

A black and white illustration of Alice looking upwards with a concerned expression. Numerous playing cards are falling from the sky around her. The cards are shown in various orientations, some showing faces and others showing suits.

# Uncanny Effects in the *Alice Tales*

*A literary Analysis of Alice in Wonderland and  
Through the Looking-Glass*

A black and white illustration of Alice sitting at a table with the White Rabbit and the Mad Hatter. They are having a tea party. The White Rabbit is on the left, the Mad Hatter is on the right, and Alice is in the center. There are teacups, saucers, and a teapot on the table. The background shows a landscape with trees and a building.

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## ABSTRACT

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In Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872) strangeness and reversal of order describe the essence of the worlds of the novels. Alice's movement into these worlds initially evokes a sense of the uncanny, as everything is possible in the worlds of Wonderland and Looking-Glass. A talking rabbit wearing a waistcoat and a clock triggers a sense of uncertainty about what is real and imaginary, as it appears in Alice's real world. The view of the uncanny presented in this thesis will focus on the uncanny effect. This effect will be argued to be caused an 'uncanny trigger', which is mostly known through Sigmund Freud's "The Uncanny" essay from 1919. In Freud's attempt to conceptualise the uncanny, he coins the phrase 'the return of the repressed', which is the most common understanding of the uncanny: meaning something repressed which has returned, causing an uncanny effect. Thus something repressed recurring can be stated as an 'uncanny trigger': Furthermore, these 'uncanny triggers' are argued as something familiar recurring as unfamiliar, or an old primitive belief which has been surmounted is once more confirmed (e.g. a ghost). In more detail, the uncanny triggers can be: castration-anxiety, womb-fantasies, a double, repetition, ghosts, the dead (returning to life), anthropomorphism, the inanimate coming to life. E.g. the uncanny trigger of anthropomorphism causes an uncanny effect upon the implied reader of *Wonderland*, when encountering the White Rabbit, as it has humanlike attributes in a world where this is not common. I will also use the scholar David Rudd's notions of the uncanny in order to attempt to comprehend the concept. The aim of this thesis is to analyse and discuss the uncanny effects on Alice and the implied reader. Although the focus will primarily be on Alice, the implied reader will also be discussed as experiencing the uncanny effect, in opposition to Alice. As the implied reader and Alice are situated on different levels of the text - inside and outside – they experience the uncanny effect differently. E.g. the above example of the White Rabbit causing an uncanny effect is only experienced by the implied reader, as it appears in the setting of Alice's real world, and the human like attributes is commented upon by the narrator. Whereas Alice does not even consider anything unfamiliar about the Rabbit before she notices that it carries a watch. The reason for these various uncanny experiences is due to the difference in perspective: Alice merely encounters the Rabbit, whereas the implied reader is informed by the narrator that it is odd that Alice does not notice the talking Rabbit – which immediately makes the reader focus on the Rabbit as odd. Furthermore, I will argue the implied reader as an adult, while

Alice is seven years old. The example of the Rabbit was only one example of the uncanny effect, which illustrated my focus on Alice and the reader as recipients of the uncanny effects and the difference in their experience of the effect. Throughout the study, I will also consider the uncanny as affecting Alice's sense of identity, and her failure in comprehending the logic and order of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* worlds.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Introduction.....	4
The Uncanny .....	7
Freud’s Uncanny .....	9
Listing the Uncanny .....	10
Freud’s Trouble with the Uncanny in Literature .....	13
Concluding Remarks on Freud’s Uncanny .....	16
Rudd’s Uncanny.....	17
Lacan’s Symbolic Order .....	19
Concluding Remarks on Rudd’s Uncanny.....	21
My Approach to the Uncanny .....	22
The Frames of <i>Wonderland</i> and <i>Looking-Glass</i> .....	23
The Opening Frames .....	25
The Frames within Looking-Glass.....	29
The Chess Game .....	30
The Closing Frames .....	37
Alice’s Experiences of The Uncanny Effects .....	40
The ‘Surmounted’ Uncanny.....	41
The ‘Repressed’ Uncanny .....	50
Alice’s Uncanny Sense of Identity.....	52
Concluding Remarks.....	58
List of References .....	60
Bibliography.....	61

## INTRODUCTION

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“Curiouser and curiouser!” cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English).

Lewis Carroll, 1865, p. 13

By following a rabbit down a hole in the ground and moving through a mirror, Lewis Carroll’s heroine, Alice, enters the fantastical worlds of Wonderland and Looking-Glass. Worlds which allow for almost anything to happen and any creature to exist are the settings for Alice’s adventures: a Rabbit obsessed with time, a caterpillar smoking on hookah, a cat whose body disappears into mere space, and a mad hatter asking meaningless riddles, are some of the curious characters she encounters on her adventures in Wonderland. Upon her arrival in Looking-Glass she is pawn in a giant chess game, which is played out by characters who continuously challenge her knowledge of the world. She changes size so many times that an existential crisis is triggered, and she discovers her inability to come to terms with the order and rules of these new worlds; nothing makes sense.

Although Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass: and what Alice found there* (1872) are considered children’s literature, I found myself as fascinated with these imaginative realms as Alice. Although I have escaped my childhood, I find children’s fantasy literature an absorbing experience. Absorbing because anything can happen, the restrictions of reality are dissolved into suspense and childish imagination. I yearned to follow Alice down the rabbit hole and through the looking-glass to get a glimpse of the Mock-Turtle’s lobster-quadrille, play croquet with a flamingo in my hands (however cruel it might sound), and gently flow down the stairs of the Looking-Glass house. As there is no such thing as living out the fantastical events of a novel, I did the next best thing: I made it my thesis subject.

My initial motivation for analysing the novels was the strangeness of them in general. However, strangeness seemed inadequate as a concept to analyse, thus the initial interest in the strangeness then progressed into an awareness of the concept of the uncanny. I wanted to argue for the strangeness of the novels in terms of the uncanny. When this was established, I attempted to conceptualise the meaning of the uncanny, and came to the conclusion that what I found most interesting in the concept was the effect it was able to create. In this line of thought, I needed to determine what the different effects evoked by the uncanny affected. Thus, I chose to focus on Alice’s experiences of the uncanny effects while opposing it with the uncanny effects experienced by the implied reader.

I recognised the effects of the uncanny as different in relation to Alice and the implied reader, as two distinct experiences signify their possibility for the uncanny. The implied reader moves on an entirely separate level than Alice, as the reader is both inside and outside the text while Alice is always inside the text. Therefore, I wanted to analyse the way the reader experienced the text as opposed to Alice's experiences inside the text. This was accomplished through a focus on the functions of the author and narrator, as these two components are responsible diversity of the experiences, as a result of the narrator continuously intervening with the reading experience, reinstating the reader outside the text. Also the construction of the novel argues for a difference experience between the reader and Alice, as prefaces, epigraphs and pictures function as elements which either absorbs or disengages the reader from the text.

Regarding structural components, I will also argue the framing of the novels as a feature which evokes the uncanny. The effects of the uncanny in terms framing are evident in both Alice and the reader. Alice's movements through her world and the worlds of Wonderland and Looking-Glass allow for the uncanny. The confusion Alice experiences in the difference between her own world and the worlds of Wonderland and Looking-Glass will be my focal point in analysing the uncanny effect of Alice experiences due to the framing of the novels, as it will be in this confusion uncertainty resides. The effect of the laws and rules of the imaginative worlds cause a general uncertainty to be installed in Alice. I will analyse and discuss this notion of uncertainty as an effect of the uncanny. The uncanny is a concept which cannot bluntly be described, which deserves to be discussed and analysed on its own terms, as it is impossible to conceptualise in a single phrase. I have now considered it in terms of strangeness and uncertainty, while stating that it causes an effect upon Alice and the implied reader. However, it needs to be unpacked and discussed in the context of other scholars who have attempted to conceptualise it in order to achieve a more comprehensible meaning. Thus, I will, as an introductory note, merely use the term uncanny, while being aware that a definition of it is required, which will come about in the first chapter.

When considering the uncanny in relation to *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* the focus will be on its *effect*: I will consider what cause the uncanny effects (uncanny triggers), what sort of effects are created, and the recipients of this effect.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse and discuss the uncanny effects in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* as affecting Alice and the implied reader.

My thesis will be divided into three main chapters, arguing for the effects of the uncanny to be considered from two different perspectives.

The first chapter “**The Uncanny**” consists of theoretical notions and discussions. It will serve as a theoretical platform for the concepts I will use in my analysis. The uncanny is mainly considered as Freud’s notion of the return of the repressed, wherein the familiar reappears as something unfamiliar. These binary oppositions of the familiar and unfamiliar will be used throughout the thesis. Furthermore, I will apply the scholar David Rudd’s notions of the uncanny in terms of signification.

The second chapter “**The Frames of Wonderland and Looking-Glass**” will begin the literary analysis with a discussion of the structure of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*, emphasising the uncanny effect experienced by the reader by opposing it with the uncanny effects experienced by Alice.

The third and final chapter “**Alice’s Experiences of The Uncanny Effects**” will proceed with the analysis, focusing on the uncanny effect experienced by Alice. In this chapter I will differentiate between two different notions of the uncanny, and finally argue for the uncanny effect on Alice’s identity.

On a formal note, I will in future reference of the novels, identify *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) as *Wonderland*, and *Through the Looking-Glass: and what Alice found there* (1872) as *Looking-Glass*. The edition of *Wonderland* (1865) and *Looking-Glass* (1872) will primarily be from Norton Critical Edition (2013) by Editor Donald J. Gray. There are numerous textual variants on the various editions of the novels, however, Carroll’s final revision of both texts for the 1897 edition are perceived as the authoritative texts, therefore, they are used in this study. However, although these editions are the authoritative, I have found it necessary to utilise the Penguin Classic Edition (2009), with Hugh Haughton as Editor as well. The reason for the usage of both is that they do not feature the same content. Some aspects are added in one editorial version, while lacking in the other. E.g. Carroll’s preface concerning the chess-game, added in the 1897 edition of *Looking-Glass* is only featured in Gray’s edition (which seems odd, as Haughton states the novels as the 1897 editions), whereas the depicted ‘Dramatis Personæ’ of *Looking-Glass* is featured in Haughton’s edition. Thus, for future reference, when quoting the novels, Gray will be the primary source and when quoting Haughton’s edition, it will be cited as Haughton.

## THE UNCANNY

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To conceptualise the uncanny, in an estimated twenty pages which grasps the full significance of it, has proven to be a task beyond the bounds of possibility of a master thesis. The impossibility of defining the concept in this thesis rests on the fact that scholar Anneleen Masschelein devoted 17 years of researching the uncanny which gave rise to *The Unconcept: The Freudian Uncanny in Twentieth-Century Theory* (2011). Masschelein's book is to some extent a genealogy of the Freudian uncanny: it outlines the development, paradoxes and changes of the concept through previous and contemporary scholars' usage and discussions of the uncanny. She argues it as an all-encompassing concept:

The uncanny becomes an insidious, all pervasive "pass-partout" word to address virtually any topic: politics, history, humanity, technology, psychoanalysis, religion, alongside more familiar aesthetic questions, related to genres, specific literary texts and motifs commonly associated with the uncanny. Because the uncanny affects and haunts everything, it is in constant transformations and cannot be pinned down (p. 2)

Thus, as the uncanny 'cannot be pinned down', it needs to be understood through the ways it has been theorised and discussed in various context, establishing a sense of what meaning it holds. Masschelein traces its origin to being considered by some scholars as closely related to the sublime in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. She states that the uncanny primarily occurred as a descriptive word in literary texts and artistic sources in that period, as opposed to the twentieth century wherein it is considered in terms of philosophy, aesthetics and as a theoretical concept. She argues that Freud's essay "The Uncanny" (1919) is to be considered the focus of attraction in terms of what the uncanny signifies today. Scholars of the concept customarily unpack the concept in relation to his essay. Therefore, I will also primarily focus on Freud's notion of the uncanny. Masschelein argues the uncanny as a 'young concept', which causes it to remain unstable and 'flimsy' (p. 7), by also having new associations added to its conceptualisation:

[...] the word "uncanny" holds together the conceptual tissue; it forms a cluster of heterogeneous conceptual elements like a Band-Aid or adhesive tape. Moreover the stickiness of the word also attracts new associations and variations that are by no means always motivated by conscious or deliberate moves, and these ensure the dynamism of the concept (p. 13)

However, it is not merely due to new perspectives being added to the concept that it is considered an ‘unconcept’, there is an instability within the notion of it, installed in its core, “As a concept that self-reflexively also signifies its opposite, as an affect and effect” (p. 157). Masschelein’s substantial research of the concept assisted in unpacking the concept, in terms of which aspects and perspectives of the concept would be relevant in this literary study. Thus, I will replicate the procedure of many other uncanny scholars in their unpacking of the concept by firstly focusing on Freud’s essay, while also discussing how it influences him to conceptualise it. Furthermore, I chose to apply the scholar David Rudd’s perspective on the uncanny, from *Reading the Child in Children’s Literature: A Heretical Approach* (2013), as he analyses and discusses the uncanny in relation to *Alice in Wonderland*. In addition to Rudd, I will also consider Jacques Lacan’s notion of the Symbolic Order, as Rudd draws on the poststructuralistic notions in this. Finally, I will discuss Tzvetan Todorov’s *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1975) in relation to Freud and Rudd’s notions of the uncanny. Thus, even though a consideration of the uncanny was deemed impossible to comprehend, I will focus on these three different perspectives of the concept, as a way of making it applicable in relation to the analysis of the uncanny in the Alice tales, while acknowledging that the uncanny can never be fully understood. It is notably that Masschelein names her book ‘the unconcept’, which I will argue sums up the impression one is left with when having studied it even for a brief period of time (as opposed to 17 years).

## *Freud's Uncanny*

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Sigmund Freud's essay "The Uncanny" (1919) is the text most scholars refer to when attempting to define the term 'uncanny', thus, I will do the same. In order to work towards a definition of the uncanny, Freud first of all states how he imagines the uncanny is generally known:

It [the uncanny] undoubtedly belongs to all that is terrible – to all that arouses dread and creeping horror; it is equally certain, too, that the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with whatever excites dread (p. 1).

It seems that Freud wishes to define the uncanny, and the understanding it holds for him is initially nonspecific as he claims it is wrongfully related to 'whatever excites dread'. Thus, his quest for a definition of the uncanny begins by attempting to make the uncanny specific. He states that, "the 'uncanny' is that class of terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (pp. 1-2). In attempting to make the uncanny specific, he first of all initiates a lexicographical examination of the German word *unheimlich* (unfamiliar), in opposition to *heimlich* (familiar), by comparing these binary oppositions. In *Reading the Child in Children's Literature* (2013) David Rudd states this about the lexicographical approach:

[...] he [Freud] notes how the word, across different languages, moves in two, opposing, semantic directions, from the 'familiar and agreeable' to the 'concealed and kept out of sight' [...] he reasons that the '[u]nheimlich is in some way or other a subspecies of *Heimlich*, or the 'unhomely' is part of the 'homely' (p. 113).

What Freud conclusively states about the relationship between the familiar and the unfamiliar, is that if psychoanalytic theory is correct in the assumption that "every emotional affect [...] is transformed by repression into morbid anxiety" (1919, p. 13), then a specific type of anxiety must derive from "something repressed which *recurs*" (1919, p. 13). Freud states that if this is the case, then this form of anxiety would be considered uncanny. Furthermore, he states that the uncanny is nothing new, nor unknown; on the contrary: "for this uncanny is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old - established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression" (1919, p. 13). Thus he coined the uncanny as 'the returned of the repressed', which is what is notably associated with his study of the uncanny.

Freud seems to experience the uncanny repeatedly in relation to literature. He analyses the repressed notion of the uncanny in Hoffmann's fantastic piece of literature "The Sand-Man" (1816). In working with this text he initially states that the uncertainty of whether a doll is living or inanimate exemplifies the uncanny. Furthermore, he considers the Sand-Man and the idea of being robbed of one's eyes, as a direct connection to the feeling of uncanniness. The robbing of the eye is by Freud compared to the Oedipal Complex, "We shall venture, therefore to refer the uncanny effect of the Sand-Man to the child's dread in relation to its castration-complex" (1919, p. 8). In concluding this, he first of all considers the fear of losing one's eyes as a childhood fear and secondly to the fear of castration. He argues this case in terms of the death of the protagonist Nathaniel's father, when replacing the Sand-Man by "the dreaded father at whose hands castration is awaited" (1919, p. 8), thus arguing that the Sand-Man symbolises the father, who in the theory of psychoanalysis would be the figure to castrate his son, as the Oedipal Complex signifies.

### ***Listing the Uncanny***

In his attempt to make the definition of the uncanny specific, Freud (1919) lists a number of things (themes), which he believes to create an uncanny effect, most importantly 'the double'. He states: "These themes are all concerned with the idea of a "double" in every shape and degree, with persons, therefore, who are able to be considered identical by reasons of looking alike" (p. 9). In addition to the doubling of character and mental states, he also mentions the double as "the constant reoccurrence of similar situations, a same face, or character-trait, or twist of fortune, or a same crime, or even same name recurring throughout several consecutive generations" (p. 9). Furthermore, he adds that a sort of telepathy can occur between doubles, which also creates an uncanny effect. Remaining within this 'list' of what evokes the uncanny he adds repetition (as also being an aspect of the double): E.g. involuntary repetition, such as encountering the same number several times in a single day, can give rise to a feeling of uncanniness. In addition to repetition, he also adds, "animism, magic and witchcraft, the omnipotence of thoughts, man's attitude to death, involuntary repetition and the castration-complex" (p. 14). Moreover, he distinguishes the uncanny as "when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality" (p. 15) In addition to the 'themes' listed in "The Uncanny" (1919), I would also like to add Freud's notion of the death drive as uncanny. Nicholas Royle argues in *The Uncanny* (2003) that Freud broadened his definition of the uncanny, when he wrote "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920),

which was finished barely a month after “The Uncanny” (1919). In the essay Freud argues that within us are two biological and psychological drives, which remain in a constant conflict between the natural instinct to stay alive and the instinct which strives for death.

It seems that he has difficulties in differentiating between his two texts. For example, the repetitiveness he initially discovered in relation to the uncanny is found in many of his arguments for his theory of the death drive, making the repetitiveness aspect interconnected with that which is described in “The Uncanny”. Royle claims that the repetition-compulsion Freud argues for in “The Uncanny” (1919) is what led Freud to the theory of the death drive:

To repeat: the uncanny seems to be about a strange repetitiveness. It has to do with the return of something repressed, something no longer familiar, the return of the dead, the constant ‘recurrence of the same thing’ (U, p. 356), a ‘compulsion to repeat’ (U, p. 360). It is the notion of a constant reoccurrence or compulsive repetition that leads Freud to his theory of the death drive (2003, p. 84).

In relation to repetition I will briefly explain how Freud phrases the death instincts and the life instincts. The essay works within two sets of oppositions; feelings of pleasure and ‘unpleasure’ and sexual instincts and ‘ego-instincts’ (much alike the familiar/unfamiliar approach). He states that the feelings of pleasure are interrelated with the sexual instincts, aim for the prolongation of life, as opposed to the feelings of unpleasure being related to the ego-instincts which aim for death. The sexual instincts’ desire for life is understood through the sexual act’s possibility of creating life. The ego-instincts “arise from the coming to life of inanimate matter and seek to restore the inanimate state” (Freud, 1920, p. 38). Thus, this instinct’s destructive aim is the essence of the death instinct; the biological urge to return to a state before living. In relation to psychoanalysis, Royle states that the theory of the death drive itself is uncanny:

The death drive figures as something uncanny ‘for’ psychoanalysis in that it would seem to disturb some of the most basic and familiar psychoanalytic tenets, in particular the argument that dreams are wish-fulfilments and that we are all basically driven by a desire for pleasure (2003, p. 91).

In “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920), Freud argues against his own thesis of dreams functioning as ‘wish-fulfilment’, concluding that ‘wish-fulfilment’ is not always imbedded in dreaming, that e.g. his patients with war-neuroses experience a compulsive repetition of their

traumatic experiences while dreaming (pp. 26-29). It seems then that what Royle claims as uncanny in this context is Freud's own 'familiarity' with psychoanalysis and the 'unfamiliar' doubt he encounters, when trying to define the uncanny and the death drive (Royle, 2003, pp. 91-92).

While Freud's uncertainty of his own thesis is considered uncanny, so is the character of Freud. Freud states in the last section of "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" that, "It is surely possible to throw oneself into a line of thought and to follow it wherever it leads out of simple scientific curiosity, or, if the reader prefers, as an *advocatus diaboli*" (1920, p. 53). Royle refers to Derrida's critical writings on Freud, arguing for Freud's uncanniness: "Derrida suggests that 'the one who ... calls himself the "*advocatus diabolicus*" of the death drive' is necessarily a double, Freud's double" (Royle, 2003, p. 88). Thus, Derrida, in accordance with Royle, argues that within "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", two Freuds are coexisting – one the respected psychoanalyst, who is confident of his own theoretical claims, as opposed to the unsecure Freud who initiates the theory of the death drive. Conclusively, Freud coins the death drive as the death instincts and the life instincts emerged in an eternal battle. Royle paraphrases:

Freud does not simply see the death drive as one drive among others. The death drive is, to adapt a phrase from Laplanche and Pontalis, the drive *par excellent*: it 'typif[ies] the repetitive nature of instinct [or drive] in general... [I]n so far as it is "the essence of the instinctual", [the death drive] binds every wish, whether aggressive or sexual, to the wish for death' (Royle, 2003, p. 92).

Thus, in Royle's reading of "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", the uncanniness he explores is in relation to Freud's process of validating his theory and focuses on the uncertainty thereof, stating that as uncanny.

In relation to Freud's list of what creates an uncanny effect, Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle (2014) explain the uncanny in a similar way. Initially, they claim a definition to be impossible. However, they make the same attempt as Freud in their chapter on the uncanny in the book *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (2014). Thus, they aim at explaining the uncanny in terms of what 'triggers' it by listing the 'uncanny triggers'. Their list includes: repetition, odd coincidences (things that are *fated* to happen), animism, anthropomorphism, automatism, radical uncertainty about sexual identity, the fear of being buried alive, silence, telepathy, death, the death drive, ghosts and language (pp. 36-40). These thirteen elements, which can evoke a sense of uncanniness, are Bennett's and Royle's attempt at coining the uncanny

elements, which cause an uncanny feeling rather than the concept of the uncanny. Royle also comments upon Freud classification of the uncanny, and how he keeps adding things to it: “Freud keeps pausing to see if it is now possible to draw up an inventory, an exhaustive list of what is uncanny. It is as if he thinks that the uncanny can be collated, classified, taxonomized. But one uncanny thing keeps leading to another” (Royle, 2003, p. 13). Thus, Bennett and Royle have classified the uncanny, but likewise remain conscious of the impossibility of containing the uncanny in a detailed register. Therefore, their list derived from Freud’s is suggestive not conclusive. While stating specific elements as the cause of the uncanny effect, they likewise claim that the concept is to be understood in the undefinable way they initially define the concept by stating: “Literature is uncanny” (2014, p. 35).

### ***Freud’s Trouble with the Uncanny in Literature***

Returning once again to Freud’s “the Uncanny” (1919), Freud argues against Ernst Jentsch. Jentsch uses the term ‘intellectual uncertainty’ to coin the uncanny, also focusing on Hoffmann’s story as a reference to the uncanny, stating this intellectual uncertainty to be present in the uncertainty of whether the doll is inanimate or living. The literary scholar, David Rudd, argues that Freud initially rejects Jentsch’s example as uncanny, “Freud promptly recasts Jentsch’s notion of an ‘emotional effect’ into ‘intellectual uncertainty’, which Freud avers, ‘has nothing to do with the [uncanny] effect’” (2013, p. 113). However, Rudd states that Freud (again) questions his own arguments, “And yet, after all this, Freud then poses the question: ‘are we after all justified in entirely ignoring intellectual uncertainty as a factor’” (2013, pp. 113-114). Freud manages to use Jentsch’s example to support his own arguments. In relation to the uncertainty of the animate doll, he relates the uncanny to infantile fears, or rather, infantile wishes or beliefs; as children often wish for toys to be animate. Then, the familiar (the doll being alive in child play) recurs as something unfamiliar (as adults do not imagine dolls being alive) (Freud, 1919, p. 9).

Freud focuses on the effect the author creates in fiction, in order to explain why he argues that everything cannot evoke an uncanny effect. Therefore, he also distinguishes between uncanny sensations experienced through fiction, as opposed to this sensation in real life, focusing on the restrictions of real life uncanny occurrences in comparison to the fantastical world of literature, stating that: “the realm of phantasy depends for its very existence on the fact that its content is not

submitted to the reality-testing faculty” (1919, p. 18), and that “ [...] fiction presents more opportunities for creating uncanny sensations than are possible in real life” (1919, p. 19). He engages in a discussion of the effect of the uncanny based on the setting in the literary work, stating that whenever a setting is fantastical and unreal an uncanny effect is lost, as the setting needs to be as realistic as possible in order for the reader to experience a sensation of uncanniness (Freud, 1919, pp. 15-20). In relation to this he further argues, that the uncanny effect is lost in the fairy tale genre. Rudd discusses why Freud denies the genre of fairy tales’ uncanny nature. Initially he quotes Freud and states, “[...] in Freud’s words, ‘the world of reality is left behind from the very start, and the animistic system of belief is frankly adopted’ – is what made Freud deny the genre’s uncanny nature” (2013, p. 108), that the elements in this genre which calls for an uncanny effect, are too frequently found, thus, the effect is lost. The question is, if the uncanny is too commonplace in fairy tales, causing it to lose its effect, is there any possibility for it in this genre? In order to answer this question, Rudd cites another uncanny theorist, Rosemary Jackson, who states that the protagonists in fairy tales are most commonly neutral and impersonalised, and are somewhat alienated from the reader, which influences the reader to be a passive receiver of events. She also claims that the structurally fairy tales consist of closed narratives, in the sense that they “discourage belief in the importance of effectiveness of action” (as cited by Rudd, 2013, p. 109). Due to this passiveness, Rudd argues that fairy tales fail to evoke to the uncanny in the reader.

Rudd discusses what complicates the case of the uncanny effect in the fairy tale genre further, in relation to another critic, Jack Zipes, who argues, “that the fairy tale is itself an uncanny form” (as cited by Rudd, 2013, p. 107) Thus, Zipes defines the entire genre as able to create an uncanny effect, on the premise that it releases the readers from the restrictions of reality. This claim contradicts Freud’s arguments about the uncanny effect being dependent on a realistic setting, and triggered by specific items or feelings. This view of the uncanny as form disturbs the idea Freud initiated about the phenomenon, thus Rudd states that, “it is Zipes who is effectively ‘excluding the uncanny’ in anything resembling a Freudian sense” (2013, p. 111). Furthermore, Rudd claims that Zipes has somewhat forgotten the disturbing, frightening aspect which is embedded in the uncanny, as Zipes states that the uncanny ‘liberates’ its readers (2013, p. 111). Rudd argues against this liberation which Zipes suggests the uncanny experience offers:

Clearly, it is the very material that the ego has repressed that disturbs people; so the idea that it might be re-accessed in some more homely fashion makes little sense; it is uncanny (disturbing) exactly because it was *once* familiar but is *now* frightening (p. 112)

Thus, Rudd focuses on the specific elements which trigger the uncanny effect, as opposed to considering an entire genre as uncanny – thereby remaining within the Freudian notion of the uncanny (Rudd, 2013, pp. 107-113).

In “The Uncanny”, Freud’s trouble with making the uncanny specific is evident, especially when he argues that e.g. a severed hand (although associated with the castration complex) is not necessarily uncanny. Rudd ponders on Freud’s argument that the uncanny, “[...] depends on which characters we identify with in a tale” (As cited by Rudd, p. 115). Rudd argues that “Freud has once again made his explanation dependent, not on the unconscious but, rather, on the storyteller’s ‘peculiar emotional effect’” (2013, p. 115). Rudd further claims that Freud troubles to remain within his ‘master discourse of psychoanalysis’, as he consistently draws on the idea of intellectual uncertainty to term the uncanny and due to him being unable to avert his attention from literature (Rudd, 2013, pp. 114-116).

In order for Freud to explain why ‘the severed hand’ is not always uncanny, it ultimately leads him to split the concept into two, stating that, “An uncanny experience occurs either when repressed infantile complexes have been revived by some impression, or when the primitive beliefs we have surmounted seem once more confirmed” (1919, p. 17). Thus, he distinguishes between an uncanny experience evoked by something ‘*repressed*’ or something ‘*surmounted*’. Rudd focuses on these two views of the uncanny:

He [Freud] therefore distinguishes between a sense of uncanny caused by what is *repressed* as opposed to what has been *surmounted*. The former concerns ‘can be traced back without exception to something familiar that has been repressed’; for example, dismembered limbs, which for Freud bring to mind castration; or, being buried alive, also mentioned earlier, which is seen to evoke our ‘intra-uterine existence’. The latter type of uncanniness, in contrast, occurs ‘when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed’ – such as our ‘intellectual uncertainty’ about death or about the animate being lifeless (2013, p. 114).

It seems that the notion of the *repressed* uncanny is what Freud associates with psychoanalysis, thereby remaining within his argument that the familiar is repressed and recurs in an unfamiliar context, such as uncanny effects relating to the castration complex or womb-fantasies. This ‘sort of’ uncanny does need ‘reality-testing’. However, the uncanny evoked by *surmounted* beliefs, which were forgotten but have been confirmed (by encountering the uncanny), is what Rudd argues is

influenced by ‘intellectual uncertainty’ – as this uncertainty is about death or the animate being lifeless. The *surmounted* uncanny can be manipulated by ‘creative writers’, only when pretending to move in the world of ‘common reality’, which causes the reader to react as one would in real life (Rudd, 2013, p. 114-117).

### ***Concluding Remarks on Freud’s Uncanny***

Freud’s notion of the uncanny has been thoroughly investigated through the eyes of other critics. Therefore, I will divert my attention from him, and focus on other uncanny scholars in the next section of this thesis.

Freud seems to have trodden on unfamiliar grounds in his attempt to make the uncanny and the death drive specific, as he conclusively doubts his own thesis and advises the reader to accept it as nothing other than speculations. He experienced an uncertainty as to his own intellect as a psychoanalyst and his general thesis of the death drive. I would argue that he encountered the essence of the uncanny – the uncertainty and strangeness that it entails. As Royle and Bennett state:

To try to define the uncanny is immediately to encounter one of its decisive paradoxes, namely that it has to do with *troubling* of definitions, with a fundamental disturbance of what we think and feel. The uncanny has to do with a sense of strangeness, mystery or eeriness. More particularly it concerns a sense of unfamiliarity which appears at the very heart of the familiar, or else a sense of familiarity which appears at the very heart of the unfamiliar (2014, p. 35).

Thus, a sense of strangeness, an eerie feeling, something unfamiliar yet familiar are amongst other things what is embedded in the uncanny. Hence, it seems this refusal of a definite definition is something which paradoxically defines the uncanny.

## *Rudd's Uncanny*

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David Rudd (2013) has already been mentioned frequently in relation to Freud's notion of the uncanny. In this chapter I will explore Rudd's definition of the uncanny in more detail. In the previous section, I stated that Rudd focused on Freud dividing the uncanny into what is *repressed* and what is *surmounted*. In relation to these two views of what evokes the uncanny, Rudd states the difficulties Freud faces in this division:

He [Freud] is repeatedly thwarted by the power of literature, and of writers, to do things: first, to create uncanny effects without recourse to repressed material (drawing on *surmounted* fears); and second, even when repressed material is present (castration anxiety – as with the severed hand), to avert its return thanks to the writer's power (2013, p. 115).

After once again stating Freud's difficulty in specifying the uncanny, Rudd offers a guide to those who wish to draw on Freud's definition of the uncanny - one can choose to do it in two ways. The first way he suggests is rejecting the elements of psychoanalysis entirely, by "misappropriat[ing], and mak[ing] light of his 'talking cure'" (p. 115), claiming that Freud himself has (however not intentionally) rejected psychoanalysis. Rudd states, "there are indeed quite *conscious* psychological mechanisms at work, including 'uncertainty'" (p. 115); he argues this view as rejecting the psychoanalytical view of the unconscious and drawing more on the 'intellectual uncertainty', which Freud "initially attempted to decry in Jentsch's work" (p. 115); thereby explaining this sort of uncanniness as an uncertainty, which is largely produced by 'creative writers', as their abilities of creating it in fiction is endless. The second option he offers when using Freud's theory: "is to accept that there really *is* something disturbing and uncanny about these phenomena, but to recognize that Freud, in his attempt at mastery (or his doubts about its adequacy), either misses or avoids these effects" (p. 115).

Thus, Rudd states these two possibilities in dealing with Freud's uncanny notion. The first, to completely reject the psychoanalytical notions of the *repressed* uncanny, seems to me unnecessary. The point Rudd is making refers back to Freud's insecurity about the concept of the uncanny and his inability to refrain from Jentsch's 'intellectual uncertainty', where Rudd suggests that one can perceive Freud's arguments of the uncanny as similar to the concept of 'intellectual uncertainty'. I, however, find it a shame to entirely deny the psychological arguments Freud makes, as some of them seem to be validated in his text. However, I do agree with Rudd that Freud

sometimes seem to insist too blindly on the notions of psychoanalysis, and that ‘conscious psychological mechanisms are at work’, which causes the uncertainty that somewhat coins the uncanny. The second suggestion to reading Freud’s uncanny indicates, that one should accept the psychoanalytical aspects Freud argues for, while recognising that Freud ‘misses or avoids these effects’. In an ‘uncanny’ literary analysis by Rudd, he utilises some aspects of Freud’s ‘talking cure’, in arguing that one could see Freud’s notion of castration symbolically:

“[...] it seems far more plausible to read it symbolically (as do both Kristeva and Lacan), where it is our entry into language that results in the world being chopped into fragmented signifiers, denying us access to that wholesome oneness we imagined we once experienced” (Rudd, 2008, p. 6).

Then, Rudd does not entirely choose to rid himself of the psychoanalytical notions Freud explains the uncanny by, he contextualises them into (most frequently) Lacan’s semiotic notions, which will be discussed further in the next section.

Thus, I would not agree completely with Freud, as I do recognise his insecurities in differentiating between literary theory and psychoanalysis. However, I also do not agree with Rudd’s ‘either or’ way of drawing on Freud’s uncanny. I will apply the Freudian arguments of the uncanny which I find valid, whether they are based on *repressed* or *surmounted* views of the uncanny, as I find that neither excludes the other. However, Rudd offers an additional explanation aside from these two ways of dealing with Freud’s uncanny; he clarifies his own theoretical approach in uncovering the uncanny:

This is where a more post-structuralist reading of Freud can be instructive, rather than one that sees the uncanny as a phenomenon that can be deployed in the service of social liberation (and thereby reduced to a slogan). Where Freud claims that the ‘*Unheimlich*’ is in some way or other a subspecies of *heimlich*’, then, we might now want to reverse this claim to state that the *Heimlich* is a more fragile island set in an *unheimlich* sea; and that the ‘master discourse’ of psychoanalysis turns out to be no such thing, but is itself very much caught up in the ongoing process of signification (2013, p. 116).

Thus, he declares a poststructuralistic reading of the uncanny as his approach. Therefore, I will briefly clarify the theoretical notions of his main influence. His is largely influenced by the Lacanian notion of Poststructuralism, focusing through his book on Lacan’s register theory; the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real.

## ***Lacan's Symbolic Order***

Lacan is considered to be 'the French Freud', as his theories are very much inspired and interlinked with those of Freud. He has however developed a *semiotic* version of Freud's thoughts, by relating the fundamental principles of psychoanalysis with linguistic theory. Thus, he applies the psychoanalytic notions to the process of signification, contrary to the mental processes of human individuals. Lacan's often quoted dictum, 'the unconscious is structured like a language', exemplifies his view of the linguistic aspect of psychoanalysis. He views the mind as constituted by the language we use and not pre-existent to it. The Imaginary and the Symbolic are the first two stages in Lacan's register theory, in the process of signification. The Imaginary stage is influenced by no clear distinction between subject and object and individual self and other selves. Thus, Lacan introduces what he calls 'the mirror stage' which is where the infant learns to recognise a sense of a separate self. This is done through identifying with its image in a mirror, which is later reinforced by being able to distinguish between it and other people. In the recognition as a separate self, separate from the mother, anxiety as to the loss of prior symbiotic state is experienced. Thus, a demand towards making another 'other' part of itself arises, but deems itself impossible, as the realisation of being a separate self cannot be reversed. The mirror image of the self, also fails this demand of providing the child with a sense of a whole self, as it proves an unstable, incoherent self, which does not correspond to the real child. Therefore, in this stage, a sense of loss and lack is experienced in this inability to achieve the sense of whole self, the child experienced in relation to the mother. Therefore, the image is a fantasy, the 'Ideal-I' or 'Ideal-ego', created by the child, in order to compensate for this sense of lack and loss, which constitutes that the fantasy image is filled by others, such as role models and people whom the child can identify with. Initially, I perceived these stages chronologically, however, Lacan states that they are at play throughout adulthood as well, thus the imaginary realm continues to influence the individual and does not merely exist prior to the movement into the symbolic. The order of the Imaginary and the Symbolic is inevitably intertwined to work in tension with the Real (Johnston, 2014, para 2.1).

The key words in the context of the Symbolic stage are language and narrative. In the Symbolic stage (or linguistic stage) where the infant comprehends the linguistic system thereby being formed by the symbolic, as it learns to accept itself in terms of linguistic oppositional binaries, such as: male/female, father/son and mother/daughter. By accepting the rules of language, the child is able to cope with the idea of others. Lacan aligns the acceptance of the culturally

determined rules of language, with the Oedipal Complex. The Symbolic is only made possible in the acceptance of the Name-of-the-Father, which constitutes the laws and restrictions communicated by the father – the rules which control desire and communication. Only when accepting these rules, is one able to enter into a community of others. The Real is a state of need, driven by ‘desire’, wherein the search for satisfaction and sense of completeness dominates. However, Lacan states that ‘the real is impossible’, as we are forever separated from the Real, once we enter into the realm of language. The Real erupts, once we become aware of the materiality of our own existence (Johnston, 2014, para 2.1).

[...] according to Lacan, all processes of linguistic expression and interpretation, driven by “desire” for a lost and unachievable object, move incessantly (as in Derrida’s theory of *deconstruction*) along a chain of unstable signifiers, without any possibility of coming to rest on a fixed signified, or presence (Abrams, 2009, p. 294).

Thus, the poststructuralistic notion of this ‘chain of unstable signifiers’ never being able to constitute a permanent signified, is in some sense the idea of the Real – it is something which humans ultimately strive for, but is never able to reach. Rudd states that one only experiences the Real when encountering some sort of crisis or accident; that we are sometimes shocked into experiencing the Real (Rudd, 2008, pp. 8-10). Conclusively, in Lacan’s register theory the Imaginary and the Symbolic are inevitably linked to one another, working in tension with the Real. Aneleen Masschelein argues that Lacan refers to the uncanny in relation to ‘anxiety’, in one of his seminars:

The Uncanny” offers Lacan a key to the fundamental new insight in anxiety, namely that “anxiety may be without cause, but not without object”. Specifically, the object of anxiety is a special kind of object that has not yet attained the status of an object, namely the “object a”, which is also the ek-centric cause of desire. The way in which this object, situated outside the realms of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, is perceived is as in a nightmare or an apparition (Masschelein, 2011, p. 54).

This seminar is about anxiety (1963), and is by Lacan considered to be a radical discussion of “The Uncanny”. In the seminar, Lacan focuses on Freud’s case studies, literary texts and some psychoanalytic theories, and relates the aspect of anxiety with the philosophies of Søren Kierkegaard and Heidegger. In the seminar Lacan situates ‘the object of anxiety’ outside the Imaginary and the Symbolic (Masschelein, 2011, pp. 54-56).

## ***Concluding Remarks on Rudd's Uncanny***

Rudd (2013) states that the uncanny has been explored through Lacanian notions by scholars such as Weber, Cixous, Dolar, Žižek and Derrida, seeking a “linguistically informed basis for the phenomenon” (p. 116), thus Rudd states: “In Lacanian terms there is, more straightforwardly, a ‘common denominator’, as Dolar phrases it; namely, the uncanny is about ‘the interruption of the real into “homely”, commonly accepted reality” (p. 116). In Rudd’s conclusive remarks about the uncanny, he focuses on how he understands the uncanny, drawing closer to Jentsch’s ‘intellectual uncertainty’ and further from Freud’s fear of castration, but ultimately closest to Lacan’s never-ending chain of signifiers:

The uncanny is therefore less concerned with particular motifs than felt effects. It certainly involves such matters as ‘seeing’ and ‘blindness’, but there are not to do with any simplistic notion of castration; rather, they are concerned with the fact that our look is always partial, always distorted by desire and blind to a **gaze** that seems to emanate from outside our own, limited perspective. We can never see the uncanny in full view (p. 116-117).

That the encounter with the uncanny is able to evoke emotional effects within an individual is what Rudd emphasises in his view of the uncanny. The focus on the effect and what causes it, as well as the recipients of it, whether they are protagonists or readers of a book, is the emphasis this thesis will have when reading the uncanny in Lewis Carroll’s *the Alice Tales*.

In closing Rudd’s theoretical notions on the uncanny, a comparison of Freud’s uncanny to Lacan’s view of the phenomenon seems appropriate, “Lacan’s reworking [*of the uncanny*] seems far more plausible [than Freud’s ‘fear of castration’]; namely, that the fear turns on the fragility of one’s existence, strung between the Symbolic and the Real” (Rudd, 2008, p 15 (emphasis mine)). Thus, Rudd’s notion of the uncanny is constructed through the concepts of the Lacanian semiotics. The fear or uncertainty, the uncanny evokes, is to be seen as depicted in uncertainty towards the individual’s existence, wherein one resides in limbo between the Symbolic and the Real, never one, nor the other. Thereby, the view of the uncanny presented through Rudd and Lacan is primarily based on a poststructuralistic approach. In this approach, specific elements which evoke the effect of the uncanny are focused upon. Thereby, the concept is never understood in full, but conceptualised through these specific uncanny triggers.

## *My Approach to the Uncanny*

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Following a long line of critics who have sought to conceptualise the uncanny, I will now summarise my understanding of the uncanny, and most importantly my approach in analysing the uncanny in *Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*.

In Freud's struggle with making the uncanny specific, a discussion of how the uncanny can be viewed was initiated. The division of the concept into *the repressed* and *the surmounted* provided him to view the effect of uncanny as something which can be explained in terms of psychoanalysis or by the confirmation of some unbelievable primitive belief. In relation to the notion of the uncanny as *repressed*, the important statement is – something familiar which has been repressed, 'resurfacing' as something unfamiliar. Examples of the 'uncanny triggers' embedded in this aspect of the uncanny are: womb fantasies (or anything to do with the uterus), anything which can be argued to resemble castration, such as dismembered limbs (e.g. heads). The *surmounted* uncanny triggers are dependent upon some sort of old superstition (primitive fear) being confirmed, and thereby rendered uncanny. These triggers can be: ghosts, the inanimate functioning as animate and anthropomorphism. These two divisions of Freud's notion will be deployed in some aspects of the analysis, as explanatory devices to where the 'unfamiliar' aspect of the uncanny is situated as – either *surmounted beliefs* or *repressed experiences*. The phrase 'intellectual uncertainty' is to be understood in terms of Rudd's notion of it belonging to the *surmounted* uncanny, which is the sort of uncanny that caused Freud trouble, as this is considered to be unaffected by psychoanalysis.

In the consideration of the uncanny in this thesis, the focus will be on its effect - in terms of what causes its effect ('uncanny triggers'), what kind of effect it is and the recipients of it. In my analysis of *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), the uncanny will be considered through the terms stated throughout this chapter: the *repressed* uncanny, the *surmounted* uncanny, David Rudd's notion of the uncanny related to the process of signification being 'chopped up into fragmented signifiers'. This aspect will primarily be considered in relation to Alice's experiences of the uncanny.

## THE FRAMES OF *WONDERLAND* AND *LOOKING-GLASS*

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In this section of the thesis, I will argue for the effect of the uncanny by considering it in terms of the Freudian notions of the familiar being made unfamiliar and the Lacanian notions adopted by David Rudd. The effect of the uncanny occurs when something familiar (*heimlich*) recurs and is experienced as unfamiliar (*unheimlich*) in Freudian terms. The unfamiliar aspect in this analysis is considered in the worlds in *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*, whereas the familiar aspect is what Alice recognises as the real world - the world she leaves when entering the two other worlds. As understood by Rudd, the uncanny is considered the symbolic order being compromised, leaving the recipient of the effect in a state of uncertainty. This uncertainty is perceived as compromising the wholeness of our familiar understanding of the world into fragmented signifiers. This uncertainty will be viewed in terms of how *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* worlds constitute a different (unfamiliar) set of signifiers than the (familiar) world that Alice and the implied reader originate from. The effect on Alice and the implied reader is to be understood in terms of how their sense of a stable self is compromised, causing them to remain in 'limbo between the Symbolic and the Real'<sup>1</sup>.

In the analysis and discussion of the uncanny in *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*, I will focus on three different perspectives and functions of the uncanny. The function of the author, Lewis Carroll, dominates and manipulates the text by being the creator of the text, thereby also the creator of the uncanny effect. Freud emphasises the author's manipulating abilities in evoking an uncanny effect, in his distinguishing between the uncanny experienced in real life as opposed to the experiences it causes in fiction. He argues that the possibility for an author to create an uncanny effect in literature is based on the reality testing principle. He states that the effect of the uncanny can only occur once the setting of the fictional world is similar to the world of common reality, thereby causing the implied reader and the characters in the novel to react as they would in real life. More specifically, the notion of the Freudian uncanny discussed in this section will be the *surmounted* uncanny, which Freud argues can be manipulated by creative writers while being restricted by the reality testing principle<sup>2</sup>. Thus, I will establish how Carroll manipulates the implied reader and Alice into being able to experience the effect of the uncanny on the basis of the reality testing principle. Carroll's creation of a fantastical world cannot be considered as consistently

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Rudd's Uncanny'

<sup>2</sup> See 'Freud's Uncanny'

conforming to the principles of the real world, however, Carroll's narrator functions as a means of both detaching and engaging the implied reader in the novel, by commenting and advising the reader within the narrative. As a result, the narrator allows the implied reader to remain both outside and inside the text, causing the reader to gain an awareness of the real world in relation to that of fiction. Furthermore, Alice's start and end point is established to be the world of common reality, thereby rendering her pre-established knowledge of the world to be similar to that of the implied reader. Thus, whenever Alice utilises her pre-existent knowledge in order to make sense of the world of Wonderland and Looking-Glass, it is a way of reality testing the principles in these worlds. Hence, the second level of analysing the uncanny is through the recipients of the uncanny, which are both the implied reader of the text and the protagonist of the text (Alice). As stated, the author (and narrator) allows for the creation of the uncanny, which is to be experienced by the implied reader and Alice. As these two recipients of the uncanny effect reside on different levels in the text, the implied reader being both inside and outside the text and Alice always inside the text, they experience the effect of the uncanny in different ways. Therefore, I will consider the different levels, in which the uncanny is experienced on.

The focus in this chapter will be on the framing of the two novels, and how this framing allows for elements of the uncanny to be evoked in both the implied reader and Alice. This will be executed through a comparison of the two novels, focusing on their differences in terms of how Alice ventures between her real world and the Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds.

Both of the novels have a similar pattern in terms of their structure. Carroll has in both novels added a poem as epigraphs. In *Wonderland*, it is Carroll's poem "All in the Golden Afternoon" in which he recalls a joyful boat ride, where he wrote the story of *Alice* for the benefit of the three Liddell sisters. In *Looking-Glass* the poem entitled "Child of the Pure Unclouded Brow" is darker in its tone, than the poem in *Wonderland*. In terms of the difference in tone, one explanation is due to Carroll's loss for the real Alice (Alice Liddell), whom the character of Alice is believed to be based upon. No one knows the reason, but when Carroll wrote *Looking-Glass*, he was prohibited from seeing Alice Liddell (Gray, 2013, pp. 241-259). However, those are the only similarities in the epigraphs. In *Looking-Glass*: a chess problem consisting of a picture of a chess game, an instructional note and a preface (1879) Carroll wrote concerning the readers' reactions to the chess problem, is added.

## *The Opening Frames*

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She was considering, in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

(Carroll, 1865, p. 7)

Both *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* consist of a dream frame, in which the opening and closing frames are situated in Alice's real world, while the dream takes place in Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds. The opening, introductory frames in both novels present the physical circumstances and settings prior to Alice falling asleep. In *Wonderland* the introductory frame features a bored Alice, sitting by the riverbank beside her sister who lectures her. In *Looking-Glass* the introductory frame includes Alice, accompanied by Dinah and her kittens inside the drawing-room, where she lectures the kittens in behaving properly. In *Wonderland* the opening frame is brief, simply depicting Alice's bored state of mind and the outside setting, however, a small hint is made by the narrator of Alice falling asleep: "[...] the hot day made her feel very sleepy" (p. 7). In opposition, the opening frame in *Looking-Glass* is longer and more detailed. In *Looking-Glass* Alice's remarks about the chess game in her conversation with the kittens is an indicator of the events and characters of Looking-Glass world, as well as Alice's own considerations of what can be found in Looking-Glass house.

Thus, *Wonderland* is structured inside and outside Alice's dream-world, where her experiences in Wonderland are thought of as signifying those of the dream. However, the lines are not drawn specifically between Alice being awake and falling asleep; the introductory frame is not entirely closed. It is evident that the frame remains open, when the White Rabbit appears before Alice – thereby introducing a character of Wonderland into Alice's real world. A hint of Alice falling asleep is made, when the narrator mentions her sleepiness, however, there is no specific statement of when she falls asleep. Thus, there is no evidence that it is a dream until she awakens from it. The Rabbit functions as an indicator of what Alice is to expect in her stay in Wonderland, much like the chess pieces give away the plot of Looking-Glass world. However, the Rabbit has the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour (anthropomorphic), whereas the chess pieces are merely stated as inanimate and normal chess pieces. The differences in the indicators of the dream

worlds are important - the appearance of an anthropomorphic Rabbit in a world where the notions of animals do not include them talking and wearing clothes is odd. However, it does not seem odd to Alice initially when she hears the Rabbit talking, not before she notices its clothing and watch: “but when the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*” (Carroll, p. 7, emphasis in original text). The aspect of a talking animal ought to have caught Alice’s attention and the narrator also comments upon this: “(when she thought it over afterwards it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it seemed quite natural)” (Carroll, p. 7). Anthropomorphism (animals and object with the attributes of human characteristics or behaviour) features in the list of what evokes the uncanny<sup>3</sup>, therefore, one would expect Alice to experience a sense of the uncanny when encountering the Rabbit. However, in this incident Alice does not experience any *surmounted* uncertainty, as the uncanny is prone to evoke when encountering a talking, humanlike animal. Thus, the stage for the uncanny is set, and anthropomorphism is throughout the novels not a cause of any unsettling effects upon Alice. If we are to believe that Alice has already fallen asleep when encountering the Rabbit, then this could explain the lack of the uncanny effect, as she has already moved into a world constituted by a different set of signifiers, which she bluntly accepts. However, if she does not question the signifiers of *Wonderland*, nothing is to be considered uncanny as long as Alice remains in this world, which I will argue is not the case. Therefore, I will state this lack of uncanny effect as incidental and caused by the imaginative logic of a child, who could attribute an inanimate rabbit (for example a toy) with human qualities through play. Thus, the senses in Alice are not disturbed in the encounter with the Rabbit as its human attributes are familiar to Alice. However, the Rabbit evokes a different effect on the implied reader. This is when Carroll’s function as the creator of the uncanny effect is demonstrated. By not stating the exact point of departure into *Wonderland*, the implied reader experiences a kind of reader *hesitation*<sup>4</sup>, as the reader remains within the uncertainty of whether Alice is situated in *Wonderland* or not. Also, the implied reader has the perspective of an adult which allows for the effect of the *surmounted* uncanny, in which the familiarity of imagining animals (or toys) as having human attributes has become unfamiliar, thereby uncanny.

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<sup>3</sup> See “Listing the uncanny”.

<sup>4</sup> Todorov’s concept of the fantastic emphasises hesitation as uncertainty in the readers decision of considering a text as ‘uncanny’ or ‘marvellous’.

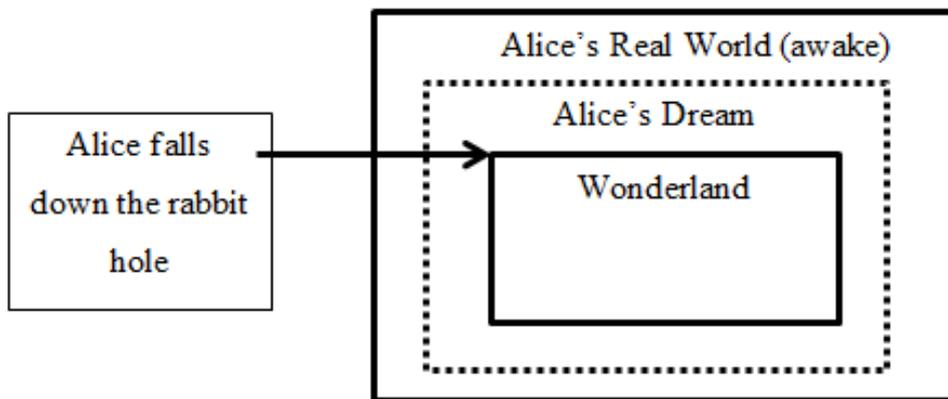
David Rudd (2013) also comments upon Alice's encounter with the Rabbit in the real world as being important in fully situating the Alice Tales within the uncanny, he contradicts a view one might take on the novels, in terms of their structural framing, because he states that the tales could be perceived as portal fantasies, as the Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds are separate from Alice's real world. However, Rudd's argument against this resides in the fact that the Rabbit appears before Alice's departure into Wonderland (Rudd, pp. 117 – 118). Thus, Carroll's act of keeping the introductory frame open and not specifically delimiting the world of Wonderland from that of Alice's familiar world, causes an uncertainty to be established in the implied reader in terms of when Wonderland begins. The uncertainty installed in the reader concerns the question of whether the Rabbit is merely a part of Alice's dream, or if there is a possibility that it is part of the real world. As the encounter with the Rabbit causes an uncertainty of what signifies Alice's real world and the world of Wonderland, the movement down the rabbit hole is the structural aspect, which clearly delimits the two worlds from each other, thereby closing the opening frame. Rudd argues that it is the significant movement from Alice's world into Wonderland, which allows for the effect of the uncanny, in arguing Wonderland to constitute another set of signifiers than Alice's world:

Indeed, *Alice* seems to me to dramatise how the whole process of signification falters when the signified slips beneath the signifier, as occurs quite overtly when Alice drops down the rabbit hole, this opening itself suggesting the dangerous porosity of the Symbolic.

(Rudd, 2013, p. 117, emphasis in original text).

Rudd's phrase 'the dangerous porosity of the Symbolic' is the key notion in this quote, as it captures the notion of the instability one encounters in the Lacanian Symbolic stage. Thus, Alice has entered the realm of the Symbolic once she enters Wonderland, by her fall down the rabbit hole, which allows an uncertainty in terms of signification. Thus, the White Rabbit initiates the uncertainty of the uncanny within the implied reader, which will continue through Lewis Carroll's two novels. The fall down the rabbit hole and the movement through the Looking-Glass function as distinct markers for when Alice ventures into another world, thus these actions clearly delimit the beginning of the literary frames structured around Alice's stay in the two fantastical worlds.

I would argue the framing structure of *Wonderland* is composed of these frames:

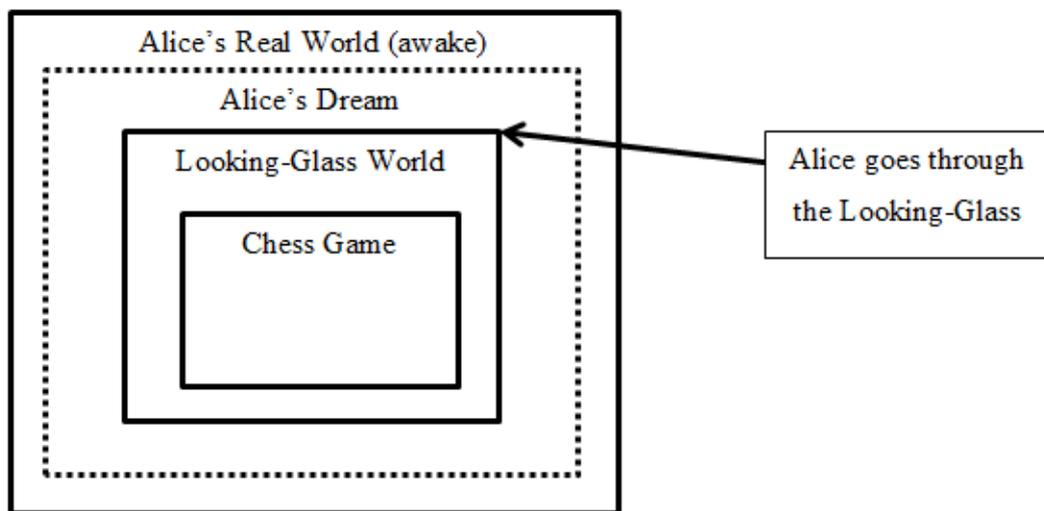


The line representing the dream frame is stippled due to the impossibility of exactly stating when Alice falls asleep (However, the end frame ought to be a straight line, as it is stated when she wakes up – yet this is beyond my technical skills). Thus, the beginning and the end is found in the frame of Alice's real word, wherein she falls asleep and tumbles down the rabbit hole, which opens up the dream frame, where she ventures into the frame of wonderland.

## ***The Frames within Looking-Glass***

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The framing structure of *Looking-Glass* differs from that of *Wonderland*, as the frame encompassing Alice's dream embodies two other frames. I will argue the frames of *Looking-Glass* are composed of this structure:



Similar to the illustration of the frames in *Wonderland*, the frame of Alice's dream is stippled (and ought to be straight at the end) as a result of the impossibility of stating the exact moment when Alice falls asleep. As shown in the illustration, within the frame of Looking-Glass World a chess game resides. The chess game functions as a way of structuring the plot in Looking-Glass, which I will now focus my attention on.

## ***The Chess Game***

“I declare it’s marked out just like a large chess-board!” (Carroll, 1865, p. 122).

Now that the frames of each novel has been analysed, I will focus my attention on how Carroll utilises the frame of the chess game as a way of structuring the plot in *Through the Looking-Glass*. In this section, I will analyse the chess game in terms of how this can be considered as an aspect of an uncanny effect experienced by the implied reader of the novel. I will first account for other critics’ consideration of the chess game as a structural aspect, and then focus on the relationship between a real game of chess and Carroll’s fictional chess, and the effect this has on the implied reader. In the above quote, Alice states the fields of the Looking-Glass world’s structure as a giant chess game. Notably, this is not the first encounter with the chess game in the novel. Already before the beginning of *Through the Looking-Glass*, Carroll sets up the plot structure as that of a chess game. A ‘Dramatis Personæ’, the ‘cast list’, features on the very first page, wherein the characters of the novel are represented as either pawns or pieces belonging to the category of Red or White. Furthermore, on the following page a chess problem appears. An illustration of the chess game before the commencement of the game, and the instructional note, “White pawn (Alice) to play, and win in eleven moves” (p. 113) is found. Below the chess problem, the moves of the game are presented in detailed description according to the chapters in the book. The moves which Carroll list constitute the solution to the *Looking-Glass* chess problem, between the oppositional forces (White vs. Red), in which Alice is to be queen at the end of the game. The moves are distinguished by whether they are made by Alice or another piece or pawn. Glen Robert Downey discusses Carroll’s chess game in his article “The Truth about Pawn Promotion: Chess and the Search for Autonomy in Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass*” (1998), and states that not all the moves represent physical movement across the chessboard. Therefore, he argues that the moves do not conform to the established rules of standard chess. The deviation of the rules from standard chess has been a focal point in the critical attention to Carroll’s chess game (Downey, 1998, pp. 123-126). In the critical response to the novel, while Carroll was alive, this focus on the standard rules of chess is evident in Carroll’s defence of the chess game, in the preface to the 1897 edition of *Looking-Glass*:

As the chess-problem, given on the previous page, has puzzled some of my readers, it may be well to explain that it is correctly worked out, so far as the *moves* are concerned. The *alternation* of Red and White is perhaps not so strictly observed as it might be, and the

“castling” of the three Queens is merely a way of saying that they entered the palace; but the “check” of the White King at move 6, the capture of the Red Knight at move 7, and the final “checkmate” of the Red King, will be found, by any one who will take the trouble to set the pieces and play the moves as directed, to be strictly in accordance with the laws of the game (Carroll, 1897, p. 103).

This was written due to readers (including critics) commenting on the chess game as the structure. Most notably amongst the critics of the game is Falconer Madan’s critique of the game in *A Handbook of the Literature of the Rev. C. L. Dodgson* (1931), who compares the rules of a real chess game to those of Carroll’s, focusing on factors within Carroll’s game that does not follow those of a real game, especially the lack of alternating turns between the two sides. He states:

The chess framework is full of absurdities and impossibilities, and it is unfortunate that Dodgson did not display his usual dexterity by bringing the game, as a game, up to chess standard. He is known to have been a chess-player [...] He might have searched for a printed problem to suit his story, or have made one. But he allows the White side to make nine consecutive moves(!): he allows Alice (a white pawn) and Alice becoming a Queen, to be two separate moves: he allows the White King to be checked without either side taking any notice of the fact: he allows two Queens to castle(!): he allows the White Queen to fly from the Red Knight, when she should take it. Hardly a move has a sane purpose, from the point of view of chess (as cited by Haughton, pp. 324 – 325).

Thus, Madan’s focus lies on Carroll’s deviation from the rules of a chess game. His argument, about Carroll (Dodgson) not bringing the game up to the standard of a real chess game and the suggestion that he could have made a suitable game for the story, is the main point of his critique of Carroll’s chess game. He argues that Carroll made an artistic failure because he does not submit to the rules of a real chess game. It does seem odd that Carroll attempts to ‘persuade’ the reader into accepting the structure of *Looking-Glass* as that of a chess game by including the formatting constituents of a chess game (the chess problem). However, I read Carroll’s preface as an intentional pun aimed at the reader. The suggestion he makes “to set the pieces and play the moves as directed, to be *strictly in accordance with the laws of the game*” (Carroll, p. 103, emphasis added), is punning the laws of the game. Carroll does not refer to a real chess game; he refers to the laws integrated in his novels. In other words, the chess game may not resemble that of a real life chess game, but that does not make it any less real according to his fictionalised world. Thus, if the reader were to play a game of chess, following the moves of the Looking-Glass chess game, it

would turn out as nonsensical and causing the same uncertainty on the player, as it does to the reader of the novel.

In other critics' considerations of the chess game in *Looking-Glass*, the deviations listed by Madan are those which define the game as not conforming to the standard rules of chess (Downey, 1998, pp. 125-128). Thus, it is now established that Carroll's chess game cannot be considered to follow the rules of a standard game of chess. This should come as no surprise to the reader, as both the world of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* continuously defy the standard conventions of rules and order. Structurally, Alice does follow the movements described in the chess problem constructed by Carroll; the plot is based on the solution to the chess problem given at the novel's outset. She proceeds from her starting square to the eighth rank where she advances to be Queen and checkmates the Red King by capturing his Queen and ultimately shakes her into a kitten. The characters in the game function as players in the game, and their role is listed in the chess problem. However, some of the characters are not listed; the Gnat, the Paper Man and the Goat. These do not function as opponents in the game, which also suggests that the novel should not entirely be considered as a real game of chess. The division of the characters into Red or White is also notable, as the standard colours of chess pieces are white and black. Downey considers this to be a way of refraining from working with the binaries of good vs. evil, which those colours could easily suggest. However, when looking at the character traits there is a tendency for the Red players to be characterised as more stern and the White players to be quite friendly, however, this cannot be applied to all the characters (Downey, 1998, pp. 126-127).

Downey also argues that not all critics who have discussed the chess game focus on its similarity to a real game. Alexander Taylor argues in "The White Knight: A Study of C.L. Dodgson (1952) that it is illogical to expect a logical game of chess to be dreamed by a child. Furthermore, he also considers the point of view of the pawn (Alice) as an important factor, as the pawn cannot see the entire game being played and is only conscious and attentive to the areas it plays in. He allegorises the pawn's perspective to that of a human's impression of life. However, Downey argues that Taylor cannot refrain from considering the chess game in terms of the standard rules, as he attempts to explain the problem Madan argues with the White King being left in check:

There is therefore something very like a checkmate and a fairly complicated one. The only objection is that the White King must have been in check while the White Queen moved to Q. R. 6<sup>th</sup> (soup) at Move 10. On the other hand, when Alice was on the Seventh Square she

was still a pawn. The White King was behind her and if he had moved to Q. B. 5th she would not have known and he would not have been in check (as cited by Downey, p. 130).

Thus, Taylor uses the rules of chess in arguing the case of the chess problem, therefore not consistently arguing the chess game as irrelevant to the novel. Furthermore, Downey mentions Martin Gardner's arguments about the logic of the game being as 'mad' as the logic of the Looking-Glass world in *The Annotated Alice* (1960). Downey states that 'mad' is an oversimplification in explaining the non-traditional principles Carroll uses in structuring the game as well as the novel. Downey argues that the principles of the game and the novel(s) contain their own logic, one that is not merely explained as mad, but which is more elaborate and incomprehensive in accordance with the logic created by Carroll's. (Downey, 1998, pp. 130-131).

In Downey's discussion of the different approaches to Carroll's chess game, a common denominator seems to be the comparison of the game to a standard game of chess, and a consideration of the game as merely illogical. Thus, as the chess structure loses its ability to be viewed as an actual game of chess, the familiarity of chess becomes something unfamiliar. The intellectual uncertainty installed in the reader is caused by the reader's inability to confirm Carroll's chess game as a real game of chess.

Downey states the premises of how he approaches the game of chess. The reader must acknowledge and admit to being unable to understand and find solution in the chess game, thereby viewing the game as a literary puzzle, rather than an actual game. Therefore, the reader must not allow "some preconceived scheme of what we think Carroll's chess problem "should" be doing influence what is there in front of us" (Downey, 1998, p. 137). Thus, Downey's premises are that the chess game is to be understood as a literary concept, in which the reader should not consider it in terms of a real life chess game, even though Carroll sets the stage for it. However, this seems to be the difficulty most readers have with their involvement in the novel, as Carroll "tricks" them into viewing it as a real game, through the use of the chess problem. Downey also focuses on the difference in how the reader and Alice experience the game. Alexander Taylor states about Alice's perspective being that of the pawn, rendering her unable to view the entire game at play, is also important to Downey. As Alice's view is limited she is unable to fully understand the meaning of her experiences. This view opposes the view of the reader, who functions somewhat like a player, who can peer over the entire board, seeing how the various pieces develop from move to move. However, he argues that this perspective of the reader is also limited, as it is not a real game of chess which causes it to affect the reader in the same way as Alice; subverting the attempts of

understanding things. Thus, a difference between the experience of the implied reader and the protagonist is stated. Furthermore, he considers three different levels of the game (in accordance with the levels I stated I will analyse): Alice's game, the reader's game, and Carroll's mastering of the game. In the first level, that of Alice (and the fictional characters of the game), the characters are actively involved in the game, which is seen in the struggle among the individual pieces. At the second level, the implied reader's perspective, the chess problem is attempted to be solved, but while still respecting the predetermined movements, and the underlying implications of Alice's dream journey. At the third level, Carroll's (and the narrator) perspective, the chess game is a demonstration of the control Carroll has over the events in Looking-Glass world, while also manipulating and controlling the reactions the reader has to these events. Downey even states that Carroll has created a new mode of writing: "In *Through the Looking-Glass*, he creates a new genre of imaginative fiction in which the rules of his genre are not simply unfamiliar, but are apt to change as he sees fit" (1998, p. 139).

In my analysis, I will remain within the three levels, in which Downey focuses on, as I think there is an important difference in the way the implied reader experiences the novel and the way Alice does. In arguing for the implied reader experiencing effects of the uncanny in *Looking-Glass*, I will state that the chess game is what can be considered uncanny, and the recipients are Alice and the reader. For Alice, the effects of the uncanny are found in many specific experiences in her adventures in Looking-Glass and Wonderland, which will be analysed in detail in "Alice's Experiences of the Uncanny Effects". To the implied reader, the feeling of uncanniness is triggered when the presumption that the novel is structured as a real game of chess is proven wrong, leaving the reader with a sense of uncertainty. Furthermore, I would argue, that the main cause for anything uncanny in relation to the novel is Carroll, rendering him the creator of all things uncanny in both novels. Carroll's control is also seen in his creation of the narrator. The narrator has the point of view of a second person narrator, who uses the pronoun 'you' to either engage or detach the reader from the story. The narrator is keen to inform the reader about Alice's thoughts and whereabouts elsewhere in the novel. Thus, the narrator engages the reader in the story, both by the use of the pronoun 'you' in commentary notions in the story, but also through the use of pictures and symbolism which are only presented to the reader and not to the characters in the text. Thus, the experiences of the implied differ from those of the characters in both novels due to these functions. The narrator frequently interrupts the action of the plot, commenting and advising the reader, for example, in *Wonderland*, the narrator advises the reader to look at a picture in order to understand

what a Gryphon is, “(If *you* don’t know what a Gryphon is, look at the picture”) (Carroll, p. 71, emphasis added). The effect of this commentary advice situates the reader outside the action of the novel, looking at a picture, reinstating the reader in the real world instead of the fictional. Also in *Looking-Glass*, the narrator explains to the implied reader why Alice is surprised by the clock in Looking-Glass house, which has a face of an old man, grinning at her: “(*you* know you can only see the back of it [the clock] in the Looking-Glass” (Carroll, p. 110, emphasis mine), thus the uncanny effect Alice experiences is due to the clock having anthropomorphic attributes on the other side of the mirror. Another example is when Humpty Dumpty tells Alice about how he pays off words to behave a specific way, ““when I make a word do a lot of work like that,” said Humpty Dumpty, “I always pay it extra”” (Carroll, p. 162), in which Alice wonders how he pays them, the narrator comments: “(Alice didn’t venture to ask what he paid them with; and so you see I ca’n’t tell *you*.)” (Carroll, p. 162, emphasis in original text). This function is important in relation to the implied reader, as the narrator controls when the reader is to either be absorbed in the fictional world or the real world. This offers another experience to the implied reader, than that of Alice. In relation to the chess game an important feature is the chess problem and the ‘dramatis personæ’ which constitutes the chess game in relation to the real world, thus creating an expectation of a real game of chess in the implied reader. Alice is never presented with these preliminary indicators of the game of chess, she merely acknowledges it as a game of chess when the Red Queen tells her to function as a pawn in order to be Queen and when she sees the board before entering it. The role of the reader is thus both as player, participant and observer of the game.

Downey allegorises the relationship between reader and text with the Walrus and the Carpenter. The Walrus and the Carpenter symbolise the reader, and the oyster the text. The walrus and the carpenter (reader) devour the contents of the text by whatever means necessary, without consideration for the pearl that might reside inside the oyster (text), or maybe without being able to consider the pearl. The pearl is to be understood as the meaning of the text – thus, there is no chance for a reader of the text to get the pearl without trying to recognise how the oyster works. Therefore, Downey does not render it impossible to captivate some sort of meaning from the text, he merely states that the reader must have an awareness of ‘how the oyster works’. Thus, the reader must keep in mind how Carroll’s laws works, and accept that the logic and laws of the novels need to be understood as just that, and are not to be compared to the rules and laws familiar to the readers and the critics. Meaning that the implied reader needs to acknowledge that Carroll’s chess game

functions in accordance to the rules of the game, while being aware of how the rules of Looking-Glass work.

## *The Closing Frames*

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She took her off the table as she spoke, and shook her backwards and forwards with all her might. The Red Queen made no resistance whatever: only her face grew very small, and her eyes got large and green: and still, as Alice went on shaking her, she kept on growing shorter—and fatter—and softer—and rounder—and—it really *was* a kitten, after all.

(Carroll, 1872, pp. 204-205, emphasis in original text)

In the closing of the introductory frames, Alice's movement through the rabbit hole and the looking-glass initiates another frame; the dream. The framing of Alice's dream is situated in Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds.

The structural effect of the dream in both novels is that it distinguishes between Alice's real world and the fantastical worlds of Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds. The beginning of the dream in Wonderland remains an open frame, as opposed to the sudden abruption of its ending when Alice exclaims, "Who cares for *you*? [...] You're nothing but a pack of cards!" (Carroll, p. 95). In this statement, she acknowledges the pack of cards as having the meaning she is familiar with: inanimate playing cards. However, she had spent her entire stay in Wonderland bluntly accepting their anthropomorphic nature. The fact that she recognises the cards as 'nothing but a pack of cards' indicates her return to her real world, in an awakened state. Alice's recognition of the signifier 'cards' has been reinstated in her awakening. Thus, the cards lose their function as animate in Alice's transition into the awakened state. Furthermore, the movement from wonderland into Alice's real world is emphasised in the transitioning of the cards as well, as their signifier 'cards' changes into 'leaves':

At this point the whole pack rose up into the air, and came flying down upon her; she gave a little scream, half of fright and half of anger, and tried to beat them off, and found herself lying on the bank, with her head in the lap of her sister, who was gently brushing away some dead leaves that had fluttered down from the trees upon her face (Carroll, pp. 95-96).

This demonstrates that another set of signifiers is associated with Alice's real, awakened world, as opposed to the signifiers of the dream world of Wonderland. A similar transition happens in *Looking-Glass* in the chapters "Shaking" and "Waking", as the Red Queen from Looking-Glass world transitions into the kitten Alice was talking to before falling asleep (see introductory quote).

Thus, the movement into Wonderland and Looking-Glass world allows for signifiers to be compromised and confused. Therefore, the movement out of these worlds indicates an attempt at restoring the signifiers once again, allowing for Alice to reinstate her familiarity with her real world. In this transition state, similar elements in both novels assist Alice in reinstating the constituents of her real world. Both novels are situated in the same place at the beginning and at the end, as Alice remains in the same place while she sleeps. *Wonderland* is both at the beginning and end situated outside the house, whereas in *Looking-Glass* the story starts and ends inside the house. For Alice, being inside the house can be understood as an aspect of home. This aspect of home is to be understood in relation to Freud's binary opposition familiar/unfamiliar, where the unfamiliar is the set of signifiers Alice has experienced in Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds, which she needs to make familiar again. Thus, the familiarity of the setting inside the house functions as an element, which assists Alice in restoring the signification she is familiar with from her real world. And in *Wonderland*, Alice's sister could be argued to symbolise the familiar aspect represented both at the beginning and the end. The importance of the sister in the end is an attempt at shutting down the signification Alice has experienced in her dream, Rudd states: "At the end of the story, this sister will seek once again to perform an exercise in textual simplification [...], shutting down the very signification opened up by Alice's vivid dreams with their endless and very vivid conversations" (Rudd, 2013, p. 117). Furthermore, the sister is represented in a short comment by the narrator at the end of *Looking-Glass*, in the chapter 'Which Dreamed it?', where Alice insistently tells the kitten to confess (which she argues it will do if it looks at the chess figure of the Red Queen) that it was turned into the Red Queen, and therefore ventured alongside Alice in Looking-Glass world:

("But it wouldn't look at it," she said, when she was explaining then thing afterwards to her sister: "it turned away its head, and pretended not to see it: but it looked a *little* ashamed of itself, so I think it *must* have been the Red Queen").

(Carroll, p. 206, emphasis in original text)

Thus, in order to 'shut down the signification opened in the dream', in this novel, Alice is initially talking to the kitten, and then later on with her sister. Perhaps, since Alice is familiar with the process (since she experienced it when awakening from *Wonderland*), she is now more capable of doing it herself (even though the Kitten assists her), and does not need her sister's help in this

process. However, since Alice believes the Kitten to have ventured into her dream, she seems to be incapable of shutting the signification down entirely, thus, she does need her sister after all.

The uncanny has so far been analysed and discussed in relation to Freud's concepts of the binary oppositions, *familiar* and *unfamiliar*, in relation to the real world and Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds. My focus has been on the implied reader and Alice's pre-existing knowledge functioning as reality testing principles, which allow for an experience of the uncanny. Lewis Carroll is considered the creator of the uncanny effects in relation to the Alice novels, where his function as author, along with the narrator, manipulates the implied reader and Alice into experiencing the uncanny on different levels. I have argued that the chess game is an artistic success as opposed to an artistic failure as Taylor argues in his article. Carroll successfully demonstrates the manipulating abilities he holds as author in confusing the readers about whether to consider the game in terms of the rules of a real chess game or a fictionalised chess game. The frames of the novels have been analysed and discussed in terms of how Alice and the reader venture between the real world and Wonderland and Looking-glass worlds. In the discussion of the chess game, the focus was on the implied reader and the narrator's ability to detach and engage the reader in the text, refraining from focusing too much on Alice. Therefore, my next chapter will focus on Alice's experiences of the uncanny effect.

## **ALICE'S EXPERIENCES OF THE UNCANNY EFFECTS**

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The focus in this section of the thesis will be on Alice's experiences of the uncanny effect, as opposed to the implied reader's experiences. The view of the uncanny in these chapters will be discussed and analysed through the notions of the *surmounted* and the *repressed* uncanny. I will argue that the notion of 'intellectual uncertainty' is embedded in the *surmounted* uncanny. In the chapter "The *Sourmounted* Uncanny", I will discuss the intellectual uncertainty Alice experiences repeatedly in her encounter with the laws and rules of Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds. In the chapter "The *Repressed* Uncanny" I will discuss Alice's experiences with the psychoanalytical uncanny triggers, and in "Alice's Uncanny Sense of Identity" I will argue that the uncanny effects experienced by Alice causes to perceive her identity as fractured.

## ***The 'Surmounted' Uncanny***

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“Let the jury consider their verdict,” the King said, for about the twentieth time that day. “No, no!” said the Queen. “Sentence first – verdict afterwards.” “Stuff and nonsense!” said Alice loudly. “The idea of having the sentence first!”

(Carroll, 1865, p.95)

The uncanny effects which are evoked by what has been *surmounted* are related to the notion of ‘intellectual uncertainty’. This uncertainty is most notably about death (anxiety of death), the inanimate coming to life, as ghosts, or in terms of anthropomorphism or animism. The aspect of the uncanny is most commonly found in literature; however, it can only be considered uncanny when it complies with the reality testing principle. I will argue for the notion of ‘intellectual uncertainty’ to be located in Alice’s experiences with the reversal of order in *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* worlds, as the pre-existing knowledge embedded in her conception of the world is tested throughout her experiences in the world. In the encounter with the uncanny effect of the ‘intellectual uncertainty’, she performs an act of reality testing of the order and rules of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* worlds by applying her pre-existing knowledge from her real world in relation to the information she is given of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* worlds.

The reversal of order is embedded in both Alice novels. In *Looking-Glass* world I will argue that the reversal of order is a result of the mirror Alice moves, as this world is situated on the other side of the mirror. This causes the world to be mirrored with Alice’s real world, and the rules and laws to be understood in a different way than in Alice’s real world, causing Alice to reality test the rules of *Looking-Glass*. In Alice’s meeting with the White Queen, her explanation of the reversal of time causes some confusion to Alice:

“I don’t understand you,” said Alice. “It is dreadfully confusing!” “That’s the effect of living backwards,” the Queen said kindly: “it always makes one a little giddy at first—”. “Living backwards!” Alice repeated in great astonishment. “I never heard of such a thing!” “—but there’s great advantage in it, that one’s memory works both ways.” “I’m sure *mine* only works one way,” Alice remarked. “I ca’n’t remember things before they happen.” (Carroll, 1872, p. 148)

Thus, the White Queen declares the reversal of time as a fact in *Looking-Glass* world. Alice has a hard time with accepting this as a condition, because the time factor from her own world is embedded in her way of making sense of the world. She uses the knowledge she has from her own

world as arguments for not understanding the rules of the new world. Previously, Alice has experienced a backwards effect in terms of movement, when she was forced to walk in the opposite direction of where she intended to go, in order to meet the Red Queen. As Alice enters the Looking-Glass garden, she spots a hill where she believes she will be able to get a full view of the garden, so she walks in the direction of the Hill, but consequently ends up in front of, or inside the house. In her final attempt to reach the hill, she meets the Flowers of the garden who announces the approaching Red Queen, who Alice then walks towards. As she is about to leave, the Rose advises Alice to walk in a different direction in order to get to the Queen: “You ca’n’t possibly do that,” said the Rose: “*I should advise you to walk the other way*” (Carroll, 1872, p.120). Alice considers this advice nonsense, but ultimately follows it and walks in the opposite direction which leads to her encounter with the Red Queen. Thus, the effect of the mirror is also found in this oppositional aspect of movement. Furthermore, a combination of the reversal of time and movement is established when Alice runs terribly fast alongside the Red Queen, consequently moving nowhere:

The most curious part of the thing was, that the trees and the other things round them never changed their places at all: however fast they went, they never seemed to pass anything. “I wonder if all the things move along with us?” thought poor Alice. And the Queen seemed to guess her thoughts, for she cried “Faster! Don’t try to talk!” (Carroll, 1872, p. 123)

Thus, Alice initially notices the objects around her remain in the same place, when she tries to establish a concept of the logic of movement, thus she argues that the objects move alongside herself and the Queen. However, while they are running, the Queen says: “Why, we passed it ten minutes ago! Faster” (p. 123). Logically, if moving further than aimed, one would go back in order to get to the place intended, however, in this statement, the Queen exemplifies the backwards principle. Alice attempts to comprehend the logic of movement in Looking-Glass by comparing it to the logical order of her real world: “Well in *our* country [...] you’d generally get somewhere else – if you ran very fast for a long time as we’ve been doing” (p. 124, emphasis in original text). The Queen elaborates further on the rules of movement in Looking-Glass world when they arrive at their destination: “Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!” (p. 124, emphasis in original text).

Alice also experiences that time goes nowhere, similar to moving nowhere alongside the Red Queen. In Wonderland, time does not move backwards, or nowhere, as it has stopped (it is

always six o'clock), causing it to continuously remain teatime for the Hatter, the March Hare and the Dormouse. This is also an example of a different set of rules in Alice's dream worlds, however, these rules only apply to the three participants of the tea party. The reason which causes time to stop is a result of a quarrel the Hatter had with Time. In the Hatter's conversation with Alice, they come across the subject of time as Alice exclaims that the riddle asked by the Hatter is a waste of time as there is no answer to it, which causes the Hatter to explain a personification of time: "If you knew Time as well as I do", said the Hatter, "you wouldn't talk about wasting *it*. It's *him*" (Carroll, 1865, p. 54, emphasis in original text). Thus, he introduces time as a person to Alice, who she must treat with respect. Initially, Alice does not understand this statement, causing her to experience an effect of the uncanny in terms of anthropomorphism, because time is attributed a humanlike personality who you can argue with. The understanding of time differs from Alice's familiar knowledge of time as an objectively viewed measuring component. Alice explains her comprehension of time to the Hatter in relation to learning music, where she attempts to "beat time" (p. 54). The Hatter responds "he wo'n't stand beating" (p. 54), and explains his quarrel with Time, in relation to a concert he gave to the Queen of Hearts, where the Queen accused him of 'murdering time' (p. 55). Thus, the threat of murdering *him* caused Time to punish the Hatter by remaining six o'clock. This punishment is symbolised in the Hatter's clock being two days wrong, and his frenzied attempt to make it work correctly by smearing butter on it. As it is always teatime, there is no time for anything but drinking tea, causing the party to move around the table in order to find a clean cup. This explanation makes sense to Alice, and in her attempt to fully accept the explanation from the Hatter, she asks: "what happens when you come to the beginning again?" (p. 56), which seems a logical question, as the cups will all be dirty at some point in time. However, the Dormouse interrupts Alice, saying: "suppose we change the subject?" (p. 56), thereby, interrupting Alice's attempt to reality test the explanation she has been offered, thereby, keeping her in a state of uncertainty of what happens when there are no more cups – or whether this will even happen as the tea party resides in a time loop, acting out the same tea party over and over again.

The fact that Carroll alters the conception and function of time in both his novels are symbolic in his reconfiguring of the concept of order, as time is a measuring aspect, which orders events according to past, present, and future. However, in Carroll's worlds, time must be understood in opposition to our concept of time – herein, it functions as an element which has the ability of creating disorder. It is in Wonderland treated as a personified subject, who you have to treat with respect in order to preserve the order it holds. In Looking-Glass world it shares the

systematic measuring notion of explaining events occurring in ordered sequences. However, it functions in reverse, thereby, dissolving our conceptualised understanding of time.

In relation to Alice being kept in a state of uncertainty by the Dormouse, I would like to mention some other attempts Alice makes at understanding the logic of Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds, which are unresolved. In Wonderland, she encounters the Mock Turtle who explains the structure of his education. When Alice asks how many hours a day he had lessons, he answers: “Ten hours the first day [...] nine the next, and so on” (Carroll, 1865, p. 75), whereas Alice initially reacts by stating: “What a curious plan!” (p. 75), to which he explains the logic of it, using the noun lesson as a pun for lessen: “That’s the reason they’re called lessons [...] because they lessen from day to day” (p. 75). This logic structure of the Mock Turtle’s lessons makes Alice form the hypothesis following the logic of Wonderland, that the eleventh day will then be a holiday, which is confirmed by the Mock-Turtle. In an attempt to altogether confirm her hypothesis she has been presented with, she asks: “And how did you manage in the twelfth?” (p. 75), to which she interruptedly receives the answer: “That’s enough about lessons” (p. 75). Thus, her attempt at comprehending the logic of Wonderland is once again disrupted by the inhabitants of the world. However, the roles of who authorises logic are reversed when Alice recites *‘Tis the voice of the sluggard’* to the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon. “That’s different from what *I* used to say when I was a child” (p. 81) and the Mock Turtle claims: “but it sounds uncommon nonsense” (p. 81). The Mock-Turtle and the Gryphon attempt to comprehend the poem in the same manner Alice attempted to comprehend the structure of the lessons, by asking questions. The Mock-Turtle asks about the content of the poem, to which Alice explains best as she can, but “longed to change the subject” (p. 81), similar to the way the Dormouse and the Mock-Turtle changed the subject in order to prevent a comprehension of the logic presented. However, the Mock-Turtle and the Gryphon still function as authoritative figures to whom, “Alice did not dare to disobey” (p. 81). Compared to teachers of Alice, she continues to explain the poem, but is unable to portray it in a way that allows for the Mock-Turtle and the Gryphon to understand it: “It’s by far the most confusing thing that *I* ever heard!” (p. 82), exclaims the Mock-Turtle, causing the Gryphon to discharge the subject: “Yes, I think you’d better leave off” (p. 82). Thus, it seems that her attempt to comprehend the logic on both Alice and the Mock-Turtle and Gryphon’s behalf is never accomplished.

An example of Alice fully comprehending the logic of her dream worlds is in her stay in the garden of live flowers in Looking-Glass world. Initially, the flowers’ ability to talk renders Alice affected by the uncanny. When she initially exclaims that she wishes for the Tiger-lily to be able to

talk, she is astonished when it suddenly replies. Thus, the anthropomorphic qualities of the Tiger-lily cause an uncanny effect on Alice. In an attempt to comprehend the logic of the anthropomorphic flowers, Alice asks: “How is it you can all talk so nicely?” (p. 119). The Flowers explain that it is due to the ground being hard, as it causes them to remain awake, whereas the flowers Alice has encountered before had been planted in soft soil. Where the “beds” are too soft; “so that the flowers are always asleep” (p. 119), to which Alice response is “This sounded like a very good reason, and Alice was quite pleased to know it” (p. 119). In this example of the logic of Looking-Glass world, Alice is allowed to comprehend it, and is not interrupted in an attempt to make sense of it. She is even able to link the logic to her pre-existing knowledge with the logic of talking flowers in Looking-Glass; if the soil is too hard, the flowers will remain awake and be able to talk, whereas if it is too soft, they will consequently fall asleep. Thus, she does experience an aspect of the uncanny, triggered by anthropomorphism, creating the effect of ‘intellectual uncertainty’ upon Alice.

Causality has been influenced by the mirror effect’s reversal of order, reconfiguring the order of the concept into effects happening prior to the cause of it. This also causes Alice to experience a sense of the uncanny in Looking-Glass world. Not only is the White Queen subjected to living backwards in terms of time, she also experiences the effects of a cause prior to the cause happening. Alice experiences the White Queen, first putting bandage on her finger, then screaming loudly and realising that her finger is bleeding. Alice asks if the Queen pricking her finger caused the bleeding, to which the Queen responds: “I haven’t pricked it *yet* [...] but I soon shall—oh, oh oh!” (p. 150). Thus, the White Queen experiences the pain (causing her to scream); the effect of the prick, before it happens. She does in fact prick her finger on a brooch-pin, causing it to bleed. Alice finds this reversal of order unsettling, but not enough for her to experience it as an uncanny effect; she finds it funny instead of unsettling “feeling very much inclined to laugh” (p. 150). However, the White Queen gives account of another example of the effect happening before the cause of it: “there’s the King’s Messenger [the Hatter]. He’s in prison now, being punished: and the trial doesn’t even begin till next Wednesday: and of course the crime comes last of all” (p. 149). The legal system in Looking-Glass is similar to the one in Wonderland, evidenced by the Queen of Hearts announcement: “Sentence first—verdict afterwards” (p. 95). In the courtroom scene in Wonderland, the Mad Hatter is also involved, as he is the first witness called before the court. He apologises for drinking tea, as he was not able to finish before entering the court (which he never can, as he is doomed to always drink tea by Time). The Mad Hatter is given permission by the King

to leave the court, resulting in the Hatter outrunning the officer who the Queen of Hearts instructs: “[...] just take his head off outside” (p. 88). Thus, the Hatter is both involved in the legal systems in both worlds, whereas he in Wonderland is able to avoid prison, he is not as fortunate in Looking-Glass World. Fortunately, Alice encounters the Hatter in the midst of the battle between the Lion and the Unicorn and is told by the King that he is released from prison; however, no explanation to his release or imprisonment is made. Thus, the Hatter must have convinced the legal system that he never would do the crime he had been punished for. However, the Hatter’s experiences of the legal system seem to have rendered his talkative spirit mute and sad, as the King’s messenger Haigha asks him: “where you happy in prison, dear child” (p. 172), to which the reply is “a tear or two trickled down his cheek; but not a word would he say” (p. 172). Furthermore, the Hatter is (as expected) still drinking tea, “He’s only just put out of prison and he hadn’t finished his tea when he was sent in” (p. 172).

Another example of a reversal of order is found in Alice’s encounter with the Unicorn and the Lion. In the break of their battle for the White King’s crown refreshments are offered, including a plum-cake which Alice is ordered to cut into pieces and pass around, however, “It’s very provoking! [...] I’ve cut several slices already, but they always join on again!” (p. 176). To this exclamation, she is offered another explanation of the reversal of cause and effect from the Unicorn, “Hand it round first, and cut it afterwards” (p. 176).

Furthermore, the rules and structures of the games in Carroll’s novels, similarly to the rules of the legal system, are also compromised and reversed in a manner that causes an uncanny effect on Alice. The chess game discussed in the “The Frames of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*” is argued to mostly have an uncanny effect upon the implied reader, and does not affect Alice on the same level. However, other games featured in *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* affect Alice to experience the uncanny. The usage of game is found in *Wonderland*, in terms of playing cards. However, as opposed to the chess game, the playing cards do not function as a structural plot device. Thus, there is no structurally based metaphor of a game in *Wonderland* emphasising Carroll’s control; the course of action is not predetermined as in *Looking-Glass* where Alice is merely a pawn subdued by the game of chess. In this, no actual card game takes place; the game of cards merely functions as a metaphor for characters. Furthermore, it is only the characters belonging to the royal family which represents the card game (including the royal family’s servants). However, a game is being played by the card game, which constitutes a trigger of the uncanny. As clarified in the listing of what causes the effect of the uncanny, Freud argues that an uncanny effect

is when the inanimate comes to life, which would be the case of the playing cards functioning as characters in the novel. However, in Wonderland, a sort of reversal of this function is at play: the inanimate playing cards function as animate, whereas the animate hedgehogs and flamingos, along with the Queen's soldiers share the function of inanimate pieces in a game of croquet. The hedgehogs function as balls, the flamingos clubs and the soldiers arches. Carroll's punning exploration of the ambiguity of the name 'playing cards' is evident in turning their function into cards that play, as opposed subjected to cards which are played with. Thus, the uncanny effect is evoked by animals subdued into inanimate objects used to play a game by animated cards. Thus, the uncanny can be viewed in terms of two uncanny triggers, both within the notion of Freud's *surmounted* uncanny: the animate being lifeless, and the inanimate coming to life. The animate as lifeless is seen in the hedgehogs, the flamingos and the soldiers functioning as lifeless objects. This sort of uncanny effect is primarily viewed by Freud as regarding the resurrection of the dead in the notion of ghosts. However, in this particular uncanny, the hedgehogs, flamingos, and soldiers are not perceived as dead or lifeless. Their function is merely reversed into objects instead of subjects – they are indeed very much alive, which is seen in Alice's struggle in handling the objects:

The chief difficulty Alice found at first was in managing her flamingo: she succeeded in getting its body tucked away, comfortably enough, under her arm, with its legs hanging down, but generally, just as she had got its neck nicely straightened out, and was going to give the hedgehog a blow with its head, it *would* twist itself round and look up in her face, with such a puzzled expression that she could not help bursting out laughing; and when she had got its head down, and was going to begin again, it was very provoking to find that the hedgehog had unrolled itself, and was in the act of crawling away: besides all this, there was generally a ridge or a furrow in the way wherever she wanted to send the hedgehog to, and, the doubled-up soldiers were always getting up and walking off to other parts of the ground. Alice soon came to the conclusion that it was a very difficult game indeed.

(Carroll, 1865, p. 64)

Thus, the objectification of the flamingos, hedgehogs, and soldiers cause the game to be almost impossible to play, as they maintain their animated characterisations, and are merely treated as inanimate objects even though they are in fact still animate. Furthermore, the rules of the game are never explained, causing the game to be influenced by confusion. The aim of the game is to have the Queen win and escape execution due to her frustration.

Additionally, the caucus-race in Wonderland holds the lack of order and aim as well, causing confusion on all the participants. As all the animals and Alice were soaked, due to them

swimming in Alice's pool of tears, the Dodo suggests that they all participate in a caucus-race in order to dry (as the mouse's tale was punningly not dry enough to dry them). The Dodo expresses: "the best way to explain it is to do it" (p. 22), thereby, offering no rules for the game, much alike the croquet game having no explicit rules. However, the narrator explains how the race is done as a courtesy to the reader: "(And, as you might like to try the thing yourself some winter-day, I will tell you how the Dodo managed it)" (p. 22). The narrator explains the race by, the Dodo initially marking out a race-course in a 'sort of circle', as the exact shape was irrelevant. Then the participants of the race were placed along the course, in various places, whereupon they initiate the race whenever they like, and likewise end the race in the same manner. Thus, the only reason for the end of the race was the Dodo exclaiming: "The race is over!" (p. 22), which confused the participants further, as no winner could be announced – causing the Dodo to declare that they were all winners. In Hugh Haughton's edition of the Alice books, he notes that caucus is defined in England as: "a committee popularly elected for the purposes of organization seeking to manage an election and dictate to the constituencies" (p. 305), thus Carroll's punning use of caucus is allegorised as a political meeting, with committee members running around in circles, getting nowhere. Furthermore, as everyone wins the race, they are offered a price. Alice has a timble in her pocket, which the Dodo argues to be the price Alice is to receive, thus, she gives him the timble in order to receive it as a price for winning the game. Haughton suggests that the timble symbolises taxes, as it is money taken from citizens given back to them in the form of political projects. (Haughton, p. 305).

The logic of Looking-Glass world culminates in the final examination Alice goes through to become Queen. The White Queen and Red Queen asks Alice a series of questions to which she cannot find the right answer, or is interrupted while giving it. Furthermore, the Red Queen states another fact of Looking-Glass world, in accordance with the reversal of time mentioned above: "Now *here*, we mostly have days and nights two or three at a time, and sometimes in the winter we take as many as five nights together—for warmth you know" (p. 194). This information is dealt with in the same manner as the other examples of the rules of Looking-Glass Alice has been given: hypothesising it in order to comprehend it: "Are five nights warmer than one night, then?" (p. 194). This is confirmed, which causes Alice to expand her hypothesis: "But they should be five times as *cold*, by the same *rule*—" (p. 194). This is likewise confirmed, which causes Alice to be reinstated in a state of uncertainty: "Alice sighed and gave it up. "It's exactly like the riddle with no answer!" she thought" (p. 194), referring to the Mad Hatter's riddle in Wonderland (why is a raven like a

writing-desk? (p. 53)). This riddle sums up Alice's unfruitful quest for logic and meaning in *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*, as it is a riddle which Alice cannot answer, as there is no answer, as it is with every other aspect she attempts to understand. Thus the riddle functions as an allegory for the way one is to come to terms with the incomprehensiveness of the logic of the two worlds; there is no answer.

In conclusion, I have in this part of the thesis discussed and analysed Alice's experiencing the effect of the uncanny in terms of intellectual uncertainty. The uncanny triggers in this section are primarily anthropomorphism and animism while the reversals of order found in the two worlds are what cause the intellectual uncertainty. Alice continuously attempts to shut down the uncanny effect of the intellectual uncertainty by comparison of the logic of the worlds of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* with that of her real world. These attempts repeatedly fail as the inhabitants of the world's interrupt Alice her before she reaches any sort of understanding. The reversal of order is considered in relation to time, movement and causality. Time and movement defies the rules of the real world by going backwards and nowhere, while the principle of causality is reversed as the effect is produced prior to the cause of it. These aspects disrupting the logical order Alice is familiar with are experienced in the games, educational system and justice system of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* worlds. Thus, the rules and logic of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* abide by to the principles and laws of physics which apply for those worlds, but are considered to be the opposite of the laws of the real world. Thus, to compare and comprehend those in terms of Alice's real world will consistently fail.

## ***The 'Repressed' Uncanny***

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The Queen had only one way of settling all difficulties, greater or small. "Off with his head!" she said without even looking around.

(Carroll, 1865, p. 66)

In this section of the thesis, I will focus on Freud's psychoanalytical aspect of the uncanny, "[...] when repressed infantile complexes have been revived" (Freud, 1919, p. 17). Thus, this aspect of the familiar made unfamiliar is in terms of repression. The uncanny triggers, in relation to the repressed notion of the uncanny, are based on psychoanalytical concepts, which can be narrowed down to: the castration complex (e.g. dismembered limbs) and womb-fantasies, where intra-uterine experiences evoke a sense of the uncanny (being buried alive, claustrophobic experiences). This aspect of the uncanny is unaffected by the reality testing principle, as infantile complexes does not raise the question of material reality. Also, an effect of the uncanny experienced by Alice is not as evident in these examples, as the ones originating from the *surmounted* uncanny notion. However, I will briefly mention a few examples which evidently illustrate the psychoanalytical aspects of the uncanny in terms of castration-anxiety and womb-fantasies.

In Alice's stay in Wonderland, the uncanny trigger of the castration complex is most evident in the Queen of Heart's continuously ordering executions in terms of cutting off practically all the heads of all the inhabitants of Wonderland. In Looking-Glass world, Tweedledum remarks about the effect the Red King's snoring might have: "fit to snore his head off!" (Carroll, 1872, p. 141), and Alice notices Humpty Dumpty smiling in such a manner that she's afraid it might cause him to lose his head: "'If he smiled much more the ends of his mouth might meet behind", she thought: "and then I don't know *what* would happen to his head! I'm afraid it would come off!'" (1872, pp. 167-158). Additionally, at the final feast in Looking-Glass world, Alice experiences a threat of being sliced by the pudding. Momentarily after she sliced a piece of it, it remarked: "I wonder how you'd like it, if I were to cut a slice out of *you*, you creature" (1872, p. 200). The effect this aspect of the uncanny has upon Alice is in terms of anxiety towards death, which is seen in Alice incapability to respond: "Alice hadn't a word to say in reply: she could only sit and look at it and gasp" (1872, p. 200).

The notions of the uncanny triggers of womb-fantasies are depicted frequently. When Alice ventures down the narrow tunnel construction of the rabbit hole, a symbolism of the birthing canal

and birth is fashioned. After her fall, she runs down a long passage and arrives in a room with many doors: “there were doors all around the hall, but they were all locked [...] she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door [...]” (Carroll, p. 9), this door is too small for her head to go through: “and even if my head *would* go through [...] it would be of very little use without my shoulders” (Carroll, p. 10). David Rudd has also analysed the birthing imagery of Alice’s stay in Wonderland, and argues that Alice’s attempt at squeezing her head through the tiny door suggests a notion of the female body and birth, similarly: “the curtain certainly, might suggest a garment being pulled aside, and the door through which Alice cannot yet squeeze could be seen to resemble a birth-canal” (Rudd, 2013, p.119). Such intra-uterine imageries signify an uncanniness in term of something homely (the womb) now disturbing (the claustrophobic experience Alice experiences as she is unable to escape). Furthermore, he argues that another example of this, is when Alice is bathed in her own tears in the room with the many doors, where she is situated: “in an amniotic-like environment reminiscent of the womb” (Rudd, 2013, p. 119). Additionally, after Alice’s experiences a rapid growth from drinking the contents of the mysterious bottle, she experiences the White Rabbit’s house as a claustrophobic enclosure; reminiscent of being inside the womb: “before she had drunk half the bottle, she found her head pressing against the ceiling, and had to stoop to save her neck from being broken” (Carroll, p. 27). Additionally, this also evokes the effect of the uncanny in relation to death, as Alice’s fears her neck will break. In Alice’s encounter with the mad tea party she observes someone else, forcefully being shoved into an enclosure, which is according to Rudd both “womb-like and tomb-like” (p. 120). What Alice observes is the mad Hatter and the March Hare: “trying to put the Dormouse into the teapot” (Carroll, p. 58).

Thus, the notions of the uncanny caused by something *surmounted* which has been confirmed as real, has been discussed in this section. Freud’s psychoanalytical aspects of castration and womb-fantasies as triggers of the uncanny are argued to have the effect of anxiety of death upon Alice.

## *Alice's Uncanny Sense of Identity*

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“Who are *you*?” said the Caterpillar. This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied rather shyly, “I—I hardly know, Sir, just at present—at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I have been changed several times since then.” “What do you mean by that?” said the Caterpillar, sternly. “Explain yourself!” “I ca’n’t explain *myself*, I’m afraid, Sir,” said Alice, “because I’m not myself, you see.”

(Carroll, 1865, p. 34)

In this part of the thesis I will focus on David Rudd’s notion of the uncanny in relation to Lacan’s poststructuralistic thoughts. As argued in “The Frames of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*”, each individual world Alice ventures in share a particular set of signifiers, which differs from each other. Due to this difference in signification, Alice experiences an uncanny effect when the signification she is familiar with does not make sense to her. Thus, the uncanny effect can at times have a disturbing effect on Alice’s sense of self, rendering it unstable. Thus, before turning to Rudd’s notion on how he perceives Alice’s unstable identity, I will first argue for the notion of the double to cause this instability in Alice as well.

One of the most notable Freudian uncanny triggers is the aspect of the double. In relation to Freud’s statement of the uncanny being something repressed, which recurs in an unsettling manner; this can be conveyed into the self being haunted by repressed feelings, which threaten to disrupt rational notions about reality. In psychoanalytic terms, the double can represent a split between the conscious and unconscious, as seen in literature, e.g. in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), where the double is considered in the protagonist as acting out unconscious desires (murderous impulses) through Mr. Hyde, where Dr. Jekyll represents the conscious. Thus, a double can be found as residing within one character, but can also be considered in terms of one character projecting these unconscious desires onto another, similar to Lacan’s Imaginary stage, where a sense of the self is projected onto an ‘other’ in the mirror stage, in order to experience a sense of stable, unified self. In the *Alice tales* a duplication of Alice occurs once she ventures from her real world into *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* worlds. In *Wonderland*, the narrator describes Alice as being “very fond of pretending to be two people” (Carroll, 1865, p. 12). In *Looking-Glass* this is exemplified in her movement through the mirror, creating a mirror image of her which functions as her double. Furthermore, in *Looking-Glass* world, Alice functions both as

a pawn in the game of chess while also being a player. Glen Robert Downey (1998) states: “when Alice becomes a pawn she takes on an identity as a *thing* as well as a person” (p. 166). These examples of doubles are contributors in the uncanny effect upon Alice’s identity, causing her to question who she is.

Rudd argues that doubling can be seen in terms of repetition as well, in relation to the fear of death: “doubling goes beyond character to repetition of events, which Freud treats as a different aspect of the uncanny, linking it to attempts to ward off anxiety-producing matters – and, ultimately, to an avoidance of the fact of death itself” (p. 122). Thus, these attempts to ‘ward off anxiety-producing matters’, are seen in Alice’s responses when she gains greater awareness of death.

When Alice falls down the rabbit hole, she notices a jar of marmalade, labelled ‘ORANGE MARMELADE’, but the jar contains no marmalade. David Rudd (2013) argues that the emptiness of the jar represents the representation of the signified no longer being at one with the signifier. Alice’s decision not to drop the jar, in fear of its fatal impact on someone underground, demonstrates Alice’s sudden awareness of death, however not her own death, as she does indicate any concern for her own impact with the ground (or the effect of it upon someone else). Rudd argues her awareness of death to signify: “Lacan’s own examples of the ‘encounter with the real’ erupting into our symbolic world [...] of ‘a tile falling on to the head of a passer-by’” (p. 118). Thus, the real erupting into the symbolic world causes Alice’s identity to be fragmented in various manners. In the beginning of *Wonderland* her body becomes an aspect of the unfamiliar as it does not remain the same size for long periods of a time. An awareness and anxiety of death is experienced when she ‘shuts up like a telescope’, and is worried about how much she will shrink, contemplating: “she felt a little nervous about this; “for it might end, you know,” said Alice to herself, “in my going out altogether, like a candle. I wonder what I should be like then?” (Carroll, 1865, p. 11). This imagery of death, symbolised by a candle, is similar to Tweedledee’s comment in *Looking-Glass* about Alice being part of the Red King’s dream, causing her to “go out—bang!—just like a candle!” (Carroll, 1872, p. 142). Additionally, the Cheshire cat’s disappearance into nothing: “it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone” (Carroll, 1865, p. 50) is by Rudd compared to the mouse tale/tail. The mouse’s calligrammatic tail is disturbingly represented in a font size that becomes smaller and smaller until the blankness of the page is left while the actual tale likewise ends in nothingness: death. This example provides both Alice and the implied reader with an

uncanny experience triggered by the awareness of death; Alice experiences the tale, while the reader the tail. Thus, the aspects of disappearance are uncanny reminders of death. Rudd argues that fears of death are “closely linked attacks on Alice’s identity, her former complacent ideal ego” (2013, p. 121). So the sense of wholeness that was experienced in the Lacanian mirror stage is repeatedly under attack.

Additionally, Alice experiences the uncanniness of her body’s growth, when she in contrast ‘opens up like a telescope’, causing her body-parts to be so far apart that her feet are alienated. They are considered something beside herself: “Oh, my poor little feet, I wonder who will put on your shoes and stockings on you now, dear [...] you must manage the best way you can” (Carroll, 1865, p. 14). These sudden changes in size makes Alice question her sense of self:

Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I’ve changed in the night? Let me think: *was* I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I’m not the same, the next puzzle is ‘Who in the world am I?’ (Carroll, 1865, pp. 14-15).

Furthermore, she is provokingly interrogated by the Caterpillar (see introductory quote) by the request to state her identity, which she cannot. In order for Alice to restore the wholeness of the ideal ego, she attempts principles of sameness in her memory of herself, as seen in the above quote, when she questions if she is the same now, as she was that morning. This approach only puzzles her even further (who in the world am I?). Thus, she undertakes the principle of difference by contrasting herself to familiar people: her friends Ava and Mable. This is similar to the process in the mirror stage, where the whole self is attempted to be restored by projecting part of the self onto an ‘other’. However, Alice finds no resolution of who she is through this comparison, she is only able to confirm sameness in terms of pronouns, “*she*’s she, and *I*’m I” (Carroll, 1865, p. 15). Thus, she attempts to rely on what she knows as an indicator of who she is (geography, arithmetic and verse), much alike the way she attempts to find order by utilising her pre-existing knowledge, in order to make sense of the nonsense she encounters in *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* worlds as I argued in “The *Surmounted* Uncanny”. However, the aspects which commonly function as confirmations of Alice’s existence, ‘grounding her sense of identity’, are ineffective in *Wonderland*, as well as in *Looking-Glass*. In *Looking-Glass* Alice is forced to walk through a wood which the Gnat informs her will make her forget her name. In the wood she first experiences an inability to recollect the word tree, and ultimately she forgets who she is:

And now, who am I? I *will* remember, if I can! I'm determined to do it!" But being determined didn't help her much, and all she could say, after a great deal of puzzling, was "L, I *know* it begins with L! (Carroll, 1872, p. 133).

She remembers that her name begins with L, which can be argued to be L, as in 'Alice Liddell'. Thus, both the signifier and signified of Alice is temporally lost in the woods, causing more instability in Alice's attempt to restore a sense of self. Thus, every attempt Alice makes in comprehending her fractured self, as a whole is unfruitful. Rudd argues that the sense of wholeness experienced in Lacan's mirror stage is under attack, with anxieties about what Lacan terms '*imagos of the fragmented body*' (Rudd, p. 122). Rudd discusses how signification in Wonderland and Looking-Glass is shut down to a single meaning (or entirely lost, as Alice's name). This is seen in the use of Carroll's puns to construct names: the Mad hatter is named after the saying 'as mad as a hatter', the Cheshire Cat named after 'a grin like a Cheshire cat' and (as argued in "The Surmounted Uncanny") time has a literal configuration which can be 'murdered'. The Duchess' saying in Wonderland "take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves" (Carroll, 1865, p. 69) is a parody of 'take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves' (Gray, p. 69). Rudd discusses this as an awareness of the distinction between signifiers and signifieds. This distinction is even more evident in Alice's dispute with the March Hare, who tells Alice to "say what you mean" (p. 53), to which she answers: "I do [...] at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing you know" (p. 53)". Rudd argues that the March Hare's (what you mean) remark 'prioritises meaning', the signified, whereas Alice's (mean what I say) 'foregrounds the signifier' (Rudd, 2013, pp. 123-124). Rudd states that the 'foregrounding of the signifier' is what:

seems to rule Wonderland, where one can move blithely across different codifying systems without concern [...] Signification deteriorates from the moment Alice drops below the surface of the rabbit hole and has her own meaning hollowed out [...] The world thereby becomes uncanny, with words seeming to control things (2013, p. 124).

In *Looking-Glass*, words' ability to control things is exemplified through Humpty Dumpty's reversal of this thought; that he is in fact the one who controls words; he functions as a master of the words:

When *I* use a word [...] it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less [...] The question is [...] which is to be master—that’s all [...] They’ve a temper, some of them—particularly verbs: they’re the proudest—adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs—however, *I* can manage the whole lot of them! (Carroll, 1872, p. 161)

Rudd compares Humpty Dumpty’s relation to words with the question of what came first: the chicken or the egg (which seems fitting as Humpty Dumpty is in fact an egg). In the allegory of the chicken or the egg, Rudd states that Humpty Dumpty sides with the egg; that it pre-exists the chicken, thereby, stating that he believes he pre-exists language which makes him able to control it, rather than recognising that language does in fact pre-exist him. “If his existence is called forth by the very rhyme that names, or nominates him, it just as readily ex-nominates him” (Rudd, p. 124), thus, Humpty Dumpty’s existence is based upon language, ‘words speak him’, therefore he cannot master it, he is subdued to it, as everyone else in Wonderland (and the real world). The language of wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds is either an exaggeration or a lack of meaning, causing strangeness. This is seen in the failed attempts at reaching signification through a chain of words, resembling the never ending chain of signifiers: “do cats eat bats, do cats eat bats, do bats eat cats” (p. 9), “important—unimportant—important—unimportant” (p. 91), “Did you say ‘pig’ or ‘fig’?” (Carroll, 1865, p. 50). These chains of words, Rudd argues are influenced by the signifiers being emptied out, causing meaning to lose its function. Everywhere in Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds, “the signifying chain stutters and stalls” (p. 124). Language and identity are very much interlinked in the two *Alice* novels, as language consistently functions as a means of fracturing the aspect of identity, as it fails to establish a mutual understanding and intersubjectivity in Alice. Rudd compares this fracturing of the identity based on the continuous abruption when attempting to understand something (whether it be Alice’s identity or the meaning of the worlds in general), to Lacan’s approach to therapy. Lacan’s sessions was influenced by a sudden abruption, which he believed to prevent the ‘too easy flow of the signifying chain’, which would only cause empty speech. By the sudden abruption, unexpected responses would be provoked, causing what Lacan believed to be meaningful responses. Thus, Rudd claims Wonderland as “the realm of what Lacan terms *la linguisterie* [...] ‘linguistricks’, which emphasises ‘the playfulness of the unconscious and the way it is always trying to trip the subject up, playing tricks on conscious thought’” (p. 125). Thus, these ‘linguistricks’ Alice encounters in Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds supplement Lacan’s statement that: “The function of Language in speech is not to inform but to evoke” (as cited

by Rudd, p. 125), which is exactly the effect language has on Alice, it evokes the uncanny, causing her to question her identity.

As the worlds in *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* are ruled by signifiers signification is lost. This causes Alice to encounter the uncanny in various aspects which affects her sense of self. The uncanny triggers, which cause Alice to experience the uncanniness of her own identity are the double, repetition, death (seen in the awareness and fear of death), and language. In terms of the double, the uncanny 's effect is seen when Alice is unable to mirror her sense of self with the 'other', and also no longer recognises even her physical form as her own, causing a fragmented sense of identity. In order to attempt to restore the wholeness of her identity, she previously had, she undertakes principles of sameness and difference and relies on her pre-existing knowledge (both of herself, but also of the world in general), which proves ineffective. Thus, no attempt Alice makes in restoring her whole sense of self will be accomplished while remaining within the worlds of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*, as each attempt will be predestined to fail, as the signifier rules these worlds, then the significations deteriorates on all levels.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

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Having reached the closure of this thesis, I will now sum up my findings.

The purpose of this thesis – to analyse the uncanny effects in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* as affecting Alice and the implied reader – has provided some interesting results.

I proposed the uncanny as a can effect to be understood by what causes the effect and how the effect is experienced. I argued it the effect to be considered in relation to uncertainty and confusion in terms of what constitutes reality. In this use of reality, I refer to Alice's real world. I have used the notions of Freud's division of the terms; '*surmounted*' and '*repressed*' in order to account for different aspects of the uncanny effect. The task of trying to define the uncanny proved a difficult one. The uncanny seemed even to pervade Freud's texts, thoughts and beliefs in his attempt to describe it, leaving him in a state of uncertainty. Arguably, to work with a theory which resists definition brought a degree of uncertainty to the entire working process of analysing the novels. However, it seems that a definite definition of the uncanny is somewhat superfluous, as the concept of the uncanny is understandable through a thorough comprehension of the aspects which triggers an uncanny effect, and of the effect itself. These specific aspects help to create a greater understanding of what the uncanny signifies. Then it seems that an understanding of the uncanny is found in the realisation that it can only be achieved by understanding specific aspects of the texts, and recognising that the whole 'truth' remains mystified.

In analysing how the implied reader experienced the effects of the uncanny, I focused primarily on *the surmounted uncanny*, arguing for 'intellectual uncertainty'. The uncanny effect was rendered possible through Lewis Carroll's function as author and the function of the narrator, due to ability of manipulation. Carroll's manipulates the implied reader, when including the chess problem, however it becomes even further confusing for the implied reader when the preface concerning the chess game is added. The presumption that the preface is real triggers the uncanny, and situates the implied reader outside the text. However, the implied reader will discover that it is impossible to consider Carroll's chess game 'real', thus the effect of the uncanny is perceived as the uncertainty experienced by the reader when remaining in doubt about the reality of the chess game. Additionally, I also argued the implied reader as having the perspective of an adult (although it is a

children's book), and Alice evidently has the perspective of a child, which further explains the difference in the uncanny effects.

In Alice's encounter with the laws and principles of physics being oppositional to her familiar laws and principles, she experiences the effect of the uncanny. The triggers of the uncanny in these oppositional worlds are primarily found in the *surmounted* uncanny, as anthropomorphism and animism. Furthermore, examples of the *repressed* uncanny are found as well, causing Alice to experience an anxiety of death. I also used David Rudd's Lacanian notions in order to analyse and discuss the uncanny effects upon Alice's sense of identity. The aspect of signification becoming uncanny commence once Alice enters the other worlds, which are ruled by signifiers, causing signification to be lost. In her continuous attempts to restore her sense of self, of finding meaning in the logic of Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds, she relies on her pre-existing knowledge. However, this approach is consistently ineffective, as she cannot compare the constituents of the imaginative world with that of her own, as different rules apply to each world.

Thus, the uncanny occurs as effect due to Alice and the reader's inability to consider the worlds of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* as complying with a different logic than their own worlds.

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