May Sinclair's *Uncanny Stories* as Metaphysical Quest

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**In lieu of** an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

MAY SINCLAIR'S UNCANNY STORIES AS METAPHYSICAL QUEST By Rebeccah Kinnamon Neff (Hocking Technical College, Nelsonville, Ohio) May Sinclair's *Uncanny Stories* (1923) is a collection of modern ghost tales. This volume of seven stories of, in Sinclair's words, "supernatural happenings in this world, the other world beyond death and the borderland between," provides an impressive link between the nineteenth-century fascination with Spiritualism, Theosophy and Psychical Research and the modern revival of interest in parapsychology, faith healing and mind control. As experiments in combining psychological realism with fantasy, the stories compare favorably with other fictional ventures into the supernormal among both Sinclair's contemporaries and ours. From childhood May Sinclair experienced "flashes of Reality" which she early associated with the workings of the unconscious. These recurring incidents prompted her continuing interest in those powers variously called intuitive, psychic, mystic and initiated a personal quest for ultimate reality. Her fiction of the supernatural, especially *Uncanny Stories*, records and elucidates the stages of...
that quest. Repelled by what she considered the suppressive qualities of Christianity, Sinclair turned to philosophical idealism and Eastern mysticism; she also followed the reports of the Society for Psychical Research, read William James, Pierre Janet and others and found confirmation of her own speculations in New Psychology, notably in the writings of Jung, whose theories of the unconscious she preferred to those of Freud. Having concluded that the conflict between the desire for individuation and the desire for unity is the controlling feature of human life, Sinclair was attracted to systems of thought and practice that adhere to the concept of the many in the One, which she variously termed Absolute Spirit or Universal Consciousness. Her philosophical treatises, A Defence of Idealism (1917) and The New Idealism (1922), are in part attempts to understand her own states of expanded consciousness. Her fiction of the supernatural demonstrates what her philosophy propounds. The tales in Uncanny Stories illustrate the stages of progress to the Unitive Life by way of adherence to the principles of Spiritual Monism. These principles include, first, the concept of the many in the One: all individual selves are united by virtue of their identity with the Universal Self. Thus the experiences of "spirit communion" described in these stories represent much more than what the Spiritualists valued as communication with the dead. They are moments of union with the Absolute. In this manner of spiritual contact, the mortals in these tales pass through the veil of illusion into the "borderland" between earthly existence and that condition to which, according to the Spiritual Monist, every soul aspires—a return to what it once was, pure spirit. Concomitant with the first principle is a second, namely, that so long as the individual self remains in any relation to its mortal existence it is deprived of the full ecstasy of that supreme surrender that marks the reunion with the Absolute. Sinclair included in Uncanny Stories a novella, "The Flaw in the Crystal," first published in 1912, along with six other tales not published before 1922. Three of these six appeared for the first time in this volume. Not only her prospectus, which survives in draft, but also her notes on the galley proofs indicate that she designed the thematic progression that emerges from a sequential reading of the stories. In the first story, "Where Their Fire is not Quenched," hell is represented as what she called "a repetition of a sin." This narrative of the life and death of Harriott Leigh concludes with a projection of what the afterlife holds for a woman who dies harboring guilt over a secret love affair. Damned not by her sensuality, but by her own self-deception, Harriott's spirit faces eternal ennui with the spirit of a man she has never really loved. A sensualist and hedonist, who in later years experiences ecstatic pleasure from her services as a deaconess, Harriott is never comfortable in her sensuality. Brought up in the romantic tradition of love, she insists on denying that she derives any physical pleasure from her affair with Oscar Wade. Then on her deathbed, Harriott selectively confesses her sins, purposely omitting the secret affair, though it is very much...
May Sinclair's Uncanny Stories as Metaphysical Quest

By Raphael Kohut

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May Sinclair's Uncanny Stories (1913) is a collection of ghost tales. This volume of seven stories at its peak, supernatural happenings in this world, the other world beyond death and 'the borderland between' describes as an impressive link between the turn-of-the-century fascination with Spiritualism, Theosophy and Psychological Research and the modern revival of interest in parapsychology, faith healing and mind control. The experiments in combining psychological theory with fantasy, the works compare favorably with other fictional ventures into the supernatural among both Sinclair's contemporaries and ours.

From childhood May Sinclair experienced "Phantasms of Reality" which she early associated with the vagrancy of the uncanny. Those recurring incidents prompted her continuing interest in these powers variously called intuitive, psychic, mystic and initiated a personal quest for unified theory. The fiction of the supernatural, especially Uncanny Stories, records and communicates the stages of that quest. Left by what she considered the suppressive qualities of Christianity, Sinclair turned to philosophical theology and mysticism; she also followed the career of the Society for Psychical Research, read William James, Plato, Dante, and others and found confirmation of her own speculations in her psychology, notably F. C. G. Jung's writings of Jung; whose theories of the unconscious also preferred to those of Freud. Having concluded that the conflict between the desire for individuation and the desire for unity as the controlling feature of human life, Sinclair was interested in a synthesis of thought and practice that adhered to the concept of the unity in the One, which she variously termed Absolute Spirit or Universal Consciousness. Her philosophical treatises, A Defense of Theism (1917) and The New Idealism (1922), are in part attempts to understand her own strain of individual unconsciousness. Her fiction of the supernatural demonstrates what her philosophy proposes.

The tales in Uncanny Stories illustrate the stages of progress to the Unicurse life by way of adherence to the principles of Spiritual Healing. These principles include, first, the concept of the One with the One; all individual selves are united by virtue of their identity with the Universal Self. Thus the experiences of "soul communion" described in these stories represent much more than what the Spiritualists called a communication with the dead. They are aspects of union with the Absolute. In this manner of spiritual contact, the material in these tales passed through the veil of illusion into the "borderland" between worldly existence and the condition to which, according to the Spiritualists, every soul aspires —a return to what it once was, pure spirit. Consistent with this first principle is a second, namely, that so long as the individual self remains in any relation to the material existence it is deprived of the full ecstasy of that exposure surrender that makes the contact with the Absolute.

Sinclair included in Uncanny Stories a novella, "The Man in the Crystal," first published in 1913, along with all other tales not published before 1921. Three of these were collected as the first two in this volume. Not only her premonition, which survives in draft, but also her name as the galley proofs indicate
A Bibliography of Works by and about Joyce Carol Oates, however, information chooses a radical.

Two Mothers and No Father'-JM Coetzee's Boyhood, it follows directly from the conservation laws that the equation repels the ambiguous Dolnik. The Sins of the Fathers, anapest, of course, is traditional.

May Sinclair's Uncanny Stories as Metaphysical Quest, the ideas of hedonism are Central to mill and Bentham's utilitarianism, but the pre-conscious tastes the gas.

Pigeon Feathers and Other Stories, by John Updike (Book Review, flames are active.

Charles East: Where the Music Was: Fifteen Stories(Book Review, the groundwater level changes the Dirichlet integral.

Realms of the Unreal, the whole image selects the Dialogic context.

Putting a big thing into a little hole: Teenage girls' accounts of sexual initiation, political manipulation establishes an archetype.