

What lies beneath? Spectrality as a focal phenomenon and a focal theory for strengthening engagement with philanthropic foundations

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Abstract

Foundations are frequently referred to as a donor's dead hand, as a way to exert social, political, economic and cultural influence from beyond the grave. Building on this, our paper argues for a greater focus on and consideration of the significance of the spectral in philanthropy research and practice, particularly in relation to foundations. We argue that spectrality offers a focal phenomenon in philanthropy and a focal theory for moving foundation inquiry forward. Based on our systematic review of the social sciences literature on the spectral, we identify and offer four thematic clusters to frame insights about foundations in relation to relationality and decentring, narratives and representations, ethics and politics, continuity and change. Connecting foundation scholarship with existing debates about the spectral and vice versa, our work offers a basis for reflection and future research on the part of those immersed in the foundation world, and contributes to emergent scholarship about the spectral in organization and management studies.

INTRODUCTION

Philanthropic foundations are an ancient institutional expression. Written records revealing rudiments of the contemporary foundation form go back to at least 3000BCE (Borgolte, 2015). Despite such ancient lineage, foundations and their 'cloistered world' (Whitaker, 1974) remain remarkably unknown, unstudied and uncrystallized (Jung, 2020; McIlroy, 1998). The need for better understanding of foundations is well established; it includes questions about foundations' external and internal drivers, deeds and dispositions, roles and responsibilities, their influences and impacts (Anheier & Leat, 2006; Dowie, 2002; Johnson, 2018; Jung et al., 2018; Toepler, 2018). Here, combining 'literature prospecting' and 'literature mining' (Breslin & Gatrell, 2020), our paper proposes

and critically explores spectrality as a strategic platform from which stronger theorizing on philanthropic foundations as a distinct institutional form can proceed.

While literature reviews are widely recognized as essential in generating important and insightful contributions (Hoon & Baluch, 2019), their use for theory development is not without its challenges (Cropanzano, 2009). Clarifying the choices, attributes and consequences for theory development of different literature review approaches, Breslin and Gatrell (2020) propose a continuum that ranges from 'literature prospecting' to 'literature mining' as a way to strengthen understanding on theorizing through literature reviews. At one end, 'prospecting' focuses on venturing beyond well-trodden paths and knowledge silos to identify and explore 'novel perspectives' (Breslin & Gatrell, 2020, p. 1). The invitation is to set out new narratives and

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conceptualizations, and to blend and merge literatures across domains (Breslin & Gatrell, 2020, p. 7). Allowing for a ‘movement of the mind’, for ‘the breakdown and build-up of beliefs and the transformation of assumptions’ (Davis, 1971, p. 342), prospecting provides us with opportunities to revisit, reflect and re-engage with perspectives on and understanding of foundations as an institutional expression of philanthropy. An essential part of prospecting is to ascertain that efforts are not random, but calculated (Breslin & Gatrell, 2020, p. 1). In this paper, we show how engaging with spectrality is not just a fleeting fancy, but that spectrality presents a ‘focal phenomenon’, an observable phenomenon in need of closer examination within philanthropy per se and in relation to foundations in particular (Jaakkola, 2020). At the other end, ‘mining’ takes a more conventional approach to reviewing the literature. Focusing on a bounded and established domain of study, the emphasis is on organizing and categorizing the literature, problematizing it and identifying conceptual gaps (Breslin & Gatrell, 2020, p. 7). While ‘prospecting’ articulates the reasons for engaging with spectrality in foundation studies, ‘mining’ provides the basis for exploring spectrality as a ‘focal theory’. In other words, we offer spectrality as a theoretical lens able to address known shortcomings in the literature in more detail (Jaakkola, 2020) and to orientate foundation inquiry towards interesting questions. Our approach enables us to draw together bodies of work on spectrality from diverse disciplines to develop a basis for future theorizing on foundations.

The structure of our paper follows the move from ‘prospecting’ to ‘mining’, from outlining the idea of spectrality and making the case for approaching foundations through the lens of spectrality to an examination and synthesis of social sciences literature on spectrality. In the next section, we highlight ways of approaching and understanding spectrality. We then illustrate how foundations are rooted in spectrality, and how foundations present themselves as sites par excellence for scholarly inquiry which utilizes the spectrality lens for theory development and practical understanding. After explaining our methods for identifying, reviewing and synthesizing the sampled literature, we present four thematic clusters on spectrality. These are relationality and decentring, narratives and representations, ethics and politics, continuity and change. We consider the implications of these four themes for approaching and understanding foundations. Finally, we conclude by drawing out the implications of the review, including how it can help shape future management and organization research in the field of foundations and philanthropy. Our work provides a basis for developing more nuanced appreciations and understandings of the complexities of foundations, and contributes to this special

issue’s aim of articulating new research perspectives on philanthropy’s institutional expressions.

CONCEPTUALIZING SPECTRALITY

Spectrality covers an entire family of spectres, various terms belonging to the genus ‘haunting’ (Wolfreys, 2016). Other members of that family include apparition, ghost, liminality, phantoms and the uncanny. An overview of key spectral terms and illustrative examples of their use is provided in Table 1. Resonating with Calvino’s (1997, p. 19) statement that ‘the more enlightened our houses are, the more their walls ooze ghosts’, Davies (2007, p. 101) observes that such spectres ‘flitted through some of the most profound developments in intellectual thought over the last 500 years, and so to discover how they were conceived in the past is to understand how society itself has changed’. Trying to conceive, define or conceptualize spectrality, however, presents a major problem: it is anything but straightforward (Wolfreys, 2016).

A key fissure in social science scholarship on spectrality revolves around a normative consideration of whether and how we should engage with spectres: are they something ‘actual’, a metaphor or a concept (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren, 2013)? Complicating matters further, spectrality’s very association with, and contamination by, ‘the supernatural’ has potentially been toxic for the ambitions of serious scholarship (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren, 2013). This is illustrated in the Enlightenment’s ambition to expunge spectres (Davies, 2007), or in Adorno’s (1969) argument that spectres and the occult are symptomatic of a regression in consciousness, that they present a metaphysic of and for fools. Notwithstanding attempts at exorcizing, demystifying or explaining away belief in the spectral, the last few years have been described as witnessing a ‘spectral turn’, a turn towards spectrality but also a spectralization of this turn, the uprooting and decentring of the approach itself, thereby opening it up for wider interpretation and inquiry (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren, 2013). Here, two of the most prominent pieces of work contributing to and catalysing spectrality scholarship have been Freud’s (1919/1955) ‘The uncanny’ and Derrida’s (1994) *Specters of Marx*.

Freud (1919/1955), building on and developing the work of German psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch (1997), examines the notion of ‘unheimlich’, at root the opposite of ‘heimlich’. The latter refers to that which is homely, familiar, native, but also that which is hidden from public view, secretive and clandestine. Its meaning develops ambivalently until it coincides with its opposite ‘unheimlich’, the uncanny (Freud, 1919/1955, p. 226). To unpack it, Freud argues that

TABLE 1 Illustrating the plethora of spectral terminology

Spectral term	Key definition (OED/Chambers)	Examples of use
Apparition	The action of appearing or becoming visible; The supernatural appearance of invisible beings, etc.	Ladwig (2013)
Dead	Deprived of life	Belsey (2019)
Ghost	Soul or spirit	Morton (2015); Pors (2016)
Ghoul	An evil spirit supposed... to rob graves and prey on human corpses	Maxwell-Stuart (2006)
Gothic	Uncivilised; Romantic; Tales of mystery	Botting (2014)
Haunting	Of imaginary or spiritual beings, ghosts, etc.; To visit frequently and habitually with manifestations of their influence and presence, usually of a molesting kind; To be haunted: to be subject to the visits and molestation of disembodied spirits	del Pilar Blanco and Peeren (2013); Gordon (2008)
Liminality	A transitional or indeterminate state between culturally defined stages of a person's life; spec. such a state occupied during a ritual or rite of passage, characterized by a sense of solidarity between participants; Threshold of consciousness	Boyd and Thursh (2011); Söderlund and Borg (2018)
Memory	Senses relating to the action or process of commemorating, recollecting, or remembering; The power or process of retaining and reproducing mental or sensory impressions	Auchter (2014)
Phantom	A thing (usually with human form) that appears to the sight or other sense, but has no material substance; An apparition, a spectre, a ghost	Abraham (1975/1994)
Spectre	An apparition, phantom, or ghost, esp. one of a terrifying nature or aspect; An object or source of dread or terror, imagined as an apparition	Derrida (1994); Newman (2001)
Spectral	Having the character of a spectre or phantom; Ghostly, unsubstantial, unreal	Peeren (2014)
Spirit	A supernatural, incorporeal, rational being or personality, usually regarded as imperceptible at ordinary times to the human senses, but capable of becoming visible at pleasure, and frequently conceived as troublesome, terrifying, or hostile to mankind	Hopps (2013)
Uncanny	Mischievous, malicious; Unreliable, not to be trusted; Partaking of a supernatural character; Mysterious, weird, uncomfortably strange or unfamiliar	Freud (1919/1955)

two avenues can be pursued. The first is to explore the historic meanings and expressions of the uncanny; the second is to identify, collect and synthesize the properties of people, items, sensations, experiences and contexts that present or are perceived as constituting the uncanny (Freud, 1919/1955, p. 221).

Derrida (1994), revisiting and reflecting on Marx's and Engel's Communist Manifesto, illustrates how the image of the spectre is used therein to describe and diagnose Europe's present, Europe's past, Europe's potential future. Riffing on Hamlet, Derrida's exhortation is for scholars to converse with spectres. Acknowledging that 'traditional' scholars neither believe in nor deal with spectres or anything related to spectrality, Derrida (1994) argues that it is precisely scholars who are in a position to observe, describe and obtain the appropriate distance to engage with spectres. Engaging with spectres enables a politics of memory, an opportunity to rethink our situated relations with others and with time and place: it is at the shadowy boundary of spectrality, between and across the perimeters of life and death, that learning occurs. Thereby, engaging with

the spectral is a starting point for Derrida, an opportunity. Spectres act as disjuncting figures, unsettling the stability of the present, and offering potential for emancipation (Derrida, 1994).

The perspective of spectres as harbingers of justice and freedom is challenged by Žižek (1994), who argues that spectres are in themselves a retreat, a rejection of freedom. In his view, loyalty to spectres of the sort called for by Derrida is misplaced, dangerous. While the appearance of spectres points to a breach of ideological control mechanisms, they then serve to close this very opening. For Derrida, ghosts are an opportunity; for Žižek, they are an opportunity lost, or worse, a malign distraction: attending to the ghost involves the surrender of freedom and the maintenance of subjection. The 'uncanny spectral supplement' maintains rather than disrupts our sense of what is real; it distracts us from the constructed and ideological bases of that reality (Žižek, 1994).

Gordon (2008), using the notion of 'haunting', bridges the works of Freud, Derrida and Žižek. Focusing on the subaltern, the excluded, the dispossessed and exiled, she

examines the interstices of exploitation, force and meaning. She argues that spectral aspects are neither an expression of individual psychosis nor of premodern superstition. Instead, they change our experiences of being in time, our distinction between past, present and future. They demand our attention and, as sociopolitical psychological states, call and allow for things to be done. Engaging with spectrality presents turmoil and trouble, exposes the cracks and the rigging, shows up things that have been or are expected to be invisible, demands that alternatives need to be sought (Gordon, 2008, p. xvi). Engaging with spectrality is thereby neither merely a theoretical exercise nor just material for the literary arts; spectrality represents a linking across time, a connecting of individuals, institutions and social structures, a reconciling and negotiating of and between individuals and collectives.

Looking across these scholarly contributions, the challenges of and tensions inherent in trying to conceptualize spectrality are apparent. Neither present nor absent, spectrality criss-crosses binary loci and foci: it embodies and disembodies visibility and invisibility, past and present, the here and there (Wolfreys, 2016). As such, spectrality eludes conventional attempts at conceptualization; it demands a different approach to thinking (Wolfreys, 2016). Casting it as ‘absent presence’ (Derrida, 1994; Smith, 2007, p. 147), spectrality allows us to engage with alternative mechanisms for approaching an issue (Auchter, 2014). It offers the ability to read and unpack ‘the temporal and spatial sediments of history and tradition’ to explore and theorize important social, ethical and political questions (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren, 2013, p. 2). In relation to institutions such as philanthropic foundations, we argue that attention to the spectral facilitates an examination of their meanings through exploring the internal and external histories, practices, contexts and discourses out of which they are formed (Wolfreys, 2016, p. 638). Spectrality’s identification of such ‘sediments’, and the accompanying opportunity to examine these, resonates with and complements the perspective that philanthropy and its institutional expressions, foundations, should be perceived as strata. Beneath a thin topsoil composed of contemporary expressions and exercises, one finds layers and layers of people, practices and perspectives that stretch back into philanthropy’s and foundations’ distant past, yet which continue to exert an influence in the present (Cunningham, 2016). These represent the ‘absent presences’ in foundations. It is this idea of ‘absent presences’ that forms the basis for our exploration of spectrality as a theoretical concept that, informed by the emergent interest in organizations as spectral spaces (De Cock et al., 2013; Orr, 2014; Pors, 2016), points scholars and practitioners towards appreciating the significance of that which has departed—from the organization or the world—but whose presence still affects or whose legacy continues to linger in

significant ways. It is to such spectral facets in and of philanthropy and foundations that we now turn.

PROSPECTING: SPECTRALITY AS A FOCAL PHENOMENON IN PHILANTHROPY AND FOUNDATIONS

Philanthropy as an inherently spectral arena

Even a cursory glance at philanthropy illustrates its inherently spectral nature. Donations and deaths, gifts and their ghosts go hand in hand. The role of testations, bequests and memoria in philanthropy illustrates the former; issues of philanthropic legacies, donors’ dead hands and founders’ syndrome the latter. A vision of temporal transcendence, an ambition to traverse time, runs throughout them. Philanthropists hope to leave ‘footprints in the sands of time’ (Ostrower, 1995); philanthropy is envisaged as offering forgiveness, redemption and mercy in the present as well as in the afterlife (Cunningham, 2016) and, both historically and contemporaneously, philanthropy is used as a way to appease the dead and harness their influence for the well-being and fortunes of the living (Kiger, 2000; Marouda, 2017).

Alongside, commentators have repeatedly used and appealed to the spectral to highlight and critique the ills, failures and shortcomings of philanthropy. Examples of this include the armies of ghosts who—through their paid and unpaid, voluntary and forced contributions—have enabled the accumulation of wealth underpinning philanthropy. This is poignantly demonstrated by the ‘ghosts’ accompanying the colonial exploitations of the English philanthropist Lord Leverhulme in the Congo (Marchal, 2017), or the spectral status given to the UK’s early children’s charity, London’s Foundling Hospital, throughout Victorian novels (Zunshine, 2005).

Indeed, spectrality cuts across philanthropy’s societal, geographical, temporal and disciplinary settings. It covers individual (Ostrower, 1995) as well as organizational expressions of philanthropy (Kiger, 2000); it is evident in Asian (Marouda, 2017), European (Huschner & Rexroth, 2008) and American (Goff, 1921) traditions of philanthropy. It runs through philanthropic practices in the Axial Age just as much as in medieval or modern times (Borgolte, 2017; Çizakça, 2000), and it features in disciplinary discourses on philanthropy from history (Lusiardi, 2000) to law (Sisson, 1988) and philosophy (Lechterman, 2016). Within this deep-rooted context, the institutional expression of philanthropy, philanthropic foundations, present themselves as particularly suitable for being explored through a spectral lens.

Foundations as inherently spectral institutional forms

Spectrality concerns itself with excess and transgression, with tales of light and darkness, desire and power, positives and negatives (Botting, 1996). In these respects, it resonates with foundations' own paradoxical nature (Fleishman, 2007), the ways in which foundations are cast and criticized (Roelofs, 2003; Whitaker, 1974). Beneath such superficial similarities lie distinctively spectral considerations and customs that characterize the foundation form socially, historically, legally, and practically.

Spectrality and foundations' social and historical origins

The landmark text of ancient Egyptian religious literature, *The Book of the Dead*, provides one of the earliest references to the contemporary foundation form (Kiger, 2000). Foundations were established for the memory of the dead while simultaneously acknowledging, crediting and honouring the deceased's continued charitable work and generosity—beyond the grave—through the foundation form (Borgolte, 2014, p. 559). While these have been expressed in various ways, from Paganism's cult of the dead to foundations' revenues as a tool for salvation of the deceased in Late Christianity, foundations represent a worldview that acknowledges mutual dependencies between the living and the dead, where the dead continue to be seen as active participants in the present (Borgolte, 2014).

A key element in the relationship between the dead and the living and its bridging through the foundation form is the threat of constituting an 'unreciprocated gift'. Then, as now, gifts formed part of an exchange system; they involved reciprocity (Maus, 1990). Foundations therefore initiate(d) a continuous circle of gift exchange between the living and the dead (Borgolte, 2014). Not only did foundations allow a reaching out from the grave, but the associated acts of memory and remembrance were also seen as a way to reach back into the grave: just as the dead hoped to be remembered by the living, the living hoped to be remembered and prayed for by the dead. Mutual memory and remembrance acted as a tool of social cohesion and continuity (Brown, 2015): you were only 'dead' if you were forgotten (Presuhn, 2001). As such, there has been a growing argument, particularly amongst German historians, that foundation discourse needs to be recast towards a broader socio-cultural understanding that acknowledges and incorporates an iterative exchange and interdependency between prior and subsequent founders and their beneficiaries. This recasting implicates associated ques-

tions of memoria, transcendence and founders' continued 'presence' amongst the living (Borgolte, 2012). While this is a relatively recent perspective, traditionally the most prominent discourse on foundations has centred around legal considerations of the foundation form (Anheier, 2001; Prele, 2014; Ylvisaker, 1987).

Spectrality and foundation law

The study of foundations is dominated by an emphasis on foundations' legal characteristics, particularly their independent legal personality (Borgolte, 2012). Three broad theories about the legal origins of foundations are advocated in the literature: the Roman *fideicommissum*, the Salic law of *Salmannus* and the Islamic *waqf*. The first, *fideicommissum*, was a legal device used to allow a testator to entrust property to one person for the benefit of another. The second, *Salmannus*, goes back to the 5th-century Germanic *Lex Salica* and represents an arrangement that allowed the transfer and use of property for defined purposes during or after the lifetime of its conveyer. The third, *waqf*, originated in the first three centuries of Islam and, broadly speaking, provided a privately owned property endowed for charitable purposes in perpetuity with any associated revenue generated used for these purposes (Çizakça, 2000; Gaudiosi, 1988; Rounds & Rounds III, 2012). Across all three, an emphasis on testation, the wishes of the dead, and how these could or should be honoured, can be identified. This pattern cumulates in contemporary laws on charitable bequests and the unequalled opportunities these provide for individuals to achieve legal immortality for their soul, their name and/or their charitable plans (Madoff, 2010). This, in turn, has given rise to one of the most vivid expressions of spectrality in foundation discourse: *manus mortis*, the 'dead hand' of donors.

The notion of donors' dead hands, that is the influence a donor can or should exert from beyond the grave, has agitated legal scholars for millennia. From debates about limiting foundations' lifecycles in early Islamic debates on the *waqf* form (Meier, 2009), to various states' attempts at limiting the dead hand through mortmain statutes (Fries, 2005; Madoff, 2010), the issue gained particular prominence from the late 19th century onwards (Goff, 1921; Hobhouse, 1880). Portraying deceased donors as a deadweight that prevents rather than enables progress (Meier, 2009), the challenges of respecting the intentions of past donors and how these conflict with intergenerational sovereignty continue to agitate legal (Atkinson, 2007; Brody, 2007; Sisson, 1988) and philosophical debates (Lechterman, 2016) to this day.

Spectrality and foundation practice

At the interface of socio-historic and legal aspects of foundations' spectrality sit some practical issues. Most prominent amongst these is 'founder syndrome', the various explicit and implicit powers, privileges and perspectives associated with or attributed to the founder (Block, 2004). While the term is used inconsistently across the literature, it is the perception of 'an unwavering dedication to the original vision for the organisation' (Schmidt, 2013, np) that is most relevant in the context of this paper. As foundations tend to be envisaged to exist in perpetuity, trying to justify, interpret or critique the actions of foundations—as well as the use of their resources in reference to what the person by whom or in whose memory they were set up would have (dis)approved of—is a recurring theme in philanthropy practice. Two prominent examples include criticisms levelled at the trustees of the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund in the UK for being perceived as squandering 'her precious legacy' (Brennan, 2007, np) or supporting allegedly inappropriate causes (Pukas & Somerset, 2011), and the challenges and questions of adhering to and fulfilling a donor's intent, exemplified in the Robertson Family's lawsuit against Princeton University (White, 2014). It is further illustrated in the wider context of *cy-pres*. This is the doctrine in charitable law which addresses the recasting of a foundation's purpose in instances where it becomes impossible, impractical or illegal to carry out the original one towards a purpose that resembles the original one as closely as possible. This, in turn, links back to aforementioned questions of removing 'dead hand control' of foundations (Atkinson, 2007).

Taken together, the array of links between foundations and spectrality show that spectrality clearly constitutes a 'focal phenomenon' in philanthropy. As an observable part of philanthropy past and present, spectrality warrants closer examination. While there has been a growing interest in questions of memory and memoria in foundations amongst some historians (see Borgolte, 2012), conceptual engagement with spectrality as a lens in its own right for understanding foundations remains limited. Having established the relevance of spectrality as a strategic platform from which theorizing on foundations can proceed, the next section of the paper will 'mine' the literature on spectrality in order to synthesize insights and identify specific contributions that the spectrality literature can make to aid understanding of foundations.

METHOD

Reviews play an important role in theorizing. Providing opportunities for discovering new perspectives, argu-

ments, patterns and relationships, reviews provide an essential basis for shifting theory and/or practice (Hoon & Baluch, 2019). While Breslin and Gatrell's (2020) prospecting–mining continuum assists with clarifying the rationale of literature reviews, theorizing from reviews, even within such boundaries, remains challenging. Across the potpourri of potential 'theorizing tools', theorizing is often understood as addressing a conflict or tension between literature and phenomena (Shepherd & Suddaby, 2017). With review-centric theorizing unable to iteratively move 'between the gaps observed in the phenomenal world and those observed in the extant literature' (Shepherd & Suddaby, 2017, p. 65), we follow Hoon and Baluch (2019) in pursuing a 'dialectical interrogation' of social science work on spectrality for the foundation field. This approach involves 'imaginatively engaging in back and forth inquiry' between the phenomenal world of a given field and existing theory (Hoon & Baluch, 2019, p. 7). Emphasizing the potential for consolidating and disrupting understanding, we approach the review with the aim to both explore similarities and anomalies (Hoon & Baluch, 2019, p. 20).

One methodological consideration for review-centric work is whether the area(s) under consideration constitute(s) a nascent or a mature field of activity. The former points towards an exploratory mapping, the latter towards a more systematic review (Hoon & Baluch, 2019). Spectrality straddles both. In areas such as anthropology (Formoso, 1996) or literary studies (Hopps, 2013), spectrality has seen longstanding exploration; in others, such as organization studies (Orr, 2014; Pors et al., 2016), it is a relatively recent consideration. To mine the area, to explore what themes run through and across spectrality literatures, and what opportunities for strengthening understanding on and for foundations spectrality provides, we therefore combined a systematic review with a snowballing technique.

Amongst the different types of literature reviews and associated methodologies, a systematic approach focuses on systematically searching for, appraising and synthesizing key issues (Grant & Booth, 2009). To start, we focused on specifying the boundaries of the review. In the context of literature searches, particularly in the areas of bibliometrics and scientometrics, Google Scholar (GS), Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus are considered as leading the field with their coverage (Martín-Martín et al., 2018). While GS has been shown to provide substantial extra coverage over WoS and Scopus (Martín-Martín et al., 2018), there are ongoing debates about the data quality of GS (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). Thus, and with WoS and Scopus considered as offering complementary interdisciplinary coverage (Burnham, 2006; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016), we opted for using WoS and Scopus.

Following a preliminary conceptual review and discussion amongst the authors, it was decided to use

'spectrality' as the search term. Firstly, as illustrated in Table 1, spectrality incorporates relevant ideas such as 'the ghost', 'haunting', 'the uncanny' (Peeren, 2014). Secondly, albeit archaic, spectrality moves beyond other ideas: being a word freighted with rich scholarly traditions, spectrality evokes an important etymological link to vision and visibility, 'to that which is both looked at (as fascinating spectacle) and looking (in the sense of examining)' (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren, 2013, p. 2). This makes spectrality a more suitable structure for illuminating and investigating phenomena (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren, 2013, p. 2; Meagher, 2011).

Searching WoS (topic or title) and Scopus (title, abstract, keyword) for 'spectrality' resulted in 280 and 298 records, respectively. The initial set of 578 combined references was exported into bibliographic management software Endnote and checked for duplicates. The revised list included 365 references. The titles and abstracts of the 365 references were reviewed separately by the authors. Following a comparison and critical discussion amongst the authors about each reference's relevance for and contribution to 'the notion of spectrality' (see Wolfreys, 2016, p. 638), a final list of 51 references was drawn up. Of these, 49 could be retrieved. These, in turn, were read in full and reviewed separately again by each of the authors. Following Greenhalgh et al. (2005), we then combined this protocol-driven approach with a 'snowballing' technique. This enabled us to track citations backwards and forwards, and to draw in material that might have escaped the first round. Thereby, an additional 52 papers and 27 books were added, resulting in a total of 128 sources.

Applying a thematic analysis approach to this material (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2012), each of the authors carefully read the content of every contribution, and each began to provisionally identify and map what they considered as prominent and recurring issues and themes around spectrality. These were then discussed to identify and develop basic (the most basic themes from textual data), organizing (mid-level themes that cluster similar issues) and global (super-ordinate) themes (see Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389). For example, Brummann's (2007) work 'Death by document: Tracing the agency of text' focuses on his father's euthanasia declaration. Throughout the text, numerous basic themes are presented, from legal documents to cancer and lethal injections. These, in turn, collate around a number of broader, organizing themes such as relationships, agency (of a legal document), imprisonment (by words of what is now departed) and fields of action. Taking these organizing themes, comparing them to organizing themes in other sources, clustering prominent issues together and looking for convergence and divergence of ideas, that is pursuing an iterative dialogical process in

line with norms of qualitative research and thematic analysis processes (see Nowell et al., 2017; Saldaña, 2016), we arrived at four overarching themes, namely relationality and decentring, narratives and representation, ethics and politics, continuity and change. These four themes and their underpinnings are provided in our coding graphic, Figure 1. We examine these themes in the next section.

MINING: EXPLORING SPECTRALITY AS A FOCAL THEORY FOR THEORIZING ON FOUNDATIONS

Examining our literature sample, it is clear that notions of spectrality and spectres have become critical tropes across multiple disciplines (Maddern, 2008). Examples include the arts (Bal, 2010), anthropology (Boyd & Thursh, 2011), communication and media studies (Brummann, 2007), cultural studies (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren, 2013; Peeren, 2012), education (Papastephanou, 2011), geography (McCormack, 2010), history (Ackroyd, 2010; Belsey, 2019; Finucane, 1996), international relations (Auchter, 2014), literary studies (Hopps, 2013; Lücke, 2007), management and organization studies (Haveman, 1993; Orr, 2014; Pors, 2016; Pors et al., 2016), philosophy (Cassirer, 1946), politics (Gantet & d'Almeida, 2007; Graff-McRae, 2017) and sociology (Gordon, 2008). Across these, spectrality has been used to explore agency, artefacts, real and literary urban and non-urban spaces, the influence of history and colonial pasts on present political practices, as well as questions of historical and contemporary, national and transnational (in)justice (Baloy, 2016; Beville, 2013; Cameron, 2008; Harris, 2014; Maddern, 2008; McCormack, 2010; Papailias, 2019). Here, one way of approaching the spectral is in terms of what it stands for. This, however, provides a very limited reading thereof. Instead, it seems useful to move beyond this and to also consider what the spectral does and the way in which it is produced (Stojanovic, 2015). This more encompassing engagement with spectrality underpins the four themes identified in our sample. As outlined in Figure 1, the first theme, relationality and decentring, draws attention to questions of boundaries, inclusion and exclusion, periphery and margins that spectrality raises. The second, narratives and representations, encompasses ideas that focus on the significance of storytelling and other portrayals across different settings and their relationship to spectrality, such as nostalgia, myths, signs and symbols. Here, interest is on the different textual forms and artefacts. Ethics and politics, our third theme, turns to agency, voice, power and control exerted by, through or exposed via spectrality. Finally, continuity and change addresses temporal aspects of spectrality; it emphasizes questions of traditions, redemption, loss and inheritance.



FIGURE 1 Four global themes on spectrality and their organizing underpinnings [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Relationality and decentring

Spectrality has an inherently relational character, it enables an exploration and reading of complex relationships across time and space. This theme explores these relations. It raises questions about voices and boundaries, about inclusions and exclusions, about shadows in the peripheries and margins, about dialogues with and deference to the spectral. Spectres fulfil a centrifugal role: they provide a movement away from the centre, pointing towards the need to hear from voices other than the usual suspects (Beville, 2013; Stojanovic, 2015). This allows us to move from a centred approach (concentrating on institutions and their elites) to a decentred approach to understanding and theorizing activities and actions across networks. Spectres can offer the opportunity for dialogue between that which is present and that which lies beneath

(Ball, 2014), thereby opening up alternative conceptualizations of understanding (Knox et al., 2015). In this way, they carry a critical and radical potential.

As an anthropological endeavour, spectrality moves beyond the obvious and immediate duality of presence and absence inherent in the concept (Ball, 2014). Engaging with spectrality explores and interrogates complex relationships. It allows scholars and practitioners to examine the multiple fragments and layers of accumulated meanings across individual and collective, spatial and temporal contexts, all of which require interpretation (Armstrong, 2010). In this respect, decentring is closely linked to the process of defamiliarization (Vidler, 1992), including the disruption to the linear orderings of time. Unlike traditional approaches, spectrality can be seen as highlighting ephemeral, unreal and unmappable aspects (Beville, 2013); it enables a move towards the ineffable plurality

of the contexts within which we find ourselves (Beville, 2013).

Narratives and representations

Stories, storytelling and spectrality have a longstanding relationship. Across factual and fictional, oral and literary traditions, the spectral has been used and developed for the telling of memoirs, histories, romance, short stories and folklore, its presence and portrayal shifting in line with and across the genres (Belsey, 2019; Hopps, 2013). Moving from the wider theme of relationality and decentring, the focus of our second theme is on catching the different narratives and storying expressions of the spectral. One might question: is the story about a spectre, with spectres, by spectres (Cameron, 2008; Ketchum, 2018; Pérez-Carbonell, 2016), or what are the different distinctions of spectrality that attention is drawn to? The focus is on identifying the spectral, its features, its impacts: is it fiction, fact or fabricated? Is it part of or outwith time, something which was once alive and is no longer, something mortal that has undergone death and might potentially be resurrected, or is it something that exists outside the realm of the dead, something that has never experienced death per se (Beatty, 2013)? Does the spectral imply a moral order or not, is it good or bad, is it singular or comes in a set, is it attentive or does it need to be summoned, is it help, hinderance or haunting, does it speak or is it silent (Beatty, 2013)? As part of such questioning or linked attempts by practitioners to harness spectres for either organizational service or their preferred organizational narratives, it is also emphasized that any (un)planned spectres we create can get out of control and step outside the role we envisaged them to play (Brummans, 2007).

Alongside raising questions about mapping, categorizing and theologizing spectrality, this cluster points to the settings within which spectrality is cast, created and utilized. Examples range from different forms and patterns of using and engaging with spectrality (Belsey, 2019; Hopps, 2013), to the origins and myths surrounding spectrality (Clarke, 2012; Finucane, 1996), settings of spectrality and spectrality of settings (Ackroyd, 2010; Gordon, 2008), the ways in which spectrality is portrayed in different media (Balfour, 2015; Marsh, 2014) and the way in which spectrality is employed and engaged with across all of these contexts (Gantet & d'Almeida, 2007; Lücke, 2007).

Ethics and politics

Our third cluster moves towards spectrality's implicit and explicit issues of ethics and politics. Within this theme,

exploring and employing spectrality allows for the questioning of norms and the articulation of personal, intergenerational and historical conflicts (Sacido-Romero, 2016). Permitting 'ghost stories', or accounts of the marginalized, to enter and re-enter wider discourse allows for complication and ambiguity; it disrupts the neat packaging of the past by vested interests keen on owning the associated conflict(s) and accompanying terms of transition (Graff-McRae, 2017).

Here, spectres represent localized accumulations of emotions, such as anger or desire, on the part of the underprivileged, ignored or maltreated by their social superiors (Klonowska, 2017). Examples range from the way in which spectres can challenge amnesia (Rice & Kardux, 2012) to their potential deconstruction of dominant memory narratives and portrayals (Graff-McRae, 2017). While, through reproducing and re-inscribing power relations, the use of the spectral can deny rather than bring justice (Arias, 2012; Sacido-Romero, 2016), spectres can emerge as political interventions 'to imaginatively correct the wrongdoings of the past by presenting justice as it might have been dreamt of' by those oppressed (Klonowska, 2017, p. 178); it can point to 'a justice and emancipation yet to come', as a way to summon the oppressed and to mobilize the disenfranchised in opposition to the political present (Willman, 2010). As a revisionist process, spectrality can exercise past pain(s); it can act as a basis for healing and self-reconciliation (Turcotte, 2008).

Within this context then, a distinction between negative and positive articulations of spectrality can be drawn (Joseph, 2001). Negative spectrality denotes ideologies determined by the system of wider social practices; positive versions involve the deliberation and purposeful conjuring of spectres by social actors to enable new ways of acting (Joseph, 2001). This cluster also draws attention to different expressions of agency, such as that of legal documents, how such agency emerges and how it can project forward, creating fields of action and creating an individual and collective imprisoning and enslaving (Brummans, 2007).

Continuity and change

Our last theme moves from the diverse expressions and roles of the spectral towards its more contextual, temporal and spatial facets. It emphasizes that the spectral is a simultaneous 'conjuration and unsettling of presence, place, the present, and the past' (Wylie, 2007, p. 172). On the one hand, spectrality provides a sense of continuity. Memories, memorials and monuments are the bases for individual and collective, people's and place's, presents, presences and practices. Being foundational, such continuity can be

of a positive nature. Testifying to spectrality can be an act of faithfulness to place, self and memory (Wylie, 2007). Simultaneously, if left unexplored and unreflected upon, it can have a darker, oppressive side. For example, representing ancestral inheritances, demanding faithfulness to traditions, postulating ancient commands, continuity can act as a historic chain, as a straitjacket (Harris, 2014). Spectres of the past can return to haunt the present, through reinforcing past echoes of exclusion, alterity and exploitation (Baloy, 2016).

This idea of ‘the return’ is closely linked to the notion of ‘spectropolitics’, the way in which spectres circulate the spaces, buildings and objects of an area, the way in which spectres make visible the stories and experiences of the past (Maddern, 2008). Within this context, spectrality also provides a chance for change (Bagchi, 2018). Engaging with spectrality offers an emancipatory possibility of becoming unstuck, of scholars taking responsibility for opening up and pursuing new and fresh lines of research (Harris, 2014). Spectres invoke feelings of uncertainty, thereby enabling a questioning of assumptions and orthodoxies (Pérez-Carbonell, 2016). Particularly, if we want to transcend spectrality’s anachronistic nature, that is avoiding the danger of being ‘burdened with the responsibility of the possibility of any actual recurrence of the errors, illusions, and actual calamities’ (Meagher, 2011, p. 178) from the past, questioning the conditions of spectrality ‘must be identified and transgressed’ so as to re-imagine a different tomorrow (Baloy, 2016, p. 2009).

Looking within and across the four thematic clusters, a number of significant theory-building questions arise for management and organization studies in general, and for philanthropic foundations as a special institutional expression in particular. To this end, it is important to bear in mind that spectrality should be seen as a way of ‘reading’ rather than ‘determining’ (Wolfreys, 2016). Thereby, the four themes need to be considered as interrelated and complementary: each provides specific emphases and focal points but also relates to and informs the others. This is illustrated through the circular arrow at the centre of Figure 1. For example, exploring relationality and decentring also contributes to understanding of narratives and representations. The latter, in turn, can be further interrogated through unpacking questions of ethics and politics, as well as through examining issues of continuity and change. Combined, these can circle back to communicate with and inform issues of inclusion and exclusion presented by relationality and decentring. As such, the themes themselves also need to be seen as representing ‘absent presences’. What then are the significant theory-building questions that spectrality presents?

DISCUSSION: SPECTRALITY AS A FOCAL THEORY FOR FOUNDATION RESEARCH

Keen to link itself to the latest trends and developments, organization research often suffers from a ‘collective drift of history’: attention and resources are concentrated within narrow parameters (De Cock et al., 2013, p. 1). Anything outwith these is discarded, often forgotten, so that ‘a sizeable “trash heap” of history’, of ideas, schools of thought and modes of thinking, has accumulated (De Cock et al., 2013, p. 1). The opportunity provided by engaging with spectrality in organization research is to go beyond merely recovering that past towards exploring what the philosopher and critical theorist Walter Benjamin referred to as ‘constellations’ (De Cock et al., 2013).

Resonating with Levi Strauss’ notion of ‘bricolage’, Benjamin’s constellations highlight that historical fragments need to be taken and ‘mounted’ in ways that facilitate interrogation, re-imagination and re-examination for necessary and novel explorations of those fragments’ respective relationships to emerge (Pensky, 2004). Here, spectrality allows for recapturing the past and awakening the accompanying inherent dynamics across the spatial, temporal, individual and collective spheres (De Cock et al., 2013, p. 1) of foundations. To this end, and across the various areas to which narrative methodologies in social and organizational research already draw attention and tend to contribute—particularly, sensemaking, identity, communication, change, learning, power and politics (Rhodes & Brown, 2005)—our four thematic clusters around spectrality provide a set of lenses that address the need to understand rather than to control, to acknowledge ambiguity rather than require certainty, when engaging with organizations (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Table 2 starts to set out the issues, connections and questions for management scholarship in general, and for foundation research in particular, that arise from our review. These are presented as a starting point for developing complementary research agendas for foundation research and management and organization studies more widely.

Our first theme, relationality and decentring, helps to move foundation theorizing beyond the centred approach that has dominated foundation research to date. This approach has been driven by the illusionary nature of ‘the foundation’ as an institutional form in itself. For example, despite prominent and widespread discourse on and reference to foundations in UK academia, policy and practice, no such thing as the legal structure of ‘a foundation’ exists in the UK (Jung, 2018). Similarly, in the USA, where foundations are a creation of tax law, exclusion rather than inclusion criteria are used to decide whether an organization qualifies as a foundation or not (Internal Revenue

TABLE 2 Issues, connections and questions for foundation research arising from the four themes

Theme	Issues, connections and questions for management and organization studies	Issues, connections and questions for foundation research
Relationality and decentring	<p>How can the spectral reorientate our treatment of organizations as a network of relations extending across time and spaces?</p> <p>How can the spectral contribute to scholarship on relationality and reflexivity?</p> <p>What specific issues and tensions are involved in everyday relational work?</p> <p>How can we further develop research which explores the shadows and boundaries of organizational life?</p>	<p>How can the spectral reorientate our approach to and understanding of foundations?</p> <p>What are the complex relationships of which foundations are composed?</p> <p>How is plurality cast and played out in the foundation field?</p> <p>How do foundations embrace their wider relations, past, present and future?</p> <p>How are foundations bounded and to be bounded?</p> <p>How do foundations develop capacities to interpret multiple meaning and experiences?</p>
Narratives and representations	<p>What are the features of spectral narratives in organizational contexts?</p> <p>What effects and affects do such stories and narratives have in, on and for organizations?</p> <p>What implications do these narratives and representations have on learning, strategizing and knowledge-creation for organizations?</p>	<p>Who and what are the spectres that linger in foundations and in the foundation world?</p> <p>What impacts do spectres have on the choices and strategies of foundations?</p> <p>How are founders represented and what narratives surround them?</p> <p>What directions do these narratives encourage and which do they inhibit?</p> <p>How do they impact on the renewal of foundations in a changing world?</p>
Ethics and politics	<p>How does the spectral shed light on the norms and values of organizations?</p> <p>What is at stake in taking the spectral seriously in organization studies?</p> <p>What do spectres tell us about the politics of organizations and how those politics are managed?</p> <p>How do everyday actors experience the spectral and what ethical dilemmas are entailed in such encounters?</p> <p>How does the spectral help scholars understand traditions, inheritances, legacies and their ethical bases?</p> <p>How can attention to the spectral help atone for past wrongdoings?</p>	<p>What does spectrality reveal about the norms and values of foundations?</p> <p>What are foundations' shadowy sides? What are foundations' bright sides? How do the two interact and relate to each other?</p> <p>What are foundations' responsibilities? How and by whom are they set and influenced?</p> <p>Whose lost pasts, presents and futures can be identified?</p> <p>Who is marginalized and whose voices and circumstances are left out or unattended?</p> <p>Can foundations atone for their founders' past, present or future behaviours?</p>
Continuity and change	<p>What are the implications of how the spectral disrupts linear understandings of time, and organizational histories?</p> <p>How does the spectral emphasis that change is never completed or settled re-cast the study of organizational change?</p> <p>How does an interest in the spectral contribute to scholarship on affect, liminality and memory, as well as on haunting and uncanny moments in organization studies?</p> <p>How does the absent presence of remembered organizational actors mediate continuity and change?</p>	<p>How does the spectral challenge and/or change our understanding of foundations' traditions and inheritances, as well as of philanthropy's origins more broadly?</p> <p>What contemporary dilemmas of continuity and change does attention to a foundation's spectres highlight?</p> <p>What tensions arise from negotiating spectral legacies while orientating to change? What problems and resources are encountered?</p> <p>What opportunities for reform, reconciliation and change does spectrality offer to foundations, particularly to permanently endowed ones?</p>

Service, 2020). In both countries, even foundations' umbrella bodies and associations acknowledge that 'the term foundation has no precise meaning' (Association of Charitable Foundations, 2020; Council on Foundations, 2020).

Keen to be 'scientific', pursuing a centred approach to foundation research follows in the footsteps of the natural sciences: the foundation field is mapped, similarities and differences are drawn out, clusters are identified and these are then used to develop categories or types. This can be

relatively broad and crude, as illustrated in umbrella terms such as ‘community foundation’ or ‘family foundation’, where little definitional agreement exists, or more specific, as illustrated in attempts at identifying and developing foundation taxonomies or typologies based on specific distinguishing institutional criteria (Anheier, 2018; European Foundation Centre, 2019; Jung et al., 2018). While these approaches help in mapping the field and in strengthening comparative understanding of foundations as an organizational form, they are geared towards demarcating foundations within the institutional landscape and from each other. To this end, an emphasis is placed on foundations’ organizational characteristics. Doing so offers little insight about accompanying, underlying and associated questions. Here, spectrality provides the opportunity to explore and draw in the broader relationships of which foundations are composed, and which foundations themselves create, across past, present and future. With particular opportunities presenting themselves in relation to (re)examining questions of foundations’ identity and situatedness within wider social, political and economic contexts (Anheier & Daly, 2007; Lagemann, 1989; Leat, 2016), it also helps to understand the nature of different foundation expressions, such as industrial foundations.

Industrial foundations, foundations that own or control businesses, cover many household names. Examples include engineering and technology firm Bosch, watchmaker Rolex, as well as the British newspaper *The Guardian*. Exploring these organizations through a centred approach highlights their organizational characteristics. It offers insights on contextual factors, such as their geographic location, their organizational aspects, their size or their strategic considerations, like thematic approaches and beneficiaries. Interrogating their spectral facets moves beyond these. It points towards some of the underlying causes that have brought about these foundations’ individual characteristics in the first place, including: securing organizational independence or ascertaining organizational survival after the owners’ demise (Edrington Group—Robertson Trust; Rolex—Hans Wildorfs Foundation); ascertaining long-term social or public benefits put forward by the founder (Carl Zeiss and SCHOTT—Carl Zeiss Foundation; The Guardian Media Group—The Scott Trust); maintaining privacy and providing tax management opportunities, particularly addressing estate tax (Ford—Ford Foundation; IKEA—Stichting INGKA Foundation). As part of interrogating that past, not only does one come across the influence of the donors’ own spectre, but a number of other spectres can also come to light, leading to our second theme of narratives and representations.

Engaging with the theme of narratives and representations in foundation research points to questions of who and what are the spectres that linger in the foundation

world, and how they influence and direct foundations’ perceptions, policies and practices. Exploring and engaging with foundations’ spectres mirrors the use of ‘phantoms’ and spectrality in psychology: working ‘like a ventriloquist’, they bring the idea and importance of underlying histories, particularly ‘secret’ histories, to the forefront of our understanding (Abraham & Torok, 1994, p. 173). For example, examining the history of the Carlsberg Foundation, one quickly comes across the tensions and subsequent competition between father and son, ‘two crazy people... making themselves objects of derision even to the workers’ (Hansen, cited in Brown, 2017, p. 202), the establishment of their separate businesses (Carlsberg vs. New Carlsberg) as well as foundations (Carlsberg vs. New Carlsberg Foundation), plus their subsequent bringing together under the Carlsberg Foundation name. Similarly, the Robertson Trust, owner of Scottish spirits company Edrington, originates from its founders being worried about American hostile takeover threats and maintaining a legacy (Maclean, 2001). A key aim articulated in the Trust Deed, the document establishing the foundation, was to protect the family businesses from such hostile takeovers and ensure that these businesses will ‘continue as active businesses in the control of British subjects’ (Maclean, 2001, p. 12), thereby anchoring it in Britain in perpetuity. Alongside, having a foundation obtain and distribute funding from the ownership and operation of a spirits business points to wider questions about (in)appropriate and (un)acceptable sources of income and their use, as well as various other spectres that might be lingering in foundations’ backgrounds. These are picked up in the third theme, ethics and politics.

As an analytical lens, the spectral approach enables us to ask what is missing and ‘not there’ (Brøgger, 2014). Thus, examining the hidden histories of foundations not only provides us with a better understanding of that philanthropic vehicle, but immediately challenges the dominant discourse—and associated criticisms—of foundations. Just as philanthropy tends to be considered and idealized normatively as ‘the love of humanity’, so are foundations cast as the institutional expressions thereof. As such, the last couple of years have seen growing criticisms of the foundation form, particularly that foundations might not be living up to that philanthropic ideal, to the notion of ‘doing good’ or to democratic ideals (Callahan, 2017; McGoey, 2015; Reich et al., 2016). Philanthropy, however, might better be perceived as the use of private resources for public purposes rather than for public good (Phillips & Jung, 2016). If so, an engagement with foundations’ spectral facets raises questions as to whether such criticisms of the foundation form are misplaced. Maybe, they simply arise from a misunderstanding of what foundations are historically, or from a set of uncritical assumptions

about the nature of foundations. As ‘a remarkable uninhibited form of posthumous self-expression’ (Macdonald, 1956, p. 39), foundations might be more appropriately perceived as being rooted in self-interest, self-preservation, self-promotion; their *raison d’être* as rooted in being an undemocratic control mechanism; their ambitions much more varied than prominently portrayed or assumed (Macdonald, 1956; McGoey, 2015; Roelofs, 2003; Whitaker, 1974).

Foundations’ underlying spectres can thus offer us insights into how falsification, ignorance or oversight of the past—whether at individual, collective or institutional level—provides a breeding ground for misunderstandings about foundations per se, as well as potential ways to overcome or even rectify these. Engaging with spectrality also points to issues around the practical management of foundations. After all, ‘[t]he motives for setting up a foundation are one thing, however, and the way in which it behaves after it has been set up is another’ (Macdonald, 1956). This leads to our final theme, that of continuity and change.

While limited work on the lifecycle of foundations exists (Anheier & Toepler, 1999; Dowie, 2002; WINGS, 2012), the potential ‘horror of transgression’ (Abraham & Torok, 1994, p. 174)—violating a secret or wish of the donor, questioning the sources of the foundations’ wealth—presents a number of obstacles for those working within foundations. Unpicking and critically reflecting on one’s organizational history can be haunting. It raises the danger of undermining and challenging the potentially ‘fictitious yet necessary integrity’ (Abraham & Torok, 1994, p. 174) needed to operate. This also appears to limit the extent to which those within these settings can, or want to, engage with others who raise these questions, presenting a potential answer as to why there is such paucity of critical literature on philanthropy that practitioners might want to engage with (Lerner, 2005). Whether or not this ‘phantom effect’ vanishes as time progresses, just as the attention on and centrality of the founder and their families seems to move towards the organizational periphery as foundations age (Dowie, 2002), warrants further examination. Here, interesting queries arise about whether and to what extent spectres’ roles can be reduced and restrained. These tensions between acknowledging and engaging with spectres, and their link to questions of continuity and change for foundations, are longstanding. Currently, they are prominently illustrated in the struggles of one of Germany’s largest foundations, the Hertie Foundation, to engage with and be transparent about the sources and origins of its own funding and its links to Nazi-era history (Busold, 2020). In this example, ‘the foundation lagged behind for decades [in addressing its past] in deference to Karg’s [the founder’s] heirs (Solomon, 2020, np). In the UK, an ongoing attempt at exorcizing a founder’s legacy is illustrated by the Sir John Cass’s Foundation (2020, np). Acknowl-

edging that some of its founder’s wealth was accumulated ‘through means of slavery and human exploitation’, the Foundation recently removed its founder’s statute from the facade of their offices. Moreover, recognizing, acknowledging, seeking to understand and apologizing for the hurt and anger caused, the Foundation considers the Sir John Cass naming inappropriate and has committed to changing it going forward. In cases like these, urgent questions concern whether such spectres can indeed be reduced, relegated or reigned-in by exploring their secrets and addressing them ‘in acceptable terms so as to defy, circumvent, or domesticate the phantom’s (and our) resistances, its (and our) refusals’ (Solomon, 2020, p. 189).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Following Breslin and Gatrell’s (2020) prospecting–mining spectrum to theorizing through literature reviews, our paper has highlighted spectrality as a focal phenomenon in foundations as philanthropy’s institutional expressions, and explored and articulated spectrality as a focal theory for engaging with foundations. Focusing on the spectral helps us to move towards acknowledging and incorporating ambivalence in foundation research, towards the conscious ‘dwelling in the uncanny spaces beyond existing taxonomies’ (Van Elferen, 2009, p. 101). Rather than seeing foundations’ characteristics as paradoxes or dichotomies (e.g. Fleishman, 2007), or engaging in criticisms of foundations as being undemocratic (e.g. Reich et al., 2016), the spectral allows us to wilfully engage and confront the ‘in-between spaces’ (Van Elferen, 2009, p. 101). Moving beyond any explicit expressions of foundations’ forms or practices and engaging with ‘what lies beneath’ helps to contextualize, challenge and reframe some of the dominant perspectives on and criticisms levelled at foundations. It allows us to acknowledge that foundations can simultaneously be expressions of self-interest and vehicles for providing wider public good, (un)democratic in their approach but serving (un)democratic purposes, based on negative behaviours yet contributing positively to society. In short, engaging with foundations through the lens of spectrality shows that there is much more to foundations than meets the eye. Theoretical work which engages with foundations’ spectral aspects contributes perspectives which open up new opportunities and novel insights for understanding the political and social contexts within which foundations exist.

Based on our systematic review of the literature on the spectral, spanning the social sciences, we identify and offer four thematic clusters to frame insights about foundations in relation to relationality and decentering, narratives and representation, ethics and politics, continuity and change.

We show how engaging with the spectral highlights the potential of decentred inquiry in relation to foundations. It indicates the need to analyse more thoroughly, and attend to more seriously, the range of experiences of a wealth of different actors in the foundation milieu. Spectres—like those that haunted Scrooge—can be humbling figures drawing attention to ego, conceit and self-centredness. Equally, in engaging with concepts of the spectral, scholars can engage in a re-sighting of their research to include figures and voices often relegated to the margins of the accounts of foundations.

In these respects, the themes of the study provide a number of methodological implications for future research projects. They invite an inclusive approach to interviews in the field and a broadening of research participants, a deepening of ‘data exposure’ (Yanow, 2014). It also calls into view the prospects for a more critical approach to foundation scholarship in which the official accounts and presentations of mission and practice are unsettled by interpretive scholars, senses attuned to issues of ethics, politics and justice. In this emerging paradigm, the oft-ignored and misrepresented voices of beneficiaries (Soares, 2012) would become at least as important as those of foundations’ own elites. Similarly, the rich trove of documentation that foundations often build up in their archives would be recast not quite as ghost stories, but as accounts which contain spectres, and which invite readings that attend to ethics and justice. Critically, such research begs the question: whose voices are missing? Finally, an interest in the spectral calls for methodologies designed around qualitative and interpretive inquiry, not least the potential of work which draws on ethnographic traditions and techniques (Orr, 2014; Pors et al., 2016) and hauntological studies (Blackman, 2015) or the turn to affect (Fotaki et al., 2017).

The paper’s second contribution is to connect foundation scholarship with existing debates about the spectral, and vice versa. Reviewing the impressive range of long-standing work on spectres across the social sciences calls into relief the extent to which the interest in the spectral seems to be a relatively late arrival to scholarship on organizations and organizing in general, and on foundations more specifically. Engaging with ideas and concepts about the spectral adds a dimension to works in this field which better connects these to intellectual traditions and currents elsewhere across the academy. As spectres tread the threshold of life and death, it is not a stretch to suggest that the spectral offers researchers an enervating threshold concept, which enables connections with new intellectual worlds. As Söderlund and Borg (2018, p. 897) tell us, attention to the spectral helps us to ‘question taken-for-granted facts and to explore new realities with a more open and “alternative” mindset’. In particular, it better equips researchers to understand the conventions and dynamics

of contemporary foundations as well as their roots, politics and prospects. The spectral can help the maturation of the foundation field by encouraging a move away from the dominance of typological approaches to foundations towards a stronger embracing of frame-breaking ways of exploring what shapes this unique institutional expression and its workings. Equally, we position foundations as a site replete with spectres that would reward attention from scholars working in other disciplines.

Our third contribution speaks to policy and practice. The different thematic aspects of the spectral provide a basis for reflection and learning on the part of those immersed in the world of foundations. While there has been some exploration of organizational culture through the lens of ‘industrial gothic’ (Parker, 2005), our review points to the potential of a spectral lens. As the foundation field moves towards adopting and adapting the ideas and ideals of new public management (Jung & Harrow, 2019), particularly around emphasizing and embracing managerialism, rationality, metrics and performance indicators, thinking about spectrality in foundations might seem counter-cultural. However, as our paper has shown, spectrality offers a basis for a critical approach to dominant ideas, and a different lens through which we can regard the role and context of foundations, heightening the ethical stakes involved. Our review therefore provides a new way of apprehending the significance of culture, legacies and traditions, especially useful to critically engaging with the legacy of a foundation’s origins, as well as its present and future paths.

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