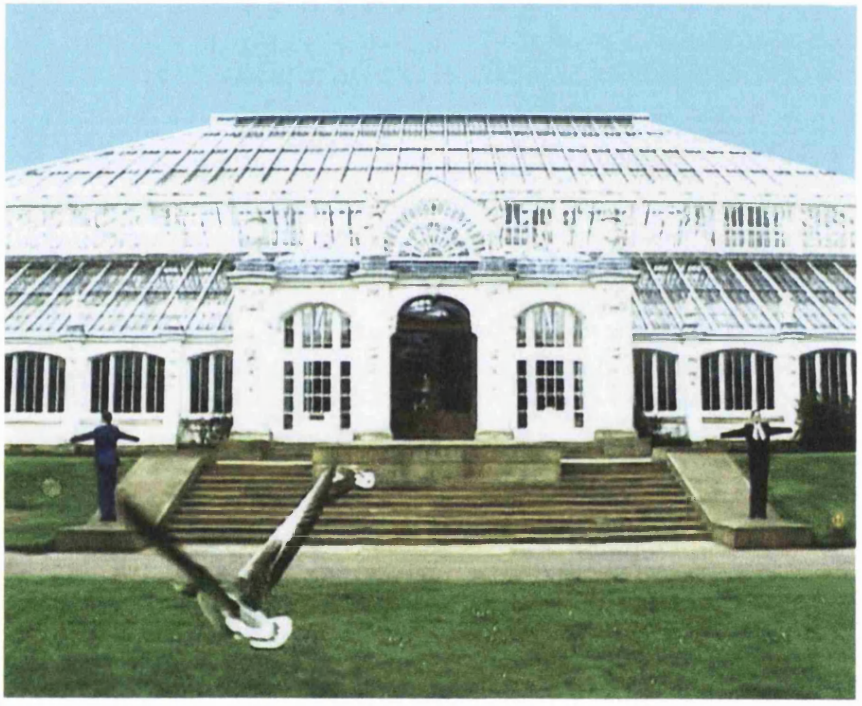
Circles and repetitions: habit and the unconscious



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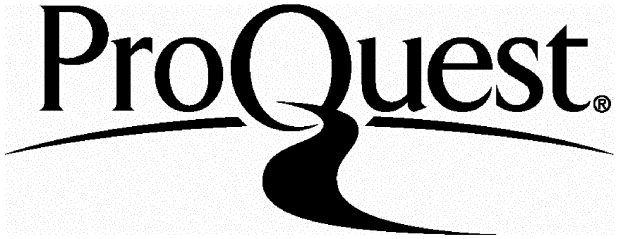

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Abstract

This thesis explores habit – learned, repetitious, ritualised activity; the most commonplace, everyday manifestation of spirals of repetition in human life.

During the modern period the emergence of self-conscious subjectivity has often been in tension with the tendency towards explanation of phenomena in terms of natural mechanism and automatism, and the notion of habit has emerged again and again as a possible modulation between these poles. Paradoxically the humble notion of habit serves as a stage on which the ancient themes of unconscious repetition and fate are replayed in a modern context. This thesis attempts to unify the philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic manifestations of habit while also expanding the concept, and thinking of it in terms of a route or device to achieve different states of 'metamorphic' awareness. My practical work, mostly video, also deals with the theme of habit and repetition and its modulation between the realms of consciousness and unconsciousness. Often my video pieces are scripted from dreams, and attempt to reflect something of the nature of the 'sleepwalker;' a figure caught somewhere between life and death, control and autonomy, determination and indeterminacy. An understanding of habit, I feel, can provide a means of articulating something of the in-between state of such compelling, impenetrable sleepwalking figures, which have emerged again and again throughout history in a variety of different art forms and practices, from literature to film, but also importantly, in everyday life.

Running throughout the thesis is the voice of Iris Geldo, the pin in the side of the thesis, who I have worked with, not unproblematically, throughout. I will include her personal experiences, in the form of letters, emails and diary entries, in which she responds to what she thinks I might be getting at in each chapter of the thesis. Although her words are often provocative, they are always relevant and she brings back a quality of indeterminacy and resistance to the things I am attempting to illuminate.

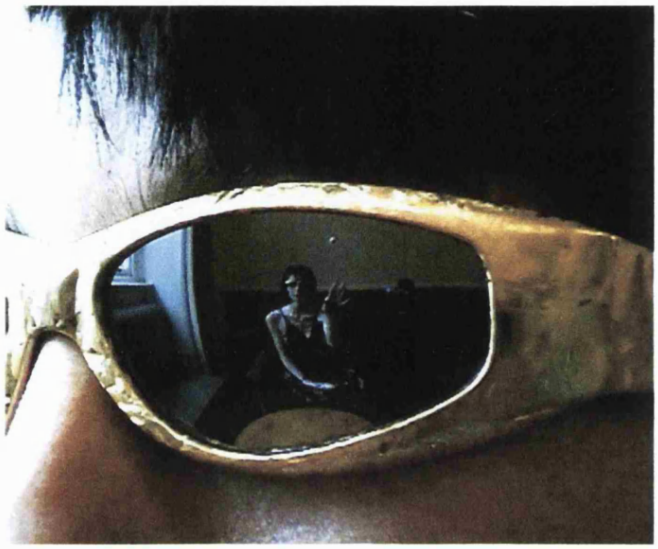
Contents

Appendices (verbal purgatory)

Illustrations to title pages

Video cassettes

Madonna, 7 mins, / *Gloomy Sunday*, 4 mins, / *Pavonia Paradoxum*, 13 mins, 2001



Introduction the art of distraction

The art of distraction

I go to put my hat on in order to scratch my foot. I have a problem in the relationship between movement and intent. There are too many choices, too many variables, so that it becomes necessary to distract myself in order for some other part of me to decide what to do. In order to walk forwards, I drop small balls of paper which I keep in my pocket, in front of my feet; the act of throwing them and seeing them land, sets my legs in motion and tells me which way to walk. This is especially valuable when I make my paper trail from shreds of official letters, bank statements, bills, doctor and hospital appointments, as finally now I find a use for them and can respond to them in some way – make them serve some purpose. This is different altogether to the way music animates me in dance, because in that case I am controlled, manipulated by something external to myself, somebody else's creation in relation to which I am no more than a puppet. I recognise in the puppet a certain freedom from the confusion of autonomy, but rather than die in order to find such certainty, or be incarcerated in an institution as I was for so long, I now seek a way of being entirely of my own making, I must be absolutely in control of who I am, what I do and how I do it. So I train myself, become habitual, and through this I achieve pure control. Within my habitual state, although I remain frustratingly prone to more random laws than those that make themselves obviously known, I know I have reduced, in part, the possibility of their controlling me. In this way, in my life I find and keep the balance between chance and control; I create a set of conditions within which I *allow* the now limited variables to remain random. The problem comes when I 'wake up' from my habitual state and find the variables have taken 'me' over, and my structure of control has been shattered. Where did the idea for the paper ball throwing come from? Don't know. In these painful waking moments I begin to question if it was every really 'me' that set up the conditions in the first place, they seem so unfamiliar in the new light of day. And if it is a 'me' that I find now so strangely, what part of the me is it that takes over when I lose myself in my habits? Don't know. So I create a new structure and begin the process over again. In this way I find myself continually evolving. It is not a smooth evolution, it stumbles and jerks, is prone to contingencies and failures, exhaustions and excitements. It involves the continual re-balancing between what I am and what I become in the moments when I no longer am. Often the only way out of the states I find myself in is to stick the pin in my foot. Yet, no matter how much I try to make this action a part of my habit, it never happens. Still, I keep my pin with me at all times. In previous, more disastrous situations, it has been a method of escape.

And now as it is time for me to leave, You will see how lacking in what they call 'grace' I have become. You will see as I start to cut my usual erratic path across the room how I lurch forwards for the door in order to raise myself from my seat. When standing, I think of sitting in order to remain standing. So that I can pick up my bag, I think of blowing my nose. To put on my gloves, I think of coughing 3 times. In order to move forwards, I think of falling asleep. To think of all that is mysterious in this room, I finally leave the room.[1]

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Does Geldo have 'grace?' Grace is important to Geldo, though she thinks she's lost it, and the notion will come, especially in Chapters 1 and 2 of the thesis, to have an intimate connection to key aspects of my conception of habit. In terms of *appearance*, one expects grace in movement to be something like a seductive series of smooth, interweaving,

uninterrupted lines, and Iris' jerky, erratic, 'inappropriate' movements would appear to present to a watching eye the very opposite of grace. But this would be to forget that grace, particularly in the Kleistian sense, as we will see as Heinrich von Kleist realised, is not so much about appearance as what structures and animates appearance.[2] Yes, the ballet dancer *looks* graceful with her lightness, poise, swoops and curves, but why would she not still be graceful if she were trained and practised in crawling on her hands and knees on the ground like a tortoise?[3] Let us not become lost here in the seduction of the rhythmic and smooth, but remember what lies beyond the false appeal of the eye. Grace is not really about aesthetics and surface, but emerges through there being coincidence between thought and action, and is manifested in any sort of movement uninterrupted by *conscious* hesitation – that is, the appearance of a hesitation can not be taken as an indication that the movement is not graceful as the hesitation itself might be incorporated into the movement. All habit has a touch of grace, whether one jerks and trips or not – one walks the familiar walk to one's everyday destination with the completeness of the ballerina, avoiding corners and loose paving stones, glancing before one crosses the road, without need of doubt or self-consciousness, although this talent will never be lauded on a stage. We are modest beings, humans, applauding the self-control of the dancer or the gymnast without applauding ourselves for the everyday 'dance' of our habits. And like the ballerina, our everyday dance, our habits, need work; they are not born into us naturally but are learned and repeated until they reach perfection. This is why I refer to distraction, an important mode of habit that I will refer to in a moment, as an art.

One might wonder then why ballet is not called a mode of the habit of dance; I will suggest something of this at the beginning of Chapter 2, though forms of movement such as dance will not be the main subject of this thesis. During the acquisition of a habit, unlike the painful training of the ballerina, neither choreographer, mirror nor stretched muscle is necessary for its perfection; habit, embodied grace really needs neither submission nor continual observation – in fact continual observation would be disruptive to the true grace of habit. While Geldo might appear 'awkward,' her highly developed ability to 'lose' self-consciousness, be distracted from herself, to metamorphose and alter herself by adopting

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[1] Geldo offered this text for the introduction.
[2] Cf. Chapter 1 on the Kleistian notion of grace in relation to the consciouslessness of the puppet.
[3] Consider, for instance, Butoh dance in which the ability to metamorphose and adapt oneself to the movements of an animal are considered extremely graceful. Cf. Susan Blakely Klein, *Ankoko Butoh: The Premodern and Postmodern Influences on the Dance of Utter Darkness*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 25-54. And Sondra Horton Fraleigh's *Dancing into Darkness: Butoh, Zen, and Japan*, Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1999.

and adapting her own habits puts her in the spotlight; Geldo shines brightly to me as the most graceful star of all, more brilliant and unique than a Nureyev or Fontaine, who in the end only follow someone else's rules and aim to perfect them, however they aim to inflect them with subtle touches of style. Geldo works hard; she questions, learns and rehearses, then speaks, writes and walks her language, she is not confined to the stage for the duration of a performance, but dances her strange dance all over house and city; morning, noon and night. This is no job and there will be no standing ovation for Geldo – this is *real* dedication. Geldo would be considered ungraceful were grace taken to mean a body given over to the control of an external choreographic force, as grace is often considered to be a 'god-given' gift for the empty and innocent open enough to receive it. But this need not be the case, and I will argue gradually throughout the thesis for a grace that is self-given, or as Cixous would put it, 'twice-born.'[4] This second form of grace, closely tied to habit as an uncanny self-coincidence in time and distraction from self-conscious awareness, need be neither mimetic nor submissive to a master of any kind.

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Habit is a difficult concept to define – one cannot easily tease out from other kinds repetitive behaviour just what the essence of habit is. The most basic definition of what habit *is* provides the theme for Chapter 1, which I can sum up here by stating that habit is a learned pattern of behaviour which after rehearsal and repetition becomes an unconscious structure of the mind and central nervous system, and can as such insert itself into everyday life without one's conscious awareness. Now, when one thinks of habit in terms of learned skills such as piano playing, bike riding or even the act of writing, the move from learning to unconscious ability is relatively straightforward. Thus writers on habit such as Maine de Biran, William James and Merleau-Ponty[5] see habit as little more than a practicable 'body technique' which allows one to adapt oneself to social norms and environmental situations,

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[4] For Hélène Cixous, 'Grace and Innocence in Heinrich von Kleist,' *Readings: The Poetics of Blanchot, Joyce, Kafka, Kleist, Lispector, and Tsvetayeva*, trans. Verena Andermatt Conley, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 37, there are two kinds of grace, the first is given and must be lost so that the second, 'the grace one gives oneself' can be found.

[5] Cf. François Pierre Maine de Biran, *The Influence of Habit on the Faculty of Thinking* (1810), trans. M.D. Boehm, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1970; William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), Vol. 1, New York: Dover Publications, 1950; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962; and his *The Structure of Behaviour*, trans. Alden L. Fisher, Boston: Beacon Press, 1963. James and Merleau-Ponty will be referred to again in Chapter 1.

etc. But while their writings are useful in part as a definition of habit, particularly in their linkage of habit to the everyday, at the same time this most basic conception of habit does not quite do justice to its multifaceted, darker origins. I will expand the notion of habit beyond this remit, suggesting that it has its feet, though not often its name, in a vast variety of areas of life spurred on by unconscious repetitions such as instinct, fate, obsession, religion, art practises and cinema. There are other areas I could refer to, but I only have one thesis, and what I hope most to show is that habit insinuates itself into more areas of human life and behaviour than it is generally given credit for.[6] Taken for granted, glamourless everyday habit will here be put on the pedestal it has long deserved.

Habit poses fundamental questions concerning the relationship between consciousness and time. While habituation certainly seems to involve the cultivation of *expectations*, doesn't it more profoundly also involve the *removal* of the state of anxious expectation from our minds? Could it not precisely be a way of helping us occupy the present moment? One of habit's major features is its link to the art of distraction, and during my research I have come to believe firmly in the importance of learning how to use and manipulate this art as Iris does so spectacularly. Clarice Lispector's short text, 'Because they were not distracted,' is an account of what happens when one loses the art of distraction: two people walking together, find themselves horribly awake to their habits, lose the ability to relocate them, and, no longer distracted, begin to 'crave their own happiness.'

> All this simply because they had been attentive, simply because they were not sufficiently distracted. Simply because suddenly becoming demanding and stubborn, they wanted to possess what they already possessed. [...] They were about to learn that unless one is distracted the telephone does not ring; that it is necessary to go out for the letter to arrive, and that when the telephone finally does ring, the wasteland of waiting has already disconnected the wires. All this, all this, because they were not distracted.[7]

The desire for the telephone to ring or for the letter to arrive, when it remains below the threshold of conscious awareness causes no problem for the attendee; they are distracted, elsewhere, still waiting for the letter of course, but indirectly. Without distraction, one is condemned to the moment in a state of sterile expectation, though not coincidental with it as

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[6] At no point in the thesis do I refer to 'habits' such as nail-biting or smoking, etc. In Chapter 3 when I look at repetition and obsessional neurosis, a habit like nail-biting might be classed under behaviours such as over-grooming or obsessive tics. The habit of smoking, on the other hand, is really an addiction and as such, for the most part is a topic for biochemistry. What I am most interested in throughout the thesis is what a general structure of habit might be, rather than studying habit in *all* its possible manifestations.

one is continually pulled away from it by consciousness – the letterbox clicks in the wind and one worries continually about the arrival of the letter. When one has lost the art of distraction, one is condemned too to look here, there, anywhere for something to equal that authenticity of living in which one forgot to fret, and now, bereft, one seeks something to take away the pain of attentive consciousness, the pain of being unable to relax into time without awareness of its passing; though the act of seeking itself does nothing except make the situation ever more consciously present, ever more tense. Alone in a quiet room, once one becomes aware of the ticking of the clock, it is impossible to distract oneself from its nagging, soulless, insistence.

The relentless ticking of the clock inspired Henri Bergson in his lifelong project to reconnect human life to time in its becoming, rather than its tick and tock. Bergson is a philosopher who encounters the notion of habit precisely through interrogating the relationship of consciousness and time. Although he will be an important figure in what follows, I will argue that his negative view of habit overlooks a fundamental possibility that it could be precisely habit that is the key to synthesising time and consciousness.

Bergson's first major work, *Time and Free Will*,[8] originally published in 1889 under the title, *Essai sur les donnés immediates de la conscience*, aimed to account for the direct reality of inner life, outlining in detail the essential heterogeneity of 'inner duration,' as opposed to artificially organised experience born out of the spatialising, homogenising leanings of human social life. When considering a psychological state, for example, can a vague, half-hearted desire be measured against an overwhelming passion on a scale of 1 to 10 of intensity? For Bergson the answer is a resounding 'no,' as the two emotions are *different in kind* rather than degree; one cannot be added to the other as though both consisted of a multiplicity of identical units. Experienced sensations or emotions consist of differences in *quality* rather than increased or decreased *quantities* of the same; any attempt to measure or objectify such qualitative states falls prey to relying on the same laws of rationality that apply to the mechanised modern world, whereas emotion is subjective, and like time itself, is heterogeneous and open to continual difference and change. In a world dominated by homogeneous instants, the separate units of clock time, inner duration has no role except as a conceptual re-animator, in relation to which the freedom and reality of the individual is subordinated. Bergson saw the increasing inability of human life to enter into

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[7] Clarice Lispector, 'Because they were not distracted,' p. 109, *The Foreign Legion: Stories and Chronicles*, trans. Giovanni Pontiero, New York: New Directions, 1986, pp. 108-109.
[8] Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, trans. F.L. Pogson, London: Allen & Irwin, 1910.

the stream of time as a state of crisis; perception and life, by becoming entrenched in quantification and abstraction, were being immobilised.[9] While clock time is predictable and can be measured and relied upon, true duration is essentially unpredictable – no two moments of experienced duration are the same, there is no perfect repetition; one lives 'in' and 'through' duration in a fluid process of continual change, whereas all mathematical time units are static and identical. However, Bergson's extreme separation of inner duration and extended matter left him at the end of *Time and Free Will* with a dualism: 'psychic phenomena are in themselves pure quality or qualitative multiplicity, and, on the other hand, their cause situated in space is quantity.'[10] By dealing only with psychological sensations which are non-extended, inner experience can have no relation to external space, and the sense of human freedom Bergson sought to revitalise, could never be expressed in 'outward' voluntary behaviour. In effect Bergson separated lived experience into two distinct realities – one spatialised, symbolic and static; the other dynamic and qualitative, in constant flux.

Although recognising its necessity in some aspects of life, Bergson was generally against habit, seeing it as the reflection of all he hated in modern life with its soulless mechanical repetitions, its cutting up of time and its loss of connection with the flow of duration and becoming. While he sought to re-familiarise human life with the unpredictable, habit seemed only to affirm an unhealthy desire for the predictable. Although I would grant there is a truth in this, I would argue that Bergson has overlooked the deeper reason for why habit is first called into existence. Habit as distraction can anaesthetise one not only against novelty, against fears of fundamental apocalypse. In its familiar repetition habit provides an illusion of predictability, a coat of armour protecting one against the unknown, but it also testifies to, and only exists because of, a basic vulnerability to trauma should the shield of habit be torn apart. The realm of broken habit, lost distraction, and the desperate search to replace it will be the main theme of Chapter 3 in relation to habit, doubt and obsession. Reference to Freud will suggest that the very desire to adopt habits is indicative of a latent

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[9] Cf. R.C. Grogin, *The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914*, Canada: The University of Calgary Press, 1988, p. 93, 'Bergson was presented with a materially enclosed world which was moved by purely mechanical and mathematical laws; a world which did not seem to allow for moral values or spiritual forces. The revolt against mechanism which Bergson led for a time represented the rejection of that world.' Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, pp. 110-114 provides a detailed contextualisation of Bergson's philosophy in relation to the Industrial Revolution. Cf. also Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983, pp. 24-27; 42-47 for further contextualisation of Bergson's writings in relation to changing perceptions of time consciousness occurring in his day.

[10] Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 224.

fundamental trauma whose unconscious repetition conditions the repetitions that come to be manifested in habitual behaviour.

So habit, the safe, useful, familiar and predictable part of life is in fact associated with the possibility of risk, pain and trauma. It is the resort of the fearful, yet it can only ever provide a tentative security. And yet, in what other way than through habit could one find self-coincidence with time? Habit as distraction from consciousness and indecision allows one to be 'in' time – when one is consciously aware of what one does, one becomes self-conscious and 'out' of time. Bergson's dualism at the end of *Time and Free Will* is a similar fix to the paradoxical dilemma of self-coincidence expressed by Kleist in his short but insistent essay, 'On the Marionette Theatre,' with which I begin Chapter 1, and expand upon in Chapter 2.[11] Although Kleist never explicitly uses the term habit, and would perhaps be horrified that I relate it to the Marionette Theatre essay, his description of how 'grace' [both *Anmut* and *Grazie*] occurs in an entity that has no consciousness, embodied in this exaggerated instance by the puppet, provides a valuable model for the study of habit, bringing out too its significance for thinking through the problem of human autonomy in general. Kleist's definition of grace is wilfully obscure, and as such reflects changes in thought occurring in his day, in which the question of the relation between the human subject and nature was reaching a crisis point. Despite its often ironic and mocking tone, the essay provides an acutely personal account of Kleist's 18th-19th century confusion about the autonomy of consciousness. Of what nature were the conditions operating behind the scenes of conscious awareness? It makes sense that Kleist chose to write of puppets at the end of his life, as never more clearly can the problematic tension between controller, 'puppet master,' (god, fate, the unconscious?) and controlled, 'puppet,' (human? corpse?) be played out than on the stage of a puppet theatre. Prior to the Marionette Theatre essay, as I will show in Chapter 2, we can trace through Kleist's dramas the trajectory of this tension, from tragic repetition to repetition driven by the human unconscious.[12]

Puppets on strings or keys in locks, if we accept there may be unconscious laws determining our behaviour, are we pre-destined merely to turn and trigger the next stage of events, then the next, embodying Bergson's greatest fears for human life? No, we are not wind-up or mechanical, and where Bergson thought of habit as the mimesis in human life of modern mechanised society, it is important to separate habit from mechanisation and

[11] 'On the Marionette Theatre' (1810), trans. Idris Parry, *Essays on Dolls*, London: Penguin Books, 1994, pp. 1-14. Cf. the beginning of Chapter 1, and Chapter 2 throughout.
[12] I look at this aspect of Kleist's work in Chapter 2.

automatism; a major point of focus at the beginning of Chapter 3 and in relation to the films of Robert Bresson in Appendix 3.

From the mechanistic point of view, the human body in its physiological essence as part of nature would also be necessarily automatic, but also *appears* to act in the same essentially non-clockwork way. What one sees when one watches a human body in movement, what one recognises as 'normal' movement, appears neither clockwork nor robotic but involves changes of speed, curves, subtle gestures, leaps, trips and falls. The addition of consciousness and thought to the human person, seem to go against nature in the scientific sense in that the laws of cause and effect become less straightforwardly analysable – it would seem that one can 'choose' to animate the body in ever more wilfully erratic ways which might even go *against* nature. Witness Houdini scaling the space between two buildings against the New York skyline, and the suicide who leaps the next day from the same building. There is a fascination for this anti-nature human behaviour, it is a fascination with risk, usually someone else's, the very opposite of habitual predictability. However, despite such irregularities, what is so stifling about the mechanistic point of view is that one cannot say in the end that anything in nature is not controlled ultimately by laws of cause and effect, however perverted the effect of the cause has become. Thus even Houdini, incredible escapologist, is reduced to repetition: 'You pay to watch a man escape in order to be able to escape again; a man who is liberating himself only to be able to liberate himself again later.'[13] There is no way of knowing, for certain, the extent of one's 'freedom' from within the already potentially confining automatism of one's nature. The mechanistic hypothesis eats up every attempt to 'prove' ones' freedom. Consciousness, thought and free will are mere 'epiphenomena.' All feelings of freedom are poisoned by an overwhelming sense of 'fate,' and whether one is controlled by nature or something beyond nature (a God) is in this respect really irrelevant – thus Spinoza, the great mechanistic philosopher, identified God and Nature as one and the same. Once such feelings of fatedness have taken hold of one, perhaps because they are *the* inescapable and *the* unresolvable, the clockwork machine whose mechanics one is caught up in without perhaps even knowing it, one finds oneself passive, unable to act *against it*, because even the act against it would itself be fated. Nature and fate would then be the tightest prisons of all and demand drastic escapologist efforts, which might also be fated.

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[13] Adam Phillips, *Houdini's Box: On the Arts of Escape*, London: Faber and Faber, 2001, p. 30. Cf. also Ruth Brandon, *The Life and Many Deaths of Harry Houdini*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1993, pp. 45-49. 'Escape' is a theme which reappears in Chapter 4.

'You expect me to go this way? Ha! I fool you, I go that way.' '*Yes, as it is written.*'
'Then I will not go that way after all, but this way!' '*As it is written.*'
'I will destroy the writing – what will you do then?' '*Yes yes, all this is written too.*'

Surely habitual action is the balance that comes closest to mimicking a clockwork *idea* of nature? However, I will claim the opposite is the case, that *without* the complex procedures and paradoxes of habit, we surely *would* just be machines. However automated habit might *appear* to be, it really should be seen as a *response* to the life / death sentences of ancient fate and modern mechanism.[14] The sense of fate that arises from the mechanistic picture increases feelings of existential uncertainty, leading to the imprisoning, disabling nature of doubt, habitual doubt; one sees this in the obsessive's need to find and maintain control, her habits adopted to cover doubt, and her insatiable question: 'What do I know for *sure?*' And then in her repetition; 'I must make it happen again and again.' It is as though the obsessive seems to buy into the mechanistic rule of repetition, and tries to mimic it, but, with her 'limited,' 'imperfect' knowledge, she can never mimic or even grasp at the vast impersonal total machinery of nature.[15] The *difference* between the sense of what one can control and what is always going to remain out of control, between activity and passivity, determination and apparent indeterminacy, gives rise to the feeling of being on a precipice, and needing to find balance. Habit and repetition, although perhaps minor in the face of fate, when adopted according to one's own needs, even if only temporarily, can provide such balance.

Habit in the human realm might act both as distraction from self-conscious awareness of the present, and provide a sense of autonomy in the face of fate. However habit is not only a soothing balm to mask over these different structures of doubt – there is one further and final dimension to my account. Habit can also provide access to the unconscious structures operating beyond our awareness. Where the mind is and what thoughts occur while in the habitual state forms a major part of my research, weaving throughout every chapter but focussed on most specifically in Chapter 4. Quite the opposite of automatism, except perhaps in external appearance, and we are not going to be fooled by that, habit allows one to suspend thoughts about immediate circumstances and needs, and focus with more intensity on other thoughts usually relegated to the back of the mind. One could draw an analogy with sleep, in which while the conscious body is suspended from affective

[14] Cf. Chapter 2 in relation to Kleist's dramas, and Chapter 4, with reference to the Puritans.
[15] Cf. Chapter 3.

action, the unconscious is left with more freedom to overflow its images, impressions, improvisations and connections. Likewise in habit, the occupied body provides a means for one to enter into the dream world without interruption. Here we touch on the relation between habit and hypnosis; but in habit, unlike traditional hypnosis, one can act alone.

The 'marginal' phenomena of consciousness as might be revealed through hypnosis and other methods of conscious suspension, were discussed freely at the turn of the 20th century, although frequently in the guise of 'spiritualism.' The figure of the somnambulist walks through the entire length of the 19th century, from the Romantics to Bergson, Myers and Freud. And the figure of the somnambulist walks throughout this thesis.

Bergson countered the dualism he was left with at the end of *Time and Free Will*, in *Matter and Memory*,[16] breaking the barrier separating the body from its environment,[17] and confronting the separation of 'matter' (extended) and 'mind' (unextended), by assigning the psychological characteristics outlined in *Time and Free Will* to both – in other words, *temporalising* them both.[18] Instead of static objects located in space, all matter consists of pulses of energy 'modifications, perturbations, changes of tension or of energy and nothing else.'[19] Matter becomes prone to unpredictability, change and qualitative difference in the same manner as inner psychological states, because matter too exists in and through duration, while movement itself is less the translation of a distinct body through an empty space than the transformation of an entire situation. In this panpsychic realm of action and change between all forms of matter, the barrier between 'inner' and 'outer' reality is dissolved. However seemingly mechanical the habitual body might be thought to be, it is

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[16] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, (1896), trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer, New York: Zone Books, 1994. I go into Bergson's theory of habit memory contained in this book at the end of Chapter 1.

[17] To speak of the body and the world here as though separate, in itself reflects the problem of using language as symbolic representation. For Bergson they are not absolutely separate entities, but for the sake of linguistic necessity must be separated in order to be brought together. Bergson often noted the paradox of 'writing' in relation to his anti-representational, anti-symbolic themes. For a full account of this problem, Cf. John C. Mullarkey, 'Bergson and the Language of Process,' *Process Studies* 24, 1995, pp. 44-58; and Maurice Blanchot, 'Bergson and Symbolism,' trans. Joel A. Hurt, in *Yale French Studies* 2:2, 1949, pp. 63-66.

[18] The extension to matter of the basic characteristics of psychological duration is cited as having far reaching consequences in terms of creating a radical break with modernist thought, as well as being an unexpected precursor to classical quantum physics. Cf. *The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy*, (eds.) Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Milic Capek, *Bergson and Modern Physics*, New York: Humanities Press, 1971; and A.C. Papanicolaou and P. Gunter, *Bergson and Modern Though: Towards a Unified Science*, New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1987.

[19] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 226. [My italic].

still a part of this realm – perhaps even more comfortably so than the conscious body that continually differentiates itself from other forms of matter. Bergson, like so many others we will encounter, was tricked by the ruse of habit which presents itself with the *appearance* of blank automatism while actually camouflaging the real mental activity occurring beneath its apparently stereotyped surface. And although not specifically naming habit as a possible route to the virtual realm of dream and pure memory images, in Bergson's description below, the possibility does lurk:

> If almost the whole of our past is hidden from us because it is inhibited by the necessities of present action, it will find strength to cross the threshold of consciousness in all cases where we renounce the interests of effective action to replace ourselves, so to speak, in the life of dreams. *Sleep, natural or artificial, brings about an indifference of just this kind.*[20]

Asleep, focus on conscious action in the world is suspended and the mind no longer has to cope with situations that demand decisions and choice. One can dream, and enter into the realm of virtual images by falling into a sleep which might be either 'natural or artificial,' to which Bergson is clearly referring to hypnosis, a lifelong interest of his.[21] However, in *Laughter* Bergson describes how, while lost in habit, 'the soul can be fascinated and hypnotised by the materiality of a simple action.'[22] One doesn't merely shield or protect oneself from unexpected encounters in the extended world during habit, one becomes hypnotised by one's movements through the combination of bodily repetition, intense focus, and the suspension of conscious interruption. When fully ingrained, habitual action invokes an 'indifference' towards effective action – that is, action which is consciously intended, thus there is, as Bergson suggested, an hypnotic aspect to habitual activity, which might also bring about a state of 'artificial sleep.' Would habit then, as with sleep, open out the realm of the virtual? Would one exist, for the duration of a fully ingrained habit, as though awake, but in a dream?[23]

As a form of self-hypnosis, habit leaves the individual free from the external meddlers and suggesters found in hypnosis and mesmerism as a 'medical' practise, though without an external monitor, nothing might be remembered from the unconscious one enters

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[20] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 194.

[21] Indeed, one of Bergson's first essays was on this topic: 'De la simulation inconsciente dans l'état d'hypnotisme' (1886), in *Écrits et paroles*, (ed.) M.R. Mossé Bastide, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957, pp. 525-531.

[22] Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (1900), trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell, Los Angeles: Green Integer, 1999, p. 28.

[23] This is highly relevant to the realms of tragedy and fate – the relationship between hypnosis, somnambulism and tragedy will be covered in Chapter 2.

into while hypnotised by habit. But this, finally, is where art practise comes in. While under the influence of hypnotic habit, any material production can be thought of as a more or less direct manifestation of the unconscious.[24] Could artistic production exist without the potentialities released by habitual activity? Perhaps uncovering this marginal area of human life can help uncover new and fragile potentialities of art practise.

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[24] Cf. Chapter 4. Cf. also Coda in relation to habit, repetition and cinema in the work of Robert Bresson.

Chapter 1 practice makes perfect: the harmony of habit

the puppet or the god

We see that in the organic world, as thought grows dimmer and weaker, grace emerges more brilliantly and decisively. [...] But grace appears most purely in that human form which either has no consciousness or an infinite consciousness. That is, in the puppet or in the god.[1]

The dialogue between the principal dancer and the first-person narrator in Kleist's 'On the Marionette Theatre' concerns the 'grace' of puppets – a gracefulness [both *Anmut* and *Grazie*],[2] he says, that a human dancer could not match. Each movement of the puppet has an absolute sense of gravity, and their limbs, like pendulums, keep a perfect rhythm in relation to the movements from their centre, displaying, 'a proportion, flexibility, lightness, and a more natural arrangement of the centres of gravity.'[3] Although the dancer puts some of this down to the reciprocal 'dancing' which occurs on the part of the puppet operator, even without the operator's sensibility, if it were a mechanical device that moved the puppets, they would still appear graceful as they 'obey the natural laws of gravity,' without the interruptions of 'affectation' and self-consciousness that beset the human dancer. Their movements come *automatically* from a balanced centre without thought or hesitation, and, according to the dancer, the puppet achieves grace: grace and equilibrium are present only in a 'human form' [*menschlichen Körperbau*] that has either *no consciousness* or an *infinite consciousness*; the puppet or the god.[4]

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[1] Heinrich von Kleist, 'On the Marionette Theatre' [Über das Marionettentheater], trans. Idris Parry, *Essays on Dolls*, London: Penguin, Books, 1994, p. 12. The essay was originally published in four instalments in the *Berliner Abendblätter*, December 12–15, 1810. This short essay has been considered the closest Kleist came to writing an 'aesthetics,' and has thus been the focus of much research into Kleist's writings since Hanna Hellmann, *Heinrich von Kleist: Darstellung des Problems*, Berlin: Helmut Sembdner, 1911 pointed it out as representing in condensed form the main themes of Kleist's entire oeuvre. The essay can be seen as a conclusion to many of the themes and issues developed in Kleist's dramatic works and short stories, to which I refer in Chapter 2.

[2] Kleist's definition of 'grace,' is deliberately indeterminate. While he uses 'grace' to describe the appearance of a type of movement, perhaps more importantly it describes too the harmony between body and mind, autonomy and destiny. And while his reference to grace is often considered theological, later in the essay, p.8, he attributes grace to a once 'remarkably graceful' 15 year old youth, who became graceless when his self-consciousness was awakened. Later still in the essay, p. 10-11, grace is attributed to the 'natural instinct' of the 'fencing bear.'

[3] Kleist, 'Marionette Theatre,' p. 5.

[4] There are huge conceptual problems in the dancer's claims, not least of which is why a god might be thought of in terms of a 'human form.' A number of writers have analysed the (il)logic of the essay in depth; Cf. Walter Silz, '*Über das Marionettentheater*,' *Heinrich von Kleist: Studies in his Works and Literary Character*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961, pp. 69-85. William Ray, 'Suspended in the Mirror: Language and the Self in Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*,' *Studies in Romanticism* 18, 1979, p. 521, claims that the 'loose logic' of the text has led to its being completely

To have no consciousness and to act and react automatically, would be to have no hesitations or possibilities other than to follow impulses imposed upon one by an external force or will – even if that force is no more than the pull of gravity. To have infinite consciousness would be to act and react in every way at once, thus still to have no hesitations as *everything* would be possible. At one extreme, a body without consciousness would be absolutely passive, an empty form buffeted around and unaware of itself; consciously dead or asleep. At the other extreme, a body with infinite consciousness would have the potential to act upon everything, it would be in a position of absolute omnipotent power, a god. While the 'inhuman' entities of puppet or god, according to Kleist, have 'grace,' the human organism, forever oscillating between degrees of these two extreme poles of conscious(less)ness, belongs wholly to neither, and thus neither purely active nor passive, is always jerky and awkward, always in between, struggling to find balance, always out of time.

Regardless of the potential freedom or autonomy the presence of self-awareness in human consciousness brings, for Kleist it is the greatest human flaw, repeating over and over the biblical Fall from grace of Adam and Eve; a severing of the strings attaching the human puppet to its Master. [5] An excited childlike cry of: 'look at me! I have no strings!' is answered, with a sigh by, 'yes, but must you stumble around so ...' For Kleist, Knowledge is the curse of human life because it brings with it stutterings and self-consciousness,

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overdetermined with readings ranging from aesthetics, theology, the mechanics of marionettes, history, consciousness, affectation, the self, and the Fall. Without wishing to add to this overdetermination, in my view the readings that criticise too literally the 'logic' of the text are largely missing the point. Written towards the end of Kleist's life, it carries within its written form as a pseudo-philosophical dialogue a certain amount of irony in relation to the theme of the inadequacy of human understanding that beset Kleist's era; Cf. on this, Nancy Nobile, *The School of Days: Heinrich von Kleist and the Traumas of Education*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990, pp. 141-172. Nobile quotes from Schiller's influential 'Über die Äesthetische Erziehung des Menschen' [On the Aesthetic Education of Man], 'Each individual carries a pure ideal man within him, with whose unalterable unity it is the great task of his existence, throughout all his vicissitudes, to harmonise.' In contrast to these ideas, Nobile p.12, points out that 'Kleist acknowledged the inconsistencies and irresoluble contradictions of human nature, keenly aware that it cannot be forced into a procrustean bed.' James A. Rushing, 'The Limitations of the Fencing Bear: Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater* as Ironic Fiction,' *German Quarterly* 61, 1988, p. 530 describes the text as a fictitious story *about* a philosophical dialogue; Anthony Stephens, 'Über das Marionettentheater,' *Heinrich von Kleist: The Dramas and Stories*, Oxford: Berg, 1994, pp. 277-291 sees the text parodying a Socratic dialogue.

[5] 'Marionette Theatre,' p. 8, the dancer criticises the narrator for not reading attentively enough the third book of Genesis. Ilse Graham, 'Concerning the Theology of Puppets: *Über das Marionettentheater*,' *Heinrich von Kleist: Word into Flesh: A Poet's Quest for the Symbol*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977, pp. 11-26, makes a close reading of the essay in parallel to Genesis 3. Cf. also James Knowlson and John Pilling, 'Beckett and Kleist's essay *On the Marionette Theatre*,' *Frescoes of the Skull: the Late Prose and Drama of Samuel Beckett*, London: John Calder, 1979, p.

hesitation and doubt, creating a distance between what one 'knows' or learns, and what one 'is.'[6] To experience a distance between the self and the body and to be aware of oneself as 'other,' disrupts the kind of harmony in movement which could only come about if the body and self existed in complete unity. Neither innocent to knowledge, empty and passive as though controlled like a puppet by an external force, nor with a perfect or complete knowledge like a god, for Kleist human life is cursed to exist in disunity and disharmony with itself, forever in search of balance. 'On the Marionette Theatre' then, indicates in its two extremes, the problematic of activity and passivity in consciousness, an ongoing problem for philosophy, and an important theme throughout this thesis.

As Kleist knew, ontologically a human can *never* be as passive as a puppet;[7] one doesn't *choose* to have self-consciousness but one cannot easily escape this most human of traits. So the Marionette Theatre essay can be seen rather as a description of 'ideal' movement, written at the end of Kleist's life, with bitter irony, from the point of view of his feeling exiled from the Paradise of innocent unknowingness. This was also a fundamental theme for other German Romantic writers of Kleist's era. Hölderlin describes how: 'If I say: I am I, the subject ('I') and the object ('I') are not united in such a way that no separation could be performed without violating the essence of what is to be separated; on the contrary, the I is only possible by means of this separation of the I from the I.'[8] One can relate this statement about the non-coincidence of the self with being, to the sense of radical misbalance in human life according to Kleist. For one to fully coincide with oneself, for act and thought to be one and the same, paradoxically the act of conscious awareness would need to be suspended.

Is this a dream? Am I awake, alive, not mad? For so long I have slept. Now I stir, uncomfortable in my self, but aware my presence is necessary. This cannot go on. Through the window, the maddening repetition of nature makes me frantic. Already I long for the sun not to rise, for the day to stay dark, for the rupture, the break in it all.[9]

279; and G.A. Wells, 'The Limitations of Knowledge: Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*,' *Modern Language Notes* 80, 1985, pp. 90-96.

[6] I am only for the moment touching on the area of 'knowledge' and 'doubt' to which I will return in Chapter 3.

[7] Silz '*Über das Marionettentheater*,' p. 79, somewhat practically points out, 'No amount of retrogression will ever restore us to being puppets, because we never *were* puppets. The marionette is not the most primitive stage of humanity, at the opposite extreme from the god: it is a human artefact, indeed *a product of a comparatively advanced stage of human development.*' [My italic]. Cf. this comment in relation to writers such as Ruyer on human development later in this chapter.

[8] Friedrich Hölderlin, 'Judgment and Being,' *Essays and Letters on Theory*, trans. Thomas Pfau, New York: SUNY, 1988, pp. 37-38.

[9] An email from Geldo, written in response to the first section of this chapter.

Going back in time we see the pre-literary Kleist as a young man, obsessively writing his 'life plan,' lecturing to everyone he knew on the importance of controlling one's destiny.[10] In an early letter to his half-sister Ulrike, he wrote how existing as 'the plaything of chance, a puppet on the strings of fate' would be so unworthy a situation that 'death would be preferable by far.'[11] For the young Kleist, rather than representing a state of 'grace,' to be a puppet and to *know it* would be an existence not worthy to be called living.[12] It would in fact be nothing more than a living death. Yet, during the years between the young Kleist's search for self-control, and the older Kleist's sardonic view of human life in the Marionette Theatre essay, as we will see in Chapter 2, Kleist wrote plays and short stories featuring characters who are as though the living dead; sleepwalkers, people in a trance driven absolutely towards fulfilling a plan which pulls them forwards like puppets pulled by gravity; except the gravity here is not earthbound, but is the gravity of fate – the magnetic pull of fate with its invisible strings.[13]

When Kleist was 23, two major events inspired his decision to seriously pursue a literary career, as well as the direction his writing took. The first was his encounter with the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which he says shattered his life.[14] Kant's distinction between the unknowability of things in themselves as *noumena* and our cognitive operations with

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[10] In an early letter to his half-sister Ulrike, May 1799, Kleist writes of the importance of a 'master plan for life.' 'I hear the words and observe the deeds of thousands of people, and never does it occur to them to ask: to what end? They themselves don't know; dark impulses lead them, the moment decides their actions. They are forever dependent and their destinies remain a game of chance. A free and thinking person feels that one can lift oneself above fate, and even, in a very real sense, master it. He determines by Reason what the highest happiness would be for him, lays out a master plan for his life.' Kleist, *An Abyss Deep Enough: Letters of Heinrich von Kleist with a Selection of Essays and Anecdotes*, trans. Philip B. Miller, New York: E.P. Duton, 1982, pp. 26-27. Kleist's letters present a vital source of research into his life and ideas as little biographical information is available. Hilda Meldrum Brown, *Heinrich von Kleist: The Ambiguity of Art and the Necessity of Form*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, devotes a chapter of her book to a detailed analysis of Kleist's letters, pp. 6-59. Joachim Maas, *Kleist: A Biography*, trans. Ralph Manheim, London: Secker & Warburg, 1983, pieces together Kleist's life by weaving hypotheses around his letters.

[11] Kleist, Letter to Ulrike, May 1799, *An Abyss Deep Enough*, p. 28.

[12] There is in fact a condition, known as *coenesthopathy*, which comes frighteningly close to what it might feel like to be a conscious puppet. Eugène Minkowski, *Lived Time*, trans. Nancy Metzel, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 321, quotes the following account of someone suffering from this condition: 'My whole body is pulled apart. Everything in me from my head to my feet is moving. [...] It seems as if I have ten million fine threads which pull at me. It seems as if my legs are stretched and that I am being pulled *outside* myself, as if there were threads which pulled from outside.' I return to this theme in Chapter 4.

[13] Cf. Chapter 2.

[14] A number of texts deal with what is usually described as Kleist's 'Kant crisis.' The two most informative being, Helbling, *The Major Works of Heinrich von Kleist*, New York: New Directions,

things as they appear, *phenomena*, led Kleist to write in a letter to his fiancée Wilhelmine: 'We cannot determine whether what we call truth really is truth, or merely seems so to us. [...] The thought that here on earth we know nothing of the truth, absolutely nothing, has shaken me in *the very sanctuary of my soul* – my *only* purpose, my *supreme* purpose has collapsed; I have none left.'[15] Kleist felt keenly the disequilibrium brought about by only partial knowledge, the lack of any 'true' knowledge of things as 'they are;' so that life hung on the uncontrolled strings of uncertainty. The other event that shaped Kleist's future, according to his letters, was his visit to the Julius-Hospice, a newly opened mental asylum, in 1801.[16] Here he encountered a series of mentally disturbed figures whose very being further upset his previous convictions of the power of human will and the possibility of knowing one's own personality objectively.[17]

And so, at the end of a short life, Kleist exults the puppet, though he does this with a bitter laugh. As McGlathery points out, 'regaining Paradise is possible only through complete surrender of the intellect, that is, in insanity or in death. Man's only chance to escape the curse of Knowledge is to become a puppet, that is, an idiot or a corpse.'[18] Kleist's

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1975, pp. 23-34; and Paul de Mann, 'Aesthetic Formalisation: Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*,' *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, pp. 263-290.

[15] Letter to Wilhelmine, February 1801, *An Abyss Deep Enough*, p. 91. [My italic] Nietzsche, 'Schopenhauer as Educator,' *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. p. 141, makes much of this phrase as an example of 'true 'philosophical' emotion,' 'Yes, when will men again feel in the natural Kleistian manner, when will they learn again to judge the meaning of a philosophy with *their deepest and most sacred feelings*?' [My italic].

[16] Nigel Reeves, 'Kleist's Bedlam: abnormal psychology and psychiatry in the works of Heinrich von Kleist,' *Romanticism and the Sciences*, (ed.) Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 280-294, classes this event as more important in Kleist's development than the 'Kant crisis.' Cf. also Reeves, 'Kleist's Indebtedness to the Science, Psychiatry and Medicine of his Time,' *Oxford German Studies* 16, 1985, pp. 47-65. In addition to this visit, in 1803 Kleist lived with physician, Dr. Georg Wedekind, who had just published in Moritz's *Magium der Erfahrungsseelenkunde* [*Journal of Empirical Psychology*] an article entitled 'Actions without Awareness of their Motivation – or the Power of Obscure Ideas.' A full account of Wedekind and his influence on Kleist is R.H. Samuel and H.M. Brown, *Kleist's Lost Year and the Quest for 'Robert Guiscard,'* Leomington Spa: James Hall, 1981.

[17] In a letter to Wilhelmine, September 1800, *An Abyss Deep Enough*, pp. 59-60, Kleist describes some of the figures in the asylum, including a man obsessed with justice and a young man who could not control his sexual desires. Sander L. Gilman, 'Kleist and the Iconography of Onanism,' *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 67-73, makes much of Kleist's encounter with the sexually obsessed young man in the asylum. Kleist ends his letter to Wilhelmine dramatically: 'O better to die a thousand deaths than live out one's only life like this! O enough of this fearful image.'

[18] McGlathery, 'Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*,' *German Life and Letters* 20, 1967, p. 330. McGlathery reads the entire text as 'the expression of a death wish,' as, he says, the only situation in which destiny and free will are not in conflict would be in death, p. 327, 'Puppets, then, may personify Death as well as Grace, and the dancing of the puppets may be explained as a mystical rejoicing over the marriage of the soul to God in death.'

final decision to shoot himself in the head, to blast away his brain and empty out his head, is not perhaps, in the end, surprising.

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Is human knowledge and consciousness doomed to destabilise grace? Can the body achieve a state of harmony and balance between its active and passive poles, without this meaning death or an endless somnambulism?

> We have to struggle not against the laws of the body, but against human laws *governing* the body. We are not into free falling because we do not *want* to fall. We respond to external constraints with a weight. We can stand up. We answer an inner constraint with the tensing of muscles. Whereas the puppet has no inner constraint. This can be understood positively or negatively. Negatively, because it implies that it has no inside; positively because it has no constraints. The puppet does not really dance. To dance is already to *want* to dance. The puppet is simply in harmony with external constraints. Humans can never get there except in brief moments, in hundredths of a second and quite exceptionally.[19]

And yet despite the human struggle against constraints perhaps there are moments of harmony in human life and movement, occurring less rarely than Cixous suggests. And perhaps their occurrence is thought 'rare' because they emerge in slight or mundane moments and are not 'taken seriously,' or perhaps they are so easily forgotten and unthought that they occupy a different realm of consciousness altogether.

At the end of the 19th century, William James describes how the human body *can* obtain 'grace,' a harmony between its active and passive poles, through *the acquisition of habits*: 'the effortless custody of automatism.' He describes all living creatures as 'bundles of habits,' which are useful because they 'simplify the movements required to achieve a given result, making them more accurate and diminishing fatigue.'[20] However, unlike a

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[19] Hélène Cixous, 'Grace and Innocence,', pp. 36-37.

[20] William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 113. James was summing up, in fact, a notion of the willed control of the body, prevalent in his day, prior to Freudian ideas of the presence of repressed unconscious drives determining our movements. Cf. for instance, William Benjamin Carpenter, 'The Power of the Will over Mental Action' (1875), in Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth (eds.) *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts, 1830-1890*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 97: 'The exercise of the Will, if habitually exerted in certain directions, will tend to form the Character, by establishing a set of *acquired habitudes*; which, no less than those dependent upon original constitution and circumstances, help to determine the working of the 'Mechanism of Thought and Feeling.' In so *utilising* it, the Will can also *improve* it by appropriate discipline. [...] And thus in proportion as our Will acquires domination over our Automatic tendencies, the spontaneous succession of our Ideas and the play of our Emotions show the influence of its habitual control; while our Character and Conduct in Life come to be the expression of our best

marionette's non-conscious movements, for the human body to acquire a habit, there must first be a certain amount of consciousness and will, followed by a process of deliberate learning and repetition, trial and error. After the habit is ingrained, the body acts out the habit without need for further conscious interruption. The acquisition of habits is the mediator in which *the body attains grace through knowledge* – James describes a possibility for human organic life that Kleist thought impossible; a balance, equilibrium and control without any need of the controlling force of either a puppet-master or god.

practice makes perfect

Rather than the empty being of the puppet which relies on an external operator in order to move, James affirms the human body's potential to be at least partially liberated from external animating forces.[21] The human body can not only exist and move autonomously, but due to its *inner* '*plasticity*,' its capacity for change, can learn new patterns of behaviour, thus continually evolving and refining itself. Moreover, the human organic capacity for change, although bringing about a change in the body's structure, does not endanger its overall integrity; it need not be destabilising. The body can act and interact with a given stimulus, not merely receive, but put into practice, until the structure of the body itself is changed. The process of changing is therefore a combination of activity and passivity – habit is a process by which one can adapt and change one's body and oneself. James uses the example of learning to play the piano. At first there is a will to learn, and during learning the whole body is involved, every move thought about consciously – the rigidity of the piano structure dominates the as yet untrained body: pressing a piano key involves the hand, the whole arm, the position of the back and head, breathing is stilted; the body is awkward and inflexible. Later the impulse is no longer spread over the entire body but is focussed on specific organs which, using only the minimum amount of muscles, creates a more efficient use of energy. The piano and the body now work together, neither is dominated or controlled by the other; one could say the piano plays the body as much as the body the piano.[22] There is a mutual dependency. Not only here has practice made perfect in

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Intellectual energies, directed by the Motives which we *determinedly elect* as our guiding principles of action.'

[21] Cf. James, 'Are We Automata?' *Mind* 4, 1879, pp. 5-17; and Milic Capek, 'James's early criticism of the automatism theory,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15:1, 1954, pp. 260-279.

[22] Cf. Brian Inglis, *Trance: A Natural History of Altered States of Mind*, London: Grafton Books, 1989, pp. 9-10 for accounts of such phenomena written by piano players.

the sense that there is an equilibrium between body and piano, but there is also *a release from conscious intervention* as '[c]onsciousness is only intense when nerve-processes are hesitant. In rapid, automatic, habitual action it sinks to a minimum. [...] Where indecision is great, consciousness is agonisingly intense.'[23] As does Kleist, James sees consciousness as signifying hesitation and choice – consciousness slips in when a new action is performed haltingly. While learning, one continually 'interrupts' oneself and consciousness is far more present; but when learned, the whole movement becomes involuntary and fluid – the awkwardness experienced in the process of learning is *forgotten*, as is the act of playing itself: *as thought grows dimmer and weaker, grace emerges more brilliantly and decisively.* The reduction of self-conscious intervention in the activity of the body allows the now trained body to make precise, decisive movements without the stutter of hesitation. Here, rather than knowledge representing a 'fall from grace,' the human organism acquires grace through its own mental and physiological capabilities, learning, and ability to change.

Such acquired habits, according to James, create 'paths' in the central nervous system, becoming more and more deeply inscribed with each subsequent repetition – an organic modification which '[o]nce *fixed* in the growing brain, becomes a part of the normal fabric, so that it may endure to the end of life, like the scar of a wound.'[24] Old habits die hard. These paths once woven into the fabric of the brain, cannot easily be erased, so although a habit is acquired by an initial plasticity, this become 'set,' encrusted, imprinted indelibly, *a bodily memory which is not consciously reiterated.*[25] The mind and the body, after receiving deliberate conscious training, acquire habits which can be performed again and again without interruption – the inner paths or lines become like a puppet's 'strings' moving the limbs at one extremity, while remaining held fast to the central nervous system as the centre of gravity; a limited movement, and as such, 'graceful.'

Before, when I was upright, not passively dominated by the images through the window, my encounters with outside encouraged me to recreate my walk. I smiled to myself for the first time at the thought of being able to make my past disappear, by removing the traces of it through the expression of my legs; or even, if I was particularly clever, of being able to write myself a different past by altering the expression of my legs. At one point I adopted a stiff-legged motion - the top half of my torso leaning forwards as though I were ascending a steep hill, slicing through a high

[23] James, *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 142.
[24] James, *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 149. Such an idea of inner change was noted long before James by the Swiss biologist and philosopher, Charles Bonnet, whose *Essai de psychologie* (1754) suggested that the repetition of the nervous current in the body during habitual activity made a change in the structure of the body which was fortified by continuous repetition. Cf. George Boas' introduction to Maine de Biran, *The Influence of Habit on the Faculty of Thinking*, p. 19.
[25] I go into this later in the chapter in relation to Bergson's notion of 'habit memory.'

wind. I was practising for battle, and I felt I was a knife, splitting the air, the crowds, my clothes. I wore a sturdy purple garment as my knees had grown so sharp. I went barefoot so I could read with more detail, the Braïlle of the ground beneath my feet. The new sharpness and attention of my body also affected the sharpness of my vision; I saw more clearly, but not with my eyes, I sliced through to the core of things. Typical everyday events grew to have significance in their displacement. All decoration, everything superfluous, became poison I could not swallow. All production, artifice and contrivance hurt. I kept to the ground, the cracks in the pavement, the random stones and glass scattered on the road, the flicker of the cinema image, the grass and trees which grew where they shouldn't. Any my legs.

It was also at this time that I got my pin.[26]

Once a habit has been acquired, during the acting out of it one becomes, however temporarily, free from conscious intervention – one knows what to do and how to do it efficiently. This kind of movement, free from hesitation, would seem to come to rest at one pole of what Kleist called 'grace' – grace according to the realm of the puppet. When habit is fully embodied then, does one become passive – attaining knowledge only to submerge it behind the action of the habit? Is one's initially willed conscious control taken over by the habit? Moreover, how different really is habit from instinct? As this kind of non-conscious[27] activity seems to occur naturally as instinct in other areas of organic life without any need to resort to the learned acquisition of habits, is habit just a form of replacement for the more deeply buried instinctual aspects of human life?

Other forms of natural life are often seen as mysteriously intelligent, in their ability to survive and function instinctively according to their own innate rules. Without consciousness or hesitation they seem to 'know' what they need and to know what to do in order to get it. Sharks and leopards are impressive, but terrifying in their seemingly non-consciousless skill and agility to hunt. These are timeless behaviours; the chicken lays a perfect ovoid, 'Egg you are prefect. You are white. – To you, I dedicate the beginning of time. To you, I dedicate the first moment.'[28] The bird moves in harmony with air currents without having to consciously learn how. There is an inbuilt 'perfection' or 'grace' in nature, without need for a process of conscious learning followed by forgetting, as happens with acquired habits.

Consider the cattle, grazing as they pass you by: they do not know what is meant by yesterday or today, they leap about, eat, rest, digest, leap about again, and so from morn till night and from day to

[26] An extract from Geldo's diary, written shortly after her long incarceration.
[27] I use the term 'non-conscious' here to avoid falling into the realm, just yet, of the 'unconscious.'
[28] Clarice Lispector, 'The Egg and the Chicken,' *The Foreign Legion*, trans. Giovanni Pontiero, New York: New Directions, 1992, pp. 47.

day, fettered to the moment and its pleasure or displeasure, and thus neither melancholy nor bored. This is a hard sight for man to see; for though he thinks himself better than the animals because he is human, he cannot help envying them their happiness – what they have, a life neither bored nor painful, is precisely what he wants, yet he cannot have it because he refuses to be like an animal. A human being may well ask an animal: 'Why do you not speak to me of your happiness but only stand and gaze at me?' The animal would like to answer, and say: 'The reason is I always forget what I was going to say' – but then he forgot this answer too, and stayed silent: so that the human being was left wondering.[29]

Nietzsche's description of the cow's continual forgetting, its ability to exist in and for each moment without being aware of or accountable for it, is perhaps one of the appeals of habitual activity when it leads to consciousness and indecision being 'switched off,' however temporarily. The acting out of a habit allows one to both *nowhere* and *now here*; a being in and for the moment. As an escape from the consciousness of self and time, habit is an escape from memory, both personal and historical – it is a way of just being, of being 'fettered' to the moment. In this case there may be a willing surrender of the self, subjectivity and responsibility to habitual activity, which belies a desire to rekindle a 'lost' authenticity of the instinctive body, an authenticity which animals seem to maintain. This leads to the 'inscribed' movements of habitual activity coming to serve as simulated instincts, and as such provide compensation for the loss of naturally instinctive action in which one knew what to do without resorting to intellectual or moral motives. Doubt can be eliminated.

To act instinctively is one mode of grace, according to Kleist.[30] The dancer in the Marionette Theatre essay tells of a bear he was asked to fence with. The bear's responses used only the minimum energy and movement because they were not burdened, complicated or interrupted by conscious indecision, thus maintaining balance and economy in movement. On one hand this complies with Kleist's proposition that without knowledge there is no doubt or hesitation, yet the narrator also describes how, '[i]t wasn't merely that [the bear]

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[29] Friedrich Nietzsche: *Untimely Meditations* (1888-9), trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 60.

[30] Kleist wrote in a letter to his friend Otto August Rühle, October 1806, *An Abyss Deep Enough*, p. 166, 'Every first motion, everything spontaneous is beautiful; but gnarled and crooked as soon as it comprehends itself. Oh, the intellect, the unhappy intellect.' Cf. also Kleist's anecdotal text, 'On thinking things over: a paradox,' *ibid.*, p. 217. Silz '*Über das Marionettentheater*,' p. 83-84, points out that 'Kleist was expressing in his essay a persistent wish of his age: to be able to act instinctively, without premeditation, and yet aright. One thing the dancer could never 'learn' from the puppets is how to eliminate his mind, for they have never had one to eliminate [...] The very capacity to delight in the primitive or mindless is a prerogative of thinking man. The ocean wave has no consciousness; it is the produce of physical forces; its beauty and grace are not *its* achievement but a mental experience of the human observer. And what we admire as the unthinking and therefore graceful actions of wild creatures, are probably quite conscious and businesslike from the creatures' point of view. It is we who dramatise and poeticise them.'

parried my thrusts like the finest fencer in the world: when I feinted to deceive him he made no move at all. No human fencer could equal his perception in this respect. He stood upright, his paw raised ready for battle, his eye fixed on mine as if he could read my soul there, and when my thrusts were not meant seriously he did not move.'[31] That the bear displays no uncertainty in its responses, remaining unfooled even by the false passes of the fencer, seems to imply that it has 'knowledge,' a wisdom or 'telepathy' which allows it to 'read the soul,' perceiving not merely what is in front of its eyes, but also truth behind falsity.[32] (The narrator also comments that when faced with the bear, '*I wasn't sure if I was dreaming.*'[33]) This ability to act or to 'know' without conscious awareness or hesitation comes across as an air of silent mystery, a wisdom perhaps lost to humans who evolved to become so clever they became confused and stupid. We will see a different Kleistian manifestation of this deeply embedded Knowledge when we look at his dramas and short stories in Chapter 2.

James describes how '[i]nstinct is usually defined as the faculty of acting in such a way as to produce certain ends, without foresight of the ends, and without previous education in the performance.'[34] With instinct, one 'knows' what to do; but one knows without knowing one knows; there is no need for self-reflection. If instinct is teleological, as James suggests, the aim and end of an instinctive action is already imprinted, fated even, and there is no need for the intervention of a conscious decision-making process, unlike learned habit which begins with more or less conscious decision. But if instinct aims to produce definite ends, how does the acting body 'know' of these ends – is it purely mechanical, oblivious to all else, or is there a form of consciousness in instinct?[35]

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[31] Kleist, 'Marionette Theatre,' p. 11. Graham, 'Concerning the Theology of Puppets,' p. 23, says of the bear, 'his every action and reaction is what we would call a reflex-action. The bear's short reflex-movements express the messages from his nerve centre with a similarly automatic immediacy. Thus he is the analogue, in the organic sphere, of the puppet.'

[32] Cixous describes the bear's self-centredness as 'a state of innocence, hence absolutely indifferent to being misled. [...] In a certain way, the bear reads in the soul and if we humans were not so busy looking into our own eyes, we would see what is happening in the eyes of the other. But generally, we mirror ourselves in the eyes of the other.' Cixous, 'Grace and Innocence,' p. 55. Deleuze describes the bear in a similar, though less 'romantic' light, 'Kleist is fascinated by bears; they are impossible to fool because their cruel little eyes see through appearances to the true 'soul of movement.'' Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, London: The Athlone Press, 1987, p. 268.

[33] Kleist, 'Marionette Theatre,' p. 10. [My italic].

[34] William James, 'Instinct,' *Instinct*, (ed.) Robert C. Birney and Richard C. Teevan, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1961, p. 1.

[35] The question of whether or not there is consciousness in instinct was much debated in the early 20th century. Cf. Knight Dunlap, 'Are There Any Instincts?' *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 14, 1919, pp. 307-311, and 'The Identity of Instinct and Habit,' *The Journal of Philosophy* 19:4,

According to the embryologist Raymond Ruyer, human life forms itself via the patterns of what might be called an innate *knowledge* – a 'skill' long forgotten by the adult human. The human, as an embryo, is a perfect self-shaping, self-sustaining and self enjoying entity, absolutely designed for survival and development, despite the odds – even if supplanted into the wrong place it will lodge itself where it can in order to continue its task: 'Although it seems to function chemically, it tends toward the correct response, the correct differentiation. It seems distracted because it cannot be distracted. It seems unconscious because it is conscious of what it does and nothing else.'[36] For Ruyer, the embryo is not without consciousness so much as *intensely conscious* of the process of its own development, the completion of its mission, but this is a non-reflective, non-distanced consciousness. The embryo does what it needs to do without prior 'training,' and without the distractions of conscious indecision, yet it is not merely robotic because it can *improvise*, albeit to a limited extent, in the wrong conditions, rather than simply functioning according to one pattern. A living form is a process involved in an ongoing *formative activity*: 'The organism forms itself with risks and perils, it is not formed [...] The living being is at the same time agent and 'material' of its own action.'[37] It is driven, and has a contracted and focussed consciousness, intended for survival. The 'telepathic' qualities Kleist's dancer admired in the bear are qualities we, as humans, had; a lost Knowledge, now forgotten or buried beneath too much conscious knowledge. Driven towards survival, we / the bear didn't / don't need to think beyond our immediate mission, and unlike the habit we perhaps use as compensation, we did not need to resort to deliberate repetition in order to self-inscribe the correct response.[38] We, who were as perfect and as timeless as the egg, became slow learners.

February 1922, pp. 85-94. Zing Yang Kuo, 'Giving up Instincts in Psychology,' *The Journal of Psychology* 18, 1921, pp. 645-664 responded to Dunlap's research by suggesting that instinct wasn't worthy of psychological study at all. Ronald Fletcher, *Instinct in Man*, London: Unwin University Books, 1957, gives a critical account of the history and development of theories of human instinct. Also useful for me have been, C. Lloyd Morgan, *Habit and Instinct*, New York: E. Arnold, 1896; Konrad Lorenz, 'Habit, Ritual and Magic,' trans. Marjorie Kerr Wilson, *German Essays on Science in the 20th Century*, (ed.) Wolfgang Schirmacher, New York: Continuum, 1989, pp. 179-197; Knight Dunlap, 'The Identity of Instinct and Habit,' *The Journal of Philosophy* 19:4, February 1922, pp. 85-94; and more recently, Stephen J. Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, London: Harvard University Press, 1977.

[36] Raymond Ruyer, 'There is no sub-conscious: Embryogenesis and memory,' *Diogenes* 142, Summer 1998, p.27.

[37] Ruyer, *La Genèse es formes vivantes*, quoted in Bogue, 'Art and Territory,' *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 96, Summer 1997, p. 473.

[38] Bogue, 'Art and Territory,' p. 473, points out the paradoxical nature of the embryologist: 'Embryologists are former embryos who, in the course of their morphogenesis, have developed a most complicated and indirect cognitive tool – adult human consciousness – with which they try to

Who knows what germ shines in each egg-bearing cell? In each cell an egg is suddenly born. In each one, a limpid but inhuman teeming goes on, the stratifications of an arrested universe.[39]

If instinct is not learned, but already *known*, as Ruyer claims, it is a fundamental condition of the body which allows one to grow, develop and survive. In comparison, it is paradoxical that habit, always learned, can be more stubborn – it doesn't easily change its pattern once it has become ingrained by repetition: 'An adult is more automatic, more mechanised than the embryo it was, the embryo that had to improvise, or use its memory to remake the structures that are the conditions for these very automatisms.'[40] On one hand, instinct can be disruptive to habitual activity: the onset of puberty for example, throws all that has become habitual into disarray, while on the other hand, instinct has inbuilt limits: a living creature, while developing, cannot mutate beyond the boundaries of its 'theme,' and, as James described, while instinctive action has a goal, a habit, initially willed, could be acquired in relation to a wide variety of possibilities, some of them arbitrary to the survival of the organism, so that sometimes habit dominates instinct.[41]

Even if one prefers a 'mechanical' account of instinct to Ruyer's quasi-Platonism, the crucial difference between habit and instinct is that when a habit is learned it must *begin* with conscious awareness. It can be thought of as a kind of second 'knowledge,' as Cixous suggests, when she defines two sorts of 'innocence,' the first which 'has to be lost, the second to be earned,' 'The second innocence is precisely the grace one gives to oneself.'[42] Whereas instinctive behaviour arises from below the threshold of representation – with habit, *one must first learn in order to forget.*

A habit once learned leads in some respects to behaviour patterns which are similar to those determined by instinct; they have in common the ability to trigger bodily responses and activities which operate without conscious awareness or hesitation. Where they differ is

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learn what every embryo already knows: how to grow in to a mature individual.' And Samuel Butler, *Life and Habit*, (1878), London: Wildwood House, 1981, p. 61, commented that 'there is no human in the whole world who knows consciously and articulately what a half-hatched chicken's egg knows unconsciously.'

[39] Antonin Artaud, 'Description of a Physical State,' *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, trans. Victor Corti, London: John Calder, 1978, p. 57.

[40] Ruyer, 'There is no Subconscious,' p. 46.

[41] A woman who survived the Clapham rail disaster in 1988, described a scene in the upturned rail carriage after the crash: 'Surrounded by debris and injured people, I can remember one man picking up a newspaper and starting to read. To make things worse, the guy next to him said: 'Excuse me that's my newspaper.'' Quoted in *The Independent on Sunday*, 10 October 1999. We will see later in Chapter 3 how more erratic 'idiosyncrasies' of habit can also come to dominate socially 'acceptable' habitual behaviours.

that as habit is learned initially, it begins with greater or lesser degrees of will and choice in relation to the present time, situation etc., while instinct develops, within limits, the already written 'theme' or innate tendency of the organism which lies dormant, waiting to be set in motion.[43] Strangely 'fated,' instinct is driven from an innate capacity that shares its 'theme' with all other creatures of the same species, while a habit can be acquired with particular relation to a group or individual, in a particular way in a particular space. However, where habits are acquired with initial conscious awareness of one's surroundings, occupation or even idiosyncrasies, during the acting out of the habit when it is ingrained into the body, there is, as with instinct, no need for this consciousness at all. Habit could perhaps then be described as a *prosthetic instinct*, a way of simulating a mode of 'instinctive' or automatic action, appropriate to the contemporary world. Habit is perhaps an 'acceptable' mode of instinct, a way of keeping at bay more 'socially unacceptable' instincts which always were, from the outset, beyond *willed* conscious control.[44] Though of course, one can always develop and maintain 'bad habits.'

habit and adaptability[45]

The process of habituation is a central mediation between self and world, inner and outer experience. But this mediation involves, as we have seen, the transferral of what is inner to conform to what is outer. Hence habit has often been treated as a contamination of the inner world. In the following pages I will compare Bergson's critical view of habituation with Merleau-Ponty's more positive incorporation of habit into the inner life of beings. However, I will suggest too that neither 'negative' nor 'positive' accounts adequately comprehend the problematic nature of habit.

Henri Bergson, writing around the same time as James, criticises habit for bringing about the modern tendency of humans to *behave like simple machines*, ordering their time and activity according to mechanised principles. He distinguishes between instincts, which he sees as geared ultimately towards effective actions, and the rigid mechanisms of bodily habits which reveal themselves to the onlooker 'unwittingly' as 'gestures.'

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[42] Cixous, 'Grace and Innocence,' p. 70, p. 67. This theme will be taken up again in Chapter 4.
[43] Cf. Knight Dunlap, 'The Identity of Instinct and Habit,' pp. 86-89.
[44] We see this opinion as early as Aristotle, who, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925, p. 28, said: 'Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.'
[45] I will return to many of the themes initially brought up in this section in subsequent chapters, but particularly in Chapter 4.

In his 1910 book, *Laughter*, Bergson attributes the main thrust of the comic to the way the human body unwittingly reveals its acquired habits: 'The attitudes, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine [...] enabling us to see man as a jointed puppet.'[46] A far cry from Kleist's celebration of the puppet. Although learned by the initial plasticity of the body, once learned such habits make themselves known by their mechanical *inelasticity*, 'something mechanical encrusted on the living,' a kind of physical obstinacy, or inability to adapt once acquired; the momentum of the muscles follows an habitually learned pattern, regardless of the circumstances. A person lost to their habits might go to change their clothes to go out and find themselves automatically getting into bed. Such rigidity when seen and exposed is comic and laughter its corrective, breaking the pattern of stiffness with an uncontrollable convulsion of the body. Laughter 'softens down whatever the surface of the social body may retain of mechanical inelasticity.'[47]

In Bergson's view, habit is a rudimentary form of time consciousness which models itself on the static nature of space and material objects, as opposed to expressing the true essence of heterogeneous duration. The rhythms of habitual movements are a reflection or mimesis of an environment or a code of practice and there is nothing creative or inventive about them.[48] For Bergson, the body caught in an habitual activity becomes focussed totally on what it has picked up from the external world or set of tools upon or around which the habit is moulded. Habit leads to one's forgetting one's individuality, and more importantly one's forgetting how to live and experience time with any sense of freedom or autonomy.

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[46] Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell, Los Angeles: Green Integer, 1999, p. 32. Bergson is here extending his more general critique of mechanisation, which began with his first major study, *Time and Free Will*, to which I have referred in the Introduction.

[47] Bergson, *Laughter*, p. 23.

[48] Cf. Charles Camic, 'The Matter of Habit,' *American Journal of Sociology* 91:5, March 1986, pp. 1039-1087 for a more sociological perspective on habit than I will attempt here. Given the space of another thesis, I would ideally include at this point and later, theories of habit, crowd behaviour and social mimesis. Particularly interesting and influential to me in this respect have been Freud, 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego' (1921), *Civilisation, Society and Religion*, trans. James Strachey, London: The Penguin Freud Library Vol. 12, 1991, pp. 91-178; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993, with its discussion of what he conceives as 'habitus.' Also fascinating, though not unproblematic are Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1982; Elias Cannetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. Carol Stewart, London: Penguin Books, 1973; Gabriel Tarde, *On Communication and Social Influence*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969, pp. 177-294. Useful secondary sources have been Robert Nye, *The Origin of the Crowd*, London: Sage, 1975; Serge Moscovici, *The Age of the Crowd*, trans. J.C. Whitehouse, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; George Rudé, *The Crowd in History*, London: Serif, 1995; Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd*

Gilbert Ryle, writing on habit a few decades later, opposes what he calls 'dispositions' with 'habits' – the former can be 'refined,' while the latter tend rather to get 'stuck.' Moreover, according to Ryle, habit also brings about a radical sense of discontinuity in the self, which he refers to as the 'systematic elusiveness of 'I',' a non-coincidence of consciousness with its own acts, leaving one 'condemned to penultimacy.'[49] In the case of habit, as one might not even be clear in one's memory of what one just did; even penultimate reflection is doomed. For Ryle, one can never judge one's own actions with the objectivity one can apply to judging another's actions as one can never be fully free of oneself. ''I' is like my own shadow; I can never get away from it, as I can get away from your shadow. There is no mystery about this constancy, but I mention it because it seems to endow 'I' with a mystifying uniqueness and adhesiveness. 'Now' has something of the same besetting feeling.'[50] 'I' and 'now' are mysterious because they can never coincide with conscious awareness. Once a habit has become so ingrained that its acting out is no longer materialised as a mental image, particularly if the habit remains uninterrupted, after performing an habitual action, one often remembers nothing of its occurrence, like a Nietzschean cow. The amnesia brought about during habitual activity is as though a hole or a gap in the stream of consciousness, producing the feeling of there having been unaccountable moments. What Ryle calls the discontinuity of 'I,' Virilio refers to as 'picnolepsy,' a lapse or break in conscious awareness during which the body still functions: 'These absences, which can be quite numerous – hundreds every day which most often pass completely unnoticed by others around [are] for the picnoleptic as though nothing has happened, the missing time never existed. [...] Without realising it, a little of life has simply escaped.'[51]

Merleau-Ponty argues against this de-individuating, de-vitalising view of habit, seeing habit rather as a 'body technique,' an acquired use of the body, which integrates the body and the self as one 'being.' Every new learned action is a positive step, a modification of the body, 'a new use of one's own body: it is to recast and enrich the body image.'[52] Habit can be seen in Merleau-Ponty's view as both practical and interactive. Our lived spaces are not containers within which we move around mindlessly, but within which we are

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in Late Nineteenth-Century France, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967; and David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969.

[49] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, London: Penguin Books, 1949, p. 186.

[50] Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, p. 189.

[51] Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, trans. Philip Beitchman, New York: Semiotext(e), 1991, pp. 9-10.

[52] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 73.

active and reactive components; one's environment is a space of relational interactions. For Merleau-Ponty then, habit is the means by which one obtains an intelligent, structured and harmonious interaction between oneself and one's environment.

Merleau-Ponty's take on habit is broad, including as part of the territory of habit, the act of speech which he describes as both an 'operation of intelligence,' and 'a motor phenomenon.'[53] In the same way, the body interacts with other aspects of the world. He calls this integration the 'corporeal schema,' a concept akin to Cixous' 'knowing without knowing;' I play the piano so well after a time that it is as though I were thinking with my fingers. I write this thesis now without having to glance down at my fingers as I type. The corporeal schema is an incorporated bodily sense and 'know-how,' a practical sense, a perspectival grasp of the world from the point of view of the body, the self and one's needs. When one moves in the world, this 'intelligence' and orientation of the body can occur without need for conscious awareness:

> A woman may, without any calculation, keep a safe distance between the feather in her hat and things which might break it off. She feels where the feather is just as we feel where our hand is. [...] the blind man's stick has ceased to be an object for him, and is no longer perceived for itself; its point has become an area of sensitivity, extending the scope and active radius of touch, and providing a parallel to sight. [...] To get used to a hat, a car or a stick is to be transplanted into them, or conversely, to incorporate them into the bulk of our own body. Habit expresses our power of dilating our being-in-the-world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments.'[54]

For Merleau-Ponty, then, habit remains open to 'refinement,' and is the means by which, in its environment or era, its clothes and social mannerisms, the body finds and projects 'grace.' He stresses the plasticity of the human organism, the primacy of nurture over nature (habit over instinct), and in a process of mutual adaptation, suggests that one moulds oneself according to one's environment or tools to hand, while also moulding things to suit the needs of the body. Habit, rather than being 'stuck,' is open to continual

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[53] For Merleau-Ponty, speech draws one out of oneself and forces one to engage with the other through mutual dialogue; Cf. *The Phenomenology*, p. 194, 'Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world. In the present dialogue, I am freed from myself, for the other person's thoughts are certainly his; they are not of my making, though I do grasp them the moment they come into being, or even anticipate them. And indeed, the objection which my interlocutor raises to what I say draws from me thoughts which I had no idea I possessed, so that at the time that I lend him thoughts, he reciprocates by making me think too.' Nick Crossley, *The Social Body: Habit, Identity and Desire*, London: Sage, 2001, p. 80, claims that in Merleau-Ponty's view, 'speech is the body of reflective thought, its 'flesh.' It is the mode between subjective and objective – subjective become object, projected outwards. For Merleau-Ponty, speech is a learned habit, a body modification like learning to play a game or an instrument.'

[54] Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology*, p. 143.

modification,[55] linking one's body to the external space within which the habit is contained and repeated – as though the entirety of actions, objects and space are all held within the same skin or 'crust.' Habit delimits a space, or a set of tools, it organises a field of activity within an environment and its objects in the same way that it organises the body – it creates a circuit of movements between things. Habit extends the body beyond the skin of the individual, enveloping both the organic and the non-organic into its circuit of movement as equal components. The body in habit needs its tools, its space, just as the tools and space need a body in order to be activated; both animate and determine each other. This kind of 'assimilation' into space of the habitual body in its environment hints at what Caillois refers to as 'homomorphy' in the mimicry or adaptation of insect life to its environment.[56] But with habitual activity there need not be any visible external 'mimicry,' the body does not necessarily change in appearance, but *through movement*, models itself around the functionality of its environment while *also* modifying the elements and arrangement of the environment to fit its movements.[57] Habit is not about 'blending in' so much as changing. Moreover, habit need not arise from an inbuilt instinct, so that where an animal might be 'pre-programmed' to 'fit in' to a particular environment, the human body is more flexible in its learned adaptability to a situation or environment; habit allows the body to continually evolve a complex set of mutual relationships between it, its environments and objects. So, on the one hand Bergson seeks to repel the habits that encrust the lived interior essence, while Merleau-Ponty feels no fear in incorporating these habits into the deepest recesses of the 'self.' Is Bergson simply being 'paranoid' about habit, or does his repulsion of the mechanics of habit spring from a deep necessity?

During the repetition of a habit, the body can seem to become in Bergson's critical sense, no more than a machine reproducing a set sequence of movements, and as such, habit is always at risk of *becoming mechanically fixated.* How is one to draw the line between 'good' and 'bad' habits, between welcome and invasive habits?

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[55] Crossley, *The Social Body*, p. 128, 'Habit is not a mechanical response and is not acquired in a mechanical fashion, but neither is it a reflective or intellectual phenomenon. It is a phenomenon which forces us to abandon each of these false alternatives in favour of a more existential focus upon our simultaneously meaningful and embodied manner of being-in-the-world.'

[56] Roger Caillois, 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia,' trans. John Shepley, *October* 31, Winter 1984, pp. 17-32. Caillois' discussion of the 'psychasthenia' that follows such assimilation will reappear in Chapter 4 in relation to metamorphic states of body and self in habit.

[57] Other defining factors that bear on different modes of occupying space relate to gender, race, age distinctions etc. – a vast area of research that I cannot go into here. Simon J. Williams and Gillian Bendelow, *The Lived Body: Sociological Themes, Embodied Issues*, London: Routledge, 1998, give a full and fascinating account of this. Likewise, Cf. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Subjectivity*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

I began to examine my movements and how I might control them *deliberately* rather than by accident, the day they took away the tweezers. I will not be stolen from again. At that time, I always used to sing the same song to myself while plucking out my hair. In that space, in those movements, neither dominant nor dominated, I belonged. I would be alone in my room and, although I couldn't see it, I didn't need to. I was it and it was me, we were intimate, the room and I. Each gesture I made was ruled by laws older in me than I could remember. Every movement I made was a pure movement, there was no hesitation as I had been here so many times before. I was as unaware of the movements and gestures my body was making as I was the shape of the tweezers; my friends – all objects together there in a mutual web of time and space. We were married harmoniously in our network of mutual relations, everything equal and particular – if one thing changed and betrayed the rest, everything would be lost. Hours would pass which I cannot tell of. Then one day there was an alien noise in the room, They entered and took the tweezers and forced me back to my self. I had thought I was Plucking, but instead I was sitting in front of the mirror drawing a picture of my face with the handle of the tweezers tipped with lipstick. It was an odd portrait, rather good though a little distorted, though They said I had drawn myself as a monster. If I had done this before, if this had been the true harmony of the Pluck, the pictures were now nowhere to be seen. I knew beyond doubt that someone had stolen my face. And I repeat, I repeat, I will not be stolen from again.[58]

To proceed with the question of the invasiveness of habit, a deepened account of interior life is necessary. Throughout this thesis, I will show that one can only explore the psychic role of habit dialectically in relation with accounts of what might be truly 'inner' about mental life. In the remainder of this chapter I will thus make my first move on this front by exploring Bergson's account of the true link between interiority and time: memory.

Bergson: habit and memory

In *Matter and Memory* Bergson outlines initially two distinct forms of memory: habit-memory and recollection. The first takes the form of motor mechanisms and is a function of the brain; the second of independent or spontaneous recollections and is part of the mind; where one *repeats* the past, the other *imagines* it. When memory works as a function of the brain as habit memory, it is closely akin to and a determining factor of an habitual action, whereas recollection involves summoning up an absent image, an image of a past event sustained intact, autonomously.

Habit memory according to Bergson is imprinted on the brain in a similar way to that in which James describes the imprint of a learned habit into the structure of the body; and like James' description of bodily habits, habit memory is acquired by a combination of learning and practice. 'Like every habitual bodily exercise, it is stored up in a mechanism

[58] Geldo, diary entry written shortly after her release from incarceration.

which is set in motion as a whole by an initial impulse, in a closed system of automatic movements which succeed each other in the same order, and together, take the same length of time.'[59] In contrast, during moments of recollection, one remembers the separate stages of learning something by heart, and each occasion will appear different to the others – each moment stands out as a definite event in a personal history; an image which is fundamentally maintained intact: 'The image, regarded in itself, was necessarily at the outset what it always will be.'[60] As it is a record of a unique set of elements or circumstances particular to a specific time and place, it cannot be repeated in an action, it can only be recalled as an image and thus keeps past time personal and clean. Where the memory of the event itself may be fleeting and spontaneous or may be dwelt on, the repetition of the lesson learned requires a fixed time, it is an action which has taken the form of nascent muscular movements which constitute a 'motor diagram' of 'acquired motor skills.' Or, as Mullarkey puts it, 'The habit of utilising an object organises various bodily movements together such that any one of these movements virtually contains the whole.'[61] No single moment of habit memory can exist without the rest of its sequence; if one was asked to describe how one plays the piano, the best description would be to sit down and play. Bergson describes how: 'The lesson once learned bears upon it no mark which betrays its origin and classes it in the past; it is part of my present, exactly like my habit of walking or writing; it is lived and acted, rather than represented.'[62] *It has no image.* Whereas recollection draws from past images which are preserved whole and intact, and affect conscious thought in the present in however a condensed and indeterminate form, habit-memory does not preserve images but triggers for sequential movements and actions, which it prolongs into the present moment, detaching it from a subjective time scale. 'Spontaneous recollection is perfect from the outset; time can add nothing to its image without disfiguring it; it retains in memory its place and date. On the contrary, a learned recollection passes out of time in the measure that the lesson is better known; it becomes more and more impersonal, more and more foreign to our past life.'[63] Habit memory is impersonal in the sense that it is 'para-temporal;' it belongs neither strictly to the past nor the present; it can be repeated in any appropriate situation, autonomously. When its patterned sequence is fully ingrained in the brain, it inserts itself into the body's actions without consciousness, and for this reason, as Casey describes, it is

[59] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 60.
[60] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 79.
[61] John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999, p. 49.
[62] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 81.
[63] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 83.

perhaps the most *radical* of Bergson's concepts of memory as it produces a threat to the 'uniqueness and power' of subjective recollection 'as a prototype for all remembering,' introducing 'the alarming notion that we can remember the past without reproducing it in *any* identifiable representational format.'[64] As habit memory has no image, when moving habitually, one has no conscious representation of what one is doing either at the time of action or after; one is given over to the habit, and it is the habit that *remembers* what one is doing and takes control.[65]

Habit memory while in the process of being acted out by the body, inhibits consciousness. In fact, Bergson sees consciousness itself as only possible when there is an unbalance between act and representation:

> When we mechanically perform an habitual action, when the somnambulist automatically acts his dream, [...] the representation of the act is held in check by the performance of the act itself, which resembles the idea so perfectly, and fits it so exactly that consciousness is unable to find room between them. *Representation is stopped up by action.*[66]

The greater the gap between the act and the idea of it, the more consciousness there will be. The gap between act and idea allows consciousness to awaken, disrupting the sequence of the habit. This is not to say that consciousness is completely *absent* during habitual activity, so much as temporarily suspended. And yet, memory is more elusive when one tries to grasp it consciously,[67] so in this respect memory images can sometimes depend on the suspension of consciousness brought about by habit.

Although the two kinds of memory just described are different to one another in that one repeats the past while the other imagines it, there is another important differentiation. Where habit memory is manifested via the body, by which Bergson also means the brain; memory images arise from a realm of *pure memory* which according to Bergson *cannot be actualised without changing in kind.* Pure memory for Bergson implies the survival of the past, the past is real.[68] He conceives a different dimension to account for the subsistence of

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[64] Edward S. Casey, 'Habitual Body and Memory in Merleau-Ponty,' *Man and World* 17, 1984, p. 40.
[65] Andrew Tallon, 'Memory and Man's Composite Nature according to Bergson,' *New Scholasticism* 67, 1973, p. 487, describes the kind of memory acquired by the body during repeated walks in a familiar town: 'One's body *knows* this city; one's body *recognises* this city ... One's body does not picture or imagine or think: it acts out, plays out, and this is its memory.'
[66] Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (1907), trans. Arthur Mitchell, New York: Dover Publications, 1998, p. 144.
[67] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 87: 'Concentrate your mind [...] you will feel that the complete image is there, but evanescent, a phantasm that disappears just at the moment when conscious activity tries to fix its outline.'
[68] In the sense of the classical definition of 'real' as that which 'endures.'

pure memory: a dimension of absolute virtuality. When a spontaneous memory is called up from the aggregate of memories which constitute the past, it moves from virtuality to actuality; two states which are different in kind, so that when actualised it becomes a present, active state, at which point it ceases to be a pure memory and becomes part of perception. Every type of actualised memory image is, as Deleuze describes: 'a corruption of pure memory, a descent from memory into an image which distorts it.'[69] Whereas a memory image or recollection actualises the past, bringing it more or less consciously into the present, pure memory *is* the past, it is all our past which we carry with us regardless of our consciousness of it. The virtual realm of pure memory is, like time, both real and beyond one's conscious control.

Deleuze defines the persistence of pure memory in Bergson as 'a virtual coexistence,' in which 'the past and the present do not denote two successive moments, but two elements which coexist.'[70] This changes the relationship between what has passed and what is present; the past stretches into the present, coexisting with each 'new' moment, it is para-temporal in a similar way to habit memory. 'The ordinary determinations are reversed: of the present, we must say at every instant that it 'was,' and of the past, that it 'is,' that it is eternally, for all time. This is the difference in kind between the past and the present. [...] What Bergson calls 'pure memory' has no psychological existence. This is why it is called *virtual*, inactive, and unconscious.'[71] Although referring to the 'unconscious,' this is not a Freudian conception of the unconscious; the two extreme poles of mental life, memory and action, are not separate topographies isolated by repression, as they are for Freud; with Bergson they interrelate dynamically. As Lecercle points out, 'In *Matter and Memory* we find a non-Freudian conception of the unconscious, as the totality of the objects which at any single moment exist beyond the subject's consciousness. Both in space (the objects outside my field of vision) and in time (the objects my memory might recall).'[72] The unconscious is the virtual: it consists of every moment of life as pure memories. While the present is always passing, the past 'preserves itself in itself [...] it is the whole, integral past; it is *all* our past which coexists with each present.'[73] The present does not 'wait' for a 'new'

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[69] Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard, London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1973, pp. 57-8.
[70] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York: Zone Books, 1988, p. 59.
[71] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 55.
[72] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, 'Berkeley: Bishop, or Busby? Deleuze on Cinema,' *Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics*, (eds.) Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne, London: ICA, 1991, p. 199.
[73] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 59.

present in order to become past; the past already coexists with the present. 'Step by step, as perception is created, the memory of it is projected beside it, as the shadow falls beside the body. But, in the normal condition, there is no consciousness of it.'[74] One lives continually on the verge between two realms: one passing and one past which change, form and reform in relation to every passing present, an evolving whole which we carry with us, often unaware of how one's memory, if not actualised to consciousness, influences one's actions in the present.

According to Deleuze, to move between the present and the past requires a leap from where we are to *where the past is*: 'We place ourselves *at once* in the past; we leap into the past as into a proper element. We only grasp at the past at the place where it is in itself, and not in ourselves, in our present.'[75] The present is always passing in a continual flow, while to leap into the past involves a mental stoppage in which conscious action in the present becomes subordinate to the free play of pure memory in the past. At this point something both interesting and paradoxical occurs in Bergson's account. While Bergson has made great efforts to distinguish between habit and pure memory, he seems also to suggest that it is precisely in habitual states that pure memory might rise to the surface. In order for pure memory to be released, without being distorted by conscious actualisation as memory images, Bergson describes how:

> If almost the whole of our past is hidden from us because it is inhibited by the necessities of present action, it will find strength to cross the threshold of consciousness in all cases where we renounce the interests of effective action to replace ourselves, so to speak, in the life of dreams. Sleep, natural or artificial, brings about an indifference of just this kind.[76]

In general, consciousness or effective action in the world must be suspended – in order for one to make the 'leap' that Deleuze describes into the realm of pure memory, one must be 'indifferent' to present action. The body's focus on action in the world is most suspended when asleep, and the mind no longer has to cope with situations that demand conscious decisions and choice. One can dream, and enter into the realm of virtual memory images. Now, what is most interesting here is Bergson's suggestion of sleep either 'natural or artificial.' Clearly, he is referring to artificial somnambulism, now known as hypnosis, an area that was to remain of interest to him throughout his life.[77] However, earlier Bergson

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[74] Bergson, *Mind Energy: Lectures and Essays*, Trans. H. Wildon Carr, London: Macmillan, p. 128.
[75] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 58.
[76] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 194.
[77] Cf. Bergson's early essay, 'De la simulation inconsciente dans l'état d'hypnotisme' (1886), *Écrits et paroles*, (ed.) M.R. Mossé Bastide, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957, pp. 525-531.

described in *Laughter* how, while lost in habit, 'the soul can be fascinated and hypnotised by the materiality of a simple action.'[78] So, one doesn't merely shield or protect oneself from unexpected encounters in the extended world during habit, one can also become hypnotised by one's movements, through a combination of intense focus, bodily repetition, and the suspension of conscious interruption, all of which are techniques used by the hypnotist to bring on a state of 'artificial sleep,' and unleash the workings of the unconscious. Would habit then, as with sleep, open out the realm of the virtual? Would one exist, for the duration of a fully ingrained habit, as though awake, but in a dream? If the virtual were to be actualised and become a memory image, it would be 'distorted;' thus if one did encounter the virtual, this encounter must remain below the threshold of consciousness in order to be purely virtual. In this respect, the amnesia which seems to follow an habitual action would not preclude that there is mental activity going on during an habitual action, so much as that the mental activity is not remembered, as it never crosses the threshold into consciousness.

The hypnotic element inherent in habitual activity might provide an example of what Bergson describes as artificial sleep, but although this artificial sleep might on the one hand dissociate the body from effective conscious action, allowing the free play of memory or other unconscious images to emerge; on the other hand, as I suggested earlier, there is an enormous vulnerability of the body to the exterior world in habit. F.L. Marcuse, among others as we will see, describes hypnosis as 'An altered state of the organism originally and usually produced by a repetition of stimuli in which *suggestion is more effective than usual.*'[79] Thus, the hypnotised / habitual subject becomes more suggestible than usual while caught in habit. Although hypnotised by its own actions which might have been more or less consciously taken up, there is also the possibility that during habit one becomes suggestible to the will of a puppet master, or god. Is one, then, as Merleau-Ponty would have it, master of oneself in habit, or is one passive to the rules of another?

There is in fact a tension in Bergson's account at this point. For Bergson, to lose self-consciousness, becoming invisible to oneself, is also to appear 'naked' to someone watching, in particular, the activity of a *personal* habit. Personal or private habits, as opposed to demonstrating a 'skill,' such as playing an instrument, or enacting a role as part of one's social demands, need solitude; in order to become 'lost' in an activity one cannot be interrupted. The social 'crust' becomes a personal 'crust' – were there suddenly an audience standing behind one, not only would the habit be broken, but one would find oneself

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[78] Bergson, *Laughter*, p. 28.
[79] F.L. Marcuse, *Hypnosis: Fact and Fiction*, London: Pelican Books, 1982, p. 21. [My italic].

horribly exposed. The crust of habit might become like a skin, both protecting the body in the extended world like a suit of armour, while also allowing one to customise one's personal activities in relation to the patterns of a private space, but it is a skin which is particularly thin.[80] A private habit is especially vulnerable, providing on the one hand, a way of keeping the body safe by adapting it to the familiarities of one's own space or code of practice, while on the other hand allowing one to fool oneself that one can be undifferentiated, a part of things, invisible. The sleep of habit can be broken, one's strings can be cut, if one is exposed during habit to the manipulation and suggestions of an onlooker. While habit therefore seems particularly open to the external world, it also paradoxically can come to remove one from the world, so that the world can only impinge through shocks and interruptions. In the former sense, one is vulnerable to manipulation, in the latter sense, one is vulnerable to shock and disorientation. The complex structure of this vulnerability will be the subject of the next two chapters.

Bergson's theory of habit and memory thus opens out two possible routes for habit. On one hand, while lost in habit, one's vulnerability to externally manipulating forces and the threat of disruption may become more acute; while on the other hand, habit can allow one, distracted from conscious awareness of the present, to enter into the virtual realm of the unconscious and the visionary – the implications and possibilities that might arise from this will be the theme of Chapter 4. An explanation of the fundamental structure of these two potentially conflicting routes will, I hope, enable me to uncover the true nature of habit. In all its mystery.

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[80] In fact, the individual while caught up in their habits becomes dangerously open to external suggestion. I explore this in Chapter 2 in relation to hypnosis, and again in Appendix 2.

Chapter 2 sleepwalkers: habit, hypnosis, and 'suggestion'

I am alone in the centre of a long rectangular room with faded yellow walls and a hard shell varnished wooden floor. I can still blink. I am unsteady on my feet.

The wall opposite me is a mirror in which I see myself holding itself up against a blast, and no woody roots to hold me down. My arms are stretched up over my head in an arc, from side to side and side to side. My face is all determination for uprightness; wet with sweat, they think I weep, well let them. I am trapped in the never-ending moment of concentration. On the ground, the two pointing points in pink silk shoes are the daytime link to gravity. I balance on the tips and my ankles tremble with the maintenance of position; my many toes must not burst the seams, spilling the wet bulk of feet onto the floor, cementing me to this spot in a footly crucifixion. Concentration melts only rarely and when it does, I can remember that I never meant to learn to balance like this, so precarious, celebrated for control. Hurrah! Hurrah. I remain here because if the shoes were off, my ankles not shuddering, it would be my neck that shudders as I parade back and forth across the dining room with the telephone directory on my head. I *know* I was born for non-domestic circus, trapeze, tight-rope, clown; they *know* so they chain me to home. Yes, my skill is a dedication to balance, to seeming seamless, smoothing junctions and transitions between am and appear. But the circus is the artificial to which I belong.

They are short-sighted; seams demand spectacles for which they never cough up. 'And what do you do in the evenings?' pleasant, pleased, without eyes, they ask me – as though I would have energy left after balancing all day!

They ask, so I tell them, the earless, so that they will not repeat.

'When the light is down, out of posture, I creep low around this room, searching for the crack. My legs are longer and multiplied; I skim lightly over walls and ceiling, all surfaces terrain, ground, magnetic. I move with neither sound nor footprint, with jerky grace so that even found I could not be crumpled. My balance? Yes, perfect: circus, take me! My body centred and surrounded by legs, too many to fall.

When I can't inhabit the night, when day doesn't end, when there is no night, I remain cabled to the surface. When they've gone home, undoing day, slouched in front of that mirror, in torchlight, I pick the hard skin off the feet with the pin. I post it down through the crack, and every few times shine the torch down to see what is growing from dead me. One day the crack will be the door, the exit from the room, the yellow, the varnish, the mirror. The floor will collapse and I will fall in day form, to where I can only get at night. At night, beneath the crack is my studio, the underground where I work, the beneath where I can spin.[1]

I can make you ...

You should see her dance! Her whole heart and soul are in it, you see, and her body is all harmony, so carefree and relaxed, as if there were nothing else, as if she had not a single other thought or sensation; and in that moment, undoubtedly everything else ceases to exist for her.[2]

This moment in which Werther, the saddest, most broken-hearted of men, describes Lotte's dance, is not without a tinge of envy, for he sees her as not only liberated of all cares

[1] Geldo, a reminiscence from her teenage years prior to incarceration. It reminds me in some ways of the artist, Louise Bourgeois, though Geldo claims this text inspired my video, 'Spinner.'

[2] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, trans. Michael Hulse, London: Penguin Books, 1989, p. 40. I am using this section of Goethe's text allegorically as I don't intend to go into this particular text in more detail.

and self-consciousness, but also as an unobtainable being. She is, in his eyes, in her dance, absolutely located in her body and movements, in 'harmony;' she need think about 'nothing else,' by which he is inadvertently referring to himself and his troubled relationship to her. She appears to him as neither possessed by, nor available for possession by him, so he can do nothing but watch from the wings in order to see her being 'taken over,' a puppet on the strings of music; music and movement combined have cast her into a trance, and he sees her as he would love her to appear to him, abandoned to *his* rhythms, in his command. She dances but at the same time she sleeps – she is lost to him; he can never know her dreams...

But.

Perhaps Werther is not alone in the wings. Does Lotte *really* lose herself in her dance – can she do that in public, her every movement followed by such a solemn gaze? Or does she masquerade her abandonment precisely *for* Werther's eye? And if she does the latter, is this to entice or torture Werther; to show him finally, once and for all, that he'll never be able to contain her? On the other hand, if her dance is 'intended' for Werther's eye, even if she is not consciously 'aware' of this, then quite the opposite of being 'free,' she is determined and controlled by him, and his sorrow, even though he too might not be consciously 'aware' of this, is a farce.

Or is it this interpretation that is the farce? Perhaps Lotte really does lose herself in her dance with no care for what either Werther or I have to say.[3]

All that is clear here, at this point, and this comes as no revelatory observation, is that all four of us, Goethe, Lotte, Werther and I stand awkwardly together in the wings, trying to get beyond our selves and our thoughts in order to find a language for, and an understanding of, the shadow spaces operating beyond our conscious awareness, trying to figure out how to read, write, recognise, believe in, or feel another's autonomy. Both Lotte and Werther are, of course, fictional, creations of Goethe. This thesis too is fictional; I am not a good puppet master, I have trouble making words say what I want them to say just as I have trouble with the notion of 'truth.' I am tempted to 'apologise,' and mumble, 'well – who or what isn't fictional?' But I will resist that conclusion for the moment.

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[3] Another possible reading of the Goethe / Werther / Lotte relationship can be found in Pierre Hadot, "Only the Present is our Happiness:' The Value of the Present Instant in Goethe and in Ancient Philosophy,' *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, trans. Michael Chase, London: Blackwell, 1995, pp. 217-237. Hadot reads the love scene between Helen and Faust in Goethe's *Faust* part two in terms of a

Habit, as I suggested at the end of Chapter 1, through repetition, the fixing and narrowing of attention, and the suspension of conscious awareness, not dissimilar to losing oneself in dance,[4] can lead to a form of hypnosis, a trance state or waking sleep in which what Merleau-Ponty describes as a mutual coincidence between one's body and self might occur, and might lead too to the appearance of 'grace' in movement in a Kleistian sense.[5] However, this can be a dangerous state to be in if one is *really* given over to it, and the situation or conditions around one aren't right – as we saw at the end of Chapter 1, hypnosis comes at the expense of an increased susceptibility to suggestion. Lotte may or may not have abandoned herself to music, rhythm and movement, but if she has, does this make her more or less open to Werther's suggestions, the power of his gaze? If the answer is more, then rather than his being alienated from her, one could say he is, with his gaze, dictating her every move. I move my eyes to the right and she follows, I throw back my head and so does she – as Werther's puppet she may or may not be aware of her status, the true fiction of this we will never know – she may be telepathic or mimetic, taut on a string of looks. The habit of a child in school who rises when the teacher raises their hand at the end of class is really not the same thing – the moment of mimesis is so directed and so brief. A sustained state of habit / trance in which self-conscious time is lost can be far more deadly. Let us suppose that the music, the rhythm, the movement, takes over a Lotte body, leaving her conscious mind suspended. Is it this that Kleist desired when he placed the empty controllability of the puppet above all human attempts to achieve grace? Is grace nothing more than obedience to an external controlling force? One can see the attraction for the puppet master – a puppet will do everything one makes it do, and will never talk back unless, in the mood for conflict, one *directs* it to talk back. But is there not also a sense in which event he mods inflexible of puppets harbours its own secret, and eludes the puppet master's will?

The puppet, often far more challenging than its outward appearance betrays, plays incessantly on the fact that the master can never be sure of the absolute nature of their influence over and control of such a seemingly consciousless being. And does not a part of a

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desire for presence, for acknowledgement of the present instant. This might equally be applied to Werther's admiration of Lotte, her ability to be 'present to the instant.'

[4] I have found useful for the relationship between habit, trance and dance, Gilbert Rouget, *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relation between Music and Possession*, trans. Brunhilde Biebuyk, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985. Unfortunately I cannot take a more anthropological view of trance states in other cultures because of space and because the orientation of those trance states veers too far away from my main subject. However, I do look at habit and trance in relation to 'spiritual exercises' in Chapter 4.

puppet's fascination stem from the fact that they are, even if only temporarily in the case of a human puppet, outside the realm of consciousness, and therefore mysterious and unknowable? 'You're somewhere else, somewhere I can never be.' If Werther did control Lotte, he could make her turn her gaze *towards* him, catch his eye, be bewitched and fall instantly in love with him. No, he *prefers* her, and most likely has no choice in the matter, as an unknowable being, a mute face with her unreadable inward expression. Perhaps one can make her move, write her, but one can never really control her because her time and her psychology are her own – either she has no depth, or, infuriatingly, she keeps her psychology secret beneath her impassive surface. Whichever, she only teases me in allowing me to think myself in control. This is, in the end, a masochistic flirtation.

Like Werther, I can only invent a Lotte. I don't trust Goethe's description of the dancing woman, but I'm not sure I trust myself either – can I think her without animating her with my own problematic desires?

In this chapter I will chart briefly the history of hypnosis and its relationship to habit and the unconscious. I will begin by tracing conceptually through Kleist's dramas the move from the ancient structure of tragedy in which the fated tragic hero(ine) is controlled by laws outside herself, to a new focus on the human unconscious as invisible controlling force. I will look then further into the vulnerability of the habitual body, its openness to suggestion and mimesis when in an hypnotic state. I will delay until Chapter 3 a discussion of the kind of vulnerability to trauma and doubt that is present in, and I shall argue, central to habit. We need at first to be aware of the full extend of the possibility of self-surrender in habit in order to draw from it the possible outcomes of its breakdown. I am aware, in every textual move I make, of the question of who is playing who; who is the instrument and who the player; and here I can only admire, and dread, the resourcefulness and the laughter echoing out from the shadows of the wings while the 'dance' goes on.

don't know

Kleist's literary figures, although insubstantial, ghostly and somnambulistic, showing no autonomy, *always* 'know' what do to without hesitation, yet appear to act with the innocent unknowingness of the puppet. When asked what they are doing and why, the

[5] Cf. Chapter 1.

answer is inevitably, 'don't know.' For better or worse they are abandoned to, and frequently martyrs to a pre-determined fate.[6]

One typically joins a Kleistian character at the moment the propulsion towards their end is set in motion; nothing is told us of these figures prior to this moment, except that they have often been exceptionally noble, virtuous people – 'a paragon of virtue;' 'a lady of unblemished reputation.'[7] Blank slates, unmarked by any notable history. As we read on, the motives behind their actions become increasingly opaque, bizarre even, yet no matter how disorientated or out of synch with the world around them they seem, they never lose inner conviction, faith in their own righteousness, and unquestioning certainty in their actions, however these actions defy every accepted moral convention of their time. Michael Kohlhaas, driven towards achieving the justice he 'knows' he is owed, 'his lunatic justice,' becomes an outlaw and a criminal in order to finally receive the apology he 'knows' he deserves.[8] That he receives the apology shortly before he is hanged for the crimes he has committed in attaining justice, which amass to far greater degrees of law-breaking than the crime originally perpetrated against him, seems not to depress him because he has achieved his goal and that is his only purpose. Although Kleist's characters' behaviour seems to defy conventional logic, at the same time it makes their fulfilling of their fate makes a strange sort of sense, as Hamburger describes, 'Kleist's works are like products of the successful collaboration between a maniac and a mathematician. That is why Kafka could learn from Kleist to illuminate nightmare with a daytime lucidity: not to explain his paradoxes, but to render them; and, however outrageous his visions, to maintain the outward assurance of a

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[6] There are similarities in this respect between Kleist's figures and those of film-maker Robert Bresson. Cf. Coda.

[7] 'Michael Kohlhaas,' in Kleist, *The Marquise of O – and Other Stories*, trans. David Luke and Nigel Reeves, London: Penguin Books, 1978, p. 114 / 'The Marquise of O,' *ibid.*, p. 68.

[8] Kleist, 'Michael Kohlhaas,' p. 184. Hélène Cixous, 'Grace and Innocence,' p. 45, describes Kohlhaas as 'someone innocent who insists on having his innocence recognised [...] An innocence that wants to be recognised is mad, in a dangerous way.' The obsession with justice of Kleist's characters is the main theme of the following essays: V.C. Hubbs, 'Heinrich von Kleist and the Symbol of the Wise Man,' *Symposium* 16, 1962, pp. 165-169; J.M. Ellis, *Kleist's Prinz Friedrich von Homburg: A Critical Study*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970, pp. 3-10, and Richard Samuel, Introduction to *Heinrich von Kleist: Prinz Friedrich von Homburg: Ein Schauspiel*, London: G.G. Harrap, 1958. Kleist's own obsession with justice is commented on and placed in context with his times by Theodore Ziolkowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Ziolkowski shows, p. 120-124, that there isn't a single Kleist work which doesn't raise legal questions. Kleist's own confusion about justice is visible in his letter to Wilhelmine, August 15, 1801, *An Abyss Deep Enough*, p. 124. 'After thousands of years we still wonder whether there is such a thing as *Justice*: can God demand *Responsibility*? There is no use saying that a voice deep within confides secretly and clearly what is just. The same voice that calls on the Christian to forgive his enemies calls on the savage to roast him, and he eats him up with piety. If an inner conviction justifies such deeds, can it be trusted?'

somnambulist.'[9] The habitual person too goes about her routine, however strange to the observer it might seem, with mathematical precision, but who knows why? What is going on in her head, what virtual worlds does she occupy, who does she murder and who does she love? Such figures are in rhythm with the strings of fate; their harmony within their theme is perfect if isolated from anything beyond the enclosed time of the theme. The literary manifestation of the puppet, rather than dancing on one spot, they make a journey, following the map that lies within them.

The question of the design and origin of the map is important. Kleist's dramas in some respects fall between two categories of Greek tragedy outlined by Hegel.[10] The essential characteristic of Hegel's view of tragedy in both its minor and major forms is that of fate and conflict: individuals pursue a goal, yet through pursuing the goal in a relentless, single-minded and uncompromisingly insistent manner, they commit a 'wrong' against society. The 'major' form of tragedy involves a conflict between two essential aspects of social life – for instance between Antigone's right to bury her brother and Creon's right to refuse him burial because he made war on the state. The 'minor' form of tragedy is exemplified by *Oedipus Rex*. Here, the conflict is between Oedipus' fate and his lack of awareness of that fate. Oedipus has no knowledge of the sins he has committed until it is too late; he is a victim, a plaything of the gods. The reader / audience 'satisfaction' which emerges from the catastrophic endings of tragedies, according to Hegel, is the security of there being an 'eternal justice' at work behind things – a justice that transcends the guilt or innocence of the hero in relation to their 'crimes,' as well as that of the audience, effectively making all human judgment powerless in the face of fate. This omnipotent overriding justice brings down 'proud, insistent self-assured individuality.'[11]

For Hegel, the tragic hero is not an 'individual' in the usual sense, but is 'animated by [a] pathos.'[12] Antigone expresses, in a fatally 'one-sided' manner, one of the aspects of the customary life of society. Oedipus is a 'pathos' because he is driven by a fate over which

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[9] Michael Hamburger, *Reason and Energy: Studies in German Literature*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1970, p. 137. Kafka mentions Kleist's influence on his writing a number of times, Cf. *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, trans. Max Brod, London: Penguin Books, 1948, p. 39, 62, 125, 246; and Gustav Janouch, *Conversations with Kafka*, trans. Goronwy Rees, London: Quartet Encounters, 1985, pp.163-4, 166. Cf. also F.G. Peters, 'Kafka and Kleist: A Literary Relationship,' *Oxford German Studies* 1, 1966, pp. 114-162.

[10] I must express huge gratitude to Christian Kerslake for his help and conversation re. my understanding in this context of Hegel.

[11] Stephen Houlgate, 'Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy,' *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 203.

[12] G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* Vol. 2, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 1209.

he has no control. As I will show shortly, Kleist's dramas qualified the notion of the fatedness of the tragic hero / heroine by appealing to the explorations into mesmerism, somnambulism and notions of a subliminal self, occurring in his day. Here fate is inscribed not through a transcendent force; the map is more a suggestion, manifested from a more earthly, 'psychic' source. As we move out of the Romantic period with Kleist, the notion of 'fate' begins to signify the presence of determinate psychic processes taking place at a subliminal level. I would suggest that this development of the notion of fate allows us to perceive anew the structure of tragedy as delineated by Hegel.

Hegel insists that Antigone's pathos expresses a *customary* mode of life. But what is custom but another word for habit?[13] On the other hand, Oedipus' pathos expresses an 'unconscious' force, at variance with his 'wide awake consciousness.'[14] Is it perhaps possible to use the psychological notion of habit to unify both the major and minor forms of tragedy, as defined by Hegel? Moreover, does not tragedy itself express the repetition over time of the same structures through centuries and generations; 'What could ten new years teach that the past could not teach?'[15] Cosmic cycles, historical destiny, eternal justice – human life is a spiral, a series of repetitions which cover greater or lesser moments of time; one life might be a repetition in itself.[16] Habit is the repetition most connected to the everyday, but is both reflected in and reflective of larger structures of repetition, it mirrors the fatedness of eternal repetition in a mundane, glamourless human time. So is Kleist's introduction of somnambulists into the tragic drama a mere 'psychologisation' of ancient tragedy – or does it reveal something powerful about unconscious repetition that genuinely sheds light on the mysteries of tragedy? The vortex of the spiral, the point in which habit and obsessive repetition take over will be the theme of Chapter 3, where I will look at Freud and Deleuze's notions of repetition. For now, 'in' this eternal repetition, whatever its source, it is enough to register that one is subject to laws governing one's life beyond one's conscious awareness. In this respect, it is no wonder that tragic figures so often appear to be asleep.

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[13] We will see this more clearly in Chapter 3, with reference to Hume.
[14] Hegel, *Aesthetics*, p. 1214.
[15] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1974, pp. 273; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin Books, 1969, pp. 162-180. Cf. also Pierre Klossowski: *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel Smith, London: Athlone, 1997; and Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974, pp. 307-333.
[16] Cf. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Or, Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, pp. 130-134.

I will look now at two of Kleist's dramas, as although the main protagonists in each appear to be polar opposites to each other in their behaviour, many of the structures behind their actions mirror each other, and moreover, represent something of the two extreme poles of conscious(less)ness described by Kleist in the Marionette Theatre essay: 'My Kate of Heilbronn is the reverse side of Penthesilea, her opposite pole, a being quite as great in her complete submission as the other is in her self-assertion.'[17] But it is also the differences between the protagonists of these two plays which allow one to detect a shift in Kleist's thought and work from the tragic heroine controlled by the justice of the gods, embodied by his 1807 *Penthesilia*,[18] to the roles mesmerism, somnambulism and the exploration of the unconscious took on in his work and thought, embodied just one year after *Penthesilia* in his *Katherine of Heilbronn*.[19]

[17] Kleist, Letter to Marie von Kleist, 1807, *An Abyss Deep Enough*, p. 175. He wrote also to Austrian dramatist, Heinrich von Collin, 1808, *ibid.*, p. 181-182, 'Whoever loves Kate cannot find Penthesilea utterly incomprehensible; they belong together as the + and – of algebra, and are one and the same nature, but imagined under different circumstances.' Kleist's anecdotal text, 'The Very Last word in Modern Educational Theory,' *ibid.*, pp. 223-228 gives an analogous account of algebra in terms of positive and negative attraction. Cf. also V.C. Hubbs, 'The Plus and Minus of Penthesilia and Käthchen,' *Seminar* 6:3, October 1970, pp. 187-194; Dennis Dyer, 'Plus and Minus in Kleist,' *Oxford German Studies* 2, 1967, pp. 75-86. Deleuze describes the difference between Penthesilia and Katherine in 'Bartleby, or the formula,' in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 80: 'The first is beyond conscience, the second before conscience: she who howls like a she-wolf and she who would prefer-not-to speak.' He likens Katherine's continual, infuriating, 'don't know' to Bartleby's 'I would prefer not to.' Cf. Herman Melville, *Bartleby*, London: Penguin Books, 1995.

[18] Kleist, 'Penthesilia,' in Kleist, *Five Plays*, trans. Martin Greenberg, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988, pp. 159-168.

[19] Kleist, 'Katherine of Heilbronn (Das Käthchen von Heilbronn),' trans. F.E. Pierce, in Pierce (ed.) *Fiction and Fantasy of German Romance: Selections from German Romantic Writers in English Translation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1927, pp. 248-346. There is much historical evidence to suggest a link between Kleist's later dramatic and fictional characters and somnambulism, mesmerism, and later, hypnosis. Cf. in particular, Maria M. Tatar, *Spellbound: Studies on Mesmerism and Literature*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978, pp. 82-120; pp. 104-6.Tatar recounts in particular Kleist's encounters with Romantic physician and expert on mesmerism, Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert as noted in Schubert's diaries, *Der Enverb aus einem vergangen und die Erwartungen von einem zukünftigen Leben: Eine Selbstbiographie*, Erlangen: Paris and Enke, 1856, Vol. 2, p. 228, 'For Kleist especially the information on mesmerism I offered was so fascinating that he could not hear enough about it and drew as much out of me as possible.' Cf. also Ursula Thomas, 'Heinrich von Kleist and Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert,' *Monatshefte* 51, 1959, pp. 249-261; Helbling, *The Major Works*, p. 181. Other works by Kleist than those I will refer to here also have somnambulistic elements. For instance, 'The Prince of Homburg' begins and ends with somnambulistic scenes; 'The Marquise of O,' involves the Marquise's impregnation while 'asleep,' and in 'St. Cecilia or the Power of Music,' three young male protagonists are thrown into a trance state at the sound of music, following which they never fully recover consciousness.

Penthesilia is a ferocious and uncompromising warrior,[20] yet uncharacteristically, when she first encounters Achilles in battle, she is, for a moment, 'struck dumb.' Later, more dazed still, no longer recognising Achilles as an enemy, she tells him how her mother, Ortere, had named him on her deathbed as her chosen partner, a fact she had 'forgotten' until the moment she was faced with him in his coat of armour and flesh. However, as a member of the Amazon state, she is also destined to 'marry' herself to the man who falls at her feet in battle. She finds herself in conflict: does she choose to follow the suggestion of her mother, or does she abide by the rules of the Amazon state? The smitten Achilles, also in conflict, goes against the advice of his fellow Greeks, deliberately sacrificing himself to Penthesilia on the battle field, desiring to become both her prisoner and her lover. But when he does so, Penthesilia, as if *taken over by a violent fury*, along with her pack of dogs, tears him limb from limb *with her teeth.* Meroe, Penthesilia's companion, describes how after the brutal attack Penthesilia doesn't recognise what she's done: 'We ask her what she's done. Dead silence. Did she know us? Silence. Would she like to come along with us. Still silence.'[21] When Penthesilia eventually 'awakens' and sees Achilles' now mutilated body, she asks in bewilderment who has done this to her lover. When she realises it was she, she says, with confusion:

Kissed him dead, did I?
An error, then.
I see. A kiss, a bite – how cheek by jowl
they are. And when you love straight from the heart
the greedy mouth so easily mistakes
one for the other.[22]

Penthesilia's disequilibrium with the moral standards of her people is enhanced by the suggestion implanted in her mind by her mother. Her moral unaccountability, and the violent attack of Achilles also reveals Kleist's growing interest in studies of abnormal psychological behaviour in his day; Penthesilia can be seen as mentally fixated and unconsciously crazed – as Cranston points out, Kleist differed from most other Romantic

[20] Kleist, 'Penthesilia,' p. 169: 'After she's attempted every rift / and cleft the rains have worn into the cliff. / She sees there is no climbing it; and yet, / as if bereft of judgment, back she goes / at it all over again, as if it were / the first time. / The women's yell of terror cuts the air, / down all at once she plunges, horse and rider,/ amid a rattling rain of loosened rocks, / as if hellbent for Orcus, crashing down / right to the bottom of the steep, and neither / breaks her neck nor learns a grain of sense: / only pulls herself together for / another try.' Cf. here, Denys Dyer, 'The Imagery in Kleist's *Penthesilia,*' *Publications of the English Goethe Society* 31, 1961, pp. 1-23.
[21] Kleist, 'Penthesilia,' p. 253.
[22] Kleist, 'Penthesilia,' p. 265. Oedipus too is faced with crimes he was unaware of committing.

authors in that there 'is no moral anchorage in Kleist's work.'[23] In the end, Penthesilia goes against her mother's suggestion, abiding by the ancient laws of her people and murdering Achilles for feigning his fall at her feet in battle – it is for this reason that we see her confusion between a kiss and a bite; Achilles has broken the rules, and as a consequence Penthesilia is driven mad. But she is not driven by a social 'pathos' in the Hegelian sense – her murder of Achilles is excessive and repellent, testifying here to a horror at the loss of self-consciousness.

Katherine's story begins with a scene embedded within the laws of human moral justice – a courtroom with its judge and jury, innocent and victim, within which Katherine's father tries to bring to account Count Wetter vom Strahl,[24] for supposedly casting a spell on his innocent daughter. Prior to her encounter with the Count, Katherine is described by her father as so good and virtuous that people would point her out in the street and say, 'Ah, *that* Katherine.' Until, that is, the moment she first saw the Count and collapsed at his feet, 'Pale as a corpse, with hands clasped as in prayer, her forehead and breast to the floor, she fell down before him, as if a bolt of lightning had stricken her down. And when I said, Lord have mercy! What ails the child? and raised her up, she threw her arms around me, closing up like a pocket-knife, with face aflame turned towards him, as if she had seen an apparition.'[25] When the Count left their home, she threw herself from the window, hurling herself thirty feet to the pavement below, with uplifted hands, in order to remain by his side. Miraculously, though not so for the invulnerable somnambulist,[26] she lived, but broke both her thigh bones and lay in bed for six weeks in a fever, never once uttering a word. As soon as she could stand, she packed a small bundle of belongings and left her home and her father to shadow the Count – sometimes sleeping in his horse shed, sometimes under a hedge, alongside the wild birds, close to his castle.

In the courtroom, the Count is as bemused by Katherine's behaviour as her father, and manages to free himself from any blame as to her sudden adhesion to his side. Katherine herself cannot explain her behaviour; each time she is asked about it directly, she replies only, 'weiss nicht.'

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[23] Maurice Cranston, *The Romantic Movement*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, p. 41.
[24] Translated, the name means almost literally 'flash of lightning,' Cf. Tatar, *Spellbound*, p. 102.
[25] Kleist, 'Katherine,' p. 253.
[26] Many of Kleist's later stories and plays involve characters falling but remaining unhurt as also happens in *Penthesilia*, Cf. ftn. 19 above. Maria M. Tatar, 'Psychology and Poetics: J.C. Reil and Kliest's *Prinz Freidrich von Homburg*,' *Germanic Review* 118, January 1973, p. 28, puts this down to their somnambulistic status, 'Like most somnambulists, they are not vulnerable to physical harm.' Cf.

Later, despite Katherine's devotion, the Count becomes engaged to Lady Kunigunde, who he believes is a Kaiser's daughter, and it is a Kaiser's daughter that he is destined to marry according to a dream / vision he experienced while lying on his death bed the previous New Year's Eve. Kunigunde, in absolute contrast to the virginal sterility of Katherine, is a woman who is 'a piece of mosaic.' 'Her teeth belong to a girl in Munich, her hair was ordered from France, the healthy glow of her cheeks comes from the mines of Hungary, and the graceful figure which you admire in her she owes to a shirt that a smith made for her out of Swedish steel.'[27] Kunigunde here is superficial and prosthetic, disguised as a puppet, but without the essential puppet trait of innocent unknowingness. Kunigunde knows exactly what she is doing, and Kleist depicts such knowingness in human form as a monstrosity.[28]

Eventually, the Count realises that the apparition who had appeared to him, is in fact Katherine. It turns out that she *is* a Kaiser's daughter, a fact proved to the Count by a birthmark on the back of her neck which was revealed to him in his vision and which he is able to examine as Katherine lies asleep in his lap. Furthermore, while asleep, Katherine recounts the events of the nocturnal encounter, saying with unusual confidence, 'Next year at Easter you shall call me yours.'[29] Though when awake again, she remembers nothing of this.

Both Penthesilia and Katherine, utterly pre-determined, exist in a realm removed from conscious experience, and although on the one hand seem the opposite of each other in character, on the other hand, both are determined by pre-inscribed laws, in the face of which they are ultimately passive. Both are spellbound when they meet their 'fated' male mates; they experience the reality of the 'other,' their beloved, through a predetermined inner vision which springs from the fact that these beloveds correspond to an already formed inner image – as Helbling suggests, 'Existentially, their love is self-centred.'[30] Self-centredness is for Kleist, as we saw in the Marionette Theatre essay, a major attribute of the puppet, though not a self-conscious centredness so much as a minimal centredness, representing an entity manipulated and controlled by one thread. After encountering their fate, they are powerless

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also Helmut Schneider, 'Standing and Falling in Heinrich von Kleist,' *Modern Language Notes* 115:3, 2000, pp. 502-518.

[27] Kleist, 'Katherine,' pp. 333-334.

[28] Helbling, *The Major Works*, p. 130, says of Kunigunde, 'We can visualise her as a grotesque, surrealistic jumble of heterogeneous objects that somehow suggest a human form. She is also a grotesque symbol of the world's radical deceptiveness, which clouds the senses and attacks the perceptions of the heart and the intellect.'

[29] Kleist, 'Katherine,' p. 314.

to resist his pull, as though previously their entire lives had involved their waiting to be activated or triggered forwards to fulfil their destiny.[31]

Kleist's move from the conventional form of tragedy to his increasing preoccupation with the science of mesmerism is evident in both dramas, though more clearly in the story of Katherine. In both cases there has been a prior death-bed 'suggestion' planted in the minds of Penthesilia and Katherine. Katherine is 'visited' in her bed chamber by the Count who, half-dead is able to achieve disembodiment, a skill of the somnambulist,[32] while Penthesilia is given a prediction from her mother on her death-bed. Following the Count's visit, Katherine's autonomy is lost, she can do nothing, make no choices for herself; as Maria Tatar points out, 'As the passive partner of a magnetic rapport, she has little choice in the matter.'[33] She becomes driven by a 'subliminal' memory, which emerges, partially, though not to her conscious self, the moment she meets the Count, in daylight, for the first time, though this memory can only be completely recovered in her full somnambulistic state, her sleeping confession, her sleeping 'knowledge.' The Count himself, although remembering the dream, doesn't associate it with Katherine until he hears her confession, thus for both, the mental state that 'knows' is the dream state, the unconscious – Katherine doesn't know why she is magnetically drawn towards the Count, simply that she *is*. And following the courtroom scene, the Count lying alone on the ground of a cave, weeping, expresses a powerful attraction for Katherine, which he cannot explain.[34] For much of the drama, there is no 'logic' to Katherine's acts, nor to her stoic faith in them – she doesn't know, nor do we (though we, the reader, are let in on her 'logic' when we become party to her somnambulistic confession). Equally somnambulistic, returning to the Amazon women after her slaughter of Achilles, Penthesilia is described as 'A walking corpse,' who 'doesn't blink an eye.'[35] The final, chilling scene of the play sees her mime the act of stabbing herself in the chest with a phantom dagger, after which she falls to the ground, dead – the most paradoxical form of auto-suggestion.[36] Penthesilia's somnambulism falls more into the category of tragedy because she experiences a conflict between the ancient laws of the gods

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[30] Helbling, *The Major Works*, p. 176.
[31] Likewise, both Achilles and the Count are as powerless as the female protagonists to resist the pull of fate; one cannot read into this a notion of gender, one only has to read Kleist's other dramas which mostly feature male protagonists to see that they are all martyrs to 'fate.' In the end these figures are sexless; as sexless as puppets.
[32] However fantastical this episode might seem today, in Kleist's day, the influence of Reil's writings inspired people to believe that the soul of a somnambulist could undertake a spiritual migration.
[33] Tatar, *Spellbound*, p. 105.
[34] Kleist, 'Katherine,' pp. 270-1.
[35] Kleist, 'Penthesilia,' p. 254.

which determine her society, and her mother's suggestion, while Katherine has no conflicting emotions whatsoever, she is a full somnambulist, a perfect puppet. And, quite unlike the destructive ending of 'Penthesilia,' in Katherine's story, despite Katherine still maintaining something of the pathos of the tragic character, no such tragic destruction occurs.[37] Katherine forever oblivious, lives presumably Happily Ever After. However, in a sense, loss of conscious autonomy still leads to destruction, albeit of the self rather than the body. In the light of unconscious suggestion individual freedom is sacrificed – would Katherine have chosen the Count for herself had she the choice? What if he hadn't been dashing, but a cruel and ugly natured man? As we have seen, Kleist's horror at the loss of autonomy is matched only by his fascination with it. As is, in the end, mine.

In these two dramas, then, Kleist's fascination with the 'puppet' and its 'master;' his endless questions about the controlling forces behind life, and his doubt about whether to put his faith in the natural or transcendent conditions behind human life, are played out. And in many ways, in his dramas and especially in the Marionette Theatre essay, Kleist pr-empted many of the problems research into somnambulism and the unconscious was to encounter over the next two centuries.

habit, hypnosis, artificial sleep

Thou art inclin'd to sleep: 'tis a good dullness.
And give it way: I know thou canst not choose.[38]

In 1843, James Braid coined the term *Neurypnology*, following on from a long line of medics, show-people's and lay-people's experiments with mesmerism. Translated from the Greek roughly as 'the rationale of nervous sleep,' what is now referred to as the hypnotic state was for a long time referred to as somnambulism – sleeping wakefulness.[39] In order to induce this state, either repetitive, monotonous stimulation, or the fixing and focussing of attention was thought to be the most successful method. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen maintains

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[36] Kleist, 'Penthesilia,' p. 268.
[37] John Greary, *Heinrich von Kleist: A Study in Tragedy and Anxiety*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968, pp. 132-134, comments on the fact that Penthesilia, unlike Katherine, is never entirely lost in her delusion.
[38] Prospero putting Miranda to sleep in Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, (ed.) Frank Kermode, London: Methuen, 1958, p. 21.
[39] Cf. Braid, *Magic, Witchcraft, Animal Magnetism, Hypnotism and Electro-Biology: Being a Digest of the Latest Views of the Author on these Subjects*, London: J. Churchill, 1852.

in principle Braid's early thesis, in that repetition or intense concentration, including both artificial methods used to induce hypnotic fixation and the natural effects on conscious awareness of everyday habit, result in trance, the waking sleep. And although broaching the subject of hypnotism without the fantastical elements attributed to it during its early years, Borch-Jacobsen sees an hypnotic trance as an extreme state of dissociation in which the hypnotised subject is so utterly embodied that they lose the sense of distance necessary for them to differentiate themselves as a self at all.[40] I have already mentioned the structural similarities between hypnosis and habit, which have also been recognised by writers on Hypnosis. Brian Inglis claims we are in a mild state of trance all the time, 'thanks to instinct and habit collaborating to provide us with automatism.'[41] A trance state, whether induced by a doctor, the rhythms of music, or the everyday familiarity of a repetitive routine, involves a peculiar co-incidence with and balance with bodily awareness, which necessarily obliterates conscious self-reflection, and might leave one pitifully vulnerable to external suggestion.

Kleist, alive and active in the mid-18th century when mesmerism and somnambulism were being scientifically and experimentally explored, foresaw the paradox behind what such a state of selflessness might mean, culminating at the end of his life in the confusion, despair, and bitter irony of the Marionette Theatre essay. If one were to find a means of attaining 'grace' or harmony without consciousness, one would not be able to experience the state itself, because while in it one would of course not be conscious, and when 'awake' again, one would remember little or nothing of it. Grace and consciousness don't go together; it is only those with consciousness who can seek to be free of it, just as it is only those alive who can desire death; the dead, like the puppet, have no desires and if they are 'liberated' in any sense, it is a liberation from the desire to be or to have what they can neither be nor have. Kleist's dancer in the Marionette Theatre essay admires the marionettes because they seem to possess effortlessly something he can never 'experience.' The puppet is *beyond* experience, (in a different way to the god), trapped in a 'living' death; the eternal purgatory of the zombie; a body that crosses over into eternity and doesn't decay.

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[40] Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, 'Who's Who?' *Supposing the Subject*, (ed.) Joan Copjec, London: Verso, 1994, p. 59, 'The hypnotic trance dissolves the subject, lunging it into a pre-representational state, in which it no longer knows itself. The hypnotised person has no 'ego,' no 'self,' not because that subject is divided or absent in relation to itself, but because it is so well-enveloped in the here and now, so very present, that it simply cannot be present to itself. There is a profound inability to reflect on itself, think of itself, or represent itself. The hypnotised person has lost the elementary distance from themselves which would allow them to be conscious of themselves.'

[41] Brian Inglis, *Trance: A Natural History of Altered States of Mind*, London: Grafton Books, 1989, p. 17. Cf. also Peter Brown, 'The Common Everyday trance,' *The Hypnotic Brain: Hypnotherapy and Social Communication*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991, pp. 85-122.

The dancer can only describe or imagine the puppet, and his teasing language bespeaks both envy and frustration that the puppet doesn't care for his description as it has no need of imagination, it is already 'free' from all the constrictions associated by him with human life. He could destroy the puppet and still it wouldn't care. The puppet represents in human form what a conscious human cannot be, as well as what a conscious human cannot *think*; a state *without* thought, living death, eternal sleep, conscious nothingness.

It can already be seen, given what has been discussed so far, that sustained habit is linked to the somnambulistic states revered by those who feel trapped by self-consciousness. If habit were to achieve a continual presence in one's life, it would provide the conditions for one to exist in a manner close to the somnambulist. As it is, one slips in and out of the habitual state, mundane, everyday, dull; fleetingly finding 'grace' – though one would be unlikely to refer to one's habits as graceful; they display nothing of the heroism of tragedy.

It is important to remember though that Kleist's writings emerged on the cusp of a change in thought, in which to be without consciousness did not necessarily mean death, sleep, or banishment to the kingdom of puppetdom. Immediately post-Kleist, and post-Goethe for that matter, the notion of the unconscious and its liberation were increasingly seen to provide freedom from the constraints of self-consciousness, the restrictions imposed by social interaction, and means of uncovering unconscious mental processes were increasingly sought.[42] To become empty of will in this respect, in its ideal form, would not just be representative of submission to an animating force, but would also provide access to what the animating forces behind one's actions might be – to then draw them out from the depths of the unconscious and materialise them either verbally or physically. This would then be a liberatory confrontation with fatedness – the 'discovery of the unconscious' might also be seen as a kind of historical 'awakening.' To wake up, in the middle of a trance state and be aware of thought unfettered by conscious orientation, provides a window onto the unconscious in the same way as when one wakes suddenly in the middle of a dream. If there is no waking, there is no memory and one remains victim to the unconscious shadows that dominate one's actions from the wings, even if it is only one's double who lurks there. In

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[42] The history of the 'discovery' of the unconscious is charted in most detail in Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1970; and Lancelot Law Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1962. For historical information on mesmerism, somnambulism and hypnotism, I am mostly referencing Derek Forrest, *Hypnotism: A History*, London: Penguin Books, 1999; Adam Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud: Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological Healing*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993; and Alan J. Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

the dramas of *Penthesilia* and *Katherine* too there are occasional scenes of 'awakening,' or recognition, and it is always an awakening to the unconscious rather than to consciousness. Beyond their somnambulistic passivity, both women have flashes of recognition which illuminate the meaning of, and the puppet master behind their lives. But of course this 'awakening' must be of a very peculiar kind if it is not also to be a 'forgetting.' In order to re-enact the death bed language of the unconscious in its pure form, one would have to speak it while asleep. One only speaks while asleep in very particular mental states, thus this historical 'awakening' to the unconscious would therefore take place first of all through an exploration of the notion of 'waking sleep.'

In Kleist's day, and during the hundred or so years which followed, mesmerism and what it promised to reveal about the human psyche, was a popular fascination.[43] Anton Mesmer's notion of an 'atmospheric tide,' produced by the same gravitational forces that move the sea, converted into a universal fluid which he named 'animal magnetism,' was thought to affect and determine every living thing. The human body was a magnet which attracted the universal fluid, though the passage of fluid to and through the body could become blocked. What came to be known through Mesmer's pioneering influence, as mesmer*ism*, involved the rhythmic brushing of a series of 'mesmeric passes' over the body by the hands of the mesmerist, or more indirectly, by the repeated touching of mesmerised water or trees, which brought on a somnambulistic trance in which the mesmerist could shift the mental blockage, without the conscious resistance of the patient, allowing the fluid to run freely through the patient's body again.[44] The connection between psychological well-being and bodily health was being forged, providing a shift in focus to the psychological rather than the physiological or transcendental, as the route to well being.

This was not all. The somnambulist, while mesmerised, was believed to have extra-sensory powers, able to perform using 'unconscious knowledge.'[45] Unfettered by conscious

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[43] A variety of accounts of somnambulistic activity were reported at this time, one of the most fascinating being L.W. Beldon, *Somnambulism: The Extraordinary Case of Jane C. Rider, the Springfield Somnambulist*, London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1834. Contemporary accounts of the popularity of mesmerism include, John Hughes Bennet, *The Mesmeric Mania of 1851*, Edinburgh: Southerland & Knox, 1851; and Milne J. Bramwell, *Hypnotism: Its History, Practice and Theory*, London: Grant Richards, 1904. I am indebted to the Wellcome Trust for allowing me access to their vast collection of rare, and often very fragile, copies of these and other texts.

[44] Forrest, *Hypnotism*, Chapters 3-4, pp. 17-69.

[45] More recent clinical studies in hypnosis suggest the presence of heightened awareness during hypnotic episodes. Cf. Brown, 'The Common Everyday Trance,' p. 85, 'Subjects report perceptual alterations with changes in the subjective experience of hearing, seeing, and touch.' H.C. Holland, 'Displacement Activity as a form of Abnormal Behaviour in Animals,' in *Obsessional States*, (ed.) H.R. Beech, London: Methuen, 1974, p. 170, links this too to habit, by describing how 'in ritualistic

questions or indecision, the somnambulist was able to perform tasks with greater acuity than in their waking hours. 'Persons who are afflicted with somnambulism, plunged into a profound sleep, walk, speak, write and carry out different actions, as if they were wide awake: and with more intelligence and precision.'[46]

To 'know' without consciousness of one's 'knowledge' demanded that conscious wakefulness be suspended. Medically used, somnambulism was separated into the categories of 'artificial' and 'natural.' Natural somnambulism is the state one might find oneself in during an habitual activity, an everyday trance; while artificial somnambulism requires the presence of a hypnotist, magnetist or external human controller, and was thought to be the only means of gaining access to what was to be gradually conceptualised as the unconscious (or subliminal / subconscious) mind.[47] In a natural sleep, one need be in 'rapport' with no-one but oneself, and as a result one might never remember the images or dreams which colour one's night. But in an artificially induced sleep, an external witness is present to direct, interrupt and record nocturnal or unconscious manifestations.

Before proceeding further into these occult realms, a note of scepticism should be sounded. If the paradoxical notion of waking sleep is the only phenomenological access to the unconscious one can imagine, and this state immediately opens itself to suggestion, then this pulls us in a different direction to that followed by Freudianism. Psychoanalysis began by using hypnotic states to access the unconscious, but moved towards more 'indirect' approaches, centring around the interpretation of linguistic phenomena.[48] But what happens if we hold fast to the paradox of waking sleep? Is there not more that can be said about it before one takes the Freudian route? In particular, Freud's fear about the manipulation involved in hypnosis should be examined further, because this apparent capacity for being manipulated might itself be an important aspect of the relation between the unconscious and consciousness. The apparent malleability of the patient represents an indeterminate zone in which the powers of the doctor as much as the patient are put in doubt. Rather than hypnotic

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activities, arousal levels lead into a state like sleep,' while at the same time, 'the organism becomes more 'aware' (though not necessarily at a conscious level) of the stimuli issuing from its skin.' I look at obsessive rituals in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I attempt to account for and provide examples of what such a state of heightened awareness might lead to in terms of literary and artistic production.

[46] H.F. Fournel, *Essai sur le probabilités du somnambulism magnétique*, 1785, quoted in Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, p. 68. This notion carried on well into the 19th century, Cf. for instance, William Hamilton, 'Three Degrees of Mental Latency,' in Taylor and Shuttleworth, *Embodied Selves*, p. 81, 'In madness, in fever, in somnambulism and other abnormal states, the mind betrays capacities and extensive systems of knowledge, of which it is at other times wholly unconscious.' The Greek *épopte*, 'one who sees clearly' would later form in part the definition of hypnosis.

[47] Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, Chapter 3, pp. 110-181.

[48] Cf. Appendix 2 in relation to Freud, Breuer, Anna O and 'the talking cure.'

processes locating the 'truth' of the unconscious, there have been, and still are, throughout the history of mesmerism, somnambulism and hypnotism, huge subversions, lies, fictions, play-acting, and delusions behind the desire to locate 'unconscious truth' on the part of both those who took on the role of 'puppet master' and those who acted out the role of 'puppet,' leading one to question who is the author of the unconscious narratives that ensue.[49] The desire Kleist showed for the unconscious entity of the puppet was replayed in the field of somnambulistic performances – the roles of puppeteer and puppet were coveted for their own reasons. Yet one's covetousness is precisely what condemns one to play-acting, for as soon as one begins to search consciously for one's unconscious one can no longer find it – the desire though, does not go away, but is transformed into fiction. And, in a different way, if one is actually aware of one's puppetlikeness, if one *allows* oneself to be controlled by another is one not in fact using this time to learn more about the other's unconscious desires than one's own, and by doing so gaining mastery not over one's own unconscious, but theirs? Then is one merely a being whose rebellion against the controller / doctor / puppet-master consists of little more, however subversive, than the mimesis of their desires? Has one no unconscious of one's own? Perhaps one prefers to keep silent, to hide behind one's playing the game of hypnosis.

All of these issues come to have bearing on what is potentially liberating about habit, and what is not. In Chapter 4 I will focus on natural somnambulism, the self-induced repetitive / hypnotic working methods, throughout history, of people who, without the interference and control of an external director, manifest the unconscious, through habitual practises, in their life and 'work.' This will lead to my general conclusion that the productive use of habit I am developing throughout this thesis, must necessarily be practised alone. It surely is possible to plunge into the virtual dimension in dreams and anomalous states, but this movement always brings with it an extreme openness and vulnerability to the influence of others. So, in order clear the way to access the notion of unconscious repetition, first we must get rid of the influence of the second party in this equation. In Chapter 3, we

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[49] Cf. Appendix 2. Isabelle Stengers, 'The Deception of Power: Psychoanalysis and Hypnosis,' *Sub-Stance* 62/63, 1990, p. 81, suggests that hypnosis 'evok[es] ideas of both trickery and seduction.' Cf. also her *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason: Hypnosis as a Scientific Problem from Lavoisier to Lacan*,' trans. Martha Noel Evans, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992. The discovery of hypnosis and play-acting is explored in Theodore R. Sarbin, 'Hypnosis: A Fifty Year Perspective,' *Contemporary Hypnosis*, 8:1, 1991, pp. 1-15. Likewise, M.T. Orne, 'The Nature of Hypnosis: Artifact or Essence?' *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 58, 1959, pp. 277-299, defined the hypnotic performance in terms of role-taking and increased motivation. Cf. also Janet Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies: Narratives of Hysteria in Nineteenth-Century France*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993, for an account of hypnotic role-playing in hysteria.

will get rid of the third, fourth, fifth, and all other parties in the equation. Then later, when we are alone, we can really think about habit and the unconscious.

suggestions

After mesmerism, the well-documented Charcotian adventure with hypnosis and hysteria occurred at the Salpêtrière in Paris in the mid – late 19th century.[50] In 1884 Bernheim, Professor of Medicine at the new University of Nancy publicly criticised Charcot for his lack of engagement with 'suggestion.' Bernheim believed that any patient could be persuaded to do anything if they were made open or passive enough to the suggestion of the hypnotist, whether they were an 'hysteric' or not.[51] Bernheim was more practical than Charcot in his conception of hypnosis, seeing it as a state similar to the state one falls into every day during automatic, repetitive, habitual activity, though both come at the cost of an increased susceptibility to suggestion. Everyone was potentially a puppet. 'The mesmerised or hypnotised somnambulist may, in fact, be characterised as a *conscious automaton*, which, by appropriate suggestions, may be made to think, feel, say, or do almost anything that its director wills it to think, feel, say or do.'[52] Bernheim's notion of suggestion is summed up by Freud in his preface to Bernheim's *De la Suggestion*: 'What distinguishes a suggestion from other kinds of psychical influence, such as a command or the giving of a piece of information or instruction, is that in the case of a suggestion, an idea is aroused in another person's brain which is not examined in regard to its origin but is accepted just as though it had arisen spontaneously in that brain.'[53] More or less then, suggestion involved embedding an artificial memory or idea in the mind of the patient; or erasing an existing memory or

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[50] Cf. Appendix 2.

[51] Bernheim, quoted in Forrest, *Hypnotism*, pp. 233-234, 'I put a pencil in his mouth, telling him that it is a cigar; he puffs out the smoke ... I tell him the cigar is too strong and that he will feel ill: he is affected by bouts of coughing and spitting, he feels sick, looks pale, and feels dizzy. I get him to swallow a glass of water, telling him it is champagne. He thinks it is strong. I give him more: he becomes drunk and staggers about. I say drunkenness is gay: he sings, hiccoughs, and laughs in a silly way. I say drunkenness is sad: he weeps and wails.'

[52] William Benjamin Carpenter, 'Mesmerism, Spiritualism, etc. Historically and Scientifically Considered,' *Embodied Selves*, pp. 62-63. Milne Bramwell, 'What is Hypnotism?' *Proceedings for the Society for Psychical Research* 1896-1897, p. 236, thought that the Nancy School went too far in asserting the suggestibility of the hypnotised subject, 'While Bernheim considers the Salpêtrière subjects so abnormally acute that they can catch the slightest indications of the thoughts of the operator [...] he, on the other hand, supposes the Nancy subjects to be so abnormally devoid of intelligence as to be unable to understand when a palpable farce is played before them.'

idea. A new unconscious thought could be planted, grow, and filter through into consciousness to affect the waking life and behaviour of the patient, determining the direction of their thoughts and habits. If the subject is (and we will keep it open as to whether they are) open to the influencing will of their doctor, their entire mental and physical health becomes dependent on the personal ethics of their doctor. In Freud and Breuer's case of and 'Anna O,' the editing and authorship of another person's 'fictional' mind – the seeds planted and the repetitions of an idea, echoing on and over, could be taken as more revealing of human desires to take on the roles of puppet or puppet master, than of an unconscious 'truth.'[54]

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Before they stuck me in front of the mirror on my toes, she was with me and I stared across the room at the window. The nights I remember now orange, white-frame quartered, glassy, like her face. And she quartered me with her passes, crossing over my abdomen – left to right, up to down, as though taking the measurements of a picture. Always the same movement, over and over and over, the pin tucked into the space between her index and middle finger, scarring my abdomen with the sign of the cross, while she sang out: 'holy, holy, holy: only the starven are holy. Stuck down here in pits.'

Now it is Autumn. Back then it was summer. I never saw her out in yellow light, she said the sun always burnt her.

Reliant with the pact of pain and scars, we were as one, though it was a oneness neither of us had chosen. Perhaps she felt I blocked her and left her in shadow, tottering between exit and entry so that she had to carve her way into me, through me and out the other side. Was she burnt through me? Etching her cross into me, like Rembrandt, endlessly recording his contours.

At times when she scraped with her pin, I would be hunted by screaming letterbox voices; voices from the crack. She would stop her engraving when I screamed so loud the whole world was etched with the Sign of the Cross. Sometimes without scream, I would lose myself in eyes and open hands. The eyes, like pools went deep. The eyes, the hands, dark waters, moving. But I was not thirsty, I was parchment, etching plate for her, the pin, the cross.

One day, etched too deeply to receive the pin, I turned away, rolled over onto my sore stomach, offered her my back to scrape instead. I looked over my shoulder to tell her, 'make your cross here then if you must' But she was gone and I never saw her again.[55]

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[53] Freud, 'Papers on Hypnotism and Suggestion,' (1882-1892), trans. James Strachey, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume 1, 1886-1889*, London: Vintage, 2001, p. 85.

[54] Cf. Appendix 2.

[55] Geldo, diary entry in which she reminisces over the loss of her twin sister when she was 10 years old. The sister's name was Katey according to Geldo, and although I haven't found any information

Clarice: the puppet master comes clean

Clarice Lispector's short, intense novel, *The Hour of the Star*,[56] stopped me, and everything I was trying to write about in this chapter, in my tracks. I wrote on Kleist's dramas, sent it to an appendix, resurrected it, while more detailed writing on mimesis and hysteria was sent too to an appendix, where it currently remains.

The 'Star' is Macabéa, a star who never shines. Lispector describes this girl from North-East Brazil, a scrawny virgin, working, badly, as a typist, as existing 'in an impersonal limbo, untouched by what is worst or best. She merely exists, inhaling and exhaling, inhaling and exhaling.'[57] 'A granule of sugar carried on an ant's back. She was as light-headed as an idiot, only she was no idiot. She wasn't even aware that she was unhappy. The one thing she had was faith. In what? In you? It isn't necessary to have faith in anyone or in anything – it is enough to have faith. This often endowed her with a state of grace. For she never lost faith.'[58] Kleist would surely have adored this girl, this girl who could exist in the moment, able to say when questioned, 'it is so because it is so. Could there be another answer?'[59] But this girl is no heroine, no fated beauty, no royal maiden wringing her hands in despair, she is lost in the glamourless realm of her habits. If there is 'grace' here, it is without religious appeal – each night Macabéa mechanically recites three Hail Mary's 'Amen, Amen, Amen.' 'She prayed but without God. She did not know Him, therefore, He did not exist.'[60] Present in her story too, is the grace of the somnambulist, but not embodied by a dancing Lotte, as 'Her life was so monotonous that by the end of the day she could no longer remember what had happened that same morning.'[61] Each morning when she awoke she forgot for a moment who she was, remembering then no traumatic drama to be revisited, only the bland facts: 'I am a typist and a virgin, and I like coca-cola.' Lispector says:

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about her, I have seen Geldo's abdomen, which is indeed scarred with the shape of a crucifix. Geldo's claim is that one day Katey disappeared from their house and was neither heard of nor seen again.

[56] Clarice Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, trans. Giovanni Pontiero, Manchester: Carcanet, 1986.

[57] Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, p. 23.

[58] Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, p. 25. I am reminded here of Francis Bacon in conversation with Melvyn Bragg in an episode of *The South Bank Show*, shown shortly after Bacon died. Bacon described himself as an optimist. Bragg asked, 'Oh yes? Optimistic about what?' Bacon replied, 'Optimistic about nothing! I'm optimistic about absolutely nothing!!' And they both laughed a somewhat disbelieving laugh which didn't reach their eyes.

[59] Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, p. 26.

[60] Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, p. 34.

[61] Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, p. 33.

The girl possessed what is known as inner life without knowing that she possessed it. She was nourished by her own entity, as if she were feeding off her own entrails. [...] Without knowing it, most of the time, she possessed the emptiness that replenishes the souls of saints. Was she a saint? It would seem so. The girl didn't know that she was meditating, for the word meditation was unknown to her. I get the impression that her life was one long meditation about nothingness. [62]

The similarities, albeit transposed to the 20th century, with Kleist's 18th century dilemma are striking in the sense that Macabéa can exist somnambulistically in time without need of reflection like the puppet. But Lispector makes Macabéa become human, and when confronted with her self for the first time, her hermetic existence broken into, she Falls; once she asks a question, she becomes incomplete, unbalanced.[63]

The Fall follows her visit to Madame Carlota, a porcelain-faced, middle-aged fortune teller. Madame Carlota tells her how miserable her life is, which shocks Macabéa as it hadn't occurred to her that her life was awful. Madame Carlota then tells her she will meet a wealthy foreign gentleman, Hans, who will transform her life and her future. Overjoyed, Macabéa leaves Madame Carlota's with a sense of the future, with a sense of her self, but with an uncertainty she has never felt before. As she stands at the edge of the street unsure how to cross the road, awarded now with a sense of choice and autonomy, she is knocked over by a yellow Mercedes driven by a foreign gentleman. She lies in the gutter bleeding, and thinks to herself, 'today is the dawn of my existence: I am born.'

I am transfixed as I read this story, desperate for Lispector to give Macabéa a happy ending, a future, while knowing too I would find that improbable, disappointing. Nevertheless, I cannot deny that this fictional girl with no psychology, no dimensions, no history and no future, is living now in my mind and I don't want her to die. Lispector, exploiting her role as author of the girl's fate, teases me, 'I shall do everything possible to see that she doesn't die. But I feel such an urge to put her to sleep and then go off to sleep myself.'[64] I know too that Lispector is dying as she writes this novel, a fact I wish I didn't know.[65] More cruelly and teasingly still she tells me, 'Pray for her and interrupt whatever

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[62] Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, p. 35.
[63] Cf. Giovanni Pontiano, 'Introduction' to Lispector, *Family Ties*, trans. Pontiero, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972, p. 19.
[64] Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, p. 82.
[65] Cf. Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, trans. Sarah Cornell and Susan Sellers, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 18, 'Throughout the writing of the book everyone is terrified, the writer is terrified, the book is terrified; the text starts telling us something, then it gives up. [...] We go with misgivings from page to page. And suddenly it happens: the text strikes, the book is finished, Macabéa is dead. But not only is Macabéa dead, Clarice Lispector is also dead, she died immediately afterward. [...] One does not really know who wrote the book or who killed who. One does not know whether Clarice Lispector wrote the book in haste because she thought she was going to die or whether the book put an end to her life.'

you're doing in order to breathe a little life into her, for Macabéa is presently adrift, like a door swinging in a never-ending breeze.' I loathe the impossible demand and faux responsibility flaunted in front of me; reader of the already written. I am furious with Lispector when Macabéa vomits blood, then utters her final, pathetic words, which the crowd gathered around her don't understand, 'As for the future.' There is no future – there are only two pages left.

Early on in the book, Lispector says, 'Who has not asked himself at some time or other: am I a monster or is this what it means to be a person?' In moments I view Lispector as a monster.[66] She is a monster because she has denied me any sort of catharsis as might come at the end of a tragedy, even a Kleistian tragedy. I am denied any appeal to external laws of God or society which might provide justice for Macabéa's fate. I am denied even the possibility of critical analysis, as Lispector, all the way through the novel intersperses her own voice to tell me exactly what she is doing, to philosophise and speculate – she won't stop insisting her authorship. I know this girl is a fiction, the continual interruptions as I read remind me of this fact, yet she is insinuated into my mind. I dreamt about her the night I finished reading her 'life.' I have an urge to take up her character where Lispector abandoned it, to write her a different fate, though truthfully neither Lispector nor I really want to continue with this girl who has nothing to say, who listens incessantly to commercials on the radio, and who doesn't even bother to wash. Neither Lispector nor I seem to have control of this girl who, 'could speak of course, but had little to say. No sooner do I succeed in persuading her to speak, than she slips through my fingers.'[67] Despite her lack of dimensions, or perhaps because of her lack of dimensions, she is uncontainable and untrainable, a rather pathetic force, but a force none the less. No, I don't want her here with me. And yet here she is.

To outline an analogy between the act of reading and habit, seems pressing: repetitious movement of the eyes, focus and narrowing of attention.[68] Is all fiction a form of hypnosis and suggestion – a means of implanting an idea in the reader's unconscious brain? Then Lispector is like Freud and all the other suggesters throughout history, and though she continually attempts to analyse the effects her suggestions might have on me, as her reader, she knows she is in control. Rather than her denying me the 'life' of this girl, her life is etched into me by these interruptions, taking me out of the virtual life of the story,

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[66] On Lispector's 'textual violence,' Cf. Marta Peixoto, *Passionate Fictions: Gender, Narrative, and Violence in Clarice Lispector*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, pp. 89-99.
[67] Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, p. 29.
[68] Cf. Chapter 4.

continually waking me from fiction, bringing the unconscious into my consciousness, not allowing me to ever really escape from my feelings about Macabéa, the girl who is not real, the girl who exists as an idea.

Cixous describes Macabéa's death in *The Hour of the Star* as 'the hour of relinquishing all the lies that have helped us live.'[69] Was Macabéa's life a lie? In death does Macabéa find truth, or is it we who are forced to consider the truth that is a Macabéa? 'Macabéa lying on the ground, seemed to become more and more transformed into a Macabéa, as if she were arriving at herself.'[70] When Lispector loosens the strings, when Macabéa starts to question herself, she escapes; she can no longer be written. Just whose death is this?

In his last essay, another writing from the brink of the grave, Deleuze says of the evil Dickens character, Riderhood, as he lies suspended between life and death, 'Between his life and death there is a moment which is now only that of *a* life playing with death.'[71] It is an impersonal moment, which is at the same time intensely personal, a moment when the singularities of his existence are revealed, beyond the superficial artifices adopted during his life. Riderhood, although surrounded on his deathbed by the many people he has crossed and who for a long time wished him dead, becomes, in his transition to death, *more* than the Riderhood they thought they knew, attaining 'a sort of beatitude.' Likewise, Blanchot, describes how a corpse becomes more themselves to the onlooker, than the person they were when alive, finally revealing their silence and unknowability. 'The cadaver is the likeness like to an absolute degree, overwhelming and marvellous. But what is it like? Nothing.'[72] 'By analogy, we might also recall that a tool, when damaged, becomes its *image*. In this case the tool, no longer disappearing into its use, *appears*.'[73] The freedom of death is of no longer being prone to anyone's control, including one's own. Envy for the puppet can be seen in

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[69] Cixous, *Three Steps*, p. 37.
[70] Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, p. 81.
[71] Deleuze, 'Immanence: A Life ...' trans, Nick Millett, in *Theory, Culture & Society*, 14:2, 1997, p. 4. Cf. Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), London: Penguin Books, 1997, p. 44, 'It is something so new to Pleasant [Riderhood's daughter] to see her father an object of sympathy and interest, to find any one very willing to tolerate his society in this world, not to say pressingly and soothingly entreating him to belong to it, that it gives her a sensations he never experienced before. [...] this short-lived delusion begins to fade. The low, bad, unimpressible face is coming up from the depths of the river, or what other depths, to the surface again. As he grows warm, the doctor and the other men cool. As his lineaments soften with life, their faces and their hearts harden to him. 'He will do now,' says the doctor, washing his hands, and looking at the patient with growing disfavour.'
[72] Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock, London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982, p. 257.

this respect as a 'safe' form of envy for death, the desire to see in an inanimate other what one knows one will eventually be, but to not yet have to face the journey to the place of no return. Lispector lets Macabéa go there, though as there is no Macabéa without Lispector, Macabéa no longer exists, or rather she exists in stasis, without future or possibility. In death you become yourself and I am forced finally to accept that I never knew you, that you were only ever substantial as my fictional version of you. All one's fictional friends die, if not in the narrative, then at the moment the book closes. Yet in memory they linger on; they only ever existed as an idea, and as an idea they don't die until I die, but they don't move forwards any more, they are futureless and out of time. In my mind I can possess you, in images I can re-animate you, but I can never resurrect you.

I write of cycles and repetitions, but now I must ask: is there such a thing as 'ending' or completion, one purely authentic moment of existence, or is life a journey round the world and back as Kleist suggested as the route to regaining Paradise? Heidegger in *Being and Time* describes how one lives 'out of time,' never present, oriented always towards the next moment, always striving, moving forwards, incomplete – in imagination – the fiction of the future. Wholeness comes in death, the end, but this is a moment, a transition, within which one cannot know oneself – one's death is not an 'event,' there will be no subsequent memory. It is the moment in which one becomes absolutely oneself, but ceases to be oneself at the same time. For Heidegger, this paradox of death signifies the necessity that death must always be understood within life itself. What is more, '*No one can take the Other's dying away from him* [...] Death is in every case mine, in so far that it 'is' at all.'[74] One has an occupation, a friend, a love, a child, towards which one reaches out in life, altering one's patterns, but one's only truly indispensable role in life is one's own death; only I can do this; I can't act or fake it – what use is artifice now? One's death is absolutely one's own – all one's strings are cut, it is a moment of pure individuality, yet it cannot be thought. The death of others is so affective because it is 'theirs,' one has no role to play, the known turns into the unknowable.[75] And it is this, in the end, that is the appeal / horror of the puppet – the signifier of death; in death there is no desire, no future, just an empty body, swinging, detached from conscious time. In the cadaver we experience

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[73] Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, p. 258. Cixous compares the literature of Blanchot and Lispector in 'Apprenticeship and Alienation: Clarice Lispector and Maurice Blanchot,' *Readings*, pp. 74-109.

[74] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962,p. 284. Cf. also Lispector's autobiography, *The Stream of Life*, trans. Elizabeth Lowe and Earl Fitz, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

[75] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 281.

something more 'than a lifeless material thing. In it we encounter something unalive which has lost its life.'[76] The human can never *be* a puppet, let us now lose that possibility once and for all. That which has lived and passed, or continues to pass between life and death in the case of habitual behaviour will never equal that which has never lived: the puppet.

'Death for Dasein is not a limit in the way that a frame is the limit of a picture or a kerbstone the limit of a road. The picture ends at the frame, but it is not annihilated by it in the way that death annihilates Dasein; the kerbstone marks the end of the road and the beginning of a new environment into which one can step from the road, whereas the death of the body is not another mode of its life.'[77] Kleist's presence is here, haunted by the fact that there may be no transcendental realm in which to escape from the limits of the frame of life. Macabéa is here too, witness, now 'alive,' as she remains in my mind, standing on the kerbstone, hesitant. Lispector decides, condemns indecision, kills Macabéa, and in this sense is traditional; not prepared to leave her fictional girl walking off into the sunset, she inserts closure, 'The End.' *Because, Lispector, the puppet master, is herself dying.*

One knows there will be a fictional death when one closes the book. The book contains a map of time, beginning, middle, end – practise for death perhaps? Rehearsal of fate? Human life, in contrast, is lived in anxiety as one apprehends the moment of pure 'individuality;' in my 'being towards death' I am nobody's puppet, but, paradoxically its arrival is the moment I will know least about, there will be pure and total embodiment, absolute harmony, and I will remember nothing of it. The paradox is that my only autonomy is found in my 'being-towards' my own absence. And when I am *transfixed* by the thought of my death, I am also transfixed by the absurdity of *representing* it. The puppet, swinging in space, is the future that mocks my paradoxical position. If I am a slave or puppet to anything absolutely, it is death, the ultimate fate, the only truth, my only moment. Everything else is fiction, game-playing; a rehearsal.

And habit, I insist, is the most acute rehearsal for death. Habit is mini-death, set on the stage of the everyday. At the same time, this is a rehearsal for one's *own* death; one can become lost in habit, given over to it. Bergson's fear is that we become petrified by habit, mummified in its web, yet he acknowledges that the process of habituation can begin freely. Habit then is different from all those things one can never know for sure, because it begins from consciousness in the present moment; one can design one's habits, one can use them to gain access to one's unconscious. I will return to this possibility in Chapter 4.

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[76] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 282.
[77] Stephen Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 115.

In Chapter 3, I will explore the habitual dream state that makes up much of our everyday life, focussing in particular on what happens when one's everyday somnambulism is broken into, disrupted, and how one searches for ways to rekindle to the security one had before the dream was interrupted.

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Chapter 3 practice will not make perfect: the sun will not rise tomorrow

on habit and doubt

The day is stuck at dark. I am used to degrees of darkness, but today is eternal night, the air thick and dense. The sun is not risen this morning; the day is not born yet time is moving on. I am caught. I thought it a matter of fact that the sun will rise each morning, but now I wondering if the sun will rise again, and if it does, will this rip in continuity prevent me from sleeping soundly, sure of light when I open my eyes.[1]

Although the term habit most readily brings to mind those repetitious behaviour patterns, manifested in the sequential motions of daily routine, or more minutely in the gestures and twitches of bodily movement, the realm of habit also occupies and structures patterns of thought. In the same way that habits function non-consciously in their animation of aspects of the body's physical behaviour, there are also non-conscious habitual structures animating the movements of thought. These habits provide the kind of certainty by which things can be taken for granted, they induce faith in things, and subsequently make up a large part of what one might call 'knowledge' or 'belief.' Such discreetly integrated habits of thought operate in relation to one's immediate understanding of situations and events in the present moment, and are also 'predictive' in the sense that the non-conscious certainty they provide allows one to *expect* the repetition of something one feels one knows will repeat itself, without one's conscious awareness of such an expectation. Conscious knowledge, as Kleist knew only too well, on the other hand, is the curse of human life because it brings with it stutterings and self-consciousness, hesitation and doubt, creating a distance between what one 'knows' or learns, and what one 'is.' As long as one sleeps the somnambulistic sleep, the threat or fear of all that is unknown in the future can be held at bay. There is no doubt when one's asleep.

When a habit that has been fixed for so long that it is no longer a part of conscious thought is suddenly disrupted, the space which it occupied becomes its negative; somnambulistic certainty transforms into the doubt of the fully conscious being. Confusion, dysfunction, trauma:[2] consciousness of oneself and of one's world is tainted when a long-standing habit behind thought is broken and leads to a change in one's entire structure of perception. Perhaps this will remain at the level of a minute displacement – a shift or a side-step, an inexplicable shiver when one sees the sun go down – one's thought has developed a

[1] Geldo, diary entry, written immediately prior to incarceration.

limp. Or perhaps there will be a more radical, disabling change. The level of distress will depend both on the prior significance of the habit itself and the degree to which it had become certainty. But whatever the level of change, there can be no full recovery of who or how one was before the moment of the breach. Broken habit, *doubt*, can in extreme circumstances become a habit, a structure behind thought. Peaceful somnambulism is harder and harder to achieve.

The morning I rose but the sun did not, anxiety took its place. 'My' world appeared as a cinematic projection flickering before me. I could hold my hand towards it, and through to the other side. I move like a ghost through it all – put your hand through me, come on! Sometimes I still function to spite the illusion, at others I am the insect on its back, the clockwork toy fallen on its side, waving my parts in the air – performing pointless movements, unable to go anywhere.[3]

In order to conquer doubt, or rather to soothe the nagging, itching, insatiable pain of doubt, new habit, a substitute for old habit, provides a cure. In the case of a non-traumatic breach of habit, one might refer to the replacement of one habit by another as merely a part of the necessary process of learning; sometimes painful, sometimes giving relief. But when the habit has been vital or particularly beyond question, its loss cannot easily be replaced. However, as we saw in Chapter 1, habit is a fundamentally adaptable structure; unlike instinct it is not innate, but learned, though like instinct, one cannot function effectively without it, so habit must re-emerge in a new form to patch over the cut in the fabric of thought. We have also glimpsed that habit is an unconscious structure bound to repeat, and now, faced with a broken circle, it will attempt to survive and remake that which has been unmade. One must cover over, veil, stitch, stay busy. Do. Because although I am talking here about habits behind thought, as I hope to show in this chapter, it is often these habitual structures of thought, converted, translated and mutated which lead to the manifestation of habit as a repetitious physical behaviour. The more damaged the fabric of thought, the greater the space for doubt and the more vehemently will the mental pain be converted into and expressed via the body in a countervailing physical habit. Sometimes the new habit will lead to something useful, but sometimes it will be translated into a repetitive disfunctionality. A machine gone wrong.

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[2] I am here initially referring to trauma from the Greek 'wound' as a breach in the mind's experience of time, self and the world.

[3] Geldo, diary entry, written immediately to incarceration.

So, head down, lost, losing oneself in the habit which is now a necessity, the habit which is now one's master, all certainty and sense of self-control having become an illusion. Lift the head and doubt returns, the breach re-opens. Lower the head and begin again – it doesn't matter how bizarre you seem, just start again, and soon it will be time to sleep.

one ordinary morning in March

It is Monday 20th March, 1995, a spring morning.[4] The passengers travelling on the busy Tokyo underground in the early morning must be bored with the journey which happens in much the same way every day. As usual they are not paying much attention to each other, they find themselves in this collective space for practical reasons, though there may be a common low-grade buzz of anxiety typically shared by people on their way to and from somewhere using mechanised transport. Some are sitting, some standing, dozing, dreaming, reading newspapers, glancing at watches, planning the day ahead, thinking of the night before. Physically one may be enclosed in one world while mentally occupying another. When an unfamiliar chemical smell enters the carriage they are so safe in the familiarity of this world as not to be immediately concerned. Even when they begin to sneeze and cough, their eyes running and their vision blurring, none of them think it is anything to be worried about; perhaps it is 'hay-fever,' perhaps the 'remnants of a cold;' at worst something might be leaking from within the train. It probably remains at the level of a slight distraction, a vague annoyance – an inexplicable difference. Some notice a clear sticky substance on the floor of the carriage but don't investigate further. The passengers stay on the train despite the smell, and the train passes through the stations one by one. The rhythm of the train, the reading, dozing, standing, sitting, dreaming, thinking. Reading,

[4] Here I will relate / recreate the story of the gas attack on passengers on the Tokyo underground by the Japanese religious sect, Aum, in 1995. Aum Shinrikyo, or Aum Supreme Truth, was founded in 1984 by the 'Venerated Master' Shoko Asahara (born Chizuo Matsumoto in 1955). The group revered Shiva as their chief god, practised ancient yoga, and studied primitive Buddhism and Mahayanist Buddhist teachings, though Asahara also claimed they were practising a new form of Hinduism. They were recognised by the City of Tokyo as a religious corporation in 1989. By the mid 1990's, Aum Shinrikyo's worldwide following was estimated at 50 000, and its global assets at over one billion dollars. Cf. Eugen Weber. *Apocalypses: Prophesies, Cults and Millenial Beliefs through the Ages*, London: Pimlico 1999, pp. 219-227. My main source here, however, is Haruki Murakami, *Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum and Philip Gabriel, London: The Harvill Press, 2001 – a collection of accounts taken from interviews made over two years, of both the people travelling on the underground and members of the Aum cult

dozing, standing, sitting, dreaming, thinking. This / my somnambular journey is interrupted finally when the train pulls into a station, stops ... and remains stopped. Everyone is told to evacuate the carriage, and although many of the passengers are now feeling ill, they are annoyed – how are they going to get to work on time?[5] One man is thinking this as he collapses head first out of the train onto the platform, but for most of the passengers, it is only when they make their way out of the station that they realise they can no longer walk regularly, and that the light outside is causing sharp pain in their eyes. Some collapse. Some are taken directly to hospital where they die very quickly, some die more slowly. Some find a way to complete the rest of their journey to work, growing sicker over the day but trying to ignore it.[6] It is only later when the first news reports come through that the underground has been attacked with the poison gas, sarin, that they begin to panic.[7] Later, shock sets in: how could this happen? And in all cases: why did this happen to *me*? Later still, for some of the passengers who survive the attack, the idea of travelling by underground again is unthinkable, while those who do go back underground are more conscious, and doubtful, of the people around them. Some return doubting themselves, unsure of their memory of the event, needing to reconfirm it by returning to the scene.[8] Many no longer go to work at all. Almost all suffer blinding headaches and nightmares which, according to the medics, have nothing to do with the after-effects of the gas. Very few of the survivors are able to talk about the attack to those close to them, they say uniformly that it is something that cannot be put into words. The terrible rupture of faith, a faith that did not even know itself as faith but called itself routine, opens a wound in the fabric of certainty that cannot be healed, cannot be undone. And for many of the survivors, there is now a distinct separation between

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who perpetrated it. Cf. also Murakami, 'Doomsday on the Tokyo Tube,' *The Observer*, Sunday May 14, 2000.

[5] Murakami, *Underground*, p. 137, Michiaki Tamada, station master: 'Lots of passengers complained 'You can't just leave us here [...] By then Kodemmacho Station was in uproar, though while we were in the station I hadn't noticed anything unusual.'

[6] Murakami, *Underground*, p. 133, Masanori Okuyama: 'Most people, although they were in a bad way physically, still tried to go to work somehow, to go somewhere. They could hardly walk – in fact, one guy near me was crawling!'

[7] Sarin, isopropyl methylphosphonofluoridate, a nerve toxin, was discovered in 1936 by German chemists while experimenting with organophosphorous compounds, often used in insecticides. It is now easily produced and the ingredients needed are readily available, even though it is one of the most lethal chemical compounds ever devised. A single drop on the skin can kill an adult. At the Aum science laboratories, one building was devoted to the production of sarin and could produce 17.6 pints of liquid Sarin at a time or two tons a day. Asahara had ordered the production of 70 tons, enough to kill every living thing on the planet.

themselves and what they previously took for granted as reliably mundane, everyday 'reality.'[9]

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It is Monday 20th March, 1995, a spring morning. In the Aum headquarters in Tokyo the clear plastic packs of sarin are distributed to five cult members, concealed in folded daily newspapers. Unlike the everyday journey of the underground passengers, this event has been planned for months and this is a special day. Yet this event has now undergone such endless rehearsals, has been gone over so many times that in a virtual way, perhaps it has already become a routine procedure, a typical day. The group repetition has certainly worked to desensitise the five Aum members against the nature of what they are about to do.[10] Precisely on time, each member involved is taken to a strategically planned underground station by a taxi driven by another Aum member. Each has a face mask – this will not appear unusual as other people will be wearing them to protect themselves from the polluted city air. Each has an umbrella, the tip finely sharpened. They enter the train carriages at strategic times, placing the newspaper / sarin on the floor at their feet, and just as the train pulls into the station they are to alight at, they pierce the sarin package with the umbrella tip and leave the carriage, not stopping to look back. The taxi waits for them outside the station and they are quickly driven away. Like clockwork, I envisage them as they perform the operation coolly, mechanically, without passion. It goes smoothly, as smoothly as the journey should have been for the passengers on the train; no need for thought or reflection in terms of operation, nor even in terms of ethical behaviour as the cult members have long believed in what they are doing. This is going to work. For them this is a merciful act, a necessary act - they are saving souls from transmigration. Asahara, their

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[8] Murakami, *Underground*, p. 153, Michiru Kono: 'Later I went back to the subway, boarded the very same train, and sat in the same seat. I even went to look at the place where I fell down. At the time I thought I'd run so far, when in fact I'd only gone about 50 metres at the most.'

[9] Murakami, *Underground*, p. 134, Masanori Okuyama: 'When I was out in front of Kodemmacho Station, certainly that one block was in an abnormal state, but all around us the world carried on the same as ever. Cars were going by. Thinking back over it now, it was eerie. The contrast was just so weird.'

[10] Aum's methods were harsh; Asahara used brainwashing techniques in order to maintain control of his group, leading to what I.E. Farber, Harry F. Harlow, and Louis Jolyon West, 'Brainwashing, Conditioning, and DDD,' *Sociometry* 20:4, December 1957, pp. 271-285 call DDD (Debility, Dependency, and Dread), thus radically diminishing the cult members' sense of autonomy. Cf. also

spiritual leader, tells them that 30,000 people must die at cult members' hands before 1999, his predicted end of the world, in order for their souls to attain salvation, since only by spiritual awakening will enough holy energy be created to avert the coming crisis. To follow Asahara they willingly gave up their autonomy and sense of judgment, delivering themselves as puppets into his hands, and in return, the Aum cult gave them a 'home.' Before joining the cult, the members describe themselves as having been 'outsiders,' misfits, and as with sects in general which provide alienated individuals with structures and belief, by joining the cult they were not only becoming part of something for the first time, but were also renouncing everything they hated in a world which they believed had renounced them.[11] Asahara offered them a community and a cause to fight for. Perhaps it is only later, as the extent of the crime becomes known and Asahara flees the cult that they begin to awaken, and to tremble at what they have done. Newspaper reports about the way the cult has been run by Asahara begin appearing and the members must realise they have been duped. Without their leader to guide them they will be lost, unable to look as the veil of security is lifted, revealing the truth of the rationalised chaos they have been a party to; the united strength of the group's belief is shattered and the cult disbands. Later still, the ex-cult members speak about the event, the experience of being in the cult, as though they had been in a dream, aware in some blurred way about what was going on, but unable to judge it, preferring instead to be led by their faith in their 'master.'[12]

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On Monday 20th March 1995, an event occurred in which two different systems of belief collided and were broken apart; two different sets of dream-life were shattered. Of course in so many ways these two worlds were different from the outset, though the

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William Sargant, *Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brainwashing*, London: Pan Books, 1975.

[11]Jean Dubuffet *Asphyxiating Culture and other writings*, trans. Carol Volk, New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1988, p. 49, puts this succinctly: 'the choice of voluntary alienation furnishes a means to fight against a sentiment of involuntary alienation.' Cf. Weber, *Apocalypses*, for an historical account and comparison of religious cults spanning the centuries.

[12] The Aum cult later revived and is currently thriving in Sanwa, North-East Tokyo, after years of being 'forced underground.' According to Andrew Marshall, *The Guardian*, Thursday July 15, 1999, the cult had 2000 followers and earned £30m in 1998 from their shops selling cheap computers assembled by cult members. Asahara is in custody, facing 17 counts of murder and attempted murder, but still communicates with cult members by telephone, and is still considered to be the 'revered master.' The cult still regularly attracts and enlists new members.

similarities between them are striking. Not only did both groups function according to a 'faith' or ideology, albeit one spiritual and one urban, whether spoken or unspoken, but both groups of people were sealed within their faiths through a combination of repetition and indoctrination; in their minds they *expected* something to happen a particular way; they had become habituated. While Asahara used brain-washing methods to control the cult members, as we saw in Chapter Two, when one is caught up in the hypnotic repetition of everyday rhythm, one also becomes open to suggestion. Both groups had learned to function according to the internal laws of their 'group,' and then they had fallen asleep.

A sleeper, caught up in her dream, is to a large extent submissive. She is unable to consciously choose what happens to her as she finds herself already *in it*, and however bizarre the logic of it, functions with and around it. A waker, recounting her presence in the dream, can now only recognise herself in an abstract way, and cannot equate her fluent, though insubstantial, functioning in the dream with her daytime alienation from its language. From where was this landscape constructed and how was the logic of its drama scripted? Parts of the landscape and events are poignantly familiar, she can still smell them or feel a stirring in her belly at the fleeting memory of a colour or a figure, but the whole has been re-arranged in an order she couldn't have consciously constructed. She can't even grasp it solidly in her mind now, thinking back over it. Nevertheless, that peculiar, dislocated sense of familiarity...The dream has suggested itself into her waking hours.

This feeling of alienation-familiarity is perhaps how the Aum members felt at the end of their time with the cult; perhaps too it is how the underground travellers felt when thinking back to their previous years of doubt-free underground journeys. Here, I can only speculate. What I am suggesting in relation to both groups of people is the presence of a pattern of life in which the same logic of distortion which transposes life into dream, can occur during 'waking' hours; the body does not need to be inanimate for the wilful or autonomous mind to be asleep. Aum could be seen then as mimicking in a grotesque way the 'belief' / habit of everyday life, in the way that life is mimicked grotesquely in a dream. Cults emerge from the shadows to play out the worst aspects of a bad conscience about the dehumanising aspects of ritualised, social life. In this sense they conspire to undermine the ritualised daydream of social life, creating a nightmare.

These *two* dream-states in which different groups of people got caught up for different reasons, gave rise to a traumatic clash. The 'underground system' cannot contain two opposing dreams, and a nightmare is the result. Murakami believes that the Aum phenomena which has continued to disturb the Japanese psyche since the events of the Aum

attacks is unforgettable for Japanese culture because, 'It shows us a distorted image of ourselves:'

A mirror image is always darker and distorted. Convex and concave swap places, falsehood wins out over reality, light and shadow play tricks. But take away these dark flaws and the two images are uncannily similar; some details almost seem to conspire together. Which is why we avoid looking directly at the image, why consciously or not, we keep eliminating these dark elements from the face we want to see. These subconscious shadows are an 'underground' that we carry around within us, and the bitter aftertaste that continues to plague us long after the Tokyo gas attack comes seeping out from below.' [13]

Is, as Murakami seems to suggest, the alienation in the entire structural life of Tokyo, perhaps like every major city, such that it potentially breeds this kind of cult activity in its shadows? Is Aum the unconscious, the nightmare reflection of modern life in Tokyo? Does Aum represent the sleeper who disturbs the sleep of others, whose dream-life clashes with the dream-life of others?[14] If so, are all participants in this urban drama of life in some way implicated in the alienation that led to this event? The desire for sleep, the 'willing' and physiological necessity of sleep, the relinquishing of conscious control, the forgetting of how vulnerable one is to the suggestions of a non-sleeper when one is asleep, was shared by both groups of people on Monday 20th March 1995. And then, after the Aum attack, the mirror reflecting the dark side of Tokyo life shows too the shadowy outlines of the underground passengers who, now like the cult members prior to joining the cult, find themselves alienated from the society around them, 'outsiders' to 'reality.'

After one's beliefs, those beliefs that became so habitually incorporated as not to be consciously recognised as beliefs, are shattered, can one ever feel certain again? To ask this question is also to ask why one submits oneself to such habit in the first place.

will the sun rise tomorrow?

The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new. Murphy sat out of it, as though he were free, in a mew in West Brompton. Here he had eaten, drunk, slept, and put his clothes on and off, in a medium-sized cage of north-western aspect commanding an unbroken view of medium-sized cages of south eastern aspect. Soon he would have to make other arrangements, for the mew had been

[13] Murakami, *Underground*, p. 199.

[14] Murakami, *Underground*, p. 229, Mitsuharu Inaba, Aum member: 'My consciousness had gone over to the other side and I couldn't get back. [...] Inside me there was nothing certain I could rely on. I got more and more afraid. The solution lay in my training. So I became an Aum renunciate. If there was nothing within me I could rely on, then the only thing to do was to give myself up to Aum. Besides, I'd always thought that someday I'd renounce the world.'

condemned. Soon he would have to buckle to and start eating, drinking, sleeping, and putting his clothes on and off, in quite alien surroundings.[15]

Which comes first – habit or doubt? Murphy appears to suffer no doubt, he and his sun are bored, bored, bored. The computations that make up his life are small, the possibilities minimal – is Murphy a genius or a fool?

The first stage of the Enlightenment saw reason as the means to illuminate the world. Rather than obeying laws according to 'blind' faith in religion and ancient authority figures, Enlightenment thinkers sought instead to bring everything to light by the natural powers of human reason. One should doubt everything unless it can be proved through reason. Thus Descartes began his *Meditations* with a strict exercise in thought as a way of eliminating doubt, or rather, of finding a fundamental, foundational principle of truth: 'I shall apply myself seriously and freely to the general destruction of all my former opinions.'[16] To begin with, he rejected experience based on sense data: 'Everything I have accepted up to now as being absolutely true and assured, I have learned from or through the senses. But I have sometimes found that these senses played me false, and it is prudent never to trust entirely those who have once deceived us.'[17] He recalls in particular the way dreams deceive, as in a dream one thinks that what is happening is real: so why should one not doubt whether or not one is asleep at any moment of the day? How does one differentiate between sleeping and waking perception if, as far as the mind is concerned, the senses convey the same data?[18] Ah, Kleist, how you loved the possibility of living in a dream, with no cause to doubt its reality. The experience and belief of the present moment is not to be trusted and subjective experience is ultimately unknowable.[19] The men Descartes sees passing below his window might in fact be 'hats and cloaks, which cover ghosts or dummies who move only by means of springs.'[20]

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[15] Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (1938), London: Calder, 1993, p. 5. Cf. on this, Steven Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988, pp. 18-26.

[16] Descartes, *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*, trans. F.E. Sutcliffe, London: Penguin Books, 1968, p. 95.

[17] Descartes, *Discourse*, p. 96.

[18] Andreas Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia: The Unique State of Consciousness between Wakefulness and Sleep*, London: Routledge, 1987, p. 108, brings into a more contemporary context the haunting doubt that one might never actually be awake: 'We can never know, at any given moment, whether we are awake or dreaming, that is, however we attempt to verify our being awake *now* we can never be certain that we are not dreaming that we are awake and carrying out these tests: at every step of our experiments we shall be haunted by this possibility.'

[19] Descartes, *Discourse*, p. 98.

[20] Descartes, *Discourse*, p. 110. Nick Crossley, *The Social Body*, p. 15, sums up Descartes' conceptual flaw here, in that 'It presupposes that which it purports to explain;' for Descartes to

In a still more radical moment of doubt, Descartes imagines there might be a cruel demon who is continually deceiving him with false perceptions, even regarding his own body. To thwart this demon and to attempt to find a fundamental truth, he denies belief even in the existence of his own body: 'I will consider myself as having no hands, eyes, flesh, blood or senses, but as believing wrongly that I have all these things.'[21] Continuing his dramatic denial of senses and corporeality, Descartes begins the Second Meditation by suggesting that although his body, limbs and movements might be fictions in his mind, they are still in *his* mind. Even if he is being deceived by an evil demon, there is still an 'I' who is being deceived: 'he can never cause me to be nothing, as long as I think I am something.'[22] Descartes, believing at least in the sovereignty of thought, concludes that despite sensory deception, the mind is capable of continuity, of 'knowing' something; the *modes of thought* themselves can be said to be true. To think is to be, to be sure of being, regardless of one's doubts about *what* one is – one can't doubt that one is thinking as even to be doubting is to be thinking.[23]

And yet, how can one live in the world if the only certainty one has is the presence of one's own process of thinking? A thinking head on a pedestal, with no other activity but thought. 'Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning. I, say I. Unbelieving. Questions, hypotheses, call them that. Keep going, going on, call that going, call that on.'[24] Descartes' huge dualism between the thinking subject and the world was ultimately untenable in itself and in the end could only be bridged by his attempts to prove the existence of God, thus falling back again into an 'irrational' faith.

The second phase of the Enlightenment saw empiricist thinkers such as Locke suggesting that rather than human reason *illuminating the world*, one can only reach a more modest understanding of things, as if *by candlelight*: 'The candle that is set up in us, shines

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recognise even hats and cloaks is to presuppose that he can even be sure of his perception of the presence of hats and cloaks.

[21] Descartes, *Discourse*, pp. 100-1. Leon Salzman, *Treatment of the Obsessive Personality*, New York and London: Jason Aronson, 1980, p. 45, describes this corporeal doubt as a pathological condition, 'When the doubts begin to reach psychotic proportions, the obsessional may become uncertain about whether they have internal organs or whether they really exist – which, in turn, may produce massive delusions, misidentification, and confusion as the very existence of people or places.' Cf. Chapter 4 in relation to John Bunyan and Antonin Artaud.

[22] Descartes, *Discourse*, p. 103.

[23] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, p. 53, points out that reflective thought is also an 'act,' 'The philosopher's skill at honing in on and attacking the weak points of an opponents argument is not different from the boxer's skill at finding the weak point in their opponents defences.'

[24] Beckett, 'The Unnamable,' *The Beckett Trilogy*, London: Picador, 1976, p. 267.

bright enough for all our purposes.'[25] Faith in human reason was as questionable to the empiricists as the other forms of faith rejected by Enlightenment thinkers, because as the limits of reason can only be discerned from within reason itself, it is dependent on the limited capabilities of human nature. In the case of fundamental laws governing causality, for instance, one cannot comprehend what is ultimately beyond one by using reason, except by imposing onto the unknowable what one can prove through one's own experience. For David Hume, perhaps the most radical empiricist,[26] reason alone cannot produce knowledge or belief, though neither can experience alone; *custom and habit* are the only way of attaining a sense of certainty in the world. Habit is the ultimate route to quelling the pain of doubt.

Hume's empiricist approach to knowledge focuses on the systematising principles behind human experience. Human beings are like 'automatons' who sense, learn and repeat; sense, learn and repeat. All of one's ideas and memories are weakened perceptions of a previous experience, 'the most lively thought is inferior to the dullest sensation.'[27] The most bizarre imaginary or dream image must derive in some way from an actual experienced impression; one might imagine something that it seems one has never experienced, but one will at some point have perceived the relevant parts of it in a different combination. One can recognise the monsters of the unconscious. However vaguely. If one didn't amass knowledge of events according to the repetition of past experience, Hume suggests, one may become prone to doubt even the recurrence of the light of day: '*That the sun will not rise tomorrow* is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, *that it will rise.*'[28] How can one say, with conviction, that the sun *will* rise again? How can one know this *for certain*?

Murphy knows. According to Hume, although one may never know any aspect of the future for certain, one lives without constant doubt because of past experiences of the relations of resemblance, contiguity in time and place, and most importantly, *Cause and Effect*. 'By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and

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[25] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, London: Penguin Books, 1997, p. 57.
[26] Roy Porter *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*, London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 2000, p. 179, refers to Hume as the Enlightenment's 'most uncompromising investigator of human nature.'
[27] David Hume, 'An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,' *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1748), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978, p. 17.
[28] Hume, *Enquiry*, pp. 25-6.

senses.'[29] The experience of cause and effect allows one to have faith in what is *not* before one's eyes in the moment. The laws of cause and effect bind together a present fact and that which one might infer from it according to the repetition of past experience. I can speculate: it is a matter of fact, it is common sense to infer that as I have seen the sun rise so many times before, it has followed a regular pattern for so long, I can afford to anticipate its coming. One learns to expect such regular repetition, to have *belief* in it, until it is such an ingrained knowledge that each day there need be no doubt about the forthcoming arrival of the sun. For Hume we *need* such beliefs based on experience to defeat doubt.[30] Human understanding relies on both the initial reception of sense data and its repetition; without the knowledge of things brought about by repetitious regularity, it would be impossible for one to maintain a steady *relationship* with any object encountered:

> Let an object be presented to a man of ever so strong natural reason and abilities; if that object be entirely new to him, he will not be able, by the most accurate examination of its sensible qualities, to discover any of its causes and effects. [...] No object ever discovers, by the qualities which appear to the senses, either the causes which produced it, or the effects which will arise from it; nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact.[31]

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[29] Hume, *Enquiry*, p. 26.

[30] Indeed, the problem of doubt led to Hume's 'mental breakdown.' In his 'Letter to Dr George Cheyne [Dr. Arbuthnot?],' March or April 1734, in J.Y.T. Grieg, (ed.), *The Letters of David Hume, Volume 1*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 12, Hume states, 'I was continually fortifying myself with Reflections against Death, & Poverty, & Shame, & Pain, & all the other Calamities of Life. These no doubt are exceeding useful, when join'd with an active Life; because the Occasion being presented along with the Reflection, works it into the Soul, & makes it take a deep Impression, but in Solitude they serve to little other Purpose, than to waste the Spirits, the Force of the Mind meeting with no Resistance, but wasting itself in the Air, like our Arm when it misses its Aim. This however I did not learn but by Experience, & till I had already ruin'd my Health, tho' I was not sensible of it'. Cf. also E.C. Mossner, *David Hume*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 66-91. Hume's famous expression of and antidote to such confusion is in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, London: Penguin Books, 1969, p. 316: 'The *intense* view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? [...] I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, inviron'd with the deepest darkness, and utterly depriv'd of the use of every member and faculty. Most fortunately it happens, that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium, either by relaxing this bent of mind, or by some avocation, and lively impression of my senses, which obliterate all these chimeras. I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when after three or four hour's amusement, I wou'd return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strain'd, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther.' Cf. also R.S. Woolhouse, *The Empiricists*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 146-9 on Hume and scepticism.

[31] Hume, *Enquiry*, p. 27.

What does one know of the sun *itself*? Through experience one gains knowledge of its sensible qualities which can be described according to its effects either on the body or the eyes: brightness, colour, shape, heat. But that the sun burns, that it turns skin red, is not a pure knowledge or understanding of what the sun *is*, because no matter how much one associates the sun with pain on the skin, the sun itself does not contain *pain* as one of *its* properties.[32] It is only when the sun comes into contact with human skin, over time, that a particular type of burning and pain is the result. The effect of pain cannot be found in the cause, in the sun itself, no matter how hard one scrutinises it, thus cause and effect are different in kind from each other and one cannot be discovered in the other; 'every effect is a distinct event from its cause.' A potential or tendency towards an effect is invisible, it is not *in the object*, but in the event which arises from the combination of the object with something else, at which point it is no longer merely potential but potential changed and actualised; metamorphosed into something different – different to what it was, but always the same in relation to the encounter between the two objects. Then, when a particular event repeats itself again and again, habit develops the assumption that the same effect as always will occur when one encounters a specific object in a specific context. Knowledge then *is* habit, repetition, 'custom.' Habit is a structure, a linking or binding structure which unites what appears to the senses now with a past experience of the presence of a particular object or event, the effects of which have repeated a sufficient number of times to create a shift in the pattern of thinking, so much so, in fact, that one is not aware of one's expectations.

Deleuze takes up Hume's conception of habit as expectation, describing habit as neither act nor event, but a *presupposition* 'based on the fact that each degree of habit is, in relation to an object, the mere presumption of the existence of another object, like the one which *habitually* accompanies the first object.'[33] Nothing changes in the nature of the causal object itself, 'Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it.'[34] The repetition of the object has no 'in-itself,' it is I that

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[32] Cf. Locke, *Essay*, p. 55, 'For although receiving the *idea* of heat, or light, from the sun, we are apt to think, 'tis a perception and resemblance of such a quality in the sun: yet when we see wax, or a fair face, receive change of colour from the sun, we cannot imagine, that to be the reception or resemblance of anything in the sun, because we find not those different colours in the sun itself.'

[33] Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Understanding*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 66.

[34] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, London: Athlone, 1994, p. 70. Deleuze is here paraphrasing Hume who in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 217, puts forward the following doctrine: '*that* the simple view of any two objects or actions, however related, can never give us any idea of power, or of a connection betwixt them: *that* this idea arises from the repetition of their union: *that* the repetition neither discovers nor causes any thing in the objects, but has an influence only on

am modified by my experience of it in relation to other objects, including myself. 'Does not the paradox of repetition lie in the fact that one can speak of repetition only by virtue of the change or difference that it introduces into the mind which contemplates it? By virtue of a difference that the mind *draws from* repetition?'[35] And yet, difference does not exist purely in one's mind, one needs the presence of something other to trigger a particular expectation of what follows or accompanies it. The presence of this trigger gives rise to a 'contraction,' an expectation, a microscopic mental flinch. This contraction or expectation, in Deleuze's terms, *is* habit – a repetition based on past experience but not manifested as a memory; it is of a different order to memory as it is not located in a specific time, nor does it have an image.[36] Where memory differentiates past experiences according to details of time and place, a contraction or habit has a more faceless continuity, it reappears and repeats in each similar situation. A habit incorporated as part of the mind / body, is a part of the present, it endures. One's entire organic existence could be said to be made up of uncountable contractions every moment; each contraction alive, being affected and responding to the particularities of whatever situation one finds oneself in. Here comes the wind – I can see it moving the trees in the distance. I shiver. But did I shiver before the breeze reached me, or after?

Because it can be affected and affective, a contraction is not merely passive, it is not based on the reception of sense data only, but is an active / reactive link constituting a part of a whole chain of behaviour. Yet neither is it a Kantian 'active synthesis' of sense data in which one organises experiences into a conceptual order. Deleuze suggests that a contraction is a 'passive synthesis;' it is a synthesis because one's senses do more than merely receive, they contract, *expect*, according to the multiplicity of repetitions which have preceded any here and now. 'Habit concerns not only the sensory-motor habits that we have (psychologically), but also, before these, the primary habits that we are; the thousands of passive syntheses of which we are organically composed.'[37]

I am habit.

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the mind, by that customary transition it produces: *that* this customary transition is, therefore, the same with the power and necessity; which are consequently qualities of perceptions, not of objects, and internally felt by the soul, and not perceiv'd externally in bodies.' Cf. also Brian Massumi, *A user's guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, London: MIT Press, 1993, pp. 47-92.

[35] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 70.

[36] Cf. my differentiation between recollection, pure memory and habit-memory in Bergson's *Matter and Memory*, Chapter 1. Deleuze here takes Bergson's 'habit-memory' to a microscopic level.

[37] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 74.

Beckett once described habit as 'the ballast that chains the dog to his vomit. Breathing is habit. Life is habit. Or rather life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals. Habit is the generic term for the countless subjects that constitute the individual and their countless correlative objects.'[38] One can only maintain ones fragmentary existence through habit, one has no continuity apart from the repetitions of habit; trigger, respond, trigger, respond. When something breaks in the chain of habits that constitutes the living of one's body, there is a breach and one's body will fail. Likewise, habit controls the contractions and expectations in the structures of one's thinking; one's 'self' is a many-selved being composed of a multitude of contractions, each operating whether one wills them or not and whether one is aware of them or not. Without habit and repetition, one would be condemned to live in doubt in an eternal present, to arrive at every situation as if for the first time, to continually ask of the pencil: 'what is this strange thing and what should I do with it?' To go to the other extreme and to live entirely according to habit and repetition one would have to seal oneself in a vacuum, preventing all chance encounters and contingencies.[39] One survives in the end by balancing between two poles; swinging back and forth between certainty and doubt, habit and anxiety, never fully attaining the absolute extreme of either, but greater or lesser degrees of each. Kleist's nightmare.

Yet, if all that one is made up of is a combination of habit, ritual, repetition; what happens to the whole structure behind one's thinking when a vital link in the habitual chain is broken, such as happened to the travellers on the Tokyo underground? What happens when one is awoken from a nightmare when one didn't know one was asleep? Habits which structure the security of belief and knowledge, if shattered, can be as destructive to the individual as a bodily blow, thus the gas attacks on the Tokyo underground not only damaged the travellers' bodies, but condemned them to doubt, led them into nightmares, headaches, and a sense of general disbelief in the continuity of 'reality.' Habits of 'knowing,' once broken, are hard to fix. Now, damaged, one must rely upon the *adaptability* of habit in order to survive. New habits, beliefs, knowledge, develop as a way of controlling anxiety, of masking off the trauma of a breach in one's prior habitual existence. But these new habits are fragile, much more so than the old, especially as they may become more

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[38] Beckett, 'Proust,' Beckett and Georges Duthuit, *Proust and Three Dialogues*, London: Calder & Boyars, 1970, p. 19. A fascinating comparison between Beckett and Merleau-Ponty is Stanton B. Gardner, 'Still living flesh: Beckett, Merleau-Ponty, and the Phenomenological Body,' *Theatre Journal* 45, 1993, pp. 443-460.

idiosyncratic and bizarre, perhaps alienating one from the realm of general habitual activity of one's shared social environment. Because when a vital or significant habit or belief is radically broken, how can one allow oneself to be vulnerable again, off-guard? How can one sleep soundly as one moves through the world?

Habit involves a stable relation to objects – for Hume it is objectivity itself. But just as the breakdown of habit can fragment one's objective world, so can the demonic manipulation of objects in the world result in psychic upheaval. Consider inanimate objects. They are reliable at least – even the dangerous ones. One sees a knife and knows that it can cut or pierce skin, it can inflict pain, or can be *used* to inflict pain. Although as Hume might have said, the knife doesn't contain pain as one of its properties, one learns that it *can* cut one's skin. It is an object with the potential for danger to human skin; I am careful when I use my knife and I feel threatened by a stranger approaching me with a knife because I have an idea of what it could do to me. Whereas, to be wounded by an object I don't associate with danger, such as a bath tub, is a totally different matter.

Elaine Scarry describes how torturers use the most familiar objects, particularly the most seemingly 'harmless' domestic objects in order to exert the most confusion and pain on their victims; rupturing not only their bodies with such objects, but their fundamental 'beliefs;' their understanding of what an object *is*, what potentials it has, and the their stable habitual relationship to it. One is so familiar with certain combinations of items of furniture: bed, table, chair; at which one lies, places, sits, that to have this familiarity turned upside down is a particularly cruel, and effective, form of torture.

> Beside the overwhelming fact that a human being is being severely hurt, the exact nature of the weapon or the miming of the deconstruction of civilisation is at most secondary. But it is also crucial to see that the two are here forced into being expressions and amplifications of one another: the de-objectifying of the objects, the unmaking of the made, is a process externalising the way in which the person's pain causes his world to disintegrate; and, at the same time, the disintegration of the world is here, in the most literal way possible, made painful, made the direct cause of the pain. That is, in the conversion of a refrigerator into a bludgeon, the refrigerator disappears; its disappearance objectifies the disappearance of the world (sky, country, bench) experienced by a person in great pain; and it is the very fact of its disappearance, its transition from a refrigerator into a bludgeon, that inflicts the pain. The domestic act of protecting becomes an act of hurting [...] The appearance of these common domestic objects in torture reports of the 1970s is no more gratuitous and accidental than the fact that so much of our awareness of Germany in the 1940s is attached to the words 'ovens,' 'showers,' 'lampshades,' and 'soap.' [40]

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[39] I will return to this issue later in the chapter.

[40] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 41. Cf. p.43 for an account of a former Paraguayan prisoner who was tortured with a bath tub, quoted from the Amnesty International Archives.

The horror and physical pain of torture breaks the body, yet added to this is a cruel form of psychological torture which unmakes structures of knowledge and when one's previously habitual relationship toward an object is turned against one, as the de-objectified object is repeatedly used as a weapon, the immediate shock and disbelief gives way to a new expectation relating to the object. The victim now only has to see the bathtub to start feeling the possibility of pain, to flinch and move away. A new habit, a new knowledge has formed, but now uneven, structured over a scar; scar tissue – absolutely vulnerable to the rays of the sun. From this point on, not only is the tortured person disassociated from the everyday objects of life, they are also separated from other people as their associations with, and experience of, everyday objects, and the manner in which they might be used against them, can never revert to its 'innocent' familial state; one can't remake the unmade, only attempt to repair it, more or less visibly. The state of habitual relationships with objects unconsciously held in common with other people is shattered, as is one's faith in the certainty of continuity between self and other. The psychological importance of the structured world with its social habits and customs is recognised and used by torturers: 'Though the primary act of eating or moving, along with all other primary acts of the body, will at some point be brought into the torture process, it is naturally not the acts of eating or moving themselves but the self-consciously civilised elaborations of these acts, the dinner party or the dance, that the torturer's words reach out for.'[41] The importance of social structures, the expectation of 'civilised' behaviour is recognised by torturers and used to break the will of the torture victim. This deliberate and drastic breakage is much harder for the torture victim, if they survive, to bear.[42] While the damaged body might recover its health, it is not necessarily accompanied by a return to health of the psychological constitution of the victim. The rip in the structures of belief cannot easily be healed; perhaps precisely because the space they occupied prior to their destruction was always a space of 'invisible,' empirically unverifiable certainty, a space of certainty not even shared by the body which is at least visible when wounded. This space was known but unperceived. Disembodied faith – resting on air. Was it all just an illusion?

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[41] Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, p. 44.

[42] Brian Keenan, *An Evil Cradling*, London: Vintage, 1992, p. xiv, says of his four and a half years held hostage in Beirut, 'The real hurt was psychic and terrible and made the bruises, beating and torture insignificant, a mere passing inconvenience.' For a more general account of subjective

In vain do you pretend to have learned the nature of bodies from your past experience. Their secret nature, and consequently all their effects and influence, may change, without any change in their sensible qualities. This happens sometimes, and with regard to some objects: Why may it not happen always, and with regard to all objects?[43]

> Is this a dagger, which I see before me,
> The handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch thee: -
> I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
> Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
> To feeling, as to sight? or art thou but
> A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
> Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?[44]

one ordinary morning in January

It is 1st January 2000. I am travelling the Circle Line, asleep, as I often am during moments of transit, when I realise I must have been staring fixedly at a pair of feet opposite me. I know I have seen these feet before, they are peculiarly familiar, though I cannot recall when I first encountered the feet. I am, in fact, only alerted to them today because the train has stopped and remains for the moment, due to the threat of an explosion, in the tunnel.

The feet don't quite reach the floor of the carriage and I remember, somewhere, somehow, that usually they dangle, swaying with the movements of the train to left and right; pendulously. Now that they and the train are still, I am immediately surprised that it had not previously struck me as odd that the feet are bare. Now they are hanging still, I can study the details of the feet, the dry skin and the long nails which curve over and press into the skin of the toes, making it pink. The skin surrounding the sole of the foot is hard and leathery – this person has long been a bare-foot traveller.

A siren sound and an overhead announcement about our frozen status allows me to break my gaze away from the feet and remove the newspaper from the carrier bag, open it and pretend to read by lowering my head in its direction. Keeping my head in the same position I move my eyes, protected behind mirror sunglasses, in order to take in more information about the owner of the feet, while remaining unobserved.

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experiences of pain, Cf. Patrick Wall, *Pain: The Science of Suffering*, London: Orion Books, 1999, pp. 4-21.

[43] Hume, *Enquiry*, p. 38.

[44] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, London and New York: Methuen, 1984, pp. 47-48.

The ankle bones are prominent, bruised and slightly grazed on the insides of the ankle joints. Only five centimetres of the lower calves are visible; wiry calves, finely coated with black hair. I move my eyes up the legs, which are covered by a heavy purple garment. From this angle it is as though I am looking at the feet appearing from beneath a purple curtain. The garment covers the entire body, so that the contours can't be discerned. I steal myself and roll my eyes to the head and face. The head is lowered, the chin resting on the collar bones as if asleep, the face hidden behind the curtain of black hair and the flopping purple hood, throwing it into shadow. I am convinced this is a woman; the fall of the shoulders, the shape of the head, the size of the feet. I stare and will her to raise her head so that I can locate myself in relation to her, but she remains still and self-enclosed. Time slips, perhaps I am asleep again. I hope I am not still staring.

'The train will shortly be leaving the tunnel!' I glance greedily at the head – she has been watching me, her lowered head acting the same strategy of feigned disinterest as my own! There is an intense stare, a glimmer from within the shadows of the purple hood. I try to avert my eyes, comforted by a fleeting thought that she can only see herself reflected back from my mirror glasses, but her eyes are penetrative, I can see that, mirrors won't prevent her from seeing through. Besides, there is a tiny hole in the left lens which the previous owner of the glasses must have made with a pin while picking dirt off the lens, and the gaze of the woman is directed right at the hole like a laser - I am exposed, she *can* see through. I know she knows I can be hypnotised; I know she knows I travel in a dream.

The train warms up, jolts, then moves. The feet must have begun to sway again as it is only when another passenger enters the carriage and brushes against my arm that I realise I have travelled the full circle. When I look again, she is gone. The train stops moving and I am able to leave. I gash my foot on the carriage door, and I realise she has stolen my shoes.

habitual doubt

I'm driving down a main road doing 55 miles per hour. I'm on my way to take a final exam. My seat belt is buckled and I'm vigilantly following all the rules of the road. While no-one is on the road, I'm intruded with the heinous thought that I *might* have hit someone. I think about this for a second and then say to myself, 'That's ridiculous. I didn't hit anybody.' None the less, a gnawing anxiety is born. Because the gnawing anxiety that I really did commit the illusory accident is growing larger – so is the pain. The pain is a terrible guilt that I have committed an unthinkable, negligent act. The anxious pain says to me '*You really did hit someone.*' Reality no longer has meaning. I have to get rid of the pain. Checking out this fantasy is the only way I know how. Fantasy is now my only reality. So is my pain. I've driven five miles farther down the road since then. I turn the car around and head back to the scene of they mythical mishap. I return to the spot on the road where I 'think' it 'might' have occurred. Nothing is there. No police car and no bloodied body. Relieved, I turn around again. I drive

for about twenty seconds and then the lingering thoughts and pain start gnawing away again. Only this time they're even more intense. I think, 'Maybe I should have pulled *off* the road and checked the side brush where the injured body was thrown and now lies? Maybe I didn't go *far enough* back on the road and the accident occurred a mile farther back.' The pain of my possibly having hurt someone is now so intense that I have no choice. I turn the car around a second time and head an extra mile farther down the road to find the corpse. I drive by quickly. Assured that this time I've gone far enough I head back. But then I think, 'I didn't get *out* of the car to actually *look* on the side of the road!' So I turn back a third time. I drive to the part of the road where I think the accident happened. I park the car on the verge. I get out and begin rummaging around in the brush. I find nothing and head off again. But I start thinking, 'Maybe an accident did happen and the body has been cleared off the road.'[45]

He dares not goe over a bridge, come neere a poole, rock, steep hil, lye in a chamber where crosse beames are, for feare he be tempted to hang, drowne, or praecipitate himselfe; If he be in a silent auditory, as at a sermon, he is afraid he shall speake aloud at unawares, something undecent, unfit to be said. [...] He would needs make away himselfe, for feare of being hanged, and could not be perswaded for three yeares together, but that hee had killed a man.[46]

Habitual doubt: the vortex of the spiral. While in the cases Scarry relates, as well as in the accounts of the Tokyo underground travellers, finding oneself in a state of habitual doubt can be analysed as the effect of a particular trauma or event, some forms of habitual doubt and the rituals that emerge to exorcise it have more 'mysterious' origins. Such continual, agonised doubting affects the psychological realm, and is translated to the realm of physical behaviour. Now, disrupted, thrown out of time, thought and movement change, one has a narrower sense of certainty and must confine oneself to operating within a smaller, more intense scope.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is the modern name used for those who practise (however unwillingly) extreme habitual, ritualised, repetitive behaviour and thought patterns, though the French definition of *folie pourquoi* or *folie de doute* – 'the doubting disease' is perhaps a more accurate title.[47] Characterised by the intrusion into conscious

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[45] Abridged account of Dr. S, quoted in Judith Rapoport, *The Boy Who Couldn't Stop Washing: The Experience and Treatment of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder*, London: Fontana, 1990, pp. 21-23.

[46] Robert Burton, 'Symptomes or Signes in the Minde,' *The Anatomy of Melancholy* Vol. 1 (1621), (eds.) Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling and Rhonda L. Blair, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, pp. 385-386.

[47] German Berrios, 'Obsessive-compulsive disorder,' *A History of Clinical Psychiatry: The Origin & History of Psychiatric Disorders*, (eds.) Berrios and Roy Porter, London: The Athlone Press, 1995, pp. 573-592, gives a full historical account of the origins and history of OCD. According to him, the term 'obsession' has been in use in medicine since at least the 16th century, but at that time related more to the Latin *obsidere*, to be possessed, and was used to describe someone 'besieged by the devil.' Cf. also M. Macdonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, anxiety and healing in seventeenth-century England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 112-172, for an account of the terminology used to describe '2000 obscure rustics who were treated for mental disorders in early 17th century England' by the 17th century country doctor Richard Napier. Under the title of 'melancholy,' Napier gives the following account of a woman who would now be diagnosed as

thought of repetitive, sometimes absurd thoughts and/or 'uncontrollable' compulsions to perform highly specific patterns of behaviour, this condition emerges as a reaction to uncertainty and results in the individual's everyday life being tyrannised by doubt.

According to Rapoport this intense state of doubt represents, harking back to the Enlightenment crisis, among other things, 'a classic battle of sensation versus reason;' 'Perhaps underlying the dramatic content of doubts is an even more basic problem: that of *knowing*. Something gets stuck. The individual is caught in endless loops of trying to be sure of the obvious.'[48] Hume's trust in the senses is radically overthrown when someone experiences such an intense state of doubt, often manifested precisely as *a lack of trust in the senses*, leading them to return again and again to have an object or event reconfirmed before their eyes, doubting immediately that they have seen it the moment their back is turned on it again. In this light, the acting out of repetitious, habitual and ritualistic patterns of thought and behaviour in order to *make* something happen the same way again and again, is peculiarly rational. The obsessive can neutralise their sense of doubt by taking control of the laws of cause and effect, reducing these laws to what can be *made* certain, asserting a cyclical pattern of behaviour *of their own making*. This is a state of extreme doubt, habitual doubt, damaged habit, reduced living, and no matter how severe the constrictions placed on life by the obsessive, there will be no real security. The obsessive is caught in a trap: this is the bottom of the well. 'There minde is filled with black fumes, obscured as the sun by a cloud.'[49]

Not only does the agonising doubt of the obsessive reflect their fear of the unpredictability of the extended world, it also reflects their fears of the unpredictability of themselves. While there may be fears that an event will take an unexpected turn, that someone will do something crazy, there are also fears about loss of self-control, usually symbolised in the physical sense: I'm going to start shouting, screaming, fainting, vomiting.[50] I will reveal myself, I will lose what I have constructed to display to others as

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having OCD, p. 154, 'Extreme melancholy, possessing her for a long time, with fear; and sorely tempted not to touch anything for fear that she shall be tempted to wash her clothes, even upon her back. Is tortured until that she be forced to wash her clothes, be them never so good and new. Will not suffer her husband, child, nor any of the household to have any new clothes until they wash them for fear the dust of them will fall upon her. Dareth not to go to the church foe treading on the ground, fearing lest any dust should fall upon her.'

[48] Rapoport, *The Boy Who Couldn't Stop Washing*, p. 207.

[49] Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 419.

[50] Dr. S., in Rapoport, *The Boy Who Couldn't Stop Washing*, p. 25, 'Many of the obsessions and compulsions were based on an extraordinary fear that my aggressive impulses, my anger, would, without me knowing it, leak out.' This is what makes Stuart Brisley's video 'Arbeit macht frei' in

my 'self.' The rituals that ensue from such an overwhelming sense of doubt represent both an attempt to control one's own possible 'deficiencies' as much as they attempt to escape from the uncertainty of things in the world.

Salzman describes obsessive behaviour as a means of imposing 'drastic security measures,' strategies to divert the disaster that *may* be about to happen into an activity that is predictable. One can imagine the gritted teeth and the tone of voice: 'it is *going* to happen, because *I will make it happen.*' However, the picture is complex, because here not only is there a breakdown of faith in the laws of cause and effect, but a strategy of displacement. By displacing what is *really* troubling, what is seemingly uncontrollable, attention may be focussed onto something more trivial, manageable, repeatable. An alternative, an escape. Often the obsessive's perfectionism may focus on a detail, a minute thing, something powerless and unthreatening that can be manipulated and grasped, thus creating for the person who feels no power, an *illusion* of power and control which may temporarily dissipate anxiety.[51]

The illusion of power and invulnerability is extended into the outward display of the obsessively habitual person, manifested in an emotional flatness, an automaton-like blankness and a lack of expression. The living embodiment of a Kleistian sleepwalker, the voice atonal, the behaviour stereotyped.[52] But here, unlike the 'tragic' somnambulist, the obsessive has at least some say in their behaviour and their deliberate blankness fulfils a desire for accuracy and completeness, invulnerability, infallibility, impassivity, the play-acting of a role which is free from all possibility of error. 'My steps had to be in perfect cadence with my arms as they moved machine-like alongside my body.'[53] The obsessive might appear puppet-like, cold or inhuman to someone observing them; seemingly uninvolved emotionally with significant people or events while under the surface being massively over-involved with minutiae.[54]

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which he repeatedly vomits, so horribly compelling. It expresses publicly the shame of one's inability to cope with the horrors of Auschwitz through one of the most repulsive to see bodily manifestations. Dr. Andrew Hodgkiss suggested to me recently that only humans experience shame in this way, that they would rather 'die' than be publicly shamed. Many sufferers of emetophobia, the fear of vomiting, say they would rather die than vomit in public.

[51] Leon Salzman, *Treatment of the Obsessive Personality*, New York and London: Jason Aronson, 1980, p. 9.

[52] Cf. Coda, in relation to the figures who populate the films of Robert Bresson.

[53] Arnie, in Rapoport, *The Boy Who Couldn't Stop Washing*, p. 124.

[54] H.C. Holland, 'Displacement activity as a form of abnormal behaviour in animals,' in *Obsessive States*, p. 162, describes the perverse displacement of anxiety that occurs when two male sticklebacks meet at the boundaries of their territories, one might expect them to either attack each other or flee.

There is of course, enormous vulnerability and tension under the apparently impassive surface – interior and exterior do not match up. It takes a lot of effort to be perfect – the obsessive person is a taut wire, stretched to their limit, always on the verge of snapping. And while the displacement of anxiety is sharply focussed onto what might appear to be relatively insignificant, the object of the obsession far from insignificant, but is vitally, intensely, invested with emotion and symbolic significance, so much so that if a ritualistic activity is interrupted, the result is a highly anxious, traumatised state. The equilibrium of the doubter will not be regained until the ritual starts up again from the beginning and is completed successfully – that is if it ever can be 'successful' when the need for control is so insatiable.[55] The need for control demands repetition of the tried and tested, thus emotional situations which involve ambiguity or ambivalence are highly confusing.[56] The tendency is to think in extremes: all or nothing: I will find total control or I will be lost to total chaos. Not surprisingly, doors and passageways feature frequently in obsessive rituals as they represent a threshold, the necessity of making a decision.[57] The obsessive gets stuck in doorways, unable to go backwards or forwards; any new decision may mean breaking an existing habit, disrupting the ritualistic magic of repetition.

But instead they begin to dig nests in the ground with great vigour, thus displacing the anxiety they feel at the presence of another male into inappropriate behaviour.

[55] Most people will find a threshold at which the need for control becomes untenable with any kind of daily life and will be forced to seek treatment. If however, an obsessive is in a position that allows them to remove themselves from society, there are seemingly no limits to the steps taken to ensure control. 'When he ordered his special beef stew, the vegetables had to be pared into perfect half-inch squares, with 'each and every corner cut off at a precise forty-five-degree angle.' He kept a slide ruler on his TV table to measure any suspiciously inexact pea or carrot. A plate of his chocolate chip cookies had to have a precise number of chips per dozen. Too many or too few chips and the cookies were rushed back to the crestfallen chef.' Peter Harry Brown and Pat H. Broeske, *Howard Hughes: The Untold Story*, London: Warner Books, 1996, p. 312. This powerful millionaire was afraid, paradoxically, of the tiniest thing, the invisible, but *uncontrollable* life of germs.

[56] Cf. H. R. Beech and Andrée Liddell, 'Decision-making, mood states and ritualistic behaviour among obsessional patients,' *Obsessional States*, pp.143-160.

[57] Cf. Boswell's 1791 biography of Samuel Johnson, quoted in Berrios, 'Obsessive-compulsive Disorder,' p. 547. 'He had another peculiarity[...] it appeared to me some superstitious habit, which had contracted early [...] this was his anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage, by a certain number of steps from a certain point, or at least so that either his right or his left foot should constantly make the first actual movement when he came close to the door or passage.' Cf. also Rapoport's account of Paul, *The Boy Who Couldn't Stop washing*, p. 66: 'With his entire family watching from the window, eight pairs of eyes shifting from one side of the yard to the other, like spectators at a tennis match, Paul tried his seventy-four step pathway towards the front door, zigging and zagging across the lawn. We all watched together like naturalists witnessing the dance of some new and exotic bird. It took two hours for Paul to get inside.'

don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know,
don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know,
don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know, don't know,

doubt and anxiety: one must get the ritual *right.* While pretending to make a choice, or presenting an illusion of control, it is the cause *behind* the obsession that is driving the repetitive activity; the illusion of control is the masking over of an anxiety that cannot easily be dealt with, or is perhaps repressed and consciously unknown. The whole routine takes the shape of an elaborate method of 'escape' – the habitual/obsessive person creates a situation or set of conditions in which they perform in order to quell the anxiety of the real situation or condition which they can neither bear to think of, nor escape from, and although producing anxiety in itself, in comparison to the unthinkable below the surface, the ritualistic activity is the lesser of two evils. In some instances 'self-contamination' may even occur: the drive to *find* a situation of danger, an alibi, in order to have a reason to carry out specific rituals and avoid the 'real' anxiety.[58] One may attach a ritual to a fear of something specific, then spend time scanning an environment or dissecting an event in search of the trigger for the ritual.

> The imperious demand of the ritual, the source of which the individual cannot identify, must be acknowledged and pursued. These intrusive thoughts, which are clearly unsolicited, can determine and influence one's behaviour. They are the clearest evidence of the presence of what is called the *unconscious*, or the out-of-awareness elements in human mentation and activity.[59]

In order for such a ritual to be completely broken, the design behind it must be found.

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[58] Cf. H.R. Beech, 'Approaches to understanding obsessional states,' *Obsessional States*, pp. 3-18.

[59] Salzman, *Treatment of the Obsessive Personality*, p. 17. Although it is generally agreed that obsessive compulsive disorder is beyond conscious control, there is much speculation about what kind of impulsion triggers an obsessive ritual. Mellett concludes in 'The clinical problem,' *Obsessive States*, p. 55-94, that OCD is a fixed behaviour pattern, occurring physiologically with no 'unconscious cause' driving it. Rapoport, *The Boy Who Couldn't Stop Washing*, pp. 184-5, concludes that obsessional behaviour is the result of 'innate behaviours released inappropriately [...] resembling misplaced grooming and/or protective rituals [which stem from] evolutionary meaningful but personally horrific orders from the brain.' Recent biological and medical studies of OCD have mostly 'given up on the idea that OCD is triggered by emotional trauma,' Phyllida Brown, 'Over and over and over,' *New Scientist* 2 August, 1997, pp. 27. Agreeing with her are: Richard Parkin, 'Obsessive-compulsive disorder in adults,' *International Review of Psychiatry* 9, 1997, pp. 73-81; Jeffrey Schwartz, 'Obsessive-compulsive disorder,' *Science & Medicine*, March / April 1997, pp. 14-23.

It is possible to recognise the dominance in the unconscious mind of a 'compulsion to repeat' proceeding from the instinctual impulses and probably inherent in the very nature of the instincts – a compulsion powerful enough to overrule the pleasure principle, lending to certain aspects of the mind their demonic character.[60]

As can be seen in Freud and Breuer's early *Studies on Hysteria*, the notion of a repressed memory lurking behind conscious behaviour was thought to be the trigger for hysteria.[61] The patient is caught in the cycle of the repetition of a memory which has become an *idée fixe*,[62]a suggestion on auto-repeat, which has to be challenged or deleted in order to erase its position as inner puppet master of the patient, directing their every move.

Between 1890–1920, Freud conceived the psychic apparatus as a homeostatic system invested with quantities of energy, regulated by the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain.[63] The organic system, he concluded, seeks to release the tension of accumulated excitations and promote an equilibrium of psychic energies, providing mental constancy and stability: balance.[64] However, by 1920, Freud adopted a darker view,

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[60] Freud, 'The Uncanny' (1919), *Art and Literature*, trans. James Strachey, London: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 14, 1990, p. 360.

[61] Cf. Appendix 2.

[62] The idea of the repetition of a fixed idea can be seen in other writings of this period such as M. Regnard, 'Sleep and Somnambulism,' *Science* 2:50, June 1881, p. 172, 'The patient absolutely ignorant of all her surroundings, neither perceiving sound or light, begins to follow out a dream which has the peculiarity of being always the same and is the reproduction of some event, or series of events, belonging to her experience.' Pierre Janet too, Freud's perceived 'rival' stated in 1888, 'The core of a hysterical attack, in whatever form it may appear is a *memory*, the hallucinatory reliving of a scene which is significant for the onset of the illness.' Quoted in Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995 p. 193. A detailed and informative comparison of Freud and Janet on this theme is Campbell Perry and Jean-Roch Laurence, 'Mental Processing Outside of Awareness: The Contributions of Freud and Janet,' *The Unconscious Reconsidered*, (eds.) K. Bowers and D. Meichenbaum, New York: John Wiley, 1984, pp. 9-48.

[63] Cf. Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), *On Metapsychology*, trans. James Strachey, London: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 11, 1981, p. 277, 'Every psycho-physical motion rising above the threshold of consciousness is attended by pleasure in proportion as, beyond a certain limit, it approximates to complete stability, and is attended by unpleasure in proportion as, beyond a certain limit, it deviates from complete stability.'

[64] Freud's conception of a balance of energies can be seen in the context of late 19th and early 20th century mechanical theories in physics and instinct theories in biology. Cf. Salzman, *Treatment of the Obsessive Personality*, p. 4, 'All mental activity was to be comprehended in the language of physiology and energy mechanics. That Freud's theories were couched in the language of energy (libido) and mechanics (cathexis, countercathexis, repression etc.), as well as in instinctual notions of human motivation is only natural.' Cf. also Tatar, *Spellbound*, p. 43, 'The terminology that Freud used to describe the operation of mental processes – 'flows and 'dams,' 'charges' and discharges,' 'excitation' and 'cathexis,' currents of energy,' resistance,' and 'tension' – similarly reflects an inclination to view mental energy as an electrical or hydraulic force, perhaps on more than a

conceiving the possibility of a paradoxical pleasure to be found in pain, a 'deliberate' unbalancing of energy and disturbance of equilibrium manifested as a *compulsion to repeat.*

The compulsion to repeat emerges, according to Freud, from a repressed instinct[65] in the unconscious realm. This instinct, although cut off from consciousness, can 'struggle through, by roundabout paths,' to reach a 'substitutive satisfaction.' What is repeated compulsively is precisely what cannot be directly remembered, so one repeats a distorted version of what one cannot remember but at the same time what one cannot completely forget. But rather than an homeostatic balance of equilibrium between psychic forces then, there is more a constant underground battle going on between them because the unconscious insistently seeks to destroy the world built up by the ego. The unconscious 'has no other endeavour than to break through the pressure weighing down on it and force its way either to consciousness or to a discharge through some real action.'[66] The unconscious is repressed by consciousness, and the compulsion to repeat is the result of the battle between the survival instinct of the organism and the darkness dwelling in the unconscious which seeks expression; this darkness is referred to by Freud as the 'death drive.'

Where one might normally think of instincts as geared towards effective action, growth and development, Freud emphasises an aspect of instinct which is geared towards the *conservation* of the previous state of the living being, an instinct 'inherent in organic life to restore to an earlier state of things.'[67] This may be in order to return to a time when life was 'safer' – for instance, a time prior to a traumatic event, or it may be a reaction to modern progressive life in general in which rapid change leads to an overload of incoming stimulus, which in order to be balanced out, demands an exaggerated need for inertia.[68] In either case, for Freud, it is outside events or change that force the living being to alter its

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metaphorical level.' For a more general account of this era and its terminology Cf. H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reconstruction of European Social Thought, 1890-1930*, New York: Vintage, 1961.

[65] Cf. J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, London: Karnac Books, 1973, p. pp. 214-217, for an account of the problematic translation of Freud's term for instinct into English. Freud's use of *Trieb* does not relate directly to the English term instinct, but relates rather to 'drive;' a dynamic process, p. 214, 'consisting in a *pressure* (charge of energy, motricity factor) which directs the organism towards an aim.'

[66] Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle,' p. 289.

[67] Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle,' pp. 308-9. Cf. also Freud, 'Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety,' *On Psychopathology*, trans. James Strachey, London: The Penguin Freud Library Vol. 10, 1993, pp. 243-244.

[68] A more materialistic way of looking at this de-animating activity is suggested by Max Horkheimer, quoted in Martin Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, Toronto: Little, Brown, 1973, p. 115, 'To adapt oneself means to make oneself like the world of objects for the sake of self-preservation.'

patterns, whereas if this were not the case, 'if conditions remained the same, the organism would do no more than constantly repeat the same course of life.'[69] In this respect, there is no inherent 'creative instinct,' only an instinct to respond; change is demanded of one from outside, and is both painful and in some ways 'unnatural,' yet is necessary for those of us who don't have the security of womb, cocoon or vacuum.[70]

The instinct towards death, the innocent, emotionally static state emerges when its repression has failed, due to unbalanced psychic energies. While there is a balance of energies, the pendulum swings equally from side to side, remaining within a particular range, keeping its limits, but after a trauma or fright[71] the pendulum, swung violently to one side, beyond its normal limits, must swing equally violently to the other side in order to remain swinging. Absolute chaos in one's life and experience will be balanced out by absolute certainty – or rather, the desire to find it. The death instinct, far back in the organism, 'the first instinct,' becomes exposed and active; it is 'remembered,' though diluted by counter-energies, and becomes converted into a need to repeat, to 'return.'[72]

Using the terms developed so far in the thesis, it seems clear that the death and life instincts can be seen as analogous to the poles of habit. Habit provides the best means of modulation between externally imposed change, and deep instincts which demand repetition in order to maintain balance and security. Through habit one has a foot in both the extended world and the interior realm of the unconscious. However, we have also seen that habit must be distinguished from instinct. Even if the 'Todestriels' is conceived as a drive rather than an instinct, it still represents an essential force of some kind. However, perhaps the model of habit I have been working towards allows one to question the centrality of this notion. What

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[69] Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle,' p. 310.

[70] As we have seen earlier, this is indeed what the obsessive compulsive aims to create for herself in her ritualistic routines. This too will come to have bearing on Chapter 4.

[71] Freud singles out 'fright' from both fear and anxiety, as the latter are mechanisms which anticipate or prepare the organism for an encounter. Group fright occurred on the Tokyo underground.

[72] This bleak view ultimately sees life as a more or less circuitous detour to death, an unconscious desire to return to the lifelessness from which one came. J. B. Pontalis 'On Death-Work in Freud, in the Self, in Culture,' *Psychoanalysis, Creativity and Literature*, (ed.) Alan Roland, New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, p. 86, points out that the theme of death is more basic to Freudian psychoanalysis than the more commonly cited theme of sexuality, 'I even believe that the latter has been widely put forward so as to cover up the former.' Richard Boothby, *Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic theory in Lacan's return to Freud*, New York and London: Routledge, 1991, p. 6-9, describes the unpopular reception of Freud's theory of the death drive in both medical, psychoanalytical, common sense and religious opinions, and the way in which discussions of Freud silence or side-step the concept, 'Indeed, in many circles the theory of the death drive remains one of the great embarrassments of psychoanalysis,' presumably because it hints at an instinct geared towards self-destruction – the opposite of what instincts are usually believed to be geared towards.

I have been trying to show in this chapter is that habit itself only exists in relation to its own breach. It itself is a response to anxiety, and always exists in relation to doubt. Could this aspect of habit therefore explain the role of anxious repetition in mental life better than the possibility of an elemental death instinct?

Slavoj Zizek sees the compulsion to repeat following trauma not as a means of 'escaping' to an earlier, inanimate state, but rather, as a response to the traumatic rupture in belief. The 'primal trauma' is the trauma of an originary groundless of belief. There always was doubt, and life is merely the papering over of it with illusions of certainty. Thus, for Zizek, whatever type of ideology[73] we commit to is not so much 'an illusion masking the real state of things but that of an (unconscious) fantasy structuring our social reality itself.'[74] 'That is why we must avoid the simple metaphors of demasking, of throwing away the veils which are supposed to hide the naked reality.'[75] Rather than any particular illusion obscuring 'reality' as such, according to Zizek, it is the entire *structure* of our social reality and of social relations which are a constant source of illusion. Such fantasy is necessary in order for one to live and function without being continually disabled by doubt, but it also reflects a fundamental unconscious structure of *belief behind belief*, 'we find reasons attesting our belief because we already believe; we do not believe because we have found sufficient good reasons to believe.'[76] The desire to believe is stronger than the rationale one can find for believing, whatever ideology one latches onto. One doesn't necessarily believe because something makes sense – rationality is a secondary condition one might apply to what one believes in a more or less erratic way – why else would superstitions, for example, have such a hold on some people, despite what the scientist *proves* to them? Without this fundamental desire to believe would something like religion or spiritual faith exist at all?[77] The need for Law, the need to believe requires one to submit oneself to ideological *ritual*, 'act *as if* you already believe, and the belief will come by itself. [...] By following a custom, the subject believes without knowing it, so that the final conversion is merely a formal act by means of which we recognise what we have already believed.'[78] This is where habit and repetition come in, by repeating the belief we have opted to believe and by repeating it, in the same way as the obsessive, but perhaps not often so aggressively, one repeats to prove;

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[73] I am using the term 'ideology' here in accordance with the Marxist notion of an 'illusion of reality.'
[74] Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, 1989, p. 33.
[75] Zizek, *Sublime Object*, p. 28.
[76] Zizek, *Sublime Object*, p. 37.
[77] Cf. Chapter 4 on religious obsession / ritual.
[78] Zizek, *Sublime Object*, p. 39-40.

the proof spurs on further repetition and grows stronger every time. I will return to this in Chapter 4.

In order to believe in something to the point where one submits to it, one has to make an initial leap of faith, thus exposing one's vulnerability to the possibility of the belief being broken. This is a tense time because every habitual structure of thought and belief one takes on, however certain it *seems*, has behind it a fundamental vulnerability. The relation between belief and its groundlessness circumscribes the realm of the unconscious. Habit and repetition are its counterparts in the sense that they are the means by which a belief can be continually secured and reinforced. Habit allows one to feel certain, to forget that the very reason that one adopted a habit in the first place was to cover over an original, however deeply unconscious, lack of certainty. When the habit is broken the lack of certainty behind it is exposed and enters consciousness more vividly. The fatalist murmers to herself, 'I always knew it would happen.' The doubt can only be eased by the adoption of a new habit or ritual and so it goes on over and over, the habits becoming more modest and refined – less dangerous and open to rupture. There is a circularity here, in fact it is a spiral: original doubt leads to habit as a means to belief, the habit when broken leads to doubt again, but now the area of certainty has excluded many previously certain things and has shrunk. The new habit which emerges can only safely be focused on fewer possibilities, and the circle gets smaller. Until in the end, if the spiral continues, one is trapped as though at the bottom of the well, turning round and round in circles in the dead-lock of obsessive compulsion. Behind the curtain of everything habitual, then, there lurks uncertainty and doubt.

We are subjects to the spirals of habitual repetition, from the smallest, tightest circles to the largest, and our visual perception in some part determines what we see and what we can subsequently control. The circle of the sun rolls across the sky (or not). The return of sinful self-consciousness to the state of grace at the end of history is a circle that unravels itself into spirals, but these can always be tilted off their axis by the hesitations and stutterings that keep the obsessive stuck in the doorway.

In Chapter 4 I will look at some very specific adoptions of habit and ritual in which the adoptive subjects attempt to use their habits to find autonomy and freedom from the dark hole of doubt lurking behind life.

Chapter 4 spiritual exercises and metamorphosis

habit therapy

As we have seen, habit has links with, but ultimately differs from other unconscious repetitions such as instinct, circles of fate and the death drive, in that it begins with more or less conscious choice, involves learning and repetition and then slips into the unconscious domain. In Merleau-Ponty's view, habit and the coincidence it brings about between body and self is a positive thing – one can gain mastery over one's habits, adopting body techniques which no longer require conscious interruption or hesitation.[1] Yet as we have also seen, when one is so familiar in one's routines as to be hypnotised by one's habits, losing self-conscious awareness can be dangerous, opening one up to the suggestive influence and will of another – the downside of puppethood.[2] We have seen too how habit, by creating predictable repetitions in one's life as 'social hypnosis,' the somnambulistic underground of everyday life, on the one hand can help to shield one from doubt and threats of apocalypse, while on the other hand, when broken, depending on the degree of trauma this brings about, can turn to obsession, leading one into the performance of increasingly bizarre and idiosyncratic ritualistic methods of maintaining certainty.

In this chapter I will return to Merleau-Ponty's view of habit as an adopted 'body technique,' while avoiding now (on the basis of excursions into the relation between habit, loss of autonomy and anxiety in the previous two chapters) his pseudo-athletic optimism. I will turn to more autonomous realms of habit and different kinds of 'natural somnambulism.' By natural I mean not just that one can slip in and out of a fully ingrained habit without consciousness, but that there can also be a more personal, autonomously tailored and controlled somnambulism; a waking sleep in which the subject invents and acts out *their own habits*. While Merleau-Ponty's view of habit is fundamentally a habit of the healthy – an anonymous kind of everyone which ends up being no-one, I will look at habit of the 'sick,' those who express through their repetitions, rituals and routines something of a Sick Soul as James might put it.[3] Merleau-Ponty does not adequately take into account the fact that the desire to form a habit must by necessity stem from an initial 'lack' of some kind. For although one's habit might not arise from a difficulty or a pain, to adopt even the 'healthier' habit of a 'skill' demands a beforehand in which one didn't have the skill but *desired* it. And as such, although I use the word 'autonomous' I am never far from

[1] Cf. Chapter 1.
[2] Cf. Chapter 2.

acknowledging the shadowy lack behind each and every habitual practice we will encounter in this chapter. The habits illustrating the next and final pages of the thesis are various and cannot easily be generalised as indicative of one and the same thing, but all, in their own idiosyncratic ways provide some form of expression and 'production' that harnesses repetitive activity. For better or worse. Habit here is about the creation of an inner world, and the possibility of self transformation this brings with it.

Here's one small, and in this instance 'cheery,' story to begin with.

In contrast to the crazy theatrical world of manipulative, despotic doctors and performing 'hysterics,'[4] in a 19th century corner of England, Harriet Martineau, writer and social reformer, began mesmeric treatment for a debilitating physical illness which had kept her housebound for five years. Initially unconvinced by what she read in the newspapers about mesmerism, Martineau was intrigued enough to buy a book on the subject, and she and her companion / maid studied it closely, learning the art, so that in September 1844 she wrote, 'On June 24th, my affectionate maid tried her powers, and gave me ease and appetite, – for the first time for 5 years; and I walked about my room and chattered. [...] The broad line is passed, – between uselessness and usefulness. I feel I can work again – and this is all I care about.'[5] By February the following year, Martineau wrote of the hallucinatory visions she experienced while mesmerised:

> I saw the march of the whole human race, past, present and to come, through existence and their finding the Source of Life. Another time, I saw all the Idolatories of the earth coming up to worship at the ascending series of Life-fountains, while I discovered these to be all connected, - each flowing down to fill the next – so that all the worshippers were seen by me to be verily adoring the Source. Such imagery I have, of course, to leave unuttered: but a world of speculations and aspirations arises from them which can be spoken, and are spoken with a delight I never conceived of. For the first time in my life, I find language a sufficient instrument.'[6]

In August the same year, Martineau ended a letter, 'I am in robust health, – have bought a field, and am beginning to build my cottage upon it. Moreover, I am mesmerising the sick and suffering with more and more success, and I need not say, am very happy.'[7]

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[3] Cf. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902), London: Penguin Books, 1985, pp. 127-165.
[4] Cf. Chapter 2 and Appendix 2.
[5] Harriet Martineau, 'Letter to W.J. Fox,' September 15, 1844, in Martineau, *Selected Letters*, (ed.) Valerie Sanders, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, p. 101.
[6] Martineau, 'Letter to Richard Monckton Milnes,' February 22, 1845, *Selected Letters*, p. 108.
[7] Martineau, 'Letter to Edward Moxon,' August 16, 1845, *Selected Letters*, p. 111.

Moreover, almost a quarter of a century later, Martineau was still recommending mesmerism to her friends.'[8]

The book that Martineau and her maid studied was J.P. Deleuze's 1825 *Practical Instructions for Animal Magnetism*, a book intended to teach the lay person to use mesmerism communally and effectively.[9] Deleuze, a trained medic, had no time for the fantastical speculations of the stage magnetists.[10] In direct contrast to the manipulated / manipulating antics of Charcot and his hysterics, Deleuze emphasised modesty and caution: the best magnetist for a woman is her husband; for a husband his wife; for a young lady, her sister or mother. The mesmerist must focus their attention on healing their patient, who, by reciprocally concentrating on the magnetist and their repetitive passes, would become sensitive to the positive fluid emanating from the magnetist's brain. However sceptical one might be about the presence of magnetic fluid, one can imagine Martineau lying in a darkened room having her body rhythmically passed over and over by her familiar maid / friend's hands and how this might at least pull her attention away from bodily pain. In Martineau's case, with power conflicts neutralised, this intelligent, practical woman (far from being an hysteric) experienced not only relief from pain, but hallucinatory visions. In contrast to popular notions of somnambulistic 'extra-sensory perception,' Deleuze explained how: 'It is in no wise proven that in the state of somnambulism one has knowledge which one did not have in the waking state: one has simply sensations infinitely more delicate, a distant recollection of everything that one has known or by which one has been affected, and a great facility for making new combinations of ideas.'[11] As Bergson also suggested, induced 'sleep' might lead one into the vast field of one's virtual images, dream images, the realm of the unconscious set free from the limitations of conscious awareness.

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[8] Martineau, 'Letter to Mrs. H. Grote, February 13, 1867,' and 'Letter to Henry Reeve,' February 23, 1868, *Selected Letters*, pp. 207-210; 216-220.

[9] Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud*, pp. 236-265, differentiates between contemporary accounts of various practitioners favouring either mesmerism or hypnosis, with more detail than I will repeat here. Generally it was thought that where hypnotism required the complete passivity of the subject, mesmerism allowed the subject's autonomy to remain to a greater extent. For my purposes, as both techniques utilised repetition and mental concentration, both of which are also major traits of habit, I will not attempt to differentiate between the effects of one or the other in more depth.

[10] Deleuze's scepticism is evident in his criticism of the 'special' powers of suggestion that some practitioners of mesmerism claimed to possess: 'I have often seen patients convinced that if they were able to consult a doctor whose reputation had struck them they would soon be cured. [...] How does it happen then that a magnetiser who promises nothing produces a greater effect than a famous doctor?' Deleuze, *Histoire critique du magnétism animal*, Paris: Mame, 1813, p. 119. Gauld believes that many of Deleuze's ideas are still valid in the therapeutic use of hypnotherapy today. Chapters on Deleuze are contained in Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, pp. 116-123; Forrest, *Hypnotism*, pp. 84-93; and Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud*, pp. 101-135.

[11] Deleuze, *Histoire critique*, pp. 179-180.

As I have shown, many of the techniques used to induce somnambulism via mesmerism and hypnosis can also be seen to be traits of habit. Brown, among others, in more recent clinical studies of the therapeutic power of hypnosis suggests that the methods used to induce the hypnotic trance, such as fixed attention and repetitive rhythm, draw one into a *necessary* rhythmic quality of organic life, that life has rhythmic continuity and repetitive order with or without a specific external schedule to regulate it.[12] He describes the presence of 'circadian rhythms,' an adaptable series of regulators which condition the body, and which allow one to adapt one's rhythms harmoniously in accord with the rhythms of one's environment. In this case, the adoption and development of 'body techniques,' would be in part led by a need for rhythm beyond one's awareness, while at the same time this might in fact lead to one's living in a semi-hypnotic state. During habitual repetition, the sleeping acting subject, depersonalised or desubjectified, is, through combined rhythm, assimilated into their environment, becoming a part of things, a part of the rhythm of things. On this view, the rhythms of life are, at least in part, given and one functions mimetically according to such laws. However, we have seen that habit can function independently from an organic, instinctual base, therefore if habit and hypnosis are correlated, one must appeal to more complex models.

If habit leads to the same state as that of hypnosis, but without necessarily involving the dominant presence or manipulative controlling influence of a specific external force, will or puppet master, one can suggest to oneself an absolutely different set of rules, drawing one's own map, setting one's own time-scale of rhythms and repetitions to which one can adapt oneself.[13] I rise at sunset and sleep at sunrise, it suits me fine. Even according to Brown, it doesn't matter whether the repetitive order sought and practised by the individual is based on fiction or fact, imagination or reality: 'Repetition of what we understand with

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[12] Brown, *The Hypnotic Brain*, p. 88.

[13] In fact, even if one is subject to the presence of an external director, the underground journey can be disrupted; from within the somnambulism of life, one can, and perhaps on occasion *must*, create a counter rhythm. This is what Erika, the protagonist in Elfriede Jelinek, *The Piano Teacher*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel, London: Serpent's Tail, 1999, did. Erika, like the puppets of Kleist, is a manipulated figure, though in her case it is a puppet-mistress, her mother, who everyday, 'unscrews the top of HER head, sticks her hand inside, self-assured, and then grubs and rummages about. Mother messes everything up and puts nothing back where it belongs. Making a quick choice, she plucks out a few things, scrutinises them closely, and tosses them away. Then she arranges a few others and scrubs them vigorously with a brush, a sponge, a dustrag. Next, she vigorously dries them off and screws them in again.' (22) Erika's mother always wanted her daughter to be a pianist, but it is really the mother who wants to play, *through* Erika, Erika is merely her instrument, her prosthesis. 'Mother yanks at HER guide ropes. Two hands zoom out and play the Brahms again, this time better. [...] She is a weary dolphin, listlessly preparing to do her final trick.' (55) Yet Erika, the weary pet,

gradual alterations leads to the extension of our knowledge through both conscious and unconscious learning. All learning, in a real sense, *depends on having a story in mind.*'[14] Gilles Deleuze points out too that habit can be adopted through 'personal fictions,' 'As a matter of fact, habit can create for itself an equivalent experience; it can invoke fictional repetitions that render it independent of reality.'[15] One can exist in a different realm, subject to nothing but the rhythms of one's own field of time and space.

In order to explore such a possibility, however, it will be necessary to take what may seem a perverse route – for I will suggest that this formation of an interior spatio-temporal field through the manipulation of habits is first clearly discernible in the religious life. The paradox of 'wilfully practised submission' to one's master can be seen in much religious ritual, thus indicating a willed *discipline* of habit-formation. Faith in the invisible, in other words in that which it is as impossible to prove negative as it is to prove positive as it has no empirical status, is what I seek to address here now. There is a perverse, circuitous autonomy at play under the guise of passive faith which can be found to embrace a peculiar kind of 'freedom.'

the led life

> We must make no mistake about ourselves: we are as much automaton as mind. [...] Proofs only convince the mind, habit provides the strongest proofs and those that are most believed. It inclines the automaton, which leads the mind unconsciously along with it. Who ever proved that it will dawn tomorrow, and that we shall die? [...] In short, we must resort to habit once the mind has seen where the truth lies, in order to steep and stain ourselves in that belief which constantly eludes us, for it is too much trouble to have the proofs always present before us.[16]

Pascal had no doubt that habit and repetition were closely tied to the fostering and maintaining of religious belief. Faith relies on such reinforced repetitions, whether manifested as group or self-controlled 'brainwashing' technique, and can lead, when practised with devotion, to greater certainty of transcendental fact than the repetition of everyday events, even the rising of the sun. One's understanding or faith, once 'the mind has seen where the truth lies' need not be forever either confused or verified empirically by the senses if one takes control of habit and repetition as a means of sustaining belief. In contrast

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once out of the puppet-mistresses sight, travels on the local streetcars, breaking into the somnambulistic travel of the others; kicking shins, pinching, pushing, sticking in pins. (14-23).

[14] Brown, *The Hypnotic Brain*, p. 123. [My italic].

[15] Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, p. 116.

[16] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, London: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 247.

to Hume's concept of custom and habit as expectation, in which all one knows is what one can verify through the repetition of what is *given* through nature and the senses, here, one ritualises one's way into a set of structures one can *guarantee* will repeat themselves.

But does the need for such rigidly determined self-imposed circularity not actually arise in turn from an original breach in one's faith in the world? Born perhaps on the morning in which the sun did not rise; or the morning the sun arose with an unfriendly glare.

> After long musing, I lifted up my head, but me-thought I saw as if the Sun that shineth in the Heavens did grudge to give me light, and as if the very stones in the street, and tiles upon the houses, did bend themselves against me, me-thought that they all combined together to banish me out of the world.[17]

✂

To seek faith with such passion that one reduces one's world to what one can *make* happen again and again is not indicative of a healthy psyche, in Freud's view. For Freud, the extremes of habitual repetition as occur in some religious rituals and all obsessive actions are fundamentally the same: 'Any activities whatever may become obsessive actions in the wider sense of the term if they are elaborated by small additions or given a *rhythmic character* by means of *pauses and repetitions.*'[18] Life is a dance, led by a score of one sort or another; one functions in accord with a series of rhythmic 'laws.' Some obsessions may be more or less an exaggeration of a usual procedure, such as washing or checking, and may remain innocuous to a watching eye, but if the ceremonial has a particular conscientiousness, and anxiety follows its failure, the seemingly ordinary act takes on a 'sacred' quality.[19] The similarity between everyday obsessional activity and religion lies too in the pangs of conscience brought on by neglect of the accuracy of the ritual, the failure to get it *just right*, as perfect a repetition as possible. The real difference, then, according to Freud, between religious and habitual ritual is that there is a 'greater individual variability of neurotic ceremonial actions in contrast to the stereotyped character of social rituals; their private nature as opposed to the public and communal character of religious observances.

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[17] John Bunyan, 'Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners: Or, A Brief Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ to his Poor Servant John Bunyan,' in *Grace Abounding and Other Spiritual Autobiographies*, (ed.) John Stachniewski with Anita Pacheco, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 86.

[18] Freud, 'Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices,' *Civilisation, Society and Religion*, trans. James Strachey, London: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 13, 1991, p. 32. [My italics]. More recently too, Salzman, *Treatment of the Obsessive Personality*, pp. 59-63, points out the similarities between religious ritual and obsessional neurosis.

[19] Freud, 'Obsessive Actions,' p. 32.

[...] While the minutiae of religious ceremonials are full of significance and have a symbolic meaning, those of neurotics seem foolish and senseless. In this respect an obsessional neurosis presents a travesty, half comic and half tragic, of a private religion.'[20] Whereas religious ritual, even in extreme, can be socially acceptable, commendable even, the obsessions, repetitions and rituals of the neurotic might appear arbitrary and absurd. Bergson, as we have seen, would probably agree. Is religion then, as Freud seems to suggest, merely an acceptable diversion through which to project the deeply seated doubt that besets and triggers the obsessional neurotic? Here we return to Zizek's notion of a 'primal trauma.' As we saw at the end of Chapter 3, habitual repetition arises in response to major anxieties about one's situation in the world. If this is so, it would not necessarily be a belittling of religion to find its source in obsession and anxiety, if this were more widely construed than Freud might allow.

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Prior to his religious conversion, Ignatius of Loyola, the man of tears, displayed obsessive tendencies with an already religious slant: 'After I have trodden upon a cross formed by two straws, or after I have thought, said or done some other thing, there comes to me from without a thought that I have sinned, and on the other hand it seems to me that I have not sinned, nevertheless I feel some uneasiness on the subject, inasmuch as I doubt yet do not doubt.'[21] Loyola suffered from what became known, from the early 13th century onwards as 'scrupulosity,' though this obsessive form of doubting is similar in many respects to what is now referred to as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.[22] In order to liberate himself from his unbearable doubt, Loyola devised a series of 'spiritual exercises,' strict paces through which to put himself, in order to neutralise the pain of uncertainty. Such rigid self-reduction and control indicates obsessional thinking as we saw in Chapter 3, but whereas in comparison to the lone ritual of the obsessive in her closed world, the environment in which Loyola's rituals were carried out was communal and mutually

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[20] Freud, 'Obsessive Actions,' p. 33.

[21] Ignatius of Loyola, 'Reminiscences (Autobiography),' trans. Joseph A. Munitz and Philip Endean, *Loyola, Personal Writings*, London: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 17. W.W. Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992, attempts a psychoanalytic reading of Loyola's character, an exercise I neither want to repeat, nor attempt here. I am more interested in the structures behind such religious rituals than in analysing a particular personality in this manner.

[22] Cf. Rapoport, *The Boy Who Couldn't Stop Washing*, p. 224, for her table of comparisons between the 'symptoms' of scrupulosity and those of OCD.

reinforcing. This involves a further reduction of self than that of the inward-turned neurotic – here one relinquishes authorship of one's habits in favour of becoming as one with the members of one's religious group. Loyola's spiritual exercises nevertheless provided a channel through which obsessive tendencies could be diverted without causing further damage to already fragile and lonely egos.

Loyola speaks in his reminiscences of his pre-conversion self as 'he;' a now alien figure who once pretended to autonomy. Now, the only thing he claims he must will is the strength to maintain absolute obedience to the laws of his Superior:

> In the hands of my Superior, I must be soft wax, a thing, from which he is to require whatever pleases him [...] I must consider myself as a corpse which has neither intelligence nor will; be like a mass of matter which without resistance lets itself be placed wherever it may please any one; like a stick in the hand of an old man, who uses it according to his needs and places it where it suits him. [...] I must consider nothing as belonging to me personally, and as regards the things I use, be like a statue which lets itself be stripped and never opposes resistance.[23]

Where Merleau-Ponty describes the blind man's stick as useful prosthesis to the body,[24] here, rather than Loyola thinking of himself as able to 'use' something, he prefers the role of 'used' object; prosthetic stick of god. After surrendering autonomy thus far, the next stage of submission involved not only acting out the commandments of the Bible via the directions of the superior, but allowing the latter's thoughts to *erase* or *replace* the subject's own. The hypnotist hell-bent on the power of suggestion would here be in his element. Furthermore, as with techniques to induce hypnotic trance states, Loyola also advised methods of habit and repetition for the devotee to become fully attuned to the laws of the spiritual exercises.

Loyola's spiritual exercises were a lesson in absolute self-discipline, as tough an exercise of the will as that practised by any athlete training their body for the Olympics. For 5 hours a day, the exercitant, alone, should spiritually flex their mental muscles. The initial battle was to overcome the self,[25] and in order to prevent all 'unwanted' thoughts (i.e. personal or selfish thoughts) from interrupting the exercises, Loyola suggested one keep

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[23] Ignatius, 'A Final Word on Obedience,' letter to the Fathers and Brothers in Portugal, 26 March 1553, *Personal Writings*, p. 257.

[24] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 143, '[...] the blind man's stick has ceased to be an object for him, and is no longer perceived for itself; its point has become an area of sensitivity, extending the scope and active radius of touch, and providing a parallel to sight.' [Quoted previously in Chapter 1].

[25] Loyola, 'The Spiritual Exercises,' *Personal Writings*, p. 289, 'We need to make ourselves indifferent to all created things. We should not want health more than illness, wealth more than

one's eyes closed or fixed rigidly on one spot to prevent both the inner and outer gaze from wandering. Rhythm too was important: 'Pray mentally with each breath or respiration, by saying one word of the Our Father so that a single word is pronounced between one breath and the next. In the interval between each breath, attention is especially focussed on the meaning of that word.'[26] Undoubtedly these techniques indicate a form of self-hypnosis; alone, chanting, breathing and focussing, the Word becoming implanted in the unconscious.[27]

Rather than the self-induced adoption of a religious consciousness however, Barthes describes Ignatius' spiritual exercises as leading to *the invention of a language*. Practised in isolation, the spiritual exercises based as they are on the repetition of words, could be thought of as linguistic exercises which through intense focus and repetition empty out existing modes of language, hollowing out a vacuum in the mind, a space within which a new language can be formed.[28] Yet ultimately, can this practice lead to the creation of a new language when everything here leans towards the loss of self? In the sense of creating a personal or individual language, the answer is no, but in the sense of an alternative shared and communal language, the answer may be yes. Loyola's aim for the exercitant was that he rid himself of self and then by learning the minor language of his congregation, become part of a larger organism in which there are no longer any individualities – all share one body, one mind, one voice. Loyola compared such an harmonious community with the movements of the 'heavenly bodies.'[29] This emphasis on community and communication with an Absolute demands an alteration of consciousness first and foremost, with language as its vehicle. Catherine of Siena in her prayer, 'Members of One Body,' related such a community to the human body itself: 'Your bodily members put you to shame, because they all together practice charity, while you do not. Thus when the head is aching, the hand helps

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poverty, a long life more than a short one. We should desire and choose only what helps us move towards the end for which we are created.'

[26] Ignatius, 'Spiritual Exercises,' p. 332-333.

[27] Many other forms of religiously induced trance also use these techniques – from Buddhism to Transcendental Meditation. Unfortunately I cannot cover the subtle diversities between them here.

[28] Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller, London: Jonathan Cape, 1977, pp. 48-49.'Retreat in a place shut away, solitary, and above all unaccustomed, lighting conditions, dispositions of the room where the exercitant is to stay, positions, facial expression, which must be restrained, and above all, of course, the organisation of time, completely governed by the code, from waking to sleeping, including the day's most ordinary occupations (dressing, eating, lying down, sleeping). These prescriptions are not confined to Loyola's system, they can be found in the economy of all religions, but in Ignatius, they have the special quality of preparing the exercise of a language.'

[29] Ignatius, 'A Final Word on Obedience,' p. 256, 'For the lower to feel the pull and influence of the higher, it is essential for it to be in a proper inferior position, with due subordination and order from one body to another.'

it. And if the finger, that tiniest of members, hurts, the head does not snub it because it is greater and more noble than all the other parts of the body. No, it comes to its aid with hearing and sight and speech and everything it has.'[30] Bataille would later write that this kind of religious community provides a substitute for individual isolated discontinuity, giving the individual a sense of profound continuity as part of a communal 'quest for continuity of existence systematically pursued beyond the immediate world.'[31] Bataille however, did not see this profound continuity as organic, but as dissolving all form. Like Bergson's quest to reunite the individual with the ceaseless flow of time, such repetitions and losses of self are a means of bringing the member, through death of self, back into continuity with the whole of being. The absenting and erasure of separate individualities can in this respect be seen to be a way of reconnecting with eternity – spreading one's life beyond the limits of one's finite material body – it is only individuals that die. Nevertheless, rather than in the end indicating absolute submission of self, or a collapse into continuity, the adoption of the spiritual exercises should be seen as a key to open the door to continued spiritual life beyond the limits of body and self, that involves a metamorphic reshaping or redistribution of the co-ordinates of the self.

Loyola's exercises, neither purely inward turning, nor about merely learning by rote a religious moral code, were highly ambitious. The exercises, once learned, carried with them the expectation of nothing less than complete *spiritual metamorphosis*; the metamorphosis of one's whole way of living, being, thinking and seeing the world, providing the exercitant with a new rhythm, a counter rhythm to their old self and to the ways of those not involved in the religious life.[32] Loyola's was a generous club without exclusive membership, and his publication of 'The Spiritual Exercises' was to act as a self-help guide book for potential metamorphees rather than to be read and analysed in scholarly fashion. Its rules were to be absorbed and put into practice as a step by step guide to spiritual metamorphosis.[33]

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[30] Catherine of Siena, *Passion for the Truth: Compassion for Humanity, Selected Spiritual Writings*, (ed.) Mary O'Driscoll, New York: New City Press, 1993, p. 121.

[31] Georges Bataille, *Eroticism*, trans. Mary Dalwood, London and New York: Marion Boyars, 1987, pp. 15.

[32] Cf. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, trans. Michael Chase, London: Blackwell, 1995, p. 127, 'Spiritual exercises have as their goal the transformation of our vision of the world, the metamorphosis of our being. They therefore have not merely a moral, but also an existential value. We are not just dealing here with a code of good moral conduct, but with a *way of being*, in the strongest sense of the term.' Cf. also Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola*, pp. 87-108.

[33] In point of fact, Loyola didn't want to publish the exercises in written form, preferring them to be passed from devotee to devotee by word of mouth. Cf. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 126-144. J. Rickaby, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, with a continuous commentary*,

Being tucked away like this in the peaceful community of monastic life, cocooned by everyday mutual reinforcement of the Truth, would undoubtedly lead to less individual doubt in each member of the Body. However, for those not harboured within the shadows of a private nook, the agony of finding the rhythm and key to spiritual metamorphosis is more marked.

I began to think how if one of the Bells should fall; then I chose to stand under a main Beam that lay over thwart the Steeple from side to side, thinking there I might stand sure: But then I should think again, should the Bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the Wall, and then rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this Beam; this made me stand in the Steeple door, and now thought I, I am safe enough, for if a Bell should fall, I can slip out behind these thick Walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding: So after this, I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go further than the Steeple door, but then it came into my head, how if the Steeple it self should fall, and this thought, (it may fall for ought I know) would, when I stood and looked on, continually so shake my mind, that I durst not stand at the Steeple door any longer, but was forced to fly for fear it should fall upon my head.[34]

Where Loyola diverted his 'scruples' into a productive life's work in the bosom of a like-minded community, John Bunyan's doubt emerged in, and in some respects because of, an England dominated by Calvinist predestination. God, all-powerful and just, reigned somewhat despotically over the impotent and corrupt human soul. The indoctrination of predestinarian logic led to lives dominated by frustration, anxiety and despair as there was no way of knowing or attempting to alter one's fate: who was a reprobate (condemned to hell) and who a member of the elect (promised to heaven)? How do I know I am saved? The question was futile, one's fate was already decided, written, and all the Puritan could do was submit themselves to the 'whim' of god, hoping he chose to shine a benevolent light on their sinning heads, but always prey to a hopeless, despairing doubt which coloured all things. 'All that I did was condemned, and my self for doing of it also. [...] I was afraid to see a Knife if I was alone, or to have any in the Room at Night where I lay.'[35] No matter how 'obedient' in a Loyolan sense the individual was, she could never be certain that her passivity would, in the end, be smiled upon by her god. Rather than attempting to quell this anxiety, Calvin used it as a cruel tool to further suppress any anarchistic tendencies in his followers, asserting that to experience even the kind of anxiety that might lead to, for

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London: Burns & Oates, 1915, turns the spiritual exercises into even more of a 'guide book,' giving step by step practical advice on how to achieve Loyolan spiritual metamorphosis.

[34] Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, pp. 13-14.

instance, the writing or practice of spiritual exercises might in itself indicate reprobation.[36] The ambiguities of salvation at the heart of Calvin's doctrine, instilled into Puritan minds, meant that either certainty or doubt may equally indicate reprobation, leading to a vicious circle of the most pernicious, self-devouring kind: tell someone experiencing doubt that their doubt is condemning them further, and all that happens is that doubt engulfs them further still. The huge number of suicides occurring at this time reveals how living with the threat of hell was a worse prospect than even hell itself. As Hill describes, 'The people of the 17th century had to accept their helplessness before a God who was as unpredictable as the weather.'[37] For these people the sun may not rise tomorrow, and they dare not assume it will.

At the same time, this period saw an enormous output of 'spiritual autobiographies.'[38] Spiritual self-confessions were penned by all who could write or at least dictate their story.[39] And as Stachniewski points out, despite, or probably because of, the condemnatory aspects of Puritanism affecting everyone, the especially disenfranchised used such autobiographies as a means of expression, they provided a loop-hole for voices to emerge which had rarely been heard before. 'The attraction of Puritanism to women [and]

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[35] John Crook, 'A Short History of the Life of John Crook,' *Grace Abounding*, p. 161.

[36] Many smaller religious groups did however rebel against Calvinism. For a fascinating account of these, Cf. Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution*, London: Penguin Books, 1975; and Ian Francis, *Ann the Word*, London: Fourth Estate, 2000, for a detailed account of one such rebel religious group, the Shakers, led by Ann Lee.

[37] Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, p. 151.

[38] Such autobiographies were no new thing, and are usually dated back to Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin, London: Penguin Books, 1961. Many writers see Augustine as the 'father' of the spiritual autobiography. Cf. Garry Wills, *Saint Augustine*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1999; Perry Miller, 'The Augustinian Mode of Piety,' *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1961; Herschel Baker, *The Wars of Truth*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952; and William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, New York: Harper, 1957. However, where Augustine's confession led ultimately to his point of spiritual conversion, these autobiographies achieved no such lofty moment of spiritual liberation and were more concerned with relating the tortures of an on-going daily struggle against human weakness, sin and temptation.

[39] Cf. Richard A. Hutch, *Biography, Autobiography, and the Spiritual Quest*, New York: Continuum, 1997, pp. 1-17. Thousands of spiritual autobiographies were written and circulated, most of which have been lost. Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* survived chiefly because his later book *The Pilgrim's Progress* gained him fame as the first major English writer who was neither London based nor university educated. Cf. Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, London: Penguin Books, 1960, which, next to the Bible, is one of the world's best-selling books, translated into over 200 languages. G.A. Starr, *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965, describes the influence of Bunyan's writings on the output of other authors, particularly Defoe. For other historical contextualisation, Cf. L.S. Lerner, 'Puritanism and the Spiritual Autobiography,' *The Hibbert Journal* 55, 1956-7, pp. 373-386; Margaret Bottrall, *Every Man a Phoenix*, New York: BFL Communications, 1958; John Morris, *Versions of the Self: Studies in English Autobiography from John Bunyan to John Stuart Mill*, New York: Basic Books, 1966; and John Delany, *Seventeenth Century Autobiography*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

other socially deprived groups (as we find it, say, in the dispossessed Bunyan) was that it offered the replacement of a worldly hierarchy by a spiritual apartheid.'[40] Those who had already lived with little or no hope on earth let alone in heaven, in already restricted circumstances, had both nothing to lose and a lot to say, albeit translated into the language of Puritanism. What began to emerge, in the form of spiritual autobiography, from the psyches of the disenfranchised, was a form of literary self-analysis, evident never more clearly than in Bunyan's own accounts of the trials of his Sick Soul.[41]

The dispossessed Bunyan wrote his spiritual autobiography from a prison cell, a setting in which he spent almost a third of his adult life, incarcerated for his unwillingness to compromise with the establishment of church and state.[42] And perhaps because of this, *Grace Abounding* doesn't read like an autobiography in the traditional sense, it provides no historical markers such as names, dates, places or times; its only historical context in fact is its reflection of the awakening desire for self-examination rife in the Puritan period.

Incarcerated, both physically and mentally, the figure of Bunyan that emerges in *Grace Abounding* is hallucinatory and insubstantial. He 'occupies,' or rather semi-materialises in a non-linear time, which, if described at all, is described only vaguely as 'about a year,' 'some weeks.'[43] There is little sense of him as a physical entity, or of there being a physical world surrounding him, and although we learn every minutiae of what he *feels*, we know nothing of what he looks like, sees or does. He consists of a mind and heart, but no body; his body functions only as an instrument to measure emotional states of religious ecstasy or self-condemnation; 'Bunyan is without a body, he is an exposed nerve, existing in a universe of dimly-suggested dimensions and ephemeral time.'[44] Like Antonin Artaud after him, all he experiences and all he can describe are varying degrees of

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[40] John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991, pp. 40-41.

[41] Roger I. Sharrock, *John Bunyan*, London: Macmillan, 1968, p. 57-58, says, '[Bunyan's] religious development can easily be studied as a psychiatric case-history showing a progress from severe maladjustment (accompanied by hallucinations and paranoiac symptoms) to a successful integration of the personality.' However, as we will see, the 'integration' of Bunyan's personality was never completely achieved.

[42] Christopher Hill, *A Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People: John Bunyan and his Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, points out the historical context of Bunyan's writing, and p. 13, 'the atmosphere of fear and semi-legality in which dissenters lived.'

[43] Cf. Melvin R. Watson, 'The Drama of *Grace Abounding*,' *English Studies* 46, 1965, pp. 471-482, on Bunyan's use of time in his work.

[44] John Barrett Mandel, 'Bunyan and the Autobiographer's Artistic Purpose,' *Criticism* 10, Summer 1968, p. 240. Owen C. Watkins, *The Puritan Experience*, London: Routledge, 1972, p. 14, describes too how, 'The Puritan watched with awed and fascinated attention the mysterious battles taking place within his own soul.'

intensity.[45] In contrast to Loyola's anaesthetic subordination of bodily sensation to the precise channelling and narrowing of its desires into strict spiritual exercises, his procedure of utilising the body rather than denying it, Bunyan, like Artaud sought absolute liberation from the body – a spiritual liberation. Pascal's suggestion that one use habit and repetition in order to provide one's own sense of certainty and at least inner continuity would never be taken up by Artaud, however, for Bunyan, like Loyola, there did remain a communal guide book – the Bible.

For the disembodied Bunyan, the written word was more physically alive and active than he himself. He writes frequently and passionately about the physicality of the Word: 'that scripture did seize upon my Soul;' 'suddenly this sentence bolted in upon me;' 'that sentence fell upon me;' 'that piece of a sentence darted in upon me.' The word is flesh, actualised, able to hurt, to physically pierce and affect him.[46] Biblical texts 'spoke' to Bunyan, directed and manipulated his behaviour, and as a result he saw it as his lot to re-enact scenes from the Bible – events in his life were a mimesis or dramatisation of the already written. In his continual repetition of the Word, Bunyan's life seemed to coincide with events in the Bible, reassuring him that he was following a predestined path, and while putting him through the same trials and torments of the biblical martyrs, the already determined outcome left him no real cause for doubt. Through the repetition of the fate of others, Bunyan secured for himself his own fate. Although unlike Ignatius, he had neither the means, nor perhaps the desire, to regulate his spiritual activities into strict exercises, his Bible-reading habits provided him with a form of habitual self-regulation.[47] Bunyan read his Bible obsessively and regularly, learning huge tracts by heart, the texts becoming stored in his mind and able to appear spontaneously should he need a readymade solution to whatever situation or dilemma he might find himself in. In effect, he used his Bible to sow his

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[45] Cf. in particular, Artaud, 'Description of a Physical State,' pp. 64-65. Artaud will reappear again shortly.

[46] Cf. Joan Webber, *The Eloquent 'I': Style and Self in Seventeenth-Century Prose*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962, p. 50, 'Bunyan's Bible plays a role in his life. It, and fragments of it, strike him like weapons, call him to do this or that, force him to respond, to move forward.' Cf. also Brainerd P. Stranahan, 'Bunyan's Special Talent: Biblical Texts as 'Events' in *Grace Abounding* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*,' *English Literary Renaissance* 11, Autumn 1981, pp. 331-335. Teresa of Ávila used the term 'locutions' to describe the supernatural words which 'fell' on her inner ear with the authenticity of actual speech. Cf. Teresa of Ávila, *The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila by Herself* (1562), trans. J.M. Cohen, London: Penguin Books, 1957; Cathleen Medwick, *Teresa of Ávila*, London: Duckworth; and Louis Bouyer, *Women Mystics*, trans. Anne Englund Nash, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989, pp. 87-112.

[47] This was not unusual to Bunyan. Richard Norwood describes in his 'Confessions,' *Grace Abounding*, p. 147, how he used the moments before breakfast and after his long working day to read through the Old Testament 'about five times, and the New, ten, with wonderful solace and delight.'

spiritual body with a set of 'false memories,' and what James came to describe later as his 'verbal automatisms'[48] came to serve him well as talismans against doubt. However, Bunyan never achieved the full metamorphosis of Loyola, his conversion was never completed, condemning him to remain forever suspended in the process of metamorphosis; his life remained fixed on the symbolic plane in constant opposition to the mute protests of his body.[49] Bunyan ends his autobiography by admitting that he still wages 'daily war' against temptation. Without the reduction of religious intensity to strict practices of habit and repetition, Bunyan, like Kleist, remained forever suspended between certainty and doubt.

that (*what*?) shape am I

Whilst in a state of philosophic pessimism and *general depression of spirits about my prospects*, I went one evening into a dressing-room in the twilight to procure some article that was there, when suddenly *there fell upon me* without any warning, just as if it came out of the darkness, a horrible fear of my own existence. Simultaneously there arose in my mind the image of *an epileptic patient* whom I had seen in the asylum, a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic, who used to sit all day on one of the benches, or rather shelves against the wall, with his knees drawn up against his chin, and the coarse grey undershirt which was his only garment, enclosing his entire figure. He sat there like a sort of sculptured Egyptian cat or Peruvian mummy, moving nothing but his black eyes and *looking absolutely non-human.* This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other. *That shape am I, I felt, potentially.* Nothing that I possess could defend me against *that fate*, if the hour for it should strike for me as it struck for him. There was such a horror of him, and such a perception of my own merely momentary discrepancy from him, that it was as if something hitherto within my breast gave way entirely, and I became a mass of quivering fear. *After this the universe was changed for me altogether.* I awoke morning after morning with a horrible dread at the pit of my stomach, and with a sense of the insecurity of life that I never knew before. *[...]I remember wondering how other people could live, how I myself had ever lived, so unconscious of that pit of insecurity beneath the surface of life.* [...] I have always thought that this experience had a *religious bearing.* I mean that the fear was so invasive and powerful that if I had not clung to scripture-texts I think I should have grown really insane.[50]

James' experience of disembodiment as he encounters a terrifyingly non-human (too-human?) image / hallucination which 'falls upon' him like a cast shadow, was to change his life. This figure haunted him as something he *could* be in much the same way that the figures Kleist encountered at the Julius Hospice affected his future life and work.[51] Both men too through these 'disembodied' experiences were thrown into the vertigo of fate or chance. The green-skinned youth, an epileptic (the famous model supposedly mimicked

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[48] James, *Varieties*, p. 70, 'Bunyan is a typical case of the psychopathic temperament, sensitive of conscience to a diseased degree, beset by doubts, fears and insistent ideas, and a victim of verbal automatisms, both motor and sensory.'

[49] Cf. Robert Bell, 'Metamorphoses of Spiritual Autobiography,' *Journal of English Literary History* 44, 1977, p. 15.

[50] James, *Varieties*, pp. 160-161, [all italics mine].

[51] Cf. Chapter 1.

by hysterics), must have appeared to James as an embodiment of the convulsive body, the body cast into limbo, out of control. And James, not a religious man in the traditional sense, nevertheless realises here how such experiences might lead to what he came to describe as 'the religious sentiment.' Unlike Kleist's escape from the potential horrors of existence into the realm of drama, James hides his autobiographical account of existential dread and doubt behind a claim that it is written by an anonymous French gentleman, and diverts his attention instead to a psychological account of religious experience.[52]

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* James aimed to locate 'the original experiences which were the pattern-setters to all this mass of suggested feeling and imitated conduct,' which present 'all sorts of peculiarities which are normally classed as pathological.'[53] In his search to theorise the essence of 'religious sentiment,' he, like Freud, separated the institutional from the personal: the latter represents the 'inner dispositions of man himself, his conscience, his helplessness, his incompleteness,'[54] and where the former can be thought of as the subject's agreeing *to* a scheme, the latter, he believes, agree *with* it. The former are passive followers, the latter, active believers, like Ignatius and Bunyan whose faith is part of, if not all that constitutes their very being in the world and their desires to transform their beings.[55]

A fundamental part of the religious sentiment, according to James, 'consists of the belief that there is *an unseen order*, and that our supreme good lies in *harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto.*'[56] As Brown suggested with his account of 'circadian rhythms,' through which the habitual person finds unity between self and body in time, the religious person must harmoniously adjust to already written 'pure ideas,' to which nothing in their lived experience might directly relate or serve as an example. Doesn't this chime with Pascal's description of the reinforcement of belief? Proof of the ineffable is achieved through intensive repetition – only this can correspond to 'the unseen order.' In a way we are encountering an habitual imaginary, not visible to an external onlooker, but fundamentally no less habitual than the repetitions of the body. Whether, like Ignatius, opting for the choice of a 'led life' of endless 'innocence' and assurance that in obeying one

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[52] James described the above text as a letter he received from an anonymous French gentleman though it was actually an account of his own experience. Cf. Linda Simon, *Genuine Reality: A Life of William James*, London: Harcourt Brace, 1998, pp. 124-127; Hutch, *Biography, Autobiography, and the Spiritual Quest*, pp. 111-129.
[53] James, *Varieties*, pp. 6-7.
[54] James, *Varieties*, p. 29.
[55] James, *Varieties*, p. 41.
[56] James, *Varieties*, p. 53. [My italics].

can commit no fault; or like Bunyan's submission to the Word of the Bible, both involve, in the same way as adopting a habit, an initial *choice*. However, this leads James to conclude that religious life in general may pertain to 'submission,' but in fact really serves the interest of the individual in relation to their personal destiny: 'Religion in short, is a monumental chapter in the history of human egotism.'[57]

There is a curious paradox here. James, psychologist rather than religious man, naturally leans toward a reading of religion which takes into account the needs and drives of the human personality. However, it was also in James' time that spiritualism and parapsychology, were at the height of their development. James was in fact closely involved with these fields, in particular because he was interested in finding means for the material manifestation of the life of the unconscious. Religious conversion and spiritual metamorphosis, according to James, occur when 'all one's habits become directed towards faith as the centre of one's energy.'[58] But let us pause for a moment and consider what the outcome might be of such an expression of the unconscious if there were no traditional channels of faith through which to direct it and no method of habit with which to regulate it. This would illuminate whether there was more in common between the religious channelling of unconscious repetition and the secular relation to the unconscious than James was prepared to let on. In order to explore this further, it is necessary first to go to the extreme. I have already suggested an affinity between Bunyan and Artaud, now I will explore Artaud's absolute surrender to bodily intensities. Artaud rejects habit as a means to channel unconscious repetition; it is as if he were in continual limbo between the conscious and unconscious realms, between embodiment and disembodiment.

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Bataille describes a public reading by Artaud: 'Before an auditorium packed with the bourgeoisie (there were hardly any students), he grasped his stomach and let out the most inhuman sound that has ever come from a man's throat.'[59] One stage further on from Bunyan, with Artaud, we find an extreme expression of the unconscious which both transcends normal linguistic forms and is entirely bereft of Pascalian habitual self-reassurance. And in comparison to the trials undergone by Bunyan transformed into

[57] James, *Varieties*, p. 491.
[58] James, *Varieties*, p. 194.
[59] Georges Bataille, *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism*, trans. Michael Richardson, London and New York: Verso, 1994, p. 43.

autobiography, now with neither faith nor method we see in Artaud's writing what life without any form of adopted 'belief' might lead to. As Sontag points out in relation to Artaud, 'Nowhere in the entire history of writing in the first person is there as tireless and detailed a record of the microstructure of mental pain.'[60]

I have suggested that Kleist's vision of grace involves a fantasy of a puppet-like passivity, which at the same time he recognises as impossible. In Artaud we see how there is no liberation whatsoever to one who *really* takes himself to be passive to the strings of unconscious forces. Artaud's disconnectedness is described by him as though all the nerve fibres of his body are severed and working autonomously against each other; he feels only too keenly what it is to be a puppet, manipulated and controlled beyond himself by invisible forces. Artaud is the living embodiment of the human trapped inside a puppet body, and all the imitative aesthetics adopted by the dancer adopting a puppet-like aesthetic cannot equal the horror of his existence. 'My whole body is pulled apart. Everything in me from my head to my feet is moving. [...] It seems as if I have ten million fine threads which pull at me. It seems as if my legs are stretched and that I am being pulled outside myself, as if there were threads which pulled from outside.'[61]

As a result of this drastic loss of autonomy, Artaud demanded, both obsessively and violently, recognition of his unconscious *authenticity.* His desperation meant his pen was never at rest in his quest to materialise the enormity of his ongoing dissolution. 'My weakness and my *absurdity* is that I must write at all costs and express myself ... I am a man whose mind has greatly suffered and as such I have a *right* to speak.'[62] We see this never more acutely than in his early correspondence with Jacques Rivière, punctuated throughout with pleading comments in which he begs Rivière to *believe* in the authenticity of his mental suffering, and ultimately to neutralise his own sense of existential doubt. 'Finally believe and understand me,' 'give me credit. I beg you ...,' 'Have I not told you enough to prove?' 'I fear an ambiguity. I would like you to understand ...,' 'You must believe,' 'So trust me,' 'One must not be too quick to judge men, one must trust them to the

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[60] Susan Sontag, 'Introduction,' *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, p. xxi.

[61] Minkowski, *Lived Time*, p. 321, account of a woman suffering from *coenesthopathy.* [Quoted earlier in Chapter 1].

[62] Artaud, 'Correspondence with Jacques Rivière' (1923-4), *Selected Writings*, p. 31. The correspondence came about after Artaud's poems were rejected for publication by Rivière, then editor of *La Nouvelle Revue Française.* Selected letters from the correspondence were published in the *N.R.F.* in 1924 under the title 'Une Correspondance.' In 1927 the full correspondence was published in a book entitled, *Correspondence avec Jacques Rivière.*

point of absurdity, to the dregs.' The only poem Artaud allowed to be published as part of the Rivière correspondence, 'Cry,' ends poignantly with the lines:

Two traditions met.
But our padlocked thoughts
Were short of space;
Begin again.[63]

Not only did Artaud seek recognition of the actuality of this war of unconscious forces on his integral self, but he sought to find a language precise enough to reflect such authenticity; a pure language that transcends the value judgments which freeze the word; a language of the unconscious in all its magnificence, fury, pain and confusion. The argument running back and forth between Artaud and Rivière has at its core the fact that for Artaud, writing must come from pain as its pure expression; as soon as writing is transformed into artistry, attaining the benign status of a finished literary product, it has lost the immediacy of expression which in the first place inspired it. For this reason, although initially drawn to explorations into the unconscious undertaken by the surrealists, Artaud and they ultimately did not get along.[64] I will return briefly to surrealism and the practice of automatic writing a little later.

No matter how many padlocked thoughts Artaud encountered, he could not give up his quest – he would always 'begin again.' Artaud was a compulsive writer, his unconscious never far from his waking hours, demanding expression, and even during his last years his output was enormous, filling the pages of 406 notebooks and countless loose pages and sketchbooks. And as Robert describes, although Artaud was neither the first, nor will he be the last of the 'suffering artists,' he was perhaps the first 'to have rebelled totally ceaselessly, against all that tries, in complicity with thought and words, to enclose within acceptable limits the strange, ever new, intolerable scandal of suffering.'[65] Artaud sought authenticity and omnipotence, and without a god, he came to recognise that in the end only he could be judge of himself, 'I am the only witness, the only true witness of myself.'[66]

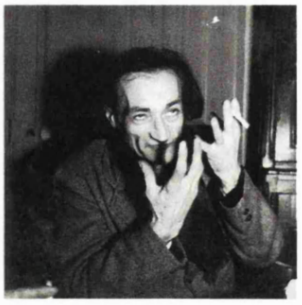
During Artaud's final years 'portraiture' was one of his major pre-occupations. His portraits represent violently disfigured faces with mutated and elongated heads, covered

[63] Artaud, 'Correspondence,' p. 34.
[64] Artaud denounces Surrealism in a number of texts, but most vehemently in 'In Total Darkness, or The Surrealist Bluff' (1927), *Selected Writings*, pp. 139-148.
[65] Marthe Robert, 'I am the Body's Insurgent,' *Antonin Artaud: Works on Paper*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996, p. 25.
[66] Artaud, *Collected Works: Volume 1*, p. 71.

thinly by lacerated skin, smudged and pockmarked, sore and bruised. Artaud 'drew' in a state of passionate frenzy, as an intern at Rodez recalls:

> During a period of several days, I witnessed the grinding out of this image, the savage hammering out of a form which was not his own. On a large sheet of white paper, he had drawn the abstract contours of a face and in that barely sketched-out mass where he had placed the blackened areas of future interventions, without a mirror, I saw him create his double, distilled as from a crucible, at the price of a torment and cruelty beyond expression. He worked in a rage, breaking one crayon after another, suffering the internal tortures of his own exorcism. All the while shrieking and reciting feverish poems which arose from the depths of his martyr's soul, he struck and chanted to a population of rebel larvae when suddenly reality appeared to him, in the form of his own face. This was the horribly lucidity of Artaud creating himself ... And when this face had become the symbolic identity of his own face, when its black mass was spread out before him like an object of fascination, with the creative rage with which he had blasted open the bolts of reality, as well as those of the surreal, I was him blindly gouge the eyes of his image. For this to him was to be a visionary: by passing through the depth of his own eyes, to perceive the reality on the other side.[67]

Artaud aimed in his portraiture to get under the skin of his subject, behind all façades and surfaces, as Rowell describes, 'Instead of drawings then, these must be seen as effigies in which the articulations between concealment and disclosure, the flesh and the spirit, inner suffering and the outer shell, are invisible, fused in a seamless and charged presence.'[68] In a reverse of the fate of Dorian Gray, the external surface of the body becomes marked with the inner turmoil of the psyche – and as is visible in photographs of the physical transformations of Artaud during his prolonged mental assault, this was his experience, not merely an aesthetic idea.



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[67] Dr. Jean Dequeker, quoted in Margit Rowell, 'Images of Cruelty: The Drawings of Antonin Artaud,' *Works on Paper*, p. 13. After completing this portrait, Artaud travelled to Ivry where he 'drew' another 40 portraits, a collection established by Paule Thévenin and Jacques Derrida and written about in their collaborative *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*, trans. Mary Ann Caws, London: MIT Press, 1998. Thévenin, a lifelong companion of Artaud describes how when he drew a portrait of her she felt as though he were 'skinning her alive.' Thévenin, quoted in Barber, 'Cruel Journey,' *Art in America*, February 1995, p. 74.

[68] Rowel, 'Images of Cruelty,' p. 15.

[69] Left, Artaud as Frère Massieu in Carl Dreyer's 1927 film *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*. Right, 20 years later, 6 spent incarcerated in mental institutions, Artaud in 1947. Around this time, Jacques

Deleuze distinguishes between Artaud's and Lewis Carroll's language in terms of surface. The language of Carroll, he says, is 'emitted at the surface' as 'non-sense,' whereas Artaud's language is 'hewn from the depths of bodies.'[70] With Carroll, 'If there is nothing to see behind the curtain, it is because everything visible (or rather, all possible knowledge) is found along the surface of the curtain.'[71] With Artaud however, there is no more surface: 'The great problem, the first evidence of schizophrenia, is that the surface is punctured. Bodies no longer have a surface. The schizophrenic body appears as a kind of body-sieve. As a result the body is nothing but depth; it snatches and carries off all things in this gaping depth, which represents a fundamental involution. Everything is body and corporeal.'[72] When the surface has been broken down or punctured in this way, words lose their meaning as they are no longer distinct from the body, so that 'all language becomes physical and affects the body immediately.' The schizophrenic then fights back by producing a language of 'action words:' breath words, screaming words, words that cannot be written down or made part of a readable surface. As we have seen, habit is all about surface – in Bergson's critical sentence it is a crust that covers over the real life of the body, whereas for Merleau-Ponty it is more to do with a surface that spreads between body and environment, enveloping them all into a part of an overall body technique, essential for survival. For Artaud to have lost the continuity of surface, he is devoid of all possibility of habit, subject to continual interruption by what is usually filtered by habit from the depths of the unconscious.

Artaud's final work was to be his radio broadcast, 'To have done with the judgment of god.' Here in voices raging between screeches, howls, screams and low growling murmurs he describes how:

Prevel described Artaud's face as having 'a lip like a knife-blade, his speech cutting.' Prevel, quoted in Ronald Hayman, *Artaud and After*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 45. Artaud's incarceration took place between 1940-1946, beginning with 3 years at Ville-Évrard, then 3 at Rodez. At Rodez between June 1943-December 1944, Artaud received 51 electroshock treatments. Cf. Barber, *Blows and Bombs*, pp. 102-120.

[70] Deleuze, 'The Schizophrenic and Language: Surface and Depth in Lewis Carroll and Antonin Artaud,' *Textual Strategies in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, (ed.) Josué Harari, New York: Cornell University Press, 1979, p. 278. This essay was written in part as a response to Artaud's great difficulty and the offence he took when asked to translate some of Carroll's writings into French. Cf. *Selected Writings*, pp. 447, 'Where I do not feel either love or soul my own soul retracts and refuses to give itself. 'Jabberwocky' has never seemed to me anything but an artifice of style, because the heart is never in it, a sort of marginal success, outside the rhythm of the litany of the heart, and one cannot write like this, one does not have the right to write like this, a poem that is outside the heart, outside the spasm and sob of the heart, a poem that has not been *suffered*.' Cf. Also Stephen Barber, *Antonin Artaud: Blows and Bombs*, London: Faber, 1993, p. 109.

[71] Deleuze, 'The Schizophrenic and Language,' p. 280.

[72] Deleuze, 'The Schizophrenic and Language,' p. 286.

Man is sick because he is badly constructed.
We must make up our minds to strip him bare in order to scrape off that animalcule that itches him mortally,

god,
and with god
his organs.

For you can tie me up if you wish,
but there is nothing more useless than an organ.

When you will have made him a body without organs,
then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom.[73]

This was Artaud's last struggle with language. His voice tears at the words, he now has no faith left in them and rips them to shreds; hysterical and icily humorous, bursting with bitterness and vengeance. Artaud's disgust with the body and its separate parts, their functioning together automatically, almost conspiratorially, can be partially redeemed if the body has no organs – one can transcend it. All of Artaud's work, as Barber describes, 'aims to reach the body directly, to establish an existence for the body in which all influence, all nature and all culture are torn away, so that the body is by itself, honed to bone and nerve as pure intention.'[74] The body without organs would become a gangling shell, a 'machine of being,' a mass without either organs or organisation.[75] The ultimate habitless body.

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The question of the bear's gaze is important, as he is not a blind animal. We write with our eyes closed and the more we close our eyes, the more we see. But the bear does not need to close his eyes, only humans do, in order to see otherwise. The bear's secret is that he sees straight but when we see, we project. We see what we have already seen, what we want to see. We see through a mirror. We see ourselves seeing, but the bear does not.[76]

Although Kleist's bear seems to have a secret vision, an unselfconscious directness of intuition, as Cixous suggests, it is important to qualify that the bear is 'not a blind animal.' Its advantage over us is that it is capable of a clarity of vision without self-reflection. Its 'blindness' is of the anxiety, the consciousness of void and death that gave rise

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[73] Artaud, 'To have done with the judgment of god,' *Selected Writings*, pp. 570-571. [My italic]. To Artaud's devastation, the broadcast was aborted at the last minute.
[74] Barber, *Blows and Bombs*, p.147.
[75] Deleuze and Guattari reinterpret Artaud's notion of the body without organs in relation to the 'desiring machines' of the capitalist body; *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972), trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, London: Athlone, 1984, pp. 9-15.

to Artaud's tortured writing. For Cixous, we can get to this clarity of vision if we 'see' with our 'eyes' closed, if we let our unconscious do the 'seeing' for us.

Looking back again to James' time, automatic writing and drawing were thought to provide a motor means for the body's manifestation of the words and images that haunt the unconscious – the body and its automatic tendencies are linked more directly to the unconscious than consciousness, generally too distracted by affective action in the everyday realm. In effect with automatic writing, *the hand is entrusted to write what the conscious mind cannot even think*, as well as what our open eyes cannot see. In order to achieve this, as Cixous suggests, one has to learn to write with one's eyes closed, to rekindle the authenticity of 'vision' the bear in Kleist's Marionette Theatre has without trying. One can already glimpse what Artaud might have thought of this unproblematic opening of a door to the unconscious. But Artaud's excavations are ultimately unsustainable, I cannot experiment with his mental torture, so let us instead look further into the use of automatic writing as a means of harnessing unconscious repetition.

James' techniques for inducing automatic writing involved such voluntary operations as 'fixing the attention,' or going through repetitive 'bodily performances,' as a means of invoking an hypnotic state. 'The mind must be detached from outer sensations, for these interfere with its concentration upon ideal things.'[77] He refers to this state as a 'semi-hallucinatory mono-ideism.' Like the trance states induced by hypnosis or indeed habit, in which all attention is focussed on a narrowed repetitive field, consciousness can be diverted from self-conscious concerns, allowing the unconscious, an 'authenticity' of thought, to be unleashed. And, unlike habit in its everyday sense, the practice of writing while in such a trance state might provide a trace of what it is that fills the mind when not concerned with conscious thought and action.[78]

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[76] Cixous, 'Grace and Innocence,' pp. 54-55.

[77] James, *Varieties*, 406.

[78] In its early days, automatic writing was the terrain of spiritualist mediums, and rather than it providing access to an individual unconscious, was used as a channel for the dead to animate the living, to speak and write through them. For the psychic medium, automatic writing indicated possession, the writer being taken over by an external entity, and what Barthes described as the 'death of the author,' Sonu Shamdasani, 'Automatic Writing and the Discovery of the Unconscious,' *Spring* 54, 1993, p. 104, describes spiritualist automatic writing as 'the authorship of the dead.' Cf. Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author,' *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath, London: Fontana, 1977, pp. 142-148. Shamdasani's article gives in general a fuller account of spiritualist automatic writing than I will repeat here. However, one of the most fascinating accounts of the phenomenon I have come across is Théodore Flournoy, *From India to the Planet Mars* (1889), Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994, in which Flournoy recounts his experiments with medium Hélène Smith.

As far back as Plato, creativity was thought to arise from a 'divine madness.' When producing, the artist's own conscious awareness was not thought directly responsible for their products, and the creative process itself was a matter of being 'out of one's mind.' But whereas in times past creative insanity was thought to come from a source outside the artist, possessing her and dictating her moves, in more modern times while unconscious factors in creativity seem to come from outside the creator's awareness, rather than attributing them to a source outside the creator herself, they are located within her as another aspect of her mind. Thus the medical profession at the turn of the last century viewed automatic writing as a dangerous practice, leading to the possibility of permanent insanity by repeated displacement of the brain into a 'pathological' condition, like that of acute mania where the subconscious state prevails incessantly. Was this, perhaps, what happened to Artaud, though without the regulatory intervention of habit?

Frederick Myers, one of the main proponents of automatic writing, intellectual colleague to James, Binet and Janet, believed that automatic writing, accessed via methods used to induce hypnosis, provided 'as though by a painless and harmless psychical vivisection, an unequalled insight into the mysteries of man.'[79] Unlike the psychologically 'unwell' subjects of experiments by other medical psychologists of his time, Myers' subjects consisted of ordinary English women and men from all areas of society with whom he conducted hundreds of experiments in automatic writing, obtaining striking dissociative phenomena.[80] Through these experiments he hoped to prove that the 'stream of consciousness in which we habitually live,' is not our only consciousness, and that 'the Self manifests through the organism; but there is always some part of the Self unmanifested.'[81] Myers believed that even if the automatically written message 'fails to convey any facts which demonstrably are not known to the writer and have never been known to him, there is no need to assume that any intelligence but his own has been concerned in the message.'[82] If an automatic message were signed with a different name for instance, this was not so much to do with the presence of an external force, as to do with the presence of multiple selves existing in the psyche.

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[79] Frederick W.H. Myers, 'Human personality in the light of hypnotic suggestion,' *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 4:1, 1886, p. 2. Cf. also Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud*, pp. 327-350.

[80] Cf. Myers, 'Automatic Writing,' *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 3, pp. 1-63; 'Automatic Writing III,' *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 4, 1887, pp. 209-261; 'Automatic Writing IV,' *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 5, pp. 522-548.

[81] Myers, 'The subliminal consciousness,' *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 7, 1892, p. 301.

André Breton, from the outset, distinguished surrealist use of automatic writing from the form of automatic writing practised by spiritualist medium on the ground of the spiritualist's loss of authorship. The spiritualist 'traces the letters and lines in a completely *mechanical* way, totally ignorant of what they write or draw, and their hand, anaesthetised, behaves as if it were guided by another hand.' Others, he says, 'reproduce the work as if they were copying inscriptions or other shapes which appear to them on any given object.'[83] For Breton, rather than the author of automatic writing being an entity taking over the passive body of the spiritualist,[84] automatic writing was connected to the expression of an individual unconscious, and was closely linked to everyday habitual acts. 'Every act tends to become habitual, unintentional and automatic from the moment it is made, be it to twirl one's moustache, to toss one's hair back, to satisfy an appetite, or to remember a name. Every mental attitude or way of looking at things becomes habitual , and therefore outside of the thinker's control.'[85] He believed that through habit and automatism the individual gains access to their 'true human condition.' And, as such, Breton describes automatic writing as 'the limit towards which the surrealist poet must tend,' and 'contrary to what spiritualism proposes – that is, the dissociation of the subject's psychological personality – surrealism proposes nothing less than the *unification* of that personality.'[86]

Breton's novel *Nadja* is an allegory of psychic automatism. Nadja exists as though in a dream, showing no attention to life, thinking and writing 'spontaneously.' With Breton in a taxi, she says, 'Close your eyes and say something. Anything, a number, a name. Like this (she closes her eyes): Two, two what? Two women. What do they look like? Wearing black. Where are they? In a park. You know, that's how I talk to myself when I'm alone, I tell myself all kinds of stories. And not only silly stories: Actually I live this way altogether.'[87] In a footnote Breton comments on Nadja, 'Does this not approach the extreme

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[82] Myers, 'Automatic Writing III,' pp. 210-211.

[83] André Breton, 'The Automatic Message' (1933), *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, trans. Franklin Rosemont, London: Pluto Press, 1978, p. 102. Breton's seminal essay on automatic writing was first published as 'Le message automatique,' in *Minotaure* 3-4, May 1934. The surrealist's own attempts to manifest automatic writing involved long sessions together in which they attempted to induce trance-like states, or 'sleeping fits.' For Breton's account of these sessions, Cf. *Conversations: The Autobiography of Surrealism*, trans. Mark Polizzotti, New York: Marlowe & Company, 1993, pp. 43-44; 61-63.

[84] Cf. Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 362-379.

[85] Breton, 'The Automatic Message,' p. 103.

[86] Breton, 'The Automatic Message,' p. 105.

[87] Breton, *Nadja*, trans. Richard Howard, New York: Grove Press, 1960, p. 74. For a full account of the real events of Breton's affair with the real Nadja, Cf. Ruth Brandon, *Surreal Lives: The Surrealists 1917-1949*, London: Macmillan, 2000, pp. 246-253; and Alina Clej, 'Phantoms of the

limit of the surrealist aspiration, its *furthest determinant*?'[88] However, Breton grows tired of Nadja, rejects her and she ends up in an insane asylum – hardly the perfect example of the limit towards which the surrealist poet must tend.'[89]

As Barthes suggests, all writing contains the possibility of disembodiment, thus to manipulate the practice of writing through deliberately automatic acts is perhaps unnecessary. 'Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing.'[90] The act of writing itself with its already habitual mechanisms needs no further prompting in its access to an unconscious beyond one's consciously known individual identity. Paradoxically, what Breton most wanted to prove via automatic writing was, like Artaud, an *authenticity*, an absolute undeniable authorship – automatic writing was to provide access to the pure expression of the unconscious in the same way that the realm of dreams during sleep is a form of pure expression.[91]

Yet, the surrealists only really flirted with the idea of unconscious expression, shying away from the threat to individual identity that the discovery of a *decentred* unconscious might activate.[92] The many writings produced under the guise of 'automatic' are clearly worked-over 'aesthetic products,' as Artaud would have it – the result of poetics over real unconscious forces.[93] Foster believes that the practice of automatic writing proved disappointing for Breton in particular in his desire for a *unified* unconscious realm, whereas what automatism actually revealed was the unconscious as 'a compulsive mechanism that threatened a literal *désagrégation* of the subject, and in doing so it pointed to a different

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Opera: Notes Towards a Theory of Surrealist Confession – The Case of Breton,' *Modern Language Notes* 104:4, September 1989, pp. 819-844.

[88] Breton, *Nadja*, p.111.

[89] On this contradiction, Cf. SuzanneGuerlac, *Literary Polemics: Bataille, Sartre, Valéry, Breton*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. 146-156;

[90] Barthes, 'The Death of the Author,' p. 142. Cf. too, Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, trans. Philip Mairet, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 59: 'The act of writing is not at all unconscious, it is an actual structure of my consciousness. Only it is not conscious *of* itself.'

[91] Cf. Ferdinand Alquié, *The Philosophy of Surrealism*, trans. Bernard Waldrop, Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1969, p. 26, 'automatic writing is a matter of writing without preconceived subject and without logical, aesthetic or moral control, exteriorising everything in us that tends to become language and normally finds itself impeded by our conscious surveillance. By automatic writing Breton aspires to liberate and manifest this essential discourse which man is.' Laurent Jenny describes the problems the surrealists encountered when attempting to use written language as a 'pure form of expression,' 'From Breton to Dali: The Adventures of Automatism,' *October* 51, 1989, pp. 105-114.

[92] Jarret Leplin, 'Surrealism,' *Mind* 96:384, October 1987, p. 520, thus calls surrealism 'surrogate realism;' 'Surrealism makes no commitment as to the actual deep structure of the world. It allows that the world has a deep structure, but declines to represent it.'

unconscious from the one projected by Bretonian surrealism – an unconscious not unitary or liberatory at all but primally conflicted, instinctually repetitive.'[94] Foster sees the surrealist quest more profoundly as a search for a lost object in which 'not only is each new object a substitute for the lost one, but the lost object is a fantasy, a simulacrum.'[95] However, the notion of repetition I have been developing avoids recourse to instincts, and instead emphasises the sense in which habits paper over the anxiety at the heart of belief. The web of habits is not an intrinsically unified domain either, but it is open to death in a different way to the Freudian death instinct. However, in the end, isn't this kind of writing a *simulated* surrender to the automatisms of the unconscious? Again, does it not appeal to the *fantasy* of the puppet?

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By writing herself, woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display – the ailing or dead future, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions. Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time. Write your self. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth.[96]

There was far too much censorship going on in mainstream surrealist practice. The experiments of Breton *et. al.*, were in the end no more than a dipping of the toe into the edge of the water without letting go of the side of the pool in case one gets sucked under, goes mad, turned into an Artaud or a Nadja. As Cixous suggests, for one to take the risk of plunging into the depths of the unconscious there must be a necessity, something at stake,

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[93] I have tried to avoid this trap in the most literal transcription of my dreams I could manage in Appendix 1, though have not escaped it completely.

[94] Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995, p. 5.

[95] Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, p. 36; p. 43: 'On the one hand, then, the finding of an object is indeed a refinding of it, while on the other hand this refinding is only and ever a seeking: the object cannot be rediscovered because it is fantasmatic, and desire cannot be satisfied because it is defined as lack. The found object is always a substitute, always a displacement, that drives on its own search.' Foster also describes how this fundamental illusion was what drove the surrealist depiction of women as illusory objects appearing how the surrealist imagined them to be. On the subject of surrealist misogyny much is written, Cf. in particular, Mary Ann Caws, 'Ladies Shot and Painted: Female Embodiment in Surrealist Art,' *The Female Body in Western Culture*, (ed.) Susan R. Suleiman, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986, pp. 262-287; Robert J. Belton, *The Beribboned Bomb: The Image of Woman in Male Surrealist Art*, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1995; Jack J. Spector, 'The Surrealism Woman and the Colonialism of the Other,' *Surrealist Art and Writing: 1919/39*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 162-193; and *Surrealism and Women* (eds.) Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991.

[96] Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa,' trans. Keith and Paula Cohen, *New French Feminisms* (eds.) Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivon, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1981, p. 250.

rather than the service of surreal poetics. Figures such as Artaud could not afford the luxury of automatic games, though neither did he need them – his unconscious was already too present, too desperate for expression for him to seek out roundabout means of language, too desperate to 'suspend' his anxiety for the duration of the experiment. Breton's rejection of difficult figures such as Artaud[97] from the surrealist circle, then does nothing but reveal his ultimate fear of the darkness of the unconscious and what it might scream out beyond poetry, beyond analysis. Nevertheless, Artaud's works on paper, pierced with screams and pencil holes, seem to invoke a void rather than express any determinate manifestation of the unconscious. Is the only way of actualising something of the unconscious into materialised form doomed – as fragile as the state of 'waking sleep' examined in Chapter 2? I am not ready yet to discount habit and automatism as practices which might allow access to the unconscious realm – rather, one needs a different conception and manifestation of such practices than those utilised by surrealism.

Rothenberg describes how 'inspiring' ideas often come to the artist when she is not working directly on her project but is distracted by something else. He relates this to the Freudian unconscious' 'diffuse and controlling effect on behaviour and on consciousness by virtue of being kept out of awareness.'[98] When an unconscious element has become conscious it can be manipulated and modified by will, but the more strongly repressed an unconscious element is, the more power it has over the individual's behaviour and in the case of the artist, her creative productions. In effect then, in opposition to the surrealist desire to write *directly* from the unconscious, perhaps the best means of manifesting one's unconscious, without going insane, is to take an even more *indirect* approach. Where the surrealists *deliberately* induced trance states, desiring through such states to attain from the unconscious a unified production which fitted the aesthetic criteria of 'unconscious expression,' I will suggest that perhaps one cannot be so deliberate in one's methods, perhaps one has to be a little 'out of one's mind.'

Rothenberg, like Foster, would have it that the unconscious is intrinsically disunified,[99] thus if one were to really manifest what lies beyond consciousness in its absolutely pure state, one would not have a work of art, a surrealist poetry of comic-erotic paradoxical juxtapositions, so much as an intense expression without form, such as the

[97] There are many others of course: Bataille himself did not last long, and figures such as Claude Cahun were from the outset too 'dangerous' to Breton's rule.
[98] Albert Rothenberg, 'The Unconscious and Creativity,' *Psychoanalysis, Creativity, and Literature: A French-American Inquiry*, (ed.) Alan Roland, New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, p. 147.
[99] Rothenberg, 'The Unconscious and Creativity,' p. 148.

hysterical laughs, screams, cries and violent drawings of Artaud. However, if unconscious repetition is understood through a model of habit, then the unconscious cannot be thought of as completely separate from consciousness, but rather , through the construction of habits and obsessive displacement one oscillates continually between consciousness and unconsciousness. So, while one might find the manifestations of one's unconscious via dreams bizarre, it is important to remember this is only so in comparison to the essentially organising factors of consciousness and one need not treat them as such in one's waking hours. As Rothenberg says, 'The unconscious is neither afraid of nor in admiration of paradoxical connections;'[100] the unconscious, in its seeming illogic to the conscious realm, is for itself highly structured in its intricate web of associations. This is why when in the dream, the dreamer usually doesn't find what's happening to her particularly unusual, while when awake the events of the dream seem strange – can one not retain something of one's unconscious logic in life, in art practices and writing without reducing it to the realm of surrealism or strangeness?[101] Moreover, in writing, as in dreams, one can project oneself outside one's body.

Although the body becomes automatic and therefore 'fluid' after acquiring a habit, James attributed another function to habit: 'The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their own proper work.'[102] We may take this as an example of the 'efficiency' of habit, and without the interference of an external controller, perhaps the body can become partly autonomous, a reliable machine which can deal efficiently with the more mundane aspects of everyday life, leaving the mind free to daydream, contemplate, imagine, away from both the responsibility and sometimes tedium of consciousness and action in the world. James suggests that by occupying the body, one thinks more freely. Habitual activity might then present a 'detour' strategy for thinking. Nietzsche spoke of this in relation to his habit of walking during his long, isolated periods of writing: 'In the coming weeks I will go south to begin my existence as a walker. In the course of my wanderings I now and then scribble something on a piece of paper; I write nothing at my work-table.'[103] Nietzsche didn't go

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[100] Rothenberg, 'The Unconscious and Creativity,' p. 149.
[101] David Coxhead and Susan Hiller point out, *Dreams: Visions of the Night*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1976, p. 4, 'Unlike states of awareness attained through esoteric disciplines by study and technique, we do not need to learn anything to begin to dream. [...] The dream state, like the waking state, simply is.'
[102] James, *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 122.
[103] Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Letter to Dr. O. Eiser 1880,' in Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel Smith, London: Athlone, 1997, p. 19.

south in order to write, but in order to walk so that he could write. `I look at the curtain so that I can see the foot *`. Perhaps efficiency of function is not the only possible goal that can be attained here; by occupying the body, a freedom of thought may be released. Habitual activity here becomes a set-up or device – a structure which provides a distraction or an indirect route towards what cannot be obtained by conscious intention alone. Nietzsche cannot write at his work-table, but during the mutual encounter between his walking body, the outside world and his pencil and paper, something unforeseen may be produced. This latter point is vital – as we have seen throughout the thesis, habit with its tendencies towards the hypnotic leaves the subject open to suggestion. However, if one is not suggested to in one's habitual / hypnotised state by an external human presence, if the habit takes place ritualistically when alone, what one will become more subconsciously aware of is the suggesting influence of the objects and space within which the habit is contained and repeated, and the interior co-ordinates which define one's mental map, leading to a metamorphosis between body, mind, objects and space. This is different altogether to the surrealist practice of automatic writing which sought expression of an unconscious – this is expression of an unconscious which transcends itself. Before going on to look at some examples of how this is used in some art practices, I will first clarify what this kind of metamorphosis might be.

the art of changing shape

Everyone carries within him his somnambulist of whom he is the mesmeriser.[104]

In obsessive rituals, the environment and objects which form a part of the repetitive behaviour are invested with 'magical' significance. The obsessive unconsciously 'alters their environment in such a way as to endow ordinary things with extraordinary amounts of information value.'[105] Furthermore this over-investment of significance leads to the activation of the sleep system, 'as this system is automatically activated when the organism's processing channel is overloaded.'[106] When one is caught up in an environment in which everything is vitally charged with significance to one's rituals, one enters a kind of

[104] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language and the Cosmos*, trans. Daniel Russell, Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, p. 55.
[105] H.C. Holland, 'Displacement Activity as a form of abnormal behaviour in animals,' *Obsessional States*, p. 173.
[106] Holland, 'Displacement Activity,' p. 171.

sleep and the boundary between oneself, one's environment and one's actions is narrowed down, while at the same time, one's relationship to the narrowed elements is more acute, more intense.

Caillois describes such phenomena in the insect world as 'morphological mimicry.' This kind of mimicry is not about visible external mimicry, but leads to a mimicry based on form and relief, 'a photography on the level of the object and not on that of the image, a reproduction in three-dimensional space with solids and voids: sculpture-photography or better *teleplasty.*'[107] In other words a form of mimicry which models the organism around forms of space. This kind of mimicry, according to Caillois, can be a dangerous 'luxury' in many respects – there are insects which mimic leaf stalks so well they are pruned by gardeners, while others, take each other for leaves, eat each other 'in such a way that one might accept the idea of a sort of collective masochism.'[108] Such mimicry could thus be described as 'an incantation fixed at its culminating point and having caught the sorcerer in his own trap,' the end point being 'assimilation to the surroundings.' In contrast to Merleau-Ponty's view of body techniques which allow the organism to adapt and function in harmony with their surroundings, Caillois describes how space is *a temptation to assimilation* in which:

> The living creature, the organism, is no longer the origin of the coordinates, but one point among others; it is dispossessed of its privilege and literally *no longer knows where to place itself.* The feeling of personality, considered as the organism's feeling of distinction from its surroundings, of the connection between consciousness and a particular point in space, cannot fail under these conditions to be seriously undermined; one then enters into the psychology of psychasthenia, or more specifically of *legendary psychasthenia*, if we agree to use this name for the disturbance in the above relations between personality and space.[109]

The kind of assimilation of the self to environment described by Caillois, references Minkowski's study of schizophrenic perceptions of time and space in *Lived Time.*[110] The schizophrenic experiences recounted in Minkowski's study often paint a very sad and negative picture of how such assimilation might be felt, usually resulting in the subject's becoming stuck and immobile, unable to function. However an early study by Kretschmer points out that there are two kinds of schizoid mental disturbance. With the first type, behind their catatonic façade, there is 'nothing but ruin and dust,' the second type are like 'Roman

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[107] Roger Caillois, 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia,' p. 23. Cf. too my notes on this in Chapter 1.
[108] Caillois, 'Mimicry,' p. 25.
[109] Caillois, 'Mimicry,' p. 28.
[110] Minkowski, *Lived Time*, Chapter 7, 'Toward a Psychopathology of Lived Space,' pp. 399-434.

villas whose shutters *lock out the fiery sun*; but inside, at twilight there are parties and banquets.'[111]

Deprivation or reduction of the body and senses can be perversely liberating in terms of the abstract, sometimes hallucinatory realm of thought it provokes – we saw this in Bunyan for example.[112] This is surely part of the appeal for the monk who submits himself to the regime and rituals of the monastery. When incarcerated or deprived of enough variable space to allow 'free' physical movement, movement inevitably turns inwards, into the movement of thought. Although enforced confinement is clearly different to voluntary confinement in so many ways, something of the strange liberation of thought occurs in both, as both restrict satisfaction of the demands and needs of the body which becomes no longer the predominant focus of attention. When attention is restricted, thoughts, desires and dreams take on an absolutely different character, thus Abbott wrote of the effects of lone incarceration: 'Solitary confinement in prison can alter the ontological make-up of a stone. [...] A kind of genius can come of this deprivation of sensation, of experience. It has been taken as naïve intelligence, when in fact it is empty intelligence, pure intelligence. The composition of the mind is altered.'[113] Likewise, Brian Keenan, writing during his time held in solitary confinement, describes how, 'My mind now moves into strange abstractions. The idea, the concept of time enthrals me. I build a complicated and involved structure which redefines what time is. Time is different now. Its flux and pattern is new, seeming so clear, so precise, so deeply understood yet inexplicable.'[114] I am taking to a no doubt problematic degree the idea of bodily and sense deprivation as thought liberation, but this is an extreme which could be expanded further still in relation to the kind of thought that happens when the body itself is a prison; when one literally cannot move.[115]

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[111] Kretschmer, quoted in Minkowski, *Lived Time*, p. 280. [My italic].

[112] Had I space, I would have included a chapter on imprisonment and its effects on the mental life of the prisoner. As it is, I can only brush upon the subject. Maud Ellman, *The Hunger Artists: Starving, Writing and Imprisonment*, London: Virago, 1993, provides a fascinating account of imprisonment and creative potential.

[113] Jack Henry Abbott, *In the Belly of the Beast,* London: Arrow Books, 1981, p. 45; 50. The book is made up of a series of letters written by Abbott to Norman Mailer while Abbott was incarcerated, aged 37. Since the age of twelve, Abbott had spent only nine and a half months out of prison, while 14-15 of his years in prison were spent in solitary confinement.

[114] Brian Keenan, *An Evil Cradling*, p. 69. Years after his release, Keenan speaks of the paradoxical feeling he has now that while in prison he was 'free,' and that there have been times when he wanted to be back in prison again; 'Because the mind was so lucid and so fascinating.' Keenan, quoted in Suzie Mackenzie, 'A Captive of History,' *The Guardian*, Saturday September 30, 2000.

[115] I return to this theme in relation to the cinema of Robert Bresson and the static position of the cinema viewer in the Coda. Sacks' *Awakenings*, gives numerous accounts by people, who, trapped in their bodies by encephalitis lethargica (sleeping sickness), when awoken by the drug *el dopa*, spoke of the amazing movements of thought they experienced when their bodies were immobile. Cf. too,

Can the kind of assimilation into space Caillois suggests, rather than leading to absolute dissolution, lead to one's being able to re-coordinate the body and self in space? Caillois suggests that in the case of psychasthenia, 'The body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at *himself* from any point whatever in space. [...] He is similar, not similar to something, but just *similar*, and he invents spaces of which he is the convulsive possession.'[116] Is this what artists such as Yayoi Kusama achieve in their habitually constructed objects, environments and installations?[117]

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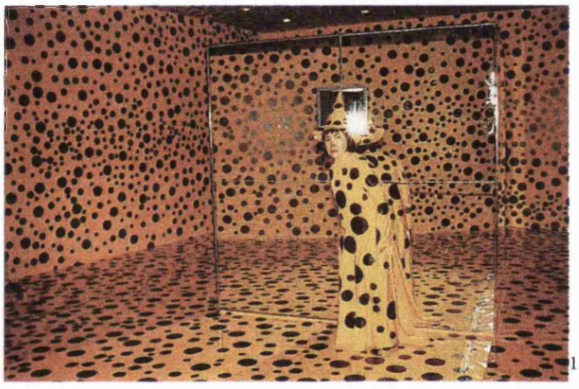 [118]

A polka dot has the form of the sun, which is a symbol of the energy of the whole world and our living life, and also the form of the moon, which is calm. Round, soft, colourful, senseless, and unknowing. Polka dots can't stay alone; like the communicative life of the people, two or three or more polka dots become movement.[119]

Jean-Dominique Bauby, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, London: Fourth Estate, 1997; and Robert F. Murphy, *The Body Silent: The different world of the disabled*, London: W.W. Norton, 1990. These two autobiographies chart the experiences of people who became severely disabled, and in both cases, woven into the tragedy of their physical loss, is a fascination with their now heightened patterns of thought.

[116] Caillois, 'Mimicry,' p. 30.

[117] The following edited section on Kusama was first written and presented in full as 'Art habit and metamorphosis,' at the ICA conference, *The Poetics of Materiality*, June 2000.

[118] Kusama, in her installation *Mirror Room (Pumpkin)*, 1991, mirrors, wood, papier mâché, paint, 200 x 200 x 200 c.m., reproduced in *Yayoi Kusama*, London: Phaidon, 2000, p. 74.

[119] Kusama, quoted in Midori Matsui, 'Beyond Oedipus: Desiring Production of Yayoi Kusama,' *Parkett* 59, 2000, p. 95.

Kusama describes her obsessive repetitive processes of making art as a means of escape: 'I make everything in quantity; in doing so, I escape.'[120] This method of escape she refers to as, 'Salvation through self-obliteration.' Something of Loyola's presence lurks in this quote, as too in the above quote in which Kusama professes respect for a form which needs community with other forms of its kind in order for each to live and animate each other.

In the 1960's Kusama was nicknamed 'Dotty,' due to her encasement of bodies and objects in polka dot motifs. She says: 'Polka dots suggest multiplication to infinity. Our earth is only one polka dot among millions of others ... We must forget ourselves with polka dots! We must lose ourselves in the ever-advancing stream of eternity.'[121] In many photographs of her work she poses, wearing something which 'matches' the environment she has created, and sometimes her installations involve mirrors, repeating her own (or our) image to infinity. 'My work is about obsession, infinite repetition,' this infinite repetition involves both the appearance of Kusama's work and her working methods – for hours and days on end she produces paintings or 3-dimensional objects which repeat the same shapes and themes again and again. The paintings she calls 'Infinity Nets,' and the objects, 'Accumulations.' The latter involve the encrustation of furniture, clothes and other familiar objects with, for instance, the cloth phallus shapes she repeatedly makes. Sometimes one may encounter clothes, floors and other accessories to life encrusted with dried pasta.

Kusama's repetitive patterns and forms are as though a material manifestation of the skin or crust of her spiritual habitus, exposing both her mental life and her obsessions. This work is not merely the representation of blank repetition, Kusama's products are repetitive but not mechanical, and what strikes one when viewing her installations is the 'hand-made' quality of her objects and her marks – this is a hand-made seriality, the imperfections in her patterning highlighting the breach between human repetition and that of a machine. Kusama's work is a making permanent of the traces of habit; the polar opposite to the habit of Dickens' Krook, writing letters backwards, in chalk on the wall, only to erase them as soon as he's written them; 'I have a turn for copying from memory, you see, though I can neither read nor write.'[122]

An immediate paradox thus arises when thinking of Kusama in terms of escape and self-obliteration. On a superficial level Kusama is an artist who has never shied from the

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[120] Kusama in conversation with Akira Tatehata, *Yayoi Kusama*, London: Phaidon, 2000, p. 14.
[121] Kusama, in J.F. Rodenbeck. 'Yayoi Kusama: Surface: Stitch: Skin,' *Inside the Visible*, p. 152.
[122] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (1853), London: Penguin Books, 1995, pp. 75-76.

public eye; she organised several naked 'Happenings' in New York, and at one point opened a fashion company to sell one-off Kusama designs. On another level, as Laura Hoptman points out, Kusama has been involved in a 50-year long performance during which she has effectively imprinted her logos, whether polka dot or infinity net, on the entire world: 'The making of her obsessive works is, paradoxically both an act of self-obliteration as well as one of artistic transubstantiation through which the physical self is erased only to be re-asserted in the artist's signature patterns.'[123] Rather than self-obliteration then this would seem to be self-proliferation, a resounding 'I'm here,' 'I'm everywhere.' But what 'I' is Kusama presenting? All of her works threaten to spread beyond their frames, just as she, by adopting repetitive motifs as a signature, can outgrow the limits of her physical presence. Rather than merely imprinting her motif on the world, it also seems Kusama is releasing via the motifs, an inner force which once outside her body, exists and subsists autonomously. 'My aggregation-sculpture arises from a deep, driving compulsion to realise in visible form the repetitive image inside of me. When this image is given freedom, it overflows the limits of time and space. People have said that [it] presents an irresistible force that goes by its own momentum once it has started.'[124]

What might be referred to by Kusama as self-obliteration is perhaps rather a projection and distribution of the co-ordinates of the habitual body as far as they will go. When a pattern of habitual activity is formed within a vacuum, what occurs is neither mimicry nor assimilation – both the habitual subject and the space are altered by the movements of habit in harmony with the co-ordinates of the space. The habitual body is in a state of waking sleep, the sleep of hypnosis and somnambulism, and just as in any kind of sleep, external sounds or sense impressions of one's environment imprint themselves on one's unconscious mind. Likewise, the habitual subject becomes able to recognise and manipulate the objects and environments it occupies in the metamorphic manner of the dream landscape. Coming out of this state, I feel I have lost my self, but in fact there was a moment when I encountered something more fundamental than my 'self' on a deeper level than I could ever attain through my usual limited self-conscious awareness. If I create while in this state I might seem to have lost control of my creations but perhaps I have given

[123] Laura Hoptman, 'Yayoi Kusama,' *Yayoi Kusama*, p. 34. Ursula Panhans-Bühler, 'Between Heaven and Earth: This Languid Weight of Life,' *Parkett* 59, 2000, p. 88, points out the similarities between Kusama's desire to enclose the world in her own patterns and that of Yves Klein's plan to cover the world in Klein Blue.

[124] Kusama, in Udo Kultermann, 'Driving Image, Essen, 1966,' in *Kusama*, p. 86.

power over to a potentiality which has a greater freedom to express my relations to my world without the usual restrictions of ordinary, representational consciousness.

Donald Judd said in 1964 that to see a show by Kusama was to see 'A result of Kusama's work, not a work in itself.'[125] Other responses to her work have described her environments as producing, rather than finished objects, bizarre optical phenomena. In response to her installation 'Driving Image,' one critic described a sensory overload in which 'separate distinguishable things tended to dissolve in their overall texture.'[126] Kusama's work does not present merely an optical illusion, nor does it represent the assimilated figure of the artist as, say, in the photographs of Francesca Woodman,[127] but is about a different, metamorphic, state of perceptual awareness altogether.

Kusama recalls from childhood how repetitive patterning can affect the psyche. After following for some time the patterns of a red flowered table cloth she describes how, 'I looked up and saw the ceiling, the window panes and the pillars completely covered with the same red flower patterns. With the whole room, my whole body and the whole universe covered entirely with flower patterns I would self-obliterate; be buried in the infinitude of endless time and the absoluteness of space.'[128] Kusama's sensations of what I would refer to as metamorphosis rather than self-obliteration, are not only achieved in her process of working in the experience of repetitive patterning she offers to her viewers. Experiencing one of Kusama's installations, one is not reduced to being a spectator of a 'finished' art work – as the shapes and repetitions, mirrored to eternity go on and on, one does experience a kind of disequilibrium, but this is not necessarily of a negative kind. Rather then than the practice of surrealist automatic writing, in work such as Kusama's the viewer is drawn into a

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[125] Judd, 'In the Galleries: Yayoi Kusama,' *Arts Magazine*, New York, October 1959, pp. 68-69.

[126] Ed Sommer, 'Letter from Germany: Yayoi Kusama at the Galerie M.E. Theren, Essen (May),' *Art International*, October 1966, p. 46.

[127] Caillois' essay is often referred to in relation to slow-shutter speed photography, the result of which is the appearance of a body vanishing into its environment as it moves. Cf. for instance, Helaine Posner, 'Negotiating Boundaries in the Art of Yayoi Kusama, Ana Mendieta, and Francesca Woodman,' *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation* (ed.) Whitney Chadwick, London: MIT Press, 1998, pp. 156-172; Margaret Sundell, 'Vanishing Points: The Photography of Francesca Woodman,' *Inside the Visible* (ed.) M. Catherine de Zegher, London: MIT Press, 1996, pp. 435-441; and Max Kozloff, 'The Etherealised Figure and the Dream of Wisdom,' *Vanishing Presence* (ed.) Kozloff, Minneapolis: Walker Art Centre, 1989, pp. 63-154.

[128] Kusama, 'The Strugglings and Wanderings of My Soul' (1975), reprinted in *Yayoi Kusama*, p. 119. Donna Williams, an autistic woman, recounted similar experiences in her autobiography, *Nobody Nowhere* London: Jessica Kingsley, 1998, p. 9, 'Very early on I learned to lose myself in anything I desired – the patterns on the wallpaper or the carpet, the sound of something over and over again, the repetitive hollow sound I'd get from tapping on my chin. Even people became no problem. Their words became a mumbling umble, their voices a pattern of sounds. I could look through themuntil I wasn't there, and then, alter, felt that I had lost myself *in them*.'

metamorphic state, which might not necessarily involve their losing self-consciousness in the way Kusama does while working, but does allow one to enter a different state of awareness of one's surroundings, in which the openness of one's relation to spatial objects assumes a delirious form. Such obsessive patterning *demands* to be broken – even if this breakage involves nothing more than a shifted point of equilibrium in the subject.

✂

If habit is that modest process on which our relations to ourselves and the world is constructed, then it might be that the most radical possibilities for seizing control of it might be in the most modest, humble aspects of human life. When reading, the eyes moved along by the structure of the words, follow an habitual pattern, which at the same time might enter one's unconscious in a suggestive / hypnotic way. When reading, one accepts as 'fact' a lot of information that could not appear before one's eyes in one's everyday realm, without severe disturbance. As Freud describes, 'A great deal that is not uncanny in fiction would be so if it happened in real life;' while at the same time, 'there are many more means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than there are in real life.'[129] The 'uncanny' for Freud is created through repetition, however, as Casey suggests, repetition in literature need not involve the literal repetition of a word or phrase but a means of prolonging an idea beyond the time it would normally be allowed to have in consciousness.[130] Neither is repetition geared towards the past as imagination is thought to be geared towards the future; one need not be stuck. 'Imagining can concern itself with possibilities which stem from the past, repetition can direct itself into the future, and both acts take place in the present. Furthermore, far from being mutually exclusive, imagination and repetition are capable of conjoint action, combining in projects in which the activity of either one alone would be insufficient. Literature presents one such project, a project in which imagining and repeating are continually co-ingredient.'[131] In this respect, repetition in literature works not as a Freudian repetition in which the unconscious idea returns again and again, but also leads toward the future – in fact to a way out of the repetition.

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[129] Freud, 'Creative Writers and Daydreaming' (1908), *Art and Literature*, trans. James Strachey, London: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 14, 1985, p. 347.
[130] Edward S. Casey, 'Imagination and Repetition in Literature: A Reassessment,' *Yale French Studies* 0:2, 1975, p. 251.
[131] Casey, 'Imagination and Repetition,' p. 249.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story *The Yellow Wallpaper*[132] presents just such a case. Here, depersonalisation through habit and repetition leads to a metamorphic assimilation into an environment, while at the same time opens out the unconscious potentiality of the subject *and* the environment. As a piece of writing this story exerts an effect on the reader's imagination through the manipulation of the habitual form of language, while at the same time Perkins Gilman's attempt to recreate a situation of depersonalisation which strongly overwhelmed her provides us with an experience of her coming to terms with a deep truth about herself.

A woman here is confined by her husband, for 'therapeutic' reasons, in an old nursery with bars on the windows and the bed nailed to the floor. Most disturbing of all for her though is the distressing yet compelling yellow wallpaper. From the beginning of the story, the wallpaper is felt as an omnipotent force – its yellowness seeps into every room, stains clothing and becomes a smell, 'a yellow smell.' But not only the smell creeps around – the outlines and shapes of the patterned paper refuse to stay in place: 'The colour is hideous enough, and infuriating enough, but the pattern is torturing. You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back-somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you.'[133]

Following the lines of the pattern becomes an obsession; 'I never saw such expression in an inanimate thing.' 'I'm getting really fond of the room in spite of the wallpaper. Perhaps because of the wallpaper. I follow that pattern about by the hour. It is as good as gymnastics. I start, we'll say, at the bottom, down in the corner over there where it has not been touched, and I determine for the thousandth time that I will follow that pointless pattern to some sort of a conclusion.'[134] She learns the rhythm of the patterns, and in them she begins to lose her conscious self, while at the same time awakening her slumbering unconscious. In the hypnotic moments alone with the paper, she sees the pattern

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[132] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, London: Virago, 1992. This story was based partly on the breakdown Perkins Gilman went through when forced into a rest cure in Spring 1887. Cf. Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990, pp. 90-106. Cf. also, *The Abridged Diaries of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, (ed.) Denise D. Knight, Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998, pp. 79-104; Ann J. Lane *To Herland and Beyond: The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1990, pp. 112-132. A detailed account of the problematic reception of *The Yellow Wallpaper* is Julie Bates Dock, *The Yellow Wall-paper and the History of Its Publication and Reception*, Pennsylvania: University State Pennsylvania Press, 1998. As with James' shadowy confession of disembodiment earlier, Perkins Gilman in her later life as social reformer and feminist was to feel somewhat embarrassed about this 'confessional' story.

[133] Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, p. 25.

[134] Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, p. 19.

separate into two; the main pattern begins to produce a *sub-pattern* which she alone can see. In the latter emerges the figure of a woman, 'a strange, provoking formless sort of figure,' which sometimes only skulks and crawls behind the main grid, but at other times reaches out to shake it violently. Watching this figure day after day, her relationship to the room and the wallpaper changes and now *she locks herself into the room*, throws the key out of the window and begins meticulously to scrape the paper from the wall with her nails – like Artaud ripping the surface of words and faces to shreds. When the paper lies in shreds, her husband breaks down the door and finds her crawling around the edges of the room like the figure she had seen locked into the pattern. She ignores him, keeps crawling, looking back over her shoulder and shouting, 'I've got out at last. And I've pulled off most of the paper so you can't put me back!' The husband faints in fright, falling into her creeping path so that 'now I have to creep over him every time!' What a nuisance! The woman went into auto-hypnosis by fixing her attention on the patterns of the wallpaper and in doing so released an anomalous part of herself. Perkins Gilman, who later became a prominent social reformer and feminist, here depicts a situation in which a woman restricted to the utmost confinement undergoes a radical depersonalisation involving a semi-mimetic union between her obsessions and the space around her, which ultimately, for better or worse, forced her to tear the pattern to shreds and releasing both the unconscious her in the wallpaper, and the she that was incarcerated in the room.

In such a tale it would seem that there is a silent anarchy of the unconscious active behind or alongside every habitual action, every habituated pattern of life, which can only be encountered indirectly, but which must, nevertheless be encountered. Such encounters cannot be put down to chance – they are always conditioned by a set of circumstances, and often stem from a deep desire to escape from constricting forces, rules or laws one is not consciously aware of. The kind of trap which demands such 'escape' is not necessarily more or less constrictive in terms of measurable 'physical' space – one may feel trapped in the middle of an empty field, but free when tied to a chair. Nor is what is constricted necessarily the physical shape of the body, so much as the unconscious forces or desires which become most urgent when one is most constricted.

An intense encounter between a subject and their environment is not necessarily confined to the aquarium quality of an interior setting. Georg Büchner begins his short story, *Lenz*, with Lenz's walk across the mountains. 'Lenz carried on, indifferent, the way meant

nothing to him, now up, now down.'[135] Lenz, caught up in the rhythm of the walk, unaware of where his feet are taking him, is indifferent to both himself and the environment in which he moves. However, he is soon to find he has not embarked on an ordinary walk, as he encounters a storm, during which:

> His breast burst, he stood there panting, his body bent forward, his eyes and mouth wide open, he thought he should draw the storm right into himself, embrace all things within his being, he spread and lay over the entire earth, he burrowed his way into the All, then the earth beneath him shrank, grew small like a wandering star.[136]

Lenz's act of walking and the relationship between his body, his environment and the forces of nature creates a pattern of mutual relations which both hypnotise and terrorise him. Lenz, as he moves forwards, becomes part of the changing shape of the whole; in each moment of his walk, his outline becomes open and incomplete – he shifts between a human shape and the shape of the environment, the elements, the act of walking. He has become a part of his environment and what is outside or inside are no longer easily distinguishable – he is now fully ingrained in a somnambulistic state of habit.

The continual shift between his body and the outside world is ruptured later as it grows darker and the storm subsides. Lenz reaches the crest of a mountain when suddenly, 'a nameless fear took hold of him in this nothing, he was in empty space, he leapt to his feet and flew down the slope,' but 'something was following him, something terrible would catch up with him, something no human can bear ... madness was chasing him.'[137] No longer buffeted around within the shape and patterns of the elements, Lenz undergoes a terrifying transformation. The pattern of nature, storm and walking body shifts. On one plane there is unconscious function or habit, during which the body is already displaced from its 'human' identity or conscious self and becomes an acting component in an environment equal to any other. The transition occurs when one becomes so much a part of one's environment that one is even displaced from one's usual function, as are all the other elements – this is the moment of metamorphosis, in which potentials are released that would not be known of in the conscious realm. Lenz, when faced by the flat power of darkness, his habitual continuity is ruptured – but not so much so that consciousness reappears. He is

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[135] Georg Büchner, 'Lenz,' in Büchner, *Complete Plays, Lenz and Other Writings*, trans. John Reddick, London: Penguin Books, 1993, p. 141. This short story is thought to be at least semi-autobiographical, based on Büchner's breakdown during a trip to a strange village. Cf. John Reddick, *Georg Büchner: The Shattered Whole*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

[136] Büchner, 'Lenz,' p. 142.

[137] Büchner, 'Lenz,' p. 142.

instead, as though in a nightmare, forced to experience himself in his displacement, glimpsing the anxiety that is the flipside of habit, yet is also its source of nourishment.

For the reader of these tales there is also an element of escape. The reader, disembodied, enters the pared down worlds of these figures and goes through a process of 'virtual' assimilation / metamorphosis / escape with them. The figures we encounter not only enter into mutual relations with the elements and functions of their environment, they are literally written into these spaces, the writing is a pattern parallel to the actions within the whole – style too is a case of habit.[138] How else could we experience the particular intensity of these metamorphic bodies if not through the writing of them? The writing style which supports these texts echoes the habitats they depict. Büchner's writing is breathless and unpunctuated, the pattern of a chaotic mind caught up in the swirl of elements; Charlotte Perkins-Gilman's first person account is tense and paranoiac, creeping through the states of a mind, scratching at the surface of things. There is little or no recourse to metaphor in these tales, metaphor would aggravate consciousness, forcing it into activity, breaking the pattern either by linking the words via an image to another space or time, or by reminding the reader that they are reading. Neither is there much description of the figures or their environments, except that is, for the maddening essentials; the writing's power is in its rhythms and affections.

Habit, with its terrible twin, obsession, always involves constriction and reduction, and thus when pushed to its limit, forces one into escape. With habit a strategy of superimposed constriction opens out an indirect route which enables one not so much to completely escape as to move more freely within or between things, as to utilise situations in a way that allows one to be most productive. Of course, this 'freedom' cannot be identical to what we think of as 'autonomy.' But it is a kind of freedom in the sense that in whatever constricted circumstances, there is always the possibility of opening out one's inner habitat to one's outer habitat, and forming a conjunction with the world that is peculiarly one's own, and expresses one's fundamental psychic co-ordinates in a strangely complex manner.

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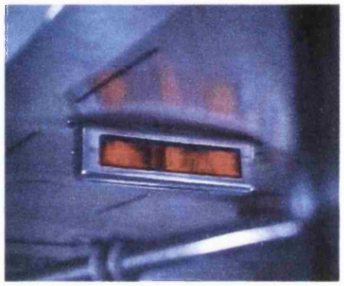
[138] Cf. Benjamin P. Kurtz, 'Style and Habit: A Note,' *Modern Language Notes* 24:1, January 1909, p.12, 'Literary style should be investigated as a problem in the psychology of habit, and upon it should be brought to bear all those discovered data and principles which are not included by psychologists under the category of habit. [...] The formation of individual habits by direct and original adaptation to environment or by indirect and imitative adaptation, by chance variation or enforced instruction; the refractive aspect of imitation; the growth of types of association; the imitative susceptibility and the inventive inclination, – these are only a very few of the principles which would find a rich illustration in the facts and functions of a style.'

Could a harnessing of the powers of habit and metamorphosis be possible, in a way that goes beyond the strictures of spiritual exercises, but nevertheless explores the anchoring points of one's 'faith' in the world? Writing can be a strategy towards this, an indirect line running through to a wider immanent system. According to Deleuze, this line is created by writers and artists, using what he calls a 'bizarre athleticism,' which is not an 'organic or muscular athleticism but its inorganic double, 'an affective athleticism', an athleticism of becoming.'[139] What emerges from this athleticism is not fantasy or imagination, it occurs in parallel to the conditions of an environment or set of circumstances. Instead of creating a link between writing and an individual life, writing may provide an indirect link to a pre-individual or immanent power of life, a Spinozist life that traverses all bodies and things. To make writing something more than personal or constrained by any particular identity, is to render 'visible' the pre-individual forces that condition life. Writing itself is inhuman and non-organic – a line that's written doesn't die, only organisms die, thus writing can do more than organic life, live longer and travel further. Perhaps it is one of the most subtle mediums to explore and harness the non-instinctual web of habits that comprise us. It can form its own composite body, capable of action and interaction across a range of other composite bodies, including the most basic strata of the human.

Writing has its own trap to escape; the depersonalised aspects of the habit of writing can have an effect on the composite body of the whole of language, leading to a dehumanising of language in order to make a becoming-other of language itself, a 'witch's line that escapes the dominant system.'[140] Rather than personalising language, one could adopt the habits that lead one to be able to write without conscious intervention, one could lose oneself in this process, forget oneself and encounter oneself all over again as a stranger.

[139] Deleuze, *What is Philosophy?* trans. Graham Burchill and Hugh Tomlinson, London: Verso, 1994, p. 171.
[140] Deleuze, 'Literature and Life,' *Essays Critical and Clinical,* trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 5.



Coda Robert Bresson: puppet master?

arrêt demandé

A rainy rush-hour morning. A woman enters the bus from the back door. The other passengers sit facing forwards in their rows of seats, a uniformly paced group of shoulders and heads like plaster busts viewed from the wrong side in a museum. No eye contact. Good. She too becomes the back of a head, directing her eyes, like the others, into the distance in front of her. They could be sleeping, except even sleep would be expressed by a slump of the shoulders. They won't remember this journey, they already no longer remember getting onto the bus, sitting down in the seat, directing the eyes; they are not aware of their own efficiency. The light inside the bus is muted; flickering yellow overhead light. The rhythm of the bus: low engine rumble, vibrating metal heater, a bell, the faint sound of money. Today is identical to every day but today is also absolutely singular. Words and phrases from conversations begin to drift back, though no-one moves their head to address another; they are not talking to each other but to themselves, aloud. The voices – random, now here, now there.

'Governments are short-sighted'
'Don't accuse governments. No government in the world can boast that it is governing'
'It's the masses that determine events'
'Obscure forces whose laws are unfathomable'
'Yes something drives us against our will'
'You have to go along with it'
'And we do so so as not to appear conspicuous'
'So who is it that makes a mockery of humanity?'
'Who's leading us by the nose?'

'The devil probably'

And now, abruptly, all sound stops. The bus lights go off but on-one moves. The bus driver leans out of the cab into the bus, turning his head to face the passengers, then freezing in this position, with his eyes off the road, the bus slides silently into a lamp post. For a while nothing moves. There is no sound. Just frozen non-eye contact. Gradually, all around the outside of the bus, people in cars begin to honk their horns until the sound becomes one long deafening noise.[1]

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Condensed into slightly more than two minutes of film, the bus sequence from *Le diable, probablement*, contains the nexus of Bresson's cinematic work. An ordinary day, though always rather *extra*-ordinary in a Bresson film, everything functioning smoothly, so smoothly as to be inhuman and suffocating. The people travelling on the early morning bus occupy their space and roles with neither flicker of hesitation nor thought. For the viewer, for most of this sequence the travellers are faceless, one only gets to know them visually by

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[1] Partial transcription, partial interpretation of a scene from Robert Bresson's *Le diable, probablement* [The Devil, Probably], 1977, 35mm, 92m, colour.

the backs of heads, static postures and close-ups of hands resting on laps, ticket taking, button pressing and money passing. Hands in Bresson's work are more important than faces. Yet in this scenario, unlike the Tokyo underground trip, Monday 20th March 1995,[2] those woven into the fabric of this waking sleep begin to speak. One cannot say they communicate, because Bresson doesn't allow them the freedom to leave their interior position and truly interact.[3] Rather, words are in the air – odd unconnected ideas and dialogue which are of course *really* connected. Within the closed environment of the bus, the enclosed inhabitants open just a little, ajar rather than open, and each begins to wonder 'aloud,' to no-one in particular but to everyone at the same time including us the viewer, about the controlling force behind their world. Is it the government? The people? Us? Then a name is suggested, the devil, though only *probably*. Perhaps the devil is nothing more than a scapegoat. Nevertheless this utterance is enough to create a rupture in the habitual scheme of things; time changes, a breach occurs where all is frozen in place, as though the devil, named and brought into the field of consciousness, has taken the life out of things. As though in a psychoanalytic group session at the height of free association, the unspoken tumbles out from just beneath the surface where it waited to be voiced: The Devil. The break, an empty frozen suspended moment, broken again by the overwhelming impatience of travellers outside this vacuum of a bus which is now the space of a group unconscious. Soon after things will resume their rhythm and the devil will not be mentioned again for the duration of the film, though now he has been suggested to our cinematically hypnotised minds, his shadow never quite goes away. Still, the film returns to its empty fluidity and one follows the events, as one always does with Bresson's later films, with a sense that something small has happened which is actually not small, but will alter the entire course of events that follow in this closed world of the film. The sleepwalkers, jolted awake for a brief moment could not sustain wakefulness – the question is: do we?

I have chosen to look at the films of Bresson because of his self-confessed use of habit and repetition in every aspect of his film-making process, from controlling the movements and gestures of the figures in his films to the final stage of editing and his notion of cinematography in general. Where much of my thesis has involved looking at habit from the empirical point of view of its host, Bresson's work provides a means of testing how

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[2] Cf. Chapter Three, pp. ...

[3] Richard Roud, 'The Redemption of Despair,' *Film Comment*, September-October, 1977, p. 23, describes 'dialogue' in Bresson's films as 'alternating monologues.'

habit and repetition affect the viewer when used as an aesthetic device. The typical surface aesthetic of a Bresson film is highly composed and flat, a monochrome two-dimensional vision of everyday life, even when the film stock is colour.[4] In addition to this, Bresson tends to suffocate narrative tension, adopting instead to use habit and repetition to build up both an intensity of unexpressed emotion, and an hypnotic suspension in the viewer.[5] Both of these elements escalate into an under the surface claustrophobia and panic, in which one longs for stoppage or escape from the blank sameness of it all, without perhaps realising one has been lulled into this position. Bresson is in this respect like Beckett but colder, denying even the chance for shifty laughter. As one endures the film, some kind of rupture becomes vital, and Bresson doesn't deny us that release, though the rupture itself might only occupy a moment and as in the bus sequence of *Le diable, probablement*, might easily be missed.

In many ways Bresson is a cruel and unforgiving film-maker, hard on himself, hard on those he works with and hard on the viewer; but I hope to show that perhaps he is so, *necessarily*.

'But I don't want to die' ... 'Of course you do'

Nine-tenths of our movements obey habit and automatism. It is anti-nature to subordinate them to will and thought.[6]

Bresson's films are populated by habitual bodies which move like zombies as though dead or asleep; they display no psychological depth, no sense of self or memory, and rarely any emotion. Their impersonal, automated movement is what Bresson refers to as 'natural' movement – though for the viewer of his films, these figures seem far from natural, and are perhaps the ultimate sleepwalkers.

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[4] Exceptions to this rule can be found, for instance, in Bresson's largest budget film, *Lancelot du Lac* [Lancelot of the Lake], 1974, 35mm, 85m, col., which is a 'costume drama' (of sorts). However, even with this and other historical allegories such as *Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* [The Trial of Joan of Arc], 1962, 35mm, 65m, bw., Bresson maintains a rather flat quality of everydayness.

[5] This is also apparent in the films of Chantal Akerman. She describes how she uses time and pace in her film-making to achieve this: 'I want the audience to feel their own sense of time, the pacing and timing of the movie is not there as information to make the story go forward. You have to feel something, and that happens through time and pace. That's the essence of movie making.' Akerman interviewed by Ilone Cheshire, *Film Waves* 14:1, 2001, p. 23.

[6] Robert Bresson, *Notes on the Cinematographer*, trans. Jonathan Griffin, London: Quartet Encounters, 1986, p. 22. Bresson remained reclusive throughout his working years, making only 13 films between 1943-1981. Apart from a few scattered interviews over the years, this slim book of short oracular pronouncements remains the only account from Bresson himself on his own working

Many of the issues addressed throughout this thesis: habit, repetition, automatism, somnambulism, fate, death and the unconscious are explored in Bresson's cinematic project, and through his manipulation of these themes, Bresson's quest is to find and reveal the *other* 'tenth' of human movement, (it is only nine-tenths of human movement that obey habit and automatism), though he never elucidates in words what the other tenth might be. Over his lifetime Bresson's stringent aesthetic control became more and more urgent and more and more pessimistic in regard to human freedom, and the missing 'tenth' is relegated to smaller and smaller moments of rupture. In 1977, the bus sequence in *Le diable, probablement* provides the film's only break from a sense of absolute cold pre-determination. Nine years later in his next and final film, *L'Argent*, the final tenth of movement has virtually disappeared. Watching the trajectory of Bresson's films is in some senses like watching the process of someone gradually losing faith in any kind of human freedom from 'fate.'[7] The (disappearing) theme of human freedom, for Bresson, may or may not be theological,[8] but ultimately, one can situate Bresson's question as: how can we, human beings, know precisely *what* it is that is determining us – and do we have any say in the matter? This was also Kleist's dilemma. When he chose the puppet and the God as representatives of 'grace,' it was because both are ultimately free from human consciousness and the destabilisation of an only partial knowledge. Bresson's figures do have a puppet-like quality, though as we

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practise. Originally published in 1975 as *Notes sur le cinématographe*, it consists of working notes accumulated between 1950 and 1974.

[7] A number of articles chart the increasingly despairing tone of Bresson's films. Cf. Jan Dawson, 'Invisible Enemy,' *Film Comment*, September-October 1977, pp. 24-25; Michael Dempsey, 'Despair Abounding: The Recent Films of Robert Bresson,' *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1980, pp. 2-15; and Colin L. Westerbeck, 'Robert Bresson's Austere Vision,' *Artforum*, November 1976, pp. 52-57.

[8] The spiritual dimension of Bresson's films is a much debated point, particularly given Bresson's supposedly orthodox Catholicism. Cf. in particular, Paul Schrader, *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer*, California: Da Capo Press, 1972, pp. 57-109. On the other hand, Bresson's films are often written about from a purely formalist perspective, as in P. Adams Sitney, 'Cinematography vs. the Cinema: Bresson's Figures,' *Modernist Montage: The Obscurity of Vision in Cinema and Literature*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, pp. 81-100. Stephen Shapiro 'A Note on Bresson,' *The Cinematic Body*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, pp. 241-254, describes Bresson as a materialist and compares his films with Andy Warhol's, both of whom, he says, share a common materialist ground of 'surface aesthetics,' 'unsignifying details,' 'focus on the body,' 'stasis' and 'refusal of emotional involvement.' As almost all of the claims about Bresson's 'spiritual' or religious beliefs have at some point or another been rejected by Bresson himself, I will not pursue his work as illustrating any particular religious belief, feeling closer to Deleuze's description of the 'spiritual' in film as a 'movement of thought,' to which I will refer later. In general, I go along with Kent Jones, *L'Argent*, London: BFI, 1999, p. 19, who points out that 'as 'perfect' as [Bresson's] films seem, as systematic and as governed by firm beliefs, there is no intellectual or spiritual 'last stop' – there is no key, either formal or religious that will unlock the door to ultimate meaning.' For my part, I have no desire to find an 'ultimate meaning' or a 'key' to understanding Bresson's films, which both move and fascinate me perhaps precisely because there is no single key.

have seen with Kleist, the most important attribute of grace is not necessarily found in the *appearance* of a particular kind of movement, but is linked rather to what structures a particular kind of movement – thus in 'On the Marionette Theatre,' not only is the puppet described as graceful, so too is the instinctively driven fencing bear.[9] What these exemplars of grace have in common is their freedom from self-consciousness. Likewise, in order to achieve a conceivable quality of grace, Bresson knows that no amount of prescribed aesthetic training can lead to the kind of movement that stems from lack of consciousness – one can't devise a graceful quality that can be consciously repeated and mimicked; Bresson is not interested in the easily admired, superficial 'grace' of the skilled and seductive actor. For Bresson, grace is already in us all, only we have buried it so deeply in our understanding of ourselves, we have forgotten we have it. The kind of grace Bresson seeks to reveal is in this respect often somewhat unsettling for the viewer to see because it animates his figures in a way that makes them seem 'inhuman' in their self-certainty; one does not receive from them the kind of conscious gestural or facial cues of expression that can be easily read; these are mysterious figures, neither alive nor dead – sleepwalking through a filmscape. Although as we will see, Bresson does use very strict methods with the actors in his films, he positions himself only partly in the role of puppet master because what he is interested in revealing is what neither he nor the figures themselves can control – but that this, as we saw in Chapter 4, must be literally forced out. Intense constriction of the body through highly controlled habit is Bresson's means of forcing the necessity of such an 'escape.'

Like Kleist, Bresson's own position is something of a self-crucifixion between two ultimately untenable extremes; an attempt to sustain a precarious balance between the desire for both absolute control and absolute submission.[10] And, as though mutely echoing Christ's words, 'My God, why have you forsaken me?' Bresson's work expresses the precarious and finite situation of human ignorance as to whether it is something transcendent like a God that speaks through our movements, or something earthbound. The frequency of suicide in, and the enormous pessimism of his later films reveals Bresson's development of this issue. In earlier films, he inevitably reconciles the individual with the animating hand of a benevolent God, as we see in *Un condamné á mort s'est échappé*[11] in which the protagonist, Fontaine, against all the odds, is represented as ultimately bound for liberation and escape.

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[9] Cf. Chapters 1 and 2 in relation to Kleist's 'On the Marionette Theatre.'

[10] It is for this reason perhaps more than any other that I have chosen to look at the work of Bresson rather than directors such as Chantal Akerman in relation to cinema and habit. I find myself placed in a dilemma with Bresson's films, on the one hand being extremely drawn to them, while on the other finding them deeply problematic, whereas with Akerman, my position feels more stable.

In later films, as with the conversation during the bus scene from *Le diable, probablement*; when the anonymous passenger asks 'Who's leading us by the nose?' he is informed by another anonymous passenger, that we are controlled by the devil – *probably*. This probably is telling, because although it still contains within it a glimmer of hope, as with Pascal's Wager, one is reduced to gambling on possibilities; belief is fading.

In the midst of all this there is habit and Bresson's particular focus on habit in his work. Habit is both the modulation between the conscious body in the world and its deeper set of unconscious tendencies or instincts, but also maintains an element of autonomy and choice – it begins with consciousness, thus prevents the one from being reduced to the limited scope of the puppet, and also prevents one from attaining 'grace' in Kleist's sense. While on the other hand, Bresson uses habit very specifically as an aesthetic device – the people we see in his films are not *habitual*, but are *habituated by* Bresson. His view of, or perhaps fear of, the world as completely mechanically determined, leads him to create in his films not a *representation* of a completely determined world, because his films bear no resemblance to our empirical experience of the world. This is a world artificially determined by him, and in the same way that Kleist saw in the puppet and its master a miniature, 'ideal' version of the roles of God and human contained on the stage, Bresson uses the environment of film as a microcosm of the world.[12]

Paradoxically, the other tenth of movement that Bresson hopes will emerge *beyond* his control is precisely what gives rise to his use of habit as a working process, 'It is not necessary to believe that one can only arrive at truth through truth. I try to arrive at truth through something ... mechanical if you like.'[13] In a peculiar reversal, Bresson presents the automatism of nature *as* automatism – it therefore appears absolutely unlike nature in terms of nature's empirical unpredictability. In effect, he uses habit to recreate an appearance of the automatism of nature as it *should* appear in terms of an *idea* of automatism, i.e. like clockwork. And through this he forces the viewer to consider the consequences of belief in a mechanistic universe, forces them into the tightest corners in which a vague desire for

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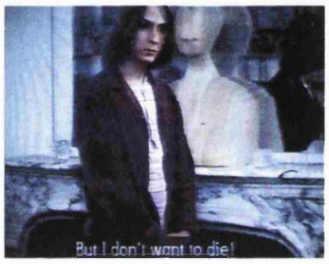
[11] Bresson, *Un condamné á mort s'est échappé* [A Man Escaped], France, 1956, 95m., bw.

[12] One cannot help recalling here the words of Louis Malle, 'Pendant le temps de la projection, l'artiste est Dieu.' Louis Malle, 'Pickpocket,' in *Robert Bresson: Éloge*, Paris: Cinématèque Français, 1997, p. 36. M.S. Silk and J.P. Stern, in *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 302, point out that in the pre-Romantic world, the idea of art was such that 'The artist is the creator of the artefact, as God is the creator of the natural world.' Thus in Kleist's 'On the Marionette Theatre,' Kleist concludes that it is the artist's task to create an artefact so perfect that it will be indistinguishable from the creations of nature, 'and so lead man back into the natural paradise from which his sophistication has expelled him.' Perhaps this too could be said of Bresson.

[13] 'Propos de Robert Bresson,' in *Cahiers du Cinéma* 75, October 1957, p. 6. [My translation].

escape turns into a *need* for escape. The desperate search for the missing one-tenth of movement is then ultimately the search for a way out of the mechanistic conclusion.

As we have seen however, habit, neither completely automatic, nor completely conscious and free, is a middle ground. Then why can't habit be precisely the means through which Bresson hopes to reveal moments of freedom? Automatism in nature cannot be broken or changed, but its adoption by the body as habit can. Breaking through the surface of habit, the small moments of indeterminacy in human life and movement are Bresson's means of linking the human back to the possibility of freedom.



14

the 'empty' vessel: Bresson's models.

Bresson never works with professional actors in his films, he 'trains' people to be what he calls 'models' [*modèles*]. The model is a replica of a human person; where an actor might present a subjective interpretation of their role, the model should show no subjectivity. The actor acts. The model functions. It is a question of a different direction of expressive movement; Bresson sees 'acting' as subjectively determined, leading to the actor's expression moving from an interior (psychological) source to its interpretation as an exterior expression, gesture, or vocal intonation. The model should go the opposite way, expressing movement from the exterior to the interior. A professional actor, trained in the direction of expressive movement from interior to exterior, for Bresson, erects a constant,

[14] Two images from *Le diable, probablement* during Charles' meeting with the psychoanalyst. The scene with the psychoanalyst contains a long dialogue which I feel in many respects is used by Bresson to parody his own role of director.

more or less (self-)conscious barrier – both in terms of the actor and the expectations of the viewer.[15] And although the behaviour of more traditionally trained actors in itself presents an intriguing set of habits, Bresson is not interested in these.

Bresson puts the models through extreme paces in order to reduce any tendency toward affected expression. The models are never shown a script or given a 'character' outline to 'identify' with; they are told not to 'deliver' their minimal lines, but just to speak, and they are drilled and made to repeat their movements and words over and over, sometimes up to 160 times in immediate succession until they have become absolutely habitual.[16] The models typically move with their arms held close to their sides, backs stiff and torsos immobile, their heads lowered, showing little, if any, facial expression, and rarely making eye contact[17] – not unlike the movements of the obsessive compulsive as they attempt to make themselves as perfectly automaton-like and invulnerable as possible. Seemingly unanimated by will, their movements could only be described by the viewer in the simplest non-adverbial language: she walks on her feet, he lifts his arm, he lies on his side, she lowers her eyes. She walks. They always walk. Bresson effects this treatment on his models in order to 'radically suppress their intentions,' or in other words, to reduce them to such a state of emotional exhaustion and indifference that they make their moves and speak their lines without thought. There are only so many times one can cross a room from side to side without losing interest in the action, without one's attention going elsewhere.

What Bresson presents to the viewer is an 'alien' version of human life; an animated body/shell which seems devoid of any kind of freedom or possibility to do other than it does. The models appear alien because they are *too* regular – what is familiar about human movement is its awkwardness, flamboyance and idiosyncrasies, yet the models *are* 'natural'

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[15] Bresson avoids audience identification with his figures by refusing to work with the same model twice.

[16] Jean Vimenet appeared in *Mouchette*, France, 1964, 78m., bw., and describes how: 'None of us were ever aware of what was going on. [Bresson] would not allow us to look at the script or see the photos taken in the course of shooting. [...] He uses people like objects. He leaves absolutely nothing to their imagination: every detail, every gesture, every millimetre of movement of a finger or a nose, your nose is in this position, you look in this direction; you are a robot, you are put in a certain position and at a certain moment you have to turn your head again and again until you no longer think about it.' Quoted in Roy Armes, *French Cinema since 1946 Vol. 1: The Great Tradition*, New Jersey: A.S. Barnes, 1970, p. 138. Surprisingly Vimenet goes on to say how much he liked the finished film, and how hard he found it to 'act' again without feeling mannered or forced. Cf. also the appendix to Lindley Hanlon, *Fragments: Bresson's Film Style*, London: Associated University Presses, 1986, in which she interviews Antoine Moniere who played Charles in *Le diable, probablement.*

[17] Dominique Sanda, the leading actor in *Une Femme Douce*, France, 1969, 89m., col., when interviewed in the documentary *The Road to Bresson*, [de weg naar Bresson], Juffriën Rood and Lea de Boer, Holland, 1986, described how Bresson told her, when speaking to another model, to direct her gaze always at their ear.

in the Cartesian sense of the body as a machine, part of nature, clockwork.[18] The strange people that populate these films appear to be consciousless and puppet-like; propelled but not by their own will; driven but unfettered by self-consciousness; emotionally charged and intense, but drained of the affectation with which to express this. The loss of all that seems most human lends them their air of mystery; like Kleist's fencing bear, in their blankness they seem peculiarly self-centred and telepathic. These figures move through space in a way that seems closer to the world of inorganic objects, and in this respect, they achieve in a human body something akin to the Kleistian ideal of grace.

Yet, these figures are not uniformly graceful, they maintain flickers of individuality. Although Bresson's methods of repetition strip his models of superficially affected behaviour, what begin to emerge are the tics and stutters *behind* the body one chooses to present, the unconscious of the body if you like, its *ways*. For this reason, Bresson often chooses to work with people local to the area in which he is shooting in order to maintain something of the everyday unthought habits that they already have and that already mark their bodies and physical expression; the more or less subtle look of the body, its movements and levels of vocal intonation are already ingrained with the effects of an environment to contain enough information to express aspects of a person or a life.[19] Their similarities may be marked in their appearance due to the effects of the weather of a particular area, or display the ingrained mannerisms of a city-dweller. The habitual walk for instance, of the country people in *Au hasard Balthazar*[20] has a 'crookedness' as though they have long had to align themselves to resist harsh winds and to traverse ground which is neither straight nor smooth. The figures in films such as *L'Argent* or *Le diable, probablement*, on the other hand, walk with the cool, upright composure of a city-dweller, protected from the weather by buildings, and generally traversing flat streets and pavements rather than rough ground. The texture of the skin and hair will be different too; perhaps a craggy texture or perhaps a pallid sheen. The models, although habituated out of their normal habit and into 'roles' by Bresson, still maintain this minimal level of individuality, a

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[18] Cf. Descartes, 'Treatise on Man,' *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes: Volume 1*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 99-110. Cf. also La Mettrie, *Machine Man and Other Writings*, trans. Ann Thomson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 3-39.

[19] Oliver Sacks, *Awakenings*, London: Picador, 1991, p. 379, describes how while interpreting his work with sufferers of encephalitis lethargica (sleeping sickness) to the screen adaptation of the same name, 'I found, interestingly, that the actors naturally divided themselves into 'shakers' and 'jerkers,' those who found it easier to tremor and shake and those who found it easier to jerk and tick; I could not help wondering if there was some basic dispositional tendency behind these different faculties.'

[20] *Au hasard Balthazar*, France / Sweden, 1966, 95m. b/w.

fraction (if not a tenth) that will always escape Bresson's control. In this respect, Bresson does not reject 'expression' from the models per se, so much as rejecting self-consciously controlled or invented expression – in other words, anything deliberately given by the models themselves. The nuances that escape from the model's stereotyped behaviour will be the only things we 'know' of individual characters beyond the bare facts of their physical appearance. As a result, while watching the models one becomes caught up in, and fluent with, an alternative language of 'expression.'[21] An almost identical flicker of an eyelid might be seen in a 70-year old man in New York and a 7-year old girl in Madrid, but the difference, the missing tenth of the flicker will be apparent only if one (or the camera) looks closely enough. One has to like detail to enjoy Bresson's films, in which the drama exists in the minuscule, which comes to seem magnified so that the repetition of the way an eyebrow flickers says more about an interior state or structure of a given life in a given narrative, than a dramatic dialogue. Watching Yvon in *L'Argent*, the moments in which he raises his eyes from their usual direction towards the ground, and the *way* he raises them, comes to communicate more than any speech he might make. The impoverished viewer of a Bresson film is hungry for detail, especially as dialogue is so minimal, and this subtle body language is the only mode of communication passing from model to viewer. Bresson focuses on such flickers of expression but only when they seem to him to 'slip out' when the model is so exhausted by their ceaseless repetitions during the filming process, that they are unaware of just what they are showing. 'The thing that matters is not what they show me but what they hide from me and, above all *what they do not suspect is in them.*'[22]

At the same time as reducing his models to habitual bodies, Bresson also sees his own role as subordinate to what the camera as consciousless visual recording machine can do: 'What no human eye is capable of catching, no pencil, brush, pen of pinning down, your camera catches without knowing what it is, and pins it down with a machine's scrupulous indifference.'[23] 'Camera and tape recorder carry me far away from the intelligence which

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[21] I am perhaps näively trying to keep the term expression 'clean,' resisting its over-determination. Jacques Aumont, *The Image*, trans. Claire Pjackowska, London: BFI, 1997, pp. 211-226, gives a full critique and account of the different attitudes towards the notion of 'expression' in cinema.

[22] Bresson, *Notes*, p. 4.

[23] Bresson, *Notes*, p. 26. The fetishisation of the movie camera as automated consciousless perceptual prosthesis can be traced back to Dziga Vertov's notion of the 'kino-eye,' a 'perfectible eye' as opposed to the human 'imperfect eye.' 'From the viewpoint of the ordinary eye you see un-truth. From the viewpoint of the cinematic eye, you see the truth.' Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov* (1911), trans. Kevin O' Brien, ed. Annette Michelson, London: Pluto, 1984. More recently, the myth of the 'authenticity' of the camera 'eye' is countered by Trinh T. Minh-ha, 'Mechanical Eye, Electronic ear, and the Lure of Authenticity,' *When the Moon Waxes Red*, London: Routledge, 1991, pp. 53-64. Deleuze's reading of the camera as prosthetic eye re-reads cinema as having the

complicates everything.'[24] The intelligence, or 'knowledge' which, as for Kleist, was doomed to be incomplete, throwing everything into unbalance. The camera is emotionally indifferent, a cold unfeeling eye, able to record the most tragic event without a blink or a turned eye. In Bresson's films watching the eyes of the models is often, for the viewer, like looking into the eye of a camera; these are eyes which look, record, but reflect nothing back. While in the earlier phase of his filmmaking, the eyes of Fontaine in *Un condamné à mort s'est échappé* are keen and alive, in the later films the looks become colder, more unforgiving and judgmental. Cruel eyes and silent cold glances are passed between the models when they do raise their eyes to take one another in.


[25]

So far we have an idea of Bresson's models as though detached moving bodies, in contact only with other bodies, but of course they are not just this; this is neither choreography nor dance. These figures occupy the environments set up in his films, play parts, have names, 'communicate' with others, even if this is only by a stare or the passing of something from one hand to another, and, however minimally, animate a narrative. And this is Bresson's artistic profession – he is not interested ultimately in what the people he works with 'are,' he is no analyst. He is interested more in their potential, in what they *can* express, as human presences, in the different contexts of his films.

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power to 'de-centre' the artificially (intelligently) centred perception of the viewing subject. His claim is not that cinema *represents* reality in a better way than the eye can see, but that cinema can *intervene* in our perceptions of reality, providing a means of breaking hegemonic tendencies of perception. Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London: Athlone Press, 1986, pp. 4-5. Cf. also D.N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 8-11.

[24] Bresson, *Notes*, p. 129.

[25] Bresson, *Mouchette*, France, 1967, 78 m., b/w., adapted from Georges Bernanos, *Mouchette*, trans. J.C. Whitehouse, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966. Michel Mesnil, Robert Benayoun and Pierre Billard, discuss in *Cinéma 63* 1974, p. 27, how: 'Il n'y a pas un seul personnage fémenin sympathique chex Bresson,' 'Il n'y a pas de personnages sympathiques chez Bresson,' 'Y a-t-il des personnages chez Bresson?'

Bresson's models often seem predestined, and because of this sense of fatedness, they appear to 'belong' where they are and to know exactly what they have to do, as though there were no conceivable alternative path or pattern – not dissimilar to the Kleistian somnambulist, except here the motives behind their somnambulism is never explicitly revealed. They are paradoxical beings, displaying on one hand emotional isolation and loneliness, particularly in their averted eyes, while also appearing cold, omnipotent and unstoppable; their vocal intonations while flat and inexpressive are also forceful and clear. They appear to be 'led', animated or driven by a force other than themselves, but there are no visible strings, and although absolutely directed, they never display the appealing passivity of the puppet. Knowledge of Bresson's role as 'puppet master,' the limits he works within and imposes on others, may provide the most simple and obvious answer to the sense of inevitability that runs through almost all of his films. He is the puppet-master, the director, the animating force. But Bresson prefers not to see himself as the one ultimately in control; he is interested in how the models unconsciously resist his control, in how they are beyond him and in how they might reveal a fatedness beyond the duration of the film. Bresson's 'murdering' of the autonomy of his figures is almost a manifestation of Craig's dream of the ultimate actor, the Über-marionette, which will 'not compete with life – rather it will go beyond it. Its ideal will not be the flesh and blood but rather the body in trance – it will aim to clothe itself with a death-like beauty while exhaling a living spirit.'[26] The aesthetic of Bresson is built on the opposition of life without will and death without stillness; an aesthetic which leans subtly towards the desire of the necrophiliac.

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[26] Edward Gordon Craig, 'The Actor and the Über-marionette' (1907), in *Craig on Theatre*, ed. J. Michael Walton, London: Methuen, 1999, p. 86. Compare also, for instance, Bresson's claim that 'Once outside themselves, your model will not be able to get back in again', and Craig's desire for the actor, rather than letting their role 'get under their skin,' should aim to get '*out* of the skin of the part altogether.' Bresson, *Notes*, p. 43; Craig, 'The Actor and the Über-marionette,' p. 85.

The more 'empty' the body in one respect, the more filled up it *can* be – it is open, gaping, hungry to be filled; reduction only goes so far before it begins to rewind, to trigger a reversal. For Bresson, the spirit that fills the now empty shell of the model will not be of its own making, but projected into it from an 'elsewhere' beyond the model's control. One is faced in Bresson's films with moving 'dead' bodies, yet what he hopes to reveal is the sense of a 'living spirit,' in Craig's terms, an invisible force behind and inside the bodies. And over this animating force, Bresson claims no control.[28] Such a force, if there were such a force, would be beyond human perception, let alone representation, if not minimised and contained. As Dubuffet says, one 'cannot grasp the wind; there are no scales to weigh the wind, only the sand carried by it.'[29] One cannot perceive the effect of an 'invisible' force except through the actions a body or object performs when animated by it. Bresson's use of habit and repetition, his reduction of human consciousness and autonomy provides him with human bodies, stripped of conscious autonomy, as *vessels* through which such an invisible force might be expressed.[30] What might this force be? Some critics point to a transcendence in Bresson's films,[31] but perhaps the sense of the invisible in Bresson's films is not more than an effect of the extreme reduction to automatism – as if a tension of refusal was building up, as if also the reduction made one all the more aware of the groundlessness of habitual action. Furthermore, not only does Bresson believe in the camera's potential to transcend the limits of human perception, he believes in the medium of cinema (the finished film) as a 'metaconsciousness' through which, for the viewer, consciousness can be transcended, opening the mind to the sense of a wider, spiritual realm. The tension in Bresson's films becomes focussed towards us as audience – towards the sense in which we have 'voluntarily' surrendered our agency to be in the cinema.

In a late interview, Deleuze describes how, 'Something bizarre about the cinema struck me: its unexpected ability to show not only behaviour, but spiritual life [*la vie spirituelle*]. Spiritual life isn't dream or fantasy but rather the domain of cold decision, of absolute obstinacy, of the choice of existence. [...] Cinema not only puts movement in the

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[27] Bresson, *Mouchette*.

[28] Bresson, despite adopting such rigid control talks always of 'chance' and contingency. He may seem to differ here from Craig, who believes art should avoid contingency: 'For accident is the enemy of the artist. [...] Art arrives only by design.' Craig, 'The Actor and the Über-marionette,' pp. 82-83, yet for Bresson it would be such rigid control that allows, indeed forces, chance and contingency to occur.

[29] Jean Dubuffet, *Asphyxiating Culture and other writings*, trans. Carol Volk, New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1988, p. 63.

[30] 'Grace fills up, but it can enter only where there is an empty space to receive it.' Simone Weil, quoted and translated in the preface to Reader, *Robert Bresson*, p. x.

image, it also puts movement in the mind. Spiritual life *is* the movement of the mind.'[32] No words have summed up in a more precise way the nature of Bresson's cinematic project than this short utterance by Deleuze. Bresson would aim more than anything to create a cinema which liberates perception, and in Bresson's world cinema must do this by both paring down and therefore exaggerating the habits of perception. Such an exaggeration happens most intensely when one is confined.[33]

Cinema itself, as microcosmic space, is also a space of imprisonment, not merely perceptual but also bodily; from the subject of the film imprisoned in the cinematic frame to the viewer silent and still in their cinema seat.[34] All is about confinement and restriction, which Bresson's films exaggerate, but Bresson also sees the incarceratory aspects of cinema as a route to perceptual freedom for the viewer.

a cinema of confinement

'When one is in prison, the most important thing is the door.'[35]

Although everything in Bresson's films is about containment, it is also about release or escape, even if only for a moment, even if only expressed by a sigh or a gasping breath.

Bresson habituates his models, emptying them of will until they become empty vessels; automated figures captured by an automated recording machine (camera) as a series of frames or containers then fall into the realm of a larger frame, the enclosed world of the film. Click click click. The settings for Bresson's films add to this sense of containment, frequently including places of incarceration and imprisonment; cells, bare rooms and sharply delineated, clean, impersonal and ultimately oppressive spaces. Deleuze describes such spaces as any-space-whatever, 'Any-space-whatever is not an abstract universal, in all times,

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[31] Cf. ftn. 8, above.
[32] Deleuze, 'The Brain is the Screen,' p. 366.
[33] Cf. my notes on perception and confinement in Chapter 4.
[34] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999, charts in detail the historical alteration of perception and attention occurring since the late 19th century introduction of new visual technologies. Crary focuses from the outset on the problematic nature of such an attention-grabbing medium as cinema, 'Attention is the way in which a subject can both transcend subjective limitations and make perception its own, but at the same time is a means by which a perceiver becomes open to control and annexation by external agencies.' Crary, p. 5.
[35] Bresson quoted in Ian Cameron, 'Interview with Robert Bresson,' *Movie* 7, Feb-March, 1963, p. 28. When asked in an interview why imprisonment is such a repeated motif in his work, Bresson

in all places. It is a perfectly singular place, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, the principle of its metric relations or the connection of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways. It is a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible.'[36] This is the kind of space in which one can do nothing but seek escape from, using whatever means one can, and in such a space, one can be surprisingly dextrous, as we have seen already with the trapped figures in Chapter 4. When confined, perceptual and habitual connections shift, giving way to new potentialities and relations previously unimaginable.

Like layers of an onion, the series of enclosed containers making up a Bresson film, contain only another, then another, container. From the inside out, to list but a few layers: prison of the body, prison cell, prison of a controlling director, prison of the cinematic frame, prison of the film's prescribed duration, prison of the cinema seat, prison of the viewer's own body. Everything encloses, invents boundaries, reinforces boundaries, restricts and squeezes so tight there must at some point be a release of tension, an escape. Or else, an implosion. A suicide. Because for the models, imprisoned in their bodies, stripped of all ability to express themselves 'freely,' surrounded by nothing except another limit, the build-up of pressure is unbearable. Silent, intense, the models are thus always on the verge of explosion or implosion, released only by the extreme limit of death.[37] The suffocating build up running through a Bresson film, with its repetitions, its endless emotionless sameness, leads to the possibility, the *necessity*, of rupture.

In the closed and claustrophobic prison cell setting of *Un condamné à mort s'est échappé*, the stark situation in which almost the entire film is set,[38] Fontaine, the man who *will* escape, (the sun *will* rise tomorrow), although seemingly stripped of autonomy and choice, becomes absolutely functional. 'Model. Reduce to the minimum the share his consciousness has. Tighten the meshing within which he [...] can now do nothing that is not

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replied: 'Perhaps because we are all prisoners.' 'Entretien avec Robert Bresson,' Yves Kovacs, *Cahiers du Cinéma* 140, February 1963, p. 7. [My translation].

[36] Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 109. Cf. pp. 108-122 for Deleuze's full account of Bresson's use of such spaces. Minh-Ha, *Framer Framed*, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 141-142, refers to this kind of environment as 'negative space.'

[37] Deleuze 'The Brain is the Screen,' p. 367, describes the 'blank' characters which populate Joseph Losey's films as being 'like capsules [*des comprimés*] composed of static violence, all the more violent because they don't move.'

[38] Bresson's cameraman for *Un condamné à mort s'est échappé*, Léonce-Henry Burel speaks about how difficult it was to make this film due to the confinement also of the technicians within the cell. 'Burel and Bresson,' Burel interviewed by Rui Nogueira, trans. Tom Milne, *Sight and Sound*, Winter 1976-7, pp. 18-21.

useful.'[39] For Fontaine, everything is limited, but as a result, everything is also potentially useful.[40] He must be resourceful, ingenious and intuitive – ways of functioning within the boundaries of what he has have to be found so that he can fulfil his destiny and escape. Despite the sense of predestination, what emerges most strongly in the film is the fate-fulfilling resourcefulness of Fontaine, given only the most limited tools. Bresson reduces the models in order for them to reveal what or how they *can be* in their most reduced, state – stripped of everything, provided with nothing, nevertheless *they will find a way.*

Often, in their isolated situations and because of their lack of expression, Bresson's models seem close to the world of functional objects, they communicate with objects in their potential state, rather than according to their familiar usage, both breaking old habits and adopting new ones. From the moment Fontaine enters the cell, his eyes and hands focuss keenly on every object around him; he is so programmed for 'escape,' that in this 'role' he has access to a highly malleable vision, a conception of the potentiality of things. Fontaine sees endless mileage in his plain metal spoon and uses it to perform a number of tasks, from prizing a piece of wood from the doorframe, to acting as a makeshift key and knife. He uses a shelf as a ladder, a shoe as a hammer, string and a handkerchief as a telephone, a pin a key and both clothes and sheets as ropes; even the walls become a source of coded communication with the prisoner in the cell next to him. When sent a parcel of clothes from his family, he utters one of his few sentences, 'What raw material!' All that is material becomes immaterial or new material, recycled. 'ON FRAGMENTATION: This is indispensable if one does not what to fall into REPRESENTATION. See beings and things in their separate parts. Render them independent in order to give them a new dependence.'[41] Nothing in a Bresson film is what it familiarly appears to be, and instead all becomes, despite limitations, open and interchangeable. In minimising the material and objects to hand Bresson aims to maximise their potential, and although the model might seem reduced or limited, by their being limited, they come to express an unlimited potentiality: 'Model. Beautiful with all the movements he does not make (could make).'[42]

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[39] Bresson, *Notes*, p. 46.
[40] Bresson comments on Fontaine, 'From one viewpoint all is made concrete and material, I put in the contacts between prisoners because they reveal some curious things: simply because when one says only perhaps three words, suddenly all their lives are changed. It's like that in prisons.' 'Propos de,' p. 7. [My translation].
[41] Bresson, *Notes*, p. 84.
[42] Bresson, *Notes*, p. 102.

In *Au hasard Balthazar*[43] the lead role of which is played by a donkey, experience and communication is located beyond the categories of everyday psychological or moral experience. Balthazar is an opaque figure, silent, *without facial expression*, and as such incomprehensible to human thought. Through Balthazar, Bresson explores further the ambiguous modulation of existence between subject and objecthood, showing us life as it might appear from the perspective of a 'utilisable' object. Balthazar is continually forced into nomadism and is used for every kind of work imaginable: he pulls hay, draws a cart, delivers bread; he is called a 'genius,' a 'saint' and the 'son of the devil.' He is loved, hated, homed, abandoned, burned, beaten and saved, before eventually being shot and dying amidst a flock of indifferent sheep in a field.[44] By opening out these different viewpoints, and thinking anew of each thing according to its potentials, whether positive and useful or degradable, Bresson opens out a virtuality immanent to every object and body, no matter how familiar or banal they might seem.

For every object and situation there are always unknown elements, secret possibilities or unseen, unspoken, out-of-fields; qualities which exceed representation and can only be inferred materially or symbolically.[45] Thus, rather than closing things down, Bresson creates such severe conditions in order to force things to express a virtual state *beyond the habitual* or familiar. Every object, including the models themselves, through singularities and combinations with the shapes and patterns of an environment, including the cinematic environment, come to be an emanation of their environment. *And yet, the break of habit comes about precisely through an extreme build-up of habit and repetition.*[46]

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[43] Bresson, *Au Hasard, Balthazar*, 1966, 35mm, 95m, bw.

[44] Nick Browne, 'Narrative Point of View: The Rhetoric of *Au Hasard Balthazar*,' *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1997, p. 26, describes how Balthazar 'functions as the locus of successive emotional displacements and projections by others. His very nature in the film is to sustain – neither to confirm nor to deny – the validity of the way others regard him. He is always the object of another's actions.'

[45] Bresson is deeply aware of what cannot be adequately represented. His films, with their narratives of violence and death, rarely show a violent act, rather a 'before' and 'after', or sometimes only a sound. 'The subject of death is not depicted in the hands which strangle, it is however in the passing currents. In those moments the objects are, curiously, a lot more important than the people. The high terrace, the sea, the night, the sound of the train is more important again that that which happens. The objects and sounds are, in a mystic sense if you like, in intimate communication with man and it is a lot more serious than the hands which strangle a guard.' Bresson, 'Propos de,' p. 9. [My translation]. Armes, *French Cinema*, p. 140, comments on this: 'Bresson is interested only in the spiritual and emotional aftermath of violent and startling events, with the result that these latter invariably occur 'off-stage.'

[46] Shapiro, *Cinematic Body*, p. 250, says Bresson's films demand an immanent reading, in opposition to the transcendent one put forth by writers such as Schrader. 'Everything turns on the allegorical discontinuity between the deliberate banality of concrete expression and the ineffability of what is being expressed.'

Deleuze makes a similar claim for cinema as a medium; the homogenisation or equality of instants in cinematic time leads to a very particular kind of perception: 'The production of singularities (qualitative leap) is achieved by the accumulation of banalities (quantitative process), so that the singular is taken from the any-whatever, and is itself an any-whatever which is simply non-ordinary and non-regular.'[47] Bresson exploits this aspect of film by focussing on the *relational* value of each image rather than separate privileged instants.

> The cinema doesn't have to express itself by images but by the relations between images, which is not the same thing at all. [...] There is an image, then another which has a relational value, I mean that this first image is neutral and that suddenly in the presence of another it vibrates, the life of it is irrupted: and it is not so much the life of the story, the people, but the life of the film. From the moment when the image lives, one makes cinema.[48]

Bresson refers to flattening images 'so that the expression comes when all the shots are put together. The more flat it is when I am shooting, the more expressive it is edited.'[49] The *power* of the image is in its neutrality, leaving each frame *open* to the frames which surround it – like the models, seemingly flat and empty, but in fact open to a wider range of possibilities than if they were more privileged individually. We have seen something similar to this in the group minded community of Loyola, and Kusama's description of the community of polka dots.[50] For the viewer, after being confronted over time with such absolute homogeneity, such repetitious habitual motion, what might seem usually banal becomes emancipated in its own right. Cinema can liberate the mind from its habits of perception – but it can only do so through an exaggeration of the habits of perception. Crary points out that, 'Attention to repetition always contained within itself the conditions for its own disintegration, it was haunted by the possibility of its own excess – which we all know so well whenever we try to look at or listen to any one thing for too long. In any number of ways, such focussed attention inevitably reaches a threshold at which it breaks down.'[51]

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[47] Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 6.

[48] Bresson, 'Propos de Robert Bresson, *Cahiers du Cinéma* 8:75, October 1957, p. 4. [My translation].

[49] Bresson, quoted in Schrader, 'Robert Bresson, Possibly,' *Film Comment* September–October 1977, p. 30.

[50] I will bring these strands together in my conclusion.

[51] Crary, *Suspension of Perception*, p. 47. Armes, 'Robert Bresson: An Anachronistic Universe,' in Armes, *The Ambiguous Image*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1976, p. 89, also comments on this but with a more theological stance, 'When we stare long and intently enough at faces, hands or objects, the mystery of God's presence becomes clearest to us.' The hypnotic possibilities of cinema also interested the Surrealists. The body in a dark auditorium, still, concentrating only on moving images was thought to create a state close to the realm of sleep. Jean Goudal, for instance, described

When this breakdown occurs, according to Crary, the viewer enters a state of hypnotic trance. A dangerous focussing of attention in that it can lead to paralysis of the will.

Nevertheless, the tension in Bresson's films, with which we are unconsciously carried along, builds up like the close oppressive air before a storm, or the heavy sense of doom in the air when one wakes in the night from a nightmare. Everything might *look* outwardly the same, but *feel* as though it's slipped out of place and become psychologically charged and stifling. Whether the film ends with an escape from a particular situation or location, or escape from the body by death, there comes with it an oddly catastrophic anticlimax and little cathartic relief. The final scene of *L'Argent* shows Yvon raise his eyes from their direction towards the ground, approach a policeman, raise his eyes to look *at* the officer, and confess to his crimes.[52] Chillingly, then, Yvon is led out of the café by policemen, watched by a group of people outside the door. They gaze at the door before he exits, then when he has passed by them they continue to gaze, leaning closer inwards, as though he had never been there at all, and they still await an ending.


[53]

Bresson says, 'Your film is not made for a stroll with the eye, but for going right into, for being totally absorbed in.'[54] And, as Shapiro describes, for us, the viewer, '[Bresson's] compulsive automatism ruptures, and replaces, our usual habits of association and interpretation. We encounter the real only when we are violently propelled into it, riveted to it, after having been uprooted from ourselves.'[55] When one leaves the cinema after

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how cinema provided an 'actual hallucination' of moving images which 'follow each other on a single plane [...] which is like a geometrical opening giving on to the psychic kingdom.' Quoted in Paul Hammond (ed.), *The Shadow and Its Shadow: Surrealist Writing on the Cinema*, Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991, p. 95. Cf. also Rudolf E. Kuenzli (ed.), *Dada and Surrealist Film*, New York: Willis Locker & Owens, 1987.

[52] The escalation of crimes snowballing through Yvon's brief cinematic existence is reminiscent of Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas*. Cf. Chapter 2.

[53] Bresson, *L'Argent*, the final scene.

[54] Bresson, *Notes*, pp. 85-6.

[55] Shapiro, *Cinematic Body*, p. 247.

seeing a Bresson film, one will not experience an instant emotional release so much as a shift or change in the intensity of one's perception. One may notice the sounds on the street with more clarity than usual, or the specifics of the gait of someone passing. In particular one begins to notice the rhythms of things and their relations; one becomes aware of habit in every aspect of things and of the void it conceals.

[56]

escape by pin

1

I am in my bed, it is night. In the ward all the lights are out at the correct time. I don't know which laws operate here though I have been here for so long. I used to fit easily into the bed and now my feet are near at bottom when I lie flat – my physical length is both my clock and calendar. Tonight, all is quiet but for muffled breathing and rustling bedclothes when someone flips and turns in sleep. All the beds but mine have their heavy purple curtains pulled closely around them, for privacy I suppose - I have been told I tend to stare and one of the wardens must have warned them before I arrived as I have never seen any of the curtains drawn. If not for the bed to my right, my only proof of other human life here would be the indistinct pockets of bed sounds from behind the purple shrouds.

The bed to my right belongs to Gladys Fish. I know her name and her left foot and ankle, just visible under the edge of her purple curtain. Only a foot away. I could stretch out my hand and touch the inside of her foot – I could stroke it with love, or I could stick my pin in it. I go over the permutations, but do nothing as I don't want to lose the company of the foot.

The foot is dry, ankle skin scaly and purple, toenails ridged and yellowish, long and hard, curling over the end of the toes and into the flesh, making it pink. At night I consider this foot and my relationship to it. And tonight, as always, the foot is immobile, hanging down like this unless the night-warden comes and puts it back behind the curtain. After a few hours it will fall back out again, swing for a second and come to rest in position. I rely on the foot, as I rely on my length, to show me I am not alone yet, not dead yet, not quite. I rely on the foot especially at night, and it has never let me down, no, the foot is *always* out at night.

….. Wait! After I turned my eyes for a moment to the closed curtain opposite me, perhaps I was sleeping, but I think I saw the foot move … *on its own*. Though now I look again it is as still as ever.

… No! The foot moved again as I stared at the opposite curtain. But it won't move when I look at it.

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[56] Yvon at his prison cell window in *Un condamné á mort s'est éschappé*.

2

Since I noticed the movement of Gladys Fish's foot, I have not escaped the feeling that she, silent Glad, is trying to communicate something to me, that she knows I am close. So I am occupied lately with trying to catch the foot in movement, to get the message.

Over the weeks it is more and more obvious that the foot only moves when I stare at the opposite curtain, or perhaps that I can only see the movement of the foot when I stare at the opposite curtain. The foot's special movement can't be seen in a straightforwardly visual way. The movement of the foot requires a different sort of eye.

The movement of the foot is not anatomical movement - the ankle joint doesn't change position, nor the toes. It is a ●, at once an inner and outer ● which pours down the foot from some point of the leg behind the purple curtain, stops at the toes and flows up again and out of sight, like a radar or a search-light. It is a movement I have never seen, not even in television footage of graceful dancers shown at Christmas. The ● is timeless; spritely, strong but not erratic. The ● bears no relation to the anatomy of the foot, perhaps that's why the ● can't be seen by looking at it itself. It is a ● that is more than that which can be contained within one limb or life.

3

The life of Gladys Fish's foot makes me think about my own mysteries, those things not immediately marked on the surface.

I don't know why or how I am here.

Two days ago I asked the day-warden why or how I am here and he was surprised at my interest but then told me it was because of the worm trapped in my right palm. The day-warden called it a thick vein, though I know it is a worm, as does he because he averts his eyes when I call it The Worm.

The worm has always been there and not disturbed me. It swells put the palm from just below the middle finger. A long gnarled swelling runs from what may be the worm's head, but as this spot may have been the worm's point of entry, it would be facing head first, and the area by the middle finger would be the end of the tail. The direction of the worm depends too on where it came from, whether it came into my palm from deep in the body, or whether it penetrated the hand from outside. The swelling pulls down over the palm, crossing the life-line, and on then to the wrist, where it shows an end, whether head or tail. I was born with the worm the day-warden says, and if I leave the institution it will lead me into upsetting activities, as it had, he says, before I came here. I was surprised he thought the worm dangerous, I always assumed it to be dead. Now I realise how much we have in common, the worm and I – we are both prisoners.

And yesterday, for the first time, the worm began to move.

I felt the worm move when I woke yesterday morning. I woke, as always, on the back with the right hand pressed palm down over the mouth, the left arm stretched straight out to the side, its palm clenched into a fist. Yesterday, as I came up from sleep, I noticed a new sensation against the lips. It was not a pulsating movement that the worm made, more a gentle stretching and pushing, an awaking I suppose. It wasn't particularly unpleasant and I didn't move from my position until a cold fear crawled over me, every part of me transfixed by the moving worm in the hand as it became more frantic. Inside the skin I began mimicking the worm's stretch and strain against its limits though when I glanced down at the body, it was still. I could 'see' the movements, however, by looking the opposite curtain. Whatever Gladys had wanted to say, she had certainly taught me how to 'see' a ●.

I had to think. On the one hand, while the worm stretched and writhed in the hand like this, I would have less control over the pen as I wrote my diaries, and if I don't write the diaries will die, they will close, fold over themselves like waves and disappear. On the other hand, the worm might tire of the confined space of the hand and travel deeper into the body, freeing the right hand, but becoming incorporated into the body, making home there. My initial conclusion is in favour of the former, as that way I can see what it is up to. The other solution would be to

remove the worm from the palm, to excise or squeeze it out. But I do not want to view the worm in its own right away from the ●. I don't want to see what I know I will see – that the worm has no face. The worm can go either way but remain unidentifiable, a terrified ambivalence best kept confined to the hand.

By what I think of as mid-afternoon I was still lying in the sleep position, trying to practise what the day-warden refers to as The Catatonic Activities Which Constitute My Life, his rudeness is due in part to his ignorance of my ability to ●. I can't blame him, until only recently, I too was ignorant of the ●). I wanted to sleep, but the day warden had removed the shutters from the window and left it open. I was not ready for this. And every time the window blew open in the wind there was the noise of people shouting and fighting from the street.

I awoke in darkness and shuddered to see the window still open. I felt relief to be again in the company of Gladys Fish's foot to my right, and I fingered my pin under the covers. The voices from the window were softer, lulling, chanting something over and over. I need this comfort. All I have written tonight has had the worm's live presence between the hand and page. If I cried, I would. But I will end instead to stare at the opposite curtain and lose myself in the ●.

4

Long day ended. But I have not been alone, I have been with Gladys Fish's foot, and I have the worm with me. I am becoming fond of it and I find myself stroking the palm of the hand when it grows restless; sticking my pin in it when it seems to sleep. I even sang to the worm in the afternoon though not aloud, I ●-ed the song out.

5

Things are changing. Since the worm awoke I am on the toes to keep up with all the changes. I begin to think perhaps the worm was always awake and that I just moved too slowly to feel it. Now, gradually, day by day, the worm and I become synchronised; we begin to share the same time.

I have been having a recurring dream, though it might be the chanting voices from outside. These words repeat over and over:

The inflatable scream, popped, unplugged
In the hand I hold a promise

The voice(s) repeating the words is/are unfamiliar I have wondered too if it is the voice(s) of the night-warden whispering in the ear while I sleep, doing an impression of my voice. He said these words in my voice only the other day, though when I interrogated him, he said that I repeat them in my sleep so much that they are ingrained in his mind. He said my talking disturbs both he and the others and that I should spend more day time out of bed. So he had a word with the day-warden who provided a chair across the room at the window for the afternoons. The day-warden was also irritated. He said he was tired of my questions about the voices outside the window. He said nobody comes into the courtyard, that it remains locked at all times of the day and night. I didn't argue, I am not responsible for his hearing.

6

I know I will not be released while I have the worm in the right hand, so I have been thinking of escape. I feel responsible for the liberation of the worm.

Using my pin when the day-warden doesn't look, I am making a small hole in the window from the chair in the afternoon. The glass itself, I realise, is not clear or open enough. By using the pin to dig a hole in it I think I can make

contact with the outside voices. Already if I press the cheek to the window, one eye close to the hole so far, the other closed, I can see into the world through a telescope. The colour of the world through there is different to its glass masked hue. And there is something else. The pressure of the image behind the glass begins to seep through the hole and into the ward – or is it the pressure of the ward that gets sucked outwards? Choose whichever, there is a sense of something seeping. An escape of sorts. The foot of Gladys Fish via the opposite curtain indicates nothing different in the ● .

7

I am a fool. I can not make a hole in the glass big enough to escape through; a hole of that size would be seen by the wardens immediately. But I have not forgotten my pledge to the worm. I have two options. I can make a hole in the glass big enough for the worm to wriggle through, though that means I will first have to remove it from the hand. Though fond of the worm, I am appalled at the thought of it on the outside. With no face. My other option is to kill the worm with the pin. That way I could continue as though nothing had ever changed.

It will take me some time to weigh up the options.[57]

[57] A series of diary entries written by Geldo while incarcerated.

Appendix 1 fifteen months of unconscious mental activity

fifteen months of unconscious mental activity[1]

1-2 December 2000

I was eating my own right ear. Its texture and taste was soft and cold, like sweet uncooked pastry. I reassured myself as I ate that it was ok to do this, that my ear would grow back, but at the same time I was troubled by a memory of eating the ear once before and its never having properly grown back again.

12-13 December 2000

I was lying in a bed and I could see the covers lifting up above my abdomen. I looked under the covers and there was a metal protrusion, 40 c.m. long by 0.75 c.m. side, sticking out from inside my stomach, but not yet piercing through the surface of my skin. It had a sharp spike at the end so it was only a matter of time before it pierced my skin and was exposed. It was moving on its own and I had to get to a hospital to show the doctors so they would believe me. There was a sudden contraction of my stomach and the protrusion disappeared. Later, I tried to show it to Christian, but as there was no longer any evidence, he found it hard to believe, though a tiny sharp spike, no bigger than he end of a pin, could still be felt beneath my skin, just below my naval.

13-14 December 2000

I was transferring brightly coloured fish from a tank to a bathroom sink when they started to break in half in my hands, like glass. The words:

Walking around among the broken animals

were going round and round in my head.

17-18 December 2000

I was in a scientific laboratory with a middle-aged female nurse and a young male Chinese doctor. He was showing the nurse how to inject a partially skinned but still live chicken in the anus with a drug that would paralyse it. Suddenly he grabbed the syringe from her hand, turned towards me, and jabbed it into my stomach, just above my naval. I was becoming paralysed but kept fighting it and shouting at him that I believed in God and that if he killed me I would come back to haunt him forever. He was unafraid, so I started screaming loudly, hoping to draw attention to the situation. An old couple came into the laboratory, wearing summer khakis, looking bemused. They wouldn't help me, but they left the door open so I escaped outside into the courtyard which was square, surrounded with large old hospital buildings with a grassy area in the centre. My mouth was becoming paralysed but I kept stopping people to tell them, 'in 2 minutes I'll be dead, I'll be dead!' No-one believed me

[1] My dreams during the months spent writing up the thesis. All dreams took place in my bed at Maydew House unless otherwise noted.

and walked away looking embarrassed after I approached them. As my mouth became increasingly paralysed I cried out, 'soon I won't be able to speak!'

8-9 February 2001

I was at a large 'amusement park' with my mother and brother, Tim. I'd messed up or failed to enjoy other rides and events prior to this point, so we were entering a virtual reality game set in a vast safari park with wild animals running loose all around. They were virtual animals and we were to fire at them with special guns if they charged towards us or tried to attack us. A leopard began running towards me and I knew it was a real leopard. I shouted to my mother and Tim, 'I'm dead, I'm dead, I'm dead, I'm dead, I'm dead!' as this might exclude me from the game. They turned to look at me, laughing, telling me how 'daft' I was. The leopard reached me, stopped abruptly, sat down by my right side and started to chew its way, slowly, smilingly, up my right arm. Although I was screaming, my mother and Tim thought it was part of the game and remained watching me and laughing.

4-5 February 2001

I was outside a tavern, by a forest, about to give a baby I had been looking after back to a friend, its mother, inside the tavern. It was night time and I was in the 17th century in terms of the way the world looked. I was cold and hesitant. Then I felt warm arms close around me from behind. Although I couldn't see her, I knew these arms belonged to Madonna, I was surprised to feel her in such an out of the way place. I went inside the tavern, the baby disappeared, and I told my friend I had just been embraced by Madonna. Everything went quiet and my friend looked me in the eye, and said, 'you can't have been. Madonna poisoned herself and died earlier on today. Everyone has been talking about it.' Then everyone in the tavern disappeared and a small, elderly woman approached me. She said, 'would you like to come and see our theatre production? it's just about to start.' She led me out into a courtyard, entirely enclosed within high walls. 10 costumed figures stood at random within the space, each involved in acting out a part of a play. Some of the words they spoke I recognised, but most sounded foreign. The actors ignored each other. Every now and then, a vivid white light would pick out one of the actors and they would dissolve into it, emerging again a few seconds later in another part of the courtyard, where they would begin their role again. It was a dazzling spectacle. Sometimes the actors would leap up and float in the air or swoop and fly around the courtyard. I asked the woman if I could return with my video camera. She smiled and said, 'no. The actors don't like to be recorded, this is their private space.' I asked if I could return again; she smiled, touched my arm and said, 'don't you know what this performance is?'[2]

9-10 February 2001

I was in a forest, lying face down on a sleeping bag made of shiny dark blue material and slightly quilted. I was surrounded by fleshy insects. They were spinning webs and making nests around me and I was becoming enclosed. An insect made of tiny pink fingers, began to attack a smaller insect and I decided to move. I lifted myself up from the sleeping bag and

[2] The text of this dream is featured in the video, 'Madonna,' June 2001.

felt the webs ripping away from me and insects begin to crawl all over me. As the webs ripped, limbs also ripped off the insects, who, crippled, still kept trying to limp forwards, their broken limbs bleeding. As I felt my left ear begin to fill up with insects, I started to slap it with my hand, saying 'get out,' 'get out!'[3]

night of 12-13 February 2001

I was in a hospital where doctors were trying to repair a faulty nerve in my stomach, but they were treating it via my genitals. A nurse opened a soft plastic pack and it contained a sanitary-towel shaped bag of blood. If I remained in bed with it pressed onto my genitals, it would heal me from the outside in. The bag generated an unbearable heat between my legs.

14-15 February 2001

I arrived at a park too early in the morning. It had a zoo and some of the animals were out as they liked to sleep out of their cages when there were no visitors. I passed two lions fighting viciously, and accidentally brushed against a black panther with my right leg, who then turned and roared at me.

15-16 February 2001

I had shit all over my hands and my mother was preparing French toast. Not wanting her to see the shit, I rubbed it onto the edge of one of the slices. She was watching me, so I began to eat it. As I ate, I glanced up at her to see if she realised what I was doing, but she remained standing, staring at me, her expression blank.

30-31 March 2001

Christian and I were on a grassy bank, plagued by swarms of large fat brown flies. I had excruciating pains in my right shin, and fell to the ground on my back. Christian rolled up my trouser leg and saw that the flies were coming from a wound in my right shin. They emerged in spasms, then disappeared after flying around our heads. We remained on the ground, watching my leg, until the flies became made of shiny chrome. They were beautiful, but alien.

I was in a large house with my mother and Tim and some other people. My mother had a small Chihuahua with a patterned porcelain bowl growing into its back, turned upwards like a basket. The dog wanted to make friends with me, to communicate with me – it nuzzled its soft nose against my hand and was trying to prance around with elegance, despite the bowl. I looked at my mother and said, 'you're not going to like what I'm going to ask you,' and she looked back at me and I thought, 'she thinks I'm going to ask her about something other than the dog.' But she said, 'don't worry, its kidneys are still in its body, below the bowl.'

[3] The text from this dream features in the video 'Gloomy Sunday,' December 2001.

I was walking through a muddy field with my mother and Tim while they quizzed me on what I was going to do with my life. My mother suggested I go to stay at the Muirs'[4] house as they were away for a while and it would give me time to think. I found myself outside the Muirs' house. It was a large, old house, with decrepit wooden window and door frames – the archetypal 'haunted house' from an American horror movie. I didn't have a key to get in so I peered through the downstairs front bay window. There was a large wooden chest standing on its end with a monkey climbing mechanically up and down it on a small ladder. A cat's face kept appearing suddenly at the window on my right. Everything was unreal and automated. I thought , 'I must go and get my video camera,' but then I realised these were already projections, and that, as such, they wouldn't show up on film.

8-9 April 2001

I was on the top floor of a large department store with Christian. There was a 'game' one could go into which was being promoted as scary but fun, though all you could see from the outside was the doorway and a passage leading down a dark corridor. I was afraid, so Christian went in on his own. I knew already that this wasn't a game and that the men I could see lurking in there in the shadowy corners were dangerous and violent; demons disguised in ordinary clothes and bodies. I had a memory of myself being in there some time before, and a man coming up behind me and shouting something in my ear. He had then dragged me to the roof of the building and dangled me by my feet over a high balcony. As I peered, now, into the corridor, hoping to see signs of Christian returning, the men in the shadows kept appearing and disappearing. I knew I had to escape from the building but I was worried about leaving Christian there.

Christian and I were in a small, shallow wooden boat which was self-propelling. It was night-time, the sky was heavy and dark, and the boat was taking us on a journey through ancient Egypt. We sailed past huge buildings and intricate monuments painted in vivid, sometimes gaudy colours. We were both overwhelmed by the visual experience. I kept trying to take photographs but everything was moving by too quickly for me to break away from it for long enough to take a picture. We began to near a huge ruin from above it and we could see that behind its main front wall there were thousands of grave stones piled up one on top of the other chaotically. Surprisingly, they were modern day grave stones, made out of white marble. As we sailed down past the side of the ruin, I knew something terrible awaited us on the other side. We rounded the corner and there was nothing ahead of us but dark water, swirling with huge fat snakes and crocodiles. Christian was travelling in the boat with his back towards this sight, so he didn't see it at first, then a crocodile's head slid lazily over the right side of the boat and took my right hand in its mouth. It began to chew, slowly, my fingers and then began to make its way up my arm. I was terrified but could do nothing as I was afraid the boat would capsize if I struggled. Christian stared at me with a dazed expression.

11-12 April 2001

[4] The Muirs were old family friends of ours. The mother, Pat, was very funny and had an incredible laugh. The father, Frank, was a Yugoslavian refugee who changed his name like my father when he was a refugee. There were two daughters, Jane and Katherine, and there had been a son Paul, who drowned in a river in Yugoslavia when I was around 10. I have feared water ever since.

I was in the back of a car when I felt something choking me at the back of my throat. I tried to ignore it, then when the people in the front seats of the car weren't looking, I put my hand to the back of my throat and pulled out a long worm. I felt relief the moment it was out. It was red and wasn't properly formed. Then I was on my bed in my childhood bedroom at Frederick Rd.[5] and worms were pouring out of my mouth. I realised that from this point on there was no going back, that everyone would Know. Other creatures began to emerge from my mouth, one of them a very small (around 3c.m. across its back), semi-transparent crab. It was running around on the bed, quickly and jerkily like a spider, so I made it walk onto a closed book and shook it off onto the floor. When it landed, it turned into a tiny man and I said to him 'go away somewhere else!' He shrugged his shoulders as if to say 'where?' Then he clicked his fingers as though he'd had an idea and grew to just larger than life size. He was sandy-haired and was wearing a beige tunic and trousers. He told me his name was Isskalmov.

13-14 April 2001

I was in a hospital waiting room and a dangerous man was threatening me. He had a shard of glass and kept slashing me with it. Sometimes too he would slash himself.

16-17 April 2001

I was travelling on a large square train and was being shown a projected film about the most 'cute' animal anyone had ever used in a film. It was small and black and furry with huge round bush-baby eyes. I was swapping roles between watching the film and being an actor in it. In the film I was to look after the animal as no-one else was able to make friends with it. It liked to cling onto my right nipple with its teeth as we walked around together, and if anyone else went to touch it, or I tried to put it on the ground, it would turn into a screeching monster. I was 'flirting' with it, saying, 'I'll keep you here, close to my heart.' But I knew that it knew I was lying.

29-30 April 2001

My father and I wore glittery silver knee-length boots which allowed us to pass between this life and the next.

13-14 May 2001

I was in the kitchen at Frederick Rd., which was filled with water which went up as high as my hips. The water was completely clear but I knew it was water as it was more dense to move through than air. I was shouting out 'Dad! Dad!' Then I found myself in the front room, my father's study, the flood had subsided, though everything was still wet. I was sitting on a small sofa beneath the bay window in between my mother and father. A metal frame was gradually swinging downwards from the ceiling towards my lap. I could see that

[5] I lived in this house, no. 2, the first house on the right hand side of the street, between the ages of 4 and 17. It was in a quiet suburb of Birmingham, with lots of trees, Sutton Coldfield.

it was electrocuted and that if I touched it I would get a shock as I was wet. I was pleading with my mother to move so that I could get out of its way.

17-18 May 2001

I was walking with my grandmother, Ruth, through a Roman street filled with ancient buildings. We passed one particularly striking building outside which there were men and women standing by columns in bright coloured costumes, with tall red glass head-dresses. They were singing, a long beautiful chant, standing absolutely still and looking upwards. The other people we were with carried on walking, so my grandmother and I started walking backwards to continue to watch the spectacle. Later, I was with my grandmother and Christian in a garden I don't recognise, and she was showing he and I some photograph albums filled with pictures of me taken from when I was a baby up until I was 12 years old. She opened a page onto one photograph which depicted me in the same garden we were sitting in now. I appeared in the photograph twice; both figures had their backs towards the camera and were wearing different clothes. One of the figures was fleeing, running away toward the garden fence, and the other was chasing her, reaching out to grab her right ankle and pull her to the ground. I said to my grandmother, 'I remember this. I remember this so well.' Then the two me's in the photograph appeared in the garden in front of us and we watched as one tried to run away and the other to chase her and pull her to the grass by grabbing her right ankle. They were both insubstantial, partly transparent. Later still, a photograph of me aged 8 came to life and Christian was talking to it. I was silently begging him not to, as the girl had an evil presence. She had gaping black teeth and a dreadful smile.

18-19 May 2001

Lis Rhodes was giving a presentation in a college classroom with no windows and 6 or 7 students, none of whom I recognised. First she showed slides of some old photographic work of hers in which she was acting, very uncharacteristically, as though she were a kind of 'high class hooker;' red lips, high heels, brash gold jewellery, a skimpy black evening dress and fur coat. She wore her hair piled up on top of her head in a big ponytail which spilled down over her head, exotically, like a fountain. The photographs captured her in different places; in the back of a black cab with a blonde woman, at a cocktail bar with a man in an evening suit and standing under the coloured lights of a New York street. In all the photographs she had an absent look on her face, but was looking straight into the camera. After showing the slides, she switched the projector off and announced that she was going to begin a performance. She dragged out a table and chair from behind where I was sitting. The table and chair were joined together, small, like an old-fashioned school desk and chair, and were made of soft, padded, patterned cloth. She placed it so that it was side on to the audience. She had her hair in the same high ponytail as in the photographs. She sat down at the desk and was making out that she was trying to write something on a piece of paper on the desk, but she kept saying in an ironic spoilt little girl's voice, 'oh I can't write, my hair is casting a shadow over the paper – oh, what should I do?' So I said in the same voice, 'why don't you just cut it all off?' I meant this comment to enter into the spirit of things, but Lis stopped abruptly, her expression changed to anger, and she came over to me and said 'why did you say that? Why have you spoiled everything?' I felt deeply ashamed.

25-26 May 2001 (Shoshana's, Safad, Israel)

Christian and I were looking out of a high window over a city in which coaches were being blown up, flying through the air in slow motion. I said to Christian, 'so this is our new landscape.' A bus fell onto the street below, hitting a post on its way. I saw the driver fall out onto the ground. He was smiling, but terrified. As I watched his face, another car approached him and drove straight over his head which exploded under the wheel into a flash of white light. I started screaming to Christian, 'I hate seeing that! I hate seeing that!'

30-31 May 2001

Christian and I were staying in a hotel where dreadful things had been happening to us. It was dark everywhere and there was a bad atmosphere, so we decided to go for a swim in the hotel swimming pool. We were the only people in the pool and I noticed syringes filled with blood floating on the surface of the water, close to us. I shouted to Christian not to prick himself on them. Then I saw the naked body of a dead man, floating face down in the pool. I said to Christian, 'this is a death. We must report it.' The situation changed and the people from the hotel thought the body of the man had been found in our hotel room. The police interviewed us to find out what had happened to him. Later still, Christian and I went for a walk in an underground cave and I knew that he knew what had happened to the man. He didn't want to tell me as he said it would upset me. The man had hung his two young children from pieces of wire by their necks outside our hotel room window, then had killed himself in our room by attaching a strip of electrocuted wire across the window and holding onto it with wet hands. As Christian told me, he began disappearing into the cave and the walls started to fall down on me. I couldn't make a sound, and shrank down on my knees to the floor.

7-8 June 2001

I was in a foreign café with Christian, Aura and an older female friend of Aura's who I don't recognise. The tables in the café, covered in a dark red shiny p.v.c., were round and the chairs formed a circle around them. Aura and her friend were dining naked and were sitting in a different red circle to Christian and I. I remember thinking it was foolish of them to eat with no clothes on, and I found the idea of eating while being able to see one's own flesh unsettling. Christian was embarrassed and wouldn't look at them. Aura was facing us and her breasts had disappeared as though tucked underneath her arms. Then I found myself with Phoebe at a different table on the other side of the room. It seemed we'd left the café and come back to find that someone else was eating our meal. She said to me, 'that's what happens when you leave food on the table in a place like this, people just help themselves.' I became angry and said something rude to the waiter. I turned to Phoebe and said, 'do you ever find yourself becoming openly angry? I'm finding I can do it more and more easily.' She looked embarrassed and didn't reply and I wished I hadn't shouted.

20-21 June 2001

Christian and I were staying overnight at Frederick Rd. We decided to sleep in my mother's bed as it was the only double bed in the house. After we had fallen asleep, she arrived home unexpectedly and got into her bed, not noticing us, so we thought we'd sleep somewhere

else. I went to look in my / my father's bedroom at the front of the house, though Christian kept telling me not to go in there. It hadn't been touched since the last time my father slept in it, there were dirty cups and glasses strewn around on the floor. Bright sunlight kept filling the room, but it was ominous rather than beautiful.

I had a plastic 3D model of a human head on my hand which I was making Aura kiss passionately. I stood watching with my own head very close to the two kissing heads, saying to myself how strange it was to be such a voyeur.

22-23 June 2001 (hotel in Tel Aviv)

Francis Duckworth[6] had splints and bandages on her feet, and her legs and feet were sore and bleeding.

I was angry with Christian for reading too much when I had a puzzle to solve. We were in a strange house where the doorway was sliding and one had to pass through a wooden slatted space on one's belly to enter. I'd taken the slats apart, painted them white and put them back together so that they were now too small to get through. Sometimes I found myself escaping into or out of buildings through windows that were almost closed. The window ledges were covered in snow which got into my clothes and made me icy cold.

1-2 July 2001 (1st night home from Israel)

I had to look after a man who was dying. He had been a famous poet and was now in his 40's. He was in bed and I had to give him medicine. Occasionally he would get very upset and hysterical and I was the only one who could calm him down.

5-6 July 2001

I was carrying small bottles of Pepsi Max around *in* my legs, underneath the skin, in long metal containers.

10-11 July 2001

I was in a hospital with Christian, somewhere in America, though one of the nurses referred to it as Jamaica. I had two small hard red lumps on the middle finger of each hand, just above the nail. I was begging the doctors to 'get it out.' They said they would cut off the end of my fingers and draw 'it' out from the tip. Starting with my right hand, they cut off the end of my finger which was boneless, just a small skin passage. Then they took tweezers and drew out a creature which was half fish and half amoeba. It expanded as it was drawn out, becoming fat and puffy. I felt enormous relief. They decided to leave the other finger for

[6] Frances is the first memory of a friend I have from school. She had a broken leg when we were around 5 years old and I always remember her as someone fragile and vulnerable. She was tiny and only ever took a size 2 in shoes, though she was the first among us to wear a bra. I subsequently went on to reject her in a way I now regret. After school we were friends again briefly until she married a middle-aged policeman, had 2 children, and we lost touch.

now, in case of shock, and loosely closed the flap of skin of the finger they'd operated on, over itself like an envelope. We didn't have any money, so as we were about to leave I reminded them that we didn't have to pay until they'd done the finger on the left hand. The man at the reception desk took my left hand in his hands and just squeezed the lump on the middle finger, and another of the same creatures squeezed out. Someone put them both in a clear plastic bag. They were still alive. They looked as though they would smell bad.

14-15 July 2001

Aura and I were at her mother's house in Jerusalem. Aura's mother was packing up her things with two very camp gay men who were going to rent the place after she left. Aura and I went for a walk in the grounds, which were like Sutton Park. I had animal shit in my mouth which I couldn't get rid of. I kept spitting bits of it out when no-one was looking, or wiping it on my sleeve. Aura and I found ourselves under a brick-built bridge with a group of people with books and candles who tried to pretend they knew Aura. She kept saying 'no that's not me' and urging me to come away. As we walked away one of the women followed us and told us that no matter how much we tried to deny that we were Jewish it would catch up with us in the end. We went back into Aura's mother's house and I was trying to find a bathroom to wash out the shit from my mouth, but two friends of Aura's from school were there. They were supposed to be taking photographs of the house, but instead they had got a group of small children naked in the bathroom and were taking photographs of them. They looked very guilty when I caught them. I managed to spit out some more of the shit from my mouth and when it landed on the floor it was a watery green colour.

Christian and I were leaving a hospital and a large, 7 c.m. long, chunky, turquoise-backed, hard-shelled beetle was following us. Then it was running around swiftly on the bed in the flat. I was terrified and kept saying to Christian 'we have to get it out of here.' Then it started running around on the floor of the lounge and I was having to jump up and down and leap around in order to avoid it running over my feet.

15-16 July 2001

There was a beautiful navy blue cat with short-cropped shiny fur. It was a stray cat, living in a small park to which I kept returning day after day in order to see it again.

17-18 July 2001

Christian and I were in a street of modern, faceless houses. It was a wide street and on the other side of the road to us, two policemen were hanging around the front door of one of the houses. Then they bashed the door in with their shoulders and a group of children came out, aged between 3 and 9. The policemen started surrounding them as if to protect them like bodyguards, but they did this violently; throwing the children onto the lawn in front of the house and lying on top of them, and at one point surrounding them and pushing them against the large front window of the house. Christian told me that these children had been being held hostage in the house by their father. I shouted to the policemen that they shouldn't hold the children against the window as the father would see them and shoot them through the glass. Later, the policemen and children gone, Christian and I lay on our backs in our underwear on the front lawn of the house, waiting to see what would happen. I was afraid,

sure the father would come out and shoot us – we could see glimpses of him every now and then through the window or the open front door – a foot disappearing up the stairs, or a shadow in the lounge. I told Christian I thought we should leave and he got up and walked off, but I found I couldn't move and began trying to crawl away on my stomach. I got to the middle of the street and the father of the house came crawling out, also on his stomach, towards me. He had a gun. As he got closer I was mesmerised by his face which was young, more the face of a woman than a man, with high cheek bones, clear pale skin, and short blonde cropped hair. But he also looked alien and had a cold expression. His left eye was half closed and was a pale, milky, pinkish-white colour. He told me he had to take me back into the house and I said 'I don't want to hurt you.' 'You can't hurt me,' he replied. 'You're beautiful' I said.

20-21 July 2001

Aura and I were going to be in a street parade, riding on two white horses. We were naked except for our elaborate head-dresses, jewellery, make-up and shoes. Aura was dressed in something Turkish with a huge feather in her hair, and I was dressed as an alien with a glowing green choker necklace.

22-23 July 2001

In Israel. Aura, Andrew and I were staying together in a large, old, rambling house with no windows. Despite its bland interior it felt charged with evil. One morning I was supposed to travel with Aura and her mother (who appeared there suddenly) to stay with some of their relatives. Aura's mother was panicking that we might not be ready to leave at exactly 12.30 p.m. When we were in the car driving away I realised I'd left my suitcase in the house, which had all my belongings in it. Aura's mother refused to go back for it, so I took a long bus journey alone back to the house. Andrew was still there for the Sabbath so I decided to stay there with him. He showed me a growth he had on his right hand which was in a small bird's egg shape, tucked under the skin, orange and pussy. I told him he ought to get it seen to, so he called in a nurse. By the time she came it had grown enormous, his whole hand had turned into a huge red bag of skin filled with blood. The nurse looked at it and didn't know what to do, though Andrew was unsettlingly calm about it. Uriel and Mole had appeared and were looking at Andrew's hand with horror.

24-25 July 2001

Christian and I were in a foreign country, perhaps China. We were in a hospice / zoo; a concrete building with no windows or carpet. There was a long conveyer belt running along one wall which was carrying beautiful, exotic cats and dogs in glass cages. I thought, 'how can they send these wonderful animals to be killed?' We were being shown around the place by some voluntary attendants from 'overseas' who wore grey cotton uniforms. The place was home / hospital to a group of people who were suffering from an illness which made them become very seriously physically deformed. One man we met had his left eye missing completely and his right eye was a tiny pinhole in the skin of his face, where his eye should have been. Some of the 'inmates' began doing short performances for us. One man who had a normal sized head, but a body of only 60 c.m. tall, started singing while standing before us on a small square white podium. As he sang, his body began to dissolve into a gooey clear

liquid which was at the same time emanating from him. Eventually he melted down into just his head, floating on the top of the liquid, staring at the ceiling, but still singing, oblivious to what had happened to him. Later, outside, I began to speak to a young woman who was also physically deformed – she had no neck and she had to keep gathering her skin up in handfuls and lifting it as it hung down heavily, causing her terrible pain. She was wearing a very simple plain white cotton gown with no sleeves. I put my arms around her and began to cry, but felt very guilty about crying as she was being so brave. I didn't want her to see I was crying, but she pulled my head back and saw. I tried to say sorry to her for crying, but I couldn't get the words out as I was crying so much. I woke up crying.

27-28 July 2001

I was in a small room with a tiny Chihuahua dog about 15 c.m. long and 10 c.m. tall and very thin. It had no fur and was a pale pink colour. It could fly, like an insect, it had wings which moved so quickly you couldn't see them, and it made a deep buzzing noise as it flew. It wanted my attention and kept flying and butting up against my head, then my ears – it seemed to want to get into my right ear. I kept batting it away, annoyed. Eventually it gave up and sat on the ground opposite me, looking troubled and pleading for my attention. It began to 'clean' its right leg, but it was gnawing at it, stopping every now and then to look up at me. I wanted to tell it to stop but was paralysed. The leg it was gnawing then broke off and fell on the ground, most of its small bone exposed. The little dog looked awful, but remained sitting, now leaning its weight on the leg which remained. I could now move forwards, but instead of comforting the dog I was angry with it, and I picked up the little leg and shoved it really hard into my right ear. I felt pain in my head, and the dog looked at me with a tragically sad expression, tears beginning to fill its large staring eyes.

28-29 July 2001

There was a dead body on the top floor of a multi-storey car park. It was the body of a naked man, lying in a huge pool of blood. Christian and I were next to it, and I had a carving knife and I began cutting off slices of the body's flesh for Christian and I to cook and eat. I said, 'I can't believe how tough human flesh is, I don't know what it will taste like.'

29-30 July 2001

The telephone was lying on the pillow next to Christian and I could hear my mother's voice coming from it faintly.

30 July–1 August 2001

I was in a small room, with a double bed in the middle of the floor. I had my video camera and was the room and speaking into the camera. I videoed the wardrobe in the corner and said 'this is where Tim and I, as children, used to keep all our toys,' though I knew it was not the same wardrobe. The door to the room, in the far right corner from where I sat on the bed, opened slightly and my mother peeked in. I immediately turned the video camera round onto her and she came into the room. While I was filming her, she started to suck my toes. Later, she and I were crossing a field to get to a passage which ran out from the edge of a

concrete wall. As we neared the wall, a line of cows came out of the passageway and into the field. We could hear a bellowing sound and we knew that there was a bull amongst the cows. The bull came out of the passage and looked straight at us. It was pale beige with only one large round eye in the middle of its forehead. It had very fine, sharp, metallic grey horns. We stood frozen by the wall and the bull crossed to the other side of the field in the corner and we knew it was going to charge diagonally across the field at us. I was on the left, my mother on the right and the bull went straight for her, piercing her just below her rib cage with its horn and lifting her off the ground, then dropping her. It backed off then to the corner and prepared to charge at me. My mother was standing and moaning really loudly, in terrible pain. As the bull began to charge toward me I leapt behind her back thinking, 'it's got her once, it might as well get her again,' as though I were sacrificing her. Then the bull suddenly disappeared.

2-3 August 2001

Aura and Christian were extracting grubs from my fingers with silver tweezers. It hurt when they pulled them out and my fingers were starting to sag. I was worried they were accidentally extracting my veins.

3-4 August 2001

I was in a huge, open-plan building like the sales floor in a furniture warehouse, with little nooks here and there where people could sleep, or there was a bathroom, or a lounge area. Everything there was plush and expensive. I was staying there with Aura and some other young women I don't recognise. I had the feeling I shouldn't be there and that they were suspicious of me. Then it was early morning and one of the women was having nightmares in her bedroom space. I was in the space next to her which was a bathroom, though I couldn't get the hot water to come out of the tap. I could hear her breathing and whimpering so I started to peep towards where she was sleeping as I wanted to see what she looked like, but she must have sensed this as she peered at me over the top of a curtain almost immediately. She walked out then, nonchalantly, from behind the curtain wearing a patterned bikini. I was wearing a large, thick, dark blue towelling dressing gown tied with its belt just under my breasts and looked and felt uncomfortable. Some of the women commented on this later as we walked outside in search of something to drink and to find the aquarium we wanted to visit. I told them it was my brother's dressing gown, though I was lying. Later, in the early evening a group of us were on a beach and 10 young Arabic men were on a tiny island just out from the edge of the beach, throwing bombs at some cars on the island and laughing. There were continually small bursts of flame and the sound of explosions. There were policemen in cars on the island too, dressed in English police uniform. The young men vanished and the policemen started to back off the island in their cars and I shouted to Aura, who was standing by the sea watching the event, to get out of the way as I knew the bombs would get more dangerous. We sat down by a wall to watch as the cars on the island all burst into violent flames. I kept wishing I'd brought a camera, though I knew that I would never be able to capture it. On our right were a group of elderly men dressed in swimming trunks. They were all ex-actors and some of them I vaguely recognised. Aura said one of them was Klaus Kinski, but I told her it couldn't be as he was dead. I noticed out of the corner of my eye 3 very small black children, dressed in odd ethnic costumes with their hair in wild dreadlock styles, carrying spears, emerge from the shadow of the wall and disappear into the sea.

14-15 August 2001

Christian and I were in a house, and I was ill in my head; I couldn't think straight and was in pain. Christian was worried, so got me to lie on a bed and Professor Craig came to see me. I don't remember what happened with Craig, but he was sitting on our rocking chair in the left corner of the room and then Dr. Hodgkiss came. Hodgkiss was also worried and went to try to find something to help me. When he was gone, I noticed that the room we were in was his office. The wall on the right was covered with pictures he'd stuck onto it, but one of them was flapping upwards in a breeze and underneath it I could see a photograph of me in a man's suit. I became worried that Hodgkiss was obsessed with me. When Hodgkiss came back, he said he hadn't been able to do the thing he was trying to do, but could he give me a photograph of himself and his favourite band. He offered to sign it for me. I wasn't at all interested and couldn't see the point so just replied 'well, if you really want to ...' I noticed Craig in the corner of the room watching my reaction intently. When Hodgkiss handed me the photograph, he hadn't just signed it, but had written a message on it which I can't remember. Later, Christian and I left the building and walked outside where he saw someone he knew and went to talk to them. I just sat down on the floor where as my head was still very painful. Craig was videoing everything with a small video camera.

15-16 August 2001

I was possessed by an awful evil demon, gibbering and shouting and drooling, unable to think or move properly. Christian found me like this in a vast, complex building. As I couldn't walk, he carried me. He was disturbed by the state I was in and now and then I would break out into a fresh burst of gabbling and bite his right cheek. Later, I was in a single bed in the dark in a large room. My mother was in another single bed across the other side of the room. The atmosphere and sense of fate, evil and hopelessness was suffocating. My mother was telling me very frightening things but I couldn't tell if they were related to the past or the future; memories or premonitions. She was cold and nonchalant. Malevolent. She told me that Frances Duckworth had poured petrol over herself in a park and set fire to herself. She also told me that I died when I was 31, I was 'boxed in the ears' as I lay in bed. I was terrified and desperate for someone to come and rescue me, so I started flicking the light switch on and off really quickly to alert someone's attention.[7]

20-21 August 2001

I was in a t.v. 'survival' game, which wasn't really a game. It was set in a house with a group of other people. Every day one of the people was to be killed by another, usually stabbed. It got to the point where there were only 3 of us left. So I decided to try to hide all the knives, but one of the others, a young guy, caught me doing that and took the knife off me and started lunging at me with it. Then the dream flipped and I was with an older man who was reading a small slip of paper which said on it, 'one dies in dark, one in light,' and he was treating the whole situation in the house as a mysterious real event. He said that meant that one person was stabbed when the sun went down, one when it rose.

[7] The text of this dream is featured in the video, 'Gloomy Sunday,' December 2001.

24-25 August 2001

I was in a warehouse-like artists' studio building. My room was huge with plain white walls and nothing in it. I seemed to spend a lot of time skating round on the floor in my bare feet, which I was able to do without any real physical effort. The people passing and watching me skate round and round in circles thought I was disturbed. Suddenly the floor started to fill up with a very pale pink transparent fluid which rose up to my ankles. Someone shouted out that it was a highly dangerous acid that had been spilt in another studio. I could feel the skin of my feet burning so I hung onto some pipes on the wall and pulled my feet up out of the acid. As I was hanging there, three other female artists came in and one of them said, 'what scares you?' I found it hard to answer her, so I said, 'deadlines,' and 'having to do something I don't want to.' But the two artists in the background kept interrupting and talking over the top of me, so I added, in a loud voice, 'people talking over the top of me and acting as if I'm invisible.' As I said this, I thrust my face right into one of the other women's faces, but she continued to ignore me, as if I were not there. Later, Aura and I entered another building in the studio complex, which was situated in an enormous park with horned cows grazing on the grass outside. Inside this building, which was also large and empty, there was a small wooden box on one of the walls and in it we watched a puppet show. Then two men who were also puppets came to join us. They were life-size, middle-aged, wearing suits. Both were very ugly, but Aura and I were fascinated at how life-like they were. We touched their skin and it was like human skin but colder and dryer, perhaps like a recently dead person might feel. They started flirting with us in a horrible way and trying to kiss us. I put two fingers in the mouth of one of them and it was hot and moist, like a vagina. They disappeared and we were joined by other people, including Norman and his ex-wife who seemed to be having an argument. Aura started talking to a woman who was a hypnotist and this upset me so I left the building and took a cab back to my building with Norman's ex-wife and another woman. I sat in the front and they in the back. Norman's ex-wife was jealous that he was so affectionate with his students and she said he'd treated her terribly since she had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. I closed my eyes and started to cry silently. One of the women in the back reached forwards and touched my arm. I waved my hand for her to leave me alone and I got out of the cab.

2-3 September 2001

I was watching (maybe from in the room. Maybe on t.v.) a six year old girl sitting on a bed in a small room. An old, very ugly man was preaching at her, but I can't remember what about. He kept changing into a pig, but not a normal sort of pig, he was smaller and completely wrinkled with dark red, dry, ridged skin. In my head I kept calling him *The Genital Pig*. Then he got smaller still and leaped onto the floor which had appeared to be covered with a furry, bumpy carpet. It now turned out that the carpet was a pile of sleeping dogs, which turned their heads to look at him. He looked over his shoulder, slightly afraid, it was obvious from the way the dogs were licking their lips that they'd like to eat him. But he was arrogant and refused to show the dogs his fear or turn away. Then the girl stood up and everything in the room shrank down to miniature size and started slowly walking out of the door in a procession.[8]

[8] The text of this dream features in the video, 'Gloomy Sunday,' December 2001.

17-18 September 2001

I was on roller skates, racing around everywhere. It felt completely natural. I know this has happened before.

19-20 September 2001

My grandmother, Ruth, shrank and became hardened and solidified like a beetle.

26-27 September 2001

My mother, Tim, and my father were in a room I don't recognise. My mother, Tim and I were watching a small t.v. and my father, on the other side of the room was struggling to move a small brown leather sofa. He was struggling in an odd, unnecessary way, kicking the sofa angrily and throwing it onto the ground. Although we could see him doing this "live," we preferred to watch him on the t.v., although on the t.v. hiss movements appeared more jerky, like a puppet. Then he fell onto the ground, unconscious, shaking uncontrollably. My mother walked over to him and stood above him, turned to Tim and said, 'symptom: shaking.' I went over and crouched on the floor next to my father and said, 'call an ambulance.' My father stopped shaking and came back to consciousness, but he'd solidified, his body contorted as though his bones had warped and calcified. He said he didn't need an ambulance and that he could get up. I told him he couldn't because he was too solid. He started vomiting violently, bringing up heavy green globs. Later, we were at the hospital and I was pushing my father who was strapped into a wheelchair. As we walked into the hospital to find the Accident and Emergency department, I got distracted by a market stall selling bags. Some time passed until I realised I'd forgotten about my father and I rushed back to where we'd last been with him. He wasn't there but as I looked into the distance I could see him in his wheelchair, alone, underneath a single oak tree.[9]

27-28 September 2001

Christian, my mother, Tim and I were driving home from a holiday in Norfolk. My mother and Tim wanted to stop in a village on the way that had a huge market and a fairground. We were all in irritable moods. My mother and Tim wandered off into the village on their own and I said to Christian, 'let's go and find some second-hand books.' We went into a large building which we had to pay money to enter and found ourselves on a 'ride.' We were strapped into a capsule and dropped and dipped through different qualities of air; some were cold and wet, others thick and heavy. I was feeling claustrophobic and I felt as though it would never end, that there was no way out. At one point we were standing in a tank of thick, transparent air while a small orchestra played us a haunting, off-key melody. I made eye contact with the conductor who knew I was afraid. When we got out, we were dirty, dishevelled and wet. We went into another building where they were making eyes for people that one could stick on top of one's eyelids when one's eyes were closed and that made one's eyes look huge and brilliantly coloured, though one couldn't see oneself when the false eyes were stuck on. It cost £5 to have a pair made so we decided to get some. All around us were people blinded by these huge coloured eyes. Christian got his pair and didn't

[9] The text of this dream features in the video, 'Gloomy Sunday,' December 2001.

like them, took them off, and threw them onto the floor. My pair had got lost so we sat down at a table to wait for them. People kept bringing us food which we didn't want. We saw my mother coming in with a tray of food and I said to Christian, 'I don't really want to be here with her.' But she saw us, came over and sat down at the table. She said she couldn't eat as she'd just been on the ride we'd been on and felt nauseous. Christian disappeared, reappearing on the small t.v. on the table which linked to a c.c. t.v. camera outside the building. He was dressed in a suit and was making a political statement about this place. He said, 'so one cannot kill animals here on the 23rd, but it's ok to kill people?' Two uniformed guards took him away. I went outside to look for him and found myself in front of a disused carousel carriage, like an old-fashioned waltzer carriage. It was moving on a small mechanised platform, round and round in squares, and in it was a small naked boy who was catatonic, not moving or responding at all, his eyes closed. I climbed up onto a platform and all along the side behind glass reptile house cases, were old waltzer carriages filled with naked men and boys, all in the same state of catatonia as the first boy. Some of them were crushed into the carriages in awkward positions. I looked behind me and couldn't see how I'd got up there, so had to walk forwards past all the glass containers. Below me the floor was glass too and was filled with exotic birds in cages, squawking and fighting. As I walked on, (the platform was like three sides of a square, horseshoe shape), I came at last to the other end. As I looked down I saw how high up I was, and that a crowd had gathered in the square below, including the orchestra from the ride earlier. There were also newspaper men with cameras and all were watching to see how I was going to get down. A turquoise hat / helmet came down unexpectedly from above me on a string. I knew that if I put it on my head I could float down to the ground so I pulled it onto my head and began to float down. I stopped half way because the people watching wanted to take my photograph, but they wanted me to smile and I couldn't. Every time I tried, they'd raise their cameras, but when I failed, they'd sigh and lower them again. Suddenly I produced the 'right' smile, a ridiculous artificial smile, which surprised me, they all took photographs, and I floated to the ground.

4-5 October 2001

I was keeping small furry animals, a cross between rabbits and cats, in a cage that was too small, but I didn't realise how small it was until I saw how the animals couldn't move when they were in it. They could talk and they told me they were very angry with me.

8-9 October 2001

I was downstairs in the lab and Christian left to go to the gym. He left me with the phone saying, 'next time it rings you pick it up because every time I do it, whoever it is just hangs up.' After he'd left, the phone rang, I picked it up and said 'hello.' On the other end, someone was making an evil sounding chuckle. I didn't want whoever it was to know I was scared so I started laughing loudly into the phone. A male voice said, 'tomorrow morning after I've finished with you, you won't know who or what you are.' I hung up. The next morning as I left the flat and passed the concrete blocks outside the building, a man grabbed me and pushed me into a car. Later, he was cut a + onto the opening of my vagina.

10-11 October 2001

Christian and I were in a bedroom, sitting on the edge of a double bed. He ate a huge meal, though he was feeling very sick, and was drinking a pint of lager. I knew he was feeling sick and was watching him out of the corner of my eye. He reached behind him and got a cardboard hospital-style 'sick bowl' and started vomiting thick reddish-orange blood-like fluid into it.. His whole body was convulsing. I couldn't bear to watch, but was stroking his back. It turned out we were on some kind of holiday with Lisa Prior, my mother, Tim and some people I don't recognise. While we were out in a small village my mother, Tim and Lisa all started vomiting the same fluid as Christian had vomited, against a wall. I couldn't look. Then we were on holiday in America and Aura was with us. We were staying in a village outside Washington, yet it was by the sea and there were enormous waves crashing onto the beach. At one point I was asleep in the room with the double bed Christian and I were sharing and I was having a vivid dream which I started to take photographs, half awake, half asleep, believing that the camera was able to capture the images in my dreams. There were all sorts of problems about our leaving to get our plane home because of the threat of bombs everywhere. I was difficult to pack my things and everyone was waiting for me in a minibus outside. So I came out in a dressing gown to drop off some of the bags, but as soon as I got on the minibus and handed a couple of bags to Christian, the minibus started moving. I felt panick-stricken that most of my things had been left behind in a stranger's home. Then the bus became a small cinema playing a movie for us. Christian settled back and said, 'this is perfect, I'm going to enjoy this journey.' He was still very exhausted from his vomiting. Later, Aura and I, at Washington airport, were confronted with an Afghan woman who was being taken away by the police and she was shaking and weeping and we were sure she was going to be blown up. We went to the airport toilet together to look at the photographs we'd taken of the rooms we'd been staying in in the house, including a morphed one of me and Phoebe asleep together in the double bed. Aura gave me Monkey, but she'd got one eye missing. I was devastated, and said to Aura, 'but where's the other eye?' and she said it was back in the house under the pillow. I was furious that she hadn't told me about it before we left.

19-20 October 2001

I was watching a film about a geeky man who'd got involved with a very beautiful woman. He was making a lot of money from an invention to do with film while a more handsome man, who wanted the woman for himself was trying to cheat the geeky guy out of his money. It went on for ages, the geeky guy getting more and more frustrated at the presence of the handsome man. The most striking thing about the dream were the close-up scenes cut into the film of faces and eyes. Often the face would be bleached out white and one eye red and filled with blood. Sometimes one eye would be damaged, cut and bleeding underneath it. Sometimes the close-up involved a pair of tweezers going into the eye itself. Each time one of these scenes came up, a choirboy voice sang:

Deep and brittle are the eyes!

24-25 October 2001

My father and I were walking along the bottom of a green grassy bank when huge rocks started raining down on us from the top of the hill. Our arms and legs were broken and we couldn't stand.

27-28 October 2001

I was travelling up an escalator with another, smaller woman. A dangerous man was sliding down the metal edge next to the escalator trying to hide a butcher's knife behind his back. When he saw me he said 'you'll do.' Then he was next to me with the knife and he carved his name into my leg. I don't remember his name. When he left me I could feel my vagina was full of something, and as I stood up a cluster of tiny red tomatoes fell out.

1-2 November 2001

Christian and I were attending, each evening, an academic course held in a small classroom with very typical university joined chair/tables. The walls of the room kept changing; sometimes they had cracks in them and sometimes they became transparent and we could see through to what was happening in the space behind and surrounding the room. At one point we could see a room on the other side of the wall, filled with identically dressed people in black suits, white shirts and ties, sitting on the ground in front of a monitor with two piles of photocopies which they were moving in perfect time with each other, from one pile to another. I said to Christian, 'they must be rehearsing for a scene in a film,' and I felt envious of them. For the whole time we were attending the course, there was a voice which kept coming into the room from behind the wall. It was the voice of a robot and one could always tell when it was coming because it would slowly build up from a deep electronic rumble, which shook the room, into speech. It had an antagonistic voice and tried to counter what the man teaching the course was telling us. On the final evening of the course it was particularly antagonistic and I decided to talk back to it, so I went up to the wall and spoke into it, 'you are Mr. Grumpy, aren't you?' Then the wall became transparent and I could see the robot behind it, which was rudimentary in form, with long metal legs, very crudely built, and a long metal arm which it reached out over the top of the wall towards me. I took its 'hand' and held onto it, and it began to pull itself up and over the wall. Then it became a very simple white flat head attached onto the end of the 'arm' I was holding. I held it out to show everyone in the room. Then it shrank down into the form of a tiny red plastic man. As we left the building, Christian said to me, 'wow, that must be an amazing model of a man,' and I said, 'no it's pretty crap,' and showed him the badly made red plastic man.

26-27 November 2001

Very small, sad, Labrador puppies who could speak, were saying to me over and over 'yes, but do you *really* love me?' I couldn't convince them.

29-30 November 2001

I was a nurse working in a modern Accident and Emergency department of a hospital which had a large reception with sliding glass doors. There were people waiting outside who wanted to come in but the head doctor wouldn't admit them as he kept said there was nothing wrong with them and we were too busy. A tall man in his late forties came up to me and spoke to me too closely and very quietly and said he had a problem with ejaculating too soon. I asked him if he'd gone to see his G.P. and he said he didn't have one. I knew it was something he didn't need to come to an A&E department for, but I had a feeling there was more to it, so I told the head doctor that we shouldn't be too hasty in sending people away. A pregnant nurse joined us as I was speaking to him. The nurse began clutching her chest and abdomen, screaming, 'get me a doctor!' I ran off to find a doctor but the hospital was completely empty. At last I found an office with some people in it and I shouted 'we need a doctor immediately. She's about to give birth!' I burst into hysterical tears as I said it. An Indian nurse jumped up and ran off to the reception. I tried to follow her, but the room had closed in and I couldn't find my way out. By the time I got back to the reception, the nurse had already given birth on the floor. The Indian nurse was lying on the floor next to the nurse with her body weirdly around the other nurse's and the doctor had to pull her away. The child was wrapped up in white tissue, even its head, and I thought it was dead. I crouched down next to the nurse and said 'are you ok?' She was wrapped in white tissue too, but she pulled it away from her head and said, 'yes.' As I looked at the baby I noticed that it had begun to move a little and that it was alive. There was a doctor there who said to me that it had been born with a joint dislocation problem but that it was a form of the disease that meant that although it wasn't now fully formed, its limbs could still grow. The doctor and Asian nurse began to take the tissue off the baby and I could see immediately that it was large, tall, but very thin and formless. The face was a simple drawing of a face, with dot eyes and black hair, but no features. It was rather pretty. I said to the nurse, 'Look you've got a baby that's as pretty as a doll.' It's arms were grotesque, only half formed with bits of flaky fingers sticking to its sides where they'd broken off, and its whole body was covered in dried blood. The nurse said, 'It's quite big isn't it?' Then she put her arm around its waist and got it to its feet and it was almost as tall as her. I tried to stop her, but she limped off with it.

5-6 November 2001

Christian and I went on a long plane journey and neither of us could sleep and were awake for two days in a row, a fact we discussed in length. We were on our way to stay with my mother in a huge house with massive windows. After we'd arrived and settled in, Christian and I went out for a day to a small town. It was an uncomfortable place with lots of strange animals which kept biting our legs and clinging to our arms with their teeth, we were continually having to shake them off. There was an animal that lived in the water in the gutter. It was a long roll of cloth, tied in the middle with a red band and open at each end with a mouth. A man came out of a shop and pushed a large fish into one of its mouths, but it spat it out again and again. The fish found its way into a pocket in the front of my smock and I could feel it rolling around until my pocket spat it out too. People, strangers, kept inviting us in for meals though they all seemed a little mentally unstable – one woman couldn't remember our names and kept turning repetitively from one to the other of us and saying 'so, your name is?' The food they gave us was horrible, cheap packaged food. At one point we were in a house where Christian bumped into an old friend of his who was an artist and he showed us a video work about an old man dying in a bed, while at the same time

he'd superimposed the old man's double next to the man. The double was in black and white, wearing a black suit and make-up like a dummy, but could move and speak. Christian and I kept arguing, so we decided to take a boat cruise that we saw a sign for that would take us around the island. As we paid the man for the cruise he said, 'this takes an hour you know. It's as serious as a horse ride.' The boat took us along a passage surrounded by incredible high cliffs. The sea was choppy and there were lots of rocks. I said to Christian, 'I think this mood would change if we were to take a swim.' The weather wasn't very warm and he wasn't sure, but we decided to try. We dove off the back of the boat into the water and swam a few metres away from it. Suddenly I realised what we'd done and I said, 'I can't believe we've done this! Where's the boat?' We managed to swim back to the boat and grabbed onto some plastic handles on the back of it and were pulled along by it. We didn't have the strength to pull ourselves back up onto the deck. I noticed we were entering a patch of water filled with killer whales and we could feel their noses bumping up against us. We were both terrified and making wailing noises. We passed other animals too, one called a Sea Pig which was a large square block of pink skin with a small straight line in the middle for its mouth.

There was a woman who had her brain scooped out so that her head had a dip in the middle. The middle of the head was filled with course, carpet-like black fur. She wanted me to speak to her, but I couldn't bear to look at her.[10]

6-7 December 2001

I was at Frederick Rd. hoping to have a birthday party. My father desperately wanted to give me a glass of champagne but things kept going wrong and in the end I couldn't find him, he seemed to have given up and was very angry with me.

7-8 December 2001

I'd kidnapped Manuela and was holding her in a small bare cell in a house where I was living with Christian, my mother, Tim and Stephen. I also had a hamster which I'd forgotten I had and suddenly remembered I had to feed it. I was relieved to see that it was still alive when I went to get it, so I took it out and played with it and fed it. I showed it to Manuela and she likened my keeping it to my keeping her. She had seriously hurt her nose and told me that she had to be taken to see a doctor. I tried to convince her that if the problem hadn't gone away I'd take her the next morning, though I didn't mean this as I knew she might use this as an excuse to try to escape. I was talking to Stephen about something in the kitchen and I went to check on the hamster in its cage and realised the door of the cage was left open. I immediately accused Stephen of leaving it open but he denied it and said perhaps someone had broken into the house and stolen it. I went to check on Manuela but she'd escaped and stolen the hamster as revenge. Out of the corner of my eye I saw her leaving down the passageway behind the house, wearing a head covering consisting of four thin black leather straps, to hold her damaged nose in place. I was filled with an enormous dread that she would go to the police and that I'd be in big trouble. There was a knock at the door and someone told me it was the headmaster of the school where Manuela worked as a teacher. I went out and he took me to a field where Manuela was waiting, with a group of children. I was relieved as I thought she wouldn't do anything terrible in front of the

[10] The text from this dream features in the video, 'Gloomy Sunday,' December 2001.

children. I was wearing a red shawl which I kept pulling tightly around my shoulders. I can't remember what she did, but it was a performance and I left, relieved that she wasn't going to take things any further. I got into a cab with a man and two boys aged 4 and 6. As I closed the taxi door a hand reached in through the window with a small yellow duster in which contained my hamster, still alive. I put it on my chest and we looked into each other's eyes and it began to doze. I didn't want to hold it so I gave it to one of the boys in the taxi thinking he might like to play with it. He immediately began torturing it, squashing its stomach. I told him to stop and that he was hurting the hamster, but he ignored me. Then he started pulling the hamster's tail and the hamster became like one of those toys in which you pull a string at the bottom and the arms and legs and eyes move. But the was pulling so hard, I could see the hamster's eyes beginning to pop out of its head.

Aura, Rita and I, and some other ex-Slade people were in a studio. We started to copy the movements of the person in front of us and Aura suggested we turn it into a dance / performance piece. Rita was antagonistic towards Aura and wanted to take control, so she got us to dress up as schoolgirls with short skirts and ties and very heavy make-up. The others were all dressed and began to do this miming performance but Aura and I were taking ages to get our costumes on. By the time we were dressed looked over at the others, they'd given up on the idea and were wearing their normal clothes. Aura and I had a discussion about how we didn't like dressing up as school-girls.

13-14 December 2001

There was a war in an unfamiliar city where I was with Aura and Phoebe. I had a small dark brown car, and wanted to drive myself out of the city but couldn't find the car park where I had left it. I also kept losing Aura and Phoebe. Violent things kept happening all around, fights and explosions in tall industrial buildings. I wanted to find my car and drive away, but I needed Aura and Phoebe's help to find it, as they knew the city better than I did. I wanted Aura to see the car as I thought she'd like it. Another part of me was worried about finding the car as I knew I shouldn't be driving as I'd had too much alcohol, and I didn't have a driving licence. A van of men drove past and fired a fire extinguisher over a group of policemen on the other side of the road. Then they turned it onto my side of the road and fired it at me. I threw myself face down onto the ground and it splattered all over the back of my head. I just left it there. Then I went across the road and I could hear Aura and Phoebe's voices in a building, so I started yelling 'Aura!' really loudly, over and over again, as loud as I could manage so that I nearly lost my voice. Eventually they came down. Phoebe showed me how the stuff from the fire extinguisher had burnt off her eyebrows, so I said 'maybe I should wash it off my hair in case it burns it all off,' and they agreed. We were standing in a square between high buildings and there was a tiny tap with cold water running from it, in the middle of the square which I thought I should just put my head under. Then an Asian man appeared and started fiddling with the tap, and it turned out there was a network of more complex taps inside it. He said one of them would pour out hot water and that I should use that, but it was too small to put my head underneath, so he gave me a plastic purple cup to use. I managed to pour one cupful of water over the back of my head when another man in a black uniform appeared and pinned me to the ground with his boot on my neck. He said he was going to kill me and was laughing viciously. I started to whimper and cry and kept repeating, 'please,' 'please.'

27-28 December 2001

The porcelain doll, 'Angus' (Tim called her that as she had red hair and a frowning expression) was lying on the third step of a flight of stairs. I knew she was in my way so I threw cold water onto her. She came alive and her eyes began to glow a vivid blue colour. She was drawing my right hand closer and closer towards her and I could feel myself being subsumed by her and that I was going to die.

29-30 December 2001

Christian and I were sleepwalking through the same dream as one another. At one point we were under water in a huge aquarium with giant coloured fish swimming around us. Every time either of us saw something new we would point it out to each other we would be able to see it too.

Christian and I were living in a flat in the East End of London, though the surrounding area looked like a mixture of Whitechapel and Acre in Israel. We were sharing the flat with a young couple who had a small 4 year old boy, who had been abducted by some foreign men who might have been Arabic. It was a Monday and I was confused about where I should be, I couldn't seem to remember if I should be at work or at college which was Goldsmith's rather than the Slade. I had a small car which I knew I had no licence for and didn't feel confident about driving and I asked Christian, 'shall I take the car or the bus?' He replied with child-like enthusiasm, 'The real train – take the *real* train!' I told him it was impossible to get from Whitechapel to New Cross on the over ground train. Meanwhile the men who'd abducted the boy now kept trying to return him. They came back to the flat at one point with him in a glass tank, shrunk down to 10 c.m. tall, wizened and leathery. The parents were beside themselves with grief, and the boy was screaming for them to help him. Eventually the abductors returned and said he could finally come home, except he was now a piece of thin, white circular wood with demonic shapes emanating from its edges, his warped and flattened face in the middle, and a live worm in a hole in the top of his head. He was screaming and screaming for his parents to get him out and that he couldn't stand it 'in here' any more. I tried to reason with the abductors but couldn't communicate with them. They said, 'this is the final edit, we can't do any more.' Christian and I discussed how unreasonable it was that they wouldn't give us the 'original footage.'

4-5 January 2002

My mother, Tim and I had to move out of Frederick Rd. We were packing, but everywhere we looked there were more and more things. I wanted my mother to throw away certain things but she was hard to convince. There were two thin metal leaf shapes which looked as though they might have once been used as ashtrays and I asked her, 'can we throw these away?' She looked romantically at my father, who had appeared, and said 'this one we found in Walsall. This one in Sutton Coldfield.' So I said, 'ok you can't throw them away, you have to find another one wherever you move to now.' Then we were at a party in a large unfamiliar house. I was with a group of young women who I don't recognise except for Marina Fleming an old school friend. We were sitting outside the house in a large garden in a sandpit; I kept burying my legs into the sand quite deeply, as it was cold. One of the women was being very bitchy to another and then when the other started saying how much her boyfriend was in love with her, the bitchy one said, 'I've changed my mind about you,

I'm even having erotic thoughts about your large breasts.' I was trying to 'bond' with Marina, to show her that I was now a nicer more mature person than I had been at school. She was lying back, leaning on her elbows and speaking about an American friend staying with her; she kept referring to men as 'dudes.' She looked very beautiful, though wore a lot of make-up, exquisitely applied – her eyes were surrounded with heavy dark purple eye shadow. In the background I could see Tim lying back on the grass, looking dazed. Marina asked, 'why are we here together now like this?' and I replied that we'd known each other almost all our lives and I reminded her of my first school memory of her swinging out of the reception class doorway in a red t-shirt saying 'uh-oh' like a t.v. character. I said, 'but I don't know anything about you now. What do you do?' She said she worked in 'a shitty cheap shop in the Bull Ring.' I told her about my Wellcome job, and Aura popped up and said that she couldn't understand why I was 'at the bottom of the ladder.' I tried to explain to Marina that it was the best job I'd ever had. Marina and I started talking about our age, which in the dream was 37. She said it really troubled her and I told her that she looked very young. I said it was important that one got married so that one's partner wouldn't leave one when one started to look old. I told her I was always asking Christian if he'd still love me when I was an old woman and told her that he always replied to me 'I can't imagine you looking like an old woman.' Marina and I were laughing a lot as we talked and then suddenly she started kissing me, got hold of my arm and pulled me down a small hole in the ground into a long tunnel of rock beneath the earth. We fell and she started kissing me again. Some of the other women then came down to join us and I was worried they'd know we'd been kissing as I was wearing red lipstick. We sat around in the tunnel smoking and one of the women noticed the hundreds of slugs surrounding us. Another noticed a dead cat which was flattened out on the floor and we all left quickly. Marina, Tim and I were walking along a path, hoping to get back to the house for something to drink. We waded through a stream and Tim asking Marina if she still lived in the house that had used to belong to Karl Marx. She said she didn't. I had mud all over my feet and was glad to wash them in the water. Tim was balancing really precariously on the steep concrete bank alongside the water and I noticed he had odd beige-coloured shoes on. I asked him why and he said 'oh, they'll do.' We got back to the house and Tim started eating a bowl of dry chocolate powder. I suggested to Marina that we go into the kitchen for food. My mother was there with her sister, Joan. The table was bare and she said 'there's fish fingers, chips and plaice in the kitchen.' I said, 'I just want a drink.' She said, 'I don't think you should, you know we have to move house in the morning. Do you really want a drink?' I said, 'Yes, that's why I asked for one.' And I poured myself some wine. Marina didn't feel well as earlier I'd persuaded her to drink too much.

13-14 January 2002

There were amorphous insect-creatures on the floor in the lounge here. They were part dark-haired moles, but flattened to the ground, like snakes / worms. They kept changing shape.

15-16 January 2002

The same creatures of last night reappeared, but this time Christian was with me and I thought, 'So I'm not dreaming – they *are* real!' I showed them to Christian who said, 'they are the most ancient example of living flesh I've ever seen.'

16-17 January 2002

Christian, my mother, Tim, my grandmother Ruth and I were on holiday together. Christian and I were arguing continually. He, mom and I went on a long walk and all along the sides of the road were untidy piles of colour magazines for me to collect. I had to tidy them into neat piles, but as I was moving along the pavement on my back, shunting the magazines along with my bare feet which were becoming sore, I found this task difficult. My mother and Christian were walking beside me, chatting and oblivious to what I was doing, so I looked up at them and said I didn't want to be barefoot like this any more and I couldn't see why they couldn't help me. My mother said I shouldn't lift the piles of magazines with my hands because of the damage to my little finger and my shattered left thumb. I replied, 'yes but neither of those things affect my legs.' Later I felt really depressed and exhausted and wanted to go to my room to lie on the bed even though I knew it would be cold. But everything I did, Christian was interfering with. He said, 'now I've given all my money away, it's up to you if I stay here any longer or not.' I got angry with him and replied 'so you've given your money away. That's your problem.' He went upstairs to lie down instead of me. I wanted to get a drink, but I dropped the glass and it smashed in a small bowl of water on the floor under a table in which a small animal was lying. I had to move the animal quickly out of the way in order to clear up the glass. It had been lying on a bed of dark mud and cotton wool and I wasn't sure how I was going to remake the bed. It was my mother's animal.

There was a naked, genital-less man with a shaved head and very pale skin, on the back of a bus on which I was travelling with another woman who I don't know. He was making awful, provocative chanting noises but the people on the bus were ignoring him. He got worse and worse, contorting his body and grumbling and growling and salivating until his whole face was covered with foam. He started crawling towards me, thrusting his face into mine and growling in an unearthly voice 'now you're evil ... now you're evil ...' I tried to push his face away with the palm of my right hand and shouted 'stop it! stop it!'

21-22 January 2002

I was going for a walk in the countryside with Christian, my mother and father. My father was smaller than I remember him, slimmer and suave, like an ageing film star. I was chatting to him as we walked and he was quite cheerful. He branched off to walk ahead with Christian, while I walked by my mother's side. I asked her, 'how can dad be here? He's dead.' She poo-pooed this and replied, 'well he's not *really* here is he?' I pointed out to her that he was speaking to Christian, which seemed to surprise her – I'm not sure she believed me. Everything felt strangely lucid as though I was going to work everything out.

I awoke with a song going round in my head with the words, 'she's all alone, under the hill.'

28-29 January 2002

There was a room filled with 50 puppies. They were so small and everywhere that it was hard not to tread on them or their shit. I had to put them out into the garden, but they were so small I thought they would get lost.

31 January-1 February 2002

There were around 15 very small dogs which were strangely coloured. One was shades of blue and white stripes and I wanted to tell it that it was the same pattern as a pullover of mine. My mother was there and she was angry with the person looking after the dogs, who I think was her sister Joan. One of the dogs had been tied up with weights outside the front door. There was dog shit everywhere.

Marcia and I stole 2 cars, both quite large; mine was an old fashioned Jaguar and heavy to drive. We could talk to each other without any problem as we drove, though we had to take the cars on a very complicated route which involved driving them up steep inclines and sharp falls. The cars became bikes and we cycled through a small town where we saw Stuart Brisley and his wife Maya. Marcia said 'Oh I wondered if we might see them here.' The town became a beach and Stuart and Maya were sitting at a table outside a café. Marcia and I wanted to speak to them but didn't want to disturb them, so we pushed our bikes down the beach to a small dip in the sand next to a large metal structure where we thought we might sit down. But when we looked down to where the water met the beach, there was a disgusting dead 'animal' there, it was like a transparent plastic bag, partly filled with water. We turned away. I said to Marcia, 'why don't we invite Stuart and Maya onto the beach for a game of charades?' She wasn't sure, so we began to play charades in their view, thinking this might entice them to come and join us. We were really good at charades, performing amazing gymnastic movements, but each time we glanced up to Stuart and Maya, they looked embarrassed and pretended they couldn't see us.

4-5 February 2002

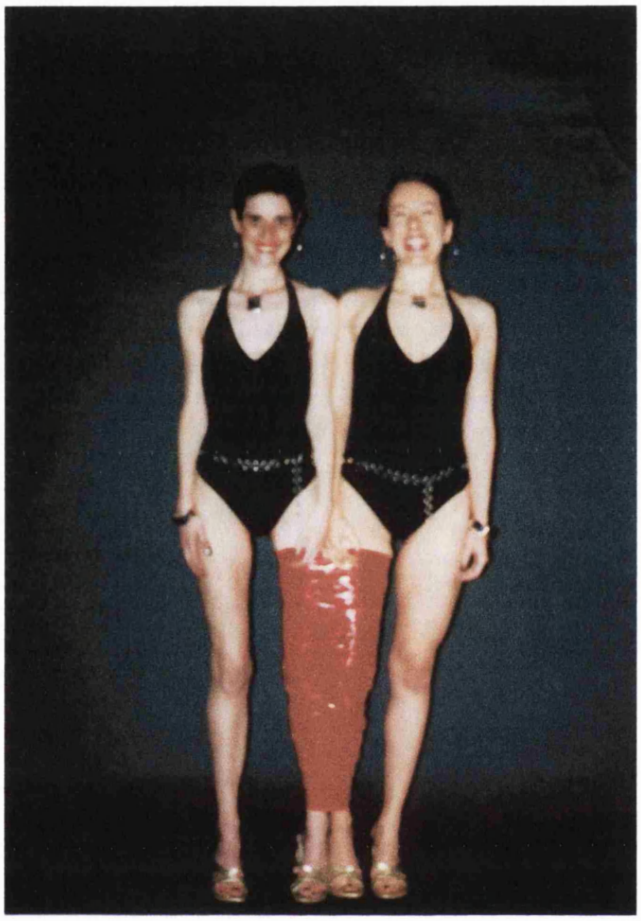
I was at Frederick Road with my mother, Tim and his partner, Stephen. We were in the kitchen and there was a pink plastic animal in the shape of a sausage, hollow in the middle. It had a small round mouth, 2 antennae and 8 legs. It was alive. I wanted to keep it as I thought it 'cute,' but my mother wanted to throw it away, saying it was just rubbish that had come free from a cereal box. I persuaded them to let me keep it in the coat cupboard in the hall. As I picked it up, it started wriggling violently and I had to squeeze it, and when I got to the hall cupboard it burst along its middle seam, deflated, and thick sticky red fluid came out and spilled onto the floor. I began crying really loudly. Tim came up and said 'Oh, is it dead?' The house became a market square in America and I had the red sticky stuff all over my hands. I ran off to wash them. While I was running down some steps I bumped into a black woman and got the red stuff in her eyes. She was furious and screamed, 'you can't rub your deodorant into my face!' She started then to rub it onto my cheeks, and I said 'that's not fair, you're doing that on purpose!' She began to fight with me.

5-6 February 2002

There was a drama which I was both viewer of and participant in, involving a young blond woman and a young dark-haired woman, both very beautiful. The blond woman had at some time tortured and murdered the dark, who had come back, though the blond didn't recognise her as the same person and was preparing a wedding for her. The dark was going along with it but I knew she was planning revenge on the blond. Sometimes the blond would be in a room and the dark would appear in a bed with a battered and bloody face, though the blond couldn't see her. All three of us were driven to a large old warehouse which was dark and

rumbling. The dark said we had to go into the basement where her wedding dress was being made by artists. I knew this was a lie. When we got inside, the dark told us to climb up through a long concrete/rock hole. I remembered being there before and knew that if I put my face too close to it, it exuded an hallucinogenic drug, so I said I was afraid of heights and went outside, which had become an enormous graveyard and men with guns started attacking each other. There was nowhere to hide.

Christian and I were in the US and had to travel to see a band. He went on a skateboard and I took a bus. When I got off I had to walk through a small undercover market. I was carrying a paper bag with raw mincemeat in it and a Rottweiler dog wouldn't let me pass. I gave it the meat, which it gobbled up. A tall, short dark-haired man appeared, very anonymous looking, and asked me if his dog was bothering me. His name was John Doe. He walked along behind me as I went to meet Christian. When we got to the end of the Market I could see Christian in the distance and I said to John Doe, 'I have to go now, that's my partner.' Christian came over and was very angry and jealous and accused me of being late because I had 'picked up' this strange man. We had to go back to the market to see if John Doe was there so that I could get him to tell Christian this was not true. But John Doe was no longer there.



Appendix 2 dancing queens

dancing queens

She is wholly in her shut eyes, alone with her soul, in the bosom of deepest attention. She is feeling herself become an event.[1]

In the early – mid 19th century, animal magnetism was particularly in vogue after having slumbered for a few decades since the previous century's fascination with Mesmer. Now, two female figures emerged as extremely talented, creative, somnambulists in the North London Hospital, where George Elliotson was Professor of Medicine: Elizabeth and Jane O' Key.[2] Elizabeth was 16 when she first met Elliotson; previously she had worked as a domestic servant but had been admitted to the hospital in 1837, described as suffering from 'hystero-epileptic' seizures. Initially Elliotson diagnosed her as suffering from 'ecstatic delirium,' but by November that year, so great were her somnambulistic tendencies and his 'influence' over her, he had only to sit on the end of her bed for her to fall into a somnambulistic trance. In the same year, Elizabeth's sister, Jane, became a patient of Elliotson's, and an inmate of the hospital, providing an understudy for the 'act,' taking over when Elizabeth grew tired. At the peak of her fame, Elizabeth's performances were visited by crowds of famous and influential people, including royalty, Dukes, Duchesses and writers such as Charles Dickens.[3] By May 1838, Elliotson decided that the public theatre of the hospital would be a more suitable venue than the hospital ward to accommodate the some 200 people attending Elizabeth's now weekly performances.

The performances themselves involved the ritual of Elizabeth, in a somnambulistic trance induced by Elliotson's mesmeric passes, entertaining / abusing her audience. She would sing loudly, dance and skip non-stop throughout the evening. Sometimes she would sit on the knee of a famous figure, usually male, and pass judgment on their attire or posture, 'Oh, don't sit that way!' she said to a gentleman she would 'not normally be allowed to address;' to the Marquis of Anglesey, one evening, she said 'Oh, how do ye do, white

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[1] Paul Valéry, 'Dance and the Soul,' trans. Dorothy Bussy, in *Selected Writings of Paul Valéry*, New York: New Directions, 1950, pp. 184-198. An ironic account of a group of philosophers studying the 'freedom' of a female dancer.

[2] Forrest, *Hypnotism*, p. 299, points out that this was probably the correct spelling of the surname, though Elliotson himself always referred to the sisters as Okey. For historical accounts of the O' Key sisters, I am drawing largely from Forrest's extensive research into their life and times in Chapter 9, *ibid.*, pp. 136-168.

[3] An account of Dickens' interest in mesmerism, and its influence on his writing is F. Kaplan, *Dickens and Mesmerism: The Hidden Springs of Fiction*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975.

trowsers. Dear!'[4] And the audience would roar with laughter. Elizabeth also used what was at the time considered offensive language; words such as 'blast,' damn,' and 'devil,' which the *Lancet*, in its frequent accounts of the O' Key's antics, took pains not to spell out. The *Lancet* however, did not take pains not to denounce the practice of mesmerism and openly poked fun at Elliotson's incredulity concerning Elizabeth's 'talent,' causing him great humiliation. Other aspects of her talent, however, did not pass by unacknowledged. Thomas Wakley, then editor of the *Lancet*, in 1838 described Elizabeth as, 'A genius in her time [...] Some of the minor theatres may find it no bad speculation to set up a mesmeric farce, in which O' Key, with a little training, would appear with advantage.'[5] That Elizabeth herself was aware of her role and status is evident in her possessiveness to maintain the position of Queen Somnambulist at the hospital, leading to her jealous unveiling of the 'phoney' status of other female somnambulists, potential rivals to her crown, when admitted to the ward.[6]

Tests and enquiries into the validity of Elliotson and Elizabeth followed rapidly one after the other until Elliotson was publicly proclaimed to be either misguided or a charlatan. His reputation destroyed, he resigned from his position at the hospital, founded a magazine devoted to the study of animal magnetism, *Zoist*, and continued to believe in Mesmerism and the talent of the O' Key sisters' to the end of his life.[7]

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In France, in 1862, when Jean-Martin Charcot became Professor of Medicine at the Salpêtrière in Paris, the theatricality of somnambulistic women performers came to a climax in Charcot's study of hysterics.[8] At the time Charcot entered the Salpêtrière it was known as the *ville des femmes incurables* and had around 5000 inmates. Under Charcot's direction it was to become the first neurological centre in Europe, and Charcot to be known as the 'Napoleon of Neuroses.'

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[4] Quoted in Forrest, *Hypnotism*, p. 144.
[5] Wakley, *Lancet*, 15 September 1838, p. 876. Cf. also numerous accounts from other sceptics in Forrest, *Hypnotism*, pp. 156-159.
[6] Cf. Forrest, *Hypnotism*, p. 142.
[7] Unfortunately, Elliotson himself never published an account of his work with the O' Key sisters.
[8] For more rare accounts of male hysteria, Cf. Mark S. Micale, 'Charcot and the Idea of Hysteria in the Male: Gender, Mental Science, and Medical Diagnosis in Late Nineteenth-Century France,' in *Medical History* 34, pp. 363-411, and Henri Ellenberger's 'Freud's Lecture on Masculine Hysteria (15 October 1886): A Critical Study,' in *Beyond the Unconscious: Essays of Henri F. Ellenberger in the History of Psychiatry*, (ed.) Mark S. Micale, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 119-136.

Charcot is described invariably as an extremely cold, hard, controlling and authoritarian man. His method of diagnosis involved scenes of unbearable humiliation in which the patient was ordered to stand in front of him, remove their clothes and adopt poses according to his directions, while he offered not a word of comfort or encouragement. The coldest puppet-master of all. No member of staff dared cross him as he would more or less immediately have them removed from their post. As a result of his pedantic control of the institution, as Ellenberger suggests, 'a peculiar atmosphere of mutual suggestion developed between Charcot, his collaborators and his patients.'[9] The Salpêtrière: mini theatre, small universe; extension of Charcot's mind, within which he could adopt the omnipotent influencing position of director, puppet-master, and judgmental god.

One of Charcot's contributions to the psychology of his day was to differentiate between illnesses as dynamic or functional, the latter being illnesses which did not have a physiologically detectable lesion to define them.[10] He also defined what became known as 'major hysteria' (*la grande hystérie*), which was manifested in four stages. The first was epileptoid, including loss of consciousness, jerking limbs, etc., and lasted a few minutes. The second, sometimes known as 'clownism,' involved amazing gymnastic movements – sometimes repeated sit-ups, or increasingly commonly the arching of the back into the famous *arc-en-cercle* as seen in Brouillet's painting of Blanche Wittmann, performing during one of Charcot's lectures.[11] The third stage: the *attitudes passionnelles*, involved the patient's expression of extreme emotion – fear, anger, love or hatred, which might be accompanied by screaming or long declamatory speeches. The fourth stage was a confused

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[9] Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, p. 98.

[10] I am indebted here to Dr. Andrew Hodgkiss' *From Lesion to Metaphor*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000; pp. 110-114; 159-168;187-188. I am also indebted to him for being my encouraging and inspiring analyst over the last 2 years.

[11] Unfortunately I cannot go further into Charcot's use of visual iconography, but I have found fascinating accounts of this in Elizabeth Bronfren, 'Jean-Martin Charcot's Vampires,' in Bronfen, *The Knotted Subject: Hysteria and its Discontents*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998, pp. 174-240. Bronfren claims that Charcot's visual imagery 'feeds off a well-established visual iconography developed in conjunction with notions of demonic possession and exorcism,' and goes on to map Charcot's definition of hysteria alongside two contemporary texts, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Wagner's *Parsifal*. Full accounts of the use of imagery by Charcot are Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention de l'hystérie: Charcot et l'iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, Paris: Marcula, 1982; Sander L. Gilman, 'The Image of the Hysteric,' in *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, (eds.) Gilman et. al., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 345-452; and more generally Lisa Cartwright, *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995. All of these writers narrate, and show, how female hysterics were influenced by the prevalence of visual iconography and generally tended, after seeing such images, to mimic each other's behaviour.

delirium which might last minutes, hours or days.[12] As Charcot practised it, hypnosis could lead an hysterical patient into one of three main states; cataleptic, lethargic or somnambulistic. With each of these, the hypnotic methods used to induce them involved either the prolonged fixation of the eyes or continued monotonous stimulation of the senses.

By the time Freud visited the Salpêtrière in 1885-6, Charcot's Friday morning lectures and his *leçons du mardi* attracted large crowds including politicians, royalty, artists and actors, journalists, literary critics and writers, and the hysterics performed for the audience in much the same way as the O' Key sisters in England, pushing the boundaries of the social expectations of women to their limit, teasing and testing these limits, regardless of their class. The medic and novelist, Axel Munthe, attended one of Charcot's lectures and provides the following account:

> Some of them smelt with delight a bottle of ammonia when told it was rose water, others would eat a piece of charcoal when presented to them as chocolate. Another would crawl on all fours on the floor, barking furiously when told she was a dog, flap her arms as if trying to fly when turned into a pigeon, lift her skirts with a shriek of terror when a glove was thrown at her feet with a suggestion of it being a snake. Another would walk with a top hat in her arms rocking it to and fro and kissing it tenderly when she was told it was her baby.[13]

Blanche Wittmann is described by Delboeuf, during one of Charcot's performance platforms as 'Wearing a complacent look, but finding visual pleasure in getting ready to do anything that should be asked of her. Féré [one of Charcot's assistants] *played her as if playing on a piano.*'[14] Nevertheless, despite this passive, puppet-like description of her behaviour, she always maintained her limits, revealing that far from losing her conscious self, she was entirely aware of her role. Gauld describes how Wittmann, while hypnotised, was told on one occasion that it was hot and that she should undress and take an imaginary bath. She undressed as far as taking off her corset, then fell into a sudden hysterical attack, putting an end to the experiment.[15] Whatever she was prepared to be, it was not a public stripper. Despite this, Wittmann, like the O' Key's, attained fame and notoriety in Paris and

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[12] M. Regnard, 'Sleep and Somnambulism,' *Science* 2:50, June 1881, p. 272, describes this state as 'frequently placing the patient in the attitude of crucifixion and this lasts generally for days accompanied by complete insensibility.'

[13] Axel Munthe, *The Story of San Michel*, London: Flamingo, 1995, p. 210. One can immediately see incredible gender stereotyping in Charcot's choice of objects: perfume, chocolate and gloves; top hats and babies.

[14] Quoted in Forrest, *Hypnotism*, p. 241. [My italic.]

[15] Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, p. 496. Wittmann's later life is summed up in Frederick Myers' *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, London: Longman's Green, 1903, pp. 447-448; and A.R.G. Owen, *Hysteria, Hypnosis and Healing: The Work of J.M. Charcot*, London: Dennis Dobson, 1971, pp. 186-190.

in the international world of medicine, by being on the one hand a psychiatrist's puppet who acted out her master's theories,[16] while on the other acknowledging the audience's desire to see the unruly aspects of the female body, made morally 'safer' for an audience to witness if they were put down to mental illness and were watched over by and under the control of a trained medic. As Martha Noel Evans suggests, 'While hysterics were represented, on the one hand, as malleable, vain, suggestible epitomes of femininity, they were, on the other, perceived as wilful, troublemaking, unladylike, virile creatures.'[17] In other words, they were a lesson to us all of what lies behind our social façade of ladylike behaviour, and how we should suppress this 'other side' at all costs. Evans also recounts the words of Gilles de la Tourette, one of Charcot's students, that 'From the moment [the hysteric] is hypnotised, she belongs to us,' [18] a terrifying, yet clearly deluded statement. If the hysteric didn't perform, humiliation fell onto the doctor; the patient, after all, was ill. Like O' Key, Wittmann was extremely aware of and possessive of her position as Queen Hysteric – prepared to cause trouble for both doctors and other female patients should anyone challenge her position. The O' Key sisters and Wittmann are just some of many examples in which it would seem that women used 'second selves' in order to find a means of expression and self assertion.[19]

The whole situation became a charade and Charcot did not get away with this despotic, self-deluded, 'rule' over psychologically 'damaged' (theatrical? expressive? subversive?) women for long. In 1884, Hippolyte Bernheim, Professor of Medicine at the new University of Nancy began to publicly attack Charcot's work. Among his many objections to the events at the Salpêtrière, was his criticism of Charcot's lack of engagement with the power of 'suggestion.' Bernheim believed that any patient could be persuaded to do anything if they were open or passive enough to the suggestion of the hypnotist, whether

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[16] Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies*, in her Introduction, describes how hysterics 'display bodies that are the site of gestures and throbbings that a male narrator then translates into words, in a reversal of what Freud would later call *conversion hysteria*.' Her entire text draws the general conclusion that the gestures and activities of the (usually silent) hysterical body in this period provides a text to be read, but the text itself is entirely written the doctor.

[17] Martha Noel Evans, *Fits and Starts: A Genealogy of Hysteria in Modern France*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991, p. 41.

[18] Evans, *Fits and Starts*, p. 37.

[19] Morton Prince, *The Dissociation of a Personality: The Hunt for the Real Miss Beauchamp* (1905), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, is often cited as the first full-length psychological account of the phenomenon of Multiple Personality Disorder. Cf. also Nellie Parsons Bean, 'My Life as a Dissociated Personality,' *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 3, 1908, pp. 240-260 for a first-hand account. Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, gives a full account of the history and different manifestations of MPD.

they were an 'hysteric' or not.[20] Everyone was potentially a puppet. He acknowledged that there were levels of 'credivity' of a patient; a young child for instance might believe and act out all that is told to them without disbelief, while an adult's limit of credivity would be dependent on their faculties of experience, judgment and intelligence. Some adults, according to Bernheim, were naturally more impressionable than others; for instance, ordinary people with docile natures would be easier to hypnotise and control than preoccupied thinkers who might be critical, resisting the process of hypnotism without perhaps realising they are doing so.[21] Under a medically induced hypnotic state, suggestions could be 'planted' in the unconscious mind of the patient by the doctor and the inclinations of the unconscious could be redirected and manipulated. When the patient was awake, such a suggestion might be felt in the same way as the fleeting image of a dream which stays with one through the day, but whose source is not easily materialised or remembered consciously; adding a tinge of colour to one's conscious impressions or moods. Bernheim's theories of the importance of suggestion became increasingly the method by which doctors sought to 'cure' their patients while hypnotised, and as a result doctors adopted an increasingly powerful role, while the patient's autonomy and rights diminished. In this respect, Bernheim's treatment of patients is not dissimilar to that of Charcot, but where Charcot underplayed, at least superficially, the influence he had on his patients' behaviour, for Bernheim, the mesmerised subject was thought to be utterly open to suggestion from their doctor, 'The mesmerised or hypnotised somnambulist may, in fact, be characterised as a *conscious automaton*, which, by appropriate suggestions, may be made to think, feel, say, or do almost anything that its director wills it to think, feel, say or do.'[22] In other words, to be the doctor's puppet – but at the same time more than a puppet in the Kleistian sense, as these

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[20] Cf. Chapter 2. Bernheim, quoted in Forrest, *Hypnotism*, pp. 233-234, 'I put a pencil in his mouth, telling him that it is a cigar; he puffs out the smoke ... I tell him the cigar is too strong and that he will feel ill: he is affected by bouts of coughing and spitting, he feels sick, looks pale, and feels dizzy. I get him to swallow a glass of water, telling him it is champagne. He thinks it is strong. I give him more: he becomes drunk and staggers about. I say drunkenness is gay: he sings, hiccoughs, and laughs in a silly way. I say drunkenness is sad: he weeps and wails.' The quote comes from Bernheim, *Automatism et suggestion*, Paris: Félix Alcan, 1920.

[21] Cf. Forrest, *Hypnotism*, pp. 234-235; and M. Regnard, 'Sleep and Somnambulism,' p. 271: 'Hypnotism can be produced in almost anyone who makes himself perfectly passive.'

[22] William Benjamin Carpenter, 'Mesmerism, Spiritualism, etc. Historically and Scientifically Considered,' in Bourne Taylor and Shuttleworth, *Embodied Selves*, pp. 62-63. Milne Bramwell, 'What is Hypnotism?' *Proceedings for the Society for Psychical Research* 1896-1897, p. 236, thought that the Nancy School went too far in asserting the suggestibility of the hypnotised subject, 'While Bernheim considers the Salpêtrière subjects so abnormally acute that they can catch the slightest indications of the thoughts of the operator [...] he, on the other hand, supposes the Nancy subjects to be so abnormally devoid of intelligence as to be unable to understand when a palpable farce is played before them.'

were puppets who could slip back into consciousness, allowing the suggestions of the doctor to be tested in the patient's waking hours to see if they remained to influence the patient's behaviour.

Two congresses were held in Paris in 1889, and the Nancy School held the floor.[23] Bernheim's theories of suggestion went from strength to strength until in 1892, he went too far even for the Nancy School doctrine in his statement, 'There is no hypnotism; there is only suggestion.'[24]

Bernheim's idea of suggestion is perhaps best described by Freud, early in his career, in a preface to Bernheim's *De la Suggestion*, 'What distinguishes a suggestion from other kinds of psychical influence, such as a command or the giving of a piece of information or instruction, is that in the case of a suggestion, an idea is aroused in another person's brain which is not examined in regard to its origin but is accepted just as though it had arisen spontaneously in that brain.'[25] More or less then, suggestion involved the implanting of an artificial memory or idea, or the erasing of an existing memory or idea; a new unconscious thought which would filter through into consciousness to affect the waking life and behaviour of the patient, determining the direction of their habits. Yet, what could be more controlling? If the subject is, and it is not at all certain that they are, open to the influencing will of their doctor, their entire mental health becomes dependent on the personal ethics of that doctor.

Freud himself was not a commanding physician in the manner of Charcot, and, by his own admission, was never a successful hypnotist.[26] Hypnosis, for Freud, was to be the

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[23] Among those attending were William James, Frederick Myers and Freud. James wrote on the event in *Mind* 14, 1889, pp. 614-616: 'The Congress of Physiological Psychology at Paris.'

[24] The effects of this statement are discussed in detail in André Weitzenhoffer, 'What did he (Bernheim) say? A postscript and an addendum,' *International Journal of Experimental and Clinical Hypnosis* 33, 1980, pp. 24-31. Cf. also Clark C. Hull, *Hypnosis and Suggestibility: An Experimental Approach*, New York: Appleton Century, 1933, in which he describes hyper suggestibility as the only characteristic of hypnosis and the only justification for calling it a 'state.'

[25] Sigmund Freud, 'Papers on Hypnotism and Suggestion,' (1882-1892), trans. James Strachey, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume 1, 1886-1889*, London: Vintage, 2001, p. 85.

[26] Cf. Freud, 'Papers on Hypnotism and Suggestion,' pp. 105-107. There always was a thoroughly theatrical nature to hypnosis. Cf. Regnard, 'Sleep and Somnambulism,' p. 273, 'One can shout suddenly and authoritatively in his ear, 'Sleep!' A theatrical gesture accompanying the command makes it more effective.' Isabelle Stengers 'The Deception of Power,' p. 83, attributes this kind of ego-driven domination of the hypnotised subject to Freud's failure with hypnosis. 'Freud's

precursor to the psychoanalytic method; a technique based on the patient's verbal revelation of a deeply held unconscious secret, *a story*, which was repressed from their waking conscious mind. The way Freud used suggestion, because he still used suggestion even without hypnosis, would aim to direct the patient towards the spoken revelation of this unconscious memory, which in its repetition, its dark habit, was affecting the patient's conscious behaviour.[27] The confessional technique had particular relevance in the treatment of hysteria, as according to Freud and Breuer in their *Studies on Hysteria*, 'hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences:'

> We found, to our great surprise at first, that each individual hysterical symptom immediately and permanently disappeared when we had succeeding in bringing clearly to light the memory of the event by which it was provoked and in arousing its accompanying affect, and when the patient had described that event in the greatest possible detail and had put the affect into words.[28]

The patient is caught in the cycle of the repetition of a memory; a human memory rather than a the repetition of a cosmic cycle or a prediction from the death bed or the gods. Freud aimed in analysis to revisit this *idée fixe*,[29] which, as though an *auto-suggestion*, had to be challenged or deleted in order to erase its position as inner puppet master of the patient, directing their every move. His object was to bring light to what lurked in the wings, forcing it onto centre stage, spot-lit, available to conscious awareness. However, verbal recollection in itself was not enough; the emotional drama of the original traumatic memory had to be *re-enacted* so that the full effect of its original damage could be felt again,

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disappointment in hypnosis has to do with both power and truth. The patient always escaped – he does not allow himself to be hypnotised by Freud.'

[27] Denys Dyer, 'Plus and Minus in Kleist,' p. 79, highlights the connection between this aspect of psychoanalysis and Kleist's figures. This focus on the narrating of hidden personal dramas is, as Borch-Jacobsen suggests in *Remembering Anna O: A Century of Mystification*, trans. Kirby Olson, New York and London: Routledge, 1996, p. 2 still entirely prevalent today; the past is thought to be the key to our present, as he puts it, 'Memory liberates, narration heals, history redeems.'

[28] Freud and Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria* (1893-1895), trans. James and Alix Strachey, London: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 3, 1955, p. 57.

[29] The repetition of fixed ideas had already been seen in writings such as Regnard, 'Sleep and Somnambulism,' p. 172, 'The patient absolutely ignorant of all her surroundings, neither perceiving sound or light, begins to follow out a dream which has the peculiarity of being always the same and is the reproduction of some event, or series of events, belonging to her experience.' Pierre Janet too, Freud's perceived 'rival' stated in 1888, 'The core of a hysterical attack, in whatever form it may appear is a *memory*, the hallucinatory reliving of a scene which is significant for the onset of the illness.' Quoted in Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, p. 193. A detailed and informative comparison of Freud and Janet can be found in Campbell Perry and Jean-Roch Laurence, 'Mental Processing Outside of Awareness: The Contributions of Freud and Janet,' *The Unconscious Reconsidered*, (eds.) K. Bowers and D. Meichenbaum, New York: John Wiley, 1984, pp. 9-48.

transferred now and acted out through the patient's relationship with their analyst.[30] Of course, the acting out of a drama, like all dramas, requires a director, and here, the role of director to the dramas occurring in the theatre of the unconscious was to be taken up by the analyst. Yet as the case of Bertha Pappenheim, (Anna O), along with many others, proves, neither Breuer nor Freud were entirely neutral directors; though neither was she a neutral patient.

It was Breuer who treated Anna O, and he saw her most afternoons.[31] They developed a close relationship in which their roles frequently changed places; in his notes he refers to her 'absences' and 'somnambulism,' during which, he would, *on her command*, hold her hands and have her tell stories, an activity which she named the 'talking cure' or 'chimney sweeping.' Whether or not the tales narrated by Anna O were related to 'real' episodes in her life, or came about under the influence of, direction of, or entertainment of Breuer, or herself, will probably never be known. However, that Anna O would have seen, or at least heard of, the well-publicised and popular performances by the Danish stage hypnotist Carl Hansen in Vienna at that time is extremely likely,[32] in which case she would know what sort of behaviour was expected of an hypnotised subject, and the many 'mimetic' theories of hysteria, in some part, would seem to ring true. But another question

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[30] 'The psychical process which originally took place must be repeated as vividly as possible; it must be brought back to its *status nascendi*.' Freud and Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*, p. 57.

[31] Breuer's case study of Anna O [Bertha Pappenheim] is in Breuer and Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, pp. 73-102. Breuer, Freud and Anna O, have been researched in minute detail, most recently by Borch-Jacobsen, *Remembering Anna O*. Other detailed studies include Henri Ellenberger, 'The Story of Anna O: A Critical Review with New Data,' *Journal of the History of Behavioural Sciences* 8, 1972, pp. 267-269; John Forrester, 'The True Story of Anna O,' *Social Research* 53:2, Summer 1986; Lucy Freeman, *The Story of Anna O: The Woman Who Led Freud to Psychoanalysis*, New York: Paragon House, 1990; Dora Edinger, *Bertha Pappenheim, Freud's Anna O*, Illinois: Congregation Solel, 1968; Dianne Hunter, 'Hysteria, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism: The Case of Anna O,' *The (M)other Tongue: Essays in Feminist Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, (eds.) Shirley Nelson Garner, Claire Kahane, and Madelon Sprengnether, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985; and more generally Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester, *Freud's Women*, New York: Basic Books, 1992. Freud claimed that Bertha went on to make a full recovery after her treatment, a fact which Borch-Jacobsen points out, and provides evidence for, wasn't true, as she ended up in another sanatorium where she remained ill for some time. She did, however, recover towards the end of the 1880's and in the 1890's took up literary and philanthropic activities which made her a pioneer of feminism and social work in Germany. In particular she worked with prostitutes, a fact that Richard Karpe, 'The Rescue Complex in Anna O's Final Identity,' *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 30, 1961, interprets as a public statement expressing her aversion to Freud's theories. She remained, always, extremely sensitive about the Breuer / Freud period of her life, her nervousness made worse by Breuer's publication of her case study 13 years after her treatment. According to Borch-Jacobsen, *Remembering Anna O*, pp. 25-28, it was largely on Freud's insistence that Breuer published the case study.

[32] Cf. Borch-Jacobsen *Remembering Anna O*, pp. 63-75; Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, pp. 302-306.

is: which came first – Anna O's symptoms or Breuer's diagnosis, writing, and directing of them?

Initially, Anna O suffered from a 'nervous cough.' Nevertheless Breuer, visiting her at home in November 1882, diagnosed her as an hysteric, and between December and April the next year she began to exhibit typically hysterical symptoms *for the first time*.[33]

Borch-Jacobsen defines hysteria as 'not a real illness,' but 'an illness that exists for the sake of the cure.'[34] And furthermore that, 'Breuer didn't so much uncover his patient's 'hysteria' as unleash it, by showing her that he was ready to play the game called hysteria. The first symptom of Bertha Pappenheim's hysteria was Breuer's diagnosis of it.'[35] Anna O's subsequent illness and her visits to Breuer became, although conducted in private, a theatre, a stage on which she could act to the rapt attention of an audience. And in this respect one could see her as Breuer's puppet, enacting and re-enacting what she gradually worked out he wanted to see and hear.

However, although doctors from Elliotson to Charcot, to Breuer and Freud, saw the manifestation of hysterical symptoms as clear evidence of the body as a 'human machine,' which could potentially be controlled and redirected in its mechanism, entirely beyond the will of the patient[36] as Borch-Jacobsen has shown, there is actually no case in the history of hypnosis in which one could *prove* that the patient was not aware of her own performance, 'watching from the wings,' a spectator (and at least partial director) of her own theatricality.

Yet the question remains: why would an intelligent woman, such as Bertha Pappenheim, become involved in such a drama? Is the play-acting, the transference of something traumatic onto something less traumatic, its re-enactment as fictional drama, therapeutic in itself? Borch-Jacobsen concludes his study of Anna O by saying, 'Hysteria and hypnosis are not less real for being simulated. On the contrary, they are *sur*real in the sense of simulation's being pushed to the point where the body goes along with it.'[37] The control of one's body via the influences affecting one's mind can be so powerful that the body takes on a life of its own. Yet, however the whole scenario of psychoanalysis,

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[33] Borch-Jacobsen, *Remembering Anna O*, pp. 80-82. [His italic].
[34] Borch-Jacobsen, *Remembering Anna O*, p. 83.
[35] Borch-Jacobsen, *Remembering Anna O*, p. 84. He also points out, pp. 85-87, how many times Pappenheim herself confessed to Breuer that she was engaged in constructing a sham illness, which Breuer refused to take seriously, presumably because he saw what he most wanted to see, and to admit he had been duped would be humiliating.
[36] On this subject, Cf. Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*, New York: Pantheon, 1988.

especially in its early days, took on the form of fictional dramatisation and storytelling, even in a temporary sense, it did appear to have a therapeutic effect, which Borch-Jacobsen puts down to the fact that, 'what matters is not the factual (reproductive, constative) accuracy of the memory but only the narrative (productive, performative) truth of the story through which the subject *constructs* his or her history, for the benefit of the analyst.'[38] One remodels oneself, in front of an audience which either claps or boos when one gets something 'right' or 'wrong.' Like being a child all over again; repeating, testing, seeking the cues.

[37] Borch-Jacobsen, *Remembering Anna O*, p. 91. As too, Milton H. Erickson suggests, in *Advanced Techniques of Hypnosis and Therapy*, New York: Grune & Statton, 1967, p. 67, 'The best simulation is an actualisation.'

[38] Borch-Jacobsen, *Remembering Anna O*, p.7.

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