

SPOTTING A DEATH'S HEAD MOTH FLYING LOOSE

BÁ Thesis
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SPOTTING A DEATH'S HEAD MOTH FLYING LOOSE

This summer the phrase “spotting a death’s head moth flying loose” came to me, but I don’t remember where I first encountered it. This fall a friend of mine told me about a short video of a person sitting in a car while a thunderstorm is happening outside. The person wants to witness the lightning with their own eyes but they look away each time, just when the lightning strikes. My friend doesn’t remember where he saw the video. Both exist in my head now. I can feel the moth fluttering and the lightning striking without my eyes being able to witness it. I can feel the urge of wanting to catch something. But the subject remains free and uncaught.

I chase it but it haunts me.

Suddenly, you find yourself in a room that seems slightly off. I whisper. I’m interested in ambiguity and the intangibility of things. I aim to trace something, chase that thing.

Spotting a death’s head moth flying loose. Catching it by spotting it with my eyes, yet not being able to grasp it, to hold it. I chase it but it haunts me. There’s something.

And I want to figure out the essence of it. I want to know what things mean, what people mean and how humans behave. Always in general and in each case in particular.

I want to know how people operate, how people act and react. I want to figure out their desires. I want to know how people deal with a sudden disruptive factor and how people move within destabilized spaces. I’m repeatedly trying to come closer to understanding _____ by visualizing _____ but a moth you have to catch with your hands. and the lightning strikes again

Look right.

Look left.

STRESS (ECHO)

Boring.

An urge is building up. Too many things held back.

Too much patience yet too impatient.

Look right

Look right

Look right

The echo is bouncing back and forth.

Like a bouncy ball is bouncing up and down.

Like a bouncy ball bouncing wildly and uncontrollably in a hall of mirrors.

In one of the corners there's a man standing, hectically looking left, right, up, down, north, west, south, east, southwest, northeast, southeast, northwest, southwest north, northeast west, southeast north, northwest east, southwest northwest south, northeast southwest east etc.

In the opposite corner there's a man standing, hectically looking right, left, down, up, south, east, north, west, northeast southwest, northwest, southeast, northeast south, southwest north, northwest south, southeast west, northeast southeast north, southwest northeast west etc.

In the corner between those two men there's a man standing, hectically looking looking looking looking looking looking looking looking looking etc. Across this man there's a man standing, a man standing, a man standing, a man standing etc. Countless pairs of eyes are following the bouncy ball bouncing up and down, left to right, corner to corner to corner to corner. "Enough!" the men say to themselves. They're walking through the door, out of the hall of mirrors, through the corridor, through another door, along a street. It's only a five minute walk to his home. His strides are rapid and tense, yet resolute. Up the staircase to the fourth floor. Through the

Okay.

Look left

Look left

Look left

door, through the corridor, into the kitchen. He gets a glass of water and sits down on the balcony. The sky has a pleasant shade of mid-blue and the air feels refreshing as he takes a deep breath. Finally his fingers, which had been clutching the glass quite tightly until a moment ago, gradually begin to loosen their grip. He drinks a sip from the glass. The water feels cold as it enters his mouth, travels down the throat, through the gullet, into his stomach. A flock of crows flies overhead, heading south. Not again. He puts down the glass, as his fingers start to tighten around it again. Awkwardly his hands lie on his lap, his legs are shaking. Tensed up he gazes at the dawning sky, hoping that this time it will be different but at the same time hoping that his premonition will come true. He knows from experience and this experience must not be refuted just like that. The racing shadow appears, suddenly causing him to scrutinize the sky with frenetic eyes.

moths, moths, The bat is flying zigzag, changing direction
moths moths, every split second, his eye is racing after
moths, moths, and them, always meeting the bat just at the
moths moths moths moment it is changing direction again.
moths moths moths moths, moths, moths,

The diet of an insectivorous bat may span many species, including moths, moths,

Another bat appears and another one. His eyes try and follow all of them, at the same time, constantly, left to right, up and down, corner to corner to corner, micro movements. He loses one, another one takes its place, not a second's pause. He tears himself away from the exhausting yet intriguing phenomenon, strides anxiously over the balcony threshold into the kitchen and shuts the door behind him. Hectically his eyes run through the room, manically scanning the spheres in the dark. 140 bpm and it slowly goes down towards the resting heart rate as he falls asleep.

The window was left open unintentionally throughout the entire night, causing the room to become quite cold. He decides to turn on the heating, but the room had become warm right when he had to leave for an important appointment. He notices a crack in his finger nail aaaa he has to bite it. As he is getting off the tram he's expecting a cold hit on his chest and his body to shiver and contract. But it doesn't come. It's warm and the wind feels surprisingly good and even though it smells like smoke, concrete and plastic, the air feels like spring.

release

A scream creates echoes. They're are almost frightening—but the screams and echoes interacting is what causes the greatest fear. They're not coming from anywhere they're not going anywhere, they're just there over your head. Echoes are lancing through the room—Once they stop bouncing off the walls—the space will become familiar to you again. For now it's here and there rrrrrr and gone another time.

FREMDENZIMMER

that is a guest room, but the literal translation is ‘strangers’
room. ^{The} guest ^{is} a stranger? ^{The} tenant ^{is} a stranger?
Tenant ^{is} a guest? ^{is} a stranger? But a ^{stranger} to whom?

When taking a trip to the Austrian countryside you see a lot of signs offering strangers rooms. Still today, even though it’s a rather outdated word. They would always be equipped with a bed, a desk, a closet and each room has its own bathroom. In front of the window they usually put flowers. If you look out of the window you can either see animals grazing and the beautiful nature, or a much frequented road and ugly, ^{There’s a thunderstorm happening outside.} dull houses. It’s a weird thing to refer to your guests as strangers. Fair, because they are strangers. But as a host you want them to feel comfortable.

I don’t think as a guest you want to feel like a stranger. ^{The lightning is striking}. It’s already strange to be in someone else’s yet unpersonalized space. Maybe that is what the word actually refers to, but I doubt it. I don’t think back in the days the train of thought they had went like: “okay, so I always feel a little strange when visiting my distant relatives in their big house or staying overnight in some random guest house on my travels or renting a room in someone else’s apartment. Therefore I suppose we should refer to the rooms we rent out as strangers rooms.” I think it went more like: “well we don’t know this person obviously and we don’t care so much either, it’s none of our business. We just offer a room and breakfast in return for money. I’m sure the guests don’t want us to know more about them anyway.” Maybe for both of them it’s comforting to know that they’ll remain strangers to each other throughout the whole stay.

The host will remain in their role as a host, the guest will remain in their role as a guest. Set. The reserved guest will only stay there for a short amount of time and won't put too much effort into personalizing the space. Instead of being in the room it is the idea of a room. A generated room. Four walls, window, door. A room that serves a mere purpose.

The guest is a stranger towards the host as well as the host is a stranger towards the guest, and the strangers room mirrors their relationship. Nevertheless, should the guest wish to remain in the room for an extended period, the guest will try to personalize the room to ensure their own comfort. Consequently, the room will gradually become more reflective of the guest's personality.

There are those very specific type of books. The protagonist would always rent a room in someone's apartment. The room is furnished in a simple style and won't become much more personalized as the story progresses. The atmosphere would always be a bit depressing and the house would appear dark, old and dirty. The people wouldn't talk much and wouldn't really care much about each other either. Something happens and the story takes its course. *One morning when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin.*² The people are strangers, maybe not towards the reader. They just appear strange. But they are strangers towards themselves. Something happens and they cannot recognize themselves anymore.

The lightning outside has illuminated the room completely. For one split second.

Feeling strange in someone else's space is normal. But feeling strange in your own space is unsettling. Spotting a death's head moth flying loose. There's something in the room but you can't tell what it is. You can feel something being present and being

present so much to an extent that it makes you not recognize your own room anymore. You feel like a guest, like a stranger in your own room because the presence of something strange took over the room. You can hear it but you cannot see it. It's dark. The only thing you can see are silhouettes but even those become less familiar in the dark. Hectically your eyes run through the room, manically scanning the spheres in the dark. You switch on the light. But it's a different room now.

And the moth had stopped fluttering.
Somewhere in the room it remains
free and uncaught. maybe it's the rrrrrrr still echoing. rrrr reverberating rr.

THE OPERATING THEATRE

The subject is laying on a bar in the middle of the room, which is brightly lit and filled with the faint but constant sounds of machinery. The subject is covered by a heavy, dark green heated blanket. Footsteps approach.

Any responsibility that the subject normally has is being relinquished, transferred to another subject, for that moment.

For which moment?

No.

Yes.

The subject's hand sticks out from under the heating blanket. Adhesive sensors are being put on the subjects skin. They're connected with the machines and detect every heart beat and all the other bodily functions that I don't even know of. The subject is being informed that they're working with electricity inside the body. Later I was told that what they probably meant with that was that they complete an electrical circuit in the body to close

the blood vessels and when they do so, the entire room always smells of grilled meat.

spaces and subjects,

transform and transition

In the operating theatre you're a stranger version of yourself. There's something inside the body that's not supposed to be there. It makes your body feel strange, makes you feel estranged. The thing in your body takes over. It's a stranger taking up space in a place that is otherwise so familiar to you. Suddenly, you find yourself in a room that seems slightly off. I whisper. But the subject remains free and uncaught.

Does being unconscious take away your responsibility?

Only for that moment.

For which moment?

Any responsibility that the subject normally has is being relinquished, transferred to another subject, for that moment.

The recovery room is weird. Time moves different there. I was laying in there for what felt like half an hour but the clock covered two hours or even more. I remember being awake the whole time, at least I thought so. I felt like I was having thoughts the whole time but looking back the amount of thoughts I had would have been a logical amount for half an hour but not for two hours plus*.

I noticed in the room already that the time I felt and the time the clock went didn't really add up. That was one thought I had. The follow up thought was me wondering for how long I'll be in that room. I asked a nurse and she said she doesn't know, the only thing she knows is that I'm young and pretty. I took that compliment just as casually as the insight that time runs different here. The catheter and the drainage were both part of my body, as well as the infusion stand.

They were part of the stranger version of my body. Tubes that went into the body to drain out fluids, attached to weird bags holding these fluids. Fluids that are not supposed to linger in transparent bags outside the body like that. I felt less like a human but I don't know what I felt like. With every step I took and every bite I ate, slowly, I regained responsibility and agency over my body. The subject had been caught. The body became less strange and more familiar. Just by itself. While I was observing. I wonder what's now in the place where the subject used to be.

*mmmaaayyybbbeee mmmmyy trhhhoouuuuggghhhtttss wwwweennntt iiinnn trhhhiiss pppaaaceee

In the chapter seeing is knowing of her book *Flights*³ Olga Tokarczuk describes the act of observing:

(...)A collection of bones—but only bones that have something wrong with them (p.25),

(...)the designated section for fetuses, miniature the lightning munchkins. Here are the little strikes once more dolls, the smallest specimen—everything in miniature, so that a whole person will fit in a little jar. These youngest ones, the embryos, which you can barely even see at all (...) (p.26).

(...)These bigger ones display the order of the human body, its marvellous packaging.(...)whose lives never crossed the magic border of potentiality.(p.27)

(...)The next row holds the same organs but now fully grown, pleased to have been allowed by circumstances to attain their full dimensions. Their full dimensions? How did they know how big they were supposed to get, when to stop? Some of them didn't: these intestines grew and grew, and it was hard for our professors to find a jar that would contain them. (p.27)

(...)It's the colour of insides, of darkness, of places light can't reach, where matter hides in moisture from others' gazes, and there isn't any point in it showing off. (p. 27)

There is no light inside the body that is actually insane. It's completely dark in there. And this dark capsule, you carry around everywhere you go. In fact, this dark capsule is what carries you around everywhere you go.

Why is the operating theatre a theatre? Because back in the days it was open for medical students to watch and learn. Still is, according to Grey's Anatomy (the TV series). If there is an audience, separated from the live scene, it's a theatre. But there's also the play that happens on the stage. It's a theatre because spaces and objects transform and transition. Things happen, a story unfolds and progresses. The task is clear, the outcome is uncertain. They can never tell for sure, they can only talk in probability. Forced to improvise, to act and react. Don't let them notice. Stand back and watch. There is tension. There is linearity, Machines are set up. Surgeons enter the room after someone prepared it. No one else is allowed inside. They move by choreography. There is a specific act they have to perform. They perform over and over again. They practice to perform. They use the word 'perform' when doing surgery. The surgeons are actors per definition.

Actor = a participant in an action or process.

They have specific clothes they were, terms to use, tools to use, rules. Focus. The patient is a subject first, though as soon as being put on the operating table the subject becomes an object. As soon as the patient is being inspected they become an object. And a subject at the same time. A subject of inspection. An object to be operated on.

Does being unconscious take away your responsibility?

Only for that moment.

For which moment?

Any responsibility that the subject normally has is being relinquished, transferred to another subject, for that moment.

Subject:

A person or thing that is being discussed, described, or dealt with. (Oxford dictionaries)

Object:

A person or thing to which a specified action or feeling is directed. (Oxford dictionaries)

Subject of inspection — there have to be things done first, tests run, diagnosis, ... then the subject becomes an object as you become unconscious and they cut into you.

First, it's your body. You know it best. You know what hurts and where, what feels weird, how you normally move and how the pain changes the way you move.

On the operating table though it's their body. They know it best. They cut and see and recognize what isn't normal. They see things they've seen a hundred times before, things in people's bodies that people themselves have never seen, even though it's inside of us and we carry it around with us. It's kept from us to see, protected by the skin. The skin, the thin layer. The thin line between a subject and an object. Passivity. And a person. Freedom of thought and freedom of action. Responsibility and agency.

FLICKERING LIGHTS, HEADLIGHTS, LIGHTHEADED

The headlights broke down. She is wearing a red flannel suit. It's a bit stiff and uncomfortable to move in. It's not the best suit for driving either. When holding the steering wheel, the shoulder part of the suit rises, causing the back part to stretch. The shoulder pads hold the fabric up while it falls down at the seams, resulting in constant pressure and rubbing in the same area of the skin. When she bends her arm back, the elbow always gets stuck in the sleeve, and when she finally gets through to reach the gears, the shoulder part is always in the wrong position. The back of the suit moves to the left, which makes it more comfortable for the left side of her body, but the collar starts to pinch her neck. She puts her hand back on the steering wheel and the suit becomes even more uncomfortable than before. Now, every time she places her hand back on the steering wheel, she goes up first with her right arm, bent.

Then she wiggles her back to get the shoulder part back to where it's supposed to be. The suit doesn't stay in this position for long, though, because every time she turns a corner, the suit gets out of place again. Therefore she is sort of glad that now she has to leave the car to check on the headlights. This suit is definitely made for walking more than driving. Finally all the parts of the suit fall back into place. The headlights are flickering. Her eyes can neither adjust to the dark nor the light. They're always too late, one step behind. It's dark, her eyes adjust to the dark, the lights flash briefly, blinding her eyes, her eyes attempt to adjust again but the lights go off again.

She squints her eyes but that barely helps. The flickering lights still blind her eyes. She looks up and realizes that the engine is still running. Cars are passing. They announce themselves with a soft noise that rapidly increases in volume before zooming past once more. Her eyes try and catch a car, one by one, fixating it, resulting in the surrounding to move instead of the car itself. The car escapes her again but she already caught a new one. Her head twitches after the cars, trying to support the movement of the eyes. Funny game. But it starts to bore her. She sits back in the car, turns off the engine and calls the roadside assistance service. The sounds from outside become quiet and muffled inside the car. The lights are still flickering as she begins to enjoy the light show in front of her eyes.

If I drink one more Negroni I'll get lightheaded.

Well, isn't that what you want?

Yea, maybe. Okay.

While talking to each other both of them consistently glance past their respective counterparts, staring into space. Their eyes are not focused on anything specific in the room. They talk slowly and monotonously. Nothing they say is really important or meaningful in any way. As they realize that, both of them start to laugh. One of them gets up to get another Negroni. The bar is empty so it doesn't take long for her to get it. As she walks back she is staring into space again. She puts the Negroni on the table.

I'll be back in a sec.

Where are you going?

They definitely overdid the amount of tables they put in the bar, you can barely even move between them. You have to pass one on the left, then two on the right, then another one on the right but a bit more right, then two to the left again, squeeze between two tables and pass one on the right again in

order to reach the door. There are heavy, dark green curtains in front of the door in order to keep the warmth in. They walk through the heavy, dark green curtains, close them again and open the door. Just wanted to check if you'd follow me haha

It's raining and there's a thunderstorm happening outside. Cars are passing. They announce themselves with a soft noise that rapidly increases in volume before zooming past once more. The traffic light switches to red, causing all the cars to slow down and stop. The cars from the other street start their engines, ready to race off. The lightning strikes again, illuminating the street, all the houses and the sky. For one split second. Cars are racing towards them, with their headlights blinding their eyes. It hurts my head.

They turn around and enter back into the bar. The small light in the small space between the entrance door and the bar area, separated by the heavy, dark green curtains had started flickering. There's a moth frantically buzzing around in the space, towards the light and out again, over and over. It freaks out even more, now that they have entered, causing both of them to freak out too. Hastily they move through the curtains, pass all of those tables again, which also became slightly more difficult now as the bar filled up with some people meanwhile, and sit down on their table again. Glancing past each other again, staring into space, again.

I don't think so.

The ice cubes in the Negroni are gone.

How much does a tailor charge for a suit?

Can there be an echo of something that hasn't happened yet, something that is yet to come?

As someone stated once again that my work seems to be about repetition, a classmate of mine argued that it might actually be about a multitude of existence rather than repetition. Even though these notions might be fairly close to one another there is a slight but big difference. I don't dislike the idea of repetition but I can't identify with it. Mind, this is only about language. Mind, not to underestimate language. Nothing is ever the same as another thing. Repetition is a tool, not a topic. Repetition is illusion. Things operate and take effect over and over. At different points in time at the same time. Paradoxes. Repetition creates paradoxes. Hypothesis. Hang in there. Until you get comfortable. Leave. At any moment.

ORIENTATION (echo)

What about it?



Placement of a human in a room. Orientation (echo)

This procedure takes longer and requires more capacity when placed into a strange space. You cannot see what's in front of your eyes. There's something, that's for sure but who knows how far or how close. If you reach out your arm you might be able to tell. But it's a risk.

The ground is wet and soft, the air is full of insects. Sometimes they come so close you can almost see them, then they disappear into the thick mist again. Through the fog you can locate a pond. As you walk closer it takes shape. Water striders are moving across the surface. The pond is surrounded by plants reaching their limbs towards the water. Leeches float through the dirty liquid, continuously surfacing and vanishing. Apparently they have ten pairs of eyes, to detect motion; their senses are so sharp that they can also recognize vibration and body temperature.

The fog clears.

Inhaling air that someone else exhaled. It's fresh at first but as it runs through the veins and enters your brain you realize, it has been in someone else's body before.

The fog returns.

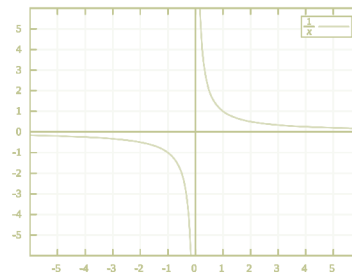
And it's denser now.

Almost solid.

In the distance the lightning strikes again.

a constant attempt, freeze

I want to put my finger on it.
What's the word?



Can i just 🖱️ ?

No.

At last we arrive to gharib—that notion of dissonance, resistance, and retreat. Gharib, in its crudest translation means “strange”, (...). It proposes a way of simultaneous being within and without, beyond a language, a place, an origin and common myth—a contradiction at its heart, its crucial principle of definition. To embed and disappear, to exist and evaporate at the same time.⁴

I wonder and I whisper, a word becomes an object. It moves through time and space, is placed nowhere but always present. In fact, the word is just a shell. What's inside, only the word itself knows. Mouth shut. The shell opens and dissolves. The essence reveals itself and swarms out into time and space. Stand back and watch.

Look right.

Look left.

VANISHING POINT

Vanishing. Gets me. What's vanishing in the vanishing point? My gaze goes so fast towards the vanishing point, i can almost feel the wind to my left and right.

It's the illusion of an only way.

It's the approximation too, a point you can't reach.

It goes so fast, you're there already, it's too easy.

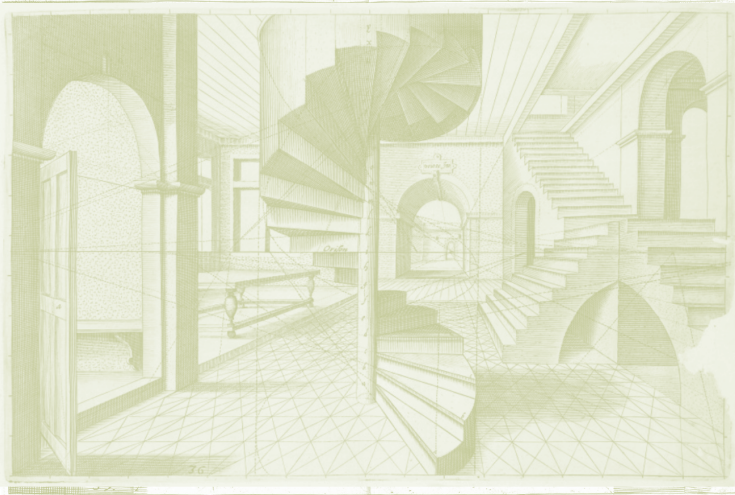
As soon as you're there you have to zoom out again.

Its a trap.

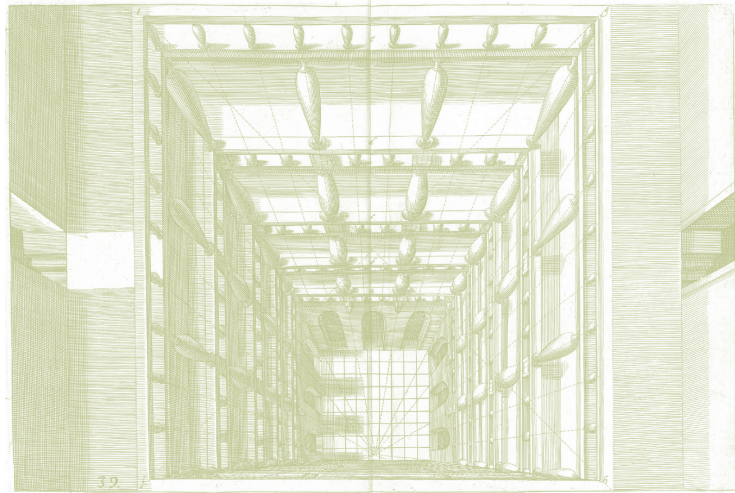
That's what gets me.

As you're falling, your sense of orientation may start to play additional tricks on you. The horizon quivers in a maze of collapsing lines and you may lose any sense of above and below, of before and after, of yourself and your boundaries. Pilots have even reported that free fall can trigger a feeling of confusion between the self and the aircraft. While falling, people may sense themselves as being things, while things may sense they are people. Traditional modes of seeing and feeling are shattered. Any sense of balance is disrupted. Perspectives are twisted and multiplied. New types of visuality arise. This disorientation is partly due to the loss of a stable horizon. And with the loss of a horizon also comes the departure of a stable paradigm of orientation, which has situated concepts of subject and object, of time and space, throughout modernity. In falling, the lines of the horizon shatter, twirl around, and superimpose.⁵

Standing there on the embankment, staring into the current, I realized that - in spite of all the risks involved - a thing in motion will always be better than a thing at rest; that change will always be a nobler thing than permanence; that that which is static will degenerate and decay, turn to ash, while that which is in motion is able to last for all eternity.⁶



Hans Vredeman de Fries, 1614¹⁶



Hans Vredeman de Fries, 1604¹⁷

I can feel
someone

breathing warm breath from behind on my neck.

*5mm
10mm
15mm
20mm

(Sources by line indent)

Agatha Christie, *Der Wachsbblumenstrauß*
Me, I disconnect from you (Replicas)–Tubeway Army
Are “Friends” Electric? (Replicas)–Tubeway Army
The Book of Gharib

AS THE SHELL CRACKS*

Resonance, not the sound itself but its trace, lingers in the room behind you. Songs between walls, conspirators behind curtains.⁷

I whisper. A staircase, that seems to have no end. Spiral stairs winding around and around. With every step you take you take a look around the corner. Another step, another corner, another look. The same hope, the same expectation, the same result. Headaches creep in, accompanied by a pounding heartbeat. Blood rushes through your body. Another stair. Another step. Another corner. Another look. Another stair. Another step. Echoes left behind, traveling downwards as you go up. A faint smell of decay lingers in the room. It must be the wood. The wooden pillars that have been supporting the roof for over a century. The sound of flapping wings can be heard, suggesting that the pigeons may have noticed your approach. I am delighted to welcome you here. Feathers are scattered on the floor. Why are you here? Suddenly I notice that using a candle in this place is actually very unsafe.

She looked around in surprise, her eyes wide open, and tilted her head to one side like a bird. Finally, she asked, ‘But he was murdered, wasn’t he?’⁸

You gently tap the spoon on the half-boiled egg.

In the early morning hours, a candle casts a shadow on the wall. Something moved in silence.⁹

An urge is building up.

Paint is peeling off of the wall.¹⁰

Secrets. They eat you from inside. Walk down the corridor.

Retreat into chambers.¹¹

THE HIDDEN
AND THE IN-BETWEEN

It's always something hidden that interests me. And I search for it, hunt it, chase it, dissect it, until the essence reveals itself. I look at it and converse with it, until it flutters away again.

TITLES

As something you can always, in your process, hang on to, reach back to. A container you fill up, or a lid you put on top for everyone to eventually lift and take a look inside. A guideline, or an illusion of a guideline. An entry point. A vanishing point. A switch of perspective. Continuously.

Look at the work, look at the title, look at the work, look at the title. Hold them both, in one hand each, arms stretched to the left and right, and look from one to another. Continuously. Look left look right. Look at the title, you can feel the work awaiting you, breathing in your neck, staring at the back of your head. Look at the work, happy to see each other, the title is smirking, staring at the back of your head, knowing you will soon look back at it. Worry not, though, you may move your arms and place your hands next to each other, looking at the work and the title as one thing. Congrats. You may put it in a container and put the lid on top. Don't close it all the way though.

Flights—a book about travels (in the broadest sense), but why did she choose flights as the title, as the medium of moving? Why not train, car or even walking? You're up there in a capsule, looking down on things that are distant and unclear. What is visible around the plane hardly changes at all. You have to endure the travel but you know you will arrive somewhere at some point. And everyone with you will arrive with you at the same point and the place will change for all of you, everyone will go their own way. Swarm out. But for now there's no way out. You're so high up that everything outside of the capsule appears to be moving slowly as everything is so far away. In fact, everything around you, even inside the capsule is moving slowly.

Moving in a capsule, encapsulated, capsules encapsulated, bodies in a plane. Constant sound of the engines, pressure in your ears.

CASTING

Again and again positive negative positive negative positive. It's a long and annoying process. But there's something that always makes me want to do it again. Hiding the object, opening the mold again and there it is. Hiding it again but in the next step it's coming out in a different shape, and the negative shape is trapped in there. It's being filled.

It's proceeding on its own. And there it is again, the shell is broken and the object is there. In fact a stranger version of the object. But to me it's familiar. I anticipated it. Spaces and subjects — transform and transition.

All the videos shown in a room and every sound to accompany those, like all the molds and wax reproductions and even the final product, all of those are only means to an end. Every sentence that's written here, every image that's created here; the moth, the lightning, echo, the rooms, the characters, they're all just means to an end. The end being an end, not an end. The end being and end as in a function, a method, not and end as in an end end end. The end being: experiencing the room, acting and reacting around, and to the things presented. Suddenly, you find yourself in a room that seems slightly off. And my works are there to observe you. I whisper. Hang in there. Until you get comfortable. Leave. At any moment.

DAS UNHEIMLICHE (THE UNCANNY)

Yes, there it is. Obviously. The chapter on the Uncanny. And, there it is, obviously, a citation of Sigmund Freud:

“Das Unheimliche sei jene Art des Schreckhaften, welche auf das Allbekannte, Längstvertraute zurückgeht.”¹²

Translated: the Uncanny locates the strangeness in the ordinary and the familiar. The German word ‘Unheimlich’ translates literally to un-homely, suggesting that it would represent the opposite of homely, as in familiar. Therefor suggesting the conclusion that something is frightening, precisely because it is not familiar. Although, Freud states, of course not everything that is new and unfamiliar is frightening; the relationship is irreversible. Something must first be added to the new and unfamiliar to make it uncanny.¹³

Another attempt by Ernst Jentsch to describe the meaning of the Uncanny: “this word appears to express that someone to whom something ‘uncanny’ happens is not quite ‘at home’ or ‘at ease’ in the situation concerned, that the thing is or at least seems to be foreign to (them). In brief, the word suggests that a lack of orientation is bound up with the impression of the uncanniness of a thing or incident.”¹⁴

It operates in a realm where it is difficult to differentiate between positive and negative, or between pleasure and displeasure, leading to an unresolvable sense of unease that points towards the inexplicable, which makes it eerie and unsettling, yet intriguing as the same time. It refers to something that is strangely familiar. Strange and familiar. *ha paradox. ha no.* Both, but at the same time neither nor. Simultaneity in its contradictory nature.

THE CORNER OF THE EYE

In psychoanalysis, they work with the notion that there's always something on the side, an element always present on the periphery of consciousness. You feel it but don't see it. You suspect but you don't know. You remember but don't recognize it, you recognize it but you don't remember. If you see something from the corner of your eye, you see it but not clearly because it happens to the side of you.¹⁵

Gazing at the night sky, in the corner of your eye you can see a star but as you attempt to look at it directly it's not there. You look away again and it appears again. There it is. You knew it. You look again but it's not there. It continues to vanish each time you focus on it directly. There won't be a moment for you to actually be able and see that star, for your eye to rest on that star. It will always remain in the corner of your eye. That is due to the fact that the eye is more sensitive to light on the side whereas in the center it's more sensitive to color. If you look next to the star the light from the star falls on the side of the eye, therefor allowing you to see it. Always only on the side. But it's always there. I look at it directly, it's not there. I look away again and it appears again. I can feel the urge of wanting to catch it. But the subject remains free and uncaught. I chase it but it haunts me. and there rrrrrrr

THE STRANGE IS UNGRASPABLE

So if u want to grasp it you have to turn it into something not strange, I suppose.

transitions
of falling from day to night,
of moving from the inside to the outside
of losing consciousness — of regaining consciousness
of losing agency — of regaining agency
of a subject becoming an object,
of an object becoming a subject
to

THE MOMENT

when action switches,
from being clueless and nervous
to being determined and focused.
And you catch it with your hands.

The moment,
when they take out the strange.
when you manage to witness the lightning striking
with your own eyes.
When you turn around.

23:59

00:00

It's not a minute
It's a second
A split second
A fraction of a second
A point in time,
A moment, so brief,

I can't name it.

I want to put my finger on it.

it echoes after

Happy new Year.

while up here on the fourth floor it's still warm. The wind feels surprisingly good and the air smells like spring. He sits down on the balcony and drinks a glass of water, leaving the balcony door open. Fresh air enters the kitchen. Agitatedly, yet gently the moth flutters out, disappearing into the dawning sky, while I'm getting out of the hospital, thinking that I'm so vulnerable, if someone would punch me now, I'd probably die. No, because I'm still in front of a hospital. I get in the taxi, driving home. The air in my room is thick, since no one has opened the window in the past seven days. As I open it, a late summer breeze enters the room. Agitatedly, yet gently the moth flutters out, disappearing into the dawning sky, while she drives around the block twice, as all the parking spots are taken, to eventually park her car on a quiet side road.

The keys are rattling in her pocket with every step she takes, as she walks home. The tailor charged quite a lot but it was definitely worth it. It's soft at the elbow as she bends her arm to turn the key in the lock. It's soft at the knees as she walks up the stairs, and the shoulder part stays in the right place as she reaches towards the window handle. Agitatedly, yet gently the moth flutters out, disappearing into the dawning sky, while they open the door again, the Negroni still in one hand. In the distance the lightning is still striking but here it has already stopped raining. A gush of wind enters, trying to go through the heavy, dark green curtains. They move a little, but don't let it through. The wind leaves again and with it, agitatedly, yet gently the moth flutters out, disappearing into the dawning sky, while

I wonder and I whisper.

THE STRANGE IS UNGRASPABLE

So if u want to grasp it, you have to turn it into something not strange.

CONCLUSION

Is all of this about subconsciousness? That's so boring. Was it about the subconscious all along? Such an anti-climax. Although, contrary to what I expected this thesis made me want to continue working in the same way as I used to. I wanted the thesis to be something final and above all closing. So I'd finally be able to write about something else, in a different style, and work in a different way. But instead it made me appreciate my way of working and realizing that I just have to... what actually? No matter how far science, technology, medical science, etc. go, they will never be able to discover someone's entire subconscious in one's single life, this is all I have and it's only mine, and if they do, the world will end the next day. Because what do people do if there is no more to discover? Due to the existence of the subconscious there will always be something inside of me for me to discover. Everything I do is an attempt to try and learn how to access that, every time anew. It's always something hidden that interests me. And I search for it, hunt it, chase it, dissect it, until the essence reveals itself. I look at it and converse with it, until it flutters away again. I wanted to catch the moth with my hands so it'd finally be gone and wouldn't annoy me anymore. And I did. But I have to catch it every time anew. It's in my hand, squished but at the same time I can see it fluttering. This moth subsists as long as I live. Things come from the subconscious and that's fine but my work is not about that. Boring. It is about a lot of things and a lot of things that I still don't know of. And I hope I'll never stop searching.

I hope I'll never stop spotting a death's head moth flying loose.

Last summer the phrase “spotting a death’s head moth flying loose” came to me, but I don’t remember where I first encountered it. Last fall a friend of mine told me about a short video of a person sitting in a car while a thunderstorm is happening outside. The person wants to witness the lightning with their own eyes but they look away each time, just when the lightning strikes. My friend doesn’t remember where he saw the video. Both exist in my head now. I can feel the moth fluttering and the lightning striking without my eyes being able to witness it. I can feel the urge of wanting to catch something. But the subject remains free and uncaught.

- 1 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bat>
- 2 Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis*; <https://www.authorama.com/metamorphosis-1.html>
- 3 Olga Tokarczuk, *Flights*, 2017
- 4 *The Book of Gharib*, p. 24
- 5 Hito Steyerl, *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective*: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/24/67860/in-free-fall-a-thought-experiment-on-vertical-perspective/>
- 6 Olga Tokarczuk, *Flights*, 2017
- 7 *The Book of Gharib*
- 8 Agatha Christie, *Der Wachsblumenstrauß*
- 9 *Me, I disconnect from you (Replicas)–Tubeway Army*
- 10 *Are “Friends” Electric? (Replicas)–Tubeway Army*
- 11 *The Book of Gharib*
- 12 Sigmund Freud, *das Unheimliche* (p.46)
- 13 Sigmund Freud, *das Unheimliche* (p.47)
- 14 Ernst Jentsch, *On the Psychology of the Uncanny*, 1906 (p. 2)
- 15 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/out-of-from-the-corner-of-eye>
- 16 https://www.ribapix.com/hans-vredeman-de-vries-perspective-part-i-plate-50-spiral-staircases-with-sight-lines-and-vanishing-points-marked-in-outline-and-with-detail-and-shading_riba99473
- 17 https://www.ribapix.com/hans-vredeman-de-vries-perspective-part-i-plate-36-spiral-staircase-with-sight-lines-and-vanishing-points-marked_riba99475

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