Beyond Reason: Revising the place of Literature in Theories of the Uncanny

Wesley Anderson

ANDWES002

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of the Arts specialising in "English in Literature and Modernity."

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2016

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Signed by candidate Date: 2016/03/24

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Reading, Fiction and Reality

In 1781 John Henry Fuseli painted an eerie scene which he called *The Nightmare*, set in a gloomy but intimate bedroom space which is inhabited by three characters. There is a woman dressed in a brilliant white gown, who is lying on a bed with her eyes closed and her arms hanging limply behind her head. There is a red-eyed incubus who sits on the chest of the woman, aiming its menacing gaze directly at the viewer. Also present is the brilliant head of a horse which looks through a curtain toward the couple, with vacant eyes and mouth agape. Through the juxtaposition of these three disparate characters *The Nightmare* presents an uncanny scene, yet viewers have historically had divided opinions about this piece, either following a psychoanalytic path or a more aesthetically based one.

H.W. Janson describes the different stylisation of these characters: "the sleeping woman (more Mannerist than Michelangelesque) is Neoclassic, the grinning devil and the luminescent horse come from the demon-ridden world of medieval folklore" (467). This stylistic separation between the classically inspired reclining female and the folkloric or Romantic incubus and horse is the prevalent psychoanalytic interpretation of the painting. This reading claims that

the painting is both a depiction of a dreaming woman, and by extension the content of her nightmare. Reinforcement of this idea can easily be found, for example Carl G. Jung's caption to the painting in *Man and His Symbols* (1964) reads that "almost everyone has been awakened, upset, or disturbed by [her] dreams; our sleep does not seem to be protected from the unconscious" (63). Such an interpretation sets up the woman as the point of orientation for understanding the whole scene and frames the two remaining characters as her particular unconscious fears, which divides the characters into one of two classes. The woman is safe because the incubus and the horse are symbolic fears that only exist in her unconscious mind. The division here relies on the idea that the woman is the 'realistic' element of the painting, and consequently that the incubus and the horse are 'unrealistic' elements (Oard *Reason Asleep*).

The psychoanalytic reading suggests that the nightmare is temporary and the woman will inevitably wake to find herself alone, physically safe and back within the realm of rational consciousness. In an abstract sense, the Neoclassical element of the painting remains safe because it is only interacting with the Romantic elements through this conceptual division between unconscious and conscious experience. The painting is read by trying to distinguish the characters by kind, and once these categories have been established the reading is made inflexible. This restricts the influence of the horse and the incubus by labelling them as explicitly temporary intruders, whose origin lies within the unconscious mind of the woman herself. In order to engage with what Brian A. Oard calls "the painting's truly disturbing power," he suggests that a viewer must try to see an implicit unity between all three characters:

> If we want to know why the work is fascinating and unsettling rather than ludicrous and cartoonish, we must move beyond questions of Romanticism and Classicism, because these concepts reinforce a misleading hierarchy of reality. The woman, because classically derived and human, is seen as implicitly more 'real' than the creatures. But when speaking of a painting (especially this painting) 'real' is an essentially meaningless word. All three characters are figures of fantasy, all three are equally unreal, and only when the woman is so recognized do we begin to appreciate the profound perversity of the painting. We must see the woman as a constructed thing, and we must understand exactly what she has been constructed for. (*Reason Asleep*)

In other words, the woman is not safely separated from the content of a nightmare, but an integral part of the nightmare construct. There is no dividing line to be seen between the characters as they are 'equally unreal' and the disturbance that the painting causes is because the characters exist on the same level, rather than being sectioned off into categories. If the painting is considered in this way, the horse and the incubus become autonomous characters that will not disappear if the woman wakes. They are no longer simple phantasms bound by the confines of a dream, they take on more immediate relationships with the woman. The incubus now represents not only a symbolic but a physical threat, and the posture of the woman herself highlights this: "She is built for rape. This is what really disturbs us about *The Nightmare*: not those hobgoblins from a scary children's story, but this woman who has been carefully and elaborately designed to embody a rape fantasy" (Oard *Reason Asleep*). The limp, uncomfortable posturing of the woman makes it is unclear whether she is sleeping or dead, a further allusion to necrophilia, and the painting opens up to a much more disturbing reading.

This is where the predominant effect of *The Nightmare* is uncanny, rather than being a scene of pure horror or fantasy. The narrative does not allow closure, and its characters are at once concordant and discordant. Every time the painting is viewed, the woman, incubus and horse present the same strange relationship. The event is witnessed by the horse and the viewer, but at the same time there is no explicit consummation or joining of the incubus and the woman. The painting is an ever-happening moment, and if the woman is "built for rape" or necrophilia, she is built perpetually for these purposes. This effect on its own holds a 'truly disturbing power', but this power is further compounded by repetition. Fuseli painted another *Nightmare* in 1791, and this prospect might at first offer some hope that a key element was changed or some new one added in order to clearly set the scene up as a dream-work.

However, this *Nightmare* pushes the relationship between its characters just a bit further in the same intimate bedroom setting. The direction of the scene is now inverted, and the characters are angled to the left instead of the right. The horse still looks toward the couple with vacant

eyes, yet its features are more defined and it now leans in closer to the scene. The incubus still sits atop the woman's chest but his gaze now ignores all audience and focuses exclusively on his prize; there is also a slight expression of joy on his face. All visible eyes are on the woman this time; none are directed at the viewer. This is perhaps the death blow to the possibility for the safeguard of consciousness against the 'nightmare', and the narrative now seals the disturbing relationship between its three characters.

Drawing out both the dominant psychoanalytic and more broadly aesthetic approaches in reading scenes like *The Nightmare* illustrates what has become a major preoccupation in the theorisation of the uncanny in the arts. As Oard points out, to focus a reading of *The Nightmare* around the inherent 'reality' of the woman in the scene is to subscribe to a "misleading hierarchy of reality", seeking 'the real' as a solution to an otherwise insoluble ambiguity and conflict. The psychoanalytic fixation in seeking to validate 'the real' has long overlooked various key components in theories of the uncanny as they relate to literature. The goal of the present study is to reaffirm the roles of uncertainty, ambiguity, and the purposeful lack of closure in the experience of the uncanny, features which will come to form an integral part of a new theory.

In Chapter I the Freudian *Unheimlich* ("unhomely") is drawn out and critiqued for its reliance on past experiences, the denial of the role of uncertainty, the introduction of the return of the repressed and finally the literary genre that is drawn from these assertions. The 'poetical uncanny' is offered as a way to understand stories that can have conflicting readings, as they operate similarly to optical illusions. The intervention into the Freudian *Unheimlich* is predicated on Freud's own doubts about the theory he develops, and his suggestion that an aesthetically attuned theory be sought to understand the uncanny as it exists in literature. Chapter II looks at Tzvetan Todorov's concept of genre in the *étrange* ("strange"), *fantastique* ("fantastic") and the *merveilleux* ("marvelous"), suggesting that the *fantastique* is closer to the general theory of the uncanny than the *étrange* or Freudian *Unheimlich* is. The relationship of the uncanny to genre is also completely reconsidered in this chapter, and the uncanny as in fiction is considered as the product of several

literary devices that can be used within any given genre, even if the uncanny is most commonly found in stories of the supernatural and the macabre. The problem of kitsch literature is also considered, as is the uncanny as a 'misdirection of consciousness' which is developed from a particular reading of intentionality theory.

Chapter III looks specifically at Edgar Allan Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* (1846), Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) and Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915). Each of these stories present lasting uncanny effects in slightly different ways; Poe's narrator in *Usher* tries and fails to understand the collapse of the house as a natural event, James's governess in *Turn of the Screw* seems to perceive identities more fully than she ought to and intuit more than she tells her reader, and Kafka's Gregor in *The Metamorphosis* is doomed to suffer an incomplete transformation into an insect, which ends in his torment and death at the hands of his father. The essay concludes with an identification of areas in which the study may be able to improve, and suggestions for study of the uncanny in literature and beyond are made.

The Nightmare (1791) John Henry Fuseli

> If the hidden motives and beliefs that produced neurotic symptoms could be revealed, they could be counteracted by other beliefs and intentions so that their force would be lessened or even dissipated. This is indeed how Freud sometimes spoke about the process of cure in psychoanalysis.
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> Gerald N. Izenberg, *The Existentialist Critique of Freud* (1976)

In Lieu of a Cure: "Das Unheimliche" and The Psychoanalytic Institution

For many years Freudian psychoanalysis has enthralled scholars from many different disciplines, whether by the originally controversial assertions of the role of sexuality in the unconscious or the neat methodical reading strategies that help these assertions to be made. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Freud's study of the *Unheimlich,* which to this day is applied in reading literature and art in order to uncover the unconscious repressions which lie beneath all aesthetic strangeness. Although many are willing to operate its machinations, Freud's theory is not without its shortcomings, and one of the interesting products to arise from *Das Unheimliche "*The Uncanny" (1919) is the lingering sense of unresolved doubt that can be found throughout the essay. Leading up to one of the final formulations of his theory Freud seems unable to help feeling that something is missing from it. First he seems confident, and argues that:

> In the first place, if psycho-analytic theory is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something *repressed* which *recurs*. This class of frightening things would then constitute the [*Unheimlich*]; and it must be a matter of indifference whether what is [*Unheimlich*] was itself originally frightening or if it carried some *other* effect. (Freud 241)

Three points stand out here: (i) any emotional impulse can be converted into anxiety or fear through repression; (ii) the return of this converted impulse belongs to the category of the *Unheimlich*, and (iii) the emotional impulse could originally belong to a kind other than anxiety or fear, and this fact does not preclude its possible conversion into a fearful impulse.[1]

[1] As an ancillary conclusion, Freud states in his second point that the German language allows this unique interpretation, "everything is *Unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light" (225). The appropriation of Schelling's definition here is outmoded, but suits Freud's purposes (Falkenberg 46).

To put this to an example, something as banal as the feeling produced by biting into an apple could, through the process of repression into the unconscious, eventually reappear as a frightening and disorienting act. This suggests that the physical sensation of biting into an apple has not changed, but the resultant emotional impulse itself has changed, so that the psyche of the person involved has developed an anomalous internal anxiety or fear of biting into apples. This method that Freud has developed relies on an impressive fusion of interdisciplinary propositions which together allow the formation of the return of the repressed.

The progression through linguistic, psychological and literary ideas in this formulation of the *Unheimlich* is an interesting one, and it is no surprise that Freud ends up in a place of doubt when he seeks to close off the essay. Immediately after giving his final explanation he admits to having reservations about its breadth of applicability, "so we should probably be prepared to assume that other conditions, apart from those we have so far laid down, play an important part in the emergence of a sense of the [*Unheimlich*]" (241). Freud's awareness that something is missing from the work is important, especially since he identifies that the uncanny "as it is depicted in literature, in stories and imaginative productions, merits in truth a separate discussion" (249), and that his explicit acknowledgement of this fact leads to the invitation for ""an aesthetic inquiry" (247) that would elucidate the gaps he has identified.

There is still much of interest to be found in his approach, and the self-conscious doubts that accompany the Unheimlich cannot be reason to write it off in its entirety. After all, the relatively recent popularisation of the uncanny owes its very existence to Freud's essay on the topic,[2] "and indeed, it was Freud who raised the phenomenon and the word "Unheimlich" to the status of a concept … subsequent theorists have not superseded his centrality in the debate" (Masschelein 3-4). Without Freud, the term may never have gained the status of 'concept' in any

[2] There is irony in the fact that Freud's essay practically fades into obscurity for about half a century or so after its publication, until it resurfaces through the interest of critical analysts in the late-twentieth century: Cixous, Castle, Derrida, Kristeva, Todorov, Vidler, Weber, and others (Masschelein 15).

serious sense, and would by now be listed only among other psychopathological disorders. It is necessary to draw out Freud's *Unheimlich* more carefully in order to avoid pre-emptive denial of the conclusions that he reaches, and to separate the productive and derivative modes of analysis that result from them. Working through Freud's method will also highlight aspects of the uncanny which have generally been disregarded or given only cursory treatments, many of which have since become very useful for thinking about literature. These aspects are primarily uncertainty, the "poetical uncanny" and "textual paranoia" that Marc Falkenberg expertly fleshes out in his book *Rethinking the Uncanny in Hoffmann and Tieck* (2005). More generally the roles of diegetic and extradiegetic influences,[3] textuality, and language as a feature of consciousness are also key elements that merit further exploration. Before progressing to these new areas, however, Freud's original arguments must be given due examination.

Freud initiates his research into the *Unheimlich* carefully, providing several definitions which move from general to specific senses of the term – firstly it is "related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror" (219); it then becomes "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (220); relying next on dictionary sources, Freud looks to Friedrich Josef Wilhelm von Schelling's distinction between '*Heimlich*' and its antonym '*Unheimlich*' which apparently refer to a similar type of secrecy, so that "everything is *Unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light" (225). Here Freud brings in the idea that the Unheimlich refers to experiences that are not as they should be, whether by the reappearance of something familiar which has been tainted, or the knowledge of something secret which should not be known.4 Understanding the specific role

[3] Diegetic refers to the internal story-world, and extra-diegetic refers to anything outside of the story-world. Dialogue between characters exists within the diegesis, but the structure of the story and its technical make-up would be an extra-diegetic element.

[4] The word Unheimlich, as well as the later use of étrange in the discussion of Todorov, will not be used in translation for the very purpose of retaining, as far as is possible, the original meanings as they exist within the German and French idioms. Where translated editions of the texts are used in quotation, 'uncanny' is always replaced by its original (*Unheimlich* / *étrange*). Observing this path of translation is intended to limit the bleeding of

of idiom in shaping the uncanny is vital to understanding its progression through different languages, and more broadly its progression as a concept. The uncanny, while it is expressed through language, is a concept that is repeatedly trapped in language when used for its idiomatic significance rather than its conceptual value. This can be seen in James Strachey's translation of Freud's use of *Unheimlich*:

> The German word translated throughout this paper by the English "*uncanny*" is '*Unheimlich*,' literally 'unhomely.' The English term is not, of course an exact equivalent of the German one. (Freud 219)

The term Unheimlich is first raised as an important signifier by Schelling in his *Philosophie der Mythologie* (1835), in which he suggests that the sublime nature of the Homeric songs arises from "an initial suppression, the civilised subjugation of mystery, myth, and the occult" (Vidler26). Jentsch later incorporates this term into his *Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen* (1906), arguing that perception of the *Unheimlich* in real life is pathological and suggests that "intellectual orientation" is most relevant to these experiences (4). Freud further revises Jentsch's theory by returning to Schelling's work and suggesting that the perception of the Unheimlich is not pathological, but that it simply arises from a return of repressed emotional impulses.

The uncanny can take many forms, and both Freud and Jentsch agree upon various examples of these, such "doubt as to the animate or inanimate state of things" (Jentsch 13) where objects might seem to move of their own accord, or the confounding of the autonomy of the human body in "the epileptic fit's ability to produce such a demonic effect on those who see it" (Jentsch 13). Similarly, the uncanny is present in "the horror which a dead body (especially a human one), a death's head, skeletons and similar things cause" (Jentsch 14). Also included are the effects of the doppelgänger that by duplicating the self, challenges its sovereignty, "having once been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death" (Freud

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semantic assumptions between terms so that the differences in each sense of the concept will become apparent, as well as how their individual contributions work to inform the greater conceptualisation of the uncanny.

235),5 or the double-perception in the experience of *déjà-vu*, in which a misinterpretation of the world leads to a momentary "confusion between symbol and reality" (Masschelein 22). Looking further afield some less obvious experiences can also be identified, such as "curious coincidences", "a crisis of the proper and natural", and "it comes above all, perhaps, in the uncertainties of silence, solitude, and darkness" (Royle 1).

This list is far from an exhaustive catalogue of uncanny experiences, but the examples should adequately demonstrate how varied these experiences can be. The uncanny can arise from many different sources, but Freud has converted his understanding of the Unheimlich into a functional mode of reading, amusingly termed 'the Unheimlich manoeuvre' by Stephen G. Yao (248). Freud uses this 'manoeuvre' to analyse the narrative of Nathanael from E.T.A. Hoffmann's The Sand-man (1815), which revolves around Nathanael's obsession with the eponymous figure of the story. Freud suggests that the Sand-man frightens Nathanael because of an unconscious fear of castration that he develops in his childhood, which links symbolically to the later threat of enucleation, the removal of one's eyes. The reason that Nathanael's fear of enucleation is the major point of interest for Freud is because he believes that this anxiety can be understood by his previous work in developmental psychology, in which he proposes that all children reach a stage where they form complexes, such as the castration complex or the womb fantasy (Freud 247-249). These childhood complexes are equated with 'primitive thinking', so that either repression or superstitions form the sources of Unheimlich experience:

> Our conclusion could then be stated thus: 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. (Freud 249)

Men in particular are said to experience infantile castration anxiety which causes them to be protective about their sexual organs, as these fundamentally represent virility and vitality. The anxiety of castration is equated with that of enucleation as the loss of eyes is a loss of perceptual

[5] Otto Rank has written extensively on the subject of the 'double' in *Der Doppelgänger* (1914).

power, just as the loss of the male sex organ would be a loss of virile power. This anxiety is said to be repressed during childhood for the safety of the conscious mind, and exist as an unconscious anxiety or fear in the mind of an adult.[6] However, this explanation only understands the fear of the Sand-man as a neurotic or pathological way of seeing the world, one which either comes from his fear of castration in childhood or his 'primitive' superstitions about the myth of the sandman – not to mention that the confirmation of either source must rely principally on Freud's speculations and research into the unconscious. The uncanny may pose many problems when it is considered in the realm of psychoanalysis as it is in Freud's Unheimlich, but it causes as many problems for literary scholars when it is proposed as a genre. The very nature of the uncanny is to resist, evade and complicate neat categorical boxes, so when theorists make a claim to the uncanny as a clear-cut genre there is need for reflection. Freud is once again at the core of this pursuit as he is the first to propose a theory of genre from his theory of the Unheimlich, and he works through the conditions he believes a text must satisfy if it is to be placed in this genre.

First the narrative must pass 'reality-testing'; the reader must start out believing that the narrative is subject to 'real world' conditions (249). Freud adds that if a story does not pass reality testing it will by definition not be *Unheimlich*, so that all fairy tales and overtly supernatural phenomenon are never considered as such.[7] The second condition is that the reader must share the view of the writer, or the narrator, so that their opinions of the experiences in the diegesis are congruent with each other. The fact that "[we] adapt our judgment to imaginary reality imposed on us by the writer, and regard souls, spirits and ghosts as though their existence had the same validity as our own has in material reality"(Freud 250) confirms this condition and also rules out the possible *Unheimlich* effect of elements that do not trouble the narrator - even if a character

[6] This is particularly apparent in Freud's reading of Oedipus (Freud 231, 261-262).

[7] Freud includes here "the souls in Dante's *Inferno* or the ghostly apparitions in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* or *Julius Caesar*" (156).

becomes familiar and comfortable with the presence of a ghost, as long as readers follow along with the character, the event would not be *Unheimlich*.

Once these two conditions have been established, Freud goes on to say that Unheimlich literature must include a turning point where it becomes clear that the writer has so far deceived the reader about the 'reality' of the narrative: "[s]he is betraying us to the superstitiousness which we have ostensibly surmounted; [s]he deceives us by promising to give us the sober truth, and then after all overstepping it" (250). The betrayal and deception of these types of stories is what interests Freud most of all – to him one of the markers of Unheimlich fiction is when a writer can take the liberty to fabricate a very realistic fictional world, then 'reveal' that this fictional world is in fact not consistently realistic. If by the end of the story it is found that a state of reality is 'restored', such stories would leave a reader "a feeling of dissatisfaction, a kind of grudge against the attempted deceit" (Freud 251). There are two deceptions which typically form part of this third condition. The first is that the narrative starts to tend toward fantasy, thus breaking the inherent promise of 'everyday reality', and the second is that the narrative ultimately returns to 'everyday reality' by dispelling the elements of fantasy through explanation or dismissal.

In summary uncanny literature must, according to Freud: (i) begin by passing reality-testing and appear to be 'everyday life'; (ii) the reader must approach the narrative with the same view of 'reality' that the writer or narrator does; (iii) the reader must realize through some event or phenomenon that the narrative no longer passes reality-testing, and the 'deceptive' elements of the story are made clear. The literary *Unheimlich* is to Freud only an emulation of reality which manages to fool its reader into thinking that the story presents consonant reality until it makes a turn away from the real. The author of uncanny fiction is by this logic comparable to a charlatan, not only because they succeed for a time in fooling their readers into believing that fantasy may legitimately be coeval with reality, but more insidiously because their conjuring trick is to sew threads of dissonance into an otherwise concrete realism. The concept of revealed deception

overlaps quite obviously with other modes of storytelling which purposefully expel uncanny experience in order to give closure to the reader. These modes are found in the novels of mystery and suspense made famous by Ann Radcliffe's archetypal gothic masterpieces, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's prolific detective fiction. Both Radcliffe and Doyle's most popular works are the locus classicus of their respective styles, and play an important role in setting the groundwork for emulation by later authors.

Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) is a tale of mystery which presents several unexplained and possibly supernatural phenomena, such as the appearance of a ghostly face and body underneath a sheet, noises and voices within the walls, and the disappearance of Ludovico. At first these moments terrify the characters Emily and Annette, and if no explanation were found in order to clarify these strange events they would indeed have sustained uncanny effects for both the reader and the characters. This story does not, however, leave the strange events without explanation, and in the closing chapters of the book the mysteries that have so far been the centre of the narrative undergo debunking at its end.

Ludovico returns in the second last chapter of the novel and reveals that the château had been used as a haven for pirated Spanish treasure, and that "to prevent detection [the pirates] had tried to have it believed that the château was haunted" (Radcliffe 448). Following this revelation both Emily and Annette consider everything that they have experienced an adventure, and seek answers to each of their uncanny moments. The ghostly face which pressed through the sheet was in fact a man trying to evade detection, "not having time to lift up the arras and unfasten the door, he hid himself in the bed just by" (Radcliffe 448). Ludovico also reveals that the voices in the walls were pirates searching through secret vaults within the castle, "for the removal of stores which were deposited in the vaults" (Radcliffe 449). By demystifying each of these episodes, the uncanny atmosphere of the novel is dispersed. The mysteries experienced throughout *Udolpho* are not due to the actions of supernatural beings but due to a band of pirates, and once this is made clear to the characters they can redirect their consciousness by filling in the gaps in understanding the

strange incidents they have experienced. Now that they have an understanding of the events which matches up with their experiences, there is closure. For the reader too, the disturbances of the uncanny moments in the novel are contextualised, not only for the first reading but for all subsequent readings. The predominant effect of this type of mystery novel is not uncanny, but something akin to its exact opposite, a canny story.[8]

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* (1887-1927) series presents an even further push toward the inherent implausibility of the supernatural in strange and confusing events. Where Radcliffe reveals deception for the closure of the reader and the characters, Doyle sets up the investigative process as one which has the expressed purpose of *solution*. With every appearance of Holmes and Watson there comes an affirmation of resolution, the "Yes, my dear Watson, I have solved the mystery" (Doyle *Three Students* 604). In *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) Holmes addresses whether the death of Sir Charles Baskerville could be due to a supernatural hell-hound with "blazing eyes and dripping jaws" (675). Holmes's approach to being a detective demands that the supernatural must always be the last solution to be considered when explaining a course of events, but the supernatural is as a rule not left out entirely:

> Of course, if Dr. Mortimer's surmise should be correct, and we are dealing with forces outside the ordinary laws of Nature, there is an end of our investigation. But we are bound to exhaust all other hypotheses before falling back upon this one. (Doyle *Baskerville* 684)

If the strange incidents in Baskerville had no natural causes Holmes could not continue to investigate them. Doyle's mysteries could be considered good examples of the uncanny if Holmes' intuition and intellect were unable to solve them – if not even one attempted solution were given to explain the case. The very nature of the mystery is predicated on the idea that the phenomenon is not as it appears to be (in this case supernatural), and the investigation proceeds with this attitude:

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[8] This reference is to Royle's etymological investigation into the uncanny, where the word 'canny' is defined by *Chambers Dictionary* as "knowing; skilled" (*Chambers* in Royle, 11). This point is not intended to enter directly into the etymological debate, as Falkenberg points out that the "etymological fallacy" in Royle's work is that he wrongly assumes the English canny is equivalent to the German *heimlich*, and that it could be closer to an original meaning (197).

> 'What do you make of it, Dr. Mortimer? You must allow that there is nothing supernatural about this, at any rate?'
>
> 'No, sir, but it might very well come from someone who was convinced that the business is supernatural.' (Doyle *Baskerville* 686)

Belief in the supernatural can exist for Holmes without the events themselves having supernatural causes, and there is a continued refusal of the supernatural as an explanation, and Holmes is always in favour of rational thought. As in almost every other *Holmes* story, the revelations from Sherlock's method of deduction leaves the reader with a sense of the story's clever construction and the tensions that it is established upon. Holmes manages to prove that the hound is in fact just a starved and rabid animal rather than a demon, and the piece of the puzzle that helps him tie together the Baskerville mystery is none other than the anxiety over an old boot:

> He then had it returned and obtained another – a most instructive incident, since it proved conclusively to my mind that we were dealing with a real hound, as no other supposition could explain this anxiety to obtain an old boot and this indifference to a new one. The more *outré* [unusual] and grotesque an incident is the more carefully it deserves to be examined, and the very point which appears to complicate a case is, when duly considered and scientifically handled, the one which is most likely to elucidate it. (Doyle *Baskerville* 764)

Rationality and scientific method are the hallmarks of detective fiction, and in uncovering the mystery that shrouds the strange events as in the *Baskerville* murder, or the ghostly faces and eerie noises in *Udolpho*. Many contemporary crime-fiction television shows and movies follow the very same path, almost to the point that they seem impossible. These types of fiction work to perform the redemptive act, not only in terms of reconciling knowledge of the events that lead to criminal activity, but the sense of integrity and justice such a revelation exemplifies:

> There is something in us, as storytellers and as listeners to stories, that demands the redemptive act, that demands that what falls at least be offered the chance to be restored. The reader of today looks for this motion, and rightly so, but what [s]he has forgotten is the cost of it. [His or her] sense of evil is diluted or lacking altogether, and so [s]he has forgotten the price of restoration. (O'Connor 48)

So embedded in reading is the "redemptive act"[9] that it is so often taken for granted, and interacting with fiction that deals with the transgression of laws, natural or legal, relies so heavily upon this assumption that audiences approach mystery and detective fiction without any sense of real conflict or discomfort. The conclusion is presupposed and resolution is more often than not the only objective. A reader will approach these narratives with the notion that they will be confused or tricked only for a time, that any injustices are bound to be righted, and they accept this condition for the very fact that the redemptive act – knowing the truth or catching the criminal – is inevitable. There could be no more appropriate contrast for the uncanny than the stories of 'canny' individuals solving apparently supernatural crimes and sightings, and there is no reason to cast these stories as examples of the uncanny when they are in fact the opposite.

Freud's evaluation of *The Sand-man* is typical of his psychoanalytic methodology, as he is working from a few single cases and using these to develop or substantiate his theoretical framework. Anneleen Masschelein does careful work in comparing *The Uncanny* to Freud's other endeavours in psychology, in order to place the essay in a broader context within his oeuvre. What Masschelein finds is that *Das Unheimliche* is similar in its analytical style to that of the Rat Man case-study, which supports the idea that the form of the essay is itself a type of case-study: In many ways, the analysis of "The Sand-man," especially the long footnote (Freud 1919h, 232) reads like a case-study of the main character Nathanael's neurosis, also caused by an ambivalent attitude toward his father" (25). This treatment of Nathanael as a patient for study highlights the fact that Freud is very much invested in the practical application of psychoanalysis in order to address Nathanael's 'neurosis' which is in need of a cure. It also shows that the place of literature in Freud's paper is intended as evidence not only for the *Unheimlich* but toward the larger theory of the unconscious. Even though these projects seem to coincide quite neatly they are not literary considerations, and uncertainty once again creeps in to Freud's mind:

[9] Though O'Connor uses the term in the religious sense, it mirrors the notion that certain types of narratives are designed to lead to closure, and in this process the reader is expecting that closure will be present.

> It may be true that the [*Unheimlich*] is something which is secretly familiar [*heimlich-heimisch*], which has undergone repression and has returned from it, and that everything that is [*Unheimlich*] fulfils this condition. But the selection of material on this basis does not enable us to solve the problem of the [*Unheimlich*]. (Freud 245)

At the close of his essay Freud is still sure only about the fact that, however helpful, his theory does not cover all elements and possible sources of uncanny experiences. He believes that the return of repression is a sufficient condition to deem something *Unheimlich*, but he has not set down any particular necessary conditions. In doing so Freud gives way to the difficulty of approaching the uncanny, trying to understand the entirety of the term from only one of its very specific possible effects. This leaves his work with a sense of incompleteness, a certain lacking:

> Freud declares that it is certain that the use of the *Unheimliche* is uncertain. The indefiniteness is part and parcel of the "concept." … yet Freud, arguing for the existence of the *Unheimliche*, wishes to retain the sense, the real, the reality of the sense of things. (Cixous 528)

Something else must be able to make sense of the other aspects of the uncanny which are not covered by this theory of the *Unheimlich*, and this 'certainty of uncertainty' that Cixous finds within Freud's writing is exactly the point which has been taken to task. Falkenberg emphasises that the oversight in Freud's thinking was to pick an element of the uncanny which was not a necessary one, as not every uncanny experience need be a return of repressed emotion. One reason for the ambiguous conclusion and minor retractions from the third section of Freud's essay is as Robert Young suggests: "Of all Freud's writings, "The Uncanny" is generally recognised as the text in which he most thoroughly finds himself caught up in the processes he seeks to comprehend" (Young 93). Theorisation of the uncanny is often paired with a direct experience of it, where in trying to grasp some concrete definition or theory, only fractions of logical certainty emerge. Even the experience of writing and thinking become disjointed and confounding practices. By placing himself in opposition to Jentsch, Freud cannot assert what is more consistently the central feature of the uncanny:

> He focuses on the past, emphasizing the familiar origins of the uncanny, and overlooks the disorientation in the present caused by the non-recognition of what was once familiar. While specific internal and unconscious or external causes

> linked to apperception are sufficient causes of the uncanny, uncertainty qualifies as the only necessary cause. (Falkenberg 21)

Uncertainty is the only feature that *must* be common to all instances of uncanny experience, and the added specificity of Freudian repression will always follow this. There is little denial that the turn from familiar to unfamiliar forms an important part of some uncanny experiences, but the limitations added to this through the concept of the return of the repressed in Freud's *Unheimlich* do not accommodate the problem posed by uncanny experiences that have indeterminate causes. There is also a slight misunderstanding that exists in Freud's use of the *Unheimlich,* because it is opposed to the common usage of the term as "something causing an uncertain feeling of fear or horror", which was already in circulation in 1811 and has retained its use to the present day (Falkenberg 41-42). Freud's appropriation of Schelling's definition is vital to his conceptualisation of the term, but Falkenberg makes it clear that the predominant meaning of *Unheimlich* is not distinctly that of repression, but of uncertainty.

This is where Jentsch's earlier theory of the uncanny in his *Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen* (1906) is an interesting contender for an alternative theory. Jentsch identifies that central to the *Unheimlich* is a form of intellectual uncertainty that arises from a conflict within consciousness. Jentsch's theory of the uncanny focuses mainly on the present moment of uncertainty that the *Unheimlich* causes. He suggests that "a *lack of orientation* is bound up with the impression of the uncanniness of a thing or incident" (Jentsch 4). For Jentsch the *Unheimlich* is best described from the disorientation of perception which phenomena cause. In this way, Jentsch focuses more on the immediacy of the *Unheimlich* experience, while Freud focuses exclusively on the possible source of these effects in the past. Freud's theory deals only with one possible formation of the *Unheimlich,* that these experiences are the conscious recognition of a converted emotional impulse which reappears as frightening or dreadful. He claims that this conversion is necessary for all *Unheimlich* experiences, and by doing so must locate the source of distress or confusion firmly in the past as phenomena which can again be 'surmounted.' This is the way that Freud approaches

The Sand-man, and in order to show that his theory can in fact apply to fiction as well as reality he proceeds to analyse the story.

When reading Hoffmann and others, Freud uses reality-testing as the litmus test for the *Unheimlich*, and this reinforces the misleading hierarchy of reality. Freud argues that fictional events are either decidedly real or not,[10] and any conflict to this which is resolved as 'real' is *Unheimlich*. In effect, this means that the *Unheimlich* necessitates a return to the real. In E.F. Blieler's introduction to *The Best Tales of Hoffmann* he proposes that there are two major interpretations of *The Sand-man*. The first is the psychoanalytical approach, as in Freud's case, which considers Nathanael's mental condition fragile and declining at the very beginning of the tale. The psychoanalytical reading proceeds to reaffirm the real at the end of the tale:

> Psychiatrically oriented readers have considered Nathanael to be mad, and have dismissed the story of Coppelius / Coppola as a projection, as the influence of a traumatic childhood experience on an unstable young man. The story is thus interpreted as a figurative statement of growing mental illness, in other words, the emergence of insanity. Everything that Nathanael sees is distorted by this peculiar defect of his "vision," and his life is a succession of wild misinterpretations. (Blieler xxv)

This perspective consigns the figure of the Sand-man to the realm of fantasy and myth and denies the possibility of his existence 'in reality', claiming that the entirety of Nathanael's life is based in the slow progress toward irreversible madness. The second interpretation of *The Sand-man* story does not rely on the assumptions of the unconscious and an exclusively internal source of the *Unheimlich*, claiming instead that Nathanael's experiences of the supernatural are presented objectively and pose real threats to his wellbeing, whether the other characters believe him or not: "Nathanael may go mad at the end, but his previous experiences are objective. Coppelius / Coppola really exists; he is the Enemy" (Blieler xxv). This interpretation is by far the less eminent of the two, but it does not presuppose that the sources of Nathanael's anxiety and fear are 'unreal'. Instead, the possibility that the Sand-man really exists is maintained even in the face of

[10] He does not argue that texts can leave the issue of reality undecided, as a reader will make up their mind even if the narrative does not explicitly settle the issue. This reasoning is further extended in Todorov's genre of the *étrange*.

Nathanael's accidental suicide. These readings are equally plausible, but Freud's *Unheimlich* only exists on the end of the spectrum that coincides with reality – the other end tends toward fantasy and myth. The problem is reduced trying to confirm the real, and failing this, accepting fantasy. The role of uncertainty is once again absent from both of these approaches, but the fact that the two readings cannot be reconciled points toward the uncanny.

The story is fraught with conflict and confusion from the very first time Nathanael learns about the Sand-man through a retelling of the legend, and this creates doubt as to whether the Sand-man exists at all. His mother claims that the Sand-man is only a tale used by parents to get their children to sleep, and this is what primes his doubt here: "There is no Sand-man, my dear," mother answered; "when I say the Sand-man is come, I only mean that you are sleepy and can't keep your eyes open, as if somebody had put sand in them" (Hoffmann 184). Nathanael remains curious about this figure because he has received conflicting stories from his mother; the first is that the Sand-man is indeed real and arrives at their house around bed-time, and the second is the amended account that the Sand-man is simply a fictional character that is used to encourage children to feel sleepy. The third time Nathanael learns about the Sand-man he enters a phase of obsession, remaining "full of curiosity" about the figure until he eventually presses the subject with his youngest sister's nurse:

> Oh! he's a wicked man, who comes to little children when they won't go to bed and throws handfuls of sand in their eyes, so that they jump out of their heads all bloody; and he puts them into a bag and takes them to the half-moon as food for his little ones; and they sit there in the nest and have hooked beaks like owls, and they pick naughty little boys' and girls' eyes out with them. (Hoffmann 185)

Here Nathanael displaces the vague, conflicted understanding of the Sand-man that his mother provides, and instead latches on to the very detailed tale that his younger sister's nurse recounts for him. The Sand-man gains grotesque features through this new telling, and the legend as told by the nurse now imprints a much more terrifying figure in Nathanael's mind. He becomes obsessive about the Sand-man from this point onward, and it is clear that he does not find any other tale to be quite as immediately terrifying. Up to the age of ten Nathanael is fascinated with

"horrible stories of goblins, witches, dwarfs, and so on; but always at the head of them all stood the Sand-man, whose picture I scribbled in the most extraordinary and repulsive forms with both chalk and coal everywhere, on the tables, and cupboard doors, and walls" (Hoffmann 185). At this point Nathanael does not yet know whether to believe his mother's use of the legend as fiction, or the vivid description that his sister's nurse has given him.

As the legend of the Sand-man has been reiterated to Nathanael in a few forms, he is confused as to who or what the Sand-man actually is. Not only is the Sand-man himself a source of confusion, but an apparent concurrence of the legend of the Sand-man with Nathanael's own experience of hearing footsteps each night starts to obscure the status of the figure as 'mere legend'. So far, the story has less to do with the unconscious link between castration and enucleation than it does with a conscious intellectual dissonance that Nathanael finds when he confronts the idea of the Sand-man. The major challenge that Nathanael faces is in determining whether or not the legendary figure of the Sand-man is manifest in a physical body, particularly one which frequents his own house. The only solution that Nathanael can find to this problem is to attempt to investigate the existence of the Sand-man on his own, to see for himself once and for all whether he exists or not. This uncanny element of *The Sand-man* works by blurring the edges that set the Sand-man up as a figure of myth, and when Nathanael stands upon this very margin the two forms violently join as one:

> "Eyes here! Eyes here!" cried Coppelius, in a hollow sepulchral voice. My blood ran cold with horror; I screamed and tumbled out of my hiding place onto the floor. Coppelius immediately seized me. "You little brute! You little brute!" he bleated, grinding his teeth. Then, snatching me up, he threw me on the hearth, so that the flames began to singe my hair. "Now we've got eyes-eyes-a beautiful pair of children's eyes," he whispered and, thrusting his hands into the flames he took out some red-hot grains and was about to throw them into my eyes. (Hoffmann185)

This moment shocks Nathanael into believing that Coppelius is the Sand-man that he is so afraid of, and that his own father is an apprentice to this figure. It is this scene more than any other in the story which determines its direction, and Samuel Weber proposes that this moment presents "a fateful plunge that will be repeated at the end of the story. Indeed, it gives the story an

ending'' (14). Nathanael's witness to the strange work that his father and Coppelius are performing is ultimately the beginning of the end for Nathanael, as he fuses his conscious terror with his most familiar point of orientation, his father. By joining the action of the scene he is also becoming a participant in it:

> In doing so he forsakes his role as spectator, seeing but unseen, and takes the plunge… onto the stage, into the theatre, abandoning himself to the dangerous sight of others, despite (and perhaps because of) the risks such exposure entails. (Weber 14)

In this moment when he enters the 'stage', Nathanael transitions from being a member of audience to being one of the actors in the scene he is watching. He joins the nightmarish figures that he is frightened of and in doing so can no longer safely separate his world from that of myth, nor return to the state of audience that he was in just a moment before. Whether Coppelius is truly the Sand-man, or Nathanael's father truly his accomplice, are both immaterial to Nathanael in the light of the fact that they are believably acting these parts in this moment.

The last letter from Lothaire is a suggestion that Nathanael is simply allowing these childhood experiences to break into his life and pull it apart, and seeing as Lothaire and Clara reject the authenticity of the account that Nathanael provides, they ask that he simply overcome his fears as "it is only a belief in their hostile influence that can make them hostile in reality" (Blieler 193). Nathanael feeds their assessment of his condition back to them in his last letter, but this final piece of first-person narration sees him, "not quite satisfied" with such a simple verdict of his experiences and he rejects the possibility that he is simply mad (Hoffmann 193). One of the interesting ideas that Cixous suggests is that "rhetoric does not create the real. To perceive identities is reassuring, but perceiving incomplete identities is another matter." (534) The incomplete or conflicted identity of the Sand-man allows for his figure to appear in many forms, never quite settling in one representative body.

Nathanael not only has the problem of trying and failing to perceive the complete identity of the Sand-man but he has the opposite problem when he meets the automaton Olimpia, and then again when he sees Clara later on. Olimpia's identity appears to him full and vibrant, even

though this is produced only by her clock-work parts, glass eyes and repetitive voice that says to him again and again, "Ah-ah-ah!" (Hoffmann 206). Where everybody else seems to be able to tell that there is something wrong with Olimpia's personhood, Nathanael is unable to pick up on this or on the fact that everybody can see him overlooking what is obvious to them:

> We think she is – you won't take it ill, brother? – that she is singularly statuesque and soulless. Her figure is regular, and so are her features, that can't be gainsaid; and if her eyes were not so utterly devoid of life, I may say, of the power of vision, she might pass for a beauty. She is strangely measured in her movements, they all seem as if they were dependent upon some wound-up clockwork. Her playing and singing have the disagreeably perfect, but insensitive timing of a singing machine, and her dancing is the same. We felt quite afraid of this Olimpia, and did not like to have anything to do with her; she seemed to us to be only acting like a living creature, and as if there was some secret at the bottom of it all. (Hoffmann 208)

Nathanael hears these claims of his friend Siegmund but completely rejects them because he is confident in his assertion that Olimpia is neither stupid nor inhuman, and that Siegmund may well want to put him off the idea of pursuing Olimpia in order to pursue her himself. He dismisses Siegmund by saying "you have no understanding for all these things, and I am only wasting words" (Hoffmann 209). It is only when Olimpia is 'killed', by the ripping out of her glass eyes, that Nathanael finally realises he has not seen her for what she really is, "he had seen only too distinctly that in Olimpia's pallid waxed face there were no eyes, merely black holes in their stead; she was an inanimate puppet" (Hoffmann 210). He awakes days later from this shock as if he had been "oppressed by a terrible nightmare" (Hoffmann 212), but now Nathanael "had become gentler and more childlike than he had ever been before, and now began really to understand Clara's supremely pure and noble character." (Hoffmann 213). He seems to have regained some power of perception by this moment; he no longer thinks that Olimpia was a real woman that loved him and he returns his affections to Clara, seeming finally to be at peace.

His reprieve is short-lived, as just a day later he is looking out at the countryside with Clara when he uses the eye-glass that was sold to him, and sees Clara through Copolla's perspective," now mistaking Clara herself for an automaton as he dances and sings "Spin round, wooden doll! Spin round, wooden doll!" (212-214), attempting to strangle her on the balcony.

When Nathanael dies at the end of the narrative, the person who shocks him into falling off the balcony is Coppelius, but he disappears into the crowd just as Nathanael hits the floor:

> Coppelius laughed and said, "Ha! ha! wait a bit; he'll come down of his own accord;" and he stood gazing up along with the rest. All at once Nathanael stopped as if spellbound; he bent down over the railing and perceived Coppelius. With a piercing scream, "Eh! Fine eyes-a, fine eyes-a!" he leaped over the railing. When Nathanael lay on the stone pavement with a shattered head, Coppelius had disappeared in the crush and confusion. (Hoffmann 214)

It is unclear here whether Nathanael has been stricken with madness by his own fear of the Sand-man or by some other action by Coppelius, but it is the narrator who confirms the presence of Coppelius in the crowd and seems to know that Nathanael has faltered from the sight of him. The fact that neither Nathanael nor the 'friend' who finishes the narrative ever settle the mystery of the Sand-man's identity, or Nathanael's madness, indicates that it is more plausible that the story is intentionally ambiguous on these points, and their obfuscation is what is called the "poetical uncanny":

> The poetical uncanny contains a particular paradoxical ambiguity that produces a cognitive disorientation structurally similar to that of an optical illusion … We observe such ambiguities when the text gives rise to mutually exclusive, yet equally valid interpretations. (Falkenberg 29)

This ambiguity is why the *Sand-man* can be read as both Nathanael's trip into madness and the objective record of Nathanael's torment by the Sand-man, because the text is set up to make both options equally plausible. It is nonetheless generally observable that Freud's methodology in reading *The Sand-man* continues to be the most consistently and widely applied aspect of his theory of the *Unheimlich*. Wherever the Freudian *Unheimlich* is to be found, there too is the return of repression; much like the notion of the '*Unheimlich* manoeuvre', the tendency to follow Freud's path is both expected and derivative:

> Freud's writings have the institutionalising effect of teaching a psychoanalytic thought style to receptive readers as a powerful method of psychological reduction. When these readers "apply" a psychoanalytic method, they become part of a psychoanalytic thought collective, constantly reproducing, reworking, and expanding the "stock" of psychoanalytic knowledge. (Winter 12)

Scholars who go through the process of reading literature via psychoanalysis are mostly 'expanding the "stock' of psychoanalytic knowledge' rather than the "stock' of literary knowledge.

Every story that features a ghost that turns out only to be a trickster must, by the theory of the Freudian *Unheimlich,* be due to the narrator's return to their childhood complexes or 'primitive' superstitious thinking. The options are thus far not particularly open to much more interpretation than this. Characters are thought to have the same psychology as all other people as Freud is working with what he believes is a universal process – the workings of the human unconscious are considered largely common – he reads Nathanael's experiences as he would read reality. Under the presupposition that any perceived presence of the supernatural is neurotic, and furthermore explicable by natural means, Freud 'solves the case' of Nathanael's reactions to his strange experiences. There are some who dissent from Freud's psychoanalytic institution applications of the Freudian uncanny which identify aspects of the theory which lack applicability, but many of these studies only delicately push toward new definitions and formulations of the uncanny.[11]

For example, in *Phantoms Limn – Silvan Tomkins and Affective Prosthetics*, Adam Frank talks about eyes and the act of looking, as a part of his larger discussion on photography and the extension of affect that it offers, and suggests that the uncanny "may have more to do with a blockage of mutual looking and a set of theoretical dynamics among the animating and de-animating powers of affect than it does with the mechanism of repression as such" (518). The idea that there is a 'blockage of mutual looking' or 'powers of affect' at play with the uncanny highlights the sense that the uncanny can be something which exists due to the way subjects not only perceive one another, but develop a relationship through which they understand and interpret each-other and the world.

In *Uncanny Resemblances: Tonal Signification in the Freudian Age*, the harmonic pairing that Richard Cohn looks at is said to be "Paradoxical, supernatural, magical, weird, dark . . . dead!" (285), and though he is able to find many strong evidences for the uncanny in music as a break from consonant reality into imagination, Cohn self-confessedly finds "no musical equivalents for such

[11] A direct point of challenge to psychoanalysis in fiction is found in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), which both satirises the treatment of women as hysterical subjects, but at the same time presents the ambiguity of the resulting insanity or autonomy that this treatment leads to.

central components of the Freudian uncanny as repression and castration'' (288). The one aspect of the uncanny which he quite rightly identifies is the presence of dissonance within an otherwise consonant experience, but castration cannot explain this aspect in any way.

In *A-Life and the Uncanny in "Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within"* Livia Monnet explains that the uncanny figures of the anime film are actually women who have had their agency abducted or substituted (97), and because of this Monnet comes to the conclusion that the Freudian reading of the doll Olimpia from Hoffmann's *The Sand-man* is fundamentally wrong. Monnet instead claims that one of the more important uncanny elements in *The Sand-man* is actually "the persistence and vitality of the beautiful doll, the fact that she refuses to go away, that she resists obfuscation and substitution'' (113). Olimpia's disturbance of the narrative is another uncanny aspect of the text which does not rely on the return of the repressed, but rather the persistence of a consciously disturbing body.

One of the recent major interventions in merging Freudian psychoanalysis with cultural theory is Julia Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991). Kristeva takes human nature and interpersonal relationships as prime examples which illustrate the Freudian *Unheimlich*, and offers his theory as a way of explaining the difficult relationship between the self and the 'other.' Kristeva proposes that the other often incites these feelings not because they present explicit external dangers, but because they cause an uncomfortable internal conflict:

> With the Freudian notion of the unconscious the involution of the strange in the psyche loses its pathological aspect and integrates within the assumed unity of human beings an *otherness* that is both biological *and* symbolic and becomes an integral part of the *same*. Henceforth the foreigner is neither a race nor a nation. The foreigner is neither glorified as a secret *Volksgeist* nor banished as disruptive of rationalist urbanity. [*Unheimliche*], foreignness is within us: we are our own foreigners, we are divided. (181)

According to this reading, every person represses their relationship to the other in favour of distinguishing the self, and confrontations with the other serve to open up a repressed reality. There is an overriding sameness which lies beneath any conscious formation of division, and

recognising this sameness within the other allows the self to identify as foreign. The most fitting experience in this respect is a forced self-reflection from a conscious experience of the foreigner:

> Confronting the foreigner whom I reject and with whom at the same time I identify, I lose my boundaries, I no longer have a container … [the variations of '*Unheimlich*' strangeness] all repeat the difficulty I have in situating myself with respect to the other and keep going over the course of identification-projection that lies at the foundation of my reaching autonomy. (Kristeva 187)

Here the uncanny arises from the relation between the self and the other which is always predicated by a stable conscious division. This becomes destabilised by the realisation of an unconscious unity - the various effects of which include the loss of boundaries, difficulty in situating oneself, and the repetitive identification-projection. In essence, the source and effect of the uncanny are both found and experienced within the same space: the self.

Another intervention in reading the uncanny is Jacques Derrida's work in *The Double Session* (1973) and *The Specters of Marx* (1993), which play with the ideas of hidden meaning and the return of the repressed. The spectre – or ghost – is Derrida's primary motif in the second of these two lengthy discussions, not only applying to the 'ghost' of Marx's political body of work, but the figure of Jesus Christ and other prominent cultural icons which represent a movement from physical to metaphysical bodies. The significance of the ghost motif in Derrida's writing is that, "It is of the essence of the ghost in general to be frightening", but more than this the frightening quality is "especially true of man, of the most "Unheimlich" of all ghosts" (181). Along a similar line to Kristeva's exposition on foreignness, the most "*Unheimlich*" relationship that Derrida can imagine is the internal relationship of the self, made conscious through interaction with the other. In this case the other is at times a physical, and at others a metaphysical body, the latter of which appears as the revenant and in the most extreme cases only a faded simulation of its original self. When ideas themselves become 'bodies', there is "a question of repetition: a spectre is always a *revenant*. One cannot control its comings and goings because it *begins by coming back"* (Derrida 11). This is where Derrida's reading of Marx draws strongly from Freudian theory - the idea that an unexpected return is the primary method of producing "*Unheimlich*" figures is what allows Derrida's

continued use of the term. Thus, the *Unheimlich* effect of returning is still attributed to a type of self-reflection which is not anticipated or desired. Derrida refers to 'man' as the most familiar symbol, so that the adulteration of this symbol would result in the most remarkable uncanny affect:

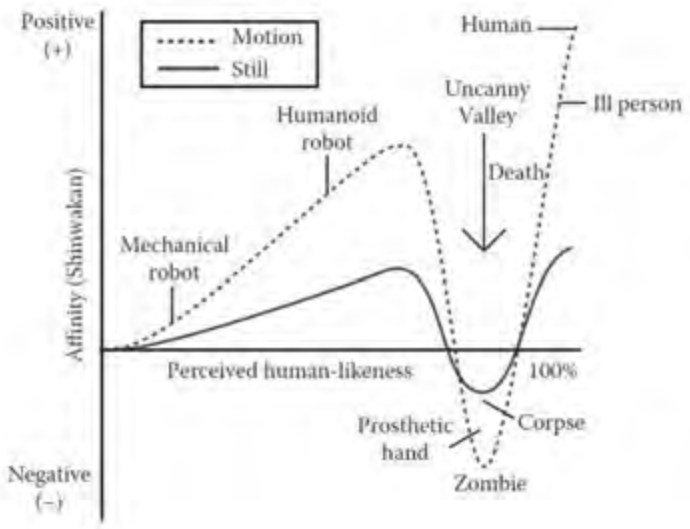
> [*Unheimlich*] is the word of irreducible haunting or obsession. The most familiar becomes the most disquieting. The economic or egological home of the *oikos*, the nearby, the familiar, the domestic, or even the national [*heimlich*] frightens itself. (Derrida 181)

With Derrida the use of the Freudian *Unheimlich* is not so much an endorsement of the theory as an experiment with it, taking it in the direction that most appeals to his sense of the term and how it might be applicable to the subject at hand. His concept of deconstruction works similarly in taking on the search for hidden or obscured meaning in text, which a Freudian might call 'repressed'. Like Derrida, most scholars use the concept of the *Unheimlich* to express some or other part of their original work, how it might work with some theoretical underpinning for their identification of the generally 'strange' or 'weird'. These scholars and others turn to Freudian theory as their starting point, but if they wish to contest it there is no real substantive theory that would allow them to.[12]Even though Jentsch introduces the term to the discipline of psychology, it is Freud who integrates it into his framework of the unconscious, and it is this framework which makes all the difference.

One contemporary theory of the uncanny which does not rely on the principle of repression, but does draw inspiration from Freud's use of *The Sand-man*, is Masahiro Mori's "Uncanny Valley Theory" (1970). Mori proposes that there is a measurable adverse reaction that results from the perception of near-human likeness in inanimate objects. Objects which have no human likeness will not cause any upset to an observer, but the closer the object gets to looking and acting like a real human the stranger it will seem, and only when the object is

[12] See for example: Wyatt (1977), Gray (1996), Capps (2000) Rohy (2003), Shumaker (2005), Frank (2007), Moshenka (2012).

indistinguishable from a real human would the uncanny effect no longer be felt by an observer. Objects that have no human likeness at all are those such as a "mechanical robot", and an example of an objects which approaches human likeness without perfectly imitating it is a "humanoid robot" (Mori 98-100). Mori's diagram is adapted by Angela Tinwell in her book *The Uncanny Valley in Games and Animation* (2015), which illustrates both the static and dynamic cases:



(7)

The uncanny effect is most present in the 'valley' which exists between near-human likeness and an actual human being, due to the "mismatches among human and nonhuman features [which] strike discords among the observer, and the overall effect is "eerie"" (Clayton and Leshner 59). The same effect can be seen in digital animation where the more accurately visual techniques can imitate the appearance and actions of a real human, the more obvious and unsettling any faults in the appearance or actions of these figures seem (Tinwell 10).

Mori's theory can lend some understanding to the overall discomfort that Olimpia causes for the observers in *The Sand-man* as well as Nathanael's shock in the moment of realisation that she is in fact an automaton, and there is nothing in this idea that requires the return of repressed emotions. Olimpia's "father" Spalanzani the inventor is comparable to the modern animator who wants to produce a body that can pass as human, due to a near-perfect likeness. The effect of the uncanny valley is in this case the failure of the inventor or animator to produce perfect human

likeness in a non-human object. Mori explains how imperfect attempts at human likeness can disturb viewers, but this is mostly helpful in understanding robotics and the pursuit of verisimilitude of the human body in digital media. In literature there are fewer examples of robotic or mechanical human bodies, one example would be the case of Olimpia, but there are subtly different effects when reading literature than experiencing this 'valley' in other media. In any formulation and theorisation of the uncanny there are going to be areas which cannot be accounted for, but the most appropriate response is to approach the subject as Nicholas Royle suggests:

> To write about the uncanny, as Freud's essay makes admirably clear, is to lose one's bearings, to find oneself immersed in the maddening logic of supplement, to engage with a hydra. There is no reason to give up trying: examples of the uncanny get tangled up with one another, critical distinctions and conclusions become vertiginously difficult, but they are still necessary. (Royle 8)

During this process of searching for new conditions of the uncanny it is also important to appreciate, as Freud did, that "we have clearly not exhausted the possibilities of poetic licence and the privileges enjoyed by story-writers in evoking or in excluding uncanny experience" (251). Freud may be the cornerstone of the theory of the *Unheimlich*, but he has not been able to successfully separate his own peculiar fascinations with repression and castration from the broader theory of the uncanny as it applies to imaginative experiences such as literature, fine art or music. There is diminishing intellectual yield in trying to reproduce the results of Freudian *Unheimlich*, and a growing need to move closer toward ideas that explain how literature achieves the effects of the uncanny through poetical, narratological and linguistic devices.

> To formulate it in the scantiest manner - the simplest but most apodictic - I submit for your consideration the following hypothesis: a text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without or less a genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging.
>
> Jacques Derrida, *The Law of Genre* (1980)

Genre and Form: "La Fantastique" and The Structuralist Method

Having looked at Freud's *Unheimlich* it is clear that it does not suffice to cover uncanny phenomena in literature, and so the next step is to look at Tzvetan Todorov's ***Introduction à la Littérature Fantastique*** ("The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to Genre") (1973) which is often considered to be a later attempt at an account for the uncanny as a literary genre. 13 In order for the structural approach to work, Todorov claims that there are three conditions that must be met: the first necessary condition is "the reader's hesitation" (31); this is a hesitation as to what genre the story will fall into once the narrative ends. The second condition is "that the reader identify with a particular character … that the hesitation be represented" (31); this identification with a character is not a necessary condition, but it is a common one. In order for a story to be lastingly uncanny, Todorov says, it must abide by these two criteria.

The third condition which is necessary for the genre that the reading be "neither 'poetic' nor 'allegorical'", so that the story is understood to be representing a literal rather than an abstracted or symbolic narrative space (32). If there is no hesitation, or if the text demands 'poetic' or 'allegorical' readings, the structure that Todorov proposes here would not apply. Provided that these earlier conditions are met, stories which incorporate supernatural elements fall into one of three major genres: the *étrange*, the *fantastique*, and the *merveilleux*.[14] The distinguishing feature that sets each of these genres apart is the reader's interpretation of the supernatural phenomenon: (i) if the supernatural element is explained away via natural or 'real'

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[13] A structural approach refers to the idea that genre is the mechanism that exists for "organizing and, to some extent, shaping literary texts and activities within a literary reality." (Bawarshi & Reiff 17).

[14] There are also sub-genres in this set, such as the *étrange-fantastique*, and the *fantastique-merveilleux*, but these are not as important as the main genre distinctions for the sake of the argument here (Todorov 46).

sources, thus rejected by the reader, then the story would be in the genre of the *étrange*; (ii) if the supernatural element is accepted without contest and does not cause either the narrator or the reader to hesitate, in a sense taking for granted that the supernatural element does not cause a problem in the story, it would be in the genre of the *merveilleux*; (iii) if the supernatural element is neither clearly accepted or rejected, and causes a significant hesitation for either the reader or the narrator, the story would be in the genre of the *fantastique*. Todorov presents these three major genres that may arise from the appearance of the supernatural, and he uses this organisational system in order to capture what he calls an "historical genre," which draws its features from "literary reality" (13). Historical genres are established through reading features of literature and finding patterns of appearance between works, rather than enforcing arbitrary theoretical distinctions.

When explaining how the genres relate to one another Todorov uses the analogy of tense. The past tense is inhabited by the *étrange*, because the supernatural in this case is explained by existing knowledge that can be validated, "we refer the inexplicable to known facts, to previous experience, and thereby to the past" (Todorov 42). Todorov clearly places the *étrange* in the realm of the knowable, which means that when something apparently supernatural happens a natural explanation must be found for it. The *étrange* is likened to the past tense as it exists in an explanation that 'already is'. This may seem similar to Freud's claim that everything that is *Unheimlich* must go through the process of repression and return – and thus has always had a root in the known – but Todorov suggests more broadly that the *étrange* exists simply because the supernatural experiences can be explained. The experiences have a root in the known, not only in the psyche of the individual but also simply a root in 'reality', and so their nature as 'supernatural' is rejected.

Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) is used as an example of the genre of the *étrange* because there are suggestions that the supernatural elements of the story are all explicable through natural causes. When the supernatural elements do start to occur – such as the

bad weather seeming to coincide with the narrator's reading of an old tale of chivalry (Poe 74-76), the apparent resurrection of Roderick Usher's sister shortly after this, the immediate death of Roderick and his sister as they reach each other's arms, and the collapsing of the house itself – the narrator brings doubt upon the possibility that these things are supernatural (Poe 77). The narrator supposedly dispels the possibility of the *fantastique* throughout the tale and as he never accepts the events comfortably his experiences do not form part of the *merveilleux*: The first instance of lightning is explained a way as "it was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone that had arrested my attention" (Poe 75), the resurrection of Roderick's sister is explained by knowledge from the past, that "*we have put her living in the tomb!*" (Poe 76); Roderick's death is anticipated throughout the narrative, as he is introduced as an almost corpse-like man with "a cadaverousness of complexion" (Poe 64), and his statement "I shall perish. I *must* perish" (Poe 65); the house itself is already old and unsteady at the moment the narrator arrives, "perhaps the eye of a scrutinising observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zig-zag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn" (Poe 63). These explanations are all sceptical and rational because the narrator's attitude is sceptical and rational. Even in the face of the supernatural, the narrator supposedly grounds his understanding in a natural explanation.

From this example, Todorov suggests that the *étrange* is a category of literature that that faces the supernatural – in a moment of hesitation – and subsequently points back to the natural. This view of *The House of Usher* is contested in Chapter III, as it is never clear that these strange coincidences are definitely due to natural causes, and it is suggested that the story is an example of both narratological and interpretive ambiguity.

There is another problem which has been posed for the genre of the *étrange*, and this is when the introduction of the supernatural ends up producing something kitsch rather than genuinely frightening. Stanislaw Lem's particular criticism on this point is that the problem of kitsch undermines the participation in, and definition of Todorov's structured genres:

> Every literary genre has its masterwork-ceiling, and kitsch, by a tactics of crude mimicry, pretends to have soared to such an altitude. Todorov, fettered by the immanence of his procedures, has deprived himself of any possibility of recognizing mimicry of values, and accordingly his implicit reader must, by dint of solemn exertions, see to it that the silliest twaddle about spirits sends chills up and down his spine. (Lem 236)

Lem's position here is that Todorov's categories do not account at all for the quality of the literature in question, and that having the defining aspects of the *étrange* does not guarantee that the work will be "uncanny" in the sense that Lem understands the term. This criticism does bring about an interesting idea, the possibility for a "hardheaded reader, who, if [s]he is not scared by a ghost story, relabels it with respect to genre" (Lem 235). It is true that literature in the broader category of speculative fiction is often accused of being nothing more than a workshop dedicated to the kitsch zombies and vampires now found throughout pop culture, so this concern is somewhat legitimate. However, the same concern applies to all literature, as any novel could easily fall into the realm of "unintentionally humoresque", but this feature is associated with speculative fiction far more than any other type. Lem's claim seems to extend so far as to say that any attempt at writing the supernatural becomes "the silliest twaddle about spirits," and while many stories of the supernatural do tend toward the kitsch, it is important to distinguish the unintentional and intentional forms of kitsch that can arise from such stories.

Three contrasting examples suffice to illustrate this point; Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the *Twilight* series (2005-2008) by Stephanie Meyer, and Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009). Both Stoker and Meyer use the motif of the vampire but to drastically different effect, and Grahame-Smith utilises the popular zombie figure for intentional parody. Stoker's Dracula is the enigmatic Count of Transylvania, and his character is slowly revealed through interactions with the various narrators, where he starts to induce disgust and terror each time he enters their presence, "a strange chill, and a lonely feeling" (Stoker 11), "a sick feeling of suspense" (Stoker 12), "a horrible feeling of nausea" (Stoker 16), "that vague feeling of uneasiness which I always have when the count is near" (Stoker 20), "repulsion and terror when I saw the whole man slowly emerge from the window and begin to crawl down the castle wall over the dreadful abyss"

(Stoker 24), "feeling as though my own brain were unhinged" (Stoker 25). The overwhelming provocation of dread in all those who are near Dracula is what establishes the tension and suspense throughout much of the novel, until such a confirmation can be made that he is in fact, inhuman:

> But the Count! Never did I imagine such wrath and fury, even to the demons of the pit. His eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell fire blazed behind them. His face was deathly pale, and the lines of it were hard like drawn wires. The thick eyebrows that met over the nose now seemed like a heaving bar of white-hot metal. (Stoker 42-43)

Jonathan Harker recalls these features here as Dracula displays his superhuman strength and rage, and from this confirmation hunt to kill him begins. He is considered a threat to the wellbeing of the entire human race, and those who hunt him undertake their task with the utmost solemnity. The novel ends with Dracula's death, and the curse of his castle is ended. By contrast, the narrator of *Twilight* Bella Swan slowly falls in love with Edward Cullen the vampire and Jacob Black the werewolf, causing a love-triangle which in turn sees both of the supernatural men vying for Bella's romantic attentions. Edward is a palpably less frightening figure of the vampire than Dracula, appearing to Bella as "the beautiful boy", (Meyer 10) who "was absurdly handsome — with piercing, hate-filled eyes" (Meyer 14), but beyond his eyes there is nothing at all frightening about him. Bella's emotional state in Edward's presence is also vastly different, where he provides her with a feeling of safety rather than dread. He makes a "promise to take [Bella] safely home", often leaving her "wishing that a miracle would occur, and Edward would appear" (Meyer 64), and confessing to him that "I feel very safe with you" (Meyer 93). Here is the exact opposite of the dangerous vampire who shows that within super-human power is a possibility for safety instead of destruction. When Edward's true nature as a vampire is revealed, Bella is still unsurprisingly interested in being close to him and loving him:

> About three things I was absolutely positive. First, Edward was a vampire. Second, there was part of him — and I didn't know how potent that part might be — that thirsted for my blood. And third, I was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him. (Meyer 92)

The motif of the vampire is reconceptualised with the power of love, and any possible chance for the uncanny is erased. Bella is perhaps in danger and Edward 'might' have a thirst for her blood, but love overrides these fears. In Meyer the vampire - as well as the werewolf - is a love-object, and no real hesitance or dread is present in perceiving this nature. In the case of *Dracula,* the Count is most unfamiliar, unsettling and dangerous. The allusion to the Count as the incarnation of the devil, his insatiable need for death and manipulation makes Dracula a very different character. *Twilight* reveals a general fascination with the supernatural and of romance, and presents the kitsch in literature as the particular appeal to a clean, virtuous, consonant and desirable reader experience, even of figures which are traditionally dreadful and frightening:

> "Kitsch" is a German word born in the middle of the sentimental nineteenth century, and from German it entered all Western languages. Repeated use, however, has obliterated its original metaphysical meaning: kitsch is the absolute denial of shit, in both the literal and the figurative senses of the word; kitsch excludes everything from its purview which is essentially unacceptable in human experience. (Kundera 248)

Kitsch is the sanitary experience of literature that changes the danger and confusion in otherwise uncanny figures into palatable, and in some cases even pleasurable, experiences. The subjects of terror turn into romantic objects to be desired, retextured with amiable character. These stories present themselves seriously enough to be taken as such, which is also a contributing factor to their *unintentionally* kitsch nature. Time and again these stories use the tropes and motifs of gothic horror in order to bring some sort of gravity to their romance; and in a sense, this can be effective. The more obviously kitsch nature of these stories is in their modifications of typically supernatural phenomena into desirable and fully comprehensible beings. This is only one side to the appearance of kitsch in literature, but it is a popular one.[15]

Stories which are intentionally kitsch function on another level, not only playing to a pop-cultural need for the figures of the supernatural, but also the relative difference in interest

[15] Further examples include: Richelle Mead's *Vampire Academy* (2007-2010), Abigail Gibbs's *The Dark Heroine: Dinner with a Vampire* (2012), Christopher Golden's *The Gathering Dark* (2013), Cassandra Clare's *The Mortal Instruments* (2007-2014), and more.

between the reading public of today compared to the last two centuries. Most are parodies which by introducing zombies, ghosts, vampires or werewolves, manage to comment critically on both our present pop-cultural obsession with such figures and their ability to coincide so readily with classic novels. The recent re-writing of many classic novels has done just this, like Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009), Porter Grand's *Little Women and Werewolves* (2009) or Ben H. Winters's *Android Karenina* (2010).[16] This self-conscious kitsch is able to draw out the stark contrast in our literary tastes, from "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." (Austen 1), to "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a zombie in possession of brains must be in want of more brains" (Grahame-Smith 1). The seriousness in this comparison is not that zombies must be genuinely frightening at all times, but perhaps that Jane Austen's novel might be improved for modern audiences by their very presence. The *étrange* could include kitsch narratives which do not scare or disturb anybody, but this is not because those stories are to be read with seriousness, it is that their predominant effect is to make themselves and their content familiar to their reader.

These stories may well still belong to the *étrange* as they present strangeness without real hesitation or conflict, but they would not in any way be uncanny. While it is a very valuable consideration to imagine that literature of this nature may simply not be read as serious or 'literary' narratives, Lem's position on kitsch here is actually formed due to an inaccuracy, a mistranslation of *étrange*, which leads him to attack an argument that has in fact not been made:

> If Todorov had called his intermediate genre the "uncanny" or given it some other less broadly designative term, much polemicizing might have been avoided. … In ordinary English usage, at any rate, "uncanny" is much closer to the mark. Here Todorov's English translator has not helped much, by translating *étrange* as uncanny. (Scholes 167)

[16] Further examples include Bill W. Czolgosz's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Zombie Jim* (2009), Nickolas Cook's *Alice in Zombieland* (2009), Vera Nazarian's *Mansfield Park and Mummies* (2009), Adam Rann's *Emma and the Werewolves* (2009), Lynn Messina's *Little Vampire Women* (2010), Sarah Gray's *Wuthering Bites* (2010), Sherri Browning's *Jane Slayre* (2010) and *Grave Expectations* (2011), Coleridge Cook's *The Meowmorphosis* (2011), and more.

In using the word "uncanny" to refer to the category *étrange*, translator Richard Howard makes Todorov seem as though he wishes to suggest that any appearance of the supernatural would be effectively 'uncanny' if it were not part of the *fantastique*. This also may seem to repeat the Freudian schema of the *Unheimlich* if Howard's translation is to be taken as a definitive one, but the terms *Unheimlich*, *étrange* and uncanny are not direct one to one replacements of each other. The distinction between *Unheimlich* and uncanny is in a sense "untranslatable", being stuck in a lexical gap which prevents completely accurate translation, but they are the closest approximations that can be made. Similarly, *étrange* and uncanny are not perfect analogues for one another either; the literal translation is "strange" (*Collins* "étrange"), which may include the uncanny by way of its broad reference, but this tentative link does not equate uncanny with the *Unheimlich* or the *étrange*.

Once this oversight is accounted for, it is possible to see some categorical equivalents within the genre theories built from the *Unheimlich* and the *étrange*. In Freud's *Unheimlich* a break from realism signals a conflict between the natural and the supernatural, and the subsequent realisation that the supernatural does not exist is a move back to realism. In the *étrange* the appearance of the supernatural produces hesitation, and the subsequent realisation of natural sources for these phenomena reaffirms the natural world once more. In this way the terms are similar, but they both do not account for the importance of uncertainty and ambiguity.

The *merveilleux* is on the other end of the spectrum and is analogised as the future tense, an "unknown phenomenon, never seen as yet, still to come – hence to a future" (Todorov 42). The understanding of the phenomenon must come from knowledge that is not yet gained, but more properly it is an assumption that the phenomenon makes sense, even without evidence. Todorov claims the *merveilleux* is analogous to the future tense as it exists in an explanation that is 'still to be', and the presence of the supernatural does not cause any disruption to the narrative or the reader. This difference between disruptive and non-disruptive inclusions of the

supernatural is not a bad distinction to make. If any supernatural element in a narrative does not disrupt either a character's or a reader's conscious experience, it would indeed not be *étrange*, nor would it be uncanny. Stories which do this are the likes of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), or J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007), and the presence of magic in these works does not cause hesitation or uncertainty.

Continuing the analogy, between the 'past' and the 'future' is the *fantastique*, and "the hesitation which characterises it cannot be situated, by and large, except in the present" (Todorov 42). The *fantastique* occupies the space between knowledge gained, and knowledge which is yet to be acquired. The *fantastique* is called an "evanescent genre" (Todorov 42) because it inhabits a space between the *étrange* and the *merveilleux*. In essence, the fantastic is the moment of hesitance and ambiguity before a more solid genre is identified, and it is found between the *étrange* and the *merveilleux* (Todorov 27). If a story is not clearly indicative of either the *étrange* or the *merveilleux* by its end, the story would fit into the genre of the *fantastique*. The *fantastique* is thus typified as an inability to place a story firmly in one genre or another. In the *fantastique* a reader can neither validate nor invalidate of supernatural elements of the story. Todorov does state the importance of "hesitance" for this particular genre, but this "hesitance" functions quite differently than the ambiguity of the poetical uncanny:

> While the poetical uncanny is similar to Todorov's [*fantastique*], because it resides on the same middle ground characterised by the reader's 'hesitation,' the role of hesitation is more far-reaching than in Todorov's model. Todorov is engaged in a repression of the uncanny that is not only similar to Freud but also derived from Freud. (Falkenberg 33)

The poetical uncanny is a far-reaching concept that need not tie itself specifically to genre, and can describe the effect of any story which presents mutually exclusive readings. Different schools of genre theory have long been in contest with one another, vying for authority over which epistemology and taxonomy are most appropriate to use when

grouping texts together,[17] and these methods of classification are an inevitable by-product from the act of writing and reading. However, when a text is said to 'belong' to a genre it is, as Derrida puts it, "a sort of participation without belonging - a taking part in without being part of, without having membership in a set" (59). Genre is at once an integral part of and completely beside the point of interacting with literature, but these categories can sometimes be helpful. Enforcing some sort of boundary around a text – or group of texts – appeals to a scientific sensibility, and the taxonomy of works under different labels does have some practical application. The broader categories in genre are typically stark: one should, for example, easily be able to find obvious stylistic differences between a typical murder mystery and an epic fantasy, the difference in form between a novel and a poem, fiction and non-fiction. As helpful and instinctive as the boundaries of genre are, literature often purposefully transgresses these in order to branch out into creative and interesting sub-genres.

New theories of genre often define themselves as apart from or opposed to more rigid ones, and the distinction of sub-genres arises from "precisely a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy" (Derrida 59). This 'parasitical economy' is exactly how the uncanny and genre coexist, just like the 'stickiness' that allows it show up in other areas, it becomes attached to other genres and by doing so complicates their possible status as a 'pure' example of any particular genre. This literature purposefully tries to subordinate genre in order to pull more focus on to the text itself:

> He believes that no one will be bound by the definition of genre (as denoted by the publishers or authors; or in the cataloging of libraries) because there are '[c]onfusion, irony, the shift in conventions toward a new definition [of the genre],

[17] The common approaches to genre theory in literary tradition are laid out by Bawarshi and Reiff in *Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy* (2010): (i) Neoclassical (14-16), (ii) Structuralist (17-19), (iii) Romantic and Post-Romantic (20-21), (iv) Reader Response (22) and (v) Cultural Studies (23). Apart from these major approaches there are several which are not literary-specific, such as the Linguistic (29 -40), Rhetorical and Sociological traditions (57-77).

> [and] the search of supplementary effect'. Literary works often have strange, foreign, uncanny and defamiliarizing effects. (Chan 157)

Every piece of writing can inevitably be evaluated for its distinguishing characteristics or style and be put it into categories based on those characteristics, but current theories about the uncanny do not denote a clear and intuitive set of characteristics that would make a narrative implicitly uncanny. With this in mind it is pertinent to answer the question whether the uncanny is itself a genre, or whether it negotiates its way between or through other genres as a completely different force. The problem of genre leaves the study of the uncanny within a reality-fantasy binary which does not adequately describe its function. This means that while a prominent feature of the uncanny may be the challenge posed by the line between reality and fantasy, this feature cannot be extended so far as to say that the uncanny is ultimately located on, or conceptualised as this line. The description of the uncanny as the location between genres, the "evanescent" genre, is also inadequate. The uncanny is neither purely reducible to a question of 'the real' as it is in the Freudian *Unheimlich* and the *étrange,* nor definitely located as the space *between* reality and fantasy as it is in the *fantastique* – the uncanny exists besides any label of genre. The tendency to redefine and reposition the theory of the uncanny has led to the emancipation of the term from any single definition or location. This continues the vitality of the term by allowing it to 's tick' to other ideas, such as genre: "the stickiness of the word also attracts new associations and variations that are by no means always motivated by conscious or deliberate moves, and these ensure the dynamism of the concept" (Masschelein 13). This 'stickiness', as Masschelein calls it, is a way of understanding how the uncanny crops up in any subject which deals with the relationship of the familiar to the unfamiliar, or the homely to the unhomely, and the generally weird fictions that it is so often found in.

Falkenberg has laid the foundation for looking at alternatives to Freud's psychoanalysis and Todorov's structuralism, and it is this foundation which will help to bridge the lexical gap, the lacuna, between the semantic differences in '*Unheimlich*', '*étrange*' and 'uncanny.' The translation

of the 'uncanny' is difficult to achieve between languages, but it is equally difficult to achieve between disciplines. It is imperative to remember, as Royle says, that the uncanny is "how we conceive and represent what is happening within ourselves, to ourselves, to the world when uncanny strangeness is at issue" (Royle 3-4). The uncanny is as much an effect arising from experience as it is embedded within language. One of the ways to understand the uncanny as contingent of both perception and language is as a problem within the realm of intentionality, a branch of the philosophy of phenomenology.[18] Intentionality concerns the instinctive 'directedness' of consciousness, meaning that people are not simply in a 'conscious' state, but that the state of consciousness is always 'of' other things:

> Things that are about other things exhibit intentionality. Beliefs and other mental states exhibit intentionality, but so, in a derived way, do sentences and books, maps and pictures, and other representations. … Hopes and fears, for instance, are not things we do, not intentional acts in the latter, familiar sense, but they are intentional phenomena in the technical sense: hopes and fears are about various things. (Audi 441)

To put this into slightly different terms, there is always an interpretive act at play which accounts for the conscious mind's awareness of the 'textuality' of things. The full consciousness of a 'text' relies not only on its denotative nature but on the complexity on the levels of its contextual, subtextual, intertextual and metatextual content.[19] These levels work together to create the overall textuality of a subject or object, and constitute the possible levels of 'relatedness' that can be formed through interpretation. This is where intentionality becomes important to the concept of the uncanny, as it deals with the idea that consciousness is "essentially directed onto existent things, and extensionally related to them. Intentionality then

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[18] Broadly speaking phenomenology is the description and analysis of consciousness. From Husserl onward phenomenology branches into various different fields; these branches are found in the work of Kant and Hegel but also revised by "Scheler, N. Hartmann, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty" (Audi 664).

[19] "Textual" in this sense is anything which has features that can be read, or that has the capacity to be interpreted (denotation, form, structure *etc.*). "Contextual" refers to everything that makes up the surroundings of a text but is not directly a part of it (historicity, preceding or proceeding texts, environment *etc.*). "Subtextual" refers to any possible underlying meaning in the text (theme, concept, pointedness *etc.*). "Intertextual" refers to parts of other texts which are incorporated into the primary text itself (quotation, motif, plagiarism *etc.*). "Metatextual" refers to the level at which a text might be commenting on another text (critique, argumentation, apologetics, *etc.*).

becomes a feature of language, rather than a metaphysical or ontological peculiarity of the mental world'' (Blackburn 197). In other words, existent things are both perceived by and expressed through the conscious mind, and whether these existent things cause uncertainty would be due to the obstruction of either perception or expression. The experience of the uncanny belongs mostly to the latter, where uncertainty is created through a conflict within the interpretive act. An uncanny phenomenon thus disrupts the certainty of the 'directedness' of consciousness, whether by perceiving strangeness within the text itself or in another level of its textuality. This interpretation of textuality is not exactly the same as the search for truth and reality but it is at times confused with questions of ontology:

> On the other hand, 'John knows (realizes, admits) there are unicorns' is presumably psychological and yet does imply there are unicorns. … Moreover, perception and feeling pain are surely psychological but do not seem always to involve ways of looking at things, or assumptions about existence, i.e. they do not seem to be psychological in the way required. (Lacey 166)

It can be seen in the example of 'John knows (realizes, admits) there are unicorns,' that intentionality appears in some cases to be a statement of ontological truth – in this case, that unicorns exist – but it is in fact more accurately speaking a representation of one's state of mind or set of beliefs. Returning to the case of *The Sand-man*, the statement 'Nathanael realises that Coppelius is the Sand-man' does not equate to a confirmation of truth, but of Nathanael's expressed belief. Intentionality is thus able to account for the two main sources of uncertainty in the experience of uncanny phenomena: the perception of any given subject or object, and the expression of this experience through language.[20]

When one or both of these aspects of consciousness are interfered with, the uncanny is made possible. The uncanny is only 'made possible' by these interferences rather than 'always present' in them because individual reactions may differ, as seen in the "hardheaded reader" who

[20] "Perception'' refers firstly to somatic experience – hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell – but it also includes emotional experiences – fear, love, hate, disgust, *etc.* "Expression'' refers to how the phenomenon is represented in and by language, but also includes intellectual factors that inform this expression – conceptions of reality, belief in the supernatural, mental acuity.

might think any appearance of the supernatural is kitsch, thereby eliminating the possibility of the uncanny in these instances altogether. The experience of uncanny phenomena may then function in the following way: if consciousness is *directed* toward – and extensionally related to – phenomena in the surrounding environment, uncanny phenomena are those things which misdirect our consciousness into negative emotions like fear, anxiety and confusion. The overriding uncertainty and misdirection which is central to uncanny experience is best understood as dissonance, meaning in this sense that one's feelings or thoughts are forced into incongruent modes of function by the appearance of some uncanny phenomenon. Falkenberg refers to this aspect as it appears in literature as "textual paranoia" (86), and claims that stories which incorporate the uncanny are complicit in "leaving the reader uncertain about the significance of the contiguous or similar elements that appear to be presented as clues" (86) for understanding plot and meaning within these stories. With this in mind, it is now time to turn to three specific literary examples.

> To feel our character, our personality, and our personal, hard-won history fade from being is to be exposed to whatever lies beneath these comforting, operational conveniences. What remains when the conscious and functioning self has been erased is mankind's fundamental condition – irrational, violent, guilt-wracked, despairing, and mad.
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> Peter Straub, American Fantastic Tales (2009)

Unresolved Doubts: "The Uncanny" and Disturbing Texts

So far two major positions in the study of the uncanny have been revised: the Freudian *Unheimlich* and its institutionalisation within psychoanalysis, and the mistranslation of Todorov's *étrange* in the genre structure of *la Fantastique*. In the place of the psychoanalytical and structural approaches, the ideas of disrupted intentionality, uncertainty, the poetical uncanny and textual paranoia have been suggested as more suitable areas that can evaluate the appearance of the uncanny in literature. These ideas will now be situated in the analysis of short works by Edgar Allan Poe, Henry James and Franz Kafka. Falkenberg suggests that Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher*, James's *The Turn of the Screw* and Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* would make suitable texts for further investigation of his own work, so these have been chosen accordingly (192).

Various aspects of Poe's *House of Usher* have been suggested as the 'legitimate sources of terror' in the story. These include the possibility that Roderick Usher life gives sentience to the house and is inextricably tied to its decay (Walker 587), that the resurrection and death of his sister Madeline is a shared hallucination of both the narrator and Roderick himself (Hill 396), that the relationship between Roderick and Madeline is incestuous and thus part of a moral "fall" in the household (Spitzer 352) and others which say that Roderick's "fear is a fear of fear, a fear that the moment of losing his individual identity will be too much for him" (Stahlberg 16). Most of these interpretations consider the Roderick or Madeline the key to understanding the overall unsettling nature of the story, but the inherent peculiarity in the narrator's journey and reliability are rather neglected in these considerations. The fact that the narrator continually tries and fails to explain away the "utter depression of soul", coincidental

noises and even the destruction of the house, is because he is desperately trying to hang on to sanity and rationality in otherwise extraordinary circumstances. The narrator's reliability is at the forefront of this problem.

As seen in Chapter II, Todorov takes up the narrator's affinity for the rational and the natural, and from this fact suggests that the narrative is one which exemplifies the *étrange*. While the narrator may try to understand his experiences as natural occurrences, he is at many times unable to shake off the ill feelings that they produce in him – so much so, that in his haste to leave the Usher mansion at the end of the story the narrator leaves the bodies of Roderick and Madeline to fall into "the deep and dank tarn" (Poe 77). While he does flee from the house in terror, abandoning the rational position that there is "little token of instability" in its masonry, the narrator affirms at the close of the story that the lightning storm enters "that once barely discernable fissure, of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base" (Poe 77). This to and fro between the narrator's terror and rationality is the primary technique that Poe uses to achieve the poetic uncanny, creating the illusion that these strange events are both perfectly explicable and yet at the same time that they defy rational understanding.

The moment the narrator begins the tale, his comfort begins to disintegrate in the "dull, dark soundless day" in which "the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens" (Poe 60). When looking on the house he feels "an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium – the bitter lapse into everyday life – the hideous dropping off of the veil" (Poe 60). The first thing that the narrator notices is the unnerving feeling that he gets when looking at the house, but there is no obvious indication as to the source of his discomfort. It is the pervading sense of doubt which should be brought to light in order to understand these episodes. The narrator's attitude toward the accuracy of his own perception and emotion throughout the experience is also important

to note. When he reflects on the source of the strange feelings that the house, the adornments, and Usher himself are eliciting in him, he says:

> There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition – for why should I not so term it? – served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. (Poe 62)

Even with the knowledge that he is in some way giving in to superstition, the narrator finds that the experience exacerbates the problem instead of allaying it. Having no reason to feel so desperately uncomfortable about the appearance of the house, the narrator tries to reassure himself that all is well by "shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream" (Poe 62). In an attempt to solve the mystery of his sudden and 'utter depression of soul', he looks to the exterior of the house and notes that the remarkable features are "an excessive antiquity" and a "discoloration of ages", with spots of "minute fungi" and the presence of "a fine tangled webwork from the eves" (Poe 62). Each of these features suggests an insidious instability, but counter to these anxieties the narrator believes that the house must still be stable:

> No portion of the masonry had fallen, and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still-perfect adaptations of parts and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. … Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability (Poe 62).

At this point, though the physical aspects of the house show no sense of volatility to the narrator, he still cannot shake the feeling that something is wrong. Once inside the house, he looks around at the items that adorn the entrance hall, "the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies" (Poe 63). Even these items which he has been comfortable with since childhood begin to seem unfamiliar in the dark atmosphere that saturates the house, "I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this – I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up" (Poe 63). What the narrator had once found to be familiar in his childhood – the house's exterior, the carved ceilings, ornamental tapestries, black floors and armorial trophies – now suddenly seems unfamiliar. This feeling of

unfamiliarity is given no explanation, and both the narrator and reader are left to puzzle at this increasingly strange experience.

Not only does the house cause a lingering discomfort, its proprietor Roderick Usher also appears to mirror this decay with a "cadaverousness of complexion" which the narrator describes "in the mere exaggeration they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke" (Poe 64). Roderick's temperament strikes the narrator "with an incoherence – an inconsistency", and his movements, "being alternately vivacious and sullen" (Poe 64), are incongruent with the narrator's recollection of his character. His appearance and actions disturb the narrator, as does his voice, which moves between "tremulous indecision" to "leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance" (Poe 64). Roderick embodies this ambiguous misery and joy through his deathly appearance and disjointed motion, but he is also, like the narrator, eager to attribute at least a part of the feeling of terror to natural sources:

> He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin - to the severe and long-continued illness - indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution - of a tenderly beloved sister, his sole companion for long years, his last and only relative on earth. (Poe 65-66)

Roderick is anxious to explain away his 'peculiar gloom,' noting that he can identify its source in the fact that his sister Madeline has been sick for a long time. He narrator also notices that Roderick's style of painting reminds him of the "certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli" (Poe 67), which could well be an allusion to *The Nightmare*, as analysed in the introduction to this study, or one of Fuseli's other angelic figures. The possible allusion suggests that the occupants of the Usher mansion are much like Fuseli's women, trapped in a dissolute construct from which they cannot escape. The difference in this case is that death is the ultimate end for the suffering of the Usher family, but also happens to be the end of their entire family line.

Roderick attempts to cover this decay, he is trying to fight against "a universe that has passed the peak of its expansion; the process of diffusion has already been halted, and the

universe has quite begun its contraction" (Stahlberg 13). In light of this, Roderick does not know how to deal with the fear of death when his sister eventually dies, as she is "the physical reflection of Roderick's individual identity, embodies this fear, and thus he wants both to bury her and to keep her" (Stahlberg 16). This is when Roderick and the narrator conceal Madeline's body inside a vault which is built into the walls of the house, and the door of the vault is "of massive iron" (Poe 71). When Roderick goes into his final frenzy he points to the door of his room and says "*Madman! I tell you now that she stands without the door!*" (Poe 77). At this moment the massive iron doors of the vault blow open, as does the "screwed" down lid of the coffin that they have buried Lady Madeline in, and both Roderick and the narrator see her body standing upright in plain view:

> It was the work of the rushing gust – but then without those doors there *did* stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the Lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. (Poe 77)

Here the narrator experiences the apparent resurrection of Lady Madeline, clad in her blood-stained robes, but he attributes the opening of the vault to the "rushing gust" and the apparent resurrection to Roderick's earlier assertion that "*We have put her living in the tomb!*" (Poe 76). One interpretation of this scene is that "Roderick must be mentally unbalanced if he is to conjure Madeline's ghost, for indeed the hallucination that Madeline returns alive from the grave is but the product of Roderick's mind." (Hill 399). Even if Roderick's melancholy and madness is attributed to this "long-continued illness" of his sister, the narrator does not share this exact feeling. The narrator tries to find natural causes for Roderick's explanations throughout the story, even when Roderick has clearly descended into madness, but in the final moments of Roderick's life, the narrator either abandons his rationality or truly does see a ghost.

This should throw doubt upon the narrator's reliability, for up until this point he may simply have been adopting Roderick's views in sympathy, but once the Ushers die in each other's arms the narrator is on his own. He claims that he does see the body of Madeline rise from the vault, and the house really does get swallowed up by the deep and dank tarn before his very eyes.

It may be that the lives of Roderick, Madeline and the house all share in the same fate, but the narrator does not. Like each of the stories in this chapter, *The Fall of the House of Usher* leaves the reader with more questions than answers, and this is the source of its lasting uncanny effect.

James's *Turn of the Screw* (1898) exemplifies the type of textual paranoia that slowly erodes the readers trust in the narrator, and every moment is used to instill doubt and distance into the process of reading and interpretation. The story is a half-framed narrative21 in which a group of friends are telling ghost stories to one another, but none of the stories seem to be unique or particularly disturbing. One of the mutual friends of this gathering, Douglas, notes reluctantly that he has for many years held on to a tale which can compare to no other "for general uncanny ugliness and horror and pain" (James 8). This tale comes from an old, untitled manuscript which belonged to his sister's governess. The manuscript follows the new appointment of the governess at Bly estate, her duties in the management thereof and the supervision of two young children, Flora and Miles. The governess tends to the affairs of the household until she starts to see the figures of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel who appear within the grounds and later the house itself. After various sightings, Mrs. Grose the housemaid reveals that the people the governess is seeing have long been dead, and in the final few lines of the story the governess finds that the young Miles has died in her arms.

The governess sees Peter Quint and Miss Jessel on a few occasions, yet at the end of the story it is unclear whether the governess has lost her mind from the overwhelming pressure of the position, whether the "received Freudian hypothesis as a result of the repression of the erotic fantasies aroused in her" (Amorós 43) should be followed, if the children and Mrs. Grose ever see the figures too, or whether the manuscript itself is yet another fictional story that Douglas or the governess herself has fabricated. These possibilities highlight that "within the well-turned little ghost tale there is deep instability. That the story doesn't really fully contain itself, that it presses

[21] "Half-framed" because it is only introduced within the frame of Douglas's story-telling, but does not return to Douglas and his listeners at its conclusion.

for explanation, not to say relief" (Klein 595). In a way, the readers and critics of the story are forced to form the other half of the framed narrative, analysing and discussing the story's important moments where Douglas's listeners do not. The enormous range of continued scholarship on James's *Turn of the Screw* is testament to its lasting effects, and the story continues to inspire adaptations in film and theatre (Cranfill and Clark 93-94).

The uncanny aspects of the story are visible in both the surface of the text itself, and also in its deeper textual layers. The first apparent level of distance the reader experiences is the half-framed narrative which begins from the perspective of an unknown narrator who writes from memory, "I remember asking" (James 7), about a series of nights during which a man named Douglas, the company's mutual friend, is convinced to read an untitled manuscript about an unnamed governess who sees ghosts. The manuscript of the story is held at Douglas's London apartment and so he commissions someone to fetch it, so that he can read it the following night - in fact, the manuscript is read over the course of "more nights than one" and when asked for the title, Douglas replies, "I haven't one" (James 9). The frame of the story places several distances between the events at Bly estate and Douglas's telling of the story to the point that the identity of the narrator and the governess are simply impossible to ascertain with any clarity, so "the only sensible conclusion is to follow Henry James's own advice in the matter and to be on out guard against making any positive identifications in a work containing such a large negative quantity" (Taylor 722). There is so much purposefully withheld from the reader, that to say the narrator is Henry James himself, or that the manuscript is in fact Douglas's attempt at a ghost story and no governess ever existed, is tending toward conspiracy.

The frame is significant because of Douglas's particular interest in the governess and in the gravity with which he presents her case. The reader, like Douglas's audience, is encouraged to believe that the governess is a trustworthy and likable person, and Douglas recalls her being "the most agreeable woman I have ever known in her position; she would have been worthy of any whatever" (James 9). It is said that the governess had also fostered some romantic interest

outside of the story, "yes, she was in love. That is she had been" (James 9), but it is unclear whether this is the case at the time she writes the manuscript because "'the story *won't* tell,' said Douglas; 'not in any literal, vulgar way.'" (James 10). Owing to the fact that the manuscript does not explicitly mention a love interest, Douglas is appealing to the sympathetic figure of the governess in order to align those hearing the story with his own opinion of her. This lengthy focus on the governess' character is not insignificant, and "the frame is contrived with such complexity and detail that it might nearly stand as a short story by itself, some 3000 words long, Douglas's tribute to the governess" (Lind 235).

When the manuscript proper begins it follows the governess's first person account, which she writes retrospectively, both recording the events of her management at Bly and commenting on the effect that certain events had on her at the time. Strangeness pervades the estate, and the governess reports on arrival that "there had been a moment when I believed I recognized, faint and far, the cry of a child" (James 16). The governess learns some information in the first few days of her stay, firstly that the young boy Miles, contrary to all descriptions of his character, has been expelled from his school as "they absolutely decline" to keep him on (James 19). The governess wonders whether Miles is really as devious as this report makes him out to be, but when seeing him in person she is shocked by his calm and handsome nature, and reassures herself that "he was only too fine for the little horrid, unclean school-world, and he had paid a price for it" (James 30). The expulsion letter from the school remains a point of mystery for the entirety of the narrative as "deep obscurity continued to cover the region of the boy's conduct at school" (James 30), and Miles never shows any particular sign of being a trouble-maker all the way up until his death. She also learns that she has replaced the previous governess, she finds out later this is Miss Jessel, who had left out of necessity for a short holiday and was found to be dead not soon afterwards - no cause of death is determined in her case.

The general atmosphere surrounding Bly and its residents is a grim one, and bears many markers of textual paranoia - the possible unreliability of the narrator, distressing sounds which

seem to be present, appearances which do not match up with descriptions, and a general sense of unease. The first figure that the governess mentions is a man on the top of the estate tower, who stares down at her as he walks across the battlements:

> There came to me thus a bewilderment of vision of which, after these years, there is no living view that I can hope to give. An unknown man in a lonely place is a permitted object of fear to a young woman; and the figure that faced me was - a few more seconds assured me - as little anyone else I knew as it was the image that had been in my mind. … the man who looked at me over the battlements was as definite as a picture in a frame. (James 27)

The governess attests to perceiving the man with clarity 'as definite as a picture in a frame', meaning that his body is not ethereal or pallid like a stereotypical ghost would be. After this sighting the governess asks herself, "was there a 'secret' at Bly - a mystery of Udolpho or an insane, an unmentionable relative kept in unsuspected confinement?" (James 28). This intertextual reference to both Radcliffe and Brontë suggests that the governess does not believe she has seen a real ghost - the uncanny figures in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Jane Eyre* are transitory, and lose their effect once they are recognised as such, which is what the governess hopes to be the case for the sake of her own and the children's safety.

The figure returns again when the governess is standing in the dining hall, but this time he is looking from the outside of the house inwards, "with a nearness that represented a forward stride in our intercourse, and made me, as I met him, catch my breath and turn cold" (James 32). The governess in this case feels more connected to the man, and his face makes her feel "as if I had been looking at him for years and had known him always" (James 32). This does not allay her fears, and something that the man does serves to increase her discomfort. He looks at the governess, but then turns to look around the house, leading her to feel "the added shock of certitude that it was not for me he had come there. He had come for someone else" (James 32). This episode is more threatening than the last as it is a more physically intimate sighting, but once the figure is gone there is also an interesting exchange between the governess and Mrs. Grose. The governess rushes outside to the window in order to see the man, but he is gone, and so she looks through the window that he was looking through. Mrs.

Grose is now on the inside of the house, and goes through virtually the same moment the governess had just experienced:

> She saw me as I had seen my own visitant; she pulled up short as I had done; I gave her something of the shock that I had received. She turned white, and this made me ask myself if I had blanched as much. (James 33)

The effect on Mrs. Grose is the same, and because of this governess confirms that the man must indeed have been there. When Mrs. Grose joins her outside they speak about the incident, and the governess gives a very detailed description of the man:

> He has red hair, very red, close-curling, and a pale face, long in shape, with straight, good features and little, rather queer whiskers that are as red as his hair. His eyebrows are, somehow, darker; they look particularly arched and as if they might move a good deal. His eyes are sharp, strange - awfully; but I only know clearly that they're rather small and very fixed. His mouth's wide, and his lips are thin, and except for his little whiskers he's quite clean-shaven. He gives me the sort of sense of looking like an actor. (James 36).

The description given here is vivid, and far from being the stereotypical ghost, the man is almost too detailed. This is a point of interest for those who follow a Freudian interpretation, and consider the presence of the ghosts as a result of the governess's "neurotic case of sex repression" (Wilson 29), because the governess only sees these figures for such short moments in time, yet her image of the man is vivid.[22] Odd comparisons are made to support this idea, such as Freud's case study of Dora and how she could well stand in for the governess, attributing "hysteria" to the appearance of sexual spectres which haunt troubled women (Cohen 73). The Freudian interpretation of sexual repression here does not account for the coincidental likeness of this apparent projection of sexual desire to Peter Quint. It does highlight how strange it is that the governess is able to hold these features so clearly in her mind, but Mrs. Grose's immediate recognition that this man must be Quint works against this exclusively sexual reading. One simple answer to the problem is that the events are intended to be recorded as objectively as possible, because James wanted to write an authentically scary ghost story:

[22] Other significant proponents of the Freudian reading of include Edna Kenton (1924), Robert Heilman (1947) and Oscar Cargill (1956).

> James seems to be taking pains to assure that his supernatural occurrences are to be taken as real and hence horrible, and not simply ineffective figments of the governess' imagination. Thus, whenever she has to report incidents which are ordinarily hard to believe, the picture drawn by the governess is exceedingly specific and detailed. (Costello 319)

The moment of recognition serves to establish the figure of Peter Quint as a real present body, even if he is dead, but it also does more than this. The governess's clarity of recall is astounding, and draws attention to just how easily and clearly she is also able to intuit the ghost's intentions, as she says to Mrs. Grose shortly afterward that they both know exactly why Quint would be there:

> 'He was looking for little Miles.' A portentous clearness now possessed me.
> 'That's whom he was looking for.'
> 'But how do you know?'
> 'I know, I know, I know!' My exaltation grew. 'And you know, my dear!' She didn't deny this, but I required, I felt, not even so much telling as that. (James 39)

How the governess is able to "know" the ghost's intentions is just as strange an element of this episode as the appearance of the ghost himself - does the clearness which "now possessed" the governess suggest some otherworldly vision, or simply that she "felt" he must be there for Miles? Her foreshadowing of the death of Miles is similar to other almost 'prophetic' moments in which the governess seems to know exactly what is going to happen next. It is never clear whether this is a feature of her retrospective narration, or something less tenable. Donald Costello writes about the structure of *The Turn of the Screw* and discusses how it brings about both mystification and horror which are due particularly to the structure of the narrative. Costello lays down a four-point pattern that the narration follows: suspense by foretelling, the incident itself, the subjective report, and the plan of action which is ineffective and overlaps with more foretelling.[23] The appearance of the second figure, Miss Jessel, follows this process exactly.

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[23] 1. The narrator establishes suspense by foretelling something of an important subsequent occurrence.

2. The incident which is the center of the sequence then takes place. (In a few cases it is a series of closely allied incidents rather than a single occurrence.) In each case, except the last, it is the focal point of an entire scene of representation.

Before actually seeing anyone, the governess intuitively knows that she and the children are being watched at the sea-side,

> Suddenly, in these circumstances, I became aware that, on the other side of the sea of Azof, we had an interested spectator. The way that this knowledge was gathered in me was the strangest thing in the world – the strangest, that is, except the very much stranger in which it quickly merged itself. (James 43)

The governess describes the figure as if from her peripheral vision, never looking directly at it, but she has gained a full and vivid account. This may not seem particularly strange to a reader who does not realise that the Sea of Asof is in fact at its closest opposing shores some twenty kilometres distance, and at most the length between shores is around three hundred and seventy kilometres.[24] The perception of a figure "on the other side of the sea" – particularly this sea – is either clairvoyance, fabrication or something else entirely, as in the governess's perfectly accurate description of Quint. When the governess perceives that a figure is watching her from across the sea, she also claims "there was no ambiguity in anything, none whatever" in her intuition, before shortly perceiving "an alien object in view - a figure whose right of presence I instantly, passionately questioned", and then further instinct that "I was conscious - still even without looking - upon its having the character and attitude of our visitor" (James 44). The governess also claims that the children and Mrs. Grose also know exactly what is going on, but Mrs. Grose once again does not reply with a definite affirmation:

> 'They *know* – it's too monstrous: they know, they know!'
> 'And what on earth –?' I felt her incredulity as she held me.
> 'Why, all that *we* know – and heaven knows what else besides!'
> … 'Flora *saw*!' (James 45)

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3. The governess then reports her reaction to the occurrence which has just taken place, and her interpretation of it. Although this step occasionally takes place in a general scene of representation it, itself, is never an objective incident but always subjective interpretation.

4. The governess then tells the plan which she has decided upon - due to the occurrence and her interpretation of it. This plan never, until the end of the story, results in effective action on the part of the governess. It is, rather, overlapped with foretelling and then another incident in which the governess is passive. Thus a new sequence in the structure begins before the preceding one reaches a sense of completion. (Costello 314)

[24] 'Azovskoye More' or 'The Sea of Azov' in modern reference borders Ukraine and Russia, and is situated near the Black Sea (Mead 79).

The governess believes that the children "know, they know" about the threatening ghosts, and that Mrs. Grose is in the same position as herself when it comes to 'knowing' that the ghosts are there. The governess believes that Flora has seen the figure too, but thinks that she is not speaking about it because she is scared of what she 'knows'. When trying to explain what both the children and Mrs. Grose know, the governess describes the figure:

> Another person – this time; but a figure of quite as unmistakable horror and evil: a woman in black, pale and dreadful – with such an air also, and such a face! – on the other side of the lake. I was there with the child – quiet for the hour; and in the midst of it she came. (James 46).

The governess gives a detailed recollection of the woman who she apparently saw only on the 'other side of the lake', and her fear is placed in the possibility that the person has come for Flora this time. The textual paranoia present in these episodes is undeniable, as the narrator seems to have moments of clear and vivid insight, but at the same time acts as though she had no idea why or how the figures of Quint and Jessel appear to her at all. The effect of this structure is that the reader, following the governess, is drawn along through the events with a sense of helplessness even in the apparently clairvoyance and clean interpretation that the governess provides. The governess attempts to describe a neat and clear story of the events at Bly estate and she cannot seem to leave any event unexplained, but the reader has every reason to doubt the vivid recall and intuition that the governess displays:

> When she *comments* on these observed phenomena, the effect on the reader is one of mystification - mystification concerning the purpose of the ghosts, and, more, concerning the reliability of the governess. She becomes, in James' words, "challengeable." (Costello 313).

In contrast to Poe's narrator in the *House of Usher*, the governess claims to understand the supernatural nature and purpose of the figures that she has witnessed, and whether she can be trusted in this respect is unclear. The poetical uncanny in *The Turn of the Screw* ensures that the story cannot be reduced to only one of the readings offered so far, but it is the "challengeable" nature of the governess herself which makes this possible. Whether the story is

taken as a legitimate account of the ghosts or not, the governess is a captivatingly unreliable narrator.

Of all the authors presented in this discussion Franz Kafka is one with whom uncertainty, difficulty and textual paranoia most consistently resonates. The eponymous adjective 'Kafkaesque' encapsulates exactly this experience of disorientation and struggle, as seen in Frederick R. Karl's explanation of the term in an interview with the New York Times:

> … when you enter a surreal world in which all your control patterns, all your plans, the whole way in which you have configured your own behavior, begins to fall to pieces, when you find yourself against a force that does not lend itself to the way you perceive the world. You don't give up, you don't lie down and die. What you do is struggle against this with all of your equipment, with whatever you have. But of course you don't stand a chance. That's Kafkaesque. (Edwards *nytimes.com*)

Kafka draws his readers into an active struggle for the power of observation and understanding, which often creates a very challenging search for meaning, and "it would seem that with Kafka, one is presented with an author who intends to baffle the reader and, in the process, retain elements of a story for his sole enjoyment" (Ryan 73). The unapologetically difficult style that Kafka weaves into his fiction has been the subject of many debates, but these criticisms tend to suggest that Kafka's endless complication of story and meaning are simply incidental to his use of the absurd or his tendency toward nihilism. The difficulty in reading Kafka is not only due to the apparent lack of meaning or potential absurdity in his works, but from the uncertainty folded in to every available layer of textuality:

> There are hundreds of images, events, statements in Kafka which defy our understanding, and there is nothing in Kafka which I am sure that I understand sufficiently, since there are always possibilities of implications to lure me on and to dismiss me finally with a sense of failure. (Heller 378)

Kafka offers everything and nothing all at once: with one hand his works hold on to the possibility of meaning, while the other is pulling violently toward incomprehensibility. It is not only the sheer number of images that Kafka produces which creates this effect, but his ability to focus a narrative around a burdening symbol which sets off a chain-reaction of associations and interpretations for his reader. *The Metamorphosis* (1915) presents such a symbol

through the transformation of Gregor Samsa into a large insect, and the narrative follows his struggle to adjust to the limitations of life in this new body. As a consequence of his transformation he is forced into solitude and shunned, he loses his job and hears that his family is struggling financially, then becomes crippled by his father and eventually dies of his wounds. At the centre of this bizarre story many issues are at stake, and Kafka's use of the extended metaphor facilitates this explosively prismatic effect. The metamorphosis refers first and foremost to an inevitable and irreversible change. Where the metaphor might be simplified as 'Gregor is an insect', it would be more accurately expressed as 'Gregor is an insect with a human family and human responsibilities'. The human as an insect is a productive idea in itself, demanding an obvious comparison of human and animal bodies (Stine 58, Powell 129 and Lang 283), but there are also links to abstractions that would otherwise not be apparent.

The negative connotations in the metaphor of the human being as an insect, for example, immediately calls to attention the likeness of Gregor's transformation as physical disability and sickness (Metzger 56-57), or even a transitional life-phase like old age (O'Connor 58-59). In this there is also possibility for the metaphor to comment on the perceived self, or body image as in body dysmorphic disorder. More behaviourally derived interpretations could point to Gregor's bodily changes as symptomatic expressions of schizophrenia or depression. Arising from these possibilities are the questions of one's familial bonds and place in society (Strauss 652-653), the meaning of suffering (Ryan 133), rebellion and punishment (Sokel 203), and even more broadly the anxiety of ascribing a sense of reality to the narrative as a whole (Sizemore 380-381). These interpretations of the metaphor and its effects are based in the repulsion that all those who see Gregor experience, and the reaction of others to his transformation is one of the ways the metaphor conveys the uncanny.

The extension of the metaphor allows for the manipulation of certain reader sensibilities, and the desire for the redemptive act is one of these. The story plays on the reader's expectation of the 'redemptive act,' which would make sense of the transformation

that Gregor has experienced, or at least provide some closure that his suffering had some level of meaning. Kafka interrupts this automatic process much like James does in *Turn of the Screw*, by denying any neat conclusions to the problems that the strange events give rise to.

The first issue is that the possibility for the story to be a representation of an unconscious fear is denied, as "it wasn't a dream" (Kafka 49), but the narrative continues with a similar type of logic to dreaming. Gregor notices things happen to his body, and is carried along by these experiences rather than being an agent in them. When the changes occur he can only notice their effects, such as the itchy spot "which was covered in white pustules whose presence baffled him" (Kafka 50), or the changes in his voice which "were distorted into a kind of echo, so that you weren't sure if you heard correctly or not" (52). These and many more changes are simply happening to Gregor, who only ever tries to understand them; there is nothing to be done about the transformation itself because its irreversibility is taken for granted. The second way that the story resists its reader is in the incompleteness of Gregor's metamorphosis, where the expectation is that the process will consume not only his human body but his humanity - in a sense, the 'complete' metamorphosis would be the one in which Gregoris no longer human in any part, and acts only to serve his primordial needs. The self- consciousness that Gregor displays in coming to terms with his changing body and his role in the world is what holds this relief at bay, and the particular tension between Gregor's animal and human nature accounts for a large part of the uncertainty in the story. It begins with the physical change:

> As he lay there on his back, which resembled an armoured breastplate, by raising his head slightly he could just see his brown, protruding belly made up of a series of rigid, arched segments, from the top of which the bedcovers were about to slip at any moment. His many tiny legs - which, compared with his otherwise considerable girth, were pitifully thin - flapped around helplessly as he looked on. "What's happened to me?" he wondered. (Kafka 49)

The first thing to change is his body, and Gregor simply notices that he now has an exoskeleton; the fact that Gregor does not immediately scream in terror from this realisation is perhaps a stranger fact than the transformation itself, and his attitude toward this change is practically nonchalant. He tries to explain it away as a lack of sleep from "all this getting up

early" and too much work at "this thankless job" (Kafka 50). After he has fully woken up he realises that he is going to be late for work, and the anxiety to reach his job takes over his concern. The company secretary arrives and makes several criticisms that Gregor is being insensible, is potentially a thief who has stolen cash cheques from his work, and a disappointment to his family's name (Kafka 59). Gregor tries his best to reply, attributing his absence from work to "a minor ailment, a little dizzy spell", but he is also curious as to what they will think of the change to his body (Kafka 60). His thoughts about this are interesting:

> He was dying to know what the others, who were demanding that he appear, would say when they finally laid eyes on him. If they were horrified then he would have nothing more to answer for and would be able to relax. But if they took it calmly then they would have no reason to be upset either, and if he got a move on he could be at the station by eight o'clock. (Kafka 61)

Either way, he would be able to cope with the situation and relax; he simply wants to know whether his family and the company secretary notice that he has changed. This casual approach to his situation reveals that Gregor knows his fate is out of his hands, he is not autonomous when it comes to his body. When he manages to unlock the door himself, after hurting his mouth by turning the key, he enters the living room and begins a page-long monologue in apology to the company secretary who has come to check on his absence from work. This monologue is once again not heard because "the others might not have - in fact almost certainly hadn't - understood a word of what he had just said" (Kafka 66). This is the second major change that Gregor comes to notice, his voice is gone and he can no longer be understood by anyone. The communicative barrier is enforced from this moment onward and he is frightened back into his room by his father.

Throughout the story Gregor retains his rational thoughts, his internal voice and his will to live, and there seems to be a small chance that his situation will improve – that he might, for the sake of the reader, triumph over his trials. There are several potential avenues for this triumph to occur, but Gregor's journey denies every single opportunity of situating meaning, and satisfying the redemption of the sympathetic figure that he becomes. His

appetite changes and he begins to prefer food that is rotting instead of fresh, clearly yielding to new tastes (Kafka 70-73). Even though this presents further movement away from his humanity, Gregor is continually thoughtful about his family's lives and comfort, wondering whether they will be able to cope without the income he used to provide for them (72, 77-78). Gregor's humanity is somewhat reaffirmed in these thoughts, and one might expect that the Samsa family will come to understand that Gregor means them no harm, and that they will eventually change their opinion of him. His sister seems to care for him, but is scared and repulsed when she first sees him, and soon loses interest in trying to take care of him.

His father is utterly repulsed by him and at one point throws apples at Gregor until one lodges in his back, crippling him with "sudden, incredible pain" (Kafka 90). Gregor spends the rest of his life starving and does not recover from his wounds, eventually seeming to will himself to die "now more determined than his sister – if that were possible – that he had to go" (Kafka 107). When Gregor dies he thinks fondly on his family, but it is seen soon afterward that his family regains much of their happiness when he is finally dead, and his sister Greta embodies her freedom from him, and "unfurled her flourishing young body" (112). It is both easy to find connections of Gregor's life to various types of suffering, and at the same time vertiginously difficult to attribute any kind of significant meaning in these connections. Stanley Corngold attributes a part of this incomprehensibility to Kafka's use of the metaphor itself:

> Kafka's human tenors and material vehicles are labile: the metaphor is always in motion. This produces an "indeterminate, fluid crossing of a human tenor and a material vehicle that is in itself unsettling" (56). (Zilcosky 355)

The 'semiotic indeterminacy' of *The Metamorphosis* is one of the major areas in which Kafka's particular use of the uncanny can be found. With every new association that Kafka makes, the metaphor changes the meaning of the story and adds to an already burdening task of interpretation. The metaphor invites these interpretations with a sense of obviousness –the metaphor means Gregor is a man struggling with physical disability or mental illness – but then labours this metaphor to such an extent that the obvious interpretations seem inadequate,

and they continue to pose themselves as problems in need of solution. This is Kafka's ingenious use of the uncanny, seen not only here but in almost every one of his major works.

Collectively the narratives of Poe, James and Kafka form examples of the poetic uncanny, the manifestation of mutually exclusive readings contained within their pages. They facilitate hesitance and uncertainty through unreliable narrators, encumbering metaphors, and a general sense of unease. Their examples are but the beginning of a new understanding of the uncanny, one which recognises the various means by which narratives can exist to purposefully disorient and disturb their readers.

Untitled (1985) Zdzisław Beksiński

The Conceptual Resurgent

The place of literature in the concept of the uncanny should now be clearer, having moved from the psychoanalytic background of the Freudian Unheimlich to more relevant aesthetic considerations of the term as it is found in art and literature. While the uncanny has historically been considered a principally Freudian idea, the separation of repression and uncertainty as separate sources of the uncanny leads to more generative close readings of unreliable narrators, texts which frustrate and disturb their readers, and above all, stories which interlace this uncertainty on and between the various levels of their textuality. Freeing the term from an association with any one genre and introducing the phenomenological explanation of the uncanny as a force which engenders a 'misdirection of consciousness' – through either a disruption of perception or expression – also widens the scope of potential scholarship. This allows for the possibility that the uncanny can be present in any style of artwork, rather than only being present in works which deal with the supernatural or the macabre, however more prominent uncanny moments may be in these areas.

There are of course some areas of the present study which require more investigation and elucidation. Firstly, the critical texts which explain terms like the *Unheimlich* and *étrange* are all used in translation, rather than their original languages. While some careful distinctions have been made to try and avoid equating one term with another, this work relies on the translation and linguistic work of other scholars like Falkenberg and Scholes. A more in-depth analysis of the uncanny and its import into other studies could specifically address the issues of translation, and deal with some specific linguistic and morphological differences. One could also more fully consider the uncanny in short form narratives such as the short story and the novella, as well as the uncanny as it relates to the literary movements of Romanticism, Modernism and the later Post- Modernism. The majority of notable literary works in the existing criticism are short stories and novellas, leading to the possibility that these forms could be favoured for their ability to encapsulate a more concentrated effect of the uncanny. The rise in the use of the uncanny during the Romantic movement could be seen as a reaction to the stoic empiricism of the enlightenment (Falkenberg 23-24, 26-28), and an increasingly popular trend in the narrative innovations of the modernist and post-modernist movements, but such areas have not yet been exhaustively explored. The overarching argument for the theory of the uncanny also currently relies on nineteenth and twentieth-century European and American male authors, as a response to the existing criticism, but the developing theory of the uncanny that is drawn from these examples makes claim to some universal applicability.

The expanded scope of literature in this area of study means that both male and female authors from all different periods, styles, and nationalities need be considered. For studying the uncanny in the work of female authors there is no shortage of potential, the likes of which can be found in the confrontations between creator and created in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), or the all-consuming 'living blackness' of the Funhole in Kathe Koja's *The*

Cipher (1991), an abyssal hole that calls "from its deeps, not music but the elegant drone of bodily organs" (78).[25]

The synthesis of these authors into the criticism of the uncanny is important for many reasons, chiefly that the role of female writers in this area has been largely neglected, but also because the psychoanalytic institution has historically read female characters in this kind of literature as "hysterical" subjects. There is also need to expand the consideration of text in the sense of the 'object to be read', so that the same principles of uncertainty, textual paranoia and the poetical uncanny can be read into other arts. Several other imaginative areas produce similar effects, and if the idea of textuality is allowed some elasticity it can serve to understand them. Fuseli's *Nightmare* has already been read as a work of the uncanny, but there are many more painters who create the uncanny in their works, such as Théodore Géricault who painted the human body in various scenes of distress and dismemberment in preparation for his famous painting *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818-1819).[26]

In music, the uncanny seems mostly to be a part of the emerging popularity of electronic instrumentation, seen in the early experimental compositions of Iannis Xenakis. These works certainly produce a type of textual paranoia, most obvious in his instrumental masterpiece *Metastasis* (1953-1954), but also throughout the various experiments in his oeuvre. Other works which engender similar effects using both voice and instrument include Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1955-1956), described as "a maddening yet arresting, irritating yet occasionally inadvertently funny sound cocktail" (Stone 553) and as a path both to and from abstraction (Metzer 695). The day of Lucifer in Stockhauzen's *Samstag aus Licht* ("Saturday from Light")

[25] The short form is once again more favoured for creating the uncanny, and many more examples can be found in du Maurier's *The Doll* (1937) and *The Birds* (1952), Leonora Carrington's collected works in *The Oval Lady* (1975) and *The Seventh Horse and Other Tales* (1988), Kurahashi Yumiko's *The Woman with the Flying Head* (1997) and Yōko Ogawa in *Revenge: Eleven Dark Tales* (2013).

[26] Other notable artists whose works could be considered uncanny include Francis Bacon, Francisco Goya, Ken Currie, Otto Rapp, Alfred Kubin, Hieronymus Bosch, Hans Rudolf Giger, Edward Munch, *etc.*

from the cycle Opera Licht (1977-2003) is equally strange and disturbing, featuring the laborious exorcism of Lucifer by thirteen monks in the final moments of the day.[27]

Film and television are also areas much left untouched by analysis of their effects as uncanny, but here again there are many works which would benefit under this developing theory. Two particular television series would be David Lynch's Twin *Peaks* (1990-1991) which blends nightmarish tragedy and soap-opera comedy, and J.J. Abrams's L o s t (2004-2010) which is certainly the most sustained achievement of the poetical uncanny in television to date. There are several more examples in movies such as Adrian Lyne's *Jacob's Ladder* (1990), in which the protagonist Jacob Singer starts to have visions of demonic forces, and starts to doubt whether he is really alive or dead; Chrisopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000) is also renowned for its purposefully confusing and disorienting structure which runs two narratives of past and present, back to front.[28]

In terms of video gaming, as with animation in film, Mori's uncanny valley theory can explain how the uncanny exists in some characters who do not exhibit perfect human likeness whether in appearance or motion. This form of the uncanny is a result of technical shortcoming, rather than an intentional output of the animation itself, but there are several games which quite successfully put the player through uncanny experiences. In Masashi Tsuboyama's *Silent Hill 2* (2001) the player follows James Sunderland as he explores the town of Silent Hill, prompted by a posthumous letter he has received from his wife. Almost every recognisable everyday interaction and appearance in the town Silent Hill is slightly off, and at dark there are horrors which appear. Steve Gaynor's *Gone Home* (2013) encompasses an atmosphere of dread as the player begins to explore the empty Greenbriar house as Kaitlin, the eldest daughter who has returned home to

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[27] More contemporary works include the industrial artists Throbbing Gristle in *Slug Bait* (1977) and *Hamburger Lady* (1978), Nurse with Wound's eerie *Soliloquy for Lilith I* (1988), the contrast between the monotone computerized vocals and otherwise positive narrative in Radiohead's *Fitter Happier* (1997), and the jarring musical and visual style of *Takyon (Death Yon)* (2011) by experimental hip-hop group Death Grips, among others.

[28] Further examples include Alfred Hitchcock's adaptation of du Maurier's *The Birds* (1963), Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), Harmony Korine's *Gummo* (1997), Darren Aronofsky's *Pi* (1998), and not least of all David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), *Blue Velvet* (1986) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001).

find a note on the door from her sister, pleading that she should not investigate the disappearance of the family.[29]

The uncanny is employed in so many different ways in every creative medium, and the relatively small amount of writing on the subject is not currently able to account for the use of the uncanny in other imaginative experiences. Wherever the theory of the uncanny is imported, distinction should be made for the specific role of the medium and style of the texts themselves. In film for example, there will be several innovations in camera technique or editing that could create the equivalent of textual hesitance and uncertainty, but these need to be discussed alongside explanations of the techniques themselves, instead of simply placing the label of uncanny on these works. By widening the range of texts and thinking about how the uncanny might work in other media, the term will continue on to facilitate the understanding of disturbing feelings, sounds and images that art provokes. In the process of adapting the ideas of textual paranoia and the poetic uncanny to non-literary works, there may well be some insights from other media that prove useful for the study of the uncanny literature too.

[29] Other games which are varyingly unsettling and outright disturbing include David Mullich and Robert Wiggins's adaptation of Harlan Ellison's *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream* (1995), Gen Urobuchi's *Song of Saya* (2003), *Pathologic* (2005) by Russian developers Ice Pick Lodge, *Outlast* (2013) developed by Red Barrels, Hideo Kojima's *P.T.* (2014) and Ezra Hanson-White's *Memory of a Broken Dimension* (TBA). There are many, many more "indie" games which have been developed by communities around the world which would also fit into these categories.

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