Contents

List of Illustrations viii
List of Creative Tasks ix
Acknowledgements xi

1 Introduction: The Dead Rejoice 1
2 The Dead Psychoanalyst 29
3 The Dead Play 49
4 The Dead Ghost 75
5 The Dead Sleep 101
6 The Undead Balladeer 131
7 The Dead Karaoke 161
8 The Dead Preserved 187

Bibliography 211
Index 221
Introduction: The Dead Rejoice

This book explores the relationship between death and play within the context of making and sharing intermedial performance. It unpacks our unique position as performance makers who work under the name ‘Gary and Claire’. We create work from out of a variety of distinct compositional strategies to realize performances for audiences. Our projects spanning many years have a relationship to death in a broad sense, and our playful explorations of this term draw close attention to detail across the metaphorical, analogical, linguistic and conceptual positions that death and the dead take within a creative process. We consider, through our practice, how the dead are remembered, represented, referenced, personified, reimagined and celebrated.

We write scripts and scores for walking performance, shoot and edit Super 8mm film and digital film works, devise participatory performance and durational live art events, make and curate visual art installations (including neon lights, photography, mixed media materials), tour live and mediated performances for studio theatres, and make documentation artefacts. The way we work encourages the different mediums within our practice to ‘speak’ to one another across themes and concepts.

The relationship between our ideas, materials and audiences are examined in this book to highlight where playfulness is a feature of the work. We write extensively about practice through a dramaturgical perspective, from discussing how a concept of a work emerges, sharing anecdotes of
Embodying the Dead

practice illuminating the materiality and delivery of a project and explore the relationship our practice has to reflection – that is, how and why we use a reimagining of specific psychoanalytic terms to talk about creative practice. This is a book about ideas for making performance, a book that reflects upon those ideas and the practical applications of them. We are highly influenced by popular culture as well as by a variety of mixed media arts practice, therefore you will notice that during our discussions we reference a wide range of influences, flitting back and forth between television, pop video, film, visual art, theatre, literature, choreography, live art and mediated work. It is important for us to reference these artistic mediums because when we make performance we are not restricted to where we share our work and who we share our ideas with.

This introductory chapter establishes our position as artists and thinkers, and sets the tone of what is to follow, namely, the thematic and conceptual position that the dead take in this book. Chapter 2, ‘The Dead Psychoanalyst’, focuses upon Sigmund Freud’s absent presence in his once UK home and the place of his death: the Freud Museum (a personality museum). For us, it was important to contextualize this house because our first collaborative project, *Ghost Track* and *Kong Lear* (2012) (as a double bill), was shared at the Freud Museum, for a public audience. After working there, we felt deeply affected by the space, and felt the presence of Freud’s ghost. In this respect we are not talking literally, but figuratively. While Freud’s legacy in the twenty-first century celebrates his work, it is also critical of it. It seems that Freud, even in his death, is very much present in everything. Even today it seems Sigmund Freud can’t be shaken off, he returns to ‘haunt us; because he keeps popping up in places he has no business being’ (Roth, 2014). As we attempt to speak from out of the phenomenon of Freud’s legacy (after some decades of persistent ‘Freud bashing’), his refashioned resurrection in contemporary art and performance is discussed. In Chapter 3, ‘The Dead Play’, we expand upon some of Freud’s concepts. Here, we begin by focusing on three psychoanalytic concepts: the death drive, desire and the uncanny (unheimlich); we then unpack these terms in relation to play theory, specifically referencing the terms ‘dark’ and ‘deep’ play. While it has been argued that psychoanalysis is a ‘collaboration that allows one to refashion a past’ (2014), and because Freudian and Lacanian thinking invites one
Introduction: The Dead Rejoice

to make meaning from history, from the unconscious and from culture, we were curious about how to achieve the distortion of certain psychoanalytic concepts and what would happen when we did. Therefore, in Chapter 3, we explicate our own reimagining of those terms (death drive, desire, uncanny) as a methodology for making performance, and as a way to reflect upon performance making. As such we name our own concept: The Death Drift/Drift Drive (DD/DD).

Documenting our projects in Chapters 4–8 has enabled us to invent a unique presentation of our materials and practices, because each chapter takes on a different form to expose the complexities within the practice of performance making. In this way, each chapter about practice takes on different forms. For example, Chapter 4, ‘The Dead Ghost’, records an artist’s talk around our 2012 project Kong Lear recorded at Bar Lane Studios in York. In Chapter 5, ‘The Dead Sleep’, we share the script from Dream Yards (2013), the walking tour performance, along with inserted commentary from the audiences who experienced the walk. In Chapter 6, we share a zombified text written specifically for an audio experience, an echo of our ensemble performance Roy of the Dead/Day of The O (2013). In Chapter 7, we share a performance listicle documenting the participatory engagement of Crying in the Dark (2015), an overnight karaoke experience from sunset to sunrise. And finally, in Chapter 8, ‘The Dead Preserved’, we offer a performance lecture that weaves descriptive anecdotes of performances made across a four-year period together with stories associated with the research we have been engaged with in relation to the themes of death and preservation. This final chapter tells a story of how we work with visual materials and objects, and takes up the visual metaphor that we offer in Chapter 3 of the Death Drift/Drift Drive (DD/DD), as a compositional strategy for writing the chapter itself. This last chapter is playfully interrupted by the voice of a fly who lands on the page to contemplate death and existence.

All these creative chapters include discussions on the conceptual framework of each project accompanied by critical reflection explaining our approach to practice, but in varying forms of delivery. Therefore, because each chapter focuses upon specific themes and performance projects, the voice and the form of each chapter is distinct. It is the intertextual braid between practice, creative writing and critical discussion that playfully
4 Embodying the Dead

binds our work. We do, however, always respect the dead and the idea that for us all, death is a difficult issue. When we write of the dead we do so with the idea that death is a part of a creative process, ergo, an inherent component and quality of performance. And it is important to note that death is not always responded to in the literal sense; on the contrary, many of our projects position death as a concept, metaphor or analogy.

Play

We concur with Tim Etchells that play, in the context of contemporary performance, is where ‘possibility thrives, in which versions multiply, in which the confines of what is real are blurred, buckled’ (Etchells, 1999, p.53). We do see performance making (the process of imagining, writing or devising a performance) as a form of play where we may imagine ourselves and our audience differently or where we write playfully to change the look of or subvert a landscape. And we like to think of performance (the work that is performed/shared with an audience) as an activity framed by a series of fixed or shifting rules. But, we also like to think that the conditions inherent in other forms of leisurely activity can be appropriated to suit an idea we have for performance. The most exciting territory of play for us is working with imagined spaces that establish some other world, but a world that coexists in our (real) world. And we do this by creating material that blends the fictional with the autobiographical. Most of the autobiographical stories found in our projects relate to our collaborative journey together as artists, through the creative experiences of the research phase of making performance. This blend of the imagined and the autobiographical is played intertextually when we write creative material (texts, scripts, scores), when we invent specific rules for a performance activity, and when we perform. Importantly, we adopt playful attitudes to the rules and the worlds we create and this affects our relationship to the imaginative concepts for performance. For us, to be playful is to test the limits of something with a humorous sentiment, to engage in a task with a kittenish or mischievous approach. It also means that we play with things that move us romantically, so not all of our work is humorous – it may be sentimental and melancholic – it is just that we take a playful approach to
making the performances. But we do take play seriously so that when we work with audiences or a specific community we are sincere in our tone. Play is enigmatic, but it can also be seen as a very straightforward tool to help us understand how to be human. Lobman and O’Neill (2011, p.x) claim that ‘Children perform who they are becoming’ and that as ‘conversationalists’ they take turns ‘babbling and become speakers’. This seems to assert that play allows us to practise the skills we need in life. With this thought in mind, we ask of our practice: can play allow us to practise the skills we need in death? Or, can play allow us to practise an imagined after-life? Here it might be useful to draw our attention to Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughan who assert that play is not an activity but rather ‘a state of mind’ (2009, p.60). For us, a useful way to assert our experience is that play is both an activity and a state of mind but the qualities that make an activity differ from the attitudes (our state of mind) that we apply to the activity itself. The varying qualities of engaging in playful performance are complex in relation to the what and the who and the as if. It is the latter consideration that invites us to reflect in Chapter 3, ‘The Dead Play’, on Roger Caillois’ subjunctive as if theory and subsequently in other chapters on the variations in play that we adapt to the worlds we have established. Definitions of play are abundant, Huizinga is most often quoted as saying:

Play is a free activity standing quite consciously outside ‘ordinary’ life as being ‘not serious,’ but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. (Huizinga, 1998, p.13)

Brown states that play is ‘a purposeless activity that provides enjoyment and a suspension of self-consciousness and sense of time’ (Brown and Vaughan, 2009, p.60) but we do assert here (and from experience) that play is productive – it permits us to use our imagination so that we may transform identities, change perceptions and offer alternative ways to think about the world; in this way play is extremely purposeful. To give a few short examples of what we mean here:

Through play we may rethink gender identity and shift attitudes away from stereotypes and challenge patriarchy. Through play we might encourage a better night’s sleep. Through play we may draw attention to how
Embodying the Dead

dead animals have been objectified. Through play we may even shift the way in which we think about death and the dead.

In fact, play has been transformative for centuries. This is why we have offered, in this book, a way to reimagine psychoanalytic concepts and playfully apply them to practice.

Death and Language

The varying attitudes towards the dead (and death) are most often expressed in language. Phrases about the dead, dead idioms and euphemisms play a significant role in how we express our fears or how we might find ways to deal with what is an inevitable part of life but through a humorous lens:

Dead as a doornail.
One foot in the grave.
Go out with a bang.

We recall the old Monty Python Parrot Sketch, and those ‘twentieth century writers give us parrots that die’ (Boehrer, 2015, p.127). The actors Cleese and Palin perform a series of vague and ambiguous phrases, Cleese in particular with his repetitive rant of euphemisms, debating the parrot’s varying qualities of deadness. The idea that the shopkeeper is insistent that the parrot is alive while the customer is just as insistent upon its state of deadness through the many different linguistic phrases – passed on, is no more, ceased to be, an ex-parrot, etc. – offers a conflict that causes the customer to attempt to wake up the dead bird while he cites the many metaphors for death to prove his point that it is, in fact, dead (when we can clearly see it is neither dead or alive, it is an inanimate object):

Mr Praline: This parrot is no more! He has ceased to be! ‘E’s expired and gone to meet ‘is maker! ‘E’s a stiff! Bereft of life, ‘e rests in peace! If you hadn’t nailed ‘im to the perch ‘e’d be pushing up the daisies! (Chapman, 1999)

This is a sketch that symbolizes the beauty of nothing else but its own very funny concept.
The linguistic tropes of text-based visual artworks of the twenty-first century where language as image subverts, juxtaposes and displaces its original context, are less humorous and more interventionist. Konrad Smolenski’s slogan *The End* (2007) was a large-scale inscription installed in many public spaces. It is an artwork made of flammable material (wood) and ‘the slogan has either faced destruction, or at least signalled its (self) destructive potential by emitting loud and realistic sounds of explosion’ (Smolenski, 2008). In his later work, *Death* (2009), we see another outdoor installation, with Smolenski drawing our attention to the word ŚMIERĆ (‘death’ in Polish). The installation is placed adjacent to the Warsaw–Berlin railway line and set on fire at dusk:

The eponymous wooden inscription has an ephemeral character, not only thanks to its rapid burning caused by petrol and explosives, but also due to the location where the entire audience is made up of accidental passengers. Because of the high speed of the train, they can only see the work for a few seconds, which makes it impossible to determine whether the phenomenon they saw was real or not. Thus, the artist created a situation in which the installation is noticed almost by accident – this is analogous to the position of the theme of death in our culture. (Smolenski, 2008)

The mischievously playful approach of Smolenski’s work conjures up the image of the experimental artist as a delinquent rebellious child, experimenting with fire, destroying objects, blowing things up. The incidental audiences that witness his work are as fleeting and ephemeral as his interventions.

Korean artist Jung Lee’s (2010) photographed neon light installation spelling out the words *The End* is a finale writ large inscribed into a rural landscape. The bright white neon pronouncement standing fixed on the sand dunes against the backdrop of the ocean is an abandoned object, displaced language in the middle of nowhere. It refers to its own status as an art object that its time is marked. In 2011, *Aporia* (translated in Greek as ‘coming to a dead end’) was Jung Lee’s photographic series of neon lights in different landscapes, one of which displays a series of words trickling on the ground and in the snow as a declaration and ends with the words ‘Thinking of you to death’. Inscribed into a lonely cold landscape the
remains are comment upon the ephemeral nature of love and death. The artist puts her work into context:

If you fall in love, your beloved becomes a sort of mystery so that you will ceaselessly try to figure out the reasons for your feelings for him or her and to interpret them. The desire to express your love produces lies and conflicts and leads to a dead end that is a love. (Lee, 2011)

Jung Lee’s neon lights invite us to think analogously about the finality of lived experience, where love and loss in a relationship is experienced as death. The work’s playfulness situates itself in the juxtaposition between the object and environment; the shiny sparkling glimmer set against a desolate deserted landscape.

Rules for the Dead in Ritual and Performance

Where do we find the dead? The dead exist in the imagination and the belief systems of the living. According to Davis (2007), we can’t get rid of the dead because we have not, despite our doubts, given up on them; ghosts stories are still extremely popular. In culture, the dead can be found in paintings, in literature, on the stage, in film, in neon light, etc., and in many different forms, as ghosts, or zombies or as saints, as concepts, as sound or in books within the soiled and smelly pages of haunted matter. Peter Moore (2016), concentrating on ‘the subjectivity of being dead’ (p.48) and discussing the possible states of mind of the dead, draws our attention to a paradox that only the dead themselves could know what it is like to be dead (meaning we do not know at all). This very plausible suggestion does not stifle our imaginations; rather, it is precisely this unknowingness that creates stories, rules and rituals that allow the dead to have a place out there somewhere, and, right here, walking among the living. And as such, ‘managing a credible afterlife requires not only following the rules of logic but also taking into account the whole spectrum of sources – mythological, folkloric, fictional, theological, and parapsychological’ (Moore, 2016, p.50). In modernist times, the dead were known to have communicated with the living via radio waves through
white noise, but when they ‘spoke’ to us, they gave very little detail of what it is like to be dead. Moore suggests this is because the ‘literature of mediumship gives us … the newly dead, who fail to recognize, or to admit, that they are indeed dead’ (Moore, 2016, p.53). He goes on to say that ‘according to the spiritualist author Caroline Larsen, not knowing one is dead is virtually the normal state of mind of the newly dead’.

Our lives are forever surrounded by the inevitability of death (the future), and the profound idea (sometimes feared, or sometimes revered) of the dead returning (the past). Therefore, many cultures remember those who have gone before in a celebratory way. In Mexico, ‘death is understood as a process, as a path or transition to a life of a different kind’ (Kettenmann, 2000, p.24). Mourning is not a feature of the gathering activities during El Dia de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead). Here, specifically in rural areas, the living’s attitude towards the dead is conditioned by specific rules that welcome a variety of different souls. On the days leading up to the 2 November – the Day of the Dead – in Mexico, in rural places in particular, there is a phased arrival and departure from a variety of different souls where for certain communities:

Days of the Dead begin on October 27th, when the hungry and thirsty souls of those without families or friends are welcomed with water hung from vessels outside of people’s homes and crusts of bread … The next night, October 28th, marks the time when those souls who die violently are cautiously welcomed back … On October 30th, the souls of children who died before being baptized and who therefore dwell in limbo are welcomed for a few hours. The next night, the souls of baptized children are allowed to return and are welcomed back into their homes … The late afternoon of November 1st brings with it the beginning of an impressive celebration. Church bells ring all afternoon to welcome the souls of the adults. The Fearful Dead, as they are sometimes called, arrive throughout the evening and join their families at the home altar where they find ofrendas, or offerings, laid out in their honor. Families first acknowledge the most recently deceased love one before welcoming home their other ancestors. (Herrera-Sobek, 2012, p.405)

The Day of the Dead’s deep tradition dating back in history to the Aztec period, where families built altars laden with photographs, candles, food
and drink to welcome the dead, has developed into a parade on the streets of Mexico in recent times.

Interestingly, Herrera-Sobek makes an important point that this once ‘deeply religious practice’ is now a ‘cultural spectacle’ and this can be evidenced by the populist attraction that is now a parade inspired by Hollywood:

The city government and Mexican tourism officials were inspired by parts of last year’s Bond film, which were filmed in Mexico City and featured 007 chasing a villain through a Day of the Dead celebration in the historical centre. (Argen, 2016)

And, there has been a difference in opinion: ‘Some Mexicans complained that their compatriots – especially those in the upper classes – only embraced their traditions after Hollywood made it cool’ (Argen, 2017). In 2018, the third parade was held as a vigil in memory of Mexican refugees who died travelling to the United States. And the Day of the Dead in recent years has become a global phenomenon. It is worth noting that celebrations that take place in some areas of the United States are ‘part of a public display of cultural affirmation’ (Herrera-Sobek, 2012, p.412). In fact, within many parts of the United States, celebrations ‘which began as a way for Mexican and Mexican American communities to maintain positive connections to their cultural heritage, have become an opportunity to practice community activism’ (Ibid., p.413). Here, the dead maintain their important critique on the living through playful and performative social rituals, as the ‘Day of the Dead altars are frequently constructed along themes that have an impact on the community such as police brutality, violence against women, and immigrant rights’ (Ibid.). And in the UK, meaningful connections are being made merging the calendar celebrations of All Souls Day and Day of the Dead through contemporary art. As one example in the UK, The Ghost Tide, an intermedial exhibition curated by Monika Bobinska and Sarah Sparkes (20th October - 3rd November 2018), evoked the ghost as the migratory tide, analogous to the presence of locally based artists as a ‘tide of creative flotsam and jetsam which ebbs and flows as the city gentrifies and develops’ (Sparkes, 2016). Playfully, their closing party entitled Day of the Dead, shared skills in how to make Day of the Dead cut-outs, offered artist-led walks on the theme and finished with a Day of the Dead feast.
Spiritual beliefs in the afterlife enable us (human beings) to imagine ourselves and those who have gone before us differently because we place significant meaning on death and the dead. Fairfield (2015), believes that religious and spiritual societies that possess ‘deeply rooted cultural resources’ (p.47), enable human beings to deal with the turmoil associated to death. Death rituals and celebrations that mark the passing of a life enable us to find peace and comfort that there was once a life. And rituals and celebrations that mark a returning of the dead offer ways for us to connect to an afterlife or rather an imaginary world. But for many people in what Fairfield describes as our ‘secular age’, believing in the mysterious is not as favoured as it once was. In fact, he argues that death rituals have ‘fallen on hard times’ (Ibid., p.47) and by way of drawing upon a debate regarding the secularization in the western world, he outlines that the modern world view of death:

is no longer a religious affair but a biological and medical one and is appropriately spoken of in this terminology, supplemented perhaps in the still empirical language of the psychology and a few related disciplines. (Fairfield, 2015, p.46)

Indeed, ‘the advantage of a secular death is that it is free of illusion, mythology, and false consolation. The disadvantage, in a word, is that it is also empty’ (Ibid., p.49). Yet emptiness can also be located in the dystopian view culture has of the dead. Magnus Irvin’s performance Deadman Talks, takes questions from the audience on what it is like being dead and informs them that it is ‘rancid, and rotten, lonely, comfortless and interminably eternal’ (Sparkes, 2016, p.386). Sparkes questions, in the context of a ‘contemporary psyche’, whether ‘we are more likely to locate ghosts within our own mind, symbolizing past horrors festering inside us. We can no longer send them to heaven or hell’ (Ibid.). Perhaps the horrors that haunt our own minds relate to the idea that we can’t accept death in life and therefore:

The alternative to denial is to keep death before the mind and to see its foreshadowing throughout life. Every small ending is an imitation of death and may be perceived as such. (Fairfield, 2015, p.30)
Moreover, performance, as ritual, renews ‘faith’ in what feels (imperative to us as artists) good to live a fuller, positive life where play and imagination create new mythologies. And it could be argued that through play we can find ways of dealing with what is hard to accept – the end of things. In fact, the shift from the religious to the cultural means that we (as performance makers) are tasked with a responsibility of how death and the dead are represented. While we are not suggesting that artists are alternative priests, or an alternative way of thinking from that of secular society, it is important to note artists manage death creatively, politically and aesthetically, and with varying attitudes.

In the 1990s, a post-dramatic framework within contemporary theatre was dominant in the UK, where the loose fragmented stories created from the structured rules of improvisation insisted that death was never absent from the theatrical stage. Playing out death scenes, for example, was a well-known trope of Forced Entertainment’s work:

Death haunts all performance, sometimes taunting its fakery, sometimes lending it power. In my own work with Forced Entertainment I’m struck by a feat that the performers are publicly rehearsing their own deaths, plotting lives for their own dead selves. After all, almost every performance stacks a new corpse behind them. I remember that Robin in our first piece was ‘dead’ for the final scenes, that he’d lie motionless for 20-odd minutes, slumped at the table and covered by a sheet. (Etchells, 1999, p.116)

In the same era, Paul Whitehouse appeared on our screens, propped up motionless inside an open coffin as Mister Dead the Talking Corpse in the television comedy sketch show *Harry Enfield and Chums* (1994). This blatant parody of American sitcom *Mister Ed the Talking Horse* (1961) was humorous, not because it drew specifically on the original show’s idea that animals could talk, but rather that the humour resided in the incongruous relationship death has to play in performance. Whitehouse playing dead is entertaining because we see first and foremost his impersonation and interpretation of the dead, as if he is following the rulebook of absolute stillness. It is his very attempt to embody deadness that is humorous.

Moore’s question, ‘What might it be like to be dead?’ (2016, p.48), is provocative but most actors must have asked this very same question.
night after night on a long theatre run where their character or persona ‘dies’. This experience must have gone into excessive overdrive for the cast of Spymonkey’s *The Complete Deaths* (2016) directed by Tim Crouch. In this humorous work, 75 deaths are performed on stage in direct view of the audience. And when Anah Ruddin played the recently deceased Mrs McLeavy in a production of Joe Orton’s *Loot* (1965) at the Park Theatre in London (2017), she expresses her experience as an actor embodying the dead:

> As the corpse, you need to remain completely still while the energy of the farce swirls around you. (Ruddin, cited in Wiegand, 2017)

Orton’s satirical work challenged the Roman Catholic Church’s attitude towards death which in turn must have informed Ruddin’s approach to playing a corpse when she was dragged all over the place in this performance, put over the shoulders of another character before being shoved in a cupboard. Playing the dead body has its challenges.

Conversely, in the playfully and beautifully animated *Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare* (2018), by Forced Entertainment, we see lifeless inanimate objects die quietly and untheatrically on stage. The stage is a table, the cast are everyday household objects from the pantry, the fridge or the dressing table: beer bottles, salt and pepper shakers, wine glasses, a can of beans, a bottle of perfume. This project consists of 32 adaptations of approximately 50-minute performances told by the Forced Entertainment cast taking turns on different Shakespeare stories. The rules are simple: to tell the whole play as a solo narration and in their own words, from their own interpretation of reading and researching the play. Their ‘episodic Shakespearean marathon’ is a game of ‘decoding language’ played out with the understated performance of the objects in the midst of an unfolding drama:

> On the one hand it’s a kind of rudimentary ventriloquism, bringing life and voice to these supposedly dead things, but on another, the work taps the half-life that objects have anyway, their speechless speech, the traces of their action and purpose, their haunted existence. Even these inanimate performers – coming from the kitchen cupboard, the grocery store, the junk shop and the supermarket – bring something to their roles. (Etchells, 2018)
Embodying the Dead

The dead are encountered as an immersive experience through the playful sensory performance of shamanic dance. Louise Ahl’s *YAYAYA AYAYAY* (2018), is a meditative visual choreography performed in darkness with stroboscopic light and sound. To witness the performance, you enter the space in the pitch black, sit and wait. Silence is interrupted by vibrations and abstract noises followed by an intense experience of a shamanic trance ritual where the performer, Ahl, otherwise known as Ultimate Dancer, is present, but invisible for a lengthy part of the show, that is until she begins to move in the darkness with a ghostly quality. Lights flash and we get glimpses of what could be a phantom. The moving momentum embodies a séance-type quality, where you are not sure who is in the room. The meditative sound to accompany the movement is like an airlock between the world that you have just come from with a ticket in your hand to an esoterically charged space, where suddenly you are being cleansed in preparation to experience the uncanny. Very slowly a supernaturally tall figure emerges, reminiscent of the Giant who visits Agent Cooper in the beginning of season 2 of Lynch and Frost’s (1991) *Twin Peaks*; at least that is what comes to mind in the darkness when the eyes begin to adjust. Gradual increases of light illuminate her hair. The audience are thrown completely into a liminal world, a space in between sleeping and death. We are left asking of this voice: is she the newly dead? Is she a ghost? What is it? Are we experiencing dead time? As her voice builds to a crescendo of ethereal, other-worldly sound, she calls out the words ‘Where are you?’ satisfying the audience’s question about her own presence which arouses laughter. She is lost as she calls out ‘I’m lonely’. An hour passes in the blink of an eye and a lot has happened. Playfully, and in blacklight, she disperses small glowing balls around the space, tiny stars adorn the stage floor and we are all hurtled into outer space. Here, floating together in the universe it seems, we are all playing dead.

Dead Animals and Fake Ones

What is it like to spend time with the dead? Spiritual, physical and psychical connections have been made in contemporary times between humans with dead animals. In 1965, Joseph Beuys performed an action and whispered a dialogue to a dead hare. Of this performance, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, the hare stood in for our ‘deadening’
intellectualizing tendencies to burrow (metaphorically) into the ‘materialistic’ (Phaidon, n.d.). And it has been recorded that Beuys sometimes preferred dead animals to the humans of his time because he felt that ‘even a dead animal would preserve more powers of intuition than stubborn rational man’ (Phaidon, n.d.). In 2005, Marina Abramovic re-performed Beuys’ performance at the Guggenheim, New York, in her series of works entitled Seven Easy Pieces. In 2014, Abraham Poincheval performed for two weeks within a sterilized carcass of a dead bear where he drank, slept and relieved himself. Dans La Peau de l’Ours (Inside the Skin of the Bear) was performed at the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature. ‘Poincheval is experimenting and re-enacts the powerful sensitivity that once brought these two creatures together’ (Mok, 2014). The shamanic reference in Poincheval’s work relates to the idea that our ancestors once shared much more time and space with the bear on an equal footing. We ask, are these artists, who work intimately with dead animals, mediums between one world and another, between one species and another?

Our lives seem disconnected from shamanic rituals where humans and animals were considered spiritually equal, animals hold a life we cannot possibly know, they are other. We treat them as gentle creatures, but we can also be cruel, sadistic and relentlessly dominating. Harmony Korine’s cat-killing boys in the 1997 movie Gummo, where the character Bunny Boy holds up a dead black cat to the camera to the sound of Roy Orbison’s song Crying, is a reminder of animals’ fragility in the landscape and their place within a pecking order. This image in Gummo blends the fake with the real; the dead cat and the fake bunny rabbit. Bunny Boy’s ears, pink and playfully animalistic, allude to his muted character, silenced and as representative of the freakishness of trash culture (Sinwell, 2012).

Therefore, thinking upon the image of the theatrical animal costume, from bunny ears, let’s consider the oddity that is the pantomime horse who seems to embody an uncanny state of deadness when it is animated by performers. Neither human nor animal, what is it? Alive on stage when it is up on its feet and dead in the wardrobe when the show is over. In Forced Entertainment’s performance of Pleasure (1997), the actors pushed a game too far and the pantomime horse was abused:

Rob pushed whisky bottles into horse’s eyes and made it look like horse was weeping tears as thick as rain … Claire played the back of horse. She
snuck a beer bottle in there and, when bored, poured it out to look like horse was pissing, sending floods of lager down onto the stage. Horse dancing in its own piss. (Etchells, 2000, p.55)

Fake animals in performance seem to contradict their theatrical presence, for the more the pantomime horse performs, the less of the animal we see. Even those games Forced Entertainment offered us in *Pleasure* at the expense of the pantomime horse’s dignity remind us in crude detail of how humans think themselves superior to animals. ‘For the sad truth is that in humour humans show themselves to be useless animals; hopeless, incompetent, outlandish animals … when the human becomes animal, then the effect is disgusting’ (Critchley, 2002, p.34).

And yet a dead and stuffed animal can look so alive in its apparent state of deadness and this is eerie:

Taxidermy is the art of taking an animal’s treated skin and stretching it over an artificial form such as a manikin, then carefully modelling its features into a lifelike attitude. The word is derived from the Greek roots *taxis*, ‘arrangement’ and *derma*, ‘skin’, although its usage became prominent only in the early 1800s when taxidermy began its evolution from a crude way of preserving skins to advance science into a highly evolved art form whose chief objective was to freeze motion. (Milgrom, 2010, p.5)

The taxidermist preserves in the dead animal an alert, focused look so that we see a clean and well-turned-out blackbird, there is no blood or guts, no rotting smell, no evidence of the cause of death. Taxidermy sanitizes death.

In the eighteenth century, when taxidermy as a practice was first recorded, animals were predominately mounted for natural history museum collections so naturalists could prove a range of exotic animals existed overseas. As the techniques and chemicals used in preservation developed, taxidermy became the delight of a hunter’s hobby. Unfortunately, mounted dead animals hunted as trophies were not uncommon. The focus of our interest in taxidermy is not to celebrate or glorify hunting, but to draw upon the more curious and peculiar form of taxidermy that developed in the Victorian age where quite often animals that were found dead in the wild, or had died at the home (a pet), were mounted and displayed, and brought together in odd gatherings set in a tableau, posing within a
Introduction: The Dead Rejoice

diorama along with other dead animals that you would not normally see grouped together. Walter Potter, whose first taxidermy project was on his dead pet canary, practised taxidermy techniques at his home in Bramber, Sussex. He would develop his art into group works where several animals posed together as if they were human. A majority of all birds Potter would practise on would be found dead under a tree or electrical wires or killed by a cat. He would find these dead birds himself or people would bring them to him. Potter’s highly theatrical tableaux often show the animals as if they are playing an imaginary game and impersonating the human, in full costume with anthropomorphic qualities. His most famous work is the staging of the nursery rhyme *The Death and Burial of Cock Robin*:

‘Who saw him die?’ ‘I,’ said the Fly,
‘With my little eye, I saw him die.’

Potter’s other works develop into the most profound and surreal of tableaux that saw animals posing as if they were humans engaging in learning (Rabbits Village School) where one rabbit is working out mathematical equations. In the Victorian era ‘attributing human characteristics to animals was a form of endearment. They were obsessed for instance if animals were happy’ (Milgrom, 2010, p.180). The idea that a dead and stuffed animal is happy in its deadness reminds us of the large red (and dead) robin sitting in the tree as a symbol of hope in the last scene of David Lynch’s (1986) film *Blue Velvet*. While making the film, Lynch acquired a robin killed (by accident) by a bus driver, who worked in the local school. Lynch had this bird stuffed and operated the movement of the bird in the film. When watching the bird move you can tell from its appearance it is not alive, but dead, but performing as if it is alive and it is uncanny. This stuffed mechanical bird’s haunting strangeness alludes to the dialogue in the scene that it appears in:

AUNT BARBARA
I don’t see how they do it. I could never eat a bug.
JEFFREY AND SANDY
(smiling)
It’s a strange world, isn’t it? (Lynch, 1986)
Embodying the Dead

What Do Ghosts Do?

Gilman-Opalsky (2016) reminds us of what ghosts do. They have a defined specific activity: they always haunt. When things (objects, places, spaces) are unsettled through a haunting, our senses are heightened, we are on full alert to the possibility of such a phenomenon, we look for things we have never seen before. And, ghosts playfully haunt the imagination, their presence it seems is also everywhere floating ‘between different realms and meaning’ (Banco & Peeren, 2010, p.xi).

In popular culture, a ghost is still favoured as the spirit of the dead returning to haunt a place or person because there is some unfinished business to resolve. Ghosts are as popular as ever, hunted down in the reality TV shows on the paranormal where the formula of the investigation of haunted sites relies on finding evidence of a ghost, and as such blur illusion with authenticating. This evidence of course is not scientific, but rather it is pushed into the realms of pseudoscience heavily reliant upon the tricks of technology to cause effect. Ghosts are quite simply ambiguous, we may feel their presence as an ineffable experience. In fact, do we still believe in ghosts? We may behave and respond in a world as if there are ghosts when we know there really are not:

If the dead come back, it is because our belief systems allow for their return. So, what is it we actually believe when we believe in ghosts? The belief in ghosts is (like the ghost itself) something that survives or returns long after it should have been relegated to the past; it is a kind of excess or fault line within belief, or perhaps an unconscious remainder of primitive, magical thinking, revealing a gap between what we think we believe (How could there be ghosts? How ridiculous!) and what we nevertheless continue to believe (there are ghosts). (Davis, 2007, p.4)

In fact, ‘If ghosts are old they are certainly not tired’ (Banco & Peeren, 2010, p.ix) and they seem to refashion themselves according to the times. Jacques Derrida ‘has argued that each age has its own ghosts’ (Ibid., p.xi). Derrida first used the term hauntology (in French, hantologie) in the Spectres of Marx (1993) and Davis (2007, p.9) draws further attention to it: ‘Hauntology supplants its near-homonym ontology, replacing the priority of being and presence with the
figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither
dead nor alive’.

In the 1983 film Ghost Dance directed by Ken McMullen, the exist-
ence of ghosts is explored by two key characters: an appearance from
Jacques Derrida playing himself in a discussion with his student, played
by the actress Pascale Ogier. Speaking on the concepts of ghosts, she asks
Derrida a question:

*I want to ask you something. Do you believe in ghosts?’*

He thinks for a moment, with that Derrida look, and retorts:

*That’s a difficult question. Firstly, you’re asking a ghost whether he believes
in ghosts. Here, the ghost is me, since I’ve been asked to play myself in a film
which is more or less improvised, I feel as if I’m letting a ghost speak for me.*
(Ghost Dance, 1983)

Derrida continues to assert the existence of ghosts during a complex
improvisation on the subject of phantom structures that technology
inhabits, pointing out that he (Derrida) is a ghost because when we see
him, we are watching a recorded version of himself. Derrida reminds the
viewer of the paradox of seeing the ‘real’ Derrida through a technological
experience, because we are watching a memory of something that did not
happen in present time, but in creative, imagined time.

Cinema, in its art of reproduction, contains ghosts: ‘it’s the art of
allowing ghosts to come back’ (Ghost Dance, 1983). Indeed, ‘cinema plus
psychoanalysis equals the science of ghosts’. In fact, cinema’s uncanny
ability to conjure up eeriness means that ‘every day is Groundhog Day in
a movie’ (Royle, 2003, p.81).

Referring to himself in the film, Derrida states that he is a ghost. If
we watched his performance at the time when the film was first released,
we would know we were watching with the knowledge that some-
where out there is an alive Derrida reading, teaching, writing philo-
sophy. In other words, we know through his own statement that the edited
recorded medium will prove a truth one day, and watching him speak we
see into Derrida’s future (and perhaps our own), we imagine him dead
(we imagine death, we imagine our own death). He is neither past nor
present, rather he is a past future. But watching the film today, we see
Derrida as history, we know him now as the dead philosopher, only now
he is the ghost of the ghost he ghosted.

We have a paradoxical and tense relationship with death: ‘the desire to
keep the dead amongst us, competes with the desire to be rid of them for
good, to stop the dead from returning and disturbing our fragile peace
of mind’ (Davis, 2007, p.3). Cinema illuminates this paradox and makes
sure the dead continue to haunt but through many different lenses:
humour, irony, wisdom and coincidence.

Unfortunately, not long after Ghost Dance was made the actress Pascale
Ogier died. Derrida writes about his experience of watching the film
Ghost Dance a few years after Ogier’s death and recalls:

Suddenly I saw Pascale’s face, which I knew was a dead woman’s face.
Come onto the screen. She answered my question ‘Do you believe in
ghosts?’ Practically looking me in the eye, she said to me again, on the
big screen: ‘Yes, now I do, yes’. Which now? Years later in Texas, I had
the unnerving sense of the return of her specter, the specter of her specter
coming back to say to me – to me here, now: ‘Now… now… now, that
is to say, in this dark room on another continent, in another world, here,
now yes, believe me, I believe in ghosts’. (Derrida & Stiegler, 2013, p.40)

This moment can be contextualized as such an astounding coincidence
but as something deeply unsettling.

Derrida’s concept that ghosts are the memory of a performance that
has never been present can be related to the idea that performance, in
many of its forms (live and mediated), recalls the past, memorializes the
dead and attempts to make them present. Any fan of the Elvis imperson-
ator may witness such a phenomenon. And, certainly an actor’s perfor-
mance conjures up a variety of different ghosts. The Netflix documentary
film Jim and Andy: The Great Beyond (2017) focuses on Jim Carrey’s com-
mitted performance of playing Andy Kaufman in The Man on The Moon
(1999). His performance is so astoundingly real that Kaufman’s relatives,
present on the set, were reduced to tears because the likeness of Jim was
so profound, they thought they were looking at a ghost. In fact, Carrey
never comes out of role, even on his lunch break, in the dressing room
or at the end of the working day. In the documentary, Carrey describes a
phenomenal moment experienced on Malibu beach while looking out to the ocean. Here, he claims, he received a sign from Kaufman. ‘I decided from then, for the next few days to speak telepathically to people,’ and he elaborates, ‘That’s the moment when Andy Kaufman showed up, tapped me on the shoulder and said: “Sit down, I’ll be doing my movie”’ (Carrey, cited in Jim and Andy: The Great Beyond 2017).

**Ghosting**

In 1975, Herbert Blau directed the Kraken theatre group in a reimagining of *Hamlet*. This work, entitled *Elsinore*, was an improvised response to Shakespeare’s original text containing ‘words, empty words, playing upon the surface of a memory like a sediment of a text, ghostly, metonymic, words displacing words, and endlessly so – like the data of prehistory or the half-forgotten substance of dreams’ (Blau, 2011, p.169). Rather than perform the play, the group practised the play as a memory game, as an experimental process of collage, creating a series of visual and verbal fragments of *Hamlet* after the actors had memorized the whole play. They could perform images, perform scenes (in no specific order) and speak lines from the play as long as it was from *Hamlet*. Kraken’s development of *Elsinore* was approached from the state of mind the company found themselves in during practice, that is, from the momentum of a work in progress. Blau was interested in how the ghosts of a scene, repeated and repeated, kept returning through varying different forms of performance processes. ‘When we described the way we worked, we called it ghosting. We found ourselves thinking through Hamlet as if Hamlet were thinking us, and as if without the play we could not think at all’ (Blau, 2011, p.171).

Blau elaborates on this concept and practice of ghosting: ‘The ghosting is not only a theatrical process but a self-questioning of the structure within the structure of which the theater is a part’ (Blau, 1982, p.199). Certainly, this practice of ghosting came directly out of an actor’s approach to play through playing their own versions of *Hamlet*. Here, the memory game created new material and transformed the original ‘territory’ of *Hamlet* into a new performance where Kraken’s actors played out their own various states of mind and attitudes towards *Hamlet*. Blau’s
use of the term ghosting means to work through the debris of a memory that is realized and interpreted within the midst of a game, repeating and returning to fragmented moments, like the ghost in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* who keeps appearing and disappearing and reappearing – moving the story along. There is something intriguing about this concept and practice of ghosting. For example, imagine each actor recalling images and sounds from the past, or indeed channelling the actors who they remember played previous roles in *Hamlet*, dead or alive, embodying dead actors from previous productions.

Ghosting developed as a theory related to reception studies in theatre. Theorist Marvin Carlson relates the term when audiences identify with an actor in role and/or a character in the theatre. His studies on the interaction between theatre and memory reveal how the memory of the spectator informs the process of theatrical reception. He asserts that actors play many different roles over time, therefore the spirit or memory of those roles influence the performance from the actor that the audience is experiencing:

The process of using the memory of previous encounters to understand and interpret encounters with new and somewhat different but apparently similar phenomena is fundamental to human cognition in general, and it plays a major role in the theatre, as it does in all the arts. Within the theatre, however, a related but somewhat different aspect of memory operates in a manner distinct from, or at least in a more central way than in, the other arts, so much so that I would argue that it is one of the characteristic features of theatre. To this phenomenon I have given the name ghosting. (Carlson, 2003, p.8)

Carlson also refers to ghosting as the ‘recycled body and persona of the actor’ (Ibid., p.53). Inspired by Blau’s use of the term in practice and Carlson’s concept of ghosting in relation to reception studies, we (Gary and Claire) take on the term, but as a practice, and a methodology for making and performing. Quite simply, ghosting (for us as practitioners) works from the physical, psychic or textual embodiment of specific qualities of performing/constructing text that reside within the nostalgic and the sentimental, that reclaim or indeed reinvent an identity for the actor – or indeed form the basis for a new persona to emerge for performance, or for the text to develop. We suggest that the practice of ghosting is certainly not unique to the theatrical stage. We find there are particular
similarities to be drawn upon in a range of artistic mediums where there is an actor or performer, character or persona or self-performing. Moreover, Carlson discusses this term in the context of the stage and live theatre, rather than thinking of the term across a broad range of arts. To this end, we assert that ghosting does indeed exist in film, TV, live and visual arts, because once you get past genre, and focus specifically on the performer (or actor, or materials), and the performative, a similar process happens: our memory relates to the object, or to the actor or character’s performance. For example, in Quentin Tarantino’s (1994) *Pulp Fiction*, the actor John Travolta plays a hitman taking part in a dance competition with his boss’ girlfriend at an American diner. We are watching a hitman dancing, but we are also witnessing the residue, a hint, a resurrection of Travolta’s once very famous self from the movie *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), the champion of disco – he moved on that floor! Travolta the actor is ghosting his former character Vincent:

> Everything in the theatre, the bodies, the materials utilized, the language, the space itself, is now and has always been haunted, and that haunting has been an essential part of the theatre’s meaning to and reception by its audiences in all times and all places. (Carlson, 2003, p.15)

We would like to paraphrase Carlson’s idea, replacing the word ‘theatre’ with performance, to assert that everything in performance (live or mediated), the bodies, the texts, the objects, the language, the actors, the space, the medium, is now and has always been haunted. In this very simple but enigmatic idea, performance invites the actor/performer to consider her own self within the world of the fictional, theatrical and performative while simultaneously, and undoubtedly, considers while performing, and remembering in her performance, the acts or the words of others.

**The Dead Celebrity and the Qualities of Deadness**

The phenomenon of the dead celebrity – and let’s dive straight in to the most famous dead celebrity of all, Elvis – has much to do with the ‘endless licensing of his image’ (Spigel, 1990, p.177) as it does a spiritual connection to him, and his continuous revival from the commitment from his fans. The ripple effect of Elvis’ death was felt across the world and as we
Embodying the Dead

went into mourning, the conspiracy theory that he had ‘hoaxed his own death to escape from imprisonment by his own icon and disappear into a life of true freedom and anonymity’ (Ebert, 2010, p.47) was mounting towards headline news. For those who adored Elvis, who were part of his era, who witnessed him perform live or on television in their own homes, it was devastating news, especially because he died well before his time and was immediately thrust into mythological status:

When life is lived at the speed of light, the earth flattens, time slows down, and mythical structures begin to appear everywhere. Hence, when certain individuals among us are accelerated to light speed via electronic replication of their images, strange, otherworldly phenomena begin to accrete to them, forming the very auras Walter Benjamin insisted would be stripped from them by the mechanical means of reproduction of the images. At light speed, however, unpredictable effects of mythic amplitude and volume give shape to the ancient patterns that act as molds by way of which the lives of such individuals are contoured: the myth of the mysterious, piping singer, whose notes resonate with a compulsively erotic effect. (Ebert, 2010, p.35)

Elvis’ continued absent presence for his most immediate fans ‘serves as a means through which to reinvent their personal history’ (Spigel, 1990, p.178). Indeed, the massive wave of Elvis impersonators in the 1990s, 13 years after his death, was responsible for ‘a subculture built around a single contradiction: If there were only one king, how come there are so many of him?’ (Ibid., p.179). Elvis impersonators were ‘deeply embedded in restoring the memory of an authentic experience – it was, that is, all about recovering one’s own historical identity through the literal “em’body’ment of a spirit from the past’ (Ibid., p.179). The revival that happened in the 1990s is described by Spigel as a ‘ritual that can best be seen as a serious game’ (Ibid., p.180), and by way of using this idea to return to play, the necromatic performers who impersonate Elvis do ‘not believe Elvis is alive, but instead they see themselves as temporarily bringing Elvis back to life’ (Ibid., p.184):

The revivalist culture of Elvis (and the obsession with the death of Elvis) meant that he has appeared in every form of art imaginable, wide ranging and in diverse contexts in all forms of lowbrow and highbrow art.
In the song lyrics of other artists, in ‘movies, novels, comic strips, poems, scholarly works, and television shows’ (Marcus, 1999, p.180). In fact, Elvis was ‘appropriated by “pop-avant-gardists” … Think for example, of Andy Warhol’s silkscreened Elvis … or of Jim Jarmusch’s more recent use of Elvis in *Mystery Train*’. (Spigel, p.183)

Who and where is Elvis in the twenty-first century? Was he not simply ‘that popular dead man of the twentieth century’? (Ibid.). The current generation of young music fans and impersonators, including Emilio Santoro, the 15-year-old Elvis who in 2018 was invited to perform at Benidorm’s Elvis Festival, knows only the mythology of Elvis, but quite possibly knows only the reproduction, the commodified image, the ghost of the ghost that has been ghosted, reimagined and distorted:

The Elvis preservationists are trying to arrest something in the process of decay, and, like the taxidermists before them, their success is measured by the degree to which the observer believes in a life-like monument that speaks the very language of death. (Ibid., p.199)

In a recent theatre production entitled *Beyond Belief* (2018), by Tmesis Theatre, Elvis’ music is played throughout the production. Set in the present day, this fictional world (as an almost darker mirror to the one we know or fear) circles around our social media-obsessed society. For, in their world, they have the opportunity to bring loved ones (family members) back from the dead. This is a disturbing view of what it might mean to live as a humanoid programmed with memories pulled together from an online identity. Tmesis purposefully acknowledge that in this digital age (41 years after the death of Elvis) we still refuse to let Elvis die. Yet at the same time they also draw upon the idea that it is not just the famous who are memorialized.

**Making and Performing with the Qualities of Deadness**

While our projects are not concerned with the death of Elvis, and nor do they offer a dystopian view of the dead, we do draw upon the image of the dead icons. We invite the dead into our practice – Roy Orbison,
Embodying the Dead

Sigmund Freud, Amelia Earhart, Laurence Sterne – and echo a revivalist spirit in our playfulness. We look upon the fans of the icon with affection, understanding their spiritual connection with a dead icon, but we also draw upon the mass production of the icon’s image too. While Orbison was on tour in the UK in 1987, television interviewers were obsessed with his ‘man in black’ appearance with an insistence on talking about his dark glasses. Orbison’s image was strangely enigmatic; in fact, while he was alive he embodied a quality of deadness, his otherness drew attention and shaped his media image. Our fascination with Orbison will become apparent in many of the chapters that articulate our practice within this book.

We make work that speaks from this paradox; that we live with the dead on a permanent basis, yet we do not know what it is like to be dead. The dead are profoundly all around us, and perhaps this is because death is within us and we draw further upon this concept through a psychoanalytic lens in Chapter 3. While performance concerns itself with liveness, it is the varying qualities of deadness in live or mediated performance in the performer or the object of performance (alive or inanimate) that intrigues us. We are not thinking of deadness as straightforwardly as a lifeless experience, although in some cases we might think of deadness as a creative metaphor to describe certain aspects of the qualities of stillness, note, not lifelessness. In our practice, we embody and encounter deadness in forms that are contradictory; we play dead, embody zombies, imitate dead icons, we animate stuffed animals to playfully critique the living. We reimagine dead acts as an anagram for cats and we acknowledge dead theories and make use of them to distort them so that we might see the world differently. And we make connections between sleep, dreaming and death because when the dead appear in our dreams and walk alongside us, we genuinely feel something.

While this book is about the dead in various contexts and usage of the word in performance, significantly, it is also an exploration into the qualities of deadness. Therefore, we offer a list that defines our use of the term:

Deadness
A state or quality of playing dead.
The playing out of something that is dead in various interpretations of the word.
The act of sleep, or the qualities of sleep.
The stillness in objects, subjects, ideas.
A play on the term liveness.
Of or relating to something being dead as in a language or a career.
The inanimate state of performance as ephemera.
The use of the word dead in language, for example the use of idioms and euphemisms.
The quality of performance produced through ghosting methodologies.
Illustration 2  Kong Lear Pentacle: copy, cut out and keep
Index

Please note: page numbers in bold type indicate illustrations

16 Millimetre Earrings (Monk), 90, 95

A
The Abominable Sigmund Freud, 125
Abramovic, Marina, 15
Ackerman, Diane, 56, 169, 176
afterlife, spiritual beliefs in, 11
Ahl, Louise, 14
Alÿs, Francis, 69
Apollinaire, Guillaume, 90
Aporia (Lee), 7
Appointment (Calle), 38–9
Armintor, M. N., 45
ATOM-r, 90–1, 95
autobiography, 38, 94, 202, 208
Auto-Icons, 202–3, 206
automatic writing, 118–19

B
Bachelard, G., 33
Badalamenti, Angelo, 204
Bar Lane Studios, York, 3, 75–6
Beckett, Samuel, 92, 193, 196
Bentham, Jeremy, 202–3
Beuys, Joseph, 14
Beyond the Pleasure Principle (Freud), 50, 65
Bishop, K. W., 138
The Black Heaps (2018), 161–2, 169, 205–6, 210
Blau, Herbert, 21, 89
Blue Jam (Morris), 135
Blue Velvet (Lynch), 17, 33, 161, 178
Bobinska, Monika, 10
Bootham Bar, 102
Boyle, Danny, 148
Braziel, J. E., 161, 178, 180
The Breasts of Tiresias (Apollinaire), 90
Breton, André, 119
Brook, Peter, 79, 91
Brown, Stuart, 5
bubbles, chasing and filming, 188
Buckley, Stephen, 207
Burkeman, O., 44
Burton, Richard, 120
Bush, Kate, 102
Index

C

Cage, Nicolas, 140
Caillois, Roger, 5, 54, 62–4
Calle, Sophie, 38–9
Carlson, Marvin, 22–3, 95
Carrey, Jim, 20
Certeau, Michel de, 113
channelling
  roots of the modern concept, 118
  Wooster Group’s process, 120, 122
Chaplin, Charlie, Covent Garden
  impersonator of, 86
City Arcadia, 151
clairaudience, 101, 116, 120,
  125, 127
claircognizance, 101, 116, 120, 127
clairsentience, 101, 116, 127
clairvoyance, 101, 116
Coffee And Cigarettes (Jarmusch), 149
cognitive behavioural therapy
  (CBT), 33, 43–4
Cohn, Ruby, 92
Collins, John, 120
Coltrane, Robbie, 95
Come and Go (Beckett), 193, 196
The Complete Deaths (Crouch), 13
costituent framework, 3, 70, 95,
  126, 161, 175
  couch in Freud’s study, repair of,
  36–8
Court, John, 201
Coventry, 151
Covington, C., 50
Coxwold, 188–90
Crab Man, 145
creative tasks
  Dream Walks, 126–7
ghosting, 95–7
karaoke, 181–2
  preservation, 209
  zombies, 154–7
Crouch, Tim, 13
Cruise, Julee, 170
Crying (Orbison), 15, 161–2, 171
Crying in the Dark (2015), 3,
  161–6
  as game of karaoke, 167, 169
  listicle, 163–6
  multiplicitous performance
    experience, 177
  performance space, 161, 168
Curating Heads exhibition, 203

D

Dali, Salvador, 30
Dans La Peau de l’Ours (Inside the
  Skin of the Bear) (Poincheval), 15
Dark Sound Destructive Pop (2015),
  161–2
Das Unheimliche (The Uncanny)
  (Freud), 64
Davis, C., 8, 18
Dawn of the Dead (Snyder), 148
dead, existence of in a dream,
  122–5
dead animals, and fake ones, 14–17
dead celebrities
  karaoke as homage, 166, 168
  and qualities of deadness, 23–5
The Dead Don’t Die (Jarmusch), 149
Deadman Talks (Irvin), 11
deadness, the qualities of, 187
Dead Parrot Sketch (Monty
  Python), 6
Death (Smolenski), 7
Index

The Death and Burial of Cock Robin (Potter), 17
Death Drift/Drift Drive (DD/DD), 3
Amelia Earhart, 124
desire, 58–64
ghosting and, 94
interplay of three terms, 68
themes of, 49–50
the uncanny, 64–8
unpacking, 68–9
visual metaphor, 69–71
death drive, 2, 50–8
inspiration for Freud’s thinking, 50
Defibrillator Gallery, Chicago, 199
déjà vu, 65
Del Rio, Rebekah, 180
Derrida, Jacques, 18–20, 91
Deschamps, Justin, 90, 95
desire, 58–64
‘Destruction as the cause of coming into being’ (Spielrein), 50
El Dia de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead), 9–10
Dittmar, J.M., 190
Doolittle, Hilda, 122
dramaturgy, 1, 46, 49, 52, 68–70, 96, 101, 120, 127, 188, 220
porosity, 46
dreams, Freud’s interest in, 45
Dream Yards (2013), 3, 76
Arts Council funding, 114
creative task, 126–7
the dead, existence of in a dream, 122–5
doppelgängers at the miniature city, York, x
dramaturgical process, 101–2
dreamers, 114
the haunted city, 113–15
Kong Lear and her Fool, 100
mediumship of the artist, 115–19
quick guide, 98, 99
research and development phase, 116–19
and Roy of the Dead/Day of the O, 136
script with audience commentary, 102–13
sites of performance, 102–3, 104, 105, 107–8, 111–12
structure, 114
studio show, 99, 124–5
vocabularies, shared between performance and mediumship, 119–22
Driver, Adam, 149
Duckworth Collection, 190
duration/durational performance, 1, 54, 151–2, 161–2, 166–7, 170, 172, 175, 201

E
Early Shaker Spirituals (Wooster Group), 121
Eckhart Park, 201
Elevator Repair Service (ERS), 120
Elsinore (Blau), 21
Elvis
channelling, 139–40
mythological status, 23–5
Etchells, Tim, 4, 12–13, 16, 53–5
Every Piece of Dust on Freud’s Couch (Broomberg & Chanarin), 37
Fairfield, P., 11
Falmouth University, 161–2
Farion, Christine, 41
Fauconberg, Thomas Belasyse, Viscount, 188
feminist perspectives, on ghosting, 85, 94
femm(e)rotics, 161, 180
Fibbers nightclub, 112, 117
Finer, Jem, 208
Five Dead Acts, Five Dead Cats (2015), 76
fly, 3, 17, 188, 191, 203–4
flyosophy, 188
Fonseca, A. J., 145
Forced Entertainment, 12–13, 15, 53–4
Freud, Sigmund, 2, 26, 31, 41, 94, 125
couch, repair of, 36–8
death, 29
death drive thinking, 50–8
experiencing Freud’s home as a Lynch movie, 35
family home, 29–30
interests, 31
legacy, 42–6
place of work, 29–30
theories and practices, 31
Freudian, 2, 30–1, 33, 35, 40–1, 43, 46–7, 57–8, 93, 141, 147
Freud Museum
bin, 47
Gary & Claire visit, 87
Gavin Turk’s work, 39–40
gift shop, 31
homeliness, 32–6
Sophie Calle’s work, 38–9
Genny and the Neons, quick guide, 163, 183
Ghost Dance (McMullen), 19–20, 91, 95
ghosting
as arts practice, 89–94
concept and practice, 21–3
creative task, 95–7
the process, 85
Ghost Research Foundation International, 113
ghosts
activities of, 18–21
belief in, 18
The Ghost Tide (Bobinska & Sparkes), 10
Ghost Track (2012), 2, 30, 76–7, 84, 87, 91–3, 197
quick guide, 72
ghost walks of York, 113
Gielgud, John, 120
Gillygate, 136
Gilman-Opalsky, R., 18
Goethe Prize for Literature, 31
Gordon Museum, 207
Gorilla Mondays (2011), 76, 79, 81, 84–5
Gummo (Korine), 15, 173, 200

H
Haiti, 144
Halperin, Victor, 144–5
Hamlet (Olivier), 95
Hamlet (Shakespeare), 21, 120
Hamlet Channelling the Ghost (Wooster Group), 121
Harpo Marx, 57, 84
Harrison, Ellie, 131
Harry Enfield and Chums (BBC), 12
the haunted city, 113–15
Heidegger, Martin, 32
Heimlichkeit (at-homeness), 32
High Street Casualties (Harrison), 150–1
Hind, Claire, 30, 62, 64, 76
Hole in the Wall, 102
homeliness, of Freud Museum, 32–6
Hopper, Dennis, 178
How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare (Beuys), 14
Huizinga, Johan, 5, 54
Hunter, Kathryn, 77, 85

Idioms, 27, 187
If Only, neon light installation, 192–4
Iggy Pop, 149
Ilyas, S., 151–3
improvisation, 12, 62–3, 96, 117, 119
In Dreams (Orbison), 178–9
intermedial practice, 10, 68, 206
Interpretation of Dreams (Freud), reimagining by Simon Morris, 40–2
Irvin, Magnus, 11

J
Jackson, Michael, 142
Jarmusch, Jim, 25, 149
Jeffery, Mark, 90
Jim and Andy: The Great Beyond (Netflix), 20
The Joke and the Relation to the Unconscious (Freud), 31
jokes, Freud’s writings, 31

K
karaoke
creative task, 181–2
Crying in the Dark, 161–6
game of, 167
‘Gary & Claire’, commitment to play, 172–7
as homage to a dead celebrity, 166–8
Orbison in the Lynchian World, 177–81
participatory experience of play, 168–72
as social event, 166
Kaufman, Andy, 20
Kaut-Howson, Helena, 77
King Kong (RKO), 77, 84
King Lear (Brook), 79, 85, 91
King Lear (Shakespeare), 76, 80, 91
Kjell Theory (ATOM-r), 90, 95
King Lear (2012)
appearance in other works, 76
appointment with Freud, 75–6, 87
artist’s talk, 3, 76–89
costume, 79, 83
double bill, 2
exhibition, 84
filming process, 78
gendered perspective, 64, 81, 85, 88, 94
ghosting process, 94
and Gorilla Mondays, 76, 79, 81, 84–5
imagery, 79, 83
intertitles, 82, 92
Pentacle, 28
posters, 79
projects, 75
public participation, 86
questions from the audience, 85–9
quick guide, 128
sites of performance, 80–2
sound, 84
tour model, 79
walking tour proposal, 78–9
Kong Lear Archive (2012), 76
Korine, Harmony, 15, 173, 200
Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve, 178
Kraken theatre group, 21
Kristeva, Julia, 50, 65, 70, 176
L
Lacan, Jacques, 45, 50–3, 68, 153
Lady Peckett’s Yard, 110
Landis, John, 142
language, death and, 6–8
Larsen, Caroline, 9
Laurence Sterne Trust, 189
Lavery, C., 76, 93–4
Lealholm, 192
Lee, Jung, 7–8
Les Champs Magnétiques (The Magnetic Fields) (Breton & Soupault), 119
Leverette, Marc, 147
The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman (Sterne), 189–90
lip-syncing, 161–2, 169, 172, 176, 179–80
living statue, Purple Man, Stonegate, 80
Lobman, C., 5
Long Player (Finer), 208
Loot (Orton), 13
Lost Highway (Lynch), 34, 36, 192
Lost in a Sea of Glass and Tin (2017), 204
quick guide, 128
Luckhurst, R., 143, 145, 148
Luckhurst, M., 113
Lynch, David, 14, 17, 33–6, 71, 123, 140, 161, 179, 196, 204, 206
Lynchian, 35, 46–7, 71, 123, 140, 161, 177–8, 196
M
Mad Men (AMC), 43
Marx Brothers, 57, 84
Mcmullen, Ken, 19, 91, 95
meditation, 116
mediumship
of the artist, 115–19
vocabularies shared with
performance, 119–22
‘memory of the spark’, 135, 142
mesocyclone, 69
Mexico, Day of the Dead, 9–10
Mister Dead the Talking Corpse, 12
Mitchell, P.D., 190
Mock, Roberta, 204–5
Monk, Meredith, 90, 95
Monkman, Kenneth, 189–90
Monty Python, Dead Parrot
Sketch, 6
Moore, P., 8–9, 115, 123
Morin, E., 113
Morris, Chris, 135
Morris, Simon, 40
Mulholland Drive (Lynch), 34, 36,
178, 180
multiple as if, 64, 67, 69, 93, 135,
139, 170, 173
Mummifying Alan: Egypt’s t Secret
(2011), 207–8
Murray, Bill, 136–7, 149
Mystery Train (Jarmusch), 25

N
Nedelkopoulou, Eirini, 152
neon light installations, Whitby, 48,
191–2, 192–4
netball, 63
Night of the Living Dead (Romero),
145
North York Moors, 189, 192
O
O’Brien, Martin, 131, 151–3
Occupy Wall Street, zombie
protest, 149
Ogier, Pascale, 20
The O Heads (2018), 208
Olivier, Laurence, 95
O’Neill, B. E., 5
Orbison, Roy
appearance, 140
image, 177
In Dreams tour, 208
in the Lynchian World, 177–81
the Orbison sound, 177, 179
persistence in the songs of, 178; see
also Roy of the Dead/Day of the O

P
Padstow Obby Oss, 91
Pais, Ana, 120
Pankejeff, Sergei, 30
pantomime horse, 15–16, 66
Pegg, Simon, 148
performance
the process, 4
vocabularies shared with
mediumship, 119–22
Phillips, Adam, 50, 59–60, 64, 70,
123, 153, 193
A Piece of Monologue (Beckett), 92
play
complexity of, 63
the concept, 4–6
Gary and Claire’s commitment to,
172–7
imaginary, 63
participatory experience, 168–72
Index

play (Continued)
   and rules, 63
   as state of mind, 5
Pleasure (Forced Entertainment), 15
Poincheval, Abraham, 15
Polonius, 89
   A Portrait of Sigmund Freud
      (Dali), 30
Potter, Walter, 17
Precentor’s Court, 102
preservation
   creative task, 209
   embalming, 201
   Five Dead Acts, Five Dead Cats,
      199, 201
   future of death, 207–9
   mummification, 207
   performance and, 204–6
   and Twin Peaks, 194–9
   Uncle Toby from Tristram
      Shandy, 204
   uses of the dead, 201–4
   words in neon, 191–2
Presley, Elvis see Elvis
Price, H. H., 115, 123
psychoanalysis
   basic premise, 44
   basis of alignment to the human
      psyche, 67
   the concept, 2
   flaws in Freudian psychoanalysis, 43
   Lacan’s version, 153
   as lens to discuss film theory, 71
   and the Lynchian world, 35
Pulliam, J., 145
   Pulp Fiction (Tarantino), 23
Purple Man, Stonegate, 80
Putnam, James, 39

Q
   qualities of deadness
      the concept, 27
   dead celebrity and, 23–5
   making and performing with, 25–6
   Queering Ritual (2017), 90, 205
   queerness, 178
   quick guides
      Dream Yards, 98, 99
      Five Dead Acts, Five Dead
         Cats, 184
      Genny and the Neons, 183
      Ghost Track, 72
      Kong Lear, 73
      Lost in a Sea of Glass and Tin, 128
      Roy of the Dead/Day of the O,
         129, 158

R
   Rabbits Village School (Potter), 17
   Rahimi, S., 65
   Ravens, Joseph, 201
   Reece, Gregory, 140
   REM (sleep and dreams), 115
   Re-Writing Freud (Morris), 41–2
   Rigg, Judith, 39
   Rio, Rebekah Del, 180
   Roberson, Colin, 90
   Rooney, Trevor, 81
   Roth, Michel, 43–4
   The Royal Road to the Unconscious
      (Morris), 40–2
   Royle, Nicholas, 50, 68
   Roy of the Dead/Day of the O
      (2013), 3
   charcoal sketch from ‘death
drawing’ event, 74
Crying in the Dark, 158, 159
Dream Yards and, 136
ghosting of the Dream Yards route, 136
intention behind, 135
the performance, 137–43
the project, 131, 137, 143
quick guide, 129, 158
Romero zombie proposal and presentation, 137–8, 145–9
sites of performance, 137
Skeleton Roy, 130
workshop training, 142
the zombie, 143, 145
Ruddin, Anah, 13
rules, play and, 63
rules for the dead, in ritual and performance, 8–14
Ruscha, Ed, 41
RZA, 149

S
Santoro, Emilio, 25
Saturday Night Fever (Badham), 23
Scary streets: which are the world’s most haunted cities? (The Guardian), 113
Schechner, R., 55–6, 153
Schelling, J., 68
Schneider, R., 94
Scofield, Paul, 79
Seabrook, W. B., 144
secularization, 11
Seven Easy Pieces (Abramovic), 15
Shakespeare, William, 21
Freud’s interest, 31
the Shambles, 109–10
Shandy Hall, 189
Shaun of the Dead (Wright), 148
Shorter, Edward, 33
Singer, Poppy, 36
Sing Your Heart Lips Out (2018), 131
audio walk, 134–7
lyrics, 131–4
purpose behind, 135; see also zombies
skull #, 612, 190
Smith, Phil, 145
Smolenski, Konrad, 7
snickelway, 101, 105, 107–10, 142
Snyder, Zack, 148
Solms, Mark, 115
The Sopranos (HBO), 43
Soupault, Phillipe, 119
Spain, Lili, 30
Sparkes, Sarah, 10–11
Spectres of Marx (Derrida), 18
Spiegelrein, Sabina, 50
spiritualism
Hilda Doolittle’s interest, 122
wartime resurgence, 118
Spymonkey, 13
stand-up comedy routine, Claire’s, 91
Stein, Gertrude, 133, 135
Sterne, Laurence, 189–90, 198, 204, 208
Stockwell, Dean, 178
Stockwell, P., 119
Stonegate, living statue, 80
Strangers to Ourselves (Kristeva), 65
the supernatural, 66, 138–9
Suspended Animation: A Foot, A Head, A Leg & A Wing, 185
230 Index

*Suspended Animation; A Foot, A Leg, A Head and A Wing* (2017), 197, 199
Swinton, Tilda, 149
Sword, Helen, 118

T
Talrich, Jacques, 203
Tarantino, Quentin, 23
taxidermy, 16–17, 25, 193, 196–9
text, 4, 21–3, 41–2, 69, 81–2, 88, 91, 96, 134–5, 154, 196
Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA), 188
Three Cranes pub, 81, 108
Tmesis Theatre, 25
tornadoes, 105, 188
tornado metaphor, 124
Travolta, John, 23
* A Tribute to Freud* (Doolittle), 122
Trotsky, Leon, 147
Turing, Alan, 90
Turk, Gavin, 39–40
Turner, Cathy, 46
* 28 Days Later* (Boyle), 148
Twin Peaks* (Lynch), 14, 123, 170, 175, 194–9
Twin Peaks the Return* (Lynch), 197

U
Ultimate Dancer, 14
the uncanny, 64–8
Unemployed Philosophers
 manufacturing company, 31
unheimlich (uncanny), 2
University College London (UCL), 203
The Unwell (O’Brien & Ilyas), 151–3

V
vocabularies, shared between performance and mediumship, 119–22

W
Wade, Richard, 81, 84
Waits, Tom, 149
Warhol, Andy, 25
*We Made Something of This* (2015), 136
West African Vodun, 144
Whitby, 191
Whitechapel Gallery, London, 197
Whitehouse, Paul, 12
*Wild at Heart* (Lynch), 140, 174
Wildgust, Patrick, 189, 204
Williams, Mason, 41
Winters, Gary, 30, 76
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 39–40, 193
*Wittgenstein’s Dream* (Turk), 39–40
Wooster Group, 120–1
writing, 3–4, 41–2, 64, 67–9, 82–3, 86–7, 96, 118–19, 122–3, 126, 202–4, 209, 211
writing, playing and performing, 46, 96, 209

Y
yesterbating, 205
Yorick, Hamlet’s jester, 190
York
  most haunted title, 113
  as Shakespearean setting, 77
York Minster, 103

Z
Žižek, Slavoj, 46, 51, 57–8, 60, 84, 147
Zombieland (Fleischer), 136–7, 149
zombies
  in acts of protest, 149
  creative task, 154–7
  as death drive ‘in drag’, 147
  evolution of the zombie, 145–9
  growing popularity on television, 136
  High Street Casualties, 150–1
  ‘living dead’ vs ‘undead’ presentations, 138
  origins, 144–5
  in popular culture, 131, 143
  the Romero zombie, 153
  Roy of the Dead/Day of the O, 143, 145
  The Unwell, 151–3
  zombie walks trend, 149