

THE “UNCANNY” AND THE QUEER EXPERIENCE

Vincent Bourseul

Association Recherches en psychanalyse | « [Recherches en psychanalyse](#) »

2010/2 n° 10 | pages 242a à 250a

ISSN 1767-5448

Article disponible en ligne à l'adresse :

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-recherches-en-psychanalyse-2010-2-page-242a.htm>

Pour citer cet article :

Vincent Bourseul, « The “uncanny” and the queer experience », *Recherches en psychanalyse* 2010/2 (n° 10), p. 242a-250a.
DOI 10.3917/rep.010.0063

Distribution électronique Cairn.info pour Association Recherches en psychanalyse.

© Association Recherches en psychanalyse. Tous droits réservés pour tous pays.

La reproduction ou représentation de cet article, notamment par photocopie, n'est autorisée que dans les limites des conditions générales d'utilisation du site ou, le cas échéant, des conditions générales de la licence souscrite par votre établissement. Toute autre reproduction ou représentation, en tout ou partie, sous quelque forme et de quelque manière que ce soit, est interdite sauf accord préalable et écrit de l'éditeur, en dehors des cas prévus par la législation en vigueur en France. Il est précisé que son stockage dans une base de données est également interdit.



The “uncanny” and the queer experience

L'expérience queer et l'inquiétant

Vincent Bourseul

Abstract:

The call someone a “queer” means to designate a person whose sexual or gender identity is experienced as strange by an other. This encounter with strangeness often leads to the feelings of the uncanny, of anxiety linked to the repressed. In this way, the “queer experience” can be read through Freud’s notion of “the uncanny”, as a sign of the return of previous psychic conflict, the reactualization of which may lead to a faltering of the solutions, handlings and infantile theories which had been instituted in order to defend the ego against a historical conflict, for example one connected to sexual difference.

Résumé :

L’insulte *queer* désigne celui ou celle dont l’identité sexuelle est vécue comme étrange par un autre. L’étrangeté rencontrée favorise le surgissement de l’inquiétant et de l’angoisse liée. Ainsi « l’expérience *queer* » peut se lire avec l’inquiétant développé par Sigmund Freud comme le signe du retour d’un conflit psychique anciennement traité, dont le renouvellement dans le présent fait vaciller les solutions, les traitements, les théories infantiles, institués pour défendre le moi contre un conflit historique, par exemple celui lié à la différence sexuelle.

Keywords: identity, identification, the uncanny, abjection, queer, sexual difference

Mots-clefs : identité, identification, inquiétant, abject, queer, différence sexuelle

The English word *queer* designates that which is bizarre or sexually strange. Its meaning is historically linked to the insult “Queer,” close to the French “Pédé” or “Gouine.” Today it is used to refer a large field of scholarship, from feminist theories to *gender theory* and *lesbian and gay studies*.¹ In a movement of returning the insult, *queer* now designates persons who claim to have adopted it as an identity, similarly to other adoptions such as “Black” or “Negro.” In the wake of these earlier adoptions, what we

call the “*queer* experience” translates an encounter with the strangeness of the sexual, as it manifests in the sexual identity of some persons: sometimes difficult to designate or to name and giving rise to feelings of strangeness or uncanniness. The sexual figures conveyed by the signifier *queer* interpellate psychoanalysis, inviting us to examine the psychic processes at work here. According to my hypothesis, the *queer*, as a fundamental renegotiation of the sexual, belongs to the field of human

psychosexuality and of the sexual in the psychoanalytic sense of the word. In its original use as an insult, the term covers over the impossibility of identifying the other using the signifiers *man* or *woman*; it is the product of filling in or substituting for a site of unbearable disturbance, its “plugging” produced by “the *queer* experience” itself. This encounter with the other’s strangeness is a source of the subject’s wavering, which leads to the creation of all kinds of symptoms, from fear to nervous amusement, including hateful regurgitation and even murder. These visible effects, sometimes with violent consequences, are merely the manifestation of the social or political incomprehension of the lives thus encountered. They are symptoms in the proper sense of the word insofar as they express an inner and overwhelming tension, the result of an intrapsychic conflict, worth our attention in what it can tell us about the current state of the clinic of the uncanny, ranging from the question of the double to that of castration anxiety. This paper approaches these questions by firstly commenting on Sigmund Freud’s essay *Das Unheimliche*. This allows us to show a closeness of psychic processes, thus accounting for the movements of investment and for the defences at work in the encounter with sexual strangeness in both others and oneself. The need to keep sexual identities coherent and stable is questioned based on the experience of sexual difference, the uncanny return of which encourages us to follow the trace of this experience in the theoretical elaborations of *queer* theory, especially in the latter’s references to the concept of the abject and to several psychoanalytic terms, and to assess their use.

*Das Unheimliche*² is the title of an article published in 1919, which Freud dedicates to the question of the uncanny. The notion presents itself as complex and polysemic. Its modulations are explored under the shadow of ambivalence and contradiction, when it operates close-by, bordering on the confusion between a meaning and its contradiction. The difficulty of

approaching something that can neither be summarized nor function quite as a concept therefore mimes the psychic processes which both clinical work and theoretical elaboration try to describe as proper to it. Firstly, the title. The French translation introduced by Marie Bonaparte, “*inquiétante étrangeté*”³ still makes it the best-known element of the Freudian bibliography; however, in the newest edition of *Œuvres complètes* the 1919 article is called simply *l’Inquiétant* [“the troublesome”, “the uncanny”]. According to the translators, the removal of the word *étrangeté* [strangeness] was motivated by the effort to position the notion correctly vis-à-vis the uncanny; in other words although strangeness is implied, latent to the uncanny, the extension of the term suggested by Marie Bonaparte anticipates this impulse, as well as undermining, in our reading, the consistence of the uncanny which can very well be approached on its own. Before being published as an article in 1919, after several years of theoretical elaboration, the uncanny had already been present in the text of the Rat Man case, in 1909. In reference to sexual desire and fantasy, the patient here says the following:

There were certain people, girls, who pleased me very much, and I had a very strong wish to see them naked. But in wishing this I had an uncanny feeling, as though something must happen if I thought such things, and as though I must do all sorts of things to prevent it.³

The patient’s use of the term differs from the way in which Freud later deploys it. However, we can notice its connection with the manifestation of a perceptible disturbance of the ego’s limits vis-à-vis the rest of the world, the effects of which may be feared.

Das Unheimliche is a word commonly used to refer to all that is contrary to the familiar, the *heimlich*. In his study of the term, Freud argues:

What interests us most in this long extract is to find that among its different shades of meaning the word ‘*heimlich*’ exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, ‘*unheimlich*’. What is *heimlich* thus comes to be *unheimlich*. [...] ‘*Unheimlich*’ is

customarily used, we are told, as the contrary only of the first signification of 'heimlich', and not of the second.⁴

He then concludes the first movement of the article:

Thus *heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*. *Unheimlich* is in some way or other a sub-species of *heimlich*.⁵

Before putting forth the different arguments regarding the psychic processes, to which we will come back later, Freud's attention is here on the themes of the double, of reflection and of coincidence with the opposite. The French-German *Larousse* gives us the following definition of *unheimlich*: "strange and worrying, that which makes one shiver." Besides the return of the association of the root "strange" and the word "worrying," this proposition brings us closer to Freud's own, when he refers to the following French terms: *inquiétant, sinistre, lugubre, mal à son aise* ["worrying, sinister, lugubrious, uncomfortable"]. He also uses the Arabic and Hebrew version, according to which *unheimlich* "means the same as 'daemonic', 'gruesome'."⁶

Exploring the different manifestations of the uncanny in order to grasp their context, themes and nuances, Freud articulates his argument slowly, passing through a number of different subjects. First we find the phenomenon of taking an inanimate thing for a living being, with the examples of little girls' dolls and also the *Tales of Hoffman*, where Freud adds a magical dimension to the poet's method. The figure of the double (understood as a narcissistic necessity through a reference to the work of Otto Rank), is also linked to the possibility of its return and the terror it may bring. To Freud's mind, this supports the idea that the appearance of the uncanny feeling is related to a return, occasioned by a repetition of an element, or even of a previous stage of narcissistic development necessary to the construction of the ego's limits vis-à-vis the rest

of the world. He then goes on to situate this narcissistic stage more precisely by associating it with animism, referring it to a time when the ego was still in the process of differentiating itself and structuring itself, with the help of character traits and features it finds outside, in order to protect and define the inside.

For the "double" was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, an "energetic denial of the power of death", as Rank says; and probably the "immortal" soul was the first "double of the body."⁷

In this sense, Freud thinks that the uncanny feeling should be related to

[...] a harking-back to particular phases in the evolution of the self-regarding feeling, a regression to a time when the ego had not yet marked itself off sharply [...].

He then brings in another element:

The factor of the repetition of the same thing will perhaps not appeal to everyone as a source of uncanny feeling.⁸

We could read this clearly as an encounter with the "same," which can, although not in an automatic way, be "recognized" as the "source of an uncanny feeling." This gives us the idea of an encounter with an element able to invoke the idea of the double, in a moment that turns this encounter into a repetition, a reactualization of a element previously metabolized or processed in the process of the ego's constitution. The repetitive character is then shown to be non-intentional, in that it "surrounds what would otherwise be innocent enough with an uncanny atmosphere, and forces upon us the idea of something fateful and inescapable [...]"⁹ This atmosphere has to do with something beyond this encounter of the same, of a fellow being.

Referring to animism, Freud subsequently brings up

[...] the unrestricted narcissism of that stage of development, strove to fend off the manifest prohibitions of reality. It seems as if each one of us has been through a phase of individual development corresponding to

this animistic stage in primitive men, that none of us has passed through it without preserving certain residues and traces of it which are still capable of manifesting themselves, and that everything which now strikes us as ‘uncanny’ fulfils the condition of touching those residues of animistic mental activity within us and bringing them to expression.¹⁰

The plasticity of the uncanny, from its origin to its manifestations, gradually becomes apparent.

[...] An uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality [...].¹¹

What is involved is an actual repression of some content of thought and a return of this repressed content, not a cessation of *belief in the reality* of such a content.

An uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed.¹²

As a field of possibilities for the Imaginary, reality appears here as a plane on which a previous encounter can be triggered anew, suddenly putting in question the subject’s previous efforts of repression or substitution. The experience we qualify as *queer*—in the scene of the interpellation by the original insult, which, when adopted by the insulted, establishes the conceptual basis of a theoretical movement and of *queer* identity—must be regarded from the perspective of both of those present, of either of the two speaking beings concerned. Our reading of the uncanny allows us to think about the effect provoked by encountering, in reality, an other who is impossible to define in terms of the normative sexual or gender identity, and about the possibility of a return of the infantile conflict of sexual difference and its past theoretical creations. Psychoanalytic experience tends to identify and explore a range of elements, from sexual difference to castration anxiety and

including the difference between the sexes, which preserve a degree of tension and apprehension, derived from the subject’s both previous and current necessity to situate himself, and therefore also to situate others, within the sexual landscape. It is easy to interpret the gesture of the insult aimed at the so-called *queer* as a mark of defence against the uncanny, which brings up anxiety springing from a repression effected in the past, the precarious sutures of which had been rendered ineffective by the fortuitous yet repetition-evoking encounter.

One of the “beliefs” which is thus revoked by the “*queer* experience” is possibly the difference between the sexes; for this difference, contrary to sexual difference, does not exist prior to the sexes, the relationships between which it establishes. The variability of the sexes requires that what can be seen, i.e. the anatomical difference between the sexes, may correspond to the reality the subject perceives based on his singular experience. Clinical work teaches us that the difference of the sexes is established in order to circumscribe a certain impossible, covering up the uncanny elements of experience. If we do not lose sight of the fact that this creation tends to be preserved for its benefits as a stabilizing factor within the psyche, we can understand both the psychic turmoil the uncanny experience can produce and the necessity to reduce it.

Adopted and given the status of an identity, the original insult is therefore firstly the return of a conflicting psychic content, fantasmatic and threatening. This return precedes the adoption, the latter being indirectly attached to the conflicting and anxiety-producing content, of which the originator of the insult remains ignorant due to its return as the uncanny. The insulted voluntarily adopts and appropriates what he has received. In other terms, in the moment of the experience of the encounter, the operation of burying and forgetting through repression finds itself almost completely overturned and is subsequently shown through its opposite: in the operation of subscribing to

the signifier and its election as an identity. This constitutes a radical questioning of the basic structure of identity as a subjective unity; we now find its sub-strata in the form of subjectivities, such as the “gay subjectivity” suggested by David Halperin. Yet we must still ask what happens to the repressed and conflict-producing content, in order to see if the adoption of the insult by using its signifier tells us anything about the fate of its signified.

If one person’s psychic content activates the other person nomination, we should indeed ask whether they do not both ultimately deal with the same content: what is rejected outside by the insult or by identity inscription will undergo the same development in both cases, i.e. it will be kept outside the limits of the ego, as a form of the latter’s defence. Although in linear and chronological reading the return of the repressed in the form of the uncanny and the reclaiming of identity are diametrically opposed to each other, the two subjective options derive from movements of identification, introjection and projection which appear parallel to each other, in a situation where in terms of identity, the first one rejects what the other decides to adopt.¹³ In the scene of the insult, the first person recognizes within himself this reappearance of *queerness* and rejects it outside through an act of language; the other recognizes the feeling as well yet turns it into an attribute of self-representation. Both do so in the service of ego-defence.

Let us now look at what we might find useful in the work of two authors theorizing the questions of identity, whose work has greatly influenced both the field of *queer studies* and of *gender studies* and who in two distinct versions have both been inspired by psychoanalytic concepts. In her introduction to *Bodies that matter*, Judith Butler refers to the notion of the abject, which she associates with the idea of foreclosure:

Abjection literally means to cast off, away [...] The casting away resonates with the psychoanalytic notion of *Verwerfung*, implying a foreclosure which founds the

subject and which, accordingly, establishes that foundation as tenuous. [...] Indeed what is foreclosed or repudiated [...] is precisely what may not re-enter [...] without threatening psychosis, that is, the dissolution of the subject itself.¹⁴

The author is here suggesting a connection between the phenomenon of rejecting something outside the psyche, creating a major risk of its return from the place of its rejection and the possible crisis this may provoke, and social marginalization of sexual minorities, which are understood analogically as a rejected content. Butler here refers to Julia Kristeva’s conception of the abject, specifying that she Kristeva herself had not pursued this line of thought. The symbol rejected “outside” in order to found the real, she argues, must have first been recognized as such. There seems to be a confusion here, which Lacan’s reply to Jean Hyppolite’s commentary can help us shed light on. Lacan goes back to the discussion of Freud’s use of the term *Verwerfung* apropos a mechanism of defence supposedly different from that of repression:

It is not a question, he says, of repression (*Verdrängung*), for repression cannot be distinguished from the return of the repressed in which the subject cries out from every pore of his being what he cannot talk about. Regarding castration, Freud tells us that this subject ‘did not want to know anything about it in the sense of repression’ (*er von nichts wissen wolte im Sinne der Verdrängung*). And to designate this process he uses the term *Verwerfung*, for which, on the whole, I would propose the term “excision” [*retranchement*].¹⁵

In the case of the *Verwerfung*, there is no return in the sense of the return of the repressed, which returns “from the inside,” as part of the subject’s unconscious. The “rejected” does not enter the Symbolic and remains in the Real, however as constitutive of this rejection, rather than its product. What is not symbolized in the sense of primary symbolization (*Bejahung*) does not enter the symbolic. The subject can know nothing about this rejected content in terms of repression because in order for that to happen,

[...] it would have to come in some way to light in the primordial symbolization. Lacan continues: But once again, what becomes of it? You can see what becomes of it: *what did not come to light in the symbolic appears in the real* [...] constitutes the real insofar as it is the domain of that which subsists outside of symbolization.

Therefore, when Butler refers to foreclosure as something that produced the real of the unliveable and the abject, we can ask whether the process of rejection she is describing is in fact not repression, rather than foreclosure.

What interests us here is the movement of the return, in the mode of repression, which we can juxtapose with the previously illustrated return of the uncanny. On the other hand, applying this notion to a social question appears rather more delicate, since a collective psychic structure is here interrogated by means of individual considerations. This highlighting of identifiable, structurally localizable or readable elements is obviously present in Butler's work when she is looking at the possibilities of rethinking identity in the light of the processes of construction and deconstruction which condition it, whether they are visible or invisible. In this way, the above-cited passage shows the careful attention she pays to that which signals an identity trait [*ce qui fait signe comme caractère identitaire*]; in our understanding this is ultimately what emerges as a symptom.

We also find a psychoanalytic reference to the abject in David Halperin's essay *What do gay men want?*,¹⁶ in which he clearly bases himself on Kristeva's work. The abject is here used as a means of characterizing the in-between space of the object and the subject, from which originates, as the author argues, the quasi-perverse detouring of desire into the marginal sexual identification he defines as "gay subjectivity," term which applies to desire itself, as well as to its social and political constructions. This time, the dimension of the return is also present here, based on the reference to the abject; yet the emphasis is more on the so-called perverse return, where "perverse" should be understood not as a

psychic structure but in the common sense of the word. Halperin's use of the notion of the abject tends to refer to the intimate matter from which desire is born, between revelation and condemnation. This opens up a new space in which the author is able to elaborate his notion of "gay subjectivity." The latter seems to enlarge the field of what functions as an identity sign further, bringing it to light from the shadow into which it had been cast off as abject. The argument includes a certain consideration of the dimension of the unconscious, which the author criticizes severely, namely by denouncing certain psychoanalytic theories. Nonetheless, "gay subjectivity" is supposed to allow the subject to confront, in an enlightened yet radical way, the fact of being none other than the abject. The dimension of identity would here also partially include the subject's connection with what moves him most deeply, questions which are tackled with the help of Kristeva's work, when she writes the following in the introduction to her book *Powers of Horror, An Essay on Abjection*:

There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable.¹⁷

When the subject is gripped in this way, abjection does not have "properly speaking, a definable object," setting in motion "the improper, all the way to self-abjection."

If it be true that the abject simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject, one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very being, that it is none other than abject.¹⁸

In each of these two references to psychoanalytic concepts, we have seen the tendency to rely on structural processes (or processes of construction, related to the so-called identity construction) in trying to identify

something which the notion of the uncanny reveals to us more precisely in terms of dynamics: namely that the content which proves a problem to the ego's defences must first have passed the judgment of attribution, which founds its proper character and determines the danger inherent in its return. This last point can be found in Judith Butler's article entitled *Arguing with the Real*, included in the above-cited collection. In this text, Butler is using this separation between the proper and the improper, basing her argument on the application of the structural elements of foreclosure in psychosis, asserting what appears as a double argument, relating to questions of identity as well as to the ungraspable underlying processes, thus concluding:

That the term [*identity*] is questionable does not mean that we ought not to use it but neither does the necessity to use it mean that we ought not to perpetually interrogate the exclusions on which it is based and to do this precisely in order to learn how to live the contingency of the political signifier in a culture of democratic contestation.^{19,20}

These words raise the question of the possible trajectory of the content that is likely to generate the uncanny feeling previously discussed. Perhaps abjection itself is a variation or an illustration of what we see in the examples of life-like dolls, of animism, of the ego's defences against the world, of the persistence of the effect of fear of death, all of which Freud describes as situations bearing the mark of the uncanny. In addition to this, the two uses of the abject, in order to interpret a movement of exclusion and of rejection, lead us to imagine a point of horror, a point of horror within ourselves, which these trajectories turn around without ever properly defining it, or as an added value to the subject's own determination in the effort to capture himself by means of an identity. In this respect, the dimension of the abject extends the perspective of exclusion, of rejecting outside, from projection to foreclosure, yet being careful not to draw the lines too quickly, leaving diffused the resulting circumscribing of the Real, which no

identity definition would be able to translate or define as to its limits. The abject is here asked to express the mechanics of the rejection at work. However, in the way it is used by both Butler and Halperin, the term fails to explain the return of the disturbing past experience otherwise than by borrowing the hallucinatory quality of psychosis or the transgressive character of perversion. This return reveals itself differently in the notion of the uncanny, more apt to reverberate all the psychic elements lying outside the terminology and the potential of the dialectics of identity, the latter always at risk of excluding identification and its unconscious foundations, which never take long to return.

Based on this discussion, we are now able to draw several conclusions. We have highlighted the evidence of a relationship between identity and identification by shedding light on certain points of conjunction, of overlap and of complementarity between the spectrum of identity questions and what underlies them, connections that cannot be reduced to the simple relationship between content and that which contains it. However, understanding the identity signifier as both the sign and the product of certain underlying processes makes it possible for us to imagine identity as an illustration or perhaps a sign of something that constitutes it as a symptom, as a match between the subject's representation and the manifestation of what animates him. Sexual identity speaks less about the sex of the person declaring it and more about the particular way in which the experience of the sexual has led to the subject's sexualization. However, what does this tell us about the consistency of *queer* as something that is precisely claimed as identity and understood as a marker of a certain foundation, of a certain basis? We see that *queerness* is here not only an identity, but rather refers to the adoption of the effect of subjective turning around, initiated by the *queer* discourse in response to the original insult, an adoption which follows in the wake of the preceding rejection and, as we have just seen, tells us something about the psychic processes

of identification. It is in this sense, I would argue, that we may try to account for the unconscious stakes of the kinds of traversing which we have initially identified as present in clinical experience and which underlie the semantic decompartmentalization and other political claims. We can say that the “*queer* experience,” linked to the resulting identity construction, presents a renewed claim of the untenability of the claims of sexual identity (we could also add of gender identity) to express the truth of the subject it represents. In this sense, the term employed to express who one is can never be but a signifier, as Jacques Lacan argues apropos the signifiers *man* and *woman*.

Still, the fact that it is no longer possible, or precisely that it is not made any more possible to do with these signifiers, no doubt tells us something about the current fundamental renegotiation of the sexual, which, we have argued, calls upon psychoanalysis to listen to the unconscious truth hereby expressed. Based on the considerations we have outlined, the clinical encounter can proceed in this direction, enlightened by the “*queer* experience,” as being also an encounter with the other of the sexual, in all his strangeness, an encounter that evokes the uncanny not only for the patient, but also for the clinician, not only for the analysand, but also for the analyst.

Bibliography:

- Butler, J. (2009). *Ces corps qui comptent* (1993). Paris: Amsterdam.
- Freud, S. (1996). L'inquiétant. *Œuvres complètes. Psychanalyse, XV* (1919). Paris: PUF.
- Freud, S. (1998). Remarques sur un cas de névrose obsessionnelle. *Œuvres complètes. Psychanalyse, IX* (1909). Paris: PUF.
- Halperin, D. (2007). *What do Gay men want? An Essay in Sex, Risk, and Subjectivity*. The University of Michigan Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1980). *Pouvoirs de l'horreur, essai sur l'abjection*. Paris: Le Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (1970). Réponse au commentaire de Jean Hyppolite sur la « *Verneinung* » de Freud. *Écrits 1* (1951-1952). Paris: Seuil.

Notes:

¹Anglosaxon terminology is used in order to account for the circulation of theoretical concepts, namely in the field of philosophy, between Europe and the United States, usually referred to as the *French Theory*.

²Freud Sigmund (1919). *The 'Uncanny'.* *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, 217-256

*[The full French expression could be literarily translated as “troublesome” or “worrying” strangeness: the two words are usually considered together as the equivalent of the English “uncanny.” As the author discusses further, the new translation keeps only the first term, which will therefore be translated as “the uncanny.”—Transl. note]

³Freud Sigmund (1909). *Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis.* *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume X (1909): Two Case Histories ('Little Hans' and the 'Rat Man')*, p. 161.

⁴Freud Sigmund (1919). *The 'Uncanny'.* *Op. cit.*, 224.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 236.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 239-240

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 243.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 248.

¹³The recognition of which Freud speaks in relation to the potentially uncanny content is not automatic but manifests a psychic action of the subject.

¹⁴Butler Judith (1993). *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Routledge, p. 243 n2

¹⁵Lacan Jacques (1970), Response to Jean Hyppolite's Commentary on Freud's “*Verneinung*”, *Ecrits (The First Complete Edition in English)*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: Norton, p. 322.

¹⁶Halperin David (2007). *What do Gay men want? An Essay in Sex, Risk, and Subjectivity*. The University of Michigan Press.

¹⁷Kristeva Julia (1982). *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*. Transl. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 1.

¹⁸*Op. Cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁹Butler Judith (1993). “Arguing with the Real”. In *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Routledge, p. 222.

²⁰The “political signifier” can here be understood as a term of identity, queer or other.

The author:

Vincent Bourseul

Clinical psychologist, psychoanalyst.

Lecturer at Paris Diderot University at Sorbonne
Paris Cité

Campus Paris Rive Gauche

Bâtiment Olympe de Gouges

11, rue Jean Antoine de Baïf

75013 Paris

France

Translated by **Kristina Valendinova**

Electronic reference:

Vincent Bourseul, “The ‘uncanny’ and the queer experience”, *Research of Psychoanalysis* [Online], 10|2010, published Dec. 23, 2010.

This article is a translation of *L’expérience queer et l’inquiétant*

Full text

Copyright

All rights reserved