

THE UNCANNY MISE-EN-SCÈNE IN ALAIN RESNAIS' *LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD*,
ROBERTO ROSSELLINI'S *VOYAGE IN ITALY*, AND PETER GREENAWAY'S *THE
BELLY OF AN ARCHITECT*

By

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To my parents

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This thesis is a close reading and synthesis of three European art films: Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* (*L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, 1961), Roberto Rossellini's *Voyage in Italy* (*Viaggio in Italia*, 1954), and Peter Greenaway's *The Belly of an Architect* (1987). The films exhibit an uncanny mise-en-scène which serves to reveal character psychology. This paper analyzes elements of the mise-en-scène, such as on-site setting, sets, décor, camera work, and properties, and their relationship to the presentation of character psychology. I use Freud's "The Uncanny" to describe the aesthetic of these films, which in various ways exhibits repetition, the double, and the return of repressed thoughts. In the films, I discuss instances of the body, architecture, space, memory, and repetition and reproduction of art.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* (*L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, 1961), Roberto Rossellini's *Voyage in Italy* (*Viaggio in Italia*, 1954), and Peter Greenaway's *The Belly of an Architect* (1987) each presents a mise-en-scène that plays an especially important role in the film. In the three films, I analyze elements of the mise-en-scène, such as setting, camera work, and properties, and their relationship to the presentation of character psychology. The mise-en-scène serves to reveal character psychology; especially in *Marienbad*, for example, it reveals more psychology than the characters do. An aesthetic of the uncanny characterizes the films' mise-en-scènes; In order to understand them, I appropriate Freud's essay "The Uncanny" where he attempts to define this aesthetic category. Of the elements that Freud defines as signifiers of the uncanny, repetition and the occurrence of the double are most useful in understanding the films' mise-en-scènes.

The three narrative films that I discuss have weak, almost banal plots. In these instances, it is not the plot that carries the films' movement; the films' formal development lies in its mise-en-scène. Peter Brunette's chapter on *Voyage to Italy* in his book *Roberto Rossellini* is particularly helpful in understanding at large the three films I discuss. Brunette quotes Rossellini: "I consider *Viaggio* to be very important in my work. It was a film which rested on something very subtle—the variations in a couple's relationship under the influence of a third person: the exterior world surrounding them" (155). In other words, Rossellini considers the mise-en-scène to be a third character in the film. He suggests that mise-en-scène becomes as important as a main character in a narrative film, and in so doing, suggests a subordination of plot to

mise-en-scène. Brunette points out that one critic objected that the film did not “give enough information, especially psychological information about the characters” (158). True, but rather, I argue that in *Voyage* and the other two films, the psychological information lies not in the characters, but in the films’ uncanny mise-en-scènes. The mise-en-scène reveals character psychology where character action fails to show it, but it also aesthetically moves the films forward. By this I mean that, in being such an important element in the films, the mise-en-scène provides the impetus, the formal aspect, which gives the films their *raison-d’être*. A film must have some formal device that carries its progression, as Gilberto Perez explains, “Films not dealing with a dramatic situation must devise a formal alternative to the dramatic plot, another kind of structure adequate to the demands of the concrete image and able to give the film its movement and its unity” (159). Thus the uncanny mise-en-scène serves to carry the movement in the absence of strong plot development and its reliance on character drama as in traditional narrative film. With their reliance on mise-en-scène rather than drama to create interest, the films are thus more cinematic and less theatrical.

The uncanny nature of the mise-en-scènes particularly impels the forward movement of the films through the uncanny’s projection of anxiety. The uncanny is a “particular species of the frightening” and in this, produces anxiety in he who experiences it (Freud, 125). If, through the mise-en-scène, the films display the uncanny, then they also move through anxiety as an *emotion* and project anxiety onto the spectator. The uncanny mise-en-scènes produce spaces of anxiety that the characters inhabit and navigate through and produce anxiety in both the characters and the spectators. In this, the films reveal a fundamental tenant of modernity: a tendency

for modern life to be permeated in anxiety because of the conditions of modernity—the decline of stable communities and the rise of uncertainty. While the main characters in the films--the woman A and man X in *Marienbad*, Katherine in *Voyage*, and Kracklite in *Belly*-- choose to be abroad, these environments cause them feel alienated within the foreign communities but also cause a rupture in their significant relationships with the other characters in the films: the woman A with man X and man M in *Marienbad*, Katherine with her husband Alex in *Voyage*, and Kracklite with his wife Louisa in *Belly*. The decline of stable communities creates isolation, and although the main characters are surrounded by people, they are psychologically isolated within themselves through their alienation in their foreign environments.

In *Marienbad*, elements of the *mise-en-scène*, particularly setting and camera work, carry the film rather than narrative or character. The *mise-en-scène* carries the emotion, as the characters often act deadpan. We hear very little dialogue that explains their emotional states and we are presented with very little background information about the characters. With the names A, M, and X, the characters are like variables in an algebraic equation. Each character plays a certain role, but beyond that, they are not distinguishable from the other guests at the hotel. In all, the actors are really part of the *mise-en-scène*; they are fixtures within the hotel.

Voyage makes use of the narrative trope wherein a foreign environment provides the impetus for character change. In *Voyage*, the settings, specifically the various sites in Naples that Katherine visits which punctuate the film, serve to bring about her experience of the uncanny. The sites she visits are uncanny in themselves and cause

Katherine anxiety which brings about a personal experience of the uncanny, a psychological welling up of repressed emotions.

In *Belly*, setting and properties serve to delineate Kracklite's psychological and physical deterioration. Kracklite struggles with a dialectic between architecture and the body in his attempt to achieve a personal legacy. A dense, artistic, and symbolic mise-en-scène characterizes Greenaway's films, including *Belly*. His mise-en-scènes are carefully composed, often filled with artwork and various textures, from marble to fabrics, and make use of color schemes and symmetric compositions.

I use the notion of the Freudian uncanny as a tool to understand the use of visual and narrative repetition in the films and the aesthetic effect this repetition creates. Sigmund Freud's three part essay, "The Uncanny," attempts to formulate an aesthetic of anxiety. Freud identifies repetition as one of the main elements of the uncanny and the films present repetition in various ways. In *Marienbad*, repetition in details of the setting and narrative events serve to create a feeling of the uncanny. In *Voyage*, the film reveals repetition with Katherine's visits to the various uncanny sites. In *Belly*, Kracklite employs repetition and reproduction of images in order to stave off death. His body becomes uncanny to him, strangely familiar, as his stomach illness is at first inexplicable and obsesses him. The uncanny is that which is strangely familiar. Narratively, each of the three films chart the dissolution of a couple's relationship while they are abroad and the alienation that the protagonist experiences. As he or she is abroad, the protagonist experiences the foreign, and in turn, this environment causes the protagonist to become a foreigner to him or herself.

The three films' mise-en-scènes each express prominence of a certain mode of artistic style: in *Marienbad* it is the baroque, in *Voyage* the classical, and in *Belly* the neoclassical. The order that I discuss the films fits with the chronological development of these styles—baroque, classical, and neoclassical. I begin my discussion of the films with *Marienbad*, whose mise-en-scène emphasizes set decor and intricate camera work which create a hermetic world that is the Marienbad hotel and which signify the limits of the diegesis. I then move to *Voyage*, where repetition of setting—the uncanny sites that Katherine visits in Naples—predominates and brings about Katherine's personal experience of the uncanny. The locations are filmed on site, in the neorealist style that Rossellini developed earlier in his career. The onsite locations open this film more to the outside world than the totally hermetic *Marienbad*, yet *Voyage* is portrayed almost always through Katherine's eyes, as Peter Brunette quotes Andre Bazin: "It is a Naples as filtered through the consciousness of the heroine. . . . It is a mental landscape" (160). Finally, we move north to Rome in *Belly*, where setting plays an important part, but in a different way than *Voyage*. In *Belly*, the Roman setting is infused with the deliberate placement of properties, such as architectural models that copy buildings in the real-world setting. Of the three films, *Belly* is most in dialogue with the real world, with Rome, yet so to it holds back through its carefully constructed mise-en-scène, particularly in Greenaway's compositions of art, sculpture, models, and fabrics which create a distance from reality and reveal a constructed nature.

CHAPTER 2
LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD: THE UNCANNY SPACE OF MEMORY

Last Year at Marienbad takes place at a luxurious hotel, which was once a palace. The screenplay labels the three main characters of the film as the woman A, the man X, and the man M. They remain nameless in the actual film. Man X tries to convince the woman A that they met and had an affair last year.¹ He tries to convince her to run away with him this year. A resists M's advances. Also, A has a supposedly stern husband M, although we are never certain of their exact relationship; they could be incestually related. Only the film's title and a few scarce dialogue points hint that the film does indeed take place in Marienbad.² Thus, the French guests are abroad.

The world of *Marienbad* is stagnant. Character X, in voiceover, describes the baroque and gloomy hotel as the "edifice of a bygone era," with carpet so thick that it absorbs all sound. Empty, endless corridors lead to empty salons, "heavy with ornamentation." The salons and bedrooms exhibit an excess of ornamentation; gilded designs cover the walls and ceilings, leaving no surface plain.

The statues that line these extensive corridors are forever frozen, haunting, and observing. They watch the aristocratic guests, but at the same time, the guests become statues themselves, as the camera freezes the characters as they mingle after a theater performance at the hotel. In voice over, X says that "no one ever discussed any topic that would cause excitement. . . . It was always the same conversation," and the guests

¹ Roy Armes observes that X, played by an Italian actor, speaks French with "a slight accent" (109). While only noticeable to a fluent French speaker, this accent contributes to a sense of the uncanny, of the foreign.

² Armes points out that the palace/hotel only exists in the film, as the *mise-en-scène* is a composite of three baroque castles: Nymphenburg, Schleissheim, and Amalienburg (111).

play their card games in silence. As the main characters move languidly through the hotel, the other guests stand motionless in clusters much like the stone statues that decorate the halls. The camera freezes them in their wealth-induced ennui; they dress elegantly for the evening and become fixtures analogous to the surrounding architecture.

Resnais presents the warped, sick nature of the European elite idling their time at the hotel. Roy Armes suggests, “perhaps it takes place in an asylum or clinic” (103). While the *mise-en-scène* does not suggest this, that is, we see no clinicians, it does suggest a labyrinth of the mind, where the patient or “guest” cannot escape. X’s voice over warns that there is no escape from the hotel. Pauline Kael, in her humorous critic’s essay “The Come-Dressed-As-the-Sick-Soul-of-Europe Parties,” suggests it is a place where the “sick souls of Europe” come home to roost (186). In this way, the hotel is a representation of the sickness of the elite’s Europe.

Versailles served as model for the palace at Marienbad. A strong correlation in terms of environment exists between the nobility who resided at Versailles under Louis XIV and the guests at Marienbad. The film’s setting’s similarity to Versailles suggests that the leisure of the aggregated nobility under Louis XIV has continued. Now residing in the Marienbad guests, the germ of Louis XIV’s attempt at consolidating power at Versailles continues in its warped form. Like the guests at Marienbad, the gathered nobility at Versailles passed the time through daily ritual—entertainments such as playing card games, dancing, attending plays, going to shooting galleries, and walking in the gardens. Louis XIV left this legacy to the twentieth century, where for the aristocratic Marienbad guests this leisure is a horror—the repetition has produced

extreme ennui, a loss of vitality, and stagnation. However, Marienbad erases Versailles' ritual of dining: we never see any guests eating. In this way, they are ghosts, not requiring any food, haunting the hotel interior and grounds. Like ghosts, they don't cast shadows in the garden.

The film's score complements the uncanny mise-en-scène. The organ music that scores the film is "liturgical" in many scenes (see also Feeney). At points, the score swells to reveal moments of interiorized horror. It swells to a demented, repetitive motif as two men aimlessly discuss bad weather "last year at Marienbad," or was it the year before that had the cold spell? In one scene of ballroom dancing, the organ accompanies with a demented waltz, the guests dancing mechanically and stilted. The music comes to a halt, and the guests stop dancing at once: dropping their arms and separating from each other. In another instance, X and A attend a concert of two string players. We don't hear string music, but an overlay of devastating non-diegetic organ music.

Anthony Vidler's book *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* helps to explain *Last Year at Marienbad's* mise-en-scène. Vidler quotes art historian Heinrich Wölfflin on the affect of the baroque:

The momentary impact of the baroque is powerful, but soon leaves us with a certain sense of desolation. It does not convey a state of present happiness, but a feeling of anticipation, of something yet to come, of dissatisfaction and restlessness rather than fulfillment. We have no sense of release, but rather of having been drawn into the tension of an emotional condition. (89)

At Marienbad, the guests came to relax, but the baroque ornamentation is anything but restful; it's busy and exhausting. Furthermore, the baroque is associated

with giving the impression of “irregular breathing” and holds a formalized tension in its design.

Vidler’s comments about perspective in the baroque exemplify the *mise-en-scène*’s ornate ceilings in the Marienbad hotel. At Marienbad, the *tromp-d’oeil* ceilings are painted so as to show depth which is not there, mainly through the use of shadows. Visually, we are tricked into seeing more space than is really there. Vidler describes the baroque ceilings as having “ethereal and potentially infinite space” (91). He also explains, “baroque space had been essentially treated as a question of depth, of freedom from limits, but thus equally of anxiety, ambiguity and disturbance, distortion and conflict” (94). The baroque ceilings, for example, can only be experienced optically, and not through physical contact, so the seeming truth about the space is confirmed through the eye. This trick expansion of space thus creates the expansion of anxiety, as Vidler explains that “in the baroque, the capacity of the human body to empathize with the building was stretched to deformity” (90).

In addition to the anxiety produced by the baroque ornamentation, agoraphobia is also central to understanding the role the formal gardens play in the film. Vidler’s writing concerning agoraphobia in *Warped Space* helps to explain its representation in the film. Vidler cites the spatial emptiness, as embodied in constructed spaces, such as in city squares or on large boulevards, which “attacks” people who are particularly sensitive to these spatial voids. The empty space attacks the participant, whenever he or she must cross a public square or walk down a deserted street. The participant projects that the empty space must be filled. One cannot do that with his or her body, and thus one attempts to fill the void with psychological projections, usually projecting

negative emotions such as fear and anxiety, or sometimes projecting desire. Vidler cites the study of Westphal's engineer who "stated that he felt less anxiety in a large space not surrounded by houses than in a space of the same size in a city: open nature was refreshing, the city was terrifying" (29). Thus we see these man-made, deliberately delineated spaces as a source of anxiety.

As well, Vidler quotes Legrand's notion of the transformation of city space from claustrophobia to agoraphobia (32). For example, Haussmann's projects of opening up Paris into wide boulevards did away with much of the claustrophobia of narrow streets and tangled alleyways, but replaced this with spaces that cause agoraphobia for some people. The synthetic nature of these delineations cause unbounded space to be captured, and to seemingly sit brooding, stagnant, waiting for the weak soul to pass by, in whom the empty space can demand to be filled. One of Legrand's clients, "Madame B," an agoraphobe, was afraid to step outside her apartment: she "filled her rooms with furniture, pictures, statuettes, and old tapestries to reduce their spaciousness. She lived in a veritable bazaar: the void frightened her" (31). Here we see Madame B attempting to fill the space with objects and attempting to reduce the void which causes her anxiety.

Vidler's notions of space and anxiety help to explain the outdoor formal gardens in the film. They are not weighted down by the unceasing arabesques that characterize the interior of the hotel, but nevertheless, the outdoors carry a tension of their own, namely in their defining of empty space. We note the possibility of woodlands surrounding the hotel and formal gardens, yet what we see at their edges are carefully placed trees that block our view of any possibility of the natural. In the garden, we see

nature, but it has been strangled into submission in the form of cone-shaped topiaries, spherical bushes, and rectangular hedges. The hedges are regularly spaced, and line a broad gravel avenue, with smaller paths to the side and around a circular reflecting pond. When X pursues A with his memories of what happened last year, she hurries out onto the terrace. To escape X's advances, she seemingly seeks out the fresh air, nature, but the formal gardens provide no respite. There, she fills the garden with her psychological projections. The large expanse of the garden, of this delineated empty space, accosts her with its "desire" to be filled. In essence, the formal gardens provoke A's anxiety through their expanses of open space.

Let us consider the scene in detail. In the hotel, X speaks to A about her past fearfulness, and he says that when he came to her in her room he took her, "probably not by force." At this, she hurries out to the terrace and the image of the formal gardens strikes her. We see a shot of the gardens in over-exposure, and thus with a hazy white overlay. When we and A see the garden image, the music score climaxes with large, frightful chords from the organ. We see the wide gravel corridor in the garden, eerily white from over-exposure. The corridor continues straight to its vanishing point. A is struck not only by this empty space, but also by its extension into infinity. She is confronted with an infinite space in which to project her anxieties and desires. After the shot of the garden, the camera swings to the left 180 degrees in a rapid, blurred movement to capture A as she swoons against the wall, her hand resting on her forehead as if overwhelmed by the glaring image. This shot too is slightly overexposed, and A, in her white dress, fades into the white wall. This shot/ reverse shot produced

without a cut, but rather a rapid 180 degree pan, reveals A's interior distress.

Camerawork, an element of the *mise-en-scène*, rather than editing, produces this effect.

At the end of the film, A elopes with X-- we get a full view of the back of the hotel in the night as seen from the gardens. Only a few windows of the hotel are lit. X narrates his voiceover in past tense, focusing on the details of the gardens that were:

devoid of trees, flowers, or any kind of vegetation—gravel, stone, marble and straight lines marked out rigid spaces, areas devoid of mystery. At first glance, it seemed impossible to lose your way—At first glance. Down straight paths, between statues with frozen gestures and granite slabs—where even now you were losing your way, forever, in the stillness of the night—alone with me. (qtd. from film)

We hear this first description of the garden at the end of the film, while visually the garden is in the dark, serving as a framing device for the hotel. On the other hand, at the beginning of the film, for example, we hear X's narration about the hotel in voiceover with tracking shots of its interior halls and room details. Thus there is a reflexivity of content at the beginning and end of the film. However, at the end, the voiceover description is denied the optic; we and A have become blind in the night. The garden becomes a more ambiguous presence in the night, at the end of the film. It is present, yet veiled in darkness. Areas that were "devoid of mystery" during the day become a place to lose one's way at night. Yet at the same time, X describes the gardens, and his voiceover seemingly conquers the once overbearing space of the formal gardens; to use language, to name and label controls and gives dominion over the space. It solidifies X's influence over A. He now "owns" the space where he leads her away.

In X's description, we sense the utter lifelessness of the gardens—devoid of vegetation, marked by rock and inorganic rigid spaces. It is a dead space where there should be life. In the voiceover, we sense the centrality of the garden, as embodied in

Vidler's notion of "empty space," in informing A's psychology. At one instance in the film after fighting with M, she is in her room and looks out the window onto the gardens. Here, the organ music swells, intensifying the scene. She moves away from the window and walks around the room, hugging the walls and large mirrors. Elsewhere X notes that she has a view of the garden from her room. For A, the garden is this external, eternal presence representing a threat to her stability. It is the blank canvas on which she projects her fears and desires.

The play of memory and space is central to the film. X and A's memories contradict each other when they discuss A's bedroom where they may have had their assignation last year. There is consensus between the characters as to the existence of a mirror above the vanity, but is the second mirror above the fireplace or the chest? Is there a mirror above the fireplace or a tableau? Resnais depicts both of these scenarios in various flashbacks, or one could argue that the time of these scenarios that take place in A's bedroom are temporally ambiguous: they could be in the past, present, or future. And further, was A wearing a white feathered dress or a black one? Again, we are presented with both scenarios. In one instance, X asks A to remember the room in order to remember the experience—highlighting the importance of the space as embodying the event, and thus triggering the memory. He asks her to remember details of the room, asking her "What type of bed was it?" and "What was out the window?" A resists these questions, as she wants to deny their meeting last year and the remembrance of a detail may provoke a flood of memories that she has repressed. But let us focus on the room as a physical space that embodies memory. Sometimes we see different rooms: both rooms are baroque in style, but one is much more heavily

ornate with arabesque designs on the walls and molding while the other is much more ornamentally simplistic.

Marienbad leaves us with many ambiguities. We see the importance of space in constituting memory in the ambiguity of the room(s) in which the assignation between X and A took place. In addition, we see a scene in the room where M shoots A. The room is central to the memory of what took place there, and at the same time, the room is represented differently in each character's mind. We know that X and A each conceive of the room differently in their conversation about it. However, when we see scenes in the room, we cannot ascribe most of them to a particular viewpoint, or even to a particular time frame. So we see the embodiment of memory (or action, if we are not sure of its placement in time) as taking place in a specific space. The space is what gives the "event" its substance, yet at the same time, the details of the space remain ambiguous.

Some critics have seen the film as revolving around X's past rape of A. Alain Robbe-Grillet's screenplay includes a rape scene, but Resnais chose to exclude it (Leutrat, 54).³ Many of the cuts to A's room happen in the context of "the time X went to A's room." For example, X and A discuss this time last year at the hotel bar, which has an overall dark texture. We see quick flashes between the dark bar and A's bright white room with her in it. The flashes, or shots, of the white room elongate in succession and depict A's repressed memory breaking to the surface of consciousness. Through these flashes, A drops her glass, it shatters, and all attention gravitates to her. Action ceases in order to focus on the servant picking up the glass. The reading is even more

³ Jefferson Kline argues for the centrality of the rape scene in his *Screening the Text: Intertextuality in New Wave French Cinema*.

complex: there is inconsistency when X says, “one night I came to your room,” but the room is fully bright, not night at all. Between the cuts from the bar to the white room, the camera moves from right to left during the bar scene shots. It first focuses on X, then frames both X and A, then on A, as X’s verbal recollection forces itself on A’s memory. The editing suggests that first it is X who conjures the image, transfers it to A, and then A accepts it as true. In the white room, A screams as X approaches her.

We get a similar instance when A, in contemplation of the past event, lets out a horrid scream and all attention is on her. The broken glass, the screams, and in addition the motif of broken high heel shoes, point to a symbolism of rape and violence. From the bar scene, the flashes elongate in duration, and we are left with a shot of A in her room while she contemplates a pile of her high heels, perhaps some of which are broken. This links thematically with two separate scenes of A walking in the gardens with a broken heel. In both, she holds the broken shoe while she stumbles along the path with her other shoe intact. If we consider the possibility of rape, then through this violence, we see A “maimed.” Or, perhaps she used her heel to fend off X’s advances. Whatever may have transpired, in the film we and the characters only have access to the past through their memories, and they are shaped by the characters’ current desires and fears. This evokes Freud’s “screen memories,” more aptly translated from the German as “cover memories,” where created memories, bearing details of a repressed memory, cover this repressed memory (15).

We see this ambiguity working in the two scenes of A in the garden. In one scene we see her walking away from the hotel: she holds her broken heel, and stumbles along looking disheveled—she is alone and it is windy and cloudy, hardly a day to be outside.

The second scene occurs later in the film. This time, X accompanies her on a sunny day. He assists her when her heel breaks, and they walk back to the hotel together. Scene one could be seen as a memory of her fleeing the hotel after the rape or assignation in her room. This memory is conceived in her present fear of X. On the other hand, scene two could be seen as a memory constructed out of her desire to elope with X, leaving M. If read in this way, the detail of the event, the broken shoe, is carried over into this screen memory. The possible rape is suppressed in her desire to leave M's suffocating presence and in X's ability to change her situation. Her desire to elope may simply be predicated on the notion that the escape will provide excitement in an otherwise stagnant existence, as embodied in life at the hotel.

Memories haunt the hotel in *Marienbad*; the film portrays the hotel as an uncanny house. The hotel situates itself within the realm of the uncanny by its presence as temporary, perennial home for its guests. Many of the guests come to the hotel every summer, year after year, and stay for a good deal of time. It is like a second house for its guests, yet there is no heimisch, or feel of the homey. On the contrary, the hotel is a place of the unheimlich, the uncanny. Freud traces the etymology of unheimlich and notes the shift when the homely becomes unhomey; that point when the home becomes a place of secrets, "something removed from the eyes of strangers, hidden" (133). Vidler describes the uncanny as that which

would be sinister, disturbing, suspect, strange; it would be characterized better as "dread" than terror, deriving its force from its very inexplicability, its sense of lurking unease, rather than from any clearly defined source of fear—an uncomfortable sense of haunting rather than a present apparition. (*The Architectural Uncanny*, 23)

In *Marienbad*, the film presents no "clearly defined source of fear," but it presents "dread [rather] than terror" and creates a sense of "lurking unease."

The film is marked by repetition, which Freud identifies as one of the major aspects of the experience of the uncanny (143-5). In the *mise-en-scène*, repetition abounds in the paintings and wall murals that decorate the hotel. Paintings of the formal gardens decorate the hotel, bringing the gardens inside, which “encourage the idea that there is no longer an inside or an outside, only spaces imbricated in each other” (Leutrat, 36). In one instance, for example, the camera zooms into a painting of the garden, down its rows, then pans to the left to show the hotel corridor, linking the two spaces. In one scene, we see two guests playing checkers in front of a wall mural that depicts a checker-tiled court reproduced *mise-en-abîme*. In many scenes, the camera captures characters only through their reflection in mirrors. In one scene, when A is in her room, her image is captured through her reflection in two mirrors: she faces the vanity mirror, and the vanity mirror reflects onto the mirror above the fireplace. The camera captures the image of the mirror above the fireplace.

The repetition that marks the film speaks to repetition compulsion and its manifestation as the desire for mastery. Freud writes, “anything that can remind us of this inner compulsion to repeat is perceived as uncanny” (145). X desires mastery over A; he desires A’s submission to him in her acceptance of last year’s events and desires her to agree to escaping with him. A’s suppression of their assignation and (possible, in both of their minds) rape comes to the surface as A prods her to remember. She has repressed the experience through the year away from Marienbad, and it resurfaces upon her return to the hotel. The experience of the uncanny comes about “when something that should have remained hidden has come into the open” (Freud, quoting Schelling, 148). A wishes for the past to remain hidden, and her anxiety comes from

this uneasiness with the past. The stylistic repetition in the film indicates a repetition compulsion in which:

The repressed seeks to 'return' in the present, whether in the form of dreams, symptoms or acting out: '. . . A thing which has not been understood inevitably reappears; like an unladen ghost, it cannot rest until the mystery has been solved and the spell broken.' (Laplanche, 79)

Both of the main characters attempt a certain mastery over the situation and over the past, although the film's ambiguity suggests a Nietzschean eternal recurrence; perhaps this happens every year at Marienbad; last year in Marienbad occurs forever.

With the beginning voiceover, the camera first tracks across the trompe-d'oeil ceilings, then close up over the baroque wall ornamentation, observing this décor's impact through its use of repetition. Later, the camera tracks through the hallways, and registers the architectural repetition in columns, light fixtures, doorways, decorative statues, and potted palms.⁴ As well, the exterior architecture is based largely on repetition. At the beginning of the film, X's voiceover, which describes the hotel, repeats multiple times. His voiceover begins en media res, first as a whisper, as if it has been cycling for eternity. At the introduction of the film, the voice is disembodied; we have not yet seen X. We notice two elements: the camera's traveling gaze and the disembodied voice, and the two are not necessarily linked together. The ownership of the camera's gaze is in question; Jean-Louis Leutrat writes that "the gaze meandering through this décor lacks a recognizable human origin" (38). A sense of the uncanny is at play here as the camera plays the role of the automaton, the machine as pseudo-entity; it has vision but no soul. Freud cites E. Jentsch's notion that "one of the surest

⁴ Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* owes much to *Marienbad*. Its tracking shots down the hotel allude to *Marienbad* and create a sense of the uncanny, prefiguring and setting up the scenes of horror.

devices for producing slightly uncanny effects through story-telling is to leave the reader wondering whether a particular figure is a real person or an automaton” (135). If we apply this to the camera’s tracking gaze in *Marienbad*, we can see the camera as bearer of the uncanny. It is automaton par excellence, as machine having the power of movement and observation, as Nicholas Royle writes “the entire [film] industry might be defined as a palliative working to repress the uncanniness of the film” (75). Whereas classical editing attempts to hide the uncanniness of film, *Last Year in Marienbad* brings the filmic experience of the uncanny to the fore.

In another instance, the camera plays host to the uncanny through the doubling of X and A’s body within a single shot. The experience of the double is another central motif in the Freudian uncanny (Freud, 141-3). In one scene, X and A mingle with the other guests. The camera identifies them standing together, then slowly pans 180 degrees to the right, leaving their presence. The camera pans across the guests, only to reveal X standing in another location, while he watches A come through a portal at a position 180 degrees from their original. The camera’s pan and continuous shot depict a doubling of the main characters. They deceive the camera’s gaze by moving behind it while its gaze is occupied with capturing the other guests. In this way, their seeming evasion of the camera’s gaze creates a doppelganger effect; they are present in two places at once, if we attribute the temporality of “at once” to the camera’s continuous shot.

T. Jefferson Kline argues that the play within the film mirrors the events in the film’s narrative. The play’s name is *Rosmer*, which alludes to Ibsen’s play *Rosmersholm*, which deals with rape and incest (72-5). The man in the play, speaking

to the woman, seemingly describes the hotel and its guests to the guests who are watching the play: “these still, silent, perhaps long-dead people still guarding the web of corridors along which I advanced to meet you.” More specifically, it reflects X’s advancements towards A. Robbe-Grillet’s screenplay indicates a “rather swift and brutal rape scene” (71). Resnais replaces this with “the brilliant scene in white of [A] in which she seems repeatedly to welcome the viewer with outstretched arms” (71). In this scene, the camera tracks down a corridor, makes a left turn, and enters A’s room. Within the room, there are successive, repetitive shots of the camera tracking towards A with her arms outstretched, her head cocked to the side, with a grimacing smile, almost clown-like, that welcomes the camera’s gaze, and synonymously, X.

The accumulation of uncanny elements in the *mise-en-scène* and repetitive plot elements leads to an understated sense of horror that pervades the film. It conveys a horror of entrapment, of eternal return, of repetitive aimlessness, the horror of people, the horror of the “other”--at times, A seems terrified by X’s advances, but she is not comfortable around M either.

CHAPTER 3 VOYAGE IN ITALY: UNCANNY SITES

Voyage in Italy's style is in many ways opposite that of *Last Year in Marienbad*.

While the baroque marks Marienbad's mise-en-scène, the Neapolitan classical style marks *Voyage*. However, as Katherine visits the classical, pre-Christian sites of Naples, her experience becomes successively strange, baroque, and leads to her psychological breakdown at the excavation site at Pompeii.

In *Voyage in Italy*, a British couple, the Joyces, Alex (George Sanders) and Katherine (Ingrid Bergman) travel to Naples in order to sell their late uncle's house. They are foreigners to each other in a foreign land as Katherine says, "it's the first time we've been really alone since we married," but at the same time notes their growing distance, saying "we are like strangers." From the house, they have views of Vesuvius and Pompeii, places that loom over the narrative and contribute to the film's development.

At the house after lunch, they lounge in the sun on the expansive patio, away from the tumult of the Naples streets. The patio has a complete view of the surrounding landscape, but is detached from the inner city throngs. In her discussion of the film, Guiliana Bruno quotes John L. Stoddard's travel lecture: "the tourist feasts his eyes only on the grand, incomparable view, but in the heart of the city . . . noise, rags, dirt, torrents of humanity inhabit the streets" (371). Here we see the tourist's distinction and favoring of the grand vistas and contrary dismay at seeing "the heart of the city." Katherine leaves the patio's seclusion to site-see in Naples; Alex is not interested in accompanying her. In the film, she and we largely view the tumult of inner city Naples through her car windows, still a relatively protected space. It is more of an experience

than remaining on the patio, yet we never see her walking the streets or interacting with the locals. The Bentley she drives remains a safe haven for the tourist, who finds Naples' exoticism disconcerting. Bruno points out the orientalist nature of the city, to the eyes of the British: "Alex holds good the idea that Naples is even more Eastern than the East. There is no sign of European quarters in this uncolonized, rather uncolonizable city of exotic habits" (373).

Katherine travels first to the National Museum in Naples, where she encounters its Greek and Roman statues. Here, the camera moves fluidly, encircling them. In a striking shot/ reverse shot, a statue of a young discus thrower confronts Katherine face to face. We see a look of surprise from Katherine, then a reverse shot of the thrower's piercing eyes. In the reverse shot, coming off the shot of Katherine, the camera tilts up quickly toward the thrower's face, emphasizing for Katherine and us the startling nature of these statues: their bodies of dark marble with severe white eyes.

Her next destination, the caves at Cumae, signify a palimpsest, a layering of history (Mulvey, 119). Laura Mulvey explains that "Cumae's history is layered with different epochs, different cultures, different religions and mythologies" (117). Cumae's multiple purposes, from Greek settlement, to Christian catacombs, to Saracean fortress, mingle ghosts of history in the air: the history of the location is at once present, and at the same time invisible. Mulvey observes that "ruins come to have a privileged position as a metaphor for [the] meeting of material and immaterial worlds" (108).

Later, while driving to the Church of the Fontanelle, Katherine comments on the many expectant mothers she sees on the Naples streets and the many "lovely children." In contrast, Katherine has no children, and she wonders if what did not keep her and

Alex together was that she did not have a child. After this, Katherine and we experience the Church of the Fontanelle, and its archive of the dead: the physical rows of skulls and piles of bones. This ossuary, or charnel house, suggests a layered history, but presents the bones from many generations in one location, in one glance. This archive of the dead does not reveal itself gradually, but overwhelms Katherine, and sets the stage for her experience at Pompeii.

So too on the streets of Naples, do we see a fluidity between life and death. Bruno writes that “the dead do not only inhabit archaeological sites here: the heads of skeletons literally punctuate street corners. In the city of Naples, one encounters death as a daily manner” (393). Further, she explains that “intimacies are practiced publicly, which includes sex and dying. Not even death is a private affair here” (394). These lack of barriers, between life and death, public and private, are foreign to Katherine and cause her anxiety. Freud, building on E. Jentsch’s writings about the uncanny, states, “for him the essential condition for the emergence of a sense of the uncanny is intellectual uncertainty” (125). Katherine’s experience in Naples creates intellectual uncertainty: the uncertainty caused by the fluidity between life and death in Naples culture leads to her experience of the uncanny.

The climax of Katherine’s site-seeing takes place at an excavation site on Pompeii, where the archaeologists fill with plaster the hollow space that has been left from a couple’s bodies when lava suddenly engulfed them, and since, their body has decayed. Thus at the core of the film there lies an empty space, a space casted by what was once there, the Pompeian man and woman, who died suddenly at the eruption of the volcano. The lava has casted a “negative” of the couple, waiting for the

archaeologists to fill it to bring the couple back to spatial existence, but at the same time, Katherine fills the empty space with her own anxieties—her anxieties about her possible divorce, her lack of connection, her feelings of isolation and ostracization in Naples brought about by its uncanny sites and attractions.

For the Pompeians, Vesuvius was an uncanny threat in that it created an aesthetic of anxiety, that is, it created a way of life that was controlled by the anxiety of possible eruption. Vidler writes that Pompeii is “a textbook example of the uncanny on every level, from the implicit horror of the domestic to the revelations of mysteries, religious and otherwise, that, in Schelling’s view, might better have remained unrevealed” (*The Architectural Uncanny*, 48). In addition, Mulvey explains that “the [ancient] population, tied to the economic benefits and the pleasures of the volcanic landscape, lived in perpetual fear of Vesuvius, and an array of cults and superstitions has always been rife in its environs” (115). Vesuvius could erupt at any moment; the Pompeians were always in a game of life and death.

In *Voyage to Italy*, we see this rupture in the “concrete,” here the solidified lava, where things that were “meant to remain secret and hidden [have] come into the open” (Freud, 132). With the archaeologists’ rupture and digging of the subterranean, in a sense digging up graves, we have the disturbance of the “settled” past and that of the mummified couple who seemingly want to be left in peace (and in a sense, they are revived in their plaster reconstructions). The unveiling of the Pompeian couple works much like the experience of the uncanny when the psyche is disrupted, when things locked away in the unconscious begin to come to the surface. This can explain Katherine’s reaction to the final unveiling of the couple. She is horrified, and this

physical representation is a parallel to a rupture in Katherine's psyche. It has been building up to this—her previous activities have hinted at this. The visits to the staring sculptures, Cumae, and La Fontanelle have gradually weakened her reserve to keep her unwanted thoughts--about herself, Alex, and their relationship—from coming to the surface.

The mummified couple is also the Joyces' Doppelgangers. Freud explains that “the meaning of the double changes: having once been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death” (142). We can see this change of the meaning of the double in the film. At first, one could see the preservation of the Pompeian couple as immortalizing them, but their representation becomes “an object of terror” for Katherine (Freud, 143).

Through her independent site-seeing, Katherine becomes increasingly disturbed. Rossellini shows several shots of Katherine's disturbed reactions to the sites. As Katherine experiences, it is being abroad that causes her to feel foreign to herself in her own skin; the displacement in the foreign causes an uncanny experience when the familiar becomes strange. In her book on the uncanny, Anneleen Masschelein points to Julia Kristeva's essay “Strangers to Ourselves” writing, “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 already contaminated from the beginning” (137). Although Kristeva's essay deals with European societies' treatment of non-European outsiders, the British Katherine in Naples is an outsider nevertheless. By traveling, although still in Europe, she displaces herself, and this displacement allows

her to see “the stranger inside.” Similarly, Freud’s notion of the uncanny is that which is strangely familiar (123-34).

After the Joyces see the plaster couple, they return to Naples and get caught in a religious procession in the center of town. Katherine declares her hate for Alex then a crowd violently sweeps her away, they call to each other, and Alex comes to her rescue. With this, they have a change of heart, and decide to stay together. This surge of life, yet of bodies and customs strange to the Joyces, leads to this turning point. The procession is as frightening and strange to the Joyces as the excavation of the Pompeian couple. Frozen death marks the excavation site while the procession is chaotic life, but both are as alien to the Joyces as they are to each other. They are alone, as a pair, in the sweep of the crowd. Several times, the camera focuses with a medium shot on the couple, then a crane shot sweeps the camera away from them into the crowd. Their former isolation from each other is usurped by the pair’s isolation in the crowd—one form of isolation replaces another, but in so doing, draws the couple together. The movement of the crowd in the procession and the sweeping spatial separation provides the impetus for their final union at the end of the film. The dialogue here is largely melodramatic, seemingly implausible. Rossellini closes the film abruptly. As the religious procession chants “Miracle, Miracle,” so too is the couple’s final resolve a miracle. Rossellini brings us away from the pagan sites that Katherine has previously visited and immerses her in a Christian ritual, in essence mitigating her previous doubts and anxieties by surrounding her in the balm of the religion of the day.

CHAPTER 4 THE BELLY OF AN ARCHITECT: THE UNCANNY BODY

Similarly to *Voyage in Italy*, Greenaway's *The Belly of an Architect* depicts an Anglo couple abroad in Italy and their dissolving relationship. In *The Belly of an Architect*, the American architect Stourley Kracklite and his wife, Louisa, travel to Rome for an extended stay so Kracklite can work and open an exhibition on the works of the French neo-classical architect Etienne-Louis Boullée (1728-99). In the film, Kracklite becomes increasingly ill, his wife has an extended affair with the financier's son, Caspasian, and Kracklite slowly loses his grip on the exhibition production, his wife, and his health. The film explores the relationship between architecture and the body, as Kracklite attempts immortality through architecture. However, Kracklite's project in Rome reproduces Boullée's architecture; Kracklite does not create any original work. The film revolves around presenting images of reproduction in art--in architectural models, sculpture, photography, and xeroxed images. These reproductions are "dead upon arrival" and work against Kracklite's notions of architectural transcendence. The reproductions are dead copies from the source. For example, the xeroxed copies of Augustus' stomach are so abstracted from the original sculpture that they lack any life that would relate them to a living stomach. The "real Augustus" has gone through so many media of representation--sculpture, photography, the postcard, and isolated and enlarged Xerox copies—that the impetus of reproduction, of mimesis, is inverted. That is, if reproduction and mimesis attempt to capture or revivify the original, multiple reproductions from the source work to deaden the original. Thus Kracklite's copies signify a dead representation, which he places over his deteriorating stomach, and these representations serve to foreshadow Kracklite's death.

At the beginning of the film, the camera frames the dinner party; the guests are seated on one side of the table, facing the camera, banquet style. Kracklite sits in the middle framed directly with the obelisk and Pantheon in the background. Waiters bring to the table a large white-icing cake model of Boullée's design of the *Cenotaph for Isaac Newton* (1784). Its dome, a half sphere, is surrounded by lit candles. Like all of Boullée's designs, the cenotaph, which was inspired by the Pantheon, is grandiose, of nearly impossible proportions, and was never realized. Here, the Pantheon's dome is shrouded in darkness, and the candle-lit dome of the cake model reproduces the Pantheon's dome that is there but we cannot see. The architectural model is to be consumed and will enter the belly, another dome-like shape (more rotund on some than others). Kracklite is portly, and the stomach pains that he begins to experience in Rome will grow more acute and all but consume him.⁵ Kracklite stands up to give a speech on behalf of the project for the exhibition, and thus we have three domes and an early instance of repetition: the cake model, Kracklite's belly, and the Pantheon's dome in the dark.

The cenotaph is a funerary monument; its design is white outside, while the interior is a perfect, darkened sphere--not unlike the interior of a belly.⁶ Newton's body is meant to be placed at the nadir of the sphere, while the zenith points to the heavens. The cake mirrors this: its interior is a dark chocolate cake. Amy Lawrence observes that "the characters are eating the representation of an empty monument to the dead" (119).

⁵ Louisa becomes pregnant, so we see another growing belly.

⁶ Other spaces in the film are belly-like: Amy Lawrence observes that "the cavernous room where Stourley works [is] an unearthly space seemingly situated in the bowels of the Victor Emmanuel monument" (120). As well, Kracklite visits Augustus' tomb, another "bowel-like" piece of architecture.

Kracklite symbolically consumes the funerary, and thus sets in motion his eventual demise. Indeed, that night after dinner, he has his first case of indigestion which will progressively worsen to be diagnosed as stomach cancer.

The motifs of architecture and food carry the broader theme of internalization of space (eating architecture, as in the cake model), and the relationship between architecture and the body. Foreigners call the Victor Emmanuel Monument “the wedding cake” (Gras, 46). Dining takes place surrounded by impressive architecture, such as the two dinner scenes in front of the Pantheon and lunch in the Victor Emmanuel Monument. In the lunch scene, figs sit atop a reproduction of the coliseum as a table centerpiece. Kracklite mentions that Chicago, where he is from, has the most “carnivorous architecture” second to Rome; his building in Chicago is nicknamed “the slaughter house.” Ingestion of the funerary cake inverts the nutritious; food leads to death.

Greenaway’s frequent allusion to art history in many of his films plays a part in the opening mise-en-scène’s similarity to Da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*. Kracklite’s body language will allude to the crucifix later in the film, and here, he sits in the middle of the table as Christ sits in *The Last Supper*. It is a miniature Last Supper, as six sit around Kracklite, rather than twelve disciples. As well, we see Caspasian, the traitor who will steal Louisa away from Kracklite, in the position of Judas at the table. Although, it could be argued that many of the Italians in the film are generally unfriendly and traitorous to Kracklite personally and to his goals for the exhibition, so there are multiple Judases. This miniature Last Supper portends death; it is the beginning of Kracklite’s downfall.

The exhibition financier Caspetti humorously links Boullée with death: “I remember coming across a drawing by Boullée when I was 10 years old. It reminded me, I must admit, of hell”. However, Kracklite believes in the supposed “immortality of architecture” to outlast death. Yet we see the Roman ruins in the film: architectural fragments that testify to the eventual decomposition of all forms. Buildings will decompose like the body, yet architecture’s decomposition is much slower, and thus is mistaken for being immortal. However, Caspetti remarks, “Roman ruins have had more influence on architecture than they ever would brand new. What you can’t see, you can imagine”. Ancient Roman architecture, particularly, and its parent, Ancient Grecian architecture, may remain “immortal” due to their continued influence on modern architecture. Yet physically, all buildings will decompose.

Greenaway notes that Rome’s architecture is “seemingly independent of the activities and time scale of man,” thus it may seem immortal (qtd. Otswald, 145). According to Douglas Keeseey, in Kracklite’s view, “architecture is there to secure the immortality of the individual soul from death, the great leveler. The closer the association between buildings and people’s bodies, the more imperiled his salvation” (57). Keeseey describes the “mortal desperation that inspired these durable buildings, monuments to man’s desire for eternal life, mausoleums for his flesh, and eventually, ruins that destroy the dream of architectural transcendence, proving that brick and stone are material too and subject to decay” (46-7). Keeseey expresses the dialectic between architecture and the body. If the body is mortal, then the corpse can reside in “immortal” architecture. The architecture will last longer than the body, yet so too will this inorganic structure decompose.

Perhaps architecture that embraces platonic geometric forms, which many of Boullée's designs do, can maintain a sense of immortality. Greenaway has said that "Boullée conceived his architecture as a function of Platonic forms . . . now it is probable that the building most admired in Europe for its geometrical perfection is the Pantheon in Rome: a perfect sphere within perfect cylinder. This rationality, this concern for perfection expressed by Boullée is what particularly interested me" (qtd. Keesey, 47). Rationality and perfection may be the ideals closest to the immortal, and if architecture embraces these, it may reach the Platonic forms, even if its material form decays. Kracklite, like Boullée, has produced very little, and thus their designs remain largely ideas. Fear of the corporeal limits Kracklite and Boullée's production. Perhaps Boullée's *Cenotaph for Isaac Newton* is really physically unfeasible and therefore can only live on paper. Ironically, perhaps the gravity that Newton was so famous for defining would bring down his own monument.

Caspasian's sister remarks that Boullée influenced Albert Speer, Hitler's architect, as well as other fascist architecture. This is fitting as Boullée was a neo-classicist. Caspasian embezzles funds from the Boullée exhibition to finance the refurbishment of Mussolini's Foro Italico, what Kracklite calls a "fascist playground" when he hears this news.⁷ In a broad sense, the fascists hoped that their architecture would lead to immortality.

Greenaway threads the theme of the relationship between architecture and the body throughout the film. Guiliana Bruno writes that the film "connects the body with built space. The mechanics of this link, as Henri Lefebvre has explained it, rests on the

⁷ Mussolini's Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, known as "the square coliseum," another piece of fascist architecture, also makes an appearance in the film.

fact that bodies produce space and produce themselves in architectural form” (297). Classical architecture reflects the physicality and proportional relationships of the body, but architecture attempts to be nonorganic, to last longer than the body, but eventually decays.

The architecture in Rome mainly consists of earth tones related to the colors of the body. One character mentions the “Boullée” unit of measurement, which is determined by the length of the body from the tip of the nose to the navel. Thus measurement is founded on human proportions. After the welcome dinner, the guests applaud the Pantheon as if it is a body that has performed. The exhibition’s motto is “Architecture c’est mettre en oeuvre la Nature” or, “Architecture is the practical application of Nature” (Keeseey, 45). Architecture is derived from nature, from the body, and thus reflects it, particularly in classical architecture’s emphasis on bilateral symmetry.

As Kracklite’s stomach pain grows, he diagrams what the pain feels like and where it is on xeroxed copies of stomachs, the images coming from roman statues. Once he draws mangoes as if in a basket in Augustus’ stomach. These drawings become interspersed with those for his exhibition. In one shot, Greenaway tracks over Kracklite’s bedroom workspace revealing the layering of architectural images and images of ailing stomachs. Kracklite describes his stomach pains in terms of geometric shapes which Boullée often used: “Some days [the hard lump feels] spherical, some days it feels like a cube, most days it feels like a sharp-cornered pyramid”. In a sense, he has internalized the decline of this control over the Boullée exhibit. The Machiavellian Italians slowly take the exhibit away from his oversight, and the geometrical shapes that he works on externally for the exhibit manifest in bodily illness.

Or perhaps his diagnosis is through the mind of the architect: he thinks in geometrical forms, so his aches take that shape.

The architectural domes in Rome are similar to bellies and wombs. In four instances, we see domes with obelisks in front: yonic figures that are visually “pierced” with the phallic obelisks. We see this architectural grouping repeated at the Pantheon, at St. Peter’s Basilica, the Piazza del Popolo, and the Piazza Navona. In one scene, in an assignation between Caspasian and Louisa, Caspasian uses a model of a Boullee tower as a play phallus, furthering the point that these architectural pieces—obelisks, towers, and lighthouses—are phallic symbols.

The domes conflate life and death. Death resides within the dome of the Cenotaph for Isaac Newton. Now, the Pantheon harbors remembrance of the death of the Roman gods, yet when it was built, it stood for the presence, the life of the gods. The dome of St. Peter’s Basilica harbors both life and death: the church houses numerous pope’s tombs, but also houses the religion of eternal life. For Kracklite, the belly physically internalizes his emotional negativity and thus becomes the harbinger of death.

Narratively, as Kracklite’s stomach becomes sicker, Louisa’s womb becomes larger as her child grows in her “belly.” In one case, the architect’s belly harbors death, while Louisa’s brings life. In *The Uncanny*, Freud links death, through the fear of being buried alive, with the womb:

Some would award the crown of the uncanny to the idea of being buried alive, only apparently dead. However, psychoanalysis has taught us that this terrifying fantasy is merely a variant of another, which was originally not at all frightening, but relied on a certain lasciviousness; this was the fantasy of living in the womb. (150)

Thus a return to the womb is associated with death: death and birth are linked. The film's imagery conflates domes with bellies and wombs, and these with death and life, respectively. At the end of the film, at the opening of the exhibit, Kracklite commits suicide as Louisa cuts the ribbon for the opening of the exhibition (an artistic birth) and at the same time goes into labor. Illness in his belly leads him to death, while Louisa's womb brings life and artistic creation.

Finally, in one scene, the fluid, curved camera motion suggests the roundness of the belly. We see a head-on shot of the Pantheon lit at night. The camera then tracks backwards in a curve to the left, showing more of the Pantheon's front façade and the obelisk and fountain in front of it. The tracking camera seemingly picks up more speed as it rounds a hedge to reveal the tables and diners of an open air restaurant. Waiters bring a large cake into the frame from the right. Finally the camera stops and frames the dinner party in honor of Kracklite and Louisa's arrival for the preparation of the Boullée exhibit. This camera work echoes the roundness of the body, of organic shapes, as well as suggests the shape of the darkened Pantheon.

Greenway remarks that many of his films "have been concerned with reproduction, and I mean both human and artistic. *The Belly of an Architect*, for those who want to look, has tried to explore all the different means by which art has reproduced the human form. So we have paintings, sculpture, photographs, and ultimately the current cloning idea of reproducing art on a treadmill [the copier machine]" (Gras, 49). The film also relates reproduction to repetition. The scenes containing repetition do not necessarily create an uncanny effect as in *Last Year in Marienbad*, although one could argue that the scenes when Kracklite copies the stomachs are strangely familiar. He uses an

everyday piece of office equipment to contemplate his illness and eventual death. He makes more copies than are necessary: the same image comes out of the machine repeatedly, accompanied by the machine's eerie green scanner light (seen in the dark) and ominous music.

Repetition within elements of the narrative punctuates the film. Caspasian relates the history of how Augustus' wife poisoned him to death. Narratively parallel, Kracklite's wife metaphorically poisons him through her affair with Caspasian. Furthermore, Kracklite "repeats" the history by claiming that Louisa is trying to poison him with tainted figs. Another narrative repetition occurs when Kracklite and Caspasian's sister have a brief sexual encounter, paralleling Louisa and Caspasian's ongoing affair.

Greenaway repeats the opening shots, camera work, and music at the opening Pantheon dinner at the end of the film. At the beginning, the Italians welcome and celebrate Kracklite's arrival. When the episode is repeated again at the end of the film, the Italians have taken over Kracklite's oversight of the exhibition and he has been diagnosed with stomach cancer. He comes out of the Pantheon, that, in contemporary terms, is a funerary monument to the Roman gods. He is drunk and splashes himself in the fountain.

This time, the tracking camera comes to rest on two Italian women dining at the outdoor restaurant, which Kracklite comes up to harass. The composition is the same as when he gave his opening speech: he is situated in front of the Pantheon and obelisk, standing as he speaks to the two women. Yet this time, the Italian women do not understand his English, he speaks drunk nonsense. Notably, it seems he has failed to learn Italian, further highlighting his ostracisation in Rome. In contrast, Louisa gives

some remarks in Italian at the opening of the exhibit at the moment before Kracklite commits suicide by defenestration (a fitting death for an architect). Louisa's father was Italian, although she grew up in America. She either knew Italian before, or brushed up on it in Italy, or learned some upon arrival. Either way, she has integrated herself into Italian culture more successfully than Kracklite. Indeed, Kracklite seemed allergic to all but the Roman architecture: the food, people, and language did not sit well with him. And it could be argued that his internalization of the Roman architecture also makes him ill, if we consider that he describes his stomach pains in terms of geometrical shapes.

When he becomes obsessed with his illness, he makes many copies of images of bare stomachs. First he enlarges a postcard photo of a statue of Augustus, isolating the stomach. He continues with other images, mostly from male Roman statues, drawings, or paintings. In one scene, Kracklite has lined his hotel bedroom floor with these reproduced prints. He has multiple copies from multiple sources, and these are further reflected in the large floor length mirror that is placed in the center of the mise-en-scène. Thus we have many reproductions and repetitions: the original sculpture, for example of Augustus, is a reproduction of the human body, and its photo on a postcard is another reproduction. The images lined on the floor are reproduced in their reflection in the mirror. Kracklite's image as well is reproduced in the mirror. At a meta-level, the film itself can be seen as yet another reproduction of reality. We have three Kracklites: his body, his reflection in the mirror, and his image in the registration of the filmic image. All of these effects create a mise-en-abime similar to that in the mise-en-scène of *Last Year in Marienbad*.

For Kracklite, all these reproductions and repetitions attempt to stave off death. Douglass Keesey quotes Carel Rowe: “xeroxing illustrates Kracklite’s creative infertility” (51). He cannot reproduce life, but must rely on Louisa to carry on his lineage, yet he and Louisa will get a divorce. In the mise-en-abime scene described above, Louisa returns to the hotel room and makes it evident to Kracklite that she is leaving him to live with Caspasian. They discuss the future of their child and Louisa shows him photos of her pregnant body (a photo reproduction of the human reproduction process). During some of the scene, they stand around a model of the Victor Emmanuel monument with models of the Boullée reproductions that will be on the outside of the monument. These images highlight Kracklite’s “baby,” the Boullée exhibition, which he says he has been working on for ten years, as well as his human baby, in Louisa’s womb. Caspasian threatens to usurp both, making Kracklite creatively barren. One scene highlights Kracklite’s feminization: shots intercut between Louisa and Caspasian nude in bed, after making love, while Kracklite is anally probed at the gastroenterologist’s in an examination. The mise-en-abime scene begins with Kracklite sitting in a chair on the hotel bed, where he and Louisa slept at the beginning of the film. The bed seemingly has a plank over it so the chair can stand on it. Beside the bed is the copier machine, repetitively making copies of bellies. This image suggests Kracklite’s infertility: the bed, place of human reproduction, is hardened over, and the machine takes the place of natural fertility.

In many ways, the film is about legacy: who will carry on Boullée’s and Kracklite’s legacies? Kracklite is determined to carry on Boullée’s legacy and attempts to secure his own legacy through this architecture. But this is the crisis: both have produced very

little that would carry on their legacy, and even architecture will decompose. In this manner, Greenaway suggests that it is only genetic reproduction, necessarily through a maternal intermediary, that will create and ensure legacy. Keeseey notes, “there is no patriarchal parthenogenesis, no tradition of male geniuses that isn’t founded on --and confounded by—the material [and maternal] world” (51).

In another instance, we see four successive images of the Victor Emmanuel monument: an establishing shot with the camera, a postcard enlargement, a model for the exhibit within the actual monument, and another museum-piece model of the monument behind that one. With the first two images, Greenaway suggests that an enlarged postcard image can serve the same purpose as an establishing shot of the monument--both are photographs. He uses postcards again: at the Piazza Navona, Kracklite takes some postcards of the plaza. The camera zooms in on these, and as he flips through them Greenaway creates a montage of still images. The montage depicts various angles of the piazza, and the passage from day to night: the postcards progress from images of the piazza in daylight, to dusk, to night. Right after this, in yet another repetition of reproduction, Greenaway shows us successive shots of men with beards: the statue in the fountain at the Piazza, Kracklite himself, and back at Caspasian’s sister’s apartment, a reproduction of a painting of Andrea Doria, then another image of Kracklite dressed to represent Dorea for the sister’s photo session.

Bringing us back to *Last Year at Marienbad*, both *Belly* and *Marienbad* have a parallel scene consisting of reproduced images. This could have been influenced by Sasha Vierny who was cinematographer for both films. In *Belly*, Kracklite sits on the bed and observes the xeroxed copies of bellies arranged on the floor. In *Marienbad*, A

sits on the bed and observes the multiple copies of photos of herself arranged on the floor, given to her by X. This parallel scene highlights the prominence of repetition and reproduction in both films. In both, the characters contemplate the reproduced image. Kracklite thinks of his mortality. We do not know what A is thinking--perhaps contemplating who in fact she is as a person and if she will escape with X.

In conclusion, the three films exhibit a strong mise-en-scène that reveals character emotion and psychology, in addition to creating a sense of the uncanny. In *Last Year at Marienbad*, Resnais employs the mise-en-scène to comment on the stagnant lives the aristocracy and reveal A's anxiety. Of the mise-en-scène, the hotel's baroque design and its formal gardens create an aesthetic of the uncanny through visual repetition. Space as an embodiment of memory plays an important role in the question of rape that pervades the film. In *Voyage in Italy*, Katherine experiences the uncanny through her visits to the uncanny sites in Naples that punctuate the film. Finally, in *The Belly of an Architect*, the mise-en-scène reveals a dialectic between architecture and the body and questions the ability of repetition and reproduction to stave off death.

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