

WORKING WITH THE APARTHEID ARCHIVE: OR, OF WITNESS AND TESTIMONY

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Abstract.

Working with the apartheid archive demands a spectral scholarship – an engagement with the dead and the past, and the unknown of a future-to-be. This “hauntology” poses challenges unlike those of a traditional, evidentiary ontology and epistemology. Indeed, to the extent that it is an ethical metaphysics, as proposed by Emmanuel Levinas, that motivates all knowing, including that of the self and psyche, the manner of the researcher’s response is in the order of witnessing and testimony. As particular mode of response, the witness who testifies sees his or her task less in terms of generating totalising thematic knowledge, than in tracing the limits of knowledge in the experience of the other.

Key words: *Apartheid Archive Project, hauntology, witnessing, testimony, Levinas, Derrida, apartheid, ghosts*

*“We have only a little time to please the living,
But all eternity to love the dead”
(Antigone, Sophocles, 1947[1986])*

The Apartheid Archive Project (AAP) presents its being and its task, its faith and its creed, around soliciting “[...] experiences of racism of (particularly ‘ordinary’) South Africans under the old apartheid order [...]” because “[...] traumatic experiences from the past will constantly attempt to re-inscribe themselves (often in masked form) in the present, if they are not acknowledged, interrogated and addressed” (Apartheid Archive Project [AAP], 2010). I have argued elsewhere (Laubscher, 2010) that this directive charges nothing less than an archontic guardianship of the archive, a keeping watch over memory as memorial (which is to keep the [honorific] past, to keep it safe) as well as reminder (which is to prevent the [traumatic] past from returning). I have also argued that this guardianship balances on the political authority and organisation of a material substrate, or address (inclusive of *who* resides there), on the one hand, and the hermeneutic privilege to interpret the archive (which is also to mark *what* is archived,

and *how*), on the other.

This article revisits much of that earlier territory (Laubscher, 2010), but hopefully in the manner of an/other beginning, of a beginning *again* that is altogether different, even as it is familiar because it *reminisces* and *remembers*. Hence, as I *recapitulate* an earlier argument of a spectral and infinite ethical responsibility to, and from, the other in the section below, I do so by somewhat different terms and figures than before, most notably that of the ghost and the spectre of an “*hauntology*”. Hereafter, I propose that the experiential and actionable manner of the “*hauntological*” response is in the order of the witness and testimony.

HAUNTOLOGY AND THE HAUNTED ARCHIVE.

Introduced by Jacques Derrida (1994), hauntology is a near homophone of ontology, in his native French – a devilishly clever performance of the very argument that the traditional Western ontological stance of reason and presence is always and already haunted by absence and the infinite. Foregoing expository detail here as to Derrida’s rather complex and nuanced critique of Western ontology and epistemology, suffice to say that our scholarship, by that argument, would do well by turning away from the violence of a totalising knowledge and the delusion of a timeless and essential understanding fully present to itself. Instead, the scholar “of the future” (Derrida, 1994: 176) would cultivate a knowing that exceeds knowledge, as it were, such that his or her “research” is about more than a learned analysis of archived “experiences from the past” (AAP, 2010), but also about meeting the dead, about facing (up to) “[...] ghosts and apparitions [...] who demand an address from us [...] and to whom and for whom we are to respond” (Laubscher, 2010: 375). Simply put, our scholarship has to be about ghosts (even be *ghostly*) because the archive is about ghosts.

What is it then, to characterise the archive as haunted and spectral? Quite apparently, the people whose stories comprise the archive are absent, at least in the sense of a certain materiality and tangible presence. That is to say, they are unavailable in one or all of four ways, at least: firstly, they are not there now, even as some of them once were, face to face, when they shared their stories with the researchers or the students and interviewers who collected a portion of the narratives in the archive. Secondly, they are not there or here because we never met them, face to face, but come to imagine them through the stories collected by other researchers or submitted via the website (which a great number of people have done *anonymously*, adding another layer of remove). Thirdly, they are absent because they are dead – either because they have died since telling their stories, or because they were conjured up in memory and referenced by the living, calling from some elsewhere, as it were, with their stories. Fourthly, in what is the absence of another kind of death, the archive teems with the nameless figures and faces of the casual acquaintance here, or the fleeting and transitory accident there, where lives intersected and crossed in an ephemeral historicity that belies their lasting demand for witness in the stories that summon them, still. There is even yet another absence and death: by the archive’s record of certain narratives, it fixes and *rescues* some, affords them a public space and presence, but always at the cost of others, alongside the silence of countless others whose stories are not noted there, for any number of reasons.

Hence, as it is “[...] neither present nor absent ‘in the flesh’, neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met” (Derrida, 1995a: 85),

the archive is a spectral place, where stories and experiences reach from a no-place, from memory, and absence. This is also to say, of course, that *apartheid* (as the manner of a certain kind of relation) reaches from a place and time that was and is no longer, from an absence (i.e. the incarnation of racism, in the present, even if one attributes it to apartheid's patronage and legacy, is not apartheid, *per se*). The archon, therefore, inasmuch as s/he solicits, *re-cords*, *re-calls*, *re-inscribes*, *re-surrects*, and otherwise conjures the *re-* of memory in *re-remembrance*, deals with death and apostrophises someone or something that is not there. Thoroughly inhabited by death, loss, and absence at the root, and for its very being, given as it is in the aporetic of memory inhabited by forgetting from the beginning (Derrida, 1995a), the archive attempts to keep alive in the face of death, and is always about a conjuring, about traffic with ghosts and apparitions.

But what is it to conjure the dead? What is it to face the faces of those ghosts that haunt the archive? Another form of the question asks why would the dead return? Why would the ghost show itself, either by itself or by our conjuration, which may or may not amount to the same instance? A popular and commonsense response to the question of the dead's return is because they have unfinished business, because their affairs are not complete or in order: something needs to be righted, corrected, completed, or otherwise put in order in this, the land of the living, before they can return, permanently, to the realm of the dead. This is as much the logic of Hamlet's wraith, as it was of those countless ghosts whom the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) aimed to lay to rest, finally. Albeit less explicit than the TRC, the AAP, as well, suggests a laying to rest: that is, whereas extraordinary stories of apartheid have been told, ordinary stories have not to the extent that needs be, and by doing so the ghosts of everyman can finally be heard such that those stories too, can be noted and acknowledged, such that wrongs can be righted in remembrance, and injustice corrected in the historical redemption of time and the testamentary.

There is another reason for the dead's return, allied to the preceding sense of having been wronged, namely that they have not been properly buried (Davis, 2007). The TRC clearly responded to this ghostly charge for a knowledge of the grave, for a knowledge of the bones, such that one could mourn, finally bury the dead, and stop their haunting unease. We recall Antigone, who weeps not only for her father, Oedipus, but also because she does not have a place, a body, or a tomb where, or over whom, she can shed her tears. She pleads with Theseus, "only to see our father's grave", in order for her mourning to have an address, a place for her to lay the dead to rest. Again, while it is not as pronounced a response as the TRC's, the Apartheid Archive Project reasons thus as well. Is the notion that apartheid may return, and come to haunt our future lest we attend to its past, and understand it properly, not a form of wanting to know where it is buried, such that we can finally bury it, such that we can bury it finally?

In these instances above, our conflicted relationship with the dead is clearly noted. We want to remember and we want to keep the dead in remembrance, but we also want to keep the realms of the living and the dead separate. We want to have a tomb, and a place to mourn at – a grave, museum, or a monument – but we are clear too that that world is separate from ours, and that is the way it should be. Whether we mourn in loving remembrance, or keep exorcising watch, the ghost has to die twice for it to settle in its world; the paradox of "*successful*" mourning is, after all, that one forgets, while the very readiness to kill again, in exorcism, is to remember the first death.

But there is yet another way to put something right. The ghost may return either to obtain a second chance for itself, or to grant a second chance to the living. That is, to go through the event or the moment again, and not to make the mistake again – or to make it again. Are the maxims of *history repeating itself* on the one hand, and *learning from history* such that it *does not* repeat itself, on the other, not precisely manifestations of the dead's return to grant or demand another chance? We may consequently avoid the mistake the second time around, having learned our lesson, *or* we may not, and repeat the error of our earlier ways. When Primo Levi says, "We must be listened to [...]. It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say" (Levi, 1988: 199), the Holocaust is as possible in some future as it is incomprehensible in some past. For the AAP, the researcher's charge and responsibility is explicit and clear: to remember and understand by means of these stories of the archive in order not to make the mistakes of the past again. The gift of the archive is precisely that those ghosts caution, by their experiences and suffering, against making the apartheid-mistake again. By the living's response, now, we are given another chance, and in action, we redeem the dead by giving *them* a second chance – their lives and struggle against apartheid were not in vain, as the petty resistance and the grand, both, are redeemed in our heeding them. Again, though, having obtained this redemptive or damning second chance, the ghost leaves, and the realms of the dead and the living attain to their absolute separateness as the order of things.

Though they deal with ghosts and the dead, I maintain that the responses above do not proceed from hauntology as much as it does ontology: a hauntological academics is not about expelling or excommunicating the ghost as much as it is about inviting it, speaking to it, of it, and even for it. This is so, firstly, because there are other ways in which the dead may return, other than the ones listed above.

The dead may return, for example, because the living cannot be fully alive without the dead. Here, life and death are inextricably bound and each haunt and obsess the other with less clear boundaries than we would like to believe. The one traces the other, and we visit more seamlessly than is apparent. Secondly, the dead may return to tell us what no human, what no living human, could know (Davis, 2007). That is, they return to bring us understanding and knowledge – knowledge and understanding that is only available by their relay. This does not mean, though, that we can know the ghost itself. Indeed, it is fundamentally beyond understanding, and to attempt a description of the ghost's essence, or its truth as fundamental and law, is to turn the dead into an object, is again to practise ontology, and to operate under the illusion of the ghost speaking when, in fact, it is but the false agency of ventriloquy or prosopopoeia. It is to kill the dead again. Inasmuch as they bring a knowledge and understanding that only they can bring, it is not about any content, not about finally divulging this or that secret, as much as it is about bringing the very secret of the secret, which is secrecy itself, "[...] an essential unknowing which underlies and may undermine what we think we know" (Davis, 2007: 11). As such, and even as the ghost and the dead do not belong to the order of knowledge, at least a certain kind of knowledge, it opens up the order of possibility, of what is new and not yet heard; it is "[...] the structural openness or address directed towards the living by the voices of the past or the not-yet formulated possibilities of the future" (Davis, 2007: 13).

Thus is opened up the very challenge of the project: to keep and hold memories of apartheid in such an understanding light that it does not happen again. But this movement is not of knowledge as much as it is of conjuring, or at least a knowledge of conjuring, of welcoming the spectre which is also to be open to the ghost. To the extent that it keeps a past, and keeps a past at bay, it guards a future, wagers a future, and invites the spectre of possibility. "Memory is mourning to the extent that memory is promise" (Laubscher, 2010: 377). To allow the living present to be visited by the dead, by the ghosts of the past as well as the spectres of the not-yet, is then to acknowledge that the present is fissured, haunted by a past and a future, never present to itself. To keep the past, therefore, is to break with it, to invent it, to re-launch it in order to keep it alive in the coming of a future that is not-yet. "Remembrance restores possibility to the past, making what happened incomplete and completing what never was. Remembrance is neither what happened nor what did not happen but, rather, their potentialization, their becoming possible once again" (Agamben, 1999a: 267).

Keeping the archive is to say yes to a heritage not of our choosing, but by our election to responsibility. To show fidelity to that dead whom I have not chosen, but to whom and which I have been elected, is to conjure a spectral future by keeping the archive in the form of a promise and a pledge. It is to welcome the ghost and the spectre in a decision, an action, a wager, that opens a future. An exorbitant scholarship is demanded of this "'scholar' of the future, the 'intellectual' of tomorrow" [who learns] "from the ghost" (Derrida, 1994: 176), an ex-orbit-ance in its offering of that "[...] which is outside the orbit, the orb (eye) [...] of Western philosophy" (Eagleton, 2004: 281).

Yet, inasmuch as the hauntological departure point is as clear ("*they are always there, spectres, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet*" [Derrida, 1994: 176]) as the scholarly imperative (to learn from the ghost "[...] how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech" [Derrida, 1994: 176]), how does one speak to, of, or for the dead?

SPEAKING TO THE DEAD.

The title heading assumes a listening – an opening for the appearance of the ghost, or a conjuring receptivity, that is already a listening. Even so however, speaking is not settled, and the section title strains, for example, under the power of a preposition. Inasmuch as preposition, after all, proposes a relation between elements, it ought to matter whether one speaks, *to*, *of*, or *for* the dead. Especially as researcher and archon, as researcher-archon, sensitive to the dead of the past, and the phantom of the future, what is the mode of my address?

That most famous ghost of the Danish ramparts provides some preliminary clues. We know that Horatio, the scholar, does not believe in the ghost at first: "Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy, and will not let belief take hold of him" (Shakespeare, 2002, 32-33). Yet, it is also *as scholar* that he is charged to investigate, and by that learned pedigree, to explain the ghost to Bernardo and Marcellus. When he ultimately sees the ghost, Horatio is filled with "fear and wonder", yet when he addresses the ghost, he orders and commands it: "[...] I charge thee speak" (ibid: 62). In response, we recall that the ghost "stalks away", in spite of Horatio's continued instruction to "stay! Speak, Speak! I charge thee, speak" (ibid: 65). In fact, when it appears again, Horatio not only orders the ghost, but threatens it, leading Marcellus to note that "It is offended", and "we do it

wrong being so majestic/ to offer it the show of violence” (ibid: 166-167). The commoner may know more about ghosts than the scholar, after all. Finally, when the ghost appears again, this time to the threesome with Hamlet in tow, it singles him (Hamlet) out, beckoning him to follow: it is a singular (s)election which Hamlet cannot but obey. He must follow; his friends advise to the contrary; they even physically try to restrain him by wrestling him to the ground. But Hamlet *must* hear the ghost: “I am call’d”, he says and opens up speech with the ghost first by following the ghost, by entrusting, risking, willing to go who knows where. It is only then, upon risking and following, asking only “Where wilt thou lead me?” (ibid: 733), in the willing submission to the ghost’s knowing, that the ghost speaks, for the first time. It says, “Mark me” – listen to me, see me, heed me, note me, notice me.

Paul de Man (1984) also wondered about talking to the dead. For him, this talking to the ghost takes place in the terms of prosopopoeia, which renders it a fiction, an invention, irrespective of the reverential or sensitive manner with which we do so, as in the funeral oration, where we often ascribe words to the dead, and where we speak for the dead as if they were, themselves, speaking. Whereas it is not entirely the same, the living speaking for the dead in ventriloquism is an allied metaphor. The importance of de Man’s point, though, is that we create a fiction of agency; the words of the dead are provided by the living and there is no *real* exchange with the alterity of the dead.

Even when the direction of the metaphor is changed, as is so often the case in popular film and lore, and the ghost ventriloquises the living in possession, there is still no *real* exchange with alterity as the ghost takes over the living who become but a mouthpiece and tangible means for the spectral parasite. Here, as well, the ghost is not addressed in any understanding exchange or welcoming meeting of the worlds.

Even in mourning, where the dead is within us, and remain with us from our care for them, one could argue that this being-with-the-dead is not to coexist with the dead. To be sure, we may carry them around with us, remember their birthdays and put flowers on their graves – a memorialisation that keeps them within memory – but we know though, that this is an elegiac mourning, and that they are gone, they are not *really* with us. Anything otherwise would be a hallucinatory mourning, for which psychology and psychiatry is at the ready to offer its exorcising services. In fact, whereas we at least had *complicated bereavement* in the language of the DSM-IV and the clinical ward (as if there can be any other kind of bereavement, but complicated, and as if there is anything *normal* to its definitional counterpart, *normal mourning*), the new DSM-V, slated for publication in May 2013, seems set to remove even that *exception* by *allowing* two weeks for *normal* mourning (American Psychiatric Association, 2010), whereafter, should *symptoms* persist, one is eligible for *depression* and the cross, garlic and holy water of little pills – blue, pink and green.

But “how does one honour or mourn the dead if not by talking to them?” (Jacobus, 2007: 393). Perhaps we have directed our question to the wrong audience; perhaps, not unlike the case for Hamlet, the answer lies with the ghost, who will only speak once Hamlet has given himself in welcome, which is also to say, welcomed the ghost in hospitality. In his homage to Louis Marin, Derrida says that Louis “[...] is watching me and that is why, for him, I am here this evening. He is my law, the law, and I appear before him, before his word and his gaze” (Derrida, 2001: 199). The death of the other institutes my response and my responsibility; we are back to Levinas (1969, 1974) and

the ethical injunction as ground zero for all knowledge and action. The death of the other is my affair for the responsibility that accrues from it, and for the manner that the survivor, surviving the other's death, continues to be determined by his or her relationship with the dead. It is, we remind ourselves by way of Levinas, the other's death that matters more, more than my own, for the fact that it opens justice and love, which is "[...] the emotion over the death of the other. It is my welcoming the other, and not anxiety of the death awaiting me, that is the reference to death" (Levinas, 2000: 105). To speak to the dead, consequently, is also to speak to the self, to the responsibility of the self, the self, itself, given as it is by the other.

Moreover, if the ghost and the phantom, the dead and the not yet, pose an ethical command, to ask how to speak to the ghost is even less of the constative that describes or charts what is. One cannot calculate how to speak to the ghost beforehand for its appearance – even by conjuring – as surprise, as the unforeseeable happening that arrives like a seizure from on high (sur-prise, from *superprehendere*, to seize). If not the constative, then perhaps a performative, where the fact of speech, *that* we speak, or attempt to, answers the question in the wager of the response that does not quite know, but risks and promises – not altogether unlike the familiar example in linguistics and philosophy of the performative speech of the marriage ceremony. To say yes, *I do*, at the marriage altar is not mere speaking, is not description or knowledge, but constitutes the very event, produces the very event, in speaking.

But yet, and even so, is it not in the end, and after all, the living speaking? Is it not that the dead and the past without response, prosopopoeia and a pitying mourning all, in the end, the very end, all things said, point to something, even someone, that does not respond, that does not speak? We recall de Man's fictive prosopopoeia, but we also remember that this fiction takes the form of an address. Derrida takes this to mean that de Man addresses him, at the very moment of the memorial, as he (Derrida) speaks these words. de Man addresses himself to Derrida, and the other friends and survivors gathered to re-member; he (de Man) "[...] looks at us, describes and prescribes to us [...]" (Derrida, 1989:26), not unlike Marin, for whom a similar sentiment was expressed and referenced earlier, or Levinas, to whom Derrida addresses a haunting funeral oratory "[...] directly, straight on [...]" in the manner of a law, "[...] to address oneself directly to the other, and to speak for the other whom one loves and admires, before speaking of him" (Derrida, 1999: 2). To be sure, one speaks to the dead in the knowledge of a "without response", in the knowing sense that the dead "[...] no longer exists except *in us, between us*" (Derrida, 1989: 28), but it is precisely and paradoxically this very knowledge that now opens another knowledge, another knowing, that one's words is neither one's own, nor singularly theirs, but precisely in an in-between that prevents closure and killing the dead again. Clearly, there are many instances where we kill the dead again, because we use and abuse them to our own ends, and where we impugn meaning to them not from our talking to them but from our own intentions and desires in the living. The politics of the finite and the calculative, and the religion of the dogmatic and the literal share much, after all.

From the between, however, we are never the same, never ourselves, having survived the death of the other, having witnessed the death of the other. Put another way, we *are* now ourselves, the other being-in-us, between us. Death and the past is a moment "[...] between memory and hallucination" (Derrida, 2007: 28). It is a *between us* that is an inheritance, a bequest, an entrusted responsibility. It is not so much that we see the

dead, perhaps, as that they see us; and in doing so displacing and disrupting our self-presence (Jacobus, 2007). As such, even though the dead and the faces of the dead are *in us*, it is not ours; we do not *own* the image in the manner of some interiorising self-possession. We are looked at, in the ethical injunction of a response, and the response is our witnessing and testimony – it is such that the “*speechless*”, the “*without response*” makes us respond, makes us speak. Agency has, in a sense, passed to the dead, in a testimony “[...] where the one who speaks bears the impossibility of speaking in his own speech” (Agamben, 1999b: 120).

To speak to the dead, of the dead, and for the dead, is to bear witness, and to offer testimony. It is thus that we take responsibility for the ghost of the past such that we can conjure the spectre of the future. Like a confession, which is not simply about conveying information, but involves a transformation “[...] in my relationship to the other, in which I present myself as guilty [...]” (Derrida, 2007: 8), testimony has to attest and offer attestation that produces an event, an/other event, for it to be testimony and for one to attest at all.

BEARING WITNESS, OFFERING TESTIMONY.

The researcher-archon, consequently, who desires a spectral scholarship, who feels him/herself compelled (“*ordered and ordained*” is a phrase Levinas, 2000, uses) to proceed from the ethical injunction of the other, may do well to fashion such scholarship by the manner and mode of the witness and testimony. This is not to advocate an end to scholarship (is this paper not *scholarly?*), but a thinking that proceeds less from asking what the experience (data) means, than from how the experience is to be acknowledged (Myers, 1999). Indeed, the ethical response(ibility) not only precedes evidence and proof, or in a less naturalistic register, interpretative truth or knowing, but also founds it. Even closer than metaphysics, the epistemological *how* I set out to meet the ghost and the dead precedes *what* the ghost says, as it conditions both *that* I see the ghost or that it says anything at all.

The law and the juridical arguably provide us with the most accessible and commonplace figure of the witness and testimony. By the law of the law, the witness has firsthand knowledge of an event, and is called upon to provide the truth of the event in testimony; to settle questions about it, as it were, having been there, and having had access to the event through the senses (we will leave in abeyance the implications and assumptions attendant upon the hierarchy of the senses in truth, such that the evidence of the eye-witness, having *seen*, is the exemplary standard). The witness is summoned, *under penalty (sub poena)*, to speak, to tell the truth of his or her witnessing, in testimony. This juridical truth is premised on fact and proof, on evidence (*e-videre*), that is, what is *obvious to sight*. However, *e-videre* also evinces what is *obvious to mind*, even as it is *not obvious to sight* (while no one saw the accident, the mangled wreckage of the car makes it obvious that the car travelled at a high rate of speed at impact). There is an interesting qualification, I venture, of particular importance to the researcher and the credentialed professional, where the *obvious to mind* rule holds not only for the commonsensical and reasonable, but actually also for the uncommon. In such cases we turn to the expert witness who is to illuminate, and bring to sight, by dint of his or her education, training or experience, a truth which is not immediately apparent, but nonetheless *obvious to the expert mind*.

In all these cases, the summons is to truth – having witnessed the event, to testify to its

truth, and to do so from two motivating pressures. Firstly, there is the public sanction and threat of penalty should one refuse the testifying injunction, or violate the summons in perjury. Secondly, there is the apparent private motivation of the moral, and right thing to do, having sworn, under oath (“*I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God*”), to answer the summons to truth, in truth. On closer examination though, the assumption is *not* of a solely internal or private motivation, at least not primarily so; in fact, the notion of an oath is precisely to promise before an other, a divine witness. As such, whereas there may not be any consequences to one’s perjurious testimony if one lies, if one lies in secret, such that no one (else) knows, that no one knows is only true in the world of the living; the divine witness to whom one promises, sees, commands, “*orders and ordains*” from a place that is *both* wholly elsewhere, and exterior, as it is wholly here, and interior, from within.

It is this latter notion that is, perhaps all too clearly by now, of particular interest and instruction. We have already argued the appearance of the other from *on high*, in *majesty and misery*, whose coming disrupts the egoic even as it founds it; and if this meeting with infinity and transcendence in the face sounds like the divine witness who sees from within, it is. By Derrida’s reframing of Levinas, “[...] God, as the wholly other, is to be found everywhere there is something of the wholly other”, so that what can be said about the relation to God “[...] can be said about my relation to every other (one) as every (bit) other [tout autre comme tout autre], in particular my relation to my neighbor or my loved ones who are as inaccessible to me, as secret and transcendent as Jahweh” (Derrida, 1995b: 78). To witness, now, as it is to testify, is consequently a summons to a wholly different order of truth than fact, proof, totalising law, theory or settled science. It is nothing less than a summons to justice, love, care, and the self that is myself by the other in me.

Bearing witness.

It may be no accident that we couple so easily, as if it is one and the same, as if it cannot be uncoupled, the notions of witnessing, and bearing it, which is to say, carrying it, suffering (*sub + ferre, to bear from below*) it. To *bear* witness is to carry a singular and irreplaceable responsibility; Shoshana Felman says beautifully that “[t]o bear witness is to *bear the solitude* of a responsibility, and to *bear the responsibility*, precisely, of that solitude” (Felman, 1992: 3). Yet it is not a self-centred responsibility in the sense of a choice or an internalised essence, but a responsibility to, and for, the other that transcends the self even as it founds it in fissure and (being put in) question. It is an indeclinable responsibility that haunts the witness. Put another way, the witness is a haunted subject, haunted by the event s/he has witnessed, which is also always the other, and the other in him/her. Primo Levi, wrestling with the witness in relation to the Holocaust, notes that it is less a witnessing *to*, than a witnessing *for* (Levi, 1988; Myers, 1999). To bear witness is to be marked, and to bear the mark – of having seen, and having borne witness, which is also to be born as witness. For our purposes, the ghosts of apartheid – all of them, heroes and villains, victims and perpetrators, even as they are never simply those – summon us by these narratives as we allow their coming by conjuring them. And, having seen, having heard, they haunt us, demanding of us to bear them; and to bear them in the wager of a future – that is, as we will see, to bear witness to the not yet by our testimony, to bear the future by attestation.

The distance between witness and testimony, however, is an impossible one. For example, the face and the face of the ghost, the past and the other, cannot be known,

and belongs to a truth that is of another order altogether than that of explanation and law. How then to put into words what exceeds language, or to put into thematised order and the logic of ontology, what is transcendent and infinitely unknowable? Or, in addition, how to account for the fact that what the witness sees is thoroughly shot through with unseeing, with not being aware of the meaning of the event or the other in the moment of its happening. Countless stories of the archive relate the meaning of the event only becoming clearer later, much later, such that witnessing, so to speak, may only be available through testimony and re-collection “[...] in another place and in another time” (Bernard-Donals & Glejzer, 2001: 58).

Offering testimony.

The witness in a court of law may be summoned by, and to, truth, but it is in testimony that truth is revealed, or made manifest. The attendant assumption is clear and rarely questioned: that testimony accurately translates the event into language, and that – by the direction of the court – this record of the historical, of the event and the facts of the event, can come to represent, and even stand in for, the event as it was. To this factual end, testamentary verification is often attempted by placing the testimonies of others that were there as well, next to each other, in comparison and in the service of the assumptive essential truth of the event, which can supposedly be gotten to. Even where there is a suggestion that the testimony does not quite tell all, or perhaps even testifies to what it does not know (like an unconscious in psychoanalysis which, as is the case with the cross-examination of the law, aims to uncover, tease out and bring to light not just what the patient/witness does not say, but what the patient/witness does not know s/he is saying), the assumption is still of a fundamental truth that can be revealed in reasoned seeing – such that anyone witnessing the event will have seen the same thing, really, even if they did not, or say they did not. But if testimony is to proceed from the ethical responsibility of the witness, and the face of the other, what the law understands as testimony is not that at all; if anything, it is a deposition (Strejilevich, 2006), a totalising rendering into an essentialised and universalised deposit what fundamentally cannot be reduced into fact. To be sure, one can testify to the historical unfolding of an event, but that is not the extent of testimony, and in truth is only superficially what it is, impossible as a *what it is* question may be. For the researcher-archon-witness, testimony has to be less the juridical bringing to evidence in clarity, bringing to stable hermeneutic truth in knowledge, or categorising in law, as much as to offer an attestation that “[...] in different ways, encounter – and make us encounter – *strangeness*” (Felman, 1992: 7). This researcher-archon-witness of the apartheid archive and the future has to bring to light, and onto the stage, for and to an audience “[...] what cannot be brought onto the stage, in the name of those who are no longer able to speak for themselves” (Assman, 2006: 268).

To attest in this way, though, is immediately to confront a failure of translation from witness to testimony - a threefold failure, at least. Firstly, as we have already seen in the section on witness above, we are unable to seize, that is perceive, the event in the moment of its happening, or the face in the sur-prise of its appearance; there is always an excess, and a beyond, that hides and resists both witness and testimony, by extension. Secondly, the historical moment of witness cannot be recuperated in testimonial narration, and notwithstanding the “[...] compulsion to speak [...] what the witness says is neither a reflection of the event (which is irretrievably lost to memory) nor unaffected by it” (Bernard-Donals & Glejzer, 2001: xii). Absence is a structural part

of testimony, a testament to what is no more. Thirdly, of course, there is the failure of translation, of putting into words and language what exceeds language.

Paradoxically, though, this doomed and impossible testimonial quality, rather than stifling speech, actually compels it, and sets it in motion. As much as one often says about an experience one has had (one has witnessed) that it *just cannot be put into words*, it is precisely because we cannot that we try, that we stutter, grope, and attempt the impossible. It is precisely by the inordinate, singular ethical command that cannot ever be satisfied, that we attempt a response, a testimony; “[...] we must remember and cannot remember at the same time” (Bernard-Donals & Glejzer, 2006: 111). And so testimony is not (only) about what happened, but – and this is what the court of law misses in its guided insistence on fact and the yes or no answer of the sequence of events – also how it was to be there, to have seen the ghost, and what the *experience* of the moment was like. It is to attest to affect and the incomprehensible, such that it “[...] cannot speak without losing track of itself” (Strejilevich, 2006: 706). Hence, inasmuch as testimony allows for a *recuperation*, a reiteration, or a *bringing back*, it is never a copy, nor a representational analogue to the historical witness. If anything, it is a seeing *again*, for the first time, which is to say, a seeing *differently* (not altogether unlike what happens in therapy, a certain kind of therapy, where *living* the trauma, again, is to live it for the first time, in catharsis, abreaction, or *working through*). In fact, one may well become a witness only by testimony. In a court of law, one may be called to the witness stand, to be sure, but one only *becomes* a witness by one’s testimony, by public attestation. And if there is such a thing as a private witness, and an internalised testimony or speech (even as there may be no such thing as a private language – a topic for another day), it is still the iterative quality of bringing back, of the one re-membering in testimony to the other in one, the witness, that founds and allows for witnessing at all.

Earlier, I commented on the coupling of *bearing witness*, of suffering (to bear) the event, experience and other in witness. There is as spontaneous a link in the *offering testimony* couplet, but what is even more striking is how suffering and offering depart from the same etymological port (suffer: *sub-* + *ferre*; offer: *ob-* + *ferre*); having borne (having suffered) witness, it is now to offer to the other, to present to an audience, in testimony. Testimony is, fundamentally, for the other, including the other in me. There is an address to an audience “[...] to impress upon a listener, to *appeal* to a community” (Felman, 2000: 103) that is more than a simple narration or description, but “[...] to commit oneself, and to commit the narrative to others” (Felman, 2000: 103). Inasmuch as testimony involves a passage into discourse, a movement from witness to language (turning being addressed into addressing); inasmuch as the witness is haunted by an other, and is pursued by that other to speak, to attest in testimony before an audience, another other; inasmuch as the witness testifies not only for his or her own sake, to having been *there*, but also for those who are not *here*; inasmuch as testimony transcends the speaker whose speech becomes the medium by which s/he realises his witnessing – all these observations are to glimpse a fundamental structure to testimony that is for, and from, the other.

Yet, even as the offering is of an order that resists totalising knowledge, the testimony of the archon-researcher-witness must interpret as s/he testifies, or does testify to an interpretation, and translation: to report what the ghost said, or meant, or even *that* the ghost said, is already to thematise. But if our departure point is less the *scholarly*

lawfulness of the *apartheid experience*, of which the thematic secret is hidden in the *data*, but rather what *commands* us is our responsibility to those who were and are pained, afflicted, or suffered and are suffering under, and by, apartheid; if we proceed from the question: “How have we been addressed by those who suffer?” (Hatley, 2000: 2), our “[...] first duty is not to classify and compare but [...] to respond” (Hatley, 2000: 2). Again, we can – and must – thematise and explain, provide reasons and come to understandings, but whereas there can be reasons for apartheid, for example, or dynamics and processes to racism, there can be no reason for *this* child’s pain at a *Whites-Only* playground, nor understanding of *that* black father’s shamed impotence before his son’s seeing him become a *boy* himself – to provide reasons for those singular moments and experiences, related by the ghosts and faces of our archive, to eclipse and cover over those moments in the totalitarian violence of a theme, an explanation and a reason, is to violate, and to kill the ghost, again. Our response is not, in the first instance, understanding, or “[...] a historical record of a particular act of violence, but [...] to witness it”, meaning, “[...] a mode of responding [...] that exceeds our epistemological determination and becomes an ethical involvement” (Hatley, 2000: 2-3). As such we are “[...] uniquely and particularly responsible” for how we “[...] characterize those who have actually suffered” (Hatley, 2000: 112). Evidence, at least in the sense of a sterile proof or process, is but to highlight “[...] the detritus of history” as it “cannot really account for those who suffered, cannot represent the trauma of the event except as an absent center” (Bernard-Dogals & Glejzer, 2001: 108). There certainly was a national Group Areas Act, and a set of apartheid laws that held for everyone, but everyone’s experience of those laws were wholly particular, and singular; to the extent that the researcher-archon-witness *does* thematise and interpret, it is by witness and testimony that every singular story *must* question the universal process, threaten it and unsettle it. Our research, as such, and like Felman’s description of teaching about the Holocaust, must “[...] **testify**, make something **happen**, and not just transmit a passive knowledge” (Felman & Laub, 1992: 53). It has to testify to a seeing that is a seeing anew, and differently – a testimony not as we remember, really, but as we learn to see for the first time (Guyer, 2009).

And in testifying, in *this* way, we may just provoke a crisis, create an event, awaken in an other, his or her inheritance in responsibility. This, of course, cannot be guaranteed, even as it is tempting to think the “[...] end of testimony becomes to witness, the end of witness [...] to testify” (Bernard-Donals & Glejzer, 2001: 125). However, to offer a singular testimony, a text that could not have been written by anyone else, from a wholly singular encounter with the other in responsibility, such that testimony offers the singular signature of that response, is to wager an *otherwise than being* in a *being otherwise*. The good therapist knows to work here, at the level of unease and the unsettling sur-prise of the other; it is time that the archon-researcher-witness does too, as the turning of testimony into testament only occurs at the happening of witnessing, of making witness.

CONCLUSION.

In **Otherwise than being** (1974/1998), Levinas distinguishes between the Saying (*le Dit*), and the Said (*le Dire*). The Said is textuality – language, the message, propositions about the world and truth, for example – whereas the Saying is antecedent to the very signs it assembles; the “*signifyingness of signification*”, it speaks to the exposure and proximity to the other, there where “[...] the infinite, or that which escapes Being, is to be sought” (Davis, 1997: 76). Yet, even as the Saying can never

be fully present in the Said, the Said constitutes the only access we have to the Saying; and, even as the Saying exceeds every Said, it leaves a trace, a mark, on the Said, “[...] but is never revealed in it; it is not a theme, but can only be discussed in terms of themes” (Davis, 1997: 76). Quite simply, the scholar of the future, s/he who learns from ghosts, needs to trace this trace, this “*intrigue of Saying*” which is simultaneously the “*intrigue of responsibility*”. Where ethics, rather than knowledge, is at stake – or put differently, where knowledge is seen to be given by an ethics, testimony is an unfurling un-saying, “[...] a saying that must also be un-said [...] in order to thus extract the *otherwise than being* from the said in which the *otherwise than being* [...] already comes to signify only a *being otherwise*” (Levinas, 1998[1974]: 7).

Perhaps we can then imagine a psychology that can acknowledge its own ghosts, and can face up to *psukhe*, the breath of the soul, which we recall is only so by the union of *Psyche* and *Eros*, of the singular by the other. There is, by that lesson, no place for love to abide but the soul, and no sense for the soul, but love. And perhaps, just perhaps, we, researchers of the apartheid archive, scholars of the dead and the not yet, will come to recognise that this herald for psychology is really the bells tolling for us, singularly.

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