The mythology of the uncanny

as theory and practice in Australian contemporary art

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I, Jacqueline Patricia Cheney, hereby acknowledge that this dissertation is my own work and that all sources used have been acknowledged accordingly.

Signed

Dated

Jacqueline Patricia Cheney

21.11.12
I remain particularly grateful and indebted to my supervisor, Sasha Grishin, who set me on this course many years ago when he suggested Sally Smart's artwork as a possible monograph for my Master's sub-thesis. Although that project ignited a curiosity for delving into the uncanny, further research and this dissertation would not have been attempted without Sasha's endorsement. For his boundless insights, forbearance and honest appraisal, his enthusiasm, frankness and wisdom, I cannot thank him enough. His counsel will be remembered with great affection and admiration.

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Especially for the uninitiated, the uncanny seems a strange subject for someone to study. It has a certain unorthodoxy and generally strikes people as a rather unfathomable and unfriendly topic; odd that it even is a topic! So, to all my family, friends and colleagues who good-heartedly — courageously — begged the question, 'what on earth is the uncanny?' and did not scarper when I uttered the likes of Freud and Heidegger, I sincerely thank you.

As always, I owe a depth of gratitude to my parents who continue to support my many and varied meanderings, and help pick me up after the inevitable falls along the way.

Special thanks belong to the most important people in my life, stalwarts of patience and encouragement, vigilant supporters par excellence: my husband, Norman Peters, and daughter, Alexandra Peters, of whom 'uncanny' and 'the uncanny' have taken on decidedly different meanings. To me, they are, in these words to follow, as in life, my reflections and inspirations — my uncanniest doubles. This is because of them — this is for them.
Abstract

A sensation raw and primal, unwelcome yet not wholly alien but peculiarly familiar, neither a penetrating roar nor shriek from the depths but a more eerily pervasive murmuring, without being discredited as irrational but instead being elevated within academia – the mythology of the uncanny persists.

This inquiry focusses on the phenomenon of the uncanny and its exemplification in the visual arts. Whilst extant literature relates uncanniness to the broader field of aesthetics, especially enlarged upon in literature, film-studies and architecture, it is a comparatively neglected topic in the context of visual arts. It is occasionally touched upon in texts concerning an artist's work, but usually very synoptically. Yet much art aligns to readings of uncanniness. For example, Sally Smart's evocatively uncanny work attracts descriptive smatterings about it without adequate enunciation against a critical theoretical framework.

Such a framework, newly developed here, takes into account Sigmund Freud's pivotal essay of 1919 whilst providing new interpretations of it and its subsequent plethoric discourse. Furthermore, this framework incorporates entirely different viewpoints, including Existentialist versions of uncanniness centred upon Martin Heidegger's and Jean-Paul Sartre's theories. Whilst being an evolution of the extensive discourse, my framework assimilates otherwise disparate notions of the uncanny effect and its sensations, then applies it contemporaneously.

In writing from the secularised worlds of Freudian psychoanalysis and Existentialism, religion, spirituality and mysticism are areas not intentionally ignored nor sidelined as unworthy of consideration. Nevertheless the scope of this dissertation required curtailing thereby making the exclusion of the non-secular a necessity. Psychophysical, neural and cognitive characteristics of viewers' sensory perception of artwork (in relation to evoking uncanniness) are other exclusions, and whilst I touch on various socio-political aspects of the uncanny, it likewise requires greater regard than what is allowed for herein.

This is essentially an interpretative analysis which applies a more broadly developed framework to six Australian artists whose work is persuasively uncanny: Ron Mueck, Patricia Piccinini, Sally Smart, Lawrence Daws, Pat Brassington and Bill Henson. These case-studies are structured into three chapters: the first concentrates on three-dimensional, figurative sculpture (Mueck and Piccinini); the next section looks at siting the uncanny in two-dimensional landscapes, specifically the locale of Australia, a land where the uncanny is said to loom large (Smart and Daws); whilst the final section focuses on uncanny 'filmic' surfaces or photo-based media (Brassington and Henson). This form of analysis is founded on either the artist's self-identification with the topic and/or is based on consistent commentary about their artwork eliciting uncanniness, except Henson, who receives little discussion in relation to uncanniness, but, as demonstrated, epitomises it nonetheless.

Examining their art against a contemporary theoretical framework thus addresses a lacuna of critical, academic insight into the uncanniness of visual art, before drawing conclusions about some conceptual, technical and formal differences and similarities.
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List of abbreviations

ACCA  Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
AGNSW  Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
AGSA  Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
AGWA  Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
ANU  Australian National University, Canberra
MoMA  Museum of Modern Art, New York
NGA  National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
NGV  National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
NLA  National Library of Australia, Canberra
NPG  National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
OED  Oxford English Dictionary
PICA  Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth
QAG  Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
RO9  Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Notations on artwork descriptions:

Measurements of artwork: except where otherwise noted, the measurements quoted are in centimetres, height before width (for two-dimensional pictures) or height before width before depth (for three-dimensional sculpture). Where measurement is not provided, variable size is assumed.

Collection: except where otherwise noted, artworks are held in private collection.

Copyright: all images presented herein are the copyright of the artist or their representative galleries.

Naming and dating of artwork versus a series of artworks:

• The names of individual items of art will be followed by their date, for example, Femmage frieze (1999);
• The name of series of artworks will not be specified by a date, for example, Family tree house.

This will distinguish an item from a series sharing the same name. For example, Sally Smart’s Femmage frieze (1999) is an item of artwork, and Femmage frieze refers to a series (or body of work).
Introduction

I shall have to speak of things of which I cannot speak.

SAMUEL BECKETT, THE UNNAMABLE

External stimuli, even those barely noticeable such as the faintest scent, cause various sensations including sense-reception which inconspicuously trigger strange reminders of something unfathomable yet dissonantly familiar, unnameable — something 'uncanny.' Rather than such sensations remaining 'unknowable' or considered too trivial, there have been many successive scholarly efforts to understand this phenomenon, predominantly centring around an essay of Sigmund Freud's, originally published in 1919, titled "Das 'unheimliche'" ("The 'uncanny'"). There remains an aura about 'the uncanny,' an enigmatic topic which has attracted great academic insight, resulting in a deluge of literature on this recalcitrant, elusive concept. So, why does it deserve more consideration and why is it still a relevant, omnipresent subject today? 'The uncanny' is a relatively under-researched topic in the context of visual arts, especially Australian art — a lacuna I address here. Although uncanniness is an ostensibly important, continually resurgent phenomenon which appears to thrive in times of turbulence or invasive threat (for example, Nicholas Royle's authoritative book, The uncanny of 2003, materialised following the 9/11 terrorist events; its uncanniness Royle contemplates in his introduction), there remain problems with a definition.

Vexingly defying description, 'the uncanny' is elusive and gets confounded or entangled in language, making it difficult to conclusively define. Metaphorically, if it were material, it could be Velcro which seems to stick to everything, or Teflon which slips and glides but never sticks. Paradoxically, 'uncanny' appears to be both: it both attaches and slips

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3 Related to concepts including de-familiarisation, alienation and commodity fetishism, many scholars have written about the sensation of uncanniness including Jacques Derrida, Martin Heidegger, Ernst Jentsch, Rosalind Krauss, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan and Jean-Paul Sartre; and more recently, Adam Bresnick, David Ellison, Scott McQuire, Nicholas Royle and Anthony Vidler, including related fictional literature such as Sarah Eyre and Rah Page (eds), The new uncanny: Tales of unease, Manchester: Comma Press, 2009, which is billed as an anthology of 'fresh fictional interpretations of what the uncanny might mean in the 21st century' by fourteen contemporary authors, including A.S. Byatt’s "Doll's eyes" and Royle’s "The dummy."
through; it is a constant yet persistent unobtainable. Perhaps the better metaphor is Velcro, since its tiny hooks are made of Teflon. This calls into question that if ‘uncanny’ is so difficult to define, does it exist at all? Anecdotally, uncanny chills are non-existent for some, but for others, in the polyester resins of contemporary lifelike figurative sculpture, the frisson of uncanniness is omnipresent.

Whereas the case-studies employed in part two of this thesis inform the manifestation and definition of uncanniness, broadly speaking, Western culture has developed two secular lines of thought concerning the uncanny. Whilst its theoretical history revolves around Freud’s “Das ‘unheimliche’” and studies on it commonly follow ideas from Freudian psychoanalysis, an alternative and opposing view of the Freudian conscious/unconscious dualism makes its case in Existentialism. Together, Freudian and Existentialist theories on the uncanny formulate perspectives which can be regarded as belonging to secular demonology. Martin Heidegger’s principle that humans are by nature linguistic creatures is significant. Fundamentally, it is a word – ‘uncanny’ – that is central to this study. What does ‘uncanny’ actually mean and how might it be visually represented. The German ‘unheimlich’ comes to English through Freud and Heidegger not only in its directly translatable form, ‘unhomely’ (unheimisch), but also as ‘uncanny.’

Linguistics exposes such words as loaded with meaning yet malleable and changeable: with each interpretation and translation adding to semiotic drift, the obliqueness of ‘uncanny’ intensifies its dynamism of meaning. Accordingly, a focal point in the discourse concerning the uncanny revolves around its very ambiguity, contributing to its ever-increasing enigma, as if caught up in an encyclopaedic vortex wherein definition and explanation are manipulated and contorted, and where trying to obtain universal endorsement for an all-encompassing definition is problematic and somewhat meaningless as there appears to be infinite ways to think about uncanniness, given the sensation is an unfathomable, seemingly inexplicable personal experience. ‘Seemingly’ is stressed here because dictionaries commonly define ‘uncanny’ as

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6 Hereon ‘the uncanny’ will be simply written as the uncanny (without emphasis or quotation marks), except when emphasising it with single quotations (as in ‘uncanny’) for the purpose of linguistic analysis on the word ‘uncanny.’
'seemingly supernatural; mysterious', or 'seeming to have a supernatural character or origin; eerie, mysterious; being beyond what is normal or expected; suggesting superhuman or supernatural powers <an uncanny sense of direction>'. The OED's etymological record of 'uncanny' traces back to its 1596 (now obsolete) meaning: 'mischievous, malicious'; along with another archaic usage: 'unreliable, [and] not to be trusted', originating in 1639. These obsolete usages exemplify the changing nature of its meaning, showing it as neither ahistorical nor acontextual. Theorists on the uncanny find dictionary definitions inadequate, driving them to other sources, whilst allowing various connotations of 'uncanny' to be manipulated for different means, constructing artifacts to accommodate subtle deviations of meaning.

The uncanny might be described as being split-second mental aberrations, something interrupting lucid thought, disrupting the mood of present moment and delivering a strangely vague yet familiar trace of atrophied memory which ought not to have been regurgitated by the unconscious. Like a flash dream, something glimmers from the depths, a 'familiar-unfamiliar' shard of memory. Freud treats the subject as a sensation derived from involuntary repetition—a sudden psychic jolt which occurs from an unexpected recollection of something sensed as familiar-unfamiliar, something from repressed memory. This flashback or psychical aberration might be likened to random computer malfunctions, errors which result in corrupt memory fetches. Electrical wiring sparks, misfiring, errant edits in moving pictures and subliminal inserts into television advertisements offer similar

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8 My added emphasis; Collins concise dictionary plus, Patrick Hanks et al. (eds) London; Glasgow: Collins, 1989.
9 The OED entry reads: "1. Mischievous, malicious...; 2. Careless, incautious... (giddy, careless, imprudent)...; 13. Unreliable, not to be trusted...; 4. Of persons: Not quite safe to trust to, or have dealings with, as being associated with supernatural arts or powers... ("gipsies were a queer uncanny folk")....; b. Paraking of a supernatural character; mysterious, weird, uncomfortably strange or unfamiliar... ("A slate quarry under the cliff - a scene of uncanny grandeur")....; 5. Unpleasantly severe or hard...("I rode whip and spur to fetch the Chevalier... and an uncanny coup I gat for my pains")....; 6. Dangerous, unsafe... ("He said it was uncanny, and would certainly have felt it very uncomfortable, not to welcome the new year in the midst of his family and a few old friends")....("Times was raderly uncanny than. An' laal better now"); see OED, "uncanny", 2nd edn, 1989, OED online, http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50263029, accessed 18/6/09.
10 Considering Freud's exercise of looking into the etymology of 'unheimlich', Maria Tatar, "The houses of fiction: Toward a definition of the uncanny", Comparative Literature, vol.33, no.2 (Spring 1981), pp.167-82, p.169, finds 'the German word for secret (Geheimnis) derives from the word (Heim) and originally designated that which belongs to the house'. Attempting to define the uncanny, Tatar turns to fiction such as Charles Dickens's Oliver Twist and Bleak House, noting, pp.181-2, 'The finest writers and critics of supernatural fiction have consistently favored the chilling uncertainty of terror over the grisly reality of horror', and, 'Whether we are dealing with the marvelous legend, the fantastic romance, or the strange novel, it is knowledge [thereby remedying uncertainty] that transforms the sinister habitation of supernatural powers into the secure haven of a home'. She points out, p.171, the prefix 'un' of uncanny and unheimlich 'figure as a token of repression'.
analogies, yet differ because they are often intentionally or consciously inserted. Such analogies to the feeling of uncanniness do not explain the phenomenon as it occurs in 'nature,' especially given it is supposedly an involuntary, unconscious derivative.

Uncanniness can be differentiated as either being an innately felt phenomenon (an essential, intrinsic real-life event, which is private); or, a manufactured aesthetic (a product of cerebral intention to create an aesthetically-induced uncanny for a public audience). Freud differentiates between something uncanny which can be spontaneously and naturally conceived to that which is a contrived experience, one provided premeditatedly by an aesthetician.\textsuperscript{11} Two such distinguishable modalities of uncanniness ('private' and 'public') thus signal a distinction between the uncanny felt by an individual to that which circulates within broad social fields. These 'uncannies' are subject to similar perceptions, they may be interpreted as being alike, but the signifier (or representamen) is either derived internally (experienced in 'real-life' as private or unique) or produced externally (as publicly-shared depictions or fictions).\textsuperscript{12} Whereas the unfathomable, eerie private uncanny delights in upsetting the emotion, spinning heads, churning stomachs, shaking and unnerving, privately uncanny events are not easily explained, as Freud concurs.\textsuperscript{13} Freud also conjectures, 'The [public] uncanny as it is depicted in literature, in stories and imaginative productions... is a much more fertile province than the uncanny in real life, for it contains the whole of the latter and something more besides, something that cannot be found in real life'.\textsuperscript{14} Whether the literary/public uncanny actually contains the 'whole of the latter' is debatable; how Freud would determine this quantitatively or qualitatively is inconceivable. Certainly he does not provide scientific explanation to his thesis yet goes on to say, 'in the first place a great deal that is not uncanny in fiction would be so if it happened in real life; and in the second place that there are many more means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than

\textsuperscript{11} Freud, op. cit., p.247, says, 'we should differentiate between the uncanny that we actually experience and the uncanny that we merely picture or read about'. Susannah Radstone, "Reconceiving binaries: The limits of memory", History Workshop Journal, no.59 (Spring 2005), pp.134-50, p.136, uses similar terminology to distinguish individual memory to that of public or collective memory. Arguably, Freud's differentiation pertains to André Breton's division of two epochs of Surrealism: a 'purely intuitive' epoch and a 'reasoning' epoch, the former which is 'characterised by the belief... in the omnipotence of thought, considered capable of freeing itself by means of its own resources', as opposed to conscious aestheticism; see André Breton, \textit{What is surrealism?: Selected writings of André Breton}, Franklin Rosemont (ed.), London: Pluto Press, 1978, p.116.

\textsuperscript{12} Following Freud's lead, Steven Schneider, "Uncanny realism and the decline of the modern horror film", Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genres, vol.3, no.3-4 (Return of the uncanny, 1997), pp.417-28, p.421, similarly divides the uncanny into 'real life' and 'work of fiction'.

\textsuperscript{13} Freud, op. cit., p.218 ff. reflects on the difficulties of describing the uncanny and resorts to the literary uncanny to help him in reference to the real life uncanny.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p.249.
there are in real life15. Significantly, the two arenas of the literary/fictional/public uncanny and the private/real uncanny are separate domains. Notwithstanding the suitability of the private uncanny and individuals' interpretations of their 'own uncanny' in psychology, the realm of the public uncanny is a more fertile territory for aestheticians, literary critics, art historians and the like.

The distinction draws out similarities to the division between the sublime and the beautiful, where the sublime is delineated as being eternal, immortal and universal, whereas beauty is ephemeral, mortal and socially bound. Sean Cubitt explains the sublime as enduring outside history, and having a permanence which 'is a presence that overwhims the everyday contingencies of history'16 - it is metaphysical and ahistorical whereas beauty is of the temporal world. Similarly, applying Jacques Derrida's terms, the uncanny withholds a 'non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present':17 it is neither here nor there, but flickers on the threshold of time, with no discernible beginning or end. Sublimity is noted as hailing us as unique and therefore elitist, whilst beauty defines us as egalitarian. The differential thus becomes an ethical issue: beauty as democratic; sublimity as elitist. Cubitt notes, 'Beauty confronts ugliness: sickness, squalor, brutality, things that can be changed. The sublime stares into the unchanging maw of evil'.18 Relating the uncanny symbolism of the crocodile of Freud's text as representing the devil and the swamp as hell, Rod Giblett positions the uncanny within the realms of the secular sublime: as 'a secular theology in which the sublime stands in for God in a culture for which God is dead', with the uncanny

15 Ibid; Freud's italics. Freud, p.251, also claims 'fiction presents more opportunities for creating uncanny feelings than are possible in real life', which is also not presented as a scientifically tested thesis but appears more as intuitued 'gut feeling', and whilst there may be more or less manufactured opportunities, perhaps they are not better or more poignant events.

16 Sean Cubitt, *The cinema effect*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004, p.10. Cubitt, citing post-Kantian theory, explains the difference between the sublime and beauty, saying, pp.9-10, 'Beauty is our highest expression of what it is to be mortal...The sublime... speaks of life unbounded by the horizon of death, perhaps without the stain of birth: the timeless time of the universal'. The comparison of beauty and the sublime is discussed in Edmund Burke's *Philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*, originally published in 1757. Burke states, 'terror is... the ruling principle of the sublime', and considers the sublime to effect violent emotional responses, writing, 'The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature... is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other... Hence arises the great power of the sublime'; see Edmund Burke, *A philosophical enquiry into the sublime and beautiful*, James T. Boulton (ed.), 2nd edn. London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2008, p.58 and p.57 respectively.

17 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The state of the debt, the work of mourning, and the new international*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, New York: Routledge, 1994, p.xix, 334. In this text Derrida examines the statement 'I would like to learn to live finally' - a living which must be done between life and death, '[n]either in life nor in death alone' (p. xviii). He thereby reads the statement from the perspective of the ghost, which is neither the ghost of the dead but also the 'not present' or 'no longer there'. He talks of this *Other* as being placed within ambiguous time zones, caught in the in-between, which has parallels with the uncanny's snare betwixt the familiar-unfamiliar, the homely yet the strange.

18 Cubitt, op. cit., p.10.
which 'operates as a kind of secular demonology'.

Whereas beauty is empathetic and communicative, the sublime is 'the voice of the incommunicable, the supernatural, the secret knowledge of the anonymous elect'. Consequently, the uncanny, as functioning within the secular sublime, is unspeakable. On the contrary, placing the uncanny within the realm of the sublime is problematic, with Eric Kligerman arguing the uncanny and the Kantian sublime are distinguishable and operate differently. The spectator/participant (or subject) of Immanuel Kant's sublime teeters on the precipice of boundlessness (of infinite voids and unbounded vastness), anchoring themselves to objects which act as self-substitutions, thereby refocusing the subject's daily existence on things depu dispitised as 'fantasies of identity.' Rivalling the subject's 'fantasy of identity' as functioning for dominion over the boundless sublime, the uncanny can be seen as an event of 'spectatorial disruption' where loss of sight and disorientation occurs. Whereas the sublime acts to orientate and ground the subject, the uncanny disorientates and confuses the subject's placement. The first is a mechanism of emplacement whilst the second is a momentary event rupturing such orientation. Similarly, in his treatise on the 'architectural uncanny,' Anthony Vidler asserts the uncanny as 'intimately bound up with, but strangely different from the grander and apparently more serious "sublime"'. Notwithstanding these differing perspectives, the public uncanny, somewhat paralleling beauty in being common, communicative and democratic, makes it possible to speak of the uncanny, to denounce or applaud its value and efficacy. On the other hand, the private uncanny is elusive, exclusive and elite simply because it is incommunicable, just as it is also related to the supernatural and secretive. This dissertation necessarily focuses on the public, tangible uncanny, specifically as a product of aesthetics, particularly the visual arts.

The uncanny presents itself at the crossroads of binary opposites, where opposites not only attract but collide to form a hybrid, exemplifying Kantian antinomy: where antinomical contradictions which occur between opposing conclusions or terms seem equally logical,

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20 Cubitt, op. cit., p.10, continues to say, '...even though that elect is made up of every audience member who has ever succumbed to the lure of totality in the late Eisenstein or his heirs'.

21 Eric Kligerman, Sites of the uncanny: Paul Celan, specularity and the visual arts, Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007, pp.31-42, discusses Kant's notions of the sublime in relation to the uncanny and events surrounding the Holocaust. Ibid. p.33, looks to where historical trauma (particularly Holocaustic) and the uncanny intersect.

22 Anthony Vidler, "The architecture of the uncanny: The unhomely houses of the romantic sublime", Assemblage, no.3 (July 1987), pp.6-29, p.10.
reasonable, or necessary. Demonstrating their collaborative interdependency, Freud calls into question the ostensibly opposite terms, *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, consequently locating the uncanny at the crossroads or collision point of these polarities; canny-uncanny as familiar-unfamiliar, homely-unhomely, knowable-unknowable. Paradoxical occurrences located at such crossroads include that which is neither dark nor light but exist as shadows, or locations neither outside nor inside but at thresholds or ambiguous and indefinite space/time constructs, such as Derrida's 'spectral moment' which ceases to belong to time: 'Furtive and untimely,' he writes, 'the apparition of the spectre does not belong to... time, it does not give time...'\(^{23}\) Can it be that in such in-between 'places' and 'times,' the friction of uncanniness may be located?

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**An appeal for mythologising an Australian uncanny**

A commonly nominated site of uncanniness is Australia, a colonised country built upon the oldest continent among one of the oldest surviving indigenous cultures, a place mythologised as alien and out-of-time. Accordingly, the mythology of the uncanny has been crucial to the tapestry of Australian multiculturalism, important from the outset of colonisation and remaining a construct which helps immigrants deal with the unfamiliar, with alienation. By lending itself to the (un)conquerable unknown, it allows strangers in unhomely foreign lands to romanticize 'belonging' — so, if one feels a misfit in a strange place, the uncanny will assure one of this reality, giving credence to one's thoughts whilst allowing one to reminisce about one's home or 'mother country.' That is, the unhomely is redolent of the homely by the very absence of the homely or familiar. The unfamiliar becomes familiar through time and repetition, so that one is consciously or unconsciously aware of the strange eventually becoming known and possibly even understood. As outlined in chapter five, the uncanny became a valuable asset to colonisation, with the first voyagers and explorers taking various depictions (drawings, paintings, artefacts and stories) back to Britain where they were used to galvanise national pride in the ever-growing British Empire. The strangeness of Australia was represented as exotic and romantic, and many were attracted to its mysteries. Whereas the uncanny (defined in this fashion) would be an

anathema to Aboriginals, whose relationship with country is felt so deeply and independently of any supposed or described uncanniness of land, the colonisation and urbanisation of Australia by non-Aboriginals has, perversely, introduced the uncanny to them too, such that the mythology of an Australian uncanny binds Australians together, as myths are want to do. Notionally, the uncanny accomplishes its universality because of its malleable, obscure and oblique properties.

Ongoing interests and oversights

Attested by recent popular culture, an ongoing interest of over a century in the unconscious is discernible, just as delving into aspects of the dualistic conscious-unconscious and unnerving psychical flashes, to which the uncanny belongs, continues to occupy academia and aesthetics. Nevertheless, compared to topics such as the sublime, it appears that art history as a discipline has neglected this already somewhat marginalised topic. Whilst Freud’s essay frames the discussion concerning the uncanniness evoked in the artwork of Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst, Hans Bellmer and Edward Hopper, for example, it is a theme discussed secondarily and infrequently, notionally because of the many competing concepts within the overarching categories of Surrealism (or Modern Gothic for Hopper). Whilst the uncanny is neither central nor predominant when these

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24 Such as the film Inception (2010), directed by Christopher Nolan, released by Warner Bros. Its main theme concerns the extraction of subconscious thought and the artificial ‘inception’ or insemination of new ideas into the same.

25 In the opening paragraphs of his essay, Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.219, says as much: ‘As good as nothing is to be found upon this subject in comprehensive treatises on aesthetics, which in general prefer to concern themselves with what is beautiful, attractive and sublime...’ Contemporary art historians, such as John Welchman, similarly observe, 'in the art world there have been few sustained discussions on the uncanny'; see John C. Welchman, "On the uncanny in visual culture", in Mike Kelley, The uncanny, exhib. catalogue, Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004, pp.39-56, p.42. Whilst the plastic arts has suffered neglect vis-à-vis being examined in frameworks on the uncanny, literature has fared much better by comparison. Edgar Allan Poe was an early master of the uncanny, with Mikhail Bulgakov, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Joyce, Franz Kafka and Yevgeny Zamyatin contributing similarly eerie stories; some of whom will be discussed here, passim.

26 The artwork of Edward Hopper and Edwin Dickinson illustrate how the uncanny was adopted as an important instrument in the gothic genre, for example: Hopper’s House by the railroad, 1925, oil on canvas, 61 x 73.7cm, MoMA; and Dickinson’s Villa la moutte, 1938, oil on canvas, 60 x 73cm, MoMA. For Hopper, see Margaret Iversen, "In the blind field: Hopper and the uncanny", Art History, vol.21, no.3 (September 1998), pp.409-29. For Dickinson, see John L. Ward, Edwin Dickinson: A critical history of his paintings. Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, London: Associated Univ. Presses, 2003, pp.33-4. For de Chirico, see Jean Clair, "Metafisica et unheimlichkeit", in Les réalismes: 1919-39, exhib. catalogue, Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1980, pp.28-41, and ibid., passim, for Surrealist evocations of the uncanny, generally. Another precinct of the uncanny of Surrealism is Anthony Vidler, “Fantasy, the uncanny and surrealist theories of architecture”, Papers of Surrealism, no.1 (Winter 2003), pp.1-12. For de Chirico and Ernst, see Hal Foster, "Convulsive identity", October, vol.57 (Summer 1991), pp.18-54. Foster reads theirs and Giacometti’s work as depicting primal fantasies and ‘riddles of origins’: ‘the fantasy of seduction the origin of sexuality, in the primal scene the origin... [and] the fantasy of castration the origin of sexual difference... [and] that of intrauterine existence... as a salve to the other traumatic fantasies;’ also Hal Foster, Compulsive beauty, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993, passim. For the uncanny in the work of Pablo Picasso, see David Lomas, The haunted self: Surrealism, psychoanalysis, subjectivity, New Haven; London: Yale UP, 2000, pp.95-142.
artists are generally discussed, this does not diminish their uncanniness. Looking to Australian art, exemplars of the uncanny appear even less apparent, with few contemporary artists who claim the uncanny as central to their practice. Nonetheless, Australia has a wealth of uncanny art that has not attracted adequate scholarly interest, including the contemporary art of Rick Amor, Hany Armanious, Jane Burton, Julie Dowling, Anne Ferran, Louise Hearman, Sam Jinks, David Keeling, Joanna Lamb, Wade Marynowsky, Christopher McVinish, Tracey Moffatt, TV Moore, Julie Rrap, Jeffrey Smart, David Wadelton, Anne Wallace, and others.27

The question of why comparatively little extended discourse about uncanny artwork has transpired might be partly answered considering Freudian discourse seemingly hijacked the subject, although others took it up, like Heidegger, whose insights appear largely overlooked, an oversight not specific to Australian art theory. Albeit, visual arts’ non-linguistic abilities to connect and provide insights should, theoretically, provide answers where language has failed, often seeking knowledge outside the ordinary or ‘beyond the bounds’ and perceivably getting close to realising the unknown, ineffable and untouchable, it ultimately remains impotent to conclusively achieving such goals. In this dissertation the question is raised as to whether the uncanny in art — as elsewhere — represents a mythology which is subject to continual adjustment, similar to the sort of ongoing myth-metamorphosis Claude Lévi-Strauss terms mytheme, where an essential element or kernel remains intact.28 Importantly, notions of uncanniness as representing some sort of anachronistic spiritual remainder which is no longer understood but has adjusted according

27 Interestingly, Lawrence Daws chose Anne Wallace for his “Artist’s choice” selection for QAG, 2009, saying her work is of ‘thoughts we have never given tongue to, or images not quite fleshed out, suddenly swim into focus with electrifying clarity. Very Proustian. Very time remembered; see QAG, Artist’s choice, Lawrence Daws, exhib. catalogue, Brisbane: QAG, 2009, np. Anne Marsh, The darkroom: Photography and the theatre of desire, Melbourne: Macmillan, 2003, discusses the work of Moffat, Brassington et al. Other artists invoking the uncanny include, for example, David Haines and Joyce Hinterding, as in House II: The great artesian basin Pennsylvania, 2009, looped DVD projection with Dolby 5.1 sound, 13 mins, Breenspace, Sydney, which presents a mesmerising video-loop of a Gothic-style house flooding or ‘spewing’ water from its edifice — the deluge forming rapids towards the viewpoint and transfixing the gaze. Juliana Engberg, The dwelling, exhib. catalogue, Melbourne: ACCA, 2009, np, describes it as ‘unheimlich: unfriendly and haunted’, as compulsively and convulsively purging unwanted memory. Whereas this work illustrates the trope of Hitchcockian uncanniness, ocular illusionism called Pepper’s ghost, a ghosting technique, plays centre-stage in David Lawry and Jaki Middleton’s unnerving installations such as The world’s more interesting with you in it, 2009, sculptural installation with video, (video, 55 seconds, 5mb). Invented by Henry Dircks in 1858 as a means of making ghosts appear onstage in theatre, Pepper’s ghost employs angled mirrors, screens and lighting to project a ghostly image into another space; see James A. Secord, “Quick and magical shaper of science”, Science, vol.297, no.5587 (6 September 2002), pp.1648-49, p.1648. Such devices were used in (Victorian era) Spiritualism; see Peter Lamont, “Spiritualism and a mid-Victorian crisis of evidence”, The Historical Journal, vol.47, no.4 (December 2004), pp.897-920.

to time, is a speculative notion outside the scope of this analysis, which looks not to supernatural, spiritual or religious uncanny, but focuses on its prominence in Western secular thought whilst enlisting an Eastern approach.

**An approach towards greater understanding**

Notwithstanding the unfeasibility of effectively deconstructing 'uncanny,' it is possible to discuss the historicity of 'the uncanny,' as well as the allusion it creates by glancing at its periphery and to that which it is not. This approach can be likened to the wisdom set out by seventeenth-century samurai, Miyamoto Musashi, in *A book of five rings,* particularly, the "Book of the void." Musashi commends a way of determining the 'truth':

> What is called the spirit of the void is where there is nothing... By knowing things that exist, you can know that which does not exist. That is the void. People in this world look at things mistakenly, and think that what they do not understand must be the void. This is not the true void. It is bewilderment...

> To attain the Way of strategy as a warrior you must study fully other martial arts and not deviate even a little from the Way of the warrior. With your spirit settled, accumulate practice day by day, and hour by hour. Polish the twofold spirit heart and mind, and sharpen the twofold gaze perception and sight. When your spirit is not in the least clouded, when the clouds of bewilderment clear away, there is the true void.

... [by] taking the void as the Way, you will see the Way as void.29

In order to come to a closer comprehension of the uncanny, it is important to study its shapes and forms, of that which can be 'seen.' Theoretically, the void should then appear, revealing more about the subject Royle portends is 'destined to elude mastery'.30 Jiddu Krishnamurti's resolute statement, 'truth is a pathless land'31 is apt here, as is Heidegger's approach against meeting a problem head-on: 'What is decisive', he penned, 'is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way'.32

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30 Of Freud's "Das 'unheimlich'", Royle, op. cit., pp.15-16, says it 'demonstrates, with unswerving energy and at moments comical lucidity, that the uncanny is destined to elude mastery; it is what cannot be pinned down or controlled'.

31 In his "Dissolution speech", spiritual philosopher, Jiddu Krishnamurti, in *J. Krishnamurti online*, www.jkrishnamurti.org/about-krishnamurti/dissolution-speech.php, accessed 26/7/09, states, 'I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect... Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organized; nor should any organization be formed to lead or to coerce people along any particular path. If you first understand that, then you will see how impossible it is to organize a belief. A belief is purely an individual matter, and you cannot and must not organize it. If you do, it becomes dead, crystallized; it becomes a creed, a sect, a religion, to be imposed on others'.

32 Martin Heidegger, *Being and time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, London: SCM Press, 1962, p.195, continues: 'This circle of understanding is an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move; it is the expression of the existential fore-structure of Dasein itself. It is not to be reduced to the level of a vicious circle, or even a circle which is
The approach I have taken looks at different facets of the uncanny, with the main focus attributed to Freud's pivotal essay. Surrounding Freud, other scholars and influences are considered including the early nineteenth-century fiction of E.T.A. Hoffmann, the 1906 paper about the uncanny delivered by the psychiatrist, Ernst Jentsch, and, numerous key followers and critics of Freud. Then alternative, significant viewpoints to the Freudian perspective are analysed, particularly those of Heidegger and Sartre. For instance, Heidegger substantially develops the theory, introducing notions of travelling from unheimlichkeit into heimlichkeit as a means of discovering one's truest being, of roots seeded deep within. Building upon this rich, complex discourse, an evolutionary framework is developed which both aligns and differentiates the two broad schools of thought. Having reviewed and provided fresh interpretations, and having amalgamated the Freudian and Heideggerian canons in part one (over three chapters), whilst calling upon more contemporary accounts, this newly formulated framework is subsequently applied and developed in case-studies of part two, thereby demonstrating how uncanniness may be revitalized and thought of in broader terms whilst gaining new insights into defining and understanding this elusive concept.

In the part two case-studies, I apply the uncanny to contemporary visual art, focusing on six contemporary Australian artists (two in each of three chapters). In chapter four, I use the framework to interpret three-dimensional verist sculpture, drawing out the concepts and formal properties which engender the artwork of Ron Mueck and Patricia Piccinini to the uncanny. Chapter five does likewise, turning to two-dimensional artwork, particularly the artwork of Sally Smart and Lawrence Daws, whilst bringing into account peculiarly Australian aspects and introducing the Jungian uncanny. Chapter six focuses on the 'filmic' qualities of Pat Brassington's and Bill Henson's photo-based artwork in evoking uncanniness. For each case-study, I draw on various affiliated (through artistic influence or evocation) literature and film, including Patrick White and Andrei Tarkovsky, respectively, as a means of explaining and drawing-out uncanniness. In turn, the case-studies serve to

merely tolerated. In the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing'.

With respect, my selection of artists and artwork is neither intentionally prescriptive nor exhaustive. Neither do I consider the uncanniness of other forms such as audio visual, performative or collaborative art, as does, for example, Charles Green, The third hand: Collaboration in art from conceptualism to postmodernism, Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001, pp.179-88, who discusses the collaborative performances of Marina Abramovic and Ulay, as artists who enact the roles of doppelgänger and 'escape as individual “artists” from their personal bodies into the uncanny but mobile realm of phantoms' (p.188).
amplify and develop the framework.

Whilst this is largely an interpretative analysis, there has been direct engagement with some of the artists, and the subjects of these case-studies were determined based on observed criteria. Firstly, is there evidence the artist intentionally worked on evoking the uncanny. Secondly, does the uncanny form a central theme running throughout their work, and thirdly, in the discourse and criticism of their artwork, is the uncanny frequently mentioned. Importantly, each case-study brings different aspects or devices into play, including the conceptual framework the artists use, artistic approaches and formal techniques – all specific to developing a sense of uncanniness in their work. Although my interpretative analysis cannot possibly guarantee conclusiveness of subject, it offers further insight, summarising important conceptual and formal aspects of art which contributes to the discourse. It also demonstrates how this well-worn topic remains ripe for scrutiny and invigoration. Today, modern technologies are exploited in evoking uncanniness, a phenomenon I treat as being diachronic and for which I develop a contemporary framework involving a resuscitation of Freud and Heidegger and it being readdressed in more flexible, universal and accessible ways.

34 As such, I invite the reader to accept the sometimes performative nature of my interpretation, which belongs to the imaginative tradition of art historical writing, and in describing the associations conjured by the artwork, I write from the perspective of the contemporaneous viewer, whilst paying heed to chronological artistic influence and development; as is discussed in Paul Barolsky, "Art history as fiction", *Artibus et Historiae*, vol.17, no.34 (1996), pp.9-17; also, Matthew Rampley, "The poetics of the image: Art history and the rhetoric of interpretation", *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunswissenschaft*, vol.35 (2008), pp.7-30.
Part one
Chapter one
The Freudian uncanny

There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy

FREUD'S FAVOURITE SHAKESPEAREAN QUOTE

Academic discourse concerning the uncanny centres on Freud’s essay, with its title, “The 'uncanny'”, intensifying the aura of the subject by substantiating ‘the’ before ‘uncanny,’ thus transforming ‘uncanny’ into a sub-noun derivative of its more timid, adjectival self. By placing quotation marks around ‘uncanny,’ Freud dramatizes what many critics argue as his attempt to commandeer and normalize the concept as belonging within Freudian psychoanalytical constructs, thereby engendering an early twentieth-century, European bourgeois male perspective. Nonetheless, subsequent commentary repeatedly treats it as ‘the uncanny’, incrementally amassing its potency as a subject in its own right.2

The Freudian uncanny event marks a return of the repressed: a recurrence of something harking back to formative development — to childhood memories.3 In our development,

1 As quoted in Ernest Jones, Sigmund Freud: Life and work, London: Hogarth Press, 3 vols, 1954-1957, vol.3, p.408, which says, '...I had several talks with Freud on occultism and kindred topics. He was fond, especially after midnight, of regaling me with strange or uncanny experiences... He had particular relish for such stories and was evidently impressed by their more mysterious aspects. When I would protest at some of the taller stories Freud was wont to reply with his favourite quotation, 'There are more things...'.’ Freud’s favourite quote is from Shakespeare’s Hamlet, act 1, scene 5: To Horatio’s ‘O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!’, Hamlet says, ‘And therefore as a stranger give it welcome./ There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,/ Than are dreamt of in your philosophy’; William Shakespeare, The complete works of William Shakespeare, Leicester: Gallery Press, 1987, p.840. Henceforth, all Shakespearean quotes are sourced from this edition.

2 The term, 'the uncanny' became commonplace following Freud’s account, regardless of criticism like Royle, op. cit., p.28 n.20, who has similar aversions to 'the uncanny'. Arguably, the quotations should be moved to the 'the' in order to highlight Freud’s exploitation, or removed altogether in order to bring about more judicious discussion on the topic. Hereon, it will simply be addressed as the uncanny (without quotation marks), except when emphasizing it with single quotations ('uncanny') for linguistic analysis. Discussing its socio-politization and calling it ‘one of the most supercharged words in our current critical vocabulary’, Martin Jay discusses the history of the conceptual uncanny and its popularization in academia, exclaiming: ‘It is now the height of caniness to market the uncanny’; see Martin Jay, Cultural semantics: Keywords of our time, Amhett, MA: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1998, pp.157-64, p.157 and p.163; and Martin Jay, "The uncanny Nineties", Salmagundis, no.108 (Fall 1995), pp.20-9.

3 The italicisation of ‘a’ emphasises the idea that Freud did not explicitly state that the uncanny is the mark of the return of the repressed, as others have misquoted him as stating. For example, David Krell’s insightful essay comparing Freudian and Heideggerian notions of uncanniness states, ‘Repression is the very mechanism of anxiety, according to Freud. Any affect or emotion that is repressed returns as anxiety. Further, its return is uncanny’. Freud, however, does not state that everything which returns from repression is uncanny. In transfixing Freud’s reckoning from the general to the particular, Krell formulates a syllogism which erroneously reflects Freud’s reasoning; see David Farrell Krell, "Das unheimliche: Architectural sections of Heidegger and Freud", Research in Phenomenology, vol.22 (Deconstruction and the architecture of the uncanny, 1992), pp.43-61, p.56. Notionally, Krell’s ideas better fit Heidegger’s notions of anxiety essentially being uncanny, discussed later. Importantly, studies and notions concerning memory are not accounted for here, however it is reasonable to note that, as Radstone, op. cit., writes, ‘even personal memory flashes, in all their apparent immediacy and spontaneity, are constructions mediated by means of complex psychical and mental processes’. Discussing memory as belonging to a complexity of mediated and articulated processes, Radstone, p.136, furthers, ‘it is simply not possible to argue that certain modes of personal memory give more direct access to that past than others. Neither those silently experienced flashes of
infantile and primitive beliefs (such as wish-fulfillments, secret powers, magic, omnipotence of thoughts, return of the dead, spirits, ghosts, and animation of the inanimate) become surmounted and repressed. Yet these old beliefs linger. Even though the once credible becomes incredible, conflicts occur — in a psychical flash of vague remembrance, 'something glimmers there for one hundredth part of a second',¹ the unfamiliar turns strangely familiar. A mnemonic trace from no-man's land, from neither the conscious nor unconscious but belonging to both, unnervingly reveals that one's being is cohabited by the 'foreign physic agency of the unconscious' — that one is literally of two minds.² Hence, the uncanny is the revelation that such bi-polarisation exists and that one (ostensibly adversarial) 'side' can override the other. Freud proposes, people are simultaneously at-home and not-at-home with themselves — an idea developed, albeit greatly modified, by some Existentialists, discussed later.

As a form of mental disturbance, Freud associates the uncanny with the revelation of that which has been repressed, hidden or concealed from oneself, saying,

this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression... [which links to] Schelling's definition... as something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light.⁶

Freud explains how this phenomenon not only deals with beliefs but with feelings or thoughts associated with childhood trauma or events, which have likewise been repressed then triggered by something and returned as an uncanny moment. A certain aroma might trigger a feeling which is confused as inexplicably familiar, for example. The gate which releases these psychic transmissions between the unconscious and the conscious does not open and close arbitrarily; something must trigger its release.

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² Adam Brennick, "Prosopoetic compulsion: Reading the uncanny in Freud and Hoffmann", *Germanic Review*, vol.71, no.2 (1996), pp.114-32, p.117, says, 'A moment of singular strangeness arrives as the perplexed subject obscurely senses the return of a memory long since repressed, a revenant mnemonic trace that occupies a kind of interior no-man's land, belonging neither to the conscious nor to the unconscious, but to both at once. The subject becomes uneasily aware that he is literally of two minds simultaneously, one conscious and the other unconscious, and while it is surely not the case that the latter may be known in the same way as the former, in the uncanny experience, the subject palpably perceives the fact of his being inhabited by the constitutively foreign psychic agency of the unconscious. The uncanny thus would not merely be something a given subject experiences, but the experience that momentarily undoes the factitious monological unity of the ego, producing what Freud describes as an effect of "doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self". It is in this fissuring of the subject, rather than in the specific content of the memory that occasions it, that Freud locates the disquieting affect of the uncanny.'
³ Freud refer to Schelling's definition of *unheimlich*, see Freud, op. cit., p.241.
For Freud, the uncanny of a well-adjusted mind depends upon the healthy development of the unconscious, including the ability to overcome and contain certain beliefs within the unconscious. The renunciation of infantile omnipotence and primitive beliefs is so critical that if a child does not voluntarily undertake this disillusioning process or does so under pressure of the severest penalties, the process is disturbed, most probably resulting in a psychologically-disturbed adult whose uncanny encounters are increased in number and intensity. 

Freudians reason, should the process of repression be impaired, adults will most likely live mentally unstable lives. Freudian psychoanalyst, Edmund Bergler observes several situations which evoke uncanniness, especially relating some to adult psychosis caused by the protective mechanism of infantile repression being disturbed. He argues, a 'dread of oneself (one's unconscious aggressive tendency) combined with a dread of others (castration)' affectively short-circuits messages, thereby inducing uncanny sensations - examples of which include:

1) witnessing aggression such as sado/masochism; 2) obsessional neurotics who believe they can work miracles; 3) perceiving others failing to display typical/expected reactions whilst remaining unacceptably unmoved; 4) realising that we stand in relation to another person or power as object not 'as we fondly imagined, of subject'; 5) witnessing the sudden, unforeseen downfall of the influential or powerful; 6) 'manifestations of unconscious psychic institutions' including compulsive-repetitive disorders occurring from infantile anxiety; 7) looking upon forms of cynicism which rekindle infantile megalomania (such as cynics who think themselves loftier than everyone, subsequently rekindling infantile self-aggrandisement and aggression in the onlooker); 8) projecting one's own omnipotence onto others (suchlike authorities or gods) so that 'every manifestation of the derivative omnipotence (in others) acts as an agent provocateur upon its headquarters in ourselves'; 9) impenetrable or unrelenting silence from another or externalised as darkness, twilight,

7 See Edmund Bergler, "The psychoanalysis of the uncanny", International Journal of Psychoanalysis, vol. 15, pts.2-3 (April-July 1934), pp.215-44, p.219, which summarises the four stages in the development of the sense of reality and, p.221, says 'we take alarm at our own omnipotence, which for a few seconds we [uncannily] imagine to exist, plus the consequence of castration which the experience of our childhood has led us to anticipate'. Whilst Bergler states this process is unconscious, he admits it can be disrupted by external pressure, which consequently makes it appear to be quasi-unconscious. Later, in comparing Freud with Sartre, this act will be shown as being consciously driven.

8 Oddly, Bergler, ibid., p.221, says he will provide twelve situations but ends up supplying thirteen examples, making one wonder whether he is intentionally being superstitious or facetious. These examples are summary points taken from ibid., pp.221-44.

9 Bergler, ibid., p.224, continues by citing from Faust: 'You think to impel but are yourself impelled'; my emphasis.

10 Ibid., p.230.
ghostly forms and stillness; 10) sensing something inescapable like the imminent death of another; 11) perceiving time as infinite or backwards; 12) experiencing that which began as play passing into ‘deadly earnest’; and, 13) felt by a particular type of masochist as veiling or covering up the anguish of the reality-principle. Many of these ‘shudderings’ are examples of rekindling infantile omnipotence. It is not surprising, then, at the core of Freud’s appraisal we find Hoffmann’s story, *The sandman* — a fictional drama rekindling infantile trauma.

**Hoffmann and The sandman**

Freud adopted Plato’s method of referencing secondary sources of literature and myth as a way of demonstrating his ideas; so, just as an Indian myth is central to Plato’s *The symposium*, Freud adopts E.T.A. Hoffmann’s fiction, *The sandman*, for his essay.11 Freud’s purposeful manipulation of *The sandman* is derided as being an overstabilized account, with Freud paraphrasing its dialogue and substituting the narration.12 Before launching into Freud’s essay, a revision of *The sandman* — independent of Freud — is an important step in critiquing the Freudian uncanny.

A much admired and influential German author of fiction, E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822) also composed and influenced music.13 His famous story, *Nussknacker und Mausekönig* (*The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*) of 1816, inspired Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker* (1892), whilst *The sandman*, also of 1816,14 inspired Léo Delibes’s ballet *Coppélia* (1870). Hoffmann’s influence extends across different mediums and time, including Russian cinematographer Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986), who wrote a filmscript entitled *Hoffmanniana*, and whilst that film never materialised, Tarkovsky’s general cinematographic style lends itself to eerie uncanniness, including the evocative *Stalker*

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12 Neil Hertz, “Freud and *The sandman*,” *The end of the line: Essays on psychoanalysis and the sublime*, New York: Columbia UP, 1985, pp.97-121, p.105, observes that Freud achieves an ‘overstabilization’ of the story by quoting only that which is already in quotation marks with Hoffmann’s text: Freud quotes the characters’ dialogues but not the narrator’s words, and substitutes his own words for the narrator’s.

13 Referencing his hero, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ernst Theodor Amadeus (E.T.A.) is a pseudonym for Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann.

14 *The sandman* was published in late 1816, but its publication date often attributes the year 1817; see Harvey W. Hewett-Thayer, *Hoffmann: Author of the tales*, New York: Octagon Books, 1971, p.100 and p.401.
(1979). Whilst Hoffmann’s influence was far-reaching, he himself was influenced by the writings of one of the great progenitors of German Romanticism, Kant, and by Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter), whose fiction often delved into the supernatural. The term *doppelgänger*, a form of self-doubling significant to the Freudian uncanny, is indebted to Jean Paul. Responding to calls of an ‘in-dwelling demon,’ Hoffmann’s gothic stories lay testimony to self-introspection and the notion, ‘a double nature is a house divided against itself’, reflecting Hoffmann’s traumatic childhood, which left traces throughout his work.

*The sandman* is a literary impregnation of uncanniness, and although simplified accounts always do disservice, a brief description is mandatory. The story is structured in three voices: the protagonist’s (a student, Nathanael), his first love (Clara), and the narrator. Three letters precede the narration: the first is written by Nathanael wherein he explains a dreadful childhood re-visitation of a feared acquaintance of his father’s, establishing Nathanael as a deeply susceptible, poetic figure; the second is Clara’s clearheaded response; and, the third is Nathanael’s emphatic reply. Whereas an implied, considerable time-lag separates each correspondence, the reader moves fluently from one to another and a sense of urgency and secrecy develops.

The catalyst of Nathanael’s anxious letter is a pedlar, a barometer-dealer named Coppola who reminds Nathanael of a childhood fiend, the eerie, loathsome Coppelius whom he confuses with another boyhood bogeyman, the legendary Sandman. An irregular, late-

15 Based on Boris and Arkady Strugatsky’s novel *Roadside Picnic*, Tarkovsky’s *Stalker*, with its forbidden ‘zone’ which promises to fulfil one’s innermost desires, has many suggestive motifs which can be read as Freudian, Existential or spiritual, and is drawn upon in the case-studies of part two. Tarkovsky’s *Andrei Rublev* (1966), which also fathoms ghost-images and *doppelgängers*, is another film which exudes notions of the uncanny.


17 Hoffmann endured a tumultuous childhood which saw the separation of his parents and siblings. After they separated, Hoffmann lived with his mother in his grandmother’s home in Königsberg, becoming estranged from his father who had left Königsberg taking with him Ernst’s older brother. See Hewett-Thayer, op. cit., pp.4-7, p.313 and p.373.


19 The point regarding Nathanael’s first letter marking him out as ‘poetic’ is from Bresnick, op. cit., p.122. Ibid., p.123, provides a brief character analysis, saying readers empathise with Nathanael’s ‘imaginative mania’. 

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night visitor of his father's, Coppelius was a mysterious, repugnant and menacing man who Nathanael stealthily witnessed making glass-eyes in the furnace of his father's chambers, whereupon Coppelius startlingly discovers him and threatens his life. From Nathanael's perspective, his antagonists commingle and are essentially the one he blames for his father's death, provoking questions about whether his antagonisms are factually-based or is he mentally disturbed. Clara tries to reason with Nathanael, to quieten his fears, but Nathanael's reply establishes his spiralling anxiousness over Coppola-Coppelius. To this clouded mood, two more characters enter: Professor Spalanzani and his peculiar yet striking 'daughter,' Olympia. Nathanael becomes bewitched by Olympia's ethereal nature and beauty, losing sight of Clara and, in believing the automaton, Olympia, as real, he loses his grasp on reality. Nathanael's desire for Olympia is so intense his normal faculties are overridden, erroneously perceiving her as flesh and blood. In a dramatic scene bringing Spalanzani, Coppola, Olympia and Nathanael together, the farce of the mechanical-doll is made clear as Olympia is defaced by Coppola tearing out her glass-eyes. Confronted by such stupefying truth and affronted by Coppola's role in conjuring her realistic eyes, Nathanael succumbs to mental apoplexy, losing consciousness. Again Clara helps restore Nathanael's mental health. Stability seemingly re-established, they cheerfully climb the town-hall tower, although upon suddenly beholding Coppelius in the crowd below, Nathanael becomes distressed, threatening Clara's life before his dreadful plight is finally resolved as he flees '(in)sanity' and suicides, plummeting to his death.

Among many strands and motifs in Hoffmann's story, eyes are crucially linked with: the mythical Sandman who sprinkles night-dust into children's eyes; Coppelius, who Nathanael witnesses experimenting with glass-eyes, threatens to burn Nathanael's eyes in punishment before his father intervenes; his father being killed by explosion during one of Coppelius' subsequent experimentations; Coppola provisioning Nathanael with magnifying lenses to spy on Olympia; Coppola fashioning glass-eyes for the automaton; and, finally, Nathanael perceiving Coppelius through Coppola's spy-glass. As 'gateways to the soul,' to the metaphysical and unseen, 'the eyes' behold the uncanny, with the spy-glass symbolising the revelation of hidden secrets. As a 'tool' which transposes the homely into the unhomely, the spy-glass allows Nathanael to sit within his home yet travel into, and secretly penetrate, the unknown unhomely of another's private sphere, Spalanzani's home, causing
Nathanael’s unconscious resurfacing of repressed childhood memories, including of his nemesis, Coppelius. Whereas the parallels with OEdipus’ self-blinding were evident to Freud who regarded it an act of castration punishment,20 Nathanael’s recollections reignite the discomfiture children encounter at the threshold of clinging onto but denying once-favoured beliefs for new, acceptable adult ones. Moreover, the accompanying uncanny sensation occurs from the revelation that one’s unconscious exists and has its own, seemingly independent, agenda.

Hoffmann’s story opens endless possibilities, scenarios and questions, thwarting any particular univocal interpretation. The sandman envelops secrecy from the outset, placing singular truth as sand in the palm of a hand, where upon clenching it shows that it cannot be fully grasped without losing grains of meaning. Nevertheless, many have tried to uncover the story’s perplexing uncanniness, with many critiques concentrating on its literariness, style and structure, and some so clinical and deconstructionist, they fail to appreciate the story’s inherent organic form in its evocative feeling, conception and prosecution.21

Another means of analysing the story is by looking to the character’s names, subjecting them to philological-history readings where key characters represent historical stages: Olympia for the polytheistic classical; Nathanael (meaning ‘God has given’) for the ecclesiastical middle ages; Clara (meaning clear, bright, famous) suggesting the Enlightenment; and, the Sandman/Coppelius/Coppola characters symbolising time itself, both sharing traits through time (diachronic inheritance) yet belonging to separate periods (synchronic independence). Adam Bresnick alludes to similar notions, mooting, ‘Clara is the voice of common sense’, whereas Nathanael favours ‘compulsive enjoyment’ over clear-

headedness. Notionally then, Hoffmann juxtaposes the enlightened Clara with the romantic Nathanael, fact versus fiction, and the prosaic against the poetic. Prior to Olympia's involvement, Nathanael admonishes Clara, shrieking, 'you lifeless accursed automaton!'; then later cries, 'Olympia may well seem uncanny to you cold, prosaic people. It is only to the poetic heart that the like unfolds itself!' Susan Brantly, observing thermographical motifs in The sandman and the 'flames' of Nathanael's poetic temperament, alludes to the fiery underbelly or furnace of unconscioussness (Nathanael) compared with the cool, aloofness of consciousness (Clara), where his 'heated poetic inspiration is met by cool unappreciation'. Ultimately it is Clara who finds domestic happiness whereas the reader is left none-the-wiser as to whose fate is better: death versus domesticity? Putting such hypotheticals aside, for Hoffmann's narrative re-emerges henceforth, it is apropos to return to Freud and another precedent.

Ernst Jentsch's contribution

Ernst Jentsch's work on the uncanny was criticised by Freud for being too limited, lightweight and for not analysing aspects of The sandman, even though Jentsch does not actually name Hoffmann's fiction. Freud, invariably searching for ways repressed desire asserts itself, became interested in unheimlichheit through cases he encountered in psychotherapy, patients who sensed uncanny phenomena. Another motivating factor was his peer, Jentsch, who, broaching the subject within the field of psychotherapy, incited Freud's call to action within the realms of psychoanalysis. Often overlooked by scholars, Jentsch's contribution is important in understanding the Freudian uncanny.
Roy Sellars, who translated Jentsch’s paper, introduces Ernst Anton Jentsch (1867-1919) as a ‘doctor by profession, [who] wrote several books of psychology and pathology, including a study of mood’. Jentsch’s essay, “On the psychology of the uncanny,” was published in 1906 in two consecutive volumes of the German journal, *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift*, and opens with a disclaimer concerning the flaws of language, its communicative limitations, warning that ‘gross errors and astonishing naïveties are often quite readily disseminated… [partly because of] the limited lexical material of a particular language’. He then provides subtle pointers towards uncanniness, writing, ‘someone to whom something “uncanny” happens is not quite “at home” or “at ease”… the thing is or at least seems to be foreign to him’. Jentsch qualifies his remarks, stressing, ‘no attempt will here be made to define the essence of the uncanny’ but a working definition of the concept would be possible, thus limiting his scope to ‘those psychical processes which culminate experientially in the subjective impression of the uncanny with some regularity and sufficient generality’.

Important ideas from Jentsch which Freud does not elaborate include the relationship between enigmatic processes and the uncanny, especially the notion of the cultural value of enigma which determines one’s level of admiration or empathy with a subject. For example, if a surgeon’s technical virtuosity was pitted against a circus performer’s, the surgeon would attract greater esteem yet both would be equally remembered. Jentsch contends, there is a ‘slight nuance of the uncanny effect… [which comes] to light now and then in the care of real admiration’. This highlights how and where the uncanny may appear and be confused – or fused – with other feelings, in this case, admiration and awe. Jentsch also

27 Roy Sellars’s introduction to Jentsch, op. cit., p.7.
28 Sellars’s revised translation of the paper notes that Jentsch’s essay was printed in vol. 8.22 (25 August 1906), pp.195-98; and vol. 8.23 (1 September 1906), pp.203-05.
29 Jentsch, ibid., p.7.
30 I emphasise the words which create important subtleties in Jentsch’s definition; ibid., p.8.
31 Ibid., p.8. Rather than trying to define the essence of the uncanny, Jentsch says, ‘if one wants to come closer to the essence of the uncanny, it is better not to ask what it is, but rather to investigate how the affective excitement of the uncanny arises in psychological terms, how the psychical conditions must be constituted so that the “uncanny” sensation emerges’. Whilst Forbes Morlock, “Doubly uncanny: An introduction to ‘On the psychology of the uncanny’”, *Angelaki*, vol.2, no.1 (1997), pp.17-21, p.17, states that ‘Jentsch is both the first to take the path towards (zur) the psychology of the uncanny and the last to suggest that he can speak of the “essence” of the uncanny’; Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., does allude to its essence, and, p.219, talks about the ‘core’ of the uncanny; ‘a special core of feeling is present which justifies the use of a special conceptual term. One is curious to know what this common core is which allows us to distinguish as “uncanny” certain things which lie within the field of what is frightening’.
32 Jentsch, op. cit., p.8.
33 Ibid., p.10; my emphasis.

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distinguishes misoneism and hyper-sensitivity to uncertainty (heightened by dark spaces, reduced vision, tiredness or depression, for example), as factors which increase the potential for uncanny occurrences. Unfavourably, Jentsch’s essentialist view that ‘women, children and dreamers’ are among those of ‘weaker critical sense’ and are thus more prone to ‘stirrings of the uncanny’ weakens his ideas for contemporary audiences.34 Otherwise, his concepts vacillate between fears and uncertainties tied up with intellect, or are of questionable relevance, such as the notion of novelty being crucial to effecting uncanniness.35

Freud cites two passages from Jentsch’s essay, including an example of a powerful, general psychical effect of uncanny experience: ‘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’.36 Whereas Freud truncates his precursor’s statement, Jentsch qualifies this psychic effect, adding, ‘and more precisely, when this doubt only makes itself felt obscurely in one’s consciousness’.37 Importantly, Jentsch indicates doubtful moods and obscurity as important factors eliciting uncanniness. The precision of lifelike anatomical figures being a function of uncanniness is considered in relation to contemporaneous notions of the uncanny valley, in chapter four, relating the human-likeness of inanimate objects with the empathetic comfort-level of the viewer, where the more human-like the figure, the more sympathy the viewer bestows upon it until a point where its anthropomorphism gets ‘too real’ and the viewer uncomfortably perceives it as uncannily frightening. Hoffmann’s mannequin, Olympia, can be seen in this light.

Whilst it is not clear that Freud’s appreciation of Hoffmann’s story as a literary exemplar of the uncanny was actually taken from Jentsch’s paper (since it is not specifically named therein), they hold similar as well as opposing viewpoints, both germinating in places of Germanic origins during uneasy periods portending human devastation, whilst strangely coinciding with the inauguration and decommissioning of the German Unterseeboot (the U-boat or undersea boat) as symbolic of the escalation of eerie uncertainty in the early

34 Ibid., p.13. Contemporary audiences, including feminists, give similar reasons for which they find disfavour with Freud.
35 Ibid., p.15: Jentsch notes that something must be novel to effect uncanniness, yet his evidence appears to be based mainly on empirical quackery and assertion rather than being scientifically proven, and in this way, his rationale is similar to Freud’s.
36 Ibid., p.11.
37 Ibid.
stages of twentieth-century Europe, with Freud researching the uncanny in parallel with World War I.38 Correspondingly, *The sandman* was written not long after Hoffmann witnessed the Battle of Dresden and the horrific effects of Napoleonic war, having endured a lonely boyhood in a household ‘where he felt himself so much an alien’, and effectively forced to flee his hometown.39 Remarkably, the alienating functions of adapting to new environments, being exiled, and natural and man-made threats to home and country, are common to Hoffmann, Jenstch and Freud.40

**Further background to Freud’s essay**

It is unclear as to when Freud commenced researching the uncanny, and although his translator states ‘the subject was present in his mind as early as 1913’, much evidence suggests prior interest developed amidst pre-war turmoil, circa 1909 and earlier.41 Certainly,
the essay magnifies ideas originally noted in his *Totem and taboo* (1913), where he uses 'uncanny' to describe the taboo of incest: 'sacred, consecrated; but on the other hand it means uncanny, dangerous, forbidden and unclean'.

In *Totem and taboo*, Freud's hypotheses about humans progressing from the *animistic* phase to the *scientific* order in the 'evolution of human views of the universe'. By Freud's account, Australian Aboriginals typify the *animistic* by attributing omnipotence to themselves so that their thoughts, fears and desires are projected or externalised onto enumerable benevolent and malevolent spiritual beings and causes of natural phenomena. Whereas Western 'civilisation' progressed from animism to the scientific, remnants of animistic belief persist in forms of obsessive, neurotic behaviour, in art 'where the omnipotence of thoughts has been retained', and in uncanny phenomena. Associating uncanniness with forms of regression and primitivism, Freud footnotes, 'We appear to attribute an "uncanny" quality to impressions that seek to confirm the omnipotence of thoughts and the animistic mode of thinking in general' until we abandon such beliefs.

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see Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung, *The Freud/Jung letters: The correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung*, William McGuire (ed.), trans. Ralph Manheim and R.C. Hull, London: Hogarth Press, 1974, pp.448-9 (letter 274F). Previously, on 16 April 1909, ibid., pp.218-9 (letter 139F), he relays to Jung a personal story concerning coincidentally recurring numbers (61 and 62) as being uncanny. Here, his translator footnotes that Freud's journey to Greece (where the coincidence repeatedly occurred) was with his brother, Alexander in September 1904. By 1904 (when Freud was 48), five years elapsed since the numbers' initial 'appearance' to him in 1899 (then 42-43). Writing this letter in 1909, Freud points out that 61 is only eight years off, and therefore it is quite plausible to assume he had been thinking about the uncanny as a subject from as early as 1909 onwards. In a letter to Jung, ibid., p.438 (letter 268F) of 20 August 1911, Freud(alludes to his work on *Totem and taboo*, telling Jung, 'Since my mental powers revived, I have been working in a field where you will be surprised to meet me. I have unearthed strange and uncanny things and will almost feel obliged not to discuss them...'. In correspondence dated 28 October 1907, ibid., p.94 (letter 193F), Jung sarcastically says that the prolific writings of Paul Naegele (a critic of Freud's whom Jung disliked) 'must have popped up with uncanny frequency in your reading'. Jung repeats the word in a letter dated 12 July 1908, ibid., pp.163-4 (letter 102): '[Ernest] Jones... is so incomprehensible that it's quite uncanny'.

Peter Gay, *Freud: A life for our time*, London: J.M. Dent, 1988, pp.262-3, shows that 'uncanny feelings' were raised in Freud's 1907 case, the Rat Man. Considering Freud's late 1890s trips to Pompeii and the photographic images of the site in Freud's library, arguably particularly uncanny images, as claimed by Mary Bergstein, *Mirrors of memory: Freud, photography, and the history of art*, Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell UP, 2010, p.269, the impetus behind his text goes back earlier. Ibid, notes another letter from Freud in Syracuse in 1910 describes his visit to the Temple of Apollo as 'unheimlich'. Thus, claims that he commenced his essay in 1913 are misleading, including that of Bernard Rubin, "Freud and Hoffmann: 'The sandman'" in Sander L. Gilman (ed.), *Introducing Psychoanalytic Theory*, New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1982, pp.205-17, p.211.

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*42* Freud made note of the uncanny in *Totem and taboo* on about three counts (depending on the translator); for example, he writes that the meaning of taboo incorporates notions of uncanny, danger, and unclean and mysterious person, and cites a colleague's use of uncanny in reference to 'omnipotence of thought', a notion he brings into "The 'uncanny." See Sigmund Freud, *Totem and taboo: Resemblances between the psychic lives of savages and neurotics*, trans. Abraham Arden Brill, Routledge, 1919, p.30, p.37 and p.142. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic mirror: The female voice in psychoanalysis and cinema*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988, p.17, points out Freud 'describes the revelation of woman's lack as "uncanny and traumatic"'in his 1927 paper on fetishism wherein he repeatedly uses the word 'uncanny.'

*43* For a summary account, see Andrew McCann, "Textual phantasmagoria: Marcus Clarke, light literature and the colonial uncanny", *Australian Literary Studies*, vol.21, no.2 (October 2003), pp.137-50. Here, and in reference to *Totem and taboo*, ff.88, Freud's reference to Charles Darwin, whose influence on Freud will be discussed anon, is made obvious.


*46* Ibid., p.144.
ruminated within Freud until he focused on the topic between drafts of Beyond the pleasure principle."

Uncanniness developed as a fashionable topic in nineteenth-century literary critique, with interest in it peaking in the twentieth-century and Freud's essay becoming the pivotal source of the cross-disciplinary discourse on the uncanny. Yet it was notionally an intermediate event in 1859, 50 years prior to the publication of Freud's essay in the autumn of 1919, which fostered the uncanny being discussed outside its usual, literary grounds. That event was the epochal publication of Charles Darwin's On the origin of species, which sent shudders of controversy across Europe and the West. Preceding the Freudian unheimlich, William James wrote, in 1902, 'If the natural world is so doubled-faced and unhomelike, what world, what thing is real?' Freud biographer, Peter Gay, postulates, "Darwin never ceased to be "the great Darwin" for Freud, who preferred biological investigations more than tending patients." With a sense of self-importance, Freud hoisted himself onto a pedestal alongside Darwin and Copernicus, claiming psychoanalysis offered mankind the 'third of three historic injuries to its megalomania'.

Darwin's theories and fame claimed Freud's imagination, with his work repeatedly referencing Darwin's revolutionary ideas, many pertaining to Freudian uncanny theory. Some scholars, such as Margot Norris, maintain Freud's unconventional ways of thinking were indeed made possible by Darwin. Generally, the emergent Darwinian perspective turned mankind's eye back towards its primitive past, simultaneously shaping ideas about its evolutionary future: as man thought more deeply about his origins, he thought about

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47 Hertz, op. cit., p.98, explains Freud wrote "The 'uncanny'" between drafts and final versions of Beyond the pleasure principle, for which the themes concerning the death drive and compulsive repetition would have bearing. Indeed, both topics are mentioned in "The 'uncanny'". Hertz argues Freud's essay was an exercise in repetition-compulsion itself.

48 Published in November 1859, The origin of species (or On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life) is Darwin's seminal work, founding the concepts of evolutionary biology.


51 Gay, op. cit., p.449, writes that Freud, in his Introductory lectures, "noted a little melodramatically that psychoanalysis had presented humanity with the third of three historic injuries to its megalomania. Copernicus had established that the earth is not the center of the universe; Darwin had invited mankind into the animal kingdom; now he, Freud, was teaching the world that the ego is largely the servant of unconscious and uncontrollable forces in the mind'.

where he was bound to go. Yet there remained a place between this past and future, a place where man was now uncertain of himself – the obscurity of the present. If man belonged to the Ape kingdom, how did the promise of eternity in the afterlife figure? Darwin also highlighted the fragility of life, how it is prone to mutation and change, thus arousing disquiet about mankind’s potential distinction. Interestingly, Darwin’s writing repeatedly employs the word ‘strange,’ and, in Barbara Creed’s words, his ‘attention to monstrosity, excess, and incongruity makes his universe exceedingly strange and alienating to the modern as well as to the Victorian mind’.

Freud took advantage of the fertile ground forged by Darwin, igniting similar ideas about the fragility of the mind, a field for which he claimed singular mastery. Darwin’s book enkindled many debates which burned for many decades into the twentieth-century, just as Freud’s arguments inflamed others, such that the newly founded sciences of the body (Darwinian biological evolution) and the mind (Freudian psychoanalysis) gave stories like *The sandman* a new life and different edge.

Similarly, Friedrich Nietzsche’s late nineteenth-century revival of the philosophy of ‘eternal return’ (the idea of things eternally recurring) is something Anthony Vidler claims Freud assumes vis-à-vis concepts of uncanny repetition. Although Freud’s knowledge of, yet indifference to, Nietzsche is clear, he most probably read Nietzsche’s thoughts on Wagner, including praise that Wagner ‘knows a sound for those secret and uncanny midnights of the soul, where cause and effect appear to be out of joint and where at any moment something can come into being “out of nothing”’.

Whilst Freud became exiled by war in England from June 1938, years after completing his treatise on the uncanny, his interests become clearer when viewed in light of earlier personal experiences, and therefore arguably symptomatic of the alienating experiences of war and anti-Semitic Vienna; Freud, as Jewish, felt himself a ‘member of an “alien Race”’. The annihilation and alienation of World War I had a lasting impact, such that, in its wake, the opulence of Makart and Secessionist Vienna must have appeared an anathema to the

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55 Friedrich Nietzsche, written 1888-9, published 1895.
harrowing disturbance on the psyche left by war and anti-Semitism. Researching the definitions of ‘heimlich’ must have been poignant considering he inserts dictionary examples such as: ‘is it still heimlich to you in your country where strangers are felling your woods?’; and, ‘To destroy the Heimlichkeit of the home.’ In his essay, Freud denies recently experiencing uncanniness, although he was often subjected to frightening trauma and alienation, both fertile grounds for uncanniness. Jay Geller links the disquieting relations between German-speaking Christians and Jews to the uncanny, noting that Jews were symbolised by ghosts, and regardless of their desire to assimilate, were considered ‘incapable of eliminating their difference’. As being among those ‘unwanted guests’ (unheimlicher gast), Freud was an uncanny cohabitant of Vienna.

Freud’s collection of antiques hold significance as ‘reminders of a lost world to which he and his people, the Jews, could trace their remote roots’. Speaking of his ‘little gods’, Freud relayed to his colleague, Sándor Ferenczi, “strange secret yearnings” rising up in him, “perhaps from my ancestral heritage... for a life of quite another kind: wishes from late childhood never to be fulfilled and not adapted to reality”. Janine Burke has written

57 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.222.
54 Geller, op. cit., p.1210. Geller, p.1213, notes that Jews were keen to adopt the “universal” culture of the German bourgeoisie. judentum’s continuing function as exemplary other, as the always already antitype to the Austrian Catholic norm, however, fomented a crisis. In reference to Hoffmann’s tale, “Der unheimliche gast”, see Susan Bernstein, “It walks: The ambulatory uncanny”, Modern Language Notes, vol.118, no.5 (Comparative Literature Issue, December 2003), pp.1111-39, pp.1127-30, which provides a good summary about the uncanniness of the story. I am reminded of Freud’s Jewish background when I read, ‘The resident alien is the most uncanny of foreigners...’ in Tracy McNulty, The hostess: Hospitality, femininity, and the expropriation of identity, Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2007, p.74.
59 Gay, op. cit., p.172. Such antiquities were popular in the milieu of fin-de-siècle Vienna, as Emily Apter, “Cabinet secrets: Fetishism, prostitution, and the fin de siècle interior”, Assemblage, no.9 (June 1989), pp.6-19, p.8, explains: ‘Often a simple room within the home, the fin de siècle cabinet, as a space in which assembled treasures nested and multiplied, habitually contained familial icons, objets d’art or private papers, themselves fetishized and invested with rarified forms of eroticism. The mania of collecting and its increasingly refined, recherché [sought-after] developments... merged with the newly minted sexual aberration of erotomania.’ Apter, p.9, describes how the two theoretical discourses of materialist-Marxism and psychanalytic-Freudianism ‘meet and become intertwined on the body of the fin de siècle courtesan’. She concludes, p.17, ‘The emergent pathological interior, progressively synonymous with the bourgeois “home,” was no longer a romantic haunted house, no longer a chamber of symbolist nightmares, no longer even a Freudian “uncanny” house plagued by secretive repression; rather, it emerged as a singularly “possessed” apartment, fostering the folly, caprice, and erotomania of its spellbound master’. Such bourgeois tendencies and obsessive accumulation is what Walter Benjamin describes as ‘phantasmagorias of the interior’: a means of controlling the universe by making a private one for which Freud ‘assembled the distant in space and in time’ with an assortment of antiques; see Walter Benjamin, “Paris - capital of the nineteenth century”, in Selected writings, Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (eds), 4 vols, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1996, vol.3, p.58. Whereas such materialistic tendencies or accumulation are pervasive capitalist traits, the objects of materialism, Freud’s ‘little god’, also represent man’s alienation of man. From a Marxist perspective, Freud’s collectibles, which he willed to his daughter, Anna (see Gay, op. cit., p.612 n.), function as eerie reflections of alienation. In liking Freud’s collection with Benjamin’s theories, I acknowledge Christoph Grunenberg, “Life in a dead circus: The spectacle of the real”, in Mike Kelley, The uncanny, exh. catalogue, Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2004, pp.57-64, p.58. Also, Vidler, The architectural uncanny... op. cit., pp.156-7, highlights Benjamin’s interest in the uncanny resulted in him claiming Olympia as the ideal woman of art nouveau.
60 Gay, op. cit., p.172.
extensively regarding Freud’s art collection, an accumulation of myth-laden objects — rich fodder for evoking uncanniness. ‘Saxa loquuntur’ Freud exclaims in his 1896 lecture about hysteria—‘Stones speak!’ — or, as Gay observes, ‘At least stones spoke to him’; then, in 1898, in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess, Freud remarks, ‘Little Anna [his youngest daughter] has not inappropriately described a small Roman statuette I bought at Innsbruck as “an old child”’.

Freud’s interest in the uncanny, simmering for some time, was arguably spurred on by local Viennese scandals, including the ‘naked architectural body’ of Adolf Loos’ Goldman and Salatsch building, described as having anthropomorphic and erotic qualities. Other scandals surrounding the Vienna Secessionists include artist Gustav Klimt’s censored Faculy Paintings for Vienna University, deemed to take ‘lewdness’ to another degree.

Freud’s attention would also divert to internationally newsworthy events including those which contributed towards his cynicism of Catholicism, such as the exhumation of St. Bernadette Soubirous in 1909 and the claim her body was untainted and preserved from decomposition after 30 years, and the repeated exhumation in 1919 when the corpse was avowed as being mummified-like; suchlike visions of exhumed corpses most probably played on Freud’s imagination.

The realistic fleshiness of Klimt’s nudes predate the Faculty Paintings, with, for example, *Hope I*, 1903, oil on canvas, 189.2 x 67 cm, National Gallery of Canada, first exhibited publicly in Vienna in 1909 along with Oskar Kokoschka’s and Egon Schiele’s erotic pictures; see Natter and Hollein, op. cit., pp.22-3. In an essay on the ‘Shame and shamelessness’ of Secession...
Rather than depict the conventional, Klimt 'sought to convey the mysteriousness and the incomprehensible in life',67 aspirations not dissimilar to Freud's: both embarking on a *voyage interieur*.68 Considering Freud knew of the Secessionists infamous work, it would be fascinating to learn what he made of the doll Oskar Kokoschka commissioned in 1918 as a life-size semblance of his ex-lover, Alma Mahler (neely widowed of Viennese composer-conductor, Gustav Mahler and ex-lover of Klimt), especially compared with the automaton, Olympia.69 It is improbable Freud escaped learning of the infamy of Kokoschka’s doll, especially since Kokoschka scandalously escorted it to the opera, hosted parties in its honour and hired a maid to dress and service it, causing assorted psychosexual conjecture.70

*Fin-de-siecle* Vienna also harboured Arnold Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School, pioneers of atonal and dodecaphonic (twelve-tone) music compositions, often described as striking uncanny chords.71 Interestingly, as an erstwhile artist, Schoenberg became interested in applying skills he learnt about spatial measurement and classical composition to ideas as a basis of composing music.72 Another prominent and controversial Viennese

art. Christina von Braun refers to Otto Weininger's sensational text (in its day), *Sex and character* (1903), in which he characterizes sexuality as such: 'Woman is only sexual, Man is also sexual... To put it bluntly: Man has the penis, but the vagina has Woman [that is, she is possessed by it]'; Otto Weininger, *Sex and character: An investigation of fundamental principles*, trans. Ladislaus Löb, Daniel Steuer and Laura Marcus (eds), Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2005, pp.80-1.

67 Natter and Hollein, op. cit., p.18.

68 Ibid., p.20.


70 According to Bonnie Roos, ‘Oskar Kokoschka’s sex toy: The women and the doll who conceived the artist’, *Modernity/modernity*, vol.12, no.2 (April 2005), pp.291-309, p.291, this incident caused ‘rampant speculation about what else, exactly, Kokoschka did with the doll [which] met its ‘unnatural’ demise when one of Kokoschka’s parties got out of hand. Police questioned Kokoschka... about a murder: a beheaded and bloody body was reportedly seen outside his home. Evidently it was the naked, wine-splattered doll, which had somehow lost its head during the revelries of the previous evening’.

71 See Michael Cherlin, ‘Schoenberg and das unheimliche: Spectres of totality’, *The Journal of Musicology*, vol.11, no.3 (Summer 1993), pp.357-73. Ibid, p.362 states, 'The glimmerings of totality that emerge here and there... throughout Schoenberg's compositional life can well be understood as 'unheimlich.' The sonorities of totality have not fully disappeared, they have become estranged, evanescent spectres'. Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell, Wesley V. Blomster, New York: Continuum, 2004, p.162, says a successor of Schoenberg's dodecaphonic composition, Igor Stravinsky's music was a kind of primitivism which enacted in the listener a form of regression to an 'inner stage' belonging to 'the scene of pre-individual experiences which are common to all and now through shock again become accessible', whereas Michael P. Steinberg, *Listening to reason: Culture, subjectivity, and nineteenth-century music*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2008, pp.124-7, discusses the uncanny in consideration of Schumann's personal background and his music. For more recent discussion concerning the uncanny in music, see Michael Leslie Klein, *Intertextuality in western art music*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2005, pp.77-107, including his web of 'uncanny' signs diagram, p.81.

72 Whalen, op. cit., p.239. Schoenberg's visual art had the same strange dissonance as his music, including self-portraits.

73 Whalen, op. cit., p.239. Schoenberg's visual art had the same strange dissonance as his music, including self-portraits.
contemporary of Freud was writer Arthur Schnitzler, whose daring plays and novels were discussed in terms of explorations into the subconscious. Richard Strauss' opera, Die frau ohne schatten (The woman without a shadow) premiered in Vienna in October 1919. Indeed, Freud's Vienna, its salons and cafés, teemed with intelligentsia who took great interest in self-examination, with themes concerning the uncanny fitting comfortably within this rich milieu.

Film, thought by some to be the medium of the uncanny,\(^7\) of relevance to and conveying the mood of the period include: Robert Wiene's eerie The cabinet of Dr Caligari, released 1920; Richard Oswald's Unheimliche geschichten (Uncanny stories), released November 1919; Ernst Lubitsch's Die puppe (The doll), based on a man falling in love with a mechanical doll, inspired by Coppélia, and released in 1919; and several films produced by Wiener Kunstfilm such as Tales of Hoffmann (1911), The unknown (1912), and, the story of the enigmatic puppetmeister, Svengali (1914).\(^7\) Whilst acknowledging the widely-held, but debated opinion, that Freud only occasionally attended cultural events of this kind,\(^7\) Freud could not have remained unaffected by the prevailing mood, and even though it appears he largely outwardly ignored contemporary artists and littérature, his admiration of Schnitzler is substantiated.\(^7\) Whilst scientific and aesthetic discourses generally developed as autonomous fields of inquiry, preoccupation with the imagination was a shared phenomenon. Freud often references art, drafting an essay on Michelangelo's Moses in late 1913, wherein he asserts Michelangelo as depicting Moses as a raw, tempestuous human — as like himself,\(^7\) whilst in an earlier essay, "Leonardo da Vinci and the memory of

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\(^7\) See, for example, Cubitt, op. cit., and Grunenberg, op. cit., p.57.

\(^7\) The adaptation of theatre settings for film in the 1910s-1920s contributed to the uncanniness of film, according to William Paul, "Uncanny theater: The twin inheritances of the movies", Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genres, vol.3, no.3-4 (The return of the uncanny, 1997), pp.321-47. Paul, p.336, mentions other films of that era including The last days of Pompeii (1913), based on the 1834 novel of the same title by Edward George Bulwer-Lytton. Ibid., p.339-40, also discusses the attempt to blend stage and screen action and the repressive element caused by attempting to move film into the 'precincts of the legitimate theater'.

\(^7\) This is briefly discussed in Joan Arehart-Treichel, "You can't take Freud out of Vienna—or can you?", Psychiatric News, vol.36, no.3 (February 2001), p.8, where Peter Gay and Peter Loewenberg weigh into this debate.

\(^7\) Geller, op. cit., p.1216, says that Freud described Schnitzler as his doppelgänger. Gay, op. cit., p.165, reads, 'Freud's tastes ran to the conventional' and modern revolutions in art left him untouched but that 'when they obtruded themselves on his notice... he energetically disapproved'.

\(^7\) According to ibid., p.316. "The Moses of Michelangelo" was published in 1914.
his childhood” (1910), Freud propounds Leonardo’s greatness as a ‘natural scientist (and engineer) who combined in him with the artist’.  

Notwithstanding Freud’s envy yet ambivalence towards contemporary artists, throughout his adult life he remained a fanatic collector of antiquities and artefacts, obsessing over his self-described ‘dirty, little gods’, which were crammed into his office, where, as the illumination of his study waxed and waned, his figurines, signifiers of human-life captured in frozen form, hovered around him, looked at him gazing back, questioning and goading him towards an ever-elusive understanding of the essence of man. In many respects, Freud was surrounded by and surrounded himself with uncanny icons, including crammed relics which made his office a veritable wunderkammer, a chamber or cabinet of wonder, from wherein he devised his essay, “Das ‘unheimliche’.”

**Freud’s ‘Das “unheimliche”’**

In “The ‘uncanny’”, Freud alludes to the subject’s obtuseness whilst proposing a simple definition: ‘the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar’. After considering various meanings of the word ‘unheimlich’ in different languages, along with its etymology, Freud looks to literature, concentrating on ‘those themes of uncanniness which are most prominent’ and whether they can be ‘traced back to infantile sources’ in his determination to align the uncanny with childhood remembrances and ‘the phenomenon of the “double”’, which, he says, ‘appears in every

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79 Gay, op. cit., pp.316-20, says Freud was envious of artists and had leanings towards being an artist himself. Perhaps, then, Freud was haunted by what he could have been if he had not pursued psychoanalysis and science. His hero was Leonardo da Vinci, a master of science and art. See also Peter Fuller, Art and Psychoanalysis, London: Writers and Readers, 1988, pp.40-57, who, p.54, considers the proposition that for Freud, Michelangelo’s statue’s surly gaze reflected Ernst Brücke’s who discouraged Freud’s pursuit into scientific research and directed him into being a practitioner instead.

80 Freud often referred to art (as he did with literature) in demonstrating points of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. For analysis on Freud’s obsessive art collecting and how his collection played a significant role in his personal and professional life, see Burke’s The gods of Freud... op. cit., and Gay, op. cit., pp.170-3 and pp.268-72, and Jeanne Randolph, “Transgressed boundaries, potent fusions and dangerous possibilities”, in Bruce Grenville (ed.), The uncanny: Experiments in cyborg culture, exhib. catalogue, Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery & Arsenal Pulp Press, 2001, pp.95-9.

81 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.220. Translator, Strachey and Anna Freud, state, ibid., p.218, “The present translation is a considerably modified version of the one published in 1925… [and that] The first section of the present paper, with its lengthy quotation from a German dictionary, raises special difficulties for the translator. It is to be hoped that readers will not allow themselves to be discouraged by this preliminary obstacle, for the paper is full of interesting and important material, and travels far beyond merely linguistic topics”.
shape and in every degree of development’. As a repetition of the self in the Other, the double is a form of ‘involuntary repetition,’ and, as Freud contends, ‘whatever reminds us of this inner “compulsion to repeat” is perceived as uncanny’. Synoptically, his notions of uncanniness incorporated several ideas, including: the revelation of encountering something which should have remained private and concealed from others and self; recurrence of a repressed feeling that occurred in formative psychic development; and, transferences of primitive and infantile beliefs which were once surmounted and unconsciously repressed.

Capitalising on its unwieldy structure and style, an array of attempts to summarise and reinterpret Freud’s essay exist, with varying degrees of accuracy and fresh insight. Whilst the notion that its puzzling nature was entirely intentional is argued later, the following attempts to disinvest its complexities, similar to Hélène Cixous’s celebrated analysis likening it to theatre, replete with puppet-dolls manipulated into place by Freud, their ‘capricious stage-setter’. Another analogy might be of a court hearing with Freud defending the uncanny, introducing witnesses and evidence including literature, case-patients and personal experience, where the reader, as judge and jury, is petitioned as being reasonable, worthy and empathetic. Freud introduces himself as an outsider to this ‘remote’ topic, thereby positioning himself as distanced, rational and scientifically critical before introducing his first witness, Jentsch’s ‘fertile but not exhaustive paper’. He progresses by presenting two courses of action: a lexicological analysis of ‘unheimlich’, then reciting characteristics found in uncanny experiences, comparing them and discovering their commonalities, he pre-emptively concludes both courses deliver the same result: ‘the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar’. Undertaking to prove this, Freud explains unheimlich, as the reverse of heimlich, does not necessarily mean everything unfamiliar is unheimlich or frightening, and

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82 Ibid., p.234.
83 Ibid., p.237 and p.238, respectively.
85 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.219.
86 Ibid., p.220.
conversely, old, familiar things are sometimes unheimlich. Their linguistic relationship is incapable of inversion and something else must be added to make it uncanny. Referencing several language dictionaries, two significant findings are presented: 'heimlich' is ambiguous and has an antinomical relationship with its opposite; and 'everything is unheimlich that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light'.

Proceeding by examining instances of uncanniness (uncanny things, persons, impressions, events and situations), Freud presents automata, crediting Jentsch's idea about doubt as to whether an animate being is really alive or whether an inanimate object might be animate. Reminded of Hoffmann's virtuoso ability to produce uncanny effects, Freud ventures to introduce Hoffmann's characters, asserting that Olympia does not exclusively possess uncanniness, but that the story's overriding uncanniness emanates from the Sandman who 'tears out children's eyes'.

Focussing on Nathanael's childhood, Freud associates the Sandman with Coppelius, contending, eyes are a key motif of Nathanael's fear. After interpreting Nathanael's suicide, Freud mentions Clara before proceeding to deduce that: uncanniness is directly linked to the Sandman; Hoffmann creates uncertainty by introducing confusion over whether the story is set in the real or a fantastic world; and, emphasising the fear of losing one's eyes or sight as central to uncanniness, links this to castration-complexes and Oedipus, stressing Hoffmann brings 'anxiety about eyes into such intimate connection with the father's death', and the Sandman appears as a 'disturber of love'.

Freud affirms Olympia as being the materialisation of Nathanael's feminine attitude towards his father; consequently he is compulsively attracted to her.

Following the re-examination of Jentsch's notion of intellectual uncertainty over animation/inanimation, Freud turns to the phenomenon of the double including Otto Rank's theories, doppelgängers, telepathically connected people, substitutions and forms of doubling, dividing and interchanging self, recurrent features, character traits and vicissitudes. He progresses by linking Ancient Egyptian beliefs in the afterlife and powers of effigies as springing from 'primary narcissism which dominates the mind of the child and

87 Ibid., p.225, which is Schelling's definition
88 Ibid., p.227.
89 Ibid., p.231.
90 Otto Rank's The double: A psychoanalytic study, op. cit., was originally published under the editorship of Freud in 1914, a period when Freud and Rank became quite close. Interestingly, Rank uses the term 'uncanny' throughout his study.
of primitive man', adding that when primitive and infantile beliefs become surmounted, 'the "double" reverses its aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death'.

Changing during stages of the ego's development, the double becomes associated with one's conscience, self-observation and to 'things which seem to self-criticism to belong to the old surmounted narcissism of earliest times'.

Reinforcing that suppressed illusions of freewill also factor, Freud marries the double with the uncanny insofar as the double is conceived positively in early mental development, then surmounted becoming a 'thing of terror'.

Noting that Hoffmann exploits 'doubling' forms of ego-disturbance, Freud introduces the repetition factor, drawing on autobiographical experience of being lost in a foreign town whence disorientation causes him to keep returning to the same strange red-light district, conjecturing that helplessness is associated with uncanniness, especially in cases of involuntary repetition, then inserting another personal episode - the number '62' coincidentally reappearing, whilst differentiating superstitious tendencies of ascribing secret meaning to obstinate recurrences before dismissing an 'ingenious' scientist's attempt at reducing such coincidence to mathematical law. Freud concludes that repetition compulsion proceeds from instinctual impulses and is thus perceived as uncanny.

The superstitious 'dread of the evil eye' is presented alongside the expertise of 'the Hamburg oculist Seligmann'. Claiming envy as its source, Freud states that such examples refer to the omnipotence of thoughts, 'old, animistic conception[s] of the universe', narcissistic overvaluation of one's own mental processes, and belief in magical

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91 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.225.
92 Ibid., p.235.
93 Ibid., pp.235-6.
94 Freud turned 62 in May 1918 and would most likely have been between 61 and 62 when drafting the essay, considering it was published in Autumn 1919 and that he mentioned it in a letter (as completed) of 12 May 1919. This is significant because in his 16 April 1909 letter to Carl Jung (see Freud and Jung, op. cit., p.219, letter 139F), Freud mentions his superstitious notion first occurred when he was 43, particularly pointing out that it was therefore plausible for him to think that he would die between the ages of 61 and 62. Thus, writing "The 'uncanny" would have been an especially profound exercise. Noting Freud's obsession, Royle, op. cit., p.202 n.35, cites the letter: 'Some years ago I discovered within me the conviction that I should die between the ages of 61 and 62, which then struck me as a long time away. (Today it is only eight years off.) Then I went to Greece with my brother and it was really uncanny how often the number 61 or 60 in connection with 1 or 2 kept cropping up... especially those connected with transportation'. Royle reminds us that this is another uncanny event in Freud's life, thus laying counterclaim to Freud's conjecture that he personally did not have much experience in the matter. NB. The letter says 'would die'; my italics.
95 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.238.
96 Ibid., p.240.
powers.\textsuperscript{97} Citing \textit{Totem and taboo}, Freud asserts humans preserve ‘certain residues’ of the primitive man and the uncanny is an expression of touching upon those residues.\textsuperscript{98}

Accounting for the linguistic puzzle of \textit{heimlich} extending into its opposite \textit{unheimlich}, Freud hypothesises a preliminary conclusion:

\begin{quote}
this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression. This reference to the factor of repression enables us, furthermore, to understand Schelling’s definition of the uncanny as something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light.\textsuperscript{99}
\end{quote}

Proceeding by testing his thesis on further examples, he addresses death, dead bodies, zombiism, spirits and ghosts, claiming mankind’s attitude towards and handling of death has scarcely changed and that it too entails repressed beliefs.\textsuperscript{100} Accumulating his findings, Freud recapitulates:

animism, magic and sorcery, the omnipotence of thoughts, man’s attitude to death, involuntary repetition and the castration complex comprise practically all the factors which turn something frightening into something uncanny.\textsuperscript{101}

Not content with this, Freud introduces the \textit{uncanny living person} perceived as beholding \textit{special powers}, extending those to the uncanniness of \textit{epilepsy} and \textit{madness}. Whilst a patient’s mother provides proof-point, Freud postulates that everyone is dimly aware of their own potential madness, which is why folk commonly have uncanny feelings towards psychoanalysis. People with \textit{dismembered limbs} and independently-moving prosthetics are likewise considered uncanny, as is the terrifying phantasy of \textit{mistakenly being buried alive}, a permutation of the non-terrifying yet lascivious phantasy of \textit{intra-uterine existence}.\textsuperscript{102}

Connecting it with animism, Freud subsequently addresses the transmogrification of the once imaginary into the real, when symbols supersede the things they symbolise, affiliated with the ‘over-accentuation of psychical reality’ over material reality, before contending that

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., pp.240-1.

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., p.241, refers to Schelling’s definition of \textit{unheimlich}.

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., pp.241-3, referencing his \textit{Totem and taboo}, says, ‘All supposedly educated people have ceased to believe... [in] spirits... their emotional attitude towards their dead... highly ambiguous and ambivalent... has been toned down in the higher strata of the mind into an unambiguous feeling of piety’

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p.243.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., p.244. Dismembered limbs and artificial body parts are discussed referencing Hauff’s \textit{The story of the severed hand} and Schaeffer’s fiction. In Freudian terms, ‘phantasy’ refers to an unconscious process that represents wish fulfilment, while ‘fantasy’ signifies a (pre)conscious daydream or pretend world.
neurotic psycho-analysands who sense uncanniness 'about the female genital organs' reflect repressed remembrances of their first home, the womb. 103

In the final section, Freud changes position from defence to offence, rebutting earlier propositions and addressing attending doubts. Reiterating an earlier theme, Freud rebounds, 'not everything that recalls repressed desires and surmounted modes of thinking belonging to the prehistory of the individual and of the race' is uncanny. 104 Rebutting most of the supportive examples adduced earlier, 105 he similarly rebuts the uncanniness of inanimate objects (like pictures or dolls) coming to life, and renounces the uncanniness of the dead returning to life and spontaneous repetition. 106 Freud then questions whether factors of silence, darkness and solitude ought to be dismissed, and whether 'intellectual uncertainty' be discounted considering 'its importance in relation to death'. 107 Concluding other elements exist which produce uncanniness, and doubting it proceeds from something familiar-yet-repressed, Freud begins a different course—an aesthetic enquiry, mooting, 'nearly all the instances that contradict our hypothesis are taken from the realm of fiction... [therefore] we should differentiate between the uncanny that we actually experience and the uncanny that we merely picture or read about'. 108 Freud commences by referring back to surmounted but niggling and enduring beliefs of primitive forefathers: 'omnipotence of thoughts... fulfilment of wishes... secret injurious powers' and the returned dead. 109 Qualifying this, he says people who have rid themselves of animistic beliefs become desensitised to uncanny coincidences, mysterious repetition, deceptive sights and suspicious noises, although he notes the uncanny 'effect of meeting one's own image unbidden and unexpected'. 110

103 Ibid., pp.244-5. He talks about 'the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced', citing a story written in a then recent publication of Strand Magazine, the story concerns a table's crocodile carvings transmogrifying as haunting ghosts.
104 Ibid., p.245.
105 Freud specifically excludes Hauff and Polycrates, and includes Herodotus's story of Rhampsinitus' treasure and fairytales like "The three wishes", although Herodotus's story and the "three wishes" had not yet been mentioned.
106 Inanimate objects coming to life, like those of Hans Andersen's stories and that of Pygmalion, and the dead reviving, as in the tale of Snow White and the resurrection miracles of the New Testament.
107 Ibid., p.247.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.

102 Ibid., pp.244-5. Freud provides another personal encounter of seeing himself in mirror reflection, and that of Ernst Mach's unexpected encounter, observed in Mach's The analysis of sensations, originally published 1885; Freud quotes from the 2nd edition of 1900. Note: trains are common to both men's experience of unexpectedly meeting their self-double whereas trains and railway journeying motifs are used in aesthetics of the uncanny, discussed in part two. In Mach's book, traces of Freud's thinking can be found; perhaps as inspiration to go beyond Mach's explanations of memory, pp.235-44, for example, in Ernst
Key to Freud's theory, he argues that real-life uncanny occurrences proceed from the psychical registration that memory has been repressed and returned, before introducing the 'more fertile province' of the literary uncanny, which, he asserts, contains the real-life uncanny yet something more, with 'many more means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than there are in real life'.

Freud proceeds to explain how literature recreates the uncanny, excluding narratives of fairytales and poetic settings where unreal worlds are invoked by admitting super/spiritual beings, like daemonic spirits and ghosts which deny uncanniness because the reader's judgement is preordained, proposing uncanniness is reproducible and incremental if stories are set in 'the world of common reality' and convey events which rarely happen, thereby igniting ostensibly surmounted superstitions 'by promising to give us the sober truth' but then overstepping it.

Examining why some things emanate uncanniness, citing the story of Rhampsinitus's severed hand, he declares, 'the uncanny which proceeds from repressed complexes is the more resistant', before contending that the humour of Oscar Wilde's *Canterville ghost* extinguishes uncanniness, yet 'silence, solitude and darkness' factor as 'elements in the production of the infantile anxiety from which the majority of human beings have never become quite free'.

Overall, Freud phrases his theories more speculatively rather than scientifically whilst appearing confident and authoritative, yet sometimes hesitantly unsure. His interpretation of *The sandman* was of the thematic, allegorical plane, and rather than analysing formal aspects, he purposes aspects of it to support his argument. The overriding verdict Freud makes sees Nathanael as unable to form a coherent ego because of an inability to repress
paternal threat of castration, accounting for the prominent eyes/sight motifs in *The Sandman*. Notwithstanding important criticism discussing Freud's focus on the castration complex as accounting for uncanniness, his notions concerning the return of the repressed regardless of content and that uncanny sensations are formed by the abrupt realisation that the trigger into one's unconscious has been tripped, uncovering one as being of dualistic minds, are key concepts gleaned from his essay.

**The post-Freudian uncanny: Interpretations and critiques**

Not intentionally divisive, the term 'post-Freudian' incorporates various subsequent perspectives to Freud's notions, including detractors and those who appropriated and extended his ideas. In considering the many critiques written about Freud's essay, the following literature review embraces prudency and caution as it relies on exercises of transposing the meaning of 'unheimlich' from an essay written in German by someone who relied on decoding oblique messages and meanings from fiction and fictitious characters, which Freud dictated as suitably uncanny, then someone else translating that into English. Consider, too, the translational difficulties encountered with 'unheimlich,' which is literally translated into English as 'unhomely' yet incorporates and transcends the narrower meaning of 'unhomely.' Indeed, Freud shows 'unheimlich' does not have the same semantic structure as 'uncanny,' whereas literary critics and semioticians warn against ventriloquizing Freud as an English speaker. Nonetheless, to disregard the 'English Freud' is inconceivable considering scholarship overwhelmingly references and builds upon his pivotal contribution.

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116 For example, Bresnick, op. cit., and Rand and Torek, op. cit.
117 Both Jentsch and Freud's accounts are based on characters from fiction, a practice which is similar to the 'Identity Club' of psychologists who base theories on fictional characters in Nigel Dennis' satirical fiction, *Cards of Identity* (1955).
118 Freud's translators comment, 'The English term [uncanny] is not, of course, an exact equivalent of the German one [*unheimlich*]. In the section of the essay where Freud offers the definition of *unheimlich* in other languages, the English is translated as: '(from the dictionaries of Lucas, Bellows, Flügel and Muret-Sanders). Uncomfortable, uneasy, gloomy, dismal, uncanny, ghastly; (of a house) haunted; (of a man) a repulsive fellow; see Freud, "The 'uncanny", op. cit., pp.219-21.
119 Royle, *The uncanny*, op. cit., p.11: 'We have... been doing something strange with Freud, ventriloquizing him into an English speaker'. Royle's observation somewhat echoes that of Jacques Derrida, "Of spirit", trans. Geoff Bennington and Rachel Bowley, *Critical Inquiry*, vol.15, no. 2 (Winter 1989), pp. 457-74, p.470: in speaking of Heidegger's (feigned) avoidance and use of "spirit", he writes: 'Geist' is always haunted by its *Geist: a spirit, or in other words, in French [and English] as in German, a phantom, always surprises by returning to be the other's ventriloquist'.
120 Consequently, the discourse on the uncanny applies a psychoanalytical perspective to the detriment of other viewpoints, including evolutionary psychology, social constructionism (looking at social effects and motivation processes etcetera), cognitive appraisal theories, and neurology.
Undertaking to define 'uncanny,' Freud stresses binary oppositions, highlighting the difficulty of overcoming contradictions regarding 'unheimlich' and 'heimlich,' and concluding they cannot be poles apart as they collide:

What interests us most... is to find that among its different shades of meaning the word 'heimlich' exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, 'unheimlich.' What is heimlich thus comes to be unheimlich... [in that one meaning for heimlich is] what is concealed and kept out of sight.123

He devises, 'heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich [which] is in some way or other a sub-species of heimlich.'122 The binary construct of canny-uncanny is similarly problematic, though rather than act as deterrent to Freud's translators, they use it to validate assimilating 'unheimlich' and 'uncanny.' Yet looking at 'heimlich' and 'canny,' there appears to be only one similarity (among many different meanings for both words): 'snug, comfortable, pleasant and cosy'. So the preferred or 'unmarked' partner terms are quite different to each other.121 Consequently, it should hold — in reverso — 'unheimlich' is unlike 'uncanny,' therefore assimilating them is problematic or even futile. Nonetheless, Freud, endeavouring to show 'unheimlich' had universal meaning, researched its foreign language equivalents. Anachronistically, taking up the mantle of Lévi-Strauss,124 Freud might have suggested the uncanny as being a mytheme, whereby cross-cultural variances retain an unchanging, universal core. Similarly, Michael Arnzen proposes, 'the uncanny should be read as an ideologeme — an ideological structure that consistently reappears across vastly differing narrative contexts'.125 Contrarily, Freud's essay shows 'unheimlich,' and by association 'uncanny', does not have convincing universality. He admits,

121 Freud, "The 'uncanny'”, op. cit., p.224.
122 Ibid., p.226.
123 OED's trace of 'canny' dates from 1637 (in reference to 'Knowing, sagacious, judicious, prudent; wary, cautious. Sc. arch.'), whilst its etymology of 'uncanny' dates back to 1596 (meaning 'mischievous, malicious'). A closer time equivalent of uncanny, in 1639, is 'unreliable, [and] not to be trusted'. As demonstrating the tyranny of meaning and translations over time, see OED, 'canny', 2nd ed., 1989, OED online, http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50032541, accessed 18/6/09, which defines 'canny' as: 1.Knowing, sagacious, judicious, prudent; wary, cautious...; b. esp.Cautious in worldly matters, worldly-wise, shrewd, having a constant eye to the main chance; cunning, artful, wily...3.Skilful, clever, "cunning" (in the old sense). canny wife: "wise woman", midwife... hence canny moment: moment of childbirth. Sc. arch.;14.Supernaturally wise, endowed with occult or magical power...15.Lucky, fortunate, prosperous...; b. Lucky or safe to meddle with; esp. with negative. Cf. UNCANNY...;6. Careful, frugal, thrifty...7.Careful or cautious in motion or action; hence, quiet, gentle, "soft" of speech; free from commotion, disturbance, or noise... 10. Also used advb...to go cautiously, quietly, gently, carefully, wary'.
124 Incidentally, Lévi-Strauss, in his studies of myth, considers binary opposition as being a basic brain function.
the dictionaries... tell us nothing new, perhaps only because we ourselves speak a language that is foreign. Indeed, we get an impression that many languages are without a word for this particular shade of what is frightening.126

Although he ascertained that several foreign languages did not have a word for unheimlich, he nevertheless assumes they too must experience uncanniness.127

Among many critiques of his essay, theorists like Bresnick argue that when Freud announces uncanny effects occur when ‘imagination and reality is effaced’, he essentially alludes to it as amounting to ‘a disturbance in the everyday function of language, a making uncertain of the symbolic function as the literal and figurative registers of language are momentarily scrambled’.128 Famously, Jacques Derrida (1993) spoke of the spectral, hauntingly uncanny qualities of Marxist discourse, describing unheimlich as a ‘word of irreducible haunting or obsession’, adding, ‘The most familiar becomes the most disquieting’, and, ‘a stranger who is already found within... [is] more intimate with one than one is oneself’.129 Derrida’s interest in the uncanny emerged earlier and persists throughout his writing, including his concept of ‘hauntology’ and his theories concerning the relativity of past, present and future, and spectres which intercede and dissolve time constructs. 130 Derrida recapitulates the obscurity binary oppositions possess, deconstructing them as not exclusively either/or but as both: ‘homely’ never cancels out ‘unhomely’ but reiterates it. In Derridean Postmodernist interpretations, boundaries dissolve, polarities collapse, and language is continually re-contextualised; continually made uncannily familiar-unfamiliar. Postmodernism, for Derrida, embodied the disruption of binary opposites, consequently positioning the uncanny as significant to that era. Successively, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (1983) maintains das unheimliche is

126 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.221.
127 Of those who argue that Freud’s assumption was an injudicious leap of faith, Hertz, op. cit., p.104, explains that Freud was motivated towards a universality of the uncanny as a form of castration complex, linking it with repetition-compulsion and the death drive. Freud regarded all these notions as being universally applicable psychoanalytical traits.
128 Bresnick, op. cit., p.119.
129 Derrida, Specters of Marx, op. cit., p.144 and p.172. Importantly, for Derrida, meaning is never fixed, such that the meaning of ‘uncanny’ is common to his whole deconstructive enterprise.
130 Among many earlier examples, Jacques Derrida, The post card: From Socrates to Freud and beyond, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987 (originally published 1980), p.270, discusses the interlacing of Freud’s works, particularly Beyond the pleasure principle and Das unheimliche, saying ‘as a doubling doubling his double, the devil overflows his double... [it is] the double of his double that produces the “unheimlich” effect’. Derrida’s ‘postcard’ is like a many times overwritten palimpsest with no particular author or destined reader, itself exemplifying the ghostly doubling and echoes of the written word as producing uncanny effects. Ideas concerning textual haunting, ‘hauntology’, introduced in Derrida, Specters of Marx..., op. cit., p.51, are developed by many including Julian Wolfreys, Victorian hauntings: Spectrality, gothic, the uncanny and literature, Basingstoke, UK: Houndmills; New York: Palgrave, 2002. Royle, The uncanny, op. cit., covers many Derrida texts in relation to the uncanny.
'essentially a matter of language' — especially of the poetic and the collapse of language poetry brings about — as an abyssal site of uncanniness, and emphatically, that language, with its perversions and dichotomies, 'harbours the Unheimliche as possibility'.

This possibility is the presence of persistent ambiguity and dichotic tensions of a word becoming as one with its opposite. Susan Bernstein picks up the strands of such theories in an essay (2004) which corrals texts describing the uncanny as indescribable to form notions about 'the ambulatory uncanny' as a process of walking: 'In walking, the excesses of time and space, of the materiality of writing, of the process of signification, have priority over any signified sense, any subjective interior, any invisible cause or ground'.

In similar vein, particularly referencing the uncanniness of repetition compulsion, Neil Hertz argues, 'the irreducible figurativeness of one's language is indistinguishable from the ungrounded and apparently inexplicable notion of the compulsion itself', and asserts the Freudian uncanniness comes from 'being reminded of the repetition compulsion', not 'whatever it is that is repeated' — that is, the process produces an uncanny sensation, not necessarily the content. In the utterance of a given word, the silent repetition of its opposite occurs, something unsaid or unwritten is also repeated and resonates as another utterance, thus forming a circular repetition.

Tzvetan Todorov's attempt (1970) at structuralising the fantastic of literature saw him align and differentiate the fantastic and marvellous with the uncanny using a diagram of four sectors: uncanny; fantastic-uncanny; fantastic-marvellous; and, marvellous. Whilst he positions the marvellous and the uncanny as being close neighbours, his attempt at bedding these 'semi-genres' has been criticised as being too simplistic and self-

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131 Lacoue-Labarthe addresses Martin Heidegger's work on the uncanny of language — moreover, Paul Celan's same of poetry; ideas expanded upon in chapter six; see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Catastrophe: A reading of Paul Celan's 'The meridian'", Oxford Literary Review, vol.15, no.1 (July 1993), pp.3-41, p.12. Lacoue-Labarthe's ideas are also discussed in Bresnick's essay.

132 Bernstein, op. cit.

133 Hertz, op. cit., p. 121 and p.101, respectively.

134 Tzvetan Todorov, The fantastic: A structural approach to a literary genre, trans. R. Howard, Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve Univ., 1973, p.44. Todorov, the fantastic and the uncanny also come together in Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: The literature of subversion, London: Methuen, 1981, pp.62-72. Ibid., p.63 defines the uncanny as 'a term which has been used philosophically as well as in psychoanalytic writing, to indicate a disturbing, vacuous area'. Terri E. Apter, Fantasy literature: An approach to reality, London: Macmillan, 1982, pp 32-47, offers an earlier summary of the Freudian uncannay, asking, p.37, 'Why must Freud's story [of The sandman] be the story?' Albeit Apter's interpretation of The sandman is interesting, her précis of Freud is sometimes elementary; for example, ibid., p.40 states Freud's uncannay is 'a repetition compulsion in the unconscious, strong enough to overrule the pleasure principle'. Even so, she provides good insight into fear in the ambiguous, incompleteness and unexplained, the double and its relation to the uncanny, pp.48-66.
Among his claims, Todorov submits, 'the uncanny is not a clearly delimited
genre, unlike the fantastic', yet the fear it effects approximates it alongside the fantastic.

Of Todorov’s insights into Freud’s essay, some are pertinent here, including his observation, 'It is as if psycho-analysis were at once a science of structures and a technique of interpretation’, because it simultaneously purports to describe a mechanism of psychic activity whilst revealing ‘the ultimate meaning of the configurations so described’, thus answering both ‘how’ and ‘what.’ Todorov dismisses Freud as misappropriating and reducing literature to the ‘rank of a simple symptom’.137

Following along similar Freudian lines, Jacques Lacan rationalises the constitution of the ego as being based on imagining one’s identity as the reflection of the mirror (the ‘mirror phase’ of development) or as another’s image, such that one’s self-identity is located in external and therefore foreign, alienating places. The ego systematically and inauthentically develops this self-image as a means of coordinating an otherwise fragmented and disturbing idea of oneself. This accounts for others (‘object-A’ or the Other) sometimes appearing uncanny to another (‘subject-B’), as the latter momentarily acknowledges self-deception in self-reflection. Emphasising symbolism and signification, Lacan stresses the notion that ‘the unconscious is structured like a language’ because language translates and structures sensory images.138

Language assumes a broader meaning, encompassing symbolism and the process of forming meaning, and the unconscious is neither individual

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135 For example, Stanislaw Lem, “Todorov’s fantastic theory of literature”, trans. Robert Abernathy, *Science Fiction Studies*, vol.1, no.4 (Autumn 1974), pp. 227-37, p.229, censuring Todorov’s text as being ‘spurious methodological sophistication, that congenital trait of structuralism, for it is plain to see what [Todorov] is seeking: oppositions which come to light on a level of high abstraction...’ Similarly, Royle, op. cit., p.18, says ‘Todorov’s study demonstrates... the folly of attempting to provide a structuralist “explanation” of the topic’. Neill Cownell, *The literary fantastic: From Gothic to postmodernism*, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990, pulls together many objections to Todorov’s model, in general, and pp.37-8, for example, particularly takes issue with his writings concerning the uncanny. On the other hand, George Aichele, "Postmodern fantasy, ideology, and the uncanny", *Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genres*, vol.3, no.3-4 (The return of the uncanny, 1997), pp.498-514, p.503, contends, 'There are important similarities between Todorov's fantasy theory and Freud's theory of the uncanny... Freud's "uncanny" is not Todorov's "uncanny," but instead it is quite similar to Todorov's concept of the fantastic'. Also, Bernstein, op. cit., pp.1123-5; says Todorov puts two hierarchies in place: 'that privileging the concept of the genre over the particular case; and the pure and objective theoretical voice over the bodily bound reader, occupied with a material text in time and space: that is, reading... The particular uncanny phenomenon thus pre-dates and conditions the possibility of discovering a principle or rule of the uncanny...’

136 Todorov, op. cit., p.46.

137 Ibid., p.149 and p.151.

138 Jacques Lacan, *The four fundamental concepts of psycho-analysis*, Jacques-Alain Miller (ed.), trans. Alan Sheridan, London: Hogarth Press, 1977, p.149: ‘The unconscious is constituted by the effects of speech on the subject, it is the dimension in which the subject is determined in the development of the effects of speech, consequently the unconscious is structured like a language’, and p.203: ‘If psycho-analysis is to be constituted as the science of the unconscious, one must set out from the notion that the unconscious is structured like language’. Whilst Lacan was influenced by semiotics, his approach cannot be reduced to language alone. For example, his notion of unbearable suffering (*jouissance*) is found in the Lacanian ‘real’ and independent of language or the symbolic. Being at the core of psychosis, *jouissance* is fundamental to Lacanian psychoanalysis.
nor collective but, as Sean Homer puts it, 'rather the effect of a trans-individual symbolic order upon the subject'.\textsuperscript{139} The Lacanian unconscious 'is not biological but is something that signifies';\textsuperscript{140} it concerns the impact upon the subject of the trans-individual symbolic order (to which language belongs). Therefore, external factors control our unconscious, which is only known through the external structure of language. It is as though man is born into 'the fog' of language where, hard as one might try, one can never fully know its rules yet one's identity is formed through processes of learning those rules, rules which originate as and remain fundamentally alien. Although man assumes a 'first language' or mother-tongue, this language remains foreign yet part-takes in forming one's unconscious, defining identity and therefore evoking the uncanny. As Lacan theorises, people develop meaning through language, and language structures the unconscious and creates uncanniness in the first instance. The uncanny exists through language, which obscures words (signifiers) to their true meaning (signified); subset of the symbolic world, language both conceals and reveals 'the real'. Lacan composes a trinity made of 'the symbolic', 'the imaginary' and 'the real', placing special weight on symbolism, whereby if an object is deficient in meaning, the subject renders it as mysterious and uncanny. The uncanny is encountered at the disjuncture between signifier and signified, thus the formula, 'object-$A$ is uncanny to subject-$B$' can again be deduced.

In crafting his theories, Lacan coined a new term, extimité, conjugating 'exterior' and 'intimate' which Mladen Dolar explains as blurring their duality: extimité is located 'where the most intimate inferiority coincides with the exterior and becomes threatening, provoking horror and anxiety. The extimate is simultaneously the intimate kernel and the foreign body; in a word, it is unheimlich'.\textsuperscript{141} Dolar relates Lacanian theory to explain Nathanael’s desire for Olympia represents the notion of the desired-imaginary which is haunted by the encroachment of 'the real', whilst contextualising the uncanny in history — its ascendency in language and discourse in modernity, brought about by the Enlightenment. For Dolar, the modern uncanny 'constantly haunts it from the inside', whereas in pre-modern times the uncanny was 'largely covered (and veiled) by the area of


\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., p.69.

\textsuperscript{141} Mladen Dolar, "I shall be with you on your wedding-night': Lacan and the uncanny", October, vol.58 (Rendering the real, Autumn 1991), pp.5-23, p.6. Dolar reproves Freud for not knowing how to make use of the uncanny and also critiques Todorov's contribution.
the sacred and untouchable... assigned to a religiously and socially sanctioned place in the symbolic from which the structure of power, sovereignty, and a hierarchy of values emanated'.

He observes the irruption of the uncanny parallels the rise of Gothic fiction and its romantic aftermath, corresponding with bourgeois, industrial and scientific revolutions. Modernity tolerated doppelgängers, the dead and all things uncanny, tempting them out of the closet and redressing them as never before.

Dolar’s insights substantiate the proposition that The sandman both evokes the uncanny and relays the history of philosophical thought itself, transcribing it generally through the characters of Olympia (Classical), Nathanael (pre-Modern), and Clara (Enlightenment).

Whilst not making such direct links, though applying the Freudian uncanny in her late twentieth-century appraisal of eighteenth-century literature and culture, Terry Castle re-examines several litterateurs, contending that the eighteenth-century invented the uncanny via a systematic ‘estrangement of the real’, ‘its confident rejection of transcendental explanations... and self-conscious valorization of “reason” over “superstition”’, and the ‘invention of the automaton’. Whilst Castle’s points are largely indisputable, she disregards the etymology of the term in a wholesale claim over the topic, assertively seizing it as demonstrating a cultural shift from ‘magic to reason’ occurring, and subsuming the Enlightenment as evoking uncanniness, saying: ‘the more we seek enlightenment, the more alienating our world becomes’. Although Castle’s points strengthen the proposition that Hoffmann’s story locates the uncanny as transformations of enlightenment, the topic cannot effectively be consigned to such narrow contexts as Castle applies.

142 Ibid., p.7. McNulty, op. cit., considers ethical and religious underpinnings of concepts aligned to uncanniness, saying, p.xix, ‘Abraham models an ethics of subjectivity in which the self leaves home never to return... [and] In Abraham’s wake, the biblical injunction to “make a stranger native among you” (Leviticus 19:35...) inaugurates a relation to subjectivity defined by nomadism and dispossession, figuring strangeness as something “native” or uncannily intimate to subjectivity’.

143 Dolar, op. cit., p.7, chimes, ‘Ghosts, vampires, monsters, the undead dead, etc., flourish in an era when you might expect them to be dead and buried, without a place. They are something brought about by modernity itself. Whereas the ascendency of such “bogeymen” in fiction cannot be denied, to state that they have been brought about by modernity is to forget their presence and importance in hellfire and brimstone depictions of pre-modern times. Donald Kunze, “The natural attitude versus the uncanny”, paper presented at “Reconciling poetics and ethics in architecture”, conference, McGill Univ. School of Architecture, Montréal, 2007, reproduced at Reconciling poetics and ethics in architecture, McGill University. www.arch.mcgill.ca/theory/conference/papers/Kunze_Donald_revised_June6_07.pdf, accessed 3/12/09, shows the disadvantages of Dolar’s schema whilst introducing his own based on the matheme relationship which allows “twists” and ‘tricks’ to be incorporated, including ‘topographical complexities that involve doubles, the optics of appearance and disappearance, and the system of exchanges’ inherent to The sandman.


145 Ibid., pp.14-15. Royle, The uncanny, op. cit., pp.35-6 n.74, admonishes Castle’s attempt at bringing the uncanny to a dead-end and historicizing it in terms of invention, adding ‘invention itself may be uncanny’. 45
Whereas Todorov dismisses Freud’s use of literature, Lacan and Derrida posit words and language as central to uncanniness whilst Dolar focuses his paper on Hoffmann’s fiction, Cixous’s interpretation of Freud’s treatise combines literary and psychoanalytical readings.  

Although Cixous enthuses about the paper’s vacillating williness, describing it as a text with hesitating shadows and double escapades, and regards Freud as being caught off-guard, she does not consider whether this provocative air is a purposeful concoction of Freud’s. Cixous presumes Freud’s reader remains unsuspecting of his interpretation of *The sandman*, although he could equally be goading them into surveying it for themselves, whilst she censures Freud’s reading of *The sandman*, charging him with effacing ‘the characters who represent the *Heimliche*’, Clara and her brother.  

Much can be garnered from Cixous’s interpretation, including her observation that Freud considers the uncanny a domain and concept with an ‘elastic designation’ despite the ‘domain’ being indefinite and the ‘concept’ without nucleus, saying that Freud presents as being ‘on the fringe of something else... a concept whose entire denotation is a connotation’. For Cixous, the connotative power of Freud’s paper cannot be reduced nor admonished; her arguments comparable to Hertz’s contention that *The sandman*’s narrative technique and thematic concerns likewise intertwine and that Hoffmann’s story cannot be convincingly deconstructed.  

Julia Kristeva argues that the pre-Œdipal (pre-mirror stage) infant, the *semiotic*, is open to the prosody of words, not their literal meanings. In that vein, it is the ominous tenor or tone of utterances of ‘the uncanny’ which causes eerie foreboding, and consequently, one’s understanding of it is tainted from the outset. In *Strangers to ourselves* (1991), Kristeva contemplates the universality of the uncanny, restating Freud’s idea that uncanny foreignness ‘creeps into the tranquillity of reason itself... without being restricted to madness, beauty, or faith anymore than to ethnicity or race, [and] irrigates our very

146 Cixous, op. cit. Her paper calls to mind Bernard Rubin’s subsequent essay where he posits Freud’s essay as having ‘qualities of the uncanny in that the Œdipus theme is presented as known and familiar while another idea, somewhat unfamiliar and strange... keeps intruding in a series of footnotes: Freud’s theory of narcissism’; see Rubin, op. cit., p.206, who says that Freud’s essay continually shifts positions thus producing an effect of uncertainty.

147 Cixous, op. cit., p.533. Whilst Cixous’s point is not totally objectionable, it should be pointed out that any interpretation of another’s text, including her own, is entirely subjective; no interpretation can claim total fidelity. Thus, Cixous’s reading of Hoffmann is comparable with Freud’s, not necessarily better.

148 Ibid., p.528.

149 Hertz, op. cit., p.105.
speaking-being, estranged by other logics...". Here, Kristeva isolates the uncanny as a unique and separate feeling, and one which is universal: 'Henceforth, we know that we are [all] foreigners to ourselves, and it is with the help of that sole support that we can attempt to live with others'. Nevertheless, utterances of 'uncanny/l’unheimlich/l’inquietant' are purely contextual and must be considered individually, on social-by-social, case-by-case basis. In a post-structuralist sense, it becomes unfathomable to treat the uncanny as a universal concept, it must be analysed in each socio-cultural setting, including questioning whether it exists at all for some. However, Kristeva’s proposition that Freud guides an understanding of and way to detect 'foreignness in ourselves' presupposes its very existence. She questions whether the “political” feelings of xenophobia do not include, often unconsciously, that agony of frightened joyfulness that has been called “unheimlich”.

Her approach of analysing the socially-marginalised foreigner parallels postcolonial theorist, Homi K. Bhabha’s project of looking at the nation-state from the perspective of the marginalised, with both referencing the Freudian uncanny 'in order to underscore not only the duplicity and ambivalence of the margin but also the threat it poses to the homogeneity of the national identity'. When reading Strangers to ourselves, one habitually lapses between thinking of foreignness as being at arms-length or externalised to realising foreignness as being integral to oneself. Ordinarily, however, the alien becomes a means by which one placates the foreigner within, by first acknowledging the outsider (the

151 Ibid.
152 The scope of this dissertation does not provide for such thorough, cross-socio-cultural scrutiny, albeit to indicate opposition to treating the concept as a universal and separate entity.
153 Ibid., p.191. Kristeva is similarly problematic when, for example, p.191, she states, 'Strangely enough, there is no mention of foreigners in the Unheimliche', referring to Freud's essay. Again, p.192, she writes, 'Freud does not talk about them [foreigners]. However, contrary to Kristeva's observations, Freud does discuss the foreign in terms of foreign languages and also as himself as being a foreigner in Italy. Freud, "The ‘uncanny’", op. cit., p.237, writes, 'As I was walking, one hot summer afternoon, through the deserted streets of a provincial town in Italy which was unknown to me...'. Omitting such seems unfathomable for an author of 'foreigner' theory. Kristeva, p.191, does say, 'Delicately, analytically, Freud does not speak of foreigners: he teaches us how to detect foreignness in ourselves'; although Freud does both: he talks about foreigners, the Other and considers the hidden, foreign-self. Providing an important contribution as to the indebtedness of Freud to philosophy, Kristeva, pp.169-82, particularly looks at Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottfried von Herder as important forerunners to Freudian theory. For example, p.171, Kant's notion of separation combined with senin was a socially driven outcome which Freud takes in structuring the dual-self. Herder’s emphasis on the foreign is also relevant, such as, p.179, she quotes Herder: 'I observe foreign customs in order to conform my own to the genius of my fatherland, like much ripe fruit under an alien sun'.
154 Ibid., p.191.
Other as foreign to ourself) and then by acknowledging that we are all foreigners. This socialised self-appeasement allows us to (continue to) repress the 'real' alien – the foreigner within, thus denying our truly uncanny-selves. We become the toughened stranger, indifferent and resolute, pressing forward whilst perpetually remaining subconsciously hypersensitive beneath the armament. Kristeva posits, 'To worry or to smile, such is the choice when we are assailed by the strange; our decision depends on how familiar we are with our own ghosts'. Whilst a person's state of mind, in certain times and contexts (day/night, alone/accompanied etcetera) presumably modifies the efficacy of strangeness, Kristeva shows that one's choice is not clear-cut and that people differ in their (assumed ability) to acknowledge and know their inner demons or essential selves. Holding true to Freud's notion, 'what is experienced as uncanny... can be traced back without exception to something familiar that has been repressed', Kristeva's uncanny becomes a function of familiarity but with a multiplier effect and dependent on context (time and place). The uncanny cannot simply be turned off or on – it simmers below the surface and conditions must be conducive to its ascendancy. The uncanny, in relation to Kristeva's stranger, becomes sudden realisations of self-estrangement, that we are inherently unhomely – strangers to ourselves. Considering definitions of 'the uncanny' are very much products of their time and context, and for a given individual, what may be uncanny one day may not be the next, Kristeva's argument that cultural practice is not structured but a process of structuration is instructive in understanding the development of the meaning of 'uncanny'. Certainly, one cannot assume to understand the uncanny outside its Westernised parameters unless it is actively researched in other contexts.

Anthony Vidler's *The architectural uncanny* (1992) was one of the first book-length studies focussing on the uncanny in the 1990s, a decade in which the uncanny thrived in

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157 Ibid., p.191.
158 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.247.
159 Kristeva, "The system and the speaking subject", in Toril Moi (ed.), *The Kristeva reader*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, pp.24-33, p.32: Looking at semiotics from the viewpoint of the enactment of language by the 'speaking subject', she says, 'Semiotics can lead to a historical typology of signifying practices by the mere fact of recognizing the specific status within them of the speaking subject' such that 'we arrive at the possibility of a new perspective on history... [and] historical time'.
160 Vidler, *The architectural uncanny*,... op. cit. Although not as thorough in its examination of the uncanny, Mark Wigley, *The architecture of deconstruction: Derrida's haunt*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993, was published the year after Vidler's book and likewise positions the uncanny with the architectural.
theoretical discourse, a time when alienation was a common theme in art and music.\footnote{161} The thrust of Vidler questions how people’s lifestyle and psyche might be altered by taking into consideration the metaphorical uncanny as applied in architecture and urban spaces. Vidler collates significant texts concerning the *unheimlich*, encompassing Freudian and, to a lesser degree, Heideggerian philosophies, concatenating them in terms of building design and city planning. Throughout the book, Vidler tends towards discussing the politicisation of the uncanny, saying, ‘the resurgent problem of homelessness, as the last traces of welfare capitalism are systematically demolished, lends... a special urgency to any reflection on the modern unhomely’.\footnote{162} Whilst showing how it has been pressed into political service,\footnote{163} Vidler’s perspective arises from broader notions of estrangement whilst acknowledging the ambivalent, malleable nature of the uncanny. In defining his version of the architectural uncanny, as being ‘necessarily ambiguous’ and ‘combining aspects of its fictional history, its psychological analysis, and its cultural manifestations’, he hypothesises:

> If actual buildings or spaces are interpreted through this lens, it is not because they themselves possess uncanny properties, but rather because they act, historically or culturally, as representations of estrangement. If there is a single premise to be derived from the study of the uncanny in modern culture, it is that there is no such thing as an uncanny architecture, but simply architecture that, from time to time and for different purposes, is invested with uncanny qualities.\footnote{164}

Vidler relays the significance of the uncanny as represented as a leitmotif in nineteenth-

\footnote{161} Regarding the spike of interest in the 1990s, see Jay, op. cit. Many scholarly articles on the uncanny written in the 1990s are published in a special issue of *Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genres* vol.3, no.3-4 (Return of the uncanny 1997).

Dianne Chisholm in Elizabeth Wright (ed.), *Feminism and psychoanalysis: A critical dictionary*, Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992, pp.436-40, summarizes the uncanny and lists some key texts, saying, p.437, the concept ‘has received greatest attention from post-structuralists, literary theorists and feminists who read it as a formula for a genre of subversion and as a disclosure of the irrepressible literariness of psychoanalysis’.

\footnote{162} Vidler, *The architectural uncanny...*, op. cit., p.12. Ibid. pp.12-14 and pp.64-66, for example, discusses the uncanny in terms of housing/building/town planning crises, citing Bachelard, Adorno, Heidegger and Horkheimer. A paper considering the development of the concept, Annelen Masschelein, “The concept as ghost: Conceptualization of the uncanny in late-twentieth-century theory”, *Mosaic*, vol.35, no.1 (March 2002), pp.53-68, p.64, talks about ‘a fundamental inconsistency at the heart of its conceptualization, which is still in progress’, saying, ‘Vidler subsequently complicates this double Freudian-romantic genealogy by emphasizing the political-revolutionary tendencies within the romantic “origin” via the related concept of the sublime, which often occurs in revolutionary discourse of the period... The uncanny of the city is also traced through the isotopy of the word fremd “strange, alien” to semantically related notions from the Marxist tradition like “estrangement,” “alienation,” and “transcendental homelessness.” The term *unheimlich* thus receives a multiple revolutionary connotation’.

\footnote{163} Arnzen, op. cit., for example, considers the exploitation of the uncanny in capitalist marketing, noting, p.581 and p.585, ‘it is not simply *the* double which has become codified as uncanny in the twentieth century, but the *process* of doubling which has been figured as an uncanny experience, particularly in our postmodern television age... To compulsively return - to involuntarily remember - is precisely what lends the uncanny its frightening aura, because it happens beyond the subject’s control... It is in the interest of commercial and rational powers to “signpost” this threat, and assert the control which the individual has lost’. Contrastingly, the ‘nomadism’ theories of Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus...*, op. cit., of ideas and actions existing outside. Imperceptible and opposing the *State or politik* could be applied to the uncanny, thus placing it as being something which transcends and is incomprehensible to the political, and therefore essentially remains apolitical.

\footnote{164} Vidler, *The architectural uncanny...*, op. cit., pp.11-12.
century literature, including Victor Hugo’s novel of 1866, *The toilers of the sea,*165 which he wrote on the island of Guernsey, whence he spent 15 years in exile during a period marked by ravages of war and the relentless, indifferent and unprejudiced impact of the industrialization on all country and cityscapes, serving to heighten feelings of alienation. As much as war and industrialization were dehumanizing, nature was threatening and the island’s raw, untameable seascape provided a backdrop pitting man against nature.

With *The optical unconscious* (1993), Rosalind Krauss spurns the Greenbergian formalist perspective of art history, what she coins ‘modernism’s repressed other’, alternatively interpreting works of art as reflections of the inner-self of the artist and viewer.166 Looking at the Surrealist uncanny, Krauss notes, ‘the double that stands at the border between life and death [is not a barrier but]... the most porous of membranes, allowing one side to contaminate the other... [as] a harbinger of death’.167 In an essay of 1997, Krauss particularly reflects on Roland Barthes’s *Camera lucida,* which conceives photography’s ability to encompass three abstract ideas, the first being photography’s ability to ‘prick’ the viewer with the news of death, which Barthes terms ‘punctum’.168 Krauss’s particular interest lies in how filmic mediums appear to evoke uncanniness more than others – the ‘thatness of the photograph’, as she states. Secondly, she notes Lacan’s use of ‘tuche’,169 employed by Barthes to define ‘the Occasion, the Encounter, the Real’, and photographs as resisting the symbolic, before elaborating.

Having explained that ‘what I can name cannot really prick me,’ and having cycled through the various ways in which photography has been ‘tamed’ by being made to speak — overlaid by the symbolic systems of sociology, of history, of technical mastery, of aesthetics — Barthes lodges his own argument nonetheless in the wildness of the *punctum* and its situation beyond speech. So that if *punctum* and *tuche* connect, they do so as two parallel vocabularies — Barthes’s and Lacan’s — with which to register the traumatic nature of an encounter with a nonsymbolizable Real, a Real that addresses us with the news of our own death about which there is nothing to say.170

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165 Ibid., pp.19-20. Hugo’s inscription reads, ‘I dedicate this book to the rock of hospitality and freedom, in the corner of the ancient Norman lands where the noble little people of the sea live, to the island of Guernsey, harsh and sweet, my current refuge, my likely resting place’.

166 Rosalind Krauss, *The optical unconscious,* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993. Krauss, pp.12-13, defines her modernism to be ‘another name for a discursive field that, like any other such field, is structured’.

167 Ibid., p.172. Krauss is considered later in relation to Surrealism.


169 See “Tuche and automaton” in Lacan, *The four fundamental concepts...,* op. cit., pp.53-64. Lacan, pp.53-4, talks of an essential encounter — an appointment to which we are always called with a real that eludes us, as *tuche* as the encounter with the real, something he says ‘lies behind the automaton [and is]... the object of [Freud’s] concern’.

As a critical extension, Krauss adds or overlays a third term, 'uncanny,' whilst acknowledging that Barthes evokes it in the closing image of *Camera lucida*, 'where photography's traumatic, nonsymbolizable condition is unleashed by the filmed sequence of a man dancing with an automaton,' whereby implying Freud, the mechanical doll and Hoffmann's Olympia, Barthes's reader arrives 'in the territory of the repetition compulsion and the death drive and the way the various avatars of the uncanny are configurations of these effects'. Krauss, following Barthes, takes Bellmer's *La poupée* photographs (1937-8) as exemplary, pointing out that Bellmer's project was triggered by a performance of *The tales of Hoffmann*. Whilst Barthes moves directly from the specific to the general, Krauss shows the automaton is particularly uncanny:

> the choice of the doll exploits the uncanniness of the automaton, which Freud described as a double of living beings which is nonetheless dead... [alongwith Freud's other] examples of cases of doubling in which likeness is simulacral in that the relation between the copy and the original is that of a false resemblance, for while the two might seem alike to outward appearances, there is a fundamental dissimilarity at their core.

As an influential contemporary theorist and art historian, Krauss situates the uncanny in the realm of Freudian psychology, making it somewhat curious that Australian film historian, Barbara Creed, in her book *Phallic panic* (2005), mentions neither Barthes nor Krauss, especially since it delves into the filmic uncanny. In *Compulsive beauty* (1993), Hal Foster discusses the uncanny in Freudian notions concerning recurrent events of repressed unconscious beliefs/feelings, and in Marxist terms regarding trauma of alienation caused by capitalism, including how aesthetic representations of classical ruins appeal to the psyche's nostalgia for pre-capitalist (feudal) society. Foster asserts the uncanny as central to Surrealism, in the particular and general, and highlights an action of injury or damage as being relevant to the uncanny, saying, once repressed, the past, however blessed, cannot return so benignly, so auratically - precisely because it is damaged by repression. The daemonic aspect of this recovered past is then a sign of this repression, of this estrangement from the blessed state of unity.

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171. Ibid.
172. She had also pointed this out in Krauss, *The optical unconscious*, op. cit., p.172, as does Foster, op. cit., pp.101-2.
174. Barbara Creed, *Phallic panic: Film, horror and the primal uncanny*, Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne UP, 2005. Creed's important addition to Freudian uncanny discourse is referenced later in relation to case-studies based on the filmic uncanny. Whereas Creed, p.xix, argues 'civilisation is a myth' and an 'uncanny form of anxiety' has generated because of this, it might also be that the uncanny is an otherwise constructed myth, not necessarily a remnant of the other.
175. Foster, *Compulsive beauty*, op. cit., p.xvii and p.164. Foster, ibid., p.xvii, writes: 'the uncanny is crucial to particular surrealist oeuvres as well as to general surrealist notions'.
The damaging act of repression renders the familiar unfamiliar, the homely unhomely, and nostalgic feelings are comforting and uncomfortable. This damage notionally relates to repression of (and nostalgia for) the womb (Freud) or freedom/democracy (Marx). For Foster, the uncanny signifies this damage and Bellmer’s artwork conjures both the Freudian uncanny whilst signifying right-wing fascism of capital excess. Foster discusses revisiting outmoded yet familiar images and objects which are ‘made strange by historical repression, as heimisch things of the nineteenth century returned as unheimlich in the twentieth century’, and translates the Surrealist ‘marvellous’ (simultaneously ‘otherworldly, secular, and psychic’) as being the uncanny as projected ‘toward the world and future revelation’ in two states: as convulsive beauty (confusion between animate and inanimate); and, as objective chance.

Contemporaneous with Krauss and Foster, British artist, Mike Kelley started researching the uncanny in 1992, mounting an exhibition, The uncanny, in 1993. Essays in his book, The uncanny (2004), contribute to the discourse and meaning of the uncanny, including the paper, “From the halls of Montezuma”, which comprises many literary exemplars of uncanniness. Central to its purpose, it conveys important concepts surrounding uncanny contemporary figurative sculpture. Among many influences, Kelley is an ardent Duchampian and promotes the ‘real’ art-object of readymades as doppelgängers, unadulterated uncanny doubles. Although his work has been criticised as glorifying kitsch,
he refutes this, arguing that the uncanny denies the irony that the kitsch embraces, and instead affects the viewer beyond their control, and whereas the viewer maintains superiority over kitsch objects, the uncanny covertly assumes control over the viewer. In “Playing with dead things”, Kelley outlines his search for the uncanny:

What I'm after is a group of objects that... share an 'uncanny' quality. What this quality is, precisely, and how it functions, are difficult to describe. The uncanny is apprehended as a physical sensation, like the one I have always associated with an 'art' experience—especially when we interact with an object or a film. This sensation is tied to the act of remembering. I can still recall... certain strong, uncanny, aesthetic experiences I had as a child. Such past feelings... seem to have been provoked by disturbing, unrecallable memories [and]... by a confrontation between 'me' and an 'it' that was highly charged, so much so that 'me' and 'it' become confused. The uncanny is a somewhat muted sense of horror: horror tinged with confusion. It produces 'goose bumps' and is 'spine tingling.' It also seems related to déjà vu, the feeling of having experienced something before, the particulars of that previous experience being unrecallable, except as an atmosphere that was 'creepy' or 'weird'... related to so called out-of-body experiences, where you become so bodily aware that you have the sense of watching yourself from outside yourself.  

Kelley's references to grouping related objects pertains to the compulsions of collecting things which form repetitions, whereas his fellow-essayist, Christoph Grunenberg, discusses 'the secret cabinet of the collector', yet does not elaborate on Freud's collection. Another essayist, John Welchman, outlines the development and modes of the uncanny in art historical movements, including the demise of the uncanny in Pop Art, referencing Jean Baudrillard's notions of simulacra, where something's replacement object, once merely symbolic or referential, overtakes and becomes a 'real' object in itself. Simulation of reality becomes reality. Delineating the un-uncanny of Pop Art, Welchman argues, 'Memory is cordoned off into annexations of celebrity and surface' where production techniques and multiplication desecrate the primal uncanny and prevent the 'return of repressed experiences or emotions', adding a possible exception, products 'of a generalised alienation', before concluding that Baudrillardian simulacra sounded 'the death knell for the uncanny'. Minimalism also lays claim to the uncanny, according to Kelley, who talks about the shift from realism to minimalism putting greater emphasis on the base materials of art products, a phenomenon which, he claims, resulted in people becoming strangely body-conscious. Consequently, the 'focus of the art experience shifts from experiencing an...'

179 See Mike Kelley, Foul perfection: Essays and criticism, John C. Welchman (ed.), Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003, pp.61-2, in reference to a question about avoiding emphasis on postmodern traits in his project.
181 Grunenberg, op. cit., p.57. Grunenberg's contribution to Kelley's book aligns the uncanny with a confrontation with 'some unknown entity... transcending the common laws of physics and rationality'.
object to experiencing oneself in relation to the object’ during a self-conscious state which is ‘very close’ to an uncanny awareness that ‘one is not, normally, self-aware’. Associating the Freudian uncanny arousal of ‘dread and horror’ with the Burkean sublime, and both to minimalism, Kelley conjectures that the sublime transcendentally seeks the formless beyond whereas the uncanny moves retrogressively, to the ‘resuscitating of the corpse’. Arguably, this backwards movement into the ‘real’ self is necessary if one is to successfully transcend oneself. Unlike the sublime, the uncanny is ‘not about getting in touch with something greater than ourselves’ but about ‘getting in touch with something we know and can’t accept – something outside the boundaries of what we are willing to accept about ourselves... the limitation is us’. Whilst Kelley regularly cites Freud in regards to such matters, he could equally have been reflecting Sartre’s grasp of bad-faith, discussed later in terms of the Existentialist uncanny.

Concurrent with Kelley, Canadian curator, Bruce Grenville spent over a decade preparing an exhibition and accompanying catalogue, and surveying socio-political angles in relation to Japanese and Westerner’s fascination with the Techno-Oriental, importantly including the uncanny cyborg. Published in 2001, this catalogue offers several insightful, scholarly essays, including a précis on the historical development of the cyborg and notions concerning the human body as machine.

Amidst minor misgivings, Hugh Haughton’s introduction to the Penguin Classic’s publication of Freud’s essay holds more insights including that uncanniness concerns ‘obscure compulsions’ but it is not a force which compels one to do something, it effects one rather than necessarily causes something else. Haughton suggests Freud’s essay explores ‘wishful fears’, whereas the uncanny strikes unconsciously, not consciously or wishfully. Whilst witty epigrams, like ‘the uncanny, like charity, begins at home’, do little to convey the author’s authority, he introduces a significant error in misnaming Ernst

186 Ibid., p.67, continues, ‘I’m not interested in what’s not us’.
187 Bruce Grenville, *The uncanny: Experiments...*, op. cit.; Freud’s essay and Haraway’s “Manifesto for cyborgs” are here too.
189 Ibid., p.xlii, says ‘At its [Freud’s essay] heart, though, is the claim that the uncanny, like charity, begins at home’. Whilst Freud discusses the home as being significant, he does not claim it is as the sole origin of uncanniness.
Jentsch as Otto Jentsch, adding he was 'little known'.

Like many before him, Haughton regards Freud's essay to be 'one of the weirdest theoretical texts' in his canon and is confounded by its strange amalgam of different genres', a disorderly combination of 'literary criticism, autobiographical anecdote, etymological enquiry, aesthetic essay, psychological study [and] fictional anthology'. He situates Freud's essay in the context of its era, touching upon war-torn times and likening post-war Freudian psychoanalysis's conjuring of Gothicism to the rise of Gothic literature in the wake of Enlightenment, as a means of secular liberalisation. 'With the death of the supernatural, it is our own and our culture's disowned past that haunts us', Haughton writes, locating the uncanny in the gap left by religion and the supernatural. Arguably, therefore, the efficacy or significance of uncanny phenomena is heightened because of a deficiency in other paranormal enigma.

Antecedent to Royle's 2003 publication, he and Andrew Bennett co-authored a paper (1993), highlighting the uncanny as a key critical concept in literature and enthusing, 'few of Freud's essays have had a more pervasive and exciting impact on literary studies'. Describing the uncanny as a 'disturbance of the familiar', they note 'familiar' as originating from the Latin familia referring to spirits or demons attendant to one's pleas, and showing it and the origins of 'uncanny' as carrying forth expressions of nefarious underworlds, whilst providing a non-exhaustive list of forms the uncanny takes, including: repetition, dejà-vu and the doppelgänger; odd coincidences fated to happen; animism, specifically where the inanimate or lifeless are given attributes of life or spirit; anthropomorphism, especially human form of animism; automatism, particularly when humans are perceived as mechanical-like, for example somnambulists, epileptics, induced trance-states and madness; radical gender confusion; taphophobia; silence; telepathy ('because it involves the thought that your thoughts are perhaps not your own'); and, death, the ultimate familiar-unfamiliar. Written a decade following Kelley's first *Uncanny* exhibition in Britain, many of these ideas are fleshed out in Royle's 2003 book, which he claims as 'the first book—

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190 Ibid., continues to call him 'Otto' throughout his essay including footnotes, yet Freud's essay references 'E. Jentsch.' Perhaps Haughton was thinking of Otto Rank when he was writing?
191 Ibid., pp.xliii-xliv.
192 Ibid., p.xlii.
194 Ibid., p.33-7. The *OED* and *Chambers Dictionaries* reference 'familiar' as such.
length study' on the uncanny. His is a momentous consolidation of disparate treatises on the uncanny and closely related topics, although asserting it as the 'first' undermines important accounts such as Vidler's, whilst introducing oversimplifications such as reproaching Freud's essay as doing 'strange violence to its subject... denying it a history... [and situating] it simply as a "province" of "aesthetics"', whereas Freud pointedly provides an etymology and literary background, as well as discusses patient cases thereby broadening his scope to the everyday. Nonetheless, Royle's book addresses numerous aspects and associations of the uncanny, beginning by defining the uncanny, significantly based on Freud, and adding that uncanniness 'can be a matter of something gruesome and terrible... death... corpses, cannibalism, live burial, the return of the dead'. Whereas such forms of dread may factor in uncanny feelings, the uncanny itself is not death, corpses, cannibalism etcetera; it may be 'something' which obliquely reminds one of those (and other) things. This is an important, subtle difference because it remains possible to depict cadavers, zombies and the like without necessarily inducing uncanniness. Indeed, death, as a foot-soldier to the sublime, evokes manifold feelings of which uncanniness may represent one. So whilst the uncanny is often associated with the death-drive, it is not always present in death, just as it does not always accompany the abject, the grotesque and horror genres. In stating, 'It comes above all, perhaps, in the uncertainties of silence, solitude and darkness', his hesitation, 'perhaps,' is feasible because such specific times and contexts for which the uncanny must be at work are too limiting. The uncanny may work outside these 'lonesome' dimensions, and whilst 'uncanny' as a time-sensitive expression is accepted (semiotically, its meaning has changed over time), it does not impose a certain state to be in in order for it to be evoked. Like many others, Royle cursorily re-attributes (to Freud

198 In defining the uncanny, Royle, ibid., pp.1-2, essentially repeats Freud's terms, as clarified, ibid., p.28 n.20.
199 Ibid., p.2.
200 For a discussion on the uncanny in relation to cruelty and abject art see Sheila Kunkle, "The uncanny effects of cruelty", Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genres, vol.3, no.3-4 (The return of the uncanny, 1997), pp.556-70. Kunkle explains how the uncanny is ignited in abject art particularly when the art object literally reflects the double of the viewer's gaze. For a discussion concerning the abject, see Hal Foster, "Obscene, abject, traumatic", October, vol.78 (Autumn 1996), pp.106-24. Although they are disparate subjects, similar questions Foster poses of the abject might be asked of the uncanny, including whether it is possible to represent the uncanny since it is of psychological trauma, and does uncanny art try to 'fathom "the bottomless 'primacy' constituted by primal repression"'.
201 Royle, The uncanny, op. cit., p.2.
whilst it was actually Friedrich Schelling’s) the idea that the uncanny is ‘that [which] should have remained secret’, but in predicking this with ‘a secret encounter’, Royle presumes the ‘thing’ is already known and understood and therefore consciously kept secret, whereas the Freudian uncanny is neither familiar nor unfamiliar but obscure, unconscious and unknown. In Schelling’s day, ‘secret’ was associated with the mystical and occult, of the veiled and unknown; and, Freud notes, uncanniness is ‘something which is secretly familiar... which has undergone repression’, thus conjoining ‘secret’ with ‘repression’, emphasising it as unconsciously hidden. Royle tempers his proposition, saying, ‘it is not “out there”, in any simple sense’, progressing more productively with, ‘The uncanny has to do with a strangeness of framing and borders, an experience of liminality’, and that ‘it is never one’s “own”... [it is an] experience of oneself as a foreign body’. In this sense, Royle reflects Freud, Lacan and Kristeva’s concern with ‘foreignness’ and relates the uncanny to the ‘Other’ of the self, for which the double is closely related. Royle’s insightful observation, ‘The uncanny is never simply a question of a statement, description or definition, but always engages a performative dimension, a maddening supplement, something unpredictable and additionally strange happening in and to what is being stated, described or defined’, presents two important ideas. Firstly, words fail to stabilise a definition of the uncanny, and secondly, the uncanny requires active participation, it assumes a performative engagement which goes beyond the theoretical. The first idea appears thus far, to be defensible, although Heidegger tests this, as will be discussed later. The second idea requires careful consideration because it suggests that, be it uncanny literature and other aesthetic mediums including visual arts, film and photography, its reading or viewing assumes a degree of active participation upfront for the uncanny to be elicited, whereas one might be consciously or unconsciously ‘aware’, corresponding to delineations of the ‘public’ versus ‘private’ uncanny. Quoting Freud’s statement, ‘an author’s words are deeds’, Royle asserts, ‘They are deeds, we might say, precisely to the

202 Ibid., writes ‘The uncanny has to do with the sense of a secret encounter... something that should have remained secret and hidden but has come to light’. Freud, “The ‘uncanny”, op. cit., p.224, (in his italics, ellipsis and brackets) says: “Unheimlich” is the name for everything that ought to have remained... secret and hidden but has come to light” (Schelling); on p.225, he restates, ‘According to him [Schelling], everything is unheimlich that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light’. Freud purposely puts doubt on Schelling’s definition, subtly distancing himself.


204 Ibid., p.16.
extent that they can produce unpredictable and strange effects', whereas it is possible to assume (without proselytising Barthesian theory) that interpretants must likewise be engaged to some extent, otherwise the public/aesthetic uncanny has no efficacy. Such reasoning follows conventions which position respondents (readers of fiction or viewers of art) as coming to and sensing uncanniness not as unacquainted innocents, but as already possessing, often unconsciously, knowledge upon which uncanny effects are borne in relation; thus, interpretants receive, then interpret something as inducing uncanniness.

Scott McQuire (2008) provides a compelling exposé into what he terms the ‘profound de-territorialization of the home’ made possible by virtual extensions of it into cyberspace and the ‘electropolis’, where video, television and computer screens exceed ‘the camera’s prodigious capacity to hijack visual appearances and to transport them into new contexts [thereby highlighting] an unnerving instability in the bond between image and referent’. Likening Bill Gates’s plans for his mansion of wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling video screens (replacements for windows and eyes) to The sandman, McQuire speculates that photographic, cinematic and televisual ‘prostheses’ threaten to ‘effectively rob us of our own eyes’. McQuire reasons that although the nineteenth-century uncanny focused on the hidden, the modern ‘technological uncanny’ concerns itself with an ‘overexposure of space’ – of reaching and probing into once-intimate (bourgeois) living rooms and creating (democratic or socialistic) glass houses and digital homes, a phenomenon accompanying media saturation of ‘private’ affairs (as with ‘reality TV’ and intense celebrity exposure):

Modernity has frequently been haunted by the spectre of the loss of home. Not simply the nostalgia for the absent home... but a more apocalyptic loss of all homes... which has a material basis in the wholesale dispossession of indigenous peoples, the exile of refugees and the dispersion of migrant populations, forms the other face of the modern desire to reinvent the home by transcending its previous limits.

205 Ibid.
206 Among other things, Scott McQuire, The media city: Media, architecture and urban space, Los Angeles; London: Sage, 2008, pp.113-27, explains how the modern ‘electropolis’ uses light to reshape and invent new forms of architecture – for example, the commemorative shafts of light in place of New York’s World Trade Centre towers.
208 McQuire, “The uncanny home...”, op. cit., p.531.
210 McQuire, “The uncanny home...”, op. cit., p.536.
The 'heart' of the home is reinvented to encompass the amorphous interconnected bodies of the World Wide Web, satellites and international media outlets, as the physicality of houses as home gives way to virtual domiciles. McQuire observes, 'Faith in the capacity of visual images to bring us close to the real has been counterpointed by a growing suspicion that media form a screen blocking the real'. Our ambivalence is intensified by access to the instantaneousness and multiplicity of events which now take place 'real-time' across the globe, contorting constructs of 'distance, proximity and locality, as well as interiority and exteriority... [and] sites, boundaries, and systems of access and enclosure', as critical aspects of contemporary experience McQuire calls the 'technological uncanny', as a function of the 'overexposure of space'. Simultaneity and the 'relational space' between 'inside' and 'outside' are discussed as being 'suffused with “uncanny” experiences of doubling and displacement, as the pulsions of events in other spaces interrupt and recontextualize immediate experience'. Whilst technological advancements persistently alter perceptions of time and space (arguably dating back to the invention of the wheel, but more obviously with train, air and space travel), humans are inherently adaptable, and therefore such feelings of annihilation (and alienation) eventually diminish or pass. Whilst man adjusts to technological change, remnants of old beliefs nevertheless remain, repressed yet still lingering.

McQuire's ideas are founded upon questions concerning fabricated life as forming new realities where new familiar-unfamiliars are forged, questions which have long been associated with the uncanny. Importantly, Bresnick (1996) questions Freud's contradiction regarding 'art versus real life', arguing that Freud cannot differentiate the uncanny as real-life (private) versus aesthetic (public) because elsewhere he argues that art is real-life experience, establishing the two as inseparable. Considering this 'art-life/life-art' entanglement, Bresnick shows that Freud tries to 'subordinate aesthetic affect to rational

211 McQuire, The media city..., op. cit., p.10, says 'Conceiving the home as an interactive node permanently on-line to vast information flows radically alters the division and dynamics of public and private space. One result is a profound de-territorialization of the home, insofar as what we see and experience within its walls is no longer contained by their limits'. With this invention comes the 'displacement of geopolitics' since geographical distinctions are less and less important but also more and more skewed towards the control of the West. Instead of delivering the promise of an inclusive, democratic 'global community', electronic media throws off a 'distorted and paradoxical glimpse... [an] oblique vision which constitutes the third window’s most uncanny effect', writes McQuire, "The uncanny home...", op. cit., p.537.

212 McQuire, The media city..., op. cit., p.9.

213 Ibid., p.11, quotes Paul Virilio's notion of the 'overexposure of space'.

214 Ibid., p.25.
cognition, thereby gaining a kind of interpretive mastery over the work of art and the aesthetic experience.\textsuperscript{215} He perceptively oppugns psychoanalytic aesthetics as attempting to ‘enact a movement from the artistic sublime to the critically sublimated, or... from the imaginary cathexis essential to aesthetic experience to post-cathartic critical interpretation’.\textsuperscript{216} In assessing Bresnick’s objections, it is worth remembering Freud’s apparent tentativeness in dividing the literary/aesthetic uncanny from the real-life uncanny, as he himself could not entirely come to grips with the latter. Irrespective of whether Freud’s endeavour to master the uncanny was successful, this separation of the premeditated, aesthetically manufactured uncanny to unplanned real-life phenomena is well-reasoned. Among other ideas gleaned in Bresnick is one that sees \textit{The sandman} as a modern allegory about the sublime and uncanny nature of art,\textsuperscript{217} as they are brought together and entwined by Hoffmann as an ironic type of reading effect where a certain ability or tendency towards inability to recognize irony results in that which drives Nathanael to his death yet the reader towards truth. Bresnick argues that, unlike Nathanael, the reader is ‘able to take refuge in irony, recognizing their folly and laughing’.\textsuperscript{218} Focussing on the literary structure of Freud’s essay and \textit{The sandman}, Bresnick locates the uncanny as encountered at the juncture of where the reader realises the black humour and ‘reality’ of the story only after having been tricked into identifying with Nathanael (thus repressing the story’s recurring irony). Hoffmann achieves this by employing an effect Bresnick terms ‘\textit{prosopoetic compulsion}’, which is the ‘tendency of the subject to cathect works of art as if they were alive and as if one might enter into a truly intersubjective relation with them’.\textsuperscript{219} This can be likened to when readers empathise so much with the protagonist (or other character), they lose themselves in the story, getting so absorbed that suspended disbelief is enacted unconsciously as the reader unknowingly experiences themselves (potentially their ‘real’ repressed selves) in the character, \textit{mise-en-scène} or plot. Whilst Hoffmann provides literal ‘pointers’ that Olympia is not real, Bresnick postulates that readers unknowingly mistake the literal for the figurative and thereby go along with Nathanael’s judgement until

\textsuperscript{215} Bresnick, op. cit., p.116.
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., p.117.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., p.129: interprets Hoffmann’s \textit{The sandman} as a ‘wholly immanent allegory of the work of art ballasted by and striving to present an irrecoverably sublime affect at the heart of the aesthetic’.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., p.122. Bresnick’s insight into Hoffmann’s story is invaluable in its regard of the formal aspects of Hoffmann’s prose and in its explanations of how readers tend to become unwittingly and uncannily absorbed by aesthetics.
the end where the mystery dissolves into irony:

Whereas Nathanael is unable to cure himself of his compulsion to read figuratively, the reader of Hoffmann's story would take refuge in the literal allegorical and thus safeguard himself in irony from the prosopoetic mania he has been made to share with Nathanael. Yet if, as Benjamin famously suggested, the reader comes to fiction with 'the hope of warming his shivering life with a death about which he reads,' the question of whether Nathanael's final downfall is also the reader's final triumph remains in abeyance.220

Just as Nathanael indulges himself by over-investing objects as his psychic double, the reader of The sandman similarly 'luxuriates in readerly narcissism at the expense of what Freud calls "the reality principle"'.221 Although Bresnick insightfully reads the poesy and prosopoetic compulsion delivered by Hoffmann, he seems blind to it in Freud's writing. Whilst reporting that Freud 'categorically rejects Jentsch's argument' and that Freud appears 'more uncertain about uncertainty than he initially lets on',222 Bresnick discovers clues within Freud's text yet fails to interpret them as anything but confusion or contradiction, whereas Freud's uncertainty could equally be read as a certain playfulness, notionally goading a battle between himself, Jentsch and his reader, or as setting up disruptive ruses to invite reader scepticism in relatively minor points so as to deflect criticism elsewhere. Just as the reader unconsciously loses (and finds) themselves in The sandman, so can they in Freud's writing, which itself might be interpreted as effecting a certain prosopoetic compulsion.

**Intentionality behind Freud's essay**

Notwithstanding the numerous theories based on Freud's account, it is possible to glean new perspectives, including one which academia appears to have largely ignored: the notion that the by-lines of Freud's essay hold a personal dimension. His essay exudes an obtuseness and a certain uncanny literariness prevails which can only properly be represented literatim, with Freud skipping over thoughts, repeating himself, leaving points suspended and using flippancy to provide light relief to his reader. In this strange and confounding essay, his disclaimers show a tentativeness of an otherwise determined, authoritative author. As he litters it with literary examples, he includes personal episodes as legitimate proof-points, such that it appears the reader sees multiple sides of Freud. Among

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220 Ibid., p.130. Here Bresnick quotes Walter Benjamin, "The storyteller", in Illuminations, Hannah Arendt (ed.), New York: Schocken Books, 1969, p.101, saying, 'it must be said that Benjamin's comment bears specifically on the novel as opposed to the story, though it is surely also apposite for Hoffmann's tale'.

221 Bresnick, op. cit., p.118.

222 Ibid., p.116.
others, Royle attributes the ‘strange qualities of Freud’s text’ to uncanniness, and just as he illustrates where and how the logic of the uncanny is elsewhere at work, he demonstrates how “The ‘uncanny’” functions as being uncanny, citing Robert Young and Slavoj Žižek, who concur on its strangeness. Yet, that Freud may have purposefully obscured his text is not examined. Jane Todd observes that only in the 1919 edition of Freud’s essay was the name “Schleiermacher”...substituted for “Schelling”, and that, perhaps tellingly, schleiermacher means veilmaker. Todd quotes, ‘the phrase immediately following Schelling’s in the dictionary entry quoted by Freud is: “To veil the divine, to surround it with a certain Unheimlichheit”, assuming Freud’s ‘mistake’ was unintended. Whilst Todd attributes Freud’s parapraxis as a symptom of his own repression, he may have deliberately obfuscated it to disclose clues about a hidden objective to write a ‘veiled’ account of the uncanny – to uncanny the uncanny, as such. Irrespective of Freud’s followers or dissenters, it becomes apparent that few assume the position that Freud may have intentionally written “The ‘uncanny’” in such an oblique manner for the very purpose of enacting the uncanny in the reader. Cixous gets close to this proposition, asserting, ‘If we experience uneasiness in reading Freud’s essay, it is because the author is his double in a game that cannot be dissociated from its own text... he manages to escape at every turn of phrase’. Samuel Weber blames the sense of being led back to the beginning at the conclusion of Freud’s essay as being a ‘strange temptation’ of Freud’s, but, like Cixous,

224 This observation of Royle’s work has also been made by others including Peter Boxall. “Book review: Revisiting the uncanny: Nicholas Royle, The uncanny”, English, vol.53 (Spring 2004), pp.87-91, p.88.
225 Robert Young, “Psychoanalytic criticism: Has it gone beyond a joke?”, Paragraph, vol.4 (1984), pp.84-114, says, p.97, ‘this diffuse, repetitive, essay... itself appears as a kind of trap into which Freud has drifted “half involuntarily” through “the temptation to explain...” Freud retires baffled, and cuts the essay off abruptly’. Another critique of Freud’s writing is Krell, op. cit., p.68: ‘one of Freud’s most tentative, tangential, and inconsequential essays; it is poorly organised, even “lumpy”; [and] it is ostensibly about aesthetics, which Heidegger scorns’. Also see Bernstein, op. cit., p.1122, regarding the reading process as overshadowing its interpretive result. Royle notes Shoshana Felman’s essay, “Turning the screw of interpretation”, which discusses ‘uncanny reading effects’ in texts like Henry James’s The turn of the screw, see Shoshana Felman (ed.), Literature and psychoanalysis: The question of reading: Otherwise, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982, pp.94-207.
226 Todd, op. cit., p.521. Todd’s reading of Freud is a feminist one, acknowledging the social power of the female gaze (Olympia and his real-life encounter with the ‘painted women’, Freud. “The ‘uncanny’, p.237). Todd, p.528, says that Freud did not realise that ‘his examples... tell a story about men’s fear of women and the social consequences of that fear. If he failed to see the veiled woman, if he averted his eyes, it was because he, too, was afraid of being “blinded”’.
227 Ibid., p.521.
228 Cixous, op. cit., p.547. Nicholas Royle, “Portmanteau”, New Literary History, vol.37, no.1 (Winter 2006), pp.237-47, p.240, enthuses, Cixous’s essay ‘remains the decisive text... for a reading of Derrida’s reading of Freud’s essay... [and is] one of the greatest essays ever written on Freud. In its ghostly pursuit of Freud and Derrida, it articulates with relentless out of breath beauty the peculiar passion of strangeness and familiarity, intimacy and foreignness, that is to be encountered everywhere in Cixous’s writing’. Comparing Freudian and Heideggerian notions of the uncanny, Krell, op. cit., p.52, mentions that Freud’s ‘text on the uncanny constates and performs its subject’.
omits questioning intention, instead simply devises that Freud leads himself astray, resorting to ‘genetic-empiricist derivation, which explains less than it obscures’. 229 Admittedly Freud does obscure but one cannot forthrightly claim it was not intentional. Again, without posing intentionality yet praising Freud as a consummate practitioner of narrative, Robin Lydenberg’s paper provides examples of the ways in which Freud makes his essay appear uncanny, 230 whilst Sarah Kosman points out, Freud’s is ‘a text dominated by an investigation which is not, at any moment, complete without being immediately invalidated’. 231 Yet Freud invalidates nothing: each snippet, even those he rebukes as being not uncanny, progressively adds towards an understanding about the uncanny. Royle notes that on the essay’s penultimate page Freud admits defeat, 232 yet this failure may be a disingenuous perversion signalling something else altogether, especially considering Freud’s usual self-confidence, his claim of defeat might double-cross as personal victory. As Royle remonstrates, Freud keeps pausing in his essay, but this may be to take stock and provide space in which the reader may concoct further meaning. On the account where Freud pleads ‘obtuseness in the matter’, conceding he has long since experienced uncanniness, 233 Royle interprets this as Freud distancing himself from the subject in order to foster unprejudiced authority. 234 Whilst plausible, it may equally be a canny ruse framed by Freud to divert the reader back onto themselves, to ask the self-same question, thus refocusing the essay’s uncanniness onto the reader. Royle also contends that Freud appears

229 Weber, "The sideshow, or...", op. cit., p.1109.
230 Lydenberg, op. cit. Ibid., p.1072: "In these [other] texts...Freud does not merely reduce the verbal and visual arts to a set of psychoanalytic laws; he shows himself to be a consummate practitioner of narrative. His adept treatment of thematic content is inextricable from his awareness and manipulation of stylistic strategies and effects... In reading Freud, I take into account both the stabilizing and destabilizing literariness of narrative, which emerges as a hybrid of convention and innovation, law and transgression, logic and nonsense, conscious and unconscious effects'.
231 See Kosman’s text, "The double is/and the desis: The uncanniness of The sandman (Der sandman)”, in Kosman, op. cit., pp.119-62, p.121, which continues ‘in it the work of Eros is always undermined by the silent activity of the death instincts’. Kosman, pp.122-3, is another who wonders what motivates Freud to investigate this cause, calling his text ‘particularly “uncanny”’. Although Kosman endeavours to show Freud’s essay has a polemical aim – to prove that aestheticians ‘are prisoners of metaphysical prejudices... [leading] to radical oppositions between beauty/ugly, attractive/repulsive, pleasant/unpleasant, etcetera, she fails to acknowledge the uncanny as being less about repressed content and more about the trigger mechanism which reveals self-duality. She says, p.143, Freud ‘does not connect narcissism and doubling with literary “creation”, whereas he discusses the creative act throughout his essay, and, in noting the Pygmalion story, there is an undercurrent which connects narcissism and doubling with creative acts. Nonetheless, Kosman makes an important contribution, particularly in her close reading of The sandman. Indeed it seems that, for Kosman, Freud is simply a catalyst to get to the more reflective or engaging work of Hoffmann’s. Among many of her interesting interpretations of Hoffmann’s story, Kosman, p.143, sees the symbolism of the eyes as inferring ‘the principle of artificial life: the hero can only create narcissistically through his eyes, not procreate through his genitals... the [Olympian] eye [therefore] is a substitute for the sex’. 232 Royle, The uncanny, op. cit., p.13.
233 Freud, “The ‘uncanny”, op. cit., p.220. This notion, observed previously herein, is not necessarily disagreeable, however it certainly does not have to be exclusively nor independently correct either.
234 Royle, The uncanny, op. cit., p.17.
perplexed by Hoffmann’s text, yet he may have purposefully introduced an atmosphere of disconcertment and bewilderment as a means to reinforce the incomprehensibility of the subject. Just as Royle believes Freud yields to Hoffmann, Royle succumbs to Freud, and herein the cycle continues – not exclusively concerning literature about the uncanny, but all literature. Among Royle’s many erudite observations is one conjoining the uncanny with the fields of psychoanalysis and deconstruction, which he asserts as arguably constituting the ‘most significant “philosophical revolutions” of the twentieth century’, and can be seen as ‘uncanny modes of thinking’ As ‘uncanny discourses’, he writes,

...both, uncannily overlap; and overlap in and as the uncanny. Psychoanalysis is uncanny on account of what Freud himself calls a capacity for ‘laying bare... hidden forces’... it brings to light things that perhaps should have remained hidden or repressed. It makes the familiar (the self, desire, memory, sexuality, everyday language and behaviour) uncomfortably, even frighteningly unfamiliar... The uncanny overflows psychoanalysis... [into] deconstruction... [which] makes the most apparently familiar texts strange, it renders the most apparently unequivocal and self-assured statements uncertain... [and involves] surprising, indeed incalculable effects of all kinds of virus and parasite, foreign body, supplement, borders and margins, spectrality and haunting.

Following Derrida, Royle shows the familiar as always containing hidden, unknown elements, and that one can never truly know or understand one’s own utterances. Indeed, Royle provides a basis which might otherwise prove Freud’s intention to confound, disorient and befuddle his reader, including that Freud protests too much, appears to nervously quip ‘I think’; introduces assertions suggestive of ‘uncanny strangeness’; and, sophistry, especially in relation to the 'explanatory power of the concept of substitution’.

Recognising the open-ended and fluid interpretative power of Freud’s text, Royle reflects on Derrida’s preference to Freud’s ‘humbler and more powerful, less “dogmatic” writing style than Lacan’s, which, unlike Freud’s, tend to ‘subordinate literary writing’. Citing Harold Bloom, Royle observes, Freud’s treatise ‘offers a powerful self-reflexive model of “great writing” and its uncanniness makes it ‘canonical or “great”’. Similarly, Nicholas Rand and Maria Torok, although confounded by its ‘tortuous progress’, confirm, ‘the essay gives the impression of being unsystematic and yet it manages to cohere around a central

235 Ibid., p.39. A similar point made earlier is that Freud took from The sandman that which suited him in forming his argument. Likewise, Freud may have taken Hoffmann’s symbolism which applied to personal circumstances.

236 Ibid., p.24.

237 Ibid.

238 Ibid., pp.40-1.

239 Ibid., p.25. For example, ibid., pp.94-5, considers many of Derrida’s texts in relation to the uncanny throughout his own, such that it might be considered a haunting of the many times haunted.

240 Ibid., p.14-15. Royle enthuses, Freud provides ‘an extraordinary, seemingly inexhaustible demonstration of psychoanalysis succumbing to madness or more precisely to literature'.
idea', yet the possibility of Freud developing a system to do just that is not considered.

David Farrell Krell queries Freud's rationale of referencing aesthetics when, as he ponders, 'any patient on the couch reproduces those affects, emotions, and feelings without dilution', and wonders whether the exercise is a trivial diversion for Freud or a 'contribution to criticism out of the goodness of his heart'. Yet Freud shows concerted effort by introducing literary account alongside personal ones.

Challenging propositions concerning Freud's motivations include him fabricating and recording for posterity his own double, and a desire to enact an artistic bent which he had frustratingly abandoned for psychoanalysis. Bennett and Royle suggest Freud's text 'gives us two Freuds, or a kind of double-Freud', someone who explores the notion of the double in relation to the uncanny, although instead of questioning whether Freud was therein intentionally creating his double, they pose, 'What makes the double uncanny?' before proceeding to recite Freud's notion of the double being a promise of immortality (a doubling of oneself) and a harbinger of death (a reminder of mortality). Following such logic, I assert that Freud doubles and replicates himself numerously within the text whilst concurrently discussing the uncanny double. David Kennedy's proposition that elegies enact a doubling of their authors can be extended to all writing, where Freud's text is no exception, it exudes the ambivalence of uncanny doubling. Several literary academics have fleshed this out, overwhelmingly concurring that the textual slippages, ramblings and repetitions effect in a remainder which is difficult to deduce or rationalise, whereas Brian McCuskey goes further, maintaining that Freud's text tests the intellectual sophistication of his colleagues and whether scholars are clever enough to recognise the uncanniness inherent in the essay.

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243 Bennett and Royle, op. cit., p.38.
244 David Kennedy, "The beyond of the subject - mourning, desire and the uncanny", Textual Practice, vol.23, no.4 (August 2009), pp.581-58. Ibid. pp.586-7, observes Hoffmann's text as a doubling with Nathanael estranging himself from his own work, as upon finishing his poem he exclaims, "Whose dreadful voice is this?", a part of Hoffmann's tale which implies, Kennedy says, 'that the acts of writing and reading risk discovering or actively conjuring a doppelganger self that is unrecognised and unwanted... [and] that, like 'The Sandman', Freud's account of 'The Uncanny' also turns upon looking'.
245 Brian McCuskey, "Not at home: Servants, scholars, and the uncanny", PMLA, vol.121, no.2 (March 2006), pp. 421-36, offers another good example of how it is possible to read between the lines of Freud's essay and his use of The sandman, stating, p.432, 'his argument sidles toward the uncanny with enough affected innocence that it appears to sneak up and seize him unawares... Freud deliberately circles around himself in order first to produce an uncanny scene of writing...' Ibid. p.434, asserts, 'as soon as "The Uncanny" becomes its own best example of the uncanny, then the essay itself becomes a test of class for his colleagues, whose professional authority hinges on their response. The more readily one succumbs to the uncanny
Whilst much has been written about Freud's private life, it has been with difficulty because
he was adept at self-concealment. His many letters do little to betray the privacy he kept so
guarded. After his death, the keeper of those secrets became his daughter, Anna, who
released some personal artefacts whilst withholding others, many no longer extant.
Consequently, one must look carefully behind and into the fissures of Freud for further
revelations. Freud's office, a chamber adorned with antique figurines and primitive masks,
was where he welcomed Anna, his third daughter, last and favourite child, into the realm
of psychoanalytic practice, and where in October 1918 she became his analysand. Whereas
the unusualness of the father-daughter as doctor-patient coupling (and teacher-student)
imparts an uneasy dilemma which has been much discussed, the parallel of Anna as
patient/student to that of Olympia's subservience to Professor Spalanzani has not been
examined. Investing his essay with multifarious angles from which one can read it, the
fictional core of Freud's essay somewhat parallels his personal life.

Rand and Torok argue that Freud erroneously focuses on the Sandman character and eye
motifs as being related to castration, positing the story's main theme is about the repression
and return of a family secret. Their word association of *heimlich* and its relationship to
things hidden or secret to that of Nathanael's family secret makes tenable a link to Freud's
own family secrets. Reinforcing the secretive quality of the uncanny, they say that due to
the covert manoeuvres of parents, children 'become virtual strangers in their own homes'.

Whilst they note Freud's work as containing "inconsistencies and methodological

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24 By 1915 Freud considered Anna to be his favourite child. He wrote in a letter of 8 April 1915 to Sándor Ferenczi, 'She is
developing into a real charmer… more delightful than any of the other children'.

25 Freud wrote about the problems of transference, saying: 'The way in which this affection [between analyst and patient] is
manifested and the goals it strives for will depend on the personal affiliations of the two parties involved. When we have here a
young girl and a man who is still young we receive the impression of normal love. We find it quite natural that a girl should
fall in love with a man with whom she is alone a great deal, with whom she discusses intimate matters, who appears to her in
the advantageous light of a beneficent adviser… Transference may occur as a stormy demand for love or in a more moderate
form; in place of the desire to be his mistress, the young girl may wish to be adopted as the favored daughter of the old man,
the libidinous desire may be toned down to a proposal of inseparable but ideal and platonic friendship'; see Freud's, "General

26 To my knowledge, the link between Anna Freud as patient of Freud and Olympia as puppet to Coppola in *The sandman*
has not been observed or discussed before now. Marjorie B. Garber, *Shakespeare's ghost writers: Literature as uncanny causality*,
London: Methuen, 1987, pp.81-8, likens Anna to Cordelia in reference to Freud's "The theme of the three caskets", as does
Gay, op. cit., p.433.

27 Raad and Torok, op. cit., pp.185-203.

paradoxes”, they fail to contemplate if and why he might have intentionally adopted such devices, instead criticising him with the very same offence they themselves commit: the manipulation of a specific reading into a generalised finding. After regurgitating slathers of Hoffmann’s text and a little of Freud’s, they submit a tenuous argument before redundantly concluding, ‘Only further research can confirm or invalidate our hypothesis’. Contending Freud misreads *The sandman*, they say Nathanael ‘will never be able to grasp the nature of his father’s murky business with Coppelius’. Yet Freud’s point was that Nathanael held onto childhood fears which fatally overpowered adult rationality. Importantly, no univocal reading of *The sandman* is better or more correct than another, but is yet another legitimate reading, with its rich complexity accounting for its many, varied readings.

Phillip McCaffrey’s observation that Freud’s many literary examples comprise especially uncanny female characters which Freud subsequently ignores or mutes is significant to the notion of manufacturing hidden links to Anna. McCaffrey argues that Freud’s omissions would merely be curious except for the many examples of uncanny women he overtly ignores in-text yet cites their associated references, figures who ‘fall into the gaps’ of Freud’s essay including the teenager, Virginia, of Oscar Wilde’s *Canterville ghost*. Whilst observing other links Freud makes elsewhere with this character yet failing to mention her uncanniness in “The ‘uncanny’”, McCaffrey does not venture to mention nor compare

251 Ibid., p.186. Whilst Olympia ‘parallels the father’s and Coppelius’s secret machinations’ (p.197), she can also embody Nathanael’s fear and be the object of his desires, as not mutually exclusive, just as Freud is not necessarily inconsistent.

252 Ibid., p.202. The ratio of citations taken from Hoffmann and Freud in comparison to their own thoughts is symptomatic of their precariously weak argument, which they acknowledge by saying further research is required. Among other problems, they say, p.188, that Freud says the uncanny springs from things which ‘have not been fully outgrown, mastered or repressed’, when Freud says that infantile/primitive beliefs have been successfully surmounted and repressed. Oddly, p.199, they question why Freud asked why Hoffmann connects ‘the anxiety about the eyes... with the father’s death?’, when – they say – there was ‘no such connection’, which is wrong considering Hoffmann, a few pages before the father’s death is relayed, has Nathanael witness Coppelius making eyes and upon seizing him, threatens to steal his own; Hoffmann implicitly connect eyes with fear. Regardless if one agrees with Freud’s castration complex theories, their declaration, p.200, that ‘Injured, blinded or lifeless eyes are omnipresent in *The Sandman* and they symbolize the sheer inability to see – nothing else’, is unconvincingly reductive for such a powerfully symbolic motif. They also claim that ‘Olympia must be either the representation of Nathanael’s dissociated narcissistic complex or his object of love’, without acknowledging that Olympia can perform both roles. Royle, op. cit., p.72 n.8, similarly criticises their erroneous reductionism. Whilst Rand and Torok, op. cit., pp.201-2, say, ‘the uncanny does not arise... [because Nathanael’s] family is willfully concealing secrets from him’, the germane point is that it is not necessarily a belief but a feeling which Nathanael has repressed since childhood, and that feeling uncannily returns.

253 According to Rand and Torok, ibid., p.195.

254 I accord with Krell’s point, ‘To insist on Freud’s *misreading* of *The sandman* seems jejune’; see Krell, op. cit., p.55.

255 McCaffrey, op. cit., pp.91-108. Of Freud’s omissions, McCaffrey includes Aurelia from Hoffmann’s *The devil’s elixir* and Bianca from Wilhelm Hauff’s “The story of the severed hand”; ibid., p.97 and pp.99-100, respectively.
Virginia with Anna. Yet demonstrable parallels exist, including: adolescence; being the youngest sibling; purity combined with curiosity and delightful mischievousness; and, the double-edged anxiety of their fathers losing them to wedlock. Freud was particularly concerned about his colleague, Ernest Jones's intentions for Anna, for example. Correspondingly, both Virginia's and Anna's fathers were intensely despondent over their adolescent daughters' protracted absences, with Freud's commencement with the uncanny (as early as 1913) converging with Anna's absence, when, with her grandmother, she convalesced from depression and anorexia in Italy. It is plausible that Freud's fatherly concerns for supporting (and holding onto) his favourite child are massaged obliquely — and perhaps deliberately — into the passages of his essay.

Many overlook some of The sandman's literal clues, including the character named Siegmund, who exclaims, 'Do me the favour, [Nathanael]... of telling me how a clever chap like you could possibly have been smitten with that wax-faced wooden doll', whereupon Nathanael retorts, asking why Olympia's charms have escaped his 'active and intelligent eyes'. Perhaps it is he, 'Siegmund,' who Freud subversively acknowledges. Arguably, other clues exist. Freud revered Hoffmann as 'the unrivalled master of the uncanny in literature',360 pointedly mentioning his novel, The Devil's elixir (1816), yet thinking it too obscure and intricate to summarise, he glosses over it with reverie, returning to The sandman. Presumably, referencing The Devil's elixir meant something, especially

256 Neither does McCaffrey compare other female characters that exude uncanniness yet are 'missing' in Freud's essay, including the link between Anna, Shakespeare's Cordelia of King Lear and Freud's "The theme of the three caskets", as observed in Gay, op. cit., p.433.

257 Anna was in her mid to late-teens when Freud started cogitating on the uncanny. When she was almost nineteen, ibid., p.433, says Freud 'still called her "my little daughter" [significantly] to Ernest Jones... [Freud's] ulterior motive... was protecting Anna from Jones's amorous propensities'. A few years later Freud's disdain for Anna's suitors included Hans Lampl. Ibid, pp.428-46, provides an interesting summary of the closeness of Freud and Anna. Also see Madelon Sprengnether, "Review: Undoing incest: A meditation on 'Daughters and fathers'" vol.89, no.4 (May 1992), pp.519-36, especially pp.528-32. Also consider that in a letter dated 12 July 1908, Jung describes Jones thus: 'Jones is an enigma to me. He is so incomprehensible that it's quite uncanny. Is there more in him than meets the eye, or nothing at all?' see Freud and Jung, op. cit., pp.163-4 (letter 102J). McCaffrey, op. cit., pp.94-5, observes the link with Wilde's Virginia, who tears her dress before disappearing with the ghost and returns a changed woman. Ibid, notes that Freud elsewhere discusses Virginia (for example, "The theme of the three caskets" (1913)) and impresses upon Freud's own comparison to Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice and the fate, Atropos. Freud observes several trilogies, including the three caskets and women (Merchant), and three daughters/sisters (Myth of psyche); whereas of his three daughters, Anna was number three.

258 Another absence followed in July 1914 when Freud allows Anna to journey to England during the onset of WWI, a decision Jones, op. cit., vol.2, p.190, sees as puzzling.

259 Hoffmann, The tales of Hoffmann, op. cit., p.116. Nathanael continues, 'Heaven be thanked, I have not you for my rival; otherwise, one of us must have fallen a bleeding corpse'. This may allude to the rivalry between Freud and Jones for Anna's affections. Bresnick, op. cit., p.127, accounts for Siegmund's 'litany of aversive truth-telling'.

considering he nicknamed Anna ‘schwarzer Teufel’ (meaning ‘black devil’). Furthermore, as Anna’s biographer, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, points out, “The ‘uncanny’” is conceivably a source or reflection of his ‘views on female psychology [which] is directly and dramatically linked to... [Anna’s] psychology’ and developed in two essays of 1919 and 1925, which ‘depend heavily on the insights Freud gained as he analysed his daughter’.261 Remarkng on the ‘confidentiality of the analytic situation [which] is protected in the essays’, Young-Bruehl cannot confirm her suspicion that such essays contain biographical verification.262 What they do show however is a tendency of Freud to bring Anna (as daughter, analysand and colleague) into his writings, including my conjecture that Anna is an important figure behind — or between the lines of — “The ‘uncanny,’” with Freud himself sharing an equally important role as another ghost-figure.

His essay may enact a mode of self-expression wherein he constructs his own double. Baudelaire and Hoffmann believed that only the reflective acts of philosophers and artists could construe self-doubles — ‘madness or philistinism is the fate of those who possess only a single power of vision’.263 Bearing that in mind, Freud potentially performs a self-doubling as artist and/or philosopher in “Das ‘unheimlich’” whilst leaving traces of the self-loathing or double-bind of a Jewish man trying to advance in Vienna’s social and intellectual circles whilst enduring as the Other.264 His remembrance of the number ‘62’ reoccurring is another form of repetition and doubling, just as the bevy of texts Freud published serve as immortalisations, as Freud uncannily present in absentia.

Questioning whether Narcissus plays a stronger role than Oedipus in Freud’s essay, Bernard Rubin (1982) senses strong veins of intrapsychic problems, asserting both Freud and his

261 Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, Subject to biography: Psychoanalysis, feminism, and writing women’s lives, Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998, p.56. Young-Bruehl proposes that the essays in question are “A child is being beaten” (1919) and “Some psychical consequences of the anatomical distinction between the sexes” (1925).
262 Ibid., pp.56-7. However, in Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, Anna Freud: A biography, New York: Summit Books, 1988, p.104, Young-Bruehl shows both Freud’s essays contain autobiographical references, and the fifth and sixth patient cases in Freud’s “A child is being beaten” (1919) may well represent Anna, with Freud protecting his ‘daughter’s privacy with silence’.
263 Tatar, “E.T.A. Hoffmann’s...”, op. cit., pp.593-4 and p.605, repeats the notion of the power of dividing oneself as belonging to artists and philosophers, those who deal in language, claims which conceive doubling as a privilege of a few to the exclusions of others; for example, long-distance runners or mountain climbers who may experience insight into their doubles/Other, and conceivably, actively employ this phenomena in their endeavours. Importantly, Freud’s competitiveness extended to other professions, especially philosophy. The nexus of Freudian psychoanalytical theory and philosophy is a topic of much discussion, including Stanley Cavell, “Freud and philosophy: a fragment”, Critical Inquiry, vol. 13, no. 2 (The trial(s) of psychoanalysis, Winter 1987), pp. 386-93. It is said, ibid., p.389, that philosophy was uppermost in Freud’s thinking in Beyond the pleasure principle, coinciding with Freud’s work on the uncanny.
264 Geller, op. cit., discusses the possible outcomes of Freud’s sense of alienation, linking it with the uncanny.
reader struggle against creative uncertainties.\footnote{Rubin, op. cit.\cite{265}} Rubin’s thesis promotes Freud’s narcissism theories ahead of Edipal complex theories, arguing Freud’s essay was an act of self-questioning and repositioning of his key theories. ‘Intellectual uncertainty’ can thus be attributed to Freud’s self-regarding. Without considering notions of intentionality, Rubin writes, ‘the uncanny is the affective experience of the reader engaged through the text in the narcissistic aspects of the author’s creative uncertainties’.\footnote{Ibid., p.213.} In his enquiry, Rubin discusses \textit{The sandman} as being about ‘the experience of the mind looking at itself creating’, whilst posing both Hoffmann’s and Freud’s texts as visualising ‘the self in its creative and disrupted aspects’,\footnote{Ibid., p.215.} whereby Olympia and Clara represent Nathanael’s narcissistic self-admiration of his artistic-self, thus symbolising art. Self-questioning, internal to both texts, is a significant factor in Rubin’s notions about uncanniness as being an affect produced via creative uncertainty.

Bearing in mind the points conveyed above, it is quite possible that in and through his essay, Freud questions and doubles himself, plus instigates a ‘double-doubling,’ taking into consideration the role of Anna, who, from early on, cared for and mothered her father, nursing the aging Freud just as Amalia, his mother, had cared for her ‘little Siggy’, with both women bestowing ‘attention to his greatness’.\footnote{Rubin, then professorial lecturer in psychiatry at the Univ. of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine, considers three inter/intrapersonal, narcissistic issues (primacy, centrality and continuity) to be behind Freud’s paper, contending, p.212, ‘There were split-off aspects of the self which reappear uncannily in his theorizing in this essay’.\cite{265}} In linking Anna with Amalia, comparisons can be drawn using Freud’s ideas discussed in his essay, “The theme of the three caskets,” where the first (representing his mother) and third (representing his daughter) of the three fates are connected, remembering another of Freud’s nicknames for Anna was ‘Cordelia’, the third and loyalest daughter of Shakespeare’s \textit{King Lear}. Although \textit{King Lear} is not cited in “The ‘uncanny,’” Freud habitually mentions Shakespeare and was writing about the character, Cordelia, in parallel to his thinking on the uncanny. In turn, Anna reminded Freud of \textit{King Lear}, leading to his meditations on the role women play in a

\footnote{Little Siggy’ was Freud’s mother’s affectionate name for him. The link between Anna and Freud’s mother is discussed in Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester, \textit{Freud’s women}, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1992, p.274 and p.278. Also bear in mind, Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.232. notes, ‘Hoffmann’s imaginative treatment of his material has not made such wild confusion of its elements that we cannot reconstruct their original arrangement. In the story of Nathaniel’s childhood, the figures of his father and Coppelius represent the two opposites into which the father-imago is split by his ambivalence...’ Besides the significance of Freud centring on the father figure of \textit{The sandman}, Vardoulakis, op. cit., p.108, translates Freud as saying, ‘The material elements in the poet’s work of fantasy are not in fact so wildly twisted, so that one could not reconstruct their original arrangement’. Thus, it might be said, Freud leaves another clue as to his own artful self-doubling.\cite{266}
man's life and death, as discussed in the “three caskets” paper of 1913, which was completed at a time when Anna began to occupy a greater role in his life.\(^{269}\) Upon being spurned by his daughter, King Lear disinherits Cordelia, saying,

Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
Propinquity and property of blood,  
And as a stranger to my heart and me  
Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian...

...shall to my bosom  
Be as well neighboured, pitied, and relieved,  
As thou my sometime daughter.\(^{270}\)

Shakespeare’s reference to Scythian cannibalism compares with Freud’s allusion to the uncanny primitivism man sees in his atavistic-self via flickering unconscious memories, and although Lear declares Cordelia ‘a stranger,’ he acknowledges her familial blood, thus she becomes strange-yet-familiar. For Freud, Anna instilled a circular conflict: she was the subject of an inner turmoil conjoining mother-wife-daughter — a conflict only released by death, yet, ironically, she was ‘his champion against death’,\(^{271}\) promoting and sustaining his legacy. Arguably, by some self-fulfilling prophecy, Anna assumed roles of carer, trusted advisor and close companion, making Freud’s remark concerning Anna’s birth all the more poignant: ‘We like to think that the baby [Anna] has brought a doubling of my practice’.\(^{272}\)

Some, including Gay, find it curious that Freud discounted Anna’s sexuality (especially as he was so decisive about that of other children),\(^{273}\) also that he worried so much about her marrying and intensely disliked her willful yet vacillating independence, yet allowed psychoanalytical transferences and counter-transferences between himself and her. Without necessarily intimating incestuous relationships between Freud and Anna as others have ventured,\(^{274}\) it is to be expected that Freud would question when, how and why

\(^{269}\) Gay, op. cit., p.433. Jones, op. cit., vol.3, p. 18, points out that Freud gifted Anna the insignia of a ring in May 1920, a gesture afforded to only a few including Lou Salomé, Maria Bonaparte and Jones’s wife. Jones’s third biographical volume of Freud’s life is dedicated to ‘Anna Freud, true daughter of an immortal sire’.

\(^{270}\) Shakespeare, cit., p.870. Hecate, the polymorphous Greek goddess of ‘the crossroads’, associated with sorcery, was known for her ability to cross the divide into the underworld — or from Freud’s perspective — into the unconscious.

\(^{271}\) The care Anna bestowed on her father is outlined in Appignanesi and Forrester, op. cit., p.278.

\(^{272}\) Freud in a letter to Fliess, 8 December 1895, as cited in Freud and Fliess, op. cit., p. 136; my emphasis. Also consider that when Anna was unwell in 1914, Freud took her on a short holiday to the sea, a journey they shared with Otto Rank from 9-13 April, a trip that Jones, op. cit., vol.2, p.118, says was ‘a long journey for a taste of sea air’. Ralph Noyes, "The other side of Plato’s wall", in Peter Buse and Andrew Stott (eds), Ghosts: Deconstruction, psychoanalysis, history, Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, pp.244-62, p.259, points out that Jones elaborates on Freud by 'suggesting that we feel as Uncanny the threatened return to consciousness of repressed infantile incestuous desires', thus putting emphasis on the oedipal causality vis-à-vis uncanniness.

\(^{273}\) Gay, op. cit., p.434.

\(^{274}\) Donald Michael Thomas’s fictional account, Eating Pavlova, London: Sceptre, 1995, explores Freud’s intimacies with his
parental affection oversteps socially-acceptable boundaries, outlining the forbidden of incest in *Totem and taboo*. As to whether he proceeds to covertly uncover personal issues in a manner aligned with his and Anna’s unusual clandestine mediation, is a point which is not defensible. Of relevance, however, is Freud’s and Anna’s secret modes of interpersonal communication, often through poetry they facetiously attributed to the family dogs, bonding humour and seriousness as one, their ‘dog verses’ acted as a secretive intermediary where private thoughts were shared through verse written under pseudonyms of beloved pets. Michael Molnar talks about the serious side of such humorous ‘doggerel’ as Freud and Anna played out as ‘a self-conscious game in which one cannot always clearly separate the actor from the role, since the playfulness and mockery often give voice to repressed or silenced feelings’, notions which mirror Freudian ideas of uncannily reliving repressed childhood events.

Other evidence as to the double-play within Freud’s essay includes Anna’s terrifying, recurrent dream of losing eyesight, as reflected in Freud’s endearment of Anna as ‘his Antigone’, as Ε οι δύο, daughter, Anna. Thomas’s book and play on words, *Eating (Anna) Pavlova*, suggests an all-consuming, incestuous relationship, however no cogent evidence exists to substantiate this proposition. Nonetheless, there are interesting coincidences during the period Freud was thinking about the uncanny, including him describing the taboo of incest as uncanny. Kofman, op. cit., pp.161-2, wonders whether Hoffmann’s and Freud’s texts might be regarded as concealing incestuous desire: *The sandman* as desire for the mother; “The ‘uncanny’” as desire to master the ‘incestuous and deadly function of writing’; noting, p.186, n.7, ‘a fundamental conflict is being played out within’ Freud’s essay. Also see Ellison, op. cit., pp.240-1, n.14. Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud...*, op. cit., p.60, p.75 and pp.104-9, discusses Freud’s and Anna’s explorations of the connections between beating fantasies, incest and masturbation (all within the timeframe of Freud writing “The ‘uncanny’”), saying, Anna’s beating fantasy was ‘substitute for an incestuous father-daughter love-scene’ (p.104), and they both ‘located the origin of post-Oedipal beating fantasies in repression of the “love fantasy” a child has for his or her father’ (p.109).

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275 Michael Molnar, “Of dogs and doggerel”, *American Imago*, vol.53, no.3 (Fall 1996), pp. 269-80, reproduced at Project Muse: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_imago/v053/53.3molnar.html, accessed 26/11/09. Molnar discusses the coded communication between Anna with her father as being ‘an expression of suppressed tenderness. They enact a return to the affections and appetites of her childhood, and also her anxieties about feeding and separation’.

276 Ibid.

277 Freud particularly concentrates on *The sandman* themes of blindness and losing one’s eyes. Regarding Freud’s endearment ‘Antigone,’ see Gay, op. cit., p.442. Ellison, op. cit., wonders if there might be more guilt-edged or sinister reasons behind Freud calling Anna his Antigone and his inclusion of *The sandman*, mocking whether ‘Anna, like Olympia… becomes the artificial progeny of scientific hubris who looks, but is not, fully alive’, whereas Royle, *The uncanny*, op. cit., p.158, considers Antigone to be one of the uncanniest emblems of the death drive. As evidence of Freud’s concurrent interest in the father-daughter relationship around the time he correspondingly published his essay is Freud’s paper, “A child is being beaten” (also 1919), which documents a girl patient’s unconscious phantasy of being beaten by her father as perversely representing her attraction towards him, with Freud regarding this as a dominant female characteristic which ought to have escaped repression yet actually becomes unconsciously repressed and is ‘replaced by a conscious phantasy which disavows the girl’s manifest sexual character’; see Sigmund Freud, “A child is being beaten” (1919), in *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, 24 vols., London: Hogarth Press, reprinted edn, 1957, vol.XVII, pp.175-204, p.202. Freud contends that the girl’s paternal desires are instinctual impulses which can ‘equally well undergo repression and so become unconscious’. Accordingly, Freud develops the possibility of repressed feelings being uncannily awakened in females, effecting in fleeting desires for their father. Considering that he was contemplating such ideas in parallel with ‘uncanny’ theorem, there may be some implications drawn in the context of developing arguments that Freud secreted
diary entries, of and prior to 1919, speak of the terror of blindness, strongly aligning her with *The sandman* and Freud’s representation that Hoffmann’s character ‘Coppola the optician really is the lawyer Coppelius and... the Sand-Man’. In his essay, Freud well-nigh uncovers a ‘hidden’ Anna when he writes, ‘damaging or losing one’s eyes is a terrible [fear] in children... we will treasure a thing as the apple of our eye... The self-blinding of the mythical criminal, Oedipus... [as symbolising] *lex talionis* (meaning ‘an-eye-for-an-eye’). In a few sentences, Freud speaks of children, ‘apples of our eye,’ and Oedipus (symbolising himself) and, by association, Oedipus’ daughter, Antigone, thereby equating Antigone to Anna, the apple of her father’s eye. Together they figuratively form *lex talionis*: Anna is the ‘an-eye’ of Freud’s ‘for-an-eye’, or simply, Anna for Freud – his double.

The journals Anna prepared for her father – conveyances of inner feelings, urges and dreams (her ‘night life’) – hold particular entries of relevance concerning recurrent disturbing, violent nightmares, where Anna is petrified ‘of shooting, killing or dying’, mirroring key themes in *The sandman*, thus developing ideas concerning Anna’s psyche bearing resemblance to the key ‘characters’ of Freud’s essay. Anna’s dreams of the bride of Viktor Tausk (Freud’s student and colleague) wanting to kill her father somewhat correspond with that of Nathanael’s father’s murder. However tenuous such links, Freud achieves an ‘overstabilization’ of *The sandman* to intentionally bring about his own, albeit unclear, objectives. In discussing the relationships of Freud, Tausk and Lou Andreas-Salomé, and then Freud, Tausk and Helene Deutsch, Hertz deduces their triangular relationships mirror those in *The sandman*, thus factoring as Freud’s motivation to restate Hoffmann’s story, including that Tausk’s suicide (July 1919) was the culmination of these relationship problems. Whilst this provides another interesting supposition, Hertz’s timings are very tight, since Freud had commenced and already drafted a version of “The

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279 According to Gay, op. cit., pp-438-9, these dreams were happening and being reported to her father for years and before the summer of 1919, so they could figure in the sidelines of Freud’s essay.

279 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.230, acknowledges Otto Rank’s wife as pointing ‘out the association of the name with “coppella” = crucible, connecting it with the chemical operations that caused the father’s death; and... “coppo” = eye-socket’.

280 Ibid., p.231.

281 Young-Bruehl, *Anna Freud*..., op. cit., p.87.

282 Hertz, op. cit., p.105.
‘uncanny’ by mid-May 1919, before its autumnal publishing. Hertz does, however, show evidence of Freud exorcising personal conflict in his essay.

Questions also arise from McCaffrey’s observation that Freud dulled-down the uncanniness of Olympia, shifting the emphasis from the Nathanael-Olympia conflict to the Nathanael-Father confrontation, neglecting another importantly uncanny character in The sandman: Clara, who is the ‘light of everyone’s lives’ and embodies or doubles Olympia, Virginia — and, as I suggest, Anna. Clara crucially performs a regulating function for Nathanael, one which temporarily re/suppresses his urges. The element of the doubling of the bad-father, good-father dichotomy becomes more prevalent the deeper one ventures into, and behind, Freud’s essay. Considering the father figures, Freud deems Olympia’s fathers, Spalanzani and Coppola, are ‘reincarnations of Nathaniel’s pair of fathers’, notionally comparing Nathanael as representative of Freud. Among the essay’s longer footnotes, Freud successively ruminates on: the Nathanael-Olympia relationship; the theory on the double; and, his encounter with his self-as-double in mirror reflection. Notionally, his footnotes support his secreting privately-held theories like ‘Anna as self-double.’ Revealing that the mechanical-like doll serves to highlight the semiautomatic mechanisms between people (between subject and object/Other), Mladen Dolar moots, Nathanael is ‘the real automaton’ — his is a role characterised by automated utterances which mimic a psychoanalyst’s exclamatory ‘ohs’ and ‘ahs’ which disrupt and encourage patient outpourings. Linking Freud and Nathanael, Dolar asserts, Nathanael and Olympia’s exchanges prefigure the analytic session.

283 See ibid., pp.112-6, regarding Hoffmann’s technique vis-à-vis Freud’s re-rendering of The sandman, which is a good insight into the way Freud has (with or without intention) used Hoffmann’s story to bring about his own objectives.

284 McCaffrey, op. cit., p.104. Ibid., pp.103-4, also considers the bad-father/good-father roles in The sandman.

285 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.232. One represents the ‘good’ father, the other the ‘bad’ father. Thus, Nathanael’s father is ‘good’ as is Spalanzani, but Coppelius/Coppola represents the bad. Remarkably, another triangulated relationship also involving a ‘Clara,’ narrator and father figure, is found in the writing of Friedrich Schelling, with whom Freud identified. Laurie Johnson, “Uncanny love: Schelling’s meditations on the spirit world”, Image & Narrative, vol.11, no.3 (Hauntings I: Narrating the uncanny, 2010), pp.64-86, reproduced at Image & Narrative: www.imageandnarrative.be/index.php/image-narrative/article/view/93, accessed 12/12/11, discusses the personal significance of Schelling’s paper, “Clara: Or, on nature’s connection to the spirit world” of 1810-1811, arguing that Schelling’s Clara represents a Romantic yearning which is essentially a re-presentation or repetition of the ancient past and presents thinking which anticipates the Freudian uncanny. Schelling’s Clara, like Hoffmann’s, ‘memorialises the past and re-invokes its loss’, and, like Freud’s Anna, is surrounded by artefacts and antiquities; see ibid, p.75 and p.77, respectively.

286 Dolar, op. cit., p.9, says, ‘Nathaniel strangely reacts in a mechanical way. His love for an automaton is itself automatic… The question arises as to who is the real automaton in the situation’.
Another peculiarity adds to these various theories. In 1915, Freud prefaces a publication of the anonymously authored, *A young girl's diary*, exalting it as a 'gem':

Never before, I believe, has anything been written enabling us to see so clearly into the soul of a young girl, belonging to *our* social and cultural stratum, during the years of puberal development. We are shown... how the relationships to parents... first shape themselves, and how they gradually become more serious and more intimate... we are shown how the mystery of the sexual life first presses itself vaguely on the attention, and then takes entire possession of the growing intelligence, so that the child suffers under the load of *secret knowledge* but gradually becomes enabled to shoulder the burden.287

Besides being claimed by some to be a fabrication that Freud and Anna helped devise,288 Freud's observation that the girl is able to overcome or surmount a 'secret knowledge' aligns with what may subsequently recur as uncanny remnants from childhood. Coincidentally, in the summer of 1915, Anna recalled dreaming about her father and herself as 'king and princess,' writing that 'people want to separate us by means of political intrigues',289 as recurrent dreams which are possibly externalised by Freud in the by-lines of his writings. Years after his death, Anna wrote of intermittent episodes of dreaming about her father: 'I dream, as I have often done, that he is here again... [showing] his tenderness to me... [and saying] “I have always longed for you so”'.290 Although Anna's intimate declaration was incensed with the melancholia of illness, it affirms the importance of their affinity, and whilst Freud's privacy was closely guarded, conceitedness and secret desire led him to bequeath writings with literary ambiguity, which consequently make it viable to reconsider his aims. Much evidence testifies as to the plausibility of Freud's doubling or self-ghosting in the margins of "The 'uncanny,'" a problematic essay constructed with curious circular passages and esoteric meanings, which thereby, perhaps, allowed him to portray his relationship with Anna in a publicly-demanding manner, thus enabling him to

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288 According to Sheila Bienenfeld, "Review: Father-figure of the century: A review of *Freud's Women* by Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester", *The Women's Review of Books*, vol.10, no.7 (April 1993), pp.21-2, it was anonymously published by Hermine Hug-Hellmuth and was 'a book that shocked Vienna with its sexual explicitness. It is now generally believed that Hug-Hellmuth fabricated the diary in order to lend support to Freud's theory of adolescent sexuality... [and that] Her contributions to child analysis were appropriated by Anna Freud, who, perhaps in an effort to avoid the taint of scandal, did not acknowledge Hug-Hellmuth's innovations'. Similarly, Appignanesi and Forrester, op. cit., pp.200-01, note an expert in literary fraud concluded that 'the *Diary* was a fiction written by an older person recalling the past'. Also see Claudine Geissmann-Chambon and Pierre Geissmann, *A history of child psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp.58-60.


290 Ibid., op. cit., p.286-7. In her 1953 paper, "On losing and being", Anna Freud echoes her father, saying, 'Lost souls are pitiable rather than threatening and uncanny rather than outrightly frightening' and, as I will show anon, she somewhat reflects the Heideggerian uncanny by furthering, 'That they are compelled to "wander" reflects the wandering and searching of the survivor's libidinal strivings, which have been rendered aimless, i.e., deprived of their former goal'; Anna Freud, *The writings of Anna Freud*, vol.IV, New York: International Universities Press, 1967, p.316.
exercise (or exorcise) a self-doubling. Ultimately, whether Freud intended a self-doubling or whether the text unwittingly generates its own perplexing secrecy, remain questions with no conclusive answers. Certainly, Freud attracts many multifarious readings, with Morten Bartnæs’s paper (2010), arguing that post-1968 deconstruction exercises of Freud’s essay are fraught with problems, that ‘Freud’s use of “intellectual uncertainty” is deprived of its rhetorical function’ in many articles, and that many bear the same mistakes the authors criticise Freud of making, an assertion elaborated on previously here. Defending Freud’s perplexing style, Bartnæs asserts, ‘a curious strength of Freud’s prose [is] that it has the power to fascinate even when it is narrowed down to its apparent face-value’, and, with the uncanny, ‘Freud has encountered something that cannot be mustered, but must be perceived by looking awry’. Like multitudes before him, Bartnæs confirms the Freudian uncanny remains a prevalent topic of interest, yet, incongruously, for a topic of such popularity, much less scholarship, including Bartnæs’s, enquires into it from entirely different viewpoints, including, significantly, Existentialism, to which I now turn.

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291 Freud’s text, as with any writing, might be seen as a narcissistic act which privileges the author insofar as affording him a platform upon which he cannot be interrupted, yet a stage where the author often interrupts his own thoughts and allows other authors/texts to interject or ‘speak’ in ghostly forms whilst assuming the authenticity of the ‘real.’ Perhaps Freud would make light-hearted use of Henry Heimlich’s choking intervention (first published in 1974), by renaming his essay Das unheimlich manoeuvre, corresponding with the idea that that which is ingested may be regurgitated. Alternatively its title could be changed to The unheimlich(e) man(oeuvre), taking its cue from Ian Duhig’s story linking (un)canny/(un)homely with man and art (œuvre); see Sarah Eyre and Ra Page (eds), The new uncanny, Manchester: Comma Press, 2008, pp.165-91. Addressing the resurgent interest in the uncanny in the 1990s, Jay, “The uncanny Nineties”, op. cit., p.20, and Jay, Cultural semantics: Keywords of our time, op. cit., p.157, regrets not being the first to call an essay “The unheimlich manoeuvre”.

292 Such as the articles of Herrt, Weber and Cixous; see Morten Bartnæs, “Freud’s ‘The “uncanny’” and deconstructive criticism: Intellectual uncertainty and delicacy of perception”, Psychoanalysis and History, vol. 12, pp.29-54, p.39. Whilst it is true that the exact phrase ‘intellectual uncertainty’ was not used in translations of Jentsch’s article, Freud’s interpretation or citation is not necessarily inaccurate. Jentsch, op. cit., p.9, says, ‘The feeling of uncertainty not infrequently makes its presence felt of its own accord in those who are more intellectually discriminating when they perceive daily phenomena…’ Bartnæs conceives Freud’s use of ‘intellectual uncertainty’ as being rhetorical. Whilst admonishing literary criticism of those before him, Bartnæs’ paper is not without problems either. For example, Bartnæs, op. cit., p.41, writes that Cixous fails to reference Ernest Jones’s biographical reference of Freud’s interest in the number 62, but has likewise omitted Royle’s finding that Freud’s fascination with 62 is accounted for in a letter to Jung; see Royle, op. cit., p.202 n.33.

293 Bartnæs, op. cit., p.50 and p.34, respectively. Bartnæs cites Slavoj Žižek’s book, Looking away: An introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991, as contributing to the idea of ‘looking away’ when endeavouring to comprehend certain texts or phenomena. In this book, Žižek draws upon the Freudian uncanny several times, some of which will be discussed herein in subsequent chapters.
Chapter two

Existentialism and the uncanny

Man would 'sooner will nothingness than not will at all' Friedrich Nietzsche

It is in the 'nothingness' at the core of Existentialism where the uncanny may be found. A fundamental difference in the secular demonology of the uncanny is one of psychic determinism: Freud contends that people cannot act or behave acceptably without repression enforced (as natural, healthy psychical mechanisms which are determined by the unconscious), whereas Sartre believes humans always behave consciously, self-commandingly and at will, indicating free-choice. Interpreting Derrida's concept of intertextualism, where texts reveal the economies of both the personal and public, specific and general, familiar and unfamiliar, Royle reasons, 'Everyone's relation with the uncanny is in some sense their own and no one else's. But the attempt to regulate an economy in this context is neither simply narcissistic nor “self-centred”, nor a blank submission to otherness and alienation'.

Marxist ideology exists behind such reasoning, which raises ideas about one's sense of self and self-control whilst questioning whether the mythology of the uncanny works to allay people's fear of losing control over (material) self-worth because it offers solace in 'private property,' signifying that which no one else can possess. Regardless of how or why the uncanny is wielded for political gain, it generally represents the idea that ultimately no one can truly or completely control the individual, and therefore, perversely, it becomes safe to submit oneself to subservience.

Before expanding upon Sartre's notions of self-possession, Heidegger's work, the foundation of Sartre's, references the unheimlich as an important flagstone in the concept of 'being.'

'Being' and the uncanny: A Heideggerian approach

At the root of ontological phenomenology, of rationalising man's existence, lays a rich history of wanting to find a something, nevertheless Existentialism insists that what exists is a nothing. Uncannily we begin to feel 'not-at-home' when this profound revelation is

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3 Incidentally, Frederick Engels wrote to his sister of an accident concerning a house painter falling from the scaffolding and dying, then, after relaying pleasantries about farmyard frivolity, he pens: 'The window of my room looks out on an alley which is uncanny. If I'm still up late of an evening... things begin to get noisy in the alley... ghosts laugh and howl and rattle the windows of the house opposite. But it's all quite natural because the lamplighter lives in the alley and he goes on his rounds at eleven o'clock'; see Frederick Engels, "Letters of Frederick Engels 1838: To Marie Engels in Barmen", Marxists Internet Archive, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1838/letters/38_08_28.htm, accessed 20/7/09.
acknowledged. In his *magnum opus*, *Being and time* (1927), Martin Heidegger postulates the state of being (*Dasein*) is found in the world perpetually in a state of 'not-being-at-home-in-the-world,' of being 'thrust' into the uncertainty of a finite existence, and that this revelation of Being-in-the-world of perpetual uncertainty and unsettledness is fundamentally *unheimlich.*

This disclosure of rootlessness (that our being exists independently of external forces like God's will, nature or even structured rationality) induces anxiety and dread in which the uncanny is located at the very core. Instead, *Dasein* flees from such anxiety caused by being thrown ('thrownness') into the world — a fleeing Heidegger describes as 'fleeing in the face of uncanniness,' which is also a 'fleeing in the face of one's ownmost Being-towards-death.' Yet this disingenuous fleeing from bewilderment (taking the 'easy-out') encounters uncanny self-revelations that one's truthful existence 'reveals itself authentically in the basic state-of-mind of anxiety.' He says,

> In anxiety one feels 'uncanny.' Here the peculiar indefiniteness of that which *Dasein* finds itself alongside in anxiety, comes proximally to expression: the 'nothing and nowhere'. But here 'uncanniness' also means 'not-being-at-home.'

By Krell's summation, 'If anxiety is the *ground* of fear, the uncanny is the *abyss* of anxiety.'

For Heidegger, the uncanny is the basic kind of Being-in-the-world, even though in an

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4 Heidegger's *Dasein* refers to our non-subjective existence, the 'Being-there' synonymous with 'human entity.' It is a 'Being' as a becoming as *Dasein* always projects itself into the future, always presses ahead. The body as an unencumbered 'clean slate' is another way of thinking about *Dasein.* *Being and time* was first published in 1927, with an English translation published in 1962. I use Martin Heidegger, *Being and time*, trans. J. Macquarie and E. Robinson, London: SCM Press, 1962.

5 Such hyphenated terms are common in Heidegger and Sartre, and are hereon used in their manner.

6 In discussing Heidegger's ideas, Hubert Dreyfus says that the condition of the human being is 'one of such radical rootlessness that everyone feels fundamentally unsettled (*unheimlich*), that is, senses that human beings can never be at home in the world. This... is why we plunge into trying to make ourselves at home and secure'; see Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A commentary on Heidegger's Being and time*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991, p.37.


8 Ibid, p.321 says that having been thrown into existence, *Dasein* comes 'face to face with the fact "that it is, and that it has to be something with a potentiality-for-Being as the entity which it is"'. For the most part, however, its mood is such that its thrownness gets closed off. In the face of its thrownness *Dasein* flees to the relief which comes with the supposed freedom of the they-self. This fleeing has been described as a fleeing in the face of the uncanniness which is basically determinative for individualized Being-in-the-world... *Dasein* is anxious with anxiety about its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. What if this *Dasein*, which finds itself [sich befindet] in the very depths of its uncanniness, should be the caller of the call of conscience? That is, *Dasein* answers its own call. A simplistic analogy might be picking up a telephone receiver to find that we are also the caller.

9 Ibid., p.296. Being-towards-death is an idea Heidegger employs as a function of *time*.

10 Ibid., p.321. Referencing Aristotle's definition of fear 'as "a kind of depression or bewilderment"', Heidegger, ibid., p.392, explains that 'bewilderment is based upon forgetting'. Hence, the bewildering uncanny is a revelation of a once-familiar consciousness of our being thrown into the world as totally autonomous entities.

11 Ibid., p.233.

12 Krell, op. cit., p.50. Krell's essay contrasts Freud's discourse about the uncanny of with Heidegger's, finding several thought-provoking similarities. See also Bernstein, op. cit., which mentions various texts where Heidegger describes things as uncanny, such as the problem of definition itself and, p.1116. 'The relation Heidegger establishes...between Sein and Nichts thus resembles the coexistence of [Freud's] the "heimlich" and the "unheimlich"'.

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everyday way it has been covered up'.

Struck with such profundity of our raw mortality, 'we flee in the face of uncanniness' into the superficialities of daily routine. Dramatically, Heidegger continues:

This uncanniness pursues Dasein constantly, and is a threat to its everyday lostness in the "they", though not explicitly ... [It is an anxiety which] can arise in the most innocuous Situations. Nor does it have any need for darkness, in which it is commonly easier for one to feel uncanny. In the dark there is emphatically 'nothing' to see, though the very world itself is still 'there', and 'there' more obtrusively.

His words rekindle Francis Thompson's "The hound of heaven":

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
    Up visaged hopes, I sped;
    And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
    But with unhurrying chase,
    And unperturbed pace,
    Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
    They beat—and a Voice beat
    More instant than the Feet—
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

Whereas Thompson's pursuer was God with the promise of eternity, the Heideggerian secular pursuer is nothingness, yet both evoke an uncanny foreboding. Heidegger's notion of the everyday cover-up, of fleeing the dreaded anxiousness of existence to the tranquillized and contrived self-assuredness of Being-at-home, is controlled but latent fear subject to exposure. The fear we cover-up is the fear that can correspondingly be revealed — a triggering of the 'abyssmal' uncanny. For Thompson's God, we are given Heidegger's 'caller' — 'the caller of the call of conscience'. In the sense of quotidian coping, this 'caller is unfamiliar to the everyday they-self; it is something like an alien voice' which utters

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13 Heidegger, Being and time, op. cit., p.322.
14 Ibid., p.234. Krell, op. cit., p.51, notes this 'mortal anxiety' does not imply 'there is a haven or heaven or hell for human existence... [but that] The only possible home for Dasein is the... Un-heimlichkeit'.
17 Heidegger, Being and time, op. cit., p.321. Here Heidegger explains, 'The caller is Dasein in its uncanniness: primordial, thrown Being-in-the-world as the "not-at-home" - the bare "that-it-is" in the "nothing" of the world.'
18 Ibid.
nothing: 'The call discourses in the uncanny mode of keeping silent... [because it is a private call from within which] calls him back from this [public-they] into the reticence of his existent potentiality-for-Being... uncanniness pursues Dasein and is a threat to the lostness in which it has forgotten itself.' The uncanny is the caller. When Dasein realises the caller is within and one-with-itself, the uncanny feeling is the revelation that Dasein is actually unremittingly uncanny to the core. The caller's message is the clear consciousness of self-responsibility, which could be interpreted as negatively grave and pessimistic, or contrarily as a positive and optimistic uncovering of truth and independency. Uncanniness brings Dasein 'face to face with its [once familiar] undisguised nullity, which belongs to the possibility of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being', producing the 'anxiety of conscience'.

Heidegger subsequently spoke of the unheimlich in a lecture on metaphysics (1929), explaining one begins to encounter the uncanniness of not-being-at-home, which he expressly differentiates from being merely nostalgic sentimentality, religiosity or homesickness, but that unheimlichkeit underpins the metaphysical. In “The origin of the work of art” (drafted 1935-37), he writes,

we believe ourselves to be at home. The being is familiar, reliable, ordinary. Nonetheless, the clearing is pervaded by a constant concealment in the twofold form of refusal and obstructing. Fundamentally, the ordinary is not ordinary, it is extra-ordinary, uncanny (un-geheuer). The essence of truth, i.e., unconcealment, is ruled throughout by a denial.

Heidegger examines the uncanny at length, significantly through Friedrich Hölderlin’s hymn “The Ister” (referring to the ancient Greek for the river Danube), in a lecture series of 1942 containing three sections: part one concerns the poetizing the essence of the rivers through Hölderlin’s poiesis; in part two, he discusses and translates from the Greek an interpretation of human ‘being’ in Sophocles’ Antigone; and, part three looks at Hölderlin’s...

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19 Ibid., p.322.
20 In understanding this call, Heidegger, ibid., p.325, says 'one hears in understanding the appeal', which being interpreted from the German 'schuldig' and 'Schuld', is assimilated with indebtedness, guilt and responsibility.
21 Ibid., p.333.
22 Ibid., p.342, explains: 'The fact of the anxiety of conscience, gives us phenomenal confirmation that in understanding the call Dasein is brought face to face with its own uncanniness. Wanting-to-have-a-conscience becomes a readiness for anxiety.'
poetizing of the essence of the poet as demigod. In this complex lecture, Heidegger elaborates on rivers having their own, unknowable spirit; that a river journeys, never standing still; a journeying which attains the ‘earth as the “ground” of the homely’. Rivers are not gods, humans, occurrences of nature or landscape, but ‘the locality of the dwelling of human beings as historical upon this earth. The river is the journeying of a historical coming to be at home at the locale of this locality. The river is locality and journeying’. An analogy of the river helps explain concepts of time and space: it flows yet is never past, present nor future – it is all time-dimensions at once: it flows and is already present yet past, and it flows forever into the future. Whereas arid ‘rivers’ hold the promise to flow again, such hopes reference the riverbed, the gauged earth from whence river-water flowed, leached and evaporated. Similarly, the ‘space’ of a river (not the gauged earth but its water formation) is constantly changing, such that it never has particular form or shape. In correlating the uncanny to the Danube, Heidegger shows how the uncanny has many dimensions and yet none. He furthers, ‘the river is also the journeying of locality’ – like time and space: the locale has ‘a position “in space” and in the journeying of steps, a sequential time. Nevertheless, the river can never represent a time nor a space: they are subjective constructs which have no bearing on comprehending Hölderlin. Citing Hölderlin’s “Voice of the people,” Heidegger stresses, rivers are ‘both “full of intimation” and “vanishing”, thus portraying an enigmatic uncanniness: They are evidently “bearers” of an as yet veiled “meaning”’. Moreover, rivers are enigmatic, steadfast supporters of man, constituting the care of poetry and giving counsel.


26 Heidegger, Hölderlin's hymn..., op. cit., p.30.

27 Ibid., pp.32-3.

28 ‘Analogy’ is used here apprehensively because Heidegger reasons that the river is not analogous or symbolic, but rather an explication or extension of man’s dwelling upon the earth, and that analogies/metaphors serve to diminish our comprehension of the river as significant to our being regardless of any metaphysical meaning we draw to explain other things. See Angela Franz, "Review: Heidegger, Martin. Hölderlin's Hymn The Ister", Review of Metaphysics, vol.51, no.3 (March 1998), pp.693-5. Heidegger’s river imagery is also discussed in Charles E. Scott, "Heidegger’s practical politics: Of time and the river", in François Raffoul and David Petrigrew (eds), Heidegger’s practical philosophy, Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 2002, pp.173-90; p.180 reads, ‘The...flowing, besowing, abandoning, home-giving, home-devastating river moves on... [and] thus composes... a poetic unveiling – an image of uncaptable destiny’. Dennis J Schmidt, On Germans and other Greeks: Tragedy and ethical life, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2001, pp.254-70, also discusses Heidegger’s lectures on the uncanny.

29 Heidegger, Hölderlin's hymn..., op. cit. p.33.

30 Ibid., pp.11-12 and p.15. Incidentally, a short story, “Dr. Heidegger's experiment,” has its protagonist, Dr. Heidegger,
Significantly, Heidegger relates the uncanny to the words of Hölderlin’s poem, which begins: ‘Now come, fire!’ Heidegger describes Hölderlin’s opening as being a calling of ‘that which is to come comes of its own accord’, that ‘fire’ represents the sun, ‘come’ enacts the calling (to poetry) of those who can only be called, and ‘Now’ enforces a demanding tone to ‘Now come’ which ‘appears to speak from a present into the future’, yet it also speaks from the past: ‘Now’ tells us: ‘something has already been decided’.31 ‘Now come, fire!’: the present; the future; and (alternatively to Heidegger), fire — symbolising the (primitive) past. Opening with three simple words, Hölderlin simultaneously provides great clarity yet accommodates infinite possibilities in reading it as a masterpiece of prose, prose that neither represents an object nor subject but ceaselessly searches for itself, thus allowing an equivocalness which brings its readers into its mystery, an uncanny mystery which feels familiar but can never be known. Such an aesthetic is absolute in its ambiguity and might be considered paltering, yet the intention is not to mislead but clarify Being-in-the-world as essentially uncanny. Heidegger’s main thrust discerns the uncanniness of Hölderlin’s poetry, consequently turning to Hölderlin’s main source, Sophocles.

Discussing the resonance of Sophocles’ Antigone in Hölderlin’s poetry, Heidegger describes it as the purest poem which demonstrates ‘everything that is is essentially permeated by its counter-essence’.32 De-emphasising absoluteness or the lineal polarity of opposites, Heidegger punctuates the idea that the diametrically opposed are not different from but are one in the same. It is this co-dependency and tension of opposites, a fusion and diffusion, which Heidegger relates as being the most uncanny ‘essence’ of man. Like Freud, Heidegger turns to the dictionary and finds it lacking, yet gleans a gem. Heidegger discusses the translation of the Greek Ðείνον and focuses on its meaning ‘fear pertaining to reverence and awe’: reverential awe, not to avoid, but respect from a stance ‘firm in honouring that which awakens such fear’, and noting the varicating translations of Ðείνον in various publications of Hölderlin (‘extraordinary’; ‘powerful’) yet translating Ðείνον as ‘uncanny’, Heidegger justifies that the manoeuvres of translation, of words which
are always and already denuded of their original context, are more accurate (or have 'correctedness') if translated slightly askew. Consequently, he maintains δεινόν as meaning 'uncanny'. Proceeding to explain how *Antigone* is about 'becoming homely', Heidegger cites the first choral ode as beginning:

Manifold is the uncanny, yet nothing beyond the human being prevails more uncannily.

Manifold is *Antigone*'s uncanniness, which like the river's essence is manifoldly uncanny. Both, elaborations on man's inherent uncanniness, coalesce in Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's hymn, demonstrating that one can only be at home via *getting there* – by journeying from the foreign unhomely, where we thus encounter our truest home – that is already and always uncanny. Heidegger acknowledges that man's vocation of an authentic homecoming is the most difficult, thus 'is taken into poetic care'. Nathanael's entreaty, 'It is only to the poetic heart that the like unfolds itself' compares with Heidegger's uncanny unfolding for those who can only be called.

Among the rich insights to be taken from Heidegger's lecture on Hölderlin, particularly worthy of mention is this impression: 'That which is un-homely is not merely the non-homely, but rather that homely that seeks yet does not find itself, because it seeks itself by way of a distancing and alienation from itself; thus instituting the idea that we (the unhomely) are impelled to become attentive and risk belonging to the homely.' This thrust does not merely incite fear or unfamiliarity, it is moreover familiar. Yet neither is this a didactic relationship or counterpoint; inherent is an 'inward counterturning' which is

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33 Ibid., p.63 and pp.61-74, respectively. Heidegger's notion of rendering translation askance is a much discussed topic; see, for example, Andrzej Warminski, "Monstrous history: Heidegger reading Hölderlin", *Yale French Studies*, no.77 (Reading the archive: On texts and institutions, 1990), pp.192-209, pp.196-200. Warminski, p.196, says Hölderlin translated the Greek into the German 'ungeheuer,' meaning 'monstrous,' thus broadening such interpretational discrepancies.

34 Whilst Heidegger, *Hölderlin's hymn...,* op. cit., p.73, translates δεινόν as 'unheimliche', he notes that this German word 'is intended to render what is meant in the Greek word: the fearful, powerful and inhabitual, including their counterturning character in each case, and to grasp this in a unitary manner, that is, in terms of the ground of its unity'.


36 The first citation is found Heidegger, *Hölderlin's hymn...,* op. cit., p.52.

37 Ibid., p.49. Scott, op. cit., p.183, talks of Heidegger's romanticization of the Greek lineage and German culture's relation to it – as a 'drift of imagery and affection' from which Scott argues, 'Heidegger never freed himself'.

38 Hoffmann, *Tales of Hoffmann*, op. cit., p.117. Alternatively, as Kofman, op. cit., p.138, points out, 'it could be said that through writing Nathaniel constructs rather than recollects his memories'; my emphasis.

its 'intrinsic and essential constitution'.\footnote{Ibid., p.84.} Furthermore, he reasons, 'because beings themselves play out their own appearances, human beings, in undertaking the risk of becoming homely, must place everything at stake... [yet] the homely refuses itself to them'.\footnote{Ibid., p.90.}

Requisitely chasing one’s tail whilst knowing its capture is at one’s own demise is somewhat akin to Heidegger’s notion that humans are constantly striving towards the homely which relentlessly repudiates itself; conclusively showing that 'supreme uncanniness' is the very essence of humankind, and that the unhomely is ‘the fundamental trait of human abode in the midst of being’.\footnote{Ibid., pp.90-1.} Heidegger affirms, uncanniness does not necessarily arouse fear or instil terror, yet manifests itself as an indeterminate risk inherent to humans. Journeying through the unhomely we are impelled towards the homely, yet it remains outside our grasp, especially repelling those who try to meet it head-on, whilst surprising those who scarcely thought of it.\footnote{\textit{The uncanny} inculcates the 'supreme' risk of 'distinguishing and deciding between that being unhomely proper to human beings and a being unhomely that is inappropriate'; ibid. p.117.}

Relating time and space with technology (\textit{die technik} or \textit{techne}), Heidegger explains the phenomenon of man and technological progress, posing that man’s essence, his utmost \textit{Being}, is of inheritance, of traits and possessions passed down through the ages, including man’s adoption of the means of technological progression which enacts a thrusting towards the future and therefore, the homely.\footnote{Ibid., pp.42-5.} The tenor of Heidegger’s notion is captured in T.S. Eliot’s verse:

\begin{quote}
We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
\end{quote}

Whilst Nietzsche’s influence is notable in Eliot and in Heidegger, the latter explains the everyday expression of ontological anxiety and dread as the feeling of uncanniness, placing the uncanny at the very root of his philosophy.\footnote{Magda King, \textit{Heidegger’s philosophy: A guide to his basic thought}, Oxford: Blackwell, 1964, pp.127-36, p.134, asserts, 'The seriousness of the discussion which Heidegger goes on to devote to [the uncanny] indicates that what may seem to be merely an afterthought to the analysis of dread will late prove to be its very core'.} The prominent think-tank fuelled by Heidegger is Existentialism, particularly for the architect of ‘bad faith’, Jean-Paul Sartre.
The uncanny and Sartrean 'bad-faith'

Whereas Heidegger outwardly ignores Freud, Sartre challenges him directly, begging questions of where the uncanny fits in relation to 'bad faith.' In *Being and nothingness* (1943), Sartre attacks the Freudian theory of the unconscious as an attempt (of 'bad faith') to make excuses for one's behaviour, arguing, 'psychoanalysis substitutes for the notion of bad faith, the idea of a lie without a liar... it replaces the duality of the deceiver and the deceived, the essential conditions of the lie, by that of the "id and the "ego"'.

He writes,

> Psychoanalysis has not gained anything for us since in order to overcome bad faith, it has established between the unconscious and consciousness an autonomous consciousness in bad faith... The very essence of the reflexive idea of hiding something from oneself implies the unity of one and the same psychic mechanism and consequently a double activity in the heart of unity, tending on the one hand to maintain and locate the thing to be concealed and on the other hand to repress and disguise it. Each of the two aspects of this activity is complementary to the other; that is, it implies the other in its being. By separating consciousness from the unconscious by means of the censor, psychoanalysis has not succeeded in dissociating the two phases of the act... [it] has merely localized this double activity of repulsion and attraction on the level of the censor.

Sartre believes that people always make conscious decisions to act or behave — and this happens from the outset when consciousness is in and of itself: 'the first consciousness... is at one with the consciousness of which it is consciousness'. Whereas Freud poses that man cannot act or behave normally without unconscious repressive mechanisms, Sartre argues against psychic determinism, saying that man's behaviour is based on conscious freewill. Sartre maintains that the conscious cannot 'relax its surveillance... it is not sufficient that it discern the condemned drives; it must also apprehend them as to be repressed, which implies... an awareness of its activity'.

Denouncing Freud, he asks, 'how could the censor discern the impulses needing to be repressed without being conscious of discerning them?' Sartre's fundamental sticking-point, as Christopher Gemerchak submits,
concerns the dynamic of repression as carried out by the "censor": if some content which threatens to traumatize the conscious ego is censored from consciousness as a means of protection, then there must be consciousness of that which is censored, consciousness of the repressed, and hence, no unconscious.52

Therefore, from Sartre's perspective, instead of thinking the Freudian unconscious as the place which harbours (involuntarily) repressed beliefs and feelings, it is possible to think of the conscious as the site where conscious containment and (voluntary) suppression occurs, where there are no hidden rules and everything is clear. Extending this notion, it is possible to conclude that slippages or flashes of such things contained or suppressed in the conscious form uncanny feelings. Before clarifying how the conscious might accommodate and produce uncanny phenomena, 'bad-faith' requires some positioning.

Endeavouring to characterise the authentic-self (of 'good faith'), Sartre consequently outlines the inauthentic-self (of bad-faith).53 Closely related to self-deception, Sartre argues, that with bad-faith ('mauvaise foi'), people neglect their freewill and responsibility, instead choosing to be as an inert object, pretending that oneself is put upon by Others or other factors not of their own volition.54 Sartre outwits this grand denial, stating, 'I must know in my capacity as deceiver' of my own truth, indeed 'I must know the truth very exactly in order to conceal it more carefully - and this is not at two different moments, which at a pinch would allow us to re-establish a semblance of duality - but in the unitary structure of a single project'.55 Whilst external factors or circumstances may limit one's choices ('facticity' such as place of birth, previous choices and inevitability of death), these cannot entirely replace freewill - one always (often in anguish) chooses one course over another. Facticity may therefore be something to bear in mind, but never to use as an excuse.

53 Sartre develops terms including 'bad faith', 'good faith', 'Being in itself' and 'Being for itself.' In order to acknowledge the terms being used in the Sartrean sense, I henceforth conjoin them as hyphenations: 'bad-faith', 'good-faith' and so on, except within quotations, which remain true to their sources.
54 See Sartre, *Being and nothingness*, op. cit., pp.47-70. Sartre employs examples to explain bad-faith, including a dinner-date scenario where he says the woman's self-denial of her companion's sexual advances is an act of bad-faith. Such scenarios are representations of what Sartre, p.58, terms as 'Being-in-the-midst-of-the-world', which places the individual as an 'inert presence as a passive object among other objects' (p.58) rather than being a truly active and responsible individual. The woman of Sartre's example acts like a passive object (of desire) in order to escape the responsibility of acting as her 'full self'. In social interaction, people play-out roles, very rarely straying from them, which he suggests as being seemingly unavoidable, but nevertheless still acts of bad-faith. Even the conduct of being sad forms part of play-roles of bad-faith (p.61). Good-faith, on the other hand is the authentic realisation and act of freewill - of a 'being-which-is-not-what-it-is'; for example, Sartre says that if a man was asked to 'sincerely' admit to being a homosexual (or to deny it), the good-faith reply would be, 'To the extent that a pattern of conduct is defined as the conduct of a paederast and to the extent that I have adopted this conduct, I am a paederast. But to the extent that human reality can not be finally defined by patterns of conduct, I am not one' (p.64).
55 Ibid., p.49.
**Facticity** operates as one of a ‘double property of the human being, who is at once a facticity and a transcendence’:56 a) I am what I am not (transcendence); and, b) I am not what I am (facticity). Bad-faith is an essential, inward-turning negation of human reality which constructs an artifice which makes use of both properties in an endeavour to escape the fact of its very nothingness. Suppression is part of the artifice of bad-faith.

If there is conscious containment or suppression, Sartre shows that there is also an exception – or that which appears as exceptional – that which effects in ‘mysteries of broad daylight’.57 For Sartre, strange occurrences happen because, first of all, consciousness and knowledge are not the same. Throughout one’s life, one can have ingested many objective ‘things’ but not have conceptualised or ‘digested’ them into knowledge. An analogy might be having data or being provided information, but not yet intellectualising them into knowledge. Therefore, things that appear strange or unfamiliar to us symbolise that which we have not yet conceptualised and thus made knowledgeable to ourselves. Sartre says, ‘this “mystery in broad daylight” is due to the fact that this possession is deprived of the means which would ordinarily permit analysis and conceptualization’.58 The result of our inability to ‘process’ some things (already ingested and contained in our conscious) may appear like anxiety ‘complexes uprooted from the depths of the unconscious’, which become nonetheless the object of psychoanalysis.59 In the same vein, flashes of such revelations commonly cause feelings of fear or self-acknowledgement of the huge liability of self-possession. Defined as a ‘state’ of uncertainty, fear or anxiety, the fright of the uncanny may thus similarly occur as a momentary glimpse of our awesome and autonomous selves. Fundamental to his philosophy, Sartre asserts that man is aware of his awesome freedom, yet the responsibility of this freewill frightens him such that he disguises his self-determination and makes excuses for his actions and behaviour. Because one cannot achieve a constant state of persistent self-disguise, occasionally things once concealed are unveiled, thus invoking phenomena of mental unrest, which would include feelings of uncanniness.

56 Ibid., p.56.
57 Here Sartre acknowledges the term as used by Maurice Barrès.
58 Ibid., p.571.
59 Ibid.
Sartre disputes Determinist notions of the past affecting the future, arguing there is a *nothingness* between our past, present and future. Bad-faith incorporates the concept that humans select parts of their past as excuses of their present or future behaviour or characteristic, deceiving themselves that they have no control over (some of) their decisions, when indeed they do. Regularity (for example, going to work in order to house, clothe and feed) is perceived to be necessary, but it too is a veil covering the anguish-fact that we are free to do otherwise. Rejecting the Freudian unconscious as being the place of 'blame' (a place where present/future behaviour is based on past experience), Sartre reckons man, in good-faith, acknowledges such blame to be self-deceit. Moreover, he stresses man's active role of disguising 'monstrous spontaneity' in the conscious: 'perhaps the essential role of the ego is to mask from consciousness its very spontaneity.'

Likening the role of conscious suppression of our complete (and thus fearful) freewill as a form of 'bracketing,' a means of segregating that which we fear most (our freedom of choice), Sartre establishes the impossibility of consistently maintaining such self-deception, which eventually fails, 'collaps[ing] beneath my look.' Combining Sartrean notions of containment of suppressed beliefs and feelings with self-deception of our inherent freewill, the uncanny may be said to reside as or in forms which unveil these terrifying truths. The fear of the uncanny is a shadow of the terror of our capacity for 'monstrous spontaneity,' appearing when self-deception collapses. Notwithstanding this 'monstrous-Being,' Heidegger's notion was that in its authenticity, *Dasein* is monstrous and angelic, yet always mortal.

So how does the uncanny fit within the notions of good-faith *versus* bad-faith? Does the uncanny occur when a person consciously acting in bad-faith encounters self-truths? If a flicker of uncanniness reveals our true, authentic-self, then the uncanny is an authentic state of good-faith (or evidence that we are acting in good-faith). Therefore, if a person never experiences the uncanny (as a frightening reflection of the true-self), must it mean they are continually in bad-faith? Acts of suppression (including old, primitive beliefs, repressed feelings) count as self-deception, considering that Sartre contends that from our anguish

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60 Ibid., pp.142-5 and p.165 in relation to past, present and future, and temporality.
63 Heidegger's notion that *Dasein* is authentically monstrous and angelic is likened to Rilke's aphorism, 'Every angel is terrible', as cited in Robert Dostal, "Friendship and politics: Heidegger's failing", *Political Theory*, vol.20, no.3 (August 1992), pp.399-423, p.416, where Dostal adds, 'Heidegger's angel, however, is mortal.'
arises self-deception to cover-up the fact that our being is totally free and responsible to make choices. Subsequently, if suppression is an act of bad-faith, is the reversal of suppression (an uncanny glimpse of that which was suppressed) an acknowledgement of that act in good-faith? If bad-faith equates to a cover-up (a fleeing from anguish), and if the uncanny is a glimpse of that which we have covered up (truths and anguish of our freedom and responsibility of choice), then we may have consciously enacted (even for a split-second) an act of good-faith. Indeed, as Sartre argues, the project of bad-faith is self-defeating because one really does know (under all one's self-deception) that they have actually deceived themselves. In this light, the uncanny acts as a reminder of one's self-deceit, representing both one's anguish (negative fear) and the promise (positive optimism) of freewill. Irrespective of whether it is negative or positive, experiencing uncanniness is a life-affirming occurrence.

Alternatively, the uncanny, because of its association with the emotion of fear, can be likened to Sartre's notion that the emotion of sadness is derived from the 'consciousness which affects itself with sadness as a magical recourse against a situation too urgent'.64 Proposing that people consciously manufacture emotions as alternative courses of action to situations more dire and troubling, Sartre says people consciously decide to become sad, they cannot be driven to it: 'being sad means first to make oneself sad',65 which requires a conscious receiving of this being sad. Correspondingly, the emotion of uncanny fear may be consciously generated in pressing conditions, as a means of veiling the truth of our existence. Additionally, just as there is 'no inertia in consciousness' insofar as 'If I make myself sad [or uncannily frightened], I must continue to make myself sad from beginning to end... If I make myself sad, it is because I am not sad... the being-in-itself of sadness perpetually haunts my consciousness (of) being sad...'.66 For Sartre, emotions are feelings which can be turned on and off at will, they are not prepossessed but learnt and consciously contained. Applying his logic, the uncanny is another learnt and consciously perpetuated emotion. Situational conditions which commonly aid and abet emotions, such as a loved one dying would normally occasion sadness, are also learnt. Likewise, the conditions or

64 Sartre, Being and nothingness, op. cit., p.61. Here Sartre references Hermann Paul, The emotions: Outline of a theory.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
atmospheres which favour the uncanny are accounted for in Freud, including darkness, solitude and foreignness.

Sartre contests that, for Freud, an act appears to be 'symbolic' and seems to 'express a more profound desire which itself could be interpreted only in terms of... the subject's libido... [with reference to] the subject's past'. In challenging this psychoanalytic approach, Sartre proposes an alternative, a reversal of Freudian theory which turns 'back the future towards the present', and dismisses the libido and the will to power as being 'neither as general characteristics common to all mankind nor as reducibles'. The goal of existential psychoanalysis 'must be to discover a choice and not a state'. In self-deception I inherently know that I self-deceive, which is the primary mode of bad-faith for which Freudian psychoanalysis promotes. Rather than Sartre relinquishing psychoanalysis as plausible or possible, he advocates replacing Freudian psychoanalysis with one which exposes the subject's self-deception and moves the subject towards an understanding of and commitment to the realisation that one's freewill controls one's feelings, actions and behaviour. This includes overwhelming and passionate feelings, which are also products of one's decision to behave in a certain manner. Existential psychoanalysis 'rejects the hypothesis of the unconscious', making 'the psychic act coextensive with consciousness', whilst sharing commonalities with (Freudian) empirical psychoanalysis; Sartre clarifies:

Empirical psychoanalysis seeks to determine the complex, the very name of which indicates the polyvalence of all the meanings which are referred back to it. [Whilst] Existential psychoanalysis seeks to determine the original choice. This original choice operating in the face of the world and being a choice of position in the world is total like the complex; it is prior to logic like the complex. It is this which decides the attitude of the person when confronted with logic and principles; therefore there can be no possibility of questioning it in conformance to logic. It brings together in

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67 Ibid., p.458, continues relaying the Freudian approach wherein 'the history of the subject will decide whether this or that drive will be fixed on this or that object', pointing out that 'the dimension of the future does not exist for psychoanalysis', and 'the fundamental structures of the subject, which are signified by acts, are not so signified for him but for an objective witness who uses discursive methods to make those meanings explicit. No pre-ontological comprehension of the meaning of his acts is granted to the subject. And this is just, since in spite of everything his acts are only a result of the past, which is on principle out of reach, instead of seeking to inscribe their goal in the future'.

68 Ibid., p.459, explains his idea by way of an analogy: 'The way in which I suffer my fatigue is in no way dependent on the chance difficulty of the slope which I am climbing or on the more or less restless night which I have spent: these factors can contribute to constituting my fatigue itself but not to the way in which I suffer it'.

69 Ibid., p.572.

70 Ibid., p.573.

71 Ibid., p.570.

72 According to Sartre, ibid., pp.569-71, there are many commonalities between the two kinds of psychoanalytical approaches, including: 'Both our psychoanalyses refuse to admit that the subject is in a privileged position to proceed in these inquiries concerning himself. They equally insist on a strictly objective method, using as documentary evidence the data of reflection as well as the testimony of others.'
a prelogical synthesis the totality of the existent, and as such it is the center of reference for an infinity of polyvalent meanings.\textsuperscript{73}

The question of how and where the uncanny fits into this, especially if the uncanny is treated as being symbolic, presents a problem because Sartre cannot abide universal or generalised symbolism when the power to (re)constitute symbolic meaning is a function of choice. Hence,

Our goal could not be to establish empirical laws of succession, nor could we constitute a universal symbolism. Rather the psychoanalyst will have to rediscover at each step a symbol functioning in the particular case which he is considering. If each being is a totality, it is not conceivable that there can exist elementary symbolic relationships (e.g.; the faeces = gold, or a pincushion = the breast) which preserve a constant meaning in all cases; that is, which remain unaltered when they pass from one meaningful ensemble to another ensemble. Furthermore the psychoanalyst will never lose sight of the fact that the choice is living and consequently can be revoked by the subject who is being studied.\textsuperscript{74}

In terms of Sartre’s version of psychoanalysis, this leaves the uncanny in a precarious situation — one where we cannot assume its efficacy as symbolic, except if one accepts it in bad-faith. The subject has the power to alter the appearance, meaning and significance of the uncanny. Indeed, this perspective helps explain the multifarious mutations the uncanny (like any other symbol) has between and within subjects and Others: how it means different things to people and why its meaning and value changes.

Having condemned Freudian psychoanalysis, Sartre focuses on laying down an alternative, Existentially-aligned psychoanalytical foundation — a means of psychoanalysis or therapy which exposes man to himself, one that conforms to confronting realities of ‘Being’ and ‘Nothingness.’ Just as Sartre confounds that man is ‘condemned to be free’,\textsuperscript{75} so is man ordained to encounter this freedom in many forms, including its surfacing as uncanny phenomena. In Existentialist terms, the uncanny is therefore a function of man’s conscience and of consciousness.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p.570.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p.573. Thus he concludes that ‘we must always be ready to consider that symbols change meaning and to abandon the symbol used hitherto. Thus existential psychoanalysis will have to be completely flexible and adapt itself to the slightest observable changes in the subject.’
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p.129.
Chapter three

Assimilating the Freudian and Existentialist uncanny – a framework for exploring the uncanny in art

Nihil humani a me alienum puto (Nothing human is alien to me)
TERENCE (KARL MARX'S FAVOURITE MAXIM) 1

Whilst Freudian psychoanalysis and Existentialist philosophies of the uncanny are fundamentally different, the chasm between them has 'stepping stones' of shared aspects and similarities, somewhat highlighting the very slipperiness of a highly subjective subject. Rather than totally accepting Heidegger's and Sartre's antipathy towards Freud as legitimating their philosophies as diametrically opposite, their ideas can be reconciled to some degree. 2 Both constructs of the uncanny deal with unknown entities, yet rather than transcending laws of physics or scientific rationality, they endeavour to provide logical explanations of the phenomenon. Regardless of whether their work is considered quasi-scientific or quasi-ontological, Freudians and Existentialists share the belief that the uncanny is within the realm of understanding. The foundation of Freud's work – certainly his legacy – was a framework from which to discuss and develop the psychic workings of man. In defence of Freud, it would be disingenuous not to acknowledge his revelations of the unknown psychic world which impelled Westerners to conceive the complexity of the psyche and attain a better understanding of ourselves. Freud was as assertive in his theories as Heidegger and Sartre; all sharing an ambition for explaining human behaviour, developing a differing framework, yet with a common aim. Accordingly, there is more gained from considering these frameworks as two sides of the same coin.

Jörg Hienger's assertion that a 'purely uncanny feeling... may establish itself as the temporary paralysis of reason in the face of an occurrence for which nothing in a person's

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1 The play by Terence, Hecaton Timorumenos (The self-tormentor), act I, scene I, reads: 'Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto', as cited Project Gutenberg: www.gutenberg.org/files/22188/22188-h/files/terence3_4.html#torm_note23, accessed 7/7/09. That it is claimed as Marx's favourite maxim, see Karl Marx, "Confession" (Zalt-Bommel, 1 April 1865), in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected works, 50 vols, trans. Richard Dixon et al., London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1987, vol.42, p.568. Kristeva, Strangers to ourselves, op. cit., p.56 cites 'Menander's famous saying, "I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me"', as referenced in Marie-Françoise Baslez, L'Étranger dans la Grèce of 1984, and p.58, Terence's as 'I am a man: I consider that nothing human is foreign to me'.

2 In his inquiry into the essence of the uncanny, Heidegger, Hölderlin's hymn..., op. cit., pp.62-3, gives caution to translation and assimilation, saying, 'Making something understandable should never mean assimilating a poet or thoughtful work to just any opinion... Making something understandable means awakening our understanding to the fact that the blind obstinacy of habitual opinion must be shattered and abandoned if the truth of a work is to unveil itself'. James Phillips, Heidegger's volsks: Between national socialism and poetry, Stanford: Stanford UP, 2005, pp.199-205, somewhat addresses the Heideggerian concept of uncanniness in relation to that of the Freudian.
prior experience and learning has prepared him or her,\(^3\) belongs neither to Freudian nor Existentialist discourse. Whilst it denotes an element of surprise, both Freud and Heidegger argue the uncanny is already known but not habituated. Heidegger’s references to uncanniness can be compared with Freud’s idea that the uncanny revivifies something which has previously been experienced as familiar yet subsequently re/suppressed, including, importantly, the fear of death or anything which threatens our sexual existence, effecting as castration anxiety. Heidegger notes, uncanniness largely ‘remains concealed with latent anxiety, since the publicness of the “they” suppresses everything unfamiliar’.\(^4\) Nevertheless, they differ in that Heidegger’s uncanny precedes familiarity — notionally, it precedes all experience — whereas Freud’s uncanny is derived from experience and the subsequent psychology of repression. Heidegger maintains, ‘That kind of Being-in-the-world which is tranquillized and familiar is a mode of Dasein’s uncanniness, not the reverse... [and it] must be conceived as the more primordial phenomenon’.\(^5\) However considering Freud’s readjusted thinking, specifically that ‘anxiety makes repression and not, as we used to think, the other way around’;\(^6\) then it appears their ideas somewhat unite, meaning that the uncanny is that which is experienced primarily, thus producing the anxiety that provokes the act of repression in the very first instance.\(^7\) The uncanny springs up before experience, before familiarity has a chance of becoming unfamiliar, and before re/suppression, dwelling within one’s being from the outset, initiating fear and inciting repression. This notion shares implications with concepts surrounding the Jungian collective unconscious, discussed later in terms of uncanniness derived from archetypes.

Similarly coalescing Heidegger’s ideas with the Freudian uncanny, Krell highlights Freud’s desire to distinguish and privilege the ‘mushy’ lived-experience to that of literary reasoning as contrasting with Heidegger’s foretelling the death-knell of thought: ‘the funeral mask of metaphysics’ given way to experience, but that Freud likewise ‘sensed the inevitable turn

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\(^5\) Ibid., p.234.


\(^7\) This idea, which assumes that uncanniness is a form of anxiety (fear), was formed upon reading Michael Sipiora’s “The psychological in the neighborhood of thought and poetry: The uncanny logos of the psyche”, *Janus Head*, vol.3, no.1, reproduced at Janus Head: Archives: www.janushead.org/3-1/nsipiora.cfm, accessed 5/10/09.
to... literature—in all thinking'. Whereas Heidegger appears to entirely ignore Freud, Krell asserts that he must have been a secret closet-reader of Freud, especially considering their similarities. Both reference darkness and solitude as non-essential yet favourable conditions of uncanny evocations, and both cast the uncanny in the light of personal revelations. They also regard the uncanny as being a universal and exceptionless facet at the root of being, thus most familiar. Heidegger's History of the concept of time (1925) provides further evidence as to similarities with Freud: in this lecture, he discusses phenomena of flight and fear, saying, 'fear is a derivative phenomenon... grounded in... dread', and 'Dread can "befall" us right in the midst of the most familiar environment... We then say: one feels uncanny... One no longer feels at home in his most familiar environment'. Far from being absolutely secretive, utterly alien or wholly unfamiliar, the uncanny is the Freudian and/or Heideggerian 'skeleton in the closet of every home, of the most closely closeted closet in the homiest home there ever was'—that is, of man's essence.

Derrida considers the Freudian and Heideggerian uncanny in Specters of Marx, saying, 'If Marx, like Freud, like Heidegger, like everybody, did not begin where he ought to have... with haunting, before life as such, before death as such, it is doubtless not his fault'—suggesting, man inherits this haunting from the beginning of time. Recalling Freud's dramatic punctuation of "The 'uncanny'", Derrida remarks on Heidegger's application of

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8 Krell, op. cit., p.60. Pointing out that Freud preferences the lived experience to that of literary renderings of the uncanny, Krell says Heidegger's triumph over Freud was in noting 'Freud was mired in Erlebnis ['lived' non-conceptualized experience], the mush of lived experience that life-philosophy dishes out in order to prove that it is not moribund', but Freud's success was in sensing 'the inevitable turn to poetry—and even to literature—in all thinking'. See also Bernstein, op. cit.
9 Krell, op. cit., pp.48-9, claims there are 'no serious references in Heidegger... to Freud's oeuvre. Not a single reference to the other great thinker of the uncanny... [but] Of all of Freud's essays, this is the one that Heidegger must have read closely. In secret. Closely closeted, carefully secreted'. He reiterates, p.50, 'To be sure, Heidegger does not mention Freud'. Moreover, the influence of Nietzsche on both men contributes as being a common ingredient to their thinking: citing Freud and Heidegger, Giovanna Borradori, "Leading words home" in Brian Boigon (ed.), Culture lab, 2nd edn, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993, pp.111-26, p.119, notes, 'for Freud and Nietzsche, there is no home without unhomeliness... [Then] Fifty years later, Heidegger added that truth itself is subject to a similar ambivalence: there is no revealing without hiding'. Annette Hamilton, "The uncanny in object relations, or, love with the machine", in John Potts and Edward Scheer (eds), Technologies of magic: A cultural study of ghosts, machines and the uncanny, Sydney: Power Publications, 2006, pp.30-47, is another who brings Freud and Heidegger together, but not in explicit relation to the uncanny. One who does is Robert Hughes, Ethics, aesthetics... op. cit., who asserts, p.101: 'It is less widely known that, in his seminars of 1925, 1935, and 1942, Heidegger himself turned and returned to the uncanny... [but his] philosophical account... is quite distinct from Freud's psychoanalytic account... [with Heidegger showing] a more refined and respectful relation to... the "literariness" of the literary'. I do not wholly agree with Hughes because as there are departures between Freud and Heidegger, there are correspondences including, which Hughes overlooks, that Freud's essay (and his use of The sandman) exercise this literariness.
11 Ibid., p.289.
12 Krell, op. cit., p.51. 'Absolutely secretive, utterly alien or wholly unfamiliar' is borrowed from a phrase of Krell's, p.52.
13 Derrida, Specters of Marx, op. cit., p.175.
quotation marks (serving to emphasize "spirit"), saying, 'It's the law of quotation marks. Two by two they stand guard: at the frontier or before the door, assigned to the threshold in any case, and these places are always dramatic.' Although Derrida notes the Heideggerian unheimliche in his article, the question of whether Heidegger's use of 'spirit' might equate to Freud's 'uncanny' is not considered, neither that Heidegger's address, with its political underpinnings, resonates with Freud's, considering their dogmatic style and self-assured command of the concept.

Refuting the existence of the unconscious, debasing it as unjustly dualistic and treating Freudian psychoanalysis as exemplifying bad-faith, Sartre engineers yet another duality — of good-faith versus bad-faith — and describes how they coalesce and evanescence with each other in the conscious. Indeed, Sartre makes a point of differentiating and thereby dividing good-faith from bad-faith. That is, like Freud, he creates two 'modes' or modalities of being — and of behaving. He goes further by imposing value labels ('good' and 'bad'), which he later clarifies and rejects as being judgmental or pessimistic. Nevertheless, Sartre provides this dualism, and whenever there is a division of two parts, however interconnected or intertwined they may be, there is also a juncture or space between the two where phenomena might be said to occur; places for which collisions and slippages gravitate towards, where things fall into or spring out from — occurrences related as being 'familiar-yet-unfamiliar.' Sartre admonishes Freudian psychoanalysis, saying, 'The effort to establish a veritable duality and even a trinity (Es, Ich, Ueberich expressing themselves through the censor) has resulted in a mere verbal terminology', yet his own philosophy is likewise explained using dualistic verbiage.

As a contemporary of Sartre's and a follower of Freudian psychoanalysis, Lacan absorbs ideas from both. Lacan's analysis, centring on 'language', is mindful of the processes and rules of language: so, the 'conscious' necessarily has its opposite — the 'unconscious.' Although Sartre contends the unconscious is nonexistent, he asserts the conscious, whereas from the perspective of language, it is unlikely to have one word without its opposite; if

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14 Derrida, "Of spirit", op. cit., p.465, says the quotation marks is an apparatus which 'lends itself to theatricalization and also to the hallucination of the stage and its machinery: two pairs of pegs hold in suspension a sort of drape, a veil or a curtain'.

15 To reiterate, my scope does not address the political servitude of the uncanny nor the Heideggerian political. Certainly, Kligerman, op. cit., treats the Heideggerian uncanny as a political tool used by Heidegger in the interests of Nazism.

16 Sartre, Being and nothingness, op. cit., p.53.
something has a presence, ergo it has an absence. Lacan’s definition of the ego maintains it as a falsifying agent, which attempts to cover up lack but instead reveals and exposes the real. Whilst having parallels with Sartrean in-authenticity or bad-faith, Lacan considers this falsification as being unconscious since the ego works to repress this knowledge.

Whilst Freud conceptualised the unconscious, he was never able to prove its physical existence, but neither was that kind of proof important to his venture, which has parallels with Sartre’s contribution. Freud’s ‘magical unconscious’ was a theoretical concept which provided an angle from which to contemplate behaviour: a theoretical framework. Freud could not assume its physicality; therefore it remained an imaginary or creative figment, comparable with Sartre’s notion of bad-faith. Considering Sartre’s bad-faith notion that the knowing conscious is fully aware that its actions are deceptive but nevertheless eventuates in (amazingly) believing in its own deception, both men’s concepts appear to comprise ‘magical’ elements. Moreover, there is evidence which shows that Sartrean bad-faith can be considered as being entirely within the frame of Freudian consciousness, particularly concerning ‘disavowal,’ where it has been shown, ‘The first movement of disavowal is avowal. There is no disavowal without prior knowledge’, such that dissociations are ‘not between the unconscious abyss and the conscious ego. Rather, as Freud will come to state quite clearly, there occurs a splitting of the conscious ego itself, its simultaneous maintenance of contradictory, conscious ideas’. That is, the conscious is the only ‘site’ mentioned as being relevant to abjuration of one’s behaviour or experience in both Sartre and Freud. Sartre’s voluntarily suppressed acts (of ‘bad-faith’) are Freud’s developmental acts of repression, with both regarding these acts of subjugating dread as necessary for living ‘normally’ in the world. Thus, the ‘sup’ versus ‘re’ of ‘repression’ in their writings can be read as being similar acts.

17 Lacan’s predisposition to applying mathematical formulae to conceive the unconscious shows that the Lacanian unconscious (following the Freudian) is more abstract and theoretical, not a physical object.

18 Gemerchak, op. cit., p.262. Gemerchak argues that Freud’s notion of disavowal (referencing Freud’s 1938 article, “Splitting of the ego in the process of defence”) can be likened to Sartrean bad-faith. He re-states, p.265, Sartre’s notion that bad-faith ‘flies being by taking refuge in “not-believing-what-one-believes”’, saying, ‘this is precisely what [Oliver] Mannoni locates in Freud’s account of fetishism. Mannoni… rejects the commonly assumed notion that disavowal rests on Freud’s dualistic topology of the conscious system and the unconscious’. Ibid., p.267, concludes, ‘With disavowal, we have found Freud’s rebuttal to Sartre’s claim that psychoanalysis has nothing to say on the matter of mutually contradictory ideas maintaining themselves simultaneously and doing so within a single consciousness’. 19 Ibid., p.263.
Establishing the act of re/suppression (or sup/repression) as essential for everyday functioning, pre-empts the revelatory event where something returns from re/suppression.\textsuperscript{20} Freud’s revelations originate as repressed subjects from infancy, \textit{including the revelation of the repression act itself}, whereas Sartre’s comes from self-acknowledgement of independence, responsibility and potentiality, \textit{including the revelation of the suppression act itself}. In defending the Freudian uncanny, Edmund Bergler (1934) contributes an example of a male patient who momentarily believes that his wishing his girlfriend dead transpired as wish-fulfilment, that omnipotence of thought actually effected her death, and that his impulsive wishes make him dangerous to others and to himself.\textsuperscript{21} In Sartrean terms, this would be taken to mean the patient experiences awesome self-truth that such deeds are plainly within one’s far-reaching potentiality. The patient’s uncanny sensation is experienced in Freudian terms as the omnipotence of infancy revisited, or in Sartrean theory as meaning an alarming reminder that we live in delusion that our existence is neither meaningful nor subservient to an external force. Bergler’s example of obsessive-neurotics believing they can perform miracles (whereby uncanny sensations are anxiety-signals reacting to self-omnipotence) also compares with Sartre’s idea of Dasein’s anxiety in the face of self-acknowledging their awesome freewill.\textsuperscript{22} Similarly, Bergler’s example showing others uncannily fail to display normally-acceptable, expected reactions can be likened to Sartre’s \textit{Other} acting in surprising good-faith rather than enacting social norms.\textsuperscript{23} Masochistic attempts to veil or cover up the anguish of the reality-principle speaks directly to Existentialist angst.\textsuperscript{24} Whilst Bergler affirms that the ‘feeling of \textit{being lived by} the unconscious’\textsuperscript{25} evokes uncanniness, it is a conflict we ourselves manufacture – the fight comes from within – as a Sartrean act of bad-faith.

When Sartre provisions his reader with the example of a couple’s first date, he insinuates the woman’s act of bad-faith is a function of the man’s sexual appetite, discounting other possible intentions of both parties.\textsuperscript{26} Whereas some scholars allow Sartre this misgiving by

\textsuperscript{20} For the purposes of conflating two acts as one, I hereon abbreviate ‘repression or suppression’ as ‘re/suppression.’
\textsuperscript{21} See Bergler, op. cit., p.218.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p.222.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p.223.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p.239.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p.224.
\textsuperscript{26} Sartre, \textit{Being and nothingness}, op. cit., pp.55-7, describes a situation of a couple’s first date, saying that the woman ‘knows
sanctioning it simply as a means of illustration, it nevertheless reflects Freud's disposition of relating behaviour to sexual drives. Another of Sartre's misgivings, that 'Freud is obliged to imply everywhere a magic unity linking distant phenomena across obstacles', compares with his own concept of magical transformation and tricks of self-deception. Regardless of ideas aligning 'Existentialist' and Freudian consciousnesses, it is possible to glean from both philosophies the possibility of the source and site of the uncanny. For example, whilst focussing on Heidegger's disavowal of the Holocaust, Eric Kligerman, in Sites of the uncanny (2007), connects the Freudian uncanny with the Heideggerian uncanny in his treatise of Paul Celan's poetry and the 'Holocaustal uncanny'.

In synthesizing secular theories of the uncanny, other writings by Sartre are helpful, including Nausea (1938), where the protagonist, Roquentin, encounters the chasm of

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27 Sartre, Being and nothingness, op. cit., p.53; my emphasis.
28 The place and time of Heidegger's lecture, Germany, 1942, when the atrocities of the Holocaust would have been understood by Heidegger, coupled with his relationship and alleged sympathetic allegiance with the Nazi party, have been subject to much conjecture. One book which encompasses such discussion and aligns the Freudian and Heideggerian 'uncannies' with the Holocaust and with Paul Celan's poetry is Kligerman, op. cit. Kligerman, like others before him, portrays Heidegger as being complicit in the Holocaust by his denial and avoidance of the subject, especially since, as Kligerman argues, it relates so much to his notions of the uncanny. By overthrowing time/date dimensions, where Heidegger presents the "now" of Hölderlin's poem as marking 'the original dwelling place of Being', Heidegger not only coalesces now with here (or time with space), he essentially dismisses time altogether, according to Kligerman, who, pp.89-9, asserts, 'The dismissal of the date allows Heidegger to avoid the historical events transpiring at the time he delivered his lectures. He continues, p.91, 'Now in his "Ister" lectures this flight [or fleeing from one's uncanniness], which is a turning-away or forgetting of one's original uncanny nature, is deemed a catastrophe [suchlike the Holocaust]. However, this catastrophe takes on a positive connotation for Heidegger, who sees it as a necessary step in the venture toward the uncanny and Being's mystery. ' Whilst the question of Heidegger's culpability in matters concerning the Holocaust is important to observe, and although sound arguments have and can be made about the uncanny and technological drive being political manoeuvrings of Heidegger's and the Nazi regime's, this present analysis steers away from presenting political stances, including, as mentioned previously, feminizing the Freudian uncanny. Henceforth, Heidegger's instigation of the uncanny is adopted in an apolitical manner, inasmuch as that can be achieved. Nonetheless, Kligerman offers much to consider including, p.24, defining the Holocaustal uncanny as being 'the perceptual disruptions that accompany the spectator's relation to the artwork, resulting in an affective tonality of anxiety... the uncanny shatters such distinctions as self/Other and interior/exterior. This moment of the Holocaustal uncanny is not an act of union or substitution between the spectator and the place of the Other; rather, during [it]... The subject departs towards the Other and is caught in an unsettling space of non-identification, a space where... there is dissolution of any imaginary union between the spectator and the scene of trauma'.

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'Being-in-itself'\textsuperscript{29} as a confrontation of 'obscene nakedness' which accounts for the absolute absurdity of Being:

And suddenly, suddenly, the veil is torn away. I have understood, I have seen... The roots of the chestnut tree were sunk in the ground just under my bench. I couldn't remember it was a root anymore. The words had vanished and with them the significance of things... I was sitting, stooping forward, head bowed, alone in front of this black, knotty mass, entirely beastly, which frightened me. Then I had this vision. It left me breathless. Never, until these last few days, had I understood the meaning of "existence"... And then all of a sudden, there it was, clear as day: existence had suddenly unveiled itself. It had lost the harmless look of an abstract category: it was the very paste of things, this root was kneaded into existence.\textsuperscript{30}

Such revelatory encounters, snippets or glimpses account for unfathomable uncanniness, symptomatic of man's sudden, fleeting acknowledgement of their absurdity. Rather than man acknowledging his absurd situation, Sartre submits that he (in cowardly bad-faith) cloaks or arms himself with delusions, such as positing the existence of God to relieve and dispel ideas of utter absurdity and that there is no meaning for our existence. Dealt with in this way, Sartre's absurd-Being reflects Heidegger's theory of the 'Being' as always a projection of the self: perpetually propelling into the future as a possibility, a 'possibility-of-Being':\textsuperscript{31} the nature of humankind — individually and collectively — is not a fixed entity, but one which is steeped in possibility. Yet an individual's (Dasein's) 'Being-in-the-world' provides the possibility of Dasein to become transfixed, inauthentically deceiving oneself as being acceptable or legitimate in other's eyes. In denying 'true-self,' Dasein lives an inauthentic, alienated life — as self-deception leads to Dasein alienating 'true-self.' This sense of not-Being-at-home, Heidegger spells out as unheimlich, a self-alienation Sartre explains as being 'the one who experiences himself as constituting an Us with other men [but] feels himself trapped among an infinity of strange existences; he is alienated radically and without recourse'\textsuperscript{32} — sensations constituting feelings of humiliation and impotence. Nevertheless, for Sartre, these are not outside one's control.

\textsuperscript{29}'Being-in-itself' is the reality of existence before any human intervention or conscious experience. Being-in-itself has no function of meaning or value, it simply 'is.' Humans create meaning and value and are fully responsible for the world that they create around themselves. The Being-in-itself becomes the 'for-itself,' which is 'separated from its Self in three successive ekstases: (1) Temporality. The For-itself nihilates the in-itself (to which in one sense it still belongs) in the three dimensions of past, present, and future (the three temporal ekstases). (2) Reflection. The For-itself tries to adopt an external point of view on itself. (3) Being-for-others. The For-itself discovers that it has a Self for-the-Other, a Self which it is without ever being able to know or get hold of it'; see Sartre, \textit{Being and nothingness}, op. cit., p.631.


\textsuperscript{31}Heidegger, \textit{Being and time}, op. cit., p.90.

\textsuperscript{32}Sartre, \textit{Being and nothingness}, op. cit., p.419.
Although man is ultimately free to choose to belong to groups comprised of ‘the Other,’ as Freud shows, man is always reflected and doubled in the Other anyhow. The Other, considering its association with projecting oneself onto objects, particularly in relation to the doppelgänger, has great relevance to Freudian uncanniness. Sartre defines the presence of the Other as consuming the space that would otherwise be occupied only by non-human objects (and the self): the Other disturbs one’s solitude and collapses the world around one, opening up ‘a kind of drain hole in the middle of its being’ that acts like an ‘internal haemorrhage’. The drain hole is the destabilising Other, and even though I can objectify the Other, I am equally aware that they likewise objectify me — that is, I am also a ‘being-for-Others’. One’s awareness of ‘being-as-object’ for the Other arrives as a frightening shock every time I am reminded of this ‘side’ of my being: the Other is my doppelgänger, as I am theirs. In Sartrean philosophy, encounters with Otherness commonly erupt as fear, with fleeting episodes of encountering the Other evoking uncanniness. Sartre presses, ‘God... is only the concept of the Other pushed to the limit’, and whilst man attempts to reclaim himself from the grips of the Other, most (if not all) attempts at doing so result in acts of bad-faith, including desire of, and pride, vanity and arrogance. The Other, therefore, becomes another agency of triggering the uncanny self-acknowledgement of Being-in-itself-in-the-midst-of-the-world, singularly of freewill, exposing the awesomeness of Being, and thus accounting for vague bursts of uncanny feelings about the Other.

Whilst suggesting ways in which the Freudian and Existentialist uncanny may be reconciled, it would be another thing to try to synthesize their secular ideologies with religious/spiritual notions of the uncanny. Theoretical bridges have, however, been provided, offering other

33 Ibid., pp.256-7.
34 Ibid.,p.266.
35 It does however call to mind the article by Lorne Dawson, “Otto and Freud on the uncanny and beyond”, Journal of the American Academy of Religion, vol.57, no.2 (Summer 1989), pp.283-311. Dawson compares the uncanny as described in Rudolf Otto’s famous theological work of 1917, The idea of the holy and Freud’s 1919 essay which, as she points out, does not mention Otto, which might be considered curious because, as Dawson, p.290, observes, ‘the essay was originally begun shortly after the publication of Totem and Taboo (1913), [and therefore] it probably represents a continuation of his interest in things religious’. She argues against several points made by Freud including his not accounting for uncanny experiences amongst primitive peoples, p.295: ‘How would you explain these occurrences, that is, within societies which still display a sanctioned belief in animism, ghostly spirits, magic, etc.?’ Whilst thought-provoking, Dawson, conclusively finding both Otto and Freud deficient, fails to account for Freud’s overarching idea that uncanny fear derives from a blinded acknowledgement of being of two minds. Otto, discussing the idea that people experience the Holy rather than think it, writes: “Religious dread” (or “awe”)... first begins to stir in the feeling of “something uncanny”, “eerie”, or “weird”. It is this feeling which... forms the starting point for the entire religious development in history; see Rudolf Otto, The idea of the holy, trans. John Harvey, New York: Oxford UP, 1969, pp.14-15.
ways forward in this analysis. Slavoj Žižek’s viewpoint constitutes one possible direction.36 Arguing that exceptions allow us to perceive the miracle of universal rule, Žižek references Gilbert Chesterton’s *Orthodoxy*, which states a case for a pervasive and persistent need for contradiction:

Mysticism keeps men sane. As long as you have mystery you have health; when you destroy mystery you create morbidity. The ordinary man has always been sane because... [he] has always been a mystic. He has permitted the twilight. He has always had one foot in earth and the other in fairyland... He has always cared more for truth than for consistency. If he saw two truths that seemed to contradict each other, he would take the two truths and the contradiction along with them... he sees two different pictures at once and yet sees all the better for that. Thus he has always believed that there was such a thing as fate, but such a thing as free will also... The whole secret of mysticism is this: that man can understand everything by the help of what he does not understand. The morbid logician seeks to make everything lucid, and succeeds in making everything mysterious. The mystic allows one thing to be mysterious, and everything else becomes lucid.37

Chesterton vexes:

The real trouble with this world of ours is not that it is an unreasonable world, nor even that it is a reasonable one. The commonest kind of trouble is that it is nearly reasonable, but not quite. Life is not an illogicality; yet it is a trap for logicians. It looks just a little more mathematical and regular than it is; its exactitude is obvious, but its inexactitude is hidden; its wildness lies in wait.38

Explaining how beliefs are often discredited, Chesterton gives a fictional example of an extraterrestrial creature assuming that a human’s interior matched their symmetrical exterior thus leading them to falsely conclude that humans have two hearts just as they have two eyes. He comprehends this ‘silent swerving from accuracy by an inch’ as being ‘the uncanny element in everything’.39 Calling this a ‘sort of secret treason in the universe’, he promotes irrationality: ‘Everywhere in things there is this element of the quiet and incalculable’.40 Significantly, and regardless of whether ideologies are based on supreme divinities, adopting positions wherein exceptions and contradictions are accounted for is often located with an acknowledgment of uncanniness. Without exception, the differing philosophies of Freud, Sartre and Chesterton regard the uncanny as being exceptional.

The Freudian and Existentialist uncanny share an important mythological character, Antigone, who is secreted in the backbone of Freud’s essay and is the essence of Heidegger’s. Of Sophocles’ “Three Theban plays,” Antigone symbolises several uncanny ideas including...
mankind overcoming 're/suppressed' primal urges and being buried alive. Heideggerian 'fleeing in the face of one's ownmost Being-towards-death' somewhat compares with Freudian death-drive compulsions, evoking Antigone overcoming fate when she keens,

O grave! my bridal chamber, prison-house
Eterne, deep-hollowed, whither I am led
To find mine own,—
...And I reap this doom
For tending, Polynices, on thy corte.41

‘Corse’ is the obsolete form for ‘corpse’ — Sophocles' vision of the living tending to the dead, a stanza uniting life and death in a journeying towards ‘mine own.’ For Freud, Antigone is represented by his daughter Anna, whilst Heidegger represents her through Hölderlin’s The Ister, saying, Antigone’s ‘dying is her becoming homely, but a becoming homely within and from out of such being unhomely’.42 To Heidegger, Antigone is the uncanny, with Hölderlin’s hymn disclosing the 'mystery of Being and its own uncanny path'.43 Classicism, at the root of both men’s theories, generally favours enlightenment before romanticism whilst The sandman and Antigone both preference the poetic to the prosaic.

41 Sophocles, The seven plays in English verse, Teddington: Echo Library, 2006, p.33: O grave! my bridal chamber, prison-house / Eterne, deep-hollowed, whither I am led / To find mine own,— of whom Persephonè / Hath now a mighty number housed in death:— / I last of all, and far most miserably, / Am going, ere my days have reached their term! Yet lives the hope that, when I go, most surely / Dear will my coming be, father, to thee,/ And dear to thee, my mother, and to thee,/ Brother! since with these very hands I decked/ And bathed you after death, and ministered/ The last libations. And I reap this doom/ For tending, Polynices, on thy corte...  

42 Heidegger, Hölderlin’s hymn..., op. cit., p.104. Parallels exist between Freud's interest in Shakespeare's King Lear (and his association of Anna to Cordelia) with Heidegger’s appreciation of The Ister, having Sophocles' Antigone at its core, including common themes and tropes such as the dominant power and fate of the dutiful female protagonists, coupling as motherland, the sun, human existence, mysteries and estrangement. Among many comparisons between King Lear and Antigone, see Robert F. Fleissner, The 'nothing' element in King Lear, Shakespeare Quarterly, vol.13, no.1 (Winter 1962), pp.67-70, p.67.

43 Kligerman, op. cit., p.75. A paper focusing on the significance of physical locations (domestic versus public arenas; the former as the 'proper' site for women) as read in Antigone and compared with Heidegger’s reading is Valerie Reed, “Bringing Antigone home”, Comparative Literature Studies, vol.45, no.3 (2008), pp.316-40. Reed describes Antigone as representing women sited in public spheres as being transgressive, out of place or alien, as representing the act of transgressing boundaries, an act of crossing borders, as is journeying between homely the unhomely. Looking at Heidegger’s analysis of Antigone as being constrained because it does not pursue questions concerning the oikos; as a site of contention, as being the site of ‘home and family,’ Reed, p.317, argues that Heidegger ‘fails to come to terms with the full implications of the “homely” nature — which is also the unheimlich nature — of Antigone’s relationship to her oikos in this play’. Antigone’s ‘proper’ place as being the underworld: at once one is born and is henceforth fundamentally destabilised and alien; Antigone equates with a migrant who does not “really” belong in any place (p.324); thus feeling profoundly alien and out-of-place in life draws one towards death as salvation; but as Antigone ‘approaches death, it comes to seem that the problem lies...in the possibility that she might never arrive... [or] that her home simply cannot be located’ (p.325). But Reed notes her ‘proper’ place is not resolved, so the proposition of belonging in a ‘proper’ place becomes ‘ungrounded’ and Antigone is caught in perpetual conflict, ‘caught between life and death... suspended between the homely and unhomely’ (p.327) — a suspension which Reed argues is best characterized by the word unheimlich’ (p.328). Whilst Reed, p.336, says ‘Heidegger does not address the question of the oikos,’ he stresses the significance of locating one’s origins, progressing the Danube as an inherited — thus family — place of profound importance; and whereas, as Reed, p.338, states, ‘Heidegger’s understanding of the (un)homely is at times so strongly oriented toward the eventual arrival at the homely as to risk losing altogether the sense of the “counterturning” inherent in the Unheimliche’, you can discern in Heidegger concepts of man as vacillating between different states — homely-unhomely — of man’s essence.
Heidegger shows that in *The Ister*, Antigone is entwined with the Danube, a river which is simultaneously symbolic of the motherland whilst flowing from and to the foreign lands of the Other, again conjoining homely with unhomely. Heidegger reasons that travelling into the foreign is essential to *Dasein*'s coming home – one must journey into the uncanny-unhomely to arrive at the 'home' of their Being. Whilst he does not ascribe this as being a physical journeying into the foreign, the unusual flow of the Danube, from West to East, journeys from Heidegger's locale in the Black Forest to and through Freud's Vienna, thus suggesting Heidegger also metaphorically journeys into the foreign land of the Freudian uncanny. As Heidegger contends, 'For only where the foreign is known and acknowledged in its essential oppositional character does there exist the possibility of a genuine relationship, that is, of a uniting that is not a confused mixing but a conjoining in distinction'. Turning Heidegger on Heidegger, one could argue that the Existentialist uncanny finds it home in the Freudian, and vice versa. The 'well-roundedness, the progressive interweaving of thoughts, and the intrinsic movement' of Heidegger's lecture series defines them as logical and coherent, yet they are intentionally open to interpretation, and not unlike Freud's essay, to comprehend Heidegger's *Ister* lectures as similarly uncanny is quite fathomable. Incessant inter-textual weavings throughout their texts evokes a nursery rhyme where there is a rhythmical 'turning in and a turning out, it is this way, that way, round about', like powerful river courses as symbolising the force of the familiar-unfamiliarity of the uncanny. Ironically, by the time Heidegger presented his *Ister* lectures in 1942, the homely-unhomely of the Danube of Freud's Vienna had witnessed his forced departure from his homeland to foreign soils of England. As such, Heidegger's lectures may be seen as an empathetic response to such alienation, whilst submitting to Freudian philosophy, thus enacting the double act of the doppelgänger.

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44 For Heidegger, it reads more like a metaphorical journeying into the foreign-yet-homely land of Germanic history, the language of the Greeks; see Heidegger, *Hölderlin's hymn...*, op. cit., ff.54.

45 Notions of West to East 'flows' can be attributed to Heidegger's interest in Eastern philosophy, evident early in his texts: see, for example, Lin Ma and Jaap van Brakel, "Heidegger's comportment toward East-West dialogue", *Philosophy East and West*, vol.56, no.4 (October 2006), pp.519-66, p.531. Heidegger, born (1889) in Meßkirch on the edge of the Black Forest, spent a great deal of time at his cabin at Todtnauberg in the Black Forest (NB: 'todt' means dead and 'berg' means mountain).

46 Heidegger, *Hölderlin's hymn...*, op. cit., p.54.


48 From "We are all nodding", a folk rhyme; Robert O. Zeleny (ed.), *Poems and Rhymes*, Chicago: Childcraft, 1971, p.23.

49 Alternatively, as Kligerman, op. cit., shows, Heidegger's approach can be read as supporting the political ideals of Nazism.
In an interview in 2001, Derrida was questioned as to whether it is possible to read the uncanny into everything he wrote after 1970 (after commenting that his work on the uncanny was ‘to be continued’). He concurred that all his writing could be inscribed as dealing with the uncanny, and given more time he would ‘show that everything refers to this uncanniness’ and ‘the only thing that [he is] interested in is the uncanny’. Qualifying his references to the uncanny as being oblique, yet describing his writings as being infected by ghostly presences and non-presences combined, Derrida shows a relentless interest in uncanniness, which is likewise regarded as being the underwritten force behind all Freudian psychoanalysis.

From a theoretical perspective, Derrida principally seeks to find the crucial points in Freud and Heidegger where *das unheimliche* is found to be the (most critical) experience, submitting, ‘why is it the best name, the best concept, for something which resists consistency, system, semantic identity?’ Whilst reflecting on the ‘madness’ of the uncanny and introducing the double bind concept, Derrida does not directly relate them but a connection is implicitly made considering his references to familiar-yet-unfamiliar, disturbing-yet-reassuring, and the double bind involving the pleasurable and painful, and is irrational, incomprehensible and maddening – all ideas akin to the uncanny.

Although the Freudian and Existentialist theories of the uncanny are discursive, complex and often frustrating, they nonetheless differentiate the private uncanny from the public uncanny of aesthetics. Inexplicably, Freud, Heidegger and Sartre did not stop to consider the uncanny as purely mythology, albeit Heidegger comes closest, considering they drew many of examples from myth and fiction. Had Sophocles’ character, Jocasta, of *Oedipus the King*, not uttered, ‘Many a man before you, in his dreams, has shared his mother’s bed’, Freud’s famous theories may not have indebtedness to such illustrious sources, nor perhaps transpired. Yet the classics remain an inspirational, scholarly source, and the importance of *Oedipus and Olympia* to Freud, and *Antigone* to Freud and Heidegger,

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50 Royle posed the question; see Michael Payne and John Schad (eds), *Life after theory*, London: Continuum, 2003, pp.32-6.
51 Ibid., pp.33-4. As Heidegger resolves, Derrida sees language as being inherently haunted. Similarly, Jay, *Cultural semantics*, op. cit., p.157, takes up this mantle discussing the uncanny of the 1990s. Mark Wigley, *The architecture of deconstruction: Derrida’s haunt*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993, provides several examples of the uncanny as it pertains to Derrida’s texts, bringing ideas from both Freud and Heidegger, as well as Rand and Torok and others.
52 For example, see: Royle, *The uncanny*, op. cit., p.24; Cixous, op. cit., pp.525-48 and pp.619-45; and, Weber, *The sideshow, or...*, op. cit., p.1104. Similar remarks have been attributed to Heidegger.
connects them to the apex of classical mythology and philosophy, to the gods’ Olympus. Indeed, via Hölderlin’s *The Ister*, Heidegger unites Olympia with the Danube (and thus, Antigone), saying, ‘Pindar speaks of Heracles’ having brought the olive leaf to Olympia “from the Ister’s shaded sources”... [symbolising] the essential connection between becoming homely and poetizing, between the poet and the demigod, between the homely and the unhomely’, whereas Hölderlin’s corresponding link in *The Ister* reads, ‘Thus it surprises/ Me not, that he / invited Hercules as guest, / Gleaming from afar, down there by Olympus’. Like Hoffmann’s visitor (Spalanzani’s ‘Olympia’), Hölderlin’s Hercules from Olympus is the uncanny guest, representing that even in the ‘locality of the homely, journeying still prevails... [and that the] appropriation of one’s own is only as the encounter and guest-like dialogue with the foreign’. Similarly, Kristeva shows the exiled daughters of Danaïs, the Danaïdes, were the first foreigners, and although she does not mention Danaïs as being etymologically linked to ‘danu’ (meaning river) and to the Danube, such connections unite Freud and Heidegger via Greek-Egyptian mythology. Indeed, Olympia symbolises much more than incertitude of the animate/inanimate, she represents the foreign yet the homely, and the journeying from one into the other, just as she embodies *Dasein* as fleeing from the homely (good-faith) into the foreign (bad-faith), only to find the foreign sporadically reminds *Dasein* of this incessant foreign-homely.

The uncanny, old and mythologised, continues to be an important philosophical and psychoanalytical subject, and without holding exclusivity of place where words have failed to convincingly accomplish ‘true’ meaning, it harnesses this conundrum, making it an attractive theme in art, thriving on the obscure edges of knowledge. Vidler declares the quest of Surrealist avant-gardes was ‘to uncover the modernist repressed and to reveal an uncanny in the other’, whereas Freud and Heidegger both reveal, by varying degrees, the centricity of the uncanny in aesthetics in general, with notions of ‘the mind looking at itself creating’ existing in Freud, Hoffmann, Heidegger and Hölderlin. Examinations into the

56 Ibid., p.5.
57 Ibid., p.142.
59 Vidler, “Fantasy, the uncanny and surrealist theories of architecture”, op. cit., pp.3-5.
discourse surrounding the uncanny proves it to be an elusive concept to grasp, difficult to confine and oriented towards increasingly complex ideas: from literal renderings of Olympia as eerily lifelike to realisations of mankind’s uncanny-self as inherently withholding true-self. Rubin’s argument that Freud’s text, like Hoffmann’s fiction, essentially presents the ideal self as artist whose creative struggle underpins the uncanniness of their art, notions examined in the following case-studies.60 Crucially, Hoffmann’s narrator says, ‘As a good portrait painter, I may possibly succeed in making Nathanael recognizable even if the original is unknown to you’.61 Certainly, the nexus between art and the uncanny is firmly forged – for Heidegger, the two are as one. Art, regardless of whether artists intentionally endeavour to evoke uncanniness, therefore can be said to address the Freudian and Heideggerian uncanny on different levels – a proposition which is considered, applying a synthesized Freudian-Heideggerian framework. This multi-layered interpretation, which corresponds to the mythology of Olympia, analyses art on several different planes, just as Olympia elicits notions of ‘intellectual uncertainty’ about the figurative inanimate, yet personifies much more besides, including beauty, omniscience, the feminine, the political and foreign-homely. Symbolic or iconographic representations of Olympia lead to complex elaborations from literal narrative to allegorical to even deeper tropological and metaphorical ideas, profound levels of exegesis, introducing metaphysical, spiritual and mystical dimensions. As being forged from Hoffmannian furnaces, Olympia also represents another significant motif of the uncanny – fire – as an important Heideggerian conjurer of uncanny remembrances and metaphorical flickerings of past into future,62 and although Freud has misgivings about the significance of Olympia, the uncanny automaton prevails. Kofman, for one, reclaims Olympia’s importance, saying her

61 Here I prefer the Kent and Knight translation, Hoffmann, Selected writings, op. cit., p.105, whereas Hollingsdale’s translation, Hoffmann, Tales of Hoffmann, op. cit., p.101, reads, ‘Perhaps, like a good portrait painter, I shall succeed in catching more than one figure in such a way that, although you never knew its original, you will nonetheless think it lifelike, that you had indeed seen the person many times with your living eyes’.
62 Originally published in 1938, Gaston Bachelard, The psychoanalysis of fire, trans. Alan C.M. Ross, London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1964, p.85, discusses ‘A poetry of the flame [which] runs throughout [Hoffmann’s] entire work’, and fire is, as mentioned, something Heidegger focuses on in Hölderlin, and is seen to be central to uncanniness. Bachelard, p.7, deciphers fire as an intimate yet universal motif which encompasses various dualities including ‘the opposing values of good and evil. It shines in Paradise. It burns in Hell. It is gentleness and torture... It is pleasure for the good child sitting prudently by the hearth... It can contradict itself; thus it is one of the principles of universal explanation’.
'effect is inseparable from the uncanny effect produced by the sandman and also from the problem of the double'.63

Significantly, Freud discusses poetic settings aestheticians employ, asserting that wholly unreal worlds taint the reader's judgement to an extent whereby uncanniness is disavowed, whereas those who skilfully employ poetic suspense thus intensify their work with uncanniness. Anticipating Bresnick’s ideas about prosopoetic compulsion, Heidegger extensively encompasses poiesis, locating the uncanny as central to poetic realms. The uncanny has particularly fuelled debate in literary critique where some regard it a 'quasi-genre'64 and an important agent in gothic fiction and romanticism, routinely performing a secondary function in fantasy, fairy-tales, horror and sci-fi, genres which presuppose a transcendence beyond the boundaries of reality. Freud conjectures, in fairy-tales,

reality is behind from the very start, and the animistic system of belief is frankly adopted. Wish-fulfilments, secret powers, omnipotence of thoughts, animation of inanimate objects... elements so common in fairy stories, can exert no uncanny influence... [uncanniness] cannot arise unless there is a conflict of judgement as to whether things which have been 'surmounted' and are regarded as incredible may not, after all, be possible.65

Freud asserts the uncanny as a revelatory, unconscious act which can be exerted through literary techniques, as Heidegger reveals in Hölderlin. Nonetheless, similar devices extend to other aesthetic mediums, with Hopper's paintings, for example, said to articulate visual properties of the uncanny. Whereas Hopper considers art as 'an expression of the subconscious... [where] most all of the important qualities are put there unconsciously'66 and something for psychologists to unravel, other artists treat their work as an intellectual exercise, intentionally trying to conjure uncanniness, with art theorists subsequently applying oversimplified Freudian frameworks in their interpretations. This tendency towards oversimplification has resulted in a lacuna for which the following case-studies attempt to redress, bearing in mind the citation from Miyamoto Musashi's Book of five rings, asserting that bewilderment caused by a lack of understanding is a false void. Applying this credo, the uncanny might be regarded as a true void, something which remains unknown or somewhere one remains 'knowingly unknowing': the void is uncanny, the uncanny is the

63 Kofman, op. cit., p.141.

64 For example, Welchman, op. cit., p.40, notes the interest in the uncanny from the perspective of film – it being a kind of 'quasi-genre' that 'spawned at least one production... the feline shocker The Uncanny (dir. Denis Héroux, 1977...)'.

65 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.250.

void. If this syllogism held true, it would mean the philosophical strategy employed herein, in an endeavour to reveal the uncanny by revealing what it is not, has orbited back on itself, just as Freud and Heidegger illustrate how the uncanny acts to betray itself. Re-stating Jentsch’s notion of ‘intellectual uncertainty,’ Freud contends, ‘the uncanny would always... be something one does not know one’s way about in’, but the ‘better orientated in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it.’ 67 Françoise Meltzer reasserts the intellectual uncertainty theory, mooting, ‘such uncertainty in uncanny moments is tolerated because of the subject’s secret motivation: the desire to know,’ 68—a curiosity factor Sartre might position as man’s underlying drive from and towards self-knowledge. Although the uncanny defies simple definition, Royle concludes:

To write about the uncanny... is to lose one’s bearings, to find oneself immersed in the maddening logic of the supplement, to engage with a hydra. This is no reason to give up trying; examples of the uncanny get tangled up with one another, critical distinctions and conclusions become vertiginously difficult, but they are still necessary. 69

Marrying Musashi’s advice, ‘There is no warrior... who really understands the Way of strategy. There are various Ways’ 70 with Oscar Wilde’s observation, ‘It is superficial to look for hidden meanings. The mystery is in the visible, not in the invisible’, 71 the following case-studies reveal various ways at looking for uncanny mysteries in the visible, showing how it is possible to visually codify the uncanny. Although wholesale or univocal deconstructions of artwork invariably reduce the ineffable nature of art, this dissertation proceeds by examining the uncanniness of six Australian artists’ work, applying a renewed framework and commencing with three-dimensional evocations of Olympia, as mascot and guide to all journeys uncanny.

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67 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.221.
68 Françoise Meltzer, "The uncanny rendered canny: Freud’s blind spot in reading Hoffmann’s ‘Sandman’", in Gilman, op. cit., p.220; my emphasis. Meltzer’s focus is the subject’s insistent curiosity — an aspect she says Freud ignores, simply assuming that uncanny discoveries occur ‘in spite of the subject... against his will’; then, pp.221-3, adds, ‘The refusal to repress curiosity results in the cases of both Nathanael and Oedipus in crimes against nature’.
70 Musashi, op. cit., p.37.
71 Contrarily, D.H. Lawrence, according to Norris, op. cit., p.174, believes, “the artist” is a social entity... a self-conscious pose rather than an ontological condition and that culture corrupts them thus resulting in a distorted perspective, ‘a devaluation of Nature, animal, and body’. However, Norris notes Lawrence also held that instinct is ‘the detector of bad faith, and the visionary faculty [provides] a sharper and truer critical sense than rational epistemology...’ Thus, it is the art, not the artist, which can provide truer or clearer observances about the nature of mankind.
Part two
Chapter four

Olympia, the model automaton: Uncanny figurative sculpture

My originality consists in bringing to life, in a human way, improbable beings... by putting – as far as possible – the logic of the visible at the service of the invisible.

Odilon Redon

A bronze statue adorns the sidewalk outside the Musée d'Orsay; its lifelikeness is remarkable; people stare in wondrous amazement; it stares back... then blinks! The artful deceit of buskers play havoc on unsuspecting tourists whose minds race busily with the novelties of a foreign place; their preoccupied minds make fertile grounds for the uncanniness of inanimate statuary. Yet this is de-animating the animate! Across many cultures, a deep tendency persists to animate otherwise lifeless objects and bestow intimidating products of modern science with human qualities, whilst simultaneously conceptualising human nature and bodies with reference to machines: anthropomorphism and its opposite. Following a concise account of the uncanny of figurative sculpture, this chapter considers the uncanniness of contemporary verist sculpture.

The history of figurative art in the Christian era includes the condemnation of sculptural effigies and iconoclastic war against idolatry, thus adding to a certain residual distrust of figurative sculpture which arguably persists in the West. Moreover, an 'aura of death' surrounds sculpture, as Kelley observes, 'the first corpse was the first statue', and the perceived permanence of statuary, along with death masks (popularised in the Enlightenment), act as surrogates of the dead and thought to house spirits of ghostly

1 Redon as cited in Jodi Hauptman, Beyond the visible: The art of Odilon Redon, New York: MoMA, 2005, p.27.
2 Similarly, Sheldon Bach, "Narcissism, continuity and the uncanny", International Journal of Psychoanalysis, vol.56 (1975), pp.77-86, gives an account of an actor performing as a machine, producing an uncanny quasi-human, quasi-machine-like appearance. Bach provides psychoanalytical examples of patients who have difficulty differentiating dead (or inanimate) and alive (or animate), and citing René Spitz, explains anxiety responses of infants towards inanimate objects - dolls and toys.
3 Alan Cholodenko, "Speculations on the animatic automaton", in Alan Cholodenko (ed.), The illusion of life 2: More essays on animation, Sydney: Power Publications, 2007, pp.486-528, discusses concepts of man-as-machine, the automaton and animation, saying that the automaton (as Other) 'introduces the crepuscular, the twilight, of the illusion of life and the life of (that) illusion to the metaphysical enterprise of philosophy', and with it 'indeterminacy rules' (p.493).
4 Christianity's distrust of sculptural idolatry pertains to one of the Ten Commandments: 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me'; see Exodus 20:4-6. Regarding such distrust, see Paul J. Alexander, "Hypatius of Ephesus: A note on image worship in the sixth century", The Harvard Theological Review, vol.45, no.3 (July 1952), pp.177-84, pp.178-9; and, Erwin Panofsky, Tomb sculpture: Four lectures on changing aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini, H.W. Janson (ed.), New York: H.N. Abrams, 1964.
5 Kelley, The uncanny, op. cit., p.34.
cadavers. Such notions apply to contemporary figurative art, including those ‘post-human’ forms bio-cybernetics creates, like the Na'vi of the film Avatar, where even in futuristic ‘super-being’ forms, death and decay is revealed, and where invoking fears concerning human frailty and fatality in the animation of humanlike cyborgs, re-animation of the dead is perceived.

Like automata, cyborgs arouse concepts concerning the human body-as-machine (a topic of fascination from as early as the seventeenth-century) and a will over and desire to engineer a better human, thus connecting with Heideggerian notions about man’s compulsion to drive or progress into the future homely through incessant technological advance. In Hoffmann’s era, mechanical inventions taking the role of humans and animals – objects as automatons – generally precipitated in alienating people, but by the time the automaton reached Freud, it symbolised more scientific, unseen matters, it signified the material of the unconscious.

As important discoveries of ancient ruins continued throughout the centuries, liberating burial sites of Egypt, Pompeii and Troy into cultural history, the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft Egyptian expedition’s find (early 1900s) of spectacular sculptural artefacts, including the bust of Nefertiti, fuelled Freud’s craving for antiquities, as did associated literature, importantly Wilhelm Jensen’s Gradiva (1903). Freud’s Totem and taboo and “The aetiology of hysteria” (1896) compare psychoanalytical techniques to archaeological processes insofar as both professions decipher and translate inscriptions of either the psyche

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6 The Twentieth Century Fox film of 2009, Avatar, directed by James Cameron, is set in the year 2154 on a planet called Pandora where the native inhabitants, known as ‘the Na’vi,’ are depicted as a humanoid species.

7 See, for example, W. J. Thomas Mitchell, “The work of art in the age of biocybernetic reproduction”, Artlink, vol.22, no.1 (2002), pp.10-17, p.10, which discusses ‘biocybernetics’ as ‘the combination of computer technology and biological science that makes cloning and genetic engineering possible’. The term ‘cyborg’ is a neologism of cybernetics and organism. For background of the history of cyborgs and man’s interest in the body as machine, see Bruce Grenville, The uncanny: Experiments…, op. cit., p.33. Ibid., p.20, regards cyborgs as uncanny ‘not because it is unfamiliar or alien, but rather because it is all too familiar. It is the body doubled – doubled by the machine that is so common, so familiar, so ubiquitous, and so essential that it threatens to consume us, to destroy our links to nature and history, and quite literally, especially in times of war, to destroy the body itself and to replace it with its uncanny double’.

8 Allan Antliff, “Egotar cyborgs” in ibid., pp.101-13, p.107, reads, ‘a will to power and desire to engineer – whether through bio-technology or social engineering – a better human’, reciting Francis Picabia’s assertion, ‘The machine has become more than a mere adjunct of life. It is really a part of human life – perhaps the very soul’. See ibid., pp.114-25, for Bruno Bettelheim’s account, ‘Joey: A mechanical boy’, a case history of a boy who thought himself to be a machine. Also see Christopher Bolton, Istvan Cicsery-Rony Jr. and Takayuki Tatsumi (eds), Robot ghosts and wired dreams: Japanese science fiction from origins to anime, Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2007, especially pp.10-18.

9 For example, Mary Louisa Moleworth’s Four ghost stories (1888) and Uncanny tales (1896), H.G. Wells’ Thirty strange stories: Tales macabre and uncanny (1898), and F. Marion Crawford’s Uncanny tales (1911) are among many in the developing interest in the uncanny in literature. See Welchman, op. cit., p.41, which briefly outlines the development of the uncanny in literature from the nineteenth through twentieth centuries, including the Uncanny X-Men comic series.
or ancient ruins. In his essay on *Gradiva*, Freud considers Jensen’s uncanny short-story about archaeologist, Norbert Hanold, who obsesses about a female depiction on a Roman plaque. Hanold maintained repressed memories of a girl from childhood until an uncanny flash of recognition happens upon encountering a like girl on a plaque in Pompeii, a locale which is considered as an overwhelming, catastrophic site of uncanniness: for example, Jensen describes Pompeii as appearing ‘petrified in dead immobility. Yet out of it stirred a feeling that death was beginning to talk’. Relaying uncanny lifelikeness, Jensen explains Hanold’s captivation over the inanimate:

> So the young woman [the plaque] was fascinating, not at all because of plastic beauty of form, but because she possessed something rare in antique sculpture, a realistic, simple, maidenly grace which gave the impression of imparting life to the relief.

Freud was particularly moved by observations in Jensen that, ‘someone must die first, in order to become alive’ and that for archaeology to be possible, that is ‘doubtless necessary’. Considering a form of ‘archaeological-psychoanalysis’ proliferates throughout Freud’s writings, the idea ‘something must die in order to become alive’ connects with notions of the ‘body-set-in-stone.’ Indeed, sculptural figures, whether in stone or polysynthetic compounds, are eternally suspended forms, offering the onlooker a launching pad from which to deliberate humanity’s profound nature. For Freud, a proclaimed ‘archaeologist of the mind’, the Pompeian discoveries of bodies buried alive within intimate, homely surrounds resounded with uncanniness of a unhomely-homely intermingling. Manifoldly, Pompeian cast formations represent ‘real-life’ statuary held in eternal lifelike suspense, being neither alive nor dead, but uncannily both, yet absent of intention insofar as being caught unawares in sculptural form, whilst mirroring...
unconsciousness as being ‘buried (suppressed and repressed) under the ashes’ before being revivified, thus ‘assuming the uncanny power associated with automata’ like Olympia.  

Referring to Freud’s Olympia and noting Germanic heritage of puppetry, including Goethe’s Puppenspiel, Cixous exclaims, ‘What are we expected to do with these puppets which have haunted the stages of German romanticism?’ Hoffmann’s original automatons can be found in Die automate (1814), which delves into mechanical likenesses of human beings. Whereas Olympia’s ‘persistence and vitality’, her refusal to go away and resistance to ‘obfuscation and substitution’ undoubtedly adds to the uncanniness of The sandman, automatons have long and pervasively haunted aesthetics, pre-dating Goethe and persisting through to Bellmer and Salvador Dalí and successive artists including superrealists Charles Ray, Bruce Nauman, John de Andrea, Duane Hanson and Robert Gober.

Sometimes derogatively referred to as ‘mannequin art’, the figurative sculpture of artists like Charles Robb likewise follow these footsteps. The disconcerting question of a figure’s ‘aliveness’ is a shared or universal enigma which feeds art’s long-term fascination with animating the inanimate, extending to British Super Humanism which was propelled by the explosion of the body image in the 1960-70s, cultivating a ‘phantasmagoria of vision that sees only bodies and sees them everywhere’, as Welchman writes. Having digested the techniques of century-old mannequin-making, the Young British Artists (YBAs) of the 1980-90s engaged with the artificial body in what is regarded ‘one of the most extensive reinvestments in the unsettling conditions of somatic sculpture’. Kelley argues that art

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18 Bergstein, op. cit., p.198. Ibid., p.202, talks of the ‘total absence of intention in the sculptural forms, and the instant sense of discovery in viewing photographs of isolated absent bodies’.

19 Cixous, op. cit., p.338.

20 See Hewett-Thayer, op. cit., pp.177-8. He notes, ‘man has long been intrigued by the possibility of creating a being resembling man and giving it a semblance of human life; the mandrake root becomes an “Alraune” or a pure mechanism is fabricated and then magically endowed with some human capacities, as in Frankenstein... Hoffmann reread Wiegleb and conceived of the plan of constructing an automaton... the artful deceptiveness of their accomplishments, fascinated him’.

21 Livia Monnet, “A-Life and the uncanny in 'Final fantasy: The spirits within’”, Science Fiction Studies, vol.31, no.1 (March 2004), pp. 97-121, p.113. Monnet wants Olympia to be reinstated ‘as a live, autonomous woman with a will and voice of her own, at the center of the narrative’.

22 Hans Bellmer (1902-1975, German); Salvador Dalí (1904-1989, Spanish); Charles Ray (1953-, American); Bruce Nauman (1941-, American); John de Andrea (1941-, American); Duane Hanson (1925-1996, American); and, Robert Gober (b.1954-, American). Kelley, The uncanny, op. cit., provides some historical analysis about figurative sculpture and its relation to contemporary verist sculpture. Gober’s style is somewhat repeated in Australian artist, Charles Robb’s work, such as Trophy, 2002, fibreglass, polyester resin, synthetic polymer paint, steel, 20.1x16.4x25.2 cm, NGV. The greatest concentration of mannequin images, according to Welchman, op. cit., p.53, ‘was produced in the 1920s and 1940s by German and other photographers associated with the Bauhaus or the ”New Objectivity”... influenced by Surrealism’.

23 Welchman, op. cit., p.55.

24 Ibid., p.56. The Sensation exhibition (1997) especially engaged with the artificial human body. Welchman outlines this
history neglected to see that the polychrome figurative of these decades were not merely examples of *simulacra* or *simulation* but symbolic *vanitas* or *memento mori* following the AIDS epidemic.  

The mannequin is particularly ubiquitous in sculpture, installations and photography of Surrealism, which has an important affinity with the Freudian uncanny via the intrigue of the unconscious. ‘Ideas in action,’ the principle attitude of Surrealism, was about throwing up and exploring fresh ideas in an endeavour to substantiate or invalidate existing values and beliefs; unsurprisingly Freudian literature was paramount. The Surrealist uncanny predominantly imagines the inner mind and re-imagines the body accordingly. In his *Surrealist manifesto* (1924), André Breton prizes the mannequin as the modern symbol of the marvellous, ‘capable of affecting the human sensibility’. As such, Max Ernst’s *Teetering woman* (1923) represents a strange fusion of woman and mannequin unsteadily tiptoeing across a tightrope whilst becoming ensnared by an organic-mechanical assailant emerging from darkened depths – an open-ended puzzle confounded by her doll-like appearance and an eerie being lurking around her. Likewise, Bellmer’s fascination with the human form, expressed as contorted sculptural figures, exemplifies the Surrealist uncanny, and according to Foster, in Bellmer’s dolls, surreality and the uncanny ‘intersect in the most desublimatory ways... [yet also] most literal’ ways, a defensible observation.

genre, discussing artists like Orshi Drozdik, Marc Quinn and Jake and Dinos Chapman, all represented in Kelley’s *The uncanny* exhibition.

25 Kelley, *The uncanny*, op. cit., p.10, discusses Gober’s, Kiki Smith’s and Cindy Sherman’s work as examples of art which went under the microscope of AIDS-related subjects (the former two) or exemplary of *simulacra* (Sherman), rather than being called out in the name of the uncanny. Kelley, p.10, states, ‘I am surprised that I did not attempt to tackle this issue [the omission] myself... however, such ideas were simply not linked to figurative sculpture then’.

26 According to Guillaume Apollinaire who coined the term.

27 André Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), in André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1972, pp.9-10, explicates: ‘We are still living under the reign of logic... But in this day and age logical methods are applicable only to solving problems of secondary interest. The absolute rationalism that is still in vogue allows us to consider only facts relating directly to our experience. Logical ends, on the contrary, escape us... Under the pretence of civilization and progress, we have managed to banish from the mind everything that may rightly or wrongly be termed superstition, or fancy... [But now] a pan of our mental world which we pretended not to be concerned with any longer – and, in my opinion by far the most important part – has been brought back to light. For this we must give thanks to the discoveries of Sigmund Freud’. Recalling Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s hymn...*, op. cit., Breton, p.18, explains the need to go ‘back to the sources of poetic imagination’.

28 Ibid., p.16, reads, ‘The marvellous is not the same in every period of history: it partakes in some obscure way of a sort of general revelation only the fragments of which come down to us: they are the romantic *ruins*, the modern *mannequins*, or any other symbol capable of affecting the human sensibility for a period of time’. Whereas this prompts the question of what that symbol may be today, those older symbols, *ruins* and *mannequins*, maintain special uncanniness.

29 Max Ernst, *The equivocal woman* (or *The teetering woman*), 1923, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 97.5 cm, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany.
remembering Bellmer took inspiration from an operatic version of Hoffmann’s Olympia.30 Bellmer’s dolls, endowed with cataleptic frigidity which photography makes more chillingly so by its internal reference of capturing ‘real’ likenesses, are lifelike beings caught in frozen state; the inanimate is animated via a mechanical means of photographic (re)production: perversely, mechanical means enliven the inanimate so onlookers half expect Bellmer’s figures to (re)vivify; ideas developed in relation to the filmic uncanny in chapter six.

Freud bestows special emphasis on the uncanny effect that ‘is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes’.31 Whereas, generally speaking, the unreal unexpectedly turning real evokes loathsome, repellent emotions, such as the frightening possibility of dolls or mannequins springing Into life or a corpse as zombie suddenly moving,32 Freud’s notion of symbols replacing the signified pre-empts Baudrillard’s concepts of simulacra and simulation, pointing to inert material substances commuting to become something else, as familiar turning unfamiliar. Krauss senses Baudrillardian concepts in Freud, saying,

the whole of Freud’s text turns on examples of cases of doubling in which likeness is simulacral in that the relation between the copy and the original is that of a false resemblance, for while the two might seem alike to outward appearances, there is a fundamental dissimilarity at their core.33

Such notions reflect uncanniness in symbols which have overpowered their referents, ideas which correlate transmutation and uncanniness. Scientists and technologists take such concepts to different levels, providing ‘out-of-body experiences’ using virtual reality and physical stimulus, for example, including the ‘body-swapping’ experiments conducted by Swedish neuroscientists to demonstrate the ability to trick the mind into believing that man can step out of his corporeal body and assume another’s or something else (like a

31 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.244.
mannequin). Equally disturbing is the fabrication of the fictional cyborg, which signifies 'a collective anxiety around the ubiquitous [and ominous] presence of the machine'. In an article explaining bio-cybernetics and its impact on art, W. J. Thomas Mitchell describes the uncanny of the bio-cybernetic boy in the film *AI*:

underlying the sickeningly sweet fantasy of mother-son bliss ... is the horror of the double, the encounter with one's own mirror image rendered autonomous, a horror that even the robot boy is capable of feeling when he sees scores of his own duplicates on the assembly line... The fantasy of *AI*, then, is a kind of extreme exaggeration of the uncanny, when the old, familiar phobia or superstition is realized in an unexpected way.

Mitchell connects Freudian ideas about the unsettling regurgitation of old, repressed fears with the fear of *the double*. As a form of doubling, statuary is imbued with death. Whilst death's relation to the uncanny is multifarious, its strongest tie is articulated as being when one comes towards death one comes towards 'true-self', or vice-versa, as one uncannily perceives 'true-self' one comes towards death. Referencing Otto Rank's theory, Freud advances the uncanny double as being 'an insurance against the destruction of the ego, an "energetic denial of the power of death"...an invention [which preserves the ego]... against extinction'.

Dating back to Egyptian customs of representing the dead in preparation for after-life, the heritage of sculpture is inextricably associated with sustaining life in death, enunciating mankind's preoccupation with 'giving up the ghost.' *Ushabti* figurines, buried as companion funerary 'doubles' or worker-companions bonded to perpetual slavery, assume roles as socio-political stand-ins (including in sacrificial rituals) whilst symbolising immortality, besides possessing associated pecuniary value insofar as being less precious substitutions for their more valuable referents. Kelley extends such notions to 'all popular sculpture' including votive sculpture to mundane worker replacements 'like the scarecrow or shop-window mannequin'. Freud refers to ancient customs of representing or mummifying the dead, early examples of the double, stressing such ideas as having

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35 Bruce Grenville, op. cit., p.47.

36 The 2001 film, *AI* (referring to Artificial Intelligence) was directed by Steven Spielberg; distributed by Warner Bros. Thomas Mitchell, op. cit., opens his paper by describing the film, *AI*, and linking it with the uncanny, although not implicitly to the Freudian uncanny, even though it shares such traits.

37 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.235, referencing his *The interpretation of dreams*, adds that this 'double's' dream-state counterpart is often represented as 'castration by a doubling or multiplication of a genital symbol'.

38 Kelley, *The uncanny*, op. cit., p.35. The associative value of figurative sculpture as substitutes for the 'real' thing represents man's bondage to work, thereby linking uncanniness with Marxist principles; thus, inherently, figurative sculpture eerily represent subservience to dominant forces, sovereignty or ruling classes. Clearly, equestrian-mounted victors symbolising
sprung from the soil of unbounded self-love, from the primary narcissism which dominates the mind of the child and of primitive man. But when this stage has been surmounted, the "double" reverses its aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death."

Thus, the double, of statuary and figurative representation including dolls, represents childhood’s naive omnipotence over death which becomes subsumed in adulthood as the inevitability of death. Consequently, the statue and doll represent that inevitability – they engender the face of death. In associating the double with uncanniness, Freud writes,

When all is said and done, the quality of uncanniness can only come from the fact of the 'double' being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since surmounted – a stage, incidentally, at which it wore a more friendly aspect [omnipotence over death]... [and also stages or events of] ego-disturbance... [and] harking-back to particular phases in the evolution of the self-regarding feeling, a regression to a time when the ego had not yet marked itself off sharply from the external world and from other people. I believe that these factors are partly responsible for the impression of uncanniness, although it is not easy to isolate and determine exactly their share of it.

So, whilst the double becomes a thing of terror, Freud is unsure as to exactly when and where it takes on its uncanny nature. There is an in-between stage which may intermittently reappear (sometimes as an ‘ego-disturbance’), when immortality barely assumes mental custodianship, where the everlasting hangs on with a fine thread. It may be, for example, where youths have regard for death yet suppose it does not actually pertain to themselves. This type of realm is a particularly fertile ground for uncanniness, where figurative sculpture, mannequins and dolls reference the territory between knowing ('canny') and not-knowing ('uncanny'): they are equally and uncannily dead and alive.

The crux of the matter lies in something familiar-unfamiliar repeating itself intermittently, when residual beliefs re-surmount the ego, if only for a split-second. Freud’s uncanny, as a class of the terrifying which relapses and replays something once familiar but now

power, authority and worthiness of class-systems in sculpture such as Andrea del Verrocchio’s Equestrian statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni (c.1480, gilded bronze, 395 cm high, Campo di Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice) symbolise socio-political value, as, contrastingy, do scarecrows; both subtly oppress and alienate mankind. Georg Lukács’s ideas about commodity fetishism (History and class consciousness, 1923) invoke questions concerning figurative sculpture imbuing monetary or ideological value.

39 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.235. Notwithstanding this, Freud, p.236, conjectures, 'we have to admit that none of this helps us to understand the extraordinarily strong feeling of something uncanny that pervades the conception'.

40 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", ibid., p.236.

41 In his story of 1846, The double: A poem of St Petersburg, Dostoevsky demonstrates the terror of the double, where the protagonist, Yakov Petrovich Golyadkin, struggles against madness. See Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Notes from underground: The double, trans. Jessie Coulson, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972. Amid Dostoevsky’s psychological strafe, the confusion of the familiar-unfamiliar recurs. Golyadkin, p.170, thinks 'The fact was that the unknown now seemed to him to be somehow familiar', and that his 'nocturnal acquaintance was none other than himself, Mr Golyadkin himself, another Golyadkin, but exactly the same as himself' – in short, in every respect what is called his double...

42 This may account for the unsubstantiated supposition that younger people are more-or-less comfortable with uncanny episodes whereas older folk commonly associate it with dread.

43 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.236, discusses this as 'a regression to a time when the ego had not yet marked itself off sharply from the external world and from other people'.
repressed, sporadically transmuting the unfamiliar as strangely familiar, or vice versa, is thus attributed to one class of the double.

Figurines, artefacts and sculpture are forms commodity fetishism. Whilst Freudians map such tendencies to libidinal surrogacy and phallic fetishism (of castration complexes), Marxism constructs altogether different reasons based on materialism and alienating processes of dehumanisation. Marxist ideas about fetishism interpret inanimate objects as possessing human properties: the man-made is made of man, commodities possess human properties because they are products of human labour, possessing traces of man, thus engendering commodity fetishism.44 Therefore, man-made objects, especially those which look like man, contain the possibility of becoming animated. Similarly relevant is the process of reification, another form of alienation or human estrangement important in Marxism. Reification separates the referent from its original context and places it in another context wherein it lacks its original connections yet retains powers or attributes which in fact it no longer has, where the abstraction of something concrete is treated as concrete itself. Alternatively, something is inappropriately treated as a separate object when it does not exist in separation.45 Through reification, inanimate objects are given human-like attributes. Condensing the enucleated Olympia from Freud's renderings of Hoffmann's story, Krell assimilates her with Heidegger's uncanny mute: 'she is "the voice of the friend that every Dasein carries with itself". The mute automaton taking on the daimonic voice of conscience and the demonic voice of guilt... the Doppelgänger... [who]

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44 As a form of reification, fetishism of commodities is explained in Karl Marx, Capital: A critique of political economy, trans. Ben Fowkes, Hamondsworth: Penguin, 1976, pp.163-77: 'A commodity appears at first sight an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that there is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a use-value, there is nothing mysterious about it... Whence, then, arises the enigmatic character of the product of labour, as soon as it assumes the form of a commodity? Clearly, it arises from this form itself. The equality of the kinds of human labour takes on a physical form in the equal objectivity of the products of labour as values; the measure of the expenditure of labour-power by the duration of that expenditure, takes the form of the quantity of value of the products of labour; and finally the mutual relations of the producers, within which the social character of their labour affirms itself, take the form of a social relation between the products. A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour... This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses. In the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events, an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye... Fetishism... attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.' The theory of reification is summarised in Joachim Israel, Alienation: From Marx to modern sociology: A macrosociological analysis, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971. ff.255.

45 Marxist 'reification' is inherently necessary in commerce, where objects can be traded by virtue of the social relationship with which people endow them.
contain[s] the secret of primal repression'. 46 Automata represent silent, lingering uncanniness at our core; Heidegger's *doppelgänger* concept of 'self'. 47

Inspired by *doppelgängers* and Freud's reading of *The sandman*, emerging artist, Wade Marynowsky fashioned an exhibition entitled *The hosts: A masquerade of improvising automatons*. 48 As part of his doctoral submission, Marynowsky explored human-machine interaction, 'imagining a space for human encounter with robots that relies only on the familiarity of context (a masquerade ball) and artifice (embroidered crinoline costumes and twinkling electronic lights'). 49 Whilst the ability to intentionally contain an artwork to a particular subject is nigh impossible and although artists endeavour to convey limitless theoretical possibilities through their imagery, 50 others deliver more literal, contained messages. Marynowsky clearly appeals to the Freudian uncanny, although his work's literalness virtually absents itself of uncanniness. 51 Moreover, his interests lie in exploring Mori's *uncanny valley* theory, testing people's reactions to objects which are clearly not human yet have lifelike qualities. Considering that kinetics plays a determining role in whether an object's behaviour is human-like or more machine-like, 52 the erratic jerkiness of Marynowsky's towering robots lend themselves to the mechanical, placing them further away from the uncanniness of lifelike realism bestowed in verist figurative artwork. The

47 As put by Krell, op. cit., p.58.
48 Performance Space, Sydney, 2009; and repeated in 2010 at "Beyond Mediations, Mediations Biennale", 2nd International Biennale of Contemporary Art, Poland.
50 Often transcending the obvious, art moves beyond the literal into moral readings and/or into metaphysical realms of the spiritual or mystical; as demonstrated by Magritte's seemingly contradictory painting of a pipe, *The treachery of images* (1928-9), which reads 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' ('This is not a pipe'), which is a *painting of a pipe*, thus conveys duplicitous meaning.
51 Even though the general viewer of his work is not expected to be knowledgeable about uncanny discourse. Marynowsky's machine-like figures also reference larger cultural debates surrounding man-as-machine.
52 Much contemporary art, such as Kenneth Rinaldo's *Autopoiesis* (2000), engages with autonomous robotics, transforming kinetic sculpture as interactive and responsive to external stimuli such as audience movement; see Ken Rinaldo, *Autopoiesis*, 2000, mixed media, robotics, sound. Rinaldo's *Autopoiesis* is a large interactive installation consisting fifteen robotic arms that loom down from scaffolding to liaise with the audience, reacting to movement. Tronstad, op. cit., p.7, describes the alienation she felt on first encountering *Autopoiesis*: 'The behaviour of the arms... swaying towards or away from approaching visitors, or towards or away from each other... [are] accompanied by an incomprehensible chattering... [It] was not a pleasant experience: On the one hand I felt invaded by the creepy arms approaching me, while at the same time slightly insulted by the other, more reserved arms, openly avoiding me... I felt an overwhelming timidity, as if exposed as a stranger entering a foreign culture in which it is clear to everyone that I don't belong; I don't know the codes or how to behave, and as the language used is incomprehensible to me I can only suspect that their jokes are on me'. Although I conceive this sense of alienation, and that discussed forthwith, as being different to that Herbert Read imposes on artists in his book, *Art and alienation: The role of the artist in society*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1967, his insights, ibid., pp.123-37, in discussing Henry Moore's work vis-à-vis Jungian notions of *archetypes*, noting, p.137, Moore 'seeks the universal in the particular', come close to notions I discuss in relation to the uncanniness of Lawrence Daws's work, chapter five.
figure, especially three-dimensional sculptural figures occupying the same viewing space as
the gallery-goer, thereby pressing upon the viewer's personal (physical and psychological)
sphere, clearly manifests the double and doubling, definitively of Freudian associations of
uncanny memorials of the womb, of birth and childhood, and of Nathanael's fears as
emanated from childhood anxiety, of adulthood disquietude borne of remembering one's
original-being in proximity to the homely, and the commensurate realisation that it is not
possible to reach homeliness unless one is coming from the unhomely. Perversely then,
one's inherent unhomeliness gives purpose to one's ultimate goal — to die thus to return
'home,' to restore one's 'homeliness.' Ron Mueck's and Patricia Piccinini's contemporary
sculpture conflate numerous such ideas including the eerie animate-inanimate, the funerary
double, one's inner-ghost and the uncanny valley effect attributed to Mori, among other
concepts which make their work appear uncanny, as is presently explained.
In producing verist figurative sculpture, Ron Mueck (b. 1958) reflects Hölderlin’s regard for learning about ‘one’s own’ yet ‘that which is foreign,’ whereas Heidegger stresses one’s own as one’s foreign, uncanny self. In considering one’s ‘own and foreign’ almost exclusively through the human form, which he captures with lifelike verisimilitude in sculpture scaled from miniature to larger-than-life, Mueck renders his work in microscopic detail, inviting curatorial enthusiasm about ‘the essence of life that gives them such indescribable presence’. The ‘indescribable presence’ attributed to Mueck’s figures is arguably associated with them being erstwhile uncanny harbingers of life and death, as animate-inanimate statues which ignite eerie sensations in the onlooker. When contemplating whether his figures might suddenly awaken and questioning their improbable yet emphatic visceral presence, Mueck’s sculpture physically move the viewer as one considers possibilities of sense (whether they smell, hear, have an aroma or make a sound), thus awakening the onlooker’s own senses and yielding indiscernible somatic arousal within. Ultimately these hyper-realistic figures possess an ability to stir something within the onlooker at conscious and unconscious levels, especially considering the hypotheses that mankind is inherently attracted to the mysterious and uncanny, as Marion Glastonbury conjectures.

Notionally, Mueck’s work delivers this kind of uncanny-creepy attraction, leading some to speculate that his exhibitions are more like sideshows than art-shows. Whilst Glastonbury maintains, ‘The Gothic has become mainstream’ and the Freudian uncanny ‘has never been more at home’, Mueck’s audience may be attracted to the ghoulish, whereas it is the

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13 Hölderlin’s words are cited as one of three opening epigraphs in Kristeva, Strangers to ourselves, op. cit., p.xi.
16 This kind of ghoulish spectatorship might be compared with Gunther von Hagens’s ‘plastination’ exhibitions of human and animal preserved cadavers, BODY WORLDS. Premiering in 1995, von Hagens’s shows continue today.
17 Ibid. p.5, says, 'The Gothic has become mainstream... library shelves are stuffed with Guides to Terror and Companions to
unheimlich and a compulsion to make more ‘human’ the everyday existence of being which strikes Mueck’s onlooker at a more profound level.

Mueck’s interest in puppetry and in animating otherwise lifeless objects became apparent early, in childhood. A puppet-maker upon leaving school, then creative director and puppet-creator of a children’s television show his early twenties, Mueck progressed to Jim Henson productions including the movie, Labyrinth. Guided by his mother-in-law, artist, Paula Rego, and encouraged by influential gallery owner and art collector, Charles Saatchi, Mueck wanted to make more universally-oriented objects not tied down by narrative, pieces which have, as he puts it, ‘no other reason for being’.58 Whereas Mueck is generally evasive about interpreting his work,59 his ascension from puppetry and the fantastical converges with the human condition,60 with his wondrous, tangible yet impalpable ‘beings’ mastering a certain ‘wow factor’ yet imparting certain unhomely residual sensations, qualities difficult to describe.

Figure 2: Ron Mueck, Spooning couple, 2005

Horror, and lecturers... vie with each other in the topicality of menace, monsters, the forces of evil...”

58 Mueck is quoted in Hurlston, op. cit., p.27.
59 Mueck prefers that onlookers respond ‘in their own personal ways’, as cited in ibid., p.32.
60 As similarly noted in Peter Hill, “The un-special effects man”, Art & Australia, vol.45, no.2 (2007), pp.242-51: ‘he has retained a sense of wonderment and enchantment... [with] a range of fantastical characters, from shrunken figures to towering giants, but [seen]... in very human situations, from the moments immediately after childbirth, to the moment before death’. 122
Bresnick's theory of *prosopoetic compulsion* helps illuminate the uncanny interplay between real and unreal in Mueck's verism. *Prosopoetic compulsion* depends upon the viewer naively believing an artwork to be 'an affair of mimesis rather than an affair of poiesis',\(^1\) whereby this naivety steals the concentration away from truth, barely covering up the fact that we are subconsciously aware of our uncanny existence. Nathanael's uncanny sensations stem from his subconscious acknowledgment that Olympia is an automaton, yet with *prosopoetic compulsion* he denies this fact in favour of romance, a more mundane coping mechanism, thereby countenancing Freudian and Sartrean readings. Similarly, the Byronic pensiveness of an awkward, unsightly couple lying, snuggled closely together in Mueck's *Spooning couple* (2005)\(^2\) conjures the mood of melancholic *poiesis* and poetic lamentation, yet viewers initially wondrously stare at the verity of the figures. As miniaturised forms placed on a low plinth, the viewer is made to look down over the sculpture thereby disconcertedly imposing an all-encompassing, voyeuristic gaze whereby the viewer's embarrassment of regarding an intimate Other is returned by the gaze, thus engendering self-reflection. By representing the pair in foetal position, the onlooker is subconsciously caught in empathetic complicity, therefore mentally entering into an object-subject relationship. Becoming strangely awkward and pensive themselves, the viewer thus mirrors the apparent mood of the couple and a doubling occurs. Mueck is careful to contain the gaze of the couple so that theirs do not catch the viewer's, such that the onlooker cannot 'converse' with the figures but must retreat into an internalised conversation with self. Meanwhile, the viewer's overarching musings about Mueck's adept mimicry, their fascination with a creator of something so human-like as to be real, screens the poetic ideas about true-self and meaning from the viewer's conscious. Instead of Mueck the poet, the viewer thinks of the conjurer, resulting in a form of *prosopoetic compulsion*.

The Pygmalion story, as recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, has relevance to this notion. From this myth, centring on a sculptor who falls in love with his creation, a statue which is subsequently brought to life by Venus, derives the concept of the Pygmalion Complex, of creators falling in love with their creation. Freud remembers the uncanniness of 'when

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\(^1\) Bresnick, op. cit., p.125.

Pygmalion’s beautiful statue comes to life,’63 which echoes Nathanael’s desire for Olympia which is so intense his ‘normal’ faculties are overridden as he believes she is real flesh and blood. Although Freud has misgivings about Olympia’s role in impressing the uncanniness of Hoffmann’s story, the significance of the automaton has prevailed. The notion developed is one where aesthetics, be it literary or plastic arts, provides a situation where the ‘reader’ maintains doubt: as to ‘whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate’,64 bringing into play antinomies such as knowing/unknowing and animate/inanimate. Observing that our uncertainty about a figure’s corporeality is intensified when our attention is not focused directly upon this uncertainty,65 Freud specifically mentions ingeniously constructed dolls, automata and waxwork figures. The ‘frisson of not knowing whether a figure is skilfully moulded from wax or just momentarily arrested in movement produces that pleasurable shiver of uncertainty with which the uncanny is so closely associated’66 — a Jentsch-Freudian idea concerning uncertainty about animation as adopted by robotics, technologists and animators, culminating in a theorem called the ‘uncanny valley.’

‘More human than human’, the motto of the ‘replicant’ manufacturers in the 1982 sci-fi film, Blade runner,67 a film depicting real people acting as automatons who supposedly looked more real than humans, offers an entry-point into uncanny valley theory originating in the 1970s when Japanese roboticist, Masahiro Mori proposed a relationship between the humanlikeness of robots or other artificial figures and shinwakan, the empathy or comfort level of the viewer. The more human-looking a robot, the more agreeable it is perceived to be, until at some point, roughly when the robots look so nearly humanly-perfect, their subtle flaws expose a creepiness resulting in the viewer feeling uncomfortable. The descent into unfavourable perception is marked on Mori’s graph as ‘uncanny valley.’ Theoretically, he charts only two dimensions: humanlikeness (the x-axis); and, comfortableness or

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64 Ibid., p.226.
65 Freud citing Ernst Jentsch in ibid., p.227.
66 Grunenberg, op. cit., p.60.
67 The Warner Bros. Pictures’ film, Blade runner, 1982, directed by Ridley Scott, was based on Philip K. Dick’s fiction, Do androids dream of electric sheep? Interestingly, Disney’s film, Mars needs moms (2011), is touted as being too uncanny; Ryan Nakashima, “Too real means too creepy in new Disney animation”. Sydney Morning Herald, 4 April 2011, who, citing uncanny valley theory, says: ‘Instead of seeing what’s similar, we notice the flaws - and the motionless eyes or awkward movements suddenly make us uncomfortable. Mars [this film] may have plunged to the bottom of this valley of fear’.
familiarity, 'shinwukan' (the y-axis), as represented in the following graph.

Mori’s theory has been criticised as being pseudoscientific and overly simplistic in its reducing ‘realism’ to a single axis, whereas, for example, bodily movement is considered but behaviour is not, nor other factors of sensory perception including sound, smell and tactile sensation. Nevertheless it continues to have popular appeal, and somewhat aligns with Heidegger’s idea that humans ‘comport themselves toward beings as beings, towards beings in their unconcealment and concealing, and can be mistaken within the being of beings… [and] so that they take nonbeings to be beings and beings to be nonbeings’.68 Our potential for reversal, seeking sites in which to become homely yet encountering the refusal of the homely, results in mistaking non-beings (or Mori’s artificial beings) as beings, and vice versa. Ragnhild Tronstad explains the ‘valley’ can be thought of as a line of demarcation between artificial and real life. As long as this line is not crossed, we are usually happy to invest empathically in the artificial object, projecting human features onto it such as desires, thoughts and emotions, magnifying its humanity and bliss…69

68 Heidegger, Hölderlin’s hymn…, op. cit., p.87.
69 Tronstad, op. cit., p.3.
Conceivable as this is, it does not take into consideration the uncanny effects of experiencing transhuman forms such as the bio-surgical transformations of Michael Jackson or bio-technologically enhanced super-humans already walking among us. Where do such examples of 'human simulacra' fit within Mori's scheme? But whether they are placed favourably or somewhere down the slope of the 'murky' valley is irrelevant here. Significantly, it is this very 'murkiness' which is important to the uncanniness of human-like figurative art. An element of cognitive dissonance vis-à-vis liminal objects, especially figurative sculpture, signifies challenges to human mortality and identity, where lifelike objects like Mueck's figures act as eerie reminders of death, as human doubles which promise to exist long after its viewers have departed this mortal coil.

Putting Mori's omission of post-humanistic factors aside (he was after all interested in robotics), as a tool of describing facets of uncanniness, his chart is of some value. Others like Karl MacDorman contribute to Mori's theory, refining it by adapting Wilhelm Wundt's curve (of 1874 which plots novelty against increasing hedonistic value to a point where it declines for extreme novelty) to represent a novelty dimension in relation to the uncanny valley, where rather than centring effect as negative familiarity, charts hedonistic value (or valance) as a function of its novelty. As such, an extremely novel experience may be measurably pleasurable or painful, and unfamiliar things do not necessarily produce negative experiences but rather are perceived as desirably novel. The novelty of Mueck's sculptures may, in this sense, inculcate uncanniness in positive or desirable ways. MacDorman proposes more dimensions of variation in android/robot experience, including: form (visual appearance, touch sensation and scent); dynamics (motion quality, speech, prosody and voice quality); and, contingency (interactivity and timing).

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70 Graham Lawton, "The new incredibles: Enhanced humans", *New Scientist*, vol.190, no.2551 (13 May 2006), pp.32-7, reproduced at ProQuest http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1039948951&sid=1&Fmt=3&clientId=20870&RQT=309&VName=PQD, accessed 5/5/09, writes, 'They're here and walking among us: people with technologically enhanced senses, superhuman bodies and artificially sharpened minds. The first humans to reach a happy, healthy 150th birthday may already have been born'. Parenthetically, the domain of trans/post-humanism is itself complex. Katherine Hayles, *How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature, and informatics*, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999, pp.2-5, and passim., points out that material instantiation or natural biological embodiment is not necessarily seen by some as an inevitability of life or existence, and the physical body one is born with is simply a prosthetic container of the 'real' (soul). Thus the act of augmenting one's body is vindicated by the notion the body is of no great value or consequence. Accordingly, post-humanists believe there are no absolute demarcations between bodily existence and virtual simulation, cybernetics, robotics and so forth. The physical body is an otherwise empty vessel — or a vessel that merely embodies the 'real' human (soul, spirit, being...) — ideas thus construing modification and substitution as morally viable.

71 Karl F. MacDorman and Hiroshi Ishiguro, "The uncanny advantage of using androids in cognitive and social science
Uncanniness is further variegated by human perceptiveness which alters according to physiological, cognitive and socio-cultural factors.\(^2\) Significantly, Mori’s theory is helpful when studying contemporary uncanny art, not necessarily because of its application to robotics, digital media entertainment and virtual reality,\(^3\) but because his ideas have percolated into the fine arts too.

Generally speaking, Mori’s theory has been adopted in two areas of art practice. Firstly, where artists’ commentary on popular culture includes animation and robotics, and uncanny valley theory is adopted as a consequent or subordinate subject. Secondly, where artists refer to it as a tool for evoking uncanniness in their work, and often directly reference the theory. Contemporary Australian artist, Hany Armanious’s Uncanny valley (2009)\(^4\) reflects Mori’s theory on a literal level,\(^5\) as does British artist, Tim Lewis, whose 2004 exhibition, The uncanny valley,\(^6\) included automated sculpture which reacted to spectators’ movements and supposedly provided a ‘most terrifying experience’—sensations akin to those provoked by encountering ‘beings’ listed in the uncanny valley of Mori’s graph.\(^7\) Lewis’s art is said to illustrate ‘the varying degrees of unease felt when we

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\(^1\) For example, physiological factors may include an individual’s visual and auditory acuity; cognitive factors include habituation and traumatic experience; social factors like family dynamics, relationships and sexual fetishism; and, cultural factors include a society’s or person’s attitude towards technology, be they techno-friendly or techno-phobic. See ibid.

\(^2\) The uncanny valley is subject to much discussion in relation to robotics, digitised media entertainment (including computer games, animated films), and virtual reality domains of the Internet. See also Jun’ichiro Seyama and Ruth S. Nagayama, "The uncanny valley: Effect of realism on the impression of artificial human faces", Presence: Teleoperators & Virtual Environments, vol.16, no.4 (August 2007), pp.337-51. Another helpful article, discussing how Heideggerian philosophy aids in understanding the perception of virtual reality, is Richard Coyne, "Heidegger and virtual reality: The implications of Heidegger’s thinking for computer representations", Leonardo, vol.27, no.1 (1994), pp.65-73. Coyne talks about Heidegger’s ideas concerning how technology provides disclosure about man as ‘being’ and the world around him, and how virtual reality offers a granularity of disclosure that reveals similarities, but moreover, difference.

\(^3\) Uncanny valley: Recent sculpture by Tim Lewis, was held at Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, May-August 2004.

\(^4\) Jasia Reichards, Uncanny valley: Recent sculpture by Tim Lewis, exhib. catalogue, Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2004, p.2. Lewis was also inspired by the mechanical workings and craftsmanship of eighteenth-century automata and started to make robotic dogs from 12 years of age, inspired by James Gray’s Animal locomotion. Ibid., p.4. notes that the world in which Lewis’s ‘characters move is a parallel universe, as prone as ours, to handicaps and obstacles, which may appear variously tragic or comic’. The characters in Lewis’s repertoire veer more towards the industrial/mechanical than the electronic/digital revolution where Mori’s theory has been adopted. Lewis’s objective was to ‘explore the relationship between mankind and our sometimes disquieting manufactured world’, using familiar items with weird and wired twists, including automated chairs with crutches and mechanised rabbits with cuddly-cute-sinister qualities; see National Museums Liverpool, "Uncanny valley", Walker Art Gallery – Exhibitions: www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/exhibitions/uncannyvalley/, accessed 23/7/09.
encounter something unexpected'.

Thus, having anticipated stillness, movement is apparently disturbing to the onlooker, assumptions which pose questions concerning an audience's predetermined expectations. For example, if, upon entering a gallery space, 'uncanny art' is already expected, this heightened level of anticipation for the unexpected most probably effectively reduces evocative uncanniness. Noting how audiences carry certain expectations and 'mental sets' about an artist or artwork, Ernst Gombrich accounts for an uneasiness caused by figurative sculpture which, in his words, 'oversteps the boundary of symbolism':

> When we step in front of a bust we understand what we are expected to look for... [But contrarily] Some who are so attuned will register a shock, not necessarily of pleasure, when they discover that a bust has been slightly tinted... [it] may look unpleasantly lifelike, transcending, as it were, the symbolic sphere in which it was expected to dwell, although objectively it may still be very remote indeed from the proverbial wax image which often causes us uneasiness because it oversteps the boundary of symbolism.

Although Mueck's art is commonly described as uncanny, audiences nonetheless expect to be awestricken upon entering his exhibitions, expectations arguably stimulated by the considerable cyberspace and tabloid hype surrounding his work, where his highly accomplished synthetic verism is treated as so incredible as if to be some kind of magical.

Nonetheless, Mueck's sculpture does engender a general feeling of eeriness, a certain unknown factor which agitates the gaze and disturbs the onlooker, thus arguably aligning it to the uncanny in several literal and non-literal ways.

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78 Reichardt, op. cit., p.2.
80 For example, Ron Mueck and Heiner Bastian (ed.), Ron Mueck, exhib. catalogue, Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2003, p.29: 'Confronting the work of Ron Mueck is an uncanny experience (and locking up a dark gallery full of them, alone, a downright eerie one'.
81 Nominally, one might say that Silicone Valley meets Mori's uncanny abyss when one 'googles' the word 'Mueck' and a resultant deluge of amateur photographs of Mueck's models display across the computer screen. 'Google' is a neologism meaning to search the World Wide Web, or Internet.
Mueck's verism incorporates minuscule detail, virtually accounting for every imperfection, wrinkle, line, vein, furrow, bump and hair in his figures, which are lifelike mimicries which represent man's vain attempt to escape the inevitability of death by doubling the animate in the inanimate. The real-looking skin yet alabastrine patinas of Mueck's figures recall Edmund Bergler's passage in "The psychoanalysis of the uncanny" about the stony silence of 'frigid marble of statuary or... the face of the dead', that is, they are simultaneously stony statues and lifelike. As a type of intellectual uncertainty which reigns over the stillness of something imaginably or impalpably alive, the artist's and viewer's self-doubling might equally be interpreted, by Bergler's reckoning, as a defence mechanism of one's repressed inner-omnipotence. The viewer observes their double or Other in the figurine whereas the artist enacts a doubling of their own within and from the creative process. Creating realistic art is in itself uncanny, as Grunenberg explains: like Pygmalion's desire to breathe life into his creation, realist artists' 'actions of doubling through mimesis strive to satisfy creative impulses or drives which might have their own origin in redirected or sublimated energies'. Interestingly, initiated by Rego, Mueck's art practice began with the creator-creation story of Geppetto and his Pinocchio taking centre-stage, a stage which

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82 Bergler, op. cit., p.233, references Robespierre's stony silence as likened to the impassibleness of the 'frigid marble of statuary...'. Paul vicomte de Barras, Memoirs of Barras, member of the directory; 4 vols, George Duruy (ed.), trans. Charles E. Reche; London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., vol.1, p.185, pens, 'I have never seen anything so impassable in the frigid marble of statuary or in the face of the dead already laid to rest'.

83 As per Bergler's explanation in "The psychoanalysis of the uncanny"; Bergler, op. cit., p.232.

84 Grunenberg, op. cit., p.62.
Mueck now augments with documentary-type films about his creative method to which his audiences show appreciable predilection. This new stage – as documenting ‘creation’ as evidentiary film – is ultimately another theatre or another theatrical way of bringing the inanimate to life in ways which press the onlooker to question the realness of the figure. His audience’s enthrallment of the creative process notionally stems from an urge to master and overcome fear derived from such unnerving verisimilitude. Certainly, Mueck’s act of ‘bringing to life’ these inanimate beings shares likeness with The sandman, particularly in the forging of lifelike eyes, a inscrutable deed of which Susanna Greeves’s passage reflects:

There is a Chinese tradition that the painter does not complete the eyes of his subjects, in order to prevent them escaping his control. Mueck lavishes extraordinary care on hand-making his models’ eyes in many stages... When he finally inserts them the effect is startling, as the figure appears to come to life.85

Audiences are generally attracted to such spectacles, insidiously and profoundly fascinated in manners which repeat Nathanael’s enthrallment in seeing his father’s and Coppelius’s experimentations and the trance induced by the contrived lifelikeness of Olympia. Just as his onlooker’s obscure captivation is largely left unsaid or unaccounted, Mueck echoes Nathanael’s father and Coppelius as the Sandman himself, and with Dead dad (1996-7),86 the whole father-son complex too.87

Mueck’s miniaturised Dead dad, as Colin Martin puts it, ‘is exactly that: his father’s corpse sculpted halfsize in minute detail, with an uncanny capacity to move viewers, unlike the conceptual work of other “Sensation” artists.’88 Martin’s view that Mueck’s Dead dad distinctively bears an ‘uncanny capacity to move’ the onlooker is a sensation evoked by the eerie ghoulishness of the figure which appears dead yet still alive: unnervingly, the vitality of Mueck’s sculpture ‘seems beyond question despite their stillness’.89 The red sinews around the eyes and genitals imbue a flicker of life, aspects juxtaposed by deathly greys and mottled, dusty green-blue colours of a body decomposing. If a viewer experiences discomfiture, it may be due to fear of death or mysophobia, an innate dread of infection

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85 See Susanna Greeves’s essay in Mueck and Bastian, op. cit., p.31.
86 Ron Mueck, Dead dad, 1996-97, silicone, polyurethane, styrene, synthetic hair, 20 x 38 x 102 cm, Stefan T. Edlis Collection, Chicago.
87 See, for example, Foster, “Convulsive identity”, op. cit., who, p.33, draws out links between the profound melancholy and associated unconscious phantasies of a deceased father in de Chirico’s uncannily, obsessively repetitive work.
from a perceivably rotting corpse. Described as a poignant exposé of humility and vulnerability, *Dead dad* was so compelling to the audience of the *The Saatchi Collection* exhibition in 1997 that it both amazed and moved people. Unsettling the audience is an important criteria for aesthetically invoking uncanny sensations associated with unravelling people's senses and emotions in order to dig deeper into psychical layers, causing momentary flickers of self-acknowledgement from the depths of unconsciousness.

Created following his father's death, Mueck's head-turning sculpture carries with it a characteristic shared among several authors and aestheticians of the uncanny—the coinciding of their work with the death of a significant loved-one. It becomes apparent that personal tragedies or shared catastrophes make fertile grounds for discussing or creating uncanniness, a commonality among Mueck, Barthes, Freud, Hoffmann and others. Yevgeny Zamyatin's experiences, for example, including the Russian revolutions and his observance of large-scale labour rationalization, resounded in his unnerving and uncanny dystopian fiction, *We* (1921), wherein the protagonist's dream-state glimpse of man's ancient and savage being spontaneously alters his perception of his world; a flash of something old revisits unexpectedly. Like Hoffmann's Nathanael, the protagonist of *We*, D-503 appears to be plunging into the depths of insanity or love. Pondering the strange familiarity of his love-interest, named 'E-330,' D-503 vexes,

I don't know whether it was her eyes or her brows, but there was something sort of strange, irritating X about her, and no matter how I tried I could not capture it... [she] had the same unpleasant effect on me as an irrational component which strays into an equation and can't be analysed.

Like D-503's simultaneous repulsion yet attraction towards E-330, Mueck's figure synchronises empathy with disgust, coming close to Foster's interpretation of Bellmer's dolls. Foster considers Bellmer's figures involve, in the viewer, 'psychic shattering (the

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91 Barthes's *Camera lucida*, for example, is a eulogy to his late mother. Whilst Hoffmann wrote *Der Sandmann* in 1816, about nine years after the death of his only daughter, Cäcilie, 'his love of children could find its satisfaction only in the children of his friends' and in the characters of his stories, including *Der unheimliche gast* (*The unhomely guest*), especially its sinister visitor (in the same vein as Coppelius in *The sandman*); and, *Die automate* (*The automatons*) where the trope of 'mechanical likenesses of human beings' evolved into Olympia of *The sandman*. See Hewett-Thayer, op. cit., p.240, pp.177-8, and pp.166-93, regarding Hoffmann's interest in the occult.

92 Zamyatin, op. cit., p.30. Later, p.40, D-503 observes her 'extraordinarily white and sharp teeth'. The eye motif and 'something sort of strange' recalls Nathanael perceiving Olympia through spy-glasses, an act which may be considered an uncanny blindsiding of perceiving one's self-double in glassy reflection, an expected meeting of inner re/suppressed self.

93 Contrastingly, of O-90, D-503's long-preferred sexual partner, he observes her tendency 'of "getting ahead of thought"—a phenomenon analogous to... ignition[s] spark[ing]... ahead of the motor'; ibid., p.32.
convulsive identity)’ which is caused by a ‘physical shattering (the compulsive beauty), which, considering Bellmer’s personal, cathetic attempts to ‘restage primal fantasies and/or traumatic events concerning identity, difference, and sexuality’,94 is comparable with Mueck’s own situation, albeit Mueck disrupts the father figure by reducing its scale whereas Bellmer’s reconfigured mannequins represent destruction/reconstruction of a different ilk. Although it is common for sons to want to remember or eulogise their fathers, in strangely rendering parent-as-corpse, Mueck deflects the gaze back onto the viewer and into a self-analysis of their own circumstances, their own familiar-família. The viewer acts as witness to a son’s miniaturisation of his father, as something symbolising some sort of psychological power-struggle with self and Other. Angus Trumble’s observation that this corpse is ‘a metonym for complete exposure’95 rouses comparison with the Existentialist uncanny, as representing sudden exposure to and concurrent self-acknowledgment of utter exposure, of Being-in-the-world, and consequently the abrupt shuddering sensation of remembering the frightening isolation of self-responsibility. By configuring modes of self-reflection and self-exposure, such verist figures have the ability to unexpectedly evoke such uncanny tremors. Mueck’s rendering of his father as immortal and undying (because sculpture never ‘dies’) binds it with the uncanny double and doubling. Like Bernini’s marble masterpieces, Dead dad perpetuates in amaranthine immutability, outlasting its creator and doubling as immortalising his father and himself. For the viewer realises this as well as it rendering its uncanny effect on the voyeuristic gaze, an effect of the ‘space between the objective appearance of the body... and the shock of the visceral appearance, or the imitation of mortality or suffering it suggests’,96 as Welchman puts it, whilst noting that uncanniness effectively diminishes as the various and ubiquitous mediated forms of the body shifts the encounters of them from shock to fascination to desensitised familiarity.97

94 Foster, Compulsive beauty, op. cit., p.102.
96 Welchman, op. cit., p.52.
97 Ibid.
Doubling more overtly appears in Mueck’s self-portraits, *Mask* (1997) and *Mask II* (2001). Upright and peering intently, the animated expression of *Mask* contrasts with *Mask II*, lying on its side with Mueck pictured peacefully asleep. Considering it was created shortly after *Dead dad*, *Mask II* is likewise evocative of a death mask. Mueck’s doubling forms a nexus with the uncanny doppelgänger, personifying repetition, his is an act of self-doubling for self-preservation against castration and death. Yet, the double reverses from being ‘an assurance of immortality’ to being ‘the uncanny harbinger of death’, thereby forming another nexus between repetition and death. Kelley notes that uncanny feelings are ‘provoked by an object, a dead object that has a life of its own, a life that is somehow dependent on you, and is intimately connected in some secret manner to your life’. Although Mueck’s masks represent more overt, literal interpretations concerning the doubling of oneself, when the object is figurative and especially lifelike, uncanny sensations are heightened. As a means of self-portraiture, his masks pose questions about whether this creative act is an unconscious mechanism or consciously cathartic on the artist’s behalf. Regardless, the masks’ poignancy is not diminished, as the ascension of the doppelgänger from the depths of consciousness makes its presence felt in the viewer whose own deathly fate is uncannily awoken within.


Remembering that a viewer's uncertainty about a figure's corporeality is intensified when attention is drawn away from this uncertainty,\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Old woman in bed} (2002)\textsuperscript{102} is another of Mueck's sculptures which avert the viewer's attention plainly towards death and therefore – importantly – away from the lifelikeness of the figure. An encounter with this sculpture is described in Anthony Bond and Wayne Tunnicliffe's text as follows:

...a frail elderly woman lies under a blanket on a gallery plinth, her small scale increasing her vulnerability as we loom over her... [she] seems only to have a tenuous hold on life as she shrinks from this world... It is imbued with the pathos of our own experiences of the death of elderly friends and relatives just as it foretells our own inevitable demise.\textsuperscript{103}

The depiction continues, coincidentally bearing literary parallels with Giorgio Vasari's description of da Vinci's \textit{Mona Lisa}:\textsuperscript{104}

The moist eyes, veins just below the skin and flushed cheeks all add up to an (sic) near palpable sense of life, or... of life ebbing. We almost expect to hear a rattling breath as we look at the work for signs of the life that is about to end. The realism... is like a series of three-dimensional freeze frames taken from the world, life momentarily paused but still fully evident... While we know these people are sculptures, it is almost impossible not to touch them to make sure that they are indeed not real. Mueck's deployment of scale distances this realism just as it entices us by the sense of wonder it evokes. The expressions of his sculptural subjects are subtly exaggerated to increase their emotional impact; indeed their heightened emotional and psychological states and the response this triggers in the viewer is the subject of Mueck's art rather than their extraordinary verisimilitude.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{101} Freud citing Ernst Jentsch in Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.227.
\textsuperscript{102} Ron Mueck, \textit{Old woman in bed}, 2002, polyester resin, fibreglass, silicone, polyurethane, synthetic hair, cotton, polyester. 25.4 x 94 x 56 cm, AGNSW.
\textsuperscript{103} Anthony Bond and Wayne Tunnicliffe (eds), \textit{Contemporary: Art Gallery of New South Wales}, Sydney: AGNSW, 2006, p.408.
\textsuperscript{104} Leonardo da Vinci, \textit{Portrait of Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco del Giocondo} (known as the \textit{Mona Lisa}), c.1503-06, oil on poplar wood, 77 x 53 cm, Musée du Louvre. See Giorgio Vasari, "Life of Leonardo da Vinci", in \textit{Lives of the most eminent painters, sculptors, and architects}, 3 vols, trans. Gaston Du C. De Vere, New York: Abrams, 1977, vol.2, p.789; Vasari says, 'how closely art could imitate nature... for in it were counterfeited all the minutenesses that with subtlety are able to be painted, seeing that the eyes had that lustre and watery sheen which are always seen in life... the pores of the skin, could not be more natural. The nose, with its beautiful nostrils, rosy and tender, appeared to be alive...'
\textsuperscript{105} Bond and Tunnicliffe, op. cit.
Several points have relevance to the uncanniness Mueck’s work assumes, including disturbing perception regarding realism of the object, the importance of scale and the psycho-emotional content in the work. Firstly, the psychological and emotional content of his figures generates a dramatic force which draws the viewer’s attention away from the uncertainty about realness. Viewers get caught up in the drama or theatre – the psychology – of the figure and momentarily forget to question its realness. Paradoxically, it is the regard for the psychological which enables the onlooker’s concentration to focus on things other than the lifelikeness of the object, thereby allowing the inanimate to ‘awaken’ within their own psyche and disturb repressed beliefs. Appearing isolated and detached, as figures often described as ‘psychological portraits of emotional intensity’, Mueck’s naked man in *Man under cardigan* (1998) cowers underneath his clothing as if seeking shelter. Aside from the viewer questioning the figure’s lifelikeness, such psychological portrayals take the viewer on a journey within themselves as the psyche is put into focus. Recognising Mueck’s propensity to delve into psychical layers, David Hurlston says:

> Often naked and suspended in states of self-consciousness, introspection or deep contemplation, his figures present both emotional and physical states of exposure. As viewers we experience a level of unease that is borne of a voyeuristic awkwardness, as though we have invaded some kind of personal space. However, we also identify with the human condition that these poignant moments express.

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106 Hurlston, op. cit., p.30.
108 Hurlston, op. cit., p.32.
Significantly, Hurlston’s description places Mueck’s viewer vacillating between poignant empathy and awkward voyeurism, a wavering from one emotional sensation to another, which emphasises uncertainty of feeling which sustains the unsettling lifelikeness of the figures. Such fluctuation in the onlooker’s mind engenders Freudian conundrums including familiar-unfamiliar and knowing-unknowing, whilst reflecting Hoffmann: ‘the automaton had very deeply impressed them, and a horrible distrust of human figures in general arose’. It is the emotion Mueck’s figures elicit which Colin Martin believes ‘is accompanied by an irresistible urge to examine the sculptures as closely as possible’. Similarly, Tracey Clement is ‘seduced by skill and comforted by familiarity [making] it easy to ignore the darker implications’, whilst Lisa Baldissera contends, ‘Mueck’s refusal of life-size figuration establishes a tender puncture of the suspension of disbelief’, notions significant to Freud’s reckoning the aesthetic uncanny suspends disbelief.

Whereas frank nudity and technical virtuosity seizes the viewer’s gaze, menacing traits are nonetheless subconsciously addressed. As the onlooker marvels about the imperceptible sleight of hand and incredible creative feat, their attention is drawn away from the verity of the figure and to other matters, perception becomes hesitant in the way Todorov defines the hesitation of the fantastic-uncanny, thus criss-crossing between suspension of disbelief and wonderment, thus allowing the uncanny of animate-inanimate uncertainty to erupt into consciousness. His super-realist sculptures possess a palpable realness which render many onlookers awestruck over the technical prowess of Mueck’s handicraft.

Although this awe and wonder results in a tendency of critics ascribing his work as sensational, it is this very sensationalism that confuses and creates uncertainty and attracts gallery-goers in the first place, with many visitors compelled to photograph the work. Indeed, Mueck’s exhibitions readily turn into frenetic amateur ‘photo-opportunities’ and attract additional ‘happy-snappers’ as digital photographs travail the cyber-streets of online photo-journals. Such compulsive tendencies embrace strains of uncanniness insofar as onlookers, feeling that by capturing a mannequin’s image, they might control or contain

110 Martin, op. cit., p.568.
113 Todorov, op. cit., p.25.
this astonishing proficiency, thereby partake in creating and preserving lifelikeness themselves. Alternatively, the photographic act provides a means of subverting an otherwise embarrassed gaze, especially considering the figures are ‘imbued with the pathos of our own experiences’ and Jentsch says enigma and the uncanny are associated when there is a heightened level of admiration present: there is a ‘slight nuance of the uncanny effect… [which comes] to light now and then in the care of real admiration’. With ‘uncanny realism’ (the ability to ‘reduce/overcome the tension inherent in the surmounted belief class of the depicted uncanny’), Mueck’s hyperrealism is so intensely perfect, the presence of humanity so realistic, many viewers are dumbfounded the figure cannot speak or breathe, reflecting in them Jentsch’s ‘intellectual uncertainty’ question concerning the illusionary unsettling the intellect.

Besides intellectual uncertainty, a more significant factor owing to their uncanniness is the general display of technical virtuosity, particularly highlighting that certain uncanny of Heideggerian techne. Heidegger’s analysis of phenomena surrounding technology finds that art (and the poetic) are forms of techne which concern ‘bringing forth’ the truth, of revealing and un-concealing that which remains concealed. Techne underscores man’s innate compulsion to drive forward into (technological) advancement. Therefore, because man is constantly thrust forth in search of himself because he exists as utterly foreign to himself, he is unheimliche, and overt forms of techne remind him of this. Considering the Greek word ‘techne’ originally referenced craftsmanship and art, coupled with the perceived technical proficiency of Mueck’s sculpture, his art unconsciously enkindles techne-driven impulses, consequently underscoring a certain unheimlichkeit (uncanniness) of man’s progressive streak towards revealing the (final) homely.

115 See Steven Schneider, op. cit., p.426.
117 In The question concerning…, ibid. pp.12-13, Heidegger writes, ‘techne… is the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts. Techne belongs to bringing-forth, to poiesis; it is something poetic… [it is a] revealing’. Edward D. Miller, Emergency broadcasting and 1930s American radio, Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2003, pp.16-20 and pp.211-13, n.4, discusses techne as referencing art and its relationship to the uncanny familiarity of radio broadcasting. Ibid. p.24, observes, ‘…it is clear that twentieth-century technologies of the home [computers, radios etcetera] have served, not to eliminate the return of surmounted primitive beliefs or infantile neuroses, but rather to extend such beliefs into burgeoning regions…’ Also see Andrew Payne, "Uncanny machinations" in Boigon, op. cit., pp.145-65.
Such discernible artifice is, for some, essential to inciting fear and uncertainty. Isabel Pinedo contends, ‘Awareness of artifice... is not a flaw but an essential ingredient of recreational terror, one that tentatively redraws the boundary between imagination and reality’ – that is, recognisable deceit actually aides in the suspension of disbelief.118 Interestingly, Pinedo considers, ‘This combination of artifice and realism whets the viewers’ appetites for knowledge about the production process, for a behind-the-scenes look that exposes’ the artist’s wizardry.119 With Mueck’s synthetic, silicone sculpture, artificiality comes to the fore, showing how vulnerable the human condition is to falseness, indeed our very attraction to and susceptibility for conceit in general. Man’s natural impulse centres on the prosaic, naïve belief that art is merely mimesis, yet a disconcerting intimacy prevails between object and viewer, puncturing the unconscious, like Hoffmann’s Olympia does to Nathanael. The lifelikeness of Mueck’s figures recall the technical proficiency of wax

119 Ibid.
models of the early 1900s, which are bestowed with transparent and luminous surfaces that emit pure appearance. They are not only lifelike but beyond lifelike. Speaking of Géricault’s equine paintings, particularly Wounded cuirassier (c.1814) and Blacksmith’s signboard (1813-14), Stefan Germer observes that the more obsessively Géricault reproduces ‘details of expression and deportment, the more clearly he articulated the alienness of his subject’. That is, the more exacting Géricault became (the closer and more familiar he came to depicting equine qualities), the more alien and frightening the subject became. Géricault’s adept, technical proficiency and insight, qualities aligned with uncanny valley concepts, can be likened to Mueck’s spell-binding realistic sculpture – it is their very believability which strikes the gaze, and although lifelike wax models have been around for eons, onlookers are nonetheless perturbed and amazed. Familiarity of the ubiquitous store mannequin differs, however, because the gaze is supposedly untroubled by fashion dummies that abide by rules of ‘acceptability’ and are:

more like fashion photography than a real person: in fashion photography, the things you don’t want to see somehow get glossed out, and that’s really what you’re aiming at with a mannequin – things like imperfections in skin, even freckles, the little fine lines around the eyes which are perfectly normal, perfectly natural, but once it’s there in fiberglass it becomes unattractive.

Arguably, roaming around department stores engenders less profound reflection in people than in gallery spaces, wherein the object’s scale ratio to the gallery-goer’s personal space has relevance. Having been a window-dresser in a Melbourne department store, mannequins figured early and founded lasting impressions on Mueck. Evoking the creators of Olympia, Mueck likewise performs a balancing act with Two women (2005), carefully constructing correct proportions but in unreal sizes, thereby juxtaposing realism with the illusory, strategies common in Surrealist art. Eliciting awkward yet awe-inspired feelings,

120 For example, the mannequins created by Pierre Imans, such as Manon, which is ‘one of a series of highly realistic mannequins’, some of which moved; see Kelley, The uncanny, op. cit., p.252.

121 Théodore Géricault, Wounded cuirassier, c.1814, oil on canvas, 294 x 358 cm, Musée du Louvre; Théodore Géricault, Blacksmith’s sign, c.1813/14, oil on wood, 122 x 102 cm, Kunsthau Zürich. See Stefan Germer, "Pleasurable fear: Géricaut and uncanny trends at the opening of the 19th century", Art History, vol.22, no.2 (1999), pp.159-83, p.170.


123 Ron Mueck, Two women, 2005, mixed media, 85.1 x 47.9 x 38.1 cm, Glenn Fuhrman Collection, New York. This somewhat bears comparison with John Brack’s Mannequins (Two figures), 1953, conte crayon, sheet 54.8 x 69.4 cm, NGA, where shop-dummies holding canes possess a measure of convincing lifelikeness, their vacuous looks are puzzlingly animate-inanimate. Brack’s art-schooling background may have bearing, including the Melbourne National Gallery School and its disconcerting jumble of ‘dismembered [classical statuary] fragments, severed heads, amputated hands… feet… and limbless torsos’: a veritable chamber of wonder or horror (a wunderkammer), especially for imaginative youths. The in-quote description comes from George Johnston, My brother Jack, Melbourne: Collins Fantana, 1967, p.75, as cited in Sasha Grishin, The art of John Brack, 2 vols, Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1990, p.8.
the anatomical is uncannily lifelike, consuming the viewer's attention. Mueck 'subverts the verisimilitude of his figures by altering their scale', bamboozling the beholder and beckoning the uncanny fine-line separating the animate and inanimate.

Scale plays an important role in evoking uncanniness. By scaling figures considerably smaller or larger than life-size, thereby de-familiarising the familiar and disrupting the viewer's search for the comfortably familiar, visiting a Mueck show is likened to being in a contemporary version of 'Gulliver's travels': everything looks real and familiar but the scale is wrong. Giant boys and pregnant women tower over us, small men row boats and lie dead, a swaddled baby is shrunk to miniature size.

Whereas contemporary verist sculptor, John de Andrea's lifelike and life-size polyvinyl model Linda (1983) represents beauty yet delivers an uncanny edge via interplaying perfection (symbolising life) with imperfection (symbolising death), Mueck's work is scaled very differently. Mueck disrupts realism by altering scale thus ostensibly rendering his figures less likely to engender uncanniness because their lifelikeness is abandoned to unrealistic scale. Discussing the formal attributes of uncanny art, Kelley argues that smaller than life-size objects do not contend well as viewers commonly project themselves onto them (becoming lost in objectification), and that objects should assert their 'own power in relation to the viewer... [so] that in the process of projecting mental scenarios onto them... [the viewer does not] lose sense of themselves physically.' This preference for life-size or larger seems to be borne out by many practitioners of uncanny art. Nevertheless, small-scale figures also actively perform power-struggles whereby Kelley's notion of becoming lost contrarily provides a mechanism whereby the viewer's attention moves from uncertainty about the object's verity to something else, thereby permitting the


125 Bond and Tunnicliffe, op. cit. Rob Wilson, "Spectral critiques: Tracking 'uncanny' filmic paths towards a bio-poetics of trans-Pacific globalization" in Meaghan Morris, Siu-Leung Li and Stephen Chan Ching-kiu (eds), Hong Kong connections: Transnational imagination in action, Durham, NC: Duke UP; Hong Kong: Hong Kong UP, 2005, pp.249-68, also references 'Gulliver' in a citation from Lyotard which likens space-time compression of globalisation, our world as simultaneously too bid and too small, as deforming man's perceived size in relation to his world. Thus, Mueck's manipulation of scale might be said to evoke or represent such concepts, which Wilson attributes to uncanniness.


127 Welchman, op. cit., p.44, summarises Kelley's ideas on the certain characteristics an artwork had best have (but not necessarily have) in order to reproduce the uncanny, including: a physicality of being body-like (in the first impression); roughly human-scaled or 'viewed through a medium such as photography it which it can be perceptually re-scaled... as "life-sized"'; be naturally or lifelike in skin colouration and clothing; and, its texture be palpably like flesh.

128 Kelley, The uncanny, op. cit., p.27.
figure to awaken, to become animated deeper within the onlooker’s psyche. Standing only approximately 80 centimetres tall, Two women exemplifies the capturing of the gaze in order to divert the onlooker’s attention away from the figure’s verity, thus admitting the potentiality of uncanny flickering or unconscious awakenings. Thus, the obvious changes in scale - both down-sizing and up-sizing - encourage suspension of disbelief and avert rational responses. Mueck’s figures are exaggeratedly scaled from enormous to miniscule, a tactic somewhat owing to Pop Art’s rediscovery of the uncanniness exaggerated scaling provides. The startling verity and manipulation of scale allows the onlooker to regard the figures with some empathy (‘look, they are just like you or me’), whilst distancing themselves (‘but of course, it’s only tiny’). This empathic distancing is crucial because it allows the viewer to project themselves onto the object and thereby contemplate themselves. Regardless of how deep or intense this reflection might be, Mueck effectively diverts attention away from the verisimilitude, thereby heightening uncanniness.

Of non-conforming scale and inconsistent size, Mueck’s figures disrupt the gallery-goer’s personal space and normalised comfort zone, thereby uniting familiar with unfamiliar. Mueck manipulates spatial dimension to disorientate viewer’s perspective and relationship to the artwork, thereby eliciting uncanniness both from scale distortion and via the disrupted viewpoint of the observer. In this way, Mueck can be likened to Antony Gormley, whose central interests lie in the body and architecture as inter-determining forms (imagining the body as architecture and architecture as body), resulting in a progressive development of figurative forms which intercept with the unhomely, as Vidler observes:

This encounter of sculpture, of the cast figure with and in space, itself produces a new kind of space: one that, rather than waiting to be occupied by human presences, as in traditional architectural space, possesses all the attributes of occupied space from the outset. Thus occupied this space is, in the deformations that stem from Gormley’s figural positions, a space of uncanny dimensions: a ‘double’ space that disturbs precisely because it proposes an occupation before our own subject-inhabitation, and an occupation that further responds not so much to any possible occupation we might imagine, but one of ourselves distorted, positioned and transported into a world that would be, in everyday life, unimaginable.129

In contorting space, Vidler sees Gormley’s work as representing the ‘shock of “return”... associated with the double, or the doppelgänger: the sudden apparition of the ghost of the

self within and engendering disturbance. Mueck’s figures, like Gormley’s, act as ‘doubles in spatial juxtapositions and extraordinary positions that stimulate that sudden shock of realisation associated with the uncanny’. Of Gormley’s least materially constructed sculpture, of simply mist and light as with Blind light (2007), Vidler references Derrida’s observation that whenever Freud mentions unheimlich in his texts, ‘one can localize an uncontrollable undecidability in the axiomatics, the epistemology, the logic, the order of the discourse and of the thetic or theoretic statements’, likening this to Gormley’s tactics which ‘contest the very limits of spatial definition in such a way as to dissolve the uncanny effects of sculptural installation and to transfer those effects to the nature of space itself’. With Gormley’s various Field installations, observers walk among thousands of figures thereby coalescing real bodies with unreal ones and consequently producing the field – the intermeshing of the visceral real and the conceptual un-real or unknown, as a theoretical pairing of authentic-inauthentic. Similarly, Mueck redefines or disrupts the normalcy of space in different, but comparable ways to Gormley. The space Mueck constructs is similarly defined as being of sculptural installation but differs insofar as being lifelike figures (rather than figurines or effigies) which do not comply with lifelike scale. Mueck’s figures interact with and contest the normalcy of human figures occupying the same space because they are obviously larger or smaller than lifelike. A viewer’s spatial perspective is determined by relating their own size (or self-conception of self-dimensions) within the immediate space and by other people’s relative positions therein. Whilst this oversimplifies the mechanics of spatial orientation, it shows how Mueck is able to simply distort viewer space by manipulating scale. When a palpably lifelike figure does not conform to realistic size, it has the effect of disrupting spatial perspective, effecting uneasiness and accommodating uncanniness.

Generally speaking, a person’s response to objects or external stimuli invokes a seeking and definition of self. In objects, man sees himself reflected, deflected, repeated, complemented,
juxtaposed, counteracted, legitimated, and so forth; objects augment one’s self-image. Thought about in this way, art-objects such as Mueck’s may be considered as too virtuoso as to become alienating and detached, his sculpture so real as to be intimidating. Yet, in this way, as the viewer projects themselves onto and therefore into this Other or double whom they nonetheless revile, the figures become mementoes of the greatest kind of alienation – oneself’s alienation of oneself.\textsuperscript{135} Contrastingly, by moving the gaze away from the human form to part-human-part-animal beings, the artist may recover the retracted gaze and thereby move into different realms, inciting other causes of uncanniness, as Piccinini shows.

\textsuperscript{135} It is an idea Patrick White, \textit{The vivisector}, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974, p.396, reflects on when he writes: ‘The paintings... had withdrawn apathetically into the walls on which they were hanging. They were less humiliating, however, than the bravura of technique, the unsolved problems of space, the passages of turgid paint, which glared at him from the later ones standing around the skirting boards’. White’s artist becomes alienated by an overwhelming incapacity to dictate his desires, or to even know them properly enough to be able to represent them adequately. Thought about in these terms, Mueck’s virtuosity in verity arguably acts as a slight to his audiences.
Hybrid-beings and atavistic throwbacks: Patricia Piccinini

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Calling upon the scientific heritage of Albert Einstein, Patricia Piccinini (b. 1965) combines science and the mysterious in her part-human, part-animal figurative artwork, which audiences often find disturbing, sometimes beautiful and wondrous, but frequently eerily disquieting. She asserts her practice as fundamentally concerning itself with what ‘we consider natural and what we consider artificial’ – the tension which Olympia effects. Piccinini’s hyperrealist hybrid-creatures are presented to her audience through many mediums, including digital photography, sculpture, video and drawings, although she is best-known for three-dimensional verist sculpture – the focus of this examination into the uncanniness of man as transformed into composite man-animal beings (as ‘mischwesen’) as effecting uneasy tension.

Figure 9: Patricia Piccinini, Subset red (portrait), 1997

137 Piccinini was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone to Australian parents; arriving in Australia in 1972.
138 Although Piccinini’s artwork in other mediums attracts discussion about the Freudian uncanny, this case-study focuses on her three-dimensional figurative work. Furthermore, much of that discussion is greatly oversimplified, such as the explanation that Piccinini’s video art The gathering (2007): ‘exemplifies the notion of the “uncanny”, first discussed by Sigmund Freud in 1919... for Freud the uncanny was experienced when the home or something familiar is rendered unhomely and unfamiliar’ (Univ. of Queensland, “Patricia Piccinini: Interpretive guide”, University of Queensland Art Museum: Learning Resources 2008, www.artmuseum.uq.edu.au/learning-resources-2008, accessed 23/10/09); or that the video ‘is as uncanny and scary as Poe’s terrible story about the tell-tale heart: the thumping echo of which sends a murderer insane’ (Rosemary Sorensen, “How death becomes you”, The Australian, 1 Aug 2008). Although Piccinini produced an installation of sculpture, film and photographs, a series (dated 2002) which she called Sandman, it has no apparent literal connection with Hoffmann’s story.
Before proceeding to her sculpture, the aurora of what she considers the fundamental underpinnings to her mature practice provides important background. Like a hybrid mad-scientist-artist recalling Coppelius/Spalanzani, Piccinini entered the art-world’s limelight with her semi-grotesque picture, *Subset red (portrait)*, a picture of a female ‘model’ with the ‘earmouse’ from the 1995 experiment of growing synthetic cartilage scaffolding, in this case a human ear formed on a mouse’s back. Her image is of technology congregating with glamour, a meeting of beauty and beast, so to speak. Kelley’s *The uncanny* exhibition, comprising ancient and contemporary figurative sculpture alongside medical models, taxidermy and preserved body-parts, provides insight and comparison. Margaret Iversen, savaged by the explicitness of Kelley’s show, thought it rather ‘shocking, transgressive, even grotesque’ as opposed to the uncanny which she regards as requiring ‘a sort of subterranean tremor that catches one unawares’. Nevertheless, she views Kelley’s work as ‘consciously “updating” the uncanny for our times’, as work exemplifying an uncanny kind of postmodernist simulacra which marries realistic art with human body doubles, where the artificial double takes on a separate power and independence to its referent, heightened by their agitated, shiny surfaces. Suchlike surfaces percolate across Piccinini’s oeuvre, infecting it with Iversen’s version of ‘updated’ uncanny, where Piccinini’s hybrid beings take on a ‘life of their own’ – as if these inanimate objects actually lived.

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139 Patricia Piccinini, *Subset red (portrait)*, 1997, from the Protein lattice series, type C photograph, 80 x 80 cm, NGA. Similarly, Piccinini’s vertiginous *Psychotourism*, 1996, digital type C photograph, 120 x 258 cm, can be seen as an interpretation of Frankenstein-style creations which warp and transcend ideas of motherhood and the homely; see Helen McDonald, *Patricia Piccinini: Nearly beloved*, Dawes Point, NSW: Piper Press, 2012, pp.70-3.

140 Kelley, *The uncanny*, op. cit., p.9. Evoking Freud’s collection, ibid. p.12, says, ‘the uncontrollable impulse to collect and order is, itself, uncanny; the strange sense of loss and wonder attendant to the gaps in collections is uncanny’.

141 Iversen, “The uncanny: by Mike Kelley”, op. cit. For evoking uncanniness, she prefers Rachel Whiteread & Mona Hatoum.

142 Ibid., p.3. Iversen finds, p.5, ‘the uncanny is not the simulacrum itself, but that which agitates its shiny surface’. 
Following glossy-filmic portraits such as the model of *Subset red (portrait)*, with her Olympia-like facial skin ‘airbrushed into a seamless plastic mask... made freakish in her absolute perfection’ and appearing ‘no more real than her hybrid’ creature, Piccinini progressed to three-dimensional sculpture, assisted by a creative team including Ron Mueck’s brother, Richard. Piccinini’s hyperrealist sculpture attracts commentary which often applies ‘uncanny’ adjectivally, such as Linda Williams’s remarks, ‘These works are made of an uncannily real “skin” of silicon... [with] astonishing verisimilitude in the illusion of living flesh’. The young family (2002-3) is one such work which presents a strange realness in agitated, shiny surfaces. Piccinini’s gentle portrayal of motherhood is punctuated with uncanny repugnance, where the creature, with its flaccid, enlarged belly, inherits familiar-unfamiliar traits of womanhood, calling to mind Kristeva’s explanation of the role of the uncanny automaton as founded on feminine discourse, particularly concerning the role of woman as an incubator of pleasure and pain. Kristeva’s expose of Freudian OEdipal and castration complex theories discusses the abject role of woman as mothers to be repelled and abhorred by individuals (and ultimately societies) as a means of forming a separate identity and purpose. The automaton, being inveterately feminine, is thus a method of such discrimination and symbolises that discrimination: because woman is repellent she is made into an automaton-like signifier — symbolic of death and zombiism. Piccinini’s work both signifies this uncanny repugnance whilst overpowering its referent. Because automatons are inherently repugnant, they deflect their repellence onto woman whilst absorbing woman’s abhorrence; thus they are doubly offensive, animate-inanimate ‘monster-mothers.’ The automaton as mannequin is further complicated by beautification, averting yet symbolically maintaining ugliness. Perversely, the ‘ugly’ mother-creature of *The young family*, an evolutionary figure of the Olympian automaton, elicits empathy from

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143 With regards to the ‘exotic’ female model in Piccinini’s *Protein lattice* series (1997), Kim Toffoletti, "Imagining the posthuman: Patricia Piccinini and the art of simulation", *Outskirts (Online)*, vol.11 (Nov-Dec 2003), reproduced at *Outskirts Online Journal* : www.chloe.uwa.edu.au/outskirts/article2.html, accessed 12/2/11, remarks: ‘Her sultry features are digitally enhanced - the face of her skin airbrushed into a seamless plastic mask. The model is made freakish in her absolute perfection. Artifice is revealed by facial features that are too large, too sculpted, too glossy and glowing, to pass as natural’. This anicle poses a case comparing Piccinini’s work with Donna Haraway’s feminist theories in relation to newly constructed imaginings of females as cyborgs and post-human forms.

144 See Linda Williams, “Spectacle or critique?: Reproduction in the work of Patricia Piccinini”, *Southern Review*, vol.37, no.1 (2004), pp.76-94; p.84; Clement, "Warped reflections", op. cit., p.57: ‘Piccinini and Ron Mueck mimic the real with uncanny believability; also Robert Nelson, “Clever technology, serious questions”, *The Age*, 4 January 2003, says ‘the works are funny and scary, strange and beguiling, uncanny and cute’. McDonald, *Patricia Piccinini: Nearly beloved*, op. cit., p.76, sees this sculpture as having ‘qualities more akin to Classical sculpture than to digital media art’.

145 Patricia Piccinini, *The young family*, 2002-3, silicone, acrylic, human hair, leather, timber, 80 x 150 x 110 cm, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo, Victoria.
the onlooker, thereby diverting the viewer’s attention away from the creature’s lifelikeness.146 Like Mueck, Piccinini’s onlooker’s uncertainty about the figure’s corporeality intensifies when their attention is drawn elsewhere. So, the viewer is left with a monster-like animate-inanimate creature which uncannily evokes surmounted, repressed ideas concerning the mother, birthing figure as well as death. Effecting flashes of familiar-unfamiliar, uncanny recognition, Piccinini’s sculpture captures birth, death and our unhomely existence in between, capitalising on notions that upon birth instantly displaced individuals commence re/suppressing a yearning for the originary homely.

This animal, an erstwhile bizarre, naked being, looks towards the viewer’s gaze and captures it, thereby enacting Derrida’s conundrum, ‘How can an animal look you in the face?’147—a disconcerting question which translates as a reflection of inner-self, wherein one imagines an inner familiar-unfamiliar of one’s primal past, yet more:  

As with every bottomless gaze, as with the eyes of the other, the gaze called animal offers to my sight the abyssal limit of the human: the inhuman or the ahuman, the ends of man, that is to say the bordercrossing from which vantage man dares to announce himself to himself, thereby calling himself by the name that he believes he gives himself. And in these moments of nakedness, under the gaze of the animal, everything can happen to me, I am like a child ready for the apocalypse, I am... the ultimate and first event of the end, the unveiling and the verdict.148

Describing her work as presenting a transgenic creature, something beyond or post-human, Piccinini nonetheless portrays it compassionately, endeavouring to make a subtle ‘distinction between human and animal characteristics, not so much her humanity, but the “animalness” in us.’149 Her hybrids thus convey the ‘gaze called animal’ whilst impressing man as one with primal ancestry, thus calling the subterranean, surmounted animal within. Here, another of Kristeva’s writings comes to mind: discussing man’s search for self in the abject Other, she argues, ‘A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar

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146 The work is variously described as grotesque, monstrous, ‘sow-like, dugongesque, or a combination of ape, pig and human’, as in Anitra Goriss-Hunter, ‘Slippery mutants perform and wink at maternal insurrections: Patricia Piccinini’s monstrous cute’, Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies, vol.18, no.4 (December 2004), pp.541-53, p.543. Whereas Goriss-Hunter, pp.549-50, legitimises Benjamin Genocchio’s endeavour (in Ben Genocchio, “Genetically modified sculpture”, Weekend Australian, 11 January 2003) to chronologically order a general response to Piccinini’s work, she nonetheless shows Piccinini’s hybrids (or ‘conglomerate bodies’ as she pens, p.545) as creating confusion and disturbance in viewer perception, such confounded reception as diverting or busying the onlooker’s conscious mind in order for unconscious thought to ascend.


148 Ibid., p.381; my emphais. Derrida views Heidegger’s Dasein in relation to the animal and talks about socio-political treatments, saying, p.394, ‘whatever practical, technical, scientific, juridical, ethical, or political consequence one draws from it... no one can deny the unprecedented proportions of this subjection of the animal... [including] a certain interventionist violence that is practiced... [but] Neither can one seriously deny the disavowal that this involves’.

as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome... [something which] if I acknowledge it, annihilates me'. 150 Creed, in discussing how male monsters signify failure to achieve masculinity, offers another idea relevant to Piccinini: 'What the male monster points to is the pretence that the achievement of proper masculinity is possible'. 151 By extension, Piccinini's sub-human creatures imply 'perfection', 'regularity' or 'normalcy' is achievable, or conversely, not attainable. Along with Piccinini's interests in the ethics surrounding scientific progress, this work is tainted by the taboo of 'an unholy union between man and beast, something forbidden and unnatural', 152 thus forming a nexus with reaching inner-animalness, infusing her work with primitive uncanniness. In these human-animal hybrids, the viewer subconsciously meets their repressed primitive past, their originary homely as witnessed through jolts of uncanny self-recognition.

Like Mueck, Piccinini's verisimilitudes of human-animal biological lifelikeness attract criticism for being technically perfect. Williams argues that Piccinini's viewer's attention and wonder is captured because of the 'textural nuance and tonal integrity' of the surfaces but that there is no further conceptual value to her work. 153 William Empson's theorem that something is ambiguous when genuine 'alternative views might be taken without sheer misreading', 154 is of relevance here, and considering uncanniness as a form of ambiguity, similarly helpful is Weber's notion of the uncanny as engendering 'a certain undecidability which affects and infects representations' and which 'always mean something other than what they are' and 'draws their own being and substance into the vortex of signification'. 155 Williams's critique of Piccinini's work is troublesome in its denial of ambiguity, simply treating it as capturing attention through its technical proficiency without considering its potential for producing multifarious meaning. Contrarily, the surfaces arrest the viewer's attention for greater gain, attracting the eye and consuming the gaze such that the mind's-eye conceives more profound ideas. In drawing the viewer's conscious thought towards the

152 Clement, "Warped reflections", op. cit., p. 53.
153 Linda Williams, "Spectacle or critique!...", op. cit., p. 87. Williams, p. 84, also discusses notions of celebrity culture as being important to Piccinini's success, and the role that photography plays in celebrity.
155 Weber, "The sideshow, or...", op. cit., p. 1132; my emphasis.
mundane aspects of the inanimate-animate, the Olympia effect subliminally coaxes unconscious attention towards other concepts. *The sandman* convinces Freud of this. Considering the formal attributes as tactically manoeuvring the gaze makes viable further conceptual analysis of Piccinini’s work. Whereas Mark Pennings’s theory that the ‘cute element…central to Piccinini’s ironic aesthetic [is] a kind of upmarket Koonsian kitsch which must seduce, if only for that glorious “moment’’’,¹⁵⁶ and even though Williams astutely regards the “please take me home” cuteness of the baby or puppy commodity has… exceeded the point of boredom in Koon’s work’,¹⁵⁷ these devices can be considered foils for unravelling unconscious memory. Syrupy cute, mundane and boring are easy-on-the-eye tactics to pull laymen into false senses of security, where surface layers and cutesy aspects underpin other strategies.

Piccinini’s occupation with the maternal and feminine reaches across her oeuvre, reiterating Creed’s observations about the horror-film genre conflating birth, intra-uterine iconography, parthenogenesis and alien nascency alongside evocations of the uncanny,¹⁵⁸ as the film *Aliens* (1986) incorporates such modes of birth-giving symbolism, including the offspring of the ‘Mother Alien’ who appears hermaphroditic (as a phallic organ is incorporated within, emerging from a vagina-like slit).¹⁵⁹ Lacking sexual organs and therefore asexual and castrated, automatons are likewise found wanting. *The young family*’s mother-like figure is similarly sexually ambiguous, and because the Freudian acquisition of a human’s sexual identity involves infantile repression of one sexuality over another, including the existence and subsequent repression of bisexuality,¹⁶⁰ the confusion created in the onlooker’s mind subliminally reignites repressed childhood beliefs, thus effecting uncanny revisitations. Creed’s explanation of the uncanny in the horror genre follows Freudian lines including the double and repetition, familiar/unfamiliar phenomena, losing one’s way, womb phantasies and the haunted house: all fears which ‘can be defined in

¹⁵⁶ Mark Pennings, “Patricia Piccinini: Enchantment, technoscience and desire”, *Art and Australia*, vol.37, no.4 (June-July-Aug 2000), pp.556-65, p.564. Whilst Pennings mainly discusses Piccinini’s kitsch photography such as *Truck Babie* (1999.), the same applies to her sculptural artwork.

¹⁵⁷ Linda Williams, “Spectacle or critique…”, op. cit., p.91.


¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp.50-1, discusses the Twentieth Century Fox film, *Aliens* of 1986, directed by James Cameron.

¹⁶⁰ The idea that children are initially bi-sexual is discussed by many Freudian writers, including Joy Damousi, *Freud in the Antipodes: A cultural history of psychoanalysis in Australia*, Sydney: Univ. of NSW Press, 2005, p.134.
relation to a loss of clear boundaries'.

Albeit instructive about how film recreates the uncanny through symbolic representation rather than literary or narrative evocation, Creed proclaims that like the abject, 'the uncanny also disturbs identity and order', yet proceeds without relaying other uncanny effects notable in *Aliens*, a sci-fi film which is instructive on the uncanniness of Piccinini in several ways. Centring on its heroine, Ellen Ripley who, revives after 50-years in cryostasis (representing zombiism), and the sole survivor of an alien invasion, a young girl called Newt, the characters and alien forms bear similarity with Piccinini figures. Mindful that Piccinini carefully makes the sexuality of her many forms ambiguous, the name 'Newt' assonates with 'neut,' slang for neuter, meaning to castrate and make androgynous. Saddled with this sobriquet, Newt uncannily carries forth the sexual modalities developed in the film, and compares with the innocent children figures across Piccinini's oeuvre, many who play with asexual alien-like forms, such as *Still life with stem cells* (2002), where Freud's ideas concerning repressed anxieties surrounding castration can thus be associated.

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162 Unlike Bresnick's reading of the poetic or *prosopoetic compulsion* in Freud, Creed, ibid., talks about the way in which film recreates and evokes the uncanny through symbolic representation. For example, she references the vampire genre as being uncanny in the more literal senses Freud describes, such as Dracula being a monster of the uncanny undead. In this way, hers is an account of the pictorial uncanny as depicted on the silver screen, sometimes comparing the storylines with *The sandman*.

163 Ibid., p. 54.

164 The other films of this series (from the first film, *Alien* of 1979 directed by Ridley Scott, through to the fourth, *Alien resurrection* of 1997 directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet) are equally redolent of the uncanny and can be seen as important contributions to the iconography of the topic. Whilst *Alien* constitutes more than a field-day's work of Freudian analysis, like Creed, the present analysis exists simply to tease out a few ideas of relevance to Piccinini's work.

Whilst Piccinini introduces children as a tactic of developing empathy, they equally appeal to the inner-child, evoking childhood memories – and surmounted modes of thought. Freud says, 'We remember that in their early games children do not distinguish at all sharply between living and inanimate objects, and that they are especially fond of treating their dolls like live people'.\(^{166}\) An adult’s regard for Newt’s emotional dependence on her doll recalls in the adult deep-seated childhood memories, as does Piccinini’s child-play in Still life. Piccinini’s strange blobs, however, confound the gaze because they are simultaneously embryonic primitives of human-animal biology whilst reminiscent of playthings. Piccinini’s double-cross playfulness, with an underlying uneasy ‘gruesomeness,’ recalls Bruce Nauman’s sculpture Untitled (Two wolves, two deer) (1989),\(^{167}\) described as radically altering the familiar and creating gruesome creatures both playful and horrific, resembling ‘results of some horrific experiment’ of genetic tampering gone wrong.\(^{168}\) Piccinini’s ‘tampering’ suggests not only what wrongs man is capable of, but also man’s uncanny origins. Indeed, the carefree girl playing with stem cells might be read as literally suggesting man’s origins as uncanny.

Piccinini’s ubiquitous child-figures function to pacify the disturbed or repelled viewer whilst representing a naïve acceptance of the subhuman creature, commenting on the artificiality of the constructed, adult world and reminding us that ‘distaste’ is merely fabricated, and that infantile anticipation of such hybrid creatures has been surmounted and re/suppressed. Alternatively, uncannily disconcerting feelings relate to the prompts which remind the onlooker that we humans manufacture quotidian coping mechanisms, and like these creatures, Dasein arrives and exists in the world in solitary autonomy. Piccinini’s guileless children are unnervingly complicit yet blissfully ignorant of their Being-in-the-world (their Dasein existence) and inner-compulsion to surmount and re/suppress childish notions and fears, whilst simultaneously projecting onto the viewer the child within, unwittingly and unconsciously reminding the adult onlooker of its profoundly uncanny self-deceit.

\(^{166}\) Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.233.

\(^{167}\) Bruce Nauman, Untitled (Two wolves, two deer), 1989, foam, wax and cable, 142.2 x 375.9 x 368.3 cm.

\(^{168}\) Tate Modern, “Bruce Nauman: Make me think”, Tate Liverpool: Past exhibitions: Bruce Nauman, www.tate.org.uk/liverpool/exhibitions/nauman/guide/room5.shtml, accessed 23/8/09, says his figures are like the ‘results of some horrific experiment, a quality enhanced by today’s genetic tampering... [they] are at once playful and horrific’. 
In describing Piccinini’s creatures as ‘cutely grotesque’ – cute-yet-grotesque – Julia Engbert alludes to Piccinini’s art as representing the antinomical quality of the uncanny of opposites colliding (or even colluding). The hybridity of her objects can be described as having an *uncanny supplement* or a set of hidden or unsuspected side effects where hybrid zones of indecision or in-betweenness becomes visible through the exchange of roles between human and nonhuman, so that the very foundations of the gaze is undermined.\(^\text{170}\)

As ‘biotechnological bestiary made up of creatures that defy classification’, \(^\text{171}\) Piccinini describes her hybrids as chimeras constructed to ‘tell stories that explain the world that I live in but cannot totally understand or control’. \(^\text{172}\) Summarising the historical depiction of chimeras, genetic artist, Dave Powell, describes contemporary chimeras as being carefully rendered as ‘overtly weak or vulnerable that which might usually be considered monstrous or even abominable’. \(^\text{173}\) Powell’s examples include the artwork of Thomas Grünfeld, Bryan Crocket and Joshua Levine, whose chimerical sculpture compare with Piccinini’s *mischwesen*, which essentially disconnect ‘the human being from humanity and the artificial being from artificiality’, \(^\text{174}\) thus causing viewers to question their very own Being-in-the-world and belonging. As Creed points out, in Piccinini’s endeavour to convey a message of duty to care for any offspring produced by humanity, ‘her humanoid creatures are deigned to arouse conflicting emotions in the viewer – to repel yet ultimately to elicit sympathy and even protectiveness’. \(^\text{175}\) Piccinini deliberately evokes an uncanniness in her figures by making them appear equally familiar as unfamiliar, yet also from eliciting the “animalness” in us’; \(^\text{176}\) thereby, the shared traits and distinctions between man and animal move us, the viewer, in both loving familiarity and a repugnant loathing, a simultaneity which induces uncanny feelings.


\(^{172}\) Piccinini as quoted in ibid.


\(^{174}\) The concept of the uncanny supplement is borrowed from Kunst, op. cit. In Kunst’s paper, the *uncanny supplement* refers to the tension in being ‘connected’ in today’s complexities of communication systems.

\(^{175}\) Creed, “Is evolution over?...”, op. cit., p.219.

\(^{176}\) Patricia Piccinini, “Public lecture - Tokyo Art Univ...” op. cit.
Piccinini's fascination with human evolution, recalling Freud's interests in the same, often expresses itself in hybrid forms with atavistic features, or in combining human features in animal forms, such as *Big mother* (2005). This practice calls to mind passages from Zamyatin's *We*:

Odd: today, all the while that I was writing about the loftiest pinnacles mankind has achieved during its history, I was breathing the purest mountain air of thought – yet within me everything was still clouded over, covered with cobwebs and criss-crossed with some four-pawed X or other. Or it may have been an image of my own paws... shaggy hands of mine... vestige of a savage epoch.

Questioning whether an 'X' exists within man, D-503 agitates, 'Most repulsive of all is that killing is somehow filthy, atavistic. The idea of braining this creature brings a sensation of something disgustingly sweet to my mouth...' Remembering what he considered at the time to be dream, D-503 experiences the same kinetic phenomena: 'down, down, down we went swiftly, with that slight sinking of the heart... [like the] repetition of that preposterous dream.' The elevator motion acts to trigger unconscious thought, as a literal slippage backwards into man's primitive past. Similarly, *Big mother* depicts a pictorial slippage whilst portending future possibilities. It speaks of man's animal within,

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177 Patricia Piccinini, *Big mother*, 2005, silicone, fibreglass, leather, human hair, 175 cm (high), AGSA.
179 Ibid., p.249.
180 Ibid., p.60.
and by association, recalls repressed atavistic memory. Motherhood, birth and the homely womb are similarly summoned, exemplifying Bram Dijkstra’s observation concerning the persistent myth that women are ‘so closely aligned with nature… they [are] able to cross the border between civilisation and wilderness without any difficulty’.\(^{181}\) Citing Descartes, Krell explains, the mother’s body ‘is a site of the uncanny unhomelike’ which stimulates ‘fantasies of life-in-the-womb’ and ‘intrauterine existence’ by humans who, forgetting womb-life, cogitate towards thinking of themselves as existing. Consequently, female genitalia inspire both Freudian homesickness and Heideggerian horror.\(^{182}\) Thus, with her tentative expression and motherly knowingness, *Big mother* enkindles man’s lost memories of the womb and primitive past whilst, with her contemporary nappy bags in tow, she represents present and evolutionary future.

Unsurprisingly, many of Piccinini’s creatures actually come from nature, strange animals like the blobfish.\(^{183}\) Explaining her blobfish-inspired *Eulogy* (2011)\(^{184}\) as a cross-examination or interchange between the natural and artificial, Piccinini emphasises the crucial (Existentialist) moment when artificiality becomes natural or organic and the onlooker’s empathy towards the object changes, their gaze becomes suddenly confused and reality is questioned:\(^{185}\) Alasdair Foster, for example, reckons her artworks ‘don’t so much appear real as feel familiar… It is increasingly difficult to draw a distinction… between the artificial and the natural’.\(^{186}\) Speaking about Julie Rrap’s picture *Overstepping* (2001), of a heel morphed into a stiletto shape, Creed detects, “The image is imbued with an uncanny sensation because the heels are not the heels of a “normal” woman but have extended to

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\(^{181}\) Creed, *Phallic panic…*, op. cit., p.23. Piccinini’s thoughtful practice of titling her work is shown with *Big mother*. Considering this sculpture is of life-size proportions, the creature is not so ‘big’, but rather the title is employed to connote several ideas, acting to draw her audience into an array of possibilities including that ‘big’ may refer to the ‘first’ or ‘ab-original’ mother, the ‘top’ of the ancestral tree, as such. Importantly, such titles signal a disturbance in any singular reading of a piece of her work, and thereby relay ideas concerning language as problematic and uncanny.

\(^{182}\) Krell, op. cit., p.59.

\(^{183}\) For example, compare Brian Crokett’s *Pride, Lust, Gluttony, Sloth, Greed, Envy, Anger and Pinky* figures of 2001 (all cultured marble, various sizes, Lehmann Maupin Gallery) with Piccinini’s small creatures, such as *The offering*, 2009, silicone, animal fur, possum pelt, 15 x 20 x 28. This in turn recalls Fiona Hall’s photographs in the AGNSW’s exhibition, *The enigmatic object: Photography and the uncanny*, including *Avarice, Pride, Envy, Anger, Gluttony, Lechery, Sloth*, all dated 1985, all colour Polaroid photographs, 60 x 50 cm, AGNSW.

\(^{184}\) Patricia Piccinini, *Eulogy*, 2011, silicon, fibreglass, human hair, clothing, 110 x 65 x 60 cm.

\(^{185}\) Among other artwork, Piccinini discussed *Eulogy* (2011) during her "Artist talk", NGA, 15 March 2011.

form flashy stilettos'. 187 Whilst confusing artificiality with naturalness and recalling Piccinini’s *Sunset red*, Rrap’s image focuses the eye on veins, sinews, scarring and wrinkles, thus evoking the uncanny of death, decay and zombiism. Rrap and Piccinini similarly fabricate interplays between artifice and nature, corresponding with Existentialist self-deceit versus man’s ‘real’ uncanny existence.

Somewhat recalling *uncanny valley* theory, Creed elaborates on the unnaturalness of the genetically engineered body, considering the ‘post-Darwinian’ body an artificial construct resulting from carefully controlled, laboratory developments as opposed to natural evolutions subject to the ‘vagaries of chance and time’. 188 This is true but not at the exclusion of the laboratory, for it too is subject to change, mistakes and mutations which can occur spontaneously or sometime later. The chance haphazardness of the genetically engineered is frighteningly disconcerting, as is the potential for producing demonic monsters, as Piccinini’s presages, ‘If we choose to customise life then we must be prepared to embrace the outcomes’. 189 That man’s experiments ‘come back to haunt us, like Frankenstein’s monster’ 190 is however a moot point because the monstrous double is already part of man, and as such, Piccinini’s evolutionary ‘mishaps’ reflect this inner, secreted *doppelgänger*. In the visual arts, the post-Darwinian body is uncanny, as Creed observes, because artists almost always create such a body by juxtaposing an aspect of the body that is familiar to us with that which is strange and unfamiliar... [and] It is this evolutionary dimension... that is essentially uncanny. 191

Evolution as essentially uncanny thus denotes uncanny fear as symptomatic of change, a continual process (and progressive journeying) which harks back to primitive, originary forms. Discussing Rrap’s artwork, Creed proclaims Darwinian evolution as terminated –

188 Ibid., p.213.
189 Piccinini quoted in Orgaz, op. cit. Similarly, speaking of her work *Roadkill* (2005, digital C-type photograph, 80 x 160 cm), Piccinini describes ‘these creatures... [as inciting a] real pathos in the scene but it is tempered by the realisation that these creatures, because of their success, may have become a danger to the ecosystem they are supposed to protect’.
190 Genocchio, op. cit., says Piccinini asks her viewer to consider such scenarios. Regarding comparisons between Mary Shelley and Piccinini, Linda Williams, “Spectacle or critique?...”, op. cit., p.86, complains that rather than make direct comparisons with Shelley, a ‘better analogy for Piccinini’s work might be the popular films made of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, with their special effects produced by a team of people’. Withal, figurative sculpture incorporates the double which has a long history including Shelley’s monster, thus validating all associations.
191 Creed, “Is evolution over?...”, op. cit., p.213.
'through genetic engineering the body can bypass natural evolution'. But rather than it be over, since the natural body is still developing alongside its contrived counterparts, the Darwinian evolution (equally founded upon biological science) continues as a progressive stage (or phase 'Mark II') of evolution, marked by heightened change, faster and manufactured as opposed to, but not excluding, the slower rate of natural progression.

Considering a progressive streak forms an inherent part of man's nature, the Darwinian selection of traits is made all the more apparent in artificial bio-genetics, and mutations and 'mistakes' still occur. Creed's conclusive question, 'If human beings are no longer open to the mysteries of evolution, does this mean their art will be forever changed?', is problematic because whether it be through artificial or natural means, the evolution of the animal and plant kingdoms still hold future mysteries and therefore, still produce certain angst among mankind.

Arguably then, if evolution is uncanny and is essentially about change, arguably change is at the root of uncanniness, considering things change or oscillate between familiar-unfamiliar, animate-inanimate, and so forth, and change itself signifies a journeying or moving between differing states.

Figure 13: Patricia Piccinini, Leather landscape, 2003 (detail)

192 Ibid., p.215.
193 Ibid., p.217, notes that both natural and artificial evolutions are 'made possible by the revolution in thought ushered in by Darwin's challenge to conventional modes of thinking'.
194 The question is posed in ibid., p.222, who similarly notes, p.218: 'It is now possible to alter the body in strange and uncanny ways', yet it has long (or always) been possible to alter the body via scarring, tattooing, make-up, plastic surgery, amputation and prosthetics, for example.
Piccinini’s work poses questions surrounding the diametrically opposed arguments of random genetic mutations of Darwinism versus Intelligent Design (Creationism) – but not so much the question of whether there is a God, rather how we might interact with or play God in any case. Piccinini’s human likenesses are so disturbingly convincing that the viewer’s side glances question whether her figures are of a different species, homo sapien mutations or unusually abnormal humans, such as those embodied in Leather landscape (2003). The question of their human-like presence can be contemplated in terms set out by Edmund Husserl’s analysis of body aesthetics. Husserl distinguishes assimilable and unassimilable experiences of the body, outlining assimilable abnormality as explaining man’s mechanism of regulating or optimising abnormality towards normality, whereas totally ‘alien’ experiences are a wholly non-human, unique species and therefore more difficult to accept and assimilate. Although wholly alien beings place man in sharp contrast, they nevertheless bring man into the picture. Upon perceiving their differences to ourselves, the alien body affirms and elaborates Dasein in his pre-existent world. An ‘alien’ form or abnormal body steals the viewer’s gaze, usurping Dasein’s manufactured everyday coping mechanisms of Being-in-the-world and uncovering man’s unhomely reality. Unusual forms and unfamiliar-familiars suddenly prompt revelatory questions about our so-called reality, de-stabilising our fabricated, concrete givens and throwing us back in our uncanny existence. The ‘alien’ and ‘abnormal’ beings of Piccinini’s work thus subliminally awaken the silent, suppressed uncanniness of Being-in-the-world. Yet, Piccinini’s portrayals of ‘abnormality’ do not seek to shock viewers or establish abnormality as an alternative to normal corporeality, instead they fall short of the grotesque; they remind us of the alien within and question our mythologised aversions to ‘beastly’ creatures. In her work Piccinini expresses an uncanniness at the extremes of normality, reflecting the banality of everyday existence or supposed ‘normality.’ In Existentialist terms, it is in disingenuously seeking normality that man inevitably encounters the surreal and abnormal uncanny.

195 Patricia Piccinini, Leather landscape, 2003, silicone, polyurethane, leather, mdf, human hair, 290 x 175 x 165 cm, RO9.
196 An article written by Alexander Kozin focusing on the abnormalities of Contergan/Thalidomide sufferers drew my attention to Husserl’s ideas regarding assimilating abnormalities. Whilst the article is written in clumsy prose, Kozin describes some worthy ideas regarding our perception of the abnormal; see Alexander Kozin, “The uncanny body: From medical to aesthetic abnormality”, Janus Head, vol.9, no.2 (Winter/Spring 2007), pp.463-84, reproduced at Janus Head: www.janushead.org/9-2/Kozin.pdf, accessed 5/10/09.
The bottom feeder (2009), a fabrication of fiction which suggests reality, is an anthropomorphic creature based on seabed-feeding aquatic animals. Fashioning a tortoise-like head on a human-like upper torso, Piccinini envisages an unfathomable hybrid, inviting Robert Nelson’s description of ‘frightening verisimilitude’ as uncannily unsettling:

Everything in the sculpture encourages scrutiny... The surreal face installed in the rear end invites numerous psychoanalytical interpretations, as does the title. The body as tube with entrance and exit at both ends suggests uncanny correspondences, even though the face is the public gateway to the mind while the nether parts are abject and banished in body-shame... Piccinini has complicated this weird semantic flicker between visage and undercarriage by making the creature hermaphroditic.

Strange familiarity is observed along with allusions to various psychoanalytical theories, particularly the play-off between the conscious (public-facing mind) and the banished unconscious. By denoting a ‘weird semantic flicker’, Nelson can be read as moving close to the unexpected trigger of uncanniness, and his suggestion of ‘body as tube’ draws parallels with the notion of the psyche ingesting and expelling ‘matter’ of the conscious-unconscious psyche. His is a common example of how audiences perceive uncanniness in Piccinini’s work, and how the artist projects certain readings of her work.

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In Piccinini’s video *When my baby (when my baby)* (2005), another mysterious creature is projected, with, as Rachel Kent notes, its hair and folds of skin which suggest a living entity which is animated by the squirming, bump-like presence of symbiotic parasites that move about just beneath the surface. The gradual revealing of a face elicits pathos and also a deeply-rooted primal recognition between viewer and creature... this odd visage is both familiar and strange to us, just as we are no doubt equally perplexing to it.

Notwithstanding Kent’s observations, particularly the elicitation of strange-familiarity and deeply-rooted primal recognition, Piccinini reveals her own subconscious thoughts at play: ‘When I started this work, I was thinking of Peter Allen, “The boy from Oz”. I’m not sure why’. Human-likeness is key to developing empathy and subliminally moving the viewer towards anthropomorphising these creatures and thus subconsciously becoming one with them as a doubling. In an almost goading way, Piccinini tempts her audience into discerning human features, faces and body parts from the various facets, indents, gaping holes, sags and ‘droopy bits.’ Viewers cannot escape incurring this involuntary empathy or instinctive protection towards these writhing, repellent creatures – instinctive urges which are derivative of Freudian primal impulses whereas Existentialist lines are composed of concepts concerning *Dasein* entering bad-faith modes of self-protection by fashioning desires to protect others. Either way, such instincts take man back to his own uncanny origin.

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201 Piccinini as quoted in ibid.
In contrast to those of skin-like verity, other Piccinini sculpture have patinas which imply precious metal, thus rather than necessarily repelling audiences, often bewitch and captivate them.\textsuperscript{202} \textit{Not quite animal} (2008)\textsuperscript{203} and \textit{Nest} (2006)\textsuperscript{204} exemplify the tension Piccinini creates by forging her creatures with brassy, reflective surfaces, wherein Heideggerian notions of \textit{techne} are heightened. In \textit{Nest}, for example, man’s compulsion towards the homely, as reflected in man’s devotion to technological progress as a mode of thrusting oneself into the future, is played off against playful, organic forms. Whereas Williams sees Engberg’s statement, ‘Piccinini, like Joseph Banks, sends dispatches from a new world’,\textsuperscript{205} as excessive, the simile legitimately throws future, present and past together, decimating time and throwing man back on himself whilst engendering ideas about man’s technocratic tendencies, man’s drive towards the homely from his \textit{unheimliche}-self. With their cyborg-like patina, such machine-human hybrids blur boundaries and confuse ideas about real-unreal, animate-inanimate. In addressing emotional responses to biotechnological

\textsuperscript{202} Of the surfaces in Piccinini’s work, Juliana Engberg, \textit{Retrospectology: The world according to Patricia Piccinini}, exhib. catalogue, Melbourne: Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, 2002, p.17, writes, ‘the “skin”, whether it be fibreglass, the glossy surface of the photograph or the digitally enhanced flesh of plant or human was flawless: perfect’ and that such surfaces propel her work (presumably for her viewer) ‘into deeper corporeal investigations’.

\textsuperscript{203} Patricia Piccinini, \textit{Not quite animal} (Transgenic skull for The young family), 2008, bronze, 19.5 x 28 x 14.5cm, plinth dimensions 100 x 40 x 40 cm, RO9.

\textsuperscript{204} Patricia Piccinini. \textit{Nest}, 2006, enamel paint on fibreglass, leather, plastic, metal, rubber, mirror, transparent synthetic polymer resin, glass, 194.2 x 197 x 186.4 cm (variable), NGV.

\textsuperscript{205} Engberg, \textit{Retrospectology}..., op. cit., p.4; and Williams, "Spectacle or critique?...", op. cit., p.86.
manipulation, Piccinini’s work elicits notions of *technē* as colluding with the uncanny impact of dualisms meeting, as in the binaries of the maternal (Nature) with technology.\(^{206}\)

Regardless of their ‘skin’ being human-like or metallic, as in her anthropomorphic scooters, Piccinini’s three-dimensional objects are always organic, semi-recognisable and disconcerting. The tactic of attributing human-like qualities to objects recalls a passage from *We*, wherein the demise of machinery is described anthropomorphically: ‘A spread-eagled body... melting, dissolving with horrifying rapidity... merely a puddle of chemically pure water that, only a moment before had been riotously and redly pulsing with a heart’.\(^{207}\) The human, as constituting another form of uncanny automaton, can be reduced to mere chemical units, just as matter creates the non-organic. Ultimately everything returns, or is thrown back, to its origins and can be, as such, ‘reduced to tears’ – ‘to water.’ The mechanical, chromed edginess of *Not quite animal* is juxtaposed by its organic form, suggesting Bernard Stiegler’s pronouncement that man and *technē* are indissociable.\(^{208}\)

Williams comes close to Stiegler when she writes, ‘the popularity of Piccinini’s work could be attributed to a... sense of unease that questions of the social impact of new technologies are indeed urgent, and yet somehow always seem to lag behind the next big technological innovation’.\(^{209}\) The notion of the malady of the *technē* lying, secreted within man, underpins Piccinini’s conflations of man as machine, communicating an inner-most psychical being, pushing forever towards the homely.

Whilst her figures transmute between man, machine and hybrid creature, Piccinini’s metamorphic beings do not merely criticise or negate man as playing God or tinkering with nature, they reference the shared concerns of man and nature in the way that biomimicry looks to nature for developing better designs and resolving problems for man. For example, research into microorganic-resistant sharks led to technological innovation branded *Sharklet*,

\(^{206}\) This collision or ‘flickering intersection’ of the maternal and the technological, as inspired by Piccinini’s work, is discussed in Goriss-Hunter, op. cit., who, pp.541-2, reads this meeting as an ‘hypertextual moment’ which offers several, often contradictory, perspectives, and says, ‘One of the main flows of Piccinini’s artwork describes movements from “natural” bodies to technologically charged corporealities’ (p.544). Although Goriss-Hunter perceives the familiar in the foreign and the ‘domestic foreignness’ (p.545) in Piccinini’s work, she does not reference notions of the uncanny.

\(^{207}\) Zamyatin, op. cit., p.77.

\(^{208}\) Bernard Stiegler speaking in the film, *The Ister*, directed by Barison and Ross, op. cit.

\(^{209}\) Linda Williams, "Spectacle or critique?...", op. cit., p.83. Later, p.88, she talks of ‘Heidegger’s fear for the role of art in relation to science... that *poiesis* (sic) may not be adequate to the task of rendering technology meaningful...’, but does attribute the notion of *technē* as directly attributable in Piccinini’s work.
which mimics the antimicrobial properties of shark skin in new materials developed to
replace the surfaces of surgical equipment, thereby minimising bacterial infection.²¹⁰
Piccinini’s artwork alludes to biomimicry working bi-directionally: nature informing man
and man informing nature. Sometimes Piccinini references proto-human or post-human
possibilities, whereas Nest translates the teachings of nature into man-made machinery.
The figures reflect man and man projects himself into them, thus sending the gaze back
into itself, man back unto himself. As Stephanie Radok suggests, Piccinini ‘approaches us
where we live, in human skin... skin that ages... and is ineluctably naked unlike that of
animals’, showing us up as Shakespearean bare forked, vulnerable creatures with ‘vestigial
scaly spines... [and] bare pinkish skin’.²¹¹ Her figures enamour the gaze with uncanny
memories of past whilst pressing the mind’s eye forth into an unknown future.

Phenomenologically, the uncanny commonly relates to the human propensity to want to
see the unfamiliar in order to reinforce the stabilising effect of the familiar. People actively
seek the familiar in its counterpart. Ultimately, whereas Williams contests that people tend
to read Piccinini’s sculpture as ‘very literally’ commenting ‘on the dangers of modern
science’,²¹² there is greater conceptual depth which can be found in her work. It imparts an
unresolved uneasiness whilst embracing future visions interlinked with the primitive past
thus moving the gaze from future through present to past. Piccinini’s hybrid figures are
neither human nor un-human, attractive yet repulsive, familiar whilst unfamiliar, recalling
Vidler’s description of Surrealist, Leonora Carrington’s zoomorphic pictures as an uncanny,
‘monstrous merging of animal and human so characteristic of Surrealist imagery’.²¹³
Piccinini’s hybrids are evolutions of the Surrealist uncanny whilst being replacements or
evolutions of the classic film monster – Frankenstein, zombies and so forth, which arguably
have diminished potency due to overexposure throughout the centuries. With Piccinini’s
work, the successors of Olympia have morphed into uncannily evolved hybrid-beings –

²¹⁰ It is marketed as a ‘surface technology [which is a revolutionary breakthrough in microorganism control... The engineered
surface, or topography, is the first no-kill technology developed to control the growth of undesirable microorganisms’; see
Sharklet Technologies, “From evolution to medical solution”, News & Events: Sharklet Science and the BERI Model,
²¹² Linda Williams, “Spectacle or critique...”, op. cit., p.87, argues that it is her collaborator Sam Jinks’s ‘technical virtuosity
in “special effects” and illustrative narrative, rather than ironic strategy, that leads people to read them very literally as
comments on the dangers of modern science’.
²¹³ Vidler, “Fantasy, the uncanny...”, op. cit., p.5. Vidler references the Surrealist, Leonora Carrington’s book, The house of
fear: Notes from down below, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1988, and p.92, her zoomorphism tendencies: ‘A horse gets mixed up
with one’s body...’
something new with which to lift the lid on the primitive uncanny and reveal the Frankenstein monster which we in bad-faith have made ourselves become. Upsetting equanimity, her hybrids are atavistic throwbacks from the past — not only biological throwbacks but possibly ideological and socio-political reincarnations, re-ingeminating the philosophical through memory. As discussed, this notion of throwing back aligns with uncanny revisitations and evolutionary notions, which have been long apparent in her practice, including the earlier series, *The mutant genome project* (1994-95) with its recurrent ‘Lifeform with Unevolved Mutant Properties.’ Certainly, Piccinini’s hybrid creatures are ‘particularly uncanny’.

Faced with the inevitability of death, the human endeavour persists in trying to cheat it. Scientific developments continue to probe the site of the body in its most intimate physicality, as the gene pool is plummeted, DNA is modified and plastic surgery transforms the body; the relevance of the uncanny continues into the future with Freudian echoes: “The goal of all life is death”, and, “The inanimate was there before the animate”.

Physically modifying oneself is attuned to self-alienation, and ‘as painful as that may be,’ Kristeva contends, ‘provides me with that exquisite distance within which perverse pleasure begins, as well as the possibility of my imagining and thinking, the impetus of my culture’. Speaking in foreign tongues is another form of self-estrangement, since polyglots distance themselves from their mother-tongue. Similarly, considering the foreign Other and thereby consuming the image of it, momentarily amalgamating it with oneself, causes self-estrangement. The gaze, having been captivated by Mueck’s and Piccinini’s seductive work, thence recognises the Other in itself, an uncanny greeting of the foreign which unconsciously ignites the foreigner within. This momentary recognition becomes an electrifying, uncanny expression. It starts as something which attracts the viewer only to repel them, as oscillating electromagnetic fields that resist and yield. Derrida echoes Kristeva’s Freudian utterances in *Specters of Marx*, delineating the living individual as being ‘inhabited and invaded by its own specter’ — one’s body is the host and haunt of the

214 Reflecting the general observation, in Creed, *Phallic panic...*, op. cit., p.13, that the ‘human/creature hybrid is particularly uncanny’; my emphasis.


spectre of oneself. He formulates, 'Ego = ghost. Therefore "I am" would mean "I am haunted": I am haunted by myself who am (haunted by myself who am haunted by myself... '218 Derrida outlines the cadaver as being never-dead, 'as simply dead as the conjuration tries to delude us into believing'.219 He explains:

The one who has disappeared appears still to be there, and his apparition is not nothing. It does not do nothing... There is also a mode of production of the phantom... As in the work of mourning, after a trauma, the conjuration has to make sure that the dead will not come back: quick, do whatever is needed to keep the cadaver localized, in a safe place, decomposing right where it was inhumed... Quick, a vault to which one keeps the keys.220

Like vaults which can be unlocked, the dead readily returns to live another 'life'—life-in-death as forever present. The lifelike models of Piccinini's and Mueck's beget life and death as uncannily animate-inanimates which forever 'speak' to their audience.

Whilst Clement likens the 'cultural anxiety that subtly animates... Mueck's seemingly ordinary human figures' to that which 'deforms the flesh' of Piccinini's creatures,221 such anxiety may not necessarily be of fears about post-humanity (as inferred), but rather more profoundly, the unsettling impression of such verist figurations plausibly relates to visitations upon our uncanny selves. Yet, in describing such figures as 'Anatomical Venuses... subjected to such meticulous and unnecessary attention to detail that they became hyper-real, at once alluring and disturbing',222 Clement's mid-eighteenth-century literature reference portends the Olympia of the nineteenth-century and her progression into twenty-first-century verist sculpture. Thus, sculptural verism like that of Mueck's and Piccinini's work form a nexus with the Freudian-Heideggerian uncanny, applying Jentsch's notions of uncanny feelings of uncertainty regarding objects which appear animate yet inanimate. Whilst Mueck's hyper-realist figures are often literally larger-than-life, they do not require the leaps of faith and imaginative processing that Piccinini's require, yet both petition suspension of disbelief, a requisite for fictitious work to become uncanny,
according to Freud. Whilst Mueck considers the spectacle of the 'real' body and Piccinini conceives post-human beings, their work lies within the realms of plausibility, a notion which vexes Freud, who tries to find a more satisfying explanation about Olympia than Jentsch’s, as Todorov explains:

Freud writes: “This automaton (Olympia) can be nothing else than a personification of Nathaniel’s feminine attitude toward his father during his infancy”. The equation Freud establishes no longer links merely an image and a meaning (though it still does that), but links two textual elements: the doll Olympia and Nathaniel’s childhood... Thereby, Freud’s remark enlightens us less as to the interpretation of the language of images than as to the mechanism of this language, its internal functioning.223

Todorov’s conclusion that Freud acts more as translator or linguist somewhat aligns with Heidegger’s idea that the uncanny is found language, in the symbolic. If then, one turns away from three-dimensional objects towards two-dimensional symbology, is the uncanny more effectively conjured? Whereas many of the figures in Balthus’s oeuvre inherit the fixed, wooden expression of Olympia, by placing his doll-like figures into two-dimensional planes, he thereby creates and controls the artworks’ atmospherics. Considering Freud’s observation that our uncertainty about a figure’s corporeality is intensified when our attention is not directly focused upon this uncertainty,224 it might be argued that sculptural artwork without frames or devices with which to rein in or control the figurative, which instead projects into and occupies the same physical space of the viewer’s, has the heightened effect of focusing the viewer’s gaze upon the figure and therefore upon such uncertainty. Unlike the detachment that hyper-realist sculpture in clinical gallery spaces engender, where the viewing experience is too often one of awestruck onlookers getting caught up in exhibition sensationalism, the two-dimensional allows the artist to consume the gaze wholly within the frame, thereby notionally achieving a more heightened sense of uncanniness. The following chapter tests this theory whilst considering the uncanny in the artwork of two contemporary artists who employ the uncanniness of Australia as a symbolic backdrop to their art.

223 Todorov, op. cit., p.150.
Chapter five

Site specific: Capturing an Australian uncanny

The strangest place in this looking-glass world is where we stand looking into it but fail to see ourselves mirrored there, glimpsing instead the strangeness of our origins. \textit{Paul Carter}\(^1\)

Whilst the private uncanny concerns alienation of oneself with oneself, as a form of self-enforced estrangement, the sensation may be stimulated by feeling alienated in one’s immediate surroundings, especially foreign locale. Both Freud and Heidegger associate uncanniness with ideas about being simultaneously ‘in place’ and ‘out of place.’ Freud discusses being lost in foreign lands, whereas Heidegger’s reminisces of the Danube introduces site-specificity, unfolding notions about the uncanny in terms of one’s native home, addressing German literature and Graeco-Germanic origins, particularly referencing Sophocles’ \textit{Antigone}. Although both schools of thought concur that one might feel uncanny anywhere (thus precluding site as being the only factor), they stress the foreignness of strange places intensifies or heightens the probability of uncanniness. One might be in what is considered the homeliest of places and still feel uncanny, yet strange sites more overtly recall the uncanny traveller who resides in a state of striving towards the homely from the unhomely. Their ideas prompted the Bulgarian-born Kristeva’s assertion, ‘Nowhere is one more a foreigner than in France’ because, she conjectures, French are generally more intolerant of foreigners.\(^2\) Corresponding to notions that certain places engender uncanniness more than others, Australia arguably exemplifies \textit{unheimlichkeit} considering, as Kristeva notes, the European discovery of ‘atheistic’ and ‘savage’ peoples propelled Westerners to eagerly pore over literature portraying the strangeness of the Antipodes. Considering too, Heidegger’s proposition that the act of colonising is essentially an uncanny journeying away from – in order to return to – one’s motherland.\(^3\) Ptolemy’s imaginations of \textit{Terra Australis Incognita}, of unknown southern lands, eventuated as fictitious masses on fifteenth-century European maps, so, long before the British colonised ‘primitive’ Australia, it was already made real-yet-unreal, known-yet-unknown: uncanny. Freud capitalised on such when he wrote, ‘The aborigines of Australia are looked


\(^{2}\) Kristeva, \textit{Strangers to ourselves}, op. cit., p.38.

\(^{3}\) Ibid., p.124. Heidegger interprets a translation of Hölderlin’s line, ‘Colony, and bold forgetting spirit loves’, as encompassing ideas about man’s will to become unhomely. He says, ‘This essential “not being at home” is an essential will to become unhomely. The will pertaining to this love “loves colony” so essentially that such love loves even “bold forgetting”… [man’s essence, his] “spirit loves precisely bold forgetting”; Heidegger, \textit{Hölderlin’s hymn}, op. cit., p.131.
upon as a peculiar race'. 4 Considering notions of 'country', Jean-Luc Nancy posits, 'When one is taken out of one's country, one feels estranged and unsettled: one no longer knows one's way around' with no familiar landmarks or customs. Moreover, Nancy maintains that representational landscapes exemplify estrangement and uncanniness: 'A landscape contains no presence; it is in itself the entire presence'. 6 Citing a poem of Hölderlin's, Nancy explains,

A landscape is always a landscape of time... the fleeting instability of what is shown... which incessantly estranges and unsettles [but]... is always the suspension of a passage, and this passage occurs as a separation, an emptying out of the scene or of being. 7

For Nancy, landscapes are all-encompassing, uncanny presences which turn the gaze inwards towards originary uncanniness. Sites or locations have spatial qualities that appeal to the visual senses, and pictures and sculpture attain unique spatial elements often referencing specific or generalised locale, besides attaining additional spatial attributes in the context of exhibition spaces. Sensory perceptions of space relate to physical locales, such that uncanniness might be compounded in art which embodies place as homely-unhomely. This chapter focuses on two-dimensional art whilst considering notions of Australia as an acutely unheimlich locale, one which inspires expressions of uncanniness.

Behind, present and ahead of time: Whilst Antipodean colonies are popularly conceived as being behind-the-times (compared with 'sophisticated' Europe), Australia's ancientness equally conceives it as uncannily ahead of time, already aged. Pre-colonised Australia heralded familiar promises of gain and glory, yet it embodied the fascination and fear of the unfamiliar and unknown. The mythology of the 'Great Southern Land' has long held it as darkly mysterious, with Europeans fixing Australia in the gothic tradition long before Captain James Cook's discoveries. 8 Long before its histories of occupation, deracination and colonisation, it was already alienating. Once discovered, its very peculiarities and

4 Freud, Totem and taboo, op. cit., p.2, says they share 'neither physical nor linguistic relationship' with their neighbours.
5 In his essay, "Uncanny landscape", first presented in 2001, Jean-Luc Nancy writes, 'within the concept of a country is included the fact that it is the country of some particular set of people or another: it is "each time my own," one might say, invoking Heidegger's Gemeinschaft, and 'the country and the people refer to one another. Perhaps the people is the country that speaks, and perhaps the country is a language when it is set outside of meaning. Be that as it may, they are both "each time my own"'; see Jean-Luc Nancy, The ground of the image, trans. Jeff Fort, New York: Fordham UP, 2005, p.54. Ibid., pp.56-8, explains reasons behind the landscape genre being unknown in antiquity, and coming into existence early fifteenth-century. Piero della Francesco's work, discussed anon, is of the beginning of landscape tradition.
6 Ibid., p.54, p.57 and p.58.
7 Ibid., p.61.
perversions of nature rendered it intensely alienating, so the very utterance of Australia became metonymic of spiritual 'dis-ease,' instigating placenames such as Cape Grim and Mount Hopeless. Pre- and post-colonial gothic portrayals of Australia and its peoples persisted in Australian and non-Australian literature. Among the Post-World War I, non-Australian literary impressions of Australia, D.H. Lawrence's novel *Kangaroo* (1923) depicts a curious sombreness, an oldness of untrodden, virgin bush, and 'a sense of subtle, remote, formless beauty more poignant than anything ever experienced before.' Written following Lawrence's self-imposed exile, leaving his home-country on account of harassment endured at the hands of British authorities, he visited Australia en route to America. Homeland alienation coupled with encountering brutally unfamiliar scenery significantly contributed to rendering Australia an eerie yet intensely moving experience for Lawrence, with *Kangaroo* adding to earlier literature which pictures Australia as uncanny. *Australian Journal* was an important early platform for popular genre texts and 'textual phantasmagoria' imagining the colonial experience. Andrew McCann explains:

so much phantasmagorical writing in nineteenth-century Australia... is organised around images of Indigenous Australian culture – the Bunyip, traces of totemic ritual etc. – 'haunting' the minds of narrators who offer their own momentary suspension of disbelief as the basis of uncanny affect. This exploitation of Indigenous culture as a reserve of uncanny affect in colonial print culture was so pervasive...

As representational, McCann reproduces William Carleton's narrative poem, "The Australian night's entertainment", beginning:

We were the first whitemen who trod
Upon that lone and distant sod;
There but ourselves no being stirr'd,
And Nature's voice alone we heard;
And as we gazed upon her face,
And marked her Maker's primal trace...

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9 Ibid, p.10 says that the Australian sense of the gothic arose before its discovery, explaining that while its natural 'features represented a physical perversion, it was widely considered to be metonymic of an attendant spiritual dis/ease'; and, p.11: 'This sense of spiritual malaise is often communicated through the Gothic mode, that is, through a literary form which emphasises the horror, uncertainty and desperation of the human experience, often representing the solitariness of that experience through characters trapped in a hostile environment, or pursued by an unspecified or unidentifiable danger'.

10 Paul Carter’s key texts come to mind, including: *The road to Botany Bay: An essay in spatial history*, London: Faber and Faber, 1987; and *The lie of the land*, London: Faber and Faber, 1996. In ibid., pp.99-101, Carter applies Heideggerian theory, particularly that of his Parnenides lectures, including notions of the uncanny, to the (Aboriginal) Aranda tribe’s sacred site, saying Heidegger understands art as a metaphysical ‘disclosure’ of Being. Also see Carter, *Living in a new country...*, op. cit., where notions of travelling predominate, where journeying into the new is seen essentially as a turning backwards to one’s familiar, and where the novelty of a new country ‘resides not in its absolute strangeness but in its strange familiarity’ (p.2). Also note John Birmingham, *Leviathan: The unauthorized biography of Sydney*, Sydney: Random House, 1999, pp.123-4.


12 McCann, op. cit., p.148.

13 The poem continues: A silent and a reverent awe/Crept o’er us from the scene we saw/While ever and anon the breeze/
The construct of uncanniness is exploited in early Australian literature to render the Aboriginal atavistic and dangerous, and, as McCann argues, to define the colonist as an 'isolated consumer/worker as the bearer of a delusional economic freedom'.\textsuperscript{14} The uncanny and phantasmagoria genres were important ingredients of colonisation and capitalism, wielded as socio-political tools, and Marcus Clarke can be held partly accountable. Clarke's editorial contribution to \textit{Australian Journal} favoured uncanny texts by Hoffmann, Poe, Victor Hugo, Thomas Carlyle and Charles Dickens. Also serialised in it was Clarke's epic \textit{His natural life},\textsuperscript{15} a much-studied story of colonial Australia which conceives the country as eerily transforming the very nature of man, with its prisoner protagonists experiencing physical, psychological and emotional disorder.\textsuperscript{16} Besides chronicling stories about penal settlement, it is a metaphor for migration and resettlement on unfamiliar grounds, for disturbing a man's 'spirit.' In the story's death-throes, set amidst fury of stormy seas, Clarke calls upon the agency of the uncanny:

\begin{quote}
    In the human soul are depths which the intellect fails to fathom. In the great crisis of our life, when brought face to face with annihilation... we become conscious that the 'self' which we think we know so well has strange and terrible capabilities. The mists that encompass our self-knowledge become transparent. Deep calls to deep within us.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Clarke's passage prefigures Freud's 'uncanny harbinger of death' and Heidegger's 'fleeing in the face of one's ownmost Being-towards-death.' Clarke, whose fascination with ghostly manifestations persist across his literary work,\textsuperscript{18} believed that Australian writers were dominated and influenced by the peculiarities of Australia,\textsuperscript{19} with its stifling, funereal

\begin{quote}
    Through the great branches of the trees! Play'd strange and mournful harmonies,/ Till one might almost think the dead/ Had risen from their final bed/ And sighed in sorrow overhead;/ Or, that the trees, as natives say,/ Strange, melancholy legends told/ Of tribes and races passed away/ As mist-wreaths flit when bright-eyed day/ Scatters his beams of gold'; see William Carleton, "The Australian night's entertainment", \textit{Australian Journal}, vol.2 no.90 (18 May 1867), p.605.
\end{quote}
forests:
The very animal life of these frowning hills is either grotesque or ghostly... shrieking like evil souls... [with] horrible peals of semi-human laughter... [and where] From a corner of the silent forest rises a dismal chant, and around a fire dance natives painted like skeletons. All is fear-inspiring and gloomy... Wrapped in the midst of early morning, her history looms vague and gigantic. The lonely horseman riding between the moonlight and the day sees vast shadows creeping across the shelterless and silent plains, hears strange noises in the primeval forest... In Australia alone is to be found the Grotesque, the Weird, the strange scribblings of Nature learning how to write.20

Like a spruiker calling forth his audience to a freak-show or circus act, Clarke's words shape an exotically uncanny Australia. Significantly, as a colonised, hybrid country equipped with European scent and shade, the transformed state of Australia calls forth the familiar-unfamiliar such that a newcomer's uneasy attraction may be likened to Lawrence's fascination with Australia's strange beauty. Transformed by imposed European mimicry and hybridity, the reverse effect happens to Indigenous who perceive their native land as distorted into something foreign.21 Ken Gelder and Jane Jacobs's Uncanny Australia (1998)22 discusses 'unsettlement' as a postcolonial condition of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Australia; moreover one which has a dialogically productive power, inciting 'discourses and counter-discourses', producing 'alignments and realignments' and reminding 'us that (whether we like it or not) "all of us" are implicated to greater or lesser degrees in this modern predicament'.23 Inculpably, this modern condition locates

our flowers without perfume, our birds who cannot fly, and our beasts who have not yet learned to walk on all fours. But the dweller in the wilderness acknowledges the subtle charm of this fantastic land of monstrosities. He becomes familiar with the beauty of loneliness. Whispered to by the myriad tongues of the wilderness, he learns the language of the barren and the uncouth, and can read the hieroglyphics of haggard gun-trees, blown into odd shapes, distorted with fierce hot winds, or cramped with cold nights, when the Southern Cross freezes in a cloudless sky of icy blue. The phantasmagoria of that wild dreamland termed the Bush interprets itself, and the Poet of our desolation begins to comprehend why free Esau loved his heritage of desert sand better than all the bountiful richness of Egypt'.

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20 Ibid.
21 As argued by Homi K. Bhabha, *The location of culture*, London; New York: Routledge, 1994. Many post-colonial studies have deliberated on such topics, including notions that 'self-othering' has the effect of not only changing how the colonised see themselves, but it also has the effect of reflecting this self-doubt and deflecting alienation back onto its colonisers. That is, by-products of colonisation include the colonisers' alienation as intensified as it becomes apparent that the indigenous are themselves experiencing alienation in their own land. The land, therefore, becomes the site of distrust, thus the uncanny has free range; see Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990.
23 Ibid., p.xvi. Among other things, the book concerns itself with the consequences of Aboriginal claims for sacredness, including turning 'what seems like "home" into something else, something less familiar and less settled' (p.xiv), and elaborating on the Australian psyche in terms of having an uncanny uneasiness, an aura of displacement and unease. See also their essay, "The postcolonial ghost story" in Buse and Stott, op. cit., pp.179-99. Kelly Greenop, "Uncanny Brisbane: New ways of looking at urban Indigenous place", Proceedings of the XXVth International Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, Geelong, Australia, 3-6 July 2008, also employs the Freudian uncanny in similar ways. Such sentiments are reminiscent of the inspiration behind Robert Hughes's book, *The fatal shore* (1987); he remembered feeling acrophobic as it struck him that 'the difference between the Australian and the American experience was that in America space liberates, while in Australia space was the ultimate prison'; see Robert S. Boynton, "Life and letters: The lives of Robert Hughes," *The New Yorker*, 12 May 1997, p.44, who says Hughes 'got the idea for the book in 1974 while he was..."
‘Aboriginal’ as a construct derived within the frame of the colonial gaze, exposing its opposite, non-Aboriginality, as foreign to Australian soil. Indeed, non-Indigenous Australia turns on itself, rendering itself familiar-unfamiliar by the very utterance of Aboriginality. For Gelder and Jacobs, ‘In an uncanny Australia, one’s place is always already another’s place...’, and the collective Australian psyche is ingeminated as profoundly disturbed. Although concepts surrounding alienation and the ‘status’ of finishing a documentary in Port Arthur, the town that had once been Australia’s most infamous prison. "One afternoon, I went for a walk along in great basalt cliffs," he says. "Being rather acrophobic, I lay down on the ground, crawled on my stomach, and hung my head over a ledge dropping hundreds of feet to the water... Suddenly, the penny dropped. I realized that the difference between the Australian and the American experience...” Where Hughes attributes Australians’ fears as a hangover from penal settlement, such post-colonial issues are not unique to Australia. Moreover, colonisation extends into the cosmos: ‘If the publicity campaign that accompanied the Apollo programme succeeded in domesticking outer space by subjecting it to technocratic principles, this had the reverse effect on domestic space itself. The clean spaciousness of the middle American home, its compartmentalization and efficiency, resonated uncannily with the interior of the Apollo spacecraft. The home was invaded by an extraterrestrial image, of a small bubble of life hurtling through vast expanses to a hostile moon. Twentieth century theory would come to define this transformation of the sublime into the banal and disconcerting as the uncanny. Instead of being located elsewhere, in the vastness of the unconquered, the uncanny situates its estranging effects firmly within the known; see Darren Jorgensen, “Middle America, the moon, the sublime and the uncanny”, Sociological Review, vol. 57, no. 1 (2009), pp. 178-189, p. 186. Ibid., p. 187, observes uncanniness in Buzz Aldrin’s famous photograph on the moon with Neil Armstrong reflected in his helmet’s visor, itself reflecting Aldrin ‘in an infinite regress of astronauts. The repetition of the human figure in this strange, inhuman environment displaces Kane’s superensible identification with the universe, the scientific gaze upon the unknown becoming a repetition of the known’. 24 Gelder and Jacobs, op. cit., p. 138. Whilst by implication these concepts render the phenomenon of the uncanny applicable to everyone, regardless of race, creed and ideology, it is not my intention to imply the same. The uncanny, as stated previously, is something that should not be generalised or particularised. Gelder and Jacobs employ the uncanny as a form of internalised, inescapable contradictory force. They write, pp. 23-7, ‘one has the [uncanny] experience... of being in place and “out of place” simultaneously’ in a ‘settler’ nation where “a condition of unsettled-ness folds into this often taken-for-granted mode of occupation’, but one where Aboriginal sacredness is aligned with secrecy and the obscure, inaccessible and untrustworthy notions of the unheimlich, making non-Aboriginals doubly removed from the locus of Australia as homely. Throughout their book Freudian notions of the uncanny, specifically the uncanniness of the familial turning in on itself to become unfamiliar, are used to represent inversive tactical manoeuvres. For example, p. 51 referencing the uncanny reads, “one can never totally polarise these features (the traditional and the modern, authorisation and the loss of authority, etc.)... to be “out of place” is still to be “in place”... to lose is also to gain.” Later, p. 54, with regards to the Australian Mineral Industry Council, they say it speaks ‘of itself without a trace of irony as “discriminated against”, endangered, disposessed. We need hardly add that this is nothing less than an uncanny reversal of fantastic dimensions’. They also question the efficacy and verity of an ‘uncanny inversion’ of supposed reverse discrimination by Aboriginal Australians, which, they argue, stems from those non-Indigenous people who believe that Aboriginals are receiving too much (Government hand-outs) and/or conversely, that non-Indigenous are not getting enough. This perceived imbalance is a cause for people claiming inverse racism (‘postcolonial racism’), and presses them to state, pp. 16-17, ‘To be in a culture which can see Aboriginal people as lacking and yet having ‘too much’ at the same time is itself an uncanny phenomenon’, introducing another example of the uncanny being wielded as a tool of socio-political ideology. They argue, p. 24, that the socio-political value of the uncanny is ‘that it refuses the usual binary structure’ and invites slippages to occur and lines to be blurred, so that either side of politics gains the empathetic power of the uncanny – of being the victim of alienation. Ibid., p. 10, they cite Tacey’s point that ‘In society, countless numbers of symbolic and mythological systems are for sale in the new age supermarket [that is, the Information Highway], emphasising the uncanny as a way of explaining complex socio-political issues; p. 138: ‘We have used the uncanny... to elaborate a modern Australian condition where what is ‘ours’ may also be ‘theirs’, and vice versa: where difference and ‘reconciliation’ co-exist unceasantly’. Furthermore, the act of applying hegemony over the Other, depriving people of property, is visited upon the aggressor as they inadvertently prove to themselves that their act of expropriation may well be visited upon themselves by another –a double-bind producing all-round alienation, from which there is no return. In reviewing Uncanny Australia, Ben Goldsmith, “Book reviews: Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, Uncanny Australia...”, The Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History, reproduced at James Cook Univ.: www.jcu.edu.au/aff/history/reviews/gelder.htm, accessed 20/7/09, argues, ‘What this formation ignores is the fact that for indigenous people what Gelder and Jacobs call “the Aboriginal sacred” may exist entirely separately from modern (non-indigenous) society...’, yet Gelder and Jacobs, p. 3, pre-qualify this sacredness as being a ‘modern sacred’ rather than necessarily representing the Aboriginal sacred. Nevertheless, there are problems in Gelder and Jacobs, including misquoting Freud, saying that unheimlich is further glossed by Freud as meaning “withdrawn from knowledge”, obscure and inaccessible, 171
'foreigner' change over time, to not be foreign or exiled means to be a lawful citizen within one's homely-land, contrasted with refugees, prisoners of war, tourists, penal colonizers and settlers. Australians are conceived as either non-indigenous colonizers/immigrants or indigenous 'savages' cohabiting a place where no-one belongs, or if they feel they do, they cannot nevertheless escape the uncanny sensation of being in the foreign. Perversely, we are all strangers wondering on 'homely' lands, inciting Kristeva's uncanny strangers-to-ourselves and Freud's unhomely inversions: 'The man who till recently had been so strange to him now seemed to him all the more Heimlich', and its reversal, the familiar becoming unfamiliar. Depicting the stranger as one who is both physically close and culturally remote, Madan Sarup relates uncanniness on the borderline 'between the inside and the outside, order and chaos, friend and enemy', literally or metaphorically 'uprooted... alienated and adrift in a world of organised others'; a 'foreignness within'. Contrarily, referencing Heidegger's philosophy, Krell proclaims, homelessness is nothing to be lamented. It is rather the pristine ontological mark of humankind; it is the primitive shelter of Dasein or "existence"; it is what every work of art bestows on us. Not roots, not domesticity, not the fireside chat, but a sense of our never being at home in the face of the uncanny.

Considering the postcolonial gaze uncanny, David Crouch restates Judith Wright's self-description as the twisting of 'two strands, which have become part of me—the love of the land we have invaded, and the guilt of the invasion... a haunted country', adding:

these two strands, the non-indigenous desire to belong to a stolen land, gives the Australian ghost story a peculiar resonance. It seems as if this bifurcated tension in the postcolonial condition allows tales of visitations from the past to rehearse crucial anxieties within the Australian psyche, to tap a sense of "haunted country". In this country the presence of ghosts can be read as traces of historical traumas, fears which are often exposed in expressions of apprehensive (un)settlement... And in

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25 Notions concerning the changing status of 'foreigner' being conceived as conflicting with universalism and globalisation is discussed in Kristeva, Strangers to ourselves, op. cit., p.90. Ibid, p.84, says, 'The alienation of the foreigner ceases within the universality of the love for the other', where promoting hospitableness towards pilgrims may acts as example.

26 Freud, "The 'uncanny'”, op. cit., p.222.


28 Krell, op. cit., p.44.
Australia it seems possible to extend the spatial metaphor to imagine the house as analogous with the nation; here the haunted house becomes a metonym for Australia, its ghosts are the collective anxieties of white settlement.29

Crouch equates the haunting of the protagonists' house in Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet* (1992) to the unhomely atmosphere of the non-indigenous foreigner in Australia, saying the family 'moved around the house like fearful first settlers, “stunned and shuffling”, “the big emptiness of the house around them, almost paralysing them with spaces and surfaces that yield nothing to them. It’s just them in this vast indoors”, adding that the homeless and uprooted families of Winton’s fiction ‘are unsettled in their occupation of this new place. The great (sic) expanses of space and unyielding alien surfaces of this “great continent of a house” paralyse their inhabitants in a way that echoes the same sense of unease, a sense of not belonging’.30 At the crux of the immigrant’s heightened sense of strangeness is spatial perception. A crucial element in art eliciting the uncanny, ‘space’ is an important element in Freud’s essay, allowing the reader pauses for reflection, whereas for Winton’s émigrés, the unyielding space of the Australian landscape is confronting. To offset such perturbation, people often try to fill the vacuum with voice or sound, endeavours which rebound as even more disturbing, such as peals of laughter reverberating through trees and echoing into the hills corroborates the vast and lonely terrain. Rosemary Jackson defines the uncanny as ‘a term which has been used philosophically as well as in psychoanalytic writing, to indicate a disturbing, vacuous area... rendering a feeling of estrangement, of being “not at home” in the world’.31

As artistic attempts to codify the strangeness of Antipodean landscapes, the ‘European-flavoured,’ colonial landscapes of artists like John Glover, Eugene von Guérard, Conrad Marten and Louis Buvelot, unwittingly expose a familiar-unfamiliar, unintentionally further bewildering Australia in their audience’s imaginations. Lavishing Australian scenery in European tonalities and lush foliage, thereby accomplishing a Euro-Australian hybrid, their amalgams are neither wholly European nor typically Australian. To the eyes of their Australian-born successors of the Heidelberg School, colonial paintings represented an...

29 David Crouch, "National hauntings: The architecture of Australian ghost stories", *JASAL*, special issue (Spectres, screens, shadows, mirrors, 2007), pp.94-105, pp.94-5. Crouch reflects on two Western Australian 'ghost'/'haunting' stories that look at ‘finding the past within the present’: Hume Nisbet’s "The haunted station" and Tim Winton’s *Cloudstreet*. Crouch’s text provides citations from Gelder and Jacobs, op. cit., but with incorrect page numbers cited.


31 Referencing both gothic literature and Freud; see Jackson, op. cit., p.63 and p.65; my emphasis.
outdated, Eurocentric idyllic vision, an exotic, romanticized Great Southern Land. The practice of rendering Eurocentric canvases was outmoded by an aspiration to reveal and valorise the ‘true’ nature of Australia’s eccentricities. The modern romanticization of the Australian bush emerged in the paintings of Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts and Sydney Long, among others of their generation, making the unfamiliar more palatable and even desirable. Hans Heysen’s depictions of the Flinders Ranges took this further, eulogizing the Australian mountain ranges, the bush and gumtree as uniquely Australian, extracting the weird, deleting local fauna, inserting cattle, and rendering the unfamiliar familiar. Simultaneously and with little reservation, white-man relentlessly scoured and savaged the Australian bushland making way for an equally uncanny substitution of the countryside — city-scapes and suburbia. Ironically, the more bush was cleared for farming and settlement, the more that which was destroyed was desired, and the ability to conquer the once seemingly unconquerable bush allowed colonizers to imagine it as being homely. It also became feasible to think of Australian landscapes as awesome yet unthreatening, as people sought a more intimate relationship with country. Accepting this as an overly simplistic overview of over two centuries of Australian landscape painting, it sets a general scene and sounds the entrance of an era of artists who expressly rendered the Australian landscape as uncanny.

Post-World War II saw artists like Russell Drysdale and Fred Williams depict the ancient Australian landscape in new ways. The aerial interpretation of the salt pans of Williams’s Salt pile, Dampier (1979) compared with that of Joseph Lycett’s Salt pan plain, Van Diemen’s Land (1824) seem worlds apart, whereas the actual salt pans have not altered greatly.32 The town of Hill End in Drysdale’s Golden gully (1949) perches above a land receding, yielding to soil erosion, expressing nature’s will to carve away the landscape, forming crevasses in a gully taking the shape of a human face with eyes formed by cavernous recesses in the escarpment and another outcrop forming the jaws and teeth, denoting man as nature and nature reflecting man, typical of landscape as a metaphor for

32 Fred Williams, Salt pile, Dampier, 1979, gouache, 57.2 x 75.9 cm, NGV; Joseph Lycett, Salt pan plain, Van Diemen’s Land, 1824, etching and aquatint print in illustrated book (Views in Australia, 1824), image 17.2 x 27.3 cm, NGA. Laurie Duggan, Ghost nation: Imagined space and Australian visual culture, 1901-1939, St Lucia, Qld.: Univ. of Queensland, 2001, pp.204-5, citing Hal Foster’s writings on the uncanny and aura, reads, ‘for the photographers and artists who visited the “centre” in the 1920s and 1930s the experience was too much one of “otherness” for such anthropomorphisms to be widely entertained… [and] the “centre” had to be rendered familiar before it could be sexualised’. 
the human condition. 33 Although Drysdale grew up in the country, his work is not drenched with sentimentality and neither do his depictions of loneliness and isolation necessarily represent ‘the loneliness of alienation, of the stranger in a hostile land’ as Geoffrey Dutton states. 34 Drysdale provided an insight into his paintings of Aboriginals in the outback, saying:

they not only have to me a peculiar dignity and grace, not the sort of dignity or grace that one thinks of in the Apollo Belvedere, but the way in which a man comports himself in an environment which is his and has been his and his alone, he’s at ease in it. The way he sits with his feet in certain positions, his hands and feet are anatomically the same as yours, but they comport themselves with a certain difference… these sorts of things are intriguing… and to me this strange primitive quality is the same thing as in the landscape… 35

In response to whether themes of alienation can be read into his work, Drysdale answered in the negative, saying that mankind is ‘unconquered by the landscape, because man is a species which has arisen like every other species on this earth and he is not alien to a landscape, otherwise he would have to live somewhere in outer space’. 36 Read in this light, perceived ‘strangeness’ concerning the outback, with its eerie landscapes and extraordinary peoples, is inherently not strange, especially for those who feel they have comfortably mastered it. Nevertheless, for those who feel uncomfortable or estranged, the outback represents the possibility of the unconquerable. Moreover, it triggers remembrances of primitive-self as inherently uncanny and unhomely, thoughts which are commonly masked and re/suppressed, thus representing the impossibility of conquering our insurmountable selves. The harsh outback becomes an externalised objectification of inner turmoil. Contrarily, Drysdale’s paintings evince ‘an internal spiritual and emotional loneliness, for which Drysdale finds compensation in the freedom of Australian landscape’ and the endurance of its cohabitants. 37 The theoretical gully formed of man’s sense of the landscape’s inhospitableness was itself being slowly eroded, as art sought to forge new

33 Russell Drysdale, Golden gully, 1949, oil and ink on canvas mounted on composition board, 66 x 101.4 cm, NGA.
36 Ibid. Geoffrey Smith, Russell Drysdale: 1912-81, exhib. catalogue, Melbourne: NGV, 1997, p.11, claims, somewhat contrary to Drysdale’s comments, that ‘In Drysdale’s paintings, concerned as they are with themes of identity and alienation, there often exists a complex relationship between artist and his subjects, and between the subjects and their environment’. Significantly, Drysdale’s work embroils complex, multifaceted relationships - internal and external to oneself - rather than exclusively alienation or identity. In Russell Drysdale and Hazel de Berg, Russell Drysdale interviewed by Hazel de Berg in the Hazel de Berg collection, sound recording, Canberra: NLA, 1960, he remarks about the ‘curious and strange rhythms’ of Australia’s vast landscape, its peculiarity and ‘quality of strangeness’ not found elsewhere, an ancient land with a ‘general psychology… so intriguing as compared’ to other countries.
37 Dutton, Russell Drysdale, rev. ed, op. cit., p.12; my emphasis. Ibid., p.13, makes a note of coincidence – that ‘Drysdale’s greatest contemporary in Australian literature, Patrick White, was born in London [Drysdale was born in Bognor Regis, Sussex, England] in the same year as Drysdale, also into a pioneer pastoral family’. 175
relationships with country. Exemplary of intense, psychological landscapes inspired by Australia’s unrelenting expanses, Drysdale’s *Walls of China* (1945) depicts an organically wrought, humanlike mangle of despair represented as a decomposed tree trunk, whereas his *The rabbiters* (1947), with attenuated shadows of men encroaching upon the monolithic rock-face, is reminiscent of Dalí’s *Remorse* (1931). Drysdale uses similar shadowing in *The cricketers* (1948), juxtaposing Australia’s agelessness with the ‘veneer of human presence’, with boys seemingly playing by the edges of infinity or nothingness, enacting roles of transitory interlopers in a timeless land where man’s precarious position represents an internal-external imbalance of homely-unhomeliness, with time appearing frozen with dreamlike surreality. It is an exemplification of Surrealism’s influence, which had spread across the world, reaching Australia and making its impression on many including James Gleeson, Eric Thake and Albert Tucker, spurred on by the 1939 *Herald* exhibition. Breton’s 1941 article in *Art in Australia* further attracted Australian artists whilst others were introduced to the movement by previous Australian texts and periodicals from abroad. Therefore, to artists of an uncanny land, Surrealism’s strong ties with the Freudian uncanny, its versions of ‘the marvellous’ and interests in the primitive, are

38 Russell Drysdale, *Walls of China*, 1945, oil on hardboard, 76.2 x 101.6 cm, AGNSW. Inspired by Henry Moore’s inside-out, biomorphic sculpture, this painting (of sand dunes are located near Lake Mungo, northern NSW) is of a series of drought affected landscapes commissioned by the Sydney Morning Herald; see Lou Klepac (ed.), *Australian painters of the twentieth century*, Sydney: Beagle Press, 2000, p.91. Influence of British artists, like Moore, is discussed in Geoffrey Smith, Russell Drysdale: 1912-81, exhib. catalogue, Melbourne: NGV, 1997, pp.21-2. Salvador Dali, *Remorse* or Sphinx embedded in the sand, 1931, oil on canvas, 19.1 x 26.7 cm, Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State Univ. Elena Taylor made several connections between Drysdale and Dali paintings in a paper presented at the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference 2009, Canberra, 28 November 2009. In addition to those Taylor discussed, it compares with Dalí’s *The great masturbator*, 1929, oil on canvas, 110 x 150 cm, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid. Also, Dalí’s *Crucifixion* (‘Hypercubic body’), 1954, oil on canvas, 193.5 x 124 cm, MoMA, compares with Drysdale’s *Tree form, 1945*, oil on canvas on composition board, 61.7 x 76.7 cm, NGV, prompting questions about them drawing on mutual inspiration. Contrary to criticism made about the ‘over-defined shadows cast by the boys’ in *The rabbiters* (Paul Haefliger, “Exhibition of society of artists”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 August 1947), the shadows clearly reference Surrealism’s interest in the unconscious.

39 Russell Drysdale, *The cricketers*, 1948, oil on hardboard, 76.2 x 101.6cm. See Klepac, op. cit., p.92-4. Of Drysdale’s *Home town*, 1943 (oil on canvas, 50 x 50 cm, The Holmes à Court Collection), Geoffrey Smith, Russell Drysdale: 1912-81, op. cit., p.20, says it depicts a ‘country town that appears to continue into infinity’. However, it is not the town but the Australian outback landscape that disappears into infinity: an infinite land as a counter-motif of man’s finiteness.

40 Of works by Ernst, de Chirico and Dalí’s controversial painting, *Memory of the woman-child* (also known as *L’homme fleur*), 1932, oil on canvas with collage, 99 x 119.5 cm, Salvador Dalí Museum, Florida. The *Herald* exhibition opened in Melbourne in October 1939 and included work by Paul Céanne, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, Amedeo Modigliani, along with Marc Chagall, de Chirico, Ernst and Dalí. Of this exhibition, the Surrealist’s work proved most provocative, attracting great interest.


42 Such as 391, edited by Francis Picabia. To my cursory list and overview, for major references to Surrealism in Australian journals from the 1920s to 1940s, see Christopher Chapman, "A bibliographic chronology of Surrealism in Australia", in NGA, Surrealism: Revolution by night, Canberra: NGA, 1993, pp.310-14. Whilst access to literature like 391 was relatively limited, articles were republished in Max Harris’s *Angry penguins* magazine, which had a strong following in art circles of that time.
inherently uncanny functions exemplified in art such as Ivor Francis’s anthropomorphic *Growth* (1941) and Douglas Roberts’s *The dead animal* (1944). Combining traditional landscape templates with surreality, early Australian Surrealists introduced an indifferent, enigmatic Australia in familiar formats, marrying the familiar with unfamiliar and grounding Australian interest in the uncanny. Numerous exhibitions dealing with uncanniness have been held ever since, including Julie Dowling’s exhibition, *Strange fruit* (2007), with its curatorial essay offering an infrequent insight into the nature of the uncanny in Australian art:

Like Billie Holiday’s haunting song about the victims of race crimes in the American south, Dowling’s paintings are a strange fruit that hang in the trees of the Australian unconscious. Aesthetically they can be understood as distinctly uncanny… Dowling’s art is permeated with uncanniness as it uncovers that which was previously hidden, bringing the private and public into collision, throwing the divine and the profane together and generally creating a sense of disturbance and disquiet in the unsuspecting viewer.

Jeanette Hoorn is slightly ‘off-target’ relating the uncanny to kinds of racism because such activism is much less unconsciously dormant but rather consciously restrained, whereas Dowling’s portraiture is haunting, it haunts to raise the audience’s ‘conscious’ and socio-political awareness. It is also questionable as to whether the uncanny extends to Dowling’s *Icon to a stolen child* series, as Hoorn suggests, pointing out their resemblance to

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Ivor Francis, *Growth*, 1941, oil on canvas, 49.6 x 38.8 cm, NGA; Douglas Roberts, *The dead animal*, 1944, oil on hessian on board, 61.5 x 46.5 cm, NGA. Bruce James, *Australian surrealism: The Agapitos/Wilson Collection*, Roseville, NSW: Beagle Press, 2003, p.33, notes that Francis and Roberts ‘share a desire to picture the very instant when biomorphic substance is born out of the Australian landscape, and when nature itself collaborates as a Surrealist’. Foster, *Compulsive beauty*, op. cit., pp.xvi-xviii, conjectures, ‘no given categories… comprehend Surrealism conceptually… [or] account for its heterogeneous practices or address its quintessential concerns with psychic conflict and social contradiction… [except one concept –] the uncanny’. The enigmatic and unknown were central concerns of Surrealism, as illustrated by Giorgio de Chirico’s *The uncertainty of the poet*, 1913, oil on canvas, 106 x 94 cm, Tate Modern, with its arches of dark gaping breaches eliciting the darkly mysterious. Also see Elizabeth Wright, “The uncanny and surrealism”, in Peter Collier and Judith Davies (eds), *Modernism and the European unconscious*, Cambridge: Polity, 1990, pp.265-82.

Similar may be said of Drysdale’s contemporaries, such as Arthur Boyd, Clifton Pugh, Peter Purves Smith and Eric Thake, although their oeuvres are not permeated with an eeriness attributed to the Australian outback in the same, explicit manner.

*Strange fruit: Testimony and memory in Julie Dowling’s portraits* was held at The Ian Potter Museum of Art in 2007; see Jeanette Hoon, “Julie Dowling’s 'Strange fruit': Testimony and the uncanny in contemporary Australian painting”, *Third Text*, vol.19, no.3 (2005), pp.283–96. The gaze of the young woman of *Mt Magnet* (2001) reaches out and seizes the viewer’s gaze with her powerful look. Ibid., p.285, misquotes Freud, saying, ‘Freud cites Schelling: "Unheimlich is the name for everything that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light," whilst misspelling both *unheimlich* as *unheimimlich* and *unheimlichkeit* as *unheimilichkeit*. Hoon sees Dowling’s work as creating ‘a sense of disturbance and disquiet’, but arguably the viewer is neither ‘unsuspecting’ nor is it a matter of ‘private and public’ colliding, but an encounter of ‘public and public’ of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. Yet, Dowling’s work may be considered uncanny insofar as exhibiting postcolonial alienation, therefore emitting ideas about the unhomely. In this way, her Indigenous figures dressed in colonial costume represent an unhomely uncanny within the alienated landscape of their once-familiar country. Ibid., pp.290-1, also discusses Dowling’s *Mary* (2001), pointing out Dowling’s references to Diana the huntress and Mary Magdalene and describing its ‘high gothic atmosphere… [which] renders the familiar unfamiliar and creates a haunting sense of the uncanny’. Comparing *Mary* with Giampietrino’s *Diana the huntress*, after 1526, oil on wood, MoMA, elicits questions about Hoon distorting the uncanny to fit where postcolonial discourse more effectively belongs, for *Mary* appears to exemplify post-colonial appropriation.
Greek and Russian icons further attest to exemplifying appropriation, although this is clearly not in the uncanny manner of appropriation Žižek discusses, where 'the alternation of a small detail in a well-known picture... renders the whole picture strange'. Hoorn nonetheless engages the uncanny discourse, bringing it into the scope of Australian art, linking it with the strategies of appropriation and pastiche. Likewise, Royle relates literary excerpts, passages or clippings as ubiquitous in this 'new era of haunting, one in which... we find ourselves engaging with the “ethics of the spectral text”, “spectral and textual haunting”, and “ghostly narrative” (as distinct from narrative about the ghostly”). Danie Mellor’s and Trevor Nickolls’s paintings similarly express an Aboriginal outlook of an uncanny Australia. Ideas originating from his Dreamtime-machinetime series and the attenuated, wobbling skyscrapers drawn as literal personifications, Nickolls captures the essence of McQuire’s confrontational ‘liquid city’, an ever-changing place arising as the urban landscape warps and morphs before our eyes. Disrupted spaces and uncanny landscapes do not exclusively belong in the outback – the strange metropolis, suburban disquietude and the unhomely home also factor. Homesickness and mechanisms of defending oneself against the unhomely (such as reclusion, assimilation and communalism) are other conceptualisations concerning the indelible link one has with their origins, the importance of place on the psyche and its uncanny expressions are exemplified in artwork by Sally Smart and Lawrence Daws.

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48 Žižek, op. cit., p.53.
49 Whilst overemphasising the presence of uncanniness in Dowling’s Melvin (1999), Hoorn, ‘Julie Dowling’s ‘Strange fruit’...’ op. cit., p.287, proposes the figure’s halo ‘heighten [sic] the uncanny nature of the image as the mixture of styles and dress is juxtaposed with sacred references which destabilise the composition. Within the halo are... windjammers... [and] drawings of the irons which were used to confine the many convicts who were transported, adding another level of uncanniness by this reference to convicts’. Whereas Hoorn takes Dowling’s mixed styles (pastiches), windjammers and irons as uncanny, Dowling’s imagery is intentionally obvious yet speaks in relation to the link between alienation and the unhomely.
51 For example, Trevor Nickolls, The adventures of Wanda Wanjina, 2001, oil on canvas, 122 x 211 cm, with its colourful exuberance exciting the onlooker’s eye, which is met by menacing skyscrapers of New York’s Wall Street and a lime-green alien puppeteer figure cajoling Wanda who drives dazedly towards an unknown oblivion, and including Surrealist quotations such as a Dali-like clock melting over the branch of a gum whose canopy takes the shape of the Australian map.
52 McQuire, The media city..., op. cit., p.88, reads: ‘buildings sprout from the ground, rooms stretch and contract, tenements become mansions and mansions shrink to hovels. All that is solid seems to literally melt right before our eyes. The liquid city is born.’
Uncanny childhood: Outback encounters in Sally Smart

The intersections of dualistic entities, where opposites meet, generally present as paradoxes often described as uncanny, including Bhabha’s distinction of the ‘unhomely moment’ as one where ‘the borders between home and world become confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other’ 54 Such points or junctions commonly present as indefinite or problematic zones which include that which one obfuscates or self-conceals as the re/suppressed. These notions of uncannily ambiguous borders reflect Sally Smart’s interests in conscious-unconscious borderlines, which finds visual expression as the ubiquitous ‘Aussie veranda’ motif, an important topoi signifying physical and emotional thresholds, in her examinations into the complicity of people negotiating external and internal spaces. Smart’s Shadow farm series, with autobiographical references to childhood nights spent on her family’s farmhouse veranda, 54 memorializes half-forgotten, 'tainted' or concealed memory, employing creative tactics evoking primary-school art, including cutting and gluing felt shapes. Smart blends painting, printmaking and collage, besides simplifying perspective and flattening objects to the picture plane to deny her pictures depth, whilst applying simple lines and silhouettes to obtain discernible naïveté — all devices lending themselves to uncanny evocations, as will be examined. Whereas the exacting verisimilitude of Mueck’s and Piccinini’s lifelike sculpture is key to eliciting the uncanny, simple, silhouetted collage is central to engendering the unhomely of Smart’s childhood reflections, where one finds serialisations of concurrent self-referential reprisals across her oeuvre, manifestations of a compulsion to repeat art historical references — and herself.

William Wordsworth’s yearning for childhood expresses itself as profoundly underpinned by ‘the power of childhood in his emotional life’, and evident in his “Immortality Ode,” which enacts a self-doubling comparable to Freud’s essay. 55 Autobiographical self-doubling

53 Bhabha, op. cit., p.9; my emphasis.

54 Sally Smart was born in 1960, Quorn, South Australia. Whereas the veranda metaphor compares with Surrealist ship-to-shore and shoreline analogies of life/death, conscious/unconscious and in-between realms, its ubiquitousness is notable throughout Australian artwork such as Russell Drysdale’s Siesta, 1952, oil on canvas, 102.5 x 127.5 cm, NGA.

55 See Daniel W. Ross, “Seeking a way home: The uncanny in Wordsworth’s ‘Immortality Ode’,” Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, vol.32, no.4 (Nineteenth Century, Autumn, 1992), pp.625-43, p.625. Ross, p.626, contends, ‘To see the child as Wordsworth’s double allows us to recognize a deeply embedded, infantile source of anxiety in the Ode which endangers the poet’s self-unity. Freud’s theory, meanwhile, helps us understand more clearly how and why the poet feels a sense of dislocation in the world he inhabits and how his efforts to defend himself against these feelings of dislocation break down in...
is likewise notable in Smart’s work, where she repeatedly pictures herself as a ghostly spectre and inserts personal references with eclectic literary and art influences, consequently shaping her work as strangely elusive. Personal events and encounters resonate alongside miscellaneous ideas, as multifarious elements leaching into her work as uncanny osmosis, bringing together disparate, fragmented memory and thus expressing a disconnectedness of life experiences, synchronicities and constant slippages between dualistic conscious-unconscious, as echoing life-death, homely-unhomy, and so forth. Rather than Wordsworth’s ode reflecting ‘his inability to accept his own passage out of childhood’, I argue he, like Smart, addresses childhood as having greater access to the ab-original homely, not of melancholic reverie or separation anxiety, but acknowledging mankind’s profound journey from the unhomely towards the homely. Significantly, childhood remembrances emphasise and symbolise uncanny origins. Although Daniel Ross concludes that ‘memory and language fail Wordsworth’ and his ode acts as ‘compensation for his feeling of being lost in the world’, poetry is not necessarily a balm for Wordsworth’s ‘fear of encroaching mortality and for his loss of home’, but moreover adroitly acknowledges mankind’s uncanny existence. Poetry, as art, illuminates much more besides, as will become apparent by examining Smart’s unframed and epic wall-mounted installations, oversized as to encompass and subsume her viewer, impelling them to project themselves beyond the frame and into all sorts of otherworlds, worlds which embody childhood memory, following aesthetic traditions of Wordsworth and Emily Dickinson, her heroine, who was likewise occupied with (re)enacting the role of a child.

The Freudian uncanny encompasses notions of once-surmounted infantile beliefs rebounding, a significant aspect of unheimlichkeit, according to psychoanalyst, Sheldon Bach, whose patients included a woman whose father treated her like a machine in childhood: ‘He treats me efficiently... mechanically... like one of his business enterprises... as if I were a machine instead of a human being’. Her father’s rigidity is eclipsed by both

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The Ode. This ode, of 1804, is also known as “Ode: Intimations of immortality from recollections of early childhood”.

56 Ibid., pp.626-7.
57 Ibid., p.639.
59 Bach, op. cit., p.79. Joseph Grixti, Terrors of uncertainty: The cultural contexts of horror fiction, London: New York: Routledge, 1989, p.57, considers man as ‘like machines because there are periods when they seem unable to exercise restraint over the “ghosts” of irrationality within... no more than engines of destruction activated by demons...’
parents' lack of interaction and feedback with her, contributing to her confused sense of animate/inanimate in adulthood. For Bach, inadequate dialogue in childhood factors in such dilemmas, recalling Nathanael who, in childhood, sought explanation about the frightening Sandman but received delusive explanations from his mother. Bach writes that one's sense of continuity is disrupted when breakdowns in narcissistic development occurs, thereby intensifying everyday uncanniness. Whilst the inability to distinguish whether something is real is heightened in Bach's patient, this defect is normally controlled in mentally healthy people through re-repression. Reiterating that eerily strange emotions arise in situations where something that promises to be familiar, responsive or animate turns out to be unfamiliar, unresponsive or inanimate, Bach articulates:

Uncanny feelings are the hallmark of a situation in which a person feels the lack of reciprocal dialogue or continuity either with an internalized narcissistic self-object, or with another person who is permanently or momentarily fulfilling this narcissistic function. Ordinarily, this continuity has become internalized in the form of stable narcissistic configurations and structures, the lack of which accounts for the prevalence of uncanny experiences in the narcissistic disorders. Uncanny experiences arise in healthy people under two general conditions:

(a) When the event itself is so sudden or so unique to a person's life experience or cognitive mass that it cannot be assimilated or integrated to pre-existing structures. Here the experience of death might be cited, or the 'premature' discovery in science which is considered 'bizarre' or 'crackpot' because it cannot be fitted logically into the accepted canon of thought. (b) In the creative states, which frequently involve a regression to narcissistic modes.

Of relevance to Smart's childhood references is Bach's notions regarding creativity involving 'regression' to narcissistic modes and uncanny objects which inhabit the transitional territory in human development, including dolls, security blankets, imaginary companions, ghosts, gods, muses and 'the creative product itself. Bach lists these 'narcissistic transitional phenomena' as peopling the intermediate area and hence becoming symbolically uncanny. Considering the great influence of her childhood surroundings, the surreal landscape of the Flinders Ranges, outback South Australia, Smart's memories of

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60 Bach, op. cit., p.79, explains a male patient's repeated references to uncanny events, which he writes 'appears to lie in his inability to experience the process which leads from here to there as a continuous one in which he and the world remain continuously alive for each other... as either a major facet of the narcissistic development deficit... [or defensive] against the narcissistic rage and self-fragmentation initially incurred by his mother's empathic failures'.

61 Ibid., p.85. Whilst Bach's latter comment relates to artists consciously moving into regressive states to thereby more readily evoke the uncanny, it poses questions about the psychopathology of the artist, which is outside present scope.

62 Ibid.

youth are not captured as simply nostalgic but form homely-unhomely manifestations whilst portraying the anthropomorphic landscape she remembers:

   My experience of a farm is a space at the foothills of pale violet ranges, which lie like fragments of the body of a Giant, but only ever partially seen. The ranges suggest a rocky shadow face, elbow, foot named as a projection of the body. The river mouth, the devil’s elbow, the foothills and rockface indicate this relationship.\textsuperscript{64}

In various ways, Smart analogises this fragmented landscape through, for example, assemblages formed using assorted, everyday materials (jeans, t-shirts etcetera) – disparate items brought together to form another whole, yet a whole which is inherently piecemeal and fragmentary. For Smart, who was heavily influenced by Dadaists, particularly Hannah Höch, collage is not simply a technique, it is a philosophical expression. As a strategy of the art movement Fluxus and its follower Joseph Beuys, an influence of Smart’s, using household materials and clothing is not simply thrifty, they represent accumulative past memory, thus (re)creating present/future from yesteryear.\textsuperscript{65} Accumulating bits and pieces from multifarious contexts, forging new relationships whilst clearly remaining manifestations of disparate elements, each new creation is neither a whole nor parts, but both. The pasted-in shirtsleeve of ‘\textit{Ghost ship (white)}’ (2005)\textsuperscript{66} transmogrifies into a ghostly skeletal figure of another world, for example. The whole-part relationship, key to Smart’s work, incorporates Holistic philosophy and concept of \textit{gestalt}: that all the properties of something cannot explain the whole, resonating with deconstructive/reconstructive approaches of acquiring knowledge and uncovering truths; and, that the whole is not only \textit{more than} but \textit{different from} the sum of it parts.\textsuperscript{67} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s theories, including that ‘the law never unites anything into a single Whole, but on the contrary measures and maps out the divergences, the dispersions, the exploding into fragments of something that is innocent precisely because its source is madness’, influences Smart.\textsuperscript{68} Their words echo master of poetic collage, T.S. Eliot:

\textsuperscript{65} Fluxus (from the Latin, meaning ‘flow’) had an international following of avant-garde artists in the 1960-70s. Robert Rauschenberg, another influence of Smart’s, collaged an assortment of images and materials generally from within his era, whereas Smart’s references span historical and modern periods.
\textsuperscript{66} Sally Smart, \textit{Ghost ship (white)}, 2005, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, fabric with various collage elements.
\textsuperscript{67} Kurt Koffka, \textit{Principles of gestalt psychology}, New York: Hacourt-Brace, 1935, p.176, argues, ‘the whole is something else than the sum of its parts, because summing up is a meaningless procedure, whereas the whole-part relationship is meaningful’.
\textsuperscript{68} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, \textit{Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia}, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, New York: Viking Press, 1977, p.43. With Holism, the whole is crucial in determining how the parts behave. Aristotle’s idea, ‘the whole is more than the sum of its parts,’ has been extended to \textit{more than} and/or \textit{different from} the sum of its parts; notions discussed in ibid., beside concepts of the ‘\textit{body without organs}’ (\textit{BwO}) as ‘potentiality’ beyond the ‘whole’.  

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April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire...  

Smart's work mixes memory and desire from external and internal referencing, repeatedly quoting herself and others, and reflecting historical sources within the contemporary. Amanda King describes Smart's collage practice as acting to 'fragment and subvert our assumptions rather than synthesise new ones', but as an important aesthetic device extending across literature and poetry, including Hölderlin as Heidegger shows, it is fundamental to conveying uncanniness. For Heidegger, *The Ister* resonates the historical home, Greek origins and Sophocles' *Antigone*, symbolising the most homely home of man's deepest desire. Likewise, Smart's work incorporates historical resonances including art-historical references such as *Bedbugs (femmage)* (2001) where portraits of Höch are applied in similar manner as Höch collaged photographs from magazines and newspapers, and echoing Höch's *Der meister* (1925), Smart's series *The Fox sisters* (1993-4) splices photographic elements from Man Ray's *Glass tears* (1932) and repurposes it in *Delicate cutting (with paper bladder)* (1993-4). The title, subject and content of *Stuttering* (1993)

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71 For example, Hannah Höch, *Monument to vanity II*, 1926, photomontage, 25.8 x 16.7 cm, Collection Eva-Maria and Heinrich Rössner, Germany. Also see Deborah Hart, *Tales of the unexpected: Aspects of contemporary Australian art*, exhib. catalogue, Canberra: NGA, 2002, p.36.
72 Sally Smart, *Bedbugs (femmage)*, 2001, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage elements, 153 x 198 cm; Hannah Höch, *Der meister (The master)*, 1925, photomontage, 15.5 x 11.5 cm, Galerie Berinson, Berlin; Man Ray, *Glass tears*, 1932, gelatin silver print, 9 x 11 3/4 in., J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Sally Smart, *Delicate cutting (with paper bladder)*, 1993-4, oil, acrylic, paper and pins on canvas, 214 x 214 cm.
73 Sally Smart, *Stuttering*, 1993, oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 214 x 275 cm, Ian Potter Museum of Art, Univ. of Melbourne, Melbourne.
conveys her predilection for engendering repetition and ambiguity. Behind Smart’s purposeful repetitiveness lies theories concerning compulsions to repeat being uncanny ‘both for its association with the death drive and by virtue of the “doubling” inherent in the incessant movement without movement’.74

The (primordial) human tendency to innately search for patterns informs Smart’s work, which incorporates repetitive layers, patterned embellishments, recurrent elements and motifs, and appropriations of predecessors such as Sidney Nolan, whose fascination with stripes (as seen in *Full back, St Kilda, 1946*)75 is recapitulated in Smart’s *Fox sisters* as an uncanny revival. Sensed by the onlooker as familiar-yet-unfamiliar, it is a repetition of Nolan’s pattern which is itself repetitious. Art history’s long-abiding affair with appropriation has seen figures repeatedly borrowed from antiquity, famously including Édouard Manet’s *Olympia*, inspired by Titian’s *Venus of Urbino*, itself modelled on Praziteles’s *Aphrodite of Knidos*, as was Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus*.76 Often a conscious act of thoughtful selection, although it may encompass unconscious behaviour, appropriation is a form of re-adaptation where previously created elements are re-contextualised and re-conceptualised, resulting in repetition — a process of interminable relativism ultimately dating back to the primitive.77 To varying degrees, preceding content, style, technique and so forth, are appropriated, whilst revealing ritualistic acts of repetition, persistent desires to look backwards and repeat things which came before, acts which, according to some,

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74 Villet, *The architectural uncanny*, op. cit., p.38, discusses theories concerning repetition, as in Freud, Nietzsche and Derrida. Jan Niklas Howe, "Familiarity and no pleasure: The uncanny as an aesthetic emotion", *Image & Narrative*, vol.l, no.3 (Hauntings I: Narrating the uncanny, 2010), pp.42-63, considers whether feelings of uncanniness can be regarded as pleasurable by aesthetic means of repetition or repetitive motifs. Initially Howe decides Freud defines the uncanny as producing negative feelings and therefore feels he ‘must inquire into the negative effects of repetition’ (p.50), but observing the change of mode in the last section of Freud’s essay where he modifies its ‘normative vocabulary’ from words like ‘mastery’ and artfulness’ to ‘treason, betrayal, and deceitfulness’ (p.56), Howe sees a way to differentiate pleasant and unpleasant uncanny feelings, saying, ‘The return of the same has to be intentional and recognisable as intentional in order to create pleasure, otherwise it creates discomfort’ (p.57).

75 Sidney Nolan, *Full back, St Kilda, 1946*, oil on board, 121.9 x 91.4 cm, Waddington Galleries, London.

76 Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 190 cm, Musée d’Orsay; Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119 x 165 cm, Uffizi; Praxiteles, *Aphrodite of Knidos*, 350-330 BC, marble, 205 cm, Vatican Museums; Alessandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, 1482, tempera on linen canvas, 172.5 x 278.5 cm, Uffizi. Cindy Sherman’s *Untitled #264*, 1992, colour photograph, 127 x 190.5 cm, Luhring Augustine Gallery, New York, are more recent examples of this progression. Appropriation is a long-established device of socio-cultural spheres generally, with artists joining a continuum of appropriators. Craig Owens, *Beyond recognition: Representation, power, and culture*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1992, p.115, contends, ‘the real agents of art-world appropriation [are] the dealer, the collector, the museum’. Owens, pp.94-6, explains how many, including art historian, Panofsky, and Heidegger, enliven old debates of what he considers is essentially proprietorial.

77 For appropriation resulting from unconsciousness, see ibid., p.94.
Australian artists embody in ways others cannot. For Heidegger, this process of revisiting ‘homely’ sources is at the heart of the journey of becoming homely from being unhomely. Freud’s hypothesis regarding the uncanniness of involuntary repetition can be realigned to Heidegger’s insofar as a repetitive step essentially moves past into present; man’s fascination with or attraction to patterns is fundamentally an acknowledgement of one’s past or origins. Smart’s collages denote the practice of repeating histories, following Ernst’s methods of uncannily reconfiguring imagery and rendering the familiar strange, acts related to notions of infinite regression, or what Hertz calls an effect of ‘mise en abyme – a casting into the abyss’, an aesthetic effect created by incorporating another’s work within your own, thus duplicating in miniature the larger structure and ‘setting up an apparently unending metonymic series’. Looking at the ways Géricaut incorporates historical references in his paintings to evoke uncanniness, Germer relates such reminiscences as impressing upon the longue durée memory of historicism. Drawing on historical memory and mythology, and often representing things lost to ‘clear’ consciousness, Smart’s collage-oriented methods of repetition are complemented by praxis of working on many different series concurrently and interchanging leitmotifs propagated in one series and dispersing those throughout, with discordant parts brought together to form new unions. Smart’s (Puppens) dolls and (Shadow farm) crows combine in various contexts and different series, including Femmage, shadows and symptoms, exemplifying her engagement in repurposing familiar motifs in new settings, with ‘remnants’ such as Rorschach inkblots reconfigured or re-contextualised in later series, providing inter-connectedness and fragmentation across her oeuvre.

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78 Discussing historical tendencies of referring back to European art, Rex Butler asserts, ‘Australia’s identity may well be unoriginal or inauthentic, but this is what is original and authentic about it. Australia might have no identity of its own or its identity might depend on that of other countries, but it embodies this condition more than any of those other countries... [in an] aboriginal, soulless, antipodal [way]; Rex Butler (ed.), What is appropriation?: An anthology of writings on Australian art in the 1980s & 1990s, 2nd ed, Brisbane: IMA Publishing, 2004, p.17. The essays in ibid. commonly speak of appropriation in relation to provincialism, as in Terry Smith’s “The provincialism problem”, pp.131-8, and Imants Tillers, “Locality fails”, pp.139-44. In summarising Australian 1980s appropriation, Butler, p.23, explains how Australian artists and art historians have taken appropriation in ‘a way of speaking of it as uniquely “Australian”’. That it is uniquely Australian is debatable, as in Smith’s essay, p.131, where he explains ‘patterns of [Australian] provincialism... [are] similar [to] patterns in American art’. Although Paul Taylor was said to be the first to ‘apply these ideas to a new generation of Australian artists’, Butler believes that Paul Foss in his “Theatrum Nondum Cognitorum” essay, ibid., pp.119-30, was the first to speak of appropriation as being an Australian condition.

79 For example, Max Ernst, Emperor Ubu, 1923, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris. QAG, Surrealism: The poetry of dreams: From the collection of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, exh. catalogue, Brisbane: QAG, 2011, p.65, describes this painting as demonstrating uncanny effects arising from chance combinations of elements.

80 Hertz, op. cit., p.112. It is like, as Hertz, pp.108-13, points out, the literary repetition within The sandman.

81 Germer, op. cit. For example, execution by guillotine and ‘revolutionary violence and its revival... reveal something familiar which has yet become alien’ as evoked in Géricaut’s work.

82 Rachel Kent, “Disturbing narratives: Sally Smart’s ‘Femmage, shadows and symptoms’”, in Sally Smart, Sally Smart: The
Smart designs work with many surfaces, building up conceptual levels of meaning, often literally layering material on material. The *Dora drawer* series addresses Freud's "Dora" case-study of the 'hysterical' girl, Ida Bauer, whilst commenting on the propaganda which resulted in women becoming a site for the signification of neurosis, thus layering reference upon reference. Whilst *Imaginary anatomy (itchy; itchy)* (1995) illustrates one print surface, the image is composed of several layers, literally and metaphorically, and although feminist themes are particularly notable throughout her work, Smart shares her interest in psychoanalytical theories with Elisabeth Grosz, whose theories are founded upon Lacan and Derrida. Moreover, Smart repeatedly references the 'uncanny monstrous woman' of successive feminist writers including nineteenth-century author, Charlotte Perkins Gilman.
(The yellow wallpaper), and contemporary commentators, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (The madwoman in the attic, 1979), and Barbara Creed (The monstrous-feminine, 1993). Smart's often sexually ambiguous feminine figures are frequently intertwined with 'monstrous-uncanny' themes. Imaginary anatomy (itchy; itchy) references Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, which shares feminist readings with uncanny interpretations among many other explications. The progeny of Shelley's creation (of her Frankenstein's), is a monstrous being, an inanimate construction which transmogrifies into real-life, a replica of Olympia, as mascot to the 'monstrous uncanny,' a clichéd sub-genre which periodically popularises the uncanny to mass-market demands. Such monsters give expression to the psychological violence of repression, plus, aligned with the Gothic, reignite popular-culture kitsch, which teeters uneasily on socio-political margins as antipathetic kitsch comparable to the clichéd 'return of the repressed', which, when represented, 'becomes kitsch, perhaps nowhere more than in the infinitely repeated persona of Frankenstein as monster.'

Smart's very deliberate, performative act of pinning down fabric segments into collages such as Anatomy lesson (1995) signifies the predicament of trying to pin-down reality and ineffable concepts like the uncanny. Whilst drawing on Höch and Dadaists, Smart's wry adaptation of Surrealism contributes to commonly-held views that her imagery is unsettling yet often funny - 'funny-spooky', as she describes them. Sculpting human forms into twisted, elongated furniture, she restores unhomely objects, clothing them with parody and the absurd of Camus. Her work is compelling, deliberately weird whilst humorous, often employing pleasantly entertaining antics as foils for sinister manifestations embodied in

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86 Gilbert and Gubar, op. cit., p.16, asserts women must 'transcend the extreme images of "angel" and "monster"'.

87 Creed, The monstrous-feminine..., op. cit.

88 Shelley's Frankenstein (1818) is discussed in Gilbert and Gubar, op. cit; Shelley's mother was an early feminist writer. Interestingly, Shelley's subtitle for Frankenstein was 'The modern Prometheus', reflecting Greek myth and Prometheus fire, notions which will be developed in association with alchemy, transmutation, and the uncanny, anon.


90 Sally Smart, Anatomy lesson, 1995, cotton, polymer paint, watercolour, gouache, ink, charcoal, wooden dowel on paper and linen. 244 x 335 cm, Ian Potter Museum of Art, Univ. of Melbourne, Melbourne.

much of her work. Significantly, the comical is a shared characteristic of Hoffmann's, as Hewett-Thayer's ideas support:

At times Hoffmann contrives a startling union of the comic with the fearful; he manipulates the material so that the humorous itself is changed into the fearful... *Der Sandmann* affords an example: the automaton Olimpia with her mechanical appearance and monosyllabic utterance is a droll conception... [yet this] comedy becomes tinged with horror.92

Likewise, the playfulness of Smart's work is an important aspect borrowed from Surrealist engagement with game-play as means of unlocking doors and crossing thresholds into the unconscious.93 Often engaging a child's perspective and beguiling her audience with humour, she attempts to tap into childhood remembrance. For example, *A Ms. by nine representations to be changed* (1992)94 evokes childhood memories of paper cut-out dolls, and by association, Barbie dolls. Additionally, the Surrealists' aleatoric, free-association strategies of collage and *bricollage* (improvised assemblage using materials at hand), *frottage* (rubbing pigments on mediums over textured surfaces like timber-grain), and *grattage* (scraping pigments from canvases/fabrics draped over a textured surface), are methods of automatism she employs, allowing for slippage or surfacing-up the sub/unconscious.

Inspired to dig below the surface, to evoke the ineffable and unapparent, Smart describes her endeavour as 'an attempt to look deeper, not to be seduced by surface appearances all the time'.95 It is unsurprising, therefore, to read that her formative schooling was conducted via School of the Air, formatively honing acuities of sense and 'seeing with the mind's-eye'.96 Made more literal with building structures, skeletal figures, x-rayed innards and other assorted see-through frameworks, Smart conceptualises the interior, unseen worlds of not only the biological but the metaphysical. In work such as *Pink medium (perfume)* (1993),97 she cross-references the sense of smell as producing memories of oblique and eidetic accuracy,98 representing the idea that strange and eerie experiences eventuate

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92 Hewett-Thayer, op. cit., p.158.
94 The full title of this work is *A Ms. by nine representations to be changed* (Ms. fit, Ms. stress, Ms. place, Ms. lay, Ms. match, Ms. inform, Ms. join, Ms. colour, and Ms. print), 1992. acrylic, pastel, charcoal and tape on paper.
97 Sally Smart, *Pink medium (perfume)*, 1993, oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 214 x 275 cm. Deakin Univ. Art Collection, Geelong; also, Smart's *Red medium (scent)*, 1993, oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 214 x 275 cm.
from all types of sensory perception. Similarly, the textual use of felt brings associations including it being skin-like, akin to craftwork, warm and sensual. Freud’s notion of symbols replacing the signified (pre-empting Baudrillardian *simulacra*) points to active substances transmuting to become inert (as in pelt to felt) or materials transforming into something else – the familiar sequentially turning unfamiliar turning familiar. Consequently, Smart’s animated-unanimated objects, of domestic furniture and agrarian machinery, become laden with unapparent meaning. By dying, staining and painting over the felt in sombre, muted blacks, greys and dark blues, Smart confuses and disrupts the intrinsic warmth of felt with dark, cold night-time colours, engendering foreboding atmospherics of wild animals and necromancy, and by deliberately juxtaposing warmth with coldness, she interweaves homely with unhomely. Her methods of overpainting and overprinting provide uncanny juxtapositions, reflecting Foster’s theory:

> With images in superimposition that lay over and seep through one another, the medium of overpainting... suggests a visual correlative of the “scenography” of the psyche – its juxtaposition of dream images, its vision of the uncanny (or the return of the repressed), its structuring of trauma out of two events distant in time suddenly connected in space, and so on.¹⁰⁰

Much of her art contains a physical, material resonance and is deliberately disturbed or contaminated so as to embody split, damaged or infected subject matter, a metaphorical representation of the antinomical nature of man as the uncanniest of all.

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100 Hal Foster, "Blinded insights: On the modernist reception of the art of the mentally ill", *October*, no.97 (Summer 2001), pp.3-30.
Backlit to throw elongated shadows across the gallery floor and walls, Smart’s *Die Dada puppens* dangle sinisterly, conveying ideas about otherworldly, spirit-beings, manifestations imbuing an eerie presence for which dolls are prone.\textsuperscript{101} ‘*Puppens*’ (German, meaning dolls) evoke uncanniness harking back to child-play where practising one’s place in the world is tested upon unresponsive inanimates, objects embodying and doubling infantile desire. Smart’s puppets are thus redolent of thoughts and feelings surmounted and re/suppressed in childhood, and associated with denial of parental intercommunication, recalling Nathanael and his response to Olympia as intensified by vague remembrances of childhood uncannily awakening.\textsuperscript{102} *Puppens* symbolise the possibility of dolls spontaneously coming to life, a prospect which delights children but petrifies adults.\textsuperscript{103} The ego, considered as lacking the ‘essential being,’ is figured as doll or mannequin, is therefore denoted as a partial, incomplete object – a fetish of the Freudian castrated self. Anything part-man or anthropomorphistic is never essentially or completely human, thus reflects the ego and represents a lacking. As such, dolls hold a mirror up, reflecting man and reminding him of his inherent lack and hidden, alternate, unhomely self. As Freud suggests, it is not so much a fear of the inanimate becoming animate, the uncanny aligns with another, secondary fear – that one’s homely-self reflects our inherent *unheimlichkeit*. In analysing D.H. Lawrence’s *St. Mawr*, Margot Norris contends,

> By making the mannikin or automaton synonymous with the eunuch in the figure of Rico, Lawrence suggests the psychological equivalence of supplements (representations, mimetic figures, effigies) and partial objects (fetishes, metonymies). Both are founded on lack and therefore constitute a mediation between presence and absence, part and whole.\textsuperscript{104}

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\textsuperscript{101} Sally Smart, *Die Dada puppens*, 1999, synthetic polymer paint on felt, cardboard and wood with collage elements.

\textsuperscript{102} Eva-Maria Simms, "Uncanny dolls: Images of death in Rilke and Freud", *New Literary History*, vol.27, no.4 (Literature, Media & the Law, Autumn 1996), pp.663-77, p.671. Simms, p.673, argues, ‘the doll has become a harbinger of a universe unresponsive and indifferent to the human cry for meaning. In her the absurdity of life finds its first dark abode. The “hollowness in our feeling” and the breathless “pause of the heart” bespeak an instant of utter terror’ – somewhat aligning with Existentialist uncanny. She says, pp.676-7, dolls act as reminders ‘that primary masochism is still familiar and present, albeit repressed and forgotten… [they] show us the vicissitudes of an instinct other than Eros. Its uncanniness reveals and conceals the dynamics of the death instinct’.

\textsuperscript{103} According to Roos, op. cit., p.291.

\textsuperscript{104} Norris, op. cit., p.179.
Figure 20: Sally Smart's *BedBugs (femmage)*, 2001 (left), and *In bed with H. H. (femmage)*, 2001 (right)

Smart has developed a visual language of uncanny double-talk, where, for example, androgynous figures form hybrid male-female human-animals. Albeit not as literal as Piccinini’s hybrids, Smart’s references to morphology align with Kafkaesque metamorphosis, where, for example, the sexual ambiguity of the presumably female figure of *Cross cutting* (1993-4)\(^\text{105}\) is obscured by a wild dog-like animalism. Smart’s double-speak strategies introduce ambiguity and antinomy, qualities aligned with uncanniness, including *The unhomely body* series, where psychological allusions are conveyed in images like *Bedbugs (femmage)*, portraying ‘home,’ ‘body’ and the architectural uncanny.\(^\text{106}\) Shod in school lace-ups, the bed-legs are transposed as women’s legs, thus animating static forms into, as Deborah Hart observes, ‘arenas in which dreams appear literally to take flight’,\(^\text{107}\) and are reminiscent of Surrealist tactics of animating architectural and domestic objects.\(^\text{108}\)

Representing the psychotherapists lounge, Smart’s bed underscores psychic divisions, with elements floating above ‘underworlds’ as represented as blankets or coverlets, a metaphorical unconscious covering-uncovering, with white and black rectangular ‘disruptions’ as representing voids or memory ‘blanks.’ With appendages transformed as furniture, Smart’s hybridised forms and ‘changelings’ thus animate the inanimate and suggesting the uncanny Olympia complex.

\(^{105}\) Sally Smart, *Cross cutting*, 1993-4, oil and acrylic on canvas, 214 x 214 cm.
\(^{107}\) Han, *Tales of the unexpected*, op. cit., p. 36.
\(^{108}\) Images by Max Ernst, Victor Brauner and Salvador Dali come to mind.
Playing on ‘mythology’ and ‘metamorphosis,’ *Morphology (Daphne)* (2004) provides another illustration supporting the importance of the theme of transformation in Smart’s work. Evoking Bernini’s sculpture, *Apollo and Daphne* (1622-25), and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Smart pictures a modern figure emerging from darkness, thus melding ancient history and the contemporaneous as ambiguous, poetic form whilst opening up ‘time-space within which a belonging to the hearth and a being homely is possible’, as Heidegger puts it. Olympia, Antigone, the Danaïdes – and now, Daphne – are uncanny, foreign, female representations of the first, *ab origine* home. Smart relinquishes history not exclusively as a feminist strategy of renouncing inequitable female histories, but to move her viewer into oblique homely-unhomely worlds. Here, as in much of her work, including the ghostly *Dora drawer* series, her use of white symbolises, she says, the ‘relationship between drawing and the unconscious’, which is noteworthy of aleatoric acts of the creative process as crucial in calling forth personal uncanniness for the artist. Across her oeuvre, trees metamorphose into human figures, recalling Ezra Pound’s poem, *The tree*:

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
Knowing the truth of things unseen before;
Of Daphne and the laurel bough...

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109 Sally Smart, *Morphology (Daphne)*, 2004, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage elements, 213.5 x 183 cm.

110 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, 1622-25, Carrara marble, 243 cm, Galleria Borghese.

111 Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s hymn...*, op. cit., p.147.

112 Smart as quoted in Wild, op. cit., p.88.
Pound’s poem restates ideas concerning psychical experiences bearing fruit of Greek mythology, and that the myth of Daphne’s metamorphosis was originally someone’s reality. Pound believed that, ‘Greek myth arose when someone having passed through delightful psychic experience tried to communicate it to others and found it necessary to screen himself from persecution.’ Thus, inversely, by imagining oneself as a tree, one moves closer to understanding the origin of the myth. Pound develops this idea, saying, ‘aesthetically, the myths are explications of mood’. Whilst not dwelling upon specific moods or phenomena such as melancholia or uncanniness, the concept of myths as driven by and originating from mood gives further purpose to the mythology of the uncanny, where, for Smart, the myth of Daphne and Kafka’s stories symbolise a myth-making compulsion, echoing Heidegger’s portrayal of Antigone in Hölderlin’s work.

Smart constructs images which show a compulsion to return to earlier, childlike states in order to coax out or uncover hidden-self. By engaging in revisionary tactics, she promotes a progressive turning-back as a means of better understanding oneself, an outlook Barbara Blackman also promotes in citing T.S. Eliot’s warning, ‘lest we have the experience but miss the meaning’ as being ‘his clue that the way forward is the way back’. Blackman favours gleaning sense from life by retracing one’s footsteps, writing, ‘Our lives proceed by experience indirectly, by event and consequence, dates and detail; but the return journey can only be mythic, direct to meaning. The way forward is the way back. We turn what has happened into stories, mythologise them as memory’ — notions reminiscent of Freud and Heidegger, and the perpetual re-surfacing of Greek mythology, the returning to the

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113 An excerpt reads, 'I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,/ Knowing the truth of things unseen before/ Of Daphne and the laurel bough/ And that god-feasting couple old/ That grew elm-oak amid the wold./ 'Twas not until the gods had been/ Kindly entreated, and been brought within/ Unto the hearth of their heart’s home/ That they might do this wonder thing;/ Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood/ And many a new thing understood/ That was rank folly to my head before.'

114 Ezra Pound, The spirit of romance, New York: New Directions, 2005, p.92. He believed myths were real for those who have experienced them, and creative minds are ones who are naturally more attuned to the spirituality of the cosmos.

115 Ibid.


117 Ibid.
homely 'home' of which we never forget.\textsuperscript{118} Just as one's origins serve to remind Heidegger of one's uncanniness, Smart's origins, the foothills of the Flinders Ranges, function as profound mementos of her beginnings.\textsuperscript{119} They are part dreamlike, part mythological, as Smart reflects: 'The Flinders Ranges are part of me. That landscape maintains a strong psychological presence and has definitely influenced my art making'.\textsuperscript{120} Whilst inspirational, the landscape is not merely nostalgic, it transpires as profoundly personal, inducing an uncanny inner-return journeying and triggering slippages back into the homely. The artwork which emerges from this personal, inner compulsion of Smart's is likewise felt as uncanny, as her motifs denote the practice of profound remembrance and delving into the unconscious.

Figure 22: Sally Smart, Stick figure (little one), 2008, installation view, Decoy nest, Postmasters Gallery, New York

\textsuperscript{118} Resembling ideas associated with Freudian thought, Blackman, ibid., pp.15-16, pens: 'What appears at the time to be a series of events in our control is seen on the return as the action of symbols of the universe moving through us making up the story. It reads back like a dream. Those two dream children carried in the half-awake... Our life patterns are imprinted on our palms because when, in the womb, the embryo first divides, it is the hands that lift away from the foetus whole carrying the map upon them, the unique divine marking'. Whilst dreams are significant in Freudian/Jungian thought, this also reveals phenomenological and spiritual nuances and connects with Heidegger's ideas about the 'literary' markings of mankind's true home, where the Ister and Antigone are inscriptions of Greco-German originary existence.

\textsuperscript{119} Smart grew up on a sheep station located in the foothills of the Flinders Ranges, South Australia.

\textsuperscript{120} Georgina Safe, 'A passion to represent', Weekend Australian, 7-8 February 2004.
As if growing strange fruit, an assortment of domestic artefacts dangle from the boughs of Smart’s towering (over ten metres high) *Family tree house (shadows and symptoms)* (1999-2003), imaging homely objects in a foreign environ which is nonetheless oddly familiar. Human innards take symbolic forms of twigs and roots for the circulatory system, whilst trunks and branches, supporting dangling body parts, resemble human skeletal structures. Similarly conceptualising nature as being intimately familiar to man, the ‘knotted’ knees and framework of *Stick figure (little one)* (2008) envelop primitive-uncanny notions, conjoining man and tree as one. Described as haunting and disturbing the viewer’s psychical equilibrium, Smart’s hybrid forms evoke primal, unconscious realms and *Alice in wonderland* dreamlike imaginings.

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121 Sally Smart, *Family tree house (shadows and symptoms)*, 1999–2003, synthetic polymer paint on felt and canvas with collage elements, approx. 1000 x 1200 cm, NGA.
122 Sally Smart, *Stick figure (little one)*, 2008, synthetic polymer paint and ink on linen and fabric with collage, 59 x 21 in, Postmasters Gallery, New York.
123 Hart, *Tales of the unexpected*, op. cit., p. 34.
124 Recalling Lewis Carroll’s depictions of a marvellous realm inhabited by strange, anthropomorphic creatures in *Alice’s adventures in wonderland* (1865), Peter Timms, “Don’t be a smart art: Parameters head: Design therapy”, *The Age*, 14 March 2001, describes ‘the grid, the silhouettes and the fact that everything is pasted directly on to the walls [as giving] the whole installation a curious flatness, like Alice in Wonderland after an hour in a centrifuge’. 
Installations like *Family tree house* are populated with autobiographical references and silhouetted self-portraits. Indeed, self-portraiture, a tactic employed throughout her work, requires a process whereby the artist flashes their own gaze back and forth between images of mirrored-self and 'canvas,' a performance Patrick White, in *The vivisector*, treats as an experience with one's *doppelgänger*, where the protagonist, an artist, relives the experience of meeting his doubly-reflected self:

This skeleton *Doppelgänger*, with his armature in greys and blacks, would no doubt have survived outside pressure if it hadn't been for a conspiracy taking place between the necessary and the unknown...125

![Figure 24: Sally Smart, *Painting in the dark (interiority)*, 2005](image)

Smart doubles herself repeatedly, repurposing self-portraits in *Painting in the dark (interiority)* (2005),126 where the same silhouetted figure stands aloof in the midst of a hauntingly misty, smoke-enveloped scene, taking the viewer outside into the small hours of night where dense atmospherics are so close as to be claustrophobic. The silhouette, a form of faceless Olympian mannequin, is a device rendering the body void yet simultaneously of substance; lacking physicality (thus metaphysical/unconsciousness) yet of physical form. Full of form yet formless, as existential outlines, Smart's silhouettes are ghostly traces of people roaming the land like ghostly apparitions inciting vague dread. Alluding to inner-worlds, silhouetted plants graphically reflect human innards, conceptualising the exposure

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126 Sally Smart, *Painting in the dark (interiority)*, 2005, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage, 66 x 72 in.
or externalisation of the inner. With such suggestive, nocturnal imagery, Smart probes into the uncanny of night, confounding her audience with possible clues and probable answers concerning her mysterious narrative whilst transporting onlookers back into themselves, to childhood remembrance of scary, night-time noises, to echoes of primitive past and lost memory, and ultimately towards unleashing unconsciousness. Smart's persistent cross-reference to childhood reflects Melanie Klein's hypothesis that the adult and child psyches are equally 'unstable, dynamic, shifting and fluid - constantly resisting psychotic anxieties' and man's internal struggles concern "deep terrors of annihilation" (paranoid anxiety) and "utter abandonment" (depressive anxiety) - an uncanniness which is not only a 'returning' but acknowledges relentless internal struggling.127

![Figure 25: Sally Smart, House (warp) silhouette, 2000-1, from Parameters head: design therapy](image)

Whilst engendering the gothic, the drama of Smart's nocturnes continues in her images of the haunted house, as a pervasive leitmotif in aesthetics generally, and Smart's specifically, is, as Vidler claims,

> an especially favored locus for uncanny disturbances: its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by contrast the terror of invasion by alien spirits... [or not] merely haunted, but rather revisited by a power that was thought long dead.128

127 Damousi, op. cit., pp.320-1.
128 Vidler, "The architecture of the uncanny...", op. cit., p.7 and p.12.
Aligning such themes with inner-haunting, Vidler describes fabricated representations of house interiors as containing notions of ‘inner self, whole and untroubled within’ – the _heimlich_ with its corresponding _unheimlich_ exterior. Noting the recurrent chimney motif (something Smart uses to symbolise passageways between psychic realms) in Herman Melville’s uncanny short story, “I and my chimney”, Vidler says, ‘Melville’s narrator had a sense of helplessness before the uncanny might of his chimney; and he seemed as unwilling as Freud to track down the causes of his involuntary acts’. Furnished with uncanny motifs, the ghostly haunted house functions as metaphor for the forgotten/lost chamber of the womb, engendering the originary uncanny and woman as primal creator who uncannily evokes life and death, nature as embodying death. Upon ‘giving life,’ this new life immediately denotes ‘parting of life,’ presence as absence, nature as evoking the otherworldliness of Dickinson’s ethereal poetry which inspires Smart’s ‘haunting’ imagery:

But nature is a stranger yet;  
The ones that cite her most  
Have never passed her haunted house,  
Nor simplified her ghost.  
To pity those that know her not  
Is helped by the regret  
That those who know her, know her less  
The nearer her they get.  

Although Freud postulates that psychoanalysts are rarely compelled to investigate subjects of aesthetics, he nevertheless examines this ‘remote’, ‘neglected’ subject as if it were a metaphorical haunted house, digging up dictionary references and conducting an etymological survey of _unheimlich_, whereas Maria Tatar finds, ‘the German word for secret (Geheimnis) derives from the word (Heim) and originally designated that which belongs to the house’. In her attempt to define the uncanny, Tatar turns to fiction including Charles Dickens’s _Oliver Twist_ and _Bleak House_, noting,

The finest writers and critics of supernatural fiction have consistently favored the chilling uncertainty of terror over the grisly reality of horror... Whether we are dealing with the marvellous legend, the fantastic romance, or the strange novel, it is knowledge [thereby remedying uncertainty] that transforms the sinister habitation of supernatural powers into the secure haven of a home.
Freud's pointed words, 'remote' and 'neglected', when applied to the *heimlich*, thus portray lonely, isolated, deserted homes, ghost haunts, which represent the metaphysical besides the outmoded and backward, as past memories extant yet repressed and damaged. The haunted house as antique exudes Benjaminian *auratic* qualities, as those Foster discusses in *Compulsive beauty*.

Notwithstanding the intrigue of 'spooky' house edifices, Smart also retreats inside, portraying the interior as equally uncanny. As conveyed in Smart's *Unique interior (wallpaper)* (1997) of *The unhomely body* series, haunted houses haunt from within, analogous with the unconscious haunting consciousness. Embellished with Rorschach inkblots, thus punctuating the psychological with monotony and foreboding, *Unique interior* references the eeriness of Gilman's menacing short story, *The yellow wallpaper* of 1890, which compares in uncanniness with *The sandman*. Although Crouch proposes,

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134 Insofar as the public/exterior space is said to relate to man, as the private/interior relates to woman, the notion of the haunted interior also reinforces Smart's feminist concerns. Likewise, the liminal void or transitive space of the veranda might be seen as androgynous. The haunted house is a subject Vidler, *The architectural uncanny*, op. cit., pp. 17-44, and Wigley, op. cit., pp. 162-74, take up. Wigley, ibid., p.163, offers, 'By definition, only space can be haunted, and space is understood as that which houses... Haunting is always the haunting of a house. And it is not just that some houses are haunted. A house is only a house inasmuch as it is haunted'. By inference, the haunted house motif is doubly haunting, and hauntingly uncanny.

135 Tatar, "The houses of fiction ...", op. cit., p.175, contends Romanticists are largely attracted to the 'auras of mystery attached to the edifice' of houses.

136 Sally Smart, *Unique interior (wallpaper)*, 1997, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage, 274 x 214 cm.

137 Helen McDonald, *Sally Smart: The unhomely body*, exhib. catalogue, Adelaide: Contemporary Art Centre of South...
'haunted houses provide a precise figure for an unsettled country' like Australia,"\(^{138}\) Smart shows, in work like this and *House (warp) silhouette* (2000-1),\(^{139}\) the 'haunted' is universally embodied within, signifying man's unhomely-self.\(^{140}\) Likewise, a house-plan transposed as a large cranium in *Daughter architect (round)* (2002)\(^{141}\) recalls Dickinson's pen:

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One need not be a Chamber – to be
Haunted –
One need not be a House –
The Brain has Corridors – surpassing
Material Place –
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Simultaneously evoking a face and cranium, a black silhouetted cross-section cut-out overlays a Vitruvian-like figure in *Daughter architect (round)*, referencing the homely-unhomely 'body' of architectural forms and the treatment of such concepts throughout history, particularly Leonardo da Vinci's theories. Eliciting the womb, the round, red disk is made perceptively three-dimensional by its black core and evokes the cortex and intra-uterine sac, as if representing MRI or ultrasound scans. Such semi-architectural, semi-anatomical connections are found throughout Smart's oeuvre, illustrating Vidler's theories.

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\(^{138}\) Crouch, op. cit., p.94.

\(^{139}\) Sally Smart, *House (warp) silhouette*, 2000-1, synthetic polymer paint on felt and fabric with collage.

\(^{140}\) Ideas concerning the haunted house topos, and inside-outside demarcations, are discussed in Wigley, op. cit., passim.

\(^{141}\) Sally Smart, *Daughter architect (round)*, 2002, synthetic polymer paint on felt, 178 x 178 cm.

\(^{142}\) Emily Dickinson, poem no. 670. The poem is also cited in Gilbert, op. cit., p.399.

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concerning architectural forms operating 'as a machine for defining boundaries' that ultimately need to be overcome.\textsuperscript{143} Similarly, conveying Georges Bataille's ideas that in tracing the repeated circuits of words in language, one discovers 'in a disconcerting vision, the labyrinthine structure of the human being',\textsuperscript{144} Smart references labyrinths as symbolic mazes of unconscious underworlds, as repeated in Surrealist works referencing the ancient Greek myth of the Minotaur imprisoned in a labyrinth along with its creator Daedalus and his son, Icarus; an important metaphor for the dark interiors of the unconscious which essentially imprisons, restricts and controls the psyche.\textsuperscript{145} According to Jung, 'The maze... shows how one is "open" to other influences in one's unconscious shadow side, and how uncanny and alien elements can break in'.\textsuperscript{146} Correspondingly, of Smart's \textit{Parameters head} series, Stephanie Radok solicits the words of Le Corbusier, champion of modern architecture:

A wall is beautiful, not only because of its plastic form, but because of the impression it may evoke. It speaks of comfort... [yet] of brutality; it is forbidding or it is hospitable;--it is mysterious. A wall calls forth emotions.\textsuperscript{147}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure28.png}
\caption{Sally Smart, \textit{Parameters head}, 2001, installation view, \textit{Figure-it}, Plimsoll Gallery, Hobart}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{143} Vidler, "The architecture of the uncanny...", op. cit., p.23.
\textsuperscript{145} The myth concerns a labyrinth as representing self-created imprisonment. As an important Surrealist motif, see, for example, André Masson's \textit{Le labyrinthe}, 1938, oil on canvas, 120 x 61 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris.
\textsuperscript{146} Carl Gustav Jung et al., \textit{Man and his symbols}, New York: Doubleday, 1976, p.170.

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The chambered nautiluses of *Parameters head* recall the shell-lined room of the curious eighteenth-century folly house, A La Ronde in Exmouth,\(^{148}\) whilst denoting chambers of the brain as the curious, mysterious place Dickerson imagines:

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Remembrance has a rear and front, –
    'Tis something like a house;
... Besides, the deepest cellar
That ever mason hewed;
Look to it, by its fathoms
Ourselves be not pursued.\(^{149}\)
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Affiliations wrought between body, brain and psychical processes with the house render the architectural as uncannily humanlike, recalling Vidler’s examination into ways man negotiates external and internal spaces and notions of house, stomach and cave as metaphors for substitute mother-womb.\(^{150}\) In *The poetics of space* (1958), Gaston Bachelard speaks of there being grounds for seeing the house as

> a *tool for analysis* of the human soul... Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are “housed”... [and that] by remembering “houses” and “rooms,” we learn to “abide” within ourselves... the house images move in both directions: they are in us as much as we are in them.\(^{151}\)

Throughout Smart’s oeuvre, motifs of house-plans and chambers align with brain lobes, cortex and womb-like formations as familiar-unhomely allusions which assimilate metamorphosis with domestic, homely paraphernalia. In the *Shadow farm* series, imaging farm objects and machinery, Smart conceptualises what Vidler describes as a propensity for an unhomeliness which is ‘more than a simple sense of not belonging; it [is] the fundamental propensity of the familiar to turn on its owners, suddenly to become defamiliarized, derealized, as if in a dream’.\(^{152}\) Vidler contemplates architecture as idiomatic of ‘the glass house of the body’:\(^{153}\) metaphorically, our homes become the scaffolding of our psyche. Houses and buildings engender human experiences; they play supportive roles yet can invalidate what we hold true about ourselves. Similarly, Creed sees ghostly hauntings as reminding ‘us of our troubled relation to the maternal body’, with the uncanny house as ‘haunted by the ghost or trace of a memory of women’.\(^{154}\) Smart’s *Head space a schema*...
imagines different personalities or psyches in the chambers or corridors of the brain, inviting comparison with an important influence of Smart’s, Louise Bourgeois’ *Articulated lair* (1986), an installation which employs ‘architecture as a metaphor for psychological, physical and sexual relationships’. Recalling Zamyatin’s words, ‘Walls are the basis of everything that’s human’, notions of uncanny psychological spaces or ‘sectors’ are heightened in Smart’s *Daughter architect* series, which elicits Sartrean ideas:

My body is everywhere: the bomb which destroys my house also damages my body in so far as the house was already an indication of my body. This is why my body extends across the tool which it utilizes... it is at the end of a telescope which shows me the stars; it is on the chair, in the whole house... 

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**Figure 29: Sally Smart, *Ghost gum*, 2004**

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155 Sally Smart, *Head space a schema*, 2001-2, synthetic polymer on felt with collage elements.

156 Louise Bourgeois, *Articulated lair*, 1986. painted steel, rubber and metal, 281.7 x 655.7 x 555.6 cm, MoMA.

157 Frances Morris, "Family affair", in Tate Modern (gallery), *Louise Bourgeois*. London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2000, p.13. Further comparisons can be made with de Chirico’s *The anxious journey*, 1913, oil on canvas, 74.3 x 106.7 cm, MoMA; and Dorothea Tanning’s *Birthday*, 1942, oil on canvas, 102.2 x 64.8 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

158 Zamyatin, op. cit., p.69. He also writes, p.54 and p.57, ‘man is constructed just as primitively as these preposterous apartments: human heads are opaque, and the only windows into the interior — the eyes — are tiny... [but] through the dark windows I saw the fireplace blazing’.

159 Sartre, *Being and nothingness*, op. cit., p.325.
The inherent privacy provided by the home, one’s domicile as a physical site of private isolation and secrecy, perversely exposes acts of self-concealment and one’s profound unhomeliness, the inner, non-physical place where the heimlich-unheimlich symbiotically intermingles with uncanny mysteriousness. Heidegger elaborates, the ‘hearth is the site of being-homely’, ‘a hearth from which the most uncanny being is to remain expelled’. As with her Family tree house series, Smart’s Ghost gum (2004) acts as a symbolic family home alluding to ancestral lines and family intimacies which bind oneself to mother-womb and uncanny existence whilst representing notions about pining for absent others as exuding an uncanny ‘supernatural aura’ as a presence in absentia. Noting the Scottish ‘canny moment’ as signifying the climax of childbirth, Tatar discusses Dickens’s Oliver Twist’s yearning for his mother who died giving birth, substituting her absence with presence of her portrait, subsequently endowing it with mystical qualities, thus advancing ideas about portraits drawing dead ancestors from graves and haunting ‘their living progeny’. Likewise, Smart’s serial portraits denote uncanny presences within absences.

Figure 30: Sally Smart’s The exquisite pirate (Oceania/navigator/Coral Sea), 2008 (left); and A W of K (Yurei), 2004

160 Tatar, “The houses of fiction...”, op. cit., p 170, says, ‘few languages other than German associate the idea of a home with secret knowledge and with mysteries’, but it is a statement which fails to recognise the implicit privacy of a home as private realm, that is, the physical security and privacy provided.
161 Heidegger, Hölderlin’s hymn..., op. cit., pp.104-5.
162 Sally Smart, Ghost gum, 2004, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage, 313 x 233 cm.
Conjoining the Surrealist ‘exquisite corpse’ (game) with ‘pirates,’ Smart’s *The exquisite pirate* series re-establishes and marries old themes within contemporaneous ones, reflecting past and present *zeitgeist* – as the ‘spirit of the time’ as represented in forms of game-play and resurgent interests in piracy – including Kathy Acker’s postmodernist fiction, *Pussy, king of the pirates* (1996), which throws up and splinters ‘reality’ into a myriad of recontextualised connotation, severing and confusing polarity-based meaning. Smart creates associations between Surrealist ship-to-shore conceptualisations of life-death, conscious-unconscious as represented by the fragile shoreline zone between land and water as symbolising states of consciousness. This series also exemplifies the significance of repetitive, recurrent motifs (including grids, spider-webs and skeletons) which act as *aide-mémoire*, conceptualising uncanny repetition. Furthermore, the backgrounds of many canvases in *The exquisite pirate* are literally reflective – in them the viewer faintly perceives ghostly shadows of themselves, uncanny, unexpected glimpses, a self-doubling where one sees oneself as object and subject as the gaze suddenly turns back onto the viewer. Lacan describes this phenomenon as a collision of object and subject, a sudden blindsiding like Freud’s disorientation of himself on encountering his mirror-reflection and realising it was not a stranger but himself:

> I at once realized to my dismay that the intruder was nothing but my own reflection in the looking-glass on the open door. I can still recollect that I thoroughly disliked his appearance. Instead, therefore, of being frightened by our ‘doubles’, both [Ernst] Mach and I simply failed to recognize them as such. Is it not possible, though, that our dislike of them was a vestigial trace of the archaic reaction which feels the ‘double’ to be something uncanny?165

Relaying a similarly uncanny encounter with mirrored-self in artwork, Sheila Kunkle explains it is as though the eye is able to watch itself wink: ‘I glimpsed a peek at myself as voyeur, watching myself watching an infinite, regressive still-life reflection... I was [suddenly] presented to myself as object of the gaze’. Smart’s mirror-like burnished surfaces also allude to alchemy, thus metaphorically aligning with the ancient in accordance with Hölderlin’s *fire*. Her glistening metallics and charred, sensuous felts subtly enact

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164 In Cheney, op. cit., pp. 64-7, I argue that the pirate-mania of popular culture constituted a *zeitgeist* in the early 2000s, referencing fiction such as *Treasure Island* and *Peter Pan*. Of Smart’s work, see, for example, *The exquisite pirate* (Oceania! navigator/Coral Sea), 2008, synthetic polymer paint, ink and foil on canvas with collage elements, 188 x 134 cm.

165 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.248, relays a personal experience when a train door with an attached mirror suddenly jolts open and Freud mistakes his own reflection for a stranger.

166 Kunkle, op. cit., p. 560. In relating the uncanny with abject art and by extension, cruelty, specifically related to the art of Aimee Morgana’s, and in referencing Lacanian theory, Kunkle, p.565, says, ‘The spectacle of sadistic cruelty was conflated with the spectator (me); and as such, a sort of inner death was experienced when the object a, the lefthand unseen X, appeared and destroyed any narcissistic illusion of unity I might experience. From this I learned that the depersonalized uncanny character of Morgana’s depictions of cruelty, of intersubjectivity itself, mirrors the master/slave relation within each person...’ Regarding the topos of the mirror and its importance in evoking uncanniness, see, for example, Chalupa, op. cit., p.18.
man's instinctive attraction to yet repellence from fire. The magnetism of fire harks back to ancient times – for its warmth but also because pyrogenic environments produce fertile soils and minerals, long attracting man's settlements along fault-lines and hot-spots. Remembering Heidegger's emphasis on the homely-hearth, he observes fire as belonging to hearth and being manifestly 'illuminating, warming, nourishing, purifying...', thus related to alchemical transformation, an important motif of The sandman (including the hearth where Olympia's eyes are forged), which Freud stresses as central to the uncanny.

Themes of fire and metamorphic processes of changing from one form or state to another share common ancestry, with the Freudian and Existentialist concepts of uncanniness revolving around transitive states, particularly the dualistic states of Freudian consciousness-unconsciousness or Existentialist acts of bad/good-faith. Smart's shimmery compositions and metallic canvases are literal references to alchemy as founded upon the transformative nature of Earth's elements, geological, botanical and biological, whereas work such as Femmage (Insectology)#3 (2003) vacillate between chemical and biological transmutations, signifying metamorphic transitions which disclose man's intrinsic aptitude to change and proneness to uncontrollable self-duality.

Figure 31: Sally Smart, Femmage (Insectology) #3, 2003

167 Heidegger, Hölderlin's hymn..., op. cit., p.105.
168 See also Bachelard, The psychoanalysis of fire, op. cit., and, Brantly, op. cit.
169 Sally Smart, Femmage (Insectology)#3, 2003, synthetic polymer paint on felt and canvas with collage, 167.5 x 110 cm.
Whereas Smart’s smoky, ashen Yurei (2004)\textsuperscript{70} denotes motifs of alchemy, including fire associations and symbolising metamorphosis, the relevancy of Franz Kafka’s surreal story about a man’s transformation into cockroach, The metamorphosis, with Hoffmann at its origins, compares with (Insectology)#3.\textsuperscript{171} Perching a roach-like creature upon a personage’s back, with their shadows forming a ‘spooky’ owl, Smart’s figure references Kafka’s fiction, which George Aichele reads as emphasising the hopelessness of understanding oneself and ‘the unspeakable, Unheimlich’\textsuperscript{172}. Smart’s autobiographical owl-shaped shadow, formed of half-self, half-insect, recalls Ernst’s disguised self-portraits or alter-ego as the half-human, half-bird creature ‘Loplop’, restating the importance of metamorphosis symbolism in Surrealism. Such hybrid insect-beings enact themes reminiscent of Surrealist writer, Michel Leiris’s description of métamorphose.

To remain tranquil in one’s skin... is an attitude contrary to all passion... Only that which can put a man truly outside of himself counts, be it a material substance or anything that is, in life, in one manner or another, susceptible of creating a bursting and violent paroxysm.\textsuperscript{173}

The uncanny as a type of sudden convulsion is a metamorphic and paroxysmal encounter that comes from within yet puts man outside of himself, an out-of-body experience. Smart’s figure in (Insectology)#3 looks upon its shadow in a contemplative mood, depicting the figure as being ‘outside itself’ and ‘to the animal within.’ Considering the return to homely origins as a ‘journey into a brutal, alien wilderness’, a paradoxical passage because the untamed, alien animal is ‘the true fulfilment of the human being’,\textsuperscript{174} Margot Norris conceives man’s journey as a profoundly savage pilgrimage (heimkehr or homecoming). Smart’s imagery, however, is neither necessarily brutal nor irenical, rather, following Heidegger’s uncanny journeying, is brought about through a lacking desideratum of the human condition, a wanting which must be fulfilled.

\textsuperscript{70} Sally Smart, A. W. of K. (Yurei), 2004, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, fabric with collage elements, 167.5 x 110 cm.

\textsuperscript{171} Kafka’s fiction tells of a young salesman, Gregor Samsa, who transforms into an insect; see Franz Kafka, Stories, 1904-1924, trans. J.A. Underwood, London: Abacus, 1995. Regarding the link between The metamorphosis and Hoffmann, see Mark Spilka, "Kafka's sources for The metamorphosis", Comparative Literature, vol.11, no.4 (Autumn 1959), pp.289-307. Importantly, Kafka read Darwin and, according to Norris, op. cit., p.34, the imagery of Kafka’s ‘Gregor’ character was influenced by Darwin’s view of himself as part-insect.

\textsuperscript{172} Aichele, op. cit., p.510. Having discussed Derrida, Lacan, Todorov and Freud, Aichele concludes, ‘Kafka’s story makes explicit and places into question the oppositions that are fundamental to all narrative, and it reveals the unreality inherent in all language. That which is Heimlich is revealed to be Unheimlich’.


\textsuperscript{174} Norris, op. cit., p.171, looks at the ontology of D.H. Lawrence’s St. Maur vis-à-vis Freudian uncanny.
The fire motif is also apparent in Smart’s images of craggy, smouldering and burnt tree branches. Often forming human limbs, they emphasise personal memories of the Australian bush, reminiscent of a passage from *The vivisector*.

The bush never died, it seemed, though regular torture by fire and drought might bring it to the verge of death. Its limbs were soon putting on ghostly flesh: of hopeful green, as opposed to the ash-tones of a disillusioned maturity...175

Scorched countryside, with its constant life-death-rebirth cyclicity, is relayed in Smart’s anthropomorphic *Stick figure*, a figure visualizing ghostly flesh draped across charred skeletal, disfigured tree limbs, encouraging interpretations including human states half-dead/alive and eternal life-cycles which continue beyond the grave.

The ancient-land atmospherics depicted in David Malouf’s *Remembering Babylon* inspire and support Smart’s salient childhood recollections of the bush, with both artists adopting similar uncanny motifs.176 Malouf’s unnerving nocturnal scenes, like the strange yard transformed and ‘made unfamiliar by moonlight and the tinking of night-creatures’,177 bear parallels with Smart’s *Shadow farm* and *Painting in the dark* series, whereas notions of conscious-unconscious domains resound in *The Fox sisters* series, evoking Malouf’s ‘most devilish’ Australia, a country they similarly envisage as playful yet sinister, with

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175 White, *The vivisector*, op. cit., p.216.
metaphorical hidden doors which lead 'into some lighter world'. The tentative steps of the colonial figures in *Femmage frieze* (1999) recollect Malouf's early Australian settlers: 'Out here the very ground under their feet was strange. It had never been ploughed. You had to learn all over again how to deal with weather.' Notionally, the need to (re)learn how to live in one's surrounds, a yearning intensified in foreign and unsympathetic environments like Australia, reveals one as essentially being uncannily foreign to oneself, thus unfolding layers of subconsciousness and reawakening re/suppressed childhood and primitive memory. For Malouf's early settlers, 'Most unnerving of all was the knowledge that, just three years back, the very patch of [cleared and ploughed] earth you were standing on had itself been on the other side of things, part of the unknown, and might still, for all your coming and going over it...'. Malouf's homesick settlers tried to adapt to a land which 'never slept', where no snow fell to cover the fiery red earth, to becalm or blanket it; a land without graves ('They would be the first dead here') made for a lonelier life and death, whereby 'the way back to normality was through habit'. Reflecting Malouf's forlorn settlers and Sartre's observations of Camusian absurd, that "custom" and "diversion" conceal man's "nothingness, his forlornness... his emptiness" from himself, Smart's androgynous, colonial figures meander across gallery walls, going about daily routines, equally lost in the stupor of existence. Camus predicts that once man becomes conscious of the absurd, he is forever bound to it; also that:

> A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity.

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178 Ibid., pp.10-11.
179 Sally Smart, *Femmage frieze*, 1999, synthetic polymer paint on felt and fabric with collage, 220 x 375 cm.
180 Malouf, op. cit., p.9.
181 Ibid., pp.9-10.
182 Ibid, p.76, p.111 and p.79. Malouf shares uncanny themes with Smart, such as, pp.130-1: the settlement's minister, Frazer writes, 'Is it not strange, this history of ours, in which explorers, men on the track of the unknown, fall dry-mouthed and exhausted in country where natives' move close-by and for centuries have lived off the land; suggesting that white-man should follow Aboriginals and live 'by what the land itself produces... allowing it to feed our flesh with its minerals and underground secrets so that what spreads in us is an intimate understanding of what it truly is, with all that is unknowable in it made familiar within'. Frazer's concern that colonisers learn from the colonised could be read as an uncanny externalisation of man learning from deep within 'the inner land' of self. Conversely, p.68, 'All they [the Aboriginals] would see of Mr Frazer was... a shape, thin, featureless, that interposed itself a moment, like a mist or cloud, before the land blazed out in its full strength again and the shadow was gone...', compares with the thin, featureless forms in *Femmage frieze*, figures which, as Malouf writes, p.42, bring you slap up against a terror you thought you had learned, years back, to treat as childish: the Bogey, the Coal Man, Absolute Night... a thing beside which all you have ever known of darkness... seems but the merest shadow...'
Depicting figures in long hoop dresses so as to rekindle the Victorian era, Smart conceives travelling back through time into Australia’s history, back to European origins and beyond, to ancient ancestry, with her long frieze-like textiles evoking friezes ornamenting Greek temples and Egyptian tombs. Thus reflecting Heidegger’s notions about replaying history as symbolic of man’s inner return to their utmost uncanny core, Smart renders an unhomely Australia, a site which remains unsettled irrespective of those who ‘settle’ in it, an unhomely exile as symbolic of the persistent condition Sartre contends we flee from — a constant (suppressed) reminder of uncanniness. Conceptually, Smart’s Femmage frieze lifts the gaze above the main horizontal demarcation and into ‘consciousness,’ yet correspondingly forces the sightline down to ‘unconsciousness.’ When Gemmy Fairley, the cast-ashore, lost, teenage protagonist of Remembering Babylon eventually encounters English-speaking people after sixteen years living with Aboriginals, he senses their language is of ‘an atmosphere they moved in’185 — dense and intense — but nonetheless strangely unfamiliar-familiar to him. His own memory was kept at abeyance until that which had been hidden suddenly rebounds as Gemmy rediscovers his natural tongue,186 and uncanny topoi which restates the significance of lost and ancient languages, as paramount in Heideggerian uncanny theory. Correspondingly, Smart’s work alludes to the guttural.

186 Ibid., p.16.
resonances of language by her arbitrarily intermingling alphabetic letters in *Femmage frieze*, including a series of o’s (‘O,o,o’) and letters forming ‘ma’ sounds, thus reminiscent of youthful cries and Heideggerian and Lacanian notions of uncanniness being tied up in language, as is found when Malouf writes that Gemmy, straining to hear the settlers’ language, yearns to grasp familiar-unfamiliar words as if ‘the words that would recognise him’ as childhood flashbacks:

> when the blade flashed and jarred against wood, it struck home in [Gemmy]. Axe. The word flew into his head as fast and clear as the flash and whistle of its breath. Axe. Axe. Circles of meaning rippled away from the mark it blazed in the dark of his skull... The taste of it, the strangeness, the familiarity, dizzied him... A stranger... who had never wept, was weeping in him. 187

This lost language held the key to unravel personal and profound mysteries, a distant, lost yet oddly familiar past. Yearning to remember language drove him to skirt the settlement’s edges, a ‘strange yet familiar’ place, yet Gemmy was never able to fully realise his inner mysteries, just as, having discovered self-disquietude through Gemmy, the settler children would never comprehend their own. 188

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187 Ibid., p. 32 and pp.30-1, respectively. Other links to Heidegger’s approach to the uncanny may be argued, with Malouf, p.168, writing, ‘The archaic and the classical... exist side by side here and in the same moment’.

188 Ibid. p.29. Ultimately Gemmy returns to the ‘un-settled’ scrub, the Aboriginal land of his mother by second birth, where man’s relatedness to land is clearly defined: ‘The land up there was his mother... It belonged to him as he did to it; not by birth but by second birth, by gift... for the whole of time... he was one with it’ (p.118).
The homely-unhomely moves throughout Smart's oeuvre in scenes depicting the domestic and originary home, homesickness and transformative states where the hauntingly absent-yet-present past materialises in different guises. Her adaptations of the unheimliche are apparent in early work such as Home (1989), where a sense of disrupted belonging is depicted in dreamscape with a silhouetted figure looking towards a house through a web-like maze of tree-limbs spelling 'home.' The trees appear to block her progression towards the home, as if imprisoning or denying her passage. Her shoes are highlighted in red, reflecting the path towards the house, and her skirt inked with similar markings on nearby tree-bark, conceptualising the indelible link she has with homely origins, thereby promoting the importance of place on the psyche and our compulsion to return to 'homely' origins. Recalling Remembering Babylon, Smart addresses homesickness, 'nostalgia for the true, natal home',189 and unconscious fixations concerning return-journeys and journeying. The eerie and alien landscapes depicted by Smart elicit notions of exile and of journeying back towards homely origins, a yearning for one's familial and aboriginal home comprised of two-edged desire: the homely (erected to guard against re/suppressed content since childhood) inherently conceals and reveals the unhomely.

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189 Vidler, The architectural uncanny, op. cit., pp.7-9, explains, "Homesickness," nostalgia for the true, natal home, thus emerges in the face of the massive uprooting of war and ensuing Depression as the mental and psychological corollary to homelessness", discussing the topic in detail, pp.57-62. Interestingly, Dickinson, as Smart's heroine, suffered from homesickness and severe reclusiveness.
An otherworldly Australia: Visionary symbolism in Lawrence Daws

The art of Lawrence Daws presents the Australian landscape as menacing and otherworldly, and incorporates 'the very Australian sense of being aliens in the landscape'. His art is also richly emblematic, so much so that symbolism potentially obscures the subtleties requisite in uncanny aesthetics. Herein lays his strategy. Although his work may be read in literal terms, Daws believes that man's inherent and inherited capacity to subconsciously interpret archetypes allows profound and multilayered meanings to be attributed to his work. Archetypal symbology also acts to expose deep inner-self – symptomatic of uncanniness – whilst the overtly literal arrests conscious attention, thus facilitating the surfacing of unconscious thought.

Figure 35: Lawrence Daws, Asylum in Eden I, 1982

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190 In Murray Waldren, “The Daws of perception”, Weekend Australian Magazine, 3-4 August 1996, Daws is quoted: ‘I've carried that clipping [of the Hesse quote] around with me for more than 30 years’.
191 Among the themes upon which Daws draws, Samela Harris, “Back to the beginning”, The Advertiser (Adelaide), 9 February 2008, relays the feeling of alienation in the Australian landscape is important to Daws.
192 Daws has been criticised for containing a wealth of symbolism which can be readily decoded. Peter Ward, “A glimpse behind the Daws of doom”, Weekend Australian Magazine, 1-2 January 1983, writes ‘I think Daws’s best work occurs when he’s not trying to bludgeon the viewer with symbols and tries to avoid clattering around the Collective Unconscious’. Similarly, Sasha Grishin, “At last, a comprehensive show of Lawrence Daws”, Canberra Times, 16 December 2000, says ‘This literary heavy-handedness is also probably the main weakness of Daws’s work – and [that] a similar criticism can be applied to the work of Max Ernst and other artists who consciously set out to depict the unconscious’. John McDonald, “On a magical mystery tour”, Sydney Morning Herald, 20 February 2010, reads, ‘While many of his pictures are remarkably “straight”, others are so bizarre and cryptic that the imagery seems to have been dredged up from some dark corner of the subconscious’.
Born in 1927, Daws was among many Australians who ventured to Europe in the 1950s, but, unlike many, he yearned to return, eventually finding his 'spiritual home' in country Queensland, overlooking the Glasshouse Mountains which dominate his paintings. His farm, "Owl Creek", was the site where uncanniness in his work developed, where investigations into interior landscapes, his own psyche and the collective unconscious, manifested itself. Whereas Daws's artwork has long been occupied with Jungian concepts including uncanny synchronicity and dream-scenes, alongside Aztec imagery, Russian iconography and Tarot card symbology transmuted as hieroglyphs, notations concerning the uncanny in texts on his work evolved much later. In 2000, Candice Bruce wrote of Daws's interests surrounding 'the uncanny and the synchronistic' and the mysteries of the unconscious, accentuating unheimlichkeit as an important aspect across his oeuvre: 'this pervasive sense of enigma in Daws's work can be best summarised as containing elements of the "uncanny"'. Whilst Bruce's brief summation of the uncanny of Daws's work is underdeveloped, her observation remains defensible. His surrealistic imagery of Australian landscapes, drawing inspiration from the Glasshouse Mountains, is the scaffolding upon which he builds upon beliefs in collective unconsciousness, significantly

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193 'Spiritual' is used here as an abbreviation of Candice Bruce's description of Daws's affiliation with his farm, "Owl Creek", near Beerwah, Queensland: 'Daws had found that the climate of Queensland...suited him. The house, set on a ridge, looks out over a valley of macadamia plantations and forest towards the extraordinary geological formations of the mountains which rise up in front. It is a mystical place. With their curious formations and dramatic projections, the Glasshouse Mountains lend themselves to a romantic sensibility. Almost immediately Daws felt that he had "found his spot", a place where he felt at peace philosophically, emotionally and physically...[he] found qualities which moved him at the deepest level'; Candice Bruce, Lawrence Daws: Asylum in Eden, Brisbane: Univ. of Queensland Art Museum, 2000, p.43; also see Robert Walker, Painters in the Australian landscape, Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1988, pp.44-55; p.54: he is written to say, 'I' ve found my spot in the Castenada sense'. Much of Daws's biographical information is sourced from Lawrence Daws and Hal Missingham, Lawrence Daws interviewed by Hal Missingham in the Hazel de Berg collection [sound recording], 1 sound tape reel, ca. 30 min., 21 September 1965, Canberra: NLA, 1965; Lawrence Daws and Barbara Blackman, Interview with Lawrence Daws [sound recording], 6 cassettes, ca. 540 min., recorded at Owl Creek, Qld. between 15 November 1984 and 17 December 1984, Canberra: NLA, 1984; and my interviews with Daws on 24 June 2011(Sydney) and 17-18 September 2012 (Port Willunga).

194 The environment of Melbourne's National Gallery School probably also had an eerie impact on him as a young man, with its disconcerting jumble of amputated classical statuary fragments - a veritable wunderkammer for imaginative youths. See Lawrence Daws, The cast room (National Gallery Art School, Victoria), 1951, oil on hardboard, 30.6 x 38.2 cm.

195 Neville Weston, Lawrence Daws, French's Forest, NSW: Reed, 1982, p.68, says, 'tarot images provided Daws with a wealth of meaning...references to the archetypal collective unconscious which we all have rattling around in our heads...'

196 Bruce, op. cit., p.12 and p.84.

197 Ibid., pp.84-7, provides simplistic definitions of the Freudian uncanny, relating it to the Jungian concept of 'synchronicity' but essentially overstating that the Freudian 'uncanny' is the Jungian 'synchronicity' and thereby disregarding their many facets, similarities and departures. Bruce also errs when she describes a series of events concerning Daws's Dolley Pond series, inferring that the synchronicity of Daws feeling that the series acted as externalizing his marriage breakdown with that of people who bought the paintings and whose marriages had also dissolved was eerily related to the uncanny, when it is more suited towards notions of empathetic synchronicity. Bruce also relays another incidence: Daws' s paintings of 'mysterious burning, riveted machines...hurting across the sky' as being uncannily related to Skylab crashing nearby some years later. Rather than deem suchlike uncanny, Freud would probably classify it as mere coincidence. Without thoroughly analyzing the concept, Bruce nonetheless makes this important and salient connection between the uncanny and Daws's work.
its very uncanniness, aspects which will be analysed forthwith.

As a young man, Daws frequented Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills, where he met an important, early mentor, Hans Heysen, who encouraged him to travel to inspirational outback sites such as the Flinders Ranges and the Tanami Desert, Northern Territory, a revelatory trip Daws recalls:

I was sleeping rough on the desert floor... in the morning when the sun rose there was this weight in the sky, almost like an echo of the massive landscape beneath. It was a formidable counter-presence, so wide-ranging, colourful and ominous. It awed me, still does in fact...198

Alterning the imagery he then portrayed, this event and the desert's awe-inspiring, foreign presence had a profound and lasting impact, prompting him to 'develop a new system',199 and moving him to create paintings like Asylum in Eden I (1982),200 a reflection of lonely outspread lakes, 'spots unholy' and 'nooks most melancholy' as Poe's "Dream-land":

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT.
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule —
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE — out of TIME.201

Daws's sombre tones of an ostensibly paradisiacal asylum paint the Queensland landscape as a veil under which ancient Dreamtime and Aboriginal burial sites become oppressed, where 'native' souls pervade the landscape which 'opens onto the unknown'.202 His scenes become metonymical sites of re/sup/op-pressed memory; they represent uncanny 'haunted real estate',203 and inherit the Jungian collective unconsciousness of peoples past and present.

Jung, a primary influence for Daws,204 championed the irrational and was strongly criticised

198 Daws is quoted in Waldren, op. cit. Also see Laurie F. Thomas, The most noble art of them all: The selected writings of Laurie Thomas, Brisbane: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1976, p.273, from a record dated 5 April 1969.
199 Waldren, op. cit.
200 Lawrence Daws, Asylum in Eden I, 1982, oil on hardboard, 137 x 160cm, collection of David Plant.
202 Nancy, op. cit., p.59, writes, 'The landscape opens onto the unknown' and present 'a given absence of presence'.
203 The term 'haunted real estate' is borrowed from Gesa Mackenthun, "Haunted real estate", Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genre, vol.3, no.3-4 (Return of the uncanny, 1997), pp.438-55, in which 'the uncanny unshackling of cultural memory relating to American colonisation is discussed in reference to Freudian uncanny.
204 Others who shape Daws's thoughts include Goethe, Schopenhauer, Kant and Nietzsche. Influential contemporaries, closer to home, include Hans Heyse, and, as cited in Waldren, op. cit., 'mining engineer Bert Mason introduced me [Daws] to the outback; my father-in-law Jack Kahn gave me the sense of a Jewish family with deep roots, of primal continuity; sapphire miner Joe Shanahan instilled the sense of alchemic search in me; and [Ian] Fairweather showed me the need for simplification'.
for doing so.\textsuperscript{205} Whilst his theories make important contributions to the uncanny discourse, especially concepts Derrida progresses, his work does not appear centre-stage vis-à-vis the predominant Freudian uncanny. Jung’s theories concerning archetypal imagery is nonetheless fundamental in the context of artwork such as Daws’s \textit{The dark sea} (c.1992-3) and \textit{Night sea journey I} (c.1992-3), referencing the Jungian concept of ‘the dark night of the soul’, an age-old metaphor alluding to the unconscious.\textsuperscript{206} Daws presents ‘night sea journeying’ as conceiving self-redemption and inner-healing though delving into the unconscious so as to attain self-realisation and unify conscious with unconscious.\textsuperscript{207} Plumbing the unconscious is moreover a thoroughly uncanny act, a journeying towards utmost unhomeliness where sudden revelations produce uncanny sensations, as was Daws’s self-recognition that his images of houses burning represented the breakdown of his first marriage to a Freudian psychotherapist.\textsuperscript{208} Whereas some regard Freud as circumscribed by ‘practical dimensions of the uncanny in the clinical setting’ compared with Jungian theory which explores much broader and universal themes,\textsuperscript{209} Daws espouses the latter.

Central to Daws’s concern is Jungian concepts of the \textit{collective unconscious}, its universal group of \textit{archetypes} and \textit{synchronicity} – all of which relate to uncanniness. Jungian synchronicity occurs when two events happen simultaneously, not by chance but because there is some indefinite link between them, yet this synchronous occurrence is acausal; synchronicity is distinct from causality yet complementary to it. Agents of synchronicity are found in archetypes of the psyche, archetypes which rise up into consciousness from the unconscious, where they are ‘housed’ having evolved from primitive man, thus considered as forming part of man’s collective unconscious. Far from being atavistic leftovers, archetypes are active and meaningful archaic remnants evolving within man’s psyche in

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\textsuperscript{205} David Tacey, “The gift of the unknown: Jung(ians) and Freud(ians) at the end of modernity”, \textit{European Journal of Psychotherapy \& Counselling}, vol.9, no.4 (2007), pp.423-34, p.429, contends, ‘It is odd today that Freud is being constructed as a champion of non-rational processes, when the nonrational was something that Freud set himself against’. 

\textsuperscript{206} Used throughout the ages including a sixteenth-century poem by Spanish Catholic priest, Saint John of the Cross, the ‘dark night of the soul’ is a metaphor for many things including desolation and loneliness. Lawrence Daws, \textit{The dark sea}, c.1992-3, oil on canvas, 61 x 76 cm; Lawrence Daws, \textit{Night sea journey I}, c.1992-3, 158 x 137 cm.


\textsuperscript{208} Daws describes his first marriage as an attraction of opposites and regards the Dolley Pond snake-handler series as being about the breakdown of that marriage, in Waldren, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{209} Tacey. "The gift of the unknown...", op. cit., p.428.
concert with man's ongoing anatomical evolution. Subliminal sense perception, for example, continually attunes to and gathers everything around us, every nuance is remembered, contributing to the psyche's hidden, concealed or re/suppressed memory. Importantly, archetypes are not merely symbols or motifs, but synchronously form indiscernible meanings which cannot be generalised yet may unleash many different meanings for different people in different times and contexts. An archetype is the simultaneity of images with emotions, psychically charged by each other: 'by being charged with emotion, the image gains numinosity (or psychic energy); it becomes dynamic'. Jung detected several general (collective or universal) archetypes, including 'eternal mother,' 'tree' and 'mandala,' devising four broad categories of archetypes: shadow, hiding one's latent dispositions and inferior or negative side of one's personality; anima and animus, the female element in the male unconscious and vice versa; the associated syzygy (divine union of male and female elements); and, the self (or persona), as being one with the universe, often felt as pre-birth or post-death. He tends greater granularity within and across these archetypes, including: (dominant) father; (nurturing/earth) mother; child/birth; hero (champion); (chaste/pure) maiden; wise old man; (mysterious) magician; (treacherous) witch; and (deceiving) trickster. These are not simply symbols but psychic cataclysms which ascend from unconsciousness. Symbols and motifs, on the other hand, relay meaning in the conscious part of the psyche, literal and metaphoric significations. They are externally-derived ideas which meet with conscious interpretation yet they may also trigger or meet with archetypes rising from unconsciousness, thus possibly (although not definitively) forming feelings and memories which are most often incomprehensible to the layman, like an uncanny flicker of (mis)remembering. Thus, symbols relating to archetypes act as cues to unleash that which is bottled-up unconsciously. An archetypal image, Jung clarifies, are those which 'exist in the records of human history, in identical form and with the same meaning'. He divides archetypal images into two extremes: '(1) The image is clearly defined and is consciously connected with a tradition. (2) The image is without doubt autochthonous, there being no possibility let alone probability of a tradition'

210 C. G. Christofides, "Bachelard's aesthetics", *The journal of aesthetics and art criticism*, vol.20, no.3 (Spring 1962), pp.263-71, p.267, says experiments conducted by James V. McConnell, reported in 1959, indicated that 'some memory... may be chemical in nature and passed on by heredity'.

211 Jung et al., op. cit., p.96.

although, he notes, this is often unprovable ‘because the tradition is often unconscious yet is recalled cryptomnesically’. Daws describes these as, ‘the sort of images that undulated through history and survive no matter...’

A trajectory from Hoffmann to Jungian thought is insightful vis-à-vis the Dawsian uncanny, as Hoffmann believed unconsciousness links people, although illiterate to its language, to cosmic forces; ideas echoing Daws’s interest in archetypal symbols as carrying unconscious meaning, messages, ‘implications and suggestions’. Germane to this uncanny elusiveness he desires is Joseph Andriano’s reading of The sandman which involves the language of archetypes, particularly how archetypes communicate with Nathanael who misinterprets their message. He overlooks archetypes including: the angel (Clara); hellfire smoke from the father’s pipe; eyes as windows to the soul, metonymies for vision; and, revealed by her breath, Nathanael’s mother, his first incarnation of anima. Put concisely, Nathanael, failing to comprehend mother/angel/moonlight and father/devil/hellfire as profound archetypes, reduces them to simple metaphors:

Instead of creating powerful poetic symbols out of the ‘dark powers’ of his mind (as Hoffmann himself is able to do), he creates reifications, pathetic fallacies that take figures too literally – that make out of the archetypes of the soul mere bogeymen and dolls. [Ultimately] Hoffmann shows us that we all have inner phantoms... [and] What dooms Nathanael, then, is his unconscious fission of the androgynous archetype – what Jung called ‘the divine syzygy’. Inwardly, Nathanael unconsciously splits himself (made literal in throwing himself) because in infancy he was unable to overcome the ‘awesome numinosity of the archetypes without denying their existence’. Hoffmann’s fiction cautions that to repress or deny the unhomely will not deprive its efficacy:

No matter how hard we try to keep life and death polarized, life is attracted to death, merges with it in uncanny images of life-in-death and death-in-life (automatons, animated corpses); and masculine easily becomes feminine in androgynous images... To recognize the archetype is to acknowledge the marriage of opposites, which seems irrational. But the archetypal syzyges... need not inspire horror or cause madness... [but rather] a source of inspiration and love.

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213 Ibid., p.273.
214 In Daws and Missingham, op cit., he says, ‘archetypal images in the Jung sense [are] the sort of images that undulate through history and survive no matter what prevailing taste might be’.
216 Daws, as cited in Rosemary Sorensen, ‘Dreamscapes of an epic journey’, The Australian, 16 February 2010, explains that the initial feeling he endeavours to ‘nail’ is complex, ‘below the surface level’ and ‘quite elusive’.
217 Andriano, op. cit., p.49.
218 Ibid., pp.51-9.
219 Ibid., p.68.
220 Ibid.
Seen in this light, the uncanny appears when one either acknowledges their deeply in-built archetypes or tries to deny them. More often it is triggered when the layman denies the archetypal, and an uncanny flash of unconsciousness ignites momentarily – either as unconscious content or the subliminal recognition that one cannot totally control their dualistic mind. Or from an Existentialist perspective, man has control but glosses over it in bad-faith, receiving sudden uncanny jolts of conscience. Tacey links Jung’s ‘reaching for the deeper dimensions of mind’ with a Heideggerian-like revelation of the ‘poetic or mythic basis of consciousness’, ideas likewise relating to Daws in numerous ways.

Fire, an ancient, potent motif, subtly unifies Daws’s oeuvre. Besides fire’s destructive potential, Daws’s pictures are not merely doom-laden; contrarily, fire is the spirit of creation, man’s origins, and possesses regenerative (or rebirth) qualities. Symbolising the universal (‘big bang’) beginning and (Apocalyptic) end, fire metaphorically links life with death, echoing man’s individual uncanny journeys from womb to tomb. An agent of change, fire is the most dynamic element required in alchemical transmutation and alchemy, particular Jungian foci for Daws, especially considering powers of psychical transformation. Daws embraces Jungian observance of fire’s two main symbolic aspects: heat and light – its dualistic destructive-constructive capabilities. The richly emblematic fire motif of Jungian-Freudian uncanny connects Daws’s work with the Heideggerian ‘fire!’ anchoring man with homely origins. The mythology of Promethean fire signifies mankind’s sources, representing man’s technological beginnings and symbolising metaphysical powers of the

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221 Tacey, “The gift of the unknown...”, op. cit., p.433.
222 Bachelard’s The psychoanalysis of fire, op. cit., examines the symbolism of fire; Northrop Frye’s “Preface” in ibid. explains, p.vi. ‘To the imagination, fire is not a separable datum of experience: it is already linked by analogy and identity with a dozen other aspects of experience. Its heat is analogous to the internal heat we feel as warm-blooded animals; its sparks are analogous to seeds, the units of life; its flickering movement is analogous to vitality; its flames are phallic symbols...’ Bachelard explains fire’s connection to reproduction as linked in many ways, such as the act of rubbing sticks together as corresponding to copulation, and, p.3, ‘our intuitions of fire—more perhaps than any other phenomenon—are heavily charged with fallacies from the past’; also see p.40, discussing fire as heat which penetrates and gets into the ‘interior of things’, whereas light simply flickers over surfaces. As taking and giving, thus analogous to the unconscious, fire’s awesome potential (as that which destroys, as raging bushfires etcetera) anticipates the otherworldliness and drama perceived in Daws’s canvases.
223 Alchemy is also a prominent theme notable in his friend, Brett Whiteley’s work. Their shared interest in alchemy is notable in Whiteley’s large painting, Alchemy, 1972-3, oil and mixed media on wood, various dimensions over 18 panels, AGNSW: its inscription reads, ‘For the poet is a light + winged and holy thing... The way that can be spoken of/ Is not the constant way;/ Alchemy/ the Grand work/ to bring together all the previous/ TRANSMUTATION/... a chain of images, as in a dream... A single flash of understanding... The thread is the Transmutation./ The fire art of painting, which is the bastard of alchemy, always has and always will be/ a game... one must visibly describe, the centre of the meaning of existence [sic]’; cited in Barry Pearce, Brett Whiteley: Art and life, Sydney: AGNSW, 1995, p.234. With this epic painting, laden with symbolism and imagery derived from Bosch, Whiteley endeavours to represent his ‘inner paddock’ (ibid, p.164). In the 1960s, Daws and Whiteley lived and travelled abroad together; later, Whiteley visited Owl Creek on many occasions. Likewise captivated by the Glasshouse Mountains, Whiteley said, ‘I have drawn it maybe twenty times now and have never penetrated it’; Brett Whiteley, Brett Whiteley, exhib. brochure, Sydney: Philip Bacon Galleries, 1981, np.

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universe (in sun and moon), marking man’s point of departure towards his unhomely-homely terminus, and accordingly holding prominence at the forefront of philosophy with Heraclitus sanctioning fire as the most fundamental element: ‘All things are an interchange for fire, and fire for all things’. So, when Daws encounters the story about the 1914 mining disaster of Marvel Loch, an episode conflagrating man’s endeavour to push ever-forward met by retrogression (and fire), it jolts his senses profoundly, serving as a pictorial narrative yet alluding to much more besides. Fire’s generative and destructive potential to both advance and reverse man’s progress, to cremate and return the corporeal to ‘pure,’ homely states, ashes to dust, is rekindled by Freud:

Nathaniel succumbs... and in his delirium his recollection of his father’s death is mingled with this new experience. ‘Hurry up! hurry up! ring of fire!’ he cries. ‘Spin about, ring of fire—Hurrah! Hurry up, wooden doll! lovely wooden doll, spin about—.’

For Heidegger and Freud, fire symbolises looking backwards, a journeying back in time and into oneself, notions Daws projects pictorially, literally as fiery balls but also evocative in burnished surfaces, texturally attractive and symbolically meaningful. Daws’s fiery motifs recall disasters yet, like miners journeying down shafts, go further, making deeper connections, symbolising inner-depths of unconsciousness. Imagining earth’s fiery core, and symbolising layers of unconsciousness, Daws recalls Zamyatin’s ponderings: ‘we who live on this earth are constantly walking over a burbling, blood-red sea of fire hidden there, deep within the maw of the earth. But we never think of that’.

Figure 36: Lawrence Daws, Mining town blacks, 1955

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225 Bruce, Lawrence Daws: Asylum in Eden, op. cit., pp.23-8, discusses the mining event and the story’s impact on Daws.
227 Zamyatin, op. cit., p.86.
Observing the dusty, hot-red earth of Daws’s early landscapes such as *Mining town blacks* (1955), menacing atmospherics prevail where one senses the heat generated comes not only from the sun but from deep within Earth’s crust, as lava surging forth. Daws detects in the ochres of outback Australia, like alien soils of Mars, a sense of reverberating foreboding, nuances of beginnings and endings, of journeying. Moreover, his Aboriginal figures not only ‘belong to country’ but act as reminders of foreign non-Aboriginality, and, standing as one with fire, that Australia is inherently uncanny. As with the spectrum of light, fire, literally and figuratively, casts shades of ‘illumination’ and ‘enlightenment,’ symbolising psychical processes: bright clarity of consciousness and shadowy darkness of unconsciousness.

Andrei Tarkovsky’s unnerving film, *Stalker*, offers insightful ways of thinking about the uncanniness of Daws’s work, particularly because, influenced by Hoffmann, Tarkovsky’s films strike a chord with Daws, whose paintings exhibit qualities of Tarkovskian cinematography, including still photographs of scenes and several similar motifs of *Stalker*, with shadowy and largely monochromatic backdrops, silhouetted figures, a certain stillness and foreboding silence, and framed interior views to exterior outlooks over barren, Apocalyptic scenes. Interpretations of *Stalker* account for its parallels with Christianity, with its three protagonists (read as Father/Son/Holy Ghost) journeying towards the ‘zone’ of ‘divinity,’ whilst other readings are analogous with political, ethical and spiritual dimensions. *Stalker’s* parallels with the uncanny include the forbidden ‘Zone’ as an eerie

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228 Lawrence Daws, *Mining town blacks*, 1955, oil on hardboard, 86.5 x 134.5 cm, AGSA.

229 Similarly, Elizabeth Coffman discusses performances in the 1935 film, *Princess Tam Tam*, as functioning like the Freudian uncanny in that the white colonial gaze looks upon the African people with ambivalence reminiscent of foreign uncanniness, and that white-man’s fear of blacks is tied to anxiety over bodily control: “The colonist fears that his own inability to control his body will resurface in his inability to control the bodies of the colonized; therefore, he repeatedly sets up a supposedly "safe" space for black performance; Elizabeth Coffman, “Uncanny performances in colonial narratives: Josephine Baker in *Princess Tam Tam*,” *Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genres*, vol.3, no.3-4 (Return of the uncanny, 1997), ff.379 and p.393.

230 Daws in interview with Grishin, 24 June 2011, with author present. In interview with author, 17 September 2012, Daws again conveyed his deep-felt appreciation for and interest in Tarkovsky’s films, noting several books of Tarkovsky’s in his collection, including a book of poetry written by Tarkovsky’s father, Aseyen Alexandrovich Tarkovsky.

231 Including environmental ethics, with likenesses to the 1986 environmental disaster of Chernobyl. Notwithstanding Tarkovsky’s remark that *Stalker* ‘is about the existence of God in man, and about the death of spirituality as a result of our possessing false knowledge’, the film explores philosophical conflicts between the disciplines of the humanities, theology and mysticism and rationalism and the sciences, recalling the philosophical interpretations of *The sandman*, where the classical ages through to Enlightenment are represented by Hoffmann’s characters, as is the prosaic against the poetic. Vida T. Johnson and Graham Pettie, *The films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A visual fugue*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994, p.139 and pp.142-3, alludes to Tarkovsky’s comment as guarding against political ramifications, discussing other meanings of the Zone and the film in general. Peter Green, *Andrei Tarkovsky: The winding quest*, Basingsroke, UK: Macmillan, 1993, p.95. for example, says, ‘there are parallels both to Dante’s Divine Comedy and to the search for the Holy Grail’. Tarkovsky’s legacy, it is said, can be divided into two groups, ‘In Ivan’s Childhood, Andrei Rublev, Mirror (Zerkalo, 1975), and Nostalgia (Nostal gia, 1983),

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and ostensibly unreachable place, a site exuding a paralysing and mysterious energy, a locale which, if one does manage to cross its imperceptible borders, promises to fulfil one’s deepest desires. The Zone can be read as the depths of unconsciousness or the brink of conscious-unconsciousness, an in-between place which holds the promise of finding one’s ‘true’ self or ‘truth’ itself, where the way to is dangerous, thus needs to be approached furtively, like huntsmen stalking prey (with protagonists as representing Id/Ego/Super Ego). The importance of iconography and archetypal motifs which draw upon the viewer’s unconscious are shared concerns: Tarkovsky employs Russian and Christian iconography, whereas Daws applies Jungian topoi. Besides sharing common motifs and overall painterly aesthetics, the dank, corrosive and mouldy interiors of Stalker compare with musty, fatigued-looking surfaces of Daws’s paintings. Aesthetics of decay and dilapidation, something Peter Green notes of Tarkovsky’s film concerning the transience of life, include the crumbling, decaying plaster walls of Stalker’s bedroom, which compares with Daws’s chalky, burnished patinas, his sepia-toned, dark-lit atmospherics, reminiscent of old Dutch paintings where the glazing has aged and discoloured, creating a smoky, gauzy veil to the surface. Such are expressions of thinly veiled façades, symbolic of man’s fragile, everyday consciousness, his edifice, of ‘murky,’ nebulous veils echoing Hoffmann, of Nathanael writing about his childhood memories: ‘it is not the weakness of my eyes which renders the world colourless to me, but that a dark destiny really has suspended a veil of gloom over my life – a veil which I shall perhaps rend asunder only in death’.


Among several uncanny motifs in Tarkovsky’s Stalker, the telephone call received at the Zone’s breach, at the depths of their labyrinthine journey, rings like an uncanny trigger which abruptly awakens the re/suppressed. Here, Stalker prophesies, ‘We are now... on the threshold. This is the most important moment of your life. You must know that... your innermost wishes will be made real here. Your most sincere wish. Born of suffering’.

See Johnson and Petrie, op. cit., pp.144-5.

This trait in Tarkovsky’s films is due to his early art studies and interest in classical masterpieces and paintings.

Peter Green, op. cit., p.102.

Hoffmann, Tales of Hoffmann, op. cit., p.92.
Manifestations of unhomely journeying towards the homely, as rendered in *Stalker*, are notions important in Daws’s work such as *The cage II* (1971),238 where a crowd of people flee into a cage, notionally away from danger towards salvation, as literally referencing the mining disaster, yet with a certain generalised angst prevalent, insinuating the possibility of fleeing towards danger and from salvation. The painting’s story is thus made ambiguous. Painted in swift, fluid brushstrokes, Neville Weston sees these marks as adding to ‘the suspicion that we, the viewers, like the figures in the pictures, moving onwards, [are] carried helplessly by events’, and these legions and cages ‘illustrate the idea of man’s inability to handle freedom’239 whilst Daws enunciated, ‘man cannot handle freedom; he wants to be caged, even in Eden’.240 Alluding to underworlds, a central horizontal line divides the composition into upper and lower frames whilst forming a horizon point, thereby conveying exterior ‘real’ versus interior ‘unseen’ and conscious/unconscious landscapes. Although the figures form shadows, it remains uncertain as to whether this scene is of above or below ground, with the tunnel-like formation overlaid on upper and lower sections yet seemingly burrowing into the earth below. As an important motif Heysen encouraged in Daws early on,241 shadows represent the Jungian hidden, repressed


239 Weston, *Lawrence Daws*, op. cit., p.139 and p.108, respectively. Daws’s cage motif might also be regarded as a more literal representation alluding to a rattling of the cages within.


241 In a letter from Heysen to Daws, dated 10 March 1949, Heysen advises Daws to treat shadows as a mass, writing, ‘you are becoming conscious of subtle differences in the make up of shadows. At your present stage I would not take much notice of these, but regard your shadow as a mass — and search for the force and differences where the light masses lead into the shadow where the shadow ends and light begins again — this is where your character lies...’
unconscious which the hero archetype must conquer and assimilate before self-unification of individuation can be accomplished. Jungian psychical unification of conscious with unconscious is an individuation process whereby man transcends into his superior, unified being, a likewise journeying into one’s homely, composite-self. For Daws, this ‘continuous search for inner composure’ is a journeying from an unhomely state of division to homely unification. Whilst not labouring narrative, Daws allows his observer to move cursorily from literal and allegorical readings to tropological interpretations. As an inherently metaphorical image, The cage II can be read in numerous ways. For example, the trajectory of the ‘fireballs’ might equally be read as a river (of water droplets), representing journeying and transcending. He employs other symbols of ‘transcendence’ such as birds and snakes, highlighting this topos as significant. Winding paths, tunnels, streams, rail tracks and other types of channels and passageways are leitmotifs dispersed throughout his oeuvre, underscoring ‘journeying’ as another key interest.

Figure 38: Lawrence Daws, Figures on eerie shore II, 1972

242 More generally speaking, the shadow is an important motif of the uncanny; see, for example, Simona Micali, “The hero and his shadow”, Image & Narrative, vol.11, no.3 (Hauntings I: Narrating the uncanny, 2010), pp.99-110, reproduced at Image & Narrative: www.imageandnarrative.be/index.php/imagenarrative/article/viewFile/95/70, accessed 12/12/11, p.107, says, ‘The shadow-subject thus becomes the projection of an Other bearing the rejected component of the Ego, a double...[and] in the stories regarding the shadow-double we also find a much stronger effect of the uncanny, especially at the moment in which the hero splits from his shadow’.


244 See, for example, Lawrence Daws, Omen bird, 1990, oil on canvas, 102 x 122 cm. Regarding Jung’s interpretations about such symbology, see Jung et al., Man and his symbols, op. cit., p.151 and pp.154-7.
Daws structures his paintings in ways which heighten the horizontal perspective, often placing the viewpoint flying phenomenally above or eerily amongst the scene. Either way, his viewer is placed uneasily within the foreground, compelled to part-take in the drama. The high, hovering viewpoint, in *The cage II* and other paintings, supports epic spatial qualities which invest the figures with a vulnerability which develops viewer empathy vis-à-vis mankind’s susceptibilities, thus encouraging onlooker introspection and self-analysis. Legions of figures representing unitary and whole collective unconscious are equally crowd-scenes of militarised automata whose very conformity perversely exposes individuality and one’s ability to become non-conformist whilst acknowledging self-responsibility. With such psycho-scapes, pictorializing universal human conditions, Daws instills a kind of self-psychoanalysis within his viewer, a self-exploratory act Freud maintains is uncanny. Other compositions of deep pictorial spaces, such as *Figures on eerie shore II* (1972), position the viewpoint lower, pulling the onlooker’s gaze — as if integrating it — into the scene, as if they wondered into the panorama half expecting to share its apocalyptic future. Although Daws’s work is described as incorporating pessimistic, doomsday-like qualities portending Armageddon, the threatening, inhospitable tonalities of Australian landscapes combine

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245 Such as Daws’s *Running figures*, 1975, oil on canvas, 183 x 244 cm; and *The beach*, 1999, oil on canvas, 102 x 122 cm.

246 Lawrence Daws, *Figures on eerie shore II*, 1972, oil on hardboard, 90 x 105 cm.
with sublime qualities such as vast distances, thus conjoining fear with the sublime such that uncanny qualities emerge.²⁴⁷ Whereas the horizon and sky bask in sunlight's last rays, the catatonic figures and earth become consumed by shadow yet an enigmatic aura persists, making the figures appear simultaneously lifeless yet embodying spirit. They seem to emerge from yet into the landscape, redolent of the Aboriginal figures who materialise out of nowhere in Remembering Babylon.²⁴⁸ Faintly illuminated, the pale glow of this painting, like Eye panorama (n.d.),²⁴⁹ depicts a vague, uncertain hour — twilight as representative of hiding-yet-revealing, the darkness of night (unconsciousness) as closing in on day (consciousness).

Alternatively, with Eye panorama, Daws confounds the (metaphysical) sky as dark and unfathomable whereas the (physical) earth is covered in diaphanous light. This idea of things becoming metaphysically overpowered is echoed in such pictures where the malevolence of an all-encompassing, watchful eye surveys both viewer and landscape, where especially well-graduated surface tones complement the hard edges of elements such as the eye, a tactic (achieved here using masking tape and spray-painting) regarded as adding a "twist to the allusion to intrusion by foreign elements".²⁵⁰ This is a kind of surreal visual blindsiding which juxtaposes hard-edges with graduated tonality, illustrating artificial/natural, animate/inanimate dichotomies. Forming shapes mirroring labia and vagina, the eye of Eye panorama represents man’s birthplace, the original homely,²⁵¹ forming

²⁴⁷ Explaining that the 'Australian landscape is always seen by artists in two ways either as a threat or as a park land', Daws feels that his 'really best pictures... combine both its threatening quality and its sublime quality'; see Sandra McGrath, "The forest on ice", The Australian, 21 July 1980. Much of the commentary regarding Daws's work as prophesizing doom was written during the Cold War, such as Gertrude Langer, "Light on the dark side", Brisbane Courier Mail, 17 November 1982, who says, 'It is a pessimistic view of mankind that... Daws expresses...'; whereas Neville Weston, in Lawrence Daws, Lawrence Daws, Broken Hill, NSW: Broken Hill City Art Gallery, 1985, pp.4-7, p.5, remarks, 'Unlike those artists who become involved in very specific political issues, like the placing of cruise missiles in Europe, or Pine Gap in Australia, Daws's concern is with a more generalized threat'. Figures on eerie shore //somewhat compares with Joseph Lycett's Cape Pillar, near the entrance of the River Derwent, Van Diemen's Land, 1824, hand-coloured etching, aquatint, image 17.4 x 27.1 cm, NGA.

²⁴⁸ Or Kate Grenville, The secret river, op. cit., p.198: 'Their bodies flickered among the trees, as if the darkness of the men were an extension of bark, of leaf-shade, of the play of light on a water-stained rock'. Comparisons may also be made with Caspar David Friedrich's Monk by the sea, 1809, oil on canvas, 110 x 172 cm, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

²⁴⁹ Lawrence Daws, Eye panorama, no date (n.d.), oil on hardboard, 90 x 105 cm; see David Bardas and Jenny Zimmer, The Coppin Grove collection of Sandra and David Bardas, South Yarra, Vic.: Macmillan, 2011, p. 69 and p.107. This painting compares with Torsten Paul's Betrachtung Deutschlands (Viewing Germany), 1984, oil on canvas, 49 x 59 cm; see Verlag Haus am Checkpoint Charlie, Artists interpret the wall, exhib. catalogue, Berlin: Verlag Haus am Checkpoint Charlie, 1985, p.117. Comparisons may also be made with the one-eyed or clycopic images of Odilon Redon's, such as Eye-balloon, 1878, charcoal and chalk on coloured paper, 42.2 x 33.3 cm, MoMA; see Hauptman, op. cit., pp.46-9.

²⁵⁰ Weston, Lawrence Daws, op. cit., p.113.

a nexus with Coppélia’s ultimate action in creating Olympia by forging eyes and Freud’s observation that a ‘most uncanny’ form of superstition is the ‘dread of the evil’ all-consuming and malevolent eye, whilst repeating Nathanael’s childhood fear of the Sandman throwing sand into eyes ‘so that they jump out of their heads all bloody’.252 This idea of ‘eyes jumping out,’ as a figurative ‘out-of-body’ experience of looking back upon oneself, is an uncanny phenomena Daws elicits with a floating, autonomous eye. Whilst Clara insisted Nathanael’s fears were within, his ultimate, fatal performance was one of peering through an artificial eye, a telescope, from a watchtower surveying the landscape beyond. With similarly eerie atmospherics, Daws’s eye hovers above the shoreline and represents the diabolical source of human life, the womb, which inherently possesses the ‘demonic power of doubling’ (as re-creating life).253 Eye panorama symbolises such dualities as anima-animus and inner-outer worlds as metaphorically represented by water and earth, whilst evoking the Yin-Yang symbolism of (Taoist) duality which bears strong resemblance to the dichotomy of the uncanny. Although states of harmony and balance are apparent, this harmoniousness teeters precariously, like Tarkovsky’s characters who, on the brink of entering the Zone, cannot seem to transgress its authority yet are aware of its omnipotence. Daws’s foreboding, all-seeing, cyclopean eye might be thought of as a breach or trigger between consciousness and unconsciousness, appearing like an all-knowing guardian of two realms or states. Whilst this panoptic eye can be considered an expression of conflict and metaphysical omnipotence, it imparts a dramatic surrealism which arrests the viewer’s imagination, as a decoy strategy which subliminally coerces unconscious triggers and induces unconscious flickerings – methods of which Freud writes: ‘the storyteller [artist] has a peculiarly directive power over us… he is able to guide the current of our emotions, to dam it up in one direction and make it flow in another…’254 Besides the many literal or explicit meanings he garners, Daws employs tactics to elicit unnerving uncanniness.

252 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.240; Hoffmann, Tales of Hoffmann, op cit., p.87; respectively. The eyeball is an important Surrealist symbol used in much imagery including film such as Eric Duvivier’s The 100-headed woman, 1967, 35mm transferred to digital video, 19:31 minutes, Centre Pompidou, Paris; and René Magritte’s The false mirror, 1928, oil on canvas, 54 x 86.9 cm, MoMA. Dora Maar’s photomontages also feature eyeballs as separate and uncannily autonomous objects, including The eyes, c.1932-5, gelatin silver print from celluloid negative, 29.5 x 23.5cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

253 Borrowing from Kofman, op cit., p.144. See also Apter, op. cit., in terms of the eye motif of The sandman, including, p.35, that Nathanael’s ‘father offers the children both frustration and delight in regard to visual pleasure: they do not see him during the day, and when they do see him, he stimulates their visual pleasure with picture books, and then frustrates them again by puffing clouds of smoke which impede their vision’.

254 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.251: ‘…he often obtains a great variety of effects from the same material’.
Eye panorama also evokes D.H. Lawrence's fiction, Kangaroo, picturing a grey-laden sky and 'low table-land into which the harbour intrudes squatted dark-looking and monotonous and sad, as if lost on the face of the earth', a glowing 'settlement in the fierce gloom of the wilderness', a township 'deciding it was night... [with] a network of wide roads... above the sea... All in a pale, clear sky, clear and yet far off, as it were visionary', allegories of unconsciousness. Daws appears equally affected by Lawrence's flight from homely origins into exiled Australia, expressed as Somers (the protagonist and author's semi-double of Kangaroo), lamenting the profundity of homesickness:

He understood now that the Romans had preferred death to exile. He could sympathize now with Ovid on the Danube, hungering for Rome and blind to the land around him, blind to the savages. So Somers felt blind to Australia, and blind to uncouth Australians... they were barbarians... with their aggressive familiarity. He surveyed them from an immense distance, with a kind of horror.

This aggressive familiarity resounds the Heideggerian uncanny, of man becoming excessively familiar or obviously 'outward' as if to overcompensate for unfamiliar surroundings and the unhomely-self these alien lands trigger, or the dualistic feelings of 'freedom' and homesickness within an oppressively strange landscape. Somers's Australian counterpart laconically rhapsodises, 'I am sure you are at home anywhere' to which Somers understands as never being at home, which is rebounded by, 'You have come to a homely country'. Recalling Hesse's aphorism, 'The true profession of man is to find his way to himself', a nexus forms among Daws, his esteem for Tarkovsky, Hesse and Lawrence, and Hesse's regard for Lawrence.

255 Lawrence, op. cit., p.15, p.201 and pp.377-8, respectively - as descriptions among many in Kangaroo which compare with Daws's oeuvre, including: p.201: 'the intense dusk of the far-off land, and white folks peering out of the dusk almost like aborigines'; and, p.378: 'the thick aboriginal dusk' with the filmic quality of Figures on eerie shore II. Ibid., p.197, Lawrence wonders, 'Would the people waken this ancient land, or would the land put them to sleep, drift them back into the semi-consciousness of the world of the twilight?', and p.264, Somers prefers 'to drift into a sort of blood-darkness, to take up in his veins again the savage vibrations that still lingered round the secret rocks, the place of the pre-Christian human sacrifice... his dark, blood-consciousness tingle[s] to it again... old awful presences round the black moor-edge, in the thick dust...'

256 Geoffrey Dutton, Out in the open: An autobiography, Brisbane: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1994, p.231, notes Daws as participating in an informal discussion concerning D.H. Lawrence's portrayal of Australians. Dedicated to Daws, Dutton's poem, 'Night fishing' evokes Daws's dark painting, Eye panorama...: 'Lovers are always walking from the sea,... sounding their eyes...When light has joined two elements, of water and of night,/The leafy land, the clouded stars, all disappear/Beyond the forgotten shore, and all else narrow.../Night closes up the arm-reach of the bay./Water absorbs the squid-ink of darkness...'; in Geoffrey Dutton and Lawrence Daws, Night fishing, Adelaide: Australian Letters, 196-?, np.

257 Ibid., p.146: 'The Colonies make for outwardness. Everything is outward — like hollow stalks of corn. The life makes this inevitable: all that struggle with bush and water and what-not, all the mad struggle with the material necessities and conveniences — the inside soul just withers and goes into the outside, and they're all just lusty robust stalks of people'.

258 Ibid., p.121, it is noted he, "Kangaroo", says this 'without the ghost of a smile'.

259 See Hermann Hesse, "D.H. Lawrence" in Hesse, My belief, op. cit., pp.343-5, for example.
Sometimes an all-seeing eye is more subtly denoted or implied using, for example, elevated viewpoints; alternatively, circular shapes evoke it, often as mandalas. Referencing Jungian and alchemical theories, the profound, richly symbolic mandala, echoing domes or eyes of aforementioned work, is another Dawsian leitmotif, acting as, in Daws’s words, a ‘counterweight in the sky balancing the enormous moods of the landscape’, whilst expressing the dualistic nature of consciousness-unconsciousness. Jung accounts for the significance of mandalas and alchemy in “Commentary on ‘The secret of The golden flower”, where he describes a palaeolithic mandala (a sun-wheel) as something ‘reaching so far back into human history [that it] naturally touch[es] upon the deepest layers of the unconscious’. Taking from Jung, Daws explains the mandala as symbolising wholeness: ‘It can be anything – a dance even – but usually it’s a circle. There’s a balance between the conscious and unconscious that makes one feel whole at that point in one’s life’. Without beginning or end, mandalas are circular symbols of unity and eternity or infinity, of continual journeying, representing a diverse range of subjects from the secular (such as democratic consular circles) through religious and spiritual (such as halos, rose windows and wafers, prayer wheels, the Wheel of Dharma, rainbow arcs as conjoining sky/heaven and earth, uniting the earthly with the divine). The mandala (Sanskrit, meaning circle or centre) is used to concentrate the mind and is the Jungian archetypal unifying symbol, ‘a primordial image of psychic totality’. Belonging to ideas about seeking wholeness of

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260 To Laurie Thomas, as cited in Laurie F. Thomas, The most noble art of them all. The selected writings of Laurie Thomas, Brisbane: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1976, p.272. Daws is quoted, ‘A large proportion of my work is concerned with landscape: ’I always feel a strong need for a sort of counterweight in the sky... [for] making the landscape whole’.


262 Daws quoted in Sandra McGrath, “The forest on ice”, The Australian, 21 July 1980. Jung et al., op. cit., p.241, says mandalas represent ‘wholeness of the psyche or Self, of which consciousness is just as much a part as the unconscious’.

263 T.G. Rosenthal, “Art and the analyst”, The Listener, 18 October 1962, p.624, explains Daw’s symbolism as a Jungian
being, it accordingly discloses man as divided, a being requiring unification, and although
Daws ‘developed a consuming interest in unity, in wholeness’, he moreover fathoms the
dualistic nature of being. Jung states,

The stronger and more independent our consciousness becomes, and with it the conscious will, the
more the unconscious is thrust into the background, and the easier it is for the evolving
consciousness to emancipate itself from the unconscious, archetypal pattern. Gaining in freedom, it
bursts the bonds of mere instinctuality and finally reaches a condition of instinctual atrophy. This
uprooted consciousness can no longer appeal to the authority of the primordial images; it has
Promethean freedom, but it also suffers from godless hybris. It soars above the earth and above
mankind, but the danger of its sudden collapse is there... The wise Chinese would say in the words
of I Ching: When yang has reached its greatest strength, the dark power of yin is born within its
depths, for night begins at midday when yang breaks up and begins to change into yin.

Referencing the alchemical symbol for change, Mandala III (1962) pictures Jung’s
passage, with its soaring or ascending mandala set against a smouldering background, rising
above a dark chasm and hovering with uneasy might. Illustrating the combination of two
opposite yet complementary parts (conscious/unconscious duality), the mandala is forged
through substances transmogrifying from one state to another, a transformative acts such as
unconscious memory suddenly transmuting as conscious thought and uncanny feeling.
Such transformative powers Freud relates to animism are connected to Yin and Yang
symbols of ‘lunar Queen’ and ‘solar King’, interconnected forces Taoists believe humans
embody. Man’s biological core is thus ruled by and incarnates principles of alchemy, the
crus of which lies fire! – as nothing can be forged without it, the inherent power behind the
uncanny conjuror, the Sandman, the supreme creator of Olympia, the smithy who fires
her eyes. Underlying Daws’s burnished mandala pictorialism, colouration plays a crucial
role, with golds and reds set against dark backgrounds as representing divisions of knowing-
unknowing, tenebrous chasms of consciousness; aesthetics reminiscent of Tarkovsky’s set
designs with interior walls and floors in sepia tonalities like scraped paint on canvas,
alluding to inner, psychological and metaphysical journeys, pictorial strategies which
represent divided worlds.

266 Lawrence Daws, Mandala III, 1962, oil on canvas, 136.8 x 137.1 cm, NGV.
267 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.243, for example: ‘secret powers brings us back again to the realm of animism’.
268 Ibid., p.230.
269 Tarkovsky similarly depicts divided worlds within and without the Zone as coloured and sepia images, where vividness
represents unconscious or dream-states against sepia tonalities of the quotidian. For critiques of Tarkovsky’s film as
portraying inner quests, see Johnson and Petrie, op. cit., p.151, and Green, op. cit., p.104.
Central to alchemy, *quadratura circuli*, meaning 'squaring of the circle,' is understood as the 'true mandala', according to Jung. It means to create a square from the area or perimeter of a circle, so the square inherently maintains or subsumes the qualities of the circle. Squares are said to represent earthbound things whereas circles symbolise infinity and divinity; consequently, *quadratura circuli* amalgamates the earthly and the divine. Thus taking the mandala as representing the psyche, the two components of *quadratura circuli* represent conscious-unconscious. Inspired by Xavier Herbert's encapsulation of Australia's early, racially conflicted colonial settlements, *Capricornia*, Daws's *Fettlers* (1957) indicates his early interests in geometric principles and their underlying symbology, whilst later mandala paintings inspired Patrick White's *The solid mandala*, a literary quest into the inner, unknown world. Reinforced by epigraphs as 'There is another world, but it is in this one' and '...yet I still long for my twin in the sun', the story mirrors the dichotomy of uncanniness with its main characters, Waldo and Arthur, as twin opposites whose relationship can equally be read as physical or psychological: one being of two 'characters' or two beings of one. Mandalas derive from primitive history relating sun and moon,
thus carry forth rich symbolism and ideas Jung regards as cardinal to inherited, collective unconsciousness, something as psychically inherent as to be barely noticeable.

The cage, another important uncanny leitmotif emerging from the mining disaster series, subliminally imaged as mesh-grid formations in paintings such as *Mining town blacks*, echoing the cell-like buildings in the background, suggestively entraps likewise alienated figures whilst symbolising encaged unconsciousness. The 'housebound-white' and 'lean-to-blacks' of *The unassimilated* (1954), and the gothic, alien-like creatures of *Fettlers* are encased in a vaguely perceptible, diaphanous 'spectral' troposphere, ethereal qualities Daws infuses into his work alongside an otherwise invisible, ultraviolet spectrum emitting from within – whilst taking the mind's eye beyond – the frame. Puzzles about whether the various shelters in *The unassimilated* offer protection or imprisonment seem to be answered in such imagery where the omnipresent unhomely is insidiously insinuated in styles owing to the strange atmospherics of the gothic. The cage motif represents man's entrapped, inner-core and compares with Tarkovsky's "Zone", to which a key is sought:

The 'key' to the Zone and its most sought-after treasure is a mysterious golden sphere which can grant the finder his wishes. However, this sphere has a sting in its tail: the wishes it grants are not our conscious ones, but those of the much more powerful subconscious... it fulfils... our most secret desires.

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275 Lawrence Daws, *The unassimilated*, 1957, oil on canvas, 61 x 81 cm, AGWA. Of *Fettlers* and like paintings, Ward, "A glimpse behind...", op cit., observes, 'it seems the precursor to *ET* had arrived to stalk outback railways and it seemed he was teetering on the brink of sci-fi illustration'. Whilst 'teetering' towards sci-fi, Daws's illusionism concerns itself with alienation rather than intergalactic aliens. The spectral qualities and style are reminiscent of Paul Klee's *Battle scene from the comic fantastic opera 'The Seafarer*', 1923, gouache, oil, pencil, watercolour, 34.5 x 50 cm, Kunstmuseum Basel.

Tarkovsky describes the 'Zone' as life itself, a state through which man must pass;\(^{277}\) to his Stalker, it is the ultimate unhomely-home: 'All I have is here, in the Zone'. Contributing to such ideas, the cage of *Owl Creek III* (1980) represents a metaphysical dwelling place of unseen presences, whilst its glassy waterway and veiled translucency, as if 'lost in white fragrance' and framed by 'bewitching unnatural mountains', a scene depicting the peculiar physiognomy of ancient monoliths, a scene which 'dazzles and disturbs' the gaze.\(^{278}\) As a 'golden transfigured landscape of... glassy mirrored reflections', it echoes Lawrence's portrayal of Australia, of mornings 'perfectly golden', effulgence across waters and 'pure, cold pale-blue inland, over the dark range'.\(^{279}\) Allusions to metaphysical worlds are likewise engendered using motifs found in Chinese art — 'platform' motifs as hanging awnings that float impossibly unfixed to anything stable, assuming an otherworldliness, symbolising the unstable scaffolding of the ego's façade, as a psychical shelter which remains exposed to unconscious elements, and where enclosed/hidden and exposed spaces equally sit alienated within the landscape, out of place and out of sync. Daws's *zones* or demarcations are depicted as cages, raised platforms, fenced-off areas and tunnels, with awnings and verandas appearing to separate areas of inaccessibility and denote shelters or sites of refuge as opposed to dangerous, perilous places: analogous of psychological journeying towards the homely and bridges or links between the conscious and unconscious.
In Somnambulists (1996), the awning motif reappears and forms a connection between outer and inner worlds, a topic echoing Surrealist interests, as is the eerie physical presence yet cognitive absence of sleepwalkers (as beings without consciousness), serving as another form of uncanny automaton, possessing mannequin-like qualities of Olympia and the faceless manichinos of de Chirico. Confounding the viewer’s focus with its gauzy membrane-like veil obstructing clear-sightedness, the awning, in sharp relief, marries with the silhouetted onlooker figure foremost yet slightly off-centre, who appears to take the role of viewer, another somnambulist or the artist himself. Providing no clues as to whether the figures appear alienated in their surreal surroundings, the pictorial conundrum remains unresolved because Daws poises on a metaphorical threshold of understanding, where the image can be interpreted as being between readings. Appearing expressionless, ineloquent and mannequin-like, Daws’s figures, taking roles of observers or participants, are oblivious, impassive and seemingly reconciled to their alien surroundings, although the viewer is not assured. Bewitched by stillness, their appearance emanates with the viewer as confused animate/inanimate of Olympia, whilst evoking the self-possessed yet dispossessed characters of Kangaroo, including ‘Kangaroo’ who Lawrence depicts murmuring in somnambulist voice, ‘It is time for the spirit to leave us’. Whilst the ‘formal’ bowler-hatted man as entering the ‘informal’ might be Somers or Kangaroo, the diaphanous women evoke those who Lawrence describes as having a ‘peculiar emptiness’ or thinned transparent blood, an absentness. Echoing each other, Daws’s ectoplasmic or phantom-

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**Footnotes:**

280 Lawrence Daws, *Somnambulists*, 1996, oil on canvas, 183 x 183 cm.
281 Such as Giorgio de Chirico, *The duo*, 1914-15, oil on canvas, 81.9 x 59 cm, MoMA. Incidentally, Daws remembers Cliff Richard’s song “Living doll” ‘pouring out everywhere’ when he was in London in 1959, according to Weston. *Lawrence Daws*, op. cit., p.39. Its lasting impression may relate to the mannequin-like figures throughout his oeuvre, as do statues and mannequins pervade de Chirico’s oeuvre. Connections between de Chirico’s texts from 1911 to 1919 and his pictures with Freud’s work is explained in Foster, “Convulsive identity”, op. cit., including, p.29, de Chirico’s thought that ‘Original man must have wandered through a world full of uncanny signs. He must have trembled at each step’.
282 Whilst Geoffrey Dutton, “Lawrence Daws”, *Australian Letters*, vol.7, no.2 (1966), pp.3-6, p.4, observes that Daws’s admiration of Piero did not result in him attempting to ‘introduce stillness or serenity into his work’, these qualities were to emerge and remain in his work.
283 Lawrence, op. cit., p.151. Emphasis added to highlight attributions to sleep walking, as in Freud’s essay.
284 Ibid., p.165, and p.199: ‘the mind in a kind of twilight sleep... peculiar [as] a main in his sleep’. The name of character, Somers, is interchanged as ‘Richard,’ ‘Lovat’ and (most often) ‘Somers,’ forming three states of one who can be read as Id, Ego and Super Ego. Daws sees the bowler-hatted man as a formal entity impinging upon the informality of the scene, as another metaphor defining the conscious to unconscious; interview with author, 18 September 2012. Such figures are depicted by Herbert, op. cit., p.8: ‘Is the ignorance of conditions of life in Capricornia, they [brothers, Oscar and Mark] came clad in serge suits and bowlers, which made them feel not only uncomfortable in [the] land... but conspicuous and rather ridiculous’; and, p.39, more generally, the natural assimilation of opposites, the Aboriginals and their colonizers ‘On they went and on and on, Stone-Age Man and Anglo-Saxon, clinging to each other for support, blending the matter of their sores’.
like figures take the form of doubles, recalling Surrealist imagery.\textsuperscript{285} Frozen and suspended as stone-like, almost sculptural forms, they recall the rigid figures of Piero della Francesca’s religious paintings, which are of significant influence to Daws.\textsuperscript{286}

Formal devices, composition, light and perspective restate Piero’s \textit{Flagellation of Christ} (c.1454) in modern settings.\textsuperscript{287} Like Piero, Daws’s constructions are infused with mathematical precision, with Daws taking advantage of various computer programs to assist in producing exacting compositions with \textit{golden means} proportions to produce harmoniously perfect images. Although such geometric systems are not hidden from view yet not made obvious, and whilst formalists may appreciate Alberti’s influence and Renaissance proportions, such properties would be unobvious to general audiences.\textsuperscript{288} Nonetheless something indistinctly strikes a chord with the viewer as they sense understanding and balance, or contrarily, a sensory imbalance caused by slight asymmetry. Such technical devices contribute to what is regarded as work possessing an elusiveness which is deeply rooted in unconsciousness.\textsuperscript{289} Rather than simply being labour-saving devices, computerised tools inform Daws’s work,\textsuperscript{290} heightening uncanniness and infecting his art with the phenomena of Heideggerian \textit{technē}, as radiating the revelatory powers of

\begin{itemize}
\item Like Victor Brauner’s \textit{Heron of Alexandria}, 1939, oil on canvas, 55x 46 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris; known to be one of many somnambulists images he painted; this one referencing the experimental studies of automata conducted by Heron of Alexandria and written about in the Surrealist journal, \textit{Minotaure}, as noted on the artwork label accompanying Brauner’s work at the \textit{Surrealism: The poetry of dreams} exhibition, QAG, June - October 2011. Daws’s somnambulists are also reminiscent of Paul Delvaux’s \textit{The Acropolis}, 1966, oil on canvas, 150 x 230 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris.
\item Daws’s veneration of Piero is well known: ‘I like the landscape and the feeling generated by Piero... it’s quite a mystical experience... I’d give my whole life to live in a Piero della Francesca painting’; as quoted in Matthew Westwood, “The mystical power of oneness”, \textit{The Australian}, 4 November 1994. Whereas writers on Daws (including Weston and MacAulay) tend to focus on the influence of Piero in Daws’s earlier work of the mid-1950s, his influence reaches across his oeuvre. Daws, in interview with author, also praised the French Post-Impressionist, Georges Seurat, as particularly influential, and noted Berthe Morisot’s \textit{View of Paris from the Trocadero} (1871-72, oil on canvas, 45.9 x 81.4 cm, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara) exhibits the qualities he is interested to impart in his work, including a powerful muteness and certain mood.
\item Among the many treatises provided on the geometric precision of Piero, who was informed by Leon Battista Alberti, see Martin Kemp, \textit{The science of art: Optical themes in western art from Brunelleschi to Seurat}, New Haven: Yale UP, 1990, and more recently, Kirsti Andersen, \textit{The geometry of an art: The history of the mathematical theory of perspective from Alberti to Monge}, New York; London: Springer, 2007.
\item Weston, \textit{Lawrence Daws}, op. cit., p.15, says ‘because of the fine technicianship, [Daws’s work] is not exasperating to view: one merely retreats to the levels of formal appreciation’ of his work. Playing with symmetry is a trick of perception related to anamorphism, another device which draws in and ‘traps’ the gaze to thereby effect in the viewer a showing of one’s (of Dasein’s) ‘nothingness’; such ideas are discussed in Matthew Causey, “The screen test of the double: The uncanny performer in the space of technology”, \textit{Theatre Journal}, vol.51, no.4 (Theatre & technology, December 1999), pp.383-94, p.390.
\item Daws started using the computer, beginning with an Omega PC, in 1986, switching from sketching draft compositions by hand to using software applications, mainly Paintshop Pro, to assemble images and variously rearrange elements from one version to another. The elements Daws brings into a piece come from personal image holdings, photographs, images taken from the Internet and segments of scanned images of older canvases, etchings, sketches and so forth. This means of assembling his work from bits and pieces, similar to Smart, informs his work and is an important approach to producing and interpreting his work. Daws explained his process in interview with author, 4 June 2011, and 17-18 September 2012.
\end{itemize}
the modern technological. The uncanny is thus qualified as being captive to such technological means Daws employs, notions of technē, which are further discussed in the next chapter.

Whilst unveiling ideas about tapping into the unconscious, the formal qualities of Daws’s work meaningfully and intentionally engender multilayered meaning from the literal narrative level of exegesis, through allegorical readings and tropological underpinnings through to spiritual and anagogical perception. With Somnambulists, Daws transforms symmetrical studies into that which slightly upsets and disturbs the onlooker. Disequilibrium and disturbance are key aspects to such paintings, where indebtedness to Balthus’s dramatic use of architectural space, picturing scenes like stage sets, is notable. Uncanny qualities also arise from the infusion of reality with the imaginary, equally lessons of Piero’s. The fusion of ‘real’ with ‘fictional,’ whether it be manifested in plastic arts or literary works, recalls Freud’s determination, ‘a great deal that is not uncanny in fiction would be so if it happened in real life; and... there are many more means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than there are in real life.’ Amalgamating the physical real (secular) with the metaphysical (religious) and this injecting lifelikeness into conventional iconography, Piero introduced inventive lighting, viewpoints and colouration which culminated to provide an enigmatic and disturbing stillness, techniques which Daws uses, including suffused lighting to bring realism into otherwise inanimate figures and backdrop scenery. The luminosity he

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291 Sasha Grishin, “Metaphysical realities: Lawrence Daw’s”, *Australian Art Review*, no.25 (November 2010-January 2011), pp.46-8, p.48, writes that Daws’s images are ‘both instantly accessible – a beautiful, meditative experience – and simultaneously a visual parable which can be entered through the intellect as well as intuitively and spiritually. There is a literal narrative level which is immediately accessible. Then an allegorical reading, where what is presented may well prefigure something that occurred on another plane of time... there is a third [tropological]... moral reading... Finally, the most profound level of interpretation, one that gives Daws’ paintings their lasting resonance and sense of presence, is the spiritual or anagogical level of perception [which is]... the least verbal level of interpretation, where the symbols cannot be decoded in a literary sense but operate within a realm of free spiritual association... taps into profound archetypal images that resonate...’

292 Timothy Morrell, “Lawrence Daws from mandala to full circle”, *Artlink*, v.22, no.4 (2002), pp.56-9, p.58, for example, states that Daws and Balthus ‘have produced bodies of work that manipulate the floor and wall planes along the lines of Japanese woodblock prints of interior scenes, and Daws refers to a group of his works as his “Japanese room” paintings. Balthus began his Japanese paintings after a visit to Japan in 1962. A retrospective exhibition of Balthus’ work was presented by the Tate Gallery in 1968, when Daws was living in London’.

293 Uncanny qualities are read into Piero’s work: ‘[his] paintings owe their peculiar quality to his placing [his] prodigious gifts in the service of a super- or preternatural cause... [achieved] by introducing a variety of uncanny conformities to or aberrations from what might normally be expected, so that with close examination and full understanding, effects that appear at first to be “natural” or “rational” in fact intimate the workings of divine intervention’, as explained in Marilyn Aronberg Lavin and Miriam I. Redleaf, “Heart and soul and the pulmonary tree in two paintings by Piero della Francesca”, *Artibus et Historiae*, vol.16, no.31 (1995), pp.9-17, p.9.

294 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.249. This idea is discussed in Bennett and Royle, op. cit., p.34, saying the uncanny ‘also has to do with how the “literary” and the “real” can seem to merge into one another... uncanniness could be defined as occurring when “real”, everyday life suddenly takes on a disturbingly “literary” or “fictional” quality... [or] literature itself could be defined as the discourse of the uncanny’.

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achieves essentially breathes life into his canvases, thus animating the inanimate and recalling Freud’s notion about uncanny effects being ‘produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced’. The opalescent colourations and misty hazes of Daws’s paintings portray the physical enactment of blurred vision of dreaming, thus align with the imaginary and partly-obscured Jungian unconscious. Harbouring shadow archetypes which the onlooker may subliminally perceive, Daws’s veiled canvases can thus be read as literal interpretations of Jung.

Using a distinctively milky or chalky and muted palette to advance themes concerning ambiguity, Daws applies opaque shrouds to objects, hence obscuring visual perception and creating indiscernable space-time divisions. From the viewer’s perspective, time and place separation happens subconsciously as one imagines where and when things were clear in order to become obnubilated. An aesthetic invention of Zamyatin’s helps describe such uncanny phenomena as likened to indistinct recollections of being ‘at the bottom and looking up through masses of water’. Zamyatin analogises the opacity of water whereas Daws blurs the edges and surfaces, thereby distancing the viewer and effacing reality. Daws also redirects the figures’ gaze away from the viewer, obscuring their countenances by veiling the faces with a fine gauzy over-paint which appears as transparent material, as hidden faces in shadow, or by hair swept over. Making his figures featureless yet by no means redundant, Daws summonses Hoffmann by configuring personas which impel the viewer to search within these obscured visages, of ‘blurred’ figures that discernably vibrate and ripple on the canvas surface, alluding to auras and cosmic powers aligned with Jungian synchronicity and ancient, universal archetypes. Whilst being pictorially resolved, the hazy patinas of Daws’s surfaces encourage notions of things unfinished or incomplete, of

295 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.244.
296 Morrell, op. cit., p.56. Ibid, p.58, links Daws’s palette to the ‘slightly blurred, highly atmospheric quality of...Chinese scroll’, saying that fires and regular burning off in the Glasshouse Mountains area ‘produce a hazy atmospheric version of the view that Daws captures with a shadowy blue-grey cast in his pictures’.
297 A character in Zamyatin’s We, op. cit., p.40 and p.156, refers to an early vision of ‘extraordinarily white and sharp teeth’ which is remembered upon encountering ‘identical yellow teeth’, an event invoking an eerie feeling of familiar-unfamiliarity.
298 Contrastingly, paintings with figures looking directly out, like Lawrence Daws, The Italian girl TV, 1990, oil on hardboard, 160 x 137 cm, Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane, align better with themes concerning isolation and alienation.
299 Hewett-Thayer, op. cit., pp.372-3, discusses Hoffmann’s ‘unusual capacity for self-detachment... [and his] talent for analysis of self [which] was early developed... [becoming introspection through which] a consciousness of a disintegrated personality began to disturb him’. Comparing the perpetually moving, quivering witch of Ludwig Tieck’s fiction to Hoffmann’s ever-changing kaleidoscopic personas, Hewett-Thayer observes, ‘The whims of a man are the ripples on the surface whilst the main body of water responds to the ebb and flow of cosmic laws, the essential character of the man’. Ibid., p.188, he reckons Nathanael ‘might supply an interesting case for the modern psychiatrist'.

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things moving towards another state or realisation. This 'left unfinished' quality is likewise reminiscent of the Tarkovsky's Stalker character who strives towards realisation even though he remains doomed to wretchedness. Daws's smoky surfaces symbolise things which appear neither finished nor unfinished but waver on a threshold, of smoky substrates recalling Vidler's description of smoke being an 'agent of dissolution', transfiguring reality into dreams and obscuring 'what otherwise would have seemed too clear'. Like Tarkovsky's 'unfulfilled' characters, the isolated figures in Daws's paintings and the seemingly half-finished veneers of his canvases are embodiments of searching for meaning or clarification, as a probing from places of uncertainty towards positions of clarity which thereby locate one as being unresolved.

With its smoky, ashen surface evoking faded film stock, *Nostalgia II* (1996) draws further parallels with *Stalker*, engendering an apocalyptic sense of foreboding which reaches back to Pompeian memory and Jensen's *Gradiva* - of 'ashes, which spread over them, first like a grey gauze veil, then extinguished the last glimpse of her face.' Daws's central figure, face shadowed and dressed in see-through gauze amid an eerie night-time backdrop, is illuminated not by moonlight but some unknown, low source. Pictures such as *Somnambulists* and *Nostalgia II* reflect Hertz's formula of *The sandman's* uncanniness in that Daws concurrently presents conflicting light-sources of energy to infer the psychological or demonic whilst portraying a sense of everlasting colours, washed-out

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300 Turovskaya, op. cit., p.112.
301 Vidler, *The architectural uncanny*, op. cit., p.41.
302 Lawrence Daws, *Nostalgia II*, 1996, oil on canvas, 137 x 122 cm.
remains and inscriptions left by ‘exchanges of energy’ or unseen forces blurring the boundaries between fields.\textsuperscript{304} The viewer is left with obscure feelings that some unknown energy source has made it mark, a force which assumes ultimate power.

In \textit{Nostalgia II}, a diaphanous apparition wonders, in dreamlike trance towards the viewpoint. Intensifying its eeriness, the bowler-hatted man in silhouette reappears, mirroring the central figure-in-frozen-isolation, another repeated topoi comparable with Tarkovsky’s lone Stalker or Lawrence’s Somers/Kangaroo, acting as the experienced veteran who guides the way through an impassable maze, bearing witness to the travails of self/Other. This figure, a nod to Magritte’s mysterious and masked men who are nominally nobody and everybody,\textsuperscript{305} is neither completely nor clearly present yet portrays the mysterious presence of the everyday, by simply bearing witness, and, by standing watch and drawing you into its viewpoint, whence your gaze is subsequently ‘boomeranged’ back to within the frame, re-joining back and forth with the gaze of the painted figure until feelings of ‘felt presence’ and ‘standing outside oneself’ develops, denoting the ‘ekstasis’ or ‘ekstasis’ phenomenon comprehended in Existentialism as projecting oneself outwardly (as ‘thrownness’ of Being-in-the-world), as contrasting with ‘enstasis’, introspection and standing-within-oneself. Daws’s technique of changing the viewer’s gaze from outside to inside the framed scene is reminiscent of other ‘uncanny art’ such as Hopper’s \textit{Nighthawks} (1942) and de Chirico’s \textit{Mystery and melancholy of a street} (1914).\textsuperscript{306} Importantly, the bowler-hatted silhouette draws the gaze, engaging the onlooker’s sense that eerie presences loom large, consequently engrossing and averting their attention and thereby providing a means for unconscious memory to ascend.\textsuperscript{307} These disguised figures can equally be interpreted as representing man’s protective mask against the realities of Being-in-the-world

\textsuperscript{304} Hertz, op. cit., p.110.

\textsuperscript{305} Whilst the bowler-hatted men of Magritte’s paintings (such as his \textit{The son of man}, 1964, oil on canvas, 116 x 89 cm, or \textit{The mysteries of the horizon}, 1955, oil on canvas, 50 x 65 cm) are usually self-portraits, the hats represent the anonymous, everyday bourgeois male figure — nominally nobody and everybody; see Luc Sanie, “Magritte the detective”, \textit{The Threepenny Review}, no.56 (Winter 1994), pp.27-8. For the uncanny in Magritte, see Wright, “The uncanny and surrealism”, op. cit., who, p.270, talks of the perceptual world of Surrealism acting to remind its viewer of ‘failure of desire of which it speaks’.

\textsuperscript{306} Edward Hopper, \textit{Nighthawks}, 1942, oil on canvas, 84.1 x 152.4 cm, Art Institute of Chicago; Giorgio de Chirico, \textit{Mystery and melancholy of a street} (1914), oil on canvas, 88 x 72 cm.

\textsuperscript{307} Felt presence is discussed in Elizaveta Solomonova, Elena Frantova and Tore Nielsen, “Felt presence: The uncanny encounters with the numinous Other”, \textit{AI and Society}, reproduced at Springer: www.springerlink.com/content/q4n35x0001143u57/fulltext.pdf, accessed 4/5/11. Citing de Chirico’s \textit{Mystery and melancholy of a street} as invoking ‘everyday felt presence’, they say Rudolf Otto’s term ‘numinous’ — of non-rational spiritual sensations — are experiences evoking the Other as being close to Freud’s uncanny as one’s projection of self onto the Other. Significant to Daws, they note two types of environments conducive to felt presence, both which Daws employ: extreme environments (like Daws’s outback landscapes) and everyday environments (such as dimly lit domestic interiors).
and that which he re/suppresses, and as taking the absent-present position of a narrator, as
in *The sandman* narrator who is both absent from the events taking place in the story whilst
being its presenter, its manifestation.

Unlike the uncomfortable interior-dwellers of *Somnambulists*, where the onlooker’s
viewpoint alternates from external to internal, the viewpoint of *Nostalgia II* is situated on
the interior side of the window, whilst the figures beckon the gaze and mind’s eye into its
exterior landscape. With these paintings, Daws reverses the location of the figures yet
places them decidedly either inside or outside, therefore creating situations where external
and internal are juxtaposed. Just as Stalker must leave the confines of his jaded yet homely
and ‘known interior’ of his home to journey into the exterior, forbidden zone – and ‘true
home’ – so does Daws’s onlooker ‘journey’ beyond demarcated boundaries, from ‘inside’ to
ominous ‘outer’ places.308 In *Nostalgia II*, a dark, foreboding horizon plummets into an
hazy abyss, pierced by a wedge of fire blazing across the sky, perhaps signifying a meteor or
alien encounter yet archetypically signifying dazzling glimpses or sparks of knowledge
emanating from unconscious depths, like uncanny flashes. Besides its allegorical
potentialities, it incites the melancholia of Matthew Arnold’s ‘The buried life’:

Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul’s subterranean depth upborne
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day.309

By doubly framing this scene with interior window-frames, Daws furnishes a safe viewpoint
which allows the onlooker to ponder its meaning, thus facilitating nostalgic tones.
Moreover, these windows (frames within frames or canvases within canvases) act as portals
into unknown worlds,310 drawing the viewer deeper into the scene, thus containing or
controlling the gaze. These layered frameworks or entranceways act as device and motif, as
metaphorical entrapments or enclosures which, coupled with the feeling the scene is being

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308 A similar observation about *Stalker* is made in Deltcheva and Vlasov, op. cit., p.546: ‘In *Stalker*, there is a juxtaposition
between the home and the mysterious spaces of the Zone. Yet the Stalker feels “at home” not in his family house, but only in
the Zone. The Room, where the visitors can find the divine, is located at the heart of the Zone, and the Stalker is the only
person who knows the way there. Through this spatial delineation of the Room, Tarkovsky establishes a clear-cut borderline
between the divine and the earthly world’.  
310 Such ‘unknown worlds’ belong to the greater ‘The Unknown’, which Tacey, “The gift of the unknown...”, op. cit., p.430,
regards as ‘not just a realm which sports strange and uncanny events... [but] which inspires awe and terror... overwhelms us
in its *tremendum* aspect and makes us feel imposing and helpless...’
Daws's framed landscapes engender the disquieting atmospherics of Surrealism, placing objects within the landscape in sharp relief regardless of their distance from the picture plane. Beyond opaque gauziness, Daws pictures objects (such as the staircase of *Owl Creek III* and the outbuildings in *Somnambulists*) in focus irrespective of their location within a receding landscape, stimulating uneasy viewing, often imperceptible to the onlooker. Thus, he incorporates conflicting moments of reception: vivid impressions saturated with meaning, coupled with haziness and a dispersion of questions, as the *The black lagoon* (1990) exemplifies. Featuring a more literal abyss, impelling the gaze into its volcanic, crater-like depths, *The black lagoon* combines flat planes with depth perspective, where a featureless foreground and flat black lagoon contrast the epic land of hillocks receding, eternally, into an endless horizon, recalling Piero's panels such as the *Urbino diptych*. Daws also adopts Piero's device of introducing spatial elements to create drama, with

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311 The uncanniness of telepresence is discussed in Tronstad, op. cit., p.3. Tronstad discusses telepresence, artificial intelligence (AI), artificial life and robotics genres as being 'especially well-suited for uncanny encounters. Telepresence because of the surveillance aspect, subjecting us to the invisible gaze of an unknown other; artificial life and robotics because of the potential uncertainties they may cause regarding their status as autonomous ('living') beings...'
312 Iversen, "In the blind field...", op. cit., p.424. Lawrence Daws, *The black lagoon*, 1990, oil on canvas, 157 x 137 cm, Brent A. Ogilvie collection.
313 Piero della Francesca, *Diptych of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino*, c.1467-72, tempera on two wood panels, 47 x 35 cm each, Uffizi, Florence. Daws's abyss motif reminds me of the diagram in Žižek, op. cit., p.135, which describes the relationship of jouissance and the abyss in the middle... [as a] whirlpool of enjoyment threatening to swallow us', and it also recalls a description of uncanniness in Bernstein, op. cit., pp.1118-9, where in reference to Schelling's finding Greek mythology as uncannily constructed as something 'ground- yet-unground,' she says, 'The uncanny opens as the flowers strewn over the abyss, the covering over its own hollow. The flowers of Greece repress the abyss below them; the uncanny guest, in contrast, reminds us of the absence he presents.'
crystal-blue waters juxtaposed by sinister pitch-blackness, allegorical of life-death, the seen-unseen and the void. This practice of distorting perspective so as to eliminate ‘transcendence or divine immanence’, that is to reduce the sublime grandeur of the landscape, brings the viewer into singular and intimate relationship with country, and by denying religious intonation, opens it up to uncanny replacements of the divine, to that secular uncanny which Jung regards as transcendence to individuation. The angle of placing the viewpoint high and framing objects and figures against the ground is typical of Tarkovsky’s way of framing scenes alluding to the metaphysical. The black lagoon hillocks compare with dune or mogul-like mounds in the interior maze leading to the Zone, a place of ‘eternal wandering’ where the journeymen’s actual passage, through arduous, uneven terrain, surpasses the goal of reaching it, reminiscent of Heideggerian uncanny journeying towards the homely. Stalker says, ‘Coming true here is only what’s in line with your nature, with your essence of which you know nothing. But it’s there, in you, directing you all your life’. Among Tarkovsky’s leitmotifs in common with Daws’s composition, is a chasm-like lagoon, a jet-black void or well, symbolic of psychological abysses. Fittingly, an image of Daws’s painting graces the cover of Thomas Shapcott’s novel, Spirit wrestlers (2004), which opens: ‘Your long journey to this somnolent land will be like the transformation achieved by fire’. The act of referencing Renaissance and modern masterpieces subliminally resonates past into present, and by depicting familiar landmarks such as the Glasshouse Mountains, woven with art-historical references and introducing the enigmatic through compositional

34 Recalling work of other Australian artists like John Olsen’s Life drawn towards the void, 1975, etching, sugar-lift aquatint, 60.4 x 45.1cm platemark. AGNSW. This print is from Olsen’s Edge of the void series.

35 Warwick Mules, “Earth, landscape and country”, in Electronic Proceeding: The UnAustralia Papers, reproduced at UnAustralia: Cultural Studies Association of Australasia’s Annual Conference, Canberra, Australia, 6-8 December 2006: www.unaustralia.com/proceedings.php, accessed 21/4/09, p.4. Mules references Nancy’s essay, “Uncanny landscape”, op. cit., in his paper arguing that, p.2, ‘landscape “materializes” the divine as the presence of an absence’ and that ‘in the Western tradition, landscape is an image of the earth from a distance, invoking the divine in the mode of its absence’. Mules discusses the distorted perspective of William Robinson paintings such as Creation night, Beechmont, 1988, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 193cm, which bears some comparison with Daws’s The black lagoon.

36 Similar ideas are developed in Green, op. cit., p.102, likening the Zone to the soul and goals ‘too immense to comprehend’.

37 Tarkovsky, Stalker, op. cit.

38 Thomas W. Shapcott, Spirit wrestlers, Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2004, pp.1-2. ‘Somnolent land’ refers to Australia. The clay soil of Daws’s image also rekindles Herbert, op. cit., p.11, explaining the ‘weaker’ brother Mark as ‘not the remarkably adaptable fellow... [but] a poor thing of common clay who was weakly retrogressing’.

39 Even paintings like Daws’s Poinciana tree, 1990, oil on canvas, 157 x 137 cm. exemplify the strange formations of the mountains, which are inversely mirrored in the tree formation.
devices, Daws de-familiarises the strangely-familiar. Particularly attracted to the strange forms he fathomed in the immediate landscape of his home, Daws’s mountains, representing the dawn of time, are age-old, pre-evolutionary omniscient, ever-changing animate-inanimates withholding secrets about the power of archetypes on mankind’s collective unconscious. Daws also transplants foreign (non-Australian) mountains into Australian landscapes, rendering the hazy, gothic Dawsian world strange, partially devoid of familiarity yet oddly familiar. This practice relates to literary devices noted by Royle as *defamiliarization* or *ostranenie*: to ‘make strange’, to render the familiar unfamiliar, ‘to renew the old, or make the habitual appear fresh or strange’. By inserting foreign objects into homely surrounds, Daws references the Freudian idea of foreignness representing the unconscious, whilst the lagoon outline summons Dali’s familiar shadow-casts in paintings such as *Remorse* (1931), and James Gleeson’s prose:

> Wherever we are, we are at a perimeter.  
> At the heart of the most familiar  
> we are at the edge.  
> Whatever we do, or think, or feel,  
> We are on a ledge  
> poised above the darkness...

Waterways of varying sorts, including ponds, seas, and rivers, populate Daws’s oeuvre. The intensely black gorge of *The black lagoon* threatens to flatten the scene, dividing the sandy forefront of the composition from the ashen, Armageddon-like land beyond. Whereas beaches and isthmuses reflect Surrealist illusions of dreamlike journeys between sea and land, where the shoreline represents between-worlds or unconsciousness, lagoons, swamps and wetlands provide especially uncanny atmospherics. Recognising Freud’s neglect to realise the full potential of uncanniness of crocodilian ecology in the crocodile-table story, Giblett interprets the ‘intermediary zone between dry land and deep water that crosses “the

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320 Linda van Nunen, "Around the galleries", *Wentworth Courier*, 16 March 1983, writes, Daws pictures ‘a strange land where reality is devoid of familiarity and gothic landscapes loom eerily through a luminescent atmospheric haze of unnatural hue’.

321 See Bennett and Royle, op. cit., p.207; ‘Defamiliarization: the Russian formalist critic Viktor Shklovsky uses the term *ostranenie*, usually translated as ‘making strange’ or ‘defamiliarization’, to denote what he sees as the primary function of literary texts — to make the familiar unfamiliar, to renew the old, or make the habitual appear fresh or strange.’

322 Salvador Dali, *Remore or Sphinx embedded in the sand*, 1931, oil on canvas, 19.1 x 26.7 cm, Krege Art Museum, Michigan State Univ., East Lansing, MI.


324 Although the lagoon’s outline suggests silhouetted portraiture, it does not necessarily compare with Dali’s painting of *Voltaire* which intentionally demonstrates *paranoiac critical perception*, particularly the tomfoolery of imaging the unconscious, where perception of reality is questioned. Alternatively, Daws may intentionally conjure art historical references for the purpose of exciting viewer memory. Salvador Dali, *Slave market with apparition of the invisible bust of Voltaire*, 1940, oil on canvas, 46.6 x 55.2 cm, Salvador Dali Museum, Florida.
boundary” between land and water’ as one which ‘upsets the dualism between them’. The dank murkiness of swamps and the heaviness of equatorial wetlands as told from a Westerner’s perspective are uncanny evocations.

Reminiscent of Stalker, Daw’s rooms within rooms, portals, strange passageways to nowhere, chambers and labyrinths are pictorial devices aligned to Jungian symbols of the unconscious. Scenes of everyday domestic places are transformed and made faintly strange, with Daws’s The bathroom (1978) setting, for example, comparing with Tarkovsky’s kitchen scene, as similarly positing the domestic as inherently strange. Maintaining apparent order and coherency, composed of harmonious mathematical proportions, ancient Greek golden ratios and Renaissance geometry, The bathroom is constructed on several planes: the forefrontal shower screen; floor-tiles receding into the lower one-third horizontal plane; and another ambiguous area in the upper, right corner. Contrasted by distinct tiles and furnishings, the shadowy alcoves and steam-clouded figures jog the memorable bathroom scene from Psycho. Although it appears not as obviously eerie as

Figure 46: Lawrence Daws, The bathroom, 1978

[Image of the artwork]

325 Giblett, op. cit., p.308, says, ‘like Freud who ignores the story within the story of the alligator swamp in New Guinea (and like Royce who ignores the alligators and the swamp in the story within the story), and like both who ignore these aspects as the vector and vehicle for the uncanny, [Val] Plumwood overbooks the fact that the wetland with its distinctive features is the crocodile’s habitat’. Plumwood authored an account of her own encounter with a crocodile in Kakadu, NT.

326 Critiquing Plumwood’s ‘croc story’, Giblett, ibid., p.309, writes, ‘the Kakadu wetland for Plumwood is good and heavenly, the crocodile swamp by implication is bad and hellish, though the wetland and the swamp are one and the same place—just figured differently. The Kakadu wetland is Eden before the Fall, or before the appearance of the serpent, here transformed into the crocodile. It is also the place of good magic, but crocodiles are excluded from this world of good magic as they bring trouble into paradise by enticing creatures of the land with bad magic into a watery grave, into a wet underworld, into its world—the swamp… Plumwood (strangely for an eco-feminist) reproduces not only the patriarchal, Western moralisation of the wetland but also its dualisms and spatial metaphysics and poetics of land and water, good and bad, white and black, heaven and hell, above and below’. Ibid., p.300, argues that reptiles are typecast as ‘orally sadistic monsters’ which project human desires and fears onto non-human Others who Freud would otherwise classify as uncannily primeval.

327 Lawrence Daws, The bathroom II, 1978, aquatint and drypoint on paper, 50 x 50 cm, Joe Daws collection. Daws’s bathroom pictures somewhat compare with John Brack’s The bathroom, 1957, oil on canvas, 129.4 x 81.2 cm, NGA.

328 Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, the motion picture film, Psycho, was distributed by Paramount Pictures in 1960.
others in his oeuvre, the divine proportions he assembles bring into question whether unapparent, miniscule distortions of those ratios unsettle the viewing experience, especially in pictures where he performs tricks of sensory perception within the stability of the square. *The bathroom* is framed as a perfectly symmetrical square, alluding to the enigma of *squaring the circle.* But within the frame, Daws subtly distorts its symmetry thus inconspicuously confusing symmetry with asymmetry. Alternatively, but not mutually exclusively, the unison between disturbing content and divine composition arguably causes unsettling viewing. Combining symmetry with discordant imagery and/or by subtly unbalancing an otherwise harmonious picture are devices Daws invariably employs, prompting observations such as, ‘There is a veil of mystery, both painterly and imaginative’ over his paintings.329 Order accompanying disorder: a conjunction of geometrical order and organic, ungovernable chaos, as consciousness to unconsciousness, Daws’s techniques engender ambiguity and unsettle the gaze, disrupting audience psyche. Contrastingly, the stability of Piero’s squarely-framed *The Nativity* (1470-5)330 is said to engender solemnity, where subject (the adoration of Christ) is complemented by technical device.

Figure 47: Lawrence Daws, *Perilous shore,* 1999 (left); Piero’s *Baptism of Christ,* c.1450s (right)


330 Piero della Francesca, *The Nativity,* 1470-5, oil on poplar, 124.4 x 122.6 cm, National Gallery, London.
Among many comparisons possible between Daws and other renown uncanny artists, a strikingly complex one is Daws’s *Perilous shore* (1999), combining imagery of Daw’s nude and bowler-hatted silhouette recalling René Magritte’s *Memory of a journey* (1926) and *The son of man* (1964) and de Chirico’s *The enigma of the arrival and the afternoon* (1911-12), respectively, and Ernst’s *Attirement of the bride* (1940), as appropriations engendering senses of déjà-vu.331 Daws’s painting points to Piero, as do Magritte, de Chirico and Ernst, applying compositional tricks and checker-board flooring to dazzle the gaze, among other devices owing to the Quattrocento master. Piero’s *Baptism of Christ* (c.1450s)332 is particularly comparable, with Daws’s brushwork eliciting similar wispy airiness and delicate tonalities, energising the scene with a fresh radiance, imparting life into a vista of otherwise catatonic figures whilst juxtaposing the natural or real (animate/organic) with the unreal (inanimate/artificial). Whereas Piero’s subject centres on religion and politics, Daws liberates Piero’s formal methods for modern-day purposes, finding them particularly useful in conjuring uncanniness. Learnt from studying Piero masterpieces, Daws’s structural organisation elides the (iconographic-like) flat within spatial realism, and therefore, the meditative within the real. Just as Piero brings his hometown surrounds of Sansepolcro into the frame, Daws draws upon his Owl Creek vista of eerie mountain-scapes, alien illuminations of realistic imagery entwined with archetypes such as the Jungian ‘philosophical tree,’333 echoing Piero’s locally-inspired mountainscape and trees with his

331 In his essay about appropriation in Australian art, “Locality fails”, Imants Tillers, in Butler, op. cit., pp.139-44, talks about de Chirico’s penchant for referencing the classical, saying the ‘game of “quotation” and “cross-reference” frequently produce ‘strong feelings of déjà-vu’. Deborah Hart, “A work in progress”, *Imants Tillers: one world many visions*, NGA, www.nga.gov.au/Exhibition/Tillers/Default.cfm?MnuID=4, accessed 3/8/10, questions Tillers’s claim, ‘locality fails,’ noting it is not that locality fails but rather that non-Indigenous artists like Tillers, an immigrant, was grappling with a sense of belonging. Royle, *The uncanny*, op. cit., p.178, notes whilst Freud does not explicitly use the term ‘déjà-vu’, he refers to it in *The psychopathology of everyday life* as something that “we must... include in the category of the miraculous and the “uncanny””. Citing Harold Bloom’s notions concerning the anxiety of influence, Royle, pp.178-9, observes that in likenesses of all kinds and in situations where someone has been influenced by something or someone else, a familiarity is borne by virtue of that influence, including Freud’s own habit of ‘déjà raconteurism’ (repetitions of his and others’ writings), where there exists an ‘anxiety of influence’, which ‘makes an extraordinarily daring and violent gesture of appropriation’. Royle poses whether the very act of psychoanalysis, where influence is exerted upon the analysand, is a form of taking on another’s ‘foreign’ ideas, thus a form of appropriation. Lawrence Daws, *Perilous shore*, 1999, oil on canvas, 137 x 157 cm. René Magritte, *Memory of a journey*, 1926, oil on canvas, 75 x 65 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris; René Magritte, *The son of man*, 1964, oil on canvas, 116 x 89 cm; Giorgio de Chirico, *The enigma of the arrival and the afternoon*, 1911-12, oil on canvas, 70 x 86.5 cm; Max Ernst, *Attirement of the bride*, 1940, oil on canvas, 129.6 x 96.3 cm, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice. Also René Magritte’s *The rape*, 1934, oil on canvas, 73.2 x 54.3 cm. Menil Collection, Houston; and, René Magritte’s *The sage’s carnival*, 1947, oil on canvas, 65 x 50 cm. Other comparions can be drawn between Daws’s *Burning train and flesh cube* (1973) and Magritte’s *Time transfixed* (1938), for example. Paul Delvaux’s *L’espo*, 1943, oil on canvas, 105 x 128 cm, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya, may also be considered here.

332 Piero della Francesca, *The baptism of Christ*, c.1450s, tempera on panel, 167 x 116 cm, National Gallery, London.

eerily repellent, mouldy blue-green gumtree.334 Daws's use of cerise to balance the composition injects drama into his scene, as raging igneous peril oozing down towards the vulnerable and exposed (literally nude) people of Perilous shore, recalling catastrophic Pompeian events whilst alluding to ancient Aboriginal legends of the Glasshouse Mountains, remnant cores of volcanoes active over 20 million years ago. Significantly, contrasting earthly, natural forces against man-made interiors, Daws repeats the metaphor of Freudian archaeological-psychoanalysis whilst alluding to Pompeian tragedy, the uncanniest archaeological locale where visitors experience a 'sense of having intruded in a domestic scene' — domestic yet absolutely unhomely for something of horror lurks behind their quotidian semblances.335 Of Greek foundation, infamous Pompeii offers a subliminal uncanny remembrance, as alluded to in Perilous shore, restating the fire topos as an energy which creates 'fault-lines' both separating and exposing Earth's physical surface with the underworld, analogous of man's uncanny conscious-unconscious fracture. Ostensibly, this type of fault-line separates what Lawrence describes as 'a great horrible lava pool' deep within the unconscious bowels of man,336 underscoring the uncanny-fire association and 'fire!' as the Heideggerian source. The complexities of man's existence and reliance on fire are subtly brought out by such illusionism, leading perception into primitive pasts, into the core of uncanny unconsciousness, or, for Sartre, towards their unfeigned-being.

Perilous shore relays other uncanny notions including the mirrored reflections of self and Other — the double. Freud explains the unexpected appearance of the double as an uncanny event, a sort of symptomatic blindsiding where one encounters their doppelgänger as encompassing manifestations of a childhood creation or 'harking-back to particular phases in the evolution of the self-regarding feeling, a regression to a time when the ego had not yet marked itself off sharply from the external world and from other people'.337 Throughout Daws's oeuvre, the double is represented by shadows, reflections and

334 Other similarities include Daws's mountaintop oddly resembling the cylindrical hats found in many of Piero's portraits.
335 Vidler, "The architecture of the uncanny...", op. cit., pp.17-18, writes, 'this dramatic confrontation of the homely and the unhomely... made of Pompeii a locus of the literary and artistic uncanny for much of the nineteenth century... [and] qualified [it] as a textbook example of the uncanny on every level, from the implicit horror of the domestic to the revelations of mysteries, religious and otherwise'. Heidegger, Hölderlin's hymn..., op. cit., p.25, mentions the artwork of Pompeii.
336 Lawrence, op. cit., pp.288-9, reads, 'perhaps it was this inversion [of southern versus northern hemispheric weather/seasons] which had brought up all that corrosive and bitter fire from the bowels of his unconscious... if the fire had suddenly erupted in his own belly, it would erupt one day in the bellies of all men. Because there it had accumulated, like a great horrible lava pool, deep in the unconscious bowels of all men... The living dead...'
337 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.235.
twins/couplings, as seen here, where an external figure mirrors an internal, undressed one – 'solid' silhouettes alongside 'see-through,' a naked-dressed coupling which analogises the known-conscious versus the unknown-unconscious.338

Similarly, the symbolically subliminal, translucent and 'ghostly' drapes of *Sunday train* (2001)339 substantiates notions of the Dawsian *doppelgänger*, whilst the speeding train flashing across the canvas is another leitmotif, a dynamic, energetic torpedo alluding to time-fleeting/memory-fleeting, whilst recalling Heideggerian immersions into the uncanny-primitive and uncanny-classical of 'fire!' *Sunday train* exemplifies the confusion Daws generates, with spatial divisions between interior and exteriors abstracted, illustrating the paradoxical nature of the conscious-unconscious workings of the psyche and ambiguous agencies of uncanniness. Structuring his picture slightly awry of divine proportions, Daws creates an imperceptibly vertiginous effect on the viewer in this intimate interior scene, exuding an eerie, brooding drama which withholds secrets onlookers cannot grasp, where narrative is subcutaneous and skin-crawlingly suspenseful. With *Sunday train*, like *Somnambulists* and *Perilous shore*, Daws evokes cinematographic attributes of *Stalker* and

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338 Another example of the repeated or twinned figure is found in René Magritte's *La reproduction interdite* (The Forbidden Reproduction), 1937, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 65 cm, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

339 Lawrence Daws, *Sunday train*, 2001, oil on canvas, 122 x 102 cm.
Hopper's *Automat* (1927), exemplary of urban alienation, and an equally enigmatic scene of vulnerability and solitude, with lost-in-deep-thought, isolated figures. The self-absorbed figure in *Sunday train* looks eternally staring into the distance yet to within the private realm of her inner-world: the cue affirming self-contemplation being her outlook, hypnotically focused on the fixed, distant buildings whilst not distracted by the train. Alternatively, she stares outwardly, oblivious to or actively evading inner-reflection, in the way Clara, as Nathanael's voice of reason, enacts the Sartrean concept of quotidian self-deceit, writing to Nathanael:

> If our mind is firm enough and adequately fortified by the joys of life to be able to recognize alien and hostile influences as such... then this mysterious power will perish in its futile attempt to assume a shape that is supposed to be a reflection of ourselves.341

Peering dazedly into a void, Daws's woman compares with Hopper's mentally isolated woman,342 engendering senses of psychological instability, thus igniting uncanny fear much like Freud feels the mentally-disturbed evoke uncanniness. A support engendering such fear is the 'blind field' device which fathoms the gaze of an unseen intruder who is figured outside the scene, as sensed across many of Daws's pictures.343

Referencing past-time by evoking classical marble sculpture, a see-through shirt tightly covers Daws's female's torso, whilst depicting the topos of the *passing moment*: the fleeting train literally and metaphorically ignites the scene with transience, uniting eternal-time with momentary-time. Resembling the perverse equilibrium of chaos theory, Daws shows the momentariness of life as comprised of multitudinous incidents, uncanny slippages, recalling Hopper's glimpses of train-passenger viewpoints.344 Symbolic of eternal transience, the train leitmotif carries the viewer into metaphorical journeys whereas the artist paints a fleeting snippet — a stillness-yet-persistence of time, as portrayed using a train-journeying

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340 Often the figures in Hopper's work, whether solitary or not, are portrayed as isolated and self-absorbed, thus alluding to the psychological. An image of Hopper's *Automat*, 1927, oil on canvas,71.4 x 91.4 cm, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, was used by *Time* magazine for a cover story about stress and depression in the twentieth century; see Roben Wright, "The evolution of despair", *Time Magazine*, 28 August 1995.

341 Hoffmann, *Selected writings of...*, op cit., p.102. Hoffmann, *Tales of Hoffmann*, op. cit., p.96, reads, '...we shall always be able to recognize an iminmal influence for what it is; and then that uncanny power must surely go under'.

342 Regarding voids in Hopper's *Automat*, see Iversen, "In the blind field...", op. cit., p.418. Albeit her observations are insightful, Iversen tries to reconcile the uncanny, the sublime and Freud's 'pleasure principle' yet misses Freud's point that the uncanny is a trigger or mechanism rather than a function of desire, state of satisfaction or content or even memory itself.

343 Considering Hopper's *Office at night* (1940) an uncanny exemplar, Iversen explicates the device of blind fields. ibid.

344 In paintings such as Edward Hopper's *Railroad train*, 1908, oil on canvas, 61.6 x 73.7 cm, Addison Gallery of American Art, Massachusetts; and *Freight car at Truro*, 1931, watercolour over graphite on paper, 34.9 x 50.2 cm, Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York.
motif similar to de Chirico's *Mystery and melancholy of a street* (1913-14)\(^\text{345}\) and Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, especially Tarkovsky's opening and closing scenes which Daws finds particularly unnerving.\(^\text{346}\) Rail tracks, roadways and paths are devices commonly introduced to impart a sense of capturing momentary glimpses and arresting time, and like de Chirico, Daws places classical architecture and statues aside modern to subtly demarcate past, present and future. With *Sunday train*, the viewer watches the woman pondering the passages of time hurtling down life's track at breakneck pace, passing-by yet catching something which feels familiar-unfamiliar and momentarily stopping time. Partly attributed to layers of muted colour superimposed as thin washes of paint, the effect educes an eerie silence or insulation of sound, quietness washes over the canvases providing a veil of mystery that makes the buildings, domes and rocky outcrops 'rising from the distant plain loom even more strangely'.\(^\text{347}\)

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\(^\text{345}\) Giorgio de Chirico, *Mystery and melancholy of a street*, 1914, oil on canvas, 88 x 72 cm.

\(^\text{346}\) Daws's comment in interview with Grishin, 24 June 2011, with author present.

\(^\text{347}\) Morrell, op. cit., p.58. Further comparisons between Daws's pictorial language are invited with de Chirico's *The anguish of departure*, 1913-14, oil on canvas, 106 x 90.17 x 8.89 cm, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY.
Cinematic and ‘filmic’ qualities of Daws’s compositions are important aspects also in common with Hopper. Many of Daws’s paintings appear as still frames or theatrical images, recounting Žižek’s theories concerning cinematography, including the dramatic tension of the axis between the gaze and voice. Žižek contends cinema is a kind of condensation where on ‘one hand you have the problem of the voice, on the other the narrativization’, asserting, ‘Cinema is still the easiest way, just as for Freud dreams were the royal way to the unconscious’. Daws’s canvases appear as muted stills, visually arresting time, sound and gaze. In arguing the uncanniness of Hopper’s work, Iversen discusses his paintings as evoking ‘film stills, suspended narratives, which simultaneously incite our desire to narrate and frustrate it’. Likewise, Daws’s film-like images engender the dramatic yet thwart comprehensive reading. With the countenance of epic cinematography, his landscapes with peopled masses of machinelike phalanxes of automatons, as in *Cain and the Promised Land II* (1983) recall Zamyatin’s ‘numbers’ – the anonymous citizens of *We*. Worshipping ‘irrevocable regularity’, D-503 heralds, ‘And we shall come to you, my unknown planetary readers – we shall come to you to make your life even as divinely rational and regular as ours’. This prophesy uncannily portends totalitarian control whilst reaffirming authoritarian-control for self-control, D-503 anguishs, ‘I had an uncanny feeling about being all left alone with my own self... with this new self of mine, a strange self’. Themes of people queuing, following blindly into annihilation, those who ‘cannot handle their own

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348 Žižek in interview in Geert Lovink, *Uncanny networks: Dialogues with the virtual intelligentsia*, London: MIT Press, 2002, p.44. Žižek, op. cit., pp.116-9, discusses the Hitchcockian montage and the kinds of cinematographic shots he uses to evoke uncanniness, saying Hitchcock permits two kinds of shots, ‘the objective shot of the person approaching a Thing [an uncanny object] and the subjective shot presenting the Thing as the person sees it’. He, p.88, describes that when ‘a perfectly “natural” or “familiar” situation is denatured, [it] becomes “uncanny”... [and] Suddenly we enter the realm of double meaning’. 354 Iversen, “In the blind field...”, op. cit., p.414.

350 Such as *The lord of the rings* trilogy movies directed by Peter Jackson, released by New Line Cinema, 2001-03. Alluding to Daws’s ‘snapshot’ tactics, Morrell, op. cit., p.57, describes Daws’s distant fleeing crowds as having ‘the universal familiarity of newsreel footage showing frightened masses’.

351 Lawrence Daws, *Cain and the Promised Land II*, 1983, mixed media, collage, oil on canvas, diptych 170 x 296.5cm, QAG.

352 Daws’s diptych recalls Magritte’s *Le domaine d’Arnhem* series (1962). Whereas Nancy Borlase, “Inevitable annihilation”, *The Bulletin*, 28 July 1973, likens Daws’s en masse figures with those of Spanish artist, Juan Genoves, Daws’s figures form tighter groupings and seem to share common concerns, a collective unconscious, and are heading in the same direction whereas Genoves’s figures form ad hoc or scattered groups without shared purpose. Ward, “Daws gives birth...”, op. cit., describes Daws’s diptych in ways recalling Hieronymus Bosch: ‘The Glasshouse Mountains rise sentinel-like... [amidst] an atomic blast, a Tower of Babel, a small streetscape thronged with people, a large broken egg from which people are emerging... a malevolent hen’s head...malevolent machinery...’

353 Zamyatin, op. cit., p.44 and p.99.

354 Ibid., pp.69-70.
freedom', relates to Sartrean concepts of man averting self-responsibility, the foundation from which man momentarily glimpses his awesome, autonomous self. Similarly, Freud deems his experience of becoming lost in the world as uncanny, a bewilderment which Sartre regards as man's suppressive coping mechanism; man assimilates so as to not stand out as alien, unburdening himself through assimilation in the quotidian cover-up of Being-in-the-world. Fritz Pappenheim recapitulates man's condemnation to be free, saying, Heidegger tells us that if man tends to flee from himself and to plunge from the height of solitude into the public lowlands of the many we should not see in this fall a descent into inquietude and crisis. Quite the contrary: to exist simply as one of the many "exercises a profoundly appeasing influence as if everything was in the best order".

Amplifying these ideas, Daws explains these pictorial hordes as being derived from 'thinking about people's inability to handle freedom', echoing Kangaroo's Somers's vexations about 'frenzied outward rushing of the vast masses of people, away from themselves... frenziedly outwards, like souls with hydrophobia rushing away from the pool of water', whereas Somers sees himself 'set apart from mankind, a Cain, or worse', and wishes to drift back into the sea of 'his own inward soul, his own unconscious faith, over which his will had no exercise', wondering, 'Why did the mass of people not want this stillness and this peace with their own being? Lawrence writes, Australia 'is really the country where men might live in a sort of harmless Eden', where the sardonic tolerance and 'strange unanimity of harmlessness in the crowd had a half-paralysing effect'. In rendering his mise-en-scène as modernity within ancient atmospherics, Daws juxtaposes Australia as an uncannily new-yet-old-world, of virgin-bush-in-ancient-land.

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355 Neville Weston, "Apocalyptic", The Advertiser, 29 September 1982, describes Daws's people as 'queuing up to be reaped to annihilation... [a] panic-driven race of self-destructive people, who cannot handle their own freedom'.


358 Daws as quoted in Sandra McGrath, "The forest on ice", The Australian, 21 July 1980. Weston, "Lawrence Daws", op. cit., p.6, reiterates Daws's concern: 'He has often talked of the inability of human beings to handle their own freedom'.

359 Lawrence, op. cit., p.276 and pp.172-3. Ibid., p.166, reads, 'Better anything on earth than the millions of human ants', whilst p.379 describes the individual voice silenced in a mob as the 'disintegration of the social mankind back to its elements. Rudimentary individuals with no desire of communication... A herding together like dumb cattle, a promiscuity like slovenly animals. Yet basic indifference under everything'. More ideas revolving around amassed peoples, herd or mobs, are described in ibid., pp.323-64, including concepts about collective psychology, a vertebral telepathic communication innate to man as being a pre-mental form of consciousness, and man being an automaton and denying 'true' self by hearing nothing at all; 'They racket away in their nice, complete, homely universe, running their trains and making their wars...' (p.326).

Daws's strategy of applying archetypal symbology continues in *Cain and the Promised Land II* with gamete-like organisms aiming towards an egg bathed in light, like swimming spermatozoa spiralling towards ovum, the origins of life, reaching memory back to the beginning of journeying and the fissure with mother-womb: Daws describes this dark, cavernous, womb-shaped tunnel as 'signalling our return to Mother Earth and to rebirth'.

Such tunnels evoke the passageway ('meat grinder') in *Stalker* and the Tarkovskian idea of moving, physically and psychically from one 'zone' into another, whilst hollow passageways represent an absence of something with the capacity to suddenly spill forth, as watery deluges down a culvert. Daws's pictorial elements are firmly rooted with the central triangular composition of the mountain acting as Earth mother, whilst forefront ranges provide a border, isolating the onlooker and separating the secret, hidden world, yet confusing depth perspective in ways reminiscent of de Chirico, symbolising the utmost outer-world of the conscious as juxtaposed by hidden inner-worlds. With an evocatively milky bloom, different planes and multiple perspectives of close and faraway distances, Daws engenders dream-landscapes which likewise solicit Walser: '...as if asleep, buried under dust, with the life gone out of it. The nearest thing lies as in a faraway veil-like dreaming distance [sheathed in cloud]'.

Responding to an observation about the cool, blue-grey light of Piero, Daws reflects, *The nice thing about... the [Pieroesque] palette I use... is you're not sure whether it's an early morning light or a late evening light... Halfway between the real world and the shadow world and that lovely haze is occupying the middle ground. And anything can happen when you're in that state of being.*

Daws pictures an alien-like landscape, the Heideggerian foreign, denoting uncanny

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861 Daws describes this work to writer Rosemary Crumlin in 1988 in Bruce, Lawrence Daws: Asylum in Eden, op. cit., p.54. Daws explains the painting generally addresses ideas concerning the human condition and depicts the masses of India, an egg symbolizing Jewish peoples, swirling hordes of Islamic peoples in anticlockwise motion around Mecca, hedonistic cages leading to killing fields where figures are lined up in rows like sugar cane ready to be harvested and carried off in trains to the womb-like tunnels, as emblematic of rebirth, all watched upon by alien-like visitors who are external, passive yet ominous observers. Interpreting the work of Giacometti, Foster, "Convulsive Identity", op. cit., p.47, explains the cave as symbolising repressed primal fantasies of the womb, a desire which 'renders any return of the maternal, such as the memory of a cave, uncanny'. Ibid., p.49, also discussed Giacometti's 'cage' and 'eye' symbolism, which has parallels with Daws.

862 Turovskaya, op. cit., p.111, explains the tunnel of *Stalker* as a 'long-lead grey pipe' like those channelling underground rivers and streams, where getting through is a "spiritual or psychological trial" rather than a physical one.

863 Foster, "Convulsive Identity", op. cit., p.29, discerns de Chirico's 'paranoiac' perspectives as working to unground and unsettle the expected viewer, and where 'points of coherence, viewing and vanishing, are decentered, sometimes to the extent that the "seer" [figure] appears within the scene as a sightless, degendered mannequin...', and where 'rational perspective is deranged, [so that] the visual array as such becomes uncanny'.

864 From Walser's "Kleist in Thun", in Walser, op. cit., p.22.

journeyings, unhomely towards homely, where spaceships and alien creatures evoke the sensibilities of Adelaide's Apocalyptic School, formed in the 1940s when Daws still lived there. Remarkably, Apocalyptic School art featured:

Soft indefiniteness and mystery, suddenly concreting itself with overwhelming hardness and harshness... rich in [melancholy] tonals... It permits the subconscious to add its quota of matter, but all must be ordered to the integrating process of the myth. It delights in caves and caverns, in transparencies and half embryonic forms; it allows of passion, and of dead things fading into night... [forms of] psychological morphology - strange, plasmic, cell-like daemons of emotive force, coming forward or retiring into the varying depth-perspective of the picture plane.

Figure 50: Lawrence Daws, The People's Square, Shanghai, 2002

366 Developed from, and an extension of, Surrealism, the Australian Apocalyptic School was formed by artists including Ivor Francis (1906-1993). In 1943, Francis wrote an essay about the movement for Max Harris's Angry Penguins journal. It is reproduced in Ann Stephen, Andrew McNamara and Philip Goad, Modernism & Australia: Documents on art, design and architecture 1917-1967, Carlton, Vic.: Miegunyah Press, 2006, pp.423-7. Naming Roberto Matta and Esteban Frances as epitomizing 'Apocalypticism', Francis's term 'psychological morphology' is borrowed from a painting of Roberto Matta's, Psychological morphology (c.1938).

367 Ibid., p.426. The presence of the alien within the familiar recalls many ideas concerning the uncanny, including Žižek, op. cit., p.145, who writes, 'The most familiar things take on an [uncanny] dimension... when one finds them in another place, a place that "is not right." And the thrill effect results precisely from the familiar, domestic character of what one finds in this Thing's forbidden place... ' Arguably, the strange 'Things' in Daws's Cain and the Promised Land II amplify the Freudian unheimlichkeit he achieves.
Daws also turns to futuristic worlds which mark mankind as pushing towards future fate, further alienating themselves yet, perversely, pressing towards the homely. *The People's Square, Shanghai* (2002) alludes to electronic cyber-world evolutions whilst constructing mandalas within grid topology. Evoking the labyrinthine topology of a computer motherboard, peopled squares and avenues replace electronic signals, recalling Castle's observation that electronic devices are inherently uncanny:

> Whenever something non-human can move on its own, respond to our movements, signal to us, answer questions, or image our bodies or voices back to us in some luminous or resonant fashion, we confront a kind of cognitive *mise-en-abyme*. We assent to such devices rationally... but in some atavistic part of us they remain magical and inexplicable.

Castle articulates the irony of modern, global travel necessitating new communication systems, wherein the increasingly sophisticated equates to greater vulnerability and anxiousness. Summoning Olympia, Daws’s futuristic landscape can be read as reflecting automata-like electrodes as animate-inanimate embodiments of anxiety, inducing fear and splitting the unity of self to awaken the unconsciously re/suppressed, whilst conceptualising the psychophysiology of the conscious/unconscious as opposite electromagnetic fields, the psyche as wired as ‘on’ or ‘off’, ‘0’ or ‘1’, where uncanny electrical cataclysms occur should opposites collide. As such, it is a painted analogy concurrently representing the importance of personal memory in the creative process, an illuminating act which echoes a passage from *The sandman*:

> If, like an audacious painter, you had initially sketched the outline of the picture within you in a few bold strokes, you would have easily been able to make the colors deeper and more intense until the multifarious crowd of living shapes swept your friends away and they saw themselves, as you see yourself, in the midst of the scene that had issued from your soul.

Populating his work with symbolic cues as triggering uncanny psychic cataclysms, as occurrences of synchronicity unconsciously transmitted, much of Daws’s aesthetics incubate dark gothic sensibilities recalling medieval and Greco-Roman origins. His natural worlds often figure as raw and untamed, with fire leitmotifs representing the primitive and eternally burning core of man’s uncanniness, and in epic landscapes, man stands in awestricken silence awaiting an unknown yet somehow known fate. Something unknown.

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268 Lawrence Daws, *The people's square, Shanghai*, 2002, oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm, Shanghai Art Gallery, Shanghai.

269 Similar to those pointed out in Jung et al., op. cit., pp.242-3.


271 As theories comparing the unconscious to ‘fields’ in physics; Jung et al., op. cit., p.308.

looms large in his pictures, evoking untapped feelings derived from the ancient evolution of the unconscious. Personally for Daws, his labyrinthine, fiery nocturnes provide a therapeutic means of rejuvenation: upon ‘working them through’, he feels ‘strangely at peace as if coming out from the dark shade into the sun’. These feelings arguably relate to the Jungian process of individuation, where one seeks communion with their inner-world, acknowledging repressed unconsciousness, which Daws, acting as ‘hero archetype’, seeks to assimilate so that self-unification can be accomplished. Whilst some say his more recent, serene work discerns a person of self-possession, it does not necessarily mean his search for inner composure is accomplished, rather that his journeying towards ‘homely’ individuation is anticipated. Moreover, Daws’s archetypal imagery does not attempt to claim a certain truth but that truth is uncertainty, existing on a conscious-unconscious threshold. Strangely familiar imagery and archetypes are crucial stimuli which may trigger an uncanny sensation as the participant becomes vaguely aware of the inner-life which holds power over them, latent yet exposed ‘content’ at the crux of our uncanny existence. Ultimately, Daws creates visually enigmatic work of multi-layered meaning, employing classical and archetypal pictorial stimuli, matched with contemporaneous cinematographic style, throwing a dreamlike aura over his work, where otherwise prescient figures represent man as estranged and searching for a truth which remains hidden and alien. It is an ominous, unseen presence of something both alien yet intrinsic to man’s being which is central to Daws. Now, come bushfire! sunburnt, smouldering earth, red-hot outback, charred remains, dust-to-dust, drought-stricken devastation, desolation: Daws’s Australia is neither Armageddon nor Paradise – it is something else altogether, otherworldly and uncanny.

373 Daws is quoted in Waldren, op. cit.
In her acclaimed book, *On photography*, Susan Sontag explains photographs as being interpretative images of the ‘real’ yet also *traces, footprints or death masks*, attributes photography-based art inherits regardless of artistic intention. Although such intrinsic qualities of photographic mediums achieve uncanniness, in accomplishing superlative uncanny effects, several other aspects demand consideration including the artists’ command of applying ‘artistic’ or ‘paradoxical deceit’ in ways which nonetheless persuade audiences of their images’ veracity, such that audience disbelief is suspended, consciously or unconsciously. Pat Brassington’s fabricated images and Bill Henson’s staged scenes are produced using a variety of techniques, photography-based, computer-generated and otherwise, to construct ‘photograph-like’ or ‘filmic’ images that arouse traditional sensations of photographs whilst referencing modern technologies, thereby immersing the ostensibly out-dated with newer modes of picture-making. Whilst Brassington manipulates images using computer programs, her often sepia-toned and colour-adjusted pictures typically reference old methods and dated technologies, whereas Henson looks to age-old subjects and re-images them in modern ways alongside modern objects, variously intermixing old with new and invariably destabilising meaning and disturbing time-place contexts. In this era of ‘post-photography’, their artwork is a progression of the technologically-driven paradoxical deceit of ‘the filmic’, where photographs, photograph-like digital pigment prints and ‘film’ present as simultaneously literal or ‘real’ yet phantasmic, spectral, ‘unreal’ – thus uncanny. Although, like paintings and sculpture, film produces ‘timeless’ snapshots outlasting the objects depicted, the *filmic*, especially digitally-derived images, arguably engenders uncanniness more than sculpture, paintings and other

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2 As opposed to ‘normative’ photography. Stephen Haley, “Double exposure: Post-photographic practice”, *Photofile*, no.84 (Summer 2008), pp.38-47, explains post-photography as a practice which experiments with processes and ‘challenges photography’s veracity, its indexical link. It is often playful, subversive of normative photography’s seriousness and claims to authority...’ The domains of post-photography and photomedia are interlinked.
3 I use ‘film’ in the more general sense to include analogue and digital film, still and moving pictures, the medium, a thin, transparent and often glossy coating (as applied in still photography), and of cinematography. Such practices, or the allusion to them (including inkjet and pigment prints which appear as photographs), is what I generalise as ‘the filmic’ or ‘filmic’.
4 As discussed in McQuire, *The media city...*, op. cit., p.31.
non-filmic mediums. This section focusses on how the filmic conveys uncanniness unlike other mediums.

Photography is a pervasive, ubiquitous medium, perceived to be a 'known quantity.' Whereas photography is thought to depict what we feel actually existed, there remain doubts as to the sleights and trickery which have been attributed to the medium since its inception. Although omnipresent 'happy snaps' somewhat engender the misguided belief that photographs possess 'truth,' they nonetheless fall short of achieving conclusive veracity, as the onlooker, no matter how technically proficient or inept at photographic techniques or knowledgeable of 'tricks of the trade,' maintains a glimmer of doubt, which they nonetheless suspend or vacillate to and from in their tendency to read the filmic as 'real.'

The advent of photo-digital manipulation has served to heighten the distrustful attitude towards the filmic. Contrary to the long-held view that photographs could be upheld with evidentiary certainty, people engender uncertainty towards the image. This very curious but impervious uncertainty (a known-unknown) associates the filmic with the strangeness of the uncanny. Evolving simultaneously with the uncanny of the mid-nineteenth-century, 'film' is inherently enigmatic for various reasons borne out in these final case-studies of filmic artwork which frequently appear as stage-managed evolutions of the mannequin as semi-real/real human models retaining suggestions of the sculptural Olympia. Brassington transforms the Freudian uncanny into two-dimensional, Surrealist and film noir influenced depictions, whilst Henson's dramatic, chiaroscuro-inspired nocturnes arouse profound Heideggerian journeys into the homely. Such distinctions are not as clear as thus put — their work is inspired by multifarious sensibilities including the gothic and classical, whilst leveraging the faux-effects of the filmic to achieve peculiarly uncanny impressions.

Among voluminous material written about film, Theodor Adorno accords the processing side of film and photography with placing 'higher intrinsic significance on the object, as foreign to subjectivity, than aesthetically autonomous techniques', and asserts that 'society projects into film quite differently' than into other aesthetic mediums. Zizek makes

1 Deceit as acknowledged through that which is felt to be real somewhat reflects notions of 'truth' as complicated by that which it is 'made to miss,' functions which truth overlooks; deceit as a residual or remainder of truth; Feiman, op cit., p.117.
2 Theodor Adorno, The culture industry: Selected essays on mass culture, J.M. Bernstein (ed.), London: Routledge, 1990, p.157; also that 'There can be no aesthetics of the cinema...which would not include the sociology of the cinema'. Manic, The darkroom..., op. cit., approaches reading photography as performative, discussing Freudian psychoanalysis and the uncanny.
similar observations whilst contributing to the domain devoted to cinema theory as do many others who more specifically look at the filmic and cinematographic uncanny. Leo Charney describes the screen (or filmic) object as differing from its source, 'from what it was before; the new context makes it a new object'; whilst it repeats the source object, it ineffably changes: 'In mechanical reproduction's reproduction of the physical universe, something new emerges'. Cinema, as Lesley Stern writes, 'gives us the experience of time, but in temporalizing it plays all the time on a series of indeterminacies: here/there, appearance/disappearance, life/death, past/future.... The cinema taps our imagination, our unconsciousness, to produce a sensory affect of dissonance at the very moment of identity'. Considering its unnerving ability to collapse the present back into its past, it is held that film aesthetics engender the uncanny more than any other medium. Among many scholars including Stern and Creed who affirm the effectiveness of photo-media in evoking uncanniness, Castle looks to an article written in 1872 where the daguerreotype represented a spectral, flash of thought on the retina, which she considers 'was simply a photographic plate on which the ghostly “flashes of thought” were captured — as a metaphor for hallucination'. Castle points out that the ghostly images of the [eighteenth-century] magic lantern influenced the invention of photography, thus contaminating the medium with its ghostly, spectral origins. She explains such ideas as being the 'spectralization or "ghostifying" of mental space' or 'the absorption of ghosts into the world of thought', the
spectral nature of our own thoughts... that we are "haunted" by our own thoughts, like an uncanny shudder that we possess two minds, as Freud conjectures. Another attempt at discovering the uncanny effect in cinema is provided by Sean Cubitt who considers a history of filmic images in motion. For example, inanimate sculpture and shadowy forms come to life in Destino, the collaborative animation of Dalí and Walt Disney, a film which continues to amplify Surrealist influence on the contemporary filmic uncanny, where Hans Bellmer is highly regarded.

During the 1930s, Bellmer dismantled, rearranged and photographed doll body-parts, illustrating the ‘body as anagram’ concept which assimilates the human body-parts as words or phrases which can be rearranged as letters of a word or words of a phrase reshuffled to produce new words/phrases. The notion of the anagrammatic body reflects the gestalt concept of parts being as important as the whole and the adage that the whole is not only more than but different from the sum of its parts. In reassembling body-parts into different wholes, Bellmer’s deconstruction-reconstructions of human forms point to the slippages and nuances of the psycho-physicality of body and mind. Moreover, the mind’s eye sees not only the finished sculptural object or photograph but also the creative performance of assemblage. Kelley’s interpretation of Bellmer is interesting:

The sentence of experience is recalled through the syntax of remembered moments. For Bellmer, the shifting of attention during the sex act from one body part to the next is presented in terms of a... flow of physical recollection [which] is further intensified by the crossover of one body part into another, as one part becomes associated with or a stand-in for a different part.

Associating Bellmer with Freudian ‘anatomical transgression’ theory, Kelley defines Bellmer’s mangled dolls as portraying the

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14 Cubitt, op. cit.
15 Disney commenced making the film, Destino, in the mid 1940s; it was directed by Dominique Monféry, written by Salvador Dalí, John Hench and Donald W. Ernst; it was finally released by Walt Disney Pictures in 2003.
16 Bellmer said, ‘the body is like a sentence that invites us to rearrange it, so that its real meaning becomes clear through an endless series of anagrams’; see Peter Webb and Robert Short, Hans Bellmer, London; New York: Quartet Books, 1985, p.38. According to ibid., p.103, Bellmer wrote, ‘The starting-point of desire, with respect to the intensity of its images, is not in a perceptible whole but in the detail... The essential point to retain from the monstrous dictionary of analogies/antagonisms which constitute the dictionary of the image is that a given detail such as a leg is perceptible, accessible to memory and available, in short is real, only if desire does not take it fatally for a leg. An object that is identical with itself is without reality.’
17 Kofka, op. cit., p.176. Also noteworthy is Vidler, The architectural uncanny..., op. cit., pp.70-2: ‘Alberti’s proposition [was] that “the building is in its entirety like a body composed of its parts”... [but by the eighteenth-century] the building no longer simply represented a part or whole of the body but was rather seen as objectifying the various states of the body.’
18 Kelley, The uncanny, op. cit., p.32.
polymorphous perversity of infantile sexuality [that] has found its way into a canon of socially acceptable genital substitutes. 'Partiality' to the lips, breasts and the ass, is not seen as strange at all... [as exemplified by] letters supposedly documenting the interest of various men in female amputees, whose obsessions were often explained by the fact that their mothers were amputees. Here, the fetish is not a part that can be objectified, but a missing part—an absence.19

Whilst Kelley's concurrence with Freud's castration theory does not attain wide-ranging scholarly consensus, notions of memory and absence expressed by an object are generalised aspects of uncanniness, as themes concerning slippages, gaps, breaches and 'negative' space, of things which fall between and are difficult to grasp. Moreover, it is the very photographic qualities of Bellmer's snap-shots of deformed dolls which heighten the uncanniness of his sculptural forms. Consider, for example, the studies of Roland Barthes which were inspired by an epiphany triggered shortly following his mother's death. Upon looking at a photograph of her, Barthes experienced a displaced, vertiginous shuddering, conceiving the photograph as representing 'a catastrophe which has already occurred'.20 In his mother's portrait, he shudderingly saw her and himself as double, alive and dead: 'What pricks me is the discovery of this equivalence'; it is a piercing (re)discovery they (the photographed) will die — and so must I.21 The photograph's indexical force, its metaphorical electrical charge transmogrifies it into a time machine or device capturing and positioning the gaze in past and future. Barthes's revelation is a shared phenomenon echoed in photographic artwork whilst aligning with spiritualist theories and the sustained occult status of the *filmic*. Contrasted with Mueck's verist sculpture, scale and perception of scale is removed or manipulated in *filmic* mediums, adding to the uncanny qualities found in Henson's and Brassington's disquieting prints.

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19 Ibid., pp.32-3, references Freudian, Wilhelm Scketel's work on 'the field of "partialisms"'.
20 Barthes, *Camera lucida...* op. cit., p.96.
21 Ibid., p.96. Sontag, op. cit., pp.15-16, similarly calls photography an elegiac, twilight art, 'touched with pathos', writing, 'All photographs are *memento mori* and participate in 'mortality, vulnerability, mutability' whilst testifying to 'time's relentless melt... A photograph is both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence'.

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Echoing Surrealist aesthetics, photo-media artist Pat Brassington (b.1942) adopts psychoanalytic theory without completely consigning her art to its discourse — or committing it to any other dialogue for that matter. As Edward Colless vexes, trying to decode her work is like ‘trying to psychoanalyse the window of a tumble dryer’ and the viewer ‘must be alert to the tiniest tremor of that uncanny experience when you recognise an ominous familiarity in an image’, inviting enquiry as to how one might be ‘alert’ to Brassington’s certain type of domestic uncanniness. Is it merely ‘ominous familiarity’? Described by Blair French as ‘a catalogue of unnerving objects, figures and scenes operating as a volatile or shifting context where each individual image conveys an imaginative world of its own,’ themes across her oeuvre frequently align with the uncanny, although problems arise when viewing her work as part of a series when an overpoweringly familiar element of narrative becomes apparent and threatens to suppress the uncanny. Could such suppression of the already repressed render her artwork as doubly uncanny? This is one question posed in this case-study, prising out the uncanny of Brassington’s enigmatic pictures.

22 Marx is quoted by Brassington in Alasdair Foster, "An interview with Pat Brassington", Photofile, vol.81 (Spring 2007), pp.20-5, p.21. Marx said, 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living'; from his Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1852).

23 Edward Colless, "Ghost", in Pat Brassington, This is not a love song: Project room: Pat Brassington, exhib. catalogue, Clayton, Vic.: Monash Univ. Gallery, 1996, pp.10-12; my emphasis. Brassington is often reticent about referencing theoretical frameworks in relation to her art but acknowledges her interest in 'some of Freud's writings', which she says, 'have even influenced my view of the people-world', before responding with, 'But, without debunking your interesting observation about Freud's depiction of the uncanny, I would have to say it has not consciously been my intention to use it'. Nonetheless, Brassington, as quoted in Alasdair Foster, "An interview with Pat Brassington", op. cit., p.24, confirms her knowledge of Freud's essay and regardless of any such denial (or perhaps it was a quip insinuating stating her 'conscious' intention), many previous essayists of her exhibitions comment on the uncanny content of her work.

Looking at *Untitled n* (2007), from the *Cambridge Road* series, in isolation, for example, elicits feelings about inner versus outer worlds, literally and figuratively. With an external light flooding through the window and drawing in the viewer's gaze to beyond the threshold and into oblivion, its contemplative mood subtly implores in-depth introspection, where the onlooker feels part of the room, moves closer to the window, feels the warmth of the billowing sun and with their guard down, a provocatively soft shudder awakens another type of window – the window to one’s ‘inner knowledge.’ Is this uncanniness shattered once juxtaposed or complemented by other work in the same series, such as *Untitled k* or *Untitled l*, which introduce dramatic characters into the scene in a playfully sinister, Hitchcockian manner? Or do they corroborate uncanniness? The *Cambridge Road* series envisages forensic dramatic fiction whilst other work is less accommodating of a storyline, as Brassington remarks, ‘narratives arise like smoke from a fire, but nothing is certain’. An uncanny shiver permeates her oeuvre – an ‘unnerving frisson’ – and, as it will be shown, it

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25 Pat Brassington, *Untitled n*, 2007, pigment print, 32.5 x 45.5 cm.
26 Pat Brassington’s *Untitled k*, 2007, pigment print, 32.5 x 45.5 cm; and, *Untitled l*, 2007, pigment print, 32.5 x 45.5 cm.
28 Ashley Crawford, “Apocalyptic whimsy”, *Photofile*, vol. 88 (Feminist & Post-feminine), pp.54-61, p.54: ‘As always with Brassington’s work there is an unnerving frisson running through the imagery’.
does so with and without narratives necessarily being involved, drawing on an uncanny filmic tradition of Bellmer, Kubrick and Lynch. Indeed, the film noir genre, heavily incensed with psychological intrigue and dramatic suspension, with menacingly dark, lurking, aberrant characters, is felt distinctly across her work, reminiscent of the uncanny familiarity of Lynch’s bizarre domestic mise-en-scène in films like Blue velvet (1986) and Lost highway (1997), and the television series, Twin peaks (1988), scripts of which often echo the Freudian-Heideggerian uncanny:

Thru the darkness
of Future Past
the magician longs to see
one chants out
between two worlds
Fire – walk with me.²⁹

Rather than narrative threatening to subsume her work, it is the utter inexhaustibility of language and narration which is at the core of Brassington’s work. Stressing the inadequacy and ghostly inheritance of language, that it speaks a tongue which utters what has already been told, she explores the unspeakable.³⁰ Although it is often delineated as ineffable, her artwork can be described to varying degrees, bearing in mind that the indescribable remnants of unutterable things that remain (as the inexpressible as expressed two-dimensionally) thus affilates Brassington with Freudian-Heideggerian uncanniness where the ambivalence and antinomical anomaly of Freud’s uncanny was Hölderlin’s poiesis to Heidegger. Brassington’s work aligns with the creative strand to which poetry belongs, especially concerning the acknowledgment of the inaccessibility of expression through language alone – towards the uncanniness with which the poet’s care is grounded. Brassington can therefore be likened to a poet whose care is centred on becoming homely from the stance of being unhomely, and of knowing or recognising Dasein as being uncanny to the core. This stance partly accounts for such artists’ adversarial disposition.


³⁰ Anne Marsh, Pat Brassington: This is not a photograph, Hobart: Quintus Publishing, 2006, p.6, says Brassington’s work ‘stands as a reminder that language itself is inadequate... [and, quoting Edward Colless] this opened mouth, the silent scream or gasp, “can only ghost a story that has already been told”’. 

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towards interviews, their unwillingness to contort that which they feel cannot be spoken or written. Nonetheless, Brassington discloses Freud as shaping her ideas:

Year's (sic) ago I read Freud's *Totem and Taboo*. If I think about it, it must have been a catalyst for me in some ways... It was Freud's musings on 'the unconscious' and the 'return of the repressed' that fuelled my desire to probe into some aspects of surrealist practice. The 'fascination' is still with me... It's not that I want to travel down the same road but it is a lantern in the window.\(^3\)

Although Alasdair Foster claims her work is 'uncanny, in the Freudian sense of being both sinister and secretive',\(^3\) Brassington explains whilst she has long been interested in psychoanalysis:

Too much digging into one's motivation runs counter to free flowing spontaneity, but I do seem attracted to the enigmatic. When morphing an image I balk prior to resolution and prefer to leave it hovering in uncertainty. Our visual brain endlessly seeks resolution and hence the real exerts a magnetic attraction. My aim is to use this gravitas to spin off towards other possibilities.\(^3\)

Brassington's work can be seen as discrediting Walter Benjamin's theories, especially his claim that the decimation of the aura of art is attributed to the 'technical reproducibility' of cameras and printing. Benjamin argues the loss of aura was achieved by bringing art objects closer to the masses, bringing about a paradigm shift whereby the social value of the image was relegated from privileged use-value to cult-value.\(^4\) The emergence of 'throw-away images' developed alongside collage and photomontage, which re-assembled 'disjunctive fragments of the visible world' thus cultivating 'viewer estrangement' and disrupting the viewpoint 'that characterized the classical observer of Alberti's painting-as-window'.\(^4\) Benjamin also analyses the transmogrification from the public/commercial space to the private realm, dubbing the latter as 'phantasmagorias of the interior' resulting from 'man's imperious need to leave the imprint of his private individual existence on the rooms he inhabits'.\(^6\) Contrastingly, Brassington's artwork reinstates the supposedly lost aura of art in her *filmic*, photographic-like imagery, and the methods and mediums she employs are implicit in eliciting an especially uncanny aura.


\(^4\) Alasdair Foster in Carver, op. cit., p.49, says, 'This harnessing of the digital medium to extend the project of surrealism and to evoke the sense of the [Freudian] uncanny demonstrates a particularly sophisticated handling of cultural threads'.


\(^7\) McQuire, *The media city...*, op. cit., p.184.

Brassington moved from collage printmaking into photo-collage, engaging early with ‘memory’ techniques involving rupture and re-association, disconnection and reconnection: fragments of images are constantly thrown up... and reconfigured into new works. Imagery that might otherwise be lost to the depths of a hazy memory leaks to the surface of new images, as if welling up from the unconscious. As if returning to open old psychic wounds... from the deep recesses...37

An exhibition titled “Maybe you’ve seen this all before” (1991)3 9 supports these tactics whilst providing a clue as to Brassington’s interests in fragmented memory, creating images which instil a ‘psychodynamic rather than a transparent logic’, as Mary Pridmore writes.” Apart from assembling together bits and pieces from the multitude of images in her personal image repository, Brassington produces pictures from theatrical productions of her own making. The textured surfaces of the objects she frames behind film are contrasted by strange tonal effects, repeating like colourations throughout her œuvre as vestiges. Her palette does not simply concern itself with contrasts or complementary colours, her mainly tertiary colourations entail dimensions involving saturation and intensity, significant factors which are carefully construed through digital processing. By modifying tonal aspects, colours are lightened, others are darkened, hues are made warmer or cooler, more or less intense. Every pixel is accounted for – not only in the stages of digital image manipulation with which she has engaged since the mid-1990s, but importantly, also in colour printing, of which she is a renown and adept technician. Moreover, Brassington is not averse to hiding such deceits. By bringing modes of techne into her work, and by combining past objects with present practice, she intentionally enkindles an uncanny backward-forward movement. In a progression of Bellmeresque imagery recalling Creed’s ‘monstrous-feminine’, particularly that which coalesces with uncanniness,4 0 she exploits technology in order to charge her work with an uncanny Barthesian punctum or Lacanian tuche required of today’s savvy, worldly-wise audiences. She explains her technique as ‘working up’ images in the computer using scanned ‘bits and pieces from various sources’ in ‘an open-ended game of jigsaw’.41 Fleshy pinks and reds, muted greys, beiges and translucent murky taupes often make it difficult to discern what is figure and what is ground, manufacturing, in her words,

39 Maybe you’ve seen it all before exhibition at 200 Gertrude Street Gallery, Melbourne, 1991.
40 Ibid., pp.16-17, outlines how the two coalesce. See Creed, The monstrous-feminine, op. cit., and Phallic panic, op. cit.
41 Brassington’s artist’s statement in King, Supernatural artificial..., op. cit., p.12.
an 'opportunity to upset expectations' by disrupting the figure-ground relationship.  

Although disruption plays its part, her compositions generally obey geometrical symmetry, with Euclidean geometry, golden ratios and methods owing to Alberti meticulously applied.

In a review coalescing Creed’s *Phallic panic* and Brassington’s monograph of 2006, Marita Bullock perceives a timely reconfiguration of the uncanny in contemporary culture,  

with Brassington’s allusions as images eliciting Creed’s theories concerning the unnerving potential of the uncanny feminine alongside the 'unsettling disquietude of the horror film genre' in such ways that

they strip seemingly comfortable domestic scenes and interiors of their safety, rendering the ordinary domestic realm in unrelenting close-up, utilising disturbing angles and viewpoints. The images suspend narrative sequence and frustrate narrative certainty, leaving the viewer bereft in the disturbing indeterminacy of the uncanny realm...  

For reviewers like Bullock, any suggestion of narrative is broken, the film is spliced, the story violated, only 'fragments' remain. By devising a method of framing what appears like shards of ruptured stills from associated horror or fantastic genres, Brassington taps into notions of fragmented memory, provisioning subliminal reminders that repressed content lurks within and moreover that the dualistic nature of our psyche remains in-or-out of self-control. Whilst Creed, marvelling at the capacity of the uncanny, says, 'Insofar as everything that is subject to repression is uncanny, it constitutes a vast field', she essentially refers to repressed content, which is theoretically limitless, but, crucially, not the uncanny mechanism itself. Brassington, however, pares down imagery, focusing content on *corpus pabulum* — matters of flesh, bodily fluids, organs, pressing the onlooker’s mind’s-eye towards systems of their inner-world. In pictures such as *Fragments off from memory #22* (1992-2002), corporeality comes to the fore, giving the gaze no place to hide — it is compelled to enter into the inner-bodily realm of self. The ghostly, double-exposure-like imagery in the *Fragments off from memory* series haunt the imagination, and literal cues ultimately yield to psychic agitation: as the viewer’s mind tries to comprehend the ghostly abstract and transubstantiate immaterial into material, the mind subconsciously delves into

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3 Marita Bullock, "Figuring the uncanny", *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol.22, no.54 (November 2007), pp.409-11, p.409. Bullock notes, 'Read in tandem (indeed both texts have been generated in inter-textual dialogue) these works generate an important re-evaluation of relations between the uncanny, constructions of gender and psychoanalysis'.

44 Ibid., p.410.


its deepest reaches thereby indiscernably opening up the possibility of uncanny feedback. The strand of hair in #22 attracts the gaze, pulling it into the frame where perplexing ghostly artefacts subtly exercise the imagination, recalling Honoré de Balzac’s notion of the body being composed of ‘layers of ghostlike images, an infinite number of leaf-like skins laid one on top of the other’, but each time someone’s photograph is taken, a spectral layer leaves the body and is transferred to the photograph. Just as Royle observes film haunts Freud’s work and is the starting-point for Rank’s analysis of the doppelgänger, film and its ghosts pervade Brassington’s oeuvre, punctuating the Barthesian punctum whilst haunting the memory of the film-audience as art-viewer.

Of images of children in Fragments of from memory, Anne Marsh says they provide ‘a glimpse into the world of childhood games’ but are punctuated with cruelty – ‘the child who tortures, albeit playfully, another child’ portrays childhood cruelty which ‘adults know about but would rather not believe in’. Perplexingly, Brassington does not actually distinguish whether this cruelty is necessarily enacted by child or adult, playful or aggravated nuisance. Poignantly, an adult’s perspective from the Freudian viewpoint relates the picturing and perception of such incidents to childhood memory and primitive urges which once welled up inside but are now insidious, unconsciously repressed desires, and the remembrance of repressed content ensues in the sudden recognition of self-dualism.

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* McFarlane, “Haunted”, op. cit., noting Balzac’s fears were relayed in photographer’s Nadar’s memoir (1900).
* Royle, The uncanny, op. cit., p.76. The uncanny film of Hitchcock, Lynch and others is implicit in Brassington’s work, effecting as continually haunting the memory of the film-audience/art-viewer. Similar ideas as glossed in Bronfen, op. cit., p.23. Although her work is carefully staged, Brassington is able to achieve such effects without the big budget spend of directorial photographers such as American, Gregory Crewdson, whose pictures appear as cinematographic stills, often of elaborately staged scenes which incur great production costs, yet are likewise redolent of the Hitchcockian.
* Marsh, Pat Brassington: This..., op. cit., pp.18-9.
Recalling film stills of the abject or X-rated, the sexual overtones of *Bloom* (2003)\(^{50}\) and *Drummer* (2005)\(^{51}\) abruptly ensnare the gaze, which becomes confounded by the strangely-familiar body-parts. With the viewer’s observation hijacked by the seamlessly constructed imagery, such corporeality guilefully works it way through psychical layers, unleashing re/suppressed content. Discussing the uncanny gaze, Creed explains, it is one of ambivalence and transformation in which one state of looking (the *heimlich*) merges into its opposite (the *unheimlich*) but each form of looking is never entirely free of the traces of its other… the uncanny gaze… creates a gap… This is not the same as the distance required for the controlling voyeuristic look; rather, it constructs a disunity, a contradiction… [it] both repels and lures.\(^{52}\)

The appendages of *Drummer* are ambiguous: what first appear as legs look like fingers; impressions of stockings transform into fingerprints before one’s eyes; and, the upper right edge of the protuberance stupefies the gaze as perspective comes into and out of focus. Brassington confounds perception, the gaze vacillates between knowing and unknowing, it settles only to become unsettled, thus the uncanny gaze engenders an uncanny vacillating process of memory: of knowing/not-knowing familiar-unfamiliar things; an internalised

\(^{50}\) Pat Brassington, *Bloom*, 2003, pigment print, 78 x 59 cm.

\(^{51}\) Pat Brassington, *Drummer*, 2005, pigment print, 86 x 66 cm.

\(^{52}\) Creed, *Phallic panic…*, op. cit., p.33.
repetition triggering uncanniness. Brassington also arouses humour or wistful playfulness, which coupled with perverse sinisterness,\textsuperscript{53} likewise acts to disarm the onlooker.

Discussing ways in which washes of pinks filter throughout Brassington's oeuvre, Helen McDonald distinguishes these colourations as inhabiting the images 'in a weak insistent way, marking out areas... [whilst] taking the chill off smooth surfaces, clogging patches of texture... and meekly' animating the surface.\textsuperscript{54} McDonald discerns tensions concerning the real-unreal of photography and the animation of artifice, whereas the layman viewer is somewhat shocked – not merely by what might be perceived as abject or sexual, but by a sudden, imperceptible burst from deep within – an explosive punctum of uncanniness, engendered by the unconscious associations begotten by subtle, luminous colourations which, like Daws's painting, breathe life into still images. Yet this pink, as McDonald asserts, 'never achieves enlightenment. It is blind, an unborn foetus, an impulse that cannot transcend the material fabric of its existence'.\textsuperscript{55} Brassington affirms, 'It's not my intention to feminise the image by using pink. It's 'nastier' than that. Pink smothers'.\textsuperscript{56} She also says, 'I don't calculate colour, I feel it. It's not a "girl" pink – it's a meaty pinkishness'.\textsuperscript{57} Brassington's tonalities evoke many things, including flesh and bodily fluids, inner realms, the womb, animal physicality and primitive urges deeply repressed. In an observation recalling Hal Foster's reckoning Bellmer's work embraces Freudian sadomasochist drives,\textsuperscript{58} McDonald feels Brassington's work engenders 'a voyeuristic appetite [which] registers an un-locatable sexual drive that is overwhelming'.\textsuperscript{59} Nonetheless, Brassington's pinks are not overtly sexualised and neither is her art abject, just as she does not exclusively invite the

\textsuperscript{53} Refer to the movement-activated multi-media installation of Tim Noble and Sue Webster's, \textit{Scarlett}, 2006, as installed at the Freud Museum, London, for examples of the perverse and the uncanny uniting, in Tim Noble and Sue Webster, \textit{Polymorphously perverse}, London: Other Criteria, 2008.


\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. McDonald, \textit{Erotic ambiguities...}, op. cit., p.183, outlines Brassington's work, including its 'seruous play of tones and highlights', pointing to the mixture of beauty and disgust Brassington conveys 'might be explained by the qualification that the abject has an aura of the sublime'. Ibid. p.161, she refers to Krauss's theories concerning the artifice of photography, noting that 'the defamiliarising techniques of surrealist photography, such as solarisation, rayography, negative printing, multiple exposures and doubling served to emphasise the artificiality of the photographic image', with 'doubling' singled out as symbolising signification itself as 'signifier of signification', quoting Krauss) whilst highlighting art as a semiological project.

\textsuperscript{56} Brassington is cited in Natalie King, "In the same vein", in Pat Brassington, \textit{Pat Brassington: In the same vein}, exhib. catalogue, Melbourne: Arc One Gallery, 2005, np.

\textsuperscript{57} Brassington in Alasdair Foster, "An interview with Pat Brassington", op. cit., p.22, adds, 'but I can't say that though!'

\textsuperscript{58} Foster, \textit{Compulsive beauty}, op. cit., p.13, explains the underlying sadist and masochist drives of Freudian psychoanalysis as it relates to Surrealism, saying sadomasochism is extreme in Bellmer's work yet it 'operative throughout surrealism'.

\textsuperscript{59} McDonald, "Pretty pink", op. cit.
grotesque or bizarre. More often her 'umbilical pinks' verge on yellow-tinged salmons or muted apricot, evoking 'sweet' and 'putrid' sensations. Brassington aims not at delivering the abject/grotesque/bizarre, rather at creating confusion. Her pinks speak of life (blood) and death (putrescent flesh), and in this way, she is closer to the more general yet essential primal urge of the uncanny deliverance towards the unhomely, compared with the more overtly Bellmeresque sexual or sadomasochist compulsions. Consequently, although the gaze is caught up by some inexplicable implication, the associated uncanny effect is not necessarily of an Œdipal nature, but a mechanism associated with imprisoned memory being abruptly released. Brassington's images portray ambivalence about the human body; she taunts it whilst exploiting it as betraying man to memory, as reminding him of his original and final homely states, that he lives in the unhomely. Referencing Kristeva's notions of the maternal pre-Œdipal state, one which becomes repressed, Kyla McFarlane likewise sees Brassington's work as evoking menstrual blood and dark, uterine spaces. Her imaginings move from the primal to the corporeal, and vice versa, where bodily fluids are evoked not only by the figures, objects and colours represented, but by the substances perceived as glossy or 'slippery,' as attributed to the surfaces of filmic media or prints encased under glass, further substantiating, albeit subconsciously for the viewer, the physical inner worlds of man's existence. Whether it be subtle or palpable, this acknowledgement of one's inner physicality immediately yet subliminally brings to mind one's psychic being. Speaking of the Sweet thereafter series in words recalling Nathanael's spy-glass inner-outer reflections, Peter Timms contemplates, 'While there's nothing in these pale, suggestive close-ups of lips, necks, legs and diaphanous clothing that specifically evokes the past, the impression is of looking down the wrong end of a telescope to an earlier age'. He explains Soft wear (2006) as showing

...folds of downy woollen fabric wrapped around a not-quite identifiable part of a body, A V-shaped opening at the top, which one would have thought to be a neckline, instead reveals a fleshy navel... seductive in its pastel pinkness, yet its weirdness grows on us... because something we're on the verge of making sense of simply won't jell...

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61 Peter Timms, "What we see is all in the mind", The Australian, 15 Aug 2006.

62 Pat Brassington, Soft wear, 2006, pigment print, 64 x 86 cm.

63 Timms, "What we see is...", op. cit.
McFarlane, in her dissertation on the hysterical in contemporary photography, regards Brassington’s haunted domestic spaces as exemplary representations of the Freudian uncanny, saying viewers are aware ‘something is being uncovered, but it is ill-defined and unnameable...’ yet some elements in Brassington’s compositions convey the uncanny and can be named, including a demarcation between reality and fantasy. In pictures like Bloom an element of fiction is enveloped within the evidentiary, verisimilar medium of photography, thus conflating a fictional uncanny with what the viewer ordinarily questions as being real. The aesthetics of photography effectively render a human image as an inanimate doubling of an animate subject. A literal a ‘slip of the tongue,’ Bloom is a fictional double of something real yet seems real itself, thus amplifying Freud’s remark, ‘a great deal that is not uncanny in fiction would be so if it happened in real life; and... there are many more means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than there are in real life’. With Bloom, Brassington exercises strange realness, with the elongated tongue and inverted outline of a tree, within a filmic boundary which entwines real-life with the fictitious. Viewers possibly imagine the image as fabricated whereas the contrary also endures, thus moving the onlooker into a state of uncertain, unease of uncanniness.

Figure 53: Pat Brassington’s Twins, 2001 (left), and Voicing, 2001, (right); both of the series, Gentle

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Ibid., p.220.

Marsh, Pat Brassington: This..., op. cit., p.11, writes Brassington is ‘quick to embrace Freud’s idea that the unconscious can never be represented... [but that] it can be glimpsed momentarily in jokes, dreams and slips of the tongue’.

Brassington purposely marries the *filmic*, with its manifold photographic associations and evocative uncanniness, with themes concerning processes of the unconscious. *Twins* (2001)⁶⁸ and *Voicing* (2001)⁶⁹ recall the strange aesthetic language of Bellmer who was influenced by Freud and the Olympia of Jacques Offenbach's *The tales of Hoffmann.*⁷⁰ Like Brassington, Bellmer's photographs are staged productions often using disassembled mannequins and dolls in oddly contorted assemblages. Importantly, their art is neither reassembled figurative sculpture nor installation art; they deliberately translate to film, thereby exponentially developing uncanniness through hybridising the aesthetic techniques involved. Initially, they physically (and thus metaphorically) deconstruct and reconstruct objects, disrupting the real yet creating a new 'real' object — often distorted inanimate mannequins which evoke Olympia. Then, a dramatic, usually disquietingly sinister stage-set is constructed before photographs are taken and the resulting images (digitally and manually) manipulated prior to or during the printing process.

Glossy or film-like prints are Brassington's end products for several reasons. Barthes explains the profundity of the *filmic* by way of another personal encounter: 'I happened on a photograph of Napoleon's youngest brother, Jerome, taken in 1852. And I realized then, with an amazement I have not been able to lessen since: "I am looking at eyes that looked at the Emperor"'.⁷¹ Barthes's experience, derived from the commonly held views that photographs possess documentary and evidentiary qualities, reflects on the possibilities photography has over and above other mediums to evoke strange sensations in the viewer. The *filmic* pretence of 'being real', images or excerpts taken from the flow of reality,⁷² is subconsciously betrayed as being unreal, unfamiliar, whilst vice versa, the *filmic* promise of a lie is met by a viewer's disbelief — it becomes real no matter what angle the artist intentionally plays; the ping-ponging of real-unreal/animate-inanimate persists. Barthes considers the efficacy of photography as incorporating the reflection of death — not only 'that its referent really existed' but that 'this referent will no longer exist', as Kraus puts it —

⁶⁹ Pat Brassington, *Voicing*, 2001, pigment print, 75 x 56 cm.
⁷⁰ The Bellmeresque mannequin has long been an interest of Brassington's. *Her Memory: Au rebours* series of 1989, for example, features torsos and heads of adult-like dolls and mannequins; see McDonald, *Erotic ambiguities...*, op. cit., pp.180-1.
⁷² Bergstein, op. cit., p.130, writes that photographs are 'like views from a stopped or moving train' and are 'understood as living excerpts, "taken" from the flow of reality, from the continuum of time and space... Photographs of sculpture and sites, then, are appropriate to the mutable thought systems that define the dream space'.
that the subject is dead or will die are underlying pronouncements photography makes and consequently reinforces in the viewer. Consequently, the photograph appeals to proponents of the Freudian death-drive whilst simultaneously moving the viewer towards Heidegger’s final homely-home.

Figure 54: Hans Bellmer’s L’idole, 1937

The filmic effects in Barthesian punctum, as an associated sensation of the Barthesian phenomenon of the ‘nonsymbolizable Real’, both of which Krauss connects with the uncanny, pointing out that it is evoked in photographs in Barthes’s Camera lucida, picturing a man dancing with an automaton: ‘the last impression Barthes gives us of photography as hallucination, as madness, as the occasion for a depthless pity in the face of the evidence of death, is not delivered by a photograph but by a mechanical doll’. Krauss links this to Hoffmann’s story and Freud’s essay, noting,

Bellmer’s Poupée, itself a photographic project that ranges most obviously over the domain that Freud organizes in “The Uncanny.” (Bellmer’s project itself had been triggered by a performance of The Tales of Hoffmann.) For the choice of the doll exploits the uncanniness of the automaton, which Freud described as a double of living beings which is nonetheless dead.

If Barthes moves from the particular to the general, then Krauss returns her reader safely home by specifying that picturing an automaton makes it particularly uncanny. Moreover, the automaton acts as another representative, not only of death, but of ‘Being-in-this-world’ and the dreaded disclosure of being a wholly thrown singular in the world. An automaton

74 Hans Bellmer, L’idole, 1937, hand-coloured vintage gelatin silver print, 5⅝ x 5⅝ in.
76 Ibid., pp.193-4.
is isolated and yet manipulated by external forces, is dead but can also revivify. Indeed, mindful of its centrality in Freud's essay, the automaton shares attributes with filmic mediums. Consequently, imaging the automaton through the filmic thereby doubles the uncanny effect on the viewer. With notable similarity to Brassington's double imagery of *Twins* and *Voicing*, Bellmer's pictures of dolls elaborate the idea of doubling as a formal resource, as Krauss writes,

beginning with his very construction of a doll that is itself split and doubled... This redoubled mechanical double he then embeds photographically, sometimes relying on the "straight" print to deliver the disquieting effect of the image coded as irreal, but at other times exploiting the technical possibilities of photography, such as multiple exposure or superimposition. It is in this formal condition of the double that the *Poupée* produces itself as an image of fissioning multiplication — doubles redoubled and doubled again — and at the same time as a kind of shadow cast by a profound absence.77

Subtly expressing early twentieth-century style (as long socks in *Twins* and abstract fiberglass/plastic-looking mannequins of 1950s types in *Voicing*) in contemporaneous format, with 'redoubled' imagery, Brassington denotes versions of *poupée* as symbolising and enacting in the viewer an uncanny doubling. The doll, as Krauss summarises, encodes two sources of uncanny terror:

the first related to the magical thinking of both children and tribal societies; the second related to castration anxiety. In both, something that was once attached to the subject's own body and was invested with tremendous power and prestige has now separated itself from the subject and turns around with life-threatening ferocity, as in the case of one's own cast shadow that 'returns' as a shade and thus an emissary of death. The structure of the uncanny turns, then, on a strangeness that grips what was once most familiar, thereby producing the double as simulacral, as it also takes the form of repetition, of the inevitability of return.78

Whereas Bellmer's truncated figures illuminate the 'drama of castration anxiety',79 Brassington's pictures are less aggressive or wretchedly abject, and by yielding themselves to many, varied interpretations, her images more effectively relate to broader concepts encapsulated by the uncanny. By being careful not to make literal or pointed comparisons with psychoanalytical texts, by approaching the subject in a more elusive fashion, Brassington comes discernably closer to the more ambiguous core of uncanniness.

Brassington incorporates motifs found in popular culture, such as Kubrick's *The shining* (1980), a film with its own links to the Freudian uncanny.80 A favourite author of Freud's,
Arthur Schnitzler’s novella *Traumnovelle* (*Dream story*) was also an important source for Kubrick, who once enthused, 'Freud said that the uncanny is the only feeling which is more powerfully experienced in art than in life. If the genre [of Kubrick films] required any justification, I should think this alone would serve as its credentials'. Significantly, materiality is important to Kubrick and notable in Brassington’s work. In Brassington’s toxic-looking figures of *Twins*, with their bilious, pitted legs, the ghosts of *The shining* twins materialise and are given ‘real’ bodies. The ‘flesh and blood uncanny’ Brassington’s work evokes is similarly evident in *The shining* with its hotel discernably corporeal, including its ‘safe womb’ of the radio room, veined hallways and stripy, capillary-like carpets resembling Brassington’s stripy carpeted floors, for example. As a contemporary forerunner to ever-increasing references to the uncanny, *The shining* has several parallels with (and is therefore evoked in) Brassington’s work, with both embracing Hitchcockian sensibilities. Brassington takes the uncanny mythology of Olympia and exploits, in snippets, the familiarity of uncanny films in the aesthetics of the photographic double, thereby doubling the uncanniness of her work. Heightening the uncanny through methods of digital deceit, including splicing ‘snap-shot’ images and applying colour de/saturation, she subliminally references unnerving films which reference or evoke the Freudian uncanny. Recalling *mise-en-scène* motifs of uncanny cinema and the Lynchian bizarre, Brassington’s directorial mode of visual expression produces imagery which evoke dreamlike flashes and glimpses, and, as Marsh describes, ‘invokes hysteria and psychosis but does so by looking at fears, fantasies and traumas with a gaze that is awry’; and, it is this ‘eschewed perspective on the psycho-sexual landscape’ which affords such artists to be ‘a kind of conjurer’.83

81 Brigitte Peucker, “Kubrick and Kafka: The corporeal uncanny”, *Modemism/modernity*, vol.8, no.4 (November 2001), pp.663-74, p.664. Peucker notes, ‘collaborating on a screenplay for *The Shining*, Kubrick and Diane Johnson read Freud’s essay on “The Uncanny” together, and Kafka was also on Kubrick’s mind... the points of connection between *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut* are mediated by the presence of Kafka...In *The Shining*... the static image as photograph does much to evoke the uncanny and the supernatural... rendering of human bodies produces portraits of ghosts and ghostly images... certainly Freud’s work on “The Uncanny”... would have triggered an interest in the effects that mechanically-rendered motion can have on the spectator...’ I recall the protagonist, Jack Torrance’s comment, ‘It’s all very homey’.82 Michel Ciment, *Kubrick: The definitive edition*, trans. Gilbert Adair and Robert Bononno, New York: Faber and Faber, 2001, p.192. Ibid., p.144, talks about the Overlook Hotel of *The shining* as portraying the Freudian uncanny home to which the protagonist returns with a sense of déjà vu; and pp.259-60, notes the uncanny in *The shining* and *Eyes wide shut*. See also Barbara Creed, “Déjà vu, film and the uncanny”, *Antithesis*, vol.17 (Déjà vu, 2007), pp.7-22.83 Marsh, *Pat Brassington: This...*, op. cit., p.6 and p.7.
As ‘conjurer’, Brassington’s images can be affronting; assaulting or jolting the onlooker’s senses with something one cannot readily explain, where the abject is not so terribly or entirely abject but is confounded by imagery which is nonetheless sensual and possessing factors of hopeful anticipation not commonly found in the fundamentally abject, which has no hope and is utterly repulsive. Pictures which Marsh categorises as abject, including Boucher (2001), with its strange probing appendage, are elsewise described as uncanny insofar as being too unfathomable, too eerie and unsettling, as to be sufficiently abject. Focussing on the erogenous zones, exposing cold, pellucid flesh of known yet unknown body parts, Boucher denies the viewer the harsh clarity which the abject normally provides. The image is neither wholly wretched nor obscene, and neither does it follow Kristeva’s definition of abject, transgressive body imagery: Boucher is not overtly contaminated,

Figure 55: Pat Brassington, Boucher, 2001

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Ibid., p.21; my emphasis.

Boucher might also be considered an uncanny take on John Brack’s acid The Boucher nude, 1957, oil on canvas, 81 x 146 cm, which has similar peculiar and alienating qualities. Comparisons between Brassington and Brack have been made elsewhere, including Ashley Crawford who reckons Brassington’s pictures ‘recall the muted nostalgia of John Brack’s figures’, and conjuring the Persian rugs in Brack’s work, says, ‘the texture of carpet in the Night Train series draws us into the picture frame, the detail hinting at the unseen detritus of old carpet – dust, dandruff, hair follicles and grit’; see Crawford, ‘Planeta Inquietante’, op. cit. Brack’s Mannequins (two figures), 1953, conté crayon, 54.8 x 69.4 cm, NGA, also compares with Brassington’s Everybody loves you baby, 2007, pigment print. 86 x 63 cm, Arc One Gallery. Whilst the title of Boucher implies the influence of Brack, consideration should be given to Brassington’s titling of her artwork. Often, her titles, in a general sense, appear to orientate the viewer yet also obscure any clear sense of meaning, acting therefore to perplex her audience even further; they both reveal yet conceal.
infected, dirty, improper, indecorous and so forth. Yet, there is the sense that what is depicted should be hidden or kept private. The image withholds information about what it depicts as being real, and is therefore doubly secretive. McDonald contemplates its confusing 'body parts and their intimate spatial contexts' as suggesting 'an unstable, creepy world that is out of step with what we imagine is real'. It is the picture's very instability which creates an uncanny creepiness and makes it doubly mysterious – Boucher is secretive about what should be kept secret. Regardless of whether it might be made of fictitious digital manipulation or clever anatomical choreography, whilst the viewer is engaged in its mysteriousness, they are left none the wiser as to its hidden meaning. Boucher's finer details tortuously disrupt the gaze: what first appears as crossed legs leading the eye towards an androgynous triangular pubic zone, with a pointer finger pressing into a leg's skin in an insistent yet gentle manner becomes the nipple of mother's breast pressing gently, insistently forth, unconsciously leading the mind's-eye back to otherwise dormant memories of birth and perceived Freudian castration. She images an illusion of touch which simultaneously conveys the sensation of 'not being able to put your finger on it' – the unnameable. By connecting the audience in its rupture, so redolent of meaning yet lost to signification, she develops a system which represents the idea of the disjuncture of man's consciousness or that very junction between consciousness and unconsciousness, the aberrant 'flip-flop' sensation derivative of uncanniness.

Dreams, as representing one way the unconscious 'communicates' with the conscious, play an important role in Brassington's work such as _Fragments off from memory_. She says she never ceases 'to be amazed by the sheer audacity of the recalled dream image'. Of significance here is the Freudian notion that dreamlike glimpses do not necessarily contain unconscious content but are pure flashes of self-awareness that man possesses two minds, that _I am_ quite literally 'of two minds;' where the hidden reveals the more profound trigger mechanism, a revelation of man's duality which outwittingly discloses man's duplicity in shirking self-responsibility, uncanny reminders of that which one keeps hidden from self. The hidden and secret is at the heart of dream-like installation art such as _Book of Jonah_ and

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In my father's house, which Marsh perceives as trembling with 'unspoken violence' whilst infecting the viewer with a 'desire to unveil the Real, to get to the bottom of things', instilling hope that an un-representable something will come forward. In this sense, it may be the desire Brassington creates which effects in unleashing realisations of self-duality, desire which taps into the unconscious, as the unconscious knocking on the door of the conscious. This is not to say that desire is uncanny, rather that they relate insofar as locating the unconscious and reminding oneself of dualistic nature of turning against yet towards one's 'real' self, inflaming the flicker of the unhomeliness located at man's uncanny core. Whereas Marsh gets side-tracked by the more commonly discussed notions of the abject and sublime, Brassington's pictures do not try to exclusively represent the un-representable but suggest feelings associated with how people feel incomprehensible to themselves because of hidden things they feel are present yet cannot be tapped into: Freud's surmounted and repressed infantile and primitive beliefs or Dasein's suppressed overwhelming responsibility. Marsh considers the uncanny as representing a 'feeling of history repeating itself which is intimately tied up with imaginary/psychic memory which is incomplete and fragmented, full of lost images', thus distinguishing the uncanny as being associated with damaged or partial memory. As belonging within the sphere of indeterminable sensations, the uncanny is commonly aligned with the effects of psychic impairment, whereas, according to Freudian and Heideggerian canons, it serves as what is considered a healthy device allowing people to lead 'normal' lives. Acts of repression/suppression are quotidian coping mechanisms, whereas uncanny sensations are slippages in the mechanics of re/suppression, a liberating force of memory from the shackles of re/suppression. Re/suppressing memory may result in flashes of re/suppressed content to unite with non-re/suppressed recollections thereby forming incoherent meaning, slippages, confusion and fear which Brassington's work evokes.

The full title is Pat Brassington, Book of Jonah 1932, sinking into a world whose bars would hold me forever, 1993, scenography David McDowell and Edward Colless, mixed media, various sizes, The Basement, Hobart; Pat Brassington, In my father's house, 1992, 3 silver gelatin prints, 3 photocopies, 3 wooden doors, fluorescent light fittings, 230 x 800 cm overall.

Marsh, Pat Brassington: This..., op. cit., p.15; my emphasis. Pridmore, op. cit., p.7, notes that Brassington's Book of Jonah was made shortly following Brassington's father's death.

Brassington says her intrigue with Surrealism centres on desire and the unconscious, and although she is ambivalent as to which school of thought she leans towards,\(^{91}\) the Freudian canon looms large in her artwork, exemplified by *Charade* (2003)\(^{92}\) and its seemingly close to literal interpretation of his essay and his 1917 analogy of the photographic process, which reads:

> Let us assume that every mental process... exists to begin with in an unconscious stage or phase and that it is only from there that the process passes over into the conscious phase, just as a photographic picture begins as a negative and only becomes a picture after being formed into a positive. Not every negative, however, necessarily becomes a positive; nor is it necessary that every unconscious mental process should turn into a conscious one.\(^{93}\)

In *Charade*, Brassington places a mannequin, as if, recalling Nathanael, clandestinely peering out between slit in rose-red drapery which signifies the division between the unconscious, that hidden by the curtains, and the conscious, the forefront area opening out to the viewer. Standing within the unconscious realm, the mannequin, as Olympia,

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\(^{91}\) In Alasdair Foster, "An interview with Pat Brassington", op. cit., p.21, she is quoted as saying, 'I am ambivalent though. If I had to choose between say the "Breton camp" and the "Bataille camp" I think I would favour the latter!'

\(^{92}\) Pat Brassington, *Charade*, 2003, pigment print, 80 x 57 cm.

represents the re/suppressed unconscious. With the bottom edges of the drapes enforcing a low perspective, Brassington directs the gaze to switch from outside this ‘screen’ to the inside perspective of the mannequin looking back towards them. *Charade* recalls Olympia as well as Freud’s determination that uncanniness is not merely uncertainty about an object perceived as lifelike or lifeless but also, and more strikingly, it concerns the fear of losing eyesight.94 Brassington’s mannequin appeals to both ideas: uncertainty over whether an object/subject is part of a charade (such as the strange temptress, Olympia, as symbolising Sartrean self-deceit); and, by it peering out towards the viewer, she puts focus on vision impairment, thus recalling Nathanael, hidden, peering out through the curtains, spying on Coppelius before being discovered and incurring Coppelius’s threats to steal eyes. ‘The scene which Nathaniel witnesses as a child from behind the curtain is especially *unheimlich* because it is the spectacle of an attempt to create life from inert matter’, as Kofman explains.95 Here, Brassington places an inert mannequin-beige figure against fleshy pinks as if to unite inanimate with animate by virtue of subliminal associations and by actively engaging the viewer by directing the mannequin’s gaze squarely at the viewer as if to pull back the return gaze and take ownership of it, as an onlooker self-doubling. Inciting vexations about Olympia as Clara’s *doppelgänger*, an imaginary power from within (Clara was concerned about ‘dark powers forming within’ and subsuming the self),96 Brassington combines narrative and staged photography, pulling the onlooker into this scene. As a theatrically synthesised image *Charade* represents *The sandman* and its metaphorical underpinnings, including the animate-inanimate and double. With *Charade*, Brassington employs, like Daws, the Hopperesque ‘felt presence’ and ‘standing outside oneself’ leitmotifs, plus recalls the unnameable presence reminiscent of Lynch’s Mystery Man in *Lost Highway.*

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95 Kofman, op cit., p.148. Although Jean-Michel Rey, “Freud’s writing on writing”, in Felman, op. cit., pp.301-28, p.316, notes, ‘Freud does not really take into account the different degrees of veiling’ that Hoffmann’s text effects, including the curtain’s central function and ‘the terms *heimlich* and *unheimlich*’, Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., equivocally elicits such notions, especially considering *The sandman* remains a backdrop to Freud’s essay. Likewise, Brassington evokes Hoffmannian veiling motifs in her work, yet with work like *Charade*, the emphasis on veiling/unveiling truths/deceit is made more literal.
96 Hoffmann, Selected writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann, op. cit., p.146.
In the objects and figures of Brassington's images, Jenny Spinks discerns a 'pity for their wretchedness', a poignancy eliciting the metaphysical, as found in images from *A perfect day* series of 2009. Such black and white imagery plays with the mind’s-eye perception of unconsciously subjectively colouring them, a process of enlivening the pictorial, thereby stimulating subliminal activity along with animating the inanimate. Particularly noticeable in this series are grainy, textured surfaces which form a ubiquitous trope across her oeuvre. They engender the subliminal, hazy half-wake-sleep states or the 'TV snow' to which one awakens after drifting off to sleep, thus enveloping electromagnetic noise as a metaphor for transmissions from unconscious states. The title of one piece, *A kind of snow* (2009), affirms this suggestion. Whereas the title *A perfect day* (2009) suggests a clear, good-weather day, it is tinged with the same fuzzy cloudiness, thus juxtaposing clarity-of-consciousness with the indeterminacy-of-unconscious memory. Importantly, this fuzziness does not represent ‘content’ but the psychic ‘modes’ of maintaining equilibrium and the psychic impairment of re/suppression. Alternatively, these grainy textures conjure sands of passing time or time-slippages, recalling George Eliot: ‘The golden moments in the stream

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of life rush past us, and we see nothing but sand'.

Like sand in clenched fists failing to keep grasp, Brassington’s textures act as subliminal motifs of the ungraspable and ineffable, of the stream of life against sands of time; eliciting such notions, she recalls Weber’s remark:

Hoffmann’s Sand Man... become[s] distinctly less human... [one] whose exact status - living or dead - cannot be determined; and even less human, quick-sand. This development from sand man to quick-sand reveals its significance... The uncanny is... bound up with a crisis of perception.

Evoking a motif notable across Lynch’s films, Brassington’s grainy shots reveal a metaphorical obscurity between seen-unseen and the clarity and opacity of meaning.

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Figure 58: Hans Bellmer’s La poupée, 1936/1949 (left); Pat Brassington, Lunch, 2000 (right)

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100 George Eliot, Scenes of clerical life, reproduced at Project Gutenberg: http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/17780/pg17780.html, accessed 7/4/11. She wrote, “The golden moments in the stream of life rush past us, and we see nothing but sand; the angels come to visit us, and we only know them when they are gone”.


102 See Macragget, op. cit., p.126.
With its distorted limbs and contorted body, A kind of snow noticeably compares with Bellmer's La poupée (1936/1949), as does Lunch (2000). Taking on a Kafkaesque metamorphosis, the dismembered insect-like figure of Lunch is at once an animate-inanimate, castrated female automaton yet erectile and phallic – a veritable totem of the Freudian uncanny. Having been long associated with the Digital Art Research Facility of the University of Tasmania, Brassington uses advanced computing and printing facilities and exploits techniques of 'digital deceit' including image scanning and the digitised manipulation tools provided by the Adobe Photoshop software application, thereby composing images which obviate reading in a more pronounced way than Bellmer was able to achieve. Whereas Bellmer was able to render a truly 'optical unconscious', as Krauss claims, successors like Brassington take this further, obliterating the more literal automaton and achieving greater or more refined complexity of the uncanny insofar as being able to more easily and successfully graduate morphing images to an extent where bodily references become less obvious and consequently more disconcertingly familiar-unfamiliar. Coupled with this, large format and multilayered colour printing affords...

103 Hans Bellmer, La poupée, 1936/1949, tinted silver print, 41 x 33 cm, Musee National d'Art Moderne, Paris.
104 Pat Brassington, Lunch, 2000, pigment print, 70 x 36.6 cm image, AGNSW.
105 Mine is similar to Krauss's reading of Bellmer's work (refer to Krauss, The optical unconscious, op. cit., p.172), although she does not make any links to Kafka. Such Brassington images also connect with photographic images made by Man Ray's assistant, photographer, Jacques-André Boiffard: for example, compare Brassington's Bloom with Boiffard's Mouth (1929), a picture discussed in Krauss, "Corpus delicti", op. cit., which discerns such Surrealist images as representing the 'glamour of rot and decay... [as] the very essence of the informe [of which]... surrealist photographers were masters' (p.34). Informe, as being forms of unformed, malformed, disturbed, disorientated or decontextualized human body, is discussed as is baisse or 'baseness' insofar as conjuring primitive animalism at man's root. Krauss, p.59, confers, 'The experience of "convulsive beauty," of something that shakes the subject's self-possession, bringing exaltation through a kind of shock - an "explosante-fixe" - the experience of the manifestations of Breton's objective chance cannot but be illuminated by what Freud means by the uncanny, where shock mixed with the sudden appearance of fate engulfs the subject'. She discusses the uncanniness of Bellmer's poupées and references to The sandman, concluding, p.72: 'The automaton, the double of life who is death, is a figure for the wound that every photograph has the power to deliver, for each one is also a double and a death: [citing Barthes] "All those young photographers who are at work in the world, determined upon the capture of actuality, do not know that they are agents of Death .... Contemporary with the withdrawal of rites, photography may correspond to the intrusion, in our modern society, of an symbolic Death, outside of religion, outside of ritual, a kind of abrupt dive into literal Death. Life/Death: the paradigm is reduced to a simple click, the one separating the initial pose from the final print." That simple click is what Breton had called the explosante-fixe and that combination of madness and love, released by the doll and by the essence of photography, which Barthes describes as a "gone mad" and an instance of "la vérité folle" is, in its uncanniness, its convulsiveness, a kind of amour fou.'
106 See University of Tasmania, "About the Digital Art Research Facility", Digital Art Research Facility: www.artschool.utas.edu.au/DARF/home.html, accessed 12/6/12. Besides using other technical advances, the Digital Art Research Facility (DARF) was a relatively early adopter of large format colour inkjet printing technology, making it available to the Tasmanian visual art academic community of which Brassington belongs. Alongside background information about the project, their website summarises the value of technological developments to the visual arts.
107 Krauss, The optical unconscious, op. cit., p.178-80, explains that whilst her book gets its title from Walter Benjamin's "Small history of photography", an 'actual' optical unconscious was not derived from the likes of Eadweard Muybridge's otherwise imperceptible images of the facets of animal motion, but 'because a group of disparate artists [like Bellmer] have so constructed it there, constructing it as a projection of the way that human vision can be thought to be less than a master of all it surveys...'
Brassington’s work qualities of depth-perception thereby engendering lifelikeness in two-dimensionality. Brassington’s incoherent images which, based on the faux-evidentiary deceit of the photographic medium, promise to tell the truth only to evade yet inform viewers that truths are already known to us yet self-shielded – we inculcate our own loss of reality. Brassington elicits an involuntary shudder within the onlooker, exposing our grand denial, the hidden knowledge we shield from ourselves. The role ‘digital deceit’ plays in effecting such responses is as important as the imagery portrayed, whilst we know images have been fabricated, we nonetheless regard them as ‘believable,’ as representing ‘reality,’ and, considering that the mastery of fabricating art is based on exploiting technological advancements, in the material properties of paints and inks, in papers and other supports, as well as in printing apparatus and technological devices used to construct pictures, art’s relationship with Heideggerian technê concepts is made more apparent. Brassington employs tactics of photomontage, collage, cropping and multilayered colour printing, and exploits the digital manipulation functions of Adobe Photoshop, which allows her ‘to layer things into one image’. Twins, for example, is constructed of layers of a repeated image, a literal doubling made possible by computer software. Not intending to yield unconscious content, Brassington fundamentally discloses the act of self-re/suppression using deceit as a technical and conceptual strategy.

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108 University of Tasmania, “About the Digital Art...”, op. cit., explains that instead of the image being printed ‘as a single layer of pigment’ which ‘lacks the capability of reproducing the complex optical effects that occur through the interaction of light within the layers of opaque and translucent pigments used in traditional [painting and printing] methods’, the value of multilayered printing is significant in that ‘the added complexity of the image surface provides a richer and more sustained viewing experience, than with mono-layered reproductions’. Importantly, whilst an artist may have access to advanced computing, scanning and printing means, a skilled support team (such as the Univ. of Tasmania’s DARF project team) is crucial in achieving high fidelity prints, accurately calibrating equipment and optimising colour properties.

109 According to Felicity Allen, “Tassie tiger”, Herald Sun, 23 July 2002, Brassington said, ‘I hate using the word Photoshop, but... it has allowed me to layer things into one image’.

110 Whereas Sontag, op. cit., p.86, says, ‘A fake photograph (one which has been retouched or tampered with , or whose caption if false) falsifies reality’, photographs (or photograph-like images) do more; they remind us that reality is false in the first place, yet we believe photographs because we do not trust our own minds, we fear that we will fail to remember what the camera records for prosperity, and whilst we believe photographs disclose truth, we also know they fabricate it even though this does not seem to dampen our trust of the filmic. Ibid., pp.120-1, asserts, ‘All that photography’s program of realism actually implies is the belief that reality is hidden. And, being hidden, is something to be unveiled’. 

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Significant to Brassington’s work are crisis of perception, confusions about whether something is real/unreal, animate/inanimate and where the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced using artistic mechanisms of deception. Averting the gaze, the boy of *A perfect day* appears blindfolded, yet raises his head as if to acknowledge a truth which remains veiled or lost in the hazy, fading environs in which he finds himself. In the surrounds of a bereft tree, he strives to look outwards to the external world which

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Crawford, "Apocalyptic whimsy", op. cit., p.55, likewise perceives a blindfold whereas Brassington confirms otherwise: *A Perfect Day*, featuring a blindfolded child, is a particularly unnerving image. It’s almost as though the child is laid out for some ritualistic ceremony, waiting, blinded, for some hideous fate. But in the day and age of ozone depletion - a phenomena of particular concern in Tasmania, where Brassington hails from - there is grim humour in the work. "Factually the child is wearing protective glasses - the type worn while undergoing therapeutic sun lamp treatment, exposure to ultra-violet or infra-red rays which was very popular during the 1940s,” Brassington says."
appears comparatively impoverished to that which really matters and resides within, internally, inherent to Dasein’s existence. By keeping her aesthetics minimalistic, Brassington compels the gaze to focus in on the figures within her images, a tactic which heightens the psychological tension and drama of the work, engendering Existentialist notions of alienation and compelling the onlooker’s mind’s-eye to retreat within, to inner-realms, pressing upon the uncanny dualism of the psyche, where rather than being able to retreat into its refuge, it signals an acknowledgement of our incapacity to fully comprehend or control oneself. Seemingly levitating, the boy floats above earthly physicality, whilst evoking the physical embodiment of Dasein. Similarly, in In marble halls #1 (2003), a figure cowers in semi-foetal position, huddled over in an almost floating allusion created by the vertiginous diagonal stripes of the carpet. Contributing to the disquieting atmospherics of her images, Brassington composes the spatial elements to ingeminate claustrophobic or agoraphobic conditions. The backdrops of such pictures from A little waltz series are furnished with inbuilt forms of destabilisation which recur throughout her work, including slanting planes and oblique perspectives. Here, elusively referencing the intrauterine body, she conjures man’s original home, the womb, for which Freud discerns in mankind a continual yearning. It also elicits Dasein’s burden, his primal, self-occupation: ‘Man goes constantly in fear of himself’, as Brassington says in a synopsis explaining her work. The ghostly figures of In marble halls vacillate between boundaries of light and shade, sometimes veiled by curtains, obscuring the form. Marsh considers this series to be Brassington’s most uncanny work ‘because the images are clearly amateur snaps, shot in a suburban interior where curtains and veils obscure any resolution of interpretation’. Certainly Brassington invites the domestic uncanny by imaging the disruptive unhomely with otherwise ‘homely’ surrounds, and whereas the veiled light and opaque haziness, complemented by motifs of curtains and shadows, comparing with Daws’s veiled lighting and suchlike motifs, the observation that her pictures engender the amateur snapshot touch reveals a device which supports two important elements in adducing uncanniness: a distancing of the artist’s hand; and an ad hoc, caught-unawares glimpse of the unnerving ubiquitousness of the domestic uncanny. Again, like Daws, Hopperesque felt-presence and glimpse-view devices are

112 Pat Brassington, In marble halls no. 1, 2003, pigment print, 78 x 120 cm.
114 Marsh, Pat Brassington: This…, op. cit., p.18.
notable. Exuding a sense of detached observation, *In marble halls #5 (2003)* depicts the nude torso of a stocky, older man who appears to be anguished by some sort of psycho/physical torment. Although she places the figure in a somewhat nervously compromised position within a private domain, with a ‘through a keyhole’ perspective the onlooker knows they are not invited but gets caught up in this strange yet familiar domestic space. The identity of the male figure is obscured and an act of voyeurism pervades. Brassington surreptitiously permits the viewer to pervade another’s ‘inner realm,’ thereby simultaneously reminding them of their own inner-worlds and vulnerabilities. Yet this is not to say the gaze is necessarily voyeuristic; rather, the uncanny gaze confounds and engenders the sense of being caught unawares.

Brassington juxtaposes clarity (the in-focus outlined tree in *A perfect day*) with obscurity, calling to mind Samuel Beckett’s *The unnamable*:

> Air, the air, is there anything to be squeezed from that old chestnut? Close to me it is grey, dimly transparent, and beyond that... spreads its fine impenetrable veils... This grey, first murky, then frankly opaque, is luminous none the less.  

The personage cowering in *In marble halls #1* evokes Beckett’s unnameable person: written in the first person, the unnameable is our uncanny-selves, our utmost homely which Beckett discerns as being ‘there’ yet out of reach:

> I, of whom I know nothing... I know I am seated because of the pressure against my rump... I am not lying on my back, my legs raised and bent, my eyes closed... [yet] I see nothing. Am I clothed? I have often asked myself this question... If I am, I am but lightly. For I feel my tears coursing over my chest... I invented love, music, the smell of flowering currant, to escape from me.

Brassington’s tragic, prostrated figure recoils from the world and into his/herself whilst being repelled by life, isolated and inconsolable, evoking man’s conundrum of Being-in-the-world, quotidian coping mechanisms and Albert Camus’ absurd. Curled-up and withdrawn, the figure educes the trauma of nightmarish remembering something best left re/suppressed, the reinstitution of once surmounted fears/beliefs, whilst conceivably recalling William James’s observation of a ‘strong relationship between post-traumatic shock and a timeless, overpowering feeling of strangeness in the subject’. The image is sad and harrowing because it ignites uncanny remembrances in the empathetic viewer.

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115 Pat Brassington, *In marble halls #5*, 2003, pigment print, 90 x 140 cm image, AGNSW.
117 Ibid., pp.304-5.
118 According to Winchell, op. cit., p.515.
With *A little waltz* series, Brassington reconstructs musical past to evoke present memory, recalling the ethereal aria "I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls" from the 1843 opera *The Bohemian girl*, composed by Michael William Balfe, with libretto by Alfred Bunn. Artists including Dame Joan Sutherland, the Norwegian soprano, Sissel Kyrkjebø, and Irish musician, Enya, have enlivening this aria with *zeitgeist* of their times. Habitually throughout history, musicians replay tunes from different eras, just as writers like T.S. Eliot form their writing by referencing those before them, and poets reflect earlier verse, including Hölderlin's allusions to Sophocles' *Antigone*, and of course, artists' appropriations of predecessor's work. Importantly, these are not simply reverential nods to admired predecessors or post-modernist strategies to outwit or usurp control over classicism, criticise or parody high-modernism. As seen with Smart and Daws, the artistic process of appropriation not only rethinks and re-contextualises preceding artwork, it has the ability of striking an uncanny chord, reiterating past memory into present as it repeats and multiplies, thus signifying uncanny doubling and repetition. Just as words repeat and create familiar-unfamiliar labyrinthine structures, which Bataille postulates as structuring man's psyche, so do the mazes of repeated images and pictures which reside in and between consciousness and unconsciousness. The repetitive nature of re-cycling memory back and forth from past to present continues in much artwork, including Bill Henson, who, as discussed anon, references the classical and baroque. Nonetheless, the significance of whatever or whoever is appropriated is somewhat irrelevant compared with questions about why continual referencing is important. Considering Freud's observation that 'whatever reminds us of this inner “compulsion to repeat” is perceived as uncanny', the process of continual referencing constitutes a repetitive enactment itself, with one appropriation after another fundamentally an uncanny act and evocation. Coupling this with the *filmic*, both in terms of her mediums' aesthetics and the subliminal messages a photograph conveys, and the uncanny films she invokes in still images, Brassington's imagery intensifies the uncanny through many layers of meaning and effect.

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119 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.238. Oddly, physical equivalents of repetitious, backward-oriented behaviour, such as walking backwards commonly result in nausea, especially if done at length. Contrary to natural perambulation, it appears that going backwards, which essentially defines repetition, is not suited to mankind. Perhaps then, there are psychophysical links between the uncanny unease felt by physical and mental backward motioning and the nature of appropriation?
Moreover, Brassington’s meaning is made purposively unclear. She invites obscurity in a world where art floats on a sea of abstract ideas, where even concrete realisms are abstracted images to varying degrees. Her art refuses to, indeed cannot, speak of that which is already clear yet hidden from us. It recalls Camus’ words, ‘If the world were clear, art would not exist’; art would succumb if the mystery of Being was understood, as Being itself would lack mysteriousness. Camus held, ‘Forever I shall be a stranger to myself. In psychology as in logic, there are truths but not truth’. The discipline of philosophy contests that mankind is no nearer to nor further from a wholly ontological appreciation of Being – we are, indeed, none-the-wiser yet nevertheless continue to question and strive towards deeper, better understandings about the nature of existence. For Camus, the futility of man’s absurd search for meaning is man’s ultimate labour for which the ‘struggle itself... is enough to fill a man’s heart’. This absurd struggle is notable in Brassington’s art, and just as Sisyphus is Camus’ absurd hero, Brassington’s personages likewise enact Sisyphus’ eternal punishment of repeatedly lugging the same rock up a mountain. Brassington’s figures are likewise eternally, yet unconsciously, reminded of their unhomely plight, condemned to themselves by themselves. Forming a foetal position, her recoiling figure tries to retreat within, uncannily portending man’s eternal struggle towards self-understanding and those sudden, profound acknowledgements of unhomeliness. Subtly, subliminally, she pricks her viewers into acknowledging their uncanny existence.

\[121\] Ibid., p.15.
\[122\] Ibid., p.91.
The poetical uncanny of Bill Henson's dark, reflexive stirrings

...there is nothing more marvellous or madder than real life, and that all the poet could do was to catch this as a dark reflection caught on a dull mirror. Hoffmann, The Sandman133

Australian poet, John Forbes described Bill Henson's work as bestowing 'that elegiac lacrimae rerum that comes from celebrating myths you can't quite believe'.124 Forbes saw in Henson a fellow bard with the ability to translate lacrimae rerum (or 'tears of things' wept simply as a consequence of Being-in-the-world)125 into profound, metaphoric imagery. Arguably, and in concurrence with Forbes, Henson is artist and poet - appellations accorded to Henson despite Celan's differentiation (which inculcates the uncanny):

In the opposition between art and poetry, art stands for mimesis, forgetting, and the uncanny. Poetry, however, follows art's uncanny path in order to break free of representation, albeit only for a brief moment, in its search for the Other and a recollection of a date.126

Such delineation is highly qualitative considering the ability of both practices to be entirely abstract or representational. Indeed they are always both abstract and representational. Significantly, artists like Henson are predominately concerned with perception.127 His poetic, dreamlike images, photographs dealing with edges of knowledge, are often described as having the aesthetics of film stills, incorporating 'gritty realism' with 'a surrealist sensibility' and distinguished by their 'highly metaphoric composure'.128 His work

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123 Hoffmann, Tales of Hoffmann, op. cit., p.101, says '...as a dark reflection is caught...'. I have deleted 'is' for clarity.
125 Lacrimae rerum comes from what is considered 'the finest verse in Latin poetry', Vergil's Aeneid 1 462: 'sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt' see Arthur L. Keith, "A Vergilian line", The Classical Journal, vol.17, no.7 (April, 1922), pp.398-402, p.399, which includes the following translation: 'Tears are universal, belong to the constitution of nature, and the evils of mortality move the human heart'; and, p.401, 'E'en things inanimate can weep for us, and the works of man's hands have their own pathetic power' (followed by 'then on the lifeless painting he feeds his heart'). Ibid., p.399, says Vergil's line relates to 'humanae sorrow [which]... goes to the very depth of man's being and is an integral element of the problem of the universe'.
126 According to Kligerman's appraisal in Kligerman, op. cit., p.104. He draws on Celan's "The meridian" speech (1960), saying, p.114, 'Art behaves like an apparition, and this link between repetition and specter eventually develops into Celan's claim that art is at home (sublatus) in the uncanny, and citing Freud's reading of sight in The sandman, says, 'Celan too will emphasize the uncanny's relation to the subversion of sight and the play between darkness and light', which as we see will align with the art of Henson's making. Ibid, pp.116-7, discusses Celan's differentiation between the uncanny of art and that of poetry: 'Poetry and art have their own distinct uncanny sides... Poetry takes the uncanny moment into itself, remembers it, and is silent before becoming voice. In contrast to art's uncanniness and its relation to place as seen in such terms as "direction," "distance," and "way," the uncanniness of poetry is linked to time'. Ibid., pp.116-7, discusses Celan's differentiation between the uncanny of art and that of poetry: 'Poetry and art have their own distinct uncanny sides... Poetry takes the uncanny moment into itself, remembers it, and is silent before becoming voice. In contrast to art's uncanniness and its relation to place as seen in such terms as "direction," "distance," and "way," the uncanniness of poetry is linked to time'.
127 Lacouvee-Labarthe, ibid., ff.29, asserts the same of Celan's work - perception rather than representation; p.33: 'poetry should be the interruption of art, the interruption, that is, of mimesis. The poetic act consists in perceiving, not in representing.'
128 Melinda Hinkson, "Australia's Bill Henson scandal: Notes on the new cultural attitude to images", Visual Studies, vol.24,
invariably aligns with the obscure, suggestive aesthetics of poetry, using filmic qualities to revivify age-old phenomena in contemporary medium. Like Nathanael’s attempt at righting himself with Clara through poesy, this case-study interprets ways Henson invokes the aesthetics of poetry in pictorial form. Appraising his work as epical, his vision apocalyptic and universal, anthropologist, Melinda Hinkson describes Henson’s pictures as dealing with:

themes of life, death, sex, corruption, filtered through the distinctive psychological anxieties of adolescence and the excesses of late modernity. Some of his pictures have the quality of dreamscapes; they convey fragments of experience on the edge of euphoria or social abyss – a contradictory state depicted in a distinctive deep black background for which Henson is renowned, a black that threatens to absorb the rest of the picture. Henson’s pictures echo, at times simultaneously, aspects of baroque painting and hyperreal advertising. This complexity is part of their richness and appeal; it gives Henson’s works a special volatility, but also the possibility of multiple conflicting interpretations by those who view them. In this sense they are pictures for our times; they invoke diverse referents and carry the capacity to speak simultaneously to the interests and experiences of diverse audiences.129

Hinkson’s erudite summation is informed by much commentary about Henson’s work since the early 1990s, with points bearing significance to the conceptual uncanny including the filmic quality, the ability of his photographs to both realise and evade a certain subject or feeling, the heightened metaphoric values and psychological tension he creates, and the experience his pictures convey to produce sensations of euphoria and dysphoria.

Even his earlier (mid-1980s) images of young prostitutes, drug addicts and highly-charged adolescents conceptualise man as being on the verge or threshold, in confused states of flux. Whilst Daws regards Jungian notions of thresholds as relating to a union of opposites, Henson’s images portray man as infinitely divided yet poised between interconnected spheres, as balancing on precipices. It is the very edginess of such earlier narratives that allude to mankind’s existence ‘on the edge’ – this Being forever on the verge of truth or reality, suggestive of T.S. Eliot’s line, ‘The awful daring of a moment’s surrender’ – the non-retractable process of stepping over a threshold.130 Henson’s sexually-explicit, raw, primal images of copulation (or perhaps rape or incest) with stains of blood (suggesting insidious disease including HIV/AIDS), are infused with dramatic emotion, suggesting ‘latent threat in the shadows with an atmosphere of morbid sensuality’. The notion of latency in his images, the idea they leave the observer with residual meaning, is common in

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129 Ibid., p.203.
130 From T.S. Eliot’s “The waste land”, op. cit., p.78.
the discourse concerning Henson’s work. Yet this latency is not of a concealed unknown. Insofar as his images linger in memory, they do so because they irritate something strangely known to us yet ostensibly inaccessible to the conscious; the remainders do not as much as complete the story (as David Malouf suggests), but open it up to infinite possibilities. Whereas Henson’s detractors assume these teenagers’ tortured expressions are functions of pornography or sexualised ‘growing pains,’ and whilst evoking the traumatic threshold between childhood and adulthood, they nevertheless summon in the adult viewer surmounted re/suppressed content. Henson’s work is harrowing not merely because they are explicit, rather their abrupt explicitness intentionally confronts and thereby breaches the consciousness, opening-up man’s ‘cover-up,’ confronting oneself with their unhomely existence. Significantly, the potency of erotic voyeurism, a role Henson often commands of his viewer, strikes the re/suppressed primitive within, puncturing subconscious memory. And whilst such images are challenging to extremes, they, like dirges, cry out with a strange pathos which presages a soulful coming home – a returning to a previous state.

Of Henson’s work, Hinkson talks of ‘life, death, sex, corruption... and the excesses of late modernity’ – themes plausibly inherited from an important source of Henson’s – Dostoevsky’s *The idiot*. Herman Hesse, in his 1919 essay on Dostoevsky’s story, places the naïve protagonist, Prince Myshkin, in isolation, sandwiched between the powerful, rich and elegant of high-society and the rebellious, ferocious youth of the working class, all of whom share critical observation of the closest attention regarding Myshkin and scorn him for his unusualness, perhaps because, as Hesse conjectures, he ‘has much closer and more direct relations with the unconscious than they do’. The characters surrounding Myshkin fear him because they cannot understand him, although throughout the novel everyone acknowledges some inexplicable understanding of him, innate understandings that cannot be reconciled in keeping with suppressed acknowledgement of bad-faith or obscured recognition of that which one unconsciously controls or is overpowered by. For Hesse, ‘we

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131 See author, David Malouf’s introductory essay in Bill Henson, *Bill Henson: Photographs*, Sydney: Picador, 1998, pp.9-10; reproduced in Henson, *Mnemosyne*, op. cit., p.35. He says, ‘What is left out is the total and orientating view. Left out as well are the connections between various parts of the body, and all those moments that the camera has not recorded for us and whose absence prevents us from following the act as a continuous spectacle. We are shown precisely what we are expected to respond to, and the gaps, alive as they are and activated by what goes missing in them, are part of what we are shown’.


133 Ibid., p.89.
understand and love [Dostoevsky’s characters] so uncannily that we must feel in ourselves something related and akin to them and Myshkin who has ‘the highest experience’ – ‘that half second of supreme receptivity and insight... that magical ability for a... flash of a moment... to understand and accept everything’. As someone succumbing to epileptic convulsions, Myshkin represents the essence of being and a ‘coming home’, the arrival at the homely from the unhomely. Hesse concludes, The idiot shows us:

The future is uncertain, but the road that is shown here is unambiguous. It... calls for “magical” thinking, the acceptance of chaos. Return to the incoherent, to the unconscious, to the formless, to the animal and far beyond the animal to the beginning of all things. Not in order to remain there, not to become animal or primeval slime but rather so that we can reorient ourselves, hunt out, at the roots of our being, forgotten instincts... No program can teach us to find this road... Each one walks this way alone... Each of us... will have to stand on the Myshkin boundary where truths can cease and begin anew. Each of us must once for an instant in his life experience within himself the same sort of thing that Myshkin experienced in his moments of clairvoyance...

The idiot gleans many ideas relating to the uncanniness of Henson, including the uncanniness of total calm and absolute chaos a fit of epilepsy produces. Written roughly 50 years before Freud’s essay, Dostoevsky aligns with Freud’s notions about the uncanniness of epilepsy, based on Jentsch, who wrote:

It is not unjustly that epilepsy is therefore spoken of as the morbus sacer, as an illness deriving not from the human world but from foreign and enigmatic spheres, for the epileptic attack of spasms reveals the human body to the viewer – the body that under normal conditions is so meaningful, expedient, and unitary, functioning according to the directions of his consciousness...

Whilst modern, neurological understandings concerning epilepsy began around the mid-nineteenth-century when Dostoevsky wrote The idiot, it was still considered incomprehensibly daemonic well into the twentieth-century. Freud’s interest in Dostoevsky and epilepsy and its relation to uncanniness is something Royle discusses, citing Freud’s essay of 1928, “Dostoevsky and parricide.” That Henson’s work relates to Myshkin whose outward calmness was juxtaposed by inner turmoil and physical epileptic

134 Ibid.
135 Ibid., p.92. Hesse adds that Dostoevsky himself experienced such things in ‘those moments when he stood face to face with execution and from which he emerged with the prophet’s gaze’.
136 One translation of The idiot reads, 'The sight of a man in an epileptic fit fills many people with positive and unbearable horror, in which there is a certain element of the uncanny'. Another interprets the same as, 'Many people have borne witness to this impression; and many cannot behold an epileptic fit without a feeling of mysterious terror and dread'; see Fyodor Dostoevsky, The idiot, trans. Constance Garnett, Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1996, p.218; and Fyodor Dostoevsky, The idiot, trans. Eva Martin, reproduced at Project Gutenberg: www.gutenberg.org/files/2638/2638-h/2638-h.htm, accessed 17/9/10, respectively. I cite the 1996 Wordsworth Edition ed. henceforth; exceptions to this are noted.
137 Freud, 'The uncanny', op. cit., p.243, writes of 'The uncanny effect of epilepsy'.
seizures, forms a nexus with the uncanniness of Henson’s pictures. Likewise, the fragile juncture between composure and calamity engenders a state of eeriness, which is reflected in Henson’s work, which obliquely represents such ideas through fissures and cracks, sometimes literally but more often indirectly by confusing and bewildering the viewer’s perception using very subtle, highly complex imagery. Like Dostoevsky’s, encounters with Henson’s art have often been described as splintering the levels of consciousness, imagination and memory, as being intensely, psychologically gruelling whilst incorporating allegorical and tropological interpretations. This granularity of interpretation creates in the viewer a sense of erratic rapture yet a foreboding uneasiness which compares with ‘daemonic’ epileptic seizures – spasms which reveal the human body to the viewer.

Emphasising traits of originality as admirable, The idiot accentuates the uncanny stance of people in good-faith. Whilst Shakespeare’s Polonius utters, ‘This above all, to thine own self be true’, the notion of being thoroughly true evokes an uncanny ardour that overwhelms man, such that he sinks back into the everyday complacency of bad-faith. When man encounters utter truth, especially if it emerges unexpectedly, he is likewise awestricken. Similar can be said of Henson’s images which sometimes terrify people into feigned indignation, acting to cover-up what would otherwise reveal the uncanny rawness of the homely. Among many links to Existentialist ideas in The idiot, Dostoevsky writes, ‘there is a limit of ignominy in the consciousness of one’s own nothingness and impotence beyond which a man cannot go’, hence, the façade one requires to distance oneself from self, to separate homely from unhomely, thereby necessitating a journey from one into the other. Recalling the story about the fly ‘that knew its place and took part in the general chorus, but [thought] he alone was an outcast’, and whilst included in the general throng of life, Myshkin similarly felt ‘outside’ and ‘outcast’. Significantly, the reader’s empathy

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140 Richard Pearce, Dostoevsky: An examination of the major novels, London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992, p.74, discusses this outer-inner tension. His essay on The idiot relates the story as an expose in aesthetics and ideals, of beauty and so forth, whilst also discussing the paradoxical nature of Dostoevsky’s story and its double meanings.

141 For example, Dostoevsky, op. cit., p.304: ‘It was not that this family was distinguished by marked initiative or was drawn out of the common rut by any conscious inclination towards originality, which would have been a complete breach of the proprieties.’ My emphasis points to Dostoevsky’s suggestion that originality is more an unconscious act.

142 ‘... And it must follow as the night the day/ Thou canst not then be false to any man’, from Shakespeare’s The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, Act 1, scene 3, 78-82; see Shakespeare, op. cit., p.837.

143 Dostoevsky, op. cit., p.386, continues, ‘and beyond which he begins to feel immense satisfaction in his very degradation... Oh, of course humility is a great force in that sense. I admit that – though not in the sense in which religion accepts humility as a force’.

144 Ibid., p.396.
with Myshkin comes from generalized notions of alienation which specifically align with an individual's uncanny disposition. Whilst The idiot spans an array of philosophical notions, including man's absurdity', Dostoevsky's characters often align with the uncanny, including the story's homesick matriarch, Princess Lizaveta Prokofyevna, whose lament, 'all of us abroad are only a fantasy', is echoed in the familiar-unfamiliar of Freud's 'something foreign to itself' and Heidegger's journeying from the foreign unhomely into the homely; whereas the heart-throbbing beautiful Nastasya and Aglaia symbolise the desirable homely, and competing for Myshkin's affections, compare with Nathanael's Olympia and Clara, respectively. Olympia and the Heideggerian homely-unhomely of ancient Greece are recognisable throughout Henson's imagery, including the pitted, crumbling statues which are brought to life by adjoining faces of girls or boys, enlivening the inanimate with the animate and vice-versa.

Parallels also exist between Dostoevsky's and Henson's work concerning ideas emanating from crisis of meaning and interregnums (periods including the tumultuous transition into/from Enlightenment and into/from Modernism); times where mass alienation develops as a result of projects which subsume 'all lived experience under the sign of an abstract reason'. But rather than portraying such communal inflictions, Henson

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145 For example, Dostoevsky, ibid., pp.517-8, says, 'There's no reason to be troubled because we're absurd, is there?... we're shallow, have bad habits... bored... we can't understand... we're all like that, all of us, you and I, and they!... One can't understand everything at once, we can't begin with perfection all at once! In order to reach perfection one must begin by being ignorant of a great deal. And if we understand things too quickly, perhaps we shan't understand then thoroughly'.

146 Ibid., p.578. She cries, 'all this life abroad, and this Europe of yours is all a fantasy, and all of us abroad are only a fantasy... remember my words, you'll see it for yourself!

147 In 1986, Michael Heyward wrote of Henson: 'Henson is possessed of an uncanny gift for finding in the actual the shadows of abstraction, endowing his images with a startling autonomous life... The pitted crumbling face of a statue is brought to life by the face of the girl it adjoins, even as her flesh is seen as stone'; see Henson, Mnemosyne, op. cit., p.133.

illustrates more intimate experiences of turmoil using universally discernible imagery such as the thresholds of adolescence as a metaphor for the uncanny gap encountered at the crossroads between consciousness and unconsciousness. Notionally, the shadowy motifs he employs are less about dark, ambiguous spaces and more about the fleetingness of things, fleeting truths and uncanny realities in accordance with Freudian-Heideggerian canons. Henson exposit, 'While in the quest of the fatal you always discover your own self; there is nothing one can do about it but try desperately hard to be honest'.

Henson’s enigmatic photographs often appear to be centred on the adolescent cusp between the awakening of adulthood and departure of childhood, exuding the mysteries of mankind’s ever-transforming form and Being. His interests, he explains, lie in 'the profound and unexpected ways in which we all react to life around us' — a viewpoint reflecting the notion his photographs portray memories. Furthermore, his conviction, 'Everyone carries their childhood around inside of them for the rest of their lives', embodies concepts about childhood revelations being revisited throughout one’s life, in keeping with Freudian concepts of repressed memory being uncannily revealed. Henson’s palpable imagery repeatedly evokes ambiguous, veiled memory sensed as familiar-unfamiliar.

148 Bill Henson, Light vision, nos. 6 & 7 (July-October 1978), p.8, reads, 'Action is a sequence of acts of desperation which allow you to keep hoping; I’m not doing as I please – I’m doing the best I can. While in the quest of the fatal you always discover your own self; there is nothing one can do about it but try desperately hard to be honest'. Alwynne Mackie, as cited in Henson, Mnemosyne, op. cit., p.129, observes his images relay the 'very basic and elemental things about feeling, inner reflection and sheer moment by moment existence (as existentialists conceive of it)'.

150 Henson continues, 'than what might or might not be controversial', in Ashley Crawford. "Henson’s art of darkness", The Age, 26 June 2004.

151 Henson as quoted in ibid.
Metaphorically, adolescence magnifies the idea that although the self constantly changes, one’s identity of themselves remains: whilst you change, you are also always you. Such are the contradictions with which Henson likes to play. His triptych, *Untitled #40,42,41 (1983-84)*, references time as ancient yet new: the first panel represents the classical; the second relates to present-day with the boy looking forward (towards the right) to the future of the third frame, reflecting past. Adopting memory topoi including the cool detached recollection of past in present, Henson emphasises forms which elicit nostalgic empathy and identification with the past. Among formal applications of uncanniness infused in Henson’s pictures are ‘factors of silence, solitude and darkness’ Freud attributes to ‘infantile anxiety from which the majority of human beings have never become quite free’. Whilst Freud possibly, obliquely brought Anna into these, the final words, of his essay, he plainly attributes these characteristics to uncanny revisitations of things surmounted and repressed in childhood. By portraying teenagers on ambiguous cusps of major life-stages, childhood-adulthood, Henson substantiates universal ideas about journeying and the process of re/suppressing inner acknowledgements of the truth.

In the enigmatic image of a tormented young woman, *Untitled 55 (1983-84)*, tinctured with a sad mysteriousness echoing Géricault’s unhappy, uncanny child-portraits, Henson relays ideas about strange moments in childhood as portending strange moments throughout adulthood, those most intimate, shuddering encounters one has which disturb and rock one’s inner core. Here, Henson not only exposes the physical as abjectly corporeal, with stains, bruises and allusions to bodily fluids, he infers the inner psyche and consciousness as being vulnerable and damaged. Often portraying the knowing-yet-unknowing prematurely mature (children ‘too-old-too-soon’), Henson’s pictures are as much generalised psychological portraits as comments on the anxieties of adolescence. Henson’s images, of ‘twilight zones’ and twilit, dusky screened scenes, resonate Creed’s

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152 Bill Henson, *Untitled #40,42,41, 1983-84, type C photograph, 100 x 80 cm, triptych, edn of 10.
154 Bill Henson, *Untitled 55, 1983-84, type C photograph, 100 x 80 cm, edn of 10.
155 As discussed in Germer, op. cit., pp.174-5, describes Géricault’s children as possessing an alien gaze, ‘more disquieting... [because] it cannot be fully dominated by the beholder’.
156 Henson’s defiled teenagers invite interpretations concerning the abject, including notions about the repression of the anal in preference for the genital, and olfactory senses as lesser value in preference to sight – Freudian concepts which interconnect with the uncanny insofar as they represent infantile and primitive repression aligned with unconscious mechanisms. Different notions about the abject is handled Hal Foster, “Obscene, abject, traumatic”, op. cit.
filmic interpretations of Dracula, werewolves and vampires, ‘moon monsters’ of the ‘undead’ which she compares with the Freudian uncanny of zombies and things animate-inanimate.\textsuperscript{157} It is an interpretation which might likewise be accorded Henson’s awkward teenagers, as the virginal quarry of vampires or adolescents who abruptly metamorphose or ‘rebirth’ into uncanny adult/zombies. And, rather than pornographic, Henson’s adolescent figures are more suitably likened to the artwork of White’s fictional artist in \textit{The vivisector}, Hurtle, whose expressions of truth border on ‘where the hideous and depraved can become aesthetically acceptable’, made from his ‘compulsion to plumb the depths’ of humanity and search for ‘the mystery of pure being’.\textsuperscript{158} Hurtle observes an adolescent girl (who makes an uncanny impression on him), seeing ‘potential strength already exerting itself, partly muscular, partly as reflections of sinewy light’;\textsuperscript{159} an observation similarly illustrated in \\textit{Untitled 55}. Whereas motifs of girlish plaits recur throughout Hurtle’s work, Henson’s topos of flaccid, pale skin suggests likewise vulnerability; his figures’ skin’s corporeality and palpability evoke biological origination and the primitive. Suffering a stroke and impaired, Hurtle is described as a ‘demi-corpus, standing between themselves and death’,\textsuperscript{160} a charge which might be assigned Henson’s deathlike figures which appear as damaged ‘organic convulsions’,\textsuperscript{161} analogous to the retardations of one’s ‘epileptic’ identity as one which convulses between past, present and future states. Notionally, White’s associations drawn from Jungian archetypal imagery, reinvigorated by Daws, holds several parallels with Henson, considering his self-reflective tendencies. White sensed, early on, an internal self-dichotomy of lightness and darkness, and began ‘the inevitably painful search for the twin who might bring a softer light to bear on my bleakly illuminated darkness’.\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{157} Creed, \textit{Phallic panic...}, op. cit., p.81.
\textsuperscript{158} And ‘of unrealized possibilities which fascinated him in children’s eyes’, see White, \textit{The vivisector}, op. cit., p.361, p.444 and p.421, which continues, ‘...there were few children with whom he had been intimately acquainted: only himself – and Rhoda... Still, you didn’t have to know them: not if you knew’. Several other parallels between Hurtle and Hurtle may be made including their desire to create a ‘child... more than one. Or many in the one. For after all there is only the one child: the one you still carry inside you’, p.405.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., p.430 and p.433. Commenting on his painting of her, she says, ‘Otherwise it’s not a bad likeness’, and the narrator adds, ‘Her use of a word peculiar to unexceptional women paying morning calls long ago made her judgement sound uncannier’: that is, the use of a peculiar word effectively dredges up past people and events for Hurtle.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., p.569; my emphasis.
\textsuperscript{161} This term is borrowed from Kristeva, \textit{Strangers to ourselves}, op. cit., p.139. She describes Denis Diderot’s writing as containing ‘organic convulsions’, that his language is ‘made up of spasms’ and thus that his work is both organic/neurological (physical sensations) and rhetorical/cultural.
\textsuperscript{162} White, \textit{Flaws in the glass...}, op. cit., pp.34-5. The influence upon White’s work of Jung, along with that of Germanic literature, in general, and of Kafka and Schönberg, is discussed in Peter Beaton, \textit{The eye in the mandala} (Patrick White: A vision of man and god), London: Paul Elek, 1976, which, p.1, sees White’s work as fusing the familiar with the strange to
Henson’s teenagers evoke the fictional character, Meursault of Camus' *The stranger*.\(^{163}\) They appear indifferent, unaffected, drained of propriety, disconnected and depleted of purpose – and bereft of consciousness – a ‘lost consciousness, of transconsciousness’.\(^{164}\) Whereas Kristeva argues that Meursault presents the opposite of uncanny,\(^{165}\) Henson’s figures give the impression of being *beyond* the containment of the uncanny. Within the adolescent cusp of rejecting and repressing childhood beliefs and entering the realm of adulthood – a ‘place’ distancing the maternal home – a teenager quavers between homely and unhomely states, often finding themselves in no-man’s land. Henson’s teenagers, like Meursault, execute the extreme ‘separateness of the uprooted person’,\(^{166}\) or as Kristeva writes concerning ‘self-destructuration’:\(^{167}\)

> the experience of the abyss separating me from the other who shocks me – I do not even perceive him, perhaps he crushes me because I negate him. Confronting the foreigner whom I reject and with whom at the same time I identify. I lose my boundaries, I no longer have a container, the memory of experiences when I had been abandoned overwhelm me, I lose my composure. I feel ‘lost’, ‘indistinct’, ‘hazy’.

Figure 63: Bill Henson, *Untitled #21*, 2008-09

‘transform the map of Australia and the topography of the inner life into a realm of myth. That which is known and rational is used in the service of the unknown and the non-rational’.


\(^{164}\) Kristeva, *Strangers to ourselves*, op. cit., p.25. The complexity of Camus’ character Meursault is oversimplified here but is nevertheless difficult to pinpoint, as many have endeavoured to analyse him previously have found. The difficulty of ‘nailing down’ such a character aligns with the complexity Henson draws in his figures.

\(^{165}\) Ibid., p.26.

\(^{166}\) Ibid., p.29.

\(^{167}\) Ibid., p.187-8, talks of ‘destruction of the self’. This idea of de-structuring or shattering the self or identity might equally apply to Henson’s series of photographs of 1994-1995 which appear slashed, torn or as shattered glass.
In the adolescent or young adult, Henson demonstrates the epitome of this uncanny non-contained being. The question as to whether Nathanael recalls the embarrassment a child encounters at the threshold of clinging on to but denying their once-favoured beliefs for new, acceptable adult ones is conceivably portrayed by Henson as adolescent awkwardness perceptively evoking the uncanny return of re/suppressed childhood beliefs whilst being emblematic of thresholds: an in-between place connected to both sides yet belonging nowhere – the gap between the homely-unhomely, familiar-unfamiliar etcetera.

*Untitled #21* (2008-09)⁶⁸ exemplifies a technique of coalescing the bodily-strange-yet-familiar within one figure.⁶⁹ Sitting amongst modern youth, the classical figure’s natural-looking deportment, rather than following a more familiar stately classical pose, suggests the posture of an awkward, introverted teenager, thus configuring familiar-unfamiliar whilst alluding to the cusp of adulthood. Often imaging solitary teens set against dark blue-black-grey twilight dullness, Henson juxtaposes children’s virginal role against the pubescence of night – an awakening of nightlife, acting as a metaphor for the emergence of our darker or unseen, unknown selves. Henson’s images relay the mysteries of physical and psychic change whilst bringing a metaphysical element into his pictures. Significantly, in referencing the classical, Henson evokes Freudian-Heideggerian citations of the ancient Greek, and to Graeco-Germanic philosophy, in general. *Untitled #21* juxtaposes the near and far of ancient and contemporary adolescents, intermixing the sculptural figure with modern teenagers such that their intermingling unites their ‘being’ in parallel with Heidegger’s meshing of the new into the old into the future. Henson’s conflation of time and space, evocative of mankind’s habit of adopting *Dasein’s* past into its future, elicits the atmospherics of Pink Floyd’s epic track “Echoes,”⁷⁰ central to their 1972-released film *Live at Pompeii*, which was staged in Pompeii’s ancient Roman amphitheatre:

> ...The echo of a distant time  
> Comes willowing across the sand...  
> And no-one called us to the land  
> And no-one knows the where’s or why’s.  
> Something stirs and something tries  
> Starts to climb towards the light.

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⁶⁸ Bill Henson, *Untitled 21*, 2008-09, archival inkjet pigment print, 127 x 180 cm.

⁶⁹ Germer, op. cit., pp.176-8, similarly discusses the uncanny familiarity of Géricaut’s portraits of children who take on the visage of the classical, such as Géricaut’s *Alfred of Dedreux as a child*, c.1814, oil on canvas, MoMA, which marries the child’s posture to that of the Mercury of Herculaneum, as ‘someone trapped inside the overgrown body of a stranger’.

⁷⁰ “Echoes” is the last track, running over 23 minutes, on Pink Floyd’s album, *Meddle*, released in 1971.
Adopting the uncanniest of all loci, Pompeii, as their backdrop, haunted by the buried and recalling Freud’s notion that ‘being buried alive by mistake is the most uncanny thing of all’, the resonant feedback of the ping announcing “Echoes” discerns the Freudian uncanny and that of Existentialism. Pink Floyd’s atonal music is described as unfamiliar, with its ‘disorientating uses of timbre [and] texture’, as mirrored in lyrics such as, ‘Something stirs and something tries / Starts to climb towards the light’, rekindling Freud’s notion of the return of the repressed. Originally performed as “Return of the son of nothing” in 1971, “Echoes” (‘of a distant time comes willowing across the sand…’), like Henson, conjures the Heideggerian uncanny as conferred in “Hölderlin’s The Ister” lecture, where journeying and locality are considered alongside Sophocles’ Antigone. Whereas interpretations of the lyrics of “Echoes” are often oversimplified, literal readings, Edward Macan contends, ‘The first line opens with a vision of the ocean as the womb of life, and renders a word painting of an archaic creature, in an unimaginably distant past, groping its way out of the ocean onto land’, evincing Heideggerian ideas regarding Hölderlin’s watercourse-based imagery. The encounter of ‘Two strangers passing in the street’ might be likened to Martin Buber’s ideas about spiritual encounters in I and thou, but can also be read as a momentary, fleeting and non-reflective confrontation which could be interpreted as the collision of the unhomely-self with its homely counterpart. Henson’s artwork similarly elicits profound encounters and acts as a means of getting us, the viewers,
'beyond ourselves and our ordinary mode of experience'. Other commonalities amongst Heidegger, Henson and “Echoes” include a probing into lost pasts with an eye to the future, and a striving towards a realness of ambiguity – subtle, poetic motioning towards subliminal glimpses or acknowledgements of our uncanny existence. In Henson’s work, one discerns glimmers of the Heideggerian uncanny and strong regard for history:

If... the historicity of any humankind resides in being homely, and if being homely is a becoming homely in being unhomely; and if, furthermore, such being homely can be determined only poetically and must be said poetically, then Hölderlin is the first to experience poetically, that is, to say poetically, the German need of being unhomely.

Striving towards a homeliness from the perspective of the unhomely thus instigates the prerequisite of being inherently unhomely. Man cannot wholly know the homely from within the homely, but regards it from being within the unhomely. Importantly, the unhomely, rather than being manifestly fearful, is a natural state from which to locate and strive towards the homely, the essence of being is steeped in man’s own, unique historicity (the locality of their homely) yet he comes to this from the foreign. This is why, for Heidegger, his Greco-German lineage magnifies an uncanniness about his homely origins, specifically through the form of Hölderlin’s poeticising. The epic poesy of Hölderlin, as echoed by Pink Floyd, rich in historicity yet adequately abstract for readers to ‘lose’ themselves in imagination, connects with Henson’s imagery which likewise stimulates a retreating into oneself, into deep levels of the psyche, opening up memory processes which reach back to one’s origins, thus exciting an uncanny flash of profound self-recognition. Whereas Peter Craven waxes lyrical about Henson’s ability to ‘make a Melbourne crowd look like a Giotto fresco... because an analogous moral intensity is brought to the representation’, there is no one element which testifies to assimilating the modern-day with the classical and neither is morality necessarily posed. Rather, Henson puts faith in mankind’s ability to uncannily recover primitive, sacred, ancient and classical myths which have otherwise been silenced; he exposes an array of similitude between past and present, reverberating ideas concerning uncanny historicity. In a lecture given in 2010, Henson dubbed a concept ‘millennial slippage’, as a becoming as one with artists or art of the past

177 Johnston, op. cit., p.134.
178 Heidegger, Hölderlin’s hymn..., op. cit., p.125.
not merely as a continuum of civilisation’s ages but as an interfolding or blending with past, present and future. Art looks backwards and into the beyond whilst being blindfolded to time, it is a ‘force of nature that is beyond anyone’s control and is therefore always potentially disturbing... the experience of art overtakes reason’. Henson talked of being ‘one with the art of the past as if the gap in time had all at once ceased’, and that...

...we are all stuck inside our bodies with a breathtaking power... this millennial slippage... [experiences which might be triggered by Maria Calais’ ability to] peel away the layers of an aria to the naked emotion within... [or] Michelangelo’s Academy slaves forever enacting the enigma of whether they are emerging from or disappearing back into the stone... Standing in front of a Twombly painting I find myself imagining that the sounds which echoed through the archaic Greek temples in Agrigento had in fact been absorbed into the surface of the walls...The palpable mystery of archaic Greek sculpture... of secrets hidden inside...

Henson’s attraction to Cy Twombly’s art encompasses allusions to the Classical. Significantly, with Graeco-Roman themes infused in much of his work, Henson’s photographs are repeatedly referential in ways which are not only reverential, but, like Hölderlin, make uncanny connections with past. Henson’s referencing, including Orientalism, does not merely conjure distant lands, the ancient associations engender notions of time, stretching time backwards and forwards so that the viewer subliminally experiences an imaginative journeying deep within. Inherent of time-passing, such observations produce experiences of internalised revisitations: subtle, uncanny reverberations, as Henson puts it: ‘On and on it goes, this being propelled forward and pulled backward...’ Henson’s viewer, therefore, experiences kinds of textual haunting they do with literature, similarly comprising manifold texts and historical references. These aesthetic expressions of journeying are elaborated as providing a ‘material presence’ which anchors man who would otherwise assume a ‘ghostly condition or impermanence’; perversely it is the very materiality of pictures and texts haunted with spectres which ground us; ‘without their physical evidence my life would be more phantasmal’, as Julian Wolfreys fathoms.

Like Daws, the quality of light Henson achieves has indebtedness to Piero della Francesca, whose paintings of inert, religious figures are brought to life on account of his masterful filtering of light which delivers drama, realism and life, and fuses the animate with the

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181 Ibid.
182 Ibid.
183 Ibid.
184 As put by Julian Wolfreys who quotes John Updike in Wolfreys, op. cit., p.xi; my emphasis.
inanimate.185 The light in Untitled #21 plays softly against the figure’s hard, marmoreal surface, softening and enlivening it, discernibly ‘plumping it up’ and rejuvenating it with appealing baby-like skin, similar to the unheimlichkeit Freud encountered in archaeological photographs which were seen as arresting yet enlivening inanimate ancient objects whilst playing on the viewer’s susceptibility to recognise photographs as both real-unreal, animate-inanimate etcetera. Set against the dark background, the youthful figure pushes forward into light, symbolic of the unconscious emerging from the depths, where Henson’s filtered and suffused lighting allows the uncanny to pervade the scene. Of this, Henson’s Untitled 1983/84 series, Michael Heyward observes, ‘It is a strange experience to see the paintings of Leonardo or Rembrandt almost entirely washed of colour in a sequence of photographs which knowingly exploits and echoes their mythic contours and outlines’.186 Pictures entwining contemporary and ancient/classical objects with antique-looking finishes exemplify Henson’s purposeful employment of subtle, complex colouration, which, like Brassington, is not only achieved through digital manipulation or optical filtering, but is considered at every point in the creative process. Often combined with diffuse, indistinct or nebulous forms, which after sustained viewing, when the onlooker’s sight has adjusted to the darkness of his pictures, figures and objects slowly — and eerily — emerge, as if making themselves known and uncovering their otherwise hiddenness, a physical focussing within the mind’s-eye which effects in the inanimate appearing to ‘come to life.’ Using a pictorial lexicon of sepia-toned spectres and haunted spaces,187 Henson’s images appear as remnants from the past whilst engendering the contemporaneous, expressing an interconnectedness so tight yet so misunderstood or overlooked as to unconsciously represent a known-foreignness or familiar-unfamiliar.

Such recurrences of the classical invites comparison with Berenson’s definition of classical work as that which ‘after no matter what desertions and rebellions, we return as to our native home’,188 and relates to Heidegger’s idea that the classical and primitive contain memories or links to the homely, they inculcate a yearning which suggests classicism as

185 Edmund Capon, I Blame Duchamp: My life’s adventures in art, Surry Hills, NSW: Penguin Lantern, 2009, p.116, says of Piero’s paintings, ‘it is soft and diffuse light, which spills throughout and echoes a pervasive silence, that really unites the image — it is that quality which seems to fuse the animate with the inanimate, the humanity and the iconography’.
186 Henson, Bill Henson: Photographs, op. cit., p.43. Heyward’s essay is republished in Henson, Mnemosyne, op. cit., p.240.
187 The sepia tones effect as a form of antiquing. Such ageing devices recall Sontag’s notion of photographs as ‘instant antiques’, as suggestive of the past, and photography as an ‘enterprise of antiquing reality’; see Sontag, op. cit., p.80.
being therapeutic. As Heidegger teaches, the classical incorporates two sides: it reflects the homely which in turn reveals the unhomely. Moreover, whereas Heidegger’s philosophy rejects metaphysical readings, Henson leaves it open to interpretation. In his images one encounters a relentless search produced from the residual meanings of any one and all his compositions. An analogy might be made to that of high degrees of entropy or disorder where elements or qualities are considered to be ‘lost’ to the order of chaos; whilst there is no way of ordering or controlling such elements, there is desire to understand them.

Constructing elements in his images like a stage set, Henson’s pictures convey the aesthetics of installation art or dramatic theatre. Devising objects in such ways, Henson literally and figuratively ‘sets the scene,’ providing a backdrop to mankind’s present locale as being steeped in historical past. The gilded frames and lustrous forms in Untitled 1983/84 reflect Graeco-Roman historicity whilst the shelves of books make a literal reference to layered meaning and man’s connectedness to and reliance on manifolds of haunted texts. With brassy, burnished figures and surfaces (recalling Smart’s allusions), Henson engages with transmogrification and metaphorical readings concerning metamorphosis of self; symbolism heightened when considering the alchemical processing of photography, its relation to metallurgy and dependence on the elemental — to ‘fire’. The confluence of such ideas, from literal meanings and psychological associations through to metaphysical possibilities, are theoretically limitless. Henson believes the ‘most important things in a painting or a photograph cannot be translated into any other medium’, including into words, exclaiming,

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189 John McDonald, Jeffrey Smart: Paintings of the ’70s and ’80s, Roseville, NSW: Craftsman House, 1990, p.35, provided the foundation for ideas concerning ‘therapeutic classicism’.

190 Bill Henson, Untitled 60,62,61, 1983-84, type C photograph, 100 x 80 cm, triptych, RO9.
'Today, legions of kids are marched into galleries and hammered into pointy shapes by their minders, who get them to play spot the symbol, etc. But it's amazing how nature keeps on pushing up the weeds and cracking the concrete'.

Opposing self-analysis of his pictures and attracted to concepts where language has failed, suchlike the uncanny, whilst elevating the 'priority of individual experience', Henson exclaims, 'I could not possibly imagine how something might affect another person beyond a superficial level...'

Although Henson rails against fixed interpretations concerning his work, it attracts and consumes its beholder with such beguiling potency, one feels overcome by a need to reflect inwardly and outwardly the effect and meaning encountered, as Seamus Heaney, as one among Henson’s heroes, exalts, 'Words themselves are doors'.

On the occasions Henson interprets his work, he employs words such as 'ambiguous,' 'liminal, 'shadowy' and 'mysterious' to suggest obscurity of message. Talking about his art-making approach, he explains, it is 'not formulaic - there's no set way of achieving a result... It can be powerful or completely vague... at a certain point, it clarifies itself, sufficiently for you to know what you're doing...'

As further explanation, he says,

Later... in the studio you can come to see why you can't use certain pictures because they give you a familiar sense of what's happening... [The] pictures which work for me are those which are intensely intimate but where you've managed also to maintain that unbridgeable gap'.

These notions of proximity to the familiar alongside a distancing - a familiar/unfamiliar - and an unbridgeable gap are concepts which strongly align with uncanniness.

Among Henson's influences, including Rembrandt, Titian, Watteau and Twombly, a favourite writer is W.G. Sebald who wrote *Unheimliche heimat: Essays zur österreichischen literature*, loosely translated as *Uncanny home: Essays on Austrian literature*. Sebald's...
concepts and literary style, known for engendering a ‘sudden uncanny sliding... as different pasts slip briefly into alignment’, are considered to be steeped in Freudian psychoanalytical thought, particularly focusing on the Freudian uncanny. Henson’s regard for Sebald is apparent in his explanation of the uncertainty imbued in Sebald’s dream-world and how that converts to the filmic:

It is very interesting to reflect on how this occurs in relation to photography with its “evidential authority” and at the same time its complete unreality... I suppose with Sebald the completeness of this dreamscape, its capacity to contain both distant history and the familiar and proximate and to imbue both with the same profound intimacy (all of which is so like dreaming), suggests how impossibly beautiful being in the world is... Transfixing distant history with immediate presence, Henson’s description of Sebald follows along similar lines as Heidegger of Hölderlin, whilst Sebastian Smee observes Henson’s photographs in words which echo the Freudian uncanny:

images, which tend increasingly towards the silent and inanimate: a floating, detached bridge; a black, glistening channel of water; a solitary silhouette of trees; a bitumen road winding into darkness... And in his crowd sequences that are heavily bleached and veiled, we are reminded of the dauntingly vast advantage of the unseen over the seen, the unknown over the known, and the irretrievable past over the present.

Sebald’s last novel, Austerlitz, underpinned by traumatic photographs, provides further similarities with Henson considering Freud’s description of photography as instigating a ‘recuperative engagement’ with repressed memory, ideas relating to the precarious dark-room processing of re-remembered images which contain presence as well as loss. Citing Sebald’s reference to Hoffmann’s Olympia, Carolin Duttlinger does not clarify links to the Freudian uncanny except to say, ‘Austerlitz’s imaginary version [of Olympia] is marked by an uncanny complicity with the film’s own dissimulating strategy, thus illustrating his investment in images which conceal, rather than reveal, the underlying traumatic reality behind the veil of reassuring normality’. Freud’s “Introductory lectures” of 1917 employed photographic analogies to represent memory processes, which Duttlinger

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197 Sebald was particularly interested in Freud’s “The uncanny” and Beyond the pleasure principle, according to J.J Long and Anne Whitehead (eds), W. G. Sebald: A critical companion, Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2004, p.8.

198 Henson as quoted in Smee, “Bill Henson”, op. cit., p.405. Ibid. writes, ‘What excites Henson about Sebald... is the uncertainty he is made to feel as he seamlessly crosses into Sebald’s dream world’.

199 Ibid., continues, ‘In these strange fragments an impossible dream of wholeness seems to depend on nothing more than a hand here, a look there’.

compares with Sebald's fictional references, whereas John Zilcosky demonstrates Sebald as presenting 'lostness as its master trope', where the 'resolutely unheimlich returns preclude a final flight of the soul', they close the gap between travelling and dwelling, and produce 'the sensation that the traveller, no matter how far away he journeys, can never leave his home'.

The nexus between Sebald, Henson, the uncanny and Freud reinforces reading Henson's photographic images as forming dichotomies, particularly of concealment and revelation, whereas Sebald's uncanny journeys or tours connect with Heideggerian journeying, pointing to another key aspect in deciphering the uncanniness of Henson.

Figure 65: Bill Henson's Untitled #10, 2008-09 (left), and Untitled #17, 2008-09 (right)

**Untitled #10** and **Untitled #17** of 2008-09 picture cascading waters falling from sources unseen, symbolising journeying from the unknown or unhomely. The stark contrasts of the milky-cream-white and crystal-blue-white water against brown-black and blue-black backgrounds evoke internal (x-ray) imaging and dark, primitive, cavernous domains; representative of journeying into inner-worlds and back towards primitive origins. Henson's torrents of water both come from a nowhere-somewhere to a nowhere-somewhere whilst symbolising a veritable 'deluge' of internal issues, external woes or metaphysical concerns which are rendered nothing or powerless in the presence of the

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201 Ibid., pp.158-9, in particular. Duttlinger points out that Freud returns to similar analogies in Moses and monotheism and Beyond the pleasure principle.

202 John Zilcosky, "Sebald's uncanny travels: The impossibility of getting lost", in Long and Whitehead, op. cit., pp.102-20. Sebald's Vertigo, The emigrants and The rings of Saturn are examples. Synthesising 'homely' with 'unhomely', Zilcosky explains that getting lost compulsively – or thinking about it – is symptomatic of an uncanny recognition of real, traumatic self-loss, yet we cannot get lost because we never leave 'home.' Is it that we are already, always lost?

203 Just as Duttlinger, op. cit., p.167, believes Sebald does with the protagonist of Austerlitz.

204 Bill Henson, Untitled #10, 2008-09, archival inkjet pigment print, 127 x 180 cm; and, Bill Henson, Untitled #17, 2008-09, archival inkjet pigment print, 127 x 180 cm.

205 To ancient Greeks, the entrance to Hades' underworld was a sea cave at Cape Matapan, Greece, a womb-like crevasse in the cliff face which appears, as caves generally do, as the earth physically turning back onto itself, as echoing man's journeying to the afterlife as a turning back to one's origins.
imhomely-homely, which represents the beginning and end of man’s being. Whilst encapsulating a quiet-disquietude, a deafening-silence, a moving-stillness, a familiar-unfamiliar, in thunderous cascades or becalmed tranquillity, Henson’s river and waterfall imagery seize the uncanny gaze where one subconsciously hopes to lose ourselves in order to, as Zilcosky speaks of Sebald, ‘transcend the uncanny presence of home’, only for uncanniness to ascend.206

Figure 66: Bill Henson, *Untitled 1976-2005*

In hauntingly romantic pictures such as *Untitled 1976-2005*, Henson presses together familiar with unfamiliar, with a ghostly house reflected in waters forefront to frame, which lapping towards the viewpoint, act as emphatic yet subliminal homely-unhomely reminders, similar to faces, streets, streetlamps and suburban backyards, suchlike imagery which appear commonplace, known yet unknown, as remnants of once-known things, objects and the feelings they ignite, flicker back and forth as uncanny reminders of something familiar-unfamiliar. Highlighting the importance of memory as philosophically underpinning his work, Henson’s tome overviewing his oeuvre is titled *Mnemosyne*, taken from the Greek goddess and mother of the Muses personifying memory. As crucial to man’s functioning, yet a psychophysiological facet which remains somewhat mysterious to man, memory and

206 Zilcosky, op. cit., p.118. The theme and motif of water in photography also encapsulates the chemical formulas involved in silver-based dark room processing, besides representing broader ideas, not developed here.

associated sensory perception is often underscored by adjectives such as ‘mysterious,’ ‘strange,’ and ‘uncanny,’ verbiage which extends to commentary concerning Henson’s work. For example, Edmund Capon describes Henson’s imagery using phrases such as ‘melancholic uncertainty’, ‘beguiling yet unsettling’, ‘laden with seductive threat’, ‘mysterious darkness and ominous light’, ‘air of lingering uncertainty’, and ‘strange illicit intimacy’;\(^{208}\) phrases which nominally point to or align with concepts encircling memory functions, generally, and the Freudian uncanny, more specifically.

\[\text{Figure 67: Bill Henson, } \textit{Untitled sequence 1979} (1979), \text{two photographs from the series } \textit{Untitled sequence 1979}\]

Capon’s illuminations on Henson’s artwork imply uncanny theorem in several ways, including Henson’s interest in crowds, a fascination Capon glosses as conveying ‘intimacy without familiarity’, feelings of something being recognised yet unknown:

> Every face we see seems familiar but they are all veiled with a beguiling anonymity... It is as though we are sitting through a film we’ve seen but cannot put a name to, nor can we be quite sure it is a film and not a dream.\(^{209}\)

Whereas people within anonymous crowds share an intimacy-\(\textit{without}\)-familiarity, the structure of a crowd possesses an intimacy-\(\textit{with}\)-familiarity, resulting from common feelings about being over-crowded or consumed by crowds and being ‘one’ of the crowd – generalised sensations whereby an individual’s anonymity is gained whilst individuality is fought for, and resulting in philosophical ideas concerning one’s being as ultimately isolated and other Existentialist and uncanny concepts as relayed in Daws’s paintings of peopled legions.\(^{210}\) Unlike Daws’s largely anonymous crowds of silhouetted and featureless

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\(^{208}\) See Edmund Capon in Henson, \textit{Mnemosyne}, op. cit., pp.8-9. Also Capon, \textit{I blame Duchamp...}, op. cit., pp.43-4, describes Henson’s pictures as ‘Beguiling yet unsettling invitations... subjects we recognise but his subtle manipulations render them beyond our immediate comprehension and take those once-familiar things into unfamiliar territory’.

\(^{209}\) Ibid., p.47.

\(^{210}\) Other Australian artists are similarly interested in ‘crowd’ phenomena, such as Bea Maddock and Robert Boynes; see, for
peoples, Henson clearly captures figures as differentiated individuals within the crowd, and photographed as being caught unawares, the individuals in Henson's pictures are open to psychological scrutiny, thus underscoring psychological aspects. Confounding the gaze by making everywhere and everyone in the crowded mass perceptively similar, initially Henson's viewer is confused by detail, but what at first appears as crowded monotony is struck (perhaps unconsciously) by the acknowledgement that each individual differs and is ultimately alone. The anatomy of a crowd thus possesses a strange-familiar antinomy: the familiar crowd versus its unfamiliar constituents. Considering they constitute familiar feelings and unfamiliar Others, and that Henson images them in bleached colours, effectively draining lifeblood from the figures, crowd pictures such as Untitled sequence 1979 instil the acme of uncanniness, where he concurrently illustrates the familiar-unfamiliar, acknowledgement of being-thrown-in-the-world, the double in Other, and the sense of animate-inanimate through the ghosted figures and through the filmic. Henson's street scenes echo White's sentiments in The vivisector, of streets symbolizing rivers of life, thus reflecting Heidegger's arterial waterways and ultimately man's uncanny journeying. Capon addresses Henson's street imagery as rendering faces 'plucked from the crowd', imagery of everyday encounters which 'disturb rather than merely inform us' whilst conveying 'a sense of the fleeting moment rather than permanence', as transient, unsettling moments, hallmarks of Henson's art which unnerve his audience. It encapsulates an important element in Henson's work – the eeriness of the fleeting moment, an illustrative aspect commonly associated with the filmic, likewise employed by Daws and Brassington.

example, Maddock's Funeral V, 1971, intaglio photo-etching and aquatint, printed in black ink from three plates, plate-mark 47.6 x 37.3 cm, NGA; and Boyne's City limits II, 2011, acrylic on canvas, 80 x 120 cm, Beaver Galleries, Canberra.

211 Bill Henson, Untitled Sequence 1979, 1979, two photographs from the series Untitled Sequence 1979, gelatin silver photographs, sizes variable, AGNSW.

212 See White, The vivisector, op. cit., p.557; 'Only that the streets were the rivers of life...'. Discussing the imagery of the 'Ister' lectures and of the river, Scott, op. cit., p.179, writes, 'Being happens as "temporal self-deferring," as enacted self-displacement, and that figures being's mortality'. Thus, river motifs reflects man's self-deferring and self-displacement.

213 Capon, I blame Duchamp..., op. cit., pp.43-4.
Despite Capon's belief that viewers are ‘unable to properly step into the frame’\textsuperscript{214} of Henson's pictures, they appear loaded with ways in which viewers effortlessly enter, including via commonplace understandings such as the transitory awkwardness of adolescence or feeling lost in or consumed by crowds. Such themes are supported by formal devices which attract the gaze towards and into the picture, such as broken, uneven frames or image edges which establish a sense of disturbance whilst furnishing his pictures with an informality which puts the audience at ease. Henson loads the frame with the eerie or foreboding ambiguity of dark spaces and voids which compel the gaze beyond the figurative and into dark depths which are ordinarily avoided, invoking Freud's 'uncanny effect of silence, darkness and solitude'\textsuperscript{215} besides Heidegger's notion that in darkness commonly makes it 'easier for one to feel uncanny': 'In the dark there is emphatically "nothing" to see, though the very world itself is still "there", and "there: more obtrusively'.\textsuperscript{216} With \textit{Untitled #68} (1998-2000),\textsuperscript{217} where a shimmery, translucent, ghostly road winds its way into the unknown distance, the gaze enters the frame via a typically familiar view: a winding road. Conjuring visions of night-time blurriness eliciting driver-fatigue fear, the scene transmogrifies as an into-the-distance fear of the unknown, where notions of roads or paths as linking past to future apply. Symbolising journeying, the road elicits recollections of past encounters, cementing past and present memory, and (literally) blurring or melding time and space constructs emblematic of Henson's \textit{millennial slippage}.
concepts. Roads and rivers, following and exposing the earth’s thermo-geographical contours, symbolic of memory and discovery, represent Heideggerian journeys into the homely, journeys predicated on discovering the unknown and encountering the foreign, a persistent searching for personal truth by moving through/from one’s present/past. Henson’s images of winding roads and rivers are analogous with one’s own ‘true memorial’ and Celan’s feeling for the ‘complex sedimentation of topography... a practice of memory intimately connected to marking, calling forth, and living with “disjunctures” in time and space’. Underscoring earth’s contours as fundamental to mankind’s concern, Henson depicts generalised roads and rivers belonging nowhere and anywhere; they are universal, non-denominational, non-site-specific memorials tying past to present. Whereas Celan’s poetry is said to provide encounters with that which remains in the present, as remnants found in ‘word-landscapes’ where historical content has expired yet something else persists, Henson, with universalized imagery such as Untitled #68, likewise seeks encounters in the present not contingent upon specific histories. Indeed, the performative aspects of creating or perceiving art is a disjointed time-spatial encounter which is never totally derivative nor historical yet always in the present, producing new sites of memory and therefore always placing the artist and subject as travelling from the unhomely into the homely. Like Todd Presner says of Celan, Henson ‘begins and ends with, departs from and returns to the remains of a no-place... the remains of language and the remains of modernity’. For Celan’s poetic ‘word-landscapes,’ we are given Henson’s pictorial-landscapes — poetically revisionary yet visionary, thus, following Heideggerian reasoning, inherently uncanny.

Whilst Henson’s stretched liquorice-like road pulls the viewer into its dark recesses, the photographic image is unfocussed, distorted and moulded in ways which exhibit artistic deceit, and although the artist’s deceptions are made visible, these ‘distortions of form and

218 As discussed in Todd Samuel Presner, “Traveling between Delos and Berlin: Heidegger and Celan on the topography of ‘what remains’”, The German Quarterly, vol.74, no.4 (Autumn 2001), pp.417-29. Presner looks at two important journeys made by Heidegger and Celan and their references to Hölderlin. He says, p.420, ‘Quite unlike other travel journeys predicated on the discovery of the unknown and the encounter with the foreign... Heidegger is undertaking a voyage of confirmation. He already knows what he wants to find in Greece and essentially seeks to verify the truth of his pathway of thinking by moving through its present remains.’ Ibid., p.423, infers, essentially Heidegger’s journey is a reenactment of what he believes the poet’s task to be: ‘to elucidate a pathway to a past origin that lies in the future’.  

219 Heidegger’s establishment of the importance of the earth for any ‘true memorial’ is discussed in ibid., pp.420-3.  

220 Ibid., p.424, says Celan’s interest in poetry as a ‘relationship or encounter - with [what] remains in the present’.  

221 Ibid., p.426.
quirks of perspective', appears as the subject's own,\textsuperscript{222} they seem like natural disturbances or inherent to the subject rather than artistically contrived. Consequently when the subject is ultimately found to be the viewer's memory, it becomes a function of disturbed memory. Simultaneously engaging and grounding the viewer using allusions to time-honoured methods and painterly compositions of past masters like Giotto, thus subtly manipulating audience memory, Henson shows how pictorial deception re-enacts self-deceit, repeatedly re-instilling in the viewer the impossibility of completely cheating self-reality/responsibility. Poetically and literally, Henson uncovers yet never reveals the ineffable, untouchable or unknowable; he creates worlds which do not exist yet are fundamentally important to us. Using and thereby alluding to tactics of falsification, he uncannily reveals the dichotomised real-unreal, deceit as rendering truth, just as truth renders deceit.

Henson's creative methods conjure the tricks of alchemy, which to the sensitive eye concerns greater wizardry than conventional photography. The camera is but one part of a complex, artistic system which Henson modifies according to his needs. Whereas his chosen creative medium, photography, is inherently uncanny and its ubiquitous, quotidian qualities fashion it to the mundane, aligning it with the everyday-man and thereby presenting itself as a friendly-familiar medium, Henson's subjects are often quite the opposite. His subjects are enigmatic and mysterious, while his technique is complex and sophisticated, and, as Isobel Crombie observes, his interaction with his models is one of

\textsuperscript{222} Heyward observes that in Henson's work 'the distortions of form and quirks of perspective, the disturbing imbalances and miraculous harmonies are always made to seem the subject's own'; as cited in Henson, \textit{Mnemosyne}, op. cit., p.134.
exacting detachment, an aloofness which paradoxically 'achieves a remarkable intimacy' even though the figures convey unawareness of the camera. Henson thereby provisions an 'infinite suggestiveness of the human face attentive to its own inner drama'. In pictures such as Untitled xxx (1976-), the figure's gaze is either obscured or diverted, the effect thus inverting the viewer's gaze back onto themselves and into their own psyche. The detachment of these often impassive figures prevents the viewer's gaze from entering their world; he constructs an 'absence of psychological access'. Whilst addressing the inner self-portrait of the onlooker, Henson's alabaster-like figures 'have a ghostly, ectoplasmic feel as though the subjects were reaching out across eons of time towards the viewer, or sinking back into the darkest recesses of memory'. Henson transforms the commonplace into the remarkable, uniting known with unknown: 'They seem tied to some residue from our prehistory when it was not only the unknown on earth that one feared in the shadows but the unseen unknown'. Exhibiting shadowing effects, Untitled xxx exemplifies carefully manipulated imagery which achieves a 'very subtle and powerful blend of physicality and spirituality' — effects produced by overlaying shadowy forms or texture on 'highly contrasted edges of the limbs and torso, so that one both has a sense of solidity of flash and a visual sensation of the body (or person) moving outside itself'. An elusive incorporeal element infiltrates the known physicality of the personage, emphasising the metaphysical and eliciting the supernatural yet also accentuating corporeality, thus defining a convergence or unfathomable location where unknown and known intersect.

Henson's work demonstrates different practices of uncanny repetition. In some work, such as the Untitled 1983/84 series, repeating forms, leitmotifs and recurrent historical (ancient/classical) elements, are found, whilst in other photographs, Henson introduces repetition using blurring effects which ghost and echo forms within the picture frame, such as Untitled #68. Applicable to Henson is Jan Ceuppens's interpretation of repetition in

...
Sebald’s work as representing the irretrievability of authentic memory whilst ‘remaining faithful to an irrecoverable past and of opening a space for a promise’.229 The repetition in Henson’s imagery might similarly be read as an acknowledgement of being thrust forward from the seemingly homely as a promise of returning to one’s true heimlich. Whereas Freud interprets ‘constant recurrence’ as being the double which springs up in narcissistic childhood (and primitive states) as an ‘insurance against the destruction of the ego’ and a measure against total castration to becoming the ‘uncanny harbinger of death’,230 Heidegger discusses the reverberation of the classical throughout Hölderlin specifically, and language generally, saying, ‘The resonance of the first stationary song from Sophocles’ Antigone tragedy in Hölderlin’s hymnal poetizing is a historical-poetic necessity within that history in which being at home and being unhomely of Western humankind is decided’.231 Henson’s work favours interpretations of these concepts including associations with epileptic or seizure-like oscillations, as discussed. Untitled 1983/84 series exemplifies referencing and repetition of the classical yet involves youthful narcissism in the bronzed, statuesque teen whose synthetic-like epidermis recalls the animate-inanimate of Olympia, whilst evoking readings from Baudrillardian ersatz simulacra through to the sublime and uncanny.

Figure 70: Bill Henson, Untitled 20, 2000-03

230 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.234-5. Borrowing ideas from Otto Rank, repetition is also discussed in Beyond the pleasure principle.
231 Heidegger, Hölderlin’s hymn..., op. cit., p.56.
Another bond Henson shares with Hölderlin is engagingly summed up in Hermann Hesse’s appreciation for the musicality of Hölderlin’s prose: ‘it is Hölderlin’s rhythmical and tonal mystery. This wonderfully enigmatic creative undercurrent, dwelling as it does in the unconscious...’ Like Hölderlin, Henson’s work performs singularly within each frame yet images and evoked feelings linger beyond, overflowing with musical qualities and making its way into the viewer’s subconscious. Musicality can be reasonably instantiated in singular imagery such as that of twinkling lights and floating forms in Henson’s Untitled 20 (2000-03) which engenders musical cadencies recalling the eerie soundtrack of Julee Cruise’s hauntingly ethereal Floating into the night (1989) of which many tracks backed David Lynch’s television series Twin Peaks whilst eliciting classical music, especially the andante movement of Mozart’s Sinfonia concertante (K.364), which particularly appeals to Henson. Considering Henson’s admiration of Walser’s short-stories, Untitled 20 recalls Walser’s “Balloon journey”, a spellbinding odyssey of three people drifting over a city, above the ‘luminous course of the Elbe... [the] nocturnal river which draws from the girl a low cry of longing... a very painful thing, having to part company with what torments you’ and floating above millions of sleeping people, an entire earth dreaming. Like Walser, something haunts pervasively in Henson’s night-time dreamscapes – of clouded thoughts, tiredness-induced stupor and involuntary acts – from the depths of night, uncanny reawakenings which threaten to wake the girl, returning her to consciousness.

352 Hermann Hesse, “On Hölderlin”, in Wilhelm Waiblinger and Hermann Hesse, We are like fire: Waiblinger & Hesse on Hölderlin, trans. Eric Miller, Victoria, BC: ELS Editions, 2007, p.153. A slightly different translation of the same reads: ‘the completely original groundswell of music, of rhythmic and auditory mystery...This marvellous, mysterious, creative groundswell in many of Hölderlin’s poems emanating from the unconscious...’; see Hesse, My belief..., op. cit., p.128.

353 Bill Henson, Untitled 20, 2000-03, type C photograph, 127 x 180 cm.

354 Directed by David Lynch, the film billed as being both prologue and epilogue to the television series Twin Peaks was titled The Twin Peaks: Fire walk with me, recalling the Heideggerian uncanny and Hölderlin.

355 Alongwith other classical music including Beethoven’s Missa solemnis and Appassionata, and Mozart’s Requiem, of which the latter two are discussed in Klein, op. cit., as possessing qualities attributed to uncanniness.

Explaining the manifold uncanniness of Hölderlin’s *The Ister*, Heidegger expresses,

The singular kind of uncanniness pertaining to the human essence must, however, itself come to light in the choral ode, since... it also tells of the sea and of the earth, of the animals of the wild and of storms, of infirmity and death, of understanding and of the word, of the gods and of ordinances, for to all these things human beings stand in relation, and all these each in their own way bear the pull and the traits of the fearful, powerful and inhabitual.²³⁷

For Heidegger, ‘the human being is the supreme ἄνθρωπος...[and whilst] strictly speaking, the human being alone can be called by the name “the uncanny”’,²³⁸ humans carry out and reach the destination of uncanniness by way of journeying from the falsehood of the homely into the truest state or position that is the unhomely. In the eerie yet sublimely majestic landscapes of Henson’s 2009-10 series including *Untitled #31* (2009-10),²³⁹ prospects of enlightenment are juxtaposed by an infinite nothingness. With *Untitled #31* Henson stages a play between the fleetingness of the portending clouds and the endurance of staid boulders. He often captures the forces of nature as relaying turbulence and unsettling fear, simultaneously reflecting the dichotomy of memory – the practises of remembering versus forgetting – the movement of memory from consciousness to subconsciousness. Whilst these elements discern the movement of time, the medium captures the stillness of timelessness, thus decimating time, displacing it altogether. Literal

²³⁷ Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s hymn...*, op. cit., p.68.
²³⁸ Ibid., p.69.
²³⁹ Bill Henson, *Untitled #31*, 2009-10, archival inkjet pigment print, 127 x 180 cm.
interpretations of Untitled #31 convey turbulence and endurance, whilst metaphorically opening up to readings about memory, space, time and journeying in relation to uncanny theorem whilst pointing to theories concerning the sublime. Although Henson’s Untitled 1983/84 series of diptych and triptych photographs juxtapose the body with architectural interiors (long hallways of grand, old buildings and smaller, more intimate nooks there within), they are otherwise described as portraying ‘a drama of ambivalence between what is sublime and what is repellent’. Whereas Giblett positions the uncanny as within the realms of the secular sublime where it ‘operates as a kind of secular demonology’, Kligerman opposes placing it within the sublime, distinguishing it as an event of ‘spectatorial disruption, the loss of sight and orientation’. The sublime orientates and grounds the subject, whilst conversely the uncanny disorientates and confuses the subject’s position. By cropping the foreground and introducing dark, foreboding elements, Untitled #31 might be read as either sublime or uncanny. Moreover, by introducing confusion about which kind of reading is more apt, Henson’s images betray the unconscious because one is made more aware of unconscious elements mystifying our perception.

Perhaps more than any other device used by Henson, the intangible is relayed through shadowy lighting and pitch-black negative spaces or voids which ignite the viewer’s imagination. Henson stresses, ‘What’s going on in the shadows charges a picture more suggestively than what’s going on in the highlights. You need that ambiguity, that unknowable space... provided by the darkness’; and, ‘Shadows can animate the speculative capacity in the viewer in a way that highlights can’t’. The seductive velvety richness of his pictures’ jet-blacks, exuding a thick, syrupy physicality, pull the gaze into the frame whilst creating a nothingness, a blackness beyond the breach as such, conceivably alluding to the pits of unconsciousness, the knowledge that one is of two minds, the deplorable realisation that one is neither in control yet completely responsible. His pitch-darkness...
represents the incomprehensible void of our uncanny Being, a liquorice-black, Dennis Cooper describes as seemingly:

caked on the surface... like tar or centuries of soot, and to recede infinitely into the background. It looks as solid as lead, a physical threat to the teens it blankets, and at the same time it's as if the blackness were exuded by their bodies, forming a kind of paranormal manifestation of some feeling too intense and guarded to register in any other fashion... there's a feeling that nothing would prevent the black from completely absorbing his attention and extinguishing the work.245

Nevertheless, light falls gently on Henson’s figures, illuminating them whilst never quite explaining the scene clearly, consequently exposing or intensifying ideas revolving around the metaphysical, the unseen, and the unconscious. Erecting mysterious, unfathomable screens which hide whatever lurks in its darkness, the menacing black chasms of Henson’s images initially exclude the onlooker’s vision. As absolute as blindness, at first the blackness deems the viewer unable to invade its territory, then unexpectedly, it pulls the gaze into its abyssal depths, as a psychological sinkhole or well, to where uncanny profundity awaits. In photographs such as Untitled #68, it is not clear as to whether the road materialises from or dissolves into infinite darkness; objects both emerge from and are consumed by Henson’s gouffre noir – black, vacuous abysses or voids which likewise consume the viewer’s gaze and momentarily steal their consciousness, thus revealing unto them a glimpse of another, truer ‘reality.’ Of Henson’s darkly-lit and twilight images, Crombie considers,

the feelings associated with this Romantic nether region between light and dark cannot be accounted for by the mere absence of light. They seemed tied to some residue from our prehistory when it was not only the unknown on earth that one feared in the shadows but the unseen unknown.246

In the dark recesses of Henson’s nocturnes one can denote the primitive uncanny, the shadowy unhomely unknown within the dark unknown. Henson’s carefully constructed lighting recalls the innovations of Piero whose muted lighting imparts realistic notes to otherwise inert religious figures, as Capon notes: ‘the soft and diffuse light, which spills throughout and echoes a pervasive silence... seems to fuse the animate and the inanimate, the humanity and the iconography’ .247 In Untitled 20 similar lighting devices employed by Henson translate into deathly (inanimate) blues of the suspended figure set against lively (animate), glittering streetlights. Henson applies illumination atmospherics to radiate an


array of dichotomies including real/unreal, animate/inanimate, visible/invisible, ephemeral/eternal, physical/ethereal, etcetera.\textsuperscript{248}

The recurrent 'light-dark' motif provides another connection between Henson and Dostoevsky whose characters are contrasted as Nastasya as cast in shadowy darkness whereas Aglaia (named after the youngest of the three Graces of Greek mythology) symbolises brightness.\textsuperscript{249} Following \textit{The sandman}, their aesthetics present their readers with forms of opposites, alternatively symbolising secularism and religion, Enlightenment versus classicism, and so forth. As chiaroscuro effects influenced by master printers or \textit{peintres-graveurs} like Rembrandt, Henson's deep blue-black and cream-white contrasts are reminiscent of the mezzotint technique – the so-called 'black art' or \textit{la maniere noire} of the deductive printmaking method of scraping light from dark background, which can be likened to a sculptor cutting away figures from stone.\textsuperscript{250} Henson is particularly attracted to photography as a creative agent because of the transformative power of perceived 'natural illumination... as an emotional reflector for his subjects',\textsuperscript{251} — natural or 'available' lighting the camera captures as opposed to – yet often complemented by – artificially manipulated lighting in studio settings and in processing and printing to accentuate psychological drama. Regardless, the viewer generally perceives the lighting as natural in photographs, therefore heightening the psychological potential. Henson typically manufactures a 'dim luminescence [which] does not immediately reveal detail but seduces the viewer by creating a scene in which form and meaning fluctuate', as Crombie relays.\textsuperscript{252}

\textsuperscript{248} Commentating on Henson's representation at the 1995 Venice Biennale, Paul McGillick, in Paul McGillick (presenter) and Philippe Marie Charluet (director), \textit{Bill Henson: Dreams of darkness}, documentary videorecording, Sydney: SBS Television, 1996, enthuses that Venice is like Henson's photography: 'The city has that same fugitive, ungraspable, contradictory quality that you see running throughout Henson's work. This is a city which is both dark and light, it's noisy and yet profoundly silent, it's seized with life and yet somehow is in permanent decay. Now look at Henson's fragile children. They're violated and yet somehow still retain their innocence, and behind their youth lies the long shadow of death'. In Henson's work McGillick discerns an endless array of dichotomous contradictions.

\textsuperscript{249} Similarly, Dostoevsky juxtaposes the antagonist, Rogozhin's dark hair and eyes with Myshkin's light hair, developing the 'darkness' of Rogozhin with vivid descriptions of his brooding, dimly-lit abode.

\textsuperscript{250} Mezzotint is referred to as \textit{la maniere noire} (the black manner) and \textit{la maniere Anglaise} (the English manner). Such deductive techniques in art align with Michelangelo's preferred method of releasing figures from blocks of marble. He famously said, 'In every block of marble I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me... I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it'.

\textsuperscript{251} Crombie in Henson, \textit{Mnemosyne}, op. cit., p.382; my emphasis.

\textsuperscript{252} Ibid.
Figure 72: Bill Henson's Untitled #1 (left), and Untitled #80 (right), both 1998-2000

Effects of chiaroscuro heighten the uncanniness of Henson’s work, with images across various series from 1976 to present depicting figures emerging from darkness into light, as if creeping out from the depths and invoking an unknown, unseen presence beyond the frame, hiding in blackness or ‘blind spaces’ where something ‘lurks outside the frame or unclearly within it’ — a shot known as the ‘unclaimed point of view’,253 which opens up an image to infinite possibilities, as Malouf observes of Henson:

What is left out is the total and orientating view. Left out as well are the connections between the various parts of the body, and all those moments that the camera has not recorded for us and whose absence prevents us from following the act as a continuous spectacle. We are shown precisely what we are expected to respond to, and the gaps, alive as they are and activated by what goes missing in them, are part of what we are shown.254

Henson regards that which ‘you don’t see in the photographs’ as having ‘the greatest potential to transmit information’; absence adds to the expression of an ineffable sense of longing:

It’s about longing for something... about the apprehension of something which you can never know. And which can never be fully possessed. It inhabits the space in which we exist, and it inhabits our mental space... It has a definitive presence. Yet it remains forever outside our grasp... the deep strangeness of being in the world.255

Conceivably, this ‘definitive presence’ is moreover definitively non-definitive and deceiving, like the uncanny journeying towards the homely. Certainly, Henson’s regard for the ‘deep strangeness of being in the world’ alludes to Existentialist notions of uncanniness. Faces either stare out from dark abysses, threatening to emerge into the viewer’s space, or are inverted in their own space within the frame. The direct gaze of Untitled #1 (1998-2000)

253 This effect also relates to ‘unclaimed point of view’ film-shots ‘which produce a tension between seeing and not-seeing’, as discussed in Pinedo, op. cit., pp.410-12.
254 See Malouf essay’s in Henson, Mnemosyne, op. cit., p.35.
255 Henson in conversation with Smee, as quoted in ibid., p.439; my emphasis.
impresses an unnervingly threatening stance adults do not generally expect of children – the girl emits a premature knowingness. With such gazes, as Germer writes of Géricault's child-portraits, 'The child gains power over the adult beholder because she ignores the boundary between the world of children and that of grown-ups'. Contrastingly, the averted gaze of Untitled #80 (1998-2000) exemplifies images where Henson presses his figures backwards against an incalculable depth of black yet pulls them forwards into picture plane, conveying surreal uncanniness and psychological drama. In such pictures, the effect of lighting is paramount. Here, as in many of his figurative pictures, light floods the skin, producing the effect of bleaching out vitality whilst introducing an opaque, bluetinged pallidness, evoking decay, onset of rigour mortis and even an ectoplastic supernaturalism. The suggestions of morbidity and immortality aligned with death and zombiism contain several uncanny parallels. Here, a shard of a young woman emerges from this cold, inhumane blackness which engulfs or perhaps blankets her in warmth. Set against the figure's translucent skin, among many ways of reading such blackness, including symbolising presence and absence, is the eerily uncanny existence of withheld memory.

With such pictures, set against heavy black-velvety backgrounds, Henson creates dim, menacing moods, not entirely closing out light but absorbing its fragments, whilst pulling the viewer into its depths. The perceptively impenetrable backgrounds entice the viewer into penetrating them. The viewer's eye looks readily beyond light figurations into the dark, the mind searching for hidden objects beyond; contrastingly, with dark figures against a light background, the eye and mind focuses on the figures, in what might be an innate desire to surmount nocturnal threats. This seeing into and beyond manifests itself across his oeuvre, with Henson employing la maniere noire in photography to create eerie effects. These enigmatic light-on-dark images produce an intense spark or flashbulb effect, visually inverting and ingraining the images into the viewer's memory. Like a subliminal flash, the viewer is infused with dream-like contemplation. Yet this flickered vision not only adds to memory, it opens it up, igniting ideas and reminding the onlooker that it knows not (or knows) its own (true) memory. The flashlight effect alludes to occurrences of subconscious

256 Bill Henson, Untitled #1, 1998-2000, type C photograph, 127 x 180 cm, RO9.
258 Bill Henson, Untitled #80, 1998-2000, type C photograph, 127 x 180 cm, RO9.
259 The device of having the skin appear bleached or flooded is something discussed in Mackie, op. cit.: quoted in Henson, Mnemosyne, op. cit., p.129. Mackie attributes the skins' appearance to depletion or sleep.
epiphanies. In such work, Henson experiments with the psychological effects of imagery, as noted in Javier Panera's observations:

He knows that these sophisticated, narcissistic and aesthetically somewhat self-indulgent images are capable of seducing the viewer, leaving them defenceless, forcing them to psychologically delve into the previously deconstructed narratives. And this occurs because each image contains a deliberately polysemic component in which we sense a calculated narrative uncertainty and a semantic ambiguity which associates them with what Roland Barthes... called the "floating chain of meanings" underlying the central meaning of images.260

Henson introduces a pictorial type of lexical ambiguity Barthes discusses, thereby injecting multifarious meanings into his work, which in turn introduces a vexatious dysfunction which 'generates a sense of threat and alarm in the observer, which [Barthes] calls "the terror of uncertain signs"'; 261 harking back to Freud's observations concerning the antimonistic and ambivalent values of 'uncanny/canny,' he essentially compounds confusion.

The blurry, winding road imagery, particularly Untitled #6 (1998-2000),262 reminds Panera of experiences

Freud associates precisely with the fear of losing sight – or becoming lost... the fear of not trusting our own eyes for obtaining information in order to recognise what previously seemed to be familiar... The impenetrable darkness and the undefined landscape thereby become metaphors for a certain state of psychological anxiety which increases the metaphysical implications of the image... We have the sensation that we have found ourselves in a parallel world, in an interstitial territory in which we find neither completely real reality nor totally conscious fiction...263

Panera references Freud's "The sinister" as being relevant to Henson's work, noting it as being Freud's 'class of terror that takes us back to what we have always known and what has always been familiar'.264 In Spanish, as Freud transcribes, unheimliche is defined as 'Sospechoso, de mal aguero, lúgubre, siniestro' (the latter meaning, among other things, 'sinister').265 Translational contingencies aside, Panera most probably cites Freud's "The 'uncanny'" in relation to Henson's work, talking of it as beholding 'unfamiliar intensity... where the boundaries between good and evil... reality and fantasy, are very blurred', whilst...


261 Panera, "Why is that...", op. cit., p.19.

262 Bill Henson, Untitled #6, 1998-2000, type C photograph, 127 x 180 cm, R09.

263 ...a "blackhole of reality"; Panera, op. cit., p.19, describes it as such, quoting 'authors such as Slavojzizek' (sic).

264 Ibid., p.25, n.10.

265 These Spanish words loosely translate as 'suspect,' 'ominous,' 'dark,' 'sinister,' respectively. Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p.221, remarks that such definitions are circumlocutions. Yet the meaning of 'uncanny' thwarts concise translation or definition, as Heidegger, Hiderlin's hymn..., op. cit., p.64, alludes. Such circumlocutions are, arguably, more precise in their imprecisions than concise definitions.
including examples of dichotic couplings that come together to disrupt viewer comprehension. Discussing *Untitled sequence 1979*, Bernice Murphy similarly picks up on Henson’s focus on dichotomy:

So many nuances and contrasts are threaded into the infinitely varied visual and psychological texture of the work: motion and immobility, naked and clothed, youth and age, the private and erotic resonated against the public and social response... This too refers to the tumultuous antinomy of the uncanny as outlined by Freud. Significantly, Henson portrays the elusive in-between and antinomical friction which elides the more apparent truths of this world. Rather than merely forming polarities, he creates scenes which allude to opposites and moreover that which exists between poles – things which are sensed as a familiar-unfamiliar, as T.S. Eliot wrote:

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

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*Figure 73: Bill Henson, Untitled #77, 2000-03*

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267 T.S. Eliot, “The hollow men”, which has strong parallels with Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, Act II, Scene I: ‘Between the acting of a dreadful thing/ And the first motion all the interim is/ Like a phantasma or a hideous dream...’; Shakespeare, op. cit., p.791. T.S. Eliot, op. cit., pp.91-92, continues: ‘*For Thine is the Kingdom*! Between the conception/ And the creation/ Between the emotion/ And the response/ Falls the Shadow! *Life is very long*! Between the desire/ And the spasm! Between the potency/ And the descent/ Falls the Shadow... *This is the way the world ends!* Not with a bang but a whimper.’
Henson’s distinctively fuzzily-framed edges support these concepts. Referencing an author of sci-fi horror or ‘weird fiction’, Panera reiterates the idea that the most intense fear is the terrorising unknown arising from the ‘palpable reality’ imbued in ubiquitous characters, spaces and ‘normal situations’\textsuperscript{268} – the eerie fear of a familiar-unfamiliar. Henson de-personifies and de-rationalises landscapes and figures by blurring boundaries between ‘being and non-being, reality and desire, consciousness and dreams…’\textsuperscript{269} as Panera notes. Many of these shadows are formed as reflections in and of infinite black, such as \textit{Untitled} #77 (2000-03),\textsuperscript{270} where a creek or river winds its way on its never-ending, never-beginning journey. Here, like Heidegger’s river, time surrenders to the conundrum of past-present-future, although there is a Heideggerian sense of ‘not being able to forget the origin’,\textsuperscript{271} of being bound to the primacy of mankind (the primitive and childhood). It evokes a place where Heidegger affirms,

\begin{quote}
Here someone dwells so near to the origin that he abandons it with difficulty... not because he simply remains in the homely, merely becoming ossified there, but because already at the source he has invited the unhomely as guest and is pushed toward the homely by the unhomely.\textsuperscript{272}
\end{quote}

Henson invokes the Heideggerian ‘river in whose flowing there constantly speaks the dialogue between one’s own and the foreign’.\textsuperscript{273} Within watery reflections, infinitude of timelessness pervades as the river flows, almost hovering, into the viewer’s space. Whereas an image’s negative space often encapsulates the uncanny, such as Brassington’s \textit{Voicing} where a silvery-white liquid river is folded between the two figures, the river in Henson’s \textit{Untitled} #77 is positively formed to unequivocally compel the focus of the gaze towards it whilst the background’s blackened depths create an intense, eerie void, thus ingratiating a subliminal uncanny viewpoint towards the unknown-yet-known. Moreover, the river’s smooth, glistening surface gently flows, encouraging the mind’s-eye to travel below to unseen turbulence, to undercurrents; thus Henson interplays and counteracts obvious with imperceptible elements, and literal with metaphoric as rivulets idiomatic of nervous systems or spinal reticulations, such river imagery is signatory of man’s metaphysical core. Elements of his imagery are not merely symbolic, they reach for more profound meaning.

\textsuperscript{268} Panera, op. cit., p.21, refers to author of fiction, Howard Phillips Lovecraft.
\textsuperscript{269} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{270} Bill Henson, \textit{Untitled} #77, 2000-03, type C photograph, 127x180 cm.
\textsuperscript{271} Heidegger, \textit{Hölderlin’s hymn...}, op. cit., p.146.
\textsuperscript{272} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{273} Ibid.
Dark chasms and shadows form important aspects of earlier nocturnes such as *Untitled #89* (1985-86),\(^{274}\) where, contributing to the haunted-house genre, a ghostly house appears isolated and bereft of human life. Applying similar tonalities as the deathly green-grey pallor of many of his personages, shadows are cast over deathly green-grey-white wood panelled exterior walls, inveigling the scene with ghostly flickers. Ajar, the picket fence gate coerces the gaze to ‘step’ into its boundaries, adding to ominous atmospherics making the scene perversely inviting. It appears hauntingly rendered by spectres whilst expressing a homely suburban familiarity. An undeniable Hitchcockian expression is portrayed – one which has parallels with Edward Hopper’s similarly coloured and haunting *House by the railroad* (1925),\(^{275}\) which Iversen defines as catching the nostalgic gaze of the train passenger who ‘sees the house as a picturesquely decrepit monument which gestures toward a more authentic past in the midst of a degraded, alienated, “rootless” present... [as] only the rootless can be nostalgic’.\(^{276}\) Like Henson’s bathed in shadow, Hopper’s *House* is this and

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\(^{274}\) Bill Henson, *Untitled #89*, 1985-86, type C photograph, 128 x 100 cm.

\(^{275}\) Edward Hopper, *House by the railroad*, 1925, oil on canvas, 61 x 73.7 cm, MoMA. Henson’s work also shares parallels with some of René Magritte’s mysterious compositions and Giorgio de Chirico’s metaphysical paintings of 1909-19. Further comparisons can be made between Henson’s imagery of uncanny dwellings and Jeffrey Smart’s early paintings, such as *Keswick siding*, 1945, oil on jute canvas, 62 x 72.1 cm stretcher, AGNSW, which share Daws’s motifs of railroads, lonely onlookers and themes relating to T.S. Eliot’s “The waste land”, op. cit., and existentialist disturbances.

\(^{276}\) Iversen, “In the blind field...”, op. cit., p.411.
more, impeding full-view of the house with railway-lines cutting across the bottom, thereby hiding middle-ground view, just as Henson’s foreground is stolen by shadow. This skewed perspective, aided by the rail curvature and shadows, tips the building aslant so that it appears sinking into earth as if being swallowed up by an unearthly source. The track’s slight angularity is confounded by the horizontal strip of earth beneath it, thereby befuddling the perspective and subtly disrupting the stability of the ground and level of the house, thereby producing a faintly vertiginous effect on its viewer. Exemplary of unhomely taphophobic fear, Iversen argues Hopper’s paintings are not solely intellectualised or formalised uncanny motifs, there is an inherent uncanniness in his artwork which cannot be reduced by a formalistic approach alone. Notwithstanding Iversen’s hypothesis or Hopper’s belief that ‘most all of the important qualities [of art] are put there unconsciously’, facets of this painting and Henson’s photograph can be considered as aiding uncanniness. The structure of Hopper’s building presents two possible ‘bodies’: a three-storey building positioned in front of a four-storey one, in a fashion resembling nineteenth-century wedding photography which positions the bride standing behind the seated bridegroom. The three-storey section’s façade incorporates facial expressions verging on comical: sleepy eyes of the dark recesses made by the open blinds of the second-floor windows are capped by frowning eyebrows of the curved architrave, with an exhausted, apathetic or wry grin provided by the upper windows’ arched lintels. Personifying a chillingly humanistic aspect of Hopper’s mansion in poesy, Edward Hirsch defiles the house as being ‘so desperately empty’ thence pens, ‘Soon the house starts/ To stare frankly at the man’, taking on an expression of someone unnerved. Like a semidetached couple sitting affixed and forlorn, Hopper’s architectural anthropomorphism, redolent of life and death, evokes Vidler’s uncanny theories. Such attributes conferred on Hopper’s painting, including the cropped and slightly vertiginous sightline across and along the picket fence-line, are lessons taken for reading Henson’s Untitled #89, including a broken or hanging narrative. Common to Hopper’s paintings in general, Henson likewise establishes embryonic narratives which are never fully realised — as they are not meant to reveal any one story — rather producing flashes of narrative, exposing an array of possibilities and

feeding the viewer's imagination. Moreover, their pictures instil the outer manifestations of inner-life, heightened by darkened windows which compel the gaze into being with one in the scene, as Lacan notes of window motifs:

This window, if it gets a bit dark, and I have reasons for thinking that there is someone behind it, is straightway a gaze. From the moment this gaze exists, I am already something other, in that I feel myself becoming an object for the gaze of others. But in this position, which is a reciprocal one, others also know that I am an object who knows himself to be seen.279

The objectification of elements of Untitled #89, including the viewer’s gaze, squarely places the viewer amongst the scene, thus engendering disquieting notions of an unhomely-homely. Although the infinitude of Henson's black chasms threaten to consume the viewer, the gaze is suddenly pulled back into the reality of the gallery space, nevertheless a residual of nauseating fear or spine-tingling terror remains.

Given Sebald's references to the architectural uncanny,280 spectres and haunted houses are anticipated in Henson, whereas another comparison between the uncanny found of Henson’s art and The idiot concerns the eeriness of unhomely and foreign landscapes. Upon reaching Lucerne, Myshkin was taken to its lake and although attracted by its beauty, felt 'dreadfully depressed by it',281 relaying a sense of foreignness which intensifies feelings of unease. Perceiving a place as especially foreign compounds an unsettling awareness of self-amidst the unfamiliar, although the intensity increases when the foreign subsequently uncannily reminds one of actually always living in states of unhomeliness. Eliciting Dostoevsky's observations, 'Architectural lines have... a secret of their own' and houses 'without as well as within... seem inhospitable and mysterious',282 Untitled #89 pictures an eerie exterior compelling the onlooker's minds-eye to imagine its interior as equally disturbing. Similarly articulating the uncanny in foreboding dreamscapes, Henson's

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281 Dostoevsky, op. cit., p.51. Interestingly, Dostoevsky was in voluntary exile in Europe when he wrote this story, according to Richard Pearce. Dostoevsky: An examination of the major novels, London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992, p.59. Ibid., p.65, also points out that Myshkin's first name, Lyov, means lion, whilst 'Mysh' means mouse. So, in name, Dostoevsky renders his protagonist as being a paradoxical beast, a destitute idiot yet a prince. Arguably, among the story's many subliminal devices evoking the uncanny, Myshkin's name resonates, mirroring the jarring and blurring of opposites created from paradoxical scenes throughout the narration.
282 Dostoevsky, The idiot, from the 1996 Wordsworth publication, op. cit., p.189, and Project Gutenberg reproduction, respectively. Later, p.191, Myshkin explains that his friend's house 'has a look of your whole family and... manner of life; but if you ask me how I know that, I can't explain it... It makes me uneasy indeed that it should trouble me so much', and, p.364. Dostoevsky's dying figure, Ippolit, dreams, 'there was something very extraordinary in [his dog] Norma's terror, as though there were something uncanny in it, as though the dog too felt that there was something ominous...'
nightmarish-world is transfigured as real-world after all, and whilst Freudian/Jungian
dreamscapes reflect unconscious content, unconsciousness equally unleashes eerie
remembrances in wakening hours. Enveloping disorientating perspectives and disquieting
motifs with suburban landscape scenes with 'human faces that act like sentinels', Henson's
Untitled 1984/85 series invokes senses of alienation of places familiar-yet-unknown,
conveying an 'essential unknowability' which echoes man's renunciation of true-self.
Henson's dark imagery poses the bodily uncanny as also mirroring the uncanny of places —
of buildings and suburbia, although it is often described contrariwise — as the architectural
uncanny mirroring the body. Irrespectively, the body and architecture are twinned
representations of each other, as mapped in Sally Smart's Vitruvian figure of Daughter
architect (round).

Figure 75: Bill Henson, Untitled 29, 1985-86

283 With indebtedness to Hewett-Thayer, op. cit., p.180, who says similar in reference to Hoffmann.
284 Crombie, "Untitled — the photographs of Bill Henson", op. cit., pp.11-12, reads, 'a sense of alienation, of being in a place
that is familiar and yet unknown... a disorienting perspective to... human faces that act like sentinels... [evoking an] essential
unknowability'.
In work such as his *Untitled 1993* series, scenes redolent of urbane strangeness, Henson conveys the eerie reality of man’s tenuous coexistence with nature, as Rex Butler explains, 'the sense of overwhelming natural forces is given superb expression and amplitude [through]... the grainy swirl of the prints, the blurring or shaking of the camera’s focus, the tenebrous shades and gradations of the photos’ development', elements which conjure 'a hostile, threatening world that is beyond our grasp'.

Electricity wires in *Untitled 29* (1985-86) tear across a foreboding twilight sky strewn with sinuous clouds resonating electrostatic interference, like ultrasound scans over flesh and muscle. Such 'ghost-images' act as a metaphor for man's delicate tightrope-walk and subservience to natural forces; vestiges containing uncanny remnants conveying man's estranged relationship with himself and his surroundings. They are literally 'live-wires' which invoke Corbusier's vision of the 'radiant city' of electric lighting 'converting mute architecture into a living, speaking entity' – a concept McQuire reads as situating 'the uncanny resonance of the new cityscape', new uncanny sites where notions of 'dimension, distance and materiality' have under 'the ambivalence which dogs the electropolis', which changes or morphs things which are nowadays measured in gigabytes or nanoseconds whilst simultaneously acting to constantly remind people of the past, man's primitive origins, and mankind's relentless push into the future. Cyclically, the familiar endlessly turns unfamiliar and vice-versa – one is not merely nostalgic, one embodies this constant repetition of remembering something long forgotten or repressed. The electrical wires, as symbolising virtual pathways, figuratively connect past with present whilst representing man's obsession with technological progress, whilst the faint half-moon underscores the reality of man's committal to earthly domains, an existence or being-thrust which works both with and against nature.

Another uncanny facet Henson's work imbues is that of an eerie silence or muted hum suchlike low-toned vibrations sounded by electrical interference as in *Untitled 29*, for example. Henson's imagery 'converses' in perceivably audible manners, more often as whispers or faint calls rather than being entirely mute. His images engender veils of murmuring, susurrant or low continuous indistinct sounds that, considering Freud's

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285 Rex Butler, "The letter returns", *Broadsheet*, vol.37, no.4, pp.277-9, p.277, which continues, 'a world of shadows and dimly apprehended forces that lie just beyond the known...[and] shadows within what we see, dark forces crossing the faces and bodies in the photos, producing for reasons we cannot guess states of fear, despair, ecstasy and exaltation'.

286 Bill Henson, *Untitled 29*, 1985/86, archival inkjet pigment print, 128 x 100 cm, RO9.

closing statement that ‘factors of silence, solitude and darkness… are actually elements in
the production of the infantile anxiety from which the majority of human beings have
never become quite free’, pictorialize a kind of disturbed muteness, as if representing
interference with infantile repression. Representing not repressed content but ‘elements in
the production’ of repression, silence, solitude and darkness factor greatly in reconstituting
repressed content, therefore are closely linked with mechanisms of uncanny triggering.
Henson’s muteness is an aspect which beguiles his onlooker whilst instilling the eerie
stillness of an unknown presence. Whereas Untitled #6 captures a contemplative silence,
other expressions of quietude in his imagery allow an array of readings, many engendering
sensations perversely disquieting. As a Freudian source ‘of the uncanny effect’, silence – or
the barely audible – transpires as a meditative quality of Heidegger’s rivers, with, as
Heidegger observes, “The Ister” abruptly ending with:
Yet what that one does, that river,
No one knows.

That is, the river will not tell, it remains mute. The river withholds this known yet
unknown knowledge and remains silent, just as Heidegger notes Hölderlin’s words have
‘the character of a keeping silent’. The silence of the river and of unheimliche poetry is
the uncanny of Henson’s quiet reflections, which emanate the uncanny language of silence.
Dark tonality, reflective medium, nocturnal imagery and the objects photographed such as
rivers, winding roads, electrical wires against a scudding clouded sky, shadowy backdrops
and veil-like motifs, are aspects contributing to evoking the inaudible nature of his work.

Much of Henson’s art spans various levels of interpretation, from literal representations of
Olympia through to the metaphorical homecoming of the Heideggerian uncanny, and into
profound, anagogical (spiritual or mystical) perception. Inversely, it would be fallacious to
categorically state anybody’s artwork as not uncanny; objects always hold an indeterminate
capacity to unfold uncanniness for certain people and situations. For example, the artwork
of Henson’s former partner, Louise Hearman, is often linked with the uncanny, and clearly
she shares his interest in the nocturnal. Nonetheless, the formal qualities of Hearman’s
work tend to overwhelm the gaze, with strident painterly qualities arguably working against

subtle evocations of uncanniness and tending more towards the bizarre or gothic.290 Her lush impasto brushwork and the often saturated, vivid (sometimes fluorescent) colouration of her work, which although frequently set against dark, menacing backdrops, act as formal aspects which prevail over the brooding, mysterious content of her work; her painterly style inclines to subvert the subject of uncanniness, although this may be an eye-catching device to seize the viewer’s attention away from the uncanny and therefore, contrarily, towards it. Contrastingly, the complexity Henson’s work demonstrates how the more profound uncanny is interconnected with an array of interrelated topics including the sublime and the absurd, and that more scholarly, pensive approaches prevail over more expressive, personal or experimental artwork for eliciting uncanniness. Nonetheless, when discussing such complicated work, it is unfeasible to designate uncanniness such that it is so distinctively defined. Henson’s multifaceted work reaches across numerous tropes and, as he prefers to leave interpretation to others, his pictures have thus has not attracted exegesis based on uncanny discourse.

Moreover, Henson’s work manifests the difficulty of defining and analysing topics which remain unresolvable, including the uncanny with its many tentacles which are inextricably intertwined in life’s fabric. Jere O’Neill Surber’s description of Pink Floyd’s music is somewhat apt: ‘Rarely does a Pink Floyd song tell a coherent story or express some single emotion or experience. Rather, most seem like “loosely woven” collages of images, metaphors, and interrupted “half-thoughts”’.291 Henson’s images possess symbolic richness and historical referencing whilst having the volatility of interrupted ‘half-thoughts,’ a certain edginess and suspense, repeatedly interweaving dichotomies relating to uncanniness: marriages of harmony and discord that reveal uncertainty over the known and unknown while surreptitiously secreting messages that our hidden truths are barely re/suppressed below the surface. With exponential complexity and layering, he creates disrupted perceptions and tensions which press upon psychical apertures between consciousness and unconsciousness, producing profound glimpses of uncanny revelations, exposing ‘we are not

290 Hearman is interested in the interaction of dreams and memory, as she is about externalizing ‘internal matter.’ Certainly, her work evokes dreamlike, surreal qualities, and she engenders her work with psychical concepts about consciousness and unconsciousness and so forth.

291 Jere O’Neill Surber, “Wish you were here (but you aren’t): Pink Floyd and non-Being”, in Reich, op cit., pp.191-200, p.199. Indeed, Henson’s earlier collaged images of torn and cut photographic elements provide a direct comparison. See Crombie in Henson, Mnemosyne, op. cit., p.383, for further insight into Henson’s collage techniques.
as we thought — or — 'we are what we hide from ourselves.' The uncanny is amplified when he fabricates these sudden blindsidings, such momentary thrusts of self-recognition which put one face-to-face with their own, their ultimate unhomely-home. His images are reminiscent of Heidegger's understanding of poetry — that the ambiguity and openness of poetry lends itself to leading us towards the uncanny by reminding us of our inherent unhomeliness — that one is uncanny to the core. Malouf, wonders whether the essence of Henson's art might be 'the act of looking itself'\textsuperscript{292} — that is, the act Heidegger suggests of Hölderlin, or the self-reflection of Nathanael in Olympia.

According to Michael Heyward, Henson educes the sensibility of a provincial artist — the 'country' his art 'inhabits and the language it speaks is its own'\textsuperscript{293} — sentiments which acknowledge art as being uniquely representative of the artist whilst employing motifs and devices of universal meaning and appeal, including saturating imagery with dark and muted twilight tones that cast literal and metaphorical blankets of shadows across forms; rendering spaces as closed to the gaze; picturing the opaque, hovering presence of the moon; and, generally sounding an eerie awakening of nocturnal forces. Such imagery encompasses the closing of the day, as of things seen beckoning the wake of the unseen/unknown. Henson once mused, 'If the subject is allowed its most full and intimate presence, it will never become merely familiar.'\textsuperscript{294} This ungraspable, inscrutable element, alluding to the obscure remainders to which the uncanny belongs, has long been an inherent quality of his practice.

Motivating towards vagueness and the truth that is ambiguity alone, and devoid of detail and open to interpretation, interplaying the traditional known (of photographs) with contemporaneous methods of pictorial deceit, Henson's work remains alluringly elusive yet esotericism is not his intention. It is through the inveigling of poetic obfuscation that veiled truth, truth which is always known but re/suppressed, is quietly revealed. His work reveals veiled truth as existing, that we unconsciously conceal truth from ourselves, and what is more, that this psychic schism both separates and unites man, making him uncannily-unhomely of two minds.

\textsuperscript{292} David Malouf, "Introduction", in Henson, \textit{Bill Henson: Photographs}, op. cit., pp.9-10.
\textsuperscript{294} Bill Henson, 1986, as quoted in Bill Henson, \textit{Bill Henson}, exhib. catalogue, Melbourne: Council of the Trustees of the NGV, 2005, p.15.
Summary and concluding remarks

Mythologising the uncanny as an artistic tradition

Myths do not 'exist in a language and in a culture or sub-culture, but at their point of articulation...' 

CLAUDÉ LEVI-STRAUSS

Myths inexorably change shape like uncanny mutants, adapting and persisting in individual and collective imaginations. The mythology of the uncanny is no exception, and just as Lévi-Strauss considers myths emanate at points of articulation, the uncanny artwork discussed facilitate an enriched understanding and definition of the elusive subject that is das unheimliche. Whilst considering innovative approaches to interpreting Freudian and Existentialist theories, and coalescing these discourses to ameliorate predominant theoretical foundations, I have demonstrated fresh ways to consider the concept of uncanniness, supported by and validated through each case-study. Besides building upon the framework developed in part one, the analysis in part two substantiates the phenomenon of uncanniness as well as providing original insights into contemporary artwork, and advancing new ways to think about this otherwise unfathomable sensation.

From where derives this Freudian 'violent jolt' of uncanniness we may never conclusively know.1 It begets present, past and future – perhaps it is time itself, considering artists of the uncanny are like time-travellers, children of Roman or Greek gods of fire, Vulcan and Hephaestus, reaching back and pulling past into present, moulding and transmogrifying time. As artistic journeyings seeking to amplify and expand self-knowledge through courting and probing inner-self through visual expression, Mueck and Piccinini travel forward, through the uncanny valley, forming disturbingly familiar and uncannily lifelike sculptures which inherit history, notions of immortality, the death drive and doubling. Likewise, Henson and Brassington perform a double step, backwards and forwards, incorporating Freudian repetition plus Heideggerian journeys from the foreign into the homely, whereas Smart and Daws introduce alchemy and transformative acts as representing past, present and future, acknowledging collective unconsciousness and the role symbolism plays in quotidian perceptions of the world whilst inferring the duality of

2 Freud, “The ‘uncanny’”, op. cit., p.248, repeating the experience of seeing his uncanny double in the train, writes, ‘when a more than usually violent jolt of the train swung back the door of the adjoining washing-cabinet’: my emphasis. Arguably, the 'door of the adjoining washing-cabinet' symbolises the door into the unconscious. Lacoue-Labarthe, op. cit., p.16, calls this the unlocatable heart of the Unheimliche.
self and the uniting possibilities of syzygy. They imagine interior and exterior spaces and uncanny in-between places, space and time warps,3 showing uncanniness as being an inherent, innate, inner quality which ultimately can only be found within oneself. Daws and Henson recall classical history, inserting it into contemporaneous settings, whereas Piccinini interweaves primitive-past and the futuristic into present-day – customary of driving history into the contemporary as is central to Heideggerian uncanny discourse and an attribute shared among the six case-studies. These artists, however, diverge in their tactics and devices employed, intentionally or otherwise and with subjectively variable degrees of success, to evoke the intangible uncanny. Sometimes their chosen medium prevails; alternatively, content becomes superlative; overwhelmingly, medium and content combine to elicit uncanniness – to reveal a homely-unhomeliness. This final section summarises some divergences and similarities.

Just as the uncanny raises more questions than it answers, art often conceals more than it reveals, acting as a screen masking memory, replacing psychic processes with new inputs that invariably obscure or cover-up 'reality.' Conversely, any such input mechanism acts as a screen through which extraneous triggers filter through and ignite or upset unconscious memory. Indeed, complex art often confounds psychical processes and cannot be wholly comprehended nor adequately described, yet encompasses multifarious layers of meaning which often effect a suspended reading in the viewer, often producing a sense of confusion, an uncanny unfixed ‘moment between perception and its classification’.4 Uncanny art, per se, slips between the Velcro threads of meaning. For Heidegger, artworks draw out or bring into focus the fissure between what is measurable and immeasurable: the difference between what can be commonly or communally perceived and the ineffable; disparities

3 Royle, The uncanny, op. cit., p.9, reads: 'Stonehenge is uncanny. It seems "new and recent", but it is ancient. It is attributed with a capacity to "eliminate" time, not only the past but also the future'. This time-relatedness to the uncanny inculcates the pace of change or the elimination of time altogether. Vidler, Warped space..., op. cit., pp.203-18 and pp.234-57, discusses the "postspatial void" and 'conditions of life without space,' and the notion that representation of the computer age continues to mimic modernism.

4 Sylvia Kelso, “The postmodern uncanny: Or, establishing uncertainty”, Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genres, vol.3, no.3-4 (Return of the uncanny, 1997), pp.456-70, p.456. Moreover, to look for meaning is both to find meaning and to find an endless possibility of meaning, arguably negating attempts to interpret artwork as engendering or portraying uncanniness; yet, the very idea that the meaning of art has the capacity (indeed, the assertiveness) to turn in on itself displays the very inverseness and indeterminacy of the uncanny itself. Thus, one might say that all art is uncanny insofar as its polysemous values disrupt, avoid or nullify conclusive meaning. Indeed, the mythology of the uncanny, with its various discursive theories, might be noted as further demonstrating the futility of (or fueling) the debate concerning interpretation as an unorthodox practice in art historical writing; see, for example, Rampley, op. cit.; and Roland Barthes, The responsibility of forms: Critical essays on music, art, and representation, trans. Richard Howard, New York: Hill and Wang, 1985, particularly, pp.21-40.
among describable and indescribable. These fissures/differences/disparities aid man’s self-disclosure of himself within his world.\textsuperscript{5} Contrarily, for Freud, uncanny art \textit{disguises} repressed content: ‘All works of art would provoke feelings of uncanniness if artists did not use the seductive artifice of beauty to divert the ego’s attention and prevent it from guarding against the return of repressed fantasies’.\textsuperscript{6}

Whereas the case-study artists to varying degrees imply the uncanny, sometimes reflecting the legendary Olympia literally, they apply tactics of subversion and diversion which allow the possibility for uncanniness to ascend from its depths. Whilst all organic and inorganic objects represent permanence, the figurative object, as human-body doubles, punctuates man’s deteriorating impermanence, moving the mind’s eye closer to the fateful homeliness of death. Whilst Olympia, supremely representative of the figurative uncanny, is often portrayed and remembered in three-dimensional mannequin-like figures, of Mueck and Piccinini’s varieties, for Smart and Daws, a faceless Olympia wonders through a thoroughly uncanny Australian landscape. Although verist sculpture recaptures an ‘Olympian immobility’,\textsuperscript{7} appropriating classical references in new formats and materials, its uncanny frisson is more fantastical and dazzling, almost too credible \textit{yet} incredible as to create profound uncanniness. Yet, placing such figures within gallery-scapes engenders part detraction, part distraction – fertile grounds for liberating the re/suppressed. Contrasting, when figures are placed within the two-dimensional, containing the gaze to within the frame, amongst unhomely surrounds and disturbing compositions, they become stranger, more alienated and unsettling. Unlike Brassington, Henson largely steers away from literal connections, disguising lost memory of the re/suppressed and using poetical ambiguities of Hölderlin’s quality to inspire uncanny jolts of remembrance, and like Hölderlin, he is not completely ambiguous nor abstract but references uncanny motifs prescribed by Heidegger, including waterways as symbolising journeying from the homely into the foreign.

The uncanny artworks discussed stimulate and complicate multifaceted ideas, often elusively introducing a common element, \textit{fire}, which prompts discussion about: the primitive; man’s history and origins; the homely; the unknown/known; Olympia;


\textsuperscript{6} Kofman, op. cit., p.123.

\textsuperscript{7} This term, used by Capon, op. cit., p.119, in discussion about Raphael and the ‘Olympian immobility’ of his Florentine style, is apt considering the historical reference to classical sculptural figures of Olympia and the mannequin.
metamorphosis; the inanimate; life and death; the double; and so forth. Central to Freudian discourse, the Sandman forged eyes from glass in homely furnaces, comparing with Heidegger's immersion into Hölderlin's profound, hymnal opening: Now, come fire! Along with the Freudian-Olympia/Heideggerian-Antigone, as an important, recurrent motif for Daws and Smart, less obvious in Henson and Brassington, fire is the keystone of alchemical and transmutational processes where things move or journey from one, known state into another, unknown. Mueck's and Piccinini's sculpture relay the effects of permutations and substituting the unreal with the realistic potential, whilst metamorphosis coalesces or interlocks present, past and future 'beings,' emphasising the fragility of physical states in the way the uncanny punctuates the instability of re/suppression and the continual psychical re-structuring as a necessity underscored by uncanny expressions, where the shattering of re/suppression leads one to journey across borders, thus finding oneself in foreign lands. The uncanny reflects dualistic self, incorporating a form of self-exile. Hesse's enchanting short-story fictionalising young devotees of Hölderlin, supports such sentiments of self-exile whilst projecting the idea that artists epitomise uncanniness:

The young [artist]... did not yet wholly understand these fugitive voices... like a scared child he often abruptly fled... from such eerie enchanted hours with overflowing woe... yet in the play of a hundred different moods, the hidden melancholy... [and] perishable guise of a transient shadow.9

Hesse sees artists as fleeing from, yet towards, themselves, subconsciously intuiting creativity as bringing oneself closer to truth. Coppelius/Coppola/Spalanzani, art-makers and creators of artifice, manifest uncanny forms of reiterative homecomings, recalling recurrent Odyssean journeyings from and into the foreign.10 Likewise, the strange mystical qualities of the epic landscapes of Australia's vast, unforgiving outback, unfamiliar flora and odd mammalian life are evocatively uncanny – especially given the European imagination

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8 Kristeva, Strangers to ourselves, op. cit., p.30. Citing the words of Hegel, Kristeva, p.144, contends that becoming a stranger to oneself is a function of cultural strangeness, and the actualisation of self-consciousness 'depends on the process through which self-consciousness devests itself of its personality, by so doing creates its world, and treats it as something alien and external, of which it must now take possession'. Kristeva understands this as being 'as estrangement of the natural being.' Thus, the uncanny alienation of oneself to oneself becomes a necessity.

9 Hermann Hesse "In Pressel's gardenhouse" (1914) in Waiblinger and Hesse, op. cit., p.156. The devotees spoken of here are poets, Eduard Mörike (1804-1875) and Waiblinger (1804-1830), who wrote the fiction, Phaethon (1823), which drew heavily from Hölderlin. See Wilhelm Waiblinger, "Phaethon" in ibid, pp.17-123. Incidentally, Hesse (1877-1962) was born in Calw, Germany, a town in the Black Forest about 110 kilometres north from the source of the Danube.

10 Reiterative journeyings recall Homer's Odyssey, and remind me of Bernard Schlink's fictional remark that rather than being a story of homecoming, the Odyssey recounts Odysseus's returning home not to stay but to set off again, as a kind of perpetual travelling towards and from the homely; see Bernhard Schlink, The reader, trans. Carol Brown Janeway, Vintage International edn, New York: Vintage Books, 1998, pp.181-2.
which long held it as mysterious and unsettling. Whereas Heidegger's teachings reveal that any locale external to oneself is ultimately uncanny, Australia's harsh, unforgiving strangeness evokes innately uncanny senses that as one comes towards true-self — homeliest of homes — one comes towards death. Whilst Freud was of influence in Australia as early as 1914, from the 1930s, artistic and psychoanalytic circles intersected, sharing in passionate Freudian debates. Interest in his theories directly (or indirectly through Surrealism) influenced many Australian artists, with 1970s feminist debates surrounding him serving to escalate interest once again. Taking into consideration the resurgent interest in the uncanny in the 1990s, continuing today, attributed to change and instability, there persists a demand for creative representations of the sensations caused by living with the unknown, conceptual voids to which the uncanny belongs. Although some argue that contemporary fear of the unknown should be positively welcomed as sources of renewal and spontaneity, visions of 'carnival' and celebration' are not exclusively 'needed to combat' this fear. Contrarily, fear and anxiety are nothing new; the 'great unknown' is age-old. The confluences of an 'already uncanny' Australia, Freud's essay and Surrealism, continues to be felt in Australian art, with Daws, Smart and Brassington clearly promoting the uncanny, intensifying its purpose, and according it contemporary themes.

This dissertation began by reviewing successive hermeneutics on the literary and aesethically-derived uncanny along side extant discourse, including those who strive to elucidate the phenomenon of the 'private' or 'real-life' sensation and efforts which appear to be equivocal prevarications, punctuating this as a notoriously 'slippery' and highly

11 Damousi, op. cit., pp.205-29, discusses the influence Freud has made on Australian art.
12 'Enormous change and instability' is discussed in, for example, Tacey, op. cit., p.424, who says, 'Creative solutions to the problem of living with the Unknown, and finding a relationship with uncertainty, are urgently needed'. Whilst having no specific zenith, the uncanny seems to flourish in turbulent periods associated with upheaval and destructive threats, effectively re-energizing the primitive within, unleashing unconscious re/suppressed memory. For Hoffmann, this was the Napoleonic wars; for Zamyatin, the Russian revolutions; and for Freud, World War I. According to Ramsay Burt, Alien bodies: Representations of modernity, 'race' and nation in early modern dance, London: Routledge, 1998, p.17, even dance styles between the wars represented uncanniness: whilst modern dance seemed strange, it was, 'nevertheless uncannily familiar because of the extent to which individuals were themselves alienated by modernity'. Re-emerging after World War II, das unheimlich peaked again in the mid-1990s, resurfacing in this age of 'war on terror,' particularly thriving in times where uncertainty is central to intellectual paradigms, associated with change as metamorphic transitions from one state to another, and thus symbolic of man as essentially an uncanny changeling. Damousi, op. cit., p.3, says, 'at times of social and cultural change such as the 1920s and 1960s, the [philosophical] emphasis shifted to theories of personal liberation and repression. During the upheaval of the two world wars the focus fell on trauma, early childhood, neurosis and familial dislocation... [when] Freudian ideas were adopted by avant-garde movements'. Also see Kebo, op. cit., pp.465-8.
13 Tacey, op. cit. Ibid., p.425, also says, 'We are looking for a way to live in the presence of mystery that is not fixed or doctrinal. We are hoping for a relationship with the Unknown that is not dependent upon a metaphysics we cannot believe, a religious orthodoxy that has lost credibility or a theology that has been overturned by philosophy and science. We (re)turn to the Unkown without the sturdy 'traditions' that religious institutions believe to be all-important'.
subjective field. Nevertheless, its very obscurity exposes its dynamic quality, and rather than being a lost relic of nostalgia, the uncanny is an active cultural residual, forming an important mini-narrative with Heidegger and Sartre as authors and protagonists, and with Freud’s perverse essay as a springboard for the more progressive, universal or neutral positions succeeding his. Indeed, with Hoffmann and Hölderlin at the heart of Freudian/Heideggerian uncanny discourse, a thoroughly Germanic strain pervades, with the enigmatic Danube at its core, as Heidegger pens:

The Ister remains enigmatic (rätselhaft) in its upper course close to the source, this standing still of its dark waters beneath the towering rocks, this swirling (wirbelnde) flow that turns back towards the banks it has already abandoned. After all, rivers elsewhere flow away from their source. Yet this one shows a mysterious tendency to cling to the homely land and its towering rocks with their ‘high-wafting scent of the fir forest.’

This pervasive Germanic rendering of the uncanny requires deeper consideration, given, for example, Daws’s Germanic associations\(^\text{14}\) and artistic parallels with Dostoyevsky and the Hoffmannesque uncanny throughout Tarkovsky’s films which are noted as possessing the childlike innocence of Dostoyevsky’s *The idiot,*\(^\text{15}\) particularly *Stalker,* emblematic of man’s vulnerability. Tarkovsky’s guileless, childlike protagonist reflects a ‘purer’ state, of innocence prior to surmounting and repressing ‘primitive’ beliefs, of approaching the (im)penetrable chasm of unconsciousness. Significantly, the overlaying of Russian sensibilities on German gives an overly simplistic posture on the rich, deep-rooted complexities of European history to which Australian art belongs, wherein the motif of the river flowing from yet into the homely/unhomely is a permeating thread, bringing ‘Odyssean water’ to the ‘Promethean fire’ of Aristotle’s *Terra Australis.*\(^\text{16}\)

Applying the developed framework, commonalities and differences in the case-studies disclose certain conceptual and formal aspects of visual art pertaining to or evoking uncanniness, which can be broadly categorised within overlapping groups.\(^\text{17}\) The first

\(^{14}\) Daws, who learnt German as a second language, grew up on the fringes of Adelaide, a region which attracted German émigrés. He frequently stayed with a German family in Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills winery district, home to many of Australia’s oldest German settlements. Here, he was introduced to an important mentor, Heysen, who was born in Germany in 1877, and immigrated to Adelaide when he was seven, later establishing his working base and life in Hahndorf.

\(^{15}\) Peter Green, op. cit., p. 12 and p.101.

\(^{16}\) *Terra Australis,* the notion of ‘the unknown land of the South’ was thought to have been introduced by Aristotle.

\(^{17}\) Several caveats are prudent at this juncture, including the subjectiveness of applying particular nuances to evoking the uncanny in artwork, especially considering the beholder’s participation varies from person to person, and in context, including particular situations and time, the historical era, and so forth: what one person may find unnerving, to another, is not, for example. Considering the uncanny as perceived in the early nineteenth-century, Germer, op. cit., p.174, points this out too. Nonetheless, this more appropriately relates to the ‘public’ or aesthetic uncanny, not to that phenomenally subjective ‘private’
pertains to *literal representations*, such as: capitalising on Australia as a place engendering uncanniness; representing journeying from or into the foreign, including rivers and roads; addressing the homely-unhomely 'body' of the architectural uncanny, including the haunted house motif aligned with inner hauntings; picturing Olympia, the animate-inanimate mannequin, and configuring other forms of the 'double' or *doppelgänger* through statuary sculpture, mirrors and forms of 'reflective' surfaces and repetitions; posing figures emerging as isolated, detached and psychologically disturbed, thus engendering ideas about inner conflict; conveying a sense of permanence as reflecting the viewer's own mortality, such as marble sculpture maintaining enduring uncanniness of the *double* whereas real-looking fake skin embody rot and decay; eliciting uncanny effects through formal attributes, including: conveying a sense of movement, as well as sound and smell aspects, which relay the behaviour of a three-dimensional object or two-dimensional figure as more machine-like than human-like, possessing a sense of their own autonomy; framing pictures as slightly disturbed or unnoticeably unstable compositions or hybridised stable compositions with slightly tilted or askew sightlines, as with vertiginous orthogonals and perpendiculars, thus conveying disturbed and dualistic perspectives; scaling the three-dimensional as larger or smaller than life-size, thereby disrupting the realism of the object and de-normalising spatial dimensions, uniting familiar with unfamiliar and disorientating perspective, including the perception of scale in photograph-like pictures; and, unless portraying perturbing gazes of children, containing the figure's gaze so as not to catch the viewer's, thus permitting onlookers to retreat into internalised conversations; incorporating subtle repetitions which carry forth echoes of the originary, as with appropriations which engender ever-recurring roundelays bespeaking 'home,' producing feelings of déjà-vu, whilst subliminally reflecting uncanny self-doubling.

A second grouping relates to *symbolic evocations*, including: building up conceptual levels of meaning using physical layering alluding to psychical layers; employing narratives, symbolism and archetypal imagery which serve to distract the viewer's conscious mind whilst subliminal messages unfold; referencing the homely origins of the womb and notions of childhood remembrance, such as puppens appealing to the forgotten inner-child and unsurmounted modes of thought; evoking the primitive via representations of man-animal uncanny. Moreover, this is a list of some of the shared similarities and stand-out qualities in the artworks discussed, and it does not pretend to be an exhaustive or authoritarian enumeration.
beings, atavistic traits and monstrous-beings, or the classical, thus eliciting homely origins, and enmeshing past, present and future, confusing or creating a lack of specificity of factors, obliterating specificities as time, place and personages, thus being universal, timeless, placeless; incorporating key uncanny motifs such as implied stillness which evokes deathly silence, including bleak landscapes or sparse domestic spaces; expressing absence through, for example, dolls with missing parts and themes concerning slippages and whole-part relationships, gaps, breaches and 'negative' space, such as voids or chasms, of portals into unknown worlds and things falling between or difficult to grasp; engendering a sense of alienation, of places familiar yet unknown, especially deceptive in domestic scenes where the homely and unhomely disquietingly unite; integrating the nocturnal or twilight, or comprising 'dark side' motifs including silhouetted figures, menacing aspects conducive with unutterable fear, with figures emerging from or receding into depths of darkness, thus compounding childhood 'fear of the dark' with primitive beginnings; using shadow and veil motifs representing the hidden, repressed or obscured unconscious; depicting the passing moment, glimpses and caught moments as with the fleeting train topos; applying 'blind field' devices which enforce a disquieting anxiousness of that which cannot be seen yet is strangely felt, and the associated 'caught unawares' gaze of the artist/viewer upon the subject; and, incorporating filmic qualities of photography-based art, film-noir and cinematography, thus further confusing the real-unreal relationship with the viewer. 18

Another category encompasses aspects which conceptualise antinomical qualities or collisions of opposites, such as the familiar-unfamiliarity of a crowd, and paradoxical expressions alluding to metamorphosis and uncanny thresholds, such as: using motifs associated with changing from one state to another, including transformative acts of animating the inanimate, and, conversely, the dissolution of two states or boundaries, including unclear delineation between interior/ exterior as representing unconscious/conscious; interplaying doubt-inducing qualities of 'real' and 'unreal' by intermixing ambiguous forms with clear ones – an optical blurring of the apparently unreal/dreamlike juxtaposed by lucid forms which might be considered real, thus addressing the ambiguity of inner-world exchanges

18 Arguably, Mueck's and Piccinini's figures are uncannier as photographs. In talking about Piccinini's Protein lattice series, Toffoletti, op. cit., says they are effectively simulacra, effacing reality and confusing binary distinctions - the organic and the 'machinic'. Filmic qualities can also be attributed to Mueck's veritable three-dimensional 'freeze frames', and this filmic metaphor is underscored by his earlier work in television and film.
and psychical confusion; employing prosopoetic compulsion, turning conscious attention towards mimesis whilst drawing upon unconscious poesy concerning one’s uncanny existence; instilling conflicting moments of reception through content and by juxtaposing clearly defined objects with hazy ones, inducing partially conscious-unconscious dream worlds; engendering visual discord with a fusion and diffusion of meaning, or of saturated meaning which collides with dispersed, confused messages, producing a sense of centrifugal disturbance from signified to signifier, confusing id and ego, Eros with Thanatos, and gliding into Lacanian ‘metonymical “glissement”’, thus exuding an ineffable something which is not totally understood.

The product of overlaying the filmic with digital-manipulation is imagery which invokes virtualised space and instantaneous time, moving viewers simultaneously into ‘place’ and ‘no place’ such that the fragility of reality and one’s potential for self-realisation becomes increasingly elusive and alienating in contemporary digital-culture. Bragginton’s and Henson’s imagery, digitally-manipulated and without deceit, attain greater levels of uncanny anxiety because the viewer associates the images, already in the schizoid state of the filmic, with warped, virtual spaces. Significantly, this relates to Heideggerian notions of techne, of man’s incessant drive or thrust forward as a self-referential cycle towards homeliness, such that uncanny jolts take on new meaning in relation to electrical pulses actually powering and driving technology. As underscoring mankind’s compulsive thrust forward, his unhomely flight towards new frontiers, it is, arguably, techne and associated technological advancements which allow artists to more effectively evoke the uncanny, consequently facilitating theorists’ successive re-examinations of the concept. Exploiting developments in verist figurative sculpture, Mueck and Piccinini are able to confound audiences whilst conveying metaphysical qualities or non-human aspects such that viewers look upon them non-objectively — as objects so perfect as ceasing to exist as real or human, rendering as so physical as to lose physicality, employing techniques to induce a tender

19 Iversen, “In the blind field…”, op. cit., p.424.
20 An increasing number of emerging, computer-generation artists explore uncanny themes by exploiting the latest gizmo of the techno-age, joined by art galleries like Australia’s National Portrait Gallery whose 2009 exhibition, Doppelgänger, was its second virtual gallery exhibition exploring contemporary notions of identity and portraiture in an online realm, a virtualised ‘Portrait Island’ within the simulated world, Second Life; exhibited 23 October 2009 to 23 April 2010.
21 Hence, one wonders whether merely looking upon or thinking about technology, as powered electromagnetically, influences perception and excites cognitive synapses, producing physical electro-spasms which are perceived as uncanny jolts, thereby interconnecting physical and mental processes. This likewise calls into question what the prevalent psychophysiological conditions of what uncanniness might look like under MRI scan.
puncture of suspended disbelief. Similarly, making the two-dimensional appear more real, Daws constructs images with the aid of computer programs to exacting compositional precision as well as manipulating lighting as lifelike. Contrastingly, Brassington uses digital manipulation to bleach colour from what would otherwise be colourfully lifelike. Like Henson’s dramatic lighting (applying the theatrical to the everyday), these artists invariably induce a sense of visual discord. Yet by making discernible the artifice of production, they draw together imagination and reality as a reflection of unconsciousness-consciousness, thus drawing out re/suppressed truths. Nonetheless, the artist’s hand is made relatively inconspicuous whilst delivering technical proficiency or precision in meticulously finished surfaces: Mueck’s and Piccinini’s superlatively modelled verist sculpture; Smart’s reflective metallic surfaces which deflect the viewer’s gaze are produced using newly-formed printing techniques; Daws’s use of computerised composition techniques are hidden behind classical, tempera-like finishes; whilst Brassington and Henson prosecute their work using various advanced photographic and printing techniques including digitally-manipulated images which function as restructured data that confounds and holds strange power over the imagination, igniting subconscious memory. As demonstrated in each case-study, progressive technological developments being exploited in the visual arts allow artists to evoke uncanniness in innovative ways, resulting in infinitesimal variations which contribute to its mutable definition.22 Whether it be new materials (like polymers and silicon) or apparatus (such as modern computer graphics and modelling tools, camera equipment, imaging and printing capabilities), viewers do not necessarily perceive the specific technicalities involved, but, in a more general sense, that human advancement prevails, and, subliminally, that man continues to push into future unknowns, as the phenomena of technē as revealing man’s essential inner force and uncanny being.

Mueck’s hyper-realistic figures and Piccinini’s hybrids, Daws’s numinous paintings and Smart’s super-scaled dramas, Brassington’s digitally-manipulated surrealisms and Henson’s disquieting photographs incorporate several aspects of each category aforementioned and allow several layers of interpretation, contributing to ideas associated with evoking uncanniness from the literal to more profound, reflective qualities, resonant with dissonant...

22 The notion that technology contributes to moulding such cultural concepts is a topic warranting further research with an objective to uncover specifics about the variances new technology delivers.
vagaries, and provoking sensations which uncover mysteries of inner-worlds whilst pricking viewers with incertitude and triggering uncanny realisations that one's inner mind is manifold, complex, unknown and irrepressible. They engender Heideggerian strange encounters 'between the foreign and one's own as the fundamental truth of history', fathoming the innate need to journey into the foreign as a way towards the homely. Importantly, there is no definitive list which simply enumerates uncanny surface effects, motifs or compositional techniques, and there remains an inexpressible agent or, as Royle puts it, a 'reading-effect', Freud's 'something more besides' — and having restated that ineffable supplement in art, and still not being able to conclusively pin it down, the mythology of the uncanny persists.

As Musashi teaches, we perceive things better by looking askance, diverting our gaze from centre to periphery, just as Nathanael does with his inner fire uncontrollably raging: his problem is not that he sees too clearly, but sees deeply into the well of his innermost being, whilst he seemingly lacks perspective, he perceives the frightening core which leads him to his death. Each new discovery about humankind and his universe, revolutionary scientific facts and philosophical suppositions of knowing ourselves better, are 'breakthroughs' which actually reveal that 'being' is as unclear as it ever was. Likewise, an uncanny sensation is a kind of symptomatic blindsiding, a sudden realisation that we know not ourselves. Life's journey, as Heidegger holds, unfolds uncannily, where the end of one's journeying is a returning to the point of departure, making the inherently-known but re/suppressed knowledge that our thrust towards the end is essentially a falling backwards to one's already-known, beginnings. Uncanny sensations are of awestruck glances into the core of one's being, origin and fate, thus making the uncanny an important, persistent myth, and one which remains elusive and slippery. As Lacoue-Labarthe says of art, with the *unheimliche* one is never finished. Conclusively, one thing is apparent: the worlds of art and the mythology of the uncanny go appreciably hand-in-glove, continuing to serve each other well.

24 Royle, *The uncanny*, op. cit., p. 44.
25 Freud, "The 'uncanny'", op. cit., p. 249.
26 Phrases borrowed from Brandy's observations into the thermodynamics of *The sandman*; Brandy, op. cit., p. 332.
27 Lacoue-Labarthe, op. cit., p. 8: 'With art one is never finished'.

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General Internet sources
List of artwork

Notation on list of artwork:
- Artwork is listed in order discussed.
- Measurements of artwork: except where otherwise noted, the measurements quoted are in centimetres, height before width (for two-dimensional pictures) or height before width before depth (for three-dimensional sculpture). Where measurement is not provided, variable size is assumed.
- Collection: except where otherwise noted, artworks are held in private collection.

From chapter one

Edward Hopper, *House by the railroad*, 1925, oil on canvas, 61 x 73.7 cm, MoMA.
Edwin Dickinson, *Villa la mouette*, 1938, oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm, MoMA.
Gustav Klimt, *Hope I*, 1903, oil on canvas, 189.2 x 67 cm, National Gallery of Canada.

From chapter four

Charles Robb, *Trophy*, 2002, fibreglass, polyester resin, synthetic polymer paint, steel, 20.1 x 16.4 x 25.2 cm, NGV.
Max Ernst, *The equivocal woman* (or *The teetering woman*), 1923, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 97.5 cm, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany.
Hany Armanious, *Unsanny valley*, 2009, cast earthenware, asphalt, polyurethane, pigment, 96 x 73 x 49 cm, RO9.
David Wadelton, *Breaking news*, 2002, oil on canvas, 91 x 198 cm.
Ron Mueck, *Dead dad*, 1996–97, silicone, polyurethane, styrene, synthetic hair, 20 x 38 x 102 cm, Stefan T. Edlis Collection, Chicago.
Ron Mueck, *Mask II*, 2001, polyester resin, fibreglass, steel, plywood, synthetic hair, 77.2 x 118.1 x 85.1 cm, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.
Ron Mueck, *Old woman in bed*, 2002, polyester resin, fibreglass, silicone, polyurethane, synthetic hair, cotton, polyester, 25.4 x 94 x 56 cm, AGNSW.
Ron Mueck, *Two women*, 2005, mixed media, 85.1 x 47.9 x 38.1 cm, Glenn Fuhrman Collection, New York.
Théodore Géricault, *Wounded cuirassier*, c.1814, oil on canvas, 294 x 358 cm, Musée du Louvre.
Théodore Géricault, *Blacksmith's sign*, c.1813/14, oil on wood, 122 x 102 cm, Kunsthau Zürich.

Antony Gormley, *Blind light*, 2007, installation, fluorescent light, water, ultrasonic humidifiers, toughened low iron glass, aluminium, 320 x 978.5 x 856.5 cm, Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London.

Antony Gormley, *A field for the Art Gallery of New South Wales*, 1989, installation of 1100 unfired clay figures, 12 x 11 metres (approx. overall), clay figures of approx. height 22 cm, AGNSW.

Patricia Piccinini, *Subset red (portrait)*, 1997, from the Protein lattice series, type C photograph, 80 x 80 cm, NGA.

Patricia Piccinini, *Psychotourism*, 1996, digital type C photograph, 120 x 258 cm.

Patricia Piccinini, *The young family*, 2002-3, silicone, acrylic, human hair, leather, timber, 80 x 150 x 110 cm, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo, Victoria.

Patricia Piccinini, *Still life with stem cells*, 2002, silicone, acrylic, human hair, clothing, carpet, installation sizes variable, Monash University Collection, Melbourne.

Bruce Nauman, *Untitled (Two wolves, two deer)*, 1989, foam, wax, cable, 142.2 x 375.9 x 368.3 cm.

Patricia Piccinini, *Big mother*, 2005, silicone, fibreglass, leather, human hair, 175 cm (high), AGSA.

Brian Crokett, *Pride; Lust; Gluttony; Sloth; Greed; Envy; Anger; Pinky*, all dated 2001, all cultured marble, various sizes, Lehmann Maupin Gallery.


Fiona Hall, *Avarice; Pride; Envy; Anger; Gluttony; Lechery; Sloth*, all dated 1985, all colour Polaroid photographs, 60 x 50 cm, AGNSW.

Patricia Piccinini, *Eulogy*, 2011, silicone, fibreglass, human hair, clothing, 110 x 65 x 60 cm.


Patricia Piccinini, *Roadkill*, 2005, digital C-type photograph, 80 x 160 cm.

Patricia Piccinini, *Leather landscape*, 2003, silicone, polyurethane, leather, mdf, human hair, 290 x 175 x 165 cm, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.


Patricia Piccinini, *Not quite animal (Transgenic skull for The young family)*, 2008, bronze, 19.5 x 28 x 14.5 cm, plinth dimensions 100 x 40 x 40 cm, RO9.

Patricia Piccinini, *Nest*, 2006, enamel paint on fibreglass, leather, plastic, metal, rubber, mirror, transparent synthetic polymer resin, glass, 104.2 x 197 x 186.4 cm (variable), NGV.

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From chapter five

Fred Williams, *Salt pile, Dampier*, 1979, gouache, 57.2 x 75.9 cm, NGV.

Joseph Lycett, *Salt pan plain, Van Diemen’s Land*, 1824, etching and aquatint print in illustrated book (*Views in Australia*, 1824), image 17.2 x 27.3 cm, NGA.

Russell Drysdale, *Golden gully*, 1949, oil and ink on canvas mounted on composition board, 66 x 101.4 cm, NGA.

Russell Drysdale, *The rabbiters*, 1947, oil on canvas, 76.6 x 102.5 cm, NGV.

Russell Drysdale, *Walls of China*, 1945, oil on hardboard, 76.2 x 101.6 cm, AGNSW.

Salvador Dali, *Remorse or Sphinx embedded in the sand*, 1931, oil on canvas, 19.1 x 26.7 cm, Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State Univ, East Lansing, MI.
Salvador Dali, *The great masturbator*, 1929, oil on canvas, 110 x 150 cm, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.

Salvador Dali, *Crucifixion (‘Hypercubic body’)*, 1954, oil on canvas, 194.5 x 124 cm, MoMA.

Russell Drysdale, *Tree form*, 1945, oil on canvas on composition board, 61.7 x 76.7 cm, NGV.

Russell Drysdale, *The cricketers*, 1948, oil on hardboard, 76.2 x 101.6 cm.

Russell Drysdale, *Home town*, 1943, oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm, The Holmes à Court Collection.

Salvador Dali, *Memory of the woman-child (also known as L’homme fleur)*, 1932, oil on canvas with collage, 99 x 119.5 cm, Salvador Dali Museum, Florida.

Ivor Francis, *Growth*, 1941, oil on canvas, 49.6 x 38.8 cm, NGA.

Douglas Roberts, *The dead animal*, 1944, oil on hessian on board, 61.5 x 46.5 cm, NGA.

Giorgio de Chirico, *The uncertainty of the poet*, 1913, oil on canvas, 106 x 94 cm, Tate Modern, London.

Trevor Nickolls, *The adventures of Wanda Wandjina*, 2001, oil on canvas, 122 x 211 cm.

Russell Drysdale’s *Siesta*, 1952, oil on canvas, 102.5 x 127.5 cm, NGA.


Hannah Höch, *Monument to vanity II*, 1926, photomontage, 25.8 x 16.7 cm, Collection Eva-Maria and Heinrich Rössner, Germany.

Sally Smart, *Bedbugs (femmage)*, 2001, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage elements, 153 x 198 cm.

Hannah Höch, *Der meister (The master)*, 1925, photomontage, 15.5 x 11.5 cm, Galerie Berinson, Berlin.


Sally Smart, *Delicate cutting (with paper bladder)*, 1993-4, oil, acrylic, paper and pins on canvas, 214 x 214 cm.

Sally Smart, *Stuttering*, 1993, oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 214 x 275 cm, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Sidney Nolan, *Full back, St Kilda*, 1946, oil on board, 121.9 x 91.4 cm, Waddington Galleries, London.

Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 190 cm, Musée d’Orsay, Paris.

Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538, oil on canvas, 119 x 165 cm, Uffizi.


Alessandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, 1482, tempera on linen canvas, 172.5 x 278.5 cm, Uffizi.


Max Ernst, *Emperor Ubu*, 1923, oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

Sally Smart, *Imaginary anatomy (itchy; itchy)*, 1995, monotype with collage, screenprint, photocopy and hand-painting, 152 x 113 cm.

Sally Smart, *Anatomy lesson*, 1995, cotton, polymer paint, watercolour, gousche, ink, charcoal, wooden dowel on paper and linen, 244 x 335 cm, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Sally Smart, *A Ms. by nine representations to be changed (Ms. fit, Ms. stress, Ms. place, Ms. lay, Ms. match, Ms. inform, Ms. join, Ms. colour, and Ms. print)*, 1992, acrylic, pastel, charcoal, tape on paper.

Sally Smart, *Pink medium (perfume)*, 1993, oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 214 x 275 cm, Deakin University Art Collection, Geelong, Victoria.

Sally Smart, *Red medium (scent)*, 1993, oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 214 x 275 cm.
Sally Smart, *Die Dada puppens*, 1999, synthetic polymer paint on felt, cardboard and wood with collage elements.

Sally Smart, *Cross cutting*, 1993-4, oil and acrylic on canvas, 214 x 214 cm.

Sally Smart, *Morphology (Daphne)*, 2004, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage elements, 213.5 x 183 cm.

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, 1622-25, Carrara marble, 243 cm, Galleria Borghese.

Sally Smart, *Family tree house (shadow and symptoms)*, 1999-2003, synthetic polymer paint on felt and canvas with collage elements, approx. 1000 x 1200 cm, NGA.


Sally Smart, *Painting in the dark (interiority)*, 2005, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage, 66 x 72 in.

Sally Smart, *Unique interior (wallpaper)*, 1997, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage, 274 x 214 cm.


Sally Smart, *Daughter architect (round)*, 2002, synthetic polymer paint on felt, 178 x 178 cm.


Sally Smart, *Head space a schema*, 2001-2, synthetic polymer paint on felt with collage elements.

Louise Bourgeois, *Articulated lair*, 1986, painted steel, rubber and metal, 281.7 x 655.7 x 555.6 cm, MoMA.

Sally Smart, *Ghost gum*, 2004, synthetic polymer paint on canvas with collage, 313 x 233 cm.

Sally Smart, *The exquisite pirate (Oceanian navigator Coral Sea)*, 2008, synthetic polymer paint, ink and foil on canvas with collage elements, 188 x 134 cm.

Sally Smart, *Femmage (Insectology)#3*, 2003, synthetic polymer paint on felt and canvas with collage, 167.5 x 110 cm.

Sally Smart, *A.W. of K. (Yurei)*, 2004, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, fabric with collage elements, 167.5 x 110 cm.

Sally Smart, *Femmage frieze*, 1999, synthetic polymer paint on felt, fabric with collage, 220 x 375 cm.

Sally Smart, *Home*, 1989, oil and enamel on canvas, 167.2 x 122 cm.


Lawrence Daws, *Mining town blacks*, 1955, oil on hardboard, 86.5 x 134.5 cm, AGSA.


Lawrence Daws, *Running figures*, 1975, oil on canvas, 183 x 244 cm.

Lawrence Daws, *The beach*, 1999, oil on canvas, 102 x 122 cm.

Lawrence Daws, *The beach*, 1999, oil on canvas, 76 x 92 cm.

Lawrence Daws, *Figures on eerie shore II*, 1972, oil on hardboard, 90 x 105 cm.


Joseph Lycett, *Cape Pillar, near the entrance of the River Derwent. Van Diemen's Land*, 1824, hand-coloured etching, aquatint print in illustrated book (*Views in Australia*, 1824), image 17.4 x 27.1 cm, NGA.

Caspar David Friedrich, *Monk by the sea*, 1809, oil on canvas, 110 x 172 cm, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin.
Torsten Paul, *Betrachtung Deutschlands* (*Viewing Germany*), 1984, oil on canvas, 49 x 59 cm.

Odilon Redon, *Eye-balloon*, 1878, charcoal and chalk on paper, 42.2 x 33.3 cm, MoMA.


René Magritte, *The false mirror*, 1928, oil on canvas, 54 x 80.9 cm, MoMA.

Dora Maar, *The eyes*, c.1932-5, gelatin silver print from celluloid negative, 29.5 x 23.5cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

Lawrence Daws, *Mandala III*, 1962, oil on canvas, 136.8 x 137.1 cm, NGV.

Lawrence Daws, *Fettlers*, 1957, oil on hardboard, 90.2 x 137.5 cm, NGV.

Lawrence Daws, *The unassimilated*, 1957, oil on canvas, 61 x 81 cm, AGWA.

Paul Klee, *Battle scene from the comic fantastic opera 'The Seafarer'*; 1923, gouache, oil, pencil, watercolour, 34.5 x 50 cm, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel.

Lawrence Daws, *Owl Creek III*, 1980, oil on hardboard, 137 x 160 cm, QAG.

Lawrence Daws, *Eerie mountain I*, c.1990, mixed media on paper, 102 x 87 cm.

Lawrence Daws, *Somnambulists*, 1996, oil on canvas, 183 x 183 cm.

Giorgio de Chirico, *The duo*, 1914-15, oil on canvas, 81.9 x 59 cm, MoMA.

Victor Braunier, *Heron of Alexandria*, 1939, oil on canvas, 55x 46 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris.


Berthe Morisot's *View of Paris from the Trocadero*, 1871-72, oil on canvas, 45.9 x 81.4 cm, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara.

Piero della Francesca, *Flagellation of Christ*, c.1454, oil, tempera on panel, 58.4 x 81.5cm, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino.

Lawrence Daws, *The Italian girl IV*, 1990, oil on hardboard, 160 x 137 cm, Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane.

Lawrence Daws, *Nostalgia II*, 1996, oil on canvas, 137 x 122 cm.

René Magritte, *The son of man*, 1964, oil on canvas, 116 x 89 cm.

René Magritte, *The mysteries of the horizon*, 1955, oil on canvas, 50 x 65 cm.

Edward Hopper, *Nighthawks*, 1942, oil on canvas, 84.1 x 152.4 cm, The Art Institute of Chicago.

Giorgio de Chirico, *Mystery and melancholy of a street*, 1914, oil on canvas, 88 x 72 cm.

Lawrence Daws, *The black lagoon*, 1990, oil on canvas, 157 x 137 cm, Brent A. Ogilvie collection.

Piero della Francesca, *Diptych of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino*, c.1467-72, tempera on two wood panels, 47 x 35 cm each, Uffizi, Florence.

John Olsen, *Life drawn towards the void*, 1975, etching, sugar-lift aquatint, 60.4 x 45.1cm platemark, AGNSW.

William Robinson, *Creation night*, *Beachmont*, 1988, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 193cm.


Salvador Dali, *Remorse or Sphinx embedded in the sand*, 1931, oil on canvas, 19.1 x 26.7 cm, Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State University.

Salvador Dali, *Slave market with apparition of the invisible bust of Voltaire*, 1940, oil on canvas, 46.6 x 55.2 cm, Salvador Dali Museum, Florida.

Lawrence Daws, *The bathroom II*, 1978, aquatint and drypoint on paper, 50 x 50 cm, Joe Daws collection.

John Brack, *The bathroom*, 1957, oil on canvas, 129.4 x 81.2 cm, NGA.

Piero della Francesca, *The Nativity*, 1470-5, oil on poplar, 124.4 x 122.6 cm, National Gallery, London.
Lawrence Daws, *Perilous shore*, 1999, oil on canvas, 137 x 157 cm.
René Magritte, *Memory of a journey*, 1926, oil on canvas, 75 x 65 cm, Centre Pompidou, Paris.
René Magritte, *The son of man*, 1964, oil on canvas, 116 x 89 cm.
Giorgio de Chirico, *The enigma of the arrival and the afternoon*, 1911-12, oil on canvas, 70 x 86.5 cm.
Max Ernst, *Attirement of the bride*, 1940, oil on canvas, 129.6 x 96.3 cm. Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.
René Magritte, *The rape*, 1934, oil on canvas, 73.2 x 54.3 cm, Menil Collection, Houston.
René Magritte, *The sage’s carnival*, 1947, oil on canvas, 65 x 50 cm.
Paul Delvaux’s *L’écho*, 1943, oil on canvas, 105 x 128 cm, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya.
Piero della Francesca, *The baptism of Christ*, c.1450s, tempera on panel, 167 x 116 cm, National Gallery, London.
René Magritte, *La reproduction interdite*, *(The Forbidden Reproduction)*, 1937, oil on canvas, 81.3 cm x 65 cm, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.
Lawrence Daws, *Sunday train*, 2001, oil on canvas, 122 x 102 cm.
Edward Hopper, *Automat*, 1927, oil on canvas, 71.4 x 91.4 cm, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines.
Edward Hopper, *Office at night*, 1940, oil on canvas, 56.37 x 63.82 cm, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.
Edward Hopper, *Railroad train*, 1908, oil on canvas, 61.6 x 73.7 cm, Addison Gallery of American Art, Massachusetts.
Edward Hopper, *Freight car at Truro*, 1931, watercolour over graphite on paper, 34.9 x 50.2 cm, Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York.
Giorgio de Chirico, *The anguish of departure*, 1913-14, oil on canvas, 106 x 90.17 x 8.89 cm. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY.
Giorgio de Chirico, *Mystery and melancholy of a street*, 1914, oil on canvas, 88 x 72 cm.
Lawrence Daws, *Cain and the Promised Land II*, 1983, mixed media, collage and oil on canvas, diptych 170 x 296.5 cm, QAG.
Lawrence Daws, *The people’s square, Shanghai*, 2002, oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm, Shanghai Art Gallery, Shanghai.

From chapter six

Pat Brassington, *Untitled n*, 2007, pigment print, 32.5 x 45.5 cm.
Pat Brassington, *Untitled k*, 2007, pigment print, 32.5 x 45.5 cm.
Pat Brassington, *Untitled l*, 2007, pigment print, 32.5 x 45.5 cm.
Pat Brassington, *Drummer*, 2005, pigment print, 86 x 66 cm.
Pat Brassington, *Soft wear*, 2006, pigment print, 64 x 86 cm.
Pat Brassington, *Voicing*, 2001, pigment print, 75 x 56 cm.

John Brack, *The Boucher nude*, 1957, oil on canvas, 81 x 146 cm.

John Brack, *Mannequins (two figures)*, 1953, conté crayon, sheet 54.8 x 69.4 cm, NGA.

Pat Brassington, *Everybody loves you baby*, 2007, pigment print, 86 x 63 cm, Arc One Gallery, Sydney.


Pat Brassington, *In my father’s house*, 1992, 3 silver gelatin prints, 3 photocopies, 3 wooden doors, fluorescent light fittings, 230x800 cm overall.

Pat Brassington, *Charade*, 2003, pigment print, 80 x 57 cm.


Pat Brassington, *In marble halls no. 1*, 2003, pigment print, 78 x 120 cm.

Pat Brassington, *In marble halls #5*, 2003, pigment print, 90 x 140 cm image, AGNSW.

Bill Henson, *Untitled #40, 42, 41, 1983-84*, type C photograph, 100 x 80 cm, triptych.

Bill Henson, *Untitled 55, 1983-84*, type C photograph, 100 x 80 cm.

Bill Henson, *Untitled #21, 2008-09*, archival inkjet pigment print, 127 x 180 cm.

Théodore Géricault, *Alfred of Dedreux as a child*, c.1814, oil on canvas, MoMA.

Bill Henson, *Untitled 60, 62, 61, 1983-84*, type C photograph, 100 x 80 cm, triptych, RO9.

Bill Henson, *Untitled #10, 2008-09*, archival inkjet pigment print, 127 x 180 cm.

Bill Henson, *Untitled #17, 2008-09*, archival inkjet pigment print, 127 x 180 cm.

Bill Henson, *Untitled 1976-2005, 1976-2005*, type C photograph, 45.7 x 37 cm, AGNSW.

Bea Maddock, *Funeral V*, 1971, intaglio photo-etching and aquatint, printed in black ink from three plates, plate-mark 47.6 x 37.3 cm, NGA.

Robert Boynes, *City limit II*, 2011, acrylic on canvas, 80 x 120 cm, Beaver Galleries, Canberra.

Bill Henson, *Untitled Sequence 1979, 1979*, two photographs from the series *Untitled Sequence 1979*, gelatin silver photographs, sizes variable, AGNSW.


Bill Henson, *Untitled xxx, 1976-, 45 x 55 cm, 72.5 x 63 cm frame*, AGNSW.

Bill Henson, *Untitled 20, 2000-03*, type C photograph, 127 x 180 cm.

Bill Henson, *Untitled #31, 2009-10*, archival inkjet pigment print, 127 x 180 cm.


Bill Henson, *Untitled #77, 2000-03*, type C photograph, 127x180 cm.

Bill Henson, *Untitled #89, 1985-86*, type C photograph, 128 x 100 cm.

Edward Hopper, *House by the railroad*, 1925, oil on canvas, 61 x 73.7 cm, MOMA.

Jeffrey Smart, *Kenwick siding*, 1945, oil on jute canvas, 62 x 72.1 cm stretcher, AGNSW.

Bill Henson, *Untitled 29, 1985/86*, archival inkjet pigment print, 128 x 100 cm, RO9.