THE UNCANNY

AND

THE AFTERLIFE OF THE GOTHIC

Edited by Manuela D'Amore

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Interdisciplinary Discourses

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Preface

Rooted in a long cultural tradition, the Gothic is still at the heart of scholarly interest. The latest theoretical publications show that thanks to David Punter's and Julia Kristeva's reflections in the early 1980s (Kristeva1982; Punter, 1985), challenging approaches such as feminism, post-colonialism and postmodernism have been crucial in the elaboration of new definitions, also in the analysis of its numerous re-interpretations in the field of television, cinema and music.

In perfect harmony with these critical trends, this two-part volume thus adds further insights into the literary and artistic afterlife of this restless genre, particularly into its links with the concept of the uncanny. The great majority of the collected articles methodologically refer to *Das Unheimliche*, Freud's 1919 seminal essay, which provides evidence that the authors consider intertextuality indispensable when analysing the fears embedded in the relationship between identity and otherness.

In point of fact, Part One – *Power to the Literary Word: The Past and the Present* – collects four essays which respectively investigate the origins of ghost stories in early modern times, significant samples of Victorian "spectral poetics", as well as of contemporary dystopian and "borderland" narratives: we shall see how the Gothic and the uncanny can operate in such a highly interdisciplinary context.

Ben Parsons's "*Unheimlich* Manoeuvres: Freud and the Early Modern Ghost Story", for instance, clearly shows that it is possible to tackle complex cultural and philological issues with the help of Freud's psychoanalytic speculations. After focusing on John Mirk's *Festial* (ca. 1380) – one of the most typical representations of the supernatural in medieval times – Parson discusses the difficult passage to the English Reformation, while bringing several interesting elements into play: the symbolic value

of the amendments that were made to the printed version of Mirk's text in the early sixteenth century, also more importantly, the strategic use of ghosts in the construction of a new religious orthodoxy. From this point of view, he provides solid documentary evidence that, despite the doctrinal debates within the Church of England and the emergence of a new form of rationalism, the medieval tradition survived well into the seventeenth century. The reasons for this cultural *status quo* can be found in Freud's seminal work, which emphasises man's eternal need of the irrational when coping with his innermost fears and anxieties.

Death is clearly the most powerful of them. **Anna Rivers** in "'No glimpse of a further shore': Emily Brontë's Spectral Poetics" refers to Cixous's assumption that the ghost is "the fiction" of man's relationship with transience and mortality to decode the hidden meanings in Brontë's *Fragment 11* (1837), *Written in Aspin Castle* (1842-43) and *A Death Scene* (1846). At a time when Victorian England was undergoing great social, cultural and economic changes, these poems challenge all certainties, while proving that it is impossible for contemporary man to grasp the very essence of otherness and of death.

Endowed with continuous textual references, this essay, however, also draws our attention to the typical elements of the gothic literary and artistic tradition. They are clearly in line with Brontë's vision of human limited powers, but most importantly, they convey a message of decay and destruction. From this point of view, it is as though, even in the mid nineteenth century, the gothic and the uncanny were employed as powerful tools to voice British intellectuals' harsh social critique.

Rivers will show that this was also unexpectedly true for a 'marginal' female writer such as Emily Brontë. Taking the reader to the twentieth-century, **Tiziana Lentini,** on the contrary, has chosen Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *1984* (1948) to apply the concept of the uncanny to contemporary British dystopian fiction. Focusing on the numerous

repetitive acts and self-propelled mechanisms in the two novels, this essay follows Freud's belief that these acts are clear distortions of the advancement of science and technology, while putting a special emphasis on the sense of estrangement that they generate.

In a context where totalitarianism annihilates all forms of freedom, the reader will thus understand why imagination is a dangerous threat and alienation is man's new existential condition: deprived of his unique interior world, he is reduced to an unanimated robot, who only serves the ruling elite.

Firmly rooted in Freud's *Das Unheimliche*, Lentini's article offers new insights into contemporary dystopia: **Carolina Asar** will also draw our attention to the uncanny uses of language in borderland narratives, and will show how they can become a part of mainstream literature.

Her main focus is on the geographical and cultural area between Texas and Mexico. Together with Standard English and Spanish, there are patois languages such as Chicano Spanish, Tex Mex and Pachuco, which fully express their speakers' communicative needs, but are not accepted by the mainstream population. For Avsar, designing more inclusive school syllabuses is absolutely crucial to stopping practices of socio-cultural marginalisation.

Yet, the concept of the uncanny can also apply to the most diverse forms of art. Starting from the mystery surrounding the 17th century painting of Medusa, Part II of this volume – *The Arts and the Media: From Early Contemporary Paintings to TV Animated Series* – confirms that even the latest animated television series can generate terror and fear.

Jun Mita's "The Mechanism of the 'Uncanny' in Vilhelm Hammershøi's Interior Paintings" is the opening contribution to this section. Its purpose is to show how Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916), one of the leading figures of Danish art between the late 1800s and the *nouveau siècle*, transformed realistic interior scenes into "silent", "dark" and "unfamiliar" spaces. In fact,

although he was generally depicting his own home, he avoided any simplistic associations with his inner world, while drawing the viewer's attention to the sense of mystery and uneasiness that his paintings convey.

Endowed with a solid interdisciplinary basis, Mita's contribution may be metaphorically considered a bridge to **Chloe Millhauser**'s "Perspectival Subterfuge: Gerda Leo's Use of the Photographic Uncanny". This too explores the uncanny sides of realism while discussing innovative artistic techniques in the early decades of the twentieth century.

As Millhauser posits, in fact, the German female artist Gerda Leo (1909-1992) provides truthful representations of common, 'banal' objects, which, despite their 'benign' appearance, symbolise death and decay. We can find evidence of the strong power of still life representations in Ernst Jentsch's seminal *On the Psychology of the Uncanny* (1906). If we consider photographs such as *Papers* (1928) and *Basketweave* (1929), we shall see how they teach the viewer to perceive their forms and energy.

Transcending the boundaries of painting and photography, the hidden life in unanimated objects or vacant spaces is thus at the heart of man's experience of the uncanny. Mita and Millhauser may have employed different methodological tools, but both their contributions provide a complex representation of European early contemporary art, which was strongly influenced by Jentsch's and Freud's new psychological theories.

Part II of this volume, however, also includes **Katherine O'Connor**'s study of the uncanny in children's animated series. After the success of *The Teletubbies* (1997-2001) and *In the Night Garden* (2007-2009), Andrew Davenport has created new "haunting" "CBeebies", thus proving that animation also has the ability to portray the "invisible" and reveal the repressed.

O'Connor's focus, in fact, is on *Moon and Me*. This 2020 television series is not only made up of a rich combination of animation, puppetry and visual effects techniques, but also

generates a deep emotional response in the general public. Building upon Freud's concept of the uncanny and Todorov's theory of the fantastic, Halas and Wells confirm that this too is a multi-layered form of art, which deletes any difference between the real and the unreal. From this point of view, the illusion of life itself is both haunting and nightmarish.

Rich in details also about the most peculiar technical aspects of this children's series, O'Connor's "Framing the Moon Baby: The Haunted Reality of the Animated Form" confirms that the uncanny can still unify literary and artistic products belonging to the most diverse historical and cultural periods. Starting from the origins of ghost stories in medieval times, the interdisciplinary path in this volume confirms that more uses and forms of interpretation will certainly be found in the future.

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PART 1.

POWER TO THE LITERARY WORD: THE PAST AND PRESENT

Ben Parsons

Unheimlich Manoeuvres:
Freud and the Early Modern Ghost Story

Abstract

As Freud makes clear, the ghost is one of the central and most potent expressions of the uncanny. It haunts his speculations, sources, and even his sense of the term itself. Yet his treatment of spectres is problematic in one key respect: while he insists on their fundamental stability, tying them to a universal and timeless cathexis that has altered "little since the very earliest times", they have a profoundly complex history, marked by ruptures, transitions and mutations. The post-Reformation period is a case in point. With its simplification of funerary rites, abolition of purgatory as "a fonde thing", and general dismantling of the complex architecture that governed the relationship between living and dead, it caused the ghost to undergo a thorough and far-reaching re-evaluation. Yet rather than using such shifts to challenge Freud, this paper seeks to recoup his ideas as a way of understanding them. It calls on the uncanny as a way of reading changes in thinking about the supernatural across the modern and medieval periods, focusing especially on the re-emergence of the ghost in seventeenth-century popular culture. It will argue that Freud's paradigms, far from driving us towards an ahistoric and atemporal line of interpretation, provide a fertile means of negotiating these shifts, especially in his emphasis on the emotional and irrational forces that drive them.

Even the most casual reader of Freud cannot fail to notice the close association between ghosts and uncanniness. If anything, Freud presents revenancy as something like a paradigm for understanding the concept as a whole. Opening his catalogue of phenomena which typify the uncanny, he remarks that "the feeling" is frequently experienced "in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts", before adding that "we might indeed have begun our investigation with this example, perhaps the most striking of all, of something uncanny" (Freud, 1955, p. 241). Ghostliness even filters into his meticulously delineated terminology. He also notes that the very term *unheimlich* recalls the idea of haunting, of a domestic space being invaded by an irrepressible supernatural force, to the extent that "some languages in use to-day can only render the German expression 'an *unheimlich* house' by 'a *haunted* house'" (p. 241).

However, when we try to think about Freud's ideas in historical terms, we run into some immediate obstacles. Freud himself treats the ghost as basically timeless, claiming that there "is scarcely any other matter […] upon which our thoughts and feelings have changed so little since the very earliest times, and in which discarded forms have been so completely preserved under a thin disguise" (p. 242). To drive home this point, his free-wheeling survey of various authors and traditions defies any sense of chronology, shuttling from Hoffman to Herodotus in a way that effectively dissolves all culture into a single atemporal repository. Many subsequent discussions of the ghost tend to follow suit, especially those coloured by Derrida's work on hauntology as a form of "untimeliness and disadjustment of the contemporary" (Derrida, 1994, p. 120). They also treat the ghost as a counteractive to chronologies and metanarratives, one that represents the obstinate tendency of the past to break into the present. Yet for all this, it cannot be denied that the ghost has a history of its own. Although variations on the idea can be found in more or less every literature and period, from Egyptian coffin texts to Platonic philosophy, and from patristic dialogue to heroic saga, these are above all variants (Finucane, 1996). The ghost is by no means constant in its manifestations, but has been constantly and radically

reshaped by the cultural determinants around it (Owens, 2017). As a result, its history is full of ruptures and erratic transitions, as the boundary between living and dead – and between past and present, and natural and supernatural – has fluctuated and been reconfigured under a range of pressures. The purpose of this paper is to ask what, if anything, Freud can add to our understanding of these breaks, despite the ahistoric thrust of his work. Simply put, it will consider whether we need the uncanny at all to make sense of them.

The particular transition I want to examine here is one of the most complex and puzzling upheavals in the history of ghost, one that sees it rapidly scrolling through a series of contradictory roles. The period I am referring to is the aftermath of the Reformation, itself a self-conscious, even aggressive, rejection of the recent past. As a way of laying bare some of the changes the ghost underwent in this period, I want to start with a source that gives some suggestive commentary on haunting. In fact, such is its suggestiveness that it discloses far more than it intends, and certainly more than its author would have wished to say. It is an early printed edition of John Mirk's *Festial* issued by Wynkyn de Worde in about 1508, and once owned by Archbishop William Sancroft (1617-93), although now held at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The text itself is a monument to persistence and stability in some respects and disruption in others. Mirk, a canon regular at Lilleshall in Shropshire, initially composed it in the late 1380s to equip secular priests with appropriate sermon material for each of 'the hye feestes of the yere' (Mirk, c.1508, fol. 2). Between 1483 and 1532 it was printed over twenty times, not only by de Worde but by Caxton, Rood, Pynson and other key figures in the early book-market, showing that none of its usefulness had abated in the century after its production. Perhaps surprisingly for such a soberly practical work, the *Festial* turns to ghosts at a number of points. Spirits are especially pervasive in its series of illustrative stories by which preachers might impress moral points on their congregations. In his sermon for the second Sunday of Lent, for example, Mirk relates the following anecdote:

> We fynde of an abbesse that was a clene woman as for
> ony dede of synne, but she had grete lust to speke therof.

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> So whan she was deed and buryed in the chyrche, the nyght after came fendes and toke vp the body and all to bete it with brennynge scourges frome the nauel vpwarde, that it was as blacke as ony pytche, but fro the nauell downewarde it shone as bryght as the sonne, and the fendes myght doo it no harme. And euer as the fendes bete her, she cryed peteously that two of her systers that were sexstens were sore aferde, but eyther comforted other, soo that they wente nere tyll they wyste how it was. Than spake the spyryte to her systerne and sayd: ye knowe well that I was clene mayden as for ony dede, but I had grete lust to speke of synne, that partye hath grete payne as ye may se, wherfore I praye you systerne praye for me, for by youre prayers I may be holpen & beware by me in tyme comynge. Here by ye may se what peryll it is for to speke ydle wordes and harlotrye speche (fol. 20v).

Mirk's treatment of the ghost here is highly conventional. There is little to set the episode apart from comparable stories in contemporary anthologies of preaching materials, such as Arnoldus of Liege's *Alphabetum narrationum* (c.1450) or the *Gesta Romanorum* (c.1400). In fact, taking a wider view, ghost stories on this model occur in some of the earliest sources to experiment with exempla in preaching, from Jacques de Vitry's *Sermones vulgares* (c.1220) to Gregory's *Dialogues* (c.594) earlier still. But the very conventionalisation of the story is what makes it significant. What Mirk shows above all is how secure the ghost had become as a conception, and how full and robust a series of meanings had formed around it. The very fact that stories of this kind have been brought into sermon discourse reflects these circumstances. The sermon is after all an interpretive framework, existing not merely to allocate meaning but to reiterate and reinforce practices, categories and valuations. The way in which the ghost of the abbess is used clearly serves this end at every step. Both of the ways in which the ghost manifests itself, physically and verbally, are obviously communicative, declaring her vexed position as a "clene woman"

compromised by *peccata oris*, or "sins of the mouth" (Craun, 1997, pp. 14-24). On the one hand, the tormented body of the abbess is itself a collection of symbols, serving to encode her as a particular type of sinner, with her upper torso "blacke as ony pytche"; on the other, her speech carries out an explanatory function, disclosing the significance of the mutilations she suffers. The ghost is then both a text and its own reading, both requiring and performing interpretation. But perhaps more interesting is the fact that the abbess inhabits a reciprocal relationship with the nuns she visits, neatly encapsulated by her sylleptic plea, "I praye you systerne praye for me". In the first place, she appears in order to educate the two sisters of the perils of salacious gossip; yet at the same time they are able to assist her in her pains, as "by youre prayers I may be holpen". There is then a mutually supportive connection between living and dead in the story, one from which both are able to benefit, giving and receiving instruction or prayer.

Plainly, what underpins and supports Mirk's sense of the ghost is the doctrine of purgatory, and the cottage industry of votive offerings and pardons that had built up around it since its ratification by the Second Council of Lyon in 1274. The "brennynge scourges" are obviously purgatorial penalties, her split physiology puts her midway between damnation and salvation, and the fact the abbess is able to appeal to the "systren" for help at all, and can expect her petition to be effective, marks her as an inhabitant of this intermediate space. Of course, none of this is surprising in itself. The work of Schmitt (1994) and Le Goff (1981) has shown us how influential purgatorial doctrine was on medieval conceptions of the supernatural across a number of fronts. But the *Festial* indicates that this is more than a technical, abstract concern, demonstrating how fully developed purgatory had become as a means of understanding, containing, and even exploiting the ghost. After all, the ghost is fundamentally a pre-Christian conception. In late antiquity and the early Middle Ages it had often proven problematic, forming a rival eschatology with which patristic apologists and missionaries had to contend (Crowley, 2019, pp. 185-222). Purgatory, however, has obviously provided a means by which these experiences can be

integrated comfortably and usefully into late medieval faith and practice. The haunting in Mirk's story is immediately intelligible, describable, and above all resolvable using the equipment orthodox ritual provides. This is not only true for the nuns in the story, but for Mirk himself, and for his intended reader and their congregation as well – all know they can look to votive prayer to remedy such phenomena, and understand what meanings and lessons apparitions support. In fact, we can see this point in other texts from the same broad period. Examples include the stories added to Royal MS 15 A XX, better known as the "Byland Abbey manuscript", which take a series of obviously folkloric narratives of shape-shifting spirits and fit them into a purgatorial framework (James, 1922); or the tremendously popular *Gast of Gy* (c.1350), which consists of a lengthy conference between a prior and a soul in purgatory, and spends most of its time delimiting the powers of the ghost: Gy patiently explains to his interviewers that he has no power to predict "how many papes suld be of Rome" until doomsday, or "Wha sall saved or dampned be" (Foster, ed., 2004, pp.79, 40). The point is, then, that the late Middle Ages had managed to come to terms with the ghost, or at least succeeded in developing reliable mechanisms to contain it and fix its value. Although we would not call these judgements rational in any modern sense of the word, it possessed through purgatory and its associated practices a well-developed machinery that allowed it to cope with the phenomena of ghosts, successfully explaining, processing, and capitalising on supernatural experiences of this kind.

However, this is also the point at which the Emmanuel College copy of the *Festial* reveals more than its author and printer supposed. It is one of several early printed books to have been hastily customised at some stage in the second half of the sixteenth century, whether to accommodate shifting patterns of belief in the Tudor period or to register hostility to medieval Catholic practice. Either way, it shows how large a bulldozer the events of the Reformation drove through the ceremonial and doctrinal architecture that supported the medieval ghost. Throughout the text, a number of words and passages have been struck out in black

ink. While the title "pope" is one of the main targets for deletion, the nameless editor takes particular aim at purgatory too, scratching over the word itself, and blacking over references to related issues such as indulgence and prayers for the dead. Hence in Mirk's sermon on Corpus Christi, which describes the institution of the feast by Urban IV, the author not only strikes out "pope" and part of the statement that remission is "graunteth to all that be worthy" by papal dispensation, but scores through the suggestion that good works can secure "for eche an hondred dayes of pardon, and for eche houre of the daye xl. dayes of pardon, and euery daye of the vtas" (Mirk, c.1508, fol. 49v). By modifying the text in this way, Mirk's reader is of course imposing on it the new limits of orthodoxy set out by Edward VI and Elizabeth I. Both sought to dismantle the entire edifice of medieval material piety and enshrine the principle that "Holie Scripture conteineth all thinges necessarie to Saluation" in place of "the doctrine of Scholeauthores": hence the *Articles* of 1553 specifically define purgatory as "a fonde thing vainlie feigned" (sig. A2v, B3v), and even the more conservative version published in 1561 seeks to abolish "priuate masses" and "settyng up of candels" as offerings for the dead (*Certayne principall Articles*, fol. 1). But the rigour, thoroughness, and violence of Mirk's reader shows how totally purgatory had been anathematised by this stage. It has effectively become a taboo or a flashpoint, suitable only for attack and obliteration.

The suppression of purgatory has some profound and far-reaching effects. Some of these are predictable, some rather less so. Its most immediate result is a period of scepticism about hauntings, although scepticism that betrays deeper concerns. In effect, repudiation of purgatory seems to have rendered all reports of ghosts suspect, since it meant that one of the chief lines of contact between living and dead, with its traffic in either direction, was now technically severed (Greenblatt, 2004, pp. 311-12). Accordingly, it is not uncommon to find straightforward denial of the veracity of hauntings. When the events are depicted, they tend to be placed in inverted commas and their status as fiction emphasised. A key example here is the revenge tragedy. Owing to its dependence on

Senecan models, this genre is compelled to make some use of the ghost to embody the heinous wrong the revenger must correct (Rist, 2008, pp. 13-15). Nevertheless, even these stage ghosts are either made the subject of explicit questioning – most famously in *Hamlet* – or are given no portal through which they might confer with the living. Hence the vengeful phantom of Gorlois in the court entertainment *Misfortunes of Arthur* is statedly confined to a mythic, premodern past. Having seen his retribution reach fruition, he pledges to "let future age be free from Gorlois' ghost" and "let Britain henceforth bathe in endless weal" under Elizabeth, whom he styles "Virgo come from heaven, the glorious star" (Hughes, 1587, p. 337). Similarly, Don Andrea in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* (c.1582) is insulated from the main action of the play in a very direct and literal way. He serves as a surrogate audience or "Chorus in this tragedie", remaining on stage throughout and powerlessly watching the "misterie" unfold from the wings (Kyd 2008, p. 8). Both measures assert that the boundary between living and dead is no longer penetrable, and cannot permit of direct interaction.

But perhaps more interesting is the tendency to find materialist explanations for apparitions in the period. A number of Elizabethan and Jacobean authors seek to place hauntings in a new, rationalist framework. Some writers, such as Timothy Bright (1586) and Thomas Nashe (1594), look to humoral theory to locate the root cause of ghosts, laying special emphasis on the effects of melancholy on the human brain. Bright describes how "darknes & cloudes of melancholie vapours rising from that pudle of the splene" succeed in overcoming the light of reason, or "the clearenes, which our spirites are endued with", with the result that once "that naturall and internall light is darkened, their fansies arise" and "phantasticall apparitions", "disguised shapes" and "counterfet goblins" are seen (Bright, 1586, pp. 102-104). Nashe for his part holds that the presence of "slimy melancholy humour" in the bloodstream "engendreth many misshapen objects in our imaginations" while the body is at rest during the night, "even as slime and dirt in a standing puddle engender toads and frogs and many other unsightly creatures" (p. 217). Although each author sees a distinct set of

psychological mechanics at work, both agree that such illusions are at root physiological and biochemical. A different set of natural laws is put forward by Robert Basset a few decades later. Basset also regards spectres as misapprehensions, although assigns their origins to weather patterns and cloud formations rather than anatomy: as he writes, "divers noyses, and sounds above in the Aire" merely occur when "the exhalation, detained & enclosed in the cold clouds, makes a way out [...] Neverthelesse, fearful, ignorant, and superstitious people beleeve, that it is the very sound of a Trumpet or Drumme [...] and seeme to see certaine troupes of Horsemen ranged in Batallia, and many other terrible things" (Basset, 1637, pp. 115-116). A still different tack is taken by Ludwig Lavater, the Swiss theologian whose work on apparitions circulated in English translation in the early 1570s. Lavater's ghosts are basically diabolical, being disguises assumed by the Devil to trick the unwary, but he is also careful to ascribe their immediate manifestation to natural operations. The Devil's power to produce these effects is apparently pharmaceutical, a result of the "long and great experience" he has gained in the "force of natural things, as of herbes, stones, etc." and their ability to influence "the eye sight, and other senses". It is by these means, Lavater states, that the Devil is able "to appeare in diuers shapes, not only of those which are aliue, but also of deade menne" (Lavater, 1572, pp.154-55).

What emerges most strongly from this period, therefore, is the sheer profusion of different explanations and rationalisations that have built up around haunting. Ghosts become a vexing question, not only in that their existence is now questionable, but that it is difficult to know in what terms they should be interrogated. When seeking to account for the ghost, there is no consensus at hand, but a spectrum of potential causes and determinants, drawn from distinct and often mutually exclusive intellectual disciplines – anatomical, meteorological, pharmacological, and demonological. The demolition of the medieval architecture for understanding the ghost has left an obvious vacuum, but one that operates at both an immediate and conceptual level. This void does not only nullify belief in the ghost as a phenomenon, but leaves uncertain how the phenomenon should be

approached and assessed, and which interpretive framework is most applicable to it. Having lost the definitive footing provided by eschatological doctrine and moral literature, in effect, the spectre floats free of any particular discourse or vocabulary.

However, the death of the ghost proves premature. True to its nature, the ghost returns in the later seventeenth century, albeit trailing some new concerns in its wake. Renewal of interest in spectres takes place at two very distinct cultural levels. On the one hand, the ghost reappears in ephemeral popular print, as chapbooks and pamphlets begin to train their sights on contemporary hauntings; on the other, ghosts become a cornerstone of philosophical and proto-scientific debate. Yet, however disparate these two literatures might appear at first glance, serving the needs of different publics and approaching their material from different directions, they share a lot of common ground. Not only do they feed off and cross-fertilise one another, but their attitudes towards the ghost prove to be two sides of a single coin. At the academic level, two key, closely interlinked figures are Henry More and Joseph Glanvill. The intellectual credentials of the two men are impeccable. More was at the centre of the loose philosophical circle known as the Cambridge Platonists, and both were card-carrying members of the Royal Society, boasting many of its leading figures among their wide network of contacts (Coudert, 1990). It is this latter connection that leaves a strongest imprint on their discussion of the supernatural, as they take up the materialist, empirical approach that had led Bright and Basset to discount ghosts and redeploy it in their defence.

The chief monument to the work of the two men is the *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681), a vast, complex disquisition on what are cautiously described as "spirits". The complexity of the volume extends to its history as well as its contents. Although it circulated under Glanvill's name, and a large proportion is made up of treatises he had already published in earlier form, it in fact appeared a year after his death, and is in no small part the result of More's editorial labour. In some of its most extraordinary passages, the *Triumphatus* takes up the fruit of recent inquiries into the natural world, appealing to observable data and "analogy of nature" to defend

the existence of spirits. It even calls on the recent revelations of Hooke's *Micrographia* (1665), reasoning that "microscopical Observations" have given adequate reason to assume the reality of ghosts. As Glanvill states at one point: "that all the upper Stories of the Universe are furnish'd with Inhabitants, 'tis infinitely reasonable to conclude [...] since we see there is nothing so contemptible and vile in the world we reside in, but hath its living Creatures that dwell upon it; the Earth, the Water, the inferiour Air, the bodies of Animals, the flesh, the skin, the entrails [...]. [S]ince this little Spot is so thickly peopled in every Atome of it, 'tis weakness to think that all the vast spaces above, and hollows under ground, are desert" (Glanvill, 1681, pp. 6, 9). More's contributions are even more methodical and schematic. In organising the accounts that make up the later sections of the volume, he seems to have drawn on his earlier *Antidote of Atheisme* (1653). Here he generates a checklist of conditions hauntings must fulfil in order to be accepted, again seeking to ground them in observable, material reality. He proposes three core principles which should work like the "Touch-stone whereby we may discerne the truth of Metalls": the impartiality of the witnesses, corroboration by multiple first-hand sources, and most importantly, whether "these things which are so strange and miraculous leave any sensible effect behind them" (More, 1653, pp. 107-108).

Yet this confidence in the validatory power of experiment and reason belies a central problem. When reports of ghosts are considered, More and Glanvill fall back on a noticeably different system of proof. A case in point is their account of "the Apparition of the Ghost of Major George Sydenham, to Captain William Dyke" in an inn at Dulverton, Somerset in the 1670s (Glanvill, 1681, p. 219). Their analysis hinges utterly on the character, education, and social level of Dyke himself, and even of Sydenham, rather than any of the more empirical factors the *Triumphatus* calls on. It stresses that the captain was "well bred, and of a brisk humour and jolly conversation, of very quick and keen parts", and that both he and his old compatriot were "both of them University and Inns of Court Gentlemen" (p. 225). More telling is a second account dealing with experiences of Jesch Claes, the crippled wife of a Dutch boatman, in October 1676.

Claes' ability to walk was supposedly restored after "a beautiful Youth about Ten years of Age, with Curled Yellow Hair Clothed in White to the Feet" appeared to her and touched her stricken limbs (p. 251). In order to compensate for the gender and class of its teller, both of which might discredit the story, Glanvill emphasises how the report has passed through a chain of further intermediaries, who succeed in giving it the social elevation it lacks. As he states, pointedly documenting the title of each link, it came to him via "a Dutch Merchant", "Dr. R. Cudworth", "Monsieur Van Helmont", "Lady Conway", "Philippus Limbergius", and finally "Dr. H. More" (p. 253). In short, the appeals to reason and science have very little practical effect on the assessment of haunting. The only epistemological test available to the authors is fundamentally judicial and social. The personal status of the witness is the only reliable means of authentication they can find as a foothold for their inquiries.

Popular pamphlets on ghosts approach the same problem from a different angle. Some of this can be seen in one of the most curious examples of this burgeoning literature, *News from Puddle-Dock* (1674). As its full title suggests, *News* claims to be a report of a "strange and stupendious" haunting, recording in proto-journalistic fashion a series of events unfolding in the house of one Edward Pitts at Blackfriars. It is in fact so topical that it ends on a peculiarly suspenseful note. Its final paragraph tantalisingly promises, "This night, March 16 Mr. *Pitts* intends to have some people to sit up, that may speak to any thing that shall appear, and to demand in the name of the Father, *what are you*?' (*News from Puddle-Dock*, 1674, p. 6). The fact that the text ends in such an inconclusive manner, with a question that goes unanswered, neatly encapsulates its general attitude towards its subject matter. One of the key features of the pamphlet is its refusal to interpret the events it describes in any meaningful way. Even when explanations offer themselves, they are not pursued. At points the experiences of the Pitts family fall somewhat short of the "stupendious" occurrences promised by the author. Aside from opening doors at night and scattering pewter and candles around the "Kitchin", the chief manifestation of the spirit is markedly unimpressive: at one stage it supposedly startles Mr Pitts

"as he was cutting the Bread" by appearing in the form of "*a great thing like a Catt*" which "seemed to slide off the Dresser, giving a thump on the Boards, and so vanished away" (p. 3). What is remarkable about the passage is that the obvious explanation for the event – that the "Cat-like thing" is in fact simply a stray cat – is not even momentarily entertained. The text has no interest in rationalising or reading the apparition, presenting it at absolutely face value. In this discourse, the ghost is put forward as something wholly inscrutable and unintelligible, resisting any form of logical inquiry. There is then little basic difference between the text and More and Glanvill's indecision about the most suitable mode of validation for hauntings; the newsbook simply brushes off the questions that exercise the *Triumphatus*. Moreover, neither branch of this renewed interest in ghosts is particularly different from the wave of Elizabethan scepticism. All are united by their high level of uncertainty about how exactly ghosts should be appraised, and to which discourse they properly belong.

This brief survey of the afterlife of the medieval ghost brings to light a number of salient points. First and foremost, it shows that the conceptual structures of medieval culture did not die an easy death, and were not shrugged off in an instant, despite their vehement cancellation in the Emmanuel College *Festial*. On the contrary, the ghost shows how persistent an absence they left behind. In all of these later accounts of the ghost, the phenomenon is marked by its lack of definite meaning, and a resistance to ownership by any single set of ideas or terms. Even though this loss of a defining and stabilising framework plays out in a number of ways, it visibly runs through and unites the work of these writers. It is equally evident in their scepticism, their disavowal, their groping after a reliable set of criteria, and their refusal to offer comment at all.

But, to return to the question with which we started, the main issue is what exactly can Freud bring to these developments, despite his insistence that ghosts are generated out of an "unchanged attitude towards death" (Freud, 1955, p. 242). In fact, I would suggest, his work has considerable value here. In the first place, it helps us to understand something that is not immediately clear,

which is why the ghost came back at all, and why these writers are driven to address a conception that should by rights have been exorcised from their culture. But at the same time, it also serves a more theoretical end, reminding us that there are certain things we should not overlook in discussions of this kind. After all, what Freud, that great cartographer of the unreasonable, brings to the table is the emotive qualities of the ghost. In his reading, the ghost is a point at which several, contradictory emotions are overlaid, forming a complex ambivalence which repression can do little to iron out. He accounts for the "conservatism" of the ghost by seeing it in terms of an "emotional reaction to death and the insufficiency of our scientific knowledge about it", a reaction that is "a highly ambiguous and ambivalent one", consisting not only of fear but grief, reverence and longing as well (pp. 242-43).

This mixture goes a long way to explain why the ghost does not vanish with the doctrinal scaffolding that gave it shape, and why and how it proves so attractive after the Reformation. The muddled feelings Freud describes are those of early modern culture itself, which was at the same time hostile towards the medieval dead, fearful of contamination by their beliefs, and keen to honour them and to utilise their voices in constructing its own culture. But on top of this, it also reasserts something that is perhaps easy to ignore: that this broken history is driven above all by human beings, not by impersonal forces, by the irrational feelings and desires of individual agencies rather than formal doctrine. Whether it be clearly marked, as in the pressurised atmosphere of the Pitts' house, or visible beneath the surface, as in Glanvill's dogged commitment to the ghost in the teeth of his own empiricism, Freud's insistence on the irrational provides the best instrument for understanding this recurrent feature. It helps us understand that it is unthinking emotion that makes the ghost horrific, and at times embarrassing, but apparently too desirable to cut loose. He shows that any intellectual attempt to contain and define the ghost must be doomed to failure, since the conception is necessarily unreasonable, born out of the desire and anxiety of individuals rather than any logic their culture might impose.

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Anna Rivers

"No glimpse of a further shore": Emily Brontë's Spectral Poetics

Abstract

Death represents simultaneously the ultimate alienation and ultimate realization of the subjectivity. Through a phenomenological analysis of Emily Brontë's poetry, this paper argues that the uncanny experience is the subject's recognition that their self comes into being only through its own constitutive otherness. Hélène Cixous states in her critique of Freud's essay on the uncanny that "the Ghost is the fiction of our relationship to death [...] there is nothing more notorious and foreign to our thought than mortality". Death is unknowable and "should remain hidden, because if it shows itself to me, it means that I am dead". Brontë's poem *A Death Scene* for example works towards this recognition that the subject and death cannot exist together, each necessarily cancelling out the other. The speaker's struggles to control and totalize death, to the extent of imagining she can see through the eyes of her dying lover, only end by confronting her with the otherness that defines her self. Cixous describes memory as a "phantom", "the other of the world in which I exist". Without this phantom there is no existence: the temporal difference of the self from itself generates being, which is therefore inherently spectral. Brontë's depictions of uncanny collisions with the spectrality of the self expose the permeability and incoherence of the subjectivity, destabilizing the boundaries between self and other, known and unknown, and life and death.

Emily Brontë's poetics turns on moments when the subject is confronted by the essential hauntedness of their being. These uncanny encounters and their associated troubling of structures of time, space and knowledge, recur again and again throughout her work. Hélène Cixous describes memory as a "phantom", "the other world of the world in which I exist" (Cixous, 2006, p. 257). Without this phantom there is no existence: the temporal difference of the self from itself generates being. The subject's consciousness of being is therefore inherently spectral. Brontë's poetry thus engages intellectually with ideas that would fall under the umbrella of phenomenology in the succeeding century, probing the relationship between self and other and suggesting that knowing the other is impossible, that to insist upon doing so constitutes a form of violence. The term "hauntology", coined by Jacques Derrida, sounds the same in French as "ontologie", or ontology, the study of being. Being, as imagined through haunting, disrupts conceptions of absolute reality, knowledge or identity on the basis of the inadequacy of available constructions of time, because it refers to the impossibility of conceptualising the present or future without the haunting presence of the past (Derrida, 2006, p. 10). The spectral thus signals disruption in discursive systems.

From these methodological foundations, this chapter analyses three of Brontë's poems, all set in her fantasy paracosm, Gondal, to argue that her depictions of uncanny collisions with the spectrality of the self expose the permeability and incoherence of the subjectivity, destabilizing the boundaries between self and other, known and unknown, and life and death. Brontë's poetics of uncertainty resists the totalization of the other, of death, to explore the constitutive relationality of the self to the other and of knowledge to death. This uncertainty as to the nature of the real, the self or life is, for Brontë, not something to be solved or negated but harnessed: she uses the uncanniness of being and experience to challenge the terms which might create certainty. This recognition of uncertainty and the unknown as a way of engaging with crucial and constitutive otherness, is crucial to poetic work and extrapolates out to political work. As Mark Fisher, following Derrida, states: "hauntology is a

political gesture: a sign that the dead will not be silenced" (Fisher, 2014, p. 132). For Brontë it is not merely that the dead will not be silenced but that they break down the binary between living and dead, silenced and sounded, self and other, knowable and unknowable. The self, which should be the most "heimlich", homely or familiar, sphere of all, is the space which is haunted in these poems. I argue that Brontë's deployment of instability and uncertainty, which opens up the space for the spectrality of her poetics, are politically radical through their overturning of the hegemony of the subject and the static reality which it defines itself through mastering.

The development of industrial global capitalism during the nineteenth century contributed to a cultural sense of the dissolution of boundaries at the local, national and metaphysical levels. This was, as Marx and Engels would indicate after Brontë's time, dialectical in the sense that it both alienated people and contributed to global networks of labour oppression, but simultaneously might hold the potential for new forms of international solidarity (Marx & Engels, 1969). Science, psychology and political upheaval eroded the foundations of a certain stable, coherent ideology of "the subject", specifically the property-owning British white male subject. Mass immigration into British cities, especially London, caused a population boom, and even at the apex of its ideological and physical violence, the imperial narrative of superior core and inferior peripheries was beginning to fray at the edges. Simultaneously, the development of print capitalism opened up access to reading, writing and subsequently public action to people who did not fit the traditional and exclusionary mould of the political subject. Physical, financial and social boundaries were thrust up against these changes, which threatened to destabilize the power structures holding this cultural hegemony, the reality in which this subject was a subject and indeed *the* subject, in place. As Line Henriksen suggests, "anxiety is the signal that a void – that is, boundless emptiness and nothingness – is too close for comfort" and that the "overflowing nature of the void threatens to undo the subject's sense of an imagined bodily unity" (Henriksen, 2016, p. 25) The desperation and neurosis of the urge to control the unknown – metrically, politically, socially,

physically – during this period can in this way be traced back to this sense that a strong ideological faith in the integrity of privileged subjectivity was becoming threatened.

While the latter half of the nineteenth century is the period primarily associated with the population explosion, Brontë was writing in the midst of the industrial revolution and its associated transformations of conceptualizations of labour, the individual, and the relationship between national (and global) core and periphery that it brought with it. Her writing is considered marginal both in terms of its treatment of and exposure to political and social issues of the time, but it is also marginal in the sense that it grapples obsessively with what it means to exist marginally. Political, social and economic boundaries were being constantly blurred and redefined, often with new violence and exclusionary force, during this period, hence Brontë's understanding and imagining of power, control, emotion and affect and the relationality of self to other as chequered, contested borderlines. Elizabeth Helsinger argues that Brontë was critical of ideologies of "possessive individualism" and imperial domination as well as the idea of a centralized or fixed subjectivity as the grounds of any ethical or political system (Helsinger, 1997, p. 9). She goes on to show how Brontë's "narratives and scenes trace the distance between privilege and deprivation as a pattern of repeated reversals in which the empowered and the disempowered sustain a common universe as they change positions" (p. 34). In Brontë's work there are no innocents: there are those who are powerful, those who are complicit, those who are victimized and those who are marginal, and they all constantly shift and vie for position in the struggle for control over their selves and boundaries, a control which is refused over and over again, hollow as soon as it is achieved and then snatched away again by the ambitions of another.

Brontë's poem *A Death Scene* (Brontë, 1995, pp. 162-4) traces a recognition of the otherness and unknowability of death which destabilizes and undoes the poetic subject even as it insists upon its stability and coherence. The poem's speaker is Brontë's Gondal heroine A.G.A., Augusta Geraldine Almeda, at the deathbed of her dying lover, Lord of Elbë. A.G.A. describes dying as the crossing of

"the eternal sea": this is the threshold separating what is knowable from what is not. She cannot imagine what lies beyond the sea, "no glimpse of a further shore / has blessed my straining eye" (ll. 19-20). Her speech is filled with exclamation marks, demands and exhortations, representing her asserting of her will against the world: in contrast, Elbë's is a silent, already departing presence in the poem. The poem is structured by her process of having to accept that death is unknowable and other, that she cannot control, totalize or access this ultimate unknown, that is to say, that it is other to her subjectivity. This poetics of uncertainty destabilizes conceptions of time, subjectivity and reality and it is this sense of the familiar becoming alien and unknown, that Brontë uses to create an uncanny effect and explore its philosophical possibilities with regards to the poetic subject. The uncanny condition of being as Julian Wolfreys uses the term is the way the subject is haunted by its self, its existence only through collision with its own spatial and temporal difference (Wolfreys, 2018). If ghosts are something essentially other or absent which defy their own essential othering or absence, this means that a hauntological poetics reimagines the subjectivity as existing by means of its being haunted by its alternate temporalities, the urge to know what cannot be known, hence, its difference from itself.

This recalls Emmanuel Levinas's argument that the relationship with the unknown is fundamentally a relationship with death. Death cannot be known: it is the ultimate situation in which something absolutely and inherently unknowable happens (Levinas, 1989). Cixous, similarly, in her critique of Freud's essay on the uncanny states that "the Ghost is the fiction of our relationship to death [...] there is nothing more notorious and foreign to our thought than mortality". She goes on to argue that death is unknowable and "should remain hidden, because if it has shown itself to me, it is the fact that I am dead" (Cixous, 1976, p. 543). The ghost therefore, which infringes the boundary between life and death, signals a paradox in epistemology compelling a destabilising collision with the ultimate uncertainty and the most unrepresentable of concepts, death. If death is the negation of knowing and totalizing power, the ghost manifesting this is a site for a renegotiation of the political

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boundaries of what can be known and correspondingly how knowledge and history are constructed. Levinas argued that an attempt to fully know the other was to effectively refuse the other as other, to try and contain the other within the self. He called this "totalization" and this is at the basis, for Levinas, of all oppressive power structures. Levinas was writing in the mid-twentieth century but his work illuminates the nuances of Victorian spectralities and death culture due to its obsession with knowing the unknowable and controlling the uncontrollable. Britain's nineteenth century was fascinated by death and generated vast networks and economies of ritual, performativity and consumption surrounding funerals, relics, graveyards, loss and mourning. These are strategies for trying to negotiate or refuse the absolutism of death's mystery.

This poem portrays death as a journey into the unknown and unknowable. A.G.A. exclaims: "O Day, He cannot die / when thou so fair art shining..." (ll. 1-2), establishing a dualism of life, light and knowledge or certainty, versus death, darkness and the unknown. Upon A.G.A.'s imagined ocean she can play the lookout, straining to see the shore, "I hear its billows roar / I see them foaming high..." (ll. 17-18). She thus asserts her senses upon her imaginary unknown in order to insist that she controls her own destiny despite the rage and chaos of her environment. She associates herself with activity, movement, energy, telling Elbë: "it is not Death, but pain / that struggles in thy breast" (ll. 25). Pain signals life, which she refuses to believe is leaving him. The panic registered by the uneven poetic rhythm is generated by her realisation that the spectral world to which her lover is going transcends her familiar systems for knowing and understanding experience: mental control and the assertion of the self upon the world. This recognition is her collision with alterity. Her sense of her own subjectivity as an active, powerful agent which can control her environment, is fractured by her inability to stop him from dying, to control life and death, to *know* the other.

After this point, the quotation marks which have framed the rest of the poem close, and A.G.A. narrates the remainder of the scene in the first person. This shift expresses her realization of the unknowability, the absolute otherness, of death. In Levinasian

terms she has been trying to totalize it, or control it, contain it within her self and its understanding, but now she is compelled through sympathy for her dying lover, who cannot stand to suffer any longer, to recognize that this is impossible, "one long look that sore reproved me / for the woe I could not bear..." (ll. 29-30). This is the spectral moment of the poem, the point at which she becomes a subject who can narrate herself and be narrated by herself, a subject who is 'not alone' in her conception of her self.

His look *reproves* her, keeping them separate and reinforcing her "I" experience of the scene. However, immediately the chaos and panic of A.G.A.'s world begins to still: "the heaving / of distraction passed away" (ll. 33-4). Which of the two of them is heaving, presumably though not explicitly A.G.A., is unclear: this is a moment of actual empathy when the two subjectivities in the poem come briefly together. One of them moves and this movement is expressed as applicable to either of them in the "real" of the poem as "heaving" has the potential to denote passion and resistance on her part, or indeed suffering and laboured breathing on his. Although this encounter brings them into contact with each other, according to this poetics the uncertainty of its terms makes it a non-violent and non-totalizing encounter which perhaps only poetic language, with its capacity to open and rewire structures of the real, can achieve. Margrit Shildrick's work on vulnerability and the embodiment of difference within a disability studies content is relevant here, in particular her interpretation of Megan Boler's analysis of empathetic identification which would, here and elsewhere, remain "trapped within a self/other binary that ultimately consumes and annihilates the other" (Shildrick, 2000, p. 223). Shildrick argues that Boler "prefers a testimonial response that requires the encounter with vulnerability to rest on an openness to the unpredictably strange and excessive, an openness that renders the self vulnerable" (p. 222). This excessive strangeness is exactly that which A.G.A. is opened up to through a desire to stop her lover's pain.

Elbë's body becomes closed to her, something she cannot access or interpret: "Then his eyes began to weary / Weighed beneath a mortal sleep / And their orbs grew strangely dreary / Clouded, even

as they would weep" (ll. 41-44). Her description hovers around it, trying to penetrate, but she cannot even imagine it with any certainty, as shown by the conditional "*would* weep". They do not, in fact, weep, as she expects, but remain "strange" to her. This expresses her coming to terms not only with the fundamental otherness of death but also of Elbë and his dying body: he is beyond her, other to her, she cannot control him or identify with him. Looking into his eyes as he dies she can see nothing, no movement or emotion, no clues as to what he is experiencing or where he is going.

The absence of signifying information represents death in this poem because it represents A.G.A.'s inability to know and through knowing control the force of alterity. Line Henriksen shows how the spectral "challenges the formation of knowledge itself" (Henriksen, 2016, p. 66) because it can be known only through its relation to something else "whether this something else is yet to come, has already been, or never will be". This otherness is specifically in the ghost's relationship, or lack or inversion thereof, with time. Movement, energy and change are negated in *A Death Scene*, "but they [his eyes] wept not, but they changed not/ never moved and never closed..." (ll. 45-6). This is the evidence that Elbë is dying. In the final stanza, similarly, it is the absence of signs of life that allows A.G.A. to interpret that Elbë is dead. This signifies her recognition that she cannot know or imagine anything about the process of dying: the knowledge she asserts in *A Death-Scene* 's final line: "so, I knew that he was dead" (l. 52) - is something she has come to through the negation of the forms of knowing she is accustomed to – movement, speech, breath, change, emotional timbre. Furthermore, this line ends in a dash which makes the stanza unfinished and unbalanced in terms of its punctuation, suggesting A.G.A.'s inability to believe it – her claim to knowledge is destabilised poetically even as she makes it. However, rhythmically and in its rhyme scheme the final stanza is a perfect cadence of an ending which completes the epistemological paradox. The poem's aim is not to show how she tries to stop Elbë from dying or to show where he is going. It is to express the impossibility of itself, which is to say its spectrality. Portraying the suspension between poetically envisioning death and

recognising the impossibility of this task situates Brontë's poem on an epistemological threshold which allows her to explore the limitations of the conception of subjectivity.

The untitled poem referred to as *Fragment 11* (October 1837)[1] begins at the fall of Tyndarum, a kingdom in the Gondal paracosm, the speaker being a member of the invading army (Brontë, 1995, pp. 42-3). Tyndarum is never mentioned again in the surviving poems, nor is there any further context to the story within which it is set. Elizabeth Helsinger writes about the political potential of the spectral in Brontë's work in her depiction of displacement under industrial capitalism as a way of life. Her work is now transmitted and received through ghostly fragments and traces. The overarching Gondal narrative, if there ever was one, has been lost and although some Brontë scholars have tried to draw together the threads of a coherent saga Helsinger considers, and I agree, that this misses the point (Helsinger, 1997, p. 189). The echoing, ghostly nature of the poems and their stories and subjects which haunt the centuries since Brontë's death, alienated and displaced from their own context, has become part of their radicalism in terms of how poetry and poetic voice are imagined in the neoliberal and postmodern world receiving them. In her life and throughout her poetics, Brontë rejects "singular authorial identity in favour of one in which voice is always contested and never definitively located" (p. 203): her poetic imagination is one of a plurality of voices, perspectives, temporalities and stories.

The poem immediately locates itself in a destabilized space: the city walls are "reeling", the ruins "smoldering" and the rhythm stilted and uneven, as in "And cold – How cold! wan moonlight smiled..." (ll. 6-7) as if to mirror the soldier's wary, weary progress through

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1 - Many of Brontë's poems are untitled and undated. There are also frequently several versions of them, many of which exist only in manuscript form, containing misspellings, uncertain punctuation and some indecipherable words. The 1995 edition which I am using is edited by Derek Roper and Edward Chitham. This edition aims to reproduce as loyally as possible the actual material left behind by Brontë herself. There is of course a spectral irony here: contemporary printed versions of her poems are haunted with the shadowy wildness of their might-have-been-s, their unknown and unknowable counterpart possibilities.

the erstwhile battlefield. The turning-inward to his experience of his own traumatized psyche signals that the poem will deal with a realm in which subjectivity and reality are blurring together:

> I could not sleep through that wild seigh
> My heart had fiercly burned and bounded
> The outward tumult seemed to asswage
> The inward tempest it surrounded
>
> But calm a seared soul cannot bear
> And silence whets the fang of pain
> I felt the full flood of despair
>
> Returning to my breast again.
> (ll.17-24)

This poem does not depict a literal haunting in the sense of a sighting of a ghost, but rather an experience of the spectral generated by the fragmentation of the subject in response to the physical and discursive violence of the siege.

The profoundly Gothic scene of the "ruined Hall" with its ghostly, sensationally personified yew trees and rattling vaults is a threshold between the institutionally-controlled and the uncontrollable. This boundary has been ruptured by the violence of the invasion, as symbolised by the "shattered glass" at the windows. The buildings in this poem – the hall, the churches and the city itself – represent a world of human constructs, symbols and systems, which are never portrayed as whole but only "plundered", "roofless" or otherwise destroyed. These are all images of the death or decay of structures of human control over the unknown – buildings, boundaries, discourses. To recall Levinasian totalization, "knowing" the other is impossible unless it is forcibly contained or controlled by the subject, "knowing" it by silencing and destroying

it as other. According to this, the subject who perceives themselves as temporally stable and present is delusional, a type of delusion reinforced by modern capitalism's investment in the idea of the bounded individual.

Exploring how the moment of haunting registers a disruption in binary systems of representation, inclusion and existence, Christine Berthin moves from Abraham and Torok's work showing how language is structured around absence and presence within discourse. Her work explores haunting as a transmission of what is unsayable/unknowable in discourse and posits that it functions as a fundamental attack on values of certainty and permanence which sustain bourgeois culture (Berthin, 2010). Similarly, Pilar Blanco and Peeren in their introduction to *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory* investigate how "the ghost also questions the formation of knowledge itself and specifically invokes what is placed outside it, excluded from perception and, consequently, from both the archive as the depository of the sanctioned, acknowledged past and politics as the (re)imagined present and future" (Blanco and Peeren, 2013, p. 9). It is not merely the construction of the "real" to which the ghost poses a threat but the discourse of knowledge within which that real can be posited in the first place. This discursive stability and coherence of the real is highly political and the ghost, undermining it, potentially revolutionary. In Brontë's poem, the subject is haunted by his own ghostly other, which he never sees or fully perceives, but is forced to recognise through fear and trauma. The wind is a "wandering moan" that causes the narrator to "shrink to be alone", expressing a dread at the level of self or identity against this immaterial yet "unutterably drear" threat. The membrane between building and outside world is no longer impermeable, so the terrifying breakdown of human systems of thought and representation are intruding into the narrator's sense of subjective space.

The spectral emerges in the uncanny space in between knowledge and fear and exists here as an intense uneasy affect. The moment of haunting is expressed as:

An undefined an awful dream
A breath of what had been before
A memory whose blighting beam
Was flitting o'er me ever more
(ll.41-44)

The lack of punctuation in this stanza, the rolling of vowels over one another in the first line and the incantatory effects of the alliterations all serve to emphasise the emotional chaos caused by this experience. The consistent regular rhythm of this stanza contrasted with the aural effects suggests that through this high affective sensitivity the narrator is reduced to clinging to the more basic properties of his discourse, the breathlike or rhythmic, what Kristeva would call the "semiotic" system of sounds and rhythms which structure the pre-linguistic consciousness (Kristeva, 1984). Human constructs of meaning have been invalidated for him, and so he falls back in his desperation for some systemic foothold, on the pre-semantic. This too is linguistically and culturally specific to some extent (Martin, 2012, pp. 1-15) but unconsciously so. The spectre here is nothing more nor less than dream, breath and memory, immaterial forces which come from inside himself, which makes them all the more terrifying. He has lost control over his subjectivity and has to realize that there is something within him, something constitutive, which is other. This knowledge which exists through a very lack of knowledge – it is "undefined" and never verbalized – generates the haunted or spectral atmosphere and hollows out the coherent individual subjectivity in its self-imagining as having mastery over itself.

The uncanny in this poem is this experience of the absence of safety, control or coherence: the space which becomes "unheimlich" or "unhomely" is the narrator's own consciousness. He feels the spectral effects within his own body, a far more terrifying prospect than an externalized apparition. Terry Castle in *The Female Thermometer* describes how, during the Enlightenment and scientific advances of the eighteenth-century, the supernatural was forced out of reality and "interiorized", so that ghosts became,

in British cultural discourse, projections of the unconscious. This created a dynamic by which "if ghosts were thoughts, then thoughts themselves took on – at least notionally – the haunting reality of ghosts" (Castle, 1995, p. 161). This cultural shift explains the innovative ability of Brontë's poem to terrify despite nothing terrifying actually happening, it is the uncertainty that makes this frightening and it is in uncertainty, the suspension of myths or structures of absolute knowledge, where the spectral emerges. The moment of horror turns on his exclamation: "O God what caused that shuddering thrill? That anguished agonizing start?" (ll. 39-40). He is aware that something spectral is happening because his *body* is telling him that it is being haunted by some alien affect. This causes the panic expressed by the alliteration of "anguished agonizing", a gasping, gargling, vulnerable effect when combined with the jerking speed of these two separate but internally non-punctuated phrases. His sense of his own contained, safe subjectivity is ruptured by the trauma he has experienced and his very body becomes haunted. This is the spectral collision – he is forced to recognize that he is not alone in himself.

The poem closes on the image of the broken cathedral, "discrowned but most majestic so" (l. 54). This is a symbol for the fall of the kingdom and the implosion of its associated form of ideology. It is worth recalling at this point that the unnamed speaker is identified only as being on the side of those who have sacked Tyndarum: although his fractured and bewildered narrative might indicate otherwise, he is a member of the triumphant army. Notions of victory, defeat and political clarity are thus destabilized by the spectral experience of the poem. The fact that the cathedral can be majestic despite being "discrowned" heralds this shift in the poetic voice and signals that a new representation of power is at play. "Serene repose" suggests a withdrawal from the necessity of knowing, judging and conquering. Its "realm of buried woe" is a world of emotional and psychic crypts, of hidden or impossible knowledge and the acceptance of this is a relinquishing of this human urge to control the unknown.

Throughout Brontë's work, truth and identity are unstable systems, fetishized and obsessed over only in order to continually invalidate themselves. Her poem *Written in Aspin Castle* is structured around the attempt of the narrator to *understand* the nature of the ghost of Lord Alfred, the first master of the castle (Brontë, 1995, pp. 131-133). The title and opening lines establish the politics which is about to be unwritten: the Gothic castle is a space in which boundaries undo themselves and the hegemonic – particularly in terms of phallocentrism, private property and ideas of wholeness – is performed in order to expose its fragility. Very little of this is contextualized: it takes place in Gondal and Alfred's daughter is probably (though not definitively) Augusta Almeda. Who the speaker is or why they are wandering around this castle hunting for ghosts, however, is not explained. The poem is situated from the very beginning within a space of concealment, in which the "murmuring water flow" and "waving trees" are only imagined to exist based on the interpretation of sensory phenomena. The speaker is sitting "within this Norman door / Whose sombre portal hides the lights/ thickening above me evermore!" (ll. 2-4) The sense of proliferation and infinity associated with the stars is not reduced by her being unable to see them: her imagined version of the stars serves for her the same purpose as seeing them in reality. This also signals to the reader that the poem deals with a narrator more invested in subjective perceptions than in portraying reality. This poem therefore turns on the same aesthetics of uncertainty to compel a questioning of representative and imaginative systems, how these work and what their respective limitations are.

The rhythm and rhyme scheme are regular and predictable in the opening five stanzas, each four lines long with eight syllables per line. This formal containment initially establishes the immaterial and uncertain subject matter as safe, unthreatening to the subject. However, the sixth stanza breaks the pattern, reflecting the movement into the fantastic mode heralded by images of the "fairy path" and Fancy's "majic power": this stanza has nine lines and the last five follow a completely different rhyming pattern. Lines five and nine are matched, while lines six, seven and eight rhyme, ending

"hour," "flower" and "power". This builds up a conjuring energy which is released, after being deferred by another two intensifying lines of suspense, in the appearance of the ghost in the next stanza. This deferral is interesting because it is charged with the human oral passing-on of stories, specifically within the local community, "round their hearths they'll tell the tale/ and every listener Swears it true" (ll. 30-1). The urged invocation of truth, which we already know to be unstable here only serves to invalidate the binary construction of truth versus fiction further: moreover, it represents a marginal and alternative structure of knowledge, one which is flexible enough to accommodate uncertainty, indeterminacy and imagination. Whether the ghost is there or not there in 'reality' cannot be known, but it exists within this communal framework. The notion of a singular superior system of belief, representation or knowledge in this poem is deconstructed from the start.

What distinguishes the phantom, when it finally appears, from an angel is its knowledge of human suffering, "brooding on that angel brow / Rests such a shade of deep despair / As nought devine could ever know" (ll. 38-9). The flow of presence and absence of knowledge and how this is qualified by imagination is thus again established as the organizing principle of the poem's world. The immediately-subverted appearance of divinity also suggests the total disinterest in and separation from the world of the divine, if it exists at all. This is not a space for transcendence because it is a space without subjects who can even imagine they are bounded or centralized. As Helsinger states, "the politics of the marginal undermine transcendent states, poetic or political, calling into question the possibilities of unified subjectivities" (Helsinger, 1997, p. 189) and the spectral is the very embodiment, because it undermines constructions of temporal and privileged embodiment, of marginality and of alienation.

Poetic form becomes increasingly uneven as the speaker questions the boundaries of this reality, "But why – around that alien grave/ Three thousand miles beyond the wave/Where his exiled ashes lie [...] doth he not rather roam?" (ll. 47-51) She is trying to understand the mechanics of the ghost's behaviour, to apply a familiar system of logic, piecing together meaning and narrative

from the scattered fragments she finds around her. These disparate clues include the stories of the local people as well as the portraits on the castle walls. Images of "twilight", "mist" and "moonlight" add to the hazy, uncertain atmosphere. The world of the poem is situated on an epistemological faultline, the speaker describing how "when the moonbeam chill and blue/ Streams the spectral windows through/ That picture's like a spectre too-" (ll. 56-9): the concepts of knowledge and reliable perception themselves are destabilized by the presence of the phantom. This is symbolised by the disruption in poetic pattern as this stanza is broken off abruptly at three lines long to admit the spectral intrusion, represented by this interactive flowing of presence and absence. The numerous references to things dusty, old, broken and ruined meanwhile locate it in a space infused with the past, which is entangled with present and future forms of being. This castle is a hauntological stain, disturbing linear structures of time.

The paintings of Lord Alfred and his daughter on the castle walls express this entanglement of times and subjectivities because *they* blur together. Their initial containment within separate picture frames and the narrator's imagining of their interrelationship symbolizes the patriarchal hierarchy as a system of understanding the world. However, they can only be situated or recognised in their interrelation:

> The hall is full of portraits rare;
> Beauty and mystery mingle there-
> At his right hand an infant fair
> Looks from its golden frame.
> And just like his its ringlets bright
> Its large dark eye of shadowy light
> Its cheek's pure hue, its forehead white
> And like its noble name-
> Daughter divine! And could his gaze
> Fall coldly on thy peerless face?
> And did he never smile to see
> Himself restored to infancy?"
> (ll. 59-70)

This hollows out this hegemonic form of temporality, distorting and bewildering reality. "Just like his" shows the father's image swiftly abandoned for the description of the child's face which matches her father's: the poem describes both of them as one body. The change in the rhyme scheme to 'aaab' in these two stanzas has a dazzling effect so that meaning is overwhelmed by the blinding repetitions of "bright", "light" and "white". What remains is one identity strewn out throughout the portrait hall, unbounded by body or picture frame. The passing-down of identity or title becomes diluted by its sharing-out between different recipients, histories and contexts: the daughter may exist only in relation to the father but simultaneously the father comes to exist only because he resembles his daughter. This resemblance is similarly the only manifestation of his ineffective and pathetic haunting of the castle, in which the presence of his daughter is hugely dominant. The very concept of the bounded human body or individual identity and all its political ramifications is completely deconstructed: without a singular body to represent or be represented by them, power structures based on the atomization and temporal fixity of beings, such as that of patriarchal lineage, cannot hold.

Ultimately the spectral presence does not represent a coherent or logical narrative, instead negating and destabilizing the very processes of thought and perception which generate such narratives at all. Although the speaker comes to a conclusion about the identity and purpose of the ghost, it does not seem to convince her either. "O come away!" she exclaims at the moment of decision, turning away from her ghostly imaginings and seizing, with some desperation, upon the natural space around her, "come leave these dreams o'er things of yore/ And turn to Nature's face devine" (ll. 94-5). She has already established the brokenness of her relationship with both time and the divine, so there is a hollowness to her attempts to relegate her spectral experience to the past or indeed to place her trust in a "divine" rather than unstable and ghostly construction of nature. She casts her imagination out now "o'er wood and wold, o'er flood and fell / O'er flashing lake and gleaming dell" (ll. 96-7). The breathlessness and desperate speed of these lines, created

by the repeated "o'er" and their proliferation of alliterative sound effects, in particular "f...d" and "wo...wo... o", represents her flinging up material certainties to try and repress the knowledge of the fundamental destabilization instigated by her spectral musings. For Brontë, spectrality suggests possibilities for living in and engaging with a marginalised and unreconcilable world in which the struggle for identity is impossible but simultaneously coercive and necessary (Helsinger, 1997, p. 215). Brontë's poetics of uncertainty do not wrap up neatly or generate satisfaction or contentment, but remain suspended provocatively in their own uncanniness.

In conclusion, Brontë's spectral poetics construct uncertainty and indeterminacy to destabilize the politics of the coherent, atomized or absolute subjectivity. Her depictions of subjects haunted by themselves and by the impossibility of their own individual being, expresses the constitutive otherness of the self. The uncanny effect appears in this sense that they are not alone in themselves, that their structures of understanding, knowing and controlling their worlds from the perspective of a contained and coherent subjectivity, is in fact illusory. The politically radical must always invoke the uncanny because reality must be made unstable and defamiliarized in order for change to happen. Line Henriksen contributes to this narrative of the revolutionary potential of the spectral and hauntological when she writes about a "risky ethics of justice that is an opening up towards the unknown, the undecidable and unpredictable" (Henriksen, 2016, p. 21). Instability can also lead to the reinforcement of totalitarian regimes, a caveat Brontë's poetry is well aware of. She does not depict any revolutionary futurity, instead dwelling in the faultlines of subjectivity, the contested spaces of power, privilege and identity. Her interest is in structures as they lose their definition, as they crumble; her poetic world is a spectral one, a world in flux, where nothing is stable or coherent and although her characters know this to be true they continue to act as if their individual will can exert control and agency over their worlds, sometimes to extremes. A poem operating in the realm of the spectral is a political intervention into ideological constructions of space and time and Brontë's poetics of uncertainty breaks open the space to admit this spectral invader, who, in her poetry, was always already there.

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Tiziana Lentini

The Uncanny
in Huxley's *Brave New World*
and Orwell's *1984*

Abstract

Das Unheimliche is a German substantivized adjective used by Freud as conceptual term for explaining that particular attitude of the fear in establishing, inside the human being, a feeling of disorientation due to an impression or a situation which appears familiar but extraneous at the same time. This kind of feeling brings the subject to experiment a sense of anguish, confusion and estrangement. In English language it was translated with the word *uncanny* and is deeply connected to the aesthetic field.

Ernst Jentsch was the first that introduced this concept in psychology and literary fields, indeed he highlighted how the narrative tool was able to create an uncanny feeling in the reader and especially how it was used by many authors for introducing in their stories situations or characters which leave the readers in a distressing and doubtful condition.

A clear example of contemporary uncanny literature could be given by the two novels which left a mark in the field of dystopian literature: *1984* (1949) by George Orwell and *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley. Reading these two novels, especially nowadays, could arouse inside the reader a feeling strongly connected to the concept of *Uncanny*. Orwell and Huxley create a

dystopian world in which man's life is marked by a dramatic existence; this new society is cold, detached, characterized by a deep pessimism and a strong crisis of values which is not so far from the current social situation that we are experiencing.

Introduction

Starting from a philological survey, the German word *Das Unheimliche* is considered the contrary of the word *hemlich (*from *heim,* home) which also means quiet, comfortable, trustworthy, intimate, something belonging to the intimacy of the family fireside. Therefore, the word *Un-heimlich* is the equivalent of unusual, foreign, unfamiliar; usually what is not familiar or known causes terror and fright but not everything that is unusual or new causes fright, terror and disturbance. In English the term *Unheimliche* was translated as *Uncanny* and it is referred to something deeply connected to the aesthetic field, which prefers to deal with the beautiful, the sublime, the attractive, typical elements of the positive movements of the soul, rather than with what brings repellent, contrary and painful feelings. To be properly *uncanny* the object must therefore have some other characteristics and it must be an infrequent characteristic because most of the frightening or terrifying things are not also uncanny. According to Freud, for understanding the real meaning of Uncanny there are two possibilities: to explore the meaning of the term through a philological survey or analyzing the sensory impressions, experiences and situations, which evokes the sense of the uncanny, and deducing the hidden character of the uncanny from something common to all cases. Both the ways lead to the same result: the Uncanny is the frightening that goes back to what has already known to us, to what is considered familiar.

Daniel Sanders in his dictionary of German language translates the meaning of *Heimlich* as "kept indoor, hide" (Sanders, 1865, p. 729), meanings which cannot be considered so antithetical regarding

to the words confortable and familiar, but which are also part of two contrasting areas. Heimlich presents an ambivalent meaning where the one "hide" overlaps with his contrary *unheimlich*, for this reason Uncanny could mean "not concealed", "come to light", "surfaced". This sort of disturbance appears when an object or a situation present an affective dualism made of strangeness and familiarity. Schelling in his work *Philosophy of Mythology* (1856) sustains that from the point of view of the ontological field, Uncanny [unheimlich] is a term for everything which should remain mysterious, hidden, latent and has come to light. The hidden, the repressed that somehow returns to our presence through the object or the uncanny situation, generates this sensation of particular anxiety defined perturbation (*unheimlichkei*t). This kind of perturbation could be considered as the "access to the ancient homeland", the first real human common mansion: the womb. So the uncanny arises when what was kept hidden is shown, when what was repressed returns to awake childhood trauma which were initially silent (Schelling, 2007).

The concept of maternal womb is one of the topic which are at the base of Huxley's novel *Brave New World* published in 1932, indeed the topics faced in this novel anticipates huge scientific advancements in psychological manipulation, reproductive technology, hypnopedia, and classical mental conditioning which are combined for creating a dystopian society. Huxley talks about "The Ultimate Revolution" several times, which is considered the only way, thanks to the applied science, on manipulating the irrational forces that are at the base of human nature. In *1984* and *Brave New World* the aim is conditioning them as one likes and satisfying them for the happiness of the leaders, it is a *conditio sine qua non* the leaders' dream does not come true.

The following paragraphs will be characterized by a critical and literary analysis of these two Literature's mile-stones; through a careful assessment of these works could be possible to underline the issues and the recurring conditions which link them to the Freudian Uncanny's sphere.

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The Freudian Uncanny in some recurring conditions in *Brave New World* and *1984*

Thanks to Freud, the Uncanny becomes one of the great aesthetic categories of the 20th century. It is important to underline that the Freudian Uncanny recurs frequently in some topics: the double, repetitive acts, superstitions and self-propelled mechanisms; the maternal womb, the animation of the inanimate, the return of the dead, alive burial and emasculation (Freud, 2003, pp. 141-143).

The theme of the "double" has quite often been addressed over centuries of time, especially in the literary field. It is considered by Freud as the aspect of us that upsets because it corresponds to our objectification, according to him it is possible to recognize ourselves through another individual; it's our self-consciousness seen from the outside. It can represent a narcissistic strengthening of identity, but it can also take on the disturbing connotation of persecution. For Freud, during the course of history, man has suffered three serious narcissistic injuries: the Copernican revolution where man had to give up the illusion of being the center of the universe; the theory of Darwin where man found out that he doesn't descend directly from God; and last Psychoanalysis studies, where was bitterly discovered that *human being* is not a *master* even in his *own house*, since the conscious ego is nothing but the tiny emerging tip of the iceberg that metaphorically represents the entire personality.

In dystopian literature the topic of *the double* is deeply related to the notion of a coherent identity which is questioned by proposing the idea of a fragmented self that is simultaneously familiar and frighteningly unknown. *The double* spreads even in other literature genres, including science dystopian fiction; this latter focuses on the investigation of identity and the nature of the human. *Identity* acquires a special relevance, especially because dystopias focus on the restless relation between society and individual. Julian Wolfreys argues that "the question of doubling is particularly connected to the sense of the uncanny, since in the double there is both that which is familiar enough to be disturbing and strange enough to remind us of

the otherness that inhabits the self-same actualizing the synthesis between the familiar and the strange that is at the core of Freud's conceptualization of the uncanny" (Wolfreys, 2002, pp. 14-15). For Linda Dryden, the double encodes an anxiety about otherness and points to the possibility of a dual self, embodying "oppositions like day and night, light and dark, upper worlds and lower worlds, wealth and poverty, beauty and ugliness" (Dryden, 2003, pp. 17-18). More than a psychological condition, duality "is a factor of late nineteenth-century metropolitan life that can be identified in the physical geography of the city as well as in the individual existence" (p. 18).

In twentieth century dystopian literature, then, the double is rearticulated within a moral and social discourse, in the novels *1984* and *Brave New World* the theme of the double is shown through the abnegation and annihilation of the self. The self is described as a person's feature which fully make up their individuality. This can include their deepest thoughts and emotions. One of the goals of the government of Oceania and of *Brave New World* is to harness that self and wrench it into what they deem as fit in their vision of society. In doing so, they destroy the self and create a homologating and homologated society. The homologation and the annihilation of the individual are created thanks to the integration of the single into a world which is totally administered by technology and consumption. Thus we have the triumph of an unreal and inauthentic reality in which "everyone is the others and nobody is himself" (Heidegger, 1962, pp.165-166).

Hence, it is not a surprise that some critics, such as Paul Coates, are used to associate the double's disclosure in nineteenth-century literature to the experience of modern age. For Coates (1988, p. 2-5), the encounter with the Other during the process of colonization already involves a kind of doubling inasmuch as the European colonizer projects his own-self over the subjugated natives; the split between written language and oral speech, which occurs with the widespread dissemination of the press, creates similar doublings, just as the reproduction of images through mass media helps foster a sense of duplication. According to Coates (1988, p. 2), the emergence of the double in literature occurs simultaneously with

the invention of machines sophisticated enough to behave like humans, citing Hoffman's work as an early example of the imbrication of modern technology with the figure of the double. Marina Warner (2007, pp. 165-168) similarly links the double with the evolution of reproduction's technologies. For these reasons the figure of the double appears with a certain frequency in dystopian fiction, especially in those narratives in which the science fictional exploration of technological development is more pronounced like *1984* and *Brave New World*.

It seems obvious how *the double* is tightly linked to the question of morality. Freud (2003, p. 352-353) argues that the concept of the double can be the result of the building of a separate aspect of the self which is responsible for self-criticism and self-observation, and which can be associated with our moral. In Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, the Savage is horrified to see the same face on dozens of workers from a lower caste, the product of a process of artificial insemination that manages to grow a large number of embryos from a single egg: "[he] knew what he saw – [...] the nightmare of swarming indistinguishable sameness" (Huxley, 2016, p. 209). For Coates, the "genetic creation of these identical hordes [in Brave New World] translates into actuality the nationalistic ideologies of fascism: the nation as a hall of mirrors, endlessly prolonging collective narcissism"; but they are also a manifestation of the double as a concretization of the "fear of the feasibility of the self's total reification by science" (Coates, 1988, p. 2-3). Indeed, in dystopian fiction, the issues raised by Kant's moral principle are associated with the dynamics of power and the capitalist mode of production.

It is not a case that the future painted by Huxley in which the World State bases is motto on "community, identity and stability" (Huxley, 2016, p. 3) which could be identified in the ideals which inspired the French Revolution and also the Ultimate Revolution actuated by the élite of Ford through Applied Science. It is important to underline the use of the name Ford made by the author because it could lead to another concept of Uncanny, the one of the repetitive acts. According to Freud the automatic, repetitive, mechanical movements and processes which seem to be produced outside an

ordinary mental activity are perceived as perturbing, fearful, strange, mysterious, inexplicable, often related to supernatural connotations. The repetition of a gesture, a fact, a behavior can become uncanny because it evokes ideas removed from the adult and present in childhood (and in primitive men) such as the omnipotent animistic magical thought that would command the actions performed automatically, whose end is unknown to us.

In the third chapter of *Brave New World*, Huxley mentions the name of Sigmund Freud and associates it to the figure of Ford "Our Ford-or Our Freud, as, for some inscrutable reason, he chose to call himself whenever he spoke of psychological matters–Our Freud had been the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life" (p. 39). The expression "Our Freud" is sometimes used for indicating "Our Ford", indeed the psychoanalytic method of Freud was used to implicitly depend on the rules of classical conditioning and since Freud was popular for the concept that sexual activity is essential to human happiness, the implication that citizens of the World State believe Freud and Ford to be the same person is strongly possible. It is not a surprise that Henry Ford has become a messianic figure to the World State. The expression "Our Ford" is used instead of "Our Lord" as an acknowledgment for popularizing the use of the assembly line. Huxley introduces the figure of Ford as a central one in the emersion of *Brave New World*, but it might also be an allusion to *Fordlandia* the utopian industrial city which was commissioned by Ford in 1927. Huxley's world is founded on the four principles of the assembly line ideated by Ford: homogeneity, consumption of disposable consumer goods, mass production and predictability. The idea of assembly line exposed the worker to that phenomenon known as "alienation": man is estranged from himself, he no longer recognizes himself in the products of his personal activity; the worker, due to the continuous obsessive repetition of movements in the service of the machine, loses the sense of his work and of himself, declines from being the creator to a production tool, practically becoming an appendage of the machine itself. Also in *1984* by Orwell there is this a strong sense of alienation especially because at the base of George Orwell's life and intellectual experience there is

undoubtedly the alienation and exile of a man who has hardly found his own place: poor among the rich, moralist among politicians, leader of truth in the age of lies, the last expression of individuality in the age of massification and the essence of mankind in a cruel Europe divided between two opposing blocks.

In a totalitarian form of government people appear incapable to express their basic emotional and mental components. Humankind is generally governed by a merciless elite who wants to maintain the total control over all the aspects of their life. As Huxley's in *Brave New World* and in Orwell's *1984* the citizens can't express their innermost feelings and thoughts. They are told what and whom they have to love or hate, when there is no individuality, there is also no free expression. What really came out is a world where the self has become nothing more than a farm animal, a common sense constantly working towards the goal of the master, with no mind to think otherwise and everyone is considered a doppelgänger. Some authors are used to link the appearance of a double with a crisis which is extremely connected to the development of the ego, or a phase in which the existential experience pushes a reconfiguration of identity. In these cases, the appearance of a double is always symptomatic of a transformation of one's self, which can be experienced in a persecutory way, hence the disturbing character of the Doppelgänger. The aim of this last is destroying the individuality and when there is no individuality, people are nothing more than robots operating on auto-pilot by and for the ruling elite. In the perfect totalitarian form of governments, product of a revolution, there is a *Community* that thanks to a common *Identity* realizes what is called *Stability*. The physical and psychological identity is reached through applied biochemistry which allows a genetic standardization of humankind. Therefore, the self which results privatized of his biologic foundation it is not considered human anymore, but inhuman, or better an automaton. Freud explained how the self, or the ego wanted to maintain a precise individual unity and to oppose to the tendency to fragmentation, duplication and splitting, a typical characteristic of every human being. But what comes out from the pages of these two novels, which left a mark in

the field of dystopian literature, is an uncanny feeling due to a dehumanizing seriality of individuals which brings the humankind at the equal terms of automatons. What comes out from Huxley's novel is the idea of automated people which sometimes gives the idea of being lifeless. Jentsch sustained that one of the surest artifices for causing disturbing effects through the story is to keep the reader in a state of uncertainty as to whether a given figure is a person or an automaton and that is exactly what Huxley was able to create in the mind of his readers.

The wealth that comes out by the Center of incubation and conditioning of London Central and the psychological and material nightmare narrated by Orwell, which appears very similar to nowadays society, give to these two dystopian novels a deep sense of uncanny. The societies present in *Brave New World* and Oceania aim to create a stability even at the expense of the truth because as Huxley were used to say in his novel "[...] One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for. You're paying for it, Mr. Watson—paying because you happen to be too much interested in beauty. I was too much interested in truth; I paid too" (Huxley, 2006, p. 228). The concept of the manipulation of the truth is one of the pivotal issue of *1984*, indeed the main character Winston Smith is the one in charge of rectifying and modifying newspaper articles, information, books that are in disagreement with the propaganda policy of the *Ingsoc* to make them more true and more just because in contrast with the alleged truths of Big Brother. The realities which are narrated by Orwell and Huxley are palpable, real; they appear so close to our time and society enough to develop inside the narrator a deep sense of *uncanny*. The narrative expedience used in the majority of the dystopian novels is the comparison between the two worlds: the real and the one narrated by the authors. Indeed, the growing uncanny sense developed inside the readers is due by the complete involvement of elements which belongs to the real world. Some characteristics are real indeed Huxley and Orwell dedicated less space on explaining and describing them just because they are familiar to the readers. Another narrative expedience used by Huxley and Orwell is using detailed descriptions of the protagonists of the

future universe which are attributable to significant characters of their intellectual excursus and life experiences. *The real* creates the Uncanny through an exasperation of the tension between past, present and future which leads the readers to feel the story as something possible. This "possible reality" which exudes from every word of these two novels is a description of the twentieth century society which has already taken the direction and developments of the narrated dystopian worlds, starting to translate their possible realities into the real reality. From their *reorganization* to the *propaganda,* from the *brainwashing* to the *chemical persuasion*, from *subconscious persuasi*on to *hypnopedia*, the *ultimate revolution* could be something not so far from our reality, in both authoritarian and democratic governments.

Another element which creates a deep sense of Uncanny is the one related to the concept of emasculation which in the case of *Brave New World* is deeply linked to the concept of sterilization. Huxley describes a world in which there is enough space for man, woman and for individual who are considered sexually neutral. The latter gender category is the one which has a normal human appearance but who is incapable of feel the sexual instinct. Today this category has many reflections in cinema, in the visual arts, in the obsession with the imagery of hybrid and mutant bodies (cyborg).

Furthermore, the ideas related to the artificial insemination and birth control introduced by Huxley in *1932* appears so close to reality of the twenty-first century, indeed today it is possible to create life in a test tube, through artificial fertilization and it is also possible for a woman to use contraceptives. In his preface of 1946 edition Huxley talks also about the sexual promiscuity which started to characterize the twentieth century. He asserts that

> in a few years, no doubt, marriage licenses will be sold like dog licenses, good for a period of twelve months, with no law against changing dogs or keeping more than one animal at a time. As political and economic freedom diminishes, sexual freedom tends compensatingly to increase. And the dictator (unless he needs cannon fodder

and families with which to colonize empty or conquered territories) will do well to encourage that freedom. In conjunction with the freedom to daydream under the influence of dope and movies and the radio, it will help to reconcile his subjects to the servitude which is their fate. All things considered it looks as though Utopia were far closer to us than anyone, only fifteen years ago, could have imagined. Then, I projected it six hundred years into the future. Today it seems quite possible that the horror may be upon us within a single century (p. 223).

The concepts of *mother* and *maternal womb* rooted in the novel of Huxley is tightly linked to the disturbing effect created by the mother's body. In one of his studies on neurotic subjects Freud sustains that in most of them there was a sort of uncanny feeling related to the idea of the female genital system. It is not surprising to see how it is described and perceived by the characters of Huxley's world; the figure of a viviparous mother is view as abominable and also the relationship that she was used to establish with his son.

"Human beings used to be ..." he hesitated; the blood rushed to his cheeks. "Well, they used to be viviparous."
"Quite right." The Director nodded approvingly.
"And when the babies were decanted ..."
"'Born,' came the correction.
"Well, then they were the parents–I mean, not the babies, of course; the other ones." The poor boy was overwhelmed with confusion.
"In brief," the Director summed up, "the parents were the father and the mother." The smut that was really science fell with a crash into the boys' eye-avoiding silence. "Mother," he repeated loudly rubbing in the science; and, leaning back in his chair, "These," he said gravely, "are unpleasant facts; I know it. But then most historical facts are unpleasant."

> He returned to Little Reuben–to Little Reuben, in whose
> room, one evening, by an oversight, his father and mother
> (crash, crash!) happened to leave the radio turned on.
> ("For you must remember that in those days of gross
> viviparous reproduction, children were always brought up
> by their parents and not in State Conditioning Centres")
> (p. 24).

Psychoanalysis has taught us that this terrible fantasy of the female genital system is the result of a certain lasciviousness, that is, a fantasy of life in the womb. Access to the ancient homeland (Heimat) of man, to the place where everyone once lived and which is indeed his first home. Love and nostalgia, the dreams of a place already present and known in men's mind a place which could be substitute with the genital organ or the body of the mother.

As Huxley even Orwell professes a contemporary uncanny reality, all his novels, essays and newspaper articles are to be considered pieces of a single large mosaic, and the different protagonists of his stories are none other than the different personalities of their author who has repeatedly denounced and rejected some of the most ferocious aspects of contemporary civilization: the violent domination of the colonies, religious alienation, consumerism, capitalism, the massification and manipulation of truth. In *1984*, due to the world wide political situation and the worsening of the physical condition of its author, the background becomes instead that of the most terrifying Apocalypse. Orwell describes the end of man as a human being and an individual. In the world of *1984* – the date was chosen by inverting the last two digits of the year of publication – hope is over and men are deprived of all freedom of action and thought. The world has thus become an *open-air prison*.

In these novels the boundaries of reality and possible reality become thin and something that up to that moment we had considered fantastic appears to us and creates a dividing line between the uncanny that is directly experienced and the uncanny

that one can only imagines or reads, indeed as it was said before the repetition of similar events is one of the sources of the disturbing feeling indeed under certain conditions and combined with particular circumstances, it undoubtedly evokes this type of feeling.

Conclusion

1984 and *Brave New World* are two representations of a twentieth century's tendency: the one in which there is a reversal of what was considered Utopia in Dystopia. The main characteristic is the increasing omnipotence of scientific and technological progress. The progress allows to the utopia to be finally realized. This led to the idea of an era in which the aim is to avoid the utopia. In dystopia there is a deep criticism of the scientific and technological progress, a sort of call for caution. This kind of literary genre was able to focus on one of the biggest dilemma which characterized the twentieth century: the contradiction between the amazing scientific and technological progress and according to Marco Revelli "the dramatic incapacity of reaching all of its goals without paying a disproportionate price" (2001, p. viii).

Orwell and Huxley saw in the past the last piece of humanity against the dehumanization of totalitarian regimes. The past, unlike the future or even the present, is a real fact, a potential certainty, it has happened, it contains more validity and reliability than any demagogy or mystification, and belongs to the mind of man, therefore indelible. *Past* is one of the features that consacrates these two novels as vexillum of contemporary dystopian and uncanny literature. Among all the anti-utopia (or dystopian) novels, these two works are certainly the most terribly successful, the ones which left an important mark in this new literature field. Not only because something very similar has already happened in our century, but also because they are able to give us a real description of how a *nightmare* could be.

Reading these two literary milestones, especially during this hard times, could arouse inside the reader that feel which is strongly connected to the Uncanny. Orwell and Huxley show us a dystopian world in which man lives in a dramatic existential limbo; this new society is cold, detached and also characterized by a deep pessimism and a strong crisis of values which is not so far from the current social situation that we are experiencing. And above all, they could be considered the great novels of the total and absolute weakness of man against power, a power that today more than in other eras seems as much abstract as concrete.

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Carolina Avsar

"Bordering the Uncanny": Re-Thinking the Importance of Language in Borderland Narratives

Abstract

Arbitrarily defined, when we look at borders in a map they give the impression of being clean-cut and linear, but the reality is very different. Far from being a place of separation, borders become a place of contact between cultures. These cultures intertwine, change, fuse, and create new approaches to different aspects of daily life. South Texas is known for its large border culture, represented not only in the food, but also in the linguistic variations, with Tex-Mex, Chicano, and Spanglish, being some examples of this uncanny meshing.

Anzaldúa was one of the first scholars to address the difficulties related to language in these regions, denouncing the systemic "otherization" and suppression of vernaculars divergent of Standard English, in something that she called "linguistic terrorism." Her work gave way to different approaches to linguistic diversity in academia and writing in general, promoting an uncanny combination of genres and languages.

This paper addresses the importance of these uncanny uses of language in borderland narratives, and how they need to become a part of mainstream literature. The vivid language of these narratives denotes of a rich history of spatial and cultural exchange that makes Texas' border culture unique. Acceptance of borderland languages into mainstream literature represents an acceptance of borderland identities and the existence of mixed cultures.

Introduction

In 1919, Freud attempts to coin a definition of the uncanny. This term, that he argues is mostly seen in literature, refers to a mixture of reality and imagination that leaves the reader with some level of uncertainty as to what is really going on in a particular text. According to Freud, because of their nature, literature and words provide more room than reality does to experience the uncanny. It suffices that the writer develops the right setting to then introduce elements that the reader would not expect to find, whether through discourse patterns, style, or by thwarting the reader's expectations (Freud, 2001). However, the uncanny is very much present in our everyday lives in different aspects, and the southern border of Texas is a good place to find it.

A border is traditionally defined as "a line separating two political or geographical areas, especially countries" *(Oxford Dictionary*, n.d.). A border is, however, much more than a simple line; it can be as much symbolic as it is material – which means that borders exist across different areas such as geography, politics, economics, identity, and culture (DeChaine, 2012). This also means that the perception of what a border is and how it is applied – and to what or whom – can differ from context to context (Arreola, 2002). With this in mind, looking at the particular situation in which this border exists becomes key to better understand the way those different areas develop. The borderlands are the representation of the interaction of human life surrounding that "man-made" line – it seems concrete but it's far more complex (DeChaine, 2012).

The United States shares continental borders with Mexico and Canada, but the one with Mexico is constantly at the center of debates. Two-thirds of the continental US-Mexico border are located between Texas and Mexico (txdot.gov). In Texas, the Rio Grande Valley is a great example of the way life takes place in the borderlands – with its own culture, language, and developments. This paper will use Borderlands, with a capital B, to refer to this region. When looking at the rhetoric that has surrounded the US-Mexico border in the past 4

years, it might seem easy to reduce the Borderlands once more to that line drawn between two countries, forgetting that people are dynamic and that cultures are fluid and ever-changing and adapt to different contexts and situations in numerous ways. Although this paper will address some general aspects of the Borderlands, the main focus will be to understand the importance of Borderland languages in narratives and how they can be better included in literature.

What Exactly is Uncanny About the Texas-Mexico Border?

Borders are often times represented as lines on a map. In the case of Texas and Mexico, this border is physically represented by two elements: a manmade border in the shape of a wall, and a natural border, the Rio Grande river. As a result of the existence of these borders, it is not uncommon to expect them to serve as clean-cut divisions between populations, with each existing in their own dimension, at their own stage of development (Brady, 2002). However, when we look at the Borderlands in South Texas, the opposite happens and, instead, a mixture of cultures develops. This gives way to the emergence of a third culture that encompasses elements of both Mexican and Texan culture and that is reflected in things such as food, economic models of landowning, music, and language (Arreola, 2002).

Mexican-Americans born in Texas oftentimes refer to themselves as "Tejana/o" to emphasize the fact that they are Texans by birth, as opposed, for instance, to Mexican-Americans who were born in other border states such as California or Arizona (Arreola, 2002). This clearly shows the connection that Mexican-Americans from Texas have to their state and the particular land where they were born, and demonstrates a certain sense of pride. This same pride can be seen in the languages that they speak.

After centuries of interaction in the Borderlands, different languages and dialects have emerged that result of the combination and mutation of English and Spanish. Some examples are Chicano

Spanish, Tex-Mex, and Pachuco, also known as Caló. These languages originated as a response to two languages – standard English and standard Spanish – that Borderlands' populations did not feel identified them fully (Anzaldúa, 2013). The development of such languages shows the fluidity of culture and the need of populations to find ways to create and express their identity. Language evolves and adapts to fit the needs of the population that speaks it.

The uncanny in these languages comes, among other things, from the fact that languages tend to be seen as existing independently. When talking about bilingualism, what comes to mind most of the time is the proficiency in the standardized versions of two languages – in this case English and Spanish – and not the result of mixing them and obtaining a third language with its own rules, and that is functional to where people can communicate efficiently in it (Achugar, 2006). Borderland languages present an approach to a rather unchallenged notion of what a language should look like, and this creates resistance from the mainstream population.

This uncanniness of Borderland languages is not without its consequences when it comes to the sense of belonging of individuals from the region. It is not uncommon for Mexican-Americans to get caught in the idea of "otherness" and internalize the bordering discourse, ending up feeling as permanent immigrants regardless of their immigration status (Goltz & Perez, 2012). The identity of people from the Borderlands has always been at the crossroads of the general perception of what makes someone American or what an American looks and speaks like. The different elements surrounding the border and its significance in terms of, for instance, citizenship and immigration status come into play on how welcome people from the Borderlands feel in their own land. This idea of border-crossing is heavily present on their consciousness, and is represented across different Borderland narratives (Brady, 2002).

An Uncanny Language

Borderland languages represent multiple challenges when it comes to education and socialization. In fact, in American education, speaking standard English represents the best way to demonstrate belonging to mainstream society, and thus is seen as achieving the goal of assimilation. This notion is represented in the use of terms such as "proficiency," "mastery," or "fluency" when it comes to the use of Standard Edited American English (SEAE) (Rosa, 2016). On the other hand, bilingualism, more so when one of the languages is Spanish, is approached from a deficit standpoint.

Those who speak Spanish either as their mother tongue or as a simultaneous home language are seen as needing to improve their knowledge in English, and having to reach a level comparable to that of monolingualism (Achugar, 2006). Instead of being seen as an advantage, bilingualism, at least when paired with Spanish, can hinder the way an individual is perceived (Rosa, 2016). Individuals who speak Borderland languages also have a double challenge, since they are perceived as being both deficient in standard English but also in standard Spanish, which makes it even harder to find validation of their languages and identities (Anzaldua, 2013).

The way Borderland languages are approached in monolingual English contexts, can find an explanation in the racialization not only of Borderland individuals and bodies, but in the racialization of the languages they speak (Calafell, 2012). Spanish and languages resulting of the mixing of English and Spanish, come then to represent a culture and people that are seen as inferior to those who traditionally hold the power—mainly White SEAE speakers. Standardization in language can be seen as an attempt to erase the languages of these populations, which brings a sense of invalidation to their culture and identity.

Gloria Anzaldúa (2013) refers to these language standardization and marginalization practices as "Linguistic Terrorism," since it targets not only the existence of a language, but also the perception

that those who speak it have of that language and of themselves. People construct their identity and sense of pride from characteristics that are given to them, such as the language that they learn at home and in which they communicate with their parents and those close to them. Standardization creates a sense of deficiency in those who speak Borderland languages, making them internalize that their language needs to be fixed, and is hence not "good enough" which directly carries along the idea that they are not "good enough" (Anzaldua, 2013). The fact that a person feels that they have to change the way the write or that they have to silence the language that they communicate in can be seen as a direct affront to people's identity.

There are different reasons why Borderland languages are so stigmatized. First, there is the fact that they are the result of the mixture of two cultures that belong to different places of a hierarchy in terms of both color and race, but also in terms of economic power (Rosa, 2016). That combination, that would otherwise be seen as unlikely, happens in a way that shakes the assumptions that are often made about borders, language, and culture. As a consequence, the results of this uncanny mixture become elements of differentiation and "otherization" of those who use Borderland languages.

Another element that may add to this stigmatization and discomfort is the fact that Borderland languages may be seen to represent the failure of imposing a standard version of the English language – and with it a cultural system – to a population seen as "below" in terms of hierarchy. The existence of Borderland languages may come as a challenge to the perceived power of the traditionally White-American culture and the Standard English that characterizes it, representing an act of resistance against colonizing practices. As a natural result of this stigmatization, Borderland populations face various challenges when it comes to their language being accepted in different areas, particularly literature.

Language Suppression in Literature

For populations in the Borderlands, finding platforms that can connect their narratives to the broader American population proves to be a difficult task. When we look at literature, finding or publishing a book that is written in an "English" different to SEAE is difficult, as is studying literature from the Borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2013). There are different narratives that have been published by Chicana/o authors, but in many cases, even if they address topics that are important to Borderland cultures, they are written in SEAE.

Many of these Borderland narratives speak to the idea of border-crossing and the relationship that people in the region have with places and spatiality, and these notions can seem distant to those who are not familiar with the region and the culture. Language is crucial in explaining and conveying that duality that many of the people from the Borderlands experience (Brady, 2002). By not according a platform to those who choose to write about their experiences using Borderland languages, there is the hidden message that these stories are perceived as somewhat less important, or even foreign.

People from the Borderlands are usually seen as the "other," and this plays a role in limiting the access that narratives written in Borderland languages have to mainstream literature. Part of what contributes to this otherization is the fact that SEAE is seen as the "default" language that should be spoken, but more so the language that should be used when writing; accents are usually perceived as markers of deficit, and so is writing in a non-SEAE language (Anzaldua, 2013). This makes it harder for Borderland narratives to be considered works of literature at the same rate that others written in SEAE would.

Even for those narratives written in a Borderland language, or who use Spanish words to convey the way they traditionally speak, the fact that the words who do not belong to SEAE need to be italicized or translated right after, can be seen as a way to emphasize

this distinction and a way to make clear that these narratives are not "completely" American, and that there are some elements that the reader needs to be constantly reminded should not be there. This adds to the perception that the general public may have of non-SAEA narratives as uncanny, unexpected, and "less-than" narratives written in a more standard English. Anzaldua's work presents this uncanny structure of a language that mixes English and Spanish, and although the non-English words are italicized, seldom does she translate what she is saying.

This language suppression in Literature ultimately responds to a more general idea that bases the level of appreciation that a work deserves in the type of language that it employs. The racialization of Spanish, and subsequent racialization of languages derived from it in the Borderlands, makes it easy to dismiss works in those languages as "different" and thus less worth of attention. In many cases, there is the perception that what makes a book worth publishing is the fact that it can speak to the monolingualism of the general public. However, when approaching literature this way, what it is ultimately being said is that the comfort of the majority, that majority who holds already privilege in terms of language and perception from others, is worth the discomfort or erasure of the identity of those who want to tell their stories.

Giving a voice and value to those who talk about their experiences using their own language should be a goal of American literature. Literary works should create bridges and connections between individuals, and should help individuals build a sense of belonging and pride in their identity. Language suppression equally hinders the possibility to enrich literature by disallowing different narratives and ways of approaching culture to make it to the mainstream population. By failing to provide access to publishing and studying literature written in Borderland languages, these narratives are effectively silenced, and they are not allowed to exist beyond those who share their language and culture, unless they adapt to the language of the majority.

How to Address Language Suppression?

Effectively addressing language suppression requires a confrontation with different notions that have existed in society and literature for a long time. Language and literature are still approached through perspectives deeply influenced by the idea that there should be a correct or standard way to speak or write in English. The way literature is studied and what is defined as "worth" studying or even simply "worth" classifying as literature still denotes of this colonization and power of English language and American culture (Rosa, 2016). In fact, language has been used throughout the history of colonization as a way to assert dominance and impose the colonizer's culture over that of the population they sought to dominate. As a result, only those who spoke the language met the right standards that would allow them advancement in society. This is an idea that remains today, and that – consciously or unconsciously – still exists in literature. To de-colonize literature, there needs to be not only an acceptance of different approaches to language but also shifting the perception of vernaculars and other "Englishes" (Rosa, 2016). The acceptance of Borderland languages also requires the acceptance of the people who have created this languages and who use it as means to convey their identity.

An important part of shifting the perspective many people have when it comes to Borderland languages comes with validating their existence and importance, and the fact that they result of interaction between different cultures and people (Anzaldúa, 2013). Borderland languages reflect the interaction and fluidity across borders and contexts, and show the dynamism of the region; it shows how individuals constantly try to find better ways to feel represented and to identify themselves. The fact that these languages come from a mixture of cultures, instead of the adherence to one in particular, shows the richness that exists in the Borderlands, and it is an asset that can strengthen the way we approach culture.

With validation of language comes the validation of identity (Anzaldua, 2013). The hierarchization of identities that is oftentimes seen when referring to Borderland populations, with some identities being seen as less important or valid, is another result of colonization. Stigmatization and marginalization of individuals because of their language or identity is a direct result of this hierarchization, and can be used in different areas of life to further suppress the individuals; to understand and value the existence of "non-standard" identities it is then crucial to effect change in the way people are treated and perceived (Calafell, 2012).

Diversifying literature is another important goal that needs to be achieved to counter language suppression. For this purpose, larger platforms should be given to narratives written in non-Standard English. Representation is important in terms of language, authors, and genres, and Borderland narratives can help bring different perspectives to the conversation surrounding literature and identity. However, for this to occur, there needs to be a shift in the perception that literary agents, publishers, but also the public in general have of narratives in non-SEAE approaches. For this reason, one more thing that can facilitate this shift and favor diversification is challenging the notion of "American Literature." We need to start broadening the definition to include authors and narratives that do not necessarily fit what would traditionally be considered as "American," which in most cases refer to narratives by white authors, written in SEAE.

This is not something new, and even today it is not uncommon to see narratives divided to where works by authors of color are usually found in sections such as "multicultural" or other labels that exists outside of American Literature. By categorizing these works in such a way, there is an implication that they are not American enough—there need to be new approaches to the way literary categories are defined. Before doing that, however, it would be important to look at ways in which language suppression in the classroom can be addressed.

Challenging Language Suppression in the Classroom

Language suppression does not begin in the publishing houses or in the bookstores. To be able to reach that industry, the shift in perception of borderland narratives needs to start earlier on. Literature and English classes, for instance, should expand the authors studied to include authors from the Borderlands and with different linguistic backgrounds. Studying these authors from a perspective that does not see their language as a deficiency, but rather as a reflection of their identity, can be beneficial in creating an inclusive perception of linguistic diversity (Dennihy, 2017).

Students and teachers can both benefit from exploring narratives that challenge the traditional perceptions of language. Not only can they gain knowledge on the different perspectives of other sectors of the American population, but also it can help break that idea of the existence of a monolingual society, where everyone speaks standard English. For students in the Borderlands, studying narratives that speak to them directly, to the particular challenges and situations they may have encountered or be familiar with, can help them feel more a part of the society. Creating a sense of belonging is not necessarily achieved by making sure everyone speaks the same language, but rather by validating the existence of those who do not necessarily share that commonality.

Another way to encourage different narratives and approaches to language, is to start including those approaches earlier on in people's education. For this, we need to re-think the way we approach writing in the classroom and how we construct writing programs (Du, 2014). By intentionally accepting Borderland languages as sources of creation of work, we can help not only create more acceptance from people in general, but also help students feel that their stories matter and that the way they express themselves and the language that they use to tell their stories is valid and important. By using their mother tongue as a way of constructing their writing, students can feel more inclined to share experiences and add to the conversation. It can also account for more authentic narratives and help them in their schooling career.

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That being said, it is important to understand that, while validating Borderland languages in the classroom is of high importance, the teaching of SEAE cannot be excluded. As frustrating as it may be, until there is a systemic change that completely shifts the way SEAE is perceived in mainstream society, not teaching students to use SEAE can be detrimental for them and hinder their access to different areas of society and education (Jordan, 1988). Teachers need to find a balance that both validates the language of the students, but also provides them with the knowledge and tools needed to succeed in their endeavors, which will most likely require them writing in SEAE at some point in their academic or professional lives.

It is also important to start seeing multilingual students and faculty not as deficient, but rather as potential contributors to a better-rounded perspective in respect to language needs and approaches (Cox & Zawacki, 2014). This should not only occur in higher education settings, but also in grade school settings. For that purpose it is important to motivate bilingual teachers to explore their role in the transmission of language, and to give them the tools they need to feel more confident in the classroom and to build their identities holding that linguistic diversity as an asset instead of a problem; they should feel that they belong in the classroom, instead of feeling that they should work harder to prove themselves (Colliander, 2017). Bilingual teachers in the Borderlands should be seen as potential transmitters of their culture and both schools and universities should try to incorporate more programs that build on borderland languages (Achugar, 2006).

School programs should also encourage exchanges with different schools, and provide platforms for students and teachers to learn more about the different languages in the Borderlands but also ultimately about the culture that was born from that interaction across the border. Having this knowledge can also effectively promote better understanding in people who would normally adhere to that clean-cut perception of the border. Acknowledging these languages comes back to acknowledging their existence and importance, as well as the worth they have to where they deserve to be studied.

Subsequently, it comes back to acknowledging the existence and importance of the people who speak them, who built them in order to feel better represented and better identify themselves.

Conclusion

Far from being a clear division between two distinct populations, the border between Texas and Mexico has seen the emergence of a culture of its own. What started with two different cultures interacting quickly became a third culture, born to fulfill a need for an identity that truly represented the inhabitants of the region. One of the clearest aspects in which this new culture can be perceived is with the birth of new languages, Borderland languages, that although the result of the mixture of English and Spanish, have a life of their own, their grammar and use, and are perfectly functional.

The uncanny of these languages reveals of misconceptions that the general population has about languages and the definition of culture, but also of the idea that these two languages and cultures belong to two different hierarchies, which causes particular distress to some. Many of these misconceptions are rooted in colonial perceptions of what a language should look like, and in the fact that monolingualism in the United States has been the norm for a long time, privileging approaches such as standardization and assimilation not only in education but also in literature.

This paper argued that literature should give narratives in Borderland languages equal importance to those who are written in SEAE, and that for this purpose there were different areas that needed to be addressed. First, there is the need to validate the existence of these languages, of understanding that they represent people who have a right to their language and culture. Second, we need to challenge the way we perceive language in literature, and accept the variations of English that can exist in different narratives. Another way of contributing to this shift in perspectives, is to make

sure that we include different approaches to language in writing classrooms from an early age. For this, it is crucial to form bilingual teachers that can transmit the culture and intricacies of bilingualism.

There is still a long way to go when it comes to accepting and including narratives in variations of English. Borderland narratives, however, reveal of such a rich and interesting approach to culture, that they deserve to be showcased more and included in the mainstream literature. Not only can these narratives offer a different perspective on how culture comes to be, but they can also help us humanize the life that surrounds the border. Instead of being a no man's land, the area that divides Texas and Mexico, far from dividing, has fused two cultures into one that best represents this interaction.

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Part 2

THE ARTS AND THE MEDIA: FROM EARLY CONTEMPORARY PAINTINGS TO TV ANIMATION SERIES

Jun Mita

The Mechanism of the Uncanny in Vilhelm Hammershøi's Interior Paintings

Abstract

This article examines the interior paintings of Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916), the most significant artist of modern Danish art. From the beginning of his career on, he mostly worked on interior scenes which evoke unusual, mysterious and uncanny feelings in particular, even though the artist mostly depicted his own apartment in a realistic style. At that time, his works were unique in comparison with his contemporary Danish artists, making him regarded as a solitary phenomenon in Denmark. On the other hand, he is sometimes classified under the international symbolist movement where his works are still singular because of their realistic motives and techniques.

By considering the theories of Sigmund Freud (1919) and Masahiro Mori (1970) as clues, it turns out that the unusual impression of Hammershøi's interior painting is, strictly speaking, the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*): the interior (a "familiar" and "concealed" place) becomes to "unfamiliar" and "exposed" by silence, solitude and darkness, because soulless things seem to be alive there. In this way, the "repressed familiar" recurs and becomes the uncanny in the sense of Freud. The uncanny is omnipresent in Hammershøi's interior painting, and its ties to reality, both in a thematic and a technical sense, which is inherent to his art, constitute the requirements for the generation of the uncanny in a fictional work.

Introduction

This article examines the interior paintings of Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916), the most significant artist of modern Danish art. From the beginning of his career on, he mostly worked on interior scenes which evoke unusual, mysterious and uncanny feelings in particular, even though the artist mostly depicted his own apartment in a realistic style. At that time, his works were unique in comparison with his contemporary Danish artists, making him regarded as a solitary phenomenon in Denmark. On the other hand, he is sometimes classified under the international symbolist movement where his works are still singular because of their realistic motives and techniques. This research analyses how this effect is created from the point of view of Sigmund Freud's consideration on the uncanny (1919) and the "uncanny valley" theory of Masahiro Mori (1970).

Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864–1916)

Vilhelm Hammershøi was born in 1864 in Copenhagen as the son of a wealthy merchant. He started learning painting at the age of eight and later studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. At the same time, he also studied at the independent school of Peder Severin Krøyer (1851-1909), one of the leading pleinairists in Denmark, but it is hard to find any trace of Krøyer's clear colours and bright light effect in Hammershøi's work. In fact, Krøyer wrote in a letter that he found Hammershøi very unique and incomprehensible but recognised in him a talent such that Krøyer would try not to influence him. (Vad, 1992, p. 24)

Hammershøi often travelled abroad. In particular, he visited Italy, France and England several times; however, interestingly, it seems that nothing there impacted his style of painting. Since his

debut in 1885 at the exhibition in Charlottenborg, he kept his own style throughout his whole life: depicting quiet scenes in a realistic style, using oil and restrained, almost monochrome colours. The interior was his favourite subject and the one that brought him fame. Hammershøi was acclaimed in his lifetime outside of Denmark and considered therefore as a representative of Danish contemporary art, while he was rather a unique and solitary phenomenon in his homeland.[1]

Previous Research in Art History

After his early death at the age of 51 in 1916, Hammershøi was quickly forgotten amidst the rise of various avant-garde movements in Europe. In art historical research, Hammershøi has often been compared with Dutch paintings in the 17th century, which is known as the "Golden Age", and with Danish paintings of the first half of the 19th century – which is also regarded as a golden age in Danish art history – paying attention to the similar motives and composition.[2] On the other hand, owing to the revaluation of art at the end of the 19th century, attention has been focused on the relationship between Hammershøi and the symbolist movement in Europe since the 1980s.[3] In fact, during his lifetime, critics recognised a certain affinity between the painter and this contemporary movement due

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1 See also Krämer, 2003, p. 127. In addition, Niels Vinding Dorph and Emil Hannover, contemporaries of Hammershøi, testified that he was a singular painter in Denmark (Dorph, 1898, p. 132; Hannover, 1907, pp. 105-106.)

2 See also the exhibition catalogue entitled *Two Golden Ages: Masterpieces of Dutch and Danish Painting* (Rønberg et al., 2001).

3 Apart from the exhibition catalogues entitled *Northern Light: Realism and Symbolism in Scandinavian Painting 1880-1910* (Varnedoe, 1982); *Vilhelm Hammershøi 1864-1916: Danish Painter of Solitude and Light* (Fonsmark et al.,1997); *Symbolism in Danish and European Painting 1870-1910* (Nørgaard Larsen et al., 2000); *Vilhelm Hammershøi* (Krämer, 2003) and *Hammershøi and Europe* (Monrad et al., 2012), consider Varnedoe (1983) as well as Krämer (2007).

to its mysterious, fantastic sphere evoked by his half-dark spaces.[4] However, unlike "typical" symbolist paintings, such as those of Odilon Redon (1840-1916) or in England represented by Pre-Raphaelites, Hammershøi does not usually paint any mythological subject but depicts plain deserted interior scenes where the painter lives, in a realistic style. Moreover, Hammershøi once wrote a very negative comment on an exhibition of symbolist painters in Paris (Vad, 1992, p. 105). Therefore, he has also been considered an outsider in this context.

We once examined his interior paintings as symbolist work in comparison with Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) and Belgian symbolist Xavier Mellery (1845-1921), paying attention to the fact that the symbolist effect is evoked by the absence of anecdotal elements, which are the essence of Dutch interior paintings, and the use of monotone colours (Mita, 2007; 2018).[5] Hammershøi's *Interior. With Piano and Woman in Black. Strandgade 30* from 1901 [fig.1], for example, was without a doubt inspired by Vermeer's masterpiece *Music Lesson* (ca. 1662-1665) [fig. 2]. Vermeer's picture clearly depicts the scene of a music lesson and, taking into account the symbolism of music at that time, we could read that this represents a romantic moment (see also De Jongh, 2000). The painter clarifies this message even further by using the reflection in the mirror (the lady's face is oriented to the man next to her) and with the message written in Latin on the virginal's inner lid: "MVSICA LAETITIAE COMES MEDICINA DOLORVM" (music: pleasure's companion, remedy of sorrow)[6], Vermeer suggests a

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4 Niels Vinding Dorph compared for example Hammershøi and French-speaking symbolist poets Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) and Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949). See Dorph, 1898, p. 131: "Er ist ein Träumer, ein Farbendichter von ähnlichem künstlerischen Wesen wie die französischen Synthetiker: Mallarmé und Maeterlinck." ("He is a dreamer, a poet of colour from similar artistic nature like French syntheticists: Mallarmé and Maeterlinck." My translation).

5 About the narrative element in his works, see also Monrad, 2000.

6 The English translation is by Harmon (1999, p. 161).

Fig.1. Vilhelm Hammershøi. *Interior. With Piano and Woman in Black. Strandgade 30*, 1901. Oil on canvas, 63 cm × 52,5 cm. Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen

Fig. 2. Johannes Vermeer. *The Music Lesson*, ca.1662-1664. Oil on canvas, 74,6 cm × 64,1 cm. Royal Collection, London. Wikipedia, Public Domain

certain context between the depicted young lady and the man standing at her side looking like a teacher with a staff in his left hand. On the other hand, it is hard to find any trace of an anecdote in Hammershøi's painting. Even though there is a piano, which is neither being played nor paid attention to by the standing woman seemingly looking at something in her hands, it is impossible to read any romantic mood in this scene. What the woman in black is doing remains ambiguous since her hands are hidden. If a viewer is familiar with Vermeer's works such as *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window* (1657-1659) [fig. 3], it is possible to guess that she might be reading a letter, but the painting leaves no clue to conclude this. This absence of an anecdote, this mysterious, unusual atmosphere is what characterises Hammershøi's greyish interiors, and this impression should become even stronger if the viewer were familiar with Vermeer. In fact, it is precisely this kind of viewer that would get such ambiguous feelings due to the misalignments between these two painters.

"Uncanny Interior"

It is however quite certain that Hammershøi's realistic interior paintings would evoke unusual feelings in viewers with no art-historical knowledge, who would not be able to connect them with symbolist paintings. A Belgian symbolist painter, Xavier Mellery shows a deep similarity with Vilhelm Hammershøi, especially when it comes to their paintings depicting a vacant uninhabited interior with open doors in the centre of the composition: *Doors* (before 1895?)[7] by Mellery and *White Doors* (1905)[8] by Hammershøi. Mellery's interior scenes, also taken from his own home, have been considered in the context of symbolism during his lifetime. So far,

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7 In a collection at Hearn Family Trust (New York). About the production year, see footnote 24 (Mita, 2018, p. 342).

8 In a collection at The David Collection (Copenhagen).

Fig. 3. Johannes Vermeer. *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window*, 1657-1659. Oil on canvas, 83 cm × 64,5 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Dresden. Wikipedia, Public Domain

there is no sign hinting at both artists having been in contact or at Hammershøi having seen Mellery's work during his travels in Belgium.[9] Mellery's realistic interior works also evoke the same impression in viewers as Hammershøi's. Michel Draguet, a specialist of Belgian symbolist art, pointed out the following about Mellery's interior paintings:

> the drawings of Mellery present mysterious interiors
> where the light reveals only an infinitesimal part.
> [...] A play of candles in the darkness, a ray of light
> in the opening of the door, an abandoned lamp on

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9 Hammershøi visited Belgium at least in 1887 and 1891 (Vad, 1992, pp. 59, 99).

the corner of a table, awaken in the very heart of everyday life an "uncanny" feeling which invades our consciousness (Draguet, 1996, p. 38. My translation). [10]

Draguet uses the expression *inquiétante étrangeté* in the French original text, which corresponds to uncanny in English. In French, *inquiétante étrangeté* univocally indicates the concept *das Unheimliche* by Sigmund Freud, even though Draguet does not mention Freud in his description of Mellery's art. Freud's famous study of *The Uncanny* (*Das Unheimliche*) in 1919 gives significant insights that help understand why Hammershøi's interiors, which appears to depict everyday motives, evoke an uncanny sensation within us.

A German art historian, Felix Krämer, already paid attention to the affinity between uncanniness and Hammershøi's interior paintings in his monograph *Das unheimliche Heim zur Interieurmalerei um 1900* ("The Uncanny Home on Interior Painting Around 1900") (2007) in which he considers six European artists around the end of the 19th century: Paul Signac, Edvard Munch, Édouard Vuillard, Félix Vallotton, Hammershøi and Pierre Bonnard. Indicating the change of nature of interior paintings during the 19th century, from the shelter of metropolitan life to threatening, unsettling, deserted spaces, he analyses the latter type of interior paintings in order to show what social, historical, psychological, and esthetical factors caused them. However, as he gives fair warning, he does not focus on defining the uncanny of interior painting, but rather states that "the term [*unheimlich*] used in my work functions merely as historical backdrop, which usually remains in the background during image analyses" (Krämer, 2007, p. 10. My

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10 Original text: "les dessins de Mellery présentent des intérieurs mystérieux dont la lumière ne révèle qu'une infirme parcelle. [...] Un jeu de bougie dans l'obscurité, un rai de lumière dans l'embrasure d'une porte, une lampe abandonnée sur le coin d'une table éveillent au cœur même du quotidien un sentiment d''inquiétante étrangeté' qui envahit la conscience."

translation and added word in brackets for sense).[11] Therefore, the chapter on Hammershøi is not considered from this view point.

The exhibition entitled *The Uncanny Home: Interiors from Edvard Munch to Max Beckmann* (Kunstmuseum in Bonn, 20.10.2016-29.01.2017) also showed the same interest in the relation between the uncanny and interior paintings of 25 artists, and also included Hammershøi. As the editor Volker Adolphs mentions in his contribution to the exhibition catalogue, starting from Freud's definition of uncanny, "[t]he interiors depicted in the exhibition present quite divergent modes of the uncanny", from the Nabis to New Objectivity art (Adolphs, 2016, p. 38). On Hammershøi (only two works of him were exhibited)[12] the commentary was limited to pointing out the mysterious emptiness, the absence of narrational and sentimental aspects in his interiors. (p. 42)

Hammershøi's paintings have often been described by ambiguous adjectives such as "mysterious", "unsettling", "enigmatic", "strange", "supernatural" or "unreal", which evoke a feeling related to uncanniness.[13] In the following, it will be argued that the unusual sensation evoked by Hammershøi's interior paintings is *stricto sensu* the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*) of Freud's theory. At the beginning of his study, drawing our attention to the fact that "the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general" (Freud, 1955, p. 219), Freud tries to determine the nature of the uncanny. By citing a short article of Ernst Jentsch *Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen* ("On the Psychology of the Uncanny", 1906), Freud develops his arguments by focusing on the problematics of this term. Jentsch considered that "intellectual uncertainty" causes an uncanny

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11 Original text: "[...] fungiert der im Titel meiner Arbeit verwendete Begriff lediglich als eine historische Folie, die bei den Bildanalysen meist im Hintergrund bleibt."

12 They are *Interior (Strandgade 30)* (1899) and *Interior. Sunlight on the Floor (Strandgade 30)* (1906). Both in Tate.

13 See Hannover (1907, p. 105); Ritter (1910, p. 265); Varnedoe (1983, p. 118) and Monrad (2000, p. 249).

emotion (Freud, 1955, p. 221). In short, people find situations comprised of things they are not familiar with to be uncanny. Hence, the more familiar they are with their surroundings, the less likely they are to experience this uncanny sensation.

In response to this opinion, Freud considers the etymology of the term *unheimlich*, in English literally "unhomely" (p. 219). This term is derived from the word *heimlich* with the privative prefix *un-*, which has *grosso modo* two categories of meaning: I. "belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly, etc."[14]; II. "Concealed, kept from sight" (pp. 222-224). Then, Freud insists that this uncanny feeling does not simply arise from the "unknown" as Jentsch says, but because something is exactly "familiar, known", it can turn to uncanny when it becomes suddenly "unfamiliar, unknown".

On the other hand, Freud carefully notes that the second meaning of *heimlich*: "Concealed, kept from sight" could overlap with the meaning of *unheimlich*, and he tries to explain it in accordance with his theory. While he mentions "'[u]nheimlich' is customarily used, we are told, as the contrary only of the first signification of 'heimlich', and not of the second" (p. 225), he also draws our attention to the fact that Schelling (1775-1854), a German philosopher, considers that "'*Unheimlich*' is the name for everything that ought to have remained... secret and hidden but has come to light" (p. 224). By discussing the relation between *das Unheimliche* and repression in the second half of the article, Freud explains that this use of *heimlich* describes something that was concealed or should have been concealed by repression, and if it is exposed to the light, it becomes *unheimlich* (p. 241). This allows us to explain the validity of Schelling's definition on how *das Heimliche* (the concealed) becomes *das Unheimliche* (the exposed), i.e. the uncanny.

Adolphs examines these two aspects of (*un*)*heimlich* in relation to the "modern crisis of the subject". Citing Walter Benjamin's mention that the house carries "the imprint of inhabitant", Adolphs takes it one step further:

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14 This meaning is obsolete today, except in dialects and carried over to the words *heimelig* (cozy) and *heimisch* (indigenous, native) in standard German.

> it carries the imprint and image of his or her psyche. The
> interior is the exterior of the soul, the still life of a person.
> [...] it is an extension of the ego, a second skin, a second
> body, a visual registration of the inner space of the psyche
> (Adolphs, 2016, p. 35).

The interior does not simply show the physical imprint of the inhabitant but also the psychological. And in modern society, "[t]he home becomes uncanny because the ego has become uncanny" (p. 36). The discovery of the unconscious at that time must be naturally relevant to this issue. Namely, the *ego*, which is the most familiar part within a person, is turned "unfamiliar" in the first meaning of *heimlich* (*unheimlich* I). Paying attention to the second sense of this term, Adolphs applies this aspect also as an "extension of the ego" by analysing Munch's autobiographical interior scene with his dead sister (*Death in the Sickroom*, 1893). "Artists see themselves in a self-portrait within an interior which, as an extension of the ego, is a part of their self-analysis and self-portrayal" (Adolphs, 2016, p. 39). Therefore, in interior paintings, the artist's concealed inner space is "exposed" in the second sense of *heimlich* (*unheimlich* II).

However, this interpretation depends on the biographical information we have on the artists and does not explain why Hammershøi's work would evoke uncanny sensations to viewers without any knowledge of art history or of the artist's biography. Moreover, unlike most paintings of this exhibition, there are no crucial motives from which uncanniness arises in his interior, such as a dead person (e.g. Munch), a ghost-like or deformed human (e.g. Vuillard, Max Beckmann) or a murderer (e.g. Otto Dix). Hammershøi's interior is mostly deserted and vacant, and as mentioned above, it is characterised by the lack of an anecdote even though a human figure is depicted. Poul Vad precisely writes: "The black-clad female figure who is occasionally seen, often with her back to the viewer, does not fill the emptiness but instead emphasizes it. She has the same neutral quality of an object as a chair or a table has" (Fonsmark et al., 1997, p. 24).

His interior is ruled by absence: absence of anecdotes, its inhabitants as well as the artist's psyche. Therefore, the uncanniness of his interiors does not arise from the exposed psyche of the painter as Adolphs indicates, but from the interior itself. Given that these two adjectives, *heimlich/unheimlich*, are originally derived from the noun *Heim* (home) i.e. literally physical space, it is also reasonable to consider that the uncanny of Hammershøi's interior emerges from the sudden reversal of *Heim* (home) in both meanings: *Heim* as a shelter that is "familiar" (*heimlich* I) and "concealed" (from the exterior) (*heimlich* II), turns to *Unheim* (my neologism, "unhome") as a place that is "unfamiliar" (*unheimlich* I) and "exposed" (*unheimlich* II).

Freud attributes the cause of inversion from the "familiar" into the uncanny to "the return of the familiar that has been repressed", and cites a few examples, mainly in literature. Among them, a theory of the uncanny which arises from an "animistic mode of thinking" could be applied to the evocation process of the uncanny sensation from Hammershøi's paintings. According to Freud, all humans used to hold animistic beliefs, such as the "return of the dead" or "secret injurious powers" (Freud, 1955, p. 247), however:

> Nowadays we no longer believe in them, we have *surmounted* these modes of thought; but we do not feel quite sure of our new beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to seize upon any confirmation. As soon as something *actually happens* in our lives which seems to confirm the old, discarded beliefs we get a feeling of the uncanny [...] (Freud, 1955, pp. 247-248).

About his most praised series of drawings *L'Âme des choses* ("The Soul of Things"), Xavier Mellery confesses precisely his animistic belief: "everything is alive, even that which does not move" (Mellery, 1909, p. 400. My translation).[15] On the other hand, about

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15 Original text: "tout est vivant, même ce qui ne bouge pas".

the aforementioned *White Doors* (1905) by Hammershøi, German art critic Emil Heilbut makes the following praise in 1905: "*White Doors*. They are really living" (Cited in Krämer, 2003, p. 20. My translation).[16]

Their interior is uncanny because it gives viewers the impression that it is itself alive, therefore, it would be more appropriate to describe this as the "portrayal of an uncanny interior" than the portrayal of the artist's psyche.

Hammershøi's Interior as "Uncanny Valley"

The core of Freud's uncanny theory was above all else that he attributed the cause of the uncanny sensation to "familiar" factors for a person. This is precisely the key of interior scenes by symbolist painters such as Vilhelm Hammershøi or Xavier Mellery and what distinguishes them from other symbolists who depict mythological, imagined subjects. Hammershøi takes motives from his most familiar everyday environments, such as his home, and represents them in such a highly realistic manner that his paintings were often compared with photographs (Krämer, 2007, pp. 166-167).

On the topic of the uncanny in fiction – "in *literature*, in stories and imaginative productions" – Freud makes the reservation that the condition of that uncanny effect could be different since: "In fairy tales, for instance, the world of reality is left behind from the very start, and the animistic system of beliefs is frankly adopted" (Freud, 1955, pp. 249-250). Therefore, there cannot be any doubt as to whether an animistic belief such as the return of the dead, or the existence of spirits and ghosts, is possible or not. This is why the uncanny sensation cannot arise when such a supernatural phenomenon comes to be described in fairy tales. However, Freud continues with:

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16 Original text: ">Die weiße Türe<. Sie lebt wirklich".

> The situation is altered as soon as the writer pretends
> to move in the world of common reality. In this case he
> accepts as well all the conditions operating to produce
> uncanny feelings in real life; and everything that would
> have an uncanny effect in reality has it in his story (p. 250).

In other words, in a fictional work, a certain level of realism is necessary as a *foundation* for generating the uncanny sensation. These conditions are also to be applied to art. The uncanniness of Hammershøi's paintings owes a lot not only to its realistic topic but also to the artist's realistic techniques, both of which play a crucial role in his paintings. If the same motives were depicted even with the same use of colour but with an abstract brushwork, the uncanny effect would certainly be weaker.

Concerning the relation between uncanniness and realism, a pioneering hypothesis called "Uncanny Valley" presented by Japanese robotics professor Masahiro Mori (1927-) is to be addressed. His short original article in Japanese was published in 1970. According to him, the more robots start looking like humans, the more a person's "affinity" for them increases in general; however, at some point, that affinity rapidly turns into discomfort, which Mori described as falling into the uncanny valley.

The background of this hypothesis was the development of robotics and prostheses. Industrial robots were far from human in appearance at that time, however, inspired by the attachment of children to toy robots and the latest automatic prostheses, Mori states that "human likeness" could cause an uncanny sensation when attempting to make robots look like humans. Therefore, he recommends avoiding creating robots with the intention of making them look like humans in order to avoid falling into the uncanny valley [fig. 4]. Moreover, he himself predicts "that it is possible to create a safe level of affinity by deliberately pursuing a nonhuman design" and he mentions glasses as an example, because glasses help the function of eyes but they do not imitate the shape of eyes (Mori, 2012, p. 100).

This hypothesis was unknown for a long time abroad, but thanks to its English translation in 2012 and the strides made in robotics and computer graphics in terms of human likeness, this paper has gotten attention again. According to a recent quantitative research, the existence of this uncanny valley is scientifically proven (Mathur, 2016). Mori and contemporary researchers working on the uncanny valley focus on humanoid robot and computer facial animation, which should be the most familiar existence to human. In his paper, Mori does not exclude non-moving objects either, although they are still related to human, such as prosthetic hands, masks or corpses, while he points out that the uncanny valley could be weaker than it is with moving, seemingly living objects. [fig. 5] Even though Mori interestingly never mentions Freud in his considerations,[17] by amplifying his theory, we shall also examine the uncanniness of Hammershøi's paintings. The basic conditions under which the uncanny feeling of Freud is generated are secured not only by realistic motives but also by a photo-like realism, which make fictional works fulfil "all the conditions operating to produce uncanny feelings in real life" (Freud, 1955, p. 250).

Applying the scheme of Mori's uncanny valley to interior paintings, we could for example set a "reality likeness" axis instead of "human likeness". With a very primitive drawing (a) [fig.6] consisting only of lines, which must be at the starting point on the graph [fig. 5], the viewer is able to understand well enough what is represented, in spite of the drawing's unrealistic style, without having an affinity with the scene. A realistic Dutch painting of an interior in the 17th century (b) [fig.2] would be placed at the same

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17 In the conclusion of his paper, Mori speculates on the root cause of uncanny valley and considers it as "an integral part of our instinct for self-preservation": "The sense of eeriness is probably a form of instinct that protects us from proximal, rather than distal, sources of danger. Proximal sources of danger include corpses, members of different species, and other entities we can closely approach. Distal sources of danger include windstorms and floods" (p. 100). It is highly suggestive that Mori notes here "proximity" for the factor of uncanny sensation as Freud. Incidentally, the original Japanese term *bukimi* (uncanny) is often translated in the English text by "eerie", except for the combination with "valley".
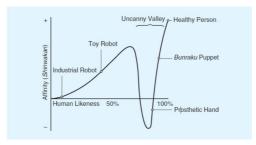
Fig. 4. The Graph of the Uncanny Valley (Moving)
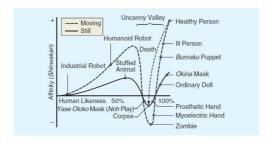
(Mori, 2012, p. 99)

Fig. 5. The Graph of the Uncanny Valley (Moving and Still)

(Mori, 2012, p. 99)

Fig. 6. Anoniime. *Reading,* 2020.

point as "Stuffed Animal", while the one in an abstract impressionist style would be situated between (a) and (b). I consider that Hammershøi's interior paintings [fig.1] would be falling into the uncanny valley, for example at the point of "*Yase Otoko* Mask" on the graph. In spite of their most ordinary motives, photo-like composition and realistic brush-work, his interiors cannot help but evoke an uncanny feeling in viewers. In the deepest point of the uncanny valley, a *super-realistic* painting or a photo of a *super-realistic* sculpture (e.g. by Chuck Close, Duane Hanson) might be situated, while a photo of an ordinary interior scene must be found at a point beyond the uncanny valley.

Mechanism of the Uncanny

Certainly, the cause which makes an interior painting fall into the uncanny valley cannot be ascribed to "reality likeness" alone, since the purpose of art is not simply to attain reality like humanoid robots or photorealistic rendering (*PR*) in computer graphics do.[18] In order to clarify the mechanisms of the generation of uncanniness, it is necessary to organise the conditions, which is lacking in Freud's text. According to his argument, a person feels an uncanny sensation when the "repressed familiar" (abandoned animistic beliefs or infantile complexes[19]) recurs, because the "concealed" by repression (*heimlich* II) is "exposed" (*unheimlich* II) and therefore the "familiar" (*heimlich* I) becomes the "unfamiliar" (*unheimlich* I). Two non-negligible points here: firstly, Freud actually does not mind what *subject* could become uncanny; any subject (human, object, situation, environment, etc.) might be capable of evoking an

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18 One exception is *super-realism* (also *photo-realism*, *hyper-realism*), which aspires to photo-like realism for the sake of its own artistic effect.

19 Freud considers them essentially close: "When we consider that primitive beliefs are most intimately connected with infantile complexes, and are, in fact, based on them, we shall not be greatly astonished to find that the distinction is often a hazy one" (Freud, 1955, p. 249).

uncanny sensation as long as it reawakens the "repressed familiar" within a person.[20] Secondly, the *factor* (the "repressed familiar") needs an *agent* (e.g. an involuntary repetition) in order to generate the uncanny. To break this down, the *subject* (what) evokes an uncanny sensation because of the *factor* (why) which is triggered by the *agent* (how).

While Freud uses literary texts as an example to explain the mechanism of his generation of the uncanny, paintings have innately no continuous actions which could be the *agent*. In this regard, it is noticeable that Freud abruptly asks: "what is the origin of the uncanny effect of silence, darkness and solitude?" (Freud, 1955, p. 246). In the text, he does not consider these elements further but he briefly references them again in the last paragraph:

> Concerning silence, solitude and darkness, we can only say that they are actually agents to which infantile anxiety, which never completely disappears in most people, is linked (Freud, 1919, p. 324).[21]

In Hammershøi's paintings, precisely these elements change his everyday interiors and make them uncanny: "Darkness" rules there with the use of ascetically restrained dark monotone colours,

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20 For Freud, the *subject* itself seemingly does not need to be familiar/known to a person, while the *factor* must be. In the article, he focuses on the uncanny as *factor*.

21 Original text: "Von der Einsamkeit, Stille und Dunkelheit können wir nichts anderes sagen, als daß dies wirklich die <u>Momente</u> sind, an welche die bei den meisten Menschen nie ganz erlöschende Kinderangst geknüpft ist" (Freud, 1919, p. 324. My underline and translation). I translated this sentence myself because the English translation (Freud, 1955) adds the word "factor" which can bring confusion. Moreover, to translate the original term *Moment*, I used "agent", which is also tied to the English word "moment" with the obsolete meaning: "a cause or motive of action" (Definition of MOMENT, n.d.). See, however, Freud, 1955, p. 252: "Concerning the <u>factors</u> of silence, solitude and darkness, we can only say that they are actually <u>elements</u> in the production of the infantile anxiety from which the majority of human beings have never become quite free" (My underlines).

while the artificially vacant minimalist composition and the lack of anecdotes, a motionless woman turning her back to the viewer and never-played instruments emphasise "silence" and "solitude" in the represented scene. In summary, Hammershøi's interior (*subject*: a concealed place which could also potentially seem familiar to most viewer) becomes "unfamiliar" (*unheimlich* I) and "exposed" (*unheimlich* II) by silence, solitude and darkness (*agents* which are also linked to the uncanny according to Freud), because soulless things seem to be alive there (*factor*: animistic beliefs): the "repressed familiar" recurs in the sense of Freud. The uncanny is omnipresent in Hammershøi's interior painting, i.e. it can be found in the form of *subject*, *factor* and *agent*. And at that point, the realistic theme and techniques establish "reality likeness" which functions as a *foundation* for the generation of the uncanny in this fictional work.

Conclusion

This article examines the mechanism of generating a singular feeling which arises from Hammershøi's interior paintings, described by various expressions such as "strange", "mysterious", etc. This extraordinary impression led him to be placed within the symbolism movement despite the seemingly realistic appearance of his works. By considering the theories of Sigmund Freud and Masahiro Mori as clues, we found that this singular impression is, strictly speaking, the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*), and that the painting's ties to reality, both in a thematic and a technical sense, which is inherent to Hammershøi's art, form the requirements for the generation of the uncanny in fiction.

Acknowledgments

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Chloe Millhauser

Perspectival Subterfuge:
Gerda Leo's Use
of the Photographic Uncanny

Abstract

Walter Benjamin's incisive 1931 critique of Albert Renger-Patzsch's *Die Welt ist Schön* mired the Neue Sachlichkeit genre's photographic practices in overtones of apolitical regressivity. In 1981, Benjamin Buchloh intensified the castigation against the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, positing that the reductive realism of *Neue Sachlichkeit* works oriented the genre as an art form perniciously imbricated with German fascism. However, in reviewing a broader field of *Neue Sachlichkeit* photography, this essay strives to highlight photographic practices that confuse the politics of Interwar photographic realism, thus providing a more nuanced perspective into the movement's representational modalities. Viewing *Neue Sachlichkeit* still life through the methodological lens of the uncanny allows for the complication of seemingly banal, straightforward imagery. No longer mundane, the uncanny still life reveals itself to be a product of post World War I existence. This investigation examines the works of Gerda Leo, one of *Neue Sachlichkeit*'s lesser-known female photographers. On close observation, Leo's outwardly benign images of quotidian objects denature into aberrant, disturbing scenes where banal commodities gain a strange agency over the viewer. Alterations of perspective and space, like the introduction of reverse perspective and implementation of the extreme close-up, grotesquely personify the arranged objects,

imbuing them with humanoid qualities that threaten animation. Leo renders the everyday object as menacing, damaged, and all-consuming. Rather than turning away from or aggrandizing authoritarianism, her photographs mirror the disturbing interwar conditions as a mode of trenchant critique.

> Thus the history of perspective may be understood with equal justice as a triumph of the distancing and objectifying sense of the real, and as a triumph of the distance-denying human struggle for control; it is as much a consolidation and systemization of the external world, as an extension of the domain of the self (Panofsky, 1991, p. 68).

In 1934, Walter Benjamin asseverated that Albert Renger-Patzsch's photographs embody "New Objective photography at its peak" (Benjamin, 2008, p. 87). These images, he contended, proffered a perniciously romanticized view of a crumbling German state, noting that they "succeeded in transforming even abject poverty – by apprehending it in a fashionably perfected manner—into an object of enjoyment" (Benjamin, 2008, p. 87). By presenting the aestheticized, processed afterimage of banal existence, such images grind up the products of proletarian struggle and, in a decidedly perverse fashion, reconstitute them as fodder for the mass consumption apparatus. Rather than plainly acknowledging a world marked by the searing trauma of World War I and its resulting political conflicts, New Objective (referred to henceforth in this paper as *Neue Sachlichkeit*) photography, Benjamin argued, succeeded only in beautifying the interwar situation to a point of unreality. Expanding upon and intensifying the acrimony of Benjamin's assertions, art historian Benjamin Buchloh posited in 1981 that all paintings associated with the return to order, within Germany and beyond, were imbricated with the rise of authoritarianism (Buchloh, 1981, p. 43).

Proving the innocence of all European realism, even merely German realism, proves too unwieldy a task for this investigation. In fact, many of these artists were indeed involved with fascist ventures and cannot be exonerated of Benjamin or Buchloh's allegations. Instead, I seek to add nuance to the genre, to pry bits and pieces of German realism away from authoritarian associations, as I find statements that monolithically align such a realism in its entirety with fascism to succeed only in awarding fascism with that much more power. To do this I will be focusing on *Neue Sachlichkeit* photography, the subset of German realism that Benjamin took greatest issue with, and will concentrate my efforts on the still life photography of the artist Gerda Leo, a lesser known *Neue Sachlichkeit* constituent.

Leo's engagement with photographic practice was regretfully short-lived, as she ceased artistic production upon marrying Dutch photographer Jacob d'Oliveira in 1932. Nevertheless, having amassed a sizable oeuvre throughout the course of her short career, her involvement within the *Neue Sachlichkeit* genre cannot be overlooked. A student at the Workshops of the City of Halle, The State and Municipal School of the Applied Arts at Burg Giebichenstein from 1926-1932, Leo conducted her formal training in an environment that heavily prioritized commercial practicalities. Hans Finsler, a Swiss photographer and art historian whose work engaged in both the fine art and commercial poles of photographic practice, acted as her mentor, thus shaping her practice, to an extent, in the image of his own. One would therefore assume that Leo adhered to the basic tenets of advertising imagery, which foreground the beautification of the depicted object, but Leo regarded advertising with disdain, lamenting its nagging presence within the Burg Giebichenstein classrooms (Göltz and Immisch, 1994, p. 13). Furthermore, her photographs reveal an exuberance surrounding distortions of pictorial surface and perspective; she presents her viewer with compositions that seem wildly unhinged from traditional pictorial modes.

Leo's still life photographs appear initially benign; they are seemingly pensive yet beautifying images of banal object clusters that outwardly reflect those conservative tendencies Benjamin and Buchloh refer to. However, I will demonstrate that there is a strange

slippage of reality that occurs within these photographs. They are not quotidian images, regressive in their charms. Rather, when one views these photographs through the theoretical lens of the uncanny –specifically, an uncanny precipitated by disruptions to naturalistic space and perspective – the images begin to decay during the process of sustained looking, transforming the depicted objects into malignant entities that threaten to sap the agency of the viewer and subjugate her beneath the newly empowered object.

Take, for example, Leo's 1929 photograph, *Basketweave* (*Korbgeflecht*) [fig. 1]. The depicted baskets appear nearly animate. Meandering reeds snap back and forth in a dance of tight control and violent organization. Each individual reed is stressed with delicate, mechanical tension as it exits the matrix of the basket and then turns and pierces the superstructure of the vessel once more. Stark lighting from the left contours the reeds with a distinct tenebrism, emphasizing every manipulation of each reed away from its original straight character. The quick thatching of the outermost reeds tightly grasps the vertical reeds that constitute the inner armature of the basket, like a hand clutching a stick. Positioned behind the round basket is an additional rectilinear basket that occupies the remainder of the picture plane. The tightly coiled fibers of the second basket stitch the four segments of the basket together, creating four diagonal seams. These seams, if extrapolated out behind the foreground basket, meet at an X in the center of the photograph. Acting as a sort of prosthetic eye, the central X pierces through the round basket and confronts the viewer with mirrored vision, watching the viewer as though the basket is itself a sentient entity. The three visible outer branches of the central X frame the foreground basket, but their diagonality, along with the tilted quality of the foreground basket, upsets the horizon of the pictorial space. The camera apparatus is positioned such that the baskets confront the human viewer, tilting simultaneously left and up as if to press through the pictorial space and intrude into the viewer's world. In the uppermost right hand corner of the photo a small, triangular shadow cuts across the further basket. Though the entity precipitating the shadow exists beyond the bounds of the photograph, one is apt

Fig. 1: Leo, G. (1929). *Basketweave (Korbgeflecht)*. [Silver gelatin print].
Kunstmuseum, Moritzburg Halle (Saale), Halle.

to assume that it is another basket. The viewer no longer consumes and acts upon the static imagery of the baskets, but rather is drained of agency and enveloped into the world of the baskets. Baskets fold up and around the viewer, encasing her in a foreign realm of uncertainty and claustrophobia. As such, the baskets cease to be simply the quotidian products of human manufacturing and prosaic usage – instead they flicker, verging on the unrecognizable while maintaining a tenuous grasp on normalcy; they become uncanny.

Sigmund Freud's 1919 essay, *The Uncanny*, is the best-known treatise on the subject. In Freud's words, the uncanny "belongs to the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread." (Freud, 2003, p. 123) The source of this fear and dread is not outright, however, but arises instead from subtle means. The uncanny reveals itself in the brief yet misplaced recognition of a friend's features in the countenance of a stranger, or when the unfocused gaze into the lush nighttime forest coalesces the delicate filigrees of foliage into a vaguely human form. As Freud states, "the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar" (p. 124).

However, for the purposes of this investigation I am more interested in the theories of Freud's predecessor, Ernst Jentsch. In his 1906 work, *On the Psychology of the Uncanny*, Jentsch prioritizes theories of animation, which I find particularly useful in complicating my readings of *Neue Sachlichkeit* imagery. Jentsch identifies one scenario that incites a "fairly regular, powerful and very general" sensation of the uncanny (Jentsch, 1997, p. 11). This he describes as "doubt as to whether an apparently living being is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate" (p. 11). For this concept, Jentsch offers the example of a traveler who "[sits] down in an ancient forest on a tree trunk and that, to the horror of the traveller, this trunk suddenly [begins] to move and [shows] itself to be a giant snake" (p. 11).

This inconclusive assessment of the animated inanimate frames my investigation of *Neue Sachlichkeit* works. One can argue that *Neue Sachlichkeit* works that contain inanimate subjects, as

well as those that depict the human form, both generate the sense of the uncanny. For example, a face may seem unsettlingly familiar or a smile may appear tinged with the qualities of a more malicious feeling. However, in his discussion of the doubt generated by confounding entities' animate qualities, Jentsch concludes that the uncanny is most piercing "when this doubt only makes itself felt obscurely in one's consciousness" (p. 11). I posit that one tends to inherently trust the stability of things. The inanimate object, for instance, seemingly exists within the domain of human agency. Specifically, the objects that constitute a still life, which one typically expects to have been arranged by a human actor and thus removed from the precarities of chance, appear to exist only as objects of human subservience. It is these objects that may initially seem benign and within human control but that transform with astonishing plasticity into entities that are strangely menacing in their unfamiliarity, thereby "unsettling" us, in the words of art historian Megan Luke, because they show "how independent they are from us... existing in a universe quite apart from one where we might imagine human life to be the leading protagonist" (Luke, 2015, p. 231). The *Neue Sachlichkeit* still life, I argue, thus constitutes the ideal canvas for a study predicated upon the uncanny.

This study takes a more oblique approach to the uncanny and posits that Jentsch's uncanny – that of ambiguous animation – arises within Leo's photographs chiefly from manipulations of space and perspective. In 1927, German art historian Erwin Panofsky popularized the concept that linear perspective, which had pervaded European artistic practice from the Renaissance until the conclusion of the nineteenth century, was in fact merely a mathematical construct, not a veracious representation of optical perception. True perception, he reasoned, negotiates angular particularities and complex curvatures of forms within space, whereas linear perspective simply proffers a mechanized, ratio-based system of representing object diminution towards a singular vanishing point. Furthermore, he contended that the generative source of linear perspective lay not in an epiphanic realization of a 'correct' mode of spatial representation during the Renaissance, but rather was due to a pivot in worldview

that prioritized empiricism and theories of infinity over objects themselves. In suppressing the importance of singular objects by installing them into a systematic schema that emphasized a unified, infinite space, linear perspective emerged as the ideal scaffolding around which to organize the early modern mode of sight.

But if the methodical logic of linear perspective inhered within the Renaissance and the subsequent centuries, a crescive refusal of such systemization characterized the transition into the 20th century. Just as Panofsky noted that, within Medieval painting, "the former vista or 'looking through' [had begun] to close up," modern pictorial practice again collapsed back towards the pictorial surface (Panofsky, 1991, p. 48). Infinity, distance, and a nebulous "empiricism" gave way to an increasingly confrontational worldview, one in which the grandly expansive space of linear perspective quickly lost its footing. Modern life, in all its overt brashness, seemingly demanded a compressed space, a space that succeeded in confronting the viewer, rather than inviting her into an illusionistic dimension. Where linear perspective had extended imagery, and by extension space, out for the viewer's domination, the concentrated space of the modern image, by contrast, opposed the viewer.

In 1908, German art historian Wilhelm Worringer recognized the condensation, and eventual elimination, of pictorial space as a necessary precondition for abstraction. In what was a tremendously influential study at the time of its authoring, Worringer posited that an artist's utilization of abstraction denotes a level of uncertainty regarding her interactions with the world. According to Worringer, in producing highly symbolic, non-naturalistic imagery, the artist attempts "to wrest the object of the external world out of its natural context, out of the unending flux of being, to purify it of all its dependence upon life, i.e. of everything about it that was arbitrary, to render it necessary and irrefragable, to approximate it to its *absolute* value" (Worringer, 2014, p. 17). As such, abstract creators, he reasoned, engage with abstraction as a sort of pictorial panacea, striving as they do to remedy the incomprehensible vicissitudes of the world — to establish stability and constancy in the face of overwhelming mutability. Identifying the unusual flatness of such

abstract works as an almost universally defining feature, Worringer surmised that space itself exists as "the major enemy of all striving after abstraction, and hence is the first thing to be suppressed in the representation" (p. 39). He noted that "[i]t is precisely space which, filled with atmospheric air, linking things together and destroying their individual closedness, gives things their temporal value and draws them into the cosmic interplay of phenomena" (p. 39). Removal of all spatial representation thus affords the artist the opportunity to reclaim mastery over fractions of the turbulent outer world.

Abstraction existed for Worringer as one component of a dyadic pair, with empathy occupying the opposite pole. Noting that empathy "means to enjoy myself in a sensuous object diverse from myself," Worringer supposed that while "the urge to abstraction finds its beauty in the life-denying inorganic," the "urge to empathy … finds its gratification in the beauty of the organic," and by extension, where "the urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world**," "**the precondition for the urge to empathy is a happy pantheistic relationship of confidence between man and the phenomena of the external world[.]" (pp. 5, 4, 15). Thus, in crafting imagery that visually glorifies the worldly object in all its spatial and volumetric qualities, the creator of naturalism affirms a certain hierarchical camaraderie between herself and the universal order of things – she tacitly acknowledges her perceived domination over the natural world and its concomitant phenomena through her willingness to give herself up to that world's object.

Considering the steadily increasing strife plaguing the German interwar milieu, it is plainly obvious why, in the years following Worringer's treatise, Benjamin would censure *Neue Sachlichkeit* photography as an example of pandering to the world as it is. And outwardly, it does seem as though *Neue Sachlichkeit* photography, in its apparent zoomed-in admiration of the object, adheres to the basic tenets of naturalism and empathy rather than those of abstraction and anxiety. Thus, upon shallow engagement of *Neue*

Sachlichkeit imagery, one may find Benjamin's sardonic jest of "What a beautiful world!", which he leveled at Renger-Patzch's 1928 publication bearing that phrase as its title, an apt characterization of *Neue Sachlichkeit* photography (Benjamin, 2008, p. 86).

But a more attentive eye reveals a subtle engagement with abstraction, in which the photograph's involvement in naturalistic modes of depiction belies a latent interest in extracting and convoluting the spatial structure of the image. Returning to Leo's *Basketweave*, one may note the presence of a diagonal pseudo-horizon of sorts, which extends outward from behind the frontal basket and denotes a theoretical transition in perspectival space from ground plane to open space. But one does not experience the phenomenon of dimensional regression typically associated with linear perspective when observing this image, regardless of the inclusion of this horizon line. Even when one ignores the tilted quality of the spatial divisor, the partition existing above the pseudo-horizon – the pseudo-space, one could say – remains in uncomfortable proximity to the viewer. The image's theoretical open expansiveness, which the inclusion of linear perspective is expected to invariably precipitate, remains decidedly closed, and those pictorial elements that should denote the deepest reaches of illusionistic space instead remain flush with the picture plane. Space collapses down to a singular stratum, that of the pictorial surface, with the objects of the still life flattening into a tessellated expanse of shapes that denies linear regression. Where one finds reference to a basic tenet of linear perspective – that of the horizon line – one concurrently discovers that Leo has stopped up the very spread of infinite interstitially that inheres within linear perspectival construction. That is, Leo crafts for the viewer a sort of perspectival contradiction. In a seemingly naturalistic image, references to further figurations of naturalism succeed only in facilitating their own logical undoing.

Similarly, if one continues to treat the diagonal line as a sort of horizon line and the adjacent basket sides as spatial planes, one may observe a strange convergence of contradicting planes within the image. When composing an image in linear perspective, the artist

organizes the systematic pictorial diminutions of objects along the linear pathways of what are known as orthogonals. Such orthogonals are clearly visible when one looks upon the striated form of a recently tilled field, in which the oblique lines incised into the earth appear to converge down towards a singularity embedded within the horizon. Many examples of painting and drawing from the fourteenth through twentieth centuries foreground the artists' dexterous handling of the linear perspectival apparatus by highlighting its use in such inherently linearized ground planes. The twirling reeds that construct the distal basket conjoin in a fashion that evokes the undulating rolls of such a tilled field. But, unlike prior representative formulations of such banded surfaces, the ribbons of shadow that mark the image's 'ground plane' fail to unite. Though the lines do tilt as though preparing to converge, upon tracing the eventual pathways of each divot, one finds that there exists no unified point of confluence. The false orthogonals join instead at a multitude of unique points of unity, which arrange themselves at varying heights along an imaginary vertical (or in the case of Leo's *Basketweave*, diagonal) line.

Panofsky termed this phenomenon the "fishbone effect" and noted its appearance primarily within imagery dating from late antiquity (Panofsky, 1991, p. 38). Where the systematically arrayed orthogonals of linear perspective splay out to denote mathematical dimensionality, this antique form of perspective instead generates a heterogeneous space, in which each convergence of false orthogonals upon the vertical dividing line precipitates a unique spatial envelope, with each dimensional form refusing spatial recession and instead pressing up against the image surface. Thus, the image proffers not a unified dimension, like in examples of linear perspective, but an aggregation of many crushed discrete spaces that threaten to push past the banks of the pictorial surface. In applying this perspectival mode, one allows composite space, consisting of a sort of dimensional pastiche, to supersede spatial regression. As such, Leo surreptitiously replaced systematic space, which had for so long acted as the marker of logical space, with a corrupted model that approximates the historically standardized mode of perception only outwardly.

Looking to other examples of Leo's still life work, one may observe consistent gestures towards an ersatz linear perspective. For example, within Leo's 1928 photograph titled *Papers* (*Papiere*) [fig. 2], one sees the presence of a piece of cellophane that, prior to snapping the photograph, Leo had methodically rolled into a conical form, with its wide end reaching to and extending beyond the lower bounds of the composition, and its narrow end terminating near the image's center. In fashioning the cellophane sheet into a cone, Leo references the diminution of form inherent to linear perspective, in which the wide base signifies proximity and the progressive narrowing of the cone denotes movement towards a theoretical vanishing point. But, where one expects to find the marker of perspectival convergence – the sharp point of the orthogonals' collision – one encounters instead a blunted end, its tip seemingly decapitated in an outward demonstration of spatial denial. Furthermore, on either side of the cellophane cone, one sees two additional oblique lines: a linear seam produced by the folding of one paper sheet onto another, and a deep shadow cast from the edge of the rolled cellophane. In tracking alongside the original conical form, these lines act as additional orthogonals, almost attempting to generate spatial recession. But as with the cellophane cone, the lines' point of confluence is unceremoniously lopped off, as a piece of corrugated cardboard occludes the apex at which one expects the lines to meet.

The viewer is therefore twice denied the opportunity to visualize absolute linear diminution at a vanishing point. And although inclusion of the image's vanishing point is not wholly necessary for generating illusionistic depth, in blocking one's view of that vanishing point, Leo succeeds in producing a claustrophobic space. As I have previously established, the horizon line, and by extension the vanishing point, mark the transition from the ground plane to open space. An image truncated before the emergence of the vanishing point invariably presents the viewer with only an image of the ground plane. And, since the ground plane expands to encompass the entirety of the image, one has the sense that the ground is rushing up to meet one's gaze, almost mimicking the act of falling. The

Fig. 2: Leo, G. (1928). *Papers (Papiere)* [Silver gelatin print].
Kunstmuseum Moritzburg, Halle (Saale), Halle.

attempted convergence of the cellophane's folded shape not only fails to constitute a perspectival recession into space, but it signals instead the objects of the scene jutting forth to collide with the image's spectator. The act of denying linear regression simultaneously precipitates an act of spatial confrontation.

Such a pictorial encounter aligns with the distortion effected by an image rendered in reverse perspective. Rather than converging down to a distant vanishing point on the horizon line like within linear perspective, objects depicted in reverse perspective narrow towards the viewer, mimicking the dimensional construction of an object extending out beyond the pictorial surface. Examples of reverse perspective appear most notably in Byzantine and Medieval Russian icons, in which one may observe planimetric objects like chairs and tables existing in a state fully dislodged from the conventions of linear perspective and, almost as though they recognize the viewer's presence, reaching towards the viewer. Though artists swiftly abandoned reverse perspective upon the emergence of linear perspective, interest in this peculiar perspectival mode enjoyed a brief renaissance in the initial decades of the twentieth century – mainly within circles of Russian theorists. Russian artist El Lissitzky observed in 1925 that, whereas linear perspective projected a sort of visual cone that terminated its apex at the vanishing point in front of the viewer, within reverse perspective, "the apex of the visual cone has its location ... in our eye, i.e., in front of the object" (Lissitzky, 1993, p. 304). Citing the reemergence of reverse perspective as a corollary of abstraction, Lissitzky further noted that the cubists had "pulled the space-confining horizon into the foreground and identified it with the surface of the painting," and, even more radically, that "[t]hey built from the plane of the picture forward into space" (p. 304). In this way, reverse perspective became commensurate to both a flattened abstraction against the pictorial surface and a protrusion beyond that same plane. Pavel Florensky, a Russian theologian, observed in 1920 that images constructed in reverse perspective succeed in "pushing away the perceiving eye" (Florensky, 2002, p. 239). Expanding further, he noted that, upon peering into such an image, "[w]e are not drawn

into this space; on the contrary, it repels us, as a mercury sea would repel our bodies" (p. 242). Comparative linguist Devin Fore noted, upon examination of Florensky's text, that "when viewing a painting that uses reverse perspective, the spectator has the discomfiting sensation of being himself on view" (Fore, 2012, p. 52). In other words, by depicting an object in reverse perspective, the artist succeeds in, albeit obliquely, imbuing said object with a latent animation and thereby facilitating the generation of the uncanny.

Reverse perspective works in direct conjunction with the disorienting oblique overhead angle that is so common within the Leo's oeuvre. Returning once more to *Basketweave*, one may recall that the viewer encounters the proximal basket from a top-down angle, which allows one to gaze into the basket's empty cavity. But this variety of viewing angle, as I have previously discussed in relation to Leo's *Papers*, evokes the sensation of the object rearing up, as it were, to collide with the viewer. As a result, the proximal basket appears to rotate forward, hinging up from its woven exterior nearest to the viewer to seemingly strike the viewer with its (currently) more distant edge. That is, Leo appears to have frozen the basket mid-strike, apprehending the object's image in an act of violence towards the viewer. And, in freezing this movement, Leo simultaneously provides the viewer with an iteration in the proximal basket's movement towards flatness — one is then able to see a single step in the process of the proximal basket aligning itself with the image's surface. The viewer sees here the image in a form of proto-abstraction— a progression towards utter flatness against the picture plane.

Since its historical nascence, reverse perspective has pitched forward objects such that the viewer is afforded an unimpeded vantage of whatever lays upon – or in the case of Leo's *Basketweave*, within – that object's uppermost plane. In much Byzantine imagery, this perspectival shifting allows the viewer to take in an unobstructed view of the objects placed on a table or a figure lying prostrate on a bed. Objects in reverse perspective are not subjected to the strict, depreciating structure of systematic space – predetermined diminution and schematic planarity do not render them oblique and

occluded. Rather, these objects come to stand as exactly what they are: icons of their own existence. In this way reverse perspective prioritizes symbolic over naturalistic depiction. For instance, although the two baskets are created through differing modes of construction, *Basketweave*, in essence, shows the viewer all aspects of the basket. The proximal basket shows the handle designed for easy carrying and the open interior space for placing one's goods; while the distal basket shows, in theory, what the bottom of the frontal basket could look like. In this way *Basketweave* becomes a pragmatic symbol of a basket, providing the viewer with a schematized model of a theoretical woven vessel. Thus the juxtaposition of the tilted view of the frontal basket combined with the straight view of the distal basket acts as a form of reverse perspective in and of itself. The implementation of reverse perspective causes the symbolic, multi-dimensional basket to look back at the viewer through its own exercise in didacticism.

This didacticism recalls the forceful structure of German playwright Bertolt Brecht's conceptions of epic theater. Eschewing Aristotelian dramaticism and its enrapturing narrative for a stripped-down, expository form of theater, Brecht foregrounded a blunt empiricism within his theatrical compositions, thereby precluding one's immersion into a constructed fictional realm. Ideally, audience members viewing one of Brecht's plays would maintain a constant awareness of the fact that they were indeed watching a *performance* – not a veracious happening. Brecht contended that such an estrangement of audience from theatrical character would render the viewer wholly aware of the *content* embedded within the play, not merely the frivolous development of the play's characters, and thus the viewer, long after exiting the playhouse's instructive interior, would continue to cogitate upon the play's themes and messages – which in Brecht's case typically reckoned with the malignant corollaries of exploitative capitalism.

In order to achieve this explicatory structure, Brecht employed what he termed the Verfremdungseffekt or V-effekt, which sought to alienate the viewer from the events occurring on stage. Application of the V-effekt entailed the director's introduction of various actor

and stage-oriented perversions of traditional Aristotelian theater, including the actor "gesturing" towards a character rather than fully embodying him (a technique that Brecht termed "Gestus"); the director's seemingly premature acknowledgement of what *will* happen in a given scene by inscribing that scene's major plot points on a half screen that hangs conspicuously behind the actors; or the actor's jarring transition into song, often signaled by a change in the actor's physical positioning that cleaves the spoken word from the sung (Brecht, 1964, p. 92, 104; pp. 43-45). Linking together these seemingly disparate V-effekt catalysts is their adherence to the didactic: an interest in *telling* rather than *showing*.

Most relevant to the present investigation, however, is the actor's ability to interface directly with the audience. Where actors of the dramatic theater feign ignorance of the audience's scrutinizing eyes, actors of the epic theater acknowledge the spectatorial unit. Brecht identified contemporary Chinese theater as the original paragon of epic theater, noting that, "the Chinese artist never acts as if there were a fourth wall besides the three surrounding him. He expresses his awareness of being watched. This immediately removes one of the European stage's characteristic illusions. The audience can no longer have the illusion of being the unseen spectator at an event which is really taking place" (p. 92). Because it is not a hermetically sealed system impervious to the audience's unceasing stare, the epic theater spills out into the space of the spectators. What was once passive entertainment converts into an active exchange.

Implicit in the removal of this theoretical fourth wall is a certain breed of self-consciousness for the spectator. The viewer of Aristotelian theater essentially loses herself within the illusion of the theatrical narrative. In forgetting the deception of the dramatic theater, she consequently forgets that she herself is an object that may be viewed. But epic theater, by acknowledging the pressing gaze of the spectators, protrudes into what was once an untouchable, sanctified viewing dimension, reminding the viewer that the performers may reach out and return her stare. Of course, one often finds it difficult to locate the exact object of the actor's gaze, but this unclarity arguably renders the experience of spectating that much

more unnerving. Where a large audience situated within a darkened theater affords the singular viewing constituent an element of anonymity, it also confuses one's perception of where the actor's gaze falls, and thus the actor's eye seems to sweep over the audience much like a beam of light, in which the watched spectator is unsure of her being illuminated until the beam's central core collides with her own eye. She exists in a veritable panopticon, constantly unsure of whether or not the actors on stage are watching her.

One may thus align this particular form of alienating didacticism with the sensation of potentially being watched. That is, the exhortative nature of the epic theater produces not only the expected alienation effect, but also a byproduct in the form of an unclear interaction. Applying this same theoretical framework to Leo's still life photographs affords these images an inner logic. In their strict didacticism – their objectivity – these commodities become so entrenched in their own iconicity that they seemingly narrate their own existence. Where the wholly aestheticized imagery native to advertising invites the viewer into an illusionistic realm where things embody the beautified forms of themselves, Leo's photographed objects appear to *tell* the viewer about the nature of their own existence. Much like the Brechtian actor, the object instructs the viewer on how to perceive its own form, thereby seemingly acknowledging the presence of the viewer's stare and, by extension, potentially returning that gaze – the didactic object toys with its own animation.

German theorist Oskar Wulff initially put a name to reverse perspective in 1907 when he authored *Reverse Perspective and the View from Above (Die umgekehrte Perspektive und die Niedersicht)*. Contrary to most ensuing research on the topic, he argued that images rendered in reverse perspective are tightly imbricated with empathy (Einfühlung), thereby aligning the act of viewing an object in reverse perspective with the process of giving oneself up to that object. Though objects depicted in reverse perspective may appear entirely nonsensical to the external viewer, Wulff averred that the recession of object size towards the picture plane actually aids in constructing a logical space within the image's interior. Specifically,

reverse perspective affords linear diminution of receding objects for the viewing subject located *within* the image, thereby creating an inner view (inneren Anschauung) positioned inside the image's viscera for the viewer's use. (Wulff, 1907, pp. 18-19) The image's construction thus succeeds in wrenching the external viewer from the outer world and installing her within the image's internal logic.

Leo's still life photographs seem to exist at the point of confluence of reverse perspective's two major conceptions: that of pictorial repellence and that of empathy. The still life objects do not appear to allow for the exact variation of empathy that Wulff describes. Rather than entering the space of the image and uniting with the photographed object, the viewer remains outside the bounds of the image, seemingly watched, as it were, by the very object she attempts to embody. The objects remain watchers of the viewer, not vehicles through which the viewer may watch. But one must also consider that the objects constituting these still lifes are tools designed to embody use value, and this purposiveness aids in human productivity. In other words, the still life objects considered in this investigation act as extensions of the human body; baskets function as prosthetic arms, facilitating one's holding of that many more objects, while paper receives and subsequently projects outward one's thoughts, much like a silent mouthpiece. That is to say that Leo's still life objects, even prior to their integration into reverse perspective, inherently contain an element of the human viewer within them, as their initial designs orient them as extensions of that very viewer. Combining the objects' prosthetic qualities with their fundamental familiarity as household tools, the objects do themselves precipitate a form of empathy. But it is not the empathy that Worringer describes, nor does this empathy adhere fully to Wulff's definition. This empathy approximates both forms of empathy, but reifies instead as a strange feeling of familiarity embedded within the very fabric of the object, drawing the viewer in like an angler's lure, only to then violently drive the viewer back through the obtrusive projection inherent to reverse perspective. The objects of Leo's still life arrangements are the threatening objects of a commodity culture that has slipped from the realm of the helpful into that of the menacing.

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Through the abstraction of space and the use of reverse perspective, the objects depicted in Leo's still life photography attain both a subjectivity and sense of semi-animation. The objects no longer appear confined to the quotidian ranks of the inanimate, but rather morph into strange entities laced with uncertainty. They are simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar, uncanny representations that both reassure and threaten. The evocation of the uncanny pulls these photographs away from more classical realisms operating at the time and throws into doubt the very nature of imagery that is conventionally accepted as benign. Leo's still lifes do not illustrate a calm, idealized world, but instead present a world entrenched in ambiguity.

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Katherine O'Connor

Framing the Moon Baby:
The Haunted Reality
of the Animated Form

Abstract

In February 2019, the tabloid press headlines captured a general reaction to Andrew Davenport's new animated television series *Moon and Me* with headlines such as, "'Haunting' new CBeebies show Moon and Me is giving parents nightmares" (Pemberton and Pemberton, 2020). In this article I seek to explore what it is within Moon and Me that reveals the uncanny hidden within the animated form. Wells describes animation as having the "ready capacity to facilitate 'the uncanny' by effacing the imagined and the real" (Wells, 1998, p. 48). Animators are creating the 'illusion of life' from something inanimate, dead in a sense already. The 'spectre' of death that hides within the animated form and brings us to a place of, as described by Crawte "the collapse of borders, a blurring between supposed opposites and troubling visions of fears long repressed becoming manifest" (Crawte, 2017, p. 1). *Moon and Me* exposes 'in the raw' something further. It brings to the fore animation's uncanny and unusual relationship with time, the unheimlich mirror of the animated form and the revealing, ultimately, of the automaton within.

John Halas and Joy Batchelor, of the Halas and Batchelor animation studio of the same name (famed for creating the first British animated feature *Animal Farm* in 1964), wrote in the 1949 Penguin Film Review in an article titled *European Cartoon: A Survey of the Animated Film*, that animation and live action film separated from each other in that their early interests and ideas around exploring "magic" and the supernatural through "trick films" (Halas, 1949) became predominantly the province of the animated film. Through the improvements in film technology, allowing for more sophisticated film techniques, Halas and Batchelor believed that "it lead the live-action camera right away from the magic world, [therefore] leaving the supernatural almost entirely to animated film" (p. 9). By the late 1940's live-action film had developed the "power to analyse and portray human behaviour under the microscopic penetration of the camera lens" (p. 10), with its enlargement of every human emotion on screen until it was "greater than life size" (p. 10) the human experience was amplified. Whilst live action film became more focused on this amplification and atomic examination of emotional states and physical authenticity, animation, in the meantime, retained its links to the exploration of the supernatural, "If it is live-action film's job to present physical reality, animated film is concerned with metaphysical reality – not how things look, but what they mean" (p.10). Halas also suggests that the animated form also has the ability to portray the 'invisible', to reveal the repressed. This play with the supernatural and the portrayal if the 'invisible' or the hidden, is an early alluding to the uncanny nature of animation and its hidden relationship that lies within the form. To further explore the relationship between the uncanny and the animated form I will use the recent children's television series *Moon and Me* directed by Andrew Davenport and I will argue that it reveals something that other animations do not readily present.

Well known for his surreal children's television series such as *In the Night Garden* and *The Teletubbies*, Andrew Davenports latest offering, *Moon and Me*, as with his other works, uses a combination of animation, puppetry and visual effects techniques to create an imaginary world for his characters to inhabit.

The show begins with a young girl tucking her dolls and other doll like toys into bed in the doll's house in which they live. This is a familiar trope for a child's program and once the little girl is in bed asleep the toys start to wake up. They then take on a life of their own ready to engage in their nightly exploits. The main character, a doll with an oversized head call Pepi Nana, starts the nightly routine off by writing a letter to the Moon Baby, a small boy like character with a light-up head that lives in the moon. Pepi Nana then goes around the doll's house waking the other toys in anticipation. The Moon Baby flies down from the moon to the doll's house, ringing the door bell and then greeting Pepi Nana with a hug. Together they and the other toys that 'live' in the house set off for their nightly adventure.

Using mostly marionette puppets, these characters are shot 'on set' and then have their strings removed in post-production, making them appear to be animated in more stop-motion style. The Moon Baby character meanwhile, is a stop-motion puppet and is either filmed on a full set or against a green screen to be composited in later depending on the shot required, appearing to fully occupy the space and even interact with the other toys. It is this combination of stop-motion and marionette movement, I will argue, that not only creates the reported 'haunting' and 'nightmarish' atmosphere of the work, but reveals where hidden relationships between the uncanny and the animated form hide.

When I first watched the animation with my son, it gave me a great sense of unease. I recognised this unease as the uncanny at play. The animation had brought forth in me a great feeling, that prickling anxiety which is synonymous with the sensation of the uncanny that Freud and many others describe. This same sense of unease did not seem to arise in my three-year-old son, as he sat happily watching next me.

Tabloids later reported on the haunting sensation that was apparently felt by many other parents when watching the program. This uncanny impression appeared not just evoked in me but in others too, although perhaps not recognised as such directly, rather

preferring to describe it as haunting, and nightmarish. The sense of creeping dread that Freud uses to describe the sensation of the uncanny was present in the wider audience of *Moon and Me*.

As a practitioner of animation I recognised that something unusual was happening within the animation technique its self and I felt driven to unravel the mystery. Why did I experience such a strong feeling on the uncanny in *Moon and Me*, but more importantly, what does it reveal about the relationship between the uncanny and the animated form?

Animation is layered with the uncanny, it flirts endlessly with the uncanny, not only in the bringing to life inanimate objects, but through the familiar and yet unfamiliar representations of our reality. It is so readily able to bring to life those things that are inert, that the inanimate become animate and it plunges us into, by its very nature, the realms of the supernatural and Todorov's *Fantastic*.

Moon and Me already contains familiar tropes of the uncanny as described by Freud in his seminal essay *The Uncanny*. Dolls that come to life, Freud states, possess the highest degree of uncanniness (Freud et al., 2001). However, it is not the bringing to life of the inanimate that evokes the uncanny feelings brought forth by this program, but rather, I will argue, the province of alienation of one's self from the mechanism of one's own body "then the dark knowledge dawns on the unschooled observer that mechanical processes are taking place in that which he was previously used to regarding as a unified psyche" (Jentsch, 2008, p. 14). Paul Wells in his book *Understanding Animation* expresses further the provocations that Freud describes "The feeling of the 'uncanny' is most provoked, he suggests [that is Freud], by dolls, automata or, most specifically, the notion of an unconscious mechanistic force informing certain kinds of human thought and behaviour" (Wells, 2006, p. 48). *Moon and Me* more readily brings to the surface the hidden mechanism that lies beneath, disrupting our "unified psyche" as Jentsch would put it, bringing the uncanny out of its indexical hiding place.

> It is not difficult to see how animation has the ready capacity
> to facilitate 'the uncanny' by effacing the imagined and real
> in creating an environment where inanimate lines, objects
> and materials have the illusion of life, impossible relations
> can take place, and representational modes of expression
> become fully accepted aspects of the real world. (p. 48)

Wells also asserts that the sheer nature of the animated form is uncanny. He concentrates on the "effacing of the imagined and the real" (p. 49) through the bringing to life of the inanimate, be it a line, an object etc., and that these objects become 'fully accepted' as part of the 'real world' (Wells, 2006). However, in *Moon and Me* something more is going on. We see the uncanny rise to the surface, rather than merely effacing the 'imaginary' and the 'real' it seems to open up fully the domain of the uncanny, revealing it to us, open mouthed like a beast rising from the depths of the deep ocean, only to return to its watery abyss once it has revealed its terror. *Moon and Me* appears to be more readily able, than other examples of animation, to reveal the hidden uncanny nature of the form, but why? What is it about this animation that appears to disturb its audiences?

This 'real' animated world that exists behind the screen behaves in similar ways to our own. The characters are acted upon by the same forces that we are subjected to in our own Newtonian reality that is gravity etc. Mirroring our reality, in its general fixation traditionally with mimesis, animation has long had a desire to recreate as realistically as possible that which the live-action cinema can do without conscious drive. That is, the desire to mimic the real world in the animated form led, from the earliest days of animation, to the use of techniques such as; roto-scoping, the tracing of live-action footage to ensure accurate mimicry of physical movement, the multi-plane camera to bring the illusion of depth in 2D animation, through to the desire to render ever more realistic virtual worlds through graphics within the computer. Of course there are possible exceptions to this overwhelming tradition of mimicking reality, including, for example, the more abstract forms of animation such

as optical poetry in the works of animators such as Oskar Fischinger, through to the exploration of visual sound by the likes of Norman McLaren. These too, however, in the main, still have within them an understandable and tangible sense of physical principles acting upon them, as well as their sense of linear time and illusion of movement. Leaving therefore only the works of artists such as Stan Brakhage and his investigations into hypnogogic vision and other film experiments such as *Mothlight*, which seek to attempt to break entirely with notions of perceptual reality and lie on the fringes of the animation genre.

However, whilst all animation, is to some degree considered to be uncanny through its illusion of life imbued into its objects, we are however, aware of the 'magic trick' that lies beneath. Winsor in his thesis *What is the Uncanny?* observes that the magic trick is not experienced as uncanny, as we know it to be just that, a trick. "We can say that where stage magic playfully challenges the subject's grasp of reality, the uncanny actually threatens the subject's grasp of reality" (Windsor, 2016, p. 92). As culturally, we are aware of the processes that create the illusion behind the animated objects, the uncanny loses its immediacy within the form and it no longer appears uncanny, as it fails to threaten our grasp on reality.

This then leaves animation perhaps only with the vaguest index of the uncanny, a sign post, be it perhaps, a large cartoon one with flashing bulbs around it, but still the uncanny does not fully emerge. However, *Moon and Me* brings to the surface something that has remained hidden, it has become, through its seeming ability to evoke uncanny feelings within its audience, an "object [that] offers a resistance to being known" (Kohon, 2016, p. 18). Kohen here is describing the uncanny within the aesthetic experience and focuses on large sculptural installations and their effects on the space in which they sit. Through this unexpected emergence of the uncanny within the usually familiar realm children's animation, Moon and Me has revealed animation's uncanny nature and leaves us in a state of cognitive dissonance, resisting comprehension, but this does not happen readily in all animation so, what is happening within Moon and Me to evoke this uncertainty?

Crawte in his 2017 thesis focuses his augment of the uncanny in animation within the realms of stop motion. This genre of animation, according to him, holds a "hidden death". He describes stop motion animation as being "[I]mbued with the spark of the … semblance of life, … [whilst it] simultaneously embodies the spectre of inertia, lifelessness and death" (Crawte, 2017, p. 2). This "hidden death" that he states lies between each incremental frame when laid on film expands on the theories laid out by Mulvey in her book Death 24x a Second. However, all animation, is in its essence, is an uncanny object, in that it brings to life inanimate objects and blurs the boundary between, as Jentsch would put it, what is animate and what is not animate (Jentsch, 2008) however I would go further and suggest that there is no "death". The illusion is, in its quintessence uncanny but, it is exactly because it is an illusion that the uncanny vanishes from animation. The "knowledge" of the magic trick pushes the uncanny back into, and even beyond, the indexical realm of film that Mulvey states as being inherent within all live action cinema. We know, in the end, that these are inanimate objects brought to life through the trickery of film.

Mulvey argues that through Barthes' observation of the "punctum of time" hidden within the still photograph, live action film and its reanimation of these still images, is at a crossroads and within it hides the uncanny:

> Stillness and movement have different relationships with time … A still from when repeated creates the illusion of stillness, a freezeframe, a halt in time. Stillness may evoke a 'before' for the moving image as filmstrip, as a reference back to photography or its own original moment of registration. Although the projector reconciles the opposition and the still frames come to life, this underlying stillness provides cinema with a secret, with a hidden past that might or might not fine its way to the surface. (Mulvey, 2008, p. 67)

She states that film has a very unique relationship to time as it

hides a 'death' between each point of movement relating to the "punctum". "This new punctum, which is no longer of form but of intensity, is Time" (Barthes, 2020 p. 115): Barthes here is referring to his observations of the "death" that lies within a photograph, the "that-has-been" (Barthes, 1993). That is, this once animate being is captured static, frozen, at a single moment in time through the mechanical and chemical processes in the creation of the photograph. This "punctum", highlights the deeper ontological and philosophical questions that we as human beings seek to answer and struggle to articulate through the limitations of language due to their simultaneous absence and presence. However, this is not present in animation as the objects never lived.

> What I see has been here, in this place which extends between infinity and the subject (operator or spectator); it has been here and immediately separated; it has been absolutely irrefutably present, and yet already deferred. (Barthes, 2020 p. 92)

We see in the image of the photograph simultaneously the 'exact' representation of the Object, in particular people that have now deceased, and this 'capturing' of this very specific moment in time, now passed, never to return, highlights the finality of time as we experience it within the world of consciousness. This, for Mulvey is also present, if not amplified, by the material of film. This "hidden death" between each frame highlights a junction between, as she puts it, the Peircian symbolic and the psychoanalytic (Mulvey, 2005). It hides the mechanical nature of our physical being, revealing and hiding simultaneously the "disconnect" between the conscious and the unconscious. The failings of the symbolic realm in its ability to describe our ontology, whilst revealing something that cannot be described but yet penetrates the deepest parts of our psyche.

Animation, has a similarly unique, but very different relationship with time. As animators we are, creating the 'illusion of life' from

something that is inanimate, dead in a sense already having never had 'life'. I would argue therefore, that this means that there is no "death" to be hidden. Once a puppet or drawing ceases to move it returns to its inanimate state and the uncanny and the punctum is diminished, it has not revealed death, just merely exposed the form of the trickery at play. The animated object returns to its inert state as we see if we study the necessary techniques needed to retain the illusion of life within the animated objects. For example, the rolling hold or the 'boil', two techniques that seek to achieve the same outcome, that is, to hide the inanimate origins of the object (in an animated sequence, if an object ceases to move it suddenly reverts to appearing as a 'still' image, a simple photograph of an object, an object never having had life and therefore not hiding death), losing its illusion altogether and revealing the secrets of its magic trick and thus dispelling this aspect of the uncanny within the form.

What does appear to be happening however, is, to return to Crawte, "the collapse of borders, a blurring between supposed opposites and troubling visions of fears long repressed becoming manifest" (Crawte, 2017, p. 1). *Moon and Me* is revealing the mechanism, bringing these 'collapsing boundaries' that are usually keep hidden within our own psyche to the surface. This altered world that we accept as 'real', as our own, becomes suddenly *unheimlich*. It places a demand on the viewer to reassess what they believed to be 'true'. What is the trick now? Collapsing momentarily our 'ontological certainty'.

What is brought into stark reality in *Moon and Me* is this hidden index of the uncanny and its position in the animated form, not just in film, but within our Self, it reveals the repressed. Through the use of the stingless marionette animated alongside the stop motion puppet we see accentuated the hidden inertia between each movement, the 'stop' within the once flowing motion of the Moon Baby puppet, but also the amplification of the flowing motion of the marionette. The unexpected characteristics of the juxtaposition of these two techniques magnifying our estrangement from something once certain as the movement plays out.

We anticipate animation to work in a particular way. That is,

we understand the 'trick' that creates the illusion of movement, and so it does not appear readily as uncanny. Rather the uncanny remains hidden within the material of animation and does not leak perceptively to the surface. But here in Moon and Me we see revealed something else. We anticipate the 'animated' characters to move in a predictable and familiar way but yet they do not, and at the same time they do, they are an internal contradiction.

> [T]he impression made by wax-work figures, ingeniously constructed dolls and automata. To these he [Jentsch] adds the uncanny effect of epileptic fits, and of manifestations of insanity, because these excite in the spectator the impression of automatic, mechanical processes at work behind the ordinary appearance of mental activity. (Freud et al., 2001, p. 226)

That is, at first (at the beginning of the program, after the little girl has tucked them in and the toys come to life) the marionettes move in a rolling, 'pure' or fluid motion that is unbroken through the integers of the animation process. This movement is perhaps unusual, but all the characters at the start of the program move in this way and we accept it. We do not notice the removal of the strings and fully accept the motion style of the animation presented, almost assuming that they are moving to the 'rules' of stop-motion. Then the 'real' stop-motion puppet appears. This time we accept his movement as fluid and 'pure' as he does not, at first appear likewise with other characters. However, when the two techniques come together they agitate and abrase each other. One technique magnifying the others oddness. The 'stop' of the stop-motion puppet and the rolling continual motion of the marionette, they should be the same, but they are not. We see animation, but it is at odds with itself. The movement style is familiar in isolation but made unfamiliar when presented with its counterpart. It calls into question our intellectual conviction in the knowledge of the 'trick' as we try to comprehend these two objects of movement. This attempt to

comprehend these factors leads to the uncanny arising through a "stimulus in the absence of conscious deliberation or awareness" (Windsor, 2017, p. 99) this 'lack' of awareness in our attempts to hold in the mind two opposing forms, that should be the same but are not, leads to a cognitive dissonance and our ontological certainty begins to collapse.

Suddenly we cannot see the 'trick', seeing only the inertia inherent in the puppet and the absence of it in the marionette but yet they are both inanimate made animate, come to life but by what mechanism? It has simultaneously revealed the repressed and made unfamiliar the once familiar, the once known. The animation enters the province of the nightmare. We are haunted by the 'absence' within the movement of the stop motion puppet but yet this same 'absence' is not present in the marionettes in the same way, however, it still haunts their movement within the material of the film, it should be there but it is not, where has it gone? We fail to comprehend this forced reassessment of the revealed 'truth', but of course the 'absence' is still there, but imperceptible, buried deep within the trick of film, it is without awareness, as once was the 'stop' in the Moon Baby puppet and so we spiral into a place of the uncanny, the anxiety of the once familiar now unfamiliar and threatening, it is resisting, becoming impossible.

> Another confirmation of the fact that the emotion being discussed is caused in particular by doubt as to the animate or inanimate nature of things-, expressed more precisely, as to their animatedness as understood by the lay man's traditional view- lies in the way in which the lay public is generally affected by a sight of the articulations of most mental and nervous illnesses. Several patients afflicted with such troubles make a quite decidedly uncanny impression on most people. (Jentsch, 2008 p. 14)

In the end, our relationship with the uncanny is a cultural one,

as is our relationship with animation. That is, our knowledge of the 'magic trick' that creates the 'illusion' of movement from these inanimate drawings or objects, be them virtual or physical, is well established within our cultural consciousness. (Small children may not experience the same nightmarish feelings as they already exist in a world of make believe. That is, their experience of the world is different. They are readily able to accept the 'magic' of the world around them, they are not yet at a stage to have their 'primitive' beliefs effaced. For them the world is full of magic and they do not need to question the trick as they do not experience it in the same way. Within their world of make believe they are able to fly, take on super powers and even transform into other animals, the impossible is already possible and so does not threaten their grasp of reality in the same way.) *Moon and Me*, through this shaking of our understanding of the magic trick, reveals an unusual ontological disturbance, an impossible representation hidden within the form. It hides and reveals simultaneously its secrets. We start, from the observer's point of view, with an established relationship with the form and its hidden inertia. However, this hidden 'stop', the "Aesthetic of the impossible" (Leddington, 2016, p. 254) that is bound up in an illusion, offers aa opposition to our knowledge of reality. As Penn and Teller said of magic, "[Y]ou experience magic as real and unreal at the same time. It's a very, very odd form, compelling, uneasy" (Stromberg, 2012) this 'uneasy' sense of a magic trick fails to manifest as uncanny as we understand that it is a trick and it therefore does not efface our ontological or intellectual certainty and animation is, in this sense, the same. However, in Moon and Me when these two techniques come together our reality is effaced, it, without warning, threatens our 'grasp on reality' and our intellectual certainty is brought into question.

Moon and Me with its different mixture of motion styles, causes an oscillation of uncertainty, we are certain of the motion style within the marionette, assuming, as we cannot see the strings, that it is animated through the usual mechanism. However, then the stop-motion puppet appears and it throws uncertainty onto what was once certain. It reveals something terrifying, and as Freud would

suggest, an "excite[ment] in the spectator the impression of automatic, mechanical processes at work behind the ordinary appearance of mental activity" (Freud et al., 2001, p. 226). It confronts us with the terror of our own, underlying detachment from the mental processes that create our own animatedness and their indiscernibility within the physiology of our brain. "the cartoons make clear that even our bodies do not belong to us" (Leslie, 2002, p. 83), I am my body and yet I am not, that is to say, that I know my body in two ways, as external to myself and as internal, as matter and as phenomena. But whilst I can see my body in its material form I cannot see the hidden inner mechanisms that bring me into motion, into being, into 'life'. These remain hidden, but are simultaneously known and unknown, held together in an impossible representation, me as automaton. *Moon and Me*'s process and technique revealing my own mechanism, my own alienation from my physical being, something that I am unable to articulate, "That which signifies without that which is signified" (Cixous, 1976, p. 543), the uncomfortable feelings of cognitive oscillation that have occurred. It brings to surface as Freud puts it, the "automatic, mechanical processes at work behind the ordinary appearance" (Freud et al., 200, p. 226). The once seemingly understood illusion within the animated form suddenly broken, the anxiety of intellectual, psychical uncertainty exposed. Revealed in its full terror in a child's fantasy world. The supposedly comforting bedtime program becomes now, disturbing even horrifying, confronting us with that which should remain hidden, the automaton within.

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List of Contributors

Carolina Avsar recently graduated from Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi with a Master of Arts in English. Her creative thesis, *'My Name is Sara' A Biomythography Exploring the Life of Sakine Cansiz*, uses Gloria Anzaldúa's autohistoria teoría to reconstruct the life of a Kurdish revolutionary icon, Sakine Cansiz. She has spent her life between four different countries and cultures: Colombia, France, the United States, and Turkey. Her goal is to attend a PhD program in English or Hispanic Studies, and focus her research on multicultural and multiethnic female narratives.

Manuela D'Amore is Associate Professor in English Literature at the University of Catania, Italy. She has translated and edited Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* (1741), W.M. Rossetti's *The P.R.B. Journal* (1848-1853) and more recently Anne Thackeray Ritchie's *Beauty and the Beast* (1867). The author of essays on poets, novelists and pamphleteers of the Early modern period, of the eighteenth century and the Victorian Age, she has researched in the fields of gender studies and travel writing. Her *Essays in Defence of the Female Sex: Custom, Education and Authority in Seventeenth-Century England*, co-authored with Michèle Lardy (Sorbonne I), was published by Cambridge Scholars Press in 2012; *The Royal Society and the Discovery of the Two Sicilies: Southern Routes in the Grand Tour* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) was awarded the ANDA (Italian Association of English Literature) Prize in 2018. She is currently researching and writing on British Italian literary narratives.

Tiziana Lentini is a PhD student in Global Studies for an Inclusive and Integrated Society at the Università per Stranieri "Dante Alighieri" of Reggio Calabria, Italy. Her research areas of interest include Sociology of literature and the phenomenon of Big Data. In 2021 she published William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*: Travel Diary and Tale of Colonial Life. In: M. Sette,

ed., *Europe: Critical Thinking in Critical Times*. London: London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research, pp. 98-116. This project was the product of a MA research work carried out in various cultural and educational institutions in Boston in April 2017.

Chloe Millhauser is a Master's student studying European avant-garde artistic practices in the History of Art Department at the University of California, Riverside. She holds a BFA in Art and Design with a concentration in Studio Art from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Chloe's pedagogical interests have led her to a variety of arts outreach positions, facilitating her designing of many arts programs for Riverside county's school districts. She has presented her original research in Riverside, London, and Cleveland, and her presented work at the 46th Annual Cleveland Symposium in October 2020 earned her the conference's "Best Paper" award. Her writings on various 20th century New York galleries are set to appear in the *Art Market Dictionary*, which is forthcoming from De Gruyter in 2021.

Jun Mita, PhD, is Associate Professor at Kitasato University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Kanagawa, Japan. He focuses on literature and art in Belgium from a comparative point of view. His recent publications include: Mita, J. (2020). La Réception du symbolisme en Wallonie et la formation de l'esthétique "nordique". Une analyse de *L'Âme des choses* d'Hector Chainaye. In: N. Bachleitner, ed., *Literary Translation, Reception, and Transfer.* XXI Congress of the ICLA Proceedings, vol. 2, Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 441-453; Mita, J. (2020). Flemish Identity in Translation. Georges Rodenbach and the Ambivalence of the "Mythe Nordique". In: Ł. Barciński, ed., *National Identity in Literary Translation. Studies in Linguistics, Anglophone Literatures and Cultures*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, pp. 171-180; and Mita, J. (2018). *Imagined "North". On Geopoetics of Symbolism in Belgium*. Kyoto: Shoraisha.

Katherine O'Connor has taught animation for almost twenty years at Teesside University and specialises in 2D and stop-motion animation. Currently studying a practice based PhD, her work explores the uncanny in relation to the animated form as well as links between the Uncanny and Foucault's Spaces of Otherness.

Ben Parsons received his PhD from the University of Sheffield in 2007, and is currently Associate Professor in Medieval and Early Modern Literature at the University of Leicester. He has published widely on various aspects of medieval and Renaissance culture, including satire, folklore, education, drama, and crime; his work has appeared in such journals as *Medium Aevum*, *Exemplaria*, and *Modern Philology*, and in the edited collections *Blood Matters* (2018), and *Medieval and Early Modern Murde*r (2018). He is co-author of the critical anthology *Comic Drama in the Low Countries* (2012), and author of the monograph *Punishment and Medieval Education* (2018).

Anna Rivers is a PhD student at the University of Warwick, researching the poetry of Emily Brontë, Christina Rossetti and Mathilde Blind. Her thesis concentrates on how poststructuralist ideas of spectrality and haunting intersect with sound studies, looking at resonance, rhythm and echo as ways of renegotiating the limitations and possibilities of poetic temporalities, imagination, subjectivity and alterity. More broadly her research interests cover poetry and poetics, feminist theory, spectrality, the supernatural, disability studies, monster theory, affect theory, posthumanism, phenomenology, Romantic and Victorian studies and the long nineteenth century.

Rooted in the late eighteenth-century and in the desire to portray the darkest sides of reality, the gothic has taken new and unexpected shapes, which have had a profound influence on Western culture. The aim of this volume is to show that it is possible to go beyond the great classics and find traces of this restless genre in the most diverse historical periods and forms of expression.

Engaging the reader in a fascinating interdisciplinary path, the essays contained in *The Uncanny and the Afterlife of the Gothic* also re-discuss the lasting impact of Freud's seminal *Das Unheimliche* (1919) on literature, the arts and the media.