

The Case of California: An Interview with Laurence Rickels by Avery Gordon and other Ghosts

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Laurence Rickels is a Professor of German at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and author of *Aberrations of Mourning: Writing on German Crypts* (Wayne State University Press, 1988) and *The Case of California* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). This doesn't necessarily tell you very much. I think Larry Rickels is the American broadcaster for the West Coast installment of "Sigmund Freud: The Video."



The Case of California channels several mediums and reprograms several channels: haunting and technologization, telecommunications and communication with ghosts, California and Germany, Psychoanalysis and Marxism, particularly those German exiles known as the Frankfurt School, adolescence and group psychology, love and war, friendship and suicide, home and exile, and fascism and American mass culture. *The Case of California* reads California neither as an empirical place nor as a character, but as a name for (or state of) post-modern technicity and asks: "What is it about California that places a call to thinking?" Responding to the prompt, and arguing that America/California is a "password" that accesses both fascism and psychoanalysis, Rickels answers that Germany and California are Teen Nations inhabited by the technologic of the friendly suicidal groupie. A friendly, but harrowing book, *The Case of California* returns, as it fast forwards, psychoanalysis to the problem Freud began and ended with: authoritarianism and resistances. This book traffics in, or jacks into, the often ambiguous difference between what's live and what's dead.

It was, on the face of it, a really low-tech affair. Coffee and cake, an ordinary tape-recorder it took the two of us 15 minutes to load with batteries, talking cured by typewriters and pencils; all this would have been a banal reminder that East-to-West-Coast transplanted professors are still, in Alvin Toffler's phrase, in "future shock." But as psychoanalysis reminds us, the unconscious does a strange hit on

time: memory and the ghosts it tracks travel with both little and specific regard for established time zones. Screening future shock, we were surprised and relieved to find that before we began the talk, there was a ghostly voice on the tape machine signaling our arrival. A spectral, perhaps Satanic voice, and a sign of the kind of technological friendship *The Case of California* maps, the ghostly haunt is never what it seems. It is only ever an elaborate symptomology for the what-it-is-that-cannot-say-it-is-missing or lost. Ghost stories, like the psychoanalytic case study and its contemporary adolescent equivalent, the horror film, are potent mysteries. What is the mystery, or the mythology, that *The Case of California* re-plays? Some part of the answer to that question can be found in the fact that the interview had already begun in some other magnetic place before we seemingly turned on or tuned in to the recording device. In other words, someone was already broadcasting and someone was already listening. Like any "out-of-phased but ongoing correspondence," the following interview spooked (spoke) us. As our couple became a little group of three, there was no guarantee that other parasites wouldn't virus in. Truly a phantasmatic experience, the interview below transmits "live" only the program advertised as *The Case of California*.

Avery Gordon: Let's begin at the end of *The Case of California* because if there's a mystery this case unravels, fast forwarding to the end doesn't allow the reader to cheat for the solution. *The Case of California* ends with a meditation on invention in the age of simulation. Simulation represents the moment where the story and the machine, the two technologies of invention bequeathed to us in a seemingly brighter moment, are not only thoroughly "patented" (in your words), but mutated to the point of symbiotic identification. You say, "the invention of California has placed a call and question to theory or thought: 'What else am I going to be able to invent?'" If we hardwire the telephone lines to the PC, what else have you been able to invent? Or, if California is Germany, are you Freud?

Laurence Rickels: *The Case of California* follows out certain conceptual placements of "California" which can be lined up in out-of-phased but ongoing correspondence with the philosophematic force associated with "Germany." On the way I was able to do a deconstructive number on, that is, inside master discursivities. The study features the Californian teenager and the native cultures, phantasms, or support groups that have accrued to that figure on both sides of a discursive continental divide. What does it mean to jack the rise of Nazi Germany into the technofuture we associate with California? And why is adolescence thus a global conspiracy operating on these two fronts? I found that I was asking a question that had to be raised at the center of Central European thought. It "was there," already in the eighteenth century, as the preprogramming of a trajectory of exile that made it to the outside in the thirties on the Coast. But my emphasis on a quasi-dialectic

between the couple and the group, between the East Coast or Europe and California, has a lot to do with shell shocks I picked up beach-side. Like a lot of post-punk intelligent-life types Back East I hadn't gotten around to going through adolescence. On the Coast I saw my deferral of teenage "Dasein" coming at me, growing perpetual. I went for the cute and popular. That's right: I too walked with a hologram. So I opened up what was an impossible and untenable position for me, namely being-in-California, with the assistance of what people Back East tend to pack in large doses: ambivalence.

But the Gulf War proved to be the case for California criticism, Big Time. Even Saddam Hussein defended his desire to hold onto Kuwait by comparing it to California. A colleague, with whom I watched the war, happens to be from Europe and is considered one of the world experts on military history. He received the first listing of American casualties, together with the immediately subsequent taking back, in a sense, of this list with the news that our first war dead were for the most part accidental victims of our own fire, as guarantee that we were going to "lose" another Vietnam. But with my Californian ears on I recognized that this instant replay could only refer to a different set of responses, namely, to the TV set. The introduction of "friendly fire" (which is a Californian concept, if I've ever encountered one) brought sitcom relief from what was, indeed, threatening to become Vietnam mourning and standstill. "Friendly fire" is the primal-time repress-release of our suicidal inoculative bond with the shocks or shots of catastrophe. You saw it; you were there. Suddenly we were out of the body bag. We were so efficient or friendly that we were even killing ourselves with a direct hit of excess.

The Case of California addresses the latest and continuing outbreaks of the phantasm Hitler first let roll. I mean the Big One, that of total warfare which, I've argued, needs to be understood within the growing replacement of love and war with friendship and suicide. Consider, for example, the rerun of phantasms to which we were entirely subjected. The warring parties were fighting World War II while the war protesters and victory celebrants alike hailed the war as a Vietnam repeat. Although the war did not mark the conclusion of Vietnam (we have yet to see that conclusion) it did (at a level that still concerns us) mark a certain conclusion of World War II. The media war's live transmission, which was coextensive with the video control that (right down to detonation) gave us the inside view, second by second, from the point of view at the end of the missiles, featured, unlike wars said to be in history, the eternal return of the same phantasms. The phantasm of portable gas chambers (made in Germany) conveyed by the buzz bombs of the Battle of Britain was one of the secret (that is, openly admitted) weapons. On another side, the German response to the opening shot of the war followed the leader: World War II was back on. In the midst of this eternal rerun of phantasms, the Patriot system raised the first real-time Allied challenge to Nazi control of the airwaves. But the Nazis

already lost, right? But they only lost because they didn't know when to stop winning. The control of the airwaves (that is, of psychological warfare and group psychology) had remained, certainly up to the Gulf War, unconsciously on the eternally and internally winning side of Nazi loss. So at the level of phantasm reception, the Gulf War brought a certain closure to World War II — but a pathogenic denial of the nonovercoming of the Vietnam trauma was at the sametime accomplished.

AG: What will it take for us to put Vietnam to rest and mourn it properly? Will there be any ghosts from this Gulf War?

LR: There were already ghosts in the war, for example an A-6 pilot nicknamed Ghost who was cited in *LA Times* coverage of operation "Jackpot." There tend to be ghosts in attendance whenever there is this kind of split level or blocked access within phantasm receptions. The split between the shutdown on the side of one war and the nonclosure of the other war, which is still being fought or acted out in the mode of denial, runs deep.

The Gulf War was brought to us by TV "liveness" or total war. The original installation of total war was completely connected to Nazi advocacy of TV (which was used, for example, to turn the Berlin Olympic games into a live transmission). It was available to the Nazis but, largely owing to reasons of timing, they chose to go with radio. Not because TV would have introduced some kind of cool distanciation which could deliver us from our share in the fantasy of totalization. The Nazi takeover of the airwaves has been brought to us by gadget love (which keeps TV watchers acting out in the short attention span or personal space that cannot be interrupted or invaded by a word from our superegoic sponsor). TV was first conceived as a surveillance device not only for use in espionage but also to monitor weapons experiments and exercise remote control over the bombs themselves. That's why television was not the "liberator" of those Eastern-European countries we had last visited, while they were still safely behind the iron curtain, in *Shoah*. TV came full circuit in the mideast media war: the war's TV coverage *was* the total war, with friend or enemy tied, gadget-lover style, to the same live broadcast.

The often noted resemblance of the Gulf War (with its smart bombs armed with their own video coverage) to video games has to be put in reverse. Video games rehearse (or repeat) the media war using *the same* technology. That's TV. The slogan "The whole world is watching" which the "liberation" of Eastern Europe shares with the defeat of the Vietnam War missed the point of impact. Now we've progressed via user-friendliness and friendly fire to a nonrelation or noncorrespondence (in the place of TV's live transmissions) between the professionalism to which gadget love has graduated and the teen-age pool of libido applicants. In other words: Gadget goes to war.

AG: Say more about the relationship between adolescence, group psychology, and domination and submission. I'm particularly interested in how politics figures in *The Case of California*. Are there alternative ways of calculating the sum of the group, such that the group is not simply a mass grave?

LR: We have arrived at a renewed structure of submission that has to do with the split reception within technophantasms. What happens when all the people in the position of the ego ideal (from Madonna to the Persian Gulf pilots) are in their 30s or 40s is not that we have arrived at a kind of maturing out of the Teen Age but that the only reserve left in the libido pool for these midlife stars, and that's all of us who have been professionalizing to the point of running media wars or publishing, is the group of misguided or rather teleguidable teenagers. It's this total split that continues to be pathogenic. The adolescent culture that survived the Gulf War is entirely jacked out. The noncorrespondence between the pool of applicants for libidinization and the successful gadget lovers who seem pretty much in control calls only for primal submissions.

AG: Your book has helped me to think about the melancholia displayed by the group of white, middle-class students we teach. They have no access to any kind of wildness and are literally rebels without causes. We successful teenagers, that is, perpetual or postponed teenagers have cornered the market on excess. Thus teenagers are invited to access totally what used to be inaccessible and excessive. On this access or excess channel we find the whole series of puritanical denial wars that were designed to promote what they are against: drugs, poverty, war. Has the deconstructive critique of the outlaw ended up being state policy?

LR: I argued in *The Case of California* that adolescence only begins looking like it's outside the law when it's first invented as an original, an origin. Once the impulse (or holding pattern) of adolescence goes against the law, institutionalization takes it over as its charge. This intake is the invention of California: Goethe, like the other German inventors of adolescence, praised the new-found energy as the native habitat of genius; but that upbeat notion was quickly wiped out by an upsurge of all sorts of other side effects. Goethe's *Werther*, for example (the self-help manual for the new invention, the adolescent) also guided its readership into instant copy-cat suicide. This seeming shortcircuit of adolescence via friendship and suicide which positions it as the other of the couple, of sexual love, was always part of the program. The adolescent begins outside the law of the couple in a place of tension between that couple (the couple of parents) and the couple he will form. The group he enters to acquire his sexuality (since he can't take it from his parents) comes complete with free membership in the mutual admiration society of group identification. The way to go from couple to couple can be endless. On a group scale ambivalence covers these regressed relations of the teenage group-of-one with the couple of parents withdrawing into the master bedroom. But you've got to become

like the couple you can never come like. "Like," the Californian particle, belongs to the pull and attraction of group identification. Every move teen self-esteem makes towards outlandishness or excess always submits to the likeability principle of identification that forever rebuilds the group. The adolescent likes to be different: like everyone he likes, to be like. But given its original alliance with genius, there might be a way in which (and I don't project where that would be or how that would be accomplishable) adolescence would be the place, deconstructively speaking, to find an affirmative and active alternative to the current way down, an alternate that would not subscribe to the couple, which is dead, and yet would not fall for that other couplification that Freud discovered in his second system, namely the couplification of drives over the body of the group. That's where only some phantom gets off at the prospect of group members not getting no satisfaction. We're talking the sado-masochistic distribution of pleasure. Everyone waits around and stands by at the pleasure or fun their best friends are having.

AG: You could read cyberspace as a kind of unconscious that the body of the operator can enter and travel through but to which it never has access. But just as the subject that this kind of travel produces is a decouplified one so the group might look different too. In the kind of travel fantasy that someone like William Gibson invents, exiling oneself into cyberspace promises the loss of the body-as home base. Virtually no-body exiled in cyberspace, is the hacker another rugged individualist looking to couple, or is the hacker perhaps a model for alternative group relations?

LR: What goes down as cyberspace is what Freud called endopsychic perception, which is a psychotic privilege that externalizes access to one's own functioning as psychic apparatus but in another, outside place (or cyberspace). Cyberspace is the ectoplasmic-endopsychic habitat of the adolescent body: the body of the group, the group of one. But adolescent modes of denial and acting out shift the Teen Age into the paranoid register where every successful accessing of the externalized apparatus shuts down the inside view of one's own apparatus. So that kind of split again (we're back to the split-level distribution of phantasms and technology receptions) keeps Californian group formation in the service of the narcissistic object, the One, which heads the group off at submission impasse, has it where One wants it, and keeps it there. The desire for the One (one nation, one god, one body, one gender) drives us, Michael Jackson style, to become the exquisite corpse we aim for and model in our Frankensteinian fitness and plastic-surgery labs. It's the memory picture that's getting built, the parting shot which is Forest Lawn's specialization in the field of the death wish.

AG: The after image. (laughter) Today between inventor and the product or machine we enter into a space which is not really machinic anymore and that paradoxical in-between space inside technologization yields a tension you're talking about in different moments in the book. The dynamic between desiring your

freedom and the technologies of submission that access this desire seems to me to be an essential thematic in *The Case of California*. This raises significant questions about what can be done to change that dynamic. The traditional way of approaching these questions has not been through a psychoanalytic subject, a subject that is bound to repeat its bindings over and over again. Indeed, psychoanalysis is rarely called for its news on the technological. One of the important thematics of *The Case of California* is to re-wire both Marxism and Psychoanalysis to questions of desire, freedom, submission, and technology, suggesting that a theory of group (or adolescent) psychology can help account for the individual's submission to technological freedom in a mass mediated culture.

LR: When it comes to invention (which has been the governing mode through today) the risk has always been that invention will quickly succumb to identification. That's the problem that Adorno and Benjamin tried to figure out between the two of them when they addressed the double issue of gadget love and being-in-California. I guess the hacker would make a move away from invention as identification to invention as intervention, thereby giving open access to systems and structures to the point of altering them from within rather than to the usual point of their open concealment. And that I think is the psychoanalytic perspective, to remain (even as you slide in and out of it) in sync with the perspective you're using to gain access. It could be that hackers are pioneers of the Freudian system, though it may also be (and here I'll let Adorno ventriloquate me for a moment) that once gadget love gets into that Freudian system all it can discover over and over again is the suicide pact, friendly fire, sadomasochism: a fundamental blindness, in other words, to its own invention. But I too risked making my writerly career coextensive or coinventive with psychoanalysis. In my first book on mourning and the media I tried to inhabit a first phase of Freud's thinking that finds its center in *Totem and Taboo*, that is, in the theory of haunting that Freud develops there. But in the second book I wanted to access Freud's second system (which, just in terms of dating, begins where the uncanny leaves off, moves beyond the pleasure principle, and meets the Nazis). Freud's shift in registers was right on time for the move beyond the first system's more personalizable scale of analysis into the blown up narcissistic format of Nazi support-group psychology. But the second system's rethinking of politics in terms of the psychic organization of groups is in direct connection with the first system. Without the first system's theories of haunting, death-wish rebound, and technology the second system's formulations of death drive, sadomasochism, and the group would run on empty.

Because Freud's double system is the only alternative to something that doesn't itself seem to be an alternative any longer, namely the Marxist discursivity, and because it's the only other attempt to read the socius that is, moreover, compellingly or compulsively coextensive with what it's addressing (namely consumer-

ist mass society), it needs to be rethought in increasing doses into the future. As an archaeology of a phantasm network *The Case of California* remains purposively ignorant of the externalities of certain kinds of political decision-making. It only reproduces the *crisis* in Frankfurt School thought between Marxist and Freudian affiliations. But what would need to be done in the future is to locate, following Benjamin, just where something like a group psychology can be ventured in Marx. Because only in that way would you come up with a truly compatible hookup between Freud and Marx. The group psychological is the cyberinternal, nonmachinic track of our ongoing technologization. So far there has always been only a division of labor which assigns Marxism to the social outside and Freud to the home, which probably does a number on both of them. But I did find (which isn't so surprising since Benjamin indicated as much) that *The 18th Brumaire* does mount a group psychology which (even in the fallout from the latest media war) fits the analysis of a society that through a series of phantasm reruns has arrived at a place of depletion where we make a triumph out of being (to borrow the army slogan) all you can be, all you can be when there's nothing left, when there's nothing else to be but uniformed, transistorized, hypnotized followers of remote-controlling phantasms. Marx's case study is what Benjamin picked up (in his *Passagenwerk*) in the face of the rise of Nazism. Such a support group of rereadings would be one of the ways to build up the political sides and asides of psychoanalysis. In *The Case of California*, I was more bound to an at once localized and totally global thought experiment.

AG: This is interesting because the "global conspiracy" that invents the love/hate sibling relationship between Germany and California has much greater stakes now: the global itself. We are at the moment witnessing the death of the nation as territorial frontier, particularly as information and capital flow through time and space, like vampires, without regard for the earth-bound rules of gravity and appearance. At the same time, nationalism has become acutely hysterical and paranoid, and various forms of what my colleague Richard Appelbaum calls tribalism abound. One aspect of this development Marx had projected in his future telling for capitalism: that it would become at once globalized and localized. But to get back to your point about home (private) and social (public), one aspect of feminism that is important here is that it has to work both these private and public moments at the same time. Feminism persistently tries to explain the ways in which something called the public and the private run away from their established places and end up being lodged, or, in your terms, encrypted where they are not supposed to be. The public and private are always mistaking each other for being some place where they are not. In other words, feminism may be a program that can figure postmodernity as just that mistake of separating Marxism and psychoanalysis, the private and the public, the local and the global. In such a program, we can see how the logics get embodied and disembodied in different ways and paradigmatically in different

kinds of people. For me, the subject of "California" is the single, under-paid, Melanesian woman assembling microchips in export processing zones, drinking coca cola, listening to Madonna records.

LR: The good news is that with the spread of technologization, groupification, and consumer projection the Freudian system also expands.

AG: A really good business. (laughter) Say more about the export potential of the Freudian system.

LR: Take the emergence of Cargo Cult in 1912 and its absolute synchronization with what also emerged, in theory, in *Totem and Taboo*. The intake of technologization instantly compelled the Melanesians to trash their traditional narratives of the mortality trail, the journey between life and death, just as they wasted the travel accessories, the shrines and holy instruments, to make storage space for what was coming soon: the Cargo, that is, the canned goods and techno gadgets that the white man had stolen from their dead who slaved away in the Land Down Under to build the telecommunications devices with which they could stay in touch and announce the date of their return. So they set up imitation telegraph poles advertising the direct connection with their dead. So direct, in fact, that the Melanesians assumed that their ancestors would speak to them in German or "Djaman." Upon contact with the white man's technosensorium the Melanesians received the long distance call, but they received it, at the same time, only as the radical disconnection of unmourning. The white man blocked Melanesian work of mourning and instantly technologized it, remaking it as desublimated, mass-media death cult. But on this ongoing verge of reunion with the returning dead, their rapport with the dead was one of missed messages, stolen cargo, of an exploitation that struck first and hit hardest within the work of mourning. This breakdown is what's packed into every "live" transmission, from Melanesia to California. It's hard to know whether the Freudian system is an invasive outsider or whether it was all along right on: on the inside. The Freudian system takes you into pockets of exploitation, perhaps with itself at the front of the line, which Marxism has, just the same, left unattended. Psychoanalysis remains the only discourse that comes completely technologized. Its rapport with aberrant mourning is its rapport with the technological moment.

What has always intrigued me about both Marxism and Freudianism is their refusal to deal in a kind of diversification of the claims and problems of their theorizing. What upsets people about psychoanalysis is the insistence on always reading the same phantasms, the same problems, just as in the analytic session you have to address over and again the same old symptoms. The neurotic always pushes for all kinds of diversification and renegotiation at the level of symptom reception. But psychoanalysis insists over and again on always the same difference. For example, when the Vietnam legacy returned to scramble receptions of the Persian Gulf media war, I was intrigued by the discourse on racism with which this dated

interference came complete. And yet this discourse on implications and exclusions of the Third World did not admit the one racism that was instantly evident in the war: the one that sent the Scuds against Israel. The psychoanalytic view insists that there's a kind of primal scheduling of the racisms and that the one symptom of our tradition which asserts itself over and over again is anti-Semitism. It's the symptom that one should never negotiate with. And I found that the identificatory politicians specializing in defending casualties or target groups of racism were at the same time only creating diversions from the one problem that, at least in the Gulf War, one had to see. This diversification of a theorization of the problem of racism finally serves not-seeing: Nazi-ing. That's what I like about psychoanalysis: its inside-out surveillance of always the same symptoms as they continue to reassert themselves, displaced only and again by ever new diversions and diversifications.

AG: More recent critiques of psychoanalysis and Marxism suggest that both are wedded within a European frame that remains fundamentally blind to non-European target groups or casualties, and the logics of racism.

LR: And yet at the same time as the technological program gets spread around, it's the oldest symptoms that get shared. Even Japan was accused of anti-Semitic PR not too long ago. Where did that come from? It comes from a program (pogrom) that has not yet been understood but only gets turned on again when, for example, the anti-Semitism charge that sent the Scuds against Israel is denied and rendered cute. Of course there are those who simply prefer the noble-savage physique (whether Aryan or Third World) to, so the other projection goes, the spectral constitution of the Jew. But what would be even more interesting, for the future, would be a reading of Japan along these group-psychological lines. When I went to Japan shortly after completing the book, I was immediately struck by a simple but subtle difference from California: Japan advertises a group psychology that has not been circuited through Christianity or, same difference, techno-secularization, which only covers for the Christianity that just the same slips into the unconscious where it exercises even more complete remote control. What I picked up in Japan (which is otherwise a totally teenagerized culture) is the absence of stray, projected, wasted hostility. Alone on a street late at night in Tokyo the pack of teenagers you encounter does not share with you, in the form of sudden outbursts of hostility or friendliness, its high spirits. There appears to be in Japan more efficient management of the group-psychological or suicidal impulse.

AG: What is the relation between incorporation and the Corporation?

LR: In *Das Kapital* Marx compares the metabolism of capital to the transsubstantial moment in which father and son become one: the Christian mass moment. Although I felt I observed in Japan the lack of a Californian-Christian lawn sprinkler of hostility, one nevertheless wonders whether becoming capitalist does not also mean swallowing the mass identification brought to us by a whole Christian history

of capitalism. In structure and by definition a corporation is a melancholic incorporation. Just as is the case with the haunted receiver of phantom broadcasts or with the transubstantial moment of father and son which Marx places at the heart of capital, any corporation needs by law only one internal "real" or "live" person among all the countersignatories it can go ahead and project or invent to make up its constituency. Inside capital, then, we find the corporation: the melancholic leveling of the father function in a place ruled by the missingness of mother.

AG: And the daughter?

LR: The daughter would also be in exile from the place where the father function has collapsed. It's the wife and the daughter who are the defenders of the law of the couple, of the father function. The wife defends the couple against the husband's seduction back into the invading group. However, the daughter's defense of the father function is suicide. The wife (see *Fatal Attraction*) is better off. The pseudo-dialectic of couple and group emerged to absorb the shocks, quakes, and tremors of adolescence (of California). The libidial upsurge of adolescence creates the group as a kind of circuit breaker for its teen passion. In that way teen esteem can move from couple to couple (skipping the beat or crush of repression) and from sexual love to sexual love. What we're now faced with in this state of preparedness we call California (the constant state of denial and acting out) is the blasted structure of simultaneity or synchronicity, the Jonestown structure of everyone going at the same time. That's what's wrong with the time-releases of catastrophe preparedness and shock absorption that have been going down. In other words (and you saw it first in the second system), with gadget love or teen passion the ego, that is, the short egoic attention span triumphs over relations with the superego, with the pre-TV machine. The egoic attention span is not interested in the fringe benefits of living on in a form that is not embodyable. The ego (or its double, same difference) doesn't want to go. What the ego or projected body models on its own (that is, via technobody and technophantasm) is an immortality plan that, like an insurance policy on which one oneself collects, kicks in now and forever.

So moving from the family to the corporation that grows around and inside capital we see these shock absorbers fail because their invention of a separate personal space is at the same time identification with a threat that gives us shelter. This whole pseudo-dialectic, again, of invention and identification has moved too quickly away from a point where something like an intervention could be possible. That's the crisis situation in which we continue to survive and it has to be exploded and explored through all these discursive coordinates and networks both as they appear to be different on the outside and as they change their shapes discursivity to discursivity.

AG: Your argument about how psychoanalysis arrives in places it hasn't been before by using other forms of travel is intriguing. It is sort of like the transference

as travel agent. Speaking of forms of traveling, let's talk about the relationship between the telephonic and the genetic and a comparison with Avital Ronell. For her, the telephone figures the technological as a site of reception: technology dominates; we submit. For Ronell, the call comes from (no)where, you pick up the receiver and are hooked into the other Thing which is still fundamentally industrial or machinic. It seems that *The Case of California* is no longer technological in this sense, but bio-genetic: The call comes from within, or from artifactual intelligences (ghosts) which are exteriorized internal (and thus reversible) projections. The endopsychic sensurround seems to be about the broadcasting of an unconscious which is mourning for the loss of itself. The teenager wears his or her unconscious on the outside, so to speak? Is this right?

LR: The different rapports we are talking about still seem to be different ways of meeting the challenge of lack whether with earlier machine prostheses which feature the logic of amputation and haunting or with organ transplantation which follows another logic of identification belonging more to the second system or to TV. Rather than talk about lack and desire, I rewired psychoanalysis via the cryptological and technological channels which had been tuned out by the mono turn-on of the sexological or Oedipal. Like the erection of the father function which for Freud is already a saving fiction (I don't think that he's really describing or reflecting any functional "patriarchy") the introduction of the Oedipus complex represents an attempt to get over or around (indeed to abort) the most pressing problem which belongs not to the Oedipal plot but to another family plot, that of unburial and unmourning.

In the early pieces on mourning Freud puts it in absolute and primal terms: the first person close to us who went (that is, the first goner who was not simply the external enemy) created in the wake of his disappearance philosophy, psychology, the work of mourning: psychoanalysis. So even though the parameters of the thought experiment change radically as we shift to the second system, to science fiction or cyberspace, still what we have shifted into is another level of dealing with melancholic adherence to the dead. I'm a material guy who does find the missing dead everywhere. That's why I refuse to talk about death: as Freud says, there's no such thing as death or fear of death; there's only (only!) the dead and their reanimation via recycled death wishes.

