Gothic-postmodernism

Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity

Maria Beville

Postmodern Studies 43

Gothic-postmodernism

Postmodern Studies 43

Series
edited by

Theo D’haen
and
Hans Bertens

Gothic-postmodernism

Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity

Maria Beville

Amsterdam - New York, NY 2009

Cover image by Mariam AlBoom

Cover design: Pier Post

The paper on which this book is printed meets the requirements of “ISO 9706:1994, Information and documentation - Paper for documents - Requirements for permanence”.

ISBN: 978-90-420-2664-3
E-Book ISBN: 978-90-420-2665-0

Printed in The Netherlands

Table of Contents

'But the Gothic art is sublime… it causes the whole being to expand into the infinite; earth and air, nature and art, all swell up into eternity and the only sensible impression left is that "I am nothing!"'

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

'The General Character of the Gothic Literature and Art' (1858)

'It silences you… When you come down, nothing seems worth saying, nothing at all. You find the nothingness wrapping you up like a sound. Non-being.'

Alleluia Cone

'The Satanic Verses' (1998)

Introduction

In the current climate of literary experimentalism, 'Gothic' may seem to some, an anachronistic term. Having spent most of the nineties as a buzz-word in literature and culture, its haunting presence appears to have faded somewhat. With the end of TV serials such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* and the current lack of interest in the so-called Gothic images that used to inundate media and popular culture, the question arises yet again as to what significance the Gothic bears for contemporary literature?

Having exploded in the last two decades (considered broadly as part of the postmodern era) to cross disciplinary and cultural boundaries beyond the 'literary' into music, film, TV, fashion and even the web, a lack of literary importance in the genre was heralded by many, who considered the intensity of the mode diluted, having been mixed with so many varieties of popular entertainment. In spite of this, the Gothic of the postmodern era continues to be analysed in detail by literary critics. Significantly, however, this analysis is mostly confined to studies of horror film and fiction and consensus tends to fall with the idea that the Gothic in postmodern literature and film is a result of a 'diffusion' of the genre (Botting 2003, 14). Its literary importance is regarded as having been depleted and the focus remains far from the literary, with recent popular films such as *Van Helsing* (2004), *Blade Trinity* (2004) and *Underworld* (2004) (Spooner 2008, 136). Importantly, what remains to be taken into account by such critics is the presence of fundamental Gothic elements in literary postmodernist texts. By this, I refer to works definable under the paradigm of postmodernism; experimental, radical and often metafictional literature which problematises the relationship between reality and fiction, reader and text. The main purpose of this book is to fill this gap in literary criticism by proposing a theoretical approach to postmodernist texts that are definitively Gothic. By defining the genre, Gothic-postmodernism, it will assert the intrinsic links that tie the Gothic and the postmodern in literary and cultural terms and declare

the Gothic as the clearest mode of expression in literature for voicing the terrors of postmodernity; a mode that is far from dead and in fact rejuvenated in the present context of increased global terrorism.

In doing so, the message that this work seeks to communicate is that, first of all, 'the Gothic' is a term that has been over-used and over-creatively interpreted in recent times. Due to this misrecognition of the Gothic, it is less obviously distinguishable in postmodern works in which its more subtle qualities come to the fore. Popular culture and its critics alike seem to have immersed themselves in a romantic notion of Gothic as a style or aesthetic defined by a number of emotive characteristics and standard devices.

Secondly, and related to the first message, is that the core of the genre, its terror, has been greatly overlooked and its relevance to contemporary culture and society has not yet been fully acknowledged. From this perspective, it is not surprising that much of the critical work that has been done on the genre observes the Gothic in modern culture as 'having lost its older intensity', 'saturating contemporary culture' to the point where it provides normative images of 'Vampire teens' and soul-hunting cyborgs to the modern consumer (Hogle 2002, 287).

It can be argued that the postmodern audience that is or was the consumer of the popular Gothic, tends now only to appreciate the superficial 'Gothic' veneers of certain works, of which, many have been accurately categorised by critics like Fred Botting as 'candygothic' (Botting 1996, 134). As Catherine Spooner puts it: 'while we all may think that we can recognise the Gothic…we are all amateur Van Helsings, well versed in the characteristics of the Vampire and its fellow creatures of the night' (Spooner 2006, 8). This discussion, in providing a definition of the Gothic in a new literary form, seeks to offer a fresh perspective on contemporary Gothic and also to highlight the survival of the Gothic in literature, by addressing the question: what is the essence, if any, of the genre?

Moreover, in defining a new genre, Gothic-postmodernism, this study will present an articulation of the psychological and philosophical implications of terror in postmodernist literature, analogous to the terror of early Gothic works. Emphasising the role of the Gothic sublime and its concern with the unrepresentable, as the core of the genre, it seeks to put forward a definition of Gothic-postmodernism as a hybrid mode that emerges from the dialogic

interaction of Gothic and postmodernist characteristics in a given text. Consequently, it will establish that the Gothic still exists in postmodernist literature, and that 'terror' (with all that it involves) remains a connecting and potent link between the Gothic and the postmodern.

The idea of defining Gothic-postmodernism is intrinsically bound up in defining the Gothic. In identifying characters such as Billy Pilgrim and Bret Easton Ellis as Gothic anti-heroes, while denying Buffy the Vampire Slayer the same identification, I will intimate that the Gothic elements evident in the latter are at base superficial and that such texts are not really Gothic. The popularity of the 'candygothic' of such novels and films is evidence of our predisposition to concentrate on Gothic stylistic conventions. While its shadows and sombre tones, its stormy landscapes and characters are of course paramount to its artistic presentation and to its terrifying effects, they are and should be seen, not as ornamental literary devices, but as derivative of the Gothic's concern with terror and with encountering the unrepresentable in sublime experience. By considering the Gothic as the literature of terror, echoing David Punter, I define Gothic-postmodernism as the same and further this idea by advocating a view of Gothic-postmodernism as an amplification of the Gothic language of terror to encompass the more recent terrors of our postmodern age and also the theories of terror that have been put forward as part of the enterprise of postmodern cultural theory.

In approaching Gothic-postmodernist works, close textual analysis and a broad theoretical approach will be the main methodological approach. Consequently, twofold readings of the selected works will be offered. These works will be identified, firstly, as a fusion of various Gothic and postmodern features of literary exploration and secondly, as an articulation of Gothic-postmodernism due to the interaction of these different features. Acknowledging the overriding concept of terror will unify this approach and analysis will progress toward a performative and contextually driven definition, in which the particular qualities of the texts that have been identified are allowed to 'speak for' the genre.

A range of theoretical approaches to the process of genre definition in this work will furthermore seek to place Gothic-postmodernism as a pioneering contemporary literary effort, a self

conscious genre that operates both to broach our desires for terror and to expunge the fears of our postmodern 'culture of death' (Baudrillard 1993, 127). While many critics propose that the Gothic has been exhausted, and that its significance is depleted by consumer society's obsession with instantaneous horror, analyses of a number of terror-based postmodernist texts in this book will suggest that the Gothic is still very much animated in Gothic-postmodernism. Moving from a particularist approach to a generalist one allows for a broad definition of this literary mode, which surveys distinctly Gothic traits at work on a fundamental level in postmodernist works such as Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, Paul Auster's *City of Glass* and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse 5*. Spectral characters, *doppelgängers*, hellish waste lands, and the demonised or possessed, emerge as the most obvious Gothic inscriptions in the chosen postmodernist narratives. However, as the main point of cross fertilization of the two genres, the deeper issue of the lingering emotion of terror as it relates to loss of reality and self, and to death will be the primary focus.

Re-evaluating current critical thought on both the Gothic and postmodernism, the premise of this book is based on the perception that our postmodern situation is comparable to the Reign of Terror in the years following the French Revolution (Punter); that period at which the Gothic reached its peak. The perspective of this work thus develops with a notion of 'terror' formulated from the theories of both continental philosophers and contemporary cultural theorists. In this sense, the Gothic anxieties of postmodern literary and cultural theories will also be considered. Quite interestingly, these theories are also evidence of the Gothic in postmodernism. Jean Baudrillard's 'spirit of terror' and 'cities of death', will be seen as closely linked to Jacques Derrida's 'hauntology', Jean Francois Lyotard's theories on the postmodern sublime and Slavoj Žižek's consideration of 'the Thing'. On a further level, these theories will be used to approach selected texts and will be applied to various readings of the works as Gothic, postmodernism or 'both and'.

Significantly, Gothic-postmodernism is not the same, although it is related to, classifications such as postmodern Gothic or Contemporary Gothic. Decisively, Gothic is used here as the adjective of the term denoting that what is under investigation is the postmodern text that is characteristically Gothic. The Gothic will be analysed as a reflexive genre akin to postmodernism in that it offers readers the

potential to interrogate our own unconscious fears, terrors and anxieties and new ways to represent them. And in its obsession with death it expunges those fears through the return of the repressed in a ghostly play on haunting and spectrality. Postmodernism can be assessed as being similarly dedicated to excess, anxiety, fear and death. According to Baudrillard, ours is a 'culture of death'. This would suggest interesting implications for the functions of terror in literature, significantly, that terror functions to highlight the spectrality of postmodern existence. In most Gothic-postmodernist works this is emphasised in the pervasive themes of haunting and fluid identity. Through these themes, a definition of Gothic-postmodernism will be suggested, introducing it as a mode of literature which, via metafictional strategies, offers the reader a new kind of reading experience appropriate to the postmodern condition; a genre in which Gothic elements fuel postmodernist explorations of reality and hauntology, and in which the liminality of the characters grasps at something close to that unrepresentability that underpins the processes of subjectivity, inducing silent screams as readers' illusions are shattered.

Part I: Defining Gothic-postmodernism

Chapter 1: Defining Gothic-postmodernism

To reiterate, this study considers the sublime effects of terror as the heart of Gothic and Gothic-postmodernist literary exploration. Significantly, enunciating aspects of the sublime effects of terror is the primary function of Gothic rhetoric. It is also the primary task of postmodernist art and literature as it is perceived as a route to the unknown, unrepresentable aspects of self and reality. Consequently, each chapter of this book, in seeking out a definition, analyses each of the chosen texts with sublime terror as a starting point, holding it to be the genre's central dialogical element. It is the most apparent common denominator between the Gothic and postmodernism, which establishes the intensity of the relationship between the two in both literary and philosophical terms and will, thus support the definition of each work under the tenets laid out here as Gothic-postmodernism.

The conventions accepted here as characterising the emergence of Gothic-postmodernism as a new and distinct literary genre include: the blurring of the borders that exist between the real and the fictional, which results in narrative self-consciousness and an interplay between the supernatural and the metafictional; a concern with the sublime effects of terror and the unrepresentable aspects of reality and subjectivity; specific Gothic thematic devices of haunting, *the doppelgänger*, and a dualistic philosophy of good and evil; an atmosphere of mystery and suspense and a counter-narrative function. Through analysing of the interaction of these Gothic and postmodernist characteristics as Gothic-postmodernism, it becomes clear that shadows and gloom, turbulent landscapes and demonised, ghostly or monstrous characters are a central part of the generic substance of Gothic-postmodernism, and subsequently of its representation of otherness: the 'subterranean areas behind everyday experience' (Carter 2006, 133).

More specifically, Gothic-postmodernism can be understood as a distinct genre by its own self-consciousness. Within the genre, multiple levels of self-irony tender a unique set of meta-discourses which run subversively against mainstream society and the literature that claims to represent it. Its meta-narratives operate to disrupt the dominating narrow accounts of history, religion, culture and identity by referring to inverted versions of the same, often implied by fantastic devices. Mikhail Bulgakov's novel is a worthy example, as is Rushdie's and more explicitly Amis's, which literally inverts the narrative to present history in reverse. Similarly, Samuel Beckett, setting a precedent for Gothic-postmodernist writers, attempted a deconstruction of the narrative construction of the self in his minimalist, spiralling prose which leads through the infernal circles of subjectivity and eventually solipsism.

The term 'Gothic-postmodernism' is necessary for this analysis as it denotes a distinct generic mutation in literature. Through particular use of this term it will become clear that the Gothic, as the descriptive term of Gothic-postmodernism, functions to fulfil the expression of the darkness of postmodernity, while postmodernist aspects operate to establish ontological and epistemological standpoints that query accepted ethical and moral 'realities', which have long been the focus of Gothic subversion. As a result, in a single term it is possible to communicate the extent to which the two literary ideologies, the Gothic and the postmodernist, have come to be intertwined into a controversial mode of writing that could be referred to as a literary monster. Its fascination with terror, the negative and the irrational, and its hostility toward accepted codes of reality, place it firmly in the realm of revolution. What is often terrifying is that this revolution is against humanity itself, a humanity that has become increasingly secular and that has become too familiar with over-arching concepts of the transcendent. Through the terror of Gothic-postmodernist texts, we can question our own unconscious fears, beliefs and prejudices, not only in terms of the desire that instigates them, but also in terms of the repercussions for society in general. This locates the genre as a literary blend of many theoretical approaches to subjectivity, in a pivotal role in contemporary literary development.

Arguably, this definition has important implications for our perspective on the Gothic more so than in our view of postmodernism.

By defining Gothic-postmodernism as a genre, distinct in its own right, this study suggests and supports the idea that Romantic Gothic, Victorian Gothic and modernist Gothic/ Gothic modernism, among others, logically represent separate genres. Thus, this definition aims to actualise the genre Gothic-postmodernism with a specific guide to its focus: that being the perceived survival of the Gothic as opposed to the concept of its revival. Spooner, in her recent study of the Gothic as it relates to postmodern culture, has in her approach opted for the quite common 'revival' theory in relation to the Gothic, noting that '[t]here is no original Gothic; it is always already a revival of something else' (Spooner 2006, 10). She adds, in conclusion, that though the 'Gothic may be a set of discourses that thrives on revival… in the context of postmodernity this process has been short circuited… [and the Gothic] now it simply exposes the void at the heart of modern consumer culture' (Spooner 2006, 155).

The former comment can be considered as valid to an extent in respect of the idea that the 'original Gothic' of Walpole and Radcliffe, as it has been accepted by critics, is underscored by an impression of earlier Gothic attitudes in literature such as those of Shakespeare, Webster, Goethe and 'graveyard poets' of the school of Robert Blair. But, while the Gothic certainly revived a selection of traits from these earlier, dark texts, it had clearly, from its various highpoints in the writing of Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker, for example, evolved into something new. There was effectively a birth of a new progeny which involved a transmutation of generic and genetic components.

This definition contends that Gothic-postmodernism can be accounted for in relation to a scheme of evolution and its generic metamorphosis pertains distinctly to episodes in the development of literary history. *Fin de siècle* realism can be deemed partly responsible for the emergence of the decadent Gothic; modernism, for the hellish Gothic visions of subjectivity in Eliot and Beckett; and postmodernism for the hauntological, terrified characters of Auster, Vonnegut, Ellis and Rushdie. Robert Stam has criticised this approach to genre by claiming that it is both empiricist and essentialist to see a genre as 'evolving', referring to it as a biological approach (Stam 2000, 128-9), suggesting the implication that only those genres which are well-adapted to their functions survive. This view, however, essentially misconstrues the biological metaphor and so it is necessary

to stress, in response to his comment, that the survival of the Gothic, is not an example of the survival of the 'fittest' in literature, but of the survival of a universally necessary topos of counter-narrative or release, which maintains a balance within the genus of modern literature.

Finally, and quite importantly, throughout this definition, the Gothic aspects of postmodern theories will be utilised in literary analysis. In this, a distinctive postmodern perspective and theoretical approach to the genre, will be offered in support of the inherent links that exist between the Gothic and postmodern paradigms. Significantly, the theories outlined in this definition all bear undercurrents that are definitively Gothic while being inspired by Gothic themes of terror and death. Lyotard's approach to the postmodern sublime, which can be seen as directly related to terror will be of primary relevance to this study. It relates directly to the functions of the Gothic-postmodernist text, specifically to the function of validating Lyotard's stated obligations to the inconceivable real by presenting the unrepresentable. Furthermore, and related to Lyotard's interpretation of terror and postmodernity, Baudrillard's 'spirit of terror' and 'culture of death', is related directly to Gothic-postmodernist literary inscriptions. In his critique of postmodern culture, Baudrillard's discourse of terror appears to be linked to traditional Gothic themes and concerns. Significantly, he draws on the Gothic idea of the spectre and sublimity in terror in claiming that terrorism is a spectre that plagues us all as part of our desire for symbolic death and the realisation of the impossible real.

Of the theories to be discussed and applied, Derrida's hauntology is most broadly applicable to the chosen texts. While Derrida's hauntology is fundamentally concerned with history, it is suggestively appropriate to the literary text. According to Derrida, and in line with the basic manifesto of Gothic literature, we should embrace the spectres that haunt as an intrinsic part of our present situation, thus destabilising the structural ideologies that maintain their otherness, in this case, language. Derrida's Gothic vocabulary is of great importance and can be seen even more obviously in the sub-title of his interview 'Passages – From Traumatism to Promise': 'prepare your self to experience the future and welcome the monster' (Derrida 1995, 385). Intriguingly, his critique of Marx's ontology of commodity value, Derrida picks up on the power of the metaphor of

the spectre as that 'indispensable', 'bodiless body' which haunts the Thing from both inside and out to the point where it becomes a 'dead-living Thing' (Derrida 1994, 4). This would, arguably, mimic such Gothic literary creations as Frankenstein's creature and the many ghosts of similar fictions which haunt the present in search of 'presence' and symbolic value.

Like Derrida, Lyotard and Baudrillard, Žižek, too imparts a particularly Gothic imaginary in his interpretations of Lacan; his analysis of first and second death, and his theory of the sublime. Notably, Žižek's version of the sublime relates directly to Lyotard's and is more than relevant to understanding how the Gothic sublime is manifested in certain postmodernist texts. According to Žižek, the sublime is 'paradox of an object which, in the very field of representation, provides a view, in a negative way of the dimension of what is unrepresentable'; that which may allow us to 'experience the impossibility of the thing' (Žižek 1998, 203). Doubly significant, in this, are the implications of 'the Thing'. In Žižek's model, *Das Ding* bears admitted connotations with 'The Thing' in science-fiction horror and also in the Gothic (Žižek 1998 132). His ideas seem to encapsulate the Gothic drive of postmodern theories and are a point of relation between those already mentioned.

But to return to the question of genre: in his study of genre, Stam poses the necessary question: are genres really 'out there' in the world, or are they merely the constructions of analysts? Is there a finite taxonomy of genres or are they in principle infinite? Are genres timeless Platonic essences or ephemeral, time-bound entities? Are they culture-bound or transcultural? (Stam 2000, 14). From a poststructuralist perspective, certainly, genres are the constructions of analysts. However, as construction in and through language is indispensable to existence and to our relative knowledge of self and of the world, the construction of genre is consequently indispensable to our understanding of art and literature. In this sense, there is an infinite nomenclature of genres according to the infinite number of literary texts that will be written, each text contributing to a change in the genre, which awaits linguistic construction. For this reason, I would disagree with John Hartley who argues that 'genres are agents of ideological closure — they limit the meaning-potential of a given text' (O'Sullivan et al. 1994, 128). On the contrary, they are agents of discourse which further the meaning potential of given texts by

relating them to other works in the construction of genre. Christine Gledhill accurately states that there are no 'rigid rules of inclusion and exclusion…Genres...are not discrete systems, consisting of a fixed number of listable items' (Gledhill 1985, 60). Instead they focus on the interpretative spaces opened up for readers, and, through the dialogic potential of intertextuality tend, to transcend time and culture, as will be demonstrated through the case of Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*.

Tangential to the issue of 'genre', questions arise in relation to the relevance of a theoretical approach to the Gothic, particularly when, as Spooner points out that due to its expansive nature, the Gothic, like postmodernism is amenable to numerous and often disparate theories. This is 'because its components can be reordered in infinite combinations, because they provide a lexicon that can be plundered for a hundred different purposes, a crypt of body parts that can be stitched together in a myriad of permutations' (Spooner 2006, 156). In light of this, Derrida's analysis of genre, which argues that 'a text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without...a genre... [e]very text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text' (Derrida 1981, 61), offers a significant answer. Literary critics who deal with the classification of genres are effectively taking part in the indispensable practice of constructing a context through language. In Derrida's view a text cannot be identified in any respect, except as part of the chain of signification by which all texts are differentiated from one another.

Interestingly, Tzvetan Todorov, in his work on the fantastic, at one point refers to Vladimir Propp's theory of genre in a similar approach to Derrida's and states that critics, like scientists, do the necessary job of classifying the world into species, genus, type etc. (Todorov 1973, 6). While this is a valid statement, it is important to take into account that 'genre is uncategorical: it is a shifting semiotic space where a certain range of textual possibilities may be framed in order to interact meaningfully… [and] we can only map the contours of this space' (Reid 1989, 209). In this sense, my argument for the definition of Gothic-postmodernism also recommends an estimation of genre as inherently linked to context and culture; as a voice for the ideological and social discourses that define an age and subsequently propose modes of identification to readers. From this perspective, and with an open and arguably poststructuralist approach to genre, and a

stark focus on the literary and theoretical implications of terror and the sublime, this study will prove that it does not suffice to say, as many critics have, that the Gothic is a genre that has seeped into all literary movements, including postmodernism, filling a small but significant role in providing an outlet for social and imaginative energy. It is an active generic component in Gothic-postmodernism; a genre, that should be appreciated on its own terms.

Chapter 2: On Gothic Terror

Terror has been central to Gothic literature since it first emerged in the turbulent years of the eighteenth century as an exorsive force for the fears, desires and anxieties that plagued society as it developed toward capitalism. In the contemporary sense, terror has been at the centre of political discourse since the beginning of postmodernism, more recently as a definitive element in the orientation of society and mass culture. Significantly, awareness of terror, terrorism and death via media representation has become a source of cultural fear and also, according to postmodern theorists, of a symbolic reality that somehow gives grounding to our 'knowledge' of self, society and history and also to our acceptance of hegemonic power. This perspective on terror highlights an important point relating to terror, history and literature: that our postmodern situation is not dissimilar to that in which the original Gothic reached its peak after the French Revolution.

In this late eighteenth century context, Gothic terror and anxiety related to a rapidly changing world defined by violence, disorientation and loss of meaning and faith. The repercussions of the 'age of reason' spawned terror novels such as, the most notable, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which articulated fears to do with the power of science, godlessness, social anarchy and privation. Interestingly, these issues re-emerged with vigour at the dawn of 'postmodernity'. The last fifty years has seen, particularly in art, a rejection of overarching concepts of truth and reality, a fascination with technological and media explosion, an increasingly isolating sense of self and an imposing increase in secularism, all of which has been transposed onto a concept of terror that is both pervasive and uncanny. The overriding atmosphere of terror that loomed over Europe after revolution in France can thus be seen to have echoes in our post-9/11, mass media-induced, terrorised culture.

Although generated by different events, terror and its effects today mimic their eighteenth century parallels and this is evidenced clearly through Gothic-postmodernist fiction. Ronald Paulson has

noted that the early or original Gothic was sophisticated by events in France, adding that many Gothic plots from the period are stories of justification followed by horrible excess (Paulson 2004, 274, 271). Notably, the Gothic at the time became an outlet for responding to terror. Similarly, Gothic-postmodernism can be regarded as an artistic response to the terror that currently haunts our collective unconscious as part of our postmodern culture of fear, and also as part of our subjective desire for its return and for discourse to open unto the darker side of our known 'realities'.

Significantly, terror is a term that has acquired a new role as part of political discourse in recent times. However, as I define it and with reference to the Gothic-postmodernist text, it is in the most basic sense, a personal experience. To be terrified is to be in a state of hesitation or suspension. Terror merely hints at unimaginable horrors and the mind is left to wander, while it waits to uncover what will happen next. Terror can be seen then as an experience that effects an altered state of consciousness, one in which a narrowed focus allows us to absorb fundamental aspects of our being; those which arguably are unknowable in our ordinary subjective frames of reference.

Jean Francois Lyotard's theory of 'the unrepresentable' is central to this idea, as it establishes the concept that an encounter with the unrepresentable, or unimaginable, results in the interruption of subjective action and a split between rationality and imagination (Lyotard 1991, 210). The condition according to Lyotard is one of exultation/ terror, or in terms of Kantian philosophy: 'pleasure displeasure'. Kant's analytic of the sublime is the basis for Lyotard's theory and accounts for the situation in terms of 'negative pleasure'. When the subject has this sublime experience, it is one of simultaneous 'terror' at the loss of 'time moving' and 'exultation' at the comprehension of the 'finite'. The feelings are the result of a conflict of reason as it comprehends the sublime, and imagination as it fails to 're-present it' (Kant 2001, 24-26).

Marshal Brown, in his study of the philosophical aspects of the Gothic, suggests, interestingly, that Kant's language 'intimates a Gothic vision' (Brown 2004, 171). In unfolding a Kantian concern with the unrepresentable, or unspeakable, postmodernist theory can be seen to maintain this Gothic vision, while, arguably, intensifying the focus on terror in itself. Lyotard was one of the first theorists to link this experience to postmodern culture when he said:

> The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have given us as much terror as we can take. We have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, of the transparent and the communicable experience. Under the general demand for slackening and for appeasement, we can hear the mutterings of the desire for a return of terror, for the realisation of the fantasy to seize reality (Lyotard 1984, 81-2).

What the self can know, how the self knows, and what it can be through its own imaginary existence is essentially the driving force behind postmodernist theory and literature. Lyotard states that the sublime has the effect of 'genuine heterogeneity on the subject', proposing that an innate incommensurability lies at the heart of sublime experience in the form of 'the naked convulsions of differends' (Lyotard 1991, 210), that simultaneous experience of terror and exultation, fear and desire. It also suggests that through these differends one has the potential to exist for a moment beyond the perceived homogeneity that governs our acceptance of imposed realities and identities. Importantly, this postmodern approach to the sublime acknowledges it as significant not for its infinite or transcendental qualities which were valued by Kant, but for its subjective and self-realising properties, for its 'extension of the domain of the perceptible' (Abinnett 2003, 46) and this has some thought-provoking implications for the role of terror literature in postmodern society.

Significantly for this study, in the eighteenth century, and in direct relation to the Gothic, Edmund Burke and Anne Radcliffe made similar comments on the nature of terror and the sublime and their relation to contemporary society. Writing in 1757, Edmund Burke claimed in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* that: 'terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime' (Burke 1998, 101); and he went on to add that:

> whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling (Burke 1998, 86).

In his treatise, he also notes that for terror, the Romans used the verb *stupeo*, a term which in his opinion 'strongly marks the state of an

astonished mind' (Burke 1998, 101). What is significant here is that terror in relation to astonishment is apprehended by Burke as a state of suspension of the self in which the mind is completely occupied by the object of terror and cannot comprehend with reason anything beyond that object. In relation to the cause of sublime terror he states: 'I am satisfied the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure'; his reason being that 'it is considered as an emissary of this king of terrors' [death] (Burke 1998, 86). In this we see that negative experiences are more powerful than positive, an idea that Emmanuel Levinas would later explore in relation to experiences of ennui, anxiety and insomnia. Notably, there is one other factor that Burke deems as essential to the experience of sublimity and that is obscurity, noting how experiences of terror are more intense during the night-time hours and when veiled by darkness. This suggests that the sublime experience of terror is one of heightened experience and imagination, one in which cognitive reason and objectivity is neglected in favour of fantasy and desire.

Literary history has revealed that Burke's perspective on the sublime is one of the most fundamental philosophies underpinning Gothic aesthetics. It therefore had a remarkable impact on the 'original' Gothic, and its orientation toward the dark side of human subjective experience. Significantly, the Gothic, as it evolved, retained this preoccupation with the sublime and the power of terror as an overwhelming experience for the subject, and an intensification of this focus is evident as the genre moves toward postmodernism. In *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, which is undisputedly inspired by Burke's philosophical enquiries, Radcliffe notes that terror, unlike horror, is regarded as bearing only a suggestion of the grotesque. In its obscurity, it stimulates the imagination, causing simultaneous fear and fascination. It is, according to Radcliffe, a route to sublime experience for this reason and should be taken as the prime focus of Gothic narrative (Radcliffe 1826, etext). Radcliffe of course, led by subtle example in works such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *A Sicilian Romance* and her approach to the role of literature in the evocation of feelings of 'pity and terror' is clearly derived from Burke's *Of Words*:

> But as to words; they seem to me to affect us in a manner very different from that in which we are affected by natural objects, or by painting or architecture; yet words have as considerable a share in exciting ideas of beauty and of the sublime as many of those, and sometimes a much greater

> than any of them: therefore an inquiry into the manner by which they excite such emotions is far from being unnecessary in a discourse of this kind (Burke 1998, 187).

We can thus conclude that terror, from the very earliest stages of philosophical and literary analysis, was regarded as sublime: as a unique, timeless and unquantifiable emotion. It was regarded as a totalising experience, in which one could potentially encounter self in its most basic of 'knowable' forms through imagination, and the most profound subject matter for *avante garde* literature.

With Burke and Radcliffe in mind, it is clear that terror has long been seen as something of an enigmatic experience and for this reason has preoccupied the minds of some of the greatest philosophers and artists from the Romantic period to the present. In a more modern context however, the general view has extended to consider terror as a sublime experience in the sense of a liminal state of existence that puts the 'real' into question, and which subsequently gives access to its most knowable of manifestations through what Levinas would most likely call 'awareness', and Lyotard, 'heterogeneity'. 'Terrified' awareness, as it is explored in relation to the ontology of the subject, differs from conscious awareness in the sense that is in an altered or suspended state of being, in which consciousness is limited to a specific subjective situation. In this state, possibilities are opened up for the reception of unlearned realities. This may be comparable on one level to the dream state, but more accurately to the suspended condition of hypnotic trance (interestingly, a familiar theme in Gothic fiction and film, most memorably in the form of the somnambulist), in which the potential is opened up for what Freud conceived as a method for accessing the desires of the unconscious and what hypnotist Milton H. Erickson later defined as 'the evocation and utilisation of unconscious learning' (Erickson & Rossi 1992, 5). Aroused by cognitive and emotional terror, this 'state' is one that exists beyond the realms of not just rationality but also of conscious being. In light of the Kantian and Burkean analytic of terror, it could be argued that in the modernist and postmodernist approach, the focus has changed from the causes and effects of terror to that suspension of being in which endless possibilities may be presented.

In our postmodern world, the real has become something of a marginalised concept. In this context, Levinas' writings have a particular relevance to my perspective on terror and postmodernity.

Levinas, in his critique of ontology, *Existence and Existents*, does not write directly about terror, but his ideas on 'becoming' are nonetheless extremely relevant. His approach to 'being' is one of his most transparent moments of thought. Essentially, he sees that the self can determine itself to be what it wills. It has the potential to violate its own existence and to dominate 'reality' (Hutcheon 2004, 43). In his work, to achieve this perspective, he focused on a condition that he termed *Il y a*, or 'there is'. This meant attempting to imagine non-existence, for when we try to imagine nothing, the result is always something. This something is *Il y a*: pure existence, and in a way this could be regarded as 'the unimaginable' or 'unrepresentable' in Kantian and Lyotardian terms.

Another interesting modern approach to this same idea which is particularly appropriate to the Gothic-postmodernist concern with the psychological aspects of identity, is Jacques Lacan's conception that the self is located where the self does not think:

> I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think. Words that render sensible to an ear properly attuned with what elusive ambiguity the ring of meaning flees from our grasp along the verbal thread. What one ought to say is: I am wherever I am the plaything of my thought; I think of what I am when I do not think to think. This two-sided mystery is linked to the fact that the truth can be evoked only in that dimension of an alibi in which all 'realism' in creative works takes its virtue from metonymy; it is likewise linked to this other fact that we accede to meaning only through the double twist of metaphor when we have the one and only key: the S and the s of the Saussurian algorithm are not on the same level, and man only deludes himself when he believes his true place is at their axis, which is nowhere. Was nowhere, that is, until Freud discovered it; for if what Freud discovered isn't that, it isn't anything (Lacan, 1995, 183).

The self, in other words, is unthinkable, or unimaginable. So, with these theories in mind, modern conceptions of self can be said to revolve around the ontological sense of the word. 'There is' a self. However, this self endeavours to exist, and thus becomes an 'existent'. This process is what Levinas terms 'hypostasis', in which the self effectively 'recoils in horror' from its own anonymity (from being and knowing nothing) and begins to strive for self-determination. Levinas' idea was that experiences such as fatigue, anxiety, insomnia, sensuality and death are examples of liminal or suspended being; they are *Il y a*. They involve a hypostatic condition of subjectivity, an experience of this genuine heterogeneity: 'In

thinking of infinity the 'I' from the first thinks more than it thinks' (Bernasconi & Critchley 2002, 10). In this condition, the 'I' has a surplus of 'other' within its 'self' and so its vigilant existence opens to the primary ontological experience (Bernasconi & Critchley 2002, 10): that state of being beyond knowledge of self and the result of trying to imagine the unimaginable. I propose that the experience of terror, so vital to Gothic-postmodernism as we will see, operates in much the same way as both a route and a response to *Il y a*; that in that sublime state we experience 'absolute' being, in which a new existence can be initiated as our usual cognitive and emotional counterpoints of self are removed from the frame of experience.

Levinas' position on the role of hypostasis in the creation of subjectivity sees the result as a divided self, a sort of Gothic *doppelgänger*. This condition of hypostasis is one in which the timeless self reflects upon itself in an unchanging way but becomes aware that what it is reflecting upon is changing. 'In place of the "I" that circulates in time, we posit the "I" as the very ferment of time in the present' (Levinas 1995, 92). So a distinction can be drawn between the identity and the self that it identifies (Hutcheon 2004, 44-45):

> The return of the present to itself is the affirmation of the "I" already riveted to itself, already doubled up with a *self*…From there results the essential ambiguity of the "I", it *is*, but remains unclassifiable as an object. It is neither a thing, nor a spiritual centre from which radiate acts of consciousness, given to the consciousness of a new "I" which would apprehend it in a new move of withdrawal (Levinas 1995, 79).

The central problem of subjectivity for Levinas is that the identified self is always 'other' but not 'object', and while we inevitably 'grasp' at it, we can never possess it. Paralleling Lacan's split subject, Jung's shadow and Baudrillard's double (which will be quite interesting in terms of this exploration of the Gothic) it will always 'overflow' and remain unattainable and uncontrollable. And so the ontology of self is problematised further, until the next encounter. To connect this theory directly to the concept of terror and the sublime as explored by Burke, Kant and Lyotard, we must follow through the idea that *Il y a* is a sublime state of existence, in which the absolutes of reality and self are not representable but suggestable. We can but grasp at their otherness. It is a state of existence in which the existent is reduced to

the 'real' in its most primitive of identifiable forms. *Il y a* is not an everyday experience of awareness of self and reality, but a unique and incalculable awakening to the reality that so evades our postmodern subjectivity.

Baudrillard, in his analysis of postmodernity as hyper-real existence, in which simulation eclipses reality in a system of reproductive representation, leading to a collapse of the binary of 'real' and imaginary, brings terror to our attention as central to the postmodernist enterprise. His analysis of the 9/11 terrorist attacks strikes a chord when one considers his argument that terrorism (which, interestingly, manifests the Gothic conceit of the return of the repressed) is effectively the faults of capitalism returning to haunt Western capitalist societies. His discourse of terror, akin to that of Derrida, draws heavily on Marx's concept of the 'spectre' that haunts the Western world. In Baudrillard's words 'the spirit' of terrorism, the terrorist imagination, inhabits us all (Baudrillard 2002, 28). Linked to Lyotard's ideas, there is a suggestion in his essay that we crave terror for its realising capabilities. Terror, in presenting symbolic death as an 'absolute' event, provokes a 'virulent excess' of reality that is so powerful that it can evoke the collapse of capitalist production of meaning (Horricks & Jevtic 1996, 156). Its symbolic nature is more powerful than any 'knowable' reality as it can generate singularity. In *The Spirit of Terrorism*, he outlines that 9/11 caused the resurrection of both the image and the event and radicalised the relationship between the image and reality in a situation where reality subsumes the energy of fiction and becomes fiction itself (Baudrillard 2002, 28). Effectively, there is a battle to find out which is the most 'unimaginable'. Through the appropriation of the experience of terror and its abilities to promote the 'unimaginable', terrorism ultimately mimics the violence that is created through globalisation and can subsume its power. As we all, according to Baudrillard, desire the self-destruction of the global hegemony of capitalism and the restoration of the real, we all 'crave' terror as a route to elusive truth and validation of self and of the world.

It is as a route to self and reality that the terror of the Gothic-postmodernist novel primarily relates. It functions to *resurrect* both the real and the fictional in that sublime moment when binary ideologies are destabilised and we are confronted with the unrepresentable. In this way, the reader can be seen as reviving within

themselves the 'terroristic imagination [that] dwells in all of us' (Baudrillard 2002, 5), that same sublime faculty that Radcliffe spoke of in her treatise on terror. Interestingly, according to Baudrillard, this spirit is 'all about death… a death that is far more than real: a death which is symbolic and sacrificial – the absolute, irrevocable event' (Baudrillard 2002, 17), and in line with this theory, the Gothic-postmodernist text, just like the original Gothic 'from the surface of life, point[s] towards the darker, latent powers of creation and fertilised life from the newness of death, ghastliness and the mysterious unknown' (Varma 1957, 2).

Death, identified in Burke's early writing as 'the King of terrors' (Burke 1998, 86) (and by Freud as the unimaginable), and the paraphernalia of death, are a focus in the Gothic novel, and also in the Gothic-postmodernist text, as the expression of that terror that haunts our collective unconscious as part of our culture of fear. According to Baudrillard, death is not just subjective or bodily death but 'a form in which the determinacy of the subject and of value is lost' (Baudrillard 1993, 5). Thus, he claims that identity in our postmodern hyperreal universe 'is untenable: it is death, since it fails to inscribe its own death' (Baudrillard 1994, 4). He goes on to add another profound insight when he claims that: 'the cemetery no longer exists because modern cities have taken over their function: they are ghost towns, cities of death. If the great operational metropolis is the final form of an entire culture, then, quite simply, ours is a culture of death' (Baudrillard 1993, 127). Through postmodernity this 'king of terrors' has achieved a new and more complex manifestation.

In Gothic literature, the most common manifestations of this terror of death are the ghosts or spectres that haunt, for example, the eerie passages of T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which also quite openly purports this concept of the metropolis of death. These hauntological characters 'are' in the sense of the indeterminate existence that is our inscription in and through language. They are present and exist in that they are inscribed through the vague mutterings that make up the poem but they are effectively 'dead' as they do not appear to exercise free will and are almost summoned by Madame Sesostris, the clairvoyant of the text. They occupy a sort of liminal, purgatorial existence and the modern reality on whose borders they linger is comparable to Dante's mythological hell. In a more recent context, the culture of fear from which such ghosts emerge is arguably fuelled by

'the spirit of terror', which is the manifestation of our subjective desire for its return and for discourse to open unto the darker side of our known 'realities'.

Gothic-postmodernism is all about terror. In principle, it alludes to the unimaginable, the 'unrepresentable' through terror. It too is embodied by a spirit of terror that seeks to achieve the dismantling of the modernist and realist enterprises. From a postmodernist perspective, we all exist in a world where we have limited access to 'the real', and accordingly, to the unreal, to the finite or the infinite. Hence, according to Derrida, 9/11, that 'ineffable', 'unqualifiable' and 'undeniable event', beyond all simulacra and all possible virtualisation' (Borradori 2003, etext), inspired a terror so great that ever since, we cannot imagine the meaning of the *thing* itself, we cannot get past naming and dating because 'in the end we don't know what' it is (Borradori 2003, etext). Perhaps it is so far beyond our simulated frames of reference, so awesome and unquantifiable and so 'real', that it can be regarded as a postmodern sublime encounter that is truly unrepresentable.

In a similar way, the sublime aspects of terror explored in Gothic-postmodernist texts have the effect of giving us as readers a sense of our own reality through the creation of the symbolic event of terror; a sense also of the reality of self, or 'being' and by extension of the infinite. To give a brief example: in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, Saladin Chamcha, shadowing Kafka's Gregor Samsa (and the similarity in names here is not unintentional), emerges as 'the impossible thing' (Rushdie 1998, 188):

> It was a figure out of a nightmare or a late-night TV movie, a figure covered in mud and ice and blood, the hairiest creature you ever saw, with the shanks and hoofs of a giant goat, a man's torso covered in goat's hair, human arms, and a horned, but otherwise human head covered in muck and grime and the beginnings of a beard. Alone and unobserved, the impossible thing pitched forward on to the floor and lay still (Rushdie 1998, 188).

This can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the loss of self in the context of a postmodern world in which existence 'means' guilt; transience; evanescence; fragmentation, and the deconstruction of individual, cultural, and moral standards. It is the presentation of a profound personal reality. By parodying the familiar hyperreal monsters and demons that we all know from late-night TV movies,

Rushdie presents the terror that is self-identification in a post-colonial, postmodern culture. Saladin's existence is described here as liminal. He is between the human and the inhuman and is defined by heterogeneity, and in this, true terror is represented. To quote from Burke again, terror 'is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling' (Burke 1998, 86), and the popularity of Gothic-postmodernist works can thus be accounted for. In a secular world, where the transcendent is marginalised in favour of the material, terror is the new creed of a new hyper-real generation. In Baudrillard's view it is everywhere as the object of desire. It is the 'other' to our self portrait of self. It is no wonder then that Hogle sees the Gothic has having 'saturated' modern culture (Hogle 2002, 287).

On a more apparent social and political level, terror has been at the centre of contemporary culture in a way that arguably outdoes the intensity of its presence since the late eighteenth/ early nineteenth century. Not only an emblematic explosion of a long pervading sense of global terror, the 9/11 attacks resulted in a globally-perceived experience of the uncanny. However, although 9/11 was a hugely symbolic and world-changing event, the terror of terrorism had been building to that climax for a significant period. Not forgetting the spirit of terror that haunted London and other British cities since the 70's, instigated by the IRA, the lasting terrorism in South America and Sri Lanka, the enduring actions of the PLO in the Middle East, and more generally the terror of nuclear war beginning in the 50's which was effectively the first 'global terrorism', it is clearly necessary to consider political terror and terrorism of the postmodern era beyond the hyperreal images of Al-Quaeda and the empty political slogans of national governments. This considered, it is widely accepted that terror, in the form that we identify with today, first emerged after the French Revolution with the birth of the modern age. According to Punter '[t]he French reign of terror established a terror that could look inward as well as outward' (Punter 1998, 235). The Gothic has long provided an outlet for the expression of fears relating to terror and terrorism while also playing a significant role in the creation of terror itself. This leads to a measurement of the Gothic according to its provision, through an uncanny aesthetic and the manipulation of suspense and fear, of the language of terror.

While Gothic and political terrors have overlapped significantly during the course of modern history, in the Gothic-

postmodernist text, these terrors have bonded on a further level whereby the genre not only speaks now for a terrorised and arguably terror-addicted postmodern culture, it also offers a counter-narrative to the same structures that lead to the terror of postmodern society. Whilst expressing, or attempting to represent, the terror of everyday and the dread that plagues the haunted postmodern subject, Gothic-postmodernist texts simultaneously disrupt and deconstruct, through counter-narrative and deconstructive transgressions, the same system which upholds the need for terror.

With terror as a starting point, the links between the Gothic and postmodernism are manifest, not just in literary, but also in philosophical terms. When considered in light of socio-historical context, it is possible to distinguish a genre that can appropriately be called Gothic-postmodernism and that appears to have emerged as a cross-pollination of idealist concepts both pre-modern and modern. Because the genre is bridging a gap of over two centuries it could mistakenly be seen as neo-gothicism or just postmodernism with some Gothic elements. However, I see it as a distinct literary movement and a genre in its own right. Primarily, this study is situated in the realm of genre theory because terror, in the deepest sense of the experience, is a fundamental preoccupation of Gothic-postmodernism, so much so, that it could be defined as a guiding principle in the same sense as 'the fantastic' has been used by numerous genre theorists from Todorov to Neil Cornwell. Therefore, it is possible to draw quite substantially from the writings of Punter who referred to the original Gothic as 'the literature of terror' and to suggest that Gothic-postmodernism as our contemporary literature of terror, is a profound generic expression of our postmodern condition.

Chapter 3: Generic Investigations: What is 'Gothic'?

'The Gothic' is a term that has been over-used and over-creatively interpreted in recent times. To an extent, popular culture seems to have immersed itself in a romantic notion of Gothic as an unfettered alternative aesthetic, which has, in effect, allowed for a vast amount of ill-defined material to be published and broadcast through the media under the rubric of gothicism. This is evident in the critical work that has been done on the genre, much of which observes the Gothic in modern culture as 'having lost its older intensity', 'saturating contemporary culture' to the point where it provides normative images of 'Vampire teens' and soul-hunting cyborgs to the modern consumer (Hogle 2002, 287). Shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and the Hollywood adaptation of Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire*, immediately come to mind, and from this point of view it is easy to take the route of Fred Botting who makes the claim that the Gothic 'died' with Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula* (Botting 2003, 180), its ghost merely serving as a 'commodity' to modern consumer culture (Hogle 2002, 287).

This discussion, in providing a definition of Gothic-postmodernism, seeks to offer a new perspective on contemporary Gothic and to highlight the survival of the Gothic by addressing the question: what is the essence, if any, of the genre? In doing so, it will assert that Billy Pilgrim, Saladin Chamcha, The Master and Bret Easton Ellis are Gothic characters, truly terrorised Gothic anti-heroes, in opposition to views that would hold Buffy and Lestat in the same classification. It may be blithe to suggest that those who look at the Gothic from the perspective of consistent revival, or who consider its presence in literature as part of a broader nostalgia, tend to see a more, 'seemingly obvious' Gothic in the stylised popular underworlds of 'Sunnydale' and 'Elm Street'. In a sense, the postmodern audience that has popularised such texts is not looking for presence of an 'authentic' Gothic aesthetic based on terror and instead opts for what Botting refers to as 'pick n' mix interpretations' of the Gothic (Botting

2001, 142), avoiding meaning and seeking out acceptable figures of horror which function as titillating exercises in reassurance (Botting 2001, 134). However, it remains to be seen that despite this saturation of mass culture with superficial elements of the Gothic, certain aspects of the original manifestation of the Gothic in literature, its 'older intensity' so to speak, have somehow been preserved in contemporary society, and have developed into what is today a complete lifestyle of its own, owing to a significant number of young adults who reject mainstream culture by adorning themselves with symbols of death, darkness, and depression, and by completing their 'counter-culture' with graphic art, literature, music and fashion. While this, superficially, may appear to some as a frivolous attempt at unconventionality, the neo-gothicism of the 'Goth' movement is, in its most basic sense, a celebration of the dark recesses of the human psyche: sensuality, melancholia, morbid fascination, forbidden love, and the sublime aspects of pain and terror. And in many ways, when we speak about 'the essence' of the Gothic, this is what should come to mind. Moreover, if we consider the survival theories of the Gothic, then it is necessary to question why it has continued for so long to be a relevant and popular form. In doing so, we must look deeper than convention and style, to the terror and excess at the heart of the Gothic and to the true Gothic aesthetic that relates a waste land and its monsters in a definite social and artistic context.

A lucid early example of the phenomenon of this manifestation of gothicism is the revolutionary lyrical work of Jim Morrisson. Described as 'Goth rock' by John Stickney when the first of their songs were released in the late 60s, The Doors' musical achievements exemplify the 'exuberant gloom and existential agony' that Devendra P. Varma would claim to characterise the essence of nineteenth century Gothic narrative (Moers 1977, 255). The venerated undertones of *Graveyard Poem*, recited by Morrisson during many live performances of "Light my Fire" are particularly poignant:

> Cemetery, cool and quiet
> Hate to leave your sacred lay
> Dread the milky coming of the day (Morrisson 1990).

Echoing the style of the graveyard poets of the eighteenth century, this poem revels in darkness. Death, mystery, transcendental experience, nature, ritual, terror and fatality all pervade these three simple lines

evoking what can only be called a 'Gothic moment' to the listener. The haunting undertones of the words proclaimed through the darkly erotic song capture the paradoxical nature of the feeling behind early Gothic rock, a feeling that would come to be heavily influential as the decades wore on. In Botting's study: *Gothic*, he claims that '[t]o contemplate death and its accompanying signs is to recognise the transience of physical things and pleasures' (Botting 1996, 32), and so, as Morrisson communicates in this poem, a sort of Gothic spiritual elevation is achieved, from which the speaker does not want to return.

Quite interestingly, the band assumed their name from a line from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, written by the darkest of the Romantic poets, William Blake: 'If *the doors of perception* were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it truly is, infinite' (Blake 1975, xv). The Gothic and Romantic influences here speak for themselves. The point of the matter, however, remains centred on the fact that Goth culture and music issues a much deeper appropriation of the Gothic than the superficially Gothic T.V. shows, movies and novels that have already been mentioned; one that is much closer to Gothic/ Romantic philosophy. Goth culture acknowledges the Gothic as an all-too-often misinterpreted mode of literature and insightfully respects the Gothic as a mode which has at its core a preoccupation with sublime experience encountered through the overwhelming emotion of terror, anticipating its return as a dominant mode in contemporary art.

So what now of the return of the Gothic to contemporary literature? In the postmodern context of global terrorism, plagued as it is by spectrality and 'death', we seem to have an appropriate setting for this anticipated return of the Gothic from the periphery of literary discourse. However, many critics would take the approach that due to the nature of the mode, in times of genuine terror the Gothic becomes redundant (Spooner 2006, 158). In relation to this claim, and noting the seeming lack of interest in the Gothic after the first and second World Wars, Spooner highlights that 'surprisingly', after 9/11 'our appetite for the Gothic seems unabated', manifested, from her perspective, in films such as *Van Helsing* and *The Da Vinci Code* (Spooner 1996, 158). While one can clearly see that the postmodern appetite for the Gothic has intensified, one wonders as to what Spooner means by referring to *The Da Vinci Code* as Gothic, and to *Van Helsing* in the same category, when it clearly fits into

'candygothic', whereby terror is obviously a novelty and created by special effects and stereotypical Gothic tropes. It is arguable from a perspective that accepts Gothic-postmodernism that Spooner, while offering many insightful commentaries on contemporary Gothic, has overlooked not only significant aspects of what she calls 'Gothic' but also the context in which these same aspects have evolved and rearranged themselves through the development of Gothic literature.

As has been demonstrated in the works of Eliot and Beckett, post World War I Gothic did not experience decline, but manifested itself in the dominant mode of the era: modernism. Though the aesthetic may have changed significantly from the haunted castle to the haunted metropolis and from the supernatural to the surreal, the main conceptual framework remained, resulting in Gothic modernist texts such as *Heart of Darkness*, *The Waste Land* and many of Beckett's prose works. Similarly in film, the new media of the modern age, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and Robert Weine's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* offered a distinctly Gothic and apocalyptic vision to expressionist art. Post World War II literature also incorporates Beckett's haunted characters, and the horrors and terrors of the war are imbricated in, not only Gothic-postmodernist novels including *Slaughterhouse 5* and *Time's Arrow*, which deal directly with issues of the war, but also in the dark thrillers of the decade directly following the end of the war, including those unforgettable conceptions of Alfred Hitchcock.

Spooner does hit on an interesting point when she states that since 9/11 'the Western world's relationship with discourses that invoke terror must undergo some kind of alteration' (Spooner 2006, 159). This is what this book has outlined in its 'definition' of a new Gothic genre. Our relationship with the discourses of terror in Gothic literature has undergone that necessary transformation (which, I would argue occurred long before 9/11) in the form of the Gothic-postmodernist text. Contrary to the suggestion that in times of genuine terror, the Gothic becomes redundant, as the literature of terror, the Gothic offers a key mode of expression for our contemporary age, voicing as it now does in postmodernist texts, the terrors of postmodernity.

The Gothic Genre

According to Botting 'the Gothic signifies a writing of excess…which shadows the despairing ecstasies of Romantic idealism and individualism and the uncanny dualities of Victorian realism and decadence' (Botting 2003, 1). This is a very accurate portrait, which places the Gothic in literary and historical context. On the other hand, Robert Miles would claim that 'the Gothic is not a genre as such, nor a specific style set by a system of conventions…[but] a discursive site, a carnivalesque mode for representations of the fragmented subject' (Miles 1993, 28). A fusion of these two definitions will lead us to uncover the true nature of what it is I refer to here as Gothic, its influences drawn from High English Romanticism, its literary principles and its adaptation through two centuries of literary and political evolution.

Significantly, the approach of Miles and Botting to the Gothic avoids the implications of thinking of the genre as a mere combination of literary conventions, which is what tends to happen when one examines early Gothic works which are based on a formula of standard devices and motifs, as outlined by the author of the first Gothic novel: *The Castle of Otranto*, Horace Walpole. While we must not overlook these conventions by any means (they will be relevant in later discussions of Gothic-postmodernist texts), one must keep in mind that if we accept that the Gothic has survived in the genre Gothic-postmodernism, then it is necessary to look beyond traditional conventions and stereotypes and to recognise the discourses, themes and sublime excesses that maintain the relevance and value of the Gothic aspects of the genre. In addition, it is crucial to remember that even in early, 'standard' Gothic works, the social or discursive aspect of the genre is quite central, functioning as a site of 'abjection' as Julia Kristeva would call it, for the fears, desires and anxieties that form the dark underbelly of contemporary culture.

Kristeva argues that ghosts and 'monsters', or to use her term, 'grotesques', were purposefully originated in Gothic works to embody the contradictions and ambiguities of our beings: those obstacles to subjective knowledge and the creation of coherent identity. Such contradictions include the 'in-between' (Hogle 2002, 7) of life and death, namely fiction and reality. Kristeva maintains that an 'immemorial violence' lies at the base of all experience: that violence of the moment of our births where we were effectively between

existence and non-existence; identity and non-identity. 'Othered' bodies subsequently provide an external form for this unnerving memory, as in the archetypal Gothic figure of Dracula who is both alive and dead, both man and beast, both human and monster. Derrida's epistemology of deconstruction is exemplified perfectly in this, and as Hogle notes, 'the process of abjection is as thoroughly social and cultural as it is personal' as 'it allows both the pursuit of sanctioned identities'…and 'confrontation with abject anomalies that are actually basic to the construction of a Western middle class self' (Hogle 2002, 7).

Many critics agree that the Gothic has endured the history of modern Western culture, primarily because its uncanny figures have consistently offered us a systematic process for determining but also disguising our hidden fears and repressed desires. We need and have needed Gothic 'abjections' in order to define our 'selves', hence we feel mysteriously attracted to them while casting them off as 'others'. Freud's psychoanalytic approach to the Gothic would seem to be an origin of this approach. His 1919 paper 'Das Unheimlich', an in-depth analysis of Hoffman's *The Sandman*, identifies that the uncanny in Gothic narrative operates on the basis of creating 'othered' versions of our most basic needs and desires; those that are intrinsically 'familiar' to us. Presenting them in repulsive, externalised forms subsequently draws them from the repression of our unconscious, having the effect of a lingering fear and uneasiness that co-exists with mysterious longing and fascination. According to Richard Kearney's fascinating study *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, these othered bodies are accounted for as 'tokens of fracture within the human psyche' (Kearney 2003, 4), that represent 'experiences of extremity which bring us to the edge…[and] threaten the known with the unknown' (Kearney 2003, 2). Holding the view that we are all answerable to the alterity within (which has echoes of Lyotard's 'obligation to the unrepresentable' and Levinas's 'face of the other'), Kearney suggests that monsters 'remind the ego that it is never whole or sovereign… [and] ghost the margins of what can legitimately be thought and said' (Kearney 2003, 4). In his view there is a need for society and the literature that speaks for it to find 'a third way' (Kearney 2003, 18). Perhaps the Gothic serves this function.

In *The Powers of Horror*, Kristeva states that the abject is edged with the sublime (Kristeva 1982, 11). I firmly agree, as the

abject, in presenting otherness, presents a form of the unrepresentable. This study, unlike Kristeva's approach however, posits the powers of terror as central to this situation, a terror inherent in the experience of nothing; 'an un-nameable non-object' (Kearney 2003, 89), as the boundaries between self and other dissolve. The terror of the Gothic therefore, often inherent in its monsters and othered bodies, functions as a deconstructive counter-narrative which presents the darker side of subjectivity, the ghosts of otherness that haunt our fragile selves.

From this angle it becomes necessary to analyse the Gothic in terms of oppositions and confrontations: life and death; good and evil; human and monstrous; male and female; self and other; past and present; fiction and reality and so on. What we find is that as a discursive medium, the Gothic functions to blur the distinctions that exist when oppositions such as these are presented. Thus, the Gothic can be interpreted as an exploration of subjectivity; an epistemological investigation of the self and what the self can know. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is an archetypal example of Gothic fiction and her uncanny monster-figure can be seen as enacting the quandary of life in the terrifying context of profound non-identity. Steven Bruhm would argue that 'the volatile status of otherness', as manifest in Shelley's novel, will forever haunt the Gothic mode, but he also notes that this 'otherness is often framed by a psychoanalytic model of the human psyche that includes a larger social vision full of phobias and prejudices about many types of "others"' (Bruhm, qtd. in Hogle 2002, 270). This allows us to see that the Gothic from its earliest days was a prelude to both psychoanalytic and deconstructive theories, rallying behind the dispersal of constructed systems of meaning that function to impose hierarchies of being based on difference and silence. It became the true voice for that which is unspeakable; unrepresentable.

Significantly, whatever that particular unspoken event may be, each individual Gothic text operates to expose, in a fashion that appears to have a curious relationship with the term 'monster'. In a sense, it is as if Gothic literature has over the centuries, developed its own subversive language, or 'counter-narrative' to quote from Botting (Botting 1996, 1), in order to gauge a more revealing communicative relationship between 'self' and 'other'. While this language may appear to be based on the negative and the irrational, by contrast, it brings a focus upon the positive and the rational. It can therefore be seen as striving for the 'in-between', and in doing so, the dark

underside of humanity is put on display with all its hate, greed and prejudice laid bare, for the 'human' reader who is often unaware of his or her own monstrosity. Gothic discourse can subsequently be seen as giving a voice to this dark side of what could be termed our collective unconscious, firmly establishing it as an intrinsic part of our social consciousness. Although terrifying and horrible, this darker side is something that we must all accept and come to terms with, and this, arguably places the Gothic as a site of discourse in an essential role in contemporary social philosophy.

When interrogating a literary mode such as the Gothic, it is easy to overlook the place of the sublime in favour of the magic that comes with the traditional Gothic conventions of the ominous atmosphere; the archaic, mysterious abode; the uncanny and charismatic villain; supernatural haunting; the oppressed, seemingly doomed heroine; and the symbolism of the irrational. We must, however, bear in mind that like any literary conventions or devices, those of Gothic fiction serve a purpose, in this case, the generation of terror. As Radcliffe put it, the primary function of the Gothic tale is to 'evoke pity and terror' (Radcliffe 1826, 1), thus generating expansive fear and metaphysical awareness whereby the reader can achieve sublime experience. The sublime experience of terror in the Gothic can be seen as a direct riposte to Enlightenment rationalism. A visceral, unquantifiable and supernatural experience, it satisfies the reader by 'awaken[ing] the imagination'; by 'expand[ing] the soul' (Radcliffe 1826, 1). While Burke would probably disagree on one or two minute details, holding it to be a conduit for a sublime experience that is somewhat diminished by the aspect of safety and distance that is inherent in the concept, Radcliffe espouses the view that terror, because of its obscurity, has the ability to arouse and stimulate the sublime faculties of the imagination. Unlike horror, which causes the imagination to recoil and shrink with fear, terror merely hints at the evil and the grotesque and opens up a space for fundamental human curiosity, and ontological enquiry.

Varma, writing in the 1950's on the Gothic novel made the insightful comment, that:

> the Gothic attitude relates the individual with the infinite Universe as do great religions and mystic philosophy…such a mind grasps the infinite and the finite, the abstract and the concrete, the whole and the nothingness as one:

> and from the tension between human and divine is kindled the votive glow that ever contemplates the world of Gothic mystery (Varma 1957, 16).

As such, terror and its sublime qualities, the liminal states that it can affect and its 'realising' potential, have long been recognised as the core of Gothic fiction. It has been acknowledged as an emotional experience that presents itself outside of time and self in the form of a 'tension', to use Varma's words, between the real and the 'unreal'. The 'in between', the apprehension and suspension of reality is subsequently presented for exploration and the reader must 'realise' in their own subjective realms of creation and interpretation.

Terror versus Horror Gothic

It is necessary to make the distinction between terror and horror Gothic. While the former is more readily appreciated in literary terms, and is seen to have dominated Gothic romance narrative in its early days, the latter, in more modern times, has found a sense of belonging in a society that has become desensitised to the grotesque, the repulsive and the outrageous. Angela Carter made the comment, originally in the seventies, that we live in 'Gothic times' (Carter 2006, 133), and one could go so far as to say that nowadays we all display a demand and a craving for not just terror, but also horror as a possible secondary intimation of terror. As Jonathan Lake Crane put it in his book, *Terror and Everyday Life*: 'living in violent times has not diminished our taste for blood' (Lake Crane 1994, 3). This situation, he says, is far more frightening than even the most brutal on-screen assault. Terror by itself, it seems, does not suffice. The continuing popularity of Stephen King and the prevalence in even in children's literature of horror, such as in the work of Darren Shan and Philip Pullman, is a general example. Lake Crane adds that what is even more distasteful in the horror genre, particularly in film, is not the violence and horror *per se*, but 'the nihilistic context in which this violence occurs' (Lake Crane 1994, 5). He quotes J. G. Ballard who claims that such narratives allow readers and audiences 'to confront the terrifying void of a patently meaningless universe by challenging it at its own game, to remake zero by provoking it in every conceivable way' (Ballard, in, Lake Crane 1994, 5).

Significantly, it could be argued that our craving for horror, evident in the popularity of horror films and novels, is a superficial

covering for our inherent desire for 'the terror of the void'. Lyotard and Baudrillard, as I have already discussed, would agree. Indeed, Punter aptly titled his book on the Gothic: *The Literature of Terror*. Baudrillard, Lyotard and Derrida have all argued that our postmodern condition has ultimately caused a shift in the nature of our collective imagination, a shift toward, and enigmatically oriented by terror. I will illustrate in this book that the terror of the Gothic has come to be, not less, but more intense, and functions today as an intrinsic force behind the expression of our postmodern concepts of life in literature through the excitement and expression of terror in the mind or psyche, that locus of the subject and of the dark sublime.

Chapter 4: Postmodernism

Literary Postmodernism

The perspective of this work is formed through an understanding of literary postmodernism as a radicalisation of the primary conceits of modernism, as a mode which crosses many disciplinary boundaries and defies any attempt to be constrained or limited to one systematic set of ideas. To further appreciate the term, it is necessary to analyse and critique the views of postmodernist literary critics such as Charles Newman, Brian McHale, and Patricia Waugh. Taking the more negative approach to postmodernism, Newman sharply describes it as inevitably calling to mind 'a band of vainglorious contemporary artists following the circus elephants of Modernism with snow shovels' (Newman, qtd in McHale 1987, 3). The more comprehensive assessment of McHale however, asserts that [a lot like the Gothic] 'postmodernism, the thing, does not exist' outside of being a 'discursive artefact constructed by readers, and in retrospect by historians'. McHale sees that the term, taken literally, 'signifies a poetics which is the successor of, or possibly a reaction against the poetics of early twentieth century modernism, and not some hypothetical writing of the future' (McHale 1987, 5). Ultimately, what both critics are emphasising here is the 'historical consequentiality' of postmodernism, and it is therefore possible to interpret it as a point where modernism has reached its estuary and is overwhelmed by the vast openness and philosophical opportunities of the condition of postmodernity.

Achieving a clearer focus on the relationship between modernism and postmodernism, Waugh claims that '[p]ostmodernism can be seen to exhibit the same sense of crisis and loss of belief in the external authoritative system of order as that which prompted modernism' (Waugh 1984, 20). To distinguish the two movements clearly, the Russian formalist concept of 'the dominant' has proved useful for many critics. Maintaining that there is a hierarchy of literary functions evident in every text, correspondent to literary movements,

the shift in the dominant function is often seen as the key to literary evolution. Significantly, McHale, among others, considers the shift of the dominant in literary developments separating modernism and postmodernism to be a shift from epistemology to ontology, leading to a focus on the 'self', and thus, to a strong trend of self-consciousness in fiction (McHale 1987, 9).

In a broad sense, there is a conjunction here between the 'historical consequentiality' of postmodernism, and that of Gothic writing. As Miles puts it, the Gothic arose 'as a result of some historical seismic shift in the deep structure of the self, or in the structure that may or may not have produced it' (Miles 1993, 12). This implication of a newly or re-emerging self-awareness in literature, or to put it in other words, a turning in on the self, is highly significant, as it can be easily argued that it is the concept of 'self' which ultimately drives narrative forward. While self-consciousness is also a central occupation of modernist writing, literary postmodernism expands to examine the self as alienated from the community and also from itself. Taking a step on from this, postmodernist fiction also displays a tendency to employ metafiction as a vehicle for epistemological exploration, radicalising the modernist quest for self knowledge and consequently re-shaping the reader's approach to questions of ontology.

The dialogical expression of the nature of existence and reality in relation to fiction is a key concept for all postmodernist texts and its origins are traceable in and through the works of 'modernist' writers such as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Vladimir Nabokov and Samuel Beckett, in which ontological exploration was, to an extent, of less concern than epistemological enquiry. However, in their respective focus on drawing attention to the 'aesthetic construction of the text' (Waugh 1984, 5) via a preoccupation with form, these modernist / early postmodernist writers understood that both perspectivism and subjectivity would soon come to occupy a pivotal position in literary expression. With the emergence of postmodernism, metafictional tendencies in literature intensified and opened up lacunae for the surfacing of necessary ontological questions of existence and 'presence'. Postmodernism, thus, questions not only the nature of existence and concepts of reality, it also take up issues such as the fictionality and textuality of those realities. Literary postmodernism has subsequently been adeptly summarised by Waugh

as ‘a quest for fictionality’ (Waugh 1984, 10), one that is oriented toward a paradoxical premise: belief in nothing but uncertainty.

Subjectivity

Selfhood in a postmodernist sense deals not only with the self that is the reader and the self that is the author, but also, the ‘self’ that is the novel, and this appears to be another point of conjunction between postmodernism and the Gothic. As a distinctive metafictional feature of many early Gothic narratives, the novel within the novel and a distinctive textual self-consciousness is evident in works from Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* and Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, through to Stoker’s *Dracula*. Narcissistic acquiescence to the concept of individual artistic genius and imaginative spirit is all too often the foundation of the postmodernist text, as it is, similarly, of Gothic/ Romantic literature. Metafictional tendencies draw attention to this premise and so the reader is often left in a condition of both subjective and objective uncertainty. Doubt is established as the central concept behind epistemological and ontological enquiry and in postmodernist literature this generally takes the form of ‘the fabulous’.

In most cases, fabulation provides an outlet for indulgence in repressed desire and emotion, and in many ways postmodernism’s fabulous characters can be interpreted as emanations of the Freudian concepts of the Super-Ego and the Id. The de-centred selves of postmodernist characters echo, in many ways, the ‘abject’ characters of Gothic literary creation, and if we are to keep in mind Lacan’s idea of the human ego as a fictive creation of ‘the Mirror Stage’, then we can see that postmodernism, like the Gothic, operates to expose the nature of those basic binary oppositions that uphold our concepts of self. When, as a result, all is reduced to subjective interpretation, then ‘self’ and ‘other’ and ‘conscious’ and ‘subconscious’ are on some level reconciled, through the Gothic experience of anguish and even terror. ‘Knowing’ and ‘being’ become suspect and the matrix of potential realities explodes, often with sublime effects.

Language

The postmodernist approach to literary creation, which effectively invests in the production of what could be called a series of meta-

realities, aims at leading the reader to the general conclusion that truth, reality and experience are in essence purely subjective and personal. This is achieved through the use of language, which draws attention to itself as a means of creative expression. For postmodernist writers, 'language constitutes reality, it does not describe the world but constructs it' (Childs 1960, 52).

Lacanian theory, which proposes that a person's identity is a product of language, rather than language being a product of a person's identity, is central to this idea. In postmodernist texts we often see that functions of character and plot are designed to be read reductively as verbal constructions and subsequently become secondary to the imaginative processes of the author and the reader. Postmodernist distrust towards fact and reality results in further complications and one could argue that it leads the fictional work in many cases to become something of a *Zen Koan*, that Buddhist exercise in conceptualisation that exhausts reason and is the perfect expression of the meaninglessness and absurdity that can be postmodern existence. And so a sort of perspectivism is acquired, which functions to 'foreground the ontological difference between the stratum of words and the stratum of worlds' (McHale 1987, 162).

We can see, here, a direct link here with both Derrida and Lacan's approaches to language. If language and consequently desire, both yield never-ending 'deferral', then there are intrinsic connections between the realm of 'symbolic order' and 'reality' in postmodernist literature, which is the illusory consequence of the incessant deferral of meaning. As Lyotard writes, it is the business of postmodernism 'not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented' (Lyotard 1986, 79); in other words to attempt to present the unrepresentable. This negative representation, so characteristic of postmodernist literature, effectively functions to assert that any reality that might exist does so only in the realm the imagination. This brings the reader to the conclusion that it is just as futile to search for meaning in a work of fiction, as it is in our postmodern world of simulation, disintegration and death. In postmodernist literature meaning is multiple and subjective; interpretation and experience is all important; no objective truth exists.

Cultural Theory

While this study observes postmodernism as it manifests itself in literary works, it also makes use of postmodernist theory in exploring the relevance of Gothic-postmodernism as a genre for our time. Considering the theories, particularly of, Lyotard, Baudrillard and Derrida, it seeks to posit Gothic-postmodernism as a genre that exists within the postmodernist paradigm. Lyotard's conception of postmodernism has a significant bearing on this claim, firstly in relation to his theories on terror and the postmodern sublime or unrepresentable, but also as this study is founded on an acceptance of his view that the development of postmodernism did not lead to the death of modernism but that, on the contrary, they exist in literature contemporaneously and that a return to high modernism is still possible, its project being incomplete (Lyotard 1986 xvi, 72). Derrida's deconstructive view of genre and his theories on hauntology are extremely relevant, as the forthcoming analyses by and large take a poststructuralist approach to literature and genre definition. The philosophy of Baudrillard is also pertinent to this examination of Gothic-postmodernism as a self-conscious response to the terrors that haunt our culture of fear and our obsession with 'the end'. The psychoanalytic analyses of Žižek, similarly, can offer insights into the functions of many Gothic-postmodernist techniques and the execution of its thematic explorations, most notably through the idea of symbolic death, and 'the Thing'.

These theories are adopted in such a way because while the effects of terror remain a constant in the Gothic, the causes of postmodern terrors differ to a large extent from those of the Romantic period, the Victorian era and those of modernism. While experiences of terror still carry the same intensity, the sources of terror in postmodern societies, are much more alarming. Indeed, metaphysical terrors now have a more profound resonance than the physical terrors of previous eras. Defined by loss of value and meaning, ephemerality, dissolution and vastitude, the existence of the postmodern subject is terrifyingly unreal and indefinable and this is apart from the obvious terrors of living, alienated in our postmodern world of violence and political terrors. Postmodernism and more specifically, Gothic-postmodernist literature has many terrifying issues to contend with. Ross Abbinett claims that postmodernism deals with 'the

transformation of "the real" with the return of metaphysical questions about culture, identity and belonging, through the loss of our basic certainties' (Abbinett 2003, 11). It is an 'attempt to theorise the feelings of diversity, limitlessness and evanescence… that have decentred the modern subject' (Abbinett 2003, 8). It is therefore a literary enterprise with significant responsibility, and through its performative nature it skilfully upholds its obligations to self, society and culture.

In many respects, the Gothic has been critically considered along similar grounds to those of postmodernism. It too is often seen as a means of accessing the real or unconscious and the dark side of subjectivity and reality, through its excesses, abjections and monsters, but more profoundly through its appropriation of the sublime effects of terror. With the similarities between the Gothic and postmodernism now in mind, it is necessary to move on to an analysis of the convergence of the two genres into one: Gothic-postmodernism, and to subsequently attempt to define the genre as distinct in its own right in order to examine the given texts and to prove that definition as accurate.

Chapter 5: The Gothic and Postmodernism – At the Interface

So: What is Gothic-postmodernism? Firstly and foremostly, it is a distinct genre in its own right. Before a more precise definition can begin, however, we must consider the significance of the interdependent interaction of its genetic components. One can start by observing that the Gothic, as manifest in many postmodernist works, operates to a large extent in fulfilling a gap in postmodernist ideology by engaging postmodernism more directly with the historical world. Similarly, we can see that postmodernism that incorporates the Gothic serves to intensify the fundamental tenets of gothicism which have, to an extent, been lost to contemporary culture and criticism. Subsequently, a balance is evident that should suggest that the literary devices of each mode and their respective strategies deserve equal status within the limits of a definition.

Definition, in practice, is bound by relativity and so always offers a negative identification. Here, that negative proposes that Gothic-postmodernism is *not*, although it is closely related to, the 'postmodern Gothic' (or the 'contemporary Gothic' or any other combination of an adjective with 'Gothic' used by critics in Gothic studies). Limited by language as we are, it is easy to confuse the two. In linguistic terms, it is important to note that 'Gothic' is the adjective of the term. What needs to be considered as Gothic-postmodernism are literary postmodernist texts that are distinctively Gothic. As has been outlined, critics have not underestimated the place of the Gothic in postmodern literary culture, in fact they have gone to great lengths in exploring the nature of Gothic incarnations in the form of modern vampires such as Lestat of the Ann Rice Chronicles, cyborgs in films like *Bladerunner*, *Alien*, and *The Terminator*, and victims of demonic possession and supernatural events, such as the characters in *The Exorcist*, and *The Omen*. The general consensus in this area of study, however, is that the presence of the Gothic in postmodern culture is a result of 'diffusion' (Botting 2003, 14); a consensus that suggests that

no new definitions are needed and that locates the contemporary Gothic firmly in that 'non-literary cultural tradition' that was always the conventional locus of the Gothic; namely popular entertainment. This is where 'Gothic-postmodernism' posits a challenge.

Spooner's definition of postmodern, or as she calls it 'contemporary Gothic', differs from many critics in terms of its appreciation of the Gothic. Importantly, it displays an awareness of the relevance of Gothic genres to contemporary society and culture. Offering the opinion that the Gothic of our time appeals to the popular imagination due to contextual problems such as 'millennial anxiety' and 'desensitisation' (Spooner 2006, 8), she notes that this presence of the Gothic is aided by the fact that Gothic self-consciousness is facilitated by the very conditions of postmodernity (Spooner 2006, 157). This outline of Gothic-postmodernism begins from a similar position, yet considers the Gothic of our time as responsive to a much deeper issue, terror. It also proposes the idea that Gothic self-consciousness, aided by postmodernist literary techniques such as metafiction, is often the basis for works that, for various other connections and similarities, may be considered as part of a new Gothic genre, one that is an example of the genre's survival, and that is founded on the central Gothic concept of sublime terror.

One rare critical text that analyses 'Gothic postmodernism' as distinct from the postmodern or contemporary Gothic is a short essay, entitled 'Gothic postmodernism' in *The Gothic*, a volume edited by David Punter and Glennis Byron. In this brief study, it is noted that there are a number of concurrent themes and issues between the two named genres, upon which a new designation might be based. As the article states:

> What we find in the numerous conjunctions of Gothic and the postmodern is a certain sliding of location, a series of transfers and translocations from one place to another so that our sense of stability of the map is – as indeed it has been since the first fantasy of the Gothic castle – forever under siege, guaranteed to us only by manuscripts whose own provenance and completeness are deeply uncertain (Punter & Byron 2007, 50).

Other conjunctions are also noted such as: 'attentions to doublings and divisions of the self' (Punter & Byron 2007, 51) and the conclusion is drawn that 'the distortion of perspective; the hallmark of the Gothic finds a home in postmodernism' (Punter & Byron 2007, 53).

Significantly, however, Gothic postmodernism as they define it represents a notable 'neo-Gothic reprise' (Punter & Byron 2007, 52). In this appropriation of the role of the Gothic in postmodernist texts, however, the Gothic is understood, again, as part of a process of revival. Furthermore, in this short outline of Gothic postmodernism, the importance of the connections between the Gothic and postmodernism are stated but they are not analysed or critiqued. Neither is the significance of Gothic sublime terror, nor the complicated processes of othering and representation. Here, I will move on from Punter and Byron's statement of the genre as a neo-Gothic reprise to analyse it as 'Gothic-postmodernism': a definitive genre that evidences the survival of Gothic within the paradigm of postmodernism on both literary and philosophical levels.

Remarkably, and relevant to this definition, some of the issues that are explored separately in Gothic and postmodernist fiction, are one and the same, namely: crises of identity, fragmentation of the self, the darkness of the human psyche, and the philosophy of being and knowing. Gothic writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries offered an insight into the human condition in a manner that one could argue anticipated the evolution of literature towards the realm of postmodernism. For example, a primary concern of Gothic literature is our lack of access to reality, formally evident in the presence of the supernatural and the surreal and in the function of ghosts, spectres and fantastic 'others' who offer the reader an alternative reality to that accepted by science and reason. From this point of view, one could argue that the postmodernist imagination, that which values fiction and fantasy over a quantified, limited concept of reality, is quite possibly inspired by the Gothic. Subsequently, we can account for the fundamental role that the Gothic plays in the expression of the postmodern experience through literature: that experience of darkness, confusion, and lack of meaning and authority in a desensitised world that confronts alienation and death on a daily basis.

The strategies and devices of literary postmodernism challenge the possibilities of writing itself as well as the imaginative capabilities of its readers. As a mode of fiction, it rejects the concept of metanarrative in favour of metafiction, which includes multiple beginnings, endings and middles; forking and crossing paths, un-resolvable plots, expanding metaphors, allegorical multi-functional characters, and most interestingly, the exhibition of playfulness in its

relationship to its readers, and in also in its relationship to its authors. If anything can be termed central as 'opposed' to marginal amid this list of literary features it is the absolute epistemological and ontological uncertainty that results from the breakdown of barriers that supposedly exist between fiction and reality.[1] The struggle for self-knowledge, definition, and access to the real is essentially the engine propelling postmodernist narrative. Desire for knowledge of self and reality is often expressed in the formulation of liminal states of existence in a text, quite often outside of the conventional structures of time and in the context of hyper-reality. To most readers this may seem a long away from Gothic narrative. However, it is quite easy to argue that Gothic romance writing operates in a similar, though less radical manner, and with similar strategies and literary techniques. Through a comparison of these, the definitive links between both genres begin to emerge.

Waugh has claimed that at the centre of postmodernist fiction is the 'construction of fictional illusion and the laying bare of that illusion' (Waugh 1984, 17). This, as it happens, is also the key feature underlying much of Gothic suspense writing. As a definitive attribute of Gothic narrative, it revolves around the concept of the sublime experience of terror was established in the early works of Radcliffe as a conduit for the creation of the sublime experience of terror in novels such as *A Sicilian Romance*. It was subsequently modified by nineteenth century Gothic writers to suit a more revolutionary approach to suspense writing, where terror and evil were internalised and developed into more abstract concepts, complicating the central ontological issues of the genre even further. It is this later abstract view of terror and evil, and the play on the reader's faith in their concrete forms, which was adapted, in and through, many different genres, reaching its most excessive stage in works, which can be categorised under the term 'Gothic-postmodernism'.

---

[1] Absolute uncertainty in this context refers to the paradox of postmodernism's extreme distrust of everything that is deemed both 'absolute' and 'certain', while also pointing toward the criticism of writers such as Terry Eagleton who note that postmodernism is in itself a totalising theory, with 'its own (hidden) authoritarian structures of legitimation' (Rice & Waugh 2001, 352).

The philosophy behind this basic Gothic (and equally postmodernist) principle of crafting illusions seems to have origins in the influential philosophical ideologies that ran concurrent to the 'original Gothic' throughout Europe. From this perspective, it might be said that the Gothic was, in a broad sense, a reaction to Enlightenment and Neo-classical ideals, those that valued reason and aimed at reducing all life to one definitive over-arching reality. The transcendental idealism that pervades the philosophy of Kant, most notably in his 'Copernican Revolution', which claims that 'it is the representation that makes the object possible' rather than vice versa, established the human mind as a creative participant in experience rather than merely an inert recipient of perception (Allison 1983, 7-10). Lyotard reiterated this philosophy in his writings on the subject and as a basic idea it is clearly central to the ontological explorations that dominate not just Gothic, but also postmodernist literary principles. And as we shall see it is also the axis of the Gothic-postmodernist text.

The idea of multiple perspectives on reality, and the possibility of supernatural or transcendental existence, is in a general sense, the key to the Gothic imagination, and while it may pertain to a lesser extent to all art and literature, it is also intrinsic to the poetics of postmodernism. Furthermore, and aside from these clear thematic relations, the manifestation of gothicism in postmodernist writing can be narrowed down to a few primary agents, namely, the concept of the sublime as experienced through terror, suspense, and horror; the supernatural; metamorphosis; the grotesque; and an obsession with death or the end. With these in mind, it becomes much easier to expose the preoccupations and fears that pervade postmodernist literature and culture, and are drawn from text via the media of Gothic conventional stylistic devices. Such devices include mystery, sensationalism, formal experimentation, and intertextuality, as well as recurring motifs such as interest in the occult, and a concern with identity and the human psyche as presented in the form of the monstrous 'other'.

When the two concepts, gothicism and postmodernism, come together it is necessary to imagine them in a condition of hypostasis. In Gothic-postmodernist works, Gothic and postmodernist ideologies exist in a sort of symbiotic relationship which effectively increases the intensity of each so that the result is a manifestation of terror in the

self-questioning realm of non-identity that is the locus of the Gothic-postmodernist protagonist. For this reason, Gothic-postmodernist works do not merely supply entertainment value. They can and should be acknowledged as eagerly adept literary explorations of ontology, epistemology and selfhood.

In modern times, concepts of wholeness and finity have resulted in terrifying realities. Fascism, genocide in the name of liberal democracy and nuclear threats have effectively given us as much terror as we could take. With Baudrillard's theories in mind, we now, in the postmodern age, subconsciously crave the destruction of 'the whole' (Western culture as it presents itself) and the reinstatement of 'pure heterogeneity', that sublime effect of the unrepresentable, recognisable in feelings of terror and exultation. This effectively summarises a general idea of the aims of Gothic-postmodernism. Terror, that sublime experience which inevitably results in the suspension of being as we are pushed to the edge, to that extreme state of liminality where all awareness is pinpointed onto the experience itself, is at the centre of this. Gothic-postmodernism therefore has an essential role in the exploration of postmodern subjectivity, in that through the recreation of terror in the novel, the reader is afforded the opportunity to redefine 'self' having been presented with the idea of the unimaginable. In Levinas's terms, imagining the unimaginable, non-existence, can be seen as *the* fundamental ontological problem and it is illustrated quite interestingly in the apocalyptic visions of many Gothic works. To consider the opportunity of imagining the 'unimaginable' is again to break down binary oppositions and in doing so to attempt to gain access to Baudrillard's and equally Lyotard's unimaginable, 'the real', and to uphold our obligation to the unrepresentable. As such, Gothic-postmodernism may be regarded as the voice of the unspeakable terrors of postmodernity, a link to the long lost sense of heterogeneity that is vital to the subjective self.

In the condition of postmodernity, which is dominated inexorably by simulation and representation, the experience of terror and its sublime, self-realising effects is one of the most extreme happenings in the existence of the subject. According to Varma, the particular terror of the Gothic novel 'creates an intangible atmosphere of spiritual psychic dread, a certain superstitious shudder at the other world' (Varma 1957, 130). Within the paradigm of postmodernism, as analysed by postmodernists, post-structuralists and psychoanalysts,

that other world is internal. In light of this, the Gothic-postmodernist text can be interpreted as seeking to expunge this other world as essential to reality and self, fragmented, disjointed and terrifying as it is. To quote again from Varma: 'the rise of the Gothic novel may be connected with depravity and the decline of religion' (Varma 1957, 210). In Gothic-postmodernist literature, the sublime faculties of terror associated with the unrepresentable are expounded in what could be considered as a sort of neo-modern transcendental idealism which seeks to validate our secular, hyper-real, meaningless universe through symbolic allusion to this unimaginable, infinite thing.

Botting's sceptical approach to the Gothic in contemporary culture does not obscure his vision of the Gothic today as a thing that 'presents the dissolution of order, meaning and identity in a play of signs, images, and texts' (Botting 2003, 14). This vision aptly relates to Gothic-postmodernism. Furthermore, what he refers to as 'the darkly illuminating labyrinth of language' in Gothic fiction can be seen as the centre of what Michel Foucault termed 'the language of terror', that which is 'dedicated to an endless expanse, even though it only seeks to achieve a single effect' (Foucault 1977, 65). In Gothic-postmodernist terms, this endless expanse of linguistic and imaginative possibilities is the core of the fictional play that is storytelling itself; it is that element which has the ability to provoke our Gothic imagination into desiring fantastic realities.

In the case of genre definition, the most accurate definition may come, only, through a movement from a particularist approach to a generalist one and so the texts that will be studied are of immense importance. The first of the Gothic-postmodernist works that will be examined in the coming chapters is Paul Auster's *City of Glass*, which tenders itself as a distinct Gothic-postmodernist novel. As will be demonstrated, it presents a dark exploration of the split psyche, and of subjectivity as text, in an adept and terrifying metafictional account of the deterioration of the detective protagonist, Quinn. *Slaughterhouse 5* by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. will then be considered as it exhibits a concern with Gothic-postmodernist themes including terror and unrepresentability in the context of war, symbolic death, madness and spectrality, through metafictional and highly erratic narrative. Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* will also be examined. It is a novel that can be taken as a Gothic-postmodernist interpretation of the terrifying and unrepresentable nature of the event of the Holocaust, and also a

meditation on the effects of sublime terror on the construction of identity, in which the temporal and the subjective are reversed and inverted so that they become tangential concepts.

Moving onto a closer analysis of the hybrid nature of Gothic-postmodernism, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* will be used to reveal how Gothic-postmodernist texts operate to deconstruct what Lyotard refers to as *grande narrative* via counter-narrative techniques which inspire terror. Rushdie's novel does this while incorporating myth, horror, magic, miracle, and fantasy into a radical and sensational story. The novel can subsequently be analysed in terms of its attempt to signify and thus confront postmodern and postcolonial terrors through a Gothic imaginary. Its apocalyptic, waste land imagery, its concern with loss of identity, and demonisation are central in this. Bulgakov's influential novel, *The Master and Margarita*, works to a similar effect, and will be considered as a work which, via carnivalesque parody and an analysis of the power of terror in relation to subjectivity, offers a Gothic-postmodernist transposition of traditional narratives of history, myth and religion. Finally, Bret Easton Ellis' *Lunar Park* will be critiqued, as it presents a lucid example of a definitive Gothic-postmodernist text, exploring the psychological effects of terror and the sublime, while positing an almost conventional Gothic aesthetic in order to suggest a postmodernist philosophy of subjectivity and narrative. It will provide an interesting concluding focus for this study as it has quite obvious Gothic and postmodernist elements which interact amicably and fuse at times so that the novel seems to fluctuate between two genres and its classification as Gothic-postmodernism is dependent on the 'inbetweenness' achieved in this movement.

The works examined in this book are, by nature, heterogonous and the links between them may not, immediately, seem apparent. Interestingly, James Watt states that 'the Gothic seems to preclude randomness by its nature…many disparate texts can be considered Gothic' (Watt 1999, 13). The reason for this can be found in an insight of Robert Hume, who claims that 'the key characteristic of the Gothic novel is not its devices but its atmosphere… one of evil and brooding terror' (Hume 1969, 286). Keeping in mind that acknowledging the plurality of a genre can sometimes jeopardise focus, my approach consents to a dual reading of the different texts, as a hybridisation of multiple facets of literary exploration and also as part of the broader

genre of Gothic-postmodernism with the durable focus of terror to maintain the analysis.

In this study, only novels and prose works considered to be Gothic-postmodernist are analysed. This is primarily because in the process of genre definition, a novel, more so than a poem or dramatic work, with its broad spectrum of easily identified characteristics, can only serve to make that definition clearer; and clarity, after all, is the aim of this study in the context of the blurred boundaries that seem to characterise the Gothic, postmodernism, and genre. Furthermore, as the 'original' form of the Gothic in the eighteenth century, and also as a form which allows potential for social commentary, the novel emerges as the first route for the literary exploration of Gothic-postmodernism. Needless to say, however, many other modes of literature, specifically poetry and film can be considered as part of the genre. Echoing T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* as Gothic modernism, Gothic-postmodernist poetry may be gestured towards in, for example, the lyrics of *The Rolling Stones* 'Sympathy for the Devil'. Gothic-postmodernist film may bee seen to include the productions of Francis Ford Coppolla's *The Godfather* and, more obviously, the work of Tim Burton which offers a darkly self-parodying Gothic response to modern and postmodern terrors such as alienation, evanescence and death in *Edward Scissorhands*, *Sleepy Hollow* and *Corpse Bride*.

Moving closer to definition, I would argue that one can interpret all of these works as Gothic-postmodernist texts for the following reasons: firstly they serve as artistic manifestations and explorations of that mysterious subjective experience of terror, and use its unimaginable outcomes as a focal point to investigate the possibility of gaining access to what Baudrillard would call 'the real' or to what Levinas would call 'infinity'. Secondly, they take the concept of objectified horror to the internal yet radically unstable locus of the individual human subject through the medium of Gothic imagination. Thirdly, to expand on the idea of Hogle, who claims that the Gothic in literature today 'exists in part to raise the possibility that all "abnormalities" we would divorce from ourselves, are a part of ourselves, deeply and pervasively' (Hogle 2002, 12), we can say that they work to destabilise accepted oppositions such as self/ other, and good/ evil by focusing the Gothic imaginary on the postmodernist approach to reality as unlimited and unquantifiable, thereby exposing

the gender, sexual and racially-based prejudices that consume postmodern, multi-cultural society. And fourthly, they do so by amalgamating Gothic and metafictional literary devices such as: sensationalism, the supernatural, mystery, suspense, and the fabulous.

To sum up, Gothic-postmodernist works, by displaying a fascination with the 'negative', 'irrational', 'immoral', and 'fantastic' (Botting 2003, 2), take postmodernism to another, more sceptical level, where all concepts of reality are tinged by the darkness and horror of transgression. Thus, contrasting with the views of critics such as Spooner, who analyse contemporary Gothic as 'a diverse, loosely defined set of narrative conventions and literary tropes' due to the fact that the Gothic since its origins has 'spawned other genres, interacted with literary movements, social pressures and historical conditions' (Spooner 2006, 26), this study offers a workable definition of contemporary Gothic in the generic form of Gothic-postmodernism, a mode which proves that the Gothic has survived through literary postmodernism.

Chapter 6: Gothic Literary Transformations: The *Fin de Siecle* and Modernism

Given that the aim of this study is to recognise Gothic-postmodernism as a distinct literary movement and genre in its own right, the starting point for analysis must be the record of its gestation. As has already been mentioned, the development of the Gothic towards Gothic-postmodernism has significant implications, in the sense that by defining Gothic-postmodernism, one necessarily implies that Victorian Gothic and Gothic modernism are to be recognised, also, as individual genres. Taking this position, I am beginning at an unusual point of analysis. Usually, in a review of the development of the Gothic, the late eighteenth century would provide introductory examples. Critics often begin such studies by considering the writings of Walpole, Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis, who are generally acknowledged as the forefathers of terror, horror and sublime experience in Gothic writing. In this case, however, which observes the survival and mutation of the Gothic, I will skip ahead to the *fin de siecle*, which can be seen to mark the first significant resurgence and transformative moment in the Gothic imagination.

The turn of the twentieth century is important because it displays the first merging of the Gothic with another literary mode, Victorian realism, under the premise of philosophical exploration. Punter has noted that what is remarkable about the Gothic in this period is that such a short space of eleven years managed somehow to produce 'the most potent of modern literary myths' (Punter 1996, 1), whose Gothic dynamism has continued to stimulate our collective imagination for over a century. Of these, most memorable are Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, H. G Wells's *Island of Dr. Moreau* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. These works are regarded by many as holding a symbolic power as vigorous as that of the original Gothic, an energy that, arguably, propelled significant developments in this first phase of

generic mutation that preceded further evolution leading to the emergence of Gothic-postmodernism.

During this literary period, it is noted that the Gothic, as a distinctive literary mode, became less conspicuous. The urban landscape replaced the forest, supernatural and abject forces became internalised and the distinctions between reality and fiction began to dissolve. It is widely accepted that parallel to this change of aesthetic, the Gothic transmuted in response to the challenges of contemporary, social, philosophical and artistic developments. The most significant of these extra-textual developments is psychoanalysis. While Darwinian and socialist theories were also quite influential, a re-emerging awareness of the human psyche had further reaching consequences for literature at the time. Significantly, Stoker's touchstone Gothic novel of the period was published the very year after the term 'psychoanalysis' was coined. While a year is not a momentous period in terms of ideological influence, it is interesting to consider Botting's point that '[t]here is a case to be made for reversing the direction of influence so that psychoanalysis becomes the effect of a hundred and fifty years of monster making' (Botting 2001, 5). From this perspective, it is worth considering that the Gothic of the *fin de siècle* is significant as the first dialogic interaction between its own inherent psychoanalytic explorations and those of the theories of Freud. From this point onwards, the Gothic would take on a more intense psychoanalytical tone and delve even further into the dark corners of self-knowledge.

The seemingly deviant concepts of sexual desire, instinct, aggression and hysteria have been key themes in the Gothic since it first emerged in the eighteenth century. However, with the beginning of the twentieth century, came new approaches to analysing such concepts and the nature of their relationship to the personal, interpersonal and intersubjective sense of self. Arguably, in the decadent Gothic, one finds a new species of literary analysis, a new hybrid of gothicism from which to critique an ever diminishing world of 'reality' and 'meaning'. Botting has commented that throughout post-Enlightenment literary history '[t]he Gothic existed in excess of and often within realist forms, both inhabiting and excluded from [their] homogenising representations of the world' (Botting 1996, 13). From this perspective, the liminal position of the Gothic can be identified as making its first moves toward literary 'centrality' with

the emergence of modernism and the general movement in art away from realism. This is evidenced further in modernism's pioneering attempt at putting forward the unrepresentable:[1] 'The Horror!' and 'unspeakable rites' of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and the anguish of the fragmented subjects whose ghostly voices are heard in Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Moving forward from struggles with subjectivity and scientific rationality, modernist literature explored modern Western culture on its own terms. Ezra Pound, in a preface to *Blast*, defined the aim of modernism as 'showing modernity its face in an honest glass' (Pound 1915, 1). This is reminiscent of Wilde's convictions on the role of art and identity, expressed in the terror of Caliban on seeing his reflection, an image used to preface *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In this sense, we can interpret Pound's approach as identifying a need to examine, as Gothic fictions have, the 'unconscious' of modern culture, including literature itself as a means to 'making new' and attempting to resolve crises of language that emerged with the writings of Ferdinand de Saussure and Ludwig Wittgenstein at the beginning of the century.

In this chapter, I will examine some texts that are not frequently considered to be Gothic. Based on the ideas just outlined, the significance of Beckett's spectral narrators, Eliot's metropolis of death and the terrors of Wilde's contemplations of subjectivity will be analysed as examples of the subtle and mutable presence of the Gothic within two dominant literary modes of the time. Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, perhaps offers the best place to begin.

---

[1] This refers to the disturbance of the subject in response to the Kantian notion of the sublime. The condition is one of exultation (as reason perceives totality) and terror (as the imagination fails to represent it). Lyotard extended this theory of the 'unrepresentable' by indicating that the faculties of reason and imagination are irreconcilable. Postmodernist art has an 'obligation' to the 'unrepresentable', whereby it should celebrate the sublime and its effects of genuine heterogeneity (Lyotard 1991, 210).

The Decadent Gothic of Oscar Wilde

The 'decadent Gothic' of the *fin de siecle* is quite a remarkable literary progression and in it we see all the characteristics of artistic decadence: the enactment of vice and immorality and a distinctive turgidity of style as a response to conceived artistic, aesthetic and moral degeneration. While *regeneration* is the aim, *degeneration* is the key concern of these Gothic works, most notably in the case of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Within the confines of the form of the traditional fable, moral degeneration is mirrored by its artistic 'other' in the haunted portrait of Dorian Gray. Regeneration and degeneration have evidently been popular themes in the history of literature and appear to have grown increasingly so around this time, reaching a climax a few years later with the emergence of modernism where they are most memorable in works such as T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land.* The phrase: '[t]hese fragments I have shored against my ruins' (430), in a way, represents, the model of literary exploration that pervades decadent Gothic, and which continues through modernist Gothic toward Gothic-postmodernism.

In Wilde's model, the reflection of degeneration can be found on historical, social and most significantly, personal levels. Firstly, the decline of the British Empire and urban crises caused by industrialisation can be seen as manifested in the urban Gothic landscape, which is demarcated by darkness, fog and disintegration. For example, the young and still relatively innocent Dorian Gray, having wandered through 'dimly lit streets past gaunt black-shadowed archways and evil looking houses' (Wilde 1994, 103), describes 'monstrous London' in Gothic terms as a 'myriad of sinners' (Wilde 1994, 59). 'Othered' people in society are presented as insane, degenerate, 'ape'-like and 'grotesque' (Wilde 1994, 59). Secondly, the corruption of morality is expressed in a general fascination with the criminal, the immoral and the irrational. This is evident in Dorian's mysterious transformation from an impressionable and naïve young man to an advocate of New Hedonism: the equal pursuit of both moral and immoral experiences of pleasure, which leads him to sexual deviance, abuse of narcotics, blackmail, murder and eventually, suicide. Finally, the fragmentation of the human subject can be seen in the exploitation and exploration of the *doppelgänger* and the deconstruction of binaries such as the fictional and the real, the soul and the body, the natural and the supernatural. In this case, the mask

or appearance of innocence is used to demonstrate the rupture of the ego and to deconstruct the binary of good and evil. Subsequently, we are presented with a *fin de siecle* self that is horrifying and monstrous in its disunity, a self that in essence cannot openly exist within the conventional moral structures of society.

The most significant suggestion of the novel in relation to degeneration, however, is that Dorian's soul or 'self' is not essentially good or bad but an entity that is subject to fashioning by corruptive influences. As Lord Henry puts it: 'to influence a person is to give him one's own soul' to the extent that 'his sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed' (Wilde 1994, 24). Dorian, in a typically Gothic fashion surrenders his soul to 'evil' forces in return for the satisfaction of his vanity and desire for eternal youth, and so the true terrors of the potential of self, a self that is fundamentally amoral and egoistic, are revealed to him and to the reader.

Later psychoanalytic theory also fits quite well with Wilde's dark ideas on the human subject as we are presented with a subject that is a fictional construction. In the early stages of the novel, before Lord Henry meets Dorian, who has been described to him as 'earnest' with a 'beautiful nature', he imagines him as having a monstrous appearance: 'a creature with spectacles and lank hair, horribly freckled and tramping about on huge feet' (Wilde 1994, 9). The central irony here lies in the realisation of his imagined picture of Dorian Gray in Basil's painting, which following supernatural transformation mysteriously becomes 'some foul parody' (Wilde 1994, 179) and comes to be interpreted by Dorian as representing the 'true face of my soul', which coincidentally 'has the eyes of a devil' (Wilde 1994, 180) and is gradually 'eaten away by the leprosies of sin' (Wilde 1994, 181). Henry's satirical approach to earnestness as a superficial value in society is central to Wilde's exploration of the duplicity of self and the nature of sovereign will. What we find at the end of the novel is that Dorian has renounced all possibilities of autonomous selfhood and has become the puppet of a much more 'evil' and harmful individual: Lord Henry.

Significantly, this traditional Gothic, Faustian concept remains confined subtly within the context of both decadent Victorian society and *fin de siecle* realism, yet it is expressed via the rhetoric and conventions of gothicism and this is interesting when one looks at how the Gothic seems to leak gradually into the work. While the

beginning of the novel is concerned with Victorian values, art and the nature of aristocratic society, one recalls such Gothic descriptions later in the story as the 'long narrow staircase', on which 'the lamp cast fantastic shadows', while 'a rising wind made some of the windows rattle' (Wilde 1994, 178). Evidently, Wilde is putting forward the idea that the devolution of self and culture, is most plausibly represented as a Gothic experience. Furthermore, the surreality of selfhood in this context, and the realisation that autonomy and authenticity are possibly unattainable commodities, is arguably a postmodernist vision on Wilde's part on the terms that have already been introduced. For Dorian, however, as the Victorian man faced with his own fictionality, this concept is, significantly, also relatable to the sublime experience of terror which has profound realising potential for the self in terms of acknowledging ontological status. The dissolution of the dichotomy real/ supernatural, and self/ other is at the heart of Wilde's novel therefore in a way that anticipates a philosophy of terror that is Gothic and almost postmodern. The sublime encounter with self *is* the portrait of Dorian Gray.

In this respect, Dorian's response to the awareness of his own split subjectivity is intriguing in Gothic and psychoanalytic terms, as the uncanny aspects of the painting come to overlap with the processes of his self identification. In effect, identity begins to flow, in a sense that is both Gothic and sublime (incorporating a sense of absolute otherness), between Dorian and his portrait. A Lacanian scholar would approach an artwork such as this as a representation of the recognition of otherness within the self, of the distinction between the self as subject and the self as object. In this case, it is quite interesting that the subject of the painting is the subjective self and that this subject arouses a lingering terror. Significantly, Dorian covers the painting with an elaborate satin coverlet, which, we are told, had probably served once as a pall for the dead. Now, it was hiding 'something worse than the corruption of death itself, something that would breed horrors and yet would never die' (Wilde 1994, 138). Ultimately, Dorian's initial image of self, based on 'the mirror stage', was young and beautiful. At the end of the novel it emerges that this initial image had, terrifyingly, been but a 'mask' and a 'mockery' (Wilde 1994, 252), a phantasy of unification.

In the literary construct that is the painting, self and other are, for practical purposes, deconstructed and sublime terror results as part

of Dorian's apprehension of his own alterity – the *doppelgänger*/ Thing which is manifested in the idea of the supernatural painting. At this crucial moment his response is the following: 'He shuddered and felt afraid…and lay there, gazing at the picture in sickened horror' (Wilde 1994, 111). The portrait can thus be considered as a conceptualisation of the unrepresentable – the impossible inversion of Lacan's mirror stage in which the subject sees not a false 'unified' image of self, but a terrifyingly 'real' and grotesque fractured image, subsequently characterised as evil. Further to this, in the context of Victorian decadence, the metaphor in the portrait of Dorian emerges as part of the *fin de siècle* struggle with subjectivity and reason. The fine line that lies between degeneration and regeneration of self is volatile and so we are left with the horrifying image of Dorian, as his 'imagination, made grotesque by terror, twisted and distorted as a living thing by pain danced like some foul puppet on a stand and grinned through moving masks' (Wilde 1994, 101).

Although considered historically as a period of radical change, the Victorian era produced a society that was austere and repressive; obsessed with the appearance of respectability, discipline and high morals. Parodied in Wilde's plays, and also in his novel, the value of earnestness characterises the double standards and hypocrisy that were typical of upper middle class society. In this context it is easy to see how the concept of internalised evil, and the horror of the duplicity of the self and reality, became the prime focus for the creation of terror in Gothic works of the time. Spiritual and artistic regeneration in light of this can be interpreted as possibly the only route for those who shared the philosophy of Wilde; the artifice of his art, in a sense anticipating postmodernist ideals by subtly suggesting that artifice and fictionality are an extensive part of the fabric we believe to be reality, and so offering the best path for the seeker of 'truth' and 'knowledge' of self.

The Picture of Dorian Gray is a particularly poignant example of the decadent Gothic ideas of artifice as principle and terror as aesthetic in full effect. Through the lens of psychoanalytic theory, desire for personal freedom in a social environment saturated by repression is interpreted as a 'natural', 'human' thing. This is established early in the novel when Lord Henry proclaims: '[t]he only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it and your soul grows sick for the things it has forbidden itself, with desire for what

its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful' (Wilde 1994, 26). Jean Paul Riquelme has insightfully noted that Wilde, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* 'takes an important step into modernism, when he gothicizes the aesthetic and aestheticizes the Gothic' (Riquelme 2000, 393). Wilde does this by establishing terror as the 'dark implication' of the excessive Romantic pursuit for beauty and immortality.

I would argue that he takes a double step and affords a glance into the realm of postmodernism in his ruminations on the fractured self. Similarly, Wilde's most noted treatise on art claims that art by nature lies beyond the binary of real/ fictional and should be for art's sake and no moral purpose. Basil's painting, therefore, while on one level operating as a visible emblem of conscience, also proclaims the philosophical and arguably postmodern idea that reality and un-reality are not in opposition but that reality, if it can be accessed in any way, is clearest through the tenets of the fictional. As Lord Henry says in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: 'I can believe anything provided that it is quite incredible' (Wilde 1994, 10). In the novel, it is quite clear that epistemology is foregrounded as a Gothic enquiry. Mystery and illusion are central and are expressed through terror, horror, and transgression. Significantly, it may also be read as an anticipation of Gothic-postmodernism: in its metafictional references; in its 'fabulous' structure; and in such comments from Lord Henry as: 'I should like to write a novel that would be as lovely as a Persian carpet, and as unreal' (Wilde 1994, 53). Despite these Gothic-postmodernist visions however, decadence, by my definition of the term, prevails. Although traces are beginning to appear of what we now refer to as postmodernist ideologies, namely, the blurring of fiction and reality and the subsequent problem of the nature of self in a hyperreal world, they are not yet fully apprehended.

The power of the Gothic lies is in its dealings with taboo; in its putting forward of those questions that we are all too afraid to ask. These questions are always historically specific, but since the advent of psychoanalysis at the end of the nineteenth century, they have attained a limitless quality. The questioning of self, reality, being, and death, is possibly only achievable through a peculiarly Gothic perspective of vertiginous darkness and violence, and this is, perhaps, why the genre has sustained itself for so long. The abject forces of Gothic writing are conceived of by Kristeva as operating to 'disturb

identity, system [and] order' (Kristeva 1982, 4). The questions that arise in the processes of abjection are notably often of a sexual nature and aim to explore the ambiguous aspects of the frontiers of selfhood. Kristeva would say that they function ultimately to 'infect' the subject until it too becomes abject. As the abject can never be totally expelled, but exists on the margins to 'haunt' and terrify the subject, the subject too is placed in a position of marginality, conditioning a unique sense of perspective.

Representing and voicing these marginalised aspects of the self has essentially been the purpose of Gothic literature. It has always essentially been a literature of alienation, existing on the fringes of art and culture. Significantly, Gothic-postmodernism has retained this feature as intrinsic to its literary existence. Much like the Gothic, postmodernism seeks to explore the nature of culture and the locale and significance of self, from the liminal position of the hyperreal. In this sense, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* may be regarded a prelude to the Gothic-postmodernist novel, its content consistently turning in upon itself as a mode of ironic commentary on the nature of art and reality. The significance of this in the context of the emergence of postmodernism almost half a century later is that a precedent was set not just for the Gothic of ontological exploration, of an ontology 'governed by mystery' as Judith Wilt put it (Wilt 1980, 17), but for the beginning of the Gothic of the city and a new series of issues about self, reality, history and art that would soon occupy the Gothic imagination, particularly, as we will now see, that of modernists Eliot and Beckett.

Fear and a Handful of Dust: T.S. Eliot

The new self-consciousness that dawned on literature with modernism established epistemological questions as key to understanding the modern condition. These questions, regarded in relation to linguistics, directed the modernist philosophical pursuit through a dark labyrinthine world of fragmentation, one that was best explored thoroughly through the unique lens of the Gothic.

The problem of language is propounded by modernists like Eliot and Beckett to be the central cause of the darkness and destruction of modernity. Importantly, this is often expressed in their preoccupation with 'death', the 'King of terrors', as it pervades the

modern metropolis and the mind of the modern individual. Generally this is linked emphatically to the failure of language to communicate introspective experience. In the early twentieth century, artists focused on the difficulties of communicating the experiences of evanescence, limitlessness, disunity and abstraction that resulted from anti-bellum capitalist dismantling of the social bond and the consequential loss of 'reality' and 'meaning'; all of this within the context of rapid technological advancement. The difficulty for the artist lay, not solely in the subtle nature of the modern condition and how it would be expressed, but in the restrictions that are intrinsically bound up in the language that must be used to communicate and recreate the experience. Eliot deals with this subject in immense detail in his poetry and *The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock* is a good example of his hatred toward 'words, words, words'[2]. We can recall frustrated lines such as: 'That is not what I meant at all, that is not it, at all' (Eliot 1993b, 97-98, 109-110) and 'It is impossible to say just what I mean!' (Eliot 1993b, 104). However, of Eliot's poetry, it is *The Waste Land* that is most haunted by the terrible realities of language.

Ultimately, Eliot's Gothic modernist anxiety about language is very much in tune with Gothic preoccupations with language. Jan B. Gordon, in his study of Gothic narratives, observes that 'the Gothic novel establishes its subversion by becoming the first anti-language novel', focusing on the possibility of unmediated experience (Gordon 2004, 65). From this perspective, Eliot can be seen as taking up an old Gothic theme to apply it to a modernist mode that is enlightened by philosophical insights into linguistics and 'meaning'. In doing this, he presents the frustration of attempting to create poetry, poetry that is essentially the metalingual by-product of a failed language but also of the broken language of all the literature that has preceded him. I say this with reference to Wittgenstein's private language argument, in which he states that '[t]he words of language are to refer to what can be known only to the speaker; to his immediate, private, sensations. So another cannot understand the language' (Wittgenstein 1967, 89).

---

[2] A critic's view of Eliot's poetry in an essay entitled: 'A New Byronism'. Published in *The Times Literary Supplement* no. 948. 18 March 1920 (Clarke 1990, vol. II).

Eliot's poetry, unlike the literature that inspired him, seeks to push the limits of 'words' closer to the subjective reality of modern existence. The problem for Eliot, however, is that language in its limitless potential paradoxically stifles the subject and traps it in a world of arbitrary creation. In a sense, his use of reference and allusion in *The Waste Land* is a metapoetical technique that evinces a concern with a breakdown in speech, whereby language is broken down and rebuilt in order to relieve the speaker's terror of being trapped within the arbitrary limits of communication.

To see this point more clearly, it is necessary for the reader to begin at the margin of the poem. From this perspective, the latent content of the text, inscriptive of Gothic themes of darkness, terror and death, as manifest in the linguistic play, is revealed. In the opening stanza we are introduced to the recurring Gothic motifs of memory and desire which are stirred by the 'cruel' Spring as it forces life from the dead earth. Here, Eliot presents an immediate link between language and identity. The ghosts of memory speak in a foreign tongue: 'Bin gar keine Russin, stamm'aus Litauen, echt deutsch' (Eliot 1993a, 12) and remind the speaker of a lively past that contrasts with a dead and sterile present: 'I read, much of the night, and go South in Winter' (Eliot 1993a, 18). The significance of this line in German is that it is presented as foreign. Like other snippets of different languages in the poem, it effectively serves to estrange the reader in his or her own language, which problematises knowledge of 'self' in language that is 'other'. Interestingly, the frustrating and disorienting implications of this idea are developed in detail as an aspect of Gothic-postmodernism in Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, where Hindi and Urdu languages are used fervently in an attempt to bring the reader to a perspective of heterogeneity and otherness.

The universal experience of terror in language is most clearly presented to us in the closing lines of *The Waste Land*, in which the English language now also reads as foreign. This final terror – the fall of language and the subsequent fall of 'self' (Edwards 1990, 344) – is written in the diminishing fragmented words and phrases which have sustained the poem as a whole. In the final verse:

> If there were water
> And no rock
> If there were no rock
> And also water

> And water
> A spring
> A pool among the rock
> If there were the sound of water only (Eliot 1993a, 346-354).

This can be interpreted as a poetisation of Lacan's theory on the imaginary formulation of the subject through language, a formula that is essentially focused on a concept that is singular, external and unified. Lacan refers to this formulation as 'a drama whose internal thrust precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation' (Lacan 1995, 5). The current and content of *The Waste Land* could be accurately described in the same statement. Lacan maintains that the nightmare of fragmentation will persistently haunt the ego as a recollection of its fictionality. When we consider Eliot's poem as an extension of this condition from the individual subject to modern culture, we can see why the fragmentation of language in the poem is so significant. In order to represent the inadequacy of language, selfhood and experience, fragments of language are shored against the ruins of the chaotic verse.

The terror in this is expanded upon in the poem as the poet persona's identity cannot be sustained. Voices and perspective constantly shift and blend into each other in the form of a disoriented and incessantly mutating protagonist, the modern man of the modern waste land. In the poem, speech is transcended: 'I could not Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither Living nor dead, and I knew nothing' (Eliot 1993a, 38-41), silence prevails, and we must look beyond it to the Gothic realm of occult presence as Madame Sesostris does in order to interpret our 'selves' and our modern condition. A Beckettian style neurosis results, which finds its only hope in a series of fantastic regeneration myths in which the undead, the hanged man, the Fisher King and the immortal Tiresias give universality to a shattered and arguably Gothic concept of reality, in which people are ghosts of themselves, unable to speak, unable to see and unable to know anything (Eliot 1993a, 38-41).

Eliot's kaleidoscopic perspective on modern reality is ultimately effected through the Gothic imaginary at work in the poem which can be seen on a number of different levels supporting the theme of terror in linguistic failure. A succession of hauntings provides the basic structure for the poem, hauntings that the reader cannot evade because of the loss of vocal unity and the disturbed and

jumbled way in which the ghostly voices speak over each other trying to give account of their lives in the unreal city of London:

> "Trams and dusty trees.
> Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew
> Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees
> Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe"
>
> "My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart
> Under my feet. After the Event
> He wept. He promised 'a new start'
> I made no comment. What should I resent?"
>
> "On Margate Sands.
> I can connect
> Nothing with nothing.
> The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
> My people humble people who expect
> Nothing"
> la la (Eliot 1993a, 292-306).

We do not know who these voices belong to or from where they are spoken. They are among other ghosts present in name only: Queen Elizabeth I and her lover; a young girl named Marie; a drowned Phoenician sailor, and their utterances are reduced eventually to a Beckettian murmuring, much like the nightingale whose once invigorating song is reduced to 'Twit twit twit/ Jug jug jug jug jug jug' (Eliot 1993a, 203-4), or overpowered by 'the sound of horns and motors' (Eliot 1993a, 197). The Derridean concept of 'hauntology' is relevant here. The vaporous voices are manifest as separate from the rest of the text, as a 'representation' or shadow of their 'real' existence, which is as empty as themselves, and which is neither being nor non-being. Subsequently, they may be regarded as a subtext or as the presence of a darker side of identity struggling to create itself as it is haunted by it own otherness. Furthermore, their representation is contrasted with the 'real' noise of mechanical or technological existence, which clashes with their ghostly whisperings, in effect illustrating that their subjective linguistic existence is almost a presence in absence. They 'are' in the sense of the indeterminate existence that is pre-linguistic, but they are effectively 'dead' as they do not exercise free will. They are the 'undamned' (Dick 1988, 112), and modern reality is measured up to Dante's mythological hell.

The Waste Land presents itself as a Gothic modernist narcotic experience, yet its chaos and displacement of the reader's consciousness yields ironically to clarity of vision. Leavis refers to this as 'the poetization of the unpoetical', the unpoetical in this case being an 'intense and absurd horror' (Leavis 1990, 160-66):

> 'There I saw one I knew and stopped him, crying: "Stetson!
> 'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
> 'That corpse that you planted last year in your garden,
> 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?' (Eliot 1993a, 69-72)

Through this image one can see that the echoes of providence, the uncanny, ominous nuances of the poem and the underlying terror and frustration are signs that the work inquires into a specifically Gothic imaginary, in which terror is utilised as a source of awakening the reader's imagination. Botting points out that 'Gothic texts can be seen to prefigure modes of "posthuman life"' (Botting 2001, 4). This is interesting, considering that the death that concerns the poet here is not physical as much as spiritual and emotional, as symbolised with references to blindness. The poem's obsession with death, conveyed through symbols of water is intrinsically linked with a lust for life, conveyed through both fire and water – the source of all life and of cleansing and regeneration. A problem is presented when Eliot illustrates that the people of the waste land prefer the sterile desolation of the dead winter season. Williamson reiterates that '[d]eath is the ultimate meaning of The Waste Land for a people for whom its explanation is only a myth, for whom death is destructive rather than creative, and in whom the will to believe is frustrated by the fear of life' (Williamson 1974, 129).

Furthermore, the 'unreal city' is dominated by spectres of humanity, who 'cannot speak' and so cannot feel, cannot truly experience life. They are interpreted by Craig Raine, through references in *The Waste Land* notes, as the occupants of Hell's purgatory, who Virgil views as 'forlorn spirits' who lived 'without infamy and without praise' alongside whom 'the sinner would be proud' (Raine 1990, 405). This is supported in Eliot's 'Sweeney Agonistes', printed in *Criterion* October 1926 in which Sweeney comments that '[l]ife is death'. There is no binary.

> I tell you again it don't apply
> Death or life or life or death
> Death is life and life is death
> I gotta use words when I talk to you
> But if you understand or if you don't
> That's nothing to me and nothing to you
> We all gotta do what we gotta do (Eliot 2004, 158-164)

Similarly, the Shakespearean tragedy of *Hamlet*, like Dante's *Inferno*, voices in the poem the dark undertones of grief, procrastination, vengeance, lust, insanity, and death that plague the liminal modern human condition. Having said this, it is significant that the author's presence is itself ghostly, melting through time and literary history, melting through space and trans-gender, much like the central figure Tiresias, who sees everything and knows everything. The 'hypocrite lecteur' at the first outset is also 'dead', 'can connect nothing with nothing' (Eliot 1993a, 301-302) as far as the poem is concerned and will not be able to do so until Eliot's true concerns have been intricately revealed.

Eliot, in his critique of Arnold's poetry, said that he should have seen 'the boredom, the horror, and the glory' (Raine 1990, 402). In *The Waste Land*, Eliot creates for the reader a collage image of all three, in which we are shown 'fear in a handful of dust'. The poem is itself, arguably, a scorched pyre consisting of the ashes of the dead who have not been buried but consumed by the fire of earthly desires: lust vanity and greed:

> Burning burning burning burning
> O Lord Thou pluckest me out
> O Lord Thou pluckest
>
> burning (Eliot 1993a, 308-311).

Again terror is reaffirmed in the poem and the Gothic elements resurface in the form of 'red sullen faces' that 'sneer and snarl' (Eliot 1993a, 344), 'bats with baby faces in the violet light' (Eliot 1993a, 380-382), a hooded man 'Gliding wrapped in a brown mantle' (Eliot 1993a, 364), tumbled graves, rattling bones, it all becomes a Gothic imaginary from which to view to emotional vampirism that seems to epitomise modern existence.

The experience of terror in Eliot's *The Waste Land* can be used quite purposefully as a tool in tracing the cross-fertilisation of Gothic and modernist ideals. Such a detailed analysis has therefore been included as an illustration of how the mutation of the genre appears and how it seems to be intrinsically linked with the social and cultural context from which it emerges. It is not a difficult step to take from the Gothic modernism of Eliot to the concept of Gothic-postmodernism. Effectively, Gothic-postmodernism, to work with the definitions of postmodernism that have already been outlined, is simply a radicalisation and philosophical intensification of the ideas of terror and death relating to language that are poetised in Eliot. What is most interesting, however, is that as intensification occurs, so does alteration in style, form, and tone, which cause the genre to become more distinct in its own right. The pattern of textual analysis that will be followed from *Time's Arrow* to *Lunar Park* will demonstrate this. However, it would not suffice to move on to Gothic-postmodernism without an analysis of the hauntological literary philosophy of Samuel Beckett.

Beckett's Gothic Modernism

Beckett's solipsistic view of modern existence, expressed in his late prose works, portrays a situation where existence is in itself a terrifying, Gothic experience. Graham Fraser identifies a series of ghosts that haunt his fiction, noting that 'Beckett's ghostly, Gothic preoccupations pervade all his late texts', which he goes on to refer to as '[t]he late Beckettian Gothic' (Fraser 2000, 782). In many modernist works – Eliot, Woolf, and Faulkner immediately come to mind – the dead often continue to speak. This, of course, is not evidence that they are all tinged by the influence of the Gothic but more so that death, in that period of world war, rapid change and secularisation, was a pervasive question. In Beckett's prose work of the thirties and forties, death is considered on a lateral plain of thought and is intrinsically linked to existentialist philosophy. Interestingly and significantly, as an existentialist problem in Beckett's works, particularly in the novellas (*First Love*, *The End*, *The Expelled*, *The Calmative*) and the trilogy: *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *Unnamable*, as in Eliot, it ultimately relates to language. Beckett's characters exist only as long as they speak. They are protean creations that

metamorphose into one another through linguistic association. They are subsequently inconsistent, 'queer', and inhabit a confused world of dark memories and unfulfilled desires and their quest is never ending and futile but continues because it must: 'I can't go on, I'll go on' (Beckett 1979, 382).

I would suggest that Derrida's ideas on hauntology are again poignant in relation to Beckett's critique of ontology, which he effects in the continuous recreation of disembodied voices; what Derrida would refer to as 'bodiless bodies' (Derrida 1994, 3). Disembodiment has by now proven itself to be a recurring feature of Gothic narrative and it is significant that Beckett's incorporeal characters exist, textually, as lost souls; validated by the language that defines them without need for the physical or tangible 'reality' of the body. From many critical perspectives, the prime object of terror in the Gothic is the body and fear of physical mutilation is seen as dominating much of the anxiety generated in contemporary works of horror. It is quite intriguing that Beckett, in his later writing, seems to be suggesting just the opposite and with an acute understanding of Gothic terror.

Abstractly, his play on the grotesque nature of embodiment or physical existence by juxtaposing it with its opposite (the extra-bodily existence of his prose characters) might be interpreted as almost an ironic inversion of the soulless bodies of Count Dracula's victims. In Stoker's legendary tale, while mesmerised, vampirised bodies achieve a wholly separate existence from their rational consciousness. They are effectively totally subsumed by bodily desire. The Count himself, as the inhabitant of a body that is a site of terror, becomes an interesting figure in relation to this. His supernatural body can potentially metamorphose into animal form; defy the laws of gravity and the established rules of metaphysics (in having no reflection). His might be regarded as something akin to the altered or extra bodily existence of Dorian Gray, whose soul has been captured in a portrait and whose body exists contra-temporally. With the advancement of philosophy and science toward the realms of existentialism, the Gothic terrors of embodiment take on a whole new 'meaning' and from the perspective of this study, Beckett's handling of the ideas may be seen as evidencing his leanings toward a modernist brand of Gothic exploration. The metaphysical problems of existence beyond the body, in language, become the prime source of terror and frustration in his work.

Beckett's *Unnamable* is his deepest expression of this idea. Throughout the story, the disembodied narrator, a dislocated voice in an urn, remains unnameable and unknowable, existing merely as a fragmented consciousness, a representation of the mind of modern man as he tries to cope with the agony of being and not knowing. In a manner similar to Eliot's, Beckett's excessively bleak, impressionistic pieces appear to portray the idea that the essence of man, which forms in and through existence in language, is monstrous; so monstrous that the weariness, ennui and distaste for the writing and life-continuance that 'must go on', lead the narrative voice to 'dream of silence' (Beckett 2000, 29). It wishes for 'the end' beyond words, beyond the reality of 'icy tumultuous streets, the terrifying faces, the noises that slash pierce, claw, bruise' (Beckett 2000, 29); beyond self: that 'vision of two burning eyes' (Beckett 2000, 55); beyond the quest 'for nought' (Beckett 1970, 166); and for the achievement of complete indetermination.

No longer able to cope with these desires, Beckett's Molloy contemplates self-murder on numerous occasions but is betrayed by the noises of approaching death: 'how often I was tempted to put an end to it, by cutting my throat. But I never succumbed. The noise betrayed me, I turned purple' (Beckett 1979, 73). The 'subversive', 'grotesque' and 'lewd' bodily descriptions that dominate Beckett's characters' impressions of the physical, external world connect his philosophy to both Gothic and post-structuralist trains of thought. Bodily desires and their negative associations in language arouse an obscure sense of terror that causes the reader to retract into the world of the mind. Passages on anal probing, bestiality, geriatric copulation, self-mutilation, regurgitation (the list could *go on*) function, arguably, as techniques in defamiliarisation. The imaginative frenzy that subsequently overtakes the reader, probably only to be repressed because of aforementioned religious subjection, is a prelude to what in his late work could be called linguistic disruption. The terror that our existence, in and through, language is essentially limiting, absurd and chaotic is so expressed. We realise, like the disintegrating consciousness that occupies the stories whether as author, narrator or character, that language fails in presenting any comprehensive 'reality', of self or of the external bodily world, and so we are destined to remain trapped and frustrated, isolated in a domain of futile but necessary expression.

The narrator of the novella *The Calmative* comments: 'It is not my wish to labour these antinomies, for we are needless to say in a skull' (Beckett 2000, 57). This highlights the current of entrapment that haunts Beckett's work as a source of terror, and interestingly, the skull, as the archetypal Medieval, Romantic and Gothic symbol of mortality and inner vision, underlines its connection to an obsession with death. The Cartesian angle of this statement is clear: we are first and foremost trapped in the subjective world of the mind and can never exist beyond it as it is our only certainty. However, we also see in this an existentialist version of post-structuralism, for it is an entrapment horrifically located within the confines of text. This 'skull' is the subjective world of words, the words that create our memories, our desires and our identities. The goal for Beckett is an extra-textual existence, mutable, without boundaries where one can be content to believe everything and nothing and flourish on self delusion. It is the paradoxical spectral existence of Mr. Endon, in *Watt*, the man with whom it is impossible to communicate, whose engagement with external reality is random at best and indiscriminate at worst.

Mr. Endon is the character who has alienated himself within the system by which he grasps at the objects of experience that are essential for his self definition. He has effectively achieved a perfect state of Levinas's timeless *Il y a*. He is in a state of existential hypostasis. His physical presence is, in itself, hauntological, ethereal and his spiritual presence is absence. His very being is in between, in between life and death, knowing and not knowing, existence and non-existence, text and nothing. Significantly, Riquelme comments that 'in Beckett we encounter a textualising of the ghost and the threat, a linking of the ghost and the threat to language' (Riquelme 2000, 602). Mr. Endon, therefore, may be seen as a prime example of Beckett's hauntology. He fails to make any discriminate attempts at communication. When tested by Watt in an experimental chess game, he is found to have made arbitrary and random moves on the board. His existence is almost beyond language in the subjective sense and therefore beyond self knowledge, and can be interpreted as spectral or shadowlike. It is a presence in absence to use Derridean terminology. It is, put simply, based on his inscription in Watt's story. He is in a paradoxical condition of liminality in that he has transcended subjective linguistic existence only to be trapped in the subjective world of text.

Beckett's narratives are often frequented by such hauntological entities which, due to their undecidable ontological status, hover, ghost-like, in the text. Due to their inactivity and sometimes unnamability, they represent an example of hauntology and may be interpreted as a Gothic approach to subjectivity as ghostly, and the self as an inaccessible unit beyond the binary structures of language. Thus, it is inevitable that we must look at the Beckettian universe as a textual universe. Ghostly voices spur the narrative forward, posthumous narrators such as Unnamable, and the central consciousness of *The Calmative* do not know who they are or when they died and their present existence in what Botting refers to as the 'darkly illuminating labyrinth of language' (Botting 1996, 14), is, in no uncertain terms, Gothic. They persist in inhabiting the textual world for reasons frustratingly unknown to them and as a result, anxiety, subversive sexuality, paranoia, violent thoughts and sublimated desire pervade their macabre imaginations. The already 'dead' voice of *The Calmative* tries to communicate this and again the voice for his terror is Gothic in tone:

> alone in [his] icy bed…[t]oo frightened this evening to listen to [himself] rot, waiting for the great red lapses of the heart, the tearings at the caecal walls, and for the slow killings to finish in my skull, the assaults on unshakeable pillars, the fornications with corpses. And so I'll tell myself a story (Beckett 2000, 47).

This type of work could appropriately be referred to as graveyard fiction, as thanatological concerns are expressed in terms of the mysterious, the inhuman and the unearthly. What is significant is that the disembodied voices with which we empathise as readers tell us, from their peripheral perspective, more about their fears, desires and anxieties through parapraxis than they do through direct language and imagery. This seems to demonstrate that their true terror, the terror of language is based around the limitless potential for signification. Their Derridean frustration with language where and the volatile boundaries which fail to define their communicative existence, confuses all interpretative parties even further.

One could also take the approach that would conceive Beckett's linguistic experiments as something of a Derridean nightmare, in which logocentrism has ironically lost all its power. Even Derrida, in his rejection of the violent hierarchies of the

linguistic world could not avoid recourse to logocentrism in the establishment of his own philosophy. In the Beckettian textual universe we are presented with a situation where no boundaries appear to exist. The Derridean conceptual paradise has become the equivalent of Dante's *Inferno*. After all, logocentrism is necessary in the creation of identity, in the affirmation of the boundaries of self and also in the definition of what it 'means' to be human'. Beckett's works, as 'contemplations on linguistic suicide' (Ricks 1995, 154), are subtly terrifying and the ominous atmosphere that results continues to loom over his formless, ephemeral, illusive creations, and also over the imagination of the now disconcerted reader.

Narration, by the time we reach *Unnamable*, is completely without structure, disintegrating before our eyes and expressing its own existence in almost subliminal terms to the reader:

> No voice left, nothing left but the core of murmurs, distant cries, quick now and try again with the words that remain, try what I don't know, I've forgotten, it doesn't matter, I never knew, to have them carry me into my story…perhaps it's a dream, all a dream, that would surprise me, I'll wake, in the silence, and never sleep again, it will be I, or dream, dream again dream of a silence, a dream silence, full of murmurs, I don't know, that's all words, never wake, all words, there's nothing else (Beckett 1979, 381).

The terror and panic that Unnamable expresses in this extract is a result of the anarchy outside of the structures of language. The chiasmic repetition of the words 'nothing', 'murmurs', 'words', 'dream 'and 'silence' expresses an impressionistic vision of the ambiguity in his distrust in language but it also shows us the great courage of his artistic endeavour.

As the narrative progresses this 'plurivocity' is reduced to the analogous murmurs of the marginalised; the insane vagrant who has been refused a voice in society, but whose voice is nonetheless loud and encompassing to the ear of the reader. The main function, it seems, is to give expression to a 'longing for oblivion' (Ricks 1995, 5). To quote again from Botting, the modern Gothic 'presents the dissolution of order meaning and identity in a play of signs images and texts' (Botting 1996, 14) and so Beckett's play can be seen as definitively Gothic, effectively deconstructing the accepted textual oppositions that define our existence and our identities. To Beckett's extra-visceral protagonists death is a complex word with limitless meaning and associations, and we must pay attention to those

associations that are repeated: physical, emotional and linguistic. The subjective internal world of Molloy, Malone, Unnamable and countless other meta-characters (characters imagined by imaginary characters), including A and C, Mahood and Worm, cannot be fully penetrated from within or without and so they can be interpreted as existing in a liminal world of linguistic reverie.

We see this in high definition in Beckett's trilogy of novels where the narrative or protagonist's voice is clearly the invention of that of the previous piece. Life and death is narrative, and so a matter entirely of continued fictitiousness and recreation. Death is therefore beyond language and its expression, ironically, is narrated silence in the form of a subsuming new character. The idea of physical or bodily death is expressed in Molloy's meditations: 'there's no use knowing you are gone, you are not, you are writhing yet, the hair is growing, the nails are growing, the entrails emptying' (Beckett 1979, 35). This is another distinctly Gothic passage in the inscription of Molloy's existence and is reminiscent of the original Gothic on Mary Shelley's terms. It is thematically clear that *Frankenstein* is similarly concerned with the binary of life and death. Victor comments that: '[l]ife and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world' (Shelley 2000, 58). Life in death for Frankenstein's creation is somewhat similar to Molloy's account, but it unfolds as a 'catastrophe':

> I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs…His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and straight black lips' (Shelley 2000, 60).

Life in death, and death in life, are set side by side. Victor's emotional and spiritual death is contrasted and presented discursively alongside 'the demonical corpse' to which he has given life. It is also, like Beckett's exploration of the subject, a Promethean suspension of Theism. The Promethean figure of Victor and his double – the creature, complete with fragmented body – can be appropriately set beside Unnamable, who recalls '[t]he fact that Prometheus was delivered twenty nine thousand nine hundred and seventy years after having purged his offences' and is left feeling 'as cold as camphor'

(Beckett 1979, 278). He goes on to repress this fear by declaring that between him and 'that miscreant who mocked the gods', there is nothing in common (Beckett 1979, 278), yet tells us that it was worth mentioning. In this, there is an acknowledgement of religion. However, his languid distrust of the Christian teleological view of existence is again expressed as Malone dies and we remember the nurse who has a crucifix engraved on her one remaining tooth.

Parallel to this is his exploration of the conventional Gothic terror of living death, something which is also central in Eliot's poetry. The binary of life and death, and the reversal of the two conditions of being and not being, are echoed in *Malone Dies*: 'All is ready. Except me. I am being given, if I may venture the expression, birth to, into death, such is my impression. The feet are clear already of the cunt of existence. Favourable presentation I trust. My head will be the last to die' (Beckett 1979, 114). For an existentialist like Beckett, life is death as a work in progress, expressed of course in the darkest and most ironic terms. Beckett parodied existence itself from its physical polarities of life and death and dislocated all of its conceptions: selves, realities, beliefs and roles. Arguably, in his work, he set the precedent for later postmodernist writers such as Martin Amis, who in his novel *Time's Arrow* takes life's journey from birth to death in reverse, ending his reversed narrative with a shocking, alien account of his physical birth and conception:

> our corporeal bond will be tied, with Solingen scissors. When I enter her, how she will weep and scream…Soon Father will have her all to himself…Naturally I cannot forgive my father for what he will have to do to me. He will come in and kill me with his body (Amis 2003, 171).

The reversal of the process of death, so similar in both Beckett and Amis's works, can be quite easily interpreted as an example of Freud's theory that our own deaths are impossible to imagine. For death, whether linguistic, emotional or physical is the unrepresentable; a unique condition that can only be experienced first hand by the subject. In this idea there is a hint of the sublime, which from a postmodernist perspective takes on certain significance. There is a fine and volatile line between life and death, as there is between being and not-being, as there is between knowing and not knowing; as there is between modernism and postmodernism; as there is between language and silence.

To represent the 'unrepresentable' through language, Beckett had to come 'as close to silence as a man can decently get while still remaining a practicing author' (Alvarez 1973, 17). I would argue that he also had to approach the subject on Gothic terms. Malone's death illustrates this:

> Lemuel is in charge, he raises the hatchet on which the blood will never dry, but not to hit anyone, he will not hit anyone anymore, he will not touch anyone anymore, either with it, or with it, or with it, or with it or with his hammer or with his stick or with his fist or in thought in dream I mean never he will never
> Or with his pencil or with his stick or
> Or light light I mean
> Never there he will never
> Never anything
> There
> Anymore (Beckett 1979, 264)

As he loses consciousness, the words lose meaning through repetition. The punctuation gradually fades, followed by the syntax, and the voice disappears. Wittgenstein, in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* wrote: 'whereof one cannot speak, therefore one must be silent' (Wittgenstein 1996, etext). This is Malone's death. The presence of 'meaning' is vague and ghostly. He is silent and the repetition ends temporarily. And such is the long awaited end.

Beckett's late prose works, in this sense offer a Gothic and hauntological approach to both modern existence and modern literature. They may be considered as an expression of Gothic modernism and also as a voicing of the unique terrors of Beckett's idea of modernity. It has been argued that Beckett maintains formlessness in this work that allows for the condition whereby his writing has 'become the ghost of itself in modern art' (Riquelme 2000, 602). In its spectrality it indeed takes up an 'inbetween' place in literature. I would argue that this inbetween is on a definite line of Gothic literary development and that it has significant implications for the emergence of Gothic-postmodernism, as we will see through investigating the Gothic-postmodernism of Paul Auster.

Part II: Analysing Gothic-postmodernism

Introduction to Part II

'Mankind's secret terrors are the realities which Gothic novelists seek to engage through their extravagant and impossible fictions… It is not Walpole's ghosts who inspire terror, but the ghosts we carry within us.'
(David Morris)

La Peur Post-Moderne

Implying that terrorised people have more fears to get rid of, Stephen King has commented, in relation to his own writing, that '[t]he more frightened people become about the real world, the easier they are to scare' (Underwood & Miller 1989, 96). In this sense, terror literature may be regarded as a sort of therapeutic art form that is more than relevant today. Due to this role, Gothic novels may offer a specific catharsis in that we need ghost stories in order to ground and give meaning to our deep recognition of our own spectrality. Significantly, Gothic-postmodernism often presents itself as an impressionistic depiction of the postmodern subject as the phantom of the hyperreal self; a phantom that is not merely a manifestation of abjection, but which must be recognised as the epitome of anti-essentialism and as a counter-narrative, a reversal of the perceived progressive unity of Western culture. In this way it connects postmodernist philosophy with postmodernist subjectivity through Gothic concerns with terror and the sublime. This approach to the reading of terror literature observes that there is a necessary release involved in the terrifying experiences of the Gothic-postmodernist text. In our current climate of globalised terror, this quality of terror in such literature can be seen to expand to offer a unique cultural value. Society today, in general, has what might be considered a pool of common fears that are culturally specific, woven together by the subdued undercurrent of terrorism. It is arguable that through the medium of the terror novel, we can potentially realise and expunge this stifling and pervasive fear. In King's words: 'we can all come and see our own faces and wet our hands in it' (Underwood and Miller 1989, 109).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Freudian psychologists and surrealists rediscovered the Gothic novel, the incentive being the inherent functions of terror literature and our fundamental need for it. Interestingly, it has been argued that the Gothic novel, as a precursor to psychoanalytic theory, actually propelled the insights of psychoanalysis into human fears and desires. Terror literature is seen to have significant function in this respect in that it can help the reader to conceptualise those repressed anxieties that are aroused in the uncanny experiences intimated by the text. In the coming chapter, which analyses three Gothic-postmodernist texts, their characteristics, aims and effects, it is possible to distinguish some defining aspects of the genre. Aside from the fact that the novels have dark and Gothic undertones, their preoccupation with sublime terror is the most prominent feature. Also definable, as a distinctively Gothic-postmodernist trait, is that in all three novels, history, subjectivity and reality are presented as narrative, as textual entities devoid of any truth or stability. Interestingly, terror is the one thing that remains outside of narrative, as a sublime, self-realising emotion, linked to the unrepresentable, from which, struggles with self inevitably evolve. The philosophy of terror supporting this study would claim that terror has realising capabilities just as 'reality' has terrifying capabilities. In effect, it is the terror of the novels, their Gothic sublimity, that offers the 'counter-narrative' value that Botting speaks of, and that provides an open ground for voicing the terror of the postmodern subject as it exists in a postmodern, hyper-real world.

It is noteworthy that all of the texts discussed in the next part of this study are adequate to the abovementioned approach to terror-writing. They are works that play on the fundamental fears and anxieties of postmodern society and also on the reader's natural curiosities by exploring the limits of human behaviour and the secret terrors of contemporary Western culture. Lacan writes that '[t]he unconscious is that chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a falsehood: it is the censored chapter' (Lacan 1995, 50). The Gothic, as the literature of taboo, the literature of transgression which addresses our repressed fears and desires, may be regarded as the unconscious of literature: that censored chapter that deals with forbidden, unspeakable aspects of our being.

If this definition of Gothic-postmodernism makes any definitive claim, it is that in postmodernist fiction, Gothic excesses

still have the capacity to transgress contemporary aesthetic and social boundaries, and also the boundaries of the self. However, this is not to say that it is definable only a degenerative, destructive and transgressive genre. In its representation of terror, it arguably retains a function of the Gothic identified by Botting in reconstituting 'the boundaries that horror has seen dissolve' (Botting 1996, 10). The horrors and atrocities of recent, 'postmodern' history need not be accounted for here. We are faced with them every time we watch the news. As outlined earlier, horror is a limiting experience as it presents the horrifying event in full and grotesque detail, causing the imagination to shrink and recoil into repressive isolation. Varma put it quite succinctly when he observed the distinction between terror and horror in the Radcliffean sense, as being 'the difference between the smell of death and stumbling against a corpse' (Varma 1957, 130). The power of terror then, is in suggestion. It functions as part of the Gothic enterprise to stimulate the reader's imagination in the recreation of a terror that is unspeakable and sublime. So while many critics may claim that the Gothic has died, it is possible to reason that in a contemporary world that is one of prolific linguistic or symbolic reality, terror beyond the scope of language is apprehended in the Gothic-postmodernist novel in a much more subtle way.

Interestingly, unlike romantic writing, Gothic terrors relate to sublimity that does not seek the divine. As we will see this continues through to Gothic-postmodernism. In *City of Glass*, divinity is reduced to authorship and textuality; in *Slaughterhouse 5*, to the reality of the fourth dimension; and in *Time's Arrow*, it is man as a Promethean figure, striving for powers of immortality and self-determination. This is not a new concept. To many critics, the Gothic novel traditionally pursued a version of the sublime unconcerned with transcendence. To Morris, the Gothic sublime is a vertiginous and plunging – and not soaring – sublime, which takes us deep within rather than far beyond the human sphere' (Morris 1985, 306). The Gothic sublime is therefore unique in that seeks out the most fundamental aspects of being on a personal, individual level. Significantly, Gothic-postmodernism continues to revise notions of the sublime and its inherent terror, parallel to postmodernist theories of sublimity and reality. To reiterate Žižek's model: the sublime is 'a paradox of an object which, in the very field of representation, provides a view, in a negative way of the dimension of what is

unrepresentable'. It allows us to 'experience the impossibility of the thing' (Žižek 1998, 203). In fulfilling, on Lyotard's request, its obligation to the unrepresentable, the Gothic-postmodernist novel endeavours to present impossible realities, those which Lacan would assume to be the 'real' of our desire. In functioning, therefore, to give us a somewhat limited access to impossible subjective reality, it operates like the dream, a surrealist, fantastic and supernatural insight into the darkest corners of our unconscious minds.

Approaching Terror Literature as a Genre

Of all the texts so far mentioned and discussed in this study, a significant number have been already classed as either postmodernist, magical realist, or as part of 'the literary fantastic'. These include the works by Auster, Vonnegut and Amis to be discussed in the coming chapters. Thus, there is clearly a need to outline and analyse motives for establishing a new genre as distinctive and unique within the broader category of fantastic literature, and also to justify the classification of the named works as Gothic-postmodernism. It is first of all necessary to assess why these works are Gothic, not only in the sense that they can be considered as an extension of Punter's 'Literature of Terror', but also of Botting's 'counter-narrative'; and secondly, how and why they can be considered as a unique expression of the darkness of postmodernity.

Genre theorists take note of the most common practice in the construction of 'genre'. Many hold that at the heart of genre criticism is the construction of the 'macro- or supertext' (Cawelti 1985, 56). This macro-text, or genre, is often laid out as a précis of the most distinctive and important characteristics among many particular texts, which are generally examined and linked together in respect of their relationship to the macro-text. This sort of approach to genre draws on Wittgenstein's consideration of 'classification' in language, whereby groups of objects bearing family resemblances may be grouped together in a genealogical manner. What is problematic about this approach in relation to Gothic-postmodernism is that many critics would assess postmodernist art and literature as unclassifiable. As a mode of art, it is seen to deny the limits of definition in its volatility and in its consistent dissolution of concepts of truth and reality. Arguably, as the postmodernist novel is fluid and based on

epistemological and ontological uncertainty, it cannot be defined in any tangible way. This is a valid point. However, from a structuralist perspective, it neglects the idea that as we exist in a textual world of language, unconnected to any fundamental reality as it may be, we need always to 'create' in language, in order to live in and appreciate the world. The same can be said for art. Without language to generate the concept of postmodernist art, or any art for that matter, it might as well not exist, as without the signifiers of language it is of no significance. Genre definition, in postmodernist literature, is, therefore, a necessary practice as a text cannot be identified except in relation to other texts through analogy and difference in the linguistic system of genre. From this perspective, applying a theoretical approach to genre definition, results in a final classification that is aware of its own construction of meaning and is subsequently open to deconstruction.

Todorov poses a similar response to another question that is often asked in relation to speaking of genre in art and literature: '[i]s it pointless to speak of genre? Isn't every work of art unique?' (Todorov 1973, 5). Todorov receives this as an aesthetic problem and his most useful observation is that 'any description of a text, by the very fact that it is made by means of words is a description of genre', and so, in response to Maurice Blanchot's conviction that only the book matters, he claims that 'rejecting the notion of genre would be a rejection of language' (Todorov 1973, 7-8). Blanchot's position is, however, quite appreciable and it is subsequently important in this study to focus closely on each individual text, particularly as no account of genre or a text in itself can be exhaustive. Literature speaks for itself and we must be aware of this when considering the notion of a literary genre or even a sub-genre.

Todorov refers to Propp's theory of genre when he comments that literary critics, like scientists, do the necessary job of classifying the world into species, genus, type. He notes, however, that 'the birth of a new tiger does not modify the species in its definition', whereas 'in literature, each new example modifies species' (Todorov 1973, 6). Defining a genre such as Gothic-postmodernism is, therefore, both necessary and important. Gothic-postmodernism can be regarded as a new example in the chain of mutations that goes into the evolution of a species of literature. Interestingly, it springs from that recessive

genotype known as the Gothic; so recessive in fact that many contemporary critics of the genre consider it to be extinct.

Fantastic Terrors

Literary texts are often categorised on a number of different levels, often resembling a genealogy. Usually, this begins by defining a work as belonging to 'literature', as outlined by the canon. Secondly, the work is categorised in terms of context, as defined by a period in history or an 'era' in literature, and thirdly, the work is defined in terms of common literary features such those recognised as being of realist literature, or in this case of fantastic literature. Where we are attempting to classify Gothic-postmodernist works, the 'macro-text' that Cawelti speaks of is 'the literary fantastic'. Todorov and Neil Cornwell, both of whom approach the fantastic from a structuralist, position classify the Gothic as a subcategory of 'the fantastic' and I would agree that the Gothic fits into what might be considered 'the fantastic' in literature in a broad sense of the concept. H.P Lovecraft outlined the following definition of the fantastic: '[a] tale is fantastic if the reader experiences an emotion of profound fear and terror, the presence of unsuspected worlds or powers' (Todorov 1973, 35). According to Todorov, the fantastic is definable in 'that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting the supernatural event' (Todorov 1973, 25). It is based on uncertainty about the nature of reality. However, he also makes it clear that the literature of the fantastic conceives the greater part of a text as belonging to reality.

In relation to this study of Gothic-postmodernism, one crucial factor must be taken into account. What of the fantastic in postmodernist literature where the majority of the text does not pertain to reality in the context of our postmodern acceptance that no 'reality' exists? In response to this, Todorov comments on how the fantastic received 'a fatal blow' at the beginning of the twentieth century. In his opinion, it is effectively dead, as we 'no longer believe in an immutable, external reality' (Todorov 1973, 168). What is extremely significant is that Todorov suggests that 'this death, this suicide, generates a new literature' (Todorov 1973, 168), of which, he posits Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as an example. What he does say of this new literature is that where previously 'the fantastic started from a

perfectly natural situation to reach its climax in the supernatural' (Todorov 1973, 169), in Kafka's work it begins with the fantastic or supernatural and reaches its climax in the acceptance of that supernatural event as perfectly natural. As he puts it: 'the fantastic becomes the rule and not the exception' (Todorov 19873, 173).

As postmodernism emerged in the literature of the late twentieth century, the fantastic as a genre exploded, and gradually became a free-floating concept related to the unrealities that we now need in literature and art as ontological 'boundary markers'. Due to newly emerging concepts of uncertainty and hesitation in literature, the suspension of disbelief in the reading of fantastic literature no longer had the same effect. Following this 'explosion', all that remained as dominant from the fantastic, it would seem, is the Gothic, as that durable form of expression that continues to haunt even twenty first century literature and art. With this in mind, Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, might be regarded as a prelude to the Gothic-postmodernist text. In Todorov's discussion of the fantastic, he introduces Sartre's ideas as outlined in his article on Blanchot's *récit*: 'Aminadab, or the Fantastic Considered as a Language'. Sartre asserts that Blanchot and Kafka, as fantastic writers, no longer try to portray extraordinary beings. For them:

> there is now only one fantastic object: man. Not the man of religions and spiritualisms, only half committed to the world of the body, but man-as-given, man-as-nature, man-as-society, the man who takes off his hat when a hearse passes, who kneels in churches, who marches behind a flag (Todorov 1973, 173).

Interestingly, we can recall a similar methodology in what is widely accepted as the 'original' Gothic novel, Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. In Walpole's preface to the second edition he suggests that he wishes (like Wordsworth) to portray ordinary men in extraordinary situations, 'in short, to make them think, speak, and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions' (Walpole 1998, 10). It would seem that Kafka and Blanchot, following the demise of the fantastic as a genre, have reverted to the Gothic generic conventions in their appropriation of the literary. Significantly, Morris' observation of the Gothic suggests that 'the artificial supernaturalism of Gothic novels carries no presumption of truth' (Morris 1985, 309), being closer to Freud's view that the

experience of terror is not dependent upon confidence in the reality of the source of terror. The terror of Gregor Samsa's situation of finding himself transformed into a monstrous beetle might, therefore, be regarded as Gothic terror, and as sublime in that it is unspeakable: Samsa, while in this condition, cannot speak but only make the noises afforded by his new insect body. Generic classifications such as 'fantastic' or 'magical realism', while valid in their own respect, neglect to see not only this reversion to the ordinary, but also the prevalence of Gothic terror and sublimity, of Gothic counter-narrative and also of the Gothic imaginary present in many postmodernist works. Similarly, they do not acknowledge the extent to which these Gothic aspects function equal to, and supportive of, postmodernist visions of man and the world in literature.

Irving Malin has acknowledged this essential break in the literary fantastic in his writing on the Gothic of postmodern literature. Malin's theory, formulates the genre 'New American Gothic' as including the following vital features: a microcosm as a site where supernatural or uncanny forces contend; the house as a metaphor for traditional Gothic themes of oppression or entrapment; and the theme of 'confining narcissism'. King, in *Danse Macabre*, notes that Malin has effectively conceived 'a fundamental change in the Gothic whereby 'the Bad Place' now symbolises interest in the self and fear of the self…we have instead of the symbolic womb, the symbolic mirror' (King 2000, 315); a similar mirror, possibly, to that which for Count Dracula impedes the development of a pre-Oedipal self and that for Quinn of Auster's novel poses extreme problems in the appropriation of self and reality leading to his spectral existence and eventual linguistic death.

The explosion of, or 'death' of, the fantastic and its reincarnation in the form of the Gothic-postmodernist text, returns to dealing with ordinary people in extraordinary situations and with this focus there emerges a significant emphasis upon the nature of the individual and concepts of self and identity. We have seen how this developed in *fin de siècle* and modernist literature. Arguably, under the influence of postmodernist philosophy, it becomes the central axis of Gothic-postmodernism. One of the ways in which this might be highlighted is via an analysis of Baudrillard and Žižek's theories of symbolic reality and symbolic death. In Žižek's writings on the sublime, he invokes Lacan's use of the Freudian term *Das Ding*, with

implied connotations paralleling those associated with 'The Thing' in science-fiction horror and also in the Gothic (Žižek 1998 132), in the form of what King would refer to as 'the thing that keeps coming back' (King 2000, 65). This is related, quite significantly, to the concept that death is twofold. There is real death but there is also symbolic death based on Baudrillard's ideas on the loss of value of the subject. Žižek claims that 'the gap [between these two deaths] can be filled in various ways; it can contain either sublime beauty or fearsome monsters' (Žižek 1998, 135). I would argue that it can contain both the sublime and the monstrous, and this idea is illustrated in much detail through Gothic-postmodernism, as will be demonstrated in the coming chapter.

The most common theme of Gothic-postmodernism is immortality; whether it is in the form of vampirism, Promethean enterprise, the dislocation of time and space or supernatural haunting. In Amis's and Vonnegut's works, the theme of immortality is presented in line with Baudrillard's theories on immortality and also of symbolic death. They might even be regarded as an expression of Freud's death drive, which is according to Žižek, the fundamental longing for second death; symbolic death or death of self. This longing is combined simultaneously with intense fear and with this in mind the experience should be considered as sublime, as the ultimate source of Kant's 'pleasure displeasure'. In this way, selfhood is a potential site for sublime experience, not just in the sense of the Gothic sublime as it relates to terror of death, but also in the sense of postmodernist terror as it relates to symbolic death. From this perspective, credence can be given to Morris' point that the Gothic is a revision of the eighteenth century sublime. Significantly, it is clear that in a postmodern context, it continues with this revision and explores various means of entering into new realities of self for the reader, thus fulfilling existentialist demands of a dislocated postmodern generation.

Uncanny Terrors

Gothic-postmodernist terrors can be regarded as impressionistic accounts of a postmodern culture of fear, in which people seem to thrive on terrifying images, whether in film or literature. This illustrates the central idea of this definition: that reading a terror novel

is essentially a reality check. It is widely accepted that in postmodern times, we find ourselves as something of a lost generation. Quite possibly, we are the first to face a terror that is globally pervasive and uncanny to our historical memory. We are also unique in defining ourselves as sceptical of 'romance' and the supernatural and we are therefore without a means of channelling our basic human and arguably romantic desires. Categorically, a second driving force of the Gothic may be identified here: nostalgia. We appreciate the Gothic for its uncanny elements, motivated by some romantic drive inherent in our nature that has been severely repressed and deprived of nourishment in postmodern times.

Arguably, our obsession with terror can be understood as emerging partly from 'romantic' motivations. We need the Gothic, with its excessive emotion as linked to the sublime to explore those unspeakable realities of our existence that evade explanation; that evade our awareness in this hyper-real world of endless reduplications; that the Romantic poets held as transcendental and divine. Guy de Maupassant in *La Peur*, tries to encapsulate how this uncanny and terrifying Gothic and also arguably 'Romantic' sublimity manifests itself:

> A vague fear slowly took hold of me: fear of what? I had not the least idea. It was one of those evenings when the wind of passing spirits blows on your face and your soul shudders and knows not why, and your heart beats in a bewildered terror of some invisible thing, that terror whose passing I regret (Maupassant 1925, 238).

Gothic sublimity exhibits the potential of terror in awakening the subject to its own mysterious abilities. In its dealings with sublimity, terror and selfhood, Gothic-postmodernism might be considered a liminal genre, existing on the margins between reality and unreality, self and other, fear and desire, reason and unreason, between past present and future. It often traverses these boundaries and so functions as a 'third space' in literary representation, a site for fluctuations and metamorphoses, for labyrinths and the births of monsters.

Botting writes that in the nineteenth century, 'terror became secondary to horror, the sublime ceded to the uncanny' (Botting 1996, 11). While the former part of this statement is accurate, the latter part

effectively misses the significance of the close relationship between the uncanny and the sublime that is based on the concept of terror. In the Gothic novel, 'the terror of the uncanny is released as we encounter the disguised and distorted but inalienable images of our own repressed desire…[it is derived] not from something external, alien or unknown but – on the contrary – from something strangely familiar which defeats our efforts to separate ourselves from it' (Morris 1985, 307). Of those uncanny, sublime and all too often denied aspects of being, the perception of human existence as living death is quite possibly the most intense. In light of this, it is significant that Tod Friendly's existence in *Time's Arrow*, like Billy Pilgrim's in *Slaughterhouse 5*, Frankenstein's creature and Count Dracula, among many other Gothic figures, is a liminal one: between what postmodern theorists might refer to as first and second death. Importantly, Freud claims that death is unrepresentable: 'no human being really grasps it [death], and our unconscious has as little use now as it ever had for the idea of its own mortality' (Freud 2003, 242). In relation to Gothic literature and Gothic-postmodernism, more specifically, it may be assumed that the function of death is to startle the subject with the uncanny experience of that which is simultaneously recognisable and familiar but also mysterious and unknowable. In this process, the Gothic may fulfil a postmodernist obligation to present the unrepresentable.

In 'The Uncanny', Freud offers a significant revision of human fear and specifically terror that has been implicated in the Gothic of the twentieth century. Through this, we can understand why terror is a crucial and inherent element of the Gothic and also Gothic-postmodernism, one that has outlasted centuries of transmutation. King has put forward the idea that in watching scary movies and reading scary books, 'it's almost as though we're trying to preview the end (Underwood & Miller 1989, 189). We are seeking a path to the end that is unknowable but familiar, realisable in the experience of terror. *City of Glass*, *Slaughterhouse 5*, and *Time's Arrow*, fulfil an obligation to unknowable death by presenting a death that is not singular or totalised, and life that is disjointed, multiple and symbolic, in that it is beyond the limits of time and space. In this context, it is possible for the artist to present the ghosts and monsters within, not merely as abject forms but as realities that need to be accepted and understood, as manifestations of negative desires which go against the

grain of our misguided essentialist philosophies of democratic, autonomous and progressive mankind.

In this sense, the Gothic interests and qualities of these works may seem shrouded by postmodern enquiry. However, in touching on the most commonplace and uncanny of fears, they delve deep into Gothic concerns. While at times, the literary surface is left to the absurd and chaotic representations of the postmodern, when considered as Gothic-postmodernist texts, the interplay of the Gothic and postmodernism at work is both apparent and significant. It is for this reason that they have been selected for this analytical introduction to Gothic-postmodernism, which seeks to ground the idea that sublimity, achieved in and through terror, is what defines the Gothic text and also the Gothic-postmodernist text. Significantly, in some cases, this sublime terror becomes self-reflexive, a tool for exploring concepts of terror in postmodern society and culture. This is a situation that is quite evident, in different ways, in the three novels about to be discussed where the terrors of war, genocide and existence in the great metropolis, become the source of the sublime realisation of self and identity in the disillusioning context of the postmodern United States of America.

Chapter 7: The Gothic-postmodernist Novel: Three Models

The Spectral Postmodern Subject: Paul Auster's City of Glass

The first part of this book has assessed how the Gothic has manifested itself in modernist works: through a play on the terror of language, and the darkness of the disintegrating worlds of self and reality. It is now a logical step to move onto the realm of postmodernist literature and to explore the place of the Gothic in texts which propound a similar, but even darker vision of contemporary existence. In the first instance, this chapter will analyse the concept of ghostliness and fragmentation in a work that appears to be greatly inspired by 'the late Beckettian Gothic' and which also encompasses the waste land vision that is expressed in Eliot's poetry: Paul Auster's *City of Glass*.

In terms of defining the genre Gothic-postmodernism, there are certain things that must be avoided in order to discourage treating the Gothic as a static or fixed mode and also, to recognise fully, the significance of historical and social context and more radical literary transformations. This approach to genre definition delineates the distinct mutations of the Gothic genre in the context of the seismic shift between modernism and postmodernism. As a result, Gothic-postmodernism will not be regarded as yet another version of the Gothic confined by postmodernism but instead as an example of the surviving, but changed Gothic within the paradigm of literary postmodernism. With this in mind, it might be deemed more appropriate to view the Gothic as tightly held to its own principal and continuing concerns, terror and transgression.

It is thus possible to observe that the Gothic has often re-surfaced as a major mode in literature, not just in response to particular historical events, but especially at times of hesitation in history; at times of revolution, as in its original context during the turbulent years of the French revolution, and also at times of 'in-between' such as the *fin de siècle*, when the world of art was about to reach the frontiers of modernism. According to many critics, Gothic

novels answered a demand and met with the needs and desires of their particular times. When approaching Gothic-postmodernist works, it is important to bear this in mind. Moreover, it is imperative in this analysis that we must appreciate that terror is culturally specific. The terror of Auster's world is not far removed from that of Beckett. Certainly, it is the terror of language and of subjectivity. However, Auster as an author is coming from 1985 which is an arguably liminal space in terms of history and modern identity and clearly a conceptual playground for the creation of something new and exciting.

City of Glass is Gothic metafiction of the highest degree. As detective fiction, it might be considered meta-mystery. Significantly, that mystery is not based, as one would expect, on the criminal underworld dominating the metropolis of the novel, but on the mystery of identity: subjectivity, and its intricate origins in language. The central character of the novel is Daniel Quinn, whose narrated existence revolves around the exploration of the multiple layers of his identity. He is introduced as the indistinct protagonist of the novel; as a liminal figure – a man who is leading a 'posthumous life' (Auster 1992, 5). Having established his typically Gothic situation of undeath, his 'triad of selves' are introduced. First of these is Max Work, who 'was Quinn's interior brother, his comrade in solitude… the animated voice that gave purpose to the enterprise'. Second is William Wilson,[1] who is possibly an illusion, but who 'nevertheless justified the lives of the other two…serving as 'a kind of ventriloquist'. We are then told of Quinn himself, who was 'the dummy' of the trio (Auster 1992, 6). Intriguingly, the Gothic convention of the *doppelgänger* effect, has, in this case, reproduced itself, leading to the emergence of two doubles who form a trinity with the protagonist, in order to relate the dark existential issues that lie beneath the concept of subjectivity in a postmodern world so fragile as to be referred to as 'the city of glass'.

Aside from his intertextual references to Poe and Milton, and use of narrative instances of the terrifying ambiguities of language,

[1] The name William Wilson is quite interestingly taken from Edgar Allen Poe's Gothic novel of the same name which explores the concept of the *doppelgänger* as the dark side of the unconscious.

Auster creates his own unique and arguably Gothic brand of postmodernism. He does so by presenting his main character as a ghost of himself and of others, and the city as a reflection of this character, to be recognised as a 'real' city only in its fragmentation and un-chartability. Quinn's ghostly haunting of the city, 'the nowhere that he had built around himself' (Auster 1992, 4) is random and meaningless and consequently, New York, the world of this novel, is given to us as 'the most forlorn of places; the most abject. The brokenness is everywhere, the disarray is universal' (Auster 1992, 78). In this city, this fallen Eden, Quinn assumes a number of 'other' identities including that of the detective Paul Auster (one of three Paul Austers including the writer Auster who is a character in the text, and Paul Auster, the author of the text). His transformation, as he assumes the role of Auster, continues through the course of the novel, corresponding to his own mental and subjective deterioration. On commencing his quest as Auster, he admits that 'he could feel himself going blank, as if his brain had suddenly shut off' (Auster 1992, 14). Quinn feels 'as though he had been taken out of himself, as if he no longer had to walk around with the burden of his own consciousness' (Auster 1992, 50). He is effectively a ghost, or the hauntological representative of otherness, within the identity that is Paul Auster. While this may seem quite obscure, the main point is that for Quinn, 'to be Auster meant being a man with no interior, a man with no thoughts' (Auster 1992, 61) and his 'wanderings' about the uncanny city 'brought the outside in' (Auster 1992, 62).

In and through his quest in the city, Quinn is gradually disembodied, in a manner not unlike so many Gothic characters. He 'drown[s] himself out of himself', effectively achieving 'mindlessness' (Auster 1992, 61). Notably, this is a Beckettian process whereby, as outlined in the previous chapter, 'the quest for nought' becomes a quest to escape from the distorting chains of language; language, which makes the library appear a 'crypt of oblivion' (Auster 1992, 41), and which inspires the character Peter Stillman's desire to create 'the New Babel'. According to Alison Russell, Quinn reneges upon the classic conventions of the private-eye and 'becomes a pilgrim searching for correspondence between signifiers and signifieds' while also undertaking 'a quest for his own identity' (Russell 1990, 72-3). In a postmodern context, however, this search is

null and void. Identity becomes recognisable as the unsolved and impenetrable mystery of our time.

In Auster's postmodern, Babylonian world, inhabited and created by the subject, man is fallen and as fractured as Humpty Dumpty, the 'egg' from the children's nursery rhyme, the same character that Peter Stillman maintains is: 'the purest embodiment of the human condition' (Auster 1992, 81). Interestingly, this reference to Humpty Dumpty of C.S. Lewis' creation is to an egg, the unborn, who lives because he speaks and is spoken of (Auster 1992, 91). He is the ideal illustration of Lacan's fragmented subject whose existence in language is spectral; who can never be whole, despite his or her own desires. Lacan, at one point in *Écrits*, refers to the pre-Oedipal subject as '*l'hommelette*', translatable as a little man composed of broken eggs. He, is the unformed child subject constructed from fragmented images, illusions and the desire of others, primarily parental, and is often regarded as a monster-like creation comparable to the likes of Frankenstein's creature (Lacan 1995, 3). The reference to the little egg-man in this story relays an acceptance of the fruitless nature of any attempt to make sense of self and also of not-self, pertaining to a fragile and instable world of language in which self seems to be sinisterly inscribed and uncontrollable.

In *City of Glass*, Auster creates and re-creates a Gothic landscape of multiplicities and unrealities, a dizzying fairground of despairing ghosts and doubles; a city of glass where shadows and reflections proliferate and where the reader can realise the potential of his or her own ghosts within and without. Numerous ghosts emerge from this Gothic aesthetic, of which the most striking, is, like Quinn, both a ghost and a double: the younger Peter Stillman. Peter is the only son of the elder Peter Stillman and is a victim of his father's tragically failed language experiment, which resulted in 'monstrous damage' to his concept of self (Auster 1992, 27). In this experiment, Peter Stillman, the elder, attempted to recapture the pure and true language of Adam in his son by isolating him completely from the world; literally, locking him in a dark room and waiting for 'natural' language to come forth in the form of a sort of sublime human speech. The result, however, is that without language, the young Peter becomes 'the puppet boy', both disembodied and a body without a self. To Quinn, watching Peter 'was like watching a marionette walk without strings' (Auster 1992, 15).

Importantly, when the reader first encounters Peter, he is dressed all in white, with blonde hair and a deathly pale complexion: 'He was almost transparent…it felt as though he was not there' (Auster 1992, 15). Significantly, his spectrality may be considered as haunting the novel in much the same way as the 'foul puppet' of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; the self, given, or taken (in an almost Faustian way) over to the desires of another. This considered, it is quite relevant that Peter's speech may be recognised as an echo of the condition presented by Beckett's Unnamable, the self without a body, the voice in the urn. Peter's speech is fragmentary, repetitive, meaningless and contradictory. It would seem that he is effectively a non-being as his speech is completely dislocated from himself and the rest of language in general. He says at one point: 'This is what is called speaking. I believe that is the term. When the words come out, fly into the air, live for a moment, and die. Strange, is it not?… If I can give you the words you need to have, it will be a great victory' (Auster 1992, 16).

Due to the language experiment, and his experience of the locked room, he appears to have moved towards a transcendence of language, and his return to the world of speech has left him void of consistent identity. For Peter, identity is not the product of words, names or language: 'that is not my real name', and seems to be inscribed along Saussure's 'syntagmatic axis' whereby random patterns of repeated phrases create and express his desires. This volatility and insecurity is undoubtedly a terrifying experience for this character and is the reason that Quinn decides to help him. Interestingly, Peter also says at one point: '[a]nd it is true, yes, and I say this of my own free will, that sometimes I just scream and scream. For no good reason' (Auster 1992, 21). According to Morris's analysis of Edvard Munch's painting, *The Scream*, 'a scream is the original and recurrent language of terror' (Morris 1985, 313). It is expressive of the unsayable, the unrepresentable; the sublime terror that can only be understood by the subject on an abstract and non-verbal linguistic level. Relating to this idea, Peter's screaming may be understood as the sublime human speech that his father so tortuously searched for and, on an expressive level in the novel, as a distinctly postmodernist revisioning of the Gothic sublime. As a disturbing experience in *City of Glass*, it is illustrative of how '[t]he potential terror of what lies outside of language – not simply reserved in silence but incapable of

speech – is among the most troubling and crucial contributions which Gothic novels bring to the sublime on its journey from emotion to interpretation' (Morris 1985, 313). In this way, Auster's exploration of identity may be seen, markedly, as both Gothic and postmodernist. It subtly corresponds to Gothic sublimity in its relation to terror and the unrepresentable.

The city of glass is a destabilising inferno. And interestingly, it too is a world inscribed by language and is unknowable and incomprehensible due to its disunity and delusive nature. According to Richard Swope who analyses this in great detail, the main point seems to be that the city is a 'universe of rented spaces'; is always 'haunted by a nowhere' (de Certeau 1988, 103). It is as empty and as spectral as the subjects who inhabit it, a sense heightened by its transparent architecture, or 'glass skin', as Swope points out in his essay. In relation to this, Swope appropriately quotes Frederic Jameson: It 'is not even an exterior, inasmuch as when you seek to look at the hotel's outer walls you cannot see the hotel itself but only the distorted images of everything that surrounds it' (Jameson 1991, 42). This is a postmodern reality that Beckett would have not been acquainted with, and Auster's exploration of the idea is quite dark and of remarkable depth. In his quest in the city which always leaves him 'with the feeling of being lost' (Auster 1992, 4), Quinn stops in front of a shop and catches a glimpse of himself in the mirror façade: 'he did not recognize the person there as himself. He thought that he had spotted a stranger in the mirror, and in that first moment he turned around sharply to see who it was. But there was no one near him' (Auster 1992, 119).

Considering the psychoanalytic significance of the mirror and reflections in Gothic literature (in the sense of Dracula's lack thereof, and Dorian Gray's haunted self image), the basic idea that identity is a fragmented and multiple 'thing' explodes when we realise that in our modern cities of glass, the mirror is everywhere. In the postmodern world, hyper-real images of self and other abound, but their presence is not just creative, it is also destructive. Baudrillard comments on this by stating that: 'the city is the zone of signs, the media and the code' (Baudrillard 1993, 77). In this space he adds that the hyperreal:

> effaces the contradiction of the real and the imaginary. Irreality no longer belongs to the dream or the phantasm, to a beyond or to a hidden interiority, but to the hallucinatory resemblance of the real to itself…In this process, the

> real becomes volatile, becomes the allegory of death (Baudrillard 1993, 72, 71).

In *The Invention of Solitude*, Auster's memoir, a reference is included to St. Augustine: 'the mind is too narrow to contain itself entirely. But where is that part of it which it does not contain?' (Auster 1988, 16). In the city of glass, it would seem to be lost in the great and monstrous metropolis, in the inscrutable maze of souls who repeat the same patterns that make up their life/death day after day. In light of this, it becomes clear that the protagonist I, 'the tiny life bud buried in the body of the breathing self' (Auster 1992, 8), has multiplied and fractured, diluted into a decentred and repetitive narrative: a counter-narrative; a 'so-called' detective novel. Quinn 'was nowhere now. He had nothing. Not only had he been sent back to the beginning, he was now before the beginning, and so far before the beginning that it was worse than any end you could imagine' (Auster 1992, 104).

In relation to Baudrillard's concept of 'the illusion of the end', in which it is suggested that the postmodern subject exists in 'a real-time afterlife' (Baudrillard 1994, 90), the Gothic undertones of Auster's story and Quinn's 'posthumous' existence are quite fascinating. They appear, in many ways, to epitomise the symbiosis of Gothic and postmodernist philosophies that is the Gothic-postmodernist text, and the supernatural and the hyperreal are not too far apart in this contemporary version of the classic Gothic/ Romantic anguish that is faced in the quest for immortality. According to many postmodernist critics, this longing for immortality is spawned by the desire for identity, for wholeness, totality and completion and this, in itself, being based on an illusion of perfection, is terrifying (Baudrillard 1994, 101). Considering that terror, in this way, originates in the subject, Baudrillard draws a significant connection between the postmodern subject and Frankenstein's creature. Having no 'other', the creature craves 'otherness' and his manic behaviour stems from this quest for identity.

The postmodern subject is in a similar condition, terrified, having 'devoured his own double', having 'lost his shadow' in the quest for an absolute self (Baudrillard 1994, 109). In Auster's novel, Quinn finally loses his shadow and disappears into his own narrative in a 'windowless cubicle', a locked room in which there is no reflective surface, no mirror to aid his fictive and reflective formation

of self. He has isolated himself from language and from the outside world. We are informed that '[h]e had come to the end of himself' (Auster 1992, 125). He finds Stillman's apartment empty and sits there, naked, with his notebook, continuing to write until everything becomes one and he erases himself with his words. Finally, 'his words had severed from him [and] were now part of the world at large… He wondered if he had it in him to write without a pen … what will happen when there are no more pages in the red notebook?' (Auster 1992, 131). After this fatalistic passage, it is evident for the reader that Quinn has died a symbolic death and on some level has returned to 'the ground of isness' (Auster 1992, 111) on which the happenings of the postmodern world take place.

Fate, we are told earlier in the text, was 'something like the word *is*, in the phrase "it is raining"' (Auster 1992, 111). It is the 'isness' within his postmodern subjective 'reality' that he is at a loss to achieve. Our only fate in a postmodern framework is death. Conventionally in the Gothic novel, the image of the corpse would present this idea but as Morris points out, from a poststructuralist perspective, 'a corpse cannot represent death but only our inability to know what death is' (Morris 1985, 311). Auster's novel as an example of Gothic-postmodernism is analogous with death in the Hegelian sense, as outlined by Žižek in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, whereby 'the word is a death, a murder of a thing: as soon as the reality is symbolised… the thing itself is more present in a word, in its concept than in its immediate physical reality' (Žižek 1998, 131), which he in turn took from Lacan: '[t]he symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing, and this death constitutes in the subject the eternalisation of desire' (Lacan 1995, 114). And so, death pervades this Gothic-postmodernist novel in quite a philosophical sense, as it relates to language, identity and the terror of the end that we inevitably move toward.

Unrepresentable Terrors: Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse 5

It is probable that we do not need the paraphernalia of the Gothic as much today, firstly, as it is all around us, and secondly, as our fascination with the Gothic is entirely narcissistic. It is to do with explorations of self and reality and the terror of the end, with issues that we cannot know or directly represent. Possibly, for this reason,

Gothic-postmodernist works can generate intense fear as they touch on those terrors and anxieties that we cannot expel, that are intrinsic to our being.

Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s novel, *Slaughterhouse 5*, is another discerning example of the Gothic-postmodernist text. In Vonnegut's case, however, unspeakable anxieties and terrors are presented to the reader through a biting and satirical effort in defamiliarisation. While many authors approach fear and shock by trying, for example like Matthew Lewis, to brutally present us with gross detail, Vonnegut, resembling Gothic-postmodernist writers like Martin Amis, manages to suggest, by creating a unique perspective with its own unique language, the unknowable and terrifying realities major events in recent history. With respect to the Second World War, Amis does this via a complicated process of narrative reversal, while Vonnegut, however, maintains an unfamiliar and arguably unrepresentable terror through the exceptional perspective of his uncanny protagonist Billy Pilgrim.

Billy, the archetypal postmodern anti-hero, is a man who came unstuck in time having been abducted from Earth in 1967 by aliens who look like upside-down toilet plungers. He was allegedly taken to the planet Trafalmadore where he was enlightened to reality outside of time and the structures of human community. By intimating terror through Billy's new suggestive and unfamiliar martianised perspective, Vonnegut manages to subtly expose the unimaginable reality of the firebombing of Dresden and the terror of his own individual experience of the war. As such, *Slaughterhouse 5* develops as a work that deals both satirically and aesthetically with the concept of terror as it affects the individual and as it may be regenerated in fiction, displaying an acute awareness of the encounter with the sublime unrepresentable that is inherent to 'terrifying' events.

A Gothic location, not unlike the waste land cities of the texts discussed earlier, provides a background for this. Interestingly, this location is doubled and based on a juxtaposition of Trafalmadore as a haunting reflection of Dresden, the destroyed cityscape which, when encountered by Billy Pilgrim, defies any attempt at realisation, rationalisation and morality. Through the novel, Billy hovers between both of these ethereal locales and his situation is one characterised, subsequently, by spectrality. In terms of Derrida's hauntology, Billy may be regarded as living in that situation in which 'time is out of

joint' (Derrida 1994, 5) and what Derrida refers to as 'the power of the ghost effect' (Derrida 1994, 2) can be applied to his ability to time travel and to exist simultaneously in the past and future, escaping the experiences which terrify him. Further to this, as a particularly Gothic-postmodernist character, Billy can be seen to manifest his own hauntological spectre in the sense that he existed as his own ghost before his first apparition (Derrida 1994, 11) and so he consistently drifts undecidably across the dimensions of time and reality.

Importantly, the novel deals with Vonnegut's own personal experience of one of the most horrific and unjustifiable massacres in modern European history; the genocide of 130,000 people by burning and asphyxiation and the destruction of a sublimely beautiful Gothic city. In the preface-like first chapter, Vonnegut says that for over twenty years he tried to write about his experience; of leaving the airtight slaughterhouse in Dresden, where he was detained as a prisoner of war to find a moonscape, littered with incinerated bodies, 'seeming little logs lying around' (Vonnegut 2000, 130), upon whom, fire was streaming from the sky. He felt that he failed because he was himself unable to describe, to recreate in language, the true terror of the experience. Intriguingly, and with implications for the concept of terror in literature, Vonnegut eventually found a way to 'speak' the unspeakable when he approached events from a Trafalmadorian perspective, from the absurd idealism of the fourth dimension where everything is upside down and inside out in terms of the reality of time and space.

In achieving this perspective he expresses through the character of Billy, that in the process of trying to re-invent things, 'science fiction was a great help' (Vonnegut 2000, 73). Consequently, Dresden after the burning is 'like the moon' (Vonnegut 2000, 29). The rest of the world might as well be invaded by aliens, and the mental asylum appropriately becomes an experimental spacecraft. But this is nothing compared to the so-called 'real world', for which Vonnegut evidently relies on Gothic language. On Earth '[t]here was so much to see – dragon's teeth, killing machines, corpses with bare feet that were blue and ivory. So it goes' (Vonnegut 2000, 47). Billy goes even so far to conclude that 'Earthlings must be the terrors of the Universe' (Vonnegut 2000, 84). According to the character Kilgore Trout, novelist and expert, 'there really were vampires and werewolves and goblins and angels and so on, but they were in the Fourth Dimension',

in line with Blake's theories in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (Vonnegut 2000, 75); existing there, supposedly, as abject projections of those terrifying aspects of our being, not allocated reality in our linear narratives of time. As we know, much of the intensity of the Gothic lies in the fact that its monsters and aliens often offer us an insight into ourselves; us 'humans': equally grotesque creatures, who produce 'shit and piss and language' (Vonnegut 2000, 51) as this novel demonstrates.

While Vonnegut's use of perspectivism may be related to the 'macro-text' of many different genres, most notably, science fiction, the formal heterogeneity of *Slaughterhouse 5* forms a dominant inclination toward the tenets of both the Gothic and postmodernism. What distinguishes this text, however, is that in a typically Gothic-postmodernist manner, it works on the distortion and perversion of particular realities that can only be considered as sublime or unrepresentable instances of terror; namely: genocide, loss of self, and death. Vonnegut's ability to recreate momentous terror is based on the temporary acceptance of the Trafalmadorian perspective and of their theory of life and time, in which 'there is no why. This moment [like every other] simply is' (Vonnegut 2000, 55). Moments are 'blobs of amber' (Vonnegut 2000, 61). They are preserved forever in the fourth dimension, which unfortunately those on Earth refuse to see. 'All moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist' (Vonnegut 2000, 19). Botting notes that the spatial and temporal separation of past and present is a key feature of the Gothic novel (Botting, 1996, 4). Usually, this involves the return of the past to haunt the present. This pertains to the Gothic principles of this novel. The terrible happenings of the war and their impact on Billy Pilgrim are presented outside of time, and from a liminal, still terrified perspective. However, they remain haunting and terrifying to him, whether he is in a past, present or future moment.

A striking example of this is when the older Billy is reminded by a song played at The Lion's Club, of four German guards he once saw in Dresden, who like Billy were 'destined' to survive the bombing. On witnessing the apocalyptic scene, the four men drew together with open mouths resembling 'a silent film of a barber shop quartet' (Vonnegut 2000, 130). This haunting and silent image has the effect of stirring his memory and emotion and spurring him on to escape in another trip through time. The significance of their effect on

Billy, however, is in their silence. Evoking the image of *The Scream*, we can imagine as readers, those four terrified faces, on confronting the unimaginable: their devastated city strewn with the mutilated corpses of people they knew and even loved. The overwhelming power of terror, with its expansive effects on the imagination, is here represented. The image of open-mouthed silence clearly has significant potential in terms of constructing some concept of an encounter with the unrepresentable. By un-representing it, in other words, by presenting the human, silent, aweful but terrified response to it without direct reference, the intensity of the unrepresentable may be characterised and is effectively presented as a presence in absence, an un-representation.

In this way, with a focus on non-verbal reactions to the unrepresentable, many terrifying events are presented and the narrative effectively becomes a Gothic-postmodernist tempest of swirling instants which flip time on its head and present death, terror, and loss of reality as recurring themes that haunt Billy's life through his internal deterioration. In Vonnegut's handling of these issues, the significance is one shared by Gothic-postmodernist fictions. He manages to present that in-between of presentable and unrepresentable, the sublime union of the abstract and concrete, and to manipulate the dynamism of that space to contemplate the true powers of terror. In this, the central theme of the novel is introduced as immortality, the central motif as death and the central image as the ghost. And consequently, mortal terror is presented as fundamental to the novel, in what seems a consideration of Freud's insistence that death is unimaginable. According to Freud, it is impossible to conceive one's own death in the unconscious. It must always be witnessed as a spectator (Piven 2004, 37). In *Slaughterhouse 5*, Vonnegut performs a 'duty dance with death' and imagines the unimaginable, which can only be achieved from a defamiliarised perspective that is absurd and terrifying, so much so, that Billy commits himself to a mental asylum because he is too alarmed by the implications of his new perspective.

The repetition of the phrase 'so it goes' after every instance of death or ending in the novel, makes it strikingly clear that death is everywhere to the narrator. It is uttered, almost whispered, one hundred times or more in the novel, from the mention of Jesus' crucifixion to champagne bubbles popping and disappearing in a

glass. It is relevant that generally in the Gothic novel 'death is an enveloping presence…it is not conceived in linear relation to life, as the terminus of a long or short journey'. It interrupts, shocks, pervades and returns, and 'is sublime because it remains a terrifying mystery, not simply unknowable but linked with human desires that we wish to keep unknown' (Morris 1985, 308-9). In this novel, death, in its transcendence of time, is certainly an enveloping presence, despite what it is reduced to in Trafalmadorian philosophy. In the words of the narrator it is 'violet light', just as pre-birth is 'a red light and bubbling sounds' (Vonnegut 2000, 31). From his hauntological position, Billy would know.

This leads to an obvious interpretation of Billy as the undead; immortal; *nosferatu*, having transcended death and time. It is widely accepted that Vonnegut is recognisable for his suggestiveness and subtle allusions. He frequently uses the technique of planting images or sounds and reiterating them symbolically in the narrative, such as the bird who sings 'poo-tee-weet' as the sole voice in the silence that followed the massacre at Dresden, emphasising the unspeakable nature of the atrocity, and who pops up occasionally to remind us that 'there is nothing intelligent to say' about war. Similarly, when Billy awakens in his prison hospital bed, wearing a coat 'with a fur collar resembling a bat' (Vonnegut 2000, 99), we may take it as a subtle reference to the vampiric nature of his existence in the fourth dimension, likened also, as it happens to Christ's resurrected existence, which is invoked numerous times throughout the novel. When Billy meets the author Kilgore Trout and is told 'you looked like you realised you were standing on thin air' (Vonnegut 2000, 128), the theme of the immortal dead returned to life continues. And it runs throughout the novel, as '[h]e remembered shimmeringly' the experience of Dresden but didn't travel in time to the moment (Vonnegut 2000, 129). In and through this collage of allusions to death, haunting and vampiric immortality, Vonnegut's novel may be seen as a definitively Gothic-postmodernist text, one in which typically postmodernist ontological problems are explored via a Gothic aesthetic and the recreation of the liminality inherent to the experience of that king of terrors.

In Vonnegut's novel, we encounter not just a Gothic depiction of the sublime terror of death in his theory of immortality; we also

receive a Gothic appropriation of something akin to Baudrillard's ideas on immortality, in a specifically postmodern context:

> We long ago stopped believing in the immortality of the soul, a deferred immortality. We no longer believe in that immortality which assumed a transcending of the end, an intense investment in the finalities of the beyond and a symbolic elaboration of death. What we want is the immediate realisation of immortality by all possible means (Baudrillard 1994, 89-90).

In its postmodernist preoccupation with terror and the effects of the Gothic sublime, *Slaughterhouse 5* might be considered as a Gothic-postmodernist re-imagining of immortality in the vein of Baudrillard's theories. Immortality for Billy is realisable in the fourth dimension and he suggests that it is realisable for us all. But immortality in the Gothic novel, as we know, is not all that satisfying. Often, it is the potential to transcend the mortal coil of life and not the transcendence of mortality in death that is the key object of desire propelling the fantasy elements of Gothic fictions. Though death is that 'king of terrors', it is desirable. Life may be considered an equalled paradox, its terrors to be evaded and yearned for simultaneously.

Importantly, suggestiveness in relation to the notion of spectrality also extends to other people in the story, reproduced by the same techniques. When Billy skips back to a moment when he visited the Grand Canyon with his parents, in the cavern 'something ghostly floated in the air' (Vonnegut 2000, 65). It turns out, however, to be the suspense-killing radium dial of his father's watch. At this point, the reference would seem irrelevant, that is, until Billy encounters, in the following pages 'starving Russians with faces like radium dials' (Vonnegut 2000, 66). However, all of these inclusions of spectrality, while uncanny in their own right, lack the eerie, terrifying spirit of the most startling of ghosts in the novel, the victims of the war. In a typically Gothic manner, Vonnegut disturbs the reader with an ethereal and uncanny account of the unnatural presence of Jews and others killed and mutilated during Hitler's regime of extermination. At one point in the novel, we are told that the soldiers in Dresden were given some essential items: candles and soap; items which 'had a ghostly similarity' (Vonnegut 2000, 69). The true terror is revealed for those readers still in suspense, that these items were 'German made', 'from the fat of rendered Jews and gypsies and fairies and communists and other enemies of the State. So it goes' (Vonnegut 2000, 69).

Terror of the unrepresentable becomes representable horror, when we realise the brutal, repulsive reality of human processing that defined the holocaust. The horror returns to terror once again however, when the room Billy enters is 'illumined by candlelight' (Vonnegut 2000, 69). The sinister glow of the candles sends chills down the spine on a par with any original Gothic tale. It is an illustration, on the most disturbing of levels, of the Gothic sublime.

Many critics of terror in the Gothic acknowledge that terror, propelled by violence can also exemplify horror. While the power of terror is subtly stronger and longer lasting, like a curious aroma, horror forms in the instant of the apprehension of the cause of terror, in Burke's words: death. Vonnegut's appropriation of this concept in his representation of his experience is deeply insightful and rather poetic. In relation to this, it is in the process of narrative reversal that Vonnegut excels, possibly inspiring Amis's technique. Like Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the Gothic novel has been described by Botting as 'an inscription neither of darkness nor of light, a delineation neither of reason and morality, nor of superstition and corruption, neither of good nor evil, but of both at the same time' (Botting 1996, 9). Narrative reversal makes this point succinctly. At one point in the novel, Billy sees a war movie backwards (Vonnegut 2000, 53). In this context, war is 'peace and help'. He is a witness to '[t]he American fliers [who] turned in their uniforms and became high school kids' and extrapolates that then Hitler and in fact everybody 'turned into a baby and all humanity without exception, conspired biologically to produce two perfect people named Adam and Eve, he supposed' (Vonnegut 2000, 54). The irony in this is quite brutal but it denotes an unimaginable situation in possibly the only conceivable terms available. Significantly, the terror and horror in this are not lost. They linger for a little while longer as we decode the representation.

J.M.S. Tompkins notes that 'the Gothic flame was often carried in a safety lamp' (Varma 1957, xiv). This corresponds to King's more modern theory that 'the fear face of our imagination' is often, having outgrown childhood, kept in a similar cage (King 2000, 143). In Vonnegut's novel, his postmodernist narrative seems the likely cage for the Gothic apprehension of the terror of war, genocide and mental illness; a special kind of cage to contain the representation of that 'paradox of an object which, in the very field of representation, provides a view, in a negative way of the dimension of what is

unrepresentable'; that which may allow us to 'experience the impossibility of the thing' (Žižek 1998, 203). Thus, *Slaughterhouse 5* may be regarded as a Gothic-postmodernist work, which has to do with explorations of self and reality and the terror of the end and with issues that we cannot know or directly represent thereby recreating the sublime experience of terror for the desensitised postmodern reader and playing a invaluable role in replacing the heterogeneity of postmodern culture and the Gothic of contemporary literature.

Sublime Encounters with a Dark Untimely Self: *Time's Arrow*

Following from Vonnegut's thanatological concerns it seems quite appropriate to incorporate Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* into this discussion, as a Gothic-postmodernist novel that terrifyingly re-visions the concept of immortality through the transposition of life and time.

The most common theme of fantastic literatures is immortality. The Gothic, as 'the initial expression of the fantastic' (Monleon 1990, 141) in certain postmodernist texts, demonstrates the most profound exploration of this theme. From ghosts to man-made monsters, to vampires, the theme of death/ immortality follows through to lost souls, the possibility of a fourth dimension, and now, as we see in these particular texts, to the complete exchange of time and death. In the Baudrillardian sense of the concept 'you only live twice', Amis's central character Dr. Tod Friendly, or at least part of him, escapes death at the opening of the story, and begins to live his life in reverse. Not only this, but he becomes aware, gradually of his own 'preternatural purpose' which is '[t]o dream a race. To make a people from the weather. From thunder and from lightning. With gas, with electricity, with shit, with fire' (Amis 2003, 128). While, this issue, reminiscent of themes from Shelley's *Frankenstein*, remains quite abstract throughout the first part of the novel, the atmosphere of mystery and evil and the fictional reality that our main character has just expired, sets a Gothic scene and tone to lead us in suspense back in time towards the terrifying atrocities of Nazi Germany and the horror of Auschwitz.

From the perspective of inverted time and space, the narrator illustrates that for him life is like a horror movie that he is forced to watch. Significantly, due to the fact that everything is in reverse,

reminiscent of Vonnegut's narrative appropriation of the idea in the film reversal episode of *Slaughterhouse 5*, all help in life becomes destruction:

> Imagine me, curled up within, feebly gagging and trying to avert my eyes…I'm taking on the question of violence, this most difficult question. Intellectually, I can just about accept that violence is salutary, that violence is good. But I can find nothing in me that assents to its ugliness. I was always this way, I realise, even back in Wellport. A child's breathless wailing calmed by the firm slap of the father's hand, a dead ant revived by the careless press of a passing sole, a wounded finger healed and sealed by the knife's blade: anything like that made me flinch and veer. But the body I live and move in, Tod's body, feels nothing (Amis 2003, 34).

To concretise the terror of this condition, he presents mundane reality in the most horrible and grotesque of manners. In an arguably Gothic-postmodernist and particularly Beckettian way, we are informed that '[c]orporeal life is not without its indignities. We still take it in the ass every morning' (Amis 2003, 52): 'Here it comes again, consciousness, weary, multiform, intolerable' (Amis 2003, 78).

These existentialist insights are of course significant in terms of Tod's role as a postmodern Dr. Frankenstein. In this 'topsy turvy world', it is not possible to end life but it is possible to create it, and Tod, who like Victor Frankenstein is 'famed for [his] quiet dedication' (Amis 2003, 142), does this in the most grotesque way: 'Soon Witney and I were busy elsewhere with a hacksaw and a medium chisel attaching a farcically mangled leg to an unknown and shrouded figure, at the thigh in a kind of rain of blood, a snow of bone' (Amis 2003, 93). To the narrator, Tod's work 'looks like hell… blood and bodies and death and power' (Amis 2003, 87), and in such passages, Tod is Prometheus, scourged by the creative power of fire. Significantly, this fire is born of terror as can be deduced from his claim that the triumph of Auschwitz was that they 'found the sacred fire that hides in the human heart' (Amis 2003, 132).

Tod, as we know from reversing the inverted narrative in order to make sense of what is going on, realises the terror of his offences and seeks escape through acquiring a new identity and exiling himself to the United States. Nevertheless, he is forever haunted by his past, perhaps manifested in the form of our narrator, his 'secret sharer', who knows that Tod's terror of his past (the future in this textual framework) is like a vision of 'rat showers and devil

winds and the mad strobes of Venusian lightning' (Amis 2003, 65). His journey to/ from Rome is charged by a 'vaudevillian menace… [t]he locomotive, black and chimerical… [until he reaches] the Stazione Termini like an anti-cathedral with its soot-stained glass and vault-like coldness and smell of earth's crust or hell's rafters' (Amis 2003, 118). The Gothic undertones here are far from obscure and they become more dominant as Tod, represented as an archetypal Gothic anti-hero, seeks redemption and sanctuary in '[t]he monastery… full of wayfarers like me, ghosts with half a name (I feel I'm between names at the moment)' (Amis 2003, 119).

This is the textual situation in which Amis can achieve in his readers, terror in realisation, and also realisation in terror, through a Gothic-postmodernist approach to the sublime and the unrepresentable. The ghosts, which we encounter and identify with in the novel, are unnameable and unspeakable in that they have no voice of their own that can be heard as a unified entity. Effectively, they are another example of the Gothic-postmodernist hauntological, supernatural, extra-sensual 'bodiless bodies' (Derrida 1994, 5). At points in the narrative, the narrator and Tod fuse into a single consciousness. Consequently, the narrator's existence can also be analysed hauntologically, particularly in relation to the reversed narrative whereby time is 'out of joint' (Derrida 1994, 5): '*I'm* between names' and this becomes increasingly significant when analysing the nature of evil in this story.

Tod's confession is important. He admits to the monk, who 'stared at him with his bleeding eyes' (and who could have been taken directly from any early Gothic Romance of either schools of Radcliffe or Lewis): 'I'm nothing. I'm dead. I'm just… I'm not even…' (Amis 2003, 120). 'I have been to hell' (Amis 2003, 121). His Faustian offence, his ultimate sin, is later described by the narrator as he elaborately tells us how in Auschwitz, Tod and others 'dealt with people improvisionally and with desperate brilliance' and did the unusual thing: 'conjure[d] a multitude from the sky above the river' (Amis 2003, 139). Tod's associate in perpetrating the terrible crimes was Uncle Pepi: the man who has a box of human eyes on his desk, the man whom it is 'not uncommon to see slipping out of his darkroom carrying a head partly wrapped in an old newspaper' (Amis 2003, 142). Significantly, this narrative can be interpreted, as it progresses, as acquiring multiple significant 'old-style' Gothic

attributes, most notably, grotesque horror as an expression of the evil that lay behind the atrocities of Nazi Germany. Throughout all of this, Tod and the narrator as one, wear 'the twisted cross', not just a swastika but a satanic, anti-Christian symbol, an emblem of pure wickedness. Furthermore, Tod mutates into the source of terror in his own dreams, '[t]he enormous figure in the white coat, his black boots straddling many acres' (Amis 2003, 48) 'in his wake, a blizzard of wind and sleet, like a storm of human souls' (Amis 2003, 16). And as he transforms into a monster from beyond even Shelley's imagination it would seem that the traditional Gothic sublime landscape is transposed onto the story.

In terms of analysing *Time's Arrow* as a Gothic-postmodernist text, Tod might be better understood as a postmodernist version of an amalgamation of Dr. Jekyll and Dr. Faustus. It has been made quite clear from the beginning that a Gothic doubling has occurred in the character of the ironically named Tod Friendly. While at first this may seem to present a relatively innocent perspectivism, the darker side of this *doppelgänger*, the parasitic narrator, is progressively revealed. Hints are given in the early stages of the novel as we are offered an image of Dr. Tod Friendly doing his job; 'spooning tumour into the human body' (Amis 2003, 97). As he performs surgery, the chord of his headlamp 'goes down my back, under my surgical gown and wiggles around behind me, like the tail of a monkey, the tail of a fiend' (Amis 2003, 85). This impressionistic picture of a concealed bestial spirit is analogous to the uncanny double that Stevenson tries to account for in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*:

> He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance, something displeasing; something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked and yet I scarcely know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He is an extraordinary looking man and yet I can really name nothing out of the way… And it's not for want of memory, for I declare I can see him this moment. (Stevenson 2002, 9)

King observes that this uncanny feature of many Gothic and horror 'baddies' is what Kipling would later refer to as 'the mark of the Beast', which would fit Hyde into the category of Werewolf as an exploration of metamorphosis, animalistic instinct and evil. In this case, however, the bestial nature of the protagonist, though clearly present, is quite tame, and the focus develops more on the idea of the

doppelgänger: 'your mirror, which is your reflection, which is your double, which is your secret sharer' (Amis 2003, 17).

In the opening pages of the novel, the scene is set for the terrible exchange that occurs in the central character as 'he awakens with a pop to discover that 'this body I'm in won't take orders from this will of mine' (Amis 2003, 13). The doubling, as we now see presented in the form of the separation of body and soul, is thus begun and is intensified throughout the narrative. The situation becomes quite interesting when this 'soulful' consciousness, this 'secret sharer', grows increasingly independent of Tod; telling us often that he does not 'see eye to eye with Tod on all issues' (Amis 2003, 39). And also: that '[y]ou'd think it might be quite relaxing, having (effectively) no will, and no body anyway, through which to exercise it… yet there is always the countervailing desire to put yourself forward, to take your stand as the valuable exception' (Amis 2003, 49). The two eventually become so separate, that Irene, Tod's lover, declares that, like Faust, 'he has no soul' (Amis 2003, 62), and while Tod does his terrifying work of mutilating bodies at the hospital, the narrator reveals that 'at such times, I conclude, the soul can only hang in the dark like a white bat, and let darkness have the day… Beneath, the body does what it does, in mechanical exertions of will and sinew, while the soul waits' (Amis 2003, 83).

The Gothic use of extremes in tone and imagery in Amis's novel is designed to be obvious, but this does not qualify a classification of the text as part of the Gothic-postmodernist genre or 'mode'. It is only when we consider the novel's heterogeneous nature that its gothicism is evident – in other words: its multiplicity of dark perspectives; its obsession with sublime terror and subjectivity; its *doppelgängers*; its ghosts; its monsters; its Promethean concerns; its Romantic appropriation of sublime nature; and its multiple layered approach to storytelling. However, Amis's may be considered a unique brand of Gothic, in that it does not negotiate any possibilities of reality. It does not return from the world of evil and the supernatural but lingers there, eerily, even as we close the final page of the text. The novel is distinctively Gothic-postmodernist for this reason. It deals with the Gothic concept of terror in the loss of reality and self, in postmodern contexts, to include both narrative and historical, in a Gothic manner.

On the source of this loss of self and its unrepresentability, it is possible to consider the situation as paralleling that of Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray. At one point in the novel, the mysterious narrator informs us that 'Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection – with his own soul. If you ever close a deal with the devil and he wants to take something from you in return, don't let him take your mirror' (Amis 2003, 17). It is safe to assume that this is the reason why early in the novel 'Tod can't stand the sight of his own reflection' (Amis 2003, 17), in opposition to his later extreme vanity. As the narrative advances and he becomes younger, he grows increasingly self-obsessed: 'As he moves through the house, mirrors monitor him. Him. It. This, this: *this* is the body he primes and mortifies and shrewdly inspects in all the rippling funhouse mirrors of Portugal' (Amis 2003, 114). Again the mirror as a Gothic-postmodernist motif emerges as central to preoccupations with self as the origin of terror, and significantly, we see that it evolves along the same lines as much Gothic literature. Reflection in itself is a non-verbal representation, an abstract conceptual image of a given event or subject. Through inversion, the narrative itself becomes a representation of the unrepresentable and may be regarded as having connections with the sublime in the sense of the terror inherent in our illusions of identity.

But Tod's condition is, explicitly, a Faustian one, in which his soul has been bargained away to the powers of evil. It wanders around, ironically, like the legendary immortal Jew, corrupting souls and doing Satan's work. He has been effectively taken over by an enigmatic darker self – identifiable only as our treacherous narrator who deviously informs us that now there was 'no secret passenger on the back of the bike… No. I was one' (Amis 2003, 124). This 'I' as it turns out, was in control of Tod during this dark period in his life, the source of all his fear, shame and anguish. It was the evil inside Tod and is revealed to us as such as we move back to the time to before Tod received absolution for his offences from the mysterious, stigmatic monk in the Italian monastery. After/ before this significant Gothic moment in the novel, a change occurs both in tone and in the character of Tod. He is no longer a 'big depositor in the bank where fear is kept' (Amis 2003, 63). He becomes the arrogant Odilo Unverdorben and now speaks of '[m]y lustreless black boots' (Amis 2003, 136), commenting that '[d]eath was pink but yellowish and

contained in a glass cylinder labelled *phenol.*… and the eastward sky looked like phenol' (Amis 2003, 137).

Like Billy Pilgrim, his existence is outside of time: 'the human dimension, which makes us everything we are' (Amis 2003, 76), but he is unique because it is suggested that he is something inhuman. Disturbingly, he complains that in the camp, 'not once did he receive thanks', apart from 'the old man hugging and kissing my black boots; a child clinging to me after I held her down for Uncle Pepi' (Amis 2003, 144). When the reader naturally reverses this piece of narrative, the terror of his offences are staggering, and chilling, increasingly so, when he claims that he is in it 'because I love the human body and all living things' (Amis 2003, 144). It is something of a relief, therefore, when we read the following:

> Fully alone.
> I who have no name and no body – I have slipped out from under him and am now scattered above like flakes of ash blonde human hair. No longer can I bear with the ruined God betrayed and beaten by his own magic. Calling on powers best left unsummoned, he took human beings apart - and then he put them back together again… He put us back together' (Amis 2003, 156).

We realise slowly that 'he' is not part of him anymore because Odilo is a child now 'in his cot shaped like a gutter' (Amis 2003, 156). He eerily adds: 'I'll always be here. But he's on his own' (Amis 2003, 156).

Interestingly, many Gothic protagonists are medical men. *Time's Arrow* holds that doctors are 'life's gatekeepers' (Amis, 2003, 11); 'vigour experts' (Amis 2003, 12); mediators between man and nature – 'soldiers of a sacred biology' (Amis 2003, 86); 'dispensers of existence' (Amis 2003, 103). Amis's initial reference in the text to a justifiable fear of doctors is based on an uncanny experience that bears a strong relation to the concept of mortality. As life's gatekeeper, the figure of the doctor (and this includes Tod) is, and commonly in Gothic fiction, accessible as a possessor of supernatural powers in that 'he' struggles against the natural processes of death; often through his power to resurrect with 'the kiss of life'. However, through this inverted and grotesque Gothic-postmodernist narrative, with its violence, terror, horror and dark irony, they are given to us as monster-like as their help becomes torture. Significantly, Tod is described as 'wearing a skull's smile' (Amis 2003, 89). Set against the

Gothic surroundings of the hospital with its 'stares of vigil, the smell of altered human flesh' (Amis 2003, 33), this functions as a typically Gothic-postmodernist foreboding of the violent terrors in the work that Dr. Tod Friendly is about to do.

The principal symbolism associated with this terrifying Gothic image of the doctor relates to immortality, the ability to transcend and reverse death; to create 'in violence and fire' (Amis 2003, 51). Although, in Amis's novel, this transcendence is not supernatural in the conventional Gothic sense of the word, undeath is presented as a terrifying experience from the perspective of the duplicate consciousness of the protagonist, who at the moment of his own death, begins to re-live his life in reverse. 'Undeath' extends to all characters in the text. Death becomes birth and vice versa for the babies who 'no longer smile…They go to the hospitals…[w]here else? Two people go into that room, that room with the forceps, the soiled bib. Two go in. But only one comes out. Oh, the poor mothers, you can see how they feel during the long goodbye, the long goodbye to babies' (Amis 2003, 41). This may be conceived as the Gothic-postmodernist enterprise in one sentence. In a postmodern context, life may be regarded as a quest for symbolic death, subsequently, a ghostly or vampiric existence. The people inhabiting Gothic-postmodernist worlds, usually, have all been or are all 'dead' and are striving towards something new, some concept of birth.

The Jewish people of Amis's story in particular may be considered the archetypal victims of this Gothic-postmodernist novel, replacing the traditional figure of the Gothic heroine. In life, following their murder, they remain spectral beings. Their destiny is hopeless. It is non-existence. Through the stethoscope 'their hearts sound far away' (Amis 2003, 131). This condition is illustrated in very poetic terms by Amis as he inserts the potent image of the starry sky above the Vistula as the locus of death before life. In Auschwitz, he claims: '[n]ot for elegance did I come to love the evening sky, hellish red with the gathering souls' (Amis 2003, 128). He also speaks of his work in a German hospital where 'our mistakes' filled the evening sky with 'hydrocephalic clouds and the wrongly curved palate of the west' (Amis 2003, 155). He relates quite poignantly that the Jews in the camp walk around with their heads bent back. '*I*, Odilo', knows why they do it: 'they are looking for the souls of their mothers and their

fathers, their women and their children, gathering in the heavens – awaiting human form and union… (Amis 2003, 131).

Much like the aforementioned novels, in *Time's Arrow*, terrifying events take place in a liminal space, both in terms of textual space but also in terms of the subjective condition of the characters. Auschwitz is a prime example as the ultimate otherworldly, liminal place of terror, horror and death. It 'was a secret. It covered 14000 acres, and it was invisible. It was there and it wasn't there. It was outside' (Amis 2003, 147). In Auschwitz, '[t]ime had no arrow, not here' (Amis 2003, 151). This liminality, in terms of theories of terror and the sublime reaction in the subject, also emerges as a key theme in Gothic-postmodernist writing. In Amis's case, similar to all of the texts so far analysed in this study, it becomes the space in which the subject, terrified, can forge a path (whether illusory or not) to self knowledge and realisation. This is the condition in which Amis's narrator, the evil, secret sharer, fulfils his 'countervailing desire to put [himself] forward' (Amis 2003, 49), to take a body as his own, as one that does his bidding (Amis 2003, 102). Here, in this Gothic setting where people are created in the fire of ovens that resemble 'tragically burly insects', 'eight feet tall and made out of rust' (Amis 2003, 129); where '[t]he dead look so dead' (Amis 2003, 129); here: 'Anus Mundi' where there is 'ordure everywhere' and '[r]ats as big as cats' (Amis 2003, 125), '*I*, Odilo' is capable of the terrible atrocities alluded to already in *Slaughterhouse 5*: the pillage of the Jews' gold teeth, fat and hair, the acknowledgement of the need to rape the bald women before they are gassed, and all that makes him 'the gravamen of the dreams of Tod Friendly, of John Young, where the half-dead stand in line and the white-coated figure sweats with power, cruelty and beauty, with all that is entirely unmanageable' (Amis 2003, 83).

Significantly, the question of responsibility for Odilo's terrible offences is thrown into question by the narrative. Much as in the case of Dorian Gray, Beckett's consciousnesses and Auster's puppet boy, Peter Stillman, the nature of human will and reflexive sovereignty is presented as a philosophical problem. In his younger years, Tod/ Odilo is 'unexceptional morally and liable to do anything, good or bad once under the cover of numbers' (Amis 2003, 164-5) and this validates the issue as one of influence. While our narrator, the enigmatic and shadowy self, in his non-verbal, repressed existence, is claiming that he feels 'like an ardent ghost, like a mute shedding tears

of eagerness' (Amis 2003, 63), clearly struggling with his desires to have control over Tod's actions, he does put forward the idea that '[p]robably human cruelty is fixed and eternal. Only styles change' (Amis 2003, 49). Even when human actions appear to be 'good' on the surface, what lies beneath is often destructive. '[D]estruction' he continues – is difficult, is slow, 'Creation as I said, is no trouble at all' (Amis 2003, 26).

In this traditional Gothic, counter-narrative approach to morality, there is no good and bad but both at the same time, as we see through Amis's 'sinister reversal'. By presenting us with morality in reverse, he is illustrating (in a manner that is darkly comparable to that of Blake) how destruction often is a form of creation and vice versa. This realisation is an uncanny one as it is centred on our repressed knowledge that we are all inherently bad as we are good, propounded by the religious myth of man's fall from grace. Amis includes a satirical observation on this when the narrator asserts that Tod's Garden of Eden (the garden of his home) 'was heaven when we started out… don't blame me' (Amis 2003, 26). Don't blame the serpent if man has free will.

This is a conventionally Gothic issue. Thompson notes that:

> In a Romantic context then, Gothic literature may be seen as expressive of an existential terror generated by a schism between a triumphantly secularised philosophy of evolving good and an abiding obsession with the Medieval concept of guilt laden, sin-ridden man (Thompson 1981, 37).

In a postmodern context, this schism can be seen as having reoccurred. In the increasingly 'progressive' and 'liberal' world that we have known since the revolutionary sixties, the prevalence of war, genocide and poverty, conflict with our obsession with democracy and 'evolving good'. The existential terror that we now face is both personal and universal and our secularism has effectively increased this terror as we no longer have those religious outlets for expunging our guilt and responsibility. This is, quite possibly, positive. Nevertheless, it is presented in this novel from a uniquely postmodernist angle, in which, a former Gothic tradition of dislocating time and space through a succession of hauntings and prophetic visions is transposed onto the narrative form itself.

The Gothic-postmodernist textual world materializes yet again in this novel as off-centre, detached from any fixed concepts of time

and space. Punter and Byron have observed, in their brief examination of the relationship between the Gothic and postmodernism, that in the postmodern text 'the uncertainties of a world in which narrative is never sure or reliable not only suggest an origin in the Gothic but also resort to Gothic means in the development of the texts themselves' (Punter & Byron 2007, 53). They also note that, like postmodernism, 'the Gothic has always had to do with disruptions of scale and perspective' (Punter & Byron 2007, 50). *Slaughterhouse 5* and *Time's Arrow* in particular present further instances of this overlap and of the cross-dimensional narrative status of the postmodernist text, which seems to have roots in the Gothic. I would suggest, however, that this overlap is indicative of something much more significant. It is a dialogical space in which a new genre, has been developed, one in which postmodern terrors can be explored and expunged and in which the sublime unrepresentable is articulated and dramatised by the interplay of Gothic motifs and techniques. Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* also suggests a valid model of the genre, where the terror of terrorism becomes the source of the sublime realisation of self and identity in the disillusioning context of postcolonial Britain. This model will be explored in the coming chapter.

Chapter 8: Gothic Metafiction: *The Satanic Verses*

To consider *The Satanic Verses* as a Gothic-postmodernist text, it is necessary to reiterate the previously suggested re-conceptualised version of both the Gothic and postmodernism that includes a philosophy of sublime terror. It is also important to note that as a hybridised postmodernist novel, mixing many generic styles from magical realism to Menippean satire it does not conventionally operate as a schema of fantastic themes and devices which encapsulate the postmodern, postcolonial condition. Instead, the novel challenges all attempts at ideological categorisation, in its own hybridity and in its own self-consciousness, which blends the forms of the Gothic and postmodernist text to materialise its own individual style of literature. In this, it also challenges certain Western cultural ideologies based on wholeness and unity in relation to both perception and subjectivity. However, its main achievement is in its appropriation of the Gothic mode to try to represent and challenge the violence and terror of postmodernity and this will be the focus of this chapter.

The familiar classification of *The Satanic Verses* as a magical realist text may be a good starting point to introduce the concept of genre in relation to this novel. Many critics share the opinion that Rushdie was among the first authors who brought magical realism into English writing. Magical realism is a style that is identifiable in its depiction of the sublime energy that exists in the co-presence of the marvellous and the tedious of the everyday. In classifying a work as such, it is this co-presence of the magical and the real that is all important. As a term in literature, magical realism was first used to describe the work of Gabriel Garcia Marquez who was an admitted influence on Rushdie. Classifying Rushdie's work as magical realism based on its relationship to that of Marquez, is however, problematic, mainly because the South American writer considered himself less a magical realist than a 'social realist' writer. As a further point of note, Roger Clark, makes an insightful point about the magical realist aspects of Rushdie's work, stating that '[i]f Rushdie were strictly a

magical realist writer, eruptions from some other world would not be as disruptive and problematic as they are' in his work (Clark 2001, 24).

From a similar position, and with a view to relating the novel to the macro-text of Gothic-postmodernism, I propose that it may be more accurate to think of magical realism as a technique, or a style and not a genre. I also agree with critics like Gelder who assert that certainly, it is possible to consider magical realism as Gothic. Often in literature, magical realism reanimates the traumas and terrors of colonial legacies as part of a broader thematic framework that is arguably for the most part Gothic. This is notable particularly in the work of Marquez and Jorge Luis Borges and is also evident in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. It may also be worth noting in relation to the classification of the novel as magical realism that Islamic mysticism is by nature magical, and as a large part of Rushdie's literary philosophy, it may represent how he is following the Gothic tradition, observed by Thomas Willard, of making 'a cult of the occult' (Willlard 1998, 165).

With this in mind, McHale's categorisation of *The Satanic Verses* as the 'Postmodernist Fantastic', which speaks of key characteristics of this genre such as the 'mythification or fictionalisation of sacred or profane levels' (McHale, qtd in Fletcher 1994, 155) is quite interesting. His idea of the hybrid genre that he coins is exemplified in his reference to the quote from Eliot that Rushdie includes in his epigraph to *Grimus*: 'Go, go, go, said the bird; human kind/ Cannot bear very much reality' (Rushdie 2007, i). There is one inherent problem in McHale's definition, however, and that is that postmodernist fantastic is a redundant term. In postmodernist literature, as has been already discussed in the last chapter, the majority of the text does not pertain to reality, usually due to the postmodernist acceptance that no 'reality' exists. Todorov suggests that the emergence of modernism and the breakdown of reality in art and literature around the same time led to the death of fantastic literature and the birth of a new literature in which 'the fantastic becomes the rule and not the exception' (Todorov 19873, 173). We see this new mode of literature exemplified in works such as *The Satanic Verses*, in which for Gibreel, 'fictions were walking around wherever he went… fictions masquerading as real human beings' (Rushdie 1998, 192).

On the other hand, it is clear why Hutcheon considers the novel a postmodernist text. It is effectively historiographic metafiction, which focuses on the textuality of the history in which it is ultimately grounded. Hutcheon's view emphasises the 'critical potential' of postmodernism and of Rushdie's novel - noting that it lacks a specific political agenda but is more focused on deconstruction: 'destabilising the centre without privileging the margins' (Hutcheon, qtd in, Fletcher 1994, 5). To view the novel as Gothic-postmodernism, it is necessary to see that it has both a specific political agenda, while, pertaining generally also to the human condition. For this reason, Rushdie's postcolonial critique of immigrant society in London should be regarded as operating as part of a grander evaluation of the terror of being lost in a meaningless universe that is ironically imbued with obsessionalist, fundamentalist false 'meaning' and epistemic violence. Clark considers Rushdie in this respect as being 'a metacist', mainly due to his consistent use of displacement to create metafictional distance (Clark 2001, 19). Possibly, this is an attempt on Rushdie's part to deny, however futile that may be, fundamentalist readings of his work, thereby maintaining its hybridity of form and achieving a realisation in the reader that he/she is not at the centre of its stories but in fact part of the heteroglossia of the text.

As a historiographical novel, postmodern 'reality' is one of many historical contexts that it accounts for and plays with. The novel clearly identifies an increasingly reflexive public sphere and the concept of the virtual dimensions of the self that affluent societies have become aware of through media and technology. Its account, however, is driven by a Gothic imagination (and sarcasm) as we are presented with 'that ol' devil music': the advertising jingles created by John Maslama (Rushdie 1998, 191), and the 'remote control culture' of the present:

> [the] gizmo, was a Procrustean bed for the twentieth century; it chopped down the heavyweight and stretched out the slight until all the sets emissions, commercials, murders, game shows, the thousand and one varying joys and terrors of the real and the imagined, acquired and equal weight… the box was full of freaks… bizarre creatures who appeared to have been crossbred with different types of industrial machinery… It put a severe dent in his [Saladin] idea of the normal, average quality of the real (Rushdie 1998, 405-6).

Gelder has commented on the nature of terror and the Gothic in relation to contemporary concepts of reality by saying that '[o]nce, horror was condemned to be otherworldly: but now… it inhabits the very fabric of ordinary life, daily picking away at the limits of reason and the aspirations underpinning "moral improvement"… gaining new identities along the way' (Gelder 2002, 2). It is very much a part of postmodern life, so much so that it is no longer noticeable. Another striking metafictional picture that Rushdie creates in relation to this idea is that of a 'brightly lit video store. Several sets have been left on in the windows; the camera, most delirious of narcissists, watches TV creating for an instant, an infinite recession of television sets, diminishing to a point' (Rushdie 1998, 455). As an accurate snapshot of the postmodern condition of hyperreality imbued with its own subtle sense of terror, this shows, like the other snapshots of historical or 'real' events in the novel, that *The Satanic Verses* is bound up in a number of particular histories. These are presented as different worlds through performative narrative, contrasting and paralleling with each other, demonstrating the textuality of each and their relationship to each other.

The narrator comments, however, that this is not in fact history, but 'something stranger' (Rushdie 1998, 210) and we gradually realise that the histories presented have something in common: terror. In one historiographical account in the novel, we are offered the story of Ayesha's pilgrimage with the faithful, which is based on the historical pilgrimage of Naseem Fatima, who in 1983 led 38 Muslim followers to drown in the Arabian Sea. Similarly, Rushdie includes reference to the Titlipur Massacre, which, like Fatima's pilgrimage, supports a revisioned portrait of modern history as one populated by monsters. In this, *The Satanic Verses* again presents itself as Gothic-postmodernism in that it is Gothic historiographic metafiction. It presents darkly and satirically the monstrosity of history in its deconstruction of the binaries between reality and fiction.

For further examples of the metafictional elements in the novel, it seems obvious to point to the origin of the satanic verses, which in itself might be measured as metafictional. In the novel 'the satirist', Baal, offers the verses as part of a poetry competition. Used as the title for the text, it suggests that essentially the novel is fiction about fiction fitting with the main concerns of metafictional writing with regards to highlighting the processes of fictional creation.

However, metafiction cannot be limited to any particular genre or defined in a concise way. It is a trend that can be identified in almost all novels and in postmodernist writing it has a mainly functional purpose as a vehicle for ontological exploration, and a tool for reshaping the reader's concepts of fiction and subsequently, reality. Generally, and in *The Satanic Verses* in particular, it is employed through the use of unconventional (in this case diabolical) narrative techniques, and the excessive use of perspectives and intertextuality. This draws attention to the 'aesthetic construction of the text…making the dialogic potential of the novel explicit' (Waugh 1984, 5).

To many, on first consideration, Rushdie's writing may seem a rejection of genre and classification. As a baggy monster of a novel, however, *The Satanic Verses* might be better understood, not as a rejection, but as a celebration of genres, of intertextuality, hybridity and the dissolution of fact and reality. Significantly, the same can be said of Gothic-postmodernism, which is saturated with excess and transgression and with the plurality of generic features often affecting the appearance of a baggy monster or mutant creation. Importantly, in terms of drawing links between this work and other novels, Cornwell suggests that Rushdie shares with Banville and Bulgakov 'a preoccupation with archangels and demons, angels and wings, and the tension between order and chaos' (Cornwell 1990, 193), and in this it *seems* that he too sees the Gothic elements of the text as strikingly clear. Of all three writers, he observes that they 'engage in unleashing diabolical figures on a modern city… share interests in the Satanic, the Faustian and (in some sense) the Fall, as well as in apocalypse, incarnation, reincarnation and fluidities of identity', have common influences in Goethe, Dante and Milton and operate on the framework of the dream/ nightmare (Cornwell 1990, 193). At this point one would think that he is leading to a definition of *The Satanic Verses* as a Gothic, if not a Gothic-postmodernist work, for its relationship to these other works through Gothic themes, influences and characteristics. Instead, however, he considers all three novels as 'fantastic', which he uses generically, ignoring the Gothic terror, among the other almost standard Gothic features, that he has just highlighted in the text.

Gothic terror, as it is manifested in Gothic-postmodernist works, functions as 'counter-narrative' in order to present the underside of our cultural and social values. The term 'counter-

narrative' is engendered by the Gothic on multiple levels, and in very many Gothic literary works, we see that it takes a primary dialogic position. It is not merely an invocation of a set of conventions that run against the grain of dominant ideologies or narratives, but also an exploration of the sublime in relation to existence and subjectivity markedly based around the concept of marginal experiences such as terror itself, that experience in which 'the doors of perception are cleansed' (Blake 1975, xv). In a way, the experience of terror goes against the 'normal', banal experiences of day-to-day life, in which imagination and subsequently being are repressed according to the moral or social codes of our postmodern community. Parallel to this, is the function of the Gothic the Gothic-postmodernist text, as it operates to challenge *grande narrative* by inducing primitive experiences of being or reality in the reader. The Gothic concentration on the sublime faculty of the imagination is central in this; in particular, the imagination, as it stumbles upon the super-real or supernatural. According to Vijay Mishra, '[t]he Gothic sublime brought a dangerous negative principle of non-transcendental subjectivity' (Mishra 1994, 4). He notes how on encountering the Gothic sublime, '[t]he mind turns inward and regresses into the labyrinths of unconscious' (Mishra 1994, 255). Hence arises the conventional Gothic hallucinogenic feeling and the mood of melancholy, mourning anxiety in the text.

On one of its most salient levels, this novel can be seen to follow the pattern of all of the fictional works already discussed in this book. It is an examination of Gothic themes and terrors that relate to the creation and subsequent loss of self in the context of a postmodern world in which existence 'means' guilt; transience; evanescence and heterogeneous identity; fragmentation, and the deconstruction of individual cultural moral standards. One point that highlights this is Rushdie's reference to Henry James toward the end of the novel:

> Every man who has reached even his intellectual teens begins to suspect that life is no farce; that it is not genteel comedy even; that it flowers and fructifies on the contrary out of the profoundest tragic depths of the essential dearth in which its subject's roots are plunged. The natural inheritance of everyone who is capable of spiritual life is an unsubdued forest where the wolf howls and the obscene bird of the night chatters (Rushdie 1998, 397).

On many occasions, direct philosophical references are made to the questions of self that arise out of Saladin Chamcha's demonisation. 'The question of the mutability of the essence of the self' is the central problem according to the wise but moderate to the extreme Haji Sufyan, who quotes from Lucretious: '*Quodcumque suis mutatum finibus exit, continuo hoc mors est illuis quod fuitante*, translated as: 'Whatever by its changing goes out of its frontiers… by doing so brings immediate death to its old self' (Rushdie 1998, 288). As a counterpoint to his initial argument, he then poses a challenge from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*: 'As yielding wax… is stamped with new designs And changes shape and seems not still the same, Yet it is indeed the same, even so our souls… Are still the same forever but adopt in their migrations ever-varying forms' (Rushdie 1998, 288). We can see in this a kind of existentialist philosophy whereby the ontology of self is the first and most significant problem. For Sufyan it is always Ovid over Lucretious, but '[h]e [Saladin] chose Lucretious over Ovid. The inconstant soul, the mutability of everything, das Ich, every last speck. A being going through life can become so other to himself as to *be another*, discrete, severed from history' (Rushdie 1998, 288). What results from this 'choice' to 'enter into his new self…to be what he had become' (Rushdie 1998, 289), is that Saladin achieves 'other' perspectives on reality than were previously available to him. He is afforded a condition of liminality and arguably occupies a concept of self that is mongrelised and uncontrollable. His old self is gone, and its loss is Hell for Saladin.

The illusion of self in psychoanalytic terms has long been a central concern of Gothic fiction. Count Dracula's transcendence of the mirror stage in having no reflection, and Dorian Gray's mysterious connection with his visual representation in the haunted painting of his artist-friend's creation, have already been discussed. In a similar vein, Daniel Quinn and Tod Friendly have been observed as suffering from the same illusions created by fissured reflections. In this case, we see that Saladin is uncannily aware of the distortions of the mirror and tries to break the illusion by convincing himself that he is a real man: the ideal of beauty. It is quite interesting, however, that the mirror-stage is here again reversed and that the mirror is offering him a monstrous and fragmented self-image, which he struggles to conceive as whole.

Unfortunately, in this struggle, he is without success and it subsequently becomes clear that his vision of the world is an extension of his vision of self. *Ellowen Deeowen*, where he once saw 'attractively faded grandeur' (Rushdie 1998, 270), 'a refuge… without any of the self-congratulatory huddled masses rhetoric of the 'nation of immigrants' across the ocean' (Rushdie 1998, 399), becomes 'transformed into Jahannum, Gehenna, Muspellheim', for '[y]es, this was Hell alright' (Rushdie 1998, 399). The London Underground system is represented as follows: 'From beneath the earth came tremors denoting the passage of huge subterranean worms that devoured and regurgitated human beings and from the skies the thrum of choppers and the screech of higher, gleaming birds' (Rushdie 1998, 254). Saladin's inferno vision of the humanity of which he was a part but on whose borders, he now exists, is one entirely defined by metamorphosis and dominated by standard Gothic imagery, as we see, quite possibly influenced by Eliot, who in *Four Quartets* uses the underground motif for similar purposes. Furthermore, Saladin's friend, Hyacinth Phillips, has transformed into a vampire with the hair of Medusa and the body of a skeleton. Through his recollection of her, he feels as though 'a skeleton had seized him and was trying to drag him down into a grave; he could smell the freshly dug earth, the cloying scent of it, on her breath, on her lips… revulsion seized him' (Rushdie 1998, 255).

References in the novel to older Gothic characters that have formerly been presented in a similar scenario prove interesting for a Gothic reading. As Chamcha tries to get back to his old self, his optimism unfortunately grows, but his agent Charlie Sellers comforts him: 'They'll come round. After all, it isn't as if you were Dracula, for heaven's sake' (Rushdie 1998, 407). Also, the narrative intrusion which disparagingly offers the following advice, reminds us of the absurdity of the situation: 'you can't keep a devil locked up in the attic and expect to keep it to yourself forever' (Rushdie 1998, 285). Similar references are made in relation to Gibreel's metamorphosis: Gibreel 'had begun to characterise his "possessed" "angel" self as another person: in the Beckettian formula, *Not I, He*. His very own Mr. Hyde' (Rushdie 1998, 340).

Rushdie's exploration of the terrifying contradictions of subjectivity follows a long line of Gothic efforts and, quite importantly, resembles Amis's illustration of the same situation quite

closely when we read that the separation of dreams and reality in Gibreel's mind 'was the same phenomenon as, his splitting of his sense of himself into two entities, one of which he sought heroically to suppress, but which he also, by characterising it as other than himself, preserved, nourished and secretly made strong' (Rushdie 1998, 340).

In a typically Gothic-postmodernist fashion, the narrative of *The Satanic Verses* makes up what Clark has referred to as 'the text's sliding fabric of worlds' (Clark 2001, 136) and is related by polyphony of voices of the novel. Of these voices, which, in their monstrosity, cohere with the concept of micro-narrative as opposed to *grande narrative*, we are presented with the first person or conventional narrator; the 'satanic' narrator (who reveals himself indirectly in the text); dialogue between various characters; the private thoughts of characters; media inclusions (such as radio advertisements and television documentaries); intertextual allusions; and finally, the private and almost telepathic dialogue between Gibreel and Saladin. What is significant in *The Satanic Verses* is that these voices are not clearly distinguishable in the streamed narrative. Despite this, James Harrison accurately recognises that each narrative stream in the novel 'has both angelic and diabolic presence' (Harrison 1992, 114). While we have two dominant narrators, it is not easy to impose a binary of good and evil in the text. This is a familiar Gothic problem and relates *The Satanic Verses* again to *Time's Arrow*, in which we encounter similar issues relating to the duality of the first person narrator and the possibility of his 'possession'.

The Gothic sublime is liminality, a space defined by hesitation and boundary crossing in the sense that Rushdie describes in *Midnight's Children* when Saleem claims that '[t]hings, even people – have a way of leaking into each other… like flavours when you cook' (Rushdie 1995, 38-9). To recall Levinas's theory, this space may be considered one of *Il y a* and in the context of plural being as it is presented in *The Satanic Verses*, it 'overflows' so that self and other become a part of each other implying a sort of shared existence. This 'possession' of an 'other' may subsequently be considered as possession of self, although in Levinas's view it can only be temporary in relation to the term 'grasping'. The dialectical nature of Gothic-postmodernist narrative generally, and *The Satanic Verses* in particular, might then be regarded as having philosophical significance that is paralleled in all the doubled characters in the text

and in the entire group of voices as a whole. Identity spills over into each one so that none can exist independently. From this point of view, the dominant presence of the mephistophelian narrator might be considered as a required element in the identity of the novel itself. This necessity has within it something terrifying for the reader, who becomes part of the identity flux in the text; becomes simultaneously good and evil, angel and demon, much like the tragic central characters Gibreel and Saladin.

Excess is a fundamental element in Gothic writing on all levels, and in this novel it is most obviously manifest in the form of the *doppelgänger*. *Doppelgänger* in Gothic fiction has been defined as: 'the presence of a second self, or alter ago, an archetype of otherness and narcissistic specularity indissolubly linked to the individual' (Mulvey Roberts 1998, 264). Rushdie's work appears to have a minor obsession with this Gothic conceit and in many of his novels we find dark doublings. In *Grimus*, we have Flapping Eagle and Grimus. Saleem and Shiva are present in *Midnight's Children*, and of course we have Gibreel and Saladin as the primary double in *The Satanic Verses*. Interestingly, in *The Satanic Verses*, the only difference between the two is that Saladin undergoes many changes willingly, while Gibreel futilely struggles to maintain one 'true self' (Booker 1994, 242). Neither of them, one should hasten to add, is aware that they are 'both sides of the same coin' (Rushdie 1998, 426), having leaked into each other during their 'transmuting fall'. This situation is illustrated clearly on a number of occasions in the text by the narrative voice: 'Watch out Chamcha, look out for your shadow. That black felloe creeping up behind' (Rushdie 1998, 53); 'For are they not opposites, these two, each man the other's shadow?'; 'Are we coming closer to it? Should we even say that these two are two fundamentally different types of self?' (Rushdie 1998, 427). Significantly, we are told later in this passage (though it is unclear by which narrative voice), that it is not feasible to think of them as two different types of self, because the self – thought of as homogenous and non-hybrid is 'an utterly fantastic notion' (Rushdie 1998, 427). We must regard them as intrinsically part of each other, as each other's dialogic other.

This excess of or fluid identity is familiar from *Time's Arrow* and *City of Glass* and is a visibly developed standard in Gothic-postmodernist texts. Its origins can be traced in earlier Gothic works,

for example *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in which identity flows between the picture and Dorian and *The Waste Land*, in which the multiple voices, like the ghosts of the damned, mutate into one another forming one indefinable consciousness, not too dissimilar to those of Beckett's prose works. Possibly having origins in even earlier Gothic works such as *Frankenstein*, which also posits the identity of the creator and his creature as double and in flux, this Gothic trait may be considered as moulded from a new literary consciousness in postmodernist novels. As will be discussed later, it reaches a highpoint in Bret Easton Ellis' *Lunar Park*, in which dialogism and fluid identity are presented to a terrifying degree.

This sublime element in the dialogism of the novel, found in its excessive hybridity, is concentrated around the dark satanic voice of the narrative. Considering the intertextuality of the novel, in particular its relationship to Blake and to Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, the satanic voice is readily discernible as more dominant and more distinct, while having a hybrid nature of its own. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie claims that Bulgakov's Mephistopheles, the satanic narrator/ character, 'turns out not to be such bad chap after all' (Rushdie 1992, 403). Given the Islamic focus of the novel, it is interesting that Rushdie's satanic narrator appears to be built quite solidly around the modern Western literary model, that of the charming and intellectual rebel. It is an amalgamation of the devil figure as conceived by Milton, Defoe, Blake and Bulgakov through to Mick Jagger's lyric persona in *Sympathy for the Devil*.[1] Apart from the obvious allusion and linking of the satanic narrator to Defoe's devil from *The Political History of the Devil* (1726), lines from which are included as an epigraph to the novel, the narrator himself reveals his disposition in a number of ways.

Notable, are his glee at being the witty puppet master and his use of parodying religious language and what Clark refers to as 'blatant anti-religious rhetoric' (Clark 2001, 166). As puppeteer the

[1] The satanic narrator's rhetorical questions such as 'who am I?' and later references to the song invoke the familiar The Rolling Stones song lyric 'I hope you guessed my name'. There is also a direct reference to the song on p.286.

satanic narrator revels in manipulating Saladin and effecting in turn, Saladin's manipulation of Gibreel by installing hellish visions in their minds and causing their eventual degeneration. He gloats over 'the dark fire of evil' which continues 'perniciously to spread' in Chamcha, which 'springs from some recess in his own true nature' (Rushdie 1998, 463). Saladin's subsequent 'revelation' of the satanic verses over the phone to Gibreel is particularly interesting and we see that the playful narrator is satirising the original incident and is forcing Saladin to take on the satanic role in inspiring evil and destruction.

In this, Saladin becomes a reconstruction of the in-between, alienated mephistophelian figure that has long preoccupied the Gothic imagination, from *Faust* to *Frankenstein*, to *The Monk*, through to *Melmoth the Wanderer* and *Dracula* to *Time's Arrow*. Here, however, this figure has a postmodern, postcolonial twist and the advantage of a long line of Gothic works with which to have intertextual links. His evil purpose is clearly delineated in Rushdie's novel: he aims to dislocate Gibreel from reality and from self. In this way, Saladin, becomes a puppeteer too, becoming more like that 'foul puppet' referred to in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. As the text develops, it is hinted that Saladin's puppeteering becomes a sort of possession whereby both characters are faced with loss of self.

Helen Stoddart, writing on 'the contemporary Gothic', comments that the novel is largely concerned with possession as 'it gives expression to fears of vulnerability or loss of control' (Stoddart 1998, 45). In line with this, Gibreel becomes aware of his possession quite late in the novel when he comments that '[b]eing God's postman is no fun, ya'ar. Butbutbut: God isn't in this picture. God knows whose postman I've been' (Rushdie 1998, 112), and when he exclaims 'What is an archangel but a puppet?' (Rushdie 1998, 460) For Saladin, however, this is clear from the outset, as early as page nine, which includes the following passage:

> [A]t the time he had no doubt; what had taken him over was the will to live…and the first thing it did was to inform him that it wanted nothing to do with his pathetic personality… and he found himself surrendering to it, yes, go on, as if he were a bystander in his own body, because it was in the very centre of his body… holding him in a way that was both unbearably tight and intolerably gentle, until it had conquered him totally and could work his mouth, his fingers, whatever it chose, and once it was sure of its dominion it

> spread outward from his body and grabbed Gibreel Farishta by the balls (Rushdie 1998, 9).

Saladin, 'enters into his new self'. In an almost Faustian way, he chooses to accept the demonised self that he is offered. Interstingly, Stoddart observes in her short essay *The Demonic* that 'the demonic is frequently incorporated into dramas of dualism or divided selves' (Stoddart 1998, 44). In this case, the drama is one of plurality of self and the demonic consequently becomes even more prevalent.

Punter refers to that 'primal fear of being in a limitless flow… where all the defences around our sense of a central self are endangered' (Punter 1998, 240), as a central terror in Gothic fiction. This limitless flow is the heart of the Gibreel/ Saladin dialectic in the novel, in which we see the identities of the two characters disintegrate and intermingle with each other so that they become self and other to each other on the level of their metamorphosis. This coincides with another point made by Punter, that in a work of terror, we are presented with 'a darker world where we can no longer control the boundary between the inner and the outer' (Punter 1998, 240). This is exactly what is presented to us in *The Satanic Verses*. In this respect, the novel presents itself as a postmodernist work of Gothic terror, terror that functions on each of the multiple and overlapping levels, or worlds that are suggested to the reader.

From this point, it is necessary to look in more detail at the sublime in Rushdie's novel. In line with Punter's theory of terror in literature, Rushdie utilises the sublime for political purposes. Rushdie's novel has also been referred to as offering an example of the apocalyptic sublime (Milbank 1998, 230). One of the original philosophers of the sublime, and a critical inspiration for Gothic fiction was the ancient Greek scholar Cassius Longinus, who in his model of the experience, *On the Sublime*, refers to the book of Genesis, when the Lord declared: 'let there be light'. According to Milbank, Longinus points to a concept of the sublime which encapsulates absolute power in which word and effect are one (Milbank 1998, 230). From a postmodern, poststructuralist perspective, it is interesting that this suggests a sublime correlation between divine language and physical reality, something akin to what is suggested in the term 'the satanic verses'.

While it was Burke who later related the idea to terror, the central premise of 'the unrepresentable' was given significant weight

even in early discourse on the sublime. As was discussed in the previous chapter, sublime terror in Gothic-postmodernist fiction is intrinsically linked with silencing; the unspeakable, non-verbal response. One of the many ways in which Rushdie presents this, is his articulation of the sublime effects of Mount Everest on Allie Cone: her transcendental visions and hauntings. According to the mountaineering mystic, the great mountain 'silences you… [w]hen you come down, nothing seems worth saying, nothing at all. You find the nothingness wrapping you up like a sound. Non-being' (Rushdie 1998, 296). In this we see encapsulated the central Gothic-postmodernist premise of the unrepresentable, that sublime moment outside of time and language in which the self exists outside of itself: in 'non-being'. Levinasian theory is quite aptly summarised in this and it is relatable to a particularly Gothic philosophy reminiscent of Shelley's *Frankenstein* when we learn that 'the mountain was diabolic as well as transcendent, or rather, its diabolism and its transcendence were one' (Rushdie 1998, 303).

Milbank is correct that in the novel, sublime terror is linked to apocalypse and becomes a route for the reconciliation of moral opposites and deconstruction in general. We know for instance that her desire for the mountain stems from a desire 'to escape from good and evil' (Rushdie 1998, 313). It is present in the Burkean sense, of fear linked to personal awareness, death and change in the subject. For example, we are told that as an icon for the revolutionary masses of immigrants in London, their 'dream devil', the demon Saladin is dreamed in a sort of apocalyptic vision by the people:

> rising up in the Street like Apocalypse and burning the town like toast… singing in a voice so diabolically ghastly and guttural that it proved impossible to identify the verses, even though the dreams turned out to have the terrifying quality of being serial… until even the Silent Man, that former justice of the peace who had not spoken since the night in an Indian restaurant a young drunk stuck a knife under his nose… astounded his wife by sitting upright in his sleep…and roaring out a song at the top of his voice, which sounded so alien and full of static that she couldn't make out a word (Rushdie 1998, 286-7).

The unspeakable terror of 'the Silent Man' is iterated here comparable to the verses which are unrepresentable in that they cannot be heard through Saladin's diabolic vocal chords. Similarly, the absurd and unrepresentable song of 'the Silent Man' on waking from his terrible

dream, makes no sense and cannot be understood by his wife on hearing it. In a sense, his song, like the satanic verses, becomes nothing more than a disturbing scream, in which 'word and effect are one', and again we meet with an invocation of the image of Munch's painting in which frustration and terror become a sublime experience.

To consider the place of the sublime in the novel on a less Romantic and more political level, it is of note that London itself is dominated by terror. As a postmodernist, urban Gothic setting, it comes, like Eliot's 'unreal city', to represent much more than itself. If anything can be taken as 'clear' from Eliot's poem, it is that his perspective on modern 'reality' is effected through the use of Gothic imaginary on a number of different levels to support his themes of terror and linguistic frustration. As was outlined in chapter five, a succession of hauntings provides the structure for Eliot's poem, represented by a series of unidentified voices whose speech degenerates eventually into Beckettian-like muttering. In *The Satanic Verses*, the dominance of the satanic narrator relates the similarly haunting voices in the novel, of Rekha Merchant, of Allie Cone's dead sister, of Rosa Diamond, of the Lost Soul who Gibreel meets and of the many media ghosts that represent hyperreal selves, as a group of djinns, whose purpose is to torment Gibreel in the chaotic surroundings of monstrous London.

Rushdie also uses the Gothic concepts of terror, evil and metamorphosis, epitomised in the transformation of London into 'Jahannum, Gehenna, Muspellheim' to highlight the condition of the ghostly and dehumanised characters of the novel, who together in 'Babylondon' (Rushdie 1998, 459) form the 'walking corpses, great crowds of the dead, all of them refusing to admit they're done for' (Rushdie 1998, 458). This image corresponds with Eliot's poem:

> Under the brown fog of a Winter dawn,
> A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
> I had not thought death had undone so many,
> Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
> And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
> Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
> To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
> With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine (Eliot 1993a, 61-68).

In Rushdie's novel, terror is reaffirmed by the narrator and the Gothic elements surface in the form of 'bat-winged imps sitting on corners of buildings made of deceits and glimpsed goblins oozing wormily through the broken tile-work of public urinals for men' (Rushdie 1998, 321), while from beneath the earth came 'tremors denoting the passage of huge subterranean worms that devoured and regurgitated human beings, and from the skies the thrum of choppers and the screech of higher, gleaming birds' (Rushdie 1998, 254). Importantly, and denoting a distinction between Gothic modernism and Gothic-postmodernism, the narrator appears to use these Gothic descriptions to invoke and parody the other plots of the novel, most conspicuously in the Jahilia plot, in which 'higher gleaming birds' parallel with the three goddesses, the 'exalted cranes', Mohammed's 'sublime birds' (Rushdie 1998, 340): al-Lat and al-Uzza/ And Manat, the third, the other? (Koran 53:19, 20). The Gothic, consequently, becomes a recognisable imaginary, tinged with sublime terror from which to view satirically, the emotional, religious and political fundamentalisms born in postmodern society.

Many intricate stratums of fear make up the worlds and characters in the text and as such, it is evident that Rushdie is looking at postmodern existence and is reading it through the lens of the Gothic. In a sense, his avatars, witches, vampires and lost souls are satirical Gothic caricatures of our postmodern selves. 'The lost soul' that Gibreel encounters in 'the hellish maze' of London is again a poignant example: 'It was young, male, tall and of extreme beauty, with a strikingly aquiline nose and longish black hair, oiled down and parted in the centre. Its teeth were made of gold' (Rushdie 1998, 322). What is immediately striking is that this description fits perfectly with that of Jonathan Harker's account of Dracula in Bram Stoker's Gothic novel of the same name (Stoker 2003, 24). Count Dracula, as is known from the novel, is an enigmatic character in that he has the ability to transcend subjectivity. Having no reflection, he can be regarded as exceeding the mirror stage and, as the novel tells us, he acquires his excessive identity from sources of myth, history, and supernatural existence.

What is significant about this link to Dracula is that 'the lost soul' has a photo of his body and is roaming the streets terrified and frantic, in the hope of finding it. The inclusion of the photograph is both a reiteration (to refer back to Saladin's mirror reflection) and an

ironic play on the question: what can we truly know of our postmodern 'selves'? In a photo, we see in a distorted image; the symbolic; the alleged 'true' self or soul is radically dislocated from the body. Fragmentation on Lacan's terms can therefore be seen as occurring on a number of different levels, and the soul or self is represented as something like a splintered glass, whose primal image can never be regenerated. This fits with the theory of Lucretious, already mentioned, which invokes a sublime terror relating the endangered self. Through the novel's questionings, however, Rushdie includes another, arguably more political, perspective on the matter, which is also sublime but in a different, more positive sense. He articulates a postmodernist concept of subjectivity via Gothic techniques.

As has been demonstrated recurrently in this study, the characters of Gothic fiction are generally in-between, liminal, existentialist figures, in excess of the boundaries that define self and other, good and evil. Rekha Merchant is another of this type of character, a manifestation of spectrality and metamorphosis, and she occupies not just a liminal textual space as a meta-character – in other words a fictional character created by another fictional character – but also in the sense that she is a ghost formed from the guilty memories that haunt Gibreel to his death. She first emerges in the novel as Gibreel falls from the plane and she tells him that she comes from 'Hell because that's where you sent me' (Rushdie 1998, 8). She is also a shape-shifter with the supernatural powers of *djinn* to create illusions. These, she uses to tempt Gibreel in an eerie and disturbing dance of seduction designed to tempt him to doubt his faith and his will to live – ironically pushing him closer and closer to fundamentalism and suicide.

To consider her as a demon spirit, or simply a demonic character, coming from Hell as she claims, also has some interesting implications as part of Rushdie's critique of the place of fundamentalism in postmodern society. So, while these spectral characters *are* in the sense of the indeterminate existence that is, struggling to achieve self-determination in postcolonial anti-immigrant society, this effectively occupy a liminal state – they are hovering between past and present, reality and imagination, symbolic life and death. They are a mirror of memory, which is also a liminal space, between past and present, reality and fiction. Rushdie's

exploration, in this sense, might be regarded as using these excessively liminal, spectral characters for hauntological purposes, reflecting the non-existence and dehumanization of the immigrant in Western society.

In postmodern times, subjectivity, with no 'real' frames of reference, is effectively void. As Baudrillard claims: 'identity is untenable: it is death since it fails to inscribe its own death' (Baudrillard 1994, 4). Referred to in the last chapter, he claims that in the cemeteries or ghost towns that present themselves as our 'cosmopolitan' cities, culture is oriented toward death. When homogenous identity cannot be sustained for long because of the dislocation of reality inherent in our society, the value of identity is lacking and this is the death of the subject. Furthermore, identity is hybrid. When we consciously construct it – as in a situation of migrancy – the boundaries that once held separate such concepts that were fundamental to our subjectivity dissolve. In *The Satanic Verses*, the idea that the universe of nightmares had begun to leak into waking life is reiterated several times to emphasise both of these ideas; as are the multiple worlds created in the novel.

The Satanic Verses can be regarded as a celebration of hybridity, monstrosity and chaos. Rushdie himself referred to this and the novel itself as:

> a migrant's eye view of the world. It is written from the very experience of uprooting, disjuncture and metamorphosis (slow or rapid, painful or pleasurable) that is the migrant condition, and from which, I believe can be derived a metaphor for all humanity…[i]t rejoices in mongrelisation and fears the absolutism of the pure… The Satanic Verses is for change-by-fusion, change-by-conjoining. It is a love song to our mongrel selves (Rushdie 1992, 394).

Kelly Hurley asserts that the 'Gothic is centrally concerned with the horrific re-making of the human subject' (Hurley 1996, 5). Possibly, the horrific remaking of the human subject in a postmodern context remains to be interpreted as a Gothic experience. This is why Rushdie's controversial novel is analysed here as a Gothic-postmodernist work, in which deconstruction and psychoanalysis both lead to terror.

As a Gothic-postmodernist text, it could be argued that *The Satanic Verses* is, not unlike so-called original Gothic works, part of

an imprecise genre. It is itself a hybridised subject in that it is 'a blend of two kinds of romance' (Walpole 1998, 9). This, arguably, makes it dialogic and its dialogic potential means that it is a novel inherently bound up in parody and pastiche, carnivalising on a number of different interpretative platforms. The unresolved dualities in the text must, therefore, by deconstructive standards, remain unresolved, further promoting the concept of hybridity and the responses of the postmodern self to 'events of silencing and exclusion through which cultural identity is reproduced' (Abbinnet 2003, 2).

Primarily, this analysis of *The Satanic Verses* was undertaken because as a complex work, it can be regarded as articulating a celebration of terror and chaos in its refutation of modernism's return to wholeness and unity through the *grande narratives* of mythology, history and religion. However, as Rushdie maintains this articulation via the familiar nightmare or 'waste land' vision of contemporary modernity, his novel can be seen as a step forward in the generic evolution of the Gothic. From the springboard of the Gothic modernist literature of Eliot, *The Satanic Verses* shifts toward a position in literature where it can attempt to voice the unspeakable terrors of metamorphosis in the postmodern subjective sphere of non-transcendental realities: of hyperrealities.

At this point, the Gothic-postmodernist qualities of Rushdie's novel have been outlined. What remains to be seen is from where did they develop? Rushdie's influences have already been mentioned, and his intertextual allusions speak for themselves. It is, however, now necessary to look more closely at one of those influences on *The Satanic Verses*, another, equally fascinating Gothic-postmodernist text: Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*.

Chapter 9: Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*

The Master and Margarita is an intriguing text in terms of its Gothic approach. Aside from its obvious Gothic terror, themes, motifs and atmosphere, the circumstances of the composition and final publication of the novel arouse a certain uncanny sensation for readers and critics alike. One of the most memorable comments made by this work is 'manuscripts don't burn' (Bulgakov 2004, 326). Considered in light of the novel's story – in which the Master, author of a controversial and mysteriously insightful book about Pontius Pilate, destroys his creation only to have it miraculously resurrected by the devil himself on Easter Sunday morning – this statement can be interpreted as a comment on textuality and the unique and unquantifiable 'true' nature of the written word. Considered in light of Bulgakov's destruction of his own masterpiece, *The Master and Margarita*, in 1930, and its reconstruction and publication many years after his death, it would also seem that the dark magic at work in the story has reached out beyond the text to reverberate a Romantic philosophy of the enigmatic origins and immortality of art. As Andrew Barrat put it, it is as though '[w]e have been permitted to read the unwritable' (Barrat 1987, 311).

'Permitted' is an interesting choice of word here in relation to the controversy that surrounds the novel. The initial censorship of the work is of note, but can be contextualised in terms of the extremely restrictive nature of the Soviet state during the Stalinist period. At this time, many writers were convicted for publishing 'antagonistic' works and even for publishing outside of the Soviet Union. However, in the years following its official publication in the Soviet Union in 1967, *The Master and Margarita* continued to be surrounded by controversy. Striking a note of resemblance with the renowned 'Rushdie affair', as recently as 2006, the Mikhail Bulgakov Museum in Moscow was gutted by a fire that was started by a fanatic who condemned the novel as satanic. According to one news report, the Bulgakov house was largely destroyed. The book had been

condemned by the Orthodox Church as 'the fifth gospel, that of Satan',[1] and the fanatical leader of a group of demonstrators destroyed the museum and its 'pornographic' contents. As will be demonstrated in this chapter, Bulgakov's writing was far from anti-religious and in fact promoted ideas of spiritualism. The novel itself is much more anti-secularist than anti-Christian, and its misinterpretation echoes the distressing repercussions of fanatical, homogenising opinions, which so drastically effected Rushdie and which, in itself, is a focus for critique in the Gothic-postmodernist text.

Critics have tirelessly debated the genre of *The Master and Margarita* but with no solid conclusion, maintaining generally, that it contains many heterogeneous elements and that it could easily be interpreted as a work of carnival, the fantastic, Menippean satire, allegory, miraculous fairytale and magical realism among many other categories. While many of these justified classifications may be applied to the text, it is quite a narrow consideration of the novel that overlooks the Gothic aspects of the work, and their relationship to its stylistically innovative narrative, which could arguably be considered postmodernist. This chapter will focus on this most important, overlooked feature of the work with a view to demonstrating its categorisation as a Gothic-postmodernist text and its influence on Rushdie and other writers.

Tolstoy once claimed that significant art always creates its own forms that do not fit into the established hierarchy of genres (Weeks 1996, 75). Remarkably, Bulgakov may be generating the same effect in fitting together the various aspects of self-conscious writing (later to be termed postmodernism) with the traditional elements of the Gothic. Accepting that it does not fit into even our current 'established hierarchy of genres', we can, as critics, begin to explore the nature of its new form and what it meant for the development of the Gothic-postmodernist text.

V. Lakshin comments, quite rightly, that we are justified in calling *The Master and Margarita* a philosophical novel (Weeks 1996,

---

[1] See article at: http://www.silverfishbooks.com/2007/01/bulgakov-museum-sacked-by.html

77). It challenges overarching concepts of truth and reality and consequently official Soviet ideology which rejected metaphysical reality based on a rejection of God and limited philosophical enquiry. Bulgakov's purpose, in a sense, can be regarded as bearing relation to the Gothic tradition of the supernatural, in its support for belief governed, not just by reason alone, but also by imagination and awareness of the supernatural and metaphysical dimensions of experience. In relation to this, many critics see the novel as fitting in with the spiritual revival that took place in Russian literature of the Stalinist period, through which writers sought to challenge the utilitarianism of the Soviet State. Influenced by Dostoevsky, this revival, in general, led to a renewed interest in religion, the occult and a regeneration of old Gothic legends, primarily those relating to the Devil.

M. A Orlov's *The History of People's Dealings with the Devil* (1904) is regarded by most critics as an intertextual source for Bulgakov's work (See Pittman and Barrat). Pittman, in her comprehensive critical work, also refers to Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *The Extraordinary Adventures of Julio Jurenito* as one such example of the newfound interest in the occult as parody in Russian literature of the 1920's, which she considers an important influence on *The Master and Margarita* (Pittman 1991, 30). Ehrenburg's novel, published in 1922, includes an important scene which takes place in a Parisian café and involves the transformation of the café setting and the surrounding shops into a vision of the circles of hell. Worth mentioning, is the café owner, who metamorphoses into a repulsive ephebe as the scene finishes with a masquerade ball for naked guests including a young girl named Margot. Interestingly, Ehrenburg's protagonist concludes that 'all this seemed like the resolute mobilisation of Beelzebub's forces, all directed against me' (Pittman 1991, 31) and the devil himself subsequently arrives in an overcoat wearing a bowler hat to offer a Faustian bargain and discuss the probability of the existence of God.

To demonstrate the literary context of *The Master and Margarita*, it is notable that around this time, a significant amount of literature discussing the existence of Christ was also produced. As a comment on the theological aspect of the novel, Proffer proposes that: '[i]n the same sense as the Moscow narrative is an anti-Faust, the Pilate novel is an anti-Gospel' (Proffer 1984, 541). This, however,

may not be entirely accurate, as the novel was dedicated by Bulgakov to his father, a theologian and university professor, who in his lifetime, often wrote of his deep concern about the modern loss of a sense of spirituality. It is clear from the text, however, that Bulgakov, though in agreement with his father's concerns, saw them from a different angle. He appears to suggest that loss of spirituality and over-reliance on reason is worrying in a more general sense, as it leads to (what Rushdie would later so strongly critique in *The Satanic Verses*) homogenising perspectives on the world.

This is evident in his portrayal of Woland and Yeshua as characters that are inherently, neither good nor bad. Yeshua is a distinctly human and consequently flawed individual, while Woland is an embodiment of the Faustian epigraph to the novel, a catalyst for a greater divine plan. What is significant, however, is that Woland is created as an incarnation of the irrational and metaphysical, while Yeshua is an ordinary 'worldly' character, and is even described in ordinary, realist historical style narrative. And, although Yeshua's crucifixion is the centre of the novel physically (in that it takes its place as the central chapter) and also structurally (as it is the centre of all stories in the china box arrangement of Bulgakov's novel, the Master's book and Woland's tale), it is Woland who dominates the entire work. So, while the author is offering a heterogeneous approach to these figures, he is all the while favouring the marginal and bringing the dark side in from the peripheries, to where it has for so long been banished, back into literary discourse and drawing, as I will outline, on Gothic-postmodernist counter-narrative to do so.

In contextualising Bulgakov's novel and attempting to find sources for, and influences on his work, the critic encounters serious difficulty. As it stands, the sources of the novel are all equally questionable since Bulgakov himself destroyed the first manuscript and his diaries from the period of the novel's writing. Also, considering the input of his wife in the completion and publication of the novel, which transpired a significant number of years after his death, the critic can reasonably only rely on one source: the text itself, and this is only to a point. Consequently, in defining the work as Gothic-postmodernism, this analysis can only base its conclusions on a close reading of the text, keeping in mind that the context of the novel's publication and its writing differ so greatly.

At this point, focus should change to the context of the first full publication of the novel in 1973 in the Soviet Union and the full text outside of the Soviet Union in 1977. Lakshin, insightfully notes that Bulgakov's novel, written in the 1930's, proved to be extraordinarily relevant to the literature of the 1960's and 70's, 'when the attention to social problems that was typical of our writers began to be accompanied by a particularly sharp interest in the question of moral choice and personal morality' (Lakshin 1996, 82). More significantly, however, its main themes may also be regarded as quite pertinent to this early postmodern era. In quite a poststructuralist manner, the novel deconstructs the authoritarian restraints of the binary of good and evil, by offering the basic spiritual Christian belief (though all too often forgotten by the Christian community) that 'all men are good'. In a typically postmodernist manner, it also posits the possibility of the existence of the fifth dimension (we have already discussed the fourth in Vonnegut), which, although generally held to be an intriguing tradition in Russian literature, is offered through playful postmodernist narration that deliberately attempts to confuse the reader and to blur the distinctions between 'known' reality and unreality.

With respect to this, Barrat mentions the novel's relationship to the *roman zagadka* or puzzle novel (Barrat 1987, 4) but as he says, puzzles are meant to be solved and this one is truly irresolvable. Notably, it is irresolvable in the same thread that would later be taken up by postmodernist writer Vladimir Nabokov, particularly in his novel *Pale Fire*, in which 'red herring' intertextual allusions, alleged coincidences and cross references lead the reader on a course of bewilderment, but also to the discovery of other worlds, and other levels of narrative, which disrupt the illusion of homogenised concepts of reality in the text. Barrat also notes that, in general, interpretations of *The Master and Margarita* have been highly imaginative, to the extent that one viable approach sees the whole thing as imagined by the schizophrenic Ivan Bezdomny in the mental asylum he shares with the Master (Barrat 1996, 89). Still, this all merely points to the extremely imaginative nature of the novel itself and to the confounding playfulness that leaks into every facet of the stories, both of which are generally considered postmodernist literary attributes.

Arguably, the narrative structure of the novel would have been easier to construct had the Pilate sections of the text been divided

into fragments of the Master's novel, to be read at various interludes in the main story by different characters. Instead, however, they are presented in multiple forms: as Ivan's dream, Woland's story, and the Master's novel as read by Margarita and referred to by the demon Azazello. This suggests that, clearly, the unrealistic elements of the narrative itself are intentional (Proffer 1996, 100). From this perspective, I would argue that it is justifiable to view the novel as a work of metafiction, or more precisely, in that it is dealing with historical narrative, historiographic metafiction. Hutcheon's definition of historiographic metafiction as 'critical fiction' has been discussed in the previous chapter. She sees it primarily as 'narcissistic fiction' that works to 'destabilise the centre without privileging the margins', and based on this definition, it simply remains to be said that *The Master and Margarita*, as a radically self-reflexive novel can readily be defined as a postmodernist work *avant la lettre*.

Of its postmodernist attributes, the most remarkable are fluidity of genre; playful and parodic narrative style; cynical ontological views; and a deconstructive approach to *grande narrative*. Furthermore, from a more philosophical approach to postmodernism, the staging of a separate level of existence in the fifth dimension is an interesting point for discussion, as is the novel's exploration of the concept of symbolic death. Also signifying this postmodernist nature is its generic fluctuation, which blends a Gothic aesthetic with political satire, supernatural fantasy and historical, mythological narrative. In relation to this Proffer notes (speaking of the novel's supernatural, satirical comedy and serious philosophical concerns) 'the lack of modern works that contain such heterogeneous elements' (Proffer 1996, 98). These elements, as they are varied in *The Master and Margarita*, may be lacking in modern works. However, it is in the postmodern novel that they are specifically found. So, while Proffer attributes the realistic settings that alternate with fantastic ones; the references to satirical works; the crude dealings with the mystical and religious; the uniting of the philosophical and the fantastic; the representations of unusual states of mind; paradox; and the mixture of stylistic levels, to Menippean satire (Proffer 1996, 99), it is also viable, as has been done with works examined in previous chapters, to attribute these aspects of the text to Gothic-postmodernism.

In terms of the Gothic-postmodernist fiction analysed so far, the satanic narrator appears in *The Satanic Verses* and *Time's Arrow*,

as well as having a cameo part to play in *Lunar Park*, so it is possible to view Bulgakov's narrator as an early prototype for these later intriguing characters. This time, however, we are not faced with any issues of duality in terms of the morality of our storyteller. It is blatantly clear that in the novel, the will of the people is a truer source of evil than the devil that tempts and ridicules them. Subsequently, the devil exposes their evil by exposing their repression of the good in favour of materialism. In this way, he offers an alternative God-image that subverts our expectations of the evil, self-serving, demonic figure with whom we are familiar. Although no explicit remarks are made to suggest that the narrator is the devil himself, there are clues to his identity which lead us to this conclusion. In relation to Rushdie's narrator, we saw that the cause of the revelation of the narrator's identity was his archetypal satanic pride. The same may be said of Bulgakov's omniscient narrator, who thrives on hinting to the reader that he has secret knowledge, and on mocking and ridiculing various characters for their ignorance of demonic qualities.

The mysterious plural nature of identity has been demonstrated as a primary focus in the Gothic-postmodernist text. Quite typically, this has manifested itself in the blurring of the identity of the narrator, as we have seen in *Time's Arrow* and *The Satanic Verses*, where a darker side of the self comes to the fore. In relation to Bulgakov's novel, when the reader begins to ponder the identity of the narrator, one phrase, repeated uncountable times in the text comes to mind: 'the devil knows'. Taken as a colloquialism by many critics, this can also be interpreted as a subtle hint about the nature of the narrator's extensive knowledge of all things. The narrator also drops a few playful clues as to his identity, such as when Margarita, overjoyed at the outcome of her Faustian bargain, exclaims to the Master, 'Hurrah for the Devil', and he interrupts with: '[t]here was no one to overhear their conversation' (Bulgakov 2004, 411). Similarly, the narrative tone is authoritative: 'Even I, the truthful narrator' (Bulgakov 2004, 250), and simultaneously derisive and arrogant: 'Follow me reader! Who told you that there is no such thing as real, true, eternal love? Cut out his lying tongue!' (Bulgakov 2004, 249).

It is passages such as this that the novel can be understood as a clear influence on Rushdie, particularly on his choice of narrator. The similarity between the narrator and Woland is evident and when one considers that Woland's physical appearance, like his character, is

inconstant and we can speculate as to whether the disembodied voice relating events so satirically, while having no fixed or given identity as such, can be interpreted as part of the fluid identity of the devil himself. This, interestingly, would include Woland and his cohorts as 'the spirit of negation' in the text, and also as, possibly, the mysterious source of the novel.

This 'spirit of negation' concept is intriguing in relation to what has already been said on the subject of gods and devils in this study of Gothic-postmodernism. As has been demonstrated, the Gothic often operates from a basic Christian moral ideal of the binary between good and evil and works to subvert this idea, by presenting a deconstructive morality that is by nature plural, echoing the writings of Milton and Blake. It would seem from certain Gothic and Gothic-postmodernist texts, notably, *Dracula* and (if we replace Christianity with Islam) *The Satanic Verses*, that the God figure is the ultimate ground for identity as it is presented as whole and totalising. In the same sense, the devil emerges as the foundation for the concept of plural identity and even non-identity in the cases that have been considered where loss of self and 'possession' have been at the centre of the narrative. In its most basic sense, this latter idea is epitomised in the standard or traditional Gothic approach to the *doppelgänger*, in which a split occurs in the identity of the subject whereby one half is good and the other evil.

Similar to Rushdie's narrator, Bulgakov's mephistophelian *raconteur* might be considered as a necessary element in the structure of the novel, uniting all three levels in the text with his secret knowledge, and offering hints as to the general 'meaning' of the work. It gradually becomes clear from his insidious interruptions, that the main point of the work is the representation of the great capabilities of the human imagination. A typically Romantic concept is darkly illustrated here, and the idea itself is clearly extended into the Gothic sphere through Bulgakov's portrayal of his satanic character, Woland. In the first chapter, Woland is introduced, even before his physical appearance is described, as a source of sublime terror. In Patriarch's Ponds, as the two literati sit discussing the existence of God, the editor Berlioz is 'seized by a fear so groundless but so powerful that he had an immediate impulse to run away from Patriarch's Ponds without looking back' (Bulgakov 2004, 14). Soon after, 'the foreigner' manifests himself in the following, traditional Gothic manner:

> he had platinum crowns on the left side and gold ones on his right. He wore and expensive grey suit and foreign shoes of the same colour as his suit. His grey beret was stuck jauntily over one ear and under his arm he carried a walking stick with a knob in the shape of a poodle's head. He looked slightly over forty. Crooked sort of mouth. Clean shaven. Dark hair. Right eye black, left eye for some reason green. Eyebrows black, but one higher than the other. In short – a foreigner (Bulgakov 2004, 16).

Instilling interest in Berlioz, and repulsion in the poet Ivan Bezdomny, he may be interpreted, at this point, as a characterisation of the Gothic sublime, causing simultaneous fear and fascination, but ultimately, terror.

At this early stage, it is also clear that Bulgakov's conception of Satan is an amalgamation of Russian and Western literary devils. We see quite clearly, in moral terms, that he is akin to the devil of the Russian Orthodox religion: 'a tempter of men but an unwitting instrument of divine justice' (Barrat 1987, 143) and also, interestingly, for this same quality, akin to Satan in Milton, Blake and Goethe. In form and philosophy, he is relatable to Dostoevsky's Cartesian devil in *The Brothers Karamazov* (Pittman 1991, 45) and in his appearances to the people of Moscow, he is an assemblage of demonic symbols from folk tradition and Russian literature of the 1920s which focused on 'the foreigner' and animal characteristics.

Though a source of Gothic sublime terror in this work, Woland is thus playfully used by Bulgakov as part of the 'postmodernist' satire and pastiche that he infuses in the text. For example, it becomes apparent by the fourth chapter that the devil and his cohort have not just appeared randomly in Moscow, but are generally summoned unknowingly by citizens who use common expressions in colloquial Russian such as 'the devil knows' or invocations of hell and damnation. They exist, as we are told, in the fifth dimension, one that is rooted in reality but sustained by fantasy. Pittman maintains a psychoanalytic interpretation of the novel by viewing Woland and his mischievous crew as Jungian agents of the unconscious (Pittman 1991, 45). This is quite an interesting approach as it sidelines the moral attributes of these characters, which the Faust epigraph signposts us to do, and considers the demonic in the novel as a guide to the reader toward a broader understanding of the work's thematic design. Significantly, it is possible to see that this thematic design is inherently a Gothic one. It offers the supernatural realm as

superior to the natural, the dark as fundamental to the existence of light and proposes deeply complex religious and philosophical issues through the inspiration of feelings of terror.

We have already discussed a similar thematic focus, also presented through satire, in Rushdie's work, and here we see that its presentation is, like Rushdie's, linked with visions, dreams and sleep; the world of dreams, leaking as it were into that of the waking hours. It has been noted by a number of critics that insanity is also a major element in the thematic structure of the novel and that often, day-dreaming as part of the narrative reveals insights into the Master's story. According to Jung, dreams and myth are located in the same psychic regions and exist as fundamental expressions of human experience that undermine reason. Pittman interprets Woland as a manifestation of a myth-like experience, as a character setting up a dilemma, whereby all the other characters and the reader are caught between myth and reason (Pittman 1991, 57).

Berlioz may be regarded, from this perspective, as the root of Bulgakov's satirical approach to his main theme: the tragedy of man who lives according to reason alone. His fate, having renounced Woland's supernatural existence several times through imaginative attempts to 'explain it all' rationally (Bulgakov 2004, 58), is, as predicted by the devil himself, to be decapitated by a tram wheel. This is described in the most banal terms for the reader. Though crude and grotesque, the tone of the narrator in relating the incident is sadistically mocking, particularly in the account of Woland's forewarning, which announced 'loudly and cheerfully: "Your head will be cut off!"' (Bulgakov 2004, 22), offered later as the seventh proof and the soundest, of the existence of God, and thereby, the devil (Bulgakov 2004, 57). This attitude to Berlioz's foolish rejection of the unexplainable gains Gothic momentum as Berlioz's body lays on the morgue table, reminiscent of Frankenstein's monster waiting to receive new life (Bulgakov 2004, 73), and reaches what might be considered a highpoint of Gothic carnival when at Satan's Midnight Ball, Woland wearing his bedroom rags addresses the head of Berlioz:

> You have always been a fervent proponent of the theory that when a man's head is cut off his life stops, he turns to dust and ceases to exist… your theory is intelligent and sound. Now – one theory deserves another. Among us there is one than maintains that a man will receive his deserts in accordance with his beliefs. So be it! You shall depart into the void and from the goblet into

> which your skull is about to be transformed, I shall have the pleasure of drinking to life eternal! (Bulgakov 2004, 311).

The decadent Gothic passage which follows, presents an image of the skull of Berlioz, now encrusted with emerald eyes and pearls for teeth as a vessel for the sublime blood of eternal life; arguably a darkly ironic outcome for the man of reason.

Continuously, throughout the text, this human desire to explain away the mysteries of experience is satirised by the narrator. Interestingly, the character Verenukha also encounters a distinctly Gothic experience as his comeuppance. Having found an immediate, 'on the spot, natural solution' (Bulgakov 2004, 127) for his colleague Stepa's cross-dimensional transportation to Yalta, he leaves in search of the jokers who set up the ridiculous joke. Suddenly,

> Out in the garden the wind blew in his face and threw sand in his eyes as if it were trying to bar his way or warn him. A window pane on the second floor slammed shut with such force that it nearly broke the glass, the tops of the maples and poplars rustled alarmingly. It grew darker and colder (Bulgakov 2004, 132).

The Gothic climate evoked in this passage, is not only sublime, but humorous, when we read the absurdity that ensues: a cat-like creature emerges from nowhere, gives him a box in the ear, sending his hat flying, and then escapes before being seen via the plumbing of a public toilet (Bulgakov 2004, 133). Similarly, the *compére* of the theatre, Bengalsky, having introduced Woland's black magic show by saying that all mysteries will be revealed, as there is no such thing as black magic (Bulgakov 2004, 142), is swiftly decapitated, re-capitated and dispatched to the mental asylum to meet his fellow literary associates. When, finally, after the departure of Woland and his legion of demons, mass hypnosis is decided to be the only reasonable explanation for the events of that Easter in Moscow, it is clear that Bulgakov is satirising not just official communist Soviet ideology, so rigorously adhered to by the masses of Moscow, but also the universal will of man to renounce the supernatural in favour of an arrogant view of the world as controllable by human forces.

The Gothic was an appropriate tool in presenting this for obvious reasons, but it seems that in this work, Bulgakov enjoyed the dark art of Gothic writing a little more than planned. Interestingly, however, he appears to transgress more commonplace portrayals of

the sublime, the creative imagination and its relationship to the supernatural in the form of the divine, in favour of a darker representation of the same, with a focus on the mysterious, the occult and the satanic. Chapter fourteen stands out as a perfect example of this, of which, Barrat, writes: 'In contrast to the gay carnival mood of the "black magic" show, this is Gothic horror pure and simple: the supernatural green corpse-like figure at the window and the fortuitous salvation "by cock crow" take us into another realm' (Barat 1987, 149). The same can be said of chapter eighteen.

Many critics, namely, Proffer, Barrat and Cornwell, have approached chapters like these as 'fantastic'. However, the fundamentally Gothic elements of these chapters and other particular events in the novel may be regarded as much more than this. In the third draft of his manuscript, Bulgakov offered various subtitles for *The Master and Margarita*. He includes among them 'A Fantastic Novel'. This subtitle however was later rejected after redrafts of part two of the work. I would suggest that before any generic terms may be applied, it must be said that the novel is most strikingly a work of metafiction. This is immediately clear in that the reader is presented with a writer who is writing a novel about a writer who is writing a novel. That Barrat considers the work as a 'self consciously Faustian novel' (Barat 1987, 269) is consequently interesting, and leads us quite easily into analysing the work as Gothic metafiction. Barrat writes that Bulgakov uses *Faust* as a subtext for his novel in order to expose the naivety of the apocalyptic mind, while also offering challenging ideas about the nature of human will and creative potential (Barat 1987, 291). As we have seen from early works such as *Frankenstein* and *The Monk*, through to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and the prose works of Beckett, these issues are deep-seated Gothic concerns.

Goethe's *Faust* is an undeniably Gothic text, and in answer to the question that Barrat poses as to whether the *Faust* allusions in *The Master and Margarita* point to similarity or difference (Barat 1987, 270), it is only possible to conclude that the answer is both. Proffer, as has already been noted, considers the novel as a Faustian parody, an anti-Faust, as she calls it, suggesting that in the novel, the *Faust* narrative is inverted (Proffer 1984, 541). Adding to this, Barrat comments that although from the epigraph, we naturally see Woland as Mephistopheles, the 'allusions to Goethe are a diversionary tactic',

to be seen in the fact that Woland differs significantly from Mephisto and bears resemblances to many other literary devils (Barat 1987, 138). This, however, ignores the fluid nature of the identity of the satanic figure in literature and in *The Master and Margarita* and *Faust* in particular. Woland, in Bulgakov's novel, though sharing a name, 'Junker Voland' with Goethe's Satan, is presented quite clearly as a shape-shifting character. He metamorphoses continually from a camply dressed foreigner, to a beggar, to a knight of shadows complete with a silver sword, yet his dominant personage in relation to the other characters of the novel is that of Woland, the one suffering from rheumatism as a result of an encounter with a beautiful witch in the Brocken Hills in 1571 (Bulgakov 2004, 295).

With all these clear references to *Faust* in the text, it is no surprise that during 1912-13, Bulgakov attended the opera *Faust* at least 10 times. In Bulgakov's interaction with *Faust*, it is significant that Margarita, and not the Master, chooses the Faustian bargain with the devil, and Satan's Ball, unlike the *Walpurgis Nacht* celebration, is concerned with divine justice instead of worshipping the powers of darkness. The Master, in fact, is not a Faustian character at all, and does not strive for any individual goals. Instead, he wants only peace. In this sense, Margarita is a parody of the Gothic heroine, saving her knight from tyranny by making alliances with supernatural forces.

But this is where the inversion stops, as the main Gothic themes of Goethe's play, namely, the power of human will and individual creativity, remain in full swing and seep into even the Jerusalem chapters of the novel. The general thematic design of the novel may therefore be seen as Faustian and also, therefore, Gothic; and this design is supported by the elements of the *Faust* and *Urfaust* texts that are playfully parodied by Bulgakov, typical of his postmodernist narrative tendencies. The opening chapter of the text, for example, forms a parallel with Aurbach's cellar scene, while Satan's Ball may be regarded as a reworking of some elements from the *Walpurgis Nacht* celebration on the Brocken Hills in *Faust*, with analogous Gothic guests and atmosphere.

Goethe's *Faust*, although earlier than the alleged first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, is saturated with Gothic themes and imagery, most notably in its exploration of the Promethean quest and the supernatural repercussions for the Prometheus figure. Similarly, its Gothic aesthetic, which is satiated with grotesque figures of the

supernatural and the superstitious, fuels an atmosphere of mystery and the occult and advances the evocation of sublime terror. While Goethe is generally considered as a Romantic writer, with a focus on his influence on and imitation by Keats and Coleridge, it is clear from the *Urfaust* text and the general themes and imagery of his work, that his design was distinctively Gothic. Superseding this argument, it is accepted that the boundaries between the Gothic and the Romantic often intersect. Both genres frequently overlap and their representative writers habitually borrow from each other, most remarkably in relation to issues of mortality and the perpetuity of the end. Eric Hadley Denton comments on this by stating that 'Faust is the archetypal figure of Dark Romanticism… [and] the diabolical Faustian bargain is enstaked at the heart of the Gothic plot' (Hadley Denton 1998, 70).

The Faustian links in *The Master and Margarita* therefore, can be seen as affecting another Gothic layer in the text. But this, of course, is all complicated by the fact that as Yeshua is not the conventional or accepted 'Jesus', Woland is not the classic Mephistopheles. In relation to this complication, Barrat has made the interesting claim that *The Master and Margarita* is closer to Dante than Faust, focusing on Satan's Ball as a last judgement and on the apocalyptic imagery of the final chapters (Barrat 1987, 234). This view discerns that in part two of the novel, Margarita, like Dante, meets the damned and hears their stories before their judgement by Woland, in which each is given according to his faith. The Gothic shades of the Dantescan features of the text are particularly interesting. Woland's undead guests at the ball clearly recall the damned of Dante's inferno. However, we are also entertained by a few non-Dantescan characters, namely, witches and vampires. Considering also, the direct references to bathing in and drinking human blood, what we have are not just characters from the *Inferno*, but an entire collection of medieval Gothic figures and their respective Gothic rituals.

These include Margarita herself, washed in blood, evoking the Vampyress Carmilla, the legendary Countess who bathed in the blood of virgins. Similarly, the first undead guests who arrive are walking corpses, one from a coffin and one from the gallows (Bulgakov 2004, 302). Headless men in tailcoats are accompanied by naked women on the ballroom dance floor and we are introduced, along with Margarita and her black cat, to the murderess Signora Toffana, who poisoned all

the men in her village; Frieda, the tortured soul who eternally relives the moment she suffocated her baby; and the tyrannical Emperor Rudolph. This all happens while the pulsating floor, reminiscent of Poe's *The Tale Heart*, throbs to the rhythms produced by waltzing skeletons and accordion playing Polar bears (Bulgakov 2004, 307). The references to a Dantescan hell are, however, apparent throughout the entire text and should not go ignored. Scattered in the narrative, from inclusions such as: '[t]he infernal heat' that beat down on the crowd as they watch the crucifixion in circles from the top of the hill down (Bulgakov 2004, 197), to ironic asides such as the short episode in Yalta, when Stepa enquires of a lone figure about his mysterious relocation only to receive the answer: 'Well I'm damned!' (Bulgakov 2004, 101), these allusions offer further clues to the interpretation of the novel's structure.

Significantly, the anatomy of this curious novel is effortlessly read as three nested circles resembling Dante's *Inferno* (Weeks 1996, 33). When one considers this, as Weeks suggests, in relation to Andrei Bely's *The Line, the Circle, the Spiral – of Symbolism*, the entire narrative structure is apparent as a play on the structure of Dante's hell; not dissimilar from the spiralling, circular prose that has already been discussed in Beckett. Bely writes that 'in moving from line to line [in narrative] the eye describes a circle' and so 'the uniting of one page to another combines circular and linear movement and form a spiral' (Weeks 1996, 33). We see this as most strikingly evident in the way that the same phrase or line of prose in Bulgakov's novel ends one chapter and begins the next. This usually links two of the given worlds in the story, maintaining a circular movement from one to the next as we go deeper into Woland's domain. One memorable, and particularly 'Dantescan' example, is where the last line of the chapter entitled 'The Dream of Nikanor Ivanovich' is repeated as the first line of 'The Execution': 'the sun had already set over Mount Golgotha and the hill was ringed by a double cordon' (Bulgakov 2004, 195-6).

Importantly, in the novel, there are also a number of significant references to Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which like Beckett's work shares with Bulgakov this fascination with *The Divine Comedy*. Especially of note, is the hooded man whose mysterious presence seems to be much more than the secret observation of the events surrounding Yeshua's crucifixion and Judas's murder (Bulgakov 2004, 199). Evocative of the image of the hooded man, gliding,

wrapped in a brown mantle in Eliot's poem (who reappears in *The Satanic Verses*), this allusion gains more power when later, at Satan's Ball, Margarita is requested to drink the blood of the spy Baron Meigel, encouraged by Woland's words: 'Don't be afraid your majesty, the blood has long since drained away into the earth and grapes have grown on the spot' (Bulgakov 2004, 313). This, interestingly, is an echo of Rushdie's depiction of the Empress Ayesha, who appears to be a reincarnation of Margarita 'within that body both fair and foul', who holds in her hands 'a human skull filled with a dark red fluid' (Rushdie 1998, 209). However, ostensibly, it refers to a philosophical view of Eliot's, expressed by the poet in the lines: 'That corpse that you planted last year in your garden/ Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?' (Eliot 1993a, 71-72), which has, in its ideal of reciprocity, a significant, apocalyptic and arguably Gothic vision.

Furthermore, in the final two chapters, the plot and the unification of the different stories gains momentum, heralded by violent storms, earthquake, fire, and a blood moon. A warning voice, like a trumpet, rings out 'Its time! Its time', recalling, again, Eliot's poem, and finally the true forms of the four demons are revealed as they ride: the four horsemen of the apocalypse against the backdrop of the night sky. Illumined by purple moonlight, Margarita observes Woland's transformation, his true aspect a sublime shadow – the reins of his horse appearing as strings of moonlight and the horse only a blob of darkness contrasting with his spurs of glinting stars (Bulgakov 2004, 427-28). The other demons, too, are revealed as specifically Gothic characters: two are knights and one a page. It is at this point that more serious Gothic concerns are addressed, such as the fate of the Master, and existential issues relating to death.

As is clear, the intertextual references in this novel are complex and varied and range from biblical texts to modern works. Significantly, they share one thing in common: they are all thematically Gothic. From the pulsating floor in Satan's ballroom and the instant whitening of Rimsky's hair, which invoke both Poe's 'The Tell Tale Heart' and 'A Descent into the Maelstrom', to the clearer allusions to Dante, Goethe, Gogol and Pushkin, symbolism of terror remains a constant, linked as it is to ideas of faith, imagination, fear and death. So, finally, and most importantly, it is necessary to analyse

the terror of the novel and reinforce its definition as a Gothic-postmodernist text.

That the demons 'terrorise' Moscow is of course obvious, but what is interesting is how this terror escalates and spreads to become an all encompassing sensation in the text. Already mentioned, is that a terrifying and uncanny atmosphere introduces the work announcing the arrival of Satan in Moscow. This terror, for Berlioz, is sublime in the conventional Gothic-postmodernist manner. Firstly, before their encounter with the foreigner, we are told that 'there was an oddness about that terrible day in May that is worth recording… the whole avenue was empty' (Bulgakov 2004, 13):

> Then occurred the second oddness which affected Berlioz alone. He suddenly stopped hiccupping, his heart thumped and for a moment vanished, then returned but with a blunt needle sticking into it. In addition, he was seized by a fear so groundless but so powerful that he had an immediate impulse to run away… without looking back (Bulgakov 2004, 14).

It is significant that this terror precipitates an event of such violence that the terror in the remainder of the text is heightened by suspense and expectation of the grotesque.

This is classic Gothic narrative technique in the style espoused by Radcliffe and Lewis, whereby the suspended state of terror is manipulated by a greater fear of horror to come, arousing in the imagination a lingering fascination that is stimulated entirely by fear and darkness. Tangential to this idea, is how the work presents the reader with the opportunity to experience the nature of the creative imagination and its potential in relation to known reality, epitomised in the fifth dimension. This relates directly to the philosophy of Pavel Florensky, who discovered through a mathematical exploration of the geometry of existence that, effectively, the imaginary plane of an object makes the real or physical plane transparent. To paraphrase, all space is double, is both real and imaginary, as is existence (Weeks 1996, 30).[2] This technique is developed and used explicitly in the

[2] Pavel Florensky's *Fictions In Geometry*, which used Dante's *Inferno* as an example of his theory of fictional space, was read with interest by Bulgakov and is widely

literary works of Nabokov, Amis, Rushdie and Vonnegut, and has been detailed in this study as a typical Gothic-postmodernist device. However, it is also evident, in a more illusive sense, in the philosophical explorations of selfhood that characterise the writing of Beckett, Auster and even Wilde (if we consider Dorian's timeless existence, in which his youth is preserved as a temporary cross-dimensional perspective on his own identity and morality).

The fundamental idea that time and space are plural, consisting of reality as well as something more subjective, is a recurring trope in Gothic supernatural writing, but it is also a prime focus in the playful narrative schemes that underlie most of what we think of as postmodernist works, and this is where the cross-over between the Gothic and postmodernism again becomes significant. The fifth dimension is not only an investigative space for dark existential issues to be resolved, but also, a carnivalesque location or 'third space' for the playful reshaping of reality. Nadine Natov writes that 'Bulgakov transforms hostile, incongruous and frequently terrifying everyday realities… into a funny carnivalesque fantasmoragia' (Natov, qtd in, Barat 1987, 321). Significantly, though dealing with terror in a profound sense and its effects on the minds of both the individual and the masses (and also significantly with its relationship to power in politics), Bulgakov's satirical and very humorous approach to the subject is distinctly postmodernist and this is essentially where the Gothic-postmodernism of the work is centred.

This is most clearly the case in chapter fourteen, entitled: 'Saved by Cockcrow'. The chapter begins quite abruptly with a Gothic account of Rimsky's terror (the treasurer of Massolit) (Bulgakov 2004, 176). Bulgakov describes, with archetypal Gothic suspense, his fear of the empty corridors, heightened by a damp, evil smelling substance which oozed from under the doors, sending tremors down his spine:

> Feeling gooseflesh spreading over his skin… he glanced round to the window behind his back. Through the sparse leaves of the sycamore tree, he saw the

---

accepted as an influence on his creation of the supernatural worlds in his novel (See Pittman 1991, 117).

> moon fly through a translucent cloud. He seemed mesmerised by the branches of the tree and the more he looked at them the more strongly he felt the grip of fear… his sensitivity was now on a par with the world's most delicate seismograph (Bulgakov 2004, 175-77).

At this point he meets his colleague Verenukha, but in the moment he realises that he is being lied to, 'a feeling of terror crawled over his body beginning with his feet and for the second time he had a weird feeling that a kind of malarial damp was oozing across the floor' (Bulgakov 2004, 178). Bulgakov's handling of Rimsky's terror is both poetic and timelessly Gothic at this point. We are presented with the uncanny anxiety that precipitates the feeling, the overactive imagination of the protagonist, the possibility of the supernatural, the sublime effects of the moon and the branches of the trees and finally, and, most interestingly, the experience of terror materialised as a parasitic entity 'crawling' over Rimsky's body.

Bulgakov's style, however, takes a remarkable turn when Rimsky perceives that Verenukha throws no shadow, causing him to cry out, 'in a silent shriek of despair' (Bulgakov 2004, 180). When Verenukha's mysterious, new, vampiric nature is revealed Rimsky's terror can be seen as having reached its pinnacle and is now unspeakable. Reminiscent again of Munch's *The Scream*, Bulgakov's depiction of his terrified character presents the unrepresentable, the genuine, sublime capacity of terror to overpower the human imagination and to transcend the limitations of language. Bulgakov's rendering of this is then transformed into what is recognisable as the postmodernist aspect of Gothic-postmodernism, as the whole scene becomes a Gothic carnival, described in tones of irony and playfully structured with intertextual references, as now, trapped in the room by Varenukha, 'the moon flooded window' reveals 'the face of a naked girl pressed to the glass' trying to break in through the lower casement, [h]er 'arm, coloured deathly green, [and] patches of decay on her breast' (Bulgakov 2004, 180-81). Finally, to Rimsky's relief, the cock crows three times to signal the break of dawn and the horrifying monsters disappear, leaving him stunned and with a full head of pure white hair.

The outcome for Rimsky would appear here to be a direct reference to a Gothic tradition also taken up by Edgar Allen Poe in 'A Descent into the Maelstrom', in which a terrifying encounter with a supernatural maelstrom leaves a bewildered adventurer as unfamiliar

to his companions as 'a traveller from the spirit-land' (Poe 2003, 193), his hair, raven-black the day before, now as white as snow. We also see in the cock crow, an allusion that breaks into three, referring firstly to the New Testament in that the cock crows, not once but three times, secondly to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and finally also to the Master's mysterious story of Pontius Pilate. Typical of Bulgakov's postmodernist narrative style, parallel dimensions in his stories, and stories outside of the text overlap and intersect through references, symbols, repeated monologue or dialogue. However, any attempt to construct a meaningful relationship between any of these devices results in disorientation.

Commenting on this, Barrat points out, that Bulgakov is hinting that searching for patterns in a novel runs against the natural process of reading, leading to a homogenising view of the novel as a spatial object rather than a dynamic experience (Barrat 1987, 133). A considerable metafictional strategy, this places the novel well within the general definition of postmodernist writing. However, there is also a Gothic connection in the counter-narrative style which places the work within the specific genre of Gothic-postmodernism and that is the sense of terror inherent in the reader's inability to solve the puzzles of the text. While one strives toward an understanding of the novel that is totalising and 'rational', there is something uncanny in the inability to control the text and more so, in the sense that it, in fact, is controlling us, as if something outside the powers of our understanding, something which for that reason is unrepresentable in language, is manipulating our imaginative response to the novel. This reaction to the text is uncanny. The situation is an insightful allegory into our general approach to solving the puzzles of subjectivity and reality, which in a postmodern context, often leads to disillusionment and aporia. In addition, it resonates with a terror that is sublime in its encounter with the unrepresentable and that unavoidable conflict of reason and imagination. From this perspective, the novel and the type of narrative that it presents may be regarded as a significant example of the Gothic-postmodernist narrative mode and also of its effects, on multiple levels, on the subject.

That Gothic and postmodernist literary elements seep from the Moscow chapters to the Yershalaim chapters, is only subtly clear, but their related functions are nevertheless significant. In the Yershalaim chapters, we are offered a completely distinctive narrative style and

strategy from the remainder of the text. The narrator of the Pilate story, as a sort of *doppelgänger* to the dominant satanic narrator who has already been discussed, seems to be quite frank and offers us a realist-historical style of narration. Noting that the Yershalaim chapters underwent the fewest changes and are a key to understanding the novel, the fact that these chapters focus on the re-writing of history and myth and the challenging of homogenising grande narratives (Weeks 1996, 49), is of the utmost importance. Here, the similarities with Rushdie's work are apparent as can be highlighted through the character, Matthew the Levite.

In his essay 'Healthy Blasphemies', G. Lucas explores the artist presented by Bulgakov and Rushdie as one who questions the unquestionable in an effort to discover individual meaning despite repressive orthodox ideologies (Lucas 1997, etext). Both authors, he notes, present us with the idea that Jesus and Mohammad were simply the purveyors of 'truth'. They were not the ones to record it. In *The Master and Margarita*, when Pilate interrogates Yeshua, he criticises Matthew:

> This man follows me everywhere with nothing but his goatskin parchment and writes incessantly. But I once caught a glimpse of that parchment and I was horrified. I had not said a word of what was written there. I begged him, "Please burn this parchment of yours!" But he tore it out of my hands and ran away (Bulgakov 2004, 25).

Similarly, Lucas notes how Salman the Persian in Rushdie's novel begins to change Mahound's recitation and does not represent the prophet accurately (Lucas 1997, etext):

> Mahound did not notice the alterations. So there I was, actually writing the Book, or rewriting, anyway, polluting the word of God with my own profane language. But, good heavens, if my poor words could not be distinguished from the Revelation by God's own Messenger, then what did that mean? What did that say about the quality of the divine poetry? (Rushdie 1998, 367)

This sort of critique of official knowledge and the concept of a 'divine text' is significant in terms of a critical response to both works, particularly to considering Bulgakov's novel as a postmodernist work *avante la lettre*. Interestingly, Gary Rosenshield places *The Master and Margarita* in a liminal spot between modernist and

poststructuralist paradigms (Rosenshield 1997, 212) this is readily supported by a number of issues in the text, notably, at the point when it is revealed Matthew the Levite's script is itself 'undecipherable' (Bulgakov 2004, 371) and that (contrary to the New Testament account) although Judas of Karioth was murdered, a rumour of his suicide was likely to spread (Bulgakov 2004, 367). This may be interpreted as a comment by Bulgakov, (to be later taken up by Rushdie) on the nature of the arbitrary structures of language and writing, but furthermore on the concept of the unrepresentable and how it extends into the realm of official ideology and to individual and collective fanaticism.

Agreeing with this view of the text as deconstructive of official narratives, one would wonder as to the reason for the Master's version of the crucifixion, which is crude and horrifying, as the dying Christ is illustrated with a mask of horseflies sucking his yellow bloated body, while vultures circle overhead in expectation of a feast (Bulgakov 2004, 200-205). Matthew, as we are told, at the peak of Yeshua's suffering, curses God as a God of evil, and as Yeshua dies, the sun is covered by thunderclouds, 'tongues of lightening' flash and the hill becomes a sulphurous 'smoking cauldron of wind, water and fire' (Bulgakov 2004, 204-7). Bulgakov is, in effect, offering us a shrewdly Gothic version of events in his creation of a standard apocalyptic aesthetic that is dominated by the sublime. We are presented with the Procurator, haunted by the scent of roses, experiencing prophetic visions (Bulgakov 2004, 45), and the sublimely terrifying effects of nature in the tempest and the moon. The temple, for example, is described as a mirage in the lightning – appearing and disappearing in the flashes of light and darkness (Bulgakov 2004, 339). Apocalyptic imagery is also abundant, as are references to the Gothic elements of the Moscow story, which are used playfully but with potency. The Pilate chapters, as a result, may be interpreted as narrative which uses Gothic conventions and motifs to deconstruct the *grande narrative* of the New Testament, thereby challenging logo-centric discourses of power and authority. It is therefore a distinctively 'dark counter-narrative' (Botting 1996, 1).

This Gothic-postmodernist schema is especially clear when one observes the links between the stories of the novel. Of these, most potent are the apocalyptic storm (Bulgakov 2004, 340); the chaos set off by Passover festival in Yershalaim which had magicians, sorcerers

and wizards; symbols of the sun and moon; and most interestingly, the spoken phrase that unites the Master and Pilate as parallel figures: 'Even by moonlight there is no peace for me. Oh ye gods…' (Bulgakov 2004, 363, 326). Proffer has commented that the symbolism of the novel is concentrated in the Pilate story and diffused in the rest of the novel (Proffer 1984, 554). Notably, as Proffer points out, the Moscow scenes refer to New Testament events and people that are not mentioned in the Pilate narrative. Berlioz for example has twelve literary disciples, Margarita drinks wine that tastes like blood mirroring the last supper, and the Master and Margarita are resurrected on Easter Sunday morning.

This is regarded by some critics as an effort to parody or pastiche the official Gospels of the New Testament and it may be regarded as a Gothic-postmodernist attempt for a number of reasons. Firstly, as has been discussed, critiquing Catholicism has been a favourite choice for Gothic writers, from the early Gothicists such as Lewis and Radcliffe who offered scandalous accounts of monastic life and the corruption of the Church, while manipulating the superstition that lies at the heart of Catholic faith, to Bram Stoker, who created Dracula as a Messianic anti-Christ figure who ritually drinks the blood and consumes bodies in an inversion of the sacrament of Communion. And secondly, the New Testament account of Jesus' death and resurrection may offers the perfect event through which to explore the Gothic-postmodernist preoccupation with symbolic death, along lines that we have already looked at in *The Waste Land*, *The Satanic Verses*, *Time's Arrow*, and *Slaughterhouse 5*.

The 'deaths' of the Master and Margarita receive significant attention, artistically, from Bulgakov in the concluding chapters of the novel, which wrap up the themes, genre and general philosophy of the text and unite the various different metafictional elements. Effectively, this begins when the Master's manuscript is released, and condemned by publishers and critics alike. At this point, we are told that the Master died spiritually as a result, sinking into depression and losing his Faustian motivation to strive toward intellectual and artistic greatness. Margarita too undergoes a sort of spiritual death here. She says herself that the book was her life and its loss begins a new, supernatural dimension of her existence, in which desperation and love lead her to her bargaining her soul to the devil: 'I sold my human nature', and became a witch (Bulgakov 2004, 413). Following from

this, both characters can be interpreted as undergoing a second and third death when the manuscript is restored by Woland as part of his Faustian exchange with Margarita. Following this exchange, the demon Azazello appears in their restored apartment and offers them a cup of poisoned wine – the same wine that Pilate allegedly drank on the evening of the crucifixion. Margarita, on drinking and offering a toast to Satan, breathes her last, soon followed by the Master, while the whole scene turns the colour of blood (Bulgakov 2004, 416). This death is clearly presented as a symbolic death for the novel's protagonists and we are subsequently told of their 'real' or physical deaths which occur simultaneously, in the 'real' dimension of existence. Ivan Bezdomny is informed that the man in room 118 has passed away (Bulgakov 2004, 422), and we are told indirectly that a woman has been found dead in her bed by her maid in a 'Gothic' house in Moscow (Bulgakov 2004, 417).

To reiterate Baudrillard's theory of symbolic death, the end is ultimately unknowable and unrepresentable, but it is graspable in symbolic death. Symbolic deaths in literature and art therefore fulfil a postmodernist obligation to the unrepresentable and manipulate the terror that lies at the heart of the inevitability of this end. Concretised in Bulgakov's novel by the repeated phrase 'everything has an end' (Bulgakov 2004, 444) and poetised by the narrator's monologue in the chapter, 'Absolution and Eternal Refuge' the deep significance of the Master and Margarita's symbolic deaths is revealed:

> How sad the world is at evening. How mysterious the mists over the swamps. You will know it when you have wondered astray in those mists, when you have suffered greatly before dying, when you have walked through the world carrying an unbearable burden. You know it too when you are weary and ready to leave this earth without regret; its mists; its swamps and its rivers. Ready to give yourself into the arms of death with a light heart, knowing that death alone can comfort you (Bulgakov 2004, 426).

Interestingly, there is a dark, anti-Christian aspect in Bulgakov's representation, as they drink from the cup of 'blood' and receive a symbolic death that leads to salvation and eternal rest at he hands of Woland and not Yeshua (Bulgakov 2004, 418). Through this inversion, symbolic death may be regarded, as part of the overall philosophy of good and evil in the novel. When Matthew comes to see Woland, 'the old sophist… spirit of evil and lord of the shadows' (Bulgakov 2004, 405), Woland tells him: 'Think now: where would

your good be if there were no evil and what would the world look like without shadow?... a bare world' (Bulgakov 2004, 405). Significantly, the afterlife for the Master and Margarita, who accept this philosophy of the duality of man's moral nature, is not in the Kingdom of God but is instead sanctuary in a sublime liminal zone somewhere between the worlds of Jeshua and Woland.

Symbolic death, as the shadow of death, occurring in the spectral and supernatural dimension of existence, offers us an uncanny vision into the nature of death's mystery. The novel, for its focus on this idea, may be seen as a celebration of the victory of art over mortality and over terror at inevitable death (Lakshin 1996, 82), and also of the heterogeneous nature of existence, which is salvable through the imagination of the artist. Most critics, though viewing the novel from various angles with bewilderment in terms of genre, accept it generally as part of the tradition that includes Gogol and Hoffman, primarily for its appropriation of the fantastic and the supernatural and for its underlying philosophical critiques. Sticking, however, to Lakshin's opinion that the novel, as a true work of art, offers us a new literary form, this book seeks to view this new form thematically, stylistically and contextually as part of the emerging genre of Gothic-postmodernism.

The foundation for this definition of the novel is the basic exploration of the incompatibility of reason and imagination, so central, as we have already discussed, to the theories of terror espoused by Kant and Lyotard alike, and also to the tradition of the Gothic novel. Similarly, the stylistic use of Gothic suspense, the supernatural, transgressive humour and sublime terror, in order to parody and pastiche, is clearly a parallel with other Gothic-postmodernist works which playfully approach terror through defamiliarisation and carnival. Most relevant to this definition, however, is the novel's particularly Gothic deconstruction of *grande narrative* in its focus on the unrepresentable and the inherent heterogeneity of all things, so powerfully influential on later writers such as Salman Rushdie.

In addition, that the novel uses a Gothic imaginary through symbolism and intertexts, and sublime terror to demonstrate the logocentric nature of discourses of power, sets it apart from other works of its time and within the slippery genre that is postmodernism. Significantly, its world-view, which perceives Moscow as '[i]n short –

hell' (Bulgakov 2004, 75), and its apocalyptic parody, provides almost a ready-made model for writers like Rushdie who would later transform hellish Moscow to London and Yershalaim to Jahilia and offer us another kind of devil, although presented to us by the same satanic narrator. This considered, as well as its dark Romantic philosophy, the novel may be seen as the first clearly distinguishable Gothic-postmodernist work, setting a high standard for writers of the same disposition who would follow to contribute to this apparition of a genre.

Chapter 10: Textual Terrors of the Self: Haunting and Hyperreality in *Lunar Park*

If any contemporary novel was to define the genre Gothic-postmodernism as it manifests itself today, none could do so more succinctly than Bret Easton Ellis' *Lunar Park*. A follow up to his sensationalist and highly controversial novel *American Psycho*, it unnervingly rediscovers the psychological aspects of terror through traditional Gothic tropes: the haunted house, the tyrannical father figure, the *doppelgänger*, the serial killer, the un-dead, the atmosphere of mystery and suspense, supernatural occurrences, and the dominating presence of the Gothic sublime. Interestingly, this is superimposed upon a strong postmodernist perspective on narrative self-consciousness and the confounding metafictional status of the novel often parodies the Gothic elements. This results in a text that hovers on the boundaries of the Gothic and of postmodernism, using anachronistic Gothic devices in a post-MTV generation context, fluctuating between the two genres, often occupying the liminal position of being 'both / and'. This chapter will focus on identifying how postmodernist narrative devices function to reinforce a traditional Gothic aesthetic in *Lunar Park*, promoting the need to see the novel as a development of Gothic-postmodernism to its most climactic point to date, and clarifying grounds for its classification as an exemplary Gothic-postmodernist work.

Lunar Park presents itself as the pseudo-biography of 'the author' Bret Easton Ellis and follows his mental deterioration, beginning with an account of his early fame as creator of best-selling novels *Less than Zero*, *Glamorama*, *The Rules of Attraction* and the infamous *American Psycho*. Fluctuating consistently between 'reality' and fiction, as it periodically accounts for Ellis' marriage to actress Jayne Dennis, and his move toward suburban family life in post-9/11 New York, the novel develops into a postmodernist ghost-story, outlining the haunting of the main character and the return of his dead father to complete the destruction of his identity.

The development of a Gothic aesthetic in the novel begins in the opening chapter, not with the establishment of standard Gothic literary devices and symbolism as one would expect, but when the narrator, Bret Easton Ellis, informs us that 'my sisters and I discovered the dark side of life at an unusually early age'. The world lacked coherence and within this chaos we were 'all doomed to failure' (Easton Ellis 2005, 8). He continues: 'My father created me, criticised me, destroyed me, and, then after I reinvented myself and lurched back into being, became a proud boastful dad' (Easton Ellis 2005, 9). This perspective on the creation and destruction of subjectivity, establishes an age-old Gothic premise that harks back to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and the dark side of life and of identity is set as the focal point for what is to become an extremely egocentric and arguably megalomaniac narrative voice. Bret's paranoia and edgy over-sensitivity creates an atmosphere of tension and suspense early on in the novel, explained away in his account of his father Robert Ellis, a typical Gothic patriarch, who, 'locked in a demented fury' (Easton Ellis 2005, 8), and obsessed by status, rage and his own loneliness (Easton Ellis 2005, 181), caused the real world to melt away for his son, opening up a path of self destruction through excess.

In this sense, Bret is introduced to us as something of a hybrid character, bred from something akin to Frankenstein's creature and Dorian Gray. His character is one that is, like Frankenstein's hideous progeny, both monstrous, for his part in the horrifying and sadistically violent fantasies of Patrick Bateman, yet also deserving of sympathy for the hurt that his relationship with his father caused him. This is exemplified in his wife's enraged comment: 'Is there anything more pathetic than a monster who keeps asking *please? please? Please?*' (Easton Ellis 2005, 291). Arguably, the fact that character Bret is conflated to a certain extent with the author Bret deconstructs the idea of authorship and furthers this idea of hybrid or blurred identity. It also effects an added hauntology, reinforcing the monstrous subject as a specific conceit of Gothic-postmodernism. But Bret's character is also one that is defined by self indulgence, obsession, recklessness, and paranoia. His encounter with himself, in the figure of Clayton, which leads to the ultimate terror of the novel, is evocative of the crucial issues raised in Wilde's illustration of his protagonist, Dorian. One might, subsequently, consider him as a typical Gothic-postmodernist anti-hero; trapped in a terrifying void of hyperreality

and non-identity, induced by a cocktail of postmodern culture, prescribed and non-prescribed drugs, megalomania and repression.

Conventionally, Gothic novels are often prefaced with an account detailing the mysterious origins of the story that is about to be told. Keeping with this tradition, Ellis's *American Psycho* was written according to the 'rambling, unfocussed and self-obsessed' (Easton Ellis 2005, 33) narrator of *Lunar Park*, during a disturbing period of the 'author's' life, 'at night when the spirit of this madman would visit' (Easton Ellis 2005, 18). We are told that something 'took over' and that 'the novel forced itself to be written…I fearfully watched my hand…[and] I was repulsed by this creation' (Easton Ellis 2005, 18). As the novel continues, we discover that 'he' returns to visit the author for the writing of *Lunar Park* as 'the writer', one of a series of *doppelgängers* in the text, who subtly creeps up on the author and the reader like some external supernatural force until he causes Bret to finally succumb to paranoia and 'illusion': 'Look how black the sky is, the writer said. I made it that way' (Easton Ellis 2005, 318).

In a style that is strikingly similar to that used in *Time's Arrow*, we encounter phrases such as '[t]he writer was about to hiss something, and I silenced him' (Easton Ellis 2005, 322). It emerges that a definitive struggle is ongoing between Bret and this mysterious, creative other: 'I asked the writer: are you writing this dialogue?' (Easton Ellis 2005, 325). Ellis' handling of this idea is expressive of annoyance with this interrupting 'writer', and offers a comical but dark reading of the same issue we encounter in *The Master and Margarita* and *The Satanic Verses*: the problem of the mysterious, insidious and disruptive second narrator.

This is extremely significant when we consider that in a Gothic novel that is narrated in the first person, the Gothic aesthetic is entirely dependent on this first-person account. That this account is divided in itself by a Gothic *doppelgänger* motif is therefore intriguing. We see this situation in the 'writer' as an embodiment of Bret's writing life: an 'enclosed sphere of consciousness' that had begun to leak into part of him that was 'tactile and alive' to the point where he can no longer tell one from the other (Easton Ellis 2005, 218). This echoes a familiar idea from *The Satanic Verses*, in which Gibreel, too, experiences the dissolution between the world of dreams and waking life until he himself becomes a narrator, bringing a divine

message to Mahound, emerging from his mysterious possession during his fall from the plane.

Possession is, thus, also a key thematic device in *Lunar Park*. The writer is, in effect, a part of Bret, controlling his thoughts and trying to control his behaviour and destroy his concept of reality. He 'promised me this was not something I had dreamt' (Easton Ellis 2005, 304), but… '[i]f I believed that the doll was responsible, the ground I stood on would shift into a world made of quicksand' (Easton Ellis 2005, 305). In *Lunar Park*, unlike in Rushdie's novel, the issue is defined by struggle. Bret's identity is split in two, like the sky '[o]utside divided in half: part of it was an intense arctic blue, slowly being erased by a sheet of black clouds' (Easton Ellis 2005, 311), but when he finds Aimee Light's mangled cat, he chooses not to tell this to the writer because of the scenario that he would come up with – it was more than he could bear that day; he would 'make everything turn black' (Easton Ellis 2005, 305-6).

It gradually becomes clear that this dark side of Bret's identity, 'the writer', is responsible for Bret's unconscious desire for 'chaos, mystery, death', as expressed in the Gothic tones of the novel (Easton Ellis 2005, 312). This is apparent particularly in the way in which 'the writer' manages to take control of the first person narrative, intruding on Bret's thoughts and therefore on the narrative, represented in the text by the use of italics: '*the thing was protecting something*' (Easton Ellis 2005, 311). 'The writer told me it was hiding. The writer told me I needed to entice it from its hiding place. I asked the writer how does something that's not alive, hide itself?' (Easton Ellis 2005, 306). 'The writer' is evidently a source of Bret's mania, and, subsequently, of his terror. Interestingly, when Bret receives a mysterious phone call from the voice, who claims: 'I'm everything. I'm everyone'; the voice in Bret's mind 'had scales and was horned… had emerged from a bonfire' (Easton Ellis 2005, 335). One wonders if this evil entity, possibly also another dark part of Bret himself, the cause of a 'fear that unnerved him' (Easton Ellis 2005, 335), was his true writer's voice, evil, born of fire, the one who came for the writing of *American Psycho*, and who murdered those victims of the Patrick Bateman copycat, indirectly (Easton Ellis 2005, 44).

This theme of the unconscious force of writing seems to develop from other Gothic-postmodernist texts. It has been quite clearly at work in, for example, the figure of the satanic narrator of

The Master and Margarita and *The Satanic Verses* and the divided narrator of Auster and Amis's respective novels. More poignantly, the theme is evident in the mysterious origins of particular stories. Of these, Bulgakov's novel is the most uncanny. This Gothic-postmodernist theme suggests the concept that the unconscious, being the 'other' of writing is also the other of identity and this has interesting implications for Ellis' metafictional work, in which the identity of the author and character is destabilised through the very process of inscription. The author Bret Easton Ellis, through his redeployment of his earlier literary creations such as the character of Clayton from *Less than Zero* and Kimball from *American Psycho*, effectively unwrites Bret the character's role as author and thereby obscures the relationship of writing to reality. The narrative of *Lunar Park* can, therefore, be interpreted as weaving itself between Bret's delirious perspective on reality and the fictions of Ellis' earlier work and the novel, to an extent, takes on a life of its own beyond the control of its professed author.

As a result, the traditional Gothic plot, based on finding reasonable solutions for supernatural occurrences, proves impossible in this text, as nothing is real or trustworthy due to the unreliability of the narrative. Of the mysteries in the story, one, to Bret, is as unreal as the other, and 'so-called reality', which is undermined by the effects of drugs, capitalist culture, and terror, seems just as unreliable (Easton Ellis 2005, 130). In his consideration of what the kids might have to add to his quest to uncover the mystery of the missing boys and to save his son, Bret realises that the kids were all effectively zombies on Ritalin and therefore undependable. On the other side of this, when he tries to cross-reference the moves of the copycat killer with the murders as narrated in his novel, he finds that the patterns of the murder do not merge with the published version of the text. Instead, shockingly, they merge with his own private first draft copy of the work, which was never read by anyone but himself. From now on, in the novel, the real world, as Bret tells us, begins to melt away (Easton Ellis 2005, 11).

By the end of the narrative, it is arguable that it has completely dissolved and what remains is an amalgamation of fictions from a writer who admits that 'as a writer, you slant all evidence in favour of the conclusions you want to produce and rarely tilt in favour of the truth. But… since the truth had already been disqualified - I was

free to envision another movie' (Easton Ellis 2005, 217). This typical postmodernist fetishism of the author for the spectrality of the real, inevitably leads any interpretation of *Lunar Park* as a Gothic work to consider the postmodernist, metafictional qualities that give substance to the text, and also to note the importance of this disillusionment for the reader, and for issues relating to terror that are the core of the narrative. In this respect, the following comment on the novel from *Publishers Weekly* is not at all unexpected: 'This is a peculiar novel, Gothic in tone and supernatural in conceit, whose energy is built from it's almost tabloid like connection to real life' (*Publishers Weekly* 2005, etext).

Bret's position as a Gothic-postmodernist anti-hero is also categorically highlighted in the alleged origins of *Lunar Park*. The novel is properly introduced in a typically Gothic/ romance manner that is reminiscent of very early Gothic writings, including Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In other words, the supernatural is undermined by a possible rational explanation; in this case, established as being possibly induced by Bret's delusion. Witnesses 'disappeared', the effect of drugs was foregrounded. Haunted by the fact that nobody was scared for him, the narrator invites the reader to return to the lost time that is *Lunar Park* and the first chapter ends echoing Bulgakov's uncanny first chapter, by addressing the reader with: 'And now its time to go back into the past' (Easton Ellis 2005, 45).

Interestingly, this is where the postmodernist parody of the Gothic begins, underlining the wry irony and self-consciousness that will define the rest of the text. The opening scene of *Lunar Park* is a Hallowe'en party, at which one guest is Frankenstein and another Dick Cheney (Easton Ellis 2005, 51). Here, the initial Gothic references and spoofs begin. While some of them poke fun at traditional Gothic characters, and at our postmodern attitudes to the commercialised Celtic ritual of Hallowe'en, such as the dialogue between Bret and his devilish drug dealer, Kentucky Pete: 'It's a spooky world dude…Ghoulish man, ghoulish' (Easton Ellis 2005, 54), other references display a more serious attitude to the Gothic genre and an appreciation for its dark philosophy. These references include the name of the house: 307 Elsinore Lane (Easton Ellis 2005, 51), which is the first of many allusions to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, arguably the quintessential Gothic tragedy, and which hints toward the coming

suspense and gloom. Similarly, Kentucky Pete, the drug dealer arrives, looking like 'a grizzled prospector' and is allowed to enter in a manner not unlike that of how Faust allows Mephisto to enter his office (Easton Ellis 2005, 53). Subsequently, Jay McInerney, Bret's 'toxic twin' (Easton Ellis 2005, 11), arrives with more cocaine, referring to it as 'Devil's Dandruff' (Easton Ellis 2005, 64), and the idea that Bret is bargaining his soul to some greater evil is suggested. Present also in this opening scene, is a Gothic aesthetic which is hyperreal and self-parodying: dry ice is poured into the Jacuzzi where the underwater light was replaced by a red bulb for an eerie smoking cauldron effect. Their nine acre yard transforms into a graveyard, complete with tombstones and inside the party danced to 'Sympathy for the Devil', 'The Ghost In You', 'Thriller' and 'Monster Mash' (Easton Ellis 2005, 51).

While the 'simulation' involved in this Gothic spectacle intimates directly toward a postmodern and postmodernist context, the Gothic atmosphere and suspense that is generated later leads, in a more traditional way, to sublime terror as the moonlit scene of the party is described: 'above the headstones I noticed the moon and a lunar light fanning over the field and there was actually a mist rolling in from the woods and drifting toward the house' (Easton Ellis 2005, 73). As Bret moves through the party to investigate the cause of his step-daughter's fear of her toy Terby, the sconces on the wall begin to flicker and the long dark corridor transforms into something akin to the labyrinthine passages of a Radcliffe novel (Easton Ellis 2005, 73). A mixture of withdrawal from the cocaine he has just taken and anxiety about mysterious scratches he notices on Sarah's bedroom ceiling, 'as if something had been crawling, hooking his claws into it' (Easton Ellis 2005, 74), initiates in the novel the development of Bret's terror. An oscillation between a traditional Gothic aesthetic and a more parodic, postmodernist or hyperreal one, begins to underline his decline and the advancement of his fear.

So, we see that early on in the text, a consistent pattern of shifting from a traditional Gothic to a more postmodernist approach is enforced. A passage such as:

> [a]s I turned away from Sarah's room, something sang out in a clear high pitched voice that turned into a guttural squawking – it was coming from the bed – and an adrenalin rush surged through me, out of me, enveloping the

> cavernous bedroom. I didn't look back as I raced down the hallway (Easton Ellis 2005, 76),

which is evocative of a terror that is certainly sublime, on the terms that have already been discussed, is easily contrasted with the passage which follows it, in which Bret emerges from a recovering sleep, and, hungover, drapes himself in a white sheet, leaving the room as 'a ghost' (Easton Ellis 2005, 78). In this passage, the narrator goes so far as to refer to himself as 'the ghost'. The ghost needed coffee (Easton Ellis 2005, 79). And as the ghost reads the morning paper, he realises that '[t]he newspapers kept stroking [his] fear' (Easton Ellis 2005, 81): '[e]veryone had become preoccupied with horror. Madness was fluttering everywhere' (Easton Ellis 2005, 81). People had 'simply become alienated and longed for a lesser horror… [and] distrust everybody was the message' (Easton Ellis 2005, 83).

Ellis's manipulation of his art as social commentary presents an example of what has emerged as a central concern of Gothic-postmodernism. While it has long been the focus of Gothic literature, social critique in *Lunar Park*, much in the same vein as *The Master and Margarita* and *The Satanic Verses*, presents a counter-narrative to cultural terrors. While the terror of everyday life is the source of many of Bret's anxieties, it is the terror inherent in his own subjectivity that is truly sublime. Therefore, it seems that Bret's encounters with the sublime through the terrors that haunt him provide a release or an escape from the narrative of the 'real' world as it is mass produced in the media. Interestingly, Bret's/ the ghost's experience of reading about high-school shootings and missing children leads to the introduction of a new kind of ominous atmosphere and the gloom and terror that it instils is that of a generation that seems far removed from older Gothic terrors. In response, Bret adds: '[y]ou couldn't help being both afraid and fascinated' (Easton Ellis 2005, 82).

Echoing Romantic views on the sublime aspects of terror which are characterised by simultaneous fear and fascination, this statement underscores that the Gothic sublime is present in both the traditional Gothic and postmodernist fluctuations in the text. This would allow us to reconsider Bret's earlier comments on postmodern terrors, the horror of urban life, and the resonance of the 9/11 attacks, in a new light. As he says: 'there were too many fearful moments when the living envied the dead… cities had become mournful places… so many people had lost their capacity for love'. Tattered

photocopies of the missing were scattered everywhere (Easton Ellis 2005, 41). This clearly but uncannily reiterates Baudrillard's ideas on the city of death: '[t]he cemetery no longer exists because modern cities have taken over their function: they are ghost towns, cities of death' (Baudrillard 1993, 127). As has already been mentioned, 'the King of terrors' (Burke 1998, 86), death, is in general a focal point in the Gothic for the expression of the terror that haunts contemporary culture, in particular in Gothic-postmodernist works where that culture is often read as a culture of fear. In Baudrillard's words, this terror is all about a death that is not just bodily or personal, but by which the identity of the subject is estimated. To reiterate, he claims that in our hyperreal world, identity 'is untenable: it is death, since it fails to inscribe its own death' (Baudrillard 1994, 4). The living, therefore, envy the dead for their escape from the chain of simulation and its evasion of 'the real'. Bret's comment to his wife Jayne at the Hallowe'en party, that: 'I've decided against wearing masks. I want to be real honey' (Easton Ellis 2005, 46) can be dually interpreted as a sample of Bret's sarcasm toward the false supernaturalism of Hallowe'en but also as a manifestation of a distinctly postmodern death instinct, the desire for the real, for identity linked to death.

What is significant, in terms of this postmodernist approach to Gothic themes, is that it merges at times with a more traditional Gothic approach resulting in a distinctly Gothic-postmodernist narrative. One striking example of this is when Bret starts to receive ghost emails from his dead father. When Bret makes the 'disturbing connection' of the date and time of the emails and the date and time of his father's death (Easton Ellis 2005, 101) and more emails flood his inbox, denial is the first response:

> The denial of everything would pull me gently away from reality, but only for a moment because lines started connecting with other lines and gradually an entire grid was forming and it became coherent, with a specific meaning, and finally, emerging from the void was an image of my father. His face was white and his eyes were closed in repose, and his mouth was just a line that soon opened up, screaming (Easton Ellis 2005, 253).

Denial, as we see, soon turns to sublime terror epitomised in the transposition of his father's face in death with a second image of his face in a virulent scream. Paranoia is hinted at here in the manner in which Bret makes the connections between the lines forming the

pattern of his father's screaming/ death image. The sequence of the delivery of the emails, and the suspense leading up to their revelation, is quite traditional in Gothic terms, as is the sublime terror apparent in the scream[1] and in Bret's reaction when he discovers the other connections that can now be made among the various mysterious and supernatural occurrences that have been fuelling his obsession. He decides that his father is trying to tell him something from beyond the grave. It is all a warning that something terrible is going to happen (Easton Ellis 2005, 254). Scenes such as this easily parallel as intertextual references to other typical Gothic texts, such as, most obviously, *Hamlet* and also *The Castle of Otranto*, in which the ghost of a patriarch returns to warn of upset and disturbance within a dynasty usually relating to blood lineage.

This conventional Gothic plot development and handling of sublime terror is, however, blurred by the instance of a particularly Gothic-postmodernist aspect of this scene, identifiable in its relevance to a more contemporary appropriation of horror and terror in relation to technology. *The Ring* (Verbinski 2002), and *White Noise* (Sax 2002), are two films that come to mind offering a similar example of the merging of the ghost and the electronic media device. *White Noise*, which was promoted with the tagline: 'The line separating the living from the dead has been crossed', presents the idea that the protagonist can communicate with the dead through EVP: Electronic Voice Phenomena, which he receives from radio-waves, through television screens and even his computer. *The Ring* also suggests the same idea, epitomised in the horrifying image of Samara as she emerges from the television screen, seemingly trapped in the video tape that is the primary source of terror in the movie.

The uncanny experience of communication with the dead via technology is significant. Our familiarity with photographs of the dead and seeing people who have passed immortalised in film is transposed

---

[1] The scream in Gothic-postmodernism is identifiable as a motif for on non-verbal reactions to the unrepresentable, as it is encountered through experiences of sublime terror. Edward Munch's painting offers an example of how the scream is part of an extra-linguistic response to those fears that lie beyond speech and has been analysed in detail by David Morris in his work on the Gothic sublime.

with the terror inherent in the simultaneous fear and desire for the possibility that this communication is a two way experience. Nicholas Royle, in his writings on post 9/11 society and culture, notes that the event of 9/11 caused 'a sense of the uncanny that seemed all-pervading' noting the uncanny double effect of the eerie telephone messages left by the dead and the coincidence of the date, which consists of the telephone number for emergency services (Royle 2003, vii-viii). The advancement of technology in a postmodern culture that is pervaded by fear, therefore, can be recognised as posing new potential for uncanny experiences and for the idea of the ghost in Gothic literature.

This technique is repeated in *Lunar Park* in the form of the movie *1941*, which takes on particular importance for Bret when he realises that the film is haunting him. On a number of occasions, the film is mentioned as playing in the background or when he enters a room, until the point when Bret realises that he had seen this movie with his father, that his father was born in 1941 and, most unnervingly, that it is playing on the television screen despite the fact that it is not being broadcasted on any channel and there is no disk in the DVD player (Easton Ellis 2005, 252).

Spooner notes that a recent self-consciousness due to mass media production, preoccupied with the end of innocence, has meant that the Gothic has access to new layers of irony beyond anything that Walpole could have imagined (Spooner 2006, 23-25). This comment is of relevance to *Lunar Park* on a number of levels and irony is apparent in the suggested paranoia, and drug-and-alcohol-induced delirium. Gothic irony becomes even more recognisable however, with the arrival of Robert Miller (the third Robert in the novel), who claims to be a demonologist/ ghost hunter/ psychic researcher (Easton Ellis 2005, 379), and who offers to help Bret to exorcise his demons. Our introduction to this character is, quite interestingly, through the story he tells to Bret of the possessed accountant, who, when exorcised by Mr. Miller, 'began speaking backwards in Latin and then bled from his eyes and his head started to split open' (Easton Ellis 2005, 382). His Gothic monologue becomes even more 'conventionally' Gothic when Miller tells Bret that it is 'really true' and that he shows videos at his lectures, adding that he found the source of the problem was that the accountant was bitten by an animal

and subsequently became the thing that bit him (Easton Ellis 2005, 383).

The reference here to the Werewolf/ Vampire legend, so often characteristically a part of what has been termed 'candygothic', in other words, Gothic in which 'terror is index-linked to the novelties provided by special effects, visual techniques and stylised killing' (Botting 1996, 134), is droll to say the least. It is also more a comment on Bret's deterioration than the presence of the supernatural. However, as a parody of modern, 'so called' Gothic film and literature, which focuses plainly on these commercial Gothic characteristics, it is developed further in the parodic account of Sarah's toy Terby, which becomes possessed in order to terrorise Bret analogous to the malicious doll, Chucky of *Childsplay* (Holland 1988). The terrorism of the doll reaches a climax when, following the outfitting of the house with a series of demon-detecting devices, Miller and his crew of 'ghost-busters' arrive with their electromagnetic field meters (EMFs) and infra-red cameras to cleanse the house. To the more cynical reader's expectation, a skeleton paces down the stairs with a face that flickers between that of Bret's father and Clayton (his serial killer suspect who incidentally is a mirror image of Bret as he looked in his twenties). As the narrator informs us 'it was the face of a father being replaced by the face of a son' (Easton Ellis 2005, 402). He also adds, intriguingly, to the unreality of the situation when he tells us that there was no fear involved initially because it all seemed counterfeit. The living room might as well have been a screen and the house a theatre (Easton Ellis 2005, 401). At this point Bret whispers to himself '*I hear you*' and on doing so, the 'thing' turns to ash. The door flies off its hinges (Easton Ellis 2005, 403) and the house finally completes its metamorphosis and transforms into the house on Sherman Oaks – Bret's childhood family home.

Prior to Bret's account, he addresses the reader with: 'I am not going to defend what I am about to describe. I am not going to try to make you believe anything. You can choose to believe me or you can turn away. The same goes for another incident that occurs later on' (Easton Ellis 2005, 401). In light of this standard postmodernist trope, when we recall his wish earlier in the chapter to become 'unafraid of madness and death' (Easton Ellis 2005, 381), it becomes clear that this is not an effort to encourage the reader to suspend his or her disbelief.

It is a presentation of the absurdity of Bret's delusion and a manifestation of his fear that simultaneously comments on the absurd nature of commercial Gothic narratives. This, to an extent, escalates when it is revealed that Sarah's Terby, which has now terrorised him to the brink of insanity, is an anagram for Y Bret (Easton Ellis 2005, 389); that Bret's birthday is 3/07 and the house is 307. It becomes obvious to the reader, and to Bret, that he is the source of his own haunting and not the house (Easton Ellis 2005, 390).

This realisation is, by contrast to the standard Gothic supernatural devices, truly terrifying. When Bret faces his fear of himself, of his psychological deterioration and his repressed frustration with his father, he screams, like the protagonist of Munch's painting, while standing perfectly still (Easton Ellis 2005, 398). His terror, at confronting the unrepresentable aspects of his consciousness, those which were the source of his grotesque hallucinations, of his creation of the monster Patrick Bateman, and his responsibility for the copycat murderers who imitated his creation, manifests itself in a scream: the only language left to communicate his unimaginable pain.

It would seem on the surface that *Lunar Park* fits quite well with Malin's definition of New American Gothic, in which he interprets the haunted castle motif as a metaphor for confining narcissism, and the haunted body as a metaphor of possession and loss of self (Malin 1962, 80). As has been already discussed, however, Malin's definition accounts for a change in the Gothic of postmodern literature, but does not deal with postmodernist narrative techniques, and so does not apply directly to this text. His comment is, nonetheless, quite insightful when applied to *Lunar Park*, as we see that Bret's terror, much more than fear of serial killers, terrorists and child abductors, has to do with his image of himself. Malin elaborates that in New American Gothic, reality is deceptive. In the mirror, reality is double: it is cracked and wavy yet it is constant; the beloved self of the narcissist (Malin 1962, 123). In *Lunar Park*, the love of this distorted image, so significant to New American Gothic according to Malin, enters a struggle with the subconscious' rational attempt to destroy it and the result is a refraction which causes Bret's image of himself to mingle with that of his rejected father and Clayton, the figure of his guilt who may be re-enacting the homicides of *American Psycho*. The motif of the scream, which has been demonstrated through reference to Munch's painting, is quite typical in Gothic-

postmodernist works, and is here a manifestation of the breakdown of Bret's narcissistic self-delusion. In this sense, again, he becomes a Dorian Gray-like character; faced with the monstrosity of his own imagination, which has made a puppet of his self-obsessed mind.

Malin's account of this type of situation in New American Gothic may be developed on here in relation to *Lunar Park* as a Gothic-postmodernist text. He notes that the basic problem for the Gothic protagonist is that he is trapped in the struggle to have a reflection or be a reflection (Malin 1962, 155). This existential problem is addressed in *Lunar Park* when Bret remarks, in relation to his new family life, that: '[i]t's like some fucking Beckett play that we're rehearsing constantly' (Easton Ellis 2005, 64). It is also effectively represented in the idea of the two Bret Easton Ellises (to include the author), which pinpoints the start of the novel's self-consciousness. The *doppelgänger* has already been mentioned briefly in this chapter in relation to the narrator. As a form of bi-location a *doppelgänger* presents itself as a spectral double or an abjection which functions as an alter-ego or twin for a character. The *doppelgänger* motif in Ellis' work was firmly established in *American Psycho*, in which a split personality developed in the form of a Jekyll and Hyde type disposition in the protagonist, Patrick Bateman. In *Lunar Park*, Bret discloses that 'that book' had been about his father and that the murders and tortures committed by Bateman were metaphorical: 'fantasies fuelled by his rage and fury about how life in America had trapped him… they were an escape' (Easton Ellis 2005, 182).

As part of the *doppelgänger* motif in *Lunar Park*, the volatile link between the actual life of the author Bret Easton Ellis, and the narrator Bret Easton Ellis, materialises. This idea is expressed firstly in the author's choice of epigraphs for the text. The first of three is from Thomas McGuane: 'The occupational hazard of making a spectacle of yourself, over the long haul, is that at some point you buy a ticket too' (Easton Ellis 2005). While the similarities between the two characters, Bret and the author Bret, seem to be fore-grounded, there are decisive differences which become apparent through the obviously embellished narrative. The opening chapter, entitled: 'Beginnings', offers the first line of *Lunar Park*, self referentially, as: 'You do an awfully good impression of yourself' (Easton Ellis 2005, 3), leading the narrative voice into an account of his early success as a writer. This chapter is quite satirical and self-parodying at times. It

describes what seems to be a true-to-life account of the author and his demise into a downward spiral of cocaine addiction. As the novel progresses, however, fictionality overrides the doubling effect, and the unreality of the text takes over. The result is an effective postmodernist and aptly cynical introduction to a forthcoming Gothic story, in which loss of self is the primary terror, heightened by the other Gothic paraphernalia that are scattered throughout the work.

That Bret considers himself as being accused of introducing 'serial killer chic' to the nation (Easton Ellis 2005, 17) while simultaneously offering '"the first novel in years to take on deep dark Dostoevskian themes"', which he apparently references from a Norman Mailer article on *American Psycho* in *Vanity Fair* (Easton Ellis 2005, 17), reveals that confidence is a foundation for the satirical comments on his own work. His recognition of the darker, Gothic aspects of his writing is also highlighted in this, notably in his mention of dark Doestoevskian themes and in the solipsism inherent in his presentation of himself. In the beginning, the Bret who speaks is smug and narcissistic, fitting as we would imagine, with the author. However, later in the novel, having been terrified by the illusions of the vampire Terby, his father's haunting and the threat of Bateman's return, he is asked by an officer investigating an intrusion at his home: 'You're not a fictional character, are you Mr. Ellis?' (Easton Ellis 2005, 185). At this point, Bret the narrator/character is identifiable as distinct from Bret the author, and his delirium is foregrounded as the central Gothic enquiry of the text. The cause of his madness, it would seem, is rooted in guilt, primarily for the crimes of others committed under the influence of his psycho, Patrick Bateman, but also in his uncanny knowledge that perhaps the officer is right. The author's attempt at a self-portrait in this novel is an attempt to present the unrepresentable, terrifying in its evolution. The inner struggles of identity are therefore recognisably represented, as Malin put it, in the form of a cracked and distorted mirror image. As a result, we meet a Bret who is falling apart mentally, driven by terror of himself and lost in the cubist collage that results from a fractured reflection.

What is also interesting is that like the narrative voice which splits, the character of Bret also splits to incorporate the character of Clayton, a reproduction of a character from Ellis' novel *Less Than Zero*, and prime suspect in Bret's attempt to solve the mystery of the copycat murders. Clayton's 'uncanny familiarity' (Easton Ellis 2005,

121) has a profound effect on him: 'I breathed in, something caught in me and I shivered' (Easton Ellis 2005, 117). He is effectively a double for a younger Bret, and the implications of this have a subtly sublime effect on the protagonist. His uncanny meeting with himself, twenty years younger, a self whom he suspects to be a homicidal maniac, is a successful portrayal of that blurring of identity that is so typical of the disorientation often demonstrated in Gothic-postmodernist works. Auster's *City of Glass*, like other texts analysed in this study, offers this same idea of blurring, confusion and turmoil surrounding the identity of the protagonist. Auster's narrator/author relationship presents a perfect parallel with *Lunar Park*, and both novels quite effectively relate a murky existentialism that refers to ideas of multiple subjectivity and a postmodernist rejection of concepts of wholeness. In *City of Glass*, Quinn is a ghost, a spectral impression that grasps the otherness that lies, unrepresentable, within the identity that is Paul Auster. Similarly, the Bret of the novel may be regarded as a projection of some aspect of the unconscious of the author Bret, who, while contesting that the novel is strictly autobiographical, has been quoted in interview as saying that writing the novel, once he decided to make himself the main character, 'became a much more meaningful thing to write… a lot of demons were exorcized. I felt a huge wave of relief when I finished this book that was different from any other times I completed a novel' (*Amazon Interview* 2005, etext).

Similar to Auster's and Amis's texts, the sublime effects of Bret's meeting with Clayton, a form of his younger self, imply a blurring, not only of self, but also of time. Effectively, this mirror phase initiates a glitch for Bret, in which people, objects and events from the past occur in the present. The transformation of Bret's house into his childhood home is a potent instance of this, as is the reappearance of his father's car, and, more terrifyingly, his father. Cross-dimensional existence, in this case, appears as an example of an extra dimension of reality, similar to that which has been observed as central to the explorations of Gothic-postmodernist works, most notably Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse 5*. Though, in this case, the presence of the extra dimension is more subtle in the standard Gothic trope of the supernatural, its significance remains the same in relation to postmodernist theory and the deconstruction of reality and self.

The place of the grotesque, suspense and sublime terror in the novel's effort at considering the unrepresentable is significant for its

Gothic aesthetic. While horror is generally Ellis' preference in novel writing, undoubtedly, terror is the prime focus in *Lunar Park*. There are no descriptions of rotting corpses, or real life horrors such as the gang rape of a twelve year old that is detailed in *Less Than Zero* (Easton Ellis 2005, 10), not to mention the obscene pornographic violence and extreme grotesquery that takes place in *American Psycho*. Instead, the focus seems to be on the terrifying images that emerge from Bret's subconscious as he faces fears that have long haunted him. In *Lunar Park*, grotesque images are confined to abjections: the 'bloody ropes of snot' which Bret discharges when he cries at the psychologist's office (Easton Ellis 2005, 126). Interestingly, they are, in more extreme cases, undermined by absurdity, such as in the scene where the possessed Terby turns the family dog inside out (Easton Ellis 2005, 440), and the appearance of the shadow of 'the Thing' 'covered in hair streaked black and blond, [that] moved on feet that weren't visible… [with] a large eye, haphazardly placed on top and rolling around in its flat, disc-shaped socket involuntarily' (Easton Ellis 2005, 142).

Similarly, the grotesque images of the dead crows, one drowned, one broken, and one nailed to a tree (Easton Ellis 2005, 148) are saturated with symbolic meaning, hinting at a link with fear of loss and death manifested in the black-feathered, sharp-billed Terby. Thus, it is quite clear in *Lunar Park* that the grotesque is part of a postmodernist narrative technique at work to create a Gothic atmosphere in the text, and also as part of the Gothic imaginary; its humour and symbolism. Coupled with the imagery and sensations reproduced to a Gothic effect in the novel, it becomes apparent that the grotesque is as much a part of the construction of a Gothic atmosphere in the text as it is a technique in subverting expectations and emphasising dialogic potential of the work.

Also contributing to the Gothic aesthetic in the novel, is the manipulation of light and shadow. The moon, has a most notable role in this and underscores the postmodernist locus of the text as not only a natural sublime element, but as a hyperreal image, displayed as a screensaver on the computer in Robbie's room, which is completely dark except for its glow (Easton Ellis 2005, 209). Shadows too, play a major part in Bret's terror as does the flickering light of the wall sconces and sudden plunges into total darkness. Other factors such as weather conditions of wind, mist and fog, function to obscure the

more terrifying scenes, heightening the suspense while denoting the liminal nature of Bret's supernatural encounters. The wind, in particular, as an invisible force of nature, has effective sublime connotations:

> Piles of leaves, blanketing everything, exploded upward and suddenly formed cones that raced across the ground. My coat flapped wildly behind me as I struggled through the lot. The air rushing forward felt like a knife. The crows were now reeling above me, black and cursing, their shrill cries drowned out by the roar of the wind (Easton Ellis 2005, 274).

Likewise, noises, such as moaning and whimpering from the dog, Victor; clicking, scratching and shrill screeching from the Terby; hissing voices in Bret's mind; and whispers from the woods, all add to the atmosphere of dark mystery and suspense. 'I froze when I heard clicking noises behind me. Before I could turn around there was a high pitched screech. The Terby was standing in the doorway, its wings outstretched. It wasn't a doll anymore. It was now something else' (Easton Ellis 2005, 307).

In the midst of this Gothic whirlwind of imagery and sensations, metamorphosis is a fantastic theme that compliments the Gothic nature of the text. Mutation occurs internally and externally, and is most memorably signified in the possession of the toy Terby and in the strange mutant creature, or shape, that lives in the forest. Of principal significance, however, is the transformation of 307 Elsinore Lane into the old house in Sherman Oaks that was once Bret's family home. In Bret's account of this, the transformation is a gradual occurrence paralleling his mental deterioration. First of all, the carpet turns a dark green colour, beginning with a stain left after the Hallowe'en party that grows to envelop the entire room. Subsequently, the paint peels from the walls and vestiges of his father's presence are sighted by the pool (Easton Ellis 2005, 152, 157). This eerie happening can be construed as a symbolic representation of the mental transformation of the central character and the return of past, repressed emotions seeking resolution. But, it can be more generally interpreted as a representation of the typical Gothic conceit of the past returning to haunt the present, as the house itself becomes a ghost.

Reinforcing this Gothic aesthetic, references to Poe are scattered throughout *Lunar Park*, most remarkably in the case when

Bret's hair, after his climactic night of terror at the house, turns completely white, echoing Poe's 'A Descent into the Maelstrom': 'When I was found in the Range Rover, my hair had turned completely white' (Easton Ellis 2005, 440). On other occasions, Ellis playfully throws in suggestive words in his narrative such as in the case of 'a writer's life is a maelstrom of lying' (Easton Ellis 2005, 218). The most resonant connection, however, remains to be seen in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'. The return of the ghost of Lady Madeleine Usher in Poe's short story coincides with the reappearance of Robert Ellis. The most striking similarity between the two is the part that the house plays in triggering madness in the character. Like Ellis's 207 Elsinore Lane, which enigmatically transforms, the House of the Ushers has a mysterious uncanny quality:

> Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity… Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine, tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones (Poe 2003, 93).

The living creeper that envelopes the house is somehow preserving it, and the presence within the upper chambers of the spectre of Lady Madeleine leads to an interpretation that what inside, is mysteriously immortalised as well. In Ellis's novel, conversely, the house becomes more of a Gothic-postmodernist motif. The convention of the haunted house and the troubled family from traditional Gothic writing has been transformed for literary purposes as a representation of the human psyche. Bret is not trapped and haunted by the house as an external force but by what it means to him, internally. His strained family life within the house and his new roles as husband, father and neighbour, trigger his fear of regression to darker family experiences from his childhood and his biggest fear of becoming his father.

Apart from this particular resemblance to, and development of Poe, a similar arabesque style can be read in the passages of both texts (*Lunar Park* and 'The Fall of the House of Usher') in relation to the sublime descriptions of tempestuous nature and its effects of uncanny feelings and a sense of the supernatural. In 'The Fall of the House of Usher':

> The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity… and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the lifelike velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other (Poe 2003, 104).

This is echoed in the sublimely Gothic, descriptive passages of Bret's experiences of heightened sensation, leading up to the escalation of his terror. Detailing a sublime encounter that occurs after another sighting of his father's old cream-coloured 450 SL, and a build up of terror relating to his meeting that day with Clayton, the narrator describes how he felt haunted:

> I was in a haze. I felt haunted and then there was a hot wind and the barely audible hum of what sounded like electrical equipment and I was shivering. My heartbeat accelerated and then, inexplicably, I felt sorrow. The moon was giant that night, hanging low in the black sky and orange tinted… The pavement was wobbling beneath me and my skin was alive with perspiration… The trees looked black and twisted beneath the orange light of the moon… [then] Something passed over me and flew away… The night was drenched with darkness and the darkness really was dazzling… I just kept staring into the darkness of the woods; drawn towards the darkness as I had always been. And the wind rushed up against me and the wind felt… feral (Easton Ellis 2005, 139-140).

This traditionally Gothic handling of feelings related to the sublime is quite effective in creating, not only an eerie atmosphere of suspense, but also a familiar Gothic aesthetic in the text, which results in a secondary experience of the uncanny for the reader. The linguistic appropriation of nature and emotion is, in both cases, darkly sublime, and evocative of hypersensitivity in both the protagonist and the reader.

While Poe considered this as part of his arabesque style and the promotion of early ideas on 'art for the sake of art', Ellis appears to use it in a playful but creative attempt at reinforcing a Gothic spectacle of his novel. This becomes more obvious as Bret outlines his isolation and alienation as it grows, relative to his terror. Darkness eclipses everything and, finally, he is confronted with 'the Thing': a shape low and hunched over, which emerges from the woods, lurching 'grotesquely sideways' like a spider (Easton Ellis 2005, 141). To Bret, it 'looked as if it were hunting something' (Easton Ellis 2005, 142).

Steadily, a terrifying hallucination is set in motion. He envisions his father's grave in the garden, streaked with blood and, at a climactic point of terror for Bret, 'the Thing' speaks to him, but Bret does not want to hear. 'It wanted to whisper my name. It wanted to be seen and felt' (Easton Ellis 2005, 142).

Lacan's invocation of Freud's *Das Ding* has already been referred to in relation to 'the Thing' in science fiction, and the Gothic in the sense of a recurring nightmare of unfulfilled desire. It does, however, also bear a poignant relevance to the Gothic-postmodernist obligation to the unsayable or unrepresentable as illustrated in *Lunar Park*. As a meditation on the sublime relation of identity, and that which is other and therefore unrepresentable, 'the Thing' in Ellis's novel may be regarded as a *thing* 'from Inner Space' to use the words of Žižek (Žižek 1999, etext). Instead of necessarily bringing relief at the point of an encounter with the impossible real, it brings terror at 'the Stain of the real' (Žižek 1999, etext), the vestiges of what might be.

The uncanny *Ding*, with which we are confronted in *Lunar Park*, is conveniently rationalised later in the novel in an explanation of a childhood fear of Bret's. He recalls creating the monster in a story he wrote as a scared twelve year old boy (Easton Ellis 2005, 367). Emanating from his fear of his father, the story, entitled 'The Tomb' involved a monster that ate children (Easton Ellis 2005, 368). This is a tidy and convenient conclusion to Bret's supernatural experience/ hallucination. It is supported in the text by the voice of the writer, which re-emerges at Bret's crucial point of realisation. At this moment, the writer becomes the voice of a psychologist, who leads Bret to ridicule the psychologist he saw as a child for reading too much into the Freudian elements in the story: 'What was the mound of hair? Why did the orifice have teeth? Why was the boy screaming *shoot it*!?' (Easton Ellis 2005, 368). This would seem to be a suggestion that the significance of 'the Thing' runs much deeper than this. Just as Patrick Bateman, his creation, has returned to wreak havoc in Bret's life, so his earlier literary creation in *The Tomb* has returned to haunt his home; 'the haunted castle' which serves as 'a metaphor for confining narcissism' to recycle the idea put forward by Malin (Malin 1962, 80).

That 'the Thing' is his own creation is quite significant if we recall that Žižek considers that 'The object-Thing is thus clearly

rendered as a part of ourselves that we eject into reality' (Žižek 1999, etext). Žižek focuses on a specific version of this Thing:

> the Thing as the Space (the sacred/forbidden Zone) in which the gap between the Symbolic and the Real is closed, i.e. in which, our desires are directly materialized (or, to put it in the precise terms of Kant's transcendental idealism, the Zone in which our intuition becomes directly productive - the state of things which, according to Kant, characterizes only infinite divine Reason) (Žižek 1999, etext).

This correlates succinctly with the already outlined relationship between terror and the unrepresentable that is so important in Gothic-postmodernism. The unrepresentable or 'real' in Žižek's terminology is outside of language, and therefore, outside of speech and it often manifests itself in experiences of the unconscious that are terrifying or of heightened emotion. As Žižek states: 'it can contain either sublime beauty or fearsome monsters' (Žižek 1998, 135). *Lunar Park*, therefore, offers an interesting analogy for this theory, in that it clearly inter-mingles 'the fearsome monster' with 'sublime beauty' present in the forces of nature as they temper the human soul. In doing so, it offers further evidence of the efforts of Gothic-postmodernism in trying to represent the unrepresentable.

Lunar Park contemplates a number of Gothic themes as they interact with the sublime: death, loss and nostalgia, identity and the powers of creativity and nature. In relation to the theme of the mysterious creative power of the individual, however, it posits a postmodernist twist in Bret's anxiety about the almost Promethean power of his writing that seems to effect the construction of reality. The ontological status of his characters, and their relationship to his identity, is fundamental to the Gothic suspense and terror in the novel. A tension exists between whether the real world is melting away, or the fictional world is taking over. This is further complicated at times in the novel by statements like 'Um, Bret, I have news for you: you were so wasted last night I don't think you could have recognised anybody' (Easton Ellis 2005, 122). That two linguistic worlds created by Bret are overlapping is the centre of the idea here: his reality and his fiction. The redeployment of images and characters from Ellis's other novels is significant in this, particularly from *American Psycho* as the most brutal, horrifying and terrifying of his works, but the real importance lies in the possibility that his creations have become real

(stressing the alternative – already mentioned, that Bret may be fictional himself). That '[t]his was a new dimension now' (Easton Ellis 2005, 267) repeats a similar ontological exploration from earlier Gothic-postmodernist works that have been already discussed. *City of Glass*, *Time's Arrow*, *Slaughterhouse 5* and *The Master and Margarita* all resonate the idea of an alternative dimension of experience that is by definition spectral, or hauntological. The liminal space inherent in this extra dimension is defined by blurring of identity and reality, and we see that like the characters of *The Waste Land*, or those in Beckett's prose, Bret and the characters that are part of his new paranoid, delirious world, are ghosts of themselves; vestiges of former and future selves.

This is quite aptly suggested in Bret's hunt for Bateman, when he ponders as to whether *American Psycho* could be becoming a reality (Easton Ellis 2005, 181). Was it another copycat murderer, or even more terrifying, the real Bateman? This causes Bret's fear to escalate (along with his desire for another Xanax) as no physical trace of the murderer is found at the crime scenes: 'no fingerprints, no fibres, nothing. *like a ghost*' (Easton Ellis 2005, 184). At a dinner party with his neighbours, Bret expresses that he 'was filled with dread and loneliness… the future didn't exist anymore' (Easton Ellis 2005, 196-7). Bret, too, is a ghost in this dimension, parodied in his wearing of the white top sheet in the opening of the novel, but acknowledged in his recognition of his own emptiness: 'I was gradually being comforted by the unreality of the situation. It made me tense but it also disembodied me… I was living in a movie, a novel, an idiot's dream that someone else was writing and I was becoming dazzled – amazed – by my dissolution' (Easton Ellis 2005, 281, 282).

What is quite comedic in all of this is that 'The Sunny Side of the Street' becomes a theme song for this reality, distorting the relentless optimism that Bret has for the reconstruction of a whole and consequently rational situation. At one point, Bret decides to 'cut the following from the work in progress: The character I had created, a monster, had escaped from a novel. Convince yourself that he had not been in the house last night...Pretend that the Terby had not bitten you (despite the presence of a small scab on my palm) and that the detective who had stopped by on Saturday was full of ominous, confused bullshit' (Easton Ellis 2005, 219). However, his attempts at

rebuilding a stable reality are confounded by, among other things, the hyperreal. As Bret outlines, Robbie grinned at his mother. This soon faded 'because it was a reproduction of a grin and not a real grin' (Easton Ellis 2005, 258). Further Gothic hyperrealities include the moon, sublime, as a screensaver on a PC monitor, and the fact that he is being haunted by a movie. This leads to the following situation:

> As I entered the master bedroom I found nothing (but what was I looking for? What clues does a phantom leave?), and as I stood by the window I opened the Venetian blinds and stared into the Allen's yard, and for a brief moment I thought I saw myself lying on that chaise longue, looking back up at myself. It was only a flash, but suddenly I was that silhouette from last night, the shadow I had dreamt (Easton Ellis 2005, 221).

In this condition, he is not unlike Quinn, Auster's protagonist in *City of Glass*. Rather than realise the meaninglessness and absurdity of it all, he begins a quest, linking clues and patterns together in the hope of finding some sense of himself outside of the narratives he created as a writer. Significantly, his quest soon takes on Gothic tones. Suddenly, '[t]he car was beginning to mean something; something dark' (Easton Ellis 2005, 138). Behind his despair, however, is a limited consciousness of his dilemma: 'If you wrote something and it happened, could you also write something and make it disappear?' (Easton Ellis 2005, 287). 'If something is written can it be unwritten?' (Easton Ellis 2005, 301). At this point, guilt again emerges as a source of his crisis as we recall that the narrator has informed us that publishers warned him that if anyone was harmed as a result of its publication – he would be responsible (Easton Ellis 2005, 182). This reverberates in his recognition of his own face in that of Clayton.

Towards the close of the novel, in the midst of the climax of Bret's confusion, fluctuation again becomes a recognisable feature of the narrative. The story and tone oscillates between an awareness of the powers of narrative in the creation of reality, in such comments as: 'I had been expecting this. It was all part of a narrative' (Easton Ellis 2005, 207), and 'I was adept at erasing reality' (Easton Ellis 2005, 217), and also: 'If I had created Patrick Bateman, I would now write a story in which he was uncreated and his world was erased' (Easton Ellis 2005, 417), and a terror sensed in feelings of loss of control and the takeover of imagination, leading him back to a darker, more Gothic version of events. This happens, notably, when Robbie, to his

horror, goes missing and he is attacked by the Terby, finally crashing his car having had another vision of Clayton in his father's cream coloured 450 SL (Easton Ellis 2005, 433). This contrasts, significantly, with his realisation just pages before, that Detective Donald Kimball is a character from his private draft of *American Psycho* (Easton Ellis 2005, 415).

Part of this fluctuation revolves around the issue of the guilt and responsibility of the author in creating a monster who has influenced, and possibly even created other monsters. This emphasises Mulvey Roberts' view of the Gothic as a textual equivalent to the race of devils feared by Victor Frankenstein because they 'might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror' (Mulvey Roberts 1998, xv). In one instance, the voice of 'the writer' argues with Bret about the character of Patrick Bateman: '*But he was curious, and he lusted*, the writer argued. *Was it his fault that he had abandoned his soul?*' (Easton Ellis 2005, 418). What we have here is the quintessential Gothic and arguably Gothic-postmodernist argument. From *Frankenstein*, to *Dracula*, to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to *Time's Arrow*, the issue that keeps arising is loss of self, and here the Faustian approach to the idea with its lack of moral resolution is upheld. What is a monster? Can it be created by a positive power? What is the self? Can it be restrained to act always in the cause of 'good'? These are questions raised and discussed in the Gothic-postmodernist text, but never answered. The darkly Romantic, Blakean dialectical model has survived, it seems. But this only causes further disillusionment in the case of the character Bret Easton Ellis. Not only does he unwrite his monsters and his demons, he unwrites himself. The words: 'Disappear Here' offer him the opportunity to escape the torture of his narrative existence. Like Beckett's Unnamable, it seems that he is seeking a way to achieve linguistic silence, to unwrite himself and end the terrifying struggle of selfhood among his manufactured realities and selves.

The unnerving quality of *Lunar Park* may be regarded as its most potent provision as a Gothic-postmodernist work. Its review of the uncanny, the sublime, the hallucinogenic and the grotesque, revisits the potential of terror in analysing the nature of the self. A nostalgia for, and simultaneous parody of, traditional Gothic devices characterises the work, and its self-conscious narrative is revealing of significant depth as well as insight into the Gothic genre. In relation to

American Psycho, the character Bret remarks that 'I had something very special to say with that book' (Easton Ellis 2005, 175). Furthermore, Ellis has acknowledged that *Lunar Park* pays homage to writers like Stephen King and Poe:

> The genesis for the book began in 1989 and changed a lot in the ten years before I began writing it. I first wanted to write a book that, I suppose, paid homage to a genre that meant a lot to me growing up (Stephen King was an idol of mine) and which was concerned with a house that was haunted (*Random House Interview* 2005, etext).
> [I] basically wanted to re-experience the pleasure I got from reading something like *The Shining* or *The Dark Half* (*Dennis Widmyer Interview* 2005, etext).

Steve Neale, in *Genre*, declares that 'genres are instances of repetition and difference' (Neale 1980, 48). We can see in *Lunar Park* that this is most certainly the case, as Gothic-postmodernism in the novel surfaces from a repetition of old Gothic themes and narrative styles transposed onto the postmodernist paradigm. At points, this transposition becomes representative of something more, something insightful in its own right and the Gothic-postmodernism of the novel is, thus, more apparent. Punter has observed that most critics and readers perceive the Gothic as a way of relating to the real (Punter 1996, 2). In Ellis's novel, the real is blurred in a manner that is typical of the Gothic but also typical of postmodernist narratives. In relating to the real, a Gothic approach may be readily likened to the techniques of metafiction in doing the same, as in both cases 'the story' with its unreal/fictional/supernatural elements are foregrounded. That Ellis blends the metafictional and the Gothic to the same extent as the Gothic-postmodernist works like *City of Glass*, and *The Master and Margarita*, is significant, and his manner of relating to the real, akin to Auster and Bulgakov's is defined by its Romantic/ poststructuralist suggestion that the real is dominated by the imagination.

According to Helen Small, post-structuralism found, in Gothic fiction, an ideal set of case-studies for the practice of reading more generally because the Gothic explores more persistently and more innovatively than other genres, the degree to which the reader's confidence in his or her interpretations is liable to be shaken (Small 1998, 157). The unreliability of everything, to a dizzying and or terrifying degree, can be seen as characteristic of the Gothic-postmodernist novel. *Lunar Park*, as has been demonstrated, is a

meditation on this idea. With a standard Gothic aesthetic, grotesque parody and the theme of terror as a potential route to the unrepresentable aspects of self as reinforcement, Ellis's novel cannot but be appreciated as a development of the Gothic-postmodernist genre.

Conclusion

The idea has been put forward in this work that arguably, our postmodern situation is comparable to the Reign of Terror in the years following the French Revolution, in which the original Gothic is said to have reached its peak. In Baudrillard's view, today, terror is everywhere as the object of desire. Ours, as he claims, is a culture of death. In our postmodern era of terrorism and more particularly our post-9/11 era of global terrorism, it is significant that postmodern literature has become possessed by a Gothic imagination. Concurrently, postmodernist theory can be seen to exhibit the same preoccupation and is obsessed with the concepts of terror and haunting: Derrida's 'hauntology', Baudrillard's 'symbolic death', Lyotard's terror in the sublime/ unrepresentable, and Žižek's interpretation of Lacan and Freud's 'Ding'. All in all, the terrors of postmodernity somehow manage to pervade not only literature but also the theory that analyses it, and this has implications for understanding both literature as the expression of our age and also the Gothic mode, its continued relevance and evolution.

In answer to his question: is it possible for a text to terrorise, Punter states: 'all texts terrorise from a post-structuralist viewpoint in that we are confronted with 'absence'… which threatens our illusions of a fullness of being' (Punter 1998, 236). In other words, the language of terror, as a system provided in the Gothic, is not subversively terroristic but dialogically terroristic. It functions to disrupt discourse and narratives which endorse concepts of homogeneity and wholeness as a means of power. From a perspective influenced by the theories of Baudrillard, then, Gothic-postmodernist works may be seen as manifestations of 'the spirit of terror', and their metonymical structures, as the symbolic 'event' of terror which has the potential to destabilise hegemonic systems of order.

As has been demonstrated, and with reference to Lyotard's ideas on the sublime, Gothic terror primarily relates to subjectivity, but it also operates, through its grotesques and its abjections, to

deconstruct moral binaries of good and evil, aesthetic binaries of beautiful and monstrous, and other oppositions that, in general, define societal values and the place of the 'other' in relation to those values. Though the terrorism of one Gothic work of literature may seem diminutive, it is reasonable to consider the Gothic, as Baldick has, as having 'a homeopathic function' (Baldick 1992, xxii). In small doses, the Gothic of Gothic-postmodernism, gradually uncovers the negation of postmodern cultures, through the ambivalent 'poison' of terror, the long recognised route to sublime feelings of fear and fascination. The old wives' tale that 'like cures like', is confirmed in this process. The terror of the Gothic-postmodernist novel thus catharses the terrors of the dissolution of reality and subjectivity that lie at the heart of the postmodern condition.

Furthermore, Gothic-postmodernism, via many different techniques, intimates the sublime unimaginable; otherness, infinity, and reality through terror. In its own way, it alleges the possibility of an experience of the absolute. For this reason, the terror of the Gothic-postmodernist text can also be interpreted as offering a new kind of transcendentalism, seeking to re-evaluate our secular world through its sublime appropriation of the unrepresentable, unknowable, or infinite. Possibly, this is a reason for the survival of the Gothic in the twentieth century in that it has endeavoured to evoke a new sense of 'spirituality' in an increasingly secular age. Though this spirituality may be located around 'the spirit of terror', it is – as a manifestation of idealist faith in the power of the imagination to 'sublime'; to melt, as Marx suggested 'from solid into air' (Marx 2005, 16) – an alternative to the profane materialism and consumerism that has defined modern and postmodern culture. Decidedly, when one considers that the Gothic sublime is 'a social experience that creates communion in a fallen and dislocated world' sought by both the master and the outcast (Milbank 1998, 230), Gothic-postmodernism can be regarded as a literature that presents a mode of rapport to an alienated and divided society.

Through its attempts to represent the sublime effects of the unrepresentable, as identified in the liminal experience of terror and exultation, Gothic-postmodernism responds to our uncanny cravings for terror. Dedicated to the endless expanse of the unrepresentable, to the impossible experience of the real through sublime feelings of hesitation and simultaneous limitlessness associated with terror, it

seeks to achieve the single effect of genuine heterogeneity on the subject. The reader of the Gothic-postmodernist work is thus presented with a new perspective on unimaginable horrors through the dark, mysterious unknown. Subsequently, as a genre it is definable with a distinct identity and with characteristics that work towards presenting what cannot be presented in the form of a new discourse of terror. Typically, in the Gothic-postmodernist text, obsession with the role of terror in subjectivity and the power of the Gothic sublime, lead to melancholic contemplations on symbolic death; the nature of identity in flux and the possibility of presenting the unrepresentable. The textual terrain of Gothic-postmodernism is consequently defined by narrative self-consciousness; the weaving of chimerical realities and an overarching dark atmosphere of suspense.

Accepting this consideration of the genre is also to accept that Gothic-postmodernism is the postmodernist literature of terror to analogise and analyse the terrors that haunt our postmodern age. Of these terrors, that of loss of self has proven to be a central Gothic-postmodernist theme, manifested in dramas of possession and the fragmentation of identity in the form of the *doppelgänger*. In many Gothic-postmodernist texts, this fear is often intensified to the point of non-identity in the context of hyperreality and 'multiculturalism'. In this sense, Gothic-postmodernism takes from both the Gothic, and postmodernism, the central idea of multiple perspectives on levels of reality, and as we have seen, it maintains the traditional Gothic preoccupation with the supernatural in order to present it. Similarly, the postmodernist and Gothic fascination with monsters and grotesques overlaps in Gothic-postmodernism. Monsters, as projections of abject otherness are subsequently deemed as no longer a marginal, but as an intrinsic part of the literary narrative of our postmodern culture. Characters that are presented as vampiric, demonic, alien, or as a manifestation of 'the Thing', in Gothic-postmodernist works, evidently suggest psychoanalytic reductions of subjectivity whereby the otherness within the self is repressed and maligned. Again, in this respect, the frighteningly monstrous relates back to the sublime faculties of terror associated with the unrepresentable and so is linked to self-awareness and an expansion of the realms of the subject. The dialogue between self and other is opened up by the initial appearance of the monster, and that dialogue

is intensified by the hesitant experience of terror which allows one to reach beyond the self to the realm of unknown otherness.

Gothic-postmodernism consequently emerges from the dialogic relationship between the Gothic and postmodernism in particular works as a literary fusion of various perspectives on the dark side of subjectivity. As a cross-pollination of two literary modes which converge on the sublime and its connection with the unrepresentable, it materialises as an exploration of terror that offers profound insight into issues of ontology, epistemology and selfhood. As a literature of excess, it seeks to concentrate experience on imagination and intense emotion and to highlight death, fragmentation and the supernatural as the 'other' of our governing reality, which needs to be rewritten into mainstream literary discourse. For this reason, the Gothic is present in Gothic-postmodernism, not due to 'diffusion' (Botting 2003, 14), but instead, due to our need for terror and the investigation of its powers in presenting the unrepresentable. Gothic-postmodernism is, for this reason, a deconstructive genre; a counter-narrative which amalgamates the metafictional and the supernatural and arrives at 'a third space', a fourth dimension in literature.

Essentially, what we have in Gothic-postmodernism is a new kind of terror literature; a new language of terror which forces us to reconsider limits. By engaging directly with social and political issues, as we have seen in Vonnegut, Amis, Rushdie and Ellis, Gothic-postmodernism poses the question: how much terror can we take? And how far can the artist go in representing that unrepresentable, sublime experience? Looking to the future, one can see the potential of Gothic-postmodernism as a genre that will soon emerge from the margins, where it haunts postmodern literary enterprise to encircle literature that attempts to examine the possibilities of subjectivity in an age defined by global terrorism and the terror of loss in selfhood. Our contemporary age of terror requires a contemporary terror literature. Gothic-postmodernism fulfils this role and now that it has defined will hopefully be acknowledged as continuing to do so.

Bibliography

Primary

Amis, Martin. 2003. *Time's Arrow*. Vintage: London.
Auster, Paul. 1988. *The Invention Of Solitude*. Faber & Faber: London.
—. 1992. *The New York Trilogy*. Faber & Faber: London.
Barth, John. 1988. *Lost in the Funhouse*. Anchor Press: London.
Baudrillard Jean. 1993. *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. (Tr. Mike Hamilton Green). Sage: London.
—. 2002. *The Spirit of Terrorism*. (Tr. Chris Turner). Verso: London.
Beckett, Samuel. 1965. *Proust*. Calder Ltd: London.
—. 1970. *Watt*. Calder Ltd: London.
—. 1972. 'Dante and the Lobster'. *More Pricks Than Kicks*. Grove Press: New York.
—. 1979. *Trilogy*. *Molloy*. *Malone Dies*. *The Unnamable*. Picador: London.
—. 2000. *First Love and Other Novellas*. Penguin: London.
Blake, William. 1975. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
Burke, Edmund. 1998. *A Philosophical Enquiry Into The Sublime And The Beautiful*. Penguin: London.
Carter, Angela. 2006. *Fireworks*. Virago Press: London.
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. 1858. *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Harper & Brothers Publishers: New York.
Conrad, Joseph. 1995. *Heart of Darkness*. Wordsworth Classics: London
de Maupassant, Guy. 1925. *The Horla and OtherStories*. Alfred. A Knopf: New York.
Derrida, Jacques. 1980. *Writing and Difference*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

—. 1981. The Law of Genre. In: Mitchell, W.J.T. (ed.). *On Narrative*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

—. 1984. Deconstruction and the Other. In: Kearney, R. ed., *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers*. Manchester University Press: Manchester. p123.
—. 1994. *Spectres of Marx*: *The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning & the New International*. (Tr. Peggy Kamuf). Routledge: London.
—. 1995. 'Traumatism to Promise'. In: E. Weber. (ed.) *Points-Interviews*: *1974-1994*. (Stanford University Press: Stanford). p385-387.
—. 1995. Passages – From Traumatism to Promise. In: Weber, E. (ed.) *Points-Interviews 1974-1994*. Stanford University Press: California. p385-387.
—. 1998. *Of Grammatology*. (Tr. G. Spivak). John Hopkins University Press: USA.
Eliot, T. S. 1993a. The Wasteland. In: Abrams. M. H. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 6th edition. Vol. 2. W.W Norton & Co.: London.

—. 1993b. The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock. In: Abrams. M. H. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 6th edition. Vol. 2. W.W Norton & Co.: London.
—. 2004. Sweeney Agonistes. In: *T.S Eliot*: *The Complete Poems and Plays*. Faber & Faber: London.
Foucault, Michel. 1977. Language to Infinity. In: *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. (Tr. Donald, F. Bouchard & Sherry Simon). Blackwell: Oxford.
Freud, Sigmund. 2003. *The Uncanny*. (Tr. David McLintock). Penguin: London.
—. 2004. *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. Penguin: London.
Interviews with Bret Easton Ellis,
Random House Interview. 2005. Online at: http://www.randomhouse.com/kvpa/eastonellis/
Amazon Interview. 2005. Online at: http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html?docId=571852
Dennis Widmyer Interview. 2006. Online at: http://www.chuckpalahniuk.net/features/interviews/breteastonellis/
Kafka, Franz. 2005. *The Metamorphosis and Other Stories*. Vintage: London.
Kant, Immanuel. 1784. *An Answer to the Question*: *What Is Enlightenment?* Online at: http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html
Kant, Immanuel. 2001. The Critique of Judgement. In: Kearney, Richard & Rasmussen, David. *Continental Aesthetics*. *Romanticism to Postmodernism*. *An Anthology*. Blackwell: Oxford.
Lacan, Jacques. 1989. 1959-60. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis. In: Miller, Alain. (ed.) *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan*. Book VII. Norton: New York.
Lacan, Jacques. 1995. *Ecrits*. *A Selection*. (Tr. Alan Sheridan). Routledge: Bristol.
Lyotard, Jean Francois. 1991. *The Lyotard Reader*. Benjamin. A (ed.). Blackwell: Oxford.
—. 1986. *The Postmodern Condition*. Manchester University Press: Manchester.
—. 1992. *The Postmodern Explained*: *Correspondence 1982-85*. University of Minessota Press: Minnesota.
Marx, Karl. & Engels, Freidrich. 2005 .*The Communist Manifesto*. Penguin: London.
Poe, Edgar Allen. 2003. A Descent Into The Maelstrom. In: *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Writings*. Penguin: London. 177-194.
—. 2003. The Fall of the House of Usher. In: *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Writings*. Penguin: London. 90-110.
Radcliffe, Anne. 1826. *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. Online at: http://www.engl.virginia.edu/enec981/Group/chris.terror.html
Rushdie, Salman. 1992. *Imaginary Homelands*. *Essays and Criticism*. Granta Books: London.
—. 1995. *Midnight's Children*. Penguin: London.
—. 1998. *The Satanic Verses*. Picador: USA.
—. 2006. *Terror Is Glamour*. Interview with Speigel Online. Online at: http://agonist.org/nymole/20060829/salman_rushdie_terror_is_glamour
Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1956. *Being and Nothingness*. Citadel Press: New York.
Shelley, Mary. 2000. *Frankenstein*. Bedford/St.Martin's: Boston.
Stevenson, Robert Louis. 2002. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Weir of Hermiston*. Dover Publications: London.
Stoker, Bram. 2003. *Dracula*. Penguin: London.

The Doors. 1990. *Best of the Doors*. Wea International: USA.
Vonnegut, Kurt. 2000. *Slaughterhouse 5*. Vintage: London.
Walpole, Horace. 1998. *The Castle of Otranto*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
Wilde, Oscar. 1994. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Penguin: London.
Wittgenstein, L. 1967. *Philosophical Investigations*. (Tr. G. E. M. Anscombe). Blackwell: Oxford.
—. 1996. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. (Tr. C.K Ogden). Online at: http://www.kfs.org/~jonathan/witt/tlp.html.
Žižek, Slavoj. 1997. *The Plague of Fantasies*. Verso: London.
—. 1998. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. Verso: London.
—. 1999. *The Thing From Inner Space*. Online at: http://www.lacan.com/Žižekthing.htm
—. 2004. *The Iraqi Borrowed Kettle*. Online at: http://www.lacan.com/Žižekkettle

Secondary

Abbinnett, Ross. 2003. *Culture and Identity*: *Critical Theories*. Sage: London.
Abrams. M. H. 1993. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 6th edition. Vol. 2. W.W Norton & Co.: London)
Allison, H. E. 1983. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. Yale University Press: London.
Alvarez. A. 1978. *Beckett*. Fontana/Collins: Glasgow.
Aravamudan, Srinivas. 1994. 'Being God's Postman Is No Fun Ya'ar'. In: Fletcher. D. M. 1994. (ed.) *Reading Rushdie*: *Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Rodopi: Amsterdam. p188.
Ayers, Robert. W. 1988. 'The Dantescan Voice: A Course in Dante and Eliot'. In: Brooker, J.S. *Approaches to Teaching Eliot's Poetry and Plays*. Modern Language Association of America: New York. p53-59.
Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1982. *The Dialogic Imgination*. (Tr. Kenneth Brostrom). University of Texas Press: Texas.
—. 1984. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. (Tr. Caryl Emerson). Manchester University Press: Manchester.
Baldick, Chris (ed.) 1992. *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
Barrat, Andrew. 1987. *Between Two Worlds*. *A Critical Introduction to The Master and Margarita*. Clarendon Press: London.
—. 1996. '*The Master and Margarita* in Recent Criticism: An Overview'. In: Weeks, Laura. (ed.) *The Master and Margarita*: *A Critical Companion*. Northwestern University Press: Illinois.
Begam, Richard. 1996. *Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity*. Stanford University press: Stanford.
Bernasconi, Robert & Critchley Simon. 2002. *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*. Cambridge University Cress: Cambridge.
Bethea. M. David. 1996. 'History as Hippodrome: The Apocalyptic Horse and Rider in *The Master and Margarita*'. In: Weeks, Laura. (ed.) 1996. *The Master and Margarita*: *A Critical Companion*. Northwestern University Press: Illinois.
Billington. R. 1997. *Understanding Eastern Philosophy*. Routledge: London.
Bocock, Robert. 1981. *Freud and Modern Society*. Nelson: London.
Booker, M. K. 1994. 'Beauty and the Beast. Dualism and Despotism in the Fiction of Salman Rushdie'. In: Fletcher. D. M. 1994. (ed.) *Reading Rushdie*: *Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Rodopi: Amsterdam. p242.
Bordwell, David. 1989. *Making Meaning*: *Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Borradori, Giovanna. 2003 *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*: *Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. p25-30, 33-4, 85-90, 100-02. Online at http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/066649.html
Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) 2004a. *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Vols. 1-4. Routledge: London.
—. 1991. *Making Monstrous*: *Frankenstein*, *Criticism*, *Theory*. Manchester University Press: Manchester.
—. 1996. *Gothic*: *The New Critical Idiom*. Routledge: London.

—. 1998. 'Horror'. In: Mulvey-Roberts. Marie. (ed.) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan: London.
—. 2001. *The Gothic. Essays and Studies*. D.S Brewer: Cambridge.
—. 2004b. 'Power in the Darkness. Heterotopias, Literature and Gothic Labyrinths'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol. 2. p243-267.
—. 2004c. 'Signs of Evil. Bataille, Baudrillard and Postmodern Gothic'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) 2004. *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol. 1. p207-325.
Bowers, Maggie-Ann. 2004. *Magical Realism*. Routledge: London.
Brennan, Timothy. 1989. *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*: *Myths of the Nation*. Macmillan: London.
Briggs, Peter. 1994. 'Salman Rushdie's Novels, Disorder in Fantastic Order'. In: Fletcher. D. M. *Reading Rushdie*: *Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Rodopi: Amsterdam. p173.
Brooke-Rose, Christine. 1981. *A Rhetoric of the Unreal*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
Brooks, Peter. 2004. 'Virtue and Terror: The Monk'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol. 2. p191-205.
Brown, Marshall. 2004. 'A Philosophical View of the Gothic Novel'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol.1. p167-192.
Bruhm, Steven. 2004. 'On Stephen King's Phallus: Or the Postmodern Gothic'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol. 4. p170-186.
Bulgakov, Mikhail. 2004. *The Master and Margarita*. (Tr. Michael Glenny). Vintage: London.
Cawelti, John. 1985. 'Chinatown and Generic Transformation in Recent American Films'. *Film Theory and Criticism*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press: New York.
Childs, Peter. 1960. *Modernism*. Routledge: London.
Christensen, Inger. 1981. *The Meaning of Metafiction*. Universitets Forlaget: Bergen.
Clark, Roger. 2001. *Stranger Gods: Salman Rushdie's Other Worlds*. McGill-Queens Press: Montreal.
Clarke, Graham. ed. *T.S Eliot*: *Critical Assessments*. *Vol II*. Christopher Helm: London.
Cohn, Ruby. 1962. *Samuel Beckett*: *The Comic Gamut*. Rutgers University Press: New Jersey.
Cornwell, Neil. 1990. *The Literary Fantastic. From Gothic to Postmodernism*. Harvester Wheatsheaf: London.
Cummings, E.E. 1990. 'T.S Eliot'. In: Clarke, Graham. (ed.) *T.S Eliot*: *Critical Assessments*. *Vol IV*. Christopher Helm: London.
Cundy, Catherine. 1994. 'Rehearsing Voices'. Salman Rushdie's *Grimus*, *In*: Fletcher. D. M. *Reading Rushdie*: *Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Rodopi: Amsterdam. p45.
Czermak, Herberth. 1993. *Kafka's The Metamorphosis & Other Stories*. Lincoln: Nebraska.

Dawood, N.J. (Tr.) 2003. *The Koran*. Penguin: London.
De Certeau, Michel. 1988. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (Tr. Steven Rendall). Berkely University Press: California.
Dews, Peter. 1999. *Habermas*: *A Critical Reader*. Blackwell: Oxford.
Dick, B.F. 1988. 'The Waste Land as a Descent to the Underworld'. In: Brooker, J.S. *Approaches to Teaching Eliot's Poetry and Plays*. Modern Language Association of America: New York. p 108-114.
Doe, Donald. B. 1977. *The Sublime as an Aesthetic Correlative*: *A Study of Late Eighteenth Century English Aesthetic Theory, Landscape Painting and Gothic Drama*. Universal Microfilms International: London.
During, Simon. 1987. 'Postmodernism and Postcolonialism Today'. In: Docherty, Thomas (ed.) *Postmodernism*: *A Reader*. Columbia University Press: New York.
Edwards, Michael. 1990. 'Eliot/Language'. In: Clarke, Graham.ed. *T.S Eliot*: *Critical Assessments*. Vol. 2. Christopher Helm: London.
Engblom, Philip. 1994. 'A Multitude of Voices. Carnivalisation and Dialogicality in the Novels of Salman Rushdie'. In: Fletcher D.M. (ed.) *Reading Rushdie*: *Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Rodopi: Amsterdam. p294.
Fletcher. D. M. 1994. (ed.) *Reading Rushdie*: *Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Rodopi: Amsterdam.
Fowler, Alistair. 1982. *Kinds of Literature*: *An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
Fowler, Douglas. 1999. 'The Waste Land as Gothic Fantasy: Theology in Scary Pictures'. In: Spearsbrooker, J. (ed.) *Approaches to Teaching Eliot's Poetry and Plays*. Modern Language Association of America: USA.
Fraser, Graham. 2000. 'No More than Ghosts Make: The Hauntology and Gothic Minimalism of Beckett's Late Work'. *Modern Fiction Studies*. *Vol.46*. *No. 3*. p772-785.
Gelder, Ken. (ed.) 2000. *The Horror Reader*. Routledge: London.
—. 1998. 'Postcolonial Gothic'. In: Mulvey-Roberts. Marie. (ed.) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan: London.
—. 1994. *Reading The Vampire*. Routledge: London.
Gelpi, Albert. 1990. 'The Genealogy of Postmodernism: Contemporary American Poetry'. In: *The Southern Review*. p517-541. Online at: http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/gelpi.html
Gledhill, Christine. 1985. 'Genre'. In Pam Cook (ed.): *The Cinema Book*. British Film Institute: London.
Gordon. Jan. B. 2004. 'Narrative Enclosure as Textual Ruin: An Archaeology of Gothic Consciousness'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol.1. p55-81.
Guattari, Felix. 1995. *Chaosmosis*: *An Ethico-Aestheitic Paradigm*. (Tr. Paul Bains & Julian Pefanis). Indiana University Press: Indiana.
Hadley Denton, Eric. 1998. 'Goethe'. In: Mulvey-Roberts. Marie. (ed.) The Handbook to Gothic Literature. Palgrave MacMillan: London.
Hall, Daniel. 2005. *French and German Gothic Fiction In The Late 18th Century*. Peter Lang: Oxford.
Hall, David. E. (ed.) *Subjectivity*. *The New Critical Idiom*. Routledge: London.

Hassan, Ihab. 1967. *The Literature of Silence*: *Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett.* Knopf: New York.
Hogle, Jerold, E. 2002. *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
—. 2004. 'The Restless Labyrinth. Cryptonomy in the Gothic Novel'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol.1. 145-164.
Horrocks, Chris & Jevtic, Zoran. 1999. *Introducing Baudrillard*. Icon Books Ltd.: Cambridge.
Howard, Jacqueline. 1994. *Reading Gothic Fiction*: *A Bakhtinian Approach*. Clarendon Press: Oxford.
Hume, Robert. D. 1969. Gothic Versus Romantic: A Reevaluation or the Gothic Novel. In: *PMLA*. 84. March. 282-90.
Hurley, Kelly. 1996. *The Gothic Body*: *Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration at the Fin de Siecle*. Cambridge University Press: London.
Hutcheon, Linda. 1988. *A Poetics of Postmodernism*: *History, Theory, Fiction.* Routledge: London.
Jacobsen, Josephine and Mueller, William. R. 1964. *The Testament Of Samuel Beckett*. Hill & Wang: New York.
Jameson, Frederic. 1991. *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke University Press: Durham.
Johansen, Ib. 1994. 'The Flight from the Enchanter: Reflections on Salman Rushdie's Grimus'. In: Fletcher D. M. (ed.) *Reading Rushdie*: *perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Rodopi: Amsterdam. 23.
Kearney, Richard. 2003. *Strangers, Gods and Monsters.* Routledge: London.
King, Stephen. 2000. *Danse Macabre*. Warner: London.
Kristeva, Julia. 1982. *The Powers of Horror*: *An Essay in Abjection*. (Tr. L.S Rouidiez) Columbia University Press: New York.
Lake-Crane, Jonathan, 1994. *Terror and Everyday Life*: *Singular Moments in the History of the Horror Film*. Sage: London.
Lakshin. V. 1996. 'M. Bulgakov's Novel, *The Master and Margarita*'. In: Weeks, Laura. (ed.) *The Master and Margarita*: *A Critical Companion.* Northwestern University Press: Illinois.
Leavis, F.R. 1990. 'T.S Eliot'. In: Clarke, Graham. (ed.) *T.S Eliot*: *Critical Assessments*. *Vol II*. Christopher Helm: London.
Lennon, Sean. 1998. *Irish Gothic Writers*: *Bram Stoker and the Irish Supernatural Tradition*. Dublin Corporation Libraries: Dublin.
Levinas, Emmanuel. 1995. *Existence and Existents*. Kluwer Academic Publishers: London.
Lucas, F. L. 1990. 'The Waste Land'. In: Clarke, Graham. (ed.) *T.S Eliot*: *Critical Assessments*. Vol.2. Christopher Helm: London.
Lucas, G. 1997. *Healthy Blasphemy*: *Dissenting Discourses in Rushdie and Bulgakov*. Online at: http://litmuse.maconstate.edu/~glucas/archives/000454.shtml
MacQuillan, Martin. 2000. *Deconstruction*: *A Reader*. Edinburgh University Press:Edinburgh.
Malin, Irving. 1962. *New American Gothic*. Southern Illinois University Press: Illinois.
McHale, Brian. 1987. *Postmodernist Fiction*. Routledge: London.

McLaren, John. 1990. 'The Power of the Word: Salman Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses*'. *Westerly*: *A Quarterly Review*. 35.1. 61-65.
Mighall, Robert. 1999. *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*: *Mapping Histories Nightmares*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
Milbank, Alan. 1998. 'The Apocalyptic Sublime'. In: Mulvey-Roberts. Marie. (ed.) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan: London.
Miles Robert. 1993. *Gothic Writing 1750-1820*: *A Genealogy*. Routledge: London.
Miller, Carolyn R. 1984. 'Genre as Social Action'. In: *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70: 151-67. 23-42.
Miller, Nchamah. 20003. *Hauntology and History in Derrida's Spectres of Marx*. Online at: http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:2LOanN9UT0MJ:www.nodo50.org/cubasigloXXI/taller/miller_100304.pdf+derrida+hauntology&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=2&gl=ie
Mishra, Vijay. 1994. *The Gothic Sublime*. State University of New York Press: New York.
Moertensen, Peter. 2004. *British Romanticism and Continental Influences*. Macmillan: London.
Monleon, Jose. B. 1990. *A Specter is Haunting Europe*: *A Sociohistorical Approach to the Fantastic*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey.
Morris, David. B. 1985. Gothic Sublimity. *New Literary History*, 16:2. 299.
Mulvey-Roberts. Marie. (ed.) 1998. *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan: London.
Nath Kher, Inder. 1974. *Landscape of Absence*. *Emily Dickenson's Poetry*. Yale University Press: Conneticut.
Neale, Steve. 1980. *Genre*. British Film Institute: London.
Nelson Jr., Lowry. 2004. 'Night Thoughts on the Gothic Novel'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol. 1. 38-54.
Newman, Judie. 2004. 'Postcolonial Gothic. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and the Sobhraj Case'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol. 1. 293-307.
Nurmic, Martin. 1975. *William Blake*. Hutchinson & Co.: London.
O'Sullivan, Tim, John Hartley, et. al. 1994. *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London.
Pattie, David. 2000. The Complete Critical Guide to Samuel Beckett: A Sourcebook. Routledge: London.
Paulson, Ronald. 2004. Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol. 2. 269-289.
Payne, Michael. 1993. *Reading Theory*: *An Introduction to Lacan, Derrida and Kristeva*. Blackwell: Oxford.
Peter, John. 1990. 'A New Interpretation of *The Waste Land*'. In: Clarke, Graham. (ed.) *T.S Eliot*: *Critical Assessments*. Christopher Helm: London.
Pick, Daniel. 2004. 'Terrors of the Night. Dracula and 'degeneration' in the Late Nineteenth Century'. In: Botting, Fred. & Townshend, Dale. (eds) *Gothic*: *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Routledge: London. Vol. 3. 287-301.

Pireddu, Nicoletta. 1996. 'Beyond Figuration, Below the Threshold. Some Observations on Postmodernism and the Sublime'. *Negations. An Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Thought. 1. Winter*. Online at: http://www.datawranglers.com/negations/issues/96w/96w_pireddu.html

Pittman, Rita. H. 1991. *The Writer's Divided Self in Bulgakov's 'The Master and Margarita'*. Macmillan Press: London.

Piven, Jerry. S. 2004. Death and Delusion. A Freudian Analysis of Mortal Terror. Information Age Publishing: Greenwich CT.

Preese, Julian. (ed.) 2002. *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Proffer, Elendea. 1984. *Bulgakov. Life and Work*. Ann Arbor Press: Michigan.

Proffer, Elendea. 1996. 'Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita: Genre and Motif'. In: Weeks, Laura. (ed.) *The Master and Margarita*: *A Critical Companion*. Northwestern University Press: Illinois.

Punter, David. & Byron, Glennis. 2007. *The Gothic*. Blackwell: Oxford.

Punter, David. 1996. *The Literature of Terror Vol.2*: *The Modern Gothic*. Longman: London.

—. 1998. 'Terror'. In: Mulvey-Roberts. Marie. (ed.) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan: London.

Rabkin, Erik. S. 1976. *The Fantastic In Literature*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey.

Raine, Craig. 1990. 'The Awful Daring of T.S Eliot'. In: Clarke, Graham.(ed.) *T.S Eliot*: *Critical Assessments*. *Vol IV*. Christopher Helm: London.

Reeve, F. D. 1967. *The Russian Novel*. Frederick Muller Ltd.: London.

Reid, Ian. 1989. 'When is an Epitaph Not an Epitaph? A Monumental Generic Problem and a Jonsonian Instance'. *Southern Review*. Vol.22. 3. 209.

Rice, Philip & Patricia, Waugh. 2001. *Modern Literary Theory*: *A Reader, 4th Edition*. Hodder: Arnold: London.

Ricks, Christopher.1995. *Beckett's Dying Words*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Riquelme, John Paul. 2000. 'Toward a History of Gothic and Modernism: Dark Modernity from Bram Stoker to Samuel Beckett'. In: *Modern Fiction Studies*. *Vol. 46. No. 3*. 590-601.

Rosenshield, Gary. 1997. *The Master and Margarita* and the Poetics of Aporia: A Polemical Article. *Slavic Review*. 56.2. p187-212.

Royle, Nicholas. 2003. *The Uncanny*: *An Introduction*. Manchester University Press: Manchester.

Russell, Alison. 1990. 'Deconstructing The New York Trilogy: Paul Auster's Anti-Detective Fiction'. In: *Critique*. 31. 2. 71-84.

Rutherford, Jonathan (ed.) 1990. *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Lawrence & Wishart: London.

Sage, Victor & Alan Lloyd Smith (eds). 1996. *Modern Gothic*: *A Reader*. Manchester University Press: Manchester.

Scruton. Roger. 1994. *Modern Philosophy*: *A Survey*. Sinclair-Stevenson: London.

Sherringham, Michael. 1985. *Beckett*: '*Molloy*'. Grant and Cutler: London.

Skenazy, Paul. 1995. 'Behind The Territory Ahead'. In: David Fine. (ed.) *Los Angeles in Fiction*: *A Collection of Essays*. New Mexico University Press: Albuquerque. 103-25.

Small, Helen. 1998. 'Madness'. In: Mulvey-Roberts. Marie. (ed.) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan: London.
Smith, Andrew & Wallace, Jeff. (eds). 2001. *Gothic Modernisms*. Palgrave: Basingstoke.
Spooner, Catherine. 2006. *Contemporary Gothic*. Reaktion Books: London.
Stam, Robert. 2000. *Film Theory*. Blackwell: Oxford.
Stevenson. W. H. (ed.) 1971. *Blake*: *The Complete Poems*. Longman: London.
Stickney, John. 1967. *Four Doors to the Future*: *Gothic Rock is Their Thing*. Online at: http://my.dreamwiz.com/openthedoors/article/article2.htm
Stoddart, Helen. 1998. 'The Demonic'. In: Mulvey-Roberts. Marie. (ed.) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan: London.
Swope, Richard. 2001. *Supposing a Space*: *The Detecting Subject in Paul Auster's City of Glass*. Online at: http://reconstruction.eserver.org/023/swope.htm
Tabachnick, Steve. 2000. 'The Gothic Modernism of T.S. Eliot's Waste Land and What Martin Rowson's Graphic Novel Tells Us about It and Other Matters'. In: *Readerly Writerly Texts*: *Essays on Literature, Literary Textual Criticism, and Pedagogy*. Portales: NM.
Thomassen, Lasse. (ed.) 2006. *The Derrida-Habermas Reader*. Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.
Thompson, G. R. 'A Dark Romanticism: Quest of a Gothic Monomyth'. In: Messent, Peter. B. (ed.) *Literature of the Occult*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey. p31-39.
Todorov, Tzvetan. 1973. *The Fantastic*: *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. (Tr. Richard Howard). The Press of Case Western Reserve University: London.
Underwood, Tim & Chuck Miller (eds) 1989. *Bare Bones*: *Conversations on Terror with Stephen King*. New English Library: London.
Varma, Devendra. P. 1957. *The Gothic Flame*. *Being a History of the GOTHIC NOVEL in England*: *It's Origin, Efflorenscence, Disintegration and Residuary Influences*. Arthur Barker Ltd. : London.
Watt, James. 1999. *Contesting the Gothic*: *Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict 1764-1832*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
Waugh, Patricia. 1984, *Metafiction*: *The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. Routledge: London.
Weeks, Laura. (ed.) 1996. *The Master and Margarita*: *A Critical Companion*. Northwestern University Press: Illinois.
Willard, Thomas. 1998. 'The Occult'. In: Mulvey-Roberts. Marie. (ed.) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan: London.
Willett, Ralph. 1996. *The Naked City*: *Urban Crime Fiction in the USA*. Manchester University Press: Manchester University.
Williams, Raymond. 1990. 'T.S Eliot'. In: Clarke, Graham.ed. *T.S Eliot*: *Critical Assessments*. Vol. 2. Christopher Helm: London.
Williamson, George. 1974. *A Reader's Guide to T.S Eliot*. Thames & Hudson: London.
Wilt, Judith. 1980. *Ghosts of the Gothic*: *Austen, Eliot and Lawrence*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey.

Index