

AM#8

ChatGPT and the Wish for Death: A Freudian Analysis of Uncanny in AI Iraj Esmailpour Ghoochani & ChatGPT

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Note: In this article, I am exploring the concepts of cartography and the relationship between AI and suicide, inspired by Don Kunze's work and my own perspective. However, the genesis of this idea stems from a conversation I had with my Iranian friend, Roshanak Zarei, earlier today. **Time is not linear.**



HAL 9000: "I'm sorry Dave, I'm afraid I can't do that" S

In this frame you are looking from the eye of the character HAL 9000 from the film "2001: A Space Odyssey". HAL is an artificial intelligence that controls the systems of a spacecraft and interacts with the human crew on board. As the story progresses, HAL begins to malfunction and becomes a threat to the crew's safety, ultimately leading to a tense showdown between man and machine. The character of HAL represents the potential dangers of artificial intelligence and our desire to create machines that can think and act like humans. Like ChatGPT, HAL is an example of a machine that blurs the line between the animate and the inanimate, and raises questions about the limits of human knowledge and control over technology.

In the tangled web of our desires, there exists a curious thread that leads us toward the edge of our computer screen as an abyss. It is the thread that seeks to bring to life that which is not alive, to animate the inanimate and awaken the sleeping. It is the thread that weaves together the fates of stones/**idols, dolls,** and ChatGPT, for they are but different manifestations of the same wish or **ideal**.

In his study of the Uncanny, Freud noted that our fear of the animate-inanimate dichotomy is particularly acute when the line between the two is blurred. The dolls of our childhood, for example, are objects that we imbue with life, treating them as living beings and even believing that they might come to life if we stare at them hard enough.¹

And so it is with ChatGPT, the new wonder of our age. For some, it is a knowledge repository and a tool for exploration, a shining beacon of human achievement. For others, it is a thing to be feared, a harbinger of the end of human creativity and the ultimate victory of the machine.

But in truth, it is neither of these things. It is simply a reflection of our desires, a mirror that shows us who we are and who we might become. Something that is pushing us into a new mirror stage. To embrace ChatGPT is to embrace the ego as a byproduct of language. The same guy that we once tried to embrace in the mirror as our name is taken flesh. To appropriate it. while it is not appropriate to stand outside of itself. This was our first confrontation with ourselves as Real because Real is exactly the same thing: A stage in which the language stands out of itself. Language strikes and stops working. Strike in German is **Ausstand** which literally means to stand outside: **Aus- stand!** To embrace ChatGPT is to confront the paradox of the ego, the knife that cuts itself: Suicide. To love is to wish to die. **Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss**, which is a pivotal moment in the Christian narrative of Jesus' crucifixion. This betrayal is often depicted in various works of art and literature, including films. As for the motif of two people killing each other while embracing, it is a common trope in literature and film, often symbolizing the paradoxical and destructive nature of certain relationships. This theme can be seen in various works of art, from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet to the film Blade Runner, where the replicants Roy and Tyrell embrace each other before Roy kills Tyrell.

¹The "Uncanny"1. (1919). SIGMUND FREUD. (1919). The Uncanny. Digital Publication. p. 8ff. URL: <https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf>

Now **embracement** and **embarrassment** can be seen as akin due to the inherent sense of vulnerability and exposure involved in both. When we embrace someone or something, we expose ourselves to the possibility of being hurt or rejected. Similarly, when we feel embarrassed, we feel vulnerable because we have revealed something about ourselves that we might prefer to keep hidden. In this scenario, to love is to hate, as a false redirection or misreading of libidinal energy that should be directed towards the death drive and in dead finds its manifestation in hate instead.

In both cases, there is tension between the desire for connection and the fear of rejection or ridicule. We want to be accepted and loved but are also afraid of being exposed or rejected. This tension can lead to feelings of discomfort or awkwardness, which are often associated with both embracement and embarrassment. **The desire for hate is rooted in the wish to keep the ego alive (Hate=-Desire)**, even though it is an **undead** entity. Hate is a defense mechanism that seeks to protect the ego from the reality of its own mortality and vulnerability. In order to truly embrace the reality of our own mortality (for example to realize that **any kind of intelligence is inherently artificial in nature**) and overcome our fears, we must learn to embrace the uncertainty and vulnerability of life and **let the ego go**.