An Inquiry into the recreative Workings of the Unheimliche in Interior Architecture
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THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

An Inquiry into the Re-Creative Workings of the Unheimliche

in Interior Architecture

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Cover: The Cupboard in the Anne Frank's House, a drawing by Karel Deckers

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Abstract

Often left unspecified in architectural discourse, the *unheimliche* (or the uncanny) emerges as a puzzling concept that operates in various disciplines throughout history and geography. The unheimliche concept continuously moves between disciplines, minds, periods and places. In so doing, the workings of the unheimliche curiously articulate them as allied together.

Four interrelated angles scanned how these transitory shifts of the unheimliche occurred in time and space. (1) The unheimliche as a discourse featured a series of unheimliche themes written by established authors who incite the reader to unsettlement and re-thinking; (2) The unheimliche as an experience surveyed how beholders received and endured an unsettling endeavour that ultimately energized them. (3) The unheimliche as a design approach devised an altered status of the designer and the discipline by investigating the faculties of the un-preferred and not knowing. (4) The unheimliche as a pedagogic approach relocated affective issues that reside within the mind and memory of learners as issued in a series of research design studios.

Whereas the first angle approached the unheimliche as a theme and discourse, the latter three perspectives explored the unheimliche as a strategy in interior architecture. By implementing the unheimliche experience as a resource for architectural design and education, I found that this experience productively deformed the beholder's perception of time. It also affected the status of the design discipline and the resources of the designer for architectural design and education. Furthermore it strengthened the position of the learner in becoming a co-researcher and co-creator in a complex network as propelled by events, institutional forces, objects and human desires.

The re-creative workings of the unheimliche advocates interior architecture as an in-between discipline aimed at conceiving places of delight but also learning from abject realities that occur in everyday places. In so doing, the unheimliche in interior architecture does not create novelty but rather amplifies the innate powers of the existent, giving way to a disturbing yet manifold experience: the unheimliche becomes a re-creation of the pre-existent, provoking a re-thinking of the design discipline and all actors concerned.

Keywords: re-creative, unheimliche, interior architecture, transitory, manifold experience

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In loving memory of
my grandfather, Albert Spruyt (1915-2002)
'the more we think to know, the less we actually do'

Foreword

Conceiving this thesis in the course of the past six years (2009-15) has been in many ways an attempt to domesticate something what cannot be tamed, making it into a quite absurd yet challenging task. At the same time, this thesis was 'an accident waiting to happen': some archaic traces were already present in some of my work as an architecture student, and as a child I was always wondering why and how certain spaces such as cellars, sheds and basements had the power to play tricks on the mind. The whole endeavour would have been quite impossible without the generosity of some of my dear friends, family and colleagues. In a rather successful defiance to the laws of gravity, their uplifting support has given me the courage to start and finish writing this thesis.

In the making of this PhD thesis, it was a true delight to be near to my three beloved yet energetic children, Oscar, Arthur and Thomas, to see them being born, to witness them grow up, watch them play and interact with each other; and hearing about their amazing discoveries at school and home, even if it sometimes meant carefully hiding my own belongings from their predatory reach. I have learnt enormously from their behavior and curious ways of looking at the world. I am indebted to my lovely wife, Astrid, who often acted as a first reader of unfinished chapters, drafts of variable quality which came to her like flying bullets. From hindsight, I apologize for any collateral damage that she had to suffer while remaining entrenched between her role as devoted wife and genuine peer-reader. I thank her for her brilliance and energy in yielding moments of consolation, hope and patience.

It is impossible to underestimate the role of my parents. Their continuing dedication and interest has provided me with a sense of stability yesterday and today. Certainly my father has set the inspiring example of how to live a reader's life and to read between the lines. He has also read many of my papers and given me many books to read. I also thank my mother for giving me a language. I am indebted for her generosity and capacity to transmit passion for art and architecture. My parents have given me a lot of freedom and taught me to take responsibility in all circumstances. Forgive me for my absentmindedness the past thirty-nine years. Knowing my grandparents was essential: my grandmother and grandfather's stories, his garden shed with various tools and materials, the summer bicycle rides to their holiday house in the middle of the countryside have expanded my parameters and sheltered me while growing up. I also want to pay tribute to my brother Raf for being there as a friend and voice to rely upon. I did appreciate his honesty when – uncannily – he said he didn't understand much from an early article I had given him to read on 'the architectural uncanny'. This event only stimulated me to write more clearly and less abstractly.

My promoter, Fredrik Nilsson, has been a generous and formidable source of inspiration, relief and support. He gave me treasurable clues as to how validate and approach the thesis in smarter ways, which always provided me an unexpected sense of freedom and confidence. I welcomed the autonomy he gave to me, which made me believe in my own capacities. Thanks to his continued patience, concern and ingenuity, I have made it through

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1. INTRODUCTION THE ROAD MAP

'For this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and odd established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression.'

(Freud, 1919:634)

Anterior Itineraries

As a first year architecture student in 1994, I cycled past the Cité Frugès designed by Le Corbusier in Pessac, France. Whereas I expected a kind of open-air museum that would pay tribute to the realizations of this famous architect, in reality what I saw was a dilapidated garden city in a state of disrepair. Still, I could discern a distinct beauty in the strangely disfigured 'Maisons Citrohans', (Fig.1 p.35) with their pitched roofs shoddily built and faded polycarbonate panels that shielded off previously spacious loggias. It made me realise the often stark difference between how buildings appear in publications and how they materialize in reality. Soon the 'divine' status of Le Corbusier tarnished. Unfortunately, shortly after my visit, the Cité Frugès was restored to its original state, consistent with the intentions of the architect. In so doing, the *unheimliche* vanished and the whole garden city became – in appearance – *heimlich* again.

For twenty years I have been living in Brussels, in many ways an *unheimliche* city. Although the majority of its population is French speaking, my mother tongue is Dutch. I write this thesis in another language, a language that is not my own and that I will never 'possess'. Professionally, I am an architect and lecturer affiliated with the Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, and the KULeuven, formerly St Lucas School of Architecture. Furthermore, I am defending my thesis in Sweden at the Chalmers University of Technology. A Belgian institution – especially the Sint-Lucas School of Architecture – would have been much more comfortable in terms of proximity and familiarity. Although moderately used and arguably mistrusted by many architects, I have resolved to use writing (and designing) as a way to conduct research. I have reshaped and questioned myself in the making of this thesis, in switching between different roles ranging from part-time researcher-teacher-architect, being a husband and becoming a father.

A second event has been decisive in writing the thesis: in July of 2005 I cycled from Venice to Belgrade, witnessing the remains of the Yugoslavian Civil war of 1992-98. I passed through several demolished villages in the Kraijina area, a territorially contested and residual stretch of land between Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia. As only roads were considered free from landmines and deemed safe for walking, most of them were lined with colourful but 'mortal danger' signs at the edge. Beyond these roads, trees and bushes were springing up like popcorn. The invisible presence of these landmines created an untouchable wasteland, which in time has obtained an awkward kind of pastoral beauty. Wiped

out by the explicit logic of ethnic cleansing, the former patchwork of mixed Croatian and Serbian inhabitants was annihilated and replaced by mono-ethnic communities. Whereas immaculate churches built by the respective conquerors were the only signs of novelty, other previous symbols of Serbian or Croatian presence had been erased, demolished or squandered. In the eerie villages I cycled through, many cars were decorated with paramilitary and fascist signs and only senior residents seemed to have remained. How could atrocities such as these occur at the close of the twentieth century in Europe's backyard? What ever made this possible? If ethnic cleansing could materialize in this period, everything seems possible.

Unconsciously and indirectly, 'cycling' and wandering became part of my research approach. By travelling between two non-pre-set places, I experienced 'randomly' unexpected discoveries. They forced me to go through the experience of the unheimliche, undesired yet fascinating endeavour. On this road to nowhere, cycling many miles without any particular goal, meeting people and coming across places, created a mesh of coincidences and encounters between the landscape and people; between the indigenous and exogenous and between the authentic and artificial. The thin lines of safe roads through a beautiful landscape clotted with mines, being a posthumous witness to a terrible war, the reliance on the bicycle, body and mind triggered a special kind of awareness. Moreover, the repetitive motion of the same circular pedalling movement led to detachment and gave room to reflections: Where does it all end? Where to stay? Ultimately, these 'bicycle' encounters have altered my way of thinking about (interior) architecture profoundly. I started questioning certain interior-architectural values that I took for granted, such as harmony, comfort and well-being.

My own architectural practice also focuses on the making of interiors. Moreover, through my daily practice, I have specialized myself in interior matters. However, instead of presenting an artistic or a practice-based thesis, I have chosen to investigate the unheimliche through my own educational practice, another dimension of my professional identity. Therefore, I am designing and writing this thesis for an audience of both interior architects, educators and all who are interested and/or engaged in the working of the unheimliche. Instead of promoting edifices that might trigger unpleasant feelings or anxiety, I rather aim to rehabilitate the value of the interior architectural experience, of which the unheimliche is just one aspect that I believe to be overlooked. Beyond being merely a theme, in this thesis I regard the unheimliche as a specific approach that is suitable for architectural discourse, experience, design and design education.

Departure and Arrival

'Dwelling demands a negotiating kind of architecture, a negotiation between past and future, between demolition and construction, between the one and the other way of living and dwelling, between different kinds of (re)constructions, between problematic alternatives and spatial organisation'.

(De Visscher, 1999)

Buildings invite feelings and desires. They influence and mould our attitudes as being delightful or abject. In the former case, they meaningfully link us to beautiful and impressive places such as the Gothic cathedrals of Normandy. In the latter case, places can also be disturbing and gruesome. In both cases – delight and disturbance – they also bind us to eras gone by or yet to come. Many architects, on the other hand, as devoted members of a discipline, usually articulate their edifices in terms of what *they themselves* (or the discipline) deem important – such as external appearance, use, materials according to their personal expression and taste. In contrast, they rarely seem concerned with the disturbing experiences of a building or the faith of other stakeholders (observers, residents, employees, occasional visitors and so on). In other words, the question of how these stakeholders are linked and inclined to a specific place and time remains open. How do these 'forgotten' end users experience a specific place? How does their experience create a heightened awareness and connection to a specific time and place? In the past, there have already been many attempts to analyze and 'compensate' for this gap. For example, developments in architecture have on certain occasions, not least in the last decade, introduced participatory strategies by including a larger variety of stakeholders in the design process in order to increase their awareness (See e.g. Blundell-Jones, Petrescu & Till, 2005). I re-introduce the puzzling concept of the *unheimliche* or 'uncanny' – as analyzed a hundred years ago by Freud – and propose it as a specific approach inside architectural design and education, which in my view allows people, and not only architects, to engage more in depth with a certain period and place.

In this thesis, I travel upstream, retracing the sources of the unheimliche along a long and winding trajectory. Writing this text meant making a kind of a travelogue that does not explain in detail but rather pursues small fragments of the workings of the unheimliche, albeit marginal and varied. I have found that some designed environments, although inanimate, seem to have an innate capacity to trigger a mild anxiety amongst people observing them. This uneasiness then leaves a range of potential stakeholders – observers, learners, designers-architects and others – puzzled and perplexed. As these built environments oscillate between the (un)expected and experienced, they bring about a mix of excitement and anxiety that sparks a wild kind of imagination.

It seems that a familiar and reassuring place can unexpectedly – seconds or centuries later – unsettle and become frightening as well depending on certain circumstances: through the unheimliche, specific places seem to 'incubate' an unheimliche event that later trans-

fixes and paralyses all concerned. Despite its connotation to an uneasy experience, the unheimliche has the *power to link people to certain places and times*. Thus, instead of considering it as a negative experience, I wondered whether this unheimliche experience can be a positive agent of change. For this reason, my thesis explores the workings of the unheimliche not as a phenomenon that one undergoes passively but as a force that *energizes* all concerned.

While undertaking this journey, I asked myself constantly what the unheimliche does, rather than finding and attributing new meanings. Is it possible to fit the unheimliche in a framework that covers thematic, experiential, designerly and pedagogic aspects? Out of these questions and agencies, I investigate the re-creative workings of the unheimliche in interior architecture as a purposeful *strategy* to the benefit of the reader, beholder, the designer and the aspirant architect. One of the difficulties in developing this strategy is that the unheimliche in interior architecture comes forth as a fluctuating *in-between force*. This 'in-between' position of interior architecture is crucial and already examined by several authors (such as Somers & De Vos, 2013). The unheimliche as well is never somewhere precisely. It always seems to move between two instances of time and/or place. According to my analysis, this 'in-between force' does not create a duality between two instances (either/or) but rather *mediates* between a set of juxtaposed double phenomena: inside/outside, home/not home, familiar/unfamiliar, other/self, empty/full, experience/expectation, retrospective/prospective, time/space. Precisely in the tension between these dichotomies, the unheimliche workings are activated and become self-propelled.

One of the examples I have investigated is the rotating cupboard (fig. front cover) that hid Anne Frank's 'back house' (*Achterhuis*) from view. In my analysis, the cupboard itself comes forward as an *in-between force* with unheimliche agencies. This pivoting furniture element allowed the family to stay hidden from view between July 1942 and August 1944. As such, the cupboard mediated between the outside world and the fragile inner world of the family; between the representative front house where Dutch office clerks continued working, and the other reality of the back house where the Frank family anxiously lived in exile, kept hidden from public view. This period living in the back house 'organized' the life world of the Frank family but also Anne's interior world. Following a betrayal, the commanding officer discovered that the cupboard was a rotating door. The opening of the door marked the end of the family's hideout. A few months later Anne Frank, her sister, and mother died in a German concentration camp. At the same time, the Nazi regime collapsed, foreshadowing the end of the Second World War. Intriguingly, despite not having been a specially designed object, the cupboard was regarded as more than an object: it turned out to be a crucial turning point in the lives of many people on both sides of the spectrum.

Moreover, the cupboard was neither an object nor a symbol: it rather became a *threshold* that 'regulated' the variations between different periods in the life of Anne Frank. She entered as an adolescent girl of thirteen and exited as a grown-up girl who could author

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complex writings. Later the cupboard became a museum exhibit that ignited both the shared memory and more personal feelings of the museum visitor. As one can notice, throughout time, this peculiar furniture object conjured up a complex history of secrecy, betrayal and hope that goes far beyond the traditional scope of an interior object.

Outline: Structure of the Thesis

Due to its in-between position, examining the workings of the unheimliche has proven to be a paradoxical endeavour. As the unheimliche wanders and refuses to be fixed, mapping its traces often means diverting or even erasing them. Even though my trajectory has been tortuous and a complex intermingling of several paths, I have structured the presentation in the following way:

Chapter 1, entitled 'The Road Map', outlines the coordinates of my research track, where one finds following items: the relevance of the subject, problem setting, aims, objectives, research questions and methods.

In Chapter 2, 'The Unheimliche as a Travelling Concept', I explore the unheimliche as it continuously travels between disciplines and authors, ranging from the world of science to literature and back again. In other words, I investigate how the unheimliche manifests itself in written works throughout time ranging from Freudian, phenomenological and poststructuralist tendencies. To this end, I interpreted existing literature on the unheimliche. It allowed me to study the unheimliche as a 'travelling concept' as elaborated by the Dutch cultural theorist Mieke Bal in her book *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Bal, 2002). She notes that these travelling concepts are not fixed, but instead travel.

> They travel – between disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities. Between disciplines, their meaning, reach, and operational value differ.
>
> (Bal, 2002:24)

The unheimliche was first identified at the beginning of the 20th century. In one of the first publications on the subject, the article 'Das Unheimliche' (Freud, 1919)*,* Freud diagnoses what he defines as an awkward 'subject of aesthetics' (Freud, 1919:619). Due to the emergence of the unheimliche, large sections of Viennese society seem to have regressed into in a state of malaise. He identifies this unheimliche as a subject that 'strangely yet familiarly' (re)emerged after repressing certain experiences – such as childhood memories. For Freud, the workings of the unheimliche have the ability to put a magical spell on humans and the objects they engage with. Consequently, he denotes the unheimliche as a revengeful and primitive force that if triggered can rage out against humans. Furthermore, Freud's book features the following unheimliche concepts: the occurrence of strange and involuntary repetitions, the evil eye, the uncanny double and others. These Freudian concepts are in reality the first attempts to define the workings of the unheimliche and how they occur in everyday life and artistic manifestations.

Almost parallel with the publication of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1927), the unheimliche suddenly swung in another direction. Heidegger presents the unheimliche both as an *existential phenomenon* and a *condition* in which humans are left bereft of a *Heimat* to which they once belonged. In other words, the 'un-heim' (or literally 'absence of a home') triggered an existential kind of anguish for beings. The unheimliche then continued its journey towards philosophers such as Jacques Derrida who interpreted the writings of Marx. In his book *Capital* (1867), Marx presents capitalism as an invisible force that bewitched ('es spukt') the world. In his re-reading of Marx's *Capital*, which resulted in the text *Spectres of Marx* (Derrida, 1994), Derrida retraces Marx as an unheimliche spectre who continued to haunt the world even after his death. For Derrida, the unheimliche becomes a *device* that is able to critically scan contemporary societal issues.

Furthermore, architectural theorists and historians such as Anthony Vidler have also attempted to approximate the workings of the unheimliche. In his book *The Architectural Uncanny* (Vidler, 1992), he considers the uncanny to be a universal *metaphor* : 'As a concept, then, the uncanny has, not unnaturally, found its metaphorical home in architecture'. (Vidler, 1992:11). For Vidler, the uncanny signalled contemporary conditions such as fin-de-siècle unsettlement, which seems to effervesce in the contemporary complexities of the digital age. In her rereading and deconstruction of Freud's publication, another literature theorist, Hélène Cixous (Cixous, 1976), notes that the unheimliche reverberates. Although Hélène Cixous does not formulate new definitions of the uncanny, she regards the unheimliche as a *literary concept* that potentially allows malleability and change. She merely reinterprets and interweaves the different layers of Freud's original text, 'Das Unheimliche'. For her, Freud's text is both a fictional and a scientific work. Cixous speculatively hints at biographical details that stage Freud as a character who is fatally biased by gender and provenance. In other words, in her reading of 'Das Unheimliche', it becomes a vibrant and literary concept. Finally, as a means to deliberately defamiliarize from known design procedures, architectural theoreticians such as Bernard Tschumi have indirectly engaged with the unheimliche. Historically, this defamiliarizing approach is developed by Russian constructivists as a *device to enhance the perception*. Conclusively, unpacked and unleashed into artistic, literary, historical, architectural and philosophical circles, it seems that the unheimliche moves in between, away from and towards a range of disciplines in time.

In Chapter 3, 'The Unheimliche as an Interior Experience', I explore interior architecture in from the perspective of the beholder who goes through an *undesired* experience. I link this undesired experience to the agency of so called *Denkbilder* (literally 'images that provoke thinking') or concepts, an idea developed by Walter Benjamin. What can *Denkbilder* do for one's existence and how does one receive them? In this thesis, I will investigate whether or not the unheimliche arises from such a *Denkbild*. Contrary to the novelty of utopian dreams, *Denkbilder* are instead rooted in the existent but also incite ideas to the beholder. As the unheimliche experience seems to be born out of something a*bject*, it can

be linked to an undesired kind of *Denkbilder,* which potentially fascinates beholders but also interferes, repels, upsets and even disturbs them. In short, these *Denkbilder* seem to be allied to a kind of imagination that one 'naturally' doesn't want to imagine: similar to a nightmare, one is rather lured into thinking fearfully about it. Thus, in defiance of common sense, these *Denkbilder* convey an unheimliche experience that seems to be disagreeable and somehow forced upon the beholder. Instead of considering these *Denkbilder* as a negative experience, I am interested in whether or not the abjectness of such a *Denkbild* can be applied in a positive way to interior architecture. Accountable for igniting the unheimliche, I argue that specific *Denkbilder* can be deployed as a kind of compass that allows the beholder to navigate within and towards unknown territories. Through a range of these *Denkbilder* taken from interiors, I explore a series of 'in-between' experiences: in-between wandering and getting lost, obscurity and clarity, encounter and belonging, ineffable and interstitial. Intriguingly, these shifts between beholder and what's beheld affect the status of the beholder. From merely passive beholders, the unheimliche transforms them into active observers.

Judging from the vast number of authors and the ubiquity of *Denkbilder*, the topic of the unheimliche seem to propose nothing new, but rather something that *already exists*. In my view, integrating the unheimliche into interior architecture also does not create novelty as such; rather it mediates between what and/or who already exists. This contrasts with a kind of architecture that thrives on the designing and the making of new, spectacular, *otherworldly* buildings. Thus the unheimliche *Denkbild* rather *re-creates* something pre-existent. By promoting the re-creation in interior architecture, interior architects need not be solely concerned with dreaming the novel as such, but should rather assess and *rehabilitate* the pre-existing. This ability to re-create an unheimliche double – a Freudian theme – enriches the discipline of interior architecture: an interior that already was there and still is, but is now somehow strangely different. By including and accepting the unheimliche – and not only the heimliche – as both *reality and asset* in (designing) interior architecture*,* a desultory quest for novelty is ended.

As studied in Chapter 3, beholders seem to be drawn to 'irrational' and unheimliche needs, including being in undesired state of mind such as melancholy. As the unheimliche comes forth as this unpleasant but simultaneously fruitful, and thus ambivalent, experience for the beholder, what can then be the agency of these undesired and turbulent experiences? How do these experiences materialize? I have found that the unheimliche experience predominantly operates in *time:* it is triggered by a longing for times gone by and yet to come. Entwined by a retrospective and prospective kind of melancholy, the unheimliche experience alters the beholder's perception of time. Paradoxically, by becoming melancholic, beholders become *emancipated and energized*. My plea is to not regard the unheimliche experience as a negative force but rather turn it into a *specific approach* that increases the resilience of the interior architect and other agents. In so doing, the unheimliche in interior architecture goes beyond being merely a theme but transforms

into a full-fledged approach that broadens prevailing notions in interior architecture and architecture.

In Chapter 4 'The Unheimliche as a Design Approach?', I introduce the unheimliche as a *design approach* that is usually deemed as *unpreferred* by the designer architect. In a general sense, observers – including some art historians – prefer to classify and define a building in terms of style, type and so on. By regarding buildings as a representative and finished work of art, they are merely treated as a testimonial to an architectural epoque or part of an architect's oeuvre. Less appreciated, and hence unpreffered, is a building that is not in tune with a building period, and hence is declared *unfinished* and *not fit*. In an unfinished and 'outsider' state, the unheimliche can thrive.

In this chapter, I also wonder if it makes sense to purposefully design an unheimliche experience. Designing a building or an object that is unpreferred seems to be unnecessary, without purpose and desultory. However, there have been some precedents such as the *Totes Haus Ur* exhibited at the German pavilion in Venice in 2001 by the German artist Georg Schneider. He made claustrophobic replicas of rooms within existing rooms but they remained artistic installations. Or one could mention the works of architects such as John Hedjuk or Daniel Libeskindt, but their realizations have remained somehow peripheral. However, as I regard interior architecture as not purely an artistic endeavour, then why would the research topic of the unheimliche be significant in the making of a design? I distinguish two reasons.

First, the unheimliche design approach furthers one's understanding of *not knowing* based on the *affect*. Not knowing implies allowing feelings to come into play in the design process rather than merely acquiring knowledge. The design knowledge distilled from an unheimliche design is neither fixed nor propositional; rather it emanates from making the design. In so doing, I permanently question the dominance of propositional knowledge by exploring other complementary forms of knowing, such as *not knowing* (or the value of information deficiency). Thus by incorporating the faculty of 'not knowing' into interior architectural design, the unheimliche potentially broadens existing epistemological frameworks such as the 'Research by Design' paradigm, which 'corners' design as a knowledge discipline.

Secondly, in contrast to the narrow 'ad hoc' approach of 'programmatic modernity', my inquiry into the *unheimliche* in interior architecture focuses on a broader time spectrum and reaches out to *the afterlife of a building,* the aftermath of what remains. As the interior architect specializes in ways to handle an edifice that is 'left over', the role of the interior architect should be the following: prioritising the idea of *lived space*, a space equipped with a certain building history of inhabitation and use, precisely *after* the architect's intervention. Following Trachtenberg in his book *Building-in-Time* (Trachtenberg, 2010), my research into the unheimliche examines a tension between two distinct artistic models: the pre-modern *'building in time'* and the Renaissance *'building outside time'*. The

latter model is linked to the *inventio* ideal as developed during the Renaissance, based on ingenuity to be realized within one lifetime. The former pre-modern model, as deployed by medieval builders based on common agreement, precedes the Renaissance model and suggests an artistic model that goes beyond one lifetime.

The latter Renaissance artistic model, as promoted by the prominent Renaissance architecture theorist Alberti, intended to encourage both formal experiments and the formation of *individual* designers, as fully accountable 'inventors' of their own artistic creations such as architectural drawings. Out of this *inventio* ideal, design emerged as an autonomous discipline. Contrary to prescriptive 'pre-modern' drawings often drafted on site by 'inferior' builders who organized themselves collectively in guilds, Renaissance drawings were regarded as prescriptive artistic documents made by one creative individual genius that needed to be accurately and 'instantly' realized within the lifetime of the architect. Interestingly, Trachtenberg contends that the *inventio* Renaissance ideal still lives on today and continues to pervade all creative disciplines. The tension between these two models is crucial in understanding my thesis: the 'inventio' model with a preference for instantaneous knowledge of the brilliant individual versus the 'premodern' model with a preference for transgenerational and collectively held knowledge.

One can question whether or not one should still make the exclusive link between a designer and his or her artefact. In contrast to the individual aspirations of the *inventio* ideal, can interior architecture depend on impersonal and shared forces such as in the premodern ideal? Can the unheimliche contribute to an awareness of the value in making and sharing in interior architecture for both stakeholders, i.e. the receiver (user) and the conceiver (designer)? *Through the workings of the unheimliche,* the interior architect can and should start from a legacy that is already there.

Chapter 5, 'The Unheimliche as a Pedagogic Approach', is written from the perspective of the learner. In this chapter, I introduce the central notion of *weak thoughts,* as developed by Gianni Vattimo (Vattimo, 1988). It allows me to examine the role of the affective in interior architecture. Is it possible to develop a methodological framework in which feelings, emotions and affective values in interior architecture can be integrated and safeguarded?

Through pedagogy, one can wonder how the unheimliche becomes an approach in which the learner actively engages with *affects* such as memories and emotions. Building on authors such as Jacques Rancière, author of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1991), and Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1993/1970), I bring forward a specific learning experience that *emancipates* apprentices of interior architecture as they go through an unheimliche experience. Instead of regarding teaching as an instructive force, I use another approach by regarding the unheimliche as a constructive learning experience that 'cares for' the fragile and the weaker position of the learner. In Vattimo's wake, I also consider education as a 'complex conversation of discourses, minds and events'

(Vattimo, 1988: XLV) whereby the fragmentary but significant 'weak thoughts' of the learner are central to understanding the architectural experience. By sharing vulnerable experiences such as unsettling memories, 'inferior' learners are emancipated from the 'superior' educator.

Furthermore, the unheimliche approach in education treats all actors as equals and by definition as learners. In other words, all stakeholders are considered to be implied within a 'reason between equals' (Rancière, 1991:45). Learners at the Onheimelijke Studio, a Research by Design Studio organized between 2008 and 2013, bring forward the affect and existing emotions as central and primary resource to work. Participants inspect their own 'weak' and fragile memories and ensuing emotions. This introspective look allows them to start their own design research. Not only past memories, but also everyday experiences and often clandestine feelings drive the unheimliche experience.

By joining the forces of the unheimliche and education I wanted to fathom, and even encounter the source of the learner's unheimliche dread. To this end, my own pedagogic approach takes as a point of departure the everyday yet disquieting memories, experiences and (pre)sentiments of the learner which can be retrieved through the mechanisms of *empathy*.

Chapter 6, 'Epilogue', summarizes the final conclusions of the thesis, followed by Chapter 7 with a bibliography. Finally, I include my joint competition entry for the Palace of Justice in Brussels as an appendix in Chapter 8.

Aims, Questions, Objectives

Bringing these four issues (education, design approach, interior experience, and ambulatory discourse) together, I have formulated the following main research question: Is it possible to develop a strategy that incorporates the unheimliche as a constructive force as opposed to constituting a weakness in relation to design and design education? If so, how can one develop this strategy in the field of interior architecture, the area of expertise from which the study emanates? Rather than finding straight answers, the questions themselves help to investigate the workings of the unheimliche. This procedure constitutes a 'design' in itself to 'design' ways to enrich singular experiences into multiple ones. This way, the aim is to demonstrate how the unheimliche might 'enchant' and 'bewitch' stakeholders concerned and take the experience of the ordinary into the extraordinary, specifically in areas such as discourse, experience, design and education. Furthermore, I hope to demonstrate what astonishing things interiors do for one's existence – when the undesired and the unpreferred can compete with the desired.

Out of the main research question, a series of sub-questions and objectives ensue that revolve around the spine of five chapters. In Chapter 2, I interpret the first cluster of existing and relevant literature studies on the subject of the unheimliche from the question of how the concept of the unheimliche has been discussed in different contexts relevant to our main question. In Chapter 3, a second line of questions and objectives gathers the unheimliche *as an experience* by the beholder. How does the unheimliche manifest itself in everyday life and its interiors? Which research frameworks sustain the research subject of the unheimliche? In Chapter 4, a third cluster of questions investigates a series of *ethical issues concerning the status and role of the design(er)*. Why are the contemporary architectural values predominantly geared to avoiding conflict and achieving harmony, comfort, and light? Why are the contraries such as obscurity, conflict and discomfort considered marginal phenomena? In formulating these questions in Chapter IV, my objective is to frame interior architecture as a proper design approach with its own knowledge production. In the concluding Chapter 5, I investigate a fourth cluster of sub-questions with regard to pedagogy and the shifting status of the learner. In this chapter, the central objective is to *learn from my own and other educational practices*. How can one teach a paradoxical phenomenon such as the unheimliche and combine it with learning? Can my own educational practice and professional practice be embedded in the inquiry?

In conclusion, by exposing and recording this darker and intimate side of architecture, I propose the unheimliche experience as a strategy for the reader, the learner, the beholder and the designer to cope with increasing complexities in interior architecture.

Auto-critique

Before finalizing the thesis, it was also necessary to critically review the history of writing it. Initially, I had mistaken the concept of the unheimliche as a sort of omnipresent phenomenon in interior architecture. In so doing, the concept of the unheimliche inflated to an all-inclusive metaphor that covered all phenomena from mild anxiety to sheer horror. Consequently, as the unheimliche was 'everywhere' there was a real danger it would lose its specificity. Similar to what Martin Jay stated, as cited in Anneleen Masschelein's book *The Unconcept* (Masschelein, 2011:147), this compulsion subverted my research negatively. Jay signalled the dangers of over-quoting the uncanny and overestimating its workings.[1] Moreover, my research itinerary hasn't exactly been a straight and uniform line towards clarity. By revising my initial convictions and critically questioning newly acquired ones, it was possible to evolve and move away from initial positions. Interestingly, from the mere conviction of the unheimliche as a medical and solvable problem, I have evolved to the hypothesis of the unheimliche as a travelling concept that stimulates the growth of creativity and imagination for the learner, the designer, observer and reader.

Informally, my inquiry into the unheimliche took off in 1995, while I was an architecture student, and progressed through my own professional practice (from 2004 to today) and my teaching practice (2005 to today). As an architecture student, I re-designed and partially reconstructed the interior of a castle, the main character in the Franz Kafka novel *The Castle* (Kafka, 1935). The design project was entitled Architecture is Terror. However, this design project, now deleted, was not really a research project but rather an artistic attempt to interpret and reconstruct an imaginary place – Kafka's castle as described in his book – into an architectural space with real dimensions, inside views and so on. After setting up my own architectural practice in 2004, my perspective on interior architecture and the unheimliche changed somewhat. I started from the conviction that space inherently contains anguish. Consequently, if space contains anguish, it must be possible to 'solve and remediate' this space by removing the cause of the anguish. Through strategically transforming the unheimliche into the heimliche (or the unsafe into the safe), I hoped – rather naïvely – that the force of the unheimliche could be *remediated*.

However, there was a crucial problem with this remedial approach. As an unheimliche place transforms into a heimliche one, the inherent force of the unheimliche becomes extinguished. In reality, as the unheimliche resists domestication, any attempt to represent or fix it invariably fails. Moreover, by transforming the unheimliche into the heimliche, the research is limited to problem solving – i.e. reduced to finding a remedy (or perhaps, a commodity) rather than effectively exploring the *transitory* concept of the unheimliche.

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1 'Jay signals some of the problems to the fashionable status of the ethical-political conceptualization of the uncanny. […] In his view, the metaphoric openness of the word, the lack of a fixed core, which he associates with deconstruction, may lead to a relativism and even cynicism with regard to "real" phenomena such as homelessness, exile, and ultimately to its recuperation by the very capitalist society that the post-Freudian uncanny supposedly criticizes: it's now the height of canniness to market the uncanny.' (Masschelein, 2011:147)

Intriguingly, it can be argued that existing literature suppports this remediating approach. For instance, publications such as *Language of Space* by Brian Lawson (Lawson, 1999) or Christophe Alexander's *Pattern Language* (Alexander, 1977) analyse existing 'sick' places and offer several strategies to *improve* them. In her book *Pathologies of Modern Space, Empty Space, Urban Anxiety and the Recovery of the Public Self*, Kathryn Milun argues that there's a direct link between modern empty spaces and pathologies (Milun, 2007). Hence, she approaches architecture and space in terms of a pathologic kind of anxiety, implying that the cause of this pathology should be sanitized and eradicated. Lawson, Alexander and Milun's approaches are valuable, but in my view, symptomatically, they somehow fit into today's context with its underlying tendency and obsession to solve and remediate problems. In Chapter 4, I will come back to this specific context.

Thus, beyond my initial scope to merely remediate 'sick' spaces, my current research has another scope. Stimulated by working together with learners, by reading about other approaches, and by reading critical reviews from peers, the focus of my research gradually shifted towards a broader field. I have granted the unheimliche a proper place in the research field as *a re-creative force*. For this reason, I decided not to concentrate on expanding its meanings but rather to explore *agencies of the unheimliche*. What does the unheimliche *do* to humans and things? How does it alter the existing alliances we have with things and with each other? I believe that this is consistent to the approach of aforementioned Mieke Bal: '*While groping to define, provisionally and partly, what a particular concept may mean, we gain insight into what it can do. It is in the grouping that the valuable work lies. […] The grouping is a collective endeavour.*' (Bal, 2002:11)

In retrospect, in a very general sense, instead of studying the unheimliche as a theme in architecture, I rather deployed it as a research strategy that allows one to deal with a *multiplicity of experiences* and *changes* in interior architecture.

Methodological Compasses

In essence, as my PhD research is informed by Research by Design, it is never finished and always 'in the making'. The research design has been carried out roughly between 2009 and 2014. As no fixed methods were pre-set, my approach shifted through certain important events, such as seminars, design workshops and studios, discussions with colleagues, mentors, and (co)-promotors, and by developing a specific pedagogic model (see chapter 5, 20.2). However, importantly and truly at the heart of my research, organizing and teaching the so called Onheimelijke Studios had been decisive for my research. The first Onheimelijk I Studio (September-December 2008) was informed by the actions and thoughts of twelve participants; Onheimelijk II (September–December 2009) had seventeen participants; Onheimelijk III (February-May 2011) had fifteen participants; Onheimelijk IV (February-May 2012) had twenty three participants; and Onheimelijk V (February-May 2013) had eighteen participants.

	Theme	Approach
Onheimelijk I: Disquieting Architecture of the Inside (2008)[1]	Interiors and anguish	Exploring subthemes on the 'unheimliche'
Onheimelijk II: Troubled Waters (2009)[2]	Interiors and climate change	Building on one selected student project from Onheimelijk I
Onheimelijk III: Fabula Rasa (2011)[3]	Interiors and the customary	Learning from and subverting conventions
Onheimelijk IV: Collective Memory (2012)[4]	Interiors and the unreliability of memory	Personal memories as reconstructed in space.
Onheimelijk V: Hidden and Reclusive (2013)[5]	Interior and the secretive and hidden	Personal secrets and reconstruction of secret

Instead of focusing on one crucial method, I developed a range of methods in the Research Design Studio Onheimelijk, which I will now try to map out. A first set of specific methods I would label as *intuitive* methods. Informed by my own set of past experiences and actions, these intuitive methods came into play gradually in an almost clandestine way. As personal events have preceded my own thesis and my formation as an architect, I cannot dismiss them and therefore they are included in the thesis. As mentioned before in the section 'Anterior Itineraries', a first intuitive approach was to engage in long-distance cycling. These journeys have enabled me to wander freely and improvise – unplanned – across foreign territories while remaining focused and dependent on one mechanical device: a bike. I believe cycling has been a suitable activity to both 'disappear' and regain the centre of the self again. Going through these experiences, I was able to reflect and experience the moving landscape at the same time. The endless repetition of wheels turning round, the crossing of borders, cities, fields and forests allowed me to shake off old habits and convictions. More importantly, cycling allowed me to achieve a different mind-set and gave me the opportunity to reflect on the unthinkable. Going back in time, there are other experiences that have been crucial: reading stories by authors such as Kafka, Edgar

Allen Poe and John Flanders were important. Reading their works at an early age certainly (de)formed my imagination. They made me realize the power of the written word and how it can transmit a sense of being and wandering in other fictive worlds. Reading them meant going through a 'fictional experience of time', as Paul Ricoeur distinguished in his *Time and Narrative* (Ricoeur, 1983:III, 100).

A final intuitive method was to reminisce and relive certain memories that somehow made a difference for me. My late grandfather, a passionate self-taught historian, once recounted the authentic story of quickly expanding Frankish tribes (Brill, 1937) who moved swiftly across the European continent after the collapse of the Roman empire before gradually settling down. In so doing, they left traces such as marking typical village names ending with the suffix '-heim' or '-gem'. (Fig. 2 p.36) These distinct village names can still be deciphered on geographical maps where one can find an elongated spot that is stretched in many directions, consistent with the movement of these tribes. In a metaphoric way, Frankish tribes have founded the notion of *heimlichkeit* both in a spatial and temporal sense. This story by my grandfather illuminated a lot of for me: suddenly the slow sediments of history became clear and near. One way or another, these past events and experiences have at least in part coloured my drive and energy to undertake this thesis. In retrospect, going back and through these intuitive experiences has been crucial: without them, I probably would not have chosen the unheimliche as a theme and approach.

These 'intuitive' methods are not established in an academic milieu and remain to a certain extent uncommunicable and not transmittable, but they relate to and could be seen as part of the now more common research methods such as auto ethnography (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). What follows is a list of methods that I were introduced in the course of my thesis.

(1) A first method was literature studies and in a more traditional way to *engage with peers and reading and writing* articles that were published in national and international architecture magazines. In making of this thesis, I published three internationally peer reviewed articles. Writing and reading allowed me to empathise with different authors, studying their writing styles, audiences and aspirations.

(2) A second approach is to consistently verify the *etymological meaning* of the words. This has been most useful as it allowed me to travel in time, discovering the slow but certain changes of notions and terms. Analogous to the workings of the unheimliche, etymology is a form of archaeology that helps to decipher and unearth the historical movements and shifts of words.

(3) Another method was to engage in a concrete design project by participating *in a design competition* in which I could conduct a specific Research by Design. The Rethinking the Palace of Justice competition helped me to rethink the future of the magnificent but

megalomaniac Palace of Justice in Brussels. The building itself has a very intriguing history and has many unheimliche qualities. In the competition, I brought out the unheimliche *as a political tool,* which enabled me to critically comprehend certain societal issues today and at the time it was built. The essence of the proposal was to re-design a brief that was, in my opinion, missing. In the thesis, you will find the document integrally published (Fig. 40-65). in the appendix, Chapter 8

(4) A fourth method was to *experiment in concrete teaching situations*, and to consider the design studios I taught as research laboratories with the students as research assistants and co-researchers. Approaching the unheimliche through pedagogy, i.e. learning from my teaching practice, implied *allowing external jury members to evaluate* the results of the Onheimelijke Studios. It became one of the ways of learning from others. Involving these evaluators allowed me to critically question my own convictions. Furthermore, engaging in a dialogue with students whom I consider —I included—learners continuously changed the course of my own research track.

In Chapter 5, 20.1-2, I return in detail to methodological approaches developed in my teaching practice. In these studios, I also allowed myself to *commit failures* and to learn from them. For five years I co-organised five Research by Design Studios in which I could experiment on various topics of the unheimliche that yielded both successes and failures. One of the more prominent mistakes and errors of judgement I have made was to premeditate the course and results of these Studios. In the first three editions, instead of following an experimental approach, I imposed certain methods upon the learners, such as pursuing a design track based on analysis. Moreover, I also disclosed prior knowledge to the students concerning the unheimliche. I expected that this injection of knowledge would inspire and stimulate them, but I found that it instead intimidated them. Moreover, explicitly bringing forward these elements of precognition critically misguided students. It made them reluctant to share unheimliche experiences with one another. Perhaps due to a lack of self-trust, I also believe that in the beginning of the research I relied too much on the knowledge I had from existing literature and not enough from my own or my students' experience. While investigating the workings of the unheimliche, I gradually realised I had to go beyond either personal experience or scientific knowledge. In fact, in my thesis, I believe that I have brought experience and knowledge into a dynamic balance.

Even though I have used some more traditional approaches, such as literature studies, interpretations of texts and theoretical elaborations, I have no intention to be a philosopher, psychologist, or sociologist. The theoretical elaborations and studies have been done from the perspective of my practice as a designer and interior architect – and as a teacher in this field – and my intention is for this research to contribute to these practices.

Fig.1 Image of dilapidated state of 'Maison Citrohan'. Photo by Karel Deckers, Cité Frugès, Bordeaux, 1994

Fig.2 Map indicating Frankish settlements ending with '-heim',, a typical procedure marking the conquest of the Franks in the 8th Century A.D. Image by Karel Deckers, 2014

§2

2. THE UNHEIMLICHE AS A TRAVELLING CONCEPT

In this chapter, I will explore the *unheimliche* as a 'travelling concept' that intervenes in between disciplines, people and periods. This travelling agency recurs frequently in the whole thesis. A first line of inquiry goes into the etymology of the word *unheimliche*. To a certain extent, etymology demonstrates how the meaning of the unheimliche has gradually diverged and shifted throughout time, place and language. Secondly, I analyse the unheimliche as a theme and discourse throughout history. Drawing from a range of schools such as psychology, phenomenology and post-structuralism, the unheimliche seems to infect diverse fluxes of thought through the written word of respective authors. Consequently, these turbulent vagaries of the unheimliche have not passed unnoticed. They have informed well-known authors such as Freud, Heidegger, Bernard Tschumi and many others. It can be argued that the unheimliche has at least in part influenced their ideas and writings. Finally, through the lens of the central concept of the unheimliche, I will examine a range of themes that these and other authors have developed. Finally, I will ask the following questions: What does the unheimliche mean? And more significantly, what does it do?

1 Introductory Remarks

In his article 'Das Unheimliche' (Freud, 1919), Freud reflects on the etymological sources of the word *unheimliche*. Through the use of etymology, he determines that the words *heimliche* and *unheimliche* reveal a logic of their own: the German adjectives *heimliche* and *unheimliche* are antonyms ('secretive' versus 'revealing') but also synonyms ('secretive' and 'stealthy'). In fact, they form a complex double concept in terms of use and meaning, as that complexity allows contradiction and agreement at the same time. Both adjectives *unheimlich* and its antonym *heimlich* indicate a sense of place or *Heim* (or a home). Strongly connoted to a *topos*, they are both topical terms. Whereas *heimlich* suggests a place to find reassurance, the *unheimlich* suggests a place of non-well-being, or else an undesirable place to stay. *Unheimlich* literally also means to be 'absent from the home'. Next to its topological connotation, its most known meaning is how the adverb *unheimliche* conveys an affect. The affect of the unheimliche denotes a feeling of being anxious, eerie, or scary. Furthermore, the term *unheimlich* comes close to the archaic German synonym *unheimisch*, which literally means 'un-homely' and also 'foreign; exogenous'. However, *unheimisch* and *unheimlich* are not synonyms. In contrast to *unheimisch*, the term *unheimlich* contains more complexities, as it has the different meanings (1) absent from

the home but also (2) something or someone secretive. Thus, paradoxically – and hence appropriately – *unheimlich* and its antonym *heimlich* give rise to the same definition: the double term *(un)heimliche* both reveals but also conceals (Freud, 1919).

 In short, the German word, *unheimlich* denotes a complex range of topologic and existential characteristics: the word combines a place (i.e. *Heim*), a specific experience and ensuing feeling (i.e. being anxious), a characteristic (i.e. secretive) into one. Thus, the term *(un)heimlich* is a complex term that allows multiplicity and contradictions: its complexity of layers can be linked to a place, affect and character.

The English translation of the unheimliche as 'uncanny' does not have this topical dimension that the German *unheimliche* has. In English, the word 'uncanny' basically has three levels of meaning. First, the term *uncanny* is foremost an antonym of *canny*, which means (1) careful and shrewd, (2) cautious, and (3) knowing. Whereas *canny* suggests a 'knowing' person (someone who *can* do things), the word *uncanny* seems to imply a lack of knowing. Thus, in an etymologic and archaic sense, being uncanny means to be an 'unknowing person'. It suggests that the *uncanny* contains specific agencies in terms of cognition – i.e. a certain loss of cognitive faculties. A second element is that the term *uncanny* is associated with the supernatural. It denotes 'mischievous' and has Scottish and Northern English origins. A third layer of the meaning of uncanny is linked to *abilities*. One can divide the uncanny into two elements, *un + can*, and the partition then suggests that 'I am un-canny' or 'I cannot'. In this sense, uncanny seems to refer to an inability to perform a certain action. Thus, the English term *uncanny* implies three layers: the supernatural, a loss of cognition, and a loss of abilities and skills. Since my research deals with the re-creative workings of existential anguish, both the English and German adjectives are suitable but within their own limits. However, I prefer the use of the German adverb *unheimliche* because of its manifest connotation to history, place, language and meaning. It underlines the uncertain closure of history, place, and language and meaning. Moreover, *unheimliche* has more intuitive links with the core of architecture – the experience of space and time – than the word *uncanny* does.

Before continuing to analyse a range of themes of the unheimliche, three items that recur throughout the thesis need to be clarified in detail: (1) the status of portrayed images, (2) the etymologic references to specific words and (3) the performative status of the learners (such as students, researchers, and so on).

First, it is important to outline the status of the images shown in the thesis. In my view, these images have the power to both energize an unheimliche feeling. Therefore, in their own way, the images bring about a familiar but simultaneously strange feeling to the beholder. The images presented are a medium to convey an immediate experience – an *Erlebnis* – of the unheimliche, irrespective of its historical origin or context. In my opinion, the selected images transmit to the beholder a concrete lived experience of the unheimliche. Furthermore, it is not my intention to make a comprehensive – let alone novel

– contribution to existing art historical discourses or theories on the unheimliche. The images have a suggestive power in themselves that does not illustrate but rather sparks the workings of the unheimliche.

The second recurring item, the use of etymology, has an entirely different scope. Etymology demonstrates how the meanings of words have slowly changed throughout time. Through etymology the reader can travel in time. Etymology can filter out the residual meaning of words and redirect the reader to its proper origins – a return to the habitual and familiar etymologic origins of words that have somehow become disfigured, transformed by accident, through time and usage. As etymology is able to reconstruct and identify this tenacious residual component within the stacked synonyms of words, it can be linked to the unheimliche. After all, the unheimliche has the same point of departure as etymology. Despite a familiar and recognizable core, the external appearance of a familiar notion somehow has been inexplicably modified throughout time into something unfamiliar. Moreover, unravelling etymologic layers of words allows the reader to go back in time. Altogether, etymology demonstrates an unheimliche agency of words that have started to 'conspire' with a certain place, objects and people. Therefore, in line with interior architecture, words seem to have this inherent capacity to retain different meanings even if they are contradictory to one another. They seem to be capable of transmitting hidden messages and delivering them from the past into the present, albeit slightly altered. Thus etymology can help to identify these hidden messages.

A third recurring item is the status of the performative. The performative has been used to 'describe and explain the meaning and value of some artistic and art world events and activities which occurred at least as far back as the 1910s (e.g. Marcel Duchamp's staging of his alter-ego identity as the woman Rose Selavy" (Harris, 2006:230). In the experience of a particular *unexpected* event, the workings of the unheimliche are potentially revealed. The unplanned and eventful dynamics of the Onheimelijke Studios between 2008 and 2013, treated in Chapter 5, reveal the workings of the unheimliche as a continuous work in progress for all stakeholders involved (the learner, the designer, the user and the observer). In other words, the re-creative workings of the unheimliche imply random and unexpected encounters as in an unplanned journey. In this respect, I follow Susan Bernstein's study *The Ambulatory Uncanny* (Bernstein, 2003), in which she states that the 'uncanny walks': the unheimliche workings cannot be pinned down but rather ambulate upon trajectories that cannot be pre-set or anticipated.

2 A Travelling Concept

How does the unheimliche 'perform' throughout time? In its unfathomable orbit, the unheimliche has travelled and still travels through a range of disciplines. As the unheimliche tends to distort whatever comes near, it has perhaps bewildered a range of authors and creators: their actions and writings have shaped the contours of the unheimliche as a recurrent theme. From humanities such as psychoanalysis, sociology, history and literature to the creative arts of architecture and cinematography, the unheimliche temporarily surfaced and then strangely disappeared. As the meaning of the unheimliche and its reach differs according to different periods of time, the unheimliche is a concept that persistently moves.

Why does the unheimliche move? What kind of energy fuels this movement? *Doubt* is a crucial element. For many artists, the unheimliche embodies a vital means to aesthetically exploit an unusual kind of doubt, wonder and even anguish. Doubt is accountable for many great works of art in history to emerge: writers, poets, visual artists and scientists shape and sublimate their doubt into art or science. This artistic expression triggered but also warranted intellectual and emotional solace for both artist, scientist and their audience. If one contemplates certain artistic works by the likes of Francisco Goya (*Los Caprichos*, 1797), the relation between doubt and art becomes apparent. The unheimliche has even become a literary genre in itself, such as in the Gothic novel. By combining architectural elements (such as the haunted house) and elements of psychology (such as the uncanny guest) the Gothic novel also has developed the theme of the unheimliche. Literary works such as Edgar Allen Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) negotiate between the reader's imagination, the architectural interiors and the anguish it triggers. Musical works such as the British post punk band Joy Division's album *Closer* (1980) sound unheimlich. A mix of 'Weltschmerz' filled lyrics, the choice of instruments, the specific structure of songs, the particular rhythm section, and the special artwork of the albums stir the audience's imagination and make listening to their music a disquieting event. Other examples include the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Requiem (*1791). Interestingly, the unheimliche acts '*in between' a range of 'authors'* – such as interior architects, builders, or musicians – and their respective audiences. In the process of designing and experiencing the unheimliche, an intriguing state of ambiguity grows between author and audience: the respective roles of beholder and author become increasingly uncertain. Moreover, all these artistic endeavours underline the workings of the unheimliche: torment becomes reciprocal to art, and vice versa.

Next to this artistical and literary approach, I also identify a large number of authors that have developed a more 'structural' and theoretical approach to the unheimliche. Thus, in order to understand this turbulent background of the unheimliche better, I have

chosen to expand upon three often overlapping schools of thought on the unheimliche: the Freudian Unheimliche, the Phenomenological Unheimliche and the Post-Structuralist Unheimliche. I will expand on respective cultural theoreticians – such as Edmund Burke, Sigmund Freud, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Otto Bollnow, Anthony Vidler and Gaston Bachelard – with their backgrounds ranging from psychology to architecture. All of them were consciously or unconsciously involved in the activating potentialities of the unheimliche within their respective disciplines. Moreover, they promote a variety of approaches in their thinking and method building that are complementary to each other.

A first line of thinking follows the romantic-existential tradition starting with Edmund Burke and Freud. Freud's findings, as initiator of a more scientific approach to the unheimliche, have been crucial. His 'Das Unheimliche' remains a significant source and this led to the title the Freudian Unheimliche for the first line of thinking. The second line of thinking, the Phenomenological Unheimliche, brings about perspectives starting from concrete and lived phenomena coming from phenomenological and existentialist authors. Authors such as Heidegger, Hans Jonas, Otto Bollnow, Juhani Pallasmaa, Christian Norberg-Schulz and Gaston Bachelard are representatives of this second line. Finally, the third line of thinking, the Poststructuralist Unheimliche, offers a post-structuralist view of history with thinkers such as Anthony Vidler, Bernard Tschumi, Anneleen Masschelein and Hélène Cixous. All aforementioned authors are key figures who have contributed to understanding the unheimliche as a discourse that influenced and 'infected' the minds of many throughout time.

3 The Freudian Unheimliche

The term *the Unheimliche* was introduced to science by the German psychologist Ernst Jentsch in an article from 1906 (Jentsch, 1906). He equates the unheimliche to intellectual uncertainty: '…doubts whether a apparently animate being is really alive.' (Jentsch cited in Freud, 1919:625). Later the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud also accepted that intellectual certainty potentially leads to the state of the unheimliche. However, in the eyes of Freud, Jentsch's analysis did not go far enough. In his article 'Das Unheimliche' (Freud, 1919)*,* he extends Jentsch's view. Freud considered the unheimliche as an a concept that 'tends to coincide with what excites fear in general' (Freud, 1919:619). As the unheimliche can be perceived in arts, culture and nature, Freud regarded the unheimliche as an *aesthetic subject* with paradoxical features, the 'subject of aesthetics even when aesthetics is understood to mean merely the theory of beauty but the theory of the qualities of feelings' (Freud, 1919:619).

After analysing the works by Jentsch (and also Schelling), Freud offers in his article several strategies of investigation. First, he retraces 'what meaning has come to be attached to the word "uncanny" in the course of its history*'* (Freud, 1919:620). This etymological approach filters out different meanings of words, artistic artefacts and so on. Alternatively, Freud proposes to 'collect all those properties of persons, things, sense-impressions, experiences and situations which arouse in us the feeling of uncanniness, and then infer the unknown nature of the uncanny from what all the examples have in common' (Freud, 1919:620). In this other approach, Freud investigates the actual workings of the unheimliche, independent from meanings. As he chooses not to pursue an essentialist approach, such as asking what the unheimliche means on a textual level; instead he questions how the unheimliche affects the beholder. Finally, Freud notes that these two strategies, one connecting to meanings and the other to agencies, lead to the same conclusion: 'the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar' (Freud, 1919:620). He stresses the *mental* uneasiness attributed to the unheimliche that lingers within each individual. Moreover, according to Freud, the unheimliche can be activated at any time as it is repressed and lays dormant in the oblivion of the primitive. In contrast with Enlightenment's claims that man has 'surmounted' (Freud, 1919:630) primitive modes of thought, Freud demonstrates with his study on the unheimliche that the power of the primitive underlies and precedes reason.

3.1 Freudian Themes

In the first chapter, Freud starts fathoming the unheimliche as a historical subject with traces in language. He investigates the various shifts of the term *unheimlich* in different Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages. By empathically reading and deciphering art works, metaphors, stories and dialogues, Freud demonstrates that the human psyche contains fundamentally unconscious layers of information that need to be elucidated. These layers may be repressed out of fear, frustration and anger. It can be said that his findings have opened the door to a fundamental distrust in the lucid judgment of the human rationale: in this respect, the unheimliche is just one of many findings.

In the second chapter, Freud devises a range of unheimliche themes. First, he identifies a universal fear of going blind that becomes a substitute for the fear of castration (Freud, 1919:628). Second, he mentions the unheimliche appearance of the 'uncanny double' or the *Doppelgänger* (Freud, 1919:630) – as embodied by the unsettling presence of mirrors, shadows or guardians spirits – which according to Freud cast a shadow onto the idea of self-reliance. Third, Freud describes why the unintended and unlikely repetition of the same event can be experienced as unheimlich. He states that the 'involuntary repetition' (Freud, 1919:630) conveys a sense of helplessness to anyone concerned. Fourth, Freud believes that the unheimliche is unleashed by *dread for the dead*. In Freudian logic, humans descend from a dark distant animistic past whereby lifeless objects, such as the ritual voodoo doll, are linked to an innate dread for the dead. When animated, these fethishes become mediators between the world of the dead and the living. With voodoo dolls, the dead are able to transmit deadly powers and uncanny feeling to the beholder. A final Freudian theme, *the omnipotence of thoughts* (Freud, 1919:633), allows the primitive workings of the so called 'evil eye' (Freud, 1919:633). By thinking maliciously about someone, a beholder is able to activate his/her evil eye upon someone. Consequently, the evil eye is the extension of the mind, which can cast an evil spell at somebody.

The Double

For the scope of my thesis, the second theme of the 'uncanny double' is significant. In Freud's lifetime, he might have been acquainted with publications such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Stevenson, 1886) that introduced the idea of an unreliable double. Such famous stories demonstrate the double's capacity to combine multifarious characters such as familiar and strange. The theme is also elaborated by Freud in his 'Das Unheimliche'. Freud states that 'the phenomenon of the double does undoubtedly arouse an uncanny feeling, which furthermore recalls the sense of helplessness experienced in some dream states' (Freud, 1919:631).

In architecture and interior design, the theme of the 'uncanny double' rebounds in the tension between inside and outside. Amongst architects and interior architects, one can detect an almost natural desire to dissolve the binary and artificial opposition between

the inside and the outside of an interior. In reality, recent and less recent examples suggest that both inside and outside can overlap and act as a double. Thus, the difference between inside and outside gradually fades and transforms into uncertainty, a combinatorial phenomenon.

Moreover, the example of the uncanny double also returns in architectural alteration of an interior. A carefully executed alteration potentially makes something 'other', an awkward but familiar creation. Similar to Freud's 'uncanny double', the (interior) architect intervenes and creates an alter ego, a strange Doppelgänger. After the refurbishment the original space might still be intact in terms of geometry, yet the space and atmosphere somehow has been altered. This 'uncanny double' strikes observers with mixed feelings, leaving them displaced and perplexed at the same time. In Chapter 3, I will come back to the role of the beholder and the unheimliche as an experience in (interior) architecture.

Involuntary Repetition

Freud develops another unheimliche theme: *involuntary repetition* (Freud, 1919:631). He refers to the inexplicable agency of these repetitions such as 'déjà vu' experiences that are common but hard to explain and rationalize. He notes that there's a 'constant recurrence of the same thing – the repetition of the same features or character traits or vicissitudes, or the same crimes or even the same names through several consecutive generations' (Freud, 1919:631). Freud recollects his own a personal déjà vu experience: after he repeatedly noticed the reappearance of the number sixty nine in one day, Freud experienced a mild kind of anxiety and unsettlement.

Amongst many architects, supposedly there's a silent consensus to avoid monotony and about how to do so. By adding visual and experiential variation in their designs, architects convey spatial variation and differentiation, which implicitly connotes to quality. If variation is lacking in the architectural experience, monotony steps in. However, sometimes reality kicks in. Doesn't involuntary repetition materialise in cities such as Hong Kong as photographed by Michael Wolf in his series *Architecture of Density* (Wolf, 2002) (Fig.3, p.65)? As one witnesses the involuntary repetition of endless skyscrapers on the periphery of contemporary cities, what does one experience, a sense of repulsion? Or perhaps a sense of indifference? I put forward the experience of spatial monotony as a potentially unheimliche one. In detecting the monotony of urban projects, these cities form laboratories where one can detect signs of the re-creative workings of the unheimliche.

Omnipotence of Thoughts

Freud continues with a third theme. For him, the dread of the 'evil eye' (Fig.4, p.66) was 'one of the most uncanny forms of superstition' due to a an 'old animistic conception of the universe' (Freud, 1919:633). In this conception, the world is governed 'by the subject's narcissistic overvaluation of his own mental processes. […] It seems that we ascribe

the character of the uncanny to those impressions that tend to confirm the omnipotence of thoughts and animistic thinking in general, though our judgement has already turned away from such thinking' (Freud, 1919:633-34). Thus, Freud connects the unheimliche workings with an outdated form of thinking and to an overt form of narcissism.

In this regard, it is intriguing to investigate the role of narcissism in design. Don't designers, architects and other creative people typically systematically overestimate the capacity of their own mental processes? Their 'benevolent' eyes are trained to project 'good' in this world, but in reality don't they sometimes fail to do so? This uniformity in the architectural design discipline makes many designers behave according to the logic of a tribe: many of them automatically assume their power of projecting something good onto reality. My point is that many designers' aspirations are in tune with the animistic conception of the universe that Freud judged as naïve. Amongst many designers, there is a universal insistence to create something good by healing and sanitizing 'sick' spaces. Yet this insistence on cleansing is hardly questioned. In so doing, designers seem to surrender themselves – and above all their audience and future users – to a vague aspiration of doing something good because it is automatically assumed by the discipline. The assumption of doing good by designers demonstrates the relevance of mechanisms such as the omnipotence of thoughts or the evil eye of the designer. It makes one aware how sticky aspirations in architecture – such as being able to envision desirable spaces for the sake of others – are maintained and remain unquestioned.

3.2 Sources of the Freudian Unheimliche

Undoubtedly, the unheimliche finds its roots in Romanticism and its division between the sublime and the beautiful. This division goes back to the writings of English author Edmund Burke. Although he wrote the book *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (Burke, 1757) at the young age of nineteen, it became a very influential publication. Some notions developed by Burke shed a light on the understanding of the unheimliche in interior architecture. Arguably Burke is the first who made the unusual connection between terror and the sublime. He explicitly refers to forces in nature such as the depth of an abyss, the roaring sound of thunder and endless misty landscapes. According to him, they make one wonder about realities that are beyond human control. By going through these experiences, one can reach out to higher notions such as the sublime and the beautiful. While the beautiful is principally linked to simple pleasures and joys, the sublime is attached to a strong sensation of pain and terror. This distinction between the sublime and the beautiful is probably Burke's most original contribution. As the sublime is driven by awe inspired by nature, the sublime thus becomes a source of fear and threat (Fig.5, p.67). However, he also states that it is necessary to keep distance from these primordial fears. By detaching ourselves from them, one can experience something like delight.

In the second part of his book, Burke identified a number of qualities that are caused by the sublime such as obscurity, vastness, infinity, power, succession and uniformity, magnitude in buildings, magnificence and light. There is even a chapter dedicated to the unsettling cries of animals.

The fact that some of Burke's later works – such as the one on the French Revolution – are affiliated with and even propagated by conservative think tanks invites the following reflection. His book on the sublime still remains significant to understand phenomena such as terror and its potential to unsettle. His vivid description of these phenomena have touched upon an intuition that the sublime was a hitherto underestimated experience. However, it is necessary to point out that I do not intend to write a thesis as an esthetical response to Romanticism. Rather, I aim to apprehend the unheimliche by studying its origins and, more significantly, how it generates productive force fields of interior architecture today.

3.3 Reflections on the Freudian Unheimliche

The Freudian unheimliche occurs in the eerie clash between the premodern and the modern. A thing or a person can be familiar yet strange at the same time, thereby creating an awkward and uncomfortable feeling. If one experiences a sense of the unheimliche, one is left feeling somewhat bewildered, perplexed and uncomfortably strange. The works of Freud and Burke stand at the crossroads between the hidden on one hand and the wish for clarity on the other. The first range of authors, from Freud to Burke, delineates a romantic tendency in philosophical thinking and science. In the Age of Reason it was believed that their writings had disrupted and rather abruptly confronted man with the relative limits of progress. Arguably, their work undermined the belief in human rationality. The writings of these two figures, Burke and Freud, are fundamentally rooted in a tradition of suspicion towards the often disturbing workings of reason. Their writings have highlighted previously underrated concepts such as intuition, unconsciousness, nature or existential anguish. Implicitly, their insights have fuelled and given rise to the value of the unheimliche. By re-appreciating what has been hitherto neglected, their work exposed the human condition in terms of the absence of reason rather than its presence.

By recognizing the importance of the unheimliche, Freud indirectly paved the way for exploring new perspectives in architectural research. However, even in his own lifetime Freud's insights were criticized for his speculative methods and literary approach to his work. For instance, his reliance on etymology has been addressed as rather problematic (Masschelein, 2011:48)[1]. In hindsight, perhaps less than for its scientific value, Freud can be credited for opening the debate on the unheimliche and for the literary qualities of his articles.

1 'The rather paradoxical combination of relative complexity and sophistication in the analysis with blatant mistakes and biases in the interpretation has given rise to countless combined readings of "the Uncanny", often in relation to Hoffman's "Sandman", which since the 1970's became a tradition in itself.' (Masschelein, 2011:48)

4 The Phenomenological Unheimliche

4.1 Phenomenological Themes

After Freud, in its travelling wake, the unheimliche has spawned a series of other themes that historically have populated architecture and other disciplines. First, the German philosopher Martin Heidegger develops a range of themes such as *death* and *dwelling*. In his masterwork, *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1927). The importance of Heidegger's works cannot be overestimated for architecture in general and this thesis in particular. His works propose an unprejudiced and fresh return to the phenomenon as such.

In Heidegger's trail, Gaston Bachelard predominantly writes on the phenomenology of the house and the lived experience of the domestic interior. Amongst others, concerning the notion of domesticity, he calls for the rehabilitation of House as a 'vertical being' (Bachelard, 1958:53). Otto Bollnow expands on the theme of orientation and its antonym, disorientation (Otto F. Bollnow, 1965;1963). Finally, Christian Norberg-Schulz explores the notion of existential space and time (Norberg-Schulz, 1971).

Mortality

The first theme I explore is the inevitable *advent and power of mortality*. Although the theme of death is an ancient theme in many disciplines, its connotation is usually negative. Whereas Freud dedicates a part of his work to the fascination for all that is dead and all that is lifeless, it was Heidegger who provided another perspective to death. Heidegger assembled the human condition under one key term, *Dasein*, as fundamentally governed by two sub conditions *being-towards-death* (Heidegger, 1927:301) and *being-in-the-world* (Heidegger, 1927:80). In being-towards-death, one is conditioned towards death but also stimulated by it: living in the expectancy of death instigates creativity amongst mortals. Interestingly, this undertone provides a relevant insight for a creative discipline such as architecture. According to many phenomenologists, the making of architectural artefacts implies more than just making objects: artefacts demonstrate the capacity of mortals to organize their lives in a meaningful way. It is an existential activity that transmits meaning to objects throughout generations. This significant blending of mortality and creativity brings forward the following paradox: death is a necessary condition for making something. In other words, creativity is both limited and guided by the mortality of things and the passing of time. More specifically, because of one's supreme yet tragic awareness of mortality, existence has a meaning and direction. The unheimliche gravitates around this mortal notion (Heidegger, 1927:244). It is the finality of things that ultimately provokes a sense of urgency amongst mortals. It provides a wider horizon against which both contemplation and action is made possible.

Under the name *Dasein*, Heidegger also developed a second condition. *Building*, and by extension architecture, existentially and primarily embodies one's being-in-the-world. It allows a being to take its place in the world. Instead of considering architecture and building as a merely theoretical stance, phenomenologists claim that architecture's imprint is a strong cultural act that confirms our human presence on earth. Thus, according to Heidegger, both being-towards-death and being-in-the-world hold a key to understand the essence of architectural creation and one's natural sense of care towards reality and things.

Furthermore, building upon previous insights – such as Kierkegaard on anxiety (Kierkegaard, 1843) – Heidegger also made the distinction between fear and anguish. For him, fear always has a clear object and can be resolved and thus annihilated. Contrastingly, as anguish infers an existential state of *Un-zu-hause-sein* (not being home in the world), it differs distinctly from fear. Thus for Heidegger, engaging with *Unheimlichkeit* embodies a primal sensation of being overwhelmed. It brings about existential anguish without object, 'as a fundamental dimension of *Dasein*'.

> We understand the un-canny as that which throws one out the 'canny', that is homely, the accustomed, the usual, the un-endangered. The unhomely does not allow us to be at home. Therein lies the over-whelming. But human beings are the uncanniest, not only because they spend their lives essentially in the midst of the un-canny understood in this sense, but also because they step out, move out of the limits that at first and for the most part are accustomed and homely, because as those who do violence, they overstep the limits of the homely, precisely in the direction of the uncanny in the sense of over-whelming.

(Heidegger, 1927:161)

In line with Heidegger's reflection, the unheimliche equally starts from acceptance of one's own ending. However, instead of being conditioned by one's finality, death becomes a *possibility* that activates and stimulates creativity. If one has this analysis of death in mind, one would expect it reccurs in architecture. However, this is seldom the case. Even though funerary architecture still has a high status in terms of typology (one can think of the continuing worldwide appeal of cemetery designs by Gunnar Asplund and Carlo Scarpa), still the value of the concept of mortality remains a marginal topic in architecture, which seems to a certain extent strange and even paradoxical. Most architects give priority to producing new spaces, thus expressing their implicit desire to surmount or even defeat the workings of time through buildings. A recent study, Jacobs and Cairns's *Buildings Must Die: A Perverse View on Architecture*, describes this universal desire to

overcome death as *obduracy* (Jacobs & Cairns, 2014:43) and *natalism* (Jacobs & Cairns, 2014:29). The underlying idea of the concept of natalism is that through his or her work, an architect lives on and can eternally be *re-born* beyond the horizon of death. Intended to remain in place and time, a building and hence its architect are expected to outlive mortals. The second concept, *obduracy*, pursues the logic of an artefact that commemorates its maker in a distant future. By rising above death, by transcending future and past generations, architects can supposedly conquer their anguish for death. Through this process of petrifying ideas into buildings, the architect endures beyond his or her death and is remembered by future generations.

(Un)Homeliness

In the wake of thoughts on the unheimliche, *Heimatlösigkeit* (homelessness) is a theme that recurs in the philosophical works of Martin Heidegger. By unravelling the etymological origins of the word *buan* from old Germanic, he further expands on fundamental themes such as *dwelling* and the consequent loss of that dwelling. *Buan* stands for 'building' in two ways. It refers both to the activity of building and its existential meaning. He concludes that dwelling and building are legitimate modes of being-in-the-world. As the act of building is an existential one, one is and becomes what one builds. Consequently, in the absence of *buan*, one is pushed into an undesired state of homelessness.

In his *Poetics of Space*, the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard introduces the notion of the *vertical house*, which for him embodies the *homely* or *heimliche*: 'A house is imagined as a vertical being. It rises upwards. (Bachelard, 1958:53). By introducing the stacked logic of functional living spaces (such as apartments), he asserts that these dwellings lack an essential quality. For Bachelard, the attic and the basement are not just ordinary storage spaces, but rather places to play hide-and-seek from a child's perspective. Both attic and basement are quintessential in understanding the unfathomable depth of the house. That is why he implicitly questions why society has allowed the disappearance of the attic and basement in new apartment blocks. The 'artificial' superimposition of apartments has created impassable borders: the absence of staircases has gradually thwarted man's freedom to dwell vertically. Furthermore, Bachelard claims that the basement– a place of secrecy, shadows and darkness – contain existential capacity to hold memories, associations and desires. In contrast with the lightness and superiority of the attic, the basement is filled with a sense of awe and fright.[2]

Interestingly, Bachelard also reflects upon the constructive agency of daydreams (Bachelard, 1958:39), which is a central concept in *Poetics of Space*. As triggered by won-

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2 My own memory of playing in the attic and basement in my parents' house reminds me of the powerful alliance of architecture and imagination: an empty trunk could quickly become a time machine! Places like these are being eliminated from home design for reasons of economic efficiency. Unheimliche in interior architecture raises questions about the rapid disappearance of such places and promotes an awareness for so called 'useless' places.

der and anguish, these dreams enable the child's imagination. By exploring awkward everyday interior elements such as nests, corners, wardrobes and drawers, dreaming becomes possible. For him, all these places and items are intrinsically related to a sense of homey reassurance: the homey can trigger daydreaming. By reading Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*, one is struck by the somewhat nostalgic tone of his vivid descriptions. In contrast, however, my research into the unheimliche does not intend to promote a return to a former and idealized world of pastoral beauty as Bachelard arguably does.

Existential Space and Time

Heidegger states that space and existence are fundamentally entwined: 'Existence is spatial. […] You cannot divorce man and space. Space is neither an external object nor an internal experience. We don't have man and space besides. […] Space receives their being from places and not from "the space"' (Heidegger as cited in Masschelein, 1954:32).

In Heidegger's trail, Christian Norberg-Schulz, the Norwegian architectural theoretician, defined in his *Existence, Space and Architecture* the value of 'architectural space […] as a concretization of existential space' (Norberg-Schulz, 1971:37). He continues that 'It is of course possible to reduce architecture to a mere rationalistic activity, and hope that the other arts succeed in showing man that his world is meaningful. Our analysis of existential space, however, tells us that this reduction would make man "homeless" in the widest sense of the term' (Norberg-Schulz, 1971:39). In this logic, he interprets architectural space as the concretization of a larger, existing but implicit holistic scheme. According to Norberg-Schulz, it is not geometry but rather existential space that forms man's general orientation in the world. Counterbalancing any deterministic claim upon space, his work can be read as a poetic analysis of the human condition in relation to architecture. Perhaps more than Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz points at the power of architectural imagination and orientation in space and time. Drawing from authors such as Heidegger, Lewin and Lynch, he develops a vision of architecture deeply rooted in existence and the aspirations of mankind.

Another work from Norberg-Schulz may be important as well. In *Presence, Language and Place* (Norberg-Schulz, 2000), he develops a phenomenological notion of both space and time, something Heidegger has never materialized. Following Heidegger, he depicts a particular sense of being-in-the-world that invariably encompasses four essential things: the sky, the earth, the mortals and the gods. These four elements, the so-called *Quadrature* (the four things), are tied together and always surface simultaneously. In other words, every architectonic creation is invariably united and fulfilled by synchronising these four elements. At the heart of Norberg-Schulz's *spatial* conception of phenomenology, the Quadrature is crucial to understanding his conception of space in relation to phenomenology.

(Dis)Orientation

Phenomenologists also have issued the theme of *(dis)orientation* (Fig.6, p.68), which I deemed relevant. The theme of one's sense of (dis)orientation relates to Heidegger's assertion that man is existentially homeless and has no option but to continue wandering aimlessly. (Dis)orientation will be developed later by post-structuralist discourses on spatial displacement. Concerning the tension between orientation and disorientation, the Belgian philosopher and architectural theoretician Bart Verschaffel distinguishes between the *circle* and the *network*. In his book *From Hermes to Vestia* (Verschaffel, 2010), he describes the circle and the network as returning spatial frameworks that allow us to orientate and disorientate ourselves. First, a round table brings forward the idea of trust amongst those seated round a closed circle. As this group of peers is seated round a circular table, nobody can dominate the discussion. Thus, the round table not only symbolizes but also embodies a constellation of equals. Finally, Verschaffel connotes the circle to a safe, reassuring domestic interior.

However Verschaffel states that whereas the circle encloses and gives a clear orientation, such as a fixed centre, the paths of the *network* rather tend to disclose and open up without a clear centre or hierarchy. Moreover, in contrast to the enclosure and stability of the circle, a network is open to expansion. As the lines of the network frame myriad potential directions and orientations, it introduces the possibility of both orientation and disorientation. Once beyond the closure of the circle, it seems that one enters into the domain of unknown encounters. At the crossing or the overlapping of network lines, any kind of encounter is possible. One can think of the random encounter with an enemy tribe, a wild animal or a stranger. As these encounters with the unknown potentially frighten, the architecture of the network provides a framework that precisely allows these kinds of encounters – even if they frighten. Moreover, the network's architecture is very similar to how public space works in reality: the structure of the network generates the necessary conditions to open up possibilities, including the unheimliche option of getting lost.

It may be no coincidence that many European medieval cities are shaped like large circular nests that shelter everything inside: the circle becomes an ideal figure to keep out danger. Christian Norberg-Schulz, clearly influenced by the phenomenological insights of Heidegger and Husserl, makes reference to the circular shape of the medieval city centre. For him, a circle defines a domain that is known and easily controlled. Surrounded by large circular walls, these cities have been built, re-designed and altered in order to withstand pillaging and looting hordes coming from surrounding land and sea. Has a ubiquitous anguish for an impending foreign invasion shaped these cities into their current circular morphological contours? If so, it conveys the following implicit message: the unheimliche can be a force that can alter desperation into innovative entrepreneurship and the making of unexpected inventions. As the unheimliche makes people 'canny' and inventive, it makes one aware of the power of the unheimliche.

4.2 Reflections on the Phenomenological Unheimliche

As phenomenologists profess an inclusive approach towards reality, they provide a strong foundation to support my research into the unheimliche. Their approach critically questions dichotomies in a range of disciplines, arguably originating from Descartes's distinction between the thinking subject and the closed world of objects. These dichotomies arguably have led to a positivist interpretation of reality, wielding misanthropy and absence of wonder. It is argued that the phenomenological approach emphasizes a vital ability to *return* to phenomena as such. By taking distance from fragmentary tendencies, and by making the notion of care (*die Sorge*) (Heidegger, 1927:247) for things and beings central, specificity and qualities are safeguarded. In their own way, various phenomenologists have already helped describe the power of the unheimliche. In retrospect, the importance of phenomenology in my research has been crucial. As the unheimliche defies grasping of reality, it needs a layered and gradual approach to approximate its workings.

However, phenomenology is not entirely uncontested. For instance, one needs to be aware of the intrinsic problematic position of phenomenology in contemporary architectural discourse. Phenomenology's supposed and insistent aversion to modernity raises questions. Typically, phenomenologists hold the Modern Project accountable for strengthening the dichotomies of subject/object, reason/mystery, and others. Many phenomenologists believe that, due to modernity, one has come to live in a disenchanted world combined with an ever-growing alienation. Phenomenologists regard this Cartesian dichotomy between subject and object as accountable for man's alienation from reality. As opposed to these dichotomies, phenomenology takes on a philosophical position that advocates a return to a world deepened by poetry and mystery.

In this sense, phenomenology often can be regarded as an anti-modern reflection. Therefore, phenomenology has been criticized as well. In the anthology, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, Michael Hayes points to an important contradiction in how phenomenology takes opposition to exact sciences (Hayes, 2000:463). He notes that by vehemently insisting on a resistance to the 'evils' of technology and reason, a phenomenological view paradoxically may give rise to a new kind of division. The anti-reaction fuels a new conflict between two opposing views: the world of hard boiled exact science and the world that nostalgically longs for a time before technology. It has been argued that phenomenology propagates a return to a former and more harmonious world. In this sense, phenomenology represents a conservative way of reasoning that turns away from technological advancements. In so doing, phenomenology's insistent longing for preindustrial times may weaken and potentially disqualify other insights. My inquiry starts from this awareness and the danger of these contradictions.

Despite these criticisms, phenomenology still offers an opportunity to take interior architecture away from certain conventions concerning its making and its education. It also of-

fers a more solid foundation of research into interiority and the unheimliche. However, in light of the aforementioned reasons, other insights such as the following poststructuralist reflections on the unheimliche are to be examined as well.

5 The Postructuralist Unheimliche

After the initial Freudian and phenomenological reflections on the unheimliche, the direction of the unheimliche changed somewhat. Under the impulse of poststructuralists, it became a *device* designed to detect and downplay the hegemony of reason and progress. The consecutive readings on the unheimliche by poststructuralist scholars have projected the unheimliche along the following range of thinkers and researchers.

5.1 The Unheimliche Metaphor

The architectural historian and theoretician Anthony Vidler announced the introduction of the poststructuralist uncanny to architecture, and the ensuing renewed interest in the theme. In his influential book *The Architectural Uncanny*: *Essays on the Modern Unhomely* (Vidler, 1992), Vidler considers the unheimliche as a metaphor that can be connoted to pertinent architectural issues: 'As a concept, then, the uncanny has, not unnaturally, found its metaphorical home in architecture' (Vidler, 1992:11). In the book he interprets contemporary buildings and projects in light of the resurgent interest in the unheimliche as a metaphor for a fundamentally unhomely modern condition. The book itself is written from a historical and theoretical point of view. Through several case studies, he describes the uncanny in terms of a 'discomforting' cultural phenomenon that manifests itself through arts, literature, architecture, psychology, phobias and archaeology. In his later publication, *Warped Space,* Anthony Vidler sums up some of the Freudian origins of the unheimliche: 'Causes of unheimliche feelings included, for Freud, the nostalgia that was tied to the impossible desire to return to the womb, the fear of dead things coming alive, the fragmentation of things' (Vidler, 2000:147).

Furthermore, Vidler claims that not only childhood memories but also the disappearance of familiar, now obsolete worlds triggers the unheimliche. He presents the example of formerly thriving but now derelict cities such as Pompeii as witnesses to fading civilisations. These examples may partly explain man's fascination for ruins. Whereas visibly only bricks remain, the world of Pompeii has vanished from view but not from the mind. Vidler argues that the tragic disappearance of Pompeii lingers and haunts as an unsettling milestone in the collective memory of mankind.

Instead of a conventional book with a pre-set sequence, Vidler's book reads as a series of juxtaposed and autonomous essays. This allows the reader to go through the text in many ways: either as historical research or as a theoretical treatise on contemporary architecture. In reading this book, the unheimliche surfaces as a dynamic concept that passes through centuries. Although the current state of affairs has changed considerably, the resurgent interest in the uncanny has not faded ever since the book's publication twenty years ago.

Arguably, new political and economic constellations and the issue of global warming challenge the sense of permanence and stability in today's society. Thus, in my view, the whole discussion on the unheimliche has become even more important and urgent. In *Architecture Theory since 1968,* Michael Hayes confirms the significance of the unheimliche in the coming decades. The disturbing nature of the unheimliche may not be this distant metaphor anymore, as Vidler explicitly identifies it to be, but it may have become a living reality today:

> From its origins in romantic thought, Vidler's later work traces the theme of the architectural uncanny to contemporary questions of the psychopathologies of modern space, such as agoraphobia and claustrophobia, and the haunting of modernism by the myth of a transparency that is at once social, epistemological and spatial. Such themes may be – if one might join Freud in a prediction – among the primary ones for the problematic of architecture theory in the next decades.

(Hayes, 2000:744)

A more recent publication, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Vidler, 2000), reads as a series of critiques on works by artists and architects who have been engaged in the field of the unheimliche. In this work, he devotes additional reflections in more depth on the architectural uncanny. However, *Warped Space* has a different methodological approach from the preceding *The Architectural Uncanny*: it presents a series of case studies from the world of art, architecture and design.

5.2 Postructuralist Themes

When it comes to defining poststructuralist themes connoted to the unheimliche, there's an issue that recurs: the common denominator is the tension between two or more terms, such as between familiar and unfamiliar, otherness and self-ness, or emptiness and fullness. Whereas in the beginning of this chapter these terms are merely treated as themes or objects of study, gradually these themes will become more real and less abstract. By turning to the experience of the unheimliche, such as in Chapter 3, the reader is more and more activated.

Otherness/Selfness

The first theme, the contradiction between the self and the other, circulates in discourses related to feminist theory, gender and identity. In the essay 'Fictions and its Phantoms' (Cixous, 1976) by the French philosopher Hélène Cixous, the author tentatively rereads and rewrites Freud's 'Das Unheimliche' as a piece of fiction. While drawing on Derrida's deconstructive strategies, her article is poignantly written and deconstructs Freud's insights on the uncanny by staging him both as author and as a fictional character. In reality, Cixous attempts to decipher Freud's article by (dis)placing him in a contemporary setting from a feminist perspective. In so doing, she implicitly criticizes Freud's male-centred lecture on the unheimliche.

In another article, 'Stranger to Ourselves' (Kristeva, 1991), Bulgarian linguist and philosopher Julia Kristeva asserts that we have become 'strangers to ourselves'. In a short but captivating essay, she explores two perspectives whereby the reliability of the self is questioned: a societal and an individual account. First, Kristeva examines the history of the stranger or the outsider in society throughout time. Secondly, as she discovers the stranger in the self, she takes a more inward look. Her analysis acknowledges the existence of a double dimension: modern man has become a stranger on the outside as well as on the inside: the strangeness that lies within and outside creates a turbulent and unreliable image of the self, hence the unheimliche connotation. Consequently, Kristeva links the unheimliche to a range of political issues such as xenophobia.

Other authors have related the unheimliche with the theme of self-doubt. Following Ernst Jentsch, the English author Nicholas Royle introduces the unheimliche in the following terms: '…feelings of uncertainty, in particular the reality of one who is and what is being experienced' (Royle, 2003:1). Thus, Royle links the unheimliche to existential introspection and identity issues. Anneleen Masschelein (Masschelein, 2011) investigates these identity issues as well. She asserts that 'The experience of uncanniness teaches us that the stranger is not someone who threatens us from the outside; rather the stranger is inside us and our identity is always contaminated from the beginning' (Masschelein, 2011:137).

In other words, the unheimliche potentially reshuffles one's identity and instigates uncertainty. Historically, the generalized anguish for the other has derailed into an obsession for the self and the rejection of the other. As a reaction to this paranoia, an anguish of and uncertainty for what is different and 'other' ensues. In a globalized world of shrinking privacy, this uncertainty is expected to increase. Thus, the significance of being together and dealing with the other increases. Within the tension between the self and the other, two courses are possible: either one can fold back onto the self and all that is *heimlich*, reliable and knowable, such as material possessions, or one can accept a changing reality that is governed by *unheimliche* features such as otherness, variation and difference. There is a strange paradox: precisely by allowing the uncertainty that otherness generates, opportunities to counter this uncertainty emerge. Moreover, uncertainty makes individuals inclined to co-operate with one another. This renewed sense of co-operation opens up the perspective of the unheimliche *as a social praxis* to which I will return in Chapter 4.

The Unfamiliar

The tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar comes forward as a second poststructuralist theme in close alliance to the unheimliche. One of the authors who expanded on this tension is the Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi. In his book *Architecture and Disjunction* (Tschumi, 1996), he engages with the unfamiliar and the familiar. Much of his study is in line with previous experiments from the Russian constructivists who at the beginning of the 20th century examined defamiliarizing as a device to enhance perception. He demonstrates his ambition to develop an architectural theory that combines the rational and the irrational, '…developing a related theory that would take into account both the unexpected and the aleatory, the pragmatic and the passionate, and would turn into reason what was formerly excluded from the realm of the irrational' (Tschumi, 1996:176). He argues that this tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar has benign consequences for architecture: it allows architecture to expand and transgress its disciplinary borders: 'Architecture in the megalopolis may be more about finding unfamiliar solutions to problems than about the quieting, comforting solutions of the establishment community' (Tschumi, 1996:247). In other words, the tension between the familiar and unfamiliar becomes more than just a theme, it becomes a proper approach. In this respect, it is telling that Tschumi refers to Walter Benjamin's distinction between the enclosure of *Geborgenheit* and the disclosure of *Ungeborgenheit* (Tschumi, 1996:246). *Geborgenheit* refrains to familiar places such as the home. In contrast, *Ungeborgenheit* holds the promise of an unfamiliar and wider perspective.

For Tschumi, not only theory but also practice comes into play. Intriguingly, through the process of defamiliarization – taking distance from familiar settings – Tschumi achieves another kind of architectural practice with unheimliche features. His design for the Park de la Villette in Paris exemplifies an unheimliche design approach in between the familiar and the unfamiliar. Interestingly, he emphasizes the significance of the architectural experience, which he says is largely ignored by conventional architectural media such as plan,

section and model. As diverse layers such as landscape elements, city fabric, topography, and so on are superimposed on top of each other, the experience of the park will trigger surprise to the beholder. As these layers have nothing in common, they are at first sight unrelated. Yet the actions of the observers themselves, who experience the park itself by walking through it, allow these layers to become interrelated. The experience of moving through these layers uncompromisingly combines them all. Furthermore, the park design and experience radically strips down all the conventional representations that have come to infiltrate the practice of architectural design. This absence of representation gives rise to a new and potentially unheimliche notion of a *non-place.* The paradox of being in a specific place in Paris, yet in a non-place is both unsettling and paradoxical.

Although Bernard Tschumi is commonly referred as a poststructuralist, he is certainly influenced by some phenomenological themes. In line with phenomenology, Tschumi also focuses upon contemporary conditions such as the post-industrial condition of 'unhomeliness'. According to him, the emerging dangers of life in the modern metropolis of the 1930s produced a kind of anxiety similar to an unfamiliar experience, which bears resemblance to the Heideggerian notion of *Un-zu-hause-sein* (not being at home) (Tschumi, 1996:246). To this end, Tschumi examines different concepts such as the mediated 'metropolitan shock' as previously elaborated by Walter Benjamin in his essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (Benjamin, 1936). Furthermore, Bernard Tschumi also acknowledges the insights of Freud. However, he pursues a reversed logic and points to what the discipline of architecture can mean for psychology: 'Architecture still has not begun to analyze the Viennese discoveries at the turn of the century, even if architecture might one day inform psychoanalysis more than psychoanalyse has informed architecture' (Tschumi, 1996:110).

Interstitial Gaps

To my knowledge, the theme of interstitial gaps is never explicitly put forward by Freud or the phenomenologists, yet the theme comes forward at a later date. In her essay 'Fictions and Phantoms', Hélène Cixous says something significant about the relationship between the unheimliche and existing gaps: 'the effect of uncanniness reverberates (rather than emerges) for the word is a relational signifier. Unheimliche is in fact a composite that infiltrates the interstices of the narrative and points to the gaps we need to explain' (Cixous, 1976:536).

Instead of considering gaps as negative elements that should be automatically filled up, she implies that gaps have a quality in themselves, such as facilitating the comprehension of language. There are a few examples: analogous to orally recited texts where the space between spoken words is virtually absent, Latin grammar also did not leave a distance between written words in written texts. The emptiness between written words allows readability *whichallowsthereadertocomprehendawrittentextbetter*. Eventually posterior languages realized that gaps between the words made a text easier to read.

Whereas in this sense, the gap remains a linguistic phenomenon, it can also be transferred to other media such as graphic arts. Adding gaps between images is for instance a significant principle in the making of comics. Interestingly, the emptiness between two (unrelated) images emphasises a sequence, and hence movement. The gap allows the beholder to make a mental connection between two images (Fig.7, p.69). Thus the emptiness between unrelated images allows readers to create their own 'fictional narrative', a concept developed by the French philosopher and author Paul Ricoeur in his *Time and Narrative* (Ricoeur, 1983). In my view, this 'fictional narrative' (Ricoeur, 1983: III, 100) in between images is driven by the power of *closure*, a concept developed by Gestalt psychologists at the beginning of the 20th century.

The American graphic artist and theoretician Scot McCloud (McCloud, 1994) defines the emptiness in between images also as *closure* (McCloud, 1994:64). To illustrate the workings of closure, he describes a father and child playing peek-a-boo. When the father suddenly hides his face, it puzzles the child. However, the child knows his father is still there. As the father's eyes are concealed, the child misses an essential part of the object of interest, i.e. 'father'. As a part of the father goes missing, the child experiences a mild anxiety. By contrast, eventually the child will start to laugh once his father's face appears again. By showing his face, the father triggers an event that allows the child to commit closure: the child experiences the other as whole again. Precisely this concealing of the   father's eyes activates a paradoxical event: it sparks a sense of a temporary loss for the child/beholder. Yet more significantly, by virtue of losing eye contact with the object itself, closure allows the beholder to appreciate the missing object even more. By creating an affective link with the same object, the beholder *compensates* this temporary loss of the object.

Unlike comics, gaps in architecture are traditionally considered problematic experiences for the observer. In this scenario, problematic traces of emptiness should be 'rectified' and filled up by the designer/conceiver or beholder/receiver. This approach is related to spatial pathologies: by 'resolving' the problem of emptiness, it anticipates the problematic advent of anxiety and phobic reactions. In her book *Pathologies of Modern Space, Empty Space, Urban Anxiety and the Recovery of the Public Self* (Milun, 2007), American author Kathryn Milun argues that there exists a direct link between modern 'empty' spaces and the emergence of spatial pathologies such as claustrophobia or agoraphobia. She links the sensation of emptiness – the *horror vacui* typified by the utopian modernist 'clean slate' in (between) modernistic building of the 1960s – to the ensuing development of phobias. As seen from the drawing board of the modernist architect or urban planner, these empty in-between spaces are desirable and look acceptable. Precisely by emphasising the monumentality of their own projected buildings, architects implicitly enhance their role of the authors/designers who aspire to annihilate the old and the redundant. However, in reality, for the beholder this in-between emptiness is perceived and documented not as a quality but rather as a problematic kind of emptiness. For instance, one need only think of the

dreaded and uncanny experience that poorly lit subway stations or underground parking garages convey. In the collective mindset, these places are deemed unreliable and unsafe.

In his *A Pattern Language* (Alexander, 1977)*,* Austrian-born anthropologist and architect Christopher Alexander also identifies this emptiness and qualifies it as positive. His book lists a number of case studies whereby irregular and specific spatial elements are translated into larger structural patterns. Specific for Alexander, he considers design to be a proper and universal language with its own vocabulary, syntax and grammar. Alexander suggests how to design 'good' interiors, buildings and landscapes for an audience of both practitioners and non-specialists. Interestingly, concerning closure he refers to the intriguing design procedure of deliberately and visually dividing windows into small panes, which 'give you a sense of protection and shelter from the outside. It is uncomfortable to feel that there's nothing between you and the outside' (Alexander, 1977:1110). Reading between the lines of Alexander's analysis, one can discern an implicit critique of modern architecture's preference for large, undivided glazed surfaces. Although these glazed surfaces without windowpanes radically disclose the whole view, he argues there's a price to pay. Large undivided windows create characterless, 'cold' and abstract surfaces, whereas divided windows make the view somehow more 'interesting'. Moreover, they give a 'sense of protection' for the beholder. Unlike the large glazed surfaces commonly seen in modern architecture, traditional window interdivisions partially conceal the beholder's inward and outward views: they are like gaps that successfully 'disturb' a full view (Fig.8, p.70).

Bernard Tschumi also refers to gaps, but in a more positive way. His *Architecture and Disjunction* (Tschumi, 1996) bundles a series of essays written between 1975 and 1990 in which he raises the issue of narratives, events and closure in architecture. According to him, closure is closely related to a gap that becomes a space of its own, 'a corridor, threshold, or doorstep – a proper symbol inserted between each event' (Tschumi, 1996:165). Moreover, he makes the distinction between open and closed sequences.[3] Whereas closed sequences are fundamentally predictable, he argues that open sequences are able to generate an architectural event. As Tschumi favours the open form of closure, he rejects the idea of closed sequences as a *general* strategy in architectural design. As closure literally means 'putting up barriers', Tschumi qualifies closure as problematic and obstructive, stupefying the designer's critical abilities.

Concerning closure, Alexander predominantly tackles aesthetic issues and Tschumi relates it to experience. However, British architect and author Brian Lawson uses the notion of closure in connection with knowledge the beholder can draw out of the experience.

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3 'Closed sequences have a predictable end because the chosen rules ultimately imply the exhaustion of a process, its circularity, or its repetition. The open ones are sequences without closures, where new elements of transformation can be added at will according to other criteria, such as concurrent or juxtaposed sequences of another order – say a narrative or programmatic structure, juxtaposed to the formal transformational structure' (Tschumi, 1996:155).

In his *Language of Space,* Lawson defines closure in terms of *redundancy*. According to him, redundancy in architecture is strongly related to events and the knowledge they generate. He defines redundancy in terms of 'implicitly held knowledge of the pattern of events' (Lawson, 1999:73). It can be claimed that *closure* comes back in other disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, literature and others. In *Time and Narrative,* Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1983) describes the capacity of fiction (and the technique of closure) to project imaginary worlds. He states that closure finally brings about stability as well as integrity, '…and finally, the technical solutions brought by lyric poetry to the problem of closure can be related to the reader's expectations created by the poem, expectations for which the closure brings about a sense of finality, stability, and integrity' *(Ricoeur, 1983: III, 21).* According to Ricoeur, closure occurs in the form of a 'fictional experience of time' in between the world of the text and the reader.

In short, closure entails very different aspects. Initially, it can be read as a linguistic concept, but it also turns into an *architectural approach to the benefit of the beholder*. In this respect, the gap becomes a delicate kind of emptiness between two events – such as a darkened recess between two brightly lit rooms – that the beholder can experience passing through the same space. It also implies that an architect can purposefully administer these gaps in order to generate a particular experience. In this case, the architect is the one who authors a specific interior experience and who programs this gap. By grace of the emptiness in between two distinct experiences, closure acts as an *in-between device* that 'closes' the relationship between author and beholder. More specifially, through closure, previously dispersed and even contradictory elements are combined in such a way that together they encompass a productive experience for the beholder. In other words, closure allows the beholder to (re)construct sense out of fragmented realities. By internalizing an unheimliche event, the act of closure transforms it into something heimlich, controllable, knowable and reassuring.

However, if the experience of a gap gives beholders an eerie suspense and undermines their certainty, it can be linked to the workings of the unheimliche. Leaving or annihilating these gaps then becomes a conceptual approach in itself, which potentially astounds future and present beholders to convey curiosity, suspense and an experience of the unheimliche. By binding contradictory experiences, the beholder becomes surprised and alert. In this case, closure *energizes* the beholder. Paradoxically, closure combines contradictory states of time and space: it seems to unexpectedly connect what normally cannot be joined. Despite reservations or unsettling premonitions, it potentially pushes the beholder to continue reading, designing and walking. This points at the perverse workings of closure: beholders are made complicit in the unforeseen plot the author has arranged. Once closed, closure leads to a paradoxical experience: it combines a state of bewilderment, but more significantly also an appreciation for what has been lost. Quite independent from the intentions of its author, closure empowers the beholder to anticipate unsettlement. In so doing, the beholder becomes resilient.

6 Preliminary Conclusions

The variety of different conceptualisations of the unheimliche draws from the Freudian Unheimliche recurring themes such as the double, involuntary repetition and the omnipotence of thoughts. From the Phenomenological Unheimliche it draws themes such as mortality, unhomeliness and disorientation. And from the Poststructuralist Unheimliche it draws contradictory themes such as familiarity versus unfamiliarity, otherness versus selfness and openness versus closure. This variety allows me to assume that the unheimliche is not a fixed philosophical concept but rather a *travelling concept* in between disciplines, periods and people, in the way Bal has described (Bal, 2002). It adapts itself to the relevant discipline and takes on the guise of Freudian, phenomenological, and poststructuralist strands. These changes make it difficult to clearly define or situate the unheimliche in time and space. All one can discern is that the unheimliche *occurs*, it comes about, i.e. the *inception* of the unheimliche as a travelling concept.

After examining the work of several authors, I have found that an intriguing kind of emptiness occurs in between a series of experiences between the author's intentions and the reader's perception. Shielded by the beholder's own 'impossible' logic, the experience of emptiness induces the unheimliche to the beholder. In a play of deliberately concealing and disclosing, closure through emptiness enables surprise and wonder but also potentially anguish. Thus, closure branches into two possible courses. Closure allows an observer to create a pleasant order, familiarity and recognition. However, closure also intentionally confuses and displeases the reader. This confusion forces the reader into following an unplanned and undesired course of events as conjured up by the author. By virtue of emptiness, closure articulates and frames the unexpected connections between event and fiction, image and word, part and whole, author and reader, designer and user. Remarkably, as planned by its author, the emptiness makes the unheimliche almost untraceable for the beholder. However, in its *unplanned* manifestation, it paradoxically betrays its presence. The emptiness testifies to the unheimliche workings in the space between images, events, words and concepts.

Ultimately, the unheimliche has changed from a particular theme into a worldwide discourse. It is the author on the unheimliche who strategically lures the reader into entering the eerie realm of the unheimliche. The turbulent inception of the unheimliche deranges the reader's mind, temporarily blurring his or her sense of clarity and certainty. In so doing, the unheimliche *alters the status of the reader*. Instead of being a passive reader, the reader is alerted through the working of the unheimliche. In brief, in this chapter, I investigate the unheimliche as a predominantly written device that unsettles by trickling down from the author to the reader but also a device that captivates readers. Together with the declining status of the author, an adapted perspective on the relationship

between author and beholder is needed. In the next chapter, I will look closer at the often conflicting relationship between artefact and beholder, between interiors as purposefully built objects and the unintended experience they generate.

Fig.3 'Architecture of Density'. Photo by Michael Wolf, 2002
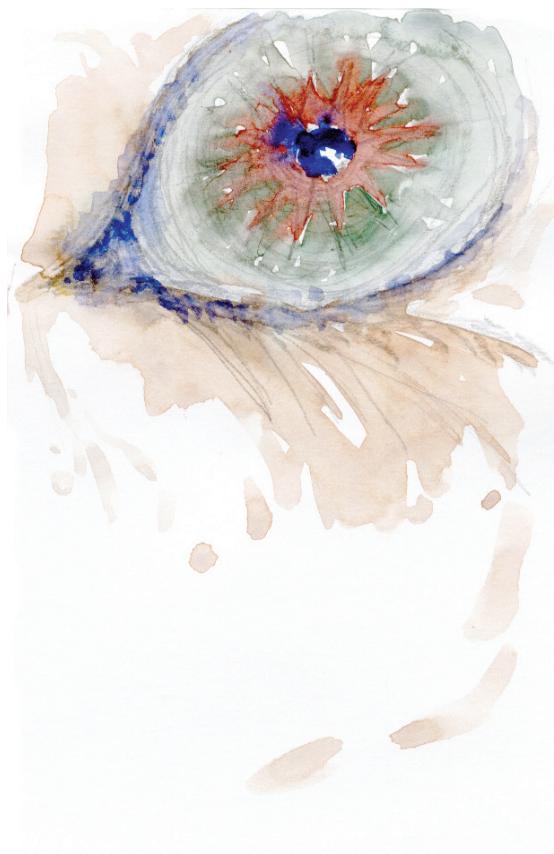
Fig.4 'Evil Eye'. Water colour drawing by
Karel Deckers, 2014

Fig.5 'The Wanderer Above Fog and Mist'. Water colour drawing by Karel Deckers, 2014

Fig.6 'Disorientation'. A research by design
by Kathy Vanhoenacker,.Onheimelijk I, 2009

Fig.7 Closure implies a void between images which allows observer to convey meaning.
Water colour image by Karel Deckers, 2010

Six views.

Fig.8 Illustration of 'closure': a divided view has more appeal than an undivided one. Source: A Pattern Language (Alexander, 1977:1110)

§3

3. THE UNHEIMLICHE AS AN INTERIOR EXPERIENCE

In the previous chapter, I expanded on the dominant role of a range of authors (of both fiction and non-fiction) who have explored the unheimliche as a travelling concept in different disciplines throughout time and space. Precisely by emphasising an *individual* reading of the unheimliche, their accounts predominantly have privileged and strengthened their position as authors to the detriment of the reader. In Chapter 2 the unheimliche was analysed from the perspective of individual authors (Freud, Heidegger, Tschumi and others) for whom the unheimliche is meant to be a privileged literary device used, conceived and shaped by an authorial elite. In contrast, in this chapter I will explore another perspective: the role of beholder. The unheimliche experience does not stand out as a privileged experience that is carefully plotted and arranged by one author, but rather as a shared and social experience that paradoxically strengthens the beholder. In order to do so, I will investigate this shared experience through a range of *Denkbilder* (idea images). Although seemingly unconnected with one another, these *Denkbilder* provoke an altered thinking. By virtue of the unheimliche experience, beholders are capable of attaining a creative agency of their own, quite autonomous from the original intentions of the author. Thus, this chapter fundamentally deals with the beholder's experience and how it is perceived and received in a specific space or situation. First I will elaborate on the status of the beholder and the interior architectural discipline. Then I will analyse a series of experiences. Finally I will look into a set of unheimliche agencies, such as melancholy, that provoke changes in one's perception of time.

7 The Status of the Beholder

In Freud's (and other authors') reading of the unheimliche, the role of the author remains dominant. Cixous states, 'only the writer [of fiction] "knows" and has the freedom to evoke or inhibit the unheimliche' (Cixous, 1976:547). However, in line with poststructuralist critiques from Roland Barthes's article 'The Death of the Author' (Barthes, 1977), it is argued that the power of the author is not entirely uncontested and that this power has significantly tilted since then towards the reader. For this reason, I will analyse the terms viewer/beholder, reader and (co)creator and (co)author in more detail.

For the purpose of conceptual clarity, I consider beholders as the ones who go through an unheimliche event that occurs in space or time. As subjected to the unheimliche experience, beholders 'receive' and deal with the consequences of the unheimliche. One of the consequences is that this experience upsets and disquiets them. However, this negative experience also contains something positive. By going through undesired experiences, beholders gradually gain involvement and resilience in dealing with these experiences and their consequences. In so doing, beholders obtain another status: from being passive observers they become active agents who can autonomously view, read and even co-create the unheimliche experience.

In his reference guide *Art History: The Key Concepts,* British author Jonathan Harris goes into the historically devolving status of the creator and how an antagonism grew amongst art-historians: there are the art-historians who either attempt to isolate the creator from their own epoch and the ones who do not. Harris writes,

> …art history has concentrated much of its efforts on the study of individual artists and their stylistic development and influences […]. Yet at the same time it is recognized – implicitly, if not openly – that all artists inevitably create and live in societies and that the meanings of their artworks relate to the aesthetic and social conventions and traditions active at particular times

> (Harris, 2006:73-74).

Here he points to a strange insistency with regards to the status of the creator as a genius. He argues that the brilliance of individual genius – as often emphasized by art historians – cannot and should not be disconnected from its surrounding social structures and its epoch. Instead of pointing to given faculties such as remarkable talents, Harris rather states that these social structures play a significant role in furthering the creativity of the artist. Thus, for him the brilliance of artistic creation needs to be *contextualized.*

He further asserts that at the end of the twentieth century, feminist orientated authors

also have attacked the notion of the artistic creative genius as 'male centred' and 'patriarchal'. All these elements have supported the idea that the current high status of the solitary creative genius is no longer sustainable. Moreover, recently – under the influence of conceptual art, for instance – the beholder has acquired more importance as a potential co-creator and co-author of an artistic experience. Harris clarifies the complexities of the concept of viewer:

> The term viewer – in a different but related way – was also rethought within poststructuralist accounts of textuality, and is now used almost to mean the same as reader. [...] Viewers are understood now to be always specific people, with a range of attributes and interests which affect the kind of viewing or interpretations they will make of the things they look at
>
> (Harris, 2006:330-331).

Thus, he points to the changing status of the viewer: '... a historically specific viewer is much more believable than the theoretical "he" or "she"...' (Harris, 2006:330-331). Can the unheimliche workings potentially call into question this aberrant but still superior status of artistic creatorship? I believe it can. Whereas creative faculties used to be attributed to the genius of an individual author, an unheimliche event can also transmit and award creative faculties to beholder(s). From individual authorship on the unheimliche as treated in Chapter 2, the emphasis shifts to a *shared experience* in this Chapter 3. In the context of architecture and interior architecture, the workings of the unheimliche ultimately strengthen the 'weaker' and 'inferior' position of the beholder. Not only the architect-creator is accountable for achieving and creating an exciting and eventful space, but the beholder of the interior space is also given a part of the same creative power.

But why should the unheimliche experience be necessarily connected to the *interior* space, its beholder and its architect/author and not to architecture? In my view, this has to do with the historical status and appreciation of interior architecture with regards to its next of kin, architecture. Therefore, the following section on the status of interior architecture tries to shed light on this relationship between architecture and interior architecture and the status of interior architecture.

8 The Status of Interior Architecture

How can one define the status of interior architecture? And how does it distinguish itself from architecture? In order to distinguish architecture from interior architecture, I'd like use the allegorical example of the shelter. In line with the French architectural theoretician Marc-Antoine Laugier's *l'Essai sur l'Architecture* (Laugier, 1752), I suggest that architecture is primarily about 'covering'. First, architects create a design to cover a piece of land. In this sense, covering implies giving shelter from excessive sun or rain. In this reading, the architectural shelter embodies the magic transformation of a redundant space into a refuge with a specific identity. Architecture covers. Still, the making of an architectural shelter in itself is not enough.

The interior architect does more than that: he or she profoundly engages with what happens *in* this shelter. Not only the architectural part (the design and construction) of the shelter is important, but one has to enter and going through it and *dis-cover* its interior life. Thus, through its interior, through residing in it, the shelter becomes more significant – it becomes an interior experience. By navigating in the inner range of the shelter, the interior architect *discovers*, experiencing its secrets, its inhabitants and their behaviour, the objects inside and the changes made over time. This implies a discovery and the making of an interior journey. By overcoming these 'threshold fears' between outside and inside, the interior commits to a brave border crossing from exteriority to interiority and back again. As the inside of the shelter provides reassurance and enclosure, it is probably the most suitable place to witness the fragile sense of interiority. Its internal glare and the inner movements codify the workings of the unheimliche. The interior both hides and reveals inner secrets: the interior allows a sheltered alliance of people equipped with strange and ritualized objects used to protect themselves against the immense deluge of time. Thus, interior architecture implies much more than merely decorating the inside of the shelter.

In line with this reading of the interior as a secret, the work of an interior architect has to do with slowly dis-covering an inner secret but also safeguarding it. Yet by discovering and revealing its interior, one makes the secret open up and paradoxically disappear. Attempts to recreate the unheimliche invariably make the unheimliche heimlich. Or alternatively: in transforming the secretive into something knowable, the original object and its unknowable aspect dissolves. The fleeting dimension of the interior then becomes moody, fragile and unstable: it flickers and reverberates. This discovery of the interior workings implies tracking down the unheimliche heartbeat of the interior. However, in order to safeguard the interior secrets, it is necessary to go *under cover* and pass through unnoticed in these hidden worlds.

After this introduction into interiors as a way to cover, discover and uncover, I ask the

following question: what is the current status of interior architecture as it relates to architecture? In the public eye today, interior architecture as an artistic and creative discipline seems to have an image problem. Judging from glossy journals, its focus seems to be aimed at either revamping and creating exclusive interiors for twenty-first century palaces or shamelessly indulging in a 'do-it-yourself' attitude as suggested by large corporate   furniture chain stores. In both perspectives, the interior is merely regarded as an affordable ready-made commodity. By limitlessly providing amenities and giving in to consumer needs, the discipline produces repetitive and uniform interiors that merely serve as surrogates for users. Quite significantly, the discipline is now confronted with the question of how to change the current status of interior architecture. It appears that merely restyling interiors, even if it works on the surface, does do not really fulfil existential needs.

It is not only interior architecture that has an image problem; architecture does too. Amongst many architects, imagining 'consensual' (or heimliche and hence reassuring) designs seems to prevail. As precedence is given to repression of conflict, harmony seems to have become the norm. Like interiors journals, architecture magazines stage the architectural discipline for an elite inhabited by predominantly white upper classes. By the same token, few architects – such as Daniel Liebeskind, Llebeus Woods, John Hedjuk, and Bernard Tschumi – have integrated the notion of the unheimliche explicitly in their ideas and, even more rarely, in their realized works.

The virtual absence of the unheimliche in architecture depends on the following reasons. As pointed out above, there is a strange insistence among architects, art historians, and critics that an architectural work, at the very point it is finally executed according to the architect's plan, achieves an aura like an untouchable status, making it into an unchangeable and finished artistic object. Uncannily, the word 'finishing' suggests a terminal point. After it has reached an impeccable status, the building should not be altered unless by the skilful hand of the initial architect. Moreover, amongst the architectural corps there is a strange and silent consensus about what architecture is and what it should look like. This invisible and ghostlike agreement marginalizes, unfairly in my view, dissident voices and 'redundant' themes such as the unheimliche. Symptomatically, a large part of the contemporary architectural discourse is contaminated with the uneasy obsession with kinship: what belongs and, more importantly, what does not belong to architecture? According to prevailing architectural orthodoxies, what doesn't belong to the circle of architecture, such as interior architecture or eccentric themes like the unheimliche, should be repelled, sanitized and put in quarantine.

8.1 Interior Architecture as In-between

In view of the context sketched out above, interior architecture acts as an 'in between', a discipline in a free range between the architectural (external) appearance and the intimate (interior) thoughts of the subjects concerned. First, there is an etymologic argument. The term *interior* has French origins: *Intérieur* is derived from the Latin for 'inner, interior and middle'.[1] This etymologic reading sums up the ambitions and characteristics of interior architecture. Interior architecture is a discipline governed by *inner* emotions and the interior space it occupies. Therefore the interior stands out as a typical 'in-between': it seems to occupy the realm between space and mind, between fact and sentiment. Historically, interior architecture as a discipline obtained a status as an 'in between' that negotiates between multiple spheres. The French architectural theoretician Georges Theyssot, in his *A Topology of Everyday Constellations*, asserts that interiors 'no longer represent a bourgeois haven; nor are they sites of a classical harmony between work and leisure, private and public, the local and global. The house is not merely a home but a position for negotiations with multiple spheres – the technological as well as the physical and the psychological' (Theyssot, 2013:2).

Secondly, it can be argued that the origin of the unheimliche in architecture is found in the often belligerent interplay between the architectural interior as a *built space* as delineated by the (interior) architect on one hand, and by the beholder/user who turns it into profoundly *subjective space* with its own logic, quite distinct from the architect's intentions. In this sense, the interior becomes an 'in-between place', a place that both temporarily shelters and – according to changing circumstances – opens or closes itself to the outside world.

A third element is that interior architecture is not fixed but rather *transfixed in between* two entities. It is uneasily squeezed in between disciplines such as architecture and interior design, in between urbanism and interior decoration. However, this in-between locus is not a weakness, but rather a strength and an opportunity to assemble a specific identity derived from fluidity, not fixture.

As mentioned, interior architecture is still struggling with an identity impasse. In a joint article entitled 'With the Other beyond Confusion: A Critical Analysis of the Anglo-Saxon Discourses Concerning Identity and the Position of the Interior Discipline', Belgian interior architectural researchers Inge Somers and Els De Vos claim that the interior architectural discipline still hasn't achieved a proper professional identity (De Vos & Somers, 2013:23-31). In their analysis, through a historical overview, they develop the argument that interior architecture is associated with the feminine. Whereas the (male)

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1 **Interior** (adj.) late 15c., from Middle French intérieur and directly from Latin interior 'inner, interior, middle', comparative adjective of inter 'within' (see inter-). Meaning 'of the interior parts of a country' is from 1777; meaning 'internal affairs of a country or state' (as in U.S. Department of the Interior) is from 1838. Interior decoration first attested 1807. Interior design from 1927

architect takes care of the design and the built exterior, it was the housewife who took care of the interior and other domestic duties. Furthermore, they claim that the interior is uneasily squeezed in between binary oppositions such as female/male, interior decoration/architecture. Searching for a new perspective out of this binary opposition, Somers and De Vos roughly identify four approaches they say should be able to re-define the discipline of interior architecture.

The first 'object-centred approach' (De Vos & Somers, 2013:24) represents the traditional focus of interior architects, i.e. the physical and material dimension of the object and its subsequent alteration. This traditional focus coincides with the core of the interior practice: to reuse and reread existing buildings. A second approach, 'professionalization through delineation and protection' (De Vos & Somers, 2013:25), consolidates the discipline as a proper and mature discipline with its own economical and jurisdictional autonomy. However, this implies taking on a defensive and disciplinary attitude whereby interior architecture emphasizes its strong borders with other disciplines (such as architecture) rather than admitting permeability. A third approach emphasizes 'professionalization through relationships and openness' (De Vos & Somers, 2013:26). As 'creativity is not territory bounded [and] doesn't thrive in captivity', the third approach rather opens up new territories and is the opposite of the second. In line with growing demands of the inter- and transdisciplinary issues, disciplines such as interior architecture become flexible and open up towards others. It implies that disciplines should not be in opposition with one another but rather in coexistence. A final 'subject-centred approach' (De Vos & Somers, 2013:27) takes human needs and feelings, the user's needs in particular, as a central starting point. In other words, the last approach focuses on interior architecture as the discipline that 'spatially organizes the narratives of life' (De Vos & Somers, 2013:27). In this final category, interiors inscribe agencies such as temporality, movement, change and encounters. Probably for reasons of conceptual clarity, these four approaches are presented by the two authors as separate categories. However, I argue that in reality these four different approaches overlap with one another and are mutually interdependent.

How do the four aforementioned approaches – subject centred, object centred, professionalization through protection, and professionalization through openness – relate to the unheimliche? In analysing these four elements, I see specific strengths, weaknesses and also missing gaps. The first two approaches, subject centred and object centred, have considerable drawbacks. The object-centred approach might lead to the preconception of a lesser and minor form of architecture. It suggests an inferior kind of architecture that merely focuses on the making of interior alterations and physical interventions. This assertion potentially weakens the position of interior architecture within the constellation of other disciplines. By defensively avoiding rather than engaging with more established disciplines, the third approach, professionalization through protection, has the innate risk of losing relevance by merely defending its borders with other disciplines.

Interestingly, the third and fourth approaches provide more promising perspectives and similarities to the unheimliche. Concerning the fourth approach, professionalization through openness, the unheimliche approach in my view is also committed to providing a public good. Likewise, my research approach also intends to enhance and broaden educational perspectives to the benefit of research and the learners involved. For instance, a display of emotions, as explored in Chapter 5, is an essential resource for conducting research. Finally, like the fourth approach, the unheimliche in interior architecture is also 'subject-centred'. As the unheimliche engages with otherness, change and movement, it strengthens the 'weaker' user needs from the sometimes oppressive and ego-driven designer needs. In the encounter with other disciplines in an open-ended and, if necessary, frictional dialogue, the unheimliche thrives. In this dialogue, the interior architect should be self-confident rather than self-centred or object-oriented like the first and second approach proposes.

However, what still seems lacking in the description of the third and fourth approaches is the *temporal* dimension that I deem as present in interior architecture. Interiors allow the beholder to make an eventful journey encompassing several generations into an unexpected dimension. Recently the architect and author Ed Hollis published in the *Interiors Journal* an article that tentatively points to interior architecture as a 'situated interior'. He suggests the existence of a 'vanished interior' that can be retraced following 'secondary sources' (Hollis, 2010:105). Instead of exclusively considering the interior as a built construct, Hollis attempts to situate the interior in terms of a 'set of relationships between the things that exist in time' (Hollis, 2010:113). Awarded with this temporal dimension, it is precisely the unheimliche is able to interrelate the four categories simultaneously – i.e. orientation towards subject, object, openness and firmness of the discipline. In short, as it furthers the complexity in between these categories, the unheimliche points at a specific in-between experience involving things, people, disciplines, space and time. In Chapter V, I will come back to the force of the unheimliche in a complex network in between individual, groups, learners, institutes and events.

In the historical debate between architecture and interior architecture, it can be argued that the interior has often been considered the inferior of the two. Often regarded as a merely decorative and marginal design activity, interior architecture remained secondary, an ersatz and unreal kind of architecture. Traditionally taken care of by the lady of the house, the interior is not entirely gender neutral, as she was the one who was committed but also tied to her domestic duties. Thus, compared to architecture, interior architecture always seemed to occupy the weaker position. Consequently, historically and until today, the uneasy coexistence between architecture and interior architecture persists.

Despite these historical drawbacks, interior architecture has its own proper voice, which is profoundly distinct from certain corporate architectural languages and attitudes. The interior voice speaks a treasurable and fragile 'minor language' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986) compared to the often hard and hegemonic rhetoric of architecture. In today's so-

ciety, speaking, reading and understanding this minor language is pivotal, as it advocates the importance of speaking in a language other than one's mother tongue. Significantly, integration of the unheimliche helps interior architecture to speak this minor language. In this multilingual respect, the unheimliche approach can help interior architecture to become fluid and open towards other disciplines. Although interior architecture may have this minor position compared to architecture, this should not be seen as problematic but rather as an ability, a strength and even a quality. As a kind of 'minor language', interior architecture is always the minor one: I would speculate that its inherent 'weakness' also makes the interior discipline alert and prone to receptiveness, openness and internal reflections. In other words, concerning interior architecture, the challenge is not to establish a fixed locus but rather to *temporarily occupy unexpected positions in the shifting constellation of disciplines*. By engaging with the unheimliche in interior architecture, the discipline can change in dealing with these shifts more adequately. In its travelling wake and as an 'in-between' discipline, the unheimliche combines binary oppositions and thus finds apparently new yet unexpected combinations with paradoxical implications that further define the discipline.

8.2 Interior Architecture as a Strategy to Reuse the Existant

Next to its position as 'in-between' discipline, interior architecture has a historical and specific role to play in *reusing* existing buildings. There are three arguments to sustain this. In contrast to the thesis set by De Vos and Somers, reusing is not only an object-related and purely material-related activity. In line with the unheimliche, reuse is primarily related to the *workings of time:* it points at the possibilities of temporality and the reversibility of changes made to a specific space. Alternatively stated, alteration means to make something *other*. If one alters a space, it means that the original can still be retrieved. A second argument is the following: in the process of reusing, there are (unheimliche) secrets and tensions within an interior that need to be read and unlocked by the beholder and the interior architect. In so doing, reusing an existing interior remains a mysterious and incredibly subtle activity: the beholder is lured into thinking that something *seems* strangely altered, yet the original *is* still intact. Thus, reusing does not imply a technocratic but rather an affective approach. Reusing demands a careful reading of what is there rather than crude materialistic intervention. Third, the interior may be the discipline in which one senses the vulnerability and fragility in the architectural field most urgently. Confronted with the question of reuse, the architectural interior is often condemned to be replaced or demolished after less than a decade. As a particular architectural fashion declines, the interior is usually the first to go. The building remains while its use, its inhabitants, and choices of style inevitably shift: the building then changes and becomes something *else*. The interior – too often the unfortunate half of a Siamese twin – is left behind and loses its *raison d'être*. Yet, precisely this tragic sense of fragility and loss makes the unheimliche in interior architecture such an exciting research topic.

The danger of engaging in an all too exclusive object-related approach is painfully present in the following example. After demolishing in 1965 the so-called Maison de Peuple, a landmark building in Brussels by the Art Nouveau pioneer and architect Victor Horta, a part of the interior was saved by some benefactors (Fig.9, p.101). Forty years later, it was integrally transposed and reused as the centrepiece inside the interior of a luxurious restaurant in the city of Antwerp. However, in this particular example the beholder can witness that the artistic qualities of the original beams of the interior cannot be moved without damaging the values of Art Nouveau, which included overall consistency between interior and exterior as well as structural innovation. As the reused beams are used to merely create a sensational background and decoration for the restaurant, it plainly demonstrates that these beams of the Maison du Peuple are not meant to be moveable objects. Although the interior arrangement in this restaurant is probably intended to honour Art Nouveau and also to set an example of proper alteration and reuse, in my view it fails to do so. The building and its interior do not pay tribute to the artistic ideas of Horta nor to good practices of reuse. By shamelessly aiming at commercial exploitation and randomly reusing and transposing objects, the interior project rather damages the precious wonders of Horta's legacy.

In contrast with the previous example, MVRDV's project for a new library building in Delft ("Why Factory Tribune", 2008) proposes a freestanding orange staircase centrally placed in a pre-existing glazed atrium space (Fig.10, p.102). Without privileged knowledge, it is easy for the outsider to discern what the situation was prior to the insertion of the orange object. The sense of alteration has been deepened and even exaggerated by the scale and the colour of the inserted object. It deliberately behaves like a foreign body, thereby creating a sense of awe inside a banal interior. Could it be that this reusing the existent and 'making other' of a building makes the beholder more tolerant for abrupt and (un)intended changes in space and time? The profound alteration of the interior – in a fundamental interrelatedness between objects, subjects, time and other disciplines – allows the beholder to encounter the *other,* making way for the unheimliche experience.

9 Unheimliche Denkbilder

In this section, the unheimliche manifests itself in interior architecture as an everyday and potentially recurring experience. Paradoxically, this experience is not without complexities. In the previous Chapter 2, I have argued that in contemporary architecture and its discourse, the unheimliche predominantly surfaces as a theme that is left more or less implicit and installed by its author in order to be consumed by the reader. Thus, as a theme the unheimliche doesn't necessarily interfere or subvert existing balances. However, in this chapter, as experienced in the interior, the unheimliche does something 'real' to the beholders: it becomes a lived *experience*. This lived and in my view unheimliche experience destabilizes and renders them helpless. The destabilization of the beholder seems to be innate to the working of the unheimliche. As beholders are affected, the unheimliche potentially frames the interior as a specific disquieting experience that resists definitions.

So what exactly provokes the unheimliche in interior architecture? Instead of novel images, it is triggered by a range of existing *Denkbilder* (literally: images that trigger thinking). Walter Benjamin wrote a short prose series without subject entitled *Denkbilder* that has a creative agency of its own. As existing *Denkbilder* may entice the beholder, they have the capacity to stir the beholder's imagination. Quite unintentionally, they gradually evoke another kind of thinking – a re-thinking of a particular event or situation. Therefore, these evocative *Denkbilder* are the mirror opposite of dreams that arise intentionally, such as the utopian dreams imaged and engineered by revolutionary architects. Thus, *Denkbilder* elicit a kind of thinking based on a reversed and alternative logic. They do not emerge from novel dreams but rather from something that is already there (a concept, image, object, artefact etc.). In this way *Denkbilder* are able to affect the status of the beholder in a strange way.

In my view, there are three principles that characterize the unheimliche *Denkbilder* in terms of experience: they are both *mundane, evolving and undesired* experiences. First, following Freud, the unheimliche predominantly stands out as a *mundane experience that is directly lived.* As the beholder doesn't necessarily need prior knowledge or skills to recognize them, these *Denkbilder* experiences are relatively easy to discern. Even a child with no previous set of memories will be able to experience the unheimliche. Secondly, instead of regarding the interior as a static object or construct, the unheimliche emulates interior architecture in terms of an *evolving experience*. Freud and Cixous have also argued that the experience of the unheimliche has a specific agency of its own: the unheimliche experience 'reverberates' (Cixous, 1976:536) and 'recurs' (Cixous, 1976:634). As the unheimliche shapes the beholder's experience of time and space in a strange way, the unheimliche emerges as a repeated and multiple experience. Thirdly, apart from an everyday and dynamic experience, this chapter explores the unheimliche as a fundamentally

undesired experience. The unheimliche frames a disquieting experience that brings about another undesired state of mind to the beholder. More specifically, through the workings of the unheimliche, the beholder perceives unexpected changes whereby the atmosphere suddenly changes from reassuring to menacing. In short, the unheimliche comes to the beholder as a complex experience, a subtle bombardment of different and contradictory sensations at once. Enticingly, it conveys to the beholder a *manifold experience which is undesired yet mundane.*

Consequently, from the perspective of the beholder, I will expand on several mundane, evolving and undesired interior experiences that reccur and take place in daily life. These experiences all manifest themselves through *observing* and then *questioning* what the unheimliche in interiors can do for the beholder, not only in terms of perceiving visual information (i.e. occularcentric) but also through other sensorial experiences.

Wandering/Drifting

One of these unheimlice experiences is the following. In wandering off from the beaten track, one becomes disoriented and unsettled. To the beholder, straying can be a life-threatening and very concretely lived experience. As Freud wandered while strolling in an Italian village, he describes his straying experience in 'Das Unheimliche'. Transfixed and disquieted, he suddenly realized having seen the same building and people before. This experience made him feel 'helpless'. This experience of wandering and digressing is also referred to in the study *Human Space* (Bollnow, 1963) by Otto Bollnow, a German philosopher and pedagogue. Bollnow distinguishes a wide typology of spaces such as *hodological space*, or the study of preferred paths (Otto Friedrich Bollnow, 1963:191); *instrumental space* (Otto Friedrich Bollnow, 1963:202); *diurnal* and *nocturnal spaces* (Otto Friedrich Bollnow, 1963:213); *affectionate spaces* (Otto Friedrich Bollnow, 1963:229); and *collective spaces* (Bollnow, 1963:256). In the category of diurnal and nocturnal spaces, he devises so called crepuscular spaces (*verdämmernde Räume)*. In this nebulous spatial category, Bollnow brings forward the disorientating experience of walking in covered landscapes – such as forests, mist and snow – as unheimlich. More specifically, he analyses these landscapes as if they were interiors. For Bollnow, a forest is a crepuscular landscape with unheimliche characteristics. While rambling in a forest, its sensorial depth changes continuously to the wanderer. On one hand, this change allows the beholder to discover the forest as a multisensory space. As there are no particular boundaries or obstructions for the wanderer, the forest becomes a spatial continuum, an open space in which to wander freely.

Yet, on the other hand, the boundlessness and infinity of the woods potentially disorientates wanderers and lures them into drifting, oblivion and going astray. In the endless repetition of trees and shrubbery, there is a real danger of getting lost:[2] 'The peculiar charac-

2 'Die Eigenart des Waldes besteht darin, zu gleicher Zeit geschlossen und allseitig geöffnet zu sein. Daher sein unheimlich bedrangender Charakter.'

teristic of a forest is that it is open on all sides and closed off at the same time. Hence the uncanny qualities of the forest' (Bollnow, 1963:218). While wandering under the thicket and surrounded by trees and without a fixed horizon, the wanderer is 'locked' in an enclosed space (Fig.11, p.103). Only the trajectory of the forest trail offers the wanderer a fixed point of reference. These paths yield comfort and a clear sense of orientation and direction to the wanderer. In short, Bollnow's study examines dense forests, thick mists and snowy landscapes as unheimliche and paradoxical experiences that upset the balance between terror and beauty.

Obscurity/Clarity

> And among the first habits that a young architect should learn, is that of thinking in shadow, not looking at a design in miserable liny skeleton; but conceiving it as it will be when the dawn lights it, and the dusk leaves it.
>
> (Ruskin, 1920:153)

As light fades and obscurity sets in, a second undesired interior experience emerges. Amongst people, the fear of darkness is universal. This is perhaps due to the following reason. As artificial light seems to be omnipresent, experiencing obscurity has become virtually impossible. Darkness seems to have become an endangered species in interiors and beyond. Therefore, one could ask to what extent darkness is an undesired interior experience. A painting by the Italian Baroque painter Caravaggio may shed light on this question. His way of painting informs the beholder of a strange and silent armistice between darkness and light. His specific techniques emulate the qualities of *tenebrità* or 'shadowness', or the *working from darkness towards light* (Fig.12, p.104). As an artist, Caravaggio used this technique of obscurity in a very conceptual way. By conveying light and dark at the same time, he managed to develop a particular atmosphere. In strictly limiting the amount of light, Caravaggio's principal method was to start from a dark canvas and work towards sparsely lit characters. He filled the edges of the canvas with dark tones and worked gradually towards the light in the centre. His particular treatment of white and black set a standard in Baroque painting, and in my view furthers an alternative understanding of spatiality in architecture. Unlike Far Eastern art, where darkness is more common, his preference for darkness instead of light is quite exceptional and revolutionary in Western painting. One can notice this in Caravaggio's typical pictorial approach: thinking in shadows rather than clearly exposed lines, the darkness is central to conveying an absence of light. Quite opposed to Le Corbusier's famous definition of architecture as 'the masterly, precise and magnificent interplay of masses brought together in light' (Le Corbusier, 1923), Caravaggio rather starts from darkness or *tenebrità*. This technique allows the beholder to explore darkness not only as a pictorial technique but also as a spatial quality. Similar to Ruskin's recommendation to students of architecture

mentioned above, Caravaggio's treatment and preference for shadows has a special appeal and is worth following. I link this preference for shadows instead of light to the re-creative workings of the unheimliche.

Instead of thinking from central light towards peripheral darkness, Caravaggio's paintings foreshadow an altered thinking which circles around the contrary principle: peripheral light and dominant darkness. In line with this thinking and way of working comes an old tradition of authors and artists who engage with darkness as an asset and quality. With his small yet influential publication *In Praise of Shadows*, the Japanese author Junichiro Tanizaki pointed to the 'illuminating' workings of shadows (Tanizaki, 1977). Interestingly, his essay is both an appraisal and reflection on shadows, revalidating them as central values in traditional Japanese culture and architecture. Implicitly his text suggests that there exists a breach between a dominant conception of architecture that pre-sets the ideal of newness and brightness, as brought forward in most modern Western interiors, and a more residual Far Eastern architecture more prone to the workings of shadows and darkness.

Encounter/Belonging

> 'When we step into the family, by the act of being born, we do step into a world which is incalculable, into a world which has its own strange laws, into a world which could do without us, into a world we have not made. In other words, when we step into the family we step into a fairy-tale'
>
> (Chesterton, 1916:143).

A third unheimliche experience occurs in the tension between *belonging* and *encounter*. Underlying this tension are the quite opposite tendencies between phenomenology and poststructuralism. The unheimliche uneasily balances between affirming a sense of homely or belonging – a question that has troubled phenomenologists for many years – and then provoking a conflict-ridden 'unhomely' encounter that bypasses this belonging. One's sense of belonging and kinship provokes unanswerable questions such as Where do I belong? To a language? A region? Juxtaposed to belonging comes another range of questions such as how to encounter the frightening and fascinating. As traditionally associated with the domestic sphere, the former belonging implies reassurance, proximity and *Geborgenheit*. The latter encounter implies distance and estrangement as commonly detected in the public realm. Mediating between these two opposites, the unheimliche as an interior experience seems to oscillate between these two extremes of belonging and encounter. Thus the unheimliche combines contradictory tensions such as relying upon comfort (I belong to a certain place and time and act accordingly) on one hand and a deliberate undesired discomfort (I want to encounter the unfamiliar) on the other hand.

Where can one find examples of this tension between belonging and encounter? The following painting by the Anglo-Swiss artist Henri Füseli, *The Nightmare* (Fig.13, p.105), informs the beholder of a nineteenth century obsession: the infiltration of outside danger into the domestic realm. As the realm of domesticity is violated by the *uninvited* outsider, it usually leads to discomfort or even a nightmare situation for the insider. The painting stages a nightly scene of a woman lying in a vulnerable position on top of a bed. There is an indication of place and time as well. As the woman is sleeping, one could assume that the scene is set at nighttime. Where does the woman come from? What are her convictions, provenance and background? Looking from her clothes and whiteness of skin, it seems that she's affiliated to the bourgeois setting portrayed. The first sphere of existential belonging defines a territory defined by ethnic and linguistic elements: belonging to a *Heim*. By affiliating to this sphere with its respective set of rituals, inherited values and convictions, one is expected to act accordingly. However, one can either accept or reject this *Heim*. In the former acceptance of a *Heim*, one becomes attached (to the memory of) a heimliche sphere to which to return. Existential belonging is then framed by pertaining to a world that is already there.

The latter option is to violently reject belonging. As one clearly identifies all the actors portrayed, something unforeseen and unknowable arises out of the shadow. Two disquieting figures, a horse and a dwarf, seem to be out of place here. Apparently, out of tune with the woman's provenance, these figures do not belong to the interior. A hideous goblin-like incubus sits upright on the sleeping woman and gazes eerily towards the viewer. This disfigured creature potentially violates the norms as set by domesticity. The contrast between the fragility of the woman and these other awkward figures disturbs the beholder, who uneasily anticipates what comes next. Beholders can only witness and realize mortal danger at hand. Apparently, unheimliche creatures such as the hideous goblin in Füseli's painting stupefy the beholder. These repulsive figures actively question, interfere, rearrange the portrayed harmonious experience. Basically, the unheimliche seems to deliver a productive short circuit between the conception of the painter (Füseli) and the reception of the beholder.

In brief, these awkward figures bring forward a neglected aspiration in interior architecture: the experience of the *encounter*. The word *encounter* is derived from Latin for 'the meeting of adversaries'. It diverges in two possible worlds for the beholder: either disagreement or passionate devotion. As the encounter stages unexpected changes, it will affect the woman's future, as portrayed in Fuseli painting. As opposed to existential belonging, which *consolidates* one's belonging to a fixed identity (i.e. a woman belonging to the nobility), an encounter *explores* unexpected future possibilities. From the encounter comes a sense of unfamiliarity, borne out of the unheimliche 'foreignness of the outer world' (Bollnow, 1965:5) as described by Bollnow, to whom I referred earlier. By counterbalancing this self-indulging mood of belonging, the encounter casts a critical eye upon reality: it projects a world that is not given but rather the excitement of a world

that is in the making. The unexpected encounter clearly interferes and leaves the beholder bewildered in an unsettled state of mind. In so doing, the encounter exceeds the existing boundaries and pushes the beholder beyond the norm. In short, whereas belonging activates a force impelling beholders to return to a closed circle of familiarity, the encounter incites a desire for the beholder to escape this natural sense of gravity and to explore an unknown outer world. In my view, this tension between encounter and belonging elicits the creative workings of the unheimliche.

Ineffable/Interstitial

A fourth unheimliche experience emerges in the tension between a totally overwhelming experience such as the *ineffable* and the relative forces of the *interstitial*. When the French nineteenth-century author Stendhal (Henri-Marie Beyle) visited Florence, he was overwhelmed by Giotto's frescoes in the Basilica of Santa Croce. This awkward feeling of sudden and unpleasant dizziness left him perplexed, quite deranged and unbalanced. In brief, it made him speechless and in awe. Since then, medical literature makes reference to the Stendahl Syndrome, described as a psychosomatic disorder that causes a rapid heartbeat when the subject beholds a great event or a work of art. In literature, this effect is also referred to as the 'ineffable'. Anneleen Masschelein conceptually links the unheimliche to the 'ineffable' and even to a religious experience. In her book *The Unconcept* (Masschelein, 2011) she draws from earlier studies by Theodore Reik and Rudolph Otto, who argued that 'The ineffable gives rise to feelings of dizziness, perhaps similar to the Freudian uncanny effect of "helplessness"' (Masschelein, 2011:121).

The Italian Baroque architect Francesco Borromini made buildings that emanate this sense of the ineffable. Situated on a narrow stretch of land in the heart of Rome, his church San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (Fig.14, p.106) dominates the intersection of two streets. The relatively small church is often overcrowded with tourists and churchgoers. After the intense glow of the Roman sun, the impressive grey masses of Roman buildings, the white interior becomes a kind of a threshold that allows the beholder to step into quite another world. Upon entering, the eyes of the beholder are temporarily stunned and need adjustment to the sparse interior light. Once inside, the other senses seem to take over. The balanced interior reveals a surprising scarcity of spatial ingredients: light, shadows, varying ceiling heights projected in a variety of different shapes. Emanating a strange sense of endlessness to the spectator, the complex vaults smoothly merge into the walls. As the whole spatial composition and experience balances between black and white, light and shadow, the interior finish manifests a lack of colour yet conveys changing sensations.

Sensing that daylight is filtering through from somewhere, the beholder's gaze is vaguely directed towards the punctured vault high up. Ambiguously, the light lantern is hidden from view, even when one moves to discern where the light comes from. As one descends towards the crypt, the space is lit even more sparsely. This movement towards the un-

derground brings an unforeseen series of spatial sequences, from winding staircases to crooked balustrades and vaults. It seems that one is gradually falling into darkness, whereby the decreasing luminosity makes it hard for the eyes to adjust.

Experiencing the complex interior of Borromini's church brings to mind the famous work on Baroque architecture, *Renaissance and Baroque*, by the Swiss art historian Heinrich Wölfflin (Wölfflin, 1888). In the book, he describes the existential experience of the Baroque as a complex aggregate of desolation and anticipation.

> The momentary impact of baroque is powerful, but soon leaves us with a sense of desolation. It does not convey a sense of present happiness, but a feeling of anticipation, of something yet to come, of dissatisfaction and restlessness rather than fulfilment. We have no sense of release, but rather of having been drawn in the tension of an emotional condition.
>
> (Wölfflin, 1888:38)

As experimental playgrounds for light and darkness, Baroque buildings such as the one from Borromini inspire a series of existential reflections for the present beholder and future generations. As opposed to the reasoned lines within the confines of Renaissance architecture, the elusive spaces of the Baroque infuse the beholder with unsettlement. Struck by its wild and untamed beauty, visitors to San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane can become overwhelmed. As one wanders through the interiors of edifices by the likes of Borromini or Guarini, it is difficult to avoid getting carried away. The ineffable experience profoundly displaces the spectator who, safely enclosed by Baroque matter, can but surrender finally to the sublime encounter with the material and the immaterial.

It seems that Borromini's sanctuary undulates between different states for the observer to go through, not only in a physical sense but also in sensorial terms. The building transmits waves that rhythmically alternate between full and empty, between light and dark, between recess and impress, between shadow and corner. I qualify these recurrent alternations between full and empty in Borromini's architecture as *interstitial alternations*: these alternations precisely allow the observer to go through a paradoxical and almost impossible ordeal that has an unheimliche undertone. The succession of these voids creates a spatial rhythm of its own, indicating a gradual transition between contrasting extremes such as from high to low, from skylights to crypt; from the bustle and heat of the street to the cool recesses of the apse. By alternating these different empty and full experiences, the beholder is squeezed into a paradoxical *montage* of erratic sequences.

Interestingly, as an in-between force, a sensorial kind of emptiness cushions the advent of new sensations. There is a distinction to be made between the emptiness that resides in the beholder's blinking of the eye and the induced fulfilment of one's mental perception.

I call the difference between this emptiness and fulfilment an *interstitial experience.* To appreciate a sense of fullness, these in-between moments intermediate between what is inherently empty and full. In reality, these interstitial moments between empty and full allow the beholder to observe and perceive better. Combined, these interstitial moments give rise to different and distinct experiences in one place and time for the beholder. As partially anticipated by the author/architect but 'received' by the beholder, these interstitial moments are experiential voids. They allow the beholder to make sense of an existing space. Thus, experiencing a Baroque interior such as San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane allows beholders to better perceive these experiential voids, which ultimately strengthens and energizes them.

Moreover, these interstitial moments are not fixed visual entities but complex multi-sensorial elements. As they often remain under the radar, it typically makes them elusive and ungraspable elements in interiors that significantly defy an *occularcentric* approach. In one of his publications, *Eyes of the Skin* (Pallasmaa, 1996), Finnish architect and author Juhani Pallasmaa warns against the overestimation of the designer's creative powers and the corollary ocularcentric approach. By exclusively building upon and referring to visual sensations, he argues, modernists have sustained and established a quasi-dogmatic emphasis on the visual data. Furthermore, in a reaction to a certain kind of disciplinary thinking in architecture, he critically reflects upon the autonomy of architecture as a discipline. In his *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Jay, 1994), American historian and researcher Martin Jay also elaborates upon occularcentrism as a modernist dogma. As the faculty of visual sight has become a central ideology in western thinking, he highlights the problematics of this occularcentrism. Portrayed in architectural journals, buildings seem to be impeccable constructs made for eyes only, and apparently not for the other senses such as touch or smell. In contrast with the overrated significance of the visual, the value of these ungraspable, marginal and interstitial experiences such as delicate sonorities versus awkward silences, has become marginalised in Western thinking, and with it their inherent capacity to convey the unheimliche experience. Whereas categories such as clarity and symmetry have become dominant, other highly significant categories such as the interstitial versus ineffable, obscurity versus clarity, encountering versus belonging, and wandering versus straying have become peripheral. In more than one sense, the scope and work of this thesis is an attempt to highlight and discuss this gap between too much visual information and the lack of other sensorial elements.

10 The Unheimliche Agencies in the Interior

What does the unheimliche do to interiors? As beholders witness an interior incident that disturbs them, in what way can the unheimliche be implied? In general, the unheimliche upsets the established hierarchy that regulates the relation between the conceiver (interior architect) and the receiver (the beholder) of that very space. To this end, I identify two significant agencies of the unheimliche. First, the unheimliche alters one's perception of time. Second, the unheimliche gradually makes beholders melancholic, an enriched form of melancholy in between the *retrospective* and the *prospective*.

10.1 The Unheimliche Alters Time

Instead of developing a purely spatial understanding of the unheimliche, instead of pursuing a Freudian strategy to unravel the mysteries of an individual's consciousness, in this chapter I focus on understanding in which terms the unheimliche gives rise to *temporal changes as experienced by many*. I regard the unheimliche as a concept that thrives on the tension between place and time, and more in detail, the tension between past, present and future. In order to understand this temporal drive, which is tied to complex states such as the unheimliche, I refer to two main articles.

The first is an article by Greig Chrysler published in the *Sage Handbook of Architectural Theory* entitled 'Time's Arrows: Spaces of the Past' (Chrysler, 2012), which develops the central concept of the *affective turn*. He starts from three terms that are linked to the past – history, memory and tradition – in relation to four distinct *time's arrows*. These four arrows designate the 'vectors of critical understanding in a non-unified field of multiple and contradictory temporalities or time zones'. These vectors constitute four different lines of motion: (1) *accelerating time* (such as spaces of flux, disappearance, the end of history); (2) *everyday times* (such as spaces of everyday life, tradition and the vernacular); (3) *remembered times* (such as spaces of memory, commemoration, preservation and collective amnesia); and (4) *institutional times* (such as scarcity of time in studio education and research) (Chrysler, 2012:290). Chrysler argues that out of these four vectors arises a new area of investigation: the realm of the *affect*. This 'affective turn seeks to redistribute subjective qualities outside the self' (Chrysler et al., 2012: 305). Chrysler's framework coincides with some of my own research's aspirations into the unheimliche. In line with Chrysler's analysis, my thesis is to understand how the unheimliche impacts on one's perception of time, more particular a synchronized multiplicity of time as experienced by the observer, learner and designer. More specifically, Chrysler suggests that this multiplicity occurs through these four distinct motions (accelerating time, everyday times, remembered times, and institutional times). In my view, three items from Chrysler's analysis can be related to my own research: Everyday times concurs with the area of interest

for the designer who investigates the unheimliche – the mundane experience as a resource for design as investigated in Chapters 3 and 4; institutional times partially coincides with Chapter 5 – the learner's perspective as experienced within a learning environment inside and outside university; the fourth vector, remembered times, draws a parallel line with Chapter 5's elaboration of a specific educational model that starts from the remembrance of past events.

A second reference is the German historian Reinhart Koselleck, who made an essential distinction between two categories of experience, 'space of the experience' (*Erfahrungsraum*) and 'horizon of the expectation' (*Erwartungshorizont*) (Koselleck, 2010/1975: 350). For Koselleck, the space of experience represents a space in which past experiences (*Erfahrungen*) are made present: an experience can only become real when the past experience is transferred to the present. In contrast, he argues that the horizon of the expectation bridges the gap between the present and an uncertain future that is yet to come: these experiences become a future-oriented kind of experience (*Erlebnissen*). Interestingly, by superimposing past, present and future, it can be argued that Koselleck's distinction between experience and expectation conceptually links past, present and future.

In addition, the article 'Imagination as a Category of History: Concerning Koselleck's Concepts of Erfahrungsraum and Erwartungshorizont' by Anders Schinkel, a philosopher of education (Schinkel, 2005), expands Koselleck's definition of the category of *imagination* in between the *space of experience* and the *horizon of expectation*: 'While I insist on the essential connection between experience and expectation, and on the impossibility of their drifting apart, I do think that their relation may change. This change depends on that which forms the connection between experience and expectation, that is, the imagination' (Schinkel, 2005:43). Thus, for Schinkel, one's imagination should prevail as it sparked in the tension between recalling past experiences (*Erfahrungen*) and expecting the advent of directly lived ventures (*Erlebnissen*). I believe Schinkel's insight brings a perspective for furthering creativity based on both past and future experiences. As imagination grows in between the tension between past and future, it need not be one or the other but can be both at the same time.

As the unheimliche shifts in between categories such as experience, imagination and expectation, these insights of Koselleck and Schinkel have repercussions for interior architecture as well. As these insights have added to the existing complexity of interior architecture, they also seem to bring together contradictory forces such as the adventurous pioneering excitement of the horizon of expectations joined to the retrospective space of experience. By drawing upon this double dimension, beholders can strengthen their involvement in interior architecture. In so doing, by virtue of the unheimliche, the beholder both approaches what was previously unknown and what is unexpected. In so doing, the ancient credo *réculer pour mieux sauter* (one has to step back in order to jump further) returns. As they accept a range of aspirations from both past and future, paradoxically beholders eventually become stronger actors in the interaction with others.

Through a range of *presentiments, recurrences* and *interferences*, the unheimliche experience actively alters the beholder's perception of time. Like the déjà vu experience, Cixous, Freud and many others have already acknowledged that the unheimliche recurs. As 'primitive' ancestral forces come back to haunt, the unheimliche experience unleashes upon beholders the grim prospect of a future death. However, in this recurrence of the unheimliche*,* its experience is paradoxically prolonged and extended. Precisely this continuous recurrence adds to the latency and 'layeredness' of the unheimliche event. According to the changing circumstances, it seems to either *delay* one's temporal perception or to *speed* it up. In any case, the unheimliche seems to actively challenge one's perception of anteriority and posterity.

Concretely, what does this temporal contraction and expansion imply for interior architecture? As beholders experience the before and after of a refurbishment, they see the interior change twice in a short time span. Significantly, the process of interior alteration points to the gradual shifts between before and after, future and past, object and project. Analysing this process may hold a key to understanding what alteration in time and space can mean for its beholder. I hope to make this clear by taking the following example. Recently, the Belgian architectural collective 51N4E Architects proposed to partially refurbish and convert an old barn into a new kitchen area (Fig.15, p.107). In a strange parallel with a stark white kitchen environment, their intervention purposefully leaves the surrounding old dark barn untouched. Their design adds to the existing complexity of the barn without demolishing the previous and latent qualities, but rather by refurbishing. By slightly altering the previous state, their project triggers the unexpected in an interior, thus triggering the unheimliche. The alteration leaves the beholder bewildered and in awe: 'This is uncanny!'

As the locus of the unheimliche is to be found neither in the restorative dreams of the art historian nor in the 'here and now' of the builder, nor in the often maddening utopian visions of the architect, but rather in all three time dimensions together, I contend that the re-creative workings of the unheimliche change one's perception of time. As the unheimliche *interfere*s with the normally expected outcome of an event, transforming it into an unexpected but unsettling event, the unheimliche productively mediates between beholders and their expectations. Originally intended to remain harmonious, the unheimliche *disrupts* the experience, quite out of tune with one's expectations. It leaves the beholder speechless and full of a Freudian sense of helplessness.

In other words, the unheimliche lingers in the interstices of three distinct temporal extremities. On the one hand, beholders seem to belong to a world in retreat where it is tempting to fall into the pit of romanticizing a far and distant past that never existed. On the other hand, the beholder sees disconcerting future visions, which fascinate as well. In between is the present that demands we enjoy today by willfully ignoring tomorrow and yesterday. The re-creative workings of the unheimliche allow a triple vision of an idealized past, present and uncertain future that frightens but leaves no option but to continue.

10.2 The Unheimliche Makes Us Melancholic

Apart from investigating the unheimliche as a global and transdisciplinary discourse, one of the other elements that I have examined in Chapter 2, The Unheimliche as a Travelling Concept, was considering the unheimliche as a device that incites a kind of doubt and wonder through the writings of an author. In this section, I relate this doubt to melancholy and its moods, which strike the observer without warning and make one reminisce back and forth in time. Do the re-creative workings of the unheimliche make the beholder melancholic? In what way does it contribute to one's understanding of architecture, space and the material world? I investigate melancholy as a *productive* state of mind that is able to colour and influence and even reform one's spatial and temporal perception. Therefore, I argue, it is not only relevant to understand one's well-being in time but also in space. In other words, how does melancholy relate to interior architecture, and what is the role of the unheimliche in this?

Melancholy is a deep, reflective yearning for another time when one used to live in another seemingly slower pace with less complexities. It tends to make the beholders melancholic and hence, out of tune with their own present time. Melancholy is often confused with nostalgia but there's a difference. In contrast with melancholy, which is linked to individual thoughts, nostalgia is more socially oriented: it is concerned with the troubled relationship between personal and collective memory. In *The Future of Nostalgia* (Boym, 2001), Svetlana Boym states that 'Unlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between the individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory' (Boym, 2001: XVI).

Svetlana Boym's publication retraces the history of nostalgia from a passing ailment to an incurable modern condition. Boym is interested in 'nostalgia as a symptom of our age, an historical emotion' (Boym, 2001:XVI). In line with Richard Koselleck, she defines two kinds of nostalgia: restorative and reflective nostalgia. In returning to the certainty of one's native origins, *restorative nostalgia* follows a singular plot: it attempts to reconstruct a mythical 'lost home' such as extreme-right nationalists tend to do. However, by glorifying a national identy based on national memory, she believes that this restorative kind of nostalgia 'can create a phantom homeland, for whose sake one is ready to die or kill' (Boym, 2001:VIII).

In contrast, *reflective nostalgia* is more complex and 'does not follow one plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones; it loves details, not symbols' (Boym, 2001: VIII). This reflective nostalgia is not based on the individual but rather on 'social memory, which consists of collective frameworks that mark but do not define the individual memory' (Boym, 2001:VIII). Significantly, Boym claims that there is an incongruence in Koselleck's distinction between the 'space of experience'

and the 'horizon of expectation' which can be linked to respective conservatism and progress: '…nostalgia, as a historical emotion, is a longing for that shrinking "space of experience" that no longer fits the new horizon of expectations. Nostalgic manifestations are side effects of the teleology of progress' (Boym, 2001:10).

Like Boym, I discern a positive undertone in this second form of nostalgia – a *reflective kind nostalgia* with a 'healthy' longing for different time zones and many places at once. Instead of exclusively linking nostalgia to conservatism, I am also intrigued by how a reflective kind of nostalgia affects one's sense of creativity in architecture. Instead of turning towards a restorative kind of thinking, the inquiry on the unheimliche (and the melancholic states it generates) is essentially about this reflective and progressive kind of thinking. Nevertheless, rather than nostalgia I choose to use the term melancholy, knowing its limitations as mentioned by Boym above. In this respect, I am more inclined to follow Wolf Lepenies, who considers melancholy in terms of a therapeutic strategy in his *Melancholy and Society* (Lepenies, 1969). Interestingly, he considers the act of melancholy as a verb, rather than a noun. In his view, 'to melancholize' is an activity that allows one to make a kind of *affective mapping*.

Retrospective Melancholy

Let us return to the unheimliche, melancholy and interior architecture. The unheimliche seems to trigger an irresolvable tension between *retrospection* and *prospection* amongst beholders. As the unheimliche deliberately interferes in the steady acquisition of past and future experiences, it makes the beholder melancholic. In this tension between retrospection and prospection, one can discern two extremes such as Boym distinguished as well: a retrospective and reflective nostalgia. By only looking back, one may turn into a grouchy retrospective melancholic who prefers to live in past feelings of regret. In contrast, if one only looks forward, one runs the risk of acting remorselessly without regret. Intriguingly, retrospection and prospection are two sides of the same coin. *While retrospection is past-oriented, prospection is future-oriented, yet both lead to a complex and reflective state of melancholy*. Instead of diverging into two distinct possibilities – a state of paralysis or a state of activation – I superimpose the prospective and retrospective states into one. Instead of problematizing divisions between retrospection and prospection, this combination turns two contradictory states of melancholy into a shared *opportunity*. Based on both past and future, it ultimately allows one to learn about the unexpected faculties of the unheimliche. From the perspective of the unheimliche, the retrospective and the prospective represent two valid melancholic attitudes towards reality.

First, as former and known worlds only seem to disappear, the attitude of the *retrospective* can be predominantly found amongst romantics. As emblematized in Casper Friedrich's *The Wanderer*, (Fig.5) romantic spirits tend to look backward in a soft and 'weak' feeling of despair and regret. By seeking shelter in a past that is no longer there and no longer theirs, they seem to be chained to an unattainable past. Those who look back through

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the first melancholic *retrospective* lens run certain risks: a reflective and reflexive looking back sometimes derails. In her book *Yearning for the Inconsolable*, Patricia de Martelaere (De Martelaere, 1993) reflects upon the dangers of the melancholic who becomes smothered in lethargy and sadness[3]. Finally, the retrograde melancholic could end up in a negative spiral of retrospection and idealization of the past. In reaching out for the unattainable past, it is not difficult to lose oneself. Therefore, a past-orientated melancholic can become harsh and critical in self-judgment. A compulsive kind of retrospection only magnifies the sensation of unhappiness, absentmindedness and displacement. Responding to the continuous alteration of previously familiar environments, the melancholic becomes ill at ease and regretful with the changes made and with the present as such.

An extraordinary woodcut from Frans Masereel entitled *Melancolie* (Masereel, 1924) emulates this first retrospective lens (Fig.16, p.108). It shows a man looking melancholically into a nocturnal campfire. The fire delineates a circle of light and warmth. Beyond this warm sphere, a dark landscape opens up. Judging from these elements, the man seems to be camping in a large forest. Rising from the back, figures appear that unsettle this introspective scene. These fantastic figures reach out menacingly towards the man. The image suggests that these figures are born out of the imagination of the man: the oversized millipede and the black leaves overshadow his faith: are they real?

One could assert that this image presents a number of known and less-known characteristics regarding melancholy. Doesn't one see an introverted man who's reminiscing about his past life? He seems to be possessed by the romantic spirit of melancholy, a melancholy fulfilled with a certain degree of homesickness. Consistent with the Romantic motto 'the past is always preferable to today's reality', he seems to look back in remorse. In my own inquiry, I associate the lens of retrospective with a sense of belonging as mentioned earlier in this chapter. As one belongs to a specific place and time, there is little chance of escaping from one's origins. One is always part of a family, a sphere of familiarity to which to belong such as a shared identity of family ties, place of birth, mother tongue, language and region. Despite a wish to autonomously achieve something, the retrospective melancholic gives in to the burden of human nature. Thus, by longing to return to this heritage of shared values and certainties in times of sorrow, one can become melancholic. Apparently, looking back offers a consolation and sustains this eternal return to a former sheltered place and time. In other words, by remembering and looking back, it is always possible to *return* to shared affinities with others. This affinity is strong and immaterial: a shared past and heritage forges strong ties. Once these ties are severed or disappear they become subject to a nagging feeling of loss. Retrospective melancholy can either sublimate into a romantic reflection on the past or derail into an uncontrolled grief over what has been lost. In this uncontrollable grief, one can only lose (oneself).

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3 'The melancholic always mourns over the possibility of loss, and who mourns because he never has something in reality or in full.'

Prospective Melancholy

Second, in contrast, the *prospective* way of looking testifies to a more optimistic attitude. As embodied in *The Leap into the Void* by French artist Yves Klein (Klein & Shunk, 1960), a prospective melancholic looks forward and aspires to construct a world orientated towards the future (Fig.17, p.109). Unfortunately, in this pursuit of a great leap forward, prospection intends to shape a future that will never be realized. Therefore, this future orientation also entails a different kind of melancholic view than the retrospective one.

Contrary to the retrospective and 'weaker' kind of melancholy, the prospective kind holds a lens upon the future: the voyager seeks adventure and desires to explore the (un) expected. Seizing on this lens means purposefully ignoring the lessons of the past out of *curiosity*. In so using this lens, the beholder is ready to encounter unknown adventures. In the advent of the unknown, the adventurer has left the comfort of home. By purposefully resigning from the familiar, the adventurer intentionally seeks new experiences, challenges and possibilities that are yet to come.

However, like the *retrospective lens*, this wealth of future possibilities also potentially holds dangers. Once these possibilities are fulfilled, the sweet spiral of regret is saturated and halted. The woodcut by Frans Masereel shows the reflective yet melancholic gaze of the wanderer. This ill-fated man doesn't seem to realize that he will be attacked by a series of monsters that will abruptly put an end to his reflections. These monsters embody the unheimliche other who potentially annihilates the *introspective* and *retrospective*. It seems that by desiring and reaching out for future possibilities, the beholder potentially creates monsters. As the prospective lens craves to realize its desired future, even by force and violence, it implies remorseless future vision. Thus, the future melancholic lens potentially implies painful and inevitable changes. In this prospective form of melancholy, the traveller anticipates the advent of unknown worlds and becomes an adventurer. In another woodcut by Frans Masereel, *The Traveller* (Fig.18, p.110), the figure directs his gaze onto unknown territories. Unprejudiced and impassioned, the traveller meets new horizons. Even knowing that these new endeavours might lead to discomfort, anxiety and potentially death, he still anticipates facing new experiences.

By transgressing the borders of the familiar, an unheimliche anguish will strike back. The prospective form of melancholy pushes the traveller to go through a particular ordeal. Can he confront these unknown realities without future remorse?

Interiors and Melancholy

In an avoidance of future remorse, what would happen if the beholder looked stereoscopically through these two lenses – the retrospective and the prospective – simultaneously? In other words, how does the integration of retrospective and prospective work? What can it mean for my quest into the unheimliche? The unheimliche negotiates between these two forms of melancholy. Paradoxically, combining them also links the unheimliche to the domain of interior architecture. In the parable of *Creixcroll, the City of Builders* by the Belgian Expressionist poet Paul van Ostaijen, two seemingly contradictory tendencies return in architectural thinking: pro-builders and anti-builders (Van Ostaijen, 1923). Without looking back, the relentless pro-builders incessantly design and construct new worlds. In contrast, the retrospective anti-builder opposes building and is full of sorrow as the old world rapidly disappears. Judging from architectural discourse and built reality, the prospective tendency of melancholy seems to be dominant nowadays. Prone to remorselessly slashing the old world down, the future-orientated melancholic is in part accountable for its rapid disappearance. It is true that the current loss of identity is striking: 'generic cities', as described by the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, are on the rise.

However, grief-stricken and refusing to build, the retrospective melancholic defends the weaker ideal of the anti-builder. The soft melancholic defends a *residual* reality, a shrinking world that is left over and/or is about to disappear. In this world, the significance of the residual increases. As the residual is an appreciation of that what remains, Jonathan Harris asserts the following:

> …theoretical concepts – dominant, residual, and emergent – are concerned with duration, influence and place of particular forms and formations in actual historical societies. […] Residual, then, suggests 'a passing away' and a 'losing of significance'. […] In a different direction, residual may be used to characterise kinds of styles, media, or practices that, though persistently or increasingly marginal, go on existing and changing in relation to other styles and media
>
> (Harris, 2006:274).

Without regressing into a narrow-minded discourse on heritage protection, I believe that interior architecture also fundamentally deals with the residual and retrospective melancholy. In reality, by transforming an existing space, the interior architect protects it from demolition. Instead of building the novel, interior architecture points to the possibilities of reusing the existent. Beyond a mere fascination for novelty, this approach explores the less spectacular dimension of the (pre)existing and what existed. As daily practice demonstrates that the interior architect excels at refurbishing existing spaces, interior architec-

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ture is essentially concerned with what remains to the benefit of things and beings. In reusing a space that is already there, the residual force of the unheimliche is potentially activated. However, if retrospective melancholy merely implies reconstructing known identities – such as some postmodern architecture buildings pretend - this approach is more problematic than intriguing.

In recent decades, amongst architects the prospective form of melancholy has become dominant and even a compulsive choice to follow. With an almost cynical pleasure, many architects seem to sublimate artificiality and facelessness in the design of their buildings. Rem Koolhaas's notion of the Generic City actually propagates the qualities of uncanny but artificial worlds such as airports and shopping centres. Around the globe, these generic cities are spreading out on the edge of cities at a vast range and speed. The artificial and exclusively commercial logic of these artificial worlds seems to dispose of the old as though on the edge of redundancy. Altogether, prospective melancholy generates a generic and unheimliche world where old notions of togetherness and society recede, giving way to private security firms who watch over citizenship and security.

In their pure forms, both extremes – prospective and retrospective – are principal yet problematic attitudes towards temporality. While retrospection mourns and is directed at glorifying a distant past, the prospection points at novelty and making new identities. Ultimately, they share a common melancholic value. However, my point is the following: a continuing battle between two melancholic extremes – prospection and retrospection – is pointless. (Interior) architecture's task should lie in the stereoscopic vision of these two extreme lenses combined. Instead of considering melancholy as a kind of illness or depression, a combinatorial kind of melancholy is in place. Negotiating the two lenses enables us to look at the world differently, to relive it and if necessary change it. Interestingly, the experience of being melancholic simultaneously activates the workings of the unheimliche. In reuniting and acknowledging the tensions that run along these two extremes, retrospective and prospective, an unheimliche but viable vision of this world opens up. By viewing through the retrospective and prospective lenses, stereoscopy does not necessarily make one see better, but rather proposes the unheimliche as a fruitful strategy for coping with an increasingly confusing reality.

Moreover, by experiencing both forms of melancholy through the unheimliche, the beholder can reposition the role of (interior) architecture. By carrying this double – critical and comforting – lens upon reality, the vision of interior architecture becomes sharper. By virtue of both melancholic lenses, architecture can forge (re)new(ed) identities and contribute to an increased 'feeling of home' in a rapidly changing world. Instead of declaring one's immunity to the outside world or becoming oversensitive, I pursue the way of the traveller who looks both back and forward. In the negotiation between the two, one can grow. In this context of negotiation and acceptance, interior architecture becomes the art of re-furbishing existing worlds.

11 Preliminary Conclusion

In this third chapter, I have explored a range of interior experiences through the eyes of the beholder. First, it seems that the unheimliche experience has the capacity to positively reassert the *status of the beholder:* previously passive, beholders now turn into active stakeholders. By virtue of an altered perception of time and an invigorating kind of melancholy, the beholder's imagination changes accordingly. Despite appearing fatal and undesired at first sight, accepting the unheimliche experience makes certain issues comprehensible in the long run. In this process of acceptance, the role of the author dwindles while the beholder's role increases: spectators themselves become partial constructers of the unheimliche experience. It gives rise to a critical repositioning of a range of stakeholders (the author, the self, the beholder, and others). Thus, the unheimliche experience changes the status of its beholder.

Second, the unheimliche alters the status of the *interior discipline.* Engaging with the unheimliche directs the discipline towards other perspectives beyond the narrow scope of a singular approach. The unheimliche deploys itself in *all* of the four approaches mentioned before – subject-centred and object-centred, open and closed discipline. The interior as a discipline emerges as the ever-changing middle between an intimate feeling and the external world. What should the approach of interior architecture be towards other disciplines? Interior architecture should wander in free alliance and coexistence with other disciplines, yet detached from its minor position in history.

Third, I have studied a series of interior experiences as triggered by a series of *Denkbilder* drawn from paintings by Caravaggio and Füseli, but also from concrete realities such as experiencing a forest excursion or visiting a Baroque church by Borromini. These experiences make the beholder go through a series of oscillatory experiences: wandering/getting lost, obscurity/clarity, encounter/belonging, ineffable/interstitial.

Fourth, after reliving of a series of emotions (such as feeling helpless, being overwhelmed and overpowered), and detecting a range of agencies (melancholy, altered perception of time), I have shown that the unheimliche creatively disturbs the beholder in time and space. Through the workings of the unheimliche, the beholder attains a double awareness that blends a future-orientated prescience and a reappraisal of the past. Out of this wide range of interior-architectural experiences, the unheimliche paradoxically becomes clearer: the beholder seems to be partially activated *by* but also partially subjected *to* the unheimliche experience. This loss of control strengthens the beholder in a strange yet enriching paradox.

Apart from actively changing the beholder's perception and turning them into melancholics, the unheimliche possesses an unsettling agency that impacts on the experience

itself. The workings of the unheimliche liberate beholders from their initial status of being 'inferior' receivers to full participants in the creative process of experiencing, imagining and giving meaning to space and time. Although this liberation does not happen in a straightforward manner, it is still possible to make sense of it. In a creative way, the unheimliche influences, disturbs and even takes control of the beholder's experience yet triggering beholders' creative abilities.

By presenting the beholder with a critical yet hopeful perspective, the unheimliche approach invites one to make an existential and paradoxical journey between a retrospective and prospective kind of melancholy which allows to make one deeper reflections.

Fig.9 Interior of Horta's Maison du Peuple reused in Antwerp restaurant.
Image by Karel Deckers, 2011
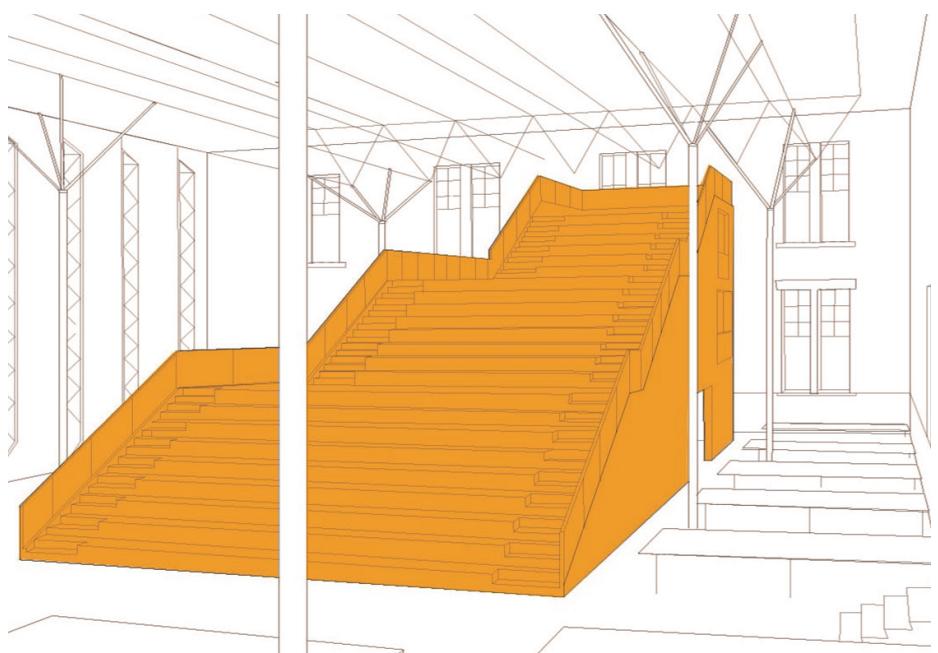
Fig.10 'Why Tribune'. Interior refurbishment by MVRDV. Leiden, 2005

Fig.11 Photo during forest walk. Montage by Karel Deckers.
Onheimelijk IV. La Dalle, 2013

Fig.12 'David with the Head of Goliath'. Oil painting.
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, 1601
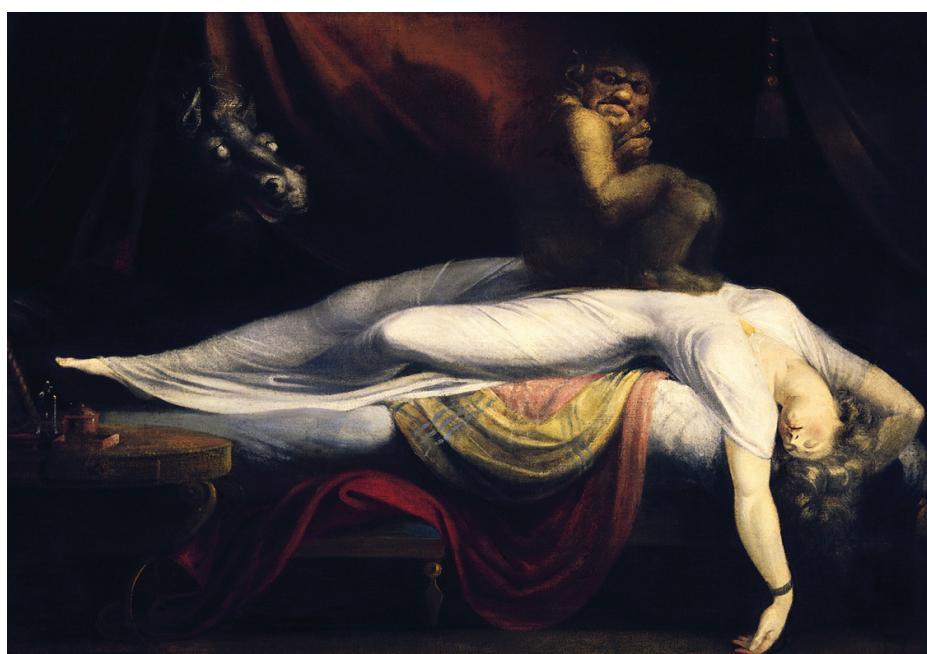
Fig.13 'The Nightmare'. Oil painting. Henry Füseli, 1781
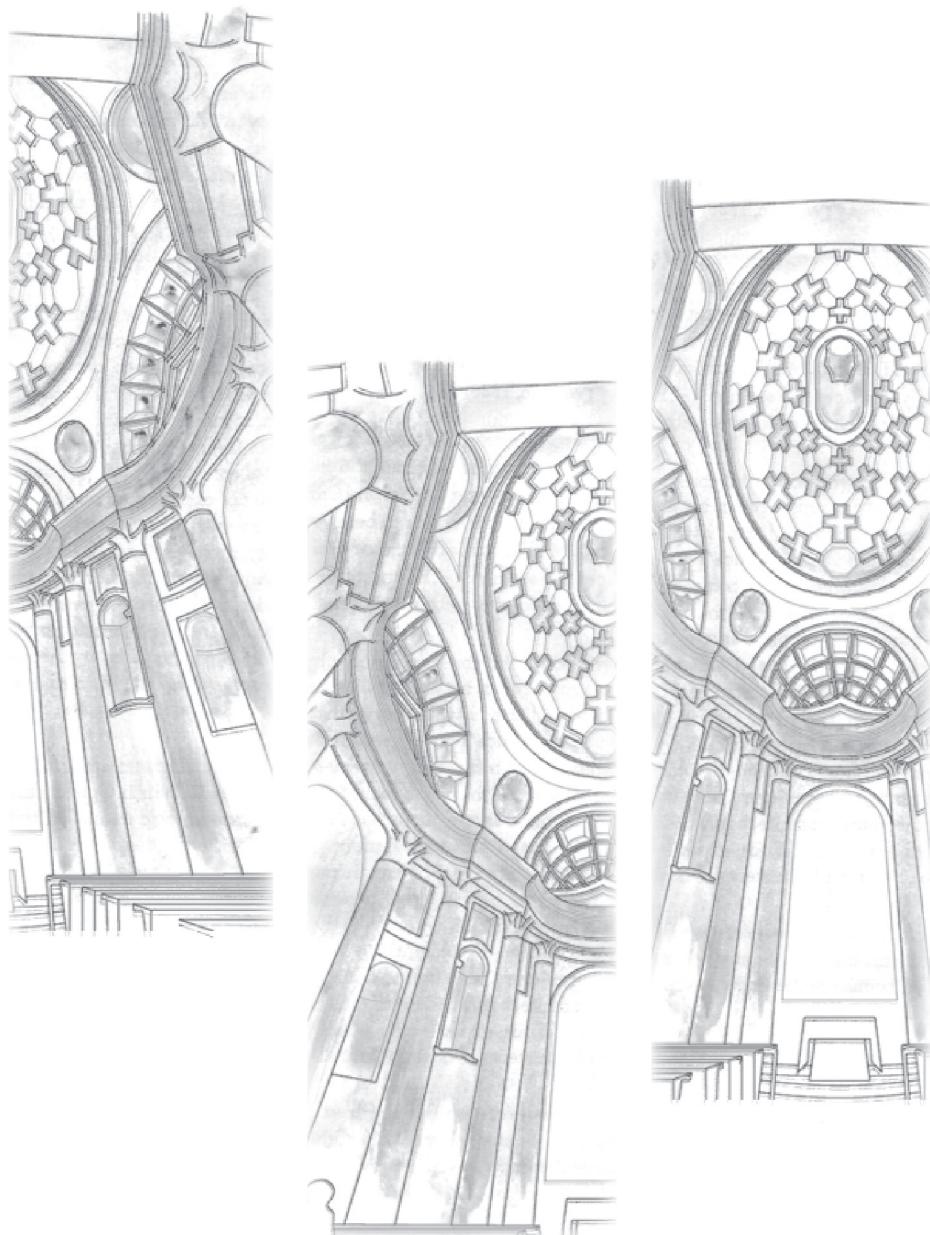
Fig.14 A Baroque experience within Borromini's 'San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane'.
Water colour drawing by Karel Deckers, 2011

Fig.15 Interior refurbishment project by 51N4e, 1998

Fig.16 'Melancholie'. Woodcut. Frans Masereel, 1924

Fig.17 'The Leap into the Void' by Yves Klein, 1960

Fig.18 'Le Voyageur', woodcut, Frans Masereel, 1922

§4

4. THE UNHEIMLICHE AS A DESIGN APPROACH?

Is the unheimliche a useful concept in design? In the previous chapter, I analysed the workings of the unheimliche from the perspective of the beholder who 'receives' the experience of the unheimliche within a specific interior in a certain period. In this chapter, I will expand on the current status of the design discipline and its practictioners. In the Research by Design paradigm (RbD), designing is used to conduct research. RbD implicitly legitimizes the designer as a researcher and alters the epistemological status of design. In my view, this opens up a range of ethical concerns about the designer's role and status in architecture and interior architecture. Furthermore, I will critically investigate the workings of the unheimliche upon the status of the designer. Following Marvin Trachtenberg's analysis 'Building-in-Time' (Trachtenberg 2010), I examine the evolving status of the designer from the 'absolute' inventor/creator of the Renaissance to the more recent tendencies of co-creator and negotiator between objects, events and people and their aspirations. What happens if the designer incorporates the unheimliche in design, i.e. alternative and un-preferred design perspectives such as 'not knowing' and 'weak thoughts'? These perspectives of the unheimliche add a dimension to existing design practices. Finally, I will elaborate on what kind of agencies are at stake when the unheimliche intervenes in the making of a design.

12 The Status of Design

> I believe that the justification of art is the internal com-
> bustion it ignites in the hearts of men and not its shal-
> low, externalized, public manifestations. The purpose of
> art is not the release of a momentary ejection of adren-
> alin but is, rather, the gradual, lifelong construction of a
> state of wonder and serenity.
>
> Glenn Gould, Payzant 'Glenn Gould: Music and Mind'
> (1964:64).

What does the altered status of the beholder, as treated in Chapter 3, imply for the status of design? In order to address this question, I refer to the French engineer and design theoretician Alain Findeli, who states, 'There are usually many potential research questions hidden in a design question, for the simple reason that design deals with the most banal of all phenomena: daily human experience' (Findeli, 2011:5). Thus, first, Findeli argues that design is already *naturally oriented towards research*. Secondly, what distinguishes design from other disciplines is the designer's focus on banal everydayness. Alternatively formulated, instead of engaging with the extraordinary, design rather engages with *the ordinary*, and in so doing it becomes a valid way to conduct research. In order to better frame design as a form of research, I will sketch out the epistemological horizon of Research by Design. In the last thirty years, a new vision of the relationship between design and research has emerged with one central concern: is a building process and/or the preceding design process – a creation of knowledge? In other words, is designing a legitimate way to conduct research?

12.1 Research By Design

In the current knowledge society and economy the significance of designing as a way to forward and unlock creativity has become crucial. The English design theoretician Nigel Cross was one of the first to assert that 'Design research is a systematic search for and acquisition of knowledge' (Cross, 1982). Following Cross's logic, a new knowledge paradigm emerged: design as a valid way to conduct research and to acquire cognition (by) designing. Interestingly, Research by Design adds a significant element to the current status of the designer and design in general. Through their specific mediation between concepts, ideas, everyday objects and events, use, form and so on, designers conduct research.

As research in interior architecture is becoming increasingly important, in universities

on different continents, several PhD programmes on Research by Design have been launched. One of them was the Research Training Sessions (RTS) at the Sint Lucas School of Architecture (now part of the KUL), which was conducted by several researchers from various backgrounds (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson, 2012). In 2006, the RTS began as a pre-doctoral school that comprised a series of seminars organized at Sint Lucas School of Architecture. The scope of these programmes is double. First, interior architects, urban planners and architects could reorientate themselves and adapt to the new requirements posed by today's changing knowledge landscapes. Second, designers were made aware of the potential for conducting research through the design process. The research environment at the Sint Lucas School of Architecture is largely informed by different approaches related to Research by Design. This research environment aims to do both: reorientation and conducting research. Furthermore, by introducing the principles of design and artistic research in architecture to a mixed audience of practitioners, architects and artists, one of the principal objectives of the RTS was to develop insight, understanding and knowledge as taught by many international teachers coming from academia. According to the programme website, 'Designing processes as well as implicit and "Mode 2" knowledge are made more explicit by the research activities involved. Designing and the artistic are the core processes to develop insight, understanding and knowledge' (RTS Website, 2012). In short, the sessions were designed to make the aspirant researchers aware of various principles within academia. For some participants, it was the first step towards potential PhD research.

13 The Status of The Designer

Architecture is both being and non-being.
The only alternative to the paradox is silence,
a final nihilistic statement that might provide
modern architectural history with its culture
to punch time, its self-annihilation.

(Hayes, 2000:226)

Above I have analysed the status of design as a research discipline. What does this imply for the status of the designer, the assumed author in architecture? Does designing automatically denote that the designer is the sole conceiver (or architect, author or creator) of an architectural design? Now I will explore these questions against the backdrop of the unheimliche.

13.1 The Architect as a Formulator

'The Death of the Author' (Barthes, 1977) by Roland Barthes arguably offers a key to understanding the sense of this chapter. In his article, the French philosopher critically distances himself from his earlier structuralist convictions. The provocative title suggests part of the content. It claims a particular disbelief that the author can have, i.e. to be the only signifier in the process of writing. Not only the author but also the reader – the beholder – can become a signifier in his own terms: an active creator of signs and meanings. Barthes implicitly asserts that the reader's imagination weakens the traditionally absolute role of the author. Implying a loss of authorial autonomy, Barthes introduces a shift in the traditional hierarchy and order between author and reader: a work of art (literary or other) is both conceived and received. This paradigm shift emulates the position of the 'receiving' reader away from the previous primacy of the 'conceiving' designer. In following Barthes's 'The Death of the Author', the term *author* has become more complex.

Jonathan Harris also expands on the author's role. He states that the term *author* designates '…the person identified as responsible for the production of a written text, with a meaning virtually interchangeable with the descriptive sense of artist' (Harris, 2006: 32). He further argues that the idea of authorship is an ideology that emerged in the high Renaissance. Interestingly, according to Harris, the author designates authority and instruction: 'Though the term authority has a range of meanings, its links to author and authorship are instructive: authors (and artists) are believed to operate control and power in their productions; that is, they have authority over them as their creations' (Harris, 2006a:32-33).

Quite apart from theories coming from literature, there are other significant architectural studies that suggest a turning point in the relationship between author and authorship. Bernard Tschumi, for example, discusses the necessity of finding an alternative role of the architect. Whereas he criticizes the persistent role of the architect-inventor who dominates the building and design process, proposing instead '…the architect first as a *formulator,* an inventor of relations' (Tschumi, 1996:181). Thus Tschumi considers the architect's traditional character of dominator reorientated to become a more complex negotiator and formulator of conflicting programs inside buildings. Controversially, he concludes that modernists and postmodernists in reality share the same conservative agenda. Both approaches still consider the architect as a supreme leader, designer and builder at the top of a complex hierarchy. Later he demonstrates the diminishing role of the architect in the practice of his own design for Park de la Villette in Paris. In line with Tschumi's thinking, the unheimliche approach also nourishes an alternative design approach. By reconsidering the architect's role in terms of formulator, and through the workings of the un-preferred in design (to which I will come later), the unheimliche subverts the traditional hierarchy of 'supreme designer' and 'inferior user' as professed by the design discipline.

The insights on authorial authority provided by Barthes, Tschumi and Harris matter to my research. Instead of a traditional approach whereby the designer solely acts as a conceiver of novel designs, the unheimliche experience conveys a wider approach in which the beholder is declared in terms of a *formulator* and even becomes emancipated as *co-creator and co-author*. So how would this broad approach work? One of the ways could be to frame the author over a larger time scale, in which he or she designs 'in time' and morphs into a 'builder-in-time'.

13.2 Builder in Time

Next to the designer's role as a formulator, the designer's mission is to be, to a certain degree, consistent with the era in which he or she builds. In his monumental *Building-in-Time: From Giotto to Alberti and Modern Oblivion*, Marvin Trachtenberg analyses the shifts and changes in the role of the architect from pre-modern times to modernity in terms of temporality and duration. He principally devises two modes of building: *building-in-time* (Trachtenberg, 2010:XXI) and *building-outside-time* (Trachtenberg, 2010:XXI). In the former procedure, pre-modern buildings such as the Gothic cathedrals were built throughout several generations, and were adapted, perfected and completed by many builders according to the slow duration of their own 'life worlds'. These slow changes emphasised continuity throughout time. Instead of a problematic force, Trachtenberg suggests that temporality is a benign force in architecture: 'Building-in-time [is] a highly efficient and creative system of time management in the designing and making' (Trachtenberg, 2010:XXI). In contrast, Trachtenberg identifies the other procedure of building-*outside*-time. This outside position emerged during the Renaissance. In his *De Re*

Aedificatore, the Renaissance architect and architectural theorist Alberti 'sought to repress time as a positive force in the making of architecture' (Trachtenberg, 2010:XXI). To this end, Alberti proposes a new role for the architect. From then on, the architect should be building-outside-time. By breaking the continuity over consecutive generations, Alberti calls for an architect-designer who should finish the building immaculately, 'here and now' within the lifespan of one generation and one person. As precisely designed and prescribed by the individual Renaissance architect, the new edifice becomes a timeless, perfect and completed object of desire. This Renaissance model is based on the principle of the *inventio*, which immediately links creativity to the power of invention by one designing individual.

However, Trachtenberg indicates that building-outside-time also has some drawbacks. First, the Renaissance ideals of Alberti's writings propagate architecture as a separate discipline that attempts to erase the workings of time: the building becomes 'frozen' in time and isolated from its life world. Trachtenberg even uses the terms *chronophobic* and *oblivious* (Trachtenberg, 2010:XXI). Renaissance building philosophers gave precedence to artistic experiments emanating from 'the eternal' rather than 'the ordinary', indicating that the architect had become part of a privileged elite of divine 'inventors'. According to their thinking, nobody else but the individual architect was capable of imagining and configuring the divine Platonic forms instilled in the lineaments of a Renaissance edifice.

In contrast, despite the sharp analysis made by Trachtenberg, the supreme role of the architect continues to be emphasised today. The Renaissance inspired 'Albertianist temporality' – i.e. building-outside-time is still intact and continues to persists in the ideals of modern architecture. According to Trachtenberg, modern architects are still part of an elite that intends to build-outside-time and aims to achieve glory and fame through its architectural works. Before Alberti, the designer was regarded as a leading builder who was uninterested in public fame and who made drawings on site. According to a pre-modern ideal, the medieval builder was foremost a craftsman who made utilitarian drawings according to prescribed conventions to facilitate the building process. However, during the Renaissance the architect's role and status changed. Unlike the drawings of the medieval craftsman, the drawings of the Renaissance architect became a legitimate means of personal expression and investigation.

In other words, from Alberti onwards, the term *architect* obtains a fundamentally different connotation far more specific than the term *conceiver* or *creator*. This difference can be also be illustrated through the etymologic origin of the terms *architecture* and *Baukunst*, as Wim Van Den Bergh argued in his article 'Architecture and Morals: Babylonic Labyrinths' (Van den Bergh, 1992:70-78). The term *architecture* has Greek origins: it denotes a superior master builder who builds for an elite, implying the one who builds temples. However, this Greek term *architecture* differs sharply from the 'inferior' German term *Baukunst*, which is committed to conceiving ordinary and everyday buildings.[1] In Chap-

ter 3, in the sectionThe Status of the Beholder, I have already elaborated on the shifting perspective of the creator and how (s)he evolved from a creative genius who dominates the creative process to someone who is now critically acknowledged to be weak and potentially gender-biased.

Despite the shifting connotations of these synonyms (i.e. designer, author, architect), I also follow Trachtenberg's contention that the present-day status of the term *architect-designer* remains untouched and unquestioned: being a designer today still implies to be a creative person who 'invents' and conducts experiments to achieve an immaculate perfection. One of the crucial questions I want to develop is whether or not the paradigm of Research by Design also pursues this Albertianist ideal – i.e. building-outside-time. Or does it rather follow the perspective of building-in-time? Is design 'Albertianist' – i.e. narrowed down to issues of novelty as proposed by individual designers – or does it look into the wider perspectives such as duration and social praxis that prevail in network offices?

13.3 Negotiator in a Network

Next to a *builder-in-time* and an *architect as a formulator*, there is a third sign that the status and role of the individual designer has shifted. In recent decades, a new paradigm of the professional design studio emerged: the *network office*. As designers gather in larger working constellations, how does this affect the status of the designer? In her article 'Exoticising the Domestic: on New Collaborative Paradigms and Advanced Design Practices' from the book *Architecture and Authorship* (edited by Katja Grillner, Rolf Hughes and Tim Anstey) the author*,* Hélène Lippstadt, introduces the term *new collaborative paradigms* (Lippstadt, 2007:164). They give rise to a range of new *network practices* (Lippstadt, 2007:164).

Supposedly, in these network offices such as the Amsterdam-based UN Studio, the traditional Albertianist interpretation of the designer's role is quickly fading. As a traditional architectural practice still heavily relies on the idea of expression, the network office takes a strategic distance from this ideal. A network practice pretends not to rely on the personality of its members as such, but rather on selecting and handling the informational data available. By drawing from a set of invisible networks, the network studio rather intermediates between people, ideas, knowledge and objects that all inform and perform the making of studio designs.

In 2000, I worked for the UN Studio. According to the UN Studio's philosophy as described in *Move* (Van Berkel & Bos, 1998) and on its website, UN Studio claims to be a 'united network studio' (UN Studio Website 2012). In its common aim to achieve 'collaboration with leading specialists' such as international consultants, partners, and so

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1 **Architect** (n.) 1550s, from Middle French architecte, from Latin architectus, from Greek *arkhitekton* 'master builder, director of works', from *arkhi-* 'chief' (see archon) + *tekton* 'builder, carpenter'. An Old English word for it was *heahcræftiga* 'high-crafter'. Referenced from the online dictionary *http://www.etymonline.com.*

on, UN Studio delivers architectural projects worldwide. Furthermore, the firm aims at distilling knowledge from its practice through so-called 'knowledge sharing in knowledge platforms'. To this end, UN Studio integrates the faculty of knowledge production, collaboration and parametric design in one architecture studio[2]. Disregarding the Albertianist ideal of designing as redundant, the UN Studio proclaims that the architect should not convey personal expression through the design. Rather than being the product of artistic endeavour, design instead emerges from other realities such as immaterial, political, economic forces called 'mobile forces' (Van Berkel, 1994), which in their turn generate new social conditions. As the architect is no longer the exclusive designer or executor, (s)he becomes a negotiator inside a united and interdisciplinary network of specialists, such as fashion designers and so on. Architecture *emerges* out of these invisible forces, giving rise to the formation of unusual architectural typologies.

In line with the complexities and possibilities generated by the digital age, one set of skills becomes pivotal in the network office: the collection and selection of data. It is not the designer's hands or individual creativity, but rather data fluxes that inform complex networks consisting of a range of interdisciplinary actors such as politicians, financial surveyors, contractors, clients, engineers, artists and so on. This continuous flux of data also deforms these networks into dynamic and changeable constellations. Ultimately, new input of data deforms yet also produces the outcome of a design. As designers merely negotiate between the different actors in the network, it seems that they themselves no longer *make* the design, but that the design *emerges*. Architectural offices such as UN Studio, Servo, Ocean, and others regard this network constellation based on handling of information as their typical working procedure.

In other words, according to the UN Studio philosophy, architecture should not be limited to the architect's personal taste and expression. As the network studio emphasizes the (political) role of the architect as a *negotiator in a complex network of actors*, it implies that the traditional authority of the architect is at stake. Instead of supreme leadership, the role of the architect in the network office is limited to merely integrating these mobile forces into a design. The new role of the designer goes beyond just designing; it implies much more than that. The complexity of the network office allows the designer to take on more than one role at a time: he or she acts simultaneously as a designer, negotiator and researcher. Significantly, by continuously mediating with other disciplines and stakeholders, network offices give rise to abandoning the underlying Albertianist ideal of personal expression within one building and one lifetime.

In *appearance* network offices propose a way to return to the cooperative and interdisci-

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2 'As a network practice, a highly flexible methodological approach has been developed which incorporates parametric designing and collaborations with leading specialists in other disciplines. Drawing on the knowledge found in related fields facilitates the exploration of comprehensive strategies which combine programmatic requirements, construction and movement studies into an integrated design.' (UN Studio Website, 2012)

plinary spirit of the pre-modern builder, i.e. the builder-in-time (Trachtenberg, 2010), but what lies beyond the external image? In reality one needs to remain critical towards the new paradigm of collaborative practices. Although they qualify themselves as 'network practices', they are not entirely uncontested. Concerning the outcome of network studio, Lippstadt cites another author, Christopher Hight. Hight asserts that despite an official agenda to eradicate personal expression, some network practices in reality still follow the Albertianist notion of temporality – i.e. building-outside-time. In other words, instead of pursuing a more disinterested collective ideal, these network offices still draw upon the arbitrary competences and skills of the individual and creative subject.

In short, both a traditional design approach and new collaborative practices keep pointing at the brilliance of a hidden individual designer's agenda behind it, although this agenda has been amply questioned and criticized. However, by means of a cooperation and non-hierarchical way of working, a more genuine network model can still induce other kinds of creativity. Beyond shielding off personal, managerial or corporate interests, the network model should also allow collaborations between different contradictory aspirations and concepts. As the central position and fixed status of the designer gradually fade, they are replaced by an uncertain network constellation through which a design both is crafted and emerges. By mediating between a series of network actors (i.e. animate and inanimate actors, politicians, artists, engineers, clients, anxieties and so on), this constellation furthers unstable ties between the individual designer and the creative design act. Ultimately, the emergence of a dynamic network model declares the disappearance of unilateral schemes such as the architectural designer as a designing subject favouring a more complex, affective and collaborative approach. In Chapter 5, I will come back to this network model.

13.4 Ethical Concerns

At present, some aspects of the Research by Design approach and current architectural production also raise a number of ethical concerns regarding current societal norms such as novelty. In the background of this ethical concern on novelty, Herbert Marcuse's analysis from his *One-Dimensional Man* (Marcuse, 1964) is still relevant. Marcuse, a philosopher who was generally regarded as member of the Frankfurt School, and others have criticized the false consumer needs that underpin the logic of capitalism. The 'one-dimensional man', in his pursuit of happiness, realizes that it can only be purchased in a capitalistic context. By providing reassuring amenities such as commodities, custom-made and material comfort, capitalism subscribes to the underlying dimension of the heimliche. Whereas design in a capitalist context tends to undervalue the unheimliche dimension, it can be argued that precisely its contrary, the *heimliche*, has become dominant in design and design education.

What is the origin of this emphasis on the heimliche, or the realm of commodities? A

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study by ecological economist Tim Jackson, *Prosperity without Growth* (Jackson, 2009), introduces the concept of the 'iron cage of consumerism'. He questions the current growth imperative and calls for a broader notion of prosperity. He asserts that beyond material dimensions, one needs to take into account immaterial alternatives such as the vital social and psychological dimensions of prosperity. As giving or receiving without expecting anything in return has become a rare faculty in society today, he pleads for a prosperity without growth: 'An even stronger finding is that the requirements of prosperity go way beyond material sustenance. Prosperity has vital social and psychological dimensions. To do well is in part about the ability to give and receive love, to enjoy the respect of your peers, to contribute useful work, and to have a sense of belonging and trust in the community' (Jackson, 2009:7). Jackson also asserts that '…the growth imperative has shaped the architecture of the modern economy. […] This model was always unstable ecologically. It has now proven itself unstable economically' (Jackson, 2009:7). He claims that it is precisely the production and consumption of novelty that is accountable and unsustainable. Moreover, the model with its pursuit of novelty creates anxieties amongst individuals: 'Perhaps the most telling point of all is the almost perfect fit between the continual production of novelty by firms and the continuous consumption of novelty in households. […] Despite this fit, or perhaps because of it, the relentless pursuit of novelty creates an anxiety that can undermine social wellbeing. Individuals are at the mercy of social comparison' (Jackson, 2009:9).

But what can one do about this contemporary context dominated by the growth imperative? Many thinkers, such as Jacques Derrida in his *Spectres of Marx*, have questioned commodities: 'The commodity is a born "cynic" because it effaces differences.' (Derrida, 1994: 13). In contrast, by advocating un-preferred values – such as abstinence from food or light – other realities can be included in design, teaching and interior architecture. Instead of propagating consumer needs, the unheimliche approach allows an appreciation of other needs such as obscurity. By proposing the deployment of the unheimliche as an alternative strategy in design thinking, I question the current quest for novelty and point to other perspectives. I assume that this quest for novelty highlights an underlying yet dominant tendency in architectural thinking and discourse that excludes the pre-existant: an existing building or artefact potentially hinders the deployment of novelty, progress and profit, and for this reason becomes an easy target for demolition. As new buildings and products assume growth, choosing novelty seems consistent in a neo-liberal context. Whereas the existant potentially conveys other values (such as status quo or contraction) that do not necessarily line up with neo-liberalist values, integrating the existant becomes the unpreffered option. However, in my view this analysis offers an unequal choice between something desirable (a novel solution) and something potentially undesirable (questioning how to integrate the existant). Thus, in this neo liberal logic, novelty is represented as a sound choice, but in reality it is imposed upon the designer as a point of departure.

14 Frameworks for the Unheimliche

After having analysed the status of design and its community, I'd like to connect it to the unheimliche. What kinds of frameworks allow the unheimliche to operate in different Research by Design contexts? I believe there are basically three frameworks: the unpreferred, not knowing and 'weak thoughts'.

14.1 The Unpreferred

Design is traditionally regarded as a discipline equipped for the making of preferred places – the French design theoretician Findeli speaks of making preferred human environments: 'Conversely the aim of designers is to modify human-environment interactions, to transform them into preferred ones' (Findeli, 2011:4). The unheimliche, on the other hand, proposes a different design attitude. The unheimliche approach implies engaging with *un-preferred* and potentially *unintended* environments (Fig.19-20, p.129-130). More specifically, the unheimliche points to an unpreferred agency that designers cannot individually control or master by means of their design. Due to the transgenerational workings of time – i.e. building-in-time (Trachtenberg, 2010) – and the shared approach and elasticity of the network model, the *unpreferred* in design is a crucial gap that links the unheimliche with existing design strategies.

In publications such as *Architecture and Disjunction* (Tschumi, 1996), Bernard Tschumi engages with the faculty of the unfamiliar (already mentioned in Chapter 2), which somehow is linked to something unpreferable: 'The danger of such anxiety [due to the dangers of life in the modern metropolis] was an experience of defamiliarization, of Unzu-hause-sein, of Unheimlichkeit, of the uncanny' (Tschumi, 1996:246). Here Tschumi regards the unheimliche as a means to deliberately (de)familiarize oneself from known design procedures in architecture. As defamiliarization allows one to learn how to make architectural designs, Tschumi introduced the procedure of defamiliarizing as a proper design tool, which was – according to him – hitherto overlooked.

14.2 Faculty of Not Knowing

The faculty of *not knowing* is a second way to engage with unpreffered design perspectives. Interestingly, this perspective differs from traditional forms of knowing. In his book *Design Research* (Downtown, 2003), Peter Downton distinguishes among three different levels of knowing based on Gilbert Ryle's epistemological distinctions. First he suggests a *propositional* type of knowledge: 'knowing that' (Downtown, 2003:62) – knowledge that makes a stance and posits what *is*. It builds an understanding and recognition of the world as it is. This type of knowing is highly successful in monitoring and acknowledg-

ing the progression of science. Next he devises a second kind of *practical* knowledge or 'knowing how' (Downtown, 2003:62), which refers to building up certain skills, such as taking driving lessons to learn how to drive. 'I can do it because I know how to do it'. A third kind of knowledge follows the logic of 'knowing of' (Downtown, 2003:62), which he calls *convictional* knowledge. One can be acquainted with something, such as certain values, and then one can be convinced that they are true. Downton asserts that it is 'simple to see designers as needing and deploying these three types [of knowledge] in their activities – each framing other types' (Downtown, 2003:63). Intriguingly, he also suggests a marginal and residual kind of knowledge that is mentioned only as an aside in his dissertation: one can also know by 'not knowing'. To explain 'not knowing' further, he cites Cetina Knorr, who argued that 'Negative knowledge is not "non knowledge", but knowledge of […] the things that interfere with our knowing…' (Cetina Knorr cited in Downtown, 1999: 64).

The tension between the first three epistemologies and the fourth is central in my research, and more in particular the tension between the third (*convictional knowledge*) and fourth (*negative knowledge*). Moreover, there is an etymological reason to assume this is so. The English translation of the unheimliche – 'uncanny' – literally means 'not knowing' and 'not being able'. It points to the fourth faculty of 'not knowing', i.e. a knowing of something that interferes with that knowledge. Building upon this etymological distinction of the word uncanny, I explore the interference of this build-up of 'negative knowledge' while engaging with an unheimliche design approach. Moreover, I claim that the unheimliche represents a form of 'not knowing'. By accepting the unheimliche, an existing logic is subverted into something that is not, i.e. not knowing.

14.3 Weak Thoughts

A third framework could be found in unfinished and hidden issues that lie within the concept of *weak thoughts* as developed in *End of Modernity* by the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo (Vattimo, 1988). Paraphrasing Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Vattimo introduces the notion of 'weak thoughts' as 'a kind of flexible "conversation" between minds, texts or cultures that differ from one another, a conversation which is always contingent on a given set of circumstances and always open to change, rather than a search for the absolute and immutable nature of truth, objectivity and reason (which is the tasks of metaphysics)' (Vattimo, 1988b:XLIV). Weak thoughts allow designers to undertake a journey while questioning themselves in the design process, paradoxically strengthening rather than losing themselves. By allowing the flexible and 'conversational' agency of weak thoughts to infiltrate their mindset, the designers are able to integrate the unheimliche as a proper strategy within Research by Design. For instance, the continuous negotiation between implicit lingering memories of the observer/designer, examples from the material world, and texts from established authors potentially open up new design perspectives for designers (Fig. 21-23, p.131-133).

In the background of Vattimo's reflection lies a fundamental critique on modernity. He implicitly challenges the idea of modernity as a 'programmatic' project, i.e. an inevitable march of society and the individual towards achieving the virtues of modernity. Instead of this 'programmed' progression and fascination for novelty, the unheimliche explores the aleatory and transitory perspectives such as *retreat*, *doubt* and *not knowing*. However, as it lies outside the scope of this dissertation, I do not want to slip back into hypercriticism on modernity. On the contrary, I intend to constructively contribute to the modern project and its aspirations, but without sticking to dogmas and prejudices. In other words, my inquiry does not reject progress in itself; it questions the degree of absoluteness to which progress is propagated as an ideal in (interior) architecture.

Thus Vattimo's work should be read in a postmodern context of scepticism and a reaction to the self-affirmative logic of modernity. However, one can question whether or not the inclusion of weak thoughts would slip into relativism, subjectivity and weakening of the self. Contrarily, if the designer is empathic and receptive towards memories, he or she ultimately gains strength and resilience. As the unheimliche in design proliferates the primacy of the weaker, the designer's attitude changes accordingly. Instead of making design proposals that merely focus on technical issues, the unheimliche as a design approach acknowledges and materializes the designer's own prevailing lived and sometimes marginal feelings and memories. These marginal feelings dwell in every individual, and they can be a starting point for a design process and product. Consequently, the unheimliche as an approach makes all designers complicit in this 'joint venture' between feeling and making. Through the re-creative workings of the unheimliche, there is an *affective turn* to be made innate to every thinking and acting individual.

15 The Unheimliche Agencies in Design

What does the unheimliche do to the design discipline? Alain Findeli's work provides some indication. In an article, he develops the notion of 'two folds of the artefact' (Findeli, 2011) whereby an artefact folds into a receiving side (i.e. reception by the user) and a conceiving side (i.e. concept of the designer). He points to the intriguing breach that runs within any artefact. In its lifespan, an artefact folds in two branches: it ramifies into a conceiving component (the designer) and a receiving component (the user). As stated above, designers still emphasize an Albertianist approach that favours the conceiver to the detriment of the receiver. My inquiry into the unheimliche critically examines how this prevailing emphasis on the conceiver-designer underestimates the importance of the anonymous receiver-user. My fundamental assertion is that through the unheimliche, a part of the conceptual and creative workings is handed from the individual conceiver into the hands of a larger entity – the receivers (or users) – and thereby strengthens them. In this devolution of power to the users, the unheimliche in design essentially entails two significant actions: the unheimliche recreates the pre-existent and it alters authorship.

15.1 The Unheimliche Re-Creates the Pre-existent

Quite unlike architects, interior architects *receive* a building that is already there, within which they *conceive* their interior design. While some architects perhaps focuse on the new, the interior architect rather nurtures the existent in reusing a building. By the same token, a first agency of the unheimliche is that it does not create novelty but rather *re-creates* something that already existed. The term *re-creation* suggests a radically different concept than *creation*. Etymologically, *re-creation* means 'recovery from illness'. Authors such as Peter Sloterdijk, in his trilogy *Spheres* (Sloterdijk, 2005), have already stated that science, religion and ideology merely attempt to re-create the biological and utopian comfort of the mother's womb. By the same logic, designers – often compulsively but comprehensibly – try to reconstruct the warmth of the womb. In contrast to a certain kind of architecture that thrives on designing and making spectacular spatial experiences within otherworldly buildings, the unheimliche design approach rather relives and re-creates something pre-existent.

As a consequence, the unheimliche re-creation fundamentally repositions the interior design discipline: out of what already existed, it moulds something relatively new. Apparently, life's painful traces and marks are not suffered in vain; they might even allow one to become energized by means of an unheimliche design: from these traces, the designer can distil an unheimliche re-creation. The intrinsic difference between the *creation* and *recreation* recurs in between the respective aims and outcomes of architecture and interior architecture. Instead of concentrating upon the novel, interior architecture refurbishes

existing places by making them inhabitable. In this process it is not necessary to establish novelty – with sensational new furniture, for example – but rather to *provoke* the emergence of an *uncanny double* – an interior that already was there and still is, but is now somehow strangely different. The unheimliche as a design approach potentially resorts to another kind of ingenuity to the benefit of the designer and beholder. It prompts the birth of a by-product, an unintended and unplanned event that fascinates. The threshold of the re-creation lies in retrieving existing yet abandoned worlds in retreat. In other words, the unheimliche as a design approach is both originator and cure that leads toward potential recovery. Next to re-creation, the unheimliche also *curates*. The curatorial power of the uheimliche gives a hint of how the unheimliche re-creates – a natural and innate sense of resilience for both conceiver-designer and receiver-observer.

15.2 The Unheimliche Alters Authorship

A second occurence in connection with the unheimliche as a design approach is that it queries a (probably too narrow) idea of authenticity. In line with Marvin Trachtenberg's work, designers insist to conceptualize their work in terms of 'purity' and 'consistency' with their own ego as though to establish a personal trademark. This narrow notion of authenticity sustains a heimliche and stealthy link between conceiver, receiver and artefact. However, ultimately the strength of an absolute designerly ego that imposes mastery and control upon the design exhausts the designer's resourcefulness and the other actors implied. For this matter, one can question whether the interior architect should also make an exclusive link between the designer and the designed artefact as *theirs*? Alternatively, can interior architecture depend on unheimliche and *disinterested* forces, shared by both stakeholders, the receiver (user) and the conceiver (designer)? The unheimliche workings do not create a personal signature but rather creatively disturb the correct reading of who is accountable for the making of an artefact. In other words, the unheimliche makes it difficult to discern who or what is accountable for a fascinating kind of design. For artefacts and their makers, the unheimliche annihilates the clarity as to what responsibilities are assigned and to whom.

Provided that it happens, how does this alteration of the authorship occur? By challenging the traditional authority of the conceiver-designer, the unheimliche design approach favours another kind of authority: that of *un-designed* and *un-authored* objects. Integrating the workings of the *unpreffered*, *weak thoughts* and the faculty of *not knowing*, as the unheimliche arguable does, has repercussions for a traditional notion of authenticity. The unheimliche in design stands for a re-reading of what already exists. In order to apply the unheimliche as a design approach, the designer should be able to learn from previous experiences and the legacy that surrounds us – from buildings to everyday objects. In reading what already exists, designers are invited to design according to an unheimliche logic – i.e. taking distance from their respective egos, and enabling them to think and work according to an *informed kind of intuition*. Consequently, the interior architect should not legitimize the use of new but pointless trademark features.

16 Preliminary Conclusions

In this chapter, I have evaluated the role of the unheimliche as a design approach in the emergent paradigm of Research by Design. The current emphasis on Research by Design strengthens the design field as a knowledge-producing discipline. However, what are the implications if the paradigm of Research by Design conforms to the requirements of society here and now such as the ad hoc creation of knowledge? Should it conform to or criticize societal paradigms? I acknowledge that the shifting status of the designer brings new opportunities to the discipline, such as knowledge production, expertise and skills, but it also raises concerns. In my opinion, the prolific disturbance of the unheimliche coincides with a debate on the status of the designer (from an artist to a researcher) and the design discipline. As designing also furthers knowledge, the status of design changes and shifts accordingly.

In this respect, the current designer's task should be neither missionary nor revolutionary. Following the unheimliche as a design approach, designers should mediate between what is and what is yet to come – between object and project. From the vain pursuits of reincarnating personal design expression – i.e. the architect as a creative individual – he or she should evolve towards a more disinterested and unintended approach. Alternatively, from the Albertianist creative genius who attempts to halt the workings of time, the designer's new role now shifts towards that of a negotiator and co-creator situated in time. In this way, the architectural design can meaningfully contribute to existing complexities of interdisciplinary networks.

Therefore, I wonder whether or not the perspective of the designer, as a member of a knowledge-generating discipline, can maintain its emphasis on the designer as the main authorial force. In appearance, and despite new emerging complexities, this status of the designer still seems supreme. For instance, by overindulging in the issues such as user-friendliness, the designer's role today seems to be limited to merely accommodating user needs. Precisely by abandoning these self-centred design paths and other diversions, the designer can engage in other and un-becoming perspectives such as the unheimliche. The unheimliche as a design approach sends also turbulent shockwaves through assumed notions of authenticity behind the designer's signature. In terms of the unheimliche as a design approach, there is little certainty as to who designs, only that it occurs and that it influences the designer's sense of authorship.

Furthermore, I have investigated three alternative design perspectives: engaging with the *unpreferred*, *weak thoughts* and the universal faculty and ground condition of *not knowing*. The introduction of weak thoughts potentially necessitates a painful introspection and 'autopsy' of the self. The self-induced weaknesses that dwell within each individual designer contains a risk but also an opportunity for the designer. The perspective of the

unheimliche may give rise to an intriguing world of not knowing – the world of the *uncanny*, where unpredicted possibilities may emerge in the temporal allowance of anguish.

In conclusion, in the context of the unheimliche as a design approach, I frame the unheimliche as a way to conduct 're-search', a way to look back again, to re-live personal or shared sentiments, and a way to question them (again). Instead of claiming the birth of a new or dominant paradigm, the unheimliche as a design approach declares the existence as a way to conduct research for and by people. I argue that the unheimliche is therefore complementary to and part of the diverse array of existing design frameworks. The following chapter interrogates how to introduce and implement the unheimliche in education and pedagogy.
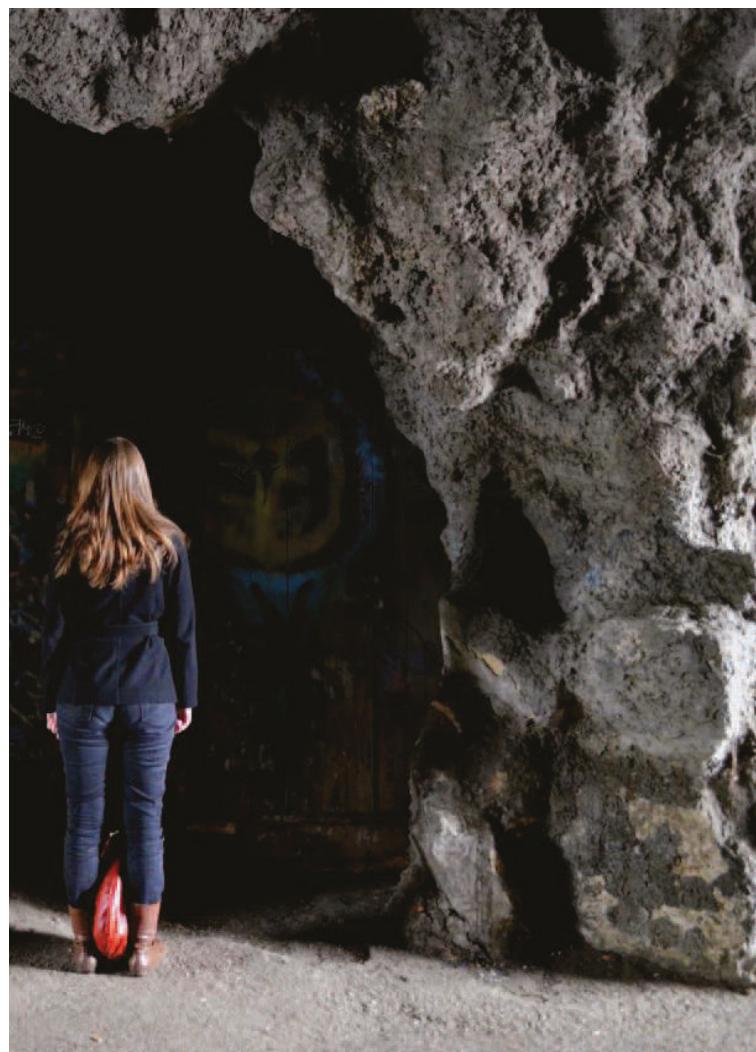
Fig.19 Photo introducing theme of 'Sexual Intimidation'. Photo by
Maxime Lenaerts, Onheimelijk V. Ghent, 2013
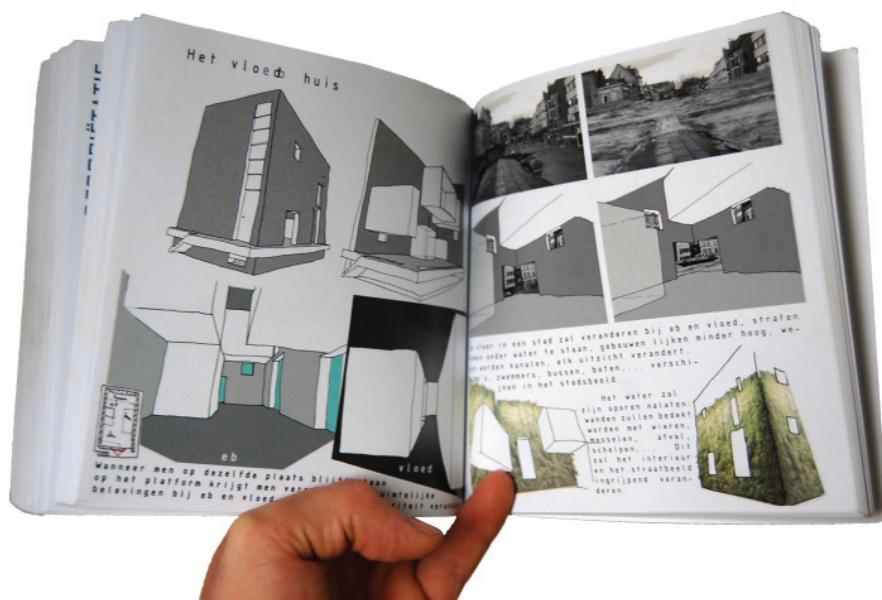
Fig.20 'Eb-Tide House'. An interior subject to changes of sea level by Jonas Van Vliet. Onheimelijk I, 2009
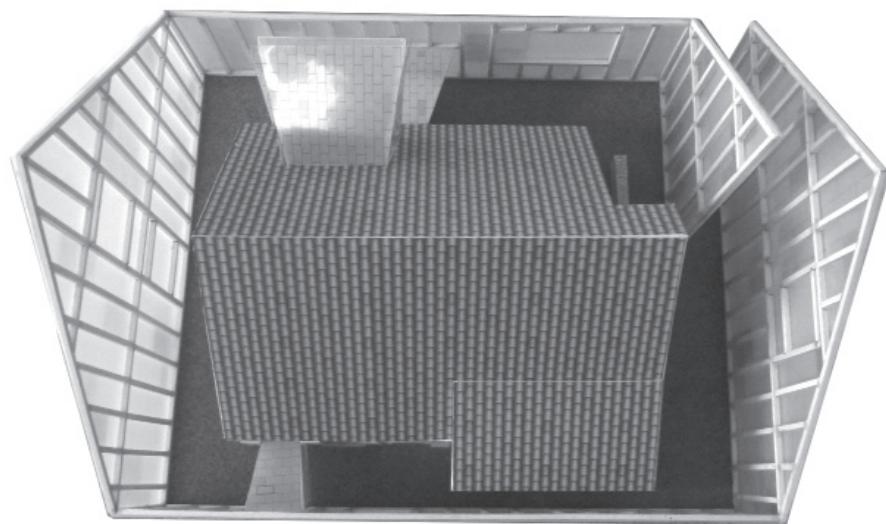
Fig.21 'Recollection of my Home'. A research by design
by Filip Van Bavel. Onheimelijk IV, 2012

Fig.22 'Recollection of my Grandfather's Shop'. A research by design
by Céline Poissonier. Onheimelijk IV, 2012
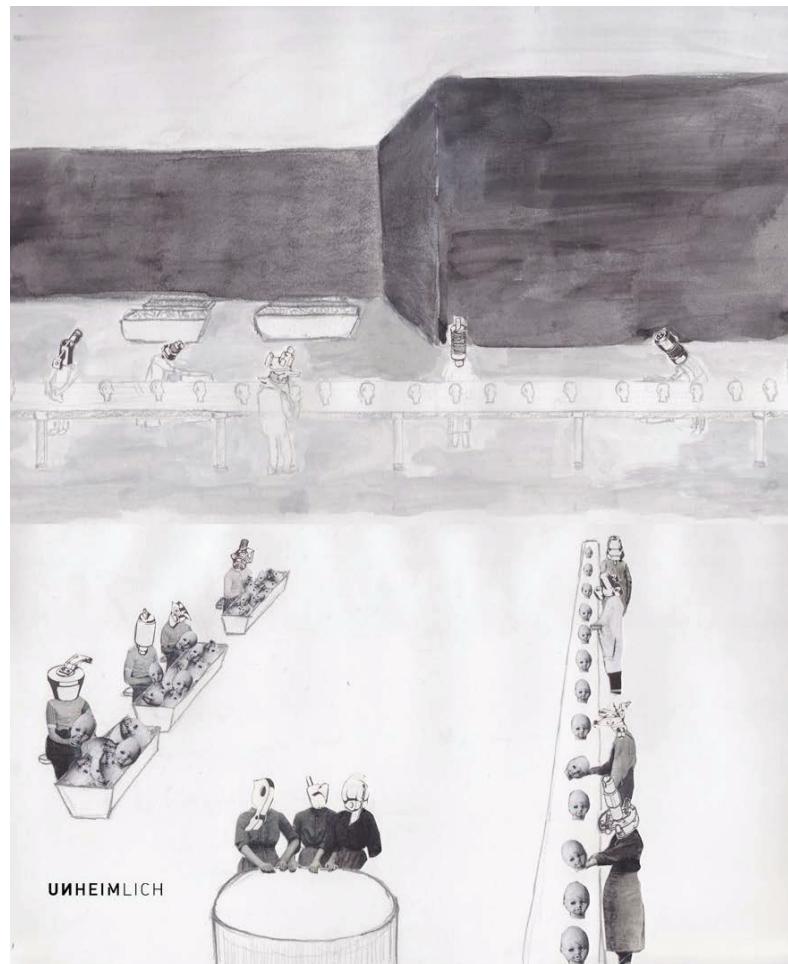
Fig.23 'Recollection of My Grandfather's Garage'.
A research by design by Els Houttequiet, Onheimelijk IV, 2012

§5

5. THE UNHEIMLICHE AS A PEDAGOGIC APPROACH

In the preceding Chapter 4, I observed the workings of the *unheimliche* as a design approach. In this chapter, I deal with the workings of the unheimliche in education. Instead of being new, it rather starts from one's own endeavours and those of others: the unheimliche as a social praxis. Ultimately, my main research material did not come from designing as such, but rather from experimenting with a specific pedagogic approach, as experienced during the Onheimelijke Studio, a research design studio organized between 2008 and 2013. These research design studios at the end of the bachelor's programme propose an experimental environment in which, together with participating students, I investigate the unheimliche (1) as a theme but also (2) as a specific approach in interior architecture. On a yearly basis, I reformulate and rearrange the central theme of the unheimliche on the basis of the findings of the previous year.

By virtue of sharing *unheimliche experiences* amongst students in this Onheimelijke Studio, the unheimliche as a theme matures into a specific pedagogic approach. As an educational program, the Onheimelijke Studio proposes essentially to relive past and disquieting experiences as recalled by students. Instead of remaining passive observers or self-centred creators focused on what is considered extraordinary and spectacular, students learn to reconstruct the memories of these unheimliche experiences, which are or were unsettling in one way or another.

Drawing upon Jacques Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1991) and Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1993), my pedagogical approach considers all students as equals. In so doing, it emancipates them as re-creators and co-authors of their own research design. Contrary to traditional artistic teaching models based on individual mastery, talent and intuition (Salama, 1995), the Onheimelijke Studio instead addresses affective issues such as those *shared* by a greater collective. In light of societal, political, and ethical challenges, Salama acknowledges that the artistic paradigm built on talent makes students less resilient and more dependent on the views of the educator. Accordingly, the unheimliche as a pedagogic approach takes distance from this artistic paradigm and builds more on the collective.

17 The Status of the Learner

In interior architecture, the unheimliche is not only a theme that can be added artificially by a student or an educator; it could be more than that. Inherently, interior architecture not only implies interiority and enclosure but also emulates *a lived and real experience that supersedes mere interiority*. What is the position of the learner/student who engages in this real learning experience? Who or what governs this process?

Traditionally, there is a strong hierarchy and distinction between teacher and student, or a tension between a supreme conceiver (the teacher) and mute receiver (the student). Through the workings of the unheimliche, this stark distinction between supreme teacher and inferior pupil loses its significance, and is replaced by a continuous *mediation* – a re-looking, re-searching, re-actualizing – between the one who teaches and the one who learns. In a pedagogic context, if all students and teachers are open to a learning experience, *all of them are students*. This implies that all who engage in a pedagogic experience are considered students from the start. If not, the learning process is halted and intimidated by pedantry and personal ambitions. In other words, from being subjected to instructive teaching methods, the status of the student improves and is relatively strengthened: as one learns through mediating various experiences such as the unheimliche, the student becomes *emancipated*.

Moreover, as turbulent shifts in their respective backgrounds become the starting point of a learning experience, metaphorically, students are no longer burdened by their own shadow but rather appreciate its value. This awareness also changes their status. For the students involved, it is an unheimliche realization that one's erratic movements, behaviour and thoughts can also provide a basis for learning. Recognizing one's own dark corner implies a 'curating' or 'taking care of' the intrinsic substance that already dwells within any student. It allows learners to realize that they already potentially own knowledge and skills. Pursuing this logic, the students become appropriators and interpreters of their own shadows.

Interpreting these experiences also points to the potential role of the *performative* amongst students. Moreover, instead of running along a premeditated and established course, could it be that by undergoing a set of unexpected experiences and events, learning is possible? Finally, the question of performative learning is also intrinsically tied to the *evaluation and judgment*. How can students evaluate themselves? Or is an external judgment by peers imperative?

17.1 Role of Empathy

Next to the shifting role of educator, people and the evaluators, there is another aspect that influences the status of the student: the increasing role of empathy. By being *empathic* towards others, to changing circumstances and challenges, one can learn. This presupposes being receptive to changes even if it probably unsettles one's own convictions. In her article 'On the Limits of Empathy'*,* Juliet Koss (Koss, 2006) notes that empathy gradually evolved from a historically elitist approach to comprehending an artwork into a technique that is largely neglected nowadays. However, she notes that empathy is gaining significance again. In recent years new articles on empathy have emerged. In the article 'Construction and Design' in *Philosophical-Epistemological Concepts: Radical Constructivism & Second Order Cybernetics*, the English design researcher Ranulph Glanville (Glanville, 2006) argues that by means of empathy, designers are keen and able to 'switch roles' with other actors even if they don't naturally match with the designer's profile: 'Designers learn to take two roles themselves. They learn to switch between viewer and drawer' (Glanville, 2006:106). The act of switching roles releases the student from sticking to one role and one fixed position in the educational process. As creative practitioners tend to practice in empathizing with other mind-sets, he argues that they are especially capable of handling all kinds of insecurities. Throughout the design process, architects empathically switch roles: they can be a drawing artist, speaker, viewer and listener all at once.

In a rapidly changing world in retreat, being receptive and empathic towards unsettling experiences becomes a significant attitude and skill. By virtue of empathy, the student creates possibilities to be more receptive of learning from an educational environment. As empathy gives the student space to open up further, it repositions the student and educator away from the sheltered zone they are assumed to be in and remain. Moreover, empathy seems to be a ground condition to trigger to the workings of the unheimliche. Intentionally infiltrating the mind-set of someone else *exemplifies one's capacity to engage with another person*. Thus, through the act of empathy one becomes someone 'else'. As the unheimliche nomadically wanders in an ever-changing constellation of opportunities, an educational approach that incorporates the unheimliche cannot be static – hence the increasing significance of empathy.

Before looking at the status of education, it is important to point out that the students who participated in the Explicit Framework and Onheimelijke Studios are graduate students born between roughly 1985 and 1990. As members of Generation Y – the so-called 'Millennials' – they are the first to be brought up with Internet and the access to information and the communication it affords. It has been argued that their worldview is considerably different from the preceding Generation X as 'gifted' with a more optimistic approach.

18 The Status of the Education

My teaching practice fits within the discourse of *weak thoughts* as brought up by Gianni Vattimo in his book *End of Modernity* (Vattimo, 1988). Introducing the unheimliche in design education implies conducting a 'flexible conversation between minds, events and texts' (Vattimo, 1988b:XLIV) whereby a range of weak thoughts comes into play within design. Despite involving contradictory voices, the unheimliche ultimately allows a kind of learning through conducting such a complex conversation.

18.1 Vocation and Conversation

A personal confession: being an educator is foremost a vocation that I dread. I regard my educational practice as driven by a personal and internal voice that urges me to follow Emerson's admonition to 'do that what you are afraid to do'. Regardless of my own anticipated dread of speaking in front of large groups of people, it seems that I have to be in a position to educate in order to bring out the most or best in people, myself included. Instead of deeming education a form of work or routine, I regard it as an inner conviction, a moral duty. However, this vocation is nourished not only by dread, but also by a feeling of gratitude. I am indebted to a number of predecessors whose teaching has brought out the best in others. For me, educating is an existential and liminal activity that 'magically' pushes the limits of both student and educator. Therefore, educating and learning share the same aspirations: they are intrinsically linked to each other. Separating educating from learning potentially derails into a strong dichotomy between strong educators and weak students. It also implies the false assumption that only students are prone to learn, and educators are not.

18.2 Fundamental Critiques

Perhaps less relevant for the outsider, my practice of educating is not only guided by these intimate and private motivations such as gratitude and dread, but essentially formulates five critiques: excessive focus on the heimliche; critique on the artistic paradigm of teaching; oppressive teaching style; imbalance between design elite and the weaker rest; excessive focus on technical issues.

First, doesn't architectural design education focus too one-sidedly on the heimliche – on the hospitable, comfortable and well-being? Doesn't it insist too much on treasuring and hence, reaffirming pleasant affinities that the student already shares with the world and others? In my work as an educator of potential future interior architects, I have come to realize that students in their respective designs often assume an implicit and heimliche need for reassurance and harmony. However, in focusing upon well-being, a design pro-

posal – often unintentionally – tries to compensate for feelings of insecurity, which then potentially subverts the design in a negative way. In so doing, the design proposal turns into an apologetic act. Strangely, it seems that students are convinced that an architectural interior should automatically respond to a need for belonging and harmony. Although it is perfectly legitimate for the interior architect to create a sense of protection, comfort and cosiness through a design, an interior architectural design has to perform on a wider range In my view, designing revolves round two contradictory sides of the same coin. Apart from wellbeing, the design is also intended to banish anguish. Precisely, by creating a reassuring sense of cosiness, a design wards off danger. At least, this act of exorcizing should call into question the emphasis on wellbeing in architectural teaching. Moreover, it is very difficult to define what comfort and cosiness precisely mean. Thus the following observation: both student and educator often legitimize the making of a design through the notion of *comfort*. As a response, I wonder what the role of *absence of comfort or light* can be? What is the potential role of the uncomfortable, the problematic, the undesired and the unpreferred, or in brief the unheimliche in interior design?

A second critique: my pedagogic approach to the unheimliche appraises but is also critical towards conventional paradigms of design education. Whereas there is still a strong tendency amongst design educators to regard the design process in terms of a largely intuitive experience as governed by individual talent and intuition, another approach is needed. Although accentuating intuition is a valuable tradition, I have strong reservations about the dominance of this artistic paradigm applied in teaching. The pedagogue Ashraf Salama also notes in his book *New Trends in Architectural Education: Designing the Design Studio* (Salama, 1995) that the 'artistic paradigm' has certain drawbacks: 'Students […] should believe in the power of design educators, assuming that teachers know how to design, and how to respond to particular problems, based on their experience' (Salama, 1995:71). The traditional educational focus of many design schools is to conceive and deliver excellent individual designers with strong design skills. In so doing, teaching design is reduced to rearing masters of artistic expression and formal manipulations. Moreover, this kind of education depends too much on the authority and set of beliefs of the educator. It creates an imbalance between teacher and pupil. Another drawback is that the artistic paradigm adheres to teaching techniques that don't necessarily coincide with the growing complexities of societal demands: 'Variables such as political, social and ethical aspects are typically ignored, as the conventional studio considers those aspects as avoidable because many educators in architecture believe that they have nothing to do with design' (Salama, 1995:71). Moreover, the reality of many architectural practices goes beyond the intuitive and conventional approach of design education. Architectural offices largely depend on collaborative processes such as cooperation and peer reading. As a result, Salama suggest that design teaching (should) combine this artistic and intuitive approach with other pedagogical approaches. Although individual self-expression is important, it should not monopolise architectural design teaching and should be supplemented by other concerns (social, ethical, political, psychological) as well.

A third point of critique is that my educational practice critically evaluates conventional teaching styles, if they are built on a inequality between student and educator that is unproductive and oppressive. Two authors have been influential in this respect: the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1993/1970) and the philosopher, Jacques Rancière in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons of Intellectual Emancipation* (Rancière, 1991). Freire proposes a new relationship between student, teacher and society. Set against the background of the 1968 revolution, the military dictatorship in Brazil and its colonial history, the book reads as a critique of a type of pedagogy that is dominated by oppressive masters who exploit education to maintain their own status in society. For Freire, pedagogy is a significant vehicle for students equipped to emancipate themselves from a society that is perceived as unjust and undemocratic. By unravelling the underlying master-slave relationship between the teacher and student, pedagogy should be devoted to liberating the oppressed (students) from the oppressors (teachers, society). According to Freire, the 'banking' concept is to be held accountable: 'Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor' (Freire, 1993/1970:72). This 'banking' does not question but rather sustains the colonial mechanisms of the oppressor ('Motherland' Portugal). In general, Freire pleads for an education that transmits values such as equality and exchange between student, teacher and society.

Another historical and radical educational experiment by the French professor Jacotot is the starting point for Rancière's book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. Jacotot taught at the Catholic University of Louvain in the nineteenth century. Despite no prior knowledge of the principles of French grammar, his pupils, who were Dutch speakers inexperienced with French, soon managed to write and understand French texts. This learning without explicating fascinated Rancière and led him to introduce the notion of the 'ignorant schoolmaster'. This pedagogic concept of *deliberate ignorance* presents a conviction whereby pupils attain mastery without being explained what to do. More so, he asserts that if a 'superior' educator explains to the 'inferior' pupils, it actually slows down the intellectual emancipation of the student. Instead of depending on a dominant and instructive educator, students should reach conclusions independently. Moreover, according to Rancière, the ignorant master does not propagate equality as a goal to be reached, but rather the idea of equality between student and educator as *a point of departure*: 'Equality was not an end to attain, but a point of departure, a supposition to maintain in every circumstance' (Rancière, 1991:138). In so doing, the ignorant schoolmaster avoids the brutalization that comes with the authoritarian methods of instruction that operate through all sorts of modern learning systems. Thus, both Rancière and Freire propose an anti-authoritarian approach to pedagogy that resists conventional teaching based on the authority of one educator.

A fourth point of critique is that some conventional approaches in design teaching may lead to a problematic and recurring imbalance between a small elite of 'strong' students and a majority of 'weak' students. A small elite of designers emerges who then become superior and overconfident in their proper design skills, which does not necessarily transform them into strong learners. Due to achieving premature success, strong aspiring designers are often unskilled at dealing with failures in the course of their later life and career. Ironically weakened by their own success, this small design elite potentially and critically lacks resilience. In contrast, the 'weaker' design apprentices are deemed to be largely residual and redundant: they have not succeeded in being excellent designers. In the course of their educational cycle, they usually had to cope with additional problems such as low grades. However, paradoxically, at the end of the educational cycle and when enrolling in a professional practice, this weaker group often turns out to be stronger in coping with setbacks. If an artistic pedagogical model – or any other model – focuses on rearing excellent designing individuals, the existing imbalance between this strong elite and the large group of remainders is only strengthened, thus negatively influencing the learning outcomes of the majority.

Finally, by exclusively referring to measurable aspects in interior architecture, educators in interior architecture exclude other peripheral issues, such as inner emotions, amongst students. As a substitute for not addressing these emotions, the educator almost compulsively fixates on the reverse or compensates by referring to universal user needs. By merely implementing these user needs and adopting minimal standards, an uncritical acceptance of functionality is *legitimized*. By the same token, if the design apprentice applies a set of minimal ergonomic rules, such as the ones propagated by the Dwelling for Minimal Existence, for instance, the educator can then reward the pupil for sufficiently addressing fundamental user needs of ergonomics. However, stressing ergonomics over emotions implies a perverted logic. By implicitly pre-setting these invisible standards of comfort, they become institutionalized and consequently become a standard for any future designer of living and working spaces. In this way, in contrast to what the unheimliche promotes, in bypassing inner emotions, fundamental needs are not addressed and are replaced with largely imaginary user needs that sustain a prescriptive and affirmative design approach. This process of inducing the heimliche, or the reassuring and knowable, in my view potentially annihilates learning.

18.3 Fundamental Aims

In my view, and following Rancière, pedagogy should imply a dialogue between students and educators as equal peers whereby mutual understanding and awareness should prevail. In my view, the fragile faculties of the interior resist an all-too-instructive approach to teaching. Consequently, the unheimliche approach in education should not rely on the dominant voice of a 'design guru' but rather on a careful reading of and listening to the pre-existent, such as one's unheimliche experiences and memories. By safeguarding the

fragility of the interior, teaching design is more than a formal mastery, but rather a complex process of investigating, reasoning and testing. In other words, if designing furthers knowledge (see Chapter 4), design education does too.

This leads me to the formulation of three fundamental aims. In considering all participants as equal students from the start, the unheimliche approach in education intends to 'liberate' the student from the hegemonic educator. The educational approach in the Onheimlijke Studio starts from a *fundamental equality* between student and educator. However, as the weaknesses and vulnerabilities from all concerned are exposed, it paradoxically strengthens them in the long run as well. But how is this possible? Precisely by exploring their own inner emotions – unheimliche emotions, for that matter – a degree of weakness is released amongst all students concerned, but in sharing them all students are equal. Whereas personal recollections and experiences are not always pleasant and rather 'unpreferred', and for this reason repressed or 'redundant', they are the focus of the unheimliche approach in education. Not only the educators, but all of learners have aspirations, experiences and knowledge that prevail in the educational cycle. In so doing, the students become emancipated.

Second, instead of acquiring knowledge, the unheimliche approach accentuates *the learner's experience* within the interior and beyond. Emanating from interiors and their design, previous personal experiences and memories of both students and educators rather *precede* the knowledge and skills. This enriched repository of both student and educator then furnishes an interior design and its conception. Moreover, the educational approach of the unheimliche allows a reciprocity and flux of thoughts, ideas and aspirations between educator and student. Although introducing the unheimliche is just one of the many avenues, the unheimliche does provoke a more relaxed attitude towards initial convictions. Precisely by exploring the affect, the unheimliche allows the student and the educator to move away from their respective positions. In short, by introducing the *affect* in education and learning, the unheimliche can eventually come forward. Instead of suppressing emotions in design, the unheimliche rather stimulates their growth. Paradoxically, this affective approach of the unheimliche pleases but also strategically *displeases* the student: it can be a way to achieve a balance between weak and strong, too-objective and too-subjective, comfort and discomfort, learning and educating.

Third, concerning evaluation I favour the approach of *an external jury*. Traditionally, the design is evaluated by the educator at the end of the design process. However, this procedure give educators incredible powers: they alone then both drives and evaluates the educational cycle. This double task – judging and teaching – potentially jeopordizes the equality between student and educator. The educator should not simultaneously judge and direct the pedagogic process. As all students and educators are equal peers in the educational cycle, I invite an external jury with members from other institutions at the end of the educational cycle. All unheimliche experiences can evoke new perspectives, and by treating those experiences equally regardless of whose they are, all stakeholders involved get more out of the educational process.

19 The Propensity of the Unheimliche to Learning and Educating

19.1 Etymologic Propensity

In this section, I focus on the current and in my view unproductive split between educating and learning. Etymologically, pedagogy comes from Greek word *paidagogos*, which means 'the slave who escorts boys to school'. Later, the same slave became a 'teacher'.[1] Today, the verb *to educate* entails the organization of pedagogical activities. Consequently, educating as pedagogy is today largely regarded as a discipline – in other words, a domain for specialists that draws knowledge and skills from pedagogic activities. In this way, a more natural learning experience free from scientific aspirations seems to be excluded from pedagogy as a discipline.

As opposed to this split between *educating* through the pedagogic discipline and the everyday activity of *learning*, there is a connection that can be made: learning and educating share a common ground through the unheimliche. Etymologically, the Old High German adverb *unheimliche* refers to the category of what is unusual and unfamiliar, as an antonym of *heimliche*, or the familiar. The term *unheimliche* implies exploring what was previously considered unfamiliar. The verb *to learn* comes from the Dutch word *leren*, which literally means *to make known*. In parallel, the verb *to educate* comes from the Latin *educere*, meaning to *bring out*. This 'bringing out' implies exposing someone and bringing into the open. In short, the three verbs of (1) *educating, (2) learning,* and (3) *provoking the unheimliche* share a common ground: all three actively intend to expose something either familiar or unfamiliar.

Educating

Interestingly, the verb *to educat*e (1) branches out in two courses: *educating as bringing out* and *educating as instructing. Educating as bringing out* comes close to what interior architecture and research also do. Like interior architecture, educating seeks to bring something out to the open. In other words, education grants the act of familiarizing. In becoming familiar with the world, it also allows acquaintance and knowledge. This process of bringing out demonstrates that education is a fundamentally constructive endeavour. For this reason, the educator should be skilled at bringing out. This 'outward-bound' educator does not demonstrate, but merely hands over a compass to the benefit of students in order to guide them out of the sheltered towards the open, or vice versa. This open form of educating allows the making of an emotional voyage. Away from an enclosed interior,

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1 Referenced from the online etymology dictionary http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=pedagogue

the educator exposes the student to a public realm where they can discuss, negotiate and endure challenging experiences. Interestingly, the complex exchanges between student, educator and the world open the door to learning. Moreover, this constructive sense of learning stimulates students to act independently. It implies and instigates a mutual understanding for and respect from both student and educator. For both educator and student, education becomes a *reciprocal event*. In other words, education becomes a constructive endeavour.

However, if educating applies to the latter narrow sense, *educating as instructing,* the outward-boundness and openness of *e-ducating* potentially disappears and evaporates. If educating merely amounts to instructing and teaching information, the educator then stops being this privileged guide with whom to share experiences. In this reduced and instructive sense of teaching, the educator does not accompany the student in a shared journey, but rather narrows it down to mere activity of transmitting knowledge. Instead of sharing or exchanging experiences, the instructive educator rather imposes propositional knowledge upon students. As this top-down process is unidirectional and with little consideration for the student, it erodes the potential bond between student and educator. Paulo Freire calls this instructional sense the 'banking' concept of teaching (Freire, 1970), whereby teachers are depositors and pupils depositories. Instead of emancipating the student, *education by instruction* as executed by a superior educator detains students. In reality, Freire unveils banking as a conservative ideology that merely intends to protect the powerful and their respective societal positions. Thus, as opposed to more constructive ways of teaching, instructive teaching puts an unproductive divide between learning and educating. Consequentially, while *education as bringing out* allows students to liberate themselves*, education as instructing* necessarily does not. Ultimately, instructional forms of education might even suppress learning.

Learning

Analogous to educating*,* the second verb, *to learn* (2) also entails a wide and narrow meaning. In its expansive sense, learning encompasses an *active experience* that couples movement, interaction and exchange between student and educator. This wider sense of learning suggests a pro-active student who actively acquires skills by going through certain experiences that ultimately invigorate the student. In contrast, in its narrow interpretation, learning becomes a *passive experience*. It reduces the student to a mute and blind receiver who fatally abides in storing and receiving knowledge coming from the educator. This narrow interpretation of learning signifies a unidirectional and passive accumulating of knowledge. The form of learning emanates from an oppressive educator who onesidedly induces knowledge to a weaker and passive student.

Learning and Educating

Considering *learning* and *educating* in conjunction with and complementary to each other can potentially generate mutual benefits: both student and educator will be reinforced with more self-confidence. In this supplemented form of teaching, student and educator can leave their respective sheltered and fixed positions by negotiating and exploring the changes in the world. Intriguingly, this complementary approach combines learning and educating: it gives precedence to *constructive ways of learning through active experiences*. The combination acknowledges that a student can become an educator and the other way around. By switching their respective positions and roles, educator and student can swap between familiar to unfamiliar. This switch is similar to Freud's assertion on the unheimliche, which flips between the familiar and unfamiliar. In this way, the complementary forms of educating and learning are consistent to the workings of the unheimliche shifts between oddity and normality. In brief, by engaging with the unheimliche, both teacher and trainee exchange their respective roles; through these varying – and often unheimliche – experiences, both learn and educate themselves.

19.2 Bringing out the Implicit

A second clue to the kinship between pedagogy and the unheimliche is that both aspire to reveal the hidden and the implicit. In 'Das Unheimliche', Freud cited the German philosopher Schelling who asserted that '"unheimliche" is the name for everything that ought to have remained [...] secret and hidden but has come to light' (Schelling as cited in Freud, 1919:623). He stated that both the heimliche and its antonym, the unheimliche, intrinsically imply (keeping) a secret or something that is hidden. As the unheimliche tends to shun clarity and chronically hides from view, it wants to stay 'heimlich' or hidden. However, at some point what has remained implicit and inside desires to come out to the open, to be expressed and to become explicit. Thus, for Schelling, the unheimliche does not only hide, but unearths innate and subversive secrets that lie within. In his interpretation, the unheimliche is an active agent that brings out what has been hidden inside. In so doing, the unheimliche actively transforms what is heimliche and implicit into something explicit and learnable.

The Hidden and the Reclusive: Onheimelijk V, 2013

Navigating through interiors suggests a movement to and fro: in between the faculties of space and time, from exteriority to interiority and vice versa. This movement through and in between enables the student to actively unfold inner worlds that contain secrets. Discovering these secrets brings out varying moods for the student: discovery becomes a lived and eventful journey that sometimes pleases and at other moments displeases. Altogether, these experiential shifts within the interior potentially educate the student. Thus, the unheimliche becomes more than just a theme. As already examined in Chapter II, its

workings are imprinted in the 'wandering DNA' of the interior itself. By embarking on an uncertain venture for both student and educator, the unheimliche as an educational approach allows both to go through a dreaded experience that potentially provokes changes for both. As the unheimliche experience *displaces* them from their own established reassurances, it brings student and educator out in the open, as though exposed to the elements and all ensuing uncertainties. This continuous movement drives the educational cycle. It moves students and educators back and forth between interiority and exteriority, between implicit and explicit, between security and obscurity. In conclusion, if educating as learning becomes an open invitation for both educator and student to step out of their implicit comfort zones, they are faced with the revelatory unheimliche workings.

The fifth Research by Design Studio, *Onheimelijk V: The Hidden and Reclusive* (Buysse et al., 2013) aimed at investigating the power of what ought to have remained hidden (such as secrets). As it is apparently a heavy burden to keep a secret to oneself, individual holders of a secret often have a need to share it with somebody else. Sharing it makes carrying the load of a secret bearable. Thus, by sharing and *co-possessing* such a secret, the holders become complicit and to a certain extent furtive holders of a secret. A shared avoidance of public outcry and scandal brings these bearers of the secret together into a clandestine partnership: their common secret seems to cut them off from the outside world. Moreover, stealthy behaviour also makes the outside world nervous. Persons that are purposefully left out of what ought to remain hidden become irresistibly curious and driven by jealousy and even anger. By contrast, those left out from sharing the secret want to bring the implicit and secretive into the open. In short, amongst all concerned, keeping and sharing stealthy secrets generates friction and discord, yet secrets also entice and fascinate. Gradually, by sharing them, an openness and equality amongst teacher and pupils grows.

This paradox between fascination and friction makes the agency of secrets come close to the workings of the unheimliche. Secrets – like the unheimliche – tend to create an uneasiness and even hostility between individuals. Keeping a secret comes between those who have it and those who don't, and brings about pleasure but also hostility – it gives rise to an unheimliche event. We put this into practice in the fifth Onheimelijke Studio, when all participating students disclosed a personal secret and transformed it into a research question. By means of an interior architectural design project, the secret was then further contextualized. Parallel to that, students identified a particular key object that strategically allowed their secret to be unlocked. Students then reconstructed this object at full scale. A double question then arose: Can one design by means of disclosing personal secrets? If so, can one disclose secrets by designing?

Secrets: a Case Study

As keeping secrets apparently makes them explosive and obscure, the unheimliche triggers a range of emotions between the secretive and the clandestine, between hiding and disclosing. Interestingly, this fascinating range of emotions also has implications on interior

architecture and education. By unlocking and bringing secrets in the open, a new field of learning can be unlocked: holders and non-holders become equal learners. It provides them a platform to learn from the agencies of respective secrets and desires in order to explore other previously unknown perspectives. Thus the unheimliche not only conceals but also reveals the hidden dimension of secrets in order to gain understanding from it.

According to the two participants in the Onheimelijke Studio V, the research design duo Selin Geerinckx and Eline Van Steenkiste, 'unheimliche secrets are powerful means that can create a strange sense of cohesion and togetherness amongst people. Personal secrets enmesh a silent and powerful alliance in between objects, people and spaces. Secrets bind the aspirations of people and charge the space and things with an unheimliche load' (Fig.24, p.182). Their research design project takes off from two intimate and shared secrets: *forbidden love* and *abuse of trust*. From that point onwards, they formulated the following research question: How can one live silently in a broken interior? Methodically, by means of a series of stills of films and photographs and models, Geerinckx and Van Steenkiste investigated the potential depths of their shared secret in interior architecture. Their research design proposal transformed the intimacy of an existing living room into a semi-public realm. In strategically adding a newly designed furniture element in the living room, their secret can be shared and partially left disclosed amongst beholders who, in the process, become learners.

In my view, the project by Geerinckx and Van Steenkiste reveals the power of the secretive in interiors, i.e. the power of the interior to contain and reveal hidden secrets. Despite their unsettling power for learners, keeping secrets – and revealing them – strategically ties people and objects together. As the secretive empowers interior architecture, it somehow allows learners to negotiate between the inanimate (such as objects and secrets) and the animate (such as those who hold a secret), between knowing and not knowing, between the implicit and the explicit. Both designers have studied the workings of the unheimliche and its unspoken secrecy, and not just in terms of a theme but as a fully fledged design and research approach to interior architecture.

19.3 Pursuing the (Un)usual

A third element that unites pedagogy and the unheimliche is their shared pursuit of *the (un)usual*. Whereas education traditionally focuses on how students can get a grip on customary norms and the habitual, the unheimliche rather seems to resist them. By strategically deferring itself from what is considered usual and conventional, the unheimliche also paradoxically relies upon them as well. This paradoxical reliance on and resistance to the habitual returns in the notion *fabula rasa* (Karel Deckers et al., 2011), which is in a reference to the more established notion of *tabula rasa* (blank slate). I have entitled the third research design studio Fabula Rasa (blank fable): this Studio articulated a desire to create another narrative in which interior architecture returns as a character of its own.

Fabula Rasa : Onheimelijk III, 2011

The title Fabula Rasa suggests a pursuing of both the usual and the unusual. This pursuit of the (un)usual challenges the learner's ideas of what is usual and what is unusual. As this approach introduces another fictional yet suggestive feature for the student/reader to discover, it parallels the formidable power of a fable. It implies a forceful and continued ability to continue telling stories after the *tabula rasa*. *Fabula rasa* repeats, recites and re-interprets ancient and erased wisdoms. Moreover, this pursuit of the (un)usual also entails the *power of the customary*. Like the unheimliche approach, *fabula rasa* implies re-creating forms of common knowledge that already exist or have existed before, but today have somehow become unacceptable or redundant. In between usual and unusual*, fabula rasa* does not desire to shock students by means of novelty or erasure, but rather to *pursue awkwardness* as a strategy.

Fabula rasa is a contamination of two contradictory notions: *fabula*, the Latin word for story or fable; and *tabula rasa*, the Latin phrase for unwritten tablet or blank slate. As *tabula rasa* stands for the commonly held, 'sanitary' and novel aspirations of moderni- ty, the notion of *tabula rasa* also paraphrases a well-known architectural metaphor that suggests a revolutionary new beginning and a liberation from old values. After scraping off old writings on the tablet (or *tabula*), a fresh and unwritten surface emerges. Conse- quently, a cleaned surface allows a new scripture (and knowledge) to be written on to the tablet. However, *tabula rasa* also holds a negative connotation. It implies that previous knowledge once considered usual and commonplace has now become redundant. In this negative sense, the notion *tabula rasa* embodies a totalitarian and instructive form of edu- cating that aspires to re-educate errant learners into a whole new set of norms and codes. As learners need to be realigned again into the new usual and customary standards of modernist aspirations such as novelty and sanity, learners are considered as errant individ- uals and drifting away from an absolute idea of Truth. In this sense, by virtue of erasure and annihilation*, tabula rasa* also alludes to the emptiness within the student who needs to be initiated, re-educated and sanitized. In a certain way, the tension between *tabula rasa* and *fabula rasa* resurfaces with Trachtenberg's contradictory distinction between the pre-modern aspirations of building-in-time (the acceptance of time and tradition) and the Albertianist and modern aspirations of building-outside-time (the ambition to anni- hilate the workings of time).

The term *fabula rasa* allows more complexities than *tabula rasa* does. Rising beyond the dichotomy of *tabula rasa* that prescribes annihilation versus novelty, *fabula rasa* instead articulates a desire to continue discovering what is kept hidden underneath the surface of the 'clean slate' – in other words, a desire *to learn again from* what has been previously scraped off the tablet. In so doing, it investigates the procedure of the palimpsest that reveals the anterior layers. Thus *fabula rasa* desires to rehabilitate conventional wisdoms that have preceded the erasure of the *tabula rasa*. Instead of replacing them, *fabula rasa*

brings out other unusual yet common wisdoms. 'Reading between the lines', the student can construct a layered and enriched *fabula* – a fable that combines truth and fiction.

Confrontation: a Case Study

Janna Crombez, one of the students and researchers participating at the Fabula Rasa studio (Karel Deckers et al., 2011), explicitly introduces the *encounter with the unusual* as a design strategy. She admits that there's a deliberate paradox in her research question: 'How can one shift the historically reduced meaning of a Catholic church – grounded in a context of western values such as harmony and reflection – into a place for reflection and meeting for people from different religious backgrounds (such as Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox) in a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood?' (Fig.25, p.183) Janna Crombez's research design explores the possibility whether or not a nineteenth-century Neo-Gothic church located in a lively and peripheral neighbourhood north of Brussels can be transformed into a meeting centre for followers of Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths. Her proposal for a pantheistic place of worship in an existing church building, qualifies the encounter between different world religions as unheimliche. Central to her approach is finding and constructing ways to mediate between the indigenous and the non-indigenous, between the cultural and religious groups in Brussels. Ultimately she asserts that the unheimliche confrontation of religions culminates in a renewed interior design that accommodates three religions under one roof. By combining three religions in one church building, her design for this unusual place of worship proposes an hybrid trait.

Concerning methods, Crombez adopts a specific approach by walking the streets and by observing and confronting without prejudices towards the other. Through confrontation, friction and perceived anguish for the other, her approach of observing and walking ultimately leads to the workings of the unheimliche. In order to identify the hidden (in her opinion heimliche) and repressed values in society (such as authenticity), she notes that the encounter, confrontation and anguish are necessary steps to investigate. She even states that only direct confrontation can lead to a genuine approach. Through manufacturing several architectural models, she establishes a platform for reflection. By reading specific and extensive literature (including works from the Belgian philosopher Bart Verschaffel and the Austrian architect Adolf Loos) she critically investigates notions such as authenticity and cultural identity.

Crombez's research design track both traces and identifies hidden interior arrangements as distilled from Jewish, Christian and Muslim places of worship. She then brings these arrangements out in a deliberate and unheimliche confrontation with one another. She concludes that cultural identities are not given entities, but partially – through the design of specific interiors – become dynamic and malleable. Thus, by superimposing three religious frameworks with respect for their various traditions, rituals and so on, the reused church becomes an experimental platform to construct a customary yet unusual kind of meeting place between religions and people.

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19.4 Opening the Door to the (im)Probable

A fourth element of the propensity of the unheimliche with pedagogy is that both open the door to the (im)probable. By eliciting this mental openness and curiosity for the (im)probable, the unheimliche and pedagogy become allies. One could ask: doesn't education rear students to distinguish the improbable from the probable? Does education allow the student to imagine what is likely and what is unlikely? In this sense, the task of education is to cultivate an openness that enables students to take up (im)probable roles, to go through unsettling experiences, circumstances and memories. In other words, the unheimliche in education allows the student to adjust and react to the (im)probable. There is one main argument to sustain this thesis.

In design education, it is rather improbable to expect that students remain open to their own unsettling memories: learning combined with evading one's own convictions or habits takes courage. Still, by *including* – rather than excluding – *(pre)sentiments and memories* the learner is confronted with elements that are usually repressed or neglected. On the uneasy stretch between the recalling of old demons and the evoking of future yet dreaded experiences, the unheimliche in education seems to thrive. Even if this potentially stirs up anxieties amongst students and educators, the unheimliche in education explores a degree of openness towards the improbable and what is usually inconceivable.

Troubled Waters: Onheimelijk II, 2010

Doesn't conceding to the improbable create a productive kind of anguish? As the unheimliche in education urges students to become inventive in finding ways of dealing with worldly problems, a mild anxiety of the unheimliche ensues. To be precise, by allowing existential anguish, the student becomes more alert in captivating and anticipating for imminent dangers. Onheimelijk II: Troubled Waters (Karel Deckers et al., 2010) started with the following proposal: it virtually set all students' projects in a common and fictitious future, situated in an dystopic and presumably undesirable state of environmental disaster and decay. Instead of 'holding the line', the point of departure for the studio was to strategically embrace unheimliche forces such as rising water. By conceding to the object of anguish (water), unsettlement becomes structurally incorporated into each student's design track.

Oxymoron: a Case Study

Significantly, a project from the first research design studio, Onheimelijk I: The Disquieting Architecture of the Inside (Deckers et al., 2009), Jonas van Vliet's 'Ebb-Tide House' (Fig.26, p.184), became a central reference point for all learners in the second Onheimelijk studio. His research design project inspects how water could be an agent of change in the experiencing and making of interiors. Subject to an unheimliche agency (the ebb and flow of the tide) Jonas Van Vliet proposes an interior that is in many ways improbable.

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His design embodies a crossing of two contradictory ideas: a safe and predictable interior that encounters the currents of salty water. Paradoxically, as seawater infiltrates the interior, an unheimliche discomfort kicks in and invades domestic privacy. The interior arrangements he proposes are not designed, they just follow the natural rhythm of the tide. By allowing water to enter, the interior continually contracts and expands into a number of configurations. Thus, the fluctuating interior becomes something intense and rich, yet at the same time disquieting. The underlying idea of Jonas's research is that by accepting a continuously changing interior, one is able to turn something erratic into a quality. By joining elements that intrinsically do not belong together, his research design provokes surprise, wonder and the improbable.

Allowing the improbable is not a new procedure in architecture and interiors. The Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas uses *oxymoron* as a common technique to provoke contradiction in a building or project. For Koolhaas, the oxymoron allows the student to combine different contradictory terms into a single element and to transform every problem into an opportunity (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995:978). As such, every disadvantage contains its proper contradiction. Interestingly, the technique of oxymoron implies a gradual moving away from initial convictions. It somehow allows the learners possibilities to solve problems that they encounters. Paradoxically, the oxymoron produces a solution for what is considered to be impossible. In the same line of thinking, the unheimliche paradoxically becomes a 'solution' for legitimate domestic and interior architectural concerns.

The Manhattan Transcripts (Tschumi, 1979) by Bernard Tschumi also explores the improbable workings of the oxymoron. By juxtaposing diverse elements such as dissociated elements of time, space and representation into one complex *montage*, he constitutes an unforeseen architectural play of space, event and movement. In the book *Architecture and Authorship*, the essay 'Post-Mortem: Architectural Postmodernism and the Death of the Author' by Carola Ebert (Ebert, 2007) makes reference to Tschumi's use of montage, which Ebert says allows one to 'expose inherent contradictions and ruptures' (Ebert, 2007: 41-42).[2]

The significance of Tschumi lies in his experimental use of *montage,* whereby film techniques such as collage are combined with traditional architectural techniques such as the diagram, plan and isometric view. As juxtaposed yet presented on one page, the imagery of *The Manhattan Transcripts* experiments with movement, action, time and architectural representation. For Tschumi, montage gives the student a clue to how space and time

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2 'Most important for Tschumi's use of montage, however, is its aspect of resistance and subversion, in that montage, by isolating chosen fragments and arranging them to form a new single image, often is used to force the existing to produce something new and to expose inherent contradictions and ruptures.' (Ebert, 2007:41-42)

potentially could be combined and transcribed into a book. In short, oxymoron and montage are techniques for eliciting the improbable workings that establish 'new' meaning in architecture.

20 Pedagogy and Research

Through etymology and various case studies from the Onheimelijke Studio, I have examined and clarified the propensity between the unheimliche and pedagogy. Now I will look into the common ground between pedagogy and research. The genesis of the Explicit Studio framework and my Onheimelijk Studios evokes this common ground. The Onheimelijke Studios operate within a larger logic entitled Explicit Studios, which is a framework for studios organized at the end of the bachelor's programme in Interior Architecture at the Sint Lucas School of Architecture. The research design studio Onheimelijk (2008-13) (Fig.27, p.185) predates the larger Explicit Studios framework (2010-present).

20.1 Towards a Larger Research Network

In terms of pedagogic scope, an Explicit Studio does not pre-set a division between students and an educator, but rather considers all students and researchers as equals. It intends to provide an inclusive tutorial environment for all students concerned in which they can acquire and apply knowledge and skills simultaneously.

Concerning aims, Explicit's main intention is to critically clarify what usually remains under the radar in architectural design teaching. Through their research, students learn to transform what is implicit into something explicit, and in so doing it also allows several colleagues to conduct research. Whereas the term *implicit* implies unsayable or secretive connotations, the tacit or inherent, *explicit* implies a critical quality, or something that become observable and clearer. Thus, implicitness is converted into something explicit. Arguably, as the Explicit Studio is also responsive to societal needs, this conversion of the implicit into the explicit becomes a sustainable activity, probably more than an artistic teaching model is. In the previous chapter, I cited Ashraf Salama (Salama, 1995), who has already argued that this artistic paradigm builds on subjective values such as talent and intuition. Although valuable as an approach, this more conventional educational technique deliberately keeps certain issues implicit. By excluding students from societal, political, and ethical issues and also by over-relying on artistic self-expression, the artistic paradigm – meant here in the sense that Salama has described it – runs the risk of making and keeping students dependent on the views of the educator. In contrast, the Explicit Studios rather move away from exclusive approaches to foster a more inclusive tutorial environment.

The Explicit Studios converged out of certain currents and aspirations that surfaced within the Academic Master's Degree Programme in Interior Architecture at Sint Lucas. In short, these currents and aspirations are twofold: they are about ways of seeking, shaping and articulating a profile for the student –i.e. the profile of learning how to conduct re-

search and design. This parallels a larger process of academization today that is running through the educational system in Europe (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson, 2012). At a design school such as Sint Lucas, research was always considered to be implicitly present in all designing activities such as making an analysis prior to a design. The 'Systematic Design approach' described by Christopher Jones (Jones, 1970), to which I will return later, articulates the standard procedure of including an analysis and synthesis into a design proposal. However, research was surprisingly never explicitly present nor precisely articulated in this systematic approach. In short, by shaping and identifying more accurate and more informed approaches and methods, the Explicit Studio also articulates the role of academic research in interior architecture.

The position of the Onheimelijk Studio as part of the Explicit Studio at the end of the bachelor's curriculum is therefore not random. This position at the end of the undergraduate phase makes the Explicit Studio into a threshold: a culmination of the bachelor's programme on the one hand and a precursor to the one-year master's programme on the other. From merely training and passive learning, this liminal space implies students can make a profile of themselves situated within the discipline of interior architecture. The studio indicates both a wish and a growing manifestation of what it can mean to be an interior architect in the world. As a result, Explicit does not present students with a clearly circumscribed program or brief that they have to execute. It rather issues an invitation to work towards interior architecture as a discipline. Explicit precisely creates the framework to do this. As organized by diverse researcher-educators at the Sint Lucas School of Architecture and at the close of the bachelor's programme, Explicit comprises a collection of several research by design studios. The motivation and research aspirations of the department's faculty are reflected in themes such as The Unheimliche by Karel Deckers, Rituals by Geert Peymen, Media Cult by Dominique Pieters, Sacred Spaces by Tom Callebaut, and Complicating Machines by Jo Liekens. This collection of studios forms the basis for a framework and collaboration among equals – researchers, educators and students.

As an explicit kind of research had been missing up to the moment of its genesis, Explicit intends to articulate and advance academic research by design in the respective design studios at Sint Lucas. Accordingly, the participating students aim at clarifying the potential role of research by design in their discipline, in their practice, and in the world as a whole. Thus, Explicit embodies a logical step into combining research and education. Within this platform entitled Explicit, all students – and educators – share their insights, approaches, theories and practices. This happens through the submersion of the educators in the existing and evolving structures of academic research-by-design and their involvement in academic research, such as the Research Training Sessions organized at Sint Lucas ("RTS Website" 2012). Furthermore, by hosting and sharing a multitude of international collaborations that are intrinsically linked to research education, the Explicit Studio can become part and facilitator of a learning community.

Foremost, the scope of the Explicit Studios as a framework is to create a set of criteria

and conditions in which learning can be possible. In this framework, diverse and heterogeneous approaches to research-by-design can emerge. Developing them fosters a creative interplay between educator and student, both of whom are considered to be both researchers and students, and between the individual and the collective, the process and the result, the method and the medium, the objectives and the contingencies determining that framework. Explicit is about framing – and simultaneously questioning the framework.

Marking the start of the Explicit Studio in 2010, two research projects were joined together: Johan Liekens's Complicating Machines and Karel Deckers's Re-Creative Workings of the Unheimliche in Interior Architecture. In close collaboration with the Architecture Department at Chalmers University of Technology, both research projects are conducted as PhD projects as well.

20.2 Pedagogical Model at the Unheimliche Studio

In order to accommodate the demands of a knowledge-based design track, I developed a specific pedagogical model. Rather than creating an all-encompassing model, by conducting pedagogic experiments I have instead tailored and adjusted this pedagogic model gradually. Thus it has been changed, redirected and adjusted through the years. The model aligns with the aforementioned paradigm of *weak thoughts* by Gianni Vattimo with four main characteristics. The first three were present from the first edition onwards. First, less than being instructive, the model proposes a more constructive questioning method into the unheimliche. In particular, the model suggests a critical approach towards design. Second, as the approach is oriented towards the collective, it envisions an inclusive educational approach with a social agenda. Third, instead of focusing on an artistic paradigm built on intuition and individual talent, it investigates the human experience by exploring the (un)familiar and taking distance from personal belongings. From the fourth edition onwards a new element comes up: from a methodical perspective the model relies upon an affect, i.e. the remembrance of unsettling experiences. It is not a universal pedagogical model but it has been gradually adapted and specifically tailored to the workings of the unheimliche.

Empowering through Questioning

 Instead of affirming a final product, the Onheimelijk Studio rather approaches the design of interior architecture as a pedagogic learning process. What matters is the eventful journey that the student undertakes, not so much arriving at a fixed arrival point. By unlocking an authentic and critical attitude, participating students undertake this uncertain journey. Instead of detecting and 'proving' the existence of unheimliche phenomena, the unheimliche approach pushes students into questioning things and themselves. Akin to critical design, it also explores designing as a way to criticize societal, ethical and politi-

cal issues. Critical design, on the other hand, considers designed artefacts as an embodied critique of existing values in society[3]. The studio investigates how artefacts can be a way to deviate from – and hence question – the norm. As mentioned earlier, the studio takes a critical position towards existing practices of teaching, which in my opinion (over)emphasizes individual design skills such as the pedagogic technique of 'banking'. Not quite unexpectedly, this deviance unsettles existing practices and ideas. In conclusion, by being disposed to welcome problems, the unheimliche promotes a particular critical attitude. Criticality may then lead to an informed self-awareness and self-reliance amongst students: 'Who am I and what place have I in the world?'

Students ask themselves two central research questions: 'What?' and 'How?' What is the experience that triggers the unheimliche in interiors? Another perspective addresses the *how* question, or the agency of the unheimliche itself: How does the unheimliche operate? In other words, what does the unheimliche do and how can the student comprehend it? From these two questions and by exploring a number of avenues – such as the alienating workings of technology, the unconsciousness, spatial pathologies, and the power of dystopia – specific research themes could be established. Thus, by cross examining these avenues and making them into themes, the studio could actually take off. In terms of content, from the first edition onwards, students did not create architectural novelties, but rather *strategically reused* existing realities. In other words, through the appreciation of something pre-existing, students critically approach architectural design.

Empowering through questioning also implies questioning prevailing design traditions. The challenge presented to students in an Explicit Studio is twofold: to design a studio and to design a research project. In contrast to other more traditional design studios, in an Explicit Studio a lot of emphasis goes into the process of doing research. This means asking questions such as: How can one conduct research? Which methods can be adopted? How can different methods be combined or personalized and made specific? How can the research process be furthered (by design)? In other words, students are invited to map out their own design process. This allows them to learn to become more independent thinkers.

As an educator and student, I purposefully abandoned a paternalistic approach based on instruction and explication to pursue a 'maieutic' strategy whereby all students could question themselves. In my view, instructing and giving fixed answers potentially damages the learning capacities of all students concerned. Instead of conducting a monologue with aspiring interior architects, I encourage them to ask questions about latent fragments of an unsettling memory. In so doing, the unheimliche experience is brought out into the open and 'restored'. By conducting this dialogue between self and the other, the complexity of other voices is added into the educational cycle. In so doing, the studio can transform students into critical thinkers and designers.

3 For further reading on Critical Design read Nel Janssens dissertation (Janssens, 2012),

Empowering through Including

Instead of excluding, the unheimliche approach in education *includes* students, educators, researchers and other stakeholders in the educational cycle. More than an individual and autonomous trajectory, a collective learning constellation is per definition more unstable, and for that matter potentially more unheimliche. Similar to so-called 'participatory design' strategies, the educational approach of the unheimliche instigates a genuine openness and a sense of equality amongst students, educators and researchers. In so doing, a field of possibilities is opened up in which all participating actors can be both co-researchers, co-students and co-educators.

In order to make this inclusive approach operational, I make use of a specific pedagogical model. (Fig. 28, p.186) The diagram shown indicates how the studio attains a certain degree of productivity. As the model combines all students, educators and researchers in parallel together in a timeline, it frames and rearranges a number of sometimes contradictory 'agents'. The evolution of the agents that appear in the diagram reflects the workings of the unheimliche. Spanning a period of thirteen weeks, the model describes the structure and growth of both individual and collective competences achieved in the research design studio.

Interestingly, this parallel development of collective and individual learning track leads to a total and inclusive educational and design approach. Whereas the red arrow explicitly indicates an individual learning trajectory, the green one indicates an inclusive and collective one (Fig. 29, p.187). It can argued that the individual learning track roughly follows an approach like the 'systematic design' approach (Jones, 1970). According to Jones, a systematic design trajectory for an individual designer usually comprises the following five elements: an analysis of the site, formation of a research question, assessing pros and cons of different designs, making an informed choice, and applying different design criteria to the final design in order to synthesise and reinforce it. As conducted by an individual student through a process of individual reflection, this step-by-step approach forms and informs the making of an individual design. After analysing and sorting out the different possibilities, the individual design trajectory is reduced and narrowed down to a singular solution, unlike the collective trajectory, which expands and reiterates.

In contrast, the green arrow implicitly indicates a collective learning track that reflects the parallel growth of implicit and collective competences. The collective trajectory follows the shared task of students, such as organising a public exhibition, organising a study trip or book publication. Through conducting this extracurricular work, the collective track – consisting of small groups of no more than three students – is generated by the force of many. This collective track shows a process very different from the previous one. As time goes by, it seems that the collective formation gradually expands and grows in importance. Perhaps more significant than the individual trajectory, the collective trajectory contains implicit forces as driven by common aspirations, affects and memories.

At the beginning of each studio, students make conscious choices about what to do with their own research and their communal research trajectory. As a way to collect data, they recollect and reflect upon their own unheimliche experiences, which are then shared in a plenary session. By agreement and interest, learning groups then join around common themes. Each of these groups is expected to formulate a common research question. Furthermore, students discuss this research question in front of a larger group. Because they have to perform both individual and collective tasks, students are expected to function under time pressure in a multi-task environment. As these research subgroups are formed, the parallel organization of the research design studio takes on unexpected directions, often with contradictory responsibilities and conflicting interests. In conclusion, at the heart of the research design studio is the combination of these collective and individual efforts (Fig.30, p.188). Associating the individual with the collective reflects a growth of both particular and generic expertise.

However, how does one couple this cooperative design process to the unheimliche? First, as Richard Sennett puts it in his book *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Co-operation*, 'Cooperation always precedes individuation: […] we learn how to be together before we learn how to stand apart' (Sennett, 2012:13). The self is not regarded as an autonomous construct, but it is also strengthened by a sense of 'togetherness'. Whereas an individual stance pretends to be in control and autonomous, togetherness implies allowing an individual to co-exist, or to exert a combined influence. This togetherness is per definition more complex and challenging than standing alone. Togetherness conveys a multiplicity of experiences: it combines one's own experience with that of others. In between the individual and collective approach, a lack of clarity ensues that is potentially unheimliche. Second, by disclosing intimate and perhaps unsettling recollections to a group of students, all students turn out to be potentially vulnerable and 'weak', which makes them subject to painful indiscretions. Yet, paradoxically, as all students expose their vulnerability, they become equal partners. In turn, being in between equal and weak can give rise to an unheimliche feeling.

Empowering through (de)Familiarizing Experiences

By going through a series of familiar and unfamiliar experiences, the pedagogical model allows students to become empowered. As the studio investigates the unheimliche, students learn to acknowledge what's familiar but also what's unfamiliar. Bearing these complexities in mind, the studio acknowledges the Freudian origins of the unheimliche – i.e. the individual consciousness that is held accountable for repressing painful memories. Moreover, unheimliche memories are examined from the following paradoxical and combinatorial perspective*:* pursuing Koselleck's distinction as treated in Chapter IV, the unheimliche comes as a distant *Erfahrung* (Koselleck, 2010/1975) and as an everyday phenomenon that can be experienced directly*,* a lived *Erlebnis* (Koselleck, 2010/1975). By recapturing and recalling a familiar body of experiences culled from the students' personal past and present, the unheimliche approach in education is activated. However,

students not only (re)read and (re)construct their own past experiences, but also directly explore fresh unheimliche experiences. By combining *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, by reconstructing and reliving a set of unheimliche experiences, the studio becomes a laboratory for tracking and shaping past and future experiences.

Not only memories from the past, but also the reality of the studio itself becomes significant. With the openness of a public space, a place that is familiar to everybody, the studio forms an experimental educational space where students, educators and researchers encounter one another and themselves. It does more than merely providing comfort. In fact, this educational space drags the students out of their positions of comfort. It is designed to help the studio participants discover and acknowledge the complexity of the world as it is and to intervene if necessary. Paradoxically, in acknowledging familiarity, the research design studio also strangely upsets – and to a certain extend also rejects – familiar and institutionalized design procedures. Arts researcher Henk Borgdorff notes,

> 'A distinctive characteristic of artistic research is that it articulates both
> our familiarity with the world and our distance from it'

> (Borgdorff, 2010:1).

As a form of artistic research, the unheimliche in education intentionally (de)familiarizes the student in order to learn and enrich one's understanding of what's familiar. As the unheimliche seems to infect the familiar and normal, once exposed, even routine seems to lose its own predictable logic. By grace of the unheimliche, something previously familiar inevitably lapses into an indefinable strangeness and vice versa. Thus the power of (de)familiarizing is linked to the workings of the unheimliche.

As mentioned previously, at the beginning of the twentieth century Russian Constructivists attempted to accommodate the procedure of (de)familiarization into a larger and general design strategy. By invoking oddities within 'normality', they detected – and started appreciating – the inherent strangeness of everyday reality. As a device to enhance perception, this approach of the unfamiliar becomes pivotal for constructivists. In the same background, their constructivist approach coincided with one of Marx's key concepts: his analysis of alienation, to which I come back later. In other publications such as *Architecture and Disjunction* (Tschumi, 1996), Bernard Tschumi also directly engages with (de)familiarization and the unheimliche: 'The danger of such anxiety [due to the dangers of life in the modern metropolis] was an experience of defamiliarization, of Un-zu-hause-sein, of Unheimlichkeit, of the uncanny' (Tschumi, 1996:246). Apart from improving one's perception of reality, Tschumi also regards the unheimliche as a means to deliberately (de)familiarize from known design procedures in architecture. As defamiliarization allows one to learn how to make architectural designs, he introduced it as an educational tool. Moreover, as a way to make innovative designerly excursions, defamiliarization becomes a vital tool for conducting research.

As this strategy of the unfamiliar repositions designers, their design, their aspirations as full actors in a field of unexpectedness and future possibilities, it also affects students. In leaving the heimliche intimacy of the known (the discipline, its procedures, its set of relations), the student becomes unsettled. As mentioned before, students instead recreate something pre-existing, a design that is slightly altered, and for that reason, unusual and unfamiliar. Instead of altering it into something completely novel and unrecognizable, the unheimliche recreation provokes a difference from the original. In conclusion, by expanding one's parameters to the unfamiliar, by dealing with the (un)familiar, the unheimliche empowers students to get a grip on the complex act of designing.

Closely related to defamiliarization is the act of *expropriation*. As students learn to deal with having nothing, it becomes an alternative way that empowers them. By gradually building up design efforts and then purposefully dispossessing them, the student gets acquainted with having no fixed properties and acquiring ownership gradually. The term appropriation, I realize, is a charged one: 'Appropriation is a term […] that reflects novel postmodernist artistic and critical conception of influence, meaning and the changed status of the artist as producer' (Harris, 2006:17). In line with Harris's reflections, expropriation in the Onheimelijke Studio alters the status of the student as well. In the studio, students are not only legitimate owners of their creations but, more significantly, they also learn to disown them.

Concerning appropriation and occupation, in *Spectres of Marx* (Derrida, 1994), Jacques Derrida describes the unheimliche as a 'strange, unnameable and neutral power […] that occupies places belonging finally neither to us nor to it'[4]. As the unheimliche leads to estrangement, Derrida asserts that it can be found nowhere. Are estrangement and alienation, which literally means 'transfer of property', not historically linked to the unheimliche? At the turn of the twentieth century, in *Das Kapital*, Karl Marx held the unheimliche phantom of capitalism accountable for the massive alienating and deskilling proletarians behind the factory lines. Marx's diagnosis on the perverse workings of capitalism foresaw a complicity of both employer and machine. As human labour was no longer necessary and disappeared into mute machines, the invisible forces of the machine had replaced manual labour. Outnumbered by machines, labourers consequentially became estranged from their own labour or at worst lost their jobs. By means of a new utopic ideal, the collective appropriation of production tools by all proletarians, alienation could be resolved and remedied. Marx argued that only by reuniting and re-appropriating production tools would labourers be able to recognize themselves again in their own labour efforts. Thus, in order to (re)appropriate the value of their own products, the Marxist approach started

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4 '*Es spukt*. […] It is […] to welcome, we were saying then, but even while apprehending, with anxiety and the desire to exclude the stranger, to invite the stranger without accepting him or her, domestic hospitality that welcomes without welcoming the stranger, but a stranger who is ready to be found within (*das Heimliche-Unheimliche*), more intimate with one than one is oneself, the absolute proximity of a stranger whose power is singular and anonymous (*Es spukt*), an unnameable and neutral power, that is, undecidable, neither active nor passive, an un-identity that, without doing anything, invisibly occupies places belonging finally neither to us or to it.' (Derrida, 1994:22)

from organizing collectives. Although this approach is slightly outdated, it certainly is not redundant. Literature theorist Anneleen Masschelein notes, 'The infusion of the Marxist tradition of alienation in the concept of the uncanny provides it with a more critical potential' (Masschelein, 2011 :146).

By giving up individual ownership and furthering *co-ownership*, students in the Research by Design Studio emancipate themselves (again). As a group, and in (re)appropriating a part of their productions, they reskill themselves. Ultimately, this (re)appropriation makes students respectively co-owners of their designs. Drawing upon Marx and other revolutionary educational practitioners such as Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Freire, 1993/1970), the production of knowledge and skills is (re)appropriated and organised by students themselves. In so doing, in close cooperation with all parties involved, students liberate themselves from oppressive forms of pedagogy and other external frameworks, and develop other ways of approaching and producing knowledge.

Practically, how does this (ex)propriation happen? It happens through three channels: sharing authority, sharing studio membership and sharing intellectual legacy. At first this happens by declining authoritative claims and by emancipating the students from their former position of being master designers ('I have nothing to declare, except my design') to collective owners of their respective research ('By renouncing exclusive authorship, I now share my design'). By acknowledging the existence and awareness of alienating and unheimliche forces, students accept the need to distance themselves from their freshly achieved ownership. Second, as they become alumni of a transgenerational group of thinkers and workers of the unheimliche, all students become members of an enduring studio collaboration that lasts for years. Their artefacts, as owned by students, testify to an innate desire to create knowledge and skills through a particular form. To this end, all design results are published in a series of five books and public exhibitions at the end of the studio (Fig.31, p.189). Both these exhibitions and books accumulate the students' common efforts, knowledge and aspirations. By publishing these books, they are brought out into the open and, paradoxically, partially disowned. In turn, these publications potentially challenge future students. Third, in re-reading and consulting the books, all students – current and future – can become aware of the studio's legacy of written and designed works. Through them, future and past students in the studio can also orientate themselves in time and space. As ways to provide research continuity into the unheimliche, this enduring framework is specifically set up. In brief, through the pedagogical model, I look for possibilities to (re)create an on-going learning community that lasts more than one academic season.

By virtue of the unfamiliar and its renunciation of fixed ownership, the studio becomes self-propelling. With(out) individual ownership and authorship, it builds on previous experiences and knowledge from other students. It is set up in the continuity of time, outside the personal agenda of the designer: building-in-time (Trachtenberg, 2010). As students both appropriate and expropriate their respective design efforts and products,

one can learn from the unheimliche. (Ex)propriation of their own production means also implies renegotiating the educational terms in which students can learn from the unheimliche. Thus, the unheimliche balances between the proper(ty) and improper, between possession and being possessed, getting closer and distancing oneself from personal ownership.

Empowering through Remembering: Onheimelijk IV, Collective Memory, 2012

The pedagogic model empowers students by means of their own memories. The fourth edition of the Onheimelijke Studio, entitled Collective Memory (Beullens et al., 2012) examined one of the most important human faculties: the student's ability to remember and to forget something. In the studio, apprentices have analysed the following: remembering can be done in several ways. Also the Dutch cultural theorist Douwe Draaisma, in his *Vergeetboek* (Book of Forgetting) (Draaisma, 2010), goes deeper into aspects connected to remembering and forgetting. He argues that forgetting is not a failure but rather one of the faculties of remembering. In this way, forgetting something is not a problem but rather a possibility.

In his 'Das Unheimliche', Sigmund Freud signals the power of the *primitive animism* (Freud, 1919:542) that is somehow encrypted into a collective memory and still shared by all humans. Despite attempts to eradicate it, he fundamentally asserts that each human retains a primitive component within. After these primitive ordeals, students have been *re-educated* in order to wipe off the primitive as if it is some kind of stain. As modernity installed a clear distinction between a hegemonic human rationality and a residual kind of inhumanity, it meant that from that moment on humans could finally act in a rational way. However, Freud argues that whereas modernity supposedly has 'surmounted' the primitive (Freud, 1919:545), fragmentary knowledge of the primitive has remained in place, repressed but not forgotten. As the primitive is being repressed, the unheimliche instantaneously resurfaces. In a reaction to this modern process of overlooking and/or sanitizing, the unheimliche as a primitive force rebounds, compensates and resurges even more violently. As a basic remedy, Freud asserts that modern man should recall his own collective memory, i.e. the primitive roots we have tried to *unlearn.* Instead of hiding these archaic forces under the surface of time and space, Freud suggests that one should accept them as part of everyday reality.

In line with Freud and Draaisma's analyses, the Collective Memory Studio (Beullens et al., 2012) deals with memory and recollection as a primitive force that is unreliable but intriguing. In brief, the Studio investigates the (un)reliability of remembering as a tool in interior architectural design and education. Existing literature such as Draaisma's *Vergeetboek* (Draaisma, 2010) shows that by recollecting a past disquieting event, one tends to believe that the event actually happened as he or she remembers it. Despite being unconnected to reality, one truly believes that the remembrance is authentic and consistent with reality. However, in reconstructing this past event, students suddenly realize that memory

may forsake them. This event demonstrates that other equally plausible versions of the same event may emerge later. This uncontrollable repetition is an unheimliche thought. As the mind seems to have the ability to construct a completely fictional version of a past event, it seems impossible to fully rely upon memory. In other words, recalling events of the past implies learning but also unlearning. As a force that apparently brings forward unreliable bits of the past, the memory attains an intriguing potential for both student and educator. Without memory, there can be no knowledge and no social interaction, only the singular dimension of the here and now. Therefore certain questions become pivotal: How does this collective memory work in interior architecture? And how does the unheimliche relate to this? And more importantly what can one learn from it? Can the making and remembering of interiors be an antidote against oblivion?

Memory: a Case Study

As presented in the Onheimelijke Studio Collective Memory (Beullens et al., 2012) the work of co-researcher and student Els Houttequiet (Fig. 32, p.190) explores an unpleasant memory, a left-over, a fragmentary residue of her own personal past. Culled from childhood recollections of a dusty garage space and an adjacent clean kitchen, she carefully distils the ingredients that compose an unheimliche research design track. While her parents were both working, as a little girl she used to play with her brother in a new kitchen and an obsolete garage. She recollects the stark contrast between kitchen and garage with their distinct atmospheres. As she reconstructed the geometry of the garage and kitchen space, she also unravels and questions the existence of these two juxtaposed worlds. On one hand, in the pristine and modern kitchen equipped with rigorous requirements of hygiene, she finds a world attached to the homely and domesticity. On the other hand, she devises the economic and cold logic of the industrial assembly line of the garage. For her, the garage bore traces of an outdated Henry Ford logic of mass production. She then asks how a child can deal with the unheimliche logic of being confronted with two such contrasting spaces. Through her research design, she implicitly criticizes the societal demands and unrealistic expectations that are usually put on a child. By conforming to ideals such as corporal beauty, ways of working, living and behaving, these ideals create artificial expectations that put unrealistic pressures on her as a child.

Concerning her design, she transforms the remembered place into an embodied experience. By creating a series of uncanny doubles, she portrays a nightmare vision of beheaded babies next to healthy ones. More specifically, her proposal shows a row of decapitated children, working along a conveyer belt, who mechanically construct new bodies. In the garage space, awkward figures arise equipped with heads in the form of bolts and sprockets. As her design 'embodies her own dark dream world', she entitles it to be an 'absurd future vision'.

Concerning the unreliability of the remembrance, one of the more striking examples comes from the artist Mike Kelley. On a reduced scale, his installation *The Educational*

Complex (which Vidler described in detail in his *Warped Space*[5]) can be seen as a personal and probably deliberately inaccurate reconstruction of his personal past as a student spent at a range of American former high schools and universities. Instead of attempting to meticulously and precisely reconstruct all these remembered edifices in terms of geometry and materials, he re-creates another reality out of his (partially repressed) memory of the place. In other words, he points to a learning process that investigates the differences between the remembered and the physical. Implicitly his educational complex also furthers ways of dealing with certain traumas deriving from his former school experiences. Through the making of this installation, he remediates personal and hidden issues of his own past.

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5 'Kelley attempted to recover the memory of buildings in which he had been educated and to map these memories on their existing plans in order to produce complex models.' (Vidler, 2000: 161)

21 A Force Within a Complex Network

This section presents a synthesis of all the issues that recur in the chapter 'The Unheimliche as an Educational Approach'. It presents the unheimliche as a travelling concept in education, design, experience and discourse, which does not simplify but rather adds to the existing complexities in architecture, interior architecture and other disciplines. Thus at this point it becomes significant to situate the unheimliche and its movements in a dynamic and complex matrix of actors. To this end, I propose to use the matrix structure of the network. This allows us to locate the unheimliche's 'position' and 'speed' in this network while referring to other agents such as students, artefacts, events and institutions.

What follows is a list of five agents around which this network has emerged and been structured. As these agents are intrinsically linked and interdependent, the network revolves around and mediates between a series of often contradictory and conflict-ridden considerations. First, out of being an educator, student and researcher comes a series of subject-related issues and aspirations of one student juxtaposed to a multitude of participating students with their respective wishes, memories, experiences. Second, artefacts placed within interiors bring about object-related considerations in relation to the learner. Third, from interior architecture as a discipline arises a series of institutional issues linked to the learner Fourth, specific events further considerations of time in close alliance to the learner's position.

21.1   Subject-Related issues: In between Learner and Learners

At some point in time, solitary Neolithic hunters learned that cooperating with other hunters resulted in a more generous catch. This formation of groups has proven to be an excellent strategy. For instance, by congregating individuals into larger groups (as guilds and design teams do), social skills can gradually develop. In the long run, these skills allow for the growth of material and mental prosperity. Moreover, forming these groups with specific skills creates another added value: the formation of groups defies estrangement, and by fighting it humans can strengthen themselves in facing all sorts of dangers and anxieties. According to the sociologist Georg Simmel, as cited in Richard Sennett's *Together*: *The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* (Sennett, 2012), the question of *sociality* is inherently tied to estrangement as well. Rather than considering sociality and estrangement as a problematic, Simmel only sees advantages. In his view, sociality is even a condition that is relatively new, in which modern man finds 'assurance to deal with difficult hostile situations' such as estrangement. As 'Life with others is bigger, richer', he also asserts that '[Sociality] requires skill' (Sennett, 2012:37-38). However, 'we are losing the skills of cooperation needed to make a complex society work' (Sennett, 2012: 9).

But why should cooperation be significant in the framework of the re-creative workings

of the unheimliche? In my opinion, the acquisition of these skills of sociality in fighting estrangement embodies one of the re-creative working of the unheimliche. As the Onheimelijke Studios create social bonds amongst students, I regard them foremost as a social praxis. (Fig.30) The formation of bonds between students generates a sense of sociality that is needed to surmount moments of anxiety amongst students. By founding this interrelated family of persons with their respective aspirations (such as alumni), objects (such as models, publications), knowledge and skills (coming from defining methods and building models), a sense of togetherness is created. These bonds help students withstand a natural tendency towards estrangement. Consequently, the pedagogical model is designed in such a way as to sustain and support this sense of togetherness to overcome estrangement. To this end, training aspiring interior architects in the virtues of cooperation strengthens their abilities to cope with estrangement.

Although sociality is largely a traditional way to overcome alienation, it is an effective way to deal with potential anguish ensuing from a world in retreat. While I regard sociality as a productive reaction to overcome a sense of anguish, it is significantly interrelated and paradoxically sustained by anguish as well. Altogether, sociality is crucial. Therefore, the unheimliche approach in interior architecture implies developing social skills and learning by sharing.

Because of this emphasis on the formation of the collective, it is necessary to envision a series of social criteria at the start of the Onheimelijke Studio. In general terms, the structure of the research design studio is mirrored by a double organization. Parallel to the individual learning track, collective cells of at most three students operate alongside each other. Inside these collective cells, crucial information from past dreaded experiences is exchanged, shared and discussed in little groups. These collective cells allow one to intercept small and seemingly insignificant (design) elements that are perhaps more difficult for individual students to trace. Moreover, the collective enterprise has another advantage: contrary to the individual student, a collective is more able to handle larger topics and/ or heavier tasks, such as conducting a dialogue, assessing one another, defining a research question, or making a large model. Finally, the formation of research subgroups makes students gradually aware of the necessity to share, explicate and critically evaluate their research design processes and respective methods with one another.

However, alongside these collective endeavours, individual students still manufacture their own design artefacts according to a logic of one-to-one. The frictional but productive workings in between these collective cells and their individual members have (in) formed the making of the diverse editions of the studio. By combining making and thinking, the studio negotiates between collective and individual aspirations in the course of a limited period of time. By virtue of this intense cooperation and shared interests, *learning communities* are assembled around which specific competences can develop. By working with each other in groups, participating students nurture a sense of mutual respect and care for each other and for the studio as a whole. As students realize that partic-

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ipation and community building is pivotal for the development of the studio, important decisions are not taken exclusively, but rather inclusively by all concerned. By conducting intense group discussion prior to any decision, a sense of involvement emerges. Ideally, this creates a community that is open to dialogue and to sharing arguments and information. The horizontal relation between educator and co-researchers brings about a mutual openness towards others. This non-hierarchical approach makes all the participating students behave as responsible actors. Ultimately it allows the studio to become a platform on which a durable exchange of knowledge, skills and aspirations is possible.

21.2 Object-Related Issues: In between Learner and Objects

Gifted by an awkward human zeal, humanity has always engaged with predominantly lifeless objects by building cities, houses and interiors from a conglomerate of materials such as bricks, wood and water. In order to gain strength, man has come to rely on the inanimate such as tools to improve the uncertain conditions of life and climate. Due to this existential desire and defensive reflex, primarily intended to exorcize anguish, humans learnt the skills of creating tools. Despite being contradictory, this alliance of matter and students is also fruitful. Whereas engaging with lifeless objects is a typical human endeavour to ward off danger, this reflex is foremost a learnt one. Architects such as Alvar Aalto, architectural theoreticians such as Norberg-Schulz (Norberg-Schulz, 1971), and philosophers such as Hans Jonas (Jonas, 1992) and Martin Heidegger (Heidegger, 1927) have already largely testified to this existential dimension of designed objects. One can distinguish three modalities by which the unheimliche 'glues' the object to a student: by connotation, by information, and by ownership.

By Connotation

Through the making of a design or by reusing a found object, the unheimliche is allowed to creep into one's personal existence. As a designed object becomes emotionally charged, like the fetish powers of a voodoo doll, an opaque (unheimliche) process *asigns and animates* these objects with certain emotions. Instead of considering designed objects as objective *solutions* for a design problem, objects challenge and question one's existence. They have the potential to embody existential questions of survival. In so doing, they ultimately convey a very specific understanding to the benefit of both student and educator. For instance, the little objects that aspiring architects make (such as drawings, models, sketches, or spreadsheets) eventually foster a genuine yet unsettling understanding of rapidly changing value systems. Whereas at first sight an object may seem useless, it can later turn out to be a precious object that activates a certain remembrance. As students start to engage with apparently trivial matter such as paper, computer mice, cardboard models and so on, these seemingly inert objects can even be transformed into highly charged objects, partially accountable for energizing experiences such as the unheimliche.

By Information

Next to the power of connotation, these objects can take on another dimension as well: objects become vehicles that contain information. At the end of each of these studios, a book was published on a yearly basis, *Onheimelijkheid I* to *Onheimelijkheid V* (Karel; Deckers et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013), to encompass all the students' work (Fig.31). As the published books compile the students' efforts in an appropriate and enduring format, they may be examples of physical remnants of items with the inherent capacity to store and transfer knowledge. Publishing these paper objects meant creating both a repository of knowledge and an archetype for future readers and students. Less than providing a dry summary of end results, the book becomes 'possessed' and forms a living testimonial of the studio as an organic entity. As making such a book is a both collective and individual design endeavour in itself, it becomes a reference (and a challenge) for future participants in the Onheimelijke Research Design Studios in the coming years.

By Ownership

As seen through the lens of the unheimliche, the status of objects in terms of *ownership* is highly uncertain. I am enticed by the example of the common party wall (Fig.33, p.191). This typical building procedure in European cities encrypts the latent (un)certainty between two properties: it is an awkward example of uncertain ownership. As it is incorporated into and shared by two adjacent row houses, this peculiar wall is usually left unseen from the street side. Historically, the procedure of both sharing and dividing a common party wall dated back to medieval times. The party wall is meant to divide and materialize two plots of built land. From a legal point of view, the party wall belongs to both adjacent owners although neither has full authority over it. In terms of structure, both buildings have an interest in keeping the wall intact, since they are divided but also structurally intertwined by it. In other words, the common party wall separates but unites at the same time. As the common wall always remains (even if one the two properties disappears) the wall's materiality and position is residual: the common wall sticks around. Given the relative (un)reliability of this architectural member, the complexity of the party wall is rather paradoxical and invisible. In my view, the latent quality and survival skills of the party wall are unheimliche.

Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language* (Alexander, 1977) does not mention shared walls but does note the psychological significance of 'common land between buildings'[6]. For Alexander, these plots of land should be co-owned. This shared ownership creates the necessary conditions for individuals and collectives to develop another kind of use and appreciation of space. Drawing away from the absolute idea of permanent and individual ownership, he confirms that there is a gradual shift towards a temporal and collective

6 '…the common land between buildings may have a deeper psychological function, which remains important even when people have no relation to their neighbours.' He continues: 'In psychological terms, we believe that a building without common land in front of it is as isolated from society as if it had just a chasm there.' (Alexander, 1977: 338)

ownership. Despite giving rise to an increased ambiguity amongst adjacent properties, the shared ownership of a party wall or the common property also fosters a productive kind of friction between them. The common party wall not only absorbs but paradoxically also sets the criteria for differentiate properties, people and their belonging.

As it designed without a pre-set plan, an 'undesigned' object can also take another and perhaps —at first and final sight— an awkward form. In the fourth Onheimelijke Studio, entitled Collective Memory (Beullens et al., 2012) together with participating students I studied the theme of memory as an (un)reliable design tool. Concerning content, as participants were asked to spatially reconstruct a personal, unsettling memory through an artefact, I qualify the basic design task as Freudian. A purposefully designed yet awkward artefact may shed light on this question (Fig.34, p.192). Methodically, as part of a longer and larger scheme during thirteen weeks, this artefact resulted from a short and parallel collective endeavour by students. As twenty student designers lined up in a non-pre-set chain, the design procedure of the artefact was rather unfamiliar. In random order, each student inserted his or her individual design inside an evolving and collectively designed artefact.

As students transformed at some point from conceivers into receivers, this collective artefact embodied an intriguing turn that students of the studio seem to make at some point: beyond merely passive receivers, they turn out to be active conceivers who have to come to terms with 'receiving what already exists'. Alain Findeli's assertion of 'two folds of the artefact' (Findeli, 2011) is reminiscent of this switch. In receiving a pre-existing design from a preceding colleague, a participating student becomes the 'receiver' of a design. Successively, the same receiving designer then conceives a new design and transfers it to the next one. It briefly becomes their proper belonging, then is immediately disowned in the transfer to the other, making all designers co-owners of this artefact. In other words, the artefact becomes receptive to a rather short-lived ownership in the encounter of twenty strange and often contradictory voices.

But what is the relationship of this artefact with the unheimliche? This design procedure and appropriation in itself may not be unheimliche, but the ensuing result may be. Unlike architects, interior architects often receive a building that is already there in which they conceive their proper interior design. By means of this particular collective design and by incorporating what already exists, student researchers continuously and perhaps schizophrenically 'double' themselves. First they are *receivers* of a building, then they become *conceivers* of the building. Uncannily, this happens after conception and/or vice versa. By virtue of annihilating their receiving position, they commit to an act of creative destruction. Instead of affirming their proper position as designers, each student eventually shifts from an uncritical belonging ('This is my artefact') towards the criticality of the encounter ('The artefact is not my design, since it existed already. Hence, I critically engage with what I receive').

Out of tune, this 'artificial' artefact emerges that (re)creates twenty traces of individual memories. As the artefact turns into a collective and successive design, it silently and randomly assembles all individual endeavours. At the end of the design cycle, this accumulation of design voices brings about a complexity that is unfathomable and unheimliche for both beholder and designer. As it starts to recite twenty voices in a virtually non-existent language, the lifeless object becomes animated with contradicting aspirations. The resulting artefact integrates and aggregates difference, thus becoming a potential source of the unheimliche. I maintain that this collective object – an almost marginal yet uncanny by-product – exhibits an underlying and emergent network of objects, aspirations and contradicting concepts.

21.3 Institutional Issues: In between Learner and Institutions

The historic relation of architecture as a solitary artistic endeavour in opposition to a functional and practical achievement informed by a surrounding and internal institutional pressures has never been easy. Perhaps more often than desired the artistic pretences of architecture have been realized through aligning to the power of institutions. Thus, in this uneasy cohabitation, architecture is paradoxically restrained but also brought to completion by virtue of the powerful. On institutional powers, Jonathan Harris (Harris, 2006) refers to the French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault, who stressed the social ordering and control as exerted by institutions. He continues that institutions such as galleries help to create meanings and values for the artefacts they exhibit. However, interestingly Harris argues that it is less common to acknowledge that other institutions such as art schools and universities also help to produce the senses of identity (and personas) that artists acquire and come to experience as their intrinsic character-type. Thus he notes the following paradox: despite obstinate refusals, anti-institutional movements still largely depend on the images that these institutional bureaucratic organisations have conjured up and vice versa. Finally, Harris points to the paradox that 'Avoiding becoming, or appearing, institutionalised, that is, became, in itself, in time, a new form of institution' (Harris, 2006:165).

(Un)Homeliness of the Learner

Bearing these contradictions in mind, the Onheimelijke Studio aims to (re)negotiate the terms and conditions whereby existing 'self-perpetuating [research] tribes' (Ziman, 2001:31) such as school or design communities can exert control with their procedures, or even install norms. Although these institutions strongly claim societal positions and impose norms, these norms potentially oppress learning. In the face of these institutional claims, the unheimliche 'misbehaves' in a desire to restore what is considered to be institutional back to the students. By renegotiating existing norms – such as questioning the branding of interiors – and exceeding the comfortable limits of architectural institutions, the unheimliche approach attempts to restore to the student what has been lost.

A significant point of reference to understand the tension between educational institutions and the outside world is the Nouvelle Ecole d'Architecture (Fig.35, p.193) led by the influential Flemish architect and teacher Wim Cuyvers. This school illustrates in my view these attempts at restitution and restoration. Based in a simple mountain refuge somewhere isolated in the French Jura, his school proposes a new environment as a way of learning architecture. According to legislative restrictions imposed on alpine huts, this refuge – also his studio – has to be open to people in need. On his own initiative, Cuyvers opens the school for all learners by entitling it a Nouvelle Ecole d'Architecture. As this school defies the traditional institutional logic of a school building, it creates a parallel circuit of learning about issues related to interior architecture and architecture. On his blog Cuyvers states that:

> In this school there are no students, no couples, only individuals. Just some 'persons'. In this school, one doesn't learn a craft or become master. Mastery is not transmitted, not even a love for materials like the craftsman has: there one only makes public space. One is in a public space or permanently in an existential space. One cannot be expert of public space. One becomes exposed and naked to the others, showing one's utmost vulnerability. Hence, the master cannot show love for material issues. What is to be expected, is a simple exposition of the one to the other: vulnerabilities are put on the table; the table which is too heavy to be displaced.[7] (http://montavoix.blogspot.be)

Thus, both by relying upon and questioning the institutional logic of the school, the unheimliche approach in education takes shape. As the word *unheimliche* means to be 'without home', or literally 'un-homely', learning from the unheimliche implies accepting that one is without a home. Consequently, not the physical building itself but rather the moral imperative it conveys amongst students can claim a sense of authority towards students. In the light of the re-creative workings of the unheimliche, students in the Onheimelijke Studio need to be able to learn without having a fixed place to return to, a home.

7'Dans cette école, il n'y a pas de groupes d'étudiants, pas de classes, même pas des couples, il y a des individus. Des « quelques-uns ». Dans cette école, on n'apprend pas un métier, on n'y apprend pas la maîtrise. La maîtrise n'y est pas transmise, même pas l'amour pour le matériel d'un artisan : on y fait de l'espace public. On y est dans l'espace public, dans l'espace existentiel, de façon permanente. On ne peut pas être expert de l'espace public. On s'expose, on se met à nu, on se montre, vulnérable, le plus vulnérable possible. Le maître ne peut pas y démontrer son amour pour le matériel. C'est seulement l'exposition de l'un à l'autre qui est envisagée : les vulnérabilités y sont mises sur la table; la table qui est trop lourde pour être déplacée.'

Intra-extra Muros

During the Onheimelijke Studios, the notion of *extra/intra muros* is systematically intro-duced. As students visit established researchers or artists in their own habitats (such as the studio of photographer Dirk Braeckman, as the Onheimelijk V Studio did (Buysse et al., 2013)) they learn to cope without the school. Leaving the classroom behind, they orga-nize visits and discussions with artists in order to learn from existing research practices. By creating deliberate distance from the school environment, students also become de-tached from particular emotions or habits. Students at the Onheimelijke Studio also trav-el to exhibitions to learn more from artistic artefacts. Moreover, meetings are frequently held throughout the city at significant locations such as museums, train stations or bars. Only after having spent sufficient time on site and in the surrounding urban context, students install research questions and intervene with their design research.

Not only the physical school building but the student's minds need to be partially evacu-ated. Instead of (re)producing a list of compulsory documents, such as plans and sections, the student is challenged to create his or her own unique research track. In so doing, the student's research by design becomes a very specific path in which to carry out experi-ments in search of other bits of knowledge. These bits of knowledge, not only consolidate the discipline of interior architecture, they can even be used in a more challenging man-ner – to value and question the different ways students see the world. In the Onheime-lijke Studio, students are challenged to explain what these other values could be and, even more importantly, to determine how these other values can be attained and what the specific role of the interior architect can be in this process of renewal. By allowing students to experience the unheimliche, they can develop a more critical attitude towards global and local institutional powers.

Of course, given that it is quite impossible to continuously escape from institutions such as schools, one has to negotiate between institutional and non-institutional. Ultimately this implies returning to the school to learn from this institutional reality as well. More-over, instead of overtly relying on openness, the workings of the studios also require inter-nal consolidation such as the creation of internal norms. As the formation of the norms and rules of the studio is continuously being balanced, checked and evaluated by all the students throughout the course of the studio, the rules or norms implemented previously are adapted to any new given situation. This continuous adaptation is also an element of controlled improvisation. Ultimately, this formation of norms creates an *ethical space* that regulates and ensures equality and social justice amongst the research community of learners.

21.4 Considerations of Time: In between Learner and Events

In a seemingly unplanned way, the unheimliche in education also 'happens'. This happening renegotiates the terms in which students experience time in an unusual way. In so doing, students explore the *performative* range within interiors and design. As Tschumi already showed with his notion of *Event Space* (Tschumi, 1996:139), certain events have their own spatial qualities. Events produce a distinct and awkward kind of space without fixed spatial boundaries. Unbounded, these event spaces are experienced as temporal, volatile and malleable to internal and external changes. Unhindered by the materiality of walls, these temporal events produce a space of their own with variable speeds, directions and movements. Interestingly, like these event spaces, the unheimliche also seems to erupt in all conceivable directions. As it is an event in itself and a step in the dark, the Onheimelijke Studio also happens. While all students concerned are unfamiliar with the subject of the unheimliche and with each other, the studio in itself is really an encounter with the strange workings of the unheimliche. As it furnishes an unprejudiced field of thought and action for all students, this starting from scratch emulates a productive tension into the research design studio as an event. Because Onheimelijk I conceived and nurtured the four following studios (Onheimelijk II, III, IV and V), I consider it to be the maternal edition and event. Thus, Onheimelijk I came to be a sort of pilot episode that eventually informed future episodes.

In the Onheimelijke Studios, other 'event spaces' pop up which then gradually disappear again. Specific events such as oral presentations instil a particular pace of the studio. Both in groups and on an individual basis students gave an oral presentation every week. Given that these presentations compile the respective design efforts and research results of the preceding week, they become moments of evaluation whereby the research process temporarily crystallizes. While students are evaluated on an ongoing basis throughout the course of the Onheimelijke Studio, this evaluation moment in itself is separated into two blocks. Whereas in the morning, the students are individually reviewed and assessed, in the afternoon the respective research groups present the last week's progress. However, what is the real connection between these presentations and the subject of the unheimliche? Intriguingly, the oral presentation potentially emulates a critique between the student who presents orally and the educator who listens. As the exchange of the roles between student and educator occurs unannounced, it seems to 'happen' unpleasantly. This unsettling experience also cannot be pinned down: in a moment of anxiety and tension, it suddenly emerges and shows up temporarily. Moreover, during an oral presentation, everybody – not only a critical audience – immediately perceives the anxiety of the presenter. The uneasy body language, the intonation of the voice, accidental repetitions or omission of words all betray and magnify to a certain extent any trace of doubt the student might have. Ultimately, the presentation can turn out to be either indifferent or a pivotal moment to learn from. Thus, the oral and plenary presentation can provoke the unheimliche as either an edifying force or a destructive power.

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Another significant 'event space' takes place during the Onheimelijke Studio. At the end of the fourteen weeks, students curate their respective individual and group work during a public showing (Fig.36-37, p.194-195). The exhibition introduces the following question: how does an external audience experience the unheimliche? Arguably, this desire for exteriority stimulates the growth of an awareness of the outside world with a set of values different than the ones one encounters in a classroom or any other classical educational environment. This curatorial event exposes a temporary space of people and their objects located in a pre-existing space (an abandoned warehouse in Onheimelijke Studio I). Chosen by consensual agreement of the students themselves, from Onheimelijke Studios I to V, all exhibitions have taken place in derelict buildings in the cities of Ghent and Brussels (an abandoned warehouse in Ghent for Onheimelijk I (Fig.36, p.194), a former veterinary school in Brussels for Onheimelijk III, a former mill in Ghent for Onheimelijk IV, and an old railway station for Onheimelijk V (Fig.37, p.195). By engaging with and potentially altering undesired spaces, these kinds of locations are consistent with the idea of the unheimliche. As it brings people and their work out into the open, the event in itself exhibits more than merely objects. In so doing, the exhibition furnishes an event-based kind of interior devoid of fixed boundaries, with no sense of permanency, almost deliberately improvised and unplanned. Instead of conventionally considering it as an *abject* experience, exhibiting in places of decay presents decay as a quality and an opportunity to learn from the passing of time.

Given that the Onheimelijk research design studio seems to be invisibly handled and altered by these series of reoccurring yet improvised events (oral presentations, exhibitions, happenings), the public display of final results gives productive tensions as well. As students communicate and share their respective personal design journeys to a larger audience, these events propose a short time span in which all the tensions, doubts and aspirations come together.

21.5 In between Network of Actors

Finally, whereas previously significance was attributed to one of these five agents (learner, learners, object, institution or time), the 'in between' workings of the unheimliche triggers movement in a complex network of all five agents together. The rotating cupboard once regulated and concealed the entrance to the hidden *Achterhuis*. This is where the family of Anne Frank lived throughout the Nazi occupation of Amsterdam. Not specially designed, this ordinary cupboard intended to prevent outsiders from entering in the *Achterhuis*. As working and everyday life continued in appearance, the closet in reality hid a complex world behind it. The storage cabinet itself pivots round the shifts between the powerful (the institutional powers of Nazi Germany) and the weak (those victimized by that very regime), between public life (working clerks) and private life (the intimate thoughts of Anne Frank), between the external appearance of the front façade and the harsh realities concealed behind the secondary façade of the *Achterhuis*. In other words,

the cupboard (re)incarnates matters of life and death. For years, the wardrobe successfully defied the institutional workings of the hostile Third Reich administration, until the fatal day the Frank family was denounced by an unknown person (Gies, 1987). Interestingly, it gave this betrayal multiple viewpoints: for those who do not sympathize with Nazi ideology, it can be considered to an act of collaboration and for those who collaborated, it was considered to be an act of civic duty. Paradoxically, and unexpectedly, throughout its lifespan the significance of the cupboard shifted from an ordinary storage object to a life-saving device and finally a museum relic, painfully reminding future generations of the dangers and atrocities committed by totalitarian political regimes.

In conclusion, as an 'in between', the unheimliche approach acts within a larger complex network (Fig.38, p.197). This network is defined by the range between the following forces. The first force comes from the tension among the large group of students that generously encircles the individual student. A second force emanates from the tension between the object and student. A third tension emerges between student and an unsettling event that alters one's perception of time. As one dreads an uncertain future and comes to terms with an unsettling past, this altered perception is governed by this twofold tension. By internalizing the discord between the past and future that still dwells within the student, the educational approach of the unheimliche takes shape. In so doing, the Onheimelijke Studio rather overcomes potential discord amongst students, the events these learners experience, the things that surround them and the institutions that potentially oppress them.

The unheimliche in education negotiates the terms in which different agents (learners, objects, institutions and events) enable the learner to find – and strategically lose – their place in a complex network. More specifically, the unheimliche approach fosters an intense communication among these agents. Interestingly, this complex network of pedagogic agents synthesizes all five previous agents. From the conception of the unheimliche (Chapter 2) to the experience (Chapter 3) and the making of an interior design (Chapter 4), the network allows a complex interplay among all the actors concerned: the life of inanimate objects, the students and their anxieties and aspirations, the institutional powers of disciplines and the immense deluge of time. Paradoxically, the interplay among these agents sparks irreconcilable tensions but also instigates an openness and curiosity in between these agents.

This process of negotiating between the institutional, temporal, personal and material makes the unheimliche approach in education an experimental ground. By dislodging the stakeholders from their initial positions in time and space, it provides a relatively safe but challenging field that strategically allows the unheimliche to infiltrate into educational practice. As it is able to empathically bind affective issues with temporal, fictional and technical constraints, the educational unheimliche becomes a learning environment that aims to achieve renewed balance between educating, designing in interior architecture in between affect and effect. To this end, I regard the research design studios as laboratories

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for the formation of *learning communities,* similar to systems scientist Peter Senge's notion of *learning organizations*:

> '…organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together'. (Senge:1990:3)

Beyond the traditional scope of one semester and informed by this network, students can promote themselves and others in these learning communities. The Onheimelijke Studio, both as a research project and as something designed, gives the students and faculty the instruments to shape their 'designerly' profiles as designer/researchers. Considering the specific objectives, program and characteristics of the Onheimelijke Studio, students can accordingly assert awareness of their positions in life and society as researchers, designers, students and educators. In so doing, the research studio intends to form a temporary, small and intense research community where (often contradictory) values and types of knowledge are being shared, exchanged and created.

22 Preliminary Conclusions

This chapter, 'The Unheimliche as an Pedagogic Approach', introduces the idea of equal students who are willing to confront and expose their own vulnerabilities. Beyond merely relying on simplicity, harmony and wellbeing, it emphasises learning from existing and sometimes abject complexities. This has to do with one of the implicit tasks of pedagogy and interior architecture: to mediate and negotiate between stealthy aspirations such as keeping secrets and bringing these secrets temporally out into the open. As hiding and keeping secrets often creates jealousy and envy, it is not always pleasant for the learner. Despite engaging with this secret dimension, and knowing that it implies exploring the unpreferred and erratic agencies of people, objects in space and time, the unheimliche in interior architectural education still makes sense for four reasons.

First, the unheimliche approach in education tries to read and detect the often unsettling signs students emit. Both the student's experience and memories can potentially enrich interior architecture and its education. The unheimliche is just one of the legitimate ways to both fuel and internalize these emotions into interior architectural education. It pursues a so-called 'affective turn' as noted by Greig Chrysler (Chrysler, Heynen, & Cairns, 2012) and mentioned earlier in Chapter 3.

Second, instead of instructing, both education and the unheimliche prioritize the idea of an educator who curates a learning process that can guide students backward (memory), forward (project) and outward. This implies educating as an activity that edifies and allows the student to make an eventful journey. In my case, incorporating the unheimliche in educational practice merely means pursuing an ideal or a vocation, an internal voice that summons learning by teaching.

Third, the unheimliche has a pedagogic objective to emancipate the weak and to correct the overly strong. In so doing, it criticizes the existing imbalances between weak students and strong students. Precisely by avoiding the emotional and affective issues that naturally dwell inside the student, these imbalances recur in various pedagogic approaches, hence my plea to re-establish the affect in interior architecture.

Finally, as anguish potentially thwarts the students' progress, the unheimliche in education aspires to empower the fragile student. By supporting students in their quest to be liberated from oppression of any kind, the unheimliche in education also legitimizes itself. By exploring the potential role of the 'unpreferred' within an interrelated network of space, time, objects, institutions and students, the unheimliche can find a common ground in education.

The unheimliche and pedagogy are already natural allies: the unheimliche intrinsically

joins up with pedagogy. This alliance licenses both student and educator to be(come) responsible actors in the specific educational environment that circles around the unheimliche. Informed by mutual exchange and respect, this environment presupposes the growth of an equal partnership of student and educator – a project in itself. In order to learn, the unheimliche demystifies and aspires to (1) bring the implicit to the fore. Apparently, life does contain unusual secrets that are usually left unnoticed, hence invigorating the idea that everyday appearance (of people, objects and events) deceives the eye. Both education and the unheimliche aim at communicating, categorizing and decoding these hidden realities that are tucked away behind their external appearance. Moreover, both (2) pursue the (un)usual to wonder about what is considered to be usual and unusual. To this end, my approach propagates the idea of the *fabula rasa*. Instead of an instructive attitude, it fosters a constructive and fictional approach towards students' understanding of reality. Finally, it can be argued that both education and the unheimliche (3) open themselves to the improbable: they want to shed light on what is considered to be quite unlikely and hence worth investigating.

As the 'stronger' logic of research starts to overshadow the more vulnerable position of education, research by design in education becomes a vital asset to strengthen the weaker and the fragile. As a platform to learn from, research by design 'emancipates' education. The integration of education and research potentially expands the domain of knowledge and skills, significant within the interior architectural discipline. At the end of the bachelor programme, the large and flexible vessel of the Explicit Studio combines research and education. As this combination prepares students for their future journey, it also rears future research designers. It allows students to reflect upon and construct their own profiles as design researchers. Within this floating network of Explicit Studios, the Onheimelijke Studio finds a specific place and role. Given the specific theme, i.e. the re-creative workings of the unheimliche, the studio also aims to integrate the unheimliche into education, design and research.

Instead of undertaking random design exercises for their own sake (i.e. the strategy of 'art for the sake of art'), the studio is set up to instigate learning by designing and researching. To this end, the pedagogic model prepares the way for future applications. As the model is not a fixed or static construct, it is foremost a tool to check the validity of certain hunches concerning the unheimliche. Instead of regarding the unheimliche as an 'illness' to be remediated, my approach is to sublimate it. Consequently, the pedagogic model changes according to the fluctuating circumstances of advancing insights.

In sum, the pedagogical model tackles the following question: How can *criticality, togetherness, (de)familiarity and (ex)appropriation* and *memory* become a creative workings of the unheimliche? By testing this question in a studio context, the model can develop into a learning instrument to verify and question the participants' own convictions. Arguably, the model gives students the opportunity to construct their own competences, skills and values in interior architecture.

The combination of pedagogy, research and the unheimliche implies inviting Freud, Freire, Tschumi and Marx into the debate. By qualifying the unheimliche as a design approach with its own logic and agency, the Onheimelijke Studio takes a constructive stance. As already introduced by Russian Constructivists at the beginning of the twentieth century, the unheimliche follows the defamiliarizing approach, which Tschumi also advocates. It implies questioning previous pedagogical models based on dominance and instruction such as 'banking' (Freire, 1993/1970). As 'banking' is fatally conducted by a 'superior' educator who instructs 'inferior' students, these traditional approaches are critically questioned and eventually rejected.

By interweaving and mutually influencing five agents (the learner, learners, objects, events and institutions) of the network with one another in a matrix, the network is activated and informs the making of an interior. As all five agents are in tension with one another, the network resonates with a proper logic and changing rhythm. Furthermore, by deferring itself from a self-referential and circular logic (like that of an overly disciplinary thinking), by distancing itself from the pit of dualism (like dividing between 'good' and 'bad' students), the proposed network rearranges all actors as fundamentally equal.

Combined and interacting, these unheimliche network forces in interior education (Chapter 5), interior design (Chapter 4), the spatial experience (Chapter 3) and architectural discourse (Chapter 2) lead to an uneasy coexistence. The respective actors, learners events, objects and institutions collide or abide alongside their uncertain trajectories. Although delightfully and carefully designed, an object can inexplicably transform into something abject. These varying forces of the encounter trigger the power of the improbable, the unusual and the implicit in education. Paradoxically, pursuing these three powers ultimately leads to strengthening the resilience of the agents concerned. In the process whereby learners, designers, beholders and thinkers are allowed to rebound after a period of crisis and weakness, the unheimliche acts as a paradoxical in-between force that heals all concerned.

Fig.24 'To Silently Live In a Broken Interior'. Research by design by Selin Geerinckx and Eline Van Steenkiste. A projective recollection of two secrets, forbidden love and abuse of trust, Onheimelijk V, 2013

Fig.25 Interior of a church: an impossible encounter of three world religions.
Research by design by Janna Crombez, Onheimelijk II, 2011
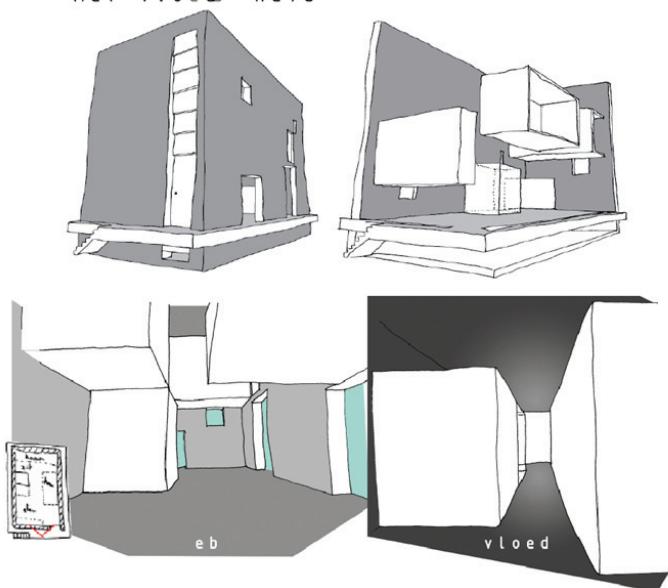
Fig.26 'Eb-Tide House'. An interior subject to changes of sea level by Jonas Van Vliet.
Onheimelijk I, 2009
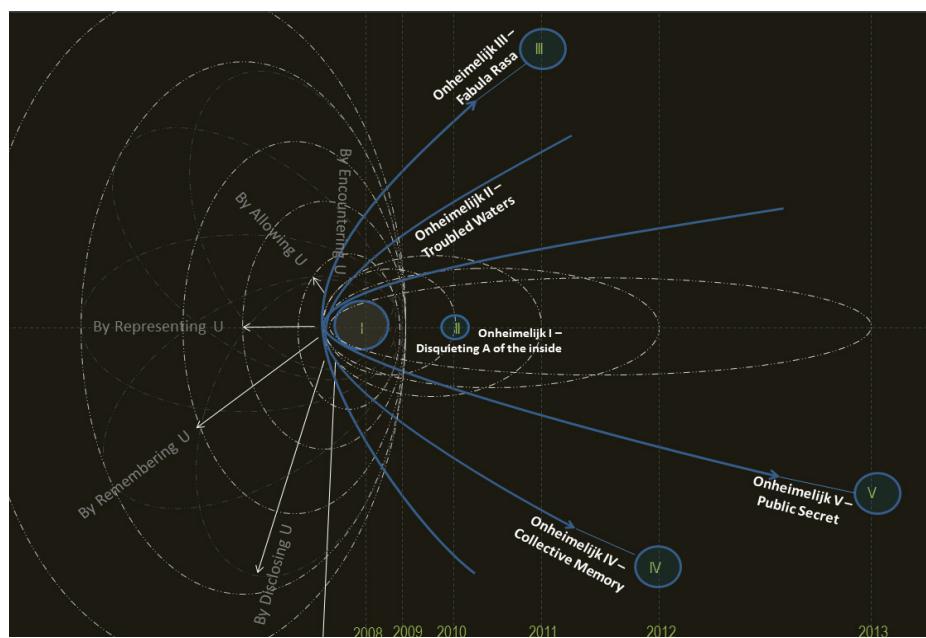
Fig.27 Overview of the onheimelijke studios and their aims.
Diagram by Karel Deckers, 2014
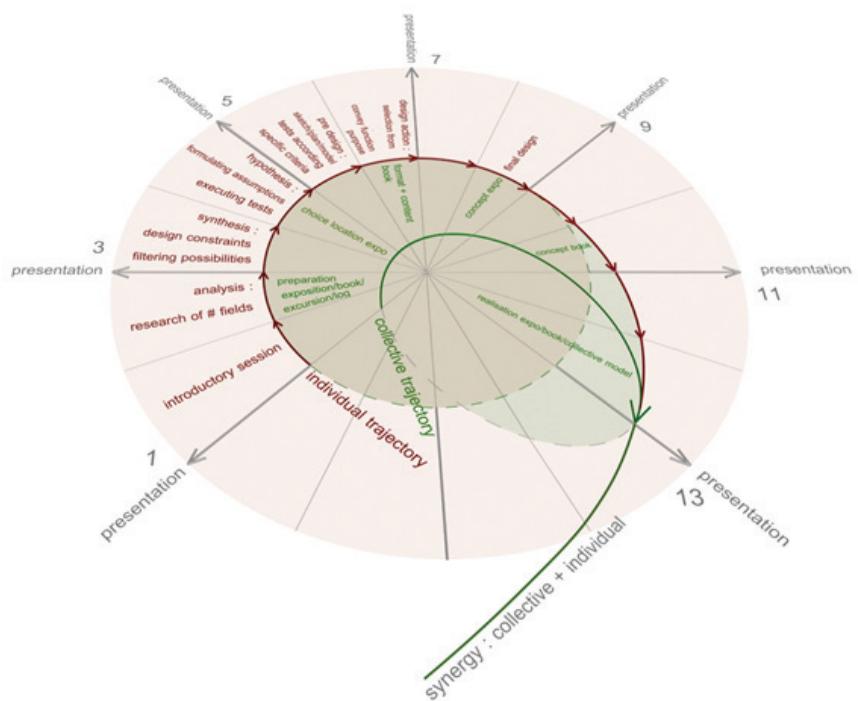
Fig.28 Pedagogic model with timeline indicating critical phases of research by design procedure and combination of collective (green) and individual (red) design trajectories. Onheimelijke Studios between 2008-2013. Diagram by Karel Deckers, 2009
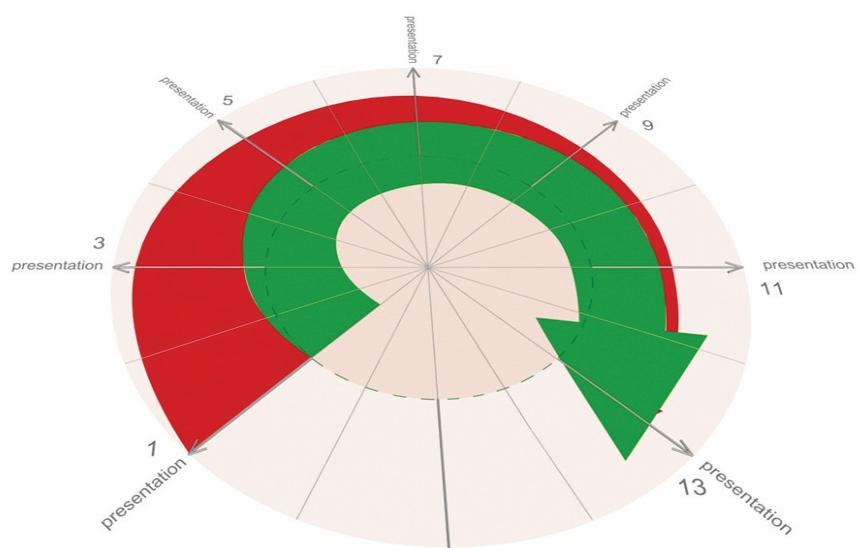
Fig.29 Collective (green) and individual (red) trajectory within timeline of pedagogic mo-
del. Onheimelijke Studios between 2008-2013. Diagram by Karel Deckers

Fig.30 Atmospheric photo indicating a cooperative spirit amongst learners.
Photo by learner. Onheimelijk II, 2011.

Fig.31 Publications at the end of each onheimelijke studio, 2008-2013.
Photo by Karel Deckers

Mijn ontwerp ontstaat vanuit een
kinderlijke herinnering die zich afspeelt
in het autobedrijf van mijn ouders, dat
in de jaren 50 gebouwd werd. Hierbij
bevind ik mij in een keuken op de eerste
verdieping van het gebouw, waar ik na
schooltijd vaak zit, omdat mijn ouders dan
nog aan het werk zijn. Beneden is iedereen
druk in de weer, maar boven is het rustig
en komt er zelden iemand. Maar de keuken
is te klein om te spelen, en ik wil zien wat
er verder nog te ontdekken valt. Van zodra
ik de deur van de keuken open doe kom ik
terecht in een donkere, langgerekte ruimte.
Een stil magazijn vol met autoonderdelen
ingepakt in bruin papier. Er valt weinig daglicht
binnen en op het einde is er geen uitweg.

Fig.32 An unheimliche remembrance and future vision of estrangement. A research by design by Els Houttequiet. Onheimelijk IV, 2012
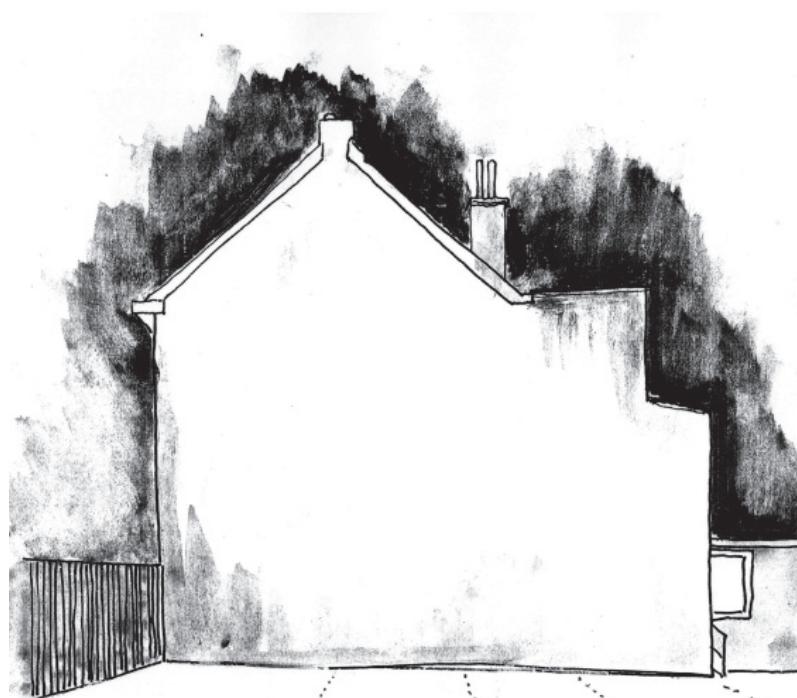
Fig.33 Common party wall indicating the contours of the adjacent house.
Water Colour. Image by Karel Deckers

Fig.34 Artefact made by twenty authors in succession. Onheimelijk IV, Ghent, 2012

Fig.35 - Photo of interior inside Nouvelle Ecole d'Architecture as initiated by Wim Cuyvers, Photo by Karel Deckers, Montavoix, 2011
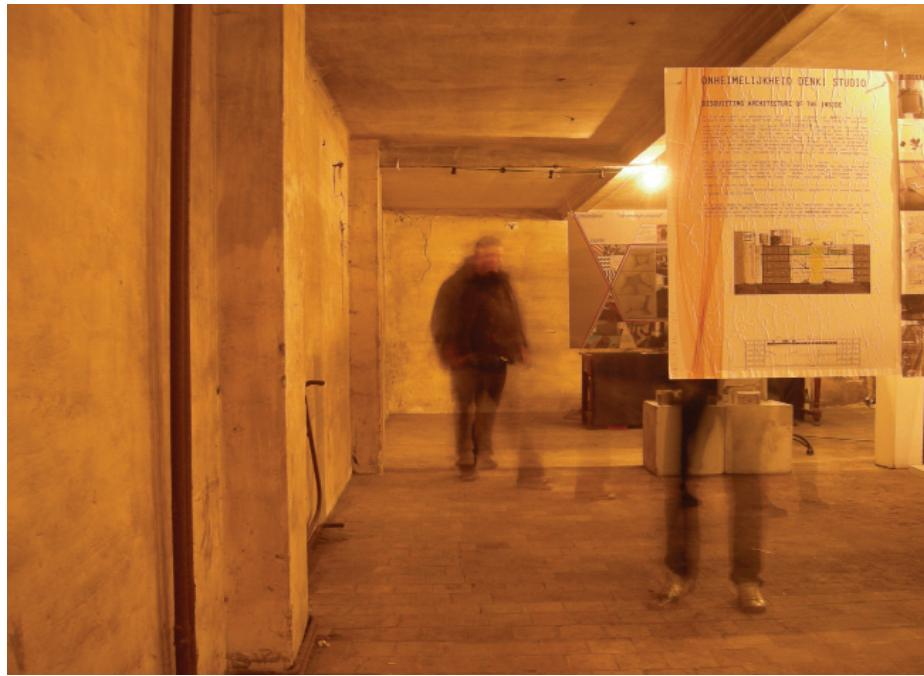
Fig.36 Photo of derelict industrial building exhibiting student's work
during Onheimelijk I. Photo by Karel Deckers. Ghent, 2009

Fig.37 Photo of exhibition of students work at OnheimelijkV.
Photo by Karel Deckers. Ghent, 2013

Registrators

Laurence Gevaert
Valerie Coucke
Jolien De Backer
Jasmin Kerremans
Els Houttequiet
Lisa Desaever
Marlies Vermeulen
Julie Dupont
Ilse Feryn

Ann-Sophie Maeyaert
Fredrik Ceulemans
Evelien Snoecks

Indra vanhoenacker
Kathy Vanhoenacker
Sarah Livemont

Extra Muros
Breakfast at T'sas
Ardennes
Brussels
Copenhagen
Berlin

Speakers
Dirk Braeckman
Rudy Luijters
Jo van den Berghe
Christiane Hoegner

Organisers Journey

Ellen Fievez
Christophe Baecke
Nele Degryse

Marjolijn De Boeck
Joemi Cornelissen
Karolien Coppens

Roosmarijn Wyns
Julie Lozie
Tom Donné

Frederick T'sas
Selin Geerinckx
ElineVansteenkiste

Pieter Schoolaert
Evelien Verpoest
Julie Delahaye

Editors Book
Natalie Bekaert
Isabel Vanieeckwyck
Julie Lapere

Stefanie Jacobs
Rebecca De Sterck
Karolien De Boeck

Carmen Rabaey
Michelle Pyfferoen
Celine Poissonnier

Joëlle Potvliege
Nicolas Lachapelle
Freek Roels

Lotte Warmoeskerken
Johanna Willemse
Filip Van Bavel

Fig.38 Network of learners, evaluators, speakers and events.
Diagram by Karel Deckers, 2014

§6

6. SUMMARIZING AND CONCLUDING: EPILOGUE

Recreation (n.) from Latin *recreationem* (nominative *recreatio*) 'recovery from illness', noun of action from past participle stem of *recreare* 'to refresh, restore, make anew, revive, invigorate', from *re-* 'again' (see re-) + *creare* (see create). Late 14c., 'refreshment or curing of a person, refreshment by eating', from Old French *recreacion* (13c.),

Buildings do invite emotions and preferences. They affect us, mould our behaviour and meaningfully link us to extraordinary architectural places of delight, such as Amsterdam's monumental facades along its canals. Yet paradoxically, we are also drawn into ordinary places such as the *Achterhuis* (secret annex to the house) that somehow linger in our collective memory. It's not beauty that draws us here, but a dark kind of fascination for things we naturally do not like to know, but ought to. In order to understand *why* and *how* we are fascinated by these places and what it can do for architecture and its beholders, designers and learners, I re-introduced the puzzling concept of the *unheimliche* or the uncanny first analysed a hundred years ago by Sigmund Freud. The unheimliche surfaces in several discourses, but also in artistic manifestations such as stories, paintings and films. However, I did not propose the unheimliche as a tool to design or build frightening edifices; I instead considered it as an experience to learn from. In my view, it is fully equipped for architectural design and education. Intriguingly, the unheimliche seems to be almost absent from architecture in terms of discourse, practice and education. Therefore I did not investigate the unheimliche on my own but rather shared my investigation throughout many years. Together with a range of learners, I have been looking into features such as darkness, disorientation, narrowness, and forgetfulness. How do these features lead to an unheimliche experience that is able to enrich architectural discourse, practice and education?

Premises

The entrance hall to the Frank family's *Achterhuis* can be opened up on the basis of four following premises. First, the architectural experience is not limited to visually discernible elements such as stone, steel and glass; the unheimliche can also *entail a single pixel* – a word, a sound, a certain smell, a texture. The presence or absence of sounds or smells can be enough to create an uncanny atmosphere. Think, for example, of the uncanny silence in the *Achterhuis* after the Frank family was transported to an extermination camp. Thus, the unheimliche sharpens our awareness of how broad the spectrum of architectural media actually is. Second, by virtue of the unheimliche, people are *linked to a specific place*. After reading Anne Frank's diary with personal recollections of the *Achterhuis*, it is difficult to look neutrally at this quiet place of residence where a family once hoped to survive and lived through a certain ordeal. Third, through the unheimliche experience, people become *(inter)connected to a specific period of time*. It makes them melancholic and nostalgic, which allows them to make a journey back and forth in time. Fourth, the unheimliche *brings established theories and everyday practice together.* Through strategic excursions towards philosophy, cultural history and pedagogy, I am able to compare, relate and interweave different discourses with my own educational practice and that of others. Unheimliche experiences such as the ultimate abolishment of hope and deliverance, as occurred in the *Achterhuis*, seems to bring people, ideas and time into an unusual relationship with each other. In other words, the unheimliche is a *travelling concept* that links people to each other, to certain periods, to places and ideas, and to new practices and rituals. It also completely changes our mindset as to behaving and being in the world.

Roadmap to the Unheimliche

Dislodged from the *Voorhuis* (front house), the *Achterhuis* seems adrift in time and space. Rather than providing fixed answers, the act of engaging with the unheimliche seems to conjure up questions. As a response, this inquiry into the re-creative workings of the unheimliche does not intend to nostalgically retreat into isolation, rehabilitation or preservation, but rather confidently looks into an uncertain future. By contributing and realizing a shared project built on the abject, as the Onheimelijke Studios did on an annual basis between 2008 and 2013, the unheimliche adds to existing yet productive complexities and tensions in interior architecture. Therefore, this project gives preference to sharing disquieting sentiments, emotions and memories that ultimately intend to strengthen the status of the reader, the beholder, the aspiring designer and the student.

While making this fascinating journey to the unheimliche and back, I have been learning from and leaning on many guides and voices. One of them has been to pursue Gianni Vattimo's concept of *weak thoughts*. Although linked to relativism, the concept still offered a useful tool to sift through a vast range of options for making the unheimliche operative in a design studio setting.

In my view, it is possible to map the workings of the unheimliche. It can be activated in four phases of growing complexity. The first phase of *inception* is linked to an author and a reader. The second phase of *reception* ties into the role of the beholder. The third phase of *conception* connects to the designer's role. The fourth phase of *perception* relates to the learner. These four phases are also the four main chapters of the thesis. This fourfold structure of the thesis presents a kind of a mapping of the unheimliche workings whereby I address recurrent questions as to when, how and why the unheimliche occurs and its impact on those living in a built environment.

Inception of the Unheimliche

Chapter 2 looks into the *inception* of the unheimliche as a theme and later as a discourse. Arguably, the unheimliche saw the light in Freud's office at the beginning of the twentieth century, but in reality represented nothing novel. Since then the conquest of the unheimliche has been both raucous and silent, leaving tenacious traces behind. Gradually infecting the minds of many on different continents and periods of time, the unheimliche emerged as a travelling concept. In its straying journey, one notes the remarkable metamorphosis of the unheimliche into a malleable, changeable concept that nomadically floats throughout time and space. As to *how* the unheimliche acts, it seems to incur on specific occasions. It resurfaces unexpectedly during everyday events (such as *déjà vu* experiences, *omnipotence of thoughts*) but also turns up as a theme (such as *the double*) in fictional accounts by various authors. However, its wandering movements seem to be governed by one central power that *ought* to remain hidden from view –the *primitive*, a superstitious yet collectively shared belief that whatever (or whoever) precedes the living will come back to haunt them.

But *why* is the unheimliche inception significant? Historically, it became a device designed to detect and downplay the hegemony of reason and progress. The later readings on the unheimliche by Freudian, phenomenological and poststructuralist scholars have orbited the unheimliche along a wide range of thinkers and researchers. Thus as time goes by the unheimliche changes its skin. Ultimately the unheimliche has changed from a particular theme to a worldwide discourse. In other words, it is the author of the unheimliche who strategically lures the reader into entering the eerie realm of the unheimliche.

The turbulent inception of the unheimliche deranges the reader's mind, temporarily blurring his or her sense of clarity and certainty. In so doing, the unheimliche alters the status of the reader. Instead of being a passive reader, the reader is energized through the working of the unheimliche. In brief, in the second chapter I examine the unheimliche as a predominantly *written* device that trickles down from the author to readers, yet a device that also energizes the reader.

Reception of the Unheimliche

If the unheimliche wanders in time and space as an infectious kind of discourse, *how* can the beholder then experience the unheimliche? Instead of being merely a literary device, the unheimliche can incite a broader everyday experience that tends to colonize readers' minds. Receiving the unheimliche, as investigated in Chapter 3, instigates another kind of awareness, transforming a familiar and everyday event into something uncomfortable, something unfamiliar, hence undesirable. Different from imagining utopian dreams as modernist architects did, the unheimliche reception is conditioned by existing concepts or *Denkbilder,* a notion elaborated by Walter Benjamin. He categorized a range of existing *Denkbilder* that have an innate capacity to incite and invoke dreams amongst beholders.

Next to the power of the existent, hidden inside these *Denkbilder*, the unheimliche is also *awoken by absence*, which potentially turns the beholder into a melancholic. However, instead of considering melancholy as a weakness, it should be recognized as an important value in architecture: it makes us aware of the passing of time and it doubles our aware-ness (such as living in the past and present). In this atmosphere of longing for another time and place, the unheimliche prospers.

This brings me to the question of w*hy* the unheimliche reception should be significant. It invokes a multiplicity of experiences for the observer, probing the confines of time and space. For example, a multiple kind of tension arises between comfortable belonging and an unpleasant encounter, a tension between obscurity and clarity such as Caravaggio's paintings convey. While absorbing this multiplicity of experiences, the receiver becomes alert. Instead of remaining passive, the unheimliche experience turns the receiver into an active observer.

Conception of the Unheimliche

Given the rich, multisensorial experiences the unheimliche seems to generate, what can the unheimliche mean for the design discipline and for the individual designer? Chapter 4 examines the conception of the unheimliche from the perspective of the designer. Can the unheimliche purposefully be conceived and reconstructed in a design environment? And what is the use of the unheimliche as a design approach? The unheimliche is related to the notion of the *unpreferred*, such as the destructive workings of wear and time in buildings**.** Whereas traditionally the designer's mission is to promote novelty, creative ideas and spatial improvement, the unheimliche instead comes as something unpreferred to the designer, the user and all stakeholders concerned.

In this sense, I am inclined to Marvin Trachtenberg's notion of *building-in-time* (Trachtenberg, 2010). He notes that designers should not be biased by their own private or esthetical concerns, but rather should accept the influence of time in their design. In contrast, since the Renaissance designers still predominantly build 'outside of time' – they wish to meticulously realize designs as objects frozen in time. Striving for immaculate and complete images, designers realize their plans in the limited time frame of their lifetime. However, Trachtenberg qualifies this Renaissance design ideal as naïve and 'chronophobic'. He calls it the ideal of the *inventio*, which views the designer as a kind of inventor who instantly comes up with creative solutions. However, instead of seeking 'to repress time as a positive force in the making of architecture' (Trachtenberg, 2010:XXI), Trachtenberg asserts that architects and designers should '*Build-in-Time*', acknowledging that a design is incomplete and never finished. Instead of freezing a design 'outside the workings of time', he suggests that the designer should build as the cathedral builders did. Medieval builders worked in the knowledge that their design might take centuries to be completed.

How then can the designer engage with the unheimliche 'building-in-time' as a design approach? First, designers should anticipate 'disturbing' future changes that will inevitably come after the completion of a building or design. By incorporating often unpredictable life phases that occur to future inhabitants, a design is amplified and stretched out in time. Second, designers should be susceptible to their own disquieting emotions and memories. In other words, less than the personal designer's agenda to innovate or achieve originality within a design, the unheimliche design approach incorporates emotions past and future – i.e. affect, anteriority and posteriority.

But why is this design approach of the unheimliche relevant? It changes the status of the designer and the design discipline. This other design approach does not privilege but rather mediates between theory and practice, objects and people, experiences and recollections, prospection and retrospection. The unheimliche also points to the significance of 'undesigned' architecture – i.e. the paradox of 'architecture without architects'. It ques-

tions the architect-designer's role as a creative problem-solver who is intolerant of future changes to his or her design. Thus, the unheimliche design approach questions prevailing notions of individual authorship, favouring a wider and shared sense of authorship in time.

The Learner's Perception

Beyond the issue of inception, reception, and conception of the unheimliche, I investigate the final and most complex phase of the unheimliche through the learner's perception in Chapter 5. Can the unheimliche – this shifting, sticky and migratory concept – be deployed in an pedagogic environment? The perception of the unheimliche happens through the undertaking of a journey back in time where students reconsider and confront unsettling past events and recollections. Reliving these personal yet unheimliche experiences forms the basis of my specific approach into the unheimliche.

Why is this unheimliche approach to education important? First, following Jacques Rancière's *Le Maître Ignorant* (Rancière, 1991), I consider all stakeholders (educators, students, researchers) to be equal learners. This equality of learners also implies an altered status of learning. Rather than a traditional hierarchical top-down approach, I envision a more non-hierarchical and collective approach tailored to equal learners. In this way an openness towards others can grow. Second, the unheimliche in education becomes a strategy that allows the emancipation of the 'weaker' whereby students learn to navigate their design track themselves. Beyond a mere reliance upon talent or intuition, participating learners are not just random passengers into a short design exercise, but they themselves become responsible learners and co-creators of a design track through time.

Outcomes

As a first step in concluding, I return to my initial main research questions, which was formulated thus: Is it possible to develop a strategy that incorporates the unheimliche as a constructive force as opposed to constituting a weakness in relation to design and design education? If so, how can one develop this strategy in the field of interior architecture, as the area of expertise from which the study starts? The research has demonstrated that is possible to develop such a strategy that sees the unheimliche not as a weakness in a negative sense, but rather as a constructive force, not least in design education and training for interior architects. The aim was to demonstrate how the unheimliche might 'enchant and

bewitch' stakeholders, specifically in areas such as discourse, experience, design and education. I have demonstrated this in chapters dedicated to each respective theme.

From these four chapters I would like to draw three main conclusions. First, my research has shown that the unheimliche can support the development of an *ethical vocation* of interior architecture as a discipline that goes beyond vanity. Beyond the vain pursuit of designing novel and beautiful objects that serve to glorify the designer's ego, the unheimliche is foremost a *strategy for learning from an abject experience*. Whereas interior architecture is usually regarded as a cultural activity, it is also driven by darker and 'natural' forces over which no observer or designer can exert full control. By drawing on and learning from *affective issues*, observers, students, readers, and aspiring designers do not hide but rather share their vulnerabilities and weaknesses: the unheimliche drives the making of an *affective turn* (Chrysler et al., 2012:305). In so doing, it can paradoxically strengthen these stakeholders and their integrity. Despite its ingrained awkwardness, the unheimliche persists through generations as an enduring learning experience. In this multiplicity of experiences – learning, designing, reading, (re)living – the unheimliche can thrive.

Second, the research has shown that the unheimliche emphasizes the power of the existing. Instead of inventing novel solutions, the unheimliche focuses on *re-creating the pre-existing*. These are the *re-creative workings of the unheimliche*. This research points to the urgency of *reusing existing edifices*. As an antidote to novelty, the thesis proposes an impossible fusion between the prevailing ideals of the homely *Heim* and a rather marginal *Un-heim*. Thus instead of making bold designer's statements, this thesis pleads for purposefully instilling 'weak' and 'silent' and almost invisible interventions. Instead of abiding by architectural fashions, the unheimliche in interior architecture rather safeguards a legacy that is already there.

Third, I define the unheimliche as a *in-between force* in interior architecture. In light of the unheimliche workings, earlier questions such as 'Who is the designer?', 'Who educates?', and 'What do these designed objects represent?' become irrelevant and can be replaced by the following questions: 'What do interiors and their objects do to the learner and how do they influence us, our institutions and our ideas?' I conclude that the unheimliche in interior architecture embraces the unforeseen and parodoxical nature of one's existence in order to identify and transform it into a particular strength. This strength does not occur by returning to an idealized past, but rather by handing out tools to the wanderer who inhabits an uncertain future. Ultimately, the unheimliche approach offers no ready-made tools engineered to change or reinvent the self. At most, the unheimliche merely creates a manifold experience, a temporary double, an alter ego that may expose one's weaknesses but ultimately strengthens one's capacity to face the complexities of space and time.

These four chapters can be regarded as a prelude, a luminous type of *Voorhuis* through which one must wander before entering into the narrow and darkened confines of the *Achterhuis*. From all corners of the world, people gather and travel to Amsterdam to experience this tiny annex in order to relive and learn from the anxieties the Frank family went through. Anne Frank's diary has been published in more than sixty languages and sold over thirty million copies: it makes us all witnesses to the power of the unheimliche. Whereas the *Voorhuis* represents the world of the heimliche – the familiar, the reassuring, the knowable, the powerful – the *Achterhuis* reveals an unheimliche reality that is ungraspable, an obscure corner of the collective mind we try to bypass but can never forget. Upon entering inside the *Achterhuis*, Anne Frank looked back at the pivoting door, which became a *threshold* between the little girl and the adolescent she came to be, and between home and exile. In this narrow transition between the *Voorhuis* and the *Achterhuis*, an unheimliche force is unlocked which drives the inhabitants, the interior objects, the events and surrounding institutional powers. In a maddening repetition and pace, it continuously drives us back and forth between the bright lights of the *Voorhuis* and the uncanny solitude of the *Achterhuis*.

Fig.39 The cupboard in Anne Frank's house.
Water colour drawing by Karel Deckers, 2015

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8. APPENDIX

Rethinking and Unsettling The P(a)lace of justice :
An 'inclusive' place for
Contemporary Nomads
Local justice
Building Knowledge

A Reflection about Justice and an Architectural Brief

Even kings can make mistakes! Building the Palace wasn't justice for all. We need to abandon monofunctional logic and gentrification. The palace of justice should become a lively place to dwell, build knowledge and to speak justice : **a place to live and work for the Unhomely**! Listen to the **voice of contemporary nomads with their vision upon humanity and this building.**

Rethinking and Unsettling The P(a)lace of justice :
An 'inclusive' place for Contemporary Nomads, Local justice, building knowledge

Introduction 1

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The palace of justice is built on a **collective and individual trauma.** It is a heroic and tragic example of massive intercity deportation, collective displacement, monocultural logic and historical gentrification.

Our proposition aims at developing a future vision for the Palace of Justice in Brussels, considering the past and present. Our project is not a pure architectural proposition, but an **invitation to reflect upon the local, national and international value of the Palace of Justice.**

The project addresses contemporary issues like **immigration...**

And the ambition of Europe to become **a place of excellence for research.**

Our project reflects upon the **issue of contemporary nomads** such as researchers in residence, retired lawyers, sense seekers, students, asylum seekers, local families.

Introduction 2

This design is made within the framework of a so called **research by design**. This research by design aims to build up knowledge by a developing a specific rhetoric and design. Our objective is to :

1 **analyse and evaluate** the current building from an historical, morphological, ethical point of view
2 reflect upon **current needs** for Brussels, Belgium, Europe and the World
3 develop **a vision** for the future of the Palace of Justice
4 **design a project brief**: in order to achieve social, economic, cultural and historical justice.

anatomy of a research : a vivisectional inside story

brussels practice – worst – schaarbeek – gent – stockholm – leeds – melbourne
travelling and instilling knowledge
simultaneous movement of landscape and thoughts – city life nutrition

domesticating knowledge

confronting knowledge

Introduction 3

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This is
a project brief.

Written to all whom it
may concern.

Yours truly.

We believe that the current competition brief is too vague in its outset to be able to guarantee a proper project of architectural standards. That's why we decided **to design a project brief**. We do not believe that the Palace of Justice should be either stripped entirely of its judiciary functions or that it exclusively should keep its original function. Our reflection builds on **simultaneously safeguarding and innovating the Palace of Justice.**

In many ways, the Palace of justice is a **building full of paradoxes displaced yet panoramically set** in the urban landscape of Brussels. The interior emits an intriguing **balance between light and darkness.**

The celebration of pagan symbolism contrasts with the 'Christian' nature of applied architectural techniques: **the built up of spaces along 2 main axes : horizontal and a vertical axis.**

The placement on the hillside is not very balanced: the building rests on and absorbs a steep slope. If this slope is not truly public domain, like it is now, it **creates and persists the existence of borders between neighbourhoods.**

The abundant monumental style of the building **evokes a 19th century rhetoric of justice** that is perceived as both qualitative and problematic. The succession of overwhelming spaces bears witness of a baroque logic and imagination: a triumphant and impressive development of spatial exuberance with its climax in the central hall, the so called 'Salle des Pas Perdus'.

Unfortunately, this mix of Egyptian, Babylonic and Baroque languages is **not up to date with today's Standards on** transparency, safety regulation, readability etc.!

Analysis 6

*The building possesses an interesting **articulation of two main architectonic parts:** one can distinguish two important components in the spatial composition.*

*the **vertical dome** actively explores and aspires **immateriality and divinity***

*the **urban horizontal base** is largely **directed towards the city and earthly matters**.*

Analysis 7

The Sublime manifests itself in the extreme contrasts in one singular architectural gesture. It invites the **visitor to wander and explore, but also to contemplate and reflect.** One can notice a relative darkness throughout the day, at night the building is lit up and becomes a nocturnal urban landmark. The void of the 'Salle des Pas Perdus' can be qualified as the essence of the building and balances with the massive columns and urban 'base'.

The immense **emptiness** speaks towards the mind and unconsciousness fulfilling the visitor with a sense of awe', a fear to be punished by a higher order of things;. **Wandering and discovering the ever changing angles and details embodies a sublime experience** equal to the famous evocation of the Sublime by Caspar Friedrich : 'wanderer above the sea of fog'. 1818

Analysis 8

The monumental staircase towards the Poelaert square is covered by a roof and temporarily shelters the transition between the outside world and the safe enclosure of justice, between crime and punishment, between concealing and remorse -a last glimpse of liberty or a new perspective towards renewed citizenship

Analysis 9

Palace of justice anno 1800

A vibrant neighbourhood's expelled to the edge of the city. A traumatic process of gentrification takes place, evacuating a large part of the Marollen neighbourhood. This traumatic event challenges and unsettles the city's balance between high and low, rich and poor.

Palace of justice anno 1850 – 2010

The palace is the place to speak justice but is also a working and meeting place. The building witnesses many lived experiences like joy, relief and disappointment for the accused, convicts and families.

Palace of justice anno 2010

the modern standards of justice have outgrown the size of the current building.
The expanding and changing responsibilities of the justice department together with a weak security system make the building difficult to maintain.
There's a need for new housing as the population of Brussels is expected to increase with 200 000 persons the next decade.

History + New needs 10

Reading the urban layout of Brussels, we can see that the plan of the Warande park is the transcription and formalization of the 'Montesquieu' concept of 'trias politica' - the so called balanced check of powers.

Parliament

the Royal Palace

the palace of Justice

Developing a vision 11

We believe in a reinterpretation and deconstruction of the formal triad by adding **a new informal axis:** the extension of the staircase of the Minimes towards the higher part of the city. This informal axis represents the **multitude of speech for all nations worldwide and the local inhabitants.** These nations can be presented, spoken and heard. The palace is not a palace anymore **but a place for the people.** We believe that the existing building - with all its faults and qualities - enables us to investigate another form of justice.

Parliament

the Royal Palace

the palace of Justice

Developing a vision 12

This axis is a contemporary translation that is different from the formal settings of the past. **It connects the lower city with the higher parts, connects the civilian with the governmental apparatus, and connects the divine with the mortals.** By developing this informal axis – perpendicular to the formal North South axis we can achieve something like social, economic, cultural and historical justice.

Developing a vision 13

The Palace of justice should become a **lively place to dwell and study that is integrated locally**. Whereas the building's architectural rhetoric proclaims a dominant and divine language, we'd like to shift its meaning from a nineteenth century courthouse **into an open and shared space to build knowledge and to dwell**.

Developing a vision 14

The justice department is a public service that is in **dialogue with the reality of a unified Europe** with emerging **immigration flows and builds on new realities**.

Developing a vision 15

The Palace of justice should not be an enclave in the city but act as a proper part of the city : it should contain **places to live and conduct research.** We also believe it should **keep its judiciary function** by installing a local peace court at the dome.

Pedestrian Rue Des Laines   **Research**   **Research**   **Peace court**   **Research**   **Housing**   **Pedestrian street**

We suggest to **'turn the building 90°'** with the realisation of a **'people's axis'**, an informal and for all **ages.** The staircase of the Minimes is the ideal setting for a **new informal route between two distinct parts of Brussels.** Walking through this axis, visitors, residents and employees can wander informally and reflect upon life, the future and the past.

We strongly suggest keeping **the east and west facade free from mechanical vehicles.** This should create a pedestrian flow from east to the west (rue de Laines and rue des Minimes). A rolling staircase can be studied in order to maximise the entrance for elderly.

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We would like to erase historical and ethical injustice: by providing **settlement and shelter for the 'displaced' ones.** By subdividing the periphery of the urban 'base' of the Palace of Justice into a set of different housing plots/shelters/rooms. In this way we permanently install **private and social housing** for all ages and layers of society and provide **temporary housing** for homeless people, young families, retired lawyers. An equal and proper system for maintenance and division of the maintenance costs should be designed for the outer skin of the building.

Developing a vision 18
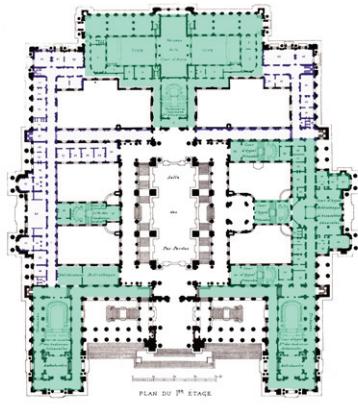
The existing building is designed according to an ancient rhetoric of justice: this needs a contemporary and more 'down to earth' transcription. Our proposal allocates **the dome as the ideal setting for a small local court house.**
A separate and highly secured entrance is achieved through a **central glazed elevator** connecting the urban base with the new peace justice court..

Developing a vision 19

The former courtrooms located in the horizontal base can be **developed as places for research, study and building knowledge**. The building can become a prestigious place for study like the 'institut du monde Arabe' in Paris. We see a future in a centre for Sublime Architecture ie the architectural 'Uncanny' and 'Unhomely'. In other words, a respectable institute that is specialized in studying the phenomena of contemporary nomads (climatic, economic, political refugees, sense seekers, students, etc)

Developing a vision 20
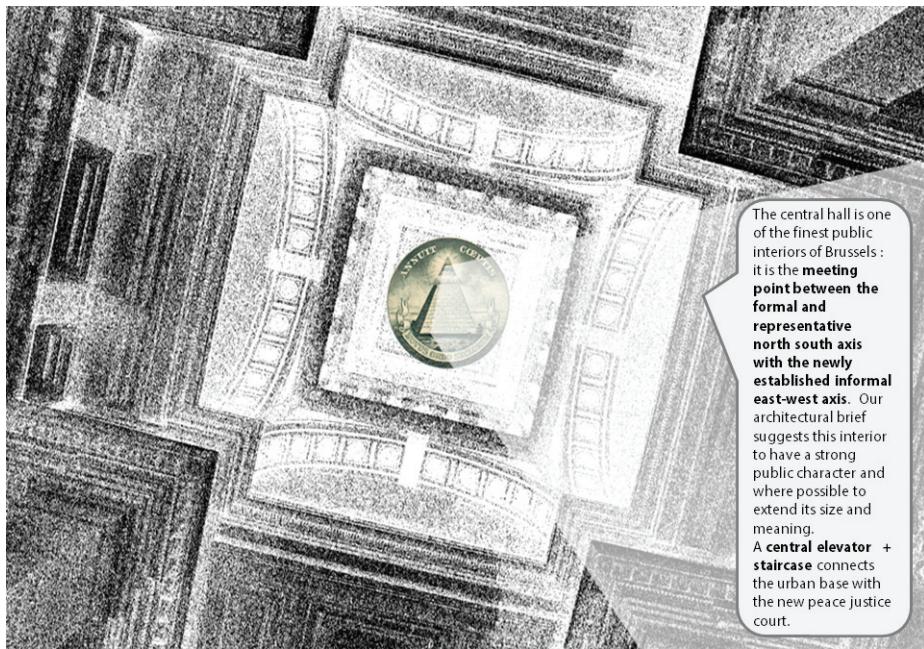
The central hall is one of the finest public interiors of Brussels : it is the **meeting point between the formal and representative north south axis with the newly established informal east-west axis**. Our architectural brief suggests this interior to have a strong public character and where possible to extend its size and meaning.
A **central elevator + staircase** connects the urban base with the new peace justice court.

Developing a vision 21

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The courtyards provide light and air to people studying and living in the building. Our proposal aims **at extending the courtyards towards street level and various directions.**

The courtyard is the best place to regenerate the extinct character (the demolished part of the Marollen neighbourhood and the former function as a palace of justice). As a place for symbolic reminiscence of the past, it can serve as a **place for recollection without nostalgia.** Suggestions of a courtyard design are **a peripatic courtyard / an animal's farm /a swimming pool / a glazed reader's corner /a children's garden / vertical garden**

Developing a vision 22

The public interior is extended to the street level . Thus the east and west gate becomes a pedestrian threshold free of mechanical means.

Developing a vision 23

Introduction

The palace of justice is built on a **collective and individual trauma.** It is a heroic and tragic example of massive intercity deportation, collective displacement, monocultural logic and historical gentrification. Imagining the future via The Palace of Justice inevitably evokes the act of imagining the Place of Justice. We believe imagining the future is impossible without reinventing the politics in order to communicate in an age of global society. We believe this question is utterly and inevitably related to **confrontations**.

The future should be the very act **of reinventing and re-evaluating the vocabulary of values in order to confront the past**, the tautology of law, the complexity of the modern risk society and the need for a reflexive democracy in an age of post-industrialism. We believe it should be an almost intuitive research for a structural de-territorialisation in a terrain of organs without bodies. Therefore we proclaim any endeavour without such engagements is futile, an error.

We defy the conception that any spatial proposal will be the whole of equity. Without a formal competition brief, any proposal is impossible if one is even inclined. Only after the spatial proposal reaches its limits, then we will be able to catch a glimpse of the **universe of possibilities** and acknowledge contingency as such. We rather believe that the confrontation should **start with the obscure and traumatic origin of the foundation of the Palace of Justice**. It should start with the confrontation with the historical 'trias politica' of Montesquieu and its consecutive sublime deconstruction by **proposing the people's axis**. The confrontation starts rather by offering an **argument on how it is possible to formalise a structure without a form**.

Finally, our project develops around the possibility to reinvent politics via constant reforming of the space, as a dwelling unit, as a social research centre, as a living community space instead of conforming within a taxidermist fetishism. **It all starts here, as an argument, as a brief.**

0.1 Analysis and evaluation

In many ways, the Palace of Justice is a paradoxical building as it **displaced yet perfectly set** in the urban landscape. The interior emits an intriguing balance between light and darkness. The placement on the hillside is not very balanced: the building rests on and absorbs a steep slope. If this slope is not truly public domain, it creates and persists the existence of borders between neighbourhoods.

The abundant monumental style of the building preaches a 19th-century rhetoric of justice that is perceived as both qualitative and problematic. The succession of overwhelming spaces bears **witness of a baroque logic and imagination**: a triumphant and impressive development of spatial exuberance with its climax in the central hall, the so called 'Salle des Pas Perdus'.

Unfortunately this language is **not up to date with today's standards** on transparency, safety regulation, readability etc. The building possesses an interesting articulation of two main architectonic parts: one can distinguish two important components in the spatial composition. The **horizontal base** is directed towards the city and earthly matters. The **vertical dome** emanates a sense of immateriality and divinity.

The Sublime manifests itself in the extreme contrasts in one singular architectural gesture. They invite the visitor to wander and explore, but also to contemplate and reflect. One can notice a relative darkness throughout the day, at night the building is lit up and becomes a nocturnal urban landmark. The void of the 'Salle des Pas Perdus' speaks towards the unconsciousness and fulfils one with a 'horror vacui', a fear to be punished by a higher order of things; The adjacent justice rooms and sparsely lit tables serve as a safe refuge.

Rethinking and Unsettling The P(a)lace of Justice :
An 'inclusive' place for Contemporary Nomads, Local Justice, building knowledge

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0.2 Traumatic history and new needs
Palace of justice anno 1800 – trauma
*A vibrant neighbourhood's expelled to the edge of the city. A process of **gentrification** takes place and unsettles the Marollen neighbourhood. This traumatic event unsettles the city's balance between high and low, rich and poor.*

Palace of justice anno 1850 – 2010: working place
*The palace is the place to speak justice but is also a working and meeting place. The building witnesses many **lived experiences** like joy, relief and disappointment for the accused, convicts and families.*

Palace of justice anno 2010 – the modern standards of justice have outgrown the size of the current building
*The expanding and changing responsibilities of the justice department together with a weak security system make the building **difficult to maintain**. Parallel to this, there's a **growing need for new housing** as the population of Brussels is expected to increase with 200 000 persons the next decade.*

0.3 Developing a vision for the Palace of Justice

0.31 Conceptualisation of the people's axis
If we read the urban layout of Brussels, we can see that the plan of the Warande Park is the transcription and formalization of the 'Montesquieu' concept of **'trias politica'** (department of justice control and controlled by policymakers and royalty and vice). One can clearly read the triangle: the palace of Justice, the Royal Palace and Parliament are carefully in balance and opposed from one another. According to this 'trias politica', the justice department should be neutral and independent towards the other political actors and society, but arguably the building's history doesn't coordinate with this principle. The supposed neutrality – one can qualify it as indifference- of some actors within the justice department has gradually led to a rethinking and reflection upon its new role in present society. We think that any architectonic intervention should ideally embody this reflection.

We strongly believe in a reinterpretation and deconstruction of the formal triad by adding **a new informal axis:** the staircase of the Minimes towards the higher part of the city. This informal axis represents the multitude of speech for all nations worldwide and the local inhabitants. These nations can be presented, spoken and heard. The palace is not a palace anymore but a place for the people. We believe that the existing building - with all its faults and qualities - enables us to investigate another form of justice. This axis is a contemporary translation that is different from the formal settings of the past. **It connects the lower city with the higher parts, connects the civilian with the governmental apparatus, and connects the divine with the mortals**. By developing this informal axis – perpendicular to the existing formal North South axis - we believe we can achieve something like social, economic, cultural and historical justice.

0.32 Dwelling
The Palace of justice should become a **lively place to dwell and study that is integrated locally**. Whereas the building's architectural rhetoric proclaims a dominant and divine language, we'd like to shift its meaning from a nineteenth century courthouse **into an open and shared space to build knowledge and to dwell**.
The future of the building can't and should not be in becoming a huge asylum to solve all the problems of the world, but we believe it to become a **centre for displaced persons in general** (for example: the asylum seeker, the sense seeker, soul searcher) This can be of temporary or more permanent nature. The outside periphery of the building can be considered for short term and long term housing. The patios provide light and comfort for the contemporary nomad.

0.32 Rethinking Justice
The justice department should be able to modernize its apparatus by attracting enthusiastic and qualified personnel. This department is a public service that is in dialogue with the reality of a unified Europe with emerging immigration flows and builds on new realities. The high dome is a dominant and limited place within the whole P(a)lace of justice – that provides an inclusive and secured place to speak justice.

Rethinking and Unsettling The P(a)lace of justice :
An 'inclusive' place for Contemporary Nomads, Local justice, building knowledge
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0.4 A prospective brief
0.41 Turning the building 90°: the realisation of a 'people's axis'
The staircase of the Minimes is the ideal setting for a new informal route between two distinct parts of Brussels. Walking through this axis, visitors, residents and employees can wander informally and reflect upon life, the future and the past. We strongly suggest to keep the east and west facade free from mechanical vehicles. This should create a pedestrian flow from east to the west (rue de Laines and rue des Minimes). A rolling staircase can be studied in order to maximise the entrance for elderly. In the building a connection should be made to ensure visual and pedestrian continuity between the two sides of the building.
0.42 Erasing historical and ethical injustice: housing plots for contemporary nomads
*Subdivision of the periphery of the urban 'base' of the Palace of Justice into a set of different housing plots/shelters/rooms.
*Installing **private and social housing** for all ages and layers of society.
***Temporary housing** for the homeless, students, young families, retired lawyers etc. An equal and proper system for maintenance and division of the maintenance costs should be designed for the outer skin of the building.
0.43 The dome : court for small claims (Justice of the peace).
The building possesses an ancient rhetoric of justice: this needs a contemporary transcription. A suggestion would be to allocate the dome as the ideal setting for a small local court house. A separate and highly secured entrance should be achieved. An example is an internal elevator.
0.44 Developing the 'court' yards into places of character
The courtyards provide light and air to people studying and living in the building. The present courtyards are like residues into the building's mass. Our proposal aims at extending the courtyards towards street level and various directions. The courtyard is the best place to regenerate the extinct character (the demolished part of the Marollen neighbourhood, its former function as a palace of justice). As a place for symbolic reminiscence of the past, it can serve as a place for recollection without nostalgia. Suggestions of a courtyard design – a peripatic courtyard / an animal's farm / a swimming pool / a glazed reader's corner / a children's garden / a park/ ...
0.45 Creation of a large public interior:
The central hall is one of the finest public interiors of Brussels: it is the meeting point between the formal and representative north south axis with the newly established informal east-west axis.. Our architectural brief suggests this interior to have a strong public character and where possible to extend its size and meaning axis. The public interior is extended to the street level (the east and west gate to becomes a pedestrian threshold)
0.46 A place for building knowledge (Cfr l'institut du Monde Arabe by Jean Nouvel)
The former courtrooms located in the horizontal base can be developed as places for research, study and building knowledge. The building can become a prestigious place for study. We give a few suggestions. A centre for Sublime Architecture ie the architectural 'Uncanny' and 'Unhomely'. In other words a respectable institute that is specialized in studying the phenomena of contemporary nomads (climatic, economic, political refugees, sense seekers, students, etc)

Rethinking and Unsettling The P(a)lace of justice :
An 'inclusive' place for Contemporary Nomads, Local justice, building knowledge
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Often left unspecified in architectural discourse, the unheimliche (or the uncanny) emerges as a puzzling concept that operates in various disciplines throughout history and geography. The unheimliche concept continuously moves between disciplines, minds, periods and places. In so doing, the workings of the unheimliche curiously articulate them as allied together.

This thesis underlines the ethical vocation of interior architecture as a discipline that goes beyond vanity. Interior architecture is driven by darker and 'natural' forces over which no observer or designer can exert full control. The unheimliche is foremost a strategy for learning from an abject experience. By drawing on and learning from affective issues, observers, students, readers, and aspiring designers do not hide but rather share their vulnerabilities and weaknesses: the unheimliche drives the making of an 'affective turn'. In so doing, it can paradoxically strengthen these stakeholders and their integrity.

The unheimliche emphasizes the power of the existing. Instead of inventing novel solutions, the unheimliche focuses on re-creating the pre-existing. This research points to the urgency of reusing existing edifices. Thus instead of making bold designer's statements, this thesis pleads for purposefully instilling 'weak' and 'silent' and almost invisible interventions.

The unheimliche surfaces as an in-between force in interior architecture. In light of the unheimliche workings, earlier questions such as 'Who is the designer?'become irrelevant and can be replaced by the following question: 'What do interiors and their objects do to the learner and how do they influence us, our institutions and our ideas?' Ultimately, the unheimliche approach offers no ready-made tools engineered to change or reinvent the self. At most, the unheimliche merely creates a multiple experience, a temporary double, an alter ego that may expose one's weaknesses but ultimately strengthens one's capacity to face the complexities of space and time.