INTRODUCTION

Haunted Futurities

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This introductory article serves to present the key themes, around which the special issue on ‘Haunting Futurities’ revolves. We show that haunting is not only about people (or communities, or whole generations) who are no longer there yet are still here as ghosts. In other words, it is not only about the past or the present. Haunting, as this special issue demonstrates, can also be a matter of the future. The aim of this special issue is to unpack and challenge assumptions about ghosts and haunting, as being solely about the past. We argue that the future may be both haunted and haunting: whether through the ways in which the past casts a shadow over (im)possible futures; or through horrors that are imagined as ‘inevitable’; or through our hopes and dreams for difference, for change. Yet haunting is not about utopian potentialities, nor is it about inevitable horrors. Rather, as we suggest in this article and as other contributors to this special issue demonstrate, haunted futurities are about responsibility. We have responsibility to listen to ghosts of the future, especially those of violent futures so that those futures do not become enacted, but in a way that is alert and sensitive to the possibility of unintended consequences.

In the last decade haunting has surfaced as a means of exploring the ways in which the past can invade contemporary socialities. As Avery Gordon has famously noted in her *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, impossible memories and unwritten histories continue living and often come to us as ghosts, demanding attention, looking for justice, challenging the way we know, act and feel. Haunting, Gordon reminds us, describes how ‘that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities’ (1997, p. 8). Haunting, in other words, is a sociality of living with ghosts, a sociality ‘tangible and tactile as well as ephemeral and imaginary’ (Gordon 1997, p. 201). This special issue opens with Avery Gordon’s article, followed by
a short commentary by Les Back. In her article, Gordon revisits her earlier work on haunting as ‘an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known’ and as ‘this socio-political-psychological state when something else, or something different from before, feels like it must be done, and prompts a something-to-be-done’ (Gordon, this issue). She emphasises the need to treat ghosts with respect, rather than simply speaking for them, or, worse, making them ‘abandoned and disappeared again’ through the very process of dealing with haunting. Gordon then proceeds to explore the relations between haunting and the future and to the notion of haunted futurity as an affective state and a political calling. ‘We’re haunted’, she notes, ‘by the historic alternatives that could have been and by the peculiar temporality of the shadowing of lost and better futures that insinuates itself in the something-to-be-done, sometimes as nostalgia, sometimes as regret, sometimes as a kind of critical urgency’ (Gordon, this issue). Her dense, moving and politically urgent article concludes with the discussion of imprisonment (and more specifically, the US prison-industrial complex) as a haunted future of a society, consisting solely of prisoners, guards and those who decide which of the two categories each of us would belong to. Such future, Gordon warns, can come ‘before it has been formally invited or approved’; to some extent, it is already here, and as such, needs to be stopped. In a time when the Left’s approach to culture has become ‘sour and bitter’, Les Back’s response to Gordon (this issue) asks us to consider Gordon’s writing as ‘a literary antidote to the disease’ which gives vitality to the questions and demands made by ghosts. He suggests that in listening to ghosts, ‘it might be helpful to imagine, what ghosts might want from us? How receptive or welcoming are our modes of writing to their enduring trace?’ (Back, this issue).

Gordon’s book has been inspirational for those of us working on past events of extreme violence, such as colonialism, slavery or genocide—events that often leave deep psychic scars but only scattered material traces, events that resist traditional narration. Histories without archives, they are saturated with pain and longing, but often struggle for words. At the same time, Gordon has been highly influential for those working on more contemporary and seemingly mundane experiences of oppression, injustice and daily structural violence—of class, or race, poverty or imprisonment. But haunting is not only about people (or communities, or whole generations) who are no longer there yet are still here as ghosts. In other words, it is not only about the past or the present. As Gordon notes in this issue, and as we ourselves have both discovered in our work and experiences, haunting can also be a matter of the future. Below, we outline how our own work on haunting came to be intimately bound up with the notion of futurity, a vision of haunting that is developed in this special issue.
I. Adi

In the past decade I have been working on issues of migration, violence and belonging in Israel/Palestine. Inspired by Gordon's work, I traced the ways different pasts—some extensively commemorated, some remembered only partially and selectively, and some forgotten—haunt the present of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union who live in the Israel of the 2000s (Kuntsman 2009). The idea to focus on haunted futurities came to me as I was watching Ari Forman’s Waltz with Bashir in summer 2008, shortly after the film debuted in the Cannes Film Festival. Waltz with Bashir is a poignant story of a middle-aged Jewish Israeli, taunted by a recurring nightmare of the 1982 Lebanon war yet unable to remember what happened to him when he served in the army at the time of the war. Unable to sleep, the film’s protagonist goes on a journey to find his former combatants, hoping they would help him remember. Piecing together dream and reality, memories and denial (one friend suggests that what he is haunted by is not the war in Lebanon but the intergenerational trauma of the Holocaust), by the end of the film the protagonist is confronted with the faces of war victims, fleeing the site of massacre.

Israel’s participation in the 1982 Lebanon war, and in particular, in the Sabra and Shatila massacre, is a huge political controversy in the country, a largely silent yet seethingly present ‘public’ secret, to use Michael Taussig’s words (1999). The role of Waltz with Bashir in addressing this public secret has been passionately debated in Israeli and elsewhere—for many viewers, the film was an honest revelation of Israel’s complicity in the massacre, as well as a brave anti-war statement that goes beyond specific historical events. Others were angered by the film’s assumed failure to acknowledge guilt, the lack of an apology or even a call for future action. In Israel, too, the reception of the film was far from univocal, and ranged from sharp critique of the film’s romanticising of the Ashkenazi soldier consumed by his own melancholic suffering (rather than looking at the violence he inflicts on others), to rage at the very mentioning of Israel’s possible complicity in the massacre, to praise for Forman for breaking the silence about this war.

It is not my aim, however, to dwell on these debates. What I want to address instead is the timing of the film—2008, 25 years after the events described. Why now, I wondered? Was the film merely a reflection of the director’s own trauma of the war and its silencing? (Forman noted on numerous occasions that the film has autobiographic elements). Was he trying to make a political statement on the Israeli past or on the country’s ongoing warfare? Be the intentions of the director as they may, what interest me here are the effects of the film on the Israeli public. What kind of work does the evocation of this haunted past do? Was the film a coded statement on the second Lebanon war of 2006, or, perhaps, a reference to yet another public secret—a recent IDF massacre in Jenin in 2002? It
was, of course, all of these—and something else. It is insufficient, I realised, to look at the film as only a work with a past—any past, whether as recent as the never-ending Israeli military operations within and outside its colonial borders, or as distant as the Holocaust. Waltz with Bashir was also about the haunting of the future: not just an outcry about the atrocities one has committed (and then erased from both personal and collective memory), but a preparation for atrocities yet to come, yet to become traumatising for their perpetrators and deadly for their victims, yet to be marked as politically necessary and ‘unpreventable’, and yet to be repressed or forgotten.

...Several months later, in December 2008, Israel began one of its bloodiest military operations—an attack on Gaza, killing hundreds of Palestinians, including civilian men, women, children and elderly. Since the end of this short war which lasted only 3 weeks, the Israeli NGO ‘Breaking the Silence’ gathered and published endless testimonies of soldiers, telling about violence and abuse they had witnessed and/or exercised in Gaza. International investigation of the war (such as the Goldstone report) was never accepted by Israel, which continues to regard the Gaza War (or the ‘Cast Lead’ operation as it was named by Israel) as a legitimate and necessary act of self-defence against Hamas.

II. Debra

The idea of haunted futurities first occurred to me when I began researching, among other things, the cultural representation of thinness. At the turn of the millennium, this was just starting to be the engulfing cultural preoccupation it is today: Kate Moss exemplified ‘heroin chic’ and was held to account for a supposed epidemic of eating disorders decimating the young, mainly white, mainly female population. What struck me was the way in which both fashion and anti-fashion cultures drew upon images of death and haunting. The waif, a figure of tragic female victimhood with her skull-like features and ragged clothes, became the deeply contested symbol of debates on bodies, images, and (post)feminist debates.

What threw this ghostly figure into sharp relief, for me, was the discovery of pro-ana websites. Suddenly these shadow people had a voice, an identity: they were young women who, hidden in their parents’ bedrooms or living away from home for the first time, were using this (then) new technology to connect, to speak for themselves; who knew how to code. Their blog postings spoke of strong opinions, deeply felt antipathies, and (sometimes) to the desire for a radical, oppositional body politics. There were discussions about anorexia as a protest against first-world greed alongside reviews of riot grrl gigs, visual art projects, and poetry, as well as the thinspiration pages, and fannish love letters to Jodie Kidd and Kate Moss, for which pro-ana
has become notorious in the popular imagination. The style was intended to be shocking, in-your-face; it drew on punk fanzines as well as appropriating the solemn, patronising tone of women’s magazines in a way that threw the academic reader: was this intentional parody, or just another version of the beauty myth gone viral? Either way, I hardly recognised in what I saw the pathetic, mawkish wraiths so piteously invoked in media commentaries on pro-ana. Whilst the content was and remains problematic—obviously—these communities had the shape of political movements; in their design, their emphasis on collectivity, their intense debates and politicisation of the personal, as well as in their transgressive cultural politics (whatever your view of the limitations of such a strategy), they seemed haunted by another ghost: that of feminism. These were living women speaking of their experience of living with eating disorders. And they were being ghosted by the very media discourses that claimed to want to save them. Ghosted not in the present, through processes of erasure which included the mass censorship of pro-ana websites by corporate service providers; but this present ghosting relied upon and was guaranteed by an assumed future ghosting. The right to silence the anorexic woman relies upon the assurance that she will one day be dead, and dead tragically young. The outcry against pro-ana, it occurred to me, is haunted by the media’s own complicity, its desire for sensation, its enjoyment of the fairytale idea of a beautiful dead young woman. But the problem with the waif, as anyone who has studied nineteenth-century literature will know, is that she does not just die: like Cathy at the window in Wuthering Heights, she always returns. The revulsion-pity complex that marks public discussion of the waif masks a deep fear of her uncanny power. The idea that public debates on anorexia were haunted by their own complicity, their own desire to ‘ghost’ the anorexic subject, made me wonder: what would it mean for contemporary mediated cultures to confront their own ghosts? What might be learned by listening to the voices of the present, as well as to the ghosts of the future?

We have included these two vignettes from our own research, in order to show how questions of haunting and futurity intersect in our work. For us, the notion of haunted futurities poses important questions about political and affective formations of violence and testimony. Our research also involves critical interventions into the stories we tell about ghosts: about the ways in which fiction, books, films, imagination might make disappeared lives matter, in the absence of other archives, as well as the ways in which stories might themselves be a means of ghosting. So what are the stories we tell about ghosts? Is the ghost always a dead person? Are all ghosts located in the past? This is the version of haunting associated with Derrida’s hauntology (1993); that the spectre represents a way of recognising the past which cannot be acknowledged in other ways. Whilst this raises productive questions for our work, we also want to depart from its implicit tendency to repeat the dual modes of past and present that structure traditional accounts of haunting. The aim of our special issue
is precisely to unpack and challenge such assumptions about ghosts and haunting. In this issue we argue that the future may be both haunted and haunting: whether through the ways in which the past casts a shadow over (im)possible futures; or through horrors that are imagined as 'inevitable'; or through our hopes and dreams for difference, for change.

Another use of haunting which differs radically from our own perspective is worth mentioning here: haunting as a form of voicelessness, where rendering someone as ghost becomes a form of epistemic violence towards actual survivors. As Anne Cubilié notes in her *Women Witnessing Terror*,

> Survivors have come to be figured by us in the form of ‘ghosts’ who haunt our cultural imaginary. Configured as the uncanny, visible only from the corner of one’s eye or when one is not looking, and vested with a power and wisdom that have literally been brought back from the realm of the dead, they are valorised, memorialized and heroized, but we cannot—and will not—hear them. Such positioning strips survivors (once again) of their humanity, removing them from the quotidian realm of ‘us’. (2005, p. xii)

Cubilié raises a very important point of epistemic and ethical obligation towards subjects—victims and survivors—of violence. Yet, for her, haunting is a form of inaction—a denial of voice, an exclusion from the collective. Gordon’s notion of haunting that inspires us here is radically different—as she outlines in her article (this issue), our responsibility to ghosts is precisely to not make them ‘abandoned and disappeared again’. For Gordon, ghosts are a form of calling, a refusal to disappear, an insistence on presence and a demand for justice. Ghosts haunt us because they want to be heard and acknowledged, and as such, they become a call for action, a demand of ‘something to be done’ (Gordon, this issue).

And lastly, it is crucial for us to emphasise the social nature of haunting. It would be a misreading, we argue, to see haunting (or the state of being haunted) as an individual concern, a matter of the unconscious. Instead, we take up Gordon’s reading of haunting as always both historical and subjective. As she argues, ‘The ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life’ (Gordon 1997, p. 8).

If ghosts are collective and social, then what might ghosts of the future tell us about our sense of a shared future? Perhaps the most famous example of a literary haunting from/by the future is Dickens’ ghost of Christmas future in *A Christmas Carol*. In this nightmarish vision of haunting from (and by) the future, Dicken’s miserly protagonist Scrooge is shown the violent repercussions of his cruelty for his employee Cratchett in the shape of the death of Cratchett’s son Tiny Tim, as well as his own death, a lonely, unmourned tyrant. The spirit, with its accusatory, pointing finger, urges him to mend his ways
and to treat his miserable employees with generosity in future; the
books closing ‘God bless us, every one’ signals the success of the
utopian project, with the sanctity of family, home, church, and capital
restored.

This spectre of future in Dickens’ writing appears as a silent and
terrifying figure; but the horrific future this figure reveals is intended as
a call to action, not as a sign of inevitability, or, to use Gordon’s
words, as ‘something to be done’. Interestingly, Dickens published his
novella only five years before Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* (Marx &
Engels 2009 [1948]), whose declaration that ‘a spectre is haunting
Europe: the spectre of Communism’ demands a radically different
version to the problems of poverty, child labour and exploitation which
haunt both of these works (and which, in its turn, provides the starting
point for Derrida’s hauntology). And although Dickens’ solution to the
‘problem’ of haunting is individual and private—it is limited precisely in
that, it foregrounds the uncanny, chilling figure of the spirit—it re-
covers the collective plight of the urban poor, of ‘the living who haunt
as if they were dead’ (Gordon, this issue) and who are re-animated by
Marx’s ‘something-to-be-done’. What is more, unlike the ghost of the
past, who is often doomed to repeat the same actions and gestures,
the future ghost is unpredictable; its radical potential lies in its
instability. Ghosts that are invoked in order to secure particular
actions, particular outcomes, as inevitable, may refuse to lie down.
Like the ghosts of the dead, they may cry out for vengeance. Unlike
the ghosts of the dead, the spectre from the future suggests what its
very presence is intended to conceal; that there are multiple potential
futures, individual as well as collective.

In thinking of haunting as potential, we are not suggesting that all
potential futures are positive. To be affected by haunting does not
guarantee that whatever action we take will not have unintended or
violent consequences. Being *affected* precisely implies an encounter
that exceeds the parameters of the known, the rational, and the
causative. As Eric Shouse puts it, in an article that draws on Brian
Massumi’s writing on affect, ‘the importance of affect rests upon the
fact ... the message consciously received may be of less import to the
receiver of that message than his or her non-conscious affective
resonance with the source of the message’ (Schouse 2005, n.p.).
Dickens is concerned with the construction of a linear narrative to
order and make sense of an impossible encounter. Scrooge’s
‘reading’ of his own future ghost—change your ways, the future may
still be changed—differs from encounters with past ghosts only in its
cheerful utopianism; whilst the ghost of the past can only demand
vengeance, Dickens suggests, the ghost of times yet to come may
allow us to imagine a better future. As such, this version of the future
ghost actually works to secure the notion of time as linear, imposing a
neat causality in which one simply chooses—and gets—the future one
deserves.
These models of futurity, culturally pervasive in late capitalism, are based on trajectories of inevitability; for example in the utopian model, an entirely positive future is imagined as the inevitable result of particular, ‘correct’ outcomes; the temporal trajectory implied is one of a stately progress towards a better time to come. Conversely, a dystopian view of futurity simply inverts this model, whether by invoking environmental catastrophe, the ‘dumbing down’ of culture, or the breakdown of family values. Our aim in this special issue is to reconfigure this version of haunted futurities in order to move beyond existing modalities of thinking about futurity: the utopian, the dystopian, and indeed the hopeful. This is a critical project since, as Gordon points out, ‘futurity is imbricated or interwoven into the very scene of haunting itself’ (this issue). What is at stake in haunting is how we think about futurity, and how this structures the kinds of futures that we make possible.

In order to move away from those fixed modalities and actually listen to ghosts of the future, it might be necessary to be attentive to other ways of experiencing time. For example, in her reading of anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose’s *Reports from a Wild Country* (2004), Donna Haraway has written of ‘the fundamentally non-teleological time of Aboriginal country’ in which ‘people “face” the past for which they bear the responsibility of ongoing care in a thick and consequential present that is also responsible to those who come behind, i.e., the next generations’ (Rose 2004 cited in Haraway 2007, pp. 2-3). Haraway draws on this way of thinking about time not in order to suggest that some cultures are better or more natural than others, but as a call to a ‘responsive attentiveness’ to the present that is impossible in the context of Western cultures’ ‘teleological, goal-directed orientation’ in which ‘the present is nothing but a vanishing point of transition toward what is to come, whether that be destruction or redemption’ (Haraway 2007, p. 3).

By bringing Gordon’s work into dialogue with such reconfiguration of linear temporalities, we propose a different form of futurity: adopting haunting as demand for justice, as *something to be done*, and looking not just into past and present, but into the future/futures. Such thinking about futurity is not so much about remembering and forgetting, as it is about responsibility. The ghost is first and foremost a presence; indeed, the only claim we can safely make about ghosts is that they are present, they are here alongside us, even if only—as Cubilié’s description of ghosts has it— as an uncanny presence, a flicker in the corner of one’s eye. As Gordon memorably suggests:

To my mind, the whole essence, if you can use that word, of a ghost is that it has a real presence and demands its due, demands your attention. Haunting and the appearance of specters or ghosts is one way, I tried to suggest, we’re notified that what’s been suppressed or concealed is very much alive and present, messing or interfering precisely with those always incomplete forms of containment and repression ceaselessly directed towards us. (This issue, emphasis added).
Being in the presence of ghosts, then, might mean simply listening; not asking, ‘what does the ghost want me to do next’—the answer to that question commonly being a projection of our own unacknowledged desires, along with a desire to restore a comforting sense of linearity—but ‘what ghosts might want from us?’ to use Back’s words (this issue), or ‘what does the ghost tell us?’

To be haunted is to be in a heightened state of awareness; the hairs on our neck stand up: being affected by haunting, our bodies become alert, sensitive. The challenge may simply be to sit with this state of awareness, not to flee into action. This responsibility to listen to ghosts, we suggest, is our responsibility to the future. In listening to ghosts of the future, we learn something about the present, but not in a passive way of ‘discovering’ or ‘revealing’ some unknown aspects of the present. Rather, listening to future ghosts is about taking responsibility in the present for the future. Haraway uses the term ‘pastpresents’ to suggest the multiple ways in which the past is always ‘in’ the present (and hence it is impossible simply to ‘move away from’ histories of colonial violence), and to rethink the present as more than a fleeting moment between past and future (cited in Haraway 2007). We might therefore think of haunted futurities as ‘futurepresents’—as presences that expose the futures that are always at stake in the present, but that are also productive of both present and future. When we open ourselves to being haunted, we might find that the present and its possibilities are transformed, with radical consequences.

By reading haunted futurities in this way, we aim to intervene in the logic by which, in many cultural visions of haunted futurities—such as for example the inevitable future atrocities that emerges from Waltz with Bashir, or the bloody insistence on retribution that possesses the Israeli society, as described by Kirstein Keshet (this issue)—ghosts generate dreams or nightmares where futures become inevitabilised. Yet what we suggest is that these futures are not inevitable. Rather, we have responsibility to listen to those future ghosts, so that those futures do not become enacted, but in a way that is alert and sensitive to the possibilities of unintended consequences.

This brings us to the notion of unfixed possibilities and of haunting as ephemeral presences in the corner of the eye—‘ordinary affects’, to use Kathleen Stewart’s words. As Stewart reminds us, those ordinary affects are

[r]ooted not in fixed conditions of possibility but in the actual lines of potential that a *something* coming together calls to mind and sets in motion, they can be seen as both the pressure points of events of banalities suffered and the trajectories that forces might take if they were to go unchecked. (Stewart 2007, p. 2, emphasis in the original)

We propose to think about haunted socialities as pressure points and as trajectories of unfixed futurities, but not in a free-floating way of anything-can-happen. By putting our emphasis on responsibility
towards the future, we do not offer recipes for particular futures—be they utopian or dystopian, fearful or hopeful. Rather, we call for a move to responsibility as both a conceptual and a political act, which is based neither on fixity nor on complete fluidity, but recognises instead the frustrating complexity of living with (oppression, privilege, ‘false consciousness’, disability, confinement, or war). Traditional haunting narratives ask what is to be done, in order to lay the ghost to rest. A better question might be: how do we live with our ghosts? How do we move towards futures with those ghosts, without erasing their existence, but equally, without allowing them to determine what is to come? It is these questions that this issue’s contributors are trying to answer.

The four essays presented in this special issue take on haunted futurities both as their point of departure, and as a point of destination for their analytical and political commitments. But they also come from a deeply personal place, from each author’s own ‘haunted locations’, as Gordon puts it. ‘To be haunted and to write from that location’, she notes, is about ‘making a contact that changes you and refashions the social relations in which you are located’ (1997, p. 22). In that sense, all of the authors are deeply inspired by Gordon’s work, not only in a conceptual sense, but in a sense of intellectual and political commitment to the ghosts’ demand of ‘something-to-be-done’. Each of the contributors takes the discussion of haunting into their own disciplinary fields: of psychoanalysis and literature (Treacher Kabesh); politics and memory (Kirstein Keshet); violence and conflict in digital media (Kuntsman); and feminist studies of the representation of the body (Ferreday). United by their dialogue with Gordon’s work and with each other, the four papers and an exhibit of photographs presented here address the relations between haunting and futurity from different angles.

Amal Treacher Kabesh’s ‘On Being Haunted by The Present’ departs from a deeply personal experience of addressing the relations with her Egyptian/Muslim father, and moves to exploring theoretical encounters between postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories, by examining postcolonial masculinities in Egypt and the UK. ‘Why does the past have such a hold’, asks Treacher Kabesh, when she takes the reader on a journey through literary analysis and her own memories of her father’s life in Egypt. Haunting in her article is about possibilities of narrating and representing the unspeakable, the silent and that which remains beyond language yet has a powerful emotional presence. More importantly, Treacher Kabesh uses haunting to explore the relations between past, present and future, holding the different temporalities together, and examining the way they shape emotional and political realities. She suggests that not only does the past have a hold on us, but we have a hold on our past(s). Future haunting, then, becomes a form of accountability, where we ‘stop turning back and become haunted not by the past but rather by our responsibilities to the present and the future’. 
In her ‘Of Ghosts and Dybbuks: the Haunting of the Israeli Imagination’, Yehudit Kirstein Keshet continues to explore the relations between grips of a past and a troubled future. An Israeli activist and political analyst, Kirstein Keshet sets on a journey to explore what haunts Israel and what haunts her own imagination and commitment to justice. Similarly to Treacher Kabesh, she asks what would happen if some ghosts were laid to rest. Her article looks at two traumatic histories—of the Jewish Holocaust and the Palestinian Nakba—and the ways they haunt the Israeli imagination. Combining autobiographical vignettes with the analysis of policies, national discourses, political activism, museology and literature, Kirstein Keshet builds her discussion around two figures. The first one is the ghost of Nakba, the second is the Dybbuk of the Holocaust. Together, they work as an unhealed wound, sustaining the future of denial, forgetting and violence yet to come. Following the Dybbuk that possesses the Israeli psyche, screaming for ‘retribution and death, for a final solution that can only end in yet another catastrophe’, Kirstein Keshet suggests that there is another possibility—talking to the haunting spirit and laying it to rest, thus allowing a different, better future.

The issue of ongoing violence in Israel/Palestine and the shadows it casts on the future is further explored in Adi Kuntsman’s article, ‘Digital Archives of Feelings and their Haunted Futures’. Kuntsman is haunted by the deadly stillness of words and images of war, as they accumulate in on-line archives, buried under layers of new updates, forgotten as new atrocities populate the news, yet always available for retrieval and as such, are not just about oblivion but also about the demands of ‘something-to-be-done’. Looking at on-line discussions of death and destruction in Gaza during the Israeli attacks in 2008-2009, Kuntsman explores the relation between violence of the present and haunting of the future as they take shape in digital media. She demonstrates that on-line discussions of the war shape a ghostly present and a haunted futurity by depicting the Palestinians as living ghosts, as made dead while alive—in the Israeli war machine and the structures of feelings that accompany it, the Palestinians are haunted by their inevitable and ‘necessary’ death, to allow a ‘peaceful’ Israeli future. But Kuntsman takes the concept of haunted futurity further, when she turns to the digital archives of those discussions, asking about their own haunted lives. She suggests that these archives are a site where a future advocate for justice would encounter the ghost of the dead Palestinian, and where haunting might operate as a form of political calling for accountability, rather than a practice of erasure and forgetting.

Debra Ferreday’s ‘Haunting Bodies: Anorexia as Media Spectacle’ continues to unpack the relations between haunted futurity and mediation, by looking at representations of the anorexic body as media spectacle. Departing from the analysis of the ‘Nolita/ No Anorexia’ fashion campaign of 2007, her article moves to a broader discussion of media representations of the anorexic body as an impossible representation—a body haunted by its inevitable death.
Ferreday’s article unpacks the ways in which our encounters with media images are always already haunted by the shared cultural appurtenances and power relations, and how the imagining of the anorexic body as already known structures the kinds of futures that are possible for certain bodies.

The four essays are followed by Tim Edensor’s photographs. Edensor, a Manchester-based researcher and artist, explores the intersections between class, architecture, vernacular workplace culture and domestication of industrial space. The issue concludes with the interview we conducted with another scholar whose work provided much inspiration to our thinking about haunting and futurity—Anne Marie Fortier. Fortier’s work on multiculturalism, racial ghosts, and anxieties of white Britain raises several key questions regarding the interplay of haunting, racialised citizenship and political feelings, as they shape our hopes and fears for possible futures.

All the contributions in this issue are driven by a sense of political urgency—whether by calling for prison abolition or challenging the racialised regimes of citizenship; opposing an ongoing bloodshed of war and occupation or raising the ghosts of a colonial past; exploring the violence of media spectacles of listening quietly yet attentively to the ‘ordinary’—and thus often ignored— injures of class, race and gender. Brought together in an interdisciplinary dialogue, the contributors reflect on the ethical nature of our relations to one another, as Les Back puts it in his moving commentary on Gordon’s piece (Back, this issue). They reflect on how to live with ghosts that would not go away; on what is to be done, and on what it means to be haunted by a future.

Together, these contributions re-imagine haunting in terms of ‘ordinary affects’, as

[p]ublic feelings that begin and end in broad circulation, but they’re also the stuff that seemingly intimate lives are made of. They give circuits and flows the forms of a life. They can be experienced as a pleasure and a shock, as an empty pause or a dragging undertow, as a sensibility that snaps into place or a profound disorientation” (Stewart 2007, p. 2).

It is in such moments of disorientation, moments when something lingers in the corner of the eye, that we might listen to our own ghosts and encounter different, transformative, futurities that are not guaranteed yet may still be brought into being.

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