Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997), x + 252 pp., $49.95 (cloth), $19.95 (paper).

Toward the end of her introduction to *Ghostly Matters*, Avery F. Gordon puts the reader on notice that "I have many more questions than answers, a potentially disappointing feature of this book, but endemic to the enterprise" (23). The enterprise is to explore the material effects of the "ghostly," of that which is excluded from conscious recollection and the historical record and yet has effects precisely in virtue of its absence. And the text is indeed structured around the broad questions of how to "identify hauntings and reckon with ghosts," that is, of how to uncover and redress the marginalizations, gaps, and exclusions of the historical record. The attention to that which is ghostly thus constitutes a critique of traditional modes of intellectual, and particularly sociological, inquiry. Among the questions that this focus on the ghostly elicits are: "what are the alternative stories we ought to and can write about the relationship among power, knowledge, and experience?" (23); "how does the ghost interrupt or put into crisis the demand for ethnographic authority?" (24); and "How...can our critical language display a reflexive concern not only with the objects of our investigation but also with the ones who investigate? What methods and forms of writing can foreground the conditions under which the facts and real story are produced?" (24). Thus, in a manner recalling the work of James Clifford, Gordon's attention to the rules governing the construction of sociological narratives and the ways in which sociology strives to disguise and expel the "fictive" calls into question the authority of the discipline and sociology's "claims to truth." Gordon's concern with "just those ghostly haunts that a normal social scientific account routinely attempts to minimize" (26) identifies a different form of sociological methodology, one more attuned to both the role of the imagination in – and the intersubjective dimension of – sociological investigation. Gordon stresses the ways in which "questions of narrative structuring, constructedness, analytic standpoint, and historical provisionality of claims to knowledge" (11) problematize sociological truth claims and reveal its "stories" to be "fictions of the real," that is, complex negotiations of the fictional, the theoretical, and the factual.

To write stories concerning exclusions and invisibilities, according to Gordon, is thus to write ghost stories. And these persistent and troubling ghosts highlight "the limitations of many of our prevalent modes of inquiry and the assumptions they make about the social world, the people who inhabit these worlds, and what is required to study them" (8). Importantly for Gordon, haunting, the phenomenon which demonstrates how "that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence," is a *social* phenomenon. "The ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life" (8). Gordon's three primary objects of inquiry, a photograph of the participants of the Third Psychoanalytic Congress held at Weimar, Germany in 1911, Argentinean author Luisa Valenzuela's novel *He Who Searches*, and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, serve as touchstones for the broader analysis of the ways in which the past structures the possibilities of the present and the ways in which the exclusions of history constitute a multitude of other stories which persistently press inward from the margins and threaten to undermine the "official story."

Gordon's second chapter, "distractions," focuses on an absence, the absence of Sabina Spielrein, a patient of Jung's who went on to become a psychoanalyst herself, from a photograph of the 1911 Weimar Congress participants. Intriguingly, Gordon, drawing on Aldo Carotenuto's 1984 collection of Spielrein's and letters to both Freud and Jung in *A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein Between Jung and Freud*, proposes that Spielrein haunts the development of psychoanalysis as an unacknowledged presence, most notably in her proposition of a death drive predating Freud's discussion of the matter by ten years (34, 40). However, Gordon uses Spielrein's absence from the history of psychoanalysis as a bridge to her broader concern with the inability of traditional Freudian psychoanalysis to grapple with the social structure of haunting. According to Gordon, although psychoanalysis is the place where the Human Sciences have been the most willing to entertain ghostly matters (42), she concludes that "Freud's science arrives to explain away everything" as the return of

the repressed on an individual basis (57).

While psychoanalysis provides many powerful tools for analyzing the structure and significance of hauntings, Gordon chafes against her perception of it as a mode of analysis which abstracts the individual from the social space of historical power structures. In her third chapter "the other door, its floods of tears with consolation enclosed," she proposes to consider ghosts and hauntings on the level of "world historical events." This lengthy chapter, which constitutes the centerpiece of the book, uses Argentine author Luisa Valenzuela's *He Who Searches* as an anchor for a discussion of "the organized system of repression known as disappearance" (72). For Gordon, the "public secret" of disappearance is exemplary of haunting because it is a "state-sponsored procedure for producing ghosts to harrowingly haunt a population into submission" (115). But the haunting produced by disappearance functions both as a mode of violent subordination and as an imperative to confront that same violence. The ghost thus carries with it simultaneously a history of violence and a utopian impulse toward a future redressment in the name of justice.

From disappearance in Argentina, Gordon moves in "not only the footprints but the water too and what is down there" to the "lingering inheritance of racial slavery, the unfinished project of Reconstruction, and the compulsions and forces that all of us inevitably experience in the face of slavery's having once existed in our nation" (139). In this chapter, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* functions, as do the photograph and Valenzuela's novel in other chapters, as a point of departure and return for Gordon's analysis of larger social structures which produce hauntings, which produce alternative readings, in their very attempts to foreclose interpretation. It is the haunting, according to Gordon, which mediates between the institutional and the personal, and produces a call for accountability, the need to recognize our own implication in historical processes. "To be haunted," writes Gordon, "is to be tied to historical and social effects" (190).

With Spielrein, Valenzuela, and Morrison, Gordon works to recover the "evidence of things not seen" (195) and to demonstrate the "intermingling of fact, fiction, and desire as it shapes us and the public knowledge we create" (195). The text's strength is also its weakness; that is, as Gordon he self notes, it raises more problems than it provides answers. The chapters, as noted, are loosely organized around an anchoring object or text, from which the discussion continually digresses and to which it returns. However, what this review cannot capture is the eloquence of Gordon's language, which at times approaches the poetic, and the insistence of her political engagement. Gordon sees with clarity the murkiness of the waters, but that murkiness serves not as an excuse to call off the search but, on the contrary, as an imperative to further investigation and, in addition, as an imperative to refine the modes of investigation themselves so as to appreciate, rather than to exclude, the murkiness. The text could serve as a valuable addition to courses which consider critical methodology and has sympathies particularly with the work of Clifford, Haraway, and Stone. For courses on American Literature, the chapter on *Beloved* provides some interesting reflections on both the incident around which the novel is based, as well as the slave narrative genre as a whole. And, of course, the text is of great value to anyone working on issues pertaining to the fantastic and the uncanny. – *Jeffrey A. Weinstock, George Washington University*

Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas S. Frentz, *Projecting the Shadow: The Cyborg Hero in American Film* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995), x + 261 pp., $45.00 (cloth), $14.95 (paper).

Like many of the films it analyzes, *Projecting the Shadow* is highly imaginative, engaging, and thought-provoking. Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas S. Frentz have constructed a creative hypothesis, based on a familiar motif of male initiation, in which "an adolescent boy descends into a dark and foreboding place to slay a dangerous enemy and to gain the knowledge, maturity, and courage he needs to become a man" (2). The authors trace this male quest through three distinct cultural phases: the Native American hunt, usually performed under the guidance of an older tutelary figure or shaman; the hunt of the white frontiersman, who has adapted certain rituals from Native Americans but rejects their spiritual principles; and the technological hunter, who becomes so "seduced by power and the tools that extend it [that] he becomes a tool himself" (3), part-man and part-machine, a cyborg