



C O N C E P T :
Fabio Camilletti,
Martin Doll,
Rupert Gaderer,
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L O C A T I O N :
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6.-8. APRIL 2009

PHANTASMATA Abstracts

TECHNIQUES
OF THE UNCANNY

I Constellations

Monday, April 6th, 15.00-18:30

Chair: Christoph Holzhey

Chair

Christoph Holzhey (ICI Berlin) read physics in Oxford University (B.A. 1988) and received his first Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics from Princeton University in 1993 with a dissertation on the entropy and information loss of black holes. At Columbia University, he studied German Literature (M.A. 1994, M.Phil. 1996) and wrote his second dissertation on paradoxical pleasures in aesthetics (Ph.D. 2001). Returning to Germany, he was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin (2001-03) and in the project "Mystik und Moderne" at the Universität Siegen (2003-06). He is the founding director of the Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry (ICI Kulturlabor Berlin), which he has directed since 2006. His fields of research include German Literature since the 18th century, pleasure and pain in aesthetics, constructions of identity, gender and sexuality, science and aesthetics, self-organisation and emergence in complex systems.

Publications (selection)

(ed.), *Biomystik: Natur - Gehirn - Geist*, München: Fink 2007.

(co-edited with Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky and Anja Michaelson), *Der Einsatz des Lebens. Lebenswissen, Medialisierung, Geschlecht*, Berlin: b_books 2009.

“*Paradoxe Lust als das Unbewusste wissenschaftlicher Kränkungen*”, in: Christina von Braun, Dorothea Dornhof, Eva Johach (eds.), *Das Unbewusste. Über das Verhältnis von Wissen und Geschlecht*, Bielefeld: Transcript (Forthcoming, June 2009).

Michaela Wünsch (Berlin)

Uncanny Thinking

The title of my proposal refers to a chapter of Samuel Weber's book *The Legend of Freud*, in which he discusses Freud's concept of the uncanny as a fear of the *coming*, "an eventuality that cannot be foreclosed by any of the borders with which we seek to wall in our spaces and control access to them".¹ For Weber the uncanny is the foreclosed that (re-)invades the sacred space of the modern period, the home, or better, what questions the borders of inside and outside, private and public, familiar and unfamiliar.

In his seminar on anxiety, Lacan equates the uncanny not so much with the indifferent, in-between, but with the hostile alien, but his argument is that these phenomena are smooth, repacified elements. Anxiety, on the contrary, arises while the "emergence of the *heimlich* within a frame". It's not only the former 'well known' or *heimlich*, as Freud described the uncanny, but the circumstance that it is framed is as much or even more important for Lacan. Anxiety is always framed, as he said.

CV

Michaela Wünsch studies Cultural Studies and Gender Studies at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. She has written her dissertation 'In the Inner Outside. The Serial Killer as a Medium of Unconscious White Masculinity' supported by a DFG-fellowship affiliated to the Graduate School 'Codification of Violence in Medial Transformation' from 2004-08. She taught in Berlin, Riverside, C.A., Bochum, Vienna and Graz. M. Wünsch also works as a lector and publisher at b_books. Her research interests includes psychoanalysis, film and television.

¹ Samuel Weber (2000): Uncanny Thinking, in: Ders.: *The Legend of Freud*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, S. 9 (Herv. im Orig.).

Publications (selection)

(co-edited with Hendrik Blumentrath, Katja Rothe, Sven Werkmeister, Barbara Wurm), *Techniken der Übereinkunft. Zur Medialität des Politischen*, Berlin: Kadmos-Verlag, 2009.

"*Auf der Spur... Materialien zum Detektivischen als Praxis visueller Lektüren in Manhunter und Red Dragon*", in: Hanne Loreck, Katrin Mayer (eds.), *Visuelle Lektüren. Lektüren des Visuellen* (forthcoming).

"*Horror und Herrschaft. Regierungstechniken im Zombiefilm*", in: Linda Hentschel (ed.), *Bilderpolitik in Zeiten von Krieg und Terror. Medien, Macht und Geschlechterverhältnisse*, Berlin: b_books 2008, p. 93-119.

"*Medien und Gespenster im japanischen Horrorfilm*", in: Katrin Pesch (ed.): *New Ghost Entertainment - Entitled*, Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag 2006, p. 60-71.

"*Who's afraid of the White Man's Mask? The Horror of Invisibility in the Stalker Film*", in: Gabriele Dietze, Jana Husmann-Kastein, Daniela Hrzán, Martina Tißberger (eds.), *Weiß/White*, Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang Verlag 2006 (2nd revised ed. 2008), p. 165-181.

"*Vom Arbeitssklaven zum Arbeitslosen. Macht, Gewalt und Souveränität in Zombiefilmen [From Slave Labor to Unemployment: Power, Force and Sovereignty in Zombie Movies]*", in: bankleer, *Reale Reste*, Berlin 2005, p. 4 -18.

"*Von Vampiren und anderen Degenerierten. Dracula im Kontext moderner Entartungsdiskurse*", in: Julia Bertschick, Christa Tuczay (eds.): *Poetische Wiedergänger. Deutschsprachige Vampirismus-Diskurse vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, Tübingen: Francke-Verlag 2005, p. 217-233.

Monika Shafi (Delaware)

Houses and the Uncanny in Contemporary German Literature

Houses play a crucial role in contemporary German fiction. Recent novels by Jenny Erpenbeck (*Heimsuchung*, 2008), Katharina Hacker (*Die Habenichtse*, 2006), Arno Geiger (*Es geht uns gut*, 2005), Susanne Fischer (*Die Platzanweiserin* 2006), or short story collections by Judith Hermann (*Sommerhaus, später*, 1998 and *Nichts als Gespenster*, 2003) link characters and plots as well as conflicts and themes to houses, often favoring old houses which challenge their occupants and visitors in unexpected and deeply troubling ways. This intense interest seems to contradict the transient, nomadic attitude seen as characteristic for a generation shaped by globalization and its spacetranscending demands. The attention paid to houses and the living that takes place in them speaks to the fundamental need of being in place, of place as condition for subjectivity, as argued by Edward Casey in *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (1993). Thus the authors' focus on house and housing suggests an intense awareness of the bonds holding identity in place.

Houses are, of course, also intimately linked to the uncanny, *heimlich* and *unheimlich* indelibly fused as described by Freud in his famous essay on the uncanny. At the same time, houses are spaces of desire, guarding visions of the good life that is shaped both by a utopian outlook and by memories, often involving childhood houses (Marjorie Garber, *Sex und Real Estate*, 2000). How then does this duality of desire and the uncanny, of longing and fear manifest itself in contemporary German house fiction and what does the turn from the familiar to the unfamiliar and frightening signal? If the uncanny at its most basic expresses disorientation, an inability of maintaining boundaries between past and present or self and other (Jo Collins and John Jervis, *Uncanny Modernig: Cultural Theories, modern Anxieties*, 2008), what does the preponderance of uncertainty portend? I will argue that rooms and residences, particularly in narratives by Erpenbeck, Hermann, and Fischer help retrieve memories of pain, of family culpability or depict the malaise of an everyday void of meaning. Such memories and feelings also touch tentacle-like upon German history and the search for belonging through places and relationships and the fleeting hold characters can, at best, have on them. Despite all their material solidity and symbolic weight the houses trouble such grounding and the feeling of being at

home, thereby suggesting an irreversible displacement and uncertainty that is loathed *und* accepted. This ambiguity is the uncanny core haunting these texts.

CV

Monika Shafi is the Elias Ahuja Professor of German and the current Director of Women's Studies at the University of Delaware, USA. She is the author of *Utopische Entwürfe in der Literatur von Frauen* (Lang, 1989), *Gertrud Kalmar: Eine Einführung in das Werk* (iudicium, 1995), *Balancing Acts: Intercultural Encounters in Contemporary German und Austrian Literature* (Stauffenburg, 2001) as well as articles on 19th and contemporary German literature. Most recently, her edition, *Approaches to Teaching Grass's The Tin Drum* was published by the Modern Language Association of America (ZOOS).

Roman Widholm (Vienna)

Uncanny Methods for Uncanny People: How Behaviorism Approaches the Subject of Autism

My paper investigates certain methods and techniques, produced by scientific discourse, that were designed to treat and overcome extreme and challenging forms of otherness and subalternity in human beings. Relating autism with uncanniness might be plausible at the first sight - individuals with autism violate basic and implicit norms of appearance and behavior and do not give any account on why they pursue other purposes in strange manners. Furthermore, the adjective “autistic” is widely used by authors, to describe an unpleasant and problematic state of individuals, societies or regimes and orders in general, that seem devoid of essential human features such as intelligibility, mutual recognition or solidarity.

In order to find out about the function of uncanniness in the field of autism, I follow a twofold approach: On the one hand, I review Jacques Rancière's concept of the voiceless speech together with his idea of a body, that adjusted to this kind of speech and link this concept to the desire for the neutral, put forward by Roland Barthes. On the other hand, I relate this theoretical discourse to a field of a tangible and ordinary practise: the behaviorist methods of treatment for human beings with autism (ABA, TEACCH, MFT).

Within the theoretical framework of Jacques Lacan's seminar X on anxiety, I regard the methods of Behavior-Therapy as a collection of symptomatic techniques, that were invented to spellbind the emergence and transference of anxiety and uncanniness. The object of my investigation thus becomes the underlying phantasm, which belongs to the behavioral therapist in charge and the cultural order he or she represents, but only comes into action in the treatment of the disabled other.

In order to explore this phantasm, I rely on the definition of Lacan, who defines the neurotic phantasm par excellence as the expansion of a fundamental desire: the wish, that the Other shall vanish and disappear, because of and on the evidence of the object, which the subject believes to be identical with, when it sees itself. In the autistic other, this wish seems to find the ambivalence of its fulfilment.

My paper therefore introduces an argument, that can be subsumed under the category of an investigation into the uncanny as political topos: an inquiry into the modes of how people hold others responsible for a lack of evidence, that they themselves cannot provide.

CV

Mag.phil. Roman Widholm studied Philosophy, Educational Science and Psychology at Vienna University and obtained his diploma in Philosophy in 2008. His diploma thesis - entitled "Was nicht täuscht - über den Begriff Angst als Affekt" - inquired into the function of anxiety and the notion of affect in phenomenology and psychoanalysis by focusing on Lacans Seminar X. His dissertation investigates into the field of psychosis and autism and concentrates on those theories and practices, which were designed to explain, manage and overcome the impact of otherness and uncanniness in human relations. He works as caretaker for people with autism in assisted living communities in Vienna and Lower Austria (www.autismus.at) and is a member of "Neue Wiener Gruppe / Lacan Schule" (www.lacan.at).

Publications (selection)

"*Was nicht täuscht - Über den Begriff Angst als Affekt*", in: Matthias Flatscher, Sophie Loidolt (eds.), *Graduiertenkonferenz Phänomenologie, Wien Sept. 2007 - Selected Essays*. (in print, www.zetabooks.com).

"*Sisyphus in der Revolte - Spontaneität, Zwang und das Begehren nach dem Neutralen*", in: Ulrike Kadi, August Ruhs, Karl Stockreiter, Gerhard Zenaty (eds.), «*texte - psychoanalyse. ästhetik. kulturkritik*», Heft 1/09. Wien: Passagen Verlag 2009.

Elisabeth Bronfen (Zürich)

Keynote: Visuality Textuality: An Uncanny Encounter

Given that visuality is as much part of all narration as the fact that we view images by reading them as though they were texts, I propose speakign about an uncanny encounter between the two. So as to illustrate this mutual implication, as well as bring in a thematics of the spectral, as Freud suggests all experiences of the uncanny entail, I will offer a cross-mapping between three different media at three different historical moments: A novella by the late Victorian author Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a series of photographs by the late modern photographer Francesca Woodman, and a film by the postmodern film maker Amenabar.

CV

Elisabeth Bronfen is Professor of English and American Studies at the University of Zurich. She did her PhD at the University of Munich, on literary space in the work of Dorothy M. Richardson's novel *Pilgrimage*, as well as her habilitation, five years later. A specialist in the 19th and 20th century literature she has also written articles in the area of gender studies, psychoanalysis, film, cultural theory and art. Her book publications are *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester University Press) and a collection of essays *Death and Representation*, co-edited with Sarah W. Goodwin (Johns Hopkins University Press). She has edited a four volume german edition of Anne Sexton poetry and letters. Further books are *The Knotted Subject. Hysteria and its Discontents* (Princeton, 1998) and the monograph *Sylvia Plath* in the series "Writers and their Work" (Northcote Press 1998). A book version of her dissertation has appeared in English, under the title *Dorothy Richardson's Art of Memory. Space, Identity, Text* (Manchester University Press). The book *Home in Hollywood. The Imaginary Geography of Cinema* was published by Columbia University Press in fall 2004. A collection of essays on recent scholarship in gender studes, co-edited with Misha Kavka and entitled *Feminist Consequences. Theory for the New Century* appeared with Columbia University Press, 2000. Further books are about the importance of the diva in celebrity culture, entitled *Die Diva. Geschichte einer Bewunderung* (with Schirmer und Mosel, München), as

well as collection of essays *Liebestod und Femme Fatale. Der Austausch sozialer Energien zwischen Oper, Literatur und Film*. The most recent publication is a book on the cultural configurations of the night, published in German: *Tiefer als der Tag Gedacht. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Nacht*. It will be published in English by Columbia University Press. Current research projects include a book on Hollywood and War (forthcoming with Rutgers University Press), an introduction to the writings of Stanley Cavell, and a book on Queen Elizabeth I. as the first diva.

II *After-Image(s)*

Tuesday, April 7th, 10:00-13:30

Chair: Fabio Camilletti

Chair

Fabio Camilletti (ICI Berlin) studied literature and art history at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, where he took his first degree in English literature in 1998. In 2001-02 he was visiting student at St John's College in Oxford. In 2002-03 he took a Masters in Comparative literature at the University of Paris 4-Sorbonne and in 2006 received his PhD in Literary studies, jointly supervised by the Scuola Normale and the Sorbonne. He is teaching assistant at the University of Birmingham, where he collaborates with the Leopardi Centre at the first English translation of the "Zibaldone". His specialism is 19th-century literature from a comparative point of view. He has mostly worked on D.G. Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites and on the metamorphoses of Dante's Beatrice as an image of feminine purity in Decadent culture. He has also worked on Sade, Manzoni, Goethe, Kierkegaard, analyzing the metamorphoses of feminine 'naivete' from medieval hagiography to libertine literature and eventually to late 18th-century and Romantic novel. His research interests include Dante, Leopardi, Aby Warburg, courtly/romantic love, literature and psychoanalysis, quotation studies, studies on memory.

Publications (selection)

Beatrice nell'Inferno di Londra. Saggio su Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Lavis: La Finestra editrice 2005.

“*On pleure les lèvres absentes. Amor di lontano tra Leopardi e Baudelaire*”, «Italian Studies» 64, n. 1 (Spring 2009), p. 77-90.

“*Ninfa fiorentina. The Falling of Beatrice from Florence to Modern Metropolis*”, in: Nick Havely (ed.), *Dante in the Nineteenth Century: Readers, Texts, Images* (forthcoming).

Hécate Vergopoulos (Avignon/Montréal)

Uncanny, but towards what?

A Referential Approach to the Uncanny Based on the Study of Legends

The uncanny, as defined by Freud has become a discursive technique widely used in contemporary art (Dali and some other Surrealists, or more recently photographers such as Nan Goldin or Delphine Balley). One can not consider it though as a simple discursive technique. In fact, as far as creation is concerned, it appears that the uncanny is more of a point of view on the world and that it divides it into two: the realm of possible and the realm of impossible. Standing as a point of view, the uncanny can be scientifically seized as a model for understanding the strength of this dichotomy and above all the rules of the distribution into these two categories of thought. In other words, the question of the referential is a fundamental one to understand the uncanny as such a model. It is what I would like to discuss in this paper, based on a study on legends, starting with the provocative question: *Uncanny, but towards what?*

Legends tell the stories of monstrosities. These can be defined towards biology (Dracula or Nessie from the Loch Ness), or towards physics (crying icons) or even towards morality (Gilles de Rais known as Bluebeard in fairy tales). Each one of these “monsters” brings with itself a feeling of “uncertainty” (Todorov) that is to say a doubt concerning their real existence. Todorov built up this concept when he studied “fantastic” literature. Therefore one could say that the uncertainty, as he defined it, is a feeling that ends when the book is closed. As it regards legends, things are completely different since they are supposed to be based on real facts (Veyne). It means that the uncertainty is a thinking game which is beyond literacy and which has to do with our reality. Indeed, what defines monsters is that they appear as an outrage to our natural and social laws (Foucault). Therefore, one could say that, in legends, the uncanny has a hold on the world we live in, and more specifically on the scientific system of thought we are building. It is because legends do position themselves towards history (mainly) as an alternative to it: whatever past phenomenon which can not be seized by the scientific techniques becomes a legend (if an icon of the Blessed Virgin has been seen crying, since our scientific rational tools can not explain the phenomenon, the fact circulates throughout society as a legend). Therefore,

the uncanny could maybe be defined as a discursive construction in which the state of knowledge is always questioned or, at least, confirmed.

CV

Hécate Vergopoulos is affiliated to the international programme *Doctorat en Muséologie, Médiation, Patrimoine* (Université d'Avignon et des Pays de Vaucluse UAPV , France, and Université du Québec à Montréal UQAM , Canada). Her thesis, led under the direction of Yves Jeanneret (UAPV) and Jacques Pierre (UQAM), questions the *Construction of the legendary discourse through travel guides*.

Tan Wälchli (Chicago)

“Living Images” and Literary Technique

E.T.A. Hoffmann at the Intersection of Theology and Philosophy

An important example of the uncanny is the “living image,” i.e. an image (or more generally a work of art) that becomes animated. In E.T.A. Hoffmanns *Die Serapions-Brüder* (1819-1821), this concept is paralleled with a second one, namely the “lively image”, whereby “liveliness” describes a particular quality of poetic mimesis. This indicates that for Hoffmann literature might itself come close to create “living images” and therefore has to be understood as a particular technique of the uncanny.

While discussing this technique, the *Brüder* allude to *imago dei*, a concept mainly known from medieval doctrines of the icon. Traditionally understood as denoting God’s ideal creatures, i.e. Adam (before the fall) as well as Christ, the *imago dei* is a particular case of the “living image”. And, as it turns out, it is one Hoffmann seriously takes into account. He argues that the poet must not try to come up with “living” images in the sense of *imago dei*, and against this background the uncanny “living image” (i.e. the animated one) can be understood as a failed artistic attempt to imitate God’s ideal creation. In contrast to such artistic hybris, Hoffmann posits a different concept of literary “living images”, namely an image which contrary to God’s ideal creations is a mere image, i.e. a product of “lively” artistic imagination.

Setting out from these theoretical reflections, I propose to explore how Hoffmann differentiates between different kinds of “living images” in some of his short stories. The vampire-tale, which in the *Serapions-Brüder* immediately follows the theoretical debate on “living images”, provides a good example to do so. More generally, a wide range of uncanny creatures such as automata, humanoids, golems or the undead might be discussed in this context.

CV

Tan Waelchli received his PhD from the University of Zurich in 2006 (thesis on “Freud and the poets”). He is currently a stipend of the Swiss National Science Foundation and a postdoc fellow at the Department of Germanic

Studies, University of Chicago, where he pursues a research project on the “Politics of the Fantastic”.

Orsetta Innocenti (Siena)

Self Made Phantasmata and «Bleak» Houses. The 19th Victorian Society and its Well-Hidden Ghosts

Both published in the middle of 19th century, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1852-53) are able to represent some relevant aspects of the Victorian Age. Crossed by the contrasting features of both an increasing modernity and the pervasive shadows of an *ancien* past, this ambiguous era may be considered as a meaningful example of compromise formation. Thus, if on the one hand «the British ancien regime» still «remained in power», on the other hand «the rapid industrialization of the country» was meant to lead both to a different conception of the ruling class and to a newly shaped image of the country itself. By all means, «through the female allegory of» the two heroines' «"progress"», both novels uncover «the incongruity between the outdated aristocratic state and the middle-class idea of a nation»; moreover, the two heroines' «ability for self-improvement is opposed to the aristocratic essentialism, the idea that legitimacy is determined by heredity instead of personal merits»².

The similarity between the two novels being already acknowledged by some critics, they also share a common pattern in the use of the uncanny. That is, both *Jane Eyre* and *Bleak House* share the image of a 'socially haunted' house, which challenges the core itself of Victorian respectability, legitimacy being the keyword which explains the meaning of these 'self-made *phantasmata*'. On the one hand, in Brontë's novel the fake vampire who inhabits the mysterious third floor reveals herself as Rochester's first wife, a proper «mad woman in the attic» whose hidden existence leads the unaware Jane to nearly lose her own independency, dignity and self-respect. On the other hand, the legend of the «Ghost's walk», which haunts Lady Dedlock's Chesney Wold, reminds us of the illegitimate origin of Esther, which has been carefully hidden in order to preserve Lady Dedlock's social status and pride. In other words, through a clever use of social uncanny, both novels show that «something rotten» is hidden precisely within

² Here and *supra*, see Olga Stuchebukhova, *Bleak House as an Allegory of a Middle-Class Nation*, «Dickens Quarterly», Sept 2006, p. 147-68 (the extension of her statements also to Brontë is mine).

the symbol of the sacred Victorian domestic myth: the family house. Furthermore, the privileged tool of the well-hidden social ghost might also provide a different reading of the two novels, *Jane Eyre* ending up by being a little less proto-feminist and *Bleak House* a little less traditional.

CV

Orsetta Innocenti (Italy, 1972) graduated in Teoria della Letteratura at the University of Pisa (1996); she is alumna of the Scuola Normale Superiore (Pisa), where she took her Diploma in 1997. In 2001 she defended her PhD Thesis in Letterature Compare (Comparative Literature) at the University of Roma Tre, where she has had a two-years (2002-2004) Junior Research Fellowship. From 2004 to 2006 she held a two-years post-doctoral fellowship in Comparative Literature at the University of Bologna. She currently holds (since 2003/04) a temporary position as teacher of Italian Literature at the University of Siena (Facoltà di Lettere, sede di Arezzo) and since 2001 she also holds a permanent position as teacher of ‘Materie Letterarie’ at the “I.I.S. Istituto di Istruzione Superiore Ferraris-Brunelleschi”, of Empoli. Since 2002 she is part of Synapsis (European School for Comparative Studies) Committee.

She has published two books (La letteratura giovanile, Laterza 2000; La biblioteca inglese di Fenoglio, Vecchiarelli 2001), and several essays on Italian and European modern and postmodern literature (her publications include works on Italian authors such as Fenoglio, Calvino, Primo Levi, Bianciardi; on the Moro-case and on the figure of Giaime Pintor; and as far as a comparative perspective is concerned Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Antonia Byatt, Julian Barnes, Kurt Vonnegut, Michel Houellebecq, Jonathan Coe, Javier Marías, Martin Amis). She has edited the Synapsis 2002 proceedings (Incontri, a c. di O. Innocenti, Firenze, Le Monnier 2004). She is currently working on a volume on the relationship between science and literature (Letteratura e scienza, Carocci, forthcoming). Some entries for the Einaudi’s Atlante storico della letteratura italiana, edited by S. Luzzatto and G. Pedullà are also due to be published in 2009.

Giuseppe Episcopo (Naples)

The Medieval Selva and the Postmodern Zone:

The *Locus Horridus* as Spatial Dimensions of the Uncanny

The “Selva” and the “Zone” can be considered as a topos or chorography, ancient terms related to descriptions of places and regions in particular. To consider the “Selva” (from Dante to Tasso) and the “Zone” (Th. Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* and A. Tarkovsky’s *Stalker*) in this way means thinking of their description as a literary topos: to be more precise, the topos of locus horridus, which is a variation of the locus amoenus. With the rise of courtly romances in verse such as the *Chanson de Roland*, we see – according to E.R. Curtius – the emergence of the important motif of the wild forest, as exemplified by the “selva selvaggia et aspra e forte” of Dante’s *Commedia* and by Percival growing up in the forest. The manner in which the locus amoenus is embedded in other canonical works such as the *Roman de Thèbes*, *El Cid* and *Orlando Furioso* explains why this textual locus is often home to narratives of misfortune, supernatural, and suspension of traditional images of reality.

The dualism locus amoenus/locus horridus has proved a central motif from the middle Ages right through to the Postmodern era’s remote stage. The Zone’s quality of infinite permutation and fertility, its familiar/unfamiliar features, its boundary’s aspect are at the same time far, as well as close to the chaotic range of shifting possibilities of strangeness in the European epic of the sixteenth century. In making a comparison between the topos of the locus amoenus/locus horridus and the Zone’s topos the XIII book of Tasso’s poem *Jerusalem Delivered* comes to mind. The postmodern Zone, just like Saron’s forest, is a locus amoenus turned into a locus horridus and placed in No Man’s Land, in the middle of the War. And both are the regions where personal myth becomes cause and cause of common obsession: as a breach in the static “order,” the shadow of the uncanny falls on the reality. This dissolution, this interregnum, this in-between time, the Zone, can be said to represent the postmodern selva where characters as Slothrop or *Stalker* become the *Abgeschiedene*, the Heideggerian stranger, the thinker/poet; both of whom have parted from their homeland and are simultaneously a-part from/of it.

CV

Giuseppe Episcopo has a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and has been Visiting Scholar at Columbia University. He is in the editorial board of Italian Poetry Review and l'espressione. He edited and translated into Italian Fredric Jameson's *Brecht and Method*. He wrote on F. Tozzi, J.R. Wilcock, W. Goyen, A. Schmidt, Th. Pynchon and S. D'Arrigo in books and reviews such as *Strumenti critici*.

III Creating Spectres

Tuesday, April 7th, 15:00-18:30

Chair: Rupert Gaderer

Chair

Rupert Gaderer (ICI Berlin) studied electrical engineering at the TGM Technologisches Gewerbemuseum at Vienna (1994-1998), German Literature at the University of Vienna (1999-2004) and at the University of Genoa (2002-2003). He received his Ph.D. in New German Literature at the University of Vienna with a dissertation on the Relations between Natural sciences, Aesthetics, and Literature around 1800. He has received grants from the University of Vienna (2002/2003) and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (2005-2007), and was a fellow at the IFK International Research Center for Cultural Studies (2006-2007). In 2007-2008 he was an IFK visiting fellow at the Humboldt-University of Berlin and at the Graduate School “Media of History – History of Media”, Bauhaus-University Weimar, University of Erfurt and Friedrich-Schiller-University of Jena. Since 2007 he has taught German Literature at the University of Vienna. His research areas include German Literature around 1800, Travel Literature on Italy (1740-1830), and media studies.

Publications (selection)

Poetik der Technik. Elektrizität und Optik bei E.T.A. Hoffmann, Freiburg i.Br.: Rombach 2009. (=Edition Parabasen Bd. 9)

Liebe im Zeitalter der Elektrizität. E.T.A. Hoffmanns Homines electricificati, in: Reinhard Sieder, Franz. X. Eder, Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat. (eds.), *Liebe: Diskurse und Praktiken*, Wien u. a.: StudienVerlag 2007, p. 43-61. (= ÖZG, 18. Jg., H. 3)

„[...] auf einer neuen Wanderung begriffen“. *Literarisierte Raumkonzeptionen in Johann Gottfried Seumes Spaziergang nach Syrakus und Mein Sommer 1805*“, in: Jörg Drews (ed.), *In Polen, Palermo und St. Petersburg. Vorträge der Colloquien zu Johann Gottfried Seume in Grimma, Riga und Tartu 2003 und 2005*, Bielefeld: Aisthesis 2008, p. 115-134.

“Geisterzitationen um 1800 · Heimliche Technologien des Unheimlichen”, «Xing. Ein Kulturmagazin» H. 12 (2009), p. 28-31

Elisa Leonzio (Turin)

«*Er hatte eine Wasserscheu vor Gespenstergeschichten*»: The Ghost Story in Late Eighteenth-Century Germany in the Light of Jean Paul's Novel *Die Unsichtbare Loge*

Ghosts and spirits are among the most successful words of the Enlightenment and it is the most surprising paradox of the 'Age of Reason' that, despite scholars' hostility to superstitious belief and their attempt to rationally explain the supernatural, ghost-seeing and passion for ghost stories dominated that period. Explanations for this attitude are both the survival of superstition and the need of a spiritual dimension, of an irrational thought which involves the enlightenment philosophers. This relation, which establishes an inverse proportion between critique and spiritual need, is present also in the late eighteenth-century literature in Germany: critics condemn the use of the supernatural (first of all of ghostly apparitions), which was peculiar of popular literature, but ghost stories become more and more common in the enlightenment novel. This happens both with a self-parodic intention and with the aim to show how a disenchanted and scientifically explained world becomes an insufficient object for literature.

Jean Paul, as he was later to do in his *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804), already reflects in his first novel, *Die Unsichtbare Loge* (1793), on the ambivalent attitude of the Enlightenment towards the supernatural and the ghost-seeing in particular. The twentieth chapter of the *Loge* includes a ghost story, which owns and parodies all the typical elements and structures of the genre. Lord von Falkenberg, the enlightenment philosopher who hates ghost-seeing and ghost stories, tries to explain, according to a scientific cause-effect model, the strange phenomena, which his son Gustav considers as ghostly apparitions. Since the ghostly apparition turns out to be the joke of an old friend and the tools of this joke and of the story-telling itself are revealed, the rationalistic attitude of the Lord seems to be successful, while the irrational perspective and the structures of the genre are dismantled and undermined by such an analysis and secularisation. The following description and justification of Gustav's feelings in front of the presumed ghost lead to a psycho-anthropological analysis of the dynamic of terror, which makes the intention of the ghost story unsure: however successful the explanation is, it is ineffective when compared to the atavistic fear

of human beings in front of the uncanny, which inhabits the same house and borders human nature. In this tension between proximity and extraneousness, where the uncanny grows in what is more familiar, the dialectical movement of the novel is driven *ad infinitum*.

CV

She was born in Turin (1980). She took a degree in Philosophy at the University of Turin (2003) with a dissertation on the moral philosophy of Ferdinando Galiani (*summa cum laude*). She received her PhD in Comparative Literature (2008) from the University of Turin with a dissertation on Jean Paul and the anthropological novel. She has already given papers to the “Convegno annuale dell’Associazione per gli Studi di Teoria e Storia Comparata della letteratura”. She is a contributor for the Italian literary magazine *L'indice dei libri del mese* and the online philosophy magazine *Recensioni filosofiche*.

Her research interests focus especially on literature and philosophy of the Enlightenment, poetry and narrative in twentieth-century Germany, hermeneutics, ethics. At the moment, she is exploring the connections between philosophy, literature and medicine in the German Enlightenment.

Publications (selection)

“*Etyka – dialektyka – polityka*”, «Prezentacje» 4 (8) 2004, p. 46-8.

“*Nico Bleutge*”, «Il Segnale. Percorsi di ricerca letteraria», 78, 2008, p. 30-34.

“*Aporie della temporalità: escatologia terrena ed esperimenti nichilistici nella Unsichtbare Loge e nel Siebenkäs*”, in *Atti del Convegno dell’Associazione per gli Studi di Teoria e Storia Comparata della letteratura, Cavallino (Lecce), 24-26 ottobre – Università degli Studi del Salento, Firenze, Olschki. (forthcoming)*.

“*L’odissea tedesco-africana di Lucia Engombe: quando il ritorno è una seconda emigrazione*”, «Scritture migranti», 2010 (forthcoming).

“*Jean Paul e il romanzo antropologico*”, «Quaderni del Dipartimento di scienze del linguaggio e letterature moderne e comparate dell’Università di Torino», Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2009 (forthcoming).

Morena Corradi (New York)

Staging the Uncanny. Phantasmagoria in Post-Unification

In his work *La Fantasmagorie*, Max Milner points out the importance of the optical images in extolling the inherent relationship between the gaze and the fantastic dimension. While analysing the influence of phantasmagoria and other techniques on the creative process, Milner insists on the commingling of science and entertainment, of the rational and the imaginative. Although the inventor of phantasmagoria, Etienne Gaspard Robertson, augurs an enlightened use of his invention by presenting it in the role of “educator,” the effects of his performances often run in the opposite direction. Robertson’s invention has been interpreted in fact as a Freudian fetish that tries to fill the emptiness left in the wake of a domineering scientific culture.

The ambiguity brought about by the contiguity of science and entertainment, of the factual and the possible, clearly displays itself in the phantasmagoric performances taking place in post-unification Italy, a setting deeply informed by the culture of magnetism and spiritism. During the eighteen-sixties and seventies, Milanese theatres in particular host numerous performances that evoke apparitions of ghosts and involve self-moving objects, performances meant to stir up a remarkable success. The boundary between the staging of a magnetic phenomenon (often defined in the journals as “trattenimento fantastico misterioso”) and a “didactic-demonstrative” performance, between a hypnotist show and that of a wizard, is indeed ephemeral – not insignificant was the fact that these events were often hosted in the same venues, such as the famous Santa Radegonda in Milan.

My paper addresses the uncanny within the fantastic culture of unified Italy, particularly in the light of the role played by optical instruments, often central to the “challenges” between hypnotists and illusionists, to scientific demonstrations as well as to staged lyric operas. I look at these phenomena particularly through the pages of the journals of the time (both political and literary), whose language strikingly reflects the fluctuation between illusionism and the supernatural.

CV

After receiving her *Laurea* in Modern Languages and Literatures (English) from the University of Bologna (Italy), she moved to the United States for her

graduate studies. She holds a MA in Italian from University of Washington and a Ph.D. in Italian Studies from Brown University (dissertation's title *Il linguaggio del fantastico nella pubblicistica scapigliata Milanese*). During the Fall of 2001, she was a teaching fellow at Harvard University for Lino Pertile's course *Dante's Divine Comedy and its World*. From 2005 to 2008 she taught at the University of Pennsylvania as a lecturer in Italian language and culture. She is currently an assistant professor in Italian at Queens College (CUNY). Her research focuses on nineteenth and twentieth century Italian literature, fantastic literature and theory, narrative theory, popular culture.

Publications (selection)

"Il gotico come sentimento anti-borghese: I Fatali di Igino Ugo Tarchetti" in: *Identità e diversità nella lingua e nella letteratura italiana, Atti del XVIII Congresso dell'A.I.S.L.L.I. Lovanio, Louvain-la-Neuve, Anversa, Bruxelles, 16-19 luglio 2003, II vol.: Poesia e narrativa dal Duecento all'Ottocento. Teatro, cultura, critica*, Firenze: Franco Cesati Editore 2007.

Catrin Misselhorn (Tübingen)

Empathy and the Uncanny Valley

The term “uncanny valley” goes back to an article of the Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori (Mori 1970). He stated that the more human-like a robot or another object is made, the more positive and empathetic emotional responses from human beings it will elicit. However, when a certain degree of likeness is reached, this function is interrupted brusquely, and responses, all of a sudden, become very repulsive with people reporting a “feeling of eeriness.” The function only begins to rise again when the object in question becomes almost indistinguishable from real humans. By then, the responses of the subjects approach empathy to real human beings. The emerging gap in the corresponding graph is called the “uncanny valley” adopting a famous term introduced to psychology by Ernst Jentsch (1906) and taken up by Sigmund Freud (1919). Due to the evolvement of new technologies in the realm of animated movies the uncanny valley became a problem for some recent film productions. Very elaborate techniques like motion-capture or morphing have been developed to produce life-like movements and facial expressions in film characters with the aim of eliciting as much empathy as with human characters in the spectator. Despite these elaborate technologies, some recent films which were entirely created with their help were accused of a severe failure in this respect, e.g., “Polar Express” (US/2004) from Robert Zemeckis. The spectators did not empathize with the small children who are the protagonists of the movie, but rather found them uncanny. If we take this evidence seriously, an explanation of our emotional involvement with humanlike creatures has to elucidate two things: *first* of all, why we feel empathy with them although we know that they do not have feelings, and *secondly* why we stop to feel empathy and respond with eeriness when they become very human-like. My aim in this paper is to present a refined explanation of the uncanny valley using the tools offered by the philosophy of mind informed by current psychological research.

CV

Catrin Misselhorn is assistant professor at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tübingen. In 2003 she received her PhD from the University of

Tübingen with an epistemological dissertation about modal justification. Currently she is writing her habilitation on representational content and the affective aspect of aesthetic experience.

Publications (selection)

Wirkliche Möglichkeiten – Mögliche Wirklichkeiten. Grundriss einer Theorie modaler Rechtfertigung, Paderborn: Mentis 2005.

“Ästhetische Erfahrung und die Perspektive der ersten Person”, in: Thomas Grundmann, Frank Hofmann, Catrin Misselhorn, Violetta Waibel, Véronique Zanetti (eds.), *Anatomie der Subjektivität*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 2005, p. 417-437.

“Probleme der analytischen Ästhetik (I): Begriffliche und methodologische Fragen”, «Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung» 61 (2007), p. 99-117.

“Probleme der analytischen Ästhetik (II): Thematischer Überblick und ausgewählte Fragestellungen”, «Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung» (2008), p. 108-12.

“Künstliche Welten – echte Gefühle? Probleme der moralischen Bewertung von Kunst”, «Arcadia. Internationale Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft» (forthcoming, 2009).

“Empathy and Dyspathy with Androids. Philosophical, Fictional and (Neuro-) Psychological Perspectives”, in: Martin Kebs *et al.* (eds.), *Konturen* (forthcoming, 2009).

Siouxzi L Mernagh (ICI Berlin)

The Dangers | 18 mins | HD

'The most dangerous plaything is woman...'

A mysterious hotel. Two inexplicable doppelgänger. A woman in need of danger. *The Dangers* is a subconscious narrative film based on a nightmare. It refers to inner tensions of personal, particularly female, identity and the external manifestation of these tensions in the forms of sexual expression and propensity to violence. The film is fascinated by manifestations of intensity, suspense, excess and jouissance and the spiralling relations between them.

CV

Siouxzi L Mernagh is a filmmaker originally from Sydney currently undertaking a fellowship with the ICI. Through the fellowship she is exploring the concept of 'subconscious narrative filmmaking' with her work 'The Dangers', an 18 minute short film based on a nightmare. Siouxzi has previously written, directed, produced and designed six self-funded short films and is currently developing a 'subconscious narrative' feature film set in Berlin.

Moderation and Discussion led by

Daniel Eschkötter is a doctoral fellow in the graduate school "Mediale Historiographien - History of Media / Media of History" at the Bauhaus University Weimar where he is currently working on his dissertation on "Political Spectrologies in Contemporary Literature and Film". He studied German literature, philosophy, and political science at the University of Münster, the University of Hamburg, and the Johns Hopkins University Baltimore. He has published articles on Benjamin, Claire Denis and Jean-Luc Nancy, writes on film for filmtext.com, newfilmkritik.de and the magazine CARGO Film/Medien/Kultur, and he prepares a book-length study on "Kleist's -flüsse".

IV Figures

Wednesday, April 8th, 10:00-13:30

Chair: Jan Niklas Howe

Chair

Jan Niklas Howe (Freie Universität Berlin) studied German and Comparative Literature and Philosophy at the Freie Universität Berlin, at Université Paris 8 and at Johns Hopkins University. He received his Magister Artium at the Freie Universität in 2007 with a master thesis on the interrelation between theories of ornamental form and political theories around 1800. He has been the recipient of grants from the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes and the Fulbright Commission. Since 2008, he is receiving a doctoral grant by the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies in Berlin. His dissertation focusses on the concept of the monstrous in 19th century literature, medicine, and psychiatry.

Simona Micali (Siena)

The Disobedient Shadow

In the philosophical and literary construction of the modern subject, the fantastic mode has performed the function of testing and challenging the epistemological principles on which modern man has grounded his consciousness of the world and of himself, by exploring what lies in the depths that scientific reason cannot enlighten. The realm of the fantastic is thus the realm of Shadow: the darkness cast by solid bodies when they are stricken by light is also an image of the remnants of unknown produced by reason itself, when it pretends to colonize the exterior and interior life of man, intruding upon the innermost layers of his conscience.

In this perspective, I would like to deal with a particular topic, which I believe could be a useful key to understand both some mechanisms of the fantastic, and some of the ways in which fictional imagination investigates the nature and the solidity of the modern subject: that of the «disobedient shadow». I refer to all the texts in which the shadow, from being a faithful follower of the character, takes up its own identity and its own will – usually, but not necessarily, a harmful and hostile one – thus turning into a double which is a highly disturbing personification of the *Unheimliche*, since what was supposed to be a part of the character himself, intimate and trustworthy, has become instead an ‘other’, a stranger and a potential enemy.

Starting with a quick examination of the Romantic archetypes (Chamisso’s *Peter Schlemihl*, Hoffman’s *Die Abenteuer der Sylvesternacht* and Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Shadow*), I will then proceed to a brief journey in the XIXth and XXth century fantastic fiction, and will try to show how the evolution of this topic, in its connection with other subspecies of the Döppelgänger (reflections, dream projections, multiple personalities and so on), follow and display the parallel evolution of the concept of human subject, through the epistemological and cultural revolutions of the last two centuries that have deeply marked the history of the fantastic genre as well.

CV

Simona Micali (b. 1972) studied Humanities and Italian Studies at the University of Pisa and at the Scuola Normale Superiore; then took a PhD in Italian Literature at the University "Ca' Foscari" in Venice. From 2001 to 2004 she was Visiting Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Bologna; in 2004-2005 she was Visiting Professor of Italian Studies at Brown University (USA). Presently she is Assistant Professor (Ricercatore) of Italian Literature at the University of Siena (Arezzo). From 1997 to 2004 she was Treasurer of the "Associazione per gli Studi di Teoria e Storia Comparata della Letteratura" (Italian branch of ICLA); since 2001 she is a member of the Executive Committee of Synapsis. Since 2003 she is also on the Editorial Board of «Contemporanea. Rivista di studi sulla letteratura e sulla comunicazione».

She has published three books (L'innamoramento, Laterza 2001; Miti e riti del moderno, Le Monnier 2002; Ascesa e declino dell'Uomo di lusso. Il romanzo dell'intellettuale nella Nuova Italia e i suoi modelli europei, Le Monnier 2008) and several essays on modern and postmodern literature; she also edited the proceedings of Synapsis 2001 (Cospirazioni, trame, Le Monnier 2003).

Claudia Peppel (Berlin)

Impassively True to Life. The Puppet and Human Identity

A model based on the human form which as artistic object and representational medium has the ability to simulate both human presence and its absence, the puppet embodies the processes of animating objects and objectifying the animate. The possibility that puppets might actually have their own lives can give rise to substantial fears. These objects question the very principle of identity and, to the extent that they elude precisely the reality which they evoke, they are profoundly ambivalent. Their simultaneous creation and destruction of illusion can open doors onto the realm of the uncanny.

This presentation will delve into the relationship between the human effigy and the body of the puppet, looking into and contemplating the underlying implications, and how the strange and uncanny emerges in the intertwining of embodiment, costume and staging.

CV

My field is Romance languages and literature. I focused mainly on culture studies and art history. I studied at the Free University in Berlin and at La Sapienza in Rome, then spent three years on a DFG scholarship at the Technical University of Darmstadt as part of the research group "Technology and Society". That involved studying media theory, and history of science and technology. The programme involved intensive interdisciplinary and international cooperation. My dissertation is about a group of avantgarde artists - the so-called Metaphysical Artists, the best known of whom was Giorgio de Chirico, and specifically about their representation of the body. Homepage: <http://www.cepweb.de/>

Publications (selection)

Der Manichino – De Chiricos Körperimaginationen in der Avantgardekunst, Weimar: VDG 2008.

“*Ernste Spiele – Serious Games als neue Tendenz der Computerspielkultur*”, Claudia Peppel, Thomas Schildhauer (eds.), «Jahrbuch für digitale Kommunikation», Bd. 3, Berlin 2008.

“*Warenkörper und Kunstfigur: Der Manichino als ästhetisches Phänomen*”, in: Gisela Febel, Cerstin Bauer-Funke (eds.), *Menschenkonstruktionen. Künstliche Menschen in Literatur, Film, Theater und Kunst des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag 2004.

“*Der Teint der Technik. Industrielles Finish am modernen Objekt*”, «Ästhetik und Kommunikation», Nr. 113, June 2001.

Vita Zilburg (Berlin)

Engführung as a Case Study of Paul Celan's Poetics of the Uncanny

In the paper I would like to propose, I attempt to reconstruct a poetics of the Uncanny in the poetry of Paul Celan by means of a close reading of his poem *Engführung*. The ICI's call for papers stresses, among other aspects, the interrelation between the aesthetic dimension of the uncanny and its psychological effects. A term that convincingly describes this relation is the Russian formalists' definition of *ostranenie*. In the proposed paper I would like to refer to the term *ostranenie*, and demonstrate its formation in Celan's *Engführung*. In this context I intend to show the manner in which the effect of *ostranenie* plays a central role not only in the single poem, but in Celan's poetics as a whole – due to its hermetic qualities in general, and the poetics' tendency to cipher materials (figures and other tropes) from the semantic field of time in particular. Insofar, the proposed paper is an evolvment of my dissertation project entitled: “*Die Zeit aus den Nüssen*”: *Die Entwicklungen in Paul Celans Zeitbegriff als Schlüssel zu seiner Poetik*. One of the central premises of the dissertation is that the conventionality of themes which occupy Celan's poetry (i.e. various themes of time such as mutability, death, memory and forgetfulness), as well as the familiarity of their expressions and representations (e.g. customary metaphors of mutability that recur in poetry throughout the ages) are countered by a constant process of defamiliarisation. Celan deautomatizes the representation of the hackneyed themes by means of encryption, which creates the aesthetic effect of what Sklovskij refers to as *ostranenie*.

In addition to the effect of *ostranenie* as a manifestation of the uncanny the proposed paper shall also elaborate on the semantic area of the ‘house’ in Celan's poem, which also comprises the etymological background of the term in the original language (das “Unheimliche”). The study of the aesthetic, semantic, and linguistic³ aspects of the Uncanny in Celan's *Engführung* will be examined in relation to the psychological phenomenon which Freud initially aimed to depict in his study. In Celan's poems the psychological state of the uncanny is embodied, as I would like to show, in the awakening of the memory of the dead, and more precisely those who were murdered and find their place of rest in the

³ In this sense, I much rather refer to *Jentsch's* study of the Uncanny than to Freud's.

landscape of memory, or what is in the poem referred to as the "terrain / with the unmistakable trace" ("Gelände \ mit der untrüglichen Spur")⁴ (Celan:136-7). The examination shall try and depict Celan's poetics of the Uncanny, and thus to reapprove; as you have put it in the CFP, that "the tension individuated by Freud [...] can still be used as an approximate framework in which to place the manifold aspects of uncanniness".

CV

Born November 13, 1982 in Minsk, Belarus. In 1989 immigrated to Israel, and has resided there since.

Since 2002 attended Tel-Aviv University, and in 2005 was awarded a B.A. degree from the department of poetics and comparative literature. In 2008 received a Masters degree from the department of literature. M.A.thesis entitled "The Language of Time: Figurative Language Reflecting the Conception of Time in the Poetics of Dan Pagis and Paul Celan – A Comparative View" was supervised by Dr. Tamar Yacobi.

Between the years 2001-2005 worked as a coeditor at *Keshev* Publishing house: edited compilations of selected poems by Boris Pasternak, Joan Margarit, Wislawa Szymborska, and Zbigniew Herbert among others. During 2007 instructed an introductory tutorial to the reading of poetry at the department of Literature, Tel Aviv University. Since October 2008 a PhD student at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies, Freie Universität Berlin.

⁴ In *Poems of Paul Celan* translated and introduced by Michael Hamburger, London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1988, p. 136-7.

Laurie Johnson (Illinois)

Uncanny Love: Schelling's Meditations on the Spirit World

Freud's definition of the uncanny in his 1919 essay relies on the 1860 *Dictionary of the German Language*, which in turn quotes a passage from Friedrich Schelling's 1842 *Philosophy of Mythology*: there the uncanny is "everything that ought to have remained...secret and hidden but has come to light" (SW 2: 649). This paper returns to Schelling and the *Mythology*, but more emphatically to a little-known fragment Schelling wrote shortly after his wife Caroline's death, entitled *Clara: Or, on Nature's Connection to the Spirit World* (1810-1811). Although it nominally takes part in a contemporary discussion about clairvoyance and immortality, the fragment focuses far more on the commemoration and representation of the dead, and the uncanny re-insertion of the dead into the everyday of the living. I argue that *Clara* can be read as a legitimate part of Schelling's philosophy rather than as only an ode to Caroline, and hence also as a meaningful contribution to Romantic thought and to the historical trajectory of the concept "uncanny."

In *Clara*, a young widow living in a convent is visited by a doctor and priest who discuss the possibility of communication between the worlds of the living and the dead, and the persistence of love as an compulsively repetitive phenomenon. Schelling deploys several themes that Freud identifies as uncanny--animism, omnipotence of thoughts, and man's attitude toward death--to address a basic problem of modernity. Because modern philosophy has severed its bond with the natural world, we are estranged from nature and from our own bodies. The consequence is that philosophy has become its own uncanny substitute: "instead of the real spirit (of knowledge) there is a surrogate of the same" (SW 9: 4). Estranged modern philosophy is an echo chamber, reminding itself of something now hidden. With *Clara*, in which he introduces the soul as a binding force between nature and spirit, Schelling does not advocate a return to hermetic views of nature, nor to primitive belief systems. Rather, he tries to move the alienated and reified modern subject philosophy represented, in his view, by Fichte into a new dialectical phase, and in a way superior to Hegel's dialectical thinking. *Clara* responds to what Schelling sees as the negative, cold and estranged uncanniness of post-Fichtean philosophy with another, more progressive form of uncanniness, thus moving subjectivity and the

dialectical time in which it moves into a new, truly critical space for the next phase of reason: a phase governed by an anxious, haunted love.

CV

Laurie Johnson is Associate Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Illinois, with additional appointments in Comparative and World Literature and in the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory. She received the Ph.D. (1997) and M.A. (1992) degrees from Washington University-St. Louis, and the B.A. (1989) from Northwestern University. She also studied in Regensburg, Tübingen, and Cologne. Before coming to Illinois, she held faculty positions at Vanderbilt University and at the College of Wooster. Her specialties are German Romanticism and Idealism, with interests in the history of psychology and psychiatry and in psychoanalysis. She has held grants from Fulbright, the DAAD, and the Humboldt Foundation.

Publications (selection)

Aesthetic Anxiety: Uncanny Symptoms in German Literature and Culture, Amsterdam: Rodopi Press (forthcoming, 2010).

The Art of Recollection in Jena Romanticism: Memory, History, Fiction, and Fragmentation in Texts by Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, Tübingen: Niemeyer 2002.

"*The Romantic and Modern Practice of Animal Magnetism: Friedrich Schlegel's Protocols of the Magnetic Treatment of Countess Lesniowska*", «Women in German Yearbook» 23 (2007), p. 10-33.

"*Dorothea Veit-Schlegel's Florentin and the Early Romantic Model of Alterity.*", «Monatshefte» 97.1 (2005) 33-62.

"*Psychic and Corporeal Displacement in Kleist's Die Familie Schrockenstein*", in: Paul Michael Lützeler, David Pan (eds.), *Kleists Erzählungen und Dramen. Neue Studien*, Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann 2001, p. 121-133.

"*Bringing Chaos Into the System: The Aesthetic Authority of Disorder in Friedrich Schlegel's Philosophical Fragments*", in: Theodore E. D. Braun, John A. McCarthy (eds.), *Disrupted Patterns: On Chaos and Order in the Enlightenment*, Amsterdam: Rodopi 2000, p. 119-133.

"*Wenn man endlich selbst Briefe schreiben will, so vergesse man die Exempel': The Construction of Imitation as Originality in C. F. Gellert's Epistolary Theory*", «Wezel-Jahrbuch (Studien zur europäischen Aufklärung)» 2 (1999), p. 97-114.

"*Reading the Excursus on Women as a Model of 'Modern' Temporality in Gottfried's Tristan*", «Neophilologus» 82.2 (1998), p. 247-257.

"*Wozu überhaupt ein Anfang? Memory and History in Heinrich von Ofterdingen*", «Colloquia Germanica» 31.1 (1998), p. 21-36.

More bio-bibliographical information is available on Johnson's faculty webpage:
<http://www.germanic.illinois.edu/people/faculty/johnson.htm>

V Political Phantoms

Wednesday, April 8th, 15:00-18:30

Chair: Martin Doll

Chair

Martin Doll (ICI Berlin): PhD (currently Dr. des.) in Media Studies (title of the dissertation: "Forgeries and Fakes as Practical and Immanent Criticism" [Fälschungen und Fakes als praktisch-immanente Diskurskritik]). Since 2008 he has taught Media Studies at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt/Main. 2003-2006, Goethe-University Frankfurt/Main, research fellowship from the German DFG within the PhD programme "Zeiterfahrung und ästhetische Wahrnehmung"; 2001-2006, guest lecturer for video editing at University of Gießen; 2001 University of Gießen, diploma in Applied Theatre Studies (Drama/Theatre/Media); 1999-2002, member of the performance art group "Drei Wolken" director und performer inter alia for: EXPO2000 Hannover, Staatstheater Darmstadt and Mousonturm Frankfurt; since 1996 freelance editorial journalist for ARD and HR (German public broadcasting); 1992-1995 Saarländischer Rundfunk, apprenticeship film and video editor. His research areas include history of culture, knowledge and media, politics and media, and Utopias.

Homepage: <http://www.mdoll.eu/>

Publications (selection)

(co-edited with Andreas Becker, Serjoscha Wiemer, Anke Zechner) *Mimikry. Gefährlicher Luxus zwischen Natur und Kultur*, Schliengen: Edition Argus 2008.

"Missing Lebanese Wars. The Art Project The Atlas Group Archive and Its Endless Search for Means to 'Document' Traumatic Memories and Mental Realities", in: Klaus Stierstorfer (ed.), *Anglistentag 2007 Münster. Proceedings*, Trier: WVT 2008, p. 165-178.

"Dokumente, die ins Nichts verweisen? TV-Fälschungen als Indikatoren der Modi journalistischer Wahrheitsproduktion", in: Harro Segeberg (ed.), *Referenz in den Medien. Dokumentation - Simulation - Docutainment*, Marburg: Schüren (forthcoming, 2009).

"Monströse Gegenstände – Über Fälschungen als Erkenntnisobjekte im zweifachen Sinne", «Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften» 1 (2007), p. 39-51.

"Similarity as a Mask. On the Identity Corrections of the 'The Yes Men'" (engl. a. slov.), «Maska» 21.3-4 (2006), p. 64-75.

Christine Blaettler (Potsdam/Berlin)

Walter Benjamin's Phantasmagoria and the Aesthetico-Political Dialectics of the Un-Canny

“Philosophie eignet den Warenfetischismus sich selber zu: alles muss ihr zum Ding sich verzaubern, damit sie das Unwesen der Dinglichkeit entzaubere.” In his ‘Characteristics of Walter Benjamin’ Adorno pointed out a peculiarity of Benjamin, who considered materiality and sensuality essential for his political philosophy.

In Benjamin's work on *The Arcades Project*, one can discern a move from the surrealistic through the dialectic to the phantasmagorical image. First, there appears the dream highly valued in the surrealist tradition, secondly his work is preoccupied with the social-historical, material-aesthetical and technical aspects of reality. Benjamin focused on how life is shaped by commodities, that have the power to ban men phantasmagorically: phantasmagoria as cultural production of reality. He was as interested in cultural effects as in the epistemological dimension, since the possibility of experience itself is at stake.

In contrast to the members of the Paris *Collège de sociologie* Benjamin did not recur to myth, instead he faced up to the tension between enchantment and disenchantment. The belief in spectres, flourishing after the French Revolution and vividly expressed by the performances of the *laterna magica*, were not considered by Benjamin as excluded from modernity. Rather he understood this phenomenon as part of modernity itself.

In Benjamin's concept of phantasmagoria several aspects come together: visual technology and social formation, perception, desire and knowledge. Benjamin developed and coined the phantasmagoria as a concept to grasp the ambivalence of profane modernity, with its productive possibilities and risks under the conditions of late capitalism. He rendered phantasmagoria a focus of his philosophy, achieving an understanding of modernity that holds onto the Enlightenment project and, at the same time, reflects its oppressed parts.

In my contribution I will examine how Benjamin further developed Marx' fetish character; here commodities get charged phantasmagorically and bring into appearance social relations as relations of things themselves. For this I want show how Benjamin systematically related aesthetics, technology and politics. I will discuss his approach with Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*, where Derrida

summoned Marx' fetish of commodities among other ghosts, tracing their mystical characters which turn out to be as haunting as effective.

CV

Studies of philosophy, Slavonic and German languages and literature in Switzerland, Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Germany. Ph. D. in philosophy. Research associate at the Philosophy Department of Potsdam University, head of the project group ‚Vitality‘ at the Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung Berlin. Research interests in seriality, experiment, and vitality in cultural and socialphilosophy.

Publications (selection)

“*Social Dissatisfaction and Social Change*”, in: Allen Wood (ed.), *Cambridge History of Nineteenth Century Philosophy*, Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press 2009 (forthcoming).

“*Politik des Gedächtnisses, des Erbes und der Generationen. Derridas Marx-Lektüre*”, «Trajekte», No. 18, Spring 2009.

“*The Virtue of Similitude*”, in: Andrea Sick (ed.), *Do not exist. Europe, Woman, Digital Medium*, Bremen: thealit 2008.

Matthias Korn (Berlin)

On the Uncanniness of Death. Bio-Power in Venice between Modern Age and Modernity.

As Freud notes in *Totem and Taboo* our attitude towards the dead used to be much more ambivalent than it is today. This ambivalence throughout history has given way to a simplified feeling of ignorance and uncanniness. To outline this development is the aim of my paper.

In the second half of the 17th century testaments show a sudden unfamiliarity with one's own death: one was seemingly not sure anymore when and whether to die. The reactions to this 'uncertainty', as Philippe Ariès puts it, have been manifold: a string in the hand of the corpse was connected to a bell outside the grave to prevent a death within the coffin; in later times the corpses were kept above ground for some days before burial. The up to medieval times vivid relation between the living and the dead, expressed e.g. by the use of cemeteries as marketplaces, was torn.

To understand this development we have to go back to the times of the great plague epidemics in the middle ages. The authorities executed a great number of actions to control and diminish the diffusion of the Black Death as well as trying to hide the huge number of corpses in order not to worry the population. This politics of control and disguise were the first account of a society we today know as control societies: aiming at total control connected with only partially informing the population.

The point of culmination of all this was the foreclosure of the city's cemetery by Napoleonic decree in 1805, a decision of sovereign power to eliminate death from our lives - due to its specific topography - still visible in Venice today.

Within this *dispositive* or *field of death* the medicine discourse of the times as well tried to get hold of death. Xavier Bichat subdivides death in his physiological study *Recherches physiologiques sur la vie et la mort* into three smaller portions or subdeaths valent up to the present day: brain-, heart- and lungdeath. The first 'modern concept of death' as Deleuze would call it later.

In the end, death disappeared from everyday life. In the following of this slow process death was considered as something useless for society, a development part of the concept of bio-power described by Foucault to keep society productive, controlled and clean of ambivalence and the Other. On the threshold to modernity of 1800 the once close contact with death finally gave way

to the "immortal" modern subject and a feeling of uncanniness of death we still can perceive today.

My approach combines historic data from Venice with Foucault's concept of bio-power and Bourdieu's of *habitus* to show what it means when we talk about repression of death, how this was actually executed and what the result of these actions were.

CV

Matthias Korn is a Berlin-based free-lance literature and art historian. He studied Comparative Literature and Religious Studies in Berlin, Rom and Córdoba and is currently writing his PhD at the Humboldt University Berlin on the above subject.

Publications (selection)

“*Vom Finden. Unsichtbare Vorgänge im künstlerischen Schaffensprozess*”, in: Markus Rautzenberg, Andreas Wolfsteiner (eds.), *Hide & Seek. Das Spiel von Transparenz und Opazität*, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2009 (in press).

“*Ein bescheidener Vorschlag zum Kennenlernen von Architektur: Destruieren. Gordon Matta-Clarks Building Cuts*”, «*Wolkenkuckucksheim*», 1/2008, Cottbus 2008 available at www.cloud-cuckoo.net (forthcoming).

(co-edited with Volkmar Billig) *Querfeldüber. Zur Topologie von Kunst*, , Nürnberg: Verlag für Moderne Kunst Nürnberg 2008.

Sandra Evans (Tübingen)

Intangible Notions of the Uncanny

In reaction to a social climate that is perceived as increasingly dangerous, gated communities are growing in numbers not only in areas of conflict, but also in 'modern liberal' societies. The question as to why is an important one as the overall crime rate has been sinking. According to a study conducted, "crime serves as an idiom for expressing and legitimating the fear of the strange and the unknown. Such fears often focus on populations that are racially, culturally and economically distinct."⁵ As a consequence, strangers or outsiders are held responsible for crimes committed while in actuality most crimes of violence are committed by people who know their victims. In the same vein, community members perceive their own neighborhood to be safer than the surrounding city, even when the neighborhood has a high crime rate. Familiarity seems to impart an aura of safety while the unknown imparts a sense of danger. Gated communities are on the one hand a manifestation of an intangible notion of the unknown and associated sensations of fear, a strategy for coping with perceived danger where those located behind the gates are trying to control their environment with the implementation of strict rules and regulations. These rules and regulations not only redefine the borders of the public and private spheres, but also of good and bad, safe and dangerous, etc. Walls, whether actual or mental, are features and constructs that are ostensibly designed for exclusive (geographical) demarcation and separation, not accommodation or inclusion, that hinder human interaction and understanding.

What interests me here is the role danger and threat plays in the emergence of the sensation of the uncanny. Does the uncanny originate in homely or unhomely spaces? What types of spaces perpetuate sensations of the uncanny? What is the difference between the uncanny which is experienced and that which is merely imagined, heard or read about? How does the seeming irrationality of uncanny sensations influence cognitive perception and reaction, social discourse, practices and structures and eventually institutions?

⁵ Merry, Sally Engle: *Urban Danger: Life in a Neighborhood of Strangers*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1981, p. 14.

CV

Sandra Evans, born 1970, has finished her PhD in Slavic Studies from Universität Tübingen within the framework of the German Research Foundation (DFG)-funded research project “Intimate Texts. Intimate Spaces: Intimacy and Proximity in Russian Culture”, a MA in Russian Studies from the European University at St. Petersburg, and a BA in International Studies with a focus on East- and Central Europe from Portland State University.

Publications (selection)

“*Extremistische Ästhetik: Solidarität als Widerstandsform im total(itär)en Alltag bei Charms und bei Bradbury*”, «Plurale. Zeitschrift für Denkversionen» 7 Alltag, 2008, p. 43-62.

“*Geschichte(n) der Kommunalka: Zur Recodierung von Intimität*”, in: Nadežda Grigor'eva, Schamma Schahadat, Igor' Smirnov (eds.), *Nähe schaffen, Abstand halten. Zur Geschichte von Intimität und Nähe in der russischen Kultur*, München (Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband 62).

“*Variations of Community: The Kommunalka and Gated Communities*”, «Vestnik», Sommer 2005, p. 19-32.

Jaime Cuenca (Bilbao)

The Political Potential of the Uncanny. The Zombie as a Metaphor for the Consumer

Ancient monsters lived beyond the frontiers of civilization: in the wood outside the polis or in the *terra incognita* of the maps. When the last remains of wild outside were explored and the world became a large interior (Sloterdijk, 2005), the monstrous chaos moved inside and settled at home. This tension within the modern interior is the uncanny. The ancient monster was a natural anomaly that was supposed to show a message of the gods. The uncanny also shows something to us: this part of ourselves we are afraid of recognizing as our own. The uncanny awakens the suspicion that chaos does not come from outside, but from the center of order and is perhaps its very foundation. This suspicion has a large political potential. I will try to show it on the example of the zombie.

The zombie is one of the most present figures of the uncanny in the current collective imaginary. Since its reinterpretation by George A. Romero (*Night of the Living Dead*, 1968), its presence in popular culture has steadily increased. This is not a coincidence, as Romero's zombie embodies our current fears much better than any previous version. Before 1968, cinema showed zombies as dead brought back to life by a villain who uses them as slaves. Romero turned zombies into insatiable cannibals deprived of consciousness that bring about an apocalyptical catastrophe. From then on, they can be satisfactorily described by the expression 'unconscious consumption'.

By developing this two defining features (consumption and lack of consciousness), I will try to show why the zombie is a monstrous metaphor of ourselves. I will relate it to the main themes of Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of consumerism: the obsolescence of market products, the desire as driving force of consumption and the failed promises of the consumer market. The tension that characterizes the hyper-stimulated consumer in the society of boredom (Svendsen, 2006) is projected on the tension between life and death, ultra-violence and apathetic inactivity that defines the zombie.

I will illustrate the paper with a practical example of how art can work with the political potential of the zombie: the project *Stay Inside, close windows and doors* (2008) by the artists Iratxe Jaio and Klaas van Gorkum, which included two

zombie walks through shopping centers in Utrecht (Holland) and Barakaldo (Spain).

CV

Jaime Cuenca (B. A. in Philosophy) is PhD at the Institute for Leisure Studies of the University of Deusto. His research project, which is supported by a post-graduate scholarship of the Basque Government, deals with the aesthetic genealogy of the current forms of leisure. He has taught History of the Avant-gardes and Schools of Contemporary Ethics at the University of Deusto.

He has published several academic articles in learned journals like *Anthropos*, *Letras de Deusto*, *Estudios filosóficos*, *Cuadernos de Estudios de Ocio* and *Lápiz*, and has contributed to the collective works: *La experiencia de ocio: una mirada científica desde los Estudios de Ocio* (2008, Bilbao, Spain) and *Ócio para viver no século XXI* (2008, Fortaleza, Brazil). He also contributes as art critic to the newspaper *Bilbao*. Jaime Cuenca has presented papers in international conferences in Spain, Portugal, Turkey and Canada. Currently, he spends a research stay at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe (Germany).

Anneleen Masschelein (Leuven)

Keynote: Between Animism and Animation: The Challenges of the Uncanny as (Un)concept in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Century

In my talk I will outline the curious conceptualization of the uncanny between various disciplines, a concept that only very gradually managed to move to the centre of what is called 'theory' and that has always remained in close contact with the margin of this field on the one hand and with the realm of creative production on the other hand. The concept of the uncanny is marked by hybridity and by a certain fleetingness. Although the uncanny sometimes seems omnipresent, the concept is perpetually being questioned in theory. In particular I will zoom in on the evolution from the uncanny's relation to animism at the end of the 19th century to the realm of robotics, virtual reality and animation in the 21st century.

CV

Anneleen Masschelein is a lecturer at the University of Leuven in Belgium, in the department of literary theory and cultural studies. She is also a postdoctoral research fellow at the Flanders research fund. Currently, she is finalizing her book on the conceptualization of the uncanny in 20th century theory, which is due to appear with SUNY University Press by the end of this year. The research for this book was the topic of her Phd. She has also just finished a book on cultural studies in Dutch, that discusses contemporary cultural 'myths' ranging from google books to surveillance and tattoos. Her recent research projects focus on 'autofiction' and on the border area between literature, art and theory. With the notion of 'Residual oeuvres' she wants to examine the contemporary trend of creative work (literature, art,...) that is published by authors that are generally recognized as 'theorists' or specialists in a field. In this project, she wants to examine how theoretical notions can be used creatively and playfully and what this entails for both domains. She is also editor of the online scientific journal Image and Narrative.