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"Love Bade Me Welcome": Repetition, Intertextuality, and the Uncanny in J. M. Barrie's *A Well-Remembered Voice*

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Abstract: This article examines the uncanny function of the phrase "Love bade me welcome" in J. M. Barrie's *A Well-Remembered Voice* (1918), a wartime one-act play concerned with mourning, spiritualism, and communication between the living and the dead. Rather than treating the play's supernatural elements as inherently uncanny, the article argues that its principal source of textual uncanniness lies in the repeated and unstable circulation of a familiar phrase. Drawing on Freud's account of the uncanny, together with later approaches to uncanny narrative and literary space, the article uses close reading to trace how the phrase changes status within the play: It first appears as a possible quotation, becomes an unexplained message from the dead, and later functions as a "password" to an undefined world beyond the room described in the play. The phrase's source in George Herbert's "Love (III)" further complicates this process. By transferring Herbert's devotional language of welcome into a wartime séance, Barrie detaches the phrase from its original speaker and makes it a recognizable intertext whose apparent dramatic sender remains uncertain. The article proposes the concept of the "intertextual index" to describe this function: the phrase repeatedly points beyond its immediate dramatic context toward another text, another voice, and another possible space, without allowing those relations to become fully stable. The uncanny in *A Well-Remembered Voice* consequently emerges as a formal effect of repetition, intertextual displacement, and incomplete spatial crossing rather than merely as a consequence of supernatural subject matter.

Keywords:

J. M. Barrie;
A Well-Remembered Voice;
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"Aşk Beni Buyur Etti": J. M. Barrie'nin *A Well-Remembered Voice* Adlı Oyununda Yineleme, Metinler Arasılık ve Tekinsizlik

Öz: Bu makale, J. M. Barrie'nin yas, spiritüalizm ve yaşayanlarla ölüler arasındaki iletişimi konu alan, savaş döneminde geçen tek perdelik oyunu *A Well-Remembered Voice*'ta (1918; Belleklere Kazınmış Bir Ses) "Love bade me welcome" ("Aşk beni buyur etti") ifadesinin tekinsiz işlevini incelemektedir. Makale, oyunun doğaüstü unsurlarını özünde tekinsiz olarak değerlendirmek yerine, metinsel tekinsizliğin başlıca kaynağının tanıdık bir ifadenin yinelenen ve değişken dolaşımında yattığını ileri sürmektedir. Freud'un tekinsizlik kavramının yanı sıra tekinsiz anlatı ve edebî mekâna ilişkin daha sonraki yaklaşımlardan yararlanan bu çalışma, yakın okuma yöntemiyle söz konusu ifadenin oyun içerisinde nasıl farklı konumlar kazandığının izini sürmektedir. Oyundaki ifade, ilk olarak olası bir alıntı şeklinde ortaya çıkmakta, ardından ölülerden gelen ve açıklanamayan bir mesaja dönüşmekte, daha sonra ise

Anahtar Sözcükler:

J. M. Barrie;
A Well-Remembered Voice;
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oyunda betimlenen odanın ötesindeki tanımlanmamış bir dünyaya geçişi sağlayan bir "parola" işlevi görmektedir. İfadenin George Herbert'ın "Love (III)" (Aşk [III]) başlıklı şiirinden alınmış olması, bu süreci daha da karmaşıklaştırmaktadır. Barrie, Herbert'ın karşılamaya ve kabul görmeye ilişkin dinî bağlılık dilini savaş döneminde gerçekleştirilen bir ruh çağırma seansına taşıyarak ifadeyi ilk dillendirenden koparmakta ve metinsel kaynağı tanınabilir olsa da oyunun kurmaca dünyasında kimden geldiği belirsizliğini koruyan metinler arası bir göndermeye dönüştürmektedir. Makale, bu işlevi açıklamak üzere "metinler arası gösterge" kavramını önermektedir. Buna göre ifade, söz konusu ilişkilerin bütünüyle istikrarlı bir hâle gelmesine olanak tanımaksızın, kendi dolaysız dramatik bağlamının ötesindeki başka bir metne, başka bir sese ve başka bir olası mekâna tekrar tekrar işaret etmektedir. Dolayısıyla *A Well-Remembered Voice*'ta tekinsizlik, yalnızca doğaüstü konunun bir sonucu olarak değil, yineleme, metinler arası yer değiştirme ve tamamlanmamış mekânsal geçişin biçimsel bir etkisi olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

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Introduction

J. M. Barrie's (1860–1937) *A Well-Remembered Voice* (1918) is a short wartime play structured around an apparently impossible communication between the living and the dead. A séance convened by Mrs. Don and Laura Bell attempts to contact Dick, a young soldier killed in the war, while Mr. Don, Dick's father, remains apart from the table as a sceptical observer. The encounter is also a problem of textual representation: When Dick later speaks to his father, the dialogue and stage directions establish his presence to Mr. Don without providing the reader with a corresponding visible figure. From its opening of a darkened room to its return to ordinary domestic memory, the play thus places presence and absence in an unstable relation (Barrie).

Scholarship on *A Well-Remembered Voice* has often approached the play through wartime mourning and spiritualism. Such approaches are indispensable: The play emerges from the cultural pressure of mass bereavement after the First World War, when spiritualist practices offered ways of imagining communication with the dead (Maunder). Recent work on Barrie likewise situates the play within his wider Gothic and post-war writing, emphasizing its recurring concern with ghosts, lost children, and the unstable boundary between life and death (Dunnigan 161). Yet a focus on spiritualism can leave the formal mechanism of the play's uncanniness comparatively underexamined. The

question is not simply whether a ghost or séance is frightening, but how a particular verbal object moves through the dramatic structure and changes its status as it does so.

That object is the phrase "Love bade me welcome." It first appears during the séance as a sequence of letters produced by the movement of the table. Mrs. Don recognizes it as a possible quotation, but it subsequently becomes a "message," then a "password," without acquiring a stable sender or definitive explanation (Barrie). The phrase is therefore familiar before it is mysterious. Its uncanniness arises not from an unknown sign but from the repeated return of something recognizable under increasingly unstable conditions. Its status is further complicated by its source: The phrase opens George Herbert's (1593–1633) "Love (III)," the final poem of *The Temple* (1633), where it belongs to a dialogue between a guilty soul and the personified figure of divine Love (Herbert line 1). Barrie extracts these words from Herbert's devotional poem and places them within a wartime séance, where their theological invitation becomes an unexplained communication from an absent dead person.

This article argues that "Love bade me welcome" functions as an intertextual index of the uncanny in *A Well-Remembered Voice*. Here, "index" is used in a limited analytical sense: The phrase has an identifiable source in Herbert's poem, yet its appearances as quotation, message, and password in Barrie's play cannot establish who transmits it or what access it promises. Unlike an allusion understood primarily as a recognizable relation between texts, the index remains active after its literary source has been identified: It directs the reader toward an unverified voice and a space implied beyond the room represented in the play. The uncanny thus arises from the tension between textual familiarity and unresolved dramatic attribution, not simply from the appearance of a ghost.

The argument develops through close reading of Barrie's language in dialogue with Freud's account of the uncanny and with later accounts of its textual and spatial dimensions. Freud is useful here because he does not reduce the uncanny to frightening subject matter: The familiar can become uncanny when it returns in a displaced or repressed form, while involuntary repetition can make an otherwise ordinary occurrence seem fateful (Freud 220, 237). Robin Lydenberg's account of Freud's uncanny narratives emphasizes the tension between narrative containment and material that escapes it (Lydenberg). This makes the play's successive explanations of the phrase a narrative problem, while Samuel Weber's emphasis on "formal textual structure itself" directs attention to how that problem is organized (1115). Elisabeth Zimmerman's study of uncanny architecture provides a further point of departure by showing how repetition, memory, and spatial organization can make uncanniness a property of literary form rather than merely a feature of fictional events (Zimmerman). Taken together, these approaches guide a sequence of analysis: Freud clarifies the disturbance produced by recurrence, Lydenberg its incomplete narrative explanation, Weber its formal organization, and Zimmerman its spatial implications. Because this study is concerned

with textual space, "reader" refers throughout to the interpreter of the written play, including its dialogue and stage directions; it does not examine the reception of a particular theatrical performance.

From Supernatural Event to Textual Uncanniness

Freud's "The Uncanny" (1919) begins from a linguistic paradox: The German "*Heimlich*" can mean what is familiar, homely, or belonging to the home, while "*Unheimlich*" marks what is unhomely or estranged. His analysis repeatedly returns to the idea that the uncanny does not simply designate an unknown threat. Rather, what becomes frightening is often what Freud calls "nothing new or alien," but something familiar estranged by repression or unexpected return (241). This distinction matters for *A Well-Remembered Voice* because the play makes supernatural events ordinary within its dramatic world. The scene begins with the séance already under way, rather than first asking the reader to decide whether communication with the dead is possible. The stage directions begin in darkness, with a woman speaking to her dead son and several figures gathered around a small table; the supernatural event is already the premise of the scene (Barrie). Dick's return as a ghost, therefore, cannot by itself explain the play's textual uncanniness.

This follows Freud's distinction between the uncanny and the merely frightening. In his discussion of fictional worlds, Freud observes that events which would be uncanny in ordinary life may lose that effect when a work establishes them as part of its imaginative reality. A ghost in a world that admits ghosts is not necessarily uncanny simply because it violates the rules of everyday experience (Freud 248). Barrie exploits precisely this possibility. The séance, the movement of the table, Dick's appearance, and the "veil" between the living and the dead are all absorbed into the dramatic world. For the reader, these details establish the séance as part of the fictional premise rather than a sudden rupture of a securely realist world.

The opening stage directions establish this distinction within the written play: The room is dark, the figures around the table are initially difficult to distinguish, and Mr. Don sits apart from the séance. Mrs. Don is introduced through her voice before her physical presence is fully specified. When Dick later speaks to his father, the stage directions sustain a sharper asymmetry: Mr. Don perceives his son, but no corresponding visible figure is supplied in the scene as described. The reader therefore encounters Dick through dialogue and Mr. Don's responses (Barrie).

This distinction helps explain why the phrase "Love bade me welcome" is more important to the argument than the ghost itself. The ghost can be accepted as a feature of the play's fictional world; the phrase cannot be so easily contained. It arrives from elsewhere. During the séance, Mrs. Don recognizes it as a quotation before she can determine it as a message. Her question—"If it is a quotation, I believe I know it!"—implies the real-world origin of these words. The phrase is simultaneously presented as evidence of communication with the dead and identified as language that already exists elsewhere

(Barrie). Its uncanniness lies in the collision between two origins: the immediate origin proposed by the séance and the prior textual origin known to Mrs. Don and, potentially, to the reader.

Weber's insistence that the uncanny cannot be determined "solely in thematic terms" is particularly useful here (1115). If the play were merely a story about ghosts, its supernatural premise would account for the strangeness. Instead, the phrase introduces a formal contradiction within that premise. It belongs to the fictional event and does not belong to it; it is produced inside the séance while also pointing outside it; it appears as Dick's message while remaining recognizable as Herbert's language. The uncanny consequently occurs at a boundary between levels of textuality. As Zimmerman demonstrates in a different text, an uncanny effect can be generated by the organization of repetition, memory, and spatial return rather than by the presence of an intrinsically supernatural object (77–78). In Barrie, the repeated phrase performs precisely this kind of formal work.

The immediate problem, then, is not what the phrase symbolizes but what authorizes its appearance during the séance. Mrs. Don's recognition supplies a literary origin, while the table's movement invites her to attribute the words to Dick. Neither explanation establishes how these familiar words came to function as a message. This unresolved double attribution is what the play's subsequent repetitions intensify: Each return makes the phrase easier to recognize but harder to assign to a single speaker or purpose.

Repetition, Recognition, and Unresolved Attribution

The phrase becomes most visibly uncanny through repetition. Freud describes the unsettling "factor of involuntary repetition" (237–238): what might appear accidental begins to acquire the force of compulsion or fate when it returns beyond expectation (Freud 241). Barrie builds the phrase into the play through precisely this structure of return. Yet the important feature is not repetition alone. Each recurrence occurs in a different discursive situation, so the phrase changes its function while retaining its verbal identity.

The first important recurrence occurs during the séance. Before "Love bade me welcome" appears, Mrs. Don has already attempted to establish communication with Dick. The participants ask questions and interpret the movements of the table, but communication remains uncertain. Mrs. Don believes that Dick "seems to want to tell us more, but something prevents him" (Barrie). When the letters eventually spell the phrase, Mrs. Don recognizes it. Her recognition creates a paradox. If the phrase is already familiar, it cannot function straightforwardly as evidence that an unknown dead person is communicating. Yet if it is a message from Dick, its familiarity demands an explanation. The phrase therefore produces a conflict between recognition and origin: Mrs. Don knows what the words are, but not why they have appeared there.

The play sharpens this problem by allowing the phrase to be renamed. Mrs. Don first calls it a "quotation." The term acknowledges that the words have existed elsewhere and have been transported into a new context. It therefore introduces an intertextual history that the séance, as a supposed act of direct communication, cannot comfortably accommodate. "Quotation" briefly restores the phrase to an ordinary literary order: A speaker quotes a text that can be identified. But the play withdraws that stability almost immediately. Although the séance has already asked for a "message," Mrs. Don's recognition of a "quotation" momentarily introduces another explanatory frame. She then asks, "Why are those words so important?" (Barrie). Her question marks the point at which identifying familiar words proves insufficient: She still cannot establish what their appearance is meant to communicate, and the quotation continues to be treated as an opaque message.

This transformation is central to the play's uncanny mechanism. The phrase becomes strange not because its words change, but because its function changes. The same four words move from literature to séance, from quotation to message, and from message to mystery. Their semantic content remains comparatively simple, while their pragmatic status becomes increasingly unstable. The phrase is therefore familiar at the level of language but unfamiliar at the level of situation. Barrie makes recognition itself the source of uncertainty.

The play repeats the process when Laura mentions the phrase again. Mrs. Don responds that it "might be very important to him," although "we don't understand why" (Barrie). The statement marks a further stage of defamiliarisation. The phrase is no longer treated as something that can be understood through its literary identity; its importance is acknowledged precisely because its function cannot be established. Repetition thus produces the opposite of semantic accumulation. Instead of making the phrase clearer, each recurrence makes its origin and use less secure.

The second half of the play develops the same mechanism through Mr. Don. Unlike Mrs. Don, he encounters the phrase only after others have introduced it into the conversation. When Dick appears to him, the phrase returns in a new form: Dick says that "they keep changing the password," and identifies that evening's password as the same words heard at the séance (Barrie). The transformation is significant. A quotation belongs to a textual world; a message belongs to a communicative exchange; a password belongs to a restricted space governed by rules and boundaries. The word "password" therefore changes the phrase from an object of interpretation into a condition of access.

Yet the password cannot perform its ordinary function because nobody can establish who created it or how Dick acquired it. Mr. Don asks how Dick obtained it, but Dick admits, "I'm not sure" (Barrie). More strikingly, when asked whether he has tried to send messages to the living, Dick replies, "Me? No" (Barrie). His knowledge of the password therefore does not confirm the séance participants' belief that he sent them the earlier message. The password therefore points toward a hidden system without

revealing that system. It implies another space, governed by regulations and forms of access, but leaves the reader without a map of it. What matters for the uncanny is not merely that such a space exists, but that the phrase promises access to an order whose rules remain inaccessible.

These overlapping attempts to classify the words can be represented schematically as quotation → message → password; this describes a shift in interpretive function, not a strict chronology of the speakers' labels. The words remain identical while their functions change. Repetition in Barrie is therefore more than simple recurrence; each return is a recontextualisation. Freud's account of repetition is useful here not because Barrie simply illustrates a psychoanalytic rule, but because the play turns repetition into a formal device for destabilizing identity. The phrase is "the same" and yet never quite the same: Its identity depends on the contexts from which it is repeatedly displaced. Crucially, each new description answers one question but leaves another unanswered: "quotation" identifies a prior verbal form without explaining its transmission, "message" supplies a possible sender without proving that sender's involvement, and "password" implies a rule of entry without identifying who established it. This is the unresolved attribution that links repetition to the narrative problem addressed by Lydenberg.

Lydenberg's account of Freud is helpful at precisely this point, because it shows how a narrative can seek to contain troubling material while allowing that material to exceed its explanations. In *A Well-Remembered Voice*, "quotation," "message," and "password" each temporarily place the words in an intelligible category. Yet the later dialogue with Dick undoes the apparent security of the séance's account: he knows the password but denies sending messages. The phrase is thus contained as one kind of utterance only to reappear with another, still unverified source or function (Lydenberg 1072–73). In this specific sense its movement parallels Dick's appearance: an apparent disclosure creates a further question rather than ending uncertainty.

This instability also changes the position of the reader. In the written play, the phrase first appears within the séance, where Mrs. Don recognizes it as a possible quotation. A reader may or may not independently recall Herbert at that point; in either case, Mrs. Don's recognition directs attention toward a source beyond the immediate dialogue. Once Herbert's "Love (III)" is brought into view, the later recurrences can be read against both textual contexts. Yet knowledge of the poem cannot verify why its opening words appear as a supposed message from Dick. The play therefore makes recognition inseparable from displacement: discovering the literary source sharpens, rather than resolves, the problem of attribution.

The Intertextual Index: Herbert's Invitation in Barrie's Séance

The source of "Love bade me welcome" is not incidental. It is the opening line of George Herbert's "Love (III)," the final poem of *The Temple*. Herbert's poem stages a dialogue between a reluctant human soul and personified divine Love. The opening qualifies its

welcome immediately: "yet my soul drew back" (Herbert line 1). The soul initially withdraws because of guilt and unworthiness; Love approaches, questions the soul, and finally invites it to sit and eat. Welcome is therefore not merely a sentiment in the poem but an enacted movement of admission: a hesitant subject is brought across a threshold and incorporated into a space of hospitality (Herbert lines 17–18).

Barrie's appropriation of the phrase retains this language of welcome while radically changing the conditions under which the welcome can be understood. In Herbert, the phrase belongs to an explicit theological dialogue. The speaker knows who speaks: Love, understood as God, addresses the soul. The movement between speakers is hesitant, but the poem ultimately supplies a recognizable theological frame. In Barrie, by contrast, the phrase is detached from its original speaker. Mrs. Don recognizes the words but cannot identify the voice behind them. Dick repeats them but does not account for their initial appearance. The phrase therefore survives its original context while losing the certainty of its original speaker. Its first-person "me" names the guest in Herbert's poem; at Barrie's table, however, it is not clear whose experience the same "me" is supposed to report. Recognition of the literary source does not establish a dramatic speaker.

This distinction matters because "Love (III)" is itself structured as a scene of crossing. The soul enters; Love approaches; the soul refuses; Love takes the speaker's hand; finally, the speaker sits and eats. Herbert ends with Love's command to sit and "taste my meat" and the guest's response, "So I did sit and eat" (Herbert lines 17–18). The poem's spatial vocabulary creates movement from outside to inside. As Hannah Brooks-Motl observes, "Love (III)" is unusually theatrical within *The Temple*: it presents a dialogue and a sequence of gestures that resemble stage action, with Love drawing nearer, taking the speaker's hand, and directing the guest to sit. Barrie relocates the opening words of this scene into another dramatic context, but the movement across a boundary remains. The phrase becomes an invitation whose destination has been obscured.

This is where the concept of the intertextual index becomes most productive. This study does not use "index" here as a claim that the phrase proves a causal link with the dead: the play offers no such proof. It names a directional textual operation that persists after the earlier literary source has been identified. "Love bade me welcome" does not simply allude to Herbert; it directs the reader toward a second textual space whose internal logic begins to reshape the first. Once Herbert's poem is recalled, "welcome" carries associations of invitation, admission, hospitality, guilt, and entry. Yet in Barrie the person being invited is no longer clearly identifiable. Is the phrase addressed to Dick, to Mr. Don, to the dead, or to the living? Is "Love" still a divine figure, or has the word been detached from its theological referent? Barrie does not answer these questions. The intertext does not resolve the ambiguity; it makes that ambiguity legible. An ordinary allusion may reward the recognition of Herbert, but the intertextual index also registers

the gap between that recognition and the unverified act of communication staged by Barrie.

The intertextual relation is therefore not simply one of enrichment but of destabilization. A quotation normally establishes a relation between two texts that can be traced and named. Here, however, the phrase is encountered before its source is necessarily identified. The play consequently reproduces for the reader some of the uncertainty experienced by its characters. Mrs. Don recognizes the words as something she may know; the reader may recognize them as something encountered elsewhere. Yet recognition does not restore the original context. The phrase becomes strange precisely because it has been displaced from its original textual home.

The relation between the two texts also illuminates the play's treatment of death. Herbert's poem describes movement into divine presence: the speaker fears exclusion but is finally welcomed. Barrie's play stages an apparent movement in the opposite direction, a return from absence into presence. Dick crosses the boundary from death to life, but the crossing cannot be completed. He appears only to Mr. Don, cannot explain the rules governing the world he comes from, and finally disappears again. The phrase that once described admission into a divine space is thus transformed into a sign of uncertain passage between life and death.

The reversal clarifies the phrase's role in the uncanny. In Herbert, "welcome" resolves exclusion by completing a movement into presence. In Barrie, "welcome" accompanies a crossing that remains unresolved. The phrase promises access while withholding knowledge of the destination. It carries the memory of a stable theological structure into a play whose supernatural structure remains deliberately incomplete. What was a language of arrival becomes a language of suspended arrival. Thus the intertextual index does not merely associate two spaces: it brings the completed admission in Herbert into conflict with the play's continually deferred account of access.

The intertextual relation becomes still more significant in the final movement of the play. Dick's conversation with his father contains questions about the world "there": where Dick was killed, what regulations govern the dead, and how the password was obtained. The play repeatedly points beyond the textually represented room toward another domain, but Mr. Don cannot gain full access to it, and the dialogue gives the reader no complete account of its nature. The intertext performs a parallel operation. "Love bade me welcome" points outside Barrie's play toward Herbert's poem, but Herbert's poem cannot fully explain the phrase's function inside Barrie. The reader therefore encounters two incomplete spaces: the supernatural "there" within the drama and the intertextual "elsewhere" beyond it.

This double movement is more than a metaphorical resemblance; it is a structural correspondence. The play creates an absent space through the unexplained world of the dead, while the phrase creates another absent space through its textual source. Both are

approached through signs that promise access without completing it. Dick's "password" promises access to the world beyond the veil, while Herbert's first line opens onto another text behind Barrie's text. Neither access is complete. The reader can identify the source but cannot determine its ultimate function; the characters can hear the password but cannot discover its origin. The uncanny resides in this repeated approach to a boundary that appears permeable but never fully opens.

Uncanny Space: Textual Boundaries and the Reader

The intertextual movement of the phrase produces a spatial problem within the play. The setting described in *A Well-Remembered Voice* is remarkably limited. The séance takes place around a small table; Mr. Don sits elsewhere in the room; later, his conversation with Dick remains within the domestic studio. Formally, the drama seems enclosed. Yet the language continually refers to spaces outside that enclosure: the "gulf" crossed by the dead, the "veil" separating the living from the dead, the regulations governing the other side, and the unknown location from which the password originates (Barrie). The represented room is bounded, but its dialogue continually opens onto undescribed spaces.

Freud's own examples of uncanny repetition are frequently spatial. In describing his experience of repeatedly returning to the same place in an unfamiliar city, he links repetition with disorientation: the problem is not merely that an event occurs again, but that repeated return changes the subject's relation to place (Freud 237). Barrie translates this logic into dramatic form. "Love bade me welcome" repeatedly returns to the same verbal location, but each return places it in a different spatial relation: the séance table, the conversation between the characters, the imagined world beyond death, and finally Herbert's poem. The phrase becomes a recurring point of orientation, redirecting the reader without providing a final destination.

Zimmerman's work on uncanny architecture is particularly suggestive because it treats space as a formal rather than merely thematic category. In her reading of Jean Rhys, repeated rooms, stairs, memories, and textual disruptions make architecture participate in the production of uncanniness (Zimmerman 77–78). *A Well-Remembered Voice* works differently, but the underlying principle is comparable: uncanny space is produced by relations among repeated elements and unstable boundaries. Barrie's room does not become uncanny because it contains a ghost. It becomes uncanny because the language spoken within it continually suggests that the room is not the whole of the dramatic world.

The phrase is the clearest mechanism of this expansion. If it were simply a quotation from Herbert, it would establish a bridge between two texts. Because it is repeatedly presented as a message whose source cannot be identified, however, the bridge becomes a threshold. The reader is encouraged to move from Barrie to Herbert and then to return to Barrie with a transformed understanding of the phrase. Each

crossing alters the previous reading. The text therefore behaves spatially: it contains an inside and an outside, but the boundary between them remains unstable.

This is also why the phrase's status as a "password" matters in the play. A password is meaningful not because of its lexical content alone but because it grants access to a restricted domain. Dick's difficulty obtaining it suggests an order governed by rules, but the dialogue gives the reader no reliable description of that order. The password therefore points toward a space that the written play invokes without defining.

The play's handling of voice and visibility reinforces the same textual boundary. In the opening stage directions, speech emerges from darkness before the speaker is fully situated in the room. Later, Dick addresses Mr. Don, yet the stage directions do not grant his presence a visible form within the described scene. For the reader, this is not an empirical experience of looking at an empty stage but a discrepancy inscribed in the script between a character's encounter and the figure the text withholds. Dick's presence is thus legible through dialogue, memory, and Mr. Don's replies, while the space from which he speaks remains undescribed (Barrie).

The phrase "Love bade me welcome" participates in the same distribution. It is materially present as language, but its source is absent. It can be read as Dick's message, Mrs. Don's remembered quotation, Herbert's line, or the sign of an unidentified voice. Its "space" is therefore not a physical location but a network of textual relations. The phrase occupies several contexts at once without belonging completely to any of them.

This structure explains why the uncanny remains active after the supernatural event has apparently been resolved. Dick appears, speaks to his father, and leaves. The plot could therefore be read as a completed encounter between the living and the dead. Yet the phrase remains unexplained. A reader familiar with Herbert can identify the words' literary source without confirming their supposed supernatural sender; a reader unfamiliar with the poem can still follow the failure of the séance's explanation. In neither case does the play verify how the words were communicated. This asymmetry prevents closure. Dick's disappearance does not eliminate the question of the phrase; it leaves the phrase behind as a remainder.

The title *A Well-Remembered Voice* is significant in this context. A voice can be remembered without being physically present and recognized without being locatable. The phrase functions as a linguistic equivalent of such a voice: it is familiar enough to be recognized but detached from a stable speaker. The uncanny effect consequently depends on a double recognition. The characters recognize a phrase whose source they cannot explain, while the reader can recognize the phrase's source but cannot explain why that source has been imported into Barrie's play in this particular form.

The reader therefore occupies a position structurally analogous to Mr. Don's, but this analogy concerns interpretation rather than theatrical visibility. Both receive a sign of another space without being granted complete access to it. Mr. Don receives the

password but cannot discover the rules of the world to which it supposedly belongs. The reader receives the quotation but cannot reduce its significance to its original meaning. In both cases, knowledge is simultaneously granted and withdrawn. The reader is thus placed on the same interpretive threshold as the character: close enough to recognize the sign, but unable to cross fully into the space it indicates.

Conclusion

A Well-Remembered Voice has often been approached through its representation of wartime grief, spiritualism, and the return of the dead. Those contexts remain essential, but they do not by themselves explain the particular textual unease produced by the play. The supernatural premise is largely naturalized by the dramatic world; the ghost is not necessarily uncanny simply because he is a ghost. The more persistent disturbance comes from the phrase "Love bade me welcome," whose repeated appearances disrupt the boundaries between quotation and message, presence and absence, and one text and another.

This article has argued that the phrase functions as an intertextual index of the uncanny through three related operations, rather than through a merely decorative reference to an earlier poem. First, it introduces a conflict between familiarity and origin: Mrs. Don recognizes the words as a quotation, yet their appearance during the séance invites her to interpret them as communication from the dead. The phrase is therefore familiar as language and strange as event. Second, repetition changes the phrase's status from quotation to message and from message to password while leaving its verbal form intact. Third, the connection with Herbert's "Love (III)" opens a second textual space in which welcome means admission into divine presence, only to be transformed by Barrie into an unresolved sign of passage between life and death.

The term "index" is useful because it names this movement without assigning the phrase a final meaning. Its specific analytical value is to distinguish the recoverable provenance of a quotation from the unverifiable authority claimed for it within the new work. "Love bade me welcome" points to Dick, the séance, Herbert, the world of the dead, and the reader's own act of recognition. It differs from a key that unlocks a hidden meaning: an index indicates a direction without guaranteeing arrival. The phrase remains effective precisely because each destination modifies the others while none fully explains its presence. The uncanny emerges in this indication without resolution.

The argument also suggests a broader way of approaching literary uncanniness. Rather than treating the uncanny primarily as a theme—ghosts, death, doubles, or supernatural events—it can be approached as a formal relation among repetition, textual memory, and spatial boundary. In Barrie's play, uncanniness is generated when language refuses to remain within the context that contains it. A phrase from a seventeenth-century devotional poem becomes a wartime password; a remembered quotation becomes an unexplained message; a small domestic room opens onto an invisible world. The play does

not finally reveal what lies beyond these boundaries. Instead, it repeatedly brings the reader to them. Further work could examine whether quotations in other dramas of mediated voices become recognizable without becoming securely attributable; not every allusion needs to produce this effect.

The final effect is therefore not simply fear but suspended recognition, in which recognition itself becomes unstable. The reader knows the phrase and does not know it; recognizes its source and cannot exhaust its function; encounters a voice without being able to locate its speaker. "Love bade me welcome" becomes uncanny because it is never allowed to settle into a single textual identity. It is at once quotation, message, password, memory, and trace. Through this unstable mobility, Barrie turns a small verbal fragment into the principal mechanism through which absence becomes perceptible.

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