



# University of HUDDERSFIELD

## University of Huddersfield Repository

Henderson, Chloe

The Art of Murder

### Original Citation

Henderson, Chloe (2018) The Art of Murder. Masters thesis, University of Huddersfield.

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/35097/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: [E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk](mailto:E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk).

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

**THE ART OF MURDER.**

**CHLOE ELIZABETH HENDERSON**

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MRes in Art and Design

The University of Huddersfield

September 2018

## Copyright statement

The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns any copyright in it (the "Copyright") and s/he has given The University of Huddersfield the right to use such copyright for any administrative, promotional, educational and/or teaching purposes.

Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts, may be made only in accordance with the regulations of the University Library. Details of these regulations may be obtained from the Librarian. This page must form part of any such copies made.

The ownership of any patents, designs, trademarks and any and all other intellectual property rights except for the Copyright (the "Intellectual Property Rights") and any reproductions of copyright works, for example graphs and tables ("Reproductions"), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property Rights and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property Rights and/or Reproductions

## **Abstract**

In 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts', Thomas De Quincey argues that murder can, by definition, be considered a form of visual art and should be viewed as an aesthetic rather than from a sociological point of view. This is also what I intend to do. I will look at murder from a stylistic perspective and use De Quincey's aesthetic analysis of murder to create my own pieces of textual practice. This link between murder, eroticism and art can also be seen in numerous other novels and pieces of art. My research is concerned with the relational and psychodynamic aspects of the connection between the topics. The first step towards confirming this connection is to define murder, a concept that is both difficult to process but one that is also constantly provoking attention. Murder is seen as the worst thing in human life but that doesn't stop people being incredibly curious about it.

In the Oxford English Dictionary art is defined as "The expression or application of creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting, drawing, or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power." The key words here are 'typically' and 'primarily.' By this definition it is possible that, like Thomas De Quincey argued, murder could be considered an art form.

Any attempt at pinning this definition down, however, shows that it is seen as a pervasive one to many. The problem with this then becomes a methodological one. How does one study murder as it operates in the encounter with works of art?

I decided on a practice-led approach, comprised of three different strands; artistic, psychoanalytic and writing practices.

The context for my research is polymorphic and located in the continuously changing field between visual and textual material.

I have focussed mainly on the following novels; *The Story of the Eye* by Georges Bataille, *Justine* by Marquis De Sade, *In the Realms of the Unreal* by Henry Darger, *The Aesthetics of Murder* by Joel Black and *Murder as a Fine Art* by Thomas De Quincey. I have used these pieces of literature as the basis for my own textual practices as well as using artists that have been viewed historically as controversial.

These artists are as followed; Walter Sickert, Henry Darger and Jake and Dinos Chapman. I have used these artists and writers as characters in my writing practices, always besides the story's main character – Murder.

I have written my own psychological short stories and will be using these stories/poems to create textual imagery of the assembly between murder and art. The use of adjectives in these pieces are particularly important. My research will look into controversy, ethical issues and stylised violence in art as well as the psychological features that go into writing about murder. I will be presenting violence as a form of expressive art both through creative writing and illustrative pieces representing both the artists involved in my writing and a replication of their styles of creativity. My own artistic practice will support the writing and help sustain the storyline and connection.

## **Table of Contents**

Abstract

Dedications and Acknowledgments

Introduction

Chapter one

- 1.1. Georges Bataille
- 1.2. Lars Von Trier
- 1.3. Thomas De Quincey
- 1.4. Jake and Dinos Chapman
- 1.5. Henry Darger
- 1.6. Marquis De Sade
- 1.7. Transformation and Walter Sickert

Chapter two

- 2.1. Psychology behind loving serial killers and Interview with Lucy Henderson

Chapter Three

- 'Tom' Acrylic on wood.
- 'Tom #2' Charcoal on paper.
- 'Tom #3' Charcoal on paper.
- 'Tom #4' Charcoal on paper.
- 'Sharp brushes' Acrylic on wood.
- Walter Sickert – Repetition is Death

Chapter Four

- 'The final shortcut' Pen on paper.
- 'Insult to insult to insult to injury' Charcoal on paper.
- 'Insult to insult to insult to insult to injury' Charcoal on paper.
- 'The real brothers grim' Acrylic on wood.
- Jake and Dinos Chapman – Most Journalists are Pretty Senseless.

Chapter Five

- 'They make fun of my arms again' Pencil and pen on paper.
- 'I wished to be young always' Acrylic on canvas.
- Henry Darger – My Arms

Chapter Six

- 'Exiled' Acrylic on wood.
- 'Perversity' Acrylic on canvas.
- 'Justine' Charcoal on paper.
- 'Justine #2' Pen and Pencil on paper.
- Marquis De Sade – Bound

## Chapter Seven

- Conclusion and Self Narrative

### **Dedications and Acknowledgements**

To my parents, Karen and Neville, and to my stepparents, Lucy and Paul. Thank you for showing me patience, kindness and believing in me so whole-heartedly. I'm so glad you pushed me to pursue university, these past 4 years have changed me in such a positive way. I love you guys. Also, my little sister Rachel, you're the absolute best.

To my auntie and uncle, Sophie and Shane. Thank you for always giving me food to eat, booze to drink, a bed to sleep and an environment to feel completely safe and happy in. I would have dropped out years ago if it wasn't for you two, I owe you big time.

To my friend Danny and my ex-housemates Vicky and Thom, thank you for giving me the motivation to continue, for your on-going compassion and helping me see that it's okay to ask for help. You really are the best friends a gal could wish for. I already miss the stupid nights we would spend getting drunk and watching The Chase. Oh, and Jerome, Jerome was the best. Long live Elm St.

To Charly, who saved me. I will never be able to repay you, but I hope you know that I love you. I'm so proud of you. You're never getting rid of me.

And finally thank you to my tutor, Dale Holmes, for showing me that it's important to enjoy the work I do and for not giving up on me when I felt like giving up on myself.

### **List of abbreviations**

Tom – prostitute - used in London in the early 1900s

Snow - cocaine

## Introduction

Art has always been a means of expressing a person's inner creativity. This is generally deemed by society as a positive thing.

...Except when a person's inner creativity is fuelled by hatred, rape or murder.

The poet, Lord Byron, famously quoted "We of the craft are all crazy."<sup>1</sup> I believe this to be true. Many artists only really become famous and successful after their demise and are often unappreciated and wildly unsuccessful during their lives. There seems to be a cult of mystery and morbid curiosity surrounding artists who were shunned in their lifetimes and praised after their deaths. If the soul exists then surely, the soul of an artist lives on through their work.

At the centre of my research I am concerned with understanding how art pieces and the controversy behind them can be transformative. Even while exploring my own practice, I approach it with a psychological perspective and consideration to societal interaction. Art can deliver a change to the world, is it more important to censor what we view as art, or redefine social norms?

I have used this thesis as an opportunity to write several short stories. In this textual practice I have focussed on several artists as characters, most remembered or known for their 'controversial' lives and artwork. Many of these artists have been posthumously judged because of their own controversial decisions.

Using these artists, I have rewritten events that have happened in their lives in an extremely dramatized way. I have been largely influenced by controversies in the artist's life surrounding violence, erotic taboos and murder. These subjects are of large curiosity to us as a society and I have been incredibly interested in the psychology behind them.

I have also investigated real life events in which violence and eroticism have coexisted in direct links to each other. Focussing on the psychology behind these links I have spoken to Lucy Henderson, the Team manager for the Offender Rehabilitation Services in West Yorkshire, regarding these topics, as well as researching into the subject of society's obsession with the macabre.

Because of the artists I have chosen to research, I have chosen to focus on erotic violence, murder and the taboo too. Biologically, sex and violence are very similar states of mind and the two often coincide and can make for incredible dramatic events and subject matters for art, film and the media. Examples of this can be found in how incredibly popular horror films based on serial killers or other horrific events can be. How can movies such as Hannibal have such a large cult following when we are constantly fed information of how dangerous of an impact these themes can have on children and our mental health?

Film makers, visual artists and writers have been stylising murder and sexual violence for many years and it has become a norm.

---

<sup>1</sup> Byron, G. (Unknown). AZ Quotes. Retrieved from <http://www.azquotes.com/quote/1312328>

As well as using textual practice to further my research, I have also created my own art pieces of art to go beside them. Through both these practices I have created a representation of my own research into erotic violence and murder in a way to sustain a connection between factual research and creative practice.

As a society we know that murder is wrong, we know that violence is wrong, but that still doesn't stop people doing it. Could art be to blame? This thesis aims to explore that question.

## **Chapter 1**

### **1.1**

One of the main artists I decided to study was the writer Georges Bataille. Born in 1897, Bataille was a French author<sup>2</sup> who produced a large and incredibly diverse body of work. His most famous works focus on philosophy and eroticism and have attracted controversy<sup>3</sup> due to their explicit topics and controversial view on sex, morals and religion. To venture into the world of Georges Bataille's writing is to embark on a journey of perversity and murder, both of which have been incredibly important within my research.

I chose to focus specifically on Bataille's 1928 novella *Story of the Eye*, a tale that focuses on two teenage lovers and their sexual travesties. I chose this novella as it is built around a series of metaphors and philosophical imagery that creates an image within itself and, in this way, differentiates itself from many 'ordinary' pieces of fiction. Although the narrative centres on the characters of Simone, Marcelle and the narrator, the text itself concentrates mainly on the symbol of the eye. The intricate use of the metaphorical imagery throughout the novel transforms the text from a generic pornographic story to a literary classic. The 'eye' in this novel can be recognised numerous times in different transfigurations, but, more importantly than its forms, is what the eye symbolises. The eye, and other cyclical metaphors and spherical objects, are consistent throughout the novel; rather than the characters, these objects are the core subjects of the story. As Rina Arya describes, 'In a reversal of conventional narrative fiction, the characters are more object-like; they are fetishized body parts that seek erotic gratification'<sup>4</sup> but it is the objects in the text that are the 'main subjects' of the story. These objects are utilized both as to demonstrate the relationship between 'taboo' and the audience, and to drive the narrative acting as a consistent motif throughout the novella. Beginning with

---

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica . (2018). *Georges Bataille*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Georges-Bataille>.

<sup>3</sup> Walden, G. (2002). *Nasty, brutish and short on ideas*. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/4728488/Nasty-brutish-and-short-on-ideas.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Rina Arya (2007) The Role of Objects in Bataille's: *Story of the Eye*, *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing*

Arts, 12:4, 67-77, DOI: 10.1080/1352816070182267

(PDF) *The Role of Objects in Bataille's: Story of the Eye*. Available from:



the cat's saucer of milk in which Simone dips her body in the first chapter<sup>5</sup> and leading to the dead priest's eye used during sex in the final chapter<sup>6</sup>, the narrator uses these objects to continue the story as well as keeping a running theme of both eroticism and terror.

The globular objects continuously referenced throughout the text are also frequently linked with an associated liquid. For example, tears are associated with the eye, yolk with the egg, and the milk in the cat's saucer.<sup>7</sup> The running theme of these objects and their liquids intermingling in unexpected ways leaves the viewer with an almost dreamlike combination of absurdity and realism, taking something ordinary and transforming it into something disturbing. During Simone's illness, the narrator speaks of her actions, noting that she was 'virtually drinking my left eye between her lips. Then without leaving the eye, which was sucked as obstinately as a breast, she sat down, wrenching my head toward her on the seat, and she pissed noisily on the bobbing eggs'.<sup>8</sup> The three objects mentioned in this passage – eyes, breasts, and eggs - are often seen throughout the novel, but this time there is a crossover of the liquids associated with them. In this situation the eye is compared to the breast, with the reference to 'drinking' conjuring the idea of breast milk, and the eggs are crossed with urine. This creates an unsettling scene for the reader through the complication of understood binaries, taking everyday objects and intermingling their associated liquids to create taboo acts.

This problematising of these symbols and their relationships is also seen in the use of these individual objects as metaphor. While objects are often employed as metaphor to express a concept commonly understood to be linked to said object, the metaphors in *Story of the Eye* often hold an opposite intention. For example, in Christianity, the eye can symbolise omniscience and clairvoyance<sup>9</sup> and in Egypt it is used as a symbol in the Eye of Horus<sup>10</sup>. In these contexts, the eye is a symbol of protection, life and sight, whereas in the *Story of the Eye*, the eye is no longer appraised for its ability to see and instead valorised for its lack thereof. Bataille depicts the eye as the 'locus of self-dissipation, it is the site from which the self, and sight is poured out'<sup>11</sup>. This quote shows how instead of the eye taking in sight, it is instead poured out, this is another example of an inverted metaphor. This is particularly prescient in the scene in which Simone takes the priest's eye and places it inside her vagina. His eye is

---

<sup>5</sup> Bataille, G. (1928). *Story of the Eye*. [PDF edition]. Retrieved from [http://www.totuusradio.fi/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/bataille\\_story\\_of\\_eye.pdf](http://www.totuusradio.fi/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/bataille_story_of_eye.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Bataille, G. (1928). *Story of the Eye*. [PDF edition]. Retrieved from [http://www.totuusradio.fi/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/bataille\\_story\\_of\\_eye.pdf](http://www.totuusradio.fi/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/bataille_story_of_eye.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Rina Arya (2007) The Role of Objects in Bataille's: *Story of the Eye*, *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing*

Arts, 12:4, 67-77, DOI: 10.1080/1352816070182267

(PDF) *The Role of Objects in Bataille's: Story of the Eye*. Available from:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233319970\\_The\\_Role\\_of\\_Objects\\_in\\_Bataille%27s\\_Story\\_of\\_the\\_Eye](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233319970_The_Role_of_Objects_in_Bataille%27s_Story_of_the_Eye) [accessed Sep 14 2018].

<sup>8</sup> Bataille, G. (1928). *Story of the Eye*. Unknown: Penguin Classics; New Ed edition (26 April 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Catholic Saints. (2018). *Eye Christian Symbol*. Retrieved from <http://www.catholic-saints.info/catholic-symbols/eye-christian-symbol.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> Good Luck Symbols. (2018). *Eye of Horus*. Retrieved from <https://goodlucksymbols.com/eye-of-horus/>.

<sup>11</sup> Nasereddin, S. Beholding the Eye: Repetition, Trauma, and Writing in Bataille's *Story of the Eye*. (n.d.). *The Psychotherapy Patient*, 12(1–2), 45–65. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J358v12n01\\_03](https://doi.org/10.1300/J358v12n01_03)

blinded in darkness and confinement, and highlights the loss of the priest's life with the loss of his ability to experience the world through sight, subsumed by Simone both metaphorically and physically. The fact that this is within her vagina after their sexual interaction exemplifies the link between the erotic and the grotesque, and the way in which Bataille interweaves violent and pornographic imagery throughout the text.

These inverted metaphors are important as they can convey the theme of the taboo throughout the story as well as showing the originality of eroticism in this more philosophical nature. The liminality between eroticism and death is a core theme of the text, as the line is often blurred throughout the novel:

“Death was the sole outcome of my erection, and if Simone and I were killed, then the universe of our unbearable personal vision was certain to be replaced by the pure stars, fully unrelated to any external gazes and realising in a cold state, without human delays or detours, something that strikes me as the goal of my sexual licentiousness: a geometric incandescence (among other things, the coinciding point of life and death, being and nothingness), perfectly fulgurating.”<sup>12</sup>

This extract shows how it is ‘one of Bataille’s central claims that eroticism and death are intimately linked.’<sup>13</sup> The intertwining of these two concepts is seen in many situations in *Story of the Eye*, for example the unintentional murder of the cyclist, after which Simone confesses to the narrator that she is aroused<sup>14</sup>. It is also present in the rape, breakdown and eventual suicide of Marcelle; she is the personification of innocence within this text and the narrator and Simone not only rape and defile her innocence, they also drive her to severe mental illness, eventually killing herself. During this berating of Marcelle, both the narrator and Simone have sex multiple times and are aroused by Marcelle’s depression and death. Finally, this is furthermore seen in the final scene in which Simone, the narrator and Sir Edmund murder a priest and copulate on his dead body. This teleological link between eroticism and death is expressed consistently throughout the novel, emphasising the thin line between life and death by highlighting the passionate, primal desires of the living juxtaposed with the dead. In this way, *Story of the Eye* has been one of my biggest sources of inspiration in writing this thesis. Although it is seen as, primarily, a piece of erotic fiction, the use of striking symbolic imagery along with blurring the lines between death, violence and eroticism, provide ample material to delve into the relationship between these concepts.

## 1.2

Another artist that I believe broaches the link between eroticism, taboo and death is the creator and director Lars Von Trier. The Danish director has a career spanning over almost four decades and is well known for his ‘edgy’ and controversial films. Getting to grip with Von Trier’s directing style is tough. Although largely admired and artistically inspired, he remains one of the most debated directors that is active today.

Von Trier uses his provocative and taboo films to challenge the viewer, both emotionally and psychologically. The director focuses mainly on female characters and places these women in extreme emotional and psychological turmoil. He is able to portray this emotional duress

---

<sup>12</sup> Bataille, G. (1928). *Story of the Eye*. Unknown: Penguin Classics; New Ed edition (26 April 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Boulter, J. (2000). The Negative Way of Trauma: Georges Bataille's "Story of the Eye". *Cultural Critique*, (46), 153-178. doi:10.2307/1354412

<sup>14</sup> Bataille, G. (1928). *Story of the Eye*. Unknown: Penguin Classics; New Ed edition (26 April 2001).

through an extremely stylised and fascinating way, as if he has used the trauma to create a piece of visual art. He manages to transform an event that is usually seen as disturbing and make it into a true piece of art.

The film of Von Trier's that I chose to focus on primarily is 'Antichrist'.<sup>15</sup> The story is focused on a grief-stricken mother whose child has died. The film follows 'She' as she deals with the death of her infant with the attempted help of 'He', the mother's husband who is also a therapist. Antichrist has made headlines for its explicit use of sexual violence and sadomasochism.<sup>16</sup> Although this is true, there are scenes of extremely graphic sex and violence, sometimes coinciding, the film's concerns are predominantly psychological. Antichrist is a snapshot into the minds of an unhappy couple, dealing with an intense tragedy and though it is easy to be distracted by the explicitness of the gore, the psychological cinematic themes are evident throughout.

The two main characters are lost in their own world, soon after the death of their child they retreat to a cabin in the woods<sup>17</sup> and cinematically it seems as if they are in an alternate universe of compulsive sexual activity and psychological terrors. Antichrist's narrative and visuals make it difficult to make any distinction to what is real and what is mind trickery, and gives the viewer a sense of unease, even without being especially graphic. It is difficult to decipher if what is happening is 'real' or if the whole events take place within the mind of a grief-stricken mother.

Antichrist is a film told in four chapters and, like many other Von Trier films, features a prologue and epilogue. The cinematography in this film is extremely pertinent to the themes throughout. The prologue of the film shows He and She having sex while their infant son accidentally falls out of a window of the seventh floor of their apartment building. The scene is shot in black and white and features a lot of slow motion, it is also accompanied by an operatic song by Handel. The scene itself is a horrific one but the way in which it was shot juxtaposes the events entirely. The clean and crisp black and white gives it an elegant, almost *Vogue* photography style to it. Throughout the film there is also a lot of symbolism involved and connections between the main characters and graphic natural events. In between shots of the main characters grieving the loss of their child we are shown scenes of a deer mis-carrying a fawn as well as a freshly hatched bird being eaten by other animals. This depicts the barbarism of nature but also represents how natural and common death is, even if as a human race we view it as horrific, much like the main character does. I believe it could also show the link between women and nature as the scenes show what 'She' is dealing with, but never 'He.'

Two scenes in particular are what has made this film as controversial as it is, a scene of genital mutilation and a scene in which 'She' stabs 'He's' leg with a hand drill. The genital mutilation in the film is incredibly graphic but helps signify how guilty the female character feels about the death of her son. She believes the death, not only was her fault, but that she and her husband should be punished to never being able to have sex again, hence the mutilation of their genitals. So, while I agree with the viewers that claim that the scene was extremely shocking, I do feel that it was necessary for the story.

---

<sup>15</sup> Garde, P (Producer), & Von Trier, A. (Director). (2009). *Antichrist* [Motion Picture]. Denmark: Zentropa Entertainments.

<sup>16</sup> Brooks, X. (2009). *Antichrist: a work of genius or the sickest film in the history of cinema?*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/jul/16/antichrist-lars-von-trier-feminism>.

<sup>17</sup> Ebert, R. (2009). *Antichrist*. Retrieved from <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/antichrist-2009>.

In the final scene of the film, after 'She' mutilates and assaults 'He', 'He' is forced to kill the female character, he then cremates her. This scene could also show the symbolism of how man has control over women, even after a woman is put in a position of power. It could also signify man's discovery of fire, and his subsequent destruction of nature. After the cremation of the female character we are met with a shot of 'He' standing at the top of a hill being swarmed by a group of people wearing masks as they all begin to lower down into the earth. Visually, it repeats an earlier scene of the fallen baby bird being eaten by animals. I also believe it could signify a form of re-birth; the man is being enveloped by nature (woman.) This is where the film ends<sup>18</sup>.

Choosing to focus on this film in particular was an easy choice to make. The link between graphic sexual and physical violence and psychological mental turmoil and morality made it an extremely thought provoking and provocative piece. The juxtaposition of the cinematography to the events also really made the film a stimulating experience.

Through this research into Lars Von Trier's use of sexual and physical violence I came across another book by Georges Bataille named *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*. In this book Bataille goes into detail about the links he feels are poignant between sex and murder as he views them in intense relation to each other, instead of individual things.

"Human sexual activity is not necessarily erotic but erotic it is whenever it is not rudimentary and purely animal."<sup>19</sup> I sincerely believe that this is also what Lars Von Trier had in mind while directing *AntiChrist*. Instead of showing simple sex scenes, which could be merely be described as pornography, he has instead decided to broach eroticism as an animal concept.

Like Bataille, Von Trier takes the theme of eroticism and shows it as a subject that cannot be questioned, as a somatic experience that doesn't have a limit. I believe this is why people found the film so shocking, we are taught to believe that eroticism has limits, this is something that Lars Von Trier and Georges Bataille clearly do not believe.

### 1.3

I also researched the writer Thomas De Quincey, particularly focusing on his 'On Murder' essays. Thomas De Quincey, born 1785<sup>20</sup>, was an essayist and writer who has grown to be one of the most respected essayists of his period. De Quincey spent his life writing a large number of essays and fiction as well as autobiographical pieces.

In 1827 De Quincey wrote a piece entitled 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts', which focuses primarily on famous criminals in his period and is a satirical and fictional piece concerning the aesthetics of murder. Thomas De Quincey considers murder as an aesthetic in opposition to a sociological or philosophical standpoint. De Quincey explains how he believed

---

<sup>18</sup> Garde, P (Producer), & Von Trier, A. (Director). (2009). *Antichrist* [Motion Picture]. Denmark: Zentropa Entertainments.

<sup>19</sup> Bataille, G. (2001). *Erotism: Death and Sensuality* (New ed.). England: City Lights Publishers.

<sup>20</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2018). *Thomas De Quincey*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-De-Quincey>.

every philosopher over the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century was murdered. 'Insomuch, that if a man calls himself a philosopher, and never had his life attempted, rest assured there is nothing in him'.<sup>21</sup>

In this satirical fiction De Quincey focuses on a series of murders that were carried out in Ratcliffe Highway in London's East End. In 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' the actual investigation seems to matter very little, what the writer continuously comes back to is the brutality and explicit nature of the crimes. In the tale he returns numerous times to the Ratcliffe Highway and outright ignores or alters details for no reason albeit that he can continue to explore his own reactions to the crimes.

Granting De Quincey writing is based on the topic of murder, he manages to breach the subject in a somewhat humorous way and this juxtaposition of subjects is pertinent to his aesthetic view on murder. "Everything in this world has two handles. Murder, for instance, may be laid hold of by its moral handle (as it is in the pulpit, and at the old bailey;) and *that*, I confess, is its weak side; or it may also be treated *aesthetically*, as the Germans call it, that is, in relation to good taste."<sup>22</sup>

This incredible quotation, while at the time simply a generalisation of what De Quincey thought of murder, has grown unbelievably relevant to many other writers and their relationship with death.

A writer that I believe has taken cues from Thomas De Quincey is author of the Hannibal series Thomas Harris. The Silence of the Lambs, the third book of the series, is based on the career of Clarice Starling, a student studying to become an FBI agent.<sup>23</sup> She is asked by her superior to interview infamous serial killer and cannibal Hannibal Lecter for his help solving a series of murders by a killer dubbed 'Buffalo Bill'.<sup>24</sup> The process of solving the murders is extremely aestheticized as Clarice has to discern a pattern between the murders as well as distance herself emotionally. The less she knows about the victims the more able she is to be objective in solving the murders.

This aestheticization has also been transformed from page to television. In 2012 writer Bryan Fuller took on the task of taking a literary and film classic and turning it into a television masterpiece.

The television show focuses on criminal profiler and teacher Will Graham. The first episode opens on Will entering a house where a murder has taken place<sup>25</sup>. Will then recreates the scene and re-enacts the murder in his mind. "This is my design" Is the profilers catch phrase, as he is able to visualise and recreate the murder from his own perspective, as if he were the murderer. This visual capacity to solve murders delves the viewer into the mind of the murderer and creates a compassionate bond between Will Graham and the viewer. As the series continues it becomes evident that Will himself struggles with viewing what he sees when he recreates a

---

<sup>21</sup> De Quincey, T. (2015). *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (004th ed.). Great Britain: Penguin Classics.

<sup>22</sup> De Quincey, T. (2015). *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (004th ed.). Great Britain: Penguin Classics.

<sup>23</sup> Harris, T. (1988/2009). *Silence of The Lambs*. Unknown: Arrow; 01 edition.

<sup>24</sup> Harris, T. (1988/2009). *Silence Of The Lambs*. Unknown: Arrow; 01 edition..

<sup>25</sup> Fuller, B. (Writer.) (2013). *Aperitif* [Series One episode One]. In B. Fuller (Producer), *Hannibal*. Ontario, Canada: NBC

murder<sup>26</sup>. Will's struggles seem to mirror that of the viewer. Will attempts to continue working as a criminal profiler but finds it difficult to maintain his sanity, eventually leaning on Hannibal Lecter for help. As Will's psychiatrist but also the murderer in which Will is hunting, Hannibal Lecter offers false assurances of recovery and happiness.

The visuals of murder are often made using body parts transformed into new and disturbing images. Each murder offers us a diabolical view into the murderer's brain, inside of which seems to be a denial for the sanctity of human life and a strive for disturbing aesthetic beauty. Fuller offers his viewer irreverent murders with the attempt to push his characters to the brink of their sanity and desensitise the viewer in such a way that always leaves us wanting more<sup>27</sup>.

## 1.4

The second piece of textual practice I have written in this thesis is based on a guardian article, an interview of Jake and Dinos Chapman by Sean O'Hagan<sup>28</sup>. I have used this structure of writing to create my own interview with the two artists. Jake and Dinos Chapman are known for their slight misanthropy, especially when it comes to art critics and interviewers<sup>29</sup>. I decided to take this interview and manipulate it in a way that could show, not only the Chapman brother's controversial past, but also could allude to something darker and more sinister. I have also used this format due to the fact that the Guardian, as well as other news outlets, seem to both love and hate the artists, meaning there are many different articles based on the pair. In this textual practice I have also used quotes from articles about Jake and Dinos. I will reference them here.<sup>30313233</sup>

I have also used reference to the artist Francisco Goya, a Spanish romantic painter and printmaker born in 1746.<sup>34</sup> Goya created a series of prints based on the horrifying things he saw during the Spanish civil war aptly named 'The Disasters of War.'<sup>35</sup> In 2003 Jake and Dinos Chapman bought this series of 82 prints and decided to 'rectify' them<sup>36</sup>. Others would say

---

<sup>26</sup> Fuller, B. (Writer.) (2013). *Aperitif* [Series One episode One]. In B. Fuller (Producer), *Hannibal*. Ontario, Canada: NBC

<sup>27</sup> Fuller, B. (Writer.) (2013). *Aperitif* [Series One episode One]. In B. Fuller (Producer), *Hannibal*. Ontario, Canada: NBC

<sup>28</sup> O'Hagan, S. (2006). *The Interview*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/dec/03/art.gilbertandgeorge>.

<sup>29</sup> Cadwalladr, C. (2006). *Meet the Real Brothers Grim*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/oct/08/art>.

<sup>30</sup> O'Hagan, S. (2006). *Loads of talent but no real taste*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/dec/03/art.gilbertandgeorge>.

<sup>31</sup> Sewell, B. (2003). *Summer show lacks talent*. Retrieved from <https://www.standard.co.uk/home/summer-show-lacks-talent-7432349.html>

<sup>32</sup> Rivkin, A. (2008). *Jake's Progress*. Retrieved from <https://www.standard.co.uk/es-magazine-fashion/jakes-progress-6809206.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Hunter-Tilney, L. (2013). *Lunch with the FT: Jake and Dinos Chapman*. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/2c364e58-51d9-11e3-adfa-00144feabdc0>.

<sup>34</sup> The National Gallery. (2018). *Francisco Goya*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/francisco-de-goya>.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Harris Collection. (2018). *Francisco Goya - The Disasters of War*. Retrieved from <http://www.richardharrisartcollection.com/portfolio-view/francisco-goya-2/>.

<sup>36</sup> Jones, J. (2003). *Look what we did*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2003/mar/31/artsfeatures.turnerprize2003>.

'deface' them. I have used this series of artwork, as well as the sculptures that have also been created from the art works and used them as a talking point in the 'interview.'

## 1.5

Another artist that I have used as a character in my textual practice is Henry Darger. Henry Darger was born in Chicago in 1892 and had an extremely tragic childhood<sup>37</sup>. At age four Darger's mother died during childbirth. While attending Catholic school he was constantly bullied and called 'crazy' due to his 'strange noises.'<sup>38</sup> It has since been speculated that Darger himself may have been on the autistic spectrum<sup>39</sup>. At age 12 his father sent him to the Lincoln County Asylum for Feeble-Minded Children. The diagnosis being 'self-abuse,' otherwise known as masturbation<sup>40</sup>. During the early 1900s it was thought that masturbation was simply a case of lack of self-control and feared that it would eventually lead to disability, insanity and even death<sup>41</sup>

During his time in the asylum he attempted to escape numerous times, eventually succeeding at age 16. He began working in a hospital as a porter soon after his escape.<sup>42</sup>

When Darger was 19, only three years after his escape, a child named Elsie Paroubek was abducted and killed near the artists home<sup>43</sup>. Henry Darger was obsessed with the innocence of children, possibly due to what he viewed as his own lost childhood. "I hate to see the day come when I will be grown up. I never wanted to. I wished to be young always"<sup>44</sup> This Peter Pan like romanticisation of childhood is evident through his artwork. Though his work it is easy to see the influence of Victorian children's literature as well as other children's book illustration. The most notable topic in Darger's artwork is the children in them, sometimes pictured naked. The naked children are drawn with feminine features, such as long hair and bows, but seem to have male genitalia. Darger is said to refer to these children as 'fairies', at the time fairies was a code word for homosexuals. Another explanation could be that Darger had actually never seen female genitalia.

As well as what Darger named the 'Vivian girls', there are also many paintings of a man strangling a young girl. This is how Elsie Paroubek was killed.<sup>45</sup> The unsolved murder fascinated

---

<sup>37</sup> Nechvatal, J. (2015). *The Radical Ambiguity of Henry Darger*. Retrieved from <https://hyperallergic.com/241213/the-radical-ambiguity-of-henry-darger/>.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas, S. (2005). *Portraits of a serial killer?*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jan/12/art>.

<sup>39</sup> Nechvatal, J. (2015). *The Radical Ambiguity of Henry Darger*. Retrieved from <https://hyperallergic.com/241213/the-radical-ambiguity-of-henry-darger/>.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas, S. (2005). *Portraits of a serial killer?*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jan/12/art>.

<sup>41</sup> The London Asylum for the Insane. (2018). *The Evils of "Self-Abuse"*. Retrieved from <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/archives/virtualexhibits/londonasylum/selfabuse.html>.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas, S. (2005). *Portraits of a serial killer?*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jan/12/art>.

<sup>43</sup> Crime Museum. (2018). *Elsie Paroubek*. Retrieved from <https://www.crimemuseum.org/crime-library/kidnappings/elsie-paroubek/>.

<sup>44</sup> Bonesteel, M. (2018). *Biography*. Retrieved from <http://officialhenrydarger.com/about/>.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas, S. (2005). *Portraits of a serial killer?*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jan/12/art>.

Darger and he soon built a shrine to the girl, consisting of newspaper clippings and a photograph of Elsie<sup>46</sup>. Many claimed that Darger was actually the perpetrator of the crime, but that has never been proven.

## 1.6

A writer that I believe has influenced my research immensely as well as influencing almost every other artist I've researched is French author Donatien Alphonse François de Sade, better known as the Marquis de Sade. The Marquis de Sade, born 1740<sup>47</sup>, is most popularly known for his erotic novels, which inspired the coining of the word 'Sadism'. During his lifetime the public viewed his work as disrespectful and unfit for public viewing and his books were ultimately banned for almost two centuries.<sup>48</sup>

In 1763 de Sade moved to Paris with his new wife and that is when he began exploring the limits to human sexuality.<sup>49</sup> Within a year people were warned about de Sade's sexual perversities and in 1768 the Marquis and his wife were forced into exile by the King and charged with sexual criminality<sup>50</sup>.

In 1791 De Sade wrote the novel *Justine*. This is what I chose to focus my research on and what has inspired a piece of my textual practice. *Justine* follows a young girl finding her way through life, encountering perverse and traumatic events along the way. *Justine's* entire life comes across as a cruel joke throughout the book and the plot is seemingly irrelevant to the meaning of the story. It is a harrowing tale of mistrust, rape and immorality.

When one reads *Justine*, it is easy to realise that the writing cannot be read like a usual piece of fiction. The plot is unrelated and the events that take place don't matter, it is almost a constant rambling of a surrealist trying to get a grip on reality.

Through literary tradition a reader is told to consider art as a 'mirror to nature'<sup>51</sup>. The reader is asked to investigate the mirror and decide for themselves which perception of reality is the truthful one between their own and what the mirror shows. With de Sade's work, the mirror is painted with grotesque and unforgiving images of torture and rape. It is easy to see why a reader may see these events simply as perversities and can lead one to despise the writer that

---

<sup>46</sup> Thomas, S. (2005). *Portraits of a serial killer?*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jan/12/art>.

<sup>47</sup> Nadeau, M. (2018). *Marquis de Sade*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marquis-de-Sade>.

<sup>48</sup> Fargo, J. (2014). *Who's afraid of the Marquis de Sade*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20141006-marquis-de-sade-still-shocking>.

<sup>49</sup> Nadeau, M. (2018). *Marquis de Sade*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marquis-de-Sade>.

<sup>50</sup> Nadeau, M. (2018). *Marquis de Sade*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marquis-de-Sade>.

<sup>51</sup> Art of Wonder. (2018). *The artist holds a mirror up to nature*. Retrieved from <https://artofwonder.org/2016/03/19/the-artist-holds-a-mirror-up-to-nature/>.



thought up the scenarios. Throughout the textual piece based on Justine, I have used multiple quotes from the book and from the Marquis de Sade, which I will reference here.<sup>525354</sup>

## 1.7

In this thesis I was most interested in the act of transformation, especially taking pieces of work and transforming them to have new meanings and context. I have used this interest of transfiguration in the majority of my creative writing. I have taken other writers or artists pieces of work and have reconstructed and appropriated them to fit my own use.

In the second chapter of my thesis, and first chapter of my own creative writing, I have drawn strong inspiration from several television or film scripts. Spoken from the point of view of the artist Walter Sickert and structured as a monologue, I have taken different pieces from scripts, poems and books and either used them as pieces of spoken word or direct quotes from these pieces.

One piece of script I have taken huge inspiration from was Amazon Prime's Mr Robot. I have mainly focussed on the monologue spoken by the character Elliot Alderson. I originally took the full script for the first 15 minutes of the third episode of season two and I have reworded it<sup>55</sup>. I have kept a very similar structure and drawn a lot of insight from the original phrasing but have significantly changed which words used and the context in which they are used. I have placed the full script link in the appendix.

Another script that I have used in this chapter is that of the 1991 movie adaptation of the 1959 book Naked Lunch by William Burroughs. I was extremely interested in this film as the work had already been transformed so many times. The 1959 novel Naked Lunch was written as a string of chapters allowed to be read in any order and is based on the author's addiction to heroin and morphine<sup>56</sup>. It was then transformed 30 years later into a film that can be seen as a metafictional piece as it contains the writing of the novel itself<sup>57</sup>. In this chapter I have taken huge inspiration from a portion of the film script to show the unhinged reality of my character, just like how unhinged William Lee comes across in Naked Lunch. I have placed the full script link in the appendix.

---

<sup>52</sup> de Sade, M. (1791/2012). *Justine*. France: Oxford World's Classics.

<sup>53</sup> Marquis de Sade Quotes. (n.d.). BrainyQuote.com. Retrieved September 14, 2018, from BrainyQuote.com Web site: [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/marquis\\_de\\_sade\\_155361](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/marquis_de_sade_155361)

<sup>54</sup> Gray, F. (2009). *Secrets of Provence*. Retrieved from <https://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/the-secrets-of-provence>.

<sup>55</sup> Esmail, S. (2016), Mr Robot. Retrieved from [https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/view\\_episode\\_scripts.php?tv-show=mr-robot-2015&episode=s02e03](https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/view_episode_scripts.php?tv-show=mr-robot-2015&episode=s02e03)

<sup>56</sup> Campbell, J. (2009). *The Ugly Spirit*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/jun/20/william-s-burroughs-naked-lunch>.

<sup>57</sup> D, Cronenberg. (1991) Naked Lunch. Retrieved from [http://www.script-o-rama.com/movie\\_scripts/n/naked-lunch-script-transcript-cronenberg.html](http://www.script-o-rama.com/movie_scripts/n/naked-lunch-script-transcript-cronenberg.html)

I have also taken huge inspiration in my first chapter from the 1959 film *A Bucket of Blood*<sup>58</sup>. During the first scene of the film a busboy at 'The Yellow Door Café' hears a poet named Maxwell H. Brock speak. I have used this starting poem as quotes in this dialogue, as well as using the structure to influence the context of the first chapter. I have also included the full script in the bibliography.

I have also taken direct quotes from the bible that I will reference here.<sup>59</sup>

The chapter is written from the perspective of Walter Sickert. Walter Sickert. lived in London in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and founded the Camden Town Group in 1911.<sup>60</sup> He was a painter and printmaker and has been regarded as a great artist among the art community in London and has been incredibly influential in British avant-garde artwork in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>61</sup>

As well as being popular for his artwork, Sickert is also known for his speculated connection to the infamous murderer, Jack the Ripper.<sup>62</sup> During his time in London Sickert took a keen interest in the murderer's crimes after his landlady told him she believed he was staying in a room that the killer had once used.<sup>63</sup>

In September 1907, while Sickert was still living in London, Emily Dimmock's body was found in her bed.<sup>64</sup> Sickert devoted several paintings and drawings related to it and the work caused controversy in the media<sup>65</sup>. After Sickert's death and many years after the murders had been committed a 'Royal Conspiracy Theory'<sup>66</sup> emerged, suggesting that Sickert was in fact an accomplice to the murder of Emily Dimmock, though it has also been speculated that, due to his appearance, he could be the actual murderer himself.

---

<sup>58</sup> Griffith, C. (1959) *Bucket of Blood*. Retrieved from

[https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie\\_script.php?movie=bucket-of-blood-a](https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie_script.php?movie=bucket-of-blood-a)

<sup>59</sup> *The Bible, Matthew 25:35-40, New International version* (1978).. U.K: Biblica

<sup>60</sup> Goldfarb, K. (2018). *How English Painter Walter Sickert May Have Been Jack The Ripper*. Retrieved from <https://allthatsinteresting.com/walter-sickert>.

<sup>61</sup> Goldfarb, K. (2018). *How English Painter Walter Sickert May Have Been Jack The Ripper*. Retrieved from <https://allthatsinteresting.com/walter-sickert>.

<sup>62</sup> Gibbons, F. (2001). *Does this painting by Walter Sickert reveal the identity of Jack the Ripper?*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2001/dec/08/art.artsfeatures>.

<sup>63</sup> Gayford, M. (2007). *Walter Sickert: The artist who loved a good murder*. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3668639/Walter-Sickert-The-artist-who-loved-a-good-murder.html>.

<sup>64</sup> Barber, J. (2007). *The Camden Town Murder*. Retrieved from <https://www.johnbarber.com/the-camden-town-murder/>.

<sup>65</sup> Tate. (2018). *Walter Richard Sickert 1860–1942*. Retrieved from <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/walter-richard-sickert-r1105345>.

<sup>66</sup> Casebook. (2018). *GOOD KNIGHT: An Examination of THE FINAL SOLUTION*. Retrieved from <https://www.casebook.org/suspects/knight.html/>.

The piece of evidence that people feel is most concrete is Sickert's paintings. Post-modernist renditions of a woman in bed, or a man sitting beside a woman, seemingly asleep, draw stark similarities to the Camden murder of Emily Dimmock.<sup>67</sup>

In 2002 author Patricia Cornwell published a book entitled *Portrait of a Killer*<sup>68</sup>. In this book Cornwell states that Sickert has the personality of a serial killer. During Jack the Ripper's killing spree he sent letters to the Central News Agency in London, Cornwell asked a group of forensic experts to analyse the letters and claimed to find at least one letter that linked to Walter Sickert himself.<sup>69</sup> Although this seems like it is concrete proof of Sickert's involvement there is still speculation that it could just be coincidence<sup>70</sup> and I believe it is a mystery that we will never be able to solve.

## **Chapter two**

The excitement surrounding the dark and sinister is nothing new to human culture. Human beings are naturally curious, and criminals and their deeds have attracted attention in the UK since the introduction of widely distributed newspapers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>71</sup> Societal curiosity seems to have two main obsessions, these being the duality of human life, and sex. Through examining these interests, we can analyse humanity's curiosity for the macabre. Many thoughts may go through a neurotypical person's head when it comes to the action of murder:

'How can somebody treat another person this way?'

'Why have they done this?'

'If I was confronted by this situation what would I do?'

'Fight or flight?'

A neurotypical<sup>72</sup> person who possesses the 'normal' range of emotions such as empathy, happiness, sadness and remorse cannot entirely comprehend the motivations of a person who murders, rapes or causes harm to another person, and therefore we are fascinated by it. The incomprehensibility of such actions is what leads society to be intrigued by it. The actions of criminal's contrast with the morals that are held by the majority of the public, in most regions of the world. When we are young, after we put our fingers into plugs, we are scolded by our caregivers. When we hit another child, we are told that it is wrong to hit. When our

---

<sup>67</sup> Tate. (2018). *Walter Richard Sickert 1860–1942*. Retrieved from <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/walter-richard-sickert-r1105345>.

<sup>68</sup> Cornwell, P. (2002). *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper—Case Closed*. Unknown: Sphere; New Ed edition.

<sup>69</sup> Cornwell, P. (2002). *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper—Case Closed*. Unknown: Sphere; New Ed edition.

<sup>70</sup> McCarthy, M. (2017). *Patricia Cornwell's 'Jack the Ripper' reboot remains deeply flawed*. Retrieved from <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/life/books/2017/02/27/ripper-the-secret-life-of-walter-sickert-patricia-cornwell-book-review/98274268/>.

<sup>71</sup> 999 Inks. (2018). *British Newspaper History*. Retrieved from <https://www.999inks.co.uk/british-newspaper-history.html>.

<sup>72</sup> Merriam- Webster. (2019). *Neurotypical*. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/neurotypical>.

grandparents die we are taught about death and grief. As children we are taught basic principles and morals, the social norms of what is right and what is wrong in the community that we live in. These societal norms are fairly universal: do not hurt people, do not kill people, do not steal.

I believe this is part of the reason why we are so obsessed with the macabre, the taboo. Crimes that involve extreme and malicious violence are almost always incomprehensible to the neurotypical person's mind and thus invite curiosity and scrutiny. Criminologist Dr Scott Bonn, author of 'Why We Love Serial Killers: The Curious Appeal of the World's Most Savage Murderers', explores the world of human curiosity when it comes to murder: 'I have a theory that serial killers are transformed into larger-than-life celebrity monsters through the combined effort of law enforcement authorities, the news and entertainment media, and the public. I believe that exaggerated depictions of serial killers in the mass media have blurred fact and fiction. As a result, Jeffrey Dahmer and Hannibal Lecter have become interchangeable in the minds of the public<sup>73</sup>.' Bonn proposes that it is the inability to understand the motive and reason for the crime that propels the public to be so obsessed. He argues that the inability to find a morally sound reason for a murder is what compels people to dig deeper and explore the killer's irrationality more so than they would if the motive was clear and concise.

As stated, the media is highly indicative of society's obsession with the macabre, as can be seen in cinematic portrayals of murders, both on television and film. Horror films depicting serial murderers have become so common, with enduring franchises like the *Scream*, *Halloween*, and *Saw* series evidencing the public's enjoyment of these depictions of murder. However, real life murders are also treated to this Hollywood adaption, with films such as 2007's *Zodiac*<sup>74</sup> chronicling the heinous crimes of the infamous Zodiac Killer<sup>75</sup>; thus, these brutal real-life murders are repurposed as an individual piece of art and entertainment. Further, news and media coverage of true crime and real-life serial killers is often stylised and displayed in a way that presents like a movie, as if we are watching someone acting out fictional events and not viewing factual events. In this way, the media has the ability to romanticise terrible people, turning them into a form of celebrity. As such, serial killers can come to appeal to our curiosity, and we can even grow to *like* them. The best example of this is the American serial killer and rapist Ted Bundy<sup>76</sup>, who confessed to the murder of 28 women. Bundy's trial was the first to be broadcast on television and attracted significant media interest, as he was more intelligent and

---

<sup>73</sup> Bonn, S. (2014). *Why We Love Serial Killers: The Curious Appeal of the World's Most Savage Murderers*. Retrieved from

[https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Why\\_We\\_Love\\_Serial\\_Killers.html?id=WUJgBgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp\\_read\\_button&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Why_We_Love_Serial_Killers.html?id=WUJgBgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>74</sup> Fincher, D. (Director). (2007.) *Zodiac*. [Motion Picture]. United States. Phoenix Pictures.

<sup>75</sup> Guardian. (2007). *So who was the Zodiac killer?*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2007/apr/15/usa.world>.

<sup>76</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica . (2019). *Ted Bundy*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ted-Bundy>.

handsome than the public expected a murderer to be, thus garnering curiosity and disbelief. This interest has continued throughout the thirty years since his execution; so far in 2019 alone there have been two popular pieces of media centering on his crimes. The first was a Netflix documentary series<sup>77</sup> using real recordings of Bundy and interviews with the people involved in the criminal cases against him, and the second a biographical film<sup>78</sup> which focuses on the personal life of Bundy and his girlfriend. The focus here is on Bundy himself, rather than his victims; he has become a celebrity, still attracting the public's attention, while his victims are simply part of his story in the public eye.

Regarding this intersection between art and murder and I have also spoken with a senior probation worker at the West Yorkshire Offender Rehabilitation Services, Lucy Henderson. I have included the full interview in the appendix. Through this interview we discussed society's fascination with criminals, as well as whether she believed there could be a link between the arts and murder. I have previously interviewed Lucy during my undergraduate degree, we spoke of art therapy and its uses in the rehabilitation of people who have committed crimes. We also previously discussed if art was beneficial to help one's recovery, if she believed it could to the opposite and influence a person to commit a crime. She proposed that "if we suggest that art, film, literature can be used in a positive way to help people to express their thoughts and feelings, which in turn can assist change; then equally the same could be said about exposure to negative or deviant influences such as violent crimes."

In the latest interview with Lucy Henderson we discussed art censorship. Lucy admitted that she did believe some art should be censored, stating "I do agree with age ratings on films, television shows and video games. A child should not be witness to the same level of gore or 'real life' crime and sexuality that adults have spent their entire life being desensitised to." Through this I questioned whether she believed that people who have committed crimes should have the same access to aestheticized violence in the arts as a law-abiding person does: "Obviously there's no way to stop a person who has committed a crime having access to regular pieces of art. Stylised violence is everywhere, films, television, books, even the news. I believe restricting a person's legal leisure activities because they have committed a crime is a direct violation of their human rights."

She continued, "Of course, it is different if what they are viewing is in direct correlation to their committed crime. I would restrict the viewing ability of a paedophile so they could not watch children's television, but I believe it is all relative and if we censor one piece of artwork, shouldn't then every other piece depicting the slightest possible criminal intent be censored too? No".

This conversation with Lucy Henderson helped me immensely in terms of knowing what I should and should not include in my textual practice. I wanted the practice to be graphic, but not necessarily censorable.

---

<sup>77</sup> Berlinger, J. (Director). (2019). Conversations with a killer: The Ted Bundy tapes. [Television Series] United States. :Netflix

<sup>78</sup> Berlinger, J. (Director). (2019). Extremely Wicked Shockingly Evil and Vile. [Motion Picture]. United States. Voltage Pictures.

Through this research I decided to focus my textual and physical practice on the elusive nature of murder. Instead of being overly explicit and 'censorable', I have taken real life people and events and have drawn inspiration from their own artwork and have continued to re-write their stories. I have used many adjectives and descriptions of murder without being incredibly obvious to draw in curiosity more so than clear imageries.

Chapter Three - Walter Sickert

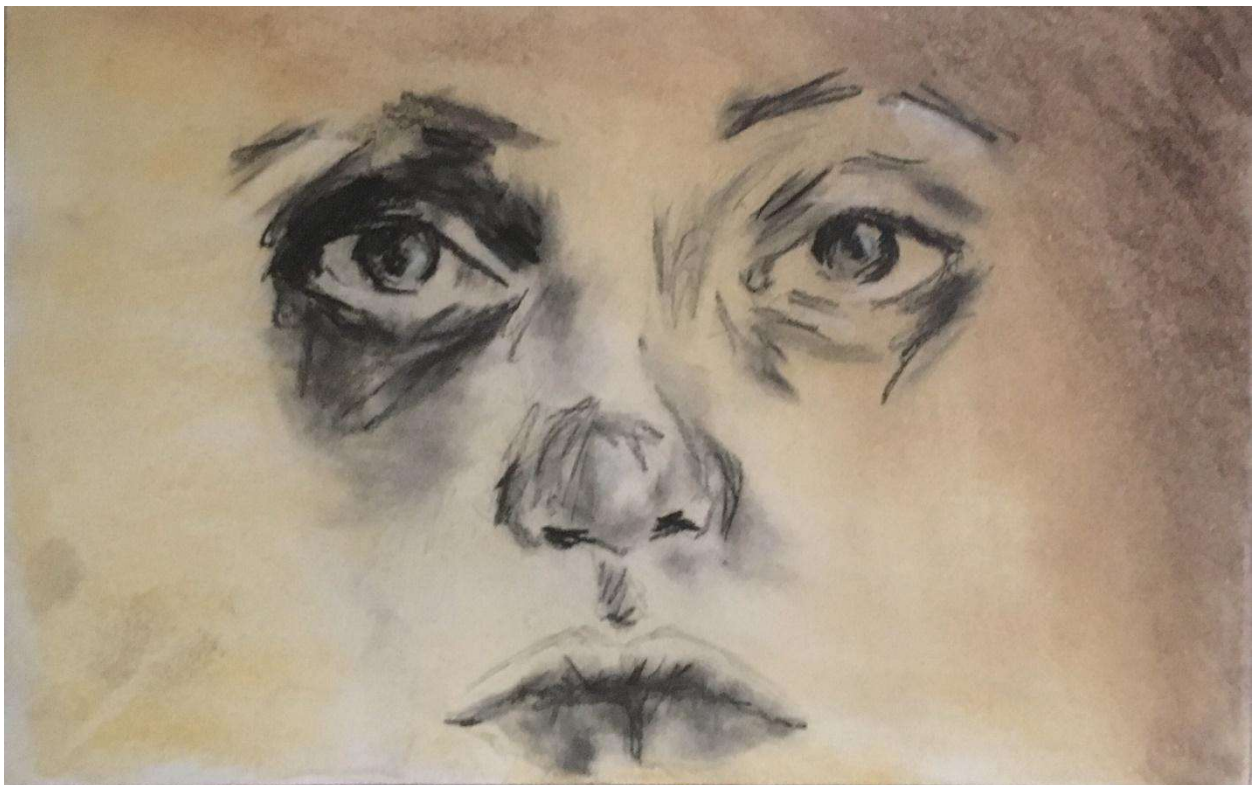


'Tom' Acrylic on wood.

This first painting was largely influenced by Walter Sickert's painting, *The Studio: Painting of a Nude* (1906).<sup>79</sup> This particular painting is one of Sickert's most complete portrait paintings. The painting is incredibly sophisticated, the brushstrokes are controlled and move between long fluid marks and staccato dabbing impressions. The painting also shows rough patches of paint that could possibly show that something akin to a palette knife was used.

Using this painting as inspiration I have created a similar style of figure painting, albeit with a few major differences. In my piece of writing influenced by Walter Sickert I have referenced his painting *The Camden Town Murder* (1908)<sup>80</sup>, as many people believe that this painting was seen to be proof that Walter Sickert was in fact Jack the Ripper. One of the figures in this painting is thought to be a prostitute, similar to the one Jack the Ripper murdered. I have used this information and changed the context of the original 'Painting of a Nude' into something much more sinister.

I decided to use a similar paint style than Walter Sickert, I used both paint brushes and palette knives to create a similar look but decided to leave the piece mostly unfinished. I opted to leave the piece unfinished as to portray the unhinged and incomplete sanity I have shown in the written piece.



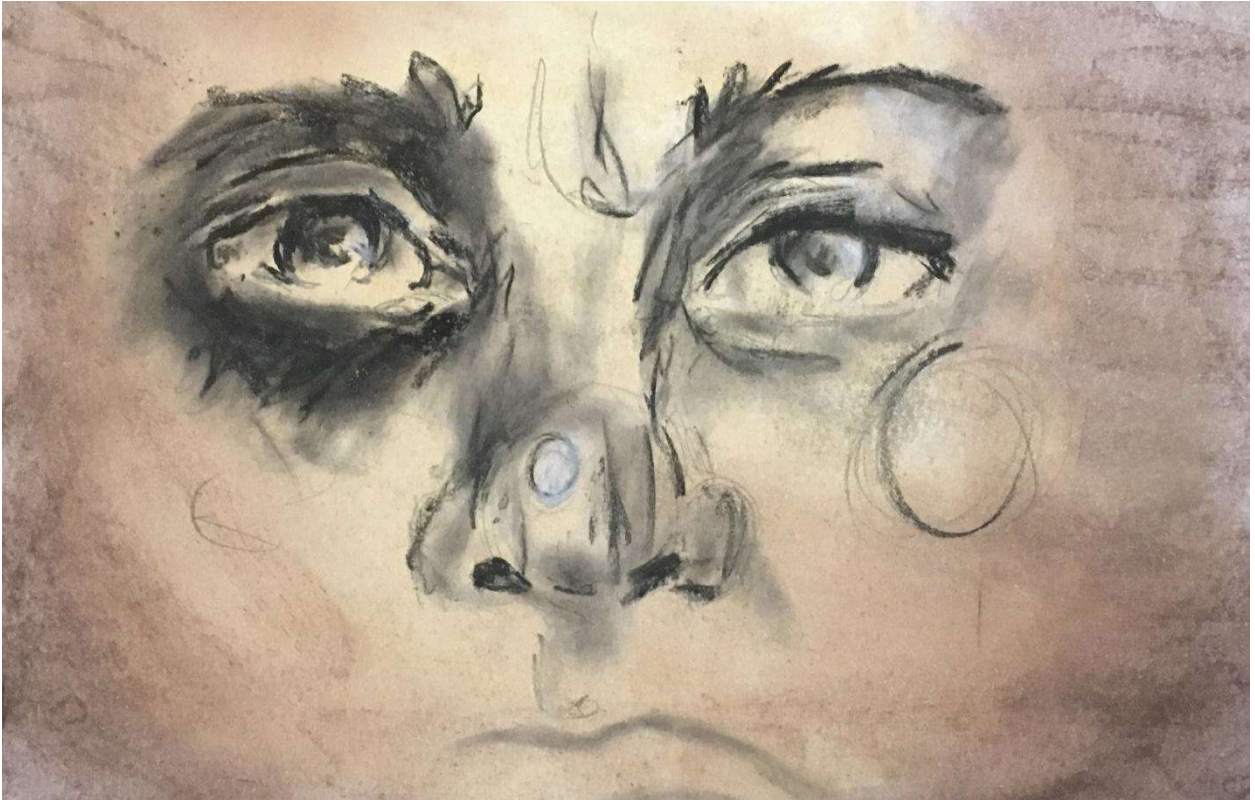
'Tom #2' Charcoal on paper.

---

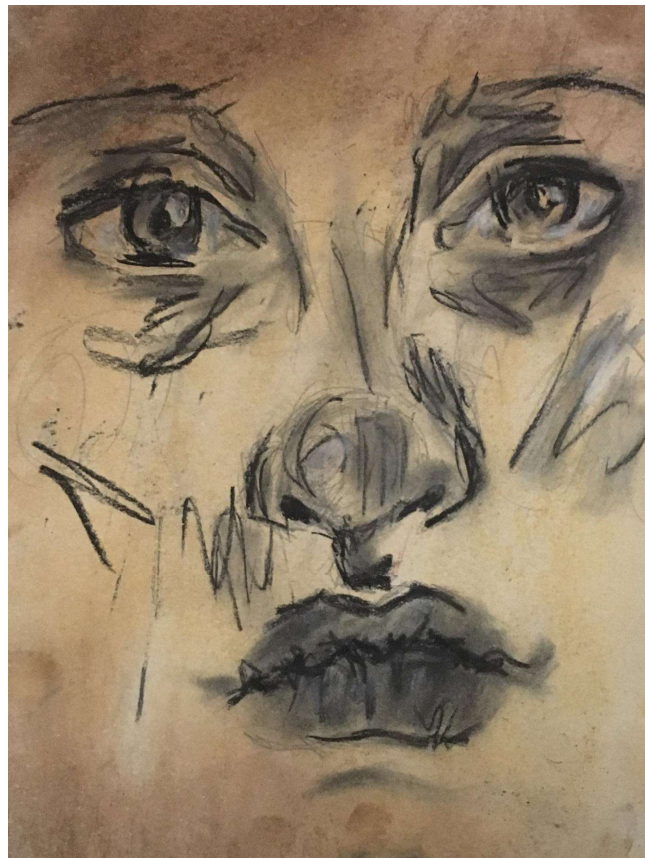
<sup>79</sup> Sickert, W. (1906). *The Studio: The Painting of a Nude*. [Oil on Canvas]. Retrieved from <https://www.piano-nobile.com/artists/45-walter-sickert/works/2240/>.

<sup>80</sup> Sickert, W. (1908). *The Camden Town Murders or What Shall we do for Rent?*. [Oil on Canvas]. Retrieved from <http://www.thearttribune.com/Walter-Sickert-The-Camden-Town.html>.





'Tom #3' Charcoal on paper.



'Tom #4' Charcoal on paper.

'Tom' #2, #3 and #4 were influenced by the supposed murders committed by Walter Sickert. While Sickert was alive he took a keen interest in the infamous murderer nicknamed 'Jack the Ripper'. There has been intense research into Walter Sickert's connection with Jack the Ripper concluding with numerous people believing that they were actually the same person.

These charcoal pieces are influenced by a drawing by Walter Sickert titled 'Portrait of Signor di Rossi'<sup>81</sup> Using this drawing to influence my style, I decided to base the context of the drawings on an article written by Patricia Cornwell for the UK Telegraph<sup>82</sup> as well as her book 'Ripper - The Secret Life of Walter Sickert.'<sup>83</sup>

In both the Telegraph article and her best-selling book, Cornwell goes to explain her reasoning as to why she believes Walter Sickert committed several murders in the late 1800s. Cornwell believes wholeheartedly in Sickert's guilt in committing the Jack the Ripper murder's between 1888 and 1889, and has found similarities between the letters supposedly written by Jack the Ripper and Walter Sickert's own artwork. As well as the letters written, Cornwell also compared the crime scene photos of the murder of Mary Kelly to Walter Sickert's art. "[on] The wooden wall behind the body appears to be a subtle collection of cartoonish figures or figurative blotches - one resembling a man's face with parted hair. I'd seen similar shapes before in the background of the British impressionist painter, Walter Sickert's work."<sup>84</sup>

Patricia Cornwell also believed she saw a distinct similarity between the crime scene photos of Mary Kelly<sup>85</sup> and a sketch<sup>86</sup> completed by Walter Sickert. "Sickert's sketch *Killed His Father in a Fight* mirrors the body position of Ripper's victim Mary Kelly, as documented in one of the few crime scene photos from the Jack the Ripper killings."<sup>87</sup>

Through reading Patricia Cornwell's views on Walter Sickert, it is plain to see how easy it is to get swept up in the mystery of Walter Sickert's strange connection to Jack the Ripper, but the

---

<sup>81</sup> Sickert, W. (1905). *Portrait of Signor di Rossi*. [Charcoal on Brown Paper]. Retrieved from [http://www.artnet.com/artists/walter-sickert/portrait-of-signor-di-rossi-G\\_q-3r7SdRCMNHazc3Bh0g2](http://www.artnet.com/artists/walter-sickert/portrait-of-signor-di-rossi-G_q-3r7SdRCMNHazc3Bh0g2).

<sup>82</sup> Cornwell, P. (2017, Feb 25). I'm certain who jack the ripper was: Thriller writer patricia cornwell on her million-dollar mission to expose artist walter sickert as the depraved killer. *The Daily Telegraph* Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/1871733791?accountid=11526>

<sup>83</sup> Cornwell, P. (2017). *Ripper: The Secret Life of Walter Sickert*. Unknown: Thomas and Mercer.

<sup>84</sup> Cornwell, P. (2017, Feb 25). I'm certain who jack the ripper was: Thriller writer patricia cornwell on her million-dollar mission to expose artist walter sickert as the depraved killer. *The Daily Telegraph* Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/1871733791?accountid=11526>

<sup>85</sup> Cornwell, P. (2017). *Mary Kelly Crime Scene*. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/patricia-cornwell-spent-7-million-solving-jack-ripper-case/>.

<sup>86</sup> Sickert, W. (Unknown). *Killed his Father in a Fight*. [Charcoal on Paper]. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/patricia-cornwell-spent-7-million-solving-jack-ripper-case/>

<sup>87</sup> Cornwell, P. (2017). *Patricia Cornwell: I spent \$7 million solving the Jack the Ripper case*. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/patricia-cornwell-spent-7-million-solving-jack-ripper-case/>.



jury is still out on whether the supposed evidence that Cornwell has collected is proof enough to say definitively that they were the same person.

Through Cornwell's research I decided to take some artistic license and use the murders as influence in the writing and my charcoal pieces. I have used an 1800's slang term for prostitute as the titles and have kept the pieces simple and sad. The drawings are meant to represent the victims of Jack the Ripper as well as keeping a somewhat similar style to the old charcoal drawings of Sickert's.



'Sharp brushes' Acrylic on wood.

This piece was again influenced by Walter Sickert's painting work. Sickert's style is very impressionistic and shows an intense love for large blocks of colour and disjointed paint-brush

strokes. I have taken this style and have shown how I believe the Walter Sickert portrayed in my piece of writing would have created a self-portrait.

## Repetition is Death

My friend,

I'm sorry, I know we don't keep secrets.

But I have one. A secret.

It's been two and a half days since I slept.

I'm up to about 6 lines now.

But no, that isn't the secret.

I'm feeling better.

Did you hear me?

I'm feeling so much happier.

It was so simple. Snow. Of course.

I'm so much more focussed.

I'm so lucky.

I'm feeling incredible.

The snow is working, and fuck, this drug feels amazing.

I can do so much more.

I can paint again.

I can have sex again.

I can talk to people again.

Even the Tom's 'Gone with the Wind' philosophy is starting to sound fascinating.

"So, Scarlett is actually a damsel in distress who uses her own feminine charms to get her own way? I mean, she steals other people's men, yes? She's a terrible protagonist, yes??"

Yes! YES! This makes perfect sense! Why hadn't I seen it before?

Why haven't I *done* this before? Damn, sex is better.

I'm pretty sure I've even found God.

Why hadn't I seen him before?

Even the damn horse racing is enthralling. The horses run.

Of course.

The horses run fast.

We can finally be back to normal.

It'll just be me and you my friend. We'll drink together.

Maybe we'll eat some food. Or maybe we'll just talk and do lines.

But the point is, I'm feeling better and now it's just us. Nobody else.

Are you buying this? No, me neither.

It was feeling great for a few days.

It really was, wasn't it? I think it was.

I was feeling better.

But this is my fifth day of not sleeping.

Bastard. I feel strange.

Something is happening. It was good for a few days.

It's day five without sleep and there it is again.

The overwhelming fear building, the panic, the screech.

"?tnaw uoy fi uoy ot ti dnel nac I .ti daer yllaer dluohs uoy ,ytrutnec siht fo koob tseb eht eb ot tog s'tl .yhw tuo erugif ot sah torioP dna deredrum gnitteg ettessaC yug siht tuoba lla s'tl ?taht daer uoy evaH .sserpxE tneirO eht no redruM eb ot tog sah tseb ehT"

I know, I know, the Tom is talking gibberish.

This isn't good.

Why are my paint brushes pointed like knives?

I know.

Yeah, I know.

I know.

I KNOW.

Panic.

Day number six without sleep.

I'm crashing. Like a plane.  
I've never been on a plane.  
I have been sharpening my brushes.

Next, my awareness will go.  
The panic isn't building anymore.  
It's just there.  
The screech in my mind is coming back.

I'll talk about art.  
There isn't much else to talk about anymore.  
Snow and art.  
Snow is instant relief from the mundane. Art makes everything you can imagine real.  
I still can't sleep.  
Burn cars and horses and whip the Toms of circumstance and hope, and maybe then I'll be able to sleep.  
What's that saying about creation?  
Oh yes.  
"Creation is. All else is not."  
Let the creation crumble into dust to choke the creator.  
"The artist is. All others are not."  
The canvas is a canvas, or a painting.  
A rock is a rock, or a statue.  
A sound is a sound, or is music.  
A creature is a creature, or an artist."  
A nice saying. But untrue.  
Dead. Dead. Dead.  
They were murdered.  
Alive. Alive. Alive.  
The creators were born by accident.  
With a multitude of sins. Feed the sins to the Sheep.  
Feed the sheep to me.

To nourish me in my time of need.

For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat,  
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,  
I was a stranger and you invited me in.

Another nice saying.

Stretch the creator's skins upon an easel.

And give me a canvas.

Crush their bones into a liquid.

That I might have paint.

Let them die, that I might have satisfaction.

And through their dismal deaths, become the earth in my hands.

That I might style a bowl or a cup.

For everything that matters to me can be moulded by my touch.

The rest are sightless, they stumble around in the dirt,

Blind with loneliness

'Stumble on, you panicking, fearful, burrowing fools.

And hope that one bright and sunny morning I will bait a hook.

And let you bite.

Bite hard and perish.'

In my mind, you are very close to timelessness.

Are you bored? I'll tell you another story then.

Did I ever tell you about the guy who cut himself to death?

This real political type, he was.

Hated injustice, loved fighting back for what he thought was right.

Didn't make sense to me, mind you. His motivations seemed twisted.

Well, one day he decided he was done. Done with the mistreatment of the poor, right?

He wanted to get back at the government, at David Lloyd George. He was prime minister at the time, right?

Well anyway, one day he decided he was going to start a protest.

He came into the village one day, clad in a sandwich board which read "For every day that the poor suffer, I shall suffer equally."

The guy had obviously gone insane.

The village thought it was cute at first, felt like he was fighting for something noble.

But soon, even the village got bored of him yelling at 3 o'clock in the morning about how if he had to suffer like the beggars, then he would.

That's when we began noticing marks on his arms.

It happened slowly at first, he would come into the village square, yelling, always yelling.

But this time we noticed on his raised arms that he had twenty or thirty thin, red lines. As if he'd scratched himself with a pencil. Not so hard to bleed, but enough to leave a raised mark on the skin.

People began to pay attention to him more when they noticed what he was doing.

The villagers would shout back at him, telling him he was crazy, but some agreed with him and urged him to continue.

He seemed to thrive on this attention.

So, his protest progressed.

The next time he came into the village the cuts to his forearms were deeper and had multiplied tenfold, littering the outside of his arms and running over his hands.

This caught more and more people's attention and soon others were copying him.

Other villagers would turn up to his protests, supporting the mad man that believed self-harming would change the state of the economy.

And the protest progressed still.

The man soon ran out of space on his arms and began cutting elsewhere, his legs, his chest, even his face.

He was more scars and blood than man.

The last day the village saw him he had advanced his cutting habit even further.

"We need to help the poor! Cut until the government listens! We won't stop until there is change!"

And I suppose he did make a change.

The change being alive to dead.

He walked the square, woozy on his feet, large cuts covered his body, yellow bubbles of fat and sinewy tendons were now visible. He smelled like rot.

His protesting friends had begun to leave him.

This was getting too much, even for the desperate.

When he finally keeled over and people came in to move the body, his shirt was moved and his intestines came spilling out.

How he had managed to walk around for hours that day with his own intestines tucked into his waistband, I will never know.

The economy never changed. It still hasn't changed.

Funny.

Am I happy yet?



It's day seven without sleep.

When is the end of the world?

Will it be when the paint runs out? When the charcoal is lost to fire?

When the canvas burns, and the artists drown?

Okay.

I know you want me to talk more about myself, but I can't. The cocaine is almost out of my system and with that, sleep will return.

Any second now, he's going to come back, if he isn't back already, and my mind will no longer be my own.

My whole world will be under siege.

Has he returned?

Am I angry again?

This isn't something I like.

I have become my own God, and like all Gods, their madness takes you prisoner.

My brain is finally cracking. My awareness will go next.

The Tom I saw this morning was Irish.

"Sir, you have already paid, I must ask you to leave."

Something snapped in me. I see red. Red paint.

I just kept punching her and punching her.

And I hated her so much.

She was Irish. I didn't realise that I hadn't been punching her, I had used my paint brush.

It was raining.

There was a thunderstorm, and I stepped outside. He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet.

The God inside me has forgiven me.

This was clearly a test.

Control is a delusion.

Sometimes you need delusions to gain control.

Gaining control is often seen under a shroud of loss.

To cover our dark lives with escapist comfort.

After all, isn't that why we surround ourselves with so many canvases? And books? And people?

So, we can avoid concentrating?

So, we can avoid what's really going on?

What if, instead of fighting back, we cave?  
Give away our minds for moulding.  
Exchange dignity for security.  
Trade in strength for weakness. Build our own prison.

I found freedom. Losing all hope was liberty.

Repetition is death.  
Next my awareness will go.  
I know we don't keep secrets, I'm sorry.  
But I have one. A secret.  
God created the world in only six days.  
What have I created in seven?

Red paint. Red rum.  
I can see God.  
And He applauds me.

## Chapter Four - Jake and Dinos Chapman



“The final shortcut’ Pen on paper.

This piece of work has been largely influenced by Jake and Dino Chapman’s series of work entitled ‘Television drawings’<sup>88</sup> I have used these drawings as influence and used different parts

---

<sup>88</sup> Chapman, J. & Chapman, D. (2002). *Television Drawing 1-32*. [Pen on Paper]. Retrieved from <http://jakeanddinoschapman.com/works/television-drawing-1/television-drawing-1-2/>.

of my written chapter as content. In my written piece I reference an article written by Sean O'Hagan<sup>89</sup> in which Dinos Chapman discusses a train track near where he had lived as a child and how body parts were often found strewn across the tracks. He called it 'Suicide Alley.'



'Insult to insult to insult to injury' Charcoal on paper.

---

<sup>89</sup> O'Hagan, S. (2006). *Loads of talent but no real taste*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/dec/03/art.gilbertandgeorge>.





'Insult to insult to insult to insult to injury' Charcoal on paper.

These next two pieces were also influenced by the quote 'They used to regularly find heads and torsos down this particular train track. It was like Suicide Alley, and it ran right under my friend's house. The fatal shortcut.'<sup>90</sup> From Sean O'Hagan's interview. With these two pieces I

---

<sup>90</sup> O'Hagan, S. (2006). *Loads of talent but no real taste*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/dec/03/art.gilbertandgeorge>.

have also been influenced by Francisco Goya's series of prints titled 'Disasters of War'<sup>91</sup> and by relation the Chapman brother's version of these prints named 'Insult to Injury'<sup>92</sup> which I also reference in my written piece.



'The real brothers grim' Acrylic on wood.

This final piece was largely influenced by Carole Cadwalladr's interview with Jake and Dinos Chapman in 2006.<sup>93</sup> In this article Cadwalladr reviews her experience in interviewing the Chapman brothers and how Jake Chapman became quite offended during the questions. I have used this difference between the brothers in this painting, displaying Jake on the left, covered

---

<sup>91</sup> Goya, F. (1810-1820). *Disasters of War*. [Prints]. Retrieved from <http://www.franciscogoya.com/disasters-of-war.jsp>.

<sup>92</sup> Chapman, J. & Chapman, D. (2003). .. [Prints]. In J. Chapman & D. Chapman, *Jake and Dinos Chapman: Insult to Injury*, (p. 1-End). England: Steidl.

<sup>93</sup> Cadwalladr, C. (2006). *Meet the real brothers grim*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/oct/08/art>.

in small brushstrokes of colour, to show his more dramatic tendencies, and Dinos on the right, showing his blander influence on Cadwalladr.

## **The Majority of Journalists are pretty senseless**

2 hours with Jake and Dinos Chapman.

I walked to the Chapman brother's residence with some apprehension and anxiety. It has been years since they were last interviewed, and they have a strong reputation for disliking journalists. I have been told many tales of the Chapman brother's infamous rows and physical fights with people who were merely *asking* about their artwork. The Chapman's do not suffer journalists gladly, and the feeling, it seems, is mostly mutual. I debated turning around, spinning on my heels and going home to have a cup of tea and read a book, it sounded much more relaxing than the alternative. But alas, I had an article to write.

"For the story..." I muttered to myself and swiftly walked up the driveway and rang the doorbell before I could talk myself out of it.

I was unsurprised when a solemn looking Jake Chapman opened the large wooden door, Dinos stood slightly to his left. They seemed eerily anxious until I spoke up.

"My name is Herbert Read, I'm here for the interview." I grinned as warmly as I could muster, and a flicker of recognition crossed Jake's face. Quickly both brothers plastered, what I would assume was, fake smiles upon their faces.

Jake is the taller and apparent leader of the two, but in conflict to all the stories I have been told of the two, does not seem like the type of person to try and hit me. He seems much more likely to take the 'flight' option than the fight and comes across fairly uneasy and jittery as he welcomes me into the studio. He gives the air of an addict in need of his next fix.

Dinos is smaller, more childlike and, although he is five years older than Jake, he looks as if he has just been told off by his parents as he shoots Jake a quick glance and sits off to the side of us. Through the interview Dinos is the quieter of the two, simply giving one-word answers after looking at Jake for confirmation first. The dynamic between the two is an unusual one, less of a brotherly mischievous rapport and more of a strict father/son relationship.

The studio itself is unkempt and messy, I have to pick up numerous sheets of paper to find a place to sit down, this is where they 'do the dirty work', defacing Goya prints, dismembering mannequins, throwing paint around and the like. There is a large space in the middle of the studio that is completely empty, save a translucent tarp soaked in what looks like dried red paint. There are two boxes piled up in the corner, one filled with mannequin heads and limbs, coated as well in what looks like thick, dried, red paint, another box filled with door hinges and chains. Knowing the contents of the boxes does nothing to allude to their mystery. I'm not sure what I expected of their studio, perhaps something darker and less spacious. The organisation is very dissimilar to the work they create. The studio is actually very large and cold, quite like Jake and Dinos themselves

"I don't remember the man you're talking about; I mustn't have been here when that happened." Whispers Dinos, when I gently breach the subject of a particular fight the brothers have had. Jake interrupts the older brother. "A lot of art critics make up lies about us, to ostracise us from the art world. It doesn't work of course, we're still incredibly good at what we do"

Although Jake and Dinos are now married with children, a naïve ignorance and arrogance still remains with them. Jake's personality seems to take on that of a teenager who's run away from his parents and decided he likes his own rules better, whereas Dinos sits in the corner like an adolescent who's just been caught smoking behind school and is scared. Their work seemingly shows only Jake's personality, the desire to shock and be known as 'controversial' artists is what seems to make the younger Chapman brother strive to continue this career, despite the somewhat unwelcoming atmosphere the art world gives them. Art, to these brothers, is a political statement as well as a childlike plea for attention. I can now understand how the public can become so confused when seeing their art in comparison to the way they look. From an outsider's perspective, one may view Jake and Dinos as thriving artists, married with children, living their life in an entirely adult way. Nevertheless, this is not the reality. As the interview continues the brothers continue to give off an air of childish petulance and I begin to doubt the validity of their artistic skill.

Art critic Brian Sewell was interviewed about Jake and Dinos' most recent art piece. 'It is an absurd object of absolutely no distinction; it is entirely without merit, aesthetic or philosophical; hardly even a joke or insult, it merely demonstrates how low the Academy is prepared to sink in its desperation to gain publicity by exploiting notoriety.'

I'm sure myself and the public will soon get another chance to decide their opinions on the Chapman brothers and without a doubt will be appalled all over again, when their mystery exhibition opens later this month. Unlike other exhibitions they've had, this one is unnamed and has been kept very secret for months. There are hopes from some art critics and members of the public that this time it will be something spectacularly different, we've seen the likes of previous exhibitions hundreds of times now. The reflectively vulgar delights of sculptures of children with genitalia as their noses and mouths and destroyed Goya prints still seem like the works of two children, trying to get their own back at their art teachers, maybe this time the secret exhibition will be something even more wildly outside of the public's comfort zone.

'If you look at the genealogy of our work,' says Jake, 'beginning with the first Goya prints we used, we got the book, we chopped it up, then we got the little soldiers and chopped them up. It's art as a creative and a destructive act, but, in our case, it's definitely more destructive.'

He's discussing their 'remake' of Goya's Disasters of War, a series of prints made between 1810 and 1820, just over a hundred years ago. This remake is what originally brought Jake and Dinos to the public eye and was one of the first pieces to be presented in the Tate Modern Gallery. The two brothers were met with shock and outrage and were soon after visited by the police when a large life size sculpture of one of Goya's prints was later displayed in the Tate Modern Gallery. The sculpture includes both decapitated bodies and dismembered limbs hung onto a tree. Many members of the public were sure that the piece was, in fact, real and believed the Chapman brothers should face a potential murder charge unless they prove that the rumours are false.

"Is that what people are saying? That's interesting. They're almost partly right." This sends Jake into fits of laughter, which I join in on slightly uncomfortably. "We will not tell anybody whether the sculpture is real or counterfeit, that's the whole point. I still believe that the newspapers are creating this 'public outrage', I have never met anybody who was shocked by our work."

The tabloids loved telling tales of the Chapman's controversies, it made great headlines and the art world is one that loves strong critiques. The arrogance of the brothers has previously



shocked people more so than their work and art critics love to test that fact. Jake has previously been quoted in the newspaper as saying that visitors to their exhibitions should be 'means tested' for intellectual rigour before being allowed entry.

"It's true," Jake says when I bring this up. "I still believe this. That's usually why the art critics are so spineless and judgemental in their critiques of us, because they are unworthy of our work. They don't understand it. The majority of journalists are pretty senseless." Jake goes on like this for a few minutes, berating other artists and criticising reporters, I don't know if he likes the sound of his own voice or if he just doesn't like to let go of a thought until it's dead – or at least disembowelled and bleeding – beneath the weight of his argument.

Jake's obvious misanthropy eventually leads on to a theory backing up his standpoint on intellectual means testing.

"The elitist arguments that we make rest on the idea that there is a mutual line that has to be drawn between the integrity of the work of art and the integrity of the viewer," he says, sounding extremely grandiose. "The work of art has to be defended from the public and the public from the work of art. I really think the sense of liberty of both is at stake with the blossoming of all these fucking super museums with champagne and people in suits."

This is slightly ironic coming from Jake and Dinos Chapman, the two brothers who have become one of the most celebrated and hated artists in England and have their work displayed in numerous prestigious museums.

"We do tend to nibble the hand that feeds us." Dinos mutters after I bring this contradiction up. Jake continues his sentence for him and Dinos settles back down into his chair, scribbling on a piece of paper. "We do, but we have good reason to do so, it's all about intellect and whether the viewer can genuinely understand what we are putting on the table. With many people, especially the pompous men in suits at galleries, they can scarcely comprehend what we are presenting to them. I can admit that there are some good people out there though, and that's who we are making the work for. The good guys. The artistic minds, the smart ones. All I can really say," Jake continues, "Is that our frustration with the system does not come from being spoilt, it's not anger and frustration about genuine interest, we just refuse to lower our level of creativity to appeal to the thoughtless."

It's this kind of attitude, of course, that riles the art critics and journalists. For all the pretension and hypocrisy, the Chapman's have become celebrities among the art world. Dinos doesn't seem all that interested. Jake, on the other hand, is often seen at gallery openings and exhibitions, the same exhibitions that had just told me are full of 'pompous men in suits.' There have been many romantic links with Jake Chapman and other celebrities too, one can only guess he eases up on his pretension when trying to court a lady.

The brothers are incredibly withdrawn when it comes to talking about their upbringing and when I ask, they both look at each other with a silent understanding. It is easy to sense that, even before their ostracism from the art world, they were outsiders in their personal lives too. Their father was an art teacher, their mother an orthodox Greek Cypriot. They were brought up in Cheltenham, then later relocated to Hastings, where they attended the local comprehensive school. When I mention that I have recently moved to Hastings with my family the brothers exchange another look, and both seem intrigued. The most intrigued I have seen them anyhow.

"We spent our teenage life there. It's an unusual place, there were all these strange people wandering around." Jake says, suppressing a shiver. 'Stranger than you?' I think, but keep the thought to myself. "There was a mental asylum pretty close to where we used to live and when

the ward would become full, they would just let the sanest people out. It ended up with most of Hastings being full of manic depressives and schizophrenics and murderers.” He sounded almost nostalgic as he relived his teenage life with the criminally insane. “We used to regularly find body parts as teenagers, heads and torsos down by the train tracks. The fatal short cut. The suicide alley. It has influenced a lot of our work and made us desensitised to some aspects of human life.” I took note of the fact that Jake changed his tone when saying ‘human life’, almost as if he didn’t class himself as one of us. “It was an interesting time, we made friends with a lot of the people that the mental ward had deemed sane and I can tell you with one hundred percent certainty, they were in no way sane enough to be out on the streets with the normal folk.”

The way he talks about his childhood makes me feel like I’m being told a scary story round a campfire. I am captivated by the ease in which he discusses the body parts found on the tracks and the criminals he befriended. I am curious to see if Dinos shares this fondness for the macabre.

“We used to host parties when we were teenagers, for our new friends. They were very fun. Our parents didn’t approve much, but that is when our awakening can be pinpointed.” I question what they mean by their ‘awakening.’

“Our awakening, artistic, sexual, spiritual, emotional. We held parties and we got to know who we were sharing our town with. Sometimes 30 or 40 people would show up at our house while our parents were away or at work. We often didn’t know a lot of them and more often than not we would catch them doing some illegal thing or another in one of our back rooms. I don’t blame them though. They were cast out of society, much like we were. I think we empathised with them a lot nearer the end in comparison to the beginning of our escapades, which were fuelled by curiosity and nosiness.

They both fall into a slightly uncomfortable silence, broken by Jake suddenly standing up and saying “Enough! No more talk about our childhood!” I understood and nodded quickly, the interlude from theorising and pretentious waffle was rather refreshing, even if it was dark and uncomfortable.

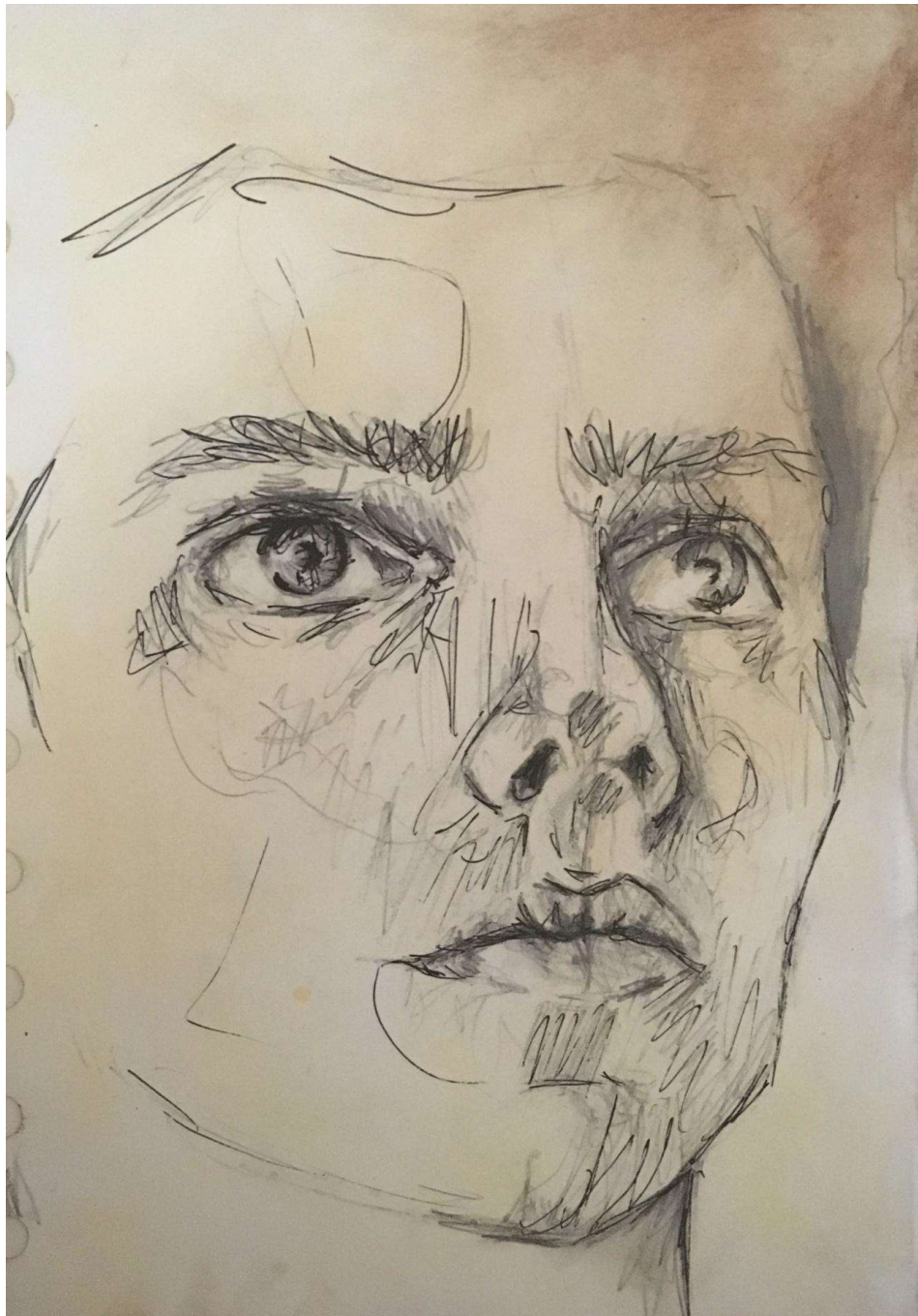
By now, some things have become apparent about the brothers. One is that Jake, when you get him talking, converses as if he’s reciting words from an art-theory textbook, he comes across as solemn and slightly as if he could actually be one of the ‘insane’ friends that he grew up with. His elder brother Dinos, by comparison, is more closed and quieter, it seems as if he fears offending his brother and would rather say nothing at all. A third thing is that the studio as well as the Chapman brothers themselves, give off an eerie, chilling feeling. Perhaps I should have turned away from their residence while I had the chance.

The interview has gone quite differently than I had anticipated and was very unlike other artists I have interviewed. In most cases I am met with older gentlemen, younger wife to their side, speaking about how grateful they are for the general public and how they truly believe art is their calling. I can appreciate that; I respect it even. This interview with Jake and Dinos however, screams a big ‘FUCK YOU,’ to the rest of those artists. They repel the normal standards of most artists and have made their own rules for the art world. Through pretention and insincerity, they have made their way to the top tiers of England’s artists. This is only my humble opinion though, perhaps I am one of the ‘thoughtless’ people that Jake seems to so severely dislike.

I leave the Chapman's residence with an intense feeling of nervousness, if the interview had been shorter or if I had not broached as many questions about their childhood, I feel as if it would have been a normal interview like any other. I walked back to my office with the feeling of a target on my back, as if every corner I turned Jake Chapman would spring up and turn me into another life-sized rendition of a Goya print. Perhaps they still will. There is always time, and they do have a new exhibition coming up. If I go missing, you'll know what has happened.

Jake and Dinos Chapman: Bad Art for Bad People is at the Tate Liverpool from 15 December until 4 March. A new mystery installation will be on show at Tate Modern from 30 January.

## Chapter Five - Henry Darger



'They make fun of my arms again.' - Pen and pencil on paper.



'I wished to be young always' Acrylic on canvas.

These two pieces are influenced by Henry Darger's harrowing life story. The first piece 'They make fun of my arms again' is representative of the struggle of Darger's life once he ran away from the asylum he was held in. I reference this in the piece of writing based on his life. I have chosen to create this in a simple black pen and pencil on watercolour paper, without colour, as I believe it could symbolise the sadness in his life at that time.

The second piece I created for this chapter 'I wished to be young always' is based on Darger later in life and is also influenced by the intensity of colours in Darger's own pieces of work.

## My Arms

Dear diary,

It's hard to imagine what it must be like to be kidnapped, to be taken from one's home. I've tried, often. Over the last few months I have imagined boundless scenarios in which poor Elsie was taken. The initial contact, they must have looked friendly. According to Elsie's parents she was a smart girl and was wary of strangers. Not wary enough.

My mind spins constantly with the thoughts of the horrific betrayal she must have felt after trusting the stranger. I don't sleep much anymore.

I've never written a diary before, but maybe this is a good idea. I can use it to remember what the weather was like and to speak of things that I have nobody else to speak to about. It's raining today, I hope Elsie is okay. I hope whoever has taken her is taking good care of her. She must be lonely without her parents.

I am lonely too. I have been lonely as long as I can remember.

When I was a boy, the children called me crazy, they didn't understand the feeling of their head being so full and busy all the time that sometimes you have to move your arms. Moving my arms makes the speed slow down.

I wasn't as lonely when I was at the asylum, at the asylum I had friends, I had people I could talk to who didn't call me crazy and laugh about my voice or my arms. In some respects, the time in the asylum was one of the best in my life. I hated to see the day come when I would be grown up. I never wanted to. I wished to be young always, and so I try my hardest to stay young. I pine for my childhood constantly, just like I pine for Elsie to be okay. She is innocent. A child.

I don't remember what date it was that my mother died. I don't remember what date it was that my sister was taken away from me. I do not recall many things from my early life, and I wish I had the sense to write a diary when I was young. Things would definitely make a lot more sense to me if I had.

My life is different now than it was in the asylum. In the summers, we worked in the fields, this is how we were to pay our dues. We received accommodation and we were put to work. If you couldn't be put to work you were beaten or made to sleep. I recall entirely too vividly the children that couldn't work and had been abandoned, only to be eaten by rats, slowly in their sleep. I hope Elsie hasn't been eaten by rats.

Besides the rats and the beatings, the asylum had been a form of heaven to me, I had been liked and people knew how smart I was. I was popular. I often wonder if leaving the asylum was the right thing to do. At the time it seemed it. It was Summer and we were working in the fields and the pollen caught my nostrils. It made me so uncomfortable and I just kept walking. I walked through the fields of Lincoln and made my way to Chicago. Where my father had lived and where my sister was born and where my mother had died.

I'm not very good at meeting people's expectations. I hardly meet my own. I try to be good even though it isn't easy and I get frustrated very easily, especially because I don't know why I am so different than everyone else. It's been nearly two years since I left the ward. I work in a hospital now; I'm trying to help people. But it's difficult. I'm not popular anymore.



People in the hospital call me crazy sometimes. My boss is not very strict but the people I work with are mean. I am a janitor now, I clean things, I help people, I'm trying to be good, but people are making fun of my arms again. I hope Elsie is okay.

### Elsie

*The water filled her. Leaves and lumps of dirt had become imbedded in her mouth past her swollen, blue lips. Her mother hadn't told her it would be like this. Her mother had told her of God and of Heaven. But this. This definitely wasn't Heaven and if He was real, why was her entire body bruised and bloated and floating amongst the fish?*

*The water continued to fill her tiny frame. In her eyes, up her nose, in her shoes. The cold of the wetness seeping down to her bones. Nobody knew how she had gotten there, and the tide continued to wash her away. The soothing sound of waves filled the night sky and the calming noise was entirely too contrasting against the sight of Elsie's mangled body.*

*The body wasn't weighted and swayed freely with each passing wave; her yellow hair now brown from mud. Her mother had told her that death would be different, that she would see her grandparents and her uncle, and her dog and they would live together and be happy. Elsie saw nothing, she felt nothing. Death was darkness, an unrelenting and unforgiveable darkness.*

*It had been a month since she was taken, and the water was only becoming more and more unyielding. The once beautiful child was now scarcely recognisable. Her body bloated and beaten in such a way that made workers at the power plant think she was an animal carcass.*

*The last thing she had seen was his eyes. They were blue, like hers.*

Dear Diary,

She was found near my house yesterday. A dead girl. She was bloated and grey from the water, they posted a photograph of her in the paper. I wish they hadn't. It was unusual seeing a picture of Elsie this way, eyes unseeing. It gave me a strange feeling. She was only young. I suppose she'll always be young. She'll never grow up.

I'm slightly jealous of her ability to stay young, she'll be youthful and remembered as beautiful, despite her destroyed body.

I've read and re-read the newspaper numerous times. I wish she was alive.

I first read about Elsie when she had gone missing on April 9<sup>th</sup>, just under a month ago and I had fallen for her then. Small, misunderstood, a child. She was like me.

And here she was, dead, strangled and attacked.

They used to strangle us a lot in the asylum, especially if we touched ourselves. It didn't happen often though, not after I learnt that that was why they were hurting us.

Elsie was only found a couple of miles from my house, in the ship canal. I wish I could have stopped it. She was only little, and I could have saved her. In the newspaper it said that they thought gypsies stole her, but I don't think that's true. The gypsies loved the little girls with yellow hair, that fawned over them all the time at the market. The gypsies have always been nice to me. I have this feeling, gnawing away at the back of my mind, a feeling that I could have stopped this.

I cut clippings from the newspaper about Elsie and have pasted them in a book. She keeps me knowing that I'm not alone, I hope she knows that she's not alone either. I keep her in my locker at work. People are making fun of my arms again. I hope Elsie is okay.

## Chapter six - Marquis De Sade



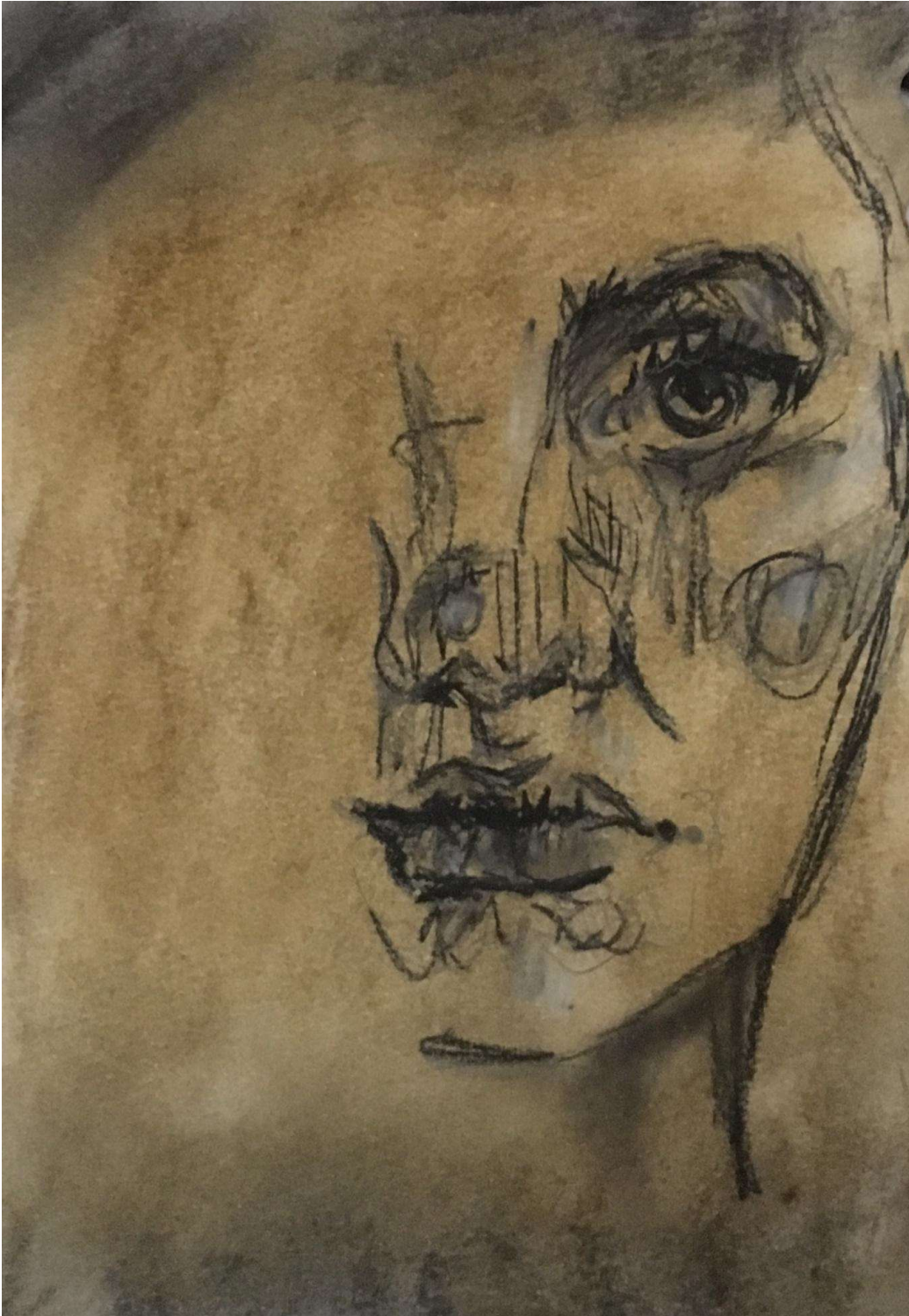
'Exiled' Acrylic on wood.





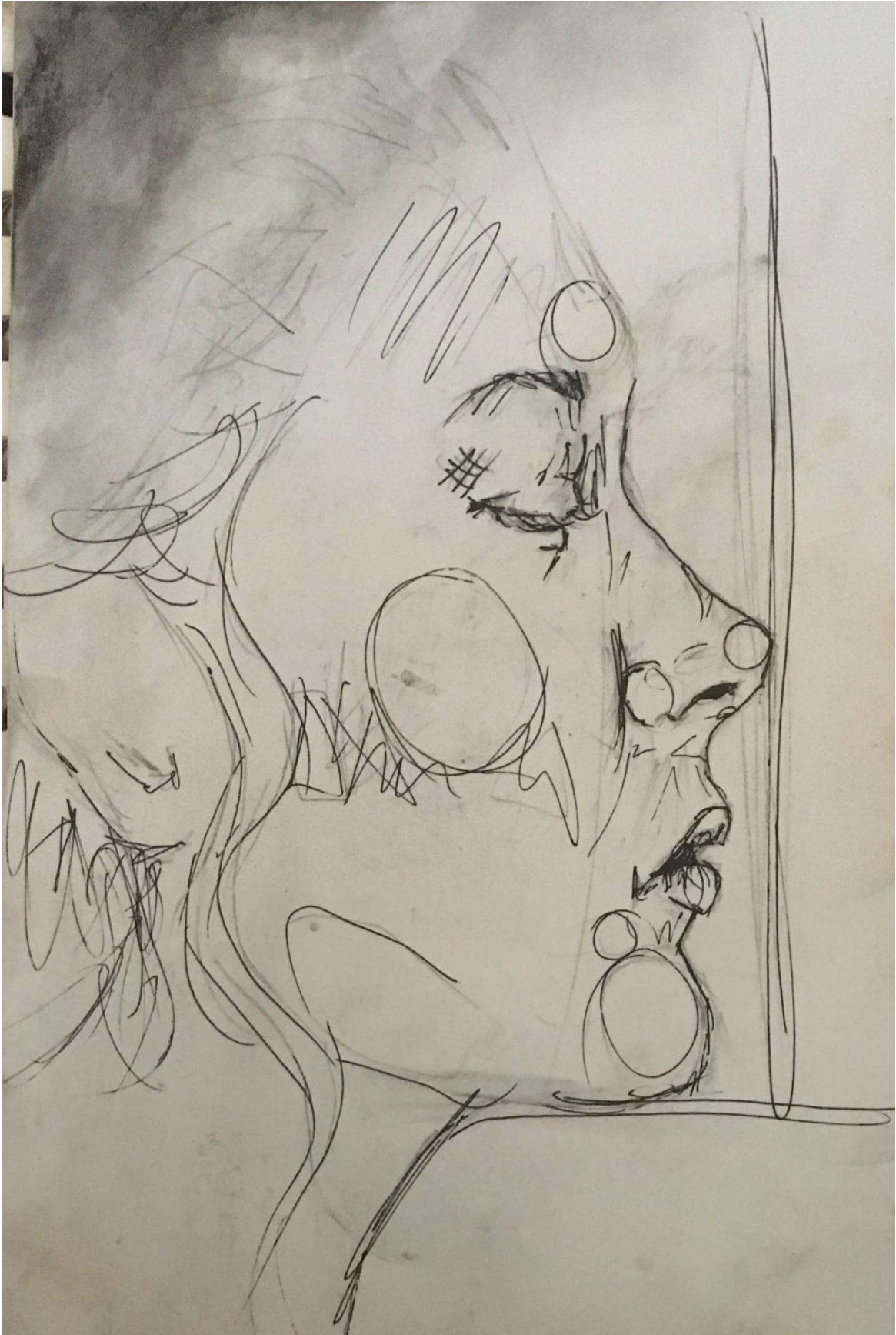
'Perversity' Acrylic on canvas.

'Exiled' and 'Perversity' are influenced entirely on the disgust I felt while reading works by the Marquis. I have used my own style of painting all while trying to portray the sitter in the painting as slightly uneasy to look at.



'Justine' Charcoal on paper.





'Justine#2' Pen and pencil on paper.

These next two pieces are inspired by the title character in the 1787 novella Justine. I have chosen a simplistic drawing style in very little colour as to represent the lack of joy and happiness in Justine's life.

## **Bound.**

This is the punishment for my unpunished crime.

Fantasies of religion flicker across my brain.

Do I beg for God's mercy? Or do I thank Him for what's about to happen?

I have been a priest.

I have been a monk.

And I have since realised that religions are the cradles of despotism, so I do neither.

In her hands, I am nothing but a machine for her to operate as she wishes.

We say few words to one another.

We both know why I am here.

Conversation, like other portions of the anatomy, always run more smoothly when lubricated.

Alas, there is no lubrication here.

Knives,

whips,

a gun.

Lust.

Lust is to the other passions what the nervous fluid is to life; it supports them all, lends strength to them all.

Ambition, cruelty, avarice, revenge, they are all founded on lust.

Lust is what has driven her to this. It is what drove me to do what I did.

Life without lust is like sex without pain or food without taste.

Like a bird in a world with no trees.

It is not a life worth living. I hope she knows this.

I hope she gives herself indiscriminately to everything that her passions suggest.

Conscience is not the voice of nature, but the voice of the prejudice, the ignorant.

Nature has endowed us with the capacity of friendly feelings, let us not squander them.

She is squandering them.

Bound.

My wrists throb. My chest aches.

Kidnapped by the likes of pure arrogance personified.

Chaos.

My skin tears with each flick of the whip.

A red-hot searing pain.

It slices through me like a hot knife through butter.

“Bastard!” She screams as she draws the whip back, again and again.

Imperious,

Angry,

furious,

Extreme in all things,

With a disturbance in the moral imagination unlike any the world has ever known,  
that is how I would describe myself, but a bastard, I am not.

People say anger is an ugly emotion.

But anger, like lust, fuels the world.

She says her name is Justine.

I barely remember her.

She says we did unspeakable things to her.

I’m sure she’s not wrong.

Pleasure without pain is like food without taste.

Without the ‘unspeakable’ things we did to her, she would not be servicing me.

She thinks this is torture.

Pain.

“I will kill you!” Justine screams.

And what a wonderful way to die this would be.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude this thesis, I would like to discuss the importance and morality of murder being introduced as an art form. During my research in this thesis I have come to know how pivotal showing the taboo in art is. Not only does it introduce a balance of morality and immorality. It makes people question art itself. Art based on murder has been around for centuries, there have been movies, books and pieces of visual art based on the inevitable facts of death. It is only recently in which people are beginning to question the integrity and morality of depicting one of humanities worst crimes in a way that can be viewed as aesthetic.

The art world is one that is viewed as entirely subjective. It is a realm that has learnt to admire works that can be seen as controversial, obscene, transgressive and taboo. This admiration however butts against societal norms and standard of taste and aesthetic.

Within the last several hundred years works of art have been altered, vandalised and even removed due to content that the current society has viewed as unacceptable. There are many reasons society has deemed it necessary to censor a piece of art. The motivations have stemmed from religious and political to social and sometimes simply out of difference of taste. Artists on the other hand have pushed through this censorship and the boundaries that have been set by society and have continued to create content that is celebrated regardless.

A popular example of controversial artwork that is loved in the art community but not in regular society is a piece aptly named 'Piss Christ'.<sup>94</sup> In 1987 photographer Andres Serrano placed a plastic crucifix in a cup of urine and photographed it. 'Piss Christ' was met with mixed reviews and has received a lot of backlash for its 'blasphemous' content.<sup>95</sup> In 1989 'Piss Christ' was exhibited in a Virginia exhibition and received an entirely negative reaction, unlike when exhibited in New York. Local Senator Jesse Helms publicly stated his horror with the piece, expressing that he believed that the photograph "Dishonoured the Lord"<sup>96</sup> In 2011, nearly 25 years after the photograph was taken, a group of protesters attempted to destroy the piece with a hammer and, in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, the Associated Press removed the piece due to societal pressure.<sup>97</sup>

Though this specific artwork was removed due to religious conflicts, there still remains pieces of art exhibited where the artists themselves have committed serious crimes a lot worse than putting a plastic cross in some urine.

Walter Sickert was believed to have committed murder. Not only did that not result in his paintings being censored, it made his work even more popular due to the link to Jack the Ripper.

In the early nineteenth century Walter Sickert produced a series of paintings titled 'The Camden Town Nudes'. The paintings themselves were originally exhibited separately but have since become a single exhibition<sup>98</sup>.

The paintings consist of naked women lay on framed beds. The colours used are dark and dreary, giving the paintings an eerie feel to them, as if we are viewing something entirely too private to see. The brush technique used is disjointed and irregular and gives off the effect of a too harshly edited photograph. The brush method and the colours used make the scene gritty and sinister.

---

<sup>94</sup> 100 photos. (2018). *Immersion (Piss Christ)*. Retrieved from <http://100photos.time.com/photos/andres-serrano-piss-christ>.

<sup>95</sup> Chrisafis, A. (2011). *Attack on 'blasphemous' art work fires debate on role of religion in France*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/apr/18/andres-serrano-piss-christ-destroyed-christian-protesters>.

<sup>96</sup> Helms, J. (1989). *Comments on Andres Serrano by Members of the United States Senate*. Retrieved from [https://web.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/361\\_r7.html](https://web.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/361_r7.html).

<sup>97</sup> Chrisafis, A. (2011). *Attack on 'blasphemous' art work fires debate on role of religion in France*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/apr/18/andres-serrano-piss-christ-destroyed-christian-protesters>.

<sup>98</sup> Darger, H. (2008). *The Camden Town Nudes*. [Painting] Exhibited at the The Courtauld Institute of Art, The Courtauld Gallery, London, England, 25/10/07 - 20/01/08 .

In a number of paintings out of the series there is also a second sitter seen. A man, sometimes sitting on the bed or standing beside it. The clothed man next to the naked woman gives off an air dominance versus submission as well as a menacing and violent quality.

The nudes themselves are painted in a disorganised, imperfect way that gives them a sense of realism that is almost unnerving. The bodies shown do not seem posed, as if Sickert has painted the women sleeping, or worse, dead. The women aren't *doing* anything, there's no fancy clothing, no beautiful linen, no jewels or other materialistic objects, just a framed bed and a naked body.

Sickert supposedly rented cheap rooms around Camden and set up his studio there, amongst his own belongings.<sup>99</sup> The knowledge of the setting of the paintings seems to give away more of the story behind it and makes the viewer aware that the nudes are not just naked paintings, they tell a tale.

These paintings make the viewer curious. Who are the women? Why are they naked? Are they sleeping? Or is it something much more sinister? The paintings seem to be full of hints to something darker than meets the eye.

In 1907, in the midst of Sickert's nude painting phase, a woman named Emily Dimmock was murdered.<sup>100</sup> After Emily's death Sickert began renaming his paintings more suggestive names, such as 'The Camden Town Murder.'<sup>101</sup>

I chose to write a piece of creative writing based on Sickert's possible connection to Jack the Ripper, Dimmock's killer. There is much speculation that Sickert was associated with the infamous killer. I chose to write this piece as if Sickert was the killer himself, fuelled by drugs and a need to create something, whether that be a painting or a beautiful murder. Writing this piece, I have tried to show Sickert's unhinged nature, that I believe can be hinted at through his paintings, and apparent "psychology of a murderer" as speculated on by Patricia Cornwell<sup>102</sup>.

In my visual practice, based on Walter Sickert, I have chosen to focus on aspects of his story. Using acrylic on wood and charcoal on paper I have based the drawings and paintings on the prostitutes I have written about.

I also attempted to show a little bit of lunacy in my creative piece based on Jake and Dinos Chapman. Jake and Dinos are known for their use of shock tactics and aggressive attitudes towards censorship within the arts.

---

<sup>99</sup> Casebook. (2018). *Walter Sickert*. Retrieved from [https://www.casebook.org/ripper\\_media/book\\_reviews/non-fiction/cjmorley/165.html](https://www.casebook.org/ripper_media/book_reviews/non-fiction/cjmorley/165.html).

<sup>100</sup> Casebook. (2018). *Walter Sickert*. Retrieved from [https://www.casebook.org/ripper\\_media/book\\_reviews/non-fiction/cjmorley/165.html](https://www.casebook.org/ripper_media/book_reviews/non-fiction/cjmorley/165.html).

<sup>101</sup> Goldfarb, K. (2018). *How English Painter Walter Sickert May Have Been Jack The Ripper*. Retrieved from <https://allthatsinteresting.com/walter-sickert>.

<sup>102</sup> Cornwell, P. (2002). *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper—Case Closed*. Unknown: Sphere; New Ed edition.

In 1993 the brothers, lovingly nicknamed 'The real brother's grim' by Carole Cadwalladr<sup>103</sup>, became obsessed by Spanish painter Francisco Goya's series of prints titled 'Disasters of War'.<sup>104</sup> The artists melted small figurines<sup>105</sup> and began recreating the Spanish artist's work and soon after, created a life-size version of one of the prints using mannequins<sup>106</sup>.

Jake and Dinos' view on aesthetic is sometimes seemingly non-existent in their work as they appear to create work simply for provocation and experimentation rather than for beauty. In 2004 the brothers took their fascination with Goya a step further when they bought the set of prints for £25000 and drew on every single one. Faces of fallen soldiers were covered with creepy clowns, mickey mouse heads and puppies<sup>107</sup>. The series of 'defaced' prints was aptly named 'Insult to Injury'<sup>108</sup>. The artists were condemned by some critics for what some viewed as an act of vandalism, while the brothers themselves called it a 'rectification' and 'improvement.'<sup>109</sup> The Chapman's obsession with Francisco Goya has followed them through their career. When asked if he would like to meet Goya, Dinos Chapman replied "I'd like to have stepped on his toes, shouted in his ears and punched him in the face."<sup>110</sup>

In my piece of creative writing based on the pair, I have chosen to pay attention to the Goya prints as both Jake and Dinos' reaction to the mixed reviews were extremely interesting to me. I have chosen to portray the brothers as slightly out of character, writing Dinos Chapman as somewhat submissive in comparison to his younger brother. I have done this with the goal of creating tension between the two artists and the reader. I have also eluded to a mysterious and slightly deadly past and present for the brothers through my own visual practice.

---

<sup>103</sup> Cadwalladr, C. (2006). *Meet the real brothers grim*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/oct/08/art>.

<sup>104</sup> Goya, F. (2013). *Los Desastres de la Guerra*. [Etchings on copper plate] Exhibited at the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 26/01/13 - 21/07/13.

<sup>105</sup> Chapman, J. & Chapman, D. (1993). *Disasters of War*. [Sculpture]. Retrieved from <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/jake-and-dinos-chapman/jake-and-dinos-chapman-room-2>

<sup>106</sup> Chapman, J. & Chapman, D. (1994). *Great deeds against the dead*. [Sculpture]. Retrieved from <http://jakeanddinoschapman.com/works/great-deeds-against-the-dead-2/>

<sup>107</sup> Turner, C. (2006). *'I'd like to have stepped on Goya's toes, shouted in his ears and punched him in the face'*. Retrieved from <https://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/id-have-stepped-on-goyas-toes-shouted-his-ears-and-punched-him-face>.

<sup>108</sup> Chapman, J. & Chapman, D. (2004). *80 colour plates*. [Prints]. In J. Chapman, *Insult to Injury*, (p. 1-176). England: Steidl.

<sup>109</sup> Turner, C. (2006). *'I'd like to have stepped on Goya's toes, shouted in his ears and punched him in the face'*. Retrieved from <https://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/id-have-stepped-on-goyas-toes-shouted-his-ears-and-punched-him-face>.

<sup>110</sup> Turner, C. (2006). *'I'd like to have stepped on Goya's toes, shouted in his ears and punched him in the face'*. Retrieved from <https://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/id-have-stepped-on-goyas-toes-shouted-his-ears-and-punched-him-face>.



Another artist's story that I have rewritten is that of outsider artist Henry Darger. Darger spent much of his life living alone and compulsively writing and collecting rubbish. When Darger died and people went through his belongings they were shocked by what they found. "Where there was any wall space, and tacked around every door frame, were pictures of little girls that had been cut out of magazines, newspapers and colouring books"<sup>111</sup> Also found amongst the photos of children and rubbish was a lifetime worth of writing. A series of diaries named "The history of my life"<sup>112</sup> as well as a 15000-page manuscript named "The Story of the Vivian Girls, in what is known as the realms of the unreal of the Glandico-Anglican was as caused by the child slave rebellion."<sup>113</sup> Darger also made over 300 illustrations based on the tale of the Vivian Girls. The illustrations varied in size but often included beautiful watercolour landscapes and little girls, sometimes clothes in pretty clothing but often naked. Some of the little girls are also depicted as having male genitalia. <sup>114</sup>

Darger used images taken from children's books and magazines as he could not draw figures himself.<sup>115</sup> Included in the photographs that Darger had collected was one of the murder victim Elsie Paroubek.<sup>116</sup> Taken from the Chicago Daily News on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Elsie became a large influence for characters and events in Darger's manuscript, many of the girls being killed in the same way Elsie was.

I have chosen to write my own piece in the style of two diary entries, with a break in the middle describing Elsie's unfortunate demise. The diary style is loosely based on Darger's own diaries found posthumously in his house.

I also based a chapter on the author Marquis de Sade, the man responsible for the word 'sadism.'<sup>117</sup> The writer's work still shocks people to this day. I have focussed my chapter around quotes from the Marquis himself as well as from the book *Justine*.

---

<sup>111</sup> Bonesteel, M. (2001). *Henry Darger: Art and Selected Writings*. Unknown: Rizzoli.

<sup>112</sup> Blogger, G. (2010, May 17). The Henry Darger Room Collection [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://studiochicago.blogspot.com/2010/05/henry-darger-room-collection.html>.

<sup>113</sup> Boxer, S. (2000). *He Was Crazy Like a . . . Genius?; For Henry Darger, Everything Began and Ended With Little Girls*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/09/16/arts/he-was-crazy-like-genius-for-henry-darger-everything-began-ended-with-little.html>.

<sup>114</sup> Gomez, E.M. (2017). *The Sexual Ambiguity of Henry Darger's Vivian Girls*. Retrieved from <https://hyperallergic.com/387178/the-sexual-ambiguity-of-henry-dargers-vivian-girls/>.

<sup>115</sup> American Folk Art Museum. (2006). *Henry Darger: Highlights from the American Folk Art Museum*. Retrieved from <http://fryemuseum.org/exhibition/71/>.

<sup>116</sup> Crime Museum. (2018). *Elsie Paroubek*. Retrieved from <https://www.crimemuseum.org/crime-library/kidnappings/elsie-paroubek/>.

<sup>117</sup> Deron, B. (2017). *Just How Sadistic Was The Marquis De Sade, Really?*. Retrieved from <https://allthatsinteresting.com/marquis-de-sade>.

Through this thesis I have been particularly interested in societies obsession with murder. “Serial killers are for adults what monster films are for children.” Says Elizabeth Yardley of Birmingham City University.<sup>118</sup>

It is undoubting that as a society we are obsessed with murder, but why? If the person themselves is uninteresting, what is it that we love so much? Are we solely motivated by our own morbid curiosity? Essentially there are many reasons why we enjoy the macabre so much. One of which is simply adrenalin rush we feel while doing something dangerous, but with the knowledge that we are actually safe.

I believe we, as humans, are also largely logical thinkers that just feel the need to know *why* someone does what they do. Killers fascinate us and, to some degree, inspire us creatively. Serial killer Ed Gein inspired killer ‘Buffalo Bill’ in Thomas Harris’ *Silence of the Lambs*, as did Ted Bundy<sup>119</sup>. It seems as if a horrific crime goes through the ranks like Chinese whispers and eventually just becomes another scary bedtime story. Real life desensitised us and murder becomes a myth that inspires us to continue creating.

### Self-narrative

I have always been obsessed with the gruesome. For as long as I can remember I have loved horror films, crime thrillers and the psychology that comes with murder. I can’t recall a time when scary films were not something I was curious about. At ten years old I remember the first film I watched without my parent’s permission. I was at a friend’s house and we found a torrented copy of the 2004 film ‘Saw’. I was horrified. The theatrical camera style, harsh lighting and gritty and gruesome events of the film brought something out in me that I wasn’t sure existed.

I had always been curious about scary stuff, but this was the first time that the curiosity had actually been quenched and it only progressed from there.

My love for the macabre grew as I got older, stemming from books like ‘Cirque Du Freak’ by Darren Shan and moving to books like ‘The Wasp Factory’ by Iain Banks and the Hannibal series by Thomas Harris. To me, it was the allure of the unknown, the knowledge that I could be exposed to something that others couldn’t stand to see, it absolutely captivated me.

In my undergraduate degree in Contemporary Art and Illustration I wrote my dissertation on the impact of art on mental health and violent crime. Through this research I was able to see how impactful art could be upon a person, both positively and negatively and found that I really enjoyed researching something that was not only pretty macabre, but also very informative. Through this dissertation I concluded that I would continue with my research into a postgraduate. This did not happen. When I began researching for this thesis, I originally believed I would discuss only the morality behind censorship in the arts.

In 1994 Haidt, McCauley and Rozin conducted research on disgust using college students by exposing them to three documentary style videos depicting real-life events. The first clip

---

<sup>118</sup> Blackstock, J. (2017). *Why is society so fascinated with serial killers?*. Retrieved from <http://www.studentnewspaper.org/why-is-society-so-fascinated-with-serial-killers/>.

<sup>119</sup> Condradt, S. (2016). *The Serial Killer Who Inspired Three Classic Horror Movies*. Retrieved from <http://mentalfloss.com/article/28663/serial-killer-who-inspired-three-classic-horror-movies>.

showing cows being stunned, killed and butchered for meat.<sup>120</sup> The second showed a live monkey being killed by a hammer and the third showed a child having facial surgery.<sup>121</sup> Ninety percent of the candidates involved in the research had to turn the videos off before they ended, the remaining ten percent expressed that they had found them disturbing.<sup>122</sup> Though of course I agree with that ten percent, it definitely sounds disturbing, there is just a small part of me that sees the research as a challenge, to see if I am able to withstand something that so many others found repulsive and live to tell the tale. Morbid curiosity.

I believe it is all about control. Out of those ninety percent that had to turn the disturbing videos off I would wager that the majority of them wouldn't turn it off if they knew it wasn't real, if it was just a horror film and good special effects. The realness makes it uncontrollable.

Many people take a lot of comfort in their routine. Two sugars and a splash of milk. 21 degrees. Socks after pants. Number 238 bus at 8:15am. It's a connection between themselves and their lives, a way of controlling the simple things. The sense of order, in whatever form it may take, can act as a shield against unpredictability and loss of control, the chaos from the world outside their bubble.

Painter Joe Bradley stated in an interview that he knew when a painting was done when it felt foreign to him, when he can't unpack or retrace his steps to how the painting was made.<sup>123</sup> It isn't until he is uncomfortable and unrecognisable to his work that he feels as if he has created something. I am the complete opposite. If it were up to me, I would work and work a piece until I had killed any taste of individuality about it. I never know when to call it a day.

In the third year of my undergraduate degree I painted a large painting of Anthony Hopkins' Hannibal Lecter. I had the eyes perfect and lifelike and the mask looked just like the one in the photograph I was using as reference. I could have spent weeks on this single painting alone, but I hit a snag and began struggling, the lines and colours in the forehead didn't match up with the photograph and looked a bit *too* orange.

It was my tutor, Dale Holmes, that told me I didn't have to make it realistic. I didn't have to spend hours and hours trying to perfect single details and make sure the colours were entirely lifelike. He taught me that spending too long on a single painting curbed my creativity. Why was I copying a photograph straight to canvas instead of enjoying my work and no longer seeing it as a task that made me slightly stressed. Copying photographs with paint didn't really say

---

<sup>120</sup> Rozin, P., Haidt, J., & McCauley, C. (1999). Individual Differences in Disgust Sensitivity: Comparisons and Evaluations of Paper-and-Pencil versus Behavioural Measures. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 33 (330), 339-334. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fb50/b284d2a40ad7a060f137819b20ee1600785e.pdf>.

<sup>121</sup> Rozin, P., Haidt, J., & McCauley, C. (1999). Individual Differences in Disgust Sensitivity: Comparisons and Evaluations of Paper-and-Pencil versus Behavioural Measures. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 33 (330), 339-340. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fb50/b284d2a40ad7a060f137819b20ee1600785e.pdf>.

<sup>122</sup> Rozin, P., Haidt, J., & McCauley, C. (1999). Individual Differences in Disgust Sensitivity: Comparisons and Evaluations of Paper-and-Pencil versus Behavioural Measures. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 33 (330), 339-334. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fb50/b284d2a40ad7a060f137819b20ee1600785e.pdf>.

<sup>123</sup> L. Hoptman. (2013). *Joe Bradley*. Retrieved from <https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/joe-bradley>.

anything about my personal style apart from the fact that it lacked originality and creativity. Picasso supposedly said that all children are artists<sup>124</sup>. The problem is how to remain one when he grows up. Every child creates artwork freely and without fear. Children are not blinded by the fear of failure or alienation in the same way that adults are. Perhaps this phenomenon of fear arises out of self-awareness and a realisation that we are just a small cog in a much larger machine. A small part of a bigger culture, community and world. Our confidence as child artists dissipates as the pressures of every day society grinds down on us and slowly, our sense of self is also replaced with insecurity that is hard to shake. My sense of curiosity has grown as I have, the only difference being that I now have the ability to quench the curiosity that I once so strongly felt. I have made a conscious decision to try not to let this impact my imagination, especially in this thesis. I have found it extremely important to stop painting and writing before I wanted to, I have tried not to overwork and keep my practice raw and emotive whilst in keeping with the artists I've researched style.

Through this thesis I have been able to re-find my sense of style, my love for writing and my adoration for aesthetic curiosity.

## Appendices

### INTERVIEW WITH LUCY HENDERSON 2016 FOR DISSERTATION

Q. What is your job title?

Team manager – Offender Rehabilitation Services

Q. How many years have you worked with people who have committed crimes?

17 years as a manager and practitioner

Q. Art therapy – do you believe it is an effective tool to help rehabilitate people who have committed crimes?

Yes – in my view multimodal approaches are far more effective in engaging service users in rehabilitative programmes and I have used art therapy in a variety of ways. These have included the traditional use of art as a way of expressing thoughts and feelings, story-telling using picture cards, metaphor and imagery along with support groups which have used art as a

---

<sup>124</sup> Quote Investigator. (2018). *Every Child Is an Artist. The Problem Is How to Remain an Artist Once He or She Grows Up*. Retrieved from <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2015/03/07/child-art/>.

mutual interest. These approaches can support rehabilitation by providing an alternative method of communication and routes into exploring areas of a person's life that may be difficult to disclose (or understand) through straight forward question and answer sessions.

Q. What topics are usually brought up through art therapy?

In interviews, the presenting behaviour (aggression, violence, substance misuse etc) is often initially addressed rather than the primary factors (i.e. isolation, rejection, guilt) that can trigger that behaviour. The reason for this is that it can take some time to reach those underlying issues, particularly when these are sensitive or difficult for the participant to disclose. Art therapy is often an effective tool to explore this quicker by offering a safer place and 'a third party' to talk from - starting the change process sooner. Topics such as identity, core beliefs, feelings of belonging and purpose are all areas that can be challenging to express. Some of these emotions may have been repressed and can be difficult for the person to articulate. Others may have led to behaviours, which may have been destructive, but have had a purpose for some time i.e. self-protection. Art therapy can help to unravel this and reach a deeper understanding of that behaviour.

Q. Do you find that many people you speak to have an affiliation with using the arts as a form of therapy?

Yes, although it's said that we surround ourselves with similar minded people! However, as an organisation, we take care to ensure that any rehabilitation programme, communication, assessment etc considers the different learning styles and preferred way of communication of individuals. Creative methods, including art therapy, are also used by my colleagues as part of a "tool box" to understand thoughts and behaviours that are linked to offending, visualise positive goals and identifying ways of achieving different outcomes.

Q. Have you ever used art therapy to help with any personal problems?

Yes, as a 'visual' learner, I have found art therapy to be useful whether used as an escape - 'mindfulness' – in order to manage stress and anxiety or as a way of expressing thoughts and feelings to others. In the work setting, I often use 'rich pictures' as a way of exploring a problem or sharing a vision.

Q. To what extent do you believe that violent films, video games, literature and art can affect a person's mind to the point of committing a crime?

If we suggest that art, film, literature can be used in a positive way to help people to express their thoughts and feelings, which in turn can assist change; then equally the same could be said about exposure to negative or deviant influences such as violent crimes etc.

However, art therapy isn't the only factor that helps rehabilitation and for it to be effective the person has to be willing to engage in that process and be motivated to change. Consequently, if viewed as a single cause, I do not believe that violent films, literature or art can affect a person's mind to the point of committing a crime. Generally, other contributory factors would exist and whilst beliefs and attitudes may be adversely influenced or reinforced by this type of media, different people may behave differently based on their personal circumstances and experiences

## INTERVIEW WITH LUCY HENDERSON 2018 FOR THESIS

Q. What is your job title?

A. Senior Probation Worker and team leader.

Q. Why did you become a probation worker?

A. I wanted to make a difference, both by reducing crime to further victims and by supporting offenders to understand why they offend and put things in place to prevent it from happening again. I am fascinated by human behaviour and the culture we operate in – including society and all the complexities within it. And maybe I am a voyeur of sorts, delving into the unpleasant aspects of people's lives.

Q. We have spoken previously about the impact of art therapy on one's rehabilitation. Do you still believe it to be beneficial?

A. Yes. Art therapy can be extremely beneficial to those who suffer from issues where they need help expressive their inner thoughts and feelings. It can help with underlying feelings of insecurity, isolation or anger and help to offer a safe space in which a person can start processing change and introduce others to topics they find difficult to discuss verbally.

Q. We also have spoken before about exposure to the arts and how it can impact a person negatively. Due to this, do you believe some forms of art should be censored?

A. I believe to some aspects of the arts should be censored. For example, I do agree with age ratings on films, television shows and video games. A child should not be witness to the same level of gore or 'real life' crime and sexuality that adults have spent their entire life being desensitised to.

Q. Do you think people who have committed crimes should have the same access to aestheticized violence in the arts as a law-abiding person does?

A. Obviously there's no way to stop a person who has committed a crime having access to regular pieces of art. Stylised violence is everywhere, films, television, books, even the news. I believe restricting a person's legal leisure activities because they have committed a crime is a direct violation of their human rights. Of course, it is different if what they are viewing is in direct correlation to their committed crime. I would restrict the viewing ability of a paedophile so they could not watch children's television, but I believe it is all relative and if we censor one piece of artwork, shouldn't then every other piece depicting the slightest possible criminal intent be censored too?

## **Bibliography**

Mr robot script - [https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/view\\_episode\\_scripts.php?tv-show=mr-robot-2015&episode=s02e03](https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/view_episode_scripts.php?tv-show=mr-robot-2015&episode=s02e03)

A bucket of blood script - [https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie\\_script.php?movie=bucket-of-blood-a](https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie_script.php?movie=bucket-of-blood-a)

Naked Lunch script - [https://issuu.com/lafamiliafilm/docs/naked\\_lunch\\_1991\\_1990-2-12\\_1st](https://issuu.com/lafamiliafilm/docs/naked_lunch_1991_1990-2-12_1st)

