

Title: Domestic Disturbance: Labyrinthine Writing Through Trauma in Pelevin's *The Helmet of Horror*

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Conflict is regarded as a clash between the familiar and the alien, but what if the most contested and anxiety-ridden site is 'home'? In my paper, I intend to visit 'homes' that function as more than dwellings, becoming, in fact, their owners' alter-egos, or surrogate M/Others. Since Freud's analysis of the uncanny in the seminal essay "Das Unheimliche," domesticity has been re-conceptualized as a turbulent locus. The associative range for 'home' encompasses not only the comforting connotations of a secure haven but also paranoid meanings of defensive edifices (castles, forts, and citadels), as well as thoroughly claustrophobic images of prison cells and hospital wards. *Heimlich* conjures up a sense of secrecy, hinting at the despair and danger of a radical retreat into any interior. Interiority can be defined as tamed alterity, for, both spatially and temporarily, home subdues the infinite and uncontrollable otherness of the universe by domesticating materiality. As a manageable substitute for cosmos 'home' offers a seductive opportunity for complete isolation from the outside and the only imperfection of such extreme interiority lies in its susceptibility to the uncanny return of the Other, demonstrating how close this 'fatal flaw' lies to the core concept of identity. Why would the return to its psychic 'home' threaten the self with dissolution? Why in the proximity to our inner 'home' do we feel least of all at home? Perhaps, the uncanny sensations about 'homecoming' reminds one that home, whether cultural or psychological, is a highly conflicted and problematic concept. As I examine how homely phenomena transgress their established limits, becoming re-presented as distorted and monstrous, I attempt to prove that in Victor Pelevin's recent work the uncanny figures as a structural disturbance of identity which stubbornly refuses to remain stable.