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Loyola University of Chicago Graduate School

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE UNHAPPY SPECTER: THE BURIED REMAINS OF SELF AND OTHER

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY

BY

KIRT HENRY BROESCHE JR.

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we will attempt to draw out Derrida's account in *Specters of Marx* of the uncanny experience of being haunted by a specter. Derrida suggests that the possibility of haunting is caused, in part, by the inability to complete a so-called work of mourning. In addition, Derrida puts forward an alternative conception of psychic inheritance. According to this conception, the proliferation of specters is the consequence of the fundamental structure of intersubjectivity. He develops his account of specters in dialogue with Nicolas Abraham and Mária Török, who jointly seek to clarify the psychoanalytic distinction between an effective work of mourning (introjection) and an ineffective work of mourning (melancholic incorporation). Although Derrida is suspicious of this distinction, he is drawn towards Abraham's related conception of a phantom, that is, a secret that has been transmitted from one person's unconscious to another's. Derrida stresses the universality of the experience of being haunted. Unlike Abraham, he suggests that it is not possible to disclose a secret in a way that would exorcise the specter. To clarify Derrida's position, we go on to compare his characterization of a haunted subject to Hegel's conception of Unhappy Consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Unlike Hegel, who thinks it is possible for the Unhappy Consciousness to transcend its predicament by assimilating its other, Derrida suggests it cannot because consciousness is constitutively and therefore irreducibly haunted. For Hegel, the Unhappy Consciousness can itself be assimilated into a communal spirit. To the extent that Derrida allows for an experience of community, it is a community not of spirit, but of haunted and haunting subjects. We will conclude that by learning

how to mindfully speak and/or listen to specters, we can form such a community, one that comprises both the living and the dead.

SECTION I: MOURNING AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Mourning is accepting the reality of loss. Freud observes that it is the normal response to the loss of an object, whether the object be a person, a thing, or an ideal: “Normally, respect for reality gains the day.”¹ According to Freud, the work of mourning involves running through the subject’s memories of the lost object for the sake of withdrawing its libidinal ties to it. The work of mourning is completed when the libido is fully detached from the object and “the ego becomes free and uninhibited again.”² When this process is inhibited it leads to what Freud characterizes as pathological cases of mourning, especially melancholia. We will thus begin this section with Freud’s differentiation of melancholia from mourning. We will especially focus on his account of the role played in melancholia by incorporation, the act by which the ego identifies with the lost object instead of accepting its absence. We will then examine Ferenczi’s distinction between incorporation and introjection. The latter, an essential part of the work of mourning, involves an expansion of the boundaries of the ego. This process can be characterized as an act of assimilation. Next, we will consider Abraham and Török’s extension of this distinction between incorporation and introjection. We will begin with their characterization of a psychic tomb or crypt which contains what Török calls an “exquisite corpse.” We will conclude

¹ Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 14 (Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 243-258, 244.

² *Ibid.*, 244-5.

with Abraham's depiction of a phantom—a secret that the subject has inherited from someone who has died or disappeared.

Mourning and Melancholia

Freud derives his psychoanalytic conception of the condition of mourning from clinical observation. In *Mourning and Melancholia*, he compares the normal “work of mourning” to pathological cases of melancholia. While melancholia does not overtly involve dealing with the loss of a loved one, Freud noticed similarities between what we would call depression and grief.

Freud begins the essay by noting the difficulty of defining melancholia; he states his goal to be an uncovering of the nature of melancholia by way of comparing it with the work of mourning.³ Because Freud's project treats the symptoms⁴ of melancholia more seriously than mourning: melancholia goes far beyond everyday grief. However, there is the general difficulty of knowing whether mourning is simply defined as the “affect of grief” when the terminology “the affect of mourning”⁵ is also used. Generally, Freud is quite clear to equate symptoms of mourning with its affects, reserving “mourning” for the general picture. This is true, for instance, in Freud's definition of mourning where he defines it as a reaction. Freud states: “Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country liberty, an ideal, and so on.”⁶ This definition aligns

³ Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” 243.

⁴ Freud regards only melancholia as capable of producing a pathological condition. See for example “Mourning and Melancholia,” 243-4. However, Andrew Cutrofello criticizes Freud's reduction of melancholy. He writes: “The bad Freud is the one who reduces melancholia to pathological mourning.” Andrew Cutrofello, *All for Nothing: Hamlet's Negativity* (The Mit Press, 2014), 30. He maintains that the good Freud is the one who is aware of the experience of haunting.

⁵ In “Mourning and Melancholia,” the first note appears after the phrase the “affect of mourning.” It specifies that the translation used of “Trauer” is “mourning” and not grief. Mourning is further defined as the affect of grief.

⁶ Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” 243.

with how one would describe “everyday grief” as a reaction to the loss of a loved one, but he also includes the “abstraction” condition. This condition is important because it clarifies how *loss* is represented within the survivor: it needn’t always be loss of a person because loss is deeply personal; for that reason, loss can also be represented as an abstraction—all loss can be described as a “lost object.” Broadly speaking then, the affect of mourning is the state of the survivor.

Freud’s analysis of melancholia depends heavily on this definition of mourning. Freud describes melancholia as presenting a unique involvement of the ego which mourning does not. He writes: “This picture [of melancholia] becomes a little more intelligible when we consider that, with one exception, the same traits are met with in mourning. The disturbance of self-regard is absent in mourning; but otherwise the features are the same”⁷ Here specified as “self-regard,” the reaction of the melancholic seems to be much more extreme. Freud’s answer, in part, is that despite arising from the loss of an object as mourning does, the melancholic’s fixation on the lost object causes the subject to repress their feelings for the object, thereby stymieing the normal *work of mourning*. In other words, the melancholic will unconsciously prevent themselves from getting over the lost object.⁸ Of course, losing anyone explains the general negativity surrounding one’s mood, but clearly the work to detach one’s affective ties to the lost object distinguishes mourning from melancholia. As Freud says: “In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself.”⁹

⁷ Freud, 244.

⁸ Freud, 256-7.

⁹ Ibid, 246.

The repression of the mental energy directed at the object makes possible another activity which Freud calls “incorporation.” In incorporation, the ego attempts to take in the “object” through a process of identification. The subject’s motivation *is* to take in the object, to engage in a desire to devour the object. Freud’s description of incorporation plays into this animalistic description when he says: “The ego wants to incorporate this object into itself, and, in accordance with the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development in which it is, it wants to do so by devouring it.”¹⁰ The narcissistic desire of the ego towards the object is thus connected to the subject’s libido in its rudimentary development. It is a rudimentary desire stemming from the subject’s unconscious. This connection to the libido is also an important site for future development which both Ferenczi, Abraham, and Török later expand upon. Freud himself sums up his findings about the role of incorporation in melancholia as follows:

An object-choice, an attachment of the libido to a particular person, had at one time existed; then, owing to a real slight or disappointment coming from this loved person, the object-relationship was shattered. The result was not the normal one of a withdrawal of the libido from this object and a displacement of it on to a new one... But the free libido was not displaced on to another object; it was withdrawn into the ego.”¹¹

Thus, expanding upon the loss from some abstraction, some object, in mourning, melancholia arises when the libido is not redirected to another object; instead, the subject doubles down by pretending to be the lost object. This act enables the libido to be withdrawn into the ego in an attempt to preserve the object. This “doubling down” can be seen from the perspective of the psychoanalyst as “regression” due to the subject’s unwillingness to confront the reality of the situation; not only are they not willing to confront their loss, but they actively construct a

¹⁰ Ibid, 249-50.

¹¹ Freud, 248-9.

situation which inhibits their acceptance of reality—their fantasy is *anti*-closure born of their regressed desire to devour what is *theirs*.

Incorporation vs. Introjection

As Abraham and Török have shown, Freud misunderstood Ferenczi, and so the distinction was left undeveloped between the work of mourning (introjection) and incorporation. Because the understanding of this difference between introjection and incorporation is crucial to the main goal of this present undertaking, we will take care in distinguishing them. In *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud first uses the German verb “*einverleiben*” meaning “to incorporate” or “to assimilate”; however, in a note (which only appears in the original¹²) Freud specifies that this type of internalization is now called incorporation (“*Inkorporation*”). While Freud seems to be aware of the analogous process in the work of normal mourning, he does not actively differentiate “internalization” in melancholia from mourning. He even writes: “Normal mourning, too, overcomes the loss of the object, and it, too, while it lasts, absorbs [*absorbiert*] all the energies of the ego.”¹³ To absorb (*absorbiert*) and to assimilate (*einverleiben*) are not enough to differentiate these two different processes. Helpfully, Sandor Ferenczi does distinguish them. Ferenczi’s term for the internalization in the work of mourning is “introjection” (“*Introjektion*”) which signifies an identification with the external from the internal. In the essays collected in the *Shell and the Kernel*, Nicolas Abraham and Mária Török describe introjection as “casting inside” and incorporation as a fantasmatic substitute for introjection.¹⁴ They credit Ferenczi with

¹² See *Trauer und Melancholie* (1917) note 12.

¹³ Freud, 255.

¹⁴ Nicolas Abraham and Mária Török, *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 127.

distinguishing the two terms, calling him the “father to the concept of introjection”¹⁵ Referencing Ferenczi’s *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis*, Török states that introjection is comprised of three activities: “the extension of autoerotic interests,” “the broadening of the ego through the removal of repression,” and “the including of the object in the ego and thereby ‘an extension to the external world of the [ego’s] original autoerotic interests.’”¹⁶ Rather quickly we see how introjection is the opposite of introjection: first, instead of withdrawing the libido into the ego, there is an extension. Second, the ego is “broadened” by undoing repression. Last, and most importantly, the inclusion of the object is meant to extend the ego towards the external world. This last point, it seems, is the most confusing because “including of the object in the ego” sounds just like incorporation. Clearly, then, the difficulty in differentiating introjection from incorporation seems to stem from this aspect, surely the inclusion of the object in the ego is nothing but incorporation, is it not? In defining introjection himself, Abraham comments on this aspect. He says: “[Freud] went further, declaring that self-perception passes at any rate through an ‘internal foreign territory,’ the Unconscious, and entails a form of exchange with it... by this means the internal foreigner will establish the external one, the object.”¹⁷ Despite the dense wording, Abraham’s remark is helpful to observe the distinction of object inclusion via introjection. We can separate the account into two steps: first, there is an exchange between the external and internal that happens through the Unconscious. Second, the exchange establishes an internal foreigner for an external object. Importantly, I take it that

¹⁵ Nicolas Abraham and Mária Török, *The Shell and the Kernel*, 111.

¹⁶ Abraham and Török, 112.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

Abraham does not mean that the external object is included (incorporated) as an internal foreigner, rather this implies the *representation* of the external object through a previously undiscovered internal territory. If this is true, there is no inclusion in the typical sense, only personal identification with the external object. Derrida later confirms this sense of introjection in *FORS* when he states: “By including the object—whence the name introjection—the process expands the self. It does not retreat; it advances, propagates itself, assimilates, takes over.”¹⁸ “Assimilation” thus seems a far better term than “inclusion” as the connotation is the expansion of the self over the other rather than the self devouring the other. Finally, despite the former presentation of introjection, it still doesn’t entirely avoid the equivocation of assimilation-inclusion-incorporation.

We move next to Abraham and Török’s appropriation and extension of these concepts.

To begin, we will first note Török’s analysis of incorporation and introjection. She writes:

In that realm [hallucinatory satisfaction], as we saw earlier, introjection and incorporation still constitute two aspects of the same mechanism. Not being able to remove repression and thus remaining unfulfilled, the long-contained hope is cornered in a desperate dilemma: deadly renunciation or fallacious triumph. Regression permits the latter, substituting fantasy for the real thing, magic and instantaneous incorporation for the introjective process.¹⁹

Incorporation is a fantasy that is designed to preserve the lost loved one. The triumph, as well the magic in the revival of the dead, is, of course, truly a lie in the sense that its attempt to incorporate the external object is futile. It is a regression predicated on the subject’s inability to confront the reality of their loss; their desire itself is a regression insofar as it involves the phantasmatic attempt to devour the object.

¹⁸ Jacques Derrida, “FORS,” trans. Barbara Johnson, *The Georgia Review* 31, no. 1 (1977): pp. 64-116, 70.

¹⁹ Abraham and Török, 117.

Apart from the fantasy of incorporation, there is also the extension of repression contributing to both introjection and incorporation. Previously, we have seen the intent for introjection to remove repression and the connection of repression to the melancholic broadly, but here we examine how “ambivalence” towards the lost object contributes to “the pain of mourning.” First, we will examine how Freud relates ambivalence to both mourning and melancholia. He writes:

Where there is a disposition to obsessional neurosis the conflict due to ambivalence gives a pathological cast to mourning and forces it to express itself in the form of self-reproaches... If the love for the object... takes refuge in narcissistic identification, then the hate comes into operation on this substitutive object, abusing it, debasing it, making it suffer and deriving sadistic satisfaction from its suffering.²⁰

In the first part of the passage, Freud is relating mourning to a pathological condition wherein the conflict of hatred and love toward the object is turned back on itself as self-reproaches. The latter half of passage describes the “self-tormenting in melancholia” that arises similarly from ambivalence. In both cases, ambivalence towards the object is turned back on the subject which results in their suffering. Török adds another dimension to ambivalence through the guilt of these aggressive fantasies which continually contribute to the “pain of mourning.” She writes: “The remorse and the guilt felt on account of aggressive fantasies would then explain the pain of mourning.”²¹ Its continued repression and regressive desires prolongs its pain and purposeless guilt.

From the pain of mourning and its continuation, Török continues to uncover the manifestation of the pain of mourning and its respective location. From Freud, it was already

²⁰ Freud, 251.

²¹ Abraham and Török, 120.

clear that repression makes possible the object's identification in the ego. However, in contrasting incorporation from introjection, we know that the ego does not devour *loss* or literally devour the external object, so what is being incorporated? Presumably it is a representation of the object, a representation that must remain hidden. Török characterizes the location of the incorporated object as a tomb in which the "exquisite corpse" is buried as if it were still alive or cryogenically frozen, thereby maintaining the fantasy that it will one day be fully revived.²² In sum, repression buries the dead inside of the melancholic who not only resists mourning, but actively attempts to do the impossible by reviving the dead—to be clear, an impossible task even in fantasy due to the cycle of desire, remorse, and repression which can only "hope" to revive the exquisite corpse.

The Secret of the Tomb, Haunting, and the Phantom

The exquisite corpse, as a sort of manifestation of the feeling of loss, and the tomb, a manifestation of repression itself in the unconscious, evince horror: the inevitability of repression coming back to haunt the afflicted. "The words that cannot be uttered, the scenes that cannot be recalled, the tears that cannot be shed—everything will be swallowed along with the trauma that led to the loss. Swallowed and preserved. Inexpressible mourning erects a secret tomb inside the subject."²³ With one word, secret, the tomb is at once the very expression of unconscious suffering and the site for unspeakable terror: the kind of terror that haunts by its name alone, leaving itself never to be discovered. But what about the tomb in relation to others, is it not simply an impenetrable secret? The secret itself only conceals the repression of loss, but it has

²² Ibid., 118.

²³ Ibid., 130.

already involved a refusal of mourning, a regression. If this secret were to continue to regress, it would pull others into its narcissism and inexpressible pain. It would take the fantasy of revival and develop it into a mimicry of life: it would overcome the repression of one's loss and come back to haunt others as the phantom:

Yes, the shameful and therefore concealed secret always does return to haunt. To exorcise it one must *express it in words*. But how are we to accomplish this when phantoms inhabiting our minds do so without our knowledge, embodying the unspeakable secret of... *an other*? This other, of course, is a love object. Produced by the secret, the gaps and impediment in our communication with the love object create a twofold and contrary effect: the prohibition of knowledge coupled with an unconscious investigation.²⁴

This phantom is first and foremost born of a secret. However, it is not clear *whose* secret or *whose* love object. Does the secret of an *other* imply that phantoms are born from secrets of other people which also haunt others or is *other* supposed to conjure the otherness as described by the “twofold effect.” That is, could the phantom created from one's own unconscious haunt the subject? It would appear Abraham affirms the former, that what haunts is the secret from another person (*i.e.*, someone else's repression of the loss of their love object). Later in that passage Abraham describes the “haunted” as being caught between two inclinations: maintaining ignorance of a loved one's secret and pushing secrecy into knowledge.²⁵ With this wording, clearly there are two subjects: the haunted subject is the one who maintains ignorance of another's secret and the other subject is the holder of that secret. Despite Abraham's support for this interpretation, it is important to note that this distinction is yet another site of ambiguity when one considers that both the *haunted* and the “crypt-keeper” (the owner of the secret) have a

²⁴ Ibid., 188.

²⁵ Ibid.

direct relationship with the unspeakable, the unconscious. Although, once again (quite like the difference between introjection and incorporation), the *crypt-keeper* seemingly creates the unconscious which effects the *haunted*. Finally, Abraham describes the haunted as being ignorant of a loved one's secret. This highlights another aspect of haunting to which we will next turn, that of inheritance.

With respect to inheritance, Abraham specifically supports the difference between the *crypt-keeper* and the *haunted*. In fact, inheritance is how he maintains the broad framework for how a secret is passed, as a phantom, to the haunted. He writes: "Since the phantom is not related to the loss of an object of love, it cannot be considered the effect of unsuccessful mourning, as would be the case with melancholics or with all those who carry a tomb in themselves. It is the children's or descendants' lot to objectify these buried tombs through diverse species of ghosts. What comes back to haunt are the tombs of others."²⁶ From melancholy to incorporation to those who carry a tomb within, Abraham connects the former analyses together while clearly specifying this new notion: that which haunts is the tombs of others. Additionally, it seems that inheritance is restricted to direct descendants, perhaps simply through the family. Abraham seems to confirm this while maintaining the mystery to the exact means of transmission. "[The phantom] passes—in a way yet to be determined—from the parent's unconscious into the child's. Clearly, the phantom has a function different from dynamic repression."²⁷ Again, Abraham differentiates the *haunted* from the *crypt-keeper*, but what of the transmission of the phantom? Shortly, we will see Derrida's answer to this very question, but for now we should

²⁶ Ibid., 171-2.

²⁷ Ibid., 173.

consider the broader effect to this present discussion. Cutrofello nicely sums up the consequence: “By representing melancholia as a pathological form of mourning Freud opens the way to a more general conception of human subjectivity as constitutively ‘haunted.’”²⁸ With this in mind, this discussion can no longer remain within the bounds of psychoanalysis when the haunted subject is now a facet to the human condition. Abraham himself calls the phantom a “metapsychological” fact.²⁹ Considering the inevitability of loss coupled with the fundamentally selfish disposition of human consciousness and the inheritance of the family, haunting transcends the subject of psychoanalysis and enters into the overall situation of haunting.

²⁸ Andrew Cutrofello, *All for Nothing: Hamlet's Negativity* (The Mit Press, 2014), 29.

²⁹ Abraham and Török, 171.

SECTION II: DERRIDA AND THE SPECTER

To carefully approach Derrida's account of haunting in *Specters of Marx*, we begin by showing that the specter, as he conceives it,¹ lies outside the ontological framework of mourning. This firmly sets up a contrast between the work of mourning insofar as it can be considered a phenomenological experience and something that eludes the order of experience. It explains why what Derrida calls *hauntology* cannot be reduced to ontology, and why living with specters cannot be reduced to being a member of a community. Next, we focus on the related topics of secrecy and inheritance. Unlike Abraham, who views the uncovering of a secret to be liberating, for Derrida the sense of a secret is always *beyond* us. This explains the interminability of mourning.

We begin by noting Derrida's use of psychoanalysis along with the other motivating threads of *Specters of Marx*. At the beginning of the text, he writes:

First of all, mourning. We will be speaking of nothing else. It consists always in attempting to ontologize remains, to make them present, in the first place by *identifying* the bodily remains and by *localizing* the dead (all ontologization, all semanticization—philosophical, hermeneutical, or psychoanalytical—finds itself caught up in this work of mourning but, as such, it does not yet think it; we are posing here the question of the specter, to the specter, whether it be Hamlet's or Marx's, on this near side of such thinking).²

Derrida clearly is centering the discussion around mourning, but only insofar as it is the starting point for a larger investigation. Phrases such as “to ontologize remains,” “*identifying* the bodily

¹ As we will shortly see, Derrida adopts “specter” (the French: “spectre”) instead of Abraham's use of “phantom” (the French: “fantôme”), or the use of “ghost” in *Hamlet*.

² Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 9.

remains,” “to make them present,” and “*localizing* the dead” belong to ontology rather than to hauntology. Derrida is invoking the ontology of introjection to distinguish it from the experience of being haunted. Finally, Derrida mentions Marx and Hamlet: as we move forward, we will observe these two are guiding threads of the investigation of the specter.

As the title of the book indicates, Marx is the primary inspiration for the book. Specifically, Derrida states that his memory is haunted by the first noun of the *Communist Manifesto*:³ “A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of communism.” To be clear, Derrida’s use of Marx goes beyond this reference: it goes beyond a metaphor for the haunted writer’s investigation of haunting. Although for Derrida this is a crucial aspect, throughout the book he provides other justifications for the primary inclusion of Marx. For example, here Derrida justifies his use of Marx for his connection to the history of philosophy and the psychoanalytic conception of mourning. He writes: “Or rather, as Marx himself spells out, and we will get to this, the specter is a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit.”⁴ By calling the specter a “paradoxical incorporation,” Derrida implicitly references the psychoanalytic conception of incorporation; however, while Abraham would describe the tomb as an incorporation, Derrida’s interpretation of Marx would describe the specter as an incorporation. Therefore, it seems Derrida’s use of Marx collapses Abraham’s distinction between the crypt and the phantom. In any case, this use of Marx demonstrates Derrida’s first departure from Abraham’s description of the phantom. The second justification for Marx as a guiding thread comes from the last portion of the quote where Derrida describes

³ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 2.

⁴ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 4-5.

the specter as a “carnal form of the spirit.” Marx is haunted by the spirit of Hegel,⁵ and here Marx’s notion of spirit seems at once to address and challenge Hegel’s use of spirit.

Next, we now address why Hamlet is another guiding thread for Derrida. To begin, the former psychoanalytic analysis of mourning implicates Hamlet in various places. For example, in *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud compares the melancholic’s self-reproaches and outwardly directed negativity to Shakespeare’s portrayal of the behavior of Hamlet.⁶ Additionally, Abraham analyzes the ghost in *Hamlet* through the lens of psychoanalysis: he even writes “The Phantom of Hamlet or The Sixth Act”⁷ which provides an alternative ending to *Hamlet* in which he imagines a revived Hamlet properly exorcizing the ghost of his father. On its own, the story of *Hamlet* is the story of a prince who meets the ghost of his dead father. He inherits from him a *secret*⁸ and vows to commit revenge. The story is an excellent illustration of melancholia and haunting. *Hamlet* is a work of art historically connected to *hauntology*. Just as we are haunted by Marx’s specter, we are haunted by the story of *Hamlet*. As we continue with the innovations of Derrida’s hauntology, we will observe the continued influence of *Hamlet* and Marx.

Sketching Derrida’s Specter

In describing Derrida’s innovation with the specter, we will begin by detailing the importance of the secret and its inheritance. After, we will focus on the importance of inheritance

⁵ See for instance: *Specters of Marx*, 83.

⁶ Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” 246.

⁷ We discuss this essay in the last paragraph of the section entitled “The Mediator.”

⁸ On the surface, it seems this secret would simply be the murder of Hamlet’s father by his uncle Claudius. But the secret would have something to be something Hamlet’s father incorporated—something Hamlet would not know.

in hauntology. Finally, insofar as both the secret and inheritance relate to conjuration, we will uncover what constitutes the task of the haunted.

As we begin to sketch the relationship of the secret to the specter, we may primarily rely on *Hamlet*. From *Hamlet* we already have a general picture of the relationship between inheritance and secret. If Hamlet inherits a secret from this father, then what is this secret to Hamlet and how exactly does he inherit it? Ostensibly, Hamlet inherits the secret directly from his father's ghost who tells him that he was murdered by Hamlet's uncle Claudius. This is Hamlet's overt inheritance, the inheritance of vengeance. However, from what we know about secrets, this cannot be all that is involved: we know that we cannot uncover the secret that is inherited and objectified through a tomb, but we know that this tomb has to be the result of a failed work of mourning. Thus, the ghost's secret must be related to the repression of loss. Are both Hamlet and his father just as unconscious of the secret and without knowing the content, does Hamlet know the presence of the secret? In addressing the compulsory aspects to the secret, such as how the ghost's overt secret (his murder by Hamlet's uncle) compels Hamlet to commit revenge while protecting his true hidden secret, Derrida addresses Hamlet's relationship to the secret along with the secretive aspect of an inheritance. He says: "Therefore an inheritance that will always keep its secret. And the secret of a crime. The secret *of* its very author."⁹ If an inheritance keeps its secret, then the act of inheritance does not involve the conscious recognition of anything about the content of the secret: for this reason, we call this covert inheritance. While Derrida specifies that the author's secret is of a crime, it does not yet specify the inheritor's awareness or full relationship to the secret. At this point in the text, Derrida highlights a crucial

⁹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 116.

conversation between the ghost and Hamlet, which we will follow as well as it resolves questions about Hamlet's awareness of the secret.

Ghost: I am thy father's spirit,
 Doomed for a certain term to walk the night
 And for the day confined to fast in fires
 Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
 Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
 To tell the secrets of my prison house,¹⁰

Hamlet does not know the actual "secrets of [his father's] prison house" or the reason the ghost references them, but the ghost is making a clear distinction of the secrets relating to his crimes: they cannot be revealed. And finally, back to the urgency, what Derrida calls the "injunction," or the "call to action" of the ghost, we see the curse of the ghost (its punishment, its purpose) is to do away with its crimes but not reveal them. So, then, this call to action, this inheritance of a father's crimes is completely futile and damning insofar as it is only inheritance of a disposition relating to a failed work of mourning. Such an inheritance will only contribute to Hamlet's downfall. Hamlet's task of vengeance will not purge his father's crime, so there is no point to the act of vengeance.

For the task of the haunted, let us continue with a focus on inheritance. As far as has been shown, it seems there's no reason to think inheritance is anything outside the confines of the family. But if inheritance is something more, are secrets, the idea of them alone, available to anyone? And if they are, what makes something more haunting than another? Further, can we freely choose how to respond to the inheritance of a secret? Instead of asking what the restrictions are of inheritance, Derrida rethinks inheritance in terms of mourning. And beyond

¹⁰ William Shakespeare, "Hamlet," ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine, Folger Shakespeare Library, accessed May 14, 2023, l.v.15.

this he asks what role inheritance plays in ethics. In the following passage, Derrida challenges the psychoanalytic conception of mourning in order to reframe the question of the nature of an *inheritance* in general. He writes:

Inheritance is never a *given*, it is always a task. It remains before us just as unquestionably as we are heirs of Marxism, even before wanting or refusing to be, and, like all inheritors, we are in mourning. In mourning in particular for what is called Marxism. *To be*, this word in which we earlier saw the word of the spirit, means, for the same reason, to inherit. All the questions on the subject of being or of what is to be (or not to be) are questions of inheritance.¹¹

In order to properly tie together all the relevant aspects of this passage, let's begin with the separate pieces. (1) Inheritance *always* sets a task before the inheritor. (2) To be an heir is to inherit. (3) To be in mourning is to inherit. Since to be is to be in mourning, inheritance brings being itself into question. More precisely, inheritance serves the same function in hauntology as being does in ontology.

The last feature we sketch of Derrida's specter is conjuration. Apart from the use of conjure as "call upon"—for instance: "I conjure you ghost to wreak a terrible fate upon all those who misinterpret introjection and accuse Hamlet of inaction"—Derrida presents two other meanings for the term. To begin, he defines typical conjuration as follows: "Conjuration" signifies, *on the other hand*, the magical incantation destined to *evoke*, to bring forth with the voice, to *convoke* a charm or a spirit."¹² Perhaps most importantly, Derrida specifies the voice for this type of conjuring. For the second definition, Derrida typically uses "conjuring away" (*pour le conjurer*) in place of "to exorcise." He writes: "For to conjure means *also* to exorcise: to attempt both to destroy and to disavow a malignant, demonized, diabolized force, most often an

¹¹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 67.

¹² Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 50.

evil-doing spirit, a specter, a kind of ghost who comes back or who still risks coming back *post mortem*.”¹³ In this second sense, thus far by attempting to understand the secret of the specter, we are attempting to conjure it away. In the third sense, Derrida uses “conjunction” for an alliance. He says: “A conjunction, then, is first of all an alliance, to be sure, sometimes a political alliance, more or less secret, if not tacit, a plot or a conspiracy¹⁴. It is a matter of neutralizing a hegemony or overturning some power.”¹⁵ This third notion, particularly in how it relates to conspiracy, is particularly relevant to the task of inheritance.

Since we have spoken of Hamlet’s inheritance of his father’s secret and the task it presents, how can we represent the task apart from questions of being? We can through secrecy itself. Conspiracy is an activity which directly implicates the parties involved in sharing a secret. As Derrida points out, the conspiracy is a new secret, a secret agreement which binds an “oath-taker” to conjure away the specter. Derrida amply describes the following conspiracy in *Hamlet*:

It is to this conspiracy that Hamlet appeals, evoking the “Vision” they have just seen and the “honest ghost,” when he asks Horatio and Marcellus to swear... to swear together *on the subject of the spectral apparition itself*, and to promise secrecy on the subject of the apparition of an honest ghost that, from beneath the stage, conspires with Hamlet to ask the same thing from the sworn... It is the apparition that enjoins them to conspire to *silence the apparition*, and to promise secrecy on the subject of the one who demands such an oath from them.¹⁶

In an act of conjunction, Hamlet forms an agreement with Horatio, Marcellus, and the ghost. Their agreement and corresponding task relate to the secret of the ghost, but it forms another secret with the involved parties. The task of the conjunction is to conjure the ghost away. Also of

¹³ Ibid., 59.

¹⁴ Derrida points out this would be *Verschwörung* in German.

¹⁵ Ibid., 58.

¹⁶ Ibid., 50.

note, is that all involved parties are in mourning and are thus inheritors who undertake the activity of conjuration.

Complications of (the Specter) Psychoanalysis

As the conjuration of the specter complicates psychoanalysis, and thereby the work of mourning, we now consider further consequences that follow in its wake. To this end, we will follow: (1) The consequence of questioning the difference between mourning work and incorporation that results in the interminability of haunting (and of mourning); (2) the departure from the “anti-semantics” of psychoanalysis with the crypt; (3) the general temporal consequences of hauntology.

We begin with the first consequence, the interminability of mourning and haunting. To put it simply, if we reduce the work of mourning to incorporation, it is inherently contradictory. Since incorporation maintains the repression of feelings, it prolongs the work of mourning in an endlessly fruitless way. What is more, this might be why Derrida identifies hauntology, and specifically the specter, as the remainder of psychoanalysis. Derrida writes: “This trauma is endlessly denied by the very movement through which one tries to cushion it, to assimilate it, to interiorize and incorporate it. In this mourning work in process, in this interminable task, the ghost remains that which gives one the most to think about— and to do. Let us insist and spell things out: to do and to make come about, as well as to let come (about).”¹⁷ Beginning by identifying the endlessness of properly addressing trauma with incorporation, Derrida then implies that incorporation is inseparable from this mourning work. The ghost, the specter, is the remainder of interminable mourning because it is related to incorporation which is now

¹⁷ Ibid., 122.

inseparable from introjection. Derrida once again invokes the specter as presenting a task, it gives us much to do, but what does it give us? It presents the trauma of itself as the specter: in other words, the specter's inheritance is in an endless circle with its task, the task being the "mourning" of its trauma and the inheritance being the trauma. This endlessness, the history of this endless circle between the specter and its inheritance constitutes the overall interminability of haunting. Finally, what Derrida addresses at the end of the passage should leave us to question what to do. Should we encourage the specter, should we simply let this come about?

We look next at the complications that arise from the notion of the crypt. From the prior analysis of the crypt (or the tomb) with Abraham and Török, we know the intimate relationship between the phantom and the crypt, but now we must investigate what Derrida's challenge says about the crypt. To begin, Derrida comments on Abraham and Török's notion of the crypt directly. He writes: "Quoting Freud, Abraham speaks here of a 'foreign, internal territory.' And one knows that the 'crypt,' whose new concept he proposed with Maria Torok, has its focus in the *Me*, in the *Ego*. It is lodged, like a 'false unconscious,' like the prosthesis of an 'artificial unconscious,' in the interior of the divided ego. Like every shell, it forms two fronts."¹⁸ The first passage Derrida refers to is the same one brought up earlier, where Abraham distinguishes introjection from incorporation.¹⁹ By contrast, in the latter half of this passage, Derrida refers to Abraham and Török's notion of the crypt. He first echoes the sentiment that the crypt is in the ego, but then he adds to it a device he later makes much use of with the "prosthesis." For now, the

¹⁸ Jacques Derrida, "Me—Psychoanalysis," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, vol. 1 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 129-143, 142.

¹⁹ We also reference this quote in the first paragraph of the section called "Incorporation vs. Introjection." Abraham and Török, *The Shell and the Kernel*, 93.

prothesis simply signifies the “unnaturalness” of the crypt lodged in the ego: to tie back to the beginning, the crypt is the “foreign, internal territory.” However, this interpretation hinges upon the connection between the “internal foreigner” (what was described earlier in relation to introjection) and the crypt (in relation to incorporation). In the first part of the passage, Derrida describes “foreign, internal territory” as if it was “the internal foreigner.” Then, without using any words to directly compare them, he suddenly talks about the crypt as a prothesis. As we have already seen, Derrida does want us to question certain aspects of introjection like the “internal foreigner” compared to the prothesis. But, of final note in this passage, despite Derrida’s comparison of aspects of introjection to incorporation, he seems to clearly separate the crypt from the phantom. To say that the crypt is like a shell in that it forms two fronts does seem quite different from the phantom which cannot be interiorized by it. As we continue, we will maintain this image of the “shell-like” crypt to further differentiate the phantom from the crypt.

The crypt is a metaphor for a secret. It is a monument to the dead and a symbol of the inclusion of something excluded (and vice versa): the content within, the dead, exclude the living and what is within is a secret, an image of something which holds content undiscoverable. As a symbol, it is a shell, but what is its purpose and what sort of mediation occurs in/at the crypt? In the essay entitled, “FORS,” Derrida sketches this significance of the crypt as a symbol. He writes: “What is a crypt? No crypt presents itself. The grounds are so disposed as to disguise and to hide: something, always a body in some way. But also to disguise the act of hiding and to hide the disguise: the crypt hides as it holds... A crypt is never natural.”²⁰ This first use of crypt propagates and attributes its secrecy to all of its aspects. One cannot find a crypt because it has

²⁰ Jacques Derrida, “FORS,” trans. Barbara Johnson, *The Georgia Review* 31, no. 1 (1977): pp. 64-116, 67.

excluded itself from being found: a crypt is not observable because it hides what it is—it holds a secret, and it is therefore a secret itself. Its construction is secrecy; it follows all consecutive levels of semanticization but as *anti-localization* to where it is always a secret. We might compare the crypt to mourning itself, but instead of localizing the dead, the crypt is a secret which holds the secret of the dead. How should we describe the inner and outer of the crypt? The crypt protects its interior while excluding the exterior. Derrida describes the “protection” of the crypt several times as a safe. He says: “Caulked or padded along its inner partition, with cement or concrete on the other side, the cryptic safe protects from the outside the very secret of its clandestine inclusion or its internal exclusion.”²¹ Within the crypt, the secret is well protected and excluded from awareness. But as it should be a monument to the dead, it is a monument to incorporation. Here Derrida writes: “What the crypt commemorates, as the incorporated object’s ‘monument’ or ‘tomb,’ is not the object itself, but its exclusion, the exclusion of a specific desire from the introjection process.”²² There can be no “exquisite corpse” within the crypt, there is only the monument of its own exclusion, the symbol of exclusion. But what does the crypt mean apart from its being a metaphor of metaphors, or a symbol for the secrecy and exclusion which extend from all levels of interpretation of “crypt”? Here, Derrida asks what is the crypt without being a symbol? He writes:

To invert the order of questions, no longer to consider the name ‘crypt’ as a metaphor in any ordinary sense, would perhaps be to go on—starting with psychoanalysis and, within it, starting from a new cryptology—to an *anasemic*²³ retranscription of all concepts, to that ‘radical semantic change that psychoanalysis has introduced into language.’ About this

²¹ Jacques Derrida, “FORS,” 68.

²² Derrida, “FORS,” 72.

²³ For the provenance of Abraham’s term see: *The Shell and the Kernel*, 3 and especially the chapter “The Shell and the Kernel.”

anasemic 'conversion' that proceeds by 'de-signifying,' along the lines of an 'anti-semantics,' more remains to be said."²⁴

The crypt is thus far more important than the location of the incorporated object, here the crypt represents Derrida's departure from psychoanalysis. Through "anasemia," Abraham attempted to avoid any problems with signification or semantics in the language of psychoanalysis. In a note, Derrida defines anasemia as "a process of problematizing the meaning of signs in an undetermined way."²⁵ Anasemia leaves behind the crucial remains of the crypt as symbol. For Derrida: "To crypt is to cipher, a symbolic or semiotic operation which consists of manipulating a secret code, which is something one can never do alone"²⁶ A crypt necessarily entails symbols and interactions between the inner and outer fronts, as such, the crypt represents the middle point between the self and other. In the following section we will describe Derrida's appropriation of Abraham's conception of anasemia, but for now we restate the importance of the crypt as a symbol for semiology in hauntology.

The last complication that arises from Derrida's departure from psychoanalysis we group as general temporal complications. In fact, the appearance of the specter seems to entirely challenge the chronological conception of history. First, to return as a ghost after death and to defy death's role in history; secondly, to challenge development for an endless cycle of mourning; thirdly, to repeat through the interminable process of inheritance rather than through the work of mourning that Hegel calls *Aufhebung*. Here, Derrida speaks of the repetition of the singularity through the ghost and to the end of history:

²⁴ Ibid., 66.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 100.

Repetition *and* first time, but also repetition *and* last time, since the singularity of any *first time*, makes of it also a *last time*. Each time it is the event itself, a first time is a last time. Altogether other. Staging for the end of history. Let us call it a *hauntology*... After the end of history, the spirit comes by *coming back* [revenant], it figures *both* a dead man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself, again and again.²⁷

When the first is the same as the last, when singularity of mourning persists, it defies all chronological, and especially teleological, conceptions of history. Further, the repetition of the ghost itself makes it a *revenant*: not only does the ghost repeat, but it is expected to. At the very beginning of *Hamlet*, Marcellus awaits the *return* of the “apparition.”²⁸ Further, when Marcellus first sees the ghost, he exclaims: “Look where it comes again.”²⁹ Thus the revenant defies the role of death in history; where also Marcellus will swear to conjure the ghost away; and where there is no development from properly mourning the dead king of Denmark, the cycle of tragedy will be continued.

Anasemia and Psychoanalysis

In the essay, “Me—Psychoanalysis,” Derrida introduces Abraham’s “The Shell and the Kernel” for the purpose of making sense of the anasemic approach of psychoanalysis. In the essay, Abraham describes the “semantic originality” of psychoanalytic discourse.³⁰ And to this point, the language (specifically referring to the use of capital letters) used in psychoanalysis is meant to “designify”³¹ ordinary language. Abraham says: “Psychoanalytic designification

²⁷ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 10.

²⁸ William Shakespeare, “Hamlet,” I.i.30.

²⁹ “Hamlet,” I.i.45.

³⁰ Abraham and Török, *The Shell and the Kernel*, 83.

³¹ Specifically, Abraham describes the designification with the use of capital letters like “Ego,” “Unconscious,” etc.

precedes the very possibility of the collision of meanings.”³² Because of this, the “kernel,” the beyond itself, can be adequately described in the words of psychoanalysis.

Thus, in his introduction to “The Shell and the Kernel,” Derrida outlines the purported stability and indeterminacy of this new language of psychoanalysis and the role (and method) of translation into it. To begin, Derrida describes the new language of psychoanalysis as a code which avoids conventional processes of signification. He says: “To decipher or reconstitute their meaning so as to lead, along new *anasemic* and *antisemantic* paths, to a process anterior to meaning and preceding presence. [Abraham] does so as well in order to introduce you to the code allowing you to translate the language of psychoanalysis.”³³ This deciphering of ordinary language into its “pure” Meaning is like a short circuit for signification: the language of psychoanalysis precedes encryption and thus deciphers the ordinary language that is translated into it. Although Derrida seems to preserve Abraham’s intent in this process of translation, he stresses, again and again, sentences “in this translation” or “that translation” to challenge the “one” translation into the language of psychoanalysis. If psychoanalysis is translating anything at all, its signification is continued through translation. Derrida writes: “Anasemic translation does not concern exchanges between significations, signifiers, and signifieds, but between the realm of signification and that which, making it possible, must still be translated into the language of that which it makes possible, must still be repeated, reinvested, reinterpreted there.”³⁴ Derrida first echoes the ability of anasemic translation to avoid semiology, but by referring to Meanings

³² Abraham and Török, 84.

³³ Jacques Derrida, “Me—Psychoanalysis,” 130-1.

³⁴ Derrida, “Me—Psychoanalysis,” 135.

as the interaction between the realm of significations and the particular language which makes psychoanalysis possible, we may wonder whether such a language (English, German, French, etc.) is not present as a kind of anasemic remainder. Since psychoanalysis must translate and re-translate, it inevitably will stumble into the semantics it seeks to avoid.

Given Abraham's insistence on the anasemic language of psychoanalysis and its propensity to stumble into the semantics of translation, there is more to say regarding the crypt and the shell. To be clear, previously we noted Abraham's use of "Kernel" in relation to pure Meaning. In Abraham's words: "A beyond that Freud named the *Kernel of Being*: the Unconscious"³⁵ In the metaphor of the shell and the kernel, which presents the kernel inside of a "shell," we previously compared the shell to the crypt. Again, Derrida notes the connection between the crypt and the shell: "Like every shell, it forms two fronts."³⁶ But for Abraham, the shell is a metaphor for the semantics which surrounds the kernel: "The shell of words."³⁷ Say, for instance that we considered the kernel as truly the *beyond*, the anasemic interior, given the shell's (crypt's) representation of itself as a symbol, is there anything inside? Exactly how far does the semiotics of the crypt penetrate the interior?

To properly sketch Derrida's relevant metaphor for metaphors, we turn to "The Pit and the Pyramid" which dwells on the signification of the crypt as it relates to Hegelian semiology. The primary goal of the essay is to locate the sign at the center of Hegel's system, but we use it here as a comparison between the shell and the kernel and the pyramid and the pit. Following

³⁵ Abraham and Török, 84.

³⁶ Derrida, "Me—Psychoanalysis," 142.

³⁷ Abraham and Török, 79.

this comparison, we may attribute Derrida's analysis of the sign to the former analysis of the crypt.

To understand the pit and the pyramid as a metaphor for the circular aspects of semiology, we begin by defining the relevant terms. First, Derrida attributes the "pyramid" to Hegel which functions akin to the crypt or tomb: "Hegel, then, uses the word *pyramid* to designate the sign. The pyramid becomes the semaphore of the sign, the signifier of signification."³⁸ A clear definition of the "pit" is difficult to ascertain within the dense text, but Derrida cites Hegel's characterization of the pit as the reservoir which intelligence draws from in order to produce meanings.³⁹ The use of the term "produce" is interesting here because it relates to Hegel's notion of work, which we will cover in the next section, and drives the path from the pit to the pyramid.

The circular interaction between the pit and the pyramid begins with the pit and moves to the pyramid in a way akin to the signifier leading to the sign. However, in the end, Derrida reveals the pyramid to be "once again" the pit. He writes:

A path, which we will follow, leads from the night pit, silent as death and resonating with all the powers of the voice which holds in reserve, to a pyramid brought back from the Egyptian desert which soon will be raised over the sober and abstract weave of the Hegelian text, there composing the stature and status of the sign... the path.... still remains circular, and that the pyramid becomes once again the pit that it always will have been—such is the enigma.⁴⁰

The pit is resonating with the powers of the voice and leads to the pyramid, the tomb, over Hegel's text, which preserves the sign. In the end, the path is circular, but it always begins with

³⁸ Jacques Derrida, "The Pit and the Pyramid," in *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 69-109, 83.

³⁹ Jacques Derrida, "The Pit and the Pyramid," 77.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

the signifier as the pyramid becomes the pit. Perhaps the pit is resonating from the powers of the voice in the pyramid, but, in any case, the power of the voice is contained in the reappropriation of the circular movement.

If we are to apply Derrida's metaphor to semiology—so that the movement of signifier (pit) to sign (pyramid) is the newly reappropriated sign (pyramid)—then what are we to make of the pit, kernel, exquisite corpse? The pit is resonating from the prior signification; are we to believe the pit is truly *beyond* this circular path, this path of reappropriation? In fact, as we challenged the notion that the kernel was *beyond* due to translation, the issue is revealed to be the resonating of the *voices*: the kernel is not beyond. The kernel like a secret; it is pushed beyond due to its shell or its crypt. But is there a kernel beneath, is there an exquisite corpse? Derrida seems to think this is the remainder, the unrepresentable or unsignifiable.⁴¹ Furthermore, this remainder as the “non-symbolizable” constitutes an incorporation which is “true repression”: “From out of which we will see it act, live, return.”⁴² Thus, the resonating voices of conjuration insure the appearance of the *revenant*.

Beyond the comparison of the pit and the pyramid to anasemia and the semiology of the crypt. And the notion of “true repression” that now adequately encapsulates the return that we have observed in hauntology. Through semiology, we now have a bridge towards the Hegelian dialectic, the final analysis which we will connect hauntology to *Unhappy Consciousness*, to this we now turn.

⁴¹ Derrida, “Me—Psychoanalysis,” 138.

⁴² Derrida, “FORS,” 76.

SECTION III: UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE GHOST

We now turn to Hegel's phenomenological account of spirit to compare Derrida's account of the haunted consciousness to Hegel's Unhappy Consciousness. First, we explain how consciousness becomes spirit through a process of positing and subsuming an other to itself. We discuss two shapes of self-consciousness: the Master-Slave Dialectic and the Unhappy Consciousness. We present Unhappy Consciousness to be a form of consciousness which cannot identify with an infinitely distant other. We take this predicament to be exemplified by Shakespeare's Hamlet, whom Derrida characterizes as a haunted consciousness. We go on to discuss Jennifer Bates's insight that being haunted in the way that Hamlet is prevents self-consciousness from becoming spirit. We argue that this deadlock or regression is due to the element of secrecy. To move forward, consciousness would have to convert secrecy into awareness. When it is unable to do this, it finds itself confronted with a crypt rather than with a new shape of spirit. Drawing on Derrida's analysis in *Glas* of an inassimilable remainder to the speculative dialectic, we characterize the specter of *Specters of Marx* as a kind of remainder. Finally, we maintain that instead of trying to exorcise or assimilate such a remainder one must learn to "mind" specters.

Hegel's Speculative Dialectic

Spirit (mind, intellect, consciousness, awareness) is nothing without the speculative dialectic (the teleological structure of its development). Just as a fertilized egg must develop into a bird or how a germ necessarily contains its developmental stages (its germination), spirit necessarily contains the potential of its flourishing, its own growth and development. Because of

this, Hegel, like Aristotle, would say that the seed contains the potential to be a tree.¹ In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, spirit begins as immediacy and progresses through many shapes towards “absolute knowing.” The mechanism to its growth is called *Aufhebung*. Here, Jennifer Bates provides an excellent summary: “In Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (in German *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*), consciousness progresses dialectically by means of *Aufhebung* (sublation). Hegel writes that the process is one of Spirit becoming ‘an other to itself, i.e., becoming an object to itself, and suspending this otherness.’ He calls this movement ‘experience.’”² To expand upon the notion of “sublation,” Bates describes it as the process through which spirit becomes an other to itself, forms a contradiction, and then rises to a level which encompasses both. She writes: “In sublation, consciousness does not merely go to-and-fro between contradictory positions. It rises to a new level that comprehends those opposites. This gives rise to an upward spiral of ever more comprehensive shapes of experience.”³ In order to comprehend these opposites, the self “suspends” the otherness of its others in order to identify with them. Hegel outlines the process as follows: “Only this self-*restoring* sameness, or this reflection in otherness within itself—not an *original* or *immediate* unity as such—is the True. It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning ; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual.”⁴ The end goal is, as

¹ See the addition to §1 in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* for Hegel’s metaphor of the seed containing the tree without being the tree itself. See also the “preface” §2 of *Phenomenology of Spirit* where, on its own, a bud or fruit seems to be a false manifestation of the plant. However, as a unity, each is a truth, where each is necessary to the life of the plant.

² Jennifer Ann Bates, “Aufhebung and Anti-Aufhebung: Geist and Ghosts in Hamlet,” in *Hegel and Shakespeare on Moral Imagination* (State University of New York Press, 2010), pp. 55-84, 55.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 10.

such, the suspension and identification with the other. Or, as Hegel states: “*Pure* self-recognition in absolute otherness”⁵

Bates’s metaphor of the “upward spiral” of consciousness is useful for understanding the union of consciousness with the other, but it also further develops the metaphor of the pit and the pyramid. From the “Pit and the Pyramid,” we know that the process of spirit becoming “other” to itself is circular. Each time spirit becomes other to itself, it returns to itself at a higher level of awareness. Thus, the circularity of the pit and the pyramid is combined with the progressive awareness of spirit. Due to this, every shape of spirit will contain all of its prior circular movements.

The circularity of the pit and the pyramid is, of course, a model to express the prominence of the *sign* in the dialectic. In this passage, Derrida helpfully ties the sign back to the movement of spirit. He writes:

The sign indeed appears as a mode or determination of subjective and finite spirit as a mediation or transgression of itself, a transition within a transition, a transition of the transition. But this way out of self is the obligatory route of a return to itself. It is conceived under the jurisdiction and in the form of dialectics, according to the movement of the true, and is watched over by the concepts of *Aufhebung* and negativity.⁶

Derrida identifies the sign as a mode of spirit which prompts the suspension of otherness: this references Hegel’s “self-restoring sameness” of spirit, so it is here where Derrida identifies the primary appearance of the sign in the dialectic. By “transition within a transition,” Derrida is referencing sublation; as such, “transition of the transition” refers to the progressive growth of sublation itself as spirit unfolds through increasingly more encompassing opposites. We have

⁵ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 14.

⁶ Jacques Derrida, “The Pit and the Pyramid,” 74.

identified the role of *Aufhebung* in the progression of spirit as it suspends and identifies with opposites, but we have yet to identify the role of negativity.

Negativity is a concept which, as Derrida points out, guides the speculative dialectic. There are several forms of the term including: “negativity” (German: “Negativität”), bifurcation” (“Entzweiung”), and “negation” (“Negation”). Let’s observe how Hegel uses each in the following: “This substance is, as Subject, pure, *simple negativity*, and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this indifferent diversity and of its antithesis [the immediate simplicity].”⁷ The use of “negativity” in relation to the subject is an incredibly important term which he typically relates to consciousness or anything that is *for-self*:⁸ this use of negativity characterizes a crucial feature of spirit which is the disposition that forces consciousness to embark on its own progression: in Hegel’s terminology “negativity” is closely related to the Idea, the True consciousness, the self-restoring. Whereas “negativity” might be characterized as a disposition, a “bifurcation” is the simple action of creating an opposition. Finally, “negation” is the relation of something to an other.

The Master-Slave Dialectic

We now focus on an important predecessor to “Unhappy Consciousness,” “Lordship and Bondage,” or as it is also called, “The Master-Slave Dialectic.” The Master-Slave Dialectic begins with an interaction between two different self-consciousnesses. This interaction is a life-or-death struggle; each views the other as an obstacle to their independence so, in turn, each

⁷ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 10.

⁸ See for instance *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 34 and 117.

stakes their life to win their freedom.⁹ This struggle epitomizes Hegel's view that every consciousness is both dependent on, and independent of, every other consciousness. In the Master-Slave dialectic, this lesson has not yet been learned; instead, each of the two struggling consciousnesses believes that it can be independent only if the other is wholly dependent on it. In the case where the struggle does not result in death, one consciousness reigns over the other; the loser must confirm the sovereignty of the other. Consciousness thus has sought the death of the other and has made them an oppressed object (the bondsman); however, as we will shortly demonstrate, the crux of the Master-Slave Dialectic rests upon the reigning consciousness (the lord) still requiring recognition from the bondsman. Hegel describes the interaction of the two consciousnesses following the struggle:

The lord relates himself mediately to the bondsman through a being [a thing] that is independent, for it is just this which holds the bondman in bondage; it is his chain from which he could not break free in the struggle, thus proving himself to be dependent, to possess his independence in thinghood. But the lord is the power over this thing, for he proved into struggle that it is something merely negative; since he is the power over this thing and this again is the power over the other [the bondsman], it follows that he holds the other in subjection.¹⁰

As the unequal relationship remains, what follows is the bondman's independence through work.

Hegel writes:

Through work, however, the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is... Work, on the other hand, is desire held in check, fleetingness staved off; in other words, work forms and shapes the thing. The negative relation to the object becomes its *form* and something *permanent*, because it is precisely for the worker that the object has independence... It is in this way, therefore, that consciousness, *qua* worker, comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its *own* independence.¹¹

⁹ Hegel, 113-14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

Apart from its importance for characterizing the situation of the bondsman, this passage clarifies the connection between work and self-consciousness. Work holds desire in check; through work, the worker gains independence. These connections relate to the ability of work to increase self-awareness and to produce in the enslaved the ability to see their independence from nature. Hegel describes how work transforms the bondman by relating the permanence of the thing worked on to the activity itself. He writes: “This *negative* middle term or the formative *activity* is at the same time the individuality or pure being-for-self of consciousness which now, in the work outside of it, acquires an element of permanence.”¹² Importantly, the combination of both—the activity of the work (here described as being-for-self) and the permanence of the “worked on” (the in-itself through its permanence)—facilitates the bondman’s independence. Also of note is the prominence of the “middle term” relating the objective (here as nature) and the subjective (as consciousness). Importantly, because the bondsman gains his independence, the relationship flips, and the lord becomes dependent on the bondsman for recognition. Hegel here specifies: “But for recognition proper the moment is lacking, that what the lord does to the other he also does to himself, and what the bondsman does to himself he should also do to the other. The outcome is a recognition that is one-sided and unequal.”¹³ The lord’s subjugation of the bondman does not provide the recognition he desires. Importantly, what the lord desires is a pivotal contradiction of self-consciousness: the lord needs the slave to both be an object and to recognize him. Consciousness both needs the other and needs to kill the other. But, on the other hand, with the bondsman’s independence comes his increased self-awareness.

¹² Ibid., 118.

¹³ Ibid., 116

Unhappy Consciousness

The *Aufhebung* of the Master-Slave Dialectic has produced, for one thing, a self-consciousness that has been transformed by the formative activity of work (on the part of the bondsman) and the awareness of the need for recognition (on the part of the lord). The former experience leaves spirit at the level of “Stoicism,” which will need to progress to “Scepticism” before finally arriving at “Unhappy Consciousness.”

Hegel presents Unhappy Consciousness as a contradiction within itself. He describes it as an “*unhappy, inwardly disrupted* consciousness” with a “contradictory nature”— this consciousness contains two different self-consciousnesses; it is a “dual-natured, merely contradictory being.”¹⁴ Hegel’s diagnosis refers to a disturbed consciousness: it is even quite tragic to learn of its “dual-nature” which arrests itself in contradiction. Hegel writes: “The duplication of self-consciousness within itself, which is essential in the Notion of Spirit, is thus here before us, but not yet in its unity: the *Unhappy Consciousness* is the consciousness of self as a dual-natured, merely contradictory being.”¹⁵ The fact that this is a necessary stage of spirit is tragic as this unity is not just a “passing phase;” this contradiction of its two natures will propel “Self-consciousness” to “Reason.” As for the two consciousnesses, Bates states that they are the Stoic and the Sceptic consciousnesses.¹⁶ Hegel specifies that “Stoicism is the freedom which always comes directly out of bondage.”¹⁷ Further, he relates the relationship of lord to bondsman to the Stoic and Sceptic: “It is clear that just as Stoicism corresponds to the *Notion* of the

¹⁴ Ibid., 126.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Jennifer Ann Bates, “Aufhebung and Anti-Aufhebung: Geist and Ghosts in Hamlet,” 66.

¹⁷ Hegel, 121.

independent consciousness which appeared as the lord and bondsman relationship, so Scepticism corresponds to its *realization* as a negative attitude towards otherness, to desire and work.”¹⁸ And just as before, the Stoic needs another consciousness to realize itself in what it views as a stable world, whereas the Sceptic develops this attitude of the other as object into an even less stable notion of the world. In this way, Unhappy Consciousness embodies the “need or need to kill” contradiction of consciousness which is what makes it constitutively haunted. On its own, this idea casts doubt on consciousness truly identifying with the other, but in the case of Unhappy Consciousness, it goes beyond a struggle for recognition and extends to a struggle to identify with an absolute reality that transcends it. Thus Hegel also represents the contradiction of the Unhappy Consciousness as being between “consciousness” and the “Unchangeable.” He says:

The Unhappy Consciousness *is* this contact; it is the unity of pure thinking and individuality; also it *knows* itself to be this thinking individuality or pure thinking, and knows the Unchangeable itself essentially as an individuality. But what it does *not* know is that this its object, the Unchangeable, which it knows essentially in the form of individuality is *its own self*, is itself the individuality of consciousness.¹⁹

The force of the contradiction is that consciousness knows itself insofar as it is changeable and the Unchangeable, but it doesn’t know that the Unchangeable is its own self. Hegel perhaps better captures the weight of this contradiction by saying: “For the Unhappy Consciousness the in-itself is the beyond of itself.”²⁰ In the first sense, Unhappy Consciousness is beyond itself because it cannot identify itself as the beyond. In the second sense, “in-itself” is beyond, so the existence or state of being of “itself” is thrown into question. Leaving this aside for the moment,

¹⁸ Ibid., 123.

¹⁹ Ibid., 130-1.

²⁰ Ibid., 139.

we turn again to Bates who helpfully connects the contradiction between the Stoic and Sceptic to the contradiction between consciousness (which she also identifies as “Changeable”) and the Unchangeable. She writes:

The Unchangeable validates the stoic position of stability of thought over against a world of change. But on the other hand, the sceptical side has shown that stoic inward stability is in fact unstable...Consciousness cannot identify solely with the Unchangeable, for it needs to be at peace with the fact that consciousness is changeable. Consciousness therefore seeks to purge itself of its changeableness by suppressing its changeable body, speech, and mind. So it seeks unchanging unity but is therefore embattled in change.²¹

Bates identifies the Unchangeable with the stoic sense of stability and the sceptic with the Changeable insofar as the sceptic casts doubt on stoic stability. Next, she points out the paradox of consciousness between the Changeable and Unchangeable: by attempting to identify with one, it becomes the other. The stoic who seeks to purge themselves of skepticism will incur the greatest of doubts quite like Descartes, who in attempting to remove his doubts, becomes skeptical of everything.

The Mediator

So, are there any treatments for Unhappy Consciousness, is there any possibility for consciousness to identify with the Unchangeable? The immediate answer is yes, and not even just from Hegel. Perhaps there is no need, then, to consider living with the condition, but let’s take this in turn after we review the various “cures” to Unhappy Consciousness.

Hegel’s solution to Unhappy Consciousness is at the end of the section. Seemingly from nowhere Hegel brings up the mysterious figure of “the mediator.” And through the mediator, the consciousness can identify with the Unchangeable. Hegel describes the process here:

Through this middle term the one extreme, the Unchangeable, is brought into relation with the unessential consciousness, which equally is brought into relation with the

²¹ Bates, 66.

Unchangeable only through this middle term; thus this middle term is one which presents the two extremes to one another, and ministers to each in its dealing with the other. This middle term is itself a conscious Being [the mediator], for it is an action which mediates consciousness as such.²²

We may first acknowledge the identification of the mediator as the “middle term.” The minister brings together the consciousness with the Unchangeable. Apart from the title, Hegel simply identifies them as a conscious being—we are unable to connect the dots until we reach the “Religion” section of the *Phenomenology*. This is why Bates identifies this person as a “Priest.”

She writes:

Consciousness has become reason because through confession, it has become freed of the problem of being both changeable and unchangeable. Consciousness does not grasp this distinction as its own dialectically necessary identity. Rather, it defers the problem by making the Priest mediate between the Unchangeable and the Changeable... leaving the problem of the Unchanging origin of things to the theologians.²³

Thus, because of the Priest’s mediation, the condition of Unhappy Consciousness has finally progressed to Reason. However, is the Priest not just a dialectical “MacGuffin”? Keeping in mind both Hegel and Bates’s remarks, consciousness would be stuck as an Unhappy Consciousness if not for the actions of the Priest or mediator. Hegel says: “only through this middle term” and Bates confirms that we are simply “leaving the problem” to the Priest. This is a serious problem: in short, one has to count on the necessity and proliferation²⁴ of Priests. However, rather than dwell on this problem, let’s instead seek out other solutions to the condition.

²² Hegel, 136.

²³ Bates, 66-7.

²⁴ Every Priest is an Unhappy Consciousness before becoming a Priest. Therefore, the soon-to-be Priest would need another Priest, who would need another Priest, and so it goes ad infinitum.

The solutions we seek come from psychoanalysis and *Hamlet*. But to consider these solutions we must make a provisional assumption that melancholia is comparable to Unhappy Consciousness. In the next section we will begin to directly compare the features of each, but for now, we can begin to see aspects of the comparison through the mediator.

The first similarity comes from psychoanalysis. It is quite simple: Hegel's mediator between the Unhappy Consciousness and the Unchangeable from which it is alienated seems to mirror the relationship between the psychoanalyst and the patient insofar as the latter is alienated in an analogous way. Abraham comments on this partnership in the case of a subject haunted by a phantom: "The phantom may nevertheless be deconstructed by analytic construction, though this occurs without the patients' having the impression that they were in fact the subject of the analysis. It is clear that, in contrast to other types of cases, this work requires a genuine partnership between patient and analyst."²⁵ In this instance, the phantom represents the "beyond" or Unchangeable, and the analyst mediates between them. Instead of confession, the analyst brings these two into relation with each other through analytic construction (which amounts to something very similar to confession, except it is on "Freud's psychoanalytic couch"). Lastly, the patient ends up leaving the problem of the phantom (or melancholia generally) to the analyst just as the problem of the Unchangeable is left to the theologians.

Apart from representing the solution to the problem in psychoanalysis, we can also observe a similarity with *Hamlet*. In fact, for present purposes, the solution in *Hamlet* will clarify the parallel between the gap between the Unhappy Consciousness and the Unchangeable, on the one hand, and the gap between the *haunted consciousness* and the phantom, on the other. We

²⁵ Abraham and Török, 174.

investigate Abraham's "The Phantom of Hamlet *or* The Sixth Act" which aims to provide a philosophical comprehension of the tragedy²⁶ by introducing a sixth act to the play. Simply put, Abraham attempts to become this mediator for the audience by enabling Fortinbras to serve as the mediator between Hamlet and the ghost. By identifying the ghost's secret—that old King Hamlet poisoned his sword in a duel with Fortinbras' father (the King of Norway) in order to win over Hamlet's mother Gertrude (who truly loved Fortinbras' father) and to seize land from Norway—Fortinbras conjures away the ghost, thereby saving Hamlet from the haunting. In the following passage Fortinbras makes Hamlet aware of the ghost's secret and its influence upon him: "No Hamlet. A ghost who trembles fears the truth... he makes you answer for his own disgrace and, in the end, you suppose him innocent before eternity. His shame is yours, you think. You think to know would be death. Yet, wishing to read in darkness nearly costs your life."²⁷ Because Fortinbras reveals the ghost's secret, he is able to exorcise the ghost. Likewise, Abraham, through Fortinbras, conjures away the ghost and thus gives us, as Fortinbras gives Hamlet, the peace of a good ending²⁸: "Now that your shame is understood, kind ghost, and everyone knows your secret, you may take your rightful place in the company of good men."²⁹ Through the "Sixth Act," Fortinbras becomes the mediator between Hamlet and the ghost, and *Hamlet* and the audience. And while such comparison between Unhappy Consciousness and the

²⁶ Bates notes: "Without philosophical comprehension of this tragedy, Hamlet as narrated story becomes the *ghost* of an Unhappy Consciousness. That tragic irrational necessity haunts unless someone... provides philosophical comprehension of Hamlet's experience." Bates, 73.

²⁷ Abraham and Török, 197.

²⁸ Derrida writes: "Hamlet could never know the peace of a 'good ending.'" Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 34. Cutrofello insists that for Derrida "a certain kind of melancholy is inescapable." He writes: "Does it involve waiting, like Hegel's unhappy consciousness, for a messiah one knows will never arrive?" Cutrofello, *All for Nothing: Hamlet's Negativity*, 34.

²⁹ Abraham and Török, 202.

haunting of *Hamlet* remains provisional, it has at least enabled us to make the first connection with the mediator.

Hamlet as the Unhappy Consciousness

From the appearance of the mediator to the representation of *Hamlet* as a guiding thread in *Specters of Marx*, all signs point towards the direct comparison of Hamlet and the Unhappy Consciousness. Bates reminds us that Hegel himself identifies Hamlet as a “beautiful soul.”³⁰ However, we will follow Bates’s interpretation that Hamlet is in fact an Unhappy Consciousness. We begin by identifying the same contradictory nature of Unhappy Consciousness within Hamlet. Here, Bates locates the two worlds of the stoic and sceptic: “the world of his earnest grief (which makes him stoic) and the world of the court’s seeming (whose false permanence he treats with scepticism). The former makes him melancholic and the latter mocking.”³¹ In his stoicism, Hamlet is a melancholic; in his scepticism, he is mocking and thus incapable of seriously addressing his grief. Apart from these two worlds, we might recall that Hegel also identifies the inability of consciousness to identify with the Unchangeable. Bates connects this situation by labelling the ghost as the Unchangeable. She writes: “The ghost presents the possibility of an Unchangeable ‘law of the father.’ The ghost is an authority and in this respect the ghost validates his stoic inwardness against the pomp and ceremony of a seeming world. On the other hand, Hamlet turns his scepticism on his own mind. He wonders whether the ghost is a fantasy produced by his melancholy.”³² The sceptic actively prevents consciousness from

³⁰ Bates, 65.

³¹ Bates, 67.

³² Ibid.

identifying with the ghost: Hamlet cannot trust the ghost and yet it is his melancholy that actively connects him to it—on the other hand, his scepticism preserves his judgment, but at the same time prevents him from acting. As we saw earlier, in seeking to identify with the Unchangeable, Hamlet is embattled in change. Bates writes: “He desires to divest himself of the changing world; he wants to divest the world of his changeable and ineffectual self; and he has the earnest desire to be united to—and fulfill the law of—the Unchangeable ‘beyond’ by avenging his father. He is a classic Unhappy Consciousness.”³³ It is, ultimately, Hamlet’s desire to avenge his father which sets in motion his various changes: his pettiness, his mocking, his poor decisions, his location. Despite his many changes and his failure to identify with the Unchangeable in life, Bates terms him a *successful* Unhappy Consciousness in death. She says: “In this respect, Hamlet is in fact a *successful* Unhappy Consciousness (rather than a cured one): In dying, he succeeds in divesting himself of his changeable nature, just as Hegel’s Unhappy Consciousness sought to do... His memory is repetition without change.”³⁴ Knowing full well the failure of Hamlet to identify with the ghost, his success in death says a lot about the possibility for a mediator to “cure” an Unhappy Consciousness.

Ghost in the Dialectic

To search for the ghost in the dialectic is not to say that there is a shape of spirit that is ghost and not spirit. Nor is it to say that Unhappy Consciousness is the “ghost consciousness.” If we say instead that it is the “haunted consciousness,” perhaps we conclude that the ghost is the “beyond” of the unchangeable—the representative of that which we cannot, as changeable spirit,

³³ Bates, 67-8.

³⁴ Bates, 72.

identify with. But what about the master or slave? Through the dialectic of self-consciousness, the two rise to a more encompassing form of spirit, namely, reason. The question is how they succeed in doing so given that the master and slave are alienated from each other. Now is it that the slave is the beyond of the master or the master the beyond of the slave? Or is the Other the beyond of the self in general? Can the ghost be characterized as a representative of the beyond? It remains to be seen if this is true, but it is also possible that the ghost appears within the dialectical progression itself as the product of the *Aufhebung*. Previously we traced Bates's model for the upward "spiraling" of consciousness. Bates also discusses the opposite of this "upward" spiral, namely, downward spiraling. This is precisely where she identifies the experience of ghosts. She writes: "If rising up the spiral is the experience of *Geist* (Spirit), descending the spiral is the experience of ghosts."³⁵ If we view the speculative dialectic as capable of moving in "both directions," then this would imply the downward spiral is the "lowering of consciousness" or the progressive restriction of consciousness. Bates calls this *Anti-Aufhebung*: "For instead of sublating contradictions, it generates contradictions. *Anti-Aufhebung* pulls cognition down to lower levels."³⁶ Bates goes on to provide several examples in *Hamlet* such as "failing to question what is behind the curtain and acting on mistaken assumptions. It is stabbing or attacking the curtain onto which or behind which one is projecting an enemy, rather than lifting it to find out what lies behind."³⁷ Her example of the curtain is a perfect example to illustrate the difference between *Anti-Aufhebung* and *Aufhebung*. As she

³⁵ Bates, 56.

³⁶ Bates, 75.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

presents it, *Aufhebung* lifts this curtain³⁸: the separation of self and other disappears and awareness increases as the partitioned sections become one. *Anti-Aufhebung*, on the other hand, not only maintains the partitions, but it actively assumes the other to be the enemy: the separation is reinforced based on baseless assumptions. But again, if *Anti-Aufhebung* is the experience of the ghost, then the ghost must be this baseless assumption. The ghost can be the “beyond” that in name is ontologically beyond. The mediator itself can be seen as the rising curtain whose effect produces a unity in spirit’s journey—it joins the partitions of the Changeable with the Unchangeable. If we consider the ghost as the “beyond,” then an anti-mediator would be the falling curtain or closed curtain whose effect creates partitions in which the ghost resides (in the *beyond*). We propose that this closed curtain or anti-mediator is none other than the secret of the crypt—just as the pit becomes another pit through mediation, the crypt becomes another crypt through secrecy.

If there is indeed a ghost that is “beyond” in the Unhappy Consciousness, there cannot be unity and progress. This would not be something which is allowed for, but something which is truly “undialectical.” It would be the remains of *Aufhebung*, not the remains we carry with us, but the interior of the tomb which can never be identified or appropriated. In *Glas*, Derrida focuses on the Hegelian *family of Ethical Life*³⁹ as such a remainder. As Derrida points out, Hegel himself connects the family to the work of mourning: “The family does not yet know the

³⁸ Hegel himself uses the image of the curtain in the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness: “It is manifest that behind the so-called curtain which is supposed to conceal the inner world, there is nothing to be seen unless *we* go behind it ourselves, as much in order that we may see, as that there may be something behind there which can be seen.” Hegel, 103.

³⁹ The Discussion of *Ethical Life* is the third part of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*. “The Family” comprises its first subsection.

universality-producing labor in the city, only the work of mourning.”⁴⁰ This difference in labor is an important qualification for the family’s further development of self-consciousness into what Hegel calls *Civil Society*. So, regarding the family, Derrida maintains that Hegel incorporates the work of mourning into the dialectic. He writes: “What speculative dialectics means (to say) is that the crypt can still be incorporated into the system. The transcendental or the repressed, the unthought or the excluded must be assimilated by the corpus, interred as moments, idealized in the very negativity of their labor. The stop, the arrest, forms only a stasis in the introjection of the spirit.”⁴¹ Derrida speaks of Hegel’s view of the necessity of incorporation from the standpoint of labor, but at the same time, curiously, he calls it a temporary stasis in the introjection of spirit. Is Derrida implying that for Hegel incorporation will necessarily pass over into introjection and the completion of mourning? Or rather, is Derrida simply voicing how Hegel would deem incorporation to be an essential feature of the speculative dialectic? For Hegel, incorporation and the crypt would be only a moment in spirit’s progression toward absolute knowing. Whatever the case, we know there is more to the picture because of the remainder. Derrida poses the question: “And what if what cannot be assimilated, the absolute indigestible, played a fundamental role in the system, an abyssal role rather.”⁴² This “abyssal” role⁴³ is the “beyond” that we have been speaking about with reference to the specter. Even if the

⁴⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 143.

⁴¹ Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, 166.

⁴² Derrida, *Glas*, 151.

⁴³ At this point in *Glas*, Derrida through *Antigone* claims that the brother/sister relation is this very remainder. What he calls: “The System’s Vomit.” Derrida, *Glas*, 162. Commenting on this aspect, Simon Critchley claims that Antigone herself cannot be dialectically appropriated and thus stands outside the development of the family into civil society. Stuart Barnett, *Hegel after Derrida* (London: Routledge, 1998), 209. However, in the end, Critchley supports the idea that Antigone will not be a remainder and thus incorporated. He writes: “For Derrida, Antigone’s death *should* exceed the Hegelian system and make Spirit stumble on its path to Absolute Knowledge, and yet Spirit barely losing its footing for an instant and relentlessly continues its ascent.” *Ibid.*, 210.

crypt is a phenomenon of spirit's lack of progression (as the family's mourning becomes melancholy), the specter itself remains outside of the dialectic serving to influence the experience of ghosts.

Ethical Considerations

If the ghost is truly the remainder, then it is nothing but the other. Then we fear it: we sequester ourselves and exorcise it by distancing ourselves from it. We "listen" to the ghost, and we give it what it wants. We listen and our awareness gets pulled down to lower levels and we act out of the same ego-driven impulses which created the conditions for the specter. But we don't give the specter its due. What would that even entail if the "reality" of the specter is an inherited failed work of mourning? Can you interact with something outside of history, outside the realm of conscious experience, something which is a barrier to the transcendental? If it is outside the realm of spirit's progression, then it will not be fixed with awareness, and it will not be solved by a mediator. How should we think about the broader effect of the specter? It is all within the realm of mourning, is it not? Simon Critchley gestures to an ethics based on mourning. He writes:

Ethics would begin with the recognition that the other is not an object of cognition or comprehension, but precisely that which exceeds my grasp and powers. The formal structure of such an ethics of the singular might well be analogous to that of mourning... Might not the death of the beloved, of love itself, and the work of mourning be the basis for a non-christian and non-philosophical ethicality and friendship?⁴⁴

Critchley's suggestion is more insightful and straightforward than it might appear. Clearly, he wants to avoid the necessity to be "saved" by the Protestant Priest⁴⁵ that is anticipated by Hegel,

⁴⁴ Stuart Barnett, *Hegel after Derrida* (London: Routledge, 1998), 211.

⁴⁵ Bates labels this as "Protestantism." The same movement that later gives rise to "Absolute Knowing" is where she supposes the Priest comes from. Bates, 66.

but he also wants to avoid trying to comprehend something that eludes philosophical comprehension. Why not attempt to empathize with something that is related to love and loss? Would this ethics not simply capture an attitude of understanding? Let's consider carefully what Derrida himself says in *Specters of Marx*:

The 'intellectual' of tomorrow should learn [justice] and from the ghost. He 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.⁴⁶

Derrida's suggestion is above all to count on the specters (in the plural) being there, to anticipate them because one can learn about life from them. Ironically, one learns to live by minding the speech between themselves and the specter. You cannot speak to the ghost, and even if you could, what would you hear beyond the familiar cries of the ego? You might want to identify with these screams of desire, but their voices are not resonating. How does the act of speech effect their resonant chamber: that is, the conditions for the possibility of their speech? We know the specter has an effect, so if we imagine that this effect comes from a voice that we cannot hear, in a place that we cannot go to, we can begin to formulate an idea for their movement between voice and its resonance. The difference is the ghost's resonant chamber. If you listen carefully for the resonant chamber, then you can mind the specter.

⁴⁶ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 221.

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VITA

Kirt H. Broesche Jr. studied undergraduate Philosophy at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy in 2020. Mr. Broesche went on to complete his Master of Arts in Philosophy from Loyola University Chicago in 2023. His future research concerns a critical appropriation to both Hegelian and Neo-Hegelian thought.