Double Exposures: Derrida and Cinema, an Introductory Séance

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Cinema is an art of the ghost.

Here, the ghost is me.

—Jacques Derrida

The promises of an introduction are many: it is an opening, an initiation, an overview, and a setup or mise-en-scène for an encounter or encounters between unaligned phenomena. Its temporal conjugations are those of a beginning that is also a return, carrying something of the rhythms of haunting, a contretemps that Derrida describes in *Specters of Marx* as "a repetition and first time."[1] For the encounter staged by an introduction to be worthy of its name, it must not simply prescribe a series of relations and a fixed course but must also open itself to difference and the unforeseeable or incalculable. In this sense the introductory encounter may produce a double exposure that captures a scene of spatial and temporal heterogeneity in which all parties and all parts are doubly exposed, opened up to forces that leave them mutually inflected, affected, and even altered.

In the technical language of photographic media, the term "double exposure" refers to an image produced when a camera's aperture allows light to pass through the lens and onto a sensitized substrate within its dark chamber more than one time. The

outcome is a superimposition of several temporally discrete impressions within the same frame, which by accidental development or by design simultaneously testifies to these separate instances *and* their mutual entanglements by virtue of being together in a single visual field. Spirit photographs and early filmic ghosts owe their existence to the technique of multiple exposures. They bear the traces of the ghostly encounters and spectral economy occasioned by the advent of photographic media and the age of technical reproducibility. But such tricks and special effects are but the most explicit manifestations of the fundamental fact to which each and every photographic and filmic impression testifies: all photographic images are spirit photographs, and all films are haunted. In his 1993 text "Aletheia," consecrated to the photographs of Kishin Shinoyama, Derrida addresses these inextricable links, stating "No phantasm and thus no specter (phantasma) without photography—and vice versa"; he extends these thoughts to film in "Cinema and Its Ghosts," his 2001 interview with *Cahiers du cinéma,* where he remarks on the "thoroughly spectral structure" of cinema.[2] Photographic media conjure, capture, animate, and generate spatial and temporal experiences marked by presence and absence, perception and hallucination, singularity and *différance*—in a word, the flickering work of a phantom techné.

It is in this spirit of such double exposures and their mutual hauntings that we introduce this special issue of *Discourse* dedicated to Derrida and cinema. We have assembled reflections on the generative encounters between Jacques Derrida and Derridean-inspired thinking and the variable configurations of technologies, techniques, texts, cultural practices, infrastructures, and institutions called cinema. The encounters of this introduction are both a repetition and a first time, which is to say that this introduction is a return to an event that has already happened, that is already there at work in the work, but also that its returns are generative of novelty, new questions, and new pathways of thinking.

Repetition, Returns

Derrida makes clear in *Of Grammatology*'s opening pages that his conception of writing exceeds the confines of print culture to include cinematography, choreography, and any number of visual, musical, and pictorial modes of expression and inscription.[3] He returns time and again to the key questions of film and media theory. To name but a few entries of a bibliography still being devised, still being discovered, reread, and translated in Derrida's wake,

one may consider his reflections on mnemotechnics in "Freud and the Scene of Writing"; on the frame and parergon in *The Truth of Painting;* on photographic media and ghosts in "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," *Copy, Archive, Signature,* "Aletheia," and *Athens Still Remains;* of video in "Videor"; on the experience of being filmed in *Echographies of Television, Tourner les mots* and *Trace et archive, image et art* (his 2002 intervention at the Institut national de l'audiovisuel); and on storage, inscription, and archives in *Archive Fever.*[4]

This quick gloss on some of the primary texts, including ones that have recently come to light, does not account for the numerous commentaries that have arisen because of them, nor does it address the abiding activity of Derrida's thought in contemporary scholarship. This is to say, all too quickly, that as Derrida's corpus continues to grow through translations and commentaries such as those provided in this issue, so do the contours, scenes, and "proper" places of and for what is called deconstruction. And yet, by contributing to this dilation, we do not mean to suggest that cinema is now, finally, in any sense deconstructed (as if any deconstruction could be rendered terminal). Instead, this special issue aims to inform and converse with a longer history of similar interventions, while also serving as a stepping stone for those to come."

Recalling *Tourner les mot*'s subtitle *Au bord d'un film* (At the Edge of a Film), Derrida's reflections frequently remain at the edges of film and media. They haunt their limits and work to interrogate their thresholds. In this sense, his reflections frequently enter into the fields of thought concerning film and media as a puncture from an outside, introducing exterior forces into them that may not be immediately recognizable or considered proper. Yet the haunting presence of Derrida *in* the realms of cinema—including Ken McMullen's *Ghost Dance* (1983), Gary Hill's *Disturbance (among the Jars)* (1988), Safaa Fathy's *D'ailleurs Derrida/Derrida's Elsewhere* (1999), Amy Ziering Kofman and Kirby Dick's *Derrida* (2002)—and cinema *in* Derrida's oeuvre have gradually emerged or, rather, are finally encountering the unknown addressees that any communicative act hazards to reach.[5]

A First Time, Again

In their prefatory remarks for "Cinema and Its Ghosts," Antoine de Baecque and Thierry Jousse admit to the apparent strangeness of this encounter at the limits of cinephilia and philosophy.[6] They quickly reassure readers of the virtues of their hospitality for Derrida based on a list of his written works touching on the visual

arts, his appearance onscreen in a number of films, and his own confessed "passion" and "hypnotic fascination" for cinema.[7] So, what to make of the slight hesitation with which they introduce the interview? It does not spring from a skepticism of intellectuals and theoretical endeavors: *Cahiers* has long made contact with prominent thinkers, and prior to Derrida's interview the journal had already welcomed contributions from and conversations with Alain Badiou, Roland Barthes, Gilles Deleuze, Arlette Farge, Marc Ferro, Michel Foucault, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Rancière, and Bernard Stiegler, to name a few. Their hesitation suggests a slight trepidation about opening cinema's notebook and its film lover's discourse to the perspective of an outlier, a strange and foreign influence—perhaps to the risks of deconstruction. While knowing the precise contours of what was to appear in print, it is *as if* the interview's ideas remain potentially unsettled, capable of deferred effects, aftershocks, unfinished work, and that category of events Derrida called "to come" (*l'avenir/l'à venir*).[8] The double exposures of Derrida to cinema and cinema to Derrida, like the separate scenes brought together into the same frame in spirit photography and early trick films, have the potential to produce extraordinary and unexpected supplements, as any good special effect does.[9]

Double Séance: A Thinking Together

The essays and interviews gathered in this issue provoke that special order of encounter called a séance, of which the double exposures of spirit photography are artifacts. They enact a conjuring of Derrida in and for cinema and cinema in and for thinking in Derrida's wake. Séance, from the old French *seoir* (to sit) and the anatomical *séant* (posterior), refers to a sitting, meeting, or session. It is an assembly, an encounter, or a reunion that is predicated on an imposed or otherwise predetermined duration in which attention is given, extended, and exchanged from a party to someone or something else. If its time tends toward constraint, its effects hold the potential opening of an untimely dimension. The term initially designated a governmental assembly, but in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries its usages multiplied to refer to the duration of a medical treatment as well as the time that a subject poses before an artist, such as in the production of a painted or photographic portrait (*une séance de photo*). Séance is also the term used for the duration of a film projection (*une séance de cinéma*), a psychoanalytic session (*une séance de psychanalyse*), and the name for an appointment or encounter with ghosts mediated by a spiritualist

(*une séance de spiritisme*), a usage that seems to have originated in an English appropriation of the term "séance" that was subsequently reimported to French (its strangeness and status as a loanword in English is demarcated by the retention of its "e" with an acute accent).[10] A séance is a fixed appointment with precise spatiotemporal frames, but its events remain open to encounters with unexpected, strange, and heterogeneous phenomena as well as with scenes *elsewhere.*

In "Cinema and Its Ghosts" Derrida's use of the term "séance" and its regulatory temporal connotations emphasizes one of the overlaps between psychoanalysis and cinema: "[A] screening session or séance [*une séance de cinéma*] is only a little longer than an analytic session [*une séance d'analyse*]. You go to the movies to be analyzed, by letting all the ghosts appear and speak. You can, in an economical way (by comparison to an analytic session [*une séance d'analyse*]), let the specters haunt you on the screen."[11] Cinematic and psychoanalytic séances are fused precisely in their spiritualist sense for Derrida; instead of costly psychoanalysis, one can save money by heading to the movies for a séance. Psychoanalysis and cinema address a similar urge, compulsion, or drive: a necessary meeting or session with ghosts, a time to sit *with* them as they reappear and speak through projection and a medium. One of the primal links between psychoanalytic and cinematic séances is the séance itself—a communication with ghosts—for as Derrida points out in the interview, the medium also absorbs the transference, projects, and projections of the audience.

Derrida, following Walter Benjamin, emphasizes the strong connections between psychoanalysis, cinema (and other technical media), and spectrality. As part of a lengthy response to Pascale Ogier's question "do you believe in ghosts?" in the film *Ghost Dance,* the philosopher improvises a mathematical formula linking them: "Cinema plus psychoanalysis equals a science of ghosts." Conversing with Bernard Stiegler about this exchange a decade later, Derrida admits that this must be revised, since ghosts do not allow for such a stable arithmetical formula. Ghosts, rather, introduce an element of heterogeneity into any scientific discourse. As Colin N. Bennett conceded in 1911, "There are no tame ghosts, even in the most up-to-date film producing studios."[12] Unlike simple arithmetic, wherein the two terms combine into a single sum, the pairing of cinema and psychoanalysis, or of ghosts and capital, which Derrida also believes necessary for understanding cinema, does not necessarily form a synthesis with calculable results. For this reason, in "Cinema and Its Ghosts" he describes psychoanalysis and cinema as engaged in a "thinking together" that is nothing short of

"primordial" in their engagements with haunting, hypnosis, fascination, identification, and scrutiny of the detail (whether through the interpretive queries of the analyst or through the filmic close-up, both of which produce scalar amplifications as well as access to an *elsewhere* within the field of perception).[13]

One of the significant contributions of cinema to critical theory is its capacity for heterology, what Georges Bataille described as an impossible science of the heterogeneous.[14] Cinema has the ability to bring together heterogeneous elements into a nondialectical copresence and unresolved tension. The film theorist André Bazin, under the influence of psychoanalysis, ghosts, and surrealism, called this capacity of photographic media "*une hallucination vraie*"—a true hallucination—and this paradoxical pairing could also be described, in the spirit of Derrida, as a form of "thinking together."[15] Cinema *is* thinking together. Akira Mizuta Lippit shows this logic at play in the very basic material of film, its sensitive emulsion, which is formed from "the mixture of two immiscible liquids" capable of producing a "synthesis without synthesis" or a technique of critical suspension.[16] Film's primary techniques, such as montage, superimposition, and shooting in depth, further materialize this assembly of heterogeneous elements into a constellation of relationships, comparisons, and juxtapositions. The elementary doubled exposure of opening the camera to the world and then that world's images to an audience also allows for the double exposures of a thinking together across time and space. Thinking together with *différance* is another way of describing the séance.

So what do the séances with Derrida and cinema in this issue, this gathering of voices, hope to call forward, call back, awaken, or invent? By evoking the French and English uses of the term "séance" as they pertain to cinema in "Cinema and Its Ghosts," we hope to establish what this *Discourse* issue will offer for debate *within* and *between* film and media studies and to the paths of thinking opened by Derrida. For film and media studies we do not seek to simply inject or apply deconstructive thought as another, albeit less trodden, theoretical avenue. Nor do we wish to uncritically advocate for Derrida's relevance or reverence in the field as a legitimating effort by means of an important proper name.

The decision behind translating and publishing Derrida's 2001 interview with *Cahiers du cinéma* as well as gathering contributions about it "grew out of some collective wondering about why Derrida's thought seems to have had *comparatively* little impact on film theory," as Peggy Kamuf states in her interview with Samuel Weber.[17] Kamuf goes on to say that while Derrida did not directly address cinema with a written text, this does not sufficiently explain
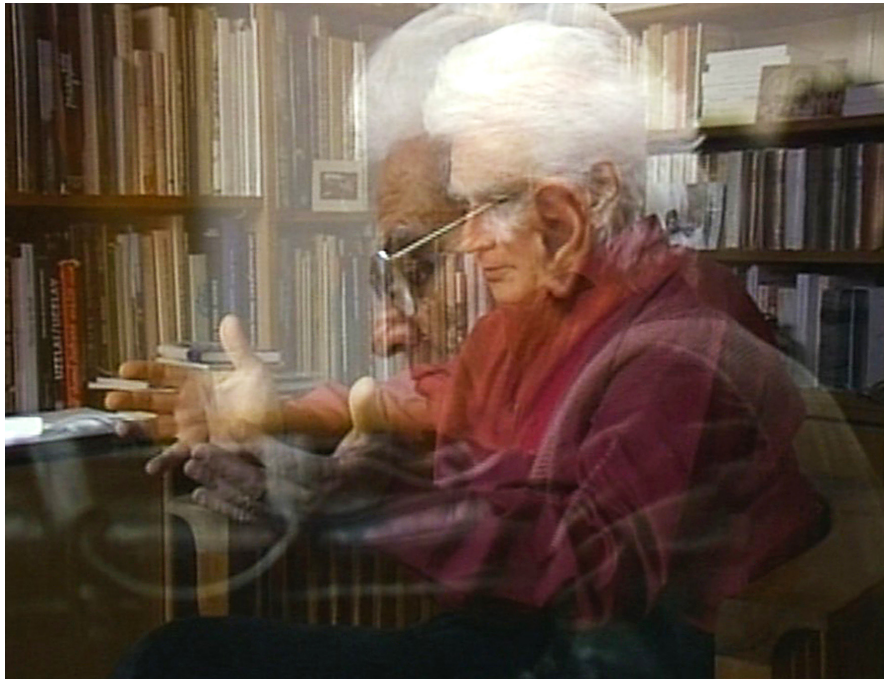
Screen Grab from *Derrida* (2002), directed by Amy Kofman Ziering and Kirby Dick.

his *relative* absence from film and media studies scholarship when compared with its cognate fields. If our first impulse was a contemplation of the history of this "comparatively small impact," our second was and is more speculative or theoretical. In short, has the time not come for film and media studies to turn more explicitly to Derrida? The thinker who rigorously analyzed concepts such as trace, storage, archive, dissemination, and invention casts an uncanny yet timely shadow on the milieu of "new" digital technologies, rapid media obsolescence, and ubiquitous screens. Who, in all seriousness, could argue that the key questions that catalyze Derrida's works aren't bound to those pursued by contemporary film and media studies? The overlap between the themes and concerns populating Derrida's oeuvre and cinema and media archaeology, as well as other forms of cinema historiography and theory, is, we'd like to suggest, indisputable. Given this timeliness and uncanniness, is *now*, in all its senses, not the time to address our supposed postfilm and postcinema conditions and their theoretical implications by conjuring Derrida's thought for film and media studies? What can deconstructive thought offer film and media studies as it considers its history and itself, as well as its objects, past, present, and future, and negotiates a necessary shift from a sense (however

phantasmic) of disciplinary coherence to polyform and interdisciplinary approaches?

For purposes of economy, we will but briefly outline three paths of inquiry that the authors in this issue examine but that also remain open to debate and further inquiry and refinement. (1) What *was* cinema for Derrida? What *is* Derrida's cinema? These questions require an approach that is historical and biographical but also speculative and theoretical. (2) What is Derrida's thought for cinema and for film and media studies? Here one may parse both Derrida's remarks about photographic media and the manner in which his work *not* directly addressed to cinema may nevertheless offer a valuable path for thinking with and through media. (3) What is cinema and what is film and media studies for Derrida and deconstruction? Or put another way, what would deconstruction be if, in a serious and sustained manner, its practitioners read film and media theory and critically engaged with cinematic media? Since the contributors address these first two questions with great care, we will offer but a few additional words in this introduction on the way to considering the third.

Derrida's Cinema

Jackie—not Jacques—was his first name, his proper "given" name, to the extent any name can be proper and can belong to oneself while referring to others, to the one and more than one that haunts identity in the form of a revenant: the return of the other through one's *proper* name. Was Jackie Coogan, best know for his role in Chaplin's *The Kid* (1921) but who also played such parts as Tom Sawyer and Uncle Fester, the inspiration for his parents' choice of an Anglophone (and rather American) name? He remained elusive on this point. Derrida lost or repressed this fundamental key to his name when, upon arriving in France as a young student, he adopted the nom de plume Jacques. As Hélène Cixous eloquently muses, he traded a homonymic *qui* for a *que,* a "who" for a "that" or "what."[18] Yet the secret star sign of cinema would continue to haunt him, to be a part of and apart from him, a role to play (as "Jackie," as "Jacques"), at work even while out of sight. Cinema was an unclaimed inheritance.

The late Derrida turns and returns to cinema. Derrida's responses to the questions posed by de Baecque and Jousse in "Cinema and Its Ghosts" offer a surprising glimpse into what cinema meant to the philosopher, into what was *his* cinema. Here readers encounter the self-portrait of the scholar as a "pathological"

cinephile for whom moviegoing afforded him an erotic initiation, an "uneducated escape, the right to wildness," and "a hidden, secret, avid, gluttonous joy—in other words an infantile pleasure."[19] Whether as a sedentary child in the Vox, Caméo, Midi-Minuit, and Olympia cinemas in the suburbs of El Biar, Algeria, as an anxious young student at the Le Champo on the rue des Écoles in Paris's Latin Quarter, or as an internationally renowned philosopher sneaking off to the unnamed multiplexes of New York and Laguna Beach, Derrida insists that his interest in cinema is squarely with its popular forms.[20] Cinema, for him, must be a mass medium. He describes his moviegoing as an experience of absence, aporias, and repression that leaves no trace in him—"I have not the least memory for cinema"—and yet produces a phantom cinema, "virtually recorded," in such a manner that at the cinema he has "forgotten nothing" even if he cannot quite recall it.[21] Unremembered and unforgotten, Derrida's experiences at the movies evoke a cinema haunted by a virtual archive of screen memories. Cinema and its ghosts.

Derrida for Cinema

Even as Derrida modestly resists a formal theoretical discourse on the cinema in his interview with *Cahiers du cinéma,* he introduces in the conditional tense—"If I were to write about film"[22]—a set of terms, concepts, and figures for a theory of cinema to come. These include spectrality, amnesia, mourning, grafts, anacoluthon (interruption and rupture), technicity, credit, and belief. Together they form a constellation of ideas about film and cinema that we may provisionally develop here under the heading "cinematograft," to speak of the specificity of the haunted technics and the graphic/grafted writing and new systems of belief, credit, and speculation that the cinema and its thinking together perform.

Media historians and theorists are well aware that ghosts have long been a primal element of the earliest experiences with photography, film, and their conceptualization: spirit photographers such as William Mumler, inventors such as Thomas Edison, and critics and theorists such as Maxim Gorky, Otto Rank, Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, André Bazin, Roland Barthes, and more recently Jeffrey Sconce, Karen Beckman, Tom Gunning, Bliss Lim, Stefan Andriopoulos, and Murray Leeder, to name but a few, have all given serious consideration to the phantoms haunting technical reproducibility and optical media.[23] Derrida's writings contribute to this tradition, and he returns to the question

of ghosts again and again, and ghosts, for their part, repeatedly emerge from his thought. Regarding the spectral nature of photographic media in "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," Derrida writes of ghosts as "the concept of the other in the same."[24] Ghosts manifest forms of inassimilable difference that stir and disturb homogenous conceptions of space, time, and identity or impregnable distinctions between life and death, perception and hallucination, presence and absence, self and other. The haunting of photographic media is not an abstract concept or simply a rhetorical trope or metaphor (it can be those, but it is always more), nor is it a species that can be generalized or reduced to a categorical, singular "the ghost"—something Derrida critiques with respect to the violence and impossibility of saying "the animal" but does not always follow in his discussion of specters.[25] All the same, Derrida's ghosts bear traces of singularity and historical specificity. They have names such as Pascale Ogier and Jacques Derrida and can even speak in the first person (a voice already indicative of a series and even a chorus of voices), as a spectral Derrida proclaims in *Ghost Dance:* "Here, the ghost is me." But, at once a "who" and a "what," a "here" and an "elsewhere," the ghost's singularity *as* specificity or locality is unmoored and out of joint. Haunting is a non-self-identical experience of being and time that, for Derrida, is always already at work.

Derrida speaks of two registers or layers of spectrality in his interview with *Cahiers du cinéma.* The first is the "elementary spectrality" rooted in the ontogenetic aspects of the cinematic apparatus and its photographic base.[26] All cinematic impressions are by their very "nature" spectral. From the processes of inscription and storage that preserve luminous traces of the bodies and decisive moments that pass before the camera's lens to their temporally displaced reanimation and representation at the scene of projection, cinema generates a series of ghosts and spectral relations. The second register or layer issues from the "staged" or fictional spectrality of an image's content, be it a supernatural narrative or a reference to specters of history, such as the victims of state repression and the martyrs of revolutionary struggles.[27] Derrida admits that this interplay of spectral registers, these "'grafts' of spectrality," which multiply beyond the first two (there is always another graft, another within the one), would be what interested him, *were he a film theorist.*[28] Through methods of splicing, superimposition, juxtaposition, cuts, and sutures, these cinematografts, this form of ghost writing, produce the phantom body of the completed and projected film, which Derrida also refers to as a ghost for its absent-presence onscreen and for its manners of haunting spectators through its séances.

The cinematograft may designate not only the heterogeneous structure of the cinematic text but also the way that cinematic experiences rework conceptions of authorship, ownership, and the integrity of the subject as a series of parts and departures, comings and goings whose primary integrity is the spectral trace. The passage into and through cinema in fact clarifies or adds new dimension to key concepts of Derrida's thinking, such as the manner in which photographic inscription and the work of montage effect a notion of the trace. In a discussion accompanying a screening of *D'ailleurs Derrida* at l'Institut National de L'Audiovisuel in June 2002, Derrida addresses the experience of watching himself onscreen, as a projection, and the narcissistic pleasures, little wounds, and uncanny sensations he experiences when confronted with images, words, and ideas that are and are not his, that do not belong to him alone, and that draw out the status of the trace as a threshold:

> As for me, I can die at any moment, but the trace remains there. The cut is there. It is a part of me that is cut from me and that thus parts from me in both senses of the term: it proceeds, it emanates from me, but does so by separating, by cutting, by detaching from me [*elle procède, elle émane de moi mais en même temps en se séparant, en se coupant, en se détachant de moi*]. And so this part of me, I gain it, I recover it narcissistically, but I lose it at the same time. . . . As I said at some point in the film, I love things that have no need for me, the traces that part from me. And that is the definition of the trace.[29]

The cinematic image is a space of both loss and recovery, of parts and part-objects that occasion partings and departures from the self. One may hear in Derrida's "this part of me" [*cette part de moi*] a simultaneous parting, slicing, and separation (the third-person singular of *partir* is also *part*), a point of departure from the self that the filmic traces in movies make possible. Whereas Roland Barthes frets at the experience of "truly becoming a specter" when posing before the camera, Derrida affirms photographic media's spectral embrace for its losses and gains, its wounds and supplements: the sites of splicing and grafts.[30]

Although it lies beyond the scope of this introduction, we might note here that this brief passage on what we call the cinematograft offers possible grounds for a response to a series of theoretical debates that emerged in the late 1960s through the 1970s in the journals *Cahiers du cinéma, Cinéthique,* and *Screen* and continue to haunt film theory. We are thinking in particular of the lines of inquiry concerning the basic effects of the cinematic apparatus, its subject effects, and theories to identification, including the

consequent and important challenges of the presumed universal conditions of cinema and its idealized spectator by feminist scholars, critical race theorists, and historians of media technology such as Laura Mulvey, Manthia Diawara, and Anne Friedberg. Derrida's evocation of the grafted subject in cinema, consisting of both self and others, divided and supplemented by the technics of cinema in its multiple iterations, offers an approach that renegotiates both the fundamental relationships and the entanglements of apparatus and subject.

Cinema is a speculative instrument as much as it is an instrument of speculation. When Pascale Ogier asks Derrida in *Ghost Dance* "Do you *believe* in ghosts?" she animates a conversation and inquiry into the suspension of disbelief (a concept that the authors of this issue return to at several junctions) and of the emergence of new forms of belief, credit, investment, and returns put into play by cinema and its ghosts. Derrida reanimates this conversation early in his interview with de Baecque and Jousse when he notes that if he were to write about film, he would examine its "mode and system of *belief*."[31] What interests Derrida about cinema's ghost belief is the way in which spectators temporarily and incompletely invest in images, stories, and icons while also accepting their production and staging. This investment, a "believing without believing," unifies for Derrida the psychical interior of emotion and the global marketplace in ways "that no other art can equal."[32] Derrida reminds us that the "success" of cinema's ghosts is the credit that they automatically elicit, and it is this automaticity of belief and faith in the spectral, in something non-present, that provides the basis for film's *mondialisation:* its duplication (not only film reels but also, we might add, generic codes, clichés, and stars), distribution, and massive financial stakes—the gains and losses, risks and returns—and art of speculation that constitute commercial cinema as a worldwide industry and economic activity. To think cinema, to understand its functioning in the world and as a world, "one has to think the ghost together with capital, the latter being itself a spectral thing."[33] Taken a step further or, more specifically, reversing the order of this phrasing, one must also look to the ghosts of cinema to understand the general abstraction of capital, which also relies on the satisfaction of certain psychical drives and impulses through spectral and speculative returns. The ethicopolitical and cinematic knot (another cinematograft, this time "ideological") in Derrida's corpus is woven through a circuit of phantoms, a "*fantômachie* (a battle or clash of ghosts or phantoms), if you wish," as he tells it to Ogier in *Ghost Dance.*

A spectral circuit or network would also characterize the impact of Derrida's thought within film and media studies. As soon as one risks an overview of the literature where scholars have engaged Derrida and deconstruction in addressing problems of film and media theory and questions of cinema, examples begin to proliferate like the ghosts and doubles in Freud's "Uncanny." An inventive group of scholars have addressed questions of cinematic writing, the language of film, and theories of representation, mimesis, and form, including Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, Peter Brunette and David Wills, Tom Conley, and Miriam Hansen (who places the German tradition of critical theory into conversation with Derrida while challenging Derridean film theorists to better account for and historicize the institutional conditions of cinema's hieroglyphic inscriptions and mass media contexts).[34] Akira Mizuta Lippit's *Electric Animal, Atomic Light (Shadow Optics),* and *Ex-Cinema: From a Theory of Experimental Film and Video* maintain a conversation with Derrida on topics including the confluence of spectrality, animality, and technics; visuality and avisuality; and the thresholds of cinema as an experimental form.[35] The thinking together of animals and cinema by Donna Haraway, Jennifer Fay, Raymond Bellour, and Anat Pick engage and critically extend Derrida's speculations on animal life, vulnerability, and singularity.[36] Nicholas Royle, Louis-Georges Schwartz, and Michael Bachmann have explored the uncanny qualities of cinema and its relation to spectrality, life, and sincerity.[37] D. N. Rodowick, Eugenie Brinkema, and many of the participants of the World Picture Conferences have engaged with Derrida on questions of philosophy, form, politics, and cinematic media.[38] Scholars working at the threshold of theory and historiography, such as Mary Ann Doane and Bliss Lim, have critically engaged Derrida in their theorization and historicization of the relationships of cinema to contingency, modernity, indexicality, the event, the archive, and temporal critique and its relationship to anticolonial thought.[39] At the same time, the impact of deconstruction on the field remains largely implicit, tactical, and rarely called by name—as if its ghost finds no *proper* place, even within the margins of reading and analysis.

Cinema for Derrida

This is the area least touched on in the pages that follow and is perhaps the horizon of this project that remains most open. Directly and indirectly, the work of deconstruction has inspired and informed three generations of scholars in careful protocols

of innovative reading, writing, research, and thinking. Perhaps most exciting and surprising in this context are the possibilities of engagement between film and media studies and deconstruction where one might least expect Derrida to haunt: work on history and historiography. In this respect, the critique of ahistoricism and idealism aimed, sometimes with good reason, at the small field of Derridean film theory (such as by Hansen) no longer holds as much weight. The so-called returns to classical film theory that have energized many film scholars in the past decade have certainly benefited from a style of deconstructive engagement that, even when not invoking Derrida's name in direct citation, has come to carefully rethink and reengage with texts, phenomena, and lines of thought once considered fully accounted for and exhaustively read.[40] Within film and media studies, a number of scholars working at the intersections of historiography and theory have begun rereading and reanimating the works of such figures as André Bazin, Sergei Eisenstein, Jean Epstein, and Siegfried Kracauer, both on their own terms and with an interest in the complex afterlives and untimeliness of these corpuses of thought.[41] The protocols of deconstruction and critical historiography frequently complement and extend each other, as can be seen at play in the refusal of scholars to reduce or reify the thought of certain restless and wide-ranging thinkers from the first two generations of film criticism and theory, whose work, on further inspection, reveals itself to be anything but homogenous, rigidly systematic, or naive.

One finds in André Bazin's "Ontology of the Photographic Image," to take one example, a forceful examination of precisely the issues Derrida recapitulates in his comments on film: an account of photographic media that addresses its implications with psychoanalysis, ghosts, and a new system of belief, a new credo, that emerges from its ontogenetic and profoundly *hauntological* process of capturing and re-presenting traces of the world. Suddenly very different theories of ontology and cinematic realism emerge that are not based on presumptions of essence preceding existence or simple one-to-one correspondences between image and world. To contemporary eyes, all of this can be seen as present in Bazin's writing. And yet *this* Bazin, this reading that counters his supposed naïveté, has developed like a photograph and only recently come to fuller light. Perhaps it required a certain deconstructive rigor to take seriously such forces and read against a presumed stasis of thought.[42] One can and should also reverse this scenario and ask how deconstruction would have been different, and how it can *still be* different, if it read film theory and took seriously the challenges of cinematic media. As a final question, admittedly unanswered in

what follows, it is worth asking what the study and theorization of cinema and the cinematic offers deconstruction.

More than simply initiating an opening of cinema and film and media studies to Derrida's thought, "Cinema and Its Ghosts" shows us that cinema has always, already been in the heart of deconstructive thought. Despite its overt nonappearance in the form of a written text, the specter seems indissociable from an idea or version of cinema, and *this* cinema is at play in the thinking together of deconstruction. Speaking of cinema's specific affinity with ghosts, Derrida says: "This solitude in the face of the ghost is a major test of the cinematic experience. This experience was anticipated, dreamed of, hoped for by other arts, literature, painting, theater, poetry, philosophy, well before the technical invention of cinema. Let's say that cinema needed to be invented to fulfill a certain desire for relation to ghosts. The dream preceded the invention."[43] With these words Derrida not only draws an intriguing parallel with Andrè Bazin's 1946 evocation of cinema's idealist history as progressing toward its own founding fantasy in "The Myth of Total Cinema" but also proposes a link between what he thinks cinema accomplishes and what he says deconstruction pursues in *Specters of Marx* and other publications more or less "about" the specter: a desire and responsibility to allow the ghost to come back and to receive it as a singularity.[44] It seems plausible too that deconstruction also owes its "invention" to this desire of relating to ghosts, to responding as responsibly as possible to their calls, to invoking the work of a séance and refusing to exorcise these spirits. This work of haunting is still to be done, but it begins by taking up the responsibility to cinema and its ghosts, to which Derrida and Ogier, at the end of their exchange, pledge a hearty double affirmation ("yes, yes") to the past and to what comes:

> DERRIDA: I do not know whether I believe in ghosts or not, but I say "long live ghosts"! And you, do you believe in ghosts?
> OGIER: *Yes,* certainly. *Yes,* absolutely. Now, absolutely.

Acknowledgments

Notes

The epigraph superimposes two sources: the first line is from Andrew Payne and Mark Lewis's interview of Jacques Derrida in "The Ghost Dance," *Public* 2 (1989): 61 (translation modified), and the second line is from Derrida's improvisation in the film *Ghost Dance* (1983, directed by Ken McMullen).

1. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, The Work of Mourning, and the New International,* translated by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 10.

2. Jacques Derrida, "Aletheia," translated by Pleshette DeArmitt and Kas Saghafi, *Oxford Literary Review* 32, no. 2 (2010): 177; Antoine de Baecque and Thierry Jousse, "Cinema and Its Ghosts: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," translated by Peggy Kamuf, *Discourse* 37, nos. 1–2 (2015): 26, originally published as Antoine de Baecque and Thierry Jousse, "Le Cinéma et ses fantômes," *Cahiers du cinéma* 556 (2001): 74–85. On technical media's spectral structure, see Derrida, "The Ghost Dance," 61.

3. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 9. The French version of this text appeared in 1967.

4. Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," translated by Jeffrey Mehlman, *Yale French Studies,* no. 48, *French Freud: Structural Studies in Psychoanalysis* (1972): 74–117; Derrida, *The Truth in Painting,* translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Derrida, "The Deaths of Roland Barthes" (1981), in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other,* Vol. 1, edited by Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, 264–98 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Derrida, *Copy, Signature, Archive: A Conversation on Photography,* edited by Gerhard Richter, translated by Jeff Fort (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Derrida, "Aletheia"; Derrida, *Athens, Still Remains,* translated by Pascale-Ann Brault and Michael Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010); Derrida, "Videor," in *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices,* edited by Michael Renov and Erika Suderburg, translated by Peggy Kamuf, 73–77 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television,* translated by Jennifer Bajorek (Malden, MA: Polity, 2002); Derrida and Safaa Fathy, *Tourner les mot: Au bord d'un film* (Paris: Éditions Galilée/Arte Éditions, 2000); Derrida, "Trace et archive, image et art" (2002), in *Penser à ne pas voir: Écrits sur les art du visible, 1979–2004,* edited by Ginette Michaud, Joana Masó, and Javier Bassas, 79–127 (Paris: La Différence, 2013); Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,* translated by Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

5. In a conversation at the Institut National de L'Audiovisuel held on June 25, 2002, Derrida also mentions a never realized film he dreamed up with Nourit Aviv and Samuel Weber in which the trio would travel to various "realms of memory" from Derrida's childhood and improvise a set of political commentaries on Algeria. See Derrida, "Trace et archive."

6. De Baecque and Jousse, "Cinema and Its Ghosts," 22.

7. Ibid., 23.

8. Derrida, *Specters of Marx,* xix, 224n5.

9. Photographic supplements are intimately entangled with haunting and the constellation of ideas related to specters, spectrality, and hauntology that become more pronounced in Derrida's later work. In his discussion of Roland Barthes's *Camera*

Lucida Derrida writes of the "ghostly power of the supplement" as an "unlocatable site that gives rise to the *specter.*" Derrida, "The Deaths of Roland Barthes" (1981), in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other,* Vol. 1, edited by Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 271.

10. See the entries for "séance" in *Le Grand Robert de la langue française* and the *Oxford English Dictionary.* The *Oxford English Dictionary* places the initial use of "séance" in a spiritualist context to 1845. *Le Grand Robert* takes its French example, contemporaneous with the emergence of film, from the preface to Joris-Karl Huysmans's *Là-bas* (1891).

11. De Baecque and Jousse, "Cinema and Its Ghosts," 27.

12. Derrida and Stiegler, *Echographies of Television,* 118; Colin N. Bennett, *Handbook of Kinematography: The History, Theory, and Practice of Motion Photography and Projection* (London: E. T. Heron and Kinematograph Weekly, 1911), 124. For more on Bennett and early filmic and cinematic ghosts, see James Leo Cahill, "How It Feels to Be Run Over: Early Film Accidents," *Discourse* 30, no. 3 (2008): 289–316.

13. De Baecque and Jousse, "Cinema and Its Ghosts," 26.

14. Georges Bataille, "The Use Value of D. A. F. de Sade (an Open Letter to My Current Comrades)," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–39,* edited with an introduction by Allan Stoekl, translated by Allan Stoekl with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 91–102.

15. André Bazin, "Ontologie de l'image photographique," in *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma,* vol. 1: *Ontologie et Langage* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958), 18; Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *What Is Cinema?,* translated by Timothy Barnard (Montreal: Caboose, 2009), 10. Barnard translates this line as "a really existing hallucination," but "a true hallucination" retains Bazin's allusion to the surrealist's appropriation of Hippolyte Taine's formulation of perception in *De l'Intelligence* (1870).

16. Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 111.

17. Peggy Kamuf, "Double Features: An Interview with Samuel Weber," *Discourse* 37, nos. 1–2 (2015): 157 (our emphasis).

18. Hélène Cixous, "The Keys To: Jacques Derrida as Prometheus Unbound," translated by Peggy Kamuf, *Discourse* 30, nos. 1–2 (2008): 71–122. The question of Derrida's name is also raised when the film crew visits his childhood home in *D'ailleurs Derrida,* where a poster from *The Kid* clearly hangs in the parlor. For more on *D'ailleurs Derrida* and Derrida's name, see Peggy Kamuf, *To Follow: The Wake of Jacques Derrida* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

19. De Baecque and Jousse, "Cinema and Its Ghosts," 23–25.

20. Ibid., 24–25.

21. Ibid., 23.

22. Ibid., 27.

23. See Clément Chéroux et al., *The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); Louis Kaplan, *The Strange Case of William Mumler, Spirit Photographer* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Octave Uzanne, "Sensations d'Amérique: Une Visite Chez Edison," *Le Figaro,* May 8, 1893, 1; Maxim Gorky, "Maxim Gorky on the Lumière Programme, 1896," in Jay Leyda,

Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film, 407–9 (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960); Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study,* translated and edited by Harry Tucker Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971); Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography (1927)," in *The Past's Threshold: Essays on Photography,* edited by Philippe Despoix and Maria Zinfert, 27–44 (Zurich and Berlin: Diaphanes, 2014); Walter Benjamin, "A Little History of Photography" (1931), in *Select Writings,* Vol. 2, edited by Michael Jennings et al., 507–30 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2005); Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image"; Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* translated by Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981); Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Karen Beckman, *Vanishing Women: Magic, Film, and Feminism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Tom Gunning, "To Scan a Ghost: The Ontology of Mediated Vision," *Grey Room* 26 (2007): 94–127; Bliss Lim, *Translating Time: Cinema, the Fantastic, and Temporal Critique* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Stefan Andriopoulos, *Ghostly Apparitions: German Idealism, the Gothic Novel, and Optical Media* (New York: Zone, 2013); Murray Leeder, ed., *Cinematic Ghosts: Haunting and Spectrality from Silent Cinema to the Digital Era* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[24.] Derrida, "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," 272.

[25.] Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," translated by David Wills, *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 2 (2002): 369–418.

[26.] De Baecque and Jousse, "Cinema and Its Ghosts," 27.

[27.] Ibid.

[28.] Ibid.

[29.] Derrida, "Trace et archive," 105 (our translation).

[30.] Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* 14.

[31.] De Baecque and Jousse, "Cinema and Its Ghosts," 27.

[32.] Ibid., 27–28.

[33.] Ibid., 28.

[34.] Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, "The Graphic in Filmic Writing: *À bout de souffle* or the Erratic Alphabet," *Enclitic* 5, no. 2/6, no. 1 (1982): 147–61; Peter Brunette and David Wills, *Screen/Play: Derrida and Film Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); Tom Conley, *Film Hieroglyphs* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Miriam Hansen, "Mass Culture as Hieroglyphic Writing: Adorno, Derrida, Kracauer," *New German Critique* 56, special issue on Theodor W. Adorno (1992): 43–73.

[35.] Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Lippit, *Atomic Light;* Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Ex-Cinema: From a Theory of Experimental Film and Video* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[36.] Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Jennifer Fay, "Seeing/Loving Animals: André Bazin's Posthumanism," *Journal of Visual Culture* 7, no. 1 (2008): 41–64; Raymond Bellour, *Le Corps du cinéma: Hypnoses, émotions, animalités* (Paris: P.O.L., 2009); Anat Pick, *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

[37.] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2003);

Louis-Georges Schwartz, "Introduction to the ~~Meaning~~ of 'Life,'" *Discourse* 28, nos. 2–3 (2006): 7–27; Louis-Georges Schwartz, "Deconstruction avant la lettre: Jacques Derrida before André Bazin," in *Opening Bazin: Postwar Film Theory and Its Afterlife,* edited by Dudley Andrew with Hervé Joubert-Laurencin (New York: Oxford, 2011), 95–103; Michael Bachmann, "Derrida on Film: Staging Spectral Sincerity," in *The Rhetoric of Sincerity,* edited by Ernst van Alphen, Mieke Bal, and Carel Smith (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 214–29.

[38.] D. N. Rodowick, "The Figure and the Text," *Diacritics* 15, no. 1 (1985): 34–50; Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

[39.] Mary Anne Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge Harvard University Press, 2002); Lim, *Translating Time.*

[40.] See Dudley Andrew, Anton Kaes, Sarah Keller, Stuart Liebman, Annette Michelson, and Malcolm Turvey, "Roundtable on the Return to Classical Film Theory," *October* 148 (2014): 5–26.

[41.] See, for example, Miriam Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Dudley Andrew with Hervé Joubert-Laurencin, eds., *Opening Bazin: Postwar Film Theory and Its Afterlife* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Sarah Keller and Jason N. Paul, eds., *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012); Hervé Joubert-Laurencin, *Le Sommeil Paradoxale: Écrits Sur André Bazin* (Paris: Éditions de l'Oeil, 2014); and Naoum Kleinman and Antonio Somaini, eds., *Notes pour une histoire générale du cinéma* (Paris: AFRHC, 2014).

[42.] It is unclear if Derrida was directly familiar with Bazin's ontology essay, he does cite it at the outset of his February 23, 2003, session of his seminar "The Beast and the Sovereign" through his reading of a letter written to him by Tim Bahti on the question of Veronica, the icon, the index, and the trace. Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign,* Vol. 2, translated by Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 172.

[43.] De Baecque and Jousse, "Cinema and Its Ghosts," 29.

[44.] André Bazin, "The Myth of Total Cinema," in *What Is Cinema?,* 13–20.