The Weird Impossibility of Story

Pál Hegyi

HJEAS

Introduction

The term "weird" first appeared in the title of a popular magazine founded in 1923 and became redeployed eighty years later with the sweeping success of China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* (2003). Originally associated with Howard Phillips Lovecraft's undermining of the distinction between high and low culture both in his fiction and in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, it once again became a tool for the eradication of such a dichotomy. In their theoretical discussion of *The New Weird* (2008), Ann and Jeff VanderMeer identify the essential attributes both the new literary phenomenon and its predecessor share as a "supernatural or fantastical element of unease" (ix), "blurred" genre boundaries (x), and, also, an "unsettling grotesquery" that brings about a "contemporary take on the kind of visionary horror best exemplified by the work of Lovecraft" (ix).

Lovecraft and Miéville may be seen as the ends of a temporal scale arching over a century that may be characterized by a distinct blurring and blending of literary conventions, the crossing and breaking down of genre boundaries, the subverting of clichés, and the confrontation of reader expectations. This blending and blurring may be seen in, for example, Lovecraft's *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928):

> The very sun of heaven seemed distorted when viewed through the polarising miasma welling out from this sea-soaked perversion, and twisted menace and suspense lurked leeringly in those crazily elusive angles of carven rock where a second glance shewed concavity after the first shewed convexity. (376)

This excerpt from China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* capturing the uncanny vista of time frozen in atemporality, is an eloquent reply to Lovecraft:

> Five enormous brick mouths gaped to swallow each of the city's trainlines. The tracks unrolled on the arches like huge tongues. Shops and torture chambers and workshops and offices and empty spaces all stuffed the fat belly of the building, which seemed, from a certain angle, in a certain light, to be bracing itself, taking its weight on the Spike, preparing to leap into the enormous sky it so casually invaded. (79)

Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies 25.1. 2019.

The stylistic effect in both citations is created by an artistic effort to avoid presenting figments of imagination in a crisp, balanced, proportionate fashion. Hyperbolic in nature, the aesthetic power that the rhythmic pulsation of sounds and sensations has is due to a covert design to lure the attentive mind into envisioning the unimaginable. Bordering on the dividing line between what it is possible to say and what is not is a property in both weird and new weird tales that not only descriptions but also narrative strategies in general share.

The period that paved the way to the emergence of the weird genre was the era when Sigmund Freud gave uncanny a substantial status in his newly coined theoretical term *das Unheimliche*. In his 1919 essay, Freud, relying on F. W. J. Schelling's and Ernst Jentsch's work, sets out to delineate the nature of the uncanny by assembling what "evokes in us a sense of the uncanny" (124). In the first seminal work on the uncanny, what we receive is an implicit taxonomy of allegorizations or phenomena of a duality similarly present in the psyche, language, and signification. This latent theoretical typology, when undisclosed, may offer new perspectives in interpreting literary pieces that draw heavily on tropes of the uncanny in American literature particularly. The capacity for such deployment of the term is indicated by the fact that one of the few literary instances Freud includes in his essay as illustrative of uncanny signifying processes is Mark Twain's *A Tramp Abroad* (144).

Surveying the formative years of the late nineteenth, early twentieth century in American literature, one arrives at the conclusion that the *oeuvres* of authors now categorized as classics of high literature show subversive traits. A wide range of now canonized authors published the most unexpected tales of imagination that would be labeled today as ghost stories, science fiction, or horror narratives. Algernon Blackwood, Henry James, Washington Irving, Clark Ashton Smith, Ambrose Bierce, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herman Melville, and Mark Twain, among others, wrote pieces anthologized in compilations of weird tales. Puritan cultural heritage with its strong propensity toward dissent and nonconformity offered a context with multiple accesses to genres in the popular register. Poe's balloon hoax of 1844 as a prefiguration of Orson Welles's 1938 radio broadcast *The War of the Worlds* (based on the novel by H. G. Wells) provides a conspicuous example of how high and low registers merged in a literary epoch where a uniquely and particularly American cultural identity was still under construction. Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) is one of the numerous illustrations of an innovative

admixture of generic attributes creating a narrative that verges on, in this particular case, both the burlesque and speculative fiction.

A close reading of Freud's seminal essay "The Uncanny" (1919) reveals the following allegorizations of memes of the uncanny: i) the *Doppelgänger* (141), ii) the haunted house (125), iii) the automaton (135), iv) chance events (144), v) madness (150), and vi) humor (144). The comparison and analyses of these memes detectable both in classic literature and popular culture suggests yet another way to account for the multifarious accessibility of genre formations.

i) The *Doppelgänger*

Edgar Allan Poe's "William Wilson" (1832) offers a textbook example of the inexhaustible aesthetic potential that lies within the conflict of the split self. Yet, the doubling is first introduced in a prefiguration of the William Wilson *Doppelgänger* in the externalized character of the Reverend Dr. Bransby. An authoritative figure of a principal, John Barnsby's persona displays traits of a "double nature," having a countenance at times "demurely benign" and yet, on other occasions, students observe a "sour visage" (335). The building of the school itself, which is reminiscent of the infinite regresses and *mise-en-abym*ic dimensions of *a pars pro toto* space of soul with "no end to its windings," is divided into "two stories" and attended by "two ushers" (336). These doubles are interiorized and regressed into the mirror images hidden behind the names of two William Wilsons, twins confounded by "detestable coincidence" (340), and separated merely by the third element, a connecting surface in oscillation, the spectral voice of the other, "a very low whisper" (340). In consequence, a gradual breakdown of the narrative plane occurs within the triadic structure of the 1) unnamed narrator as a destructive force, 2) William Wilson as compunction personified in a separate identity, Freud's eternal soul, and 3) the voice, which regains its essence only in unifying death. Irrational fear, a gothic atmosphere of impending doom, a sense of inescapable imprisonment motivates the drama of the narrative. The innovation in poetics is created by the substitution of the conventional conflict between protagonist and antagonist with a compulsive insistence for the *Doppelgänger* to return to his double. This is embodied in the endless language games hidden in the rhyming pair of the mirroring names, the initial "double yous," the hidden capacity for language games: "will I am, will's on," "Will, I am Will's son." At the climax it is a destructive act of aggression and transgression, the irreducible collapse of the third element that inverts the polarity of host and parasite, thus replacing the ghost-like echo of the other with the voice of the narrator. The narrative of the homely, *heimlich* name, the

originary secret of the story in the end is impossible to be told, rather it is the *unheimlich* horror of the double, the collapse of the opposition between the ego and the other that is presented as a sublime singularity.

A memetic variation of a similar conformation around an externalized double gradually shifting into an internal split is also at work in Lovecraft's short story "The Dunwich Horror" (1929), where a series of generational metalepses, a regression of genealogical *mise-en-abyme*s, signal the inadmissibility of an originary father. Wilbur Whateley's figure is portent with the same duality as the William Wilson character. The double nature of names opens a gateway toward the singularity of an unknown, invisible, inassimilable trauma. In "Dunwich Horror," the transparency of the albino mother in Lavina—a counterpart for her "dark, goatish-looking infant" (636)—creates the oscillating surface as a territory for the incessant movements between the *Doppelgänger* and the inaccessible unity of the traumatic locus. The farmhouse in the story incorporates boundless, immeasurable expanses indexing the soul as a system containing a bigger *pars pro toto* structure than itself. A compulsive return to a genealogical origin is paralleled with a proliferation of dualities. Whereas the plot line follows a pattern of continuous progression towards the possibility of alluding to the name of the unnamable, originary singularity in the father, Yog-Sothoth, "double yous" and other rhyming alliterations contaminate the text. "Wilbur Whateley" (636), "witch Whateley" (640), the repeated moniker "Wizard Whateley's" (651, 652, 661, 667), the ever-present "whippoorwills" (a word repeated twenty times throughout thirty-three pages), "Arkham Advertiser" (641), "Fred Farr" (659) are textual doublings in alliterations that reach their dramatic peak with their collapse. At the climax of the narrative, the implosion of these dualities is indicative of the absence of the singularity, which motivated the plot all along. The dramatization of the inassimilable trauma is played out at a phonological level. The "W" splits into double "V"-s, then, losing its essence, becomes unvoiced transforming into two "F"-s and ultimately, into a single consonant, the first letter in "Father" as the initial of the final referent: "*ff—ff—ff*—FATHER! Father! YOG-SOTHOTH! . . . " (666). The irrevocable deconstruction of the narrative swirls around the dead center of the paradoxical singularity in the name of the father. It is a name which presents itself as a violent and contaminating textual intrusion by a narrative never to be told.

In the same vein, Poe's "William Wilson" is the dramatization of the inability and impossibility of uttering the name of the narrator. "Let me call myself, for the present, William Wilson. The fair page now lying before me need not be sullied with my real appellation. This has been already too much an object for the scorn, for the horror, for the detestation of my race" (330).

The story that is not to be told unfolds in the singularity of the name behind the mask(s) of William Wilson. The narrative is nothing but an expression of the very effort to create a discursive condition when direct speech—addressing the self in the second person singular—becomes a possibility, even if at the expense of putting an end to an imploding plot. "In me didst thou exist—and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly though hast murdered thyself" (354).

ii) The haunted house

Mirroring effects arising from the uncanniness of a haunted place are found in *The City & The City* (2009) by China Miéville. Beszél and Ul Qoma are situated in the same geographical location separated by an invisible border. In this synchronicity, a secondary, mirroring world exists as a Foucauldian heterotopia ("Of Other Spaces" 46-49), a place of utter otherness that subverts a hierarchical, pre-existing source of origin. The unity of the locus (1) is split into two reflective surfaces (2), which, in their turn, inevitably lead to the creating of the connecting surface (3) in this juxtaposition. In his *mise-en-abym*ic book-within-the-book, *Between the City and the City*, doctor Bowden states that between the cities of Beszél and Ul Qoma a third one resides. The citizens of Orciny are invisible to residents of both the other cities. The way they dress and move makes it possible for these denizens to oscillate between the *The City & The City*. Miéville's novel itself becomes a *mise-en-abyme*, for it is structured in a tripartite fashion (with parts titled 1] Beszél, 2] Ul Qoma, and 3] Breach) mirroring the overlapping threefold construct of the cities. This structure is evocative of the myth of Narcissus and Echo, a mythotheme of the interminable regress of the originary self in infinity mirrors.

The City & The City as an acclaimed achievement in new weird fiction suggests parallels for its deployment of uncanny, *mise-en-abym*ic mirroring places not only in stories published in the early editions of *Weird Tales*, but also in Shirley Jackson's the "Visit," first published in 1950 under the title "The Lovely House." This intricate text is constructed around memetic tropes already intertwined in the imaginative fabrication of Lovecraft's work.

Just as the initial word of the short story is the noun phrase "the house," the first utterance is the protagonist's referring to it as "a lovely house" (249). From a focalized point of view, the reader is informed that Margaret "felt that she too had come *home*" (249, emphasis added). The story shifts from this initial homely feeling to the utter unhomeliness at its closure; from the temporality of a narrative to the timelessness of a frozen image. With this transition, the narrative confronts a timeless unity with the temporal movement necessary to give meaning to the pieces of a fragmented entirety.

When the protagonist enters the space made up of disparate, isolated constituents, it is the paradox of temporality she has to face.

> She could see the fine threads of the weave, and the light colors, but *she could not have told the picture unless she went far away*, perhaps as far away as the staircase, and looked at it from there; perhaps, she thought, from halfway up the stairway this great hall, and perhaps the whole house, is visible, as a complete body of story together, all joined and in sequence. Or perhaps I shall be allowed to move slowly from one thing to another, observing each, or would that take all the time of my visit? (249, emphasis added)

In the first section the eye moves across a pattern of tiles in the hall "too large to be seen from the floor" at first, the genealogical *mise-en-abyme* of the gold room: "mama," "grandmamas," "great-grandmamas," "great-great grandmamas" (251). Then, secondly, it focuses on the irrationality of the silver room, which "shows the house in moonlight" (251). The inevitable remove from the immediate proximity of particularities in order to gain perspective opens up the third chamber of parallel, infinity mirrors, which project ever-diminishing reflections within a Chinese box: "another within that, and another within that one" (251). The oscillating, mirroring surface of the third room separates the cognizant rationality of the "sunlight" in the gold room from the irrational whiteness of the silver one (251). Margaret finds this third room frightening because "it was so difficult to tell . . . what was in it and what was not" (252). There is a compulsive effort palpable in the story to incorporate an external third element: "That evening Carla and Margaret played and sang duets, although Carla said that their voices together were too thin to be appealing without a deeper voice accompanying, and that when her brother came they should have some splendid trios" (254).

Fragmentation and multiplication, integral parts as representations of the whole, and a threatening lack of essence characterizes architectural descriptions and scenes in the narrative. The plot itself revolves around the absence of the captain/brother *Doppelgänger*, the inassimilable lacuna to which circular and regressive returns always fail. The narrative is the story of its own ceaseless effort to define itself as a romance, as a tale of unbroken unity, a pursuit which was doomed to fail from the onset. Two mirroring screens facing each other not only end up in a) endless mirroring and b) coincidences, but also in c) inversions and d) disappearances. Here are few of the countless examples: a) the miniature mosaic replica made of the material of the house itself, within which Mrs. Montague's needlework depicting the building is in progress (255); b) by "coincidence" (263) both the guest and the great-aunt

are called Margaret; c) while glimpsing at her miniature representation in the tiles, Margaret asks, "What is *this*?" and then repeats, "*What* is this?" (255, emphasis in original); d) when the captain/brother *Doppelgänger* disappears from the story, so does the single male first name that connected the doubles in their undecidability: "*and Paul?; Who was Paul?*" (273). The "lovely house" serves as an index for the self, a *mis-en-scéne* where the drama of performing one's identity occurs. Noticeable cracks on the house cannot be repaired (270), aging components cannot be replaced. In the vortex of the *mise-en-abyme* no action and movement in time are possible: "We shall be models of stillness," says Carla laughing (273). Nothing can be changed or replaced in any of the mirror images: "All we can do is add to it" (273). In the closing scene, before the mother figure goes back to her embroidery, she turns to the now indistinguishable Margaret and Clara: "'I have only to put the figures into the foreground,' Mrs. Montague said, hesitating on her way to the drawing room. 'I shall have you exactly if you sit on the lawn near the river'" (273). By placing an extra set of figurines in the foreground for a new, multiplied layer within the *mise-en-abyme*, the horror of compulsive repetition is infinitely prolonged.

iii) The automaton

According to Freud, who quotes Jentsch to support his argument, the automaton operates as the expression of the

> doubt as to whether an apparently animate object really is alive and, conversely, whether a lifeless object might not perhaps be animate . . . . One of the surest devices for producing slightly uncanny effects through storytelling is to leave the reader wondering whether a particular figure is a real person or an automaton, and to do so in such a way that his attention is not focused directly on the uncertainty, lest he should be prompted to examine and settle the matter at once, for in this way, as we have said, the special emotional effect can easily be dissipated. (Jentsch qtd. in Freud 135)

Ambrose Bierce's "The Death of Halpin Frayser," written in 1891, centers on a story not to be told, the unspeakable trauma of an incestuous, murderous relationship between mother and son. The mother's name propels the narrative: "One dark night in midsummer a man waking from a dreamless sleep in a forest lifted his head from the earth, and staring a few moments into the blackness, said: 'Catherine Larue.' He said nothing more; no reason was known to him why he should have said so much" (1). The new identity of the mother—called "Katy" by the loving son (5)—presents a mystery, yet solving

the riddle becomes impossible at the precise moment the originary, singular identity of Halpin Frayser could be returned to. This identity that served as the protagonist for the tripartite dream sequence of the short story (sections 1, 2, and 3) can only be implied and hinted at in section 4, which shrouds the aftermath of the dissemination of Halpin Frayser's self into a triad of selves in the disguise of a detective story. Here ratiocination serves as camouflage, which cloaks the traumatic singularity. The identity of Katy Frayser is masked under the pseudonym Catherine Larue, the real family name Branscom used, and also one which the detective accidently mistook for Pardee. The Larue-Pardee-Branscom-Frayser chain of signification is both an allusion to and a diversion from the only name not possible to be uttered: Halpin Frayser.

The two Larues, Catherine and Halpin, as *Doppelgängers*, share the pre-existing singularity of their inaccessible name in oblivion. The dream sequence sets out with a dreamless dream, in which "staring a few moments into the blackness" (1), Halpin spoke "aloud a name that he had not in memory" (2). The trauma of matricide—later inverted into filicide—is just as inassimilable: "he felt as one who has murdered in the dark, not knowing whom nor why" (3). The mechanical, self-activating plurality of "unintentional returns" (Freud 144) to a traumatic singularity is strengthened by a distinction between the essence of silence and inactivity (Bierce 3, 8, 14, 15) and the multitude of sounds and voices: "an infinite multitude of unfamiliar sounds" (3), "a murmur of swarming voices" (8). A haunting genealogical *mise-en-abyme* in the poetic talent passed on from the maternal great-grandfather, Myron Bayne, through Katy Frayser to Halpin Frayser also accentuates the effect of infinity in split selves. All three characters are presented as mirroring surfaces, simulacra reflecting poetic talent in one another as essence; yet it is an essence located outside these selves. However, the most compelling aspect in the interpretation of the automaton is how it further multiplies the duality into a triad of selves:

> [N]ot a soul without a body, but . . . a body without a soul! . . . For an instant he seemed to see this unnatural contest between a *dead intelligence* and a *breathing mechanism* only as a *spectator*—such fancies are in dreams; then here gained his *identity* almost as if by a leap forward into his body, and the straining *automaton* had a directing will as alert and fierce as that of its hideous antagonist. (7-8, emphasis added)

The split inherent in the dualities of "a body without a soul," "a breathing mechanism," and those of its mirroring phrases in "a soul without a body," "dead intelligence" is a "leap forward" to the outer, third self, that of the

"spectator." The fissure here is a gateway to reading and interpretation, the act of reception itself. Yet, this explosion is at the same time also an implosion. The conflicting drama of a compulsive return to the trauma is played out to the effect of reaching its climax by ejecting the singularity of identity and rendering it a "spectator" of its own dissemination. At this point "Halpin Frayser dreamed that he was dead" (8). The infinite, spiraling cycle of compulsions to repeat is corroborated by loops: "the combat's result is the combat's cause" (8). Halpin Frayser's dreamed death signals the collapse of the narrative. Paradoxically, this breakdown is also a *denouement* reaching a mechanical sense of the sublime not unparalleled by Lovecraft's automata and "daemons of unplumbed space" (*Supernatural* 15). "The Death of Halpin Frayser" concludes with the plurality of disseminating voices ever distancing themselves from and vanishing in the infinite singularity of sublime silence. "As it had grown out of *silence*, so now it died away; from a *culminating* shout which had seemed almost in their ears, it drew itself away into the distance, until its failing notes, joyless and *mechanical* to the last, sank to silence at a *measureless remove*" (15, emphasis added). This sense of sublime horror detected in Bierce's narrative features a particularly Lovecraftian quality and a recurring theme in nineteenth-century American literature.[1]

What makes Henry James's "Sir Edmund Orme" (1891) yet another labyrinthine example for the triads inherent in the automaton is the delicate dance around numerous permutations of threes within the five-element set of 1) the narrator, 2) Sir Edmund Orme, 3) Mrs. Marden, 4) Charlotte Marden, and 5) Captain Marden. Sir Edmund Orme is transformed into a pale, vague, strange, cold, and silent automaton at the instant his love chooses Captain Marden over him, yet the first time the reader meets him is after his rival's death. Only when three characters out of the possible five appear on stage does this drama of retribution move towards a new phase. Previous to the narrator's encounter with the Mardens, the triad consisted of the singularity of the spectral automaton (as compulsive return to the trauma of his death), the mother and her *Doppelgänger*, Charlotte Marden (as the innocent, would-be substitute sacrifice). The first outsider to whom the "perfect presence" (865, 866) of Sir Edmund Orme appears is the narrator, who becomes an accomplice to the mother. Mrs. Marden willingly gives advantage to the young gentleman over other suitors in exchange for sharing a most foreboding secret with an outsider: "You have intervened, you're *in* it" (866, emphasis in original). The two men become doubles when the soundless apparition of the ghost is associated with the narrator's silence: "I held my tongue for three months" (875). Now it is the ghost's turn to disappear from the triad of the Mardens and the Narrator, who acknowledges with relief that "Sir Edmund

Orme gave us a holiday" (875). The disappearance and ensuing absence of his *Doppelgänger* in Orme instigates the narrator's detachment from Charlotte: "I felt less connected, less designated with Charlotte" (875). However, when the mother falls ill, happiness is made possible for Charlotte and the narrator by the deadly duality of the ghost of Sir Edmund Orme and the sinful Mrs. Marden. Through the impossibility of "not knowing which was which" (878), the romantic couple is turned into a pair of mirror images. This duality is complemented into a triad by the trauma of the reciprocal murders. "The transcendent essence" (873) as a mirroring third element makes them one just like the reciprocal murders of the Larues create their singleness. Charlotte is saved from becoming a substitute sacrifice by the ghastly and ghostly union between her mother and Sir Edmund Orme, who are reduced from "perfect presence" (865, 866) to an "unmentionable presence" for the subsequent generations: a story never to be told (874).

iv) Chance events

Return as a compulsion to indicate the absence of a presupposed unity also incorporates another allegorization, that of *Doppelgängers*. The rhyming pair of coincidences created in the act of perception is a propelling force of signification similar to the ones outlined in the discussion of doubles. Whenever uncanny coincidences occur in a narrative, it is the sublime of an ever-absent yet inamissible singularity that is being defined as the aesthetic stake in telling the story. Yet, there is a significant shift detectable between *Doppelgängers* and coincidences from subjectivation towards meaning creation. Unintended repetition can only be interpreted as repetition initially unmarked for intention, since the return is always-already between disparate, random elements, which are intentionalized into meaningful, coherent, rhyming pairs of the fateful and the inescapable. The paradox lies in the fact that the very act of assigning meaning to coupled occurrences already renders meaning pre-existent, in consequence, repetition can never be unintended. As Jean-François Lyotard insists: "In the case of the subject, and by consequence the other as subject (that is, as *alter ego*), we cannot *reduce* the real existence to an intentional correlate, since what I intentionalize when I see the other is precisely an absolute existence: here, being real and being intentional merge together" (58, emphasis added). Interpreting the presence of two elements as duplicated, coincidentally re-emerging phenomena of a singularity always conveys a turn (trope) from a sequence of events to diverse plots, from incongruous, haphazard sememes to possible meanings, from isolated movements to compulsive returns, or, rather, approximations, to a locus never to be reached.

The aporia between intentional and unintended meanings in chance events as a tension and impetus for uncanny narratives is central to William Fryer Harvey's short fiction "August Heat" (1910). The narration of "August Heat" is built exclusively on a rigorous economy of words and the efficient mastery of plot development that lacks any denouement. Every description is retrospectively governed by this narrative fissure, which, for lack of a proper resolution, dislocates the space of meaning production to utter uncertainty. The concluding line, "It is enough to send a man mad" (238), refers the reader back to the rhyming games of signifiers played out on the previous four pages by asserting the irrationality of the climax. Madness—which will be covered in the next section—thus constrains narrative tension within opposing and mutually exclusive limits. Perception becomes a constant hesitation between the unintended and the intentional. No matter what the foreboding last concluding lines suggest, none of the *Doppelgängers* go insane by the end of the story, here incoherence and absurdity are but a *caveat*. Yet, signification is thrust back to a ghost-like state, what Derrida called "hauntology" in *Specters of Marx*. This concept connects the always already absent present with an understanding of language that is dependent on a system of linguistic differences prior to its origin. Derrida contends that "the radical possibility of all spectrality should be sought in the direction that Husserl identifies, in such surprising but forceful way, as an intentional but *non-real* [*non-réelle*] component of the phenomenological lived experience . . . " (237).

The house of the monumental mason, a *Doppelgänger* for the narrator, is a haunted place: "I don't know about oasis but it certainly is hot, hot as hell" (235). This spectral quality is fused with irrationality, here the stifling heat is "enough to send a man mad" (238), but a fourth allegorization also merges with the occurrence of chance events. The two characters operate like puppets, as references without referents, embodiments of Lyotard's transcendent object (54). The protagonist rolls up his sketch and "without knowing why" places it in his pocket (Harvey 235). A "sudden impulse" makes him enter the mason's workshop (235). The mason puts down the "first name that came" into his head (236). Finally the artist/protagonist meets his demise by declaring, "To my surprise I agreed" (237). "It's a rum go" (237) indeed as the mason acknowledges it must be but an "unnatural, uncanny" and "strange coincidence" (236) that an artist should put down the execution scene of his future murderer the same morning when the yet innocent mason inscribes his would-be victim's name on a tombstone. The linear narration of the draughtsman who creates two dimensional drawings ushers the reader to his *Doppelgänger*, the mason carving letters in a three dimensional piece of stone. They are both *automata* operated by mere coincidence and the madness that

looms over the haunted house, characterized with phrases such as "curiously veined marble" (235), "headstones" (236), "the air seems charged with thunder," "shaky table," "the leg is cracked" (238). Anything could happen, possibly real meanings multiply around the lack of semantic abyss: "A cart may run you over, and there's always banana skins and orange peel, to say nothing of falling ladders" (237). Yet, there is one thing that the story circumspectly and painstakingly avoids telling. The collapse of coinciding doubles into a single pre-existing entity through the act of an unreal, inexplicable murder.

In Lovecraft's "The Shadow Out of Time" (1936), two different time dimensions provide a continuous flux of synchronicity for rhyming coincidences. "My conception of time, my ability to distinguish between consecutiveness and simultaneousness seemed subtly disordered" (954), confesses the protagonist. In parallel with Harvey's short story, Lovecraft's conception of chance events, madness as the irrationality of signification, and *automata* are ever present. Simultaneity and irrationality are accentuated in the blurred intersection of conscious and semi-conscious states: "I was awake and dreaming at the same time," haunted by "maddening dreams" (982). Just as in his predecessor's narrative, Lovecraft's piece amalgamates madness with the impending doom of turning animate beings into *automata*, "[a]lien captive minds inhabiting their bodies" (971). The crucial difference in the way the two authors utilize tropes of the uncanny is that Lovecraft, who is overtly preoccupied with creating an atmosphere of cosmic horror, embeds these allegorizations in *mise-en-abyme*s. The cone shaped bodies of the Yithians are the mortal coil of a race previously annihilated by a mass projection of minds (a myth leading back to the Elder Things), and it is also revealed that the Great Race of Yith will acquire new bodies after the extinction of humanity. The *mise-en-abym*ic structure underpinned by three possible allegorizations of the uncanny is also central to the conclusion of the story. Here, the "blasphemous reachings and seizures in the cosmos-wide vortex of time" aligns with the protagonist's realization that, in the "abyss" of the archive, the "eon browned" pages containing an unspeakable secret of the unplumbed cosmos are written in his own handwriting (998). The content of the book-within-the-book remains unknown and untold.

Coincidences are among the most significant narrative devices of Lovecraft's cosmic horror. "The Temple" (1920) is typical in this respect by its juxtaposition of two artefacts. "*The head of the radiant god in the sculptures on the rock temple is the same as that carven bit of ivory which the dead sailor brought from the sea and which poor Klenze carried back into the sea.* I was a little dazed by this coincidence" (99, emphasis added). The narrative function that this chance

event carries out seems purely technical at first glance, it purportedly thrusts plot development toward creating a mystery, which, in turn, generates a need for a resolution. However, no resolution, no disclosure of the enigma is offered in the story. After an accident renders the submarine immobile, Klenze, the Lieutenant of the U-boat, succumbs to insane paranoia and dies. Altberg, who previously ordered the remaining crew of the US warship to be executed, mesmerized by the sublime flickering light of the underwater altar willingly meets his own death. It is never explained whether the mysterious temple is surrounded by the ruined city of Atlantis, or R'lyeh, nor is the content of the sealed manuscript ever revealed in the story. The undecidabilities and chance events in the narrative lead any act of signification back to two opposing realities, which cancel each other out. The head of the radiant god is both an archeological find and a harbinger of death, just as the temple is the remnant of both Atlantis and R'lyeh. The mythic cycle is left incomplete for the sake of the same aesthetic effect that prevented Lovecraft from publishing the Necronomicon or the myth of Cthulhu as unified, coherent narratives. For it is in the utter hesitation and sustained uncertainty where an atmosphere of ultimate dread from the cosmic horror of the unknown becomes exposed.

v) Madness

When discussing madness, Freud inadvertently places the ego in relation to the other, turning them into *Doppelgängers*, thus localizing madness in the utter hesitation between the self and its mirroring other. An abysmal conformation of madness as utter uncertainty between interior and exterior is what Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* conceptualizes: "Madness has become man's possibility of abolishing both man and the world . . . because it is the ambiguity of chaos and apocalypse" (281). Repetition, reciprocal oscillation between a pre-existent, presupposed origin and irrational signifying processes are postulates in Foucault's work (286). Secondly, as Freud insists "an uncanny effect often arises when the boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred," which thought is paralleled with overlapping dimensions of reality and fantasy in animism and uncanny magical practices: a unity of symbol and symbolized (150). These primordial modes of signification subvert temporality in the sense that the "full function and significance" (Freud 151) in the irrationality of the monadic symbol is inherently atemporal. John A. Michon, delineating J. T. Fraser's levels of temporality, identifies mysticism and animism as root metaphors for atemporality (60). Fraser himself connects the notion of atemporality with the chaos of the underworld when asserting that

> [a]temporality is not to be mistaken for the philosophical idea of nothingness. It might better be associated with the pre-Socratic notion of Chaos, a state of affairs which was said to have preceded the emergence of the world. . . . Some of the early Greek cosmogonists identified Chaos with Tartaros, a sunless abyss and the lowest part of the underworld. (31)

The vertiginous atemporality of madness as a meme for the "full function and significance" of typological symbols, prefigurations as chance coincidences refers to one single but inaccessible meaning (Freud 151). Thus, timelessness in derangement creates another trope of the uncanny that connects Lovecraft's *oeuvre* with his highly canonized predecessors. The lines already cited from "The Dreams in the Witch House" (1932) with regard to the *mise-en-abym*ic structure of spaces in the Lovecraftian universe could well be interpreted as a direct allusion to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-Paper" (1892): "Gilman's room was of good size but queerly irregular shape; . . . there was no access—nor any appearance of a former avenue of access—to the space which must have existed between the slanting wall and the straight outer wall on the house's north side . . . " (861).

A space containing a larger expanse than itself is described in Gilman's short story as a "queer" and "haunted house" (166). The sub-pattern (171, 176) behind the wallpaper that opens up the mirroring plane of the "woman" (174, 176, 178) to the irrational perception of the protagonist has no access for "reason" personified in the husband (169), who would find even the existence of it "absurd" (173). Irrationality is indexed by the recurring sign of the Moon (167, 174, 176, 180), while the atemporal synchronicity of signification is first indicated by the mentioning of "arbors" (167, 179, 170) and "garden" (167, 169, 172, 179), both of which serve as prefigurations for a yet undisclosed, *unheimlich* space. The distinction between prefiguration and fulfillment breaks down when the woman's ghostly creeping is brought to daylight:

> I see her in that long shaded lane, creeping up and down. I see her in those dark grape arbors, creeping all around the garden. I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines. I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight! (179)

In the multiple descriptions of wallpaper patterns, verbs expressing motion mirror the eye-movement of the perceiver. Copulas, verbs with stative meaning, such as "match" (160), "stare" (170), "connect" (172) are prevalent

in these ekphrases. Patterns create an atemporal space of "everlastingness" (170) with their rhizome-like qualities: "an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolution" (175). On the other hand, a proliferation of indices marks the recurrent returns to the inaccessible singularity of meaning: "nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads" (178). The story of the woman behind the bars wrought by the patterns is never to be read by the ratiocinative husband, whose fainting signifies the collapse of all boundaries between the rational and the irrational. Memetic attributes such as the adjective "bulbous" will reappear, for instance, in Lovecraft's "At the Mountains of Madness" (738, 746, 762), along with the synesthetic smell as an index hinting at, implying the presence of the uncanny (741, 786, 801). Textual occurrences, such as "pointless pattern," "not arranged on any laws," "I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order," "confusion" (172), are not only expressive of madness in "The Yellow Wall-Paper" but also of the atemporality in a dreamlike state that is characteristic of the weird: "optic horror" in "delirium tremens" (172). At the climax of Gilman's narrative, the lifeless yet animate automaton of the husband's body is presented as an allegorization for the story not to be told, the inaccessible trauma "over" and to—but not *in*—which the creeping, weird protagonist compulsively returns "every time" (182).

Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (1890) also fuses atemporality and irrationality in a dreamlike state. Its handling of time is the single most distinctive narrative device in the entire text offering itself as a governing trope for a story about frozen time. The first three paragraphs of the introductory section are a still life of the execution scene, a meticulous ekphrasis composed completely of descriptive statements, whereas the ensuing three paragraphs narrate a sequence of actions at an ever-decreasing pace. This symmetry of proportion is indicative of a tripartite structure from a static stance through actions recounted with a gradual slowing-down of the tempo back to atemporality in the final paragraph. The second phase weaves the concept of time slowing down with 1) madness, 2) the *mise-en-abym*ic symbol of vortex, and 3) water as a symbol for dreams. "He looked a moment at his 'unsteadfast footing,' then let his gaze wander to the swirling water of the stream racing madly beneath his feet. A piece of dancing driftwood caught his attention and his eyes followed it down the current. How slowly it appeared to move! What a sluggish stream!" (24). Here, in two sentences, the pace decelerates from "racing madly" to "sluggish." The succeeding paragraph associates the notion of madness with prolonged intervals further decreasing the already sluggardly tempo. The penultimate paragraph merges the symbol

of water with a picture of the family to be left behind and introduces the symbol of a device measuring time. "The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. . . . What he heard was the ticking of his watch" (25). Interrupted by soundless pauses, finally the progressive slowing down is brought to a halt, to an atemporality of signification in the concluding paragraph: "these thoughts . . . were flashed into the doomed man's brain rather than evolved from it" (26).

The second section gives a brief chronological account of the antecedents that lead to the execution of Peyton Farquhar. The third one, by inserting phrases like "as one already dead," "without material substance," "he had power only to feel," (29), however, emphasizes the atemporality of the discourse right at the outset by describing a preternaturally rapid pulsation of time, which turns pure perception into the uncanny symbol of an unthinkable sense of time: "unthinkable arcs of oscillation," "like a vast pendulum" (29).

Corporeality and emotions being separated, a "feeling of fullness" comes over the protagonist (29), who perceives an animistic world in the totality of synchronicity: "He was now in full possession of his physical senses. They were, indeed, preternaturally keen and alert" (31). "Vortex" and "gyration" (36) are indices for an atemporal, *pars pro toto* space that opens up to vistas of a dreamlike territory of timeless originary nature: "aeolian harps," "[t]he forest seemed interminable," "[t]here was something uncanny in the revelation" (36-37). The last section sets out with the symbol of bodiless atemporality and concludes in the return to temporality with the image of Peyton Farquhar's corpse swinging like a pendulum: "Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek bridge" (39). The narrative frame encapsulates the traumatic lack of a story that cannot be told for the reason that it never occurred in the first place. Where it did occur, however, is nowhere else but the atemporal, irrational, uncanny location of the transient "Owl Creek bridge."

Lovecraft's novella, "At the Mountains of Madness," with its elaborate descriptions of rock formations and eldritch, otherworldly architecture, uses the allegorization of the uncanny seen in "The Shadow Out of Time." These descriptions play a decisive role in Lovecraftian poetics as discussed in detail by Houellebecq. Lovecraft's writing to Rheinhart Kleiner underlines the atemporal, irrational qualities of these textual loci: "And it was in all seriousness he told Kleiner that a man is like a coral insect—that his only destiny is to '*build vast beautiful, mineral things for the moon to delight in after he is dead*'" (65, emphasis in original). An art form in itself conveying a sense of atemporal readings of space, architecture is defined in the Lovecraftian *oeuvre*

with a prefix giving negative force, as non-Euclidian, which term emphasizes the uncanny characteristics of these structures. The language Lovecraft created to depict eldritch monuments, buildings, and rock formations is seen as his most revered stylistic achievement and often characterized as a plethora of paroxisms by Houellebecq (71, 82). This effect is brought about by the impossible effort to name the unnamable, to grasp the sublime atemorality of radical dislocation. In "At the Mountains of Madness," Lovecraft centers depictions of Cyclopean constructions on such tropes as the *mise-en-abym*ic vortex, the paradox of the ultimate name that cannot be uttered, as well as atemporaility and madness. The principles that govern the designs of "the unnamable architecture of time" (79) are built on a juxtaposition of incompatible, inconsistent, and irreconcilable dimensions and spectra. Houellebecq distilled the aesthetics of Lovecraft in barely six words: "The scale factor, the vertigo factor" (81).

The novella exhibits several traits of the typological symbolism and synchronicity in the magical mode of signification discussed at the beginning of this section. Lovecraft explains that the uncanny structures "had been shaped to greater symmetry by some magic hand" (755), just as instances of prefigurations and their fulfillment are offered in the text. The makeshift dwellings of the explorers are mirrored in the campsite they chance upon. "In other words, it could not be other than a sort of camp—a camp made by questing beings who like us had been turned back by the unexpectedly choked way to the abyss" (787). Meaning creation as an irrational effort to access the presupposed singularity in the blurred domain between the real and the imaginary is described as a compulsive drive for repetition, "weaving links betwixt this lost world and some of my own wildest dreams concerning the mad horror at the camp" (759).

As a counterpart of the homeliness of the camp, the *unheimlich* "magnificent cathedral" (Houellebecq 63) erected by the Old Ones is also doubled in atemporal signification. The sacred nature of Lovecraftian architecture is epitomized in theological prefigurations that are suggestive of sublime horror in unearthly dimensions (66):

> [T]his shocking stone survival had projected its image across the mountains according to the simple laws of reflection. Of course the phantom had been twisted and exaggerated, and had contained things which the real source did not contain; yet now, as we saw that real source, we thought it even more hideous and menacing than its distant image. (757)

It is not just the previously quoted ever-present smell of decay that makes Lovecraft's descriptions reminiscent of Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-Paper." Citing a typical illustration for the Lovecraftian paroxysm in depicting otherworldly architecture brings back not only the vocabulary, but also the irrationality inherent in the representation of patterns in the yellow wallpaper: "There were geometrical forms for which an Euclid could scarcely find a name—cones of all degrees of irregularity and truncation; terraces of every sort of *provocative* disproportion; shafts with odd *bulbous* enlargements; *broken* columns in curious groups; and five-pointed or five-ridged arrangements of mad *grotesqueness*" (762, emphasis added).

The countless mentions of "madness" (nineteen times), "mirages" (twelve times over eighty-three pages), and juxtaposed disproportionate time scales are deployed in the novella to create a vertiginous atmosphere directed towards the unspeakable and unnamable. "The bottomless abyss" (763) of "illimitable emptiness" (764) guides the reader to the inaccessible singularity. As Houellebecq contends, "'All-in-One and One-in-All.' . . . These are the coordinates of the unnamable" (82-83). Lovecraft concludes his story with an intensely poignant sense of humor. Having reemerged from the bottomless depths of the abyss, an insane Danforth keeps repeating the unnamable he risked his life for, but all that is heard is the absurdly eldritch cry of the penguins: "Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!" (806).

vi) Humor

The sixth allegorization of the uncanny had a foreboding significance for Lovecraft, whose humor cannot be described in terms of such traditional approaches as the superiority theory—that is, laughing at something with a sense of superiority—or the relief theory, which negotiates laughter resulting from the release of tension. The incongruity theory occupies a different perspective by locating the source of laughter in an uncanny experience that violates expectations projected by previously constructed cognitive patterns, thus generating an inaccessible inconsistency (Morreall 245). According to this theory, laughter resolves a tension mounted between irreconcilable realities—any sketch by Monty Python would serve as a textbook example of this. Michael Clark in *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor* defines three essential criteria to create such an effect. A person 1) perceives something as incongruous, 2) enjoys perceiving it as such, and finally 3) does so for the sake of incongruity itself and not for physiological release or with the intention to feel superior (139-55). Probing into the capacity of incongruity, Mike W. Martin offers examples when laughter is not the only way for the audience to enjoy incongruity. In Sophocles's *Oedipus the King*, the incongruity of the king's

vow to do everything in his power to find King Laius' murderer creates tension in the audience, who are well aware of Oedipus's patricide. The aesthetic effect is not that of humor, yet it still causes aesthetic pleasure. The intriguing, uncanny aspect in John Morreall's edited collection of essays, *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*, is that he leads step by step from accounts of laughter towards explications of amazement and confusion. In the final third of the book Morreall takes Martin's concept a step further by confirming that aesthetic categories such as the horrible, the fantastic, the macabre, and the grotesque, although built exclusively on uncanny incongruities, entail a non-humorous amusement in transgressions against horizons of expectations. As he contends, "What we enjoy here is being surprised by strange things and situations" (205). As the evolution of theories of humor suggests, the weird tale, swirling around uncanny inconsistencies, always already involves the element of humor, just as humor has always had the capacity to incorporate the uncanny as the provider of tensions to be resolved by laughter. Lovecraft's aesthetic innovation is to push limitless incongruities to the extreme, to create situations where humor collides with sheer madness and callous indifference in absolute amorality. The frequently quoted line he wrote in defense of "Dagon" is the sole exception where he commented: "But I cannot help seeing beyond the tinsel of humour, and recognizing the pitiful basis of jest—the world is indeed comic, but the joke is on mankind" ("*In Defense*" 54).

The aesthetic potential for humor is always already memetic as an aesthetic quality derived from incongruities that the genre of uncanny tales encapsulates. Parallel with the emergence of early gothic tales in American literature, influenced by the works of Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe, there appeared the first comic reiterations. "The Lightning-Rod Man" (1856) by Herman Melville is a play on genre expectations and incongruities to a comical effect. Stylistically the short story is embellished by a vast array of hyperboles ranging from overly stylized exclamations—"Hark!" repeated ten times over six pages—to ancient Latin vocabulary and mythological images: hills are "acroceraunian" (118); a chair is a substitute for the "evergreen throne on Olympus" (119). Finally, this stylistic extravaganza is pushed to downright exaggerations: the cottage can be turned into "Gibraltar," roars of thunder are described as "Himalayas of concussions" (120). The dealer in lightning-rods, a door-to-door salesman in actuality, is addressed as "Jupiter Tonans" or "Thundering Jupiter" (119, 120, 124) and "Tetzel," who was the *casus belli* for Protestantism, as a "false negotiator" or the "dark lightning-king" (124). The host, when scolded, chided, and blamed for his unpardonable nescience, is deemed a "horridly ignorant" and "impious wretch" (119, 124). The stake of the debate is whether the dealer will manage to sell his copper lightning-rod

for a dollar a foot—a reference to Benjamin Franklin, the enlightened scientist and his thirteen virtues—or if the host devoted to a benevolent Deity will finally manage to kick the sales hustler out of his home without having spent a dime. The entire setting is not only a parody of the memetic opening sentence of gothic stories, it also inverts the typical situation where the home, a symbol of normalcy and rationality, is intruded upon by irrational forces. Here, it is the representative of the age of reason and American enlightenment, whose entering the humble abode of the firm believer in transcendence becomes aggressively avenged. "I seized it; I snapped it; I dashed it; I trod it; and dragging the dark lightning-king out of my door, flung his elbowed, copper sceptre after him," recounts the narrator (124). However, while the reader seems to be prompted to identify with the narrator, a didactic function hidden in the narrative creates a countering effect. A lot is learned about why copper is a better conductor than iron and, therefore, is the appropriate choice for lightning rods (121), how one should "avoid pine-trees, high houses, lonely barns, upland pastures, running water, flocks of cattle and sheep, a crowd of men" during a storm (123), why it is advisable to stand in the middle of the room when lightning strikes (119). There are lessons to be learnt here, and it is the salesman the reader has to thank for them.

From literary history to contemporary popular culture

As part of the whole, the aporic nature of the humorous uncanny offers a recapitulation of those characteristics inherent in all six tropes of the uncanny as the building blocks of weird genre formations. For incongruities are played out at three different levels in Melville's short story: first, the incongruity of style (everyday experience vs. hyperbolic, parodic stylization), secondly, the incongruity of genre expectations (irrational attack on rational lifeworlds vs. rational help brutally rejected), and thirdly, on the autopoetic level, by way of reflecting on literary epistemes. When carrying out comparative analyses between nineteenth-century classics and early-twentieth-century Lovecraftian texts along with their contemporary memetic mutations, I have relied on the presupposition that the formative years of creating a unique American identity made nineteenth-century American fiction particularly susceptible to genre variations: hoaxes, fantastic and proto-horror stories created by now highly canonized classics. Another reason encoded in the history of American literature that has never ceased to exert its influence is that the Puritan heritage, subversive in itself, paralleled with the ethics, core values, and rationalism of American enlightenment creates a doubled domain for the interpretation and creation of cultural artifacts. The recurrent waves of awakenings, transcendentalist and counter-cultural

movements, have been accompanied in American cultural history by the legacy of the tenets originating in the Age of Reason. Melville's joke is on the incongruity of culture, as well. It is as if Washington Irving were to chase Benjamin Franklin away on a whim—to utilize Rip Van Winkle as a meme. The uncertainty and hesitation between two epistemological domains in these co-present traditions is one of the causes of a peculiar sensibility towards the uncanny in American literature.

Identifying six elements of an implicit taxonomy that I have unraveled in Freud's *das Unheimliche* is made possible by the very process via which the theoretical concept of the uncanny translates into literary tropes. I argued that these allegorizations encapsulate an utter hesitation between distinctive modes of signification built around twos and threes for lack of a unifying, singular number one. The trauma of the absence occupying the domain of a presupposed yet continuously dislocating singularity—that is, the impossibility of the story—opens up the weird to infinitely regressive and progressive signifying processes. The old/new/next weird features these narrative traits with a characteristic susceptibility to sublime horror, which is expressive of the aesthetic tensions between homely and unhomely, subject and abject. These allegorizations of the uncanny display a tendency to contaminate other genres belonging to differing modes of representation or separate art media. As testified to by Houellebecq's personal experience, it is to a lesser extent that plot lines are resuscitated to an unholy existence of plagiarism, yet the memetic transmutations of tropes of the uncanny seem to have created an intermedial pandemic of appropriation in culture. Cthulhu's tentacles crawl out of the most unexpected corners of cinematography, literature, and popular culture, but the deity himself rarely appears in remakes. Filmic adaptations of Lovecraft's short stories and novels have never been particularly successful: "HPL's works are notoriously challenging to translate into films, which is one reason why truly outstanding pictures have been so rare in Lovecraft films" (Mitchell 7). Despite the obvious hindrances to adapting Lovecraft's narratives to the big screen, the *Alien* movie franchise (1979-) or the *Apocalypse Trilogy* (1982-94)—*The Thing* (1982), *Prince of Darkness* (1987), *In the Mouth of Madness* (1994)—are deeply indebted to the American author for their memetic inspirations. The number of Lovecraftian role-playing and video games available on the market are exceeded only by the plethora of Lovecraft themed heavy metal albums on several fandom websites ("A List of Lovecraft"). It is rather a cultural evolution through replication and imitation that informs such memetic phenomenology in a wide array of genres. This memetic contamination is an influence that is exerted specifically

by deploying tropes of the uncanny as formative elements in the Lovecraftian *oeuvre* and the weird tale in general.

Eötvös Loránd University

Note

[1] Lovecraft in his *Supernatural Horror in Literature* quotes Samuel Loveman, who praises Bierce's narratives for the uncanny atmosphere they create, a familiar characteristic of the Lovecraftian stories: "In Bierce the evocation of horror becomes for the first time not so much the prescription or perversion of Poe and Maupassant, but an atmosphere definite and uncannily precise" (27).

Works Cited

Alien. Dir. Ridley Scott. Twentieth Century Fox, 1979.

Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." 1890. *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*. San Francisco: E. L. G. Steele, 1891. 21-39. Print.

---. "The Death of Halpin Frayser." 1891. *Can Such Things Be?* Gloucester: Dodo, 2008. 4-22. Print.

Clark, Michael. "Humor and Incongruity." *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*. Ed. John Morreall. New York: State U of New York P, 1987. 139-55. Print.

Cybersymphony. "A List of Lovecraft Themed Metal Albums." *Metal Storm* 10 Oct. 2013. Web. 12 May 2018.

Derrida, Jacques. *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, Work of Mourning and the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Vintage, 1988. Print.

Fraser, J. T. *The Genesis and Evolution of Time: A Critique of Interpretation in Physics*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1982. Print.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." 1919. Trans. David Mcliontock. *The Uncanny*. Ed. David Mcliontock, London: Penguin Classics, 2003. 121-62. Print.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Yellow Wall-Paper." 1892. *The Yellow Wall-Paper, Herland, and Selected Writings*. Ed. Denise D. Knight. London: Penguin, 2009. 166-82.

Harvey, William Fryer. "August Heat." *When Churchyards Yawn*. Ed. Niels W. Erickson. Bay Saint Louis, MS: Couch Pumpkin, 2012. 234-39. Print.

In the Mouth of Madness. Dir. John Carpenter. New Line Cinema, 1994.

Jackson, Shirley. "A Visit." ["The Lovely House"]. 1950. *American Supernatural Tales*. Ed. S.T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 2007. 249-74. Print.

James, Henry. "Sir Edmund Orme." 1891. *The Complete Stories 1884-1891*. Ed. Henry James et al. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1999. 851-81. Print.
Jentsch, Ernst. "On the Psychology of the Uncanny." 1906. *Angelaki* 2.1 (1997): 7-16. Print.
Lovecraft, Howard Phillips. "At the Mountains of Madness." 1936. *The Fiction* 723-806. Print.
---. "The Call of Cthulhu." 1928. *The Fiction* 355-79. Print.
---. *The Fiction: Complete and Unabridged*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008. Print.
---. *Supernatural Horror in Literature*. 1927. Mineola: Dover, 1973. Print.
---. "The Dreams in the Witch House." 1933. *The Fiction* 859-88. Print.
---. "The Dunwich Horror." 1929. *The Fiction* 633-67. Print.
---. "[In Defence of Dagon:] The Defence Remains Open!" Apr. 1921, *Collected Essays. Volume 5: Philosophy*. Ed. S. T. Joshi. New York: Hippocampus, 2006. Print.
---. "The Shadow Out of Time." 1936. *The Fiction* 948-98. Print.
---. "The Temple." *The Fiction* 91-101. Print.
Lyotard, Jean-François. *Phenomenology*. Trans. Brian Beakley. New York: State U of New York P, 1991. Print.
Martin, Mike W. "Humor and the Aesthetic Enjoyment of Incongruities." *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*. Ed. John Morreall. New York: State U of New York P, 1986. 172–86. Print.
Melville, Herman. "The Lightning-Rod Man." 1856. *The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces: Writings of Herman Melville*. Vol. 9. Ed. Hayford Harrison et al. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1987. 118-24. Print.
Michon, John A. "J. T. Fraser's 'Levels of Temporality' as Cognitive Representations." *The Study of Time V: Time, Science, and Society in China and the West*. Ed. J. T. Fraser and N. Lawrence. Amherst, MA: U of Massachusetts P, 1986. 51-66. Print.
Miéville, China. *Perdido Street Station*. London: Pan Books, 2003. Print.
---. *The City & The City*. London: Pan Books, 2009. Print.
Mitchell, Charles P. *The Complete H. P. Lovecraft Filmography*. Westport: Greenwood, 2001. Print.
Morreall, John. "A New Theory of Laughter." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*. 42.2 (1982): 243-54. Print.
Petersen, Sandy, and Lynn Willis. *Horror Roleplaying—Call of Cthulhu*. Hayward: Chaosium, 1999. Print.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "William Wilson." 1832. *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*. Vol. 1 Ed. John H. Ingram. London: A. & C. Black, SohoSquare, 1899. 333-55. Print.

Prince of Darkness. Dir. John Carpenter. Alive Films, 1987.

Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph. *Philosophie der Mythologie* [The Philosophy of Mythology]. 1835. Munich: Fink, 1996. Print.

Sophocles. *Oedipus the King*. Trans. David Grene. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1991. Print.

The Thing. Dir. John Carpenter. Universal Pictures, 1982.

Twain, Mark. *A Tramp Abroad*. Mineola: Dover Publications, 2002. 49-53. Print.

VanderMeer, Ann, and Jeff VanderMeer. *The New Weird*. San Francisco: Tachyon, 2008. Print.

The Weird: A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories. Ed. Ann VanderMeer and Jeff VanderMeer. London: Corvus, 2011. Print.