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THE BIG SLEEP, UNCANNY SPACES, AND MEMORY

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Abstract

The development of Southern California is defined by its struggle against the hostile wilderness. Los Angeles in particular, as articulated by Raymond Chandler, is an example of a kind of subverted Eden. The critic David Wyatt notes that Chandler was 'a failed pastoralist, and his work can be read as an elegy for the "Good Green Place" he had known and lost'.¹ Chandler's version of the pastoral can be found in novels such as *The Big Sleep*, in which 'the longing for a garden poises itself against the determination to confront the world of the machine'.²

This article discusses the repression of the past in Los Angeles and the ways in which this manifests itself in Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. This is represented in particular by the unhomely, labyrinthine Sternwood house, full of empty spaces and hidden compartments. Within this house the wilderness is controlled and replicated in the form of a domesticated wonderland, with the bizarre nature of the Sternwood family, from the cadaverous General Sternwood to his ghastly daughters (and the performativity and duplicity they personify) further expressing the sense of the uncanny which pervades the house, and, by extension, the whole of Los Angeles. The central narrative is the concealed history that is buried in the wilderness, hidden within the false mythology spun by the city.

Key Words: Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, Los Angeles, Uncanny, Memory

We are first introduced to Philip Marlowe, the man who will be our hero (of sorts) in Raymond Chandler's 1939 novel *The Big Sleep*, as he stands at the entrance to the Sternwood Mansion. He is, he says, 'everything the well-dressed private detective *ought to be* (emphasis added)'.³ This immediate sense that Chandler is concerned with the presentation of façade is extended to the city in which the novel is set. Los Angeles is both a synecdoche for and a product of Southern California and the way in which it has been developed as a whole. The gradual encroachment of urbanisation on its natural landscape is of crucial significance to the city; the way in which the city expresses and acknowledges (or fails to acknowledge) its own history manifests itself in *The Big Sleep* as a failure to properly deal with the past.

This article discusses the idea of the return or resurgence of that which has been repressed, or, to put this idea into Freudian terms, the presence of 'the uncanny' as it is made evident in the external and internal spaces of *The Big Sleep*. Due to the fact that they are often built upon a suppressed or hidden landscape, cities themselves can exhibit signs of the uncanny. In the novel this is evident in the relationship between the Sternwood family mansion and the family oil fields, in specific interiors such as the house and store belonging to Mr Geiger, and even in the very character and behaviour of Carmen Sternwood. To build over the natural landscape and deny its existence is to repress the past of the city, which has strange and dangerous consequences. The behaviour of the Sternwoods, as I will illustrate, replicates on a small scale the effect of urbanisation on the natural landscape of Los Angeles and its surrounding area.

'California', writes David L. Ulin, 'has always been an elemental landscape, where we don't so much master nature as coexist uneasily with it'.⁴ Los Angeles itself was at first merely an isolated tract of land 'in the middle of the empty, semi-arid coastal plain'.⁵ Richard

Lehan argues that the very idea of the West is defined by the belief that ‘man must dominate his environment, impose his will upon nature and the land, and turn that control into wealth’.⁶ Expanding on the theme of domination and development in *City of Quartz*, Mike Davis describes Los Angeles as historically ‘first and above all the creature of real-estate capitalism: the culminating speculation, in fact, of the generations of boosters and promoters who had subdivided and sold the West from the Cumberland Gap to the Pacific’.⁷ California, or Los Angeles in this instance as the state writ small, is defined by its land. The cultivation and propagation of the land is the thing, and the frontier must be endlessly pushed back to maximise its potential.

In short, this seemingly uninhabitable space eventually submitted to the might of urban development. In *The History of Forgetting*, Norman M. Klein argues that Los Angeles in particular has exhaustively abused its natural landscape throughout its history of environmentally ignorant plans for city development. Specifically, the city’s relationship with both oil and water became exponentially more significant. Klein writes that during the 1920s, Los Angeles was ‘the Saudi Arabia for American oil. Its population doubled to 2.2 million, filling in many of the vacant boundaries between townships that once were simply lined with pepper trees, or with summer flowers rising up into the hills unchecked’.⁸ Morrow Mayo states that E.L. Doheny and C.A. Canfield, two oil prospectors, discovered oil in Los Angeles after much toil in 1892. This encouraged the hunt for oil amongst all Angelenos, who took to digging pits and wells ‘in vacant lots, in orchards, in their front yards’.⁹ Turning the agricultural village that was Los Angeles into the biggest city in the West was dependent upon the proper irrigation of the land. Sustainable power produced by water was eventually introduced through the building of aqueducts. These huge concrete troughs, running through the city, built to control and direct the Los Angeles River, were constructed at the expense of the greenbelts and parks imagined by early urban planners. The riverbed was paved with concrete during the 1930s, turning the source of the city’s lifeblood into a drainage ditch. The effect was to almost eradicate ‘what once were massive underground lakes, very abundant aquifers. Water tables continue to drop immensely. Innumerable species have disappeared’.¹⁰ In time land became a sequestered, privatised entity, available for purchase to the highest bidder. Instead of being used to build more verdant public spaces like parks, land was divided into an endless series of backyards, shopping malls, and theme parks. Klein writes that Los Angeles was transformed from a city of open farmland to a city of inaccessible, introverted spaces.

The desertion of the oil fields in *The Big Sleep*, juxtaposed with the extreme cultivation of the land surrounding the Sternwood mansion, recalls this kind of degradation of and withdrawal from the natural landscape.¹¹ Indeed, bodies are disposed of in the oil fields just as the detritus of the city is dumped into the concrete riverbed. Los Angeles ultimately became a machine in the garden of Southern California. *The Big Sleep* articulates that this might be its biggest crime. Chandler’s novel presents a place where much of the natural world has been wrangled into a highly cultivated form. In California, writes David Wyatt, ‘every family has its paved garden’.¹² The Sternwood family have two such paved gardens – one exalted and displayed, the other hidden from view – each representing this overlaying of the urban upon the natural. The state and location of these gardens signify the determination of the Sternwoods to separate themselves from the past, and this desire is in turn emblematic of the way in which California as a whole, and Los Angeles as a microcosm of that whole, symbolically and literally distances itself from its own past by continually paving over it.

The most obvious paved garden in *The Big Sleep* is that which surrounds the Sternwood mansion. This garden seems, at first, to be in complete opposition to the ‘garden’ at the bottom of the hill. The natural landscape of these expansive grounds has been rendered a mere ornament with which to accessorise their home, making it into a kind of synthetic

wonderland. Indeed, the greenhouse in which Marlowe is first introduced to General Sternwood embodies a desire to contain the natural environment and maintain it like a domestic space. Marlowe takes in the immaculate lawn, the spotless garage, and the 'decorative' trees trimmed to within an inch of their lives.¹³ The insistent aura of artificiality is compounded by the fact that the 'whole estate looked as though it had been made about ten minutes before I rang the bell', he notes, as though the place is a movie set, packed and unpacked when needed.¹⁴

Inside the Sternwood mansion an equally unsettling atmosphere awaits. Its domestic spaces are strangely lacking; items of furniture are decorative rather than functional, and the house is full of unoccupied spaces: 'Large hard chairs with rounded red plush seats were backed into the vacant spaces of the wall round about. They didn't look as if anybody had ever sat in them'.¹⁵ The eerie stillness and stagnancy of the Sternwood mansion, its manicured garden and uninhabited rooms, signifies that something intangible has been removed or repressed. It is as if there has been some sleight of hand and one thing has surreptitiously replaced another. In *The Architectural Uncanny*, Anthony Vidler describes the attempt of modernist architects to rid culture of the burden of the past through 'eras[ing] its traces from their architecture'.¹⁶ For if houses 'were no longer haunted by the weight of tradition and the imbrications of generations of family drama [...] then memory would be released from its unhealthy preoccupations to live in the present'.¹⁷ But Vidler also contends that this type of 'housecleaning operation produced its own ghosts', with formerly familial, domestic spaces becoming instead 'object[s] of memory' characterised by the remoteness of a 'never-experienced space'.¹⁸ The familiar is thus coupled with the unfamiliar, the absent with the present.

Vidler utilises the work of Sigmund Freud, who articulates this sensation in his 1919 essay on the subject of the uncanny, in which he asserts that the 'uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed'.¹⁹ In his excavation of the uncanny, Freud makes his way through an extended etymological journey through the German language that begins with *heimlich* as 'belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, dear and intimate, homely', and subsequently transforms into *heimlicher*: 'All the more familiar did the man appear to him, who but a short while before had seemed such a stranger'.²⁰ Already, the word is seemingly porous enough to contain both one meaning and its binary, but Freud then demonstrates the movement of the word further into opacity with *heimlichkeit*: 'things which have been kept secret', and *Das heimliche Gemach*: 'the private room'.²¹ The word *unheimlich* itself denotes a sense of fear, horror and anxiety; indeed, it applies to 'everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open'.²² As the unhomely/homely confusion of this passage reveals, *heimlich* is an ambivalent word capable of merging with 'its formal antonym, *unheimlich*'.²³

This duality is evident in the Sternwood mansion, which provides a localised example of the way in which the meaning of the word *heimlich* 'becomes increasingly ambivalent' until what was domestic and familiar becomes private and withdrawn (*unheimlich*).²⁴ The oil fields, a second, secret 'paved garden' belonging to the Sternwoods, is also a place that conceals more than it reveals, and is 'removed from the eyes of strangers'.²⁵ Despite their attempt to distance themselves from the oil fields, the windows of the family pile, which are located at the top of a hill, provide a constant, albeit remote, reminder of this localised natural resource, which gave them everything they have. When Marlowe first gazes beyond the surrounding gardens of the Sternwood mansion to the land which established them, he is looking at the place where the past dwells: 'The Sternwoods, having moved up the hill, could no longer smell the stale sump water or the oil, but they could still look out of their front

windows and see what had made them rich. If they wanted to. I don't suppose they would want to'.²⁶

The encroachment of the urban often necessitates the burial or erasure of traces of the past, with cities paving over signs of their own history as they renew themselves and move ever forward. In such an environment it seems impossible for the past to be retained in any tangible form. Yet in the world of *The Big Sleep*, signs or remnants of the past *can* be physically located in the spaces that speak to a pre-urban history. In a twist as sly and caustic as Marlowe himself, however, these remnants come mostly in the form of dead bodies. The oil fields provide a burial ground for one such dead body – that of Rusty Regan, Vivian Sternwood's erstwhile husband. Elsewhere, in the few remaining uncultivated spaces of Los Angeles, a series of bodies are both hidden and exposed. The body of Owen Taylor, Carmen Sternwood's old flame, is dragged out of the ocean. The hideaway house outside Realito, situated beyond the orange groves of Pasadena in the middle of nowhere, is where Mona Mars, who was presumed dead or missing, is finally found. Lash Canino meets his demise outside the same place, his bullet-ridden body lying face down in the mud. Despite the subterfuge and suppression of the Sternwoods, the novel makes clear that the denial or removal of history creates its own enduring ghosts, corpses who silently attest to the concealment of criminal behaviour. In *The Big Sleep* repressed incidents can be both hidden in and exposed by the city's remaining natural spaces.

'From the outset', says James Donald, 'the uncanny has represented the internal limit of modernity, the split within it'.²⁷ Michael Dear states that the perpetual self-effacement of Los Angeles in particular has disconnected it from its own history, making it in fact 'a city without a past'.²⁸ The urbanised spaces of Los Angeles in particular exhibit this lack of continuity between past and present due to the difficulty in tracing the path from the city's original state and its present incarnation. Urbanisation thus generates signs of the uncanny because it creates a schism between the present and the past.

Not only is this schism given physical form in the internal spaces of the Sternwood mansion and in the purposeful separation of the family from the oil fields, but it is also in evidence in most of the interiors depicted in the novel, all of which are comprised of a series of partitions, rooms within rooms and suddenly revealed entrances and exits. David Fine argues that '[c]rime in the southern California [novel] is ordinarily an act carried out in the *past* and hidden behind a respectable façade in the *present* (emphasis added)', and this need for a 'respectable façade' (as mentioned in the opening paragraph of this article) not only explains the duplicity of characters like the Sternwood sisters, but is also literalised throughout *The Big Sleep* in its endlessly subdivided internal spaces.²⁹ Indeed it is Vivian's job to keep her family's secrets behind any and all available façades, burying the past where it cannot be found. But it soon becomes apparent that the Sternwood family crimes of the past are in fact constantly present, each crime both covering up and necessitating another, every mystery disappearing inside the discovery of a new mystery.

Throughout the text, every building is a front full of false walls, hidden doors and secret compartments that create a sense of internal doubling and duplicity. The Geiger bookstore is also a front for a more unsavoury business; Geiger's house hides a disappearing dead body and some incriminating photographs, while the Fulwider Building sets the scene for the murder of Harry Crane at the hands of the obscured Camino, and the Cypress Club finds Vivian Regan frittering away her inheritance at the roulette table. Much as Los Angeles was carved out of a wild and seemingly uninhabitable place, its urbanisation necessitating the suppression of its agricultural past; behind every man-made door and beneath every paved garden in *The Big Sleep* lies something that requires suppression.

An illustration of this is provided with particular clarity by Mr Geiger's bookstore and his home. The books in the store are kept in glassed-in shelves, untouchable and

unidentifiable, compounding the atmosphere of secrecy and fraudulence. The store turns out to be a room within a room (reminiscent of the greenhouse within the Sternwood house), with the outside, which performs the part of a home for rare books, functioning as a false front for the real business, which is conducted in the inner sanctum. Once inside the store itself, Marlowe finds another space comprised of partitions and compartments – ‘At the back there was a grained wood partition with a door in the middle of it, shut’.³⁰ The lone figure in the store, a long-limbed ash blonde with a fragile veneer, is another front, the mask she calls a face slipping incrementally with each line of questioning – ‘Her smile was tentative [...] She smiled bleakly [...] Her smile was now hanging by its teeth and eyebrows and wondering what it would hit when it dropped’.³¹

The truth is revealed when Marlowe tails a customer from the bookstore along the tree-lined streets. The man nervously leaves his shrouded novel behind a conveniently located cypress tree before disappearing. Nature, an ever-present a spectre in Chandler’s novels, here provides another hiding place for another dirty secret. The book is, of course, not what it seems. Though Geiger purports to sell ‘*Rare Books and De Luxe Editions*’, his products are rather more sordid than his store might wish to advertise – explicitly, at least. Geiger turns out to be a purveyor of ‘indescribable filth’ masquerading as a bibliophile, his books wrapped and concealed like illicit cargo.³² Even Marlowe does not unwrap his volume until he is alone in his car, before quickly rewrapping and locking it away in yet another compartment in which secrets may be hidden.

When Marlowe tails Mr Geiger himself to his home, described by Chandler as ‘a vault’, he finds it equally as obscure to the eye as his workplace. Outside the house sits ‘a square box hedge so arranged that it masked the front door completely’.³³ As with the Sternwood grounds, nature is controlled and arranged in favour of privacy, the shrubbery providing a fortress around the residence. Marlowe attempts to peer through the drapes that obscure his view through the window – another screen that impedes his vision – but ultimately is able to gain entry to the house by clambering through this same window, California houses being apparently easily penetrable except for their front doors. It conceals not only a dead body but also a naked Carmen Sternwood, and as such Geiger’s home encapsulates the sense of the Freudian uncanny. Carmen’s frozen and dreamlike state of semi-consciousness, Geiger’s body which appears and disappears (and re-appears later in the narrative), and the empty spaces left by items of furniture that point to where they were once situated, all speak to the sense of absent presence which characterises the uncanny.

Every internal space in *The Big Sleep* serves more than one purpose – each houses both the façade and the reality on the other side. The doubling and repetition that occurs incessantly throughout *The Big Sleep* is symptomatic of a city that is endlessly reinventing and rearranging itself. It is also another sign of the uncanny: Freud states that the most prominent themes of the uncanny can all be traced back to the ‘phenomenon of the “double”, which appears in every shape and in every degree of development’.³⁴ This phenomenon occurs in the appearance of doppelgängers, in the recurrence of events and objects (such as when particular features of crimes recur), and when ‘the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own. In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self’.³⁵ Just as the buildings and gardens of Los Angeles are capable of creating their own spatial duplications and facsimiles, so, it seems, are its inhabitants. In his absence, Rusty Regan is replaced in the esteem of both the General and Carmen by Marlowe. In turn, Owen Taylor preceded Rusty in Carmen’s affections, just as Arthur Geiger preceded Taylor. Similarly, before Geiger came along to blackmail the General, Joe Brody performed the same function. Marlowe himself seems to find a double wherever he goes: Lash Canino, for example, is more myth than man, and in this way he function as a shadowy self for Marlowe. Canino is a

taciturn and unassuming figure without ties or commitments who acts in his own interests and according to his own code, and is just as dedicated to finishing the job. Carmen and Vivian, another duo who come as a pair but never share a scene, may in some ways be interchangeable – two variations on the same theme. While Carmen is an insular void, endlessly disseminating and denying history, disappearing into faints and fugues like a human vapour, Vivian is continually surrounded by mirrors and windows and is highly visible while also remaining morally indefinite.

Repeated actions also create their own form of doubling. In his account of the uncanny, Freud recounts the many occasions in which he returned (unintentionally, or so he claims) to the insalubrious streets of Genoa's red light district, so that this unfamiliar place became familiar. Yet in repeatedly returning to this space, it became undesirably *overfamiliar*.³⁶ Marlowe's own repetition compulsion – he returns four times to Geiger's house, for example, and perpetually revisits the domestic spaces of the Sternwood mansion – is reminiscent of this experience. His insistence upon returning to such places signals a desire to demystify their strangeness, to transform the unfamiliar into the familiar. But unlike Freud, Marlowe's recurring visits to the Geiger store and house, the Sternwood residence, and indeed the hideout in Realito, render such places *more* strange, rather than less so. During or after every visit, further bizarre coincidences occur, more blank envelopes are passed around, keys are lost and found, furniture is rearranged, and the body count stacks up, one replacing another – first Rusty and then Geiger, Owen Taylor, Joe Brody, Mona Mars, Harry Jones, and finally Canino. When one body is buried in *The Big Sleep*, another is found dead and yet another disappears; invented memories take the place of those wilfully forgotten, and a once fertile terrain becomes a wasteland to be turned later into a park, further paving over signifiers of the city's past. Such permutations, duplications and replacements speak to the notion that repetition dulls original meaning, taking us further and further away from the authentic and the real. Indeed, in the *tabula rasa* of the modern city there often is no original, only endless substitutions that seek to plug the hole where the original once was. The novel's original dead body, that of Rusty Regan, is never explicitly found. Once again, Chandler emphasises that the oil fields where he is apparently buried are a place of absent presence – his body is there, but remains unseen. This failure to 'show' the reader Rusty's body and fill the central gap of the narrative is another demonstration of the way in which absence and lack define the novel, and indeed define the Los Angeles of *The Big Sleep*.

If the double is a sign of the uncanny, and the presence of the uncanny heralds the return of the repressed, then the unrelenting abundance of doubles, both spatial and corporeal, in *The Big Sleep* perfectly illustrates the rampant repression of the past and the wilful forgetfulness that characterises Chandler's Los Angeles. Carmen Sternwood, adrift in the 'perpetual present' is the embodiment of this denial; her insistent inability to retain memory is her most constant feature.³⁷ For David Wyatt, this is a state in which the whole city dwells thanks to its self-imposed expulsion from paradise. Carmen claims to have no memory of the night that Marlowe found her semi-conscious next to Geiger's dead body, 'persuading herself that she didn't know' what has happened – "'Remember what? I was sick last night. I was home'" – and creating her own narrative instead.³⁸ Freud contends that another possible conduit for uncanny feelings can be found 'when there is intellectual uncertainty whether an object is alive or not, and when an inanimate object becomes too much like an animate one'.³⁹ Objects such as dolls, waxwork figures, and other ostensibly inanimate items can inspire a sense of the uncanny, as they possess the signs and semblance of agency without the actuality of it. Carmen is often described in terms that align her with seemingly inanimate objects. When Marlowe discovers her inside the house of Arthur Geiger, he remarks that it seems she is 'not there in that room at all' as she sits like a string-less puppet, immobile and expressionless.⁴⁰ He dresses her and walks her about the room, her malleable body in his

control, submitting to his slaps. ‘The hissing noise came tearing out of her mouth as if she had nothing to do with it [...] her lips moved very slowly and carefully, as if they were artificial lips and had to be manipulated with springs’.⁴¹ She is like an uncanny doll staring blankly and emitting strange disembodied noises. Like the uncanny spaces of *The Big Sleep*, Carmen has suppressed something inside herself. In her case that something is expressed by her forgetful emptiness. Prompted by Marlowe’s own reminiscences, her memory drifts in and out, and is as dilapidated as the Sternwood oil fields, as empty as the family home.

Carmen’s mind is a place of absence in which one remembrance endlessly replaces another. In the end even Marlowe ultimately falls prey to this ‘false memory’, as he describes it, which pervades the novel.⁴² The phrase evokes Marlowe’s sense of repetition compulsion – the replication of action with no conscious rationale and without hope of resolution. At the novel’s conclusion he articulates his memory as though in a trance, telling a story in a distracted and imprecise manner, one event leading inexorably to the next and the next like a series of slides projected onto a blank wall. ‘It was like that, over and over again’ he says, the facts repeated as though learned by rote.⁴³ Marlowe’s memories have been emptied of all value, their significance drained of meaning until they are nothing but dead synapses that no longer connect to or connote anything, resembling false icons with the gold rubbed off as in Dashiell Hammett’s titular *Maltese Falcon*. When he recounts the events that occur after his discovery of Mona Mars, one would think that the past is occurring in the present, as though it was ‘real, like something actually happening, and for the first time’.⁴⁴ Like Carmen, he is left living in the present tense, the past nothing more than a ransacked room. Perhaps after all a big sleep is not so much a literal death but rather the death of one’s unadulterated memory, the lack of which keeps one locked in the present with no access to the past.

If the Sternwood mansion and its vacant interiors represent a present which has been emptied of memory, the natural landscape of the oil fields represents the past – a place which has been plundered, abandoned, and turned into a dumping ground for crimes which must be denied. Vivian believes that her sister has forgotten her crime completely by leaving it behind where it took place. Indeed, Carmen’s memory of the past is *dislocated* (to return to Vidler), excised and discarded in the oil fields, leaving a gap in her mind where it used to reside. At the novel’s conclusion, Marlowe proposes a solution that both protects the family and solves Carmen’s problem; she must be sequestered inside a place where she can continue to forget: “‘Will you take her away? Somewhere far off from here where they can handle her type’”.⁴⁵ The implication is that this forcible detachment from the past, a continuation of her present detachment, will resolve her psychological ailments. Yet once the past is a place removed from sight, becoming a faraway land that they have turned their backs on, the present becomes a relentlessly uncanny experience. When, at the novel’s conclusion, Marlowe accompanies Carmen down to the urban graveyard of the fields, a neglected place where the noise of the city recedes into memory, its landscape, littered with the debris of disuse, may be understood as the external manifestation of her internal dissonance. There is no continuity between the past and the present in Carmen’s mind and memory; she personifies the uncanny landscape that is Los Angeles, its history located in the land as something that *used to exist*.

To build over or repress the natural landscape is to pave over the past. A lack of continuity between the past, coupled with the ever-evolving present of the modern metropolis, uproots the city from its most essential, primordial self and makes it a place where the uncanny sets up permanent residence. Carmen personifies the dangers involved in repressing the past and living in a perpetual present where the past is erased as soon as it occurs. Her psychological damage as a result of this lack of continuity is writ large on the uncanny urban landscape. Yet as Chandler suggests, the past, though it can be repressed, is difficult to completely eradicate. The uncanny is a constant reminder that the city’s shadow self, buried somewhere in its abandoned, primitive spaces, endures.

Notes

- ¹ David Wyatt, *The Fall into Eden: Landscape and Imagination in California*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 161.
- ² Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep and Other Novels*, (London and New York: Penguin, 2000).
- ³ Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, p.3.
- ⁴ David Ulin, *Unshakeable Memories* (2006). <<http://articles.latimes.com/2006/apr/16/opinion/op-ulin16>> [accessed 16 April 2015].
- ⁵ Fogelson, Robert, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1993), p.xv.
- ⁶ Richard Lehan, 'The Los Angeles Novel and the Idea of the West', in *Los Angeles in Fiction: A Collection of Original Essays*, ed. David Fine, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), p.29.
- ⁷ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*, (London and New York: Verso, 2006), pp.24-25.
- ⁸ Norman M. Klein, *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory*, (London and New York: Verso, 2008), p.78.
- ⁹ Morrow Mayo, *Los Angeles*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1933), p.129.
- ¹⁰ Klein, *The History of Forgetting*, p.83.
- ¹¹ For the purposes of this article, when referring to the 'natural landscape' of Los Angeles, I am speaking of the material environment as it was before the urbanisation of the twentieth century. The oil fields are of particular significance in this regard in *The Big Sleep*; when I refer to these fields as symbolic of the natural landscape I am speaking of the subterranean crude oil reserves, revealed by tar seeps above ground, the discovery of which brought with it the development of the oil fields. The oil itself is natural; the method of extraction that necessitated the existence of the fields is not.
- ¹² Wyatt, p.xv-xvi.
- ¹³ Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, p.3.
- ¹⁴ *The Big Sleep*, p.148.
- ¹⁵ *The Big Sleep*, p.3.
- ¹⁶ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1992), p.63.
- ¹⁷ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*, p.64.
- ¹⁸ *The Architectural Uncanny*, p.64
- ¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock, (London: Penguin, 2003), p.148.
- ²⁰ Freud, *The Uncanny*, p.126, p.127
- ²¹ *The Uncanny*, p.129, p.130.
- ²² *The Uncanny*, p.132.
- ²³ *The Uncanny*, p.132.
- ²⁴ *The Uncanny*, p.134.
- ²⁵ *The Uncanny*, p.133.
- ²⁶ Chandler, pp.15-16.
- ²⁷ James Donald, *Imagining the Modern City*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), p.72.
- ²⁸ Michael Dear, "In the City, Time Becomes Visible: Intentionality and Urbanism in Los Angeles 1781-1991", in *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Edward S. Soja and Allen J. Scott (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998), p.76.
- ²⁹ David Fine, 'Nathanael West, Raymond Chandler, and the Los Angeles Novel', in *California History*, 68.4, (Winter 1989/1990), p.200.
- ³⁰ Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, p.17.
- ³¹ *The Big Sleep*, p.17.
- ³² *The Big Sleep*, p.16, p.22.
- ³³ *The Big Sleep*, p.24, p.23.
- ³⁴ Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny.' *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 17, trans. James Strachey, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), p.234.
- ³⁵ Freud, 'The Uncanny', p.234.
- ³⁶ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. by David McLintock, (London: Penguin, 2003), p.144.
- ³⁷ Wyatt, p.xvi.
- ³⁸ Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, p.47, p.46.
- ³⁹ Freud, 'The Uncanny', p.233.
- ⁴⁰ Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, p.25.

⁴¹ *The Big Sleep*, p.112.

⁴² *The Big Sleep*, p.147.

⁴³ *The Big Sleep*, p.148.

⁴⁴ *The Big Sleep*, p.147.

⁴⁵ *The Big Sleep*, p.162.

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Biography

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