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## When YouTube gets dark

It was all fun and games... Until we got creative...

By [Jordan Licht](#), Deputy Arts Editor (2012/13)

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"Let's get creative!" The beginning of this YouTube sensation "Don't Hug Me I'm Scared" is so deceptively innocent it could easily be on any children's program: a singing pad of paper teaches three puppets how to think creatively, reminiscent of childhood programs like Sesame Street and The Muppets. Yet this fun and childish facade fades, and the video deteriorates into a frightening animation of the puppets covering a heart in glitter, making a cake out of organs, and spelling out 'DEATH' in blood.

So what is it this chilling video has in common with the Gothic genre? Gothic literature often demonstrates chaos when the deepest locked away areas of the mind are delved into and likewise this video portrays a scene of monotony transformed into violence – the puppets begin chaotically dancing after they have descended into the taboo territory of their dark imaginations. With the video already having attracted over 11 million views on YouTube, it seems perhaps it is tapping into the same cultural fear of a violent subconscious hiding beneath the facade of normality that Gothic Literature did in its height of popularity in the 18th and 19th centuries.

After the nightmarish episode, the pad of paper, who is acting as the instructive character, suggests to the puppets they agree "to never be creative again". The opposition of the 'teacher' to dark creativity is alike to the criticism the Gothic genre received for being too "hysterical", as one anonymous critic put it. Yet, through their exploration of dark imaginations, both the Gothic and this piece question whether inventiveness should be confined to a certain type of 'safe' creativity. They question the authority of the 'teacher' figure over the puppets.

Co-director of the video Becky Sloan said, "creativity is almost always associated with progress and healthy positive expression but in actual fact you can get creative with a hammer and a cowpat".

Whilst this video is frightening as it looks at dark creativity, and overall it is a rather chilling piece, it is simply a continued exploration of the darker side of the human imagination, which instead of being

expressed in dense literature, has been modernised into the form of a Gothic YouTube animation.



## One comment

Svix

16 Apr '18 at 12:54 am

What

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