

‘What’s haunting *Dead Europe*?’

Trauma fiction as resistance to postmodern governmentality

MICHAEL VAUGHAN

University of Sydney

Dead Europe is a novel that has been described as unsettling, disturbing, poisoned, repellent. The text, by most accounts, has the capacity to haunt readers as much as it tracks the diegetic haunting of its protagonist. This paper argues that we can read *Dead Europe* as an example of trauma fiction, where the painful past is first accessed through its haunting and troped echoes in the present, and that the trauma Tsiolkas writes of is the blood-soaked history of 20th century European history. Indeed, most critics are either implicitly or explicitly in agreement about this first point, whether or not they situate the text specifically within the framework of trauma theory. However, the argument here will be that the purpose of Tsiolkas’ trauma fiction is as resistance to postmodern governmentality, the omnivorous neoliberal democracy beyond the ‘end of history’. In doing so, this paper will draw on Derrida’s concept of hauntology, a product of his reading of the role of Marxism after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Derrida, and arguably Tsiolkas, maintain the usefulness of the spirit of Marx not in the dogmatic belief in his specific theories (such as dialectical materialism) but rather as an ongoing spirit of critical reflexivity, a spectrality which acts as a reminder of the ideological contingency of the present moment. Tsiolkas writes trauma fiction to challenge the totalising discourse of postmodern governmentality, to assert the impossibility of an end to history, and to construct a way of writing and reading fiction ethically which can haunt its readers.

It is impossible to write about *Dead Europe*, in fact to read it, without confronting its ghosts. At the most literal level is the figure of the ghoul who attaches himself to Isaac during his travels across Europe. Initially felt as merely a presence or intimation, the ghoul then manifests in Isaac’s photography, where in image after image ‘the pale thin face of the boy was still laughing behind them, his thin, poisonous face mocking and malevolent’ (Tsiolkas, *Dead* 157). Isaac is increasingly possessed by the ghoul, descending into vampirism and depravity as his journey continues. In a sense this possession is a perforation between the barriers walling off Isaac’s realist contemporary travel narrative and the interspersed mythic account of his family’s experiences in war-torn Greece, an undead past intruding on the present. More than just the figure of the ghoul, the narrative itself becomes haunted and haunting to encounter. Isaac turns to discover ghosts where he believed none did or could exist—similarly Tsiolkas has talked about anti-Semitism as ‘something that I thought had died in history’ (Tsiolkas, ‘Interview’ 446). The question of anti-Semitism, too, haunts *Dead Europe* without resolution, the inexplicability of its recurrence and persistence explored through uncomfortable moments of possession (‘For one deranged, terrified moment—I promise, only a moment; it passed, I willed it away immediately—I wished that not one Jew had ever walked on the face of this earth’ (158)). The narrative of haunting and possession escalates: temporality unwinds through slippage between the present, past, and future tenses, and finally the realist present is wholly subsumed by a hellish and supernatural ‘devil’s jumping castle submerged in excrement, blood and foul vapours’ (Joseph, ‘Gardening’ 107).

The arc of *Dead Europe* here replicates what Geoffrey H. Hartman labels negative narratibility, ‘a temporal structure that tends to collapse, to implode into a charged traumatic core, so that the fable is reduced to a repetition compulsion not authentically “in time”’ (547-8). This traumatic core is the endpoint of Isaac’s narrative, where ‘I pull away skin and muscle and bone and the blood gushes onto my face and neck’ (Tsiolkas, *Dead* 382) in a hellish and surreal final episode detached from time and place. For Hartman, negative narratibility is a mark of the nearness of trauma.

The traumatic event is one which, by definition, resists symbolization and linguistic representation at the time of reception. Instead the experience is screened and refigured through the post-traumatic echoes within the subject’s psyche. Anne Whitehead proposes that:

trauma does not lie in the possession of the individual, to be recounted at will, but rather acts as a haunting or possessive influence which not only insistently and intrusively returns but is, moreover, experienced for the first time only in its belated repetition (5)

Similarly, the ghosts of *Dead Europe* are first experienced through the haunting encounters in Isaac’s travelogue, and then summoned up by interwoven possession and narrative reconstruction. The mythic tone of the past Greece narrative, which Catherine Padmore argues ‘suggests that they belong to the old world and have no bearing on Isaac’s first-person and realist narrative’ (54), I see as representing the inability for recollected trauma to be anything but troped and figurative. In a sense, the fairytale tone and supernatural events are another form of haunting, of the traumatic event being screened by linguistic representation which cannot transparently or “realistically” reconstruct the actual experience—since it was never properly experienced at the time of reception at all. The question for interpretation is then to ‘sort out the relations between split or rupture (schize), place of [first] encounter, repetition and subject’ (Hartman 543) because I would argue that the trauma at the heart of *Dead Europe* is more than the murder of the Jewish boy by Michaelis, and points to more than Isaac’s fall or redemption.

Isaac’s descent into hell is a descent into a traumatic core which he shares with the other characters of the novel. Stories of pain, loss and disillusionment recur on his journey: from the tongueless man and his blind wife in Venice, to Maria and Pano’s horrific sex show in Prague, to the brutal domestic violence in Paris. Along with Isaac everybody in Europe is traumatised and haunted, a ‘truth’ captured by his photography, where for example ‘the young men in Gerry’s warehouse are not laughing and joking. Their faces are contorted into death masks of sullen despair, of unbearable anguish and of never-ending grief’ (Tsiolkas, *Dead* 303). Tsiolkas’ Europe is truly a traumascapes, to use the word Maria Tumarkin applies to landscapes where the violence and horror of the past refuses to release its grip on the present, returning time after time to suffuse the physical landscape and catalyse haunting and relapse (See Tumarkin 12, quoted in Padmore 57). Traumascapes are constituted from the sheer scale of trauma; if ‘the injury done to the symbolic order at the level of the subject will, in many cases, ripple out from the site of trauma to disturb the wider symbolic network’ (Crosthwaite 25) then for traumascapes like Tsiolkas’ Europe the symbolic network remains damaged and haunted by the persistent ripples of the disturbing past. While Michaelis’ murder may be the point of rupture for Isaac, the traumatic core which he is drawn into is the ‘impossible history’ (Caruth 5) of Europe itself; impossible precisely because it can never be other than present and recurrent. The haunting of *Dead Europe* is the collective trauma of Europe, and more broadly the West after the blood-soaked 20th century.

Yet *Dead Europe* departs from conventional trauma fiction in an important sense: the why. Trauma fiction, in a definition outlined by Kali Tal and adopted by Jane Robinett, “is defined by the identity of its author” and is centred on “the reconstruction and recuperation of the traumatic experience” (292). I would argue that Tsiolkas’ trauma fiction concerns something entirely different, an anger and form of resistance that is much more personal and political, and which centres on two words shared by Maria and Colin and Tsiolkas: ‘Fuck democracy’.

Let us set aside the concept of writing trauma for a moment to examine Tsiolkas’ relationship with democracy, by first establishing what we mean when we talk about ‘postmodern democracy’ and then specifying the term ‘governmentality’. Democratic societies are those where the nature of justice, government, and knowledge are permanently contested and therefore fundamentally indeterminate (Gabardi 96). I use the term postmodern democracy, however, because of its position following the fall of the Berlin Wall as the harbinger of the ‘end of history’. Francis Fukuyama’s words have been indiscriminately quoted, often self-servingly, and the intention here is not to rehearse his thesis. Instead, the fall of the Berlin Wall is here emblematic of the apparent fall of a coherent ideological alternative to neoliberal capitalist democracy: Sal Mineo bitterly talks about a Czechoslovakia jealous of Australia’s ‘headstart in capitalism’ whose people would ‘sell all their fucking children for a buck’ (Tsiolkas, *Dead* 203). The collapse of Communism becomes the collapse of ideological dialectic, and the disintegration of metanarrative into the all-encompassing indeterminacy of postmodern democratic governance. So postmodern democracy is representative of the putative end of history, a descent into ‘a discontinuous, fractured plurality of micronarratives governed by an indeterminant play of contingent forces devoid of purposes, immanent logic, or coherent direction’ (Best 23).

Moreover, an indeterminacy which has always been immanent to democracy is amplified in the 21st century by the advent of postmodern hyperreality. Hyperreality is constituted by a surplus of signs and images detached from the material world, primarily through mediated technologies like television and computers, a new world ‘in which words, symbols, and images are disconnected from their empirical referents and effectively displace the experiential reality of everyday life with a simulated reality’ (Gabardi 100). We can term this hyperreality postmodern because of the erasure of the referent, the proliferation of surface meaning and the rejection of materialist ontology. In *Dead Europe*, there is a palpable anger at the lack of ethical grounding for our modern hyperreality, something Tsiolkas himself discusses in talking about the novel:

To say that this is a reality of the new Europe: what does that mean? Isaac does it physically, with a human body, but you look at pornography on the net, we do that digitally, but at the end of the digital image is a real human body being exploited, that is being used, that is entering the sphere of capital and the distribution and exploitation (‘Interview’ 452)

Tsiolkas rejects a social system where images and symbols detach from the lived experience of its members, instead reasserting the ethical instrumentality of historical materialism (i.e. that all things, even digital images, are ultimately determined and produced by the material relations of production). It is through Isaac’s photography that the trauma of the past is first realised, a point I will return to later; digital imagery that enables and bridges the divide between representation and lived experience, between a detached postmodern present and a materialist grip on the past.

So we can approach Tsiolkas' anger at democracy ('Fuck democracy') not in terms of the philosophical abstract of democracy, but as a reaction to its contemporary incarnation, something Gabardi, quoting Foucault, labels 'postmodern, neoliberal, techno-oligarchic governmentality' (99). Governmentality in Foucault's work describes the broad historical change in the operation of the Western state: at one early historical pole, the Machiavellian prince, external and singular, rules a bounded geographical area with a territorial foundation for a 'juridical framework of sovereignty' (Foucault 99); at the other historical pole, the management of the welfare of mass populations with their own dynamics and effects becomes the primary business of a state apparatus which is widely dispersed and facilitated by the self-regulation of individuals (Nadesan 16). I have used the term governmentality in reference to this historical specificity of the postmodern democratic state in Foucault's framework which I argue is key to Tsiolkas' text, and because resistance to postmodern governmentality may not necessarily be the same as resistance to the traditional state.

While I will argue in the following section how Tsiolkas' choice of trauma fiction relates to his anger toward postmodern democracy, one example can highlight the centrality of this anger to the emotional core of the novel, when Andreas tells Isaac why he refuses to argue with the museum tour guide about the politics of the Resistance:

–What should I have said to him? That it was worth nothing, all those deaths, all those years in exile? He began laughing and I realised that for him, laughing was not joy but it was rancour and confusion. He laughed as the truck driver Takis in Agrinion had laughed when I had attempted to describe another world to him. It was the same laugh.

–Come, continued Andreas, it's all in the fucking past, isn't it? There's no exile any more, no civil war, no blood feuds, no more prisons and even the State builds a monument to the Resistance. We are all democrats, now, aren't we? (Tsiolkas, *Dead* 93-94)

In this powerful passage, the play and irony of postmodern indeterminacy is refigured as 'rancour and confusion', a paralysis that is a cultural and collective rather than individual failure ('It was the same laugh'). The ideologically barren present, devoid of the past, is simply a void ('no... no... no... no more'), where even ideological difference is fetishised and neutered by all-encompassing neoliberal democracy ('even the State builds a monument to the Resistance. We are all democrats now, aren't we?'). In postmodern governmentality, the past is disjoined from the present, only accessible through representations that are themselves hyperreal and detached. The indeterminacy of the postmodern democratic present, and its detachment from history, enervates debate and discussion among a population which now disciplines and regulates itself; it is not worth arguing about politics anymore in a society where ideology is an anachronism.

To draw the bridge between Tsiolkas' anger at postmodern democracy and his use of trauma fiction, we have to turn to Marx—or rather the spectres of Marx, as conceived by Derrida. In 1993, Derrida presented his reading of Marx's work to a conference in California entitled 'Whither Marxism?'. Derrida's central argument as it relates to this paper is:

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... Without this *non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present*, without that which secretly unhinges it, without this responsibility and this respect for justice concerning those who *are not there*, of those who are no longer or who

are not yet *present and living*, what sense would there be to ask the question “where?” “where tomorrow?” “whither?”. (xviii)

Derrida pursues through the figure of the ghost a form of resistance to the impossibility of ethics and politics in a living present disjoined from its past: against this ‘pure ontology’ he posits a more surreal and ethical ‘hauntology’. Derrida maintains the usefulness of Marx, not as a way of reconstructing metanarrative or dialectical materialism, but as a radical and reflective spirit critical of capitalism; he argues that ‘we would distinguish this spirit from other spirits of Marxism, those that rivet it to the body of Marxist doctrine, to its supposed systemic, metaphysical, or ontological totality (notably to its ‘dialectical method’ or to ‘dialectical materialism’)’ (88 quoted in Lewis 139). By deconstructing Marx’s body of work, its preoccupation with ghosts and haunting, and his political legacy as itself haunting, Derrida proposes a critical spirit which rests on the ever-present past. Fredric Jameson’s summary of spectrality is that ‘all it says, if it can be thought to speak, is that the living present is scarcely as self-sufficient as it claims to be; that we would do well not to count on its density and solidity, which might under exceptional circumstances betray us’ (38-9). In *Dead Europe*, Tsiolkas enacts the disintegration of the ‘self-sufficient present’, its ‘density and solidity’, into a surreal and atemporal hell, a transition from pure ontology to hauntology.

What is crucial are the ways in which the emerging hauntology of *Dead Europe*, while disturbing and difficult, is precisely for those reasons a more honest and ethical basis for political philosophy than the pure ontology it displaces. We can see hauntology on this basis as a means of interrogating ‘postmodern, neoliberal, techno-oligarchic governmentality’. It is anger at the “end of history” thesis that, Tom Lewis contends, motivates Derrida’s strategy of hauntology (138). Similarly, Tsiolkas’ own hauntology is an assertion that history can never end, can never be fully dealt with, something he alludes to when he comments about recent European history that ‘this is not the past in the past, this is something we don’t have words to describe’ (‘Interview’ 459). The fact of something we don’t have words to describe, a history of pain and suffering which resists linguistic representation, yet haunts our understanding of the world and our place within it, acts as a counterpoint to postmodern hyperreality. Rather than representation as a space of detached surface meaning without any referential relationship to the material world, hauntology suggests that every attempt at representation tropes endlessly the spectres of past trauma, ideology and experience. As Isaac narrates in the novel:

History, manure, blood and bone under my feet. The dust of death, life, death, life, endless death and life, repeating repeating, this is what my body is propelling itself through, this is what life on this dirty soil means (375)

History, manure, blood and bone are commingled, and ‘life on this dirty soil’ means forging through the echoes of endless repetitions of lives, and deaths, and violence. For Isaac, this means the inability to restrict his encounter with Europe to the hyperreal representation it offers of itself, porn and sex shows detached from history and trauma. As David Sornig observes, ‘while *Dead Europe* may not remember Berlin, it remembers the hate, the Holocaust, that was directed from it’ (70) and through Isaac’s journey the transition to hauntology is a way for Tsiolkas to construct an ethical relationship with the violent past.

I have positioned *Dead Europe* as trauma fiction which, rather than reconstructing and recuperating the traumatic experience, occupies the traumatic core as a form of resistance to postmodern governmentality. Trauma, because it can only ever be reconstructed and never experienced in its first encounter, does not conform to ‘discredited notions of transparent

referentiality' and yet simultaneously 'would seem to guarantee the stubborn irreducibility of the historical referent' (Crosthwaite 40). In other words, trauma fiction can moderate the excesses of postmodern hyperreality by telling stories which are not direct representations of, but rather haunted by, the past and the real. Trauma fiction works against the extreme perspective where 'some postmodern theorists speak as though historical events have no independent status beyond the linguistic fictions of writers' (Best 24) while stopping short of claiming that its narratives are a true reflection or 'real' account of historical events. Any political resistance to current forms of governmentality must acknowledge the intellectual contribution of poststructuralism, while finding some way of retaining a grip on the meaning of historical events. Tsiolkas wrote in an unrelated article that 'The end of history happened with the fall of the Berlin Wall until, abruptly, terrifyingly, history resumed transmission on 11 September 2001' ('Americans' 95). The irony of history dropping in and out of transmission like a radio network with poor coverage is directed at the short-sightedness of the Fukuyaman end of history, the inability of postmodern democracy to conceive of an alternative to the capitalist now. Booth writes that 'there can be no exorcising Marx's ghost, except perhaps for those for whom we are not a part of the *longue durée* but creatures of the hour ever fashioning ourselves anew' (531) and so it is fitting that Tsiolkas, admittedly indebted to Marxism himself, writes trauma fiction as a hauntological act of resistance to the totalising discourse of post-Communist neoliberal democracy.

This presents a model for Tsiolkas as a writer, just as for Isaac as a photographer, on the question of ethics and aesthetics. The haunting and possession that collapses the two threads of the novel's narrative, between Isaac's realism and the mythical account of Greece, is paralleled in Isaac's own photography. At the outset, he is devoid of artistic inspiration, his camera lying forgotten in his hotel room. However, the photos he takes grow progressively more haunted—first there is the suggestion of the ghoul in the background, then it is prominent in every picture, then every person Isaac captures is hellishly transformed. He confronts the unavoidable fact of his photography's possession in Cambridge, saying 'I found the shot of the old man in the train carriage. But in the photograph he was not asleep. His terrified eyes were wide and bloodshot and his toothless thin mouth was stretched in a moan to the camera' (Tsiolkas, *Dead* 337). Yet despite the horror of these images, Reveka maintains that 'they are true' (403) because 'Europe has suffered Hell' (404). The idea that there can be truth in Isaac's photography in the way he records the traumatic aftershocks of European history, even as the images themselves are false records of his own experience, gives a role for aesthetics in the witnessing of trauma that is not our own. Ethical—true—art is what acknowledges this ongoing trauma after the 'end of history', for Isaac and for Tsiolkas. Tsiolkas provides an opposing model that this kind of ethical art is set up against at the beginning of the novel, saying:

There are photographs that are blurred or ugly or too dark or over-exposed, they can be banal or boring or incompetent. But that does not necessarily make them dead. Death is, of course, simply the absence of life, of the heart and the blood and the soul. The absence of fluid and flesh. (*Dead* 46)

Paradoxically, it is through the haunting of the ghoulish past that Isaac's photography comes alive, and through the absence of that haunting at the outset which makes the photography and perhaps Europe itself 'dead'.

This in turn leads us toward a reading of the most difficult and disturbing parts of *Dead Europe*. There are several episodes in particular which not only narrate the protagonist's possession, but which are told in a way that is shocking and haunting to encounter. The sex

show in Prague; the subsequent sex scene in the train to Berlin; the final section with the American and Russian in London; all are repulsive, confronting and difficult to read. In fact, I would argue that this is ethical writing for Tsiolkas, in that it is fundamentally honest, avoiding aesthetic ‘death’ through the ‘absence of fluid and flesh’. Tsiolkas writes the physicality of the human body—fluid, flesh, ‘piss, sweat, blood, shit’ (*Dead* 381)—as a path to embodiment. This embodiment asserts the fundamental material commonality between human beings, something Terry Eagleton also marshals in a Marxist defence against postmodern indeterminacy (47). The abstract and the philosophical are anchored in the physical experience of the human body. This embodiment enables a certain critique of neoliberal economics (such as Maria’s ‘And what about the boys in the streets below? What about the boys you’re going to fuck tonight? What does the market give them?’ (Tsiolkas, *Dead* 212)). Embodiment also provides a means to access the screened traumatic experience, as Hartman outlines, in fact arguing that ‘perhaps the only way to overcome a traumatic severance of body and mind is to come back to mind through the body’ (541). It is in the most physical, confronting, and repellent passages of Tsiolkas’ work that Isaac is possessed by the trauma underlying *Dead Europe*, precisely through his carnal and physical possession, the past inhabiting the present via the materialism fundamental to all human existence.

These confronting passages are not only the way that Isaac is possessed by the ghosts of the past and accesses that trauma, but the way that trauma is transmitted to us as readers. Lines such as ‘She smelt of farting and diarrhoea, shitting and pissing, burping, bile and vomit. I forced my tongue into this churning compost’ (Tsiolkas, *Dead* 258), instill in the reader a ‘visceral reaction’ (Padmore 61), a physical shock that is passed on to us through the act of reading. Padmore suggests that ‘something from this book can move into the reader’s body and lodge there long after the book has been put down’ (61). If we read *Dead Europe* as trauma fiction then these passages are the shockwaves of the traumatic past which, in rippling through the text into us, confirm our common tie to a social order which has been violated. We are drawn into Tsiolkas’ hauntology because we share the disgust and horror of Isaac’s possession and in doing so become part of affirming the screened existence of the traumatic encounter. Just as it is the false and hellish prints which convince Isaac that photography is ‘the most truthful of the arts’ (340), Tsiolkas evokes a physical and visceral reaction with his narrative that affirms the potential for language to be honest in writing our relationship with the past. In doing so, we as readers are anchored to a traumatic history. If we accept Jameson’s notion that ‘history is what hurts,’ our visceral reaction to Tsiolkas’ writing in these sections is what hurts to read, and in doing so confirms the tie of the ‘irreducible historical referent’ between all of us (Crosthwaite 40).

In concluding this reading of *Dead Europe*, it is worthwhile spending a moment looking at the ending of the novel itself. For although I have argued that Tsiolkas uses trauma fiction as a hauntological act of resistance against postmodern democracy, this resistance certainly does not recuperate a coherent ideological alternative, Marxist or otherwise. Even though trauma anchors Isaac (and us as readers) in ‘history as what hurts,’ it creates a political position governed by pain without the consolation of metanarrative. When Isaac finally produces an answer to the recurring question of what he believes in, he rages:

What I believe is that we will kill each other, that we will hurt each other. We will destroy our neighbours and we will exile them. We will sell our children as whores. We will murder and rape and punish one another... We will create poverty and illness and we will create obscene wealth and the depravities that arise from it. We will think ourselves just and righteous, faithful and sane. We will hate and kill and piss and shit on one another (379)

The inability for Tsiolkas' hauntology to enliven a positive ideological position is mirrored in many critics' readings of Derrida's *Specters of Marx*. Booth outlines how Derrida's spectrality occupies two temporal frameworks, 'the past-present, the specter of Marx as legacy and what it means to be his inheritors; and the present-future, the specter of Marx as the herald of things to come' (530). His comment that, beyond the assertion that 'there is no future without Marx,' there is little substantiation over how this spectrality enables political action in anything other than a broadly self-reflexive critical position, also relates to Tsiolkas' hauntology (Booth 531-2). Although there is undeniably anger, hurt, and resistance toward neoliberal capitalist democracy, there is also a palpable despair over what might form the basis of a new utopian (or even hopeful) political philosophy. Politically, Tsiolkas falls back on the assertion that history will always hurt, that 'Isaac had not photographed the past, he had captured the future' (*Dead* 405). While there is a difficult but possible relationship between ethics and aesthetics, Tsiolkas' *political* praxis is located in the arenas of personal faith and romance rather than formal politics or ideology.

The final section of the novel turns to religious faith for a sense of closure. Colin, in a remembered fragment after Isaac's final disintegration, talks about what he believes, in a passage which offers Tsiolkas' best possible answer to the genuine rage and pain in the above quotation of Isaac:

I choose Lilith and the demons, I choose Lucifer, who too knew love. I promise you, Isaac, if God is the righteous prick from the Bible, I choose Hell over Him. Fuck him. I choose to be with you. I choose Hell. (390)

Ultimately, redemption in *Dead Europe* must be romantic, personal and religious, not political in the traditional or formal sense. Tsiolkas explicitly links the question of faith with the fall of Communism, calling 'the impossible question', 'the question then of political faith and do you again commit in that way to a political expression given your experience of the previous collapse in faith' ('Interview' 460). Hauntology is a form of resistance to postmodern democracy which cannot wholly displace it, its deconstructive bent unable to form the foundation for a new ideological metanarrative or faith. If governmentality describes the diffuse regulation and self-regulation of populations of individuals, however, then Tsiolkas' hauntology does offer a form of resistance at the individual level through trauma and possession. While unsure about whether to commit to 'a political expression', let alone what that expression might be, Tsiolkas offers Isaac resistance to postmodern governmentality through the demon which possesses him.

In this sense the novel ends with Reveka's possession because it cannot end with exorcism: as much as Isaac's world is contaminated by the ghost, it is redeemed as well. The exorcism of the spirit would be the exorcism of the spectre of history, a transition from hauntology to a pure Fukuyaman ontology of the capitalist 'now'. Instead, Reveka's sacrifice is a spiritual and wilful possession, which Tsiolkas says is 'required because of the history of the Jews. That sacrifice is required because of the history of Stalinist communism in Europe. That sacrifice is required here because of the colonial history of Australia' ('Interview' 455). He argues that with these histories—traumatic histories—'It's certainly not enough to turn a blind eye to it, but it's also not enough to just say that I acknowledge it. Something else has to come from that' ('Interview' 456). More than simply acknowledging that trauma has happened, or representing it as the past in the past, the ethical relationship with traumatic history as mediated by art is possession. The ghoul's final words, 'Not alone, but together. You and I, together, for all of time, for all of eternity' (411) are meant to haunt us, and just like Reveka we should call up and welcome that possession as a means of attaining a critical

reflexivity of the world in which we live: an ethical relationship with collective trauma, and a hauntological understanding that even in our neoliberal capitalist world, history can never be finished with us.

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