WILD OR DOMESTICATED
UNCANNY IN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES TO MIND

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY
THE ACADEMY OF FINLAND: MIND AND THE OTHER RESEARCH PROJECT
AND FINNISH ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

THE HOUSE OF SCIENCE AND LETTERS,
HELSINKI, FINLAND, SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2016

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Wild or Domesticated: Programme

Tuesday 20th September

9:00-9:30  
Registration & coffee

9:30-9:45  
Opening words, Professor Marja-Liisa Honkasalo, University of Turku

9:45-10:15  
Opening words, Professor Pauline von Bonsdorff, University of Jyväskylä

10:15-11:45  
Keynote-lecture: Professor Tanya Luhrmann, Stanford University
Knowing God: How local theory of mind helps us to explain supernatural experience

11:45-13:00  
Lunch

13:00-14:30  
**Workshop 6: Uncanny Landscapes, part 1**
*Convenors: Jon P. Mitchell, Karis Petty*

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<td>13:00</td>
<td>Jon P. Mitchell and Karis Petty: Introductions</td>
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<td>Callum Pearce: Gifts from the Hidden People: Spirits and the unheimlich in the landscape of a Zangskari village</td>
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<td>Alex Aisher: Emotion, Theory and Time: mutual inflections of the human and more-than-human in India’s 'last truly wild place'</td>
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<td>Jon Mitchell: How Landscapes Remember</td>
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<td>Helen Cornish: Uncanny enchantment: materiality of magico-religion in the Museum of Witchcraft (and modern witches)</td>
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13:00-14:30  
**Workshop 9: The hallucinatory uncanny: On the boundary of the normal and pathological mind?**
*Convenor: Susanne Ådahl*

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<td>Julian Goodare: Emotional Relationships with Spirit-Guides in Early Modern Scotland</td>
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<td>Mari Stenlund: How are psychotic and exceptional spiritual views of reality distinguished?</td>
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<td>Susanne Ådahl: Ethnographies of Voice Hearing in Finland</td>
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14:20-14:30 General discussion

14:30-15:00 Coffee/tea break

15:00-16:30 **Workshop 6: Uncanny Landscapes, part 2**  
*Convenors: Jon P. Mitchell, Karis Petty*

15:00-15:15 Karis Petty: Perception, the environment and the uncanny: Sensing the woodlands with a psychic medium who has impaired vision


15:30-15:45 Billimarie Lubiano Robinson: Wanderlust As Ritual: Wonder, Walking, & the Rise of the Solo Female Contemporary Artist Vagabond

15:45-16:00 Susannah Gent: The Wandering Mind: A filmic investigation of the uncanny and the walking body

16:00-16:30 General Discussion

**Workshop 2: The mind’s involvement with spiritual and supernatural realities.**  
*Convenors: Mirjam Mencej, Kaarina Koski*

15:00-15:30 Vladimír Bahna: Are beliefs a part of experiences, or experiences a part of beliefs?

15:30-16:00 Mirjam Mencej: Narratives about night witches and altered state of consciousness

16:00-16:30 Kaarina Koski: The mind as a source and a channel of uncanny experiences

**Workshop 7: The limits of reason**  
*Convenors: Vibeke Steffen, Kirsten Marie Raahauge*

15:00-15:10 Vibeke Steffen and Kirsten Marie Raahauge: Introduction: The Limits of Reason

15:10-15:30 Katriina Hulkkonen: Spirituality and Business in the Lives of Women Channellers

15:30-15:50 Reet Hiiemäe: Parodising Contemporary Vernacular Belief: The Question of Conflict, Interpretation and Symbiosis

15:50-16:10 Ülo Valk: Vernacular Strategies and Theories of Dealing with Ghosts in Contemporary Estonia

16:10-16:30 Concluding remarks and general discussion

17:00-19:00 Cocktail event, House of Science and Letters
Wednesday 21st September

9:00-10:30

Workshop 3: Neither real nor true – evidence and sensory overrides

*Convenor: Marja-Liisa Honkasalo*

- 09:00-09:20  Ehler Voss: The battle for evidence. The mediumistic trial in California
- 09:20-09:40  Luka Luka Šešo: "Reality" of traditional beliefs in supernatural beings
- 09:40-10:00  Marja-Liisa Honkasalo: Making sense of the unseen
- 10:00-10:30  Concluding remarks and general discussion

Workshop 11: Images, madmen and the haunted

*Convenor: Tiina Mahlamäki*

- 09:00-09:20  Annika Jonsson: The deceased as ghostly matter in social haunting
- 09:20-09:40  Tatiana Tiaynen-Qadir and Ali Qadir: Uncanny images and the literalism of authority
- 09:40-10:00  Mariella Asikanius: Aquinas: Can a madman be saved through sacraments?
- 10:00-10:30  Concluding remarks and general discussion

10:30-12:00

Keynote-lecture: Professor Simo Knuuttila, University of Helsinki

*Demons, Odd Experiences and Galenist Medical Philosophy*

12:00-13:00

Lunch

13:00-14:00

Workshop 6: Uncanny Landscapes, part 3

*Convenors: Jon P. Mitchell, Karis Petty*

- 13:00-13:15  Patti Lean: Uncanny Landscapes
- 13:15-13:30  Genevieve Lutkin: The Uncanny Landscape in the Cinematic Space
- 13:30-14:00  Concluding remarks and general discussion

14:00-14:30

Coffee/tea break

14:30-16:00

Workshop 1: The “Domus” as “Shared breath:” a way to challenge the boundaries between “reality” and belief among indigenous peoples

*Convenor: Laura Siragusa*
14:30-14:50 Karina Lukin: Knowing and Encountering the Otherworld in Nenets Shamanistic Poetry
14:50-15:10 Madis Arukask: Where do the shepherd dwell?
15:10-15:30 Sarah Carmen Moritz: Co-Creation and Reenactment of the Relationship between St’át’imc Salish People and the Salmon People in the Fraser River Valley
15:30-16:00 Concluding remarks and general discussion

**Workshop 4: Psychoanalytic approaches to the uncanny**
*Convenor & Chair: Jussi Kotkavirta*

14:30-14:50 Susannah Gent: The Neuroscientific Uncanny: An investigation into the limits of scientific method
14:50-15:10 Peppi Sievers: Sense of sacred in psychotherapy
15:10-15:30 Sami Santanen: The Uncanny and Experience
15:30-16:00 Concluding remarks and general discussion

**17:30-19:00**
Guided tour of Suomenlinna

**19:00**
Conference dinner at Restaurant Suomenlinnan Panimo

**Thursday 22nd September**

**9:00-10:30**
**Workshop 8: Discernment: Recognising the Presence of Spirits, part 1**
*Convenors: Fiona Bowie, Jack Hunter*  
*Chair: Emily Pierini*

09:00-09:10 Jack Hunter: Welcome and Introductions
09:10-09:30 Jack Hunter: What discernment might tell us about the nature of consciousness
09:30-09:50 Fiona Bowie: Spirit Release as Therapy: An Alternative Western Tradition
09:50-10:10 Terence Palmer: Spirit Release Therapy and the Art of Discernment
10:10-10:30 General discussion

**Workshop 5: The possibilities of an encounter: Differing realities, shifting contexts**
*Convenors: Pirjo Virtanen, Inkeri Aula, Eleonora Lundell*
09:00-09:20  Terhi Utriainen & Peik Ingman: The Relational Dynamics of Enchantment and Sacralization: Changing the Terms of the Religion vs Secularity Debate
09:20-09:40  Jamie Barnes: The Speaking Body – Metaphor and the Expression of Extraordinary Experience
09:40-10:00  Lea Kantonen & Pekka Kantonen: Negotiating with ancestors in the planning of a community museum
10:00-10:20  Riitta-Marja Leinonen: “Straight from the horse's mouth” – Uncanny experiences of communicating with non-human animals
10:20-10:30  Concluding remarks and general discussion

10:30-12:00  Keynote-lecture: Assistant Professor Diana Espirito Santo, The Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
             *Trickster Spirit Ethnographies in Rethinking Concepts of Belief and Representation*

12:00-13:00  Lunch

13:00-14:30  **Workshop 8: Discernment: Recognising the Presence of Spirits, part 2**  
*Convenors: Jack Hunter, Fiona Bowie  
*Chair: Fiona Bowie*
13:00-13:20  Emily Pierini: Discerning Spirits, Defining Selves: Learning Semi-Conscious Trance in the Vale do Amanhecer
13:40-14:00  Irene Majo Garigliano: Drinking blood, dancing on swords: What a deity can do, and a human cannot.
14:00-14:30  Concluding remarks and general discussion

**Workshop 10: “It’s Alive!” – Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Popular Culture**  
*Convenor: Heidi Kosonen*
13:00-13:05  Opening words
13:05-13:20  Heidi Kosonen: Haunted. – Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Taboo-Mediating Cinematic Representations of Suicide
13:20-13:35  Essi Varis: Whither Does This Senseless Curiosity Lead Us? – Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Graphic Frankenstein Adaptations
WORKSHOP 1: The “Domus” as “Shared breath:” a way to challenge the boundaries between “reality” and belief among indigenous peoples

Meeting the supernatural and engaging with non-human beings is often not perceived as “uncanny” among indigenous peoples. Rather, it is felt as an experience which brings together several aspects of life, including human and non-human beings, and which connects to the environment, and brings back (or not) social order.

With this workshop, we challenge the assumption that there is a strict distinction between “reality” and “magic/belief” through an analysis of verbal art. We are interested in enchantments and other verbal “magic” practices among indigenous groups. More specifically, we inquire how the spoken word along with the intentional breath, is the space through which negotiations with non-human beings take place. Within this space, humans and non-humans demonstrate to have agency and be able to influence the course of life events. The “domus” in which they simultaneously dwell, therefore, surpasses a merely geographical conceptualization, but encompasses also the breath, its intentionality, and the spoken word. By adding a new focus to the concept of “domus,” the workshop links to a contemporary discussion on the relations between the individual, non-humans beings (animals, spirits, etc.), and the territory in which they live.

Reference
ERC (European Research Council) funded project Arctic Domus, University of Aberdeen, Scotland (PI Prof. David Anderson)

Convenor: Laura Siragusa
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Knowing and Encountering the Otherworld in Nenets Shamanistic Poetry
Karina Lukin
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Nenets shamanistic poetry consists of sung epic and ritual poetry that both dwell in the same landscape. This scenery is at the same time built on the everyday premises of the Nenets nomadic way of life and on the possibilities of orally projecting images of the otherworld on
this quotidian landscape. The images projected, are produced by specialists in oral poetry that master the traditional contents and imagery of the poetry, its structural and linguistic features, and the strategies for the production. Travelling, encounters, and negotiations are central in Nenets shamanistic poetry, as well as the possibilities of misunderstanding, misconduct, and fierce violence following them. The performance of the poetry is governed by poetic and musical conventions that both link the epic and ritual poetry and set them apart in certain respects.

This paper explores the interconnections between Nenets epic and ritual poetry. It will discuss the notions of the song (syo) and the word (wada) as key terms that open up views on the Nenets understanding of possibilities of knowing about the otherworld, being in contact with it, and transmitting the information about the otherworld. The paper will show that Nenets knowledge about the otherworld is profoundly connected to the ideas of dissemination of this knowledge through interaction, and through the voice and words of those who took part in or witnessed the interaction. Travelling, as a precondition for encounters and interaction, is intertwined in poetry with the notions of singing and word, and travelling connects the mythic landscape with otherworldly beings and the poetics.

The presentation is based on the corpus of Nenets shamanistic poetry collected by Matthias Alexander Castrén in 1840s and Toivo Lehtisalo in 1910s. It will discuss two genres, namely the epic syudbabts and the ritualistic sampadabts.

**Keywords:** oral poetry, shamanism, Nenets, landscape, Otherworld, knowledge

**Where do the shepherd dwell?**
Madis Arukask
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The Finnic/North Russian shepherd as a person and/or social role is a marginal in-between, somebody to whom during the herding season different taboos (moral, behavioural, sexual) may apply. The taboos „are taken” by him according to the magical agreement with the forest spirit who takes then the cattle then under his protection. Even today in the northern parts of Russia that kind of shepherds who have used or are using this kind of magic can be found. Also for the ordinary members of community this kind of relationship between shepherd and forest is nothing too supranormal.

This way the „position” of shepherd remains between the human society and forest/wilderness. He dwells in his own „autistic room”, holding distance with everything human and daily, and assuring this way the forest’s protection over the cattle. The shepherd’s relationship with forest (differently to the hunter or gatherer) is not active or contacting. Nordic shepherd does not dominate over the livestock (differently what Ingold 2002: 72 – 75 states), he is not fully the representative of human community, but rather some kind of „hostage” of forest.

In the herding period shepherd uses to keep silent. Nevertheless, the verbal magic has its role in the herding, especially on the St. George’s day when cattle is let out. This day the ritual is made where the cattle has circled by shepherd using some magical items. The ritual takes
place (as expected) somewhere on the border of the village, near forest. The special prayer-like charm is performed by shepherd or by the village sorcerer/healer. Often the same text has been written on the paper (Bobrov & Fintšenko 1986) and if the shepherd was illiterate somebody else might read it in the ritual. I have managed to copy/photograph that kind of texts from my Vepsian informants. As artefacts these texts on paper have been magical proofs about the competence of shepherd. Shepherd had to keep this paper away from other people not to breach the contract with forest and loose the magic protective power—similarly to healer who keeps his charms strictly himself.

**Keywords:** Finnic peoples, folk magic, forest, North Russia, shepherd, verbal magic, written

**References**

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**Co-Creation and Reenactment of the Relationship between St’át’ímc Salish People and the Salmon People in the Fraser River Valley**

Sarah Carmen Moritz
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The St’át’ímc Salish communities have thrived in governing their traditional fisheries in the Fraser River Valley of British Columbia, Canada, for centuries. It is said that this is not just because there were laws and social institutions in place but because these laws and institutions are grounded in a particular way of thinking about, communicating with, and honouring fish, fishing and fishing technologies. This system of beliefs includes profound notions of respect and collaboration in co-creating the relationships that sustain ‘life’, ‘body’, ‘mind’, ‘spirit’ and ‘home’ (domus). St’át’ímc believe(d) that all living things were once people and they are respected as such. It was believed that the salmon runs were lineages in relations of kinship to human lineages and that as long as the salmon were allowed to return to their home rivers to spawn, then both lineages would thrive. First fish, particularly ‘wild’ salmon, ceremonies before the annual harvest and return of salmon were conducted to welcome the first fish and ensure posterity through respect, friendship and proper treatment. Prayers, songs, speeches and ceremonial actions were conducted to give recognition to the spirits of the salmon and to co-create through reenactment the space and conditions necessary to ensure the possibility of continued life, growth and unity. The primacy of the salmon in this reciprocal relationships sustains the livelihood and wellbeing of the human community which is highly endangered in times of fluctuation in salmon stocks and in destruction of salmon habitat. Drawing on a variety of historical and contemporary ethnographic (mis-)representations of the relationship between the salmon people and their human kin and on the rationale underlying the current efforts to revitalize these practices in the Upper St’át’ímc context, this paper will explore explicit notions of the domus that challenge prevalent externally imposed dichotomies such as wild/domesticated and belief/reality by showing
how the distinct components of these relationships are inextricably entangled in the simultaneity of the literal and the symbolic in the fishing way of life.

**Keywords:** St’át’imc Salish, traditional fishery, traditional governance, salmon people, cultural revitalization, traditional ecological knowledge, relational ontologies, domestication, Indigenous law

**WORKSHOP 2: The mind’s involvement with spiritual and supernatural realities**

Belief systems which acknowledge the existence of other realities or supernatural beings sometimes assume that the encounters with them require an altered state of consciousness or a person with special mental abilities. States like trance, dream or deep meditation make people experience things which can, depending on the interpreter, be viewed as real contacts to other realities or as images emerging from one’s own mind. Also in a fully conscious state, people can encounter strange, mysterious, uncanny experiences. However, these are not always acknowledged or agreed upon by people and communities who give other meanings to the experiences. In an emic view, a mental susceptibility to otherworldly contacts can be viewed for example as a sign that spiritual beings have chosen the person to carry their messages. Or, the explanations are regarded merely a neural basis for phenomena which have a deeper spiritual significance. Lately, it seems that in the western societies, the role of the mind in uncanny encounters has increased while the images of other worlds have become culturally more fragmented and multiple. There are various reasons for the mind’s relevance, for example the psychological turn in popular thinking that has started transferring spirits from an outer reality to the human subconscious. The mind has a central role also in eastern philosophies which have gained popularity gradually within a century via esoteric and New Age movements. In addition to meditation, the training of one’s mind may have various goals involving other realities and psychic abilities. In other words, spiritual and mental are not mutually excluding aspects in the interpretation of uncanny experiences. This panel proposal welcomes papers which analyze the role or contribution of the mind in encounters and practices which are nevertheless interpreted as spiritual or supernatural.

**Convenors:**
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**Are beliefs a part of experiences, or experiences a part of beliefs?**
Vladimír Bahna  
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According to certain cognitive theories of religion, the attractiveness of supernatural representations is based on their contradiction to our intuitive expectations, which allows them to be easily remembered and transmitted. This theoretical framework was applied predominantly to the domain of cultural transmission, but, as it is argued here, it can be linked also to religious or supernatural experiences. This paper is focused on the concepts, of an agent capable of direct manipulation of other agents’ body states, what is contradictory to human intuitive expectation about agents. This specific type of counter-intuitive concepts has been so-far overlooked in the cognitive science of religion and the author claims that it can be crucial to explain the cognitive background of experiences which are linked to supernatural agency (e.g. sense of presence, possessions, glossolalia etc.). On one hand culturally shared beliefs about such agents, can be used as explanatory models for different bodily experiences. On the other hand, several naturally occurring body states disturb the sense of self-agency and lead spontaneously to attribution of these body states to external agency, which can hence lead to a new formation and further spread of supernatural agent beliefs of this kind. This paper is based on ethnographic data from north-west Slovakia.

Keywords: supernatural experiences, counter-intuitiveness, sense of agency, feelings, body perception.

Narratives about night witches and altered state of consciousness
Mirjam Mencej
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The field research conducted in rural eastern Slovenia in 2000-2001 revealed a great number of narratives, usually first or second hand memorates about people being led astray by witches in the forests at night. In everyday communication these narratives fulfilled various social functions, but the core features of the descriptions of the experience – such as seeing the lights, references to the shift of consciousness, a sensation of flight and circular movement – show remarkable similarities with characteristic features of altered state of consciousness. This paper aims to show that in these narratives at least some people described a genuine experience of an altered state of consciousness, which they tried to express with the aid of available cultural vocabulary.

Keywords: experience, altered states of consciousness, witches, narratives, cultural vocabulary

The mind as a source and a channel of uncanny experiences
Kaarina Koski
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The role of the mind is manifold in the explanations which people give to their own uncanny experiences. In Finland, reactions toward personal uncanny experiences are ambiguous, reflecting the controversial status of both the experiences themselves and the stereotypical expectation of interpreting them as supernatural or paranormal. Even though the interest towards new forms of spirituality has recently increased, supernatural beliefs are widely
considered as contrary to common sense and rational ideals. My research materials – internet discussions and letters containing written experience narratives – show that people do have uncanny experiences regardless of their worldview and beliefs. They sense for example encounters with beings or persons who are not physically present, or they experience precognitions, telepathy or out-of-body experiences. Not everyone is willing to interpret their experiences as supernatural or paranormal. One solution which feels more legitimate to Finns with a science-based worldview is to turn to psychological explanations. Psychological ponderings have entered everyday discourse gradually during the 20th century. Today, it is quite common that the experiencers themselves mention the contribution of their emotions and desires to the experience and locate the source of the encountered ghosts or spirits in the mind. This does not mean denying the reality of the experience but finding an acceptable explanation to it. Beside psychology, the increased role of the mind resonates with contemporary spiritual and wellbeing movements which apply meditative techniques. Meditation and altered states of consciousness are not only regarded as a source but as a channel of the encounters. As suggested in various belief systems old and new, these states make it possible to contact other realities. For some people, the other realities only exist in their own subconscious which they are able to contact e.g. in dreams. Others feel they contact another, perhaps supernatural.

WORKSHOP 3: Neither real nor true – evidence and sensory overrides
How do you convince someone of the existence of the invisible and non-existing? How do you make people believe that voices that no one else hears are real and true? Questions of evidence and proof are crucial for the research on the uncanny. The uncanny is also a domain that crystallizes many of the current interdisciplinary problems when it comes to questions of evidence. Different disciplines, policies and institutional practices define the criteria of evidence in different ways. In our western society the criteria that measures validity, is based on quantitative and measurable ground. This leads to a series of political questions on power. Today, researches speak of ‘regimes of evidentiality’ as a place where science, knowledge, organizations and power meet. In interdisciplinary research, who has the right to define the criteria of evidence? Who can decide how to represent evidence? These are only few questions that our panel wants to pose and to base discussions on.

The research into evidence is split into different academic domains. In anthropological research, the testimonies that people use when they do not have any other ways to convince other than their own experience comprise a certain sort of speech acts in the category of desperate evidence providing. They illuminate “the lacking of evidence” in the meaning of not being able to communicate the experience in a proper way when the power discourses are such as law or medicine. Research on testimony – and evidence- has been rich in history, especially concerning miraculous healing, canonization, court cases and experiences of war victims, and more recently among the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers. A large amount of literature in the humanities originates from the studies on the narratives of the Holocaust survivors.

Convenor:
Marja-Liisa Honkasalo
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The battle for evidence – The mediumistic trial in California
Ehler Voss
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In my research I follow the controversy about mediumism, i.e. the testing of the capabilities and potentials of both technical media and human mediums. Throughout the 19th century mediumism was the subject of a controversy which was staged as a great transatlantic public debate between religious and secular interests and this controversy has had a significant impact on the way mediumism has been discussed and tested in other regions of the world as well. Towards the end of the 19th century mediumism was “domesticated” by various strategies in public discourse, through archaization (attributing it to a premodern state of mind), psychological immanenziation (transferring magical agency to the “psyche” or the “mind”) and pathologization (treating and separating the individual). Even if this led to the dissolution of extensive public debates on mediumism, the testing of mediumistic capabilities and potentials of humans in altered states of consciousness as well as technology has not yet disappeared in the 21st century. In the 20th and 21st century, mediumistic trials continue to be conducted (e.g. in neuroscience, psychiatry, parapsychology, mind research, consciousness studies, churches, esotericism, ethnology, art, and the skeptic movement) and they regularly produce new controversies and “trading zones” for different claims and interests. These controversies constitute a field in which the boundaries between technical media and human mediums, believing and knowing, fake and authenticity, religion and the secular are constantly negotiated and often blur.

Based on anthropological fieldwork among ghost hunters, magicians, parapsychologists, spiritualists, and skeptics in California, a region where many mediumistic trials of the 20th and 21st Century received crucial impulses, I will show the current attempts of proving or disproving “the paranormal” and the potentials of the human mind and inspired by Science and Technology Studies I will interpret these findings against the background of the history of mediumism from a symmetrical perspective.

"Reality” of traditional beliefs in supernatural beings
Luka Šešo
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For more than a hundred years, witches, mòras, werewolves, fairies and other creatures have been in the focus of Croatian ethnologists and folklorists who have collected numerous accounts about folk life mentioning these supernatural beings. My recent field work in Dalmatian hinterland (part of Croatia) has shown that today groups and individuals still tell vivid stories, and some even believe in supernatural beings. Thus, in this paper I will try to understand the role the belief in supernatural beings plays in the community in which they appear. I will argue that even today the regulation of social norms is one of the main social roles of the “existence” of supernatural beings. The breaking of taboos, social, moral or religious values causes someone to become a werewolf or to encounter some other supernatural being that punishes the offender. Supernatural beings also serve as a means of
social strain gauge. Dissatisfaction and the unwillingness to accept unfavorable condition presuppose the existence of witches and mòras in a community who take the responsibility for all the troubles. Supernatural beings, in which often real, undesirable members of the community can be recognized, become scapegoats responsible for the misfortune and thus clear the accused of the responsibility for the problem. Emphasizing personal beliefs in supernatural beings for some inhabitants of the Dalmatian hinterland also serves for expressing their own affiliation with a certain group. By having information, knowledge about certain events and occurrences, and finally by demonstrating their own involvement in the problem of supernatural beings, certain individuals in the Dalmatian hinterland show that they belong to the community and connect the belief in supernatural beings with their home. At the same time, supernatural beings have the purpose of indirect determination of the relationship toward other ethno-confessional groups. By attaching negative characteristics of supernatural beings to the Others or by comparing the members of other groups with particular supernatural beings, the differences between groups are emphasized. Today, from the interlocutors we can also learn that the beliefs in supernatural beings were used (and still are) in illegal gaining of profit as well as improving certain individual’s unfavorable status. The mechanism is the same. Witty individuals reach after supernatural characteristics and the symbolism of supernatural beings and use them in order to fool those who still strongly believe in them and their power.

Making sense of the unseen
Marja-Liisa Honkasalo
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This paper is concerned with people’s attempts to describe their experiences of sensory overrides and to make them comprehensible to the listener. As data, I make use of the over 180 letters on kumma, the uncanny, that our research project Mind and the Other (mindandotjer.com) received spontaneously after some belittling and ridiculing news in the Finnish media. The people who wrote to us about their kumma experiences mention that they have not shared the experience with others frequently. This has been noted also in earlier research. The writers mentioned that the reason why they didn’t tell anyone about these experiences was to avoid the feeling of stigmatization and the feeling of not being understood. Some writers wrote that they had encountered professionals of e.g. the health care sector or the church who had had deprecating or insulting attitudes. Many writers started their letters by asking us researchers to help them – this was due to them having recurrently been disappointed with the encounters they had had with other social institutions.

Several letters resemble testimonies and most writers know that the reader probably does not share the same world of experience. They as writers fear not being able to provide the kind of evidence that the medical personnel, state officials – including us as researchers – want as a form of truth. The evidence they provide consists of intricately detailed written descriptions of “unsayablity”. In this paper I compare these attempts at shaping the evidence in the letters with narratives of pain, the results of a study I carried out earlier, in order to analyze the ways in which the interlocutor seeks to convince the listener.
WORKSHOP 4: Psychoanalytic approaches to the uncanny

Ever since Freud published his famous essay *The Uncanny* in 1919, the notion has had a prominent place in psychoanalytic thinking. Following Freud's discussion it has been particularly important in interpreting psychoanalytically works of literature and art, but its significance is actually much wider when we think of how the past is present in our lives and minds. Something that seems to be familiar or homely may turn into something strange, frightening and uncanny. This is because we never are fully aware of all the possible conflicts and anxieties within us or between us as individual minds. It is pivotal for psychoanalytic thinking in general to be always open to such ambiguities, and the notion of uncanny has proved to be indispensable here.

Freud himself was originally a neuroscientist, who invented psychoanalysis and then gave up the project researching the connections between mind and brain. His principal interest in these connections remained however. More recently the discussions concerning neuropsychoanalysis have been lively indeed and new theoretical ideas as well as applications are brought up. This is the case with the uncanny as well. The workshop is built up of three papers that approach the uncanny from different perspectives, neuroscientific, philosophical and religious, and also discuss the wider significance of psychoanalytic approaches to the uncanny. The overall aim is to contribute to the discussions of the conference topics.

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The Neuroscientific Uncanny: An investigation into the limits of scientific method
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Filmmaker Susannah Gent employs a diverse range of methodological approaches to investigate the uncanny, including art practice, psychoanalysis, and scientific method. Following Mark Solm's assertion: 'There can't be a mind for neuroscience and a mind for psychoanalysis. There's only one human mind', (Schwartz 2015) she believes that interdisciplinary approaches will reveal interesting peripheral elements which would not come to light through single field investigations. In 'Das “Unheimlich”' Freud describes the uncanny as a ‘class of fear’. For many years emotion has been considered too subjective and inappropriate for scientific study yet it was Freud's conviction that psychoanalysis was a science. Recent brain imaging technology has lead to a resurgence of interest in emotion in scientific fields. Gent’s research involves an eye tracking survey and an fMRI study which aim to see if scientific approaches can lead to uncovering a neurological underpinning to the uncanny. This study is combined with an experimental film project which documents the process as well as instilling uncanny sensations in the audience, an approach which recognises art practice as a form of research. By allowing the creative process, a method led by non- or unconscious affective decision making, an external artefact, in this case an experimental film, can provide the focus for intersubjective dialogue against a backdrop of objective, scientific method. Currently Gent has undertaken a behavioural study which has
produced an image set of 300 images rated according to eeriness valance by 250 participants. In this presentation Gent will look at the top ten of those images and discuss why she feels psychoanalysis offers the best analytical tools for understanding how these images act upon the participants. The image set is intriguing and includes, in the top ten, an image of euphemistically named prairie oysters from a cookery blog, suggesting that the Freudian castration complex may hold a place in the collective human psyche. This research-in-progress evaluation of interdisciplinary approaches is underpinned by the conviction that humanistic investigations can compliment scientific research as they employ methods unavailable to objective research, essential when researching subjectivity. Ultimately Gent believes that our experience of the uncanny stems, in part, from the haphazard evolutionary development of the brain, where mismatches between our consciousness experiences and unconscious processes produce cognitive dissonance. This indicates a gap or grey area between what we experience and what we think we know.

**Keywords:** uncanny, psychoanalysis, neuroscience, neuropsychoanalysis, interdisciplinary, consciousness, unconscious, Freud, Damasio, brain

**References**
The images below are from the behavioural survey, discussed above, which would form part of the proposed presentation.

**Sense of sacred in psychotherapy**
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In my doctoral thesis I have studied how psychotherapists manage the religious, spiritual or existential material of their patient’s. In this qualitative study I analysed interviews of 11 psychodynamic and 9 cognitive psychotherapists. My main focus is to describe what it feels like to work with this kind of material and why this material is still sometimes so specific in its nature, that it is difficult to work with. It was a real surprise to me that some of the psychotherapists really sensed or realised moments when their patients were in contact with their own deep sense of sacred or holy. When this happened, they ceased to work with psychotherapeutic tools and just respected their patients experience. They did not have need to verbalize or rationalize these phenomena. It was something that was happening on the level of experience.

One of the core ideas in my dissertation is that people are object-oriented from birth. We form internal representations of objects and of ourselves in relation to these objects. These representations in our mind change constantly, if we let them change. Very meaningful in this respect is the so called transitional space. In the childhood transitional space first develops
when the child uses some kind of transitional object. This object represents at the same time part of something outside of the child, and something inside his/her mind. In an optimal situation this transitional space stays with the person and it can be used in a very creative way. If one can use his/her transitional space freely, art, religion and new scientific theories develop.

Transitional space is also the place where all knowledge of experiences lies. Here we are mostly human beings and can experience how other humans, things, phenomena and relations feel. These are also experiences we are not capable of fully expressing in words. These experiences are possibly uncanny and at least deeply personal.

In psychotherapies people are asked to talk and express everything that is on their mind. If psychotherapy is to be optimally beneficial to the person this deep level of experiencing should also come to the front. Then it is crucial how the psychotherapist listens to her/his patient. If the psychotherapist is too hasty with her/his interventions or can’t reach this level of being with the patient, the results of psychotherapy can be disintegrating to the patient instead of the patient becoming more whole.

**Keywords:** psychotherapy, transitional space, representations of the mind, object-oriented, religion, spirituality, knowledge of experiences, holy, sacred

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**The uncanny and experience**

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“"The ego is not master in its own house” (S. Freud). In philosophical terms: “The subject is not master in its own house” (B. Waldenfels). This state of affairs is a matter of experience, although the experience proves to be of extraordinary character. In this paper I compare Freud’s psychoanalytic approach to the experience of the uncanny and Waldenfels’s phenomenological conception of what he calls the alien experience (Fremderfahrung), that is, of the pathicity of experience. What I’m trying to show is that there are, in Freud’s analysis, some elements that help to understand the radicality of the idea of the alien experience. At the same time there are to be found certain aspects of the uncanny resonating in Waldenfels analysis that are more stressed by other thinkers than Freud.

To begin with the experience of the uncanny, let it be noted that Freud approaches the uncanny from the point of view of the psyche. As to my topic the discussion that Freud devotes at the outset of the article “The Uncanny” (das Unheimliche) (1919) to the meanings of the German word unheimlich (uncanny) is of central importance. He finds that the word heimlich – the latter component of the word unheimlich signifying usually “familiar” or “homely” – also means “secret”, “kept from sight” (or otherwise repressed) that is identical to its opposite unheimlich. Unheimlich and heimlich (“unfamiliar” and “familiar”), then, are intertwined, they are in this respect not opposites. Freud quotes the Schellingian formula “everything is unheimlich that ought to have to remain secret and hidden but has come to light” and, consequentially, links the phenomenon of the uncanny to repression, to the return of the repressed. Here I would like, however, to refer to Heidegger’s view of the uncanny. He sees the familiar as a mode of the uncanniness while Freud in “The Uncanny” holds that “the uncanny [...] leads back to what is known of old and long familiar".
For Bernard Waldenfels this kind of difference has no relevance although the moment of the alien (Fremde) gains in importance and is radicalized in his analysis of pathic experience. For him the uncanny described by Freud permeates the home, the familiar resulting in the alien experience inhabited by the uncanny. The extra-ordinary nature of this experience and e.g. the spatial implications will be discussed.

WORKSHOP 5: The possibilities of an encounter: Differing realities, shifting contexts
Research as the encounter between the researcher and his or her subject inevitably brings the researcher to partake in differing contexts and realities, in which different perceptions and notions apply. This panel looks at cultural analyses of differing ontological, epistemological, and ethical contexts and realities, where finding adequate tools for analysis poses challenges. The research data, for example, tends to be translated into existing fields of science, with their own language, discourse, and paradigms, but in order to make appropriate analysis of cultural experience, assemblages, actor-networks, or different onto-ethico-epistemologies (Barad 2007) requires sensitivity to shifting contexts.

Previous studies have already addressed questions related to these issues, such as what in fact are the contexts to be compared. Shifting contexts of knowledge-production include broader and narrower formations, between which the scientific analysis draws comparisons and moves during the research process (Strathern 1995, 2014). Yet, collaborative, engaged, and experimental research has altered the ‘sites’ where research is being carried out, and the boundaries of difference are constantly on the move. These shifting frameworks often overlap and encompass each other. Research collaborators may have divergent perspectives and positions for constructing both cognitive and social contexts for interaction, and they may emerge differently in individual’s everyday lives. Diverse non-human entities, such as objects, animals, and plants, and other life forms exercise their social power in ways that are challenging for a scientific analysis wishing not to explain away these kinds of phenomena in a reductive manner. Meanwhile, the contemporary ‘west’ has been labeled by some as living a post-secularist era characterized by a search for re-enchantment.

In these new shifting contexts of research, the notions related to subjectivity and agency are tightly connected to places and territories, to time and space, and to how social relations are produced and interpreted. In the process, the purpose remains to enhance understanding and not reduce difference. This panel invites papers to discuss, but is not restricted to, the following topics:

- How can we make productive analysis of different onto-ethico-epistemologies?
- How can shifting contexts of research be experienced by researcher and research collaborators?
- How are (non)human agencies included in the making of the research process?
- How to do justice to differently conceived ontologies and contexts in a scientific analysis?
- How to gain, find, and produce appropriate relations, categories and concepts during the analysis?

Convenors:
Pirjo Kristiina Virtanen
University of Helsinki
This presentation serves to inform about a forthcoming edited volume with the above title (October 2016, Equinox).

The volume revisits the concepts of enchantment and sacralization in light of perspectives which challenge the modern notion that man (alone) is the measure of all things. As Bruno Latour has argued, the battle against superstition entailed shifting power away from God/the gods to humans, thereby disqualifying the agency all the other objects in the world. We ask, might enchantment and sacralization be understood in other ways than through this battle between almighty gods and almighty humans? Might enchantment be understood to involve processes where power and control are not distributed so clearly and definitively?

Like social constructionists, Latour emphasizes that things are constructed, yet, like many other new materialists, such as Jane Bennett, Manuel De Landa and Karen Barad, he emphasizes that this construction is not the result of projecting meaning onto a passive and meaningless world, but a matter of compositional achievements, whereby assemblages of actants co-compose each other and frame, enable and delimit one another’s agency. This move recognizes the active participation of players beyond the humans versus God(s) framework that informed the modernist project. Understanding enchantment and sacralization as compositionally and relationally constructed does not mean the same as understanding them as constructed by humans alone. What it means is one of the main questions posed in this book. In other words, if enchantment and sacralization are not understood (solely) in terms of projecting anthropocentric meaning onto mute objects, what are some promising alternative approaches (old and new) and what are their implications for how we understand modernity and for method and theory in the study of religion?

Discussing some key concerns and themes in the book, two of the co-editors will note the relevance of the volume for the present conference theme(s) and respond to questions concerning the contents of its 12 chapters. The presentation will also present the arguments
posed in the introduction regarding the benefits of directing the focus of religious studies onto the relational dynamics in diverse compositions involving enchantment and sacralization.

The Speaking Body – Metaphor and the Expression of Extraordinary Experience
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In this paper, building upon recent ‘ontological’ imperatives to take seriously the worlds of research participants and drawing upon anthropological work on the senses enabling us to conceive ‘alternative’ sensoriums not necessarily conforming to those dominant within secular societies, I argue that experience ‘in the body’ often acts as a powerful grounding force in both one’s sense of being-in-the-world and that-which-is. Events which may seem unusual or extraordinary within secular paradigms are not necessarily conceived as such within worlds where non-corporeal beings are not only thought to exist but also constitute vibrant aspects of one’s lived experience. However, in order to convey, and indeed make sense of ‘alternative’ experiences, actors often move or translate these experiences through metaphor into more familiar domains. Often one metaphor will not do, as it only translates one dimension of the experience, and as such obscures other elements. This paper considers one person’s metaphorical moves in order to convey an ‘extraordinary’ experience, namely a highly sensorial encounter with the divine. As the subject slides from one metaphor to another, for the listener, an increasingly lucid impression of the encounter emerges. And yet the experience itself, wrapped in human subjectivity, always remains beyond our grasp. The metaphors stretch toward the experience without ever being able to adequately express it. This paper argues that, in considering the architecture of religious experience, sensitivity to the use of metaphor (both its powers and its limits) is essential. Those seeking to take seriously and understand the ‘extraordinary’ experience of others need to appreciate how metaphor ‘works’ and how, within any social matrix, a listener’s experience of the ‘extraordinary’ – or lack of it – plays into the space of interaction, continually shaping the metaphors the ‘speaking other’ employs in order to make him or herself understood. Finally, entertaining a different notion of that-which-is invites us to reconceive our ideas about the nature of the sensorium by which that ‘reality’ is experienced and sensed and the nature of the body that conceives it. Through opening up our ideas about a) the sensorium, b) what exists that might be sensed, and c) the nature of the body that conceives it, we come closer to answering the ‘ontological’ challenge to take seriously ‘alternative’ domains of human experience.

Negotiating with ancestors in the planning of a community museum
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In the process of planning a community museum in the context of the Wixarika community-based school Tatuutsi Maxakwaxi (Our Great-grandfather Deertail) together with the Finnish NGO CRASH and Mexican university ITESO we need the permission of the community authorities as well as that of the deified ancestors (kaka+yari, plur. kaka+yarixi) for staying in the community, conducting art workshops and filming videos for the museum collections together with the teachers. The kaka+yarixi are usually benevolent, but some of them can be capricious at certain times. They communicate their wishes through dreams and chants of a maraakame, shaman-priest and through omens, for example sudden appearance and disappearance of certain animals and objects. They accept offerings in exchange of success, well being and good health. They may send sickness and misfortune if they are not venerated as they should. We, the teiwari, the non-wixarika, are not expected to give offerings to the kaka+yarixi, however, we should show them respect.

Our relationship with our informants, maraakame and community musician Niereme and craft teacher 'Utiam, has an aspect of collegiality since we collaborate as museum planners and art teachers. However we sometimes have difficulties in mutual understanding: they tend to see omens and interventions of kaka+yarixi where we only see coincidence, and it has implications for the museum planning. When this happens we need to discuss before we can proceed in our collaboration. Niereme and 'Utiam then explain events, interpret omens and negotiate with the kaka+yarixi for us.

Diana Espirito Santo ja Ruy Blanes apply the term "evidentiary regimes" for studying experiences of interaction with spirits. We relate to these regimes through practical cases. In this paper we refer to Niereme’s and 'Utiam’s experiences as evidence of kaka+yarixi. The cases studied are a videoed pilgrimage with offerings to the sacred place Turamukameta, an appearance of a scorpion, and a disappearance of two suitcases during a museology workshop.

“Straight from the horse’s mouth” – Uncanny experiences of communicating with non-human animals

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Anthropological evidence suggests that humans across times and cultures have experienced deep connection and communication with nature and non-human beings. (Plec 2013; Hurn 2012; Nadasdy 2007; Ingold 2000; Viveiros de Castro 1998). Today animal communication, which is understood here including acoustic, visual, tactile and telepathic communication, is considered part of the 'New Age' movement. However, it is also practiced by some animal healers (e.g. physiotherapists and energy healers) as a way to diagnose the animal’s condition. The view presented in this paper locates within the emerging field of internatural communication which explores interactions among and between humans, animals and other forms of life (Plec 2013). The theoretical-methodological approaches utilised in this research situate within the approaches of posthumanism and ethnography.

The goal of this paper is not to prove that telepathy between humans and animals exists, but rather open up discussion on what people experience as telepathic communication with animals. In other words, what is the ethico-onto-epistemology (Barad 2007) behind animal
communication. The research material includes in-depth interviews and written accounts of Finnish people who have experience of telepathy with animals. I inquired of them how they communicate with the animal. How do they explain the phenomena of telepathy? What makes it possible for them to “read” animal minds or receive telepathic information from them? What is their idea of the human and non-human mind?

**Keywords:** animal communication, internatural communication, experience, telepathy, posthumanism, ethnography, ethico-onto-epistemology

**References**

**WORKSHOP 6: Uncanny Landscapes**

This workshop explores the context of the uncanny as experienced through people’s embodied engagements with landscape. The understanding of landscape across the social and cultural sciences has shifted in recent years, away from the ‘objectifying’ vision of landscape as representation, or as a base upon which humans live and act. In its place has emerged a new concern with the materiality of landscape, with landscape as a context through which people live and move, and landscape as an agent or actant. This workshop picks up on this concern with landscape as ‘subject’ to raise questions about its capacity to generate the uncanny.

Across times and landscapes, people have reported uncanny experiences within, and of, landscape. This panel asks, do landscapes have inherent qualities that we experience as uncanny or is this uncanniness a product of our perception of the landscape? What are the theoretical and methodological implications of this question? Further, are these experiences brought about by what we might recognise as the landscape’s inherent “wildness”, or through the process of our dwelling in it? This panel asks whether we can understand landscapes as characterised by certain energies, memories, or affects, which are experienced as uncanny, as people move through them. What are the limits of an approach to landscape that pushes our research towards that which Abram (1997) referred to as a ‘more-than-human’ world?

The workshop revolves around a number of intersecting themes in the exploration of uncanny landscapes. Among these are questions of ontology and representation; questions of movement, travel and stasis; and questions of materiality and immateriality. Contributions
combine anthropological with artistic accounts of the uncanny, and examples come from Northern India, UK, and the Nordic regions.

References

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SESSION ONE
Gifts from the Hidden People: Spirits and the *unheimlich* in the landscape of a Zangskari village
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“"The landscape opens onto the unknown. It is, properly speaking, place as the opening onto a taking place of the unknown."
(Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*)

Anglophone discussions of landscape within Tibetan Buddhism have tended to focus on a putative ‘wild/tamed’ dichotomy thought to pervade religious symbolism and relations with local numina. Read alongside Jean-Luc Nancy’s claim that European landscapes only acquire a sense of the uncanny due to the absence of ‘blessed spirits’ following the decline of paganism and ‘the disappearance of the gods’ (2005: 60), this might lead us to suspect that the agrarian landscapes of Zangskar – a predominantly Tibetan Buddhist region of the Indian Himalaya – will not be characterised by any sense of the uncanny, but rather by a clear demarcation between spaces of certainty and danger: the landscape as a known area, understood through a defined scheme that banishes threatening elements to the margins. This, I argue, would be a mistake. Working from descriptions of encounters with *lhande* (spirits) and *beyulpa* (hidden people) around the Zangskari village of Karsha, related to me during a period of winter fieldwork in 2014, I will suggest that: 1) concepts of ‘wildness’ and the ‘wild/tamed’ dichotomy are entirely absent from lay Buddhist discourse, and 2) the landscape is characterised by a sense of threatening otherness comparable to both Jentschian and Freudian concepts of the *unheimlich*. The landscape encompasses other houses and other villages, and the sense of the uncanny that pervades it at night is linked to encounters with almost-human or semi-human beings. These spirits project an ambiguous familiarity and a fundamental epistemological uncertainty: a basic otherness, revealed at night, that lurks behind the social façade of day. This is an essential aspect of the agrarian Zangskari landscape, as it comes to be known to those who live within it, and emerges from the limitations of ordinary human perception.
Emotion, Theory and Time: mutual inflections of the human and more-than-human in India’s ‘last truly wild place’
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It is widely recognised among anthropologists that fieldwork does not end when you leave the field. For many, theoretical interpretation of field experiences continues to evolve over the years following fieldwork, in part through exposure to comparative data and diverse theoretical frameworks. This paper explores autoethnographically just such transformations over the decade following the author’s first fieldwork with the Nyishi, an animist tribe in the cloud forests of Arunachal Pradesh in India’s extreme Northeast, recently described by the WWF as ‘one of India’s last truly wild places’. The paper traces the transformations over time of the author’s theoretical and emotional understanding of Nyishi villagers’ oral accounts of their uncanny, highly-charged, often traumatic, conflicts with powerful master-spirits locally conceived to underpin the ecological dynamics and biological diversity of the dense forests surrounding upland villages. The paper offers a reflexive account of the transformations over the years following fieldwork of the author’s theoretical interpretation of uncanny more-than-human encounters of tribal informants, and how such interpretive transformations were influenced by the author’s own personal life experiences, emotional investments in the field, duty to informants, and exposure to successive waves of anthropological theory. In short, the paper explores how emotion, theory and language are intertwined and coevolve over time. The paper traces a movement through three distinct stages of ethnographic interpretation of uncanny phenomena. This begins with an interpretative stance during and immediately after fieldwork that is closely aligned, even identified, with villagers’ own perceptions of human-spirit conflicts and the associated trauma, suffering and fear of spirit-revenge. It then outlines the factors driving a later reductive historical interpretation of spirit-revenge as a cosmological product of centuries of clan warfare in the uplands. This leads to a later interpretation, held in the present day, that is more closely aligned with a ‘rational’ - comparative, historical, systems based - view of such human-spirit conflicts. The paper culminates in reflections on the value of a new wave of multispecies scholarship for developing a more nuanced understanding of both uncanny phenomena and the worked wild: an understanding grounded in the material agency of the landscape and more-than-human energies of animals, plants and holistic entities like forests, mountains and river catchments, and which bridges the divide between the otherness, aliveness and fertility of the more-than-human world and its vitality, immediacy and significance in human life.

How Landscapes Remember
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This paper considers the possibility that landscapes might have the potential to contain, store and transmit memories of their pasts, which are engaged experientially as uncanny. It focuses on the Neolithic temple site of Borg-in-Nadur, in Southern Malta, which as well as having been a site of prehistoric ritual activity, has more recently been the site of a significant devotion to the Virgin Mary, and a focus for national and transnational Goddess pilgrimage. The paper
examines the intertwining of prehistoric, Catholic and Neo-pagan accounts of Borg-in-Nadur, suggesting that we might adumbrate a shared uncanny that is immanent in its landscape.

**Uncanny enchantment: materiality, magico-religion and the Museum of Witchcraft**  
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Visitors to the Museum of Witchcraft (Cornwall, UK) commonly relate their uncanny experiences in the museum, and it seems to charm the most sceptical visitor. Situated at the foot of the harbour, nestled down a steep and winding route, its place in the landscape encourages ready connections to esoteric matters. This sense is reinforced by an expansive network of sacred sites that are seen to weave outwards from the museum, in addition to the plethora of occult, folkloric and magical objects displayed inside.

This paper will focus on the experiences of visitors who explicitly identify as modern Witches or Pagans. Through a focus on an inherent animism imagined through *genius loci* (spirit of place), these visitors situate their experiences within an understanding of environment, landscape and materiality that is live and active: places, sites and things literally have agency. In contrast to explanations of magico-religion as a transcendental or spiritual concept, these accounts demonstrate the extent to which the uncanny, as a practice, is experienced through materiality.

**SESSION TWO**  
Perception, the environment and the uncanny: Sensing the woodlands with a psychic medium who has impaired vision  
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This paper presents ethnography exploring the sensuous perception of English woodlands for a psychic medium named Amanda, who has congenitally impaired vision. This case study is part of an ethnography investigating the sensory perception and experience of the woodlands for walkers who have impaired vision, in the South Downs, England (2012-2014). I propose that the uncanny experiences Amanda described as a psychic medium and that I experienced in her company provides opportunities to reflect on anthropological conceptions of the environment, and the methodological, analytic and theoretical tools available for investigating uncanny experiences in natural environments. Walks through the woodlands with Amanda were characterised by uncanny experiences. I recount some of these uncanny experiences, describing her embodied and sensuous engagement with the woodlands as a psychic medium. I propose that these accounts of uncanny experiences within and of the environment contributes to theoretical (and therefore both methodological and analytic) reformulations of the environment beyond that of an objective back drop to human activities and extends to what Abram referred to as a ‘more-than-human-world’. This ethnography describes an environment sedimented with feeling tones of past activities that are sensed as “energies”, with which one can interact and alter. Thus, the environment is identified as processual, imbued “energetically” with, and altered by, human activities. Yet, there is also a sense of
agency or subjectivity of the environment, which Amanda recognised as changes in the weather, and the feel, sounds and motions of the environment. Suggesting that the environment embodies these “energies” with some kind of agency. I consider how anthropological approaches to the environment have principally been concerned with the human perceiver and the environment as *affording* perceptual experience (following Gibson 1979), identifying the human-centric dynamic implicit in this. Reflecting on the anthropological opportunities and limitations for investigating the environment and uncanny experiences, I open questions for ways forth. This paper is situated in a sensuous anthropology of the environment and explores sensory perception through embodied methodologies of apprenticeship.

**Auto-ban: the Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Uncanny**

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There’s something both utopian and uncanny about hitch-hiking. And yet this alternative method of travel is dead, or so many people say. Once a ubiquitous phenomenon of modern societies the world over, hitch-hiking in its more ‘pure’ form of expression is now largely regarded as extinct, at least in the western world. This paper examines this truism comparatively, in the context of Western versus Eastern Europe, considering both the social practice of hitch-hiking and its literary representation. It shall compare the ‘public’ waiting game of luring a car as a hitch-hiker with the hidden ‘private’ moments of being confined as an unwitting passenger. Recently, I have argued that this mode of transport is a valid ethnographic methodology as well as a powerful conceptual metaphor of dissent and subversion within the contemporary world of travel narratives (Laviolette, 2014 *Ethnos*). The presentation draws together my personal experience of this activity with hermeneutical readings of the auto-stop phenomenon as it occurs in the genre of travel writing and the ‘mobilities turn’ literature since hitch-hiking has inspired and been inspired by entire literary/artistic movements. In particular, the idea is to examine how the British landscape’s appearance has been ‘uncannified’ by the disappearance of the eccentric figure of the drifting hitch-hiker.

**Wanderlust As Ritual: Wonder, Walking, & the Rise of the Solo Female Contemporary Artist Vagabond**

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This presentation consists of empirical case studies which examine solo wandering women utilizing walking itself as a contemporary arts expression. It seeks to expose patterns in a variety of performances to show how the act of walking, the role of wonder, and the mysticism of a landscape are inexplicably linked in such an unexamined artform. Topics include wild inspiration, art as force/motion and motion as response, and the natural environment (with a special emphasis on forest landscapes) as a conduit for creation.

While we have seen the act of walking in the past as a means of thoughtless transportation, as political protest, as philosophical inquiry, as societal rebellion, as leisure...what has not been
examined is the act of walking aimlessly, otherwise known as wandering, as an artistic expression in and of itself. This proposal seeks to examine the role that wonder plays in the solo female contemporary vagabond artist’s work: wandering as an artistic practice, the role of wonder in art (specifically wandering art), nature as an art source (experienced through a feminine gaze), and how natural landscapes--specifically forests--can inspire artists and inform art.

**The Wandering Mind: A filmic investigation of the uncanny and the walking body**

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Susannah Gent, experimental filmmaker and interdisciplinary researcher of consciousness, employs walking as a strategy to explore the uncanny nature of the subjective experience. Her films investigate ways of representing walking as an act of synthesis of mind and body. Using the camera as a substitute for the eye, Gent considers the problem of recording the movement of the body through an environment, following a map of the landscape whilst simultaneously creating a neural map of the experience.

This paper contributes to a contemporary, interdisciplinary dialogue on the uncanny by drawing on the Freudian unconscious and Heidegger’s Dasein, alongside the recent work of neuroscientist Antonio Damasio. Damasio proposes a three tiered construct of self; the proto-, core-, and autobiographical self, with the proto-self being the nonconscious forerunner to consciousness, and present in all organisms with brains.

The paper explores this evolutionary view as a potential expansion of psychoanalytic and philosophical notions of selfhood, with the haphazard nature of mental evolution producing perceptual contradictions between thinking and being. With selfhood viewed as an evolutionary latecomer, the automaticity which underpins Dasein and the psychoanalytic unconscious can be seen as a mode of unity between an organism and its environment. This unity offers a potential new position from which panpsychism can be viewed and places consciousness in the position of an eerie bystander.

Gent’s filmic sketches are produced using a combination of structuralist and surrealist approaches; small cameras strapped to the body, combined with stream of consciousness monologue which attempt to render visible something of the subjective experience.

Although imperfect, these representations create a starting point through the presentation of an external object. In this way the film acts as an intermediate in the intersubjective dialogue of human consciousness.

Irving Massey suggests that ‘metaphors are incubators for ideas’, (Massey 2009) proposing that the visual language of metaphor and the dream are pre-linguistic in evolutionary terms. The relationship between art and the psychoanalytic unconscious is well established, with an intention of accessing and exploring dimensions of thought which underpin conscious cognition. In this way art practice acts as a form of research with unique and individualistic methods, and walking, which promotes automaticity and reflection is an ideal activity through which to undertake this approach to research.
My research examines and uses paint and painting as material expression for the kind of sensuous and sensate reciprocity with environment discussed by writers such as Abram. My focus is on particular views of northerliness, and draws on experience in Scotland and Iceland. My paper will explore uncanniness at two mountain locations, Snæfellsjökull and Ólafsfjörður, in north-west Iceland. It will begin by drawing on uncanniness in literary sources: Snæfellsjökull is the setting for Halldór Laxness’s 1972 novel, Under the Glacier, which tells of a naïve Christian emissary dispatched to investigate phantasms, shape-shifters and pagan rituals in a remote parish at the foot of the glacier. Ólafsfjörður is where I explored the mountains and read Laxness’s Independent People (1935), a novel that centres round a malevolent presence in the mountain, one that cuts through all attempts to embrace modernity, politics and progress in... sheep-farming methods. I will also refer to the episodic style and subject-matter of Laxness’s source, the Icelandic sagas, the settlement narratives that continue to inform and identify contemporary Icelandic culture.

The paper will go on to discuss the triggering of the uncanny in what Abram terms, ‘an expressive, gesturing landscape, in a world that speaks’. Here I will draw on my own research and experience of walking, eating and sleeping for weeks on end, in a terrain seems to be constantly shifting, moving, creaking, echoing and generally confounding normal perception. The language of natural science has names and explanations for many phenomena I experienced: the Bergie Selzer, glacial erratics, the Brockenspectre, the aurora borealis, noctiluence. And yet, experience of place, as affect, can lead to ‘feyness’: as Nan Shepherd (1977) puts it, ‘my fear unmans me, horror is in my mouth.’

Thirdly, working with the premise that painting embodies a feeling not a process, nor is necessarily a representation of landscape in the sense of ‘window-to-the-world’, I will address the category of the uncanny in painting, in contexts of non-verbal and pre-verbal experience of specific environments. The presentation will be illustrated with examples of works of visual art.

Freud writes that the uncanny is ‘a special core of feeling that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar’ – it is a double self that is always hidden within. The cinematic image is inherently rooted in the uncanny, being itself an uncanny doubling of the world. Joanna Lowry illustrates the dualism of the camera and the uncanny, describing the altering of one’s perception of event via the photographic preservation of it, ‘severed from the agency of our desire and returning to us a familiarised reality that we can recognise but can never actually see...’ (Lowry, Theatres of the Real, 2009).
Illusion, deception, trickery and distancing via the camera lens occurs through multiple cinematic devices, produced ultimately by controlling our experience of looking; the directed view of the camera angle, how much light shall enter into the scene and how the props are placed within the set. The viewer is invited to make the imaginative leap into the cinematic construction, and further, into the conceptions buried below their awareness. How does the uncanny landscape appear within this cinematic mise en scene? Artifically constructed as the set or evoked through an atmospheric soundtrack? And how does the camera/viewer travel through this strange terrain? Within the workshop I wish to explore these ideas through 3 points of enquiry:

- The Unheimlich
- Mirrored world
- Willing Suspensions

I propose to expand upon these in relation to a selection of case study films, examining the landscape in both as both a material and psychological space.

**WORKSHOP 7: The Limits of Reason**

This workshop is inspired by two apparently opposed characteristics of modern societies globally: On the one hand, the scope of established, scientific reason and bureaucratic efficacy seems to be expanding. On the other hand, there is a continued, perhaps even a growing, interest in spiritual, supernatural, occult, magic and extraordinary phenomena, not only in popular culture but also within established institutions such as religion, medicine, business and science, reminding us that it does not seem to be possible to account in purely rational terms for everything in human lives or even in nature. We call for abstracts that deal with this field on the limits of reason. When is a phenomenon or an experience on the limit of reason? What do people do when they meet this limit? How do they try to establish reason? It might be clairvoyance, ghosts, spirits, werewolves or trolls that the papers deal with, but also papers about the limits of scientific, bureaucratic, or medical reason are welcomed.

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**Spirituality and business in the lives of women channellers**

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This paper is concerned with the relationship between entrepreneurship and spirituality. It is an ethnographical enquiry into ‘the limits of reason’ of the ‘channeling business’ within the New Age spirituality in today’s Finland. Typically, channeling refers to an ability to receive and transmit messages from higher or other levels of being. The purpose of channeling is
mainly to help the client or the audience by giving them advice and support regarding their personal problems.

In New Age spirituality, the boundaries between culture, religion and economic life are being blurred. Two concepts have been developed to describe the intertwining of these fields. The term ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ is used to refer to individuals who generate income in the realm of cultural production for example, in the fields of entertainment, tourism and religion (Röschenthaler & Schulz 2016). ‘Spiritual entrepreneurship’, on the other hand, denotes an entrepreneur who connects her spiritual calling or a life project with business (Fonneland 2012). The market of channeling in Finland contains mainly small-scale enterprises and entrepreneurs who offer channeling as one of their services/products. In addition, some women do channelling without a trade name or any established commercial enterprise of their own along with other jobs or when they are retired. In these markets the value of channeling is not purely economic.

In this paper I shall examine how the women channellers, who are also entrepreneurs, understand the relationship between entrepreneurship and spirituality. In particular, I shall concentrate on how they combine these apparently contradictory aspects in their lives especially when they are starting their business. How do the logics of business and channelling on one hand restrict each other and on the other hand enable something new? And what kind of problems do arise?

**Keywords:** channeling, New Age spirituality, entrepreneurship, business

**Parodising contemporary vernacular belief: the questions of conflict, interpretation and symbiosis**

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My paper analyses the materials of some Estonian web portals that are specialised in parodising various contemporary esoteric beliefs, spiritual teachings, supernatural experiences and conspiracy theories, but also other ways of joking about contemporary belief. The aim of my paper is trying to position such humorous phenomena on the landscape of contemporary belief. Such internet portals and other ways of joking about contemporary belief presuppose a rather good orienting in and knowledge of modern belief forms, respective terminology and modes of expression, thus they should be viewed in the frames of a more general belief discourse. The parodising material is often so close to the materials of seriously-meant topical websites, books and forum posts that readers often express their doubt if it is actually humor or not. The thrill that goes together with such balancing between believability and non-believability seems to be one of the reasons why such jokes are made. However, the position of the jokers themselves is not as self-evident as it may seem. It is noteworthy that several people who post such materials told me in private conversations that they actually don’t exclude the possibility that spiritual realms exist, on the contrary, some of them have passed courses in spiritual teachings or tried esoteric practices independently, they have been fascinated in books about mysterious phenomena or experienced such phenomena themselves. In my paper I will discuss the aims and functions of such humorous material, for example the questions of conflict, interpretation and symbiosis.
On the one hand ghosts and hauntings belong to the world of traditional narratives, on the other hand to extraordinary phenomena that contradict our usual perception of the world in their striking otherness. Such experiences become meaningful in religious ontologies but become problematic in the secular world of materialism and (quasi)scientific rationalism, which cannot accommodate them. Ghosts tend to be discursively controlled by fictionalising them as manifestations of artistic fantasies, by de-essentialising them as illusions produced by subjective experiences, or by pathologising them as symptoms of mental illness. In contrast to these authoritarian perspectives, vernacular theories and strategies of dealing with the supernatural offer a flexible array of discursive contexts and practical devices. The paper discusses ghostly experiences in Estonia – in a secular society that has been traumatised by a violent history and fifty years of state imposed atheism as a part of communist education. Narratives about ghosts and hauntings often include information about effective means of repelling or pacifying the supernatural, ranging from Lutheran house blessings and traditional customs of burning juniper branches, to more experimental and innovative practices, such as applying runic signs or switching on electronic equipment to generate electromagnetic waves. The ontological liminality of ghosts at the margins of a rational worldview cannot be handled with a unified set of interpretations and controlling methods, but rather it provokes a versatile and disorganised set of responses. The messy set of beliefs and practices at the margins of the rational worldview also marks the limits of rationalism, which cannot accommodate human lives and the totality of their experiences.

**WORKSHOP 8: Discernment: Recognising the Presence of Spirits**

Discernment is a key skill in many traditions concerned with non-physical, non-ordinary beings, whether in the context of shamanism, spirit possession and mediumship, or spirit release therapies and ghost hunting in contemporary post-industrial societies. How do practitioners know that spirits are present? How do practitioners distinguish between what they perceive to be an external, ontological other and the ‘normal’ self? What methods are employed to make this distinction? Inherent in such questions are issues relating to the nature of personhood and consciousness – what exactly constitutes a ‘person,’ and what is ‘consciousness’? This workshop will explore the theme of discernment from a range of different cultural contexts, and will discuss the implications of traditions of discernment for wider questions about the nature of consciousness and self.

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SESSION ONE
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What discernment traditions might tell us about the nature of consciousness
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Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with spiritualist trance and physical mediums in Bristol, UK, as well as on the wider cross-cultural and ethnographic literature on spirit possession and mediumship, this paper will explore the ways in which mediumistic experiences lead to expanded conceptions of the nature of the self, and will explore the potential contribution of taking extraordinary experiences seriously in the context of the personhood debate. This paper will analyse core features of mediumistic discernment traditions, focussing specifically on experience (i.e. how is the presence of spirits determined, experienced and distinguished from ‘normal’ consciousness), and will ask what these techniques of discernment might reveal about the workings of consciousness and the nature of the Self. In particular it will be argued that an awareness of extraordinary experiences in post-industrial societies reveals surprising variations in conceptualisations of the self, including the presence within 'Western' cultures of self-concepts that have historically been classified as 'non-Western,' or 'dividual.' What is particularly interesting about these expanded notions of the self is that they seem to contradict the standard models of mind and self implied by the dominant paradigms of materialist science.

Keywords: consciousness, discernment, experience, personhood, spirits, trance

Spirit Release as Therapy: An Alternative Western Tradition
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Exorcism has been practiced and is still practiced in Western Christian Churches, but there is a parallel tradition of spirit release therapy, often growing out of conventional psychiatric and psychological practices. The assumption is that some forms of physical and mental illness or disturbance are caused by changes in the patient’s energy field that allow foreign entities to attach themselves.

These energetic attachments can take many forms and one of the tasks of the spirit release practitioner is to discern the type of entity that might be troubling the patient. At one end of the spectrum there might be sub-personalities that have become split off in times of trauma, but which are part of the same individual and can be reintegrated. At the other extreme are
dark force entities that intend to cause harm and misery. In between are lost or earthbound spirits, thought forms and emotional ties emanating from both the living and the dead. Some attachments may involve non-human beings from other realms or members of the devic kingdoms (elves, fairies and so on).

While the cosmology of spirit release might seem a strange mixture of European folklore, Jungian psychology, science fiction and Western esotericism, it is also fairly consistent among practitioners. As publications and practices continue to develop spirit release is gaining in popularity and visibility, presenting an alternative to the more established church practices of exorcism.

This paper will give an overview of some of these trends and attempt to map the main features of contemporary Western spirit release.

**Keywords:** spirit release, exorcism, spirit attachment, therapy, possession

**Spirit Release Therapy and the Art of Discernment**

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Spirit Release Therapy (SRT) has been used by pioneering clinicians and acknowledged by some researchers in psychology since the 19th Century, although the name SRT is a recent label that was originally introduced as Spirit Releasement Therapy by William Baldwin in 1995.

SRT, as a clinical method of removing troublesome spirits, is more able to discern the difference between the spirits of the deceased who remain earthbound and the more damaging non-human demonic, otherwise known as Dark Force Entities (DFE) that are traditionally ‘exorcised’ by the Roman Catholic Church.

To the SRT practitioner, the term discernment not only refers to the art and skill in discerning whether or not spirits are present, but more importantly the discernment between different types of spirit, which is important in determining what method is used to aid the spirit in moving on or being captured and escorted away to another realm of existence.

This presentation demonstrates, with the aid of a video recording of the process, the method of discernment and removal of discarnate negative entities by an SRT adept at work. Following the presentation, participants of the workshop will be able to discuss the method of discernment applied in this particular case.

**Keywords:** spirit release therapy, clinical spirit release, clinical discernment, psychiatry, possession
Discerning Spirits, Defining Selves: Learning Semi-conscious Trance in the Vale do Amanhecer
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This paper explores the process of mediumistic development in the Brazilian Spiritualist Christian Order Vale do Amanhecer (Valley of the Dawn) drawing on ethnographic research in temples in Brazil and Europe. This process is described by mediums as being culturally shaped according to the purposes for which it is used. Since mediumistic practice in the Vale do Amanhecer is aimed at releasing discarnate spirits obsessing humans – that is dissobsessive healing – these spirits need to be discerned from the medium and the spirit guides, and controlled during a semi-conscious trance.

Control and discernment are skills to be learned; and emotions, feelings and bodily experience play a pivotal role in this process. In illustrating the different modes of discernment as culturally informed, the discussion addresses specific notions of the self as produced through the bodily and affective dimensions of this process, and how these embodied notions, in turn, inform therapeutic experiences.

Keywords: Vale do Amanhecer, mediumship, trance, learning, discernment, self, body, emotion, Brazil

Moral corporalities: Non-human others, perspectivism and Christianity in Amazonia
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It has by now become commonplace to understand human to non-human relations among indigenous groups especially in Amazonia, but also beyond, to be characterised by some variety of the perspectival logic in which a subject’s perspective is a feature of the body rather than that of mind, and where relationships precede form. According to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's seminal work, in human-non-human encounters in perspectival cosmoses a human being may be left to occupy the second person position – you – in a relation to a non-human occupying the first person subject position – I. In such a case, the bodily perspective of the non-human becomes dominant in the relationship and subsequently, the human person drifts away from his or her human condition. It is largely in the moral sphere, as immoral behaviour, that the presence of non-humans and their influences on humans can be detected. In this paper, however, I wish to explore the question of discerning the presence of the non-human others among Christians in indigenous Amazonia. How is the presence and influences of the non-human others of Christianity, especially God and the Holy Spirit but also Satan, discerned among the indigenous Yine people living in the Peruvian Amazonia? To what extent does the Yine perspectival logic characterise these relations? Or does Christianity provide novel ways
of gaining knowledge of non-human presence? Relating the case to recent discussions in the field of Anthropology of Christianity, the paper suggests that while the discerning in these cases still takes place largely on the basis of morality, the relationships to Christian others differ from the relations to other non-humans in the Yine social cosmos especially in regard to the emphasis placed on the closed body and inner subjectivity instead of open consubstantial personhood.

**Keywords:** Amazonia, indigenous people, Yine, non-humans, Christianity, perspectivism, corporeality

**Drinking blood, dancing on swords: What a deity can do, and a human cannot**
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For the Ghoras (possessed-dancers) of the Kāmākhyā temple complex (India) there is nothing strange that Goddess Kāmākhyā possesses a human. For devotees too possession by Goddess Kāmākhyā and the other deities of the temple complex is not surprising. The problem is, rather, to discern genuine possession.

Every year in August the Ghoras become possessed by Goddess Kāmākhyā and the other deities of the temple complex. For three days they dance to the beat of drums. During the dance devotees worship the Ghoras and beg for their blessing. When the dance is over, the Ghoras go back to their everyday life.

When a man first claims to be possessed by one of the deities of the temple complex, he is not allowed to dance unless elder Ghoras consent. The newly acknowledged Ghora as well as the seniors ones are expected to drink the blood from the head of goats, immediately after they have been sacrificed, and to dance on swords before the thousands of devotees gathering for the festival. According to both the Ghoras and the devotees, if a Ghora is unable to drink this blood or if his feet get cut on the swords, it means that he is not really possessed by any deity. Ghoras express their concern thereupon and, during the month preceding the dance, observe a set of restrictions in order to make their bodies fit to be fully possessed by the deities.

According to Ghoras, they cannot decide whether to dance or not. The dance, display of the Goddess’ awesome power, depends upon Her inscrutable, capricious will; it is Her līlā (play). The deity presence in the human body is subject to unpredictable ups and downs. Just before dancing on swords, Ghoras rush to the Goddess’ altar, which is believed to “charge” them with divine power. Based on extensive fieldwork, the present paper explores the ambiguous feelings that the Ghoras express in the delicate phase preceding the dance. How do the Ghoras perceive the deities’ overwhelming intervention in their lives? How do they prepare for the temporary obliteration of their selves? Scenes of my documentary film *Ghora: Waiting for the Goddess* (2014) will be screened to show the most significant moments of the dance.

The pan-Indian concept of śakti (divine feminine creative/destructive power) will be evoked, with reference to the Kāmākhyā temple complex, one among the most celebrated site for śakti cult in South Asia.
**Keywords:** possession, Goddess Kāmākhyā, Ghora, dance, śakti, Hindu temples, sacrifice, blood, swords, power

**WORKSHOP 9: The hallucinatory uncanny: on the boundary of the normal and pathological mind?**

One of the perhaps most uncanny experiences that a person can have is a hallucinatory experience such as hearing voices. Hallucinatory experiences are not always and necessarily linked to a psychiatric condition. In fact, most people who, for example hear voices are not suffering from an illness, but due to the heavy stigma associated with the phenomenon it is often concealed and silenced. What adds to the uncanniness of the experience is that voices are often perceived to be very real and present; they are ‘as if persons’ that are often also by voice hearers seen as authentic companions that have a real effect on their lives. The experience may, and does, also include a variety of sensory inputs such as visions, tactile sensations, olfactory experiences and a sense of felt presence, further complicating the understanding of what voice hearing is.

Within psychiatry the diagnostic categorisation of hallucinatory states has in recent years been contested and there has been a call within the research community to increase research on the phenomenological perspectives of these experiences in order to broaden our understanding of what it entails for the perceiver. In a historical and cultural perspective various connotations and valuations have been linked to these types of experiences. Unusual sensory experiences can be viewed as threshold phenomena where understandings of origins, cause and progression consist of a mixture of viewpoints and approaches situated on a continuum ranging from the pathological to the normal. The notion of threshold is also present in another sense; perceiving that one’s mind is being penetrated by immaterial entities in the form of voices, visions and an embodied sense of presence illustrates how the mind can act as a porous boundary between what is internal and external to the mind.

This panel invites papers that investigate and debate the notion of threshold in relation to hallucinatory experiences. Where and how are boundaries drawn? Who is scientifically and ethically in control of boundary making? What is the significance of boundaries shifting in terms of societal and sociocultural understandings of hallucinatory experiences? What theoretical and conceptual notions can be applied in order to broaden our understanding of hallucinations as threshold phenomena and what kindred notions can be linked to them? Which kinds of methods would be appropriate to use for the study of these phenomena?

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Emotional Relationships with Spirit-Guides in Early Modern Scotland
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This paper is about people who experienced relationships with spirits.

The evidence comes from Scotland between about 1500 and 1750, mostly from witchcraft trials. The interrogators assumed that they were dealing with a witch who had met the Devil, but is clear that this is not how the visionaries themselves had experienced their relationship before their arrest. Most of the visionaries were women. Most of the spirits were either fairies or ghosts; they were usually male.

The visionary relationship was a two-way one. The woman trusted the spirit, and the spirit expressed sympathy for the woman and offered practical help, usually by giving her special powers of healing or divination. Some women’s spirit-guides already knew all about her when they first appeared, while others asked the woman questions in order to form a relationship with her. A few women could summon their spirit-guide; others waited passively for the spirit-guide to appear.

The relationship was not always positive for the visionary. Some visionaries experienced physical or sexual abuse from their spirit-guide. Some were ordered about in a subservient way. One at least was forced to sacrifice her ability to speak, becoming mute, in return for being granted powers of divination. A few visionaries resisted their spirit-guide, arguing with him or refusing some of his demands. The gendered aspects of these relationships were prominent.

Overall it is fascinating to see how these women understood, not only their own various emotions, but also the various emotions of their otherworldly partner. We may think that this partner had no existence outside the woman’s own mind, but that is not how she herself construed her experience. The emotions of otherworldly beings are a deeply human subject.

Keywords: emotions, visionaries, nature spirits, fairies, ghosts, witchcraft, gender, Scotland


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To encounter a person with schizophrenia is for many to meet the uncanny made flesh and due to the horror that such meeting may entail—dub the person abnormal. The same kind of labeling is used for that person’s experience of limits that includes though not limited to hearing of voices, hallucinating, experiencing revelation, producing artworks. The first-hand narrative of such a person is the basis of the memoir Henry’s Demons: Living with Schizophrenia, a Father and Son’s Story by Henry and Patrick Cockburn.

In the novel hearing voices is one of the manifestations of schizophrenia that haunt Henry. There is substantial neurological research on auditory hallucinations in schizophrenia, yet the
mystery of their origin remains. I believe that the firsthand narrative of the personal experience is crucial for understanding the nature of the voices. Henry perceives every call of voices he hears and hallucination he sees as an awakening, a mystical experience that makes him feel in charge, responsible for the mission he believes he is on. Henry believes that trees and bushes produce the whisper that can be both comforting or threatening, depending on what emotions Henry projects. While the feeling of ‘illumination’ and being ‘closer to truth’ (L. Sass) is characteristic of people with schizophrenia, the trust in his own experiences and his firsthand testimony makes Henry’s narrative authentic and important for our comprehending of the nature of voices.

People fear that if they share their experience of hearing voices or having fears and suspicions, they will be seen as mad. It is crucial that public tends to stigmatize and label what is not immediately graspable or understood as the inferior to them. Such stigmatization results from sustaining the binary of normal and deviant, rational and irrational. I argue that in case the hierarchy of norm and deviance is challenged, the seemingly uncanny way of Henry’s thinking should not be treated in the terms of regression but rather as unconventional. Henry’s devotion to spirituality is sustained by his interest in music and art: in the chapters he wrote himself Henry mentioned the names of Jackson Pollock, Virginia Woolf and saw himself as a descendant of ‘artists from Basquiat to Picasso.’ While rational gaze treats the experience as deviant, I propose to consider the experience ‘from the inside’ represented in the memoir as being outside of the conventional binaries.

**Keywords:** alterity, authenticity, autobiography, limit-experience, madness, narrative research, otherness, schizophrenia, transgression, voices.

**How are psychotic and exceptional spiritual views of reality distinguished?**
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Whether a person is defined as having exceptional but still healthy spiritual beliefs and experiences or psychotic delusions and hallucinations has significant consequences in the area of human rights. When the view of reality is understood as “healthy”, the individual is seen as competent enough to live according to his or her views, and to make his or her decisions as long as the human rights of others are not violated. However, people who are defined as psychotic are not necessarily considered competent enough to make their own decisions. Moreover, their view of reality is seen as a symptom which should be treated even by involuntary antipsychotic medication.

This presentation features my value-laden model of psychosis which clarifies how psychotic and exceptional spiritual views of reality are distinguished. According to this model, psychosis manifests itself through the following aspects: irrationality (together with a loss of insight), unwellness, and alienation, while exceptional spiritual views of reality are restricted to one or two of these aspects.

Irrationality and unwellness have several characteristics, of which at least one is required for a view of reality to be considered as psychotic. Irrationality includes characteristics of ‘non-
correspondence to reality’, ‘incomprehensibility’ and ‘agential irrationality’. Unwellness includes characteristics of ‘an unsound mind’, ‘incapacity’ and ‘distress’. The model is value-laden, multidisciplinary, and open to discussion.

**Keywords:** psychosis, spirituality, irrationality, rationality, wellbeing, alienation, sharedness, ethics

**Ethnographies of Voice Hearing in Finland**
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This paper provides a brief outline of some of the central results of the ethnographic research I have conducted on the lived experience of voice hearing in Finland. Voice hearing brings about a great deal of suffering and self-isolation, particularly if voices are disturbing and interfere with the everyday life of the voice hearer and his or her family. Society at large still stigmatises voice hearers as mad people that need to be controlled by society through psychiatric care. Voice hearers inhabit a liminal space in mainstream culture, at the borderlines of culture because their voices comment on the values and norms of our (Finnish) society, but they are not fully members of this society due to their extraordinary experiences. The pivotal focus of the research has been to investigate the phenomenon of voice hearing void from preconceived labels and to examine the intersubjective nature of the experience and the contemporary beliefs, practices and explanatory models (Kleinman 1976) surrounding the phenomenon, as well as viewing voice hearing as a representation of the mind. Creating spaces of normality and strengthening one’s identity as a voice hearer are some of the strategies used by voice hearers to deal with this experienced stigma. This points to the central role played by peer support group activities and self-therapy methods employed by voice hearers and to the transformative potential inherent in these activities. The presentation will discuss and present ethnographic examples of how voice hearing is explained and given meaning by research participants; how relationality emerges in the social practices employed by voice hearers; and, how personal, embodied experiences are linked to broader societal issues, historical traumas, alienation, uncertainty and social change.

**Keywords:** voice hearing, mind, relationality, alienation, trauma, social change, ethnography

**WORKSHOP 10: “It’s Alive!” – Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Popular Culture**

The normal and its others – the abnormal, the pathological and the irrational – are “socially and culturally” constructed not only by “science, medicine and religion” but also by popular culture. When juxtaposing science fiction novels, children’s picture books or horror comics and films with the Western ideals of rationality, secularity and science, it becomes evident that many perspectives and themes labelled superstitious or “non-Western” have always been celebrated in the popular cultural carnival. For instance, the definition-defying border between life and death has been explored in popular culture in various ways. Not only do these stories and images recycle the folklore and dogma abjected by the medical and scientific institutions but have also created myths and imaginary afterlives of their own. In this sense,
popular culture has generated categories, meanings and explanations of death that remain relatively untouched and even unapproved by other institutions.

We propose a complete, interdisciplinary workshop of three papers, in which we will examine the popular, mythifying side of a culture that has declared itself rational and secular. In other words, we focus on the vast “grey area” popular culture tends to leave “between science and the supernatural”, especially when discussing the limits of human life. The simultaneity and alteration of scientific and superstitious explanations of life and death are especially poignant in the representations of suicide, in narratives aimed at children and in such recurring tropes as Frankenstein’s tale. In all these cases, human attempts to control the terms of living and dying evoke profound questions of normality and abnormality of life and knowledge. How do items of popular culture – or, more specifically, our chosen targets of analysis – represent, conceptualize and explain death in order to make it tolerable, knowable, or even controllable? Moreover, how are the various illusions and illustrations of death in these discourses ranked naive or sophisticated, serious or frivolous, improper or appropriate, adult or childproof?

We aim to answer these questions by implementing relevant theories from the fields of comparative literature, social anthropology, aesthetics, semiotics, visual cultural studies, comic studies and childhood studies. One of the workshop’s theoretical starting points is the concept of the taboo, which is closely linked to the construction of abnormal and improper, and their stigmatization. Each workshop paper problematizes the “taboo-bound” cultural constructions by studying the carnivalism and medical stigma manifested in the portrayals of suicide, exploring the aesthetics of linking childhood with death, and questioning Frankenstein’s pseudo-scientific dream of reversing death, respectively.

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Haunted. – Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Taboo-Mediating Cinematic Representations of Suicide
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In our workshop we explore how popular culture participates in the construction and differentiation of the Normal and its others – the abnormal, the pathological and the irrational – by analysing popular cultural representations around the definition-defying border between life and death. On one hand, we study how popular culture makes death tolerable, knowable, or even controllable by representing, conceptualizing and explaining it through visual, generic, and often mystifying devices. On the other hand, we focus our gaze on the rhetoric that categorizes certain popular cultural representations naive or sophisticated, serious or frivolous, rational or irrational, improper or appropriate, adult or childproof.

My contribution to these questions comes from the fields of social anthropology and visual cultural studies, and offers the concept of the taboo as one of the workshop’s theoretical starting points. I weave the taboo, the subject of my doctoral research (2011–2016), into the
fabric of our workshop in two ways. Firstly, when studying the conceptual history of the taboo we see the phenomenon itself has been a victim of the Western autoportrait of dominant rationality. When Victorian scholars discovered the Polynesian taboo under the paradigm of social evolution, the exotic phenomenon was classified ‘irrational and ‘superstitious.’ This has largely affected how we view the taboo in our time: a primitive control structure pertinent to marginal mentalities, bordering extinction.

Secondly, as we reach beyond the popular, westernized definition of the taboo as a form of discursive suppression, we see that the taboo is, in effect, a societal structure closely linked to the construction of abnormal and improper – and their stigmatization as such. I employ the theories of carnival and transgression in order to point out this “primitive structure” of taboo is never really threatened by the Western entertainment culture bristling with transgressive depictions. Rather, also in our time the taboo relates symbiotically to the transgressive carnival that enforces the prohibition by abounding with superstition and prejudice. I here connect the taboo and the popular cultural representations through the concepts of myth and stigma, and illustrate the taboo-mediating means of popular culture by focusing on the cinematic representations of suicide. I observe particularly the circulation of both medical stigma and superstitious elements in representing and rationalising this form of death often construed as ‘irrational,’ ‘sinful’ and ‘bad’. Indeed, I illustrate how stories and images not only “recycle the folklore and dogma abjected by the medical and scientific institutions” but also “create myths and imaginary (taboo-mediating) afterlives of their own.”

**Keywords:** popular culture, visual media, horror, cinematic representation, death, suicide, stigma, myth, taboo, carnival

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**Whither Does This Senseless Curiosity Lead Us? – Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Graphic Frankenstein Adaptations**

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Popular cultural recycling has transformed the first Western science fiction novel into a horror trope: while the utilitarian science student Victor Frankenstein toils away in Mary Shelley’s imaginary Inglostadt, alone and forgotten, his failed experiment has multiplied into an army of zombie-like caricatures that stagger hither and thither in contemporary vocabulary. The oft-cited discrepancy between the novel’s complex characters and the popular, Halloweenish perception of “Frankensteins” testifies to layers of adaptation, in which the ideological and generic ambiguities of Shelley’s tale shift and seesaw: folklore and supernatural imagery intermingle with the very scientific aspirations that abject them, resulting in an inappropriate vision of controllable death that academic communities deem delirious, spiritual communities blasphemous, and artistic reinterpretations either horrific or satiric. In a word, Frankenstein’s creation is deeply uncanny: human-like but non-human, rational to the point of irrational, supposedly explainable – yet unexplained.

These conflicting qualities are already present in *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818). Although the novel’s Gothic aesthetic is undeniable and its main idea apparently came to Shelley in a dream, Frankenstein is an archetype of a true scientist. He unmasksthe mechanics of nature with his own intellect and curiosity; no Mephistopheles tempts him. As
any good scientific experiment, his feat would also be repeatable – which is exactly why he refuses to follow the scientific principle of openness and explain how he did it. As the rationale at the core of the narrative is shrouded in mystery, speculation becomes the only substitute for truth, and the entire text becomes destabilized.

Thus, in a truly Frankensteinian spirit, the denial of explanation has launched a frantic search for explanation in popular cultural adaptations. The dramatic sceneries and the fact that galvanism was a hot topic around the time of the novel's publication have merged into the pseudo-scientific notion that the creature was awakened by a lightning. On the other hand, religious didactics, visual spectacle and pulp fiction markets have all motivated and contributed to the further mystification of Frankenstein's work. Two graphic short stories – *Frankenstein's Womb* (2009) by Warren Ellis and Marek Oleksicki, and *The Heart of the Beast* (1998) by Dean Motter, Sean Phillips and Judith Dupré – illustrate these conflicting attitudes towards reanimation: the latter attempts to bring the runaway creature back under the control of science and civilization, while the former dubs not only the work of Frankenstein but also the work of Shelley supernatural.

**Keywords**: Frankenstein, popular culture, comic studies, adaptation, uncanny, reanimation, science fiction, horror

**“Riddikulus!” – Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Children’s Culture**
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Cultural representations of death have the power to make us feel uncomfortable. The ultimate unknowability of death and the fears related to it have inspired stories that play with the uncanny and the abjected. As a result, they often touch upon both our hopes and fears in ways that may fascinate and repulse us at the same time. Some of these stories seem sophisticated and philosophical. Others seem naïve or even frivolous. Stories aimed at children often fall into the latter category. But how can the portrayals of death in this category be conceptualized aesthetically, in philosophical terms?

In my paper, I discuss the construction and mystification of the border between life and death within the field of children’s culture. While the human fascination with death is not restricted to a certain age, there are age-specific restrictions and limitations regarding the representation of horror. Representations and narratives produced for children tend to control the frightfulness of death and darkness more than the representations and narratives aimed at adults, which leads to some interesting aesthetical practices. One way to control fright-inducing themes is to aestheticize them through such means as cute talk. Another practical, control-oriented solution is the approach that I have, following Carolyn Korsmeyer, termed aesthetic sublation.

Korsmeyer originally brought the concept of the “sublate”, a term more commonly used in the field of physics, into the field of art theory in her book *Savoring Disgust: The Foul and the Fair in Aesthetics* (Oxford University Press 2011) by suggesting it might be used as a counterpoise to the sublime. In this presentation, I aim to discuss the concept of aesthetic sublation in
relation to zombies and their portrayal in children's culture. When applied to the mastering of horror in children's culture, I suggest the mechanics of sublation work like a boggart-banishing spell, which uses humor and grotesque exaggeration to master fear.

**Keywords:** children's culture, horror, aestheticizing, cute, sublate

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**WORKSHOP 11: Images, Madmen and the Haunted**

Various uncanny experiences or phenomena, and particularly the meanings attached to these are socially constructed. They can also be interpreted as forming part of vernacular spirituality and religion, and as such are part of the social imaginary. This panel explores unacanny religious images, madness and its relation to Medieval Christianity, and social haunting in contemporary Western societies. The papers presented provide various perspectives on how these phenomena can be studied and what implications it has for our understanding of reality.

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**The deceased as ghostly matter in social haunting**

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Based on an interview study carried out in Sweden and the UK 2013-2016, this presentation explores people's experience of being haunted by their deceased. The haunting described is social in nature, that is, it does not contain supernatural elements in the conventional sense, but is restricted to memories, mundane events and the social at large. In terms of emotional impact, eeriness and persistence, these experiences are, nevertheless, comparable to those depicted in, for instance, horror movies. Theoretically, the arguments made are inspired by Avery Gordon's notion of ghostly matter as a structure of feeling, exposing patterns of powerlessness, biographical disruptions and disconnectedness in people's lives. In the case of social haunting, the deceased are always present as an absence-presence, but they manifest for different reasons and with different consequences. The presentation investigates such, and other, differences and is an attempt to make the analysis of social haunting an intelligible endeavor for social scientists.

**Uncanny images and the literalism of authority**

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This paper locates people's engagement with uncanny religious images as a significant component of vernacular religion. We propose that such images make a phenomenological demand of the faithful that inherently reaches beyond the loci of institutionalized authority. The paper builds on a theoretical framework of “vernacular religion” and post-Jungian archetypal psychology – as elaborated by James Hillman. We discuss this framework in the first part of the paper, emphasizing the centrality of the mundus imaginalis, and highlight three key features of this notion: the distinction between imaginal and imaginary; significance of a culturally differentiated collective unconscious; and the reflection of the imaginal in practice rather than concepts. We emphasize the materiality of sacred symbols that emerge from the imaginal realm. In the second part of the paper we discuss two uncanny medieval images each from Islam and Eastern Orthodox Christianity. We underline their intuitive role that disturbs literal, rationalized, and authoritarian readings. In the final part of the paper, we discuss how such images demand a release from both authoritarian interpretations and literalized readings. The paper concludes with a comment on the significance of this approach in modernity, when the imaginal realm has been deprived of its autonomy and the imaginal has become merely the imagined.

**Keywords:** imaginal, image, collective unconscious, post-Jungian archetypal psychology, vernacular religion, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Islam, authority, literalism

**Aquinas: Can a madman be saved through sacraments?**
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My paper concerns Thomas Aquinas's ideas on madness and, more particularly, Aquinas's ideas on madmen's possibilities to receive sacraments. Since sacraments were a central part of communal life in the medieval world – and some sacraments (i.e. baptism) were even necessary for salvation – to default or to be excluded from sacramental community were both severe proceedings. Therefore, a condition that sets restrictions on one's possibilities to participate in the sacramental community determines the boundaries between normal and uncanny in the thirteenth-century society.

For Aquinas, madness was a condition in which intellectual capacities were not functioning properly. Physiologically he thought that black bile gathering in the brain caused the malfunctioning of the imagination (an internal sense) which was considered crucial for intellectual operations. Because thinking and judging activities required properly functioning imagination Aquinas, as well as other medieval scholars, thought that madness impedes one from using one's reason and choosing freely. Madmen were seldom held responsible for their actions. Although, the medieval world seems to have been quite tolerant with eccentric habits or other unaccustomed behavior, madmen were often described as behaving inappropriately or holding uncanny beliefs.

According to the Aquinas's doctrine of sacraments, the receiver needs to understand what a sacrament is and to consent to it freely. A person should also show respect towards sacraments and behave accordingly. Since the medieval scholars thought that madness impedes one from using one's intellectual capacities, Aquinas had to discuss whether a
madmen could fulfill any of the aforementioned requirements. In this paper, I examine what kind of solutions Aquinas gives for the discussion.

**Keywords:** Thomas Aquinas, madness, sacrament, salvation, imagination, black bile, free choice, consent, thirteenth-century