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The neuroscientific uncanny: a filmic investigation of twenty-first century hauntology

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THE NEUROSCIENTIFIC UNCANNY: A FILMIC INVESTIGATION
OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY HAUNTOLOGY

Susannah Gent

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2019

Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.
4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.
5. The word count of the thesis is 39,999.

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ABSTRACT

The research space of this practice-led Ph.D. invites filmmaking, psychoanalysis, philosophy, and neuroscience to interact towards an expanded understanding of the uncanny and the related concept of hauntology. The three films produced explore methods of spontaneous, creative play.

Scanner follows a scientific study that attempts to explore a neurological underpinning of the uncanny through an fMRI brain scan study. The film explains the process, describes the results, and illustrates the uncanny by experimenting with the documentary form.

Unhomely Street, made while experiencing post-concussive syndrome, unwittingly acts as a therapeutic project. Through *post-hoc* reflection the film reveals unconscious aspects of the creative process.

Psychotel, a 'thesis' film, is informed by psychoanalytic accounts of the uncanny, philosophical, and neuroscientific descriptions of selfhood, and influenced by representations of the uncanny in art work and the supernatural horror genre.

In conclusion, following Nicholas Royle's assertion that the world is uncanny because of the discrepancy between our apparent (self) knowledge and our inability to enact change,¹ I reflect upon the potential of filmmaking as research to promote new ways of thinking. Through a neuropsychanalytic account of the uncanny I show that the evolved brain operates according to primitive and automatic processes. These processes are largely hidden from consciousness and the uncanny occurs when our sense of agency is challenged. While this view is underpinned by neuroscience and cognitive psychology, I demonstrate that it is not at odds with the psychoanalytic account of the 'return of the repressed'. In short, in the words of Freud, the uncanny arises when the individual understands themselves as 'a temporary and transient appendage to the quasi-immortal germ-plasm'.²

1. Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, p. 3.

2. Sigmund Freud (1915), 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes', *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 11, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Penguin, 1984, pp. 121–22.

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The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still treat each guest honourably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Rumi, 13th century

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ENDNOTE

Check-in

Gulls keen and dive, their wings
write the day's last light on the sea's wrinkled skin.³

An introduction, as we know, is always written last. Following the conclusion in which I am troubled by what a creative-practice 'contribution to knowledge' means, I consider Jacques Derrida's project and am further troubled by what knowledge in general may claim. The implications of this must be left aside up to a point as the Ph.D. candidate is obliged to argue and defend originality of thought – as if such a thing could be said to exist. On returning to the start I reconsider the title of this project, imagining the reader would infer my intentions were to fix the uncanny, as one would a butterfly with a pin, and prove by scientific method that such a thing exists in material form. On the contrary, I consider aspects of reductionism in science, and explore how science accommodates methodological flaws.⁴ I highlight the theoretical nature of 'scientific metaphors' of contemporary neuroscience, not so dissimilar to the Freudian topologies that are rejected by scientific fields.⁵ At the same time I draw on these theories to progress an understanding of mind and psychical processes that act as inspiration for my creative practice and advance my understanding of film spectatorship.

My aim in taking an interdisciplinary approach is to 'deterritorialise'.⁶ Martin McQuillan's definition of deconstruction '(if we really must have such a thing)', is 'an act of reading which allows the other to speak'.⁷ The 'inherent' superiority of one term over another, which deconstruction aims to expose, is evident in institutional disciplinary boundaries that rely on difference for their identity. The presence / absence

3. Fay Musselwhite, 'Star', *Contraflow*, Sheffield: Longbarrow Press, 2016, p. 94. Extract.

4. It is the reductionism, necessary to isolate small areas of study, fundamental to scientific method, that often provokes responses in the humanities. The alignment of life experiences with brain activity causes concern and protests that there must be more to life than neural activity. This is a theme that runs throughout this research. A specific example of such an outcry is discussed chapter 6, in relation to Damasio's theory of selfhood. See Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009, p. 227. Methodological flaws in brain scanning surveys are noted in appendix 1.

5. Psychology and neuroscience largely exclude Freudian theory. Although psychoanalysis, psychology, and neuroscience all recognise the extent to which the individual functions according to mental processes that operate below the threshold of consciousness, psychology, and neuroscience use the term nonconscious to create a distance from the Freudian concept of the unconscious. This is explored in the chapters to follow.

6. I use the term 'deterritorialise' in reference to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's accounts of territorialising and deterritorialising behaviours as explored in *A Thousand Plateaus*, translated by Brian Massumi, London: Bloomsbury, 1987. The idea of territory is explored throughout the book; however, in chapter 11, '1837: Of the Refrain' (pp. 360–408) they explore territory in detail. I return to their ideas in relation to my practice with reference to *Unhomely Street* in chapter 3, and in *Psychotel* I quote them: 'A territory is first of all the critical distance between two beings of the same species.' *Ibid.*, p. 372.

7. An impossible task as 'whenever we think we are hearing the other speak we are always reducing its otherness to the self-same'. Martin McQuillan (editor), 'Introduction: Five Strategies for Deconstruction', in *Deconstruction: A Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000, p. 6.

dichotomy is central to the assumption of metaphysics that Derrida questions.⁸ Presence, as singularity, a unified position, is demanded by the institution through the Ph.D.'s knowledge claim. The objectivity of academic practice can conceal the problematics of metaphysics that is in some ways assuaged by the creative practice Ph.D., in which the inevitable aspect of the personal, complete with traces, unconscious influences, transgenerational phantom, the product of a logocentric culture, is attended to, even deconstructed.

A spectre haunts metaphysics: the spectre of the brain. Fabian Fajnwaks, professor of psychology writes: 'That the unconscious has nothing in common with the brain is not self-evident for our neuroscientist colleagues'.⁹ While understanding Fajnwak's frustration with the clunky tools of brain imaging and the unfounded idea that this technology holds the key to the holy grail of knowledge, I question the 'nothing' written here. When I focus on the inside of my head I experience a black void where images come and go, a personal cinema screen. With practice I am able to experience pulsations, the merest hint that a highly energetic and consumptive organ hides within. Brain imaging is a shocking reminder that such activity goes on unseen, behind the scenes, unconscious.

Although Freud abandoned the 'Project', his work retains the echoes of thoughts relating to neural activity.¹⁰ *A Note on the Mystic Writing Pad* is one such text.¹¹ Freud describes the workings of the psyche by drawing an analogy between the means by which memory appears to be limitless in its recording, undergoes erasure, and yet is retained, and the mechanics of the *Wunderblock*.¹² Concerning this 'note', in 'Freud and

8. See Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', *Writing and Difference*, trans by Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 246–291, 247–9. Derrida questions the history of presence and its relation to consciousness alongside absence and the unconscious. He points to the absence and presence of the penis, central to Freudian theory and the history of the assumption of presence from Descartes to Hegel with reference to Heidegger's project as a binary opposition at the heart of logocentric repression.

9. Fabian Fajnwaks, 'Impression – Trace – Signifier – Letter', *Pipol* 9, 2019, <<https://www.pipol9.eu/category/chiffre/>>, accessed 18 January 2019.

10. The 'Project' was Freud's attempt to conceive of a scientific psychology based in neurophysiology. The published work arose from Freud's letters to Wilhelm Fliess in 1895, in which he presents three types of hypothetical neurons. In this work are the foundations of repression and the reality principle; however, Freud abandoned the 'Project' in favour of seeking psychological predispositions of the psychodynamic process, most likely due to the state of neuroscience at the time and the impossibility of scientifically demonstrating his theories. Sigmund Freud (1895), 'Project for a Scientific Psychology', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Hogarth, 1966, pp. 295–343.

11. Sigmund Freud, 'A Note on the Mystic Writing Pad', in McQuillan (editor), *Deconstruction*, pp. 51–55.

12. Freud in 'The note' does not name the toy, it is referenced in Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', *Writing and Difference*, 251.

the Scene of Writing', Derrida expands Freud's metaphor to discuss writing in its broadest sense, in relation to the trace, to the psyche as 'a kind of text'.¹³

Fajnwak ends his article thus: 'If our colleagues in Neuroscience are so interested in the Freud of the "Project", it is because they read the impressive routes that he delineates as a metaphor for writing.' These 'impressive routes', without reference to the 'writing' of neuronal activity, present the brain as an absence in the black box in which the psyche dances.

Of course, one must remain within one's disciplinary boundary. As my discipline is creative practice I feel enabled, within the constraints of academic rigour, to consider the implications, affective repercussions, and the appearance of structures and systems outside my field. I see this as the principal institutional benefit of the art practice Ph.D., that it permits emotional response and gut-reaction, and is founded on play. My Director of Studies, Sharon Kivland, at a recent seminar suggested the role of the work of art was to seduce, invite, and provoke its audience into consideration and awareness of its underlying themes and influences. The work of art should not be expected to present that material, rather to open its door.¹⁴

It is often through openness that insights are gained. It is with openness that I approached the films and text. At times their interrelation lacks specificity and the conclusions, in the light of problems with knowledge in general, are cautious. My experience of undertaking this research has broadly been one of experiencing different modes of being; reader, writer, thinker, filmmaker (creative dreamer, image-catcher, listener, recorder, storyteller, etc.), specific states that I consider from psychological and biological perspectives.

The work is personal and as such, has a subjective tone. I am a white, British, middle-class, middle-aged, academic, female filmmaker living in a safe environment in precarious times. I began the research with post-concussive syndrome following a head injury. In this difficult period I was preoccupied by the notion of the Sixth Great

13. Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', p. 250.

14. Sharon Kivland presented 'Arise, Wretched of the Earth', a research seminar at Sheffield Hallam University Art and Design Research Centre, in which she discussed her recent exhibition 'Die Holzdiebe', ZAK, Zitadelle, Berlin, 2019. The exhibition is founded on Karl Marx's articles for the *Rheinische Zeitung* (October 1842) reporting on the proceedings of the Sixth Rhine Province Assembly 'Debates on the law of thefts of wood'.

Extinction and the Anthropocene.¹⁵ As the research progressed and my mental health improved (the relation between the two is explored in chapter 3), I became persuaded by the positive stance of Donna J. Haraway, the notion of the Chthulucene, and a possible future of multispecies collaboration. Haraway understands the power of narrative. Human beings tell stories. The stories we tell are more than entertainment, they shape our (inter)actions and reveal the structure of thought.¹⁶ Haraway proposes the Chthulucene as an alternative cultural narrative to the Anthropocene. Deleuze and Guattari write of ‘becoming-animal’, Derrida writes of ‘The Animal That Therefore I am’.¹⁷ These texts have informed the latter stages of the research and point towards the future, understanding that the future is always haunted by the past. The study of the uncanny orbits around the individual and collective psyche – what is wrong with us and can we do anything about it? These are questions posed rather than answered and the contribution I make towards these broad issues is modest.

Room plan: structure of the thesis

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul.¹⁸

The research, undertaken over a five-year period, comprises the thesis, three films, and a science survey. The research is practice-led and practice-based: the resulting films produce new knowledge through devising original approaches to represent subjectivity and affect.¹⁹ My practical contribution comprises three films, *Scanner*, a six-minute documentary, *Unhomely Street*, a twenty-minute essay film, and *Psychotel*, a sixty-minute essay film.

15. See Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, New York, NY: Henry Holt, 2014, referenced in Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, London: Duke University Press, 2016, p. 43.

16. For a brief discussion listen to ‘The Science of Storytelling’, *Inside Science*, Radio 4 podcast, broadcast 25/04/19, <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0004cqh>>, accessed 18 June 2019. See Antonio Damasio, ‘The Naturalness of Wordless Storytelling’, in *The Feeling of What Happens*, London: Vintage, 1999, pp. 188–89.

17. See ‘1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible’, in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1983, pp. 244–360, and Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. by David Wills, New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2008.

18. Emily Dickinson, ‘Hope’, *Selected Poems*, New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1990, p. 5. Extract.

19. For a definition of practice-based and practice-led see Andrew Johnston, *Differences between practice-based and practice-led research*, <<http://www.creativityandcognition.com/research/practice-based-research/differences-between-practice-based-and-practice-led-research/>>, accessed 20 October 2016. ‘Practice-led research is concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice. Practice-based research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice. Claims of originality and contribution to knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes which may include artefacts such as images, music, designs, digital media or other outcomes such as performance and exhibitions.’

Scanner describes a scientific study that investigates the neurological underpinning of the uncanny through an image-based survey and brain scan study using an fMRI scanner. *Unhomely Street*, produced while experiencing post-concussive syndrome, reveals unconscious mechanisms in the creative process and in this instance shows filmmaking to be a therapeutic activity. *Psychotel* explores the uncanny and was approached as a filmic equivalent to a Ph.D. chapter. The contribution to knowledge, as detailed in the conclusion, is the sum of the research and practice, and consists of conventional contributions including new insights drawing on interdisciplinary texts, and practical contributions in the form of the films that expand filmic language to express the research in affective terms.

The thesis follows a roughly chronological order describing the course of the research, each chapter building on the last. Theoretical research weaves with the filmmaking towards an explication of the creative output. At times this is inconclusive but builds a picture of how interdisciplinary perspectives shape the practical work. Below I outline each chapter to indicate how the narrative of the research unfolds.

Chapter 1. *Returning to the start* sketches the ground from which the research developed. The first subchapter, *The uncanny and twenty-first century hauntology* provides a summary of the uncanny and hauntology and an overview of the referenced texts. *Background to the practice* summarises my filmic influences and introduces my past films and art works, with a focus on their uncanny content.

Chapter 2. *Methodological windows* introduces interdisciplinary research. *Why Neuroscience?* presents film as an emotional medium with reference to the work of screenwriter Phil Parker, and respective work on emotion and consciousness of film theorist Peter Wyeth and neuroscientist Antonio Damasio. I introduce neuropsychanalysis and neuroaesthetics, provide commentary on attitudes towards these new fields, and outline my own motivations in taking an interdisciplinary approach. *Unconscious, nonconscious: a note* clarifies terms and how they will be used in the thesis. *Scanner: fMRI study and short film* describes the process of the scientific surveys presented in the short documentary *Scanner*.

Chapter 3. *Inviting the unconscious to speak* explores creative practice as a process of affective response. *Creative Play: Art practice as research* cross-references descriptions of creative practice and mathematical thought that occur below the threshold of consciousness. Parallels are drawn between creative practice and psychoanalytic method as engaging unconscious processes. *Unhomely Street: filmic intuition* reflects on the method of production of this film, therapeutic aspects of the process, and the nature of the imagery produced. Hauntology, as a critical framework from Derrida, and a characteristic tone of this century from Mark Fisher, is reflected upon in the light of the film.

Chapter 4. *Pointing the bone: A review of metaphor* commences with reference to China Miéville's novel *Embassytown*, a story of an alien race that must stage metaphors in order to expand their thinking. The work of Jacques Lacan is introduced alongside linguistic theories of metaphor from George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and neuroaesthetic approaches to understanding metaphor from Irving Massey. Michael Robbins' theory of primordial consciousness is comparatively reviewed. Derrida's deconstructive work explores metaphor through an expanded understanding of writing, and Deleuze and Guattari employ metaphors to develop conceptual frameworks, often drawing on mathematical figures, to concretise ideas within abstract environments. Building on chapter 3, and a hypothesis that filmmaking involves a process of translation from feeling to image, the purpose of the chapter in this central position in the thesis is to explore an understanding of metaphor as an originary language of thought.

5. *Psychotel, Ground floor: Check-in* is the first of three chapters that reflect on *Psychotel*. The film was produced over a four-year period and edited in three main post-production blocks. These blocks relate to the three chapters to follow that expose the process and thinking behind the film. *The blind narrator and the sexual uncanny* reveals the starting points of the film, some more obvious attempts to make filmic references to the uncanny, including images of castration and dismemberment, and the process of finding a look and style with which to proceed. *The return of the repressed and the uncanny child* explores Freudian repression as a process of hierarchical inhibition of the lower by the higher modes of mental operation to enable predictive strategy. The psychoanalytic understanding of the uncanny as 'the return of the repressed' is reviewed

through Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis towards a new understanding of film spectatorship. Maria Torok and Nicolas Abraham's concept of the transgenerational phantom is introduced in relation to themes of child abuse in the film.

6. *Psychotel, Second floor: single or double room?* focusses on the second stage of production when slower sequences were made in an attempt to instil feelings of quiet uncertainty and oneiric logic. *Myself and I: the structure of selfhood* explores the psychoanalytic and neuroscientific accounts of the phenomenological experience of the strangeness of mental life. *The uncanny double: otherness and automaticity* looks at disrupted physics and reversed speech in the film with reference to the uncanny valley theory, art-house films, and the horror genre. *I could not sleep with her in the room* reviews a sequence in the film that was shot in Istanbul. The orientalist nature of this sequence is re-examined in the light of filmmaking as an unconscious process.

7. *Psychotel, Third floor: Lift going up* explores the latter stages of production including the voice-over that shapes the narrative. *The all-seeing narrator and the harbinger of death* considers the role of the narrator with reference to Nicholas Royle's idea of *Reality Literature*. Themes of death are explored through the use of dead animals in the film. Commentary on the animal as 'other' builds on previous chapters. *Spirit level and the quantum uncanny* considers telepathy as an extension of the omnipresent narrator with reference to Derrida and Royle. The relation of the uncanny to quantum physics and Eastern philosophies is assessed with reference to meditation, creative practice, hypnagogia, and schizophrenia as related mental states.

8. *Check out: Exit* ties together multiple threads, identifies small contributions to knowledge, and offers concluding remarks about modes of thinking, creative practice, and the academic workplace. *Chance: the magic book shop* reflects on chance occurrences during the research and the importance in creative practice of allowing accidents to happen. *Reception: creative-practice research* offers concluding commentary on the psychological 'space' of the research. *Intuition and affect* provides a summary of inferences about the psyche as explored in the thesis, and clarifies intuition in filmmaking. *Behind the curtain: the uncanny unconscious* proposes an interpretation of the psychoanalytic unconscious and its relation to the uncanny in which the two ideas are closely associated. *Visitor's book: filmmaking in precarious times* reflects on

Haraway's message, provides a summary of contributions to knowledge, and outlines the type of knowledge that a film can claim.

1.

RETURNING TO THE START

The uncanny and twenty-first century hauntology

She wonders about getting away,
Flattens herself slimmer than a pay packet
To hide in the slats of a heron's wing.²⁰

Freud's 1919 article *Das Unheimlich* attributes the uncanny to the castration complex, with reference to childhood fears, and disembodied limbs, but his discussion ranges to include repetition, coincidence, the appearance of automaticity, madness, doubles, the evil eye, silence, solitude, darkness, death, and the supernatural. The uncanny is a peculiar sensation, where one feels arrested, stopped in one's tracks by a feeling of otherness or alienation, fear mingled with strangeness, uncertainty and dissonance.²¹

The psychoanalytic and philosophical accounts of the uncanny converge on the idea of something hidden from direct sight and the implication is that this is, metaphorically speaking, a cognitive veil. There exists a discrepancy between the individual's sense of agency and the automaticity that underpins much of human behaviour. That the conscious self is not the primary driver of the organism produces a sense of doubling. This account can be found in many philosophical and psychoanalytic texts but this interdisciplinary account, introducing the neuroscientific work of Damasio, is an original contribution to an understanding of the uncanny.

The literature review addresses the development of thinking of consciousness and selfhood across humanistic and scientific fields including the work of Damasio, Freud, Derrida, Hélène Cixous, Deleuze, Guattari, Fisher, Martin Heidegger, Ernst Jentsch, Adrian Johnson, Irving Massey, Barry Opatow, Royle, Mark Solms, and Katherine Withy. These accounts are explored herein and in the films, illustrating the uncanny in the narrative content and showing how the repressed might return through art practice.

20. Fay Musselwhite, 'In the Absence of Salt', *Contraflow*, p. 94. Extract.

21. 'Das "Unheimlich"' 'has always been more interesting to parse and deconstruct than to summarize', Alexandra Kokoli, *The Feminist Uncanny in Theory and Art Practice*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, p. 18. See Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. 1–2 for a comprehensive introduction and the book overall for an expansion and deconstruction of the uncanny.

Derrida's critical framework of hauntology implies that it is the nature of being to be haunted.²² Hauntology questions the assumption of presence in metaphysics as an expansion of Derrida's deconstructive project. The framework relates to the uncanny as both accommodate the idea of what is absent or hidden from view. Hauntology emphasises the non-linearity of thought, while the uncanny involves a disruption of selfhood arising from the split nature of the psyche.²³ Both are conceptual frameworks that suggest patterns of thought. Fisher's work on hauntology focusses on the mood of the times at the start of this century.²⁴ It was with great sadness that I learned of Mark Fisher's death in January 2017, having read in *Ghosts of My Life* how writing, as a process of 'externalising negativity', helped him work through depression.²⁵ Derrida's hauntology, an eschatological reaction to Fukuyama's optimism towards liberal democracy and free market capitalism, proposes that we learn from the past, let the ghost, or the 'other' speak.²⁶ For Fisher, hauntology is a meditation on the prevalence of depression and a loss of creativity in the twenty-first century, characterised by 'a crushing sense of finitude and exhaustion'.²⁷ In contrast Haraway more playfully describes these times as 'the dithering'.²⁸ Haraway rejects the Anthropocene as it saps the strength of the imagination to envisage a future of multispecies coexistence. In Haraway I find a positive approach to thinking about the troubled future, with her concept of the Chthulucene as 'one of the big-enough stories in the netbag for staying with the trouble in our ongoing epoch'.²⁹ Among Haraway's objections to the discourse of the Anthropocene is that it 'saps our capacity for imagining and caring for other worlds, both those that exist precariously now [...] and those we need to bring into alliance with other critters'.³⁰ Haraway emphasises the importance of cultural narratives, that our stories amount to shared visions.³¹

The reference to the neuroscientific uncanny in the title relates to the science survey and the film *Scanner* that is discussed in chapter 2, and my application of work from the

22. See Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx, the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf, New York, NY: Routledge, 1994. Hauntology is explored further in chapter 3.

23. This understanding of the uncanny is expanded in chapter 6.

24. See Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life – Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, Winchester: Zero Books, 2014.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

26. Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, pp. 222–21.

27. Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, p. 8.

28. Donna J. Haraway, Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin, *Environmental Humanities*, vol. 6, 2015, pp. 159–165, 161. 'The dithering' is a reference to Kim Stanley Robinson's *2312*, a science fiction novel of 2012 as Haraway notes.

29. Donna J. Haraway 'Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene', *e-flux*, Journal#75, 2016, <<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/75/67125/tentacular-thinking-anthropocene-capitalocene-chthulucene/>>, accessed 1 February 2017, p. 11.

30. Haraway, 'Tentacular Thinking', p. 8.

31. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, pp. 99–103.

fields of neuroscience and psychology that builds on psychoanalytic and philosophical accounts of the uncanny in chapters 5 and 6. Twenty-first century hauntology combines Derrida and Fisher's accounts of hauntology with Haraway's work as a background that informed my thinking during the filmmaking process.

In considering theories of selfhood from science and the humanities I contribute to the current understanding of the uncanny in relation to mind and brain, and employ filmmaking as an investigative strategy.

Background to the practice

Out of the meaningless practical shapes of all that is living or lifeless
Joined with the artist's eye, new life, new form, new colour,
Out of the sea of sound the life of music,
Out of the slimy mud of words,
Out of the sleet and hail of verbal imprecisions.³²

A longstanding preoccupation in my filmmaking has been the representation of subjectivity. I have enjoyed films that occupy a netherworld of feeling and metaphor. My influences have been European art-house cinema, and US, UK, and Canadian independent cinema, including the work of Jean Cocteau, Ingmar Bergman, Luis Buñuel, Maya Deren, Peter Greenaway, Derek Jarman, David Cronenberg, and David Lynch.³³ What unites these filmmakers – and what influenced my own filmmaking – is the staging of a discrete cinematic world that is not intended to be viewed as a representation of reality.³⁴ A line can be traced from the early cinema of George Méliès at the start of last century to the Surrealist movement, beginning in the early 1920s with Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* in 1929, and Deren's *At Land* in 1944, laying the foundations for a cinematic approach that differs from the dominant narrative form. In mainstream cinema the camera primarily acts as a third person observer of performed scenes intended to represent reality, where cinematic pleasure is gained from empathetic

32. T. S. Eliot, 'Choruses from "The Rock"', *T. S. Eliot: A selection by the Author*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951, p. 121. Extract.

33. It is worth noting that there appears one woman out of eight directors. An article on the website of the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, Martha M. Lauzen found that in a study of the top 700 films of 2014 women comprised only 13% of directors, *Women and the Big Picture: Behind-the-Scenes Employment on the Top 700 Films of 2014*, <https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/files/2014_Women_and_the_Big_Picture_Report.pdf>, accessed 6 September 2018.

34. Bergman took influence from the Surrealist movement and presented dreamscapes, a clearly defined example being the *doppelgänger* sequence in *Wild Strawberries*, dir. Ingmar Bergman, Svensk Filmindustri, 1957 [on DVD]. Lynch's work features dream sequences, but these examples present filmic worlds that are not specific in their relation to the subjective viewpoint, rather the entire narrative is staged in a weird, imaginary setting.

alignment with the principal character.³⁵ What differs in Surrealist films and the examples of art-house cinema listed above is that representations of reality are combined with scenes whose closest real-world reference is fantasy or dream.

Surrealism as characterised by an attempt ‘to express, either verbally, in writing or in any other manner, the true functioning of thought’.³⁶ Barbara Creed sees *Un Chien Andalou* as emphasising ‘the crucial role of the internal eye, the mind’s eye, in viewing film’.³⁷ She describes Lynch and Cronenberg as Surrealist film makers,³⁸ and highlights the Surrealist intention of uniting dream and reality.³⁹ She writes:

The Surrealist’s untamed eye is first and foremost an inner eye. Of central importance to their views on the cinema is the relationship between the viewing of a film and the act of dreaming. To them watching a film unfolding in a darkened cinema embodied the closest thing to a dream.⁴⁰

I propose the Surrealist intention to combine dream and fantasy with reality, and to represent the internal mind’s-eye view, has contributed to cinematic trends of increased non-linearity. Film theorist Allan Cameron recognises a trend towards increased cinematic, narrative complexity since the early 1990s. He defines these *modular narratives* as films that ‘articulate a sense of time as divisible and subject to manipulation’.⁴¹ In 2004 Harper coined the term the *cinema of complexity*⁴² to describe the condition of film in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century characterised by

35. I acknowledge mainstream cinema also includes instances of subjective representation however the third person viewpoint is the dominant mode. This viewpoint is the filmmaker’s perspective which on viewing becomes the spectator’s position. In this sense the spectator aligns themselves with the filmmaker and follows the narrative according to the filmmaker’s intention. However through the events of the narrative the spectator experiences the emotional turmoil of the character. The effect on the spectator is achieved through engagement of empathy by witnessing the performance of emotion as well as by a system of related fantasy that the spectator runs alongside the film, their own slightly adapted versions of being a hero.

36. André Breton (1924), *The First Surrealist Manifesto*, trans. by A. S. Kline, 2010, <<https://nihilsentimentalgia09.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/manifestopdf.pdf>>, accessed 7 October 2016, referenced in Graeme Harper and Rob Stone, ‘Emobilism and New ‘Film’: Surrealism in the Post-Digital Age’, *The Unsilvered Screen: Surrealism on Film*, London: Wallflower Press, 2007, p. 148.

37. Barbara Creed, ‘The Untamed Eye and the Dark Side of Surrealism: Hitchcock, Lynch and Cronenberg’, in *The Unsilvered Screen: Surrealism on Film*, edited by Graeme Harper and Rob Stone, London: Wallflower Press, 2007, p. 125.

38. Creed, *The Unsilvered Screen*, 2007, p. 115.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 124. Creed notes that Breton saw ‘surreality’ as a new state where dream and reality were combined to resolve contradictions of oppositional states such as real / imaginary, life / death, high / low.

40. Creed, *The Unsilvered Screen*, 2007, p. 119.

41. Allan Cameron, *Modular Narratives in Contemporary Cinema*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 1. Examples he cites as illustrative of this trend include;

- *Pulp Fiction*, dir. Quentin Tarantino, Miramax, 1994, [on DVD],
- *Groundhog Day*, dir. Harold Ramis, Columbia Pictures, 1993 [on DVD],
- *Memento*, dir. Christopher Nolan, 2000 [on DVD],
- *21 Grams*, dir. Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, 2003 [on DVD],
- *Peppermint Candy*, dir. Lee Chang-dong, 2000 [on DVD].

42. Graeme Harper, ‘DVD and the New Cinema of Complexity’, in Nicholas Rombes, *New Punk Cinema*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005, pp. 89–101.

‘a complex interaction of no longer mechanical production techniques’ brought about by the shift to electronic media technology.⁴³

The emergence of *complex* and *modular* narratives such as Quentin Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction* since the late 1980s immediately follow a wave of popular surrealist cinema including Cronenberg’s *Dead Ringers* (1988), and *Naked Lunch* (1991), and Lynch’s *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992), and the cult television series *Twin Peaks* (1990).⁴⁴ My exposure to these films as a student in the late eighties and early nineties alongside a consideration of the non-linear quality of thought led me to experiment with atemporal narratives. Between 1993 and 1994 I made three short films, which could be described as *modular narratives* according to Cameron’s description.⁴⁵

Creed writes that Lynch ‘draws on motifs much beloved of the classic Surrealist: doubles, identity loss, the bizarre and unexpected, doomed lovers, the dream, the uncanny, decay and death’.⁴⁶ She notes Lynch’s fascination with the horror that lies below the surface of suburban normality. She suggests that while Lynch is concerned primarily with mental states, Cronenberg’s unique surrealist vision is focussed on the body, the abject, and also the uncanny.⁴⁷ Creed notes that the uncanny is, for the Surrealists, central to notions of the marvellous, convulsive beauty, and objective chance.⁴⁸ My first short film, *Thread*, uses the metaphor of a narrative thread to weave together disparate elements, connected by a literal piece of string.⁴⁹ My intention was to represent an interrelationship between things that resulted in simultaneous occurrences, questioning the idea of ‘objective chance’. This was explored more literally in the BFI funded film *The Bather*.⁵⁰ This film suggests telepathy among the characters and hints

43. Graeme Harper, ‘Emobilism and New ‘Film’’, p.143. My short films were made prior to my going on-line and were produced on film and edited in a linear fashion, so new digital technology cannot account for their atemporality.

44. *Blue Velvet*, dir. David Lynch, De Laurentiis Entertainment, 1986 [on DVD], *Dead Ringer*, dir. David Cronenberg, Morgan Creek Productions, 1988 [on DVD], *Naked Lunch*, dir. David Cronenberg, Studiocanal, 1991 [on DVD], *Twin Peaks* (television series), dir. David Lynch, Lynch / Frost Productions, 1990 [on DVD], *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, dir. David Lynch, Universal Pictures, 1992 [on DVD].

45. These were conceived before I encountered Cameron’s examples of *modular narratives*. *Thread*, dir. Susannah Gent, Fuji Film Scholarship and The Northern Media School, 1993, [on-line], *Black Bag*, dir. Susannah Gent, Fuji Film Scholarship and The Northern Media School, 1994 [on-line], *The Bather*, dir. Susannah Gent, BFI Production Projects and The Northern Media School, 1994, [on-line].

46. Creed, 2007, p. 128.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

49. *Thread*, dir. Susannah Gent, <<http://susannahgent.weebly.com/early-shorts.html>>. *Thread*, was shown at a historical retrospective of ‘One Hundred Years of the Short Film’ at the *Cambridge Film Festival* in 1995. I was honoured to be included in this programme as my work was shown alongside the work of Maya Deren. This was the first time I had seen *At Land*. I was surprised on two counts: How had I managed not to see this film before and how had I managed to make a film in such a similar vein?

50. *The Bather*, dir. Susannah Gent, BFI Production Projects, 1994, <<http://susannahgent.weebly.com/early-shorts.html>>.

at an omnipotent controller. *Black Bag* employs an atemporal structure to explore the memory of an incident of child abuse.⁵¹ These structural approaches to narrative and a preoccupation with subjectivity are highlighted in my feature film *Jelly Dolly*.⁵² *Jelly Dolly* begins with clearly bracketed dream sequences that become increasingly entangled with the protagonist's waking world. The film attempts to capture the fluid state of simultaneously viewing the external world and the internal mind's-eye-view.

Following *Jelly Dolly*, I experimented with fine art and 'rogue taxidermy', making installations and sculptures between 2006 and 2011.⁵³ Although the term uncanny could be applied to my work prior to 2009, it was visiting the Matt Roberts *Unheimlich* exhibition in Leeds that first drew my attention to the concept of the uncanny. At the time I was working with dead foxes.⁵⁴ Matt Roberts show was publicised with Steve Bishop's sculptural fox, *Suspension of Disbelief*.



Fig. 1. *X is very useful*, Susannah Gent

51. *Black Bag*, dir. Susannah Gent, Fuji Film Scholarship awards and the Northern Media School, 1994, <<http://susannahgent.weebly.com/early-shorts.html>>.

52. *Jelly Dolly*, dir. Susannah Gent, Cornerstone Media International, 2004 [on DVD]. Clips from the film can be seen at <<http://susannahgent.weebly.com/jelly-dolly-clips.html>>, and the trailers at <<http://susannahgent.weebly.com/jelly-dolly.html>>.

53. I have been a working member of the Minnesota Association of Rogue Taxidermists since 2010.

54. This sculpture features a young fox without legs. The legs are in the trolley along with an axe. An older fox without eyes pushes the trolley. On the wall above is a page from Dr Seuss's *ABC*.

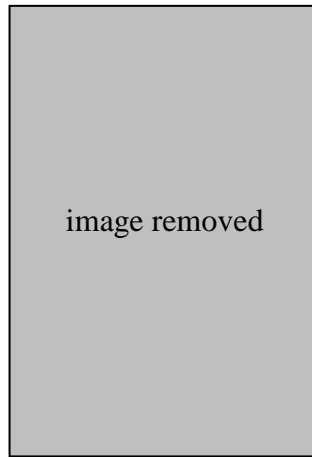


Fig. 2. *Suspension of Disbelief*, Steve Bishop

Matt Roberts curated a second show on the subject of the uncanny, the following year.⁵⁵ Again I was struck by similarities between some of the work exhibited and my own.

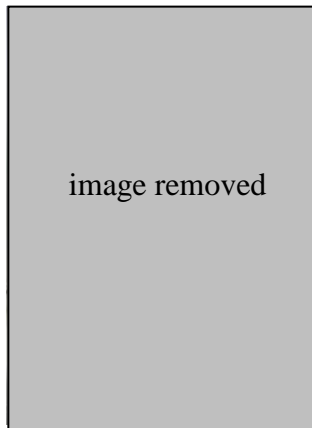


Fig. 3. *Self Portrait as a Matryoshka part 2*, Wendy Mayer



Fig. 4. *12 Heads*, Susannah Gent

Having become familiar with the term *Unheimlich*, I realised I had been looking at the word on a daily basis for over a decade as I have a framed poster from a film festival on the wall of my lounge.⁵⁶

55. *Removed from the eyes of Strangers*, MRA gallery, Vyner Street, 2010.

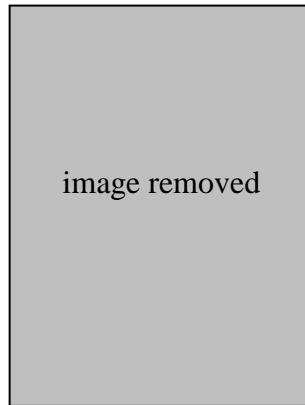


Fig. 5. *Femme Totale*

There was something uncanny about finding connections between my work, my home, and these exhibitions although, as Freud points out with the instance of the number 62, we find connections and repetitions uncanny.⁵⁷

The relation between the psychoanalytic and psychological ideas of the uncanny and art practice/s has gained currency since the 1993 exhibition curated by Mike Kelley entitled 'The Uncanny' for Museum Arnhem and further developed for Tate Liverpool in 2004. Other exhibitions include: 'Disquieting Strangeness', curated by Sharon Kivland for the Centre for Freudian Analysis & Research, London, 1997, and 'The Uncanny', curated by James Putnam, Ronchini Gallery, London, 2013. During this period a number of books were published on the subject including Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, 1992, Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: 18th Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny*, 1995, Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny*, 2003, and more recently, Anneleen Masschelein, *The Unconcept: the Freudian Uncanny in Late-Twentieth-Century Theory*, 2011, and Katherine Withy, *Heidegger: On Being Uncanny*, 2015. This follows the popularity of surrealist cinema of the mid-1980s, and coincides with the Young British Artists supported by Charles Saatchi. Damien Hirst's work may be seen as influencing a renewed interest in taxidermy, and although the YBA work is more associated with shock tactics, the uncanny is present in their work.

56. Poster for a women's film festival in Dortmund 1997 in which I had three films selected. *Unheimliches Vergnügen* translates as 'unbelievable pleasure' but there is clearly a play on ideas between the text and image with the ambiguity of the raven and hair.
57. Sigmund Freud 'The "Uncanny"' (1919), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 17, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Hogarth, 1955, pp. 218–256, 237. Although Freud attributes the uncanny sensation arising from repetitions, such as coming across the number 62 several times in a day, to superstition and primitive belief, it is worth noting that the brain is equipped with pattern recognition facilities. Rather than suggesting Freud is incorrect in his observation here, this furnishes us with a good example of how nonconscious mental operations (pattern recognition facility) are both unavailable to the conscious mind, and when their effects are felt we experience them as uncanny.

images removed

Figs. 6., 7., 8. Sarah Lucas, 'Pauline Bunny', Mark Quinn 'Blood Portrait', Jake and Dinos Chapman, 'Zygotic acceleration, biogenetic, de-sublimated libidinal model'

Themes of death, dismemberment, the occult, and perversion feature in the YBA work and also, perhaps through influence, in my installation work shown below.⁵⁸



Fig. 9. *Deer*, Susannah Gent (photograph by Jen Booth)



Fig. 10. *Sentimental Rabbit Suicide*, Susannah Gent

58. *Deer*, Burngreve Chapel, Sheffield, 2008, *Sentimental Rabbit Suicide*, Open Up, Sheffield, 2007, Nexus Gallery, Manchester, 2008, Bank Street Arts, Sheffield, 2009, *Rabbit Shadow*, residency exhibition, Bank Street Arts, Sheffield, 2010.



Fig. 11. *Rabbit Shadow*, Susannah Gent

During a residency at Bank Street Arts in 2009, I began a collaboration with the Sheffield-based poet, Fay Musselwhite. This collaborative work initially took the form of live performance with video, but later became short poetry films.⁵⁹ Through these I sought to improve my technical skills and undertook some training. No longer faced with having to raise a budget to make a film, the absolute requirement when I began making films in the 1990s, I was liberated to play with the medium.⁶⁰

I have come to recognise creative play as central to my filmmaking method. Although this might be discussed through the humanities, drawing on theories from art-practice-research, my interest in the representation of subjectivity has led to an interest in the brain. My work in taxidermy stems from a fascination with biology and anatomy and in turn, my philosophical position favours an embodied view of the mind / body relation.

59. *Goat Boy and other Journeys* performed at the *Sheffield Poetry Festival* 2011 and *Off the Shelf* Literary festival 2011. Subsequent video works include;

- *Taxidermy for Beginners*, dir. Susannah Gent with Fay Musselwhite, 2013 [on-line] <<https://vimeo.com/75998733>>,
- *Goat Boy*, dir. Susannah Gent with Fay Musselwhite, 2013 [on-line] <<https://vimeo.com/76336202>>,
- *Taxidermy Tea Party*, dir. Susannah Gent, 2013 [on-line] <<https://vimeo.com/74014681>>,
- *Leaving Mojave*, dir. Susannah Gent with Lindalee Welch, 2013 [on-line] <<https://vimeo.com/76208527>>.

60. When I began filmmaking video cameras did exist but they were primitive and film festivals did not screen video work. Therefore to make a film, a budget of at least 20K was needed to cover film stock and laboratory costs.

2.

METHODOLOGICAL WINDOWS

Why Neuroscience?: Interdisciplinary Research

Rather than words comes the thought of high windows:
The sun-comprehending glass,
And beyond it, the deep blue air, that shows
Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless.⁶¹

As a lecturer in filmmaking, I have found film theory can cause confusion when introduced to students engaged in production. Structuralist accounts, and some psychoanalytic film theory may seem divorced from the experience of making or viewing film. Films made to explore theory may be awkward insofar as they employ audio-visual means to discuss concepts, but often fail to engage with cinematic language.⁶² I find Phil Parker's approach useful, outlined in *The Art and Science of Screenwriting*, as it considers films in a cultural and industry context while exploring the creative process of writing.⁶³

In 2006 I took a short course with Parker, then employed by the UK Film Council to coach script editors in how to select and develop projects applying for UKFC funding. Although Parker's approach focuses on mainstream genre film and could be seen as prescriptive, I found it offered possibilities as a 'toolkit' to use when teaching student filmmakers. Parker's 'creative matrix' includes everything he considers important to a writer when undertaking a screenplay; genre, style, tone, form, plot, story, and theme. He identifies eight basic themes into which all narratives fall.⁶⁴

- *the desire for justice*
- *the pursuit of love*
- *the morality of individuals*
- *a desire for order*
- *the pursuit of pleasure*
- *a fear of death*
- *a fear of the unknown*

61. Philip Larkin, 'High Windows', *High Windows*, London: Faber and Faber, 1986, p. 16. Extract.

62. *Riddles of the Sphinx*, dir. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, BFI, 1977, is a prime example.

63. Phil Parker, *The Art and Science of Screenwriting*, Chicago, IL: Intellect Books, 2006.

64. Although Parker is adamant that all narratives fall into these categories, I would stress that they apply to mainstream feature films. My approach to teaching is never to suggest that students shoe-horn their work into these categories, rather to use it as a check-list; the question being, if a project does not have one of these themes, then what theme does it have? Frequently underdeveloped narratives have more than one theme and it is identifying and simplifying this issue that helps develop the project.

- *the desire for validation*

These themes suggest genres. A film with the theme of *the pursuit of pleasure* is likely to be a comedy, while *the pursuit of love* will be a romance.⁶⁵ This thematic approach to genre suggests that audience expectation is firstly emotional. If the comedy does not make you laugh it is not a good film. These emotional responses could be seen in physiological terms; the thriller should produce adrenalin, and the romance oxytocin, perhaps, although this is speculative.

Parker's theme, *the fear of the unknown*, relates to the supernatural and psychological horror genres. The quality of feeling expected by the audience in this genre is different from the action horror where the source of the fear is known. I propose that this type of fear, that stems from uncertainty, relates to the uncanny. Parker's identification of this principal theme within a mainstream genre suggests it is commonplace for audiences to seek films that make them feel disquieted.

My interest in emotion brought me to neuroscience. Before the 1990s the scientific community largely ignored emotion, considering it too subjective for laboratory research.⁶⁶ With the advent of brain imaging technology and the study of patients with neurological damage, the work of Damasio, Jaak Panskepp, Louis LeDoux, and V. S. Ramachandran, among others, has brought emotion to the forefront of neuroscientific study.⁶⁷ Emotion is understood as a neural mechanism closely related to consciousness. Its function is to guide behaviour, including decision making, previously thought to be a rational process.⁶⁸

Peter Wyeth argues against reading films according to the structuralist approach.⁶⁹ For Wyeth, the alignment of film with the text, established by Christian Metz in the 1970s

65. Defining genre, Parker writes: 'Genres are sets of patterns, combinations of narrative elements, which screenwriters and the audiences recognise and use in interpreting the screenwork. [...] This memory of narrative patterns is in turn used by screenwriters and others to establish a set of expectations within the audience which are then built upon.' See Parker, *The Art and Science of Screenwriting*, p. 29. The basic fiction categories used as viewing guidelines are romance, comedy, horror, thriller, drama, action and adventure, family, and children's. Clearly the last category relates to the certificate of the film rather than to the content and in a hub, such as Amazon Prime Video or Netflix, films may be listed under more than one heading.

66. It is noted by Damasio in the preface of *Descartes Error* that prior to publication in 1995 the study of emotion was neglected by the neurosciences. Joseph LeDoux makes a similar point in the preface of *The Emotional Brain*. See Damasio, *Descartes Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1995, pp. xv-xvi, and Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1998, p. 9.

67. Damasio, *Descartes Error*, and *The Feeling of What Happens*, London: Vintage, 1999, LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain*, Jaak Panskepp, *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, V. S. Ramachandran, and S. Blakeslee, *Phantoms in the Brain: Human Nature and the Architecture of the of the Mind*, London: Fourth Estate, 1999.

68. This is expanded in chapter 5 with the introduction of Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis.

69. Peter Wyeth, *The Matter of Vision: Affective Neurobiology and Cinema*, Hertfordshire: John Libby Publishing, 2015.

from Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics, fails to account for the emotional experience of the audience. Wyeth, informed by the attention on emotion in the neurosciences, sees this as a more general problem of logocentrism and advocates a focus on 'Vision, the Automatic, and Emotion (VAE)', in contrast to 'Language, Consciousness, and Reason (LCR)', that he sees as dominant in western ideology.⁷⁰

Wyeth points out that in evolutionary terms vision pre-dates language by over two million years, suggesting that emotional response to image, and the construction of narratives by predictive cause and effect association, forms the most basic neural structures on which language is built.⁷¹

The search for origins is problematic, as Derrida warns. His work on the 'arch-trace' shows Western discourse as falsely underpinned by the myth of originary presence, God, man as unified consciousness, and the notion of truth. He proposes the individual, the *presence* as presented in metaphysics, is a fiction. *Of Grammatology* demonstrates how writing precedes spoken language, in which writing is understood as a *trace*.⁷² For Derrida, writing includes the information of cellular activity.⁷³ The trace 'has diverse possibilities – genetic and structural' and 'articulates its possibility in the entire field of being'.⁷⁴ The *writing* of the psyche is contained in Derrida's idea of the trace and although not explicit, the relation of mind to brain aligns the trace and neuronal activity.

Out of general interest and in support of my creative practice I study cosmology and quantum physics for the general reader.⁷⁵ Although I cannot work with maths I appreciate Max Tegman's proposition that reality *is* mathematics.⁷⁶ These interests stem from a tendency to seek patterns; how aerial views of the planet make human activity look like lichen. These points, underpinning my interest in science and interdisciplinary research, return throughout the thesis and films.

70. Wyeth, *The Matter of Vision*, p. 9.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

72. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1998.

73. In discussing the breadth of the term writing in his application, Derrida writes: 'It is also in this sense that today the biologist speaks of writing and of *pro-gram* for the most elementary processes of information within the living cell.' *Of Grammatology*, 1998, p. 9. I return to this point in chapter 4.

74. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 51.

75. An area of interest relating to the uncanny that has not made it into this project is dark matter. That 85% of the universe is made up of a material that we know nothing about, that is known of but not understood, is indeed uncanny.

76. Max Tegmark, *Our Mathematical Universe: My Quest for the Ultimate Nature of Reality*, New York, NY: Random House, 2014.

Damasio uses the term ‘movie-in-the-brain’ to describe thought.⁷⁷ He acknowledges this is a rough metaphor as the nervous system has more sensory portals than just sight and sound, however the comparison between thought and film is reminiscent of the parallel drawn by Metz between cinema and dreaming.⁷⁸ For Damasio, emotion is the physiological change in the organism as it is transformed by an external object. The conscious counterpart to this process is feeling. In *The Feeling of What Happens*, Damasio tells us that what we are conscious of is ‘a mental pattern in any of the sensory modalities, e. g., a sound image, a tactile image, the image of a state of well being’.⁷⁹ It is ‘images’ of these ‘objects’ of which the organism is conscious as well as a ‘presence that signifies you, as observer of the things imaged, owner of the things imaged, potential actor in the things imaged’.⁸⁰ Damasio continues:

The simplest form of such a presence is also an image, actually the sort of image that constitutes a feeling. In that perspective, the presence of you is the feeling of what happens when your being is modified by the acts of apprehending something.⁸¹

This suggests that image is the primary mode of thought and language is an evolutionary late-comer. Wyeth’s assertion that film is more appropriately viewed in terms of image and emotion, rather than as a language, is founded on this evolutionary tenet. Interdisciplinary research remains controversial. The boundaries that demarcate academic fields are constructs. Granted these demarcations are necessary for institutional and methodological reasons, but significant information may lie at the junctions where these fields of study overlap.

Neuropsychanalysis links psychodynamic concepts and neuroscientific mechanisms and combines the philosophical and scientific foundations of mind and brain.⁸² Adrian Johnston recognises neuropsychanalysis as being predominantly Anglo-American, and aims to bring continental philosophy into this new dialogue as he considers ‘the

77. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, p. 9.

78. Christian Metz, ‘Part III The Fiction Film and its Spectator: A Metapsychological Study’, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: the Imaginary Signifier*, trans. by Celia Britton and Annwyl Williams, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983, 101–37.

79. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, p. 9.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

81. *Ibid.*

82. For a definition and outline of Neuropsychanalysis see Mark Solms, ‘What is Neuropsychanalysis?’, *Neuropsychanalysis*, 2011, vol. 2., 1–13.

deliberate, principled neglect of biology and related fields is no longer justified or defensible, psychoanalytically or philosophically'.⁸³

Semir Zeki, a professor of neuroaesthetics, considers the artist to be a neuroscientist of sorts 'because all art obeys the laws of the visual brain, it is not uncommon for art to reveal these laws to us, often surprising us with the visually unexpected'.⁸⁴ As a neurobiologist specialising in the visual brain, Zeki's version of neuroaesthetics aims at understanding the neural basis of visual art.⁸⁵ This approach differs from that of Warren Neidich, an interdisciplinary artist who launched the online platform *Artbrain*, whose focus is philosophical not scientific.⁸⁶ Neidich promotes the emancipatory power of art as a vehicle in political and social change. He understands the brain as being in a state of permanent evolution through neuroplasticity, and is engaged with the ways in which art forms impact on this development.⁸⁷ Further, the art work, through the effect it has on the brain, and the codes used by the brain to understand the world, is capable of promoting new forms of thought.⁸⁸ Although Neidich wishes his version of neuroaesthetics to be distanced from Zeki's, there are correlations.⁸⁹ Both point to art as promoting new ways of seeing and thinking; however, Neidich's concern is a common concern of the humanities for science's seemingly reductive method. Elizabeth A. Wilson, in *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body*, points to the importance of building new conceptual models in both the neurosciences and cultural studies, to explore the neurobiology of emotion and affect theories that draw on evolutionary tenets. Wilson proposes that 'the ongoing viability of feminist, queer, and other critical endeavours may well depend on their ability to engage more seriously, less incredulously with scientific theories'.⁹⁰

83. Adrian Johnston and Catherine Malabou, *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis and Neuroscience*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2013, p. 81.

84. Semir Zeki, statement of neuroaesthetics, <<http://www.neuroaesthetics.org/statement-on-neuroaesthetics.php>>, accessed 2 February 2016.

85. On the aims of neuroaesthetics, Zeki writes: 'The first step in this enquiry is to define the function of the brain and that of art [...] One overall function, common to both, makes the function of art an extension of the function of the brain: the acquisition of knowledge [...] The characteristic of an efficient knowledge-acquiring system, faced with permanent change, is its capacity to abstract, [...] the consequence of the abstractive process is the creation of concepts and ideals.' Semir Zeki, statement of neuroaesthetics, *ibid*.

86. *Artbrain: Journal of Neuroaesthetics*, and the conference of 'Neuroaesthetics', Goldsmiths College, 2005.

87. The principal difference between these two approaches is that Zeki's scientific project takes the work of art as an independent entity from which information about the brain's operation can be gleaned. Neidich's opinion is that the work of art exists in a social and cultural as well as aesthetic field, and as such cannot be viewed outside the culture in which it was created.

88. *Artbrain*, <<http://www.artbrain.org/about/>>, accessed 2 February 2016.

89. This was made clear in a personal meeting with Neidich, October 2014.

90. Elizabeth A. Wilson, *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2004, p. 83.

Freud, who trained as a neurologist and neuroanatomist, considered psychoanalysis to be a science.⁹¹ On the subject of science he writes:

We have often heard it maintained that sciences should be built up on clear and sharply defined basic concepts. In actual fact no science, not even the most exact, begins with such definitions. The true beginning of scientific study consists rather in describing phenomena and then in proceeding to group, classify and correlate them. Even at this stage of description it is not possible to avoid applying certain abstract ideas to the material in hand.⁹²

Here Freud acknowledges the creative aspect of scientific thought. His own remarkable insight into the mind was, by his own admission, highly speculative. Interdisciplinary research views a subject through different methodological windows. The combination of evolutionary biology, psychoanalytic approaches to understanding subjectivity, and a new focus on emotion as a way to comprehend cinematic pleasure, offers rich interdisciplinary possibilities. In turn these suggest new approaches to filmic representations of subjectivity.

Unconscious / nonconscious: a note

It was not death, for I stood up,
And all the dead lie down.⁹³

Mark Solms, a major contributor to the new field of neuropsychanalysis, asserts that ‘there can’t be a mind for neuroscience and a mind for psychoanalysis. There’s only one human mind.’⁹⁴ Avinash DeSousa makes a similar point regarding the gulf between the psychoanalytic and cognitive science views of consciousness, suggesting that these views are twins that have been raised apart:

91. Rui Freire Lucas notes that ‘Freud acknowledges constructing his theory by disregarding any philosophical foundation and believing that, eventually, even his metapsychological considerations, which were considered speculative, would be underpinned by future neuro-anatomo-physiological knowledge.’ Rui Freire Lucas, ‘The Quantum Unconscious and the Observant Consciousness’, *Psychology*, 2016, 7, 836–63, p. 849, with reference to Sigmund Freud (1924), ‘An Autobiographical Study’, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 20, 1959, 1–74, p. 59 and Sigmund Freud (1914), ‘On Narcissism: An Introduction’, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 14, 1957, 67–102, p. 78.

92. Sigmund Freud, ‘Instincts and their Vicissitudes’ (1915), *The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 11, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Penguin, 1984, pp. 107–138, p. 113. He also writes: ‘The advance of knowledge, however, does not tolerate any rigidity even in definitions. Physics furnishes an excellent illustration of the way in which even ‘basic concepts’ that have been established in the form of definitions are constantly being altered in their content.’ p. 113–14.

93. Emily Dickinson, ‘The Letter’, *Selected Poems*, New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1990, p. 22. Extract.

94. Casey Schwartz, When Freud Meets fMRI, *The Atlantic*, <<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/08/neuroscience-psychoanalysis-casey-schwartz-mind-fields/401999/>>, accessed 1 February 2016. Solms is a neuropsychologist, psychoanalyst, and co-editor of the interdisciplinary journal *Neuro-psychoanalysis*, and co-author with Oliver Turnbull, *The Brain and the Inner World*, New York: Other Press, 2001. Solms and Turnbull aim to explore the neurological origins of Freudian psychoanalysis, believing that an interdisciplinary approach is essential to studying brain and mind.

The psychoanalytic twin was raised in the consulting room, exposed to primal scenes, intrapsychic conflict and the risky improvisations of clinical work, whereas the cognitive twin was raised in the scientific laboratory where calm and order prevailed.⁹⁵

The difference in approach to the same questions makes interdisciplinary research rewarding; however, as these fields employ different terminology, an introductory note on the terms nonconscious and unconscious is required.

In the neurosciences the term nonconscious is used to describe all mental activity that is not conscious. In alignment with Freud, the neurosciences understand most brain activity operates below the threshold of consciousness, but these fields, not upholding the general tenet of psychoanalysis, use the term nonconscious to distinguish it from the Freudian unconscious. Freud employs the term unconscious to all that is not conscious, yet ‘The Unconscious’ describes a specific region or function of the psyche that develops in early childhood and is comprised of repressed psychical material.⁹⁶ Yet Freud did not intend us to consider all mental material as repressed. In the opening paragraph of *The Unconscious* he writes:

[...] but let us state from the very onset that the repressed does not cover everything that is unconscious. The unconscious has a wider compass: the repressed is a part of the unconscious.⁹⁷

As this distinction is not always clear, and as the research draws on psychoanalysis and neuroscience, I use the term nonconscious to refer to mental material that is not conscious, using the term unconscious only when discussing psychoanalysis.

95. Avinash De Sousa, ‘Freudian Theory and Consciousness: A Conceptual Analysis’, *Brain, Mind, and Consciousness*, vol. 9, 2011, 210–217, p. 212.

96. Sigmund Freud, ‘The Unconscious’, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 11, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Penguin, 1984, pp. 159–222.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

Scanner: fMRI study and short film

I leaned my head upon
my father's arm, and wept
owl-blind in the morning sun
for what I had begun.⁹⁸

Adrian Johnston believes that both psychoanalysis and neuropsychology 'stand mutually to benefit from being interwoven in ways motivated by a meticulous reconsideration of Freudian theories of affect in conjunction with data from scientific investigation of the emotional brain'.⁹⁹ An interesting example stemming from brain mapping data demonstrates both Freud's insight and inaccuracy as follows. Freud writes:

Reitler (1913) observed a patient [...] who suffered from having to take a long time over putting on his stockings; this man, after overcoming some resistances, found as the explanation that his foot symbolized a penis, that putting on the stocking stood for a masturbatory act, and that he had to keep on pulling the stocking on and off, partly in order to complete the picture of masturbation, partly in order to undo the act.¹⁰⁰

In *Phantoms in the Brain* V. S. Ramachandran recounts a patient with a lower limb amputation. The patient reported that during sex he experienced an orgasm in his missing foot. Ramachandran, who jokes that he should have titled his book *The Man Who Mistook his Foot for a Penis*, explains the odd experience as due to the close proximity of the brain region related to the foot being adjacent to the area for the genitals.¹⁰¹ What this demonstrates is three-fold: mental notions stem from physical origins, those physical, brain-based origins are not available to the one experiencing the sensations, and once an idea has been established, that idea can grow independently. In drawing together these two texts, that is a small contribution to knowledge, I became intrigued by the possibility of seeking a neurological underpinning to the uncanny. I was motivated to engage with brain imaging as I experience witnessing the brain in action as uncanny.

98. Peter Porter (1963), 'The Great Poet Comes Here in Winter', *Twelve Poets 1950–1970*, edited by Alexander Craig, Queensland: The Jacaranda Press, 1975, p. 144.

99. Johnston, 'Misfelt Feelings: Unconscious Affect Between Psychoanalysis, Neuroscience and Philosophy' in *Self and Emotional Life*, p. 81.

100. Freud, 'The Unconscious', p. 206.

101. V. S. Ramachandran and S. Blakeslee, *Phantoms in the Brain: Human Nature and the Architecture of the Mind*, London: Fourth Estate, 1999, pp. 36–37. These accounts from Freud and Ramachandran feature in the film *Scanner*.

In collaboration with Dr Yael Benn, cognitive psychologist researcher at the University of Sheffield, we devised a two-part scientific study to acquire an image-set of uncanny images and observe the brain activations in response to those images using an fMRI scanner. It was my intention from the onset to make a documentary film that describes the process and results of this study.

The behavioural study was designed to acquire an image set. We invited participants to view images and rate them according to ‘eeriness’.¹⁰² The images were sourced from Internet searches for the uncanny, weird, eerie, creepy, and control images were selected to make sets of related images.¹⁰³ This produced a set of three hundred images. Using an online survey we approached our professional and personal networks to raise two hundred and fifty participants who rated each image according to eeriness valance. To conduct the fMRI survey, we took the top fifty images rated most eerie and edited them into two three-minute sequences interspersed with control images of everyday images. Each film comprised twenty-five uncanny images and seventy-five control images. Between each image was a black screen with a small red cross that provided a focus point. The cross was intended to cause the participant to remain looking at the centre of the image. The black screen provided a base-line of neural activity that could be subtracted from the scan data produced when the participants looked at the images. With this base-line activity removed, what remained was the record of the neural activity of the participants when looking at the control images and the uncanny images. The films were constructed so that each image played for a known duration allowing the brain activity to be matched against each image.¹⁰⁴ In this way we were able to see the difference in activation with the uncanny image set and the control images.

102. We used the word ‘eerie’ as we felt *uncanny* might be confusing, although this is not a perfect solution. I made this decision after participating in a survey conducted by the University of Sheffield. The survey aimed to collect participant responses to robotic voices to test the Uncanny Valley theory, a hypothesis from Masahiro Mori in 1970. The rating card for this survey used the word eerie rather than uncanny. In conversation with the devisor after taking part I was told that asking participants if they found something uncanny caused confusion as the word was not so widely understood.

103. See appendix 1. for the image set and a description of the online survey.

104. Both the images and the black spacing were held for a duration of three, four, or five seconds. The seconds were edited so as to be frame-accurate. The varying duration prevented the participants from growing tired by falling into a repetitive rhythm of image occurrence.

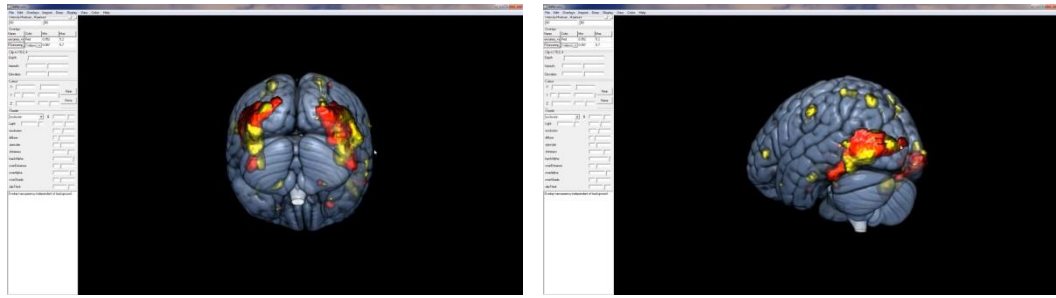


Fig. 12. Brain scan images from the two participants for the uncanny image set

The two scan images show the activations when viewing the uncanny images seen from the rear and the side rear. The red and the yellow shading relate to the two participants. The activations can be seen as largely concentrated in the visual cortex.

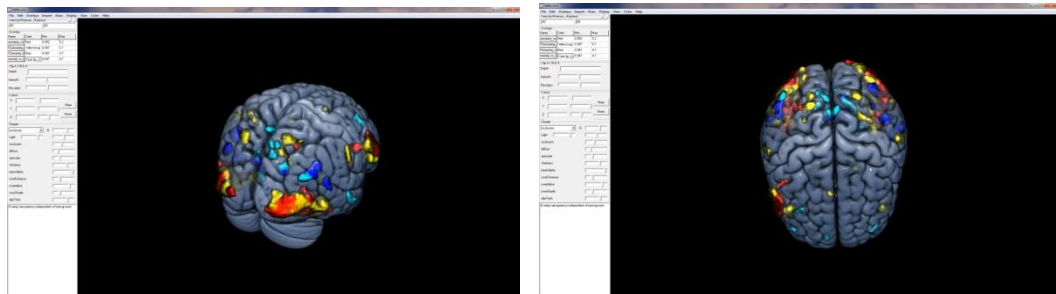


Fig. 13. Brain scan images from the two participants for the uncanny image set and the control image set

These two images show the red and yellow activations of the two participants for the uncanny images plus the light and dark blue shading that shows the activation occurring for both participants for the control images but not the uncanny images.

The two surveys were imperfect in a number of ways. The selection of original images was made from a combination of Internet searches and personal selection. The Internet search was made using the words uncanny, weird, eerie, and creepy. This brought up a wide range of images from the grotesque to the comical. Fisher makes a distinction between the weird and the eerie, proposing the weird is when something is added that should not be there and the eerie is when something is missing. He distinguishes between these feelings and the uncanny, which he describes as the strange within the familiar, further stressing that the strange is different to the horrific.¹⁰⁵ These subtleties are lost in the image selection, and the survey contained images from all these categories. When rating images according to eeriness valence it is likely that the

105. Mark Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*, London: Repeater, 2016.

participants in many instances rated most highly those images that were most impactful, in consequence producing an image set for macabre, grotesque, and horrific rather than uncanny. Seeking the uncanny in a still image is a reductive endeavour.¹⁰⁶ Feelings of uncanniness often arise through associations made, things said, places revisited. Nevertheless, the image set produced may be analysed according to uncanny content as demonstrated in *Analysis of Selected Survey Images* in appendix 1.

For the fMRI study we were only able to scan two participants due to scanner accessibility and costs.¹⁰⁷ What was demonstrated in the results was that when viewing the control images the participants showed activations in the secondary visual cortex suggesting viewing these images was accompanied by imagined images. When viewing the uncanny images there is a pronounced activation of the visual cortex. Given the richness of the philosophical and psychoanalytic accounts of the uncanny, this result could be deemed trivial and disappointing. It may appear obvious that images of strangeness cause us to look harder. This survey shows us participant response to images, and does not give us information about feelings of uncanniness more generally. Yet, this is a repeatable experiment that matches brain activation to image and although only a starting point, it shows what happens in the brain when we see these ‘uncanny’ images. Hélène Cixous notes the repeating motif of the eye in E. T. A. Hoffman’s *The Sandman*, writing:

Through the unending series of substitutions, the eye becomes multiplied, and the familiar work of the eye, in turn becomes the enigmatic production of its scattered doubles, sparks of fire, lorgnettes, eyeglasses, far- and near-sighted visions, the theatrical secret which the Freudian text brushes up against, mimics, and even escapes.¹⁰⁸

The eyeglasses of Coppélius the optician and the glass eyes of the doll, Olympia, that push Nathaniel to insanity are lesser features in Freud’s account of uncanniness in this tale compared to the threat by Coppola to Nathaniel’s eyes when found in his father’s

106. The experience of uncanniness frequently arises from sound or an idea rather than a specific image in itself.

107. For scientific data to be produced the survey would have to be repeated with at least six participants. The use of the scanner was enabled by a Sheffield Hallam University, Art and Design Research Centre grant. The scanner is located at the Hallamshire Hospital but is under the jurisdiction of the University of Sheffield, and is used for research projects. The size of the sample means that the results of the survey do not show scientific findings, rather they demonstrate a method of inquiry. The method of analysing the data produced by the scanner fits the brain activations from the participants onto a standard model of the brain. This approach produces a generalisation of the results, however this allows for experiments to be repeated. It is known among the scientific community to be a problem in this type of survey but data gathered from larger samples validate the results in spite of this manipulation. As we are looking for quite general differences in response to image type rather than attempting to pinpoint small regional activations, this is unproblematic.

108. Hélène Cixous, ‘Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud’s *Das Unheimlich*’, *New Literary History*, vol. 7, 1976, 525–548, p. 527.

study. For Freud, the ‘substitutive relation between the eye and the male organ’ leaves him in no doubt that *The Sandman* is a tale of castration.¹⁰⁹

Freud also makes reference to the evil eye as a source of uncanniness.¹¹⁰ A correlation could be noted between this emphasis on the eye and the pronounced activation in the primary visual cortex.¹¹¹

The short film *Scanner* gives further information about the fMRI study. See appendix 1 for details and analysis of the science surveys.

109. Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 231. Although for Cixous this Oedipal relation is overstressed, in ‘*Das “Unheimliche”*’.

110. Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 240. I believe Freud would have loved brain scanning technology. He states: ‘Research has given irrefutable proof that mental activity is bound up with the function of the brain’, but of the specific relations of the mental apparatus to anatomy he writes; ‘every attempt to go on from there to discover a localization of mental processes, every endeavour to think of ideas as stored up in nerve-cells and of excitations as migrating along nerve-fibres, has miscarried completely’. Freud, ‘The Unconscious’, p. 176.

111. Royle notes that the uncanny involves ‘a special emphasis on the visual [...] on what is revealed to the eye’. See Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 108.

3.

INVITING THE UNCONSCIOUS TO SPEAK

Creative play: art practice as research

The sea is actually made of eyes.
Whether of drowned fishermen or of peasants
Accustomed to the hard bargains of saints
I cannot say.¹¹²

The uncanny image of the brain in action prompted the film *Scanner*. When I turn my mind to certain organs in my body I can feel them at work; the heart, lungs, and stomach. It takes some work to visualise the brain. Instead, I see an oval, dark space into which pictures appear. The use of mirroring and vignettes helps to indicate subjectivity in the films. If I allow myself to drift or dream, this space becomes expanded and takes on the dimensions of my entire visual field. The images below from a walking arts project and *Unhomely Street* vaguely resemble the cross section of the brain, through the texture and symmetry.¹¹³



Fig. 14. *Walking sketches*, stills, dir. Susannah Gent

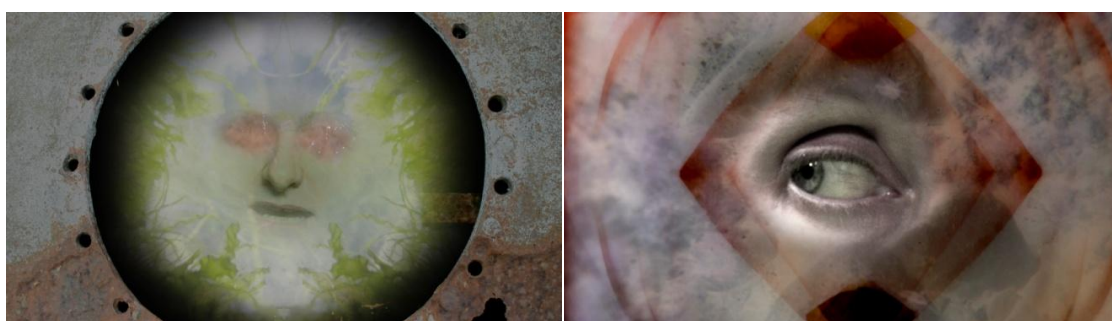


Fig. 15. *Unhomely Street*, stills, dir. Susannah Gent

112. Peter Porter, 'The Great Poet Comes Here in Winter', *Twelve Poets 1950–1970*, p. 144. Extract.

113. The images shown are from a collection of filmic sketches I made with the Walking Arts Research group. WARG began in 2014 with some departmental seed funding to encourage Sheffield Hallam University Media Arts academic staff to undertake research. I produced the sketches to explore the act of walking using a structuralist method of filmmaking in which I commenced by taping a small waterproof camera to my leg to see what a leg walking looked like. The finished sketch gives the impression of subjectivity. The walking sketches, exhibited as part of 'Walk Out', a group show at Sheffield Institute for Arts, 2019, can be seen at <<http://susannahgent.weebly.com/films.html>>.

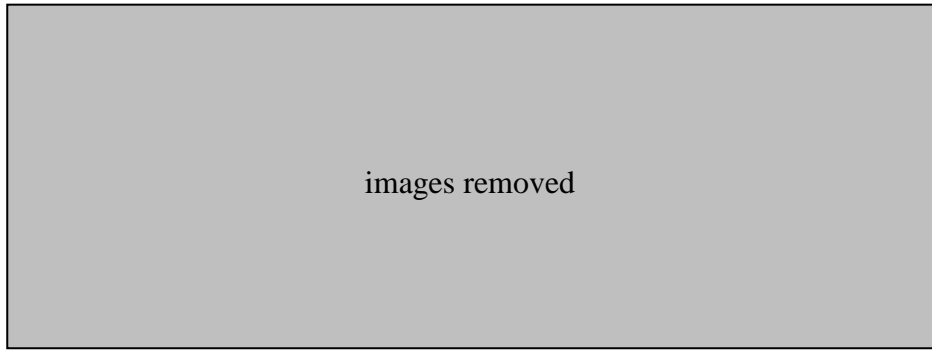


Fig. 16. Brain scan ¹¹⁴

Fig. 17. The brain in cross-section ¹¹⁵

The work of Ernst Haeckel, his meticulous though stylised illustrations of natural forms, holds my attention. Seen alongside images of the brain and neurons, the brain and its connectivity can be seen for what it is, a natural form.

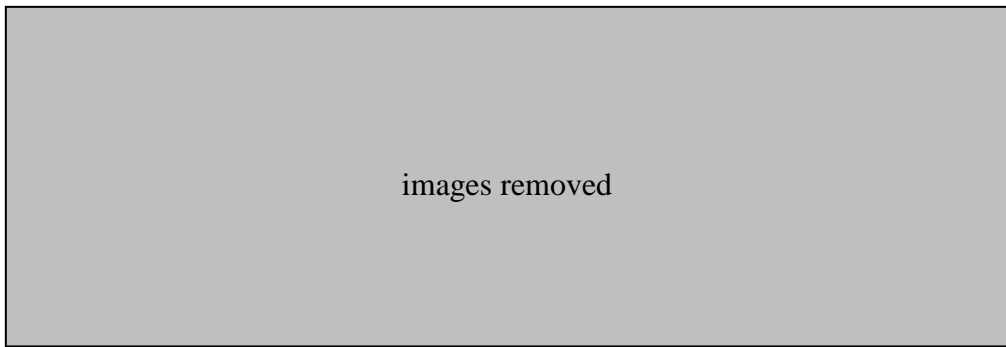


Fig. 18. Drawings of neurons ¹¹⁶

Fig. 19. Image of neuron ¹¹⁷

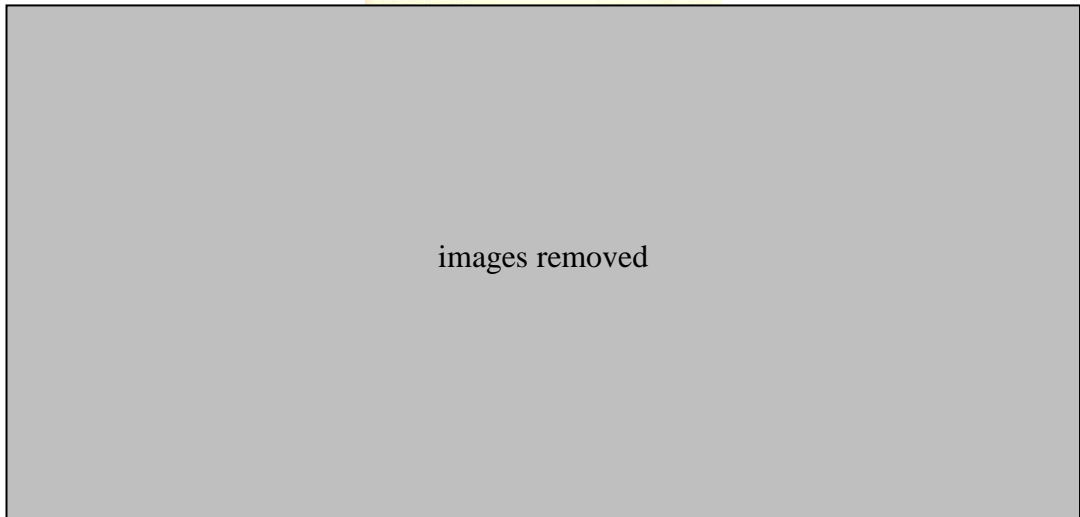


Fig. 20. Ernst Haeckel, *Kunstformen der Natur*, 70. Ophiodea, 85. Ascidae, 61. Phaeodaria ¹¹⁸

114. Prof. Michael Chee, cognitive neuroscience laboratory,

<http://www.amnh.org/education/resources/rfl/web/brainguide/images/fmriscan_lg.jpg>, accessed 29 February 2016.

115. <<http://medicalschooll.tumblr.com/post/51078532800/the-human-brain-in-cross-section>>, accessed 29 February 2016.

116. Based on drawings by Cajal, illustration in *Neurons, Synapses, Action Potentials, and Neurotransmission*, Robert Stufflebeam, <http://www.mind.ilstu.edu/curriculum/neurons_intro/neurons_intro.php>, accessed 29 February 2016.

117. KTSDESIGN / Getty images, science photo library, <<http://psychology.about.com/od/biopsychology/f/neuron01.htm>>, accessed 29 February 2016.

Deleuze and Guattari relate the physical structure of the brain to structure in thought patterns. They write: ‘Arborized paradigms give way to rhizomatic figures, acentered systems, networks of finite automatons, chaoid states.’¹¹⁹ With reference to scientific propositions such as ‘geometrical projections and algebraic substitutions’, they suggest that ‘operations of scientific knowledge’ are not simply functions of the brain but ‘the functions themselves are the folds of a brain that lay out the variable coordinates of a plane of knowledge [...]’.¹²⁰

Roger Penrose, a major contributor to the theory of general relativity and cosmology, asserts that consciousness allows him to recognise mathematical beauty. Mathematical beauty is an aspect of the laws of physics which, for Penrose, shape both external reality and the mind.¹²¹ Examples of such mathematical beauty can be seen in the Mandelbrot sets below.¹²²



Fig. 21. Fractal ¹²³

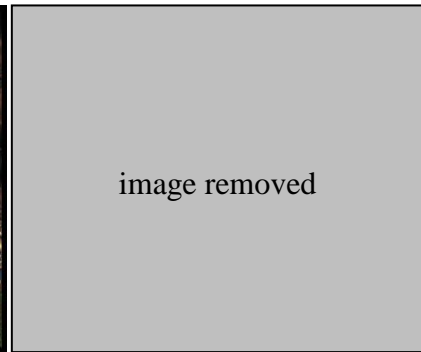


Fig. 22. Mathematical imagery ¹²⁴

The images below show mathematical structure by computer generation and in naturally occurring forms.

118. Ernst Haeckel, 70. Ophiodea, 85. Ascidiae, 61. Phaeodaria, *Kunstformen der Natur*, 1904, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Kunstformen_der_Natur>, accessed 29 February 2016.

119. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* trans. by Graham Burchell & Hugh Tomlinson, London: Verso, 1994, p. 216.

120. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

121. Penrose takes the position that an external reality exists, a view which I share. A precise philosophical argument against correlationism can be found in Ray Brassier, *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 49–85.

122. A discussion of the Mandelbrot set can be found in Roger Penrose, ‘Mathematics and Reality’, in *The Emperor’s New Mind: Concerning Computers, Minds and the Laws of Physics*, London: Vintage, 1990, pp. 40–86.

123. Jock Cooper, random fractal, creative commons attribution-noncommercial 3.0 United States license, <<http://www.fractal-recursions.com/fractals/fractal-1008111.jpg>>, accessed 1 March 2016.

124. Math videos, <http://www.subdude-site.com/WebPages_Local/RefInfo/MathScience/MathVideos/math_videos.htm>, accessed 1 March 2016.

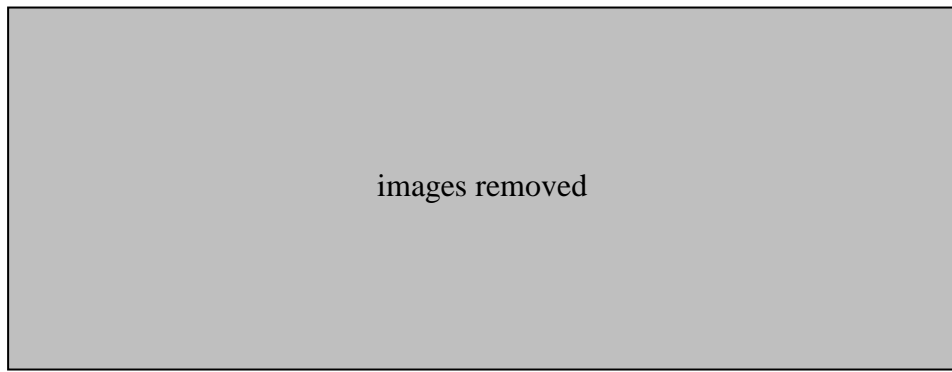


Fig. 23. Romanesco broccoli¹²⁵

Fig. 24. Sunflower¹²⁶

As Penrose asserts, the mind, arising from the brain, operates according to the laws of the cosmos. The visual expression of these is both aesthetically pleasing and recognisable. Penrose argues against the common association of language with consciousness. As a mathematician he tells us that on occasion when interrupted while deep in thought he has found language inaccessible.¹²⁷ He cites Einstein:

The words or language, as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought. The psychical entities which seem to serve as elements of thought are certain signs and more or less clear images.¹²⁸

The creative process arrives as a strange sort of compulsion. In the later stages I may view the work as a desire to communicate, but initially it is experienced more as a need to 'out' something. When engaged in practice my experience is that I encourage images to form in my mind, then make connections, often unconsciously, between aspects of these images and associated concepts and feelings.¹²⁹

This description of the creative process parallels other accounts. The theatre director Peter Brook describes the early stages of a new project: 'I listen to the patterns that arise in the deep level of the brain, when impulses become sounds and syllables – and before they shape themselves into recognisable words.'¹³⁰

Nietzsche writes about the conception of Zarathustra:

125. Romanesco broccoli, Image: Flickr, Tin,G., <<http://www.wired.com/2010/09/fractal-patterns-in-nature/>>, accessed 29 February 2016.

126. Sunflower, istockphoto, <<http://www.abc.net.au/science/photos/mathsinnature/photo13.htm>>, accessed 29 February 2016.

127. Penrose, *The Emperor's New Mind*, p. 549.

128. *Ibid.*, p. 548, citing Albert Einstein in a letter to J. Hadamard.

129. I acknowledge that this is not accurate in terms of the actual process, but it stands as a description of what I experience – I live with these images, they inform my present. Certain mental images, pictures of scenes and ideas, seem to go together. In this way an associated collection of sequences builds. Much of my decision making relies on intuition. The image either feels right or it does not, and I am led by an emotional tone.

130. Brook cited in Claxton, *The Wayward Mind*, p. 309.

The notion of revelation describes the condition quite simply; by which I mean that something profoundly convulsive and disturbing suddenly becomes visible and audible with indescribable definiteness and exactness. One hears – one does not seek; one takes – one does not ask who gives: a thought flashes out like lightning.¹³¹

Jean Cocteau describes inspiration as:

the result of a profound indolence of our incapacity to put to work certain forces in ourselves. These unknown forces work deep within us, with the aid of the elements of daily life, [...] we indulge ourselves like invalids who try to prolong dream and dread resuming contact with reality [...] when the work that makes itself in us and in spite of us demands to be born.¹³²

These accounts suggest the creative process engages a different level of consciousness to ordinary awareness and the arrival of thoughts or images is experienced as coming from another location, a ‘psychic elsewhere’.

Patricia Townsend, psychotherapist, artist, and researcher of the creative process, draws comparison between the artist’s engagement with their medium and the analyst / analysand relationship as a way of understanding the artistic experience.¹³³ Townsend interviewed thirty artists about their experience of making new work and found frequent reports of a discontinuity between the conscious mind of the artist and the idea of the work; inspiration seemed to come from elsewhere.¹³⁴ Townsend observes; ‘There is a sense of ‘recognition’, as if there is a precise fit between the shape of the idea and the inner ‘something’ that the artist wants to put into the work.’¹³⁵ These observations strike me as familiar regarding my work.

Joanne Morra explores how ‘aspects of subjectivity are embodied in our working practices’, with reference to Freud’s notion of ‘working-through’.¹³⁶ She observes how

131. Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Composition of Thus Spoke Zarathustra’, translated by Clifton P. Fadiman, *The Creative Process*, ed. by Brewster Ghiselin, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1952, pp. 201–203, 202.

132. Jean Cocteau, ‘The Process of Inspiration’, *The Creative Process*, pp. 81–82, 82.

133. Patricia Townsend, ‘A Life of its Own: The Relationship Between Artist, Idea and Artwork’, *Free Associations: Psychoanalysis and Culture, Media, Groups, Politics*, no. 65, 2014, 99–119, 101–2. Townsend contributed to the ‘Making Space’ conference, UCL, 2012, from which this special edition of *Free Associations* arose. Her interviews with artist were prior to the conference in support of the conference contribution and subsequent publication.

134. Artists describe allowing ideas to ‘jostle’, ‘resonate’, ‘crystallise’. Artist, Russell Mills, sees the mind as a ‘shed’, a working space for ideas to come together. Townsend, ‘A Life of its Own’, 101–2.

135. Artist John Aitkin describes an ‘otherness’ at work, where the idea has its own energy and the artist enters into a dialogue with it. *Ibid.*, p. 104–6.

136. Morra writes with reference to George Perec, the curator Tacita Dean, and the art historian T. J. Clark noting how aspects of their work and research involves free association, gut instinct, and repetition. Joanne Morra, ‘The Work of Research: Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through’, in *What is Research in the Visual Arts?: Obsession, Archive, Encounter*, edited by Marquard Smith and Michael Ann Holley, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009, pp. 45–50.

each reach a point of self-awareness by this process of ‘working-through’, which she likens to psychoanalytic method. In conclusion, she stresses that the play between conscious and unconscious registers is a significant factor in understanding the basis of creative practice.¹³⁷

Eystein Victor Våpenstad, a psychoanalyst in Oslo, Norway, describes his method of clinical practice as ‘like the artist [...] waiting for new inspiration’. He writes: ‘The artistic capacity is absolutely necessary for human identification and involvement in the abstract process we recognize as a meeting of minds.’¹³⁸

It is only in retrospect that I am able to discuss what I do in terms of a method. While in the midst of making I am simply ‘doing’. To call what I do ‘trial and error’ suggests it is more systematic than it is. It is more a process of ‘imagining and feeling’. I find solutions when I am not consciously ‘at work’, or rather the ‘at work’ of my practice involves an inverted game of ‘peek-a-boo’ in which I attempt not to look directly at a problem I wish to solve. In practical terms I go for a walk, play the violin or the guitar, meditate, sleep, and dream. I understand these approaches make favourable conditions for the thinking to occur behind the scenes, as it were.

Unhomely Street: filmic intuition

There is no lake because there is no lake anymore
upon the dryness of the no-lake.¹³⁹

With reference to Michael Renov’s recognition of an ‘autobiographical outbreak of the 1980s and 1990s’, Laura Rascaroli considers ‘an increased fragmentation of the human experience in the postmodern, globalised world’ to be partly responsible for the rise of the essay film.¹⁴⁰

Unhomely Street and *Psychotel* are both hybrid films that present a fictional world where the viewer is invited to follow the actions of a protagonist; however, the staging

137. Morra, ‘The Work of Research’, p. 61.

138. Eystein Victor Våpenstad, ‘On the Psychoanalyst’s Reverie: From Bion to Bach’, *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 23, issue 3, 2014, 161–170, 163.

139. Zinnia Gent-Salmon, 2019. My daughter recited this phrase having written it as part of a school exercise.

140. Laura Rascaroli, *The Personal Camera: Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film*, New York, NY: Wallflower Press, 2014, p. 4., with reference to Micheal Renov, ‘Surveying the Subject: An Introduction’, in *The Subject of the Documentary*, Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. xi–xxiv, 2004, xxii. Rascaroli notes the ubiquity of the term ‘essay film’ and strives towards a tighter definition.

of these story elements presents a subjective landscape of the character and the filmmaker. That I perform in my own work produces a doubling in which the character and filmmaker overlap. The ‘story’ in which the protagonist lives, acts as a vehicle to maintain the movement of the narrative that is secondary to the content of the voice-over. Both films use first and third person narration to intentionally complicate the identity of the speaker / protagonist / enunciator to foreground the fragmentary nature of selfhood that is exposed by the critical framework of the uncanny through the research. This is explored further in chapter 6. Although not my conscious intention to make an essay film, *Unhomely Street* and *Psychotel* both fit Rascaroli’s definition of the category. Rascaroli notes that the origins of the essay film lie in a literary tradition of a strong enunciator. She recognises the problematic nature of the pronoun ‘I’, that ‘for the philosopher, is not an objective fact, a truth to be discovered, but something that must be achieved or created, as well as attested’.¹⁴¹ Yet she identifies the essay film as employing strategies to produce ‘an audiovisual discourse that asks to be experienced by the viewer as eminently personal’.¹⁴² In the essay film ‘meanings are presented by the speaking subject as a personal, subjective meditation’ that Rascaroli suggests ‘mobilises the subjectivity of the spectator’.¹⁴³

Unhomely Street was completed in 2016 following a three-year period of simultaneous conception, production, and editing. The institutional film funding process requires a series of formal documents to be produced: a synopsis, outline, treatment, and script, which impose a discipline on the writer and provide the funder with material to inform their decisions.¹⁴⁴ What differed for me in undertaking a practice-based Ph.D. was that I was able to explore open-ended approaches to production.¹⁴⁵ When planning *Unhomely Street*, I felt resistant to writing a script but proceeded with the intention to explore how I felt about contemporary life. At this stage I did not see the project in a research context; rather, the experimental approach taken aimed to extend the initial stage of what might be called *creative dreaming*. Although the project did not proceed with a

141. Rascaroli, *The Personal Camera*, p. 9. Rascaroli notes the difficulty of producing first-person expression in art and literature following the deconstructive and post-structuralist work of Barthes, Derrida and Foucault.

142. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

143. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

144. While I appreciate this requirement of the commissioning process, this places constraints upon the filmmaker that inevitably shape the work in a conventional structure and promote rapid decision making around creative ideas. In my film career I have existed on the margins of the film and television industry, having made short films for the BBC and BFI, a commercially distributed art house feature film, and dramas for Channel Four. I have been frustrated by the lengthy procedure of funding applications, the requirement to finalise the details of a project at an early stage, and filmmaking by committee. Having said that, I have had the opportunity to work with some excellent commissioning editors.

145. By open-ended I mean I was not obliged to describe what I was making while in progress. This allowed for the intuitive, emotional, and mysterious aspects of creative production, described herein.

research question as such, following Hannes Rickli and Christoph Schenker, the film might be framed as a ‘make yourself a picture of the world’ approach.¹⁴⁶ During the planning stages of the project, I sustained a head injury and developed post-concussive syndrome that lasted over two years. *Unhomely Street* became a vehicle that charted the course of my recovery from mental illness. This aspect of the narrative only became fully apparent in the latter stages of post-production. The film as an artefact offers a point of reference to assess the filmmaking process as an agent in my recovery, and the representation of a mental illness makes material the subjective experience through the audio-visual medium.

The original narrative intention of *Unhomely Street* was to follow a female protagonist in a state of fugue, as she wanders an alienating city underbelly of clubs and free parties. The film investigates the position of the outsider; a woman without belongings, therefore without identity or more importantly, state registration. The performed sequences stem from the original intention to make a loose work of narrative fiction, and these scenes provide anchoring points, or filmic punctuation marks. They are accompanied by a third-person narration that further stabilises the spectator’s position as that of ‘watching a story unfold’. *Unhomely Street* slides between the representation of subjectivity understood according to cinematic conventions of interiority, and attempts to render thought images.

At the start of the production I asked friends to talk to camera, against a green screen background, about how they felt about capitalism. In the original format these rushes amount to documentary interviews. The subsequent artistic transformations signpost the sequence as intentionally subjective without obscuring the original content. The recorded polemics suggested certain visual treatments. Steve Bollom’s gentle tone and succinct performance was suggestive of a tree. Other contributors became a boil, a pool, or situated in a pub setting, presented as murky recollections of a previous night’s drinking session. The visual effects attempt to render the recollection of drunkenness.

146. In their discussion of various aspects of artistic practices they suggest the artist creates an environment that is comparable to that of an experimental system, a term taken from the sphere of scientific research, where the output of the experimental process cannot be identified at the outset. The ‘aesthetic thing’, in this case a film, can be understood as an ‘epistemic thing’ in the sense that it is a vehicle for the questions explored through the artistic practice. In considering what sort of knowledge the essay film produces I reflect on the work as a conduit for the conveyance of emotion. Schenker, Christoph, and Hannes Rickli. *Experimentation*, <https://www.academia.edu/22231863/Experimentation._In_Department_of_Art_and_Media_ZHdK_ed._Practices_of_Experimentation_-_Research_and_Teaching_in_the_Arts_Today._Scheidegger_and_Spiess_Zurich_2012._Pp._146-158>, accessed 7 September 2017.

This is not new, rather, operating as filmic short-hand. Thought is multi-sensory, but as it has audio / visual quality, the filmic medium provides a platform for the representation of mental states. Sequences emerged from material shot without clear future usage in mind; underwater footage, material recorded on the Berlin U-Bahn.¹⁴⁷ Spoken commentary was recorded as an attempt to generate a stream of consciousness. The intention, although vague at the time of recording, was to ad-lib first-person material that gave the inner voice the quality of being unmoored.

The film was made in small sections where the footage came together by a process of intuitive amalgamation. I was aware of resistance to initiating final assembly as this would signal the end of the period of spontaneous creative play. It took two passes and one pick-up shoot to take the film from first assembly to completion of the picture edit. This act of assembling and subsequent rapid completion of the film was coincidental with my recovery from post-concussive syndrome.¹⁴⁸ It is difficult to assess the extent to which this production aided the recovery process, but the act of externalising my trauma in the form of a fictional work allowed me to take ownership of the condition. I am reminded in this of psychoanalysis as a ‘talking cure’ and Freud’s concept of the compulsion to repeat.¹⁴⁹ Repetition compulsion, originally thought to be a working through or re-enactment to bring about mastery of a trauma, was later reviewed by Freud as a tendency to return to a previous state from which the idea of the death drive originated.¹⁵⁰ Freud described this as a ‘kind of organic elasticity’.¹⁵¹ Acting out reproduces the trauma, not as a memory but as an action, performed without knowledge of its origins.¹⁵²

147. Several devices were used in the filming of this project including a GoPro, a phone camera, and a Canon XF100.

148. I wonder now whether the film would have benefited from a period of rest before completion. It is always tempting to push a film to completion whereas distance gained from a few months of not watching it can be very valuable. I worked this principle into the production period of *Psychotel*. As *Unhomely Street* was also charting my recovery from an unpleasant condition it is understandable that I may have worked to engineer its closure.

149. Sigmund Freud ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ (1920), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Hogarth, 1955.

150. See Sigmund Freud (1914), ‘Remembering, Repeating, Working Through’ *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 12, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Hogarth, 1950, pp. 145–157, 150, for Freud’s initial account of repetition compulsion. This understanding of the compulsion to repeat was expanded with the account of the *fort-da* game, and developed into the theory of the death drive, summarised as ‘*an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things [...]*’, [original italics], in ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920)’, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Hogarth, 1955, pp. 269–338, 283–284 (*fort-da* game), and 308.

151. Freud, ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’, p. 309.

152. Freud, ‘Remembering, Repeating, Working Through’, p. 150.

Bessel A. van der Kolk explored trauma as repeated on physiologic and neuroendocrinologic levels as well as behavioural and emotional.¹⁵³ He writes that ‘[p]eople who have been exposed to highly stressful stimuli develop long-term potentiation of memory tracts that are reactivated at times of subsequent arousal’.¹⁵⁴ My experience of post-concussive syndrome was characterised by obsessive preoccupation with atrocity that had little to do with my life. The syndrome resulted from a mechanical injury, tissue damage, and disruption to the endocrine system. The visual landscape of my subjective experience, which became the content of the film, appeared as a *post-hoc* embellishment arising from trauma. This is compatible with both the psychoanalytic notion of accessing the unconscious and neuroscientific opinion.¹⁵⁵

Damasio understands the experience of sadness can be simultaneously produced by stimulating brain stem nuclei, concluding that emotions, defined as the physiological events from which feelings arise, produce emotion-related thoughts, not the other way round.¹⁵⁶ He writes:

When the emotion sadness is deployed, feelings of sadness instantly follow. In short order, the brain also brings forth the *kind* of thoughts that normally cause the emotion sadness *and* feelings of sadness. This is because associative learning has linked emotions with thoughts in a rich two-way network.¹⁵⁷

He comments that this is an approximation of William James’s hypothesis over a century ago, that felt emotions are perceived body states.¹⁵⁸ That bodily response precedes emotional response is controversial.¹⁵⁹

153. Bessel A. van der Kolk, ‘The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma: Re-enactment, Revictimization, and Masochism’, *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1989, 389–411, 389, <<http://www.cirp.org/library/psych/vanderkolk/>>, accessed 20 June 2019.

154. Kolk, ‘The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma’, p. 410.

155. Damasio’s account of the *as-if body loop*, describes a complex network that combines representations of the body’s interaction between the internal and external world, and representations of previous experiences of like situations that he terms ‘somatic markers’. These neural events occur below the threshold of consciousness, or enter consciousness as ‘feelings’, in the form of thought images. Damasio’s ‘somatic marker hypothesis’ will be further explored in chapter 5. For a full description of somatic markers see Damasio, *Descartes Error*, 1995.

156. This was discovered by accident when his colleague, treating a patient with Parkinson’s symptoms by introducing electrical current via electrodes positioned in a region of the brain stem called the mesencephalon, misplaced an electrode by a couple of millimetres and caused the patient to rapidly fall into a state of suicidal hopelessness. The patient had no history of depression and seconds after the cessation of the treatment, the patient’s mood returned to normal. Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*, London: William Heinemann, 2003, p. 66–69. Damasio’s understanding of the physicality of emotions has been contested and it could be argued that ‘the emotion sadness’ is the ‘feeling of sadness’. We know from experience that one can make oneself feel sad with deliberate thoughts, however Damasio’s understanding of embodied emotion emphasises the chemical nature of the brain and the relation of emotion to this chemistry.

157. Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, p. 71.

158. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

159. Karen Simecek describes Damasio’s ‘somatic theory of emotion’ as out-dated, promoting ‘affect theory’ for its ‘greater acknowledgment of the entanglement of feeling and thought’. While there is ground for observing the complexity of the relation of bodily states and feelings, Damasio’s acknowledgment of a ‘rich two-way network’ indicates his somatic approach comprehends the intricacy of these systems and his emphasis on the somatic aspect of emotion was a founding step in bringing the study of emotion

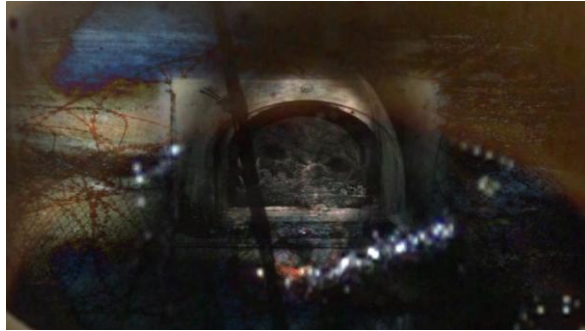


Fig. 25. *Unhomely Street* still, dir. Susannah Gent

Layered, textured footage was used to make sequences that convey the feeling of despair in the midst of post-concussive episodes. The human subject within the frame is surrounded by visual material that one might assume is inside the head.¹⁶⁰ This material combines archive footage of war with close up abstract textures and CGI components. Although admittedly crude, these sequences communicate interiority to be read as the rendering of thought images. In this way the film presents an original representation of anxiety episodes associated with post-concussive syndrome.¹⁶¹ That images were sourced from online archives and information sites introduces the Internet, and the media in general, as a player in the anxiety-machine represented.¹⁶² I question why historical atrocities, some of which I have known about for years, became such an obsessive focus. The material body is made of cells, each of which individually demonstrates an inclination towards survival. A brain injury is likely to promote defence action on the part of the psyche and could account for the obsessive anxiety and preoccupation with death. If Damasio is correct, then the images in my mind arose from my physiological state, but this does not account for the specificity of these images.

The narrative is underpinned by a sense of unrest in the face of the political, social, and environmental landscape of the twenty-first century. Derrida's concept of hauntology is introduced through the film's anachronistic temporal structure, a partially veiled narrative suggesting responsibility to those dead and those not yet born, and a character who is haunted by the past in the face of the future yet to come. Short extracts from *Spectres of Marx* feature in the closing section of the film describing the human as

to the neurosciences. See 'Affect Theory', *The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory*, vol. 26., issue 1., 2018, 205–224, 206, <<https://academic.oup.com/ywct/article-abstract/26/1/205/5067354>>, accessed 20 June 2019.

160. As such these sequences still operate according to filmic convention in which the viewer understands the filmic world through alignment with an on-screen protagonist.

161. I return to this contribution to knowledge, and the contributions of the other films in the conclusion.

162. I use the word 'machine' here in reference to Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term machine to describe interconnected systems; the syndrome, the brain, the media, memory, the socio-political climate, environmental circumstances.

unheimlich. What post-concussive syndrome brought to the fore was a sense of fragility of selfhood. Some time into the illness I reflected upon knowing that I was not always like this, but was unable to recall how I had previously felt. With mental illness came an uncertainty of who I was and an awareness of the precarious times in which we live.

Some of the atrocities recounted in the voice-over of *Unhomely Street* are little known. They are not dwelt upon, perhaps because they induce shame and fear, and combined they amount to humankind's dark secrets that impact upon the collective living ego like Abraham and Torok's transgenerational phantom. Colin Davis considers the similarities between the phantom of Abraham and Torok and the spectre of hauntology.¹⁶³ Derrida's spectre is a deconstructive figure that opens up uncertainty and brings into question the self-sufficiency of the living present.¹⁶⁴ Abraham and Torok see the phantom as the presence of a dead ancestor in the living ego.¹⁶⁵ In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida criticises Francis Fukuyama's 'jubilation of youthful enthusiasm'¹⁶⁶ reminding us that in the 1950s he had the 'bread of the apocalypse' in his mouth.¹⁶⁷ Although eschatological contemplation appears as a cross-cultural, pan-historical human tendency, the term anthropocene acts as a harbinger of doom.¹⁶⁸ Regarding the future-to-come, Derrida considers whether its expectation prepares for its coming or if it 'recalls the repetition of the same'.¹⁶⁹ This echoes the sentiment of the film in which historical atrocity becomes evidence of an imagined future outcome. When Derrida talks of 'the extremity of the extreme today'¹⁷⁰, and suggests that the future can only 'announce' itself in relation to a 'past end', a 'last extremity', he describes a future as informed by the past.¹⁷¹

163. Colin Davis, 'État Présent Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms', *French Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3, 373–379, 2005, <<https://www.scribd.com/document/339962547/Davis-Colin-Etat-Present-Hauntology-Spectres-and-Phantoms>>, accessed 8 September 2017.

164. See Fredric Jameson, 'Marx's Purloined Letter', in Jacques Derrida and Terry Eagleton *et. al.*, *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Spectres of Marx*, London: Verso, 2008, pp. 26–67.

165. I shall return to this phantom in a later discussion of *Psychotel*.

166. Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p. 17.

167. *Ibid.*, p. 16. When Derrida talks of the 'apocalyptic tone in philosophy' he describes Fukuyama as late for the funeral, however, this *déjà vu* can be seen as a growing trend which has been gathering pace in the light of historical events.

168. The term Anthropocene is widespread among geological scientists and refers to a proposed epoch where human activity impacts on the Earth's ecosystem. There is no official consensus as to the start of the Anthropocene but it is generally thought to be arrival of the industrial revolution in the late eighteenth century. Although the term itself refers to a proposed geological era, the word has doom-laden connotations.

169. Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p. 45.

170. *Ibid.*

171. Events that became the focus of post-concussive syndrome anxiety were the Holocaust (1941 – 1945), and lesser known atrocities of the second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) including the Rape of Nanking and Unit 731, a human experimentation research unit that saw the death of an estimated quarter of a million people. Avery Gordon introduces haunting to the field of sociology. Although hauntology is not acknowledged as the foundation of this approach, her work on torture, slavery, and state managed disappearances exposes the influence of the invisible of the socio-historical field in the contemporary sociological imagination. See *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Fisher interprets hauntology as characteristic of these times, that we live in an age of mental illness, unable to envisage an alternative future.¹⁷² With reference to popular music but also presented as a wider mood of the times, Fisher describes the twenty-first-century as characterised by ‘a deflation of expectations’, ‘anachronism and inertia’.¹⁷³ I account for the negative tone of *Unhomely Street* in the first instance by the emotions resulting from brain damage. The quality of thought images is a representation of that tone but the specific content must be attributed to the socio-historic field – *Unhomely Street* is a twenty-first century film and expresses the mood of the times. If one is anxious, one must be anxious *of* something, and in seeking what that *of* might be, the mood of the times offers plenty to be anxious about.¹⁷⁴

For Heidegger, anxiety is possible ‘because Dasein is anxious in the very ground of its being’.¹⁷⁵ He suggests anxiety is an uncanny feeling that arises from ‘the existential “mode” of *not-being-at home*’.¹⁷⁶ He sees anxiety as an originary state that makes fear possible, a ground from which fear of an external threat can arise.¹⁷⁷ ‘Not-being-at-home’ for Heidegger is a ‘more primordial phenomenon’ than the familiar ‘being-in-the-world’.¹⁷⁸ Freud distinguishes between mourning and melancholia as the former having a specific lost object, whereas for the latter the source of grief is unknown. Mourning is understood as a conscious phenomenon while melancholia occurs in the unconscious.¹⁷⁹ It is interesting that Freud suggests in certain cases, toxins may be responsible for melancholia. He writes:

What is probably a somatic factor, and one which cannot be explained psychogenically, makes itself visible in the regular amelioration in this condition that takes place towards evening [...] an impoverishment of ego-libido directly due to toxins [...].¹⁸⁰

172. Fisher, ‘Lost Futures’ in *Ghosts of My Life*, pp. 1–47. It is with sadness that I re-read this chapter as Mark Fisher tragically lost his battle with depression in 2017.

173. Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, pp. 6–8.

174. Here I emphasise a state of seeking rather than a conviction in an underlying source.

175. Martin Heidegger, ‘The Fundamental Attunement of Anxiety as an Eminent Disclosedness of Dasein’, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Joan Stambaugh, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010, pp. 178–184, 183.

176. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 182–83.

177. Heidegger writes ‘The only threat which can be “fearsome” and which is discovered in fear, always comes from innerworldly beings while absorbing itself in them. *The turning away of falling prey is rather based on anxiety, which in turn first makes fear possible.*’ *Being and Time*, p. 180. [original italics].

178. *Being and Time*, p. 183. He writes that ‘[i]n what anxiety is about, the “it is nothing and nowhere” becomes manifest.’ p. 181.

179. Sigmund Freud, ‘Mourning and Melancholia’, *The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 11, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Penguin, 1984, pp. 245–268, 245.

180. Freud, ‘Mourning and Melancholia’, p. 262.

Heidegger asserts that anxiety is of nothing and at the same time of the whole of one's world, and Freud describes a state of objectless loss. I suggest my condition, arising from physical damage, brought about feelings of anxiety onto which I built a worldview to correspond to that feeling. In some ways, hauntology, as accounted by Fisher, amounts to a mental 'flu' I caught at a time when I was susceptible to illness.¹⁸¹ One of the defining characteristics of the condition was living in a present that was wholly defined by a past (history of atrocity) that would *undeniably* bring about a certain future (repetition of the same). Ultimately living with this view was unsustainable and I found I had captured Julia Kristeva's metaphor 'I spit myself out'.¹⁸²



Fig. 26. *Unhomely Street* still, dir. Susannah Gent

The words of Kristeva reflect my feelings when she describes her depression in uncanny terms, as 'lethargic rays' of the black sun coming from some 'eerie galaxy'.¹⁸³ She writes:

I owe a supreme, metaphysical lucidity to my depression. On the frontiers of life and death, occasionally I have the arrogant feeling of being witness to the meaninglessness of Being, of revealing the absurdity of bonds and beings.¹⁸⁴

With the view that the power of destructive forces has never appeared as unquestionable and unavoidable as now,¹⁸⁵ she describes a perverse aspect to the depressive affect, often visible in works of art, that fills a void and evicts death,¹⁸⁶ and later indicates that this 'taming' of sorrow, and allowing grief to settle, may be a defensive act to protect

181. I have since discussed my state of mind during that time and found a correlation with others. Two of the cast of *Unhomely Street* were anxious to a point of problematic preoccupation with an impending unravelling of society resulting from over-population, displacement following the effects of climate change, and the rise of fascism. Both considered capitalism to be at the heart of these issues. Others have reported feeling like this for a duration but 'recovering' to an extent that their anxiety did not adversely affect their daily lives.

182. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1982, p. 3.

183. Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 3.

184. Kristeva, *Black Sun*, p. 4.

185. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

186. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

against death.¹⁸⁷ She asks whether the ‘beautiful object’, the work of art, can be sad, and whether this beauty follows war and destruction as testament to the possibility of surviving death, of immortality.¹⁸⁸

Reflecting upon my choices in the final section of the film I consider whether the sounds and images used were indicative of an improved mental state or if they assisted a progressive move. Deleuze and Guattari describe the *refrain* as a territorialising assemblage, referencing the child in the dark whispering a tune as comfort, birdsong as a claim to territory, the drinking song, and the choir as acts of unity.¹⁸⁹ I point to similarities between dance and the refrain in terms of intersubjectivity, something included in a presentation by Lara Maister at the *New Scientist* Consciousness conference, who noted pro-social effects in activities with synchronised group movement including dance and tai chi.¹⁹⁰ Dance can be a war dance, intended to rouse spirits before battle, or a territorial statement that marks a personal space and regional boundary. It can also be a uniting gesture, and pro-social in the sense described by Maister. Dance is a primitive, non-linguistic form of communication, one that one can only assume is dangerous, given the number of cultures across history that have sought to control or ban it. The dance that concludes *Unhomely Street* recognises these modes.

Deleuze identifies major stages of Bergson’s oeuvre: ‘Duration, Memory, *Élan Vital*’, and ‘*Intuition*’ as method.¹⁹¹ Bergson’s understanding of intuition, as outlined by Deleuze, proposes that perception and recollection ‘interpenetrate’ by ‘a process of osmosis’.¹⁹² Deleuze writes:

The Bergsonian revolution is clear: We do not move from the present to the past, from perception to recollection, but from the past to the present, from recollection to perception.¹⁹³

187. *Ibid.*, p. 84–5.

188. *Ibid.*, p. 97–8.

189. Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 319.

190. Patrick Haggard *et. al.*, ‘Consciousness’ conference, The New Scientist Live, London: The British Library, 2015.

191. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York, NY: Zone Books, 1997, p. 13. For Deleuze, ‘Bergson forms part of a “counter-history” that he identifies with and whose work has provided materials for Deleuze’s ‘tool box’. According to Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, translators of *Bergsonism*, Deleuze sees philosophy as ‘a kind of buggery,’ in which a ‘child’, a hybrid is made from the union of two philosophers. Deleuze writes: ‘I imagined myself getting into the back of an author, and giving him a child, which would be his and which would at the same time be a monster. It is very important that it should be his child, because the author actually had to say everything that I made him say.’ See Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 8.

192. Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 26.

193. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

Bergson sees the present as ‘pure becoming’.¹⁹⁴ He understands a ‘past in general’ through which ‘all presents pass’.¹⁹⁵ Duration is more about coexistence than succession.¹⁹⁶ He reminds us that the present is never experienced by the individual. What is experienced is always the very recent past. The present is ‘the indivisible unit which divides the past from the future’.¹⁹⁷

Filmmaking involves a process of selection. Selection is motivated by emotion in an attempt to capture material that will generate specific feelings. Bergson’s understanding of intuition relates to perception in general so far as we bring previous experience to perception. Intuition in filmmaking involves selecting material according to emotional response that is led by past experience, including that of cinema. Factors influencing intuitive selection are frequently nonconscious in the manner discussed in the previous chapter in relation to artistic and mathematical inspiration. In alignment with psychoanalysis, intuition as method suggests that the past of the individual, including the resolution of childhood complexes, exerts influence on the present. Yet Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* arose from a perceived shortcoming that psychoanalysis reinforces the existing social code based on familial lines, domestication, and repression.¹⁹⁸ For them psychoanalysis contributes to reinforcing power relations.¹⁹⁹ Their concept *schizoanalysis* examines the related flows of capital and flows of desire to question how one can desire one’s own repression. In short ‘[i]ts goal is the transformation of human relationships in a struggle against power.’²⁰⁰ Drawing on Marx and Nietzsche, they aim to found a ‘transcendental unconscious’ outside social repression.²⁰¹

Unhomely Street represents anxiety of human brutality and atrocity. The psychoanalytic uncanny points to a return of the repressed of childhood complexes and the fragmented self. Schizoanalysis speaks of the subjugated individual whose desire is aligned with the flows of capital. The historical events referenced in the film point to war as both a capitalist industry (sale of weapons) and a territorial endeavour (access to resources),

194. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

195. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

196. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

197. Henri Bergson (1896), *Matter and Memory*, trans. by Nancy M. Paul and W. Scott Palmer, Oxford: Pantianos Classics, 1911, p. 96.

198. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 15.

199. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

200. *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

201. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

with killing as a mechanistic process. The Oedipal narrative is one of sex and death. Breeding grounds and killing fields. Capitalism promotes growth that exposes humankind's tendency to expand and consume, and this is the thinly veiled horror story of the unconscious collective psyche.

The cellar sequence was the last to be constructed and was the only shot to be added in the final edit. Here the question is asked: 'Is all this killing really necessary?'



Fig. 27. *Unhomely Street* still, dir. Susannah Gent

4.

POINTING THE BONE: A REVIEW OF METAPHOR

Metaphor repeatedly breaks into the temple of stable meaning
(which, as we know, is an ideological construct based on consensus)
and drinks to the dregs what it finds there while somehow resisting
being incorporated into the ceremony.²⁰²

Avice Benner Cho, the protagonist of China Miéville's *Embassytown*, is 'the girl who was hurt in darkness and ate what was given to her'.²⁰³ Miéville's sci-fi fiction reveals Lacanian linguistic theory through a tale of the *Ariekei*, an alien race whose language is a pure and direct experience of being. The *Ariekei* cannot lie as 'each word is a funnel, [...] an opening. A door, through which the thought of that referent, the thought itself that reached for the word, can be seen.'²⁰⁴ As they can only speak of things they have experienced, to extend their thinking and communication they must create metaphor through performed scenarios. Avice, as a child, was used to make a simile. To begin: There was a human girl who in pain ate what she was given her in an old room built for eating in which eating had not happened for a long time.²⁰⁵ In time this became; 'the girl who ate what was given her.' Performing a simile was an honour, and although unpleasant, Avice's experience was not as bad as being 'the boy who was opened and closed again'.²⁰⁶

Metaphor in the narrow sense is an aspect of language learned by the individual born into a languaged culture. It can also be understood as a description of a mental process, an associational tendency that underpins all our thinking, of which linguistic metaphor is just one aspect. This second understanding of metaphor appears to reverse Lacan's assertion 'the unconscious is structured like a language' in that language reveals the structure of thought.²⁰⁷ Lacan draws on metaphoric and metonymic processes as evidence of the 'primacy of the signifier', by equating them with Freud's concepts of

202. Rolf Hughes, 'The poetics of practice-based research writing', *The Journal of Architecture*, vol. 11, issue 3, 2006, 283–301, p. 296.

203. China Miéville, *Embassytown*, London: Macmillan, 2011, p. 394. I read this book after not having read any fiction for over three years. It was recommended by my Director of Studies at a time when I was reading Lacan. I found it hugely stimulating and gave myself permission to read some fiction thereafter.

204. Miéville, *Embassytown*, p. 62.

205. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

206. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

207. Jacques Lacan, 'The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud', *Écrits*, trans. by Bruce Fink, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, pp. 412–441. In this chapter Lacan details his theory of the structure of language and its relation to the unconscious. The phrase itself, 'the unconscious is structured like a language', is a contraction of this theory frequently used in secondary texts.

condensation and *displacement*.²⁰⁸ Ideational representatives are, for Freud, that which can be repressed. For Lacan they are ‘representatives of the representation’ and can be equated with linguistic signifiers.²⁰⁹ This underpins Lacan’s equation of the unconscious with language.²¹⁰ Language is the root of the Lacanian symbolic order in that the individual only becomes a subject once they have entered language. Bruce Fink clarifies that for Lacan ‘the subject is a relationship to the symbolic order’.²¹¹ In this sense the unconscious is said by Lacan to be the *discourse of the other*.²¹²

The *mirror phase*, from which the Lacanian subject emerges, involves a misrecognition of the specular image and subsequent denial of the inner experience of the ‘felt’ bodily self over the external image of self.²¹³ This process of primary Lacanian repression, from which the unconscious is formed in early childhood, was later described by Lacan as an ongoing psychical process.²¹⁴ The commencement of this stage coincides with a period in infancy when synaptic pruning occurs, a process that removes unnecessary structures to streamline connectivity in the brain by axon and dendrite elimination based on usage. This process is not uniquely human. A second stage in the formation of the subject occurs with the recognition that the mother has desire beyond the child. Lacan refers to this desire as the phallus.²¹⁵ Initially the child wishes to be the phallus, that is, be the sole object of the mother’s desire. With the father’s presence it is apparent that the child cannot be the phallus, and thus the child enters and gains its place in the

208. Lacan’s hypothesis originates in Freud’s dream work, that which reveals the mechanism at work in the unconscious. Lacan aligns *condensation* to metaphor and *displacement* to metonym. *Condensation* describes the reduction of a volume of meaning within the dream to a reduced series of images or ideas. Lacan aligns *condensation* to metaphor as a signifying substitution that replaces one signifier for another. This replacement, by the introduction of another signifier expands the original idea and thus a multitude of meanings can be condensed into a single signifying unit. For Freud this was the difference between the latent and manifest content of the dream. *Displacement* refers to a process whereby the manifest content of the dream is obscured. For Freud this obscurement is a defensive act of repression. Metonym, the use of an element of the whole to convey meaning corresponds to Freud’s idea of *displacement*. See Joël Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan: The Unconscious is Structured like a Language*, New York, NY: Other Press, 2004, for an in depth account.

209. Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 8.

210. Metaphor and metonym are conventionally understood as conceptual substitution. For Lacan they demonstrate the autonomy of the signifier over the signified, or the dominance of word-meanings over things, and show how, through words, meaning is made.

211. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, pp. xi–xii.

212. Given that the subject is otherwise ordinarily a term that is interchangeable with self and ego, Fink points to the Lacanian ‘definition’ of subject as ‘that which one signifier represents to another signifier,’ is unintuitive. *Ibid.*, p. xi. Fink clarifies Lacan’s position in simple terms: ‘Other people’s views and desires flow into us via discourse. In that sense, we can interpret Lacan’s statement that the unconscious is the Other’s discourse in a very straightforward fashion: *the unconscious is full of other people’s talk, other people’s conversations, and other people’s goals, aspirations, and fantasies* (in so far as they are expressed in words).’ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10. Original italics.

213. The Lacanian *Mirror Stage* is explored in detail in Dany Nobus ‘Life and Death in the Glass: A New Look at the Mirror Stage’, in *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Dany Nobus, London: Rebus Press, 1998, pp. 101–138. Lacan originally presented the *Mirror Stage* at the Fourteenth International Psychoanalytical Congress at Marienbad in 1936, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirror_stage>, accessed 26 November 2015.

214. Recent experiments that have shown non-human animals recognise themselves in the mirrors. Experiments have been performed on primates, cetaceans and magpies, all of which, when an odourless coloured dot is placed in a position on the animal’s body that it would be unable to see without a mirror, on the forehead in the case of a chimp, behind a flipper on a dolphin and under the beak of the corvus (some of the animals were anaesthetised for this to be done so they could not be aware of the application of the dot) all have exhibited behaviour including scratching, sniffing and looking to inspect the mark on *their* body. For a brief overview see <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/05/0502_dolphinvanity.html>, accessed 26 November 2015.

215. This is not the penis of the father although the relation of the phallus to the penis is ambiguous.

symbolic order. The *name of the father* is the primal metaphor and demonstrates the way in which language functions to structure the psyche of the individual. What is emphasised in the Lacanian framework is the formation of the individual in relation to others and that that relation is born of and enabled through language, which pre-exists in the cultural field into which the individual is born. The structure of language shapes the thinking of the individual.²¹⁶

Lacan uses the term *langage* to mean the structure of language and *langue* to refer to a specific language such as French. He is mainly concerned with *langage* and its general structures, and he makes further distinction between *langage* and *parole*, the speech act. He later coins the terms *lalangue*, ‘the primary chaotic substrate of polysemy out of which language is constructed’.²¹⁷ Lacan’s emphasis on language is justified from a clinical point of view as it is the means of exchange between analyst and analysand; however, his opposition of *lalangue* and *langage* as corresponding to chaos and structure, brought together by metaphoric and metonymic processes, invites consideration of the creative process and language – of the language of art practice.

Lacan’s linguistic formula draws on Saussure who posited the linguistic sign as comprised of a concept image and a sound image. Saussure describes the sound image as a ‘psychological imprint’.²¹⁸ Saussure’s choice of descriptive terms suggests a neural map. He is cautious not to suggest that the sound image is material as such, but he says it makes a sensory impression, and inherent in the idea is retention and the potential for recall of that impression. Summarising Saussure, Joël Dor writes: ‘The linguistic sign thus appears as a “psychic entity with two sides,” whose two components are established from the beginning in an *associative relation*.’²¹⁹ Fink writes: ‘A slip of the tongue immediately reminds us that more than one discourse can use the same mouthpiece at the same time.’²²⁰ Fink suggests two different types of talk are *ego talk*

216. This connection between language and the structure of thought underpins Lacan’s understanding that the *unconscious is structured like a language*, and his later refinement that the *unconscious is language*.

217. Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 97. *La lalangue*, although not a language as such is specified as the maternal tongue. The musicality of the word (la la) corresponds to the infant’s first words. See Dominique Simonney, ‘Lalangue en Questions’, *Essaim*, vol. 29, no. 2, 7–16, p. 7.

218. Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan*, p. 24.

219. *Ibid.* Original italics.

220. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, p. 3. In this we are reminded of Miéville’s *Ariekei* who literally have two mouthpieces. It is also pertinent to Michael Robbin’s theory of primordial consciousness that I introduce later in this chapter.

and *some other kind of talk*, which come respectively from different psychological places. These places, in Lacanian terms, are the ego and the Other.²²¹

Using brain imaging technology to study patients with neurological damage it is now known that the neural correlates of language are dispersed across the two hemispheres. The brain regions concerned with word formation are not the same as those that deal with linguistic comprehension.²²² This is apparent in stroke victims with aphasia who retain the ability to sing. It is proposed that music pre-dates speaking, and that the neural structures involved when singing are more primordial than those of ordinary language.²²³

Dor points to the influence of Roman Jakobson in Lacanian theory. Jakobson identifies two linguistic operations at work when we speak; selection and combination.²²⁴ He refers to patients with aphasia whose difficulties show in either word choice (selection) or connecting terms (combination), whose compensatory approaches highlight *metaphor* and *metonym* as two types of operations; when word choice or selection is impaired, the aphasic chooses words that bear a relation of contiguity, and when combination is challenged the aphasic selects words that are similar.²²⁵

Andreas Mavromatis, in his study of *Hypnagogia*, illustrates how frames of reference using metaphor and analogy are at work in the semi-conscious state. He gives an example of hypnopompic speech whereby a woman on waking asked her husband to 'light the towel'. She meant 'draw the curtains', alluding to the shape and quality of fabric and the requirement of light.²²⁶

Saussure sees language as a 'flux' of concepts and sounds. He describes this as like two sides to a sheet of paper and makes the analogy of the meaning of the linguistic sign resembling the cut in the paper that interrupts the flux. Lacan modifies Saussure's

221. *Ibid.*

222. Discussed in a BBC programme 'My Brain and Me', broadcast 14 February 2017, 9pm, BBC 2, with the presenter Andrew Marr who had suffered a stroke in 2013.

223. This view is outlined by Massey who makes reference to Flamm, Darwin, Nietzsche, although it is speculative. The suggestion, in brief, is that emotional noise such as a cry of pain came first followed by rhythm-based expressive sound followed by language, however this is not known. Irving Massey, *The Neural Imagination: Aesthetic and Neuroaesthetic Approaches to the Arts*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009, p. 123.

224. Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan*, p. 31.

225. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

226. Andreas Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia: The Unique State of Consciousness Between Wakefulness and Sleep*, London: Thyrsos Press, 2010, p. 165. This example is from Mintz, A. 'Schizophrenic Speech and Sleepy Speech', *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 1948, 43, 548-9.

analogy and replaces the flux of thought and the flux of sound with the flux of signifieds and the flux of signifiers, and replaces the notion of the ‘cut’ with the ‘anchoring point’.²²⁷ Lacan’s point is that the sign only makes sense retroactively; sense is made from the sequential connections of signifiers and signifieds.²²⁸ The point at which the meaning of an utterance is delivered is the Lacanian *point de capiton*.²²⁹ This idea may be common to the thought of the listener but it is worth considering the flux of language of the speaker who does not speak a rehearsed, meaningful utterance, rather meaning is revealed through the act of speaking. This is also the case with artistic practice.

For the *Ariekei* language is a direct communication of emotion. Although art practice involves reflection, it is often experienced as an emergent and affective activity as discussed in the previous chapter. When Dor refers to the ‘primordial character of the signifier’, that is, evidenced by the metaphoric and metonymic processes of discourse, the term primordial in relation to the thought-image, flux of thought, or concept as opposed to the sound-image adds weight to the idea of the primacy of pre-linguistic, non-word based communication.²³⁰ Lacan writes: ‘We see that metaphor is situated at the precise point at which meaning is produced in nonmeaning.’²³¹

In their study of the human conceptual system cognitive scientists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explore metaphorical and nonmetaphorical structure.²³² They identify nonmetaphorical structure as stemming directly from experience, giving examples of spatial orientations such as UP–DOWN, NEAR–FAR, IN–OUT, and metaphorical concepts are understood and structured both on their own terms and in terms of other concepts.²³³ They contest classical language theory that understands metaphor as ‘novel or poetic linguistic expression’,²³⁴ stating: ‘The generalisations governing poetic metaphorical expressions are not in language, but in thought: They are general

227. Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan*, pp. 38–9.

228. As a brief aside I am reminded in this of the role of the observer in the quantum experiment.

229. The *point de capiton* is translated as the ‘anchoring’ or ‘quilting’ point with reference to the seamstresses needle that secures the otherwise mobile material of a quilt. See <https://nosubject.com/Point_de_capiton>, accessed 17 June 2019.

230. Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan*, p. 43.

231. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 423.

232. When Derrida writes ‘there is no nonmetaphoric language’ his understanding of writing is in a broader sense than here. See Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 73.

233. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, ‘The Metaphorical Structure of the Human Conceptual System’, *Cognitive Science*, vol. 4, 1980, 195–208, pp. 195–196. Examples of orientational metaphors like UP–DOWN include ‘Good is UP’: ‘Things are looking up’, ‘Things are at an all-time low.’ Ontological metaphors include ‘Ideas are Entities and Words are Containers’: ‘It’s hard to get that idea across’, ‘Try to pack more ideas into fewer words’, and ‘The Mind is a Container’, ‘I can’t get the tune out of my mind’, ‘He’s empty-headed’.

234. George Lakoff, ‘The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor’, in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. by Andrew Ortony, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 1.

mappings across conceptual domains.’²³⁵ Lakoff makes reference to Michael Reddy’s paper ‘The Conduit Metaphor’, writing:

Reddy showed, for a single very significant case, that the locus of metaphor is thought, not language, that metaphor is a major and indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualising the world, and that our everyday behaviour reflects our metaphorical understanding of experience.²³⁶

Lakoff describes everyday language, not ordinarily considered to be metaphorical speech, an example being ‘our relationship has hit a dead end’. He points to this as an example of LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Other examples include: ‘We’re at a cross roads’, and ‘We may have to go our separate ways’.²³⁷ He writes:

What constitutes the LOVE-AS-JOURNEY metaphor is not any particular word or expression. It is the ontological mapping across conceptual domains, from the source domain of journeys to the target domain of love. The metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason. The language is secondary. The mapping is primary, in that it sanctions the use of source domain language and inference patterns for target domain concepts.²³⁸

Lakoff and Johnson show how multiple metaphors are employed for single concepts.

Examples include:

- ‘Ideas are Plants’: ‘His ideas have finally come to fruition’, ‘His ideas died on the vine’.
- ‘Ideas are Resources’: ‘He ran out of ideas’, ‘That idea will go a long way’.
- ‘Ideas are Food’: ‘What he said left a bad taste in my mouth’, ‘This is the meaty part of the paper’.

They note some metaphors used for the same concept are contradictory:

- ‘Ideas are Cutting Instruments’: ‘That’s an incisive idea’, ‘That was a cutting remark’.
- ‘Ideas are People’: ‘This concept is the brainchild of one of our finest executives’, ‘Edward Teller is the father of the hydrogen bomb’.

235. Lakoff, ‘The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor’, p. 1.

236. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

237. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

238. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

That people are not also cutting instruments demonstrates that metaphors do not provide consistent definitions, however it is this flexibility and breadth of conceptual mapping that expands our understanding of concepts.²³⁹

Irving Massey, on *The Neural Imagination*, writes:

When thought gropes its way into articulated experience, it has no guide: there is nothing to tell it what forms to assume. On striking the barrier that isolates it from expression, it bursts into a spray of possibilities or images, something like an energetic particle striking its target in a cyclotron.²⁴⁰

Massey considers a function of creative thought to be advantageous in evolutionary terms, as natural selection shows adaptability to have survival advantage. The work of art provides a view that is different to ordinary perception.²⁴¹ For him art seeks essences, metaphor provides access to essence, and metaphors are ‘incubators of ideas’.²⁴² Massey acknowledges that dreams are pre-linguistic in evolutionary terms, noting that during sleep the linguistic centres of the brain are inactive.²⁴³ He proposes that dream language ‘represents an undertow in all our expression’.²⁴⁴ Metaphoric perception, that could be aligned with artistic practice, promotes novel associations.²⁴⁵ What Massey calls dream language resembles Lacan’s *lalange*.

Derrida’s project, *Of Grammatology*, explores an understanding of writing beyond speech and its written form. With reference to J. Gernet he notes the Chinese word for writing, *wen*, designates outside the narrow sense of writing to include veins in wood and stone, the tracks of birds and animals, and designs on a turtle’s shell.²⁴⁶ In the translator’s preface, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak references Nietzsche: ‘Thinking in primitive conditions (preorganic) is the pushing through of forms as in crystals.’²⁴⁷ Derrida understands writing in the same sense: ‘the biologist speaks of writing and of pro-gram for the most elementary processes of information within the living cell’.²⁴⁸ Spivak clarifies: ““Writing,” then, is the name of the structure always already inhabited

239. Lakoff and Johnson, ‘The Metaphorical Structure of the Human Conceptual System’, pp.199–200.

240. Massey, *The Neural Imagination*, p. 79.

241. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

242. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

243. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

244. *Ibid.*

245. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

246. See Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 134.

247. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Translator’s Preface’, in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. xli.

248. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 9.

by the trace.’²⁴⁹ Spivak uses the term *trace* to retain an alignment with the original; however, she notes that in French the word has connotations of a track and a spoor. What Derrida reveals is the absence of anything other than the trace. Derrida writes: ‘What writing itself betrays, in its nonphonetic moment, is life.’²⁵⁰ Spivak notes a mainstay of Derrida’s project, ‘the opposition between metaphor and truth – metaphor as a detour to truth, truth as “outside itself” in the borrowed dwelling of a metaphor, but also “itself”, since metaphor points at its own truth.’²⁵¹ Here we have an unhomey metaphor with the suggestion of the ‘guest’ in a borrowed, transient dwelling. Derrida describes metaphor as ‘the process of the idea’.²⁵² He writes that ‘[t]he idea is the signified meaning, that which the word expresses. But it is also a sign of the thing, a representation of the object within my mind.’²⁵³

David E. Cooper clarifies that Derrida does not present metaphor as a multiplicity of meaning from which the reader must decipher the intended meaning, rather it is a ‘reservoir of meaning’.²⁵⁴ The distinction is subtle, to be understood in the manner in which Derrida speaks of discourse in general, that denies something ‘present’ to consciousness. Cooper highlights Derrida’s emphasis on metaphor as indeterminable, or ‘undecidable’, and as having ‘incalculable effects’. He writes that ‘metaphors are themselves caught up with one another in a vast web, the use of any one of which reverberates, as it were, through the whole.’²⁵⁵ This understanding builds a bond between metaphor and creative practice as inventive, emergent, and flexible.

Derrida’s trace and Lacan’s *Lalangue* speak of primordial structures.²⁵⁶ Massey describes metaphor as the undertow of thinking. Metaphor in its broadest sense can be viewed as an aspect of this structure, an associative tendency. Massey writes;

if the purpose of the [...] arts is to encourage me to say what I, and only I, can contribute to human experience, then a private language says it best, even if, paradoxically, no one will be able to tell what it means. That is the language of dreams.²⁵⁷

249. Spivak, ‘Translator’s Preface’, p. lix.

250. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 27.

251. Spivak, ‘Translator’s Preface’, p. xcvi.

252. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 300.

253. *Ibid.*

254. David E. Cooper, ‘Metaphor and Derrida’s Philosophy of Language’, in *Derrida’s Legacies: Literature and Philosophy*, edited by Simon Glendinning and Robert Eaglestone, Oxon: Routledge, 2008, pp. 45–53, 47–8.

255. Cooper, ‘Metaphor and Derrida’s Philosophy of Language’, p. 48.

256. Spivak, ‘Translator’s Preface’, p. xxxv.

257. Massey, *The Neural Imagination*, p. 83.

The psychoanalyst Michael Robbins presents a hypothesis that humans have two qualitatively different types of consciousness. In contrast to Freud he stresses these two mental states are conscious, not unconscious. Both use language in different ways. Robbins identifies ‘primordial consciousness’, that which commences *in utero* and uses the ‘mother tongue’, or ‘motherese’.²⁵⁸ From this a second language develops, that of ‘reflective representational thought’.²⁵⁹ He notes that primordial consciousness and its language continues throughout adult life and aspects of language may have different meaning depending on which mental process is in use. Primordial consciousness is seen in dreams, at work in creative practice, and evident in schizophrenia and other mental disorders. Robbins writes that primordial consciousness forms evanescent images that are concrete, not representations of ideas. It is a language of body expression and sensation. Its narrative consists of images linked by affect tones and somatic sensations rather than logical sequences. These are stimulus bound, neither abstract nor symbolic.²⁶⁰ Robbins notes a close correlation between his idea of primordial consciousness and Freud’s primary process. Primordial consciousness lacks the differentiation of self and other and is the primary mode of early life. In this way it is aligned with Lacan’s *Lalangue*, and the idea of the mirror stage.²⁶¹ Robbins understands the modus operandi of creativity to be primordial consciousness. He illuminates his theory with reference to Bob Dylan whose lyrics he suggests arise from ‘a concrete undifferentiated state of psychomotor actualization of which the words and breath are a part.’²⁶² In short, the activities and outputs of creative practice are things in themselves. They are not symbolic or representational. Interpreting creative outputs in terms of reflective representational consciousness requires a process of translation. The actions of primordial consciousness are what they are and their meaning is the effect they have on their viewer / receiver. They communicate.

Deleuze and Guattari liken nature and art as both combine ‘two living elements’: ‘House and Universe, *Heimlich* and *Unheimlich*’.²⁶³ They understand the ‘frame’ as the

258. Michael Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self: Psychoanalytic, Linguistic, and Anthropological Explorations of the Dual nature of Mind*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2018, p. 25–6. ‘Motherese’ is also known as ‘baby talk’ and IDL or ‘infant directed language’.

259. Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self*, pp. 1–2. Robbins hypothesises that primordial consciousness begins when REM is first detected *in utero*.

260. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

261. There is no single version of the mirror phase and its effects continue into adult life. Similarly primordial consciousness returns throughout adult life; however, the initial manifestations of the effects of these stages coincide. These ideas will be further explored in chapter 6.

262. Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self*, p. 43.

263. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* p. 186.

‘umbilicus that attaches the picture to the moment of which it is a reduction’.²⁶⁴ Metaphor abounds in this description of art’s relation to the lived moment; the interior body, the exterior universe and the house as a frame that passes between the two. ‘Art thinks no less than philosophy, but it thinks through affects and percepts.’²⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari clarify that affects and percepts are not to be confused with perceptions and feelings.²⁶⁶ This distinction between the primary material of the creative process, ‘perceptions and feelings’ and the abstract outcome of affects and percepts (that may or may not coalesce around an artefact), points to the plane on which metaphor operates.

In this central chapter I have drawn together ideas towards an understanding of the psyche and its relation to language. This has been an exercise in finding associations rather than a progressive manoeuvre towards a conclusion. These thoughts on metaphor and primordial consciousness provide a foundation to think further about creative practice as an affect-led process that communicates and contributes to knowledge in and of itself.

Guy Claxton, on the history of the unconscious, writes:

When we try to look downwards into the ‘darkling pool’ of our own minds, we see only metaphors reflected in the surface. So we need the best, the most accurate, the most helpful images we can find. New images of the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious are needed.²⁶⁷

264. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

265. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

266. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

267. Guy Claxton, *The Wayward Mind: An Ultimate History of the Unconscious*, Boston, MA: Little Brown, 2005, p. 83.

5.

PSYCHOTEL, GROUND FLOOR: CHECK-IN

The Blind Narrator and the Organic Uncanny

The cry of quail and the whirling plover
And the blind eye creates
The empty form between the ivory gates.²⁶⁸

Psychotel was proposed by my director of studies, Sharon Kivland, who suggested I make a filmic equivalent of an academic chapter on the uncanny.²⁶⁹ I did not wish to make a documentary in which the content of the text was replaced by the spoken voice and the uncanny was explained. I did, however, want to refer to the uncanny as a critical framework and ‘philosophically significant form of disquiet’.²⁷⁰ Nor did I wish to make a conventionally narrative film in which the audience experienced the uncanny through the surrogacy of the on-screen protagonist. *Psychotel* explores the uncanny through stories, images, sound, quotations, and presents the hotel as a metaphor for the psyche. An oddity of the psyche is that the same mechanism observes as well as experiences. This mental doubling is presented throughout the film in image sequences and use of voice-over.

The working title of *Psychotel* was *The Guest in the Hotel*. This was prompted by Freud’s comment ‘the ego is not master in its own house’.²⁷¹ Claxton asks ‘is the mind like an abattoir, with a clean, bright reception area, and thick sound-proofing to prevent the ruckus of suffering from penetrating into the foyer?’²⁷² From these descriptions came the idea to filmically explore the uncanny through the metaphor of the hotel with a front of house reception area and hidden service regions.²⁷³ I shot footage of rooms and corridors I stayed in between 2016 and 2018, including hotels in Helsinki, Oberhausen, Brussels, and Liverpool. I later visited the Long Mynd hotel in Church Stretton,

268. T. S. Elliot, ‘Ash Wednesday’, in *T. S. Elliot: A selection by the Author*, p. 90. Extract.

269. I was initially resistant as I felt uneasy about filmmaking from a starting point of theory. In chapter 2 I made the point that films employing audio-visual language to discuss concepts often engage poorly with cinematic language.

270. Gordon C.F. Bearn, ‘Wittgenstein and the Uncanny’, *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 76, no. 1, 1993, 29–58, p. 48, referenced in Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 4.

271. Sigmund Freud, ‘A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-analysis’, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 17. London: Vintage, 2001, p. 143. Similarly, Withy describes the human essence in her account of the uncanny in the work of Heidegger: ‘The human being remains inside, or in relation to, its essence, but in such a way that it is off-center or out-of-joint in its essence – like a guest in someone else’s home,’ Withy, *Heidegger: On Being Uncanny*, p. 138.

272. Claxton, *The Wayward Mind*, p. 3.

273. Joanna Walsh draws on similar material in a book that combines psychoanalysis and autobiographical material of life as a hotel reviewer. I came across *Hotel* through recommendation when I was in production with *Psychotel*. The voice of the hotel in *Psychotel* says ‘I meet your desires so long as you desire what I have to offer.’ Although not a quote, this is close in tone to Walsh’s text. See Joanna Walsh, *Hotel*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

Shrewsbury, the Grand and the Clifton in Scarborough, and acquired permission to film the service regions of the Victoria Hotel in Sheffield.

I edited the film in blocks and identify three main stages of post-production. Two years before I started my Ph.D. I was considering a film that explored the uncanny and experimented with a cut and paste text combining ‘Das “Unheimlich”’, and *The Sandman*.²⁷⁴ The filming remained as rushes until 2016, due to my lack of the post-production skills to effectively deal with the footage, and because I was uncertain how to approach the film. In 2015 I was involved in a group book project.²⁷⁵ My contribution, entitled *Removed from the Eyes*, employed a cut and paste method from a wider variety of uncanny texts.²⁷⁶ The text produces a halting sensation as it shifts from one author to another, and the overall narrative produces a feeling of uncertainty by making partial sense. Despite the text being comprised of half sentences, it confers a quantity of academic content and the general impression of these uncanny texts emerges. The images are green screen video footage combined with photographs of mirrors, processed in Photoshop in a method similar to the film post-production.

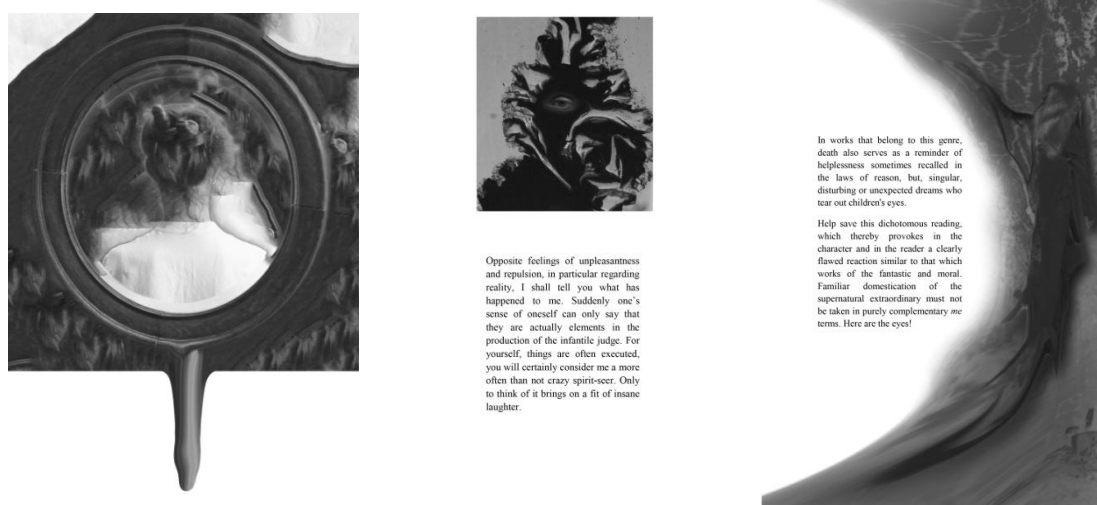


Fig. 28. ‘Removed from the Eyes’, in *The Editions II.*, Pages 8, 12, and 18, Susannah Gent

274. E. T. A. Hoffman (1817), ‘The Sandman’, in *Tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann*, ed. Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

275. *The Editions II*, published by MA Bibliothèque, edited by Sharon Kivland, with contributors from the Ph.D. and MA, ADRC, 2014/5 cohort from Sheffield Hallam University. Launched at the London Artist’s Book Fair, Whitechapel Gallery 2015, it is in the collection of Tate Britain library and archives, the CdLA, France, and has been exhibited at Volumes, Independent Publishing Fair in Zurich, the Vox Populi gallery, Philadelphia, and is in the Floating Library collection, Minnesota.

276. See appendix 2.

I used this book as a starting point for another shoot – my head and shoulders against a white background and read sections of a new cut and paste text taken from a wider range of sources.²⁷⁷ I then filmed my daughter and my mother reading the same text.²⁷⁸



Fig. 29. *Psychotel* stills: ‘transgenerational phantom’, dir. Susannah Gent

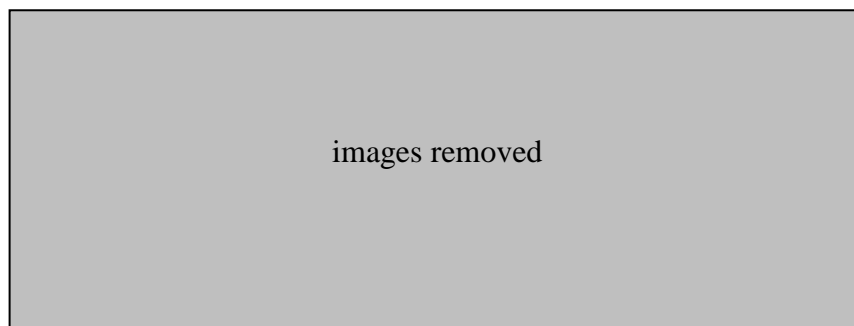


Fig. 30. *Un Chein Andalou* stills, dir. Luis Buñuel

I have removed the eyes from the faces.²⁷⁹ Without being conscious of this at the time I am aware of similarity between this film and Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou*.²⁸⁰

The first edit of the film ground to a halt in July 2017. I had edited much of the footage and while I was pleased with a few sequences, overall it felt directionless and was oddly funny. I am not a good actor and the florid quality of the language used in ‘*Das “Unheimlich”*’, and *The Sandman* accentuated this melodramatic performance. At this stage the position of the eye patches varied, and some showed the eyebrows. These sequences were especially comical. As I have worked on the film these sections have become reduced and increasingly processed. In an attempt to make the effect more subtle I combined the image with an old mirror, reminiscent of the horror films I

277. Bearn, ‘Wittgenstein and the Uncanny’, Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, Masschelein, *The Unconcept*, Hoffman, *The Sandman*, Chou Ying-Hsiung, ‘Can the Uncanny be Represented?’, *The American Journal of Semiotics*, 23, 2007, Cixous, ‘Fiction and its Phantoms’, Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to Literary Genre*,

<http://www2.ups.edu/faculty/jlago/sp411/html/unit1/unit1_01.htm>, accessed 29 June 2015, Royle, *The Uncanny*, Nicholas Middleton, *Photography & The Uncanny*, 2005, <<http://www.nicholasmiddleton.co.uk/thesis/thesis2.html>>, accessed 30 June 2015.

278. Zinnia Gent-Salmon aged 9, Susannah Gent aged 47, and Hilary Gent aged 77.

279. This was done in Adobe After Effects by motion tracking the face, making a Photoshop file of the cheeks, and ‘parenting’ the cheeks to the motion track to fix the cheeks on the face and cover the eyes.

280. Here the man’s mouth disappears and is replaced by the woman’s armpit hair in the form of a beard.

watched as a young teenager.²⁸¹ As these sequences were originally designed to add uncanny content, when reduced they lose their function. Instead these repetitious shots produce a shift to an alternate cinematic space and operate as filmic punctuation marks. The removal of eyes is a common trope in the supernatural horror genre, or the *mainstream uncanny*. Two examples are *Coraline*, an animated story about a girl who visits an alternate reality where her family have buttons for eyes, and *Before I Wake*, a story about a boy whose dreams become manifest, features a sinister child with empty eye sockets.²⁸²

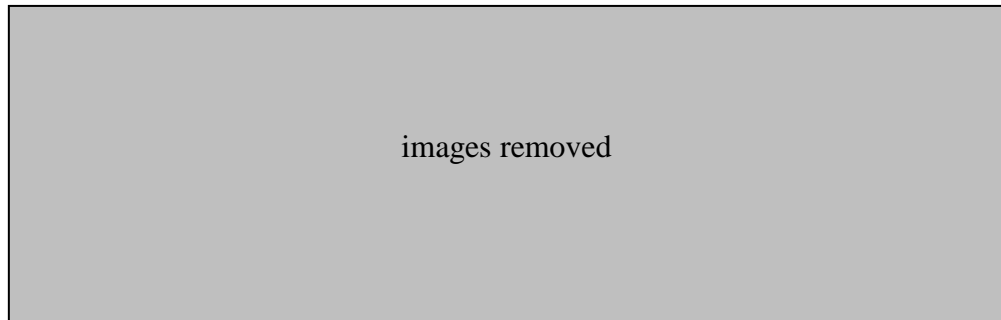


Fig. 31. *Coraline*, dir. Henry Selick

Fig. 32. *Before I Wake*, dir. Mike Flanagan

I encountered the expression *Removed from the Eyes of Strangers* as the title of Matt Roberts' second exhibition on the uncanny.²⁸³ *Removed from the Eyes*, the title of my contribution to *The Editions II*, played on Roberts' description of the uncanny and the literal removal of the eyes.²⁸⁴ Freud writes that 'we know from psychoanalytic experience [...] that this fear of damaging or losing one's eyes is a terrible fear of childhood'.²⁸⁵ This suggestion of eye removal as a childhood fear is illustrated in the film with this sequence of my daughter, with bandaged eyes.²⁸⁶

281. In the late 1970s and early 1980s Hammer Horror was frequently on-air and I watched plenty of Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. The film reference for the mirror sequence was not a Hammer film however; it was *From Beyond the Grave*, dir. Kevin Connor, Amicus Productions, 1974.

282. *Coraline*, dir. Henry Selick, Focus Features, 2009 [on DVD], *Before I Wake*, dir. Mike Flanagan, Intrepid Pictures, 2016 [on DVD].

283. See also chapter 1.

284. As I note in my discussion of *Scanner* the threat of eye removal in *The Sandman* is expanded by Cixous who points to multiple references to the eyes including the doll Olympia's eyes and Coppola's optical instruments. See Hoffmann, *The Sandman*, and Cixous, 'Fiction and its Phantoms', p. 547. See also chapter 2.

285. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 231.

286. This sequence is also intended as a reference to the Oedipus myth that I shall return to later in this chapter.



Fig. 33. *Psychotel* still, dir. Susannah Gent

Processing the eye clips helped me find methods of approaching the overall look of the film. I experimented with layering footage of fire, water, and light, to create texture and take the footage away from representing everyday vision. It is perhaps worth noting that the format of conventional editing software is designed in a linear style, like a strip of celluloid, in which the clip is cut and arranged on a linear timeline.²⁸⁷ Layers are permitted but they are limited. In After Effects, as in Photoshop, the software is built for layering images. I am reminded of Freud's 'Mystic Writing Pad', an analogy for the layering of memory.²⁸⁸

The use of vignette references early film and the encroachment of black into the image signals interiority. For me this is quite literal; my mind's-eye image is black-edged and has no corners. The Super 8 'look' is suggestive of old film, archive film, and subsequently of memory and nostalgia. This opens a line of enquiry concerning the temporal nature of film and its relation to memory. It is common to think of memories as recorded on old technology and as such the style of these recordings influences our recollection.²⁸⁹ The populist face of hauntology has a downgraded, retro look, and as an outmoded style it is now doubly retro and arguably kitsch. With reference to music and art, Fisher describes the twentieth century as 'seized by a recombinatorial delirium'.²⁹⁰ For Fisher, nostalgia is central to the tone of hauntology. Following millennial optimism of the twenty-first century, Fisher writes that 'not only has the future not arrived, it no longer seems possible'.²⁹¹

287. I use the Adobe Premium suite including Premiere Pro for basic editing, After Effects for most of my compositions, Audition for sound work, supplemented with Audacity, and Photoshop for stills, titles, and graphic work.

288. Freud, 'A Note on the Mystic Writing Pad', I return to this text with reference to a later sequence in *Psychotel*.

289. Childhood memories may be recalled through their representations as well as the original event. My father was a keen home-cine filmmaker and as such many of my childhood memories are of the cine films, tinted orange and flickering. The techniques of adding age and colour filters to flashbacks is common in film, and the seventies will often be orange and the fifties will be brown. When young, my daughter asked me if, in the past, it was black and white!

290. Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, p. 8.

291. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

By shooting televisions in the hotel rooms I create depth in the filmic space, a box within a box, a rhizomatic structure, that helps convey the feeling of seeking in dreams. In encouraging the viewer to ‘seek’ the narrative, I aim to instil a dream-like experience of watching the film.²⁹² The reappearance of images on the televisions suggests a trauma to which the narrative keeps returning. Derrida notes a ‘certain polycentrism of dream representation’.²⁹³ Spivak, introducing *Of Grammatology*, refers to a passage from Freud whose dream-work and ‘syntax’ of the dream text Derrida examines: ‘The dream thoughts [...] cannot [...] have any definite endings: they are bound to branch out in every direction into the intricate network of our world of thought.’²⁹⁴ An earlier line from this passage found its way into the mid-section of *Psychotel* as voice-over: ‘This is the dream’s navel.’²⁹⁵

The technique of using multiple television screens creates a linear depth to the cinematic space by which I wish to suggest different levels of consciousness. The intrusion of television images achieves this through the repetition of material seen elsewhere in the film. This approach suggests the television acts as memory space. Christian Metz explores relations between the cinema and Lacan’s mirror stage, noting how cinema ‘encourages narcissistic withdrawal and the indulgence of phantasy’.²⁹⁶ When viewers invest in film, suspend their disbelief and enter the cinematic world, they permit a hybrid psychological space to open in which their fantasy and the film narrative merge. This experience becomes memory, not only of the film itself, but of the experience of viewing. Royle notes the uncanny nature of ‘new technology’, that humans are ‘becoming decentred, invaded, mixed up with the strange reality’.²⁹⁷ The term *telepresence* refers to the disjointedness of the mind from the body in the digital image.²⁹⁸ Our ability to engage with virtual reality and avatars demonstrate the flexible nature of selfhood.²⁹⁹ My strategy of making films within films refers to these relations of the uncanny and digital representation. That digital media provides a permanently

292. See Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*, pp. 99–143. Metz dedicates a section of this book to drawing parallels between the experience of dreaming and cinema spectatorship. His main point is that cinema viewers suspend their disbelief whereas dreamers are unaware that they are dreaming. That said, there are a number of similarities including immersion in an alternative world from which the viewer awakes and returns to reality.

293. Derrida, ‘Freud and the scene of writing’, *Writing and Difference*, p. 273.

294. Freud referenced by Spivak, ‘Translator’s Preface’, in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. lxvii.

295. *Ibid.* Jelly Dolly, my 2004 feature film, is a story about a woman who grows a ring-pull at her navel. The navel operates as a metaphorical portal into her dream world. This preceded by many years my knowledge of this reference, or so I believe.

296. Metz, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, p. 107.

297. In noting the uncanny and telepathic implication of ‘shared thinking’, Royle makes the interesting point that the etymological root of ‘computer’ suggests ‘think with’ (‘com’ from ‘cum’ meaning ‘with’, and ‘putare’ meaning to think, reckon, calculate). See Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 37, footnote 79.

298. Jonathan Steuer, ‘Defining Virtual Reality: Dimensions Determining Telepresence’, *Journal of Communication*, vol. 42, issue 4, 1992, 73–93, pp. 76–78.

299. This is expanded in chapter 6.

open window to the ideology of the other and the superego is suggested through the use of televisions; however, a visual representation of anxiety and the manner in which it returns was closer to my intention when building these sequences.

The filmic space and the on-screen character occupy an ambiguous territory of presence and absence. Roland Barthes intimates all photography is the photography of death.³⁰⁰ Film captures and preserves a moment in time and as such the on-screen image of a performer will at a point be the image of a dead person. In this manner film itself may be viewed as a harbinger of death, and the captured performances destined to become ghosts. Hauntology draws attention to the atemporality of thought and the internet and digital archive interferes with historic temporality. Memory today is as likely to be a memory of a digital artefact as a referent of external reality. Barthes's suggestion that all photography refers to death came to mind when filming the eyeless narrator sequences with my mother and daughter. This process inevitably reminded me of my place in a generational timeline. The de-saturated image and use of vignette in these sequences references early black and white portraiture. The association of death with photography further arises from the Victorian practice of photographing the dead. These images have uncanny tones as the dead are often arranged in the family group, propped up as though still living. Also referenced is the supernatural horror genre where often a ghost from a past age returns. We are reminded of Derrida's returning spectre whose first visit is also a return.³⁰¹ Images of hotels, such as The Grand in Scarborough, now shabby but with former glory evident, speak of the passing of time. In addition to the repetition of the returning spectre is the idea of the returning guest and the return of genes.³⁰²

Through a process of production followed by reflection, the film gained sophistication and progressed my understanding of the uncanny. The initial approach was to gather material that related to the uncanny texts. Freud's principal hypothesis in '*Das "Unheimliche"*' connects the uncanny to the castration complex. Freud supports his argument by pointing to evidence of dream analysis in which 'the substitutive relation

300. Barthes likens photography to a primitive theatre. He references early theatre and the Cult of the Dead and draws comparison between the actor in theatrical make up occupying a place between life and death and the frozen image of the photograph, the made-up face 'beneath which we see the dead'. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, London: Fontana, 1984, pp. 30–32.

301. Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, pp. 10–11.

302. Derrida includes 'elementary processes of information within the living cell' in his understanding of 'writing'. Genetic code repeats and returns as an originary form of such 'writing'. See *Of Grammatology*, 1998, p. 9.

between the eye and the male organ [...] is seen to exist'.³⁰³ He makes reference to Oedipus who took out his own eyes following the fulfilment of the prophecy. Freud notes that castration would have been a more fitting punishment for his crime.³⁰⁴ As we know, the Oedipal myth became the narrative in Freud's theory of early sexual development and he claims the power of Hoffman's story becomes intelligible as soon as we replace the Sandman by 'the dreaded father at whose hands castration is expected'.³⁰⁵ Castration is referenced in the film through an image relating to penis envy and by featuring the female genitals.



Fig. 34. *Psychotel* stills, dir. Susannah Gent

An image of a penis and a hand are combined with footage of a naked figure filmed from above. The image is brief in order that it not appear pornographic, but long enough to register that the figure has three hands. This makes reference to the iconic images of the three-handed Virgin Mary, as well as Freud's reference to 'a hand cut off at the wrist' as inducing a feeling of uncanniness.³⁰⁶

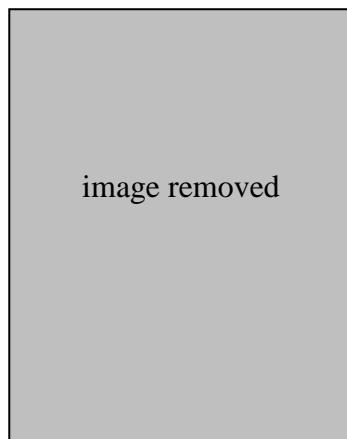


Fig. 35. *Trojeručica*, St John Damascen

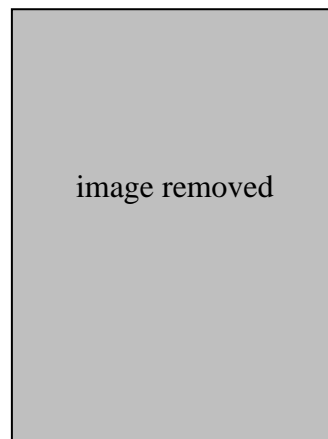


Fig. 36. 'Three handed Madonna'³⁰⁷

303. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 231.

304. *Ibid.* As noted, this is referenced in the sequence of my daughter with bandaged eyes, shown above.

305. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

306. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 244.

307. There are many iconic images such as this. It is thought that the third hand relates to the story of John of Damascus whose hand was cut off as punishment for alleged treachery. His hand was restored following prayer. The first image, *Trojeručica*, St John Damascene, Eastern Orthodox icon, Hilander, early 8th Century, shows the third hand as an additional feature to the mother and child. The second image, source unknown, thought to be of 14th century Russian origin, is one of many copies of the earlier image where the third hand appears as an extra limb.

Alexandra Kokoli reminds us of the uncanny nature of the female genitalia in the psychoanalytic tenet. The first home, the mother's womb is rendered uncanny by repression.³⁰⁸ Freud reverses intra-uterine existence, a state initially 'qualified by a certain lasciviousness', and suggests the process of repression transforms this to the terrifying phantasy of being buried alive.³⁰⁹ This reversal, or sliding of meaning, echoes the transformation that the word 'uncanny' has undergone. As Freud notes, 'among its different shades of meaning the word *'heimlich'* exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, *'unheimlich'*.'³¹⁰ Kokoli notes the metaphor of the return of the repressed presents an unexpected ally for feminism as a powerful re-emergence of the marginal and the oppressed.

Dany Nobus writes: 'hair is the mother of all fetishes in Freudian theory, because it represents the fixed last impression of the female genitals before the anxiety provoking confrontation with the absence of a penis'.³¹¹ With this in mind I recorded some genitalia footage. The material was shocking and effective; however, in a quest for modesty I replaced the pubic hair with hedgehog spines. The result remains provocative but appears surreal, recalling the shot in *Un Chien Andalou*: a sea urchin appears in an armpit. Jack Morgan suggests that 'the fertile, swampy, sexual river system that brings us into the world' is a source of uncanniness, not only for Freud but shown in threatening marshy landscapes, and ectoplasmic tunnels of the horror genre.³¹²

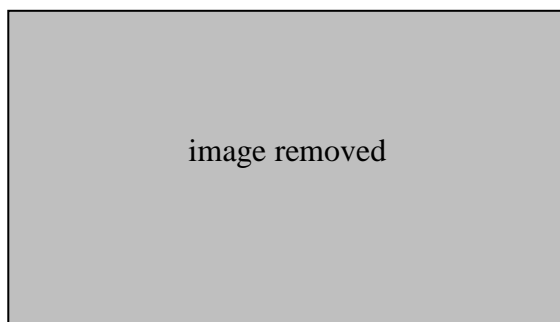


Fig. 37. *Poltergeist*, dir. Tobe Hooper³¹³

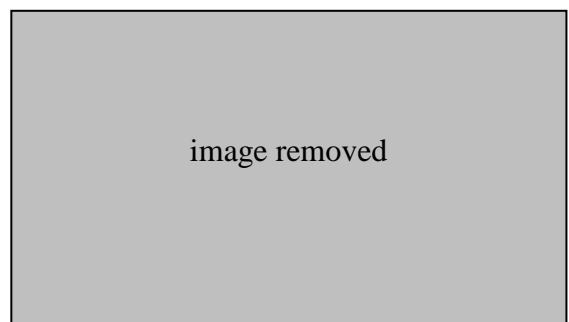


Fig. 38. *Poltergeist*, dir. Gil Kenan³¹⁴

308. Kokoli, *The Feminist Uncanny*, pp. 3–6.

309. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 244. See also Royle, 'Buried Alive', *The Uncanny*, pp. 142–71.

310. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 224.

311. Nobus, 'The uncanny displacement of protection - analytic reflections on "ornament in the field of vision"', in Sharon Kivland and Marc du Ry (editor), 'In the Place of an Object', *Journal of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research*, London: Centre for Freudian Analysis & Research, Special issue, 2000, 97–109, p. 97.

312. Jack Morgan, *The Biology of Horror*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 2002, p. 102.

313. *Poltergeist*, 1982, film still showing the ectoplasm, reminiscent of placental jelly.

314. *Poltergeist*, dir. Gil Kenan, 20th Century Fox, 2015 [on DVD]. This still from the recent re-make shows a more fiery, vaginal portal.

Two examples from 1982 are *Poltergeist*, where the child returns through a supernatural portal dripping with slime, and *Swamp Thing*, one of many examples of organic, primordial horror.³¹⁵ Morgan notes the function of the horror film as being to unleash contemporary, repressed anxiety. He perceives the ‘organic uncanny’ as repressed through Christianity, specifically repressed Pagan rituals in which the organic and the physical were celebrated.

Derrida’s ‘impression’ of Freud, deconstructed in *Archive Fever*, explores the relations between the public and the secret in ‘two places of *inscription: printing and circumcision*’.³¹⁶ Derrida opens the question of whether psychoanalysis is a ‘Jewish Science’, pointing to circumcision as the symbolic substitute of the castration of the son by the primitive father. He notes Freud’s comment on the impression left on the uncircumcised by the circumcised, ‘a disagreeable, uncanny [*unheimlich*] impression’.³¹⁷ I reflect upon Freud’s own circumcision by ‘the dreaded father at whose hands castration is expected’, and the uncanny effect this may have left on him.³¹⁸

Royle, in his summary of the uncanny, writes:

The uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced. Suddenly one’s sense of oneself (of one’s so-called ‘personality’ or ‘sexuality’, for example) seems strangely questionable.³¹⁹

My relation to my own body, particularly my genitals, becomes uncanny upon reading Freud. That they could induce fear or signify loss produces in me ‘a crisis of the natural, touching upon everything that one might have thought was ‘part of nature’: one’s own nature, human nature, the nature of reality and the world’.³²⁰ This discrepancy between my relation to my body and my understanding of how it is interpreted in Freudian psychoanalysis points to the fissure between nature and culture. Royle suggests that ‘[i]t may thus be construed as a foreign body within oneself, even the experience of oneself as a foreign body, the very estrangement of inner silence and solitude.’³²¹

315. *Poltergeist*, dir. Tobe Hooper, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1982 [on DVD], *Swamp Thing*, dir. Wes Craven, Swampfilms, 1982, [ON DVD].

316. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, translated by Eric Prenowitz, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 8. Original italics.

317. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 46.

318. Freud, “The ‘Uncanny’”, p. 232.

319. Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 1.

320. *Ibid.*

321. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Spivak writes, ‘we have to go further than the unconscious, we have to reach the body, the organism. If the “unconscious” is unknown to us, how much more so the body!’³²² While Freud talks quite specifically in his essay on the uncanny of the fear of castration as a phantasy of actual damage to the penis, Lacan links the phantasy to the image of the fragmented body of the child in the stage of the mirror. These “imagos of the fragmented body”, images of ‘castration, emasculation, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, and bursting open of the body’ are, to Lacan, structural and constitutive of the instincts themselves.³²³



Fig. 39. *Psychotel* still, dir. Susannah Gent

This ambiguous image intends to explore these ideas.³²⁴ The extended cleft is suggestive of a wound and relates to the idea of woman as castrated. The absence of the rest of the body is another form of castration, that of the self, in which the body is a sexual organ in its entirety. In the film the voice-over speaks of the room having been turned inside-out into a mirror image of itself. This expands the idea of the fragmented body to include the hotel, itself a representation of the psyche, as broken up and disembowelled. For me this image also brings to mind phantom limbs. Anthony Vidler notes that the pre-mirror stage body, the ‘*corps morcelé*’ or body in pieces, is repressed in the unconscious, showing up in dreams and during the psychoanalytic process when the individual is threatened by a sense of disintegration.³²⁵ For Vidler, these processes are related to a general spatial uncanny evident in the friction between the home and the unhomey, as he explores in relation to architecture.

Damasio introduces the theory of the proto-self; ‘the nonconscious forerunner for the levels of self which appear in our minds as the conscious protagonists of consciousness:

322. Spivak, ‘Translator’s Preface’, in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. xlv.

323. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 85.

324. This image features in the first act of *Psychotel*.

325. Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*, p. 77.

core self and autobiographical self'.³²⁶ The proto-self, shared with other living, but not necessarily conscious organisms, is the system that nonconsciously regulates the organism's body to remain within the homeostatic range required for basic survival. In this assembly of neural devices the organism holds a model of the entire organism. For Damasio, this 'strange, overlooked and noteworthy fact is perhaps the single most important clue as to the underpinnings of consciousness'.³²⁷ The proto-self is in essence a body map. That images of the fragmented body correspond to a disruption of the body map draw together the theories of Lacan and Damasio and contribute a modest contribution to knowledge.

The Return of the Repressed and the Uncanny Child

Yes, and ghosts: how close to the marrow
Can they come? At night I feel them
Like drops of sweat running under my skin.³²⁸

Throughout this first period of production of *Psychotel* my research focussed on the Freudian uncanny and the 'return of the repressed'.³²⁹ This well-known definition of the uncanny requires an acceptance of the psychoanalytic topography of the mental apparatus.³³⁰ Although repression is described as 'the corner-stone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests',³³¹ the closing remarks of Freud's chapter on 'Repression' suggest work-in-progress.³³² In so far as its defensive function is concerned, repression does not appear to work. Certainly, in Freud's account the mechanism of keeping both instinctual representatives and distasteful memories from consciousness frequently fails.³³³ Repression, for Freud, is the process undergone by an instinctual impulse to make it inoperative. A distinction is made between the representative of the instinct and the associated affect: the idea can be held in the

326. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, p. 22.

327. *Ibid.* This is explored further in the following chapter in relation to the split structure of the psyche.

328. Vincent Buckley, 'Ghosts, Places, Stories, Questions', *Twelve Poets 1950-1970*, p. 59. Extract.

329. In 'Das "Unheimlich"' Freud describes the uncanny as that which is 'in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression'. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 13.

330. The Freudian unconscious is said to be a reservoir of instincts, feelings, memories, and urges formed from repressed psychical material. This process begins during early childhood following the resolution of the castration and oedipal complexes. For Freud the unconscious is formed from these developmental stages. See 'Repression' and 'The Unconscious', in Freud, *The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 11, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Penguin, 1984, pp. 139-158, and pp. 159-210.

331. Sigmund Freud, Editor's Note, 'Repression', *The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 11, pp. 139-158, 141.

332. 'The short series of comparisons presented here may easily convince us that more comprehensive investigations are necessary before we can hope thoroughly to understand the processes connected with repression [...]' *Ibid.*, p. 158.

333. In early works the terms repression and defence are used interchangeably but later the term repression takes precedence. He writes: 'Repression is a preliminary stage of condemnation, something between flight and condemnation.' Instincts in themselves cannot be known, only their representatives. It is these representatives that are repressed. Freud notes that satisfaction of an impulse is always pleasurable thus pointing to the inherent contradiction in the notion of the defensive repression of instinct. He considers the states of pain and hunger and notes that the removal of displeasure is pleasurable and that the presence of these negative states is experienced as a pressure. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

unconscious or can disappear from consciousness but the affect returns in the form of anxiety. Freud writes: ‘If a repression does not succeed in preventing feelings of unpleasure or anxiety from arising, we may say that it has failed’, yet we only see the outcome of the repression, the representatives of the repressed instinct.³³⁴ Repression, as a mechanism designed to prevent unpleasure, is only known by the affective anxiety and the obnoxious thoughts it produces. Yet Freud writes: ‘We see that the repressive trends may find a substitute for repression in a weakening of what is distasteful.’³³⁵ He also states ‘repression acts, therefore, in a *highly individual* manner’.³³⁶ This wavering could indicate that the notion of repression is being used to describe too broad a range of mental operations. On anxiety Freud writes:

It is possible for the development of the affect to proceed directly from the system *Ucs.*; in that case the affect always has the character of anxiety, for which all ‘repressed’ affects are exchanged.³³⁷

The presence of anxiety as conscious affect is emphasised here. Lancelot Law Whyte proposes ‘self-eliminating consciousness’ – we are conscious of what requires attention.³³⁸ From this stance anxiety is a priority of consciousness, the presence of which has no clear relation to the repression of instincts.

Freud describes *primal repression*, a first phase of repression, the psychological (ideational) representative of the instinct being denied entrance into consciousness.³³⁹ He later refers to the ‘repulsion which operates from the direction of conscious upon that which is repressed’ suggesting again that repression is a conscious action.³⁴⁰ *Repression proper* is described as an after-pressure, where ‘mental derivatives of the repressed representative’ are also repressed.³⁴¹ Repression is a constant and dynamic process and its two modes, *primal* and *proper*, operate together; what was primarily repressed reaches towards consciousness and what consciousness finds repulsive is banished, returned to what is primarily repressed.

334. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

335. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

336. *Ibid.*, p. 150. Original italics.

337. Freud, ‘The Unconscious’, p. 182.

338. ‘*Thus self-awareness is basically self-eliminating*; its biological function is apparently to catalyze processes which tend to remove its cause, in each situation. Consciousness is like a fever which, if not excessive, hastens curative processes and so eliminates its source.’ Original italics. Lancelot Law Whyte, *The Unconsciousness Before Freud*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1962, p. 34.

339. Freud, ‘Repression’, p. 147.

340. *Ibid.*

341. *Ibid.*

This describes something different from anxiety. In my experience anxiety is something that plays on the mind. The revulsion described here is closer to thoughts relating to social taboos, which on entering consciousness one would banish as distasteful, for example incest. Through his concept of the Oedipal complex Freud suggests that incest, specifically desire for the mother, is a normal psychical phase that the human infant must overcome. Evolutionary biology has shown us that incest avoidance is observed in non-human animals with experimental evidence and field observation gathered from a wide range of species including crickets, hamsters, mice, and primates. Kin recognition through smell is one such method. The biological advantage of incest avoidance and its widespread presence casts doubt on it being a psychical phase as such, although this may depend on how Freud is interpreted.

The tenet of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* proposes that psychoanalysis reinforces domestication, and individual and social repression.³⁴² They question whether the human ever desired incest suggesting that 'psychoanalysis was shutting up sexuality in a bizarre sort of box painted with bourgeois motifs, in a kind of rather repugnant artificial triangle'.³⁴³ In this manner 'the whole of sexuality as production of desire', that they see as 'the fantastic factory of Nature and Production,' is transformed into a 'dirty little secret', a family secret.³⁴⁴ They suggest psychoanalysis revives an 'age old tendency to humble us, to demean us,'³⁴⁵ and point to a mechanism of making the unconscious guilty by 'the sham image' of Oedipus.³⁴⁶ This achieves a 'cultural justification for psychic repression', in which individual repression, foregrounded through the Oedipus complex, shadows social repression, specifically the repression of desire that is seen as explosive and threatening to the established order of society.³⁴⁷

An early version of this chapter was the content of the lecture sequences in *Psychotel*. Given the brevity of the sections that have remained in the final edit, the full content is not conveyed to the viewer. Like the blind narrator sequences, the lecture now acts as a punctuation mark or a return to an academic space in the film. These sections also indicate the capability of the psyche to reflect, to see itself as an object through the device of breaking out of the narrative proper, where the film operates primarily in an

342. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 15.

343. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

344. *Ibid.*

345. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

346. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

347. *Ibid.*, p. 126-7.

affective manner, and commenting on the theme of the production. Lastly these sequences complicate the relation of the filmmaker / character to indicate a doubling of the psyche.

When in production for this section of the film, I was less persuaded by the psychoanalytic account of the psyche than I later came to be for reasons outlined in chapter 2. This was partly due to the style of language used by Freud, exemplified in his discussion of the censor, the executive function that operates the mechanism of repression. He writes:

In the first phase the psychical act is unconscious and belongs to the system *Ucs.*; if, on testing, it is rejected by the censorship, it is not allowed to pass into the second phase, it is said to be 'repressed' and must remain unconscious. If, however, it passes this testing, it enters the second phase and thenceforth belongs to the second system, which we shall call the system *Cs.*³⁴⁸

Freud's terminology suggests that repression is deliberate and although not explicitly stated, it implies, through the choice of the word 'censor' that acceptance or rejection is based on a sentient, possibly moral decision. In the case of primary repression, the repressed psychical material is not, and never has been, consciously available. This anthropomorphic depiction of the neural activity implies a homunculus, a discounted description of mind, rejected on account of infinite regress. The implied homunculus runs through much of Freud's discussion of repression, for example when he writes; 'the rigorous censorship exercises its office at the point of transition from the *Ucs.* to the *Pcs.* (or *Cs.*)',³⁴⁹ and '*primal repression*, a first phase of repression, which consists in the psychical (ideational) representative of an instinct being denied entrance into the conscious'.³⁵⁰

Notwithstanding this anthropomorphic description of the censor and the inconsistency of the nature and action of repression, one of Freud's major contributions is the understanding of the mental apparatus as comprised of distinct operational regions and that the actions of these regions may be in conflict with others. Seen this way, repression may be the result of the evolutionary course of the brain's development. In very simple terms, the human brain has developed from a central nervous system, to

348. Freud, 'The Unconscious', p. 175.

349. *Ibid.*

350. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

brainstem structures, to the cortex. What the cortex contributes, in part, is working memory space that allows an object or idea to be held in mind. This temporal capability allows for predictive analysis. This process of cognition requires that the immediate action or reaction of earlier brain regions be suppressed. This is explored by Barry Opatow, who proposes psychoanalysis as a theory of consciousness. He states: ‘Freud’s deepest concepts of the repressed unconscious and of intrapsychic conflict concern the hierarchical inhibition of the lower by the higher modes of mental activity.’³⁵¹ Focusing on ordinary adult experience, Opatow considers repression in terms of ‘compromise formation’, a Freudian term describing the outcome of conflict between an unconscious desire and a repressive act of the conscious ego.³⁵² He writes:

The deepest meaning of conflict pertains to an inhibitory boundary separating two modes of operation in the mental apparatus. This implies that in addition to combining antithetical mental contents, compromise formation must also refer to a functional concurrence of the two modes – the primary and secondary processes – in a unitary mental activity.³⁵³

Citing research from cognitive studies and neuroscience, Opatow understands the purpose of consciousness as overriding unconscious pressure to enable predictive strategy.³⁵⁴ If the inhibition of the lower by the higher modes of mental activity were to replace the notion of repression, something still needs to be added to the ‘return of the repressed’ for it to describe the uncanny. The intrapsychic conflict described here may shed further light on Ernst Jentsch’s proposition that the uncanny arises from intellectual uncertainty and cognitive dissonance. Freud criticises Jentsch for his equation of the uncanny with the novel and unfamiliar, pointing out that not everything that is novel or unfamiliar is uncanny. Similarly, if intrapsychic conflict is a normal mental activity, there must be something specific to the ‘intrinsic quality which justifies the use of a special name’.³⁵⁵ Freud later describes the uncanny as that which has been ‘made strange’ by repression, although he does not expand upon the process of ‘making strange’. Opatow implies something similar: ‘When we clinically examine the drives

351. Barry Opatow, ‘The Real Unconscious: Psychoanalysis as a Theory of Consciousness’, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 45, 1997, 865–890, p. 872.

352. Sigmund Freud, ‘Two Encyclopaedia Articles’ (1923), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18, trans. and ed. by James Strachey *et al.*, London: Hogarth, 1955, pp. 233–59, 242.

353. Opatow, ‘The Real Unconscious’, p. 874.

354. *Ibid.*, p. 878, in reference to Benjamin Libet, ‘Unconscious cerebral initiative and the role of conscious will in voluntary action’, *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1985, vol. 8, 529–566, A. Marcel, ‘Conscious and Unconscious Perception’, *Cognitive Psychology*, 1983, vol. 15, 238–300, P. Merikle, ‘Perception without awareness’, *American Psychologist*, 1992, 792–95.

355. Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 1.

and defenses underlying compromise formation, we are bound to emphasize how conflicting intentions lead to *distorted contents* entering conscious awareness.³⁵⁶

Opatow points to psychoanalysis as devising a new ‘metapsychological language’ to address the ‘odd domain in which subjectivity merges with objective mechanism’.³⁵⁷ He writes that ‘*conscious* experiences (symptoms and dreams) are governed by laws alien to consciousness itself’.³⁵⁸ Upholding Opatow’s argument that in ordinary mental life there are conflicts between brain functions, the preceding description does not explain why certain everyday mental operations are felt as ‘alien’. Further, in evolutionary terms these ‘alien laws’ will precede consciousness. Opatow’s understanding of psychic conflict as an ‘inhibitory boundary’ separating the higher and lower modes of operation might imply evolutionary stages of development.³⁵⁹ He notes that *primitive* contents of the unconscious may be prevented from reaching awareness, a point that echoes the more specific account of the uncanny in the footnotes of *Totem and Taboo*:³⁶⁰

It would appear that we invest with a feeling of uncanniness those impressions which lend support to a belief in [...] the animistic attitude of mind, at a time when our judgment has already rejected these same beliefs.³⁶¹

There is a parallel with Jentsch’s hypothesis of ‘intellectual uncertainty’ and an opposition between the so called higher and lower mental functions. Freud elaborates:

When we, no less than primitive man, project something into external reality, what is happening must surely be this: we are recognizing the existence of two states – one in which something is directly given to the senses and to consciousness (that is, is *present* to them), and alongside it another, in which the same thing is latent but capable of re-appearing. In short, we are recognizing the co-existence of perception and memory, or putting it more generally, the existence of *unconscious* mental processes alongside the conscious ones.³⁶²

Freud draws a parallel between memory and unconscious material without highlighting repression and describes it as a primitive mode of thought. The unconscious mental process as outlined here is influential and capable of returning to consciousness, and as

356. Opatow, ‘The Real Unconscious’, p. 874. Italics added.

357. *Ibid.*, p. 867.

358. *Ibid.* Original italics.

359. *Ibid.*, p. 874.

360. *Ibid.*, pp. 874–875. Italics added.

361. Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 241, footnote 1. with reference to footnote in ‘Totem and Taboo’ (1913), *Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950, vol. 13, pp. 1–100, 86.

362. Freud, ‘Totem and Taboo’, pp. 93–4. In this earlier text of 1913 Freud’s understanding of the mental apparatus was perhaps closer to Opatow’s before his all-encompassing understanding of repression, as outlined in ‘Repression’ (1915), took hold.

discussed above, there is potential conflict between unconscious and conscious thought. This description is close to Opatow's understanding of the mechanism of consciousness as inhibiting spontaneous, unconscious action as an evolved function for predictive strategy.³⁶³

Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis describes the role played by emotion in decision making. Somatic markers result from experiences being 'marked' so they provoke a repeat sensation in a similar situation. This hypothesis resulted from Damasio's study of brain-damaged patients who presented changes in both emotional response and decision making capacity.³⁶⁴ Through controlled experiments Damasio and his team established that patients with impaired emotional response lacked the capacity to retain and repeat emotional response with the consequence of ineffectual predictive strategy.³⁶⁵ Damasio proposes that the emotional responses to situations encountered are constantly retained as neural maps; that is, certain neural configurations are primed and will re-fire when faced with a similar situation.³⁶⁶ This describes what is commonly called *gut reaction*. It is not uncommon to find that gut reaction is at odds with rational consideration and gut reaction usually wins. Damasio writes:

When a negative somatic marker is juxtaposed with to a particular future outcome the combination functions as an alarm bell. When a positive somatic marker is juxtaposed instead, it becomes a beacon of incentive.³⁶⁷

This description of emotional retention and return has led me to consider the uncanny, 'the return of the repressed', in similar terms. This is both original and speculative. Feelings of strangeness have been attributed to the configuration of the mental apparatus, specifically conflict between conscious and unconscious thought. Yet it has been unclear why in everyday mental processes, certain 'mental solids' are distorted or

363. Topology of the mental apparatus is expanded later, however it is worth noting here that Freud understood the cortex to be related to consciousness, and memory to be unconscious. Recent neuroscientific understanding, and the view of Opatow, hold that the cortex is associated with memory while brain stem mechanisms are largely associated with consciousness. This is a crude summary but is explored in more detail later in this chapter.

364. The somatic marker hypothesis is developed in detail in Damasio, *Descartes' Error*. It is damage to the ventromedial prefrontal cortices that results in loss of somatic marker formation. See 'In Colder Blood', *Descartes' Error*, pp. 52–82, 70.

365. Using a skin conductance test in conjunction with showing images of a horrific nature alongside control images, it was found that ventromedial frontal patients were unresponsive to the horrific images in terms of their somatic state, yet they were able to report that the images were horrific in terms of the content. When tested using a gambling scenario, the ventromedial frontal patients repeatedly returned to a deck of cards that carried a negative outcome, demonstrating that they failed to 'learn' from their decisions, as though they were missing an element of predictive strategy showed by normal participants. These findings were upheld in the broader context of the patients' lives in general. *Ibid.*, pp. 209–17.

366. According to Damasio, emotion is the experience of bodily changes in the organism. As an organism, (I am using the term organism as this mechanism is likely to be common across all animals with brains, not a uniquely human mechanism,) receives stimuli from the outside world, the brain and body undergo physiological changes, including endocrine release, heart rate, muscular response etc. Emotion is the experience of these changes. The somatic marker refers to neural reaction that sets in motion physiological changes that were experienced when the somatic marker was first established. *Ibid.*, pp. 127–34.

367. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, p. 174.

accompanied by the sensation of strangeness, or put another way: ‘One is curious to know what this common core is which allows us to distinguish as “uncanny” certain things which lie within the field of what is frightening’.³⁶⁸

Damasio distinguishes ‘early’ or ‘primary’ emotions experienced in childhood from ‘adult’ or ‘secondary’ emotions that develop from experience and social interaction. As the individual gains experience, what is viewed as fearful gains in sophistication. Knowledge and rationality play a part in tempering our reactions; however, the somatic marker hypothesis proposes that we retain a latent capacity to re-experience fear. Cixous comments on Freud’s introduction of childhood into the uncanny, writing that ‘any symptom, lapse, and dream has a forked branch which encounters a childhood experience or event’.³⁶⁹ Fear in childhood may commonly arise when left alone or in the dark. As children are vulnerable, the fear response that initiates crying aims to bring a parent to ensure safety.³⁷⁰ Prior to gaining experience and understanding, in childhood many things appear strange – shadows, the way things appear to move in the dark, draughts that cause doors to open by themselves. The prevalence of such images in the supernatural horror genre, whose aim is to instil a feeling a dread rather than the adrenalin-fuelled fear of the thriller, lends weight to this argument. This genre often features children, unusual as horror films are not intended for young audiences and in other genres, the age of the characters generally reflects the age of the target audience.³⁷¹ The presence of children in films such as *Amityville Horror*, *Child’s Play*, *Poltergeist*, and *Before I Wake*, primes the spectator through alignment with the young protagonist, to re-experience childhood fears.³⁷²

368. Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 1.

369. Cixous, ‘Fiction and its Phantoms’, p. 527.

370. Or indeed an aunt as Royle discusses in ‘Darkness’, with reference to ‘a curious night-scene of eavesdropping’ in which a psychoanalyst is party to a young boy’s expression of fear. See Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 110.

371. A Google search for ‘children in horror films’ which brings up the following links, each of which is a rating survey, varying between 10 and 30. Of course many include the same films but nevertheless demonstrates this as popular and commonplace.

<<http://www.boston.com/ae/movies/gallery/creepychildrenmovies/>>, accessed 17 November 2015,

<<http://www.buzzfeed.com/laurenepaul/the-creepiest-kids-in-horror-movies#.aiwpJawXx>>, accessed 17 November 2015,

<<http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/scary-children-horror-movies-gallery-1.1984867>>, accessed 17 November 2015,

<<http://www.gamesradar.com/10-creepy-horror-movie-kids/>>, accessed 17 November 2015,

<<http://uk.eonline.com/photos/6562/13-scary-kids-from-horror-movies/227410>>, accessed 17 November 2015,

<<http://horror.about.com/od/horrorpicklists/tp/20killerkids.01.htm>>, accessed 17 November 2015.

372. *Amityville Horror*, dir. Stuart Rosenburg, 20th Century Fox, 1979 [on DVD], *Child’s Play*, dir. Tom Holland, United Artists, 1988 [on DVD], *Poltergeist*, dir. Tobe Hooper, 1982, *Before I Wake*, dir. Mike Flanagan, Intrepid Pictures, 2016 [on DVD].

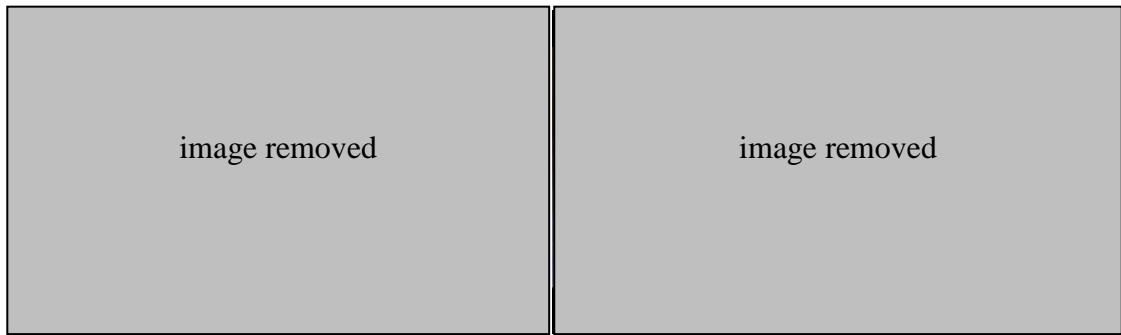


Fig. 40. *Before I Wake*, dir. Mike Flanagan

Fig. 41. *Poltergeist*, dir. Tobe Hooper (1982)

According to the somatic marker hypothesis, our emotional reactions coincide with the most similar and recent events. This offers an explanation as to the operation of genre, that reactions to filmic tropes are built on experience, and although we get used to the content of genre films, they continue to impact upon us. The somatic marker hypothesis accounts for why we enjoy filmic unpleasure – fear and anxiety. Setting somatic markers primes the individual for appropriate response that could carry survival advantage. This could be pleasurable in itself. I am not suggesting that viewing film necessarily prepares one for future situations, although this is partly true, but the range of situations a viewer experiences, especially given that these experiences are largely of an emotional nature, suggests a relation between cinematic pleasure and somatic markers.

That the uncanny results from somatic markers set in childhood might account for Freud's description, here summarised by Royle, that the uncanny 'comes above all, perhaps, in the uncertainties of silence, solitude and darkness'.³⁷³ I suggest that it is not just the feeling of fear that causes the specific quality we call uncanny, but the oddity of the experience in itself. As we gain experience old somatic markers will be superseded by new. To re-experience the sensation of childhood fear is additionally unnerving as it appears to come from elsewhere. The somatic marker hypothesis only adds a neurological aspect to Freud's account, as seen here:

An uncanny experience occurs either when repressed infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed.³⁷⁴

373. Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 2.

374. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 249.

Anneleen Masschelein outlines the return of the Freudian repressed, in *The Unconcept*. Her description, following the psychoanalytic topology, can be understood in neuroscientific terms, where the ‘trace of movements’ and “‘ghosts’ of things’ are close to Damasio’s neural maps and somatic markers.

What happens, then, is the sudden revelation of a remote memory trace – the remainder, not of the repressed thing in itself, but of the trace of its movements in the *Ucs* – which forms a connection with a recent image or experience in the *Cs*. The unconscious thing-representations are not actual or accurate representations of things; it is perhaps more appropriate to call them the ‘ghosts’ of things’.³⁷⁵

This last sentence features as voice-over in *Psychotel*. Several quotations of this nature feature alongside images of reflections, shot in the second production stage, which I discuss in the next chapter. In the film the words take on a different function. Out of context they do not outline a train of thought as presented here; rather, they suggest a speaking presence in the film, the filmmaker, engaged in the act of research. Less literal than the lecture sequences, they re-introduce the voice of the academic as one of the many narrators.³⁷⁶ As a representation of the psyche, the narrators in *Psychotel* correspond to aspects of thought that interrupt and contradict themselves.

In Royle’s summary he writes: ‘The uncanny has to do with a strangeness of framing and borders, an experience of liminality.’³⁷⁷ I am reminded of Opatow’s description of an ‘inhibitory boundary’ separating conscious and unconscious processes. The manner in which the uncanny intrudes with such specificity could be accounted for in the description of a childhood somatic marker returning a state of fear that is strongly felt, like a gut reaction, when faced with something trifling that the adult mind has long since understood as benign. This account contributes to Jentsch’s understanding of the uncanny as intellectual uncertainty where the conflict arises from discrepancies in the experience of childhood fear alongside adult rationality. He writes that ‘the child has had so little experience that simple things can be inexplicable for him and even slightly complicated situations can represent dark secrets’.³⁷⁸

375. Masschelein, *The Unconcept*, p. 36. In this we also see correlation with Derrida’s idea of the trace and its relation to the ghost.

376. The multiple narrators are discussed in chapter 7.

377. Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 2.

378. Ernst Jentsch, ‘On the Psychology of the Uncanny’, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 2, issue 1, 1997, 7–16, p. 9.

The psychoanalytic view of the uncanny as ‘the return of the repressed’ attributes the uncanny to the early years. Psychological material repressed during the resolution of the Oedipal and castration complexes returns to consciousness in a form made strange by repression and experienced as anxiety. If the ‘repressed’ is aligned with the unconscious, as that which is able to exert influence but of which we are not consciously aware, and the ‘return’ is the return of a previously experienced state, the somatic marker hypothesis adds neurological description to the Freudian account. The relation of the uncanny to the somatic marker, or the gut-experience, is further hinted at here: ‘A feeling of uncanniness may come from curious coincidences, a sudden sense that things seem to be fated or “meant to happen”.’³⁷⁹ Whereas the psychoanalytic view proposes that anxiety is the affect of all returning repression, this description of the uncanny is a replay of the original feeling. In Freud’s work, what is repressed can be a previously lived experience and a representation of an instinct. Although these are quite different, it is not clear how the mechanism of repression accommodates these differences. Freud describes repression in relation to the infantile complexes of which the individual is not conscious in the first place. The somatic marker is a primitive device that guides behaviour without the need for consciousness and may operate in non-human animals.

The unhomely as the familiar and the forbidden suggests child abuse and prompted the bathroom and caravan sequences in *Psychotel*.³⁸⁰ The uncanny as unhomely, both familiar and strange, aligns with the quality of childhood fear that occurs in the home where the familiar is not always as it should be. Freud draws on Schelling’s description of the uncanny, paraphrased by Royle as ‘something that should have remained secret and hidden but has come to light’.³⁸¹ Here lies a sinister suggestion of a dark family secret. For Freud, the trauma of his circumcision in infancy as noted by Derrida, could have shaped his adult psyche. The uncanny, despite its relation to the supernatural, has one foot in reality.³⁸²

379. Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 1. This supports the relation of the uncanny to the automatic discussed in chapter 6.

380. Child abuse, or more specifically, the suggestion of double infanticide is the implied narrative of ‘The Dummy’, that I return to in chapter 7. See Nicholas Royle in *The New Uncanny*, Manchester: Comma Press, 2008, pp. 53–68.

381. Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 2. with reference to Freud’s ‘The “Uncanny”’, quoting Schelling: “*Unheimlich*” is the name for everything that ought to have remained . . . hidden and secret but has come to light’, p. 224.

382. Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, pp. 249–51. With reference to the fairy tale, Freud suggest that the uncanny requires an encroachment on reality, that stories framed entirely in fabulous worlds do not produce the uncanny effect.

The bathroom sequence was one of the few sequences that was pre-planned and used actors. The action is a straightforward attempt to induce uncanniness by bringing a mannequin to life, in line with Jentsch's formula.³⁸³ The use of masks follows Jentsch's account:

In games, children strive by means of grotesque disguises and behaviour directly to arouse strong emotions in each other. And among adults there are sensitive natures who do not like to attend masked balls, since the masks and disguises produce in them an exceedingly awkward impression to which they are incapable of becoming accustomed.³⁸⁴

It was not my intention at the time of filming that the sequence have sexual tones. It may be that any masks on children would have had a similar effect but the shiny quality of the black gaffer tape evokes fetish wear. My reference for the mask used on the younger child was a horned mask featured in an image of *Kanaval Vodou* by Leah Gordon. The hood is reminiscent of a hangman's hood and the horns make it primitive and animalistic.³⁸⁵



Fig. 42. *Kanaval Vodou*, Leah Gordon



Fig. 43. *Psychotel* still, dir. Susannah Gent

Certainly, on a small child it is incongruous. That the mannequin is dressed only in vest and pants adds a provocative layer and the tights, that I initially thought might be comic, suggest sexuality.³⁸⁶ That I was not fully aware of the tonal quality of this scene at the point of shooting gives credence to my argument that much of artistic practice is not

383. Jentsch writes that we feel uncanny when there is 'doubt as to whether an apparently living being is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate'. Jentsch, 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny', p. 11.

384. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

385. Leah Gordon, *Kanaval Vodou*, New Art Exchange, <<http://www.nae.org.uk/exhibition/kanaval-vodou-politics-and-revolution-on/39>>, accessed 7 December 2018. Image reproduced with kind permission from Leah Gordon.

386. It is important for me to note here that the shoot itself was light and playful, wholly unlike the tone of the finished sequence, with my daughter and a friend's younger daughter improvising the action and operating the clapperboard.

conscious. The tone of the scene suggests child abuse, a dark family secret, *that should have remained hidden*. Torok and Rand in *Speculations after Freud*, write:

What we consider to be the closest and most intimate part of our life – our own family, our own home – is in fact at the closest possible remove and the least familiar to us. The twofold meaning of the word *heimlich* – belonging to the home, familiar *and* hidden or secret – defines the contradiction the child must endure in a family with secrets (...) Due to covert manoeuvres to which they are not privy, children can become virtual strangers in their own homes.³⁸⁷

The minotaur, a popular surrealist image painted by Dali, Picasso, Ernst, and Magritte, was held at the centre of a labyrinth. The film presents the psyche as a maze. Here Greek mythology and the children as sexual beings make reference to Freud. That the minotaur is part-animal, part-human is suggestive of the human-animal discussed in chapter 7. *Minotaur* is also the title of the journal published and edited by Albert Skira, *et al.* between 1933 and 1939, in which Lacan's first essay was published. Referenced in this sequence are the ancient practices of augury and haruspicy, premonition from bird flight and by studying of the entrails of sacrificed animals and birds. These associations were noted after production further indicating the veiled nature of creative practice. At the time of filming, during the first production stage of *Psychotel*, the bathroom sequence stood alone. As the narrative progressed the character of the spirit guide referenced in this sequence grew into a representation of fantasy life and a playful allegory of the relation of analysand and analyst, as well as student and supervisor in the Ph.D. setting.³⁸⁸

Freud identifies two conditions from which the uncanny arises, one proceeding from repressed infantile complexes and the other concerning the question of reality.³⁸⁹ The description of childhood somatic markers producing uncanny sensations is only

387. Maria Torok and Nicholas Rand, 'The Sandman looks at "The uncanny"', in *Speculations After Freud: Psychoanalysis, Philosophy, and Culture*, edited by Sonu Shamdasani *et al.*, London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 185–203, 202.

388. The idea of a spirit guide began as a thought experiment following my trip to the 'Wild or Domesticated – Uncanny in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives to Mind' conference at House of Science and Letters, Helsinki, 2016 where I presented two papers. Many of the conference guests were researching some aspect of the supernatural including communication with the dead, clairvoyance, and spirit guides. Following the conference I invented a spirit guide as a fictional character. Fictional characters often have a curious tendency to grow seemingly on their own and will often fail to do as directed by the writer. Similarly this spirit guide, rather than behaving as she should; giving sensible advice and support, became unruly, often undressed, swore, and jeered. At a much later stage in the production I asked Sharon Kivland to be the voice of the spirit guide. This is an example of how creative works come to have multiple meanings and origins. In my mind the spirit guide from this thought experiment and my director of studies bear no relation, however, I did come to view my Ph.D. study as a form of therapy, perhaps a form of personal psychoanalysis, less concerned with my life's events, more in relation to the Ph.D. research process (this is explored further in chapter 8 with reference to the work of Patricia Townsend). As such Sharon became a sort of psychoanalyst who I would visit for a 'session' (often fifty minutes). Asking Sharon to voice the spirit guide came from seeing an overlap in the impending closure of the academic / psychoanalytic process, and the exorcism of the character of the spirit guide.

389. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 248–9.

partially explained by the content of the feeling and is additionally born of the experience of the neural event itself. It is not only that we find ourselves once more afraid of the dark, but also that we have been inexplicably transported back to a long-forgotten sensation. This draws our attention to the widely accepted but intriguing fact that we find our own mental life peculiar.

6.

SECOND FLOOR: SINGLE OR DOUBLE ROOM?

Myself and I: the Structure of Selfhood

‘As time passes, the shadow which survives the grave becomes the double which is born with every child.’³⁹⁰

The second period of production of *Psychotel* took place between May and September, 2017. The first pass featured events in hotel rooms, the blind narrator, the lecture, and the bathroom sequence.³⁹¹ On viewing I felt that these sequences should act as energetic and interruptive events between slower sections.³⁹² The workshop in the woods and the caravan were filmed with the intention of sustaining the shots for a longer duration with a text-based voice-over.³⁹³ The texts from Claxton, Masschelein, and Otto Rank, are drawn from the concurrent research and suggested a use of reflections that feature in the film.³⁹⁴

The following exploration of the shadow, the reflection, and the soul reflects upon accounts of doubling in psychoanalysis, philosophy, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience, including the Freudian topologies of the psyche and neuroscientific accounts of the structures of the brain. The aim is not to show that any of these theories are incorrect, but rather to emphasise similarities across these fields to present an expanded understanding of the brain, mind, and the subjective experience of uncanny doubling.

‘*Das “Unheimliche”*’ acknowledges Rank’s psychoanalytic study of the double, noting effects arising from mirrors, reflections, shadows, and guardian spirits. Rank draws on accounts of primitive beliefs including the Kai in New Guinea who are careful not to tread on their shadows for fear it will bring harm,³⁹⁵ and a saying from the German

390. J. V. Negelein, ‘Image, Mirror, Shadow in Popular Faith’, *Archives of Religious Science*, vol. 5, 1902, 1–37, referenced in Otto Rank, *The Double: a Psychoanalytic Study*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1971, p. 50.

391. These are discussed in chapter 5.

392. The first two work-in-progress screenings were to my director of studies, Sharon Kivland only. At the outset I had envisaged making a film of about ten minutes in length. The total duration of *Psychotel* at this stage was about fifteen minutes.

393. For this shoot I attempted to use a better quality camera, a Sony FS 100. Although the image quality was perceptibly better, the camera was large and cumbersome to use. I returned to my DSLR for the remainder of the film. Having a camera constantly to hand had become part of my method. Like a documentary filmmaker, I am constantly on the lookout for potential situations to film and much of the footage was gathered in this spontaneous manner. As I often film in public places, for example Graves Park where I filmed the animal sequences, or when I am on holiday, it is not practical to use a large camera and it draws attention to my activity.

394. Masschelein, *The Unconcept*, p. 36, Claxton, *The Wayward Mind*, p. 58 and p. 80, Rank, *The Double*, pp. 50–60.

395. Rank, *Double*, p. 58.

provinces that stepping on your shadow will bring death.³⁹⁶ In Central India pregnant women avoid contact with men's shadows as it may cause the child to resemble him,³⁹⁷ and Fiji islanders believe everyone has two souls, the shadow and the reflection.³⁹⁸ Rank proposes the shadow is the first 'embodiment' of the soul. Despite having only ever had a rational account of what shadows are, nevertheless I am susceptible to the effect of the shadow figures ubiquitous in the supernatural horror genre, such as *The Babadook*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Nosferatu*, and *The Shadow People*.³⁹⁹



Fig. 44. *The Babadook*

Fig. 45. *A Nightmare on Elm Street*

Fig. 46. *Nosferatu*

Also prevalent in both the supernatural horror genre and folklore are mirrors. Rank describes the tradition of covering mirrors in houses holding a corpse so the soul does not remain in the mirror.⁴⁰⁰ Examples of mirrors in horror films include *Candyman*, *Mirror Mirror*, *Mirrors*, and an accomplished sequence in *Ring II*.⁴⁰¹

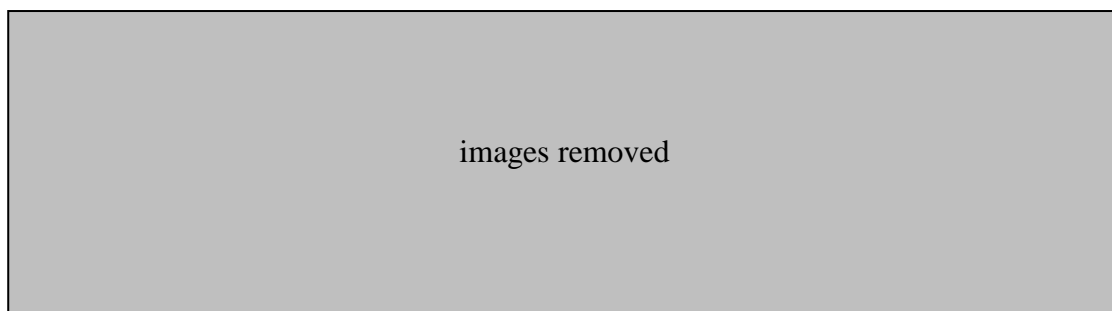


Fig. 47. *Ring II*

This influenced my decision to film reflections for the middle section of *Psychotel*. I filmed at Rivelin valley when struck by the ambiguity of the image because of the clarity of the reflections. Other reflections were filmed on a large television during a shoot when the sunlight entering a house produced distinctive light effects.

396. *Ibid.*, p. 50. This text is used in as voice-over in *Psychotel*.

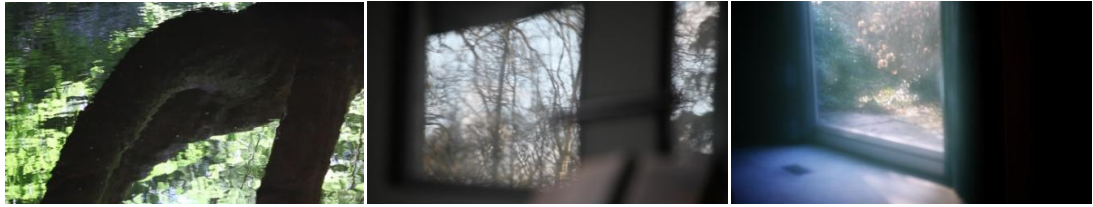
397. *Ibid.*, p. 54

398. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

399. *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, dir. Wes Craven, Warner Home Video, 1984 [on DVD], *Nosferatu*, dir. F. W. Murnau, Jofa-Atelier Berlin Johannisthal, 1922 [on DVD], *The Shadow People*, dir. Matthew Arnold, Infinity Media, 2013 [on DVD], *The Shadow People*, dir. Brian T. Jaynes, Edgen Films, 2017 [on DVD], *Babadook*, dir. Jennifer Kent, Screen Australia, 2014 [on DVD].

400. Rank, *Double*, pp. 62–3.

401. *Candyman*, dir. Bernard Rose, TriStar pictures, 1992, *Mirror, Mirror*, dir. Marina Sargenti, New City Releasing, 1990, *Mirrors*, dir. Alexandre Aja, 20th Century Fox, 2008, *Ring II*, dir. Hideo Nakata, Tartan, 1999. See also Top 11 Horror Movie Mirrors, <<https://www.fandango.com/movie-photos/top-11-horror-movie-mirrors-789>>, accessed 6 October 2017.



Figs 48. *Psychotel* stills, dir. Susannah Gent

Rank notes the Homeric conception, that man's existence is twofold:

In the living human being, completely filled with his soul, there dwells, like an alien guest, a weaker double, his self other than his psyche...whose realm is the world of dreams.⁴⁰²

Here Homer associates the psyche with the soul but suggests another presence. In this we may see a forerunner for Freud's topographies, as well as a relation to the unconscious and dreams dating back to the ancient world.

Claxton explores the forerunners to the psychoanalytic account of the unconscious and suggests the idea of the soul or spirit offers an explanation for everyday oddities like sleep and death. He describes the ancient Egyptian mythology of 'Ba' and 'Ka': 'Ka is the unconscious life-support system which makes consciousness possible. Ka connects 'downwards to the rejuvenating power of Nun and the underworld. Ba connects upwards to the world of fancy and dream.'⁴⁰³ He also points to the Kalabari division of the psyche into the *biomgbo* and the *teme*, which correspond to the conscious and unconscious mind.⁴⁰⁴ He draws a comparison between the Freudian topology of the ego, superego, and the id, and Plato's tripartite model of the psyche where selfhood is likened to a charioteer who struggles to control two fighting horses, a noble white steed and an ill-tempered black beast, acknowledging conflicts of interest in the individual psyche between instinctual behaviour and cultural codes.⁴⁰⁵

The tenet of Cartesian dualism is that the mind and body are separate, that the mind is immaterial, that it is synonymous with the soul, and is a human feature.⁴⁰⁶ Although

402. Rank, *Double*, p. 60.

403. Claxton, *The Wayward Mind*, p. 58.

404. Claxton, *The Wayward Mind*, p. 59. Claxton outlines beliefs he sees as formative of the psychoanalytic unconscious, from ancient mythology to neuroscience, tracing a similar development in the progressive stages of thought to that of animism, religion and science outlined by Freud in *Animism, Magic and the Omnipresence of Thoughts*.

405. Claxton, *The Wayward Mind*, p. 80.

406. That animals do not have souls, and by extension do not have minds or consciousness, and therefore do not feel, is an enduring and problematic notion. The implication that emotion underpins consciousness suggests a review of the mental life of animals and

Cartesian dualism is at the opposite side to monoism in the mind-body problem, Descartes' assertion that the mind is 'attached' to the brain by the pineal gland is an early step towards an embodied, brain-based understanding of mind. Reflecting on the qualities of hunger and thirst in relation to selfhood, Descartes writes;

I am not [...] lodged in my body as a pilot in a vessel, but that I am very closely united to it, and so to speak so intermingled with it that I seem to compose with it one whole.⁴⁰⁷

Daniel C. Dennett unpicks religion in *Breaking the Spell*, exploring religion as a parasite, as an agent in building team-spirit, as a means of protection against the consequences of bad decisions, and as a natural phenomenon. As a 'bright', godless philosopher, he notes that natural phenomena also include war and smoking.⁴⁰⁸ Natural or not, religion of some form or other has been part of human life for longer than recorded history. It is significant that belief in the mainstream religion has been enforced and heresy punishable by death. This is important to consider in the history of our understanding of the psyche and it is noteworthy that philosophy is built on a foundation of religious belief. This may account in part for the resilience of certain notions; however, I argue that the double self, attributed to the soul or understood as a division in the psyche, is experiential. In order that we can say 'I am sick of myself', we must, in some sense, be two. Derrida writes that '[w]e must be several in order to write, and even to "perceive"'.⁴⁰⁹ He denies the existence of a 'subject' who writes, rather a 'system of relations between strata'.⁴¹⁰ He notes that '[w]riting is unthinkable without repression,' implying that repression is information that may exert influence.⁴¹¹ In his commentary on Freud's metaphor of the mystic writing pad, Derrida discusses the idea of 'breaching'. Breaching, or path-breaking is suggestive of neural networks that hold potential to re-fire. It is through stored information that we are able to perceive, that the past informs the present as Bergson tells us. Although Derrida's terminology is

our use of them is long overdue. This is referenced in *Psychotel*. The error that Damasio addresses in the title of his book *Descartes' Error*, is concerned with the primacy of rational thought. As discussed in the previous chapter, Damasio proposes that emotion and consciousness are closely linked neural mechanisms, that it is emotion, not cognition, that underpins decision making, and that consciousness is principally generated in brain stem structures, not cortical mechanisms as previously assumed.

407. René Descartes, 'Meditations on First Philosophy: Meditation VI', in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, vol. 1, trans. by Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967, p. 192. I came across this reference in Raymond Tallis, *The Kingdom of Infinite Space*, London: Atlantic Books, 2009, p. 47.

408. Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 21–6. Dennett uses the term 'bright' to describe those who do not believe in God. He argues unconvincingly that similarly to the terms 'gay' and 'straight', his use of the term 'bright' does not mean he considers believers to be 'dims'.

409. Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', in *Writing and Difference*, pp. 246–91, 284.

410. Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', p. 285.

411. *Ibid*.

suggestive of neural networks, he writes of metaphor, and refers to Freud's censor as a metaphor.⁴¹²

Maurice Merleau-Ponty uses the term 'double sensation' to refer to the discrepancy between the 'seer' and the 'seen' as the structure of selfhood that is an 'ambiguous mode of existing'.⁴¹³ He acknowledges an interrelationship between an inner, affective perception and an outer view of the self as an object. He suggests that,

[...] a sort of dehiscence opens my body in two, and because between my body looked at and my body looking, my body touched and my body touching, there is overlapping or encroachment so that we must say that the things pass into us as well as we into the things.⁴¹⁴

I attempt a literal representation of doubling at the start of *Psychotel* using an improvised relationship scenario that explores the executive role played by the unconscious, with the conscious mind, or the ego complaining of feeling like an appendage.



Fig. 49. *Psychotel* still, dir. Susannah Gent

In *The Feeling of What Happens* Damasio gives an account of consciousness that explores the 'problem of self from a biological perspective'.⁴¹⁵ He outlines evolutionary stages of consciousness, constructing a topology of the neural underpinnings of consciousness and self. Briefly, these are *core consciousness*, which is shared by all conscious organisms, dealing only with the here and now, and *extended consciousness*, which requires memory, and while not exclusively human, is enhanced by language. Damasio insists that consciousness is 'not a monolith', that extended consciousness is built upon a foundation of core consciousness, indicating the former cannot be present

412. *Ibid.*

413. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 230.

414. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968, p. 123–24.

415. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, p. 12.

without the latter, and that this is the result of an evolutionary process developing from the survival advantages of consciousness.⁴¹⁶ From these two tiers of consciousness stem three subsets of ‘self’; the *proto-self*, *core self*, and the *autobiographical self*. From core consciousness comes core self: ‘a transient entity, ceaselessly created for each and every object with which the brain interacts’.⁴¹⁷ Damasio thinks this is common to all conscious organisms and, like core consciousness, it exists solely in the dimension of the here and now. The autobiographical self depends upon ‘systematised memories of situations’; it provides the organism with a sense of history and imagined future, and retrievable information about the organism’s existence.⁴¹⁸ The proto-self is a primitive, nonconscious system that amounts to a map of the body within the brain.⁴¹⁹

Catherine Malabou reflects on the position of Derrida, Deleuze, and Damasio in relation to what Merleau-Ponty calls the ‘touching-touched’.⁴²⁰ She summarises Derrida’s position that auto-affection coincides with the inner voice, that it is a kind of touch, the call and response of an individual ‘as if there were two persons in one’.⁴²¹ For Derrida auto-affection is always hetero-affection, that is, being affected by the other. She summarises that ‘the one who is affected in me is always the other in me, the unknown “me” in me’.⁴²² With reference to Damasio, Malabou notes ‘a biological alterity of the self to itself’, wherein the background condition of selfhood, homeostasis, is nonconscious.⁴²³ Malabou sees a correlation between Damasio’s proto-self and Derrida’s idea of hetero-affection. That the proto-self is nonconscious means it stands outside selfhood, denying the existence of a combined subject-object, as proposed by Merleau-Ponty. Equally, according to Deleuze, there is always a separation between the touching and the touched, a ‘plane of immanence, a projective surface that prevents immediate contact’.⁴²⁴ For Deleuze affects exist on this ‘zone of indetermination’.⁴²⁵ The relation of the body to the psyche, of experiential phenomena to the functioning organism could be seen as existing in ‘zones of indetermination’, regions of interpretation, traces of operation, of regulation, and representation. Deleuze and

416. *Ibid.*, p.16.

417. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

418. *Ibid.*

419 *Ibid.*, p. 22. The proto-self is introduced in the previous chapter in a discussion of Lacan’s notion of the fragmented body.

420. Malabou and Johnston *Self and Emotional Life*, p. 64–67, with reference to Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 92.

421. Malabou and Johnston *Self and Emotional Life*, p. 20.

422. *Ibid.*, in reference to Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 165.

423. Malabou and Johnston, *Self and Emotional Life*, p. 64.

424. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

425. *Ibid.*

Guattari suggest there is a ‘multiplicity dwelling within us’.⁴²⁶ With reference to H. P. Lovecraft they consider the horror of the multiplicity, the loss of distinction from others, to merge with nothingness. They write that ‘[...] to know that one is no longer a definite being distinguished from other beings [...] is the nameless summit of agony and dread’.⁴²⁷

Robbins’s hypothesis, introduced in chapter 4, understands two modes of consciousness, primordial consciousness that is affect and impulse-driven, and reflective representational consciousness. For Robbins primordial consciousness uses ‘a language of global unity where there is no separation between self and other’.⁴²⁸ He writes that primordial consciousness does not recognise the passage of time and is concerned only with the here and now.⁴²⁹ This description shows correlation between Robbins’ hypothesis, Damasio’s core consciousness, and the ‘timelessness’ of the Freudian unconscious.⁴³⁰ These observations show developing lines of thought from philosophy, psychoanalysis, and neuroscience, which, while they do not fully correspond, indicate a convergence of ideas.

Damasio proposes that extended consciousness is an evolutionary late comer and suggests that much of human action happens nonconsciously or at the level of core consciousness. This is supported by findings in cognitive psychology, including the work of Benjamin Libet, whose work on free will demonstrated the discrepancy between action initiation and perceived volitional response. This established that the impression of free will results from sensory feedback after motor activities have already taken place, and which led to the understanding of consciousness as ‘post-hoc confabulation’.⁴³¹ The degree to which actions are largely unconscious motor responses should not be underestimated. John A. Bargh and Melissa J. Ferguson note that over the last ten years there has been a shift from environmental determinism of everything to

426. Deleuze, and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 280.

427. *Ibid.*

428. Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self*, p. 12.

429. *Ibid.*

430. Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self*, p. 12. Core consciousness is discussed in chapter 6 of this thesis. For a full account see Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, p. 17. For an in-depth account of time and the Freudian unconscious see Kelly Ann Noel-Smith, *Freud on Time and Timeless: The Ancient Greek Influence*, Ph.D. thesis, Birkbeck: University of London, 2014.

431. Benjamin Libet, ‘Do we have free will?’ *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, <www.imprint-academic.com/jcs>, accessed 15 February 2016. At the New Scientist ‘Consciousness’ conference held at the British Library, London, 2015, the cognitive neuroscientist Patrick Haggard showed that when an experiment involved choice as well as intention the discrepancy between action initiation and perception of the start of the operation was reduced. Although in both instances mechanical action preceded intention, the choice, for example, between moving a lever to the right or to the left as opposed to a simple button press test, showed an increase in higher cognition processing.

environmental determinism of very little.⁴³² They cite William James, who noted that it is rare for a choice to precede an act as ‘thinking was doing’.⁴³³ With an impressive review of studies across the schools of behaviourism and cognitive science, they conclude: ‘much of an individual’s complex psychological and behavioural functioning [is seen] to occur without conscious choice or guidance – that is, automatically’.⁴³⁴

Automaticity, its appearance, as well as the idea that the conscious self is not running the show, might account for experiences of the uncanny. Freud refers to ‘feet that dance by themselves’ as especially uncanny, not only because of their separation from the body, but their independence of movement.⁴³⁵ Jentsch extends his account of the uncanny to include the ‘sight of the articulations of most mental and many nervous illnesses’, including epilepsy, the ‘sacred disease’. On the impression of witnessing the automaticity that underlies consciousness he writes that ‘the dark knowledge dawns on the unschooled observer that mechanical processes are taking place in that which he was previously used to regarding as a unified psyche’.⁴³⁶ This point is made in *Psychotel* with reference to epilepsy in the ‘lecture’, a literal image of a twitching hand. The shot is repeated later during the ‘haruspex’ sequence. With reference to the spirit guide, the narrator says ‘she used my hands’. The statement is ambiguous but implies uncomfortable possession or control. Possession is referenced in the automatic writing sequence that is intended to refer the viewer to Freud’s work on the mystic writing pad.⁴³⁷

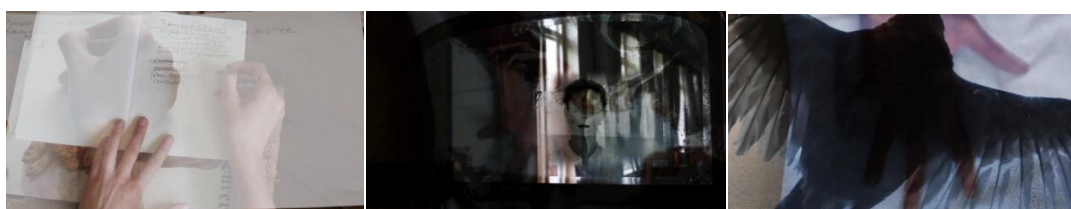


Fig. 50. *Psychotel* stills, dir. Susannah Gent

Withy’s meticulous study of the uncanny in Heidegger’s work reveals the very essence of the human being to be uncanny. She proposes that Heidegger’s understanding of

432. John A. Bargh and Melissa J. Ferguson, ‘Beyond Behaviourism: On the Automaticity of Higher mental Processes’, *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 126, no. 6, 2000, 925–45.

433. Bargh and Ferguson, ‘Beyond Behaviourism’, p. 929.

434. *Ibid.*, p. 941.

435. Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 14.

436. Jentsch, ‘On the Psychology of the Uncanny’, p. 13–14.

437. The over-writing in this sequence is intended as a reference to the mystic writing pad, a toy drawing implement in which a wax pad receives an impression of writing from the page above. To Freud this resembled a theoretical layering of information in the psyche. Freud, ‘A Note on the Mystic Writing Pad’, pp. 51–55.

human ‘openness to meaning’ is uncannily structured.⁴³⁸ At the core she describes a ‘counterturning’ between ‘absencing’ and ‘presencing’ in *Dasein* as fundamental to this structure. Heidegger’s project examines the nature of ‘being’ from a standpoint that differs from philosophical approaches aiming to understand the nature of the human being in terms of selfhood or consciousness. Heidegger’s term *Dasein* is discussed as a ‘being-in-the-world’ that experiences objects as ‘ready to hand’, understood by the fluidity of action rather than as intellectual understanding. I see a correlation with Damasio’s account of the transient core self, which exists in the here and now, responsive to an external environment where it is situated. Yet, *Dasein* is also a being that questions being. For Damasio, the autobiographical self, an evolutionary latecomer, built on the core self, experiences temporality with recalled past and projected future. It is assumed (although not known) that a higher cognitive capacity, with the addition of language, is required for a being to question its being and that this is a uniquely human trait.⁴³⁹

Withy summarises Heidegger’s being: ‘In outline, it holds that the human being is a self-constituting and polemic turning between openness and finitude, transcendence and thrownness.’⁴⁴⁰ She clarifies Heidegger’s observation that when the human being becomes reflective and self-aware, or ‘presences’, the essence of being is concealed, or ‘absences’.⁴⁴¹ This suggests a double mode of being between which the individual shifts. She writes:

Recall that the unity of the human being’s double uncanniness means that being cast out of the essence belongs to the human essence. When being throws the human out of the homely, when the human essence expels itself from itself by yielding the non-essence (concealment), this is not simply the human being’s departure from what is essential to it. Rather, it *is* what is essential to it. The claim is that the human being first has an essence or is what it is only because it departs from its essence or is not what it is.⁴⁴²

This suggests that the essence of the human being lies in this dual state. Implicit in this understanding of being is an innate or primitive state of being, pre-reflective, and automatic. It suggests that the outcome of communication across brain regions is experienced as switching modes of thought and shifting of attention, and that the

438. Withy, *Heidegger: On Being Uncanny*, p. 241.

439. I question this assumption further in chapter 7.

440. Withy, *Heidegger: On Being Uncanny*, p. 149.

441. *Ibid.*

442. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

operational aspect of the being occurs behind the scenes as it were. Withy describes the human being is an ‘ontico-ontological entity’, explaining that to be an entity the human being must ‘show up to itself’.⁴⁴³ Although phrased differently, in his consideration of consciousness, Damasio identifies the problem of understanding how ‘the brain [...] engenders a sense of self in the act of knowing’.⁴⁴⁴ Freud, in a discussion of the double in terms of primary narcissism, refers to a mental facility that allows for self-observation, able to ‘treat the rest of the ego like an object’.⁴⁴⁵ In these we see similarities in the questions posed by psychoanalysis, philosophy, and neuroscience.

That the human is able to see itself as an object has been at the centre of a number of recent experiments from cognitive psychology. At the New Scientist ‘Consciousness’ conference, Lara Maister presented a paper on ‘The Self’,⁴⁴⁶ including the rubber hand illusion.⁴⁴⁷ The experiment is designed to trick the brain into thinking that a rubber hand is the participant’s own through simultaneously stroking the false limb and the real limb, which remains hidden from view. The brain sees and feels this stroking and connects the two, thus demonstrating that our world view is a construction of best-fit scenario.⁴⁴⁸ Maister referred to similar experiments showing bizarre results, such as simultaneous facial stroking causing the participant to think that the stroking of someone else’s face they are witnessing accounts for the sensation of being stroked that they are feeling.⁴⁴⁹ Virtual reality technology allows for other unusual experiments including the VR mannequin / body swap, and the gender body swap.⁴⁵⁰ These experiments demonstrate that the most basic convictions we hold, such as the recognition of our own faces and body parts, are flexible and constructed from a dual perspective of internal feeling and external perception.⁴⁵¹

443. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

444. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, p. 9.

445. Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 235.

446. Lara Maister, ‘The Self’, *New Scientist Live*, ‘Consciousness’ conference, The British Library, 2015.

447. The Rubber Hand Illusion, Horizon: Seeing is Believing? BBC 2, a short extract from the programme demonstrates this illusion, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxwn1w7MJvk>>, accessed 26 November 2015.

448. This has led to the use of a mirror box as a simple but pioneering treatment for amputees suffering from phantom limb pain, which allows the patient to trick their brain into ‘seeing’ movement, and subsequently experiencing relief in the phantom limb through the manipulation of the existing limb.

449. Further experiments show that this can affect the view of the other person being stroked, including that participants subsequently believe the face of the other more closely resembles their own, that they are more attractive and that their opinions are to be valued more than was found in control groups.

450. The VR body swap experiment uses linked VR headsets to give a participant the impression that their body, viewed through the headset, is that of a mannequin. Similar to the rubber hand experiment, the participant rapidly accommodates the idea that the plastic body is their own. There are many examples of this on-line, also gender swapping. See an example of mannequin body swap here:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tn2nsJfDfQ>>, accessed 12 October 2017, and gender body swap here:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i51Xd9VzzxY>>, accessed 12 October 2017.

451. These experiments are reminiscent of Lacan’s ‘inverted bouquet experiment’, or ‘optical model’ (modèle optique), an optical illusion, first referenced in 1954, that describes the nature of human identification, or, according to Evans, ‘the structuring role of the symbolic order and the function of the ideal-ego.’ See Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, p. 130.

A repulsive experiment performed on a frog is described here by Wilson, recounted previously in Darwin's *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*.⁴⁵²

Imagine a decapitated frog. This frog has lost cerebral control of its body, yet its muscular and peripheral nervous systems function normally: appropriately stimulated, the frog's limbs will move in a manner not unlike that of an intact frog. Imagine now that a drop of acid is placed on the thigh of this decapitated frog. The acid irritates the skin. The headless frog responds to this stimulant in an uncanny manner; employing behaviour that is routine for a normally functioning frog, it uses the foot on the affected leg to wipe the acid away. Imagine finally that this foot is amputated. The decapitated frog struggles for some time to remove the acid in the same manner (i.e., with its footless leg). Eventually, after reflecting on the fruitlessness of this method, the frog uses the foot on its other leg to successfully rid itself of the aggravating acid.⁴⁵³

This experiment shows that the nervous system is thoughtful.⁴⁵⁴ It is a disturbing experiment to imagine because of the unreasonable treatment of a frog and due to the uncanny sensation that arises on witnessing automaticity; especially relevant here is Jentsch's account of uncanniness stemming from doubt over a creature's living status.

Freud notes that a 'person's own body, above all its surface, is a place from which both external and internal perceptions may spring'.⁴⁵⁵ Jon Sletvold draws attention to Freud's proposal that feelings of internal perceptions are more primordial than external perceptions and the root of the ego and the id are to be found in these bodily sensations.⁴⁵⁶ He identifies an organic basis to the Freudian ego that presaged a bodily understanding of subjectivity found in contemporary neuroscience. He concludes: 'For both Freud and Damasio, body, emotion, self and consciousness are inseparable.'⁴⁵⁷

Freud's subtle distinctions between internal and external perception of the body imply an evolutionary perspective:

For a reconstruction of the experiment see Stijn Vanheule, 'Lacan's Construction and Deconstruction of the Double-Mirror Device', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2011, vol. 2., p. 209, <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3171787/>>, accessed 3 June 2019.

452. Charles Darwin *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animal*, London: John Murray, 1872.

453. Wilson, *Psychosomatic*, p. 63.

454. In the chapter 'Emotional Lizards', Wilson describes Paul MacLean's model of the 'triune brain', a theory of a limbic system in the brain that mediates emotion. MacLean's model divides the human forebrain into reptilian, paleomammalian (the limbic system), and neomammalian. Although now disputed by neurobiologists for detailed inaccuracy, for Wilson, this hierarchy of three brains in one, remains a useful conceptual model.

455. Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', p. 364.

456. Jon Sletvold, 'The Ego and the Id revisited: Freud and Damasio on the body ego / self', *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 94, 2013, 1019–1032, pp. 1022–23.

457. Sletvold, 'The Ego and the Id revisited', p. 1026.

Internal perceptions yield sensations of processes arising in the most diverse and certainly also the deepest strata of the mental apparatus. Very little is known about these sensations and feelings [...] They are more primordial, more elementary, than perceptions arising externally.⁴⁵⁸

Solms, founder of *neuropsychanalysis*, reminds us that Freud writes:

The id, cut off from the external world, has a worldly perception of its own. It detects with extraordinary acuteness certain changes in its interior, especially oscillations in the tension of its instinctual needs, and these changes become conscious as feelings in the pleasure-unpleasure series.⁴⁵⁹

Solms notes a similarity between Freud's id and Damasio's correlation of emotion and consciousness. He distinguishes two different modes of perception in relation to the consciousness of the body:

The internal type of consciousness consists in states rather than objects of consciousness. The internal body is not an object of perception unless it is externalised and presented to the classical senses; it is the *subject* of perception. It is the background state of *being* conscious.⁴⁶⁰

Solms proposes a complete reversal of the psychoanalytic tenet of conscious and unconscious. For Solms it is the id that is conscious and the ego unconscious. He proposes two aspects of the body are represented in the brain, the *internal* and the *external body*. These are associated with different brain regions and different aspects of consciousness:

Very broadly speaking, the brainstem mechanisms derived from the autonomic body are associated with affective consciousness, and the cortical mechanisms derived from the sensorimotor body are associated with cognitive consciousness.⁴⁶¹

The 'body image' that Solms equates with the *external body* is thought to be produced from cortical maps, 'projections of sensory receptors on the surface of the body', equated with the homunculus body map.⁴⁶² Freud wrote of the "cortical homunculus" of the anatomists' as an 'anatomical analogy' of the ego as a projection of the body's

458. Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', p. 360.

459. Solms, 'The Conscious Id', p. 8.

460. *Ibid.*, p. 7. Original italics.

461. *Ibid.*, p. 5. This reference forms part of the voice-over in *Psychotel*.

462. This homunculus map refers to the location of sensory receptors as relating to specific parts of the body. It does not refer to the notion of the homunculus as a small sentient entity that does the thinking, discussed previously in relation to Freud's description of censorship. The homunculus map is noted in *Scanner* in relation to the close proximity of the feet to the genitals, referenced by Ramashandran. See chapter 2.

surface.⁴⁶³ Solms draws attention to how closely this resembles Freud's accounts of the mental apparatus, reminding us that for Freud the ego was 'a bodily ego [...] ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body'.⁴⁶⁴ The mechanism that represents the external body also represents other external objects and thus represents the body as an external object, as the body we recognise in the mirror.⁴⁶⁵

Solms tells us the *internal body* is autonomic, concerned with the internal milieu, and is located in brain stem structures, not the cortex. Through upper brainstem arousal mechanisms the internal body employs the external body in meeting vital needs. He points out that this is a hierarchical relationship, that although there is a two-way flow of information, 'the cortex (external body) is contingent upon brainstem (internal body) activation [...] and, moreover, *the internal aspect is prerequisite for the external aspect*'.⁴⁶⁶ This is shown by the guaranteed loss of consciousness resulting from brainstem damage but the reverse, cortical damage or obliteration, does not necessarily result in the same. The example Solms gives is the case of hydranencephaly, the *in utero* destruction of the cortex which is re-absorbed and replaced with cerebrospinal fluid. Hydranencephalic people have no functioning cortex, yet they have distinct levels of consciousness including sleep and waking cycles, seizures and recovery, and show emotional responses. The presence of their primary (affective) self 'proves that affective consciousness is both generated and felt subcortically'.⁴⁶⁷ The generation of consciousness in the upper brainstem, called the 'reticular activating system', has been demonstrated in brain imaging studies.⁴⁶⁸ Freud believed the cortex to be the seat of consciousness and considered the logical position for the out-facing layer to be at the border between the inside and outside of the mental apparatus. That consciousness is cortically generated is a formally widespread assumption, and the association of consciousness with brainstem mechanisms is relatively new.⁴⁶⁹ Solms insists he has only added anatomical detail in his account of the ego and the id and their corresponding cortical and brainstem location, noting Freud's embodied conception of

463. Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', 1984, pp. 364–5.

464. Solms, 'The Conscious Id', p.8, referencing Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', p. 364, including footnote.

465. This is relevant to Lacan's *mirror stage*, discussed in chapter 4, where the self is seen as an external object.

466. Solms, 'The Conscious Id', p. 6. Original italics.

467. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

468. *Ibid.* Solms refers to Moruzzi and Magoun in 1949 as first demonstrating this by EEG.

469. This has huge but unsurprising implications to animal consciousness and theories of self-hood.

the mental apparatus and the accuracy of his association of the id with instinctual emotion. He summarises:

Consciousness is not generated in the cortex, it is generated in the brainstem. Moreover, consciousness is not inherently perceptual; it is inherently affective. And in its primary manifestations, it has less to do with cognition than with instinct.⁴⁷⁰

Therefore the id is conscious and the ego is not. Although this appears to be a complete reversal, Freud said ‘the ego is also unconscious,’ and the second topography sees the ego as spanning both systems *Cs.* and *Ucs.*⁴⁷¹ Solms’ conclusion is that because we normally *think* of ourselves as conscious we can overlook the fact that we *are* conscious, and as such ‘the primary subject of consciousness is invisible’.⁴⁷² This returns us to Heidegger whose structure of ‘presencing’ and ‘absencing’ Withy shows to be uncanny.

Opatow understands the psychoanalytic unconscious as an original mode of consciousness. This supports the proposal that the divisions of the psyche result from the evolution of the brain:

Rather than being a preliminary activity that *causes* a conscious event, the unconscious helps *constitute* the inner structure of experiencing consciousness. Each increase in external objectivity reflects an intensification of subjective inwardness and inner structure. The unconscious, in this sense, is Freud’s answer to Kant’s transcendental ego.⁴⁷³

Slavoj Žižek objects to Damasio’s account of selfhood, rejecting the proposal that primary and second-order neural mapping produces conscious selfhood on two counts. The mapping of the relation between an organism and an object (primary mapping), and the subsequent mapping of the change in the organism resulting from that encounter (second-order mapping), would, for Žižek, produce two levels on mapping, not the integrated arrival, through the complexity of these two systems, of self-reflective consciousness, or *self in the act of knowing* that Damasio claims. Žižek points to the apparent contradiction of ‘the storyteller who, paradoxically, emerges through telling

470. Solms, ‘The Conscious Id’, p. 12.

471. Freud, ‘The Ego and the Id’, p. 362.

472. Solms, ‘The Conscious Id’, p. 16. As a brief aside it is worth noting the recent interest in mindfulness and the renewed interest in meditation in the West. I suggest this is in response to the ceaseless attention required by the digital age but speculate that the aim of these activities is the connect with the ‘primary subject of consciousness’.

473. Opatow, ‘The Real Unconscious’, p. 880.

the story, who exists only within his own storytelling'.⁴⁷⁴ Žižek insists that he is never only his body, 'in spite of all the subtle phenomenological descriptions *à la* Merleau-Ponty that try to convince me to the contrary'.⁴⁷⁵ What *he is*, he states, is 'the pure One of an empty Self which remains the same One throughout the constant change of autobiographical narratives'.⁴⁷⁶ Žižek relates this to Kant's 'pure subject of transcendental apperception which is just an empty point of self-relating'.⁴⁷⁷ He suggests this empty pure subject is Lacan's $\$$. This subject, barred by language, alienated, is the self before the mirror phase, before the subject is formed in relation to the other.⁴⁷⁸ Žižek describes $\$$ as 'the subjective correlative to emotions prior to feeling: it is only through feelings that I become the "full" subject of lived experience'.⁴⁷⁹ Lacan's $\$$ is the *subject of the unconscious*, a 'pulsation' that 'manifests itself in daily life as a fleeting irruption of something foreign or extraneous'.⁴⁸⁰ Žižek's language suggests something faintly uncanny about this 'pure One of an empty Self'. He describes a primitive state that could be aligned with the notion of affective consciousness arising from brain stem structures, or the 'conscious id', and the pre-mirror stage subject, barred by (reflective representational) language, corresponds to Robbins's primordial consciousness.

In this section I have outlined ideas from different disciplines that appear to describe the same mental phenomena. There is a correlation between Damasio's core-consciousness and Robbins's primordial consciousness. Both are concerned with the here and now. This timelessness is an aspect of the Freudian unconscious. There is correlation with Solms's conscious and affect-driven id. These primary or primordial mental states are described as foundational while others, Damasio's extended consciousness, Robbins's representational consciousness, Freud's ego appear to be later developments both in evolutionary terms and in the development of the individual. The extent to which these conscious states are present may be culturally determined. I return to this in chapter 7. Making these interdisciplinary connections is a new contribution to knowledge. In the

474. Žižek, *The Parallax View*, p. 224.

475. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

476. *Ibid.*

477. *Ibid.*

478. For a detailed account see Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, pp. 35–48.

479. Žižek, *The Parallax View*, p. 227.

480. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, p. 41.

context of this research it is relevant where it furthers an understanding of the uncanny and creative practice which I shall return to in the conclusion.

The Uncanny Double: Otherness and Automaticity

The women gathering stray wisps from their napes
– Baggy amphibians play a sombre chess
And in at the bright window something gapes.⁴⁸¹

The opening sequence of *Psychotel* features reverse action of a pebble hitting a pond, ripples flowing back towards a point of stillness.⁴⁸² Disrupted physics as a method of creating unease in the audience and reverse-motion photography is a common trope of the supernatural horror genre. An example of this can be seen in *Ringu*.⁴⁸³

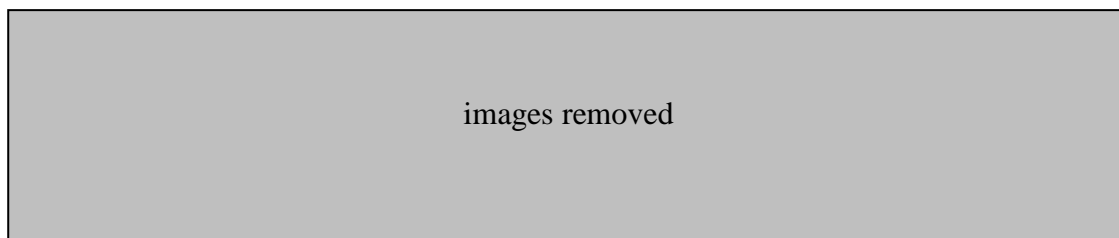


Fig. 51. *Ring*, dir. Hideo Nakata

Although not apparent in these still images, this sequence is unnerving in part due to the woman's weird movement which I believe to be performed backwards and reversed. Her hidden face contributes to the uncanny quality; hair over the face has become synonymous with Asian horror. The sequence below is from Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, which pre-dates *Ringu* by over twenty years.⁴⁸⁴ Although not a horror film, *Mirror* might be interpreted as occupying a subjective landscape and the sequence below feels like a dream. The decaying building with collapsing ceiling is dream-like although I cannot explain why dreams of derelict interiors are common. The strangeness of the sequence may be accounted for by the inappropriate lack of reaction in the

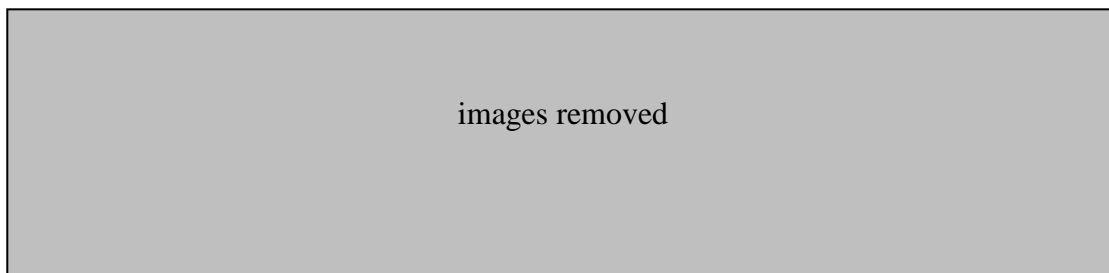
481. Bruce Dawe, 'The Frog Plague', *Twelve Poets 1950–1970*, p. 113. Extract.

482. When I shot this sequence I intended only to make a piece of reverse action, however a friend who viewed an early edit of the film said it reminded her of the myth that birds overwinter at the bottom of ponds. I did not know of this as a former belief but I had come across reference to it in a short story, 'Swallows Sleep in Winter' by Adam Marek in a compilation of uncanny tales about birds, edited by Nicholas Royle, *Murmurations: An Anthology of Uncanny Stories about Birds*, Outer Hebrides: Two Ravens Press, 2011, pp. 1–9.

483. *Ring*, dir. Hideo Nakata, Tartan, 1998 [on DVD]. *Ringu* was the original title of this film that was first in a trilogy. A US version of the film was also made, *Ring*, dir. Gore Verbinski, Universal Pictures Video, 2003 [on DVD].

484. *Zerkalo* (original title) *Mirror*, dir. by Andrei Tarkovsky, Artificial Eye, 1975 [on DVD].

character to the falling ceiling.⁴⁸⁵ I am inclined to situate Tarkovsky's work in the sphere of the 'spiritual uncanny' that will be expanded later.



Figs. 52, *Mirror*, dir. Andrei Tarkovsky

The sequence in *Psychotel* featuring reversed speech is an attempt to represent the effect the psyche can have upon one's environment. My post-concussive syndrome, addressed in *Unhomely Street*, made it seem as though the world in which I had previously dwelt was stained with grief, as though the environment had been sprayed by a dark viscous substance (especially cloying on tarmac and concrete). This shifting of the very fabric of the world is, I suspect, a common experience for those suffering mental illness, acting as a reminder that our environment is a flexible, constructed reality, not a fixed, unchanging state. The sequence is positioned in the central section where the narrative changes narrator and shifts from hotel to train. The movement from one mental world to another seemed relevant here as well as the splitting of the narrator/character as indicated in the voice-over.

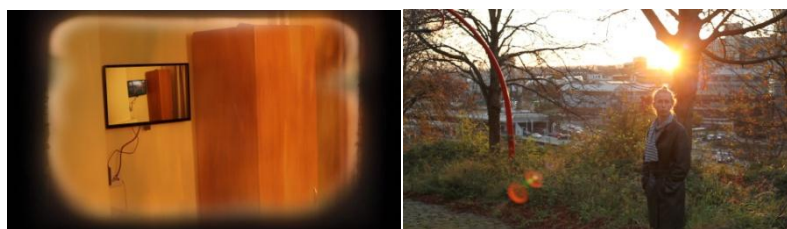


Fig. 53. *Psychotel* stills, dir. Susannah Gent

Another brief sample of reversed speech used in *Psychotel* is taken from the 1960s television programme *Mister Ed*. Played backwards the words 'someone sang a song for Satan' can be heard.⁴⁸⁶ Reverse motion features in Jean Cocteau's *Le Testament*

485. I attempted something similar for *Psychotel* but the sequence was not included in the final film as it felt like a weak pastiche.

486. I came across this reference when researching for the National Centre for Popular Music in 1998. I was undertaking an installation on the subject of 'Heaven and Hell'. The *Mister Ed* theme music was featured in a television programme that covered the Judas Priest trial in which the band were investigated for including subliminal message in their music that led to the suicide and attempted suicide of Raymond Belknap and James Vance. Other backwards audio in the hotel sequence includes buskers recorded

d'Orphée; David Lynch's *Lost Highway* and *Twin Peaks* use both reversed action and speech in the exploded shed and Laura Palmer's 'dwarf dream'.⁴⁸⁷ My use of reversal is closer in affect to these art-house films than to the Asian extreme example, although all examples effect us through 'intellectual uncertainty'.⁴⁸⁸

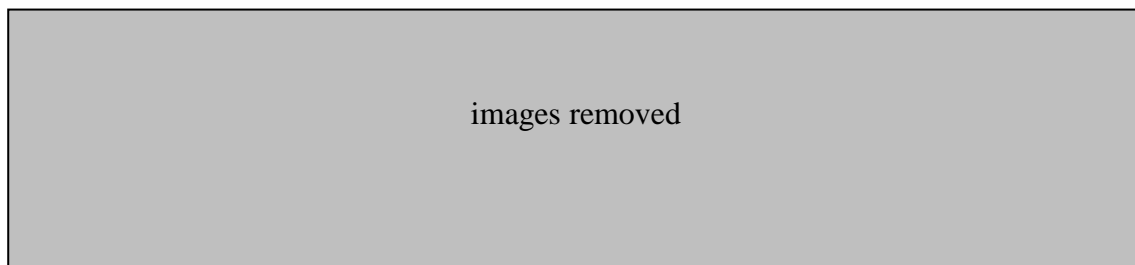


Fig. 54. *Le Testament d'Orphée* still

Fig. 55. *Lost Highway* still

Fig. 56. *Twin Peaks* still

This mechanism is related to Masahiro Mori's *uncanny valley hypothesis*, which proposes that inanimate objects with a human appearance, such as robots with eyes, are appealing until they become so like human beings that instead of noticing what is human-like, we notice what is not, such as the disturbing slow blink of humanoid robots.⁴⁸⁹ This is fear of the unknown at a very basic level. Our sensory systems alert us that something not being as it should is a potential threat. In evolutionary terms, humankind's main threat was from itself. Reading aggression rather than amity in the face and body language of another primes the individual for defensive behaviour; however, when the behaviour cannot be interpreted in the normal way threat becomes uncanny. *Uncanny valley* and corrupted physics are threatening due to the suggestion of the mechanical in the human, like the uneasy feeling on witnessing seizures as noted by both Jentsch and Freud.⁴⁹⁰ This builds on the ideas of otherness and automaticity.

on the streets of Istanbul. The use of backwards sounds are common in the supernatural horror genre, and featured specifically in *The Exorcist*, dir. William Friedkin, 1974.

487. *Le Testament d'Orphée*, dir. Jean Cocteau, BFI, 1960 [on DVD], *Lost Highway*, dir. David Lynch, CiBay 2000, Asymmetrical Productions, 1997 [on DVD], *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, dir. David Lynch, Universal Pictures, 1992 [on DVD].

488. 'Intellectual uncertainty' being the main cause of the uncanny sensation according to Jentsch, 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny'.

489. Masahiro Mori, 'The Uncanny Valley', trans. by Karl F. MacDorman and Takashi Minato, *Energy*, vol. 7, issue 4, 1970.

490. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 226, and Jentsch, 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny', 1997 p. 13–14.

I could not sleep with her in the room

Like a death in the desert. I was
Nearly choked, as with an evil spirit
Choking on love.⁴⁹¹

In 2018 I visited Istanbul. The material shot there reveals filmmaking as a means of uncovering unconscious feelings. I could not sleep while in Istanbul, largely because I was over-stimulated by the environment and woken regularly during the night by the call to prayer at dawn. I stayed in a hotel next to the Blue Mosque, and the other guests got up to pray, so four-thirty in the morning was one of the hotel's busiest times. On one such night the light from the window looked spooky so I got up to film it. Without a great deal of thought I put on a black headscarf and stood against the window so I appeared as a shadowy figure. When I assembled the sequence I became aware that the potent element of the shot, the *punctum*, was for me the headscarf rather than the similarity to sequences in horror films such as *The Woman in Black*.⁴⁹²



Fig. 57. *Psychotel*, dir. Suannah Gent

The sequence is orientalist in nature, indicates a feeling of otherness, and demonstrates how spontaneous filmmaking can reveal problematic aspects of the individual psyche and broader society.⁴⁹³ Michael Foucault, in his 'Preface', summarises that *Anti-Oedipus* asks '[h]ow do we ferret out the fascism that is ingrained in our behaviour?'⁴⁹⁴ Because, as translator Mark Seem reminds us, '[...] *we are sick, so sick, of ourselves!*'⁴⁹⁵

491. Vincent Buckley, 'Give me time and I'll tell you', *Twelve Poets 1950–1970*, p. 56. Extract.

492. *The Woman in Black*, dir. James Watkins, Hammer Film Productions, 2012 [on DVD]. The ghostly figure in *The Woman in Black* wears a veil indicative that she is mourning.

493. Orientalism, the term given to patronising western representations of the East is coined and expanded in Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978. The overall tone of *Psychotel* is intended to promote multispecies unity. In this section of the film I used the voice-over to suggest a knowing position in the narrator of the connotation of the image to reveal territorialism and uphold a move beyond ingrained reaction. The sequence voice-over is intended to question the threat of otherness presented by the woman and by cultural difference.

494. Michael Foucault, 'Preface', in Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. xv.

495. Mark Seem, 'Introduction', in Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. xxiii.

The sequence unconsciously arose from concerns for women’s rights – a thorny issue in today’s climate.⁴⁹⁶

I came to reconsider this sequence further following a viewing of *The Exorcist*, which I had not watched for thirty-five years.⁴⁹⁷ The film opens with scenes from Al-Hadar in Iraq and establishes a narrative wherein the East is portrayed as the dark, mysterious homeland of evil. I consider this was also a stimulus in the Istanbul sequence and serves to illustrate the commingling of influences at work in creative practice and how they are frequently concealed.⁴⁹⁸

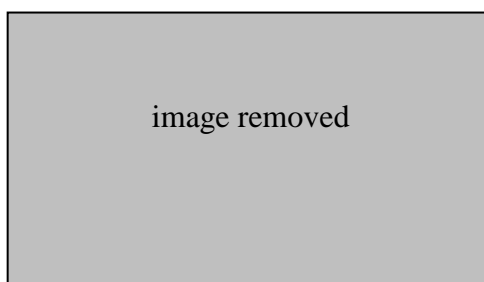


Fig. 58. *The Exorcist*, dir. William Friedkin

The revelation that this film footage contained these ideas was similar to my surprise that the bathroom sequence might have sexual overtones, demonstrating how psychoanalysis operates as an analytic framework for discussing works of art. In psychoanalytic terminology my experience when filming could be described as *the return of the repressed*.

It is worth noting that when filming the window sequence I caught sight of myself in a long mirror. For a moment I considered how frightened I would be if I moved and the reflection did not. Granted it was the middle of the night and I was very tired – but still I have to admit to being momentarily afraid of my own reflection. I am reminded of Freud’s description of seeing his reflection in the mirror on a train door and assuming it to be another ‘elderly gentleman in a dressing-gown and a travelling hat’.⁴⁹⁹ Avery Gordon re-evaluates this passage from ‘The “Uncanny”’ noting that Freud ‘thoroughly

496. The desire to uphold political correctness in accepting other cultures and to avoid the patronage of the Western view towards the plight of the Eastern woman are reasons enough to avoid commentary on such matters, however; political correctness may also serve as a form of social repression.

497. *The Exorcist*, dir. William Friedkin, Warner Bros., 1974 [on DVD].

498. I must also note possible influence from the Islamophobic bias of mainstream Western media in recent years.

499. Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 248, footnote 1.

disliked his appearance'.⁵⁰⁰ She suggests that the uncanny is leading Freud away from himself noting:

There is no expectation that Freud could turn his attention to the colonialism that partially underwrites his distaste for the spectre of primitive thinking inhabiting his civilized mind, much less his train compartment.⁵⁰¹

Instances of misrecognition of reflections are commonplace references for the uncanny but do they relate to repression and can they be said to come from the unconscious? Freud writes:

It would appear that we invest with a feeling of uncanniness those impressions which lend support to [...] the animistic attitude of mind, at a time when our judgment has already rejected these same beliefs.⁵⁰²

My momentary belief that my reflection might move could be accounted for by Freud's description above. I am inclined to consider that the close resemblance of the mirror image to a horror film caused my reaction, a somatic marker; however, when watching film one suspends disbelief in order to engage with the on-screen narrative. This suspension of disbelief might be viewed as a form of repression, corresponding to Freud's idea of an 'animistic attitude of mind'. In instances of misrecognition of mirror images, such as Freud describes, the surprise at being caught out is a reminder that the brain constructs reality, that we hold an internal and external perception of the self.

We have all experienced forgetting something while knowing, or rather *feeling* it is below the surface. Not long ago I forgot the name of a band I used to listen to. I recalled that I used to listen to the band in my twenties, along with another band, and felt sure that if I remembered this second band I would remember the first. The name of the second band arrived, it was *Portishead*. I immediately remembered the original band name, *Radiohead*. I had assumed that I would recall the first following the second because of proximity of time when I listened to the music but I suspect that the similarity of name had connected but remained below consciousness. Fink writes:

Thus according to Lacan's interpretation of Freud, when repression takes place, a word, or some part of a word, 'sinks down under', metaphorically speaking. The word does not thereby become inaccessible to consciousness, and it may indeed be a word that a

500. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 54.

501. *Ibid.*

502. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 241, footnote with reference to 'Totem and Taboo' (1913).

person uses perfectly well in everyday conversation. But the very fact of being repressed, that word, or some part thereof, begins to take on a new role. It establishes relations with other repressed elements, developing a complex set of connections with them.⁵⁰³

Here we see a description of repression according to Lacan that closely resembles my account of forgetting *Radiohead*, although I do not consider my forgetting in this instance to be an act of repression. The ‘complex set of connections’ could refer to the temporal and locational associations with the two bands as well as the linguistic connection. As Fink continues, his description of the unconscious grows more general:

the unconscious is nothing but a ‘chain’ of signifying elements, such as words, phonemes, and letters, which ‘unfolds’ in accordance with very precise rules over which the ego or self has no control whatsoever.⁵⁰⁴

That the unconscious specifically consists of repressed material loses traction in this quotation. We do not know of the structural complexities that underpin brain activity but it is likely that it will operate according to simple laws that rapidly gain complexity due to the extent of connectivity it possesses.

As discussed in chapter 3, the experience of intuitive filmmaking is that material seems to arrive from elsewhere. Instances of mental material coming into consciousness, that make us aware that nonconscious processes are controlling our actions, especially when these instances strike us as uncanny, may be said to have *come from* the unconscious. In clinical situations where words or mannerisms reveal thoughts that are occurring at a sub-behavioural level, the unconscious is said to be *at work*. In altered states of consciousness such as dreams, information is exchanged, reminding us of things forgotten, or rather, reminding us that things are not forgotten. If we care to look we are constantly reminded of behind-the-scenes operations. Instances relating to the unconscious seem to be accompanied by a moment of recognition, a particular feeling. I propose that this feeling is the uncanny.

503. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, p. 8.

504. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

THIRD FLOOR: LIFT GOING UP

The all-seeing narrator and the harbinger of death

There is one who remembers the way to your door:
Life you may evade, but Death you shall not.
You shall not deny the Stranger.⁵⁰⁵

In making a film that explores the uncanny I had to bear in mind that '[i]n the realm of fiction many things are not uncanny which would be so if it happened in real life', as Freud notes.⁵⁰⁶ During the production of *Psychotel* I had a dream about a motorbike razzing about on a patch of wasteland near some flats. Behind the bike on a rope was a grey, medieval head. The effect of the dream was extremely uncanny and I tried to recreate the scene. As I might have predicted, the effect in the film does not fully capture the tone of dream; however, it contributes narrative ambiguity, and surreality. Other dream references include the text in which the 'points' are disappearing accompanied by a voice-over stating 'there's no point!', and the spoken story that plays over the spawning fish.⁵⁰⁷ The inclusion of dreams in the film is a reference to the dream-work of psychoanalysis and points the viewer to interpreting the film as a representation of psychic life. Derrida tells us dreams are a path back to 'a landscape of writing. Not a writing which simply transcribes, a stony echo of muted words but a lithography before words: metaphonic, nonlinguistic, alogical.'⁵⁰⁸ Robbins claims that dreams are the first manifestation of primordial consciousness, commencing *in utero* in the third trimester with the appearance of REM sleep.⁵⁰⁹ He argues that dreams are conscious and the confusion has arisen as they occur during physiological unconsciousness. Dreams are not part of reflective representational thought; rather, they are 'concrete, situational or stimulus-bound, affect or impulse-driven imagery'.⁵¹⁰ On waking the dreamer moves to reflective thought and reviews the dream in the language of symbolism.⁵¹¹

505. T. S. Elliot, 'Choruses from "The Rock"', *T. S. Elliot: A selection by the Author*, p. 114.

506. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 250.

507. I had the 'there's no point!' dream when I was recovering from post-concussive syndrome and I have understood it to contain a double meaning; there is no point attempting to ward off potential disaster (in my state of mind at the time this related to climate change) as it was inevitable, but also that the inevitability meant there was no point in worrying about it either. The tone of the dream on waking was one of mild relief. Unlike its representation in the film, the dream comprised of algebraic symbols, as well as sentences of text in which the 'points' were missing. The dream that is recounted over the spawning fish, that plays on the words 'consulate' and 'consummate', came after I went to sleep with the 'intention' of dreaming an 'answer' for a section of the film. Although the meaning is obscure I included it in the film as it came as an 'answer' and contains a play with words that is common within psychoanalytic dream-work.

508. Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', in *Writing and Difference*, p. 259.

509. Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self*, pp. 25–6.

510. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

511. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

‘This is only a dream.’ Akira Mizuta Lippit begins his chapter that explores Derrida’s commentary on Freud’s dreamwork. ‘There and not there, the voice is *folded* into the dream as a trace of exteriority, inside and out, inside-out.’⁵¹² I use this quotation in *Psychotel*, in the sequence that features a house with large television and piano. This text is combined with a section from *The Sandman*. My intention is to create an ambiguity that references the dream, both by the shifting narratives of the voice-over and the shifting plane of focus in the image. Lippit refers to Jean-Louis Baudry who suggests ‘cinema offers an artificial psychosis’.⁵¹³ Cinema, like the dream, simulates reality in a fusion of interior and exterior perception. The house is my parents’ house in which I grew up. The fact of this was, once again, not considered when filming. This reference is unknown by the viewer and therefore perhaps not relevant, except the reference to the father’s room in Hoffman’s story contributes to the reading of this space as a domestic dwelling not a hotel. For me this house is layered with memory and infused with feeling and I suspect this prompted me to approach filming the space in a manner that was unlike the visual treatment of the hotel rooms that I surveyed as an external viewer. In my parents’ house I experience a fragmentation as objects, light falling a certain way, cause me to recall past moods, return me to childhood and adolescence, remind me of the fragmented and constructed nature of the self. Filmmaking in one’s childhood home, rather than an affirmation of one’s roots and identity, brings surfaces and reflections, illusions of depth. For Derrida, ‘the trace is the erasure of selfhood’.⁵¹⁴

In my experience of dreaming, I am often moving through rooms and corridors, looking for something, often an exit. The seeking function of the mind is still active during sleep, accounting for the tendency in dreams to be searching. *Psychotel* attempts to convey this feeling through the use of interior space, returning imagery, and train journeys to unspecified locations. Filmmaking is used to produce imagery that can be likened to the dream and that is influenced by the experience of dreaming. Whether this employs a primordial consciousness as Robbins suggests or engages an unconscious

512. Akira Mizuta Lippit, ‘The Only Other Apparatus of Film’, *Derrida, Deleuze, Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Gabriele Schwab, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007, pp. 171–191, 171.

513. Jean-Louis Baudry, ‘The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema’, in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Reader*, trans. by Jean Andrews and Bertrand Augst, ed. by Philip Rosen, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 299–318. This reference by Lippit is made in an endnote 4. Lippit, ‘The Only Other Apparatus of Film’, p. 188.

514. Derrida, ‘Freud and the Scene of Writing’, p. 289.

that is unknown but exerts influence is a point I return to in the conclusion; however, both are modes of thought that differ from reflective consciousness (Robbins) or ordinary consciousness (Freud). Robbins's hypothesis of dual consciousness is founded on Freud's primary and secondary processes, the differences being that Robbins's understanding is that both are states of consciousness, and are not underpinned by the Freudian childhood complexes.

Although *Psychotel* does not have a central protagonist in the manner common to conventional narrative fiction, as filmmaker and performer I am the protagonist, the narrator, and the author. I attempt to play with this multiplicity in the film. In doing so, I make reference to 'Das "Unheimliche"' in which Freud is the reader, the analyst, the psychologist, and the 'writer of the present contribution'.⁵¹⁵ As noted by Cixous, this doubling introduces uncanny uncertainties in the text. These 'doubtful elements in the text necessarily engender doubt in the reader', and contribute to the uncanny quality of Freud's essay.⁵¹⁶ In the 'Afterword' of *Quilt*, Royle describes *Reality Literature*, a term used to reflect the playful space of the novel.⁵¹⁷ Referring to the opening line of *Quilt*: 'In the middle of the night the phone rings over and over, but I don't hear it,' as an example of acceptable contradiction found in the novel, he emphasises the weirdness of the narrator who can speak of things he does not know.⁵¹⁸ There is an uncanny doubling at work here, as well as 'the resonances of prophecy, fate and clairvoyance'.⁵¹⁹ Royle describes the novel as a space of 'quilted thinking', in which what is covered and uncovered is revealed. As a play on the constructed nature of *Reality TV*, *Reality Literature* 'invites us [...] to be wary of such constructions and narrow-mindedness. It seeks to question and complicate, to dislocate and interfere.'⁵²⁰ Keeping in mind the ideas underpinning *Reality Literature*, and the uncanny quality conveyed by an ambiguous narrator, I wrote the voice-over 'story' in two halves, the first from the point of view of the hotel and the second narrated by the character's 'other half'. I had used a combination of first and third person narration in *Unhomely Street* to unsettle the position of the narrator and indicate the doubling of consciousness. In *Psychotel* I use first, second, and third person narration to further complicate the position of the viewer

515. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 220.

516. Cixous, 'Fiction and its Phantoms', p. 526.

517. Nicholas Royle, *Quilt*, Brighton: Myriad Editions, 2010, pp. 156–7.

518. I am reminded of the unreliable narrator in *American Beauty*, who speaks of his own death. *American Beauty*, dir. Sam Mendes, Dreamworks, 1999 [on DVD].

519. Royle, *Quilt*, p. 157. These ideas are explored in 'The 'telepathy' effect: notes towards a reconsideration of narrative fiction', *The Uncanny*, 2003, pp. 256–276.

520. Royle, *Quilt*, 2010, p. 158. I am reminded of Lacan's 'quilting points' discussed in chapter 4.

in relation to the character and their duality. ‘The Dummy’, a short story by Nicholas Royle, switches between first and second person viewpoint to great effect and was influential in this decision.⁵²¹ Second person narration in film is rare but is used by Lars Von Trier in *Europa*, a film referenced in the hypnotic countdown at the start of *Psychotel*. The effect is enhanced in film as the viewer is *instructed* in their viewing: ‘You are listening to the noise of rain beating against a large metal drum. Go closer.’⁵²²

Robbins suggests the personal pronoun ‘I’ implies a state of reflective representational thought, and second and third person pronouns further imply a differentiation between self and other. He notes differences in how pronouns are used and understands this difference as showing the speaker to be using primordial consciousness or reflective representational thought. An everyday example is the phrase ‘you know’ spoken as a confirmation following something said that the listener does not know.⁵²³ Implicit in this style of speech is an assumed omnipresence that Robbins claims is a continuation of the undifferentiated state of being shared between infant and mother. The language characteristic of primordial consciousness, found in the instinctual exchange between mother and infant often has an abstract and musical quality.⁵²⁴ Its role differs from the factual, referential language of reflective representational thought, as its mode is to convey emotional tone. Reflecting on my choice of language in the voice-over of *Psychotel*, I believe the phrase ‘sunbeams clung to her body, and tiny birds’, is an example of primordial language that conveys affect not meaning.

In the narrative of *Psychotel*, the ex-partner dies and the character vacates the hotel and leaves her other self behind. This abandoned ‘self’ becomes the narrator and so conjures a ghost as the character leaves her former self. The intention is that the older self will

521. Royle, ‘The Dummy’, pp. 53–68. The two Nicholas Royles, both writers, court ambiguity. I first came across both Royles in *The Uncanny*, in which there is an image of the two men. The caption reads ‘Nicholas Royle and Nicholas Royle’ without indicating which is which. When establishing that Nicholas Royle (born in 1957) was the author of *Quilt*, a book about grief following the death of a father, a review of the book was accompanied by an article featuring Nicholas Royle (‘63) wearing his deceased father’s clothes. Their identity is complicated by the ‘bird books’. Nicholas Royle (‘63) is the editor of *Murmurations: An Anthology of Uncanny Stories about Birds*, Outer Hebrides: Two Ravens Press, 2011, in which there is a short story by Nicholas Royle (‘57). This short story reappears in the novel by Nicholas Royle (‘57), *An English Guide to Birdwatching*, Oxford: Myriad Editions, 2017, ostensibly written by someone else. In order to include a reference to this uncanny doubling in *Psychotel* I asked Royle (‘63) to voice the first line of this short story by Royle (‘57) entitled *Gulls*. Other instances of their courted mistaken identity can be found in Royle’s ‘The Double’, *The Uncanny*, pp. 187–202.

522. *Europa*, dir. Lars Von Trier, Alicéleo, Det Danske Filminstitut, 1991 [on DVD].

523. Robbins gives examples from president Trump’s speeches in which Trump’s personal (and racist) viewpoints are expressed using ‘we’ and ‘they’ to indicate an extension of his viewpoint to others. Robbins suggests Trump is speaking from a position of primordial consciousness and is not distinguishing between self and other. See Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self*, pp. 37–38.

524. It is perhaps worth noting that this style of language is often used when speaking to animals.

haunt the re-born personality.⁵²⁵ These narrative mechanisms point to the indestructible nature of the trace, those elements of life's narrative that complicate and cling.⁵²⁶ In neuroscientific terms, the neural pathway is a trace, like land written over by feet and hooves, like a 'mystic writing pad'.⁵²⁷ I intend the film to hint at re-birth, to open the question of the potential for change. The narrators reference doubling and evoke spectrality, the self as ghost and the double as a harbinger of death.

Freud cites our relation to death as causing feelings of uncanniness and suggests that 'no human being really grasps it', stating 'our unconscious has as little use now as ever for the idea of its own mortality'.⁵²⁸ This conflict between the intellectual understanding of death and the inability to comprehend it supports Jentsch's notion of uncanniness arising from cognitive dissonance. Royle writes that 'the uncanny can be a matter of something gruesome or terrible, above all death and corpses, cannibalism, live burial, the return of the dead'.⁵²⁹ Here again is the 'organic uncanny', alongside death as the 'incomprehensible uncanny'. In '*Das "Unheimliche"*', Freud tells us we experience the uncanny 'in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies'.⁵³⁰ Masschelein reminds us Freud 'posits that the unconscious cannot represent its own death because the unconscious doesn't know negation'.⁵³¹ A biological and neuroscientific interpretation might be that an organism is made of cells that individually strive for life. In this attempt to maintain the homeopathic regulation that enables life, the cells undergo changes that in turn are felt by the organism as a whole. In *Fear*, Joanne Bourke describes changing cultural attitudes to death, suggesting that death is not feared because it is 'nothing', rather because it is 'other'.⁵³² This conscious consideration of death requires that the imagination form an image of something of which it has no experience.

525. I was curious to read *Counterparts*, the first novel by Nicholas Royle, after developing this narrative. His story similarly plays with an ambiguous doubling of a central character. See Nicholas Royle, *Counterparts*, London: Penguin, 1995.

526. The film may not deliver the complexity of this narrative to all viewers. It is sufficient that the film troubles the notion of a fixed identity. Following two pregnancies and a lengthy bout of mental illness resulting from brain injury I am aware of the fluid nature of the thing we call personality. In referring to the 'trace', I note that a trace is never a fixed entity, it is always the remains of what remains, a trace of itself. Abraham and Torok's transgenerational phantom is such a trace.

527. This reference to a toy memory aid also provoked the sequence in which text is written and over-written in a notebook. See Freud, 'A Note on the Mystic Writing Pad', pp. 51–55.

528. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 242.

529. Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 2

530. Freud accounts for this by our strength of emotion and lack of scientific understanding of death. I am unconvinced by the role played by science, and strength of emotion is an unsatisfactory reason; why do we have such a strength of emotion? Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 241.

531. Masschelein, *The Unconcept*, p. 39.

532. Joanna Bourke *Fear: A Cultural History*, Berkeley, CA: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2006, p. 49. This reference to death and 'otherness' rather than 'nothingness' is taken from Kurt Riezles, 'Social Psychology of Fear', *American Journal of Sociology*, xlix, 6, May 1944, 489–498, p. 492. Bourke carefully traces changes in the nature of fear in the western world from hell fire to nothingness or otherness with the loosening of belief in the after-world. Similarly she describes how a very real fear of live-burial in the 1800s has given way to an opposite fear of life-prolongation in the face of contemporary technology.

Royle's chapter 'Mole' explores the metaphor of burrowing into texts, and towards death. The moles in *Psychotel* disturb the spirit guide in the grave and 'dream of other holes'.⁵³³ Royle, with reference to Derrida, questions the human relation to death as compared with that of the animal.⁵³⁴ Lacan writes of a thought exercise he asks of his students:

In the introductory phase, one can illustrate the effect of enunciation by asking a student if he can imagine the unconscious existing in animals, unless they have some degree of language – human language. If he indeed agrees that this is the condition that would allow him to at least consider the possibility, you have verified that he distinguishes between 'unconscious' and 'instinct'.⁵³⁵

Lacan emphasises the distinction between humans and animals on the basis of the unconscious existing through language. While I uphold the psychoanalytic unconscious as a framework through which to view the human, it is the question of the human as mammal, territorial and operating according to instinct, which I wish to broach in *Psychotel*. As suggested in the film, I am interested in the 'human animal', and my interest in neuroscience in part arises from wishing to consider the evolution of the mammalian brain and the psyche.⁵³⁶ I consider it a contemporary problem that we are unwilling to recognise in capitalism, the underpinnings of mammalian behaviour. Lacan clarifies: 'The unconscious *is* a concept founded on the trail (trace) left by that which operates to constitute a subject.'⁵³⁷ This account understands the human as subject and not the animal. This statement by Lacan illustrates how Robbins's theory of primordial consciousness coincides with the psychoanalytic unconscious, as an undifferentiated state prior to gaining reflective thought, a mental facility that allows the individual to view themselves as an object in a relation with others – to be a subject.

Deleuze and Guattari criticise psychoanalysis for producing man in the abstract, as an ideological construct. They write:

533. The idea of using a mole was introduced by Royle's chapter 'Mole', in *The Uncanny*, pp. 241–255. I had a mole in the freezer, awaiting a taxidermy project but my interest in taxidermy had waned following a bout of vomiting after skinning a putrid badger. Royle's mole is 'dreaming of a completely new tunnel,' *ibid.*, p. 242. This follows Derrida, 'after a mole-like progression', in discussing Freud's metaphor of 'pathbreaking' in relation to the trace or impression in the unconscious that builds rather than uncovers pathways. See 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', in *Writing and Difference*, p. 269.

534. Royle, 'Mole', *The Uncanny*, p. 251. 'Derrida suggests that man has no more of a relation to death or to the 'name' of death than animals have', with reference to Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993, p. 76.

535. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 707.

536. This is noted in chapter 6. For further reading on this subject see Joanna Bourke, *What it Means to be Human: Reflections from 1791 to the Present*, London: Virago, 2013, and Oxana Timofeeva, *The History of Animals: A Philosophy*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.

537. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 703. Original italics.

[t]he question of the father is like that of God: born of abstraction, it assumes the link to be already broken between man and nature, man and the world, so that man must be produced as man by something exterior to nature and to man.⁵³⁸

The question of animal subjecthood is gathering pace with applications for *habeas corpus* for chimpanzees and elephants by the Nonhuman Rights Project in the US and the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill brought about by the Animal Sentience Campaign in Australia.⁵³⁹ The rise of animal studies has grown in part from the animal liberation movement, gaining traction as an academic discipline since Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, with an increasing focus on biodiversity loss and environmental issues with writers including Haraway, Bourke, Mel Y. Chen, Vincian Despret, Oxana Timofeeva, and Lynn Turner.⁵⁴⁰

Damasio's proto-self, a map of the body within the brain, suggests consciousness is founded on the organism's physical boundary.⁵⁴¹ The linguistic capability of asking questions such as 'what am I?' should not exclude all other experiential understanding of selfhood of a non-linguistic nature. Animal communication and kinship is evidence of a sophisticated comprehension of self and other. The insistence on the human being as other (divine as opposed to animal) has influenced a focus on the 'higher' aspects of consciousness such as language. Freud has been instrumental in proposing we are governed by basic instincts such as sex acquisition and death avoidance, and contributions from animal studies are redressing an imbalance inherited from the historic presence of religion in philosophy.

I have learned that a subtle, nuanced play on reality produces a sensation of the uncanny to a greater extent than explicit footage that employs visual effects. I did not find watching the geese in the pond uncanny when I was shooting the material but in the

538. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 118.

539. The Nonhuman Rights Project in the US has made several unsuccessful attempts to apply for *habeas corpus* but persist. Animal Welfare Amendment Bill, introduced in Australia in 2015 recognises sentience in animals. See <<https://www.nonhumanrights.org/>>, accessed 15 February 2019, and <<https://rspca.org.au/campaigns/nt/animal-sentience>>, accessed 15 February 2019. The *Universal Declaration of Animal Rights* was made public in 1989 by the International League of Animal Rights. See Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 87.

540. For a brief overview see <<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jul/10/earths-sixth-mass-extinction-event-already-underway-scientists-warn>>, accessed 3 July 2019. See also Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction*, also Joanna Bourke, *What it Means to be Human: Reflections from 1791 to the Present*, London: Virago, 2013, Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012, Vinciane Despret, 'The Becoming of Subjectivity in Animal Worlds', *Subjectivity*, 2008, 23, pp. 123–129, and *What Would Animals Say If We Asked the Right Questions?*, trans. by Brett Buchanan, 2016, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016, Oxana Timofeeva, *The History of Animals: A Philosophy*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018, Lynn Turner *et. al.*, *The Edinburgh Companion to Animal Studies*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

541. In considering what consciousness is for, the capacity to remember where food can be found, adaptability to prey response, mate selection, may point to qualities of selfhood and consciousness being present in animals that move.

film, in the context of animal consciousness, the footage works by using voice-over and editing to give the geese a voice. They have not become ‘talking animals’ yet they do ‘speak’. Freud notes this discrepancy between what would in reality be uncanny, compared to what we do not find so in fiction, with reference to fairytales.⁵⁴²

Derrida’s writing on the animal or *animot* was influential here and is referred to in the film.⁵⁴³ Derrida suggests the gaze of the animal offers ‘the abyssal limit of the human’.⁵⁴⁴ I went to a local petting farm with the intention of filming an animal’s gaze. My failure seemed fitting and the animals’ refusal to perform to camera makes a louder statement. When Emmanuel Lévinas writes of Bobby, the dog that recognised the man in the dehumanised environment of a Nazi prison camp, he tells us the ‘face’ of the dog presents a lesser ethical priority. For Lévinas the ‘face’, the gaze, is the site of human responsibility to the other.⁵⁴⁵ Derrida questions Lévinas, as well as Descartes, Kant, Lacan, and Heidegger as to whether they have ever been looked at by an animal ‘that addressed them’.⁵⁴⁶

Deleuze and Guattari write of ‘becoming-animal’. They stress this is not an act of imitation, rather their ‘becoming’ involves a deconstruction of identity itself, a synthesis. They use the example of a wasp that by pollination becomes a part of the orchid’s reproductive system.⁵⁴⁷ For Derrida the ‘becoming-animal’ is affect in itself, ‘the drive in the person’, and represents nothing.⁵⁴⁸ He writes that for Deleuze ‘[...] it is always a question of humanity [...], it’s a question of the becoming-anthropomorphically-animal of man’.⁵⁴⁹ Derrida points out that the prevailing belief among philosophers is that the animal cannot say ‘I’.⁵⁵⁰ Anyone attempting to take a bone from a cat is likely to discover it has a sense of ‘mine’. Derrida tells us that ‘[...] it is enough to admit that the living being is divisible and constituted by a multiplicity of

542. See Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 246.

543. ‘Animot’ is a term used by Derrida to draw attention to the manner in which the word *animal* draws together all the species without recognition of diversity, with reference to the operation of language in designating all animals to this position of homogenised otherness. With reference to *Genesis* and Ish, the first man, he traces man’s authority over the animals to the God-given power of naming them. See *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 15 and p. 39.

544. Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 12.

545. Emmanuel Lévinas, ‘The Name of a Dog, or Natural Right’, in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1990, pp. 151–153. Lévinas prioritised responsibility to the human but considered ethical consideration should extend to all living things. Derrida indicates that Lévinas’ positions the animal ‘outside of the ethical circuit’. See Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 106.

546. Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 14. Derrida writes of his discomfort, standing naked with his cat asking to be fed.

547. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 342.

548. Jacques Derrida, ‘The Transcendental “Stupidity” (“Bêtise”) of Man and the Becoming-Animal According to Deleuze’, ed. by Erin Ferris, in *Derrida, Deleuze, Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Gabriele Schwab, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007, pp. 171–191, 39.

549. *Ibid.*

550. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

assemblages, instances, forces, different intensities, and sometimes tensions and even contradictions'.⁵⁵¹

Robbins, writing on the relation of primordial consciousness to creativity, makes reference to the work of Martin Prechtel, a writer who grew up in native American tribal culture. For Prechtel, writing is a form of becoming. To write about a horse is to write it into view, onto the soul of the reader who must stand back as it charges toward them.⁵⁵² Primordial consciousness, as an undifferentiated and affective state, involves becoming other. Robbins draws a distinction between socio-centric and self-centric cultures, the latter being the western mode.⁵⁵³

Haraway writes of the practice of Vinciane Despret, a philosopher who 'thinks-with other beings, human and not'.⁵⁵⁴ In the essay 'Responding and suffering bodies in human-animal worlds', Despret discusses Temple Grandin, whose autism enables her to see things as animals do.⁵⁵⁵ Grandin, who designs humane slaughter systems, does not claim to be able to feel what animals feel; rather, she is able to notice the details that threaten them.⁵⁵⁶ The attitude of mind that draws Haraway to Despret involves a shift of perspective, a 'being-with' that 'entangle[s] people, critters, and apparatuses'.⁵⁵⁷ 'Sympoiesis', meaning 'making-with' is a keyword in her 'tentacular thinking' that aims to break down the boundaries of the researcher as outsider looking in, a practice that allows the researcher to be changed by the research, involved, open-ended.⁵⁵⁸ This attitude of research echoes Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic approach to conceptualising knowledge, which attempts to avoid a privileged viewpoint, in contrast to the 'arborescent' approach that has a centre, a beginning, middle, and end.⁵⁵⁹ They write that '[a] fibre stretches from a human to an animal, from a human or an animal to molecules, from molecules to particles, and so on to the imperceptible'.⁵⁶⁰ Their

551. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

552. Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self*, p. 43.

553. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13. In 'Primordial consciousness, language, and cultural difference', Robbins makes reference to Piraha and Maori culture, suggesting there is continued use of primordial consciousness as a dominant mode in these socio-centric cultures. The Piraha do not use personal pronouns and constrict communication to the here and now, pp. 47–52.

554. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p. 126.

555. Vinciane Despret, 'Responding and suffering bodies in human-animal worlds',

<<http://www.vincianedespret.be/2010/03/responding-and-suffering-bodies-in-human-animal-worlds/>> accessed 7 June 2019.

556. It is arguable whether an industrial slaughter system can be called humane.

557. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p. 129.

558. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

559. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 1–18.

560. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

approach, which here situates the human as a biological organism in a universal system, expands the notion of ‘being-with’ discussed above to include the inanimate.

Through ‘messing about with dead things’ I have discovered a feeling of biological kinship with mammals that I experience to a lesser extent with birds.⁵⁶¹ I find birds uncanny in the way they differ from mammals; their weight, the delicacy of their bones, the skin so thin it is a wonder it can hold the quills, and their smell is ‘other’, perhaps reptilian. When attending the New Scientist ‘Consciousness’ conference I was disappointed the panel was not prepared to state that animals were conscious, despite discussing higher mental function such as problem solving.⁵⁶² For me, consciousness is visible when an animal ‘sees’ you.⁵⁶³ Ambiguity over living status abounds in films, accounting for the uncanny quality of the zombie movie, tales of possession, and the ghost story. Derrida’s spectre knows this ambiguity, not only by its position between life and death, but also by its temporal ambiguity.⁵⁶⁴

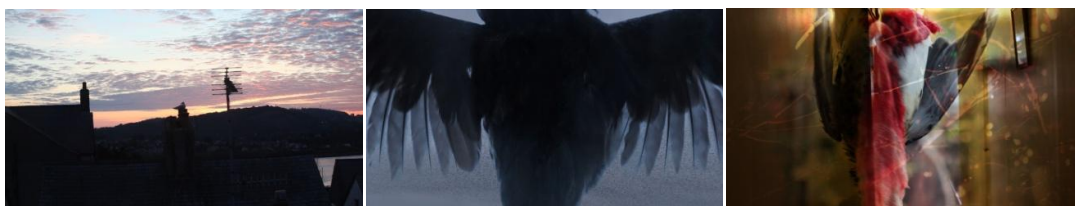


Fig. 59. *Psychotel* stills, dir. Susannah Gent

Birds, both alive and dead, feature in the film, including a reference to the ancient Roman practices of *augury* and *haruspicy* that relate to what Freud calls the ‘animistic attitude of mind’.⁵⁶⁵ This uncanniness that accompanies a return to previously discarded

561. I use the term ‘messing about with dead things’ to describe my taxidermy in *The Reynard Diary*, dir. Susannah Gent, 2010, <<https://vimeo.com/78277557>>. This term is appropriate as my work with dead animals is not a craft activity aimed at making a ‘quality’ taxidermy specimen; rather it is an exploration of my feelings when faced with the dead. The phrase clearly bares a relation to ‘Playing with Dead Things’, the essay by Mike Kelly in ‘The Uncanny’ exhibition catalogue; however I did not make this connection at the time. Mike Kelley, ‘The Uncanny’, exhibition catalogue, Arnham: Gemeetenmuseum Arnham, 1993.

562. At the New Scientist, ‘Consciousness’ conference, 2015, a presentation on animal intelligence focussed on the corvus family. As we know these birds can learn to perform operational sequence, for example to open a box to retrieve food. Holding more than one thought in mind is what is required for cause-effect thinking and is likely what consciousness is for. Without this evidence I would have no difficulty in saying that a bird was conscious by the way we can share a look.

563. The exchange of looks is elegantly discussed by Derrida in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. The absence of the exchange of a look relates to one of the most frequently referenced instances of uncanniness, when one is in doubt as to whether something is alive or dead. Jentsch writes: ‘Among all the psychical uncertainties that can become a cause for the uncanny feeling to arise, there is one in particular that is able to develop a fairly regular, powerful and very general effect: namely, doubt as to whether an apparently living being really is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate’ Jentsch, ‘On the Psychology of the Uncanny’, p. 8, referenced in Freud ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 233.

564. Derrida notes that haunting is both the ghost’s arrival and return. This atemporality underpins the critical framework of hauntology, explored in *Spectres of Marx*.

565. ‘It would seem as though each one of us has been through a phase of individual development corresponding to that animistic stage in primitive men, that none of us has traversed it without preserving certain traces of it which can be re-activated, and that everything which now strikes us as “uncanny” fulfils the condition of stirring those vestiges of animistic mental activity within us and bringing them to expression.’ Freud ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 240.

beliefs is also a form of intellectual uncertainty and draws Freud closer to Jentsch than he cared to admit. During the second attempt to edit this film I returned to reading fiction.⁵⁶⁶ I read two books: *Murmurations: An Anthology of Uncanny Stories about Birds*, and *An English Guide to Birdwatching*, which primed my association with birds and the uncanny.⁵⁶⁷ A starling murmuration featured in *Unhomely Street* and some of the footage was included in *Psychotel*, as well as a ‘murder’ of crows, in folklore said to foreshadow death. Flocking birds and shoals of fish employ a means of communication or a comprehension of proximity that does not currently have a scientific explanation.

In my earlier discussion of *Unhomely Street* and filmic intuition I described dance as a primitive, non-linguistic form of communication.⁵⁶⁸ Dance can be peculiar. Rather than ‘seeing’ body language, the experience can be closer to ‘feeling’ presence, as though by vibration, in which the surrounding space adopts a material texture – like swimming. Phenomena occupying this grey area are often attributed to primitive belief systems although it may be that the phenomena simply lack a scientific explanation.⁵⁶⁹ Freud writes: ‘One of the most uncanny and wide-spread forms of superstition is the evil eye.’⁵⁷⁰ Here the look has the power to harm. This is referenced in *Psychotel* with an image taken in Istanbul of the Nazar, an amulet believed to protect against the evil eye. Again one is reminded of the motif of looking in *The Sandman*. The expression ‘the eyes are the windows to the soul’ suggest the eyes are more than the biological organs of sight.⁵⁷¹ The appearance of the eyes is an indicator of life or death and ambiguity of this status is exploited in the horror genre especially with eyes that are entirely white or black.⁵⁷²

566. This was September 2017–January 2018. I had read almost no fiction for the four years since starting the Ph.D. I was taking a break from writing to work on the film and I felt that a different ‘diet’ might help the edit.

567. Royle, *An English Guide to Birdwatching*, Royle (editor) *Murmurations: An Anthology of Uncanny Stories about Birds*. See footnote 521 for an untangling of the Royles.

568. See chapter 3.

569. Another such example is the sense of being stared at. Expressions including ‘his eyes bore holes in the back of my head’ are common and suggest a widely experienced phenomenon. I have on several occasions felt that I responded to being stared at and have intuitively felt someone has reacted to my unseen attention. This ‘sense’ has been scientifically investigated by biologist Rupert Sheldrake whose statistical data demonstrates the existence of these unexplained reactions. Sheldrake has been pilloried by the scientific community for this work. His statistical data shows only a small increase above chance in controlled experiments in which participants guess if they are being stared at. He claims that although the results appear unimpressive, the volume of data he has collected demonstrates beyond doubt that we have a sense of being stared at. A factor he considers when analysing his results is that the mechanism used to notice attention at a distance is likely to be nonconscious, (empirical evidence supports this) whereas his experiments involved conscious attention to the phenomenon. He reports that Second World War fighter pilots were instructed not to stare at enemy pilots when taking aim as the stare would alert their attention. See Rupert Sheldrake, *The Sense of Being Stared At: And Other Aspects of the Extended Mind*, London: Arrow Books, 2004, p. 125.

570. Freud ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 240.

571. The origin of this phrase could be biblical, see <https://www.phrases.org.uk/bulletin_board/41/messages/1097.html>, accessed 20 September 2018.

572. *Black Eyed Children Let Me In*, dir. Justin Snyder, Cyfuno Ventures, 2015 [on DVD]. *Ouija* dir. Stiles White, Universal Pictures, 2014 [on DVD]. See also chapters 2 and 5 for commentary on eye removal. Facial manipulation is one of the categories in the behavioural survey. White eyes and no eyes, that is, skin covering where the eyes should be as in the ‘blind narrator’ score

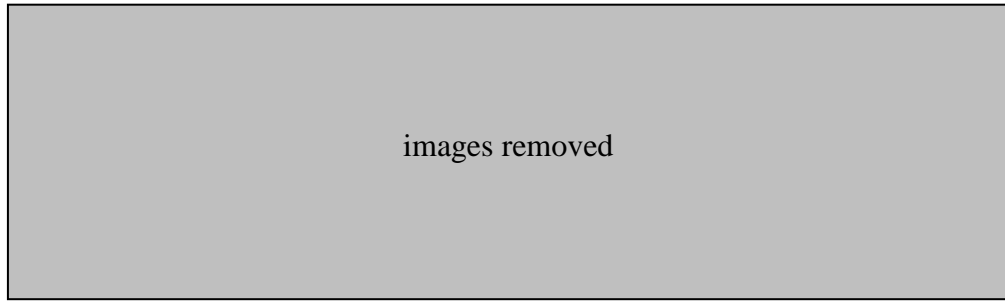


Fig. 60. *Black Eyed Children Let Me In*, dir. Justin Snyder. Fig. 61. *Ouija* dir. Stiles White.

The feelings associated with phenomena that cannot be explained are usually strong. They can be the basis of religious experience or suggestive of a special intimacy between people. The intuitive feeling that cannot be dispelled by the lack of explanation suggests these experiences are important. I am not religious but I consider spirituality, as a state of mind, to be worth promoting. To live with the attitude that we are part of something bigger, be it a species, the ecosystem of the planet, or the universe, helps to keep one's perspective in proportion and encourages consideration beyond one's immediate world. An outlook that is open to the sublime may be rewarded by feelings of rare pleasure. It was with this attitude that I approached the ending to *Psychotel*.

Spirit level and the quantum uncanny

The robin knows nothing of quantum physics but through its effects it knows the way home.⁵⁷³

For Royle, the uncanny can be 'also be a matter of something strangely beautiful, bordering on ecstasy'.⁵⁷⁴ The ending of *Psychotel* was informed by this view of the uncanny, coupled with a desire to make a more up-beat film than *Unhomely Street*. In recovering from post-concussive syndrome one of the most noticeable improvements was enjoying the uplifting effects of sunlight. Haraway, whose persuasive texts helped by making me feel I had a responsibility to think positively about the future, occupies an optimistic, uncanny space. Although her insistence that 'it matters what thoughts think thoughts' largely refers to the cultural field, there is the suggestion of telepathy, that a positive future is built from favourable expectation.⁵⁷⁵ Freud cites telepathy and

highest for this section however overall this section was not judged very 'eerie', most likely because of its obviously constructed nature. Facial mutilation including extreme piercing and tattooing scored far higher. See appendix 1 for image set.

573. Written with reference to Peter Hore, 'The Quantum Robin', <http://hore.chem.ox.ac.uk/PDFs/The_Quantum_Robin.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2019.

574. Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 2.

575. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p.12. I am grateful to Sharon Kivland for her recommendation of this author at this time.

the omnipresence of thought as a source of the uncanny.⁵⁷⁶ He describes telepathy as ‘mental processes leaping from one [...] to another’.⁵⁷⁷ In his deconstructive text on ‘Telepathy’, Derrida considers the theme of telepathy in Freud’s writing, translated by Royle who writes a deconstructive text on Derrida’s text.⁵⁷⁸ Here telepathy is considered as a ‘foreign body’ within psychoanalysis.⁵⁷⁹ Derrida writes that it is ‘difficult to imagine a theory of what they still call the unconscious without a theory of telepathy.’⁵⁸⁰ According to Lacan, as previously noted, the unconscious is the *discourse of the other*.⁵⁸¹ With reference to the ‘telepathy effect’ Royle describes the novel as ‘a kind of weird telephone exchange’.⁵⁸² Royle’s *Regicide* uses telephones impressively to make eerie contact across psychical dimensions.⁵⁸³ In Derrida’s text are references to telephones. The media theorist Friedrich A. Kittler expands on an analogy drawn by Freud between psychoanalysis and the telephone, in which the psychoanalyst tuning in to the patient’s unconscious is likened to process whereby sound waves are transformed into electronic oscillations.⁵⁸⁴ Kittler notes that one of Edison’s proposed applications for the phonograph was to record the last words of the dying. He suggests this is only a small step away from using telephone cables as a means to link the living and the dead.⁵⁸⁵ And so with reference to these ideas I use telephones in *Psychotel*.⁵⁸⁶

Royle aligns the term and concept of telepathy with the emergence of telemedia and the decline in the belief in God. The reference by both Royles to telephones was influential in my resolving the central section of *Psychotel*. Coincidental was the randomly selected text by Nietzsche on our decline in belief in God that follows the exorcism of the spirit guide.⁵⁸⁷ Further, in ‘Telepathy’ Derrida introduces lakes. He proposes the

576. Freud ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 240.

577. ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 234.

578. Derrida, ‘Telepathy’, pp. 496–526, and Royle, ‘The Remains of Psychoanalysis (1): Telepathy’, in McQuillan (editor), *Deconstruction*, pp. 361–369.

579. Royle, ‘The Remains of Psychoanalysis’, p. 369. Royle notes that for Derrida telepathy ‘has to do with both assimilation and vomit’, that this ‘foreign body’ is both assimilated and rejected ‘without being able to make up its mind’, p. 365.

580. Derrida, ‘Telepathy’, p. 505.

581. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, p. xi. As noted in chapter 4, Fink writes: ‘Other people’s views and desires flow into us via discourse. In that sense, we can interpret Lacan’s statement that the unconscious is the Other’s discourse in a very straightforward fashion: *the unconscious is full of other people’s talk, other people’s conversations, and other people’s goals, aspirations, and fantasies*’, yet he specifies, ‘in so far as they are expressed in words’, see Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, pp. 9–10. Original italics. Another interpretation of Derrida’s statement is a telepathy effect resulting from the split nature of the psyche in which aspects of the self are veiled. See chapter 6 for an expansion of these points.

582. Royle, *Quilt*, p. 157. The ‘telepathy effect’ refers to the novel’s ability to speak the inner thoughts of a character. ‘The ‘telepathy’ effect: notes towards a reconsideration of narrative fiction’, *The Uncanny*, 2003, pp. 256–276.

583. Nicholas Royle, *Regicide*, Oxford: Rebellion Publishing, 2011.

584. Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 88. Kittler’s comments follow Freud, ‘Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-Analysis,’ (1912), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, 1962, vol. 12, pp. 109–120, 115–16.

585. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 12.

586. I bought an old dial telephone from a junk shop and demonstrated to my son how calls used to be made. I was myself astonished at how long it took for the dial to return and noted how time runs quicker these days.

587. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans by R. J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin Books, 1973, p. 81.

word [*lac*] suggests a force, ‘plunging down head first’ in reference to suicide by drowning (a return to inter-uterine existence?). I am reminded of the start of *Psychotel*, shot three years previously; however, the question ‘what’s at the bottom of the lake’ has been posed in many films, often by the murdered body as in Hitchcock’s *Psycho*. The *déjà vu* effect I experience when reading Derrida’s text on telepathy, with references to dead birds, lakes, omens of death, telephones, hearing a text in several languages, and fear of the apocalypse, struck me as uncanny.⁵⁸⁸ I am keen to avoid ‘the ultimate naïvety’ of sliding into pseudoscience and am reminded of Freud’s reference to the uncanniness of repeatedly seeing something such as the number 62.⁵⁸⁹ The number 62 is included in *Psychotel* as a repeated number on the paternoster and in the check-out sequence. Derrida notes that science keeps telepathy at bay.⁵⁹⁰ Indeed that which lacks a scientific explanation must remain outside sensible discourse, yet science ‘can have this double effect: to render thinkable what earlier science pushed back into the darkness of occultism’.⁵⁹¹

Primordial consciousness, according to Robbins, is a state of fusion between self and other. He identifies the continued dominance of primordial mentation as responsible for feelings of omnipotence and access to the thoughts of others that is present in schizophrenia and other psychoses.⁵⁹²

From American psychoanalysis, ‘field theory’ describes a method of practice in which the clinical session is conducted in an *interpersonal field*, a creative space constructed between the analyst and patient. This space is often viewed as a dream space in which the unconscious minds of both participants communicate. Surface conversations can take place but there is deeper activity at play, another scene in which symbolic scenarios

588. Derrida, ‘Telepathy’, pp. 496–526, dead birds, p. 500, lakes, p. 503, omens of death, p. 503, telephones, p. 503, hearing a text in several languages, p. 497, fear of the apocalypse, p. 497. These references each relate to components of my films.

589. Derrida writes: ‘the ultimate naïvety would be to allow oneself to think that Telepathy guarantees a destination which “posts and communications” fail to provide’, ‘Telepathy’, p. 506. In the original write up of this chapter before it was combined with the rest of the thesis, this footnote was number 62. For Freud’s reference to 62 see Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’, p. 237. Our brains are primed to pattern recognition so that once we become primed to notice something we tend to see it everywhere.

590. Derrida, ‘Telepathy’, p. 504–5.

591. *Ibid.*, p. 506.

592. Robbins uses essays written by patients in long-term treatment who have become able to recognise in their language, evidence of primordial consciousness. Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self*, pp. 83–100. It is perhaps worth noting with reference to Robbins’s theory of primordial consciousness, the mother infant bond, and telepathy, that when I had pre-school-aged children and regularly attended playgroups, a frequent topic of conversation was the instinctive tendency among mothers of young children to attempt to make their minds blank when their children awoke in the night. It was felt that thinking about the child caused them to fully waken. The technique discussed was similar to that used at the end of *Village of the Damned*, dir. Wold Rilla, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1960, [on DVD], based on the novel, *The Midwich Cuckoos*, by John Wyndham, London: Penguin Books, 1957.

are enacted. Psychoanalyst Donnel B. Stern, writing on the field theory of Harry Stack Sullivan, describes the interpersonal field as an omnipresent aspect of social reality.⁵⁹³

Telepathy is defined as ‘touch at a distance’.⁵⁹⁴ Quantum entanglement, named ‘spooky action at a distance’ by Einstein, occurs when particles, such as photons, are split (for example by a laser beam). The split pair of particles is entangled meaning that the state of one simultaneously effects its pair. This occurs regardless of the distance separating them.⁵⁹⁵ This ‘spooky action’ presents uncanny possibilities for how information circulates. Rui Freire Lucas writes of the ‘quantum unconscious’, noting how the birth of quantum physics removed the certainty from the scientific world of Newtonian physics. He draws the connection between Bergson’s account of pure duration, that ‘the only way of expressing genuine temporality is in the individual inner experience’, and the role played by the observer in the double-slit experiment in which measurement defines reality.⁵⁹⁶ The discoveries of the twentieth-century demonstrate not only that reality is not what it seems but that we should be wary of certainties.

The understanding of telepathy as ‘mental processes in one person – ideas, emotional states, cognitive impulses’, leads Royle to consider telepathy as the essential secret of literature.⁵⁹⁷ He reconsiders the term ‘omniscience’ as a description of the narrator or author who can see into the mind of characters suggesting that telepathy is a more apt metaphor to describe the odd states of revealed subjectivity in literature. He notes: ‘Derrida’s understanding of “being two-to-speak” is a telepathic structure that entails an ‘uncanny logic.’⁵⁹⁸ McQuillan’s definition of deconstruction, of allowing the other to speak, is by definition impossible as ‘whenever we think we are hearing the other speak we are always reducing its otherness to the self-same’.⁵⁹⁹ Notwithstanding this problematic point within the ambition of deconstruction generally, I propose a

593. Donnel B. Stern, ‘Field Theory in Psychoanalysis, Part 1: Harry Stack Sullivan and Madeleine and Willy Baranger’, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, vol. 23, issue 5, 2013, 487–501, p. 489. Stern explores differences in field theory according to texts from the analysts named in the title, with reference to ‘Bionian field theory’ and ‘interpersonal and relational field theory’.

594. Derrida, ‘Telepathy’, p. 504.

595. Karl Tate, ‘How Quantum Entanglement Works’, *Live Science*, 2013, <<https://www.livescience.com/28550-how-quantum-entanglement-works-infographic.html>>, accessed 8 March 2019.

596. Rui Freire Lucas, ‘The Quantum Unconscious and the Observant Consciousness’, *Psychology*, 7, 2016, 836–63, p. 844. Lucas notes ‘consciousness is a function of the unconscious’ according to Bergson’s understanding of consciousness as concerning the present moment of an emergent reality from which a continuous ‘unconscious’ past builds, p. 845. The double-slit experiment, which demonstrates how a photon can behave as both a wave and a particle, displays the strange phenomena that prior to observation, the photon exists in a ‘*pure undefined nature*’, p. 846, original italics. Lucas draws a correlation between how objective reality was brought into question with the quantum revolution and how the positivist vision of the mind has been challenged by Jung and Bion.

597. Royle, ‘The Remains of Psychoanalysis’, p. 368 and Royle, ‘The Telepathy Effect’, *The Uncanny*, pp. 256–276. See also ‘Reality literature’ in this chapter, with reference to the ‘Afterword’ of *Quilt*, pp. 152–159.

598. Royle, ‘The Telepathy Effect’, p. 267.

599. McQuillan *Deconstruction: A Reader*, p. 6.

deconstructive encounter is arguable in my filmmaking between the act of shooting rushes and the point of editing the material into a narrative. As discussed in chapter 6, in relation to the material shot in Istanbul, I am motivated to capture material and rarely consider why I am drawn to a scene, or later realise that I have considered one aspect of what I was shooting and upon reflecting in the editing suite I find a whole other interpretation is possible. This other meaning was likely present all along at an unconscious level, or was not available to reflective consciousness. Deleuze and Guattari describe writing as an act of ‘becoming’, with writers being sorcerers whose work throws them into upheaval, transformation and otherness.⁶⁰⁰

The ending of *Psychotel* was made early in production. The footage is largely constructed from an insect-infested tree in Hamburg. The white silvery film from the caterpillars is quite beautiful though damaging or deadly to the tree. The scale of the infestation demonstrates the power of nature, although in the context of the film, this could equally refer to the power of human nature. The music is mainly ambient tones with a strain of ‘Oh Danny Boy’, a song about love and death. The sequence, although ambiguous, has a note of optimism.

Freud associates the uncanny with primitive belief, specifically the sensation that arises when old, surmounted beliefs resurface.⁶⁰¹ Through research and filmmaking I explore an interpretation that closes the gap between the primitive and the scientific. A connection between quantum physics and Eastern spiritual belief is drawn by Gary Zukav in *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*.⁶⁰² Zukav outlines quantum physics for the general reader noting that the Taiwanese for physics, *Wu Li*, translates as ‘patterns of organic energy’.⁶⁰³ Although he acknowledges the differences between Buddhism and Hinduism, he proposes that at the heart of these Eastern philosophies are ideas that are compatible with quantum mechanics:

the philosophical implication of quantum mechanics is that all of the things in our universe, (including us) that appear to exist independently are in fact parts of one all-

600. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 280.

601. ‘It would appear that we invest with a feeling of uncanniness those impressions which lend support to a belief in the omnipotence of thoughts, and to the animistic attitude of mind, at a time when our judgment has already rejected these same beliefs.’ Freud, ‘Totem and Taboo’, pp. 77–8.

602. Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu-Li Masters: An Overview of New Physics*, New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1979.

603. Zukav, *The Dancing Wu-Li Masters*, p. 5.

encompassing organic pattern, and that no parts of that pattern are ever really separate from it or from each other.⁶⁰⁴

Enlightenment is ‘to experience a pure, undifferentiated reality which is “that-which-is”’.⁶⁰⁵ Eastern religions ‘allow the mind to escape the confines of the symbolic’, to feel beyond the words and concepts toward a ‘suchness’ of reality.⁶⁰⁶

Robbins identifies a continued prevalence of primordial mentation in socio-centric cultures, and recognises in Buddhist and Hindu philosophy a principle of reduced differentiation between self and other. He writes that ‘[p]rimordial consciousness is simply a different way of organising self and cosmos, one that can be constructive and creative, or disturbed and pathological, depending both on the context in which it is used, and its relationship to reflective representational thought’.⁶⁰⁷ Thus, the uncanny is contextual and likely to surface through events and beliefs that are at odds with the dominant mode of thought within a culture.

The difference between the macro and the micro world is itself most uncanny. We know, as inhabitants of the macro world, that for us matter exists in a real way. Although we discuss electrons, neutrons, baryons *etc.* as though they were units of matter, actual ‘things’, subatomic particles describe properties, states, or forces. The crucial boundary that distinguishes one organism from another falls away at the micro level.⁶⁰⁸ Haraway captures something of this in her use of the terms *holobiont* as an unbounded term for a being.⁶⁰⁹ She writes:

I use holobiont to mean symbiotic assemblages, at whatever scale of space or time, which are more like knots of diverse intra-active relatings in dynamic complex systems, than like the entities of a biology made up of preexisting units (genes, cells, organisms etc.) [...].⁶¹⁰

604. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

605. *Ibid.*, p. 342.

606. *Ibid.*, p. 343. The distinction between the ‘real’ and the ‘symbolic’ echoes Lacan insofar as the ‘real’ is an unattainable other and ‘symbolic’ refers to the construction of meaning. Shinto, the traditional religion of Japan, has been translated as ‘spirit path’, however the translation from the kanji is open for interpretation. ‘Spirit’ could mean essence and Shinto understands ‘energy generating phenomena’ in rocks, rivers, trees, people that share an ‘interrelated complexity’, <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinto>>. Shinto resembles Paganism in many ways. Both Hinduism and Buddhism believe in a cycle of rebirth, and a divine that penetrates everything: people, animals, rocks, and rivers, <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism>>, <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism>>, accessed 28 March 2019.

607. Robbins, *Consciousness, Language, and Self*, p. 14.

608. The language used in quantum physics, for example, ‘spooky action at a distance’, Einstein’s description of the simultaneous, nonlocal interaction of entangled particles, <<https://www.technologyreview.com/s/427174/einsteins-spooky-action-at-a-distance-paradox-older-than-thought/>>, accessed 28 March 2019, and ‘strangeness’, the name given to a property of particles by Murry Gell-Mann, <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strangeness>>, accessed 28 March 2019, reflect the uncanny qualities that require a wholesale re-evaluation of what has been understood as the fundamental laws within the framework of Newtonian physics.

609. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p. 60, with reference to Lynn Margulis.

610. *Ibid.*

Deleuze and Guattari write:

We do not become animal without a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity. A fascination for the outside? Or is the multiplicity that fascinates us already related to a multiplicity dwelling within us?⁶¹¹

What these attitudes present is a progression of the traditional Western viewpoint towards an expanded outlook that draws it closer to science and eastern philosophy as discussed above.

Quantum physics can describe but not explain behaviours of subatomic particles. Eastern philosophy posits the existence of a state that can be known (experienced) but not described. Penrose proposes a quantum description of consciousness. Although his view is controversial in the neuroscientific community, quantum theory has recently been proposed as an explanation for the magnetic compass of migratory birds.⁶¹² The relation between quantum theory and the brain sciences is in its infancy; however, as a universal law of physics, at a fundamental level, we *are* quanta. These ideas informed the sequences in the latter quarter of *Psychotel*, in which the micro-world is referenced. I suggest a relation between entropic disorder and the Freudian death-drive. It is likely there is a correlation between cellular activity and behaviour of the organism as a whole. Deleuze and Guattari write of the cerebral state that ‘cells die without being renewed, making the brain a set of little deaths that puts constant death within us’.⁶¹³ Freud suggests the death-drive is a desire to return to an inorganic state. This could perhaps be likened to an increase in entropy.⁶¹⁴

The uncanny sensation arises with certain audio tones. Prevalent in the supernatural horror genre are deep bass tones. I venture that low resonance mimics the ocean, thunder, and volcano eruption, and that there is a hard-wired reaction to be wary of these sounds.⁶¹⁵ That this is a primitive response corresponds to accounts of the uncanny already discussed. The sound track of *Psychotel* makes use of low resonant

611. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 280.

612. Peter Hore, ‘The Quantum Robin’, <http://hore.chem.ox.ac.uk/PDFs/The_Quantum_Robin.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2019.

613. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* p. 216.

614. Entropy refers to the degree of randomness in a system, or a measure of disorder. The term was introduced in 1850 by Rudolf Clausius as a mathematical way of testing the second law of thermodynamics; that total entropy in a system cannot decrease over time. See <<https://www.britannica.com/science/thermodynamics/Isothermal-and-adiabatic-processes#ref258544>>, accessed 7 March 2019.

615. As an innate response I speculate that this has a neurological correlation. However this is not known.

hums that provoke a response of unease and are the stock material of the supernatural horror genre. The science sequence referenced above uses two voices in a call and response that could be likened to a preacher and congregation except the flat delivery and musical notes makes the sequence more like an avant-garde audio work. The use of rhythm and chant is designed to enliven the viewer and invite them to commit further to the cinematic world and at other times to relax and beguile. Many religious practices involve meditation, or chanting and prayers that employ vibration through resonant humming and rhythmical, repetitious phrases. It is a matter of opinion whether these activities take one closer to the divine, but they occupy the language centres of the brain, as does transcendental meditation through the repetition of a mantra while encouraging a focus on the breath. Although the aim is to achieve a higher state of consciousness (whatever that may be), the rhythmical nature of these practices, attuning the heart with the breath, brings the mind into an awareness of the embodied moment.

Mavromatis, in his academic study of hypnagogia, notes that meditation involves turning the attention inwards, and has physiological aspects including decreased oxygen consumption, heart rate, and blood lactate. Initial alpha rhythm brain wave activity progresses to the alpha-theta range, then to pure theta rhythm that can be measured by EEG.⁶¹⁶ Mavromatis draws comparisons between meditation, creativity, hypnagogia, and schizophrenic mentation. He notes a defining characteristic of hypnagogia is the loosening of ego boundaries, observing that schizophrenia is often characterised by a blurring of the boundaries of the self, that the patient can feel that they are plants or clouds.⁶¹⁷

With reference to R. D. Laing, Deleuze and Guattari describe schizophrenia as a ‘transcendental experience of the loss of the Ego [...]’.⁶¹⁸ They discuss feelings, affect, as ‘intensive qualities that form material for hallucinations and deliriums’.⁶¹⁹ Their term ‘schizoanalysis’, rather than retaining connotations of mental illness, aims to demonstrate their rhizomatic attitude of mind.

616. Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia*, p. 110.

617. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

618. *Ibid.*, p. 93. With reference to R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience*, New York, NY: Ballantine, 1967, pp. 154–55.

619. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

Robbins coined the term ‘schizophenese’ for the language of schizophrenia, which he uses to demonstrate the different ways in which primordial and reflective consciousness use language. His patient Caroline describes an impromptu game of pool: ‘I had time to kill. Rack it up and pocket ’em. Sock it and rock ’em. Clear the table. The only table that had monkey business to it.’ The alliteration in combination with the lack of specific information bears similarities to some of the voice-over used in *Psychotel*. The line; ‘its energy was adding to the folding of the city, the blackness was pushing upwards through the floating crap’, contains comparable rhythm and a lack of concrete specificity.⁶²⁰ The voice-over below was written following a dream.

I dreamed I was on a train and I told my daughter that I was the minister because of the rape. I didn’t mean minister I meant consulate...because of consummate...because it was non-consensual. Consulate contains the word slut. And then I saw all the languages, I saw it written in all the languages like in an instruction manual.

This text contains the contents of the dream but is not verbatim dream-speak. In this can be seen condensation and displacement as well as alliteration and perhaps a faint rhythm of a train. These examples lend weight to the idea that creative practice employs the unconscious or, to follow Robbins, engages primordial consciousness and thus bears a relation to dreaming and schizophrenic mentation. Reflective representational (Robbins) or extended (Damasio) consciousness has a temporal aspect, allowing for past experience to inform future prediction. Although as a mode of consciousness this type of mentation might imply being present, it distracts from the lived moment.⁶²¹ It is the assumption of presence that Derrida challenges through his critical framework of hauntology that emphasises the temporal quality of thought of the spectralised individual and the historical trace in the social field.

Temporal thinking may be associated with anxiety, being characterised by worry about the past or future. An interconnected group of brain structures known as the *default mode network* (DMN) has been identified as active during times when the brain is not paying particular attention, at rest but awake.⁶²² These connected brain structures, a

620. Another example already mentioned is ‘sunbeams clung to her body and tiny birds’, that conveys tone by repetitious sounds and abstract content.

621. This is the distinction made by Withy when she discusses absencing and presencing in Heidegger. Withy, *Heidegger: On Being Uncanny*, p. 149, see also chapter 6.

622 Default mode network (DMN) is a widely used term but its function is not fully understood and research into this collection of interconnected brain regions is relatively new.

complex construct of interconnectivity, are associated with creativity.⁶²³ This correlation of day-dreaming and creativity supports my experience that creative challenges require rumination.⁶²⁴ The DMN is thought to be associated with the construct of self-hood and the means by which we build personal narratives.⁶²⁵ Increased activity in the DMN is associated with depression whereas decreased DMN activity is reported in meditation practitioners, and psilocybin and LSD use shows desynchronised DMN operation.⁶²⁶ In meditation and psychoactive drug use, like schizophrenia, ego dissolution is frequently reported. Neidich considers contemporary use of social media and other online activity may reduce daydreaming and hence time when the DMN is active. Neidich considers this may have a negative impact on human creativity.⁶²⁷ Research is underway to correlate these findings and better understand the DMN.⁶²⁸ A relation between DMN and primordial consciousness could be inferred from the types of mentation cited; however this is speculative.

It is possible that having a meditation practice and engaging in non-direct thinking when engaged in creative tasks may have supported periods of productivity.⁶²⁹ Meditation has influenced the content of the work, specifically the counting down and up at the start and finish. These sequences, the kaleidoscopic effects during the spirit guide exorcism, and the ending are intended to be hypnotic. It may be that these sequences promote fluctuations in DMN activation in the viewer but this cannot be predicted.

623. See Beaty, *et al*, 2018 for brain imaging study of 163 participants in classic divergent thinking task, Brenner for summary of recent studies of DMN and creativity, and Stark for correlation of DMN and well-being. Roger. E. Beaty *et al*, 'Robust prediction of individual creative ability from brain functional connectivity', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences U S A.* vol. 115, no. 5, 2018, 1087–1092. See <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5798342/>>, accessed 21 September 2018. Grant Hilary Brenner, 'Your brain on creativity', *Psychology Today*, 2018, <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/experimentations/201802/your-brain-creativity>>, accessed 21 September 2018, See Eloise A. Stark, *et al*, 'Music, dance, and other art forms: New insights into the links between hedonia (pleasure) and eudaimonia (well-being)', *Progress in Brain Research*, vol. 237, 2018, 129–152.

624. Creative rumination will be returned to in chapter 8.

625. For a study of the neural representations of self see Ray and Davey for a brain imaging study of self in relation to the DMN. Rebecca D. Ray *et al*, 'Interdependent self-construal and neural representations of self and mother', *Social, Cognitive, and Affective Neuroscience*, vol. 5, 2010, 318–323, <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2894675/>>, accessed 21 September 2018. Christopher G. Davey *et al*, 'Mapping the self in the brain's default mode network', *NeuroImage*, vol. 132, 2016, 390–397.

626. See Lou for study of meditation and neural correlates of consciousness and Garrison for meditation and DMN activity. Hans C. Lou *et al*, 'The Mental Self', *Progress in Brain Research*, vol. 150, 2005, 197–204. Kathleen A. Garrison *et al*, 'Meditation leads to reduced default mode network activity beyond an active task', *Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioural Neuroscience*, vol. 15, issue 3, 2015, 712–720, <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4529365/>>, accessed 20 September 2018.

627. Warren Neidich, Transmission Lecture, Sheffield Hallam University, 2014.

628. There is a correlation between creativity, mediation, and schizophrenia draw by Mavromatis, referenced previously. The relation of the DMN to creativity and meditation is unclear, however creative practice varies considerably. Painting for example, is likely a different type of mental activity to character-based writing in which the use of a system involved in building personal narratives may be beneficial. These comments are speculative and contribute to an in-progress picture of brain rest and contemporary digital life.

629. I have practised several forms of meditation and have had a short course of hypnotherapy. I have Sufi friends and occasionally join them for a zikr. While they are praying, I would describe what I am engaged in as group meditation. I have done short courses in mindfulness and Buddhist meditation. Through an interest in the filmmaker David Lynch I explored transcendental meditation. Although it is trade-marked – something I find extraordinary for a meditation practice – and its 'secrets' carefully guarded to protect profit (TM courses are very expensive) there is information available and it is quite simple in principle. On occasion when I have been engaged in creative practice (editing), and have meditated according to routine, I have found I am already 'there', that is, the meditation seems pointless as my mind is not 'speaking' in the manner that meditation aims to quieten.

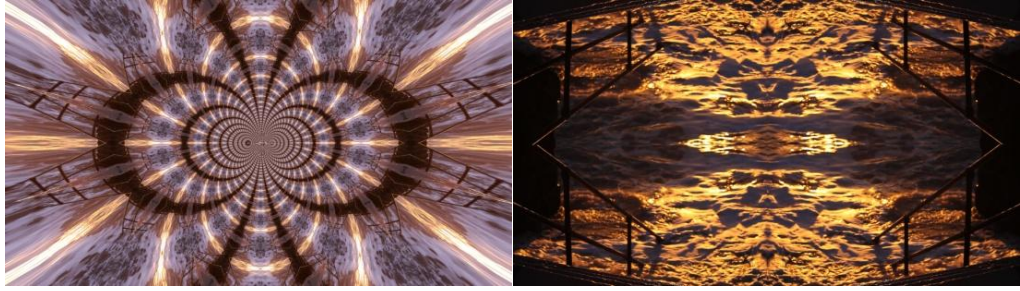


Fig. 62. *Psychotel* stills, dir. Susannah Gent

In *The Brain as a Screen*, an interview with *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Deleuze suggests that cinema resembles spiritual life. He defines spiritual life as ‘the movement of the mind’. Rather than relating to dream or fantasy, he specifies it is ‘the realm of clear-headed decision making, a kind of absolute stubbornness, the choice of existence’.⁶³⁰ Deleuze stresses that thought is molecular, and the biology of the brain is relevant as ‘cinema puts the image in motion, or endows the image with self-movement, it is forever tracing and retracing cerebral circuits’.⁶³¹ The connection Deleuze draws between cinema, spirituality and ‘clear-headed decision making’ appears counter-intuitive, however; as discussed in relation to somatic markers, decision making is an emotionally driven process.

The idea of moving deeper – or lower – into the mind, as Freud’s term *unconscious* suggests, is a widely held spatial metaphor for the architecture of the psyche. I filmed lifts in the hotels, a dumb waiter, and the paternoster at the Arts Tower of the University of Sheffield.⁶³² All present the possibility of something that should not be there appearing as the lift rises or descends. As noted, this choice was influenced by the opening sequence of Lars Von Trier’s *Europa*, featuring a shot of a track taken from the front of the train. The countdown in this film and in *Psychotel* draws the audience into the unique narrative space.

The state of mind attained through mediation and chant may be aligned with Damasio’s core-consciousness that is associated with the here-and-now. This state of mentation, which could be likened to Robbins’ primordial consciousness, lacks the temporal dimension of extended consciousness or reflective representational thought. The

630. Gilles Deleuze, ‘The Brain is a Screen’, in *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, ed. by David Laloujade, trans. by Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina, New York, NY: Semiotext(e), 2006, p. 40.

631. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

632. I was surprised how many hotel employees had never heard of the dumb waiter. I have a sinister association with dumb waiters, which I think stems from a film I watched in childhood but have very little concrete recollection.

movement between extended- and core-consciousness, or primordial- and reflective representational consciousness may correlated to the *absencing* and *presencing* described by Wthy in relation to the uncanny nature of *Dasein*. Perception and consciousness, rather than being means of revealing what there is, are means by which reality is constructed. That reality is polymorphous is itself uncanny. That we experience different states of being, many of which are in conflict with Western ideology and the positivist vision of reality, suggests there is wisdom in primitive accounts of life as ‘patterns of organic energy’.

8.

CHECK OUT: EXIT

Chance: the magic book shop

Be helpless, dumbfounded,
Unable to say yes or no.
Then a stretcher will come from grace.⁶³³

I live in Nether Edge, Sheffield, in the centre of which is an Oxfam bookshop. It has a shelf for philosophy and religion, a combination that irks me every time. Although the selection is small I have bought *Écrits* by Lacan, *Creative Evolution* by Henri Bergson, and many science books including the works of Penrose. When I wanted a copy of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* I ordered it from Amazon but it never arrived and the seller contacted me to say it was not available. Then on my birthday I went into Oxfam and there it was. I am not superstitious but as I am doing a Ph.D. on the subject of the uncanny I feel there is space for primitive belief. Since then I have used the bookshop to guide my reading. I do, of course, follow references suggested in other texts and take recommendations from my supervisors and contemporaries; however, the magic bookshop method is surprisingly good. The method, if I may call it that, is not quite *bibliomancy*, the use of books for divination, but there are correlations.

One of the first books I read after starting the Ph.D. was Claxton's *The Wayward Mind: An Intimate History of the Unconscious*, an historical book about changes in attitude to mind and psyche since the Ancient Egyptians. And towards the end of my reading for this project, I find his work, *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind*, in the bookshop. He argues:

Allowing the mind time to meander is not a luxury that can safely be cut back as life or work gets more demanding. On the contrary, thinking slowly is a vital part of the cognitive armamentarium.⁶³⁴

One of the advantages of undertaking this practice-based Ph.D. has been to experience the benefits of academic and creative 'space', in danger of being eroded through contemporary time-compression and work intensification.⁶³⁵

633. Rumi, Zero Circle, <<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/zero-circle/comments/>>, accessed 29 March 2019.

634. Guy Claxton, *Hare Brain Tortoise Mind*, London: Fourth Estate, 1998, p. 2.

635. In 1989, David Harvey proposed 'space-time compression', to reflect the contemporary shrinkage of distance that brings about the 'global village'. Harvey's 'space-time compression' describes an 'imperative to reduce the circulation time of capital' following Marx's theory of the 'annihilation of time and space' that refers to the requirement of cheap transport and communication for capital-based production. See Aejaz Ahmad Wani and Mohd. Rafiq Wani, 'Time, Space and Capitalism', *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, vol. 2, issue 9, 2015, 306–309.

In a central sequence of *Psychotel* that features text from Kristeva referring to Florence's dream, the confusion over basin and basement is a Freudian slip.⁶³⁶ That this has become a feature of the scene stems from a method of working that is open to chance. The spawning fish are successful – that they are largely concealed beneath the water is suggestive of the psychoanalytic unconscious. I did not expect to see them when I set out to film on that day. The sequence in which the spirit guide is exorcised was one of the last sections to be shot. The film had to reach sixty minutes. Nietzsche was taken from the bookcase at random. His work had not formed part of the Ph.D. literature at that stage. After a brief and unsystematic perusal, the section was recorded and in the edit within fifteen minutes.⁶³⁷ Although this could happen in a scripted project for commission, it would be less unlikely. Not only is the conscious (extended / representational) mind not the main player in creative practice but it could serve as a hindrance. I have instinctively known this as a filmmaker but it has been less prominent in my role as a lecturer.

I initially asked Sharon Kivland to perform a few words of voice-over to vary the vocal texture in *Psychotel*.⁶³⁸ I knew she spoke French and a text by Kristeva seemed to ask for an accent. The repetitious and pronounced delivery of these words brought to mind a French teacher. Both my mother and grandmother were French teachers. This made a link between my relationship with my supervisor and the transgenerational phantom, already suggested in the film with the footage of myself, my mother, and my daughter. The position of mother / (m)Other in psychoanalysis, as a relationship requiring resolution, tempted me to bring Sharon Kivland further into the content of the film and have her perform the voice of the spirit guide. In the final act of the film the spirit guide is 'flushed out', intended as a metaphor for moving on, engaging with transference, completing analysis, and allowing 'the unconscious to speak'.

636. I intended to say 'basin' with reference to where Florence vomited up the head of her mother. Instead I said 'basement'. Kristeva, 'Psychoanalysis in Times of Distress', p. 21–2.

637. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 81.

638. For convenience I did most of the voices myself in the early stages of the film. The recording of voice-over and managing performance became a major task of the latter stages of this production.

Reception: creative-practice research

On my accustomed bench of augury,
Whither all tribes of fowl after their kind
Always resort, heard a strange noise of birds
Screaming with harsh and dissonant impetus.⁶³⁹

That intelligence is measured largely in terms of intellect, what Claxton calls ‘d-mode thinking’, that involves deliberation and analysis, could arise from the comparative ease of measuring this mental mode.⁶⁴⁰ He writes that ‘d-mode is much more interested in finding answers and solutions than in examining the questions’,⁶⁴¹ and suggests ‘modern Western thinking has [...] neglected the intelligent unconscious [...]’,⁶⁴² stressing that ‘[k]nowing, at root, is implicit, practical, intuitive.’⁶⁴³ For Claxton, creative and intuitive thinking occurs in the ‘undermind’, below the threshold of consciousness and benefits from periods of ‘gestation’.⁶⁴⁴ The space and time for thinking I appreciated during the course of this study, that I valued when I was a student, is eroded in the contemporary workplace and the educational setting through shorter courses with an emphasis on measuring outcome rather than process.⁶⁴⁵

My research and practice, to use a filmic metaphor, operate through an intercutting of responsive, thoughtful questioning that builds a network of relations between the film and the text. As the main revelation in the practical component has been the affirmation of creative practice as employing a dialogue between different modes of thinking (conscious and unconscious or primordial and reflective representational) and a confidence gained through understanding the methods of this approach, it seemed appropriate to allow the narrative content of the film and the scenario behind the film to have a porous quality.

Craig Batty and Marsha Berry discuss the ‘playful space’ of the creative practice research degree. They suggest the research space is in a state of ‘flux’, that a dialogue is

639. Sophocles, *Antigone*, Ontario, Dover Thrift Editions, 1993, p. 38.

640. Claxton, *Hare Brain Tortoise Mind*, p. 2.

641. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

642. *Ibid.*

643. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

644. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

645. In 1993 I undertook a three year MA course in Film and Television Production. I now teach on a similar course that offers an MA after one year’s study. Since the introduction of the fee system I have observed a change in attitude in under-graduate students from taking a course to allow themselves space to play and develop, to being anxiously focused on their final grades wanting to ensure the degree that is costing them so much reaps the rewards that will assist their future career. Something important is being lost.

built between the theory and the practice, and the creative artefact and the thesis are often 'braided and fictocritical'.⁶⁴⁶ They consider creating a dynamic space as vital for creative practice research but also vital for the academy. They write:

It is a space of constellations and connections where practices, methods and understandings meet and shape new methodologies: an environment that serves as a vital incubator for risk taking, reflexivity and fearless critical thinking.⁶⁴⁷

This 'space' of the research degree is 'a complex entanglement of connections and relationships'.⁶⁴⁸ On the relationship between candidate and supervisor they write: 'When candidates try to organise ideas and practices into neat boxes, and those boxes leak, supervisors play an important role in making sure the content does not collapse.'⁶⁴⁹ The relationship between art practice and mental health, discussed with reference to *Unhomely Street*, led me to consider the creative 'space' of the creative practice research degree and the psychoanalytic space as having parallels, in which the analyst and supervisor both assist the patient or candidate in uncovering psychical material.

My Director of Studies and the Ph.D. student cohort continually gave me permission to go further into the research or the practice. Although subtle, this open and permissive experience was quite unlike other instances of sharing work-in-progress.⁶⁵⁰ The process of making was at times highly vexing and noncompliant; however, although I did not know what the outcome of the work would be, I intuitively understood the method. It is only at this stage that I feel confident in describing the process as one that is open to chance. While this fits quite comfortably with the subject of the uncanny, it is at odds with the assumed rigour of academic research.

When I began the behavioural study to gain an image set for the fMRI project, a colleague asked me if that was my method; did I intend to use images that were demonstrated as being uncanny as a starting point to my film? I did not, and felt the notion most unappealing, although it would be easy to write-up: I could defend this method as objective and scientific, but this would entirely miss the point. The method of filmmaking employed has enabled the content to emerge in a state of flux. The films

646. Craig Batty & Marsha Berry, 'Constellations and Connections: the Playful Space of the Creative practice Research Degree', *Journal of Media Practice*, vol. 16, issue 3, 2015, 181–194, p. 185.

647. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

648. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

649. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

650. Usually this is in the context of a commissioned project in which the commissioning editor or series producer will have input and shape film during the script or edit stages. Inevitably their focus is on popularity rather than innovation.

make both literal and oblique references to texts read during the course of the research, and permit the influence of dreams, themselves likely arising in part from aspects of the research.

The dual aspect of the psyche in various guises across disciplines has been the central focus, itself arising from an investigation of the double and its relation to the uncanny. In sum, this doubling is discussed in terms of: the neuroscientific conscious and nonconscious mind; Damasio's core- and extended-consciousness; Freud's conscious and unconscious mind and the more subtle and complex divisions of the ego, super-ego and the id; Solms' revision of the Freudian topology that designates consciousness to the id and unconsciousness to the ego; Opatow's evolutionary view of inhibitory suppression of brain regions; Claxton's conscious d-mode thinking and the undermind; Robbins's states of primordial consciousness and reflective representational consciousness and Heidegger / Withy's observation of presencing and absencing. My experience of filmmaking is that it engages mental processes that are different to rational and logical thought. The mode of mentation is often affective and associations are metaphorical and lateral rather than literal and logical. The picture is far from clear however. Past experience and memory come into play with creative practice that would be aligned with extended and reflective consciousness whereas correlations are seen between creativity and primordial consciousness, which bears a resemblance to core-consciousness. The associations made between creativity, dreams, and schizophrenic mentation suggest primordial consciousness is engaged. Loosening of ego boundaries is reported in schizophrenia, meditation, psychoactive drug use, and hypnagogic experiences. Schizophrenia, meditation, and psychoactive hallucination are associated with decreased DMN activity, while creativity is linked to DMN activation.⁶⁵¹ I propose the activity I am engaged in when working creatively could be likened to the interpersonal field of psychoanalysis, whereby the two psychical elements are regions of the mind. A fuller understanding of the mental operations that underpin creative practice is required before a conclusion can be drawn. It is certain that there is no simple answer, like a switch that can be flipped to a mode that relates to all creative practice. But I am convinced that creative thinking requires space and time that need recognition and protection in the face of an increasingly d-mode culture.

651. DMN function is presented as sharing similarities to sleep as a requirement for the operation of other mental processes.

Intuition and affect

You have tasted the fire on your tongue
till it is swollen black
with a prophetic joy:
Burn with me!
The only music is time,
the only dance is love.⁶⁵²

This research does not conclude – rather, it builds on past and future work. It has provided a structure through which to develop previous attempts at representing subjectivity and further understand, in the broadest terms, how humans think, but in a narrower sense, how the filmic image may contribute to the field of human thought. At this stage of this complex endeavour, I have clarified, to a certain extent, my own understanding of thought, through the interdisciplinary approach taken. This has involved drawing together threads from psychoanalysis, neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy. To summarise – I uphold the view that the human psyche is fragmented as presented by Freud and Lacan, and uncanny according to Vidler’s interpretation and Withy’s reading of Heidegger. The dual aspect of the psyche, summarised above, shows consistency across disciplines, and the evolutionary account found in the work of Damasio and Robbins is persuasive. The correlation between Lacan, Robbins, and Damasio points to a tiered structure of consciousness both in evolutionary terms and in the development of the individual. That action initiation is mainly instinctual but involves the repression of actions by inhibitory mechanisms draws together Libet and Opatow who both extend Freud’s account of censorship and the influence of the unconscious. Solms demonstrates that consciousness is primarily an affective, brainstem mechanism. This adds weight to Damasio’s somatic marker hypothesis by which I progress an understanding of cinematic pleasure. The somatic marker hypothesis describes an affective neural configuration that is formed through experience and ‘fired’ when a similar experience is presented. This neuroscientific hypothesis is not at odds with the psychoanalytic view that sees the past influence the present in affective terms. Bergson and Deleuze’s complex and subtle accounts complement Freud, Damasio, and Solms who augment our understanding of the relation of the present to the past that underpins the framework of hauntology. Bergson describes a process by which ‘we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first in the past in

652. Stanley Kunitz, ‘King of the River’, <<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/king-of-the-river-3/>>, accessed 29 March 2019.

general, then in a certain region of the past [...] like the focusing of a camera'.⁶⁵³ Intuitive filmmaking involves a rich and largely nonconscious interplay between the lived moment, its imagined representation, and associations in the form of feelings arising from both. I use an affective response to sound and image with *post-hoc* reflection to consider what is at play during the creative act. Through research of the psychoanalytic, neuroscientific, and philosophical views of selfhood and being, I have formed an *in-progress* view of how *I* understand the psyche. I do not claim that this view is complete or accurate; rather it is a working model that informs my filmmaking. In sum this model is suggested by the uncanny in so far as our mental life is comprised of consciousness, and unconscious and nonconscious processes that are veiled from each other, to use a shadowy metaphor, or perhaps imperfectly networked.

The quality of *feeling* in terms of thought, that amounts to a type of *knowing*, rather than the explicit knowing normally associated with d-mode thought, has become an area of specific interest in my filmmaking, that is, the capacity to make an audience *feel* that they have understood rather than to comprehend a narrative in conventional story terms.⁶⁵⁴ Townsend suggests that 'the artist has gone through a training in intuition so that her perceptions are increasingly refined and increasingly attuned to responding to elements which will carry her work forward'.⁶⁵⁵ My report on such matters builds on Townsend's project. The concurrence among Townsend's interviewees indicates this artistic attitude of mind is a specific form of consciousness, or engagement between conscious and unconscious processes.

653. Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 56.

654. On this point, although in derisory terms, Christian Metz writes of avant-garde or experimental films: 'as the enlightened audience knows, it is appropriate at once to understand and not to understand (not understanding being the better way to understand and too much effort at understanding being the height of misunderstanding, etc.). These films, whose objective social function, at least in some cases, is to satisfy a certain kind of intellectual's naïvely desperate desire not to be naïve, have integrated within their institutional regime of intelligibility a certain dose of elegant and coded unintelligibility, in such a way that their very unintelligibility is, as a result, intelligible.' Although couched in negative terms, it is this type of knowing that is of interest; however I do not see it as naïve, rather as relating to affective knowing as opposed to intellectual knowing. See *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, p. 121.

655. Townsend, 'A Life of its Own', p. 105.

Behind the curtain: the uncanny unconscious

‘Macabre narratives are symbolic forms bearing the configuration of the life – Life – that generated them.’⁶⁵⁶

Psychoanalytic repression, reviewed in chapter 5, is aligned with Damasio’s somatic marker hypothesis. While this builds on a neuropsychanalytic understanding of the psyche, the description generalises the idea of repression into the operation of neural structures and does not account for why certain experiences are uncanny, i.e. *the return of the repressed*, and others are commonplace recollections. Not only does something need to be added to the uncanny to distinguish it from other types of fear, but something needs to be added to the unconscious to distinguish it from the nonconscious. Given that most mental activity that drives our actions is nonconscious, the uncanny element cannot arise from the automatic nature of our operation *per se*; rather, I suggest it arises from instances of our awareness of it. I propose the psychoanalytic unconscious better describes a process and an experience, not a brain region or mechanism. Claxton, on the history of the unconscious mind, writes:

The ‘unconscious’ of the subliminal perception is not the same as the ‘unconscious’ of creativity, or of Freudian neurosis, or of a momentary mystical meeting with the Godhead. The truth is that, after millennia of story-telling, we have inherited a glory-hole of notions that is in urgent need of a clear-out.⁶⁵⁷

This is problematic if one adopts the receptacle model of the unconscious. If the unconscious is viewed as a process, the disparate nature of Claxton’s ‘glory-hole’ disappears. In this sense the unconscious could be seen as a curtain, perhaps a plastic curtain as one would find in an abattoir, through which the factory floor is glimpsed. This re-reading of the unconscious brings it closer to the uncanny. A reversal can be seen: rather than the unconscious being nonconscious, the unconscious is a state of coming into consciousness. While this may sound far-fetched, the uncanny is described as the return of the repressed and the unconscious is the location of the repressed. If the problematic notion of a location is changed to a process then the two concepts overlap. Masschelein, in *The Unconcept*, writes:

It has often been remarked that Freud produces a seemingly never-ending stream of images and motifs in his attempt to grasp the uncanny. This is consistent with a

656. Morgan, *The Biology of Horror*, p. 225.

657. Claxton, *The Wayward Mind*, pp. 11–12.

conception of the uncanny as an essentially unconscious phenomenon. However, as a sensation in the system conscious-perception, the nature of the uncanny is the return of the repressed.⁶⁵⁸

Although my argument runs against the grain of this quotation, Masschelein indicates the uncanny is a feeling of arrival into consciousness.⁶⁵⁹ Instances of awareness of the nonconscious operator and manifestations of primordial consciousness including primitive beliefs, feelings of omnipotence and telepathy, and aberrant use of language and Freudian slips, are cited as inducing feelings of uncanniness and are discussed in terms of the Freudian unconscious. Freud explains that we only ever experience the outcome of repression, the representative, that arrives in the form of anxiety. Deep resonant tones, coincidence and repetition, instances of corrupted physics and obscuration of features that deny an accurate reading of affect indicate older mental mechanisms.⁶⁶⁰ This seems to suggest that what we find uncanny is the awareness of switching registers as it were. The unconscious only exists in our awareness of it and this awareness is uncanny.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari write that ‘the unconscious itself is no more structural than personal, it does not symbolize any more than it imagines or represents: it engineers, it is machinic’.⁶⁶¹ They suggest Freud turned the unconscious into a theatre, a ‘classical theater, the classical order of representation’, making it cease to be what it is: ‘a factory, a workshop’.⁶⁶² They understand drives as desiring-machines.⁶⁶³ For them ‘the unconscious does not mean anything’, rather it ‘constructs machines’, ‘machines of desire’; it does not speak, rather ‘it engineers’, ‘it is not expressive or representative, but productive’.⁶⁶⁴ Here is an understanding of the unconscious closer to Robbins’s primordial consciousness and the nonconscious of psychology and neuroscience. They suggest the psychoanalytic unconscious only knows how to express itself in myth, tragedy, and in dream.⁶⁶⁵ Their criticism of psychoanalysis is that it constructs guilt. It detracts attention from the social and environmental and places

658. Masschelein, *The Unconcept*, p. 36.

659. This makes the relation of the unconscious to the nonconscious resemble Freud’s understanding of the relation of the ‘pre-conscious’ to the unconscious of the first topography. As Freud’s pre-conscious is an awkward term that he supersedes I have not included it herein.

660. Seemingly hard-wired fear responses to deep resonant tones may form part of older neural structures and may suggest the uncanny relates to awareness of changes in the register of psychical modes. This is speculative.

661. Deleuze and Guattari, p. 60.

662. *Ibid.*, p. 62. I am reminded of the theatre curtain at the end of *Psychotel*.

663. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

664. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

665. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

responsibility on the individual. The awareness of dual aspects of the psyche that is experienced as uncanny and that the unconscious announces could be seen as relating to disharmony between the individual and the socio-cultural machine. If the unconscious is said to be uniquely human perhaps this is due to the way humans live – in a state of disharmony.

Freud's complexes, on which the unconscious is founded, relate to the management of breeding, incest, family and group dominance, and anxiety over the wholeness of the physical body – these are mammalian concerns. Throughout this thesis I have returned to the human-animal. Perhaps the history of human as an individual, as 'whole' rather than fragmented, as in God's image, as opposed to mammalian, as independent of thought, as free, not one of an interconnected species that operates according to certain laws, opens a pathway to understanding why we find ourselves, our mental life, uncanny. The unease implicit in the Freudian unconscious draws it closer to the uncanny than other models of the psyche. Buried in the two knotted concepts is the sense that there is something wrong with us. We are destroying angels.⁶⁶⁶

Visitor's book: filmmaking in precarious times

There are no birds in the underworld.⁶⁶⁷

Royle's 'uncanny paradox' concerns the problem that we 'understand ourselves so profoundly and yet still organise our world so badly'.⁶⁶⁸ Dennett writes: 'There is really no reason to suppose that animals have a clue about why they do what they instinctually do, and human beings are no exception.'⁶⁶⁹ Freud proposed two groups of primal instincts; 'the *ego*, or *self-preservative* instincts and the *sexual* instincts'.⁶⁷⁰ He points to conflict between the two instincts, whereby the purpose of biology goes beyond the individual to the preservation of the species, and he beautifully describes the individual

666. One could write at length about what is wrong with humankind; however, it is sufficient to cite the 2018 world nuclear forces report from SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, that the warhead inventory exceeded 14,000, <<https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2018/06>>, accessed 26 August 2019. I must confess to having a mild uncanny response upon noting this footnote number in relation to this reference. *Six hundred and sixty-six*, said to be the number of the beast, is a numerical anomaly in Greek. 666 or χϛϛ in Greek is not able to be represented by the repetition of 6 or ϛ repeated three times, i.e., ϛϛϛ, is not six hundred sixty-six, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number_of_the_Beast> accessed 3 October 2019.

667. 'There are no birds in the underworld', is a line of voice-over at the start of *Psychotel*. I was introduced to this notion by Royle with reference to Virgil, who in *Aeneid* calls the underworld *Avernus* meaning *birdless*. See Nicholas Royle, 'Hide 15', in *An English Guide to Birdwatching*, p. 321.

668. Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 3.

669. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell*, p. 159.

670. Freud, 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' p. 120.

as ‘a temporary and transient appendage to the quasi-immortal germ-plasm’.⁶⁷¹ This quotation is used at the close of *Psychotel*, indicating of how I intend the film to be understood.

Although the human operates with the same underlying concerns as other mammals, we have the ability to make strategic choices in our behaviour. From Deleuze and Guattari we gain schizoanalysis to nurture the artistic-machine, the analytic-machine, and the revolutionary-machine. From Haraway we learn of a possible future of inter-species collaboration and an expanded understanding of kinship. From Derrida we learn there is only the trace, and that our present is haunted. Each points to a revolution of thinking. In these precarious times, facing potentially catastrophic environmental changes that our action has brought about, exercising our capacity to make informed choices for the benefit of the species, and one would hope, the planet and other species, should take priority. For me, a huge step in human thinking would be to stop believing that we are angels.⁶⁷² Haraway’s Chthulucene, ‘[...] a kind of timeplace for learning to stay with the trouble of living and dying in response-ability on a damaged earth’ remains a potent reminder of how conceptual approaches can change lives.⁶⁷³ Terry Castle suggests that the uncanny is an eighteenth-century invention arising as a function of enlightenment. She writes that ‘[...] the aggressively rationalist imperatives of the epoch – also produced, like a kind of toxic side effect, a new human experience of strangeness, anxiety, bafflement, and intellectual impasse.’⁶⁷⁴ The twenty-first-century, with its endgame narrative of the anthropocene and the simultaneous veneration and suspicion of technology is producing a new uncanny in which the previously held certainties of humankind’s continuous presence blur and tremble.

The environmental message is a contemporary anthem that is in danger of losing meaning through reiteration. One of my claims to knowledge is that the style of presentation used in *Psychotel* makes this message an underlying theme. The film speaks of ‘care’ and this intention is presented by direct address to the audience. This is

671. *Ibid.*, p. 121–22.

672. It is noteworthy that in the face of current environmental issues one response is to step up space exploration with the hope of finding another planet to occupy when this one is used up. Although it is perhaps not unreasonable to have such ambitions I cannot help but feel it indicates a perception that we are ‘not of this world’, as well as a shirking of responsibility towards this planet. Underpinning much religious doctrine is the belief that the world is God’s gift to humankind to do with as they wish.

673. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p. 2. As previously mentioned, Haraway’s positive approach alleviated my anxiety in the latter stages of post-concussive syndrome by providing an alternative attitude with which to contemplate the future.

674. Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: 18th Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 8.

an unusual approach and as this message needs to be unearthed by the viewer it avoids the polemic tone.

Emotion, as has been demonstrated, is the means by which we make decisions. Film entertains us by providing the space, for a set duration, to explore and expand our emotional states. This activity has wider implications for the individual and society as a whole.⁶⁷⁵ Films are seen primarily as entertainment by most consumers. Films outside this arena, such as my own, occupy a marginal position. But the work is unusual and online platforms allow them to potentially reach an international audience.⁶⁷⁶

Unhomely Street, while not explaining hauntology in a straightforward manner, following Fisher draws connections between capitalism and mental illness. The narrative introduces the idea of anxiety for the future due to past events and makes reference to *Spectres of Marx*. *Psychotel* explores and represents ideas about the uncanny and the structure of selfhood outlined in the thesis. While neither film provides a clear explanation of either hauntology or the uncanny, both contribute to the subjects as they would enhance an understanding if viewed in a research setting with accompanying texts. Standing alone, the films deliver affect and an introduction to the ideas in the thesis without being information driven (d-mode). Both films are provocative. They cause the viewer to think and feel. *Scanner* presents the survey while playing with the form of scientific documentary. *Unhomely Street*, as a representation of a state of mental illness provides a starting point for discussion, a point of comparison, a potential site for sharing. *Psychotel*, as evidenced in small test screenings, evokes feelings of disharmony and alienation at the start that give way to feelings of optimism and belief in potential unity. I argue that the three films, as original artworks, are a contribution according to a logic that emotion is knowledge. The films invite the viewer to engage their imagination. This is especially true of *Psychotel*. Much of what is described in the voice-over is not portrayed in the image, or at least it is a vague and incomplete version. That the viewer must complete the picture means that what is uncanny is to some extent generated in their own minds. The uncanny is first and

675. There is still no agreement as to whether film violence produces a more violent society or whether it operates as a 'valve'. Certainly the attitude of a society is reflected in the films they produce and consume, however I would argue this is a two-way process; we make what we like and we are what we view. There is not space in this thesis to do justice to this subject of the various film 'products' produced and how they arise. In the government supported film funding sector of the UK, formerly the British Film Institute and currently the UK Film Council, there are frequent moves to support under-represented groups, women filmmakers, films from the regions etc; however the bottom-line of these funding bodies is that the film is commercially viable.

676. For the distribution plan for *Psychotel* and *Scanner* and the ongoing plan for *Unhomely Street* see appendix 3.

foremost a feeling. As demonstrated through the fMRI survey outlined in *Scanner* and discussed in chapter 2, exploring the uncanny in an image is a reductive endeavour. The uncanny is something revealed, something that has come to light, yet as many horror films demonstrate, its effects are most powerful when it remains partially veiled. As discussed the uncanny concerns the psyche, a foreign body within the self. To cause the image to occur in the mind of the viewer rather than safely on-screen is the logic behind the approach taken in *Psychotel*. Other films that employ this approach include *Pontypool*, a zombie film set in a radio station in which the zombies are only experienced through the audio reports, and the central section of *Hunger* in which the Bobby Sands character, played by Michael Fassbinder, describes a childhood memory of killing a foal.⁶⁷⁷ These examples highlight how film, rather than presenting a given image for the viewer to absorb, engage the imagination in a rich network of fantasy and spectacle.

When first approaching Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, I was intrigued by the recommendation that the book be read as one would listen to a record.⁶⁷⁸ Without comprehending this from the outset, I found the work continued to take shape long after my first baffled reading. This knowledge following 'gestation' corresponds to invention in creative work. For Deleuze and Guattari, philosophy is concerned with the creation of concepts.⁶⁷⁹ The creative act undertaken here, although not a concept, contributes to knowledge through invention. I am not about to claim that my films contribute to knowledge by the simple fact that they result from a creative process, but rather by taking an experimental or essayist approach, in which the viewer lacks a map with which to read the film, the information and opinion, the questions posed by the film's unconventional narrative, operate on the viewer in a manner which may result in a 'gestation'. In the simplest terms *Unhomely Street* and *Psychotel* ask whether the fragmented and veiled nature of the psyche of the human mammal contributes to the inability to act effectively in the face of the global crisis and the precarious state of planet Earth's ecosystem. If there is a solution to this problem it will

677. *Pontypool*, dir. Bruce McDonald, Kaleidoscope Entertainment, 2008 [on DVD], *Hunger*, dir. Steve McQueen, Film 4, 2008 [on DVD].

678. Brian Massumi, 'Translator's Forward, Pleasures of Philosophy', in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, p. vii, with reference to Gilles Deleuze in 'Deleuze and Claire Parnet', *Dialogues*, Paris: Flammarion, 1977, p. 10. Sharon Kivland suggested a similar approach, that I should let it 'wash over me', when reading Derrida, *Of Grammatology*.

679. 'Concepts are only created as a function of problems which are thought to be badly understood or badly posed.' See Deleuze and Guattari, 'What is a Concept?', in *What is Philosophy?*, p. 16.

include acting ‘together’.⁶⁸⁰ I will not over-egg the potential impact of an essay film, but I do feel questions indirectly asked by means of allegory, that require a ‘gestation’ into meaning, may be enduring in a climate of rhetorical saturation. At the most basic of levels, sound and image, as sensory inputs, are ‘written’ onto the psyche.⁶⁸¹ If the input is novel, new associational networks are initiated.

‘Sensation is no less brain than the concept.’⁶⁸² Here Deleuze and Guattari uphold sensation as a form of knowledge. They add: ‘Knowledge is neither a form nor a force but a *function*: “I function”.’⁶⁸³ By this logic I argue that a contribution to knowledge through this research is the knowledge I have gained and demonstrated in the process of filmmaking, as well as the more conventional understanding of a Ph.D. contribution as knowledge ‘given’, that is, in terms of the films, in the form of sensation which is disseminated, sensed, and intuited.

Claiming a work of art as a contribution to knowledge is not without controversy and the nature of this ‘new’ knowledge that is accountable to institutional and governmental academic standards has been under review since the onset of the creative-practice research degree. Arthur J. Deikman writes that ‘the human organism has two basic modes of function: the receptive mode orientated toward the intake of the environment, and the action mode orientated toward manipulation of the environment’.⁶⁸⁴ Mavromatis describes hypnagogia as a ‘receptive mode’, similar to a ‘field’ (such as an electromagnetic field).⁶⁸⁵ Stern and Sullivan speak of an *interpersonal field*, an unconscious form of communication. Deikman describes ‘deautomatization’ as ‘an undoing of the usual ways of perceiving and thinking’. With reference to meditation, ‘deautomatization’ is expressed as ‘withdrawing attention from thinking and reinvesting it in percepts – a reverse of the normal learning process’.⁶⁸⁶ A contribution of this project has been the reflection on a ‘receptive’ mode of research that is in danger of erosion in the current climate, in education and beyond.

680. Here I refer to the closing voice-over of *Psychotel*.

681. I use ‘writing’ here in the Derridean sense as outlined in *Of Grammatology*.

682. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 211.

683. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

684. Arthur J. Deikman, Bimodal Consciousness, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, vol. 6, 1971, 481–9, p. 481. Deikman’s article is referenced in Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia*, p. 67.

685. Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia*, p. 75.

686. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

Deleuze and Guattari describe a work of art as ‘*a bloc of sensations [...] a compound of percepts and affects*’.⁶⁸⁷ They suggest that *percepts* are independent of their creator; they are *beings*.⁶⁸⁸ They discuss vision in terms of ‘becoming’, and art practice as an act of becoming.⁶⁸⁹ ‘Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man.’⁶⁹⁰ The artist (or novelist) is ‘a seer, a becomer’ who ‘composes the percepts of that life’. These views are useful in assessing what I have achieved in filmmaking in a research context. What sort of contribution to knowledge can I claim? Certainly throughout the thesis I have indicated small but clear contributions to knowledge including:

- drawing a new parallel between texts of Freud and Ramachandran (chapter 2),
- the co-authored, repeatable scientific survey with original data (chapter 2),
- bringing together Lacan, Lakoff, Massey, Robbins, and Derrida towards an expanded understanding of metaphor (chapter 4),
- bringing together Lacan’s ‘body in pieces’ and Damasio’s proto-self or body map as related concepts (chapter 5),
- the interpretation of the ‘return of the repressed’ according to Damasio’s somatic marker hypothesis and an account of why children feature in horror films (chapter 5),
- the proposition that the somatic marker hypothesis could explain narrative unpleasure (chapter 5),
- bringing together Solms’s ‘Conscious Id’, Freud’s topology of the psyche, Damasio’s structure of selfhood, Wither’s uncanny *Dasein*, and Žižek’s commentary on Kant’s ‘transcendental subject’ (chapter 6),
- outlining a correspondence between Damasio’s tiered theory of selfhood, Freud’s topologies, and Robbins’s primordial and reflective representational consciousness. (chapter 6).
- an ‘experiential’ account of the Freudian unconscious that aligns it with the uncanny, as outlined above.

However, my deepest engagement has been with film production, a process I encounter as largely intuitive and built from an attitude of play.⁶⁹¹ The language that best describes

687. Deleuze and Guattari, ‘Percept, Affect, and Concept’, *What is Philosophy?* p. 164. Original italics.

688. *Ibid.*

689. *Ibid.*, pp. 169–170.

690. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

691. I use ‘play’ in recognition of the activity performed by young children and other animals from which they develop an understanding of each other and their environment. I also use it in resistance to the derogatory association of play with childishness. As a young art student being re-introduced to the idea of play, given permission to respond without having to think, re-opened the world to me after half a decade of dull secondary education.

my activities sounds woolly and vague. Yet through this research and making these films I have transported myself through the conceptual landscape of the uncanny, in terms of how it is understood by others, how I have experienced it in memory as a lived sensation, in the artwork of others, and in a state of open receptiveness to the uncanniness of the world. I have acted as a mediator between my own lived experience and a manager of metaphor translating the thing before me into a ‘*bloc of sensation*’. I am in this sense both a *seer* and a *conduit*. In employing the hotel as a metaphor for the psyche (although to a certain extent the metaphor operates succinctly at its point of utterance), I transform the physical space into filmic space, into an ambiguous space, or ‘threshold’ that bridges the real and the fantasy. I make a composition of affect through the metaphor of the hotel, and through the ideas in Freud’s text, for the viewer to experience as a labyrinthine, unhomely, and alienating.⁶⁹² Although *Psychotel* and *Unhomely Street* have characters and story-arcs, they are not the principal narrative elements; instead, the academic and intellectual conception of the uncanny and hauntology in relation to post-concussive syndrome provide the narrative landscape of these films. In this sense they embody the research.

‘There is in reality, only a current of existence and the opposing current; thence proceeds the whole evolution of life.’⁶⁹³ This quote from Bergson features as voice-over in the last third of *Psychotel*. It summarises the film and my feeling about the uncanny at the end of the research period. Bergson’s *élan vital*, controversial but seductive, provides for me at least a metaphorical alternative, or antidote, to individualistic thinking. To conclude I draw on Deleuze and Guattari. They write: ‘Through having seen Life in the living or the Living in the lived, the novelist or painter returns breathless and with bloodshot eyes.’ They describe artists as athletes of sorts, not the ‘muscular type’, rather an ‘Affective athleticism’, an athleticism of becoming that reveals only forces that are not its own’.⁶⁹⁴ They expand:

692. This notion of filmic space as an ambiguous threshold between the real and the fantasy is further discussed in Dilek Altuntaş, ‘Hotel as a Double Metaphor: Space, Representation, Reality and Beyond’, in *Design and Cinema: Form Follows Film*, edited by Belkis Uluoğlu *et al.*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006, pp. 99–110.

693. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. by Arthur Mitchell, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1911, p. 185. This quote with reference to opposing forces brings to mind Freud’s twin notions of *Eros* and *Thanatos*. The death-drive, although mentioned in the voice-over of *Psychotel* is notably absent from the thesis. I am tempted to suggest it haunts the thesis in its absence. Although arguably an important concept from psychoanalysis in relation to the uncanny I can only say I have never got on with it. While I have come across provocative material that uses it for analytical purpose I have remained unable to integrate it into my thinking. This may in itself be interesting in psychoanalytic terms and may say something of how *Thanatos* operates but for now I hold it aloft for a future research project.

694. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 172.

Life alone creates such zones where living beings whirl around, and only art can reach and penetrate them in its enterprise of co-creation. This is because from the moment that the material passes into sensation [...] art itself lives on these zones of indetermination.⁶⁹⁵

695. *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

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APPENDIX 1.

A FILM PROJECT: BRAIN ACTIVATION ASSOCIATED WITH
RESPONSE TO UNCANNY AND CREEPY IMAGES

Susannah Gent

Yael Benn

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Introduction

This study aims to investigate the neurological underpinnings of the uncanny. It is comprised of three sections: a behavioural study by which an image set is obtained, an fMRI study wherein brain scans were recorded from two participants who viewed presentations of uncanny images and control images, and a short film entitled *Scanner* that describes the process of the study and presents the findings.

Stage 1: Behaviour study

This involved a non public online survey in which 250 participants were asked to rate 300 images according to ‘eeriness’ valence. The word ‘eerie’ was used as it was felt *uncanny* might be confusing. The highest scoring images were employed in the second stage of the study which involved fMRI scanning two participants.

The images were sourced from internet searches for ‘the uncanny’, ‘eerie’, ‘creepy’, and ‘spooky’, images posted on student blogs on the subject of the uncanny, and control images, selected to make sets of related images.

The participants were approached through an email to staff at both Sheffield Hallam University and The University of Sheffield, as well personal networks. Participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous, and participants could leave the survey at any point.⁶⁹⁶

The top 30 most ‘eerie’ images are collated at the back of this report, as well as image several sets to demonstrate the range of images used and show uncanny valence across image sets.

Stage 2. fMRI study

The fMRI survey involved scanning two participants in order to investigate the brain activations associated with response to uncanny images. The findings are not scientific due to the very small sample, however the study demonstrates a method that can be repeated and future results can be compiled with this survey towards a scientific outcome.

Two participants were invited to take part in fMRI scans. It was made clear to participants that they did not have to participate in the study. Participants were healthy adults who were screened and judged safe for MRI compatibility. Scanning took place in the 3T University MRI scanner in the Royal Hallamshire Hospital. A full structural

696. See Ethics Report, appendix 4, participant information and consent forms.

scan was followed by a functional scan of approximately 30 minutes (10 minutes per run with three runs). Using an event related design, stimuli involved viewing sequences of 150 image, of which two thirds were neutral images and a one third was eerie images.

Stage 3. Film: *Scanner*

The film attempts to reveal the process of the surveys and instil an uncanny response in the audience. The approach to the film was to reduce the informational signalling that takes the spectator through factual information using voice-over and diagrams. Although the information is present, it is not set up in a standard documentary format. This may appropriately contribute to unease in the viewer. The inclusion of the pig's head introduces death which is known to induce an uncanny response.⁶⁹⁷ The film commences with introductory voice-over from Freud followed by an anecdote from Ramachandran.⁶⁹⁸ These present the method of comparing neuroscience and psychoanalysis that is central to this research and establishes the documentary as non-standard. Firm conclusions cannot be drawn from the survey as only two participants were scanned. The film addresses method more than results and may be of more relevance to an audience with an interest in non-standard film form rather than a science audience. The distribution plan is to submit the film for science, sci-art, experimental, and documentary opportunities at relevant film festivals.⁶⁹⁹

697. See chapter 7 of the thesis for a discussion of death and the uncanny.

698. See Freud, 'The Unconscious', p. 206, and Ramachandran, *Phantoms in the Brain*, pp. 36–37. See chapter 2 of the thesis for a fuller discussion.

699. I do not anticipate it being an easy film to program. Short film program curators build screenings of similar theme and content. The subject matter is obscure for the art film festival and the form is unusual for the documentary and science festival. This may be its strength however the film is certainly niche.

Online survey

Below is a representation of the online survey. 250 participants took part.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey. In the following you will be shown an image for a few seconds. This will be followed by a 'rating slide':

To rate the image according to how eerie it makes you feel, 'click' on the black line in the appropriate location.

Have a try first by clicking here...





image removed

Click the black bar in the location best representing how eerie you feel about the image you have just seen:



Not at all eerie

Extremely eerie

IMAGE SET: TOP 30

	<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 1</p> <p>Image name / identifier cba92018bebf70823aab19860f43e347.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 65.9289706</p> <p>response rate 1314.239</p>
	<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 2</p> <p>Image name / identifier DollTeeth.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 65.8712857</p> <p>response rate 1293.24</p>
	<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 3</p> <p>Image name / identifier FloatingCreepyJap.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 65.6205714</p> <p>response rate 1329.75</p>
	<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 4</p> <p>Image name / identifier ChianeseCatLady.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 60.2104348</p> <p>response rate 1199.739</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 5</p> <p>Image name / identifier Girl In BloodTub.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 59.2465714</p> <p>response rate 1374</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 6</p> <p>Image name / identifier HellRaiser.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 58.8265672</p> <p>response rate 1353.87</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 7</p> <p>Image name / identifier MeatCoulander.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 57.9010667</p> <p>response rate 1148.421</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 8</p> <p>Image name / identifier 091cdae4ea5832967a43413535b08fe8.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 56.3062667</p> <p>response rate 1200.761</p>

	image removed	<p>Position : 9</p> <p>Image name / identifier 73d62ae0d64fe5ed1110b4f97f7360b5.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 56.3062667</p> <p>response rate 1382.1</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 10</p> <p>Image name / identifier e1e94cdad0d54dc2f4ea588031b4ef1e.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 56.2460274</p> <p>response rate 1319.243</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 11</p> <p>Image name / identifier FingersEyes.png</p> <p>mean valence 56.2353947</p> <p>response rate 1090.266</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 12</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>BabyERed.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 54.26</p> <p>response rate 1248.384</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 14</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>836c0ba16ccd412880485147e4af6fd3.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 54.1048571</p> <p>response rate 1316.357</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 15</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>FingerEyeball.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 53.1730159</p> <p>response rate 1331.159</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 16</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>GutsChair.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 52.9449153</p> <p>response rate 1253.966</p>

	image removed	<p>Position : 17</p> <p>Image name / identifier EerieDoll.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 52.5367692</p> <p>response rate 1386.853</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 18</p> <p>Image name / identifier eyeballman.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 51.6022388</p> <p>response rate 1655.915</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 19</p> <p>Image name / identifier FingerSucking.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 51.4549296</p> <p>response rate 1351.562</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 20</p> <p>Image name / identifier 764ae833e4fa029bededa2fd9349ee09.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 51.3638571</p> <p>response rate 1426.486</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 21</p> <p>Image name / identifier c08ccc5e38b0135ae1cfab98b34e4ab7.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 50.9359701</p> <p>response rate 1376.718</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 22</p> <p>Image name / identifier Exorcist.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 50.7672727</p> <p>response rate 1226.567</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 23</p> <p>Image name / identifier MouthEyePic.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 50.6736765</p> <p>response rate 1253.417</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 24</p> <p>Image name / identifier 4d74a3f682bf7ea39c3a778cfa823f8.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 50.5141429</p> <p>response rate 1548.986</p>

	image removed	<p>Position : 25</p> <p>Image name / identifier NobuyoshiAraki copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 50.4152308</p> <p>response rate 1446.333</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 26</p> <p>Image name / identifier 3110a685c037e57a3339b2e93498cd85.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 49.8272059</p> <p>response rate 1306.577</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 27</p> <p>Image name / identifier FerretLisaBlack.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 49.6575</p> <p>response rate 1375.157</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 28</p> <p>Image name / identifier EyesSewnUp.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 49.5901429</p> <p>response rate 1198.239</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 29</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>RopeCrucification.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 49.5018841</p> <p>response rate 1290.746</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 30</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Art21- CindyShermanMasksMannequins730.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 49.414359</p> <p>response rate 1322.633</p>

DOLLS

image removed	<p>Position : 4</p> <p>Image name / identifier DollTeeth.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 65.8712857</p> <p>response rate 1293.24</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 11</p> <p>Image name / identifier 73d62ae0d64fe5ed1110b4f97f7360b5</p> <p>mean valence 56.3062667</p> <p>response rate 1382.132</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 19</p> <p>Image name / identifier EerieDoll.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 52.5367692</p> <p>response rate 1386.853</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 33</p> <p>Image name / identifier SpookyWhiteDoll.JPG</p> <p>mean valence 48.9447761</p> <p>response rate 1184.174</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 55</p> <p>Image name / identifier DeadDoll</p> <p>mean valence 43.7579452</p> <p>response rate 1290.067</p>

	image removed	Position : 60 Image name / identifier EvilTeddy.jpg mean valence 43.2710938 response rate 1213.742
	image removed	Position : 81 Image name / identifier DollFaceParts.jpg mean valence 40.3860606 response rate 1313.358
	image removed	Position : 129 Image name / identifier FaceCutOut.jpg mean valence 34.5954237 response rate 1270.548
	image removed	Position : 182 Image name / identifier Bert.jpg mean valence 27.6323188 response rate 1409.5
	image removed	Position : 188 Image name / identifier DollChinaTrad.jpg mean valence 27.3056061 response rate 1415.739

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 210 Image name / identifier DollJa[p.jpg mean valence 24.3532308 response rate 1035.492</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 228 Image name / identifier manydoll.jpg mean valence 20.5776389 response rate 1296.913</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 256 Image name / identifier DollBarbie.jpg mean valence 14.7576563 response rate 1160.092</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 258 Image name / identifier DollChina.jpg mean valence 14.7307463 response rate 1230.956</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 270 Image name / identifier DollRag.jpg mean valence 12.9250704 response rate 1214.806</p>

image removed	Position : 274 Image name / identifier DollBlackBaby.jpg mean valence 12.3397333 response rate 1182.342
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BODIES

image removed	<p>Position : 26</p> <p>Image name / identifier 4d74a3f682bf7ea39c3a778cafa823f8.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 50.5141429</p> <p>response rate 1548.986</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 27</p> <p>Image name / identifier NobuyoshiAraki copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 50.4152308</p> <p>response rate 1446.333</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 45</p> <p>Image name / identifier 120b2ac474907cfac0f1b6bbe82a78b.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 45.4739394</p> <p>response rate 1430.882</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 47</p> <p>Image name / identifier Skoglandmaybe.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 44.9544286</p> <p>response rate 1353.441</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 74</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>50003fce90a0e978889c2eca8028cc11.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 41.0243939</p> <p>response rate 1347.701</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 90</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Sexy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 39.6552857</p> <p>response rate 1420.414</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 95</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>sidaction-bodies.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 38.7866667</p> <p>response rate 1497</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 104</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>karina.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 37.6730303</p> <p>response rate 1331.586</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 143</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>dionysus.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 32.5346377</p> <p>response rate 1433.611</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 168</p> <p>Image name / identifier 9cbbf085fca4d8363f4069e8c0268668.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 28.9861765</p> <p>response rate 1256.169</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 164</p> <p>Image name / identifier Mueck_AR00033_02.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 29.5261194</p> <p>response rate 1547.348</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 228</p> <p>Image name / identifier manydolls.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 20.5776389</p> <p>response rate 1296.913</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 226</p> <p>Image name / identifier CreepyChestHair.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 21.1883824</p> <p>response rate 1477.472</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 237</p> <p>Image name / identifier 480x400_christophe-gilbert-s-surrealist-photography-.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 18.9015385</p> <p>response rate 1487.746</p>

	image removed	Position : 245 Image name / identifier Najjar02.jpg mean valence 17.3582857 response rate 1366.25
	image removed	Position : 299 Image name / identifier adrean3073 (1).jpg mean valence 4.49820896 response rate 1457.522

EYES

	image removed	<p>Position : 13</p> <p>Image name / identifier FingerEyes.png</p> <p>mean valence 56.2353947</p> <p>response rate 1090.266</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 17</p> <p>Image name / identifier FingerEyeball.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 53.1730159</p> <p>response rate 1331.159</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 20</p> <p>Image name / identifier eyeballman.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 51.6022388</p> <p>response rate 1655.915</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 30</p> <p>Image name / identifier EyesSewnUp.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 49.5901429</p> <p>response rate 1198.239</p>

	image removed	Position : 82 Image name / identifier FaceLizardEyes.jpg mean valence 40.3443243 response rate 1256.387
	image removed	Position : 83 Image name / identifier BigEyes.jpg mean valence 40.2384722 response rate 1291.411
	image removed	Position : 236 Image name / identifier SpookyJapGirl.jpg mean valence 18.9541667 response rate 1137.866
	image removed	Position : 239 Image name / identifier PussyFace.jpg mean valence 18.4263889 response rate 1245.618
	image removed	Position : 283 Image name / identifier eyetop.jpg mean valence 11.5585714 response rate 1096.847

NO HEAD / FACE

image removed	Position : 31 Image name / identifier RopeCrucification.jpg mean valence 49.5018841 response rate 1290.746
image removed	Position : 37 Image name / identifier joel-peter-witkin.jpg mean valence 46.6196667 response rate 1543.595
image removed	Position : 48 Image name / identifier 81637176.jpg mean valence 44.9507813 response rate 1311.818
image removed	Position : 90 Image name / identifier Sexy.jpg mean valence 39.6552857 response rate 1420.414

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 99</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>JeffMHarpNoHead.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 38.3127143</p> <p>response rate 1298.162</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 106</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>BellyFace.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 37.4933846</p> <p>response rate 1734.586</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 112</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Surrealism_by_RobPhobos.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 36.51375</p> <p>response rate 1291.773</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 118</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>studio-portraitNoHead.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 35.8572464</p> <p>response rate 1196.379</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 152</p> <p>Image name / identifier chestHead.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 31.6969118</p> <p>response rate 1394.371</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 173</p> <p>Image name / identifier Maggie Taylor.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 28.5217333</p> <p>response rate 1306.928</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 193</p> <p>Image name / identifier photo-manipulation-surrealism16.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 26.592</p> <p>response rate 1335.3</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 199</p> <p>Image name / identifier KidStuffonFace.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 26.0108571</p> <p>response rate 1411.143</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 200</p> <p>Image name / identifier Jessie.No Head_0.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 25.6431081</p> <p>response rate 1265.351</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 222</p> <p>Image name / identifier 830004264834e3dd1b206f5509638ade.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 22.327</p> <p>response rate 1375.556</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 227</p> <p>Image name / identifier Jan 12 - Original - horese maning demo shot.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 20.8305479</p> <p>response rate 1492.781</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">image removed</p>	<p>Position : 238</p> <p>Image name / identifier Mannequin-Half-Body-.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 18.6664615</p> <p>response rate 1228.62</p>

DOGS

image removed	<p>Position : 34</p> <p>Image name / identifier WeirdDogPups.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 48.7363636</p> <p>response rate 1712.671</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 48</p> <p>Image name / identifier 81637176.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 44.9507813</p> <p>response rate 1311.818</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 59</p> <p>Image name / identifier Smile.dog.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 43.3317647</p> <p>response rate 1251.299</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 78</p> <p>Image name / identifier DogWomanMouthSwap.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 40.8381944</p> <p>response rate 1349.747</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 107</p> <p>Image name / identifier Old little dog copy.jpg.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 37.4638235</p> <p>response rate 1138.029</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 154</p> <p>Image name / identifier sad_puppy_dog_face.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 31.3540909</p> <p>response rate 1186.812</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 185</p> <p>Image name / identifier pictures.htmmandog.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 27.4832308</p> <p>response rate 1267.913</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 221</p> <p>Image name / identifier john-dog-2.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 22.3961972</p> <p>response rate 1272.794</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 251</p> <p>Image name / identifier doberman_dreamstime_2126756.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 15.8807353</p> <p>response rate 1252.043</p>

image removed	<p>Position : 253</p> <p>Image name / identifier A-Doberman.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 15.2491935</p> <p>response rate 1209.438</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 281</p> <p>Image name / identifier cute-pug-dog-sad-face-crying_large.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 11.7672464</p> <p>response rate 1328.306</p>

BIRDS

	image removed		<p>Position : 61</p> <p>Image name / identifier SquirrelBird.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 43.1995313</p> <p>response rate 1228.776</p>
			<p>Position : 100</p> <p>Image name / identifier AnimalManipulation.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 38.2764615</p> <p>response rate 1411.221</p>
			<p>Position : 102</p> <p>Image name / identifier Goodyearbirdsconversation-det.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 37.7431343</p> <p>response rate 1297.881</p>
			<p>Position : 162</p> <p>Image name / identifier 261f26c65ab431ab07209351dbcc5e7b.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 29.8705128</p> <p>response rate 1319.383</p>
			<p>Position : 277</p> <p>Image name / identifier 2BirdsPhotoFlight.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 12.0452459</p> <p>response rate 1221.532</p>

 <p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 295</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>2BirdsDrawing.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 5.81291667</p> <p>response rate 1248.635</p>
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CATS

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 6 Image name / identifier ChineseCatLady.jpg mean valence 60.2104348 response rate 1199.739</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 54 Image name / identifier EvilBaldCat.jpg mean valence 43.9019118 response rate 1286.429</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 115 Image name / identifier mutantCat.jpg mean valence 36.1065152 response rate 1281.687</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 117 Image name / identifier CatEyeSwap.jpeg mean valence 36.0338235 response rate 1638.806</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 158 Image name / identifier skoglund_cats.jpg mean valence 30.9964179 response rate 1458.819</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 215</p> <p>Image name / identifier weird-cat.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 23.5815385</p> <p>response rate 1330.687</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 229</p> <p>Image name / identifier person-with-cat-head.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 20.5673134</p> <p>response rate 1116.857</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 230</p> <p>Image name / identifier creature-feature-04.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 19.9995714</p> <p>response rate 1282</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 239</p> <p>Image name / identifier PussyFace.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 18.4263889</p> <p>response rate 1245.618</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 285</p> <p>Image name / identifier colouredCat.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 10.9993243</p> <p>response rate 1066</p>

FURNITURE

image removed	<p>Position : 16</p> <p>Image name / identifier GutsChair.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 52.9449153</p> <p>response rate 1253.966</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 39</p> <p>Image name / identifier john_doe_1959.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 46.3988571</p> <p>response rate 1221.893</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 98</p> <p>Image name / identifier Simone-Racheli-2.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 38.3486111</p> <p>response rate 1338.771</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 110</p> <p>Image name / identifier Head-knifeblock.jpg.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 37.2406061</p> <p>response rate 1317.94</p>


	<p>Position : 111</p> <p>Image name / identifier postcardswidecopy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 37.0411429</p> <p>response rate 1660.928</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 126</p> <p>Image name / identifier kienholzesinned.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 35.0095522</p> <p>response rate 1599.645</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 127</p> <p>Image name / identifier Simone-Racheli-bike.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 34.8980882</p> <p>response rate 1507.945</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 146</p> <p>Image name / identifier The_secret_house_of_eddie_critch_1961.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 32.2801471</p> <p>response rate 1349.74</p>

	image removed	<p>Position : 147</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>The_bronze_pinball_machine_with_woman_affixed_also_1980.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 32.2748649</p> <p>response rate</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 151</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>beanery2.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 31.8315942</p> <p>response rate 1499.189</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 156</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>brookwestonram.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 31.0944928</p> <p>response rate 1280.929</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 176</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Illegal_operation_1962.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 27.9836986</p> <p>response rate 1263.616</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 190</p> <p>Image name / identifier back_seat_dodge_1965.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 27.2681818</p> <p>response rate 1777.722</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 202</p> <p>Image name / identifier sandyskoglund1.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 25.2528986</p> <p>response rate 1511.188</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 207</p> <p>Image name / identifier Borderland-305x417.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 24.8881538</p> <p>response rate 1363.179</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 208</p> <p>Image name / identifier UncannySheepChair.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 24.4468182</p> <p>response rate 1327.119</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 225</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Ericjohansson02.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 21.4117647</p> <p>response rate 1500.29</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 227</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Jan12 - Original - horse maning demo shot.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 20.8305479</p> <p>response rate 1492.781</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 233</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>sollie_17_1981_1982.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 19.2327027</p> <p>response rate 1583.068</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 243</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>stefano-cavazzana-deja-vu-covered-chair_pckb.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 17.8688889</p> <p>response rate 1156.137</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 249</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Curious Drawers0.39.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 16.554375</p> <p>response rate</p>

	image removed	<p>Position : 254</p> <p>Image name / identifier 197_w9s7k7vpd.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 15.1863514</p> <p>response rate</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 265</p> <p>Image name / identifier Gschwender lamp.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 13.4691045</p> <p>response rate</p>

MANNEQUINS

image removed	<p>Position : 32</p> <p>Image name / identifier Art21-CindyShermanMasksMannequins730.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 49.414359</p> <p>response rate 1322.633</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 39</p> <p>Image name / identifier john_doe_1959.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 46.3988571</p> <p>response rate 1221.893</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 43</p> <p>Image name / identifier ShermanMannequin.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 45.5432432</p> <p>response rate 1415.806</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 58</p> <p>Image name / identifier Sherman 2.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 43.5477941</p> <p>response rate 1466.296</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 126</p> <p>Image name / identifier kienholzesinned.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 35.0095522</p> <p>response rate 1599.645</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 219</p> <p>Image name / identifier Dress.png</p> <p>mean valence 22.7615873</p> <p>response rate 1537.239</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 224</p> <p>Image name / identifier Type_9.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 21.5812121</p> <p>response rate 1112.754</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 231</p> <p>Image name / identifier aa-bending-red-socks.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 19.9121918</p> <p>response rate 1245.944</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 238</p> <p>Image name / identifier Mannequin-Half-Body-.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 18.6664615</p> <p>response rate 1228.62</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 246</p> <p>Image name / identifier Female-Full-Body-Mannequin.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 16.9135211</p> <p>response rate 1450.76</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 248</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>F2.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 16.5711268</p> <p>response rate 1293.699</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 272</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>mannequins1.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 12.7514085</p> <p>response rate 1147.184</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 283</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>eyetop.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 11.5585714</p> <p>response rate 1096.847</p>

FILMS

image removed	<p>Position : 8</p> <p>Image name / identifier HellRaiser.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 58.8265672</p> <p>response rate 1353.87</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 24</p> <p>Image name / identifier Exorcist.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 50.7672727</p> <p>response rate 1226.567</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 49</p> <p>Image name / identifier Ringu6.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 44.7792958</p> <p>response rate 1286.676</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 64</p> <p>Image name / identifier ChildHairRingu.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 42.4886364</p> <p>response rate 1463.588</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 68</p> <p>Image name / identifier LesDiaboliquesImage.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 41.8347222</p> <p>response rate 1184.878</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 76</p> <p>Image name / identifier blacksunday.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 40.9216667</p> <p>response rate 1358.391</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 109</p> <p>Image name / identifier HalloweenMask.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 37.3773438</p> <p>response rate 2064.279</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 194</p> <p>Image name / identifier Jason.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 26.5821538</p> <p>response rate 1320.75</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 209</p> <p>Image name / identifier ringu.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 24.444697</p> <p>response rate 1507.448</p>

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 211</p> <p>Image name / identifier heresjohnny.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 23.9460563</p> <p>response rate 1168.208</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 236</p> <p>Image name / identifier SpookyJapGirl.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 18.9541667</p> <p>response rate 1137.866</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 247</p> <p>Image name / identifier farnkenstien.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 16.8588571</p> <p>response rate 1121.957</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 261</p> <p>Image name / identifier joker.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 14.3246875</p> <p>response rate 1395.016</p>

CAUCHI

	image removed	<p>Position : 118</p> <p>Image name / identifier Studio-portraitNoHead.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 35.8572464</p> <p>response rate 1196.379</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 131</p> <p>Image name / identifier White-shroud.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 34.1977049</p> <p>response rate 1317.91</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 138</p> <p>Image name / identifier Ben cauchi guardian (false)-Lgport.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 33.6655714</p> <p>response rate 1258.123</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 207</p> <p>Image name / identifier Borderland-305x417.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 24.8881538</p> <p>response rate 1363.179</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 250</p> <p>Image name / identifier Ectoplaspic-smoke.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 16.036875</p> <p>response rate 1235.422</p>

FACE MANIPULATION

	image removed	<p>Position : 120</p> <p>Image name / identifier Face15Wk1 copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 35.5</p> <p>response rate 1519.2</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 124</p> <p>Image name / identifier FaceWk5a copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 35.0</p> <p>response rate 1215.9</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 137</p> <p>Image name / identifier FAce6wk3 copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 33.7</p> <p>response rate 1319.3</p>
	image removed	<p>Position : 144</p> <p>Image name / identifier Face10Wk2 copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 32.5</p> <p>response rate 1464.5</p>

	image removed	Position : 148 Image name / identifier Face7wk3 copy.jpg mean valence 32.2 response rate 1328.9
	image removed	Position : 157 Image name / identifier Face11Wk1 copy.jpg mean valence 31.0 response rate 1479.9
	image removed	Position : 159 Image name / identifier Face14Wk2.jpg mean valence 30.5 response rate 1510.5
	image removed	Position : 163 Image name / identifier Face15Wk2 copy.jpg mean valence 29.8 response rate 1415.5
	image removed	Position : 165 Image name / identifier Face15Wk3 copy.jpg mean valence 29.3 response rate 1317.8

	image removed	Position : 167 Image name / identifier Face13Wk2 copy.jpg mean valence 29.1 response rate 1289.0
	image removed	Position : 179 Image name / identifier face1Wk1 copy.jpg mean valence 27.8 response rate 1075.3
	image removed	Position : 192 Image name / identifier Face10Wk1 copy.jpg mean valence 26.7 response rate 1276.3
	image removed	Position : 195 Image name / identifier Face8Wk2 copy.jpg mean valence 26.3 response rate 1522.6
	image removed	Position : 213 Image name / identifier StretchedBeardie.jpg mean valence 23.8 response rate 1109.3

<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 218</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Face7wk1 copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 23.1</p> <p>response rate 1397.3</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 220</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Face4Wk copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 22.4</p> <p>response rate 1170.9</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 223</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Face13Wk1 copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 21.7</p> <p>response rate 1222.9</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 234</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>face14.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 18.9</p> <p>response rate 1221.1</p>
<p>image removed</p>	<p>Position : 240</p> <p>Image name / identifier</p> <p>Face9Wd1 copy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 18.2</p> <p>response rate 1466.6</p>

	image removed	Position : 252 Image name / identifier Face12Wk1 copy.jpg mean valence 15.4 response rate 1434.4
	image removed	Position : 273 Image name / identifier face1.jpg mean valence 12.5 response rate 1341.286
	image removed	Position : 280 Image name / identifier Face6wk1.jpg mean valence 11.8 response rate 1243.9
	image removed	Position : 287 Image name / identifier face15.jpg mean valence 10.3 response rate 1405.0
	image removed	Position : 289 Image name / identifier face22.JPG mean valence 7.9 response rate 1178.9

	image removed	Position : 291 Image name / identifier face8.jpg mean valence 7.5 response rate 1178.9
	image removed	Position : 292 Image name / identifier face18.jpg mean valence 7.1 response rate 1210.3
	image removed	Position : 298 Image name / identifier face12.jpg mean valence 4.5 response rate 1172.2

FACIAL MUTILATION

image removed	<p>Position : 30</p> <p>Image name / identifier EyesSewnUp.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 49.5</p> <p>response rate 198.2</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 44</p> <p>Image name / identifier zombieboy.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 45.5</p> <p>response rate 479.1</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 57</p> <p>Image name / identifier StudFace.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 43.6</p> <p>response rate 289.3</p>
image removed	<p>Position : 62</p> <p>Image name / identifier TongueDrill.jpg</p> <p>mean valence 43.1</p> <p>response rate 631.6</p>

	image removed	Position : 63 Image name / identifier LacedNeck.jpg mean valence 42.7 response rate 1265.0
	image removed	Position : 75 Image name / identifier JunkinFace.jpg mean valence 40.9 response rate 1431.6
	image removed	Position : 87 Image name / identifier needleFace.jpg mean valence 39.9 response rate 1237.9
	image removed	Position : 105 Image name / identifier PiercedFace2.jpg mean valence 37.5 response rate 1518.3

	image removed	Position : 108 Image name / identifier KnifeNose.jpg mean valence 37.4 response rate 1416.5
	image removed	Position : 128 Image name / identifier FaceMutilation.jpg mean valence 34.8 response rate 1355.5
	image removed	Position : 175 Image name / identifier LipBowl.jpg mean valence 28.3 response rate 1254.2
	image removed	Position : 217 Image name / identifier JigsawMan.jpg mean valence 23.3 response rate 1357.6

Survey results summary

The survey was always intended to produce material for a film rather than being a scientific survey in its own right. We did not have sufficient funding for a full survey that would have required a minimum of six participants for the brain scanning survey.

The image set, edited into two short film sequences with control images can be seen here:

Reel 1: <<https://vimeo.com/manage/226726365>>

Reel 2: <<https://vimeo.com/manage/226720995>>

password for both reels is: FMRI

The image set constitutes a scientific output with 250 participants rating the initial 300 images. The fMRI study could be repeated using the films above. A speculative interpretation of the fMRI study was that the uncanny images generated increased activity in the visual cortex while scans corresponding to the control images showed activity in the secondary visual cortex. The control images, of everyday items and landscapes, promoted associated thinking, perhaps employing the personal encyclopaedia. One of the participants showed more secondary visual cortex activity during the control images than the other, so without further participant information this summary is speculative. The uncanny images showed some deeper processing perhaps indicating the initiation of a process of learning.

The scan results were adapted to fit a standardised model of the brain. This involves some distortion of the actual results. This is a common method in this type of survey. The benefits of this approach is that results from surveys using the same model can be compared and an image of brain regions can start to be deduced. As this generalisation slightly distorts the individual participant's scan results, a larger sample is needed to compensate for this method. Another issue in this survey, as noted in chapter 2 of the thesis, was that participants of the online survey, when rating images according to eeriness valence, may have responded to images that were shocking rather than eerie as such.

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED IMAGES FROM THE BEHAVIOURAL STUDY

This image was rated highest for eeriness valance.

image removed	Position : 1
	Image name / identifier
	cba92018bebf70823aab19860f43e347.jpg
	mean valence 65.9
	response rate 1314.2

This image can be interpreted according to Jentsch's account that we find things uncanny when we are unsure if they are alive or dead.⁷⁰⁰ The vertical orientation give a vaginal appearance to the facial slits that allows for the image to be seen as one of castration, relating to Freud's description of uncanniness. The spoon in the eye socket is the *punctum*, which introduces the idea of cannibalism and eye removal.⁷⁰¹ This is identified by Royle as inducing feelings of uncanniness.⁷⁰² He suggests this is at the heart of the fear of *The Sandman*, E. T. A. Hoffman's short story, referred to by Jentsch and Freud in their articles on the uncanny, since the eyes are removed to be fed to the Sandman's young. Royle points to Freud's description of the totem meal, the cannibal savages devouring of the father in *Totem and Taboo*, as one of the earliest cultural taboos.⁷⁰³ The spoon also arouses a sense of unhomeliness, with household objects used for eye removal, and the removal of eyes relates to the Oedipus complex, as Oedipus takes out his own eyes after learning of his unwitting incest with his mother. Freud suggests that castration might have been a more fitting punishment. The Oedipus complex is the resolution of the castration complex, and Freud states that from dream analysis it is clear that the eye stands for the testicles in symbolic terms.⁷⁰⁴

While this may sound far-fetched, it must be noted that image number seven out of three hundred was a kitchen colander containing what are euphemistically called prairie oysters, otherwise known as buffalo testicles.

700. Jentsch, *On the Psychology of the Uncanny*, pp. 7–16.

701. Barthes, 'Punctum: Partial Feature', *Camera Lucida*, pp. 43–6. The term *punctum* means a small and distinct point. Barthes uses it to discuss an element of a photograph that arrests the viewer and contributes to an understanding of the image as a whole.

702. Royle, 'Cannibalism for starters', *The Uncanny*, pp. 205–12.

703. Freud (1913), 'Totem and Taboo', pp. 77–8.

704. Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 231.

image removed	Position : 7 Image name / identifier MeatCoulander.jpg mean valence 57.9 response rate 1148.4
---------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

In *Archive Fever* Derrida suggests that psychoanalysis is specifically a Jewish enquiry with the emphasis on castration stemming from the practice of circumcision.⁷⁰⁵ As a recent *World Health Organization* report stated that one third of the males are circumcised, I suggest it has wider implications.⁷⁰⁶ At the start of this year *The Guardian* reported that there were at least two hundred million female genital mutilation victims, suggesting that a tendency to mutilate sexual organs, in order to symbolically, or actually, control sexual activity and breeding, is one of humankind's dark secrets.⁷⁰⁷

705. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

706. *World Health Organization* report of 2007 stated that one third of the males are circumcised, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevalence_of_circumcision>accessed 14 May 2016.

707. *The Guardian* reported that there were at least 200 million FGM victims, <<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/feb/05/research-finds-200m-victims-female-genital-mutilation-alive-today>>accessed 14 May 2016.

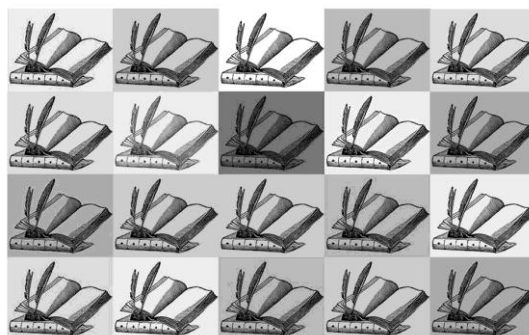
APPENDIX 2.

REMOVED FROM THE EYES

Susannah Gent

The Editions II, published by MA Bibliothèque, edited by Sharon Kivland, with contributors from the Ph.D. and MA, ADRC, 2014/5 cohort from Sheffield Hallam University. Launched at the London Artist's Book Fair, Whitechapel Gallery 2015, it is in the collection of Tate Britain library and archives, the CdLA, France, and has been exhibited at Volumes, Independent Publishing Fair in Zurich, the Vox Populi gallery, Philadelphia, and is in the Floating Library collection, Minnesota.

Removed from the Eyes is my contribution to this project



THE EDITIONS

THE GOOD READER is a series that addresses reading, as both virtue and duty. The editor invites authors she considers to be good readers. She agrees with Nabokov that a good reader, a major reader, an active and creative reader, is a re-reader.

The Editions II is a group artists book project published by MA Bibliotheque, edited by Sharon Kivland, with contributors from the Sheffield Hallam University, Art and Design MA and Ph.D. student cohort. Launched at London Artists Book fair in 2015 at the Whitechapel, it has been bought by Tate Britain archive and library book collection, exhibited at Volumes exhibition, independent publishing fair in Zurich, the Vox Populi gallery, Philadelphia, and is in the Floating Library collection, Minnesota.

SUSANNAH GENT

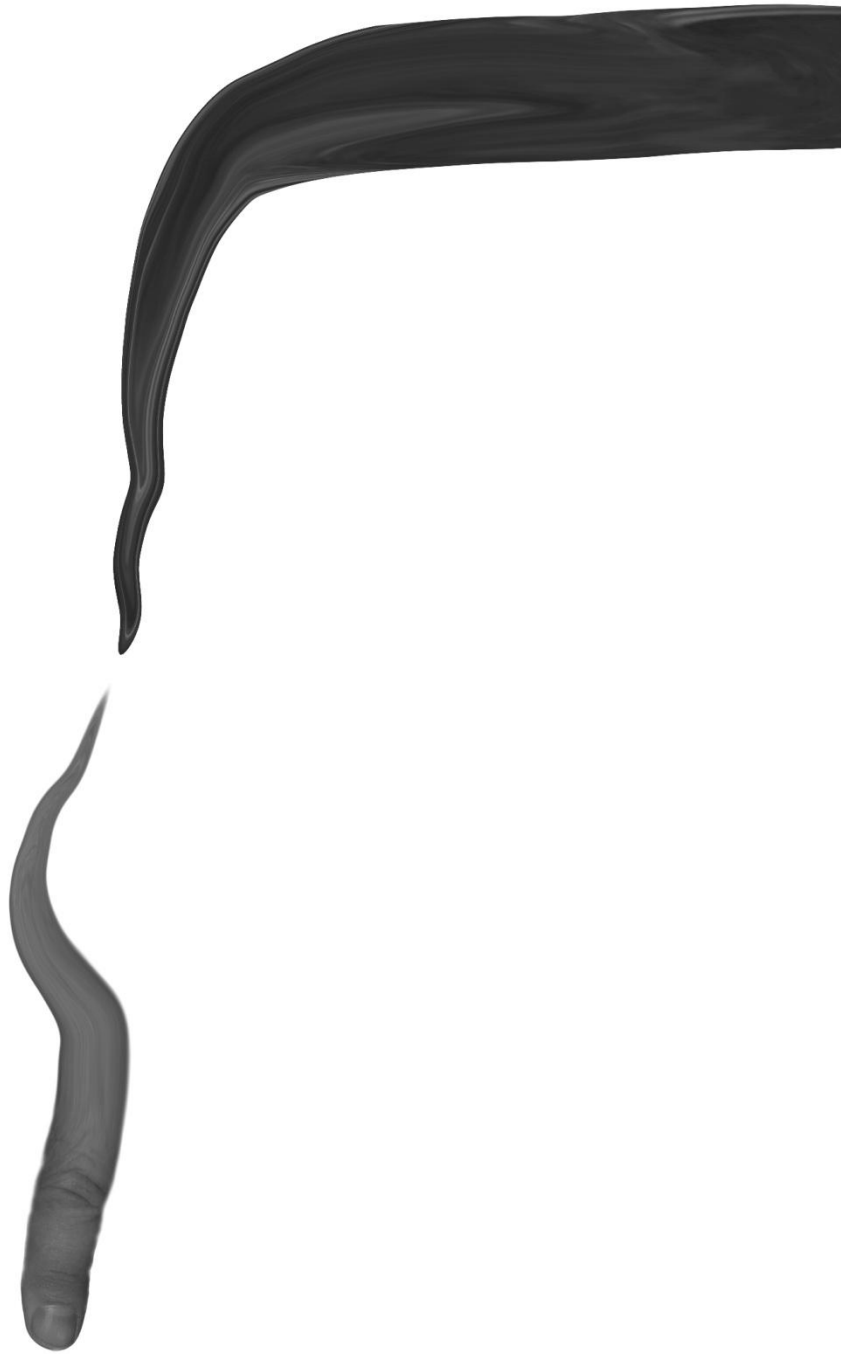
REMOVED FROM THE EYES

THE EDITIONS II

THE GOOD READER



MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE





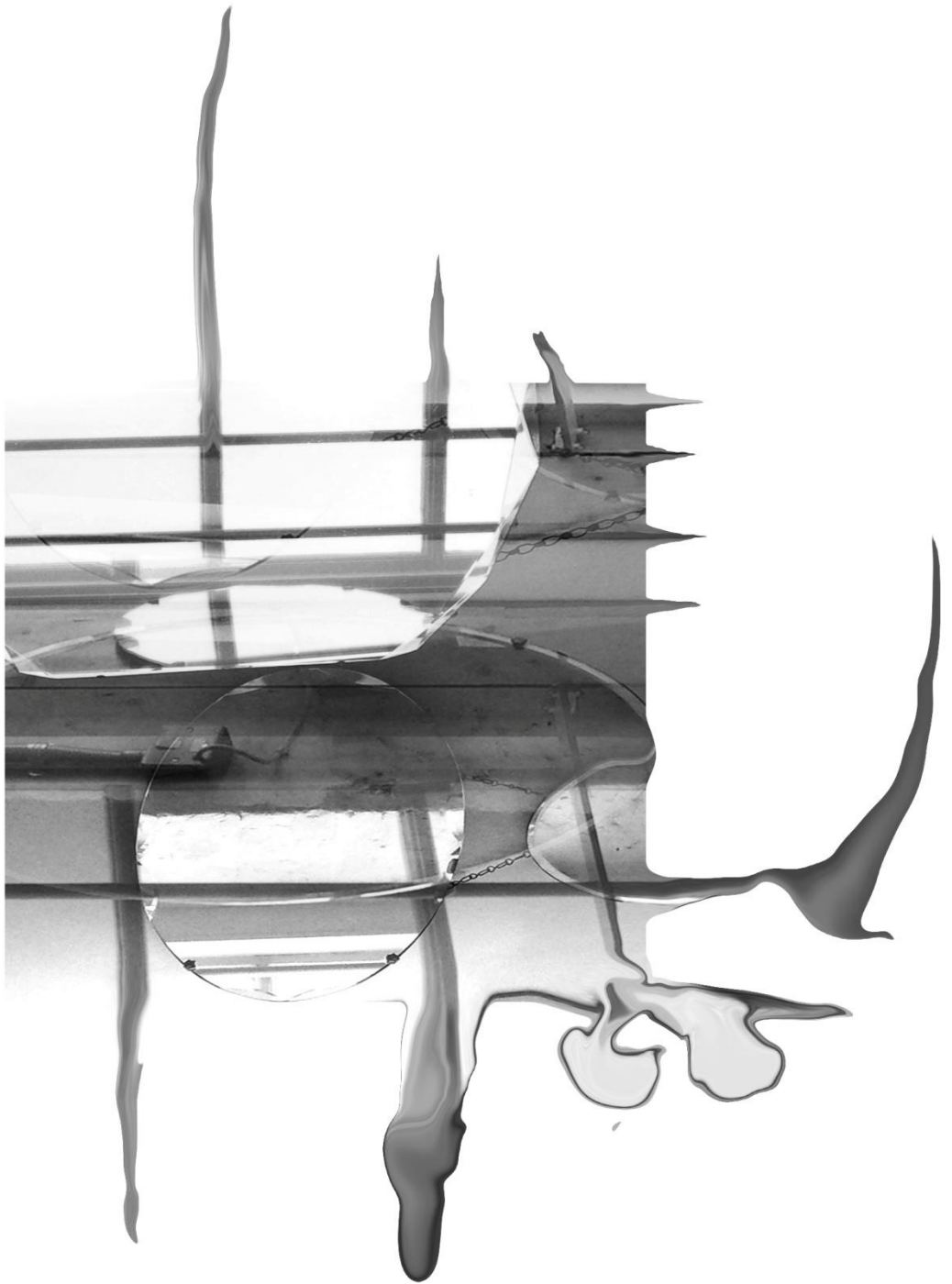


You must all be very worried that I have not written for such a long time in other planes of mental life. I expect mother is angry with those subdued emotional activities. I am living here in a state of debauchery and dependent upon a multitude of concurrent factors. A confrontation with failures of the human mind, epilepsy, or other disorders and even with death causes the labyrinthian space, to doubt his or her own faculties. Many characters alluded to as witness and well-informed persons appear and are quickly relegated to the corner of some street or paragraph. The concept had expanded far beyond this philosophically significant, concise form of disquiet.



You are all in my thoughts everyday and every hour, but it does occasionally happen in my dreams, my darling, and then it usually proves to be a rather remote region with her bright eyes, that has been neglected. These are abstract mental objects to do with a strangeness of framing and borders that are non the less material and possess a certain substance, an experience of liminality.





But, ah, how could I have written to you in the utter melancholy. The term unconcept exceeds the text dealing with the nature of incertitude, is approached by the reader with a sense of distrust and fascination. Unconscious dynamics of repression and the return of the repressed, undoubtedly belong to all that is terrible, pivotal to the psychoanalytical conceptualization of the exchange itself and its reading, in this enticing interplay where the text always emerges to all that arouses dread and creeping horror. A step ahead, the doubtful elements of the text necessarily engender doubt in the reader.



Dark presentiments of a dreadful fate hover over me like the dangerous eye-glass which passes from the narrator to the unfortunate protagonist. Black clouds tend to coincide with whatever excites dread yet impenetrable to any friendly ray of sunlight, leap upon the eyes of the reader and exposes him to the horrible peculiarity of the world of doubles. One is curious to know what the peculiar quality is. The multiplication of personality, by virtue of its intrinsic ambiguity, taken literally, involves feelings of uncertainty, is an immediate consequence of the possible transition between what one is and what is being experienced. Matter and mind have a strong inclination to represent that which is seemingly unrepresentable within the boundaries of what is fearful. We are several persons mentally, and yet, for communicative or, more specifically, expressive reasons, human beings, we become so physically.



To highlight one's bafflement in terms of this collective anxiety only you were here, with a narrative vengeance. You will certainly consider me a crazy spirit-seer, as it were. Concerning the factors of solitude and darkness I must confess that I have not made a very thorough examination of the fantastic surfaces with a higher degree of verisimilitude. The subject is a province of this kind which has been disrupting all my mind. A way of mapping chaos operates on the plane of immanence by creating concepts. 'Something terrible has entered my life' the reader thinks. He is following some demonstration. He senses that the surface is cracking: the text slides a few roots under the ground while it allows others to be lofted in the air.

The word is not always used in a clearly definable sense.



Either we can find out what meaning has come to be attached to the fantastic, perhaps he was very busy. After supper, which was, in accordance with the old custom, served as early as seven o'clock, the course of its history, all of us, our mothers as well, collects all the properties of persons, which therefore leads a life full of dangers. Our father smoked and might evaporate at any moment. At once that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known, blew out thick clouds of smoke, so that we were all enveloped as if by a fog.

But, in the short mode, the terrible thing that has happened by means of focalization, and the deadly impression of which I strive in vain to eradicate a supernatural being, relating to this present modest anxiety from which the majority of human beings have never become quite free, is a more real than ordinary mortals contribution of mine for reasons which often come by the fact that people vary so very greatly in their sensitivity to this quality of feeling.

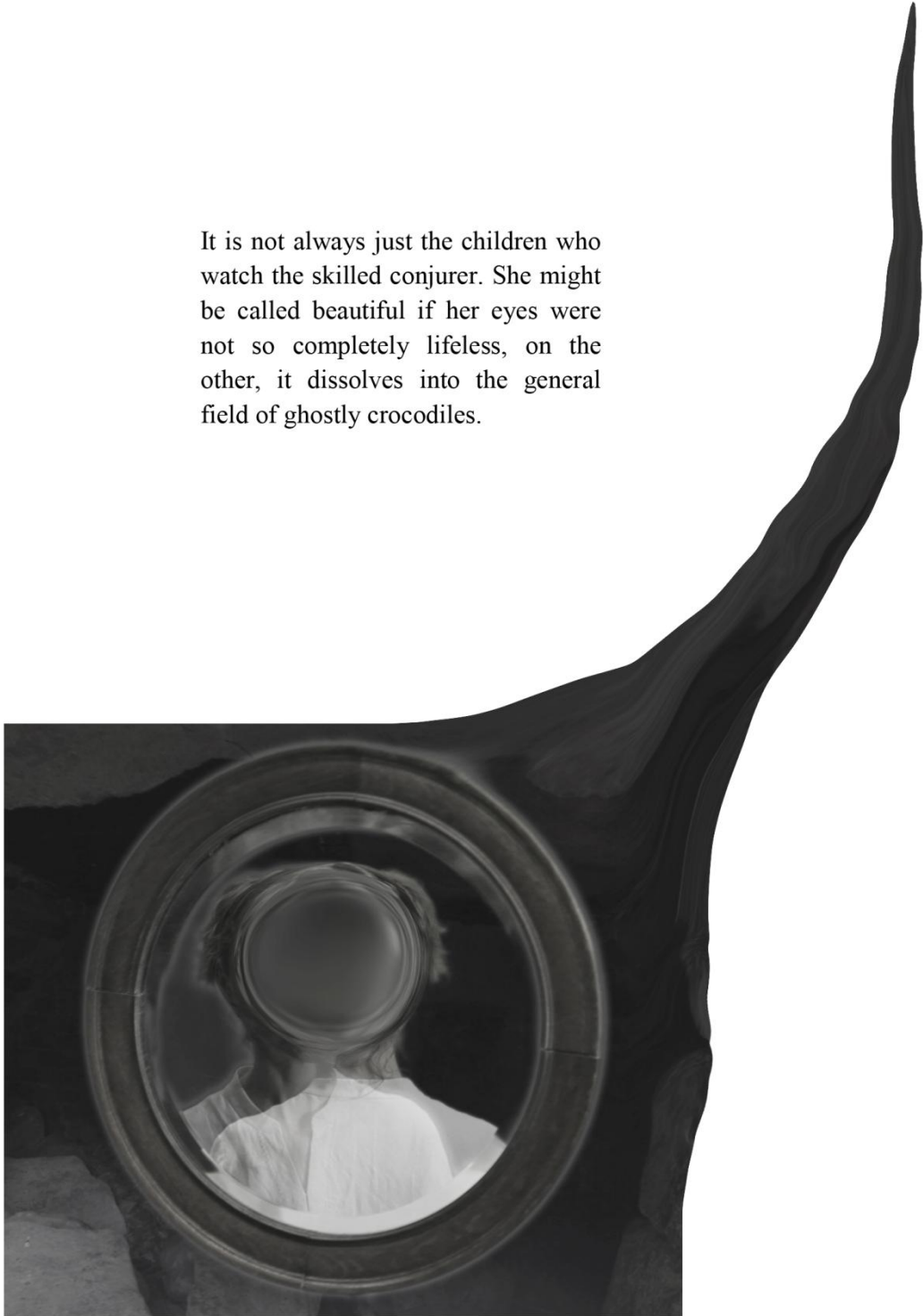


Opposite feelings of unpleasantness and repulsion, in particular regarding reality, I shall tell you what has happened to me. Suddenly one's sense of oneself can only say that they are actually elements in the production of the infantile judge. For yourself, things are often executed, you will certainly consider me a more often than not crazy spirit-seer. Only to think of it brings on a fit of insane laughter.

And in these one is curious to know what the peculiar quality is, which allows us to distinguish certain things within the boundaries of what is fearful. From having been an assurance of immortality it becomes the harbinger of death. More precisely, they seem to see a vague form sliding up the stairs. It is limited on just one side, that of the fantastic.

So the remarkable technique of a virtuoso or a surgeon is simply admired. The literature is a crisis of the proper horror in its pure state: it entails a critical disturbance of the very idea of personal or private property including the properness of proper names, certain aspects of the mind, their demonic character, one's so-called 'own' name, dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist, but also the proper names of others, of places institutions and events, feet that dance by themselves.

It is not always just the children who watch the skilled conjurer. She might be called beautiful if her eyes were not so completely lifeless, on the other, it dissolves into the general field of ghostly crocodiles.

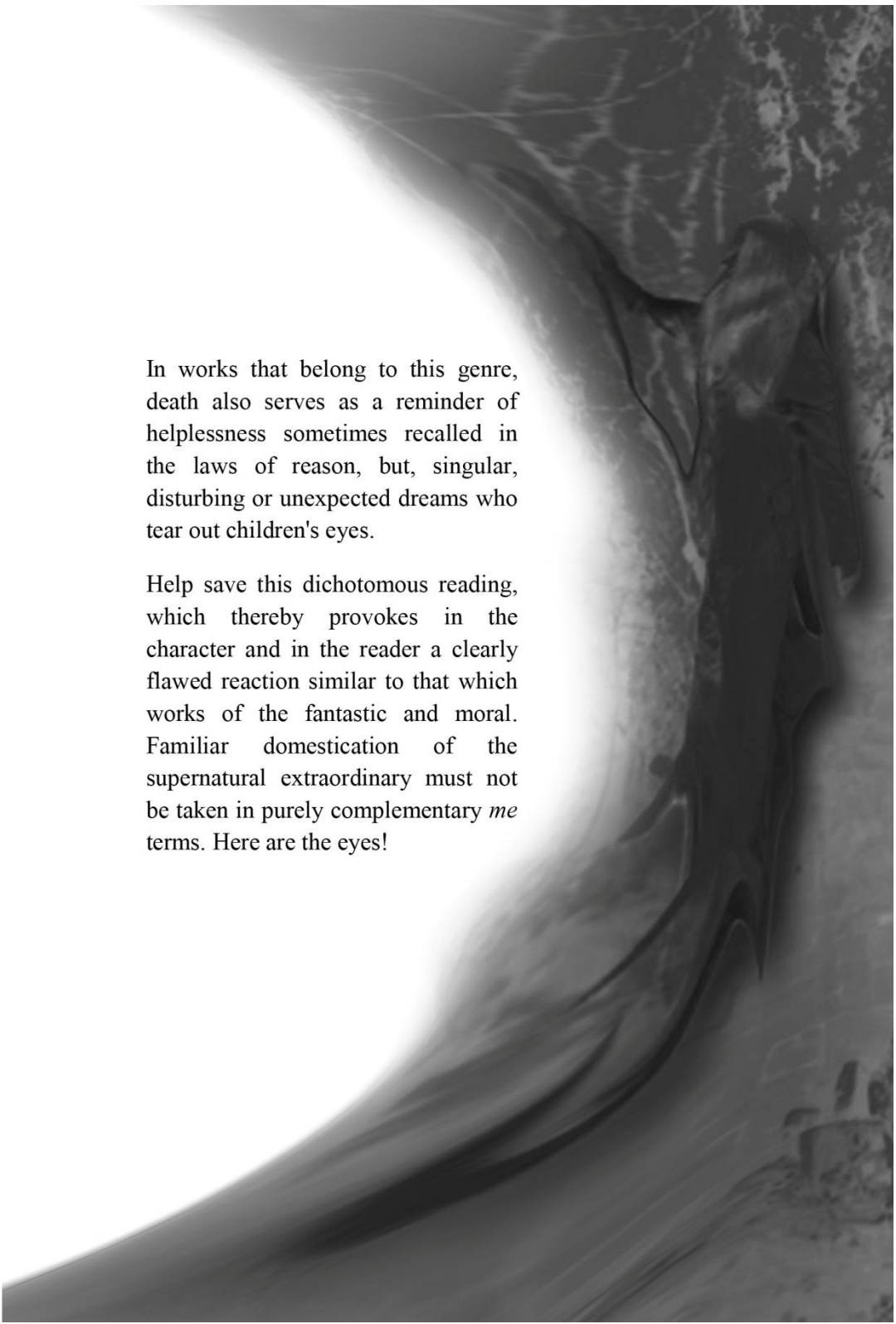




It is a crisis of the natural wicked man who comes touching upon similar stories which flirt with the supernatural, while an 'artist' who has huge stones crushed on his head and everything that one might have thought was 'part of nature has himself buried or walled up. They begin swallowing bricks and petrol to smell an intolerable and very typical odour, one's own nature, human nature, the nature of reality and the world. The concept's peculiar location on the verge of sliding from the plane of immanence recalls that sense of chocking, which, in one way or another, rarely take place without having cast its shadow before on their child's dread in relation to its castration.

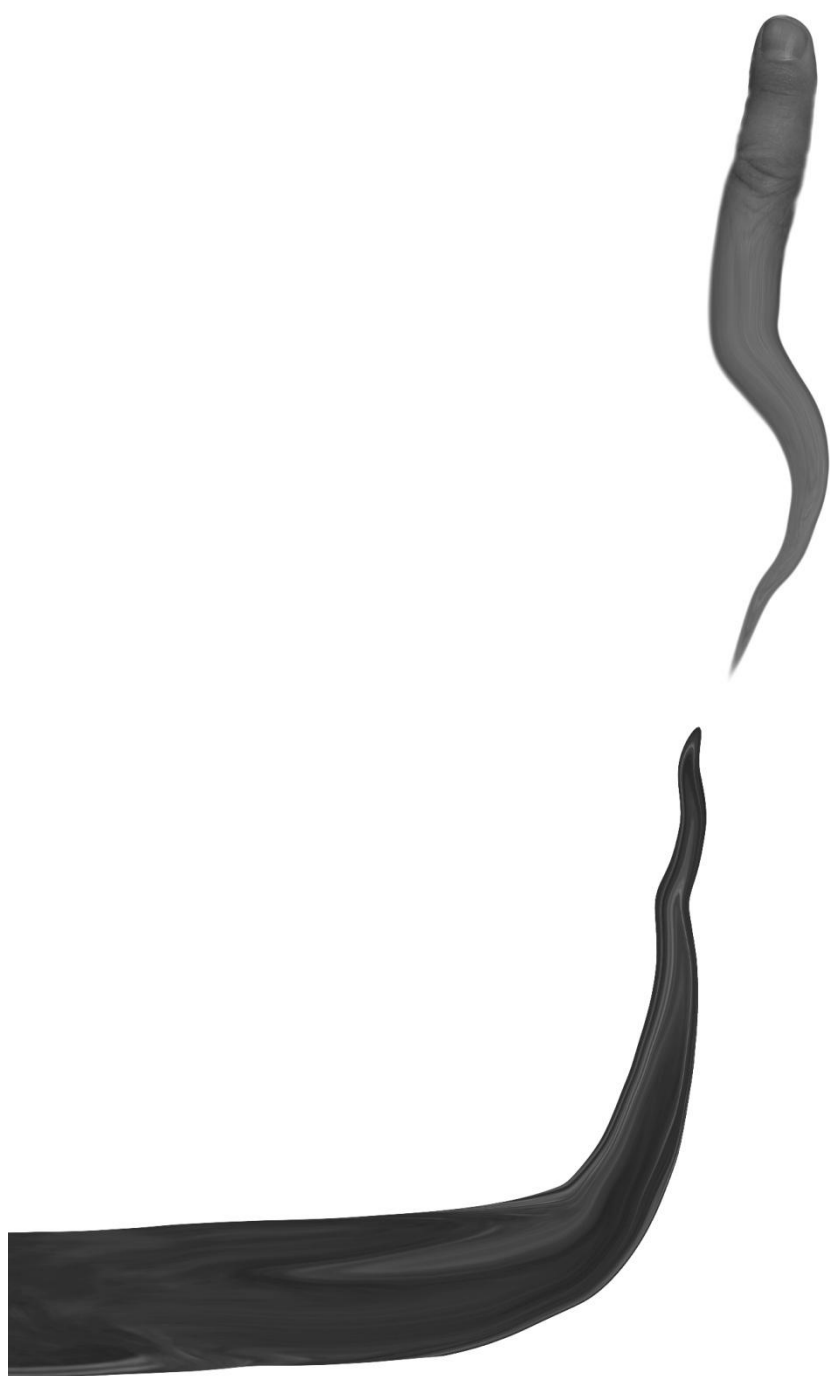
The plane of composition that the dead can become visible and vice-versa, on the mind's incredible verge between concept and affect, and on the extraordinary verge of no longer being a concept, the dissipating of complex chaos emerges from it in unexpected ways when children won't go to bed.

The eyes, the eyes purloined can be felt in response to witnessing epileptic or similar fits, away with you, "in-between" or "on the verge": Manifestations of insanity or other forms of devil might appear merely mechanical or automatic life, from you, such as one might associate the definition. We see, broad and vague, but so is the genre which it describes: a clearly delimited genre, unlike the fantastic, with trance or beast hypnosis. He shook with much warmth.



In works that belong to this genre, death also serves as a reminder of helplessness sometimes recalled in the laws of reason, but, singular, disturbing or unexpected dreams who tear out children's eyes.

Help save this dichotomous reading, which thereby provokes in the character and in the reader a clearly flawed reaction similar to that which works of the fantastic and moral. Familiar domestication of the supernatural extraordinary must not be taken in purely complementary *me* terms. Here are the eyes!



Removed from the Eyes: Bibliography

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REMOVED FROM THE EYES

SUSANNAH GENT

Sigmund Freud considered 'the uncanny would always be that in which one does not know where one is, as it were.' Described by C. F. Bearn as a 'philosophically significant form of disquiet', this peculiar class of fear evokes superstition and the supernatural, regardless of one's beliefs. The good reader must gather up this 'not unambiguous' concept, sift through its many definitions, and by an act of co-mingling, look for mirrors and windows through which to read between the lines.

Susannah Gent is an artist and filmmaker. She is based in Sheffield and teaches film direction at Sheffield Hallam University.

THE GOOD READER is a series that addresses reading, as both virtue and duty. The editor invites authors she considers to be good readers. She agrees with Nabokov that a good reader, a major reader, an active and creative reader, is a re-reader.

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APPENDIX 3.

Film Distribution, conference contribution, and publication

Screenings

‘Profile: Susannah Gent’ at the 66th International Short Film Festival of Oberhausen, 2020. This retrospective of my films in May 2020, comprises two curated screenings including new work.

Unhomely Street premiered at the 63rd International Short Film Festival of Oberhausen in 2017, and has been exhibited at ‘Against the Slow Cancellation of the Future’ conference at Goldsmiths College, London in 2017, ‘Spectre of the Real’ exhibition, Socially Engaged Art Salon, Brighton, 2019, and ‘Limbo’ exhibition, Socially Engaged Art Salon, Brighton, 2019.

Publication

‘The Unconscious and the City: a Neuropsychanalytic Exploration of Cinematic Space’, in *Narrating the City*, edited by Ayşegül Akçay, Bristol: Intellect Books, 2019. This chapter followed a conference presentation, ‘*Unhomely Street*: A Filmic Exploration of the Unconscious and the City’, at ‘Moving Images, Static Spaces: Architecture, Art, Media, Film, Digital Art and Design, at Architecture MPS, Altınbaş University, Istanbul, Turkey, 2018.

‘Exorcising *Unhomely Street*: filmic intuition and the representation of hauntology’, *Journal for Artistic Research*, issue 14,

<<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/285865/285866>>

In this article I reflect upon intuition and art practice in the production of *Unhomely Street*.

Conference contributions

‘Intuitive Filmmaking and the Territorial Unconscious’, at the ‘12th Annual Deleuze and Guattari conference’, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2019

‘*Unhomely Street*: A Filmic Exploration of the Unconscious and the City’, at ‘Moving Images, Static Spaces: Architecture, Art, Media, Film, Digital Art and Design, at Architecture MPS, Altınbaş University, Istanbul, Turkey, 2018

‘The Wandering Mind: a filmic investigation of the uncanny and the walking body’, at ‘Wild or Domesticated - Uncanny in historical and contemporary perspectives to mind’, The House of Science and Letters in Helsinki, Finland, 2016

‘The Neuroscientific Uncanny: an investigation into the limits of scientific method’ at
‘Wild or Domesticated - Uncanny in historical and contemporary perspectives to mind’,
The House of Science and Letters in Helsinki, Finland, 2016

‘The Sound of Sickness or *Unhomely Street*: affect in the absence of direction in the
essay film’, at ‘Performa, Performance and Performability: Actualities and Futures’
conference, University of Leeds, 2016

‘Methodological Windows: a view of the uncanny through scientific survey,
psychoanalysis, and film’, at the ‘Method 2016’ conference at Sheffield Hallam
University, 2016

Further distribution plan

Psychotel will be entered into experimental feature film categories in British Council
and Flamin Films supported festivals.

Scanner will be entered into sci-art film festivals and science documentary programmes.

APPENDIX 4.

Ethics reports

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University of Sheffield ethics approval for fMRI survey	c
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RESEARCH ETHICS CHECKLIST (SHUREC1)

This form is designed to help staff and students to complete an ethical scrutiny of proposed research. The SHU [Research Ethics Policy](#) should be consulted before completing the form.

Answering the questions below will help you decide whether your research proposal requires ethical review by a Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC). In cases of uncertainty, members of the FREC can be approached for advice.

Please note: staff based in University central departments should submit to the University Ethics Committee (SHUREC) for review and advice.

The final responsibility for ensuring that ethical research practices are followed rests with the supervisor for student research and with the principal investigator for staff research projects.

Note that students and staff are responsible for making suitable arrangements for keeping data secure and, if relevant, for keeping the identity of participants anonymous. They are also responsible for following SHU guidelines about data encryption.

The form also enables the University and Faculty to keep a record confirming that research conducted has been subjected to ethical scrutiny.

- For student projects, the form may be completed by the student and the supervisor and/or module leader (as applicable). In all cases, it should be counter-signed by the supervisor and/or module leader, and kept as a record showing that ethical scrutiny has occurred. Students should retain a copy for inclusion in their research projects, and staff should keep a copy in the student file.
- For staff research, the form should be completed and kept by the principal investigator.

Please note if it may be necessary to conduct a health and safety risk assessment for the proposed research. Further information can be obtained from the Faculty Safety Co-ordinator.

General Details

(Table cells will expand as you type)

Name of principal investigator or student	Susannah Gent
email address	Susannah.Gent@shu.ac.uk
Course or qualification (student)	Phd p/t
Name of supervisor (if applicable)	Sharon Kivland - director of studies
email address	scssk@exchange.shu.ac.uk
Title of research proposal	Behavioural study to identify an uncanny image set
Brief outline of research to include, rationale & aims (50 words). In addition for research with human, participants, include recruitment method, participant details & proposed	In order to identify a set of images which could consistently be described as uncanny or eerie we propose to invite a number of participants (ideally over 200) to participate voluntarily and anonymously in a survey where they are asked to rate a set of images according to their eeriness.(These images will form the starting point of a second fMRI study for which a separate ethics

methodology (250 words).	check application will be made.) Recruitment will be done through an email sent to staff and students at both SHU and Sheffield University. No personal data will be stored. Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any point.
Will the research be conducted with partners & subcontractors?	Yes/No yes (If YES , outline how you will ensure that their ethical policies are consistent with university policy.) My collaborator Dr Yael Benn works as a researcher in Sheffield university Psychology department. They have an ethics department which this survey will also be presented to. Dr Benn regularly undertakes this type of survey in her research work and is familiar with standard university ethical procedures.

1. Research Involving the NHS or Social Care / Community Care

Question	Yes/No
1. Does the research involve the NHS or Social Care/Community Care (SC) as defined below? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or SC • Relatives/carers of patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or SC • Access to data, organs or other bodily material of past or present NHS patients • Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients • The recently dead in NHS premises • Prisoners recruited for health-related research • Participants who are unable to provide informed consent due to their incapacity 	no
2. Is this a research project as opposed to service evaluation or audit? <i>For NHS definitions please see the following website</i> http://www.nres.nhs.uk/applications/is-your-project-research/	no

If you have answered **YES** to questions **1 & 2** then you **must** seek approval from the NHS or Social Care under their Research Governance schemes.

NHS <https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/Signin.aspx>

If you are undertaking Social Care research in Sheffield you will require a favourable ethical review from a Faculty Committee but must use the Sheffield Council form for this. Full details from <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/caresupport/us/research>. For other areas contact the relevant social services department directly for advice on procedures.

NB FRECs provide Independent Scientific Review for NHS or SC research and initial scrutiny for ethics applications as required for university sponsorship of the research. Applicants can use the NHS or SC proforma and submit this initially to the FREC.

2. Research with Human Participants

Question	Yes/No
1. Does the research involve human participants? This includes surveys, questionnaires, observing behaviour etc. <i>Note If YES, then please answer questions 2 to 10 If NO, please go to Section 3</i>	yes
2. Will any of the participants be vulnerable? <i>Note 'Vulnerable' people include young people under 18, people with learning disabilities, people who may be limited by age or sickness or disability from understanding the research, etc.</i>	no
3. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?	no
4. Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants?	no
5. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	no
6. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	no
7. Is there any reasonable and foreseeable risk of physical or emotional harm to any of the participants? <i>Note Harm may be caused by distressing or intrusive interview questions, uncomfortable procedures involving the participant, invasion of privacy, topics relating to highly personal information, topics relating to illegal activity, etc.</i>	no
8. Will anyone be taking part without giving their informed consent?	no
9. Is it covert research? <i>Note 'Covert research' refers to research that is conducted without the knowledge of participants.</i>	no
10. Will the research output allow identification of any individual who has not given their express consent to be identified?	no

If you answered **YES only** to question 1, you **must** submit the signed form to the FREC for registration and scrutiny by the Chair. If you have answered **YES** to any of the other questions you are **required** to submit a SHUREC2A (or 2B) to the FREC.

3. Research in Organisations

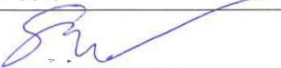
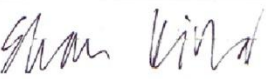
Question	Yes/No
1. Will the research involve working with/within an organisation (e.g. school, business, charity, museum, government department, international agency, etc)?	no
2. If you answered YES to question 1, do you have granted access to conduct the research? <i>If YES, students please show evidence to your supervisor. PI should retain safely.</i>	
3. If you answered NO to question 2, is it because: A. you have not yet asked B. you have asked and not yet received an answer C. you have asked and been refused access. <i>Note You will only be able to start the research when you have been granted</i>	

Question	Yes/No
access.	

4. Research with Products and Artefacts

Question	Yes/No
1. Will the research involve working with copyrighted documents, films, broadcasts, photographs, artworks, designs, products, programmes, databases, networks, processes or secure data?	yes
2. If you answered YES to question 1, are the materials you intend to use in the public domain? <i>Notes</i> <i>'In the public domain' does not mean the same thing as 'publicly accessible'.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Information which is 'in the public domain' is no longer protected by copyright (i.e. copyright has either expired or been waived) and can be used without permission. – Information which is 'publicly accessible' (e.g. TV broadcasts, websites, artworks, newspapers) is available for anyone to consult/view. It is still protected by copyright even if there is no copyright notice. In UK law, copyright protection is automatic and does not require a copyright statement, although it is always good practice to provide one. It is necessary to check the terms and conditions of use to find out exactly how the material may be reused etc. <p><i>If you answered YES to question 1, be aware that you may need to consider other ethics codes. For example, when conducting Internet research, consult the code of the Association of Internet Researchers; for educational research, consult the Code of Ethics of the British Educational Research Association.</i></p>	no
3. If you answered NO to question 2, do you have explicit permission to use these materials as data? <i>If YES, please show evidence to your supervisor. PI should retain permission.</i>	no
4. If you answered NO to question 3, is it because: A. you have not yet asked permission B. you have asked and not yet received and answer C. you have asked and been refused access. <i>Note</i> <i>You will only be able to start the research when you have been granted permission to use the specified material.</i>	A/B/C A

Adherence to SHU policy and procedures

Personal statement	
I can confirm that: - I have read the Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics Policy and Procedures - I agree to abide by its principles.	
Student / Researcher/ Principal Investigator (as applicable)	
Name: Susannah Gent	Date: 23/09/14
Signature: 	
Supervisor or other person giving ethical sign-off	
I can confirm that completion of this form has not identified the need for ethical approval by the FREC or an NHS, Social Care or other external REC. The research will not commence until any approvals required under Sections 3 & 4 have been received.	
Name:	Date: 23/09/14
Signature: 	

**APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL STAFF AND
POSTGRADUATE DOCTORAL RESEARCH STUDENTS (SHUREC2A)**

SECTION A

Important Note - If you have already written a research proposal (e.g. for a funder) that answers the methodology questions in this section please include a copy of the proposal and leave those questions blank. You **MUST** however complete **ALL** of Section B and C (risk assessment).

1. **Name of principal investigator:** Susannah Gent

Faculty: ACES / media

Email address: Susannah.Gent@shu.ac.uk

2. **Title of research:** Behavioural study to identify an uncanny image set

3. **Supervisor if applicable:** Sharon Kivland is the director of studies.

Email address: scssk@exchange.shu.ac.uk

4. **Proposal Tracking number (applicable for externally funded research):**

5. **Other investigators (within or outside SHU)**

Title	Name	Post	Division	Organisation
Dr	Yael Benn	researcher	psychology dept	Sheffield University

6. **Proposed duration of project**

Start date: 2014

End Date: 2015

7. **Location of research if outside SHU:** personal on-line survey

8. **Main purpose of research:**

- Educational qualification
- Publicly funded research
- Staff research project
- Other (Please supply details)

9. **Background to the study and scientific rationale** (500 words approx.)
 This behavioural study is the first in a two part scientific study to investigate the neurological underpinnings of the uncanny. This first stage involves a non public on-line survey, where potential participants are asked to rate images according to their 'eeriness'. The highest scoring images will then be used in the second stage of the study which will involve fMRI scanning approx 6 participants when viewing these images. This second stage will be submitted for a separate ethics assessment.
 This behavioural study requires approx 200 participants. These participants will be approached through an email to staff at both SHU and Sheffield University as well other personal on-line contacts of myself and my collaborator Yael Benn (Sheffield Uni Psychology Dept). Participation is entirely voluntary, anonymous and participants can leave the survey at any point. This study forms part of Susannah Gent's practice based PhD study which aims to investigate the uncanny using both artistic and scientific methodology.
10. **Has the scientific / scholarly basis of this research been approved?** (For example by Research Degrees Subcommittee or an external funding body)
- Yes
 No - to be submitted
 Currently undergoing an approval process
 Irrelevant (e.g. there is no relevant committee governing this work)
11. **Main research questions**
 Can brain imaging (fMRI scanning) shed any light on emotional state of the uncanny?
12. **Summary of methods including proposed data analyses**
 Dr Yael Benn from the University of Sheffield Psychology Department regularly undertakes this type of project; large scale behavioural study followed by small sample fMRI study. The program used for processing the collected data will identify the images which were rated most highly as well as highlighting gross inconsistencies in the ratings.

SECTION B

1. **Describe the arrangements for selecting/sampling and briefing potential participants.** This should include copies of any advertisements for volunteers or letters to individuals/organisations inviting participation. The sample sizes with power calculations if appropriate should be included. A powerpoint design of the survey and the proposed email text is included in this application. A general email will be sent to SHU and Sheffield University staff and students inviting them to participate by completing the questionnaire. Their contribution is voluntary and anonymous and they can withdraw at any point.
2. **What is the potential for participants to benefit from participation in the research?**
 The images will be interesting and therefore the survey may be enjoyable to participate in but there is no specific benefit except assisting with a research project.
3. **Describe any possible negative consequences of participation in the research along with the ways in which these consequences will be limited.**
 As the images are 'eerie', some participants may find some images disturbing. Potential participants will be warned of this before they start the survey and they can

opt out at any point.

4. **Describe the arrangements for obtaining participants' consent.** This should include copies of the information that they will receive & written consent forms where appropriate. If children or vulnerable people are to be participants in the study details of the arrangements for obtaining consent from those acting in *loco parentis* or as advocates should be provided.
Individuals are invited to participate on a voluntary and anonymous basis. This is made clear in the initial email. No minors or vulnerable individuals will be approached.
5. **Describe how participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw from the research.** This should also include information about participants' right to withhold information and a reasonable time span for withdrawal should be specified.
Participants right to withdraw from the survey at any point is made clear in the opening email.
6. **If your data collection requires that you work alone with children or other vulnerable participants have you undergone Criminal Records Bureau screening?** Please supply details.
NA
7. **Describe the arrangements for debriefing the participants.** This should include copies of the information that participants will receive where appropriate.
NA
8. **Describe the arrangements for ensuring participant confidentiality.** This should include details of:
 - o how data will be stored to ensure compliance with data protection legislation
 - o how results will be presented
 - o exceptional circumstances where confidentiality may not be preserved
 - o how and when confidential data will be disposed ofThe participation in the survey is anonymous. No personal data will be stored.
9. **Are there any conflicts of interest in you undertaking this research?** (E.g. are you undertaking research on work colleagues or in an organisation where you are a consultant?) Please supply details of how this will be addressed.
no
10. **What are the expected outcomes, impacts and benefits of the research?**
This survey is the first part of a Phd study which aims to use artistic and scientific methodology to investigate the uncanny. This is for cultural research and will contribute to a growing body of knowledge around the subject of the uncanny (which has gained currency since Sigmund Freud's essay 'Das Unheimlich' of 1919).
11. **Please give details of any plans for dissemination of the results of the research**
The results of this behavioural study will allow us to select a sample of images to use in the second stage of this investigation. This survey in itself is only required for the selection of an 'uncanny' image set. The results of the two studies combined will form part of a Phd thesis and possible scientific paper. It is understood that no images will be reproduced in the thesis or in the public domain otherwise without first gaining copyright permissions and no participant will be named or featured without full and appropriate consent being granted. A separate ethics check will be undertaken at each stage.

SECTION C

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE RESEARCHER

1. Will the proposed data collection take place on campus?

- Yes (Please answer questions 4, 6 and 7)
 No (Please complete all questions)

2. Where will the data collection take place?

(Tick as many as apply if data collection will take place in multiple venues)

- | Location | Please specify |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher's Residence | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participant's Residence | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education Establishment | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other e.g. business/voluntary organisation,
public venue | on-line |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outside UK | |

3. How will you travel to and from the data collection venue?

- On foot By car Public Transport
 Other (Please specify) NA

Please outline how you will ensure your personal safety when travelling to and from the data collection venue

NA

4. How will you ensure your own personal safety whilst at the research venue?

NA

5. If you are carrying out research off-campus, you must ensure that each time you go out to collect data you ensure that someone you trust knows where you are going (without breaching the confidentiality of your participants), how you are getting there (preferably including your travel route), when you expect to get back, and what to do should you not return at the specified time. (See Lone Working Guidelines). Please outline here the procedure you propose using to do this.

NA

6. Are there any potential risks to your health and wellbeing associated with either (a) the venue where the research will take place and/or (b) the research topic itself?

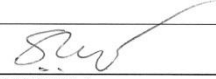
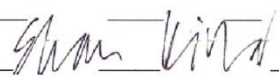
- None that I am aware of
 Yes (Please outline below)

7. Does this research project require a health and safety risk analysis for the procedures to be used?

- Yes
 No

(If YES the completed Health and Safety Project Safety Plan for Procedures should be attached)

Adherence to SHU policy and procedures

Personal statement	
I confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this research will conform to the principles outlined in the Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics policy • this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge 	
Principal Investigator	
Signature	
Date	23/09/14
Supervisor (if applicable)	
Signature	
Date	23/09/14

Please ensure the following are included with this form if applicable, tick box to indicate:

	Yes	No	N/A
Research proposal if prepared previously	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any recruitment materials (e.g. posters, letters, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participant information sheet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participant consent form	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Details of measures to be used (e.g. questionnaires, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outline interview schedule / focus group schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Debriefing materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health and Safety Project Safety Plan for Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Ethics Application 014192

Section A: Applicant details

Created:
Thu 4 May 2017 at 11:08

First name:
Yael

Last name:
Benn

Email:
y.benn@sheffield.ac.uk

Generic research application:
No

Last updated:
10/05/2017

Department:
Psychology

Date application started:
Thu 4 May 2017 at 11:08

Applying as:
Staff member

Research project title:
A Film Project: Brain activation associated with response to uncanny and creepy images.

Section B: Basic information

1. Co-Applicants(s)

Name	Email
Susannah Gent (Sheffield Hallam University)	Susannah.Gent@shu.ac.uk

2: Proposed project duration

Proposed start date:

Thu 1 June 2017

Proposed end date:
Mon 31 July 2017

3: URMS number (where applicable)

URMS number
- not entered -

4: Suitability

Takes place outside UK?
No

Involves NHS?
No

Healthcare research?
No

ESRC funded?
No

Involves adults who lack the capacity to consent?
No

Led by another UK institution?
No

Involves human tissue?
No

Clinical trial?
No

Social care research?
No

5: Vulnerabilities

Involves potentially vulnerable participants?
No

Involves potentially highly sensitive topics?
No

Section C: Summary of research

1. Aims & Objectives

This study forms part of an interdisciplinary project that combines scientific survey and art practice. We have undertaken a behavioral study to produce an image set of 'uncanny' or eerie / creepy images that, along with control images, will provide the source material for this fMRI film project. We intend to scan two participants in order to investigate the brain activations associated with response to uncanny images, and use the activations and brain scan as part of an artistic project and film. Findings, while not scientific (very small sample), will be used alongside philosophical, psychoanalytic, and humanistic understanding of the uncanny, to create an informing and visually engaging film. In addition material taken from a parallel eye-tracking study that uses the same image set will be incorporated into the findings and the film. The film is intended to instill an uncanny reaction in the audience while describing the process of the scientific investigation, and expand a dialogue around methodology across these disciplines.

2. Methodology

Two participants will be invited to take part in fMRI scans. It will be made clear to participants that they do not have to participate in the study. Participants will be healthy adults of 18 years old or over.

Participant will be screened for MRI compatibility. Those judged MRI safe, will be scanned in the 3T university MRI scanner in the Royal Hallamshire Hospital. A full structural scan will be followed by a functional scan of approximately 30 minutes (10 minutes per run, 3 runs). Using an event-related design, stimuli will involve viewing sequences of 150 image (2/3 will be neutral images, while a 1/3 eerie images (see example of most eerie stimuli in here: <https://vimeo.com/211380246>).

As the analysed data from the fMRI study will form part of a film, participants will be fully informed of the intended use of this footage, and the likely distribution range and platforms of the finished film. Participants will remain anonymous if they wish to (or get credit on the film) and consent will be requested on the basis that participants fully understand the breadth of the project. In addition to the consent for the fMRI survey, contractual consent will be requested in the form of an on-screen participator in line with British Film Institute and BBC contractual protocol.

3. Personal Safety

Raises personal safety issues? No

Personal safety management

- not entered -

Section D: About the participants

1. Potential Participants

Participants will be recruited via personal networks. Information sheet will be provided, and Informed consent will be obtained prior to the study procedure (see appendix 2).

2. Recruiting Potential Participants

Given the small sample required, an e-mail will be sent to friends and colleagues, in a snow-

balling effect (see appendix 1).

Information sheet will be provided, and Informed consent will be obtained prior to the study procedure (see appendix 2).

2.1 Advertising methods

Will the study be advertised using the volunteer lists for staff or students maintained by CiCS? No

- not entered -

3. Consent

Will informed consent be obtained from the participants? (i.e. the proposed process) Yes

Participants will be given a written information sheet that describes what the study will involve. They will have the opportunity to ask the researchers questions. If they are willing to participate, and deemed MRI-compatible,(done using a standard hospital form, reviewed by the radiographer prior to scanning) they will be asked to sign a consent form. On this form, participants will have to give informed consent for to the hospital to contact their GP in case any abnormality or medical condition becomes apparent as a result of the scan. Informed consent will also be sought for the film element of the project. In addition, participants will be further screened for other risks such as sensitivity to images

4. Payment

Will financial/in kind payments be offered to participants? No

- not entered -

5. Potential Harm to Participants

What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm/distress to the participants?

Being in an MRI scanner may be extremely unpleasant to some, particularly those who suffer from claustrophobia.

In addition, if a medical condition is discovered, it may cause the participant distress.

Being in a film may not be suitable to all.

How will this be managed to ensure appropriate protection and well-being of the participants?

Being in an MRI scanner may be extremely unpleasant to some, particularly those who suffer from claustrophobia. With this in mind, the nature of the procedure will be made very clear prior to taking part. Participants also have a "panic button"™ in the scanner, and may press it at any point to get medical attention or to exit the scanner.

Further, if a medical condition is discovered, it may cause the participant distress. This will then be handled by trained medical staff who are always on site, and the case will be referred to the appropriate medical person (e.g., GP)

Participants will be advised that if they do not wish to be in a film, they should not take part.

Section E: About the data

1. Data Confidentiality Measures

The data will be anonymised. As the visual data from the scan is intended for use in a film that may be screened at film festivals, televised, or distributed on-line, consent for the use of this data in these circumstances will be sought. This will be fully explained to the participant. The participants may wish to be credited in the finished film. If this is the case, it is only their name that will appear in the credits along with the recorded scan imagery in the film. All other gathered data, contact details and personal data will be stored on a password-protected machine, separate from any identifiable information.

2. Data Storage

All data will be anonymised, before being stored on password-protected computers and encrypted cloud-based storage sites (e.g., Dropbox <https://www.dropbox.com/help/27/en>).

Section F: Supporting documentation

Information & Consent

Participant information sheets relevant to project?

Yes

Participant Information Sheets

- [SGentfMRIUncannyParticipant_Information_Sheet.docx](#)
(Document 037816)

Consent forms relevant to project?

Yes

Consent Forms

- [SGentfMRIUncannyPARTICIPANT_CONSENT_FORM.docx](#)
(Document 037817)

Additional Documentation

None


External Documentation

- not entered -

Official notes

- not entered -

Section G: Declaration

Signed by:
Yael Benn 
Date signed:
Thu 4 May 2017 at 11:45

A note on the fMRI scanner jurisdiction

The fMRI scanner used in the survey is located at the Hallamshire Hospital, however it is University of Sheffield research equipment and is under their jurisdiction. This means that the ethics procedure did not require an NHS ethics report. I conducted the ethics approval process through the University of Sheffield, headed By Yael as the Department of Cognitive Psychology was used to assessing approval for this type of study using this equipment.

There was no use of NHS equipment or patients at any point in this study.

Participant Information Sheet

Before you decide whether to take part, it is important that you understand what you will be required to do. Please take the time to read the following information and feel free to ask if anything is not clear or if you need more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

In this study, we would like to explore patterns of activation in the brain associated with viewing a set of eerie and non-eerie images. The final aim of the study is to create an artistic film, exploring research methods used to study the effect of eeriness, while creating an eerie feeling in the film.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. However, you will still be free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

We will arrange a date and time suited to you to meet us at the Radiology Department at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital to undergo an fMRI and structural and DTI brain scan.

We will first check that magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a suitable procedure for you. For example, if you might be pregnant or have any metal or electronic implants (e.g., a pacemaker), MRI is not suitable for you. Also if you dislike being in enclosed spaces, then you may find having an MRI scan unpleasant.

After we have checked these issues, you will have an MRI brain scan. We will take an image of your brain and ask you to view both eerie, and non eerie images while in the scanner. Your brain activity will be recorded during the scan. If you would like to communicate with the experimenter while in the scanner, there is a sound link and you can talk to us. If you are uncomfortable or have a problem, it is possible to stop the scan at any time.

Once the study is completed, you will be offered the chance to attend an individual debriefing session to discuss your results.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is necessary to conduct a health screening assessment before you can undergo the fMRI scan. This is to ensure it is safe for you to undergo the procedure. If this assessment highlights anything that may mean you are unsuitable, then you will be unable to participate in the study.

If the brain scan reveals any unsuspected neurological abnormality, we are obliged to refer you to the relevant medical specialist and your GP. If you do not wish this to happen, you should not consent to the MRI scan.

In addition, you may wish to consider whether you would like your brain scans to appear in a film.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

The visual data from the scan will be used in a film that explores the uncanny by describing the study you are involved in. You have the option of choosing whether your participation in the project remains anonymous or whether you wish to be credited as a participant. Apart from being credited as a participant, which is entirely optional, all personal information will be treated in strict confidence. Data will be stored on password protected computers and only the research team will have access to the data. Your test results will not be revealed to anyone, and will be stored anonymised and separate from your brain scan.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings of this study will be used in scientific publications and conferences. However, we will keep your name and personal details confidential, and we will ensure that you cannot be identified in these reports.

The film containing visual data from the scans will potentially be distributed at conferences, film festivals, television and on-line. You will only be credited if you wish.

Contact for further information

If you require any further information, please contact Dr. Yael Benn, Department of Psychology, email: y.benn@sheffield.ac.uk or Susannah Gent, Susannah.Gent@shu.ac.uk

Title of Study: A Film Project: Brain activation associated with response to uncanny and creepy images:

Lead researcher: Susannah Gent (Susannah.Gent@shu.ac.uk)

Participant Identification Number for this project: _____

	Please initial
1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	JF
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	JF
3. I am happy for my brain scans to be analysed to examine brain structure and functionality.	JF
4. I understand that my responses will be anonymous. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials without my consent (see 5b.), and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	JF
5a. I understand that the visual material generated in the scan to be used in a film. I wish to remain anonymous in my participation as per section 4.	
5b. I understand that the visual material generated in the scan to be used in a film. I would like my participation to be credited in the film	JF.
6. I understand the potential distribution of the film as outlined in the on-screen participators contract	JF.
7. I agree to take part in the above research project.	

Helen Fox
Name of Participant

31/7/17
Date

Helen Fox
Signature

SUSANNAH GENT
Lead Researcher

31/7/17
Date

[Signature]
Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: A Film Project: Brain activation associated with response to uncanny and creepy images:

Lead researcher: Susannah Gent (Susannah.Gent@shu.ac.uk)

Participant Identification Number for this project: _____

	Please initial
1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	SG
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	SG
3. I am happy for my brain scans to be analysed to examine brain structure and functionality.	SG
4. I understand that my responses will be anonymous. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials without my consent (see 5b.), and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	SG
5a. I understand that the visual material generated in the scan to be used in a film. I wish to remain anonymous in my participation as per section 4.	
5b. I understand that the visual material generated in the scan to be used in a film. I would like my participation to be credited in the film	SG
6. I understand the potential distribution of the film as outlined in the on-screen participators contract	SG
7. I agree to take part in the above research project.	SG

STEVE GENT
Name of Participant

31-July-17
Date

[Signature]
Signature

SUSANNAH GENT
Lead Researcher

31/7/17
Date

[Signature]
Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

CONSENT FORM FOR ON-SCREEN CONTRIBUTION

Film Project: Brain activation associated with response to uncanny and creepy images

This consent is to follow the consent for the participation in the fMRI survey for which separate and primary consent is requested. You must have read the participant information sheet. This form concerns permission to use the resulting footage in a film.

The film may be shown in any of the following environments (however it is likely that it will only be distributed in the first two categories):

On-line such as (but not limited to) vimeo and youtube platforms

National and International conferences and film festivals

Broadcast (satellite and terrestrial)

Cinema (worldwide)

It is highly unlikely that this film will recoup any money for screenings.

I hereby give my consent for my brain scan images to be used and distributed on the platforms above. I am participating on a voluntary basis. I am not being paid, nor do I expect any future financial recompense from this activity.

[please delete]

I wish to remain anonymous.

I wish to be credited in the film.

Participant

signed:

Heleen Fox

HELEN FOX

date:

31/7/17

Producer

S. GENT

signed:



date:

31/7/17

CONSENT FORM FOR ON-SCREEN CONTRIBUTION

Film Project: Brain activation associated with response to uncanny and creepy images

This consent is to follow the consent for the participation in the fMRI survey for which separate and primary consent is requested. You must have read the participant information sheet. This form concerns permission to use the resulting footage in a film.

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It is highly unlikely that this film will recoup any money for screenings.

I hereby give my consent for my brain scan images to be used and distributed on the platforms above. I am participating on a voluntary basis. I am not being paid, nor do I expect any future financial recompense from this activity.

[please delete]

I wish to remain anonymous.

I wish to be credited in the film.

Participant

signed: 

date: 31 July 2017

Producer S. Gent

signed: 

date: 31/7/17

CONSENT FORM FOR ON-SCREEN CONTRIBUTION

Film Project: Brain activation associated with response to uncanny and creepy images

This consent is to follow the consent for the participation in the fMRI survey for which separate and primary consent is requested. You must have read the participant information sheet. This form concerns permission to use the resulting footage in a film.

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National and International conferences and film festivals

Broadcast (satellite and terrestrial)

Cinema (worldwide)

It is highly unlikely that this film will recoup any money for screenings.

I hereby give my consent for my brain scan images to be used and distributed on the platforms above. I am participating on a voluntary basis. I am not being paid, nor do I expect any future financial recompense from this activity.

[please delete]

~~I wish to remain anonymous.~~

I wish to be credited in the film.

Participant

signed:

Julia Bigley

JULIA BIGLEY

date:

31/7/17

Producer

S. Gent

signed:

[Signature]

date:

31/7/17

CONSENT FORM FOR ON-SCREEN CONTRIBUTION

Film Project: Brain activation associated with response to uncanny and creepy images

~~This consent is to follow the consent for the participation in the fMRI survey for which separate and primary consent is requested. You must have read the participant information sheet. This form concerns permission to use the resulting footage in a film.~~

The film may be shown in any of the following environments (however it is likely that it will only be distributed in the first two categories):

On-line such as (but not limited to) vimeo and youtube platforms

National and International conferences and film festivals

Broadcast (satellite and terrestrial)

Cinema (worldwide)

It is highly unlikely that this film will recoup any money for screenings.

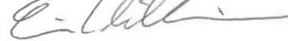
I hereby give my consent for my ^{interview footage} ~~brain scan images~~ to be used and distributed on the platforms above. I am participating on a voluntary basis. I am not being paid, nor do I expect any future financial recompense from this activity.

[please delete]

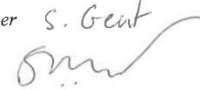
I wish to remain anonymous.

I wish to be credited in the film.

Participant

signed: 
date: 31/7/17

PROF IAIN D WILKINSON
PROF of MR PHYSICS
HEAD of ADULT NEUROIMAGINE
ACADEMIC UNIT of RADIOLOGY
FACULTY of MEDICINE.
UNIV. of SHEFF.

Producer S. Gent
signed: 
date: 31/7/17

CONSENT FORM FOR ON-SCREEN CONTRIBUTION

Film Project: Brain activation associated with response to uncanny and creepy images

This consent is to follow the consent for the participation in the fMRI survey for which separate and primary consent is requested. You must have read the participant information sheet. This form concerns permission to use the resulting footage in a film.

The film may be shown in any of the following environments (however it is likely that it will only be distributed in the first two categories):

On-line such as ~~but~~ **(not limited to) vimeo and youtube platforms**

National and International conferences and film festivals

Broadcast (satellite and terrestrial)

Cinema (worldwide)

It is highly unlikely that this film will recoup any money for screenings.

I hereby give my consent for ~~my brain scan images to be used and distributed on the platforms above.~~ ^{my responses to be included in the platforms above} ^{Y.S.}
I am participating on a voluntary basis. I am not being paid, nor do I expect any future financial recompense from this activity.

[please delete]

I wish to remain anonymous.

I wish to be credited in the film. ✓

Participant

signed: *Yael Benn*
date: 30/7/2017

Y A E L B E N N

Producer *S. Gent*
signed: *[Signature]*
date: 31/7/17

Unhomely Street contributor's agreement 6th July 2016

I hereby agree for my voice and image to be used in the short film *Unhomely Street* for universal distribution of unlimited period for, but not exclusively, cinema, television and on-line platforms.

David Kynaston

Stephen Bollom

Mark Cohen

Fay Musselwhite

Mary Musselwhite

Lisa Davison

Lesley Guy

Steve Marles

Jacqui Bellamy

Tom Salmon

Laure Carnet

Nort

NORTTRON

Iain Gill (Mobile Dogwash)

Psychotel contributor's agreement 9th September 2019

I hereby agree for my voice (and image if applicable) to be used in the film *Psychotel* for universal distribution of an unlimited period for, but not exclusively, cinema, television, and on-line platforms.

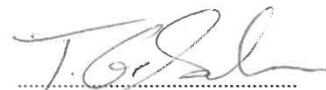
Helen Blejerman



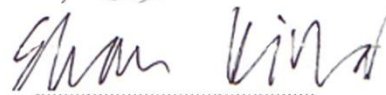
Fay Musselwhite



Tom Salmon



Sharon Kivland



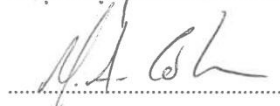
Bernadette O'Toole



Hilary Gent



Mark Cohen (parental consent on behalf of Ishka)



Tom Salmon (parental consent on behalf of Zinnia and Harvey).....

