In 1982, Derrida appeared in Ken McMullen’s film *Ghost Dance* as a philosopher interviewed by the actress Pascale Ogier about ghosts. In a later discussion Derrida describes how, two or three years after appearing in the film, he watched it with a group of students in the United States. By this time, Pascale Ogier was dead:

> I suddenly saw Pascale’s face appear on the screen, and I knew it was the face of a dead woman. She was replying to my question: ‘Do you believe in ghosts?’ As if she were looking straight into my eyes, she was still saying to me on the big screen: ‘Yes, now, yes.’ Which now? Years afterwards in Texas. I had the overwhelming feeling of the return of her ghost, the ghost of her ghost, coming back to say to me, to me, here, now: ‘Now... now... now, that is, in this darkened room, on another continent, in another world, there, now, yes, believe me, I believe in ghosts.’

In part, Derrida is merely describing an encounter with the dead made possible by the technologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Roland Barthes suggests in *La Chambre claire*, photography already entails an experience of death. In the photograph, Barthes argues, the dead return, but they return as mortal, destined to be lost again; and they remind us of our own mortality. Whilst photography made the dead visible once again, moving film and sound recording enabled us also to see and to hear people, to watch their movement and listen to their voices, long after their deaths.
In his account of seeing once again the image of Pascale Ogier, Derrida implies that there is a close relation between film and the disorientating, deconstructive effects of spectrality. The dead return through film to throw into question the experience of time and space: when is now, where is here? Moreover, the filmed subject is always, already enunciating her own death: ‘She was already, she was already saying so, and she knew, as we know, that even if she hadn’t died in the meantime, one day, it is a dead woman who would say: “I am death”, or “I am dead, from where I am I know what I’m talking about, and I am watching you”.’¹³ To watch film is to be in the presence of spectres, the already-dead or the soon-to-be-dead, and it is also to be watched by them as they look back at us and see that we too shall die.

This close connection between film and death has already been noted by the film critic Michel Chion. His comments, though, are concerned principally with the possibility of the dead speaking in film. He refers to voiceovers by characters who turn out to be dead in films such as Billy Wilder’s *Sunset Boulevard* and Joseph Mankiewicz’s *The Honey Pot*; and he observes that even when the speaking character is not actually dead, ‘the narrative voiceover is often that of the almost-dead, of the person who has completed his or her life and is only waiting to die’.⁴ Rather than following Chion’s lead and examining the link between speech and death in the cinema, this chapter discusses the work of death in silent film, in particular in Louis Feuillade’s serial film of 1915 *Les Vampires* and, at the end of the chapter, in F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* of 1922. In the main part of the chapter, I suggest some links between thematic and formal concerns in Feuillade’s film and Freud’s controversial theory of the death drives, through which death is re-located into the very centre of the living subject. In the ten episodes and 7 hours of running time of *Les Vampires*, a criminal band known as the Vampires creates havoc in First World War Paris. The Vampires, here, are not the supernatural beings of other early vampire movies, notably Murnau’s *Nosferatu* or Carl-Theodor Dreyer’s *Vampyr* (1932); but their association with death is no less constant, as they kill and are killed, they die and sometimes apparently return from the dead. The film does not refer directly to the war and its deadly consequences, but they are always obliquely present. The leader of the Vampire gang, the Grand Vampire, goes through a series of different incarnations