

## Hauntological Modernisms: Spectral Temporality and the Poetics of Lost Futures in American Avant-Garde Poetry

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الحدائث الهونطولوجية: الزمن الطيفي وشعرية المستقبلات المفقودة في الشعر الأمريكي الطليعي

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### Abstract

The concept of hauntological modernisms that is discussed in this paper is the application of the theory of hauntology by Jacques Derrida as a methodological prism to re-read the time processes within the American avant-garde poetry. Concentrating on the works of T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, H. D., *Helen in Egypt* and the work of Frank O'Hara, *The Day Lady Died*, the paper proffers that these classic texts are designed around a spectral temporality that disrupts the linear concept of time, presence and historical development. These poets express cultural and psychic crises of modernity by creating poetic landscapes of temporal disjunction, spectral repetition, and futures that are lost. This analysis brings out the way hauntology as a logic of the ghost makes sense of how modernist and avant-garde poetics are conditioned by the recurrent re-emergence of what is absent, repressed or unrealised. In a conclusion, the paper sees American avant-garde poetry as a haunting discipline, where the unresolved pasts and unreachd futures of the twentieth century are manifested time and again in the poetic form. **Keywords:** Hauntology , Spectral Temporality, American Avant-Garde Poetry, *The Waste Land*, *Helen in Egypt* , *The Day Lady Died*.

### المخلص :

يتناول هذا البحث مفهوم الحدائث الشبحية بوصفة تطبيقاً لنظرية الاشباح عند جاك دريدا، بوصفها منظوراً منهجياً لإعادة قراءة سيرورات الزمن داخل الشعر الأمريكي الطليعي. ومن خلال التركيز على أعمال ت. س. إليوت في *الأرض الخراب*، وهويذا دوبلي في *هيلين في مصر*، وفرانك أوهارا في *اليوم الذي ماتت فيه السيدة*، يقترح البحث أن هذه النصوص الكلاسيكية قد شيدت حول زمن طيفي يزعم المفهوم الخطي للزمن، والحضور، والتطور التاريخي. يُظهر هؤلاء الشعراء أزمت الحدائث الثقافية والنفسية عبر خلق عوالم شعرية تقوم على الانفصال الزمني، والتكرار الشبحي، وغياب المستقبل—أي المستقبلات التي فقدت أو لم تتحقق. تكشف هذه القراءة كيف تساعد *الهونطولوجيا* بمنطقها القائم على عودة الشبح—في فهم كيفية تشكيل الحدائث والطليعية الشعرية عبر عودة ما هو غائب، أو مكبوت، أو غير مُنجز بصورة متكررة. وفي الختام، يرى البحث أن الشعر الأمريكي الطليعي يشكل حقلاً "مطارداً"، حيث تستمر الماضيات غير المحسومة والمستقبلات غير المُدركة في القرن العشرين بالظهور مرة بعد أخرى داخل البنية الشعرية الكلمات المفتاحية: *الهونطولوجيا*، الزمن الطيفي، الشعر الأمريكي الحدائث، *الأرض الخراب*، *هيلين في مصر*، اليوم الذي ماتت فيه السيدة.

### I. Introduction

The modernist poetry, especially in the American avant-garde, is a landscape of disruption, discontinuity, and of a deep challenge of the forms and conventions. The key feature of this revolutionary aesthetic is radical reconfiguration of time. The modernist poets defied linear, chronological sequencing that was typical of the nineteenth-century verse, and that is why they adopted temporal disjunction, thus establishing very intricate, layered, and sometimes disorienting experiences of time. The main suggestion of the paper is that Jacques Derrida's notion of hauntology offers an effective methodological approach to study these temporal experiments.

Hauntology as defined in *Specters of Marx* by Derrida, is not the haunting of ghosts, but a logic of haunting which contests ontological primacy of presence. To Derrida, the specter is an object that is neither real nor not real, neither living nor dead and its emergence disturb the clear-cut lines between past, present, and future. The paper discusses that the poetics of T. S. Eliot, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), and Frank O'Hara are essentially hauntological. Their writings are not about ghosts thematics per se; on the contrary, they are constructed through a spectral temporality that defines their form, meaning, and powerfulness. The analysis of Eliot, H.D., and O'Hara, shows how these authors recruit spectral people, haunting cultures, and time-travels in order to express the crises of modernity and the continuation of the unrealised futures. Although their poetic means and historical backgrounds vary, they all develop their own hauntological time, which challenges the content of the very present moment. The poem is a sort of cultural, civilisational haunting in which the ghosts of the mythical past run into the remnants of the post-war present. H. The epos of D. enacts some sort of mythic recursion and spectrality that is gendered in that it rewrites the myth of Helen of Troy to reveal her as an object that is never present and is being remembered in a distorted manner. The elegy by O'Hara about Billie Holiday shows how the spectral abruptly and shockingly enters the realm of everyday urban reality and thus shows how hauntological disruptions shape the modern consciousness. This paper is aimed at discussing how this spectral temporality is not a simple feature of style, but one of the major organising principles of the work of these poets. Through their poetry, the perspective of hauntology allows one to understand how they are struggling with the past, present, and future anxieties and foreclosures. The theoretical framework that is established in the paper first combines hauntology, as introduced by Derrida, with theories about the study of modernist time and spectrality. It further proceeds to an in-depth analysis of the chosen poems examining how each poet creates a distinctive hauntological world. Finally, the paper argues that American avant-garde poetry is a discipline of perpetual haunting, a sphere where the unfulfilled futures and unfinished histories of the twentieth century continue to haunt our minds.

## **II. Theoretical Framework**

To gain the maximum opportunities to feel the hauntological aspects of writing in the American avant-garde poetry, one has to establish a strong theoretical framework. This paradigm brings together the original investigation of Jacques Derrida in hauntology, theories of modernist temporal break, and the broader body of scholarship on spectrality. Together, these constructs provide a complex prism through which one can examine how poets like T.S. Eliot, H.D. and Frank O'Hara conceptualize and work through spectral temporalities in their work. The subsequent synthesized model allows a reading of their verse as a sequence of temporal instigations, where futures lost, pastes subjugated, mythic preconditions re-enter and re-shuffle the current text. In his treatise *Specters of Marx* of 1993, Jacques Derrida coined the term hauntology. Even the term itself is a intentional language pun on ontology, the philosophy of being. Replacing the term ontology with hauntology, Derrida also indicates the rejection of a metaphysics of presence a claim of meaning and being as definite and all-present as possible and a logic controlled by the specter. To Derrida (1994), "the specter is a paradoxical character that is. "neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive" (p.4). It is a revenant, a figure that returns, and in its returning, it disrupts the linear flow of time and destabilizes the clear-cut opposition between presence and absence. As Derrida (1994) writes The specter is a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes, rather, some 'thing' that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other. (p.6) This spectral logic has a close connection with the rest of the deconstructive project of Derrida, specifically his ideas of trace, deferral (*différance*), and iterability. The trace is the indication of a lack in a presence; that which makes a sign have a sense. A sign never has a complete meaning, but rather a deferral meaning that refers to other signs in a sequence of signification. The ability of a sign to be used in other contexts, which is called iterability, makes no meaning final and complete. The theme of allusion, repetition and language play makes poetry a more than ideal place of the expressing of these concepts. It is the area in which meaning is forever been spooked by the non-existent, by the residue of other texts, by words and images revived like the undead. Hauntology, thus, offers a philosophical basis of interpreting poetry as not filled with set meanings, but a shifting area of spectral effects. The modernist poetics are marked by a sharp severity of the chronological and linear time that prevailed in large part of the nineteenth-century literature. Under the influence of the philosophical thought of Henri Bergson, the psychological thought of Sigmund Freud and the shock of World War I, the modernist writers aimed to indicate a more mobile, disintegrated, and subjective sense of time. This resulted in what may be described as temporal disjunction, which is a literary technique that breaks down the boundaries of time to the past, present, and future. Time in modernist poetry is usually simultaneous, recursive and layered as opposed to linear and progressive. The modernist period has

witnessed a revival as literary critic Stephen Kern has observed (1983) shattering of the traditional sense of time and space,” leading to new forms of artistic expression that emphasized fragmentation and simultaneity”(p.360). The temporality of hauntology is produced by this temporal disjunction, which causes the past to be not a closed vessel of past recollections, but what actively enters and passes through the present. The future, in its turn, does not seem to be such a place of promise and advancement, but a place of crisis, devastation, or foreclosure. The fragmented syntax, the changed perspectives, the density of allusions of the modernist poem turn it into a territory where various time perspectives collide. This makes one feel like they are “out of joint” and in fact this is what Derrida himself does to describe the temporality of the specter(Derrida ,1994,p.7) .The modernist poem by the nature of its form does this time-living haunting, and this temporal haunting is a rich place to apply the hauntological analysis. Developing on the philosophical model of Derrida, the interdisciplinary spectrality studies have been able to investigate the cultural, social, and aesthetic consequences of ghosts and haunting. As those scholars like Avery Gordon and Mark Fisher have shown, the spectral is not just a literary device but a useful tool of analysis of social power, historical trauma and cultural memory. Relying on her masterpiece book *GhostlyMatters* , Gordon (2008), states that “haunting is an inseparable component of contemporary social life, and the ghost is a social being which discloses repressed past and unsolved social contradictions” (Gordon ,2008,p.9). To Gordon, the spectral represents the place of historical traumas, repressed futures as well as the stories of the marginalized and silenced. In this regard, poetry is one of the mediums by which this cultural memory is able to become real, a place where the ghosts of the past are able to speak. In his work, Mark Fisher (2014), uses the notion of hauntology in relation to modern culture, contending that we are living in an era where the future has been cancelled, and that our current culture has pervasively developed a sense of cultural stagnation and nostalgia (p.78). The hauntology of fisher is the worry with the lost futures that the past had, and how these unknown possibilities haunt the present. Although Fisher is focused on post-modern and contemporary culture, his concepts are equally applicable to the analysis of modernism, that was also struggling with a crisis of the future after war and industrialisation. Incorporating the observations of spectrality, we are able to comprehend how the hauntological sides of the modernist poetry are not merely formal experiments, but are in fact directly concerned with the social, cultural, and political crises of the period.

### III. Analysis of Selected Poems

T.S. Eliot, H.D., and Frank O’Hara, though belonging to different epochs and impulses of American avant-garde, all build their own hauntological times in their poetry. *The Waste Land* by Eliot is a paradigmatic example of cultural and civilizational haunting where the fragmented present is continuously overrun by the ghosts of a mythical and historical past to speak a feminine spectral consciousness and to challenge the narrative of the patriarchy. H.D. in her book, *Helen in Egypt*, discusses a more personal and gendered haunting where mythic recursion is used to disrupt the narratives of the patriarchy and to speak the spectral feminine consciousness. Having lived the apparently continuous present of urban modernity, the hauntological shock of Frank Hara, *The Day Lady Died*, is the shock of seeming continuity that is abruptly interrupted by the sudden intrusion of the past and loss. Despite a difference in methodology, all three poets activate spectral temporality to express the crises of modernity and the continuation of futures that could not happen T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, published in 1922, in the aftermath of the First World War, appears to be the archetypal modernist poem of chronological dislocation and cultural corruption. *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot does not follow a linear narrative and does not have a strictly homogeneous stylistic or structural structure. Rather, the poem swings between prophetic and satirical, characterised by sudden, unforeseen shifts in narrator, location and reference to time, thus creating an enormous and discontinuous array of cultural and literary allusion. It is intertextual and alludes to major works of the Western canon Ovid, the *Metamorphoses*, the legend of the Fisher King, Dante Alighieri, the *Divine Comedy*, Geoffrey Chaucer, the *Canterbury Tales*, a popular song of that time, *That Shakespearian Rag* (Ackroyd, 1984)The poem can be characterised as a pile of broken images, a collage of voices, languages, history periods that together create a hauntological space where the past is not a well-grounded source but an apparition of ghostly invasion, and the future is already a ruined space. Eliot only imagines modernity as a world that continuously haunts itself, a world in which time is out of joint, where the lines between the living and the dead are permanently crossed. The waste land serves as a template of time dislocation. Instead of starting with a song of rebirth of spring, the poem starts with a statement of such brutality :April is the cruellest month, breeding Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing Memory and desire, stirring Dull roots with spring rain (Eliot ,1922 ll.1-4) From the beginning, Eliot erases the time difference between the past, which means memory, and the future, which means desire, creating the present that is suspended between the past and the future conspicuously. This

time, fusion is not a synthesis that follows a sequence but a forceful breeding and mixing, a disruptive shattering of a forgetful snow that has hitherto kept the people of the wasteland warm. The past is therefore haunted by the thing it has been unable to own and the thing it has been unable to attain. This disruption in time finds its expression in the structure of the poem. It jumps between the different speakers, places, and periods of history, thus, forming an impression of confusion and disintegration. The poet states in the first part : You cannot say, or guess, for you know only A heap of broken images, where the sun beats, And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, And the dry stone no sound of water. Only There is shadow under this red rock, (Eliot ,1922, ll. 21-25) a line that serves as a metacommentary on the poem's own method . This fragmentation is not merely a stylistic choice; it is a reflection of a world where historical continuity has been shattered. The result is a hauntological landscape where time is fractured, and the future appears as a barren extension of a ruined present. The speaker's vision of a land is very gloomy , its already a dead land and the dead land gives no green and this means the future will not come with any promise of life the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, And the dry stone no sound of water (Eliot ,1922, ll.26-27) This is a vision of a future that is already dead, a lost future that haunts the present with its absence. *The Waste Land* is populated by a host of spectral figures, both literal and metaphorical. Madame Sosostriis, the "famous clairvoyante," with her "wicked pack of cards," serves as a degraded medium, a conduit to a spectral realm that has been commodified and trivialised. Her prophecy, "Fear death by water," introduces one of the poem's central ghosts: the drowned Phoenician Sailor. This figure, who is "neither / Living nor dead," (Eliot ,1922, ll.39-40), becomes a symbol of a death that is not final but a perpetual, haunting presence. The line, "(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)" (Eliot ,1922, l.48) is a direct allusion to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, another work populated by spirits and magic, thereby layering one spectral text upon another. The most striking image of cultural haunting appears in the description of the "Unreal City," a direct borrowing from Baudelaire, another poet of urban alienation. Here, a crowd of spectral commuters flows over London Bridge :so many, I had not thought death had undone so many" (Eliot ,1922, ll.62-63) This line, a direct translation from Dante's *Inferno*, transforms the modern city into a literal underworld, its inhabitants reduced to ghosts, sighing and fixing their eyes "before their feet." The speaker's encounter with "Stetson," a fellow soldier from the Punic Wars ("You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!"), further collapses historical time, suggesting that all wars are the same war, and all soldiers are ghosts of soldiers past. The chilling question, "That corpse you planted last year in your garden, 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?" (Eliot ,1922, ll.71-73) transforms the idea of resurrection into a grotesque and uncanny haunting, a return of the repressed that refuses to stay buried . The ultimate horror of *The Waste Land* is not just its haunted past, but its foreclosed future. The poem is saturated with a sense of civilizational exhaustion, a feeling that the possibility of renewal has been lost. This is the "poetics of lost futures" that Mark Fisher (2014), describes, a cultural condition where "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism" (p.9) .In Eliot's poem, the future is not a space of potential but a continuation of the wasteland. The repeated injunction, "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME," (Eliot ,1922, l.141, l.152, l.165, l. 168.) which echoes the closing call of a London pub, becomes a frantic, almost hysterical announcement of an impending end, a closure without resolution .The final section of the poem, "What the Thunder Said," offers a glimmer of hope in the form of the Hindu fable of the thunder, but this hope is tentative and deferred. The poem ends not with a triumphant resolution, but with a series of fragmented quotations and a final, enigmatic command: Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina Quando fiam uti chelidon—O swallow swallow Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie These fragments I have shored against my ruins Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe. Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata. Shantih shantih shantih (Eliot ,1922, l.427- 433). This Sanskrit word, which can be translated as "the peace which passeth understanding," is less a statement of achieved tranquility than a desperate prayer for it. The future remains unrealized, a spectral possibility that haunts the poem's ruinous present. In this sense, *The Waste Land* is a profoundly hauntological text, a poem that demonstrates how the crisis of modernity is a crisis of temporality, a condition of being perpetually haunted by the ghosts of what has been lost and what can no longer be imagined. A deeply philosophical exploration of the myth, of memory, and of the ontology of historical truth, H.D. in her late-modernist epic, *Helen in Egypt*, which was published in 1961, is a work of myth. The poem constitutes a radical reworking of the old story of the Helen of Troy, relying on the other version where Helen did not go to Troy but was taken away to Egypt, with her being filled in by a phantom or eidolon. This assumption creates a hauntological paradigm of the work, placing the spectral disjunctive as an instrument of deconstructing the patriarch discourses that have historically characterized Helen. In this scenario, Helen is changed to no longer be a passive object of male desire and struggle, but a more nuanced and searching consciousness of her own.

The recursive, dreamlike form of the poem, as well as the subject matter of a hazy, spectral Helen, bring out a strong sense of myth as a hermeneutic of haunting, the spectrality of feminine identity, and the instability of time narration of history. The myth in the context of the Helen in Egypt is not static and old-fashioned but is a series of forces that creates movement and acts in the present. The poem begins with the setting of Helen in Egypt, following the Trojan War, trying to figure out the so-called hieroglyphs inscribed in her memory. She is depicted as a figure that traverses time like a ghost of a story that was already told. The main assumption, namely the listing of Helen of Troy as a merely phantom, introduces immediately a hauntological logic. As Helen herself recalls, but I was a phantom Helen and he was Achilles' ghost (H.D., 1961, Pallinode II, "Section 4) Their relationship is a relationship between two specters, a hauntological romance that takes place outside of linear time. The poem's temporality is recursive; it loops and repeats, moving between Helen's present in Egypt and her fragmented memories of Troy. This non-linear structure enacts the process of being haunted. The past is not something that can be neatly recalled; it returns in flashes, in spectral images and disembodied voices. Achilles, the great hero of the Trojan War, appears to Helen as a ghost, and their encounters are marked by a sense of temporal and ontological uncertainty: I had met him, the New Mortal, baffled and lost," ( H.D., 1961, Pallinode II, "Section 4 )Helen, in H.D.'s retelling, becomes a ghost of the patriarchal imagination. She is the ultimate spectral figure, a woman who is famous for being absent, for being a beautiful image that launched a thousand ships, but who is never truly present in her own story. H.D. reclaims Helen by embracing her spectrality. Helen's status as an *eidolon*, a phantom, becomes a source of power, allowing her to critique the very narratives that have sought to contain her. She is a ghost in the machine of epic poetry, a spectral presence that haunts the heroic tradition from within. This 'feminine spectrality' challenges the linear, progressive, and masculine time of heroic history. The epic, with its focus on war, conquest, and the founding of nations, is a genre of historical progression. H.D. disrupts this by creating a poetic space that is fluid, associative, and psychological. Helen's journey is not a physical one, but an internal one, a "psychic archaeology" into the depths of her own memory and the collective unconscious. As feminist critics have noted, H.D.'s revisionist myth-making "is a political act, a way of writing women back into history, not as objects, but as complex, spectral subjects" ( DuPlessis, 1985). By making Helen a ghost, H.D. gives voice to the silenced and the absent, to the spectral feminine that haunts the margins of Western literature. The narrative structure of *Helen in Egypt* is itself a manifestation of its hauntological themes. The poem is divided into three sections, "Pallinode," "Leuké," and "Eidolon," and within these sections, the narrative moves in a circular, recursive fashion. Past and present intermingle, and the poem often feels like a dream, a space where the laws of time and logic are suspended. This dream-like quality is a deliberate aesthetic choice, a way of representing a consciousness that is haunted by the past. "The poem's instability, its refusal to provide a single, authoritative version of events, enacts the experience of temporal haunting" ( DuPlessis, 1985). H.D. (1985), described the poem as a "moving picture," a series of "projections" of Helen's consciousness (p.67). This cinematic metaphor is apt, as the poem cuts between different times and places, creating a montage of spectral images. The reader, like Helen, is forced to piece together a narrative from these fragments, to become a detective of the past. This process of reading mirrors Helen's own process of self-discovery. She is, in a sense, a ghost to herself, and the poem is her attempt to come to terms with her own spectrality. In *Helen in Egypt*, H.D. creates a poetics of haunting, a form of writing that is adequate to the experience of being a ghost in one's own life. The poem's recursive temporality and its dream-like narrative are not simply formal devices; they are the very substance of its hauntological vision. The last poet under consideration in this paper, Frank O'Hara, offers a corpus of work that, though intensely occupied with visual arts and artists and the mundane landscape of the New York City, attacks systematically the traditional ideas of social context, autobiographical story, and the autonomy of the artistic object. O'Hara, writes Marjorie Perloff (1999a), wrote poetry, "in order to express" (p. xii ), thus, anticipating spontaneity and immediacy as opposed to the formal detachment. Perloff also notes that her study demonstrates that the aesthetic of O'Hara challenges and reestablishes the borders of traditional poetic forms at the same time :[her] conviction that O'Hara is one of the central poets of the postwar period, and that his influence will continue to grow in the years to come .(Perloff (1999b,p.xii) The Day Lady Died," written on the day of jazz singer Billie Holiday's death, July 17, 1959, offers a different but equally potent form of hauntological modernism. As a key figure of the New York School, O'Hara's poetry is often characterized by its immediacy, its conversational tone, and its engagement with the ephemera of urban life. "The Day Lady Died" is a quintessential "I do this, I do that" poem, meticulously cataloguing the speaker's movements through New York City on a seemingly ordinary day (Perloff,1999b ). However, this carefully constructed presentness is violently interrupted by the sudden intrusion of death, transforming the poem from a simple diary entry into a

profound meditation on memory, loss, and the spectral nature of cultural icons. The poem exemplifies the hauntological shock, where the everyday is suddenly revealed as a site of spectral resonance and the linear progression of time is arrested by the overwhelming force of a memory. The poem begins with a precise, almost obsessive documentation of the present moment: It is 12:20 in New York a Friday three days after Bastille day, yes it is 1959 and I go get a shoeshine (O'Hara, 1964, ll.1-3) The speaker proceeds to narrate a series of mundane activities: having a hamburger and a malted, buying a book of Ghanaian poetry, going to the bank, and shopping for gifts for friends. This catalog of actions and proper nouns 'Miss Stillwagon, the GOLDEN GRIFFIN, the PARK LANE Liquor Store, Gauloises and Picayunes' creates a powerful illusion of a continuous, unfolding present. The poem's momentum seems to be entirely forward-moving, a linear progression through the city and through the speaker's day. This linear temporality is, however, a carefully constructed artifice, designed to be shattered. The rupture occurs in the poem's final stanza, when the speaker "casually" asks for and for Mike I just stroll into the PARK LANE Liquor Store and ask for a bottle of Strega and then I go back where I came from to 6th Avenue and the tobacconist in the Ziegfeld Theatre and casually ask for a carton of Gauloises and a carton of Picayunes, and a NEW YORK POST with her face on it (O'Hara, 1964, ll.20-25) This is the moment of hauntological intrusion. The sight of Billie Holiday's face on the newspaper—a sign of her death—instantly collapses the poem's carefully built-up presentness. The forward momentum of the narrative comes to a halt, and the poem pivots from the external world of the city to the internal world of memory. The mundane details of the day are suddenly cast in a new, spectral light, revealed as the prelude to a moment of profound loss. The present, which seemed so solid and real, is shown to be fragile, susceptible to the sudden, violent intrusion of the past. Billie Holiday, the "Lady" of the title, is the poem's central ghost. She is never named within the body of the poem, a significant absence that only enhances her spectral quality. She appears first as a disembodied image, "her face on it," a ghostly trace in the machinery of mass media. But this image triggers a powerful, multi-sensory memory that brings her back to life in the speaker's consciousness. The poem's final lines shift dramatically in tone and temporality, moving from the bustling present of 6th Avenue to the intimate, smoky past of a jazz club: and I am sweating a lot by now and thinking of leaning on the john door in the 5 SPOT while she whispered a song along the keyboard to Mal Waldron and everyone and I stopped breathing (O'Hara, 1964, ll.26-29) In this moment, Holiday is resurrected as a spectral force. Her voice, a mere "whisper," has the power to arrest the speaker's breath, to suspend life itself. This is the visor effect that Derrida describes, where the specter looks at us, and its gaze has a physical, affective power [1]. Holiday, though dead, continues to exert a powerful influence on the living. She is the embodiment of Derrida's specter, "neither present nor absent," a figure who haunts the present through the persistence of cultural memory. The poem demonstrates how modern life, for all its forward-driving energy, is structured by these sudden hauntological shocks, these encounters with the ghosts of our cultural past. "The Day Lady Died" is a poignant example of what Mark Fisher calls the "aesthetics of lost futures" [4]. Billie Holiday's death at the age of 44 was a tragic loss for the world of music, a foreclosure of all the artistic possibilities that her future might have held. The poem captures this sense of a future that has been cancelled. The final, breathless moment of the poem is a moment of suspended animation, a freezing of time in the face of an irretrievable loss. The future, which the speaker was so meticulously planning for at the beginning of the poem is suddenly rendered meaningless I will get off the 4:19 in Easthampton at 7:15 and then go straight to dinner and I don't know the people who will feed me I walk up the muggy street beginning to sun (O'Hara, 1964, ll.3-6) The poem's temporal disjunction, the sudden shift from a linear present to a looping, recursive memory, turns the quotidian into a site of spectral resonance. The ordinary becomes extraordinary, haunted by the weight of what has been lost. O'Hara's poem suggests that modern consciousness is not a seamless, continuous flow, but a series of hauntological encounters, moments where the ghosts of the past rise to interrupt and redefine the present. In "The Day Lady Died," the death of a cultural icon becomes a personal, embodied experience, a spectral event that stops time and leaves the speaker, and the reader, breathless.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

This paper argues that hauntological approach to the analysis of American avant-garde poetry is tenable, and it proves that the pieces of T.S. Eliot, H.D., and Frank O'Hara are organized according to a spectral temporality which supports their modernist agendas. The analysis of the poems by combining Jacques Derrida concept of hauntology with modernist theories of temporal disjunction and spectrality studies demonstrates that the poets move beyond thematic interest in ghosts and achieve an intense formal expression of haunting. The principle of hauntology, developed as logic of the specter, neither present nor absent, allows explaining how these authors create poetic space in which the past is not a fixed entity but rather a disruptive power, and the future is the place

of crisis and foreclosure .The analysis of *The Waste Land* reveals a cultural and civilizational haunt poetics, where the broken present is constantly peaked by the spirit of a mythic and historical past. The use of temporal disjunction, spectral bodies, and an overall feeling of a lost future by Eliot creates a quintessentially hauntological landscape, a modern world that, in its very fabric, is an Unreal City populated by the dead. H.D. in her book, *Helen in Egypt*, in its turn, examines a more personal and gendered spectrality. H.D. breaks down patriarchal myth through the figure of the eidolon, the phantom Helen, and, thus, creates a recursive, dream-like temporality, which intensifies a feminine consciousness of the spectral. Her writing shows how even the myth can be used as a kind of haunting a story that comes back to disturb and re-pattern the present. Lastly, *The Day Lady Died* by Frank 'Hara can be viewed as a representative of hauntological shock when it comes to cities and urban modernity. The drastic shift of the poem as a carefully-documented present to a shocking memory of Billie Holiday is testimony of how specters can burst into the present, showing the way the contemporary consciousness is organized around these sudden confrontations with the specters of our cultural past. Finally, the poetry of Eliot, H.D. and O'Hara speak of the fact that the crisis of modernism represents, in most of the aspects, a crisis of time. As they show, the experience of modernity is an experience of being haunted: with the trauma of war, with the burden of a history that can no longer be told coherently, with silencing the voices of the marginalised and with frustrating futures that were once promised. It is here that the modernist poetry is a realm of haunted perseverance, a place where the forgotten futures and irregular histories of the twentieth century are not only recalled but are also actively and spectrally experienced. Through the process of learning to read on behalf of the ghosts in these poems and through their consideration of their spectral temporalities, scholars can accrue a better sense of the persistent efficacy of the modernist project and its application to our own haunted present.

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