BORDERS AND 'GHOSTS':

MIGRATORY HAUNTINGS IN CONTEMPORARY

VISUAL CULTURES

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In this concluding chapter, I will draw on Derrida's notion of the 'ghost', as it offers a theoretical figuration with which to better understand contemporary migrant subjectivity. My main argument is that the experience of haunting brings us to a particular structure of 'waiting' for a future yet to emerge. This is the pure performativity of the 'ghost'. Through the discussion, I wish to see what future we already have and what future the figure of the 'ghost' would offer us. In so doing, I first will examine Abderrahmane Sissako's film, *Waiting for Happiness* (2002), and then compare it with a chilling x-ray image that recently appeared in *The Guardian* showing 'illegal' immigrants crammed into the hidden

compartments of a lorry. This is an attempt to re-examine the notion of subjectivity in alternative manner to that of looking and being looked at. Visual Culture 'designates an entire arena of visual representations which circulate in the field of vision establishing visibilities (and policing invisibilities), stereotypes, power relations, the ability to know and to verify: in fact they establish the very realm of the "known"' (Rogoff 2000: 20). What I am interested in, therefore, is what is beyond the 'known' and beyond the 'predictable'.

Waiting

Abderrahmane Sissako's, *Waiting for Happiness* (2002), is about rootless characters that are suffocated by their geographic non-being in Nouadhibou, a Mauritanian port city surrounded by huge stretches of sand, dunes and the sea. In the film, a light bulb appears as a metaphor of hope for the inhabitants of this small and isolated seaside town, which is a transit city with predominantly temporary housing. It is as if the film narrative suspends an unforeseeable future, bearing the entire weight of isolation and loneliness of the lives of the people in the town who have been stuck on a geographical edge of the world. As a shadowy reminder of the world beyond, the resting vessels at sea imply the condition of people in departure, who, to a certain extent, have already left without actually having yet moved. In the exile before the voyage, we learn disjointed information about the characters that convey the sense of transition and movement. At the very beginning of the film, seventeen year-old Abdallah returns from Mali to his homeland on the West African coast, before leaving for Europe. Not being able to speak his native language and being frustrated by his rootless past, he has become a melancholic viewer, loaded with the unsettled condition of waiting for 'moving forward.' Abdallah rarely goes out and prefers to watch the outside world through the small window in his small, dark bedroom. His mother

is hoping that her son will get better when they finally have electricity in their house. We first encounter the light bulb in a scene where an old electrician, Maata, and a young orphan, Khatra, try to connect the house to the electricity. While Khatra and his mentor attempt to install a light bulb, Abdallah's mother is talking to an officer at the doorsteps of their house trying to secure her son's passport. Maata and Khatra's struggle is futile. The light bulb is not lit (Figure 5.1).
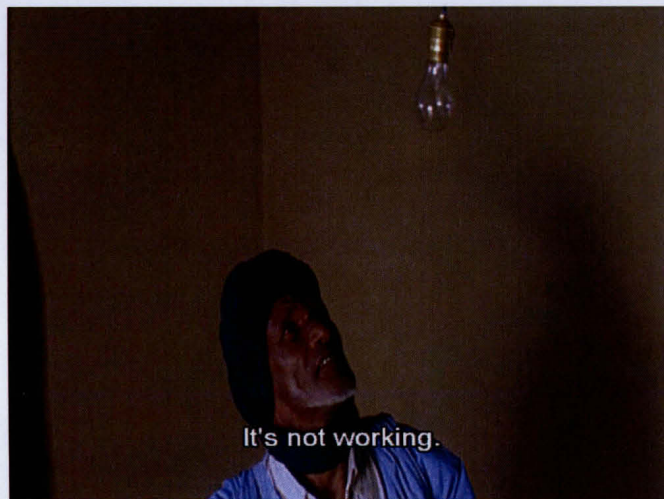

It's not working.

Fig 5.1 Abderrahmane Sissako, *Waiting for Happiness*, film-stills, 2002

In another scene, a young prostitute, Nana, tells a story of a trip to Paris to tell the father of her child that the young girl has died. Significantly, Paris looks otherworldly - shot in grainy stock, with none of the traditional images of the city. The trip is more of an emotional one and the story is representative of the desire of the people in the town to reach out beyond the current existence - to have both a place and a goal to aim towards. An illegal immigrant, Michael, another stranger in town, is looking forward to leaving for Europe. He is not only in transit in body but also in mind, because his expectations began long before the journey itself. Two weeks after he leaves, his two friends are trying to

predict how far he has gone. When a body washes ashore, the officials who are trying to identify this stranger can only find a faded photograph in his pocket (Figure 5.2). The photograph, taken in a studio in the town, shows Michael standing, smiling alongside a friend in front of a life-sized photograph of a brightly lit, Western metropolis at night (Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4).

This particular image reflects on an 'imagined world'[28], whose landscape of images is produced and disseminated through the Western global media. In the age of advanced mechanical reproduction, 'the lines between the realistic and the fictional landscapes are blurred so that the further away they are from the direct experiences of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct imagined worlds which are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world' (Appadurai 2003: 33). The photograph found in the pocket of the immigrant illustrates how a migrant's decision is interwoven into the narrative of a collective.

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[28] In his important essay, 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', Arjun Appadurai focuses on migration, diaspora and the movements of peoples and capital in the global world and extends Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities', to argue that global cultural processes are based upon the logic of the 'imagination' as a social practice. He writes: 'No longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses whose real work is elsewhere), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer elite pastime (thus not relevant to the lives of ordinary people), and no longer mere contemplation (irrelevant for new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (both in the sense of labour and of culturally organized practice) and a form of negotiation between sites of agency ("individuals") and globally defined fields of possibility. It is this unleashing of the imagination which links the play of pastiche (in some settings) to the terror and coercion of states and their competitors. The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order' (Appadurai 2003: 29-30). Following this claim, he employs five terms to stress different streams or flows along which cultural material may be seen to be moving across national boundaries: ethnoscapes (landscape of people who move between nations, such as tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles and guest-workers), technoscapes (technology, often linked to multinational corporations), financescapes (global capital currency markets and stock exchanges), mediascapes (electronic and new media whose space of operation is closely related to landscapes of images) and ideoscapes (official state ideologies and counter-ideologies, whose space of operation is also firmly attached to landscapes of images) (ibid., 31-35).

In *Waiting for Happiness*, Sissako urges us to read one of the familiar images from the large and complex repertoires of the global image bank in a critical and subversive way. The portrait of Michael standing with his friend in front of a life-sized photograph that depicts a bright, Western metropolitan city in the dark recalls the fact that the 'night' has already arrived and the future has already been fixed even before the migrant has begun his long and dangerous journey to Europe.
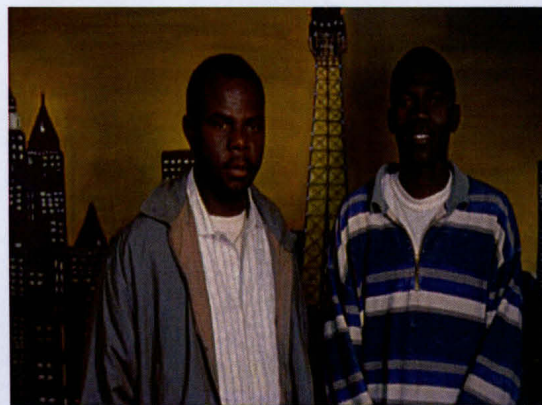

Fig 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 Abderrahmane Sissako, *Waiting for Happiness*, film-stills, 2002

Towards the end of the film, Abdallah finally moves on, but he has a hard time negotiating a steep hill in the desert on the way to the train. The electrician Maata, who, his whole life has refused to emigrate, dies on the same shore where the dead body of Michael was found. While he is dying, the light bulb in his hand gradually lights up:

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transference of power between his spirit and the external world. Derrida has noted that the spirit is before and outside the flesh, and can be seen only to the extent that it inhabits a visible, sensing body and produces effects only by taking on a material form (Derrida 1994: 6-7). This spirit is not simply the spirit of Maata, but the spirit of African migrants of the past, of the present and of the future, that draws us into a network of migrant populations.

The rootless people in *Waiting for Happiness* are fragile-beings, and this fragility becomes as nearly lightness. They have been caught up in a series of empty moments, awaiting a future that is already closed off. If there is a 'frozen' waiting without light, without any promise of brightness, outside of time and space, and a hopeless attempt at an 'illegal' crossing that has ended in death, it is because, in this small town, previously a French colony, this situation is not a condition of subjectivity but of the world.

Border Surveillance System and 'Ghosts'

We have floodlights on borders. Border officials use this light against the 'illegal' crossing of 'immigrants. In postmodern border management, there are electronic frontiers and visual borders. Borders are electronically equipped and under surveillance by means of heat, infrared, radar and satellite technology. In the advanced technological surveillance systems on European borders, the desire to make everything visible is also an imperative to make things legible and governable. But capturing an image ends up as catching a 'ghost', as is the case in an x-ray image showing 'illegal' immigrants crammed into hidden compartments in a lorry stopped at a British channel port (Figure 5.5).

Visibility is a complex system of permission and prohibition, of presence and absence. It always contains apparitions and often obligates blindness. The x-ray image reveals that even technologies of hyper-visibility cannot save us from 'visible invisibilities.' It reminds us that the highest level of visibility can actually be a type of invisibility.

Visually, luggage or the suitcase has long been attached to the state of exile, to the space of diaspora or to the issue of migration, signifying a variety of conditions, such as displacement and mobility, and a variety of personal feelings, such as nostalgia or longing.[29] This small object containing very few personal effects signifies his or her owner's lack of belonging. Yet, it serves as a compartment in which an immigrant carries his or her wishes, expectations, dreads and desires as well his or her anxieties or fears. Strangely enough, the x-ray image published in the newspaper reminds us of the image of the suitcase, but this particular suitcase is in the form of human cargo; a fragile cargo, of illegal immigrants.

Fig 5.5 x-ray image showing illegal immigrants crammed into hidden compartments on a lorry stopped at a British channel port (Source *The Guardian*, 12 October 2005).

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[29] for a detailed discussion of the image of luggage in relation to Visual Culture see Rogoff (2000: 36-72).

We learn from the newspaper that this is not an ordinary journey for the people who are circulating on borders. The illegal immigrants' trips, guided by the smugglers, often take months. They can travel hundreds of miles, as many as twenty of them lying flat, barely able to move, in cramped, secret compartments in lorries. People travel from Turkey in lorries up through the Balkans through Germany and Italy, continuing to Belgium or France, sometimes by train, where they hide out in safe houses near major ferry ports, such as Calais, Cherbourg or Dieppe, until the smugglers deem that the time is right to shuttle them to the UK (Cowan 2005).

Modern surveillance systems are based on the British philosopher, Jeremy Bentham's, panopticon (Bentham 1843), which he invented in 1786 as the perfect prison, and which Michel Foucault saw as the major mechanism for the disciplining of society, and foresaw was destined to spread throughout the social body (Foucault 1991 [1977]: 207). For Foucault, as one of the technologies of discipline, the panopticon assures the automatic functioning of power. In the architecture of Bentham's panopticon, each person in his or her cell or cage is alone, completely isolated and constantly visible under full lighting. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities in such a way as to make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. Each individual is seen but s/he does not see. S/he is the object of information, but never a subject of communication. Foucault is referring to this in his infamous aphorism: 'Visibility is a trap' (Foucault 1991 [1977]: 200).

Having failed to notice that a straight sight line did not equated to visibility, Bentham simply assumed that the panopticon would bring perfect visibility with no shadows or dark

corners. However, we learn from Bentham's panopticon papers that even he came to realize that solitary confinement, a key part of his plan, was in fact the undoing of a system of visibility, since: 'in a state of solitude, infantile superstitions, ghosts and spectres, recur to the imagination' (cited by Mirzoeff 2002: 241; Semple 1993: 132). The prisoner could neither be perfectly visible nor be constantly aware of disciplinary surveillance. Consequently, they were not disciplined, but simply punished: they became 'ghosts' (Mirzoeff 2002: 241).

However, it seems that even in our times the most sophisticated surveillance systems introduced to borders cannot escape from 'ghosts'. I argued in the first chapter that people crossing borders, or on the move on border zones, operate as 'ghosts' mainly because 'illegal' border-crossing is all about visibility and invisibility; about disappearance as coming into presence. Strangely enough, the x-ray image of the 'illegal' immigrants published in the newspaper illustrates that even though they have been caught, what has been captured is no more than ghost-like.

For the most miniscule of durations, the 'ghosts' have been captured, and therefore removed from the event, by passing in front of both a machine and an official's eye. The image is a powerful reminder that materialist science cannot account for the textures of everyday experience of people crossing borders. 'Ghost-images' of the 'illegal' immigrants empty all the realities an immigrant would firmly be tied to. If it signifies anything, it would be an irreversible moment of rupture.

This bold, extraordinary and shocking image contains nothing that can be translated into experience. Giorgio Agamben argues in his book, *Infancy and History*, 'to experience something means divesting it of novelty, neutralizing its shock potential' (Agamben 1993: 41). He writes:

> The unusual could not in any way be translated into experience. Each event, however commonplace and insignificant, thus became the speck of impurity around which experience accrued its authority, like a pearl. For experience has its necessary correlation not in knowledge but in authority – that is to say, the power of words and narration; and no one now seems to wield sufficient authority to guarantee the truth of an experience, if they do, it does not in the least occur to them that their own authority has its roots in an experience. On the contrary, it is the character of the present time that all authority is founded on what cannot be experienced, and nobody would be inclined to accept the validity of an authority whose sole claim to legitimation was experience (Agamben 1993: 14).

The circulation of these types of images in the media serves as the embodiment of a fear and panic provoked by 'intimations to the borders'. The alien strangers, who are already found within, trigger emotional reactions aimed at denying or exorcizing the necessary recognition of their very existence. Thus, we end up with an image that looks like a scene from a horror film.

This image blinds us. The light from the x-ray machine can only bring 'night', covering up realities and disguising human dramas, rather than making things more visible. The immigrants have disappeared with the dispersion of light coming from the x-

ray machine. The electronic image does not allow for any form of reflection about the textures of life on the surface of the image. In that sense, it is spectral. It refers to 'something', but it lacks the unfolding of any specific narrative and is unable to refer to any life with values or qualities.

Through the machine, movement in time has been reduced to a single image; a static, frontal section that refers to nothing outside its frame. The machines, or these 'eyeless eyes', do not correct vision, but construct a specific perception. As Paul Virilio points out:

Digital technology is a filter that is going to modify perception by means of a generalized morphing, and this in real time. ... we are faced *with the failure of the analogical in favour of calculation and the numerology of the image.* Every sensation is going to be digitized or digitalized. We are faced with the reconstruction of the phenomenology of perception according to the machine. The vision machine is not simply the camera that replaces Monet's eye ... no, now it's a machine that is reconstructing sensations pixel by pixel and bits by bits. Not just visual or auditory sensations, the audio-visible, but also olfactory sensations, tactile sensations. We are faced with a reconstruction of the *sensas* (Virilio 2005: 65-66).

The machines do not present or represent anything; they create and represent their own kind of presence. They have become 'optical', and, as Virilio argues, this 'correction' is not correct in the political sense of the world (Virilio 2005: 70). The vision the machines offer presses its own dominance, which is unquestionable, indisputable or without doubt. In one moment, the snapshot of the lorry in motion has formed an image that substitutes

the passing reality and takes on a privileged position. It produces an unreachable distance between what we see in the photograph, and what was 'out there' at the moment of the border crossing itself and what happened afterwards. In this 'movement-image' there is nothing 'real'; they are only images which are quantitative. When Deleuze discusses what he calls 'movement-image' in cinema, he writes:

> The cinema can, with impunity, bring us close to things or take us away from them and revolve around them, it suppresses both the anchoring of the subject and the horizon of the world. Hence, it substitutes an implicit knowledge and a second intentionality for the conditions of natural perception. It is not the same as the other arts, which aim rather at something unreal through the world, but makes the world itself something unreal or a tale [*récit*]. With the cinema, it is the world which becomes its own image, and not an image which becomes world (Deleuze 1992: 57).

The light from the machine imposes its own regulations and propagates its own conditions onto real people. Since it is coming from an invisible place and from an unimpeded, unlocalized source, it has and is the absolute power. The photographic x-ray image indicates that the border is a 'surgical place'. It has to be closed. It has to be protected through systems of militarization, purification and cleansing. The stranger is a virus detected in the system. In this respect, the x-ray image becomes visible in the context of haunting. It hints that both the illness and the cure lead us to the same site; that is, the border.

What is appearing in the instant in which vision is refracted through technology rather than through the eye?

Spectrality is already there, if there is a visibility of technology. In the film, *Ghost Dance,* by Ken McMullen (1984), Derrida states that 'modern technology, contrary to appearances, although it is scientific, increases tenfold the power of ghosts. The future belongs to ghosts'. When discussing photographic or digital image-making Derrida argues in an interview with Bernard Stiegler, that once an image of someone has been taken or captured, this image becomes reproducible in his or her absence. His or her disappearance is already there. S/he already is haunted; already transfixed by a disappearance that promises and conceals in advance an 'apparition' and a ghostly 're-apparition' (Derrida and Stiegler 2005: 116-117). When we see the electronic image of the immigrants being captured on the border, they have already been spectralized by the shot, and captured and possessed by spectrality in advance. In the 'darkness of night', they are already positioned outside of matter and time; they have become both phenomenal and non-phenomenal, both sensing and non-sensing. There is no longer anything material, only something invisible/visible.

In techno-reality, the event is not experienced in 'real time.' From the moment that there is a technical interposition, an event is always deferred. This brings us to the notion of 'différance' (see for instance Derrida 1973; Derrida 1982), which Derrida uses to suggest that the production of meaning is never simply the representation of what was already fully present, but is a moment of deferral in which every origin is constituted retroactively. In this way, an origin is never present except in its belatedness. Ghostliness and the act of haunting are related to the notion of 'différance', which is inscribed at the very heart of the supposed synchrony in the living present. Thus, being is exposure to an

alterity that makes any, and all, presence possible. Spectrality refers to the sheer persistence of beings in time; continuing temporalization, where our presence is given (to us) by an alterity (Cheah 2003: 387).

Lightening Up

Spectral knowledge considers the 'ghosts' to be someone or something with a demand or a claim. In Derridean thinking, this raises the question of the future and the question of justice. According to this way of thinking, the appearance of a 'ghost' has a potential to reverse the way things go. Not only is the 'ghost' *not* something or somebody that is captured and killed by the light, but it is also something which exudes an illuminating beam of light, making us see things differently. According to Derrida:

> All the grave stakes we have just named ... would come down to the question of what
> one understands, with Marx and after Marx, by effectivity, effect, operativity, work,
> labour [*Wirklichkeit, Wirkung*, work, operation], living work in their supposed opposition
> to the effects of virtuality, of simulacrum, of 'mourning work,' of ghosts, revenant and
> so forth. ... [D]econstructive thinking of the trace, of iterability, of prosthetic synthesis,
> of supplementarity, and so forth, goes beyond the opposition and the ontology it
> presumes. [It inscribes] the possibility of the reference to the other, and thus, of radical
> alterity and heterogeneity, of différance, of technicity, and of ideality in the very event
> of presence, in the very presence of the present that it dis-joins *a priori* in order to
> make it possible (Derrida 1994: 75).

Spectrality, therefore, is another name for the condition of possibility and potentiality. Even as it disjoins the present, in the same movement, it renews the present. The 'ghost'

enjoins us to act in the here and now. The temporality of the 'ghost' represents a momentary arresting of passing time, in any given instant, which changes or transforms. In this respect, spectrality has a 'performative' character. It 'allows something to act on and affect itself or another (and also to affect itself as an other) or to be acted on or affected by another (and also by itself as an other)' (Cheah 2003: 388). It allows an action or occurrence to take place.

I would suggest that the image of the immigrants conveyed through the x-ray machine implies that illegal immigrants, as figures of light, 'shine' for us, waiting to be seen. The x-ray machine is an aperture into a reality ordinarily unseen in the ontological sense. Ontology speaks only what is present or what is absent; it cannot conceive of what is neither. A world cleansed of spectrality is ontology itself; a world of pure presence, of immediate density and of things without a past. In contrast, hauntology is concerned with spectral knowledge in which the 'ghost' appears in the open joint between future and past. 'The linear time of birth, life and death, of the beginning and the end, has no place in the hauntic. It allows us to speak of what persists beyond the end, beyond death, of what was never alive enough to die, never present enough to become absent' (Montag 1999: 71). And the 'ghost' or the apparition is the principal form by which something lost, invisible or seemingly not there makes itself apparent to us. We come to experience things that are not able to manifest themselves otherwise. Haunting recognition is a special way of knowing what has happened or is happening. There is a partial occurrence. The state of being is not quite there, and this necessitates a preoccupation with what is there.

The 'ghost' haunts the full presence of the 'real' in the form of a debt to the past and a promise of justice in the future. Furtive and untimely, the apparition belongs to a future-present, whose past has a claim and whose present comes with a demand. Derrida has written, 'Ghosts' are:

> certain *others* who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us, it is in the name of *justice*. Of justice where it is not yet, not yet *there*, where it is no longer, let us understand where it is no longer *present*, and where it will never be, no more than the law, reducible to laws or rights. It is necessary to speak of *the* ghost, indeed *to the* ghost and *with* it, from the moment that no ethics, no politics, whether revolutionary or not, seems possible and thinkable and *just* that does not recognize in its principle the respect for those others who are no longer or for those others who are not yet *there*, presently living, whether they are already dead or not yet born (Derrida 1994: xix)

Derrida speaks about a responsibility to the victims of wars; political and other kinds of violence; nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist or other kinds of exterminations; victims of oppression, of capitalist imperialism or of any of the forms of totalitarianism. In his conception, justice carries life beyond present life, or its actual there-ness; its empirical or ontological actuality. It urges us to contact 'traces' and the 'traces of traces.'

The justice Derrida is talking about carries the temporal form of a future-present or of a future modality of the living present. Derrida writes: 'At bottom, the spectre is the future, it is always to come, it presents itself only as that which could come or come again' (Derrida 1994: 39). Derrida relates the question of future to what he calls the 'messianic.'

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As opposed to messianism, a religious concept in which the future is already fixed and filled up with certain determinations, calculations, objects or consequences, the 'messianic' refers, in every here-now, to the coming of an eminently real, concrete event, that is to the most irreducibly heterogeneous otherness (Derrida 1999: 248). There is an understanding of what I would call 'the coming justice' as something not to be applied to pre-existent discourses or to some pre-established social or political values and norms. 'Messianic' hope, as a 'coming justice', is without content and widely open to the coming of an event or of an alterity that cannot be anticipated beforehand.

Derrida dresses up spectrality as the scene of migrancy and transnationalism. Regardless of how lacking in content he purposely leaves the future-to-come, it is definitely anti-nationalist:

> Awaiting without horizon of the wait, awaiting what one does not expect yet or any longer, hospitality without reserve, welcoming solution accorded in advance to the absolute surprise of the *arrivant* from whom or from which one will not ask anything in return and who or which will not be asked to commit to the domestic contracts of any welcoming power (family, State, nation, territory, native soil or blood, language, culture in general, even humanity), just opening which renounces any right to property, any right in general, messianic opening to what is coming, that is, to the event that cannot be awaited *as such*, or recognized in advance therefore, to the event as the foreigner itself, to her or to him for whom one must leave an empty place, always, in the memory of the hope – and this is the very place of spectrality (Derrida 1994: 65).

Derrida clearly dismiss nationalism as a discourse that does not allow for the promise of 'the messianic'. There is something that is always arriving but which never finally arrives. Derrida's arguments bring us to experience the structure of waiting, the waiting that the past has a claim and the present has in every minute a potentiality which brings us a future, a future which is not a pre-existent one. The temporality of waiting, the temporality of ghosting, cannot be reduced to this or that image.

However, the x-ray image taken at one European checkpoint 'visualizes' the way messianism is already installed at the border in order to screen the arrivals. Therefore, it does not bring us into the future. But Derrida asks: 'how to give rise and to give place [*donner lieu*], still, to render it, this place, to render it habitable, but without killing the future in the name of the old frontiers? (Derrida 1994: 169).

What happens if we think of this dividing line as a threshold, rather than as a concrete border or a frontier? Andrew Benjamin puts it beautifully when analyzing the notion of waiting: 'the crossing of a threshold – a crossing in which futurity is introduced as made possible by the present's potentiality - has to be thought beyond a conception of the future that is already pictured' (Benjamin 2005: 165). Thus, crossing is more than a simple movement. Through the act of crossing, one takes the dividing line through one's powerful motion. Disturbed by the passage of chronological time, this particular interruption has potentiality.

The blind field of the x-ray photograph is where the ghost's arrival shines wavering on the edge of the event:

... [a] flow of light, which captures or possesses me, invests me, invades me or

envelops me is not a ray of light, but the source of a possible view: from the point of

view of the other. If the "reality effect" is ineluctable, it is not simply because there is

something real that is undecomposable, or not synthesizable, some "thing" that was

there. It is because there is something other that watches or concerns me. This Thing

is the other insofar as it was already there – before me – ahead of me, beating me to

it, I who am before it, I who am because of it, owing to it.... My law. ... The 'reality

effect' stems here from the irreducible alterity of another origin of the world. It is

another origin of the world. What I call the gaze here, the gaze of the other, is not

simply another machine for the perception of the images. It is another world, another

source of the phenomenality, another degree zero of appearing (Derrida and Stiegler

2005: 122-123).

The 'ghost' is a transformative figure. Wherever there is a spectre, even if I cannot see it,

even if I am not able to exchange a glance with the invisible or unnoticeable 'gaze' of the

other, the 'gaze' of the ghost not only touches my body and mind, but it also implies my

responsibility towards the 'other'. It becomes the law for me. The spectre is not simply the

visible invisible that I can see, it is someone who watches or concerns me without any

possible reciprocity, and who, therefore, makes the law when I am blinded by the

situation. Derrida writes: '... my freedom springs from the condition of this responsibility

which is born of heteronomy in the eyes of the other, in the other's sight. This gaze is

spectrality itself. ... wherever there are these spectres, we are being watched, we sense

or think we are under surveillance. This dissymmetry complicates everything. The law, the

injunction, the order, the performative, wins out over the theoretical, the constative, knowledge, calculation and the programmable' (Derrida and Stiegler 2005: 121-122).

The radiant flicker of promise, which the ghostly shadow of the disappeared illuminates, is waiting for us to experience it. The 'dark' visibilities, the apparitions of the immigrants in the x-ray image, should be seen as the bearer of promise in the name of justice.

Immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers are all 'limit-figures' who trouble any attempt at border construction and identity demarcation. They are complex figures: of all possible figures they are never fulfilled and closed off in one figure. 'The coming being is whatever being', writes Agamben, and the whatever, Agamben explains, 'relates us to singularity not in its indifference with respect to a common property (to a concept, for example: being red, being French, being Muslim), but only in its being, such as it is. Singularity is thus freed from false dilemma that obliges knowledge to choose between the ineffability of the individual and the intelligibility of the universal' (Agamben 2001: 1). Agamben's conception of 'whatever singularity' seems to answer the question of future and of justice. The notion of 'singularity' implies that a fixed and stable identity is unthinkable in advance. It can be neither an object of knowledge nor of perception, and then only because it evades the controls of both perception and knowledge, and keeps the possibility of the future open.

This brings us to the Derridean notion of hospitality (Derrida 2000). The principle of hospitality should not be premised on the prior identity of the stranger. Hospitality should

not be confined to those with whom we already are familiar or we expect or have need for. The identity or utility of the stranger should not be determined in advance because when the stranger enters s/he marks an 'absolute arrival.'

The spectral moment signifies a rupture that is pregnant with radical changes. It does not promise a figure. It is itself the promise of a figure yet to come in the map of intensities realized by dynamic trajectories that cannot be 'identified with the commemoration of a figure or an arrival, but with the creation of paths without memory, all the memory of the world remaining in the material' (Deleuze 1998: 64). There is no beginning or ending. There are no further lines to be drawn in order to establish absolute belongings and desperate unbelongings. The world is holding on journeys whose energetic trajectories constantly delineate new and untouched territories, which endlessly write unexpected and unpredictable stories.