

The Postcolonial Gothic: Towards an Exploration of this Theory through Selective Readings of John Banville's *Kepler* and *Ghosts* and Mary Morrissy's *Mother of Pearl*



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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted, in whole or part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other qualification.

Signed: _____

Date: April 2012

Dedication

For my husband Peter

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Abstract

The title of this thesis points to an ongoing dialogue between the Gothic and the postcolonial within the space of the novel. In reality however there are a variety of other exchanges that continually intersect with the postcolonial and the Gothic, informing both in divergent and yet surprisingly complementary ways. The exchanges I am alluding to contemplate such notions as the way a dialogue with stone can illuminate both the postcolonial and the Gothic from a feminist perspective in Mary Morrissy's *Mother of Pearl* (1997). They question how air, fire, water and earth manifest themselves in the novels in a way that expresses both the postcolonial and the Gothic as mutually transformative locations. They imagine how geometry might offer itself as an imaginative device in this exchange of ideas. An opening premise, one that will be explored in detail throughout the thesis, is that they each participate through an engagement with metamorphosis.

Both writers engage in a form of elemental philosophy that is compellingly evident in the three novels I have selected for exploration. The four elements of air, fire, water and earth, those 'hormones of the imagination' (Bachelard: 2002, 11), are constantly transforming themselves. In the novels they manifest in their own elemental metamorphoses as breath, tears, sweat, soil, rain, wind, stone, sunlight, flesh and much more. Geometrical patterns find almost endless multiplicity in nature and are revealed in the novels in numerous ways, for example in the complex frame for *Kepler* (1981), or inscribed in the soil in *Ghosts* (1993) as a journal of the past, and in the river that divides the city in *Mother of Pearl*. Even the music that flows through each novel, whether it be howling, music from the earth or Pythagorean music of the spheres, forms geometric lines that translate a variety of alliances. All three novels reveal air as a dynamic and transformative cartography that expresses itself as a creative force, or as a powerful carrier of memories, or even as breath which seeks to

transform received notions of creation myths. To envisage the air as an empty space is to underestimate its rich texture.

This thesis explores these affective connections with John Banville's complex tender mapping, and with Morrissy's cartography of breath showing how it creates intersections between howling, insects and stone. Stuart Aitken, emphasising the importance of such cartographies, says that '[t]he notion of a tender mapping is hugely appropriate to moving in and beyond imperial cartographies of today (Aitken: 2009, 1).

The act of reading itself also comes under scrutiny within the cartography of affects as a potentially Gothicized and embodied act of touch. Michel de Certeau anticipates this idea by embracing the elemental and spectral music that is implicated within reading, calling it 'a wild orchestration of the body' (de Certeau: 1984, 175). Reading for de Certeau creates its own affective mapping as a 'network of an anti-discipline' (de Certeau: 1984, xv), thus becoming unruly and audacious rather like the Gothic.

To expand upon these ideas I am utilizing theorists who engage in their own distinct elemental philosophies namely, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, Gaston Bachelard, Rosi Braidotti, Michel de Certeau, and Friedrich Nietzsche. They each provide an inventive vocabulary that articulates how the elements operate as imaginative tools within the postcolonial Gothic dialogue, serving to show the respective efficacy of each theoretical location in seeking to transform the way we see the world.

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Introduction

I suspect that even today when the most erudite ask what is the nature of anything, they are haunted by the answer, “of earth,” “of water,” “of air,” or “of fire” – the solid, the flowing, the gaseous, the caloric. (Woodbridge Qtd. Macauley: 2010, 1)

Before stating the research aims of this thesis, given the broad scope of the areas with which it sets out to engage, it is necessary to clarify what it is not attempting to prove, before describing what it does attempt to prove. This thesis is not an attempt at seeking to classify John Banville and Mary Morrissy as postcolonial or Gothic writers; neither is it saying that the three novels under scrutiny are to be classified as postcolonial or Gothic novels. This thesis is not engaging in a specific study or history of the Irish novel. It is however setting out to explore how the novel is a fitting aesthetic form to accommodate the highly inventive and original imaginations of these two writers. It is also suggesting that both the postcolonial and the Gothic are present as an on-going dialogue within the space of each of the novels. It is further an exploration of how each writer uses air, fire, water and earth as a means to express facets and flows of memory within this dialogue, as well as articulating the movement and metamorphosis flowing within these postcolonial Gothic encounters. The thesis will explain how the fusion of the postcolonial and the Gothic, through a postmodern lens, creates a fluid and rhizomatic theory which is ideally suited to offer readings of novels which stem from a postcolonial culture.

The Elemental Encounter

The notion of elemental encounters firstly points towards the way in which Morrissy and Banville make air, fire, water and earth perform in the texts. Their use of the elements as both a form of affective language, and as versions of elemental philosophy is, as Luce Irigaray states, an attempt to revisit and invigorate ‘those natural matters that constitute the origin of

our bodies, of our life, of our environment' (Irigaray Qtd. Canters and Jantzen: 2005, 29). Both writers offer an affective cartography that submits to the haunting of elemental language at which Woodbridge hints in the epigraph above. Secondly, the elements offer skilful compositions of movement within the texts and between reader and writer as affective 'hormones of the imagination' (Bachelard: 2002, 11), providing what Frantz Fanon sees as 'the real *leap* [that] consists in introducing invention into existence' (Fanon: 2008, 179). Thirdly, the elements are not only able to occupy haunted locations or invoke ghosts through memory, but they also, paradoxically, serve to exercise a grounding effect upon the aesthetic use of the Gothic. This is achieved by weaving the Gothic into everyday objects and environments like stone, trees, weather conditions, rooms and bodies. This technique lends a subaltern aspect to the elemental gestures, as Ranajit Guha describes, 'bending closer to the ground in order to pick up the traces of a subaltern life' (Guha: 1987, 138). The vestiges of these often barely-detectable presences are evident within Declan Kiberd's 'messy phenomena' (Kiberd: 1996, 646) or Michel de Certeau's idea of the 'world's debris' (de Certeau: 1984, 107) or, as in the title of David Nally's recent book on the Irish Famine, 'human encumbrances';¹ all descriptions of voices and presences deemed to be extraneous as they are embodied in these elements. Banville and Morrissy both use the elements as cartographies of tender encounters that express the lingering hauntings of such presences in the novels. In this way they can express memories of places or people that are intensely pertinent to the Irish postcolonial imagination.

Finally the word 'encounter' forms a connection between the postcolonial and the Gothic as the word indicates a meeting with something that has the capacity to disrupt or challenge: for example hauntings, experiences of otherness or the presentation of contentious issues. The psychoanalyst Piera Aulagnier states that to 'live is to experience in a continuous

¹ See Nally, D.P. (2011) *Human Encumbrances: Political Violence and the Great Irish Famine*, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

way what results from the situation of the encounter' (Aulagnier: 2001, 8); from this perspective, the textual encounters translate into elemental expressions of postcolonial reverberations that insinuate themselves within the most intimate of lived spaces. Such encounters, amplified by the Gothic, become affective moments because 'something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter' (Deleuze: 1994, 139, emphasis in original). Thus, reading mere representations might offer comfort for, as Simon O'Sullivan says, 'our habitual way of being and acting in the world is reaffirmed and reinforced, and as a consequence no thought takes place' (O'Sullivan: 2006, 1). Counter to this, the Gothicised elements create textual encounters in which our 'typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of knowledge disrupted. We are forced to thought' (O'Sullivan: 2006, 1).

Postcolonial Gothic Criticism: an Irish Context

To date there are no postcolonial Gothic critical studies relating to Banville's or Morrissy's work, in fact, a postcolonial Gothic study relating specifically to Irish fiction has yet to be undertaken. Postcolonial Gothic is still a fairly new field of criticism, but it has not been selected as a field of study in this thesis merely because a gap exists in postcolonial literary analysis in Irish fiction.² Rather, given the attraction for so many Irish writers of Gothic

² One of the first to approach a postcolonial Gothic genre is Newman, J. (1996) 'Postcolonial Gothic: Ruth Praver Jhabvala and the Sobhraj case', in Sage, V. and Lloyd Smith, A., eds., *Modern Gothic: a Reader*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 171-187. Gina Wisker has written a useful guide on teaching and reading the postcolonial Gothic in, Wisker, G. (2007a) 'Crossing Liminal Spaces: Teaching the Postcolonial Gothic', in *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, 7, (3), 401-425, and Philip Holden has written an article exploring the contextualisation of the postcolonial Gothic in Holden, P., (2009) 'The 'postcolonial gothic': absent histories, present contexts' in *Textual Practice*, 23, (3), 353-372. A number of extended studies have been published that examine the postcolonial Gothic genre namely, Rudd, A. (2010) *Postcolonial Gothic: Fictions from the Caribbean, Canada, Australia and New Zealand*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press; Sugars, C. and Turcotte, G., eds. (2009) *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic*, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press; Punter, D. (2000) *Postcolonial Imaginings: Fictions of a New World Order*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Andrew Smith and William Hughes approach the Gothic from a postcolonial perspective in Smith, A., and Hughes, W., eds. (2003) *Empire and the Gothic: the Politics of Genre*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. Tabish Khair explores the Gothic and postcolonialism through their respective preoccupations and narrations of Otherness in Khair, T. (2009) *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. Jodey Castricano's article explores the postcolonial Gothic in relation to Kathy Acker's writing, see

conventions (Killeen: 2006), coupled with Ireland's protracted colonial experiences and ongoing postcolonial recovery, the postcolonial Gothic emerges as not only an overdue, but also a potentially valuable, field of study in an Irish literary context.

My approach to literary texts is not to read them as political manifestos, but rather to see both the literary space, and Gothic nuances, as offering a significant means of expression for the postcolonial imagination and memory. I would agree with Italo Calvino's view that literature, especially the novel, is able to express aspects of experience 'that the language of politics excludes or attempts to exclude' (Calvino: 1986, 98). Thus art remains autonomous and not reduced to mere polemic, an issue important to Morrissy, who states pointedly, 'I don't think that's the function of art';³ and yet for both writers 'art is action' (Banville Qtd. Imhof: 1989, 16). But why is the postcolonial designated as a focus of study for the Irish novels in this thesis? Why is the aesthetic form of the novel such a fertile space for the postcolonial Gothic imagination to thrive in? What can the Gothic bring to literary expressions of the postcolonial, and how do the two interrelate in the novels? How do elemental encounters perform within a postcolonial Gothic reading of the novels? I will deal with each of these questions in turn.

The postcolonial imagination: movement and metamorphosis

If, as Ashcroft maintains, 'we can only understand modernity,⁴ and hence postmodernity and globalism, if we understand the trajectory of imperial expansion' (Ashcroft: 2001, 29), then

Castricano's, J., (1998) 'If a Building is a Sentence, So Is a Body: Kathy Acker and the Postcolonial Gothic' in *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative*, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 202-216.

³ See Morrissy interview with Ashley Taggart in the *Dublin Quarterly: International Literary Review*, Sept – Dec 2007 [online], available: http://www.dublinquarterly.ie/11/int_mmorrissy.html.

⁴ Modernity, initiated by cultural movements such as the Renaissance and the Reformation as well as the expansion into the 'new world', is coterminous with imperialism, its colonial conquests and its subsequent manipulation and construction of identity. Ashcroft utilizes Anthony Giddens' idea of the 'disembedding' of time from its relationship with place as a consequence of the calendar and the clock. He states that postcolonial thinking, although working within the accepted notions of space and time, 'often reinstalls...the importance of the connections between time and place, thus 'refilling' space emptied by modernity' (Ashcroft: 2001, 35n¹). This replenishment of space is experimented with in Banville and Morrissy with their engagement with the elements and with the Gothic, for example in hauntings, in alliances and intense interactions with stone, or insects and plants, or with air carrying memory. By elevating the *minutae* of the everyday with intense sensory perception they ground time and space within a topography of affects.

the postcolonial performs a crucial role in understanding both the development, and the continuing implications, of the process of imperialism. Postcolonial thinking aims to explore how the imperialist project plays out its affective relationship, not only within the spaces of the body politic, home and community, but also within the highly intimate flow of forces within each of us as human beings.

Defining the postcolonial is much like defining the novel or the Gothic – a slippery process. However, Achille Mbembe offers this productive interpretation of the heterogeneous constellation of ideas and perspectives that is the postcolonial:

In truth, [postcolonialism is] a way of thinking that derives from a number of sources and that is far from constituting a system because it is in a large part *being constructed as it moves forward*. (Mbembe: 2008, my emphasis)

Mbembe identifies how the postcolonial is not only itself being continually transformed as a theoretical and imaginative tool, but also that a crucial part of its remit is about the affective process of transformation. In keeping with this idea, John McLeod offers a description of the postcolonial with the assertion that ‘out of its very variety comes possibility, vitality, challenge’ (McLeod: 2000, 3):

... ‘postcolonialism’ recognises both historical *continuity* and *change*. On the one hand, it acknowledges material realities and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today, even if the political map of the world has changed through decolonisation. But on the other hand, it asserts the promise, the possibility, and the continuing necessity of change, while also recognising that important challenges and changes have already been achieved. (McLeod: 2000, 33, emphasis in original)

By emphasising change, challenge, opportunity and potential, as well as the persistence of the past as located in the present, McLeod points to a number of key areas that will be explored in this thesis, namely memory, metamorphosis and the flow of imagination. In recognizing how traces of colonialism linger, McLeod introduces a form of haunting, especially the forthright *acknowledgement* of haunting. By this I mean the recognition that, within the tempero-spatial transformations that postcolonial thinking affirms, remnants of the past are also repeatedly carried forward. They intersect through memory, creative thinking and productive forms of nostalgia, in the search for identity, both individual and communal.

Svetlana Boym appreciates such complex hauntings when she talks about ‘reflective nostalgia’ (Boym: 2001, xviii) as presenting ‘an ethical and creative challenge, not merely a pretext for midnight melancholias’ (Boym: 2001, xviii). She grasps how memory and identity are marked by the multiplicities spawned by ‘challenge’, ‘doubt’, ‘collective frameworks’, and the deep understanding of the nature of ‘longing’ (Boym: 2001, xviii), rather than by a single rational narrative. Ultimately for Boym, nostalgia embraces the intensities found in ‘the rhythm of longing’ (Boym: 2001, xvii) and like McLeod, she sees it as being permeated by hauntings that are epitomized by the Gothic ‘repetition of the unrepeatable, materialization of the immaterial’ (Boym: 2001, xvii). These spectral encounters form a connection between the postcolonial and the Gothic. In his emphasis on change, McLeod also initiates a link with metamorphosis, a central theme within the Gothic, and also at the core of the transmutative dynamic interaction of the elements; hence elemental encounters provide a valuable means of expressing the symbiosis between the postcolonial and the Gothic, as well as with the protean space of the novel within which they flow.

Postcolonialism: the Irish experience

Why accentuate the postcolonial specifically in relation to Irish literature? Without attempting to rake over old ground, it is fair to state that the journey to interpolate Ireland within postcolonial studies has been formulated within a fairly convoluted epistemological and historical debate. Somewhere within the spaces between Simon Slemon’s discussion about the somewhat undignified ‘scramble’ for the ‘shimmering talisman’ (Slemon: 1994, 17) of postcolonial status, and Bart Moore-Gilbert’s unforgettably surreal image of the ‘distasteful beauty parade’, where colonial nations are seen to be displaying their wares to vie for the coveted title of ‘most oppressed colonial’, (Moore-Gilbert: 1997, 12) Irish academics have cultivated a fruitful presence.

When the prominent postcolonial text *The Empire Writes Back* first appeared in 1989, a statement was made that cast doubts upon Ireland’s claim to postcolonial status:

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While it is possible to argue that these societies were the first victims of English expansion, their subsequent complicity in the British Imperial enterprise makes it difficult for colonized peoples outside Britain to accept their identity as post-colonial. (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin: 2003, 31-2)

This statement served to open up a robust and yet nuanced debate about Ireland, its history and culture, the country's relationship with England, and ultimately what it means to be Irish. Subsequent dichotomous coloniser/colonised labels pinned onto Ireland, allied to other points raised in relation the Act of Union (1801) and Ireland's geographical position within Europe, appeared to further undermine any attempts at a durable claim to a postcolonial identity. Liam Kennedy has raised the point concerning the active role that the Irish played in the exploitative British imperial enterprise (Kennedy, 1996), and Thomas Bartlett (Bartlett et al, 1988) has gone so far as to state that Ireland may even be considered as a 'mother country' in its own right.

Ireland has also been viewed intrinsically as part of Western Europe; thus the contention for some is that it cannot justifiably be viewed like other overseas British colonies. This analytical framework takes such proximity into account, and foregrounds the contention that Western European cultural and its intellectual development has inevitably shaped Ireland. Clare Carroll cites Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge to illuminate a number of vital indicators that problematise these analyses:

At the same time, if the indigenous Irish participated in and at times benefited from the British Empire, they were also subject to the forces that define oppositional postcolonialism ' (a) racism, (b) a second language and (c) an armed struggle'. (Carroll and King, 2003: 8)

This complex location of formal integration with the colonizing power in the Act of Union, alongside armed resistance against that same power, serves to create a 'radically undecidable text' (Eagleton: 1995, 132). Two axes run concurrently here, one of equivalence and affiliation, the other of estrangement and inequality.

Using a literary analogy that points towards an unpredictable Gothicized space, Ireland came to be viewed simultaneously as Prospero *and* Caliban, thus contending with some highly contradictory yet fertile border crossings, as Bhabha puts it:

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...we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-dela* – here and there, on all sides, fort/da, hither and thither, back and forth. (Bhabha: 1994, 1)

This sense of movement is expanded further by Stuart Hall. In a discussion of black Caribbean identities that also has direct bearing on the Irish postcolonial experience, Hall describes the shifting relationship that constitutes a 'positioning' into a narrative of the self, especially when that self has been disrupted. Hall sees such identities as being:

'framed' by two axes or vectors, simultaneously operative: the vector of similarity and continuity; and the vector of difference and rupture...The one gives us some grounding in, some continuity with, the past. The second reminds us that what we share is precisely the experience of a profound discontinuity. (Hall: 1990, 226-227)

Bhabha and Hall introduce a sense of tempo-spatial movement into postcolonial encounters that chimes with the Gothic and elemental encounters that will be explored in this thesis. The diverging energy of 'rupture' and 'similarity' (Hall: 1990, 226), alongside the 'restless movement' (Bhabha: 1994, 1), converges with the question that Plato poses of the elemental flux: 'how can anyone have the assurance to assert positively that any of them, whatever it may be, is one thing rather than another?' (Plato: 2008, 37); thus, I would contend that elemental philosophy begins an alliance with the postcolonial Gothic imagination.

Identity is always a mobile process, predisposed towards the characteristics of a verb rather than those of a noun; the notion of Irishness displays this tendency in diverse ways. A kinetic energy of influences and affects reveals itself in the shifting unpredictability of historical events: the Irish diaspora; a protracted period of colonialism, conflict and subsequent recovery; the loss of a language and adaptation to a new one; the overwhelming trauma of the Irish Famine and the void of silence that ensued; and the continuing divide between the north and south of Ireland. Jim MacLaughlin, focusing upon racial construction and Irish immigrants living in Britain, quotes Salman Rushdie on how immigrants must define themselves in their new world: 'migrants must, of necessity, make a new imaginative relationship with the world, because of the loss of familiar habitats' (Rushdie Qtd. MacLaughlin: 1999, 61). If, as Seamus Deane says, 'exile is at its most profound when it is

experienced at home' (Deane: 1997, 96), then Irish people did not have to leave to experience exile thus are creating that 'new imaginative relationship with the world' in Ireland.

Can an imaginative literary space assist in assembling this regenerative terrestrial affiliation? Braidotti asks a similar question in relation to a new form of analysis of Europe: namely 'how do you develop such a new European social imaginary?' (Braidotti: 2003, 25), she offers this answer:

I think that such a notion is a project, not a given, nonetheless, this does not make it utopian in the sense of over-idealistic. It is even the contrary: it is a virtual social reality which can be actualised by a joint endeavour on the part of active, conscious, desiring citizens. If this may be utopian at all, it is only in the positive sense of utopia that Benhabib suggests: the necessary dose of dream-like vision without which no social project can take off and gather support. (Braidotti: 2003, 25)

Writers of fiction can provide some of that 'dream-like vision' for the future and also, utilizing Kevin Whelan's ideas in an Irish context, encourage the galvanising force of memory which 'makes us heirs of the past... and its utopian possibilities...thereby nourishing the utopian instinct' (Whelan: 2003, 93). Indeed, for Whelan, the artist/writer can play a crucial role by 'telling things another way' (Whelan: 2005, 4).

The Novel as Genre

I will address my choice of writers and texts in due course, but first this is an opportune juncture to examine why I have chosen to focus upon the novel as an aesthetic form. I have already alluded to the presence of metamorphosis in the elemental dialogue between the postcolonial and the Gothic, an allusion to which I will return, but it is true to say that the novel also experiences its own continual transformations. In fact, the novel revels in metamorphosis to the extent that 'we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities' (Bakhtin: 1996, 4); for Franco Moretti the novel is like 'a phoenix always ready to take flight in a new direction' (Moretti: 2007, ix) and Mikhail Bakhtin adds that it is like 'a creature from an alien species' (Bakhtin: 1996, 4).

In a quest to seek out a compatible textual space for an embodied and tactile exploration of the postcolonial Gothic, I might well have engaged with poetry, after all it was

Pablo Neruda who said that poetry should contain the stuff of life that is ‘steeped in sweat, smoke, smelling of lilies and urine’ (Neruda: 1974, xxii). The sheer physicality and tangible aesthetic of drama and its performance speaks for itself. In the short story, such a confined textual space means every word, every nuance has to count for so much, thus hauntings and other encounters may be even more intense. But the rambling sense of space offered in the novel means that there is so much room to tell a story, room to set out on an adventure across its generous topography. Echoing this tempero-spatial architecture, Banville describes the novel as ‘some enormous thing dancing in sadness, brief happiness, [and] pain’ (Banville Qtd. Imhof: 1989, 17). This sense of affective movement, when enjoined with the similar dynamic inherent in the reader-writer relationship, expresses the novel as more of a verb than a noun. It also allows for multiple narratives and for descriptions of the elements and their interaction with these narratives, and as such, is the most suitable genre through which to investigate the postcolonial Gothic interaction.

Heraclitus, the philosopher whose words open Banville’s novel *Birchwood* (1973), and who is a vital force in his thinking, discusses the intrinsic ebb and flow of all physical reality. If all matter is subject to flow then, as David Macauley puts it, even seemingly static objects become ‘verb-ed’ (Macauley: 2010, 46). Thus if ‘trees are tree-ing, things are thing-ing, and you are you-ing’ (Macauley: 2010, 46), might one also say that the novel is novel-ing? The novel is an intriguing prospect; it speaks of animation, emotion, mystery and regeneration, and is full of what Margaret Doody has called a ‘rich, [human] muddy messiness’ (Doody: 1997, 485). It is also ‘the receptive home of all substance – bones, blood, feathers, shit, lost gold coins, and chips of earthenware’ (Doody: 1997, 478), linking the body with the elements and a form of realism in the process.⁵ The circulatory flow within

⁵ This is a form of realism that utilizes the elements as Wilson Harris describes: ‘The creation of texts which diverge from one-track realism must...of necessity seek to cross chasms in reality, to cross from the familiar raw material of existence we would associate with a mere blackboard, for instance, to an element such as a storm, or a wave upon which the elements write with the chalk of lightning (Harris: 1999: 233). This is, Harris

blood recalls water; feathers regularly negotiate air; gold invokes the mineral world; and the fiery processes involved in its conception, and buried earthenware, discarded bone and faeces speak of the earth and corporeality. Thus, while the novel is not the *only* space in which to explore postcolonial Gothic metamorphoses, I suggest that it is certainly an *ideal* space in which to begin such an exploration.

When Toni Morrison laments the demise of oral storytelling, an art form that vocalises emotions and connections with the living and dead, she concludes that somehow ‘new information has got to get out, and there are several ways to do it. One is in the novel’ (Morrison: 1990, 328). The novel has the space that allows for a journey through a diverse emotional spectrum through ‘sadness, brief happiness, pain’ (Imhof, 1989:17). Ultimately, the novel’s protean form cultivates an intensive location for creative thinking that galvanizes ‘invention into existence’ (Fanon: 2008, 179); Banville and Morrissy offer such invention with their cartography of affects.

The textural alliances formed by the novel with the elements and cartography are a reminder of how Deleuze and Guattari state that ‘thinking takes place in the relationship between territory and earth’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 1994, 84). The word ‘territory’ clings to connections with the colonial appropriation of places, and of mapping as part of the apparatus of exploitation. Within postcolonial thinking, cartography becomes a deeply contested site of both loss and recuperation, recognising Ihab Hassan’s assertion that ‘maps are power; everyone knows that’ (Hassan: 2005, 1). Deleuze and Guattari offer the idea of territory as a series of affects moving within a group environment, for example animals living in packs display a multiplicity of interactions that cluster as a variable space of flows and intensities. In a similar way, the individual experiences a constellation of sensory information within his or her immediate living-space that determines the felt-space of home. The body, in that

concludes, ‘a different kind of fiction from conventional realism’ (Harris: 1999, 233). The Gothic is a helpmate in crossing such ‘chasms’.

Gothicized depiction of a ‘body without organs’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 4),⁶ becomes a fixed yet inherently mutable site of circulating influences, relationships and affective experiences: it is in constant metamorphoses. A book is also a space of interactions and alliances between bodies, writers, readers, life, and the world: it ‘establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 25). Consequently, the body and the novel map a shared elemental space of affects, an imaginary map that can ‘caress the earth; and stroke its contours’ (Hassan: 2005, 1). An example of this space becomes apparent during haptic moments,⁷ portions of time that embrace a sense of the past flowing into an intense sense of the present, whilst accommodating notions of the future. In a passage that captures this vibrant and earthy, yet haunting and Gothicised, flow of affects within the intense experience of life, Deleuze and Guattari affirm:

You are longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a life (regardless of its duration)—a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack (regardless of its regularity). Or at least you can have it, you can reach it. A cloud of locusts carried in by the wind at five in the evening; a vampire who goes out at night, a werewolf at full moon. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 262)

These words create a condensed depiction of many of the ideas in this thesis, the elemental encounters, metamorphosis, cartography and movement. It also anticipates processes of becoming which I will address presently. In short, the passage stresses the way the postcolonial, the Gothic and the elements flow and form themselves into unlikely, shifting alliances within the mutable space of the novel. It is this cartography of affects that enables Banville and Morrissy to show how writing is about ‘mapping, even realms that are yet to

⁶ The ‘body without organs’ is creatively described in a way that highlights the sensory and affective capacities of the living being as ‘defined by axes and vectors, gradients and thresholds, by dynamic tendencies, involving energy transformation, and kinematic movements...’(Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 170). This description echoes Michel de Certeau’s wonderful depiction of the vibrant gestures and affects within reading that coalesce as ‘a wild orchestration of the body’ (de Certeau: 1984, 175).

⁷ Haptic comes from the word haptology (from Greek *haptesthai* ‘to touch’ or *haptikos* ‘to come into contact with’ or ‘to lay hold of’) expresses a perception of our environment or location that exceeds visual experience. There is an intermingling of a wide range of senses such as memories of earlier experiences of people or an acute perception of place, sensations of touch, sound, smell and so forth. This meld of sensations may produce

come' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 5), and this interchange is central to the approach of this thesis.

In an Irish context, the novel's protean form, and its attendant resistance to uncomplicated categorisation, leads Derek Hand to remark that it 'resonates profoundly alongside the idiosyncrasies of the Irish experience' (Hand: 2011, 2). Indeed, the elemental and postcolonial Gothic facets of the novels in this thesis resonate with what Hand describes as the burden of dealing with living in the shadow of 'an imposed stereotype' (Hand 2011, 13). By utilizing an elemental philosophy, Banville and Morrissy embrace Irigaray's notion of drawing upon 'those natural matters that constitute the origin of our bodies, of our life, of our environment, the flesh of our passions' (Irigaray Qtd. Canters and Jantzen: 2005, 29). The writers offer a challenge to the shadow of coercion by seeking to expose the multiplicities that flow within terrestrial and intimate interactions; the Irish postcolonial experience can be expressed within this framework.

The Gothic

Within imaginative literature, the elements and the Gothic work towards revealing the hidden aspects of imperialist progress that the postcolonial also seeks to uncover. They also offer a means of exploring new affiliations that go beyond nation-building, and seek new forms of relationships in the process. If, as Joe Cleary comments, Irish postcolonial thinking seeks to explore 'the various forms of subaltern struggles largely written out of dominant modes of Irish historiography' (Cleary: 2007, 19), then the Gothic might serve as an imaginative parallel to postcolonial thinking by seeking to uncover 'the presence of diverse absences' (de Certeau: 1984, 108).

Negotiating complex situations demands a resourceful imagination, the sort of narrative vision that Aimé Césaire contends is crucial 'to re-establish a personal, fresh,

experiences that are not easy to articulate, not easy to name, but are nevertheless distinctly *felt* – they may *touch* us deeply.

compelling magical contact with things' (Césaire: 1996, 121); such enigmatic encounters are encouraged by the Gothic and the representation of the elements. Furthermore:

True civilizations are poetic shocks: the shock of the stars, of the sun, the plant, the animal, the shock of the round globe, of the rain, of the light, of numbers, the shock of life, the shock of death. (Césaire: 1996, 119)

This poetic expression of life is imbued within the actions and representation of the elements, and in the sense that 'the potency of place [is] a marvellous thing' (Aristotle Qtd. Macauley: 2010, 197); perhaps this is why much postcolonial fiction embraces marvellous or magical realism, a close affiliate of the Gothic. To engage in a rejuvenating social imaginary then, 'necessarily involves re-establishing elemental contact' (Macauley: 2010: 198). In the interstices of Césaire's elemental shocks lies a Gothic vision of the world and our life within it, as Braidotti says, 'the raw force of life is frightening; the "sentimentalization" of life is necessary to cover up this rawness and disperse the fear' (Braidotti: 2008a, 166). With its own brand of disquieting magic and inventiveness, the Gothic aims to show this 'rawness' in its full force.

Like the novel and the postcolonial, 'the Gothic remains a notoriously difficult field to define' (Punter and Byron: 2004: xviii); moreover 'the Gothic is a mobile and specific form' (Botting: 2005, 13) and a 'discursive site crossing genres' (Wright: 2007, 4). Thus a discreet empathy evolves between the novel, the postcolonial and the Gothic, one of movement and metamorphosis. In this space, air, fire, water and earth, constantly transform themselves, and the geometrical patterns that find diverse multiplicity in nature, find a residence of affinity. They all engage in their own metamorphic cycles, or as we might say, 'becomings'. Jerrold Hogle captures the Gothic's metamorphic and infiltrating qualities:

It is about its own blurring of different levels of discourse while it is also concerned with the interpenetration of other opposed conditions – including life/death, natural/supernatural, ancient/modern, realistic/artificial, and unconscious/conscious, – along with the abjection of these crossings into haunting and supposedly deviant "others"... (Hogle: 2002, 9)

For Gina Wisker, one specific form of haunting that the Gothic generates is the 'bodying forth the imaginary, the spiritual, imaginative, sensed and felt, the internal landscapes of the

mind' (Wisker: 2007, 403-4). The Gothic thus engages in an affective mapping of place, and for postcolonial geography this experience summons the invention and the 'fresh and compelling' (Césaire: 1996, 121) sense of place that Fanon and Césaire encourage. It might seem that too much weight is being placed on what is, after all, a minor literary genre, but Braidotti maintains that "minor" literary genres (Braidotti: 1996, 3) can contribute to inventive alternatives and perceptive transformations of reality. The Gothic enjoys a rich alliance to becoming minor:

Minorities, of course, are objectively definable states, states of language, ethnicity, or sex with their own ghetto territorialities, but they must also be thought of as seeds, crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and deterritorializations of the mean or majority. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 117)

The Gothic, as an outsider in the literary canon, has been termed 'a staggering, limping, lurching form akin to the monsters it so frequently describes' (Punter and Byron: 2004, xix). Angela Wright emphasises the paradox that the Gothic is at once loved and yet also relegated to the critical sidelines, attracting 'so much critical appetite and opprobrium simultaneously' (Wright: 2007, 1). However, as minor literature, it is free to probe the interstices of other forms of expression.

The Gothic, in its recognition of metamorphosis, recalls what de Certeau says about everyday life and about language as an inventive and transformative tool:

Only a dead language no longer changes; only an absence of all residents respects the immovable order of things. Life maintains and displaces, it wears out, breaks, and reworks; it creates new configurations of beings and objects across the everyday practices of living. (de Certeau: 1998, 148)

The Gothic not only emphasizes the 'poetic shocks' (Césaire: 1996, 119) of life, but furthermore it uses its own circulatory nature to flow within the spaces of 'the irrational, the outlawed and the socially and culturally dispossessed' (Smith and Hughes: 2003, 1). Wisker remarks that the Gothic uses its mobility and 'strategies of estrangement and engagement to explore and challenge cultural, social, psychological and personal issues' (Wisker: 2007, 403). Such movement epitomizes the cartography of affects that flows through the novels,

and between the space that exists within the reader and writer relationship. Giuliana Bruno describes such circulatory and affective flow as being ‘*in transito*’ which is:

[...] a form of human motion through culturally conceived space – a form of *transito*. Not necessarily physical motion, *transito* is circulation that includes passageways, traversals, transitions, transitory states, spatial erotics, (e)motion. (Bruno: 2007, 71)

Bruno’s description offers a perfect way to navigate within and between the novel, the postcolonial and the Gothic, as well as the drawing attention to the ‘spatial erotics’ that defines the affective relationship between the writer and reader. The tempero-spatial dynamics of *transito* anticipates diverse metamorphoses in this thesis, those that permeate the elements, the geometric shapes, the creative breath, or within the ‘daydreams of inhabited stone’ (Bachelard: 1994, 111); *transito* is also experienced in the acts of reading and writing, and the creative thinking that might subsequently be inspired.

Minor Writing: ‘thinking means venturing beyond’ (Bloch: 1996, 4)

Donna Haraway embraces the idea of minor writing by introducing ‘cyborg writing’ (Haraway: 1991, 175). In a passage that allies itself with the Gothic, the postcolonial, the literary, and the metamorphoses that permeate each one, Haraway talks about ‘boundary creatures’ (Haraway: 1991, 2), a term that includes women, simians and cyborgs. The cyborg is itself a hybrid creature which is full of contradictions and which occupies an ambivalent space, unsettling the concept of a pure cultural identity. The cyborg occupies what Homi Bhabha calls the ‘Third Space of enunciation’ (Bhabha: 1994, 38), an inventive space where Bhabha thinks that ‘we may elude the politics of polarity, and emerge as the others of ourselves’ (Bhabha: 1994, 39). Thus the creative skill that emanates from this space, which Bhabha recognizes as having a ‘colonial and postcolonial provenance’ (Bhabha: 1994, 38), can be writing that is willing to explore the space of ambivalence, of ‘*regions far from equilibrium*’ (Deleuze: 1997, 109). In the end:

Writing has a special significance for all colonized groups...Contests for the meaning of writing are a major form of contemporary political struggle. Releasing the play of writing is deadly

serious...Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of an original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other (Haraway: 1991, 175)

Bill Ashcroft echoes this affirmative opinion when he says that language is ‘...a tool...which can be employed for various purposes, a tool which is itself part of the cultural experience in which it is used’ (Ashcroft: 2009, 4).

If writing is such an important inventive tool how does it work? How might writing, especially minor literature, and subsequently the act of reading, offer or lead to more than just recreational contemplation? As Milan Kundera sees it, there is a move away from the ‘din of easy, quick answers’ when encountering the novel’s ‘spirit of complexity’ (Kundera: 2003, 18). Such a move triggers a sense of undecidability, initially forcing the reader to stop and reflect. But in this hiatus of thoughtful space, there is also a sense of movement, as this type of ‘thinking means venturing beyond’ (Bloch: 1996, 4). Bloch’s creative, forward-looking thinking resonates with Boym’s ‘reflective nostalgia’, in that it looks to the future, but ‘in such a way that what already exists is not kept under or skated over’ (Bloch: 1996, 4). Such thinking speaks directly to the Gothic in its refusal to refrain from challenging issues in the past or present, and the postcolonial project sustains an equivalent desire to engage with the more problematic aspects of the socio-political and socio-cultural spheres . Kundera goes so far as to say that a race towards the future, which has no regard to any analysis or exploration of the past, ‘is the worst conformism of all, a craven flattery of the mighty’ (Kundera: 2003, 20); the novel, the Gothic, and the postcolonial do not aim to fit into this description. Instead, together, they strive to interrogate such hegemonic positions.

The Act of Reading: a Gothic Encounter?

The Gothic and the elements also flow through the reader-writer relationship, Alan Bennett says that:

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The best moments in reading are when you come across something, a thought, a feeling; a way of looking at things that you'd thought special, particular to you. And here it is, set down by someone else, a person you've never met, maybe even someone long dead. And it's as if a hand has come out and taken yours. (Bennett: 2004, 56)

The image of a hand within the reading space is significant as it suggests a sense of intense physicality, as well as that of haunting, the kind of haunting that offers a hand from a textual, maybe even spectral, presence. Furthermore, if we view the Gothic in Avery Gordon's terms as an 'encounter of tremulous significance' (Gordon: 2008, 134) that 'speaks of phantoms' (Punter: 2004, 3), it evokes a meaningful union between the Gothic and the act of reading. This idea initiates a view of reading as being deeply embodied and tactile, as an animated and interactive process that embraces a haunted elemental world buzzing with memories.

The encounter between, flesh, blood, reading and writing is grasped by the Liverpool writer Pauline Rowe, who talks about the reading experience as one of engraving on the body. Rowe describes this process as writing 'the words of others in my heart so that, in deep crisis, they came back to save me' (Rowe: 2009, 76). Thus, hand, heart, memory and thinking inscribe themselves in an en fleshed, elemental and spectral embrace. The act of reading, which at first glance might seem to be rather incorporeal and cerebral affair, becomes an intensive and tactile process that has an embodied dimension. De Certeau senses reading as a corporeal musical performance because:

...from the nooks of all sorts of "reading rooms" (including lavatories) emerge subconscious gestures, grumblings, tics, stretchings, rustlings, unexpected noises, in short [reading becomes] a wild orchestration of the body. (de Certeau: 1984, 175)

Reading and the body thus become connected by both spectral noises and textual, sensual, vibrations. De Certeau's depiction of reading has strong resonances of the Gothic body. Rather than being a mere "impertinent absence", reading now potentially becomes 'the network of an anti-discipline' (de Certeau: 1984, xv); it can be unruly and audacious as references to the words 'unexpected noises' and 'wild orchestrations' imply. Banville and Morrissy's fashioning of the affective performance of the Gothic within quotidian

experiences serves to intensify sensory perception and emphasize de Certeau's depiction of reading to the full.

The Postcolonial Gothic

But what have the postcolonial and the Gothic in common that renders their alliance so valuable in exploring the 'presence of diverse absences'? (de Certeau: 1984, 108). Hall commends postcolonial thinking as an 'episteme-in-formation' (Hall: 2001, 255), which entails 'the dangerous enterprise of thinking at or beyond the limit' (Hall: 2001, 259). The postcolonial enterprise, as a shifting configuration of movement and transition, echoes both the Gothic, and the notion of becoming, as creative and potentially transgressive transmissions. If 'Gothic texts are about crossing thresholds' (Wisker: 2007a, 404), then the affiliation is further enhanced. Additionally, by highlighting the 'dangerous' aspects of postcolonial thinking, Hall echoes both the wild and volatile dynamic that operates both within processes of becoming, and within the Gothic. Angela Wright emphasizes the Gothic's mobile properties suggesting that it is 'culturally amphibious' (Wright: 2007, 5) and 'a discursive site crossing genres' (Wright: 2007, 4). It too embarks on its own version of 'thinking at the limit' (Hall: 2001, 259) as Botting stipulates that the Gothic 'remains fascinated by objects and practices that are constructed as negative, irrational, immoral and fantastic' (Botting: 2001a, 2).

The postcolonial and the Gothic are adept at the illumination of that which society, or those who hold authority, may try either to conceal or else to construct in a negative way; they are also adept at the incitement of counter-thoughts, themselves deemed to be 'mobile in history' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 4). Working together in this way, the postcolonial Gothic amplifies the affective encounter of reading and 'doubly destabilizes' (Wisker: 2007a, 411) the reader, even when the text presents the most quotidian events.

This destabilization is exemplified in the thread of a subaltern philosophy that runs through the postcolonial Gothic in the hauntings of voices, both human and those of place,

that have been silenced. One consequence of highlighting the processes of gender-construction in postcolonial Ireland (Morrissy: 1997), and the resonance of an island's song (Banville: 1998), is to construct a subaltern space, both human and terrestrial, within a literary text. Thus the postcolonial Gothic operates in a nuanced way with an act of listening that gestures towards Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's assertion that 'to do *a thing*, to work for the subaltern, means to bring it into speech' (Spivak Qtd. De Kock: 1992, 46: emphasis in original). The interaction and representation of the elements in literary texts can be experienced as an expression of this dialogue.

The Postcolonial Gothic: memory and the magic of the everyday

Asserting itself as imperative within the postcolonial and the Gothic, memory often unearths that which are considered to be 'things extra and other' (de Certeau: 1984, 107). In other words, both the postcolonial and the Gothic like to engage with memory, as David Lloyd notes, 'not as the mere debris of progress, but as the openings in which other possibilities live on' (Lloyd: 2008, 71). In this scenario, everyday encounters, whether these be with the natural world, or with photographs; with household paraphernalia, or with other people, can become deeply significant, and can serve as a reminder that 'objects and words also have hollow places in which a past sleeps, as in the everyday acts of walking, eating, going to bed, in which ancient revolutions slumber' (de Certeau: 1984, 108). While these connections may not be part of the narrative of history, they are important in the experiences of identity under colonialism; such quotidian experiences and values can become so intensely felt, they are deemed to exude traces of magic.

Henri Lefebvre states that 'magic plays an immense role in the everyday, be it in the emotional identification and participation with 'other people', or in the thousand little rituals and gestures used by every person, every family, every group' (Lefebvre: 1991, 21). There is an ontological alliance between magic and the Gothic in their mutual engagement with hauntings and experiences that are inexpressible yet significant; these ideas propagate the

seeds of subversive potential within the everyday, a point that is not lost on Kiberd. In an address to the Postcolonial Studies Association on ‘Edward Said and the Everyday’, Kiberd asserts, like Said, that ‘those who resist do so in the name of everyday values’, stressing that liberatory writing, like that of W.B. Yeats, means ‘reconnecting with the quotidian’ (Kiberd: 2009, 4). Kiberd and Said explored Yeats’s concentration on Irish lore as a poetic and decolonising act, but diverse quotidian rhythms also permeate the novels in this thesis, and the postcolonial Gothic can both create and unearth ‘unnatural participations’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 266). These alliances, which nourish elements of magic whilst never losing sight of a grounded aesthetic, will be mirrored in the connection between the postcolonial and the gothic, a connection which allows unvoiced elements of both genres to find their voice. Memory plays a significant part in finding and listening to these traces.

Kevin Whelan, in his article entitled ‘Between Filiation and Affiliation: the Politics of Postcolonial Memory’,⁸ illustrates how aspects of memory within an Irish postcolonial context display themselves in this thesis. Central to Whelan’s exploration is the Ricouerian idea of three levels of memory with the movement towards healing and the development of an ethical memory; I will expand upon this idea more fully in the next chapter by exploring memory, narrative and healing in the Andoque communities in the Amazon, and linking their experiences with those of Ireland. The title of Whelan’s essay is drawn from the idea of filiation and affiliation as set out by Said;⁹ filiation being relationships through descent, birth and affiliation referring to wider alliances through cultural associations. Said clarifies this notion of relationships by saying he is expressing:

the transition from a failed idea or possibility of filiation to a kind of compensatory order, that whether it is a party, an institution, a culture, a set of beliefs, or even a world-vision, provides men and women with a new form of relationship, which I have been calling affiliation but which is also a new system. (Said: 1983, 19)

⁸ See Whelan: 2003, 92-108.

⁹ See Edward Said. (1983) *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. (see p 19-21 especially).

Said echoes Deleuze and Guattari's articulation of 'becoming' as operating rhizomatically within 'the domain of symbioses' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 263). They too explore the notion of affiliations or alliances rather than filiations, of creative involutions rather than progressive evolution, thereby challenging the official paradigms of enlightenment progress.¹⁰

The Postcolonial Gothic and elements: 'becoming'

The notion of 'becoming', a transformative process elicited by Deleuze and Guattari, operates throughout this thesis. Rosi Braidotti utilizes 'becoming' in her own brand of feminist philosophy, describing it as 'the actualization of the immanent encounter between subjects, entities and forces which are apt mutually to affect and exchange parts of each other in a creative and non-invidious manner' (Braidotti: 2008a, 68). Braidotti's interpretation segues with the concerns of the postcolonial and the Gothic in seeking inventive ways of how to live with difference, and of avoiding acts of appropriation. Braidotti echoes Irigaray's sensual thinking about 'approaching', an alternative mode of engagement that provides a tactile route 'to encounter the other, illuminated-illuminating, overflowing one's own world in order to taste another brightness' (Irigaray: 2008, 174). So, just as 'becoming' will be useful in examining the elemental encounters in the novels, it also functions, at a meta-theoretical level, in describing the interaction of the postcolonial with the gothic in the theoretical matrix of this thesis.

The danger that 'becoming' might be seen as a postmodern buzzword is countered by Elizabeth Grosz's warning that in any process of becoming, there is 'a kind of wildness, pivots of unpredictability, elements whose trajectories, connections, and future relations remain unpredictable' (Grosz: 1994, 174). 'Becoming' entails 'a substantial remaking of the subject,

¹⁰ 'Becoming is involutory, involution is creative' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 263). The definition of involution as I understand its use here is 'the process of involving or complicating; or the state of being involved or complicated', Pearsall, Judy (ed.) (2001) *OED*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. There is also the allusion to

a major risk to the subject's integration and social functioning' (Grosz: 1994, 174), thus rendering it productive in expressing the transformations we experience in life – both minimal and momentous. It indicates a vocabulary of movement and change that both the postcolonial and the Gothic see as the potential within the human being and all interactions with the world; it is elemental philosophy at its most inventive and most immanent.

The elements operate then by forging a symbiotic relationship with the postcolonial and the Gothic in the novels, flowing through each to touch and impart a faint residue like 'those poor, pale wraiths pegged out to shiver in the wind of the world' (Banville: 1998, 37). That the elements and the Gothic complement each other is illuminated inadvertently by John Sallis in a summary of Levinas's engagement with the elemental.¹¹ Sallis describes elemental traits as displaying 'indeterminacy' with a 'lack of clear form'; they can manifest 'seemingly from nowhere' with a curious presence amidst 'absence' that speaks of 'unfathomable depth' (Sallis Qtd. Macauley: 2010, 311). These words imply a shifting world of metamorphosis that expresses the Gothic and haunts postcolonial imaginations in the blurring of presence/absence: 'the twin fantasy of death-in-life and life-in-death' as Wilson Harris puts it.¹² But how exactly does this imaginative symbiotic flux manifest itself?

Kiberd underlines one way to approach this dynamic process in Irish writing, in considering how one might engage with the diametrically opposed challenges of both the consequences of colonial power struggles, and 'the oppressive sense of a tradition' (Kiberd: 1996, 289); and his answer is that what is required is the liberation of more 'expressive selves' (Kiberd: 1996: 290). The exigencies inherent within such creative expression inspires a *levitation* of the idea of a prescribed Irish self-hood in tandem with the acknowledgement that 'to be a new species of man or woman is to lack a given identity, to be not nobody but not somebody either' (Kiberd: 1996, 290). Deleuze and Guattari might articulate this as an

the way in which an organ alters in relation to use, for example, when the womb changes shape before, during and after childbirth. It introduces the idea of transformation, of metamorphoses and inventiveness.

encounter of the self within the dynamic force of an assemblage that ‘acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 25). There are also echoes of the Gothic experience of *Unheimlichkeit*, and the associated apprehension of feeling not at home, especially within formally sanctioned identities (Ricoeur: 2004, 149). Thus, alliances are created between the postcolonial and the Gothic that express metamorphosis and movement – both signatures of the elements. But Kiberd poses another question that generates yet more connections.

Drawing directly upon the reflections of Yeats, Kiberd asks the question: “is not all history but the coming of that conscious art which first articulates then destroys that old wild energy?” (Kiberd: 1996, 290). The elements also forge their symbiosis within the postcolonial Gothic by seeking, through their fiery, earthy, fluid and airy metamorphoses, to breathe life into this ‘wild energy’ (Kiberd: 1996, 290); as a result a ‘deeper self is freed... [that will] allow the forces of creation to flow through it’ (Kiberd: 1996, 291). Elemental processes are not only a profound expression of becoming and the wildness Grosz sees within them, they are also suggestive of minor writing in that it articulates the flux, ‘cries...timbres, accents [and] intensities’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 115) of a postcolonial Gothic dynamic. But the other activity intimately connected with writing is that of reading, and this thesis sets out a specific notion of what a postcolonial Gothic reading means, with specific focus on the physical, embodied and haptic aspects of reading, aspects which have often been occluded in consideration of the epistemology, and indeed, the ontology, of reading.

The Postcolonial Gothic Literary Imagination: a haptic experience

One challenging issue that is a key target of both the Gothic and the postcolonial is the Enlightenment. One particular aspect of Enlightenment thinking, secularism, comes through

¹¹ See Sallis’s summary in Macauley: 2010, 311, and the full discussion on Levinas and the elements on pages 310 – 312.

in each of the novels as a search for ways of retaining a spiritual aspect of life without recourse to formal religious institutions. Bhabha and Braidotti both call for a revisiting of secularism. Braidotti endorses Bhabha's view that a brand of secularism grounded in a 'liberalism devoid of the *crucial interpolation* of its colonial history' (Bhabha: 2001, 209), views the world from a position of the allocation of privilege. Alternatively Bhabha's idea of 'subaltern secularism' (Bhabha: 2001, 208) counters the presumption that all are equal and (like the Gothic, the postcolonial and the novel), gives voice to those who would otherwise be excluded. In this vein, Braidotti calls for a form of secular spirituality in the manner of 'philosophical materialism' (Braidotti: 2008c, 257); this might be located somewhere in the interstices of the popular new-age approaches to spiritual life, and the more prescriptive branches of formal religious institutions. It is a cartographic eco-philosophy that embraces the body, and all matter within the spiritual, operating from a 'topology of affects' (Braidotti: 2008c, 257). The flow of air, earth, fire and water through the novels implies a seeking of such spirituality, especially in the vein of Irigaray's project with the elements:

I had thought of doing a study of our relations to the elements: water, earth, fire, air. I was anxious to go back to those natural matters that constitute the origin of our bodies, of our life, of our environment, the flesh of our passions. (Irigaray Qtd. Canters and Jantzen: 2005, 29)

Thus the affective cartographies of the postcolonial Gothic aid in this search for a secular spirituality; they remember that 'there is more wisdom in your body than in your deepest philosophy' (Nietzsche: 2006, 23).

But how might readers respond to haptic moments both within, and inspired by, the novel, and how might these responses lead beyond initial reflection? Wisker introduces the idea of a hiatus of reflection that can put the reader out-of-joint when she refers to the 'praxis of stuck places', and this interruption in the reading process can prove ultimately both 'troubling and transformative' (Wisker: 2007, 422). Maggie Kilgour highlights how, by ushering the reader away from what Raymond Tallis calls 'higher prattle' (Tallis: 2010, 67),

¹² See Wilson Harris, (1998) *Palace of the Peacock*, London: Faber & Faber, p327.

and by denying access to any straightforward answer to complex issues, the novel and the postcolonial Gothic ‘forces its readers to address them in real life, thus (ideally) using literature to encourage social change’ (Kilgour: 1997, 10). The novelist John Hawkes maintains that reading triggers inner ‘psychic events’ that ultimately ‘affect the outer literal events in time and space’ (Hawkes and Scholes: 1972, 205).

Arjun Appadurai says that fiction is ‘the conceptual repertoire of contemporary societies’ and that ‘readers of novels and poems can be moved to intense action... and their authors often contribute to social and moral maps for their readers’ (Appadurai: 2003, 58). Moreover, he adds that the inequalities endured by people through many quotidian experiences are interpolated by ‘the ironic compromise between what they could imagine and what social life will permit’ (Appadurai: 2003, 54). Reading and the imagination then ‘oscillate rapidly’ to cite Ato Quayson (Quayson: 2003, xi), within the fertile space that flows between the constraints of the everyday and the possibilities of an imagined life. Reading creates a liminal space where the ontological foundation of the possibilities and freedoms of the imagination seem to be at variance with that of the restraints of the everyday. In reality, these ontological deviations are in constant dialogue, often via the literary imagination. Thus reading enables the imagination to ripple through ‘the literary-aesthetic, the social, the cultural, and the political – in order to explore the mutually illuminating heterogeneity of these domains when taken together’ (Quayson: 2003, xi). If then, as Hall puts it, ‘we always knew that the dismantling of the colonial paradigm would release strange demons from the deep, and that these monsters might come trailing all sorts of subterranean material’ (Hall: 1996, 259), then the imaginative lure of the Gothic can facilitate that ‘dangerous enterprise of thinking at or beyond the limit’ (Hall: 1996, 259).

Hawkes notes that reading can have an affective dynamic in real life, and that affect operates by restoring emotion to reasoned thinking; haptology marries tangible emotion to wisdom. Affect, described creatively by Jane Bennett and William E. Connolly, is a key

motivator and facilitator of thinking; above all, it interjects the sense of movement and *transito* in the liminal spaces within and between the Gothic, the postcolonial and the novel:

the rapid play of affect that, above all, *moves* thinking. But since affect is not entirely under the control of consciousness that means that the flow of thinking exceeds its control too. Affect is often conveyed by contagion, contamination and inspiration; it moves across registers and constituencies by extra-logical as well as logical means...affect is not simply intra corporeal; it flows across bodies too, as when anger, revenge or inspiration is communicated across individuals or constituencies by looks, hits, caresses, gestures, the bunching of muscles in the neck and flushes...Affect is contagious across layered assemblages, human and otherwise. (Bennett and Connolly: 2002, 159-160, my emphasis)

Thus the body and reading are inextricably entwined in the affective process of inventive emotion and thought. Affect is also one means by which the elements can be accessed and it can subsequently initiate the recollection and narrativisation of a complex rhizomatic tangle of memory. As Banville says in *Birchwood* (1973), an affective moment is not just about feeling, it offers us glimpses of the world ‘in those rare moments when a little light breaks forth, and something is not explained, not forgiven, but merely *illuminated*’ (Banville: 1998a, 33).

The haptic interludes in the novels, frequented by elemental postcolonial Gothic metamorphoses, materialize within and across a topography that is mapped with, to borrow Raymond Williams’s term, ‘structures of feeling’.¹³ Echoing the comments by Hawkes and Kilgour on the dynamic of reading that operates as a process of ‘folding-in of external influences and a folding-out of affects’ (Braidotti: 2008c, 160), Williams perceives within affective, inventive art the seed of potential for becomings and metamorphoses that can translate into the material world. This potential stems from the manifestation of such affects as being ‘in solution’ (Williams: 1977, 134), thus, like haptologies they are not easily articulated. This does not mean however that they are totally free-floating and boundless; they gather to generate what Deleuze calls an assemblage,¹⁴ thus yielding, as Williams puts it:

¹³ See Williams, Raymond (1977) *Marxism and Literature*, Part II chapter 9, pp 128-135.

¹⁴Deleuze offers this description of an assemblage: ‘It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms, which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes, and reigns - different natures. Thus, the assemblage’s only unity is that of co-functioning, it is a symbiosis, a ‘sympathy’. It is never filiations

a structured formation which, because it is at the very edge of semantic availability, has many of the characteristics of a pre-formation, until specific articulations – new semantic figures- are discovered in material practice. (Williams: 1977, 134)

Hence these feelings and characteristics that congregate into a ‘pre-formation’ replicate assemblages created by rhythms, lines, flows and affects. They form maps and, as Braidotti puts it, ‘encountering them is almost a matter for geography, because it is a question of orientations, points of entry and exit, a constant unfolding’ (Braidotti: 2008c, 160). Thus, the postcolonial Gothic, creating a fluid matrix of the elements and haptic moments, generates a cartography that might eventually lead to ‘new semantic figures’ (Williams: 1977, 134). Said grasps these ideas, and echoes Williams by discussing how ‘structures of location and geographical reference’ (Said: 1994, 52) appear in literature ‘sometimes allusively and sometimes carefully plotted across several works that are not otherwise connected to one another’ (Said: 1994, 52). So, not only do writers and novels form lines of connection but each text also expresses its own complex cartography, charting the flow between filiation and affiliation acting as ‘the power point between inspiration and memory’ (Whelan: 2008, 9).

Affective cartographies

To reiterate then, this thesis explores how the novels create their own affective cartographies which can be accessed through postcolonial Gothic interpretations of elemental philosophy. Doubtless there have been, and will continue to be, other cartographies for readers to locate in these novels. These inventive mappings are crucial to how we come to perceive and remember the space we inhabit. Braidotti skilfully links the process of becoming with the act of cartography, and reveals ‘the cartographic gesture as the first move towards an account of nomadic subjectivity as ethically accountable and politically empowering’ (Braidotti: 2008b, 2). The creative mapping that flows through the novels runs counter to the ‘Prescriptive

that are important, but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind’ (Deleuze: 2007 ,69).

Realism' that Doody describes,¹⁵ where the space of the novel exists as somewhat inhibited and fettered; it is rather an elemental realism derived of fermenting multiplicities. It is true to say that space and nature is ripe for various forms of transformation, and the geographer Neil Smith's pragmatic Marxist analysis emphasizes this point when he says that 'no part of the earth's surface, the atmosphere, the oceans, the geological substratum, or the biological superstratum, are immune to transformation by capital' (Smith: 2008, 79). This is nature created in the image of the commodity which can be bartered for and exchanged, forming 'second nature' (Smith: 2008, 79). Expanding upon this idea, Said says that for the 'anti-imperialist imagination' however, it is crucial 'to seek out, to map, to invent, or to discover a *third* nature' (Said: 1994, 225-226). One way to accomplish this is to create affective cartographies that trigger the 'real *leap*' that Fanon describes, thus galvanizing much needed 'invention into existence' (Fanon: 2008, 179). Hence Aitken concludes that 'the notion of a tender mapping is hugely appropriate to moving in and beyond imperial cartographies of today and we believe emotional geographies help us to get to that place' (Aitken: 2009, 1).

Processes like becoming, along with the diverse metamorphoses and transformations expressed within the postcolonial Gothic and the novels in this thesis, indicate forms of change that do not forget the past, no matter how painful. Using elemental philosophy to express 'becoming' is highly astute from a postcolonial perspective. Graham Huggan contends that, for the postcolonial, 'it seems necessary to reaffirm the potential of the environmental imagination to envision alternative worlds, both within and beyond the realm of everyday human experience, which might reinvigorate the continuing global struggle for social and ecological justice' (Huggan: 2008, 80). This line of thinking ultimately leads Huggan to believe that 'some form of active exchange between the critical projects of postcolonialism and ecologism now seems urgently necessary' (Huggan: 2008, 80).

¹⁵ See Doody: 1997, 287 when she describes 'realism' as the '[r]epresentation of common objects, of forms of speech, of personalities and emotions' being part of the novel's milieu, but 'Prescriptive Realism'

Ecologism, like the postcolonial, acknowledges a cartography that seeks to ‘caress the earth, stroke its contours, without asking for a reward’ (Hassan: 2005, 1), but it also requires ‘radical changes in our relationship with the non-human world, and in our mode of social and political life’ (Dobson: 1995, 2).¹⁶ This thinking draws parallels with the elemental geophilosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, and intersects with their ideas of becoming insect, mineral or animal in a bid to encourage, much like the Gothic, far-reaching changes in how we view, and map, our relationships with the world around us.

Theoretical Approaches

In order to help articulate these ideas, I have utilized a number of key theorists who work with affective knowledge and with representation of the elements. I will refer to thinkers such as Gaston Bachelard, and his deeply creative work with the elements as ‘hormones of the imagination’ (Bachelard: 2002, 11), and Irigaray and her work with feminism and the human relationship to the elements. Cixous is inspirational with her stimulating exploration of reading, writing and the elements, especially in *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (1993). The collaborative work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, as well as Deleuze’s solo works, resonate with nuances of the Gothic in the way they describe life as a continual series of metamorphoses. They express creativity, life and the human being as a dynamic process of becoming, offering the ‘fragmentation bombs of enthusiasm’ (Braidotti: 2008, 66) that resonate with the novels. Braidotti supplies some of the most valuable, imaginative and accessible interpretations of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy. While she herself works in the area of feminist philosophy, her writing is equally useful for postcolonial interpretations, especially her interest in ‘minor’ literature as a way of negotiating the future in a non-nostalgic way. Boym’s thoughts on nostalgia are significant, and will be valuable in the thesis, as will Whelan’s work on memory, art, narrative and healing within an Irish

circumscribes that realism in ways that ‘makes it less possible to move out of one’s sphere’ (Doody: 1997, 287).
¹⁶ See Andrew Dobson (1995) *Green Political Thought*, London: Routledge, p2.

postcolonial context. Whelan's understanding of the role of the artist/ writer as crucial to 'the retrieval of traces, the rescuing of voices, the expansion of the human archive' (Whelan: 2008, 9) expresses the potential within Banville and Morrissy's writing.

Jacques Derrida's work in *On Touching* (2005) explores how touch does not require the imperative of immediacy, and is especially insightful with respect to the act of reading as a form of touch. De Certeau's scrutiny of everyday life, and how individuals and groups confront subjection and inequality, is valuable when exploring the focus upon quotidian experiences in the novels, especially how the characters' 'use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it' (de Certeau: 1984, xiii). A philosophy of the everyday and the 'world's debris' (de Certeau: 1984, 107), is a fertile means of exploring the novel as 'the receptive home of all substance – bones, blood, feathers, shit, lost gold coins, and chips of earthenware' (Doody: 1997, 478).

John Banville and Mary Morrissy: the novels

John Banville: *Kepler* (1981)

Kepler, published in 1981, articulates the postcolonial Gothic in some unusual ways. Banville uses the technique described by Trinh T. Minh-ha of 'talking nearby' (Minh-ha: 1999, 218) to create a transversal dynamic; this dynamic narrates Kepler's struggles and haptic moments within a highly volatile religio-political milieu, and it also enables contemplation of Ireland at a similarly difficult time in its history alongside the struggle of the artist/writer to work within an unstable environment. This is a technique he will use again to compelling effect in *Ghosts*. What is spectacularly clever about the form of *Kepler*, and one of the reasons why I selected this novel, is how Banville uses geometric forms to devise the shape of the text. The novel has five parts and each part has a number of chapters that conform to the numerical

values of the solid shapes, namely the Platonic solids as Plato utilized them to configure cartographic depictions of the world.¹⁷ One example is how part one expresses the cube which has six sides, thus there are six chapters. Part two is a textual expression of the tetrahedron or pyramid and has four chapters; and this pattern continues through the novel. Banville says that the geometric structure in *Kepler* ‘tamed the sentiment of the book’ (Banville: 2005), in other words, it generates a grounding effect on the affective encounters in the text and allows the rawness of life to emerge. But there is more to it than this.

The geometric cartography of affect that Banville creates in this novel seems, at first glance, to be restrictive; indeed, Rudiger Imhof comments that it might even be seen as a ‘mild form of lunacy’ (Imhof: 1989, 138). This may well be so but firstly, as Igor Stravinsky notes, the greater the constraint there is ‘the more one frees oneself of the chains that shackle the spirit’ (Stravinsky: 2000, 64-65), and I would argue that this thinking is loaded with significance for postcolonial imaginations, while also serving to bolster the transgressive qualities of the Gothic. Secondly, Plato determines that each geometrical shape holds an elemental signature, for example the cube signifies the earth. The elements are mutable forces that impart communication, movement and metamorphosis, which is why Bachelard calls them ‘hormones of the imagination’ (Bachelard: 2002, 11). They are so rich in a circulatory metaphysics of transformative becomings, rather than stasis and intransience, that, as Braidotti puts it, these elemental flows become a matter of ‘affinities and the capacity both to sustain and generate interconnectedness’ (Braidotti: 2008a, 8). Such creative thinking is

¹⁷ The Platonic solids are regular three-dimensional objects that are tools of solid geometry (see Appendix 1 for an illustration), used to describe multiple facets of the three-dimensional space we inhabit. Banville uses them creatively to shape his narrative much like descriptive geometry is used in architecture or art. Originally attributed to the Pythagoreans, Plato went on to explore them in more detail in *Timaeus* and associated the each solid with a specific element from air, ether, fire, water or earth. Kepler used the solids to depict both the internal dimensions of the then five known planets and the distance between them. Kepler was mistaken on this point but as Arthur Koestler says the Platonic solids continued to form the *vigor matrix* of all life’s work – like a Gothic moment in a narrative might provide the electrical stimulant to galvanize creative thinking.

productive to a postcolonial Gothic imagination, it offers a tantalisingly Gothicised environment of blurred endings along with a resistance to closure.

Kepler is an eruption of the four elements cited at the end of *Copernicus* where, after death, ‘the body dissolves into the four base elements of which it is made, and the spiritual man, the soul fire and ablaze, ascends through the crystal spheres of the firmament’ (Banville: 2001, 277). In *Kepler*, this transcendence translates into the epitome of pragmatic yet still enchanted materialism; it is elemental philosophy manifesting as ‘far and faint music out of the earth and air, water and fire, that was everywhere’ (Banville: 2001, 278), exploding through *Kepler* as a deeply embodied experience. This experience is discernible in relationships with the cosmos, with humans and with insects and animals alike, and it expresses itself through the performance of writing and reading it inscribes in both paper and flesh. This is the same music of the earth that resonates through *Ghosts* twelve years later. The elements metamorphose and form alliances, always remembering fragments of their former contours as they create new ones. In the same way, *Kepler’s* elemental philosophy is relocated, remembered and re-inscribed in the spaces of *Ghosts*, as Banville writes in *Kepler*: ‘the world shifted and flowed: no sooner had he fixed on a fragment of it than it became something else...the limits of things became blurred...’ (Banville: 2001, 392).

Banville thus engages in an exercise of negotiating the present by exploring the challenges, dreams, hopes and doubts contained within the past, by re-evaluating the potential insights that may be found in ancient ontologies and epistemologies. These ideas are reinforced by the fact that Banville sees Ireland as permeating both *Copernicus* and *Kepler*, ‘how could it not, especially in the 1970’s, when we were tearing ourselves to pieces’ (Banville Qtd. Friberg: 2006, 202). The simple act of contemporary reading of the novel can thus connect the ancient epistemologies within the text to those of the present, and so writer and reader engage in an articulation of reflective nostalgia. *Kepler* is an imaginative telling of Kepler’s life and creative drive; but it is also formidable example of ‘talking nearby’ (Minh-

ha: 1993, 218) and of how a non-appropriative touch can reach a hand ‘very close to a subject without seizing or claiming it’ (Min-ha: 1999, 234).

John Banville: *Ghosts* (1993)

The novel *Ghosts* is effectively a lengthy series of philosophical conversations between reader and writer. Published in 1993, it is both born into, and born out of, a very different Ireland to the one *Kepler* addressed in 1981. Ireland in 1981 was witnessing the hunger strikes in the North of the country, emigration was rising, the Celtic Tiger had not been invented and European funding for Ireland as an Objective One region was limited.¹⁸ Over the next twelve years, between the publication dates of the two novels, European funding started to flow into Ireland to make a difference in many areas of the infrastructure, both rural and urban. Funding for tourism was not allocated until 1984, but once it was, tourism became the source of substantial income. In 1975, tourist visitors to Ireland were just over two hundred million people; by 1995 this figure was peaking five hundred million.¹⁹ Crucial to this development of tourism is the marketing of Ireland as a product or a brand; Bord Fáilte and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board created a narrative of Ireland’s green pastures and wide rural spaces, of flowing Guinness and the rich cultural heritage, as well as highlighting the museums recounting Ireland’s history. But where in this complex narrative web is the felt elemental space of Ireland?

This is the difficult question posed by Banville, as he presents diverse narratives of Ireland in art, tourism, memory and history, through the academic telescope and through the photographer’s lens. By presenting a sensual version of the terrestrial and the intimate in the

¹⁸ European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) monies were allocated to countries in Europe in stages from 1975 to the present. Ireland, Greece, Portugal, and Spain were classed as Objective One regions. This classification signals economic under-development thus triggers development funding, as Karen E.Volkman and Ray M. Guydosh describe: ‘These regions are eligible if their GDP based on data for the three years prior to 1993 was less than 75% of the EU average. EU contributions are matched by their respective country recipients; in the case of Ireland, EU funded projects can be funded at the 75% EU to 25% Ireland levels.’ Online article at: faculty.plattsburgh.edu/karen.volkman/vita/TourismInIreland6.doc

¹⁹ Figures from http://www.transport.ie/tourism/pdfs/tourism_review_report.pdf.

text, Banville sets in motion a multiplicity that vibrates *affectively* through the elemental space that we encounter as Ireland. Hence, the best way for readers to *feel* this version of Ireland is through Gothicized haptic moments. Banville utilizes this mode of writing throughout his work, but it is most vividly in *Ghosts* that it forms an elemental assemblage of Ireland as a tender cartography of place. In any assemblage that ‘acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 25) the complexities of expressing such movement is understandable, as Nathalie Sarraute comments:

These movements...slip through us on the frontiers of consciousness in the form of undefinable, extremely rapid sensations. They hide beneath our gestures, beneath the words we speak and the feelings we manifest, all of which we are aware of experiencing and are able to define. (Sarraute: 1963, 8)

The imaginative narrative that Banville creates in *Ghosts* encourages an affective, haptic reading of place that, recalling Whelan’s ideas, actively embraces the power of memory as an ethical force and shows it is ‘always possible to tell it another way’ (Whelan: 2003, 92).

Remnants of the geometric formulations that construct *Kepler’s* frame penetrate *Ghosts* transversally, whether that be through furrowed lines in the soil, or within the depths of the spherical ‘stricken eyes’ (Banville: 1998, 31) that pierce the text in the tender geometry of a haunted gaze. Banville connects the story of famine and colonial struggles experienced by communities on the other side of the globe with those of Ireland, offering a postcolonial Gothicised cartography that weaves intimations of colonial and postcolonial discourses of place into narratives of personal and corporeal suffering and loss.

Mary Morrissy: *Mother of Pearl* (1997)

Colonialism serves to ‘produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside’ (Bhabha: 1994, 1), but so too can the process of postcolonial recovery. If *Ghosts* expresses the multiple discourses that have sought to narrate and construct Ireland through colonial and postcolonial encounters, then Mary Morrissy’s *Mother of Pearl* highlights this with specific reference to gender construction. If, as Gerardine Meaney states,

Irish women have experienced ‘the violent rejection and repression of the maternal body’ (Meaney: 2010, 10) to such an extent that this body ‘became a spectre, haunting national consciousness [which]... functioned in true Gothic fashion’ (Meaney: 2010, 10), then Morrissy seeks to engage directly with this spectre. Morrissy calls the reader’s attention to the ‘polymorphic and dynamic life’ (Sartiliot: 1993, 41) that awaits both our reading and acknowledgement of its repression ‘under the name it receives by enlightened vision’ (Sartiliot: 1993, 41). *Mother of Pearl* shows how meaningful exploration of gender construction in Ireland is crucial to understanding the nature of postcolonial processes of recovery. Morrissy’s elemental philosophy emphasises the terrestrial and intimate choreography between air and breath; she expresses how the breath of contagion is akin to alternative knowledge, it is above all about communication. Breath and contagion flow through the text, voicing an encounter with creative and non-appropriative ways of being, and seeking to challenge religio-political gender constructs generated in the postcolonial response to oppression. Paradoxically, in the processes of exertions for freedom from colonial subjugation, these constructs became yet another form of oppression. Morrissy’s cultivation of breath also echoes the narrative of biblical creation, and thus accentuates the deep significance of the ‘creative breath’ to set ‘in motion that which was motionless, rigid, dead’ (Irigaray: 2004, 166).

The act of naming is of central importance in the novel. The reader is reminded that the ‘true proper name’ materializes only ‘when the individual opens up to the multiplicities pervading him or her, [it is] at the outcome of the most severe operation of depersonalization, that he or she acquires his or her true proper name’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 42). Morrissy’s elemental encounters are traumatic, bloody and powerful, and by entering into the mineral world of stone, she challenges the notion of stone as cold and uncommunicative; it is rather, as Marcia Bjornerud states, that ‘stones are richly illustrated texts, telling gothic tales of scorching heat, violent tempests, endurance, cataclysm, and reincarnation’ (Bjornerud: 2006, 5). Additionally, the appearance of flowers in the novel acts as a link to the process of

naming in that, as Claudette Sartiliot remarks, ‘like woman, the flower gets her name, gender, and species from another’ (Sartiliot: 1993, 119). The presence of flowers and stone (in the form of jewel), seeks to expose that ‘polymorphic and dynamic life that is buried under the name it receives by enlightened vision’ (Sartiliot: 1993, 41).

The flow of elemental philosophy can shift between diverse geographies from the most deeply intimate to the widely terrestrial. Using an elemental Gothic imagination in feminist postcolonial thinking is a fertile way to highlight ‘sexual conservatism, the relationship of the Catholic Church and the state and the gendering of national identity as elements that it shared with a wide variety of postcolonial cultures (Meaney: 2011, 6). The importance of assigning the mutative elements to solid shapes is that such an alignment ‘offers a metaphysics of change and becoming rather than one of permanence and being’ (Macauley: 2010, 145). By opening up what Arnold Berleant calls the soft side of stone Morrissy shows that ‘stone’s sense of permanence is deceptive, ... [d]espite being used to symbolize our hopes and desires for stability and permanence, stone reveals surprising malleability and transiency’ (Berleant: 2007, 3). Berleant cites instances of how rock can be ‘carved, worn down, and pulverised; stone surfaces weather, crack and crumble, inscriptions become illegible and even disappear, vertical stones fall and sculptures break’ (Berleant: 2007, 3).

Thus the process of becoming-mineral in *Mother of Pearl* highlights two things simultaneously: firstly it recognises that change is possible; secondly, in the same breath of that creative becoming, Morrissy serves to undermine the apparent solidity of religio-political foundations. As the narrative of the Catholic Church is created on a foundation of rock, this challenge becomes profound, one that might cleave the rock wide open. Ultimately Morrissy and Banville’s writing, within each of the novels in this thesis, resonates with Franz Kafka’s belief that reading should be ‘the axe for the frozen sea inside us’ (Kafka Qtd. Cixous: 1993, 17).

Outline of the Thesis

This work begins by engaging with the aesthetic form of the novel in Chapter One, in order to explore why and how the novel is so adept at accommodating the shifting and transformative nature of elemental encounters within the postcolonial Gothic alliance. Sylvie Thorel-Cailleteau suggests that the status of the novel has suffered because, unlike poetry or drama, ‘no great poetic art’ (Thorel-Cailleteau: 2007, 64) was conferred upon it. This chapter explores how this lacuna enables the novel to operate as a space that is not only brimming with ‘plastic possibilities’ (Bakhtin: 1996, 4), but which also offers a certain freedom; such freedom gives opportunities to explore the marginalised and controversial subject-matter that is valued by both the Gothic and the postcolonial paradigms, for example, ghosts, memory, terrestrial and human reverberations. I will explore how the sense of movement within the volatile spaces of novel invites it to be viewed as a verb as well as noun, enhancing its ability to accommodate processes of transformation, metamorphosis and becoming which are also key areas of interest within postcolonial and Gothic literary texts.

By viewing the novel in terms of what Patricia Williams calls a ‘phantom-roomed exile of our longing’ (Williams: 1991, 49), it becomes a textual location within which to explore the ‘blindly formalized constructions’ (Williams: 1991, 49) of both place and subject that can occur, not only under colonial subjugation, but also during postcolonial recovery. Thus, when viewed through a postcolonial Gothic lens, the novel becomes ‘a space that is filled in by a meandering stream of unguided hopes, dreams, fantasies, fears, recollections...the presence of the past in imaginary, imagistic form’ (Williams: 1991, 49). Furthermore, if reading itself is viewed as a Gothicised act, especially as a tactile haptology, this might serve to enhance the affective experience of intense destabilisation offered by the postcolonial Gothic. Drawing on the experiences of the Amazonian Andoque community, and generating a parallel with Whelan’s depiction of how narrative and memory can propagate healing in an Irish context, I will examine the creative and magical ways the Andoque utilize narrative, processes of metamorphosis and inventive play to mobilise healing

after trauma. This chapter will subsequently speculate if the affective experiences and creative thinking surrounding the act of reading the novel might similarly posit it ‘as an enterprise of health’ (Deleuze: 1997, 3).

Braidotti suggests that “‘minor’ literary genres’ (Braidotti: 1996, 3) can assist in dealing with the ambiguities presented in contemporary society, and I would suggest that they also facilitate a productive engagement with lingering traces of the past, the ‘presence of diverse absences’ (de Certeau: 1984, 108), especially in terms of how these persist in the contemporary world. The next chapter takes the Gothic as its subject of inquiry and explores how the Gothic affectively realises the notion that ‘objects and words also have hollow places in which a past sleeps, as in the everyday acts of walking, eating, going to bed, in which ancient revolutions slumber...There is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence, spirits one can “invoke” or not’ (de Certeau: 1984, 108). If the novel is home to ‘bones, blood, feathers, [and] shit’ (Doody: 1997, 478), then the Gothic also embraces flesh, blood and other bodily fluids, as well as elemental substances. The Gothic’s fluid nature, and its movement at varying speeds throughout the texts, sometimes pausing to create moments ‘pregnant with tensions’ (Benjamin Qtd. Gordon: 2008, 65), is explored through the cartography of affects that includes protean rhizomatic alliances and the tempo-spatial dynamic of *transito*.

Additionally this chapter explores the Gothic as a means of enunciating and understanding ‘cultural imaginings, affective experiences, animated objects, marginal voices, narrative densities, and eccentric traces of power’s presence’ (Gordon: 2008, 25). The Gothic as an affective force that galvanizes creative thinking is especially important, particularly the association of affect with ‘contagion, contamination and inspiration’ (Bennett and Connolly: 2002, 159-160), all of which are active processes associated with the Gothic and postcolonial expressions of otherness. The Gothic is viewed in this chapter as a highly charged and affective means of experiencing emotion in the Nietzschean sense, in other words, as being ultimately integral to reason. By transporting the reader to ‘regions far from equilibrium’

(Deleuze: 1997, 109; emphasis in original), I will suggest that the Gothic assists in inspiring a challenge to dominant forms of thinking. The Gothic also engages with memory by stimulating ‘reflective nostalgia’, invocations of ‘challenge’, ‘doubt’, and an interaction with ‘collective frameworks’ (Boym: 2001, xviii), all serving to blur the boundaries of rigid beliefs no matter how benevolent they may initially appear. What is crucial to the Gothic experiences in the novels in this thesis is how they remain immersed within quotidian experiences, paradoxically rendering them arguably more disturbing than the appearances of Gothic creatures such as vampires or Frankenstein’s creation.

Following on from these ideas, chapter three deals with how the Gothic forms an affective alliance with the postcolonial and I will focus on one area with which both engage, namely the Enlightenment. This engagement hinges upon the way reason eclipses the world of emotion as a superior form of knowledge. If it is true that ‘the more enlightened our houses are, the more their walls ooze with ghosts’ (Calvino: 1986, 19), then the Gothic can work with the postcolonial in literary texts to exhume buried forms of knowledge and experience in the shape of memories, haptic experiences, hauntings and elemental encounters – a counter-enlightenment of sorts. I will explore the idea of the postcolonial Gothic as expressing a subaltern secularism cultivated out of ‘the debris of unkept promises’ (Braidotti: 2008, 255), an action which may be viewed as a ‘form of resistance’ (Braidotti: 2008, 255). I will also explore how postmodern thinking can be useful in postcolonial Gothic engagements with subjugation, this despite its cited tendency to use ‘whole world as its raw material’ (Ahmad: 1997, 370).

This chapter will take up the salient points made by Florencia E. Mallon when she argues that we need to consider becoming ‘stunt riders’ (Mallon: 1994, 1515) and consider valuable ingredients of postmodern thinking within postcolonial exploration. One way we might do this is by utilizing the sense of play as Nietzsche describes it, when he defines ‘mature manhood’ as meaning that one has ‘reacquired the seriousness one had as a child at play’ (Nietzsche: 1997, 48, no 94). An example of this will be put forward through a

discussion of the narrative play in the Andoque process of representing the axe as a tool of both oppression and abundance. Ultimately the postcolonial Gothic opens up a channel by which we may see that reasoned thinking alone is not always the best way to reach ‘the presence of diverse absences’ (de Certeau: 1984, 108), or to engage with that which has been categorised as the ‘world’s debris’ (de Certeau: 1984, 107) and ‘messy phenomena’ (Kiberd: 1996, 646).

The last two chapters explore the novels themselves, and how the postcolonial Gothic forms cartographies of affects in each text. Thus chapter four deals with John Banville’s *Kepler* and *Ghosts*, and examines how Banville creates tender cartographies in both. Much of the critical work on Banville approaches his writing from a postmodern slant, for example, Elke D’Hoker’s (2004) exploration examines postmodern aspects of alterity, while Joe McMinn (1999) offers a critique that takes a postmodern and feminist approach, with a specific focus upon the role of art in the texts. Hand, whilst going to some lengths to acknowledge the complexities of a postmodern labelling, notes that Banville engages with the intricacies of language and creativity by contemplating ‘the vagaries of the postmodern imagination’ (Hand: 2011, 262). Whilst Hand explores the Gothic links with history in *Birchwood* (1973), in the same article he describes *Ghosts*, along with *Athena* (1995), as ‘unsubtle and obvious post-modern texts that challenge the limits of the novel form’ (Hand: 2006a, 167). Imhof (1989) also complicates the postmodern label, calling it a cultural rather than literary phenomenon, and he sets Banville within a questioning tradition of modernism that reaches back to Sterne and Cervantes; for Imhof Banville is ‘a highly conscientious modernist of the post-Beckettian era’ (Imhof: 1989, 13).

Whilst acknowledging then that Banville’s reputation and, by implication, his writing has been caricatured as ‘austere, aloof, urbane, hermetic, reserved, cerebral, intellectual, precious, ironic’ (Kenny: 2009, 2), this chapter sets out to amplify Hand’s identification of the ‘very real stratum of emotion’ (Hand: 2006, ix) that pulsates in Banville’s novels. It also extends Joakim Wrethed’s article connecting air and memory (Wrethed: 2007), seeking to

develop the emotional context of Banville's work within the 'affective texture' (Wrethed: 2007, 288) of a tender mapping. The elements are introduced as a key feature in Banville's cartography by way of the intriguing structure of *Kepler*; Banville uses a textual geometry of the Platonic solids to shape the chapters thereby opening the way for their signifying properties of earth, fire, water and air to flow through the text. This exploration of *Kepler* will approach it from the perspective of 'talking nearby instead of talking about' (Minh-ha: 1999, 218).

The final chapter deals with Morrissy's novel *Mother of Pearl* (1997) and embarks upon the first exploration of her novel that focuses upon air and breath as a force of expression, memory and metamorphosis. Like Banville, Morrissy uses elemental flows as a form of communication that is often transgressive, an idea bolstered by the emphasis on contagion in the novel. This chapter could have just as easily focused upon how Morrissy's exploration of how water performs as a geographical divide, a repository of memory, as well a spiritual symbol that forms fluid relationships with the encounters of blood in the texts. There is also room for a valuable engagement with postcolonial Gothic expressions of gender construction with reference to Irish masculinity. Drawing inspiration from the work of Cixous, Irigaray, Deleuze and Guattari, and Meaney, I have elected to examine how Morrissy harnesses the flow of air and uses it as a language within which the Gothic can express both postcolonial and feminist concerns. This is because of the persistent encounters with airborne contagion in the text, one that moves within both a physiological location and a haunting Gothicised expression of air and breath as voice. The flow of breath and air becomes transgressive in that it acts as a counter to biblical notions of creation, as well as challenging formal postcolonial articulations of gender construction by performing acts of naming.

I conclude this thesis by considering ways in which the ideas presented here might be progressed not only within Irish literature, but also to extend across a productive cross-cultural imaginative space.

Chapter One: The Novel and Space

. . . phantom-roomed exile of our longing. (Williams: 1991, 49).

The generic skeleton of the novel is still far from having hardened, and we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities. (Bakhtin: 1996, 3-4)

. . . the receptive home of all substance – bones, blood, feathers, shit, lost gold coins, and chips of earthenware. (Doody: 1997, 478)

I should constantly remind myself that the real leap consists in introducing invention into existence. (Fanon: 2008, 179)

If the novel displays anarchic inclinations, as Terry Eagleton suggests (Eagleton: 2005, 2), then these traits stem from a certain ‘lacuna’ (Thorel-Cailleteau: 2007, 64). This lacuna has a dual significance in that firstly, it relates to Aristotle’s (384BC-322BC) lack of any definition of the novel as an art form. Secondly, the lacuna relates to a lack of any association of the novel with the inspiration of a divine Muse, so that ‘no great poetic art was consecrated to the novel’ (Thorel-Cailleteau: 2007, 64).²⁰ The word ‘consecrated’ stresses the sacred attributes that have been assigned to the poetic arts, and to their accompanying Muses and perhaps it also alludes to a sense of purification. The word also prefigures a renouncing of the novel as having ‘the absence of poetic art, the haphazard assembling of diverse forms, and a value close to nil’ (Moretti: 2007, 64). It appears that the novel may have been more desecrated than consecrated.

Viewed from another perspective, it may be that, paradoxically, the lack of divine impetus and parallel marginality enables the novel to enunciate a certain sense of freedom in the midst of its unruly traits. Consequently, the novel can be seen as potentially dangerous, and as a threat to the *status quo*, a feature underscored by the novel’s refusal to be formally

²⁰ As Walter Siti points out, there are no citations of the novel in Aristotle’s *Poetics* or in Horace’s *Ars Poetica* (Siti: 2006, 98).

constructed in any finite manner as those ‘plastic possibilities’ (Bakhtin: 1996, 4) infer. This is a useful status for the novel when offering a challenge to dominant modes of thinking, especially within a postcolonial perspective. If, as Ashcroft *et al* state, the empire does indeed write back, then so does the novel. But, as Bijay Kumar Das notes, in a consideration of writers of inventive literature within postcolonial societies, it is not all about writing back. Das says it is incorrect to focus exclusively upon the idea of writers always trying to write back to the coloniser; instead, he suggests that ‘they write to establish their individual identity independent of their colonizer and they show that not only they have gained independence from the latter but successfully made the colonizer’s language (i.e. English) as a vehicle for creative expression.’ (Das: 2007, 8). Here Das concurs with Fanon’s account of such productive invention as being the ‘real leap’ (Fanon: 2008, 179).

This chapter does not seek to explore the history of the Irish novel or the novel generally, but aims to explore how the aesthetic form of the novel offers the creative landscape that, as Aimé Césaire says, can ‘re-establish a personal, fresh, compelling magical contact with things’ (Césaire: 1996, 121). The chapter-epigraphs suggest that the novel-genre is significant in exploring dynamic ways of mutually unleashing and accommodating acts of invention within quotidian experience. The novel is especially attuned to the fragments of the everyday and, as Doody points out, it is the dwelling place of ‘bones, blood, feathers, shit’ (Doody: 1997, 478). The novel, as a ‘truly planetary form’ (Moretti: 2006, ix), can accommodate both the expansive terrestrial circulation of air, fire, earth and water, as well as their more intimate materializations such as bodily fluids, emotion, memory, and the fiery desire of the creative urge. It also offers a locus for the minute experiences of everyday objects, both inanimate and animate, like photographs, insects, clothing or furniture. It is, in other words, an ideal place to engage with haptic experiences of intense sensory perception, which operate simultaneously within the present moment and the remembered past. Marina Warner captures this intense shifting between the inestimably cosmic and the infinitesimally

particular by citing Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Warner says that the novel is both engaged with the 'vast, biological scheme of things', catching individual lives within its huge scope of 'eternal flux', while at the same time focusing on stories of 'individual transformation' (Warner: 2004, 4) that are the key to the creative inspiration of writers and readers. This is the dynamic which will be explored and critiqued in this thesis.

How might such an imaginative space be useful to Irish writers? Hand says that an exploration of the Irish novel charts a history of Ireland's continual negotiation with modernity, as such:

what is clear is how the novel form – with all its inherent contradictions and tensions – chronicles the complexities of that movement into modernity. In an Irish context this means that the novel can be thought of as the ideal literary form through which to chart the numerous tensions, divisions, and diversity within Irish life and culture over the last four hundred years. The novel form, oscillating between containment and chaos, between the simplicity of narrative progress and the complexity of expression, seems best suited to capturing the energies of an Irish culture which also moves between the poles of stability and social coherence and the ever-present realities of division and conflict. (Hand: 2011, 8-9)

The idea of Ireland and the novel can be seen to engage in constant renegotiation, maintaining an ability to look ahead whilst reflecting upon the past. Both positions hint at Fanon's determination that 'in the world I am heading for, I am endlessly creating myself' (Fanon: 2008, 204) and, as Hand reminds us, 'Ireland is a place and an idea that is constantly reinventing itself' (Hand: 2011, 8). Movement and metamorphosis, then, permeate both the novel and any enunciation of the Irish experience, and both paradigms resonate with the inventive dynamic of the Deleuzian 'body without organs' that is 'permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 40).

Claire Colebrook describes the body without organs in a way that might offer a clue as to why the representations of the elements are so useful as concepts within postcolonial texts. Their metamorphoses already connect them to the Gothic, which is a protean genre, and this connection will be explored in the following chapters. Colebrook says that the body without organs is derived from 'an intense and original filiation whereby the desires of the

bodies on the primitive *socius* bear a filiative relation to the mythic earth' (Colebrook: 2007, 130). A desire to connect to this primal filiation touches upon Irigaray's drive to 'go back to those natural matters that constitute the origin of our bodies, of our life, of our environment, the flesh of our passions' (Irigaray Qtd. Canters and Jantzen: 2005, 29). I will return to this point which sees writers from locations that have been ruptured by colonialism using the metamorphosis within the elements as a means of creating a reimagined sense of place.

What is crucial to this body without organs, and the reading process, is the kind of thinking that is driven and galvanized by affectivity; the kind of thinking that is inextricably bound up with invention; the kind of thinking that is 'enfleshed, erotic and pleasure-driven' (Braidotti: 2008a, 124). This is the creative thinking that Hand sees in the vigour of the aesthetic form of the novel; that Fanon sees in the 'real leap' (Fanon: 2008, 179) of invention into everyday existence; and which is found in Césaire's desire to explore the 'magical contact with things' (Césaire: 1996, 121).

The novel, then, possesses a nomadic mystery and radical pliability that is intriguing. By 'intriguing', I allude to both senses of that word because firstly, the novel invokes curiosity, with its elusive 'plastic possibilities' (Bakhtin: 1996, 4) and its 'continuous history of about two thousand years' (Doody: 1997, 1). The novel is no newcomer to the literary scene, as Massimo Fusillo points out, the genre existed even if the actual name 'novel' was yet to be born (Fusillo: 2007, 36). Doody captures this alchemical synthesis of past, present and future within the novel by saying that it 'always does look to the future. Rooted in a deep past it may be, so it can withstand the winds of taste and fashion – including icy blasts of disapproval – but it always looks towards possibility' (Doody: 1997, 471).

Secondly, this protean form displays an insubordinate and untamed character which leads the reader through deceptive and unknown paths: as Bakhtin says, 'the novel appears to be a creature from an alien species' (Bakhtin: 1996, 4). Walter Siti, in an article appropriately titled 'The Novel on Trial', quotes examples of criticism directed towards the novel and its

authors. Siti cites Rousseau's assertion that 'a novel should be booed, hated, torn to pieces by stylish people' (Siti: 2006, 100), and Mme de Stael's declaration that 'novels are bad for us; they have taught all too well the most secret part of the sentiments...the ancients would never have agreed to treat their soul as a subject for fiction' (Siti: 2006, 108). On the topic of novelists, the Lutheran pastor Gotthard Heidegger (1666-1711) bristles with indignation when he says that 'like hornets, which respond to having their wings plucked out by devouring those of other hornets, novelists squander ignobly the reader's precious time' (Heidegger Qtd. Siti: 2006, 103).

Siti suggests that the novel possesses properties of both poison and medicine. Citing a line from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, which declares that Emma Bovary's poison 'tastes like ink' (Siti: 2006, 116), alongside the ruling in 1934 which enabled *Ulysses* to be published in America, despite Judge Woolsey's description of *Ulysses* as being 'somewhat emetic' (Siti: 2006, 116), Siti notes how the novel, as aesthetic form, becomes both poison and medicine. The ink, as lifeblood of the novel, becomes both potential poison and a medicine to induce vomiting. The novel thus wears the apparel of the multi-faceted *pharmakon* which, by exploiting its powers of seduction, 'makes one stray from one's general, natural...paths and laws...writing, the *pharmakon*, the going or leading astray' (Derrida: 1981, 71). The novel lures us into taking a Borgesian journey to discover clues which explain what it means to live as a human being, and suggests that 'history, real history, is more modest and that its essential dates may be, for a long time, secret' (Borges: 2000, 167). That such history finds its way into the 'great anthropological force' (Moretti: 2007, ix) that is the novel, means that the novel as genre allows the reader to 'experience the end of the world...to discover that there is more than one world and that the world isn't what we think it is' (Cixous: 1993, 10).²¹

²¹ By referencing anthropology in connection with the novel Moretti affords it an extensive history that traverses the terrestrial and the particular as this description in *Anthropolgy: the Human Challenge* (twelfth edition)

The reader, who incidentally also performs as a writer: ‘a real reader is a writer’ (Cixous: 1993, 21), inscribes a path into the novel’s world of intrigue and inhabits the space that Jean-François Lyotard calls a ‘secret existence’ (Lyotard: 1997, 118). This ontological space operates like a Foucauldian heterotopia in that it persists within the interstices of experience, offering diverse perspectives on experience; it is a tempero-spatial multiplicity, much like the experience of postcolonial societies.²² As a result, the novel manifests as an ideal geography for imaginative ventures, offering a fertile dynamic with which to creatively explore those ‘energies of an Irish culture which also moves between the poles of stability and social coherence and the ever-present realities of division and conflict’ (Hand: 2011, 8-9). Lyotard’s ‘secret existence’ (Lyotard: 1997, 118), in which we can exist ‘at intervals, unchecked, in freedom and in private, alone or with someone’ (Lyotard: 1997, 115), can develop into a subversive mode of resistance, considering Lyotard’s claims that it causes those in power to become ‘haunted by the suspicion that there is something that escapes them, that might plot against them’ (Lyotard: 1997, 118).

reveals ‘[a]nthropology is the study of humankind everywhere, throughout time, [it] produces knowledge about what makes people different from one another and what they all share in common.’ (Haviland et al, 2008, 3). This expresses Moretti’s call for ‘world literature’; see Moretti (2000) ‘Conjectures on World Literature’ *New Left Review*.

²² Foucault has his own ideas about the nature of colonial (and other) sites within his discussion about the ‘counter-sites’ he has called heterotopias (Foucault: 1967, 3). The novel, a boat, a river, an island, a mental institution or workhouse or tuberculosis sanatorium can all be seen as heterotopic spaces. These sites and their heterotopic status have direct bearing on the novels in this thesis as such sites permeate the texts; they offer scope for a fascinating future study on heterotopias in Irish novels. Where violence, bloodshed and death have transformed colonial regions these sites can be read as ‘traumascapes’ (Tumarkin: 2005) or as Foucauldian ‘heterotopias’ (Foucault: 1967, 3); these are places where concepts of past and present collapse and the evocation of initial traumas leave the past openly haunting the present. They are immediately visible in sites such as monuments to the dead, famine graves, battle memorial sites and roadside memorials. Less visible, but no less powerful, they may be found in a forgotten field where folklore and oral history tells that great unhappiness and loss occurred, or a pile of stones that once formed an inhabited dwelling. Reflective nostalgia can be seen as one way of stepping in and out of such spaces as it is a process that ‘explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones’ (Boym: 2001, xviii).

Etymologically heterotopia is formed by two Greek words *topos* (place, space) and *hetero* (other) and is originally an anatomical term. The term refers to a ‘place of otherness’, specifically relating to parts of the body that may be occupied by tumours or where parts are missing or out of place. Heterochrony substitutes *chronos* (time) in place of *topos* and was borrowed from zoology where it referred to developmental differences in appearance between two related organisms. Using these terms as references to both temporal and spatial ‘otherness’ in cultural productions, whole colonies can be seen as heterotopic and contain heterochronias within the networks of the geographical landscape. They can be seen as culturally embedded temporal and spatial configurations and artefacts.

The act of reading, if it has this power to haunt, embraces the Gothic. It is also suggestive of the Deleuzian notion of becoming, in that literature, in this sense, is a ‘vehicle of de-territorialization’ (Braidotti: 2008a, 96), as the affective experiences of reading can shift the reader into locations that may be uncomfortable, yet also intensely stimulating. Consequently, for Cixous, ‘the writer [reader] is a secret criminal’ encountering ‘strange sources of art that are foreign’ along the creative journey (Cixous: 1993, 20). The reader translates this into an act of ‘provocation, a rebellion’ (Cixous: 1993, 21), and so reading becomes a way of ‘doing everything exactly as we want and “on the sly”’ (Cixous: 1993, 22). Opening a book becomes a way of embarking upon a gothic quest and, as Doody describes it, we are ‘initiates, entering upon the marshy margins of becoming’ (Doody: 1997, 48). My perspective on reading in this thesis is informed by such Gothic associations.

One of the striking aspects of the novel is that it regenerates itself to accommodate each new age, whilst simultaneously incorporating its past formations; it is a ‘pained, pleasurable, imperfect, incessant, labyrinthine reflection of consciousness working through time’ (Doody: 1997, 479). This process echoes the notion of becoming as a transformative immanent encounter, as well as pointing towards Haraway’s salamander or cyborg metaphor. Haraway writes that when salamanders have been injured, they have the capacity to regenerate a new limb if necessary but, with a nod towards the Gothic, ‘it can be monstrous, duplicated, potent’ (Haraway: 1991, 181); this is a metamorphosis that expresses the capacity to prevail, even if it is not always a comfortable metamorphosis.

I would propose that the fuel driving the salamander’s regenerative properties is memory. After all, ‘a body is a portion of living memory that endures by undergoing constant internal modifications following the encounter with other bodies and forces’ (Braidotti: 2008a, 99), and I would see reading as a significant factor in this encounter. Memory informs notions of becoming, regeneration, and reflective nostalgia, as each process seeks to accommodate the past without trying to restore it to a perceived former glory. This is one of

the reasons why I have chosen to use Williams's words 'phantom roomed exile of our longing' (Williams: 1991, 49) as one of the epigraphs for this chapter on the novel.

The novel is, amongst other things, a home of hauntings and memory, and one affective trigger of such memory is the Gothic, which I will explore more fully in the next chapter. Imagination, narrative and invention are a vital part of memory which is, like the novel, 'fluid and flowing; it opens up unexpected or virtual possibilities' (Braidotti: 2008a, 168). Furthermore, 'opening up these virtual spaces is a creative effort' (Braidotti: 2008a, 168). Morrison grasps both the incentive behind and the continuing value of this venture when she says:

We don't live in places where we can hear those stories anymore; parents don't sit around and tell their children those classical, mythological archetypal stories that we heard years ago. But new information has got to get out, and there are several ways to do it. One is in the novel. (Morrison: 1990, 328)

The desire Morrison unveils here constitutes a substantial part of the longing which Williams finds in that spectral place of exile. In a discussion that relates primarily to the creation of equal-opportunities policies, Williams refers to how 'blindly formalized constructions...are the creation of a space that is filled in by a meandering stream of unguided hopes, dreams, fantasies, fears, recollections. They are the presence of the past in imaginary, imagistic form – the phantom roomed exile of our longing' (Williams: 1991, 49). Ultimately, it is not only the contents and desires within that 'meandering stream' with which stories and novels engage, but also with the way in which those 'blindly formalized constructions' (Williams: 1991, 49) permeate the most intimate areas of human life. We might consider here Morrison's depiction of gender construction within postcolonial Ireland in *Mother of Pearl*, or the multiple constructions of Ireland (within art, tourism, or history), played out upon the unnamed island in *Ghosts*.

The novel, then, is an imaginative space where ghosts gather, especially those that may have been confined or expelled like 'those poor, pale wraiths pegged out to shiver in the wind of the world' (Banville: 1998, 37). Derrida reminds us that this poignant spectral

embrace is vital if we are to ‘learn to live, finally’ (Derrida: 1994, 176). One of the key aims of the novel, and the process of reading, is to explore the experiences of tempero-spatial multiplicities where worlds ‘bleed into each other’ (Banville: 1998, 55). I will return to think about the issues of memory, ghosts and touch, later in the chapter.

That the novel cares little about inducing provocation or disturbing the reader is accentuated by Doody’s comment that ‘if you are a saint or a prude, novels aren’t written for you’ (Doody: 1997, 481). And yet, in tandem with this desire to shock, beats the familiar pulse of a ‘rich, muddy, messiness’ (Doody: 1997, 485). The novel advocates a sense of dynamic marginalism, espousing the ‘anomalous position, at the edge of the fields or woods’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 271) that takes us to the limits of our thinking. Neruda’s ideas about poetry apply to the novel in that it should contain the corporeal stuff of life that is ‘steeped in sweat, smoke, smelling of lilies and urine’ (Neruda: 1974, xxii), ensuring that ‘even when an individual novel is respectable, it is not very respectable’ (Doody: 1997, 471). Eagleton expands upon these thoughts:

The point about the novel...is not just that it eludes definitions, but that it actively undermines them. It is less a genre than an anti-genre. It cannibalizes other literary modes and mixes the bits and pieces promiscuously together. You can find poetry and dramatic dialogue in the novel, along with epic, pastoral, satire, history, elegy, tragedy, and any number of other literary modes. Virginia Woolf described it as ‘this most pliable of all forms’. The novel quotes parodies and transforms other genres, converting its literary ancestors into mere components of itself... (Eagleton: 2005, 1)

Building on these ideas of flexibility, together with the ‘ontological category’ (Ashcroft et al: 2007, 27) of cannibalism as disruptive and untamed, Eagleton underlines the novel’s nonconformist inclinations by maintaining that it is ‘an anarchic genre, since its rule is not to have rules. An anarchist is not just someone who breaks rules, but someone who breaks rules as a rule, and this is what the novel does too’ (Eagleton: 2005, 2). Thus, the novel begins to look comparable to the notion of a postcolonial ‘other’. Reiterating earlier affiliations to the postcolonial, there are a number of allusive links here between theories of the novel and aspects of postcolonial thinking: the references to cannibalization, or parody, the sense of its being hard to define, and the desire to undermine repressive constructions. With reference to

Ireland, Hand comments upon the ambiguity that haunts the diverse attempts at defining the novel, concluding that it ‘resonates strongly with the idiosyncrasies of the Irish experience’ (Hand: 2001, 2).

Images of the cannibal echo in colonial discourse, as the perceived dichotomy between that which is deemed to be civilised and savage, and one could see the genre of novel as the Caliban/cannibal of the literary world. The descriptions of Caliban in *The Tempest* resonate with those of the novel.²³ Just as Moretti describes the varying embodiments of the novel as the ‘strangest creations’ (Moretti: 2007, ix), so too Alonso says of Caliban, ‘this is a strange thing as e’er I look’d on’ (*The Tempest*: 1996, Act Vi l290). Trincolo’s derision is expressed by calling Caliban ‘a very weak monster’ (l151), as well as likening him to a fish, ‘moon-calf’ and ‘strange beast’. Prospero remarks ‘He is as disproportionate in his manners/As in his shape’ (*The Tempest*: Act Vi ll291-292). Given that the novel is ‘a creature from an alien species’ (Bakhtin: 1996, 4), this aesthetic form becomes Calibanesque due to the mutual propensity to elude, and directly challenge, any secure definition. It is this challenge that invokes the periodical ‘icy blasts of disapproval’ (Doody: 1997, 471) directed towards the novel. Caliban’s final words in the play contain the promise ‘I’ll be wise hereafter’ (*The Tempest*: 1996, Vi l295), and Ashcroft sees this vow as one of using ‘Prospero’s language to change the world’ (Ashcroft: 2009, 183). Echoing the ‘plastic possibilities’ that saturate the novel, so Ashcroft’s Caliban holds within his grasp, pen in hand, the power of ‘transformation [as] the strategy of possibility, infused with the hope for a different kind of future. It is this hope that energises post-colonial writing’ (Ashcroft:

²³ *The Tempest* has also been perhaps one of the most critiqued literary works within postcolonial thinking as well as appearing inter-textually in other art forms, thus it straddles quite blatantly across postcolonial and literary ideas. This Shakespearean play has had many postcolonial re-readings has appeared inter-textually in other works, Banville’s *Ghosts* (1993) certainly evokes echoes of *The Tempest*. There have also been numerous rewritings of the play like Aimé Césaire’s play *Une Tempête* (1969), Marina Warner’s novel *Indigo* (1999), George Lamming’s novels *Natives of my Person* (1972) and *Water with Berries* (1971) W.H. Auden’s poem ‘The Sea and the Mirror’ (1976) and Peter Greenaway’s film *Prospero’s Books* (1991). As well as comparing the novel to Caliban, it is after all a book thus potentially it is also a signifier of power in relation to Prospero.

2009, 183). This potential of metamorphosis, immanent within desire and dreams, is what the novel shares with postcolonial thinking and writing.

Furthermore, Eagleton cites how the novel ‘parodies and transforms other genres’ (Eagleton: 2005, 2), thus introducing allusions to Bhabha’s theories of postcolonial mimicry. Bhabha, directly quoting Lacan, cites mimicry as being like ‘camouflage practiced in human warfare’ (Bhabha: 1994, 85); it does not attempt to ‘[harmonize] with the background’ rather it is set, like the novel, ‘against a mottled background’ (Bhabha: 1994, 85). As the novel ‘converts its literary ancestors into mere components of itself’ (Eagleton: 2005, 2), it indulges in its own form of extravagant mimicry, becoming a ‘*bricolage*’, pulling bits and pieces ‘promiscuously together’ (Eagleton: 2005, 1) from a wide variety of temporal, textual, geographical, epistemological and ontological locations.²⁴

Of added interest to postcolonial theories of writing, specifically in the case of this thesis on Irish writing, are Deleuze’s comments that as an act of ‘becoming’, writing is essential as a:

fabulating function to invent a people. We do not write with memories, unless it is to make them the origin and collective destination of a people to come still ensconced in its betrayals and repudiations...The ultimate aim of literature is to set free, in the delirium, this creation of a health or this invention of a people, that is, a possibility of life. (Deleuze: 1997, 4)

Cixous envisages this creative faculty as a writerly and readerly nomadic means of discovery that seeks a ‘second innocence’ (Cixous: 2000, 588), as she put it:

It makes us go around the world, to regain the second innocence. It’s a long path. Only at the end of the path can we regain the force of simplicity or of nudity. Only at the end of life, I believe, will we be able to understand life’s secret. One must have traveled a great deal to discover the obvious. One must have thoroughly rubbed and exhausted one’s eyes in order to get rid of the thousands of scales we start with from making up our eyes. There are poets who have strived to do this. I call ‘poet’ any writing being who sets out on this path, in quest of what I call the second innocence, the one that

²⁴ It is worth a brief mention here that Deleuze and Guattari, in relation to the process of becoming, feel that ‘mimicry is a very bad concept, since it relies on binary logic to describe phenomena of a very different nature’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 12). They promote rather the idea of rhizomatic, multiple connections that are expressed as ‘transversal communications between different lives’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 12). Nevertheless, as McLeod states, mimicry for Bhabha offers ‘an unconquerable challenge to the entire discourse of colonialism (McLeod: 2000, 55) because the colonised ‘challenge the representations which attempt to fix and define them’ (McLeod: 2000, 55). The postcolonial, the Gothic and the novel link rhizomatically in their delight in ambiguity

comes after knowing, the one that no longer knows, the one that knows how not to know. I call 'poet' any writer, philosopher, author of plays, dreamer, producer of dreams, who uses life as a time of approaching. (Cixous: 2000, 588)

Deleuze and Cixous echo Fanon's declaration: 'I am not a prisoner of history', and they conclude that 'the real leap' is to initiate acts of imagination into reality (Fanon: 2008, 179). Creative thinking in the form of the novel may thus lead to 'a possibility of life' (Deleuze: 1997, 4), especially one that galvanizes the dialectical vitality of imaginative play and the reality of everyday experience as Hand suggests when he remarks that the Irish novel encompasses both 'a wish to configure specifically Irish traits and characteristics, and the demand to recognise Ireland as a space where it is also possible to be simply human' (Hand: 2011, 1). Lyotard also emphasizes this desire by directly quoting from a novel by Nina Berberova:

...every person has his own no-man's land, a domain that is his and his alone. The life everyone sees is one thing; the other belongs to the individual, and it is none of anyone else's business...man lives at intervals unchecked, in freedom and in private, alone or with someone, be it for an hour a day, an evening a week, or a day a month, he lives for that private, free life of his from one evening (or day) to the next: those hours exist in a continuum...they are crucial to demarcating any sort of 'general line'. (Berberova Qtd. Lyotard: 1997, 115)²⁵

There is much here that points towards the acts of reading and writing as offering vital tools that enhance notions of liberation. Such creativity is in the manner of Sartre's notion that 'the act of imagination is a magical one' (Sartre: 1948, 177). It is magic because, although the reader might never actually experience unconditional freedom, the creative thinking galvanized by affective stories can offer choices that have the potential to become real. In this way, the seeds of these choices resonate with William's idea of 'structures of feeling' that nourish 'the characteristics of a pre-formation' (Williams: 1977, 134). Calvino provides an inspirational example of this tantalising impetus within stories by showing how the invention of a perfect prison can paradoxically present the idea of opportunities for escape:

²⁵ This excerpt is from Nina Berberova (1989) *The Revolt*, translated by Marian Schwartz, London: William Collins and Sons, pp27-28.

If I succeed in mentally constructing a fortress from which it is impossible to escape, this imagined fortress either will be the same as the real one – and in this case it is certain we shall never escape from here, but at least we will achieve the serenity of knowing we are here because we could be nowhere else – or it will be a fortress from which escape is even more impossible than from here – which would be a sign that here an opportunity of escape exists: we have only to identify the point where the imagined fortress does not coincide with the real one and then find it (Calvino: 1986, 27).

So the exacting form in a novel such as *Kepler* offers the reader an opportunity to choose either tranquil acceptance, or the emotional turbulence of actively seeking those points of escape. In *Ghosts*, the structure is looser, but the sense of confinement on the island, coupled with a perceived lack of conventional plot, offers a labyrinthine journey for the reader. Morrissy expertly amplifies the sense of confinement within gender construction in Ireland with depictions of actual incarceration within various institutions, or within the well-nigh suffocating and haunted atmosphere of the home, and in the struggle of constantly living up to local communal pressures.

Returning briefly to the unruly transgressive qualities of the novel, it is pertinent to make a note here about realism and the novel, specifically in terms of Irish writing. Lloyd notes a very real dilemma in that:

[o]ne of the problems of the Irish novel, precisely insofar that it conforms to the symbolic mode of realism, is the sheer volume of inassimilable residue that it can neither properly contain nor entirely exclude. (Lloyd: 1993, 152-153)

This point has been reiterated by Luke Gibbons, who suggests that Gothic fiction might, due to the ‘inchoate structures’ of the Gothic paradigm, be able to tell a more enlightening story of Ireland than historical discourse.²⁶ Banville and Morrissy both utilize the Gothic in a way that exposes mundane experiences in order to highlight the undercurrents of power that touch even the most intimate of those experiences, as Hand suggests: ‘the Gothic...can actually force the reader to look again at the real world by focusing on what lies beneath the surface of everyday experience’ (Hand: 2006, 168). In the context of the real, Michael Gamer makes a valuable point about how Wordsworth and Coleridge use the Gothic in that they both

‘attempt to separate gothic writing’s penchant for shock and sensation from its interest in extreme states of consciousness in order to reject the former and renegotiate the value of the latter’ (Gamer: 2004, 115).

In a similar way to that proposed by Gamer, Banville and Morrissy explore contentious and unsettling ideas, but utilise the Gothic to intensify sensation rather than to shock for the sake of it. One example is in *Mother of Pearl*, where, following the emotionally-wrought abortion scene, words become fraught, questioning, and stuttered and the atmosphere is intensely gothicized but the focus always remains on how the actual lived experience within the community will feel from that point on. Morrissy hinges this Gothic moment with ‘I will return to our cottage home. Alone. A criminal. Will it be haunted too? ...Will I wake in the night and hear the cries of the creature I expelled there in a mess of blood and sweat?...Or will there just be the hard, bright, concrete things of the world saying, now, live with us?’ (Morrissy: 1997, 217). Thus, the Gothic mingles fluently and disquietingly with the sensation of commonplace experience and all the anxieties that accompany it.

In *Mother of Pearl*, everyday activities like knitting, and everyday objects like kitchen equipment and clothing, or even the basic requirement of life, breathing, take on the mantle of haunting, death and the multifarious aspects of creation. The everyday pulses with the manipulative power of religio-political influence. In *Kepler*, Banville discusses how power sometimes feels obscure and faintly murky, ‘peopled with vague grey shapes’ like some ‘invisible workshop of the world’ (Banville: 2001, 481). The unease this shadowy world causes is because ‘a palpable enemy would be one thing, but this [is] vast and impersonal...’ (Banville: 2001, 481). Such shadowy spaces are the *milieu* of the Gothic, and the sheer size of the novel allows the expanded play that the Gothic requires to explore these locations.

²⁶ See Luke Gibbons (1996) in *Transformations in Irish Culture*, Cork: Cork University Press in Association with Field Day, p15

Another response to the challenge of ‘inassimilable residue’ (Lloyd: 1993, 152-153) is to engage in ‘talking nearby instead of talking about’, which can serve to ‘make visible the invisible’ (Minh-ha: 1999, 218). The Gothic works in this way by taking the reader to places that stretch the limits of the imagination, for example the experience of excessive blood, the details of murder, a sense of being haunted or the sound of the earth’s music as perceived by a character. One creative technique of ‘talking nearby’ is to place the action of the novel in a seemingly disparate location, as Banville does with *Kepler*. Yet Irish historical experiences can still be indirectly accessed by thinking creatively about Kepler’s experiences within the turmoil of his own community. Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of de-territorialization is useful here, especially in their description of the relationship between two discrete organisms, namely the orchid and the wasp. The relationship between the two is not just about resemblance or imitation; rather it is about ‘the capture of code, the surplus value of code’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 11).²⁷ Thus, the way in which Banville draws the simplest of descriptions from sixteenth and seventeenth century Prussia and the Holy Roman Empire, those of insects, the smells of ‘bread and dung and smoke –that smell!’ (Banville: 2001, 381), and ‘the rosebuds on the tumbledown privy’ (Kepler: 2001, 391), or the ‘vampire weather’ (Banville: 2001, 299) which we might read also as weather suggestive of potato blight, all resonate on symbolic levels with ambient experiences of rural Ireland. Subsequently, we might say that in the space of *Kepler*, the conflation of Ireland and medieval Europe becomes ‘an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 11). *Kepler* is haunted by common experiences that can be recognised affectively, or haptically, as Irish. Minh-ha makes an excellent point here when she says that ‘truth can only be approached indirectly if we don’t want to lose it and find oneself hanging

²⁷ See Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 11 for the discussion on the relationship of intensities between ‘two beings that have absolutely nothing to do with each other’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 11).

onto dead, empty skin' (Minh-ha: 1999, 219). I will return to Minh-ha's fruitful ideas throughout the thesis.

Realism is both actively sought, and demonstrated in diverse ways, in Banville and Morrissy, and it is one of the constituent tropes of the novel as genre. However, in the constellation of the postcolonial Gothic novel, realism has different and transforming modes of action. Prescriptive Realism expresses a level of responsibility in the way it operates. From this perspective, as Richard Brodhead makes clear, prose fiction in the form of the novel can 'not only imitate reality. It produces reality – establishes and sustains the sense of the world on which its audience lives and acts. For this reason, fiction cannot be permitted to fabricate idly' (Brodhead: 1989, 101); this approach towards realism renders it as something like a 'moral reconstruction program' (Brodhead: 1989, 101).²⁸

An alternative view of realism is to see it as Neruda does, as the stuff of life that is 'steeped in sweat, smoke, smelling of lilies and urine' (Neruda: 1974, xxii). Doody echoes these sentiments by stating that the novel is '...the receptive home of all substance – bones, blood, feathers, shit, lost gold coins, and chips of earthenware' (Doody: 1997, 478). Morrison, in answer to a question about the part played by realism in her conception of the novel, answered 'realism, yes, but not in that sense. There are a lot of ways to touch realism. It's not documentary ... [i]t's visual, it has a sound, that's what I work toward, a place where the reader can come in, like a congregation, like an audience at a musical concert, where they participate in it' (Morrison: 2008, 117-118). For Morrison, the novel is vital in this participatory act because:

²⁸ Brodhead, in his book *The School of Hawthorne*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, is discussing realism here in relation to American realist fiction, with specific reference to the American writer William E Howells. Brodhead notes that for writers like Howells, the slow erosion of social institutions like the family and the church meant that prose fiction needed to take on board the responsible role of moral authority that was being dislocated in society, to relay descriptions of 'the permitted and the proscribed, the normal and the aberrant, the serious and the unserious' (Brodhead: 1989, 101)

We don't live in places where we can hear those stories anymore; parents don't sit around and tell their children those classical, mythological archetypal stories that we heard years ago. But new information has got to get out, and there are several ways to do it. One is in the novel. (Morrison: 2008a, 58)

Taking a sideways glance towards the postcolonial for a moment, John Kenny feels that postcolonial literary theory has often worked under the 'misguided assumption that plainly realist forms are implicitly collusive with an oppressively empirical or imperial centralizing mind-set' (Kenny: 2000, 49). Echoing Kenny's concerns, Laura Moss suggests that an attitude exists where 'non-realist forms are inherently more postcolonial – and therefore have greater potential for resistance' (Moss: 2000, 2).

On a further note, Wisker points out that postmodern theories of decentering the subject can be incompatible with the requirements of those within postcolonial societies. She continues that 'life writing, the assertion of individual identity, and the forms that took were impartial testimonies to ways of establishing both a voice and a history' (Wisker: 2007b, 100), and the novel plays a part in this materialisation of voice, because it appreciates that 'lived experience uses realism, it does not have to be first person, but shows experience in action' (Wisker: 2007b: 100). Citing how many black and Asian writers use realism and testimony, while others use deep symbolism and poetic imagery, she further adds, 'it can be argued that expecting postcolonial writers to always write using testimonial realism is an arrogant, culturally imperialist act, but so, too, is insisting that using symbolism and the poetic is an indication of (preferable, advanced) sophisticated writing' (Wisker: 2007b, 100). So the novel is able to provide the felt, individual, particularist aspect of the postcolonial experience that will always be elided in a broader historical narrative.

Applying these ideas to Morrissy and Banville, it can be argued that these writers combine forms of realism and symbolism in the affiliation between the postcolonial and the Gothic, and while they never ignore the ultimate aim of telling a story, they nevertheless manage to express some deeply significant cultural issues. Whilst the Gothic plays a part in the novels in this thesis, it moves within objects such as Stanley's mother's apron hanging on

the door in *Mother of Pearl*, or the furrows in the soil in *Ghosts*, or within the spectral vision of a vague authority whose shadowy power is expressed by Winkelmann's unexplained disappearance and his eerily abandoned house in *Kepler*. The continual flux of the elements in their work expresses realism in the way in which Irigaray proposes, which is by engaging with air, fire, earth and water in order 'to go back to those natural matters that constitute the origin of our bodies, of our life, of our environment, the flesh of our passions.' (Irigaray Qtd. Canters and Jantzen: 2005, 29). The elements enhance the sensation of movement and metamorphosis in the novels because 'they are mobile adjectives rather than static nouns, and in this regard they seem to share affinities with Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomes' (Macauley: 2010, 313). Hence, the view that the novel is an assemblage of forces 'permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 40) is intensified by the movement of these elements.

Continuing with this notion of movement, a vital part of this inventive journey within the novel is the presence of affect, and the animation of emotional responses thus triggered forms a connection with the sense of travelling to which Cixous refers above (Cixous: 2000, 588). Jorge Luis Borges makes the point that:

poetry lies in the meeting of poem and reader, not in the lines of symbols printed in the pages of a book. What is essential is the aesthetic act, the thrill, the almost physical emotion that comes with each reading. (Borges: 1985, 294)

Borges's words might be equally applied to the novel, and his introduction of a sense of movement into the act of reading. Richard Kearney elaborates upon this point when he alludes to the 'referential world of action' from which stories are both drawn from, and to which they also return; such journeying enables the reader to 'recognise the indispensable role of human agency. This role is multiple, relating as it does to the agent as author, actor and reader' (Kearney: 2004, 151). Furthermore:

Every story is a play of at least three persons (author/actor/addressee) whose outcome is never final. That is why storytelling is an open ended invitation to ethical and poetic responsiveness. Storytelling invites us to become not just agents of our own lives, but narrators and readers as well...There will

always be someone there to say, 'tell me a story', and someone there to respond. Were this not so, we would no longer be fully human. (Kearney: 2004, 156)

This sense of agency is central to reading a novel. The words that emerge in discussions of the novel such as 'play', 'pliability', 'becoming', 'invention', 'flow', 'leap' or 'journey', are all implicated in movement and metamorphosis. Kearney rightly maintains that emotional receptivity (the reader to the story and storyteller, and the storyteller to the reader's need for the story to be told), is at the heart of a deeply intimate and affective (moving) experience, one that 'is never final' (Kearney: 2004, 156). This relationship, amplified by a sense of movement and Bakhtinian 'plastic possibilities' (Bakhtin: 1996, 4), relates obliquely and rhizomatically, to a story of the Andoque tribe, and to how the multiple dynamics of narrative ultimately helped them deal with a traumatic colonial past. The story links the movement of narrative and invention with the use of breath in a postcolonial Gothic paradigm that expresses the most positive aspects of reflective nostalgia. It connects the transformative properties of the classical elements, the Gothic, the postcolonial and the power of storytelling which are the main intellectual components of this thesis. It occurs to me then, that we might begin to see the novel as more of a verb than a noun. I will return to this idea.

Deleuze asserts a belief that literature 'appears as an enterprise of health' (Deleuze: 1997, 3). As he puts it, 'the ultimate aim of literature is to set free, in the delirium, in this creation of a health, in this invention of a people, the possibility of a life' (Deleuze: 1997, 4). Crucially, in a link to the Gothic and to the alchemical metamorphoses that literature and narrative might affect, Deleuze sees the writer is not only as a physician but also as a shamanic sorcerer:

Sorcerers [writers] have always held the anomalous position, at the edge of the fields or woods. They haunt the fringes. They are at the borderline of the village or between villages. The important thing is their affinity with the alliance, with the pact, which gives them status opposed to that of filiation. The relation with the anomalous is one of alliance. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 271)

Taking this idea further, I would like to explore the example of the Andoque community which utilizes narrative in magical and transformative ways. It is an example that, not only echoes Deleuze's ideas of the writer as physician (Deleuze: 1997, 3), but one which also

expresses just how the wide terrain of the novel must be in order to accommodate the intense flows within the postcolonial Gothic.

In a revealing article about the Andoque people within the Putumayo native communities in the Amazon, Fisi Andoque (a shaman himself), has written about the communal role of the shaman/sorcerer. The shaman occupies a role that specifies a wide area of expertise in the promotion of well-being in the community:

The taetúo (sorcerer) is the person who gives strength to the community's heart. He resolves the group's questions and problems using psychotropic plants. The asoki sióho is the healer. Using plants and prayers, he cures the mental and body illness. Finally, the po'soo, the 'strong word man', creates all: works, dances, songs, treatments and secrets – creating and promoting a general well-being among his people. This person, who is also a maloca's [collective house] leader, can be said to give birth to everything: 'We must have a po'soo, a leader, because he is the only one who can turn the people into proper people or hóihó using the maloca, ritual food and drinks, songs and dances. Without his protection the people are i'hooá or orphans. (Arango and Andoque: 2005, 246)

The Andoque people were almost exterminated to the point of extinction during the period between 1840 -1914 at height of the exploitation of rubber. The region has a long history of occupation, but this particular era began with about ten thousand Andoque people living in the area and by 1914, after compulsory resettlements, the effects of colonization, forced migrations, the exploitation of rubber and the attendant epidemics spread by colonizers and the presence of the rubber industry, there were just eight people left in their community. Juan Alvaro Echeverri cites the words of the Andoque elders who said that, after the catastrophic effects of rubber exploitation, 'we are all orphans now' (Echeverri: 1997, 221), a response to the fact that many clans had lost their shamans.

When Deleuze advocates his ideas of the writer and literature being able to provide for people the 'possibility of a life' (Deleuze: 1997, 4), of operating affectively on the health of individuals and communities, these ideas mirror the vital importance of the shaman; in this case the 'strong word man [woman]' (Arango and Andoque: 2005, 246). An alliance exists between the writer and sorcerer and those who experience colonialism, as they too are deemed 'anomalous' and 'haunt the fringes'. It is the writer, or storyteller who takes on the task of entering challenging spaces to provide opportunities for meeting equally challenging

aspects of life. The Gothic assists the novel in these engagements. The maloca, once known as the dwelling where community members would gather, can be interpreted for our twenty-first century experience as a local, national or global community: this is the flourishing ‘maloca’ of today’s writer. The novel is embedded deeply in the everyday experiences of this space, as such it can also be interpreted as a ‘maloca’; the ‘supreme cultural and ritual space’ (Arango and Andoque: 2005, 247); this is a space of creative play and performance, but it is also one that is profoundly serious.

The seriousness of inventive play is expressed in the way the Andoque people mobilize the shifting form of the axe through a process of metamorphoses termed, in Juan Alvaro Echiverri’s words as ‘active elaboration’ (Echiverri: 1997, 206). This tool holds historical importance for the Andoque people, as it was initially a device of trade and agricultural growth for the community. However the axe also has parallel associations with the colonial period during the development of the rubber plantations, and with the fear which this process brought to the Andoque people. In the course of ‘active elaboration’, there are coeval trajectories within time and space: the axe is transformed into breath and air and expressed, in Doreen Massey’s words as a multiplicity of ‘stories so far’ (Massey: 2009, 9). The image of the axe is destabilised via dream-work and narrative: from being a metonym of bloodshed and violent upheaval (the ‘illness of the axe [and] axe of fear’) (Echiverri: 1997, 93), it is transformed into an affirmative and regenerative ‘axe of abundance’ (Echiverri: 1997, 93), and this transformation points towards the productive value of stories. Such imaginative and potentially healing metamorphoses remember both the violent past, as well as images of nurture and communal fertility, and fuse both as a living memory into a new future. Both axes are inextricably bound in a complex philosophical dynamic, where storytelling is recognised as having the capacity to not only be healing, but also to have the potential to be ‘very dangerous’ (Echiverri: 1997, 110). In other words, the transformation of

the axe, in which the role of the imagination is deeply significant and respected, creates something new.²⁹

This process of metamorphosis connects strongly with Whelan's depiction of how narrative and memory can propagate healing. There are three distinct but overlapping movements within the transfiguration of the axe. Firstly, there is the explicit connection of the axe with loss and fear; secondly, there is the movement of the axe through the tempo-spatial multiplicity of breath. Here, the galvanizing energy of breath lies within its connection to both the intimate and the terrestrial within narratives, and the image of the axe can be seen in and around bodies and the voice. Thus the elements within postcolonial Gothic narratives embrace movement and change on all levels of experience; this is apparent in *Mother of Pearl*, where the intimacy of shared human breath challenges religio-political constructions of gender in a postcolonial society. The elemental movement, through the imaginative Gothic performance within the novel, serves to emphasize of the 'interplay of scales' (Ricoeur: 2006, 210) that determines the interrelation of macro and micro history. The third movement is one of desire towards the cultivation of a dynamic *milieu* of affirmation and abundance. The complexities of the novel as 'a phoenix always ready to take flight in a new direction' (Moretti: 2007, ix), play a special part in this narrative dimension. Hand notes that the Irish novel is particularly attentive to Ireland's constant state of transition because 'a new Ireland is continually being born or is about to be born while an old Ireland is forever passing or about to pass away' (Hand: 2011, 9).

²⁹ There are echoes here with Haraway's use of cyborg imagery, for example: 'The cyborg [is]...a creature of social reality as well as fiction...The cyborg is our ontology...[and] is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation' (Haraway: 1991, 149-150). The story of the Andoque use of the axe triggers a new understanding and appreciation of Haraway's words here. Note also how, just as with turning the axe into breath, the imagination is important within the cyborgian transformative experience. Additionally, '[c]yborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other' (Haraway: 1991, 175), echoes Ashcroft's ideas of using the coloniser's language as a tool in the postcolonial transformative process (see Ashcroft 2009, 3).

Parallel to the three movements within the Andoque process of transformation, the three levels of memory initially described by Paul Ricoeur, and reiterated by Whelan (Whelan: 2003, 92-3), are particularly relevant to the analysis of a Gothic presence in the Irish novel, especially when viewed within postcolonial paradigms. The first level of memory can be described as therapeutic, in that it moves between loss, grief and melancholia, and eventually towards healing. Melancholia, stemming from repression, can manifest itself as repetition within dreams, as a constant longing or as imaginary sightings of the object of loss and deep trauma. Gothic motifs such as hauntings, loss, fear, loneliness, mental instability, buildings or rooms in which protagonists feel trapped are all textual representations of this level of memory. Repetition, for example, shows in how Morrissy depicts a female character Betty in *Mother of Pearl*, knitting and constantly unpicking her stitches, only to knit the same thing over and over again; we might say that she is ‘staving off destiny and not inviting or inventing or controlling it’ (Heilbrun: 1997, 46). Betty’s repetitive reworking of the thread connects to being trapped in the same narrative; her life as an institutionalised woman within a TB sanatorium constructs an identity for her that she cannot escape. She is trapped within the ‘wounds and scars of memory’ (Ricoeur: 2001, 6).

Secondly, the pragmatic level of memory seeks to explore identity as well as confronting the issue of the ‘other’ as a potential threat. Within both the postcolonial and the Gothic, identity is posed as problematic. Whelan points out that if violence is the initiator of a communal sense of identity, ‘cultural memory then becomes a storage system of violence, wounds, scars, anger’ (Whelan: 2003, 92). These injuries and emotions filter through individuals in diverse ways. The themes and tropes of secrets, photographs, letters, and the process of naming are all used in ways that serve to accentuate the complexities of this pilgrimage. Memories of the past linger, whether inscribed into the soil as geometrical shapes like ‘a curious ribbed pattern in the turf’ (Banville: 1998, 30), or as officially outmoded ways of thinking that nevertheless form the dynamic *vigor motrix* of Kepler’s trailblazing creative

thinking. Pearl, through breath and voice, names her spectral companion as Jewel in *Mother of Pearl*; it is a radical moment in the course of her working through the complex issues of gender construction and memories of the past: ‘I rescued her and named her Jewel’ (Morrissy: 1997, 185).

Furthermore the gaze of the emigrant woman in the midst of the famine in *Ghosts*, ‘looking back out of huge stricken eyes’ (Banville: 1998, 31), draws a space of pain that acts as a provocation to the reader to remember. Later on in the same novel, the account of the Xhosa tribe’s starvation and death (Banville: 1998, 192-3) traces a line of flight right back to those ‘huge stricken eyes’ (Banville: 1998, 31) in a way that is reminiscent of Minh-Ha’s ‘talking nearby’. The Gothic, then, operates in the mode of a Ricoeurian ‘becoming-an-image’ (Ricoeur, 2006, 7), itself an expression of haunting and reminiscent of the spectral shaping of the axe in breath.

At the third level, memory becomes ethical and political. It is here that the impetus for healing and movement can take place, revealing a desire to work towards possible futures. Narrative is crucial to the dialogical process of opening up negotiation between memory and history and, as Whelan puts it: ‘narrative means it is always possible to tell it another way’ (Whelan: 2003, 92). By harnessing the potential of the Gothic, and by placing it within a narrative form (in this case the novel), a space opens up for an empathetic accommodation of loss, melancholia, the search for identity and confrontation of ‘other’. In conjunction with the postcolonial and the elemental imagination, the Gothic can also provide affective maps that trigger creative thinking about possible futures.

One example of this Gothic dynamic within the novels is Pearl’s metamorphosis into Jewel in *Mother of Pearl*. After the act of naming comes the transformation of slow regeneration. Deleuze and Guattari state that the ‘true proper name’ materializes ‘when the individual opens up to the multiplicities pervading him or her, [it is] at the outcome of the most severe operation of depersonalization, that he or she acquires his or her true proper

name' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 42). Another way of approaching the sometimes unsettling act of 'telling it another way' (Whelan: 2003, 92), is to engage in 'talking nearby'.

An example of this practice can be found in *Kepler*, which deals with the German astronomer, mathematician, astrologer, novelist, and inventor Johannes Kepler (1571-1630). *Kepler*, published in 1981, is filled with war, exile, death, financial difficulties, and religious intolerance. The 1970's and 1980's were similarly demanding periods in Ireland's long challenging history. The 1981 hunger strikes, the deep religio-political unrest and violence bound up with a convoluted colonial past and postcolonial present in Northern Ireland, paralleled by rising unemployment, emigration, and an economic crisis in the Republic, exposed a volatile environment of struggle and adversity. Kepler's scientific accomplishments, set against an equally volatile backdrop within the novel, serve to offer an insight into the achievements of which individuals are capable, even in the direst of circumstances. One way of facilitating a means to 'make visible the invisible' (Minh-ha: 1999, 218) is by offering such an oblique exploration of deeply complex and emotionally challenging issues. Banville himself is aware of how the memory of Ireland flows through *Kepler*: 'as I look back on Copernicus and Kepler, I see how Ireland seeped into them. How could it not, especially in the 1970's, when we were tearing ourselves to pieces' (Banville: 2006, 202). Ireland haunts *Kepler* as a Ricoeurian 'becoming-an-image' (Ricoeur: 2006, 7).

There are two specific points that connect the use of imaginative narrative within the transformation of the Andoque axe through breath, to the narratives explored in this thesis, and to the Ricoeurian processes of memory. Firstly, the act articulates Deleuzian 'becoming', and secondly, it echoes the notion of minor literature. As I have already noted, the processes of metamorphosis and becoming are present in each of the texts under scrutiny, both in the acts of the characters, and in the incessant flow of the elements. The Andoque story of regeneration serves to emphasize exactly why Grosz cautions against failing to incorporate into our understanding of becoming just how much it necessitates 'a substantial remaking of

the subject, a major risk to the subject's integration and social functioning' (Grosz: 1994, 174). As Braidotti points out, the connections made within the process of becoming are 'intense and at times can be violent' (Braidotti: 2008a, 8). It is no accident that blood and death work their way through the novels, the bloody act of abortion in *Mother of Pearl*, Freddie's personal history as a murderer in *Ghosts* and the whole backdrop of war, exile, torture and death in *Kepler*.

On the second point of minor literature, the Andoque story again connects with the novels in this thesis, and with Whelan's ideas on memory in relation to Ireland and the value of narrative. Whelan grasps narrative's ability to 'tell it another way', as opening up 'a space for dialogue, [and] a negotiation of narratives' (Whelan: 2003, 92); this is exactly the central drive and desire of minor writing. Deleuze and Guattari, citing Kafka writing as a Czechoslovakian Jew and using the German language, point out that minor writing yearns to 'make language stammer, or make it "wail"...to draw from it cries, shouts, pitches, durations, timbres, accents, intensities' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 115). This example correlates both with how Irish writers use English, and also, as Banville puts it, how writers seek to stretch and exert force upon language until it begins 'to blush, [and] blood begins to flow' (Fachinello: 2010, 41). Once again, blood appears to signal that sense of becoming, and also to gesture towards how minor writing plays a part in this transformative process. The Gothic, with its own penchant for blood and metamorphosis, is deeply effective as a tool with which can evaluate these 'cries, shouts...timbres...intensities' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 115).

Through this connection between the novel, the postcolonial and Whelan's ideas, the notion of minor literature recognise that art 'keeps itself alive through its social force of resistance' (Adorno: 1997, 296). Whelan states that the autonomy of art is crucial in realising 'its emancipatory function in the creation of alternative futures' (Whelan: 2003, 108), thus anticipating Alexander Thomson's idea that autonomy in art 'keeps alive the memory of a promise of freedom' (Thomson: 2006, 68). Whelan takes this point further into postcolonial

contexts by stressing that the postcolonial must engage with ‘that movement of freedom that is art...[and] negotiate between memory and inspiration, between filiation and affiliation’ (Whelan: 2003, 108). It is this role which the novel takes on board, specifically playing its part in the injection of inventive and enchanted materialism into the postcolonial paradigm, and directly challenging ‘the vexed question of whether the subaltern can speak’ (Whelan: 2003, 108).

Minor literature, in its move towards multiplicity, connects to the novels in this thesis. These novels straddle the interstices between the molar and the molecular poles of power, linked respectively to *potestas* (networks of power that can fix, restrict and hinder), and *potentia* (which facilitates potency, intensity and desire). Minor literature may be situated within molar plateau of *potestas*, but it is always striving towards *potentia* and as such expresses the very heart of ‘becoming’. Furthermore, whether we are considering acts of becoming and metamorphosis, or the creation of inventive narrative, or instances of Haraway’s cyborg ontology and acts of regeneration, all processes require fragments of the past to be carried forward into the desire for alternative futures.

I would contend that there is a striking alliance between the Andoque echo of the axe and Lloyd’s discussion of narrative in an Irish context and the act of flinging an iron bar through the air. Briefly, Lloyd tells of an elderly man during the land clearances in Ireland who, on being turned out of his home, is asked by a British soldier to hand over the key. He flings an iron bar at the soldier. On the one hand, he does as he has been asked, as the bar is a key of sorts, being used to secure the door against bad weather, although the soldier does not realise this. On the other, it is perceived as an act of defiance, as the bar flies through the air, taking on the attributes of a projectile and weapon. Even if, on the face of it, such actions appear ineffectual, these acts and their retelling are a part of what serves to ‘remake the terms for collective survival’ (Lloyd: 2008, 37). Lloyd asks that we:

...rather than lament the futility of the gesture or rush to trace in it the contours of a resistance that will emerge in more articulate forms, we should perhaps for a moment suspend the image of this iron

bar cast on the road as the die turns in the air before it falls to the ground. In the very cusp of the catastrophe, this turning bespeaks the memory of the alternative possibilities that live on athwart the mournful logic of historicized events. (Lloyd: 2008, 38)

Lloyd is expressing the potential that exists in the affective moment, as the iron bar almost becomes breath, because at that moment, the decisive narrative forms ‘as the die turns in the air’. At that moment, the potential of multiplicities, the ‘alternative possibilities’ (Lloyd: 2008, 38) that always exist within any narrative, are palpable. It is as de Certeau recognises, that even an iron bar can have ‘hollow places in which a past sleeps [and]... in which ancient revolutions slumber’ (de Certeau: 1984, 108). It is the reader who performs the Andoque ritual and engages in ‘active elaboration’ (Echiverri: 1997, 206) by comparing the transformations of the bar to those of the axe in the Andoque culture.

Such potential stems from the manifestation of affects as being what Williams calls ‘in solution’ (Williams: 1977, 134), which implies that, like haptologies, they are not easily articulated. This does not mean, however, that they are totally free-floating and boundless; they gather to generate what Deleuze calls an assemblage thus yielding, as Williams puts it:

a structured formation which, because it is at the very edge of semantic availability, has many of the characteristics of a pre-formation, until specific articulations – new semantic figures – are discovered in material practice. (Williams: 1977, 134)

Hence, the emotional engagement with narratives that assemble into a ‘pre-formation’ echoes the Deleuzian assemblages created by rhythms, lines, flows and affects. They form maps and, as Braidotti puts it, ‘encountering them is almost a matter for geography, because it is a question of orientations, points of entry and exit, a constant unfolding’ (Braidotti: 2008c, 160).

I will explore how postcolonial Gothic inspirational thinking within the novels, through the medium of the elements and haptic moments, creates a cartography that might eventually lead to ‘new semantic figures’ (Williams: 1977, 134). Banville describes this beautifully in *Kepler*, when he talks about the memory of an event, especially ‘the aimless parts of it’ (Banville: 2008, 384), that might include the way the light falls, or a sound, or a particular piece of clothing; such assemblages come together in ‘an almost palpable shape, a

great air sign, like a cloud or a wind or a shower of rain, that was beyond interpreting and yet rich with significance and promise' (Banville: 2008, 385). Said has picked up on these points, and echoes Williams by discussing how 'structures of location and geographical reference' appear in literature 'sometimes allusively and sometimes carefully plotted across several works that are not otherwise connected to one another...' (Said: 1994, 52). Thus, not only do different writers and novels form lines of connection between each other, but each book also offers its own complex cartography.

Returning to the affective instants with the iron bar and axe, and especially to the way in which these elemental moments throw out lines of flight towards a multiplicity of possibilities, I would like to consider the way in which the novel accommodates such intense ambiguities. I use 'elemental' here, both to maintain the connection with the classical elements (air and breath are central to both intensities), but also to illuminate the critical nature of each experience. Ambiguity is the dwelling place of the Gothic and the postcolonial to a great extent, but the act of reading the novel assists our reflective capacity to engage with these slippery affective geographies. Kundera indicates that the novel's importance rests in part in its ability to face 'the world as ambiguity, to... face not a single truth but a welter of contradictory truths...to have...the wisdom of uncertainty' (Kundera: 2003, 6-7).

Hand identifies the ambiguity surrounding definitions of the novel, and how this ambiguity resonates with the Irish experience of struggle and difference; he discusses how the novel does not simply regurgitate 'oppositional positions' but offers 'negotiation between opposites and acceptance of difference' (Hand: 2011, 8). The navigation through these complex routes manifests in Morrissy's and Banville's writing as 'a wish to configure specifically Irish traits and characteristics, and the demand to recognise Ireland as a space where it is also possible to be simply human' (Hand: 2011, 13). Such a complex negotiation demands an ability to engage with 'the wisdom of uncertainty (Kundera: 2003, 7), in fact it is crucial in order to express the collective ambiguities of being human within locations that

have experienced traumatic pasts. The Romanian Philosopher Emil Cioran writes on this point:

Those who write under the spell of inspiration, for whom thought is an expression of their organic nervous disposition, do not concern themselves with unity and systems. Such concerns, contradictions and facile paradoxes indicate an impoverished and insipid personal life. Only great and dangerous contradictions betoken a rich spiritual life because only they constitute a mode of realization for life's abundant inner flow (Cioran: 1992, 39)

It is this 'abundant inner flow' that Banville and Morrissy seek to express. Their writing raises more questions than answers, and trawls through murder, religio-political turmoil, blood and grief, thus intimately and intricately connecting the novel, the Gothic and the postcolonial. The tears that flow from these experiences act as catalysts to creative thinking, as Cioran reminds us, 'tears always have deeper roots than smiles' (Cioran: 1992, 22).

For Kundera, in our world 'it grows steadily harder to hear amid the din of easy, quick answers that come faster than the question and block it off. In the spirit of our time it's either Anna or Karenin who is right, and the ancient wisdom of Cervantes, telling us about the difficulty of knowing and the elusiveness of truth, seems cumbersome and useless' (Kundera: 2003, 18). But there is also a link (embracing the spirit of the rhizome perhaps) between these ideas and everything that postcolonial thinking stands for – the search for that 'world as ambiguity' (Kundera: 2003, 18). The Gothic traverses this space too. If, as Kundera asserts, 'the novel's spirit is the spirit of complexity' (Kundera: 2003, 18), then we can say the very same of the postcolonial and the Gothic. The three are kindred spirits that seek to make a stand against 'the forgetting of being' (Kundera: 2003, 19), and they can do this because they attempt to live and move counter to the 'process of dizzying reduction' and 'against the progress of the world' (Kundera: 2003, 19). Reading the novel allows for an exploration of possible pasts and futures, so that we might avoid simply 'chasing after the future [which] is the worst conformism of all, a craven flattery of the mighty' (Kundera: 2003, 20).

Raymond Tallis reiterates Kundera's concerns citing the:

Dispiriting... 'higher prattle' where weighty issues are touched on lightly and depths are drained to shallows... The prattle with which we fill our consciousness and that of our fellow beings empties us: we are eaten away from within by the virtual solace of sentences. (Tallis: 2010, 67-68)

For Tallis, the potential of literary on the other hand:

...has the effect of slowing the flow of words, with every word measured, listened to as well as spoken, every thought thought until it is truly thought rather than merely echoed or cited, pointing to a kind of stillness, like a kestrel on nictitating wings... (Tallis: 2010, 68)

Paradoxically, this slowing down of thought simultaneously nurtures an expansiveness of thinking. Such reading enables movement through slippery 'flows and interconnections' (Braidotti: 2008a, 2), and it is worth reiterating here that 'opening up these virtual spaces is a creative effort' (Braidotti: 2008a, 168). Ultimately, this discussion keeps returning to the uses of creative endeavours, like reading, to real life. Calvino responds by quoting Cioran, not with an answer, but with another question: 'While they were preparing the hemlock, Socrates was learning a tune on the flute. "What good will it do you," they asked, "to know this tune before you die?"' (Cioran Qtd. Calvino: 1986, 134). As Michael Taussig says 'when disaster strikes, the useless becomes useful' (Taussig: 2003, 111).

I reinforce the importance of the reflective and transformative role of the axe because it says a great deal about the way the postcolonial Gothic moves within the narrative space of the novel and about the way in which postcolonial, Gothic and postmodern ideas can work together. Firstly, the act speaks of the subaltern facet of the postcolonial, as voices and experiences that were almost wiped out, now find their own way to articulate the past and lead themselves into the future in a manner that anticipates work such as Boym's reflective nostalgia. Secondly, the way in which the Andoque use notions of dream and play, and recognise that the material axe can be deconstructed through these discourses, is suggestive of how I see postmodern tools being useful for postcolonial thinking. In both of these cases, they put into practice what Ashcroft says about postcolonial cultures using language as a creative tool. Thirdly, the Gothic is present throughout the whole process in the way in which ghosts of past violence and trauma, and also of happiness and joy, are acknowledged and are able to assist in the journey to a future that looks backward and forward at the same time. It is

also a Gothic of the everyday, in that the axe is a tool that determines agricultural practice, building, and clearing trees. As such, ghosts are not bizarre or out of the ordinary, rather they are commonplace and manifold. Ghosts, and by implication the Gothic, cultivate creative thinking and reflective nostalgia to combine within the emotionally perceptive ‘active elaboration’ Echeverri describes. Thus we might conclude that ‘the more enlightened our houses are, the more their walls ooze with ghosts’ (Calvino: 1986, 19).

Finally, in the way in which the axe is turned into breath, it lends voice to the importance of narrative in our lives; storytelling acts as a facilitator in dealing with aspects of life that can be too painful or too complex to confront directly. Minh-ha’s thoughts about the important act of ‘speaking nearby’ are useful to recall here, especially in that this gesture is ‘a great challenge...this is not just a technique or a statement to be made verbally. It is an attitude in life, a way of positioning oneself in relation to the world’ (Minh-ha: 199, 218). Minh-ha articulates the importance of the ‘positioning’ that occurs when engaging with narrative forms, and points towards how reading might help to evaluate and contest deeply-held perceptions within the social, political and personal spheres of life. The ‘great challenge’ stemming from such an engagement echoes the kind of reading that ‘is the axe for the frozen sea inside us’ (Kafka Qtd. Cixous: 1993, 17).

On the subject of reading and politics, Calvino makes the claim that literature is crucial to politics ‘especially to what the language of politics excludes or attempt to exclude’ (Calvino: 1986, 98). Appadurai says that fiction is ‘the conceptual repertoire of contemporary societies’, and that ‘readers of novels and poems can be moved to intense action... and their authors often contribute to social and moral maps for their readers’ (Appadurai: 2003, 58). Moreover, he continues, the inequalities that are endured by people through many quotidian experiences (some harsher than others), are interpolated by ‘the ironic compromise between what they could imagine and what social life will permit’ (Appadurai: 2003, 54). Drawing on Quayson’s work, I would agree that reading and the imagination ‘oscillate rapidly between

domains' (Quayson: 2003, xi) within the fertile space that flows between the constraints of the everyday, and the possibilities of the imagined life.

This is a space where the ontological foundation of the possibilities and freedoms of the imagination seems to be at variance with the restraints of the everyday. In reality, these ontological deviations are in constant dialogue, often via the literary imagination. Thus, reading enables the imagination to ripple through 'the literary-aesthetic, the social, the cultural, and the political – in order to explore the mutually illuminating heterogeneity of these domains when taken together' (Quayson: 2003, xi). It is this 'mutually illuminating heterogeneity' (Quayson: 2003, xi) within the dialogue between the postcolonial and the Gothic that I want to explore. Quayson highlights another point that is pertinent in this dialogue, and gestures towards the ways in which Banville and Morrissy engage in a process of 'looking awry' as Žižek suggests³⁰ or, as Minh-Ha puts it, 'talking nearby instead of talking about' (Minh-ha: 1999, 218). For Quayson, this is at the heart of the postcolonial project, and it engages in 'the mutual interdependency and antagonism of ... two pulls' (Quayson: 2000, 6). Extrapolating from Quayson's postulation, the two pulls that operate in the novels pivot around firstly, the Gothic imaginary, a literary discourse in itself which interpolates itself into the everyday; and secondly, around the materiality of social, cultural, political oppressions scrutinized by the postcolonial; together these pulls create a symbiotic revelatory dynamic within the affective geography of the novel.

Returning to the Andoque narrative for a moment, the shift in thinking and vision they undertake occurs through something known as '*rafue*' (see Echiverri: 1997, 190-192 for a

³⁰ Žižek, S. (1991) *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jaques Lacan through Popular Culture*, London: MIT Press. Žižek describes this process as 'not just a kind of contrived attempt to "illustrate" high theory, to make it "easily accessible," and thus to spare us the effort of effective thinking. The point is rather that such an exemplification, such a *mise-en-scène* of theoretical motifs renders visible aspects that would otherwise remain unnoticed' (Žižek: 1991, 3). Trin.T. Minh-Ha also uses this idea when she refers to 'talking nearby instead of talking about' which can serve to 'make visible the invisible' (Minh-ha: 1999, 218). Minh-Ha's observation that '[t]ruth can only be approached indirectly if we don't want to lose it and find oneself hanging onto dead, empty skin' (Minh-ha: 1999, 219), is one I will come back to later in the thesis.

fuller discussion of this term), which can be interpreted as ‘the movement from the named to the real through time’ (Echiverri: 1997, 190). The roots of its word signal this time/space embrace in that ‘*raa*’ equates to “a thing” which exists in space and time, and ‘*ifue*’ which means the act of ‘something spoken’; with this in mind, we might not talk of ‘the *rafue*’, but rather of ‘*rafue* in action’ (Echiverri: 1997, 191). By applying this same principle to the novel, and by inclining more towards the verb than the noun, we might refer not simply to the novel, but rather to the novel in action.

The writers under consideration in this study exemplify this process, specifically using the postcolonial Gothic as a form of breath, space or air in a potentially transformative space. The space of the novel is one and the same as the space which we inhabit, this is why ‘a book is an assemblage’ through which flows ‘variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 4). The flow of breath is important in the process of ‘active elaboration’ (Echiverri: 1997, 206), as it anticipates how vitally important the elements of air, fire, water and earth are in the novels discussed in this thesis. Breath is deeply significant in *Mother of Pearl* as an active challenge to notions of biblical creation. It is a challenge that, like the Andoque experience, is not without its own bloodshed and loss.

On the subject of violence and bloodshed, it may appear odd to introduce the notion of play at this point, but it is worth recalling Nietzsche’s suggestion that the sign of maturity means having ‘reacquired the seriousness one had as a child at play’ (Nietzsche: 1997, 48, no 94). Thus play can be a deadly serious activity. So, in what specific ways might the Nietzschean seriousness of play be of use within the postcolonial, with specific reference to the literary? Paul B. Armstrong utilizes Wolfgang Iser’s ideas of play in literary theory by highlighting how, rather than being the apolitical, somewhat disengaged, idealistic act it has sometimes been accused of, it can actually be seen as ‘a profoundly important social activity’ (Armstrong: 2000, 211). Armstrong also underlines how the radical and potentially rule-breaking nature of play draws a distinction between the sublime as an aesthetic of power, and

the love of the quotidian that is shared by the novel and the Gothic. Armstrong points out that for all the sense of border-crossing and challenge of accepted norms in which the sublime participates: ‘its pursuit of what is not contained in any order or system makes it dependent on the forms it opposes’ (Armstrong: 2000, 220).³¹

Armstrong goes much further and cites the unyielding presumptions of the sublime as being potentially:

... terroristic in refusing to recognise the claims of other games whose rules it declines to limit itself by. It is also naïve and self-destructive in its impossible imagining it can do without the others it opposes. (Armstrong: 2005, 40)

Conversely, it is the experience of the everyday, and the heterogeneity of the quotidian experience, that is important to creative play within the novel and the postcolonial Gothic. Echoing Gamer’s earlier point, there is a desire within the novel and the Gothic (despite its association with monsters and supernatural phenomena) to explore that which hides within the everyday, and to renegotiate the significance of an enhanced sensory perception of the everyday. What is essential to any sincere radicalism or quest to confront the unrepresentable, is a participatory experience that acknowledges the need for ‘a play-space that includes other, less radical games with which it can interact’ (Armstrong: 2005, 40); if the Gothic offers this opportunity, then it is the novel that provides the space. Iser’s sense of play also concedes that often, and this is a crucial point for postcolonial literary readings, ‘creativity and innovation is possible not in spite of disciplinary constraints but because of them’ (Armstrong: 2005, 40). Cleary, writing about Irish culture and the postcolonial experience, also indicates that ‘peripheral cultures...have to wrestle with different constraints, handicaps and dilemmas that metropolitan cultures do, but this can be a spur and a stimulus, as well as

³¹ Lyotard describes the sublime thus, ‘[t]he sublime feeling is an emotion, a violent emotion, close to unreason, which forces thought to the extremes of pleasure and displeasure from joyous exaltation to terror; the sublime feeling is as tightly strung between ultraviolet and infrared as respect is white’ (Lyotard: 2006, 257). In nature the sublime might be a vast ocean, a huge mountain or a wild, untamed terrain of some sort – overwhelming in stature. Lyotard found it especially interesting that Kant, a philosopher steeped in Enlightenment rationality, could entertain the notion that there is so much in the world that cannot fit into rational thinking.

an obstacle, to cultural and intellectual creativity' (Cleary: 2007, 75). Banville expresses these points skilfully in his geometrically-inspired creation of *Kepler*.

For Iser, the idea of 'staging' within literature encourages creative thinking and, arguably one of the most deeply Gothic concepts of all, the 'indefatigable attempt to confront ourselves with ourselves' (Iser: 1993, 303), and thus contemplate 'the extraordinary plasticity of human beings... [and how] literature becomes a panorama of what is possible' (Iser: 1993, 297). Such play enables the reader to negotiate, within those 'plastic possibilities' (Bakhtin: 1996, 4) of the novel, the equally malleable versions of humanity. Furthermore, participatory play can offer a fertile space to postcolonial thinking by offering a creative 'self-consciousness about [observable] alternative epistemological models' (Armstrong: 2005, 38); the potential metamorphoses within this pliable fictional space offers a means of testing boundaries because:

Combination emancipates elements from the limits of their prior situation even as it liberates them to join new relations. Combination has transformative power because it 'transgresses the semantic enclosures' that had previously defined the materials it realigns.' (Armstrong: 2000, 214)

The alliances we might draw, transgressive or otherwise, out of the creative thinking galvanized by reading a novel, are almost endless. One of the intriguing combinations worth exploring further here, however, is the alliance between reader and writer.

The relationship between reader and writer forms a dynamic bond that is complex, unpredictable and potentially volatile; a journeying relationship that can be 'unchecked' and 'in freedom' (Lyotard: 1997, 115). If the novel follows any rules, it may be, as Thorel-Cailleteau suggests, that by striving to 'make horror itself lovable [and]... depicting the human in a strictly human framework... it was able to preserve a certain nostalgia for lost aspects...a poetic form...rooted in the depths of the body' (Thorel-Cailleteau: 2007, 93-94). Accordingly, if there is one rule for which the novel has any real respect, it is 'to put its hope in love' (Thorel-Cailleteau: 2007, 94). Doody cites Francisco Angelo Coccio, first translator of Achilles Tatius in 1560, as saying 'from [Amore] as from a most abundant fountain is the

principle of all our workings' (Doody: 1997, 372). Thus it is possible that 'any story about our human activities is a "love-story" of sorts' (Doody: 1997, 372).

Expanding upon Thorel-Cailleteau's introduction of the novel as a potential love story between reader and writer brings me to a point raised by Vladimir Nabokov. His work offers another perspective on reading the novel, which sees it as not only an act of movement, but also as one of touch. Nabokov speaks of the writer as being engaged on an arduous mountain climb, whereupon, 'at the top, on a windy ridge, whom do you think he meets? The panting and happy reader, and there they spontaneously embrace and are linked forever if the book lasts forever' (Nabokov: 1983, 2); this embrace is an expression of touch, entwined with reading, and with hands inscribing and perpetually re-inscribing the pages. Alan Bennett emphasizes exactly this point and also renders reading a gothicized act when he says:

The best moments in reading are when you come across something, a thought, a feeling; a way of looking at things that you'd thought special, particular to you. And here it is, set down by someone else, a person you've never met, maybe even someone long dead. And it's as if a hand has come out and taken yours. (Bennett: 2004, 56)

Bennett depicts, not only the intimate alliance generated by the act of reading, but also the gothicized spectral aspects of the sense of touch which it engenders. Derrida also introduces touch into the act of reading by challenging that which 'common sense and philosophical sense are always affording it, namely, immediacy' (Derrida: 2005, 119). Citing Jean-Luc Nancy, he continues that 'we clearly have to understand reading is that which is not deciphering, but rather touching and being touched, having to do with body mass and bulk. Writing, reading, a tactful affair' (Derrida: 2005, 127).

Touch is of vital importance to both physical and emotional life. Drawing on Aristotle's words that 'the loss of this one sense alone must bring about the death of an animal' (Derrida: 2005, 47), Derrida then suggests that 'no living being in the world can survive for an instant without touching, which is to say, without being touched. Not necessarily by some other being but by something = x...For a finite, living being, before and

beyond any concept of “sensibility”, touching means “being in the world”. There is no world without touching’ (Derrida: 2005, 140).

Thus, touch is intensely connected to survival. Nowhere does this become more vital than when that sense of survival is threatened. The geographer Paul Rodaway notes how ‘touch still holds great significance in Western culture’ (Rodaway: 2002, 149). While there may be a level of indifference to tactile matters in areas of science, aesthetics or everyday experience, touch and haptic encounters become valuable in terms of ‘intimacy, trust and truth...[and] to affirm contact between people and between people and their environment’ (Rodaway: 2002, 149). By acknowledging the idea that reading and writing are inextricably bound up with touch and with the capacity to survive in the world, the novel and stories become vital to how we negotiate our very existence. Writerly and readerly touch becomes a revelatory form of recognition of both self and other, a way of ‘approaching the other as other’ rather than an ‘appropriation’ in the sense that Irigaray conveys when she writes of:

Touch which allows turning back to oneself, in the dwelling of an intimate light. But which also goes to encounter the other, illuminated-illuminating, overflowing one’s own world in order to taste another brightness. In order to give and to receive what can enlighten mortals on their path. (Irigaray: 2008, 174)

This sense of touch, operating within spaces found in ‘our flesh, our heart, our thinking and our words’, and crucially which is ‘not always visible’ (Irigaray: 2004, 7), resides within the textual spaces of the novel.

The novel, then, performs as a tactile textual space, with the Gothic as a galvanizing force within its geography of affects. Massey’s idea of space as a multiplicity of ‘stories so far’ (Massey: 2009, 9) assists in extending this idea. I have already noted how Deleuze and Guattari, reiterating the notions of space and time posited by Massey, see the book as a dynamic assemblage:

A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds...In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an

assemblage. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 4)³²

This depiction renders the novel as a process, as ‘lines’ of movement experienced as a verb rather than noun; as a shifting tempero-spatiality, or ‘magical bumps’ (Bennett and Connolly: 2002, 158). The novel is steeped in those ‘variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 4), of microcosm and macrocosm. Raymond Tallis calls attention to how the reader might experience these dynamic and diverse processes:

the novel’s gaze, telescopic and microscopic, sees the curvature of the world – the large facts that enclose us – and at the same time, imagines conversations in the room, the head of the fretful baby being soothed, the papers in the cupboard about to be discovered – the small facts that detain us. (Tallis: 2010, 69)

Within the novel, everyday life exists as the large and the small with its diverse speeds and heterogeneous space, simultaneously traversing the ‘telescopic and microscopic’ (Tallis: 2010, 69). As Bachelard says, again working with ideas of space as movement and flow, ‘intimate space and exterior space, keep encouraging each other as it were, in their growth’ (Bachelard: 1994, 201).

If ‘there is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence’ (de Certeau: 1984, 108) then, by implication, the novel is also haunted. The spectral moments in the novels in this thesis are suggestive of the Gothic and the postcolonial in the way in which they call attention to hidden voices or to how certain voices have been subdued within the archive. But hauntings in themselves are also suggestive of movement within time and space, they serve to reveal the way that space is not just an inert backdrop where things

³² A counter argument with reference to the book being ‘unattributable’, and the view that to ‘attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 4), is offered by Richard Kearney. He makes this tongue-in-cheek point after reading Roland Barthes assertion that ‘in narrative no-one speaks’:

...it is Barthes himself who belies his own statement...by inventing a narrative about the end of a narrative and signing his own authorial name, qua narrator, to this story. (He also presumably collected his royalties and safeguarded the copyright of this same ‘no-one’). (Kearney: 2007, 127)

happen; it is in itself dynamic and mobile. Crucially, opening up space and the novel in this way ‘makes room for a genuine multiplicity of trajectories, and thus potentially of voices’ (Massey: 2009, 55). Furthermore, a postcolonial Gothic conversation, operating within such unpredictability, holds the potential to amplify any radical movement. If the novel is a mobile form, there is no telling where reading and resultant creative thinking might lead the reader; the act of reading itself becomes a Gothic experience.

Massey’s writing provides a focal point on the perception of space, and on how this, ultimately, can have a bearing on the way in which the novel is perceived. Massey ponders how we might explore ‘an alternative imagination’ (Massey: 2009, 13) for our times, a journey that includes a necessary re-imagining of space from associations of ‘stasis; closure; representation’ (Massey: 2009, 13), to notions of ‘heterogeneity; relationality; coevalness...liveliness indeed (Massey: 2009, 13). Massey further reinforces the idea of the novel as an assemblage when she states that within:

open interactional space there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished...a space then which is neither a container for always already constituted identities nor a completed closure of holism. This is a space of loose ends and missing links. For the future to be open, space must be open too. (Massey: 2009, 11-12)

By viewing the novel in terms of such a generous notion of reciprocal space, the postcolonial Gothic, and other voices, can engage in diverse ways; some alliances will potentially ‘flower into interaction’ (Massey: 2009, 11) more than others, but they all embrace the potential to do so. Massey also writes in response to Derrida’s assertion that ‘the effect of spacing already implies textualization’ (Derrida: 1994, 15):

Coming at it from another angle hints at what it might mean to argue not that the world (space-time) is like a text but that a text (even in the broadest sense of the term) is just like the rest of the world. And so might be avoided the longstanding tendency to tame the spatial into the textual. (Massey: 2009, 54)

Massey's comments echo the idea that the novel is ultimately an assemblage of terrestrial 'variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 4); and in this light the words of Marcus Doel are provocative:

It would be better to approach space as a verb rather than a noun. To space – that's all. Spacing is an action, an event, and a way of being. There is neither space 'behind' something, functioning as a backcloth, ground or continuous unlimited expanse (absolute space), nor space 'between' something, as either a passive filling or an active medium of (ex) change (relative, relational, diacritical, and dialectical spaces). There is just spacing (differentials). The 'points' – as things, events, terms, positions, relata, etcetera – that are supposedly played out 'upon' and alongside space are illusory. Space is immanent. It has only itself. (Doel Qtd. Murdoch: 2000, 91)

If these words are used to articulate the novel, then the novel is space, as are the fleshy materialities of reader and writer; all can be seen as engaging in a reciprocal creative relationship that expresses a state of becoming. Indeed, Derrida describes literature as an 'experience of Being, nothing less, nothing more' (Derrida: 1992, 47). This is why the classical elements of fire, air, water and earth, and their interminable metamorphoses, are so useful for writers wishing to communicate ideas through the multiplicity of space; they speak of a radical desire to plant heterogeneous coevalness into a rolling globalisation that constructs a paradigm of homogeneity. Such radical thinking is explicitly used to challenge prescriptive ways of seeing space, and may take the form of alliances of breath and contagion, or air and memory, or fire and creative thinking or geometric tender mappings. The point is that movement and metamorphosis is central to offering diverse narratives in answer to orthodox tenets. Geometry, cartography, elemental philosophy, and narrative form a potent and wilfully gothicized alliance, especially within the novels in this thesis

Connecting these ideas of space to the materiality of flesh, Jean-Luc Nancy echoes the perception of space both as 'juxtapositions ready to flower into interaction' (Massey: 2009, 11), together with the notion of the novel being filled with the 'muddy messiness' (Doody: 1997, 485) of life:

the coming-and-going of bodies: voice, food, excrement, sex, child, air, water, sound, color, hardness, odor, heat, weight, sting, caress, consciousness, memory, swoon, look, appearing- all touches infinitely multiplied, all tones finally proliferating. The world of bodies is the nonimpenetrable world, a world that is not initially subject to the compactness of space, (space, as such being only a filling-up, or at least virtually so); rather it is a world where bodies initially

articulate space. The world is spacing, a tension of place, where bodies are not in space, but space in bodies. (Nancy: 2008, 27)

Nancy provides an excellent description of the novel and its intimate love of bodies and all the ‘messy phenomena’ (Kiberd: 1996, 646) associated with them, at the same time echoing the sense of openness and dynamic processes that constitute the space whirling through it all. The novel, the postcolonial and the Gothic appreciate the deep significance of flesh and blood. Herein lie some of the reasons why Deleuze asserts that ‘[i]n the act of writing there is an attempt to make life more than personal, to free life from that which imprisons it’ (Deleuze: 1995, 143), and why Haraway argues that ‘[w]riting has a special significance for all colonized groups... Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of an original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other’ (Haraway: 1991, 175).

Cixous clearly grasps the profound emotional significance of writing and the act of reading for human beings in a way that brings together many of the ideas above:

The harpooners or harpists of the ultimate hours are occupied with this challenge: to fish in the space between the lines beyond the heart for what must return to the heart, and to make it sound once more. It is this hunger for flesh and tears, our appetite for living, that, at the tip of forsaken fingers, makes a pencil grow. (Cixous: 2005, 96-97)

Within the context of traumatic experiences and the consequences, be they colonial or otherwise, what may ultimately be one of the most important things to remember is to seek out what was and is precious, even if it remains as no more than a memory: to ‘make it sound once more’ (Cixous: 2005, 97).

On a final note, Walter Benjamin has said of the role of the dialecticians that ‘[t]hinking for him means: to set sail... Words are his sails’ (Benjamin Qtd. Taussig: 1993, 70); Benjamin’s words within the context of the novel returns the focus back to movement. If literature is aroused by and provoked into action by the ‘call and attraction of what is not in the dictionary’ (Calvino: 1986, 18), then a response to that call has to involve the Gothic. As a craft riding this textual ocean of the unknown the Gothic is reminiscent of a ship; thus a prominent actor in the history of the colonial enterprise embarks on a new journey, one that

seeks to ‘fish in the space between the lines beyond the heart for what must return to the heart, and to make it sound once more (Cixous: 2005, 96-97).

Chapter Two: The Gothic

I would like to suggest that we need to turn to ‘minor’ literary genres, such as science-fiction and more specifically cyber-punk, in order to find non-nostalgic solutions to the contradictions of our times. (Braidotti: 1996, 3)

Can we make progress if we do not enter into regions far from equilibrium? (Deleuze: 1997, 109)

Of all that is written, I love only that which one writes with his blood. Write with blood, and you will experience that blood is spirit...Whoever writes in blood and proverbs does not want to be read, but to be learned by heart. (Nietzsche: 2006, 27-28)

In a discussion on nostalgia relating to both ‘Russian spiritual longing’ and the ‘American dream’, Boym, whose work on nostalgia will be discussed later in this thesis, makes an inspired observation about the unexpected connections between these two different cultural experiences. She notes that they share a mutual ‘dream of transcending history and memory’ (Boym: 2001, 18) and ‘[s]omewhere on the frontier, the ghost of Dostoevsky meets the ghost of Mickey Mouse. Like the characters from *The Possessed*, they exchanged wry smiles’ (Boym: 2001, 18).

It occurs to me that this image depicts something of the relationship that exists between the form of the novel and the genre or discourse that is the Gothic. The ghosts of novels past, present and future exchange knowing, humorous glances with the Gothic; these are two anarchic rule-breakers who are often to be found conferring in corners about their next creative collaboration. The novel and the Gothic share a sense of protean marginality; both are ‘creature[s] from an alien species’ (Bahktin: 1996, 4); indeed, Punter and Byron suggest that the Gothic may well be ‘a staggering, limping, lurching form akin to the monsters it so frequently describes’ (Punter and Byron: 2004, xix).

If the novel is hard to define, the Gothic can match this complexity with equal vigour. When Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy ask, “What is the Gothic?”, their response is, ‘[t]here is no single, straightforward answer to that question’ (Spooner and McEvoy: 2007,

1). Furthermore, Punter and Byron say that ‘the Gothic remains a notoriously difficult field to define’ (Punter and Byron: 2004: xviii) and, in a manner that parallels comments made on the novel, it has been said of the Gothic that ‘[f]ew literary genres have attracted so much critical appetite and opprobrium simultaneously’ (Wright: 2007, 1). The novel and the Gothic then are a like-minded couple, operating on the same wavelength in more ways than we can imagine.

We might talk in terms of ‘lines of flight’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 4) intersecting in zig-zag formations in, around and through the novel and the Gothic. If ‘a book is an assemblage’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 4), then the Gothic is its ally. In addition, if the book can take us to ‘realms that are yet to come’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 5), then the Gothic is the ship on which we may travel to that terrain. The dream shared by the Gothic and the novel, however, is different to that of ‘transcending history and memory’ as outlined by Boym above. Their dream is to plunge right into the midst of the messiness of history and memory, into all those Kiberdian ‘messy phenomena’ (Kiberd: 1996, 646), and observe life as Nietzsche describes it ‘that dark, driving, insatiable power that lusts after itself’ (Boym: 2001, 19). Both also like to provoke us into new directions of thinking, to wander a little away from the more well-trodden epistemological paths; as with the *pharmakon* and the novel, so it is with the Gothic, it is ‘the going, or leading astray’ (Derrida: 1981, 71).

Thus the Gothic can fuel our approach to thinking along different lines. We are also reminded here that Cixous talks of the ‘violence’ (Cixous: 1993, 20) of both reading and writing, to the point where it can cause us to ‘redden and bleed’ (Cixous: 1993, 32), and Doody urges us to remember that the novel and writing deals with ‘the tough experience of living’ (Doody: 1997, 478). Similarly, the Gothic does not shy away from conflict or challenging encounters in fact it wholeheartedly embraces conflict and, as Hogle comments, the Gothic is quite unremitting in its passion for:

confrontations between the low and the high, even as ideologies of these change. It is about its own blurring of different levels of discourse while it is also concerned with the interpenetration of other

opposed conditions – including life/death, natural/supernatural, ancient/modern, realistic/artificial, and unconscious/conscious – along with the abjection of these crossings into haunting and supposedly deviant “others”. (Hogle: 2002, 9)

Moreover, Andrew Smith and William Hughes affirm the Gothic’s ‘seeming celebration of the irrational, the outlawed and the socially and culturally dispossessed’ (Smith and Hughes: 2003, 1), and Wisker remarks that the Gothic uses ‘strategies of estrangement and engagement to explore and challenge cultural, social, psychological and personal issues’ (Wisker: 2007, 403). These shrewdly confrontational aspects of the Gothic are further commented upon by Fred Botting, who indicates that in the Gothic, that which we attempt to lock into that ‘phantom-roomed exile of our longing’ (Gordon: 2008, 207), is set loose, as a result, ‘margins may become the norm and occupy a more central cultural place. Consequently that center is now characterized by a dispersal, emptied of both core and apex’ (Botting: 2002, 286). Furthermore, Hogle adds:

No other form of writing or theatre is as insistent as Gothic on juxtaposing potential revolution and possible reaction – about gender, sexuality, race, class, the colonizers versus the colonized, the physical versus the metaphysical, the abnormal versus normal psychology – and leaving both extremes sharply before us and far less resolved than the conventional endings in most of these works claim them to be. (Hogle: 2002, 13)

Clearly, the connection with the postcolonial and the novel in terms of a pluralistic political stance is strong here. The Gothic, like the novel, is creative of a space which is a site of struggle.

If the ‘Gothic speaks of phantoms’ and seeks to ‘make the crypt the cornerstone of [its] topography’ (Punter: 2004, 3), it does so to stress the interpenetration of body and spirit. Nietzsche was well aware of this mutuality: ‘write with blood and you will experience that blood is spirit’ (Nietzsche: 2006, 27-28), and he anticipates Irigaray’s use of the idea of ‘enstasy rather than ecstasy’ (Irigaray: 2004, 9), as body and spirit fuse as opposed to being separate immanent and transcendent experiences. They also anticipate Braidotti’s observations about the interpenetration of ‘bios’ (the ‘intelligent life’ which rational thought privileges to humans over animals) (Braidotti: 2008, 132) and ‘zoe’ (the ‘gritty’ flesh, soil to the soul of bios and ‘poor half of [the] couple’) (Braidotti: 2008, 131). For Braidotti, this

touching of the two living processes within the body ‘turns the physical self into a contested space, a political arena’ (Braidotti: 2008, 132). Those dispersals from the centre that Botting relates to above can be found in the Gothic’s attitudes towards the body, opening up a dynamic new relationship with notions of the self. It can be said that the Gothic works within the field of ‘nomadic becomings’ (Braidotti: 2008, 135) in that it can ‘engender possible futures [and] construct the world by making possible a web of sustainable interconnections’ (Braidotti: 2008, 135). If Doody asserts that the novel is ‘the receptive home of all substance – bones, blood, feathers, shit, lost gold coins, and chips of earthenware’ (Doody: 1997, 478), then I would suggest that the Gothic is also ‘a genre which ‘abounds in images of . . . the corpse, whole and mutilated’, and of ‘an array of bodily wastes such as blood, vomit, saliva, sweat, tears and putrefying flesh’ (Hurley: 2007, 138).

The Gothic has made us aware of the body as ‘an assemblage of body parts’ (McEvoy: 2007, 23) and ‘a body metamorphic and undifferentiated’ (Warwick: 2007, 35). The body is also central to our reading experience in more ways than one, for as Thorel-Cailleteau notes, the novel is ‘rooted in the depths of the body’ (Thorel-Cailleteau: 2007, 93-94) and, when writing, reading or dreaming we use our ‘own body as a form of transport’ (Cixous: 2003, 64), thus we meet ourselves in diverse forms throughout our readings of the Gothic.³³ One consequence of this diverse foregrounding of the body, its flesh and fluids, is that the Gothic, and its travelling companion the novel, dare to confront western humanist thought. This is especially true in terms of the segregationist definitions of Enlightenment humanism, which are ‘reliant on defining the human in relation to the seemingly non-human’ and on a hierarchy which states that ‘since some human beings are more human than others,

³³ Michel de Certeau also makes some intriguing comments about the act of reading, connecting it with the spectral noises and textual vibrations (we could say ‘music’) of the Gothic and the body: ‘from the nooks of all sorts of “reading rooms” (including lavatories) emerge subconscious gestures, grumblings, tics, stretchings, rustlings, unexpected noises, in short a wild orchestration of the body’ (de Certeau: 1984, 175). Rather than a mere “impertinent absence”, reading now becomes ‘the network of an anti-discipline’ (de Certeau: 1984, xv); confrontational and audacious, just like the Gothic.

they are more substantially the measure of all things' (Smith and Hughes: 2003, 1). Such boundaries, and their potential disruption, are grist to the Gothic's mill; they are also very definite grist to the postcolonial mill. This aspect of the Gothic's willingness to challenge and dislocate such definitions, to offer up 'metamorphic and undifferentiated' (Warwick: 2007, 35) bodies, renders it a potentially useful ally to postcolonial studies.

Another consequence of the Gothic being saturated by representations of bodily fluids is that it becomes reminiscent of Irigaray's notion of the 'mechanics of the fluid' (Irigaray: 1985, 106-119). By foregrounding images of blood (and other bodily fluids), the Gothic presents us with a substance that, on the one hand, 'exists at the limen or threshold between two conceptual categories' (Hurley: 2007, 138). It is not a case of blood and spirit but rather, as Nietzsche says, that 'blood is spirit' (Nietzsche: 2006, 28). Thus the corporeal and the spiritual aspects of life become inextricably intertwined, and render this alliance rhizome-like. By highlighting the notion that we do not know where one category ends and the other begins, David Biale notes that 'the very "fluidity" of blood as a symbol gives it its power because it can be filled with a host of meanings, some of them even contradictory' (Biale: 2007, 4).

Consequently, the Gothic acts as a facilitator (in the vein of Morrison's idea of the novel, as 'something...that opens the door and points the way') (Morrison: 1990, 328), for us to explore those 'in-between flows', to envision 'interconnections', that may go against the grain of traditional western humanist thinking. The Gothic seeks to transport us towards contemplating the 'self' in terms of forms of 'figurations' that Braidotti speaks of, a 'multi-layered vision of the subject as a dynamic and changing entity...a transformative account of the self' (Braidotti: 2008 2-3). For me, what the alliance of the novel (in its refusal to back away from the 'tough experience of living' and celebration of the body) (Doody: 1997, 478), and the Gothic (in its insistence upon drawing our attention to blood, flesh, spirit and 'the

outlawed...and dispossessed') (Smith and Hughes: 2003, 1), serves to remind us is that we all are potentially those Gothic creatures/monsters, who may experience what it means to be marginal, exiled or 'dispossessed'. Such figurations of the self are not mere metaphors; rather they are 'highly specific geo-political and historical locations – history tattooed on your body. One may be empowered or beautified by it, but most people are not; some just die of it' (Braidotti: 2008, 3).

This is an appropriate juncture to consider how the Gothic's receptiveness to bodily substance has a bearing on how it engages in its conversations with phantoms. Gordon makes shrewd points about how ghosts and hauntings carry 'the violence, the witchcraft and denial that made [them], and the exile of our longing, the utopian' (Gordon: 2008, 207). These observations will inform my later discussion of Lloyd's plea for an ethical approach to memory, and for the restoration of a sense of humanity to the ghosts who walk with us. Violence and exploitation in the form of bloodshed, poverty, corruption and its effects, homelessness and diaspora all have a crucial bearing on how we experience life, and ghosts carry the affects of these traces with them. Ghosts and hauntings hold the remnants of those 'highly specific geo-political and historical locations' to which Braidotti alludes (Braidotti: 2008, 3). But there are other experiences that circulate relentlessly, those ingrained happenings that are difficult to find the words to articulate clearly but significantly dominate much of a lived life:

the sublimating insecurities and the exorbitant taxes for our unquestioned behavior; the wear and tear of long years of struggling to survive; the exhausting anger and shame at patiently and repetitively explaining or irritably shouting about what can certainly be known but is treated as an unfathomable mystery; the deep pain of always having to compete in a contest you did not have any part in designing for what most matters and merits; the sinking demoralization and forlorn craziness of exchanging everything with the invisible hands of a voracious market; the quiet stranglehold of a full-time alertness to benevolent rule; and the virtually unspeakable loss of control, the abnegation, over what is possible. (Gordon: 2008, 207)

The Gothic both gestures towards, and also understands, people's fears and desires, as evidenced by its willingness to confront marginal and controversial subjects. Its ghosts carry

with them the traces of a life lived at times in joy and laughter, at others ‘sinking demoralization’ and ‘exhausting anger’.³⁴

Gordon’s words about the ‘wear and tear of long years of struggling to survive’ (Gordon: 2008, 207), resonate within those of Robert Scally’s study of Ballykilcline in County Roscommon. Scally discusses how ‘the most ostensibly weakest layers of the native [Irish] population’ created ‘the most successful resistance to [colonial] intrusion’ (Scally: 1995, 233). They achieved this by way of ‘rent strike[s]...a tangle of evasions, dodges, and fluid identities that often defied the order that colonial rule required everywhere’ (Scally: 1995, 233). This is not only the very stuff of the Gothic, but it also serves to remind us that this was a lived struggle – it is the trace of this struggle that lives on in stories, memories and ghosts. It is, as Lloyd rightly insists, ‘the openings in which other possibilities live on’ (Lloyd 2008, 71). The Gothic serves to remind us of these ‘possibilities’.

Derrida says something interesting that has an impact upon how we bring the body to bear in our reading of the Gothic, as well as on our engagement with ghosts and memory and on how this affects our flow of thinking. It relates significantly to the heart and to images of an interpenetration of blood, flesh, spirit, memory, emotion. Moreover, Derrida’s evocation of ‘convulsion’, of a heart-felt quiver, anticipates my forthcoming discussion of Deleuze’s notion of ‘stuttering’ within certain types of writing, which can be seen as constitutive of of

³⁴ To quote de Certeau again, he makes a comment that adds further emphasis to Gordon’s points about the way ghosts and hauntings carry definite traces of the everyday, the ‘everyday life’:

Objects and words also have hollow places in which a past sleeps, as in the everyday acts of walking, eating, going to bed, in which ancient revolutions slumber...There is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence, spirits one can “invoke” or not...Places are fragmentary and inward-turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read, accumulated times that can be unfolded but like stories held in reserve, remaining in an enigmatic state, symbolizations encysted in the pain or pleasure of the body. “I feel good here”: the well-being under-expressed in the language it appears in like a fleeting glimmer is a spatial practice.... (de Certeau: 1984, 108)

Thus hauntings, reading (reading the Gothic doubly emphasizes the spectrality of reading – we might say it becomes spectral reading, reading the spectral!), writing and inscribing, thinking and the ‘wild orchestration[s] of the body’ become spatial practices.

creative thinking. Derrida's ideas fuse with Nietzsche's notions of blood and spirit and gesture towards the very distinctive space created by the Gothic:

[This] syncopated convulsion, this contraction of the inside and outside... Isn't the heart memory? Isn't it thinking of memory? Thinking as memory? We shall safeguard the recollection, the cardiogram of this cardiology from one end of this book to the other – as it also writes itself or is written on the heart and on the hand, if not with a wholehearted hand or a freehanded heart. (Derrida: 2005, 35)

This is the heart that we bring to our readings of the Gothic and that is moved by those readings. This heart, and the responses provoked by our Gothic readings, give shelter to Gordon's excellent depiction of the diverse ghostly troupe that constitutes 'the fictive': 'cultural imaginings, affective experiences, animated objects, marginal voices, narrative densities, and eccentric traces of power's presence' (Gordon: 2008, 25). It is this actively-pondering heart that endeavours to initiate 'thinking as memory' (Derrida: 2005, 35). The ghosts (and the Gothic) carry the lived bodily experiences that beckon to us for recognition. Their beckoning renders our thoughts, to borrow the words of Benjamin, 'pregnant with tensions' (Benjamin Qtd. Gordon: 2008, 65). The spectral gestures cause our thoughts to experience a form of 'stuttering' (Deleuze: 1997, 107-114).

Deleuze has elaborated further on these thoughts when he discusses how writers can make language 'stutter'. In this act of stuttering it may be that '[i]t is no longer the character who stutters in speech; it is the writer who becomes a stutterer in language' (Deleuze: 1997, 107). For Deleuze, it is not merely that a character in the fiction displays a speech impediment, it is that the writer 'makes the language as such stutter: [the language becomes] an affective and intensive language' (Deleuze: 1997, 107). A brief example of this can be found Morrissy's *Mother of Pearl* (1997); at a crisis point in the novel, a passage 'steeped in blood' as an unborn child is aborted by its haunted mother, language becomes stilted as if panic-stricken, accompanied by a frantic questioning that can yield no definite answers – 'How can I explain this madness?' (Morrissy, 1997, 215) leads to:

I was wrong about her. Blindly mistaken. Those ghostly memories I ascribed to her, they're mine. They were always mine. Memories not of this life, but of a life before...Not the scaly, red, wet burbling of the womb. No, before that even. The Garden of Eden. And my first parents. Adam and

Eve. Already under threat of expulsion but hanging on to the dream of happiness... (Morrissey: 1997, 217)

This process of stuttering reverberates in Benjamin's idea of the way thinking can be arrested:

Thinking involves not only the flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock, by which it crystallizes into a monad. In this structure [the reader] recognises...a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. (Benjamin Qtd. Gordon: 2008, 65)

Another way of describing this 'arrest', this 'stutter' is with this exquisite illumination of Nietzsche's 'the hand advanced, the clock of my life drew a breath – never had I heard such stillness around me, so that my heart was terrified' (Nietzsche: 2006, 115). The sudden shocks, sparks and fears that the Gothic can invest in our thinking, the ghostly company we keep when reading the Gothic, can serve to 'crystallize the social gist of a dramatic or mundane event' (Gordon: 2008, 65). Benjamin goes on to describe how the arrest of the thought flow can trigger the 'blast [of] a specific era out of the homogenous course of history' (Benjamin Qtd. Gordon: 2008, 65). Gordon interrelates this idea with ghostly presences by commenting that this sense of blasting 'might be conceived as entering through a different door, the door of the uncanny, the door of the fragment the door of the shocking parallel' (Gordon: 2008, 66). For me, Gordon's comment on haunting, memory and the past is probably one of the best descriptions of the Gothic I have encountered.³⁵

³⁵ Philip Davis has written about the 'functional shift' occurring in the brain after reading some of Shakespeare's language, especially when encountering a word that cannot be simply compartmentalized into a noun or verb (words like 'madded' in *King Lear* 4.2 ll 40-44 or 'godded' in *Coriolanus* 5.3 10-11). (See *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 2008, 33, 4) Davis says something of this functional shift that is very like Deleuze's idea of the 'stutter' or Benjamin's 'arrest' of thought and can easily be applied to Gothic presences:

For these excited hesitations have the electricity to open up newly possible networks of understanding out of the old repertoire of adjective-noun-verb travelling all too easily left to right... The revitalizing word is then powerfully and demandingly free, looking to create some third area out of the baffled interaction of the two. The shift in language creates a shift in the brain: plausibly, the two morphing into an analogous shape behind the eyes and in front of them (Davis: 2008, 269)

Not only does this 'morphing...shape' suggest the formation of Gothic a spectral presence but those 'newly possible networks of understanding' imply a distinctly rhizomatous character.

Crucially, Deleuze reminds us of something else in relation to ‘stuttering’ and the Gothic that forms a thread to my comments in Chapter Two, where I allude to Ashcroft’s notion of language as ‘a tool...used in different ways of talking about the world’ (Ashcroft: 2009, 4) in postcolonial societies. Ashcroft remarks how language ‘can be an ontological prison [but] it need not be...colonial languages have been not only instruments of oppression but also instruments of radical resistance and transformation’ (Ashcroft: 2009, 3):

Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium: Ill Seen, Ill Said (content and expression). Being well spoken has never been either the distinctive feature or the concern of great writers. (Deleuze: 1997, 111)

The rhizome and its way of being always in process, of never setting root at just one particular point, is a perfect way of viewing both the novel and the Gothic. It is also a way of viewing Ashcroft’s notion about language as a transformative tool. Deleuze and Guattari say something that is of interest in terms of the Gothic being a ‘minor’ mode of language. For Deleuze and Guattari the tree ‘is not the method for the people’ however on the contrary, the rhizome may just be a method for the people as it ‘can analyze language only by decentering it onto other dimensions and other registers’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 8). If the Gothic possesses rhizomatic qualities (and its abilities to blur boundaries and delight in the interpenetration of seemingly opposite social and cultural hierarchical categorizations causing ‘disequilibrium’ suggest that this is so), then it becomes an ideal method for ‘the people’, a way of engaging in a discourse that acknowledges those who may currently be, or have been, oppressed and those who have experienced loss on a massive societal and cultural scale. This is why Braidotti speaks of minor literatures being the way forward to find productive, ‘non-nostalgic solutions’ that we can utilize in an effort to interpret and think about our world.

There are endless possibilities for rhizomatic alliances in the Gothic, for example, those alliances forged between animal/human, machine/human, living/dead, blood/the corporeal/the spiritual and natural/supernatural. Hogle reminds us that the endings to the Gothic stories telling of these alliances are ‘far less resolved’ (Hogle: 2002, 13) than we

might think, rendering them able to ‘shake...the verb “to be”’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 27). Deleuze and Guattari express these rhizomatic properties by comparing the tree and its particular way of embedded rootedness with the rhizome’s ‘in-between flows’ (Braidotti: 2008, 2), with its sense of being an ‘intermezzo’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 27):

The tree imposes the verb “to be”, but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction “and...and...and...” This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb “to be”. Where are you going? Where are you coming from? Where are you heading for? These are totally useless questions... [The rhizome is] a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 27-28)³⁶

This liminal fluidity (emphasized in the Gothic by blood and bodily fluids, ideal for negotiating those ‘in-between flows’ of Braidotti), not only meanders through the Gothic but is shared by writing itself, as evidenced by Morrison when she speaks of writers and writing ‘[a]ll water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was. Writers are like that...and a rush of imagination is our flooding’ (Morrison: 1987, 99). When we read the Gothic, questions like these become problematic precisely because we enter the rhizomatic world of the conjunction, the world of “and...and...and...” (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 27); thus the Gothic becomes a form of ‘stuttering’ (Deleuze: 1997, 107-114).

At this point, it is useful to explore how this ‘creative stuttering’ and rhizomatic ‘disequilibrium’ relates to our lived experience in the world. How can the Gothic’s ability to

³⁶ These questions – “Where are you going?” “Where are you coming from?” “Where are you heading for?” – are interesting in light of discussions about what postcolonial literature actually *is* and who epitomizes the label ‘postcolonial writer’. Paul Brians has posed an enquiry into what constitutes a postcolonial writer, who is to be excluded / included, when he says: ‘...What determines when you are too acculturated to be postcolonial: where you were born? how long you’ve lived abroad? your subject matter? These and similar questions are the object of constant debate?’ (Brians: 1998). Additionally, in response to the notion that postcolonial writers are creating national allegories, David Punter counters ‘I do not believe that such reductivisms are possible’ (Punter: 2000, 6). On another related point, Braidotti and Hall also posit the important view that the ‘politics of location’ is vital for those who may still be grappling with questions in relation to subjectivity. It is possible to view the notion that the repudiation such questions as outlined by Deleuze above in respect of location/s is yet another means of silencing those voices already marginalized by colonialist (and other) encounters. As Braidotti rightly asks, in such situations the verb ‘to be’ may well be crucially important and she raises the point in relation to feminist theory but we can apply her thoughts it equally well in postcolonial theory, with an eye on how postmodernist ideas can sometimes work against marginalized people and causes ‘...one cannot deconstruct a subjectivity one has never been fully granted control over; one cannot diffuse a sexuality which has historically been defined as dark and mysterious. In order to announce the death of the subject, one must first have gained the right to speak as one’ (Braidotti: 2008, 82).

engage in this dynamic and radical means of expression connect with how we interpret our environment? Nietzsche has some valuable points to make that may go some way to develop a response to this question. Bennett and Connolly discuss how ‘affect is crucial to thinking’, thus affirming Deleuze’s words cited above, when he talks of an ‘affective and intensive language’ (Deleuze: 1997, 107). They reiterate some of my thoughts on the reader/writer relationship as one of touch, in describing how the body is vital to the process of thinking. Using Nietzsche’s words they highlight how thought can potentially perform through layers of ‘visceral registers’ (Bennett and Connolly: 2002, 161) to enact within the body:

...a mere disciplining of {conscious} thoughts and feelings is virtually nothing...; one first has to convince the body. It is decisive...that one should inaugurate culture in the right place – not in the ‘soul’...: the right place is the body, demeanour, diet, physiology, the rest follows. (Nietzsche Qtd. Bennett and Connolly: 2002, 160)

Thus thinking becomes a bodily function. In many ways, these ways of thinking about the performance of thinking also echo descriptions of the Gothic:

It is the rapid play of affect that, above all, *moves* thinking. But since affect is not entirely under the control of consciousness that means that the flow of thinking exceeds its control too. Affect is often conveyed by contagion, contamination and inspiration; it moves across registers and constituencies. (Bennett and Connolly: 2002, 159, my emphasis)

One recalls here how the Gothic also *moves* as a ‘discursive site crossing genres’ (Wright: 2007, 4). Consequently we could say that creative thinking acts as a complementary form of sustenance for the body. What is interesting here, not only in our readings of the novel, but also and especially of the Gothic in relation to affect, is the physiological response to reading something disturbing. Consider the physiological reactions that may communicate with those ‘visceral registers’; consider the affect when reading the Gothic. I suggest that the Gothic encourages the reader to open up to the idea of vulnerability, especially where the emotions are concerned. But what use is the irresistible urge to read and write the Gothic? What is the attraction to that which has the power to disturb the emotions and sense of reason so deeply? These questions point to what Anna Letitia Aiken describes in 1773, as ‘a paradox of the

heart' (Aiken Qtd. in Wright: 2007, 42). Let us consider here what Erika Kerruish says of Nietzsche's attitude to emotion. Kerruish points out the Nietzsche 'does not view reason as conflicting with emotion but as integral to it' (Kerruish: 2009, 18), indeed Deleuze's feeling is that 'the classical image of thought is a profound betrayal of what it means to think' (Patton: 1997, 7). Furthermore, and in answer to our questions about the use of reading the emotionally provocative Gothic, Kerruish remarks:

Without the passive aspect of emotions we cannot effectively interpret the world. Emotions monitor how we are doing in relation to our aspirations as individuals, our success in projects such as surviving, creating, forming relationships and maintaining our freedom...Emotions incorporate a passive capacity to sense the world in the context of a person's efforts towards persisting and thriving in the world...Hence Nietzsche characterises the will to power as pathos. The growth and flourishing of a self in an environment requires the ability to passively suffer the emotions that monitor its condition. (Kerruish: 2009, 23)

Hence we might say that the Gothic functions by allowing us to 'passively suffer the emotions' (Kerruish: 2009, 23) that will enable us to 'effectively interpret the world' (Kerruish: 2009, 23). The discourse that is the Gothic may well speak to us in a way that acknowledges our struggles to survive, our ability to engage in relationships and experience difference, our potential to cultivate a sense of creativity and to 'write, and form a rhizome' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 12). The dialogue we encounter with the Gothic holds the capacity to be fruitful for every reader who engages in it, however this dialogue may be especially productive for postcolonial societies, especially in the context of the endlessly creative possibilities the rhizome holds.

To come back to the act of thinking again for a moment, it is this process of thinking combined with the Nietzschean ideas of the importance of emotion that Bennett and Connolly have in mind when they say:

Thinking bounces in magical bumps and charges across multiple zones marked by differences of speed, capacity and intensity...It is above all in the relations between the zones that possibilities for creativity reside. For thinking is not harnessed entirely by the tasks of representation and knowledge. Through its layered intra- and inter-corporeality new ideas, theories, identities are propelled into being. Thinking is creative. (Bennett and Connolly: 2002, 158-159)

Reading the Gothic may well do what Irigaray assigns to the reading of philosophy 'it sometimes stimulates, even cures' (Irigaray: 2008, 4), at the very least it can '[send] us back

to our daily existence with our spirit a little more alive' (Irigaray: 2008, 4). Irigaray also has something to say about reading and thinking and how we might approach it in a way that does not simply mean a choice between activity and passivity, rather we can '...become actively receptive' (Irigaray: 2004, 187); for Irigaray, acts such as 'reading, music, walking in nature, collective ritual practice, silent in-gathering' (Irigaray: 2004, 188) can all help us to achieve a crucial: 'constant passage from an inanimate material to a living flesh, from a corporeal inertia to a body animated with intentions' (Irigaray: 2004, 188). Thus when we consider that we bring the body to any reading experience, in tandem with the call of the Gothic to the experience of creative thinking and to 'passively suffer the emotions' (Kerruish: 2009, 23), our imaginative, thoughtful and heart-felt responses to these acts can lead us to become 'a body animated with intentions' (Irigaray: 2004, 188).³⁷

It is appropriate here to review once more the idea that writers are part of a Deleuzian 'enterprise of health' (Deleuze: 1997, 3). It is the words of Kerruish outlining Nietzsche's ideas about how 'the passive aspect of emotions...incorporate a passive capacity to sense the world in the context of a person's efforts to persisting and thriving in the world' (Kerruish: 2009, 23). It is the words 'persisting' and 'thriving' that draw me towards the idea of health and to the notion that, if writing and writers have a place in this enterprise, then so too does the Gothic. If the Gothic serves to stimulate emotions upon our readings, then we are assisting our ability to interpret our world, often from 'regions far from equilibrium' (Deleuze: 1997, 109). Thus the Gothic assists in our endeavours to challenge dominant forms

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari are quite explicit about the radicalism of the act of thinking when they discuss noology 'the study of images of thought, and their historicity' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 415). Crucially, they alert us to the notion that '...it could be said that all this has no importance, that thought has never had anything but laughable gravity' (it occurs to me here that 'laughable gravity' may also be what the Gothic has often been greeted with, often with more of the 'laughable' than the 'gravity') *but* we are to consider that 'the less people take thought seriously, the more they think in conformity with what the State wants' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 415). In the history of noology we find resistance in the form of 'counterthoughts, which are violent in their acts and discontinuous in their appearance, and whose existence is mobile in history' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 415). I suggest that such resistance and 'counterthoughts' may be found in the Gothic, which is itself 'mobile in history' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 415). We might also bear in mind the radical idea that '[e]very thought is already a tribe, the opposite of a State' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 416).

of thinking by the very act of thinking transgressively. Such thinking may, according to Nietzsche's, Deleuze's and Kerruish's points of view help us to flourish – to thrive. Perhaps then, to borrow Nietzsche's thoughts, the Gothic fits into the notion that 'every Art, every philosophy may be viewed as a remedy and an aid in the service of growing and struggling life' (Tongeren: 2000, 8).

The Gothic's capacity to provide readers with blurred boundaries between such crucial aspects of our lived experience as 'life/death, natural /supernatural... realistic /artificial... [and] the abjection of these crossings into hauntings and supposedly deviant "others"...' (Hogle: 2002, 9), provides us with many opportunities for 'tremulous' encounters. There may be many times we cannot fully articulate the impact of these encounters, a situation exacerbated by the rather elusive endings or resolutions to the unfolding complexities in the texts, as Hogle further states, 'extremes [are often left] sharply before us and [often] far less resolved than the conventional endings...claim them to be (Hogle: 2002, 13). Thus it may be that the Gothic encourages a situation where we have to attempt to embark upon a negative dialectic, and 'return behind or beyond all our discourses and knowledge, to keep silent and then...listen to the speech of the other and enter into communication with him, or her' (Irigaray: 2004, 3).

The act of reading enters into the listening and communicating processes Irigaray outlines above. We might also consider that in reading the words of another, alongside ineffable encounters with the ghosts/monsters/ marginal creatures in the Gothic, makes possible some understanding of the 'mystery that the other remains for us', and how it 'communicates an awakening, both corporeal and spiritual' (Irigaray: 2004, 5). This sense of initiation and arousal leads to another readerly/writerly insight, that the 'other' in our Gothic textual encounters is not 'inside or outside' but 'both inside and outside' (Irigaray: 2004, 5). Thus the Gothic, in the dwelling spaces of the novel, provides an opportunity for our

engagement with textual others ‘to continue to move and enlighten us without our being able to seize or make ours the very origin of our state’ (Irigaray: 2004, 5). Consequently, the Gothic in the novel promotes an experience of approaching rather than appropriating.

Passion is a word that is used so much it has become somewhat hackneyed and much diluted. The intensity of the emotions triggered by the Gothic should here be considered in the terms outlined above, when Deleuze and Guattari talk of straying from known paths, of ‘violence’ of ‘provocation’ (O’Sullivan and Zepke: 2008, 19). It is in relation to its Latin root word ‘pati’ that we may come to rediscover passion as a form of suffering, albeit willingly undertaken. It is a passionate suffering, a form of endurance that entails a full encounter with life as Nietzsche’s ‘dark, driving, insatiable power that lusts after itself’ (Nietzsche Qtd. Boym: 2001, 19), and of memory and possible futures. As Cixous says, ‘it is this hunger for flesh and tears, our appetite for living, that, at the tip of forsaken fingers, makes a pencil grow’ (Cixous: 2005, 96-97). I suggest that this appetite is at the heart of our engagement with the Gothic. Irigaray says something about this passionate engagement that I see as embodying our encounters with the Gothic and the thinking processes it may set loose:

in this nocturnal wandering where is the gaze to be fixed? The only possibility is to push onward into the night until it becomes a transverberating beam of light, a luminous shadow. Onward to a touch that opens the “soul” again to contact with the divine force, to the impact of searing light...She is torn apart in pain, fear, cries, tears, and blood that go beyond any other feeling. The wound must come before the flame. But already there is delight and longing in this torment, if she has entrusted herself to a skill subtle enough in its strength. Though the path she is cutting is a difficult one, she is impatient to set everything else aside and pleads to go on. But she cannot specify exactly what she wants. Words begin to fail her. She senses something remains to be said that resists all speech, that can at best be stammered out...or else utter only a sound so inarticulate that it barely forms a song... (Irigaray: 1985, 193)

In this Irigarayan metamorphosing space, itself a form of stuttering, our reading of the Gothic becomes something akin to Taussig’s description of the ‘space of death’ which is: ‘a space of transformation’ which comes about through the experience of fear and loss (Taussig: 1984, 468)

This path of ‘nocturnal wanderings’ (Irigaray: 1985, 193) and the ‘space of transformation’ (Taussig: 1984, 486) are not painless thresholds to cross. The idea of such

potentially transformative spaces connects directly with an additional important point that Deleuze has made, one that we can adopt to envisage a Gothic space within which the ‘stuttering’ of language may take place. Deleuze points to ‘an atmospheric quality’ (Deleuze: 1997, 108) which may be introduced within a literary text, ‘a milieu that acts as the conductor of words – that brings together within itself the quiver, the murmur, the stutter, the tremolo, or the vibrato, and makes the indicated affect reverberate through the words’ (Deleuze: 1997, 108). So, between the stuttering of language that the Gothic can produce and the Gothic ‘milieu’ that provides ‘the quiver, the murmur’ (Deleuze: 1997, 108), the ‘syncopated convulsion’ (Derrida: 2005, 35) of the heart, the Gothic has the propensity to render language a transformative and an ‘affective and intensive language’ (Deleuze: 1997, 107).

Thus, through the emotion of fear we may find some form of transformation. This is not the fear that Nietzsche criticized, one of restricting our emotional engagement with our environment, rather it is fear in the sense that Nietzsche recognises as that which encourages the development in the self of a certain ‘discipline and sense of command’ (Kerruish: 2009, 12). It is this issue of emotion and how it can help individuals find their way in the world. We must remember that it is not to find some ready-made path (Nietzsche reminds us that ‘...the way after all – it does not exist!’) (Nietzsche: 2006, 156). The transformation through this Nietzschean potentially developmental fear is described by Deleuze’s ideas of how style works in philosophy, I am borrowing it in relation to the Gothic. This style has bearings upon how the Gothic works, as it:

...strains toward three different poles: concepts, or new ways of thinking; percepts, or new ways of seeing and construing; and affects, or new ways of feeling. They’re the philosophical trinity, philosophy as opera: you need all three to get things moving (Deleuze: 1995, 164-5)

Thus Gothic can be seen ‘as opera’ (Deleuze: 1995, 165), flowing between the ‘philosophical trinity’ of thinking, seeing and feeling that Deleuze describes. This is how the Gothic serves to ‘get things moving’ (Deleuze: 1995, 165). The Gothic displays much of what Nietzsche calls writing ‘in blood’ and as such fires our taste for ‘all that is perplexing’ (Marsden: 2002,

13). It compels us to read it and can often be disturbing, spellbinding and deeply disruptive – but it also embraces and encourages passionate responses (the Gothic and Nietzsche actually have a lot in common in this respect). The act of thinking is no longer a solely cerebral act, thinking is now endowed with ‘heart, blood and fire’ (Marsden: 2002, 13).

Furthermore, Deleuze goes on to say something that alludes directly to how the Gothic works in the novel. In a dazzling and inventive passage, providing a worthwhile example of what Braidotti means when she talks of Deleuze’s philosophy as ‘fragmentation bombs of enthusiasm’ (Braidotti: 2008, 66), Deleuze reflects:

Philosophy’s like a novel: you have to ask "What's going to happen?" "What's happened?" Except the characters are concepts, and the settings, the scenes, are space-times. One's always writing to bring things to life, to free life from where it's trapped, to trace lines of flight. The language for doing that can't be a homogeneous system, it's something unstable, always heterogeneous, in which style carves differences of potential between which things can pass, come to pass, a spark can flash and break out of language itself, to make us see and think what was lying in the shadow around the words, things we were hardly aware existed. Two things work against style: homogeneous language or, conversely, a heterogeneity so great that it becomes indifferent, gratuitous, and nothing definite passes between its poles. Between a main and a subordinate clause there should be a tension, a kind of zigzagging, even-particularly-when the sentence seems quite straightforward. There's style when the words produce sparks leaping between them, even over great distances. (Deleuze:1995, 140,141)

In this passage Deleuze forms an intensely productive and richly fertile alliance between the love of wisdom that animates and is to be found in both philosophy and the novel. The creature that rides between the two offering us that ‘spark’, the ‘zigzagging’ that tries to ‘bring things to life’ and create a means of evoking ‘something unstable, always heterogenous’ (Deleuze: 1995, 140-141), is the Gothic. These interconnections, these alliances, highlight Deleuze’s notion that to attain a rich experience of philosophical thought, we need something other than philosophical understanding. To achieve this, we are encouraged to allow ideas to enter an ‘echo chamber, a feedback loop’ (Deleuze: 1995, 139). Here, ideas undergo a subtle filtering that provides a dynamic ‘non-philosophical understanding, rooted in percepts and affects’ (Deleuze: 1995, 139). I propose that the novel and the Gothic provides us with a means by which we can effectively interpret the world around us; if philosophy is one way to negotiate the world, then the alliance of the Gothic and the novel is ‘one of its two wings’ (Deleuze: 1995, 140). The Gothic then enhances the sense

of sudden encounters, of mystery, of the unexpected. Wisker says that the Gothic is ‘layered with meaning, demanding interpretation and engagement from readers... [it] use[s] strategies of estrangement and engagement to explore and challenge cultural, social, psychological and personal issues’ (Wisker: 2007, 402-403). In other words, the Gothic makes us, as readers, think.

The Gothic’s destabilizing, unsettling and mutable qualities delight in taking us, to use Deleuze’s words, to ‘regions far from equilibrium’ (Deleuze: 1997, 109). With this in mind, we might then deduce that by entering those unsettling ‘regions’, the Gothic can act as an enabling force to help us ‘make progress’ (Deleuze: 1997, 09). Both Deleuze and his equally pioneering predecessor, Nietzsche, may throw some further light on this thought. The Gothic acts upon the reader’s imagination and thought processes in the same way that Braidotti speaks of Deleuzian/nomadic philosophy, as both ‘fragmentation bombs of enthusiasm’ (Braidotti: 2008, 66), and a ‘rainbow of alternative figurations’ (Braidotti: 2008, 73). As a haptic journey of reading, inscribing and re-inscribing is opened up to us when we approach the novel; the Gothic also plays its part in this Derridean ‘haptology of the heart’ (Derrida: 2005, 251).

Thus the task is to explore just how the Gothic fulfils this cordiological ‘haptology’, enabling the reader to feel the sense of pathos that Nietzsche suggests is vital to ‘healthy’ emotional responses. Kathleen O’Dwyer points out how Nietzsche deems that ascetic Christianity’s role, apart from limiting our capacity to fully interpret the world in which we live, also limits our capacity to connect with others in love and friendship. Maybe we can find this facility in the novel for, as Nietzsche says ‘we may find greater value for the enrichment of knowledge by listening to the soft voice of different life situations’ (Nietzsche: 1984, 256). The Gothic functions by encouraging us to face-up to emotions and senses of ‘otherness’ in a way that seeks to dispel ignorance and can point a way towards that ‘enterprise of health’. Nietzsche states:

A sudden decision for ignorance, for arbitrary shutting-out, a closing of the window, an inner denial of this or that thing, a refusal to let it approach, a kind of defensive posture against much that can be known, a contentment with the dark, with the closed horizon, an acceptance and approval of ignorance. (Nietzsche: 2003, 161)

It is precisely this ‘window’ that the Gothic seeks to open; opening out onto a terrain that enters into an Irigarayan positive sense of approaching. The Gothic provides a textual topography that enables and welcomes the act of thinking as a beneficial and necessary action for humans, a way of approaching emotions in order to sense and beneficially interpret the world we inhabit. In a way it is a form of sensual textual geography (‘magical bumps’), (Bennett and Connolly: 2002,158), that offers us a foothold on which to explore processes of thinking about otherness, specifically the challenges brought about by the effects of this term on postcolonial societies. The Gothic becomes a means of taking on ignorance head-to-head, of encouraging a softness of listening to a text that does not shy away from exploring the darkness.

The Gothic also provides access to a space within which we may know what it is to understand how things may be, as Alenka Zupančič states, ‘dressed in their own shadows’ (Zupančič: 2003, 29). We may come to know how we may wear our own shadow. As Paul Kingsbury adds, Nietzsche conceives of noon as the point, ‘the stillest hour’ (Kingsbury: 2010, 51), when shadows do not disappear, rather our shadows are thrown upon ourselves revealing ‘the inherent shadowy gaps and tensions that work in things (Kingsbury: 2010, 51). This is the point that signals the ‘One turns to Two’ (Kingsbury: 2010, 51), and heralds ‘an uneasy yet inventive breaking apart: a creative short circuit...’ (Kingsbury: 2010, 510). This is another excellent description of the Gothic ‘a creative short circuit’ that is reminiscent of Braidotti’s ‘fragmentation bombs’, or Benjamin’s ‘blasting’, or Deleuze’s ‘stuttering’ – but there is a difference. It concerns the idea of the ‘stillest hour’ and how this is as crucial as the fearful occurrences or volatile happenings that may crop up in the Gothic text. As Gordon reminds us ‘...profane illumination can take different forms: it can be quiet and understated or deafening and dramatic’ (Gordon: 2008, 206).

The Gothic appreciates what Zupančič says of Nietzsche: that ‘silence is not something that takes place after the explosion – it is the silence at the very heart of the ‘explosion’, the stillness of the event’ (Zupančič: 2003, 9). It is Derrida’s intimate ‘upheaval of the internal’ (Derrida: 2005, 2) that is a ‘syncopated convulsion’ (Derrida: 2005, 35). Thus in the Gothic, we find that inanimate objects ‘hung about pretending not to look at me’ (Banville: 1993, 180), or ‘the house attends me, monitoring my movements’ (Banville: 2001, 53); there may be a lightness of air or silence as a palpable presence: ‘the hushed, attentive air’ (Banville: 2001, 19); there may be a sense of absence in the midst of presence: ‘I stood in the midst of my own absence’ (Banville:1993, 181). Seamus Deane’s *Reading in the Dark* opens with, ‘On the stairs, there was a clear, plain silence’ (Deane: 1997, 5), but that silence contains ‘something there between us. A shadow...’ (Deane: 1997, 5). Characters may experience an incredible sense of isolation before a crescendo of life-threatening, dark experiences as Roseanne does in Sebastian Barry’s *The Secret Scripture*. Confined to a life of indescribable loneliness after accusations of adultery by the Church (or ‘pernicious and chronic nymphomania’ according to the priest) (Barry: 2009, 232), Roseanne says ‘I have had my own death sentence spoke against me’ (Barry: 2009, 250). Roseanne is confined to an existence where she has been placed ‘outside the frame of the photographs of life’ (Barry: 2009, 202), ‘a raging woman all alone in a tin hut’ (Barry: 2009, 223) whose ‘heart was...calling, signalling out into that difficult human world’ (Barry: 2009, 210). It is within those acts of reading, writing, thinking, dreaming and engaging with the Gothic that we may experience the silence that is at the heart of the explosion. Zupančič reminds us that for Nietzsche, activities/processes such as ‘nuances, of dance, of perspectivity, of fictions, of the layering of appearances and differences’, hold true value because ‘they are the bomb of the event’ (Zupančič: 2003, 9).

In terms of such experiences, I want to draw on a passage by Scally. In the final intensely moving chapter of his book *The End of Hidden Ireland*, Scally describes the Irish

famine emigrants leaving the shores of their home for the last time. He describes how the villagers living in Ballykilcline, a village which ‘concealed itself within an hour’s walk from “civilization”’ (Sally: 1995, 235). This concealment proved to be ‘nearly as effective in dimming its view of itself as extreme geographical remoteness’ (Sally: 1995, 235). Consequently, when they stood on the ship sailing away for the last time:

Most actually saw the land of their nativity fading into the sea as they sailed westward. For the famine emigrants, it was a revelation unimaginable weeks before, sudden and experienced by masses of them simultaneously, shipload after shipload, year after year. Peering from the stern rather than the bow of the emigrant ship, that backward glance at the incongruous palms and gaily painted houses along the shore near Skibbereen was not only their last sight of Ireland but the first sight of themselves. (Sally: 1995, 236)

It was, to quote Benjamin, ‘love at last sight’ (Boym: 2001, 360n5). Reading this, it seems trite to talk of the novel or the Gothic as a means of finding a way to remember these people, but history sometimes chooses to forget such aspects of sadness, and we need to find ways of engaging with ghostly fragments. What may sometimes carry through into versions of history, as a direct result of the wearing of one’s own shadow, is shame. Sally puts this point well when he says that ‘among emigrants who were also victims, that sight [of their fading homeland] was sometimes accompanied by shame’ (Sally: 1995, 236). There are times when ‘the fictive’, not literature alone but also ‘the ensemble of cultural imaginings, affective experiences, animated objects, marginal voices, narrative densities, and eccentric traces of power’s presence’ (Gordon: 2008, 25), will choose to take on board that which history elects to forget. Banville has summoned up the distressing scenes of emigration in a way that evokes the ghosts of people that lived in the pre-famine space; it is a haunting:

I picture them, in their cawbeens and their shawls, straggling down the path to the beach and the waiting black ship, the men fixed on something distant and the women looking back out of huge, stricken eyes... Such suffering, such grief: unimaginable. No that’s not right. I can imagine it. I can imagine anything. (Banville: 1998, 31)

In a discussion about the use of ‘mnemonic air’ in Banville’s science tetralogy, Wrethed points out how certain ‘experiential fragments’ may be ‘affects so powerful in their penuriousness that they may radically overthrow belief in any ordered form of memory or

any historiographic representation' (Wrethed: 2007, 284). Furthermore, he conjectures that in literary texts, memories of those long gone can act like an 'affective texture' rather than a 'representing text' (Wrethed: 2007, 288) and that:

air itself possesses the capacity to retain the lived past...The felt presence of a people long gone may be presented and understood in more general terms...In its capacity to retain, air brings to givenness an affective past that does not obey the will of a remembering subject. (Wrethed: 2007, 285-286)

Wrethed goes on to discuss the retentive nature of air, and what he calls the 'precondition for it to have such power is that it necessarily eludes representation and objectification' (Wrethed: 2007, 287). Thus the Gothic allows occluded voices to be heard; it explores and embraces memory and the past as in Husserl's 'dark horizon', '[t]his dark horizon is the lived past as such. Even passively lived experience continues to exist as this dormant pastness of seemingly lost presence, which nevertheless has the capacity to exercise a stimulus on the subject'. For the Gothic, marginal voices and 'passively lived experience' that might otherwise be discarded as the debris of history is never really lost. I believe that by reading imaginative literature with a certain Gothic milieu, in some small way we might come to conceive of some of the 'seemingly lost presence' (Wrethed: 2007, 282) of our ancestors. The Gothic may just be able to help us to remember – to open and enter through another door.

Lloyd has made some insightful points on history, memory and forgetfulness that have a bearing on this thesis. Writing about memory and loss in Irish history, Lloyd talks of how historicism's 'refusal of a relationship to loss' leads to a form of haunting which simultaneously renounces any form of humanity. This renunciation gives birth to an 'ineradicable, if disavowed, mournfulness' (Lloyd: 2008, 71). Rather:

Only a conception of the work of history that does not seek to lay the dead to rest, but which attempts to grasp the record of both their recalcitrance and their defeats as the record of an unfinished collective struggle to live on, can escape the burden of that mournfulness. This work of history [not only recognizes] the unrealized projects of the past not as the mere debris of progress, but as the openings in which other possibilities live on [but also knows that] the dead are the contemporaries of every unfinished struggle against domination. (Lloyd: 2008, 71)

The Gothic relates to this sense of 'openings in which other possibilities live on' (Lloyd: 2008, 71). Alongside historical research 'that does not seek to lay the dead to rest' (Lloyd:

2008, 71), the Gothic may help by exploring some aspects of the ‘other possibilities’ and reaching out to the ghosts that are our ‘contemporaries’ by taking us through ‘the door of the fragment’ (Gordon: 2008, 66). Lloyd’s perspective on memory and loss finds an echo in Irigaray’s consideration of ‘History’:

The teaching of History cannot substitute for an individual memory without running the risk of subjecting such a remembering to an already existing representative model, which amounts to annihilating it as remembrance of the personal present or past. That which remained the condition and the foundation of culture is thus sent back to oblivion in favor of instructions abstracted from any subjective experience (Irigaray: 2008, 143).

This approach towards personal memory functions as a renunciation of the idea of experience as ‘inscribed on the body by perception, memory’ (Irigaray: 2008, 144), and serves to deny the individual the very ‘material and spiritual frameworks’ that are ‘indispensable for [his/her] blossoming’ (Irigaray: 2008, 144). Such a stance serves to oppose a ‘relationship to loss’ (Lloyd: 2009, 71), encouraging ghosts to stalk the margins of our culture – doomed to remain distressingly unacknowledged. It also amounts to a double loss; the memories of the original losses experienced by our ancestors and spectral contemporaries are now lost to us too, ‘sent back to oblivion’ (Irigaray: 2008, 143). I suggest that one possibility is to engage in the reading and writing of the Gothic within the novel, as it is a space which beckons to our ghosts and encourages us to challenge and to re-think our attitudes towards all manner of ‘cultural, social, psychological and personal issues’ (Wisker: 2007, 403).

For Lloyd, the form of nationalist subjectivity that results in being ‘unable to name the loss that it mourns’ operates in ‘Irish cultural spaces’ and within its ‘psychic and physical landscapes’. But the ‘trace’ remains, particularly after the Famine, as ghosts of ‘unredeemed and unredeemable loss [continue] to glimmer cryptically’ (Lloyd: 2008, 66). The Gothic, in its radical manner of seeking out deviations from the norm and daring to suggest to its readers that ‘all “abnormalities” that we would divorce from ourselves are a part of ourselves’ (Hogle: 2002, 12), can be seen to actively seek out alternative views of selfhood, memory and history in those very ‘psychic and physical landscapes’ within which Lloyd suggests

“official” memories are propagated, and then re-formed at will. Wisker puts it well when she says:

While much postcolonial writing could concern itself with mimesis, exposing histories and experiences using realism, the Gothic in postcolonial Gothic enriches the landscape of place, mind and expression further by bodying forth the imaginary, the spiritual, imaginative, sensed and felt, the internal landscapes of the mind, showing these as real, as the more frequently recorded historical, and richer because layered with meaning, demanding interpretation and engagement from readers. (Wisker: 2007, 403-4)

Smith and Hughes also broach the interconnections between postcolonial concerns and those of the Gothic. They discuss how both these fields of study appear to be ‘superficially...of rather different intellectual, cultural and historical traditions’ (Smith and Hughes: 2003, 1), however this superficial disparity hides a deeper relationship which ‘indicates the presence of a shared interest in challenging post-enlightenment notions of rationality’ (Smith and Hughes: 2003, 1).

Thus, the Gothic acts as a vehicle upon which the ‘messy phenomena’ and ‘melancholy survivals’ can hitch a ride. This is why I see the Gothic as a ship, a potent symbol of colonial displacement and diaspora, now rejuvenated like a Harawayan salamander or imaginatively turned into breath as the Andoque did with the ambiguous image of the axe, in order to render it a form of abundance. Perhaps here we have, as an Irish counterpart to the Andoque people’s ‘philosophy of the axe’, (in itself a philosophy that never forgets the ‘illness’ associated with the pool of cultural memories connected with the colonial enterprise such as loss, bloodshed and violence), a ‘philosophy of the Gothic’. This philosophy utilizes Gothic themes and tropes to stimulate other ways of thinking, to act as a response to “official” modes of publicly acceptable histories and memories, to activate thinking through other doors by turning parts of the past into ‘breath’, which can then be renarrated. We may connect this idea of breath as transformative device to Wrethed’s depiction of ‘mnemonic air’, offering itself up potentially as a similar means of transformation. The Gothic ship helps us to traverse the alternatives and blur boundaries that we come to see are not as clear as we would be given to believe. Perhaps one place it takes us to is a ‘space of death’ (Tausig:

1984, 467). Just as the Andoque people delved into their own 'space of death' as do many other cultures and groups, so postcolonial deliberations and searches for ways to enter possible futures may use the Gothic as one part of this task.

Hogle makes a point about the concerns of the Gothic that speak directly to Lloyd's appeal for a way of conversing with the past and engaging with memory. This conversation seeks to locate and free-up the 'fluid possibilities' (Lloyd: 2008, 72) that can potentially exist in memory and within the acts of thinking and writing about the past, a potentiality that can nevertheless become 'truncated' and 'preserve[d] in its fixity' (Lloyd: 2008, 72). Hogle states that the Gothic is quite unremitting in its passion for 'confrontations between the low and the high, even as ideologies of these change' (Hogle: 2002, 9). Thus, the Gothic recognizes the need for fluidity, indeed it thrives on it. The Gothic, in its blurrings between life and death, between past, present and future, does not renounce the humanity of ghosts. Hogle's comment about the 'interpenetration' of the status of life and death suggests support and respect for the humanity of our ghosts rather than the denial which Lloyd sees as operating in certain aspects of history. The Gothic, with its imaginative probing into our emotions (its 'uncertainty generate[s] both a sense of mystery and passions and emotions' (Botting: 2001, 32)), actually involves us in the very actions Lloyd proposes as valid for an ethical approach to memory and the past.

The novel provides a space where our thoughts can, and often must, become creative if we are to deal with all that the Gothic can throw at us. Braidotti makes an excellent point about how such innovative thinking processes and 'nomadic embodied subjects' are interpreted via their 'mobility, changeability and transitory nature'. The Gothic and the novel both understand these concepts and as such, are the ideal places to explore and engage in creative nomadic thinking. Braidotti goes on to say that such thinking:

is a way of establishing connections with a multiplicity of impersonal forces...[it is] the activity of thinking differently...The point is to move beyond dialectics...[towards] the affirmation of difference in terms of a multiplicity of possible differences; difference as the positivity of differences (Braidotti: 2008, 70-71)

These thought-processes find affiliations not only with the way the novel crosses boundaries and the way it relishes its seditious nature, phoenix-like mobility and love of the imund – encouraging readers to become ‘unclean with joy’ (Cixous: 1993, 117), but also with the Gothic and its similar relishing of the imund (think of the Gothic here as ‘culturally amphibious’ (Wright: 2007, 5). The Gothic can be seen as a ‘staggering, limping, lurching form, akin to the monsters it so frequently describes’ (Punter and Byron: 2004), its sheer audacity at poking fun at the purely rational (it abounds in all those ‘unnatural and marvellous creatures’ who were ‘excluded by rational culture’ (Botting: 2001, 32) as it wills us to engage in emotional responses that are actually the nourishment that our rational thinking craves – it is ‘an intensive way of reading...[it] is reading with love’ (Deleuze: 1995, 8-9).

The alliances between the novel and the Gothic open up possibilities for each reader to participate in nomadic thinking, and to experience the Gothic ‘fragmentation bombs’ that can deliver a ‘rainbow of alternative figurations’ (Braidotti: 2008, 73). This dynamic duo also offer the opportunity to experience a ‘multiplicity of possible differences’ (Braidotti: 2008, 71), leading the way towards what Irigaray recognises as:

Touch which allows turning back to oneself, in the dwelling of an intimate light. But which also goes to encounter the other, illuminated-illuminating, overflowing one’s own world in order to taste another brightness. In order to give and to receive what can enlighten mortals on their path. (Irigaray: 2008, 174)

In their vibrant offerings, the novel and the Gothic enable us to participate in a form of ‘approaching’. This tactile journey can open up possibilities for new worlds, new experiences however, it can also open up old wounds, and old memories. We do not leave the past behind when we move into the future, we carry it with us and such memories become embodied encounters that can be constantly rewritten, re-experienced in new ways.

At the start of this chapter, I cited a quotation from Braidotti about how the use of ‘minor’ literary genres may be some worth to explore ‘non-nostalgic solutions to the contradictions of our times’ (Braidotti: 1996, 3). Braidotti’s words form a bridge to take me

into discussions of the novels in subsequent chapters and I note that she is quite definite about the avoidance of nostalgia and to some extent I agree with her. I feel it would be remiss however to ignore some incisive points about nostalgia made by another writer whose words I use at the start of this chapter, namely Svetlana Boym. I want to take some time at this juncture to consider the potential role which certain forms of nostalgia could have in our readings of the novel and the Gothic. Boym, in chapter five (incidentally contained within Part One entitled ‘Hypochondria of the Heart’), explores ‘restorative nostalgia’ and also says something of ‘reflective nostalgia’ that contains an echo of the characteristics of nomadic creative thinking (Boym: 2001, 49-55). Rather than come up with a ‘magic cure’, Boym cleverly offers a way of approaching nostalgia that might ‘illuminate...some of [the]... mechanisms of seduction and manipulation’ (Boym: 2001, xviii) that nostalgia utilises. Made up of two Greek words, ‘*nostos*’ meaning a return home, and ‘*algia*’ meaning longing or pain, the word ‘nostalgia’ was actually coined in 1688 in the thesis of a Swiss doctor, Johannes Hofer. In the following long (but extremely worthwhile) passage, Boym shows how two different types of nostalgia connect with these Greek roots:

Restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately. Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the conditions of modernity [like the Gothic]. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt [also like the Gothic]...

Restorative nostalgia is at the core of recent national and religious revivals; it knows two main plots – the return to origins and the conspiracy. Reflective nostalgia [like the ‘rainbow’ creativity of nomadic thinking] does not follow a single plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones; it loves details [like the novel], not symbols. At best, reflective nostalgia can present an ethical and creative challenge, not merely a pretext for midnight melancholias. This typology of nostalgia allows us to distinguish between national memory that is based on a single plot of national identity, and social memory, which consists of collective frameworks that mark, but do not define the individual memory. (Boym: 2001, xviii)

Reflective nostalgia then contains a number of key ingredients (for example, the sense of ‘challenge’, ‘doubt’, ‘collective frameworks’ to mark identity and memory rather than the ‘single plot’, the travelling across place and time and the deep understanding of the nature of ‘longing’), that renders it a likely ally with both the Gothic and the novel, particularly in the Deleuzian and Guattarian term of alliance, when they refer to the writer as sorcerer – as

having an ‘affinity with alliance’ and a potential to ‘[inspire] illicit unions or abominable loves’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 271). It is Boym’s focus upon the idea of reflective nostalgia as ‘an ethical and creative challenge’ that dwells upon ‘the ambivalences of human longing’ calling ‘absolute truth...into doubt’ (Boym: 2001, xviii) which leads me to think, not only about the Gothic’s engagement with that ‘phantom-roomed exile of our longing’ (Williams:1991, 49)), but also about the engagement with Ricoeur’s three stages of memory and how it all intertwines with the Gothic’s diverse spheres of activity.

I would say that the Gothic certainly understands both forms of nostalgia and plays around with each of them, but its heart is in the creative nomadic challenges that reflective nostalgia sets out for us as readers, writers and creative thinkers. In its adjective – ‘reflective’ – we are presented with an image of deep thinking that fits in with Deleuze and Braidotti’s ideas as thinking as a transformative ‘process of becoming’ (Braidotti: 2008, 73). The Gothic encourages and stimulates the creativity of our thinking, acting as a ‘zone of vibration’ (Deleuze: 1997, 109) and as such, it can intervene and interact with the thing/s remembered. As Isabella van Elferen contends:

The Gothic gaze into the past is not passive, and does not result in mere mirrored images. Gothic nostalgia is a gesture, a movement, an act, and one that intervenes with the structure and nature of the thing remembered. The Gothic gaze therefore entails transgressive rewriting *per se*. Nostalgia and transgression are two seemingly opposed yet inseparable aspects of Gothic rewriting, as they are both defined by the desire to re-create stories, situations, or identifications. (Isabella van Elferen: 2007, 3)

What is interesting in Boym’s account of reflective nostalgia is the ambiguity of the feelings that accompany this process: ‘a modern nostalgic can be homesick and sick of home, at once’ (Boym: 2001, 50). Whilst recognizing the depth of heart-felt emotion within such longing, it also incorporates an ability to be ‘ironic and humorous’ (Boym: 2001, 49) showing us that ‘longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another, as affective memories do not absolve one from compassion, judgement or critical reflection’ (Boym: 2001, 50). In some ways, nostalgia has often been dismissed as a useless activity, and the Gothic (like the novel) has had its share of similar contentions laid at its door. Angela Wright cites Michael Gamer

to make the point of how eighteenth century critical readership (especially a British readership) approached the Gothic's presence in literary culture with some negativity, 'as foreign invader, as cancer, as enthusiasm, as emasculating disease, or as infantilizing nurse' (Wright: 2001, 4). Yet Gamer sees the Gothic as a ' "protean" entity that both sustains and is sustained by other literary discourses' (Wright: 2001, 4). It is a flowing genre but because it nevertheless retains something of its roots of condemnation and scorn – is rendered ever-marginal.

In the same way nostalgia has its critics and deniers:

...the more nostalgia there is the more heatedly it is denied. Nostalgia is something of a bad word, an affectionate insult at best...The word nostalgia is frequently used dismissively... [seen as] an abdication of personal responsibility, a guilt-free home-coming, an ethical and aesthetic failure. (Boym: 2001, xiv)

Boym cites writers like Charles Maier, who says 'Nostalgia is to memory what kitsch is to art' (Boym: 2001, xiv), and Michael Kamen who feels that 'nostalgia...is essentially history without guilt' (Boym: 2001, xiv). But I reiterate the view that Boym's description of reflective nostalgia has much in common with Ricoeur's writing on ethical memory, and Whelan's implementation of these ideas.

Gothic motifs such as hauntings, fear, loneliness, mental instability, metaphysical or corporeal prisons, and buildings as visible remnants of the past, are all textual representations of the first level of memory, moving as it does between loss, grief and healing. Crucially, reflective nostalgia recognises that 'affective memories do not absolve one from compassion, judgement or critical reflection' (Boym: 2001, 50). In the way that the Gothic defers closure in the challenges and interpenetrations it lays before its readers, so reflective nostalgia delights in 'individual narrative that savours details and memorial signs, perpetually deferring homecoming itself' (Boym: 2001, 49).

Also, if the pragmatic level of memory seeks to explore identity, it also seeks to confront the theme of otherness as a potential threat. Within the Gothic, identity is often posed as problematic. Thus themes and tropes of secrets, photographs, letters, household

objects and furniture, names and especially the process of naming, are crucial in analyses of how identity can be formed and remembered. These aspects of the Gothic will be explored with specific reference to how the Irish novelists cited above use them in ways that serve to accentuate the complexities of identity. If ‘one remembers best what is coloured by emotion’ (Boym: 2001, 52), then the Gothic utilizes to the full how ‘the traces of existence in worn objects and furniture tie activities and persons to a particular spatial locality’ (Wrethed: 2007, 286). The Gothic often traces these remembrances of place, object and person ‘as an aerial phenomenon [which] may even permeate the text with a sense of haunting’ (Wrethed: 2007, 286).

If the third level of memory becomes ethical with a potential for healing then movement can occur. Such transformative processes can offer signposts towards possible futures, and it is at this point that reflective nostalgia is fully operative too. In the novels I will explore, Wrethed’s notion of ‘mnemonic air’ (Wrethed: 2007, 282) permeates the text within familiar objects such as those outlined above, but also in terms of specific locations and ‘ghostly signals’ (Gordon: 2007, 196). Not only air, but also earth, water and fire flow dynamically through textual spaces such as fields, a familiar street, a window, a ghost, an institutional building, flowers, a jewel, in a bid to touch the presences, in that ‘dark horizon’ (Wrethed: 2008: 282). Narrative is cited as crucial to the process of opening up negotiation between memory and history. By harnessing the potential of the Gothic and placing it within a narrative form (in this case the novel), a space opens up for an empathetic accommodation of loss, melancholia, the search for identity and confrontation of the ‘other’, all crucial dialogues within the postcolonial. Similarly by engaging with aspects of otherness, individual and communal memory, and hauntings, the writer opens up a highly intimate and potentially spectral relationship between reader and writer. We are dealing here in the aspects of what Deleuze and Braidotti would call enfolded memory. The Gothic engages in stimulating the emotions, memories and thinking processes in the reading body that is in itself already ‘a

portion of living memory that endures by undergoing constant internal modifications following the encounter with other bodies and forces' (Braidotti: 2008, 98). We might consider that Nietzsche has said, 'there is more wisdom in your body than in your deepest philosophy' (Nietzsche: 2006, 23). It is this wisdom that I want to explore by engaging with the Gothic in the Irish novels.

Chapter Three: The Postcolonial Gothic

The text of place becomes embedded through a continual process of narration, the reality of the world itself “sustained through conversation with significant others” (Ashcroft: 2009, 76-77)

Every story is a travel story – a spatial practice (de Certeau: 1984, 115)

David Punter has said something that I feel I have to bear in mind when discussing the postcolonial and the Gothic together, specifically within the spaces of the literary text:

what is specifically not needed, in the West in general and in the encounter with the postcolonial in particular, is more theoretical ‘frameworks’ or ‘matrices’, which inevitably repeat a prior subjugation and exploitation, a kind of mining and transportation of natural resources reinscribed at the cultural level. What is needed is perceptions and ideas, perceptions about what might be in the text (however broadly the ‘text’ might be conceived) and ideas about how and why it might be there. (Punter: 2000, 9-10)

This extract echoes an assertion made by David Scott, when he suggests that we enter into questions of postcolonial spaces:

...not with proposals for new models of colonial study, but with attempts to identify the relevant features of the postcolonial problem space in which our investigation takes place...colonialism is neither a stable nor a self-evident object: it is not merely there, in the past, awaiting better and better methodology in order to elicit deeper and deeper or more and more encompassing meanings. (Scott: 2006, 399)

Scott suggests that if we continue to seek more new ‘models’ to investigate postcolonial studies, then our thinking will, in line with Kuhn’s thinking on scientific paradigms, move from a potentially ‘revolutionary’ paradigm to become a ‘normal’ paradigm. In Scott’s words, “‘normal’ scientific change occurs with the cumulative stockpiling of scientific knowledge, revolutionary change takes place by altering our conceptual lenses in such a way as to bring new objects into view’ (Scott: 2006, 392).

By taking these opinions into consideration, I am obliged to engage in an exploration of the way in which I intend to align the postcolonial and the Gothic. I must also take into account and respond to the suggestion that such a mode of textual analysis could well reproduce a form of ‘prior subjugation [perhaps even]... a kind of mining’ (Punter: 2000, 9).

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to take time before exploring the texts to set out the manner in which I will use the postcolonial and the Gothic together, whilst attempting to be mindful of Punter's warnings. Bearing in mind the often highly-combative and, on initial views, seemingly inhospitable terrain that is postcolonial studies, it is well worth emphasising the many positive aspects of postcolonial thinking and writing, especially in relation to reading literary texts. In a similar vein, equal attention needs to be paid to my use of postmodern theorists and their ideas. Not only could the use of postmodern theories be viewed as using a kind of master-narrative to read the texts, but it has also been regarded as problematic to use such theories within postcolonial thinking, for, as Kumkum Sangari has pointed out, the 'crisis of meaning' expounded upon by postmodernism 'is not everyone's crisis (even in the West)' (Sangari: 1987, 184). Here, too, I must offer my reasons why I think some postmodern ways of viewing the world can be of practical use, especially in the way the ideas of 'play' have been used. I will suggest that these are not new ideas or even by any means confined to postmodern thinking. By linking perceptions of play and story-telling with long-established methods used by the Andoque people, especially their dynamic, transformative reflection upon the use of the axe (drawing upon past, present and future imaginaries), we might come to regard some of these ways of seeing the world, not as facile and pretentious, but as potentially motivating and revitalizing. Calvino says something which posits these ideas amongst the Gothic, the novel, reading, writing and thinking and which can help to inform imaginative postcolonial thinking especially as:

...the authority of the writer – that is, the power to transmit an unmistakable message by means of a special intonation of language and a special distortion of the human figure and of situations – coincides with the authority of the thinker on the highest level. (Calvino: 1986, 42)

There are echoes here also of Boym's 'reflective nostalgia' (Boym: 2001, xviii), which, she says 'does not follow a single plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones' (Boym: 2001, xviii). Such tempero-spatial multiplicities and 'special [Gothic] distortion[s]' (Calvino: 1986, 42), can converse in multi-faceted ways with

the postcolonial and require a particular type of dynamic space within which to move about; I will come to explore this in relation to the novel presently.

Additionally I must explore some key terms that I have used, the first is the Enlightenment. This crucial constellation of ideas and modes of thinking is inextricably entwined with the manner in which we articulate both postcolonial and Gothic critiques, as we tend to see both as responding to, or reacting against, Enlightenment thinking. Of course postmodernism also engages in an ongoing critique of notions of objectivity and progress associated with Enlightenment thinkers. Recent attention paid to some areas of Enlightenment perspectives by writers like Bhabha and Braidotti, as well as a new collection of essays edited by Lynn Festa and Daniel Carey entitled *Postcolonial Enlightenment* (Festa and Carey: 2009), renders it productive to discuss to how this term might easily be used as a mere ‘laundry list of stances’ (Festa and Carey: 2009, 6); and also to enter the caveat that what is often called the Enlightenment project can be seen as ‘a construct invented by both left and right in order that they may denounce it’ (Festa and Carey: 2009, 7).

Embarking upon any contemplation of the postcolonial requires some recognition that some highly shrewd, but nevertheless intensely confrontational, opinions have been voiced in this area of study; I have no doubt that this will continue. One might indeed be forgiven for agreeing with Edna Longley’s tart but nevertheless memorable statement that the postcolonial consists of a series of ‘intellectual holiday romances in a post-colonial never-never land’ (Longley: 1994, 28). These so-called ‘romances’ are, however, persistently shadowed by the vigorous cut and thrust of vital intellectual debate, the rigour of which may well create some significant tensions within the field of discussion. I can well understand why Dawn Duncan has called for a ‘less aggressive debate style’ (Duncan: 2002, 327) in academia generally, as well as within postcolonial dialogue but, it might be that it is partly due to the challenging verve, punch and gusto that the postcolonial can be seen as a radical means of ‘altering our conceptual lenses’ (Scott: 2006, 392) and veering more towards a revolutionary paradigm.

Tensions abound across the whole field of postcolonial study (not least in determining which countries are seen to be legitimately postcolonial but also in relation to what and might constitute postcolonial literature),³⁸ but it is in a discussion of Irish postcolonial studies that lies a clue to why this might be:

Irish Studies is, then, combative but above all dynamic, engaged in a relentless reappraisal of its own fundamental principles and, moreover, that of the culture of which it is both product and analysis. Far from settling into cosy idealisations on the level of ‘quote and dote’ there is a full engagement with debates which are informing the humanities and social sciences on a global scale, but above all with those which are, in the best sense, ‘critical’. (Richards: 2002, xiv)

Some striking words here from Shaun Richards point to the rigorous cut and thrust of the debate that is postcolonial study, a discourse which is ‘combative’ in its attempts to avoid ‘cosy idealisations’, ‘dynamic’ and intent upon ‘relentless reappraisal’, a ‘full engagement with debates’ that are ‘critical’.

So for all the ‘intellectual holiday romances’ (Longley: 1994, 28) that Longley perhaps rightly identifies (and one could argue that this trend can be found in any theoretical location if one looks hard enough), there is some sense of a willingness to avoid the convenience offered by a “‘quote and dote’” approach. I must add here that I do not aim to label the novels studied in this thesis as postcolonial or Gothic. My focus is on the way

³⁸ On the subject of the term ‘postcolonial literature’ Dr Paul Brians has written an informative article that exposes many of the complexities surrounding the labelling of literature and writers as ‘postcolonial’ (see Brians www.wsu.edu/~brians/anglophone/postcolonial.htm). Bijay Kumar Das expresses an opinion about this matter that I feel a certain sense of agreement with. Writing about poetry (his words can be applied to the literary generally), Das says:

Postcolonial poetry refers to poetry written in English in the erstwhile British colonies. It is not correct to say that the post-colonial writers (poets included) write back to the former colonizer. In fact, they write to establish their individual identity independent of their colonizer and they show that not only they have gained independence from the latter but successfully made the colonizer’s language (i.e. English) as a vehicle for creative expression. The result is that English literature has yielded place to literatures in English and the medium has been transformed from English to other Englishes (or englishes). Each former colony uses English in its own way (the Queen’s English is out of fashion) and that is why we get African English, Australian English, Caribbean English, Canadian English Indian English [and Irish English?] etc. in the postcolonial age. (Das: 2007, 8).

This point about using the colonizer’s language as a tool has been echoed by Ashcroft in his 2009 book *Caliban’s Voice*. Adding to the point about labelling, Dennis Walder has noted that: ‘...all literary and cultural labels are questionable to some extent, and post-colonial is no exception. Indeed nothing is more likely to enrage certain writers than to hear themselves described as postcolonial. Who can blame them? (Walder: 1998, 1)

certain postcolonial concerns cluster with those of the Gothic, forming an illuminatory constellation of ideas, and we might, borrowing Deleuze and Guattari's terms, and envisage these as lines of flight running through the assemblage that is the novel. For me, listening to the novels in this way avoids a scenario that Mukherjee outlines in which the writer is left with 'only one modality, one discursive position... forever forced to interrogate European [or English] discourses, of only one particular kind, the ones that degrade and deny... humanity' (Mukherjee: 1990, 6). I feel that Irish writers, indeed any writers, would tend to agree with Mukherjee's feeling that 'our cultural productions are created in response to our own needs' (1990, 6). Thus, although the postcolonial and the Gothic form layers or lines of flight within the novels, they are certainly not the only 'discursive positions' (Mukherjee: 1990, 6).

One of the major bones of contention which has affected both those participating in the whole debate and those commenting and observing as non-participants, is what Bart Moore-Gilbert acknowledges as 'the increasingly heated, even bitter, contestation of the legitimacy of seeing certain regions, periods, socio-political formations and cultural practices as 'genuinely' postcolonial' (Moore-Gilbert:1997, 11). Ireland has been the focus of much of this discussion regarding its own legitimacy within postcolonial thinking. These deliberations, however, may be seen as part of a much wider debate entailing the attempts to define the term 'postcolonial'. Deleuze's portrayal of stuttering as "'and...and...and...'" rather than the verb 'to be'" (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 27) is a useful way to describe how the postcolonial operates as a theoretical tool; especially so in light of the complexities involved in rendering one explicit definition to the term, a problem which we have also found in attempting to define the novel and the Gothic.

McLeod states that 'postcolonial is not a word we can render precisely' (McLeod: 2000, 3), and Ania Loomba comments that '...the term postcolonial has become so heterogenous and diffuse that it is impossible to satisfactorily describe what its study might entail' (Loomba: 2001, xii). Benita Parry has noted:

Amongst the many sober definitions of the term are those denoting a historical transition, a cultural location, a discursive stance, an epochal condition distinguished by the entry into metropolitan cultures of other voices, histories and experiences, and an achieved transition. For many participants in the discussion, the plenitude of signification in 'postcolonial' has enabled a diversity of studies – and indeed both the subjects of enquiry and the theoretical positions are bewilderingly various. (Parry: 2004, 3)

Such diversity can offer scope for much positive, nuanced interdisciplinary study, but it can also afford the drawback of enabling 'an arbitrary and ill-considered use of the term' (Parry: 2004, 3). McLeod goes on to encourage us to broach any use of the term postcolonial 'with a healthy degree of self-consciousness and suspicion' (McLeod: 2000, 3), thus enabling an engagement with this theoretical tool in a manner that helps us to grasp that 'out of its very variety comes possibility, vitality and challenge' (McLeod: 2000, 3). Furthermore, McLeod continues:

Perhaps articulating 'postcolonialism' can be defended on the grounds that it serves as a constant reminder of the historical contexts of both oppression and resistance which inform literature in the colonial period and its aftermath; it provides us with a challenging, innovative set of concepts which we can bring to bear in our reading practices, perhaps making us change some habits of mind; and it reminds readers that 'English Literature' is only a small part of the literatures in English that are available today. Attending to cultural, historical, social, political and geographical differences is paramount; but so is thinking between and across differences too. (McLeod: 2000, 258)

McLeod's words are important, especially when we think about Braidotti's ideas about 'thinking through flows and interconnections ... [and]... in-between flows of data' (Braidotti: 2008, 2), and these are the very 'challenging and innovative' (McLeod: 2000, 258) aspects of postcolonial theory that I want to utilize, facilitated by a certain amount of postmodern thought.

Hall probes the epistemological problems of the postcolonial in a manner which has a number of allusions to our earlier discussion of the Gothic:

We always knew that the dismantling of the colonial paradigm would release strange demons from the deep, and that these monsters might come trailing all sorts of subterranean material. Still, the awkward twists and turns, leaps and reversals in the ways the argument is being conducted should alert us to the sleep of reason that is beyond or after Reason, the way desire plays across power and knowledge in the dangerous enterprise of thinking at or beyond the limit. (Hall: 1996, 259)

It is this very 'thinking at or beyond the limit' (Hall: 1996, 259) that forms a bond between postcolonialism and the Gothic within a literary perspective. The novel allows the space for many interesting conversations to occur between the two. There is also a connection here

between Hall's words and something said by Mbembe in an online interview about the nature of postcolonial thinking. With specific reference to racism as 'the wild region, the beast, of European humanism' (Mbembe: 2008) Mbembe says that:

postcolonial thinking aims to take the beast's skeleton apart, to flush out its favourite places of habitation. More radically, it seeks to know what it is like to live under the beast's regime, what kind of life it offers, and what sort of death people die from. (Mbembe: 2008)

Within the context of literature, if we are to develop multi-faceted 'perceptions and ideas...about what might be in the text' (Punter: 2000, 10), then postcolonial thinking may well imbue one of the conversations we might have during our readings. Writers that have some connection with geographical locations, and cultures who have experienced some aspect of 'the beast of European humanism' (Mbembe: 2008) and colonial practice, may well be engaging with their own 'demons from the deep [and] subterranean material' (Hall: 1996, 259).

Mbembe also makes another interesting point about postcolonial thinking that puts forward an explanation about why this field of study can appear somewhat disorderly and unsystematic. Trying to find a concise description of what postcolonialism actually is can be exasperating (but this is no different to trying to find a concise description of the Gothic, the novel or postmodernism), and on this note, Mbembe points out that 'it's a fragmented way of thinking, which is both a strength and weakness [and]...it would, in my opinion be an exaggeration to call it a "theory"' (Mbembe: 2008). He follows this with words that, for me, could just as easily be applied to ideas of the novel and the Gothic 'in truth, [postcolonialism is] a way of thinking that derives from a number of sources and that is far from constituting a system because it is in a large part being constructed as it moves forward' (Mbembe: 2008)

I would add to this that the movement is not just forward in direction, but more rhizomatic in nature. This perspective validates my own approach to the postcolonial Gothic as a conversation. What is a conversation after all but a mobile dialogue that is constantly shifting, taking on board new ideas, thinking, engaging, exchanging, agreeing, disagreeing,

feeling and sensing emotions, listening, incorporating all those ‘wild orchestration[s] of the body’ that de Certeau avidly describes and ‘being constructed as it moves’ (Mbembe: 2008). This is why I draw on Irigaray’s ideas when thinking about reading, writing, exploring literary texts because she describes this process well in her ideas about such intersubjective relationships:

Touch which allows turning back to oneself, in the dwelling of an intimate light. But which also goes to encounter the other, illuminated-illuminating, overflowing one’s own world in order to taste another brightness. In order to give and to receive what can enlighten mortals on their path. (Irigaray: 2008, 174)

Furthermore Mbembe says that ‘postcolonial thinking is not an end in itself’. In its very movement and dynamism, both thinking and questioning are paramount. Of course, we might also consider, bearing in mind Mbembe’s idea of postcolonialism as ‘being constructed as it moves’ (Mbembe: 2008), that space itself both constitutes and is constituted by ‘stories so far’ (Massey: 2009, 9). This is important because we are using the protean ideas within the postcolonial, within the Gothic, and within the ‘plastic possibilities’ offered by the spaces within the many forms of the novel, to ask many questions and stimulate and encourage creative thinking. On this point Babette Babich puts it well when she says:

...to ask the question one needs more than a faith in answers; one needs more than belief. In place of the faith of our fathers, the faith of religion and the faith of science – in the place, that is to say, of the answer – one needs the rare ability to think, and the daring that is the exact prerequisite for its very exercise which is its only consummation. (Babich: 1990, 265)

Thus, we come back around to the importance of thinking. I will return to ‘daring’ that is ‘the prerequisite’ for such thinking in a discussion about Mallon’s approach to postcolonial writing. This strength, stemming from postcolonialism’s heterogeneity and diversity of thinking, enables us to do more than seek for ‘the answer’, it enables us to dismantle ‘the prize of thought, the illusion of the accession to the ultimate object, and offers us ‘a metonymic conduction which lines the thinker up, but not as before, either on the right, on the side of primacy, fulfilment, or truth, or on the left, on the side of failure, incompleteness, or illusion’ (Babich: 1990, 265). This ‘conduction’ in an engagement with literary texts

within the contexts I have already suggested may well bring us into contact with ‘demons from the deep [and] subterranean material’ (Hall: 1996, 259), whether we like it or not.

Having explained that it is difficult to define postcolonialism in any simple way, it remains to clarify which specific aspects of the postcolonial I wish to employ, and more specifically, how I intend to use the postcolonial within the context of the postcolonial Gothic as a means of exploring the Irish novels in this thesis. McLeod says something else in the quote above which gives a clue to why utilizing the postcolonial can be valuable, especially in conjunction with the Gothic. In his defence of articulating the postcolonial, and in his exploration of how it can inform literature, McLeod asserts that ‘it serves as a constant reminder of the historical contexts of both oppression and resistance’ (McLeod: 2000, 258). It is within the contexts of such challenging experiences of containment, suppression, and of intimidating and relentless attempts at ‘taming’, that everyday coping mechanisms and potential resistances are placed.

The literary spaces of the novel allow for creative, haptic and human explorations of how individuals exist within such contradictory and often unremitting circumstances. The novel enables feelings to be explored especially those that leave deep imprints, often these feelings can be profoundly life-changing but are nonetheless difficult to articulate in any easy fashion. It is no surprise therefore that Angela Bourke chose to present her narrative of the history of Bridget Cleary in the form of the novel, as Bourke explains:

[the] spacious narrative structure offered the possibility of assembling the facts that could be established about Bridget Cleary, her family and neighbours and presenting them within an explanatory framework that would draw on many disciplines. Readers of novels, like listeners to oral storytelling, form mental pictures of their own that enable them to navigate the complexities of narrated events. (Bourke: 2006, viii)

So, the boundaries between novel and history become blurred and the ‘texture’ (note the haptic allusion) is offered a space within which it can be articulated and disseminated – in which it can move.

Calvino says that the ‘more enlightened our houses are, the more their walls ooze with ghosts’ (Calvino: 1986, 19), and to express these thoughts more deeply and immerse them in a conversation with the postcolonial Gothic, it is worth considering how Punter elucidates the literary within the postcolonial and to connect this sense of the uncanny with Whelan’s insightful attention to memory. Whelan’s notion of memory is essentially liberatory, multiple and transformative, in this it has something in common with Boym’s ideas of the multiplicity of reflective nostalgia which ‘consists of collective frameworks that mark, but do not define the individual memory’ (Boym: 2001, xviii). Rather than memory leading to ‘midnight melancholias’ (Boym: 2001, xviii), Whelan’s point about memory is that it can present us with nuanced, ‘ethical and creative challenges’ (Boym: 2001, xviii), as Whelan himself maintains:

Memory...makes us heirs of the past (what we call heritage) and its utopian possibilities. The promise of a historical event is always more than what actually happened. There is more in the past than what happened; at any given point in time, multiple trajectories towards the future where possible. Memory can restore this openness to the past and thereby nourish the utopian instinct – we can reactivate unkept promises to create a better future by restoring lost opportunities, and betrayed possibilities...., of loss, of victimization, of humiliation. (Whelan: 2003, 93)

Just as important for Whelan (and for my intention to explore the novel with the postcolonial Gothic), is that ‘narrative means that it is always possible to tell it another way; that possibility opens a space for the “other”, a space for dialogue, a negotiation of narratives’ (Whelan: 2003, 93). For me, the novel holds a particularly creative and potentially transformative role in imagining such possibilities and multiple trajectories.

The use of the postcolonial Gothic to explore these imaginings and narratives is underscored by Punter’s description of the literary as being all that which is excluded from San Juan’s definition of literature as ‘an instance of concrete political practice which reflects the dynamic process of the national democratic revolution in the developing countries’ (San Juan: 1998, 254). Thus for Punter literature includes:

the uncanny, [engaging with]...haunting and the haunted...intimately connected with hallucination and dream...constantly in exile and in flight...always imbricated with the passions...a phenomenon of lies and truth. (Punter: 2000, 5-6)

Such ideas are veined throughout both the postcolonial and the Gothic, and moreover they echo what Whelan describes when he says that ‘radical memory allows for the parallel creation of a counterpoint history, of loss, of victimization, of humiliation’ (Whelan: 2003, 93). This is what Nietzsche means when he says that emotion and reason are integral to one another, and that the passive effect of experiencing such emotions relates directly to our capacity, not only to survive in the world, but also to thrive and create. Not only is this capacity to evaluate emotion and experiences beneficial to our way of negotiating relationships (both beneficial and destructive) but also to explore:

the relationship between, and condition of, the diverse internal phenomena of the self in the context of its environment...emotions are essential to organising and maintaining diverse bodily phenomena as a whole. Emotions provide vital guidance and feedback to the self in the process of adjusting to the environment while maintaining a balanced self-organisation. (Kerruish: 2009, 24)

Hence the postcolonial Gothic embraces and actively encourages emotion through the act of reading as a creative and life-enhancing tool. It also acknowledges the experiences explored within postcolonial theories, such as implications of otherness; violence; loss and trauma; constructions of narratives that form (sometimes divergent) identities; voices that are excluded but remain as the ‘fascinating presence of absences’ (de Certeau: 1984, 21); periphery/centre; home and exile; and language, that pose deep threats to that search for ‘a balanced self-organisation’ within the self (Kerruish: 2009, 24). Min-ha talks about the possibilities of initiating silences and rhythms within texts and how:

rhythm can only be created if one works on relationships, which means...that you do not just focus on the object of observation or on advancing an argument, but musically as well as conceptually, on the reverberations and the links created in the process you have initiated. It is in drawing new relationships among old objects that changes can be affected on these very objects and that an unspoken space can be opened up...when you let things resonate and approach them indirectly, you are opening up a space in which absence and presence never work as mere oppositions. So, although you cannot be exhaustive and totalizing, you are not excluding either. Silence here resonates differently. It is not equated with absence, lacuna or emptiness, it is a different sound or...a ‘soundless’ space of resonance, and a language of its own. (Min-ha: 2001, 7-8)

It is within these spaces that resonate with absence and presence that the postcolonial Gothic moves; both are deeply concerned with phantoms and the flesh and blood of bodies, with voices that subjugate and those that are subdued. Its radicalism lies in that it can draw ‘new

relationships among old objects' (Minh-ha: 2001, 7). For me, the postcolonial Gothic recognises the "soundless" space of resonance' (Minh-ha: 2001, 8) as one which is intensely perceptible, not just within aberrant ghost stories or with the appearance of fantastic monsters and extraordinary surroundings, but within everyday experience and routine.³⁹

Using specific references to de Certeau's ideas on everyday life, I will explore how notions of memory, haunting, searches for identity and meaning in life are underpinned by acute and at times uncanny experiences of quotidian sensory perception. In this way, the Gothic works within areas like the home, the body, nature and the land, household objects and trinkets, photographs, flowers and intimate relationships; it can offer pronounced illumination of how it *feels* to cope in a place that has had bitter experience of colonization. For me, the everyday is important in the postcolonial Gothic because it accentuates what Calvino calls the 'relationship between the phantom lightness of ideas and the heavy weight of the world' (Calvino: 1986, 49).

Georges Perec has written about the significance of everyday experience, even in the face of the bleakest of life's circumstances. In a discussion about Robert Antelme's book *L'Espèce humaine*, an account of his experience in concentration camps, Perec highlights how Antelme noticed that people latched onto 'a notion of terror' (Perec: 2008, 255) about the camps but were unable to 'understand, nor to think more deeply about them' because beyond that terror 'there was nothing, they didn't understand, couldn't imagine' (Perec: 2008, 255). What Antelme does is to avoid the 'horror image' (Perec: 2008, 255) and attempts at explanations, Perec continues:

³⁹ Raymond Tallis differentiates between sensory perception and extra-sensory perception, he says: 'the truly awoken imagination, ordinary 'voyance' (about whose existence there can be no question) is more mysterious than clairvoyance' (Tallis: 1997, 178). For Tallis, those who are preoccupied with magic do *not* have a well-developed sense of imagination; rather it is those who discover 'the sense of enchantment of the everyday' (Tallis: 1997, 178) that possess a deep understanding that it is within our encounters of everyday life that the mysteries of the world are located.

Instead there is time dragging itself out, a chronology that hesitates, a present moment that persists, hours that never end, moments of vacancy and unconsciousness, days without a date, brief instants of an 'individual destiny', hours of abandonment. (Perec: 2008, 257)

What is shown here is that the everyday, within its ostensible triviality, can hold all of the terrors or joys that we can imagine, but it is expressed in a way that does not numb thought; on the contrary, it encourages thinking. For Perec the importance of literature lies in this way of expressing life, as he says:

This is how literature begins, when, in and through language, the transformation begins – which is far from self-evident and far from immediate – that enables an individual to become aware, by expressing the world and by addressing others. (Perec: 2008, 266)

Both the postcolonial and the Gothic can express their concerns quite profoundly when embedded within an articulation of the everyday, and they can perform such expressions to great effect within the novel. De Certeau has written extensively on the everyday, and it is his work that holds some resonance with the concepts of the subaltern project. The space of the novel, and the conversations of the postcolonial Gothic, are populated by 'everyday virtuositities that science does not know what to do with and which become the signatures, easily recognised by readers, of everyone's micro-stories' (de Certeau: 1984, 70). Indeed, following de Certeau's thinking, the everyday takes on a radical, transformative guise; a guise that the postcolonial and the Gothic would both recognise:

Objects and words also have hollow places in which a past sleeps, as in the everyday acts of walking, eating, going to bed, in which ancient revolutions slumber... There is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence, spirits one can 'invoke' or not. Haunted places are the only ones people can live in – and this inverts the schema of the Panopticon. (de Certeau: 1984, 108)

Thus, the everyday holds traces of radical practice and all space is haunted. If the Panopticon is subverted by ghosts 'hidden there in silence' then the assumption of constant surveillance is undermined.

Stephen Howe has commented that the use of literary theory in Irish postcolonial study, rather than fostering a trans-disciplinary environment, is instead perceived by some historians as potentially 'producing new barriers or clashes between disciplines' (Howe: 2005, 108). Moreover, he cites Nicholas Canny as saying lecturers in 'literature, social

sciences etc. are colonising history as their own' (Howe: 2005, 108), and presents the view that in Ireland 'it sometimes seems as if everything begins with politics, becomes mystique, and ends as literary theory' (Howe: 2005, 144). Eóin Flannery has countered Howe's attempts to dismiss such approaches with the view that:

it ignores the fact that literatures and writers were, and are, hugely constitutive of cultures of resistance and solidarity in colonial and postcolonial milieus –literary theory does not replace the political, the economic or the historical; it is implicated in all of them. Literature and literary theory are facts of material culture... (Flannery: 2009, 226)

Literature, then, is intimately integrated within postcolonial study, not as an appealing ornament or static reservoir for universal 'truths', but as a complex, mobile tempero-spatial multiplicity which can give voice to that which has been excluded from more formal or official discourses. Calvino cautions that wherever writers and literature are discriminated against, banned or persecuted then 'fiction, poetry, and literary criticism in such countries acquire unusual political specific gravity' (Calvino: 1986, 96).

Punter's words about the presence of the 'passions' in the literary; Nietzsche's awareness of the importance of emotions in surviving and thriving in the world; and Kiberd's and Doody's reminders that the literary has room for the 'messy' and 'muddy' human experiences, are also echoed by Calvino when he states that we need writers to call our attention to and:

guarantee the survival of what we call human in a world where everything appears inhuman; guarantee the survival of human discourse to console us for the loss of humanity in every other discourse and relationship. And what do we mean by human? Usually, whatever is temperamental, emotional, ingenuous, and not at all austere. (Calvino: 1986, 95)

Here we return to the notion that the literary enterprise may indeed be one of health, of survival and of thriving. Perhaps this is one reason why postcolonial study has such an affinity with the literary, not specifically due to any notions of writing back, but more generally for attempting to create something positive out of the mire of history and memory. This may also be why the postcolonial has such an affinity with the Gothic as a narrative trope, as the Gothic has its own history of reminding us of what we try to suppress or ignore.

It points towards Whelan's notion of narrative being important in exploring 'multiple trajectories' or, to borrow Calvino's term, as an 'open encyclopaedia', where knowledge is not encompassed in the completed closure of a totalizing circle with 'but, like space itself, is 'potential, conjectural, and manifold' (Calvino: 1996, 116)

One of the other heated areas of contention within postcolonial study is the way in which postmodern theories are regularly recruited in an effort to explain and interpret postcolonial encounters, whether textual, or geographical, or both. Willy Maley sums up the often hard-hitting exchanges with the frank comment that 'a postmodern punch beats a postcolonial kick' (Maley 1996, 37). Furthermore, Loomba notes that a certain wariness has crept into the reception of postcolonialism, a feeling echoed by Hall when he says that the whole concept of postcolonialism 'has become the bearer of such powerful unconscious investments – a sign of desire for some, and equally for others, a signifier of danger' (Hall 1996: 242). This wariness was felt especially by 'Third World' academics, precisely because of the idea of postmodernism being somewhat distanced from them and from their specific locations. Indeed, Ella Shohat has called postcolonialism to task by commenting that irrespective of postcolonialist theory's 'dizzying multiplicity of positionalities' (Shohat: 1992, 99), it has 'curiously not addressed the politics of location of the very term "post-colonial"' (Shohat: 1992, 99). Equally, when Aijaz Ahmad speaks of 'the jargon of postcolonial theory' (Ahmad: 1997, 362) and cites postmodern thinkers such as Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard as the initiators of this jargon, he is putting the connections between postcolonial and postmodern theories under severe scrutiny. To Ahmad's mind, the application of the term 'postcolonial' to such a wide ranging area across the globe renders it 'remarkably elastic' (Ahmad: 1997, 366). The effect of a postcolonial theorist like Gayatri Spivak, who makes much use of Derridean theory in her work, is that 'her deconstructionist intervention in matters of writing the history of the wretched of this earth is to make radically

impossible the writing of that kind of social history' (Ahmad: 1997, 378-379).⁴⁰ In relation to Bhabha's writing, and employment of Lacanian theory, Ahmad feels it is the case that both 'the coloniser and the colonised ... appear remarkably free of class, gender, historical time, geographical location, indeed any historicisation whatsoever' (Ahmad: 1997, 370).

Thus the issue of location, and the use of postmodern theories within the field of postcolonialism, raises its head again. In this way Ahmad is broaching the very necessary point, one preceded by Sangari, that there are times when such postmodern epistemology can be seen to use the 'whole world as its raw material' (Ahmad: 1997, 370). Sangari has made some pertinent points on this matter of a certain disregard for location:

postmodernism does have a tendency to universalize epistemological preoccupations – a tendency that appears even in the work of critics of radical political persuasion...On the one hand, the world contracts into the West...the postmodern problematic becomes the frame through which the cultural products of the rest of the world are seen. On the other hand, the West expands into the world; late capitalism muffles the globe and homogenizes (or threatens to) all cultural production-, this, for some reason, is one "master narrative" that is seldom dismantled as it needs to be if the differential economic, class and cultural formation of 'Third World' countries is to be taken into account'. (Sangari: 1987, 183)

Thus the postcolonial's relationship with this sort of postmodern 'master narrative' threatens to undermine the whole enterprise. We need to realise that, as Sangari continues, 'the postmodern preoccupation with the crisis of meaning is not everyone's crisis (even in the West)' (Sangari: 1987, 184).

The postmodern perception of the world then might be described as something of a master narrative in its own right. Thus it would appear problematic when I attempt to utilize theorists like Deleuze and Guattari to underscore a postcolonial perspective, especially when Hall has made the comment:

Is globalization nothing but the triumph and closure of history by the West? Is this the final moment of a global post-modern where it now gets hold of everybody, of everything, where there is no difference which it cannot contain, no otherness it cannot speak, no marginality which it cannot take pleasure out of?...It is just another face of the final triumph of the West. I know that position. I know

⁴⁰ Ahmad uses the work of theorists such as Said, Spivak, Bhabha, Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths to show how expansively the term is applied, see page 365-366 of his article.

it is very tempting. It is what I call ideological post-modernism: I can't see round the edge of it and so history must have just ended. That form of post-modernism I don't buy. It is what happens to ex-Marxist French intellectuals when they head for the desert. (Hall, 1997: 33)

Furthermore, the Nigerian writer Denis Ekpo feels that postmodernism does not offer much for the colonised subject. For Ekpo postmodernism is 'nothing but the hypocritical self-flattering cry of the bored and spoilt children of hypercapitalism' (Ekpo: 1995, 114).

If we reduce the individual to a mere discursive subject, it may also be easy to turn away and become unable to cope with any sense of brutality or violence. This is one of the ideas that Banville explores in *The Book of Evidence* (Banville: 1989), as the main protagonist commits the brutal murder of a woman in order that he can complete the theft of a painting of a woman with whom he has become obsessed— the discursive subject wins out over the subject of flesh-and-blood. Such approaches may assist a path towards a negation of responsiveness. In a passage that draws upon how science practices vivisection and which then relates this idea directly to how we can so easily come to view those in other cultures that are perceived as under-developed, Babich states:

Like the project of third world development that has built the infrastructure for today's globalized world economy, like the medical school's cadaver, the silenced dog, or the similarly silenced and immobilized cat, is "used" for medical instruction and demonstration, that is to say, for practicing surgical procedures, in utter inattention to the animal under the knife. Along the way one learns the ideal of "objectivity," learning to negate "sentimental" responsiveness, sympathy, empathy, an inculcation assured by deliberately discarding the experimental "object"...the experimental "scene" with all its blood and its literal and metaphorical life —"sacrifice" is to be repeated again and again. (Babich: 2006, 142)⁴¹

⁴¹ Babich is drawing on the work of Shiv Visvanathan here, especially in 'On the Annals of the Laboratory State' and also Irigaray's term - 'scientific "schiz"' (Babich: 2006, 142), taken from Irigaray's article 'In Science, is the subject Sexed?' in Gary Gutting (2005) *Continental Philosophy of Science, Oxford: Blackwell*, 283-292 (see Babich (2006), 312 note 16). Babich uses Irigaray's model of the business which keeps two sets of books to highlight how we are capable of holding ethical, empathetic views for some people (or perhaps I should say some *living creatures*), but those views can be strangely absent for others. In a passage that I feel needs reiterating here, the lack of empathy and disregard cited for any feeling one might have in being attached to one's home has a distinct bearing upon Irish postcolonial history. Visvanathan cites a moving letter from Guyana's Akawaio Indians on being asked to vacate their homes for the sake of development of the land:

This land is where we belong - it is God's gift to us and has made us as we are. This land is where we are at home; we know its way: and the things that happen here are known and remembered, so that the stories the old people told are still alive here.... This land is the place where we know where to find all that it provides for us - food for hunting and fishing, and farms, building and tools, materials, medicines. Also the spirits around us know us and are friendly and helpful.... If we had to move, we

There is no doubt that reducing a living, breathing person to something that Ahmad describes as ‘remarkably free of class, gender, historical time, geographical location’ (Ahmad:1997, 370), like the ‘silenced dog’ or cat, could lead to a negation of empathy, an inability to listen. With all of that firmly in mind there might just be some ways in which encountering the discursive subject, especially within a literary text, could be of some benefit in the act of creative thinking.

A number of these same critics also feel that a rather neglectful approach has been taken in the context of the specificity of location, especially in relation to the postcolonial subject. I am keen to broach these concerns as I have utilized postmodernist / poststructuralist theorists such as Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, de Certeau, Lyotard, Braidotti, Cixous, and Irigaray. Thus, in light of the issues raised by critics, I feel an onus to explain why I feel their works are useful in my postcolonial Gothic dialogue. Moreover, I will attempt to clarify why I have utilized the postcolonial to explore the literary texts and why I feel it opens up a fruitful flow of communication with the Gothic.

In terms of a crisis of meaning Sangari does issue a note of caution, one that Braidotti repeats in the first publication of *Metamorphoses* in 2002, and one which Irigaray reflects deeply upon in the initial publication of *The Way of Love*, also in 2002:

If the crisis of meaning in the West is seen as the product of a historical conjuncture, then perhaps the refusal either to export it or to import it may be a meaningful gesture, at least until we can replace the stifling monologues of self and other (which however disordered or decentered, remain the orderly discourses of the bourgeois subject) with a genuinely dialogic and dialectical history that can account for the formation of different selves and the construction of different epistemologies. (Sangari: 1987, 186)

would be lost to those who remain in other villages. This would be a sadness to us all, like the sadness of death. (Visvanathan: 1990,290)

As Visvanathan states, this letter is now their obituary. An interesting point here is the importance allocated to the fact that ‘the stories that old people told are still alive here’. This is why stories are so important. They are a part of the space we occupy which is itself, as Doreen Massey notes, a multiplicity of ‘stories so far’ (Massey: 2009, 9).

Subsequently, fifteen years later, Braidotti is saying something the same when she comments that in 'late postmodernity the centre merely becomes fragmented, but that does not make it any less central, or dominating. It is important to resist the uncritical reproduction of Sameness on a molecular, global or planetary scale' (Braidotti: 2008, 13-14).

So, just how can postmodern thinking offer something that can be of use to the postcolonial Gothic ideas? Mallon, working within the field of postcolonial study, has talked about how when we push 'the nuances, the internal tensions, and contradictions' of a dialogue aside, we then lose 'the very stuff of which meaningful academic discussion is made' – all in an effort to plump for 'the correct way' (Mallon: 1994, 1501), in other words, for another form of 'the answer' (Babich: 1990, 265). Mallon has introduced the term 'fertile tensions', and it is one that I find particularly useful in light of my discussion above; the term is creatively fruitful and yet does not ignore the way in which theories and conversations can have their ambiguities, inconsistencies, and at times astounding paradoxes and significant challenges. Mallon, in an article that thinks through the difficulties of working with postmodern ideas within a 'politically committed intellectual project' (Mallon: 1994, 1515), suggests that to utilise this 'conduction', this transport, to places that do more than seek 'the answer', we must learn to become 'stunt riders' (Mallon: 1994, 1515). As it happens, we need to be prepared to take 'the most dangerous and improbable option [and perform the stunt of] riding several steeds at all times!' (Mallon: 1994, 1515), and Loomba finishes her book on postcolonial studies with this very idea (see Loomba: 2001, 253-254).

It could be that a deliberate sense of play might just be the aspect of postmodern thinking that gives us the confidence to be 'stunt riders' at all. Mallon certainly adds to her ideas a sense of the seriousness and integrity of the endeavour. Her suggestion about the way we should approach our research is one which I find fruitful:

it is the process itself that keeps us honest: getting one's hands dirty in the archival dust, one's shoes encrusted in the mud of field work; confronting the surprises, ambiguities, and unfair choices of daily life, both our own and those of our "subjects". (Mallon: 1994, 1507)

The process may be long and yield modest amounts of knowledge, but Mallon echoes Alan Bennett in his observations about the sense of touch at the heart of reading, in that sometimes we make contact with a travel-companion in the shadows:

occasionally, just for a moment, someone comes out of the shadows and walks next to us. When, in a flash of interactive dialogue, something is revealed; when, for a brief span, the curtain parts and I am allowed a partial view of protagonist's motivations and internal conflicts – for me, those are the moments that make the quest worthwhile. (Mallon: 1994, 1507)

Just as reading the novel enables us to encounter benevolent haunting, so to might a dialogue between the postcolonial and the Gothic. It is possible that a sense of play might actually help us in the ultimate seriousness of our endeavours, in our search for illuminations of sorts. Can we not utilize some of the fertile postmodern theories as tools in a similar way that Ashcroft speaks of language, that is as 'a tool' which can be 'employed for various purposes, a tool which is itself part of the cultural experience in which it is used' (Ashcroft: 2009, 4)? Spivak has remarked in her preface to *Of Grammatology*:

...if the assumption of responsibility for one's discourse leads to the conclusion that all conclusions are genuinely provisional therefore inconclusive, all origins are similarly unoriginal, that responsibility itself must co-habit with frivolity, this need not be a case for gloom. (Spivak: 1997, xiii)

At this juncture, we recall Nietzsche's aphorism that one of the ways to embody mature manhood is to have 'reacquired the seriousness one had as a child at play' (Nietzsche: 1997, 48, no 94). Suddenly, play emerges from the shadows with a different appearance. I previously cited Cixous as saying 'we no longer know how to read. We used to read when we were children and knew how violent reading can be' (Cixous: 1993, 20), her words take on an even richer meaning now.

The very notion of frivolity and play immediately mobilizes an image of the child and childlike behaviour. Is this suited to the seriousness of literary study, especially when we include postcolonial concerns in any theoretical conversations? Through what we might call the seriousness of play, a performative act that does not turn away from chaos and disorder in life, we might come into touch with the unstinting notion that the 'human being is the witness

to what gigantic powers can be set in motion through a small being of myriad content...Beings that play with the stars' (Babich: 2006, 182).

The potential seriousness of play can offer some perspective on the ways through which we might observe life, how we experience it and it might just be of use within postcolonial thinking; again Nietzsche comes to mind when he says:

At times we need to have a rest from ourselves and...from an artistic distance laughing at ourselves or crying at ourselves; we have to discover the hero no less than the fool in our passion for knowledge. (Nietzsche: 2008, 104 no. 107)

Minh-ha says something similar in her discussion of 'talking nearby instead of talking about' which can serve to 'make visible the invisible' (Minh-ha: 1999, 218). She goes on to stress that 'truth can only be approached indirectly if we don't want to lose it and find oneself hanging onto dead, empty skin' (Minh-ha: 1999, 219). This sense of play of course, has resonances with my earlier discussion of the Andoque narrations of the axe.

Their transformative use of the axe says a great deal about the way the postcolonial Gothic moves within the narrative structure of the novel. It underpins and exudes so much of how I envisage the way that postcolonial, Gothic and postmodern ideas can work together. Firstly, the act speaks of the subaltern facet of the postcolonial, of how voices and experiences that were almost wiped out, find their own way to articulate the past and lead themselves into the future in a manner that anticipates work such as Boym's reflective nostalgia. Secondly, the way in which the Andoque use notions of dream and play and recognise that the axe is a deconstructive symbol, is greatly suggestive of how I see postmodern tools being useful for postcolonial thinking. In both of these cases, they put into practice what Ashcroft says about postcolonial cultures using language as a creative tool. Thirdly, the Gothic is present throughout the whole process in the way that ghosts, both of past violence and trauma and also of happiness and joy, are acknowledged and all are able to assist in the journey to a future that looks backward and forward at the same time. It is also a Gothic of the everyday in that the axe is a tool that is rooted in agricultural practice, building,

and clearing trees. As such, the ghosts are not bizarre or out of the ordinary, rather they are commonplace and manifold. Finally, I see, in the way the axe is turned into breath, the very essence of the story and the importance of narrative in our lives. In this way, storytelling acts as a facilitator to deal with aspects of life that can be painful or too difficult to confront head on. I return to Minh-ha's thoughts when she says about the important act of 'speaking nearby' which is 'a great challenge...this is not just a technique or a statement to be made verbally. It is an attitude in life, a way of positioning oneself in relation to the world' (Minh-ha: 199, 218). These words articulate the 'great challenge' that is undertaken by the postcolonial Gothic in the novel; one a vast, diverse cultural and theoretical project, the other an audacious and slippery literary theme, genre, trope, discourse or conceptual strategy – but somehow the two speak to one another.

We might also recall from the Ashcroft epigraph that the reciprocal nature of our readings of places, texts, the world, is maintained chiefly by an ongoing and important 'conversation with significant others' (Ashcroft: 2009, 76-77). Now this thoughtful conversation is reminiscent of something Derrida says about telepathy and communication, especially tactile communications from a distance:

we would not have moved a step forward in this treatment of the dispatch [envois]...if among all these telethings we not get in touch with telepathy in person. Or rather if we didn't allow ourselves to be touched by her. Yes, touch. I sometimes think that thought before "seeing" or "hearing", touch, put your paws on it, or that seeing and hearing come back to touch at a distance – a very old thought, but it takes some archaic to get to the archaic...The truth, what I always have difficulty getting used to: that nontelepathy is possible. Always difficult to imagine that one can think something to oneself..., deep down inside, without being surprised by the other, without the other being immediately informed...[d]ifficult to imagine what they still call the unconscious without a theory of telepathy. (Derrida: 2007, 236-237)⁴²

⁴² For me 'envoi' relates so much to the reader/writer relationship and the repeated and diffuse tactile transmissions that occur between the two – writing, reading, re-writing, re-reading; the haunting Gothicized traits of touch from a distance. It illuminates and challenges the 'privilege given to immediacy' (Derrida: 2005, 127) in touching and connects with Jean- Luc Nancy's ideas that the writer 'touches by way of addressing himself, sending himself *to* the touch of something outside, hidden, displaced, spaced...Writing is thinking addressed' (Nancy: 2008, 17).

Furthermore, I suggest that within the postcolonial Gothic as a conversational undertaking, we are confronted with a dilemma, similar to the one to which Derrida relates, by equating psychoanalysis with ‘an adventure of modern rationality’ in that it is:

set on swallowing and simultaneously rejecting the foreign body named Telepathy, assimilating it and vomiting it up without being able to make up its mind to do one or the other...[it is] the speaking scar of the foreign body...’ (Derrida: 2007, 261).

Thus, the experience of conflict or discomfort, when engaging in the postcolonial Gothic dialogue within the novel, is precisely because in a world that does not know how to touch otherness save for ‘assimilating it and vomiting it up’, it has become ‘the speaking scar of the foreign body’ (Derrida: 2007, 261). I suggest that in order to imagine the gestures we might use to truly touch otherness, to remind us that ‘the most rational knowledge is first mystical’ (Irigaray: 2008, 3), we could do much worse than avail of courageous, serious play.

Such a tactic, that of Mallon’s stunt rider, might enable us to locate ‘an artistic, musical, touchful way of speaking or saying’, that might enable us to ‘talk with the other, to listen to the other’ (Irigaray: 2008, xx). With this in mind, I submit the idea that the novel, with its penchant for delving into vomit and other bodily fluids and functions as the ‘receptive home of all substance – bones, blood, feathers, shit’ (Doody: 1997, 478); together with the Gothic which engages with ‘an array of bodily wastes such as blood, vomit, saliva, sweat, tears and putrefying flesh’ (Hurley: 2007, 138); and the postcolonial, which bends ‘closer to the ground in order to pick up the traces of a subaltern life’ (Guha: 1987, 138), all operate in an elemental flow that embraces metamorphosis and room for diverse expression. They provide a dynamic space with ‘multiplicity and space as co-constitutive’ (Massey: 2009, 9) that ‘makes room for a genuine multiplicity of trajectories, and thus potentially of

voices' (Massey: 2009, 55); here we can approach, not assimilate, that which has been retched up.⁴³

De Certeau adds more substance to the ways in which we might experience other voices, or what he calls the 'presence of diverse absences' (de Certeau: 1984, 108). The haunting air of expelled and previously unheard voices holds an almost imperceptibly radical quality, as it has the 'potential to alter the expeller (even if momentarily) and to unbind the archival impulse' (Highmore: 2006, 91). He develops this idea using the example of Jean de Léry's writings about the Tupis Indians of Brazil, and shows that, although their songs are missing from his texts ('a purloined memory beyond the text'), de Léry is nevertheless haunted by them in a profoundly haptic sense. De Certeau, quoting de Léry, conveys how the 'joy' of songs haunted de Léry so that he was 'completely ravished' as their music 'still rings in my ears' (de Certeau: 1988, 213). It is an experience that recalls Derrida's 'haptology of the heart' (Derrida: 2005, 251), indeed for de Léry upon remembering the songs 'my heart throbs' (de Certeau: 1988, 213). These ideas of 'purloined' memories are also suggestive of Kiberd's 'messy phenomena' within the literary in that they can help to 'complete the picture' (Kiberd: 1996, 646) and give a more complete narrative.

De Certeau, then, is attempting to give voice to those who have been erased from the archive. It is this act of erasure that enables him to hear those voices as a 'vast, undifferentiated expanse of silence' (Highmore: 2006, 90): the sound of the 'presence of an absence'. As Highmore affirms:

the epistemological "no" of the archive leading to a presence, transformed into a potential "yes" (which is never the complete concretization of the Archival impulse of the scriptural economy) through a schema which suggests that the archive is fashioned out of what it attempts to tame'. (Highmore: 2006, 93)

⁴³ Tabish Khair (2009) has also expressed this mutual concern of otherness between the Gothic and postcolonialism along with the challenges presented by narrating the subaltern within a postcolonial context and the representation of difference in his book *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere*.

Listening to the rhythms of such presences as absences is Angela Bourke's quest when she makes the strangely unforgettable statement about Bridget Cleary that 'although she was literate, however, and by all accounts highly articulate, no written word of hers survives' (Bourke: 2006, viii). Bourke then goes on to tell the story of Bridget in the form of a novel. I suggest that such listening is also the quest of the novelists in this study, as they seek to reveal that which cannot ultimately be fully restricted or constrained. Furthermore, the desire to engage with untameable presences, and their rhythms, is also the concern of both the postcolonial and the Gothic.

Notions of haunting, emotional displacement and the detection of presence within absence might seem irrational when viewed from the perspective of Enlightenment rationality. It would appear that discussions about the relationship between the Gothic and Enlightenment and deliberations within the postcolonial project in relation to Enlightenment thinking have, in some cases, grown to be binary concepts in their own right. A sense of awareness to the presence of the potential multiplicities that reside within the term 'Enlightenment' is crucial, especially so because it is sometimes presented and reduced to a 'laundry list of stances' (Festa and Carey: 2009, 6). The semantic convolutions alone are perplexing, but an excellent discussion of the terminologies associated with the Enlightenment can be found in the 'Introduction' in Graeme Garrard's book *Counter-Enlightenments: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*. Garrard states that the term 'enlightenment' is as 'necessary to Enlightenment's enemies as it is to the Enlightenment itself' (Garrard: 2006, 9). Dipesh Chakrabarty has pointed out that the Enlightenment within postcolonial theory can at times appear as 'an imaginary figure that remains deeply embedded in clichéd and shorthand forms in some everyday habits of thought' (Chakrabarty: 2000,4). Spivak feels that 'philosophy has been and continues to be travestied in the service of the narrativisation of history' (Spivak: 1999, 9). As far as investigations of the Gothic are concerned, there are numerous citations of the Gothic as the antithesis of the Enlightenment

‘project’, or as David Denby has termed it: ‘the Enlightenment steamroller’ (Denby: 2004, 33). For example, Alexander Warwick discusses the Victorian Gothic, and states that Freud ‘mirrors the impulse of the eighteenth-century Gothic to counter (or indeed to complete) the projects of the Enlightenment by bringing apparently unaccountable mental experience within the bounds of rational enquiry’ (Warwick: 2007, 29)

Furthermore, Robert Miles talks of ‘the Gothic cusp’ (Miles: 2002, 29) that Catherine Spooner, in turn, calls ‘the moment of hesitation between barbarism and enlightenment’ (Spooner: 2007, 43). Botting adds:

In a modern sense, however, ‘culture’ and ‘Gothic’ were strictly opposed, the one defined in terms of what the other lacked or negated: Enlightenment values of the eighteenth century (reason, virtue, moderation) emerged on the basis of their difference from Gothic darkness (passion, vice, excess), in a move from feudal savagery and landed property to bourgeois exchange and commerce (Botting 1999; [reference in original]). The move imbricated ‘Gothic’ (as an invented amalgam of pre-Enlightenment forms) in the construction of new aesthetic and cultural hierarchies: Gothic ‘transgressions’ and ‘excesses’ redrew the limits of taste and acceptability; Gothic figures (monsters, vampires, ghosts, sexual deviants, criminals, foreigners) condensed (class, sexual, ethnic, colonial) anxieties and fantasies about those others occupying social, political and cultural margins. (Botting: 2007, 199)

Additionally, Botting says that Gothic literary texts are ‘attempts to explain what the Enlightenment left unexplained’, and as such, become ‘a site of struggle between enlightened forces of progress and more conservative impulses to retain continuity’ (Botting: 2001, 23). Botting also states ‘the Enlightenment, which produced the maxims and models of modern culture, also invented the Gothic’ (Botting: 2004, 13). There are also remarks about ‘Enlightenment decorum’ and ‘Enlightenment sensitivities’ (Miles: 2001, 49) that beg to be included in the comment about ‘shorthand notations’ and ‘familiar abstractions’ that Festa and Carey mention (Festa and Carey: 2009, 11). Moreover, Smith and Hughes explore trajectories connecting Gothic and postcolonial study with ‘the presence of a shared interest in challenging post-enlightenment notions of rationality (Smith and Hughes: 2003, 1).

The Enlightenment, then, is located as a major site of reference for both the postcolonial and the Gothic. Smith and Hughes note the way that a postcolonial approach to

the Gothic, especially if drawing upon a poststructuralist philosophical stance, can further explore the challenging aspects of the Gothic. They assert that:

Postcolonialism helps to isolate images of Self and Other in such a way that they identify how a particular brand of colonial politics works towards constructing difference, whilst at the same time indicating the presence of the inherently unstable version of the subject on which such a politics rest. In other words, postcolonialism explains the Gothic by other means. (Smith and Hughes: 2003, 4)

Scrutiny of the Enlightenment as a cluster of perceptions, theories and opinions is especially valuable in view of the work that is currently being carried out to re-examine some key terms and assumptions within Enlightenment studies. Braidotti sees the need to ‘develop a reasoned and secular account of Enlightenment-based humanism’ within postcolonialism, and she calls for ‘a revised and more critical brand of humanistic thought and practice’, which is to be striven for from a ‘location of historical accountability’ and cultivated out of ‘the debris of unkept promises’ (Braidotti: 2008, 255). This action may in itself become a ‘form of resistance’ (Braidotti: 2008, 255).

Haraway has made some interesting points here that relate directly to Braidotti’s perspective:

Shaped as an insider and an outsider to the hegemonic power and discourses of my European and North American legacies, I remember that anti-Semitism and misogyny intensified in the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution of early modern Europe, that racism and colonialism flourished in the travelling habits of the cosmopolitan Enlightenment and that the intensified misery of billions of men and women seems organically rooted in the freedoms of transnational capitalism and technoscience. But I also remember the dreams and achievements of contingent freedoms, situated knowledges and relief of suffering that are inextricable from this contaminated triple historical heritage. I remain a child of the Scientific revolution, the Enlightenment and technoscience. (Haraway: 1997, 3)

Haraway reminds us that as we engage in the acts of reading or writing, in order to have any sense of integrity within a venture of radicalism, we must remember that ‘my modest witness can never be simply oppositional’ (Haraway: 1997, 3). Bhabha, in a call for a version of subaltern secularism, has pointed out that, ‘the trouble with concepts like individualism, liberalism or secularism is that we think we understand them too well’ (Bhabha: 2001, 208). Expanding upon notions of secularism, Bhabha says that, being grounded in a ‘liberalism devoid of the crucial interpolation of its colonial history’, it views the world from its location of privilege and thus perceives ‘a world of equal individuals who determine their lives, and

the lives of others, rationally and commonsensically' (Bhabha: 2001, 209). Bhabha argues that a secularism viewed from a subaltern perspective will give voice to those who have previously been excluded from such privilege. Furthermore, for Bhabha:

The process of choice, and the ethics of coexistence come from the social space which has to be communally shared with 'others,' and from which solidarity is not simply based on similarity but on the recognition of difference. (Bhabha: 2001, 211)

Following on from Braidotti's idea of a 'form of resistance' (Braidotti: 2008, 255), de Certeau perceives that 'modernity' as an identikit is 'always going to be inadequate for describing actuality'; it is rather the 'dynamic suturing of past and present, as well as the failure of this suturing' (Highmore: 2006, 82). De Certeau's study *The Possession at Loudon* shows how:

in seventeenth-century Europe, scientific knowledge becomes more and more dominant as an explanatory form, but it doesn't simply win out; it doesn't eviscerate religious belief. Religious practices, religious beliefs become more and more marginalized in certain societies, at certain times for instance, and in this way they become altered, pushed underground, but not fully liquidated. (Highmore: 2006, 82)

Subaltern secularism connects strongly with Massey's ideas of space as a multiplicity of 'stories so far' (Massey: 2009, 9), and with Irigaray's and Braidotti's calls for recognising difference and dispensing with the cult of sameness, through nomadic philosophy. Similarly, it speaks to the novel as a space for encounters with the complexity that the postcolonial Gothic engenders.

What becomes apparent is that complex imaginings require a spacious home in which to move about. If, as de Certeau asserts in the opening epigraph, 'every story is a travel story – a spatial practice' (de Certeau: 1984, 115), then we may need to explore the novel as more than a home or location within which things happen. Thinking about the novel as a 'receptive home of all substance' (Doody: 1997, 478) brings me to a description of home by Said. It is an interpretation that also alludes to an expression of the novel and hints at the tempero-spatial multiplicity that Massey argues for:

The inside of a house...acquires a sense of intimacy, security, real or imagined, because of the experiences that come to seem appropriate for it. The objective space of a house – its corners, corridors, cellar, rooms – is far less important than what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually a quality with an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel: thus a house may be haunted, or homelike, or prison like, or magical. So space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here. The same process occurs when we deal with time. (Said: 2003, 54-55)

As we can see, Said attributes to space the merging of emotional and rational thought and experience, echoing the Nietzschean idea that emotion is crucial to reason in helping us to interpret the world we inhabit. Thus the idea of touch is conveyed in hauntings and the necessity for immediacy within tactile experience is eradicated by the transformation of distance into meaning and sensation in the here and now. Mobility, and the potential for transformation, opens space up from a closed place within which activities take place, to an ‘open interactional space’ where there are ‘always connections yet to be made’ (Massey: 2009, 11). I have alluded to possible futures to be gleaned from reading/writing and creative thinking, but as Massey goes on to say ‘for the future to be open, space must be open too’ (Massey: 2009, 12).

Developing Derrida’s comment that ‘the effect of spacing already implies a textualization’, Massey asks what if we say not just the world is like a text but that the text is just like the world. For Massey, this is to avoid what she sees as the tendency to try to ‘tame the spatial into the textual’ (Massey: 2009, 54), but if we do view the textual space as part of world space, then this leads for a much more open and dynamic view of the novel. This is especially so if we view space as an ‘open, ongoing production’, which ‘makes room for a genuine multiplicity of trajectories and thus potentially of voices’ (Massey: 2009, 55). This is the kind of space that can accommodate the intensity and energy of the multiple conversations within the postcolonial Gothic wherein our reading becomes ‘doubly defamiliarized, doubly entrenched, duplicitous in the dynamic space’ of the act of reading (Wisker: 2007, 404).

The postcolonial Gothic encapsulates the spirit of ‘possibility, vitality and challenge’ (McLeod: 2000, 3); for me, both the postcolonial and the Gothic embody de Certeau’s

contention that ‘there is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence, spirits one can “invoke”, or not’ (de Certeau: 1984, 108). Such thinking and reading avoids becoming a ‘touristic delight in difference’ (Wisker: 2007, 422) by offering a textual engagement that ‘doubly destabilizes’ (Wisker: 2007, 411), and this intensification of destabilization opens up spaces in which we are haunted by the idea that within the many everyday experiences that the novel displays ‘objects and words also have hollow places in which a past sleeps’ (de Certeau: 1984, 108). It is rather a location where we might encounter ‘discrepancies, repetitions, hesitations, and uncertainties’ (Wisker: 2007, 422). It is the challenge set by creative thinking.

I would like to make a penultimate point about the writers I wish to explore next and draw attention to Denis Donoghue’s point about writing literature. Coming back to Punter’s words earlier, about the importance of listening to ‘perceptions and ideas’ (Punter: 2000, 9-10) that are in the novels, there is an onus when reading to take some delight in the way the writer has used words to convey meaning. Donoghue says that he finds it increasingly more difficult cultivate the aspects of literature he cares deeply about, such as:

aesthetic finesse, beauty, eloquence, style, form, imagination, fiction, the architecture of a sentence, the bearing of rhyme, pleasure, “how to do things with words.” It has become harder to persuade students that these are real places of interest and value in a poem, a play, a novel, or an essay. (Donoghue: 2008, 13)

I agree with Donoghue wholeheartedly; he cites many of the reasons why we have favourite books and passages that we delve into again and again. This is why we remember certain fragments from a poem or a story. On a final note, Eavan Boland shares her understanding of Irish literature:

I began to understand Irish Literature as a living web of influences and inheritances, of injuries done, of continuous, fierce disagreements. The more I came to this view, the less it seemed a diminishment. In fact, the opposite. (Boland: 2007, xii)

I anticipate a ‘fierce’ fertile and dynamic space, and a compelling description of space as ‘stories so far’ (Massey: 2009, 9).

Chapter Four: John Banville

John Banville's map of tenderness in *Kepler and Ghosts*: '...that tender burden I had been given to hold' (Banville: 1998, 178).

The notion of a tender mapping is hugely appropriate to moving in and beyond imperial cartographies of today and we believe emotional geographies help us to get to that place. (Aitken: 2009, 1)

Maps are power; everyone knows that. From the start, maps, especially nautical charts, have been instruments of conquest and empire. But this view is narrow. Some maps, for instance, are wholly imaginary... other maps caress the earth, stroke its contours, without asking for a reward. (Hassan: 2005, 1)

Francis Ponge, uncomfortable at being categorised as a poet, described his own work as 'description-definition-literary-works of art'.⁴⁴ Ponge's diverse and capacious (one might also say rhizomatic) portrait of his own writing suggests one way through which to approach the work of John Banville, in that his writing is at once poetry, prose, philosophy, art. Banville himself has described his writing thus:

The kind of writing that I do springs from an intensity of concentration that makes the words flare into what is neither prose nor poetry but something else. I don't like the definition "poetic prose," which is the worst kind of prose, I mean "poetic" in the sense of prettiness, floweriness, over-sensitiveness. But when prose is pressed on strongly enough it begins as it were to blush, blood begins to flow, and that's what makes it something that acts on the reader like poetry. It isn't poetry, but it's not prose either. (Banville Qtd. Fachinello: 2006, 41)

If Banville does not see his writing as poetry or prose then what is it? Straddled somewhere between poetry and prose, Banville locates his writing at the interstices. As he presses on language, the 'blood begins to flow' (Banville: 2010: 33-34) into liminal spaces. Blood itself

⁴⁴ Francis Ponge (1899-1988) known as an essayist, poet, art critic Ponge describes his own work thus 'description-definition-literary-artwork' (encyclopedia.stateuniversity.com/pages/7758/Francis-Ponge.html). This is also a valuable description of Banville's creative imagination. Ponge's poem, 'The Making of the Pré' [meadow], constitutes one small section at the end of a magical book encompassing art, tapestries, dictionary entries, botanical plates, musical scores, showing both French and the English translation side by side. It illustrates the view that writing is a moving synthesis of all these expressive forms or 'languages'. Ponge's signature is heavily underlined at the end of the poem and denotes the burial of the writer under the pré itself. In this way the meadow, the soil, the writer, and reader circulate in an affective cartography of death and rebirth. Ponge is one of the inspirations in Derrida's book *Signéponge/Signsponge* and Claudette Sartillot (1993) draws on Ponge's work in *Herbarium Verbarium*.

behaves as a liminal fluid and as Biale suggests ‘the very “fluidity” of blood as a symbol...gives it its power because it can be filled with a host of meanings, some of them even contradictory’ (Biale: 2007, 4). Blood, fluidity and the associated suggestions of polymorphism in the ‘host of meanings’ (Biale: 2007, 4) are significant within a postcolonial Gothic reading, as they hint at the potential for alternative productions of meaning, of transformations and of a dynamic sense of movement. All of this will become particularly important as I come to explore how Banville creates maps of tenderness in his writing.

Echoes of the Gothic emerge in the indications of blood, and recall Nietzsche’s urging to ‘write with blood and you will experience that blood is spirit’ (Nietzsche: 2006, 27-28). As blood flows, movement is subtly introduced. Additionally, the idea of wandering into spaces that are deemed ambiguous and challenging as they are not easy to define, serves to elicit the perplexing emotions that are central to the Gothic. Borders and thresholds exist between poetry and prose, and the idea of pushing against and beyond them into liminal spaces makes words transform and ‘flare into... something else’ (Banville: 2010, 33-34). Such notions of transformation and transgression, as well as being suggestive of the ambiguity of space, are not only reminiscent of the Gothic but also the postcolonial. Wisker makes some pertinent points:

Images of liminal spaces are common to the Gothic. They tend to be doorsteps or windows...and the liminal spaces of existence, hovering between being and unbeing, dead and undead. These liminal spaces and the interruptions in calm, often threatened complacency, in authorized views or orthodoxies, are figured as interstices: underneath, above, around the side of, parallel to, or in the fissures in established places and being. Liminal spaces appear in colonial texts as those *terra nullis* locations ready to be written upon, interpreted, stolen, and named. They appear in colonial and then reappear in postcolonial texts as space, identity, or interpretations of culture. (Wisker: 2007, 412)

This sense of liminality impels Banville’s work towards rhizomatic connections with the postcolonial and the Gothic. In pushing at the boundaries of poetry and prose, he creates a map of sorts; a counter-cartography that flows and operates not simply as a representation of reality but as an inventive tool for the production of meaning. If this assertion sounds too

weighty for what could be termed as amusing recreation in the shape of a fictional cartography, then de Certeau's comments on the cultural significance of games and inventions might modify that perception:

If, in every society, games make clear the formality of its practices for the reason that, outside of the conflicts of everyday life, it no longer has to be concealed, then the old game of hopscotch becomes a kind of map in which, on a series of places and according to a sum of rules, a social art unfolds a field of play in order to create itineraries, and to make use of the surprises that lie ahead. It is a scale model, a theoretical fiction. In effect, culture can be compared to this art, conditioned by places, rules, and givens; it is a *proliferation of inventions in limited spaces*. (de Certeau: 2001, viii, my emphasis)

There exists a dual role in such games or fictions as, on the one hand, the social networks of power and their compelling 'moves' become patently visible, on the other hand the power of invention enables an opening of spaces in which to play with those 'moves'. Fictional spaces, then, not only express the restrictive nature of power structures but, by thinking rhizomatically, those 'limited spaces' also provide a fertile arena for exploring the challenges of imagining life outside of those confines. By rendering them patently visible, they become less thorny to negotiate. This is what Banville sets out to do in the constricted narrative spaces he devises for both *Kepler* and *Ghosts*.

Banville's description of his creative impulse, of words being 'pressed on strongly' (Banville Qtd. Fachinello: 2010, 41), endorses Deleuze's idea that creating literature involves forcing language 'out of its usual furrows' (Deleuze: 1997, 5) or pushing language:

to a limit, to an outside or reverse side that consists of Visions and Auditions that no longer belong to any language. These visions are not fantasies, but veritable Ideas that the writer sees and hears in the interstices of language, in its intervals. They are not interruptions of the process, but breaks that form part of it, like an eternity that can only be revealed in a becoming, or a landscape that only appears in movement. (Deleuze: 1997, 5)

A clue to Banville's map of tenderness lies in the connections between his ideas of creative force and the way in which Deleuze talks about ideas that reside in 'the interstices of language' which reveal themselves as a 'landscape that only appears in movement' (Deleuze: 1997, 5). Sarraute has coined the word 'tropisms' to refer to a similar idea in that they are a dynamic 'series of moments...spontaneous, irresistible, instinctive' (Sarraute: 1963, 9).

These moments and movements also lie in the interstices of language and, echoing previous discussions of the haptic in this thesis, are thus acutely difficult to articulate:

These movements...slip through us on the frontiers of consciousness in the form of undefinable, extremely rapid sensations. They hide beneath our gestures, beneath the words we speak and the feelings we manifest, all of which we are aware of experiencing and are able to define. They...seem to me to constitute the secret source of our existence. (Sarraute: 1963, 8)

Sarraute goes on to discuss a method of communicating these moments and movements that point to the creation of a cartography, and hint at how Banville creates his own map: it is 'necessary to make them break up and spread out in the consciousness of the reader' (Sarraute: 1963, 8). By engaging in this undertaking the writer turns each fractured moment and movement into 'a hugely amplified present' (Sarraute: 1963, 8), galvanizing the reader into an awareness, however fleetingly, of those movements, moments and sensations that live in the interstices of language. I will come to explore how these 'hugely amplified presents' (Sarraute: 1963, 8) run through *Kepler* and *Ghosts*, revealing themselves as Deleuzian landscapes of movement or as Sarraute's 'tropisms' plotted in the co-ordinates of a map of tenderness. The word tenderness however is not one that has generally been applied to Banville's work.

Perhaps it is partly because of Banville's transgressive and transformative creative practices that he has often been labelled as 'difficult', his work being deemed neither easy to read nor easy to categorise. The portrayal of Banville as 'a writer's writer' irks Rüdiger Imhof, who feels strongly that Banville's writing is not to be likened to 'a big beribboned box of chocolate-coated culture' (Imhof: 1989, 13) to be effortlessly consumed in one sitting. Banville's work asks that readers make some effort and, bearing this in mind, to dismiss him as 'unrewarding to read' or 'irksome', is for Imhof just a 'silly excuse for people who are too lazy to make the effort' (Imhof: 1989, 13). Imhof's words may seem unforgiving and might be countered by saying that reading fiction is undertaken mostly for enjoyment, but Imhof is not alone in his thinking.

Kundera comments that it becomes increasingly difficult to hear anything whilst we drown ourselves in the ‘din of quick and easy answers’ (Kundera: 2003, 8) and Tallis endorses this by referring to the ‘higher prattle’ (Tallis: 2010, 67) with which we surround ourselves. There is often a compulsive desire to seek the ‘instantaneous answer’ (Babich: 1990, 265) rather than taking a slower path amidst ‘the wisdom of uncertainty’ (Kundera: 2003, 7). Imhof is suggesting then, and I agree, that Banville’s writing offers an opportunity to experience ‘a kind of stillness...with every word measured...every thought thought until it is truly thought...’ (Tallis: 2010, 68); this process inscribes the cartography of creative thinking.

Critical observations of Banville’s work also appear to correlate his sense of linguistic play with a perceived lack of emotional depth. After winning the Booker prize in 2005 for *The Sea*, an article in *The Independent* newspaper by its literary editor Tonkin Boyd, gave vent to deep unhappiness at Banville’s success. Tonkin labelled Banville’s work as displaying an ‘emotional range’ that is ‘limited’, with prose that exhibited a ‘chilly perfection’ (Tonkin: 2005). Although Monica Facchinello has noted how some reviews highlight the power afforded by Banville’s use of language, providing the reader with ‘a voluptuous, unfashionable pleasure’,⁴⁵ the notion of being ‘difficult’ continues to rear its head. An anonymous reviewer refers to Banville’s ‘linguistic pyrotechnics’ which are deemed to overshadow any ‘felt emotion’ and produce the effect of one writing with ‘a Thesaurus constantly implanted in his head’ (*The Economist*, 15 October 2005, 88).⁴⁶ Such comments bequeath Banville with what John Kenny calls a ‘caricatured extension of his own prose style’, using terms such as ‘austere, aloof, urbane, hermetic, reserved, cerebral,

⁴⁵ Written by an anonymous reviewer entitled “From the deep.” Review of *The Sea* by John Banville in *The Economist*, 15 October 2005, 88.

⁴⁶ Kakutani, Michiko. 2005. “A Wordy Widower with a Past.” Review of *The Sea* by John Banville, in the *New York Times*, 1 November, <http://www.completereview.com/reviews/banvillej/Sea.htm> [Retrieved 20th October 2010].

intellectual, precious, ironic' (Kenny: 2009, 2). The 'difficult' marker continues as Hand notes Banville's absence in Gerry Smyth's book *The Novel and the Nation* saying this demonstrates 'how difficult it is to categorise Banville's writing with reference to Irish writing/literature in general' (Hand: 2002, 5).

It would be remiss to ignore the contradictions in Banville's approach to his writing; on one hand his language is so rich, deep, and philosophically and inter-textually complex, leading him to use references that can require supplementary research. Such intricacies point towards superficial impressions of intellectual pretentiousness or to a lack of passion. Alternatively, Banville expresses surprise to Ronan Sheehan that people think they should not respond to a book unless they can utilise academic language:

Everything I intend in a book is there and can be read in the words. I like to feel that anyone can read my books and given a certain level of receptiveness – not even of intelligence – they can see exactly what I'm talking about. They may not be able to put it into words... They've been conditioned to feel that unless they use five-syllable words in a kind of critical language that they don't understand it. (Banville Qtd. Sheehan: 1979, 81-82)

Thus it is a feeling or 'level of receptiveness' (Banville: 1979, 81) that Banville seeks from his readers. Banville continues that, after reading his work, a reader might comment 'I didn't know what it was about but I liked such and such an aspect of it' (Sheehan 1979, 82); for Banville this means 'they did know what it was about because if they like that part of the book they know exactly what it was about' (Sheehan, 1979, 82). This echoes the 'enigmatic matters' (Banville: 2001, 10) experienced in *Doctor Copernicus* pointing towards the 'ideas that the writer sees and hears in the interstices of language, in its intervals' (Deleuze: 1997, 5). Banville's suggestion for receptive readings draw comparisons with Brian Massumi's suggestion of how to read Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. Massumi advocates a reading approach similar to listening to a record in that some sections do not affect the listener, however other sections reach out and 'they follow you. You find yourself humming them as you go about your daily business' (Massumi: 2008, xiv). I suggest that maps of tenderness, plotted with intense haptologies, in Banville's novels provoke similar responses

recalling that ‘writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 5).

If reviews have ascertained a lack of emotional depth in Banville’s writing, Hand counters this by noting that ‘below the stylistic veneer of Banville’s work throbs a very real stratum of emotion as he returns again and again to a common tragedy’ (Hand: 2006, ix). Hand detects the shifting emotional location expressed by Banville’s map of tenderness. The semantic diversity of the word ‘tenderness’ constitutes a depth of joyful passion in tandem with rawness, loss and pain, offering valid reasons to associate the emotion in Banville’s work with a sense of a ‘common tragedy’ (Hand: 2006, ix). But tragedy is not the only thread.

The word ‘tender’ is explored by Derrida, who sees its tactile intonations conversing with love and compassion, rawness and pain, delicacy and sensitivity, a sense of tendering a hand, subsequently in the act of reading, ‘it’s as if a hand has come out and taken yours’ (Bennett: 2004, 56). Tenderness implies both reaching out, as in tendering a hand or offering love, and contemplation or intense internal disruption whilst experiencing passion, pain or sensitivity to external influences. Thus touch, emotion and physical sensation form cartographic movements that explore, often simultaneously, both external and internal worlds – haptologies. In *Kepler* and *Ghosts*, public and intimate worlds ‘bleed into each other’ (Banville: 1998, 55).

Cartographies of intimacy transmute and adapt through the ages, they manifest as:

a corner by the window or in the hallway, a secluded spot behind the orchard, a forest clearing [or] the ostentatious bourgeois interiors of the nineteenth century with their innumerable curio cabinets and chests of drawers, to the end-of-the-twentieth-century transitory locations, the backseat of a car, a train compartment, an airport bar, an electronic homepage. (Boym: 2001, 253)

Intimacy can become a manipulated commodity and thus no more than ‘a fulfillment of the dominant cultural ideology’ (Boym: 2001, 253) but Banville’s writing has something in common with Boym’s idea of ‘diasporic intimacy’ which is ‘approached only through indirection and intimation’ (Boym: 2001, 252). In these intimate spaces, tenderness is at the

intersection where 'need and desire are joined' (Boym: 2001, 254), recognizing that 'where you are tender you speak your plural' (Barthes Qtd. Boym: 2001, 255).

Banville recognizes that spaces of intimacy often display a 'seductive tyranny' (Boym: 2001, 253) as depicted in strained, thwarted or staged sexual encounters. Examples might be the difficulties within Kepler's marriage, the 'failed first encounters' (Banville: 2001, 329) of their sexual relationship, and the dawning realization that 'they had surrendered their most intimate textures to a mere conspiracy of the flesh' (Banville: 2001, 330). Thus, for these two 'intimate strangers' (Banville: 2001, 330), tenderness turns to loathing. Freddie, in *The Book of Evidence*, finds his deepest intimacy with another human being in the act of killing. The staged sexual encounters in *Athena* once again pair two 'intimate strangers' (Banville: 2001, 330). But some of the maps of intimacy open themselves into the vast expanse of tenderness, as when Kepler 'his heart full of hope' (Banville: 2001, 297) works on his cosmic explorations from 'a cubbyhole' (Banville: 2001, 297) which is hidden away and where 'calm greenish light soothes his eyes' (Banville: 2001, 298), or when he burrowed into a little room on the top floor' (Banville: 2001, 3696). The spaces are tiny and intimate, but they also echo a restrictive space much like Banville's geometric novelistic forms, especially in *Kepler*. On one hand, these rooms contrive to restrict the body into a tiny space, and yet heart and mind are still embarking on a vast enterprise. In *Ghosts*, the main protagonist Freddie (appearing previously in *The Book of Evidence* and *Athena*) stands amidst an oak wood and, although enclosed by the intimate space of the trees, he also embraces terrestrial expanses with rain, wind, thunder and clouds, contemplating how the world is always 'murmuring to itself in a language we shall never understand' (Banville: 1998, 65). When Freddie sits opposite the young woman Flora at the kitchen table, it is a deeply intimate, intense moment of pure presence, yet it expands by the drip of 'a condensed drop of colour into the water of the world' – thus 'the colour had spread' (Banville: 1998, 147), touching

everything on its way. These intimate haptologies generate irregular, sprawling multiplicities in the map of tenderness – it is a process of becoming.

Nietzsche's and Cixous's explorations of tenderness point towards additional ways of engaging with Banville's cartographies. Tenderness evokes youth, fallibility and vulnerability, recalling how Nietzsche says that true maturity and experience comes from having 'reacquired the seriousness one had as a child at play' (Nietzsche: 1997, 48, no 94), additionally while searching for meaning and wisdom one needs to acknowledge the inner fool as well as the inner hero. On similar lines Cixous counsels that as youngsters 'we knew how violent reading can be' (Cixous: 1993, 20); yielding to such raw tenderness renders the reader open to the 'extremely rapid sensations' (Sarraute: 1963, 8) of a tender cartography that moves about in liminal spaces. In other words, by accepting the challenges of vulnerability and tenderness as integral to readerly responsiveness it can also lead to creative thinking – emotion and reason begin to touch. Hence Banville draws upon Wallace Stevens as an epigraph to *Doctor Copernicus*:

You must become an ignorant man again
And see the sun again with an ignorant eye
And see it clearly in the idea of it. (Banville: 2001a: epigraph)

But the word 'tender' has yet other meanings, the implications of which not only feed into ideas of movement, but also hark back to reading and writing acting as an 'enterprise of health' (Deleuze: 1997, 3). A 'tender' also relates to specialised support ships or rail cars which carry food, fuel, water and also provide access to repair facilities. This semantic perspective obliquely expresses a tender mapping of textual creative nourishment and emotional fuel; a means of repair, healing and a galvanizing force. A postcolonial imagination might contemplate how forms of transport, once used as a means of colonial practices of appropriation and exile, are now embraced as part of a fictional cartographic tool that is reflective and replenishing; it also expresses the idea of the Gothic as a form of creative transport that carries the reader into a seductive and tender, albeit temporary, exile.

Tenderness then plots affective coordinates between the Gothic and postcolonial. Returning to de Certeau's analyses of games, inventions and social rules, it is pertinent to note that Banville's inventions map the liminal worlds of the mystical, of hauntings, the mutable cosmic elements, of Pythagorean music and earthly murmurings, of folklore and fiction, of trees that observe things only they can witness, of ancestral voices and angelic presences; such phenomena inhabits that world of experience that is irreducible to conventional rules and regulations. This cartography maps Kiberd's 'messy phenomena' (Kiberd: 1995, 646) and it is crucial to both the postcolonial and the Gothic. If the Gothic strives to display voices that are often left out of the official archive, then the postcolonial seeks to evidence its importance and existence as part of a more comprehensive historical record – looking instead to the unofficial archive for a fuller explanation of history. In this space, the voices of so many, past, present and future, cry out to be heard; it is a postcolonial Gothic map seeking the paradoxical 'presence of diverse absences' (de Certeau: 1984, 108). Banville's map of tenderness seeks to restore the importance of emotion back into reasoned thinking. It is a form of contemporary alchemy that Kundera expresses perceptively:

Oneiric narrative; let's say, rather: imagination, which, freed from the control of reason and for concern for verisimilitude, ventures into landscapes inaccessible to rational thought. The dream is only the model for the sort of imagination that I consider the greatest discovery of modern art. But how can uncontrolled imagination be integrated into the novel, which by definition is supposed to be a lucid examination of existence? How can such disparate elements be united? That calls for real alchemy! (Kundera: 2003, 80-81)

We might say that reading is also a form of alchemy, a tactile haptology. Bruno's introduction of movement in her description of the 'map of transito' (Bruno: 2007, 208), forms a connection with Derrida's analysis of touch and its other meanings. For Derrida, to touch upon something also introduces movement a similar form of movement to Bruno's as "to touch" means to say, to tamper with, to change, to displace, to call into question; thus it is invariably a setting in motion, a kinetic experience' (Derrida: 2005, 25). Touch and the act of reading offer something in common with 'transito'. This term, borrowed from the work of

the Italian philosopher Mario Perniola, cannot be simply translated with one word. Bruno describes it thus:

a form of human motion through culturally conceived space – a form of *transito*. Not necessarily physical motion, *transito* is circulation that includes passageways, traversals, transitions, transitory states, spatial erotics, (e)motion. (Bruno: 2007, 71)

In both *Kepler* and *Ghosts*, as we shall see, the elements endure this idea of *transito*. Viewing Banville's novels from this perspective substantiates them as verbs as well as nouns. *Transito* also attests to the Gothic as a form of transport, carrying us through those circulatory 'passages' and 'transitory states' (Bruno: 2002, 71) of the tender, fluid medium it loves, blood; Nietzsche reminds us that writing in blood 'does not want to be read, but to be learned by heart' (Nietzsche: 2006, 27-28). What is vital to how these cartographies converse with both the Gothic and the postcolonial is that '[t]hey are composed with the world's debris' (de Certeau: 1984, 107), and these fragments live in the haptic moments presented by Banville; it is they that afford the affective power of tender mappings.

In Banville's writing, emotion also seeps into the most seemingly inconsequential events, but these events are also the haptic movements that weave through life and memory – the 'movements' and 'series of moments' of which Sarraute speaks (Sarraute: 1963, 9). Consider Kepler's recollection of a boyhood memory in which he watches a snail crawl up a window in 'a lavish embrace' (Banville: 2001, 391) whilst he is in awe at 'the heedless beauty' of the snail's movements (Banville: 2001, 392). Additionally Kepler has a haptic experience in the familiar streets of his youth with the 'mingled smell of bread and dung and smoke – that smell!' (Banville: 2001, 381). In *Ghosts*, Banville shows his main protagonist (actually unnamed but recognisable as Freddie from *The Book of Evidence* and *Athena*), finding emotional sustenance in the temperate weather and the natural world, it is 'a healing and invigorating balm' (Banville: 1998, 97). Moreover as the rain stops and the sun shines, the experience is filled with 'drenched brilliance' (Banville: 1998, 100).

There are two specific moments that not only form part of the emotional stratum that Hand describes, but which also presage the textual topography that creates Banville's map of tenderness. The first is from the opening paragraphs of *Doctor Copernicus* where, in contemplating the essence of a tree, young Copernicus experiences how 'in the changing air, it changed and yet was changelessly the tree...That was strange' (Banville: 2001, 9). Yet as Copernicus matures and abandons this protean world that amplifies the ambiguities within the act of naming, 'he soon forgot about these enigmatic matters, and learned to talk as others talked, full of conviction, unquestioningly' (Banville: 2001, 10); he reaches for purely rational accounts of the world. The second moment from *Kepler* depicts the bittersweet nature of a topography created from those 'enigmatic matters' (Banville: 2001, 10), that is to say 'his world was patched together from the wreckage of an infinitely finer, immemorial dwelling place; the pieces were precious and lovely, enough to break his heart, but they did not fit' (Banville: 2001, 348). Both selections gesture towards the difficulties of realizing unambiguous translations of the world, hence Banville's suggestion that we approach his work with 'a certain level of receptiveness – not even of intelligence' (Banville: 1979, 81); a reading that accommodates a little Nietzschean tender vulnerability may be more responsive approach towards Banville's affective cartography.

In the two extracts there is also a connection to one of the great inspirations for Banville in his writing – Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926). One particular excerpt from the *Duino Elegies* epitomizes the quest that underpins much of Banville's writing:

Yet in the alert, warm animal there lies
the pain and burden of an enormous sadness.
For it too feels the presence of what often
Overwhelms us: a memory, as if
The element we keep pressing toward was once
more intimate, more true, and our communion
infinitely tender. Here all is distance,
there it was breath. After that first home,
the second seems ambiguous and drafty. (Rilke: 2009, 49)

This passage acts like a poetic guidebook for a journey through the map of tenderness. Rilke's depth of emotion echoes Kepler's as he presses towards those 'precious and lovely'

fragments of life which are ‘enough to break his heart’ (Banville: 2001, 348). However the fragments Banville searches for, and strives to communicate to the reader, are part of an ‘immemorial dwelling place’ (Banville: 2001, 348) that does not fit any rationally constructed geographical map; instead, it moves towards being a counter cartography. In pressing language to communicate that which is neither prose nor poetry Banville echoes Rilke’s description to find the element that is ‘more intimate, more true, and our communion/ininitely tender’ (Rilke: 2009, 49). His map is plotted with and articulated by breath and air, alongside fire, water and earth, all playing a moving (in both senses of the word) performance.

I should indicate that the idea of a map of tenderness is by no means a new one. Between 1654 and 1660 Madeleine de Scudéry published a novel in ten instalments called *Clélie* and subsequently created a map to accompany her novel. The ‘*Carte du Pays de Tendre*’, or ‘map of the land of tenderness’, takes us on a visual journey through the narrative of emotions to countries of tenderness. Banville’s map is also flowing and rhythmic, and while created with words rather than with pictures, it operates similarly to Scudery’s creation. The reader is encouraged to stop at particular locations within the text, at a ‘series of moments’ and ‘movements’ (Sarraute: 1963, 9) or at ‘congealed “suddenlys”’ (Bakhtin: 1996, 102). These sensations are ‘constantly emerging up to the surface of the appearances that both conceal and reveal them’ (Sarraute: 1963, 8). Thus everyday actions, thoughts, memories and gestures can paradoxically both obscure and reveal fragmentary instants of that ‘ininitely finer, immemorial dwelling place’ (Banville: 2001, 348). Banville produces what Bachelard describes as waves of movement or ‘reverberation’ that act as a dynamic energy galvanizing thought and emotion, leading into deeper reflection that ‘explores ways of inhabiting many places at once...imagining different time zones’ (Boym: 2001, xviii). Boym’s use of words like ‘ambivalences’, ‘doubt’ and ‘challenge’ in relation to reflective nostalgia can also be applied to the map of tenderness in that it is made up of ‘collective

frameworks' that counteract mere national perspectives (Boym: 2001, xviii). An imaginary location, for example in *Ghosts*, can be envisioned as manifold thus challenging the restrictive boundaries of both convention and geography; a transmutable cartographic transgression that is of interest to the postcolonial Gothic. Banville plots a map that expresses an affective topography, strange and yet unexpectedly familiar, 'a cartography of intimate space that designed a haptic route' (Bruno: 2007, 208) as well as an 'emotional map of transport' (Bruno: 2007, 208).

Why is a map of tenderness worth exploring? More specifically in relation to this thesis, how might it relate to concerns of both the Gothic and postcolonial theories? The perceptible hints of transgression, of shifting, challenging and vaguely unfamiliar locations, accompanied by the sense of heightened emotions, all point towards a Gothic sensibility. Moreover, the very idea of creating and exploring a map that is continually shifting between the exquisitely 'precious and lovely' fragments of an 'infinitely finer...dwelling place' (Banville: 2001, 348) and a dwelling that is 'ambiguous and drafty' (Rilke: 2009, 49), echoes Ricoeur when he says that:

placing and displacing oneself are primordial activities that make place something to be sought out. And it would be frightening never to find it. We ourselves would be devastated. The feeling of uneasiness – *Unheimlichkeit* – joined to the feeling of not being in one's place, of not feeling at home, haunts us and this would be the realm of emptiness. (Ricoeur: 2004, 149)

Such feelings and actions recall the unrest and sense of homelessness that is central to so much of Gothic subject matter; unrest and homelessness, together with the subsequent connections to exile, is also a distinct feature of postcolonial thinking.

If a tender map displays footprints in the Gothic, it has yet other tracks into postcolonial terrain as cartography is a central concern to postcolonial theory. It is worth reflecting that:

although ethnography (the supposedly objective scientific description of 'primitive' peoples and cultures) has frequently borne the brunt of anti-colonial attacks as being the principal intellectual discourse of colonization, it is worth noting that geography and geographers, and the science of cartography, played at least as important a role in underpinning the objects and values of the colonial enterprise. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin: 2007, 29-30; emphasis in original)

Indeed, the act of cartography was and remains a powerful tool in the construction of reality as Ashcroft et al indicate, ‘in effect, the European map created what has remained the contemporary geographical world reality’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin: 2007, 29-30). To take on the role of cartographer, then, is to attempt to create a tool for the production of meaning. This is one major reason why we might consider it a worthwhile task to explore a tender cartography. In addition, I wish to draw attention to Aitken’s epigraph heading this chapter as ‘the notion of a tender mapping is hugely appropriate to moving in and beyond imperial cartographies of today’ (Aitken: 2009, 1).

Aitken’s belief indicates a way in which Banville’s map of tenderness can be of use within postcolonial theory, in that it serves to offer movement and explorations into space where we might find ‘a genuine multiplicity of trajectories, and thus potentially of voices’ (Massey: 2009, 55). It is not to argue that Banville’s novels are in themselves postcolonial, but rather that they contain within them a language that can accommodate a diverse and compelling postcolonial imagination – one that does not always conform to type. Aitken’s words also echo Massey’s question ‘how might we pursue an alternative imagination and how might we imagine spaces for these times?’ (Massey: 2009, 13); I suggest that Banville’s thought-provoking cartographies initiate the chase.

To further expand upon why such a cartographic exercise is worthwhile studying, I would like to examine the novel *Kepler* in some depth. Firstly, the stringent formal structure that Banville creates for this novel is worthy of note. Imhof has previously given a meticulous and valuable reading of the intricate details of this frame, so I will summarize here. Banville places the novel within the geometric formation of Platonic solids, thus spacing his narrative much as geometers represent the three-dimensional cosmos. The five parts in *Kepler* each has a sum of chapters that synchronizes with the number of faces on the Platonic solids just as Kepler himself designed for his work *Harmonices Mundi* (1619). This ‘harmony of the world’ translates the Pythagorean music of the spheres into the physical harmony of planetary

movement. Part one exhibits the properties of the cube in that it has six chapters, part two is analogous to the tetrahedron or pyramid and has four chapters, part three corresponds to the dodecahedron and contains twelve chapters, part four contains twenty letters written by Kepler and represents the icosahedron, and part five has eight chapters representing the octahedron; a map of the cosmos is hidden unobtrusively within the narrative, revealing itself ephemerally through the text. Furthermore, Imhof details other interesting mappings within the book, referring to the cyclical or elliptical shaping of ideas, memories or events within the chapters that signal further references to the planetary and cosmic laws with which Kepler grappled.

Indeed, the whole novel is cyclical in that it begins and ends with the notion of dreaming. In addition part four is entitled *Harmonices Mundi*, and it associates itself with music in that, as Imhof highlights, it is suggestive of a retrograde canon. In a simple canon the singer imitates the leader after an interval as in a simple round of the song *Frère Jacques*, but the retrograde canon requires that the following singer accompanies the leader backwards. In this fashion, the twenty letters are arranged so that letter number one, to David Fabricius, connects with letter number twenty to the same recipient, and letter number two, written to von Hohenburg, links with letter number nineteen to the same person, and so on. The influence of the cosmos deftly weaves into the narrative of the book and vice versa displaying how Kepler sought congruence between diverse aspects of the universe such as the musical scale, solid geometrical forms, the elements and planetary movement.

Kepler's geometric and elemental structure leads Imhof to comment that the novel could be seen as both 'sterile' with Banville operating under a 'mild form of lunacy' (Imhof: 1989, 138); there are resonances with the folly which Koestler attributes to Kepler:

We had the privilege of witnessing one of the rare recorded instances of false inspiration, a supreme hoax of the Socratic *daimon*, the inner voice that speaks with such infallible, intuitive certainty to the infallible mind...there are few instances where a delusion led to momentous and true scientific discoveries and yielded new Laws of Nature. This is the ultimate fascination of Kepler – both as an individual and as a case history. For Kepler's misguided belief in the five perfect bodies was not a passing fancy, but remained with him, in a modified version, to the end of his life, showing all the

symptoms of a paranoid delusion; and yet it functioned as the *vigor motrix*, the spur of his immortal achievements. (Koestler: 1989, 254)

One important point here is that the inspirational ideas, outmoded and flawed though they may be, are effectively the dreams and stories that are the driving force behind Kepler's rational creative thought. Eccentricity and unconventional thinking provides the dynamic spark that ignites inspiration. Thus the substance of dreams, laughable though some of it may be to up-to-the-minute scientific theories, provides nourishment for some fundamentally life-changing thinking. Banville's imaginative cartography shows that 'the union of a frivolous form and a serious subject lays bare our dramas (those that occur in our beds as well as those we play out on the great stage of history) in all their terrible insignificance' (Kundera: 2003, 95).

A trace of the Gothic haunts the lingering sense of enchantment that surrounds Kepler's experiences of dreaming, as well as in the faint bouquet of madness implied by the 'Socratic *daimon*'. There is also an insinuation of being haunted by the otherworldly music that permeates this geometry – the Pythagorean music of the spheres. I feel that Banville's work is itself haunted by this very music, in all its forms. Keith Ansell Pearson makes a comment that has something in common with this Gothic idea of seeking out and remembering an ancient music:

The task today is no longer to seek God, dead or alive..., but to be drawn to the land of the future where human impotence no longer makes us mad and where it is possible to decode the signs of alien life within and without us. For this we do not so much require new truths; rather it becomes necessary to remember and relearn some ancient ones. (Ansell Pearson: 1997, 7)

Kepler's, and in turn Banville's, success is in part due to this summoning up of ancient ontologies and epistemologies. By drawing on the Platonic solids and their elements, as well as on the Pythagorean music that Kepler, like so many ancient philosophers before him, looked towards to explain the workings of the cosmos, Banville has written this ancient music and geometry into a text that seeks a readership in the twentieth century and beyond. He is, as Ansell Pearson suggests, not looking to form 'new truths', but seeking to re-evaluate the potential rewards that may be found in ancient ontologies and epistemologies. This is not

to say that Banville engages in an exercise to restore the past; he is rather exploring the challenges, dreams, hopes and doubts still moving within the past and transporting them into the present for creative reflection. He is effectively engaging in Boym's articulation of reflective nostalgia.

But are there any advantages to be gained by creating such a tightly-woven structure in a novel? It would appear at first glance that any sense of freedom involved in the creative acts of writing and reading are being severely restricted. Such deliberate constraints would seem to render the novel as useless to postcolonial imaginings and to make the novel the very antithesis to everything the Gothic purports to be. In addressing this, and in keeping with this musical theme, I will utilize Stravinsky's discussion of the subject of constraints and artistic freedom:

And yet which of us has ever heard talk of art as other than a realm of freedom? This sort of heresy is uniformly widespread because it is imagined that art is outside the bounds of ordinary activity...in art as in everything else, one can build only upon a resisting foundation: whatever constantly gives way to pressure, constantly renders movement impossible.

My freedom thus consists in my moving about within the narrow frame that I have assigned myself for each of my undertakings.

I shall go even further: my freedom will be so much the greater and more meaningful the more narrowly I limit my field of action and the more I surround myself with obstacles. Whatever diminishes constraint diminishes strength. The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees oneself of the chains that shackle the spirit...the arbitrariness of the constraint serves only to obtain precision of execution. (Stravinsky: 2000, 64-65)

For Stravinsky, the greater the constraint we have to work within 'the more one frees oneself of the chains that shackle the spirit' (Stravinsky: 2000, 64-65); such a suggestion is emancipatory and exhibits a variety of resistance that is almost utopian. This is not only of critical interest to the general reader, but also holds fertile significance for postcolonial imaginations while serving to bolster the transgressive qualities of the Gothic. Furthermore, Stravinsky goes on to cite Baudelaire as supporting his ideas in that such constraints in art 'contain the secret of salvation' (Stravinsky: 2000, 65); rather than impeding the flow of original thinking and creativity, to say that 'they have aided the flowering of originality, would be infinitely more true' (Stravinsky: 2000, 65).

Additional constraints present themselves in the cultural climate that permeates *Kepler*. It may seem slightly odd to include this novel in a consideration of Irish postcolonial Gothic themes, but what disturbs this notion at the outset is a consideration of the social and political milieu within which Kepler realises his creative thinking and scientific discoveries. Set in an environment of political flux, war, religious persecution, enforced exile, torture, fear and violence, the desire to preserve the self and one's family is always present. It was an era in which being different, or conspicuously 'other', could result in the threat of being burned at the stake. Kepler was to discover that the threat of this fire burned very close to home, as it took six years of legal wrangles to release his own mother from prison, and ultimately from the death penalty. This volatile climate exerts a far-reaching connection with postcolonial thinking and the Gothic saturates this angst-ridden experience of living in fear of persecution; it also pervades the liminal spaces where superstition and magic (the unknown of all kinds), propel themselves into the rational and scientific world.

By exploring *Kepler's* cultural environment how does it stir any impulse to consider Irish postcolonial experiences and loss? Two responses come to mind. Firstly, Banville says 'as I look back on those novels now, as I look back on Copernicus and Kepler, I see how Ireland seeped into them. How could it not, especially in the 1970's, when we were tearing ourselves to pieces' (Banville: 2006, 202). This is not to suggest that Banville is writing as a political polemicist: he always maintains that art should be autonomous. However, this does not suggest that there is no function for art in society, for as Banville says: 'I cannot rid myself of the quaint conviction that art is action' (Imhof: 1989, 16). D'hoker notes Banville's response to the early novels of the postcolonial writer John Maxwell Coetzee in a way that directly reaffirms Theodor Adorno's thinking, for Banville Coetzee's novels are:

so intensely mediated, that they are wholly autonomous, and do not depend for their power on knowledge of where and in what circumstances they were written. Surely, this is one of the identifying marks of authentic, enduring works of art (Banville Qtd. D'hoker: 2004, 77)

This directly echoes Adorno who, in his *Aesthetic Theory*, specifies that:

art, however, is social not only because of its mode of production, in which the dialectic of the forces and relations of production is concentrated, nor simply because of the social derivation of its thematic material. Much more importantly, art becomes social by its opposition to society, and it occupies this position only as autonomous art. By crystallizing itself as something unique to itself, rather than complying with existing social norms and qualifying as “socially useful,” it criticizes society by merely existing. (Adorno: 1997, 225-226)

Furthermore, and in keeping with Banville’s comments on Coetzee, Adorno says that:

art keeps itself alive through its social force of resistance; unless it reifies itself, it becomes a commodity. Its contribution to society is not communication with it but rather something extremely mediated: It is resistance in which, by virtue of inner-aesthetic development, social development is reproduced without being imitated. At the risk of its self-alienation, radical modernity preserves art’s immanence by admitting society only in an obscured form, as in the dreams with which artworks have always been compared. (Adorno: 1997, 296)

Whether we accept the possibility of autonomous art or not, what is worthy of note as well as being pertinent to a postcolonial Gothic reading of Banville’s work, is Alexander Thomson’s suggestion that ‘the idea of autonomous art, however degraded in practice, keeps alive the memory of a promise of freedom’ (Thomson: 2006, 68). It is this memory that Banville relishes and seeks to uphold in his own writing. There is something irrepressibly utopian about this notion, something which harks back to my considerations of the importance of dreaming. In an essay within a volume edited by Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini, considering utopian thinking and ‘the value of social dreaming’ (Moylan and Baccolini: 2009, 55), Ruth Levitas discusses how utopian dreaming can be considered an escapist practice. On the other hand, Levitas cites the closing words of *News From Nowhere*, William Morris’s utopian socialist novel, as an encouragement to dream of what might be possible, ‘if others can see it as I have seen it, then it may be called a vision rather than a dream’ (Morris Qtd. Levitas: 2009, 55). As we come to read Kepler’s experience of his epiphanic moments, they are written with a distinct dream-like quality which is nevertheless set in an earthy and grounded aesthetic. Levitas goes on to state that ‘for Bloch, wishful thinking is itself a pre-cursor of will-full action, this utopian content is indispensable’ (Levitas: 2009, 53).

Considering both the postcolonial Gothic and Banville’s idea of art as an autonomous tool of mediation we might ask how the reader might ever come to a point of animated action.

Kilgour contends that the ambiguities raised and ultimately unanswered by the Gothic ‘exposes the Gothic reality of modern identity, and by failing to represent an adequate solution, it forces its readers to address them in real life, thus (ideally) using literature to encourage social change’ (Kilgour: 1997, 10). Similarly, novels that do not ‘depend for their power on knowledge of where and in what circumstances they were written’ (Banville Qtd. D’hoker: 2004, 77) can encourage that ‘will-full action’ (Levitas: 2009, 53) by performing as circuitous creative go-betweens.

Secondly, Trinh T Minh-ha offers yet another way in which *Kepler* might figure within postcolonial imaginings. By exploring another time, place and culture in a highly astute and perceptive way, Banville reaches towards Minh-ha’s reflections upon approaching a search for truth indirectly rather than head on. This will also become clear in readings of *Ghosts*. Adhering to his principles of art as being autonomous, Banville’s writing is more ‘talking nearby instead of talking about’ (Minh-ha: 1999, 218). This process encompasses the best way to ‘come very close to a subject without seizing or claiming it’ (Min-ha: 1999, 234), it is rather a technique to ‘make visible the invisible’ (Min-ha: 1999, 218). Thus to render visible the creative act of writing fiction, Banville utilizes the dreaming mind of the scientist. Additionally, by depicting the social upheaval Kepler was working within at the time, we come to appreciate, albeit obliquely, how Banville feels that Ireland has suffused its way into the spaces within the novel. For Min-ha, this is an important technique, not just about writing or creating but it speaks of how we approach life and our place in the world. This approach to writing, reminiscent also of Irigaray’s ideas of approaching, echoes Banville’s aim of engaging with the crucial question ‘how do we live?’ (Banville Qtd Kenny: 2009, 21)

Returning to the structure of *Kepler*, if the creation of narrative constraints in the shape of geometric shapes can galvanize a sense of reaching for freedom, there are yet other aspects of the Platonic solids that are also at work in the novel. Assigned to each geometric form are the four elements, air, water, earth and fire. The fifth aether (or ether) was

determined by Plato and later classified by Aristotle as the substance with a cyclical movement that fills all space, and from which the heavens and planets are created. Plato assigned a sense of movement and transformation to each of the four elements and Banville employs their mutable properties that form a moving cartography along with the intense sensory perceptions that extend across the tender landscape.

Fire, water, air and earth – integral mobile facets of the Platonic solids – are not only present in the novel, but also display their transformative qualities at specific junctures. It is this transformative nature that deeply enhances the shifting potential in Banville's map which is, to borrow Bruno's words 'a map of transito' (Bruno: 2002, 208). By using these elements as a form of cartography, Banville introduces a sense of movement and possibility of change in the novel, especially when we consider Plato's theories directly:

In the first place, we see that what we just now called water, by condensation, I suppose, becomes stone and earth, and this same element, when melted and dispersed, passes into vapor and air. Air, again, when inflamed, becomes fire, and, again, fire, when condensed and extinguished, passes once more into the form of air, and once more, air, when collected and condensed, produces cloud and mist--and from these, when still more compressed, comes flowing water, and from water comes earth and stones once more--and thus generation appears to be transmitted from one to the other in a circle. Thus, then, as the several elements never present themselves in the same form, how can anyone have the assurance to assert positively that any of them, whatever it may be, is one thing rather than another? (Plato: 2008, 37)

Such metamorphoses, whether real or imaginary, are key ideas which are articulated incessantly within both Gothic and postcolonial texts. These movements not only signal the potential for change, resistance, empowerment, but also the presence of desire and an opportunity to redefine any parameters that serve to impede the way we live.

By creating a map that permeates the novel within a narrative of cosmic investigation and imaginings, Banville offers a space which Bachelard determines as 'an immense cosmic house' which:

is a potential of every dream of houses. Winds radiate from its center and gulls fly from its windows. A house that is as dynamic as this allows the poet to inhabit the universe. Or, to put it differently, the universe comes to visit his house. (Bachelard: 1994, 51)

Bachelard's imaginative observations connect with Banville's aspirations in *Ghosts* as Banville writes 'my life is a ruin, an abandoned house, a derelict place' (Banville: 1998, 54).

This is in essence a house where the elements have been given access, it is open and although at first-glance uninhabited, there are many life-forms residing there. An abandoned house is actually openly teeming with life, such as the vital force of plants, insects, animals seeking shelter, and ‘winds’ and ‘gulls’ – this is the energy that, as Bachelard says, allows the writer, and reader, ‘to inhabit the universe’ (Bachelard: 1994, 51). In *Kepler*, flowing maps connect the four cosmological elements of air, earth, water and fire, which extend their influence throughout the text by permeating the body, mind and the external environment.

The elements materialize in the form of storms, sunlight, tears, loss, deep sadness, love, urine, sweat, clouds, illness and fever, wind and bodily functions as well as connecting rainfall with ink, writing and creative instincts. Fire interweaves its physical and metaphysical forces within emotional fervour, sexual energy and the sparks of an energetic mind as well as in the violence imposed upon those considered to be different. Banville shows that the same fire which spurs the writing of challenging texts can equally inflame the censorship that seeks to burn them. Just as fever is expressed as a ‘refining fire’ (Banville: 2001, 316) that spurs Kepler on to his writing until it glimmers with ‘newfound elegance and strength’ (Banville: 2001, 316), fire also becomes the funeral pyre upon which books are burned and, ‘after the burning of the books, what would there be for them but to burn the authors?’ (Banville: 2001, 338).

Within such an intricate cartography of syncretic perception and movement, the possibility of change is evident. Banville presents a map of tenderness which acknowledges the importance of emotion in the pursuit of knowledge, questioning the certainties assigned to “truth.” By weaving the elemental forces into the equally changeable milieu of emotion and thought, Banville has created a “map of transito” (Bruno: 2002, 208) which recalls the Deleuzian notion of “becoming,” thus displaying reality as a state of flux. Persistent social stability and the fixed nature of identity are shown to be illusory accounts of reality, thus open to adaptation.

A sense of movement, then, is evident throughout both novels in a variety of specific ‘moments’ that exemplify what Bachelard has described as ‘inhabited geometry’ (Bachelard: 1994, 146). At the outset of *Kepler*, the reader embarks for the journey into the emotional cartography. The Rilke epigraph at the beginning of *Kepler* provides one clue as to how the work is to be presented. The epigraph ‘*Preise dem Engel die Welt*’ taken from the Ninth elegy in Rilke’s *Duino Elegies*, refers to the first line:

Praise the world to the Angel, not what’s unsayable: you
can’t impress him with lofty emotions: in the cosmos,
that shapes his feelings, you’re a mere novice. Therefore, show him
some simple object, formed from generation to generation
until it’s truly our own, dwelling near our hands and in our eyes.
Tell him of things. He’ll stand more amazed: as you stood,
beside the rope-maker in Rome or the potter along the Nile. (Rainer Maria Rilke: 2009, 55)

It foretells how Banville grounds his aesthetic very firmly in the everyday world of human experience, the world that is composed of earth, fire, air and water. Another clue is contained within the first paragraph of the novel:

Johannes Kepler, asleep in his ruff, has dreamed the solution to the cosmic mystery. He holds it cupped in his mind as in his hands he would hold a precious something of unearthly frailty and splendour. O do not wake! But he will. Mistress Barbara, with a grain of grim satisfaction, shook him by his ill-shod foot, and at once the fabulous egg burst, leaving only a bit of glair and a few coordinates of a broken shell.
And 0.00429. (Banville: 2001, 289)

To be precise, these are the first two paragraphs; the number that signifies Kepler’s discovery of planetary elliptical motion, composes a miniscule paragraph all of its own. Banville’s incorporation of flesh and cosmos creates the first sensory input into the tender cartography. The haptic mapping of a vast cosmology, weaving within the act of dreaming, the tangible physicality of hands, the social realities of financial predicaments with the ‘ill-shod foot’ (Banville: 2001, 289), an expanding inquisitive mind and the numerical portrait of planetary motion in geometric form encapsulates the sense of movement, emotion, mystery and earthly reality that is *Kepler*. Movement does not run in straight lines here, it is a spatio-temporal multiplicity that is rhizomatic in nature, and flows in many directions resembling thought and creative undertakings. Using science and geometric form as a creative tool, the power of the

imagination is not only presented as being far-reaching but also grounded within the flesh. For Liam Heaney, this tactile metaphor shows how Banville ‘succinctly encapsulates and parallels the physical world of reality, the outer space of an expansive universe, with that of the intellect, the mind and the imagination, the inner space of the unconscious mind’ (Heaney: 1996, 365).

But how does Banville convey the mutable, transformative properties of the cosmic elements? How does he display them as permeating flesh, emotions, thoughts and the creative impulse? He does this in diverse ways; taking the example of the element of air, he shows that the same air that carries the ‘tang’ (Banville: 2001, 364) and ‘stench’ (Banville: 2001, 368) of urine and other bodily odours, also carries the fragrance of ‘a tumbling flaw of lavender smoke’ (Banville: 2001, 351). The air that is present in the ‘grey wind’ which swarmed through the grass’ (Banville: 2001, 317), is also present in the ‘brave tempestuous air’ (Banville: 20021, 315) of the storm which Kepler inhales deeply as if to gain some of its energy and ardent potential. In Wincklemann’s house (the Jewish lens-grinder who gives Kepler a home when he is in exile), the air is ‘weighted down with a strange, sweetish smell’ (Banville: 2001, 33). In the familiar streets of his home-town, Kepler, in a truly haptic experience of place and memory, finds ‘the morning air heavy with a mingled smell of bread and dung and smoke –that smell!’ (Banville: 2001, 381). These scenes echo Wrethed’s comments on how the spaces of a novel can be permeated by ‘mnemonic air’ which ‘possesses the capacity to retain the lived past’ (Wrethed: 2007, 285).

Water contains the essence of the creative force, and it is worth recalling Morrison’s words that ‘all water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was. Writers are like that...and a rush of imagination is our flooding’ (Morrison: 1987, 99). It is interesting, from this perspective, to note that the section of the novel containing Kepler’s letters is represented by the geometric form with the signifying element of water. This section is also called after Kepler’s work *Harmonices Mundi*, which itself retains a memory of the

idea of planetary music. Similarly this section of the novel could be said to retain the ‘music’ that is Kepler’s own voice, his letters becoming like an orchestra whose music drifts in the air that Wrethed calls ‘mnemonic’. Kepler found that ‘the prosaic miracle of water had always fascinated him’ (Banville: 2001, 366), and indeed, this ‘miracle’ seems to be partly demonstrated by rain and ink working in a deeply intuitive and empathetic partnership as Banville (and Kepler) writes ‘the rain was still coming down...Kepler’s steel pen, not to be outdone by the deluge outside, deposited with a parturient squeak upon his papers a fat black blot’ (Banville: 2001, 367).

Water also materializes as a variety of bodily fluids that ebb and flow in harmony with nature’s own secretions. One of Kepler’s epiphanic moments occurs whilst demonstrating Euclid’s theorems to his students, and he is pictured ‘swabbing tears from his eyes and trumpeting juicily into a dirty handkerchief’ (Banville: 2001, 314). When Kepler is forced to go into exile because of his Lutheran faith, he is waved off with ‘Barbara’s kiss, juicy with grief’ and his own sorrow is revealed amidst a ‘wash of tears...his streaming nose...and faint, phlegm cries of distress’ (Banville: 2001, 333). Water appears when Tycho Brahe, drunk, urinates in the fireplace resulting in the steamy ‘stench of boiled piss’ (Banville: 2001, 368) wafting in the air. There is the ‘spicy tang’ of Barbara’s ‘water in the earthenware pot under the bed’ (Banville: 2001, 364). Water even shows itself in the sweat of fever, as the ailing Kepler’s ‘flesh oozed a noxious sweat’ (Banville: 2001, 316). Mästlin, recognising that Kepler is ill with fever, says ‘You are on fire, man’ (Banville: 2110, 316), and subsequently, the element of water plays a healing role with Mästlin’s ‘unhandy tenderness’ (Banville: 2001, 316) in the form of ‘boiled fish, soups, stewed lights’ (Banville: 2001, 316).

Weather forms an integral part of Kepler’s creative processes as in the depths of a storm ‘black rain was falling’, and it ‘drummed on the roof’ (Banville: 2001, 315) or when, in winter, everything holds ‘its breath under an astonishment of fallen snow’ (Banville: 2001,

466). The ‘exhilarated air’ (Banville: 2001, 316) acts like a motivational vigour; paradoxically the brute force of the elements is sometimes responsible for his illnesses and sometimes it becomes his creative fuel – the *pharmakon* haunts this novel. Furthermore, like the *pharmakon*, water is associated not only with inspirational ink but also with illness and the copious sweat of fever. Kepler ponders, ‘what was this rage to work, this rapture of second thoughts, if not an ailment of a kind?’ (Banville: 2001, 316). If fever is related to illness, it also manifests as passion for his work, ‘the fever which he had held at bay...took hold of him like a demented lover’ (Banville: 2001, 365), and again, ‘the joy of the zealot in his cell, scourge clasped in his hand’ (Banville: 2001, 365). Likewise as ‘the sky was coming apart and falling on the city in undulant swathes’ (Banville: 2001, 367), his ink deposits the ‘fat black blot’ (Banville: 2001, 367). As I have already described in relation to the Gothic, Derrida presents the *pharmakon* as ‘this charm, this spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be--alternately or simultaneously--beneficent or maleficent’ (Derrida: 1981, 70).

If water oozes from fever in terms of ‘a noxious sweat’ (Banville: 2001, 316), then the fever itself is steeped in the element of fire ‘like a refining fire the fever had rinsed him clean’ (Banville: 2001, 316). Fire is also deeply evident in the terms of religious persecution that exists in the novel, as Lutheran books are burned and Kepler contemplates the unthinkable idea that ‘after the burning of the books, what would there be for them but to burn the authors’ (Banville: 2001, 338). Of course, people are burned as witchcraft trials and burnings were prevalent, and Kepler’s own mother fell under accusation and narrowly escaped this fate. Fire is made all too evident in this sense by the description of the place of torture where his mother was taken – ‘the brazier stood throbbing...there was a hot smell, a mingling of sweat and burning coals’ (Banville: 2001, 479). Kepler’s anger at Tyco Brahe’s treatment of him is a display of emotional fire, the furious passion that drives him to feel ‘ENOUGH IS ENOUGH’ (Banville: 2001, 345; emphasis in original), presented in capital letters to drive

the explosive feelings home. That same fire is also responsible for his creative energy as ‘his overloaded brain began to throw off sparks of surplus energy’ (Banville: 2001, 366).

Earth and earthly matters are disclosed, not only by the presence of the financial matters that plague Kepler throughout the novel, but also by his life experiences such as birth, marriage, sex, illness, death, the acts of eating and drinking as well the taverns he frequents. Death and money combine their forces when Kepler buries his child Susanna ‘the Catholic council fined him ten florins for having the funeral conducted in the Lutheran rite’ (Banville: 2001, 339). The persistent presences of the various homes in which Kepler resided and worked, also connect with the earth as well as with the streets in which the homes are located. Banville writes of how ‘the streets stank’ with ‘vampire weather’ (Banville: 2001, 299), (one thinks of blight weather) and of how Kepler ‘had softened towards the house on Stempfergasse’ (Banville: 2001, 297) and of how ‘his workroom was at the back of the house, a cubbyhole off the dank flagged passage leading to the kitchen’ (Banville: 2001, 297). He could have chosen ‘grander rooms’ but this was more preferable as it was ‘out of the way’ (Banville: 2001, 298), a nest of sorts in the Bachelardian sense. ‘In the midst of Welderstadt’s familiar streets’ (Banville: 2001, 381), he finds everything still the same ‘the narrow houses, the stucco and the spires and the shingled roofs, that weathervane’ (Banville: 2001, 381).

The transformative elements continually flow as transito through Banville’s tender mapping, radiating beams between flesh, cosmos, thoughts and emotions thus illustrating how:

emotional cartography is about an itinerary, the carnal knowledge by which one comes to know beings. It is the kind of cosmography whose compositional lines touch the most tender filaments of our inner cells – a cosmography that draws the universe in the manner of an intimate landscape. (Bruno: 2007, 245)

One unconventional incident in *Kepler* marries Bruno’s intimate ‘cosmography’ with the rhizomatic nature of drunkenness, as the ‘triumphant irruption of the plant in us’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 12) allows creative thinking to become a transformative force in times of

crisis. In a volatile environment of religious persecution, political turmoil, exile, death, war, legal and financial struggle, Kepler realises a major scientific theory in an unexpected manner. Stumbling drunk out of a tavern in the night air, accompanied by a number of prostitutes and drinking friends, Kepler vomits into a drain. A Dionysian mapping of intoxication, uninhibited dance, wild music, sexual abandon, vomit and human waste matter serves to fuel Kepler's discovery of the elliptical movement of planets. Watching the female "goatish dancers" (Banville 2001, 363) move in an elliptical pattern in the light of the tavern window instigates Kepler's thought processes. The configurations of scientific, astronomical and geometric knowledge are grounded within the human cartography of Dionysian earthly pleasures; the cosmos is drawn 'in the manner of an intimate landscape' (Bruno: 2007, 245). Banville shows 'the kind of thought that aims at reconnecting theory with daily practices of change, transformation, and resistance' (Braidotti: 2008, 124-125). Mapping new configurations of reality can emerge from the most difficult of circumstances, and the most human. The revelatory philosophical glare of light may offer illumination, but the night also offers its own wisdom. Banville is aware that, as the philosopher Erazim Kohák fittingly notes, philosophical thought 'needs to recover the darkness that comes not as a menacing stranger but as a gift of the night, the time of philosophizing' (Kohák: 1984, 34). This nocturnal and 'intimate call of immensity' (Bachelard: 1994, 198) is the hinge on which the Gothic swings.

Continuing with this theme, Kepler spends some of his exile at Wincklemann's house, and experiences the fire of the furnace, the smell of the sweet tobacco in the night air, the cordial wine and healing herbs. The earth flourishes in its flowering and mingles flesh, blood and plant; as Kepler experiences the tobacco plant for the first time 'a green sensation...spread along his veins' (Banville: 2001, 334) as the wine he drinks is 'lightly laced with a distillate of poppy and mandragora' (Banville: 2001, 335). Metamorphosis is in the night air and Kepler is becoming embodied within nature and the world and in a way is

almost becoming plant himself. Waking refreshed the next morning, the fever having dissipated, Kepler has a feeling as if ‘some benign but enigmatic potential were being unfurled about him’ (Banville: 2001, 335) as ‘the world abounded for him now in signature and form’ (Banville: 2001, 338). Earth and flowers, air and tobacco smoke, wine and blood, plants and sap, the ‘red mouth of the furnace’ (Banville: 2001, 334) and its ‘comprehensible magic’ (Banville: 2001, 334) as it shapes the glass into lenses, all map a transformative effect on Kepler. Again the ‘irruption of the plant’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 12) manifests as a potent transit: magic and science, cosmic elements and geometric forms, blood and breath weave within diverse ontologies and epistemologies. It is a tender cartography of the elemental desire for metamorphosis found in Gothic and postcolonial writing.

Wincklemann’s empty house appears later in the novel, showing how air carries not only smoke, wind, or the ‘brave tempestuous air’ (Banville: 2001, 315) cleansing like that ‘eminent exhilarated air sweeping through him’ (Banville: 2001, 316), but also throws lines of flight through plague, bacteria and viruses – elements of contagion. Additionally, as Kepler contemplates Wincklemann’s eerily empty house with its broken windows, something malevolent has been caught up in an air current. An elemental turbulence generates encounters between Kepler’s mother in the torturer’s chamber and her persecution, Kepler’s own experience of Lutheran persecution, and the Jew’s empty house with the shuttered and broken windows. The ‘stink of fear’ (Banville: 2001, 481) in the torture room breathes into Wincklemann’s intimate space so that ‘in some invisible workshop of the world, the Jew’s fate and the trial verdict had been spatchcocked together, with glittering instruments, by the livid light of a brazier’ (Banville: 2001, 481). The menace navigating the air is deeply intimidating and the cause of real paranoia, but for Kepler, ‘even in his worst moments of fright and foreboding he did not imagine there was any human power behind the plot’ (Banville: 2001, 481). Rather than allay his fears, these thoughts stimulate even deeper worry as ‘a palpable enemy would have been one thing, but this, vast and impersonal’ (Banville:

2001, 481). Uncovering hidden aspects found within régimes of oppression and hegemonic power is central to the deepest concerns of the postcolonial and the Gothic. Wincklemann physically disappears, but his presence still manifests itself within the novel. Gordon picks up on this point of disappearance as ‘a state-sponsored method for haunting a population’, and the practice it uses to carry out ‘its dirty nervous work is haunting’ (Gordon: 2008, 131). As Charles Derber puts it, fear comes from the realisation that power and its manifestations do not reside in a ‘palpable enemy’ (Banville: 2001, 481) of ‘evil plotters...but are deeply entrenched social forces and institutions with far more power and sophistication’ (Derber: 2005, 3). Conversely, the Gothic also cultivates elemental encounters to unearth the equally hidden power of individuals, of radical purpose and ‘dissent that has been repressed and forgotten’ (Derber: 2005, 3).

So power that is ‘vast and impersonal’ (Banville: 2001, 481), also impresses itself upon the everyday and ‘within the already understood meanings that have been appropriated, worked over, settled into a structure of feeling that oscillates between the banal and the magical...[ultimately] we make of them our breathing life world’ (Gordon: 2008, 131). This ‘breathing life world’ (Gordon: 2008, 131) moves within Banville’s tender cartography, and the postcolonial Gothic forms an alliance by negotiating these fluctuations of power which can be ‘invisible, it can be fantastic; it can be dull and routine. It is systematic and it is particularistic and is often both at the same time. It causes dreams to live and dreams to die’ (Gordon: 2008, 3). On a regular basis, Kepler deals with struggling to receive withheld payments for work he has done, or is forced to travel inordinate distances on horseback to claim them. Payments received were liable to high tax penalties for being a Lutheran, and for the same reason, Kepler is barred from teaching, forced into exile and fined for carrying out a Lutheran burial for his child. His mother, held for six years under suspicion of witchcraft, is imprisoned and tried and then finally questioned in the presence of torturer with his ‘thumbscrews and the gleaming knives, the burning rods, the pincers’ (Banville: 2001, 479).

Power materializes in the vaguely ‘dull and routine’ (Gordon: 2008, 3) milieu of intimate relationships when Kepler has to explain his lack of financial security to his father-in-law, (Banville: 2001, 301–305) or when being forced to beseech Tycho Brahe for basic food and firewood while working for him (Banville: 2001, 351). In spite of all this, Kepler experiences that power of ‘exhilarated air’ (Banville: 2001, 316) galvanizing his creative thinking – there is always hope for radical thinking.

If power manifests itself in ghostly form in *Kepler*, then the diverse nature of hauntings provides numerous elemental encounters in *Ghosts*. Elemental music infiltrates Gothic explorations of memory in the ‘tiny, thin, heartbreaking music’ (Banville: 1998, 67), or in the ‘faint, deep, formless song that seemed to rise out of the earth itself’ (Banville: 1998, 6), and in ‘the strange, soft, bellowing sound the island makes’ (Banville: 1998, 23). The main protagonist, recognisable as but not directly named as Freddie, sensually experiences the world of the island and its music. A Gothic frisson is established as Freddie, who takes the reader through some intense and moving elemental memories, is a murderer. It is not necessary to read *The Book of Evidence* (the novel that depicts the murder), before reading *Ghosts*, but doing so places the reader under no illusion about the desolation the victim must have felt before death and the inexcusable aspects of the murder. There are no extenuating circumstances offering an expedient explanation of the killing; it is not self-defence, a crime of passion, nor an attempt at saving another from harm, not even an accident. Freddie murders a young maid because she disturbs him in the act of stealing a portrait painting with which he is obsessed; the discursive subject seemingly becomes more valuable than flesh and blood. The Gothic quandary arises because the reader succumbs to the hypnotic intimacies of the textual relationship by a murderer; such is the power of Banville’s writing. Taking a leaf from Nabokov’s techniques, Banville’s characterisation of Freddie is not particularly likeable, but is nevertheless disturbingly compelling; the reader’s sense of moral indignation is tested, but there is a point to this. By challenging the reader’s sensibilities, creative

thinking can lead into some precarious imaginative landscapes and although the act of thinking can often be deemed unexceptional:

It is a dangerous exercise nevertheless. Indeed, it is only when the dangers become obvious that indifference ceases, but they often remain hidden and barely perceptible, inherent in the enterprise. Precisely because the plane of immanence is prephilosophical and does not immediately take effect with concepts, it implies a sort of groping experimentation and its layout resorts to measures that are not very respectable, rational, or reasonable. These measures belong to the order of dreams, of pathological processes, esoteric experiences, drunkenness, and excess. We head for the horizon, on the plane of immanence, and we return with bloodshot eyes, yet they are the eyes of the mind. Even Descartes had his dream. To think is always to follow the witch's flight. (Deleuze and Guattari: 1994, 41)

Thus any ambiguous relationship with Freddie may not be 'very respectable, rational or reasonable' (Deleuze and Guattari: 1994, 41), but it provokes thinking that does not create superior, reproachful beings, instead it seeks to 'makes us deeper' (Nietzsche: 2008, 6-7); it leads us right into the alchemy that is the 'witch's flight' path (Deleuze and Guattari: 1994, 41).

There is also an imaginative relationship between killing and the creative act in that, as Cixous states, a writer is a 'secret criminal' (Cixous: 1993, 20) and in acts of reading and writing 'we are killers' (Cixous: 1993, 21). Furthermore, tenderness and killing are interrelated for if the writers we trust take the reader on dangerous journeys, then 'loving and killing absolutely cannot be disentangled' (Cixous: 1993, 53). Hawkes, echoing Cixous, says that 'the act of writing is criminal. If the act of the revolutionary is one of supreme idealism, it's also criminal...the so-called criminal act is essential to our survival' (Hawkes and Scholes: 1972, 205). Consequently, the reader's complex affiliation with the murderous Freddie might just be the ignition to reading and writing as an 'enterprise of health' (Deleuze: 1997, 3).

But to kill also implies loss, and Rilke's view that 'killing is one form of our wandering sadness' (Rilke: 1987, 77), pervades Banville's writing. In order to negotiate reality with any significance *all* aspects of nature and human desire must be recognised, in tandem with those unrelenting intrinsic transformations and volatility that flow within desire and nature; thus no matter how minute or intensely beneficial the change might be, it is also

always an encounter with loss. In imaginative texts, loss and the blurring between presence and absence are often conveyed in a spiritual or mystical style of communication. The 'presence of diverse absences' (de Certeau: 1984, 108) is heard in ancestral voices or encountered in dreaming, when the 'night time always seems peopled' (Banville: 1998, 38). When the earth murmurs its 'heartbreaking music' (Banville: 1998, 67) heightening awareness of how 'silence whirred' (Banville: 1998, 51), or with recognition that pieces of furniture 'live their secret lives' (Banville: 1998, 53); a spatio-temporal movement causes these liminal worlds to 'bleed' (Banville: 1998, 55). Thus, the reader occupies two worlds simultaneously in *Ghosts* emphasizing that in reading, 'we must constantly have one foot in one world and one in another' (Cixous: 1993, 27). Dichotomies such as presence/absence and insider/outsider, become hyphenated within the postcolonial Gothic, and by using the elements as imaginaries of continual flux strategies of meaning are displaced thus closure is deferred. However such imaginative strategies must always remain mindful that:

Displacement involves the invention of new forms of subjectivities, of pleasures, of intensities, of relationships, which also implies the continuous renewal of a critical work that looks carefully and intensively at the very system of values to which one refers in fabricating the tools of resistance. (Minh-Ha: 1995, 216)

Hence the continual flux of Banville's map of tenderness expresses itself as an elemental philosophy seeking to provoke the ontological convictions that breathe life into our experiences of reality; this is why it is a counter cartography. The Gothic expresses de Certeau's contention that mysticism is a form of discourse, not unlike physics or geometry. For de Certeau, such discourse was especially prevalent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as reason and science became more prominent as a way of describing the world. However, mysticism is inclined to linger and haunt through time and space, given that it 'proliferated in proximity to a loss. It is a historical trope for that loss. It renders the absence that multiplies the productions of desire readable' (De Certeau: 2000, 80). Hence, Banville's tender mappings become intensely valuable for postcolonial imaginings, they resonate with deterritorialisation and reveal how 'the very connective forces that allow any form of life to

become what it is (territorialise) can also allow it to become what it is not (deterritorialise)' (Colebrook: 2002, xxii).

The map of tenderness in *Ghosts* has a different vibration to that of *Kepler*, and yet there are elemental connections between the two. A playful link between Kepler and Freddie is positively canine; in his writing, Kepler describes himself in some detail as being dog-like, through continued references dotted throughout *Kepler*, for example in his letters which Banville incorporates within the novel, Kepler writes 'I am like a little dog, with a wagging tail and lolling tongue' (Banville: 2001, 451), or 'if I growl, it is only to guard what I hold precious' (Banville: 2001, 452) and he signs off one letter with 'I may snap and snarl' (Banville: 2001, 414). Banville continues these canine references beyond Kepler's letters with 'I am a dog...a rabid thing' (Banville: 2001, 305). In *Ghosts*, Licht's praise of the dog at his feet, 'Good old dog' is met with Freddie's quip 'That's me' (Banville: 1998, 215) offering an infinitesimal spark of recognition between both texts. *Ghosts*, like *Kepler*, is held together by numerous examples 'of moments...spontaneous, irresistible, instinctive' (Sarraute: 1963, 9), exhibiting themselves as 'congealed suddenlys' (Bakhtin: 1996, 102). Exile interconnects the two novels, Kepler undergoes periods of temporary exile, and Freddie's journey to the island is a form of exile after his release from prison, yet 'another prison, I was thinking, its walls made of air, and the old self inside me still snarling for release' (Banville: 1998, 215). Moreover, if alchemy manifests itself in the Rosicrucian milieu of *Kepler* it is also evident within the vitalist erotics of intense sensory perception in *Ghosts*; it is alchemy transmitted as writing that seeks 'to free life from what imprisons it' (Deleuze: 1995, 143).

Both novels exhibit forms which serve as boundaries, in *Ghosts* this is evidenced by the perimeter of the island. Both novels also engage in blurring those boundaries. In *Kepler*, the protean signifying elements of the geometrical forms that shape the novel continually disrupt the geometrical boundaries, much as they do on the island in *Ghosts*. The island sets out a periphery but there are numerous opportunities to drift off-course, not only terrestrially

from the liminal shoreline into the water (characters are depicted coming adrift and departing from the island), but also both emotionally and intellectually. Written as a philosophical contemplation, *Ghosts* draws lines of flight into thinking where ‘you’re bound to enter a line of thought where life and death, reason and madness, are at stake, and the line draws you on’ (Deleuze: 1995, 103). The elemental philosophy forms radical syntheses with the postcolonial Gothic, and Banville is acutely aware that ‘writing has to be liquid or gaseous because normal perception and opinion are solid, geometric. Not becoming unearthly. But becoming all the more earthly by inventing laws of liquids and gases upon which the earth depends’ (Deleuze: 1995, 103).

A description of Madeleine de Scudery’s cartography connects with Banville’s tender mapping on the island, as in the map:

memory, journey, time and discourse are not only understood spatially but are mobilized in imaginative ways. There are no fixed directives for this map tour. In the undetermined itinerary, several movements are possible and encouraged. (Bruno: 2007, 225)

Thus it is understandable how *Ghosts*, with its own ‘undetermined itinerary’ (Bruno: 2007, 225), is deemed to be lacking in plot. However, by circumventing traditional notions of plot, experiences like memory and philosophical contemplation, together with Gothicised elemental encounters and their associated intensive haptologies, actually become the plot. Furthermore, beyond the island shoreline it might just be as Bruno describes Scudery’s map:

a boundless fluid that is called “dangerous,” it is actually dangerously appealing: a calm expanse of water interspersed with restful islands. It is a top destination on the itinerary that takes one from *tendresse* to the terra incognita of affect. Driven by amorous “curiosity” and beguiled by the epistemic seduction of swimming in the unknown, one approaches this sea with the sweet danger of navigating a tender geography and reaching beyond it – toward a new form of mapping. (Bruno: 2001, 227)

Banville describes the waters surrounding the island as ‘treacherous, running with hidden currents and rip-tides’ (Banville: 1998, 23-24). But the ‘sweet danger’ lies in the seduction of deeply affective haptologies in the company of a murderer. Banville’s tender mapping in *Ghosts* connects the postcolonial and Gothic with its exploration of challenging liminal

spaces, echoing the ambiguities of the *pharmakon* it offers a fluid counter cartography that aids us in ‘moving in and beyond imperial cartographies of today’ (Aitken: 2009, 1).

Banville’s technique of depicting the island mirrors Bakhtin’s description of the Greek romance, in that there are no defined or designated national customs. So although the reader might well recognise the location as being Irish (through events, weather, topography or flora) even though it is not named, the reader also encounters:

isolated natural phenomena...or a description of some strange isolated quirk, connected to nothing...each object is sufficient unto itself...the spaces of an alien world are filled with isolated curiosities and rarities that bear no connection to one another...they are congealed “suddenlys”... (Bakhtin: 1996, 102)

A story might well require a sea, or a house, an island, or a country to shape the narrative ‘but which particular country’ (or sea, or island, or house] ...makes no difference at all’ (Bakhtin: 1996, 100). In the Greek romance then, as in *Ghosts*, there is evidence of ‘interchangeability in space’ (Bakhtin: 1996, 100), rendering the world of the Greek romance an ‘alien world’; but this world does not succumb to exoticism as to do that would be a ‘deliberate opposition of what is alien to what is one’s own’ (Bakhtin: 1996, 100). In this way dichotomies are again hyphenated, questioned, and joined in unnatural alliances – a constant undertaking of the postcolonial Gothic. In *Ghosts* the unnamed location that expresses an imperceptible familiarity requires an alternative cartography to aid the journey; the ‘atlas of emotion’ offers that cartography. The action pulsing through the island is the continual shifting presence of a ‘formless song’ (Banville: 1998, 194), a refrain of the interminable ‘and...and...and...’ rather than the verb ‘to be’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 27); it is always in the process of becoming.

So how exactly does the reader recognise any sense of place if it is a shifting, unnamed location? The affective experiences that Boym describes lends a clue, the ‘phantoms of familiar faces and façades, the smell of frying cutlets in the cluttered kitchen, a scent of urine and swamps in the decadent hallways, a gray drizzle over the Nera River, the rubble of recognition’ (Boym: 2001, 253). Banville has created similar haptic glimmers, the

‘rubble of recognition’, that ground the reader temporarily at places of interest on the tender map. Feeling at home is more of a state of mind, a deep longing for ‘a sense of intimacy with the world’ (Boym: 2001, 251) and not always a specific location. So, in *Kepler*, Banville describes the memory of watching a snail crawl up a window incorporated with the backdrop of ‘washed sunlight in the garden, the dew, the rosebuds on the tumbledown privy, that snail’ (Banville: 2001, 391). Kepler watches as ‘a festive swallow swooped through a tumbling flaw of lavender smoke. It would rain again’ (Kepler: 2001, 351), and the ‘daddy-longlegs feebly pawing at the window-sill at twilight, its impossible threadlike limbs, the gauzy wings with fantastical maps traced on them’ (Banville: 2001. 392). The intricate geometries of insect wings connect with the terrestrial geometry of the Platonic solids and the form of the novel itself.

In *Ghosts* familiar aspects of the natural world are manifest when ‘gorse grows along the bank, and hawthorne pale pink and white’ (Banville: 1998, 8) or as ‘the stream gurgled’ (Banville: 1998, 9). Coming up to the oak ridge ‘there were bluebells and wild garlic and even a nosegay of primroses here and there, nodding on a mossy bank or lurking coyly in the rotted bole of a storm-felled oak (Banville: 1998, 64). Such ostensibly inconsequential yet intense offerings of sensory perception are paradoxically both familiar on a global scale, and yet quite specific to an Irish sense of place; they are both tantalisingly ephemeral and enduring, ‘the unwarranted yet irrepressible expectancies of the heart’ (Banville: 1998, 203). Banville’s cartography acknowledges that ‘memory is a sort of antimuseum; it is not localizable’ (de Certeau: 1984, 108).

Weather connects both novels, and as it is a ‘prime means of linking spatiality and temporality’ (Bate: 2001, 109); as well as being a connector of mood and memory, it is a wholly appropriate medium for the expression of Banville’s affective elemental cartographies. This is especially so as Michel Serres shows how the French word for weather, ‘*temps*’, is also bound up with a meaning relating to time and ‘climatic temps precedes and

makes temporality, the time of organisms, clocks, systems, the time of precipitations is the driving force of these temporalities' (Serres: 1995, 102). To engage with the elements means to garner that 'driving force' and use it inventively to think about tempero-spatial flux and, by implication, acts of creation and narratives of history. Serres, commenting on the French language, says that 'we must praise a language that has a single word with which to gather these things together, receive them in the same ensemble of meaning' (Serres: 1995, 102). The Irish language can also be approached in this vein because, as *temps* relates to weather and time then so does the Irish word '*aimsir*'. Thus to contemplate weather and time in this way is not just a French approach to the tempero-spatiality of the elements, or a Romantic engagement with weather, it is also a specifically Irish encounter.

So the 'exhilarated air' (Banville: 2001, 316) that Kepler inhales and breathes out plots a course through *Ghosts*, through time and space into the wind that 'swept wetly through the trees' (Banville: 1998, 66) as Freddie sits in the oak wood, and into the 'wind of the world' (Banville: 1998, 37) in which ghosts live a trembling existence. The symbiotic relationship between the storm, rain and the 'fat black blot' of creative ink (Banville: 2001, 367) in *Kepler* performs a time-shift to become 'therapeutic value' (Banville: 1998, 65) in *Ghosts*, as Freddie delivers himself up to the elements, the rain pouring over his skin. Banville writes 'I should have studied meteorology' (Banville: 1998, 55), perhaps he envisages the kind that is 'a typology of textual passions, a sort of applied affective meteorology, which traces the grids of possible lines of becoming' (Braidotti: 2008a: 96). But Banville's elemental climatic grid also composes the geometric line of the spectral gaze.

The geometry that links the terrestrial with the intimate in a sense of place and plays such a formative role in *Kepler*, metamorphoses into the 'curious ribbed pattern' (Banville: 1998, 30) in the soil in *Ghosts*; these geometrical shapes introduce connections with memories of the Irish Famine. This affiliation pierces the rest of the novel through the corporeal geometry of the gaze from the circular pools of 'huge stricken eyes' (Banville:

1998, 31), emanating from the women leaving the island for the last time on the coffin ship. Their gaze, and the awaiting emigrant ship, draws a line, not only to the intimate connection of home, but out from the island to ‘treacherous’ (Banville: 1998, 23-24) waters and beyond to the unknown, ‘from *tendresse* to the terra incognita of affect...toward a new form of mapping’ (Bruno: 2001, 227). This anguished gaze operates as a geometric line of affect connecting to the postcolonial Gothic narrative of the Xhosa’s dream-world and their experience of famine narrated later in the novel, forming an affective cartography between global and local traumas. It traces another line through to the gaze of the tourist trippers to the island as they come and go. The gaze even permeates through to Morrissy’s writing as, in *Mother of Pearl*, Ellen Rivers leaves her famine ravaged village for the last time and gazes back ‘like Lot’s wife’; the experience hardening her against the ‘uselessness of love’ (Morrissy: 1997, 5) for her remaining days. The multiple charted gazes become a textual expression of the rhizome.

Ultimately the geometry of the gaze within an elemental cartography of affect offers a postcolonial Gothic alternative mapping that escapes and challenges the diverse discourses of Ireland. It offers itself tenderly yet defiantly in the face of colonial, postcolonial, nationalist, tourist, artistic, literary, photographic and academic narratives that seek to name and construct Ireland. Like Pearl in Morrissy’s novel, seeking to find a name for herself as Jewel within her own elemental cartography, Banville seeks to do the same for Ireland – no names are required however, only the tender haptologies of intimate recognition within ‘emblematic fragments’ (Banville: 1998, 39). Banville thus allows the reader to explore this place in a tender Gothic experience that is both familiar and yet disoriented: as a philosophical strategy of approaching rather than appropriation of place, it is a postcolonial Gothic remapping of Ireland. The elemental tendernesses throughout the novels seek to ensure that trauma, loss and exile are presented as one part of the story of Ireland, but not the only story.

Freddie says in *Athena*, ‘if I ever get round to writing that work of philosophy I’m convinced I have in me... (Banville: 1998, 117); by placing emotion back into reasoned thinking, Banville reclaims the idea that philosophy is both a love of wisdom and, as Irigaray puts it, a ‘wisdom of love’ (Irigaray: 2008, 1). Banville desires to know one might live, a crucial contemplation in any society but especially so in postcolonial societies where language, home, identity has been threatened; as such he rejects being one of philosophy’s ‘eunuchs of the heart’ (Irigaray: 2008, 3) acknowledging instead that:

between the head and the feet, a continuity is lost, a perspective has not been constructed. And the wisdom of which those technicians of the logos are enamoured is sometimes a knowing how to die, but seldom the apprenticeship to a knowing how to live. (Irigaray: 2008, 3)

Banville creates a map of haptic locations and elemental philosophy that negotiate a postcolonial Gothic terrain, with all the loss and trauma that it contains, and still retains a connection to the earth and the body.

Linnell Secombe contemplates this choreography between philosophy and love in a way that bears upon Banville’s cartography. Echoing Banville’s belief that the ‘marks of authentic, enduring works of art’ are that they are ‘so intensely mediated’ (Banville Qtd. D’hoker: 2004, 77), Secomb notes that philosophy is ‘movement back and forth between knowledge and its lack’, offering a gothicized ‘unending intrigue’ (Secomb: 2007, 157). Similarly love displays the same qualities in that it ‘is a mediation not a fulfilment’ (Secomb: 2007, 157). Thus, as with Banville’s cartographic art, ‘love and philosophy, both, live from the deferring and differing movement of indirection, non-arrival, endless delay, and detour’ (Secomb: 2007, 157). Furthermore, Secombe echoes Banville’s ideas on literature as mediation in saying that ‘stories and literature, participate in and share with love and philosophy the structure of mediation, deferral, unendingness and even of unworking’ (Secomb: 2007, 158).

The presence of love in both novels is complex, passionate, and moving, constantly interweaving with philosophical deliberations. The words ‘indirection’ and ‘detour’ (Secomb:

2007, 157) are indicative of the Gothic as an expression of being lost, or of love itself being lost, and as a shifting ambiguous experience such as being unable to find a way home; there is also a nod towards the postcolonial with nuances of exile, intimacy, and loss. The complexity of love and loss is particularised in the novels by Kepler's 'tender ball of love' (Banville: 2001, 332) for his mother, and of his sense that this love is never fully reciprocated, and it is also symbolised in the way that Kepler feels as he holds his dying baby, or in the complex feelings he experiences for his stepdaughter Regina. The 'unhandy tenderness' (Banville: 2001, 316) with which Mästlin nurses Kepler displays a tender intimacy. In *Ghosts*, Freddie extends tenderness and recognition towards the dead in his recognition of 'those poor, pale wraiths pegged out to shiver in the wind of the world' (Banville: 1998, 37); in his affection for weeds 'I cherish them' (Banville: 1998, 99); and in the intense longing conveyed by the gaze of a woman leaving her island home for the last time as famine drives her to seek another life elsewhere, 'such suffering, such grief' (Banville: 1998, 31). Love, emotion and loss create a complex and exquisite 'hypochondria of the heart' (Boym: 2001, 3-76) that circulates freely in Banville's elemental philosophy; in the affective elemental connections that vibrate within the novels. The arousing nature of the Gothic plays an affective role in expressing these emotions within postcolonial memory precisely because 'one remembers best what is coloured by emotion' (Boym: 2001, 52).

But how might an expression of love and philosophy work in a postcolonial Gothic sense to circulate within and 'beyond imperial cartographies of today'? (Aitken: 2009, 1). Hermann Broch, a writer that Banville admires, speaks about the diffusion between philosophy and love, and of how philosophy can reach a poetic peak: 'a sort of divining love that is sometimes allowed to burst the boundaries' (Broch: 1977, 349). Furthermore, anticipating Banville's creative energy in making 'words flare into what is neither prose nor poetry but something else' (Banville: 2010, 33), Broch states that 'genuine art bursts through boundaries, bursts through and treads new and hitherto unknown realms of the soul, of

conception, of expression, bursting through into the original, into the immediate, into the real' (Broch: 1977, 255). Thus the affective cartography of love, philosophy and the elemental affiliations, all within intense haptic moments, creates a 'tender burden' (Banville: 1998, 178) that acknowledges how:

the Gothic in postcolonial Gothic enriches the landscape of place, mind and expression further by bodying forth the imaginary, the spiritual, imaginative, sensed and felt, the internal landscapes of the mind, showing these as real, as the more frequently recorded historical, and richer because layered with meaning, demanding interpretation and engagement from readers. (Wisker: 2007, 403-4)

Love in Banville's writing acts as an 'intimate connivance between love and thinking' (Nancy: 2003, 247) within philosophy; the act of thinking itself is love. As Nancy states, 'in the movement across discourse, proof and concept, nothing but this love is at stake for thought' (Nancy: 2003, 247), and as Rilke declares: 'there is no beauty in Eros' (Rilke: 2004, 28). Clearly this is not romantic love, rather it is love as a dynamic, disturbing Gothicised 'unending intrigue' (Secomb: 2007, 157). In a passage that articulates Banville's affective elemental philosophy, Rilke states:

Verily, nature speaks not of love; nature bears it in her heart and none knows the heart of nature. Verily, God bears love in the world, yet the world overwhelms us. Verily, the mother speaks not of love, for it is borne for her within the child, and the child destroys it. Verily, the spirit speaks not of love, for the spirit thrusts it into the future, and the future is remote. Verily, the lover speaks not of love, for to the lover it comes in sorrow, and sorrow sheds tears. (Rilke: 2004, 28)

Rilke's words show that love in Banville's postcolonial Gothic mapping expresses the endless deferral implicit within the contemplation of how we might live in the aftermath of trauma and great loss. This yearning question, and the thin line between pleasure and pain, is a galvanizing force for the postcolonial imagination, 'it is this hunger for flesh and tears, our appetite for living, which, at the tip of forsaken fingers, makes a pencil grow' (Cixous: 2005, 96-97).

Echoing Nietzsche's ideas of affective experiences, and their importance to philosophical thought, Freddie encounters 'a spasm of blinding grief; it was so pure, so piercing, that for a moment I mistook it for pleasure; it flooded through me, a scalding serum,

and left me feeling almost sanctified, holy sinner' (Banville: 1998, 187). Such philosophical and affective anguish for Nietzsche is crucial to how we understand life as:

only great pain, that long, slow pain that takes its time and in which we are burned, as it were, over green wood, forces us philosophers to descend into our ultimate depths and put aside all trust, everything good-natured, veiling, mild, average – things in which formerly we may have found our humanity. I doubt that such pain makes us 'better' – but I know that it makes us deeper. (Nietzsche: 2008, 6-7)

These are the depths that Gothic descends to in Banville's tender mapping, and why he deviates from the 'good-natured, veiling, mild, average' (Nietzsche: 2008, 6). Out of such pain, creative thinking is endowed with 'blood, fire, heart, pleasure, passion' (Nietzsche: 2008, 6), and love; it is the physicality of 'blood remembering' (Rilke: 2004, 111) that recognises how 'verses are not, as people imagine, simply feelings'; for Rilke, 'they are experiences' (Rilke: 2004, 112) Moreover to experience memories is one thing but it (Rilke: 2004, 112) is:

not until they have turned to blood within us, to glance and gesture, nameless and no longer to be distinguished from ourselves – not till then can it happen that in a most rare hour the first word of a verse arises in their midst and goes forth from them. (Rilke: 2004, 112-113)

These fluid elements are 'the rapid play of affect that, above all, moves thinking' (Bennett and Connolly: 2002, 159); they pervade the Gothic and haunt the postcolonial; they constitute the ferment for acts of reading and writing, and for the subsequent relationship that is cultivated between reader and writer. Banville's painful emotional challenges dance within utopian shadows reminding that 'only great pain is a liberator of the spirit' (Nietzsche: 2008, 6). Thus the same pain that stultifies and obstructs the flow of life is also paradoxically that which can loosen the shackles that bind the spirit. Banville's map of tenderness is ultimately an exercise in 'reading with love' (Deleuze: 1995, 8-9).

Banville's 'hunger for flesh and tears' (Cixous: 2005, 96) also manifests itself within the sensual physicality that moves through his writing. Sitting opposite the young girl Flora at the kitchen table, embodied thought and emotion is palpable as Freddie contemplates how:

The present feeds on the past, or versions of the past. How pieces of lost time surface suddenly in the murky sea of memory, bright and clear and fantastically detailed, complete little islands where it seems it might be possible to live, even if only for a moment. (Banville: 1998, 146 -147)

As Flora talks he watches and becomes intensely aware of her physical presence:

The little fine hairs on her legs, the scarp of dried skin along the edge of her foot, a speech of sleep in the canthus of her eye. No longer Our Lady of the Enigmas, but a girl, just a girl. And somehow by being suddenly herself like this she made the things around her be there too. In her, and in what she spoke, the world the little world in which we sat, found its grounding and was realised. (Banville: 1998, 147)

This represents a small island of home, a momentary respite in the drifting and dangerous sea of life; for one instant life is ‘no longer figment, no longer mystery, no longer part of my imagining’ (Banville: 1998, 147). The way in which society forges constructions of both the individual and the community is at stake here. Between the publications of *Kepler* in 1981 and *Ghosts* in 1993, Ireland developed as a major tourist attraction and was now narrated, not only by colonial, postcolonial and nationalist discourses, but also by a touristic discourse of commodification. Similarly, individuals are constructed within multiple narratives such as gender, and this will become more explicit in *Mother of Pearl*. Banville’s elemental philosophy seeks to find something of that old ‘wild energy’ (Kiberd: 1996, 290), the elemental vibrations that tell a whole other story to that of the marketing strategy or ‘peddling of the authentic’ (Graham: 2001, 144), so that a ‘deeper self is freed’ that will allow the ‘forces of creation to flow through it’ (Kiberd: 1996, 291).

Time is also imbued with a sense of physicality imparting a very real sense of embodied tempo-spatiality in the comment: ‘time on my hands. That is a strange phrase’ (Banville: 1998, 37). Time is further described as something ‘more than clock time’ it is rather ‘a thicker-textured stuff’ (Banville: 1998, 38). This ‘stuff’ is the haptic plot and action vibrating in the novel, circulating as blood in the flesh of animal and human bodies, the through natural world, the elements, thoughts, emotions and memories; it is a ‘geopsyche “architexture”’ (Bruno: 2002, 4). Banville’s description of grief embodies the painful physicality of this experience in the ‘scalding serum’, the idea of ‘piercing’, the sense of ‘blinding’ and ‘spasm’ all imply pain, the rawness and sensitivity associated with tenderness

(Banville: 1998, 187). Flesh and touch manifest as tempero-spatial thinking by ‘touching it gingerly, with the barest tips of thought, as if it were one of those lethal lumps the precise depth and dimensions of which I would not care to discover’ (Banville: 1998, 81). The *pharmakon* is detectable here, rendering the act of thinking as not only tender vitality in the pursuit of knowledge, but also as a cancerous growth and danger. The intricacy of expressing meaning through language means that every ‘plunge’ he makes into articulation is like ‘a bellyflop’ (Banville: 1998, 27). A sense of corporeality and movement also breathes into objects and elements and while ‘the silence whirred’ (Banville: 1998, 51), and all around the house ‘the sea breezes make the timbers shift and groan’ (Banville: 1998, 38); at times the reader feels ‘the wind pummelling the house, pounding softly on the window pane’ (Banville: 1998, 42-43) as ‘the rain whispered softly’ (Banville: 1998, 61).

Implicit in the haptic cartographies connecting *Kepler* and *Ghosts* is memory, both personal and cultural. Wrethed has discussed the role of ‘mnemonic air’ (Wrethed: 2007, 282) as a carrier of memory that permeates everything, and explores how the transformative properties within all four elements are felt in startling ways within memory. For Banville, fire is capable of ‘transmutation...a comprehensible magic’ (Banville: 2001, 334), consequently when Freddie affirms, in *Ghosts*, that ‘fire must be my element’ (Banville: 1998, 31) the polymorphism that pervades the novel is intensified. Multiplicity manifests itself, not only within the cosmic elements permeating the novel, but also within the oblique references to diverse incarnations and metamorphoses that specifically relate to Freddie.

When Freddie journeys to the oak ridge and finds himself standing out in the thunder and rain, eyes stinging with smoke from the outdoor fire he has built, he becomes ‘this big, half-naked, red-eyed, dripping creature, the wildman of the woods’ (Banville: 1998, 66). A number of interpretations open up here, perhaps the most immediately obvious being that of Caliban ‘the monster of the isle’ (*The Tempest*: 2.2. 56-65), who enters the play in Act Two carrying firewood amidst a storm. An alliance is formed between that ‘poor credulous

monster' (*The Tempest*: 2.2. 143) Caliban and Freddie the 'poor inert monster' (Banville: 1998, 66) and 'the ogre himself' (Banville: 1998, 67). There is another alliance with the twelfth century Irish poem by an unknown author called 'The Wildman of the Woods'. In this poem the ancient Irish King Suibhne, driven mad by a curse, wanders the countryside; however, despite his madness, he expresses nature in verse from the perspective of one who lives within it as opposed to a mere spectator. This epitomises the haptic encounters of the natural world, invoking the sensuous perception and equally sensuous geographies in the affective instants within *Ghosts*.

Yet another subtle articulation within Freddie's polymorphism relates to the Dagda of Irish mythology. One of the Dagda's names is 'red-eye' and he has an elemental relationship to both the sun and fire (MacKillop: 2004, 126). His further description as being oafish and peasant-like, often only half-dressed, is parallel to Banville's depiction of Freddie sitting by the oak wood. The Dagda also holds a number of mythical associations with the otherworld and the earth, both as the global planet that we inhabit, and the more specifically tactile soil, clay and earth in which plants and trees grow, and in which we will be eventually buried. There is also an association with the Platonic element earth, that resonates strongly with both *Kepler* and *Ghosts* (Scott Martin: 2008, 2). He can be seen as a Green Man figure. The Dagda is also associated with fire as in '*dag dé*' meaning 'fire of God' (Martin: 2008, 2) as well as *Rúad Rofhessa* which refers to '*Ro-fessa*' meaning 'of the great science', or ancient 'heathen science' (Martin: 2008, 2). Another of his names is '*Eochaid Ollathair*' which translates as 'Horseman Allfather' (Martin: 2008, 1). Furthermore, he has been referred to in the *dindshenchas* at least twice as '*Dagdai duir*', which refers to the oak tree. There are a number of interesting references in the text that suggest the Dagda could indeed have a voice in the novel and a place on the map of tenderness, for example, his description of himself as 'red-eyed', 'half-naked' and as the 'wildman of the woods' (Banville: 1998, 66). Freddie's prolonged conversation with fire is interesting in light of the Dagda's relationship with fire, 'I

think fire must be my element' (Banville: 1998, 31), and, 'Fire: yes, yes' (Banville: 1998, 32), along with, 'And I in flames' (Banville: 1998, 73). The reference to the sun as a 'gold man' (Banville: 1998, 68) echoes the link with the Dagda's elemental relationship with the sun. The sound of the unknown rider at night prompts 'Who is the horseman?' (Banville: 1998, 73), and connects to the Dagda's mythical association with horses as well as with the Erl King mentioned later in the novel. The Pythagorean music of the spheres resonates in that 'faint, deep, formless song ...of the earth' (Banville: 1998, 6) resonates with the mythical breath and music of Dagda's magic harp, one of Ireland's oldest symbols. The ancient bards were also gifted musicians of the harp; its music breathes between the earth and the otherworld, and between Banville the contemporary writer and the bardic traditions of the past.

Added to this creative multiplicity, one hears the multiple voices of Ariel in 'I am free...but what does it signify...be something new, a sticky, staggering thing with myriad-faceted eyes and wet wings, straining drunkenly for flight' (Banville: 1998, 195). There are echoes of the unnamed Gothic creation in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, 'perhaps lightening would galvanise me into life, poor inert monster that I am' (Banville: 1998, 66) or an equally Gothic 'poor parched Nosferatu' (Banville: 1998, 170), or an amalgamation of all of them. One thing is certain in Banville's landscape, its representation serves to reveal a postcolonial Gothic metamorphosis of subjectivities as deeply 'contested, multi-layered and internally-contradictory subject positions' (Braidotti: 2008a, 13).

In this diverse landscape of transito, space is an 'open, ongoing production' (Massey: 2009, 55) that 'makes room for a genuine multiplicity of trajectories and thus potentially of voices' (Massey: 2009, 55). Polymorphism pervades both Gothic and postcolonial imagination, operating within Banville's map of tenderness it amplifies the idea that:

[t]he impact of maps on selfhood is even more pronounced in forms of emotional cartography...through narrative forms, cartography has redesigned the very space of the subject. By providing a design for ...spatial imagination, it has fashioned forms of spatial inner-subjectivity and intersubjectivity. (Bruno: 2002, 235)

Banville's tender cartography of Irish historical experience, specifically how he touches upon famine and the Xhosa people of South Africa, operates as a means of 'talking nearby' (Minh-ha: 1999, 218). Briefly, the story centres on the Xhosa prophet Nongqawuse who dreams that her ancestors present her with a solution to the problem of ongoing colonial battles; the solution determines that if all livestock is slaughtered and agricultural practices stopped, then the ancestors will return to life and form an invincible army to overwhelm the colonisers. Banville writes, 'they were a proud and sophisticated race, and great warriors, too, yet unaccountably, for nigh on a hundred years, they had been losing battle after battle against the white settlers' (Banville: 1998, 192). Thus, the drastic action was deemed a price worth paying in order to drive the European settlers into the sea and allow the Xhosa to regain their homeland.

There is a striking parallel between the desires of the Xhosa ancestors and the Irish myth of the legendary Fianna who it was thought would drive the English into the sea. When the Xhosa killed their cattle they became desperately weakened with over seventy thousand people dying of starvation in 1857 and by 1879, after the ninth war, all Xhosa homelands had been incorporated into the Cape Colony. As previously illustrated in relation to Kepler's tempero-spatial and cultural setting, this traumatic story 'talking nearby' can 'come very close to a subject without seizing or claiming it' (Min-ha: 1999, 234). Thus, in encountering and contemplating the fate of the Xhosa people, a tender connection is formed with the memory of Irish experiences in colonial battles, and with the devastating experience of famine; a line of recognition radiates towards other experiences of loss.

Drawing another line between Banville's recounting of the Xhosa story and postcolonial theory, Robert Knox in his classification and assessment of race entitled *The Races of Man* (1850) compares the people of Ireland with the Xhosa. Knox has been referred to as the founder of British racism, and specifically of what is known as scientific racism (Magubane. B: 2001, 19). As a fervent supporter of colonial enterprises in Ireland and South

Africa, Knox was keen to study both indigenous populations, he came up with similarities between them. Knox describes the Celt as possessing ‘furious fanaticism; a love of war and disorder; a hatred for order and patient industry; no accumulative habits; restless, treacherous, uncertain: look at Ireland’ (Knox: 1850, 27). Further, he writes in a similar way of the Xhosa in that ‘never could be made to, comprehend the word liberty’ (Knox: 1850, 26). Zine Magubane comments that Knox’s ‘prescriptions for the eventual annihilation of the Irish closely resemble the writings of the Eastern cape settlers about the Xhosa’ (Magubane. Z. 2003: 112).

One might argue that Knox’s ideas are simply one man’s estimation; however Vincent Cheng notes that Knox’s views were highly respected and indeed became a galvanizing force for thinking about race as a theoretical concept. Cheng, in his study of James Joyce in the context of race and empire, goes on to note the vehemence with which Knox discusses the Irish and how to ‘dispose of them’: in short they ‘should be forced from the soil’ (Knox: 1850, 253). Cheng sees this as ‘nothing short of a recipe and justification for racial genocide’ (Cheng: 1995, 30). By setting the story of the Xhosa catastrophe in *Ghosts*, Banville has given the reader an option to reflect upon the analogy between the Irish and South African experience, in other words, to engage in rhizomatic thinking. Such imaginative triggers of remembrance then ‘open up spaces of movement and of deterritorialization which actualize virtual possibilities which had been frozen in an image of the past’ (Braidotti: 2008, 168).

Lingering with the idea of ‘spaces of movement’ (Braidotti: 2008, 168) brings me to the closing part of this chapter and back into the idea of mapping, transito and space. In keeping with Deleuze’s theories that thinking and memory is not tied to experience alone, Braidotti emphasises that it is imagination that liberates these creative and vital spaces. Deleuze’s embodied, imaginative and cartographic philosophy provides a fertile vocabulary for articulating the intense haptologies in Banville’s writing. How can these diverse strands within a map of tenderness come to approach an ‘enterprise of health’ (Deleuze: 1997, 3)?

Can a form of closure be articulated that is in keeping with the nature of a shifting cartography, especially in a way that points towards further lines of flight? How might the ‘tender burden’ and reading experience of intense haptologies, imaginative play, and creative thinking be applied to the lived environment? How might one transform these encounters and become a ‘body animated with intentions’ (Irigaray: 2004, 188)?

In a response to W.H. Auden’s claim that art has no effect upon the world, Hawkes says that imaginative acts ‘create inner climates in which psychic events occur’; such events are, in themselves, significant, but they also ‘affect the outer literal events in time and space through what has occurred in the act of reading’ (Hawkes and Scholes: 1972: 205). Thus with a whisper of the Gothic and a nod towards reading as a healthful endeavour, ‘history and the inner psychic history must dance their creepy minuet together if we are to save ourselves from total oblivion’ (Hawkes and Scholes: 1972, 205).

On a tangential note, Christian Nold’s emotional map project might further show how emotional mapping reaches out into the world; this project has collected data from 25 cities across the world in an effort to determine levels of arousal in response to locations in our environment.⁴⁷ An innovative idea that nevertheless connects with ancient Aztec maps that link places by footsteps, memories and events; rather than just records of place, they are tempero-spatial documents. Nold records results of emotional arousal recorded by a Galvanic Skin Response device, and maps them to form an emotional cartography of the immediate environment. Together with personal recollection they form an atlas of emotion plotted by memories are insignificant to the formal archive but completely resonant with the memory and tempero-spatial experience of places; they express quotidian intense haptologies.

Contemplating further lines of flight from Banville’s tender mappings, it would be a worthwhile project to trace this cartography in all his writing. Additionally, a cross-cultural

⁴⁷ See Christian Nold’s emotional map project in England www.biomapping.net and his free to download book *Emotional Cartography: Technologies of the Self* (Christian Nold ed.) is at: <http://emotionalcartography.net/>

study between *Kepler*, *Ghosts* and, for example, the New Zealand writer Janet Frame's novel *Scented Gardens for the Blind* might serve to further enhance the way in which we read tender mappings. Frame utilizes air, fire, water and earth and interweaves these elements with flesh in breath-taking ways. Furthermore, her use of the term 'hypotenuse longing' resonates with Banville's use of geometry as both a restrictive and paradoxically liberating imaginative form thus:

from one writer to another, great effects can link up or diverge, within compounds of sensations that transform themselves, vibrate, couple, or split apart: it is these beings of sensations that account for the artist's relationship with a public, for the relation between different works by the same artist, or even for a possible affinity between artists. The artist is always adding new varieties to the world. Beings of sensation are varieties, just as concept's beings are variations, and the functions beings are variables. (Deleuze and Guattari: 1994, 175)

Acts of transformation then, whether real or imaginary, are key ideas which are articulated incessantly and procreatively within both Gothic and postcolonial texts. These movements not only signal change, resistance, empowerment, but also the presence of desire and the seeking of an imaginative opportunity to redefine the parameters through which we interpret the way we live. If there is still any doubt about the power of mere words Ngugi says:

In my view language was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation. (Ngugi: 1994, 9)

If words hold such power to subjugate, might they also conversely provide a liberating force? Such is the potential facility of Banville's 'tender burden' (Banville: 1998, 178).

Chapter Five: Mary Morrissy's *Mother of Pearl*

It had started as a shadow on Irene Rivers' lung. (Morrissy: 1997, 3)

A creature that hides and "withdraws into its shell" is preparing a "way out"...in the motionlessness of its shell, the creature is preparing temporal explosions, not to say whirlwinds, of being. (Bachelard: 1994, 111)

...if we were to allow ourselves to indulge in all the daydreams of inhabited stone there would be no end to it. (Bachelard: 1994, 111)

The flower, which has its roots in the underground, always leads back to it. In this way, it reminds us of the polymorphic and dynamic life that is buried under the name it receives by enlightened vision. (Sartiliot: 1993, 41)

In this exploration of Morrissy's *Mother of Pearl*, I am taking up where Ann Owens Weekes leaves off when she says that 'in creating this new fiction from the detritus of myth, Morrissy begins to reconstruct the absence Pearl grieves' (Owens Weekes: 2007, 145). Morrissy's novel is, as Weekes suggests, about the search for ways in which to accommodate loss, to encounter some means of engaging with the 'presence of diverse absences' (de Certeau: 1984, 108). The novel seeks to work towards productive and creative ways of communicating with those 'diverse absences' (de Certeau: 1984, 108). Taking the title of her article from the Adrienne Rich poem 'Diving into the Wreck', Owens Weekes charts the myths that surround gender construction and the act of mothering and, as she rightly points out:

[t]he problems with myth are multiple: the loss of actual women's history, the distortion of relationships to favour the powerful, and the embedding over time of these distortions in both culture and the individual psyche as natural, as unmarked. (Owens Weekes: 2007, 145)

If as Sartiliot remarks, 'Cixous's feminine writing is a quest for the absent mother' (Sartiliot: 1993, 142), then in dealing with the insidious power relations that distort the cultural role of the mother, Morrissy's novel might well be described as such. Morrissy not only displays and accentuates the protean form of these complex distortions with their disturbing and

manipulative influence, but she also throws into the narrative mix Gothic allusions to metamorphosis.

The implications of acts of metamorphoses in the novel are crucial in that, even though cultural constructions of gender can be deeply embedded 'as natural, as unmarked' (Owens Weekes: 2007, 145), change is always possible. The story Morrissy tells is one of grief, sorrow, loneliness, blood and death, but I am prompted to recall three pertinent observations here about the potential for transformation that can be found in desperate situations. Firstly, I refer to Irigaray's 'nocturnal wanderings' that provide the experience of being 'torn apart in pain, fear, cries, tears, and blood that go beyond any other feeling', and which serve to foreshadow the knowledge that 'the wound must come before the flame' (Irigaray: 1985, 193).

Secondly, there is Taussig's description of the 'space of death' (Taussig: 1984, 468) which, while operating as a space of fear, disorientation, and a loss of any sense of identity, is also paradoxically 'a wide space whose breadth offers positions of advance as well as of extinction' (Taussig: 1984, 468); in other words this sense of unpredictability, movement and potential transformation renders it a space of metamorphosis. Taussig sees this creative potential as being vital to communities living under severely repressive regimes, including torture. If however, as Meaney recounts, Irish women have experienced 'the violent rejection and repression of the maternal body' (Meaney: 2010, 10) to such an extent that this body 'became a spectre, haunting national consciousness [which]... functioned in true Gothic fashion' (Meaney: 2010, 10), then the creative space that Taussig describes begins to look useful.⁴⁸ Additionally, if acts of motherhood were indeed 'ruthlessly demonized' (Meaney:

⁴⁸ The repression described here is not exclusive to Irish women, nor do *all* Irish women perceive themselves as being repressed in such a violent way. Meaney and Morrissy are emphasizing the way gender roles are created in such a way that they act as a hinge between religious and political ideals of womanhood and motherhood. In turn, this can create a heavy-duty lexical framework that becomes uncomfortably visible if you don't 'fit in' to the image that has been constructed, or indeed if you wish to break loose and change it. Such constructions

2010. 10) in cases where motherhood was not seen to conform to the ideologies of church and state, then the 'space of death' (Taussig:1984, 468) unquestionably holds a creative potential. I envisage the 'space of death' transforming into the dynamics of what Irigaray would call a space of breath, especially as 'woman's breath, is at the origin of human generation' (Irigaray: 2004, 168-9). This relocation of the biblical breath as depicted in the Book of Genesis is not lost on Morrissy as I will show.

Thirdly, I am prompted to recall Bakhtin's judicious advice about the form of the novel, and to apply it to gender construction, as ideas about gender are continuously evolving 'we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities' (Bakhtin: 1996, 3-4). These words anticipate Irigaray's dream for a progression 'from a conformity to a natural or cultural innateness or received practice to the transformation, transfiguration of these givens into means of allowing natural and spiritual growth' (Irigaray: 2004, 188). Morrissy's transformative writing on gender ultimately expresses Irigaray's hope and coincides with the preceding examples of affirmative thought. The narrative of *Mother of Pearl* employs metamorphosis as a way of breathing life into the 'absence Pearl grieves' (Owens Weekes: 2007, 145). Deleuze and Braidotti would say that Morrissy navigates the intricacy and intensity that exemplifies the processes of becoming. By using the wide terrain of the novel to forge a dynamic synthesis of the Gothic with elemental forces, Morrissy generates a postcolonial Gothic exploration of gender construction within postcolonial Irish society.

I will recount the story very briefly here, before moving on to discuss other critics and their views of the novel; my telling, unsurprisingly, cannot do justice to the substantial affective complexity of the novel. The story begins with Irene who has tuberculosis and is sent to Granitefield sanatorium for treatment. Having survived the disease, Irene finds she is unable to have a child, thus facing extreme pressure about her childlessness within the local

attempt to repress the existence of 'complex personhood' (Gordon: 2008, 4); they cannot totally fulfil this duty thus leave room for hauntings, contagion, breath and alternative voices – as Morrissy shows.

community. Irene visits a hospital and steals a new-born baby girl from her biological mother, Rita. Irene brings the baby home to live with her and her husband Stanley, and, deeply cherished by them both, that baby comes to be known as Pearl.⁴⁹ Although Pearl is eventually returned to her biological family when she is about four years old, she never loses the intense connection with Irene. As a young woman, Pearl marries but then aborts her baby as she has a desperate desire to make room in her life for Jewel; Jewel is that part of her own self with her own invented name in recognition that the 'true proper name' materializes 'when the individual opens up to the multiplicities pervading him or her' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 42). Irene serves a term in prison for the kidnapping, and as she has nowhere else to go takes a live-in job in the kitchens back at Granitefield, now a home for the elderly. The novel closes with Irene 'reading' her box of treasured memories and thinking deeply and lovingly about Pearl. There is much in this book for the reader to think about in relation to gender construction and its potentially devastating effects upon individual lives; the novel is filled with the implications of 'dark, gendered origins' (Owens Weekes: 2007, 135-136). There is much to contemplate about survival in desperate situations.

Other critics have explored similar ideas to Owens Weekes, for example Linden Peach also discusses the nature of the religio-political shaping of mother roles. Peach pays particular attention to the ideas of the 'Mater Dolorosa' (mother of sorrows), and Mediatrix (intervening on behalf of humans who are suffering or seeking forgiveness). Using Marina Warner's work on the Virgin Mary, Peach highlights how the diverse roles occupied by the

⁴⁹ The repression described here is not exclusive to Irish women, nor do *all* Irish women perceive themselves as being repressed in such a violent way. Meaney and Morrissy are emphasizing the way gender roles are created in such a way that they act as a hinge between religious and political ideals of womanhood and motherhood. In turn, this can create a heavy-duty lexical framework that becomes uncomfortably visible if you don't 'fit in' to the image that has been constructed, or indeed if you wish to break loose and change it. Such constructions attempt to repress the existence of 'complex personhood' (Gordon: 2008, 4); they cannot totally fulfil this duty thus leave room for hauntings, contagion, breath and alternative voices – as Morrissy shows.

Virgin Mary are historically and culturally specific.⁵⁰ Warner highlights how the survival of the Virgin Mary as a goddess in a patriarchal society rests upon 'her sweetness, her submissiveness, and her passivity' (Warner: 1990, 191).⁵¹ She also emphasizes how this is not a circumstance culturally specific to Ireland alone, and she cites Spain, Portugal, Italy and Belgium as locations where 'women are not rallying for comfort to a symbol that holds out hope of something different from their lives' (Warner: 1990, 191). Peach also draws upon Susan Sontag's suggestion of taking illness (she explores in particular tuberculosis, cancer and AIDS) out of the realms of metaphoric language within which it is often couched, proposing that Morrissy does the same for women.⁵² Taking a postmodern stance, Peach writes that *Mother of Pearl* 'unwraps women from their metaphorical contexts...and also deconstructs women's experiences' (Peach: 2004, 166).

Peach offers a detailed account of the biblical symbolism in the novel, focusing closely upon the Virgin Mary and the Virgin Birth, which propounds very specific ideas about gender. It offers a framework within which many of the characters operate, as Mary /Pearl/ Jewel says: 'You see, I have resorted to biblical metaphor. But it is all I know. And so much more exotic than the literal truth' (Morrissy: 1997, 217). For Peach, the many biblical references that pepper the novel mean that Morrissy not only draws attention to religious tenets, but also refigures them from a feminist perspective. In other words, the novel seeks to 'relocate the bible' (Peach: 2004, 168). I would like to add to this aspect of Peach's study by exploring the imaginative aspects of breath as contagion, rewriting the narrative of breath in the creation story. Morrissy also revises the biblical creation of Eve from a rib thus again refiguring the story of creation in Genesis. So while the character Irene is in deep

⁵⁰ See Peach, Linden (2004), *The Contemporary Irish Novel*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, especially pages 160-168 and Peach, Linden (2007) *Contemporary Irish and Welsh Women's Fiction: Gender, Desire and Power*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, especially pages 172-176.

⁵¹ Warner, Marina. (1990) *Alone of all Her Sex: the Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*, London: Pan.

⁵² Sontag, Susan. (2001) *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*, New York: Picador.

contemplation about birth, creation, blood and 'new life' (Morrissy: 1997, 54), the reader becomes aware of being drawn into an encounter with 'the fruit of Eve's ribs' (Morrissy: 1997, 55).

Peach has also drawn attention to the act of naming and 'unwrapping names' (Peach: 2004, 167) in the novel, and I will expand on his analysis by exploring the etymological significances of names such as 'Pearl' and 'Jewel'. 'Pearl' can be considered particularly for its implications within a postcolonial Gothic reading, as the process of a pearl's formation intimates notions of papering over, or attempting to heal, past traumas. Conversely, the name 'Jewel' begs to be considered in light of the energetic and disruptive violence associated with the 'birth' of a mineral gemstone out of the earth, as well as the connection of minerals, with metamorphosis and becoming. 'Jewel' expresses the process of transmutation that can be envisaged as a Deleuzian becoming-mineral, a reinstatement of the Dionysian world of dark earth, of rhizomatic thinking, of intuitive creative energy, of deep intimacy, of touch and hearing, of pain and joy within the Apollonian world of light, reason, logic, observation and vision, and restraint. Not only are there echoes of biblical creation for, just as God created Adam from the dust of the earth, so too Pearl initiates Jewel's birth out of the earth. Pearl's act of naming Jewel is also crucial to counter the biblical narrative of Adam's naming of 'every living creature' including Eve (*Bible*, Genesis, 11). If acts of naming and creation are important in the novel, the inclusion of the vegetal and the mineral worlds are also crucial to displace such acts.

Sartiliot highlights what Derrida illustrates throughout his *oeuvre*, that 'this telos is achieved through chance and intermediaries (insects, water, air and humans)' (Sartiliot, 1993, 32). In the novel, Morrissy allows moths, wolves, minerals, flowers, breath and contagion, howling, the suckling of animal milk and humans, to permeate and displace any sense of certainty that is presented in the giving of names, in the cultural determining of gender, and in biblical acts of creation. Like the flowers that rise out of the earth in the last paragraphs of the

novel, Jewel calls to our attention the 'polymorphic and dynamic life' (Sartiliot: 1993, 41) that awaits both our reading and acknowledgement of its repression 'under the name it receives by enlightened vision' (Sartiliot: 1993, 41). I will return to these points throughout the chapter.

Jennifer Jeffers's study of the novel examines how words possess the power to both 'destroy and produce bodies' (Jeffers: 2008, 121). She focuses on the characters' attempts to render meaning within their environment and relationships by accounting how they 'measure the distance between a lack of sense or knowledge and sense or knowledge' (Jeffers: 2008, 121). It is within the movements between these perceived absences and presences, between the epistemological and deeply haptic experiences of the environment, that Jeffers reads *Mother of Pearl*. Jeffers concludes that the relationship between Irene and Pearl, as well as Pearl's relationship with her different selves (Mary and Jewel), highlights how their ways of measuring these distances 'has very little to do with what we might call "reality" or a shared experience of "reality"' (Jeffers: 2008, 131). Thus, there is room to explore further how Pearl and Irene seek to create alternative realities, both through their individual acts, and also within the context of their unconventional relationship. The distance between the constructed religio-political notions of women and motherhood, and the tangible lives and experiences and desires of actual women is a complex terrain with some intricate paradoxes to negotiate. Certainly the Gothic can offer a means to do this.

One particular paradox is implicit within the restorative processes of postcolonial, and it has direct implications on gender construction and on the negotiation of the distance which Jeffers discusses. Meaney states that:

[t]he psychodynamic of colonial and postcolonial identity often produces in the formerly colonized a desire to assert a rigid and confined masculine identity, against the colonizer's stereotype of their subjects as feminine, wild and ungovernable. This masculine identity then emerges at the state level as a regulation of "our" women, an imposition of a very definite feminine identity as guarantor to the precarious masculinity of the new state. (Meaney: 2010, 5)

Thus, a particular notion of woman is formed and appropriated in order to serve the creation of the state, a notion that is upheld within the Irish constitution.⁵³ The paradox here is that at a superficial level, the Constitution upholds the fundamental rights of women to remain at home within the scope of family and motherhood should they so wish; however by rendering this right as being critical to the 'common good', and the maintenance of 'welfare' and 'social order of the state', it becomes a challenging task for an individual to aspire to other options. To act upon such aspirations becomes more challenging still. Women thus become bound within the ties within which the words of the Constitution constitute them. To opt out can equate with going against state, nation and religious ideals; after all 'the common good cannot be achieved' (*Irish Constitution*, Article 41) without this co-operation from women. There is a lot more at stake here in any idea of change than simply making a personal choice that other people do not like, which is why any reading of the concepts of becoming and metamorphoses in Morrissy's novel is necessarily a turbulent and forceful one. Although this experience is by no means exclusive to Irish postcolonialism, Meaney's words bear out the value of giving serious reflection to postcolonial issues within any meaningful exploration of gender construction in Ireland. Equally, it appears to me that to engage with gender construction by way of the literary imagination can offer postcolonial research 'the necessary dose of dream-like vision without which no social project can take off and gather support' (Braidotti: 2003, 25).

⁵³ CONSTITUTION OF IRELAND – BUNREACT NA hÉIREANN **The Family: Article 41**

1. 1° The State recognises the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law.
2. 2° The State, therefore, guarantees to protect the Family in its constitution and authority, as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the Nation and the State. 1° In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved. 2° The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.
3. 3. 1° The State pledges itself to guard with special care the institution of Marriage, on which the Family is founded, and to protect it against attack.

The postcolonial Gothic literary imagination, and especially writing like Morrissy's, can be of help in revisioning postcolonial religio-political interventions in gender construction in Ireland, and elsewhere. This point is encapsulated by Braidotti when she discusses how:

Deleuze's hybrid nomadic selves; the multiple feminist-operated becoming-woman of women; Irigaray's woman as not-one; Haraway's cyborgs, not unlike Cixous's new Medusa (1975), are often rendered in the old-fashioned social imaginary as monstrous, hybrid, scary deviants. What if what was at fault here, however, were the very social imaginary that can only register changes of this magnitude on the panic-stricken moralistic register of deviancy? What if these unprogrammed-for others were forms of subjectivity that have simply shrugged off the shadow of binary logic and negativity and have moved on? The process of transformation of the subject goes on and we need process ontology to provide adequate accounts of it. (Braidotti: 2008a, 263)

In other words, we need to explore philosophical and creative ideas like 'becoming' as a way of seeing metamorphic subjectivity and the experience of life as variable, often inconsistent, often irregular, sometimes tumultuous and violent, but as endlessly adaptable and potentially as an affirmative process. The postcolonial Gothic in a novel such as *Mother of Pearl* can enable the reader to come face to face with those 'monstrous, hybrid, scary deviants' (Braidotti: 2006b, 205), casting doubt upon such lexical cages. Indeed, I agree with Braidotti when she says of 'minor' literature which includes the Gothic, that:

[t]he quest for positive social and cultural representations of hybrid, monstrous, abject and alien others in such a way as to subvert the construction and consumption of pejorative differences, makes the science fiction [Gothic] genre an ideal breeding ground to explore our relation to what Haraway (1992) describes affectionately as 'the promises of monsters'. (Braidotti: 2006b, 203)

The idea of metamorphic subjectivity takes on multiple meanings when exploring Jewel in the novel; it resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's idea of becoming-mineral in that Morrissy 'establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are closest to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes. This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 300). Thus, what is important when deliberating upon Jewel is the concrete process of metamorphic mineral activity that creates a jewel in the earth. Ultimately, this creates a narrative of desire about Pearl, her

mode of survival, her hunger, the constraints that bind her and the ongoing intense metamorphoses that compose her and enable the birth of Jewel. Above all, it is this sense of Gothic displacement and instability that the process of becoming provokes, and Morrissy's writing provides us with readerly access to it as a form of mediation.

On occasions when transgression and upheaval is not overtly presented, it still seethes under the surface of the text. We might consider, for example, how one woman in the sanatorium, Betty, is portrayed continually knitting with 'a tight-lipped ferocity', and then as unpicking her creations while 'fretting over lost stitches' (Morrissy: 1997, 13). Irene's mother, Ellen Rivers, is 'calcified by her husband's tidal rages and the harshness of her solitary life' (Morrissy: 1997, 5). Ellen has no outlet through which to voice her feelings, and gives in 'to the venomous life that fuelled her' (Morrissy: 1997, 5). These images bring to mind that 'imaginary paradox of a vigorous mollusc', wherein we encounter 'postponed aggressiveness...that bides its time', serving to alert us that 'wolves in shells are crueller than stray ones' (Bachelard: 1994, 112). This is a warning not lost on Morrissy, as the wolf haunts the text in myth, breath and mother's milk. I will return to the wolf.

The way in which Morrissy broaches the negotiations of distance between reality and imagination within religio-political gender constructions renders the text deeply Gothic, as it highlights the difficulties of asserting the purportedly "real" and "natural" from the imaginary, as well as that which we invent. The Gothic thrives on foregrounding such blurrings, making us question our own knowledge and certainties about the world. In asking these difficult questions, we may need to consider taking deviant paths and encountering equally deviant and shadowy relationships in order to find a way out of the mesh of 'distortions' that Owens Weekes discusses above. Thus, to perceptively question what is deemed to be natural, we have to come face-to-face with what is deemed to be unnatural. Cixous might say here that we have to confront what is 'imund', that which is deemed to be abominable, unclean, forbidden or excluded. For these reasons, I feel that Cixous, Irigaray,

Braidotti and Deleuze can provide the vocabulary to articulate such postcolonial Gothic encounters. Conversely, the Gothic provides a rich fermenting space that can accommodate encounters with the imund, through metamorphosis and the desire to journey to the geography of hell in order to find joy.

Heather Ingman utilizes the ideas of Julia Kristeva in her work 'Stabat Mater', with its split text referencing the interstices between spirituality, birth, death, blood, text, gender, and creation.⁵⁴ Ingman suggests that Morrissy echoes Kristeva's call for, in Kelly Oliver's words, 'an image of maternity that can found, rather than threaten, the social relationship' (Oliver: 1997, 297). If that image is to incorporate flesh, blood and sexual desire, then the Virgin Mary is not deemed to be the most beneficial model for such corporeal explorations of motherhood. Ingman, as well as citing Irene's name as symbolic of the Goddess of Peace, also explores the religio-political background to the construction of ideas of gender and mothering; she discusses how *Mother of Pearl* seeks to reveal the 'immeasurable, unconfined maternal body' (Kristeva: 1997, 322). The desire for such liberation permeates the novel.

Ideas about that which cannot be easily measured or confined, for example loss, grief, blood, illness and contagion, or hauntings, all form a complex, rhizomatic landscape in the novel. It is the terrain of the postcolonial Gothic and Anne Fogarty has utilised some of these links to explore neo-Gothic motifs in *Mother of Pearl*. Fogarty employs a postmodern slant to specifically hone in on aspects of doubled identity in the novel, especially double-mothering; she also explores how the home is seen as a site of confinement and alienation. Fogarty states how the Gothic 'quest for escape' (Fogarty: 2000, 66) from these distorting and restricting roles is central to Morrissy's text. She also cites Bachelard's writings on the shell as an ambiguous symbol of 'freedom and imprisonment, life and death, the human and

⁵⁴ See Ingman (2007) *Twentieth Century Fiction by Irish Women*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, pp172-177.

the non-human' (Fogarty: 2000, 67). Shells refer to interiority, both of the self and of home, and in this way Bachelard's notions connect the title of the novel with the idea of home, and with the women in the novel, especially Irene and Pearl. We might also remember that Bachelard says 'a creature that hides and "withdraws into its shell" is preparing a "way out"', and that this is especially so for 'one who has long been silent' and who will be 'preparing temporal explosions, not to say whirlwinds, of being' (Bachelard: 1994, 111). Bachelard's vision facilitates, and is critical to, understanding the narratives and processes of becoming in *Mother of Pearl*, as Morrissy urges us to consider that 'the most dynamic escapes take place in the repressed being' (Bachelard: 1994, 111). As a result, we are guided quite forcefully to think about the repression that operates in the lives of the characters, and the often unpredictable dialectic between subjection and the subjective. Such 'temporal explosions' haunt the novel and for this reason I feel they are worthy of deeper attention.

I have already alluded to Gothic motifs that run through the novel, as well as to postcolonial aspects of gender construction that impinge upon the characters (and potentially the readers). Richard Haslam (1999) has viewed *Mother of Pearl* as a magic realist novel which uses a child-nation parable exploring the 'ideological phantoms' that haunt Ireland, both the North and South. The novel is certainly permeated by a postcolonial undercurrent with the division between north and south 'like twins divided at birth' (Morrissy: 1997, 167).⁵⁵ There are ideas of mythical 'othering' and associated imagined savagery with comments such as "'they eat their young over there"' (Morrissy: 1997, 167), with the presence of soldiers and borders, and with the imagery of blood and killings that spells 'hardly a war at all, more a distant campaign' (Morrissy: 1997, 168). With such a literary

⁵⁵ In the novel the north/south divide is within an imaginary city based in Ireland. This creation serves as a microcosm of the north / south divide in Ireland between the twenty-six counties of the Republic in the South and the six counties of the North which still remains part of the United Kingdom.

backdrop it is entirely feasible to utilize the process of Pearl becoming-Jewel as a metaphor for Ireland as a damaged child attempting to heal itself.

I wonder however, if in viewing one of the female characters as a metaphor for Ireland's colonial traumatic past and postcolonial present, we are not only engaging in yet another appropriation of women as metaphor for nation, but are also sidestepping the very real concerns about women's lives. I feel that there is a need to draw upon a feminist imagination to ensure that womanhood is not utilized as yet another metaphor for Ireland and Irish history. With this in mind, although Haslam's interpretation is in many ways a valid and interesting one, I wish to focus specifically upon women's experiences during the ongoing healing processes occurring within postcolonial Irish culture.

In this respect Catriona Moloney states that 'feminist critics see a causal relationship between women's silencing and colonialism' (Moloney: 2007, 3). Moloney posits the writing of women such as Eilís ní Dhuibhe, Anne Enright and Kate O'Riordan as examples of countering what she asserts to be Spivak's error in thinking that the intellectual replicates the silencing of the subaltern voice. Indeed, Moloney's conclusion is that these women writers are 'creating a voice for subaltern women' (Moloney: 2007, 13). In its insistence upon exploring alternative modes of naming, communication, and rewriting biblical creation myths, I suggest that a postcolonial Gothic reading of Morrissy's writing will reveal the same conclusion. For Ailbhe Smyth, Irish culture is one which 'has colonized, contained, and controlled women's bodies, women's sexuality, with particular ferocity and tenacity' (Smyth: 1996, 143). Meaney suggests that postcolonial theory has thus been useful to feminist thinking in Ireland because 'it offered a vital way of understanding sexual conservatism, the relationship of the Catholic Church and the state and the gendering of national identity as elements that it shared with a wide variety of postcolonial cultures' (Meaney: 2011, 6).

This is suggestive of the kind of group 'consciousness-raising' that Catharine Mackinnon articulates in that 'through consciousness raising, women grasp the collective

reality of women's condition from within the perspective of that experience, not from outside it' (Mackinnon: 1982, 536). Reading fiction, especially but not exclusively the postcolonial Gothic, can assist in this process of understanding. Even more crucial, is Meaney's assertion that 'postcolonial theory has been highly resistant to being "differenced" from within' (Meaney: 2011, 17); this is all the more reason to engage in postcolonial feminist readings within Irish literature. This is not to suggest imposing such readings inappropriately over texts where they do not fit, but rather to recognize these aspects within fiction and tease them out where they do exist.

A postcolonial Gothic perspective then, offers a means through literary imaginings in which women might discover 'a heuristic way of destabilizing authoritative, distorting notions' (St. Peter Qtd. Moloney: 2007, 3) of gender and mothering and of how these concepts are constructed. Thus the creative discoveries and insights that are drawn from *Mother of Pearl* can offer a revealing heuristic model of potentially subversive creative thinking. Literary creations embrace a crucial role within the array of imaginative feminist challenges to inhibiting acts of gender construction.

On the subject of postcolonial Gothic imagination, Wisker puts it well when she says that:

the Gothic in postcolonial Gothic enriches the landscape of place, mind, and expression further by bodying forth the imaginary, the spiritual, imaginative, sensed, and felt, the internal landscapes of the mind, showing these as real, as the more frequently recorded historical, and richer because layered with meaning, demanding interpretation and engagement from readers. (Wisker: 2007, 402)

I have cited this quote again at this point as it provides an instantaneous expression of Morrissy's inventive landscape in *Mother of Pearl*. In the meticulous attention given to a female relationship that in absence 'seemed more real to me than all the presences' (Morrissy: 1997, 218), Morrissy engages with 'bodying forth the imaginary' thus displaying 'the internal landscapes of the mind' (Wisker: 2007, 402). That relationship is between Irene and Pearl.

The relationship between Irene and Pearl demands particular attention, as it reveals how Morrissy utilizes the Gothic in the realization of communication at a distance. In focusing primarily upon these characters, I must point out some exclusions of my own. Much more could be written on Rita, and how she changes from being a young girl 'full of a vague and tender optimism' (Morrissy: 1997, 102) to feeling that 'Rita Golden was lost' (Morrissy: 1997, 103). Irene's mother endures a life of disappointment and loneliness that creates a woman who is 'calcified' (Morrissy: 1997, 5), eventually capitulating in the face of her bleak future. I also remain mindful that just as women are locked into gendered lexical cages, so too are men. Sexual intimacy is problematic and Stanley is impotent, the one time he engages in a sexual encounter with his wife Irene, it is a violent rape. Irene's two brothers seem traumatised by seeing their mother indulge in sex with their father, thus 'it was the last time either son would abandon his mother' (Morrissy: 1997, 4). Both Jeff and Mel encounter blood and violence, Jeff is seriously wounded and Mel is shot dead. But it is Irene and Pearl who articulate, both individually and in their relationship, the postcolonial Gothic elements of this thesis in the most profound way.

Anne Fogarty describes Irene's mother love as providing an affirmative bond, but one that is nevertheless 'furtive, perverse, criminal, and tragically doomed to failure' (Fogarty: 2000, 68). It is the paradox of the 'perverse', combined with the intense loving connection, which forms the basis of the deep relationship that Irene and Pearl experience, even when separated. Their intensely complex but loving relationship, paradoxically, takes on the mantle of a disease, or a contagion. The opening line of the novel introduces Irene as being contagious 'it had started as a shadow on Irene Rivers' lung' (Morrissy: 1997, 1). This is a physiological reference to the presence of tuberculosis, but we might also come to think about the shadow and contagion in a philosophical and imaginative way, one that connects the shadow and lung with air, breath, voice and thought. In the context of this novel and its dealings with Irish religio-political gender constructs, the shadow can be seen as a creative

way of pronouncing a 'contagious' challenge to those constructs and appropriations of gender and motherhood. I am thinking specifically here about Deleuze and Guattari's notion of contagion as a means of spreading infectious and dangerous ideas and of potential transformations.⁵⁶

The alchemy that permeates contagious creative thinking, as Deleuze and Guattari present it, is saturated with Gothic allusions. The Gothic is present in the way in which they address their readers when discussing contagion, immediately implicating them as 'fellow sorcerers' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 280).⁵⁷ The Gothic, together with Cixous's imund world, vibrates within enunciations of contagion as transmission, multiplicity and the monstrous, with statements like 'I am legion' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 264), or operating in the presence of 'werewolves', 'vampires', 'the Devil', with warning of 'unnatural participations' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 266) and 'hybrids (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 267), in 'epidemics' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 266) and 'propagation' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 264). These Gothic ideas act like a transversal dynamic that can be both 'borne on the wind, [and] form rhizomes around roots' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 267). These fertile presences project a Dionysian world that has been expelled or repressed. In the novel, this contagion translates as hauntings, and absences that seem more real than presences, the insect world is present with moths, and minerals with Jewel, and the wolf prowls and howls within the interstices of the text. Daffodils emerging from rhizomes call out of the earth from a world that, as Morrissy shows, can never be completely excluded.

Ideas that stem from Irigaray's creative breathing as a means of women's expression, and Cixous's imaginative mythic telephone with its cord stretching underground and

⁵⁶ I am drawing on the section of their chapter '1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible...' pp256-341 with focus here on the sections entitled 'Memories of a Sorcerer' parts I, II and III in (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008). The page references here to contagion and Gothic allusions relate to this section.

⁵⁷ All references here are from Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. (2008) *A Thousand Plateaus*; translated Brian Massumi, London: Continuum.

connecting the separated mother and daughter, both serve as valuable ideas here, as each connects the postcolonial Gothic and feminist thinking in illuminative ways. In *Mother of Pearl*, these ideas engage with mother and daughter bonds by way of the ongoing connection between Irene and Pearl as a transgressive alliance rather than filiation, by contagion rather than heredity, thus breaching both the written and unwritten rules about what it means to be a mother, daughter and a woman.

The creative breath acts as the air through which the contagious voice and thoughts can be transmitted and imaginatively articulated, along with the idea of the creative telephone and cord. Contagion, breath and, by inference, voice connects Irene and Pearl's 'furtive, perverse, criminal' (Fogarty: 2000, 68) relationship with the kind of vibration Serres discusses in relation to noise that 'sows the poisonous stroke as it goes' (Serres: 1995, 57). The *pharmakon* is on the same wavelength as this contagion as it 'acts as both remedy and poison' (Derrida: 1981, 71). By means of enticement and provocation both contagion and *pharmakon* make 'one stray from one's general, natural, habitual paths and laws' (Derrida: 1981, 71).

Irene and Pearl's initial contact may pass but, as in the manner of a disease, 'the cause passes, the effect remains' (Serres: 1995, 57). More importantly, the creative breath carries with it on the air the disruptive temper of the:

rumor spreading by word of mouth, from one mouth to another, without making a move, always the same: that doesn't exist, or it may happen, once in a while. No, a rumor does not fly along, stable and constant, it rushes forth. It is only a murmur when its voice is hardly audible, at the beginning. No, a rumor goes like the devil. The devil, in Greek, is calumny itself.' (Serres: 1995, 58)

Such calumny and opposition afford Irene and Pearl the status of Gothic monsters. Irene was also deemed to have been, as Rita quips, 'suckled by wolves' (Morrissy: 1997, 160). Pearl is forever touched by this contagion. As she says 'it is I who am the skeleton in the cupboard'

(Morrissy: 1997, 218). Serres describes emphatically just what Irene and Pearl are setting themselves against, their thread of communication even when apart is such that:

if it were constant and stable, like an imitative murmur, a quasi-object exchanged within the group, and which itself does not change, it would die, in a few short steps, of redundancy. A murmur is redundant, so is mimicry. Papa, mama, immovable families. Bromides. Methodology, a straight path, is, in general, redundant. Rules, criteria, insurances, dying knowledge. Redundancy is needed, of course, for the maintenance of groups and the establishment of institutions, but rumor is not that. Oh yes, it goes like the devil. (Serres: 1995, 58)

This rumour resonates with the movement of nomadic thought, the line of flight, and the dynamic metamorphoses of becoming. It is a perilous space to occupy, but as Serres adds, 'if you wish to save your soul, your breath, your voice, venture to lose them; if you wish to lose them, try to save them, to keep them in the cocoon of redundancy' (Serres:1995, 59). Contagion, air, breath, metamorphosis all underpin Irene and Pearl's relationship, forming the communication that 'goes like the devil' (Serres: 1995, 58). In attempting to keep hold of these vital aspects of voice, both characters indeed 'venture to lose them' (Serres: 1995, 59).

Irene and Pearl's relationship, then, epitomizes the idea of a mother-daughter alliance through an invisible telephone cord, rather than one based upon filiation. Their transgression against the legal framework that has appropriated the female body gives an indication of contagion in their behaviour and their relationship. The dynamic space that forms between them, long after they are parted, forms an assemblage of living forces that endures right to the end of novel. I would suggest this is true even beyond the novel, as the reader carries its resonance out into the 'real' world, as Hawkes says, the intensity can 'affect the outer literal events in time and space through what has occurred in the act of reading' (Hawkes and Scholes: 1972: 205). Irene and Pearl epitomise the subversive potential of the repressed that often goes unnoticed in society. It is Cixous who warns, 'when the "repressed" of their culture and their society returns, it's an explosive, utterly destructive, staggering return' (Cixous: 1976, 886).

Irene is an isolated character from the outset of the novel. Her infection with tuberculosis renders her an outcast with her family, as the disease carries the stigma of

deprivation and being unclean (already throwing a line into the imund world). Morrissy describes Irene's exile thus:

Her mother, horrified by the notion that she might have contaminated the family (although in fact the opposite was the case; years of living in a damp quayside house had aggravated Irene's condition), would have nothing to do with her. She had, by her illness, disgraced the household, her mother believed. It spoke of poverty, a lack of hygiene. Her brothers dared not visit her. They would have had to explain their absence to a mother obsessed with contagion. Instead they helped to scour her room and burn her bedding. What they remembered of her shamed them. (Morrissy: 1997, 4)

Following Irene's arrival into the sanatorium, family and friends do not visit, a state of affairs not unusual for TB patients after entering a sanatorium. Irene is isolated during her prison term for kidnapping Pearl, and once more as she returns to work at Granitefield. Irene also encounters isolation in her marriage, as not only is Stanley impotent (so sexual intimacy is missing from their relationship), but the house is still haunted by his dead mother's presence in an understated Gothic paradigm operating within the ordinary and mundane.⁵⁸ The dead woman's clothes hang in the wardrobe, the couple sleep in her bedroom and in her bed, and her apron still hangs on the back of the kitchen door. Stanley often seems to expect his mother's return at any minute and, as though momentarily confusing Irene's presence with an expectation of his mother's, when Irene walks into a room 'an expression she couldn't quite decipher would flit across his features' (Morrissy: 1997, 37). Irene experiences isolation in the immediate community through the fact that she is childless and the subsequent related pressures she endures because of this. Ultimately their relationship becomes defined, by that 'dusty space neither of them could populate' (Morrissy: 1997, 38).

Irene, then, is an individual who is always on the periphery of the community, as Deleuze and Guattari might put it, Irene like the sorcerer is seen to 'haunt the fringes' and is well placed to trigger a bond 'inspiring illicit unions or abominable loves' (Deleuze and

⁵⁸ Irene finds other tactile outlets for intimacy in their relationship, as Morrissy describes, 'Irene fed on other tenderesses which Stanley offered, often unknowingly. His hand, the soft, burly strength of his embrace, his worshipping gaze. She loved the geography of his face, a country she had explored with her fingertips and the rough crevices of his blameless hands' (Morrissy: 1997, 39).

Guattari: 2008, 271). This is all the more interesting as the word 'inspiring' connects us back to the breath with the etymological root of 'inspire' being '*inspirare*', to 'breathe' or 'blow into', originally used of a divine or supernatural being in the sense of imparting an idea or truth to someone. Thus Irene's 'shadow' breathes out as an expression of an illicit connection between her and Pearl. This idea is crucial in *Mother of Pearl* in terms of the way we view Irene and Pearl's relationship, and in terms of ways of approaching female relationships outside of official religio-political constructs. In order to appreciate the full radical implications of this contagious relationship and the accompanying proliferations of metamorphoses, it is worth considering that:

[t]here is an entire politics of becoming-animal, as well as a politics of sorcery, which is elaborated in assemblages that are neither those of the family nor of religion nor of the State. Instead, they express minoritarian groups, or groups that are oppressed, prohibited, in revolt, or always on the fringe of recognised institutions, groups all the more secret for being extrinsic, in other words, anomic. If becoming-animal takes the form of a Temptation, and of monsters aroused in the imagination by the demon, it is because it is accompanied, at its origin as in its undertaking, by a rupture with the central institutions that have established themselves or seek to become established. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 272-273)

This passage describes a type of marginality that can be seen by official institutions as being deeply subversive. Pearl and Irene exhibit this marginality in the novel, their relationship opens up a 'rupture' in the social fabric. The mother-daughter bond, and the individual actions of kidnap and abortion, shatters any over-idealistic illusions of mothering, motherhood and womanhood presented by state and religious doctrines. It may be deemed that in reading these criminal acts 'monsters are aroused in the imagination' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 272), but we might also remember that in the veneration of the Virgin Mary as an impossibly 'perfect human woman, both humanity and women were subtly denigrated' (Warner: 1990, xxi). Irene and Pearl are thus deemed to be a contagion, to be imund, a 'rupture' to official versions of womanhood and subsequent appropriated notions of motherhood.

How is this imaginative contagion spread between Irene and Pearl in the novel? Irene's lungs are seen to be contagious; her breath possesses the ability to transmit infection. Irene saves Pearl from drowning by giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, but the words 'her mother has breathed new life into her' (Morrissy: 1997: 193) take on new meaning when we review them, firstly in terms of contagion, and secondly in relation to the biblical creation scene in Genesis. The breath of contagion is akin to alternative knowledge; it is above all about communication. Contagion becomes a means by which we can experience what it means to be rhizomatic, to encounter creative and non-appropriative ways of being. Irene and Pearl's alliance is reinforced by an act of transgression that brings them together and the breath and air that connects them long after they are separated. Movement, flow and transformation are intrinsic to the space of their connection, which is why breath takes on such an important role.

Irigaray has commented on the importance of the 'creative breath' to set 'in motion that which was motionless, rigid, dead' (Irigaray: 2004, 166). Thus such 'creative breath' can assist in the preparation of those Bachelardian 'temporal explosions...of being' (Bachelard: 1994, 111). Force, intensity, even violence emanates from the idea of explosions; they are certainly unpredictable. This hint of disquieting volatility is doubly reinforced in the novel by the notion that Pearl has been 'returned by one who was suckled by wolves' (Morrissy: 1997, 160), a postcolonial Gothic hint of savagery and otherness. However, contagion has also permeated the flow of mother's milk. The Gothic 'topos of the wolf' with 'speed, fur, blood and violence' (Braidotti: 2008, 128), enters the sacred space of motherhood, charging it with an earthy, tactile and erotic texture of the body, one that seems blasphemous in proximity to the Virgin Mary as the holy mother. Thus mother's milk, in tandem with breath, is a medium of contagion, triggering an 'explosion' of the civilised confines of one's self that 're-asserts some raw corporeality of the subject' in an 'ecstatic erotic encounter with radical otherness'

(Braidotti: 2008, 128). So, when Pearl says in the novel 'cursed, as I am, by a savage reversal of the natural instinct' (Morrissy: 1997, 216), we might well ask 'what is natural?'

Irene's breathing of life into Pearl is also a rewriting of the biblical creation scene when God creates Adam; breath is the spark of creation in the bible.⁵⁹ Moreover, the revisioning is reiterated in the novel with the references to Irene's ribs and the imaginary creation of a new life from one of the ribs which had been removed in the operation to treat tuberculosis: indeed, Pearl is visualised by Irene as 'the fruit of Eve's ribs' (Morrissy: 1997, 55). Their relationship moves away from the visual and into a tactile and auricular space, I say tactile while remembering that immediacy does not have to be privileged in a tactile relationship. Within the context of contagion amongst milk and breath, this affiliation signals the desire to create a subversive line of female expression and relationships. This creates a strong bond between Irene and Pearl, and they communicate in a way that is deeply instinctive, receptive and of the body. Heather Ingman has also commented on Irene and Pearl's emotional telepathic communication, and indeed, it is a crucial part of Morrissy's revisioning of the very foundations of biblical and religious tenets, as Derrida says 'before the act or the word, the telephone. In the beginning was the telephone' (Derrida: 1992, 270).⁶⁰ Pearl senses that Irene is 'calling out for me, not from the dim recess of the womb or the dreamy distant city I had housed her in, but here in this world, in my world' (Morrissy: 1997, 214).

The notion of breath from Irigaray's point of view anticipates, and forms an intrinsic part of, the idea of metamorphosis in the novel. Irigaray maintains that we have forgotten about air in the same way that Heidegger states that we use the word 'being' without really

⁵⁹ 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul', The Book of Genesis in the King James Bible, [online], available: <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Genesis-2-7/> [accessed 22 June 2011].

knowing what it means. Derrida reaffirms this point using words like 'soul', 'touch', 'body' or 'mind' as cases in point, as he deftly puts it:

one day some statistics will reveal to me how often I made use of them publicly and failed to confess that I was not only unsure of their exact meaning (and "being"! I was forgetting the name of being! Yet along with touch, it is everywhere a question of "being," of course, of beings, of the present, of its presence and its presentation, its self-presentation), but was fairly sure that this was the case with everybody-and increasingly with those who read me or listen to me. (Derrida: 2005, 7)

Thus air, although intriguing and vital, is often treated with indifference. Diane Perpich highlights the importance of air as metaphor in Irigaray's thinking in a way that is highly useful to notions of gender construction, and of relations between the sexes in the novel. It is also productive when viewing appropriative relationships within a postcolonial perspective:

The appeal to air and the associative figure of breath are employed not merely to invert the traditional dualisms, but to destabilize the dualisms themselves and more specifically to serve as figures of a threshold between binarily opposed terms, across which differences can be mobilized and mediated. (Perpich: 2003, 400)

This sense of movement renders the metaphor of air as being indicative of a postcolonial Gothic mode of expression, in that it articulates metamorphosis, productive liminal spaces and the desire for relationships within a process of approaching rather than of appropriation. Such movement and desire expresses an elemental philosophy of air as the process of becoming. Air and breath are also sustaining in that they enables life, but also in the sense of a spiritual sustenance as when Irene states at the end of the novel that the 'the knowledge that [Pearl] lives and breathes is enough to sustain her' (Morrissy: 1997, 223). This poignant statement, placed as it is in the final sentences of the story, serves to remind us that Morrissy incorporates Irigaray's rendering of the maternal as one which is extolled for:

the need to reproduce, the need to produce citizens, the necessity for man to give himself descendents and also the respect, even worship, of what would be a sacrificial gift of herself...and not a sharing of life and breath. (Irigaray: 2002, 81)

⁶⁰ Ingman discusses the sense of the North / South divide in the novel and says of Irene and Pearl that '[o]n some mythical level, since they never meet again in the novel, Irene and Pearl /Mary, through their yearning for one another, overcome the sectarian divide of their society' (Ingman: 2007, 176).

Morrissy's novel is a call to appreciate the mother as one who 'gives her breath and lets the other go' (Irigaray: 2002, 81).

More crucial for a postcolonial Gothic reading of gender construction in this novel is Irigaray's significant assertion that it is 'impossible to appropriate breath or air' (Irigaray: 2002, 79). As such, it is the perfect uninhibited medium to describe creatively and move within those metamorphoses that display subjectivity and inter-subjective relationships as volatile processes of social mediation. I might add that if any genre knows how to offer a radical rival to religio-political scripture in a contribution of our experience of creative metamorphoses, it is the Gothic.

This notion of calling between mother and daughter, of communicating between ear and body from a distance, is one that has been wholly appreciated by Sartiliot. Drawing on the work of Irigaray and Cixous, Sartiliot writes that the voice of the mother is 'an invisible and subterranean link – something like a telephone'. This invisible telephone is described as 'a mythic telepathic thread' (Sartiliot: 1993, 122) which enables communication from afar. This telephonic thread establishes itself like an umbilical cord which 'transforms absence into presence, re-establishes proximity beyond time and space' (Sartiliot: 1993, 137). In *Mother of Pearl*, this communication serves to do as Owens Weekes suggests, 'to reconstruct the absence Pearl grieves' (Owens Weekes: 2007, 145). In a reappraisal of the Demeter – Persephone myth, Sartiliot highlights that although they have been separated in one world, there is still a connection; they still possess the ability to connect with the 'ear, the voice, the body' (Sartiliot: 1993, 133). Thus, Irene can sense deep inside herself the child who is 'still out there. Not dead, simply lost...unclaimed, waiting for her mother' (Morrissy: 1997, 55), and the last line of the novel continues that poignant calling as the child 'is not lost but merely waiting to be found again' (Morrissy: 1997, 223), no matter how long it takes. This last line, with its implicit urge to go and seek, reaches out beyond the confines of the covers of the book; it reaches out to the reader directly as yet another extension of the telephonic

thread. The vibration of the telephonic thread encourages, through the acts of writing and reading, a form of becoming and a means of metamorphosis as 'writing is a becoming, writing is traversed by strange becomings that are not becomings writer, but becomings-rat, becomings- insect, becomings-wolf, etc' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 265).

To end a story in the context of a dream of someone reaching out for the future with 'arms spread wide', and 'waiting to be found' (Morrissy: 1997, 223), suggests a form of calling in itself. Morrissy's novel manifests as a tactile Gothic provocation to think creatively about the possibilities of change for women, both in Ireland and on a global scale. The mystical communication that connects Irene and Pearl might then also be interpreted as the contagious relationship between reader and writer, serving to 'remind us that there is a treasure locked away somewhere, and writing is the means to try and approach the treasure...the treasure is in the searching, not the finding' (Cixous 1993, 88). The treasure in this novel endures the process of rewriting and renaming, of becoming-mineral: that treasure is Jewel.

Other women in the novel also find a means of communication by creating cushions, appliqué, crocheting 'chalice covers' (Morrissy: 1997, 13), drawings with shells, making 'cathedrals out of matchsticks' (Morrissy: 1997, 13), and knitting. Betty spends her time in the sanatorium knitting, and continually unpicking only to re-knit baby clothes again and again. In these creative acts, they are continually seeking a way to form their own narratives, to call each other. Their efforts are, however, still within prescribed boundaries and inhabit the landscape of religious symbols and artefacts, babies and shells. They work within a distinctly visual framework, seemingly unable to find other ways to speak to each other. Morrissy suggests that if women continue to weave narratives such as these they will remain, as Heilbrun suggests, 'like Penelope awaiting Ulysses, weaving and unweaving, women will be staving off destiny and not inviting or inventing or controlling it' (Heilbrun: 1997, 46).

The residues of religion infiltrate all areas of life, even when individuals are not particularly religious and, as Owens Weekes states, 'signify the unmarked texts that deform their lives' (Owens Weekes: 2007, 143). As with the creative endeavours above, which are all connected somehow to religious narratives, Morrissy imbues names with the same fragments of religion, serving to create a potent undercurrent throughout the novel.⁶¹ The name 'Rita' is a derivative from the name 'Margaret', which in turn stems from an old Hebrew word '*margaron*', meaning 'pearl'. Indeed throughout the Middle-Ages, the name 'Margaret' was consistently understood as meaning 'pearl'.⁶² Mamie, Pearl's mother-in-law, has a name that derives from 'Mary' or 'Margaret'. The name 'May' derives from 'Mary', as does 'Moll'. The name of Rita's other daughter, 'Stella', derives from Mary through the term '*stella maris*' or 'star of the sea', a title used since the ninth century to signify the Virgin Mary. In a configuration of religious significations, there is even a line drawn here connecting '*stella maris*' and the lighthouse, that 'cathedral of rock', where Irene's father became 'a prisoner of the elements' (Morrissy: 1997, 4). Out of the etymological significance of these names emerges the 'unmarked texts' (Owens Weekes: 2007) that play such a part in all their lives, whether they realise it or not. I will come to look at Pearl and Jewel presently, but it may be significant that Jewel, in spite of all the pain and anguish surrounding her emergence, is related to the word 'joy'.⁶³ The pain and tribulation of an illicit journey to hell (as Cixous suggests) in order to interpret and read the root of such texts may prove to finally be, like reading itself, 'a wonderful metaphor for all kinds of joy that are called vicious' (Cixous: 1993, 119).

The women in the novel may form a part of what Sartiliot has referred to as the 'daisy chain' or 'switchboard' (Sartiliot: 1993, 138) of writing, which seeks the lost mother's voice,

⁶¹ Peach (2004) and Owens-Weekes (2007) have both discussed names and naming, I am expanding on their work.

⁶² All name references are from Hanks, Patrick, Hardcastle, Kate and Hodges, Flavia. (2006) *A Dictionary of First Names*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

but it is Pearl and Irene who seek a more transgressive means of interaction as they attempt to invent their own destiny. As such, their tactile writing and re-writing is rendered more able to initiate metamorphoses. For Cixous, this is the gift of feminine writing passed between mother and daughter. This is a form of writing that underpins Pearl's understanding that 'it was not she who had been lost, it was her mother' (Morrissy: 1997, 214). For Cixous, such writing is formed in the body, and Morrissy displays this by showing that, although Pearl has not officially been biologically born from Irene's body, the references to ribs, breath, dust, earth, fruit, wounds, and the inferences of attendant blood as well as mother's milk (Morrissy: 1997, 54-55 and 193), renders it a tangible, elemental and bodily relationship. Embracing such embodied callings and writing offers a means of seeking the lost mother and is an answer to her call. Furthermore, when we hear that Irene has 'breathed new life' into Pearl's mouth (Morrissy: 1997, 193) we become a little more aware of how Cixous 'links breath with the inspiration to write, establishing an embodied poetics of breathing/writing to communicate the life-affirming force of writing against negativity, lack' (Bray: 2004, 97). Thus the enduring relationship between Pearl and Irene begins to take the form of an 'embodied poetics of breathing /writing' (Bray: 2004, 97), and this is an impression which deepens upon consideration of metamorphoses in the novel.

In keeping with air, breath and the spatial choreography of relationships, Braidotti's resourceful description of the intense relationship between Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West serves to further illuminate the sheer force of Irene and Pearl's contagious connection. Braidotti talks, after Deleuze, in the terms of a haecceity⁶⁴ and assemblage of

⁶³ See <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=jewel&searchmode=none>

⁶⁴ The term haecceity is first used by the thirteenth century theologian and philosopher Duns Scotus to describe the diverse qualities that define something as being uniquely that particular thing. Deleuze and Guattari use it to describe a 'mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing or substance' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 287). Haecceity here expresses the way the flows and intensities of the seasons or hours of the day and night can have a 'perfect individuality lacking nothing' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 288), even though they are not defined as *things* or *subjects*. Our experience and recognition of spring for example, or night is deep and forms part of the haptic experiences I have discussed earlier in this thesis. We are also reminded that tales (fictions such as novels, relationships, subjectivity as a series of fictions) play a part in this sense of

forces as an intensity which manifests as 'a sort of geometry, geology and meteorology of forces that gather around the actors...but do not fully coincide with them' (Braidotti: 2008b, 49). The space that flows between the two (Virginia and Vita as well as Irene and Pearl), offers an example of 'an ethical model where the play of sameness-difference is not modelled on the dialectics of masculinity and femininity...it is an active space of becoming which is productive of new meanings and definitions' (Irigaray: 2008, 55). Similarly, Irene and Pearl's relationship is not modelled on the conventional and appropriated notions of mother/daughter relationships, but is deemed wild, transgressive and potentially socially disruptive. It performs a feminist postcolonial Gothic scenario as a relationship that embraces 'intensive de-territorializations, unhealthy alliances, hybrid cross-fertilizations, productive anomalies and generative encounters' (Braidotti: 2008, 55).

To really understand how this works, we can utilize the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari, as Braidotti does, with specific reference to a passage that haunts in its ability to convey the ephemeral and yet intensely sensual and haptic flows of life and relational experiences:

You are longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a life (regardless of its duration) – a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack (regardless of its regularity). Or at least you can have it, you can reach it. A cloud of locusts carried in by the wind at five in the evening; a vampire who goes out at night, a werewolf at full moon. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 289)

This passage highlights the sense of motion that Irigaray instils in the idea of breath; it expresses Bachelard's 'temporal explosions...of being' (Bachelard: 1994, 111), and poetically utters the shifting nature of haptologies and their affective arousal. It also speaks of those alliances and 'generative encounters' (Braidotti: 2008, 55) that, in Morrissy's novel, is epitomised by Irene and Pearl's unorthodox affiliation.

By way of adapting this strangely Gothic passage to intersect with Irene and Pearl, we might say that their relationship is 'a set of speeds and slownesses' (Deleuze and Guattari:

individuation in that they can 'direct the metamorphosis of things and subjects' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 288). Reading and writing are thus also implicated in this guidance.

2008, 289), that is traversed by flows of breath, air, wolves, moths, the dark, blood, minerals, shadows and contagion, an invisible telephone, the imund and 'hectic daffodils' (Morrissy: 1997, 222). These are all spectral presences of that which is either deemed sacred (breath and blood) or profane (wolves and contagion), but Morrissy displaces these ideas so they bleed into each other. As a frantically populated space, a multiplicity, it runs counter to Morrissy's description of Irene and Stanley, occupying that desolate 'dusty space which neither of them could populate' (Morrissy: 1997, 38). The biblical sacredness of breath moves freely within the imund world, thus boundaries crumble and are breached.

Having incorporated allusions to Woolf briefly above, I will continue the thread into a discussion of metamorphosis. The 'embodied poetics' (Bray: 2004, 97) of the lingering relationship between Irene and Pearl acts as a hinge between the postcolonial and the Gothic desires to rewrite the world, to gather scattered and repressed portions of the self. Located in the imund and Dionysian worlds, this gathering is populated in the novel by moths, wolves, minerals and rhizomatic flowers born out of the earth. Like women, these life-forms have been the subjects of very specific appropriations. For Woolf, moths can be indicative of the forces of creativity, life and death. Indeed in her essay on moths Woolf conveys how the moth's sheer vitality contains a 'tiny bead of pure life...dancing and zig-zagging to show us the true nature of life' (Woolf: 1974, 4). In *Mother of Pearl*, Irene resolves to hunt moths to protect her husband Stanley from his fear of the insects. Irene comes upon Stanley one day 'standing as if transfixed, while a moth flapped helplessly near the light bulb' (Morrissy: 1997, 42). She finds Stanley 'stripped to the waist like a man about to do battle and it was only when she noticed his fingers clenched white around the collar of his shirt that she realised his terror' (Morrissy: 1997, 42).

The scene echoes Stanley's reaction to Irene's attempts at sexual intimacy, as he lies motionless 'surrendering to her probing, his eyes averted as if she were conducting a humiliating, physical examination' (Morrissy: 1997, 38). The moth, irresistibly drawn to the

light emitted by the light bulb, as it 'flapped helplessly' with its 'frenzied movements' and 'mesmerising whirring' (Morrissy: 1997, 42), echoes in its movement Woolf's idea of the moth as pure 'life'. In the novel the moth becomes entangled within a complex space merging seduction and fear, temptation and terror, dark and light. Morrissy compels the reader to consider the line of flight that might run from the moth to Irene.

Ronald A. Gagliardi has explored the presence of moths and butterflies in western art in a way that deepens their connection with the imund world.⁶⁵ He discusses how moths have been labelled as being less attractive than butterflies. They have a predisposition to fly at night, and this penchant for darkness lends them a Gothic vibration. They are considered wearisome in relation to the destruction of clothes, and are often treated as a pest. Their attraction to light and those 'frenzied movements' (Morrissy: 1997, 42) recalls the Nietzschean description of life as 'that dark, driving, insatiable power that lusts after itself' (Boym: 2001, 19). Their actions attest to the difficulty of continually hiding very real desires and of living up to a construct that has no bearing on the lived corporeal experience of women – sometimes these desires surface into the light. In the appearance of the moth, Morrissy also draws our attention to how women can feel the need to hide their sensual, sexual selves in case it invokes fear or horror. Irene says 'of a creature so small – it was inconceivable...that this could be something to be afraid of' (Morrissy: 1997, 42); the moth's fragility paradoxically conceals an underlying power that has the potential to invoke paralysing fear. Irene can be seen to be complicit in the suppression of the moth's display as she spends 'many daylight hours hunting away sleeping moths' (Morrissy: 1997, 43). On the other hand, she could be trying to rescue them.

In spite of them revealing their fleshly sensuality, Irene also notices that the moths are adept at blending in, and at not making themselves noticed (like Irene herself), 'how

⁶⁵ Ronald A. Gagliardi, [online], available: http://www.insects.org/ced4/butterfly_symbols.html [accessed 16 May 2011].

clever they were, she thought, melting grainily into wood, inhabiting the darkness and making it their own' (Morrissy: 1997, 43). This line, together with Irene's time spent looking for moths, illustrates a dynamic process of becoming-insect that calls attention to:

the domain of symbioses that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation. There is a block of becoming that snaps up the wasp and the orchid, but from which no wasp-orchid can ever descend. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 263)

Moths and Irene co-operate in a mutual bond of 'empathic proximity and intensive interconnectedness' (Braidotti: 2008, 8); they learn how to be devious, silent, and virtually unreadable, while concealing themselves in the grain of the wood. By understanding the tactics of survival (to borrow de Certeau's ideas), they are able, at least on the surface, to integrate within the community. This insect attraction expresses 'transversal communications between different lines' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 12) that is something of a molecular border crossing, so subtle we might miss it.

Irene herself is highly adept at blending in, 'she was an unknown quantity' (Morrissy: 1997, 40). When Irene is on her way to steal the baby from the hospital 'nobody remembered the gaunt woman in a black beret and severely belted maroon coat and rubbed-looking gloves with a pearl at the wrists' (Morrissy: 1997, 63), so already a connection to Pearl is established here. At the end of the novel, Irene appears as 'a timid woman, slightly down at heel, wearing a well-worn coat, and a hat several years out of date' (Morrissy: 1997, 222). However, this strategy of blending in can mask the heart of a rebel fighter as 'to hide, to camouflage oneself, is a warrior function...the warrior arises in the infinity of the line of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 306). In Woolf's own sense of becoming-insect, she makes a comment that acts as a pulse of recognition in the space between Irene and the moths as:

...when there was nobody to care or know, this gigantic effort on the part of the insignificant little moth, against a power of such magnitude, to retain what no-one else valued or desired to keep, moved one strangely...somehow, one saw life, a pure bead. (Woolf: 1974, 6)

It is this insatiable 'pure bead' of life that Morrissy searches for in the space between Irene and Pearl, and within the dynamics of the symbiotic relationship between Irene and the insects. It is this life that breathes insistently out of the novel, its 'arms spread wide greeting the future' (Morrissy: 1997, 223).

If the dark brings the moths a place to secrete themselves and just be, it also gives Irene a chance to explore her own body. In the boarding house where she stays preparing for her kidnap mission, Irene:

... undressed self-consciously. She couldn't remember the last time she had disrobed in a room where no-one was looking... She was naked; there was nobody to see her. The feel of her own unobserved skin next to her was strange and lurid. She stroked the crowns of her nipples; she sought the cleft of moisture between her legs. A shiver of joy made her gasp. She was, at last, invisible. (Morrissy: 1997, 62)

These moments in the dark enable Irene to move from the experience of visual, religious, and political appropriation of her body to the tactile, sensual self-appreciation of her own flesh, a 'tiny bead of pure life' (Woolf: 1974, 4). There are two points I would make here: the first is that Irigaray's words about the body and writing permeate Morrissy's lines. Irene, in a search for her own self, embraces a form of physical and emotional expression that 'does not privilege sight; instead, it takes each figure back to its source, which is among other things tactile' (Irigaray: 1985, 79). It leads to 'joy'. Additionally, Irene's tactile self-exploration of her body equates to a search for her own self and way of inscribing its expression, hence Irigaray cautions:

If we don't invent a language, if we don't find our body's language, it will have too few gestures to accompany our story. We shall tire of the same ones, and leave our desires unexpressed, unrealized. (Irigaray: 1985, 214)

It seems to me that Irene's quest in this novel (and Pearl's by way of alliance) is to seek out her 'body's language' (Irigaray: 1985, 214).

The second point is the way in which Morrissy uses the words 'strange and lurid' (Morrissy: 1997, 62) to describe Irene's experience of the touch, texture and sensation of her own body. The postcolonial Gothic rings in these words as one's own body should be the

location that feels the most natural and comfortable; here it is, in fact, the most unfamiliar. From a postcolonial perspective, 'the body is a crucial site for inscription. How people are perceived controls how they are treated, and physical differences are crucial in such constructions' (Ashcroft et al: 2007, 166). Moreover, the role gender has played in constructing impressions of inferiority in colonial projects, as discussed by Meaney earlier in this chapter (Meaney: 2010, 5), foreshadows 'a special 'double' colonization for women within the general field of colonial oppression' (Ashcroft et al: 2007, 166). Thus the body is a site of enormous challenge; Braidotti emphasises the importance of this point 'life is half animal: Zoe (zoology, zoophilic, zoo), and half discursive: Bios (bio-logy)...Bios is holy, Zoe quite gritty. That they intersect in the human body turns the physical self into a contested space, i.e. a political arena' (Braidotti: 2008, 132).

The clever use of the word 'lurid' (Morrissy: 1997, 62) draws attention to Irene's haptic experience of this 'contested space' in a decidedly Gothic manner. Etymologically, the word is related to the shocking and scandalous tales of sex and crime within, the 'Penny Dreadfuls', mid-Victorian sensation fiction, or pulp fiction genres that are related to Gothic fiction. The word also radiates rhizomes to words such as 'ghastly', 'unnatural', 'savage', 'shocking', 'macabre' and 'horrifying', and begins to express in postcolonial Gothic fashion, the deep alienation Irene feels within her own body.⁶⁶ What is also interesting about Morrissy's choice of the word 'lurid' is the fact that it has links to the name 'Chloe',⁶⁷ another name for the Goddess Demeter, meaning 'the young green shoot',⁶⁸ a symbol of returning fertility and growth. The connection of 'lurid' to 'pale yellow, and ghastly' is said to originate from the pale yellow shoot signified by Chloe. This image sends an unexpected thread to the end of this chapter, and with the appearance of yellow/green daffodils, it connects flowers and rhizomes with the earth and Jewel. Out of the Gothic mire of

⁶⁶ See <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/lurid>

⁶⁷ See: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=lurid>

estrangement and loneliness emerges the Dionysian world of multiplicity and strange metamorphoses; it just also happens that Irene (or Eirene) emerges from that mire as the Goddess of Spring, and is identified with Demeter.⁶⁸ As Morrissy has been so careful in her choice of names in this novel, I feel that this connection is no accident.

Returning to moths, metamorphosis in the case of the moth is suggested by the fact of its corporeal metamorphosis from pupa to winged insect in flight. Braidotti discusses the importance of such insect transformations which expands our understanding of the importance of the moths in *Mother of Pearl*:

...the insect provides a new paradigm for discontinuous transmutations without major disruptions. The key elements of this are: larval metamorphoses; the speed of their reproductive system; the propensity to generate mutations; the faster rate of genetic recombination. Moreover, not having any major neuronal reservoir, insects are free from the hold of memory and of the socially enforced forms of sedimented memory, known as institutions. In Deleuze's terminology, they are multiple singularities without fixed identities. (Braidotti: 2008, 149)

Moths, through their ability to transform themselves after long periods in a cocoon state, through their ability to merge into the background, and through the idea that they are outside the grip of cultural codes and memory, are an ongoing subversive presence in the novel. It is the general unpredictability of their actions and transformations that are cause for trepidation, as well as their perceived ability to work around 'socially enforced forms of sedimented memory' (Braidotti: 2008, 149). Furthermore, the insects' seemingly diminutive visual status hides a force that is such that 'they exercise the same sense of estrangement as dinosaurs, dragons or other gigantic monsters' (Braidotti: 2008, 149). Their connection with Irene affords her the same subversive force and outsider status, her actions and life experiences in the novel bear this out. All these vivid darts of association between Irene and the insect world are ultimately why she experiences a becoming-moth. But Irene also has connections with other creatures – wolves.

⁶⁸ See: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Chloe>

⁶⁹ See: <http://www.theoi.com/Ouranios/HoraEirene.html>

If insects are the stuff of Gothic metamorphoses, wolves haunt the long history of Gothic. Not only are they the subject of fairy tale narratives of violence, but they offer one of the most irresistibly compelling examples of human/animal metamorphosis: the werewolf. Morrissy introduces the wolf into the novel by the words relating to Pearl on her return to her biological mother: 'she was being given back a stranger who had been suckled by wolves' (Morrissy: 1997, 160), and thus, the phantom presence of the wolf pervades mother's milk and the act of suckling. The notion of a human being 'suckled by wolves' (Morrissy: 1997, 160) invokes the anomalous and 'that which is outside rules or goes against the rules,' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 269), of being a foreigner and 'other', of being feral or animalistic, and of contagion flowing through mother's milk. Contagion becomes another form of vital nourishment.

I was about to connect wildness to the appearance of the wolf when I came across this piece by Sean Kipling Robisch:

While I bristle at a wolf being called "the spirit of the wild" or a "symbol of wildness" –both lexical cages- we have to acknowledge this deep need we have for animal symbols. Wolves, generally speaking, have strong voices. They tend to have complicated personalities and social enclaves, they inscribe, exchange, travel, nurture, kill, consume, enjoy, question, resist, anger, expel, prefer, copulate, play, deceive, perform rituals, and die, among the other things they do that we are gripped with trying to name. (Robisch 2009, 5-6)

Thus, in negotiating the dynamic space that flows between the living creature and the symbol, we must remain mindful of the ease with which the wolf becomes a prime target for appropriation, as connections of the wolf with wildness and savagery initiate a forgetting of the living animal. If the flow of milk initiates a remembering of the wolf, then so too does breath. Morrissy sets out to stir the refrain of this active memory with the howling breath.

The howling in the novel is a call, an instantly recognisable yet perplexing harmony, what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a refrain. The howl serves to remind us that to read with the eye is only one factor of the experience as:

music is pervaded by every minority, and yet composes an immense power. Children's, women's, ethnic, and territorial refrains, refrains of love and destruction: the birth of rhythm... The motif of the

refrain may be anxiety, fear, joy, love, work, walking, territory...but the refrain itself is the content of music. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 330)

Thus we must also read with our ears, only then will we pick up on that vibration within which the 'diverse presence of absences' (de Certeau: 1994, 108) makes itself heard. The howling is actually a form of haunting, it works in the novel to call attention to 'a feeling of reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative experience' (Gordon: 2008, 8). The howling is the spectral presence of those multiplicities of experiences that we feel, and in which we perform, and which we ultimately believe ourselves to be; in spite of the confined spaces we find ourselves 'gripped with trying to name' (Robisch: 2009, 6). Hauntings are not only carried out by those who are dead, they are also initiated, as Meaney has suggested, by a spectre which is 'a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life' (Gordon:2008, 8). Thus, the howling haunts the reader by communicating an experience from within that 'dense site' which at times is almost too thorny to negotiate with words.

It might be considered mere trivia to include howling in a novel so deeply concerned with women's experiences of postcolonial life in Ireland, but it serves as a postcolonial Gothic literary mode of communication that directly challenges us to imagine the experience that are suggested by this exquisitely desolate sound.⁷⁰ Where words, the language of the coloniser, fail, then an alternative must be found, and this is as true of gender colonisation as it is of political and cultural colonisation. Morrissy describes the feeling of contact with this

⁷⁰ It is interesting to note here that the sound of howling has been connected to the sound of Irish keening, the wailing lamentations for the dead. In a discussion about J.M. Synge's 1907 publication *The Aran Islands* and also his notebooks, Sinéad Garrigan Mattar (2004) *Primitivism, Science and the Irish Revival*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, comments how Synge adopts the idea of an alliance between human and animal (in this case the seagull) through the sounds of seagulls communicating and the howl of the keening (Mattar: 2004, 151-152). For Synge the howling sound 'seems to contain the whole passionate rage that lurks somewhere in every native of the island. In this cry of pain the inner consciousness of the people seems to lay itself bare for an instant, and to reveal the mood of beings who feel their isolation in the face of a universe that wars on them with winds and seas' (Synge: 2007, 45). Out of this 'passionate rage' emanates 'the first stage of primitive music – the howl' (Mattar: 2004, 151). This version of his book is online at www.forgottenbooks.org

haunting and howling, one that is described to us directly by Pearl when she is haunted by Jewel:

But where exactly had she gone? It worried me greatly that I did not know. I imagined her an orphan lost in a blizzard, her cries swallowed by the howling of an east wind, trapped in a globe of snow, frozen forever in winter, flurries of flakes falling from its endless heaven. Imprisoned in her lostness. I would wake at night, my own cries mingling with hers, seized by her panic in the throbbing darkness, to find my own world mercifully intact. (Morrissy: 1997, 185)

This scene expresses Meaney's idea of the spectre of the maternal body which haunts us continually. The fact that Pearl speaks directly to the reader, the only character who does so in the book, shifts some of the sense of security of the readerly position. By crossing the liminal space into Pearl's haunted world, we begin to understand the nature of this lonely haunting where her own self is 'there, but hidden' (Morrissy: 1997, 184). Pearl's intimate disclosure forces us to make some kind of acknowledgement. Jewel is the spectre who 'hovered like a guardian angel on the margins of our lives' (Morrissy: 1997, 184), and is felt as 'an airy presence, no more than a soft wingbeat of sadness' (Morrissy: 1997, 184). It takes the refrain of the howl to call to her. Here it is the east wind that howls but other creatures emit their own howls.

Dogs themselves recall traces of the wolf as Pearl hears '[a] muted howling...from the underpass. Dogs roamed in packs down there, wild and ownerless, scavenging for food' (Morrissy: 1997, 172). Elsewhere in the novel humans emit a call that pitches itself way out into the distance as if trying desperately to forge a line of contact out of the darkness of their lives. Rita, tormented after losing her baby, lets out a 'great, agonised howl' (Morrissy: 1997, 129), Pearl imagines Jewel alone, lost and frightened 'coming too in the darkness, howling' (Morrissy: 1997, 214), and Irene imagines her own father working alone in the lighthouse during storms and gales, like 'a wounded beast howling at the water's edge' (Morrissy: 1997, 5). The reverberating sound of howling connects breath and voice with the contagion of the lungs and shadows; within its vocalisation, the body clamours to be heard.

Christine Berthin, drawing on Deleuze, says that ‘when the body takes over, words become “passion words which explode in wounding phonetic values” or “action words which weld together inarticulated tonic values”’ (Berthin: 2010, 41). The act of howling disperses its refrain in a similar way, sending out Gothic lines of communication that become the ‘axe for the frozen sea inside us’ (Kafka Qtd. Cixous: 1993, 17) and enter Irigaray’s feminine space of metamorphosis where:

she cannot specify exactly what she wants. Words begin to fail her. She senses something remains to be said that resists all speech, that can at best be stammered out...or else utter only a sound so inarticulate that it barely forms a song... (Irigaray: 1985, 193)

For Morrissy, that song is a howl that can travel along lines of great distance. As a song, howling has the same transformative potential as music because:

music has always sent out lines of flight, like so many ‘transformational multiplicities’, even overturning the very codes that structure or arborify it that is why musical form, right down to its ruptures and proliferations, is comparable to a weed, a rhizome. (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 10-11)

The howling acts as a rhizomatic line of communication between Irene and Pearl, linked as they are in their alliance by the wolf. Through her intimate connection with Irene, Pearl is also rendered one of the pack.

There is yet another particularly noteworthy metamorphosis in this novel, and that is Pearl/Jewel’s becoming-mineral. Jewel’s haunting presence in the novel reminds us that ‘whoever writes in blood and proverbs does not want to be read, but to be learned by heart’ (Nietzsche: 2006, 27-28). This is especially pertinent as Jewel is steeped in blood, her incarnation is heralded by a death, enabling her to cross the ‘bloody threshold’ (Morrissy: 1997, 215) from one world into another. Jewel shifts back and forth across liminal spaces tinged with blood; there is an intense moment of presence connected with picking dark blood-red blackberries (Morrissy: 1997, 194), and this is paralleled later with ‘the blackberry smell of menstrual blood’ (Morrissy: 1997, 196), she ‘tiptoes away into the hallucinatory past’ (Morrissy: 1997, 194), only to return again with more forceful presence. Thus, blood oozes as both a corporeal and spiritual life force. With the bloody metamorphosis of Jewel,

Morrissy displays how creative 'thinking demands a provocation, even a kind of violence' (O'Sullivan and Zepke: 2008, 19). With Jewel's emergence, the 'temporal explosions' of 'being' (Bachelard: 1994, 111) are unrelenting in their demand to be noticed, the haunting is an overwhelming desire to make a presence felt. To engage with Jewel's complex desires initiates an awareness that to 'allow ourselves to indulge in all the daydreams of inhabited stone there would be no end to it' (Bachelard: 1994, 111). Such an encounter becomes all the more perilous as, in some quarters, Jewel might be deemed 'a phantom, a wilful sprite, a demon, perhaps' (Morrissy: 1997, 216).

Kafka expresses these ideas (of danger, of blood, death, life and the shattering of the listless apathy that permeates communities and individuals) with a perceptive energy, deepening our understanding of what Deleuze actually means by saying that literature is an 'enterprise of health' (Deleuze: 1997, 3), as Kafka says:

I think we ought to only read books that wound and stab us. If the book we are reading doesn't wake us up with a blow on the head, what are we reading it for? ...we need the books that affect us like a disaster, that grieve us deeply, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into forests far from everyone, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us. (Kafka Qtd. Cixous: 1993, 17)

Kafka sees reading as a ferocious force that incorporates the body, blood, spirit, loss, isolation, trauma, love and deep emotion; *Mother of Pearl* moves into this site as a book that expresses, through the search for Jewel, 'an exquisite loneliness, an absence unaccounted for' (Morrissy: 1997, 218). If Pearl's relationship with Irene plays a part in this affective wounding, then Pearl's seeking of Jewel forms yet another part of the blade of Kafka's axe. Jewel's presence manoeuvres within the Gothic location that Cixous calls the 'imund', to find her requires a willing creative descent to hell. Such a willing journey speaks of transgression, of sorcery, and of nomadic thought. If Cixous emphasises writing as 'the means to approach the treasure' (Cixous: 1993, 88), then it links Jewel with writing, and in turn echoes Irigaray's ideas of approaching rather than appropriating. Jewel's emergence is not about the desire to construct a finalised subject, and thus offer the reader one single key with which to solve the

questions and problems that are raised in the text. More accurately, we are being encouraged to feel the presence of Jewel as a rough unpolished mineral, covered in the raw earth from which she has been formed. Morrissy inscribes Jewel the way Geoffrey Hartmann talks about mute letters as 'discreet jewels of meaning' (Hartmann Qtd. Marder: 2009 164 n35).

Jewel embodies 'a promise of meaning... like a jewel in the rough... Its 'potential' is held in reserve precisely in the potentially intimate interval between its inscription and its encoding' (Hartman Qtd. Marder: 2009, 164 n35). Pearl moves with Jewel within the space of this 'intimate interval' (Hartman Qtd. Marder: 2009, 164 n35); her faltering search for adequate words to describe her experiences are filled with all the promise that is essentially the process of becoming. Pearl's stumbling dialogue, which I will come to explore more fully, verifies how becoming and the Deleuzian idea of stuttering are actually the same as they both epitomize 'a long apprenticeship to minute transformations, through endless repetitions' (Braidotti: 2008, 116). When Jewel haunts, we become aware that the importance of becoming, both textually and in other areas of social experience, is that it is saturated with the potential to engage in an act of 'revisitation or remembering which traces empowering transversal lines that cut across the staticity of sedimented memory, activating it by de-programming it out of the dominant mode' (Braidotti: 2008, 116). The process of jewel configurations can be explosive as Morrissy shows, which is precisely why Braidotti says 'we need to turn to 'minor' literary genres' (Braidotti: 1996, 3) so that we can engage in these processes.

The physical process of crystal formation is an interesting one, and one that has not gone unnoticed by Deleuze and Guattari. It differs from the layering of protective armour that eventually creates the pearl. Pearls are formed in response to some kind of invasion or irritation (like a piece of grit) in the confines of the shell. Layers of the *Mother of Pearl* inner lining are placed over the 'invader', locking it deeper within the pearl until it is completely covered. Thus, the initial infiltration, the original traumas, are always confined and hidden

away within the pearl itself. William's point about 'blindly formalised constructions' (Williams: 1991, 49) epitomizes the restorative actions of nation-building enshrined in the Irish Constitution. Layering over past appropriations, as the shell does to minimize further damage, these actions can serve to create a postcolonial Gothic space crowded with 'a meandering stream of unguided hopes, dreams, fantasies, fears, recollections' (Williams: 1991, 49). Morrissy demonstrates the dreams and fears simultaneously haunting both individual homes and the sanatorium, the institutionalized aura of which seeps insidiously into private dwellings, and blurs the boundaries between incarceration and freedom. It creates a dense, seething space that operates like 'the phantom roomed exile of our longing' (Williams: 1991, 49). The grit that initiates the initial protective reflex in the shell imitates the way in which longing can eventually become buried under many layers, growing into a pearl of ever-unrealized hopes in the process. However, Bachelard voices a reminder in saying 'thus it is that shell-constructing dreams give life and action to highly geometrically-associated molecules' (Bachelard: 115). That which imprisons can also, paradoxically, act as a springboard of desire to affect change.

One of the main elements of crystal formation is molecular communication; a certain vibration is passed within the immediate substance undergoing transformation, and then further in a process of interconnection. The desire to form transformative alliances and engage in other forms of communication echoes Pearl and Irene's relationship which pulses as an underlying refrain throughout the novel. Ronald Bogue, drawing upon the work of Gilles Simondon and Deleuze and Guattari, describes this communication as part of a process of individuation and 'a process which difference differentiates itself' (Bogue: 2004, 62). This is why the reclaiming of Jewel is so crucial, as this act embodies the sheer effort of highlighting the difference Jewel embraces and the potential she has to carve out an alternative mode of being.

The jewel as mineral of the earth transmits the shifting, displacing violence of the postcolonial Gothic as it alters through intense weathering by the wind, rain and sea (sedimentary rock), or is spewed out of the midst of a volcanic larval emission (igneous rock), or transformed by intense heat and pressure (metamorphic rock), within the earth. The turbulent shaping of a jewel, constantly being exposed to external affects, offers a diverse scenario to the formation of the pearl. Out of the dynamic, sometimes violent, space between Pearl and Jewel emerges the complexity of articulating stories of the self and reminds us that:

complex personhood means that the stories people tell about themselves, about their troubles, about their social worlds, and about their society's problems are entangled and weave between what is immediately available as a story and what their imaginations are reaching towards. (Gordon: 2008, 4)

Ultimately, these words express the transverse dynamic that crosses between Pearl and Jewel as Pearl tends to inhabit the story that is 'immediately available' (Gordon: 2008, 4). Jewel embodies the experience of how creative thinking displays a sense of 'reaching towards' possible futures, in other words she embodies the process of becoming. The postcolonial Gothic assists the reader to negotiate this intense space, a journey that necessarily involves an approach towards the vegetal world that Jewel emanates from – perhaps even that journey to hell as Cixous suggests.

There are a number of allusions to the volatile forces of the earth's vegetal world and minerals throughout the novel, and they anticipate the arrival of Jewel. Pearl, encountering numerous vegetables in a shop, finds them still bearing the residue of their 'strange and uprooted world' (Morrissy: 1997, 174). As Morrissy puts it, Pearl touches:

the caked potatoes still bearing the traces of earth from which they had so recently been torn, purple turnips, beaten and battered, the whiskered bunches of scallions with their virgin- looking bulbs like newly-born infants, raw and screaming. (Morrissy: 1997, 174)

The violence of the description echoes the nature of mineral metamorphosis into crystals, and subtly weaves into the text the idea of the virgin, babies, and birth and by inference, motherhood. Additionally, there are the warnings of possible earthquakes on two occasions, presentiments of Jewel's impending birth. Firstly, Pearl is removed from Irene's care and

awaits her biological mother's arrival in the children's home. As Rita arrives to reclaim her daughter:

trains rumbled in the embankment below like some vast disturbance of the earth's crust, a groaning prelude to an earthquake...the very earth was about to succumb to a monstrous upheaval. (Morrissy: 1997, 158)

Secondly, when Pearl lying 'swaddled white sheets, wrapped tightly in them' (Morrissy:1997, 165), regains consciousness after the abortion, the earth responds again in a scene that resembles both a birth scene and the biblical resurrection of Jesus, the huge stone rolling away from the burial chamber:

There is a great rumbling, the very earth's crust heaving as if in pain and a boulder eclipses the aperture that I am straining towards. Suddenly there is darkness – and silence. And then from above a tear in the sky and I am delivered from my tiny ante-chamber into a bowl of light. (Morrissy: 1997, 165)

The swaddled sheets are both suggestive of birth and death. From a biblical point of view, there are two occasions when Jesus is 'swaddled' in white linen, at his birth and at his burial preparing for resurrection.⁷¹ Morrissy offers a rewriting of the biblical resurrection showing the earth preparing for Jewel's arrival.

In a way this capacity for violence anticipates the distinction between force and power, as Massumi describes, 'force arrives from outside to break constraints and open new vistas. Power builds walls' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, xiii). Jewel creatively embraces the metamorphic capacity of nomad thought via formation through the earth and eventual birth into air; she expresses the type of movement Irigaray assigns to breath and air and desires to move within 'an open space' as opposed to 'the logos of entrenching oneself in a closed space' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, xiii). But it is that very movement through the earth that enables the active birth into air in the first place; this is why Cixous finds the descent to earth, and the embrace of a joyful hell, so useful to creative insight and the act of writing. Deep in

⁷¹ Peach has raised this point about the word swaddled in relation to Pearl as a baby. See Peach: 2004, 166.

the earth from which Jewel is torn, like the vegetables she encounters on the shelves, on our way to hell, we can encounter and reinstate the imund.

So in what ways does the novel engage with a journey to hell? One of the major catalysts in the novel for Pearl's rescuing of Jewel and, we might say, of her own descent into hell, occurs within a moment of sexual intimacy. Pearl recalls that Jeff 'called me his precious, his jewel' (Morrissy: 1997, 213). The moment defines an intense experience of appropriation for Pearl, and is a critical point in the novel; it echoes Cixous's statement that 'as soon as I say my, as soon as I say my daughter, my brother, I am verging on a form of murder, as soon as I forget to unceasingly recognize the other's difference' (Cixous: 1993, 13). For Pearl, then, being 'his jewel' (Morrissy: 1997, 213) is tantamount to a form of death. The intimate moment with Jeff runs counter to a previous intensity in the novel when Pearl, speaking of Jewel, says 'I rescued her and gave her a name. Precious and treasure – like and as far away from my own as I could imagine. Jewel' (Morrissy: 1997, 185).

Yet another scene between Pearl and Jeff further develops the suggestion of appropriation within intimacy. Pearl describes their first sexual encounter in a hospital broom cupboard with visions of violence and possession, it imprints upon her:

a joy so bleak it was akin to desolation, that I was released into his world, a battleship-grey dawn, the whine of sirens, the spat of gunfire, the crash of soldiers' boots, the splintering of wood. (Morrissy: 1997, 204)

The language of colonisation is used in the context of sexual intimacy, and within the space of gender relations, echoing Smyth's statement about the colonization, controlling and containment of women's bodies in Irish culture (Smyth: 1996, 143). Moreover, the occasion of their church marriage ceremony with 'elaborate rituals of handing over and surrender' (Morrissy: 1997, 209), further consolidates the war-like terminology. Gender construction, and the subsequent lived experience of it in postcolonial Ireland, is thus depicted here as yet another form of violence, colonisation and submission, paradoxically taking place within a postcolonial recuperative phase of the country's history. From a postcolonial Gothic

perspective, these moments display the intensity of 'that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life' (Gordon: 2008, 8); it is a haunted space.

Implicit within Pearl's rescue of Jewel, then, is a searching for a non-appropriative way of existing. If Jewel reveals the potential process of individuation, or of becoming, where 'one learns to reinvent oneself and one desires the self as a process of transformation' (Braidotti: 2008, 84), then her rescue becomes imperative. However, an attempt to move away from appropriation, and to embrace an Irigarayan form of approaching does not necessarily instil immediate peace and tranquillity. In this novel, such a transformation signals a depth of change that sends shudders through religious and political life at the deepest levels, Braidotti reminds us that seeking ways of approaching can be a process that is still 'intense and at times can be violent' (Braidotti: 2008, 8).

Violence and death begin to permeate the language of the novel more explicitly, suggesting the violence of the impending birth of Jewel, and the violent formation of the mineral into crystal. At this point, the novel is teeming with Gothic evocations of madness, blood, flesh, life, death and pain. In addition, the fluency of the writing collapses by using language that exemplifies the Deleuzian notion of creative stuttering. The stuttering materializes at the point the reader is being initiated into Pearl/Jewel's space of desire and of metamorphosis. If, as Bachelard states, we allow ourselves to participate in an unnatural alliance that involves the 'daydreams of inhabited stone', then 'there would be no end to it' (Bachelard: 1994, 111). This is why Deleuzian creative stuttering is defined by 'and...and...and...' (Deleuze and Guattari: 2008, 27), the unrestrained movement suggested in the continual 'and' accompanies those daydreams in 'inhabited stone', and creates the process of becoming that is Jewel.

We might see Jewel as a postcolonial Gothic feminist heroine who shows us the violence that accompanies a birth of 'temporal explosions, not to say whirlwinds, of being' (Bachelard: 1994, 111). Those dynamic words 'whirlwinds' and 'explosions', coupled with

the sense of underlying movement implicit in Bachelard's idea of 'preparing a way out' (Bachelard: 1994, 111), anticipate Deleuze when he describes a mode of expression conceived:

to bring something to life, to free life from where it's trapped, to trace lines of flight. The language for doing so [is] something unstable, always heterogeneous, in which style carves differences of potential between which...a spark can flash and break out of language itself, to make us see and think what was lying in the shadow around the words, things we were hardly aware existed. (Deleuze: 1995, 141)

The symptom of this is stuttering. It is a restless symptom which leads to destabilisation and paradoxically, to potential new meanings. Creative stuttering spans the continuum between imaginative health and illness, seeking that 'spark' to enable us to sense the 'shadow around the words' (Deleuze 1995, 141). Ultimately this is what the recognition of Jewel is all about.

Morrissy writes in a way that is suggestive of inventing new space for movement and desire in the limited spaces of the shell. Some examples of the expressive disjointed journey into a Gothic destabilised world are found by analysing the use of language in two pages of the novel which deal with the act of abortion itself: 'How can I explain this madness?' 'stalked my dreams' 'bloody threshold', 'steeped in blood', 'tormented', 'violent love', 'clawed' , 'screaming' , 'attacked' , 'slaughter', 'forced', 'weapon', 'wounds' (Morrissy: 1997, 215), 'blood' , 'exultance of pain' , 'thunderous roar of the sea' 'scream' (Morrissy: 1997, 216). All of this is suggestive of a painful, hellish Gothic experience, and the almost forced and compressed nature of these signifiers of violence is almost poetic in its explosive use of language.

Thus, we are drawn into a world of loneliness and exile, of the imund, and the desire to experience a process of reconstruction as Owens Weekes suggests at the start of this chapter. Morrissy tellingly writes this sense of exile in a biblical milieu, underscoring the whole construct of the novel and stressing the power of the religious role in the lived experience of gender. There comes a point towards the end of the novel when Pearl aborts the baby she has conceived with her husband Jeff, or more specifically as Pearl describes it 'I

have killed his child by my own hand' (Morrissy: 1997, 216). She does not see it as my child, or our child: it is simply 'his child'. Thus what has been destroyed here, albeit in the most bloody and Gothic fashion, is the chance of a recurrence of the restrictive form of gender construction described by Morrissy. In this act of death, Pearl has struck at the heart of the whole notion of motherhood and as such, considering the constructions of motherhood in the postcolonial Ireland outlined in the novel, has conjured up an earthquake at the very core of religious and political diktats. All is now 'steeped in blood' (Morrissy: 1997, 215) and consequently it becomes impossible to allege 'all reasonableness and calm' (Morrissy: 1997, 215), to reach across 'the bloody threshold' and 'restore order' (Morrissy: 1997, 215). As Pearl expresses it:

I struck out and tore away the very stuff of dreams, the cringing flesh and blood, the throbbing pulse. And all for a phantom, a wilful sprite, a demon perhaps. I will return to our cottage home. Alone. A criminal. (Morrissy: 1997, 216)

Having aborted the foetus inside her, she expresses 'expulsion', 'illicit love', 'banishment', 'wilderness', 'ruin' (Morrissy: 1997, 217), 'exquisite loneliness', 'shameful' (Morrissy: 1997, 218), 'dangerous' and 'the skeleton in the cupboard'. Such is the strength of the assimilation of religious doctrine that Pearl admits 'I have resorted to biblical metaphor. But it is all I know. And much more exotic than the literal truth' (Morrissy: 1997, 217). Jewel brings about the creative cataclysm necessary for an escape from these restrictions, a line of flight that offers a means to divert a path away from restrictive cages. These lines of Deleuzian stuttering are teeming with the violence, exile and upheaval that change can bring, and are a distinct expression of how the postcolonial Gothic can afford the reader a feeling of being 'doubly defamiliarized' (Wisker: 2007, 404). The dialogue in the pages surrounding the abortion scene is that which 'trembles from head to toe' (Deleuze: 1997, 109), it presents the Gothic 'profane illumination' (Gordon: 2008, 204) that conveys 'to the point of explosion' the immense forces 'of "atmosphere" concealed in everyday things' (Gordon: 2008, 204). Morrissy's writing is a precise example of Cixous's decent into the

earth and to hell, and the axe-like words such as 'wilderness' (Morrissy: 1997, 217), 'expulsion' (Morrissy: 1997, 217), 'bloody threshold' (Morrissy: 1997, 215), 'tormented' (Morrissy: 1997, 215), all signal ideas of an experience we might envisage as hell or that Kafka might envisage as part of the act of reading.

In this scene of displacement there are more questions than answers: 'will it be haunted too? That bed, those sheets? Will I wake in the night and hear the cries of the creature I expelled there in a mess of blood and sweat?' (Morrissy: 1997, 216-7) The language, as if verifying a state of uncertainty and nomadic becoming, transforms into staccato utterances that overtake sentence construction. As Jewel is being rescued we read:

I was wrong about her. Blindly mistaken. Those ghostly memories I ascribed to her, they're mine. They were always mine. Memories not of this life, but of a life before. Before birth. Not the scaly, wet burbling of the womb. No, before that even. The Garden of Eden. And my first parents. Adam and Eve. Already under threat of expulsion but hanging on to the dream of happiness...My banishment. I wonder if my Eden still exists? Or has it turned into a wilderness without me? (Morrissy: 1997, 217)

This moment depicts a postcolonial Gothic scene of intense realisation, loneliness and exile; it depicts a sense of occupying a liminal space between everything one has been taught as true, and the realisation that there are alternative truths. Morrissy's writing instances Deleuze's description of how some writers make 'a minor use of the major language within which they express themselves entirely' (Deleuze: 1997, 109). Morrissy's minor writing conveys an urgency driven by the impetus of intense perception, expressed by the staccato nature of the bombardment of questions and the sudden realisations; this is one way in which writers make 'the language take flight, they send it racing along a witch's line, ceaselessly placing it in a state of disequilibrium, making it bifurcate and vary in each of its terms' (Deleuze: 1997, 109). The sense of banishment that Pearl/Jewel feels, that sense of 'exquisite loneliness' (Morrissy: 1997, 218) and the feeling that she is a mode of contagion 'like the shadow on an x-ray that speaks of death' (Morrissy: 1997, 218), is expressed in a language 'in which she becomes 'like a foreigner in the language in which [s]he expresses [her]himself, even if this is [her]his native tongue' (Deleuze: 1997, 109).

Irigaray makes a pertinent point that echoes Deleuze, and it is one worth repeating at this juncture. Morrissy draws upon Irigaray's tormented Gothic journey in engaging with Pearl's attempt to articulate her feelings asking 'how can I explain this madness' (Morrissy: 1997, 215) and:

in this nocturnal wandering where is the gaze to be fixed? The only possibility is to push onward into the night until it becomes a transverberating beam of light, a luminous shadow. Onward to a touch that opens the "soul" again to contact with the divine force, to the impact of searing light...She is torn apart in pain, fear, cries, tears, and blood that go beyond any other feeling. The wound must come before the flame. But already there is delight and longing in this torment, if she has entrusted herself to a skill subtle enough in its strength. Though the path she is cutting is a difficult one, she is impatient to set everything else aside and pleads to go on. But she cannot specify exactly what she wants. Words begin to fail her. She senses something remains to be said that resists all speech, that can at best be stammered out...or else utter only a sound so inarticulate that it barely forms a song... (Irigaray: 1985, 193)

This Irigarayan metamorphosing space connects us back up to the resonance of howling in the novel, and anticipates the stuttering language at the emergence of Jewel. Pearl realises in her desperation that 'the wound must come before the flame' (Irigaray: 1985, 193).

The reader is also drawn to creatively examine conventional ideas of criminality, spirituality, ghosts, and demons. It is pertinent to note here that the apparent appropriation of an act like abortion as a metaphor of transformation may seem needlessly provocative to many readers. But I think Morrissy has done it precisely because it unsettles the reader. The act of abortion converges upon some of the most intensely personal issues relating to women's bodies, specifically their sexuality and reproductive rights; on the other hand it belongs to the most politically, socially, morally, culturally, and we might say spiritually, constructed codes of belief concerning women. This paradox is also precisely why it expresses a postcolonial Gothic reading of intense displacement, as Morrissy forces the reader to think constructively and creatively about some very real social and personal issues.

Teresa de Lauretis puts it succinctly when she suggests if:

...as Catharine McKinnon states "sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism, that which is most one's own yet is most taken away" (p515), that which is most personal yet most socially determined, most defining of the self and yet most exploited or controlled, then to ask the question what constitutes female sexuality, for women and for feminism (the emphasis is important), is to come to know things in a different way, and to come to know them as political. Since one "becomes a woman" through the experience of sexuality, issues such as lesbianism, contraception, abortion,

incest, sexual harassment, rape, prostitution, and pornography are not merely social (a problem for society as a whole) or merely sexual (a private affair between "consenting adults" or within the privacy of the family); for women they are political and epistemological. "To feminism, the personal is the epistemologically political, and epistemology is its politics" (de Lauretis: 1984, 184)⁷²

Here, De Lauretis touches upon the complexity of the spatial relationship between the experience of subjectivity and subjection. The Gothic is a crucial means of exploring this space, and 'a kind of sympathetic magic is necessary because in the world and between us as analysts and the worlds we encounter to translate into world-making words are hauntings, ghosts and gaps, seething absences, and muted presences' (Gordon: 2008, 21). Throughout Pearl's first person narrative in the novel, Morrissy uses a Gothic milieu of fear, isolation, shadows, and a feeling of losing one's mind, to emphasize the sensory overload and create 'inner climates in which psychic events occur' (Hawkes and Scholes: 1972, 205). Morrissy offers an example of Kilgour's idea that the Gothic, by not offering a comprehensive solution and by leaving more questions, 'forces readers to address them in real life thus (ideally) using literature to encourage social change' (Kilgour: 1997, 10).

If we believe, as Cixous does, that the novel writer, is also a poet or, in her words, 'any writer, philosopher, author of plays, dreamer, producer of dreams, who uses life as a time of approaching' (Cixous: 2000, 588), then Audre Lorde's words about the significance of poetry to the disempowered are also meaningful to Morrissy's writing:

For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. (Lorde: 1984, 37)⁷³

Imaginative work such as Morrissy's can offer the challenging and confrontational narratives I discussed in terms of the Gothic, daring us to air 'our fears, our hopes, our most cherished terrors' (Lorde: 1984, 39). Braidotti notes that many of the women portrayed in Gothic texts articulate how 'the monstrous body fulfils the magical or symptomatic function of indicator

⁷² de Lauretis is citing Catharine McKinnon here from her article 'Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: an Agenda for Theory', *Signs* 7: 3, 1982: 515-544.

of the register of difference, which is why the monster has never been able to avoid a blind date with women' (Braidotti: 2008, 191). We can begin to see the creative importance of the literary crimes, the criminals, the outsiders, the monsters and also how Morrissy's writing enables us to feel empathy for the two women who might well be deemed society's female monsters.

Elizabeth Grosz makes a relevant point about the process of becoming, pertinent to feminist, Postcolonialist and Gothic metamorphoses in the novel. Grosz rightly notes how, at times, the ideas of metamorphosis and change may be evidence of a form of liberal humanism with the accompanying 'aura of an advertising slogan' (Grosz: 1994, 174). She counters the idea of becoming being a mere flippant amusement by saying that it is:

...not simply a matter of choice, not simply a decision, but always involve[s] a substantial remaking of the subject, a major risk to the subject's integration and social functioning. One cannot-become animal [or mineral] at will and then cease and function normally. It is not something that can be put on or taken off like a cloak or an activity...there is a kind of wildness, pivots of unpredictability, elements whose trajectories, connections, and future relations remain unpredictable. (Grosz: 1994, 174)

Hence Morrissy's provocation is necessary, and metamorphosis in postcolonial Gothic texts such as *Mother of Pearl* is less of a lifestyle choice and more of a matter of life and death. For Cixous it involves crossing the border to the imund world.

The imund, as previously discussed, is home to those who are on the outside of 'the world of order' (Cixous: 1993, 117). Irene, Pearl/Jewel, the imund of the novel, realise that 'the moment you cross the line the law has drawn by wording, verb(aliz)ing, you are supposed to be out of the world. You no longer belong to the world' (Cixous: 1993, 117). Hence the references to 'savage' and 'criminal' (Morrissy: 1997, 216), and to 'expulsion', banishment' and 'wilderness' (Morrissy: 1997, 217) are a deep connection to this imund world. As Pearl reclaims Jewel, and reaches down into the mineral earth to enable Jewel's birth, she touches the root of the imund. This is why I think Morrissy has created Jewel; it is a

⁷³ Audre Lorde's essay 'Poetry is Not a Luxury' [online], available: http://www.english-corner.com/comparativeCulture/etexts/more/feminist_reader/poetryisnotluxury.html

way of reaching into elemental philosophy, of digging down to find what is beyond the discourse of appropriation. As Lispector says, 'the imund is the root' (Lispector Qtd. Cixous: 1993, 116) and the imund is associated with a kind of joy and, as Cixous explains, the two are inextricably entwined. This is a difficult path however precisely because:

since we are shaped by years and years of all kinds of experiences and education, we must travel through all sorts of places that are not necessarily pleasant to get there. And yet it pays to go there. The trouble is that we are not taught that it pays, that it is beneficial. We are not taught the pain nor that in pain is hidden joy. We don't know that we can fight against ourselves, against the accumulation of mental, emotional, and biographical clichés. (Cixous: 1993, 119)

In her own way then, Morrissy takes us on a trip to hell. But this hell is not the negative place as suggested in most Christian traditions; it is instead a 'working toward libidinal and geographical reorientation' (Cixous: 1993, 121). Creatively speaking, this is the location where 'the treasure of writing lies, where it is formed, where it has stayed since the beginning of creation: down below. The name of the place changes according to our writers' (Cixous: 1993, 118). For Morrissy, this place exists within the 'wilful sprite, demon, phantom' that is the body of Jewel. Jewel literally embodies and inscribes the 'treasure of writing' (Cixous: 1993, 118).

If it is true to say that there is not much overt happiness present in a reading of *Mother of Pearl*, it could be that we have to look deeper for a sense of joy. Cixous suggests that 'everything ends with flowers' (Cixous: 1993, 151); surprisingly, so does *Mother of Pearl*. The flowers are linked to Irene who closes the novel. Irene (or Eirene) is, as Ingman astutely notes, the name given to the Greek Goddess of Peace. However, she is also one of the Horai who rule the seasons, and the Goddess Irene is specifically attributed to spring, how appropriate then that the novel should end with the sight of 'crescent beds of hectic daffodils' growing at Granitefield where the isolation chambers once stood.

The daffodils express multiplicity and the process of becoming as they are rhizomes, returning and proliferating year after year, and performing their own 'endless repetitions'

(Braidotti: 2008, 116). This perennial plant is implicated within the postcolonial, having experienced its own share of appropriation by means of its inclusion in colonial education and science projects. Jamaica Kincaid states 'I do not like daffodils...for I was forced to memorize the poem by William Wordsworth when I was a child' (Kincaid: 2001, 134). Daffodils were also transported to other parts of the world as a colonial reminder of home; they too have a memory of diasporic experience and share something in common with the vegetables which Pearl encounters, being covered in 'traces of earth from which they had so recently been torn' (Morrissy: 1997, 174). Additionally, and crucially as a link to the acts of naming in this novel, 'like woman, the flower gets her name, gender, and species from another' (Sartillot: 1993, 119). The daffodil then serves to remind us of that 'polymorphic and dynamic life that is buried under the name it receives by enlightened vision' (Sartillot: 1993, 41)

Ensnared as a visual emblem of colonial imposition, Jana Evans Braziel illustrates how some postcolonial texts written by women incorporate the daffodil as a means of showing how 'nature is historically and culturally determined' (Braziel: 2003, 111).⁷⁴ In a project that echoes Morrissy's exploration of gender construction in Ireland, Kincaid 'demythologises daffodils, exposing the violent erasure of other histories' (Braziel: 2003, 112). On the other hand, when we utilize a rose to symbolize love, or the daffodil to symbolize hope, we find how 'the flower disappears as such when it is used to emblemize human characteristics' (Sartillot: 1993, 37). In Morrissy's novel, the daffodil embodies a transversal communication as a rhizome between breath, earth, air, voice, the ear, and the multiplicity that composes the 'complex personhood' (Gordon: 2008, 4). But how can the flower connect to voice and breath?

⁷⁴ See Braziel, Jana Evans. (2003). 'Daffodils, Rhizomes, Migrations: Narrative Coming of Age in the Diasporic Writings of Edwidge Danticat and Jamaica Kincaid', *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, 3:2, 110-131.

Sartiliot has deftly expanded on the writing of both Cixous and Michael Leiris, emphasising how the flower offers its own communication systems. Being linked as it is with Irene, the daffodil enters into Cixous's idea of the mythical telephone as an umbilical cord connecting earth with air, a means of alternative communication. Michael Leiris sees the flowers as a living means of connection with the earth, their yellow blooms like gramophones transmitting the music out of the earth through the air. If we connect this communication with the mother and daughter Persephone and Demeter, then the breath and voice that connects Irene and Pearl is like a rewriting of this myth. The daffodil appears just before Irene sits down to explore her small box of treasures which includes:

...a strand of Pearl's hair, springy as a coil and glinting impishly as the light catches it. A single bright green mitten snapped from the string which once attached it to the child's coat, a painting she made of the house, a pleasing rectangle with puffs of charcoal from its chimney and the sun a bright yellow ball, a reader for beginners, *The Sleeping Beauty*, in the corners of whose pages are tiny toothmarks. And there are photographs of a plump-faced baby with a gummy smile and a mark on her chin. (Morrissy: 1997, 222)

Morrissy expresses in this poignant scene the sense of haptic or sensuous knowledge. This idea of haptic or sensuous knowledge is appropriate here as it is 'receptive, close, perceptual, embodied, incarnate...It tells and transports at the same time' (Gordon: 2008, 205). The daffodil, linked as it is with Irene, heralds the communication, the haunting, that continues the process Owens Weekes says is implicit in the novel, it 'begins to reconstruct the absence Pearl grieves' (Owens Weekes: 2007, 145). This tactile scene is an intense haptology of sensual connection with one who is both absent and, in the interstices of implied acts of reading, biting, smiling and painting, also present. The daffodil, with its connection to the disappearance of Persephone into the underworld, her mother calling after her, becomes a potent source of living communication with the one who is lost. In an elaboration of calling from a distance, Cixous connects the Demeter and Persephone myth to the idea of a mythical telephone, as the telephone literally translates as 'distant voice' (Sartiliot: 1993, 137). Connecting the earth to air, like the daffodil, the telephone cable acts like an umbilical cord connecting mother and daughter from afar hence '[t]he telephone, as an image of the thread,

the cord between mother and daughter, between earth and seed, transforms the absence into presence, re-establishes proximity beyond time and space' (Sartiliot: 1993, 137). Through sensuous knowledge Irene connects with Pearl's grief.

Sartiliot introduces how Michael Leiris uses the Demeter/Persephone story to connect the act of writing, voice, ear and flower.⁷⁵ Using this idea, we might think about Pearl's distant cries of distress as paralleling those of Persephone from underground, as the flowers piercing the ground are carrying her cries to Irene. The flower displays a 'gigantic ear' (Sartiliot: 1993, 139) like that of an old gramophone, one which emanates the music of those who have been excluded, lost, or taken. In keeping with the ideas of reading as a form of touch, what is common in these aspects of Leiris's and Cixous's work is that this communication is 'like 'telepathy' a voice that touches at a distance' (Sartiliot: 1993, 140).

So it is that Morrissy can end the novel with a look to the possibility of the continuation of this communication and towards possible futures. Thus, it is possible that Irene can justifiably see Pearl with 'her arms spread wide greeting the future' (Morrissy: 1997, 223) a future she herself 'has relinquished' (Morrissy: 1997, 223). Within this distant communication, it is possible that Irene's beloved Pearl, and Jewel who waits to have her life' 'is not lost but merely waiting to be found again' (Morrissy: 1997, 223). The onus is on the reader then to carry on the search and:

...as stigma of the flower, is the one who ensures the signature and life of the writer as flower. The writer is the one at risk, the seducer of intermediaries who has to rely on wind and chance so that his or her message reaches its destination, all the while knowing it will always reach its destination, albeit through many detours. (Sartiliot: 1993, 33)

I have been on just one of those detours, there will be many more.

⁷⁵ For Leiris's original essay see Leiris, M. (1991) *The Rules of the Game, volume 1: Scratches*, translated by Lydia Davis, London: The John Hopkins University Press.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have attempted to set out the broad parameters of a mode of theoretical reading which I have termed ‘the postcolonial gothic’, and I have then used texts by Banville and Morrissy to illustrate the value of this mode of reading in enabling new and complex meanings to be emancipated from these texts. The real and symbolic value of the elements has been a core trope that is foregrounded in this reading. The tender cartographies created in the spaces of the postcolonial Gothic are galvanised by using the elements as an affective language which functions as circulatory ‘hormones of the imagination’ (Bachelard: 2002, 11). This creative topography expresses ‘a locus for human affection, imprinted as remembered forms, ways of being, ways of living, ways of knowing’ (Whelan: 2004, 315); as such, tender mapping is an affective cartography and yet it also breathes traces of a counter cartography.

If we agree that ‘maps are active; they actively construct knowledge, they exercise power and they can be a powerful means of promoting social change’ and yet can also ‘caress the earth, stroke its contours, without asking for a reward’ (Hassan: 2005, 1), then by utilizing the imaginative flow of this affective *transito* (Bruno: 2007, 71), writers can create maps that display a potential for ‘moving in and beyond imperial cartographies of today’ (Aitken: 2009, 1); this is at the core of my understanding of the postcolonial Gothic. The use of elemental affective language, operating within a vista that contains the ingredients of postmodern thinking, creates a synthesis of ancient and contemporary expression. This dynamic initiates a volatile alchemy that ‘ventures into landscapes inaccessible to rational thought’ (Kundera: 2003, 80), a tempero-spatial milieu that accommodates the affective ‘presence of diverse absences’ (de Certeau: 1984, 108).

The importance of affect and its role within the postcolonial Gothic must not be understated, especially in its role of stimulating the sheer enjoyment of reading novels; this is after all one of the main desires of reading fiction. It also establishes a bond between reader and writer, a form of touch that renders the act of reading a gothic experience in its own right. The tempero-spatial dynamics of reading the postcolonial Gothic can provoke diverse ideas and creative metamorphoses, potentially leading to ‘new semantic figures’ (Williams: 1977, 134).

This thesis offers new readings of three Irish novels by exploring how each writer uses the postcolonial Gothic to create affective cartographies expressed by elemental philosophy, but how might this research be progressed? At a micro level, one could explore how Morrissy’s novel *Mother of Pearl* (1997) effectively displays the element of water to challenge religious rituals of baptism, to explore corporeal and spiritual significances of blood, and the depth and flow of memory. Additionally, the study of religio-political aspects of gender construction in this novel could effectively be expanded to engage with the male characters.

On a macro level, the research can be expanded by examining evidence of the postcolonial Gothic, and the use of elemental philosophy, in other Irish novels; a starting point might be Deane’s *Reading in the Dark* (1996) with its elemental flows of fire within a postcolonial Gothic dynamic. Desmond Hogan’s novel *Farewell to Prague* (1995) is not only haunted by vibrant memories of Irish topography and culture, it also expresses images of the Irish in England and conceives a tender mapping of the fragmentary and ongoing experiences of the Irish diaspora.

Furthermore, expanding the research beyond an Irish *milieu* would trace global routes that realize how:

from one writer to another, great effects can link up or diverge, within compounds of sensations that transform themselves, vibrate, couple, or split apart: it is these beings of sensations that account for the artist’s relationship with a public, for the relation between different works by the same artist, or even for a possible affinity between artists (Deleuze and Guattari: 1994, 175).

With this in mind Wilson Harris's ideas on a cross-cultural imaginative space are useful.

Harris's creative philosophy resonates with the ideas put forward in this thesis, especially his employment of elemental forces through the 'implicit orchestra, of living landscapes when consciousness sings through variegated fabrics and alternations of mood, consonance as well as dissonance' (Harris: 1999, 44). His idea of the 'poetry of science' (Harris: 1999, 143) echoes Banville's ideas on the blurred boundaries between the practice of science and art as ways of seeing about the world. Harris's postcolonialism, as with Banville and Morrissy, is expressed within an innovative imagination that seeks out the 'alphabets of the elements within every hollow epitaph of memory' (Harris: 1993, 140); his novels offer another avenue to expand this research.

Banville's reluctance to label himself solely as an Irish writer evokes Harris's call for a cross-cultural approach to the study of fiction. Like Harris, Banville is not uttering a negative denial of his birthplace, but rather, is offering a positive embrace of the terrestrial elemental space that is Ireland along with a cross-cultural temperament. Banville's and Morrissy's writing could thus also be explored alongside the New Zealand writer Janet Frame. Frame, the subject of a postcolonial study by Marc Delrez that rigorously stresses how her postcolonialism and utopianism does not 'conform to type(s)' (Delrez: 2002, xxx), utilizes her own form of elemental postcolonial Gothic and processes of becoming that vibrates with the novels in this thesis.

Frame's novel *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, first published in 1964, culminates in a sound emerging as a 'new language' rising 'out of ancient rock and marshland; out of ice and stone' (Frame: 2000, 251-252). Frame's earth music expressed through human breath interlinks with Morrissy's interpretation of breath, and with Banville's insistent music of the earth. It also recalls the Irigarayan elemental language that seeks to revisit 'those natural matters that constitute the origin of our bodies, of our life, of our environment' (Irigaray Qtd. Canters and Jantzen: 2005, 29). Harris asserts that Frame's novel needs a different kind of

criticism, one that can map 'bridges and connections with other cultures' (Harris Qtd. Delrez: 2002, xi); the postcolonial Gothic and its tender cartographies can be progressed to offer precisely such a critical paradigm.

The postcolonial Gothic offers an opportunity to explore experiences and connections with other cultures, whilst also remaining mindful of both the specifics and intimate contexts of location; it also creates a 'living map, [that offers] a transformative account of the self' (Braidotti: 2008, 3). The postcolonial Gothic, and its use of elemental philosophy, generates a narrative that understands the experiences of 'permanent processes of transition, hybridization and nomadization, and [how] these in-between states and stages defy the established modes of theoretical representation' (Braidotti: 2008, 2). The philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari conveys a creative vocabulary that actively desires an expression of this narrative, this is worth cultivating as it has Gothic nuances at the heart of its radical phenomenological approach. Deleuze and Guattari, like Banville and Morrissy, recognize the presence of diverse absences in voices that intersect between human, terrestrial, animalistic, and insectile spaces. The postcolonial Gothic literary imagination revels within movement, hybridity, liminality, metamorphosis, and maps; it propagates a fruitful counter-cartography.

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Appendix 1

PLATONIC SOLIDS

