Article

The Primacy of Family Genealogy to Situate Burial, Spectrality, and Ancestrality: Adventures in the Land of the Dead

Stephen B. Hatton

Independent Researcher, Delaware, OH 43015, USA; stephenhatton@archeopath.info

Abstract: Family genealogy is well-positioned to explore the significance of burial and death, particularly as it relates to one's connection to ancestors. Doing genealogical research involves visiting the land of the dead, treasuring information, heirlooms, and documents providing evidence about the life of an ancestor, and often revealing a presence of and interaction with the ancestor. Burial is not only associated with the essence of humanity, and coeval with historical consciousness, but it is also essentially connected with genealogy. One may argue that historical consciousness is founded on awareness of and practices bearing on genealogical and ancestral relations. After briefly listing points related to burial and mortuary practices, the article discusses Western philosophers beginning with Plato to show the dual emphases of concern for personal mortality and death of the other. It focuses on death of the other as being able to explain funerary practices and as amenable to genealogy. Next, a brief examination of Freud's uncanny and of Abraham and Torok's transgenerational psychology constructed on evidence of the unconscious phantom lead to the spectral turn instituted by Derrida. The article is rounded out with a consideration of the metatextuality of *Gilgamesh* and the *Odyssey* epics. Both involve a visit by the living to the land of the dead. Both are textual, placing unwritten stress on the critical role of writing.

Keywords: ancestrality; burial; death; funeral; *Gilgamesh*; mortality; *Odyssey*; spectrality

1. Introduction

Most family genealogists are concerned primarily with individuals and vital facts related to such events as death and burial, and with generational linkages. More curious and advanced researchers progress beyond genealogy to family history that includes more biographical information and exploration of reasons for behavior for such events and characteristics as migration, geographic moves, occupation, and activity in various personal social networks. This kind of research may leverage knowledge and methods of other disciplines such as history, psychology, law, and sociology. Two examples are the work of Alison Light (Light 2015) and Maria Stepanova (Stepanova 2021), neither of whom is a genealogist. The research approaches family historians use may be influenced by microhistory exemplified in some of the work of Carlo Ginzburg (Ginzburg 1980) and Natalie Davis (Davis 1983), or the theoretical work of microhistorians (Grendi 1977; Levi 2001; Ginzburg 1989; Ginzburg 2012; Magnússon 2003; Magnússon and Szijártó 2013; Peltonen 2001; Szijártó 2002; Cerutti 2004), or books by historians like David Sabean (1998) and Barbara Hanawalt (1986). Yet other family historians undertake projects such as reading cemetery inscriptions, inventorying cemetery and church locations, and indexing local and regional records held at various government and private archives. Genealogy applies practical methods to compile evidence of parental relations, that is, to determine ancestral and descendant relations in the narrow sense. It seeks to discover and understand ancestral relations. Though genealogy is predominantly practical, scholars have explored a few theoretical concerns connected with it, notably critical family history, investigating motives for undertaking genealogical research and the relations of family genealogy and media studies, as well as reconsidering the history of modern genealogical research. This article

examines another theoretical problem of family genealogy, specifically, what underlies its practice. It looks at death and burial as prime drivers for genealogical pursuits but from the perspective of its relation to the roots of culture and historical consciousness.

For some non-genealogical scholars, burial distinguishes humans (Gadamer 1981, p. 75; Vico [1725] 1948, p. 8, para. 12; Harrison 2009, p. xi), and for others it is the basis of culture (Ruin 2018, p. 13; Assmann 2011, p. 1), society, and civilization (Ruin 2018, pp. 3, 87). In his 2018 book *Being with the Dead*, Hans Ruin argues that burial and mortuary practice form the roots of and explain the origins of historical consciousness (Ruin 2018, p. 4). This is independent of the epistemological grappling with the origins of historical self-consciousness that was a key component of the Hegelian project of Spirit (Hegel [1807] 1977; Hegel [1816] 1969), at the heart of the concerns of Wilhelm Dilthey (Dilthey 1989), and was reflected on by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Gadamer 1975) and others. Burial and funerary practices used to provide evidence of humanity, culture, and historical consciousness or to argue the origins of them have merit and are plausibly different aspects of the same observation if one believes that historical consciousness and culture are co-indicative or the same. The main thrust of this article is that considered in a more nuanced manner, death as perceived through the lens of burial is more theoretically aligned with genealogy than other disciplines.

Archaeological evidence is widespread that burials occurred for thousands of years, and contain tools, weapons, ornaments, and careful placement of bodily remains. Some occurred in more permanent structures, and with monuments, and show evidence of ritual practices (Fleming 1973; Harries 1997; Bradley 1998; Pearson 2000; Assmann 2005; Baker 2012; Ensor 2013). Nevertheless, it is not possible based only on archaeological evidence to determine whether the association of burial is closest to human nature (however one defines it), culture, historical consciousness, or genealogy.

2. Grief, Mourning, and Funerary Practice

Following Johann Jakob Bachofen, Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry noted how fertility and sexuality were often associated with funeral practices (Bloch and Parry 1982, p. 1). In those cases, the dead may live on in newborns in a kind of reincarnation. Death makes possible a new potentiality for life (Bloch and Parry 1982, p. 8), and is essential for the continuation of life (Bloch and Parry 1982, p. 10). Death is converted to birth by a cycle of regeneration (Bloch and Parry 1982, p. 26), and thus establishes a genealogical linkage between generations. Middleton noted that hierarchy and authority were associated with differences in genealogical generation and age (Bloch and Parry 1982, p. 11). Legitimate authority is founded on an orderly replication of a pattern ordered by ancestors (Bloch and Parry 1982, p. 12). The graveyard is a symbolic representation of social order (Bloch and Parry 1982, p. 33).

It is a social imperative to care for the dead body consistent with society's time requirements (Christensen and Willerslev 2013, p. 1). Mourning and remembrance are essential to death's sociality. They support the social ties between the living and the dead (Christensen and Willerslev 2013, p. 10). Those who are living live with the dead (Christensen and Willerslev 2013, p. 12). The Siberian rebirth doctrine shows similarity to the cultures that believe in regeneration. This is one way of dealing with grief. It stresses continuity rather than finality (Christensen and Willerslev 2013, p. 79).

Robert Hertz wrote that the Dayak of Borneo practiced rites that related to the body, the soul, and survivors (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 29). Relatives of the deceased were temporarily isolated from the rest of the community (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 38). Death causes the social fabric to tear (Lévi-Strauss 1966, p. 196). The length of mourning depended on the degree of kinship (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 39), but normally lasted until the second burial (after the body decomposed and the bones were cleaned, the bones were reburied) (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 40). Death was a process not an instantaneous event (van Gennep [1909] 2004, p. 214; Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 48; Garland 1985, p. 13). Even in cultures where there was no double burial, a period of time had to pass before the death was consummated (Hertz [1907] 1960,

p. 52). The final ceremony consisted of burying the remains, which ensured the soul of the departed peace and access to the land of the dead, and freed the living from further obligation of mourning (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 54). The final resting place of the body was in a small house, a monument to the deceased (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 54). The final ceremony delivered the deceased from isolation and reunited the body with ancestors (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 55). The bones also protected the village against misfortune and helped the living with their activities (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 57). The deceased entered the community of the family (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 57). Services were exchanged between the living and the dead (Hertz [1907] 1960, p. 61).

Writing about African groups, Igor Kopytoff described communities of the living and dead (Kopytoff 1971, p. 129). The dead (ancestors) retain a functional role in the world of the living, especially in living kin (Kopytoff 1971, pp. 129, 131). The dead are also present in the world of the living in their dreams (Astuti and Bloch 2013, p. 105).

Expressions of mourning are often assigned according to kinship roles (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, p. 3). Death is a shock to the family group which in response draws together in reaction to the loss (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, p. 51). The funeral is a communal affair, with participants cooperating in its preparation tasks and duties that serve to bring them close together (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, p. 93). One objective of following a protocol on funerary practices is to prevent the deceased/corpse from becoming a monster (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, p. 94). If the practices such as the feast that brings the dead and living together are followed, good things will come from the dead ancestors (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, p. 96; Garland 1985, p. 39). Death is a process, a transition from one spiritual state to another (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, p. 97). Metcalf also speaks of reburial which is an obligation of descendants (Metcalf and Huntington 1991, p. 120).

In some hunting societies, the intimate presences of ancestors and spirits of deceased in their worlds were coeval. They communicated with the living. Ancestrality is connected and articulated with the living in their plans and events (Poirier 2013, p. 56). Subarctic Amerindian ancestors (spirits of deceased relatives) are present in the land, encountered in dreams, and acknowledged through ritual gestures (Poirier 2013, p. 57). The Australian landscape is impregnated with ancestral power, presence, and agency. Aborigines believed in a regenerative process of ancestrality expressed in mortuary practices and mourning ceremonies (Poirier 2013, p. 58).

The effect of death on the closest kin, the generational linkage between death and fertility/birth in some cultures, the responsibility of relatives to care for the deceased, the joint world of the living and dead, and the isolation of relatives during mourning are phenomena oriented more closely with genealogy than with historical consciousness and culture. The latter are larger macro-social phenomena built upon the many particular deaths and dead–living interactions of personal families.

3. Philosophy and Reflections on Death and Burial

This section explores the philosophic background of death and burial. It selects from some of the more important Western philosophers, namely, Plato, Hegel, Heidegger, Gadamer, Blanchot, Foucault, Levinas, and Lingis who made significant contributions in this area. It also discusses Ruin.

Plato wrote about Socrates speaking in detail about recollection in the dialogues *Meno* and *Phaedo*, and in less detail in such dialogues as the *Phaedrus*. The *Phaedo*, however, is more famous for its scene of Socrates' execution and his reflections on his own death and mortality. Socrates' concern for mortality was not accompanied by existential anxiety. Rather, his focus was on the philosophers' way of life and death, and on recollection.

Socrates refers to burial (Plato 1961, 115e) as applicable only to the body, and that he might be cremated or inhumated. He leaves it up to Crito to decide how to bury his body. In any case, there is no reflection on the death of another, or on death seen through the practice of burial. Socrates is not concerned about the impact his death will have on others,

though he complains of his companions' emotional reaction prior to his death. Rather, he dwells only on his preparation for death, and the lessons that might teach to those listening to him.

Giambattista Vico briefly discussed burial, leaning on his penchant for etymology. He noted the derivation of human (*humanitas* in Latin) from *humando* (burying) (Vico [1725] 1948, p. 8, sct. 12). He wrote that giants demarcated land ownership by placement of their graves (Vico [1725] 1948, p. 166, sct. 531, p. 8, sct. 134; Anderson n.d., p. 3), noting that the Greek for giant meant "children of the earth," that is, descendants of those who have been buried. In this, he stressed the economical side of burial, but still displayed no interest in the death of the other except insofar as the others were ancestors who claimed land by burial location.

G.W.F. Hegel made important contributions to the subject at hand, exploring how death and burial are keys to humanity and the unfolding of Spirit. Hegel emphasized burial as an ethical act that raises the deceased above nature and completes the universal resolution of the family member who died. Death is the individual's ultimate *Aufhebung* (sublation), the dialectical movement, or unfolding, from singular to universal. Burial actualizes the *Aufhebung* (Kalkavage 2007, p. 243). Burial also protects the departed loved one from irrational nature (Hegel [1807] 1977, p. 270), honors him as a family member (Hegel [1807] 1977, p. 271), and treats the dead person as more than just a material corpse. By burying the dead, the family re–confirms the deceased as a member of the community (Hegel [1807] 1977, p. 271).

Martin Heidegger viewed Dasein (being-there) as being-toward death (*Sein zum Tode*). That is because it is ahead-of-itself, anticipatory, confronted with its own end, its own death. It is not a possibility but constitutes the limits of Dasein and of all possibilities. Dasein's death belongs to it alone and permeates Dasein's mode of being. Time is the basis upon which to think of Dasein's annihilation (Levinas 2000, p. 50). That is, Heidegger thought time on the basis of death, as death marks the final temporality of Dasein's ownmost being (Malpas 2006, pp. 101, 272–73; Levinas 2000, p. 106). For Heidegger, time is a continuous, linear, irreversible flow of events, but for some, time is repetitive (Leach 1971, pp. 125–26, 131–32; Tokarczuk 2017, pp. 52–53).

For Heidegger, mortality constituted the essence of Dasein (Lingis 1989, p. 6). A person advances resolutely into his own singular termination, but that death determines possibilities (Lingis 1989, p. 6). One's existence projects itself to its own death (Lingis 1989, p. 109). Anxiety senses that nothingness of oneself (Lingis 1989, p. 112).

But in spite of this strong existential view of death, Heidegger reflected on death of the other, for Dasein is also Being-with-others (Heidegger [1927] 1962, p. 155 [H118]). Death tears away someone from those who remain living (Heidegger [1927] 1962, p. 282 [H238]; Earle-Lambert 2011, p. 25). Care and concern for the deceased are displayed in funeral rites, interment, and a culture of graves (Heidegger [1927] 1962, p. 282 [H238]; Laqueur 2015, p. 5). Mourners are with the departed in respectful solicitude, even though the deceased is no longer factically there. After the other's death, being-with-others becomes being-with-the-dead (*Mitsein mit dem Toten*) (Davis 2007, p. 115).

For Hans-Georg Gadamer, the goal of burial, perhaps the fundamental phenomenon of becoming human (Gadamer 1981, p. 75), is to live with the dead and to enable the dead to remain among the living (Gadamer 1981, p. 75). Mourning gifts left at graves do not let death have the last word (Gadamer 1981, p. 75).

Maurice Blanchot argued that writing is possible only when the author is his own master before death (Blanchot 1982, p. 91). A writer is equal with death in terms of power. As Alphonso Lingis explains, for Blanchot, death is always imminent. Death is indeterminate, and one cannot perform the singularization by one's own power (Lingis 1989, pp. 186–87). Writing history is achieved against death, and builds a *tombeau* for the dead, thereby exorcising death (de Certeau 1988, p. 100).

Michel Foucault conceived of a cemetery as a heterotopia (Foucault 1998, p. 180), a localizable utopia distinct from other places. When doubts about the existence of souls

prevailed, attention was given to mortal remains (Foucault 1998, p. 181), and cemeteries moved to the edges of cities—city at the edge of a city, "where each family possessed its dark dwelling" (Foucault 1998, p. 181; Harries 1997, p. 295).

Lingis combines discussions of the existential finality of death (Lingis 1989, pp. 109–34) and the sensitive care for others' deaths (Lingis 1989, pp. 176–91). The former engages in dialog with Heidegger, and the latter is informed by Emmanuel Levinas. For Heidegger, the sense of the possible and the sense of mortality are the same (Lingis 1989, p. 113).

Skin and the face are expressive of humanity, and appeal to the other for answers and responses. The other acknowledges and calls for a response (Lingis 1989, p. 136). He exposes himself (Lingis 1989, p. 136), expressing vulnerability (Lingis 1989, p. 138). Death cannot give direction à la Heidegger because it is always imminent. To recognize the other is to be ordered by him, to respond to a summons (Lingis 1989, p. 145). This demands responsibility, answering to the other who appeals (Lingis 1989, p. 146). The death of the other concerns a person (Lingis 1989, p. 182). The alterity of the one who is dying demands respect (Lingis 1989, pp. 188–89). This is a compulsion to substitute oneself for the other in his dying so that the other is not lost in solitude; death is an eventuality that will occur for all (Lingis 1989, p. 190).

Levinas viewed death as the disappearance in beings of expressive movement (Levinas 2000, p. 9). He focused not on his own death but on the death of the other person, in which that person's face becomes a mask with no expression. One's relationship with that person before death becomes a deference to him after death even when he no longer responds (Levinas 2000, p. 12). This is affectivity without intentionality (Levinas 2000, p. 17). The other concerns one as a neighbor, and one who is a survivor has a responsibility to him (Levinas 2000, p. 10; Ruin 2018, p. 104; Grainger 1998, p. 7). The ethical imperative of the family is to bury the dead (Levinas 2000, p. 83). The act of burial is a relationship with the deceased not to a corpse (Levinas 2000, p. 83). Death is a function of time instead of death being the project of time (Levinas 2000, p. 113).

Robert Harrison writes that culture perpetuates itself through the power of the dead (Harrison 2009, p. ix). Those who came before the living instituted and conveyed laws, language, etc. (Harrison 2009, p. ix; Allan 1986, pp. 78, 79, 84). Harrison makes the point that one's awareness of death arises from one's awareness that one is not self-authored but comes from ancestors (Harrison 2009, p. ix), and thus does not arise from consciousness of mortality or at least not only from that. For Harrison, humans bury to achieve closure and separate the living from the dead while also continuing to build worlds and found histories (Harrison 2009, p. xi).

History and memory depend on inscription. The Greek word *sema* means both sign and grave. The grave is the sign of the one who lies buried below the gravestone. In this sense, death is the opening, the creation, of reference, providing the sign, the signified, and the inscribed signifier. Two realms under the earth (the dead) and on the earth (the living and the gravestone) (Harrison 2009, p. 39) interpenetrate one another.

Humans housed their dead before they housed themselves (Harrison 2009, p. 38). The dead abide in those houses, tombs, in earth, memory, institutions, genes, books, and in dreams (Harrison 2009, p. 39). Burial lays the dead to rest in the earth, while mourning lays them to rest in us (Harrison 2009, p. 50). Humans find their voice in the other's death (Harrison 2009, p. 65), which recalls Hegel's statement about animals expressing themselves in death (Hegel [1806] 1976, p. 170). Genealogy opens up the possibility of signification in death, burial, and cultural inheritance (Harrison 2009, p. 104). Dasein is historicized by the law of genealogy (Harrison 2009, p. 104). It is difficult or impossible to get the dead to die in one if the dead body is missing (Harrison 2009, p. 147; Derrida 1994, p. 9; Etkind 2013, pp. 13, 16–17; Laqueur 2015, p. 8). The communion between the living and the dead synthesizes generational binding (Harrison 2009, p. 151).

The desire to know lies at the heart of mourning. There is also a desire to share its burden by expressing it (Etkind 2013, p. 13; Sebald 2011; Drndic 2012). Some polit-

ical regimes sometimes seek to erase the existence of suppressed people (Gordon 2008, pp. 72–81, 126–27; Bargu 2014; Bradley 2019).

Hans Ruin writes that the act of burial is a relationship with the dead in which the family makes the deceased a member of the community, and transforms the dead into living memory (Ruin 2018, p. 21). The historical in life is the opening toward the demand of the dead other (Ruin 2018, p. 34). Those who live show respect for the dead in the burial rite the purpose of which is to reestablish autonomy of the spirit across the threshold of death (Ruin 2018, p. 44). One has, not has had, an ancestor (Ruin 2018, p. 66). Though the ancestor lived in the past, he exists now as an ancestor. This is the grounds and foundation of the meaning of death exhibited through lineage and inheritance (Ruin 2018, p. 66). We keep the dead alive through historical knowledge (Ruin 2018, p. 77) but even more through genealogical knowledge. Knowledge of the past constitutes reciprocity to predecessors (Ruin 2018, p. 78). It preserves and cultivates lineages of ancestors in the arts, sciences, etc. (Ruin 2018, p. 78). Keeping a legacy alive is an ethical imperative (Ruin 2018, p. 78). For Ruin, historical research is the most advanced epistemic practice available for determining how it really was with the dead others (Ruin 2018, p. 83). But he neglects to note that genealogy is a practice that fulfills that role even better. The grave is the first sign of the departed person, the present absence of the other (Ruin 2018, p. 185). The grave is the exterior stabilization of social continuity (Ruin 2018, p. 185; Allan 1986, pp. 7, 78).

Burial is founded on care of the other, especially kin, rather than on concern for and anxiety about one's mortality. One relates to the deceased as a departed loved one, not just to a corpse, and with little or no attention to one's own mortality. Caring for the departed one through the funeral and burial process occupies those responsible for ensuring those tasks are performed properly according to current cultural beliefs and practices. Burial of the ancestor is the ethical imperative of descendants, the family as a whole, and it also benefits the continuation of the family and the good of society which rests upon the accumulated cultural traditions, beliefs, and behaviors established by ancestors. Genealogy is an appropriate path for understanding those practices, the role ancestors played and continue to play in the lives of the living, and of cultural and heritage transmission, but most particularly, the family historic aspects of dead ancestors.

4. Psychology and Spectrality

The "spectral turn" began in 1993 with the publication of Derrida's *Spectres de Marx* and the English translation *Specters of Marx* in the following year, even if for many years belief in and stories about ghosts and hauntings were widespread. Although this is a work of philosophy and politics as well as of other disciplines including history and psychology, it raises the subject of burial and mourning. A discussion about Freud and Abraham and Torok will help situate Derrida's concerns.

In his 1919 essay on the uncanny, Sigmund Freud discussed how the opposite terms *heimlich* and *unheimlich* coincide (Freud [1919] 2001, p. 226). *Heimlich*, the agreeable and familiar, is frequently concealed (Freud [1919] 2001, pp. 224–25). According to Schelling, *unheimlich* ought to have remained secret and hidden but came to light (Freud [1919] 2001, p. 225). The uncanny is that which is frightening that leads back to what is known and familiar (Freud [1919] 2001, p. 220). Freud cited Jentsch who believed one such condition arises when there is uncertainty about whether an object is alive or not, or when an inanimate object seems too much like an animate one (Freud [1919] 2001, p. 233). Freud believed that the source of uncanny feelings is an infantile wish or belief, not fear, though it may be experienced as fear (Freud [1919] 2001, p. 233). The frightening element is something repressed (Freud [1919] 2001, pp. 241, 248). Many experience the feeling in relation to death and ghosts (Freud [1919] 2001, p. 241). Already in Freud, the uncanny is closely tied to death.

Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok thought that a phantom was a formation of the unconscious that passed from a parent's unconscious into the child's (Abraham and Torok 1994, p. 173). Contrary to traditional psychoanalytic thought up to that time, it was not

a Freudian repressed experience or an incorporated experience such as Ferenczi thought (Abraham and Torok 1994, p. 175). It was a trace of the dead buried in oneself that pointed to a gap in consciousness, referring to the unspeakable (Abraham and Torok 1994, p. 174). Haunting is the manifestation of the phantom (p. 181). The psychic ghost returns to haunt with the intent of lying (Abraham and Torok 1994, p. 188), and it is the psychoanalyst's goal to make the gap visible, to bring it to knowledge, so that the patient can be healed. Whereas Abraham and Torok sought to return the ghost to the order of knowledge, Derrida wanted to retain the strangeness, the unheard otherness, and the ghost to emphasize uncertainty to enable the unsettled past to haunt the present (Davis 2007, p. 13).

Derrida conceived of a ghost as an other that is an entity but not living. A specter is neither living nor dead, neither present nor absent, participating in habitation without inhabiting, a haunting (Derrida 1994, p. 20). It causes a disjoint in time, disarticulates it, and dislodges it. Hauntology, a term Derrida coined, is not ontology but makes it possible (Derrida 1994, p. 63; Davis 2013, p. 53). For Derrida, mourning consists in attempting to ontologize the deceased's remains, to make them present (Derrida 1994, p. 9), but it is crucial to localize the remains, to know where they are buried (Derrida 1994, p. 9). The Greek and Platonic *phanesthai* itself (visible appearing) is the possibility of the specter. It brings death, and works at mourning (Derrida 1994, p. 169). Phantasma are figures of dead souls in the *Phaedo* (Plato 1961, p. 184). More specifically, the specter exceeds the opposition between the visible and the invisible (Derrida and Stiegler 2013, p. 39). It watches me but I do not watch it (Derrida and Stiegler 2013, p. 41). When they are not near funeral monuments, specters haunt souls of living persons. The question of life-and-death precedes the question of Being, essence, and existence. A specter is a historical entity made of signatures inscribed on living beings by time (Agamben 2013, p. 474). Derrida observed Freud's remarkable aside in "The Uncanny" that he (Freud) should have begun his research on the *unheimlich* with phantomic haunting, or the "*es spukt*" (Freud [1919] 2001, p. 217). Derrida believed one must hold fast the uncertainty that the specter affords. Undecidability is a determinate oscillation between possibilities (Hitchcock 2013, p. 175) that opens one to the unsettled status of interpretation. Thus, the ghost functions as the paradigmatic deconstructive gesture, the trace of an absence that undermines the fixedness of binary oppositions, and the finality of any interpretation (Weinstock 2013, p. 62). A specter referring to the presentness of the past by haunting it with the past, suggests an alternative narrative that calls into question the veracity of a canonic version of events and interpretation (Weinstock 2013, p. 63).

Spectrality has influenced thinking in many disciplines including historiography itself which is a form of haunting because the past haunts the present and vice versa (Blanco and Peeren 2013, p. 482). History is reshaped by disrupting its chronological retelling (Blanco and Peeren 2013, p. 14). The influence of the spectral in other areas is exemplified by Freccero, Hitchcock, Lippit, Rashkin, and Wolfreys. Freccero looks at queer historiography spectrally. She calls for using the force of the spectral (Freccero 2013, p. 342) in a critical re-valorization of places and possibilities of pleasure in serious works of historiography (Freccero 2013, p. 335).

Peter Hitchcock focuses on Derrida's apparent focus on Marx and capitalism. Capitalism as a world system is haunted and haunts the current world it formed (Hitchcock 2013, p. 175). A Marxist critique depends on grasping the visible of the invisible (Hitchcock 2013, p. 182).

Akira Lippit notes the coincidence of spectral technologies that occurred in 1895, making the invisible visible. Freud illuminated the secret in dreams and revealed the unconscious (Lippit 2013, p. 268). The Lumières set the stage for cinema by freezing motion, allowing the frozen images to regenerate as action in theaters. Röntgen made visible invisible X-rays. 1895 was the year in which humans exposed the psyche, the movements of life, and the body (Lippit 2013, p. 271).

Esther Rashkin explores the haunting effects of family secrets on characters in fictional narratives (Rashkin 1992, p. 3). Phantoms may be concealed rhetorically and linguistically

within literature. The challenge is to detect them and expose their driving forces (Rashkin 1992, p. 5). Julian Wolfreys broadens this by applying the spectral to fictional texts as such. The text itself, he argues, haunts and is haunted by traces that come together in the textual structure itself (Wolfreys 2013, p. 73). The reader believes the characters, and assumes their reality, even though they are textual projections, apparitions, part of an authorial fabrication (Wolfreys 2013, p. 73).

Ruin locates the historical, the spectral, in the space between the living and the dead (Ruin 2018, p. 5). To be historical is to live with the dead (Ruin 2018, p. 9). This is the basis upon which he develops his book *Being with the Dead*.

Freud's *unheimlich* is experienced when one expects one thing, say something human, but is confronted with something else, say the animate or the inanimate mechanical, to use an example of Jentsch cited by Freud. On the other hand, in some contexts, experiencing aspects in a human of the inelastic mechanical automatic may strike one as comical (Bergson 1956, pp. 66–67, 76, 81–82; Koestler 1964, pp. 45–47). However, the beliefs and practices discussed herein show an expected participation of the living and the dead in human experiences. That includes visits to the land of the dead, spectral hauntings, the notion of ancestors present in the ongoing family, and many others. Because these are normal and expected, they are not uncanny.

Abraham and Torok observed instances of transgenerational phantoms in which the unspeakable was passed from the unconscious of a parent to the unconscious of a child. Similar hauntings are common in skipping generations, as experiences of the Holocaust were passed on unconsciously to grandchildren. Other psychoanalysts have continued their research and writing on transgenerational psychology as it relates to genealogy (Schützenberger 1998). One goal is to obtain knowledge, to make the invisible visible, amenable to a primary goal of genealogy. Derrida wrote that mourning is meant to make present the dead ancestor, to ontologize him. The same applies to the not so recent deceased ancestor in a situation in which mourning is not applicable, but the presence of the dead ancestor affects and influences, consciously and unconsciously, beliefs and behaviors of descendants. Thus, Derrida is consistent with that aspect of family genealogy in which the appearance of the specter depends on *phanesthai* itself.

5. Writing and Epic Visits to the Land of the Dead

The living and the dead interact and influence each other in many ways. This section reviews ancient visits by the living to the land of the dead. In Greek mythology, two such visits were made by Hermes (Graves 1960, vol. 1, p. 94 [24h]) and Orpheus (Graves 1960, vol. 1, p. 112 [28c], and vol. 1, p. 278 [82i]). To be briefly discussed are two well-known such visits in epics, that of Enkidu in *Gilgamesh* and of Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*.

5.1. Gilgamesh

Gilgamesh, an eleventh-century BCE Mesopotamian epic (George 2003, pp. 16–25; Michalowski 1999, p. 77; *Gilgamesh* 2021, pp. 125–28), depicts the friendship of Gilgamesh and Enkidu and Enkidu's visit to the netherworld. The narrative consists of a framed story written by Gilgamesh himself—"he set down all his trials on a slab of stone" (*Gilgamesh* 2021, Book I, line 10). The structure brings attention to the wall of Uruk. According to legend, the written stone epic was part of the physical foundaton of Uruk's wall. In the narrative, the wall refers to the protective ring around Uruk but also to the narrative's shape (*Gilgamesh* 2021, p. 147). The wall signals the narrative structure, appearing at the beginning, the end, and near the curse Ishtar directs at Gilgamesh (VI.157–63). The text performs a literal return—textual structure, content, and physical epic turn on each other and merge iinto one semiotic whole.

Enkidu goes to the underworld to retrieve Gilgamesh's ball and bat (XII.73–75). He descended (XII.31) but could not ascend back to the world of the living (XII.51). After Gilgamesh implores the god Ea to asssist, Ea aids in Enkidu's return (XII.85–88). Enkidu relates to Gilgamesh who he saw while in the underworld.

5.2. Odyssey

The author of the *Odyssey* situates the story of an oral performer as a writer within the narrative (Homer 1996, pp. XI.255–56, 378, 415–17). The goddess Circe tells Odysseus that he must travel down to the House of Death and find Persephone to consult with Tiresius (X.539–41). Circe's instructions about the way to travel (X.561ff) are more serious than the quip in Aristophanes' *Frogs* that the quickest way to Hades is to jump off of a tower (Aristophanes 1924, pp. 118, 129–36).

Elpenor approaches Odysseus as a ghost, and Odysseus encounters the ghost of his mother who flutters through his fingers three times (XI. 235–37). Odysseus relates meeting many other in the land of the dead (XI.257ff) all of whom are described with genealogical relations to parents or spouses.

An analysis of *Gilgamesh* and the *Odyssey* illustrates two key points: the dead and the living interact (Enkidu's and Odysseus' visits to the land of the dead) and the relevance to genealogy (naming of ancestors and spouses; conversations with relatives in the land of the dead). Writing is of great importance in these epics, and although writing is clearly closely associated with both historiography and genealogy, it can be demonstrated that neither text exemplifies historiography. This will be illustrated by a discussion of *Gilgamesh*.

Gilgamesh is a myth about the founding of Uruk. The Flood story within the Enkidu story within the outer frame is text, story, writing only, not history. The Western concept of history did not exist in ancient Mesopotamia (Michalowski 1999, pp. 70, 75, 78). The only immortality enjoyed by Gilgamesh and Enkidu is in the telling of the stories in the text *Gilgamesh* (Michalowski 1999, p. 80). Gilgamesh immortalized his own deeds through writing and also the Flood story told by Utanapishti which up until *Gilgamesh* had been told only orally. The very remembrance of the deeds, the very binary state of life/death lies in the written text of the epics. The walls of Uruk built by Gilgamesh (purportedly history) are revealed in the written epic to be a semiotic sign referring to the construction of the *Gilgamesh* epic, its structure. Thus, history is not conceived as history is in the West, but is textual, in some respects like the metatextual and logomimetic atopia of Aristophanes' Cloudcuckoovillle (Whitman 1964, pp. 167–99; Koelb 1984, pp. 61–80; Dobrov 1997, pp. 95–132). Neither is a real localizable place. Each is composed of text. This textual polemic was typical of late second millennium BC Mesopotamian thought (Michalowski 1999, p. 81). Thus, the surface description of Uruk as historic is transformed from historiographic to textual and mythic (Michalowski 1999, p. 87). The texts of *Gilgamesh* and the *Odyssey* circle around genealogy with their naming of ancestors, visits to the land of the dead, emphasis on text, all including not only just documenting lineage but naming the dead and more importantly, therefore immortalizing them, making their deceased hidden ancestors visible, remembered, and honored.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

Death of kin deeply affects those most closely related—spouse, parent, child, sibling, and uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces. cousins—and to a lesser extent, the larger community both because of empathy and because of the social roles played by the deceased. Care for the deceased extends beyond the death of the loved one. It is the responsibility of those who survive to prepare for and follow socially prescribed steps that vary depending on the culture but often involve preparation of the body, funeral practices, burial, and commemorating the life of the deceased with a gravestone, monument, or memorial. In some cultures, the family of the deceased is isolated from the larger community during these process steps, but rejoins the community upon completing those tasks. These are matters of practice, ritual, phenomenology, and ontology, not of epistemology. The relation of these largely genealogical responsibilities, relations, and memories to historical consciousness and culture are logical and foundational, and the problem to be thought through is theoretical. Insofar as mortuary practices and burial stem from kinship relations, and memories of the deceased are first and foremost genealogical, genealogy cannot be just another illustration that we engage the past first through the care for ancestors. Rather,

that is the founding reason for engaging the past. Viewed thus, historical consciousness is founded on genealogy. One is aware of, reflects on, and writes about the past because one first relates to the past and to personal ancestors genealogically with personal responsibility based on a close relation with an other.

Today, kinship is viewed socially in terms of shared interests, mutuality, and friendship (Sahlins 2013, p. 9; Viveiros de Castro 2009, p. 237). Anthropologists a century ago and many genealogists today consider kinship narrowly to consist of blood (biological descent and ascent) (Schneider 1980, p. 23) or marriage relations (Bouquet 2000, p. 127; Bouquet 2001a, p. 44; Bouquet 2001b, p. 98). Thus, kinship was conceived to be transmitted through sexual reproduction and relationships, that is, genealogy narrowly defined. Apart from the social reasons for broadening the perspective of kinship, there are technological reasons to do so, including adoption and use of assisted reproduction technologies (DaCosta 2022). So while in many cultures, especially in the West, the closest kin are those related via consanguinal or affinal links—and thus are most affected by death of a loved one who was part of the same "family," the larger community was affected because of the social networks to which the deceased belonged.

Insofar as culture and historical consciousness are coeval, and arose from what is fundamentally (originarily) a genealogical relation, the grounding of burial and mortuary practice in genealogy implies that genealogy is the foundation of historical consciousness and cultural transmission. A corollary to this theoretical perspective is that the, or at least a, founding basis of genealogy is death. However, this is not death faced with existential angst, but death of closely related others—a being-with-others transformed into a being-with-the-dead. This may be viewed from a Foucauldian philosophical perspective or a phenomenological perspective similar to that taken by Levinas and Lingis, and to an extent, Gadamer. Both perspectives, including that taken by Derrida, enable the dead to live with or near the living, and the living with the dead. This co-living may be considered culturally, spectrally, and textually (a material and anti-evanescent capture in logos). The texts of *Gilgamesh* and the *Odyssey* show the living and dead to co-exist in the genealogical relations of those encountered in visits to the netherworld, in the founding of the city/Uruk/culture, and in mythological substantiation in which historical consciousness, myth, writing, and genealogy merge, not epistemologically but ontologically and more accurately, phenomenologically, theoretically, and textually.

Whether one approaches this theoretical problem through funerary practices and burial, philosophy of the death of the other, psychological intergenerational spectrality, or epic literary analysis, one ends up in a similar position—family genealogy is the foundation of each. The ethical imperative of the family to bury the dead is founded on the affective responses of the face, the body, and the personality and character of the loved one to whom one is related. Abraham and Torok's phantom, a formation of the unconscious, haunts the child's or grandchild's unconscious in an intimate genealogical coexistence of the dead and the living. The trace of the ancestral dead is buried in the descendant's living unconscious. The unspeakable is passed on, inscribed in a corporeal and symbolic text. Death underlies the genealogical convergence of inheritance, the phantom in/as self-referential text, and of heirloomic presence.

Harrison correctly concludes that "it is at the genealogical level that lexification first opens up the possibilities of affiliation" (Harrison 2009, p. 104). On the other hand, Ruin's statement that "historical research is the most advanced epistemic practice available for determining how it really was with the dead others" (Ruin 2018, p. 83) is problematic. What is puzzling about his statement is that concrete examples he gives pertain to activities of genealogy. He discusses a project of producing a field guide to Jewish burial sites in Poland (Ruin 2018, pp. 108–10), and another project that documented burial sites of enslaved African Americans (Ruin 2018, pp. 110–12). He also mentions maintenance of family lineage on a personal family level (Ruin 2018, p. 78), and keeping images, artifacts, and locks of hair of dead kin (Ruin 2018, p. 103).

It is not the purpose of this article to reject the views that burial is the unique factor defining humans or that it evidences the roots of culture and historical consciousness. It was the objective to make the case to regard family genealogy as more appropriately aligned with burial and mortuary practices but also as fitting with an understanding of death as concern for the other instead of self. Additionally, genealogy stands at the crossroads of a better understanding of spectrality, and of the metalinguistic ancient epics of *Gilgamesh* and the *Odyssey*. A philosophic genealogical explanation or understanding of family genealogy's foundation is death, not in the trivial sense that dead ancestors are dead, but that care of the ancestral dead is primordially (family) genealogical. It may be argued that death and concern for the ancestral dead constitute family genealogy's foundation, its core, its original ground.

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