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"THERE'S A DEMON IN THE INTERNET": HAUNTED MEDIA, GLOBALIZATION AND TELEVISUAL HORROR

Klára Feikusová

Abstract

This paper is focused on the portrayal of media, more precisely television and new media, in television horror shows in the context of globalization and the implications of this portrayal. The media and their technologies have always been demonized in one way or another. Every new invention, every new means of communication is viewed with a mix of awe and suspicion. New technology and new media become objects of phobia. Once a new medium is introduced, it usually takes the position of a phobic object, relieving the old one from this burden. However, a certain level of anxiety remains with the old medium. No genre shows this quite as well as horror. In the horror genre, the media and their physical forms are often shown either as a threat itself or bringer of thereof. The internet and social media are just as monstrous. But how are these monsters, material or not, portrayed in the media itself?

In this paper I will analyze how television horror shows mediate the anxiety about threats linked to new media, social media, and television itself. In the first half of the paper, I focus on haunted media as a travelling concept in the television landscape. In the second half, I use the TV show *Evil* (2019-) as a case study, analyzing how it portrays new media as an ultimate threat in the era of globalization.

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1. Introduction

THE titular quote comes from the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode *I, Robot...You, Jane* (s01e08, 1997). In this episode, one of the main characters, Willow (Alyson Hannigan) accidentally puts a demon on the internet while scanning a book in which it is trapped. The demon uses the web and its chat rooms to find followers that it

manipulates. Even Willow is contacted by it and for a while believes she has found a boyfriend. But her friends, Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar) and Xander (Nicholas Brendon), warn her that she should not trust a stranger she met online. Although the demon does not turn out to be an axe wielding circus freak with murderous intentions as they first assume, they are ultimately right to consider him a threat; it is the demon Moloch himself.

The episode stands as a metaphor, in true *Buffy* fashion, for the dangers of meeting people online. Curiously, the internet is not only a way for the demon to gather followers but also provides the means for its demise. In the episode's finale, techno-pagan computer teacher Mrs. Calendar (Robia Scott) and other techno-pagans across the globe unite to exorcise him from the internet, using the internet. So, the web not only represents danger but also offers a solution to deal with its own threats.

But the internet and computers are not the first media or technologies to be vilified. Technology and the supernatural have always been linked (Sconce 2000, 24–5). Photography has been used to 'capture' invisible and paranormal forces, be it ghosts or fairies (Abbott and Jowett 2013, 180). A telegraph, in its power to send quick messages across long distances, seemed impossible and miraculous, and for the people of the 19th century was comparable to a séance (Sconce 2000, 28). New technologies are always viewed with suspicion and thus related to the supernatural. As Stacey Abbot and Lorna Jowett point out, they are "inherently uncanny because they challenge our established understanding of the natural world" (2013, 180).

It is not just technologies that are uncanny. It applies to the media too. Consider the radio as a box containing or producing mysterious voices that belong to no one present in the room; or take the images of distant things projected on an otherwise plain screen in the cinema. One only has to remember the anecdote about people running away from the incoming train during the screening of one of first films to fully appreciate the frightening nature of new media.[1] The new and unknown is always scary.

Nonetheless, once they became automatized, in the terminology of Viktor Shklovsky, the unfamiliar becomes familiar (Berlina 2017, 59). Yet, it can become unfamiliar (de-automatized) once again when conventions are further broken. A famous, or rather infamous, example of this would be the broadcast of adaptation

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1 This refers to the myth surrounded by a screening of early short film made by Auguste and Louis Lumière, *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat*. The film consists of simple shot of a train approaching the camera. The myth says that people started to run in fear from the cinema as they believed the train was real. There is no real evidence that this happened, and most scholars consider it an urban legend (Loiperdinger 2004).

of the science fiction novel *The War of the Worlds* (1938) that used a news format which led some listeners to believe that the presented events were real.[2]

In horror studies, this de-automatization is called 'the uncanny.' It derives from the writings of Sigmund Freud, who used the term to describe objects that seem familiar but are unfamiliar at the same time, e.g., automatons, dolls, wax figurines (Cherry 2009, 125–28). For Freud, the uncanny represents the "return of [the] repressed" because we are reminded of something from our past that we pushed away in our mind (ibid., 104). The uncanny is used in horror studies to describe a feeling of dread created by something that is supposed to be familiar, but it is not – e.g., an animated corpse, doppelgangers, shapeshifters, possessed people etc (ibid., 104–6).

Haunted media works in the same way. A radio or television set is something that has a steady place in our home, it is a source of information (we often presume reliable) and entertainment. So, when these objects and the media they embody start behaving as if they have taken on a life of their own or seem to be a mediator of some malevolent force, they quickly become strange and frightening. They are "bringing this spectral world" into our daily lives (Sconce 2000, 4). With that in mind, it is not only the technology that becomes unfamiliar; it is our own homes along with it.

In this paper, I will focus on the representation of television and new media as monstrous on television itself. This representation is viewed in the context of globalization, which is an important notion for television. It is, as Jérome Bourdon puts it: "a global medium par excellence" (2004, 93). As television may be divided into linear and non-linear,[3] it becomes tightly linked to the internet. I will focus on the monstrous media that also shifts from linear to non-linear. In this sense, haunted media can exemplify a travelling concept as described by Mieke Bal. According to her, the concepts are not fixed but rather flexible as they change when they move across academic fields, geographical locations, historical periods, or as they are treated differently by different scholars (Bal 2002, 24). The concept of haunted media also travels; it evolves and changes with every invention, in different times

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2 *The War of the Worlds* (1938) was an episode of drama anthology The Mercury Theatre on the Air broadcasted by CBS Radio. The episode was an adaptation of H. G. Wells's novel of the same name. Howard Koch adapted the novel for radio and the episode was directed and narrated by Orson Welles who is regarded as the author of this episode. *The War of the Worlds* was broadcasted on 30th October as a part of Halloween week programming (Schwartz 2015).

3 A linear television and non-linear television are terms from television studies. Linear television refers to older model of television where it was the medium itself that dictated how it needs to be watched (by television scheduling and programming). Non-linear television is newer model where the viewers decide for themselves when and how to watch television (using TiVo, video on demand etc.).

and places. Haunted media is not "timeless expressions of some undying superstition," but rather a permeable language that expresses the society's (or societies') changing attitude to the given technology (Sconce 2000, 10). In that way, it is accurate to call haunted media a travelling concept because it is always on the move.

I want to explore the concept of haunted media, namely television, and track how it has moved, and continues to move from analogue to digital, just as television itself has gone, and continues to go from linear to non-linear. I am not suggesting that non-linear television is replacing linear television because that is not the case. Non-linear television exists alongside linear television, it just became one of the ways how to distribute and watch television. My aim is to demonstrate that the concept of haunted media reflects the changes in television technology, production and distribution. In my analysis I use examples from television horror shows from period TVIII (1990s–present),[4] that deal with television and new media as monstrous. The haunted media narrative precedes this era – e.g., it is portrayed in the movie *Murder by Television* (1935), or the episodes *A Thing About Machines* (s02e04, 1960) and *What's in the Box* (s05e24, 1964) from the anthology *The Twilight Zone* (1959–1964). I focus on television shows from this era because it was when television underwent a lot of changes in production, technology, distribution and modes of reception. The expansion of the internet and later rise of social media, digitalization, streaming services or the possibility to watch television on other technology than just the TV set, all influenced how television as a medium is produced, distributed and received as well as how it is talked about. The growth of streaming services – especially those that do not stem from linear TV stations, like Netflix – poses a question what television is today.[5] The aim of the present paper is not to answer that question, I am just pointing out the changes of the medium in era TVIII. All these changes influence how the concept of haunted media is represented in the horror shows, how this concept shifts and *travels* in the era.

2.   The Ghosts in the Machines

Before I start analyzing how haunted media is represented as monstrous in television horror, I need to consider what 'monstrous' is. There are numerous ways

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4 I am using a periodization of television history used by Michael M. Epstein, Jimmie L. Reeves and Mark C. Rogers that categorizes the medium's history into three eras – TVI (1950-1975), TVII (1975-1990s) and TVIII (1990s-present) (Epstein, Reeves, and Rogers 2002).
5 While this question requires more space to be properly analysed, for the purposes of this paper I work with the notion that non-linear television and streaming services are just another form – or extension – of linear television (Johnson 2015).

monsters and monstrous can be defined. For Noël Carroll, a monster is something that cannot be explained by current science and it should be threatening and impure (Carroll 1990, 27–8). Daniel J. Russell defines monster as fantastical and unreal, having a conflicted relationship with normality (Russell 1998, 252). However, haunted media are based in reality – there is nothing fantastical about the TV set or computer. It is known to science. Carroll mentions the objects (e.g., haunted houses) as being monstrous when they conflate the animate and the inanimate (1990, 32). Since haunted media appear to have a mind of their own, this condition is fulfilled. Carroll does not develop this idea further, he only mentions that it is problematic (ibid., 45). According to Bruce Kawin, the monster and monstrous are a representation of tension of the known and unknown (quoted in Jancovich 2002, 8). As I stated above, technologies and media are often viewed as threatening because they challenge our knowledge of the natural world (Abbott and Jowett 2013, 180). New media is especially suspicious to people because they are unknown and not understood. Such feelings also relate to the uncanny characteristic of 'machines' and the concept of automatization and de-automatization, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, I consider this fear of unknown to be a key to the monstrosity of haunted media.

3.   Analogue Television

The television is often depicted as a portal to another world and/or a network that allows the supernatural to travel through it (Abbott and Jowett 2013, 179–89). This is related to the fact that the television set is a common object not only in our homes (not to mention these days it is often more than one set *and* you can watch TV on the computer or mobile phone as well), but also in public places – bars, doctor's offices and even streets (ibid., 182–3). We are surrounded by screens. On top of that, television sometimes blurs the lines between the real world and fictional worlds, take any reality TV show, for instance. It is also the premise of films like *The Truman Show* (1998) or *Pleasantville* (1998), where the main characters find themselves either unwittingly being a protagonist of reality show or they are sucked into a diegetic world of television show. Vilifying television in the cinema is a strategy to demean the medium that started in the 1950s when the film industry became threatened by the competition of television (Stokes 1999, 58). At the same time, television became a phobic object, which was cinema's status before it.[6] Since tel-

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6 The term 'phobic object' describes the fear that a medium could impact people negatively (by showing and so inviting violent, sexual or destructive behaviour). At first, film represented this phobic object but as soon as television became a mainstream commodity, it took on this label (Attalah 2013, 86).

evision was easily accessible and domestic, people were concerned about its influence on children. That is why television has been heavily regulated since its inception (Attalah 2013, 86). Its status as the phobic object still lingers and is supported by the representation of television as threatening (or at least 'dumb' and numbing).

However, it is not only the cinema that, sometimes literally, demonizes television. Paradoxically, it is also the medium itself. Horror television shows sometimes depict television as the monster. For example, in the episode *Smile Time* (s05e14, 2004) from *Angel* (1999–2004), the puppets from a popular kid TV show compel children to touch the TV screen, so they can absorb their life force. In the episode *Wetwired* (s03e23, 1996) from *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016–2018), main characters, FBI agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) are, as they often do, investigating a case in a small town where people are turning paranoid and then violent. The source of this paranoia is later found to be a cable TV that was hacked using a device that emits a signal prompting the violent behavior.

The cases of *Smile Time* and *Wetwired* show a televisual threat that is physical (at both ends). In the first case, it is a TV set and production (puppets) that has a monstrous quality to it, in the latter case it is a device hooked to a cable system. The form of both threats is rather analogue than digital which reflects the era in which the shows were made. Although digitalization of television was underway in 2004, it was not until 2009 that digital television officially replaced analogue (Hart 2011, 7). Furthermore, in *The-X Files* example, point of view shots show that the people influenced by the signal have impacted vision and they see the world around them with lines and blurs as if they were watching it through an analogue television screen as the point of view shots indicate. Moreover, while the threat in these episodes is not focused on a single person, it is rather localized - by the target audience in *Smile Time*, and by the place in *Wetwired*.

But television can address millions of people simultaneously. So, the threat can become much bigger, national or even global. There are cases of monstrous television where "the true threat is not the television in the living room, but rather the invisible network that binds all televisions together on a national and global level – a theme that is more relevant today than ever before" (Abbott and Jowett 2013, 187). The implication here is of course the rise of globalization. In the context of the television industry, national televisions stations are more open to different markets and buy foreign content as well as sell their own local content. Television formats are being distributed and transformed across the globe regularly (Bourdon 2004, 107–8). The rising popularity of streaming services and their expansion in many countries allows for some shows to premiere at the same time across the globe. So,

not only has haunted media expand, but it is no longer limited by the reach of a broadcasting signal as it now travels around the world online.

Concerns related to globalization in the context of television studies are usually those of the potential loss of national identity and Americanization. However, when it comes to haunted media, the anxiety surrounding globalization is about how easily and quickly data can spread. While this fear is not new, it is growing with the rise of globalization.

4. Abstract Worlds

As streaming services expand and linear television stations invest in non-linear versions to accommodate the market, the internet has become one of the primary sources of television. The internet itself is one of the new phobic objects (Attalah 2013, 90). *Buffy*'s episode mentioned in the introduction is one of early examples of this discourse. This shift is depicted in the episode *Halt and Catch a Fire* (s10e13, originally broadcasted in 2015) from *Supernatural* (2005–2020) where several deaths are caused by machines (a car, computer, hi-fi speakers etc.). The main characters, Dean (Jensen Ackles) and Sam Winchester (Jared Padalecki), who are hunters of all things demonic and monstrous, investigate the case as they suspect ghostly activity. The Winchesters identify the culprit as the ghost of a man who was killed when he was run off the road into an electrical pole. At first the Winchesters suspect the ghost is travelling through electricity. Later they find out he had jumped from the electric cable to a nearby Wi-Fi tower. Then the ghost used the Wi-Fi to find and kill his victims (he hacked into the Siri-like app in the car or InstaChat on the computer). This episode shows the shift from analogue to digital, but also represents a generational conflict when the Winchesters interview the college students haunted by the ghost. When Dean expresses confusion over a navigation app in the car, the interviewed student comments: "Oh, you're gen X." The Winchesters are used to dealing with more physical threats - demons, vampires, werewolves, even ghosts who are usually linked to their earthly remains, be it their bones or possessions, through which they can be destroyed. They are at first unsure about how to destroy the spirit using virtual space. In the end, it is the human factor – the dead man's widow – that offers a solution.

In this sense, the internet is even more monstrous than analogue media. It is vast, global and not bound by any single object. But television is no longer bound by the TV set either. One can watch television on a computer, phone, or tablet; it can be watched anywhere and anytime. And it is done online more and more often,

as the internet is the home to the on-demand streaming platforms. Then, it seems that the internet fulfilled the notion of fluidity of the haunted media. Jeffrey Sconce writes that "fantastic conceptions of media presence ranging from the telegraph to virtual reality have often evoked a series of interrelated metaphors of 'flow', suggesting analogies between electricity, consciousness, and information that enable fantastic forms of electronic transmutation, substitution, and exchange" (Sconce 2000, 7).

5.   Fluidity of Haunted Media

It is no coincidence that Sconce mentions 'the flow'. This term from television studies describes television's capacity to pour one type of content into another. The perfect example in the world of televisual fiction would be the episode *Changing Channels* (s05e08, originally broadcasted in 2009) from *Supernatural*. In a very metafictional fashion, the Winchesters are sucked into the televisual world, or "televisionland", which is a term coined by Sconce for the virtual realm of all the fictional worlds of television (2000, 177). In this "televisionland", the Winchesters jump from one genre show to another (e.g., medical drama, sitcom, game show etc.). The flow is considered one of the defining characteristics of television, *linear* television to be exact, though it can be found in other media as well. The internet is full of flow – YouTube with its video queuing or Netflix with its never-ending auto-playback of episodes of episodes and shows meant for binge-watching. The flow can complement a televisual horror show if well placed amidst other programs, like advertisements and shows of other genres, and can then create an uncanny feeling (Wheatley 2006, 7). This is especially true of uncanny metafiction, exemplified by *Changing Channels*.

Furthermore, the uncanny quality of the flow lies in its endless and ever-changing nature. Just as Sam and Dean are threatened to stay in "televisionland" forever, the televisual flow is always there when we turn on our television sets. The flow exists on its own, all the time. As Abbott and Jowett point out "the presence of the supernatural on film means that it is bound by the form of that medium – the monsters, ghosts or witches are trapped on the film and so the audience can watch safely within the cinema" (2013, 189). But the flow creates a notion that "television is not contained by physical boundaries" (ibid., 189). On top of that, television is today defined by globalization and convergence so it can serve as a doorway to other technologies (via internet and digitalization).

After all, we live in an era when all media can share one media storage (be it a computer, mobile phone or tablet). The virtual can also be spread across different technologies. So, media can travel from one piece of hardware to another with ease, just like the demons in them. This danger of convergence is neatly presented in the episode *Rm9sbG93ZXJz* (s11e07, 2018) of *The X-Files*. Mulder and Scully have dinner in a fully automated sushi restaurant but when Mulder refuses to tip, technology seems to conspire against them. This malevolence follows them to their homes where it affects the alarm system and any 'intelligent' technology. The haunting does not stop until Mulder pays the tip on his phone. This episode can be put in the contrast with a much earlier episode, *Ghost in the Machine* (s01e07, 1993), where the agents face an intelligent murderous computer. But while in this earlier episode, taking place in the early 1990s, the threat is contained to one building, in the later episode from 2018, the threat is omnipresent. It is a statement about how technologies spread, how our world became much more technology-dependent and these technologies more interconnected.

There is another aspect of the televisual medium that has an uncanny and potentially frightening quality - its 'liveness'. Liveness refers to the medium's ability to broadcast events as they are happening and is considered one of the most important characteristics of television. Radio is capable of this too, but the same cannot be said about cinema, so liveness is a core quality that defines television as a medium. Of course, not all television is live. However, the power of live broadcasting can be used to create frightening effects. While Sconce comments that liveness may suggest that TV is "alive" (for example *Smile Time* or the film *Poltergeist* support that), there are other ways in which liveness can be scary. One of the famous examples – at least in the UK – would be the broadcast of the mockumentary *Ghostwatch* (1992). The TV film used the investigative journalism format, obviously borrowed from *Crimewatch UK* series (1984–2017), real TV personalities, and audiovisual presentation containing elements related to live broadcasts (e.g., a hand-held camera, a call-in center, cutting between the studio and exterior locations where the investigation was being conducted etc.). On top of it, it was shown on the BBC, which is a public service TV station and is very well respected. Even though *Ghostwatch* was not broadcast live, it seemed like it was, and that immediacy frightened a lot of the viewers. In *Ghostwatch*, a team of reporters investigates a haunting in a suburban house. At the end, the ghost "jumps" on the airwaves and begins to haunt the studio. The movie ends with a shot of an empty studio set where the TV host, none other than Michael Parkinson, is wandering around, obviously possessed by the ghost.

Ghostwatch caused a lot of controversy. Since it seemed quite authentic, some adult viewers, and many children, believed it was real. Making use of real and respected TV presenters like Michael Parkinson, Sarah Greene, Mike Smith and others, as well as techniques typical of live broadcasts, combined with the fact the presentation was shown on a public service TV station, made it all seem rather believable. Also, the flow of televisual content helped to feed this belief. Many felt particularly betrayed by the BBC (Wheatley 2006, 87). A public service channel is supposed to inform its audience, not mystify them. But if we put the controversy aside, *Ghostwatch* is a unique example of how television and its specific characteristics can be used to explore horror. *Ghostwatch* was terrifying exactly because it was on TV. Abbot and Jowett claim that: "What made this film so effective and threatening was the suggestion that this was 'actually happening'… now… and not simply captured on TV but channeled through television" (2013, 189). The mockumentary format and horror hybrids are common in cinema now too (e.g., *The Blair Witch Project*, *Cloverfield*, *Paranormal Activity* etc.). However, cinema cannot use "liveness," but new media can.

There are live streams and social media that are used for immediate communication. This immediacy can become deadly, as exemplified in a *Halt and Catch a Fire* episode, where a ghost contacts his victims on their apps or social media before attacking them.

6.   Demonization of New Media in *Evil*

At this point, I want to focus on the TV horror show *Evil* (2019–) and its representation of haunted media. *Evil*'s story revolves around a team of experts hired by the Catholic Church to investigate alleged supernatural cases of possessions, miracles and such. The group consists of a forensic psychologist called Kristen (Katja Herbers), priest in training David (Mike Colter) and technical expert Ben (Aasif Mandvi). *Evil* constantly balances on the edge between admitting to being a supernatural horror show and undermining the trustworthiness of its characters. In this sense, the show is fulfilling Tzvetan Todorov's notion of fantastic hesitation (1973, 31). According to him, the first condition of the fantastic genre is the reader's hesitation whether the supernatural elements in the text are actually real or not (ibid., 31). While the fantastic does not necessarily have to include horror, this hesitation is very helpful in building an atmosphere of fear and anxiety that is central to horror (Hills 2005, 34–5). *Evil* is an example of 'pure' fantastic because it never actually answers (or at least has not yet) the question of the (non)existence of the supernatural (Todorov 1973, 43–4).

Although the ending of the first season could be interpreted as 'fantastic-marvelous,' i.e., the kind of narrative that ends with the acceptance of the supernatural (ibid., 52), the show may go either way in the next season.

The fantastic hesitation is crucial to *Evil* because this way the events in the series are more uncanny and terrifying. This hesitation is concerned mostly with the existence of demons. While Kristen considers the villains who they meet to be psychopaths, David sees them as either possessed by or embodying demons. However, the truth is the villains are dangerous either way. What is the most interesting notion from the series, for the purposes of this paper, is that the villains often use new media and modern technologies for their crimes. This is especially true for the main villain Leland Townsend (Michael Emerson), who coaches psychopaths and helps them commit murders or other crimes. For example, he finds a young man with misogynistic ideas and connects him to an online incel terrorist group. In the first episode, Leland gives advice to a serial killer over e-mail to help him fake demonic possession so he could be tried as insane. In the episode *7 Swans a Singin'* (s01e10, 2019), the protagonists investigate a case of mass hysteria that makes teenagers hurt themselves. They later trace it to an influencer who used subliminal auditory stimuli affecting youngsters in her videos. At the end of the episode, the influencer's followers – not the main protagonists of the show – learn that it was Leland who told the influencer to put the auditory stimuli in her videos.

Evil also includes storylines about a haunted augmented reality game or haunted virtual assistant, and while there are usually malevolent hackers behind this, the explanation is not that simple – or mundane – every time. For example, in the episode including the haunted virtual assistant, *3 Stars* (s01e03, 2019), Ben learns that two objects have become haunted, the other one being his own father's virtual assistant. But when he finds the hacker and confronts him, the cybercriminal admits to hacking only the first device, but not that of Ben's father. Therefore, it seems that while the first haunted object was just a prank, this haunting quality became real on its own and spread to another object. That implies that technologies are all connected and can be used as a conduit. Such a suggestion brings back the notion of flow and its uncanny character. It is also evidence of growing convergence. The converging media and technology allow for the flow to shift from one technology to another.

The notion that psychopaths and/or demons use the internet to literally spread evil implies the dangers of globalization. In the first episode, this notion is verbalized by the main protagonists. They have the following conversation while watching news on the TV:

> David: "The world is getting worse because evil is no longer isolated. Bad people are talking to each other. They're connected."
> Kristen: "Through social media."

This exchange encompasses, in quite glaring terms, the main theme and message of *Evil*. Later in the series, the main protagonists identify a hierarchy of demons on Earth based on an old codex. So, the threat is not a local one. These demons are all across the globe and they work together through modern technology and new media, as is exemplified through the character of Leland. Therefore, the haunted media in *Evil* are not just part of an isolated incident when a ghost enters a Wi-Fi signal. This haunting is a part of something bigger. This evil is organized, and its goals are worldwide. It is global and converging.

7. Conclusion

The concept of haunted media is as old as the media itself. They were uncanny from the very beginning. And every new medium is set to be demonized. Media create anxieties because they are difficult to understand and because they are all around us. It is not surprising then that they became vilified in horror fiction as well. Haunted media are compelling because they are something we easily let into our lives; we depend on them and we trust them. We share secrets over the internet on social media, we have online bank accounts. But the stories of malevolent machines and media do not surprise us. They are quite common. And they are always going to be.

It does not matter that we got used to these media. They are still uncanny because they can be concurrently comforting and disturbing. They provide us with reliable information, but they can lie and deceive. They are there but they are not. The media are thus inherently uncanny. They exist in a liminal space that is virtual and material at once. They are in one place and all the places at the same time. The growing globalization incites that. Since the media make up such a big part of our lives, there is no escaping them. But before we make villains out of them, it would be good to remember who it is that creates and explores media.

If we look back at the examples in the text, we can see that haunted media did not become haunted on their own. The haunting began with a demon, ghost or even a human using them. The media are not evil in and of themselves – they are merely mediators of evil. Because in the end, it always comes to the person using them. If they want to use media to commit crime or cause harm, they can. The haunted media need a partner in crime to become dangerous. It is easy to blame media technology that is naturally uncanny. But it is us, human beings, who use it or abuse it.

So, is there a demon on the internet? Yes. In fact, there are millions of them.

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