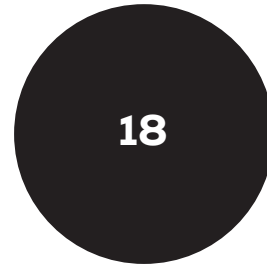




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The Specters of Colonialism – the Haunted Cinema of Sven

Augustijnen

Translated by Łukasz Mojsak

Where do specters actually come from and what are the reasons behind their appearance? Why do the deceased, against all expectations, fail to disappear, to dissolve in nothingness, and relocate to the afterworld, but instead return, as if against common sense, and haunt the present, refusing to leave in peace those who persistently hold on to life? One of the most brilliant answers to this question comes from Slavoj Žižek.¹ Analyzing the customs around burial, he claims that only the deceased who were given such a possibility by the failure to bury them in an appropriate manner can return. The Slovenian philosopher reveals a rather ambiguous function of burial, which not only bears a relation to the (most often honest) mourning caused by the death of a loved one, but also signalizes the desire to make certain that, once buried, the dead will never return and reappear among the living. Not only does the purpose of burying and entombing the dead consist of effectively removing them from sight, but perhaps above all of creating the illusion that they no longer have anything in common with our world.

How to properly bury the deceased?

According to Žižek, the tombstone plays a key role in effectively separating the world of the living from the dead, and becomes indispensable for situating death in the symbolic order. With appropriate weight and bulk, it is supposed to offer the certainty that the deceased buried underneath and restricted by it will never again manage to rise. The inscription, in turn, not only serves to identify the dead, but above all offers the guarantee that the deceased will remain forever in the same place and therefore appear nowhere else.

Žižek appears to be a reliable source on the matter as he himself is unable to part ways with and bury Jacques Lacan, who constantly appears in his reflections. Each

new, impressive book or deft interpretation formulated by Žižek turns out to be an attempt to bury his master, who thus becomes an unburied specter: he is too powerful to be put completely to death, yet too weak to live an independent life. In turn, Žižek is not strong and independent enough as a philosopher to possess a sufficiently strong theory (tombstone) that can eclipse, weigh down and kill Lacan once and for all, thus putting an end to his return(s). Conversely, it seems that the author of *The Plague of Fantasies* is not at all interested in burying his master, but rather in highly productive digging in his grave.

Žižek's approach to philosophy may well be defined as plundering Lacan's tomb by constantly taking old and new things out of it, which keeps the tomb open. In order to explain the incorrect and improper burial of Lacan, who, despite his death, still seems unburied, we need to refer to a specific method of reading used by his most renowned interpreter. The method in question is obviously the so-called "looking awry," which consists of a range of deliberately erroneous interpretations, incomplete readings, and overinterpretations (the strategy of misreading).²

Žižek does not want to enact an appropriate burial ritual as accepted by the humanities, and he therefore prevents enclosing (and thus burying) Lacan's complete works in a monumental set of canonical, unambiguous, and valid interpretations legitimated by the gravity of academia. He brings about a situation in which fragments of Lacan's symbolic body, detached from the whole and perversely interpreted, are chaotically scattered around his books. Žižek's Lacan does not become immortal, but rather undead – suspended between life and death, impure, forever at the stage of decomposition, and hostage to unconventional interpretation – with an awry look. The philosopher cannot release himself from Lacan, and the unburied Lacan is doomed to recur constantly in a form in which he never would have appeared during his lifetime: in the atmosphere of farce, jocular poses, and many unexpected popular cultural manifestations.³

The Unburied: Cinema of Absence

Comparable origins of returns and haunting can be encountered in *Specters* (2011), directed by Sven Augustijnen. In his film the director attempts to face the difficult and still unresolved colonial history of Belgium, which in the 21st century already seems to be a matter of the past; however, contrary to appearances, it turns out still to be alive and have an immense influence on the fate of the living. Virtually the whole of Augustijnen's documentary is organized around the experience of loss, and it is therefore important to define the absences that provide the axis of the film.⁴

The first of them bears relation to the genocide perpetrated on the territory of the Congo under the reign of King Leopold II of Belgium, who was still the private owner of the land towards the end of the 19th century. Due to the ruthless exploitation of the territory and its inhabitants, the despotic monarch caused the death of more than a dozen million people, yet never suffered any punishment for this crime against humanity. His long-term flagitious activity and colonial exploitation – continued by his successors – left a trace in the form of the capital accumulated during those times, without which it would be difficult to imagine today's Belgium. Leopold II is still regarded by many of his fellow countrymen as a national hero, which is one of the reasons why a monument raised in his honor can be found in Brussels. Augustijnen highlights the fact that the city-center statue casts a shadow, thus revealing the dark side of the postcolonial present: the forgotten genocide and the illegal provenance of Belgian wealth.⁵ Stored in the sculpted stone, the memory of Belgium's greatness must always be ambiguous as it simultaneously speaks about absence – the mysterious disappearance of millions of Congolese, who were never mourned and buried in the manner that they deserved.

It is not a matter of chance that the production of *Specters* coincided with the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of Congolese independence. Augustijnen's documentary concentrates almost entirely on one absence that has major significance for the history of postcolonial Belgium. Shortly after coming into power,

the first prime minister of independent Congo, Patrice Lumumba, was imprisoned, and murdered on 17 January 1961 in circumstances that have remained obscure until the present day. The members of the execution squad cut his body into pieces and treated the fragments with hydrochloric acid in order to make it impossible to identify where they came from, then scattered them around the murder site.

The murderers' efforts proved their excessive zeal as they were not content with the mere death of their victim. Most likely, their goal consisted of the complete dematerialization and obliteration of Lumumba, who indeed died, dissolved into the air, and literally disappeared from the surface of the earth without a trace. Never mourned, never buried, and – above all – denied his own grave, Lumumba became a specter who, for the next 50 years, shattered the peace of those who wished to solve the mystery of his disappearance. Lumumba's annihilation is the main topic of and primary reason for Augustijnen's film; against the will of the killers, and understanding that the perfect crime does



not exist, the director looks for traces, remnants and fragments. He attempts to achieve the impossible by showing the absence itself and demonstrating its constant unwavering impact on the heirs – those living in the present. Commenting on *Specters*, T. J. Demos argues that the film may well be defined as an attempt to document nothing – in the sense that there is actually nothing in it that could be seen, nothing that could be present.⁶ Developing the aesthetics of absence, the Belgian director has joined the debate on the manner of representing the absent and the invisible.⁷

Postcolony: the Specter of the Colonizer

Augustijnen's film would be too one-dimensional and definitely less complicated without yet another absence. In 1960 Belgium declared, at least officially, that it was leaving its zone of influence, disappearing and withdrawing from the Congo,

which finally regained independence and thereby lost the status of a colony. Lumumba was regarded as dangerous by the advocates of the old order, primarily because he championed radical separation – utter liberation from the long-term state of dependence. In essence, he proclaimed the policy of emancipation – a vision of the colonizer's total absence from Congolese territory, the entirety of which was to become the exclusive property of its rightful citizens. It was Lumumba's murder, among other reasons, that prevented the project of complete divorce from the colonizer (alongside its expulsion) from succeeding.

That was the beginning of the process of neocolonization, the seemingly independent rule of the Congo, which was, however, completely dependent on the interests of the colonizers. Thus, Belgium itself became a specter: formally dead, defeated, and exiled from the territory of its former colony, but at the same time still alive as it was unofficially unable to come to terms with the perspective of losing influence. At the same time, the independence of the Congo, constantly entangled in political and economic dependence, was not entirely reclaimed, but rather ineffectual. Not only because it was exaggeratedly announced and could not be put into practice, but also for the reason that it never really became present, never really happened. The spectrality of that time, characteristic of the postcolonial Congo, consists of the fact that the promised independence could not appear and deliver on the assurance, while the colonial past refuses to disappear entirely, to become a matter of the past, but continues to remain in force.⁸

Augustijnen also created an exhibition that accompanies the film, which comprises materials gathered during his work on the documentary. It features a photograph of the celebrations of regained independence, but its most important aspect is hidden on its reverse: a handwritten inscription in French: "L'indépendance du Congo."⁹ This seemingly meaningless error – a few lost letters, a lingual mistake, the awkward, miswritten phrase ["Independence of the Congo"] – acquires meaning that can be interpreted through the prism of spectral hermeneutics. This is the only territory of sensitivity to the unfinished, the weak, and the overlooked – to that which exists on the very edge of presence and absence. If we assume, paradoxically, that in that moment the inscription perfectly corresponds with the

photographic representation of reality, we may state that their juxtaposition demonstrates a gap, a chasm, the visible incongruity of the postulated promise of independence that was not delivered, not put into practice, and remains ineffectual, incomplete, and looming on the horizon in the manner of a specter.¹⁰

Burial Rituals: Tombs and Monuments

The postcolonial Congo appears as a truly spectral space where we encounter a range of unfinished affairs that have not been buried thus far. One of these is the hope for independence, which means the ultimate burial of the undead colonizer and completion of the process of separation from the status of Belgian colony. The plot of Augustijnen's film is primarily woven around the absence of the dead Patrice Lumumba, yet the main living protagonist of the documentary (and the guide to graves that we visit with him) is the ambiguous figure of Jacques Brassinne de La Buissière, a high-ranking Belgian official. Brassinne was an eyewitness to the ineffectual process of Congolese transformation, and thereby also entangled in a certain way in Lumumba's murder. He worked in Katanga, a rich, industrialized part of the colony, which sought autonomy under the leadership of Moïse Cizombe, a collaborator with Belgium, after the Congo gained independence.

Jacques Brassinne devoted 30 years of his life to explaining the cause of Lumumba's mysterious death, which not only provided the topic of his PhD dissertation and 2,000 pages of various publications, but also gave meaning to his life. One of the scenes in the film shows a giant cabinet filled entirely with documents and gathered materials related to the murder. Brassinne has succumbed to archive fever: he seems truly overwhelmed, even haunted by the never-buried Lumumba, completely unable to release himself from the specter. There may be at least two reasons behind the Belgian scholar's many years of diligent archival work. The first is the apologetic effort of a faithful state official who would do everything to absolve Belgium and himself of the accusation of murdering an innocent man. Hence the compulsive gathering of countless documents, photographs, and maps that serves to substantiate – at any cost – the claim that the killing was exclusively an internal matter of the independent Congo.

On the other hand, Brassinne pursues his archivist efforts in order to finally bury the undead Lumumba (and make sure he really is dead), to locate the execution site, and therefore to put an end to the haunting once and for all. In Augustijnen's film, the worlds of the living and the dead are not separated from one another, but continue to mutually overlap since many affairs from the colonial past remain unexplained and unfinished. The absence of Lumumba's body – a material remnant that could be buried – and the lack of a sole, definitive version of the story of his murder compel the Belgian official to single-handedly build a tombstone, the monument that makes burial possible. Even though his book comes in three different versions, by writing his own, Belgian vision of history he activates the well-known logic of colonization. Accordingly, the European forces of rationality come to the help of the dependent Congo to pull it out of chaos, arranging matters of state into an order and thus putting an end to irrational obscurity. It was difficult to detain Lumumba in prison (from where he had already managed to escape once previously) given, among other factors, the considerable social support that he enjoyed in the country. That was one reason why Count Harold d'Aspremont Lynden (1914–1967), the Belgian minister for African affairs, called Lumumba's activities, several months before his death, chaos from which the Congo should be liberated at any cost.

Monument

Brassinne demonstrates a particular zeal in gathering eyewitness statements and collecting material traces related to Lumumba and his death, yet he adjusts the acquired information to his own vision of events. The Belgian guards the coherence of the story; he wants to build a tombstone for an unburied person who has no grave. He wants to fill in the traumatic gap caused by a killing that still demands justice, to build a monument and thus ultimately resolve all doubt as to who is guilty of Lumumba's death. Yet the history intricately woven by Brassinne, which takes the form of a book (perversely both dedicated and presented to Lumumba's wife), continues to fall apart. It cannot be consolidated as there are too many gaps, things passed over in silence, and ambiguities.

In *Specters*, Augustijnen effectively undermines faith in the promise of immortality, eternity, and certainty that was once supposed to be guaranteed and conveyed by firm and stable monuments.¹¹ The film comes close to the concept of the "weak monument" developed by Gianni Vattimo, who reinterprets the aesthetic thought of Martin Heidegger and indicates the transience and impermanence of statues cast in bronze or sculpted in stone.¹² The philosopher not only refers to the destructive effects of atmospheric conditions, but also to varied interpretation of the same symbols (Leopold II is regarded by some as the perpetrator of a crime against humanity, whereas others consider him a national hero) or the destructive force of the society that topples monuments and the power they symbolize (the film features the fallen statue of Henry Morton Stanley, the Welsh discoverer of the Congo, who then offered it to Leopold II).¹³

Other noteworthy references are the two different, coexisting concepts of justice found in Derrida, since they correspond in a certain way to the abovementioned means of understanding the monument and manners of commemoration.¹⁴ The first, traditional and legalistic vision, compels the understanding of justice as repaying an overdue debt, settling accounts, compensating for a wrong, filling in an abyss, reconnecting what has so far been torn apart, and removing the cause of division, i.e. injustice. Brassinne's efforts consist of seeking justice in this very traditional sense, and their aim is to redress an imbalance – refuting accusations he believes to be false and clearing Belgium of charges concerning Lumumba's murder.

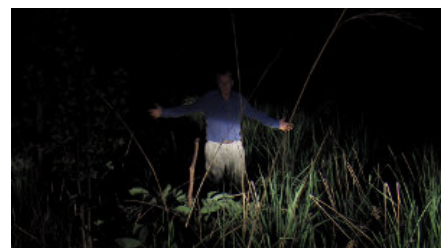
Yet Derrida attempts to open us up to a different, extrajudicial understanding of justice, whose necessary condition is the lack of an overriding principle that binds what is out of joint, disjointed, and misadjusted – everything, therefore, that would bring to mind the colloquial take on justice. A lacuna, interstice, or gap creates a unique space that offers room for otherness, a just heterogeneity (inconvenient polyphony) that is usually weighed down, suppressed by the hegemonic

requirements of unanimity and unequivocality. The French philosopher therefore opposes burials in the symbolic order, burying the polyphony of voices and interpretations formulated under the burden of a single deadening tombstone that enforces silence. The homogeneous, violent manner of commemoration erases the memory of a living polyphony and re-enacts the gesture of killing, as well as perpetrating the greatest possible injustice.

Augustijnen creates a truly haunted moving-image space; his work features a multiplicity of varied, often contradictory, overlapping voices that cannot ever be harmonized. The director additionally strengthens this uncomfortable feeling of rupture, which carries the Derridean dimension of justice, through a range of formal solutions. One of them consists of subtitles imposed on the image and covering the entire screen to suggest a version of events that is different to the official Belgian story presented by Brassinne. The inscriptions create an interstice, a gap between what individual protagonists say. A similar role is played in *Specters* by music, which destabilizes the main narrative: it does not accompany it, but becomes independent from the image and sometimes even disturbs the reception of the content; we are given the impression that it was taken from a different film or epoch. Yet the director's choice of *St. John Passion* by J. S. Bach as the soundtrack for his film was not random. This classical piece, which conveys the well-known story of a death sentence given to an innocent man who carried the promise of liberation, revolution, and salvation, perfectly resonates with the story of Lumumba's murder, but at the same time stands in contrast to the vision of events proposed by Brassinne.

The Movement of Haunting

Another formal device that strengthens viewers' belief in the existence of a vision that differs from the Belgian perspective is the volatile movement of the camera. The shakiness that tires the eyes via unstable shots indicates above all the presence of the director, who thus highlights the constant change of perspective, refusing to formulate an objective



universal story for even a single moment. Yet this is not the sole aspect of the dynamics of *Specters* that intensifies the involved heterogeneity. Akin to the soundtrack (sometimes loud, sometimes silent), the camera disobeys cinematographic standards – its movement becomes unpredictable, it roams wherever it wants, regardless of what seems most important at a given moment.¹⁵ For instance, in Brassinne's conversation with d'Aspremont Lynden, instead of showing the faces of the two speakers, the camera slides down the Count's leg and carefully examines his sock and shoes (as if repeating and parodying the gesture of subordination to colonial power).

Difficult to stop, the unpredictable dynamics of the film's images primarily draw attention to the fact that Lumumba's story has been told only incompletely, and the multiplicity of unfinished threads have not yet consolidated in the form of a stable, lasting, and unquestionable representation. The camera's unconventional movements are initially perceived merely as a disturbance, and then as the director's deliberate decision. They can also be interpreted as the movement of haunting, and therefore not only the possibility of a different interpretation or the suggestion of a different perspective, but as an artistic attempt to actualize the perspective of the absent Lumumba.

Augustijnen concentrates not just on the mobility of the living, who move in his film around the graves and monuments that give their lives meaning: *Specters* attempts to show that the unburied dead not only have the power to set the living in motion, to move them, but also that they themselves are incredibly dynamic and changeable, which makes the truth about them difficult to grasp. One of the most agitated (not to say haunted) protagonists of the film is Brassinne himself. We observe him in constant motion, always on the road. When seeking unquestionable certainty he resembles a researcher, a tireless truth-seeker. On other occasions, attempting to absolve himself of guilt, he wishes to resemble a repentant nomad, or adopts the form of a specter condemned to compulsory wandering. Augustijnen refers to the persuasive and confrontational documentary work of Claude Lanzmann, forcing the protagonist of his film to return to the crime scene in order to pursue a detailed reconstruction and face the trauma that he has hitherto been

trying hard to escape.

Brassinne invests ineffective (even desperate) efforts in finding the site of Lumumba's execution. His orientation mark up to this point has been a natural monument: a tree with bullet traces, yet now he is unable to locate it. When it turns out that the locals have simply cut it down and used the wood as fuel, the trauma becomes repeated. Previously functioning as a tombstone, the tree follows the same fate as the first prime minister of the independent Congo, whose body was cut into pieces after being murdered in order to be disappeared, and scattered around the site. Not only does the moment of death, dissolution, and absence become repeated and reconstructed, but we might also say that Brassinne experiences the loss in an almost direct manner. The Belgian official directly confronts an acute lack, a gap in the symbolic order, which he is unable to veil in any way, to cover with representation, to explain or justify.

In one of *Specters'* final scenes Brassinne roams at night, lit by car headlights, in an attempt to find even the slightest material remnant of the unburied (and therefore unmourned) Lumumba. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida underlines the role that acquiring knowledge and unshaken certainty plays in the process of mourning.¹⁶ According to him, we can allow our deceased to leave only when we ontologize them. That means replacing the lack and loss with an illusory form of presence built of remnants, traces, and fragments – a monument or grave that can be identified and recognized. Brassinne cannot perform the work of mourning as he is unable to reach undisputed knowledge about the unburied (and therefore mobile) Lumumba, who escapes his cognition by being nowhere and everywhere at the same time, refusing to belong to a single specific place. Hence the disoriented, chaotic, helpless, and formless movements of the Belgian, as if they did not originate from him – as if he were guided by someone else. Brassinne is unable to set himself free from the specter that pesters him; he does not manage to bury Lumumba, to illuminate the darkness around him, and his narrative – which attempts to lend coherence to the story – proves helpless in confrontation with the experience of death, which effectively makes symbolic tissue disintegrate.

Spectral Returns

The strange, uncanny movements made by Brassinne resemble those of the protagonists of Isaac Julien's video installation *Western Union: Small Boats* (2007), which, akin to Augustijnen's *Specters*, shows an economic and symbolic exchange between two worlds (of the living and the dead, of the colonizer and the colony), making use of choreography and the dynamics of the human body. The British artist deliberately refers to *The Leopard* (1963), directed by Luchino Visconti, the story of the end of the feudal world and the problems of the advent of a new reality.¹⁷ Akin to the promise of independence in the postcolonial history of the Congo, which remained ineffectual, the anticipated demise of the aristocracy in Sicily cannot be completely fulfilled in the 19th century.¹⁸

In his work, shot in the same location as Visconti's film, Julien refers to journeys made by migrants in small boats between Africa and Italy, during which many of them drown, while their dead bodies are never found, thus preventing proper burial.¹⁹ Aware of the impossibility of locating the precise place where the unfortunate travelers died, the artist draws our attention to a cemetery of shipwrecks on the island of Lampedusa, which are shown in lieu of the drowned bodies. The dead spectral landscape is disturbed only by the unstoppable wind which brings the wrecks to life, as they begin to screech, move, and produce various sounds under its force. Similar movements are performed by the inert, unconscious, and dead bodies of travelers carried on the backs of their companions or weaving on the floor of the palace, imitating the movements of the drowned. We receive the overwhelming impression that the human bodies in Julien's work are set in motion by an unknown external force that has taken control of them. A similar thing happens to Brassinne, who loses control of his movements and becomes utterly possessed by the specter of the dead Lumumba. If haunting means, above all, that the body is seized by something alien, other, something that is not us, then the reason of agitation in Augustijnen's cinema becomes perfectly clear.

Communication between two worlds adopts a symbolic and economic dimension – it is enough to mention the *Western Union* evoked in the title of Julien's video installation, the name of a bank whose services include cash transfers to the country from which one emigrated in order to earn money. Augustijnen's film also features various forms of returns, circulations, and movements between Belgium and the Congo. When we learn that Count d'Aspremont Lynden's son, also named Harold, began his first job in Lubumbashi (*Élisabethville*), we may get the impression that history is coming full circle. Human life-stories bear too strong a resemblance to inert bodies moved by the winds of history or set in motion because of a past that largely determines our present choices.

The goal of Augustijnen's film is not to solve the mystery, to reach a transparent, grasped truth; it does not propose to abandon uncertainty, to explain, to complete the process of mourning, thereby putting an end to haunting or settling accounts with the spirits of the colonial past. It is, above all, a project of living with specters, a task of creating a heterogeneous, impure, multivocal, remembering community that implements the ideal of Derrida's justice, which is not based on coherence, but on the gaps, multiplicity, and ruptures that make room for otherness. Augustijnen's postcolonial spectral imagination suggests that each of us lives in an open grave alongside undead companions who are difficult to bury because they make our existence possible. Just as Žižek is not able to commit philosophical patricide and set himself free from Lacan once and for all, and as Brassinne cannot part ways with Lumumba, whom he cannot bury, the Congo and Belgium are probably condemned to an endless exchange of colonial specters. Our existence is a haunted structure, and therefore the idea of an individual, independent, and isolated subject that could detach themselves from the past, which often belongs to someone else, becomes an impossible wish.

Augustijnen's cinema is haunted, as virtually every scene opens up the possibility of a different reading, including one that causes discomfort and anxiety. The director depicts a reality woven from traces that we always inherit. One of the early scenes of the film features children's heads emerging from a hedge – a dynamic view that is contrasted with stable and massive stone buildings. This is the exact kind of living,

moving monument that Augustijnen would wish to erect in his work, as opposed to an unchangeable one that preserves a single timeless truth.

Footnotes

- 1 See: Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 27.
- 2 See: Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 30.
- 3 In his interpretation of Stephen King's novel *Pet Sematary*, Jodey Castricano remarks that everything that returns to us from beyond the grave is always different, touched with decay and death. The scholar demonstrates that the difference between what left and what returns is exactly the same as the difference between the words "cemetery" and "sematary." See: Jodey Castricano, *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2001).
- 4 According to Jacques Derrida, every text always appears in the place of a certain absence – it takes the place of a different text and story that has been lost. Cf. Jacques Derrida, "FORS: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok," trans. Barbara Johnson, in Nicolas Abraham, Mária Török, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xii.
- 5 Cf. *In and Out of Brussels: Figuring Postcolonial Africa and Europe in the Films of Herman Asselberghs, Sven Augustijnen, Renzo Martens, and Els Opsomer*, eds. T.J. Demos and Hilde Van Gelder (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012), 37.
- 6 Cf. *Ibid.*, 43.
- 7 The discussion on the visual representations of the Holocaust and representations of absence is elaborated in Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in*

Spite of All, trans. Shane B. Lillis (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

8 More on hauntology [*hantologie*], i.e. the ontology of weak, residual, and fragmentary phenomena, and those situated between being and non-being, in Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994).

9 See: T.J. Demos, *Return to the Postcolony: Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), 24.

10 In another film, which confronts France's postcolonial past, *Vita nova* (dir. Vincent Meessen, 2009), a similarly telling slip of the tongue occurs in the first scene, when the main character is given the task of recalling and singing the French national anthem. He clearly does not remember it well and is at pains to pronounce each word; finally, instead of "Allons enfants de la Patrie" [*Arise, children of the Fatherland*], he sings "Allons enfants de la tyrannie" [*Arise, children of tyranny*].

11 See: Robrecht Vanderbeeken, "Documentary as Anti-Monument: On *Spectres* by Sven Augustijnen," *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, 2012, no. 31, 95-105.

12 See: Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 79-82.

13 More on meanings and power deposited in monuments that become destroyed in order to give way to new ones can be found in the interesting film by Laura Mulvey and Mark Lewis, *Disgraced Monuments* (1994).

14 See: Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 29-35.

15 See: Sophie Berrebi, "Neither Fish nor Fowl, but Real Bodies: The Films of Sven Augustijnen," *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, 2012, no. 31, 87-93. The author demonstrates in an interesting way the role of dance, agitation, and dynamic corporeality that creates meanings in Augustijnen's films.

16 "Nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt: one *has to know* who is buried where – and it is *necessary* (to know – to make certain) that, in what remains of him, *he remain there*." Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 9.

17 Isaac Julien, Katarzyna Bojarska, "Podkładam ludziom ogień! Rozmowa z Isaacem Julienem," <http://archiwum-obieg.u-jazdowski.pl/rozmowy/11795> (accessed June 1, 2017).

18 More on Julien's work and its relation to the disturbance and rupture of the coherence of the story, in Shelleen Greene, "Envisioning Postcolonial Italy: Haile Gerima's *Adwa: An African Victory* and Isaac Julien's *Western Union: Small Boats*," in *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*, eds. Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 251-260.

19 In his film *Better Life* (2010), Julien returns to unburied victims by telling a story of 24 Chinese illegal immigrants who died in the 2004 Morecambe Bay cockling disaster.