

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN, TRINITY COLLEGE

**Hauntologies of Domestic Space in Contemporary Women's Writing. 1985-2015:
Alice Munro, Lorrie Moore, and Anne Enright**

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Summary

This thesis proposes a hauntological understanding of domestic space in order to examine the spectral presences in the fiction of three contemporary women writers, Alice Munro, Lorrie Moore, and Anne Enright, published between 1985 and 2015. This study establishes a means of analysing haunted domestic spaces in contemporary realist fiction authored by women, through theoretical, cultural and literary responses to the domestic space. The study is organised into four chapters: a theoretical chapter which outlines ‘thinking hauntologically’ about domestic space as a cultural and literary entity, followed by three chapters which focus on each author’s respective fiction through a close reading of the spectral presences that haunt domestic space in their work. The introduction outlines the cultural contexts, defining terms, and methodology of the study. This chapter establishes its contemporary framework, before going on to consider each author’s affiliation to concepts of the domestic in their critical reception and shared thematic concerns. The methodological stance of the thesis is then outlined: the use of a relational comparative framework examines the domestic discourses shaped by cultural values and public policy in Canada, the United States, and Ireland in turn, and close reading of domestic descriptions in each authors work through the themes of space and place, domestic architecture, and domestic objects.

Chapter 1 explicates the study’s proposition of thinking hauntologically about domestic space. It outlines hauntology, drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida and succeeding developments, as one concerned with haunting as a temporal, and hence spatial, phenomenon. It draws parallels with the Gothic mode and then establishes hauntology as a discrete framework for analysing haunted space by considering haunting as a motif within the ‘spatial turn’ in critical theory and in feminist theory from the second wave onward. The pervasiveness of the spectre in domestic discourses positions the haunted house as a wide-ranging concept with particular significance in contemporary women’s writing.

Chapter 2 examines a selection of short stories by Alice Munro published from 1986 to 2012 in light of spectres of memory. Grouping stories thematically, this chapter views spectres of memory as related to an anxiety about the family in Canadian culture, and focuses on the ‘surface detail’ of Munro’s stories which interrupt received understandings of spatial boundaries, the safety of the family home, and the possessive function of objects through ghostly memories of past events pertaining to family, particularly maternal figures.

Chapter 3 explores spectres of failure in the short stories and novels of Lorrie Moore published from 1985 to 2013. Ordered chronologically within the chapter’s thematic framework, this chapter considers spectres of failure in Moore’s fiction as a response to post-war images of the family and femininity, which is communicated through ‘invasions’ of the exterior into the interior space, the lack of protection afforded by family homes, and through immaterial objects which productively fail in their original function in the home.

Chapter 4 focuses on the novels of Anne Enright, published between 1995 and 2015, regarding spectres of silence in the domestic space as ethical responses to elided histories of post-independence Ireland. This chapter examines domestic discourses in Irish culture as an inherited silence which haunts the prosperous contemporary home through blurred boundaries between space and place, interiors occupied by spectral figures as symbols of the state’s regime of silencing, and objects which ‘speak’ on behalf of silenced figures.

The conclusion reiterates the applicability of hauntology for the study of haunted domestic spaces in contemporary women’s fiction and reflects on the way in which Munro, Moore, and Enright’s respective hauntologies of domestic space suggest ways for ‘living with’ the spectre in the contemporary moment.

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Introduction

(i)

This project puts forward a hauntological approach to the study of domestic spaces in the fiction of three major contemporary women writers—Alice Munro, Lorrie Moore, and Anne Enright—published since the 1980s. Throughout this fiction the presence of spectres,¹ death, strange figures, and other tropes and images that would otherwise appear more at home in a Gothic romance recur. Why such haunting should prevail particularly within the contemporary moment in which women, now more than ever, are perceived to have a mobile and liberated relationship to the domestic space is a question central to this thesis. The fiction of Munro, Moore, and Enright—their short stories and novels—allows for an interrogation into why haunting remains at the heart of the domestic space in contemporary women’s writing.

Domestic space is a historically inscribed cultural concept as well as a material, built space. To speak of the domestic space is to conjure up a range of images, discourses, and values. Etymologically the term ‘signifies of/belonging to the home, house or household’ (Mezei and Briganti, “Introduction” 3) and is used in this thesis to group together built spaces which enable individuals to dwell and sites a range of practices and behaviours from the emotional to the economic. Domestic space is typically viewed as mundane or quotidian, yet it has inestimable individual and cultural significance. The term often induces images of the genteel, the feminine, or the sentimental, particularly within literary discourses. It is a site of inherent tensions

¹ A note on spelling: the British English spelling of ‘spectre’ is used throughout this thesis, while the American English variation, ‘specter’, as it arises in quotations and text titles, is retained.

between public and private, labour and leisure, safety and precarity, and security and imprisonment. However it is figured, one element which appears to unite the various understandings and uses of domestic space in Western culture is its seemingly immutable connection to women.

This connection emerged during the Industrial Revolution (Gamble 218; Heynen 6). The manifestation of a spatial division of two autonomous and disparate spheres—public and private—organised space and labour along gendered lines, and gave rise to the concept of ‘separate spheres’. The domestic space has throughout Western history been envisioned as ‘woman’s sphere’ (Hayden 13): the totemic figures of the Victorian ‘Angel in the House’, first conjured in the poetry of Coventry Patmore and challenged by Virginia Woolf,² as well as the ‘happy housewife’ of post-war popular culture and her reanimation in the twenty-first century as the ‘domestic goddess’, are evidence of this enduring conceptualisation of the domestic space as women’s rightful place; the intricate binding of feminine identity and domesticity. This long history does not necessarily signal a positive relationship between women and ‘their’ sphere: as Dörte Kuhlmann notes, it is possible that ‘the exclusion of women begins at home’ (175). Furthermore, the domestic space is one that has been forged in and configured by a capitalist and patriarchal ideology, as ‘capitalism incorporated the patriarchal home, which antedated it’ (Hayden 296) and so within the Western domestic space, capitalist and patriarchal values have tended to sustain one another.

The conditions of the domestic space in the contemporary era, meanwhile, are such that while the traditions and origins of the space have shifted from their original forms—indicating that the inherent inequalities of the domestic space and a separate spheres ideology itself may be resolved—there remains unsettlement and irresolution.

² Evoking Patmore’s Angel in “Professions for Women”, Woolf describes her as particularly demonic: “Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing” (Woolf 238).

The recurrence of spectral presences in domestic spaces in contemporary women's writing attests to this. In the fiction of Munro, Moore, and Enright, spectres make themselves present in different ways and for different means: these domestic spaces are sites of death, act as symbolic graves for their inhabitants, or are haunted by figures who unsettle the ontological categories of the living and the dead. But such spectres do not always invoke terror or horror. Rather, haunting is made rather quotidian in these works. Images associated with the fantastic or Gothic are interpolated into the everyday. This haunting is the material manifestation of personal memories, familial inheritances, and traces of historical and political events staged within domestic spaces. Ultimately, the recurrence of spectres in the domestic spaces of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction may be seen to result from the enduring legacy of separate spheres ideology in the contemporary moment, as well as in response to family memories, national histories, and cultural narratives.

A hauntological reading of domestic space is informed by the conceptualisation of architectural spaces and material objects as having the ability to retain the traces of past events, emotions, and behaviours. Such a concept is rooted in psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and architectural theory, among various areas contributing to the 'spatial turn' in critical theory.³ It is also a notion fundamental to the study of space in ghost stories and Gothic literature. The haunted house in particular, intimately associated with the Gothic, is a recognisable and enduring cultural idiom. By employing hauntology, haunted domestic space can be envisioned beyond a singular literary genre and can be seen as being shaped by a variety of disciplines and theoretical positions.

The fiction of Munro, Moore, and Enright, while written in the contemporary moment, offers ways of interrogating historically entrenched literary and cultural

³ Kathy Mezei and Chiara Briganti note that the spatial turn, or a sustained interest in the concepts of spatiality, began in the mid-twentieth century with the work of Michel Foucault, Gaston Bachelard, Henri Lefebvre, Derrida, among others ("Introduction" 4-5).

discourses regarding the domestic space. Although Munro began her writing career roughly twenty years prior to Moore and Enright, the texts considered in this project by the three authors have been chosen from a thirty-year range, bridging the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries, published between 1985 and 2015. The definition of the ‘contemporary moment’ in this study as an ‘extended’ (Crosthwaite 8) one has been formed not only in response to the fecundity of women’s writing during this period, as the fiction of these three writers illustrates, but also in response to the myriad changes to the domestic space in this time, particularly with regard to the fashioning of women’s relationship to the space. A shift in cultural values regarding domestic space from the recent past and into the contemporary moment can be traced in Munro, Moore, and Enright’s fiction.

However, definitions of the contemporary moment can be impeded by the process of definition itself (Bewes 159). Therefore, the definition of the contemporary with regard to cultural values and literary practice in this thesis is necessarily contingent and provisional. Although Robert Eaglestone proposes a definition of contemporary literature as that produced in ‘the last ten years or so’, for the purposes of this study and as a reflection of Munro, Moore, and Enright’s literary practice, acknowledging the broader contexts from which the contemporary moment emerges is particularly vital. As Paul Crosthwaite argues, the study of contemporary literature is ‘sometimes hampered by its determination to insist on the stark novelty of the practices it identifies’ (4). Thus historical contextualisation, illustrating connections between the contemporary moment and that which precedes it, is critical in order to avoid the overestimation of novelty and to situate the contemporary moment within a broader continuum.

Crosthwaite defines the contemporary as not only the immediate moment but ‘as a ‘long’, ‘thick’, or ‘extended’ present; and, on the basis that the contemporary is best defined in terms of the core socio-economic conditions that shape the experience of the

present and recent past' (8). This envisioning of the contemporary based on wider cultural and political conditions is also promulgated by Mary Eagleton and Susan Stanford Friedman in their definition of contemporary women's writing. For Eagleton and Friedman, 'the conditions of late twentieth-century- and early twenty-first-century history that shape and reflect women's writing' are of key importance to this area of study (2). Indeed, this fruitful grouping of the contemporary moment under a set of common cultural and political factors, with historical legacies, may provide the critical 'leverage' which Eric Hayot deems to be essential to the productive study of contemporary literature and culture. It is also reflective of the fiction considered in this project, as each text evidences a literary link to wider ideologies surrounding the concepts of domestic space and domesticity, both contemporary and historic.

To consider the interplay of shared cultural, political, and socio-economic factors as central to the definition of the contemporary moment can thus be viewed as an inheritance from feminist approaches to criticism, in which a consideration of these factors is central, regardless of the period or object of analysis (Monteith 5). While this approach may be as limiting as strict periodisation, dependent on the whims of those who decide what those cultural and political factors are and who has experienced them, it is particularly appropriate in this study of women's writing and domestic space which is interested in the intersection of literature, theory, and culture. This move within the study of contemporary literature and culture to envision the temporal and spatial boundaries of scholarship in a more capacious sense can also be seen as a response to the limitations of scholarly critique itself.

Although not solely focused on the study of contemporary literature, Rita Felski's proposal in *The Limits of Critique* (2015) for a movement towards 'postcritical reading', echoes the challenges of studying the contemporary. Felski argues against the binary between 'historically orientated scholarship' and that which focuses on

aesthetics, formalism, or phenomenology (*Limits* 154). In order to navigate this ‘problem of temporality’ (*Limits* 154) posed by both approaches, Felski, indebted to the spatial frameworks of postcolonial theory which muddy Eurocentric concepts of history, conceives of approaching spatial and temporal connections as ‘threads crisscrossing through time [...] connect[ing] us to what comes before, enmeshing us in extended webs of obligation and influence’ (*Limits* 158). The slipperiness of the contemporary moment as a solid and definable object of study naturally draws attention to broader issues with periodisation and definition. The bracketing-off of the contemporary moment in this particular study, to a period of time between 1985 and 2015, is therefore a pragmatic necessity, but one which has been defined and understood through historical legacies and networks of cultural and political factors.

If 1968 is seen as a definitive moment for understanding the conditions of postmodernity, the decade of the 1980s is pivotal in understanding the conditions of the contemporary. The 1980s begins the ‘extended’ contemporary moment in this study as the temporal threshold in the West between political ideologies and cultural values inherited from the post-war era and the intensified neoliberal political economy which characterises the first decades of the twenty-first century.⁴ Crucially, throughout the decades of this extended contemporary moment, there has been a clear impact in the West of post-war inheritances and neoliberal ideology on dwelling practices, feminist movements, and women’s writing, as will be examined in more detail in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

The domestic space, a fecund symbol within literature and culture has always taken on particular import in times of cultural and political flux. While this extended

⁴ David Harvey pinpoints the beginnings of neoliberal political economic policies, such as ‘[d]eregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision’ in the 1970s (2-3). However, the 1980s saw the interpolation of these approaches into global political ideologies, and an intensification of such policies as normative, as well as the fall of the Soviet Bloc, and the resurgence of centre-Right governance in the West.

contemporary moment is by no means the first period in time in which the domestic space has taken on significance, it is important to note the social conditions and political events of this moment which render the space precarious and uncertain, and in response, existentially more desirable. Writing in 1996, Catherine Wiley and Fiona Barnes noted this dependence between the existential uncertainty of contemporary life and the import of the domestic space:

Living as we do now, in a world where new nations arise from the collapse of old political structures, the idea of home as a starting point and a returning haven becomes ever more attractive and yet paradoxically more difficult to attain (xv).

Although the contemporary moment cannot claim precedence over the precarity or importance of dwelling, since the 1980s in Canada, the United States,⁵ and Ireland there has been significant political and economic changes which have reshaped the act of dwelling, the provision of housing, and forms of housing tenure and ownership. Imagining the contemporary moment as *the* moment of immeasurable change, particularly with regard to housing and space, falls foul of the insistence on novelty that Crosthwaite cautions against. However, an intensification of certain policies and practices related to housing and dwelling has occurred in the contemporary moment which situates housing construction and provision as central to wealth creation on a mass-scale in Canada, the US, and Ireland.

During this moment in all three national contexts there has been a turn toward a near-total reliance on the private market for housing, shaping forms of tenure and types of housing built. As Norris (99) notes in the Irish context, state intervention is not completely absent in the housing sector in the contemporary period, yet, the scale of its intervention has greatly reduced. Public- or social-housing programmes, co-operative housing schemes, and rent control policies have been scaled back in Canada (Wolfe 121), the US (Kwak 203), and Ireland (Norris and Redmond 13) in an effort to house

⁵ Hereafter referred to as 'the US' throughout this thesis.

people in a more ‘cost-effective’ manner in line with neoliberal economic policies.

Furthermore, while policy asserts private homeownership as the ideal, in the wake of the 2007-08 global recession (also known as ‘the Great Recession’), the private market is in itself riven by a global affordability crisis (Wetzstein 3160). For those who cannot afford a mortgage due to rising costs of living or without access to generational wealth, housing in the contemporary moment is characterised by a stratum of private landlords and property management companies, producing a generation excluded from the ideal of homeownership and from security of tenure.⁶ These shifts in housing provision and tenure have had a more sustained impact on people who are already tenuously positioned within the capitalist system: children and young people, female-headed households, single parents, migrants, the unemployed, the precariously employed, and working class communities.

The focus on financial markets over human need shape housing forms. As David Madden and Peter Marcuse argue, the hyper-commodification of housing which characterises the contemporary moment has resulted in the proliferation of ‘luxury’ housing which is built ‘not [...] primarily to provide housing but to make profits upon resale’ (37). This housing, according to Madden and Marcuse, is inherently ‘antisocial’ (38), preventing social bonds and communities from forming. Examples of luxury housing include the so-called “McMansion”⁷ or high-rise condominium in the US and Canada. While such terminology is not present in the Irish context, variations on these architectural forms are evident within the landscapes of Irish cities and towns: large single-family houses constructed on isolated plots of land along commuter belts and luxury apartment complexes designed to appeal to investment management companies.

⁶ As Norris notes, ‘In countries where governments have withdrawn home ownership subsidies and liberalised the commercial mortgage lending industry home ownership has often contracted due to a rise in buy-to-let lending’ (Norris 98).

⁷ Defined as a ‘North American pejorative term for a large house built on a small plot of land, often constructed cheaply but including ostentatious traditional features’ (Park and Allaby).

Thus, the widely received idea of the domestic space as an inalienable or protected entity which functions first and foremost as shelter has become more illusory in the contemporary moment due to the structural inequalities of free market capitalism.

Perhaps the most notable event in this regard in the contemporary moment is the Great Recession, which not only impacted housing and dwelling in its aftermath but was in the first instance engendered by unstable and inflated housing construction and property markets.⁸ Such political and economic policies which created the conditions for deregulated financial lending and property markets are rooted in the free-market rhetoric typified by a neoliberal political ideology which has been a feature of most Western nation states since the 1980s. As noted by the mid-2010s, where the chronological scope of this study ends, the influence of the Great Recession on housing is still felt. Although this study is not concerned directly with the representation of the Great Recession in fiction, this event and the contexts from which it arose evidence the import of domestic spaces in global wealth creation and in individuals' daily lives. It also illustrates the inherent interconnection of economic and political structures and systems in the contemporary era. Housing crises are intimately connected global phenomena in the contemporary era (Madden and Marcuse 3). Given the technological and financial interdependence between nation states in the period of globalisation, which has only intensified since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the ways in which people live has become ever more connected in tandem. The examination of the fiction of three writers from distinct national backgrounds is in response to this increased global connection, which is felt intimately on the level of the domestic space.

On one level, such simultaneous interconnection, schism, and precarity may, as Wiley and Barnes have suggested, make the idea of home more desirable. Yet, in an era

⁸ While this occurred to a lesser degree in Canada because the housing boom was 'milder' (Hoffmann and Lemieux S97), the collapse of housing bubbles is directly attributed as the cause of economic collapse in the United States (Schwartz 229) and Ireland (Kitchin et al 1070).

in which dispossession, dislocation, and dislodgement are the norm in dwelling practices it also ‘becomes increasingly difficult to imagine houses as secure shelters in a world in a state of flow’ (Larson et al 1). As such, the way in which domestic spaces are imagined, either in literary texts or through theoretical lenses, is inevitably structured and shaped by broader cultural conditions. Although the haunted house has been an abiding literary and cultural image since at least the publication of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, its viability in contemporary culture and in contemporary women’s fiction in particular may be related to the cultural conditions such work emerges from and is shaped by. This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 1, and informs how this study ‘thinks hauntologically’ about domestic space. Arguably, it is the precarity of contemporary dwelling that is reflected in literature through the trope of the haunted house or by the presence of spectres, even in those narratives that are not explicitly written in the Gothic mode or genre fiction, in order to articulate an affective response to the paradoxically entwined yet disconnected nature of dwelling in this era.

Hauntology is a fruitful lens for examining this fiction in this period under study precisely because of its emergence out of a set of political conditions following the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc and the global rise of neoliberal political economies. In Munro, Moore, and Enright’s fiction, the narrow and individualised concerns of contemporary Western culture is evident in the prevailing focus on familial structures and an orientation towards a preceding generation of maternal figures. Although deeply invested in generational structures in their fiction, Munro, Moore, and Enright rarely extend this interest beyond the figures of the ‘Boomer’ mother/‘Gen X’ daughter—both of whom benefitted from the liberalisations of second-wave feminism and from a post-war and early-twenty first century economic prosperity. While children as a symbol of futurity are at times the focus in this fiction, they are less frequently invested with the

same amount of significance. The anxieties expressed regarding a younger generation remain linked to the insular structure of the white, heteronormative family. This interiority is reflective of the contemporary moment which dismisses collective action and alternatives to capitalism as historical failures and promotes neoliberalism as ubiquitous and inevitable.

Moreover, such haunting in the contemporary era can also be traced to the re-animation of domestic roles and identities associated with the past and the re-entrenchment of traditional values of the home, which has coloured contemporary culture since the 1980s. In the wake of the second wave of feminist activism in the West, which largely focused on challenging and rectifying the barriers to women's inclusion within the public sphere, the historical ideal of 'women's sphere' has been repeatedly reconjured in public discourses in the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries (Faludi; McRobbie; Hollows; Munford and Waters). As will be explored throughout this study, the idealisation of traditional values of the home can be thought of as hauntological recurrences, reanimations of domestic ideals which have always been phantasmagorical or ghostly, reflecting little on individual or collective realities of women's experience of domestic space.

The fiction at the centre of this study responds in various ways and by various means to these shifting discourses and cultural values regarding the domestic space in the contemporary era. In examining the surprising recurrence of spatial haunting in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction, the cultural and literary problematics of imagining and living within the domestic space are brought to light. First and foremost, it is the surprising—even incongruous—recurrence of the haunted house in their fiction which invites a hauntological reading. This recurrence is surprising given that these three writers are generally considered under the remit of contemporary realist fiction, as it is broadly defined by Robert Rebein, as a 'resilient', 'adaptable', and variable mode in

which there is ‘an unselfconscious mixing [...] with other complementary (and in some cases even some antithetical) modes, including a few borrowed from postmodernism itself’ (30). The domestic space in realist fiction is typically associated with the prosaic or everyday, as opposed to the fantastical or uncanny spaces of the Gothic mode. Whether or not a Gothic intertext is invoked in the description of domestic space in the fiction of Munro, Moore, and Enright, the space is more often than not depicted as home to spectral presences.

While the influence of the Gothic on these writers—and women’s writing more generally—will be addressed, and indeed cannot be ignored, the recurrence of haunted spaces in Munro, Moore, and Enright’s fiction will not be treated as Gothic spaces. Notably, the haunting found in these texts deviates from the fear and terror typically associated with the Gothic house (Ng; Ferguson-Ellis). The affective response to haunting is largely muted or ambivalent, balanced between frustration of entrapment and the desire for shelter and security. By no means is hauntology utilised in this project in order to suggest that the Gothic is not a fruitful category of analysis, nor even one that can be fully separated from hauntology and the ‘spectral turn’ within critical theory more generally. As will be elucidated in Chapter 1, various conceptualisations of haunting exist on a continuum and the concept of haunting has a discursive mobility. However, while recognising the importance of the Gothic, the haunting of domestic spaces in Munro, Moore, and Enright’s fiction is something insidious and subtle, not always reliant on the recognisable figures of the Gothic or alluded to in ambiguous ways. Therefore, their fiction requires a different lens.

In reading domestic spaces in Munro, Moore, and Enright’s contemporary fiction, a number of challenges arise in terms of contingent parameters of literary periodisation, shifting definitions of terms of analysis, and the boundaries of generic affiliation. The presence of haunted domestic spaces in this work may naturally call for

placing this study within the parameters of the Gothic. Yet it is the dislocation of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction outside of the Gothic genre, because of their critical reception and the literary traditions their work is situated in, which stimulates the need for a related but distinct critical lens, such as hauntology, which responds to haunting. This in turn has necessitated a consideration of how discourses of haunting have a certain motility and permeability across a range of literary texts and theoretical lenses. Hauntology, in its focus on that which exists through nonexistence or is present through absence, and its concern with that which remains of what is presumed to be negated or exorcised, particularly in political and cultural discourses, is a fitting lens for the fiction at the centre of this study. While the term, hauntology, emerges from Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (first published in French in 1993 and translated into English in 1994), the theory itself has since evolved through the work of other scholars and in a variety of fields, illustrating its wide-ranging applicability.

Hence, this project's use of hauntology is informed not only by the related concepts which surround it, such as the Gothic, but also by those theorists who have developed the use of the term within literary and cultural studies more broadly. As such, thinking hauntologically about domestic space involves not a direct application of Derrida's text to my close readings of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction, but rather uses the concept in order to theorise how it can apply to the study of domestic space more broadly—how the spatial and spectral 'turns' in critical theory speak to each other productively, and how it can then be applied within literary analysis. This is in response to the usefulness of hauntology in literary analysis: as Colin Davis argues, the use of hauntology within literary studies can create space to 'interrogate our relation to the dead, examine the elusive identities of the living, and explore the boundaries between the thought and unthought' (379). It is also, as will be articulated in further detail in

Chapter 1, in response to some of the challenges hauntology poses as a methodology or lens, particularly when brought into contact with a feminist literary analysis.

Although there are boundless ways in which this fiction can be framed and approached, this study, at its core, has been formed in response to the challenges posed by Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction as texts which are, like all literary texts, resistive to neat diagnosis. Their depiction of domestic space interrogates the notion that writing about domestic space limits women's writing to certain themes, forms, genres, or political perspectives. The fiction of these three authors engages with established literary and cultural concepts of the domestic space—the idea of the domestic as 'woman's sphere' or the concept of the haunted house—yet finds ways of defamiliarizing such traditions even in their invocation.

(ii)

The term, 'women's writing', is used in this thesis to group together the fiction of Munro, Moore, and Enright. Within the study of contemporary women's writing there is an inexhaustible range of discourses and conflicts: disagreement surrounding the categorisation of feminist literary criticism into its 'Anglo-American' or 'French' branches (less a geographical distinction than one of methodological approaches or 'intellectual traditions' [Moi xiv]); shifting definitions of the category of 'woman', as well as its potential redundancy; and issues of universalising experiences of female identity, eclipsing other intersecting categories of identity beyond that of gender. Within the field, there have been productive conversations vis-à-vis the distinction between women's writing and feminist fiction (Green 291) as well as fundamental questions regarding the epistemological foundation of the field itself. While Lynn Pearce, writing from a reader response standpoint, defines women's writing as texts not only written 'by women, and about women, but more especially written *for them*' (66; emphasis in original), other critics, such as Peggy Kamuf, taking a more poststructuralist approach,

argue that the term itself only produces reductive statements about the identity of the author, rather than the text itself (285-286).

Acknowledging that ‘woman’ is a complex category of identity, this project, concerned as it is with the literary representation of women’s lives, as well as the work of three writers who identify as women, approaches the term (and related terms such as ‘femininity’) not as biologically rooted but, as Vicki Bell notes, ‘a discursive construction’ (7). This view, which may appear to destabilise the foundations of the study of contemporary women’s writing, is as Eagleton and Friedman attest, the reason for the field’s diversity and epistemological productivity: shifting ‘composition, meaning, and focus’ regarding the term itself ‘is not the same as saying it is *without* composition, meaning, and focus’ (3, emphasis in original). Women’s writing, given its close academic association and overlap with feminist studies and gender theory, must be receptive to emerging theorisations of what the category of ‘woman’ has historically meant, may presently mean, and will come to mean in the future. Notwithstanding the inevitable shifting preoccupations of the discipline, there is value in its intellectual traditions: since its academic beginnings in the 1960s and 1970s, the study of women’s writing, in tandem with feminist literary criticism, has remedied a historical tendency to relegate, obfuscate, and outright ignore women’s contribution to literature.

Furthermore, the value of drawing on the intersecting fields of feminist literary theory and women’s writing lies in the articulation and assessment of the domestic space as a primary, perhaps even ubiquitous, setting in Anglophone women’s writing, in these areas of study. As the domestic space is ‘arguably the most potent place to explore the spatiality of gendered power relations’ (Baydar 39), it is unsurprising that it features recurrently in the tradition of women’s writing and its contemporary practice. For many contemporary women writers, as well as their literary foremothers, the public-facing role of the writer comes into tension with the history of the space as ‘women’s sphere’

and expectations of domestic labour. This has been explored in a range of literature authored by women, as well as in feminist literary criticism. One of the foremost examples of feminist literary criticism, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's study of nineteenth-century women's literature, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), evidences the import of domestic space in women's writing.

Although Gilbert and Gubar's text is not solely concerned with the domestic space, images of spatial boundaries routinely occur in their analysis of women's writing. As they argue, in tracing 'a distinctly female literary tradition' through the work of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Dickinson, Virginia Woolf, and Sylvia Plath, the 'image of enclosure and escape, fantasies in which maddened doubles function as asocial surrogates for docile selves, metaphors of physical discomfort manifested in frozen landscapes and fiery interiors' (xi) recur throughout. Yet, despite the wealth of work which has valuably identified and articulated the centrality of the domestic space in the tradition of women's writing, certain entrenched meanings particularly regarding psychological limitation and enclosure for women can be inadvertently supported or remain unchallenged in such work. The domestic space as a concept is particularly liable in scholarly responses to imputations of tradition or even conservatism on both ends of the political spectrum (Fraiman 3-4).

For example, Maria DiBattista and Deborah Epstein Nord in their 2017 study, *At Home in the World: Women Writers and Public Life, from Austen to the Present*, argue that domestic associations '[cast] women's writing as inevitably—and conservatively—preoccupied with the mundane and circumscribed aspects of home, personal relationships, sexual mores, marriage, and the taming of refractory men' (2). DiBattista and Nord, perhaps understandably in their focus on women writers' contributions to public life, wish to consciously move away from associations with the domestic space which they view, through their reading of women's writing, as limiting.

Indeed, throughout their study the authors do not ignore the recurrence of home and dwelling in the tradition of Anglophone women's writing, noting that 'women writers contend always—and still—with the myths and meanings of home, their bodily and psychic ties to family life, and their unauthorized desires for independence and equality' (xi). However, the dismissive framing of the quotidian aspects of the domestic space—which, mundane as they may be, are also fundamental to identity formation and the organisation of society more broadly—reaffirms the binaries inherent to an ideology of separate spheres, and ignores scholarship that has emerged as part of the spatial turn within feminist analysis which regards the domestic space as a fruitful site of interrogation.

Thus, my issue here is not with DiBattista and Nord's text itself and its framing of women's writing, but rather it is an illustration of a tendency in feminist literary criticism to ignore the interconnectedness of public and private spaces, and to treat the domestic space in particular with suspicion. While the domestic associations of women's writing have been used to discredit its literary value, this implicit judgement of the domestic in multiple scholarly fields should be challenged. As Kathryn Kish Sklar argues, '[d]omesticity is about intimate space, but it is also about the location of that space in a wider world' (1250). To consider the domestic space in its full complexity requires refusing the draw of the public/private binary, and that in privileging one through analysis, the other is necessarily excluded.

This study therefore approaches the concept of the domestic space, as well as its recurrence within women's writing not as an inevitable or innate link to 'woman's sphere' but as a response to a broader cultural problematic. Furthermore, given the limits of the public/private binary, which become evident once applied to the literary texts in question, this project seeks to challenge the idea that a fictional concern with the domestic space in women's writing negates considerations of the public sphere, or

political concerns. The approach to studying the domestic space in this fiction owes much to the work of feminist literary critics and feminist cultural studies scholars and their approaches to the myriad and surprising meanings of the domestic space. In particular, Susan Fraiman's study, *Extreme Domesticity: Views from the Margins* (2017), has been influential in shaping my approach to reading domestic spaces in contemporary women's writing. Although this project and its focus on domestic spectres and haunting in work by three white, cis-gendered, and heterosexual women writers, diverges from Fraiman's aim to study domesticity beyond its Gothic implications,⁹ and to focus on 'alternative homemakers' (4) and 'outsiders to normative domesticity' (5), the generous and nuanced approach that Fraiman takes regarding domestic space has informed my own. The desire to counter the 'prevalent framing' of domesticity (Fraiman 9) is at the centre of this project, from its methodology to its use of theoretical frameworks.

Furthermore, Fraiman's capacious marrying of literary texts and popular culture with a range of voices from critical theory and cultural studies across a broad span of time has also provided a model for this study's analysis of domestic space. One of the most fecund areas in which the domestic space has been examined is in feminist cultural studies. In particular, the work of Diane Negra, Joanne Hollows, and Stéphanie Genz is crucial to this thesis in their respective interrogations into the gendered dynamics of contemporary domesticity. This work, which takes into account the possibility for pleasure (Genz) and avoiding easy summations of women's desire for the domestic space (Hollows), but also does not disregard political connections (Negra), embodies Fraiman's advice that 'if domesticity is not always simply reactionary, neither is it always simply progressive' (24).

⁹ Although, as Fraiman notes, this Gothic house inevitably 'lurks in the background' (18). It is this inevitability that has impelled this investigation into haunted domestic space, as will be explored in more detail in Chapter One.

As such, the reading of domestic space in this thesis attempts to find a balance between outright suspicion and unnuanced optimism. This thesis is not precisely a reparative reading as proposed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *Touching Feeling* (2003) or a postcritical reading following Felski,¹⁰ yet it is an inheritor of these models of critique which seek to move away from established modes or moods of criticism. Given the feminist underpinnings of this study it is difficult to entirely move away from a suspicion towards the domestic space, particularly in the case of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction.

As will be elucidated throughout this thesis, Munro, Moore, and Enright's depiction of domestic space features spectral presences. These presences typically manifest out of traumatic events, difficult relations within family units, or more broadly in connection to the entrapping history of the domestic space as 'woman's sphere'. This fiction illustrates how primarily women, but also children, elderly individuals, disabled persons, and other individuals perceived as non-normative particularly due to their class or race,¹¹ are made particularly vulnerable within domestic spaces. Instances of violence and abuse, physical and emotional, are common in this fiction. These domestic spaces by and large conform to the cultural image of the home as one dependent on women's invisible and unpaid labour. Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction evidences the difficulty of imagining alternatives to this inherently threatening domestic space in literary works and in reality. Thus, it can be difficult, in acknowledging and honouring these highly problematic aspects of the domestic space, to move away from binaries of thought, which may lead to surmising that the space itself holds no value for women. However, while there are invariable pitfalls that this thesis will be blind to, and many

¹⁰ Neither indeed does this thesis sufficiently challenge, nor does it claim to, Paul Ricoeur's articulation of a 'hermeneutics of suspicion', which undergirds both Sedgwick's and Felski's work.

¹¹ In terms of racial and class politics, Munro, Moore, and Enright's work varies in representation of these issues. What this fiction does lack is an overt consideration of how sexuality effects individuals' relationships to the domestic space, although the avowed heteronormativity of these haunted domestic spaces may be considered an implicit comment on sexuality and dwelling.

critical avenues it cannot for pragmatic reasons take, the readings of domestic space and the chosen methodology in this study strives to approach its subject as a complex entity.

(iii)

Despite a slight generation gap—Munro was born in 1931, Moore in 1957, and Enright in 1962—the affiliation between these three writers is clear with regard to their depiction of the domestic space in their fiction. All three writers focus on family, motherhood, marriage, childrearing, and domestic labour in a manner that highlights the ability of the domestic space to retain or house spectral presences. This is the central reason for bringing their work into contact, as will be elucidated throughout this thesis through close reading. However, this section will consider how Munro, Moore, and Enright can be drawn together on the basis of their critical reception, examining the presence (or absence) of domestic discourses found therein.

As writers producing fiction in the Anglophone literary marketplace, there is a case for Munro, Moore, and Enright being aware of one another's work, beyond models of direct influence. However, these points of connection, which amount to brief mentions in journalistic interviews and profiles, are tenuous and rather disproportionate.

¹² Thus, it would be erroneous to employ the language of literary influence when discussing these writers. Rather, affiliation between these writers is established through close reading of the texts, which will be the foundation of each author-focused chapter. As well as the repeated presence of spectres in domestic spaces, each signalling a distinct preoccupation in each writer's work, an intertext of domestic writing, ranging

¹² Perhaps due to Munro's canonical eminence, both Moore and Enright have expressed public regard for Munro as a 'short-story writer looking over and past every ostensible boundary' (Moore) and an author whose 'work has always posed a larger question about reputation itself, about how we break and remake the literary canon' (Enright). Enright has read 'early Lorrie Moore' (qtd. in Preziosi 24) but this is not so much an endorsement of influence as an awareness of a compeer of contemporary women's writing. There is no publicly available evidence of Moore having read Enright, nor of Munro having engaged with the fiction of either Moore or Enright, hence, a discourse of direct literary inheritance would be insufficient here.

from “Bluebeard”¹³ and other fairy tales; Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*; Edgar Allan Poe’s short stories; Henry James’s concept of ‘the house of fiction’; the poetry of Sylvia Plath; Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and other Gothic-inflected idioms and images, recurs across Munro, Moore, and Enright’s fiction. In this way, Munro, Moore and Enright’s literary allusions are in conversation with the tradition of women’s writing as theorised by Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Indeed, the prevalence of *Jane Eyre* as a continuing touchstone for the writers in this study supports Gilbert and Gubar’s assertion that the novel offers ‘a paradigm of many distinctively female anxieties and abilities’ (xii). However, while the significance of these allusions will be attended to through close reading, this project does not frame this intertext within a traditional discourse of literary influence.

Munro’s later short fiction has been chosen for this project precisely because of the complexity of the depiction of domestic space in her work. Only her fiction published from 1986 to 2012—stories collected in *The Progress of Love* (1986), *Friend of My Youth* (1990), *Open Secrets* (1994), *The Love of a Good Woman* (1998), *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage* (2001), *Runaway* (2004), *Too Much Happiness* (2009), and *Dear Life* (2012)—will be considered for pragmatic reasons, given the breadth of Munro’s career, and to match the timeframe of Moore and Enright’s publishing careers. The depth of her fiction also makes it difficult to analyse the totality of Munro’s fictional output. Ailsa Cox, for example, identifies the difficulty of incorporating all of Munro’s short fiction in a critical analysis as each story is ‘so densely written, every page is crowded with potential interpretations’ (*Alice Munro* 7). This is echoed by Isla Duncan who argues that Munro’s stories ‘cannot be read cursorily, for they are often densely complex, thickly imbricated, usually requiring more

¹³ The Breton folk tale, formalised by Charles Perrault in 1697, enjoys a particularly healthy afterlife in contemporary literature as part of feminist revisions of fairy tales, most notably Margaret Atwood’s “Bluebeard’s Egg” (1983) and Angela Carter’s “The Bloody Chamber” (1987).

than one reading' (129). Similarly, as Munro's early writing is particularly bound up in an at-times problematic discourse of domesticity (Duncan 122), there is a need to examine how that is present (or absent) in her later works. A myriad of critical texts—essay collections, monographs, and journal articles—examine the domestic space in Munro's fiction from a number of standpoints. Christine Lorre-Johnston and Eleonora Rao's edited collection, *Space and Place in Alice Munro's Fiction: "A Book with Maps in It"* (2018), features a range of approaches to space in Munro. Furthermore, many critics including Cox, Duncan, Coral Ann Howells, Robert McGill, Magdalene Redekop, Catherine Sheldrick Ross, and Robert Thacker, have all examined Munro's use of domestic space. In particular, the subtly disruptive nature of Munro's representation of domesticity has been articulated by numerous scholars. Howells, for example, has productively argued that Munro's use of the domestic in her fiction hints 'at what is usually hidden or unspoken' (4), an attitude at the heart of her fiction, both narratively and formally.

Although Munro is established as a 'domestic' writer, as well as one of the Canadian Gothic and its offshoots, the postcolonial Gothic or the Southern Ontario Gothic (Sugars and Turcotte xviii), which will have implications for reading haunted domestic space in Munro's post-1980s fiction, as Thacker argues, 'there are many, many ways in which her writing has yet to be sufficiently explored and, to the degree possible, sufficiently explained' ("Genius" 145). Munro has been analysed alongside the work of her compatriots Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, and Marian Engel, as well as other women writers in the Anglophone tradition—chiefly, her self-proclaimed literary influences, Emily Brontë and Eudora Welty (Howells, *Alice Munro* 13; Thacker, *Reading Alice Munro* 48). However, she has yet to be analysed alongside Moore and Enright, until now. While Munro has strong critical renown, established as part of the intersecting canons of Canadian literature, women's writing, and the

contemporary short story, her inclusion in this study both honours that canonicity and attempts to defamiliarize some of the accepted aspects of her work.

In the scholarly work produced on Moore's fiction—of which there is startlingly little for a writer integral to contemporary American literature¹⁴—the domestic space does not feature widely. Many critical treatments of Moore's fiction, particularly her early works, *Self-Help* (1985), *Anagrams* (1986), and *Like Life* (1990), tends to focus on her use of humour, although this is a cause of some critical ambivalence (Chodat 42; Weekes, "Speech Acts" 551). Her novella *Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?* (1990) and short story collection *Birds of America* (1998), received critical recognition, but it was not until the publication of her novel *A Gate at the Stairs* (2009) that the domestic space came to attention in scholarship on Moore. Aliko Varvogli and Susan Civale respectively centre the significance of domestic space in the novel: Varvogli taking into account the broader implications of 'the homeland' in the text's post-9/11 setting and Civale in her reading of the novel as a neo-Victorian adaption of *Jane Eyre*. The one book-length critical treatment of Moore's fiction, Alison Kelly's *Understanding Lorrie Moore* (2009), although it does not explicitly focus on the topic, provides an analysis of Moore's fiction (and a thorough overview of her career) that productively intersects with domestic—and indeed, hauntological—concerns, through its focus on history and inheritance in Moore's work. Kelly characterises Moore's fiction as appearing to be:

preoccupied with private emotions that are universal in nature [...] In subtle ways, however, the individuals in her narratives are placed in the specific context of the United States in the late twentieth or early twenty-first century. American history and politics do not dominate her works, but they are present in telling details that reflect the impact of these larger forces on her characters' lives (4).

¹⁴ While David Brauner and Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson, in their introduction to a special issue of the *Journal of American Studies* on Moore, characterise her as, variously, a 'precocious talent'; 'one of the most original and distinctive contemporary writers'; 'the master (or mistress) of the American short story' and 'a writer's writer' (541), it seems strange that there appears to be relatively little academic interest in Moore in comparison to some of her contemporaries, such as David Foster Wallace or Jonathan Franzen, whose work has inculcated veritable cult followings.

As Kelly argues here, Moore's fiction seeks to consolidate the political and the quotidian: themes, characters, and forms that are associated with small, personal narratives and are the basis of much domestic fiction. However, that the categories of personal and political are often employed as a binary in such scholarship as Kelly's is interesting in itself, revealing the lasting power of this separation which so underpins cultural conceptions of the domestic space and its import.

This is clear in the reception of *The Gate at the Stairs* which is more often considered a coming-of-age narrative rather than an 9/11 novel, without the consideration that the novel can function as both. According to Varvolgi, this critical oversight lies in elements of the novel and Moore's writing more generally: female narration and domestic setting mark the novel as incongruous with political concerns and its 'scale of composition and execution', notably its use of vignettes, masks the larger themes of the novel (178). In many ways due to the subtlety of Moore's approach to both the personal and the political, as well as the often-diverting use of humour in her fiction, Moore's work falls between definite categories, which may, as Brauner and Macpherson argue, along with other factors such as her prolific engagement with the short story form, account for her scholarly and critical disengagement (544). The way in which Moore is placed—and displaced—within a number of literary traditions may also account for the critical disregard for the domestic aspects of her fiction.

It is striking that Moore has more often been critically positioned in relation to male writers, as an inheritor of Raymond Carver's minimalism (Showalter 476; Chodat 48; Brauner and Macpherson 546),¹⁵ or as John Updike's (Kelly 4) successor as a fellow-chronicler of post-war American suburbia and marital malaise. Moore's self-proclaimed influences include a more varied cast of writers and cultural producers and

¹⁵ Interestingly, Kasia Boddy places Carver and Moore on opposite ends of a continuum of literary emulation evident in university creative writing programmes: 'By the end of 1980s, students in creative writing schools of North America could be divided into two camps: those "doing Raymond Carver" and those "doing Lorrie Moore"'.

suggest an affinity with a tradition of domestic fiction: Atwood, Charlotte Brontë, Henry James, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton (Pneuman); Charles Dickens and Gustave Flaubert (McNally). Brauner and Macpherson note the potential in studying Moore alongside other women writers of her generation such as Amy Bloom, Amy Hempel,¹⁶ or Louise Erdrich, as well as with more established writers such as Alison Lurie, Atwood, and Munro (546). Indeed, as they argue, Munro and Moore's 'imagined landscapes offer useful comparisons' due to a shared preoccupation regarding 'how the contours of the domestic sphere shape the lives of the girls and women within it' (547). Thus, while several critics have noted the importance of the domestic space in her fiction, Moore's presence in this study serves to expand the scope of scholarship on her fiction.

Scholarly work on Enright, meanwhile, evidences a middle ground between Munro's established acclaim and Moore's occasional critical elision. This critical work foregrounds the importance of the domestic space in Enright's novels, short stories, and non-fiction. Regarded as having a keen insight into the cultural zeitgeist of contemporary Ireland, Enright's fiction focuses on how people dwell, and their attitude towards housing, spaces, and domesticity. Enright's writing is notable for its political and cultural awareness, for its challenge to accepted meanings of gender and national identity, and for its humour. Enright's earlier works—short story collection *The Portable Virgin* (1991), and novels *The Wig My Father Wore* (1995) and *What Are You Like?* (2000)—were received at the time of publication as specifically Irish approaches to literary postmodernism and a response to postfeminist culture (Moloney 55; Bracken and Cahill 17; Schneider vii). These texts, including the publication of *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch* (2002), Enright's only foray into historical fiction, are viewed as

¹⁶ Susan Lohafer also compares Moore to Hempel because of the focus in her fiction on 'a transitional period in the social history of the country, no longer battling institutionalized oppression but struggling in a vacuum of values' ("The Short Story" 78).

particularly experimental, fragmented, and jarring, making use of various narrative points of view, multiple chronologies, and intertextuality. Later novels after the publication of *Pleasure*, are noted for their increasing realism (Schneider 3; Nolan 170).

An edited collection—Susan Cahill and Claire Bracken’s *Anne Enright* (2011)—was the first major collation of scholarship on Enright. Contributions by Bracken, Anne Mulhall, and Heidi Hansson in particular focused in various ways on the domestic space in Enright’s novels and short stories up until *The Gathering* (2007). As Cahill has argued regarding *Like*, in a separate publication, Enright draws attention to ‘the degree to which the female body forms an unacknowledged basis of spatial relations to the detriment of the lived experience of women’ (“Doubles and Dislocations” 137). Enright’s *oeuvre* is seen as being responsive to the lived experience of Irish women, past and present, and the dysfunctions of the Irish family unit; two elements which have been of particular scholarly interest. This is evident in responses to *The Gathering*, which was awarded the Man Booker Prize (as it was then known) in 2007. From the significant amount of scholarship devoted to this novel, it is viewed as a form of traumatic testimony (Dell’Amico 59; Downum 84; English 159; Harte 189), which explores the latent effects of childhood trauma in a way that implicates both family and nation state (Dillane 146).

Enright’s attention to the domestic space is also a response to the centrality of homes and houses in Irish culture during the era of economic prosperity known as the Celtic Tiger. Yet, as Maria Amor Barros-Del Rio puts forward with regard to *The Green Road* (2015), Enright in her depiction of domestic space ‘transcends the material and visual aspects of the real estate boom and engages with the emotional consequences of this phenomenon’ (41). Arguably, the affective and psychological impact of material change is evident across Enright’s body of work. The centrality of the domestic space, and related categories such as maternity and the family unit, to Enright’s fiction has

been well noted, particularly within Irish Studies. However, Enright has less frequently been considered within the broader remit of Anglophone women's writing. Comparative studies of Enright's fiction are largely limited to comparison with other Irish writers, such as Tana French and Roddy Doyle (Downum; Dillane), Colum McCann (Mara), and the stalwarts of Irish modernism, including James Joyce and Samuel Beckett (English). This may be reflective of the relatively insular boundaries of Irish Studies, as well as the largely Anglo-American disposition of the study of women's writing. Ana-Karina Schneider's recent monograph, *Understanding Anne Enright* (2020), considers Enright's work as being in conversation with 'the latest thematic and formal trends not only of Irish or British, but of western, literature' (viii), yet there are still ways in which this claim is to be developed in scholarship.

As is evident from these brief overviews of each author's critical reception, there are many ways in which Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction has been approached and analysed. Intersecting themes and concerns can be surmised from this overview, including a concern with domestic space and family life in the fiction of each author. Yet there is also room to expand the critical conversation on each writer, separately and together. In particular, the ways in which Munro, Moore, and Enright have yet to be read, or sufficiently read, are interesting to note. The purpose of conjoining Munro, Moore, and Enright in this study is to not only consider their fiction as preeminent examples of a hauntology of domestic space but to rectify the ways in which these writers have been insufficiently considered within certain areas of scholarship.

Affiliation can also be traced between the three authors and the way in which they view the role of the domestic space in their literary practice. In media interviews and profiles of each writer, all have acknowledged the relation between their writing and domesticity. Munro's intimate association with the domestic space is in part a reflection of her fiction, as well as a legacy of the early reception of her fiction in the

late 1960s and 1970s, which routinely stressed her role as mother and wife. For example, the headline for a profile of Munro published in the *North Vancouver Citizen* in August 1961 read: “Housewife Finds Time to Write Short Stories” (qtd. in Duncan 123). The reductive framing of Munro’s career via her domestic roles has receded in the later part of her career, reflecting a post-second wave discursive shift in media culture, one that is still on-going. Most significantly, the complexity and value of Munro’s representation of domesticity was rightfully observed when she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013. Peter Englund, secretary for the Swedish Academy, remarked that ‘[r]eading one of her texts is like watching a cat walk across a laid dinner table’ (qtd. in Staines 2). Englund neatly characterises the subtle disruption of Munro’s fiction via a domestic image.

Munro herself has linked her chosen literary practice of short fiction to the demands and expectations of domestic labour:

When you are responsible for running a house and taking care of small children, particularly in the days before disposable diapers and ubiquitous automatic washing machines, it’s hard to arrange large chunks of time...I took to writing in frantic spurts, juggling my life around until I could get a story done, then catching up on other responsibilities (qtd. in Duncan 124).

This recognition of the interdependence, rather than separation, of domestic and writing lives has been echoed by Moore. In an interview for the publication of *Birds of America*, Moore observed that alongside writing, her “[...] life’s mostly taken up with conventional stuff [...] like parenting and laundry and making lunches” (qtd. in Giles). Similarly, Enright has stated in interview that she envisioned having children as being intrinsically part of her life as a writer, ‘specifically a woman writer’s life’ (qtd. in Meade). Enright’s non-fiction text, *Making Babies: Stumbling into Motherhood* (2004) extends this connection between writing and domestic lives, exploring both the mundanity and absolute import of motherhood and childrearing in literature and culture. It is notably ironic in doing so, as Enright writes: “MARRIED WOMAN HAS

CHILDREN IN THE SUBURBS”—it’s not exactly a call to arms, and I do genuinely apologise for being so ordinary, in the worst sense’ (2), in some ways recalling the framing of Munro in the aforementioned *North Vancouver Citizen* headline. However, the fundamental ordinariness of domestic life, pinpointed by the three authors of this study, co-exists alongside the production of their fiction.

As mentioned within the context of feminist literary criticism, domestic connections to women’s writing can often be denigrated due to the constraining implications of domestic space as a symbol of tradition and concretised gender roles. As is evident in Munro’s early reception, the framing of the woman writer’s domestic role as her primary social function above her role as artist is founded in patriarchal assumptions. Yet, there is a clear difference between that framing (the housewife who happens to write) and Munro, Moore, and Enright’s own framing of their domestic roles as coexisting with their writing careers. Thus, this acknowledgment of the interdependence between writing and the domestic labour (primarily for these three writers of motherhood) is not insignificant within a cultural context which routinely positions the roles of mother/housewife and artist as diametric opposites, or even, incompatible existences.

It also evidences a connection to a recent turn in contemporary literature (particularly in non-fiction) towards the existential and artistic import of parenting and childrearing, in which the family is treated as a ‘site for intellectual inquiry’ (Sehgal, “Mothers of Invention”).¹⁷ This is not to put forward a postfeminist, ‘having-it-all’ revisionist reading of Munro, Moore, or Enright’s writing careers. Indeed, what is often absent in these profiles and interviews are discussions of the role of class and available finances in negotiating domestic labour with a writing career. Rather, these brief

¹⁷ Sehgal includes the work of Maggie Nelson, Jenny Offill, Ben Lerner, as well as Enright’s *Making Babies*, in her assessment of this turn towards familial care and labour in contemporary literature.

examples emphasise some of the contradictions inherent to discussions of the domestic space in literary reception and the public role of the author. They highlight that despite the longevity of the patriarchal roots and gendered divisions of domestic space, there is potential for it to be envisioned, not as trivial nor inconsequential, but rather a complex site of existential and literary importance.

(iv)

As the above overview of Munro, Moore, and Enright's critical reception illustrates, this project unites a range of cultural contexts, as well as fictional forms. This section will examine the methodological underpinnings of the project: a comparative framework based on relationality, its analysis of narrative description over form, and its close reading practice in conversation with theoretical frameworks.

Differences between domestic spaces in Canada, the US, and Ireland are perhaps difficult, on a surface level, to see immediately given the homogeneity of dwelling practices in contemporary Western culture. In all three cultural contexts, the single-family home is the primary housing form—varying in architectural style, this form is built to house one family unit, typically in a detached or semi-detached, one or two storey construction.¹⁸ Related to recurring architectural forms, the longevity and ubiquity of the gendered division of space and labour becomes evident through reading Munro, Moore, and Enright's work in tandem, while, at the same time, being noticeably culturally contingent. For example, the provision of housing is organised differently in each nation, as are formal rights to property and opportunities for women's labour force involvement, all of which impact the representation, as well as experience, of domestic space. However, similar architectural forms, domestic behaviours, and images of

¹⁸ For Canada see, Gowan, *Building Canada* (1966), and Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture* (1994); for US, see Kemp, *Vernacular Architecture* (1987), and Walker, *American Homes* (1981); for Ireland, see McManus, *Dublin 1910-1940: Shaping the City and Suburbs* (2002), and Kearns and Ruimy, *Beyond Pebbledash* (2014).

domesticity are to be found and shared across these cultures, due in part to intensified globalisation and its impact on housing design and dwelling practices.

Comparison is a productive framework for literary analysis but it is not without its issues and limitations. It can erase or homogenise difference in focusing solely on establishing similarity (Pedwell). The history of literary comparison is invariably tied to ideas of Eurocentrism and colonialism, which emerged out of Imperialist ideals of the nineteenth century (Mignolo 99). Therefore, as R. Radhakrishnan argues, comparison cannot be assumed to be neutral, as '[b]ehind the seeming generosity of comparison, there always lurks the aggression of a thesis' (16). In bringing literature into contact, different frameworks will uphold or discount various viewpoints and underlying ideologies will invariably emerge. However, it remains that comparison is one of the most useful tools in the literary critic's arsenal (Felski and Friedman 2).

The tendency to produce cultural hierarchies through comparative frameworks, as these critics note, can be mitigated by thinking differently about the function of comparison. Carolyn Pedwell suggests that a concept of 'relationality', rather than similarity, be at the centre of such studies which take into account different cultures and that what is absent as well as present in 'cross-cultural constructions of commonality' must always be queried. Shu-mei Shih, in a similar vein, proposes an approach of 'relational comparison': '[s]etting into motion historical relationalities between entities brought together for comparison, and bringing into relation terms that have traditionally been pushed apart from each other due to certain interests' (79). Friedman, noting that traditional methods of comparison are 'essentially static, not sufficiently dialogic' (40), proposes that comparison must attend to the interplay between the commensurability and incommensurability of objects of study to avoid the flattening of sameness and the separation of difference. This model of in/commensurability, like the relational models put forward by Pedwell and Shih, is 'juxtapositional, contrapuntal, and reciprocal'

(Friedman 40).

Following these calls for a more dialogic approach to comparison, the texts and contexts brought together in this thesis affirm and negate each other on different levels. On the level of similarities, the connections between Munro and Moore's work (as Brauner and Macpherson have noted) are evident, given the close connection, although not always positively framed, between Canadian and US culture. Enright's inclusion in this project as an Irish writer writing about Ireland may appear incongruous. Due to the geographical and cultural proximity of Canada and the US, the domestic discourses of both nation states intersect productively. Shared political and cultural events during the twentieth century—the Great Depression, the First and Second World Wars, the fraught political climate of the Cold War, and dependent economies—mark the relationship between Canada and the US. Ireland, as a geographically, and in the initial decades after independence, economically isolated nation state, was not as significantly impacted by these global events.

However, as already discussed, the increasing connection between nation states—particularly in the West—in the contemporary era, as well as the historical transatlantic connections between the three nations, places Canada, the US, and Ireland into an interdependent relationship. On a fundamental level, public discourses on women's domestic roles and the construction of the family unit in all three nations are shaped by major events in the beginning of the twentieth century: in the U.S and Canada by the two world wars, and in Ireland, by the fight to gain independence from Britain. These major events are typically followed by a return, or at least the desire for a return, to a legible and 'traditional' home space. These contexts will be explored in detail at the beginning of each chapter, prior to the close reading analysis in order to establish the wider contexts which underpin the fiction under consideration. Although not every text, or each writer, equally privilege or centralise such contexts overtly, they

reflect the conditions the texts were produced within.

This project is not a transatlantic study. The three writers considered are not diasporic writers, writing back to the nation of origin from outside. For the most part,¹⁹ Munro, Moore, and Enright create fiction within their nation and are valued in this project for doing so. Geographic connections are therefore not overtly present in the texts but in the surrounding contexts. The three-author structure of this project is influenced by frameworks employed in the study of Anglophone women's writing which considers a range of writing in English authored by women. Yet, in order to avoid the tendency to flatten cultural differences in studies of Anglophone women's writing, in which gender experience has the tendency to be universalised, this thesis emphasises the cultural contexts of each writer. The role of gender in the production of domestic space is the unifying theme in this study, but is approached as culturally contingent. In focusing on relationality, each author is studied distinctly from the other, albeit under the same thematic structure, so that differences and similarities have space to be defined on their own terms and within their specific cultural contexts. In drawing together Canadian, American and Irish literature in this study, the primacy of American and British writers in studies of contemporary women's writing is similarly fractured. As such, the modified comparative model used in this thesis responds to certain gaps in traditional comparative models and particularly how they are employed in the study of women's writing.

The variety of forms considered within this thesis is a necessary reflection of the respective practices of the study's three authors. Munro is known primarily as a short

¹⁹ This is not to say that Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction could not be open to a transatlantic reading. For example, Ellen McWilliams' study, *Irishness in North American Women's Writing: Transatlantic Affinities* (2021) examines Irish connections in Munro's work. Similarly, Enright's novels, particularly *What Are You Like?* and *The Green Road* would also make the fruitful subject of transatlantic study. Moore's fiction, while having some Canadian connections in *Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?* is less open to an Irish reading, the Irish setting of short story "Which Is More Than I Can Say About Some People" in *Birds of America*, being one exception.

story writer. The majority of Moore's fiction comprises of short stories, but she has published a novel, a novella, and a short-story cycle, with many of her works straddling formal lines. Enright, although she initially came to prominence through her short stories, is better known for her novels. Beyond their critical reputations, the multitude of literary form considered in this dissertation—novel, novella, short story, and the less established forms of the composite novel, interlinked short stories, and the short story cycle²⁰—reflect the multifarious innovations and applications of fictional narrative. This project is less interested in discussions of form and is more engaged with the depiction of domestic space within a capacious envisioning of fictional narrative as a category of analysis. The primary reason for this is that theorisations of certain literary forms are embedded with domestic discourses: the novel is primarily viewed as the foremost 'domestic' form (Mezei and Briganti, "Reading the House" 840), while within theories of the short story, discussions of domesticity are often absent or at least less sustained. In privileging neither novel nor short story over the other, this study attempts to navigate these entrenched conceptions of literary form as they intersect with notions of domesticity.

Fictional narratives are primed for discursive overlap with architectural forms due to the shared vocabulary used to describe both writing and building: plot, character, structure; both literature and architecture share a discourse of creation and de/construction (Mezei and Briganti, "Reading the House" 840). The basis for this 'discursive exchange' (Mullholland and Sierra 2) lies in the connection between language and building as cognitive activities. Amos Rapoport argues, regarding a broader conception of spatiality, not simply domestic space, that 'language and

²⁰ The short story cycle has often been overlooked in scholarship on narrative fiction (Nagel 1). Moore's *Anagrams* is the most prominent example in this thesis of the form although the text has been described and marketed as a novel or composite novel. Munro's 1971 text, *The Lives of Girls and Women*, has been considered both as a short story collection, a cycle, and a composite novel or novel in short stories. However, it is outside of the chronological purview of this project.

environments are related: both express the cognitive process of making distinctions, reflecting the tendency of the human mind to impose order on the world through schemata and naming' (284). Rapoport's statement inevitably calls to mind Martin Heidegger's postulation that '[b]uilding and thinking are, each in its own way, inescapable for dwelling' (158).

Beyond this general link between building as it pertains to literary and architectural creation, architectural forms have been positioned as appropriate comparisons to narrative forms. Ellen Eve Frank's theory of 'literary architecture' examines how writers use 'architecture as art analogue for literature' (4) and affirms the interconnection between built structures and literary texts. One of the examples Frank focuses on is Henry James' theorisation of fictional narrative in 'The House of Fiction', one of the most prominent examples of the architectural analogue (Frank 184), not only for understanding the various functions of houses in James' work but also further establishing a mutual bond between domestic spaces and literary texts, particularly the novel. Thus, the connection between fiction and architecture is not only part of a critical rhetoric but is embedded in fictional narratives too: as Kathy Mezei and Chiara Briganti put forward in respect to the novel, 'domestic spaces frequently serve as the medium of negotiation and communication between author, characters, and reader, and between self and others, and with the self' ("House Haunting" 149). Such allegiances between architecture and literature, although as I will go on to explore has certain limitations, accords importance to architectural spaces—which extends to domestic spaces—as not only sites of mundane practices and repetitive labour, but ones of fundamental importance to the processes of the imagination.

The novel and the house, more so than any other forms, have been consistently employed as doubles. The tradition of the realist novel is particularly associated with the concepts of domesticity and other practices of the home space (Fraiman 9; Ginsburg

and Nandrea 246-47; Tristram 268). As Nancy Armstrong puts forward in her germinal study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987), the gendered dynamics of domestic space grew in tandem with those of the realist novel (8). Armstrong considers ‘the domestic novel as the agent and product of a cultural change that attached gender to certain kinds of writing’ (28). This association between novel and domestic space extends into the twentieth century, as Lorna Sage notes in her study of post-war women novelists and the privileging of domestic matters in their fiction (x-xi). Hence, when speaking of the novel it is almost impossible to avoid a discourse of domesticity, particularly pertaining to the gendered dynamics of the house.

This domestic presence is much less evident in the case of the short story. As Susan Lohafer argues, the theorising of short stories within literary criticism by scholars or ‘narrative theorists’ (rather than practitioners of the short form such as Poe, James, Welty or Frank O’Connor) began only in the mid-twentieth century (“Introduction” 3). Therefore, in comparison to studies of the novel within literary criticism, short story theory²¹ is relatively nascent and also reflects different critical concerns. Within short story theory, the novel and short story are typically set-up in a hierarchical and comparative relationship (Pratt 94). Thus, within this comparative relationship the short story may be seen to negate the novel’s traditionally feminine, domestic, and psychological concerns. Arguably, if the short story is always in conversation with the novel, even only as a point of comparison,²² then the domestic tradition of the novel is

²¹ As Lohafer notes, the 1970s illustrated a shift from short story studies comprised of anthologies of stories and the ‘practitioner’s notebook’-style study of O’Connor’s *The Lonely Voice* to anthologies of criticism and sustained theorisations in journals (“Introduction” 7-8).

²² There are indeed examples in short story theory where the relationship is considered in more interdependent terms. For example, Thomas M. Leitch puts forward that ‘the short story, far from defining itself purely in contradistinction to the novel, has established formal patterns which have been crucial to the development of the modern novel’ (146). Similarly, as Charles E. May notes, the short story is also considered in a ‘midway relationship’ between novel and lyric poem (114) which also suggests a continuum rather than discrete formal or generic borders.

present in a spectral sense in the tradition of the short story. Yet, aside from absence as presence, this project contends that the short form, as much as the novel, has domestic connections. This is clearly evident in the work of two writers, Munro and Moore, who predominantly practice the short form, as well as a writer, Enright, who is well regarded as a novelist. Furthermore, there is some evidence of domestic discourse in theorisations of the short form, to a less sustained degree than that concerning the novel. For example, women's prominence in the short form (Ingman, "The Short Story" 227) and the domestic coding of different generic modes of the short story such as the ghost story, 'which depends upon a tension between the cosy familiar world of life [...] and the mysterious and unknowable world of death' (Briggs 180-81), show that there is a palpable intersection between the short form and discourses of domestic space.

Extending an architectural analogue for the short story to match the house/novel dyad—as a smaller dwelling, or a room, in comparison to the novelistic house—reveals the limitations of the analogue itself in that it is liable to privilege certain forms.²³

The dominance of that near-axiomatic equivalency between house and novel is perhaps more to do with the historical dominance of both the architectural and literary forms in their respective contexts, rather than the value of the analogue itself. The semantic intersection of literary and architectural form, a prominent framework in literary criticism, certainly has its uses. While the architectural analogue enables a productive discussion of form, it reveals little about the practices that go on within a domestic space, which is fundamental to this project. Therefore, form is secondary in my analysis to the function of domestic description in narrative fiction, in response to the project's focus on a range of narratives regarding the domestic space throughout

²³ For a convincing application of spatial values on to the short form see Renate Brosch's book chapter, "Experiencing Short Stories: A Cognitive Approach Focusing on Reading Narrative Space" (2015), in which she argues for an understanding of the short story as a specifically liminal spatial form. The explicit utilisation of spatial elements such as boundaries, frontiers, limits, and thresholds in a short story, according to Brosch, is key to the production of narrative conflict in the short form (101).

literature, culture, and theory. Fiction—both short story and novel—is one such vehicle for those narratives, and one in communication with other narratives, political, cultural, or mediated, that percolate around the domestic space and create a deeply layered understanding of it, materially and imaginatively.

Setting aside distinctions in form as the primary way to discuss literary spaces, then, this project focuses on close readings of domestic description in narrative fiction. Description, however, has an uneasy place within the study of prose, as many critics have elucidated. Mieke Bal notes that description has often been treated in literary criticism, particularly in narratology, as an addition or interruption to narrative rather than a central element (“Description” 571). The status of description in literary criticism and literature itself has shifted constantly since the eighteenth century, as Cynthia Wall argues. This shift may lie in the centrality of descriptions of domestic interiors—‘the furniture and fabric and object details of particularized rooms as part of ordinary life and action’ (Wall 10)—to the eighteenth and nineteenth-century novel. Arguably, it is this connection between description and the realist domestic novel that may be the reason for its critical denigration: domestic associations nearly always negate literary importance.

Yet, the assumption, based on the connection between the realist tradition and domestic interiors, that literary description merely replicates a middle-class reality has been challenged by Michael Riffaterre, who has argued that: ‘[d]escription, like all literary discourse, is a verbal detour so contrived that the reader understands something else than the object ostensibly represented [...] Its primary purpose is not to offer a representation, but to dictate an interpretation’ (125). Description thus defamiliarizes objects, rooms, and spaces through its very contrivance. Domestic description, however rooted it is in certain texts, genres, or periods, is not the sole domain of the realist novel

of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁴ As Sage argues with regard to post-war women's novels, the durability of realism, although it can be reflective of nostalgia, 'also reflects dissent: a protest on behalf of fiction-as-family, as the middle ground where genders and generations can be pinned in focus together. We arrive back home, but home has changed' (71). Above all, domestic description—even of the middle-class interior—is not merely distraction from the narrative or simple mimesis but is a central carrier of meaning within a text.

Domestic description typically occupies a symbolic or metonymic function, a signal for further and perhaps even obscured meaning. Objects or rooms are not merely representative, as Riffaterre reminds us. They are more often employed as a physical manifestation of a relationship, event, or emotion within a fictional narrative. As Mark Taylor puts forward, '[a]cross various texts, rooms and moments of transition such as ascending a stair can be a social, psychological, moral, or spiritual act' (481). In this sense, descriptions of domestic space tend, on the whole, to give meaning to character, action, and plot, rather than distract from it. Michel Beaujour argues that '[d]escription [...] ought to be considered a life-force, the ever-available key to inexhaustible treasures' (47). Indeed, the power of description, according to Wall, is its ability to accord visibility: 'it makes the invisible present, brings the unthought of into awareness, gathers circumstances into meanings' (13). Thus, in paying attention to literary description, endless interpretative possibilities are open to the reader.

Fraiman's theorisation of 'shelter writing', defined as writing produced across a range of forms and genres, literary and non-literary, which accords 'attention to the minutiae of domestic interiors and behaviors' (9) foregrounds the importance of domestic description. In doing so, Fraiman challenges some of the accepted functions of

²⁴ See Victoria Rosner's persuasive study of domestic spaces in modernist literature, *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* (2005), which argues that the domestic space is a 'generative site' for modernism (2).

literary description as outlined by Bal, Wall, and Riffaterre. In writing concerned with precarious or non-normative forms of dwelling, Fraiman argues that ‘interior description functions not apart from but *as* narrative, depicting interiors as they are actively envisioned, handled, and renewed’ (30, emphasis in original). Hence, a recentring of literary description is central to approaching the study of literary domestic space in more expansive ways.

Given the wealth of meaning to be found in description of domestic space, close reading is the central approach taken in this project’s analysis of Munro, Moore, and Enright’s fiction. Close reading, despite its socially conservative (Gilbert and Gubar 588) beginnings within the New Criticism,²⁵ has been reappraised, much like description, for its uses particularly for the analysis of women’s writing. While close reading is ‘the New Criticism’s primary gesture and most significant legacy’ (Devereux 219), it is also an embedded and ever-present practice in literary criticism (Hickman 3). Close reading is an apposite approach particularly for women’s writing concerned with domestic space, as it encourages a form of reading which attends to the ‘marginal or trivial’ details in a text (Gallop 8). While close reading may be in tension with feminism and deconstruction, as also utilised in this study, as it is often positioned in opposition to theory (Devereux 218), it is a methodology that can be recuperated as a form of textual analysis that is open to the productive intersection of theoretical frameworks. In particular, close reading has been reconsidered as particularly useful to feminist criticism. Jasmina Lukić and Adelina Sánchez Espinosa argue for the necessity of marrying close reading with feminist methodologies, specifically, as ‘close reading relies heavily on a larger interpretative framework. It cannot exclude the context, nor a

²⁵ Although this characterisation of the New Criticism has been questioned. Miranda Hickman has argued that ‘the convictions and political perspectives associated with the New Criticism were multiple, diverse, and complex’ (5). Generally speaking, however, the isolationist approaches of the New Critics—particularly of the text from its author and material conditions—has been perceived as promulgating socially conservative ideas about literature and literary criticism.

number of specific problems that are related to the position of the reader' (116).

In response to the above articulations of the necessity of bringing together close reading with a broader framework, this thesis marries close reading with a number of theoretical frameworks, including hauntology, with its basis in deconstruction, and feminist theory and cultural studies from a variety of positions. However, as mentioned briefly earlier in this chapter, this does not involve a direct application of theory on to literary texts. Rather, this project approaches the relationship between theory and the literary text as a dialogic one. Instead of viewing theory as a form of mastery (Culler), either to be mastered or being held in a hierarchical relationship to the literary text, and with the power to solve or explain the literary text, this project utilises theory for its far-reaching and diffuse ability to hold a wider conversation about a theme, image, or concern within a literary text, *with* the text(s). The use of theory is not that it can speak with more authority on the text than the text itself, or as Felski articulates, that the literary text can be used 'to confirm what the critic already knows, to illustrate what has been adjudicated in other arenas' (*Uses of Literature*).

The assumed inertness of the literary text awaiting its scholarly critique or theoretical application is challenged by the way in which the work of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction resists easy interpretation or predictable narratives regarding domestic space and its meanings. Therefore, this use of theory and literary text in dialogue, via the postulation of a hauntology of domestic space in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction, is by no means seamless. This thesis began with close readings of the chosen texts and it was only through close reading that the issue of spectres and haunted domestic space became evident. After a discussion of the cultural contexts surrounding concepts of domesticity particular to each author's nationality, the close readings of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction, in each author-focused chapter, significantly shaped by feminist perspectives, as well as a range of theoretical stances, are treated

thematically, organised into analysis of the following: interior and exterior space, domestic architecture, and domestic objects. Taken together, these elements provide a holistic sense of how domestic space is represented in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction. Close readings focus on descriptions of exterior spaces and interior spaces, descriptions of objects, and of labour, relationships, practices, and behaviours which foreground haunting in a broad sense.

Much like generic distinctions between novel and short story, clearly defining the separation between interior and exterior spaces is perhaps an impossible task, given their reciprocal nature. In conceptualisations of 'space', the term can often pertain to the interior, or is used interchangeably with 'place', a term which also may align more closely with exterior space (geographical place, landscapes, topography). For example, Doreen Massey's definition of 'place' as 'the sphere of the everyday, of real and valued practices, the geographical source of meaning' (5), appears to interpolate these meanings together. For the purposes of this project, space (and relatedly, 'domestic space') is understood as that pertaining to the interior (of the house or dwelling), while topography or landscape refers to those exterior areas surrounding domestic space. However, the fiction at the centre of this project illustrates the difficulty of examining interiors as wholly separate from exterior spaces. To focus solely on the interior is to isolate built space from its wider surroundings and obscure how concepts of domesticity are embedded in understandings of topography or landscape, experientially and discursively. Although the concepts of interior and exterior are made distinct through separate spheres ideology and an Anthropogenic understandings of the environment, they are ultimately interdependent. A blurred boundary between interior and exterior space is a recurrent feature of all three authors' fiction—the domestic space is placed continually in relation, rather than in opposition, to the outside world, whether that takes the form of city, suburb, or rural place. Their depiction of interiors and exteriors also

takes into account the way in which notions of the domestic are inherently present in discussions of exterior space, even as an absence. Furthermore, the permeation between interior and exterior space is underpinned not by a Gothic anxiety of boundary infiltration but by a far more ambivalent affect. For Munro, domestic imagery infiltrates depictions of rural landscapes, itself marked by the threat of death. In Moore's fiction, flora and fauna typically invade the interior of domestic spaces, breaking down the boundary between inside and outside. Enright's fiction depicts domestic space as implicated in domesticating projects of urban planning, as well as the literary and cultural legacies of rural space associated with femininity. The seemingly inviolable boundary of the domestic space is continually diminished in their fiction through the process of haunting.

Through an examination of 'domestic architecture'—namely, descriptions of interior spaces, the built structure of dwellings, and other details of spatial arrangement—the relationship between individuals and space can be ascertained in the fiction of Munro, Moore and Enright. As noted previously, the metonymic or symbolic import of spatial descriptions in literature allows for built space to be 'read' or interpreted in the same manner as a text. Within each chapter, domestic architectures are grouped according to the predominant architectural form which recurs in each author's respective fictional output. The apartment and the single-family home are prevalent in Munro's fiction; in Moore's work the single-family home is frequently depicted, as is rented student housing and housing occupied by single women. For Enright, the single-family home is also the predominant architectural form to be found across her novels. Significantly, the single-family home as the overwhelmingly haunted space, suggests that the family unit at the centre of (or absent from) this domestic architecture plays an important role in the production of spectral presences. Ghosts of children or former partners return; brutal murders and abuse of vulnerable individuals disturb the home's

expected safety, and generally familial and marital relationships are failed to be sustained within the confines of this space. The lack of alternatives to this architectural structure, and the relationships it fosters, signals its status as intrinsically haunted.

The final element under which close readings of Munro, Moore, and Enright's depiction of domestic space is organised is their respective focus on domestic objects. Their fiction prominently features furniture, furnishings, wallpaper and other wall decor, food, waste, domestic technologies and consumer goods such as televisions, all of which function as haunted or haunting entities. Such domestic objects are another aspect of the domestic space that are associated with the feminine. Household consumerism has typically been constructed as one of the housewife's primary vocations. For women in Canada, the US, and Ireland, buying domestic goods and objects was framed as integral to the process of capitalist wealth production, hence giving women, as singularly domestic subjects, a stake in the public sphere from their safe situation in the home. Relatedly, domestic technologies—from washing machines to can-openers—have been positioned as solutions to domestic labour, typically and historically performed by women. Hailed as pragmatic solutions to the problem of gendered labour, these objects are fundamentally consumerist solutions, and remain implicated in the structures of capitalism which underpin separate spheres ideology. In Munro, Moore, and Enright's work, objects occupy an important symbolic function within the texts and provide another way to consider how domestic spaces are haunted. They represent familial and national memory, intergenerational inheritances, and frequently symbolise relationships between mothers and daughters. As functionaries of haunting in the domestic space they reveal hidden secrets and absent relationships, or obscure the origins of cultural and familial trauma. These objects, as spectral functionaries, are also disruptive presences within the home, challenging the intelligible

and unobtrusive social role that consumerism accords women as domestic subjects.

(v)

This study is organised into four chapters: one theoretical chapter, followed by separate chapters devoted to Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction published between 1985 and 2015. The theoretical chapter establishes a manner of 'thinking hauntologically' about the domestic space, while each author-focused chapter will apply that to close readings of the respective author, identifying a distinct spectral presence at play in each author's body of work under the themes of 'Domestic Discourses', 'Interiors/Exteriors', 'Domestic Architecture', and 'Domestic Objects'.

Chapter 1 will elucidate in further detail the framework of hauntology utilised in this dissertation, through the proposition of a specific 'hauntology of domestic space'. This chapter explains how the temporal concerns of hauntology as proposed by Derrida, and developed by Mark Fisher, Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, Jessica Aughter, and a range of other theorists, have ramifications for understandings of domestic space. The prevalence of the Gothic as a mode for theorising haunted domestic space in literary texts in particular will be considered for both its intersections with hauntology and for its limitations for analysing contemporary realist fiction. The manifest ability of the concept of spatial—particularly domestic—haunting to 'travel' between texts, genres, theories, and disciplines will be asserted through a consideration of a discourse of haunting in examples of critical and feminist theory concerned with domestic space. This chapter establishes the foundations of 'thinking hauntologically' about domestic space in women's writing as an ethical but ambivalent process, a position that informs the project's close reading analysis of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction.

Chapter 2 focuses on Munro's short fiction published from 1986 to 2012 to

explore the spectres of memory which haunt the domestic spaces found in her later fiction. This chapter cannot attempt to deal with all of Munro's short stories in this time frame, but will focus in detail on those stories in which domestic space has been rendered spectral or haunted, via the undercurrent of familial violence, abuse, and marital infidelity which presides within these domestic spaces. Given the breadth of Munro's later work, and the way in which individual stories across collections productively speak to one another, with Munro revisiting similar themes and settings, the selected stories are analysed thematically, rather than in strict chronological order. Through this analysis, it emerges that certain groupings of stories both within and across collections, centralise memories of abuse, violence, betrayal, and murder as spectral presences within domestic spaces. This chapter establishes a reading of Munro which highlights the complex ambivalence of her depiction of domestic space, an element of her work which has been gestured to but has not been sufficiently explored in detail.

Chapter 3, on spectres of failure in Moore's domestic spaces, will treat Moore's fiction chronologically, within the chapter's overarching thematic structure. Due to the lack of scholarship on domestic space in Moore's fiction, it is important to achieve a sense of Moore's development of domestic concerns in her work over time. However, due to the breadth of this body of work, only one to two short stories from each collection have been chosen, along with her novels. Moore's fiction depicts the domestic against a backdrop of inherited narratives and values of domesticity, an increasing precarity of dwelling, and threats to 'the homeland'. A specific hauntology of domestic space in her fiction lies in recurring emotional betrayal, and often violence, within marriages and other familial relationships, a constant imposition of the outside forces on the boundary of domestic spaces, and of the presence of spectral figures, and immaterial objects within the space that represent failures of relation or care,

particularly concerning children. The inherent ambivalences of Moore's depiction of domestic space will be stressed throughout this chapter, as a way of attending to the oft-overlooked political concerns of her fiction and for conceiving of the ambivalence of the hauntological spectre, specifically.

Finally, Chapter 4 is devoted to an exploration of spectres of silence in Enright's novels published from 1995 to 2015. Enright's novels have been chosen (rather than a consideration of both novel and short stories) in order to complement the analysis of Munro and Moore, which focuses on their *primary* literary practice. These novels, as in the chapter on Moore, will be analysed in chronological order within the thematic structure of the chapter. The spectres of silence that dominate Enright's novels manifest in direct response to the cultural conditions and historical legacies of contemporary Ireland, from contradictions between official and individual remembrances of history that are deliberately staged within the domestic space. There is a schism between surface-level progress and repressive legacies sited in the home, which impels the constant return of spectres and take multiple forms: returned presence of family members, both dead and alive, or represented by built structures, interiors, and objects that have the ability to occlude or reveal the origin of silences. This chapter explores, through spectres of silence, Enright's novels as specifically ethical responses, which although they eschew resolution, illustrate the potentialities of the hauntological lens.

The conclusion of this thesis will return to questions of the value and import of examining the domestic space in literary and cultural study, with particular regard to the contemporary moment and women's writing. Through a reflection on the applicability of a hauntological lens, and the findings of the project's close reading analysis, this chapter will consider why haunting remains as a predominant mode of discourse, particularly in contemporary women's writing and Western culture more broadly. Ultimately, the ambivalences of haunting found in the fiction of Munro, Moore, and

Enright indicate the generative unease and challenge of 'welcoming' and accepting spectres as an intrinsic aspect of many women's experiences of dwelling within the domestic space.

Chapter 1

Thinking Hauntologically

Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical paradigms which inform the project's exploration of haunted domestic space in the fiction of Alice Munro, Lorrie Moore, and Anne Enright. The purpose of this chapter is to define hauntology as a recent movement in critical theory before going on to elucidate why hauntology is relevant to the study of domestic spaces in literature. The Gothic mode and the spatial and spectral turns within critical theory will be explored in connection to hauntology. Furthermore, this chapter will also articulate the manner in which hauntology provides salient challenges for the study of haunted domestic space in fiction authored by women specifically. As such, this chapter will propose a manner of 'thinking hauntologically' (Auchter) about fiction, time, and space, as a means of mapping out the concepts that inform the close readings of the spectres which populate Munro, Moore, and Enright's fictional domestic spaces. Beginning with an overview of hauntology and its many connections, this chapter will go on to explore the linkages between the Gothic mode and hauntology, as well as the Gothic's limitations for exploring haunted domestic space in texts outside of the genre. Following this, a discourse of haunting in the spatial turn in critical theory will be examined, with three key texts regarding the theorisation of domestic space explored with regard to images and language of haunting. Finally, examples from feminist theory and cultural studies will be examined as articulations of domestic dissatisfactions which also 'ghost' the problematics of the domestic space in the contemporary era.

Hauntology is a critical concept with many antecedents and associations. It can be conceptualised as existing on a continuum of related concepts regarding haunting. As noted in the introductory chapter, the term itself originates in Jacques Derrida's 1994

text, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, a deconstructionist critique of late twentieth-century capitalist society's failure to fully exorcise traces of Marxism within its political discourses. However, the adoption of the term into numerous scholarly areas attests to its conceptual movement. When considered as part of a broader genealogy of a literary and critical interest in haunting, from Freud's *unheimlich* to Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's concept of 'the phantom', hauntology can be seen as just one of many critical theories on the subject of haunting. Mieke Bal's theory of the 'travelling concept' in interdisciplinary studies of the humanities helps to understand how hauntology exists within such a continuum of haunting. As Bal notes, concepts are never totally rooted in their originating disciplines but rather 'travel' between time and space, and into other disciplines (*Travelling Concepts* 24). Hauntology, as just one point along a continuum of haunting, as Elisabeth Roberts observes, 'does not replace other concepts but instead inhabits (or revisits) them' (393). It is necessary, therefore, to note that hauntology does not displace other theoretical or literary traditions associated with haunting, such as the uncanny or the Gothic. The concept of haunting travels between literary studies, psychology, architectural theory, and anthropology, among other disciplines. While there are differences in definition at play within and between distinct disciplines and areas of scholarship—and certainly, no overall consensus—there is also shared meaning and, within this, space for innovative ways of conceptualising the haunted domestic space.

Hauntology as Methodology

Hauntology is a critical lens which gained prominence as part of a larger 'spectral turn' which occurred in critical and literary theory during the 1990s (Luckhurst, "Spectral Turn" 527). Derrida's *Specters of Marx* is concerned primarily with the nature of time and history: how it is understood and used for political ends, and how history comes to

bear on social models for the future. This concern, as the editors' introduction to the 2006 edition of the text reminds us, emerged out of the specific context of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the USSR, in which political discourse was mired in declarations of the 'end' of Communism, if not, as per Francis Fukuyama, the 'end' of history itself (Magnus and Cullenberg vii-viii). The renouncing of Marxism—the declarations of its irrefutable death after the end of the Cold War—works instead to conjure up Marxism as a spectral presence rather than to exorcise it. As Derrida puts forward, despite the intensification of a neoliberal iteration of capitalism as a diametric opposite to the values of Marxism, 'no disavowal has managed to rid itself of all of Marx's ghosts' (37). Therefore, hauntology questions whether something can be declaratively dead, or at an end, if it continues to exist in some form, even if only as a spectral trace which haunts a discourse or political ideology.

Central to hauntology, and its concern with death, is the figure of the spectre. While there is no singular figure of haunting, nor one way in which the dead can (re)appear to the living (Roberts 392),¹ the spectre is most associated with hauntology. It is a figure which resists absolute definition. The hauntological spectre interrupts both accepted binaries of life or death as well as notions of time as linear and progressive. In the first instance, the spectre is, according to Derrida, a figure that disrupts the ontological absolutes of life and death by being 'neither soul nor body, and both and the other' (6). Hauntology is a concept which resides in opposition to definitive categories of embodied being. The existence of the spectre in the present—that is to say, the acknowledgment that something haunts or is haunting—naturally queries accepted medical, theological, and secularised conceptions of life, a general understanding of when the living die, they cease to exist.

¹ Derrida promulgates that the spectre is differentiated from the ghost or spirit through its 'supernatural and paradoxical phenomenality' (7), its embodied disembodiment. However, this dissertation uses spectre, ghost, and spirit somewhat interchangeably, given the conceptual relations between hauntology and other literary and theoretical discourses of haunting.

The hauntological disruption of life and death interrogates the very constitution of existence in ways in which the field of ontology cannot. As Katy Shaw argues, it is the limitations of ontology that give rise to hauntology, leading to the development of ‘a way of articulating both the presence and absence that defines the spectral’ (6). The spectre has the ability to be living or dead or neither living nor dead: absence and presence are not binaries under the auspices of hauntology. Increasingly, as Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren note, in contemporary culture, living persons such as ‘marginalized citizens, invisible terror threats’ (*Popular Ghosts* x) who have been rendered effectively non-living, or non-human, by society are figured as spectral presences. Hence, when the living are progressively conceptualised as dead though they continue to exist, the limits of ontology require expansion. The spectre is the figure which leads us beyond those limits.

Through its ability to continually return the spectre disrupts an understanding of time as linear and history as progressive, and thus conclusive. This has clear repercussions for understandings of temporality. The spectre’s return, as Shaw postulates, becomes a meeting point for various temporalities and their discontinuities (7). Past, present, and future reside simultaneously in a singular moment when the spectre returns, therefore all received notions about temporality are disrupted. The presence of the spectre means that, borrowing from *Hamlet*, “[t]he time is out of joint” (Derrida 49).² The spectre creates fissures in the notion of time as stable and intelligible by being unpredictable in its return. As Derrida argues, central to hauntology is the repetitive and returning nature of the spectre, which the living cannot control: the spectre ‘is always a *revenant*. One cannot control its comings and goings because it *begins by coming back*’ (11; emphasis in the original). The paradox of the spectre, in

²In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida uses *Hamlet* as the stimulus for his postulations on the nature of the spectre which illustrates the travelling nature of the concept of spectrality, from literature to philosophy and back again.

that its return signals both an end and a beginning, undercuts not only a traditional, ontological concept of death, but also a teleological conceptualisation of time. Differentiation between past, present, and future thus becomes ‘immaterial’ (Letissier 36) through the presence of the spectre. This is not to say that the events which are ordered and defined under these temporal headings are immaterial in themselves—indeed, hauntology stresses the importance of the past on that which comes after; the events of the past cannot, through the constant return of the spectre, be considered ever fully concluded—but that, as Georges Letissier argues, relations to time become ‘structurally traumatic’ (36). The predictability of time in its linear conception is disrupted and causes psychic as well as temporal uncertainty. This destabilising of time, whether conceived of as a productive meeting point, as per Shaw, or a traumatic event, as Letissier puts forward, has consequences for understandings of space, as will be explored further in this chapter.

In this sense, although clearly concerned with entities returning from the past, hauntology is equally concerned about the repercussions of the past on the present moment, and what it may herald for the future. The Derridean spectre, according to Roger Luckhurst, ‘intersects and divides contemporaneity with a double gesture that invaginates the past and future into the present’ (“Something Elemental” 62). As such, a hauntological lens is particularly resonant in the contemporary moment, posed between past and future. It also has implications for the specific cultural conditions of the contemporary, not only regarding the seemingly unanimous embrace of neoliberal capitalism after the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc, but for the technologies and media which have flourished in this time. According to José Esteban Muñoz, hauntology is a ‘conceptual tool for the understanding of being within the postmodern age of an electronic *res publica*’ (42), as new media and technologies interrupt accepted understandings of time and space.

Indeed, this is evident in Mark Fisher's development of hauntology with regard to popular culture. Fisher argues that despite rapid changes in communication technologies and political economies since the 1980s, contemporary culture, from music to film, has become marked by the absence of a legible future. Rather than the visions of the future which proliferated during the 1960s and 1970s, Fisher maintains, cultural products of the twenty-first century operate in a mode of anachronism 'interred behind a superficial frenzy of "newness", of perpetual movement' (*Ghosts of My Life* 6). Fisher's hauntology is characterised by a pessimistic (perhaps even fatalistic) mood, but his application of it is diffuse and capacious, as evident in *Ghosts of My Life* (2014), which takes popular music, television, and film as objects of analysis and demonstrates the aesthetic application of hauntology in tandem with political critique. The value of hauntology as a lens, according to Fisher, lies in its ability to not only provide a frame of reference for supernatural events and figures, but also for other more ambiguous concepts characterised as 'the virtual' or those entities that act 'without (physically) existing' ("What is Hauntology" 18), which are inculcated by new technologies. Fisher's conceptualising of hauntology as a response to 'lost futures' is a particularly valuable contribution. Lost futures are characterised by Fisher as those unrealised radical imaginings of society anticipated throughout the twentieth century that haunt the cultural productions and objects of the twenty-first century ("What is Hauntology" 16). Through lost futures, Fisher extends Derrida's concern with Marxism's afterlife to a broader concern with various intersecting politics which strive to imagine alternatives to current political and economic structures. The applicability of 'lost futures' to feminism in particular will be explored in further detail later in this chapter.

The hauntological spectre shifts perspectives on a number of received and reified concepts, including death, time, and as I will argue, space. In this sense, the spectre heralds a new way of looking, a critical lens which is applicable to any number

of concepts beyond and in relation to the Marxist focus of Derrida's text. Hauntology, as it has been expanded by other scholars beyond Derrida, is increasingly positioned as a productive mode of analysis for a range of disciplines and objects of study. As Blanco and Peeren note, the discursive shift in critical theory after *Specters of Marx* to the notion of spectrality has signified:

an etymological link to visibility and vision, to that which is both *looked at* (as fascinating spectacle) and *looking* (in the sense of examining), suggesting [hauntology's] suitability for exploring and illuminating phenomena other than the putative return of the dead (*Spectralities Reader 2*, emphasis in original).

Blanco and Peeren's suggestion dislodges the spectre from its Gothic image, echoing Fisher's similar imperative in his development of the uses of hauntology. Furthermore, this wide-ranging applicability of hauntology is rooted in the manner in which the concept allows for the examination of the invisible, meaning not only that which emerges in response to virtual technologies, as Muñoz and Fisher suggest, but also in the way in which the spectre functions as a symbol of in/visibility. Indeed, a number of scholars have argued that hauntology's central propositions amount to a specific ethical stance regarding the act of critical analysis itself. In the introduction to *Specters of Marx*, Derrida notes that welcoming the presence of the spectre amounts to 'a politics of memory, of inheritance and generations [...] in the name of *justice*' (xviii, emphasis in original). Hence, the spectre allows for these elements to be explored, to be brought to light, and to be examined under a new set of terms that cannot be divorced from political structures and discourses. To 'think hauntologically', as Jessica Aughter puts forward, emphasising its ethical stance, is to 'pay attention to the spectral voices that cannot be so easily subsumed into the life/death dichotomy'. Hauntology brings to light that which appears unreal or hidden, yet makes itself known, nonetheless.

The ethical possibility of the hauntological lens lies in its imperative to acknowledge and extend hospitality to the spectre. As Derrida offers, learning how to

live entails learning how to ‘live *with* ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts’ (xviii, emphasis in original). By welcoming the spectre, the individual is compelled to approach the experience of haunting beyond cycles of fear and repression, which as will be explored further in this chapter, mark postulations of haunting found in Gothic literature and the concept of the uncanny. However, as Martin Hägglund cautions, the ethical or justice-orientated position of *Specters of Marx* should not be misread or misappropriated into liberal ideals of social change (77). The inconvenient and confronting spectre, the ‘haunting reminders of victims of historical violence, of those who have been excluded or extinguished from the formation of society’ (Hägglund 82), allow us to identify the violence of social structures which order the contemporary moment, but do not themselves offer convenient solutions (or perhaps any solutions at all) to this violence. *Specters of Marx* presents an ethical problem by challenging the idea that the exorcism of cultural ghosts, as a solution to violence, is a positive or beneficial act. According to Hägglund, Derrida

maintains that a completely present life—which would not be “out of joint”, not haunted by any ghosts—would be nothing but a complete death. Derrida’s point is not simply that a peaceful state of existence is impossible to realize [...] Rather, he challenges the very idea that absolute peace is desirable (84).

Thus, when hauntology is employed as a lens with ethical potentiality in its focus on how spectrality is engendered by violent systems of thought and action, bringing attention to those individuals and entities that are made invisible or even nullified, it does so with a caveat. Indeed, hauntology’s interaction with the spectral and all it encompasses *is* a means of ‘bringing to the fore a sense of the forgotten and unacknowledged, the repressed and the denied’ (Sugars and Turcotte xiv). But this illumination or identification of the spectre is not an end in itself. *Specters of Marx* concludes in its postulation of welcoming the ghost that exclusion and violence cannot be resolved; that these processes are foundational to individuals and communities

(Hägglund 82). The challenge remains in the ambivalence of accepting the spectre without wanting to be rid of it, although it is representative of and created by processes and structures which are violent, alienating, and traumatic.

This ambivalence is particularly testing for a feminist utilisation of hauntology. The acceptance of violence inherent to hauntology and deconstruction, as Hägglund argues, is at odds with much of feminist thought. It is particularly difficult to parse the acceptance of violence as inevitable when it is primarily women, children, and other vulnerable people who are made spectral through violent social structures (as Blanco and Peeren, Auchter, and others have noted), and given that feminist theory and praxis is broadly focused on imagining and bringing into being structures of relation which might leave behind those conditions which produce the spectre. Judith Butler, for example, has argued that the injury of violence offers an opportunity to ‘reflect upon injury, to find out the mechanisms of its distribution, to find out who else suffers from permeable borders, unexpected violence, dispossession, and fear, and in what ways’ (xii). This call for reflection which Butler connects specifically to ‘[imagining] a world in which that violence might be minimized’ (xii), counters Hägglund’s more fatalistic approach to the hauntological spectre as an acceptance of violence and exclusion.

With this in mind, this schism between the epistemological (and, ontological) concerns of hauntology and feminism cannot perhaps be neatly resolved, nor is it the intention of this thesis to argue for cohesion.³ Rather, as will be illustrated throughout this chapter, hauntology—an imperfect theory, like all theories—presents epistemological opportunities through the challenge of its ambivalence. In deliberately resisting tangible or concrete postulations on life and death, revelling in ambiguity and

³ This is not to say that the two cannot be productively used in tandem. Indeed, the relationship between feminism and deconstruction has long been a matter of discussion in the academy: Mary Poovey has suggested that deconstruction’s offering to feminism is its ‘project of demystification’ (58). Similarly, Diane Elam has argued that while feminism and deconstruction may not be able to ‘learn from a partnership with the other’ (1) they are both disruptive movements of thought (2). Peggy Kamuf’s scholarship on women’s authorship illustrates feminist deconstruction in action.

resisting ontological and epistemological stability (Blanco and Peeren, *Spectralities Reader* 9; Roberts 393), hauntology amounts to a ‘form of knowledge based on an acceptance of uncertainty and of liminal phenomena’ (Funk 150). Within this ethical and epistemological directive (and challenge) there is the potential for new forms of knowledge to be created. For a feminist analysis, then, there cannot be a seamless adoption of hauntology without perhaps accepting social structures which do not have to be inevitable—such as the violence, dispossession, and alienation that colours many women’s experience of the domestic space.

Rather, what is useful in the hauntological lens is the act of recognition: the moment that haunting occurs becomes a moment of interpretative possibility. Rather than relating death with the negation or end of meaning (or indeed, life), hauntology as a critical framework instead insists on the opposite, endowing possibility and genesis of thought to that which is associated with death. The ambivalence inculcated by the spectre and the imperative to welcome it can itself be accepted. As Lauren Berlant has articulated, ambivalence does not have to be ‘seen as the failure of a relation, the opposite of happiness’ but can be envisioned as ‘an inevitable condition of intimate attachment and a pleasure in its own right’ (2). Thus, the ambivalence produced in bringing hauntology and feminist analysis into contact will be embraced, particularly as hauntology, as will be elucidated in the remainder of this chapter, opens up productive avenues for examining domestic spaces in literature and culture.

Haunted Houses in Literature

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, hauntology is but one point along a continuum of thought on haunting. Before hauntology can be adequately demonstrated as a useful lens for studying spectral presences in literary domestic spaces, the prominence of certain modes and lenses within this area of analysis must be considered. The subject of haunted space is perhaps best documented through literature and in

literary criticism. A spectral discourse, as will be demonstrated, has long been at play in this area of scholarship and literature itself is often conceived of as a haunted entity. Literature contains its own ‘internal haunting’, found in the multifarious meaning of language, intertextuality, and in its capacity to bring attention to hidden or silenced voices (Shaw 15), a position reiterated by numerous scholars with regard to literary texts (Funk 152; Greary 118) and rhetorical devices used in literary criticism (Buse and Stott 5).

Given the amount of scholarship found in Gothic studies on the subject of haunting in domestic spaces, it would be remiss not to explore this area and its limits, before explicating the proposed hauntology of domestic space in further detail. The dominance of the Gothic mode with regard to haunted spaces cannot be elided. The haunted house is a prominent trope in Gothic fiction (Ferguson Ellis ix; Ng 1). As Ruth Parkins-Gounelas argues, the formal beginnings of the Gothic can be specifically located in the actual and imaginary dwellings of Horace Walpole: *Strawberry Hill* and *The Castle of Otranto*, respectively (131).⁴ Indeed, the Gothic can be characterised as being a fundamentally domestic mode. The haunted house proliferates to such an extent in Gothic fiction that it may be difficult to fully separate instances of haunted domestic space from the mode itself.

Certain conventions regarding the domestic space have developed within Gothic literature. Andrew Hock Soon Ng posits that the haunted house tale can be divided into two separate impulses: the ‘cursed’ or possessed house and the house that is haunted by ‘its very own self; that is, the house is itself the very source of strangeness or anomaly’ (2). Hence, the haunted nature of the house emerges from either an external or internal source. Regardless of the source, Gothic anxieties begin at the physical and symbolic

⁴ However, Walpole’s position as the ‘father’ of the Gothic has been challenged by critics such as Anne Williams (11).

borders of the domestic space, as a space of shelter and protection. Given that the Gothic mode deals with ‘violent transgressions of boundaries’ (Meyers 2), it is inevitable that the domestic space in its metonymic and metaphorical importance to identity and security becomes the site of such anxiety and terror. Boundary transgression is a pervasive anxiety within the Gothic text (Williams 16). The Gothic thus associates the domestic space that is haunted with existential terror and fear, affective states central to the mode (Punter 13; Sedgwick, *Conventions* 11).

The haunted house proliferates particularly in the work of women writers working in the Gothic mode.⁵ An explicitly female literary aesthetic within Gothic fiction, known as the ‘Female Gothic’, was first proposed by Ellen Moers in *Literary Women* (1976). Moers text illustrates the ways in which the Gothic mode and women’s writing are inextricably linked within the academic tradition of feminist literary criticism (Fitzgerald 9). As Fraiman argues, in discussing the relationship between women and house, ‘[t]he gothic house [...] is not so easily eluded’ (19.) Fraiman characterises the Gothic house, which appears in both Gothic writing and feminist theory as one

that imprisons rather than shelters women; that keeps them in thrall to norms of marital femininity; that hides domestic violence, exploits female labor, and thwarts female ambition; that binds some women in domestic service to others at the expense of their own households (18).

This Gothic-coded domestic space prevails in the tradition of women’s writing: this includes the constant return of the phantom ‘Angel in the House’ in Woolf’s “Professions for Women”, the possessed wallpaper of Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The

⁵ Such examples include a breadth of work from the eighteenth century onward in which haunted dwelling spaces proliferate: Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847). Throughout the twentieth century this continued through works such as Daphne du Maurier’s *Rebecca* (1938), the majority of Shirley Jackson’s novels, particularly *The Haunting of House Hill* (1959) and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962), a tradition that is sustained in more contemporary work, flourishing particularly in the short story form: *Get in Trouble* (2015) by Kelly Link and *Her Body and Other Parties* (2017) by Carmen Maria Machado being two such examples.

Yellow Wallpaper”, and the many ghosts, spectres, spirits, witches, hags, and haunted houses that populate the texts of writers such as Elizabeth Bowen, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, Shirley Jackson, Margaret Atwood, Angela Carter, Toni Morrison, and Marilynne Robinson, to give a necessarily brief overview.

As Williams argues, the theme of boundary transgression associated with the Gothic has engaged both women readers and ‘also offered women a language to speak—or rather to write’ (16). It is a trope that flourishes even in writing that does not easily fit within the conventions of the genre, as is evidenced in close readings of Munro, Moore, and Enright’s depiction of domestic space. The reasons for this prevalence are clear, as Fraiman outlines above. This thwarting, Gothic house becomes a symbol for women’s oppression, a spatialization of the effects of the patriarchal ideology of separate spheres on women. As Diana Wallace notes, the Gothic is a mode that has ‘most brilliantly articulated and symbolised the terrors of [...] domestic space’ for women. The Gothic brings the patriarchal logic of ‘women’s sphere’—the inevitable and inextricable bond between women and domestic space—to its terrifying conclusion. Women’s writing employs the terror of the Gothic house to articulate fears of entrapment and suffocation that the expectation of a solely domestic role can instil.⁶ In many ways, the Gothic mode can be seen as an imaginative outlet for the alienation inherent to the gendered division of space. The Gothic haunted house that prevails in women’s writing is also a challenge to idealised images of domestic space. Popular notions of the space found in contemporary media, advertising, and increasingly in the twenty-first century, on online platforms, promote the space as solely happy and productive for its female inhabitants. The reanimation of visions of domestic femininity, from the happy housewife to the domestic goddess promulgate certain ideas about

⁶ As noted in the introduction, the motif of entrapment has been saliently articulated in Gilbert and Gubar’s *The Madwoman in the Attic*, perhaps setting the conventions for the way in which domestic space is envisioned in literary criticism of women’s writing.

women's relationship to the home, and ultimately reaffirm the notion of 'women's sphere' as a positive one.⁷ The Gothic and its ability to articulate the negative, terrifying, or even deathly aspects of the domestic space—particularly for women—is an important counternarrative to received ideas about how women should inhabit a home.

The relatively recent popularity of hauntology in critical theory might seem to surpass the Gothic as an established means for theorising haunting in its own right. Peter Buse and Andrew Stott note that the new-found critical interest in ghosts and haunting in theory at the peak of the spectral turn has appeared belated to literary scholars of Gothic and uncanny fiction (8). While hauntology has been viewed as 'a new vocabulary for familiar ideas' (Greary 118) and by no means should it be positioned in a hierarchical relationship above the Gothic, hauntology provides a productive way of thinking about haunting and spectres that is not only more germane to the study of contemporary women's writing written in the realist mode but also broadens the remit of the very concept of spatial haunting itself. As I have previously argued, the close relation between the Gothic and hauntology is an example of Bal's 'travelling concept': familiar ideas are frequently reinterpreted and re-interpolated throughout areas of study and disciplines. Hence, Greary's postulation is essentially a fact of all contemporary scholarship in which new vocabularies do and must emerge in the advance of knowledge.

Thus, the Gothic can indeed be celebrated for its invaluable articulation of and influence on literary haunted spaces but it can also be seen to have certain limitations in this area. This is not to denigrate the genre or area of criticism (indeed, many scholars

⁷ As mentioned in the introduction, and as will be explored in more detail in this chapter, the work of Negra, Hollows, and Genz has been particularly germinal in articulating contemporary reanimations of domestic femininities.

would argue that the Gothic is as an expansive a mode as any)⁸ but to consider that with regard to the analysis of haunted domestic spaces, there may be some constraints. Ng argues that within Gothic studies the house is rarely considered as a significantly spatial entity but rather is treated as metaphorical or supportive of certain ideologies (5). The Gothic mode arguably privileges narrative closure and binaries regarding spectral presences that hauntology seeks to avoid. The Gothic tradition relies on a narrative process in which uncertainty is restored to ‘order and normalcy’ (Ng 1), particularly in instances of the haunted domestic space. Julian Holloway and James Kneale note that in the Gothic text ‘[t]he monster becomes visible; the ghost is laid to rest’ (300). The deconstructionist spectre, in comparison, is ‘considerably different from those found in the majority of fictional haunting narratives’ because the hauntological spectre is inherently resistive to closure (Buse and Stott 12). Hauntology resists order and closure, or at the very least questions whether such order, spatial or temporal, is possible.

Related to boundaries—of space and narrative—there is a risk in the ubiquity of the Gothic domestic space, particularly in the study of women’s writing. The anxiety and terror of boundary transgression, which is for many critics at the heart of the Gothic domestic space as written by women, may exclude examples of haunted spaces in which other affective states or emotional responses are fashioned by the writer and/or felt by the reader. In many postulations on the domestic space in the spatial turn in critical theory (as will be discussed in further detail in this chapter), boundary transgression and dissolution are seen as accepted and desirable values of the space, rather than a cause for anxiety. In Munro, Moore, and Enright’s fiction boundary transgression occurs (and is even taken for granted) but is rarely framed through feelings of anxiety.

Rather, in these texts, haunting is acknowledged and articulated in a highly

⁸ Punter maintains that ‘in studying Gothic fiction almost nothing can be assumed, not even the limits of the field’ (18). Parkins-Gounelas also counters the idea that the Gothic is always focused on exorcising ghosts, resolution, or closure (138).

ambivalent fashion, in conversation with the ethical ambivalences of the spectre itself. The presence of Gothic tropes in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction are intertextual impositions that are characteristic of the playfulness of contemporary realist fiction, in conversation with its aesthetic inheritances. This Gothic intertext illustrates the always present, never erased, danger of the domestic space for women. However, in these texts, beneath the surface of Gothic motifs and images is a different kind of impulse which speaks to the necessity of an open, rather than closed, system for analysing the imaginary domestic space. As such, hauntology offers ways of attending to haunting and spectral presences in fictional domestic spaces, while traversing some of the established aesthetics of the Gothic.

As explored in the previous section of this chapter, the epistemological and ethical challenge of hauntology lies in the spectre as a revenant that will always, however unpredictably, return, and must be accommodated. Accepting the notion that haunting is inevitable, even in those spaces which seem on the surface to be positive and sustaining, provokes other ways of considering haunted domestic spaces in literature beyond the borders of the Gothic. This, as previously mentioned, is not without its own challenges and limitations. The issue with both the Gothic and hauntological lenses for examining haunted domestic space is that there may be a point in which the recurring articulation of the domestic space as a site of bodily and existential threat for women becomes a continuation and even an emboldening of existing patriarchal values. The prevalence of the haunted house in women's writing calls attention to the limitations of imagination under the conditions of the contemporary moment. How can women writers ever escape the haunted house if its narrative or its framing do not change?

It remains that a more expansive vision of the domestic space in women's writing needs to be envisioned. Such a vision would ideally neither pathologize nor

normalise the often-harsh reality of the domestic space. It would take into account the multifarious narratives, histories and experiences, both collective and personal, that underpin the space; as well as making room for joy, pleasure, boredom, rage, unhappiness and a myriad of other emotional responses. It is entirely possible that no such theory could meet such diverse demands—and generating such a theory is outside of the capabilities of this thesis. However, hauntology, in its total but not unproblematic acceptance of the spectre, opens up a space for more questions, and perhaps fruitful solutions, to the problem of the domestic space in women’s writing and women’s lives. Hauntology offers leverage to examine the myriad reasons why the domestic space in contemporary women’s writing continues to be haunted. This makes it applicable for exploring haunted domestic spaces outside generic boundaries and for establishing new directions within the study of women’s writing on domestic space.

In Munro, Moore, and Enright’s fiction, while homes are certainly haunted by a myriad of spectres, neither the spaces nor their spectral presences can ultimately be rejected (although attempts at rejection or disavowal are made by characters). The fact remains that contemporary conditions of dwelling make having a place to call home ever more important. People require spaces to live and applying the framework of hauntology to the domestic spaces portrayed in Munro, Moore, and Enright’s work suggests how women might live in the haunted house. In the remaining sections of this chapter, which map out the conceptual mobility of haunting in the ‘spatial turn’ and feminist thought, illustrating the suffusion of the haunted domestic space in multiple areas of criticism, will articulate further why, beyond the presence of Gothic tropes, Munro, Moore and Enright’s work calls for a hauntological lens.

Haunting and the ‘Spatial Turn’

Given the seemingly singular focus on temporal matters, hauntology may appear to exclude considerations of space. However, time and space are inextricably linked. As

Gerry Smyth and Jo Croft note, '[s]pace is not "outside" time, but exists in dialectical relationship with it; the meaning of a place is always in part an effect of a temporal shift [...] from past to present' (22). This sentiment is echoed by Fisher who postulates that hauntology 'concerns a crisis of space as well as time' and that haunting occurs when 'a place is stained by time, or when a particular place becomes the site for an encounter with broken time' ("What is Hauntology" 19). Considering how space and time interrelate, and specifically how space is used to conceptualise time, these issues underscore not only hauntology but are foundational to many theoretical considerations of the domestic space, evidencing the productive interrelation between hauntology and the spatial turn. This section will consider theorisations on the domestic space from psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and cultural studies which are imbued with images and language of haunting.

Attesting to the conceptual 'travel' of haunting, the idea that domestic spaces can be haunted goes beyond any notion or belief in the paranormal. Indeed, religious belief is no longer wholly relevant to cultural interest in the spectre (Buse and Stott 2-3) and yet the spectre is overwhelmingly present within the largely secular contemporary era. It is not only ghost hunters, but academics and philosophers, who concede that ghostly presences are intrinsic to the experience of space and place. A rhetoric of haunting is applicable to almost every area related to the domestic space. The discursive link between haunting and property, as Daniel Miller notes, is rooted in the concept of possession: individuals are possessed psychologically by their houses, as much as houses are possessed legally by individuals ("Possessions" 109). Despite the legal discourses of real estate, property, regardless of its architecture or age, Buse and Stott posit, 'is never free of ghostly vicissitudes, contrary to all rhetoric of property and possession which would exorcise past struggles over it' (9). Within critical understandings of space (and relatedly, place), haunting is a basic assumption or

expectation. Blanco and Peeren argue that ‘places are simultaneously living and spectral, containing the experience of the actual moment as well as the many times that have already transpired and become silent’ (*Spectralities Reader* 395), while Michael Mayerfeld Bell contests that ghosts (which he defines as any ‘felt *presence*’ (815; emphasis in original)) are an ‘ubiquitous aspect of the phenomenology of place’ (813).

The frequent conception of the domestic space in critical theory as the physical site of time’s passage and the spatialisation of human memory underpins the intersection of haunting and domestic space. While the female body has also been frequently placed in this same dialectic (Baydar 35; Kuhlmann 175-177; Adams 103), as is evident in many theorisations of domestic space, this appears to be more of a manifestation of separate spheres ideology than a genuine or useful framework for understanding domestic space and its import. The domestic space has been envisioned as an archive of memory (Boughey 227) and a location, not only for the body, but for the consciousness (Mezei and Briganti, “Reading the House” 839). This link between domestic space and the processes of the human mind is rooted in the concept of interiority. As Charles Rice notes, the multiple meanings of ‘interior’ (inside as opposed to the outside, the human soul or spirit, and even the geographic territories and political concerns of nation states) have worked to produce a significant confluence between inside space and the psyche (2). A spectral discourse is often employed to communicate the connection between built space and the human psyche, with memory envisioned as a type of haunting. Domestic spaces, as repositories of memory, can house and even create spectres. This idea, that the domestic space is a site for psychic, mnemonic encounters figured as haunting, is evident in three germinal theorisations of the domestic space that will now be examined: Sigmund Freud’s “The Uncanny” (1919); Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* (1958), and Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol’s *The Practice of Everyday Life Volume 2: Living and Cooking*

(1980).

In Freud's concept of the *unheimlich* (the uncanny), there is a clear confluence—even symbiosis—between interior, psychic states and interior spaces.⁹ In “The Uncanny”, Freud outlines the doubled nature of the relationship between home and haunting, and how it pertains to the psyche. *Heimlich*, meaning of or related to the home, is rooted in its opposite concept, the *unheimlich* (Freud 221). The typical definition of the uncanny is that which is *unfamiliar* and thus frightening. However, Freud attests that there is no simple separation between the *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. It is the unfamiliar's repressed but fundamentally present familiarity that produces the uncanny, ‘that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar’ (Freud 220). The symbiosis between the two concepts lies in the etymology of *heimlich*: it can mean, Freud postulates, both that which belongs to the house but also those elements that are ‘concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others’ (223).

Therefore, embedded within this seemingly positive concept of the homely, is that which is hidden and repressed (Horner 250). Uncanniness relies on closeness, familiarity, and repetition. The seeming unfamiliarity of the uncanny is due to the psychic repression of the familiar (Freud 241). For Freud, the ultimate source of the uncanny, and the reason for its repression, lies in the female body, specifically the mother's womb:

This *unheimlich* place, however, is the entrance to the former Heim (home) of all human beings, to the place where everyone dwelt once upon a time and in the beginning. [...] the *unheimlich* is what was once *heimisch*, familiar; the prefix ‘*un*’ is the token of repression (Freud 245).

⁹ As in Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, there is a literary source to Freud's postulations in his use of the stories of E.T.A Hoffmann to explore the uncanny. Pamela Thurschwell suggests that this link to literature goes beyond Freud's use of literary examples: the concept of the uncanny blurs the line between reality and imagination, a process that also happens in fiction (117).

As Pamela Thurschwell puts forward, Freud ultimately ties his understanding of the uncanny back to anxiety regarding human sexuality: ‘this *heimlich/unheimlich* doubling of ambivalent meanings around the female genitalia returns to us, in fantasy, to a former safe, protected but simultaneously deathly and frightening pre-natal state’ (117). In the connection between domestic space and mother’s womb—this being the foundation of the uncanny affect—“The Uncanny” recalls the interchange between beginning and end signalled by the spectre. If, as in Freud’s theorisations, the mother’s womb simultaneously represents life and death, the act of being born is a beginning that is also necessarily an end. Therefore, being situated within the un/heimlich space of the home is a reminder of that collapse between life and death and is the source of haunting.

Freud’s formulation of the uncanny is fundamental to understanding the layered and deeply rooted relationship between the domestic space, comfort, and fear, as well as the use of the domestic space as a metaphor which interpolates both the human psyche and the female body together. While Anthony Vidler argues that the uncanny is not an inherent spatial entity but a psychological projection (11), Freud’s concept (and its cultural dominance) reveals a number of anxieties regarding the domestic space and its multifarious interpretations, which are located in connection to the maternal body. The uncanny situates the domestic space as a hauntological site because it contains various and often seemingly contradictory concepts that continually return and disrupt the surface safety of the space. In Freud’s concept of the uncanny, the domestic space is haunted by a number of psychological repressions which lead back to the ‘first home’, the mother’s body. This haunting is therefore inescapable as it is deeply rooted in unconscious memory, and in the principal event of an individual’s life, their birth. The connection to the maternal is not incidental. As Jane Marie Todd argues, Freud’s theory of the uncanny is characterised by a number of denials regarding its uses and interpretations of the female body and maternal signifiers. In particular, by locating

the source of the uncanny in the mother's genitals, Freud's reliance on sexual difference expressed in "The Uncanny" and across his work, is bound up with his own repression of 'men's fear of women and the social consequences of that fear' (528), according to Todd.

Nevertheless, the notion of the uncanny provides a clear-cut example that unites the concept of haunting with the domestic space and homeliness. Yet, even in theorisations of domestic space that do not outwardly employ images of the frightening or fearful, domestic spaces are articulated as haunted. By their ability to retain memory, acting as an analogue to the mnemonic processes of the human mind, domestic spaces are memorial sites. The lasting presence of memory (such as that of the unconscious memory of the mother's womb as evident in "The Uncanny"), and crucially its ability to return, is central to a hauntological understanding of domestic space. This emerges in Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, which although it is primarily focused on 'felicitous' spaces (xxxv), is not without a discourse of haunting.¹⁰ Bachelard argues for an understanding of the domestic space as a 'psychic state' (72). It is the memory of the childhood home, the first experience of domestic space, that is of foundational importance (Bachelard 30). Dreams and daydreams provide the interplay for such memory to form and then to return throughout an individual's life, according to Bachelard. The domestic space becomes a site of 'integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind' (6) and functions as the 'embodiment of dreams' (15). Dreams can be perceived as hauntological phenomena: Luckhurst argues that dreams are a way for the dead to return to the living (52) and so Bachelard's emphasis on the relation between the domestic space and the process of dreaming (related, as with memory, to the psyche) opens up an understanding of the haunting connotations of the

¹⁰ Nor, as will be explored in more detail, is Bachelard's text without similar assumptions of sexual difference and images of the maternal body.

felicitous space.

Furthermore, Bachelard's consideration of how the domestic space shapes memory and provides a space to access memory is replete with a motif of return. The memory of the childhood home in Bachelard's text is figured as a kind of revenant. Such is the import of the childhood home that all domestic spaces subsequently occupied throughout one's life become 'but variations on a fundamental theme' (Bachelard 15), suggesting repetition. Crucially, this recurrence is not framed as pathological as it might in psychoanalytic discourse, but emphasises that haunting, broadly conceived, is a fundamental function of the domestic space. Similarly, Bachelard characterises the childhood home as a 'great image of lost intimacy' (100). The return to the childhood home, either physically or psychologically through memory work, becomes an attempt to re-engage with an intimacy associated with the past that is absent or has become lost in the present moment. The image of lost intimacy as a spectral entity recalls the haunting provocation of 'lost futures' as theorised by Fisher.

Although Bachelard's focus is on 'felicitous space' rather than images of Gothic or uncanny dwellings, the revenant impulse of even happy memories of the childhood home connects it to a discourse of the returning spectre as is found in hauntology. Bachelard's suggestion that '[a]n entire past comes to dwell in a new house' (5), is key to the domestic space's hauntological status. Although a newly constructed or occupied domestic space should be free of all memory and emotional connection—a sort of architectural *tabula rasa*—given the inescapable influence of the first home, every occupant inevitably brings their past into each space they inhabit throughout their life. The memory of the childhood home has spatial and temporal mobility as it 'co-penetrate[s]' (Bachelard 5) other domestic spaces throughout time. Thus, memories of domestic spaces have an inherent spectral quality to them.

The ubiquitous return to the memory of the childhood home also complicates the

categories of past, present, and future, much like the hauntological spectre. ‘Past, present and future give the house different dynamisms, which often interfere, at times opposing, at other, stimulating one another’ (6), Bachelard argues, suggesting that the domestic space is a space of temporal meeting points, recalling the respective postulations of Shaw, Letissier, and Fisher regarding the appearance of the spectre as a temporal collision between past, present, and future. The evocation of opposition and stimulation in Bachelard’s phrasing also brings to mind similar language employed in *Specters of Marx*, in which the spectre’s productive deconstruction of linear time counters the typically ontological view that the spectre, as symbol of death, implies the negation or end of meaning.

While Rachel Bowlby places Bachelard’s conception of home in opposition to that found in Freud’s “The Uncanny” (77), *The Poetics of Space* is similarly reliant on maternal imagery and assumptions of sexual difference in its conception of domestic space. Given Bachelard’s tendency to associate the home with the maternal—it has ‘maternal features’ (7); it is imagined as a ‘large cradle’ (7)—the maternal body is clearly a revenant image in patriarchal discourses of the domestic space. Bachelard’s ‘happy phenomenology of the home’ (Sibley 94), has been critiqued for its assumptions regarding the male beneficiaries of its felicity (Price 48) and his lack of attention to the gendered power dynamics of the home (Gwin 423). The erasure of the labour inherent to creating and maintaining comforts of home permeates the domestic discourse of *The Poetics of Space*. As Sara Ahmed notes, Bachelard offers only ‘a romantic reading of housework’ which does not attend to its gendered organisation, suggesting that such a reading could only be possible from within a patriarchal ideology in which men are not required to perform housework (184). Furthermore, as in the case of Freud’s theories, the affirmation of the home space as inherently connected to the mother is not incidental but indicates a larger issue at the heart of philosophical, phenomenological, and

psychoanalytic conceptions of domestic space. The repeated invocation of the maternal body and related images as man's 'first home', as seen in Freud and Bachelard's work (and, although not treated at length here in this thesis, in Heidegger's "Building Dwelling Thinking"), relies on the presupposition of sexual difference.

Such assumptions have been the starting point of feminist reconsiderations of Western understandings of space and attempts to reorientate spatial concepts away from patriarchal ideology. Luce Irigaray's *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* (1999), critiques Heidegger's masculinist understanding of home in which 'man projects onto woman the nostalgic longing for the lost wholeness of the original mother' (Young 116). The feminine in such discourses is always only symbolic—privileged on the basis of being the original source of nurturing and security, as image of vessel or boundary—and the experiences of women are erased. Irigaray, as Joanne Faulkner notes, offers up a 'conception of place as interval, passage, or fluid-medium' (136) to counter Heidegger's understanding of dwelling. Employing a more fluid conception, Irigaray imagines a relational experience of dwelling within porous spatial boundaries based on the relationship between mother and child, not reliant on the repression or loss of one over the other (Faulkner 137). Irigaray's challenge to masculinist conceptions of femininity and dwelling is the basis of later feminist reconsiderations of domestic space and home, such as Bowlby's and Iris Marion Young's.

As established in the work of Freud and Bachelard, domestic spaces perform a memory function, understood as a form of haunting. Certeau, Giard, and Mayol extend this idea in their study of domestic space, domestic practices, and the everyday, which has become foundational to the spatial turn in critical theory. Certeau et al's approach to the function of the domestic space in the lives of individuals expands upon the assumptions inherent to Freud and Bachelard's theorisations. Although the text employs a direct language of haunting in its examination of the haunted topography of Paris, in

terms of the 'private spaces' of domestic practice, Certeau et al's text, similarly to Bachelard's, largely theorises the potential of the domestic space to be a site of positive intimacy, respite, leisure, and pleasure. To live within a domestic space, whatever its architectural form, means to have 'a *protected place* at one's disposal where the pressure of the social body on the individual does not prevail' (Certeau et al 146, emphasis in original). However, despite this idealism, Certeau et al also conceive of the domestic space that is not merely a protective space but one with porous borders between interior and exterior. This porousness arguably makes room for the hauntological spectre.

A domestic space, according to Certeau et al, houses a "“life narrative”" (145). This narrative 'floats like a secret perfume, which speaks of a lost time, of time that will never be regained, which speaks also of another time yet to come' (Certeau et al 146). Again, a destabilised temporal discourse is at play here: the linearity of temporal experience is inherently muddled in the domestic space due to its ability to house memory, or 'life narrative'. There is also the presence in Certeau et al's propositions of a metaphorical language that recalls the spectre: the 'floating' memory of space echoes the 'tangible intangibility' (Derrida 7) of the spectre, as both an absence and a presence. The ability of the domestic space to retain the trace of the individuals who reside there necessarily interferes with the linear progression of time, recalling certain moments that have passed, bringing to light the unknowability of the future in the present moment of residing. This presence which is indicated by but has meaning beyond the space or a specific physical object, is ghostly. The private space as theorised by Certeau et al, then, is a hauntological site as the 'housing' of memories becomes a form of haunting, producing a spectral trace or presence without a deathly event necessarily occurring within the space.

While the traditional spatial value of protection is invoked in Certeau et al's

work, their invocation of a more open vision of domestic boundaries has potential hauntological connections. They are attuned to the ability of the domestic space to become a space of freedom and movement, one that

must *know how to open itself up to the flow of people coming in and out*, to be the passageway for a continual circulation, where objects, people, words, and ideas cross paths; for life is also about mobility, impatience for change, and relation to the plurality of others (148, emphasis added).

The domestic space as one with open, porous boundaries, welcoming ‘the flow’ recalls Derrida’s language of welcome and acceptance in *Specters of Marx*. This productive openness of the private space of home also owes much to Henri Lefebvre’s postulations in *The Production of Space* (1974), another important text in the spatial turn ‘canon’, which proposes that the concept of the house as protective is illusory, and that spaces are inherently permeable (93). However, both Lefebvre and Certeau et al’s work invokes the inherent spectrality of space without introducing the fear and terror associated with breakdown between spatial boundaries found in Gothic texts, nor Derrida’s ethical challenge of welcoming the spectre at the expense of accepting the conditions which manifested it. Nevertheless, *Living and Cooking* presents another instance in which the language of haunting is embedded in the meaning and experience of domestic space, one in which openness is valued.

These examples are significant in theorising the cultural importance of the domestic space. Furthermore, all foreground an element of haunting, consciously or unconsciously, in their understanding of the domestic space. In uncanny, felicitous, or private spaces, memories, psychic processes, and forms of dwelling are frequently positioned as spectral returns. Haunting is how the domestic space is overwhelmingly understood in Western thought—haunted houses are continuously evoked in different guises. Thus, hauntology, as another entity within the cultural continuum of haunting is readily positioned to be applied to the study of domestic space. As will be articulated in the next section, this is particularly apposite for the analysis of domestic space with

regard to women's experience of same, taking into account theorisations of the domestic space from feminist perspectives. As is evident in both Freud and Bachelard's postulations, two totemic philosophical responses to the domestic space, and challenged by feminists such as Irigaray, Todd, Ahmed, and Young, assumptions of sexual difference undergird the discourses of the spatial turn. Feminist accounts of domestic space typically counter such assumptions and looking at these discourses makes a clear case for the necessity of thinking hauntologically about domestic space in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction.

Feminisms' Domestic Spectres

In tandem with the spatial turn in critical theory, feminist theory is also an area in which the domestic space has been especially theorised and offers a number of articulations and re-orientations of the domestic space, its history and meanings. Although, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, hauntology and feminism may clash in their respective ethical outlooks, hauntology and feminism can be seen to be in dialogue with regard to the meaning of the domestic space. Feminism, as much as hauntology, is concerned with notions of time. Feminist theory and praxis are both occupied with the temporal through an equal focus on past and future in relation to the present. Similar to hauntology, the future is a matter of urgency in feminism. As Prudence Chamberlain argues, '[a]lthough feminism responds with the demands of the present, it actually adjusts itself in relation to a hoped-for future' (460). The future-orientation of feminism as an emancipatory politics is contingent on shedding light on and understanding the past, indicating that spectres are perhaps always present in feminist thought.

Rebecca Munford and Melanie Waters' productive use of hauntology to explore postfeminist popular culture emphasises this applicability of hauntology as a lens for exploring feminism as a cultural and political movement. Munford and Waters argue that 'the spectre of feminism' (17) haunts contemporary culture, which assumes that

feminism's aims have been met and yet continues to conjure up the images of feminist politics as 'dead' or 'not alive in the same way that once it was' (18). Munford and Waters account for this allegiance between hauntology and feminism as a mutual 'investment in notions of otherness, memory, nostalgia, inheritance and futurity' (19). Given the constructive intersection between hauntology and feminism regarding concerns of futurity, there are clear consequences here for feminist considerations of domestic space.

Furthermore, domestic spectres are present in feminist thought through two means: lost futures and disavowal of domesticity. Firstly, the contemporary domestic space is haunted by a lost future of a feminist kind, in which domestic space and its related practices could be figured outside of the patriarchal imaginary and separate spheres ideology. Returning to Fisher's concept of lost futures as imaginative failure or the loss of 'the capacity to conceive of a world radically different from the one in which we currently live' ("What is Hauntology" 16), the domestic space as one loosed from its patriarchal origins, either in concept or spatial form, has frequently been imagined as a potential future in feminist theory. However, this future domestic space has not come to be in the contemporary era. Thus, this lost future is one such spectre which haunts feminism. Secondly, related spectral presences emerge in feminism with regard to the domestic space through the continuous disavowal of domesticity within feminism itself. While there is a strong tradition of imagining alternative domestic spaces and practices, there is also an equally influential position in feminism which seeks to disavow the domestic altogether.

Drawing on Munford and Waters' position that hauntology and feminism can work in tandem, this section will examine the domestic space as a problematic within feminist thought, taking into account feminist theory regarding domestic space and domesticity from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) through to the

postfeminist age, in which Western culture ‘returns’ to the concept of woman’s sphere. These examples illustrate the way in which feminism is both haunted by the failed futures of the domestic space it has imagined coming into being and by a simultaneous ‘ghosting’ of the domestic in mainstream feminist discourses. The aim here is to again emphasise the discourse of haunting at play in theorisations of domestic space. Taking into account the usefulness of hauntology for the purposes of examining this domestic haunting in feminism itself, the question of accepting the hauntological spectre as a *specifically* feminist challenge, as discussed earlier in this chapter, will also be returned to.

Critiques and radical re-imaginings of the domestic space, family life, and thus of society itself are the cornerstone of feminist thought. Perhaps best-known—and still salient—is Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*. Beauvoir’s philosophical treatise critiqued the narratives, histories, and societal values which have trapped women in states of immanence. Pre-empting the popular and academic literature produced during the second wave of feminist activism in the West during the 1960s and 1970s, *The Second Sex* articulated the domestic space as the spatialization of women’s oppression. While Mimi Choi and Elizabeth Patton view Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) as a starting point for a feminist critique of housework and housewifery (xiii), Beauvoir’s text anticipates Friedan’s by more than a decade.

In particular, the section entitled “The Married Woman” scrutinises the institution of marriage as a primarily limiting one for women, and the existential challenges inherent to the concept of ‘woman’s sphere’. Beauvoir argues that for men, marriage is a path to the future, the embodiment of transcendence. Marriage leads women only to immanence, which Beauvoir links explicitly with domestic life: through marriage, ‘[w]oman is destined to maintain the species and care for the home, which is to say, to immanence’ (455). Because men also live within and primarily benefit from

this domestic space, they have equal access to both immanence and transcendence; crucially, however, they have the mobility to go between the two states, which women lack:

the wife has no other task save the one of maintaining and caring for life in its pure and identical generality; she perpetuates the immutable species, she assures the even rhythm of the days and the permanence of the home she guards with locked doors; she is given no direct grasp on the future, nor on the universe; she goes beyond herself towards the group only through her husband as mouthpiece (455).

Beauvoir's invocation of the lack of a future as a condition of the entrapping ideology of 'woman's sphere' is something that underpins nearly all feminist interrogations of and solutions to the domestic space. Although an explicit evocation of haunting is not present here, Beauvoir's image of the woman trapped in her immanence through her position within the home alludes to a certain existential spectrality for women. The above quote speaks to Fraiman's articulation of the Gothic house, seen time and again in the tradition of women's writing, as inherently entrapping. The locked doors potentially recalls "Bluebeard" and its fashioning of the domestic space as a site of secrecy and violence. Furthermore, Beauvoir's suggestion that the married woman is ultimately dependent on her husband 'as mouthpiece' suggests a kind of ventriloquism, the re-animation of woman in her husband's voice and through his ideals.

At the apex of the Anglo-American second-wave, texts such as *The Feminine Mystique* and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) captured both academic and popular imagination in their articulation of the 'problem with no name' (27), as Friedan termed it. As Clare Hanson notes, second to feminist concerns with women's sexual objectification, there was a heightened concern during the second wave with the 'entrenched ideological construction [...] of woman-as-homemaker' (146). These texts therefore illustrate the prominent discourses surrounding domesticity, framed in a rhetoric of urgency. While Friedan's work articulated the dissatisfaction of university educated, middle-class American women in light of a post-war domestic expectation,

Greer's text proposed more radical solutions, suggesting that women should abandon the home completely in order to escape their domestic burden: '[m]ost women [...] would shrink at the notion of leaving husband and children, but this is precisely the case in which brutally clear rethinking must be undertaken' (361), Greer advises. For Ann Oakley, in her 1974 work *Housewife*, abolition of the women's domestic role was also promulgated and the role of housewife was framed specifically as 'antifeminist' (233). These are all echoes of Beauvoir's text, where she maintains that 'to find a home in oneself, one must first have realised oneself in works or acts' (483), and therefore the domestic space itself cannot be that site of realisation.

Such articulations of oppression and expectation were bestirring, clearly responding to a social pressure and cultural mood in the mid-twentieth century of Western women's dissatisfactions. However, even in their attention to the personal and private spheres as areas of political importance, these texts retained 'a spatial problematic inherited from the nineteenth-century women's suffrage movement' (Heller 219), that of the private as being separate from the public. In fighting for women's public roles, and leaving the home behind, these texts suggest that the problems of the private sphere will solve themselves. However, as the contemporary women's writing explored in this study, as well as contemporary re-evaluations of the second wave illustrate, there must be other ways of finding home. Dana Heller argues that the idea of public/private sphere separation as being at the core of women's oppression has become a totalising narrative, erasing difference between women and their experiences, with domestic space being 'an arena of female consensus in opposition to increasingly multiple and contradictory public spheres' (222). Indeed, many of the popular feminist texts produced during this time entrenched understandings of woman as a category without the consideration of other factors; discussions of race and class were particularly absent in such texts as Friedan's (Fraterrigo 35). While Hilde Heynen

argues that second-wave feminism did impact upon the post-war cult of domesticity through its concentration on women's access to the public sphere (13), arguably these texts further emphasised the nugatory values of the domestic space, rather than trying to reimagine what could be salvaged from its patriarchal image. Furthermore, as Angela McRobbie highlights, many of these thinkers, including Greer and Friedan, had reneged on their domestic opposition by the 1980s (*Aftermath* 31).

Furthermore, such disavowals of domesticity in the second wave, though clearly understandable in their contexts, propose more problems than solutions. As Dolores Hayden has argued with regard to *The Feminine Mystique*, the problematic of the connection between women and the domestic space is positioned as 'more of a social than a spatial problem, yet the design of domestic space defied all architectural and technological rationality' (25). Therefore the domestic space in such feminist approaches, from Beauvoir to Oakley, rarely consider spatial or architectural solutions to the problem of separate spheres ideology. That is not to say that the subject of domestic space has been totally abandoned by the feminist project. The totalising view of the domestic space as intrinsically oppressive, as well as its links to a white and middle-class iteration of womanhood, were routinely challenged in academic feminism.

This has occurred throughout the third wave of feminism (broadly conceived as occurring from the late 1980s to the 2000s) and into the fourth wave (2010s-present), and was led by scholars working from within the intersection of feminist, queer, critical race, and postcolonial theories. Powerfully articulated in texts such as Minnie Bruce Pratt's "Identity: Skin Blood Heart" (1984); bell hooks' "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance" (1991), and Iris Marion Young's "House and Home: Variations on a Theme" (1997), this feminist dialogue acknowledged the sustaining patriarchal structure of the home, while also examining the domestic space as one that can have value particularly for women who were decentred from second-wave feminism by the white,

heteronormative, and middle-class image of the political movement. hooks noted that for black women specifically in the US, the act of creating a ‘homeplace’ as ‘the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist’ (42), is a political act within a racist society. In this essay hooks illustrates the value of home situated outside of a conservative rhetoric. Similarly, Young questions if there are ways of seeing beyond the patriarchal home as it constructed on the use and erasure of the maternal body, without eschewing the positives of the home space entirely (122). Young proposes four qualities of home—access to safety, individuation, privacy, and preservation—to form the basic foundations of a dwelling space configured outside of the patriarchal imaginary (142-144). Such qualities should be available to all: not merely as ideals but as concrete realities. Ultimately, as Young argues, while taking into account the feminist imperative to critique the domestic space, ‘it is difficult even for feminists to exorcise a positive valence to the idea of home’ (115).

However, it is significant that these feminist reappraisals have not had the same mainstream traction as second-wave texts scrutinising the oppressions of domesticity, not because they do not have valuable insights to offer, but because they challenge the normative values of home and the structures of capitalism, racism, classism, and heterosexism which underpin it, while refusing to give up on the home entirely. Such third-wave treatments of the domestic space do not propose spatial solutions to the domestic space but they do signal that the second-wave disavowal of the domestic requires rethinking. Yet, the second wave’s conception of domestic space have had a wider cultural impact in the West than reconsiderations of its uses, precisely because third-wave theorisations pose a larger challenge in the form of change and acceptance, rather than outright refusal.

The failure of domestic solutions which require fundamental structural change is also evident in the history of feminist-socialist projects of communitarian living and the

invention of domestic tools and technologies, which sought to envision the domestic space beyond the expectation of women's unpaid labour and maternal role, without eradicating or rejecting the space itself. Hayden's study of feminist innovations in the design and organisation of domestic space in the US, *The Grand Domestic Revolution* (1981), details the long history of communal living projects, home-economics literature, and shared domestic labour co-operatives which have all in different ways proposed solutions to the domestic space as it has been shaped by industrial capitalism.¹¹

Material feminism has sought to envision and innovate the domestic space as one in which domestic labour in particular is shared, made easier, and uprooted from its gendered division. These innovations, although some have been realised through the 'industrialisation' of domestic spaces (Schwartz Cowan 4) via household technologies, by and large amount to a lost future of a functional and egalitarian domestic space for all of its inhabitants; a loss that haunts the contemporary domestic space and feminist analyses of it. Such re-visioning gained little mainstream traction, and would come to be seen as 'remote' to the later generations (Fryer 41), mainly due to the fact that they would require an end to capitalist economies and the family as a fundamental unit of society. As Hayden notes, '[t]he material feminists' unrealized plans provide glimpses of daily life in a socialist, feminist world we have not yet seen' (302). While feminist theory and praxis has continually provided a platform for the problematics of the domestic space to be articulated, the mainstream solutions to these issues has left the domestic space in a marginal position within feminism itself and public life more broadly.

A broader cultural movement in the West to value the traditional or conservative aspects of the domestic space (as part of what Susan Faludi has termed the 'backlash'

¹¹ In her history, Hayden includes: Fourierist communities (35); household guides by Catharine Beecher advocating for the 'servantless' household (56); co-operative housekeeping groups organised by Melusina Fay Pierce (68).

against feminist politics and the expansion of civil liberties of the 1960s and 1970s) also accounts for the lost future of the feminist domestic space. Indeed, McRobbie, in *The Aftermath of Feminism*, has noted that from the 1980s onwards, a public rhetoric that is increasingly pro-family and pro-domesticity (31), a ‘defensively sentimental celebration of femininity’ (32)¹² has been inculcated. The pro-domesticity tenor of contemporary culture has thus positioned itself in response to the challenges of second-wave feminism, and its perceived ‘attacks’ on traditional conceptions of femininity and the family.¹³ In defiance of the oppressive home in second-wave feminism, the embrace of domesticity particularly at the beginning of the new millennium ‘rebranded [the home] as a domain of female autonomy and independence, far removed from its previous connotations of toil and confinement’ (Genz and Brabon (51-52)). In this way, the reanimation of traditional feminine domesticity places itself in a causal relation with the domestic disavowal in twentieth-century feminism.

Broader feminist political and legal projects of the contemporary era continue to focus more concertedly on women’s public, rather than private role, disregarding spatial solutions. In the constant deflection of the expectation of women’s unpaid domestic labour and in the continuing link between women and domestic space, many feminist considerations of domestic space, as discussed by Hayden, have been rendered into a lost future. The prevailing focus on the public sphere has transformed the domestic space into an unsolved problem within feminist theory and activism. Although aspects of feminism have been welcomed into mainstream political ideology and increasingly commodified within contemporary culture, to solve the issue of the domestic space for women would entail a full-scale deconstruction of not only patriarchal, but capitalist,

¹² McRobbie regards Faludi’s understanding of backlash as somewhat simplistic, preferring to characterise the 1980s onwards as a ‘disarticulation’ of feminist politics, a sustained campaign which has rendered the politics of the second wave as radical, other, and obsolete (*Aftermath* 34-35).

¹³ In these conditions it is evident why the work of hooks, Pratt, or Young written during this period of backlash and domestic reassessment did not gain mainstream traction.

social structures. It is easier to make the case for the inclusion of lower paid, self-managing female workers into the capitalist economy than to fully break down the patriarchal ideology inherent to the home and the unpaid labour within it.

The call for women's domestic work to be remunerated is one such tactic that has been frequently promulgated as a solution to inequalities of separate spheres, most prominently through the International Wages For Housework Campaign. This solution, however, has been viewed ambivalently by a number of feminist theorists. As Ellen Malos argues, being paid for labour does not solve the gendered division of that labour (23). However, the maxim clearly illustrates that housework is *work* and not a female biological function (Malos 26). Similarly, Hayden argues that '[t]o attack the exploitations of women's unpaid household labor successfully, it is essential to remove not only the idea of woman's sphere but its spatial embodiment, the isolated home' (295). As such, changes must be made to economic, ideological, *and* architectural structures, given that these entities are interlinked. Until that can happen on a mass scale, however, the domestic space and domesticity remains as unfinished business in feminist theory and praxis.

Lack of resolution such as this manifests as a type of haunting both within feminism and the domestic space itself. Munford and Waters note the way in which domestic identities, associated with post-war culture and second-wave feminism live on in domestic discourses of the present moment. In particular, the housewife is an ambivalent domestic figure within feminism, as is evident from Beauvoir, Greer, and Oakley's work. In such work, domestic labour and care work were typically denigrated 'on the grounds of its maternalist essentialism' (McRobbie, "Top Girls" 730). As Joanne Hollows argues, the housewife is typically 'excluded from the identity of "the feminist"' ("The Feminist and the Cook" 33), calling to mind Oakley's assertion that identifying with the term amounts to an antifeminist stance. Silvia Federici has

postulated that women reject the identity of housewife because '[t]hey know that this is the most powerless position in society and so they do not want to realise that they are housewives too' (194). Usurped by the career woman as a symbol of feminist progress, according to Munford and Waters, the housewife is 'a shadowy presence in the wings [...] a reminder to her feminist sisters of everything that feminism is not' (71). The housewife is invoked in contemporary culture to simultaneously showcase a typically second-wave conception of domestic oppression for women while also fetishizing a white, suburban and middle-class iteration of domesticity (Munford and Waters 72), thus inculcating an affective response of both pity and envy.

Acknowledging the 'domestic revivalism' (73) of twenty-first-century culture—complementing McRobbie's articulation of same, as well as Hollows' theory of the domestic 'downshifting' ("Can I Go Home Yet?" 108) and Diane Negra's 'retreatism' (9) in their respective studies of domesticity and postfeminism—Munford and Waters argue that given the binary conception of feminist versus housewife as 'a central axis of second wave feminism' (73), this distancing of the housewife is the reason for her repetitive and uncanny returns in contemporary popular culture. The housewife is a domestic figure who has been made spectral through her abjection within feminist politics and her oppression within a patriarchal space. Munford and Waters' exploration of the ways in which second-wave feminism, including its interlocutions on domestic space, are spectral presences in the twenty-first century illustrate the efficacy of hauntology as a critical lens for the domestic space. The way in which the subject of domestic space has been treated within feminist discourse illustrates in dialogue with hauntology how spectres are produced: through barriers to realisation, through loss, and through disavowal. However, as hauntology evidences, just because a concept or movement (whether Marxism, feminist domestic spaces, forms of liberation beyond what is promised through labour and commerce) is declared 'dead' does not mean its

power is necessarily diminished.

Whether it is communicated through the reanimation of the housewife or through the very idea of domesticity itself, the domestic space is a spectral entity within feminist thought. Here we return to a certain sense of ambivalence, already touched upon at several points throughout this chapter with regard to hauntology and the Gothic idiom of the haunted house: is there a point in which the domestic space might become a neutral entity, free from its patriarchal roots? Is it possible to imagine again alternatives to its current state which oscillates, as Fraiman has articulated, between rejection on the Left and spurious championing on the Right? Mainstream feminist discourses in the West sustain a dichotomy between public and private, yet its significant achievement has been in—as in the use of the Gothic by women writers—articulating the deeply rooted existential threat of subsumption that the domestic space can signify to women. As with the psychoanalytic and phenomenological considerations of domestic space, by Freud, Bachelard, and Certeau et al, feminism draws attention to the fact that domestic spaces house not only living people, going about their domestic practices, but a complex web of histories, memories, behaviours, and emotions. By acknowledging this value of domestic space, beyond the practicable function of shelter from the elements, there is recognition of why the space is one of intrinsic import to humans, even if the mood of that recognition shifts throughout time.

Conclusion

What is striking about these various—and sometimes opposing—considerations of domestic space examined in this chapter is that haunting emerges as a central imaginative trope. Whether it is the haunting trace of memory or the spectralised housewife, it seems as if the haunted house recurs constantly throughout time, space, and intellectual traditions. In this way, such recurrence can be perceived as conceptual travel (via Bal), illustrating the versatility and adaptability of an image intimately

associated with Gothic literature. Furthermore, this recurrence also signals something fundamental about the human experience of dwelling. As the hauntological spectre reminds us, haunting is a deliberate intercession of the past with the present, with ramifications for the future. Particularly with regard to women's experience of the domestic space as a *lived* and *imaginary* space, such haunting indicates a spatial and temporal issue that requires further investigation. Haunting disrupts 'the habitualized sense we make of objects [...] such that the configuration of materiality, space and bodies show up and are enabled in new and unexpected ways' (Holloway and Kneale 303). Hence, thinking hauntologically about the domestic space—recognising the multifarious ways it is and can be haunted by both past and future, by certain events and behaviours—adjusts preconceptions of domestic space beyond simple binaries.

Yet, beyond these perhaps platitudinous uses of defamiliarizing the ubiquity of the domestic space, this chapter will conclude with a consideration of the ambivalence of the hauntological spectre in the domestic space, in order to prepare for the close readings of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction in the chapters that follow. As explored in this chapter, hauntology provides a solution for framing the study of haunted houses in literary texts that are not necessarily defined in other ways as Gothic. The Gothic's focus on the intrinsic terror of the haunted domestic space precludes those literary texts in which ambivalence, not fear or anxiety, is the primary mode of feeling towards the space. In Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction, domestic spaces are certainly not wholly felicitous, as is evident in close readings of their texts but also find ways of imagining haunting beyond terror and which also resist closure on the problematic of the haunted domestic space. Moreover, the domestic spaces evoked in their fiction are not only home to recognisable spectres in the form of the returned dead, but ones which manifest through specifically spatial means: as inheritances and traces of the past that linger on, as well as futures that have not come to pass, signified by

landscapes, architecture, and objects.

These spectres signal something unresolved regarding a character's relation to family, nation, and the notion of domesticity itself. They typically emerge out of traumatic relations and instances of violence and death. They disrupt linear temporality, signified in the texts not only by a tendency to invoke the past but in the sudden jumps in time between memories of childhood and present experiences of adult life. These shifts in time are marked by movement between domestic spaces in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction; spaces that are always open to haunting, the sudden appearance of spectres. Finally, the absence of alternative forms of dwelling is another recurring feature of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction which allows spectres to appear and be identified. This is most evident in the primacy of the single-family home as an architectural form in this fiction, with other forms, such as apartments, mobile homes, or bedsits being framed in relation to this dominant form. Similarly, lack of alternatives are also frequently framed through the commonalities of experience between mother and daughter in domestic space, as a seemingly inescapable maternal inheritance figured as a haunting. Tensions between mothers and their daughters who have come of age in a new set of social conditions but also, crucially, inherit a past, is the basis for much of this fiction.

In the chapters that follow, it is evident that spectres in the domestic space are an indication that all is not well within the imaginary home. Yet, in Munro, Moore, and Enright's work, as will be seen, this spectral imposition is often treated as a mundane fact of living within a domestic space as a woman, as an inheritor of long-embedded values and behaviours. The lack of alternatives may leave no choice, this fiction suggests, but to accept and welcome the spectre and may also mean accepting and welcoming the conditions which create spectrality. This thoroughly ambivalent welcoming makes few claims for radicality or societal revolution. Munro, Moore, and

Enright's fiction does not necessarily or overtly advocate for social change. However, it does generate ways of thinking about the contemporary domestic space and its historical inheritances which may lead to rethinking the function of the space in the present and for the future in literature, with implications for cultural conceptions of domesticity and women's relation to it in the West. This question will be returned to in the Conclusion of this thesis, after the following close reading analysis of Munro, Moore, and Enright's respective hauntologies of domestic space.

Chapter 2
Alice Munro: Spectres of Memory

Introduction

To examine domestic space—even that which is haunted—in Alice Munro’s fiction may seem a predictable approach given that she is widely understood as a writer who privileges domestic matters. As mentioned in the introduction, Munro’s attention to houses and home furnishings, as well as domestic relationships, has been well-documented in scholarship on the author, particularly with regard to her earlier fiction. However, such is the affiliation between Munro and the domestic that this aspect of her fiction has often been treated as a quaint, even anachronistic, trope in her writing. Christian Lorentzen’s review of *Dear Life* (2012), is characteristic of this, trivialising the recurring domestic details of Munro’s realism: ‘[h]ow many rooms are in the house, and what sort of furniture and who used to own it and what is everybody wearing? To ask these questions is to live your life like a work of realism’. Lorentzen’s criticism appears to be rooted in a general apathy regarding literary realism, of which Munro is one of the best-known contemporary practitioners.

In Munro’s forty-four-year writing career (1968-2012),¹ the domestic space is frequently the well-spring of narrative inspiration. Domestic space is certainly not an ignored aspect in critical work on Munro and her fiction; that Munro renders domestic space faithfully and realistically in her fiction goes, almost, without saying. As Robert McGill notes, ‘Munro’s fiction might seem to evince a very traditional preoccupation with hearth and home’ (36). Yet, the domestic is at times only referenced in scholarship as a predetermined element of her fiction and requires further comprehensive

¹ Munro announced her retirement following the publication of *Dear Life* and prior to the awarding of the 2013 Nobel Prize for Literature.

examination. The aim of this chapter is to both build upon and question the seeming ubiquity of the domestic space in Munro's fiction, examining this aspect as more than just an incidental outcome of her narrative focus on women's lives or the realist mode she predominantly works within, but a distinct element of her short fiction which approaches and renders the spatial configurations of the domestic in complex ways and by complex means, primarily through the presence of domestic spectres.

One way into understanding this complexity is through reading Munro's representation of domestic space as hauntological, taking into account the relationship between interiors and exteriors, domestic architecture, and domestic objects. Munro's hauntology of domestic space lies in the function of memory in her narratives. Munro's propensity for 'looking back' (Howells, *Alice Munro* 101) in her fiction is an intrinsic element of her domestic hauntology as the domestic spaces her characters dwell in are frequently haunted by spectres of memory. This chapter will examine domestic space in a selection of Munro's short fiction collected and published between 1986 and 2012, in which memory as a form of haunting is centralised. Memory is significant to theoretical understandings of the domestic space as a lived space. As noted in the preceding chapter, which outlined 'thinking hauntologically' about the domestic space, the principal writings of the spatial turn in critical theory, namely Freud's "The Uncanny", Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, and de Certeau et al's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, foreground the role of memory not only as a fundamental aspect of the human experience of dwelling, but crucially figure it as a form of haunting. The connection between memory and domestic space has been noted with regard to Munro's fiction: domestic space in her work 'often reflects characters' psychic state' (Lorre-Johnston and Rao 13), and many of Munro's stories hinge on a character's return to a domestic space from the past (Zsizsmann 208).

Furthermore, memory is an inherently unstable entity in Munro's fiction. As Éva

Zsismann notes, in Munro's fiction 'memories are never complete: there are always gaps in the texture, details eluding the searching mind' (208). The ever-shifting nature of memory renders it spectral, unpredictable. This unpredictability, along with the deferral of fixed meaning regarding memory as a hallmark of Munro's short story practice, points to the ambivalence and irresolution signified by the hauntological spectre. Related to memory, mystery and secrecy undergird Munro's narratives, as many critics have noted. Isla Duncan argues that Munro's work 'is characterised by qualities that generate and deepen mystery—indeterminacy, obliqueness, layering, opaqueness, and the postponement or withdrawal of closure' (129); while on the subject of the domestic space specifically, houses in Munro's fiction are 'infused with secrets' (McGill 27). The types of secrets which are embedded in Munro's domestic spaces are those which are connected to violence, the taboo, or grotesque, undermining the placid surface of the domestic space. From the beginning of her career, Munro has routinely stressed the danger posed particularly to women and children in the domestic space, which is often explored through childhood memory.²

Death, in particular, is a frequent presence in Munro's later fiction, and arrives in various forms. Murder colours the domestic spaces in Munro's work: as Susan Warwick notes, murder occurs in five stories published between 1986 and 2009, in "Fits"; "The Love of a Good Woman"; "Dimensions", "Free Radicals"; "Child's Play". Both Ailsa Cox (*Alice Munro* 3) and Coral Ann Howells (*Fictional Words* 74) have identified traces of the Gothic in Munro's work, while Jack Zipes notes that Munro's fiction is 'filled with motifs from folklore, myth, and fairy tale' and Judith McCombs holds that Munro adapts "Bluebeard" in "The Love of a Good Woman" (327).³

² "Royal Beatings" is a particularly salient example, as Munro writes: 'Pots can show malice, the patterns of the linoleum can leer up at you, treachery is the other side of dailiness' (109).

³ However, these Gothic connections in Munro's fiction have also been troubled: Howells has argued that that Munro's later work in particular finds 'other ways for talking about the strange and the grotesque' (*Fictional Words* 77), while Andrea Szabó postulates that Munro's work, although employing a Gothic intertext, ultimately complicates the spatial paradigms of the Canadian Gothic.

Arguably, the prevalence of death in domestic spaces in Munro's fiction may have roots in her Depression-era upbringing. As Cynthia Comacchio has noted, the 'Depression lore of Canada is replete with family tragedies' (113), including instances of familicide or infanticide which were typically framed in media reports and judicial rulings as being in response to the economic pressures of the time. Although the stories considered in this chapter have, for the most part, contemporary settings, the lasting impact of fractures to family life situated in the effects of the Depression and the World Wars typically comes to the surface. Fundamentally, as Cox suggests, Munro's work is 'haunted by the dead [...] Silences and absences are made palpable, and although the past is irretrievable, memory strives to fill both the psychic and the spatial void' ("Space" 131) that death inculcates.

The destabilising presence of death in her fiction often comes into tension with Munro's repute as a realist. This tension is reflected in scholarship on Munro. Kristin Lucas claims that within critical work there are two seemingly contradictory interpretations of the writer: 'two Munros, one a writer of precisely rendered realist stories and the other a writer of fluid and destabilized narratives' (34).⁴ Yet, Munro's use of realist detail—her foregrounding of narratives within a tangible, accurate depiction of the everyday—is key to understanding the formal complexity of her short fiction, and moreover, the hauntology at play in domestic spaces in her fiction. As Ajay Heble argues, Munro's use of the trappings of realism, 'trivial details', are evoked in order to be ultimately deconstructed so that her fiction 'reveals itself to be maintaining and undoing reality at one and the same time' (4). Munro's use of metafictional techniques (Zsizsmann 209) in her stories—non-linear chronology, switches in focalisation, revisited memories, the disclosure of information at the end of

⁴ This doubling of Munro in her critical reception recalls the uncanny figure of the *doppelgänger*, suggested in the title of Catherine Sheldrick Ross' 1992 biography of Munro, *A Double Life*.

the narrative which shifts the reader's understanding or perspective—is key to her representation of the complex and unstable process of memory and its recollection, particularly when such memory manifests as spectral. Stephen Regan suggests that it is precisely this use of memory as 'a potentially unstable form of representation [...] [which] challenges any simple notion of realism' (112) in Munro's fiction. Rather than being considered as separate entities, Munro's simultaneous use of conventionally realist and more metafictional techniques, alongside the Gothic resonances in her work, are treated in this thesis as cooperative and co-dependent aspects of the short stories, and as central to Munro's hauntology of domestic space.

In Munro's fiction, memory is not simply housed within the domestic space but is deeply embedded and concealed, and its spectral invocation ruptures not only characters' lives but narrative structure as well. This is reflected on a formal level through a fragmented representation of past and present events. In Munro's work, time is frequently 'out of joint' as characters move through and between chronological eras. Primarily, the domestic spaces of childhood (1930s and 1940s) and early adulthood (1950s and 1960s) return or are returned to by Munro's characters and narrators. Munro's complex 'manipulation of time' particularly in the latter years of her career (Duncan 132) are key to understanding how memory functions as a spectre in the domestic spaces she represents in her fiction. Moreover, movement between chronological settings, memories, and narrative focalisation is signalled, as Cox notes, through paragraph breaks, white space, and titles which allow the reader to be involved in the meaning-making process of the text, 'relating individual sections to one another [...] as if we were roaming back and forth between the *rooms of a house*' (*Alice Munro* 58, emphasis added).

Munro's own theorisation, explored in a 1982 essay "What Is Real", of how she reads and writes a short story, borrows the motif of a house, and signals the metatextual

significance of the domestic space in her fiction.⁵ Munro identifies her technique as being: ‘like a house. Everybody knows what a house does, how it encloses space and makes connections between one enclosed space and another and presents what is outside in a new way’ (224). McGill notes that Munro’s house/story analogue illustrates that ‘fiction is a manner of built form [...] reading a narrative involves not only an engagement with fictional spaces but also the reader’s literal passage through the space of the story on the page’ (28). This, alongside Cox’s postulation regarding Munro’s formal innovation, suggests that domestic space has a dual function in Munro’s fiction.

Therefore, in the stories examined in this chapter, the domestic space is not only represented as a hauntological site, but also as a narrative setting for both character and reader which collapses time and space. Furthermore, Munro’s technique of what Howells refers to as ‘supplementarity’ (*Alice Munro* 10) in which new knowledge is revealed typically at the end of the narrative, causing character and reader to reconsider the story as a whole, constitutes a metafictional narrative ‘return’, mirroring both the process of memory itself and the nature of the spectre. Howells suggests that this technique has intensified in Munro’s work since the 1980s, with ‘supplementarity pervad[ing] the whole narrative through time shifts and shifts in narrative perspective, unsettling the story at every stage of its telling’ (*Alice Munro* 11). In this sense, if the story is a house—and Munro the architect—the reader along with characters and protagonists, become revenants impelled to return to the narrative-house to walk through its halls in search of meaning. Although this consideration of Munro especially privileges domestic description, rather than explicitly formal or narratological elements of fiction in its analysis, the Munroian house-as-story is important to call attention to,

⁵ As Miroslawa Buchholtz has noted, Munro shares the use of the spatial metaphor of the house as a means to explain fictional practice with Henry James, drawing a connection between the Munroian ‘House’ and the Jamesian ‘House of Fiction’.

as it shapes the reading of domestic description,⁶ as well as mirroring the spectralisation of memory in the texts.

By crossing boundaries of time, space, and form through narrative repetitions and returns, as well as through haunted and haunting spaces and objects, Munro's stories offer themselves up for productive hauntological readings. The following texts⁷ have been selected for analysis from collections published from 1986 to 2012: "The Progress of Love" (hereafter, "Progress"); "Fits"; "Friend of My Youth" (hereafter, "Friend"); "Wigtime"; "Vandals"; "The Love of a Good Woman" (hereafter, "Good Woman"); "Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage" (hereafter, "Hateship"); "Family Furnishings"; "Runaway"; "Dimensions"; "Fiction"; "Free Radicals" and "Gravel". Munro's specific concern with memory in her fiction manifests as spectral in these particular stories. Memory as a spectral entity breaks down boundaries between interior and exterior, causing values associated with this division of space to intersect and overwrite one another. Memories haunt characters and the spaces they dwell in and are represented by the domestic objects that surround them. Across these stories, the 'surface' details of domestic spaces in Munro's work are shown to operate on a deeper level than they initially seem and become a way of exploring the fundamental ideas at the heart of Munro's fiction.

Discourses of Domestic Space

Due to its shifting chronology, interest in explorations of the past, and a propensity to engage with multi-layered familial memory, Munro's fiction necessitates an examination of Canadian domestic ideologies rooted in the period from the First World War (1914-18), to the Great Depression (1929-1939) and after the end of the Second

⁶ The interdependence of these elements highlights Mieke Bal's postulations on the integration or 'stitching' of description into narrative (578).

⁷ Munro is known to be an avid revisionist of her stories, with initial publications in journals or magazines often differing immensely from the collected version. For the purposes of this chapter, quotations and analysis are taken, where possible, from the collected editions of Munro's stories.

World War (1939-1945).⁸ This historical context is important to consider not only because these time periods are central to Munro's settings and plots but are also a point in time in which domestic discourses in Canada considerably shifted and intensified. Notions of domesticity are deeply rooted in Canadian culture, due to the longevity of separate spheres ideology since the foundation of the modern nation state.⁹ However, this period is particularly rife with influential ideas on the family, maternity, child-rearing, and women's societal function. Mary Louise Adams, writing on the post-war period in Canada, notes that one of the primary effects of wartime was the concerted establishment of family life 'to a degree unparalleled in other historical periods in this country' (20). Crucially, as a reaction to both national and global upheaval, the re-entrenchment of domesticity was, although it focused on the private sphere and its personal relationships, ultimately connected to political interests.

In order to counter the instability of the wars and the Depression, an image of the domestic space emerged as a specific articulation of personal and political desires.¹⁰ The Great Depression revealed the particular vulnerabilities of the Canadian family (Comacchio 114). The death and trauma signified by the wars required the order and safety of the family home, while the perceived threats of the Cold War, immigration, and non-normative sexualities were countered by a powerful image of the ideal domestic space housing a white, heterosexual, and financially prosperous nuclear family (Adams 20-21) As Annalee Gözl postulates, the post-war period in particular signified a reaction to the 'gender dislocations', as well as the socio-economic upheavals, of the

⁸ As Regan notes, in contemporary Canadian literature the First and Second World Wars and the Great Depression are the defining events employed specifically in 'memory fiction', including the work of Munro (112), in which the 'impact of two world wars resonates [...] even in its most contemporary settings' (124).

⁹ As a settler-colonial state, modern Canadian constructions of domestic space and domesticity are closely aligned with those found in Britain and France, the primary settling powers of the modern nation state (Ward 8-10). Similarly, as Comacchio notes, pre-Confederation Canada was structured around "paternal rule and 'separate spheres' for women and men" (5).

¹⁰ In an article for Maclean's Magazine on 15th May 1943 entitled "War Damages Family Life," A. Beverly Baxter claimed the Canadian home as 'a shrine to which the thoughts and yearnings of men overseas turn as to a fixed star' (qtd. in Gözl 13).

Depression and First and Second World Wars (9). Hence, the positioning of women as domestic subjects in the twentieth century is crucial to examine. Such gender dislocations were related to women's larger participation in the labour market and the restructuring of gender roles based on economic duties during this period. It is generally held that as the financial effects of the Depression, including large-scale male unemployment, lead to married women taking on employment outside of the home, as 'secondary workers' (Bellou and Cardia). Similarly, the wars required women's increased labour involvement as part of the war effort. After the end of the Second World War, discourses of femininity, related behaviours, and forms of labour, were relocated back into the domestic space. A discourse of 'vocation' became entwined with motherhood (Gözl 16), resurrecting a similar discourse of 'mothercraft' which developed in medico-scientific literature during the late nineteenth century, as Katherine Arnup has articulated (193). Hence, a discourse of labour remained central to ideas of femininity in Canada, however, conceptions of that labour as public or private (and paid or unpaid) shifted in peace time.

Despite the power of the post-war image of normative domesticity, for various reasons, this gender 'relocation' was not a straightforward return for many women. While traditional domesticity was promoted at an alarming rate in the post-war era, women's labour force inclusion rose, rather than fell, after the Second World War (Strong-Boag 479-80). Narratives of women's domestic aptitude—their vocational status as mothers—co-existed with a growing expectation, economic necessity, and in some cases, women's personal desire to work outside of the home. While wives' and mothers' employment outside of the home ensured more economic stability within a family and supported growing domestic consumerism in the country (Strong-Boag 480; Roach Pierson 4) it also appeared to threaten the order of family life that was central to the perceived strength of the post-war nation. Given the symbiotic relationship between

nation and family during this time, women's position within the domestic space as wife and mother was key. The increase in women working outside of the home brought with it an anxiety regarding children and juvenile delinquency (Gözl 13).¹¹ As children (and hence their upbringing) were of particular importance in Canada during this time, as a symbol of futurity (Adams 27), the intersection between maternity and nation is clear. Public acknowledgement of instances of juvenile delinquency disrupted, according to Franca Iacovetta, the mythos of normative domesticity rooted in a suburban ideal (590). Mismanagement of the domestic space by women, as well as other issues such as inadequate or unsafe housing, placed the domestic space at the centre of larger societal anxieties.¹² Perhaps as a way to assuage such anxieties regarding the family, the Canadian government began to focus on the issues of women's employment and domestic work through national committees and commissions.¹³ To varying degrees, these official bodies attempted to emphasise women's incontrovertible contribution to society, *either* as mothers or as workers, but rarely as both; rights and responsibilities accorded by the state were contingent on women fulfilling a certain social role.

Despite the importance of the nuclear family and the promulgation of idyllic images of domestic life, a counternarrative to this existed not only in the anxiety expressed about women's work but also regarding the inherent danger of domestic space for women during the inter- and post-war years. Feminist movements in Canada have been concerned with this issue since the first wave of activism in the late nineteenth century.¹⁴ During the second wave of the 1960s and 1970s, according to

¹¹ In particular, this anxiety orbited around the figure of the young girl, which is especially palpable in Munro's fiction.

¹² As Iacovetta illustrates, social worker case notes for legal proceedings regarding young women and girls' delinquency often detailed the type of domestic space the girl was brought up in, observing both the moral quality of the home as well as its architectural form and location (618).

¹³ These included the Subcommittee on the Post-War Problems of Women (1943), the Canadian Youth Commission's Committee on the Family (1943-47), and, perhaps most significantly, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) in 1967.

¹⁴ The close ties between women's suffrage and the temperance movement in Canada is significant in this regard. Many Canadian women were introduced to feminist activism through the temperance movement, which correlated male violence in the domestic space with alcohol consumption (Valverde 566).

Ruth Roach Pierson, feminist discourses focused on ‘the issue of the oppression of women in the domestic sphere’ (1). Beyond middle-class domestic ennui,¹⁵ other issues regarding the space were brought to light. The hidden prevalence of domestic violence in Canada became one of the central concerns of grassroots feminist movements in the wake of the post-war period. As Nancy Janovicek notes, discussion of domestic violence during the RCSW hearings was proscribed by chair Florence Bird as it was accepted that such violence was adequately dealt with under existing criminal laws (4). Domestic violence is generally referred to as ‘family violence’¹⁶ in Canada and is technically legislated for under the country’s criminal code.

However, the proliferation of women’s shelters and transition houses established within communities during the 1960s and 1970s speaks to the prevalence of violence that took place in the domestic space (Janovicek 3). According to Joan Sangster, the intense focus on re-stabilising the family during the inter- and post-war periods did not allow for a questioning of patriarchal ideals and behaviours enshrined within the notion of family and that ‘[w]omen’s resistance to violence was severely circumscribed by their fears of reprisal, poverty, social condemnation, and concern for their children’ (“Meanings of Mercy” 518). The seeming impartiality of the criminal code—which makes no distinction in terms of legislation between violence in the home versus violence in the public sphere—arguably fails to acknowledge that certain behaviours, such as violence towards certain subjects, are culturally constructed to be more permissible within the assumed privacy of the domestic space.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s several advances were made in public policy

¹⁵ Roach Pierson suggests that the popularity of Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* in Canada in the 1960s, was ‘anticipated in *Chatelaine* and other Canadian women’s magazines, as far back as the late 1950s’ (2).

¹⁶ Family violence within Canadian law refers to physical, emotional, sexual, or financial abuse and/or neglect of children, intimate partners, and elderly persons. There has been some critique within Canadian feminisms of the broadness of the term and its potential to ignore the gendered nature of violence within families (Janovicek 10). The term is used in Canada more often than ‘domestic violence’, a term more common to Ireland and the US.

regarding women's equality: amendments to legislation have altered labour codes which prohibit discriminatory employment practices based on gender; federal divorce laws have been introduced; and medical abortion in most provinces has been made legally accessible.¹⁷ However, by the late 1980s, as in similar occurrences in the US, Ireland and the West more broadly, politics in Canada began its about-face towards conservatism (Wine and Ristock 6) which hindered the progress of women's rights.¹⁸ Nostalgia for the idealised post-war home and housewife proliferated, framed through a feminist rhetoric of 'choice' (Roach Pierson 15-16). Into the late 1990s and 2000s, the image of the self-sufficient nuclear family remains.

Although the global image of Canada in the contemporary moment rests on an image of equality, particularly gender equality,¹⁹ the family remains an important structure and central tenet in Canadian society. Both the Conservative and Liberal parties of Canada have built political campaigns around the image and idiom of 'the family', and although these parties are positioned on opposite ends of the political spectrum, as Kate Bezanson argues, both 'have pursued family-related policies with at times convergent [...] gendered outcomes' (175), which typically rely on sustaining women's unpaid domestic labour. Similarly, a middle-class image of the Canadian nuclear family is sustained: as Susan Prentice et al note, the normative family in Canada remains wedded to middle-class values while 'children and parents in working-class, Aboriginal, immigrant, and other minority families are too often scrutinized, over-

¹⁷ For many of these laws, the necessity of women's equality has been argued on the basis of wording of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, incorporated into the Canadian Constitution in 1982 (Boyd 263).

¹⁸ This was especially led by Conservative governments since 1980: the Mulroney government (1984-1993) restricted universal Family Allowance payments and child benefits and failed to create nationalised childcare (Roach Pierson 17); while during Stephen Harper's tenure as prime minister (2006-2015), national childcare was reneged and child benefit supports from the state were subject to neoliberalisation (Prentice et al 8).

¹⁹ The notion of Canada as a gender-equal nation is buttressed by its Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as its 'self-declared feminist prime minister' (Bezanson 170), Justin Trudeau. However, as many scholars have pointed out, the nation state performs liberalised notions and practices of equality, while routinely failing its First Nation, Inuit, and Métis populations, as well as perpetuating whiteness as the norm.

policed, and made the object of unwanted public intervention' (1). Therefore, a particular image of the family still prevails, and the notion of the family itself is still subject to national anxiety. While war time and post-war ideologies of domesticity, as well as women's material lives, inevitably have shifted in the latter half of the twentieth century and in to the twenty-first, the recurring invocation of such domestic discourses in Munro's fiction, even in those stories set in the contemporary moment, suggest that despite changes, disruptions, and diversions to accepted norms, there are certain elements deeply rooted in the domestic space which refuse to be exorcised. As Munro's hauntology of domestic space seems to suggest, such historical precedents inform lived experience more than individuals can often articulate or acknowledge, manifesting in various ways within the space.

Interiors/Exteriors

Geographical place is undeniably important in Munro's fiction, where the landscapes of south western Ontario and British Columbia predominate. The small townlands of Huron County in the former and the cities of Vancouver and Victoria and rural farms of Vancouver Island in the latter are settings that are frequently returned to in Munro's short stories. Munro's connection to south western Ontario has been well established but as Robert Thacker has argued, the place names and landscapes of British Columbia, particularly Victoria, are of equal importance to Munro's work and identity as a writer ("Munro's Victoria"). Similarly, the geographical purview of Munro's collections of the 1980s and 1990s expanded beyond Canadian borders to Australia, New Zealand, Albania, and Scotland (Simonds 33; Howells, *Alice Munro* 2).

Rurality is particularly central to the sense of place in Munro's writing. Undeniably, many of Munro's stories are set in urban and suburban areas. Nevertheless, the degree to which rural place recurs in Munro's work, and critical preoccupation with that recurrence, indicates a profound, career-long interest in rural settings and their

meaning.²⁰ Despite excursions elsewhere in the world, as Howells notes, ‘the Ontario small-town rural community remains [Munro’s] ground base’ (*Alice Munro* 2). Munro and her work are so associated with the landscape of Huron County in south western Ontario, that the location is often referred to by Munro critics as ‘Alice Munro Country’.²¹ The towns that populate her short fiction, such as Walley, Jubilee, and Carstairs, are understood to have affiliations with Munro’s own hometown of Wingham, Ontario and its surrounding areas.²²

Aside from the skill with which Munro writes about rural place, it can also be considered as a key element of the hauntology of domestic space in her work. More broadly, rural place, frequently considered under the term of the ‘wilderness’ in Canadian Studies, can be understood as a haunted landscape in Canadian literature and culture, being primarily associated with death.²³ As Margaret Atwood notes in *Survival*, the natural world in Canadian wilderness texts is ‘often dead and unanswering or actively hostile to man; or, seen in its gentler spring and summer aspects, unreal’ (17). This inherent presence of death in Canadian rural landscapes can be seen in Munro’s fiction, and critics such as Faye Hammill consider Munro, along with Atwood, to have written ‘some of the most significant contemporary Canadian wilderness texts’ (86). However, the designation of the wilderness myth may appear to preclude discussions of domesticity in its insistence on a strict binary of inside/outside. Indeed, as Howells argues regarding early Canadian women’s writing, the wilderness was frequently figured as ‘the pathless image beyond the enclosure of civilized life’ (*Fictional Words*

²⁰ Certainly, the richness with which Munro imbues rural settings cannot be contested. Marilyn Simonds regards Munro’s urban settings as ‘stage set[s]’ (32) in comparison the more potent presence of her rural settings.

²¹ Such is the ubiquity of the link between such a rural setting and Munro that as Lorre-Johnston and Rao have noted, Munro has ‘been—wrongly—confined to the label of “regional writer”’ (2).

²² According to Simonds, Munro was born in Wingham hospital, however, her childhood home was situated in the ‘poor side of town’ in Morris-Turnberry Township (28).

²³ Thematic criticism in Canadian literary studies, popularised by Northrop Frye and Atwood, identified the emblematic motifs and images of the wilderness: uncharted territories, underpopulated rural landscapes, snow and ice, the forested hinterland of the bush, and the deathly inclination of nature.

15) in such literature. However, while tropes of the wilderness myth are utilised in Munro's depiction of the rural landscape—particularly of Huron County—images and motifs of 'civilized life' are simultaneously present and are vital to understanding Munro's complex treatment of spatial values.

Munro's rural landscapes are characterised not only by the presence of death but by the use of domestic imagery. The way in which this prevalence of domestic imagery can be understood as being part of Munro's specific hauntology is through two particular images which roughly bookend Munro's writing career: the 'deep caves paved with kitchen linoleum' (from *The Lives of Girls and Women*) and the 'drab agricultural counterpane' of the Huron County landscape (from *The View From Castle Rock*). These two images reveal the ways in which spatial boundaries are ruptured in Munro's short stories so that domestic space and rural landscape consistently intersect and extend into one another. The image of the linoleum cave is considered a distinguishing feature of Munro's work (Howells, *Fictional Words* 73; Rao 49) and a key to understanding how her stories operate (Lorre-Johnston 133). Primarily, the image's integration of the hidden (the cave) and the mundane (linoleum) evokes Freud's uncanny, as a marrying of the known and unknown. This opens up interpretative possibilities: as Jason Blake notes, commenting on the counterpane image, the image is 'telling: a quilt or bedspread can be beautiful and striking, and a lot can go on under the drabest of bedding' (87). From linoleum to counterpane, Munro's description of rural landscape is imbued with domestic imagery which signals something beyond its mundane materiality, and reorders not only space but time through the imposition of memory.

A concurrent haunting, therefore, occurs both in Munro's landscapes and domestic spaces and, crucially, in the intersection between them. Far from turning the rural Canadian landscape into something quaint or domesticated, the function of the

domestic imagery is to intensify the shared menace and deathliness of both rural place and domestic space. These images signal obfuscation and revelation, two central features in Munro's fiction. As Blake notes, 'plainness and the apparent lack of striking features is crucial in Munro precisely because the chaos that lies hidden threaten to emerge' (87). These two images are also connected to the function of memory in Munro's fiction, which, as discussed in the introduction of this chapter, is an inherently spectral entity due to its instability and constant re-evaluation. Although such use of domestic images may at first glance appear to undermine the inherent threat of the Canadian wilderness—literally domesticating the landscape—in Munro's fiction, because the domestic space routinely complicates accepted values of safety, protection, and shelter through the intrusion of violence and death, the presence of domestic imagery in the landscape doubles the presence of death. Much has been made of the way in which Munro focuses on surface detail (Thacker, *Reading Alice Munro* 50), but as the linoleum and counterpane images illustrate, by focusing on the surface Munro simultaneously indicates the depths hidden below.

One such story which epitomises this complex interplay between spatial values is "Vandals". In this story, domestic imagery extends to descriptions of the Ontarian landscape. "Vandals" is a story imbued with various forms of harm and threat which are articulated through the memories of Bea and Liza in connection to a man named Ladner. Ladner, who is Bea's partner, is through her initial focalisation of her memory of them meeting the narrative's Gothic hero, living and working on the land, away from the civilizing forces of culture, giving 'his attention to nature' (223). However, Ladner's work as a taxidermist suggests a more dominant relationship to the natural world, and to other people, rather than that of a peaceful conservationist. As well as keeping the taxidermied animals in his house, Ladner places them around his land, creating dioramas and placing exhibition text and labels nearby; such labelling and curation

signify his control (McGill 29). Nature, trapped in the stasis of death, sits alongside its living, thriving form. Ladner's work indicates a clear desire for control. Taxidermy is decorative, and often used for scientific display, but is also a practice which displays humans' perceived mastery over the natural world. These animals become material objects as they are mounted and displayed, significantly, within repurposed household appliances:

a glass-fronted case containing a stuffed golden eagle with its wings spread, a gray owl, and a snow owl. The case was an old gutted freezer, with a window set in its side and a camouflage of gray and green swirls of paint (227).

Household consumer objects, associated with the consumerist world which Ladner has supposedly rejected, suggests the level of control he exhibits towards his surroundings; a control that is 'domestic' on numerous levels. As Carrie Dawson argues, Ladner's taxidermy, 'the violation and manipulation of bodies [...] man's domination of nature', is unequivocally linked to his sexual abuse of Liza and her younger brother Kenny during their childhood (74). For Liza, the blurring of boundaries and spatial values is connected to her trauma at the hands of Ladner, and what she comes to perceive as Bea's knowledge of and complicity with same. As a child, Liza, the neighbour of Ladner and Bea, lacked a secure, safe home due in part to her mother's death and father's indifference towards domestic matters. For Liza, as a child, both domestic space and the controlled wilderness of Ladner's land were unsafe. The threat of Ladner's control takes on deeper significance in the switch in focalisation from Bea's memories of Ladner to Liza's remembrance of her childhood. This switch occurs with the now-adult Liza travelling with her husband Warren to Bea and Ladner's house to check on it while Ladner receives treatment in hospital. The prominence of the snow-covered landscape which Liza and Warren traverse is significant. The landscape is described thus:

the trees along the eastern bank were all plastered with snow, clotted with it, their branches spread out like *wicker snow baskets*. On the western banks, drifts curled like waves stopped, like huge *lappings of cream* [...] a back road full [with snow] *as a bed* (232, emphasis added).

Here, the wild landscape is cast as serenely domestic and turned into a scene of comfort, as signalled by the images of wicker baskets, cream, and beds. The suggested comfort of the landscape is directly contrasted with the landscape as experienced by Liza as a child, memories of which resurface in Liza's section of the narrative. In childhood, the land is conflated with Ladner's abuse: 'a bruise on the ground, a tickling and shame in the grass' (244). Sexual threat has long been linked to rural space in Canada since the nineteenth century. According to Sangster, '[s]exual depravity and danger, it was presumed, were more likely to be located in the "wild" and untamed north (particularly after the influx of non-Anglo immigrants) or in rural areas that were experiencing economic hardship' ("Masking" 514). In Liza's memory of the abuse, Ladner's body is rendered in animalistic terms and conflated with the animals he has taxidermied: his body is 'collapsed heavily, like the pelt of an animal flung loose from its flesh and bones' (245) and his eyes are 'hard and round as the animals' glass eyes' (245).

Regarding this association between the rural landscape and sexual abuse in Munro's story—an association, as Sangster notes, that is embedded in Canadian culture—the domestic comfort of the snowy landscape appears on further reading as an incongruous image. However, because Ladner's abuse is associated in Liza's memory with the summer landscape, the snow—although deathly and dangerous—becomes a site of comfort, as it momentarily obscures the association between land and abuse. Corinne Bigot argues that Munro utilises snow in her fiction as 'the instrument through which secrets are concealed *and* revealed' ("Mapping" 74, emphasis in the original). The obfuscating snowy landscape in "Vandals" is an articulation, therefore, of the way in which unassuming domestic imagery in Munro's landscapes denote hidden threat, as well as deeply embedded memory.

In keeping with the constant re-orientation of spaces and boundaries, a motif of trespass and infiltration colours the story, primarily through Ladner's abuse, and culminates in Liza and Warren's seemingly spontaneous destruction of the interior of Bea and Ladner's house. It is significant that it is the house that Liza and Warren destroy, rather than the land, which is the primary site of the sexual abuse. As McGill suggests, this destruction is 'Liza's response to Ladner's violent masculine order [...] [through] vehement disordering' (30). Arguably, because the snow obscures the landscape and its association with trauma, Liza's traumatic memory is transferred to the domestic space. Therefore the destruction of the domestic space is not only revenge upon the primary perpetrator of the abuse, Ladner, but also Bea, whom Liza views as Ladner's co-conspirator.²⁴

This redirection or even sublimation of Liza's traumatic memory from one space to another (and from one individual to another) recalls the inherent mobility of the hauntological spectre. The sexual abuse Liza was subjected to as a child now haunts her adulthood—as is heavily suggested throughout the story, from Liza's rejection of a university education funded by Bea to her controlled life of getting 'up early in the morning to do knee bends and read Bible verses' (232). Rather than the spectre coming in the form of Ladner (although he is represented through Gothic, deathly images in the story), it is the memory of the abuse itself that becomes spectral, as it roams from space to place and reorders spatial boundaries and values. In "Vandals", Munro treats space and memory as interlinked. However, she does not merely map one concept on to the other. Rather, she renders both as complex entities: memory reorders space; space reorders memory. Furthermore, the switch in focalisation and temporal travel between the present moment and Bea and Liza's memories of an earlier time illustrate the out-of-

²⁴ As critics such as McGill and Dawson have argued, Bea's knowledge of the abuse is suggested throughout the story, yet never explicitly confirmed. Speaking about *Open Secrets*, in which "Vandals" is collected, Munro has noted that she 'wanted to record how women adapt to protect men' (*Meanjin Quarterly*) with the collection.

joint nature of traumatic memory.

Regarding “Vandals”, McGill notes that ‘hostilities arise when men use space to define and dominate other people, especially by asserting their own mobile subjectivity while controlling others’ ability to range’ (29). This can be seen in a number of Munro’s stories, most notably “Runaway”. This story converges with “Vandals” in significant ways, not least in the way in which domestic detail is used to depict rural landscape, but also in its preoccupation with memory, death, and male violence. On first reading, “Runaway” may appear to conflate the rural landscape with freedom from entrapping domesticity. As Fiona Tolan proposes, the story is one of multiple and overlapping ‘frustrated departures’ (164) from confining situations and spaces for the characters of Carla, Sylvia, and Flora. For Carla, the rural landscape associated with her husband Clark is at first an escape from her parents’ bourgeois values, represented by the home: ‘their house, their backyard [...] their Cuisinart, their *powder room*, their walk-in closets’ (33, emphasis in the original). Later, the farmland surrounding Clark’s property becomes a place of respite from his all-encompassing presence in their mobile home, his ‘weight[ing] down all their inside space’ (9) with his emotional volatility. Yet these escapes, as Tolan notes, are provisional (162). Carla’s attempted escape to Toronto, which is aided by her neighbour Sylvia and impelled by the farm’s pet goat Flora’s escape, is never completed. In Carla’s memory, the rural landscape is ultimately associated with Clark, even as she uses it as a provisional escape from his emotional control. As such, Carla’s perception of the rural landscape from the bus window as she makes her way to Toronto—‘[t]he whole countryside was changing, shaking itself loose [...] as they sped along she was able to see not much trace at all of the recent past’ (31-32)—is that of the erasure of memories, specifically those related to Clark.

Carla’s return, driven by the fear of losing her connection to Clark, appears to settle the conflicts in her marriage. However, Munro’s supplement to this seemingly

happy coda recentres betrayal and male violence within the narrative, as has been alluded to by Clark's unpredictable moods throughout the story. On the night of Carla's escape/return, Flora reappears to Sylvia and Clark, as Clark berates Sylvia for encouraging Carla to leave. Flora is one of the central spectres in "Runaway".²⁵ She is physically absent throughout most of the narrative, present only in Carla's dreams.²⁶ When she returns, she is described explicitly as a ghost: she emerges out of the fog of the night, 'an unearthly sort of animal, pure white, hell-bent' (39) and Clark remarks, "'We thought you were a ghost [...] Like an apparition'" (40). However, this return, like Carla's escape, is temporary. It is suggested that Clark has hidden Flora's return from Carla when, in a conciliatory letter to Carla, Sylvia mentions Flora's homecoming—of which Carla has no knowledge. Furthermore, Carla's uncovering of animal remains deep in the woods surrounding their farmland suggests that Clark has killed Flora as revenge for Carla's departure. On this discovery, domestic imagery incongruously intersects with that of death and landscape in the description of the remains: 'the little dirty bones in the grass [...] A skull that [Carla] could hold like a teacup in one hand' (47). The implied death of Flora, the 'other' runaway of the story, in the wild indicates some kind of punishment for pursuing freedom, in accordance with the deathly nature of the wilderness, as Carla's insistence that Flora 'might be free' (47) seems to suggest.

The quaint image of the skull as a teacup complicates the protective attributes of the domestic space in revealing Clark's murderous intent. In this sense, Flora is the sacrificial runaway of the story, a warning to Carla to accept her entrapment. As Bigot has noted, reading "Runaway" alongside a later story "Dimensions", Munro places

²⁵ The other spectre of the text is Leon, Sylvia's deceased husband. Although his death and its aftermath are significant to the plot, this aspect of the story will not be dealt with here, as it does not pertain to the relationship between interior and exterior spaces.

²⁶ The potential punning of 'ghost' and 'goat'—similar to the punning of hauntology/ontology—also suggests Flora's spectrality.

Carla in a classic double-bind, between life and death, blurring the boundary between these divisions in the process: for Carla ‘choosing life with Clark may mean choosing death’ (“Life and Death” 103). Bigot’s postulation here recalls the fundamental paradox of the spectre as representing both life and death. Thus, in choosing to return to Clark and accept his control and potential capability for violence, Carla is too rendered spectral. Through the image of the teacup-skull, death in the landscape and death in the domestic space are aligned, just as Flora and Carla are aligned in spectrality. Neither space—but perhaps particularly the domestic space—is safe from that threat. The positioning of Flora as Carla’s ghostly animal double means that the discovery of her remains—and the related suggestion of Clark’s violence—requires a ‘shaking’ of past memories, similar to that which is experienced by Carla during her escape. The teacup-skull image reveals enough information so that death—Flora’s actual and Carla’s deferred—becomes a spectral presence in both landscape and domestic space, fundamentally restructuring Carla’s memories of safety and security associated with Clark.

Boundaries between inside and outside and life and death are similarly undermined in the memories of the narrator of “Gravel”. The story is told from the perspective of an unnamed narrator, recounting childhood memories of her parents’ separation and the death of her older sister, Caro, by accidental drowning. In “Gravel”, as in so many of Munro’s stories, ambiguity of motivation and narrative instability transform memories into spectral entities. Caro’s death is the central haunting event in the narrator’s memories of childhood. It is a trauma which colours not only her conscious memory but also her dreams. Such trauma accords a sense of time- and placelessness to the narrative. It is clear that the narrator is retelling the past from their present, adult perspective, however, there is no explicit anchoring of time or place in the

story.²⁷ Amidst such vagueness, landscape—and its connection to death—becomes crucial. The landscape in question is the land surrounding the mobile home in which the narrator and Caro live with their mother and her new partner Neal. Neal’s mobile home is situated in a rural area of a township, down an isolated lane. Neal, an actor, is a symbol of death—he not only plays the role of Banquo²⁸ in a local production of *Hamlet* but also conceivably introduces death into the text due to the location of his home beside the gravel pit in which Caro will drown. Just as the land in “Vandals” and “Runaway” becomes associated with trauma and death, so too does the land in “Gravel”. Caro’s accidental drowning—one of many child-drownings to be found in Munro’s work (Cox, “Space” 128)—turns her into a spectre, as she ‘lives’ on in the narrator’s memories. Furthermore, the non-linear fashion (echoing the back-and-forth temporalities of both “Vandals” and “Runaway”) in which the narrator reveals the events, self-consciously aware of gaps and absences, suggests the spectral quality of traumatic memory itself, as a psychic revenant.²⁹

The gravel pit as symbol of death—unlike the snow in “Vandals” or the skull in “Runaway”—does not appear to interpolate a jarring image of the domestic into that of rural landscape. Instead, the gravel pit’s evident deathliness, is, years after Caro’s drowning, replaced by domestic spaces. The pit is built upon, with ‘trendy houses’ (106) in its place. As such, in “Gravel”, the connection between domestic imagery and rural landscape is rather more transparent. However, it functions similarly to those more

²⁷ There are suggestions throughout the text that the story may be set around Stratford, Ontario, where the Stratford Shakespeare Festival has operated since 1952: ‘In town there was a professional summer theatre, a new thing at the time’ (93). Therefore, it may be inferred that the story takes place in or around Stratford after 1952. Cox also suggests the setting may be the 1960s or 1970s, due to references to the atomic bomb and hippie counterculture (“Space” 126).

²⁸ The narrator describes Neal’s Banquo as a ‘solid ghost’ (95); this spectrality is noted by Cox (“Space” 128) in her analysis of memory and absence in the story.

²⁹ This conceptualisation of traumatic memory echoes throughout Freud’s postulations on the unconscious and is further reified within the germinal texts of trauma theory, including Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub’s *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (1992) and Cathy Caruth’s *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996), as well as being supported by research on the neurological and physiological effects of trauma.

sublimated images of domesticity: it simultaneously obscures and reveals memory. This building-over of the gravel pit by houses may seem to erase the traumatic memory sited therein, yet, absence necessarily signals presence (Cox, “Space” 130). Thus, it is suggested that such erasure—the building over or anew of traumatic memory—is impossible. In “Gravel”, as in “Vandals” and “Runaway”, knowledge can never be erased or un-known, even as it is displaced by time, or is obscured from view. The trauma associated with the gravel pit remains for the narrator, even as in time the landscape duly changes. The houses obscuring the presence of the gravel pit are ‘put up on unproductive land’ (106). The double meaning of ‘unproductive’ here suggest that the land, although it has produced a senseless thing—the trauma of Caro’s death—it cannot provide meaning or resolution for the narrator. Despite the narrator’s avowed scepticism of psychoanalysis as a way of giving trauma meaning,³⁰ and her mother’s inability to ‘be made to recall any of those times’ (106), the site of the former gravel pit exists as a pilgrimage site for both, suggesting the haunting nature of traumatic memory as it is both related to land and domestic space. As Cox argues regarding “Gravel”, ‘Munro often uses landscape to enact the erasure of memory and the absence of knowledge—or even its suppression’ (“Space” 129). Erasure and suppression of memory and knowledge—always interlinked in Munro’s fiction—are fundamental to “Vandals” and “Runaway”, in a similar manner. This erasure is achieved through the intrusion of domestic imagery into descriptions of the landscape. In Munro’s fiction, domestic imagery is not employed as a foil to the wilderness or to mitigate its threat. Through ‘surface’ images related to the domestic, the boundary between inside and outside is shown to be diminished, and even inexistant.

³⁰ The narrator, at some point in adulthood, has discussed Caro’s death with a ‘professional person’ (103): ‘she convinced me—for a time, she convinced me—that I must have tried the door of the trailer and found it locked. Locked because my mother and Neal were having sex and had locked it against interruptions’ (103). The repeated use of ‘convinced’ indicates a sense of imposition or falsification. Similarly, the narrator’s insistence that ‘[a]ll the eviscerating that is done in families these days strikes me as a mistake’ (106) also suggests a suspicion towards psychoanalysis.

All the same, such images usher spectrality into the lives of the female characters of “Vandals”, “Runaway”, and “Gravel”. Although Liza expresses the effect of this spectrality in her destruction of Ladner’s house, Carla and the narrator of “Gravel” largely accept the ways in which their memories become spectral and confer spectrality. The domestic image in its seeming incongruity works to challenge the binary construction of domestic space and the wild landscape—both bring about death; neither offers freedom nor safety. Furthermore, by melding images of the domestic with the landscape, Munro’s fiction structures space—in its most general conception—and time as palimpsests of memory, knowledge, and narrative. That this is figured by Munro as being hidden underneath the surface of the ordinary, recurring images of the domestic—counterpanes, linoleum, blankets, teacups, and houses themselves—points towards the complexity of the domestic space and its hauntological resonances in her fiction.

Domestic Architecture

Examining the relationship between interior and exterior space illustrates that expected constructions of the domestic space are frequently fractured in Munro’s short stories. This too is evident in the architectural forms which predominate in her fiction: apartments and the single-family home. As with descriptions of landscape, descriptions of architecture in Munro’s later fiction frequently invoke death, violence, and existential alienation as constant presences. Beginning with an exploration of apartments and their relationship to singleness, before considering the haunted nature of the family home, this section will further articulate the hauntology of domestic space in Munro’s fiction via the motif of memory as spectral. The architectural forms in the short stories considered below construct the domestic space, domesticity, and family, as inherently deleterious entities for women. Again, supplementarity and chronological manipulation—representative of the memory process—add to the sense of immutable

haunting at play in the domestic space.

Although they appear in her fiction less frequently than the single-family home, apartments feature in Munro's work, and have their own specific hauntology. The apartment, as a spatialisation of single life in Munro's fiction, is imbued with the spectral presence of those relations which have been lost or are absent: relations to children, partners, and mothers. Compounding this haunting are the cultural associations in Canada of the apartment as a space of uncontrolled female sexuality, poverty, and a general sense of immorality. This is arguably the source of their spatialised terror: made marginal to the totemic ideal of the family, an image and structure which haunts domestic discourses in Canada, standing in as a symbol for the health of the nation. Within Canadian culture, the apartment has been historically marked by moral concerns and crises which centre around femininity and family. Their increasing popularity in urban centres in the late nineteenth century, due to rising land values, inculcated anxieties regarding poverty, health and sanitation, via their association with the tenement building (Ward 15; Dennis, "Modernity" 308). The apartment building was believed to be 'undermining family life [...] too 'easy' an environment for young housewives who, with few domestic chores to keep them occupied, might be tempted to succumb to more hedonistic pleasures of big-city life' (Dennis, "Apartment Housing" 250).³¹ There are traces of these anxieties regarding family life and domesticity in Munro's depictions of apartments. This is suggested by the primary inhabitants of these apartments: single women, untethered from family life. Although the figure of the single woman is not necessarily constructed in Munro's work as a social deviant, she is clearly placed outside of structures of the family and married life, and this displacement can be traced back to earlier anxieties regarding the moral quality of domestic spaces—

³¹ Dennis also notes the link between apartment housing and sexual licentiousness ("Modernity" 310), as another aspect of apartment-anxiety.

as explored in the first section of this chapter. In “Fiction” and “Family Furnishings”,³² apartments are sites of unease specifically regarding unmarried women, and such unease manifests through the spectral presence of memories of the past.

In “Fiction”, the breakup of Joyce’s marriage to Jon due to his infidelity with his carpentry apprentice Edie, necessitates her move from her marital home to a sublet apartment. Such a tenancy echoes Joyce’s existential precarity after her separation from Jon: it is a temporary and unstable form of possession over the space. Joyce considers her new life in the apartment as ‘terrible but wonderful’ (39). Yet, descriptions of the apartment emphasise terror over wonder, and settle into marked ambivalence. The interior of the apartment is infiltrated by ‘the vibrating pink lights of the restaurant sign across the street flashing through [Joyce’s] window, illuminating the [...] Mexican doodads. Pots of cacti, dangling cat’s eyes, blankets with stripes the colour of dried blood’ (40). These ostensibly mundane pieces of décor, when taken together, convey a sinister atmosphere, as well as a sense of otherness through their Mexican origin (or imitation of such). Significantly, descriptions of dwelling in “Fiction” are characterised by opposing qualities of light.³³ In Joyce’s marital home the ‘two oblongs of light’ from the patio doors ‘seemed to be a sign or pledge or comfort, of safety and replenishment’ (32-33), while, in contrast, the apartment is infiltrated by uncanny flashes of neon light.

As well as living amidst another person’s decoration scheme, Joyce is impelled within this space of singleness, the apartment, to perform the role of the sexually liberated single woman. The performativity of Joyce’s behaviour is stressed by the fact that the space outside of the apartment is a now ‘stage, and Jon was the essential, if second-hand, spectator’ (41). However, this sexual performance is conflated by Munro with a kind of horror. The make-up Joyce wears is rendered in violent terms: she

³² “Bardon Bus” is another example of apartment dwelling related to singleness in Munro’s oeuvre. However, this story is outside of the chronological remit of this thesis, published in Munro’s 1982 collection, *The Moons of Jupiter*.

³³ A recurring motif in Munro’s short stories, as is evident in “Family Furnishings”.

‘slashed her cheeks with rouge’ (40). The violence of the verb ‘slashed’ and the colour of the make-up is a physical manifestation of Joyce’s psychic wound, caused by Jon’s infidelity. The similarity between the descriptions of Joyce’s make up and the apartment’s decoration scheme—the shared suggested violence of the ‘slashed’ rouge and the ‘dried blood’ of the blankets—illustrates the conflation between single woman and her domestic space, and the horror that both inculcate. This horror is constructed in relation to the ‘naturalness’ of the marital home as a marked absence. Joyce’s return to a single-family home, and the space of marriage and family, later in the narrative indicates the isolating terror of the apartment space. Her home with second husband Matt—a large, detached house in Vancouver—is an active space, shared by the various children from Matt’s previous marriages, friends and neighbours; a space of ‘easy (shallow?) cheer and bourgeois hospitality’ (46), distinct from the seclusion of her home with Jon and the inherent terror of the apartment.

The presence of a young writer, Christie, who Joyce believes to be one of her former music students and Edie’s daughter, at Joyce and Matt’s family party implicates Joyce in a mnemonic return to her past. However, the connection between this adult woman, and Christine, the child Joyce knew, is unclear, hinging on Joyce’s reading of one of Christie’s short stories, entitled ‘Kindertotenlieder’,³⁴ which appears to be a retelling of the aftermath of Jon and Edie’s affair from Christie’s perspective. Although Christie does not recall Joyce when she attends her book signing, casting doubt on Joyce’s own reading of the story, Christie can be understood as a revenant from her past. Her spectrality is suggested through her appearance: ‘[w]ispy pale hair, evasive pale face, invisible eyebrows’ (46). Christie is a cypher in Joyce’s memory of the child who is ‘[a] blank face. A blob of female childishness’ (53). Joyce’s feelings of

³⁴ The story title is a reference to an orchestral and vocal piece by Gustav Mahler, which translates to ‘Songs on the Death of Children’, augmenting Christie’s spectrality further.

annoyance at Christine—‘an instant dislike’ (46)—suggests the characteristic inconvenience of the hauntological spectre’s return. Munro offers no resolution to the question of whether Christie, the adult writer, is Christine, the child implicated in adult affairs.³⁵ Rather, the story ends in typical Munrovian doubt and suggestion. In many ways, Christie’s real identity is superfluous. Christine/Christie’s attendance at the party disrupts the careful marital domesticity that Joyce has created with Matt, casting doubt upon the depth of Joyce’s domestic contentment. As the author of a story which, if not based upon, at least mirrors an event in Joyce’s life, Christie is a hauntological functionary in that her presence impels Joyce’s mnemonic return to the past—which includes her dwelling in the apartment as a single woman, a memory that had been put at a great distance from her present life.

In “Family Furnishings”, the apartment of the narrator’s second cousin Alfrida, is also a site of feminine ambivalence. Like “Fiction”, the apartment has a part to play in resurrecting the ghosts of concealed or embedded memories. Alfrida’s apartment undermines the narrator’s childhood memory of Alfrida, which eventually leads, characteristically for a short story by Munro, to a revelation which impels a reconsideration of all remembered knowledge in the story. In comparison to the insular domesticity of the narrator’s other female relatives, Alfrida appears to occupy a more expansive vision of femininity, as a ‘career girl [...] a city person’ (79). As the author of two newspaper style columns, she is positioned through her profession as a domestic authority despite being, in the eyes of the young narrator, the least traditionally domestic woman in her family.³⁶ This initial impression of Alfrida is explored through the narrator’s childhood memories of her visits to her home. Alfrida’s presence in this

³⁵ The author’s note in Christie’s book mentions that she grew up in the same town, Rough River, that Jon and Joyce lived in during their marriage, hence heavily implying that Christie is the Christine that Joyce remembers.

³⁶ The two columns are “Round and About the Town, with Alfrida”, and a housewives’ advice page, penned under a pseudonym, “Flora Simpson”.

particular domestic space (a single-family home) provisionally reconfigures the dynamics of the narrator's relationship to her parents and their normative domesticity, making room for a sense of freedom and permissiveness in a space which is marked by strictness and violence.

A key scene illustrating this is when Alfrida allows the then-sixteen-year-old narrator to smoke a cigarette in front of her parents. Such behaviour, according to the narrator, would typically be met with condemnation or even physical punishment. The narrator's father jokes that he should 'horsewhip' (78) his daughter, however, the narrator notes that this is not an empty threat as her father, 'had beaten me, in this very room, not with a horsewhip but his belt, for running afoul of my mother's rules' (78). The narrator's experience of her childhood home is thus one of error and violent punishment, which she associates particularly with the dining room in which they receive Alfrida. Alfrida's power within this space is such that she changes the spatial experience of the family home, with her ability to place the narrator's parents 'in a corner' (78) when she visits. Despite Alfrida's liberating presence in the childhood domestic space, the narrator's visit to Alfrida's own home—an apartment—as a university student years later, reveals more about Alfrida's domesticity and the restrictions she imposes on herself and others.

To the narrator, the apartment that Alfrida dwells in, so distant from her own rural upbringing, signals wealth and refinement: 'I had believed that Alfrida was rich [...] She lived in an apartment [...] that fact conveyed at least the idea of a very civilized life' (84). In Munro's work, class is very often signified not only by the divisions between rural and urban but by the types of dwelling spaces which predominate in these areas. However, these dwelling spaces in themselves complicate the narrator's understanding of class position. The narrator's reconsideration of Alfrida's 'civility' is engendered by the strange space of Alfrida's apartment. The

apartment is situated above a shop selling second-hand goods, structurally aligning it with commerce rather than the homespun domesticity of the narrator's home. The narrator's description of the space highlights its architectural dissonance, its 'makeshift' (91) nature:

There was a living room whose ceiling sloped at the sides and whose windows overlooked the street, a hall-like dining room with no windows at all because side bedrooms with dormers opened off it [...] a bathroom also without windows that got its daylight through a pebbled-glass pane in its door, and across the back of the house a glassed-in sunporch (91).

The apartment lacks light because of its unusual construction: windows are absent or unusually placed. The emphasis on windows—or lack thereof—as light sources is significant given that light is central to the narrative (Bigot, "Family Furnishings" 32), foregrounding how light and revelation are linked.³⁷ Windows also function as a mode of perception: a way of looking in and out. This too, will become significant given that the narrator is a writer, and her writing will become a point of conflict with Alfrida later in her life.

The apartment, because of its association with Alfrida, should represent freedom, civility, and upward mobility to the narrator. However, its 'makeshift' nature appears instead to repel the narrator and invalidate her expectations. Moreover, the apartment is inadequate in the face of the narrator's idyllic domesticity with her fiancé, who comes from a solidly middle-class family and whose 'resolute approval [...] did not extend to [the narrator's] ramshackle background' (98). The apartment is ultimately a replication of those repudiated spaces associated with the narrator's other female relatives. It does not represent an alternative to the 'ramshackle' nature of the narrator's family. However, unlike "Fiction", Alfrida's apartment and status as unmarried woman is not overtly constructed through language and images of terror. Rather, the apartment

³⁷ This echoes the nature of light sources in "Fiction", although in that story they are less linked to revelation than they are to mood or atmosphere.

is haunted by spectres of maternal memory: some conspicuous, others so deeply embedded that their relevance does not become clear to the narrator until she is older and is privy to more knowledge.

The most evident maternal memory in the space is indicated by the presence of furniture inherited by Alfrida from her deceased mother, the ‘family furnishings’ of the title. This ‘serious furniture [...] all meant for larger, proper rooms’ (91-92) are the vestiges of Alfrida’s inheritance. They are Alfrida’s remaining maternal connection but also a manifestation of familial and domestic life that cannot be realised in the provisional space of the apartment. This is compounded by the presence of Bill, Alfrida’s married partner, who will later go back to his wife; a presence which also recalls the connection between the apartment space and sexual immorality, as explored by Dennis. Most importantly, it is the revelation that Alfrida secretly gave birth to a child when she was a young woman—a supplement that comes at the end of the story—that completes the spectral community of the story, sited in the apartment space. Alfrida’s secretive pregnancy, suggested to be the product of a sexual relationship between Alfrida and her cousin, the narrator’s father, necessitates not only a reconsideration of the narrative, as it has been told thus far but also of the connections between characters. In particular, returning to the narrative with this, albeit suggested, knowledge, the connection between Alfrida and the narrator must be re-evaluated.

Arguably, Alfrida’s fondness and implicit protection of the narrator during her adolescence, through Alfrida’s ability to reconfigure the dynamics of the family home, can be reread, post-supplementarity, as a transference of maternal love. Hence, Alfrida, on second reading, can be considered a sort of spectral mother to the narrator. Alfrida’s spectrality is cemented in the secrecy surrounding her pregnancy and the adoption of her child. She is thus one of many spectral mothers in this story: Alfrida’s mother, whose presence is felt on a material level through her inherited furnishings, as well as

the narrator's mother, who is rendered ghostly in her illness, a 'stricken presence around the house' (87). The apartment space must also be reconsidered, with this new information in mind. Its contingent nature—a 'makeshift' space rather than a home—is not only the result of the haunting presence of Alfrida's spectral mother through her belongings, but of the secrecy and repressed familial memory of Alfrida's own maternal identity.

Although the haunting that is intrinsic to the apartment extends from its relation to the single-family home and its related ideals, either as the absence or rejection of same, the single-family home itself does not function as a paean to safety and happiness in Munro's fiction—as is evident in the physical violence at play in the family home in "Family Furnishings". The single-family dwelling in Munro's fiction houses a particularly haunting version of domestic life. Murder and other forms of violence, as well as death, characterise single-family homes. The recurrent use of this architectural form signals a constant return of deeply entrenched memories which disrupt the space, as well as outright bodily and psychological violence, associated with the family unit housed in this space. Maternal memory in particular—that which is passed on from or associated with the mother—is often the source of the haunting that is found in these single-family homes, as well as memories of control and betrayal at the hands of male partners.

As noted by Warwick, murder is a recurrent trope in Munro's later fiction. As a narrative event it not only invites death into domestic spaces through the actual violent act but appears to have wide-ranging consequences within other domestic spaces in the community, inviting other, related spectres to re-emerge in other homes. This ranging spectrality of murder is evident in "Fits", in which the murder-suicide of Peg and Robert Kuiper's next-door neighbours, the Weebles, extends into their domestic space by various means and seems to reawaken spectres of violence within the collective memory

of the family. It is precisely Peg's discovery of her neighbours' bodies in their home, pre-empted by a mundane domestic errand of delivering eggs, which shifts the family's understanding of the safety and protection offered by the boundaries of the domestic space. As in Munro's other murder-centric stories, "Fits" illustrates the permeability of the domestic space particularly to violence. This permeability is intensified by the similarity between the architecture of the Weebles' and the Kuipers' houses. The houses have been built as 'mirror image[s]' (283), save for the differing design of the front windows of the Kuipers' house. This familiarity is reasserted when Peg enters the space and notes that '[t]he layout of the kitchen was almost exactly the same as her own' (283). The image of the neighbouring houses as doubles indicates not only sameness but the underlying anxieties of the story: that of the unknowability of others, even family members, and the potential encroachment of violence into every home.³⁸

Descriptions of the Weebles' domestic space is centralised through Peg's perspective, emphasising its cleanliness and quiet: the stairs is covered in 'clean, pale' (284) carpet and the living room is 'perfectly tidy [...] somehow too perfectly tidy' (284). The silence and order signals uncanniness ('somehow too perfectly') and this appears to be what draws Peg further into the house to investigate. Yet, it also aligns Peg with the house, as throughout the story Robert comments on her containment: she is 'reserved [...] self contained' (280) in his view. Thus, Peg and the uncanny violence of the Weeble home are linked throughout the story in various ways, beyond her discovery of the bodies. The tension between Peg as a contained individual and seeming conduit for violence is suggested through her reticence to talk about the murder as she trails bloody footprints around her workplace.³⁹

This connection to violence is telegraphed via Peg's teenaged sons, Clayton and

³⁸ However, the minor contrast between the two houses, namely the front windows and the qualifiers in descriptions ('almost exactly the same'), indicates a clear difference between the Weebles and the Kuipers, which is that Peg and Robert do not have a violent marriage.

³⁹ Munro, ever subtle, suggests this through the detail of Peg 'wiping up some marks on the floor' (285).

Kevin, from her previous marriage, and their reaction to the murder. They initially appear interested only in the graphic details of the murder—indeed, Kevin expresses so much interest in these details that Clayton refers to him as a ‘ghoul’ (292). Kevin’s morbid fascination with the visceral details soon gives way to a conjuring of a past spectre of violence by Clayton. Clayton links the Weebles’ murder to his parents’ volatile relationship, saying to Peg: ““When you used to have those fights, you know what I used to think? I used to think one of you was going to come and kill me with a knife”” (294). The Weebles’ violent death has brought to the fore the undercurrent of violence that had been present in Peg and her sons’ lives before Peg’s marriage to Robert. Although Peg and Robert’s marriage is non-violent, the implied violence of Peg’s previous marriage—made revenant by the Weebles’ murder-suicide—is clearly an entity that continues to haunt the domestic space, at least for her children.

This intrusion of the memory of violence also impels Robert to reflect on his own past relationships as well as Peg’s marriage to her first husband, concluding that, ‘[m]arriage knots aren’t going to slip apart painlessly [...] There’s got to be some wrenching and slashing’ (296). Robert’s new perspective on his memories of his own relationships, characteristic of Munro, is more destabilising than it is affirming. Clayton’s agreement that Peg and Robert’s relationship is not as conflictual as that between Peg and his father (“No [...] No, not you” [294]) is not an affirmation of Peg and Robert’s domestic harmony, Caitlin Charman argues. Rather, ‘Clayton’s repetitive “no” indicates that violence might not be so extraordinary, and that at any moment the ordinary might split open and erupt into violence’ (Charman 17). Charman’s interpretation is not only supported by the Weebles’ murder-suicide itself as a simultaneously mundane and inexplicable event (as the community’s speculation about the motive attests) but by Munro’s *oeuvre* as a whole in which violence is an ordinary experience within the single-family home. There is also a marked ambivalence at play,

again characteristic of hauntology: the ‘mirror image’ houses in “Fits” are indeed different in built detail and in the relationships fostered therein. However, the spectrality of memory inconveniently reminds readers of the potentiality of violence which undergirds the family unit itself.

“Progress”, collected alongside “Fits”, is also characteristic of memory—particularly memories of maternal figures—as a haunting entity in the single-family home. In “Progress”, the single-family home is haunted by memories of maternal figures who are linked, in various ways, to death. Houses are undeniably important in this story: Euphemia, the narrator, is an estate agent and houses are thus her livelihood. Her career is perhaps the result of the importance of domestic spaces in her life, related to her mother and the overarching narrative of the family unit. The story presents two overlapping sources of maternal memory: Euphemia’s memories of her mother, Marietta, and Marietta’s memories of her mother; both are focalised through Euphemia. The story begins with Marietta’s death. Informed by her father, Euphemia understands Marietta’s death as a leave-taking of the actual and symbolic domestic space, for both her mother and herself:

I knew that “gone” meant “dead”. I knew that. But for a second or so I saw my mother in her black straw hat setting off down the lane. The word “gone” seemed full of nothing but a deep relief and even an excitement—the excitement you feel when a door closes and your house sinks back to normal and you let yourself loose into all the free space around you (219).

This image—in which Marietta’s death is the departure from a house, a form of freedom for the remaining occupant, Euphemia—is a significant one in connection with the way maternal figures are connected in memory to death, so that such memories become spectral not only as symbols of death but in their mobility as they pass from one generation to the other, through time and space. Marietta’s memory of witnessing her own mother’s attempted—or feigned—suicide as a child in the barn beside their house, becomes a presiding narrative in Euphemia’s childhood, and seems for

Euphemia to hold the key to understanding her mother. As such, Marietta's childhood home is significant as a site of deathly maternal memory: it is a semi-detached house, 'a double house' (224) which shares a wall with their German neighbours, the Sutcliffes. This sense of doubleness—as in "Fits"—extends into the interior: while the exterior of the house, with its bay windows and trellis, as well as its closeness to the Sutcliffes, suggests closeness and conviviality, the interior is wholly different and marked by fear. Specifically this is rooted in Marietta's fear of 'a silent house' (224) which she interprets as an articulation of her mother's unhappiness. Silence in the home, the absence of the sound of her mother's domestic work, is what signals to Marietta that her mother is in peril. It leads her to find her mother standing on a chair in the barn with a rope around her neck. Marietta's mother's requests that Marietta find her father indicates that this 'hanging' may be a kind of performance, although one which is underscored by real psychological distress, and certainly to a child would be perceived as a serious threat.

Marietta's inability to raise alarm and ask for help from other families in the community as she attempts to find her father is rooted in Marietta's sense of a clear division between her family and others: '[s]he had the idea that all families except her own lived in peace, that threats and miseries didn't exist in other people's houses, and couldn't be explained there' (226). When Marietta's younger sister Beryl retells the story to Euphemia, she claims that their mother's suicide was a performance, a reprimand for their father's infidelity, as she had not tied the rope to the ceiling beam. Despite the ambiguity of Marietta's mother's intentions, in the 'versions' (235) of Beryl and Marietta's memories, the mother's warning—"Well, I'll just do away with myself [...] and see how you like it when I come back and haunt you'" (233)—remembered by Beryl, underscores Marietta's connection between the maternal and death. Moreover, for Euphemia, Beryl's memory appears to dispossess Marietta's, or at least comes to

exist in tandem with it: 'Beryl's story didn't vanish' (235), she notes, so that Marietta's mother—in this remembered narrative—becomes simultaneously living and dead, in the characteristic fashion of the spectre.

Given the traumatic impact of Marietta witnessing her mother's suicidal ideation, Marietta arguably brings this mother-as-spectre into the home in which she raises her own daughter, Euphemia—who, significantly, is named after Marietta's mother (222). In welcoming the spectral mother into her own home, Marietta is understood by Euphemia as a spectral presence herself: Euphemia's childhood anxiety regarding not being able to remember her mother's face ('if I couldn't do it, that might mean my mother was dead' [224]) is a recurrence of Marietta's own childhood fear of her mother's silence. Furthermore, Marietta's memories—'talk and stories' (227)—take on a spectral quality for Euphemia, who understands them to be 'a cloud, a poison' (227) that she must contend with, even though they do not belong to her. The primary 'story' in "Progress" is Marietta's mother's attempted suicide: a memory-turned-family-narrative which takes a unique hold on the household, subject to revision and over-writing. Through this primary story of the spectral mother, Munro asserts the inherent instability of memory—perhaps particularly childhood memory—and its simultaneous importance.

Turning now to Euphemia's experience of domestic space, the description of her childhood home is marked, initially, by poverty, rather than overt spectres of maternal memory. However, this poverty is arguably a type of spectre, or comes to be understood by Euphemia as such. This poverty is linked to Marietta, who marries Euphemia's father without a dowry due to owing a debt to her own father. Marietta later inherits \$3,000 from her father, which Euphemia witnesses her burning in the house's wood stove: 'I see my father standing by the table in the middle of the room—the table with the drawer in it for knives and forks, and the scrubbed oilcloth on top' (240). This

image, grounded in the material reality of the home, is later revealed to be untrue or misremembered when Euphemia realises—again during Beryl’s visit—that her father had no knowledge of the inheritance, nor its loss. Although the burning of the money is an act of wilful revenge on Marietta’s part (perhaps for the emotional hurt caused by Marietta’s father in her childhood) Euphemia’s false memory of her own father’s complicity transforms the act into evidence of her father’s love for her mother: as Euphemia later articulates when telling the story in adulthood, ‘I consider that love’ (237). Therefore, Euphemia’s interpretation of events counters the betrayal at the heart of Marietta’s own maternal haunting, which, in Beryl’s version of their mother’s attempted suicide, is linked to the infidelity of the father. Both Marietta and Euphemia possess a memory of the mother and the authority of this memory is undermined and then reasserted throughout the story. The power and authority of Euphemia’s memory of events in particular foregrounds the complex understanding of memory as both accurate and a construct: ‘[i]t seems so much the truth it is the truth’ (240).

Unlike “Fits” and other stories concerning maternal inheritances, there is some sense of the spectre being exorcised or put to rest in “Progress”, at least for the next generation. As Euphemia notes, augmenting the image of Marietta’s death as a departure from a house, she has not passed-on her own ‘talk and stories’ to her children, two boys: ‘something could stop now—the stories, and griefs, the old puzzles you can’t resist or solve’ (227). Thus, Munro suggests here that spectral maternal memories may be inherently gendered, the product of the complex relation between mothers and daughters.

In two further ‘murder stories’ situated within the space of the single-family home, both collected in *Too Much Happiness*,⁴⁰ “Dimensions” and “Free Radicals”, the

⁴⁰ *Too Much Happiness*, which, as Janice Kulyk Keefer notes, is a collection in which death is a central conceit (27), contains three murder stories: “Child’s Play” rounds off the triad.

spectres of memory which haunt such houses are related less to maternal figures and more to lingering traces of violence and betrayal. However, the spectral presences in these stories—although linked irrevocably to violence—are figured in a productive manner, and illustrate how spectral memory, even that which is overwhelming and inhibiting, can be lived with. Hauntological spectres in “Dimensions” are indicated from the beginning of the narrative, in which the traumatic memories of the protagonist Doree are understood and processed spatially. The violence at the centre of “Dimensions” is that of infanticide: Doree’s husband Lloyd murders their three young children after Doree flees the house during an argument. The argument begins over a dented can of spaghetti, which Lloyd claims would poison the family. Hence, this accusation confers a certain trace of the Gothic to the narrative, transforming Doree from loving mother into the jealous maternal figure of fairy tale or Gothic novel.

Prior to the murder, the space in which Doree and her family live is one, as in “Runaway”, circumscribed by a patriarchal figure.⁴¹ Doree, who is only sixteen when she begins her relationship with Lloyd, is subject to Lloyd’s control. Lloyd, once a hippie, believes ‘in marriage, constancy, and no birth control’ (4). His conservatism particularly pertains to Doree’s mothering: he insists on the children being home schooled, he will not let her bottle-feed their youngest child, Dimitri, and when she does, he attempts to force milk from her breasts, ‘getting a couple of drops of miserable-looking milk out’ (7). Doree’s friendship with another home-schooling mother in the community, Maggie, highlights the isolation of her marriage and the psychological effects of Lloyd’s control. As in Sylvia’s house in “Runaway”, Maggie’s house is understood as a safe space.⁴² However, while it provides Doree with a minor reprieve

⁴¹ As Bigot argues, “Dimensions” and “Runaway” share a ‘depiction of a passionate relationship that entraps the women and the gradual intrusion of actual or symbolic violence, and possibly murder’ (98); as well as a shared female rescuer figure in the form of Sylvia (“Runaway”) and Maggie (“Dimensions”) (102).

⁴² Both Sylvia and Maggie are mobile characters, most often associated with vehicular movement, in comparison to Carla and Doree who cannot drive.

from Lloyd, and the suffocation of their family home, Doree's provisional escape, in Lloyd's view, is the cause of her children's murder. Lloyd reasons that killing his children was an act of mercy, to "save them the misery [...] of knowing that their mother had walked out on them" (17).

When Doree returns to her home the next morning, she finds the children dead. Here, the narration becomes spare and candid. Doree's emotions in the moment of her finding her children (as in the spare, unemotional description of the murder scene in "Fits") are notably absent, suggesting the characteristic breach of traumatic memory. The children's bodies are described simply in connection to their position within the house:

Dimitri still in his crib, lying sideways. Barbara Ann on the floor beside her bed, as if she'd got out or been pulled out. Sasha by the kitchen door—he had tried to get away. He was the only one with bruises on his throat. The pillow had done for the others (15).

The children's murder has the effect of rendering both Lloyd and Doree spectral in their own ways. Doree moves away from the community, taking up residence in a town nearby where she changes her appearance and goes by a different name. She works as a cleaner in a motel, a form of employment which confers a certain amount of invisibility to Doree and her past life (Cox, "Spectral Figures" 244). Indeed, Doree's work as a cleaner can be interpreted as a desire to erase the past. The verbs used by Munro in the description of Doree's work suggest erasure: '[s]he *scrubbed* bathrooms and *stripped* and made beds and vacuumed rugs and *wiped* mirrors' (1, emphasis added). This desire for erasure goes hand-in-hand with Doree's memories of her children's murders, which, it can be inferred, haunt Doree's life no matter how she tries to distance herself. The irony of the description of Doree's cleaning job, '[s]he was seldom faced with a really bad mess, though some of the women she worked with could tell stories to make your hair curl' (1), make the concepts of mess and shock relative once the nature of the spectral memory in "Dimensions" is revealed.

However, due to her continued contact with Lloyd, visiting him in the facility in which he is incarcerated, the possibility of erasing the traumatic memory of her children's murders is impossible, and to an extent, unwanted by Doree. Lloyd's spectrality is explicit. Upon seeing him for the first time, Doree notes that '[i]t was almost like seeing a ghost' (17). Before the murders, Lloyd is, perhaps ironically, associated with life: he works as a hospital orderly, he teaches Doree first aid and resuscitation skills, and knows 'a lot about gardening [...] and keeping an old car running' (4).⁴³ As well as being rendered ghostly in the aftermath of the murders, Lloyd's association with death manifests through his understanding—which he shares with Doree—of the children existing in a 'Dimension' separate from their own.

Lloyd informs Doree of the Dimension in a letter, which is presented in the text set away in italics. He writes that the children '*do exist and it must be that there is another Dimension or maybe innumerable Dimensions [...] They don't seem to have any memory of anything bad*' (25, emphasis in original). In Lloyd's vision the children are situated in what appears to be their family home:

They are in a room I can partly recognize. It's like our house but more spacious and nice. I asked them how they were being looked after and they just laughed at me and said something like they were able to look after themselves (26, emphasis in original).

The Dimension that Lloyd speaks of is arguably a hauntological space. Time, in the Dimension, is disjointed: the children appear older than they were, despite looking the same. They have taken on adult-like qualities and are able to care for themselves. As a dream of the children's safety, the Dimension also constitutes a failed future for the children. Lloyd's dream situates the children in the idealised safety and protection of the domestic space that was denied to them through his violence.

⁴³ Arguably, Lloyd's control over Doree's reproductive capacities, his banning of all forms of birth control, is also a manifestation—a negative one—of his association with life. However, as is illustrated in stories such as "Vandals" and "Runaway", the line between love and control is a thin one in Munro's fiction.

This information from Lloyd, regardless of its link to reality, gives Doree a ‘refuge’ (27) from the visceral memories of the children and their murder. The use of ‘refuge’ in its meaning as a space of shelter suggests a further spatialisation of the Dimension as one of comfort and succour for both Doree and the children from patriarchal violence. The Dimension Lloyd envisions allows both Doree and Lloyd to engage with the children as if they are still alive, yet their existence in the Dimension is dependent, of course, on their death. As they both lack access to the family home in which the children were murdered, the Dimension becomes an imaginary, mnemonic space of haunting.

Yet, the granting of safety within this space of the Dimension remains within Lloyd’s imagination and thus, control, ‘imprison[ing] Doree more deeply in the mesh of her marriage’ (Kulyk Keefer 29). In this sense, the imagined hauntological house of the Dimension, which exists to shelter the children, and thus Doree, is under Lloyd’s dominion, replicating the family home as the site of his control of Doree and his murder of their children. As such, while the power of this imaginative space is wholly enticing to Doree, given the circumstances of her children’s deaths, Munro ultimately undercuts the captivating power of this hauntological space in the story’s ambiguously hopeful ending. At the end of the narrative, Doree is neither with Lloyd, at her cleaning job, nor in the children’s Dimension, but in the outside world. While travelling via bus to visit Lloyd, Doree witnesses a road traffic accident and disembarks to give first aid to the injured driver. As Cox notes, Doree’s decision to stay with the driver rather than continue her journey to Lloyd aligns her with the living rather than the dead (“Spectral Figures” 244). This ending appears to break the cycle of Doree’s visits to Lloyd as her means of accessing the children’s Dimension. That Doree uses the first-aid skills that Lloyd had taught her to protect their children brings the story to an end in a kind of circularity: the life-saving skills associated with the deathly figure (Lloyd) and which

were not able to save her own murdered children, are used to save a life and bring Doree back from the mnemonic dimension of the dead.

The inherent entanglement between life and death in “Dimensions” is evident in “Free Radicals”, the final of Munro’s murder stories considered in this section. Undercutting the certainty between life and death as separate categories, as a strictly ontological view would hold, Munro’s hauntology of domestic space evidences that not only do life and death exist simultaneously, as characterised by the figure of the spectre, but that death itself is essential to life. This is again achieved through the presence of memories as spectral presences within the home, one that is not conceived through maternal connections but to a severed or troubled relationship to another woman. Death leaves its trace within the domestic space in “Free Radicals” on many levels: it is a space in which ghosts beget more ghosts. The first death encountered in the story is that of Nita’s husband Rich. His absence is felt by Nita within the walls of their house, a former holiday home—‘[t]wo tiny bedrooms, a lean-to kitchen, half a mile from the village’ (118)—which has been renovated for year-round habitation. Nita locates his absence from the domestic space: ‘[s]he thought carefully, every morning when she first took her seat, of the places where Rich was not’ (120). Each room of the house is tied to specific memories Nita has of Rich and their life together.

The study is particularly symbolic, to Nita, as a spatialisation of Rich’s mind. Nita equates going into the study, to clear it of Rich’s belongings, to an intrusion into his psyche: ‘[s]he thought of it as invading [...] her husband’s dead mind’ (120). Invasion and intrusion are central to this story, particularly in connection to death or its threat. This connection extends beyond Nita’s unwillingness to clean Rich’s study and is present in various forms: the invasion of Nita’s own body by liver cancer, now in remission, and the central event of the story, in which a man, who has just murdered his family, breaks into Nita’s home. The threat of invasion into the protective boundary of

the house is signalled early in the story through the image of the cellar space. Nita has long been fearful of this space as one somehow permeable to the outside: '[w]hen she came up [from the cellar] she bolted the door as usual, on the kitchen side. Rich used to laugh about that habit of hers, asking what she thought could get in' (121). The cellar, the dark, unknowable subterranean space beneath the inviting safety of the house, is often a feature of Gothic works (Sedgwick, *Conventions* 21), as in Poe's murder stories ("The Cask of Amontillado" being perhaps the most obvious example). However, rather than the cellar as the site of murder or death in "Free Radicals", it is the above ground, more comfortably 'domestic' space of the kitchen which is occupied by the murderer. This invocation and then deferral of a Gothic idiom such as the cellar is typical of the intertext of Munro's fiction. Yet, the cellar is not simply a narrative diversion. Rather, it signals a pre-existing fear of invasion through death, of which the murderer's presence in Nita's home is arguably a manifestation.

Posing as a repair man, the murderer gains access to Nita's domestic space not by breaking and entering but by subterfuge. The revelation of the man's identity, and the crime he has just committed, is achieved through his escalating erratic behaviour. Trapping Nita in the kitchen and demanding food, the man turns the kitchen into a space of potential violence. Both the man and Nita separately consider the kitchen objects—knives and a corkscrew—that could be used to cause harm to the other. Smashing his plate on the floor, the man uses a shard to harm himself: 'he scraped the point lightly down his bare forearm. Tiny beads of blood appeared, at first separate, then joining to form a string' (125). This blood, like his revelation of the murder he has just committed, is syntactic. The man's gradual revelation that he has murdered his parents and disabled sister implicates Nita's home in actual—rather than just imagined—violence, as the man shows her before-and-after photographs of his murdered family. The 'after' photograph shows:

The old man's head was fallen sideways, the old woman's backwards. Their expressions were blown away. The sister had fallen forward so there was no face to be seen, just her great flowery swathed knees and dark head with its elaborate and outdated coiffure (130).

In response to this revelation, Nita tells her own murder story to the murderer. In this, Nita recounts attempting to kill the woman, 'a useless whiner who worked in the registrar's office' (133), having an affair with her husband, with a pie made of poisonous rhubarb leaves. The story is an attempt at creating a conspiracy of sorts between her and the murderer: "Nobody knows what I've told you," she said. "You are the only person I've told" (135). Taking on the persona of a murderer—a persona that is fairy-tale coded through the allusion to poisonous food—is perhaps what saves Nita's life as the man soon leaves, stealing her car to escape. Yet, although the murderer has invaded the home and left without violence, other spectres remain in Nita's space: that of Rich's first wife, Bett.⁴⁴

The murderer's presence therefore gives way to an older, more embedded betrayal in the domestic space. It is suggested that the murderous persona that Nita takes on in order to save her own life is based on Bett who is an author of cookbooks, including 'A *Celebration of Familiar Fruits and Vegetables*' (136). Although it is difficult to ascertain whether Bett did attempt to poison Nita upon finding out about the affair—Munro heavily implies that Nita is, like many of the narrators who populate her fiction, simply constructing a narrative from the events of her own life and others—there are significant implications to Nita's performance as Bett. Through Bett, Nita can take on the traditional trappings of domestic life, which she herself rejected during her marriage to Rich. The murderer's demands for a meal momentarily impel Nita to fulfil the housewife role that belonged to Bett, perhaps influencing her decision to take on a murderous-Bett persona. Indeed, Nita considered herself not the happy housewife but

⁴⁴ The dispossession of the first wife by a bookish, younger woman is reminiscent of *Jane Eyre*, another intertextual allusion to domestic haunting in this story.

‘the happy home wrecker’ (119). Hence, Munro returns again to the theme of death and intrusion. Nita and Rich’s house was initially built as a holiday home for Bett. However, when the affair is revealed, Nita dispossesses Bett not only from her status as wife but from a dwelling space, and the attendant betrayal of dispossession becomes inscribed into the house as it is being renovated, when Nita and Rich consummate the affair ‘amid the shavings and sawn wood of what would become the central room with its arched ceiling’ (119). Thus, it is obliquely suggested that Bett’s presence remains as a spectre within this home through the memory of her betrayal.

In occupying the role of the non-housewife in her marriage to Rich, Nita is the ghostly abnegation of Bett. However, even after Rich’s death, Bett remains central to Nita’s memory of the space due to the betrayal of the affair. As testament to Munro’s hauntology of domestic space, Bett is linked both to death and to life. By possessing the (fictional) role of a vengeful Bett, Nita attempts to murder her past self, the ‘useless whiner’, the ‘lissome, laughing, tripping ingenue’ (119) who broke-up a marriage. Yet, Bett is also ultimately a protective spectre: in embodying her own memory of Bett—not as her absence or opposite but by momentarily re-enacting her betrayal—Nita saves her own life. Nita’s desire to write to Bett and thank her—‘Dear Bett, Rich is dead and I have saved my life by becoming you’ (136)—indicates the complex relationship between Nita and Bett: creator, destroyer; victim and saviour; housewife and homewrecker.

Bett, as a welcomed spectre in “Free Radicals”, illustrates as in “Dimensions” and to a degree, “Progress” that haunting memories which become spectral manifestations in the domestic architecture of the single-family home can be reckoned with in a way that does not require the displacement of the living or the dead. Munro’s depiction of the architectural spaces of the apartment or the single-family home, although they differ structurally, privilege in some way the presence of death. Memories

of betrayal, violence, psychological control, murder, and the loss of mothers and children are notable components in these narratives. As in Munro's depiction of interior and exterior space, architectural forms and the behaviours enacted within reflect the vulnerability of certain subjects—particularly women and children—to spectres of memory. Daughters are especially haunted by memories of maternal figures, who are themselves rendered spectral by and within the domestic space. These spectral memories are traces left in domestic spaces but are also mobile, being carried through space and time. These spectral presences depict the experiential reality of dwelling, in ways which often eschew conventions of realism. This again illustrates the way in which 'surface detail' in Munro's fiction accords meaning beyond mimesis.

Domestic Objects

While there has been no full-scale study of Munro's use of objects in her fiction, critics have noted in passing the significance of material culture within her work. Cox highlights the frequent reclamation of abandoned objects in Munro's short stories (*Alice Munro* 72), while Ross argues that a familiarity with Munro's work encourages a reappraisal of 'things': 'innocent objects that we normally pass over' ("Too Many Things" 786).⁴⁵ Magdalene Redekop proposes that Munro's interest in 'houses, clothing, cameras, eyes, food' is due to the fact that 'Munro [...] thinks in images' (xii). However, these images could also be considered as objects, under the umbrella of material culture. Whether considered as 'image', 'thing', or 'object', it is difficult to deny that domestic material culture—objects associated with or found in the domestic space—are central to Munro's fiction. While the significance of such objects is often

⁴⁵ Although Bill Brown has argued that things and objects can be differentiated, through his influential proposal of 'thing theory'—things represent 'a particular subject-object relation' (4) when an object can no longer achieve its original function—in the instance of Sheldrick Ross' article, the two are treated as commensurate entities, as illustrated by her equivalency in this sentence between 'things' and 'objects'.

subtle and shrouded, they allow for a deeper understanding of Munro's complex narratives, and reveal narrative mysteries. These objects do not just add a level of veracity to Munro's realist depiction of domestic space but are also imbued with hauntological meaning, particularly as it pertains to spectres of memory. As Heble notes, '[o]rdinary objects in Munro's world can, at any moment, become sinister or threatening' (4). Thus, the hauntological significance of domestic architecture in Munro's fiction is extended to her use of objects. As Munro's characters take possession of certain objects, they are also possessed by the memories these objects represent.

What is immediately notable about the objects that appear in Munro's fiction is the lack of modernising technologies: there are few electric stoves, dishwashers, or vacuum cleaners, and even less mention of radios, televisions, or computers. This absence is apposite given the chronological settings of Munro's stories in the years spanning from the Great Depression to the early 1960s. However, even in stories with a contemporary setting, such as "Fiction" or "Wigtime", the consumerist items that have become central to the Canadian home since the post-war period rarely feature in Munro's depiction of domestic space.⁴⁶ The presence of objects from the past emphasises the role of memory in Munro's domestic spaces. Such domestic objects typically represent the recurrence of memory, collapsing boundaries between time and space in their invocation. As such, two domestic objects associated most prominently with memory in a range of Munro's short fiction—wallpaper and coverings and furniture—will be examined in this section, as a coda to Munro's depiction of spectres of memory that form the hauntology of domestic space in her fiction.

As an object itself, wallpaper is essentially ephemeral, at least compared with

⁴⁶ As Adams and Strong-Boag's respective research indicates, there was no lack of domestic consumerism in post-war Canadian society which makes this absence of technologies all the more significant.

other more ‘solid’ or inheritable objects within the home (Hendon). Despite, or perhaps because of this ephemerality wallpaper has a significant function within literature. As Tomáš Jirsa articulates, the invocation of wallpaper in literature (as an aesthetic object made up of motifs or patterns) inevitably presents interpretive clues for the reader. Wallpaper is a particularly significant motif in women’s writing, through the canonicity of Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story, “The Yellow Wallpaper”. The narrator’s obsession with the figure trapped within the wallpaper is not only a Gothic articulation of women’s domestic entrapment but is an imaginative and interpretive act: the vocabulary Perkins Gilman uses to describe the narrator’s close attention to the wallpaper’s design recalls the close gaze of the literary critic. Although there is no obvious allusions to Perkins Gilman’s short story in Munro’s fiction with regard to wallpaper,⁴⁷ the object has an important function in certain short stories. Wallpaper and other forms of wall decoration (including paint and coverings) have an evident mnemonic function in Munro’s stories, being associated by characters with spaces of childhood memory. In “Progress”, “Wigtime”, and “Gravel”, wallpaper, paint and other decoration are linked to memory: its recollection and ‘papering over’, as well as how memory, as represented through these domestic objects, is shown to be a palimpsest of contradicting and co-existent narratives which haunt the characters’ lives.

In “Progress”, the details of the changing wallpaper and paint of a single domestic space illustrate not only the passing of time but Euphemia’s constant re-inscription and reinterpretation of memory, particularly as it pertains to her mother. Thus, the detail of wallpaper provides a way to understand the narrative scope of “Progress”, which, as Regan notes, is one of Munro’s ‘most formidable experimental works’ (127) and the way in which memory functions as a vital aspect of the narrative.

⁴⁷ However, as Tolan argues, there is a clear allusion to “The Yellow Wallpaper” in “Runaway” in which Carla’s careful examination of the carpet in her mobile home recalls the entrapment of the narrator of Perkins Gilman’s text (171).

The changing decoration of the walls signals various temporal shifts throughout the narrative, as well as the different epochs of the house in which Euphemia grew up in, a property which changes hands at various points in the story. Euphemia associates the wallpaper consisting of ‘a design of cornflowers on a white ground’ (222) with her childhood home, when the house is still under her parents’ ownership. The room is decorated in anticipation of Beryl’s arrival. In being primarily attached to Beryl’s visit, in which two family stories—the attempted suicide of Marietta and Beryl’s mother and the burning of the family inheritance—are given new narrative additions, the wallpaper is key to understanding Munro’s treatment of maternal memory as a spectral presence.

Regarding the wallpaper, Euphemia notes that:

My mother had got it at a reduced price, because it was the end of a lot. This meant we had trouble matching the pattern, and behind the door we had to do some tricky fitting with scraps and strips (222).

This act of ‘tricky fitting’ pertains not only to the wallpaper but to Euphemia’s understanding of Marietta, who is haunted by her own spectral mother. Euphemia utilises the ‘scraps and strips’ of information regarding her mother’s childhood from Marietta’s own memories, and Beryl’s interpretation of same, to build what is a cohesive (to Euphemia) narrative regarding her mother’s actions, namely the burning of the money in the stove. Significantly, as opposed to presenting wallpaper as an object which obscures detail or information, the connection between wallpaper and Euphemia’s construction of a cohesive maternal memory in “Progress” suggests that wallpaper functions as something that reveals as it conceals.⁴⁸

That Euphemia and Marietta decorate the room with wallpaper together points towards the story’s larger concern with the dependence and interconnection of the mother-daughter relationship. Furthermore, the image of mother and daughter decorating the room with wallpaper together also suggests something about Munro’s

⁴⁸ This function of wallpaper will recur in Enright’s fiction, as will be explored in Chapter 4.

approach to writing the ‘biographical mother’ (Cox, *Alice Munro* 25), as if by using her story, the mother becomes co-author within the daughter’s own narrativization. It is this impulse that underscores Munro’s work, an impulse which Elizabeth Hay characterises as ‘[t]he problem of “the mother” for a daughter who writes [...] [who] hovers in the background of everything’ (178). Hence, although Hay here is referring to Munro’s more autobiographical stories, and Euphemia is not one of Munro’s ‘writer’ characters, the connection between mother and daughter which is figured by Cox and Hay as a problem is also, simultaneously, a productive entity for both writer and fictional protagonist—even if that connection is, as in “Progress”, a spectral or ‘hovering’ connection.

Regan postulates that “Progress” ‘is not simply concerned with the problematics of fiction; it has as much to do with the problematics of moral judgement and assessment in a period of complex social change’ (127). This complex social change, and the memories it engenders and makes spectral, is also reflected through the decoration of the walls of the house, as it changes ownership over time. When the house and farm are sold by Euphemia’s parents, it is rented to a commune and then sold on to a young professional couple. In this way, Euphemia is shown throughout the story to be positioned not only between Beryl and Marietta’s versions of their maternal memories, but between two moments in time: the religious, impoverished past of her mother, and the ‘free love’, countercultural ethos of the commune that rents her childhood home after it is sold. These two differing epochs are signified by the walls of the house: from cornflower wallpaper to the commune’s cartoonish murals. The members of the commune have, during their tenancy, painted over the wallpaper with large murals. On Euphemia’s return to the house, now as an estate agent, a painting of a naked man and woman is found covering over the layers of wallpaper in the guest room:

I noticed that they hadn't quite finished peeling the wallpaper away before making this painting. In the corner, there was some paper left that matched the paper on the other walls—modernistic design of intersecting pink and gray and mauve bubbles [...] The paper underneath hadn't been stripped off when this new paper went on. I could see an edge of it, the cornflowers on a white ground (238).

The layers of paint and wallpaper illustrate the passage of time inscribed on the walls of the house. Euphemia pulling-away of the paper, taking with her 'the cornflower paper [...] and a little shower of dried plaster' (238), evidences a form of time-travel through the act of stripping away the different eras of the house. Given the significance of the cornflower paper to Euphemia's understanding of Marietta, this excavation of the palimpsest of paper and paint can also be read as a means of Euphemia releasing the hold of her mother's spectral presence on her life, which she feels able to do without daughters of her own.

The decoration of walls has a similar relationship to haunting and revelation in "Wigtime". Death is foregrounded from the beginning of the story as the protagonist, Anita, returns to Walley to visit her dying mother. During her time at home, she makes contact with a childhood friend, Margot. Characteristic of Munro's stories, "Wigtime" travels back and forth between past and present, via the domestic space. Anita's visit to Margot's home, shared with her husband Reuel, conjures up memories of Margot and Anita's adolescence and their respective family homes. For Anita, Margot and her house are irrevocably aligned, noting that '[i]t looked as if all her care, all her vanity went into the house' (246). Despite the years that have passed between them, and the changes in their lives, Margot remains an authoritative figure to Anita in the space of her own home: 'The kitchen was done in almond—Anita made a mistake, calling it cream—with teal-green and butter-yellow trim. Margot said that all that natural-wood look was passé' (245). The description of Margot's house communicates a sense of security to the space through an association with money. The colour-scheme of the house is marked by a quality of richness:

They did not enter the living room, with its rose carpet, striped silk chairs, and yards and yards of swooping pale-green figured curtains. They admired it from the doorway—all exquisite, shadowy, inviolate. The master bedroom and its bath were done in white and gold and poppy red (245).

Such abundance—of colour and material—promises a form of psychological, if not actual, safety. The use of ‘inviolate’ to describe the living room is telling particularly when contrasted with details of Margot’s childhood home. Both Anita and Margot—who, like many of Munro’s young women are positioned as doubles—live in rural poverty. While Anita lives in relative poverty in a ‘drafty shell of a brick house that hadn’t had any new wallpaper or linoleum for twenty years’ (246), Margot, on the other hand, lives in a cramped house, a space of ‘crowdedness and confusion [...] the terrible temper of Margot’s father’ (246). Descriptions of Margot’s childhood home are imbued with Gothic images: ducks are prepared for sale at the market in the kitchen, leaving ‘feathers in the milk jug [...] Blood was puddled on the oilclothed table and dripping to the floor’ (246). Young Margot’s interpretation of her father’s behaviour, as told to Anita, rewrites the domestic Gothic text as

some movie comedy. Her father beside himself, a hapless comedian, racing around in vain pursuit (of fleet, mocking Margot) and rattling locked doors [...] and shouting monstrous threats and waving over his head whatever weapon he could get hold of (255).

Margot rewrites her domestic script again in adulthood, turning the impoverished and violent space of her childhood into one of safety and affluence, as the décor scheme represents.

Memories of mornings and afternoons spent in the local store, owned by Reuel and his French war-bride, Teresa, also come to bear on Anita’s return to Walley and to Margot’s domain. As in many of Munro’s stories, restrictive domestic space can give way to places of provisional emancipation. Such a provisional space is the ‘ramshackle haven’ (247) of the store, where they meet to get the school bus, driven by Reuel. While they wait they are taken into the feminine space of the store, overseen by Teresa. Teresa

is othered through her French identity and her inability to follow the social mores of a West Huron town in which the female body should never be spoken about. However, Teresa's frequent talk about her miscarriages are tolerated, and her social gaffes are attributed to her non-Canadian identity: 'Teresa was not vulgar—she was just foreign' (248). Teresa is associated with domestic space, not only due to her status as war-bride and housewife, but as a domestic object. The teenage Anita and Margot liken the colour of her skin to something 'burned [...] her skin [...] made you think of a pie left too long in the oven' (249). The characterisation of Teresa as other obliquely invokes the dynamics of *Jane Eyre*. Arguably, given the characterisation of Teresa's skin by Margot and Anita as 'burned', there is a suggested racialisation of Teresa, again invoking the colonial contexts of Brontë's novel, amplified and made explicit in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The word 'burned' also recalls Bertha Mason/Antoinette Cosway's burning of Thornfield Hall and foreshadows the madness that Teresa will suffer after the revelation of Margot and Reuel's affair.

Reuel's subsequent affair with another local teenage girl, Lana, replicates the beginnings of Margot and Reuel's own relationship but may also be understood as the return of Teresa's betrayal. Margot reveals to Anita that she visits Teresa, who is now a patient at the local psychiatric facility. Teresa believes that she is a war bride again and is on the boat to Nova Scotia to meet Reuel. As such, Teresa's memories haunt and eventually become her reality. However, there is also a return at play for Margot. Although Margot has replaced Teresa in her role, they are ultimately aligned through Reuel's betrayal. Teresa's feelings toward Reuel are focalised through Anita: 'for years she hadn't the least wish to see him. A man undermines your life for an uncontrollable time, and then one day there's nothing, just a hollow where he was, it's unaccountable' (273). The need for accountability marks the connection between Teresa and Margot as Reuel's betrayed wives. However, Margot does ultimately make Reuel accountable for

his betrayal. After Margot discovers the affair, she negotiates for a new house: ‘[b]efore they went to bed at some awful hour in the morning, she had the promise of her house’ (270). The incomprehensible shock of Reuel’s betrayal is made literally accountable through Margot’s acquisition of a new house as emotional repayment.

As such, in Anita’s eyes, Margot transforms ‘love and betrayal into solid goods’ (271), a situation Anita herself finds unaccountable. Yet, despite Margot’s seeming rejection of status of betrayed wife, the décor scheme of Margot’s bargained-for house signals the continued trace of older, unresolved betrayals. The colour red symbolically links the three major spaces of the text: the presence of duck’s blood in Margot’s childhood home which compounds the violence of Margot’s father, is contrasted with the ‘poppy red’ of Margot’s adult bedroom, yet it is also conceivably linked to Teresa’s miscarriages in the local store, where she ‘lay on the floor in her blood’ (248). As such, both Margot’s father and Teresa, are spectral traces within Margot’s seemingly ‘inviolable’ domestic space. Through the décor scheme of Margot’s home, Munro seems to be implying that even in rewriting the domestic script—willing a change through material means, new spaces, bright colours—spectres continue to surface.

Wallpaper is too an aspect of mnemonic haunting in one of Munro’s last stories, “Gravel”. It is connected to the narrator’s gap in memory of her first childhood home, the space occupied before her parents’ separation: ‘[a]ll that I retain in my head of the house in town is the wallpaper with teddy bears in my old room’ (91-92), she notes. The use of wallpaper in the beginning of the story is suggestive of a traumatic memory, foreshadowing the narrative climax of Caro’s death. The detail of the teddy bear motif further implies a childhood lost to trauma, while the very innocence of the motif belies or even deflects the nature of the trauma later revealed. As in “Progress”, the image of the wallpaper is intimately connected to the memory process, and attempts to create cohesive narratives out of fragments and versions of memory, or indeed, its very

absence. However, in “Gravel”, the past is ultimately ‘irretrievable’ as Cox (“Space” 126) argues, as the trauma of Caro’s death appears to obliterate the narrator’s memory of spaces and events associated with the time prior to the drowning. In this way, wallpaper in “Gravel” performs a straightforward function in representing yet obscuring the past. However, unlike in “Progress”, for example, there is no opportunity to strip away the surface layers to interrogate and make sense of the past.

Further to wallpaper and decoration, another domestic object which recurs in Munro’s later fiction are ‘furnishings’—couches, tables, dressers, wardrobes, lamps, crockery and other decorative objects. These are an almost ubiquitous aspect of Munro’s depiction of domestic space and its material culture. The generalising term of ‘furnishings’ to group these objects together obscures the importance of these objects. Such objects are typically representative of family or married life, as is made clear by frequent mentions of dowries, ‘hope chests’, and ‘trousseaus’, particularly in maternal memories of marriage. However, many of the characters who are in possession of these objects are placed in ambiguous relation to marriage, with Munro frequently rewriting the marriage plot in her short fiction so that women transparently scheme and strategize in order to secure their love-object—giving double meaning to the term ‘marriage plot’ and indeed, love ‘object’.

Such tactics revolve around taking possession of domestic objects such as furniture or other consumer goods that belong to other women. This is particularly evident in three of Munro’s ‘nurse narratives’: “Friend”, “Good Woman”, and “Hateship”. The respective nurses of these stories, Audrey, Enid, and Johanna, are linked not only due to their profession, but because of their role in these narratives as domestic interlopers, as women ‘who [take] over the household, throws her weight around, and supplants the wife/mother figure’ (Ross, “Too Many Things” 799), and

their connections to domestic objects.⁴⁹ Women intruding on the spaces of other women, displacing them in the process, is a common theme in Munro's fiction, as is evident in "Wigtime", "Fiction" and "Free Radicals", among other narratives concerned with infidelity and remarriage. However, in terms of the nurse figures, such intrusion is complicated by the fact that these women are employed in order to help with the running of the domestic space, offering palliative care to dying mothers and wives, or caring for children. In all three stories, the nurse figures are canny, and their romantic machinations, although met with the disapproval of the wider community by being considered morally dubious, are successful. Their acts of (re)possession and displacement have hauntological consequences as they conjure up and inhabit the place of spectral figures which live on through familial memory.

This is particularly at play in "Hateship", where a furniture suite comes into the possession of Johanna through various forms of subterfuge and leads her to marriage. Johanna, formerly a nurse, works as a housekeeper for Sabitha and her grandfather, Mr McCauley. The furniture in question belongs to Sabitha's deceased mother Marcelle and is initially a symbol of Johanna's desire for Sabitha's wayward father, Ken. This desire has been falsely constructed by Sabitha and her friend Edith⁵⁰ through letters written to Johanna under Ken's name. The letters impel Johanna to move to Ken's home in Saskatchewan and take the furniture suite with her, eventually marrying Ken after she nurses him through an illness. The furniture, a symbol of married life due to its connection to Marcelle (whose death was caused by 'some female thing' (20), suggested to be an abortion), is repossessed by Johanna. Arguably, Johanna, as Sabitha's primary caretaker and maternal figure/moral instructor, is Marcelle's double, in fulfilling the maternal role. Although the maternal connection between Sabitha and

⁴⁹ Cox echoes Sheldrick Ross, noting that these figures 'insinuate themselves with their patients' relatives, taking charge where there is disorder and imposing a more rational, up-to-date lifestyle on the families they have colonized' (*Alice Munro* 52).

⁵⁰Edith and Sabitha are another pair of young female doubles in Munro's later fiction.

Johanna is largely absent, Johanna's departure from the house invokes similar feelings of abandonment in the McCauley household: leaving the house 'full of a feeling of callous desertion, of deceit' (21), a repetition of Marcelle's absence. Johanna's possession of the furniture suite ultimately enables her to possess the role of wife, which was previously occupied by Marcelle, not through mothering Sabitha, but by marrying Ken.

Aside from the 'love objects' of these skewed marriage plots, domestic furnishings have a hauntological function regarding mother-daughter relationships. Ownership of these furnishings, bequeathed to Munro's female characters, involves taking possession of memories and narratives associated with these objects. This is most evident in "Family Furnishings". The story can be read as a treatise of sorts on Munro's approach to domestic objects as both a means of according verisimilitude to a narrative and conferring narrative meaning. As Lucas notes, "Family Furnishings" speaks to 'the realist detail for which [Munro] is known [...] furniture and family history—while simultaneously calling into question the ability of such detail to accurately depict the world' (35). Such detail aids in 'accurate' depiction but also simultaneously undercuts notions of accuracy or truth as it pertains to memory itself. As the title indicates, in "Family Furnishings" objects are central to the narrative. The 'serious furniture' and other decorative objects owned by Alfrida serve a dual memory function. Firstly, they remind the narrator of her other, more conventionally domestic, female relatives: there are

'[d]oilies on the tables, squares of embroidered white cloth protecting the backs and arms of sofa and chairs, sheer curtains across the windows and heavy flowered drapes at the sides—it was all more like the aunts' house than I would have thought possible' (92).

The presence of these objects in this space indicate that Alfrida herself has inherited symbols of a domestic femininity that, for the narrator, are at odds with her public identity as a journalist and unmarried woman. This reminder is significant not only

because of the dislocation it causes the narrator, as she is expecting a different type of space, but also because it closes the gap between Alfrida as the liberated and liberating female figure in the narrator's life, and her more censorious female relatives. Secondly, these objects as material memories of Alfrida's childhood and her relationship to her mother, constitute an actual and mnemonic inheritance. Kept by Alfrida's grandmother until she acquired a space of her own, the 'family furnishings' are Alfrida's sole inheritance, aligning her with her dead mother, against the betrayal of her father's remarriage. It is specifically the narrator's admiration of a dish, 'creamy-colored, slightly yellowish, with a rim of blue flowers' (96), which impels Alfrida to express this protective possession over her mother's belongings. In this way, as guardian of the family furnishings, Alfrida also guards her mother's memory.

It is suggested that in possessing these objects, which constitute a maternal inheritance, Alfrida is stymied, unable to move on from past betrayals and grief. As such, possessions—objects and memory—become possessive. This doubled nature of possession connects as well to the concern with contested ownership or right of possession in the story. It is reflected in the way in which Alfrida's grandmother retains the furniture to keep it from falling into Alfrida's stepmother's possession and the wider family's understanding of family stories as 'treasure' (97) which can be collectively possessed on the condition that—like objects—they stay within the family. Thus, the narrator's possession of Alfrida's maternal memories, her 'treasure', through integrating it into a published short story, becomes the source of a rift in her relationship with Alfrida. The principal object in this matrix of familial possession is a coal oil lamp: Alfrida's mother died from burns resulting from this lamp when it exploded in her hands. Alfrida's grief is used in a didactic fashion by the rest of the family. The story is 'a reason to be desperately careful with coal oil, and a reason to be grateful for

electricity, whatever the cost' (96-97).⁵¹ Beyond this didactic function, the story about the coal oil lamp becomes an object itself. Alfrida's trauma, particularly for the narrator's aunts and grandmother, is a 'horrible treasure' (97). Ironically, while the narrator finds her female relatives' morbid fascination with this story repulsive, comparing their words to 'worms slithering around in my insides' (97), the detail of the coal oil lamp will remain with her, 'possessing' her imagination.

The elements the narrator appropriates into her short story, 'the exploding lamp, the mother in her charnel wrappings, the staunch, bereft child' (100), become her possessions. In this sense, the coal oil lamp is something that the narrator herself inherits, disinheriting Alfrida from it at the same time. On a broader level, the coal oil lamp is indicative of the importance of narrative to the women in this one family: who can claim ownership of a narrative, who is allowed to tell it, and through what means. Furthermore, the oil lamp becomes a spectral memory in its absence from the rest of the 'family furnishings'. It is not saved and handed down to Alfrida, presumably because it was destroyed in the accident, yet it takes on an oversized importance within Alfrida and the narrator's lives than its absence would indicate. In this sense, absence becomes presence. The ghost of Alfrida's mother cannot be laid to rest when the events of her death are treated as a family heirloom to be passed on and when the possession of this object-memory, itself spectral, is a matter of conflict and contestation.

The significance of the lamp as object-memory is at the core of "Family Furnishings" and its interest in knowledge and revealed secrets. As Bigot points out, light and its ability to reveal plays a central role the interlocking narratives of the story: the exploding lamp and the blinding sunlight that prevents the narrator from seeing the resemblance between Alfrida and her daughter at the funeral ("Family Furnishings" 32-

⁵¹ Electric lighting was introduced to the Canadian home in the late 1800s, however, many rural homes still used other forms of lighting well into the 1950s (Ward 48-49).

33); an interpretation echoed by Duncan, who characterises the story as one which ‘contains one of Munro’s brightest and most astonishing epiphanies’ (128) through the motif of electric- and sunlight (129) . If storytelling can be thought of as bringing hidden information to *light*, then both Munro’s short story and Alfrida’s story as textual and oral narratives, respectively, simultaneously leave certain things in the shade, just as they reveal key information. This is characteristic of the supplementarity central to Munro’s fiction overall, but achieves a metafictional resonance in this story. The lamp—a light source—that leads to Alfrida’s mother’s death is a dangerous object, perhaps implicitly signalling the danger of telling stories, whether they are written down or told. The significance of this danger is not made completely clear (and even then, is complicated) until the end of “Family Furnishings” when the identity of Alfrida’s daughter and her connection to the narrator as her half-sister is implied when they meet at the father’s funeral.

This ending results with another—ultimately unarticulated—story belonging to Alfrida, of which the narrator is conflicted about taking possession. As Duncan argues the symbolism of the furnishings in this story functions as ‘an onerous inheritance [of knowledge] the narrator will now have to accommodate, and which she cannot let go’ (128). Alfrida’s daughter can also be understood as a hauntological revenant, appearing seemingly out of the ether. The strong sunlight that obscures her to the narrator can be read as a condition of her spectrality: she is both hypervisible and invisible. It is precisely the sunlight that turns this woman into a ‘trick’ of the light, making her unclear in such extreme clarity. The narrator’s cognition or ability to ‘see’ this woman for who she is (she moves, in the narrator’s mind from being Alfrida’s sister to Alfrida’s daughter to the narrator’s half-sister, in the space of a paragraph) is both revelatory but ultimately obscuring since the narrator’s presumption is suggested but never verified. That this woman was erased from the family narrative, when other family histories,

objects, and memories have been ‘treasured’, also suggests that her spectrality results from dispossession from the family unit itself. Her provenance is such that she has been kept a secret and cast out of the domestic nexus of this family, only to return when her father—the narrator’s father—has died.

Through this examination of a brief selection of domestic objects in Munro’s later fiction, we can see that objects, whether wallpaper/coverings and furnishings occupy a crucial and complex function in these short stories. Their relation to memory not only augments the spectrality also at play in intersections of interior and exterior spaces and domestic architecture, but illustrate the embeddedness of memory as a trace in the domestic space itself, which is constructed as a ghostly entity. Again, as evident in Munro’s treatment of domestic architecture, domestic objects operate not just as realist detail—that detail disparaged by Lorentzen in his review of Munro’s final collection—but are codes to the narrative, significantly enabling further avenues of interpretation.

Conclusion

In “What Is Real”, explaining her fictional practice, Munro asserts that ‘everyone knows what a house does’. Yet, throughout her work, and particularly in stories published since the 1980s, Munro routinely complicates the expected narrative functions and certainties of domestic space. Seemingly ‘surface’ details in descriptions of domestic space—attributed merely to Munro’s realism, at times even dismissed as an overused trope—are shown to communicate much more. Such details make material the haunted nature of these domestic spaces: spaces that are primarily haunted by memories of the past, of old or severed connections, of familial stories and narratives, and those memories which are particularly marked by violence and death. The domestic detail that has become an accepted, if perhaps ubiquitous, element of Munro’s fiction is fundamental to understanding the way in which her fiction consistently destabilises and

defamiliarizes accepted realities and visions of women's lives and the spaces in which they live. Munro's preoccupation with capturing the domestic details of the Canadian home in its many iterations from the 1930s to the 1960s places her work in conversation with the complex domestic ideologies of this period. Throughout these stories, the pull of the idealised home is evident, as characters search for meaning and shelter in the aftermath of the death and destitution which characterises this period of history.

Moreover, even as characters seek a sense of home (often in the seeming protection of marriage) they are more often than not simultaneously displaced. Anxieties about the function and image of the family, about young girls and women, and about the nature of women's public role, underscore Munro's narratives, preventing women from feeling 'at-home' in their own domestic spaces. Further to this anxiety is the presence of harm and violence in domestic spaces—the 'treachery' that has marked Munro's fiction from the very beginning of her career—as another element which unsettles the ideal of the home.

The narrative strategies employed by Munro—her use of domestic images to complicate spatial values in character memory, her representation of the domestic space that is haunted by recurrent spectres who take various forms, her disjointed portrayal of time, the supplementing of the narrative with new information or perspectives, impelling the reader to return to the text with this ghostly knowledge—are all highly complex. Even as these strategies 'hide' beneath the surface of domestic detail, the two elements of Munro's writing, the domestic and the haunted, cannot be considered as separate from one another. Their symbiosis is key to understanding—and appreciating—the 'genius', as Thacker ("Genius" 144) rightly notes, of Munro's fiction. In opening up the idea of what the domestic space can do in a fictional narrative, Munro's innovation—partly realised through her allusion to a tradition of domestic haunting in women's writing and Gothic fiction, and her own coded and complex

writing of the space—presents points of affiliation between her work and writers, namely Moore and Enright, who follow in her wake. The following chapter will turn now to Moore's hauntology of domestic space through the invocation of spectres of failure.

Chapter 3

Lorrie Moore: Spectres of Failure

Introduction

While Alice Munro is considered almost notorious for her attention to domestic space, the quotidian focus of Lorrie Moore's fiction has by and large remained under-investigated by scholars throughout her thirty-six-year writing career. By her own admission, Moore chronicles the day-to-day life of America in her fiction: in an interview with Angela Pneuman for *The Believer* magazine in 2005, Moore states: 'I'm just trying to register the way we, here in America, live'. Domestic spaces in Moore's short stories and novels provide a stage for a complex interplay of the personal and political, in which normative cultural values come into conflict with individual agency and desire, typically in a highly ambivalent fashion. The significance of the domestic space is evident throughout Moore's fiction—in short story collections, *Self-Help* (1985), *Like Life* (1990), *Birds of America* (1998), and *Bark* (2014); the short story cycle/novella *Anagrams* (1986); and the novella, *Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?* (1994) and novel *A Gate at the Stairs* (2009)—and is open to a fruitful hauntological reading.

Moore's fiction illustrates a clear awareness of the longstanding political and cultural connection between women and domestic space in the US. This connection, rooted in separate spheres ideology, amounts to a temporal and spatial recurrence which manifests spectrally in the contemporary domestic space. Moore's early fiction, *Self-Help*, *Anagrams*, and *Like Life*, engages with domestic space as a site of inheritance of domestic practices through familial relationships, primarily marriage and maternal connections. With the publication of *Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?* (hereafter referred to as *Frog Hospital*) and *Birds of America*, Moore's fiction begins to explore

more explicitly the imposition of the outside world into the private arena of the domestic space. Later work, *A Gate at the Stairs* (hereafter referred to as *Gate*) and the stories of *Bark*, evidences an intensification of this interest, with more acute reference to political events and ideologies which have the power to infiltrate the seemingly protective space of the home. To quote again from Moore's interview with Pneuman, she states that in her writing she is, 'interested in the way that the workings of governments and elected officials intrude upon the lives and minds of people who feel generally safe from the immediate effects of such workings'. The domestic space as one of safety, comfort, intimacy, and economic success is challenged in various ways throughout Moore's fiction, particularly from the point of view of individuals who expect the space to fulfil these functions.

As such, as David Wallace-Wells notes, 'a spirit of devastating failure pervades [Moore's] work and the lives of the characters who populate it' (35). Failure is a defining feature of the domestic space in Moore's fiction. In particular, failed intimacy and emotional connection, whether within the context of familial or romantic relationships, is a hallmark of domestic spaces in Moore's short stories and novels. Such failures are in themselves failures of the accepted functions of the domestic space in the US. Specifically, these failures fracture the expected happiness and productivity at the heart of post-war domestic values—the 'American dream'—inherited by her female characters and transmogrified by the forces of late capitalism in the contemporary era. Rather than domestic spaces filled with economic and biological productivity, Moore's fictional domestic spaces are replete with loneliness, abjection, illness, violence, and death. Thus, such failures manifest as spectral presences in the home space. Moore typically borrows, to a greater extent than Munro or Enright, elements of both fairy and ghost tales, two literary modes which contain a myriad of domestic discourses, as a means of telegraphing the inherent hauntology of the US domestic space.

Moore's domestic hauntology, in which the political and the personal inevitably collide and collude, centres around concerns of failure—intrusion, alienation, and isolation—which manifest as spectral presences. In order to explore the ramifications of these spectres of failure, a consideration of the wider cultural and political contexts which frame the US domestic space will be considered within this chapter, followed by an exploration of the relationship between interior and exterior space, domestic architecture, and domestic objects through close reading of a selection of Moore's fiction, taking into account her short stories, novella, and novels published from 1985 to 2013, in chronological order. Texts that have been chosen for analysis include: "What is Seized" from *Self Help*; "The Nun of That" (hereafter referred to as "Nun") from *Anagrams*; "You're Ugly, Too" and "Places to Look for Your Mind" (hereafter "Places") from *Like Life; Frog Hospital*; "Agnes of Iowa" and "Real Estate" from *Birds of America; Gate*; and "The Juniper Tree" and "Wings" from *Bark*.

Contemporary domestic discourses promulgated in the US, as this chapter will illustrate, are entrenched in post-war values of family morality and domestic consumerism, and such values are themselves rooted in earlier iterations of the same. Over various periods of history, the domestic space has been the site of multiple forms of productivity and Moore's protagonists grapple with the inheritance of this in light of the global destabilisation of the notion of 'home' in the contemporary moment. This sets the scene for exploring Moore's use of suburban and Midwestern landscapes which forefront an intrusion of the outside, natural environment, into the domestic space. The dissolution of the boundary between interior and exterior in Moore's suburban landscapes articulates individual alienation from the cultural concept of suburbia. Furthermore, the Midwest, with its uncertain borders and national import, is an imaginary landscape particularly associated with 'domestic' values of home and heartland and is fashioned by Moore as a strange, and uncanny landscape which

fractures the values it is said to stand for through the imposition of death which bleeds into the domestic space. Both suburban and Midwestern place is rendered spectral through absence and imposes itself on the home. Following this, the interior elements of the domestic space, namely its architecture and its objects, also construct failure as a spectral presence within the material experience of the home. The primacy of the single-family home as a haunted space contrasts with its cultural positioning as the ultimate protective space within the nation, with children in particular figured as spectral figures. Moore also positions single women as individuals displaced within the single-family home as signifiers of domestic failure, yet their presence also offers a vision of living with spectres of failure. Finally, Moore's focus on what I term the 'immaterial' culture of the domestic space—ephemeral objects, food, and household waste—is another means through which spectres of failure manifest in the home, in ways which diverge from, yet speak to Munro and Enright's use of more ubiquitous domestic objects in their own fiction.

Ultimately, the spectres which haunt the domestic spaces in Moore's fiction are an ambivalent presence. While they are created by instances of death, loss, and traumatic ruptures in time and relation, failures of the productive domestic space is at times positioned as productive itself. Moreover, Moore's narratives figure the domestic space as ultimately immutable, an indestructible structure and concept within US contemporary culture, leaving the female protagonists of these narratives to grapple with the pains and pleasures of dwelling within the home. Thus, the aim of this chapter is not only to illustrate for the first time in sustained detail the vibrant and nuanced way in which Moore has written about domestic space and domesticity throughout her career, but to explore another instance in contemporary women's writing in which the space is ambivalently haunted.

Discourses of Domestic Space

The concept of domesticity has been central to the US since its colonial beginnings. As Douglas Anderson notes, the sermons given by John Winthrop aboard the *Arabella* on its way to the ‘New World, associated the family unit and its practices with ‘the Puritan errand’ (40). Similarly, as Judith Fryer postulates, the Puritans’ ‘belief in the morality of architecture’ has continued to colour US culture through the ages (30). Therefore, from the founding of the nation state itself, an abundance of meaning has been accorded to the material space of the home and its practices. As many historians have noted,¹ notions of femininity, domesticity, and nationhood are inextricably entwined in the US. Moore’s fiction deals more specifically with the inheritance of post-war values in the contemporary domestic space: as Kelly notes, Moore and many of her characters ‘[belong] to a post-World War II generation that came to political consciousness during the cold war, Vietnam, and Watergate’ (4). Thus, this section will examine conceptions of domesticity as they pertain to women in the US during the 1950s and 1960s, and how they have shifted (or indeed have remained much the same) into the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries.

The post-war period is regarded as a time of change to domestic spaces and domesticity. The domestic space was envisioned as a private, protective space for the family as well as one in which new forms of media and an intensified consumerism allowed the outside world to be filtered in. The cultural conceptions of public and private space shifted noticeably during this time (Spigel, *Dreamhouse* 1). Elaine Tyler May notes the myriad values and desires incorporated into the post-war space: ‘the

¹ Barbara Welter’s research on the ‘Cult of True Womanhood’ throughout the nineteenth century and Nancy F. Cott’s work on domestic femininity during the same period notes the intersection of femininity, domesticity, and religious piety that formed feminine subjectivities in the US, culminating in the idea that women’s ultimate role (both individually and on a broader social level) was to become a mother. Furthermore, as Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English suggest, internal migration in the nineteenth century strengthened the link between domestic space and the maternal figure, with the concept of home ‘redefined as “where mother was”’ (147).

home would contain sexual enjoyment, material comfort, well-adjusted children, and evidence of personal success for husbands and wives who performed well their clearly defined roles' (175). Hence, the domestic space in this era was defined by various conceptions of success and women were positioned as being central to its attainment. Hallmarks of domestic life at this time included a significant rise in marriage and birth rates, as well as economic prosperity. According to May, the post-war marriage and baby 'booms' during this time are an anomaly when placed within a wider context: the preceding generation 'challenged the sexual norms of their day, pushed the divorce rates up and the birthrate down, and created a unique youth culture' (7) and hence have more in common with their grandchildren's generation (those born during the post-war baby boom) than their own children.

Similarly to Canada, as explored in the previous chapter, the reinstatement of women into the domestic sphere after their inclusion in the war-time labour force was a significant element of post-war domesticity in the US. This 'return' to the domestic space after the war is shaded by both a clear invocation of longstanding conceptions of domesticity—recalling the 'cult' of True Womanhood of the nineteenth century, as articulated by Welter—as well as some shifts in those conceptions. Although Lynn Spigel argues that the post-war return to domesticity was not simply a replication of Victorian domestic values (*Dreamhouse* 32), updated for a new era, there are some inheritances, if not commonalities, between these distinct moments marked by cultural reappraisals of domesticity. This can be seen in the robust consumerism of the post-war domestic space which appeared to suddenly challenge the idea of the home as separate to the world of commerce and economy.

Yet, such consumerism—and its links to domestic labour—predates the post-war era. As Dolores Hayden notes, women have long been given the identity of home manager and chief consumer (284). Consumption in the US has frequently been

positioned as women's 'patriotic duty' (Hayden 384)—this line of thinking was held by various public figures, from Henry Ford to the home economist Christine Frederick, as Hayden articulates (285). May argues that the virtuous and frugal domesticity of the nineteenth century was transmogrified in the post-war consumerist home in order to elide a contradiction in values pertaining to morality:

the values associated with domestic spending upheld traditional American concerns with pragmatism and morality, rather than opulence and luxury. Purchasing for the home helped alleviate traditional American uneasiness with consumption: the fear that spending would lead to decadence (158).

Hence, post-war consumerism—imbued with moral value—held the ability to change the materiality of the domestic space without entirely disrupting long-entrenched ideals of domesticity as a moral good. Consumerism did not have to be at odds with morality and indeed could be an articulation of it. With consumerism at the heart of the post-war home, it was women, as May argues, who were again primarily identified as ideal consumers (159). As in Canada, the paradoxical relationship between women, consumerism, and labour was linked to the spending power of the family. While it was more desirable for women not to hold paid employment so that they could more properly perform their labour in the home, having a dual income in a family increased the ability to engage in the level of patriotic consumerism central to the US domestic space (May 159).

This point in time, with regard to domestic values and intersections with notions of femininity, illustrates how the domestic space takes on import particularly after times of crisis but also how this importance can be conceived of as a crisis itself. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the problems of the domestic space for women at this time have been well recorded, most notably in popular and academic texts published during the feminist second wave in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the narrow outlook of texts such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, even the seeming heterogeneity of white, middle-class feminine domesticity hid a complexity beyond the mediated image

suggested by the June Cleaver, ‘happy housewife’, archetype. As Joanne Meyerowitz notes in her re-evaluation of ‘return-to-home’ ideology during this period in high- and middlebrow magazines, ‘domestic ideals coexisted in ongoing tension with an ethos of individual achievement that celebrated nondomestic activity, individual striving, public service, and public success’ (231). Yet, to reiterate my stance in Chapter 1, the popularity of these articulations of domestic dissatisfaction—despite their weaknesses—signalled a clear problem for women with regard to discourses of domestic values.

The ideal of the US post-war home as a fecund and successful space for the nuclear family is undercut, as in Canadian and Irish contexts, by cultural attitudes towards family violence. It can be argued that the US domestic space has various forms of violence built into its very structure due to the nation state’s origins as a colonial settler state (Chandler 1) and in particular its history of racially segregated housing policy and provision (Kwak 206; Taylor 25).² But even in the ideal, normative home—the site of the white, heterosexual family—violence could be found. As Linda Gordon notes, echoing Joan Sangster’s work on violence in the Canadian home, the importance of the nuclear family during the 1940s and 1950s overshadowed cultural acknowledgement of family violence (23). Legal interventions in family violence have historically been seen to challenge the concept of civil liberty (Gordon 4; Goodmark 2) and has meant that state intervention in combatting or even acknowledging family and intimate partner violence in the domestic space was slow, even non-existent. It was only in the 1980s that major government funding became available for public interventions

² Although the 1968 Fair Housing Act was ostensibly introduced in order to eradicate racist housing policy and improve affordability to a greater number of people, racism continues to prevail in US housing policy, mortgage lending, and real estate: as Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor notes, not only have Black communities been provided with sub-par housing by the state, as potential homeowners they have been targeted as an ‘emerging market’ by the US real estate sector from the 1970s onwards, were more likely than whites to be given sub-prime mortgages by banks, and were one of the largest groups impacted by foreclosure and housing loss in the wake of the Great Recession (23).

into domestic violence, overtaking the role of community-based interventions (Goodmark 76). The introduction of policies such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994, appears to suggest that gendered and family violence has become a cause of political and hence, public, concern rather than a private experience to be endured, obscured by powerful ideals of domestic happiness. However, despite the rise in government intervention, there are a number of discrepancies at play: while legal systems are thoroughly funded, financial provision for housing is much lower, ‘despite repeated studies showing that housing is the single greatest need identified by people subjected to abuse’, and furthermore, the criminalisation of intimate partner violence through VAWA is understood to have led to increased levels of incarceration (Goodmark 3) .

Given the cultural oscillation throughout the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first, between liberalising women’s role in society and reasserting traditional gender relations, the domestic space has become a battleground of conflicting values, practices, and experiences. An ever-present conservative opposition to the political gains of feminism since the 1980s has continually asserted the domestic space as a woman’s ‘rightful’ place in the US. As Susan Moller Okin has argued, echoing the work of Faludi and McRobbie on the resurgence in traditional values since the 1980s, this reanimation of domestic ideals has been ‘in part in reaction to feminism [...] an attempt to restore or recover the traditional family, perceived as a lost or dying institution’ (41). This anxiety regarding the loss of the ‘traditional family’—an exclusionary, if not outright fallacious, entity itself—has underpinned a number of subsequent returns to the domestic space since the 1980s. Postfeminist culture at its peak during the late 1990s and early 2000s resurrected, under the unconvincing auspices of irony, the happy housewife ideal associated with post-war televisual culture. This ‘domestic revivalism’ (Munford and Waters 73) was and is divisive. As Stéphanie Genz

notes, citing a cover line on a 2000 issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, which declared the return of the housewife, this resurrection was seen as both a ‘reaffirmation of family values’ and a ‘retro-boom [...] that returns women to the subordinate roles of a bygone, prefeminist era’ (49). Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra’s definition of postfeminism as an aesthetic and cultural moment which promotes ‘consumption as a strategy for those dissatisfactions that might alternatively be understood in terms of social ills and discontents’ (2) illustrates a consumerist lineage in cultural constructions of femininity and domesticity from the post-war era to the twenty-first century in the US. In contemporary culture, along with the body, the domestic space is a problematic site for women which can be ‘solved’ through financial intervention (Gillis and Hollows 8-9).

This reanimation of post-war values in the contemporary era is inherently ghostly, as Munford and Waters’ work, discussed in Chapter 1, illustrates. In conjuring up the concept of the domestic space in its ‘white picket fence’, post-war, iteration as a means of lamenting social change regarding broadening conceptions of the family unit and domestic life, a set of domestic values with an uncertain ontology is brought back to ‘life’. As numerous scholars of the domestic space and feminist history elucidate, this vision of the home existed primarily as a powerful mediated image rather than as a reality. As such, the post-war home, reanimated in contemporary culture is arguably a ghost of something that did not exist—an apparition of absence. However, while the veracity of this reanimated post-war ideal is specious, its significance and relation to wider contemporary social and political contexts are crucial to consider. Increasing insecurity in the form of global conflict and economic recession has worked to intensify an ideal of the domestic space as protective and sustaining. Political rhetoric in the US, particularly after the events of September 11th 2001, has focused on projecting and protecting a normative form of the ‘domestic’ as white and affluent. The emergence of the notion of ‘homeland’, particularly in the wake of 9/11, is particularly prescient with

regard to recent domestic discourse in the US. Although as Amy Kaplan argues it ‘has the ring of ancient loyalties’, it is a ‘a recent term in the American lexicon’ (58). The term produces an imaginary space which integrates both wider notions of home and belonging with particular images of family and domesticity as a space worthy of state protection. This normative deployment of the domestic has had wide-reaching consequences for women in the US. As Tisha DeJmanee argues, a noticeable shift toward interiority in popular culture aimed at women in the twenty-first century, which includes the ‘revival of the home space’ (123), is due to a number of phenomena that have rendered the ‘homeland’ unsafe. DeJmanee includes 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the Great Recession as examples of but a few events since the beginning of the twenty-first century that have heightened the concept of the domestic space as ‘the individual’s sanctuary and fortress through the mechanisms of neo-conservatism’ (DeJmanee 124).

National feelings of insecurity also infiltrate the domestic on the level of reproduction and motherhood, as Natalie Fixmer-Oriaz’s concept of ‘homeland maternities’ illustrates. Fixmer-Oriaz argues that in the US, women’s domestic role as mother, and reproductive politics more generally, are shaped by ‘the logic of homeland security culture’ (130) in which policies and cultural discourses of maternity, reproduction, immigration, and family are constrained in relation to wider issues of national security, with women’s bodies imagined as another ‘border’ to be protected (131). May, too, posits that the post-9/11 political landscape in the U.S has worked to recentre certain domestic values, identifying rhetorical commonalities between political responses to the Cold War and to 9/11.³ The political discourses of the twenty-first century, while relying on the intersection of traditional gender roles and white supremacy via separate spheres ideology, in order to legitimise the protection of the

³ In particular, George W. Bush’s call for patriotism through consumerism after 9/11 echoes Richard Nixon’s ‘kitchen debate’ of 1959 with the Soviet Union’s Nikita Khrushchev, May notes (217).

symbolic homeland via the unjust means of war (the effects of which remain a global concern, as the withdrawal of Western forces from Afghanistan in August 2021 attest), also inculcate the private sphere of the home into the political arena through the constant invocation of conservative values regarding family, home, and nation in all of their interlinking significance. Hence, the home is both public and private, personal and political in the cultural discourses of the contemporary moment, though the illusion of separation is maintained between these concepts even as they are invoked simultaneously through an image such as ‘homeland’. Moore’s fiction produced post-9/11, *Gate* and *Bark*, engages specifically with these concerns regarding protection and the interruption to idealised notions of the domestic space as separate to the public sphere. However, her preceding fiction, since 1985, has also dealt, albeit in more subtle ways, with the political and cultural ideals of domestic space as they manifest in the US.

Interiors/Exteriors

As in Munro and Enright’s work, the role of topographical place is important when considering the hauntology of domestic space in Moore’s fiction. In terms of geographical setting, Moore’s work depicts a variety of places—city, suburb, and countryside—and engages with national discourses of place and identity. Moore’s realist portrayal of American daily life is evident in her use of geographical settings, incorporating small towns in New York state and throughout the Midwest. Moore employs a mix of real state and town names, alongside fictional places within these established geographical settings. The states of New York, Wisconsin, Ohio, Illinois, and Iowa and the imagined towns of Crasden, Fitchville, Horsehearts, Troy, and Dellacrosse are referenced throughout her fiction. In doing so, Moore inserts imaginary spaces within a pre-existing topography and cultural history.

Moore, who grew up in Glenn Falls, New York and was educated at St. Lawrence University and Cornell University, both located in the state, lived in Madison,

Wisconsin from 1984 to 2013, before moving to Nashville, Tennessee.⁴ In line with her own trajectory, Moore predominantly represents small-town New York life in her early fiction and *Frog Hospital* and then shifts to Midwestern settings in *Like Life*⁵ and *Birds of America*, the latter cementing Moore's status as an ambivalently Midwestern writer. While Moore has claimed, in interviews, a closeness and familiarity with the Midwest, Kelly notes that her fiction retains some crucial irony and distance to the setting and its social mores (3). With the publication of *Gate*, this irony and distance was complicated by Moore's choice of narrator, an undergraduate student Tassie, who is a native of the Midwest. Throughout Moore's fiction, domestic space is placed in relation to the alienating setting of the suburbs and the seemingly ahistorical, and therefore uncanny, landscape of the American heartland, the Midwest. Primarily, whether in the suburbs or the semi-rurality of the Midwest, the domestic space is in direct conflict with its surrounding topography, as climate, flora, and fauna impose themselves into the interior space, exposing the space's failure of protection and creating the conditions for haunting. Both suburbs and Midwestern landscapes are coloured by an atmosphere of alienation which aligns with or even leads back to the domestic space.

The suburbs as a place of dwelling long precedes the post-war era, beginning in the nineteenth century (Hayden 23). Yet, at least on the level of cinematic and televisual image, the suburb is associated with post-war domestic ideals. Margaret Marsh argues that the suburb of the twentieth century was predicated on a shared belief of those who dwelled within it:

that proper family life required a breadwinning father (albeit one who took his leisure with his wife and children); a homemaking mother, who cultivated

⁴ In common with many of her characters, Moore is an 'academic [transplant]' ("The Juniper Tree" 50), having moved to Madison to work as a lecturer in creative writing in the University of Wisconsin, Madison and relocating to Nashville in order to take up the Gertrude Conaway professorship in English at Vanderbilt University.

⁵ Kelly argues that *Like Life* is a particularly New York text, treating the mythic power of the city with characteristic ambivalence (10). However, there are numerous stories in the collection that are equally invested in the cultural conception of the Midwest, such as "Two Boys" and "You're Ugly, Too".

outside interests but did not attempt to share the breadwinning function of her husband; and a house in a homogenous community that kept out blacks, some other ethnic groups, and the poor (“(Ms) Reading the Suburbs” 41-42).

Therefore, the suburb is frequently associated with whiteness, the nuclear family, uniformity, and defined gender roles. Yet, in spite of these normative values or perhaps because of them, the suburb is also coded as an inherently strange space. According to Daniel Miller, the language of suburbia—‘semi-detached’, ‘sub-urban’, ‘middle-class’—is one of ambiguity (*Stuff* 83). Not only is the suburb and its values somehow incompatible with the diversity of human dwelling and foregrounds liminal states of being but its strangeness also recalls the gendered assumptions of haunting associated with the uncanny. The suburb is typically gendered as feminine (Silverstone 7); while this association appears primordial, as Marsh argues, the suburban ideal and domestic femininity developed in tandem throughout the nineteenth century but it was not until the end of the century and into the early 1900s that the two fully converged (“Social Construction” 507). The feminine image of the suburb may account for its ambivalence, if not outright denigration, within US culture. As Roger Silverstone evocatively claims, the suburb is viewed as ‘a consequence, an excrescence, a cancerous fungus, leaching the energy of the city, dependent and inert and ultimately self-destructive’ (4), invoking a monstrous, uncanny discourse that underpins many literary and artistic responses to the ubiquitous suburb.

Given this convergence of femininity and the uncanny in discourses of the suburb, it is significant that Moore frequently makes strange her characters’ experience of suburban life in ways that often invokes (although not always in obvious ways) popular and Gothic-coded conventions. In a number of stories, Moore uses the trope of space and alien-life to communicate such estrangement. In “Nun”, the protagonist Benna refers to her and her deceased husband’s home as their ‘house in outer suburbia’ (75), suggesting a discursive link to the phrase ‘outer space’. Frequently husbands or

male partners are characterised as aliens who have infiltrated the domestic space. In “Real Estate”, Ruth watches a film in which a woman falls in love with an alien who takes on the form of her dead husband. To Ruth, the film, though science fiction, is a piece of realism: ‘someone assumed the form of the great love of your life, only to reveal himself later as an alien who had to get on a spaceship and go back to his planet’ (242).⁶ Similarly, in “Paper Losses”, Kit’s husband Rafe is also compared to an alien, his newfound hobby building models of space rockets obfuscating his infidelity: ‘He seemed to have turned into some sort of space alien. Of course later she would understand that all this meant he was involved with another woman’ (66).

This alienation is significant on a two levels. Firstly, it recalls the space-age futurity of the post-war suburb; as Spigel notes, television in particular promulgated a ‘set of images that presented suburban family life in terms of space travel’ (“Space Ship” 217). Secondly, by evoking a discourse of the alien within heterosexual marriages specifically, Moore disturbs the idea of the productive and successful marriage that is so central to the suburban ideal as represented by the rise of marriage and birth rates in the post-war era. Aside from this recurring motif of aliens in a number of stories, the monstrous aspects of the US suburb are evoked in more sustained detail and in ways which evoke hauntology through the collapse of time and space, as signals of spectres of failure. This is evident from Moore’s first collection of stories. In “What Is Seized”, set in a post-war suburb in New York state, the topography of the emerging suburb is marked by opportunities for freedom as well as circumscription. The story is told via the memories of the protagonist, Linnie, of her childhood and early adulthood. Linnie’s family home is situated on the lakeshore and the natural environment offers reprieve from the domestic space yet is also where domestic conflict is played out, seeming to

⁶ Aliens also recur in descriptions of rural Dellacrosse in *Gate*—Dellacrosse has been marketed as an ‘extraterrestrial tourist site’ (66) yet to Tassie, even without any otherworldly presences, the Midwestern strangeness of the community marks it out as doubly alien: ‘Dellacrosse seemed the outer space of outer space’ (68).

extend the boundaries of the family home beyond its material borders. Her mother's suicide attempt at the lake shore evokes the deathly maternal figure as seen in Munro's "Progress" and is figured as a form of direct escape from domestic space. Linnie's use of mundane detail in her telling of the event foregrounds domestic entrapment: 'my mother left rice burning on the stove and half-tried to drown herself in the lake' (40). The burning rice suggests abandonment, a rejection of careful domestic labour, while the ambiguity of 'half-tried' recalls the living-death of the spectre, as well as the liminality of the suburbs.

Moreover, the way in which Linnie conveys her mother's suicide in relation to the natural environment points towards the idea of escape from the domestic—in this post-war setting—as unattainable:

It was March and the lake was not even completely melted yet—a steely slate green with a far-off whitish centre, like some monstrous wound [...] I found her on the shore [...] water lapping at her like an indifferent cat (40).

The uncanny description of the semi-thawed lake along with the domestic inflection of the image of the water as a cat's tongue brings together these seemingly opposing impulses, as frequently seen in Munro's 'linoleum cave' imagery. The 'monstrous wound' of the lake connects to Linnie's description of her mother, as she finds her on the shore, 'clutching fistfuls of gravel and smearing them across her cheeks, down the front of her body, her legs still but her mouth opening and closing noiselessly, twisted and stretched' (40). This tableau is later recalled in Linnie's description of her mother's death some years later, in which the language of madness and possession is invoked: '[s]omething had seized my mother in the back [...] stiffened her limbs, her mouth a gash across her face, revealing only her teeth, yellowed fine as old piano keys' (44). Again, as is typical of Moore's fiction, small domestic details—the cat's tongue, the piano keys—converge with embodied descriptions of death, madness, and illness.

In contrast, the lakeshore is a more straightforward space of escape for Linnie's

father, who uses it as a natural stage for cathartic bouts of singing. These performances, according to Linnie's mother, are 'a way of releasing things inside of him, [...] in a way, he hoped, that would not disturb the neighbors (who were a quarter of a mile away on each side)' (41). His concern with disturbing their neighbours hints at the scrutiny of the suburban community. Linnie's father's singing voice, in this instance, is contrasted with his voice as it occurs elsewhere in the text—namely as an actor in local amateur productions of Broadway musicals and plays. Linnie describes it as sounding like 'some creature that lived inside of him' (41). The difference between his 'public' voice and this more vulnerable, private voice—that can only be expressed in the liminality of the outside space, one that is both natural and 'domestic' due to its proximity to the family home—hinges around the use of the word 'creature' with its non-human resonances. Significantly, Linnie's description of this 'other' voice of her father as a hidden monstrous identity links to the images of monstrosity in her recounting of her mother's attempted suicide.

Non-human presences are also central to the suburban estrangement at the heart of "Real Estate". The outside world of the suburb does not buttress, but threatens, the protective qualities of the domestic space. Aside from the aforementioned aliens, the intrusion of the exterior into the interior space is indicated in this story by the obscured rural past of the suburb and environmental revenge. Animal and human invasions characterise the new home that Ruth and her husband Terence have recently purchased. These invasions are linked to Terence's past infidelity and Ruth's experience of cancer, both of which she fears returning. The suburban setting of their new home, an old farm house within a newer suburban development, allows the natural world to impose into the domestic space which signals a recurrence of the past. The house is situated in the 'suburbanized cornfields on the periphery of town' (228) and is the only dwelling within its location with a marked history: it is an 'original ancient four-square

farmhouse in the centre of a 1979 subdivision' (228). Hence, it becomes a meeting point between 'ancient' history and the more recent past of the late 1970s.

The suburban characteristics of this '1979 subdivision' with its community 'of spiffy middle management' (234) also adds to this sense of the elision of history, as suburbs are often regarded as disconnected from the collective history and embedded tradition of established communities, being considered spaces of perpetual exit and (re)entry of individuals (Garnett 278). Furthermore, a specifically agrarian space—presumably a family farm—has been built over to make way for an educated workforce. The land, as is constantly made clear in "Real Estate", is not simply a place for people to build and dwell upon, but has its own agency. One way in which the natural environment exercises this agency is as a threat to human dwellers. The garden surrounding Ruth and Terence's house, which they are attempting to tame through landscaping, is rendered in violent terms: '[f]rom the [...] flower bed came the persistent oniony smell of those chives not yet smothered by the weed barrier. And the rhubarb, too, kept exploding stubbornly through' (243). The language Moore employs here—'smothered', 'exploding'—suggests an intrusive violence posed by the natural world, which is at odds with the suburb as a landscape which is thought to lack 'disorder and decay' (Griffiths 4). "Real Estate" is on many levels about the unwilling and uncontrollable traversal of boundaries—between inside and outside, between health and illness, life and death, fidelity and infidelity—and this is seen in the relation between interior and exterior spaces. The threat of the outside as it impinges on the inside adds to the strangeness of the suburban space which elides its own history. The monstrous images found in "What Is Seized" are largely absent in the depiction of place in "Real Estate", save for descriptions of the interior, yet the uncontrollable threat of the natural environment accords a sense of hostility which characterises the suburb in Moore's fiction, and counters the received image of the harmonious and homely suburb.

The imbedded spatial insecurity and estrangement of the suburban space again comes to the fore in Moore's retelling of Henry James' *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) in *Bark*, entitled "Wings". "Wings" borrows from James' novel a concern with inheritance, money, time, and morality, along with his overarching preoccupation with dwelling spaces and literary architecture, yet adapts a transatlantic, city-centred story into a Midwestern suburban narrative. Long-term partners KC and Dench (analogues for James' Kate Croy and Merton Densher) are two musicians of middle age, living in a sublet house in an unnamed Midwestern suburb. The neighbourhood in which KC and Dench live is affluent, with surrounding roads in the neighbourhood named after East Coast colleges, denoting a sense of economic and intellectual privilege, as well as exclusion. However, a closed-down bookshop and the 'cranes bisect[ing] the sky' (105) indicate a lack of economic prosperity specifically linked to the Great Recession. The bookshop is in fact Borders—'The D was missing from the sign so that it now read BOR ERS' (107)—which, along with other retail chains such as the video-rental shop Blockbuster, was a prominent casualty of the recession. Vacant retail outlets such as these became characteristic of the post-recessionary suburban landscape in the US, in which strip malls became ghost towns, the economic power represented by these buildings rendered impotent.

Because of KC and Dench's status as temporary tenants in a neighbourhood of homeowners, as well as their obvious lack of wealth, they are marked as outsiders. This separation, and related isolation is what motivates KC's ambiguous relationship with an elderly neighbour, Milt (the Milly Theale counterpart of the story). KC's interactions with Milt highlight the inherent isolation of the rest of the neighbourhood which is individualised and solitary: the only people seen by KC are jogging on their own or driving in their cars. To be car-less in the car-centric space of the suburb indicates a limited mobility which connects to KC's and Dench's existential stagnation. The layout

of the suburb hinders non-vehicular movement and marks out walkers like KC as unusual and hyper-visible, if not entirely strange. As a later story in Moore's *oeuvre*, "Wings" appears to move away from the language of uncanniness and violence which marks space-place relations in those earlier stories, aligning itself with the realism of its Jamesian source material. However, that the suburban landscape is figured as intrinsically empty communicates the diffuse nature of spectres of failure in Moore's fiction as it pertains to the intersection of interior and exterior spaces. In "Wings", the suburban landscape is haunted by spectres of what it lacks—in this case, communality and financial prosperity, which can be read in conversation with the failures of the post-war family and suburban futurity in "What Is Seized" and "Real Estate".

Various forms of failure are present, too, in Moore's Midwestern stories, wherein the specifics of place are brought into conversation with broader meanings of dwelling and home, which also manifest as a type of haunting. As Jurrit Daalder notes 'the language of homecoming' marks understandings of the Midwest in the American imaginary (220). This illustrates the discursive intersection of place with notions of the domestic. Despite the actual social, economic, and topographic variety of the Midwest, as Ralph Poole notes, it is often homogenised into a place of mythological mundanity: 'a territory consisting of families, who for generations have owned their farms, as well as small towns whose inhabitants are provincial, ingenuous, and generally optimistically inclined' (265). Yet, the Midwest as a geographic and literary landscape is also simultaneously marked by its own liminality. The geographical boundaries of the Midwest are neither conclusive nor static. While, according to David Pichaske, 'Midwesterners pretty much agree that 'the Midwest' is roughly the region between the Missouri and the Ohio Rivers' (103), William Rankin's 'Radical Cartography' project

emphasises the region's complex and conflicting borders.⁷ According to Rankin, '[t]he American Midwest has no obvious boundaries; it is, at best, a collection of ill-defined ideals about landscape, labor, and culture that vaguely invoke the westward march of U.S. expansion in the nineteenth century'. The Midwest is therefore integral to the nation via its status as the national 'heartland' yet it is also marginalised by its lack of specificity.

Unlike the inherent Gothicism of the South and the Puritan history of the East Coast, the Midwest's ordinariness and lack of official histories put it in conflict with its image as the symbolic 'heart' of the nation—the place of 'ordinary Americans'—which would suggest national import. As Kent Ryden postulates, unlike the East, the South and the West, the Midwest is 'defined by the absence of a past, a sort of temporal emptiness' (513), echoing Pichaske who suggests that the Midwest is marked by 'a feeling of emptiness' (103). This marked temporal and affective absence is significant regarding the understanding of history through landscape (and vice versa) as Ryden suggests: the Midwest's 'landscape of absence [...] argue[s] implicitly not for the thickness of the region's history but for its thinness' (Ryden 520). The Midwest's lack of history and seeming lack of culture is a significant trope in Moore's fiction. In "Agnes of Iowa", the titular character returns to the region after a spell in New York. Her frustrations with Iowa, and the Midwest more generally, recur on her return: '[s]he had grown annoyed with Iowa, the pathetic thirdhand manner in which the large issues and conversations of the world were encountered, the oblique and tired way history situated itself there' (146). Agnes' frustrations recall the characterisation of the Midwest, as Ryden and Poole put forward, as a geographical place lacking a formal or concretised history. A lack of formal markers for historical events such as plaques,

⁷ See Rankin's map of the Midwest: www.radicalcartography.net/midwest.png. This version of the Midwest integrates delineations of the region from 100 maps published by a range of organisations, illustrating the contingency of its borders.

signs, or statues to signify an ‘official’ history, are instead, according to Ryden, replaced by a more localised understanding of history as small rather than large (514). The smallness of local history and experience is figured by Agnes as mundane gossip—‘pathetic thirdhand manner’—evoking in a disparaging sense notions of the feminine and the domestic. This tone of frustration is also evident in an earlier story, “You’re Ugly, Too”, in which much of the protagonist Zoë’s dissatisfaction with the Midwest finds its locus in the students she teaches at a small university, who are ‘spacey with estrogen from large quantities of meat and cheese’ (382).

The Midwest is typically rendered in Moore’s fiction in a tone of frustration, if not outright hostility, that is somewhat tempered by lyrical descriptions of the landscape and natural environment. However, even with the presence of this lyricism, the absence inherent to the Midwest as geographical place and cultural concept, also fundamentally imbues Moore’s fiction with a sense of existential negation connected to death and rendered as a spectre of failure in the heartland itself. This is particularly prevalent in *Gate* in which the Midwest figures as an important setting to theorise spatiality and identity as it relates to the linking of ‘heartland’ and ‘homeland’, particularly in post-9/11 contexts (Varvogli 179). As well as being a novel concerned with domesticity, motherhood, post-9/11 politics, food, and social class it is also a subtly ecological novel concerned with the effects of industrialisation—namely building and farming—on the land. Via the geographic interpolation of heartland *as* homeland, an inherently uncanny spatialisation ‘haunted by prior and future losses, invasions, abandonments’ (Kaplan 63), the Midwestern setting of *Gate* articulates the relation between interior and exterior space as it pertains to spectral failures, simultaneously political and domestic.

Gate takes place between two fictional Midwestern locations: the small farming town of Dellacrosse and Troy, a university town described, tongue-in-cheek, as ‘the Athens of the Midwest’ (4). However, while it is an important setting in the novel, as

the site of Tassie's university life and her employment as a childminder for the Thornwood-Brink family, it is Tassie's hometown of Dellacrosse where Moore shifts away—to some degree—from her disdainful depiction of the Midwest. Despite the existence of major urban centres (Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, among others) the pervading image of the Midwest in US culture is that of an idealised agrarian space of flat fields and farms (Poole 265-269) and this rural image is sustained in the novel. In some ways, the hickish tropes of the Midwest continue to be lampooned in *Gate*: the main street of Dellacrosse is 'lined with single-story store-fronts' including 'Larry's Resale Shop, Terry's Taxidermy (formerly Dick's Deergutting), and Walt's Worms' (43), while a sign in front of the local Methodist church reads, 'LOVE YOUR ENEMIES; YOU MADE THEM' (42)—a maxim which encapsulates the novel's overarching philosophy on US foreign policy in the aftermath of 9/11. Such public signage is characteristic of the Midwestern landscape, in lieu of a more marked history worthy of emphasis in other regions (Ryden 517). The descriptions of Tassie's family farm are also coloured by an absence which denotes the failure of productivity: Tassie calls it a 'hogless, horseless' (4) farm, while Tassie's father is depicted as being a misfit farmer within the Midwestern context. He is not a 'real' farmer but 'a hobby-ist, a truck farmer, with no real acreage, just some ducks [...] a dog, a tractor, a website' (18) and the farm 'a mere kitchen garden that had gotten slightly out of hand' (19). Ironically, Tassie's father's dedication to responsible farming practices—illustrating his love for the land—marks him as separate from the local industrial farmers and illustrates the way in which industrialisation shapes the notion of productivity itself into a single, economic meaning.

The farm, as symbol of heartland/homeland, becomes an explicit site of haunting as the novel progresses. This haunting, and the various failures it implies, comes into conflict with the tradition of the farm novel in American literature, which, as Florian

Freitag notes, typically ‘portray farming as a way of realizing the American dream of material and nonmaterial success’ (6). In *Gate*, the farm as symbol of success is rendered null through haunting. Although vestiges of material wealth are gestured to in descriptions of the land—a disused tennis court is a symbol of ‘an old affluence that once protected the place’ (62); portions of the farmland have been sold and are now being developed into a new subdivision called ‘Highland Estates’ (46)—this wealth associated with the land has lost, or perhaps never held, its protective capabilities. The farm becomes an explicit site of haunting in the summer of 2002 in which Tassie’s younger brother Robert dies in combat while serving in the US Army in Afghanistan. Tassie experiences a premonition of Robert’s death while running in the fields, one which implicates a number of spectral figures from the text, including her former boyfriend, Reynaldo, and a young boy she believes to be Gabriel, the deceased son of her employers. The language in the description of their manifestation grants a sense of spectrality:

Their stillness, the fact that as apparitions they seemed to recede and keep the same distance from me [...] was an omen. Plus they came again the next night in the exact same way, *neither vaporous nor cadaverous*, but wordless and turning and walking away, this time with a little bruised up boy (293, emphasis added).

This recurring haunting within the farm landscape will soon infiltrate into the domestic space as a manifestation of the failure of the protection of the homeland. Both Robert and Reynaldo are implicated in one way or another in post-9/11 conflict: Robert in his death in Afghanistan and Reynaldo, it is suggested, through involvement in a terrorist cell.⁸ In this sense, the distant conflict, meant ostensibly to ‘protect’ the nation state from the outside threat of the racial other, manifests itself into the nation’s heartland regardless. It renders all subjects, but particularly children and young adults, vulnerable

⁸ Reynaldo as the novel’s uncertain duplicitous jihadist figure is one of the less successful aspects of *Gate*, as reviewers of the novel noted on its publication (Wallace-Wells 39; Leithauser, “Voices in the Heartland”).

(Varvogli 180), against a prevailing sense during this period of conflict of the US and its citizens as ‘invulnerable’ (Young 11). Gabriel’s inclusion in this group of spectres, as will be explored in the following section on ‘Domestic Architecture’, connects political failure with that of the family unit, and its failure to protect those who dwell within the domestic space.

As Victoria Johnson notes, the Midwest provides ‘a key prism through and against which “common sense” ideals regarding citizenship, national identity, and cultural worth have been variously debated and understood’ (5). Given this deeply-rooted connection between the landscape of the Midwest and notions of ‘home’ as a space of collective belonging in the American imaginary—which is intensified in a post-9/11 political landscape—it is unsurprising that traces of domestic idioms and images percolate. Moore’s depiction of the Midwest, although often lambasting, illustrates the way in which, like her depiction of the suburbs, concepts of strangeness, intrusion, and infiltration are central despite the ‘common sense’ coding of the region in the American imaginary as protective and worthy of protection. The breakdown of the boundary between interior and exterior spaces in Moore’s fiction communicates how failure is inbuilt into idealisations of the domestic space rooted in place or even nebulous concepts of the homeland. As will now be explored in the next section, such failure is evident in the built structure of the domestic space itself.

Domestic Architecture

As explored through relations of interior and exterior spaces, the failure of expected spatial functions of protection produce haunting atmospheres and lead to the appearance of spectres. In the domestic architecture that populates Moore's work—typically the suburban single-family home, as well as student apartments, and city condominiums—failure is too a feature. Through these domestic spaces, violence, death, and loss are preconditions of the domestic space, contrived through its architectural materiality. This

section will explore occurrences of spectres of failure through close reading of a selection of Moore's fiction in chronological order. Recurring characteristics of domestic architecture in Moore's work include the presence of infidelity and familial violence. Children are particularly vulnerable figures and many children or young adult characters populate these texts as ghosts.

As in the depiction of landscapes, failures of domestic architecture are figured as both political and familial failures. Moore's depiction of domestic architecture, as mentioned previously, frequently borrows from fairy tales, Gothic images, and from the tradition of women's writing. Therefore, to a greater degree than Munro, who also draws on these traditions of haunting, Moore's domestic architecture is more self-consciously intertextual and so the material space that characters reside in is simultaneously shaped by imaginary, and literary, spaces. Fundamentally, what is striking about description of domestic architecture in Moore's fiction is that the material structure of the space, as well as being a site of haunting through failure, is also ineradicable despite the desires of its female inhabitants for their own death and the destruction of the home. Therefore, domestic architecture in Moore's short stories and novels communicates a fundamentally *structural* ambivalence regarding the notion of the domestic that speaks to, but complicates, the notion of failure.

In "What is Seized", the structure of the childhood home is used to explore Linnie's understanding of her relationship to her parents and their fraught marriage. The story focuses explicitly on the post-war domestic space through a chronological setting at some point in 1960s, indicated by the frequent mention of popular culture, namely Broadway musicals. Music plays a significant role in this story, as in much of Moore's fiction. Indeed, the first description given of Linnie's childhood home is figured in musical terms:

The rooms in our house were like songs. Each had its own rhythmic spacing and clutter, which if you closed your eyes became a sort of musical notation, a score—clusters of eighth notes, piles of triplets, and the wooden roundness of doorways, like clefs, all blending in a kind of concerto. Or sometimes, as with the bathroom, with its motifs of daisies and red plastic, they created a sort of a jingle, something small, likeable, functional (26).

This description is suggestive at first of harmony. Individual rooms are likened to musical notation yet each room is a distinct form which would also suggest a certain level of discord within the space as a whole. Therefore, the seeming harmony of this image gives way to something darker when the link between music and Linnie's parents is considered. Music is central to their marriage. Linnie's mother, while too reserved to sing in the presence of her husband due to his control ('he would correct her pitch and straighten her posture and insist she use her lungs and diaphragm better' [27]), happily sings to Linnie and her brother as she puts them to bed, 'crooning imitations into one of the bedposts as if it were a microphone' (27). The children's bedroom becomes the site of performance as well as a space in which she can express herself without judgement. Despite the felicity of these moments with her young children, Linnie's mother is progressively rendered as spectral by the cruelty of her husband.

Linnie's father's public identity as a performer is linked to his emotional artifice and is evident during their 'motherless' (34) Saturdays when he takes over the domestic realm for a brief period. His paternal power, as the adult Linnie suggests, hinges on his ability to perform, but not embody, the role of father (and husband), leaving her to wonder '[i]f his talents, his magic, his legerdemain, didn't remain inimitable, unknowable, if they weren't protected and preserved, what could he possibly be, to us, for us, what could he do?' (35). In hindsight, her father's power is rendered impotent by the artifice which underpins it. As the narrative progresses, in line with Linnie's childhood and adolescence, the psychological effects of her father's power over her mother are catalogued. Much of their marital discord is communicated through spatial

images. For instance in a letter to the adult Lennie, her mother writes about her marriage:

Cold men destroy women [...] They woo them with something personable that they bring out for show, something annexed to their souls like a fake greenhouse, lead you in, and you think you see life and vitality [...] and then when you love them, they lead you out into their real soul, a drafty, cavernous empty ballroom [...] They lock the greenhouse and you are as tiny as a figure in an architect's drawing (30).

Arguably, elements of “Bluebeard”—its spatial metaphors and focus on entrapment and marital betrayal—are evident here. The particular architectural space rendered here by Lennie’s mother is a metaphor for her husband’s psyche and his secrecy. In contrast to “Bluebeard”, it is emotional damage, rather than physical violence, that is at the core of this marriage in “What Is Seized”. However, there is no hierarchisation of violence: Lennie’s mother asserts that the emotional coldness of her husband is a destructive force. Lennie’s father takes on, in her mother’s mind, the role of Bluebeard as murderer: ‘She dreams that he is trying to kill her. That he has a rifle and is calling her out of the bathroom. In the bathroom she has knives and axes’ (38). On an imagined level, the domestic space becomes a site of violence.

The destructive effects of the marriage—the implicit violence at its core—diminishes Lennie’s mother. In memory, she appears spectral to Lennie. Again, the space of the children’s bedroom is associated with her mother as she comes to say goodnight, ‘looking wraithlike, silent, in a long white sleeveless nightgown’ (32-3) while standing in the doorway. This spectral image becomes reified in Lennie’s memory where her ‘childhood [is] sometimes simply a series of images of her swirling into the doorway, in white, over and over again’ (37-8). Her mother’s spectrality also becomes evident as the effects of her failing marriage are linked to her body: her attempted suicide and later, a cancer diagnosis. Indeed, the suggestion that the marriage is so destructive that it begins to impinge on the borders of the maternal body is made clear when the divorce coincides with her mother’s mastectomy surgery.

As the marriage comes to an end, Linnie's mother's selfhood is increasingly diminished, first through being made spectral and then eventually in her death at the end of the narrative. It is this experience of caring for her mother as she dies, and eventually her mother's death, that inculcates an epiphanic moment figured by Linnie, tellingly, in domestic terms:

I am driving back toward my tiny kitchen table and I will write this: forgiveness lives alone and far off down the road, but bitterness and art are close gossiping neighbors, sharing the same clothesline, hanging out their things, getting their laundry confused (46).

Significantly, the domestic space here—the kitchen table—becomes a site of writing and of creation in contrast to the destructive and spectral space of her childhood home, in which creativity was controlled and performed. The invocation of domestic—even suburban—discourse is also notable: the distinctly feminine images of housewifely gossip and laundry are analogies for bitterness and art. In many ways, despite the marked emotional injury of the childhood home, this image suggests a more positive future for Linnie, a direct rejection of her parents' lives.

The stories which constitute Moore's next text, *Anagrams*, in many ways continue to use the domestic space in a similar way to "What Is Seized", as a space of failed familial connections. *Anagrams*, given its structure as a repeating rearrangement of characters, settings, and imagery, is a hauntological text. The recurrence of such elements amounts to a form of textual haunting, even though not all of the stories included in *Anagrams* feature spectres within domestic spaces. The most obviously hauntological story of the text is "Nun" in which the domestic space is haunted by the protagonist Benna's imaginary six-year-old daughter, Georgianne. She is a composite of two losses in Benna's life: George, her husband who died in a car crash after their marriage ended, and Annie, her niece whom she no longer sees after her brother lost custody of her in his own divorce. In effect, Georgianne, like many of the characters in *Anagrams*, is an anagram herself. Indeed, as is suggested in the first story in *Anagrams*,

“Escape from the Invasion of the Love Killers”, children may be particularly anagrammatic beings—“a baby’s not much more than a reconstituted ham and cheese sandwich. Just a little anagram of you and what you’ve been eating for nine months” (6-7). Arguably, children are a rearrangement and refraction of their genes and environment, leading to an uncanny sense of repetition throughout generations.

However, Georgianne, being both imaginary⁹ and representative of Benna’s dual loss of familial relationships, renders her hauntological in an explicit sense. She is described as ‘an angel, a beautiful child ghost’ (104). Georgianne allows Benna to provisionally occupy a maternal role. However, because of Georgianne’s imaginary status, this experience of motherhood is mostly idealised (Weekes, “Cycles” 7) and the realities of the role—the corporeal and psychological effects of pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting which are the cause of much anxiety for many of Moore’s characters—are bypassed via Georgianne’s status as a spectre. As Georgianne functions in this way, her presence within the domestic space has obvious hauntological significance.

A print of Pierre-Auguste Renoir’s “Madame Georges Charpentier and Her Children” (1878)¹⁰ hangs on a wall in Benna’s house. Throughout the course of “Nun”, the print becomes covered in pen marks, as if a child—ostensibly Georgianne—has drawn them. The image itself is an anagram. Renoir’s painting is an explicitly domestic scene: a mother, two children, and a dog placed in a domestic setting, surrounded by lush furnishings. The composition is warm and harmonious, highlighting the very elements lacking in Benna’s home. Benna is ostensibly the ‘other’ Madame Georges Charpentier—Benna’s last name is the anglicised Carpenter and she was married to a man named George, but in contrast to Renoir’s sitter, Benna has but one imaginary

⁹ Georgianne’s imaginary nature is linked to the recurring references in *Anagrams* to American Impressionist Mary Cassatt, whose paintings feature domestic life and mother-child relationships. In “Water”, Benna is an academic specialising in Cassatt’s work and characterises her thus: ‘the childless Mary Cassatt giving herself babies with paint’ (58) yet in “Nun”, Benna is similar: childless, giving herself a child with her imagination.

¹⁰ The text erroneously refers to the painting as ‘*Mme. Charpentier and Her Daughters*’ (108).

child¹¹ to Madame Charpentier's two real children.

Significantly, the marks on the poster echo the structural damage of Benna's home. The damage is due to an ant infestation, a common occurrence in Moore's fiction. The infestation, as well as denoting a diminished boundary between inside and outside, also invites images of death. Benna's attempts at exterminating the ants amounts to placing one dead ant in the middle of a room and killing the others when 'like stubborn Antigones they rush out to bury their dead brother and get nabbed' (67). In light of the symbolic resonances of this structural damage, the link between the poster and the house—'[t]he dark line on the Renoir looks like a miniature of the crack on the side of the house' (108)—has deeper implications for Benna's domestic desires. Given that the Renoir print is a representation of Benna's desires for motherhood and a domestic ideal she cannot occupy, the marks on the poster are an attack on and a re-inscription of such ideals, which echo the destruction of the house. Renoir's image is an uncanny mirror of Benna's desires, highlighting the complexities of loss and desire in Benna's life which manifest themselves in the domestic space.

Such concerns with children in domestic life occur in "Places", too. In this story the domestic space is explicitly a site of failure: the loss of a child is placed in conversation with the idea of the domestic space as a site of various forms of waste. The story engages with a number of hauntological tropes. Middle-aged housewife Millie attempts to form a mother-son bond with a young man named John Spee, an English acquaintance of her daughter's, who is visiting the country for the first time. Millie endeavours to make the domestic space welcoming for John, however, the spectral presence of her son Michael, who disappeared from their home several years prior, overshadows this connection. Millie's life is characterised by disconnection on many

¹¹ One of Madame Charpentier's children depicted in this painting is named Georgette-Berthe, hence providing another link to Benna via Georganne.

fronts, not least the broken relationship to Michael. Her husband Hane and daughter Ariel show clear disdain for Millie's intellectual life and particularly her aspiration to turn her interest in household waste management into a role as a consultant 'Environmental Project Manager'. Although no such career opportunities exist, Millie situates her prospective employment, significantly, in Michael's former bedroom which she has turned into a home office. Ariel articulates the unfulfilled nature of Millie's aspirations, using quotation marks around the word 'office' whenever making reference to it. This use of quotation marks recurs in the story when John comes to stay, as the room is referred to by Millie as not simply 'the guest room' but 'the "guest" room' (410). This grammatical distancing illustrates how the room cannot be separated from its original purpose for this family.

For Millie, John functions as a double to Michael. John frequently occupies the physical space vacated by Michael: not only his bedroom but his usual place at the dinner table across from Hane who sits in the patriarch's place at the head. John sits 'kitty-corner' (407), meaning diagonal from Hane, and the phrase, through its childlike imagery, suggests that the domestic space itself is forcing John to occupy this vacated role of son. John's discomfort in this role recalls the fractious relationship between Hane and Michael. Although Millie chooses to believe the police's suggestion that Michael's disappearance is connected to drugs, it is suggested that Hane's tension with Michael, their lack of mutual understanding and connection, is the reason for his running away. This tension caused violence within the home:

No matter what Hane said, standing in a doorway or serving dinner [...] Michael would always tell him just to forget it, Dad. One time, in the living room, Hane had found himself unable to bear it, and had grabbed Michael by the arm and struck him twice in the face (409).

This tension, although it has no violent outcome, is replicated through John's presence in the home. He is polite but distant, clearly uncomfortable in his communication with Millie and Hane. Despite John's discomfort, his presence in Michael's room appears at

first to be a positive return for Millie: ‘it pleased her to have someone in that space, someone really using it’ (410). John’s presence in the house gives her a sense of purpose and a reoccupation of her role as a mother to a son: she cooks meals, drives him to the train each morning, and cleans his room. However, soon these positive connotations take on a darker taint. While cleaning Michael/John’s room while John visits New York city, Millie’s interlinked failures as a mother and a ‘career woman’ come to be articulated as she performs this domestic labour. This labour soon becomes purposeless, as Millie vacuums not only the surfaces of the room but ‘the ceiling and the air’ (415). A desk—once envisioned as the site of her ‘business headquarters’ (415)—is covered by the detritus of John’s visits to the city, flyers and matchbooks. While John’s presence, through his dirty clothes and litter, provides purpose and pleasure for Millie it also reminds of other failures: as she cleans she thinks of the business, ‘how she had hoped to run it out of this very room, how it seemed now to have crawled back in here [...] looking a lot like a laundry’ (416).

Given that Millie’s career aspirations appear to be a way for her to recuperate a new role for herself after Michael’s disappearance (and the emotional distance of her daughter), the two are linked through the space of Michael’s room and its shifting purpose. It represents both a failure of care for a child as well as a failure of agency for Millie. The room’s new purpose—as either guest room or office—cannot ultimately be established due to the traumatic loss it represents, that of Michael’s disappearance. John’s repetition of that action, his sudden departure from the house in the middle of the night, is a recurrence of the loss of Michael and is rendered as a spectral return, a doubled absence. On discovering John’s absence in the bedroom,

Millie let out a gasp of dismay. “Hane, the boy has gone!”. Hane was dressing for church and came out to see [...] he stopped, as if some ghost that had once been cast from the house had just returned (421).

Ironically, the ghost—Michael—which ‘had once been cast out’ is shown throughout the story to be very much present. Old and new loss manifest here and the circularity of the connection between Michael and John as well as the sudden return of ‘the ghost’ as guest illustrates how Michael—and the failure of care his departure represents—is an unpredictable spectre.

Moving on to *Frog Hospital*, the architectural form of the single-family home is also presented as a site which fails to adequately house children, resulting in haunting. Berie and her husband Daniel are childless as both carry the Tay-Sachs gene, the inheritance of which would be fatal to their biological child. They are—at least in an abstract sense—considering adopting a child, however, the possibility of adoption is mired in ambivalence. This ambivalence is signalled by the fact that the spare room in their house, ostensibly imagined as a future child’s bedroom, is referred to as ‘the “Maybe’s Room”’ which stands ‘still empty’ (71). The narration leaves uncertain whether this desire is merely thwarted by biological conditions or for other, deeply rooted psychological reasons. Berie’s memories of her childhood friend Sils’ pregnancy and abortion, and the revelation of Daniel’s violent behaviour midway through the narrative, underscore such ambivalence towards pregnancy and children.

Berie’s recounting of her adolescence is interspersed and thus held in tension with, her present-day adult life, specifically throughout the course of the narrative, during a trip to Paris. The events in Berie’s past and their immediacy in her memory as an adult suggest that domestic spaces, and the wider world, are inherently unsafe for children in this text. In the novel the central moment of violence which haunts the larger narrative—and again, as in “What Is Seized”, recalls “Bluebeard”—occurs when Daniel, during a fight about his infidelity, pushes Berie down a flight of stairs and into the basement of their home. This allusion is unsurprising given the novel’s overall preoccupation with fairy tales: during their adolescence, Berie and Sils work at a fairy

tale-themed adventure park, Storyland. The allusion to “Bluebeard” is suggestive and complex. During their argument Berie likens Daniel’s secrecy about his infidelity to ““living with a wolf in the cellar as a pet—except he’s not a pet, in fact, he’s not even a wolf, he’s a nuclear power plant!”” (79). This surreal image illustrates a recurring concern in Moore’s fiction: a man’s infidelity is a potentially destructive or dangerous force.¹² Berie’s opening of the basement stairwell door, in order to performatively identify Daniel’s secrecy—‘I marched over and threw open the basement door in some kind of attempt at illustration if not proof’ (79)—aligns Berie with Bluebeard’s wife, revealing secrets hidden within the domestic space. Unlike the traditional tale, Berie does not find evidence of Daniel’s transgressions: there are no bodies in the basement. Rather, what is revealed is Daniel’s capacity for cruelty, something which is also at the crux of “Bluebeard”. Berie’s fall into the basement is conflated with Daniel’s infidelity, symbolic of his carelessness towards Berie and their marriage:

I stumbled backward, into the open stairwell to the basement, my feet hitting air, my whole body falling, pitching backward toward the wolf and the nuclear power plant, the world reeling, both slow and fast, a tiny rectangle of light with Daniel in it, and then just the dark space of the basement (79-80).

It is difficult to parse how much this experience of violence stains Berie and Daniel’s domestic space, specifically. The occurrence of violence is revealed—and gives context to Berie’s previous mention of her injured hip—at the midpoint of Berie’s visit to Paris. The injuries Berie sustains from the fall denote a lingering emotional as well as physical trauma as the event becomes interweaved into the ‘Paris’ sections of the narrative. Perhaps it is this physical distance from the domestic space (and homeland more generally) that allows for Berie to articulate this event to herself, though not to other people. Certainly, subsequent mention of the home are laced with the language of confinement and the desire for freedom. Berie tells Daniel that she does not wish to go

¹² Significantly, it is always men, not women, who are unfaithful in Moore’s depiction of marriage.

home, expressing a sense of distance from the space itself: ““ I feel disconnected these days, in the house, in town”” (86). She later characterises the notion of home itself as inherently paradoxical in its ‘[a] lovely cheat and evasion; its capitulation to longing and rest’ (146). Berie’s final word on the matter of home appears to suggest that despite her willingness to remain with Daniel and the possibility of motherhood symbolised, however ambivalently, by ‘the Maybe’s room’, it is the destruction of the home that Berie longs for: ‘I harbor secret wishes of its burning, our life in flames, the crazy wicked freedom of it’ (146). Subtly nodding to “Bluebeard” yet again, Berie’s desire to burn down her home recalls the actions of Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*: such allusions recur again in *Gate* and it is significant to note that as in Munro’s work “Bluebeard” and *Jane Eyre* are repeatedly evoked in narratives concerning infidelity. Yet, ultimately it seems that in *Frog Hospital* the power of the home is too strong in the face of individual desire for freedom. Although Berie desires its destruction, she also concedes that the house:

will still be standing, safe and whole, the previous owner’s rubber bands still wrapped around the doorknobs. The animals we’ve sealed in, in mending and patching—the mice and the larks—will wake and cry within the walls, then go still. The season will be spring but the squirrels will have eaten and rearranged the bulbs, so that only one lone daffodil—a trumpet solo!—will be shivering the yard (146).

This image is characteristic of the bursts of lyricism which intersperse Moore’s fiction and that often suggest ambiguous, even dogged, hope. It also emphasises that despite failure, the architectural structure of the home will remain standing. Whether this can be construed as a positive notion, given what has occurred in this home, remains to be seen as Moore gives no indication of Berie’s return to this home, illustrating the ambivalence and lack of closure that is a recurring feature of Moore’s fiction.

This domestic ambivalence and deathly failure reaches its apex in “Real Estate”. The story represents an intensification of Moore’s hauntology of domestic space, augmenting and escalating that which is at play in her previous texts. Death imbues the

story from the off: the narrative begins with Ruth's fearful premonitions of her own death, the recurrence of her lung cancer. Ruth's fear of her own demise is linked to a related fear of Terence's infidelity. As in *Frog Hospital* and "What Is Seized", marital infidelity is presented by Moore as a force of destruction—specifically threatening female embodiment and livelihood. Ruth deals with this destabilising dual fear of death through a search for a new house. As Terence admits, "We've soiled the nest, in many respects" (225), suggesting that a new house symbolises an escape from death and diminishment. The search for a new house at first complies with the concept of the domestic space as protective: it is possible to sustain life—and a committed marriage—within the home, just not the one they currently dwell within.

House-hunting in "Real Estate" is at first a pleasurable process which soon gives way to the threatening spectre of death. The house viewings are compared to '[t]he airing of the family vault [...] [a] peek into the grave' (227), while later in the story Ruth argues that '[e]very house is a grave [...] All that life-stealing fuss and preparation' (234). As in other texts, in "Real Estate", the domestic space cannot fundamentally keep death at bay, touching on one of the central ironies of the domestic space, and the central reason for its hauntology: by sustaining life, the space also necessarily sustains death. The inescapability of death and houses are at the core of "Real Estate" and this fact finds its locus in the Gothic-inflicted house that Ruth and Terence eventually buy and move into. Moore taps into a number of Gothic tropes in the description of the house. In descriptions of its structure Moore employs a number of conflicting and uncanny images to describe the house: 'its porch and dormers angled as if by a Cubist, its chimney crumbling on one side, its cedar shingles ornately leprous with old green paint' (228); 'the Picasso porch, the roof mottled with moss and soot' (229). These images suggest illness, decay, and defamiliarization—three elements that counter the idea of the domestic space as felicitous and protective. A connection to

death is extended further when Terence announces that this house is their ‘dream house’, yet for Ruth this has no positive connotation as her dreams are ‘about death—its blurry pixilation, its movement through a dark, soft sleep to a hard, bright end’ (228). These uncanny and ultimately deathly connotations become stronger when Ruth and Terence begin their occupancy. On their first night in the house, with no furniture or belongings, the interior’s Gothic elements come to the fore:

A small candle on the floor cast their shadows up on the ceiling, gloomy and fat. Wind rattled the panes and the boiler in the cellar burst on in small, frightening explosions [...] There was scampering in the walls. The sound of footsteps—or something like footsteps—thudded softly in the attic, two floors above them (233)

Here, the classic markers of the Gothic house—anachronistic candlelight, the suggestion of a ghost—cause Ruth to claim, jokingly, “‘We’ve bought a haunted house’” (233). The irony of Ruth’s claim is undercut by the fact that the house is legitimately haunted, not in a straightforward Gothic sense but by the grievances and failures that Ruth and Terence have brought with them. Infestations of the house by various animals and vermin escalate the deathly aspects of the space. Ants, racoons, bats, crows, and geese at various points and in various ways infiltrate the boundaries of the domestic space. Not only do these infestations undercut any suggestion of the space as protective they are another signal of death, comparable as they are to human disease and Ruth’s illness in particular. During the first night in the new house, racoons are found in the porch roof and their revelation invokes in Ruth a bodily memory of her lung cancer, feeling ‘a twinge in her one lung’ (233). When Ruth queries why the racoons were not noticed before they moved in, Terence quips that the house needed not an inspection from animal control, but an ‘MRI’ (233). This use of medical language, again linking the infestation to Ruth and her recent ill-health, estranges the home from its life-sustaining qualities. These infestations are thus a direct threat to Ruth’s

embodiment, seeming to portend death. As Ruth continues living in the house, her sense of bodily integrity begins to devolve:

Never a temple, her body had gone from being a home, to being a house, to being a phone booth, to being a kite. Nothing about it gave her proper shelter. She no longer felt housed within it at all (243).

Hence, with this spatial metaphor, the house which has previously been figured explicitly as a grave and implicitly as a body through its connection to Ruth, is now definitively both house and grave. Throughout “Real Estate”, Moore recalls the destabilising metaphor of women’s entrapment, the image of the house as womb and tomb, which is a present feature not only in Freud’s “The Uncanny” but within the Anglophone canon of women’s writing too (Gilbert and Gubar 88). In alluding to this recurring image in her own story, Moore places her work within a broader literary tradition concerned with women’s confinement. The more Ruth’s body is connected to the house—and the more the space is invaded—the less she is corporally rooted, thus growing closer to death and spectrality.

The bodily and existential threat represented by these various infestations engenders a shift towards violence in the narrative. When an exterminator advises that Ruth shoot the crows occupying her garden, she and her friend Carla buy guns. The gun is way for Ruth to reclaim her home—and thus her body—from invasion and ultimately from death, however it brings her closer to that which she seeks protection from. Two human invasions—one by a mysterious young man, Tod, who has been occupying their attic, the apparent ‘ghost’ who has haunted their house; and another by their landscaper, Noel—bring the story’s preoccupation with intrusion to a deathly culmination. Noel, whose narrative focalisation intersperses Ruth’s, has taken on the bizarre occupation of breaking into people’s home in order to steal songs from them at gun point. At the climax of the story, he breaks into Ruth and Terence’s home and while they are singing, Ruth shoots him with her gun. Shooting Noel gives Ruth temporary reprieve from the

constant threat of intrusion she has faced: ‘For a minute, she felt restored and safe—safer than she had in years. How dare anyone come into her bedroom! How much was she expected to take?’ (249). It is at this point of extreme violence that death—though not Ruth’s own—is unequivocally present in the domestic space.

At the end of “Real Estate”, Ruth’s house becomes a *de facto* grave but not her own. In this way, Moore subverts the house-as-womb/tomb image not by rejecting the presence of death or offering an alternative to this image but by ultimately illustrating that death itself is an ambivalent escape route. Even outside of the confines of the grave-home at the end of the story as Ruth flees from the police, closure is interrupted. Instead the narrative ends with a mediation on the unreliability of the body itself, the entity which the house-grave image orbits around: ‘the body—Jesus, how the body!—took its time. It possessed its own wishes and nostalgias. You could not just turn neatly into light and slip out the window. You couldn’t go like that’ (250). The body becomes spectral here as a becoming-body: it still exists, but even in the face of death it cannot wilfully turn into a ‘neat’ and sanitised spirit. Furthermore, the delay of absolute death here is rooted in the inescapability—perhaps even embodied purgatory—of the body/grave/house triad that Moore successfully constructs through Ruth and her haunted house in “Real Estate”.

Moving now to a consideration of domestic spaces in *Gate*, a change is evident in Moore’s depiction of spectres of failure. In the examples examined up to this point, Moore’s *oeuvre* has mainly focused on the experiences of domestic architecture from the point of view of women living in single-family homes (with or without families). *Gate*, on the other hand offers an example of a young student experiencing living away from the single-family home for the first time. Tassie’s status as a young, single woman is central to the novel, which is, as Civale argues, a neo-Victorian text that draws upon *Jane Eyre* (344), placing Tassie in her role as part-time childminder as a ‘modern-day

governess' (349). In *Gate* Tassie lives in an apartment in the 'student ghetto' (24) of Troy. As is typical in university towns with high student populations, older housing stock—former family homes—are often split into several units for renting. The purpose of such spaces change from a free-flowing and shared space to a fragmentary one of individuals who are kept separate from each other. While Tassie and her housemate Murphs' approach to domesticity is infused with humour and irony as an embrace of domestic failure, the space of the apartment itself has darker connotations. Murph jokingly refers to the other tenants as 'the Clutter Family' (27) in reference to Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1966), lending an air of malevolence to these unseen, unheard tenants. Their building is shadowed 'in a bleak and brutal way' (25) by the university's football stadium and lacks sunlight, suggesting a subterranean space, which as seen in Munro's fiction and in *Frog Hospital*, is a space associated with a Gothic anxiety.

Tassie's apartment is immediately contrasted with the other homes in the novel—Tassie's family home and the home of her employers Edward Thornwood and Sarah Brink, for whom Tassie works as a childminder—by being an explicitly non-normative space. The apartment, in contrast to its simultaneously dark and isolated atmosphere, is marked with childlike flourishes: the nameplate for their post-box is written in glitter ink, while attempts at interior decoration consists of neon signs and C.D cases in the fireplace. This space also shapes their approach to housekeeping, which by Tassie's own admission is 'delusional' (214), and throughout the novel used dishes and rotting food populate descriptions of the space. However, unlike the nugatory housework performed in "Places", a text also concerned with housekeeping, housework is framed here as a creative act. Tassie notes that they wash the floor in patches 'like writing a poem everyday until you eventually said everything about the human condition there was to be said' (213). Household labour is perhaps especially construed as a limiting and unceasing domestic practice: in *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir

likens housework to ‘the torment of Sisyphus [...] day after day, one must wash dishes, dust furniture, mend clothes that will be dirty, dusty and torn again’ (487). It is significant then that Tassie invokes a different discourse, one linked, as in “What Is Seized”, to creativity and the act of writing. In this way, Tassie’s housework is a realisation of what Beauvoir ironically referred to as ‘[t]he poetry of housework’ (484).

Tassie’s approach to domestic labour associates her with her mother’s similar domestic practices, which Tassie derides throughout the novel. This is one of the ways in which, as seen in “What Is Seized” and in “You’re Ugly, Too” (which will be treated in more detail in the next section on objects), a woman’s relationship to her domestic space is fashioned as a direct inheritance from the maternal figure, an echo of Munro’s fiction. What is significant in this regard about *Gate* is, because of the broader scope of the novel, there are a larger number of maternal figures (including Tassie herself as a maternal figure to Sarah and Edward’s adopted daughter Mary-Emma) present in the story and therefore a broader way of conceiving of the maternal inheritance as both an immutable rite and a negotiation. For Tassie, it is a negotiation, albeit an ambivalent one. Tassie notes at certain points throughout the novel her mother’s improper domesticity regarding food preparation and gardening, including putting baking soda rather than cornstarch into a stew, turning it ‘vesuvial and overflowing’ (63); presenting salad to the family in small dog dishes; and placing mirrors in the flower beds to ‘double the look if not the actual volume of her gardening’ (20). Tassie’s mother’s domesticity is imperfect but also—as in the case of the mirrors—inventive.

Despite Tassie’s desire to distance herself from her mother’s domesticity and catalogue her perceived failures, it is significant that Tassie employs similar non-normative practices to her own, adult, domestic space. Unlike “You’re Ugly, Too”, in which the presence and power of maternal inheritance is communicated through objects, in *Gate* the maternal presence is felt in the text via allusions to a domestic intertext. As

previously established, *Jane Eyre* is the main literary influence in *Gate* and one which structures the narrative and plot. Although the presence of this text amounts to a hauntological recurrence not just in Moore's work but in Munro's as well, it has heretofore been employed to explore the nature of infidelity. In the case of *Gate*, Brontë's text allows Moore to explore meanings of motherhood. As Adrienne Rich argues, *Jane Eyre* is replete with various proxy-mothers whom Jane, a motherless woman, seeks out (252) and so fashions the idea of motherhood as something beyond biological connections.

Similarly, Tassie's appreciation of Sylvia Plath's 1965 poem, "Morning Song", communicates the influence of the maternal figure and in doing so reimagines the possibilities of maternal love. Tassie places fragments of Plath's poem—"I'm no more your mother/ Than the cloud that distils a mirror to reflect its own slow/ Effacement at the wind's hand/'—written on Post-It notes on a mirror in her apartment. This is simultaneously a rebuke of and elegy for her mother, as Tassie's mother—in another instance of her domesticity that invokes Tassie's ire—dots their house with Post-It notes to remind her of domestic tasks. Reading this inclusion of "Morning Song" in conversation with the broader concerns regarding motherhood in *Gate*, it has further significance beyond Tassie's ambivalence towards her mother, as the poem focuses on how maternal love can be understood as a biological process. Diane Middlebrook argues that the image of breastfeeding is key to the poem's concern with the biological connection between mother and child (162). If one accepts this reading of "Morning Song" as a paean to biological maternal love then Moore's invocation of it is notably ironic: Tassie and her mother's biological bond does not ensure unconditional love between mother and child; meanwhile Sarah and Tassie's lack of a biological connection to Mary-Emma does not counter their love for her. Furthermore, as with the Gothic idioms of *Jane Eyre*, the inclusion of "Morning Song" is significant to the text's

hauntology in that Plath is a literary figure with a notable domestic hauntology present in her own work (as Christine Britzolakis notes, the poems in *Ariel* are concerned with the tropes of return and repression (108), making the reference to “Morning Song” highly pertinent) and through the ‘Gothic housewife’ image that has become associated with her life and death.

Despite the haunted coding of her student apartment, Tassie’s ambivalent failures of domesticity do not produce spectres. Rather, this particular space inculcates maternal bonds and inheritances. The domestic spaces that are explicitly haunted in the novel are the Thornwood-Brink house and Tassie’s family home. In these two spaces, Moore reinvokes the single-family home as a built and ideological structure which becomes haunted through various modes of failure. The seemingly productive space of the Thornwood-Brink home, which is aligned with normative middle-class values, obfuscates a number of domestic failures that become increasingly apparent as the text progresses.

On an economic level, it is a dual income home—Sarah is a chef and restaurant owner, while Edward is a researcher in the university—and their economic fecundity is evident in the space itself. It initially appears protected from the outside world by virtue of its middle-class values and material culture. The house’s interior decoration is particularly significant in revealing Sarah and Edward’s middle-class status. Tassie takes note of a pillow-ticking sofa, Stangl sugar bowls, and rooms that are ‘elegantly pastel and cluttered’ (132). Even the decoration of a child’s room is done in tasteful yellows and creams, a Winnie-the-Pooh crib and a heated baby wipe dispenser the only signs of a child’s presence.

However, the haunted nature of the house and of Sarah and Edward’s lives becomes evident as the narrative progresses. As Civale notes, Moore adapts the spatial metaphors of *Jane Eyre* in her depiction of the Thornwood-Brink home ‘in order to

dramatize the gothic dimensions of domestic life' (351). The house, with its allusion to Thornfield Hall, via Edward's name, and its 'chimney cloaked in dead ivy' (10), is characterised by an architecture haunted by past violence and parental neglect. The gate of the novel's title, alluding to the 'gate at the head of the stairs' in Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper", refers to the protective baby gate near Mary-Emma's bedroom. However, another gate—the one separating the Thornwood-Brink's house from the street—is also significant. This gate, which marks a boundary of property ownership from public space, is also symbolic of the Thornwood-Brink's treatment of their children (their biological son, Gabriel and their adopted daughter, Mary-Emma), and the treatment of children in the US more generally. Tassie describes the gate thus:

one of its hinges was loose and missing a nail. I had to lift the gate to relatch it. This maneuver [...] communicated itself as something else: someone's ill-disguised decrepitude, items not cared for properly but fixed repeatedly in a make-do fashion, needful things having gotten away from their caregiver (10).

The resonances of the broken gate, the way in which it symbolises the neglect of 'needful things' to Tassie, is emblematic of the Thornwood-Brink's care for their children. As well as the self-consciously Gothic intertext of *Jane Eyre* evoked throughout the text, there are a number of elements of the Thornwood-Brink house, from the garden gate to its architecture that reveal the multiple ways in which it is haunted.

On Tassie's first day of caring for Mary-Emma, the ghostly acoustics of the domestic space sends Mary-Emma's cries down the many stairs and the laundry chute, concealing her presence in an attic room. The attic bedroom conflates Mary-Emma, as Civale suggests, with Bertha Mason (345). This allusion turns her into a ghostly presence in the space, linking her to the 'other' child of the novel, Gabriel, while also suggesting Sarah's desire to protect Mary-Emma, who is mixed-race, from the racist gaze of the outside world. As Elizabeth Anker argues, adopting Mary-Emma 'compels [Sarah and Edward] to navigate the vexed terrain of post-9/11 racial politics' (479),

which they manage to some degree. Mary-Emma's race and status as adopted daughter position her as 'other' to Gabriel, the white, biological son. Mary-Emma is at once a replacement for and a manifestation of Sarah and Edward's original loss. The link between Gabriel and Emma as ghostly doubles signals the novel's preoccupation with the failure of protection for children, both in the individual family and within society. In a similar way to John in "Places", Mary-Emma's presence in the domestic space is a symbolic return of the lost child. However, Mary-Emma comes to embody this loss by the end of the novel, when she is taken away from the home by social services when Sarah and Edward's criminal neglect of Gabriel—after misbehaving during a car journey, they leave him on the side of the road where he is killed by a passing vehicle—is revealed to the adoption agency.

Due to her racial identity and the precarious position as non-biological child at the mercy of policies and institutions of fostering and adoption, Mary-Emma's role within *Gate* highlights the racialised discourses inherent to family and domestic space in the US, as they intersect with notions of protection. The consciousness-raising/support meetings with other multi-racial families that Sarah and Edward host in their home illustrate the way in which the US domestic space in its normative, white iteration has always failed to protect those who do not conform to this norm—and indeed has been structured on the basis of violent exclusion. This lack of protection and exclusion is symbolised by the haunted nature of the Thornwood-Brink house. During these meetings the multi-racial children of the families are placed upstairs to play together, ostensibly away from the adult conversations below. However, the downstairs conversations are audible in the room as disembodied voices. The domestic space lacks the protection to shield the children from the liberal chatter of the adults below, many of whom, like Sarah and Edward, are white. These adults discuss the racial exclusion which structures society: "This whole town is racially inexperienced and so there is

racism on the ground floor of everything”. “Including this house. No offense, but you can’t exclude anything” (159). This disembodied discourse is heard without warning by way of the stairs, open doors, and laundry chutes—the same elements of the domestic space that keep Mary-Emma’s location hidden on Tassie’s first day of work. As the disembodied voices articulate in the above quote, racism is present in every home in the US. However, Moore’s depiction of the inherent insecurity of the Thornwood-Brink home extends this acknowledgment beyond ‘the ground floor’. The failure of the white home to protect Mary-Emma evidences that racism is built into the very fabric of the US domestic space and is structural in every sense of the word.

Tassie’s family home becomes similarly imbued with spectral presences due to its inherent lack of protection and care. In particular, when Tassie returns to the family home in the summer, she finds that, despite its ‘warm neglect and elegant poverty’ (44), the domestic space does not have the power to protect from death. Connecting to the political and personal failures of care in the Thornwood-Brink home, the death of Robert in Afghanistan turns Tassie’s childhood home into an explicitly haunted space. Furthermore, after Robert’s funeral, his ghost appears to Tassie in her bedroom on a nightly basis. In line with other spectral apparitions in Moore’s fiction, Robert’s ghost is not a cause for terror. Rather his ghostly presence is often surreal, both comforting and confounding to Tassie. The appearance of his image on the evening news in a ‘semimonthly honor roll of American servicemen’ (305), has the same effect as his night-time visitations, in this case haunting the living room via the television. Robert’s face and the faces of other deceased soldiers are conflated with Gabriel and Mary-Emma, as the soldiers’ faces are likened to ‘a sweet, accusing child in the good-bye window of a terrible, terrible nursery school’ (305). This conflation of soldier and child is suggested by Moore throughout the text leading up to Robert’s death. He is frequently described by Tassie as innocent, struggling in school, and largely ignorant of the world

outside of Dellacrosse. Indeed, he is only freshly graduated from secondary school when he enlists in the army and it is clear, through this invocation of the child, that among other policies and historical foundations, the US military's enlistment practices are another instance of the state's failure of care. In *Gate*, whether expressed through a literary intertext or in reference to contemporary US militarism, the very architecture of the US domestic space fails to protect its dwellers and shows protection to be an illusion. It is through this failure that spectres are produced. By offering another instance in which children and young adults are rendered spectral by the domestic space, Moore accentuates in this novel questions of inheritance and the impact of the past and the present moment on future generations, offering a thoroughly ambivalent picture.

The stories of *Bark* continue *Gate*'s concern with the political but also shifts away from some of the techniques and tropes of Moore's earlier fiction. As Parul Sehgal notes in her review of the collection, the stories of *Bark* 'rarely rise to the gaudy horror of her previous work. Death does not stalk her characters the way it once did. Children are finally allowed to survive to adulthood'. However, while the stories in *Bark* are not marked by 'gaudy horror', death and haunting remain as central elements in those stories concerned or set within the domestic space. In this consideration of two stories from the collection, "The Juniper Tree" and "Wings", Moore's continued concern with domestic failures in *Bark* will be explored as a possible new avenue for her depiction of spectral failures and domestic ambivalence for women.

Beginning with "The Juniper Tree"¹³ the story is both a dream narrative and a fairy tale, borrowing its title from the Aarne-Thompson type 720 tale, 'My mother

¹³ The story is dedicated to the memory of Nietzchka Keene, a filmmaker and Moore's colleague at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Keene passed away from pancreatic cancer in 2004 and is best known for her cinematic reimagining of the tale, also entitled *The Juniper Tree* (1990). Keene began graduate work in folk tales at UCLA before graduating with an MFA in film production (Greenhill and Brydon 117). This dedication, and connection to Keene's film, compounds the story's concern with the bonds of female friendship.

killed me/My father ate me'¹⁴ which wears its Gothic images overtly. The unnamed narrator of the story recounts a dream or real event—here, as throughout her fiction, Moore grounds her narratives in a realist mode—in which her playwright friend, Robin, who has died shortly after a cancer diagnosis, returns to seemingly haunt her own home, inviting her friends to a surreal gift-giving ritual. On the level of plot, Moore's deconstruction of the narrative elements of the original tale are evident: birds, gifts, guilt, a white scarf that Robin uses to keep her head—severed from her body after an autopsy—in place. Beyond adaptation of the tale, "The Juniper Tree" is rife with hauntological resonances. Robin's spectral status and her ontological precarity is linked to her domestic space and its surrounds in a number of ways. The house is described by the narrator as possessing a 'witchy strangeness' (53). Robin's self-planted garden features a number of plants with fairy tale allusions: rosebushes, apple and hazelnut trees, as well as the titular juniper. As Robin's plays are based on fairy tales (recalling Keene's work as a film maker), her garden, as part of her domestic space, is a manifestation of her creative work. The narrator notes that the plants are in their winter decline: 'leafless and bent, one couldn't say for sure whether they were even alive. Spring would tell' (54). The same could be said of Robin and her status as neither alive nor dead.

The suggestion, in Robin's spectral return to the home, that she either can only be laid to rest in the domestic space or has come back to haunt it for the rest of time, brings the conservative rhetoric—that women are inextricable from the domestic—to its logical, yet surreal conclusion. As the narrator's friend Pat quips, in the ironic tone typical of Moore's female characters: "You know women and their houses [...] It's hard for them to part company'" (52). The sustained connection between women and

¹⁴ The tale features a young boy who is beheaded by his stepmother and cooked into a stew that is fed to the rest of the family. As an act of revenge, the murdered boy turns into a bird who sings a song of his stepmother's violence to the community, receiving gifts in return. His final act of revenge culminates in him dropping a millstone on his stepmother's head.

domestic space is further suggested by the narrator's mention of Robin's relationship with a man ending because of her untidy garage. While "The Juniper Tree" playfully invokes a conservative discourse of domestic femininity through Robin's return (and apparent attachment) to her domestic space, it does not fully support such a discourse. On the journey home from Robin's house, Isabel, another friend, angrily laments the entrapping elements of their lives—"Our work! Our houses! The college" (58). However, the narrator silently disagrees with Isabel, speaking on their behalf: 'we did not entirely believe it. Somewhere inside us we were joyful orphans: our lives were right, we were zooming along doing what we wanted, we were sometimes doing what we loved' (58). Given the ambiguous nature of "The Juniper Tree", it is unsurprising that the story ends without closure.

As in texts such as "What Is Seized" and *Frog Hospital*, in "The Juniper Tree", total rejection and dissatisfaction with the domestic space is deferred at the end of the narrative. As we have seen, Moore has a tendency to end her short stories without closure. What we see in "The Juniper Tree" that marks a shift from Moore's previous stories is that failure here is perceived as a pleasure. What is also key is the narrator's framing of her and her friends as 'joyful orphans': they are single and the story mentions no other family ties, to either mothers or children. Hence, as in Tassie's joyful domesticity in *Gate*, this story seems to support Fraiman's assertion that domestic failures can be embraced as a challenge to 'hierarchical social relations' specifically by those who are placed outside a normative image of domesticity (20).

The potential of failure as pleasure and joy is too at play in "Wings", in a more ambiguous, but still present, fashion. As noted previously, questions of money, property, and inheritance are at the centre of "Wings" and intersect with various forms of haunting. For KC and Dench, the financial precarity of their artistic vocation seeps into every aspect of their life, including rendering their living space as alien and strange.

Any confidence in their lives as frugal artists, as illustrated by their failed newsletter ‘on how to simplify your life (*be broke!*)’ (97), is undercut at every turn. Moore represents their lives as fragmented and complex due to their impecuniousness. KC’s grandmother’s dying words to her granddaughter, whom she raised, are ‘*Marry well*’ (103). This is understood by KC in spatial terms. The advice is ‘life-preserving but with a glimpse of a dark little bunker in a war not yet declared’ (103). The link between marriage and property is indicated here, suggesting ideas of protection and danger. Property ownership and the safety it both does and does not afford to individuals is at the core of “Wings”. The security that home offers is understood by KC and Dench to be both financial and temporal: being able to afford a house is a sign of safety, as is the amount of indefinite time one would have to live there. For KC and Dench, their nine-month sublet gives the illusion of security, but the time-limit imposed on their dwelling there underscores the instability of security itself.

The house, ‘a fluke, a modern, flat-roofed, stone-and-redwood ranch house with a carport’ (105) is rendered in unhomey terms: there is no bed and the food left behind in the fridge by the owners is covered in dust. As in so many of the dwellings in Moore’s fiction, there appears to be something rotting in its walls, making the house smell, a ‘strange meaty rot, with its overtones of Roquefort’ (122) which comes and goes. KC and Dench feel no urgent desire to locate the cause of this odorous rot, and instead pontificate about what it may be. This lack of urgency belies their lack of ownership towards this impermanent domestic space. However, it is soon revealed that the dead creature creating the stench is a rat-king:

a pile of furry flesh with the intertwined tails of rats. They were a single creature like a wreath and flies buzzed around them and excrement bound them at the center while their bodies were arrayed like spokes. Only one of them still had a head that moved and it opened its mouth noiselessly (140).

As Dench notes, the rat-king is a bad omen, and one that is particularly associated with folk storytelling traditions. Furthermore, it embodies not only the haunted nature of the

sublet but is an image of the dangers of total interconnection. This anxiety is present in the text—as in many other stories of Moore’s about heterosexual relationships—in which, through cohabitation with men, women are endangered by total fusion with the other; of what Beauvoir cautioned as the immutable immanence of the married woman. This deeply pessimistic framing of interpersonal connection through the grotesque image of the rat-king found in the house augments the sense of temporal and spatial anxiety in the story. Given this atmosphere, as well as the sublet’s intrinsic insecurity, it is perhaps unsurprising that KC is drawn into an ambiguous relationship to their neighbour Milt precisely because of his property. Arguably, KC is attracted to Milt’s house rather than to Milt himself. The house is ‘sprawling white-brick’ and KC notes its ‘elegance and size [...] the magical blue sea of squill that spread across its sloped and wooded lot’ (108). The house is an object of fascination and desire to KC and her sublet life. However, Milt interprets KC’s desire for his house as at first for a familial connection and then as romantic desire. Their encounters are marked by an uncertain line between friendliness and flirtation on Milt’s part. KC’s desire for a secure and stable domestic space leads her to pursue a filial role in Milt’s life, taking him to medical appointments or on day trips to the beach. At the climax of the story, Milt bequeaths his house to KC, wishing to unburden her from her transitory life, telling her: “‘it will keep you the angel you are’” (131), recalling, inevitably, the Victorian ideal of the Angel in the House. In many ways, KC, after parting with Dench—the rat-king who promises only failure and death—and taking possession of Milt’s house, comes to embody the figure of the Angel as Milt had envisioned her.

In the story’s coda, KC, now in full possession of the house, opens up the space to the families of the child patients of the nearby hospital, and her life becomes ‘one of hostessing’ (144). In many ways, KC embodies an idealised form of domesticity as is suggested by the highly feminised concept of ‘hostessing’: she prepares meals for the

families and provides wholesome entertainment in the form of board games and music in the afternoons. Arguably, this domestic comfort deviates from its conservative, patriarchal history by virtue of the individuals it benefits; namely, those vulnerable subjects at the heart of Munro's fiction, children. As well as this, the house is no longer solely a private or familial space, but is transformed into a communal space through the presence of these families, transient as they may be.

A total idealisation of domesticity in the story is similarly undercut by the haunted nature of the space, although it is a different type of haunting than that failure of heterosexuality in the subplot shared with Dench. The house is also home to the ghosts of the children once under the care of Milt's wife during her time as a paediatrician in the hospital. When he is alive, Milt tells KC that before his wife's death "she sat up in bed and began to shout out the names of all the sick children who had died on her watch" (138). This haunting is passed on to KC when she takes over ownership of the house. KC's possession of the house establishes a clear link between her and Milt's wife as KC is visited by these same children:

[KC] never saw the sick children themselves—except at night, when they were ghosts in white nightgowns and would stand on the stair-well landings and recite their names and wave [...] she roamed the house, thinking of them as "her children" and then not thinking of them at all [...] but she would hear of their lives' (145).

KC had no personal connection to these children when they were alive, yet she acts as custodian of their memory. The presence of these ghost children in "Wings", indicates a vision of haunting not as a product of familial failure but rather as a form of remembrance and commemoration. In "Wings", ghostly children bring with them not horror or abjection but an impetus to witness and welcome. In this case, KC and "Wings" more generally offers a clear example of what living with and accepting spectres of failure might look like, specifically for women who occupy the domestic space. KC both takes ownership of these ghostly children— 'her children'—and

curiously rejects ownership at the same time. This would suggest that KC has a more motile relationship to these ghosts precisely because they have been inherited with the property, to which KC has no familial connection. “Wings” recalls the image of women living in the domestic space as ‘joyful orphans’ as evoked in “The Juniper Tree”. In these stories in *Bark*, Moore offers two examples of haunted domestic space which in many ways align with the domestic spaces found in her earlier work. However, they also illustrate a difference in Moore's depiction particularly of domestic architecture as a structuring device and literary image, one which suggests potential joys and pleasures of the domestic space and may become the more prevalent framing of domestic space in her fiction to come.

Domestic Objects

In tandem with her depiction of domestic architecture, failures of the domestic space are also expressed in Moore's fiction through the function of various objects. The material culture of Moore's domestic spaces are significantly marginal: clutter, waste, food, and ephemera abound. Such examples may not immediately register as necessarily domestic objects. In contrast to Munro and Enright's fiction, Moore's depiction of domestic material culture stands out because of its general disinterest in those objects such as furniture, carpets, or wallpaper that predominate in domestic fiction for their symbolic importance.¹⁵ While Moore deviates from this convention of domestic fiction, the minor, even seemingly inconsequential, items found within these domestic spaces are rife with meaning, particularly in relation to the spectral failures which underpin her hauntology of domestic space. Moore's focus on what may be termed the immaterial culture of the domestic space suggests various failures of intimacy and care as well as connecting to discourses of presence and absence at the heart of hauntology. The

¹⁵ See discussion of interiors and domestic description in the introduction of this thesis, particularly Cynthia Wall's postulation on domestic interiors in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel.

immateriality of these objects highlights the oft-forgotten afterlife of the consumerism at the heart of the US domestic space. Such unrestrained consumerism which sites itself in the domestic space inevitably leaves behind a trace that remains after the original object has lost its purpose or place. This trace is symbolised by the objects that recur in domestic spaces across Moore's text which are essentially unproductive: even food, in Moore's fiction, is more associated with death and decay than with production and the sustainment of the body.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, consumerism in the US domestic space is complex as it both reifies and challenges the very values of domesticity. The presence of consumer goods in the domestic space represent the economic productivity of a household and appear to offer concrete solutions to women's domestic labour.

However, their presence also appears in conflict with the frugality underpinning normative practices of domesticity in the nation since at least the nineteenth century.

Domestic literature from the time, such as Lydia Child's *The American Frugal Housewife* (1829), a forerunner to Catharine Beecher's *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841), placed frugality as 'a uniquely American virtue' (McHugh 19). In texts such as Child's, domestic work is 'imbued with the same Protestant work ethic that disciplined the practices of industrial capitalism' (McHugh 23). From the titles of such books alone, the language of the public world of commerce and capitalism has always invaded the seemingly private world of the domestic space. This again emphasises that the increased consumerism of the post-war and contemporary home is not as contradictory as it would first appear. Ruth Schwartz Cowan, in her work on the history of household technologies, has suggested that while the industrialisation symbolised by household technology and consumer goods is often seen in opposition to concepts of the home in the popular imagination, the space cannot function without industry, and housework has rarely been achieved without the aid of some form of industrial power (4-6). This

concentration on industry and productivity within the domestic space is interesting to consider in dialogue with Moore's focus in her fiction on failure and waste, both in terms of space and embodiment.

In privileging ephemera and waste in her depiction of domestic space, Moore challenges conceptions of what constitutes a domestic object. Waste, although the subject of material culture studies more generally, is rarely studied with regard to domestic space. Although absent from spatial studies discourses, waste and ephemera are intrinsic elements of the domestic space. Indeed, dwellings are sites of the *production* of waste, the inverse action of the domestic space as a site of consumerism. Yet, waste (also discussed under the terms 'garbage', 'junk', 'rubbish', 'trash' [Allen 202]) cannot be possessed or consumed in the same way as non-waste objects, Maurizia Boscalgi argues, '[i]ts ephemerality makes it impossible' (231).

In many of Moore's stories, many objects found within the domestic space—significantly those inherited by a daughter from their mother—are essentially ephemeral: photographs, magazines, and other paper products with a finite lifespan. With their link to the maternal figure, the ephemeral, throw-away nature of these objects may appear to suggest that the mother-daughter relationship is similarly immaterial. However, these objects—ephemeral as they may be—still exist and carry meaning, even only as a trace of that connection to the mother. In "What Is Seized", Linnie's inheritance of objects belonging to her mother (and which are, in the absence of her mother, symbolic of her life) are noted for their damage and outmoded nature: 'Once [mothers] die, of course, you get the strand of pearls, the blue quilt, some of the original wedding gifts—a tray shellacked with the invitation, an old rusted toaster' (39). However, it is the memories of her mother that carry more meaning than these objects:

the touches and the words and the moaning the night she dies, these are what you seize, save, carry around in little invisible envelopes [...] No matter how

you try. No matter how you lick them. The envelopes will not stay glued (39-40).

Though seeming to eschew the connection between object and memory, as seen repeatedly in Munro's fiction, the image of the unglued envelopes—a throwaway, ephemeral object—communicate the powerful memory of her mother. The image of the envelopes connects to the other paper materials that are interspersed as objects and intertext throughout the story. Photographs of Linnie's mother, descriptions of which impose on the linear narrative as both image and memory, grant Linnie access to her mother's interior life (in looking at them she notes, 'I felt, was to know her, to become her, to make my mother [...] a woman in a story, a book, a movie' (26-27)). Similarly, letters between Linnie and her mother provide epistolary revelations in a similar fashion, echoing the connection between knowledge and domestic objects found in Munro's short fiction. The letters connect back to the image of maternal memories as envelopes. In "What is Seized", the ephemerality of an object, a discursive demarcation that signals insignificance, is attached instead to the immutability of a maternal memory and connection.

More ephemera, in the guise of magazines, become, in "You're Ugly, Too", a way for Zoë's mother's own domestic desire to be imposed and inherited into the domestic space. When Zoë moves into her new house, her mother sends her old home décor magazines, essentially incorporating her mother's lapsed and unrealised domestic desire into Zoë's space. The home décor magazine can only offer a romanticised and consumer-orientated vision of the home. In many ways the story positions these magazines as a form of maternal inheritance. Zoë's mother clearly views this passing down of the magazines as a rite of passage. Here, the story situates inheritance, particularly between mothers and daughters, as being one not of property (since women have been historically denied property rights upon marriage) but of an inheritance of desire for the domestic space and its consumer objects. Yet this inheritance can only

ever be imaginary, not actual. Indeed, this circumscribed form of inheritance is rendered as perverse in the story: Zoë likens the magazines to ‘her mother’s pornography [...] her drooled-upon fantasies, the endless wish and tease that had been her life’ (387). As Rosalind Coward notes, cultural texts regarding the home, such as décor magazines, are ‘essentially voyeuristic, a legitimate way of peeping through keyholes in a society where the private realm is kept so separate from public life’ (64). This is significant given the way in which embodied affect and biological processes, in this case sexual desire but in other instances, pregnancy and childbirth, are connected to consumerism throughout the story.

The outdated nature of the magazines, their very ephemerality, symbolises Zoë’s deferred desire for domesticity. While Zoë seemingly accepts the domestic desire these magazine can foster, a discourse of distance is employed. In reading them Zoë feels ‘[i]deas and ideas of longing’ (387), foregrounding longing not as an embodied feeling but as a cognitive process. This ambivalence in the face of an inherited domestic desire is also suggested by Zoë’s failure to settle within her house. The space is empty of decoration and badly wallpapered, with ‘strange gaps and silhouettes on the walls’ (387) left by the previous tenant. She continuously buys and returns furniture for the house and this is explicitly linked to the reproductive processes of the female body: ‘furnishing and unfurnishing, preparing and shedding, like a womb’ (387). Earlier in the narrative, the domestic space is figured as both a romantic partner and an infant. When Zoë’s sister Evan asks if she is seeing anyone romantically, Zoë answers that she is ‘seeing’ her house. However, Zoë then depicts the house in the terms of infant care: “‘I’m tending to it when it wets, when it cries, when it throws up’” (387). This maternal discourse embedded throughout the story is heightened by the menstrual image of furnishing the home (an image which recurs in Enright’s novels), given the story’s overarching concern with failures of sustainment in terms of Zoë’s ambivalence

regarding her potential infertility, as well as her identity as a single woman. Although Zoë has the makings of a home and the security of a dwelling space, in the contexts of an idealised domesticity, as represented by the home décor magazines, these makings are framed as ultimately inconsequential without marriage or children.

Aside from ephemeral objects, food in Moore's fiction represents a complex nexus of material practices within the domestic space. Although it is not often conceived as a domestic object necessarily, food—its purchase, preparation, and consumption—is deeply bound to conceptual and material experiences of the domestic space. As Marjorie DeVault notes, 'Eating, apparently a biological matter, is actually profoundly social' (35). It is a practice deeply rooted in the domestic space and the family unit. The preparation of food as a form of labour, as well as its consumption, are linked particularly to the maternal figure. Food is also connected to the sustainment of the body and to emotional connection, stemming from the mother-infant relationship in which food is symbolic of care and love. As Sarah Sceats has argued 'formative feeding experiences are inscribed in the psyche' (1) and that

[f]or many people the connection of food with love centres on the mother, as a rule the most important figure in an infant's world, able to give or withhold everything that sustains, nourishes, fulfils, completes. [...] Yet the maternal role in western society is ambiguous, if not ambivalent; mothers are overwhelmingly powerful but at the same time are socially and domestically disempowered by their nurturing, serving role (11).

In *Gate* food is central to the narrative's intersecting concern regarding cultural identity, class, and maternal care, rather than the symbolic import of eating and the body.

Tassie's Jewish-Protestant heritage, as well as her Midwestern identity are both articulated through the consumption and preparation of food.¹⁶ Food also communicates

¹⁶ On Tassie's visit home for Christmas/Hanukkah, her hybrid religious identity is symbolised by the preparation of pancakes and latkes; her visits to diners and restaurants around the Midwest while accompanying Sarah to adoption meetings, marked by Friday fish fries, 'Chubby Mary's', and green beans in butter, are contrasted with her first time eating Chinese food in Troy: 'these odd Chinese vegetables—fungal and gnomonic in their brown sauce—had the power for me of an adventure or a rite, a statement to be savored' (6).

minute differences in class, primarily through Sarah as chef and restaurant owner, and Tassie's father as a farmer of organic produce.

In line with the overarching sense of haunting failure in the domestic space, food is used to communicate various failures: of care, sustainment, and connection. The broader connections to care and love, inherent to the concept of food, are certainly brought into play in *Gate* but they are rarely validated in the novel. One manner in which food as failure, rather than food as sustenance, is articulated in the domestic space is through Sarah. Sarah's association with food is markedly clinical and sterile. Her chef's uniform is described by Tassie as 'the Madame Curie look [...] a white lab-style coat and black tights' (126) and she informs Tassie that '[a] restaurant was a science [...] not a square dance' (127). This philosophy aligns her with Edward, who is a scientist, and also with the professionalisation of cookery in the food industry. The kitchen of the Thornwood-Brink house is similarly clinical, even agricultural. Tassie notes that the kitchen appliances are similar to those found 'in the back rooms of feed stores and supermarkets' (127) of Dellacrosse. Here Moore frames Sarah in an opposing relationship to the sustaining values of food and maternity, as articulated by Sceats. Sarah's philosophy surrounding food telegraphs her inability to provide proper care for Gabriel and the repetition of this failure towards Mary-Emma.

Food and waste are connected in the novel through Tassie's domestic space. Tassie's youth and singleness, like Zoë's in "You're Ugly, Too", are significant when considering this aspect of immaterial culture in the novel. As Rebecca Jennings notes medical and self-help literature have historically 'constructed the home as a place of isolation and failure for the single woman' (77). Furthermore, as Beauvoir states in *The Second Sex*, marriage has traditionally benefitted the young woman as a means of integration into a community beyond the original family, therefore positioning single women in society, as they exist outside of heterosexual marriage, as 'social waste'

(453). The recurrence of rotting food in Tassie's kitchen is indicative of this linking of singleness and waste.

Tassie's apartment in Troy is one of the decay of food and suggests a failure of sustainment in a life of isolation. To return to the anxiety regarding the connection between food and maternal care, via Sceats, the wastage of food in Tassie's apartment may also be read in response to absent or failed mothering as a larger theme of the novel. Tassie, along with Sarah, is also a substitute maternal-figure to Mary-Emma, as well as the daughter of an ambivalent mother, one whose own culinary prowess is dubious. Thus, this rotting food potentially furthers the connection between food and the maternal figure in ways that suggest a certain moral judgement towards mothers in this novel. However, the ambiguous value judgement of food-as-love are troubled in Moore's descriptions of the rotting food in Tassie's apartment, which is accorded its own aesthetic beauty.

In its decay, the food is made into an object. The collection of mouldering food is lavishly described by Tassie as 'the Frugal Girls' Museum of Modern Art' (123): strawberries grow mould 'the turquoise-gray of a copper roof'; bread has 'a powdery blue mold that would have made a lovely eyeshadow for a showgirl'; another loaf is likened to a snake, as 'a coil of mold with orange and black markings' (123). Arguably, although rotting food invokes abject responses as well as fear of contamination, through this description it is framed in different terms. While rotting food is undoubtedly connected with death and decay, its very objectivity in the single woman's home both counters and aligns with the sterility of food in the Thornwood-Brink home. Both represent some failure of sustainment within the domestic space, particularly in relation to the feminine subjectivities of mother and single woman. However, the startling images of rotting food as aestheticized objects or animal life, in the 'museum' of the single woman's domestic space specifically, seem to suggest the potentialities or

productivity of failure inherent to waste that are at play in other works by Moore.

Such feminised discourses of food and household waste, although played out in more depth in *Gate* due to its novel form, can be found in an earlier iteration in “Places”. The story is highly concerned with the subject of waste and wastage—that of a woman’s potential and hopes for the future, as well as the wastage or failure of love characterised by Millie’s family. Environmental waste, namely that produced by households, is a striking aspect of the story. Frugality, and the unwillingness to let things *go* to waste, are key to Millie’s domestic practice. As in *Gate*, categories of waste and food are placed on the same plane in “Places”, particularly through the meals that Millie prepares using leftover food. These prudent meals bring Millie a sense of pleasure: a ‘fried pallet of mashed potatoes, turnips, chopped broccoli, and three eggs over easy’ (407) that Millie enjoys specifically because of the ‘warm, rising grease of them, their taste and ecology’ (409).

In many ways, Millie’s domestic practice finds connection with the patriotic frugality of the nineteenth century housewife, as symbolised by Child’s 1829 domestic handbook. However, Millie’s frugality is out of place in the contemporary consumer society in which waste is proof of capitalist hyper-productivity. Indeed, in this story—as in *Gate*—waste is overwhelmingly feminised. Millie’s husband Hane associates Millie’s interest in waste management as a ‘female thing’ (413) and thus the labour inherent to organising and controlling household waste is frivolous to him. Millie’s complex recycling system with separate boxes for different materials is meaningless to Hane: ‘She had twice told him the difference between garbage and trash, but the distinction never meant that much to him, and he always forgot it’ (413). Somewhat ironically, if this story had been published thirty years later, Millie’s interest in waste management and recycling would be in line with the current, albeit highly neoliberal and commodified, trends of ‘eco-friendly’ waste reduction. “Places” illustrates that

while discourses surrounding human waste have changed, the link between waste and capital has yet to be fully disrupted.

Furthermore, Millie follows obsessively a news item about a floating barge of garbage, ‘rejected by two states and two foreign countries, and was floating, homeless, toward Texas’ (405). The garbage barge shares a sense of displacement with both Millie and John and on the journey home from the airport, they listen to the news report about the barge in which the presenter invokes Emma Lazarus’s poem, “The New Colossus”, inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: ‘*The wretched refuse of our teeming shores*’ (405, emphasis in original). This allusion extends the individual displacement that Millie and John feel towards a broader, political discourse of displacement and exile, calling to mind the way in which migrants are objectified by biopolitical discourses of the nation state as non-human, mere wastage. There is an ‘ethical plea’ inherent to waste, in that it brings attention to what has been demarcated as non-object (Knetchel 9). The same applies to that which has been marked as non-subject. The equation of human life and waste in such discourses is at the core of a contemporary ontological collapse.¹⁷ Therefore, the concept of waste is connected to spectrality: if, as Greg Kennedy argues, ‘consumer trash signifies our failure at being human’ (121), so does the failure to treat all humans as such, as this allusion to Lazarus’ poem suggests.

Moreover, the link between the barge and Millie furthers the general connection between waste and femininity in the story which is grounded in the domestic space. Waste is ‘stuff at its most uncertain, vulnerable’ (Boscalgi 227). Millie’s vulnerability lies in her inability to align herself with a productive role within family and society and is articulated through the image of household waste. Millie herself compares the garbage barge to her own mind: “I guess my mind’s wandering around, just like that

¹⁷ This recalls Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren’s postulation, noted in Chapter 1, that contemporary culture increasingly fashions marginalised persons as spectral.

heap of trash” (412), illustrating the existential and intellectual wastage of Millie’s life. She is neither the productive matriarch of a fecund family nor a successful career woman. Therefore, she is displaced from two seemingly opposing feminine subjectivities (both linked in various ways to production and success—biological and capital) which dominate contemporary culture. As we can see in “Places”, waste as it is sited in the domestic space, as product and object, can be read as another manifestation of spectres of failure. The immaterial culture of Moore's domestic space foregrounds those objects which are considered as excesses of the domestic consumption. In being connected to certain “failures” of feminine subjectivity, these immaterial domestic objects highlight the meaninglessness of ‘woman’s sphere’. As uncanny or Gothic allusions are largely absent here, waste, as immaterial domestic object, showcases a more fluid conceptualising of the hauntological spectre, that as a 'virtual' (Fisher) or non-supernatural entity which has the ability to haunt.

Conclusion

As discussed throughout this chapter, in many of Moore’s stories, the enduring presence of the domestic space in women’s lives is evitable, perhaps even perpetual. The physical structure of the house continues to stand despite the desire or need for its destruction. The repeated failure of the US domestic space to appropriately house its inhabitants recurs throughout Moore’s short stories and novels through images of the house as a grave, built spaces which are structurally compromised, and the constant rupture of the supposedly protective boundary of the domestic space by the impinging presence of the natural world, and by the presence of patriarchal and racist lineages built into the walls of the single-family home. In Moore’s work, a clear inheritance of various long-held values can be seen, from the power of the fecund post-war domestic space to the belief in the physical and existential security of the single-family home. These values, despite their longevity and power, are called into question not only by the domestic architecture

in Moore's fiction, with its invocation of Gothic and fairy tale tropes, and allusions to *Jane Eyre* in particular, but also by the use of immaterial objects which denote the failure of these values: their inability to be sustained, but also their inherent spectrality, representing images and ideals that perhaps have never really existed, but that hold power all the same.

Yet, as in Munro's fiction, there are few alternatives to this deathly home haunted by spectres of failure to be found in Moore's work. The remark made by one of the characters in "The Juniper Tree"—"you know women and their houses [...] It's hard for them to part company" (52)—can be read as the essence of Moore's depiction of domestic space in her fiction. The pessimistic outlook that this quote implies is countered, however, particularly by Moore's younger, unmarried, protagonists—those 'joyful orphans'. Linnie, Tassie, and KC respectively evidence other ways of 'doing' domesticity, their own manner of living in the domestic space haunted by spectres of failure is marked against examples of domesticity inherited from family members and surrounding community. By welcoming spectres of failures to co-exist with them, these characters also embrace the failure of the post-war American dream as it pertains to family life and move towards envisioning other ways of living beyond notions of financial and reproductive success and violent exclusion of the other. In reading the domestic space through Moore's existing body of work, from 1985 to 2013, we find a writer preoccupied with meanings of the domestic space as a matter of political and personal import. This body of work also foregrounds an ambivalence associated with a hauntology of domestic space, which as will become clear in the following chapter on Moore's contemporary, Anne Enright, is a prominent mode in contemporary women's writing.

Chapter 4

Anne Enright: Spectres of Silence

Introduction

As explored in the preceding chapters on the fiction of Alice Munro and Lorrie Moore, spectral presences in the domestic space emerge from a myriad of social and personal inheritances. The role of history always looms large in the production of spectres—as *Specters of Marx* reminds us, ‘haunting is historical’ (4). In Anne Enright’s fiction this is perhaps most evident. This is not to say that Munro and Moore’s treatment of the wider contexts which impinge upon the spectral presences in the home is politically disengaged. Rather, in Enright’s fiction we see a body of work in which historical contexts are made utterly central in the texts. As we have seen through the spectres of memory in Munro’s fiction and the spectres of failure in Moore’s, a specific form of spectrality is also found in Enright’s novels: spectres of silence. In an interview with Caitriona Moloney in 2003, Enright noted that silences and absences are ‘part of a feminist aesthetic. When women have been silent so long, you have to read the silences really urgently. The silences and also the illusions and the slippages’ (qtd. in Moloney 63). The urgency of silences is perhaps the unifying theme of Enright’s fiction since her first publication in 1989.¹ Throughout her writing career, from her short stories to her novels, and her non-fiction and essays, Enright has centralised how, in the Irish national context, silences, elisions or absences in public discourse surrounding maternity, sexuality, and structural violence occur.

Understandings of contemporary Ireland, both global and local, have had a tendency to repress the past, obfuscating various difficult histories in favour of a

¹ Four stories by Enright, “Smile”, “Felix”, “Thirst” and “Seascape”, were published in *First Fiction: Introduction 10* (1989), a series of anthologies of short fiction published by Faber during the 1980s.

singular narrative of progress and change. This was a particular characteristic of the Celtic Tiger period (c.1994-2008), during which Enright rose to prominence as a novelist, and arguably continues into the present day. As Gerardine Meaney puts forward, '[t]he narrative of rapid national progress [during the Celtic Tiger] was dependent on suppression of the evidence of the persistence of structures of conformity, domination and exclusion at the heart of Irish society and culture' (xv). Social and economic progress was understood as a shift away from the closed-off and inhibited nature of post-independence Ireland and a definitive break from a colonial past, as well as in certain theorisations of the Celtic Tiger during its apex, a belated expression of an inherently Irish entrepreneurial prowess.²

However, this vision of progress also serves to silence the sustaining inequalities and traumas of the contemporary moment as well as those of the past, not yet reckoned with. Susan Cahill, writing on the subject of Celtic Tiger-era Irish women's writing, argues that easy categorisations of past and present, so often cemented in Irish culture and society, were disrupted in such work, which is 'particularly astute to the discontinuities, fissures and snags in such narratives of progress and development' ("Celtic Tiger Fiction" 429). Within Enright's novels—as in the work of Munro and Moore—the past is depicted as intersecting with the contemporary moment in multifarious and often fractured modes, so that the idea of progress itself is unsettled. Claire Bracken, in *Irish Feminist Futures* (2016), characterises this temporal movement as a form of 'transportation' between 'the public life of Ireland's pasts [...] that explores their continued living in the present' (91) and 'time-travelling' (100). While Bracken employs a discourse of vehicular movement and science fiction, this same imperative of temporal movement can be traced in Enright's depiction of domestic space. Moreover,

² For instances of the latter see Declan Kiberd's 2003 Parnell Lecture given at Magdalene College Oxford, "The Celtic Tiger: A Cultural History".

Bracken argues, such movement between past, present, and future has an ‘ethical effect’ (*Feminist Futures* 100). In these ways, we can see the opportunity for a hauntological analysis particularly as Enright’s fiction skewers concepts of progress with particular regard to women’s domestic position in contemporary Ireland. This chapter will explore how spectral presences manifest in domestic spaces in Enright’s novels published from 1995 to 2015 in response to the silencing, elision, or otherwise absencing of Ireland’s post-independence history, and particularly its unsettling treatment of women and children, in the contemporary moment.

Although Emer Nolan considers Enright’s fiction to be insufficiently political as it ultimately avows the individualism of the Celtic Tiger era (188-192), in reading the domestic spaces in these novels political discourses can be found. When a narrative of national progress necessarily relies on the silencing of the past, as it has in contemporary Irish culture, the spectral presences in the private sphere, as we see in Enright’s fictional domestic spaces, cannot be separated from public events and discourses. This chapter reads Enright’s depiction of domestic space as political.³ Matters of the domestic space frequently act as a microcosm of the goings-on of the state in Enright’s fiction (Ingman, “The New Woman” 242-43; Cahill, “Celtic Tiger Fiction”, 431; Estévez-Saá 47-48). In this sense, Enright taps into a long tradition within Irish culture—as C.L Innes notes in allegories of Ireland as a woman, metaphors of family and gender have typically been transposed onto political and economic discourses (10).

Enright’s fiction can be situated within a broader movement—not only in literature but within other artistic practices, the media, and grassroots political movements—in contemporary Ireland to bring to light in the public sphere the historic

³ This reading is supported by the work of other Enright scholars, particularly Bracken who views Enright’s tendency toward ‘creative remembering’ as being ‘closely connected to a feminist drive embedded in her work’ (“Televisual Memories”).

silencing of state policies, the creation of institutions, and the structural regulation of certain bodies and identities. The state's response, in relation to this movement, has been through commissions and reports⁴ investigating their own culpability in what James M. Smith has termed an 'architecture of containment'—'industrial and reformatory schools, mother and baby homes, adoption agencies, and Magdalen asylums, among others' (2), created and sustained by the Church-state dyad of post-independence Ireland.⁵ As Moira Maguire argues, throughout the twentieth century the state was indeed aware of and acknowledged instances of abuse, particularly child abuse, in its institutions (as evidenced by the reports and commissions from the 1930s to the 1980s) but there was 'little public comment' and inaction by successive governments (80). Such abuses of power sanctioned by the state are not exceptional to Ireland—indeed, recent discoveries of unmarked graves of Indigenous children near residential schools in Canada echo the similar treatment of children and infants in Mother and Baby homes in Ireland. However, as Meaney argues, 'the systematic scale of it [child abuse] was unique to Irish conditions' (xvi). The revelation of Ireland's history of state-sanctioned harm and its silencing occurred within an era of unprecedented financial prosperity and an embrace of neoliberal policies. This schism between economic progress and a constant invocation of the past is key to understanding how the domestic space functions hauntologically in Enright's fiction.

During the Celtic Tiger new wealth generation in the state, partially through a boom in housing construction, transformed perceptions and behaviours of dwelling in

⁴ These include the Ferns report (2005) on child sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic diocese of Ferns; the Ryan report (2009), investigating child abuse which occurred in industrial schools and reformatory institutions; the Murphy report (2009) on child sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic diocese of Dublin; the McAleese report (2013) on the state's complicity in the Church-run Magdalene laundries, and the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation (2021). It is also important to note that reports antedating this era of inquiry, such as the Cussen report (1936) and the Kennedy report (1970), both on the subject of industrial schools, are also part of Ireland's history of knowledge and revelation.

⁵ The existence of many of these practices and institutions predate the formation of the Free State and the Republic of Ireland, however, their sustainment post-independence is particularly felt in Enright's work.

Ireland. Domestic spaces were no longer simply places to live but units of wealth, to the extent that despite the increase in housing construction, affordability became an issue (Smyth, “National Identity” 133). Privatised, speculative building as the state’s primary form of housing provision has come to be at odds with the reality of meeting demands for housing; the effects of which have progressed to a crisis level in the decade after the 2008 financial crash and subsequent recession. The domestic space became inextricable from the world of finance during the Celtic Tiger period. The influx of wealth into domestic spaces during the Celtic Tiger creates a dichotomy between spaces of the past and the present. However, Enright ultimately undercuts this dichotomy—and its related discourse of teleological progress—by depicting spectral silences as omnipresent and mobile. No space in Enright’s novels is ultimately protective from the past or its attendant ghosts. The financial prosperity of the Celtic Tiger home only serves to make spectral silences more conspicuous. Various events in family—and thus national—history are brought to light in the prosperous confines of the Celtic Tiger space. These events are spectral presences in childhood, which are then articulated in adulthood. Enright’s depiction of domestic space is typically filtered through mothers and daughters. The generational structure establishes a line of inheritance regarding spectres of silence: Enright’s generational focus specifically fosters a critique of ‘the inability of modern Irish women to reconstitute an identity amidst an unreliable, silent, patriarchal past’ (Sydora 239). Daughters are typically the figures tasked with articulating silences, which the maternal figure has either refused to articulate or lacks the vocabulary and audience for doing so.

Despite many opportunities for articulating silences and bringing spectres to light in Enright’s novels, spectres remain in the contemporary domestic space. As in the case of Munro and Moore’s fiction, these texts generally refuse resolution or closure. Enright’s protagonists are impelled to speak out and draw attention to silences and their

spectral manifestations, yet doing so does not necessarily put to rest the spectres nor the conditions that created them. Thus, the question of ambivalence returns again, as in the considerations of Munro and Moore's haunted domestic spaces. This chapter, as the final instance of textual analysis in this thesis, will elucidate firstly the historical discourses regarding domestic space and how they underpin contemporary culture in Ireland. It will then go on to analyse five of Enright's novels— *The Wig My Father Wore* (1995) (hereafter referred to as *Wig*); *What Are You Like?* (2000) (hereafter referred to as *Like*); *The Gathering* (2007); *The Forgotten Waltz* (2011) (hereafter referred to as *Waltz*); and *The Green Road* (2015) (hereafter referred to as *Road*)—with regard to interior and exterior spaces, domestic architecture, and domestic objects. As in the chapters on Munro and Moore, this consideration of spectres of silence in the domestic spaces of Enright's novels will argue for hauntology as a productive lens for analysing domestic space in literary texts as well as for thinking about the import and meanings of the domestic space overall in contemporary culture, particularly as it pertains to women.

Discourses of Domestic Space

The importance of the domestic space in Enright's contemporary novels lies, as mentioned, in a broader historical and socio-cultural context of dwelling in Ireland, particularly as it pertains to women. As in Canada and the US, in Ireland women have been perceived as central to the domestic space and are routinely framed as solely domestic and domesticated subjects. This becomes particularly apparent when examining the legislative, political, and social events that have impacted upon women's public and private lives from the decades after independence and into the twenty-first century. Unlike Canada and the US, wherein contemporary domestic discourses are marked by changes set in motion during the World Wars and the Great Depression, Irish domestic discourses result out of a slightly different set of conditions, related to its fight

for independence from British rule in the early twentieth century.

Dwelling is conceived as being particularly important in Irish culture to the point where Ireland can be characterised as ‘a nation somewhat obsessed with property and property rights’ (Norris and Redmond 1). Reasons for this are manifold but are generally ascribed to the dispossession accompanying British colonialism, particularly during the Famine (Coen and Maguire 14), and to the traditional function of land ownership as a form of wealth in the nation (White 35-36). As Daithí Downey notes, these legacies filter into the state’s political rhetoric on home-ownership as the “natural” desired choice of housing tenure for all households by the state’ (122). While the state’s attitude towards housing provision, the inevitable privileging of homeownership in the decades after independence, was partly based on pragmatic decisions of available finances (Brady and McManus 1009), a cultural understanding of histories of dispossession and displacement plays an undoubtably influential role in national attitudes towards dwelling as a human right and an economic practice. Moreover, much research has been undertaken on the construction of a domestic femininity in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as in the years spanning the War of Independence and Civil War.⁶ Since the foundation of the Free State in 1922,⁷ the foundations of such a domestic femininity lie in two main legislative areas: labour and housing. The 1920s and 1930s heralded a number of social and legislative changes⁸ that have shaped the domestic space as it is experienced by women in the contemporary moment: what types of work and behaviour were permissible there,

⁶ Critical studies by C.L Innes (*Woman and Nation in Irish Literature and Society, 1880-1935*, 1993) and by Gerardine Meaney (*Gender, Ireland, and Cultural Change: Race, Sex, and Nation*, 2010) offer particularly comprehensive analysis on this subject of the symbolic feminine in Irish culture and literature.

⁷ A note regarding terminology: the Free State (or An Sáorstát) was established following the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921. The use of Éire to refer to the 26 counties coincided with the ratification of the Constitution in 1937 and the use of the Republic of Ireland predominated from 1948. This thesis uses the term ‘Ireland’ or ‘the state’ to refer to the 26 counties of the Republic.

⁸ These included, perhaps most importantly, the ‘marriage bar’ (1933-1973) which precluded women from employment in the civil service after marriage; and the 1935 Conditions of Employment bill.

who controlled and owned the space, and its design, construction, and provision.

Shadowing the relationship between women and domestic space in Ireland, even in the present moment, is Article 41 of the state's Constitution.⁹ The Constitution is both an ideological as well as a practical document, containing within it a framework for how the nation state should function, the scope of its laws, and the relationship between individuals, families, and the state. The incongruous presence of this article in the contemporary era amounts to a spectre of a certain vision of domestic femininity in the lives of Irish women today. Article 41, subtitled 'The Family', states the overall function of the family within the nation as well as the protection it is afforded. The article outlines the purported role of the family as a crucial functionary of the state; the 'natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society' (Article 41.1.1) and the 'necessary basis of social order' (Article 41.1.2). Regarding the domestic space and women explicitly, the article outlines the following:

the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.

The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home (Article 41.2.1-2).

On a discursive level—'support'; 'common good'; 'neglect'; 'duties'—this section of the Constitution is rife with ideological import. It assumes the fulfilment of a certain role by women, in a certain space, placing Irish women in the unique category of being both integral to the state, yet peripherally placed. While the state promulgated this essential connection between women and the home, it did not provide economic remuneration for domestic labour, nor, as Caitriona Beaumont notes, did it result in legislation to support women who worked outside of the home in their domestic duties (183). As such, the Article seems to be no more than an ideological placeholder—it acts

⁹ While various calls have been made to repeal this article of the Constitution—and as of February 2021, its removal has been discussed as part of the Citizen's Assembly—at the time of completing this thesis, it remains.

to situate women in the home and vaguely suggests significance and reward but takes no concrete steps to ensure that women are protected, economically or otherwise (Clear 191; Scannell 72). Yet, as Maryann Valiulis has argued, a woman's domestic function was the keystone of her citizenship since the foundation of the Free State:

Women's citizenship [...] was rooted in the private sphere, in the domestic arena, in the family and directly related to motherhood within marriage. Because it was related to motherhood, it was the heterosexual, nuclear family that was privileged and glorified in the gender ideology of the period (102-3).

As a 'gender ideology' that made the home into the *de jure* space of women's existence, Article 41.2 is significant to a study of Enright's novels in that its continued presence in the contemporary era constitutes not only a cultural anachronism, but is also a spectral reminder of the way in which women have been constructed as solely domestic subjects by the state. The emphasis on women's citizenship being contingent on the legitimisation of motherhood within marriage has also served to make spectral the existence of unmarried women and their children, as evidenced by the function of Mother and Baby Homes and their inhumane practices.

Barriers to women's role in the public sphere through marriage bars and discriminatory employment laws further constructed the domestic space as the most appropriate space for Irish women. In tandem with Article 41.2, this legislation placed the domestic space as the source of women's existential significance. However, as an ideal so embedded in patriarchal logic, the domestic space was as circumscribed as the public sphere. Most notably, the absence of legislation regarding property ownership and protection from domestic violence placed women in a thoroughly disempowered role within the domestic space. Property rights for women were tied to matrimonial law. Women's recourse to property (and dwelling in a home) has typically been through marriage, an institution which up until the 1970s remained legislated under family laws dating from the Victorian period (Connolly and O'Toole 102), or otherwise dependent

on a relationship to fathers, husbands, and other male relatives.¹⁰ Hence, outside of the family, women's rights to property were circumscribed and even within familial connections, women were placed into a conditional and precarious legislative relationship to dwelling. As Nicola Yeates suggests, 'housing is a key economic resource [...] access to, and control over it, is central to women's economic independence' (607). Beyond economic ownership of the home, legislation regulating behaviour within the home, regarding domestic violence in particular, was non-existent, making the domestic space one of permissible violence and neglect toward women, children, and other vulnerable persons, a further means of spectralisation.

A number of changes to existing legislation, as well as the introduction of new legislation, during the 1970s, 1980s, and into the 1990s, impacted women's relationship to domestic space. From the late 1960s, feminist thought and activism began its conscious rise in Ireland (Kilfeather 108). Spurred on by the work of feminist legislators, Irish women actively challenged the state's discriminatory legislation from the 1980s onwards, by using the Constitution—namely the veneration of mother and wife found in Article 41.2— against itself to claim equal rights within a myriad of spaces, public and private. A number of laws were changed or introduced which extended women's rights to paid work in a wider number of sectors, recourse to property ownership,¹¹ and to protection against violence within the home.¹² However, while such legislation appears to suggest an immediacy of change, on a cultural level this process is slow and complex. The late-twentieth century saw a number of counter-attacks on women's equality in Ireland, as well as the enduring legacy of the so-called

¹⁰ Remaining in the original family home as a single woman was a less favourable position. A woman's claim to power (as per the Constitution) was in being the 'woman of the house', as wife and mother. The identity of daughter placed a woman in a more precarious position in the home, liable to be displaced.

¹¹ These include: the Married Woman's Status Act (1957); Family Home Protection Act (1976); the Family Law Act (1981); Status of Children Act (1987); the Matrimonial Home Bill (1993).

¹² This extension of such legislation continues into the present day, such as the Domestic Violence Act (2018), although domestic and intimate-partner violence remains a hugely urgent issue in Ireland.

‘Marriage Bar’ in Irish public service.¹³ In 1980 Pope John Paul II’s visit to Ireland seemed to herald an intensification of Catholic-right ideology in the state. Such conservatism imposed itself repeatedly on the state’s laws pertaining to sexuality, reproductive rights, and the institution of marriage. A number of highly fraught referenda during this time signalled a population grappling with its history and potential visions of its future. The 1983 referendum to amend the state’s laws on abortion (commonly referred to as the Eight Amendment), equated the life, and hence legal status, of the unborn foetus to that of the mother. Two referendums regarding the state’s proscription on divorce (the first in 1986; the second in 1995 which overturned the ban) revealed a societal fear of the sanctity of the family and heterosexual marriage—the foundations of domestic ideals as the Constitution makes clear—being diminished or even destroyed, echoing a broader anxiety in the West, as evident in the Canadian and US contexts studied so far.

Into the decades of the twenty-first century, it remains to be seen what social progress for women means in light of this post-Independence history. While on the surface, material conditions for women in Ireland are by and large less circumscribed than their foremothers’ (Coughlan 175), their position and function within Irish society is no less contradictory and complex. Women’s citizenships being contingent on their placement within the domestic space and performing a domestic role, as Valiulis’ work on Free State Ireland articulates, has certainly morphed in its intensity from the 1980s onwards. Women are expected to have a public role and to be equal earners in their household. Despite this relatively novel development of societal expectation, as Debbie Ging notes even in the post-Celtic Tiger era, ‘children and homemaking remain the emotional responsibility of women’ (66). As such, a clear legacy of the sublimation

¹³ The Marriage Bar was repealed for primary school teachers in 1957 and fully rescinded in 1973, however, as Jennifer Redmond and Judith Harford note, a culture of resignation by married women remained within the civil service (649).

between women, maternity and domesticity remains at play in contemporary Irish culture. Even signs of progress in the post-Tiger years through two referenda—the successful campaign to extend civil marriage rights to same-sex couples in 2015 and the repeal of the Eight Amendment in 2018—are countered by the cultural power of the domestic space, and women’s rightful place within it, which are frequently conjured up in normative discourses of marriage, reproduction, and the nuclear family. Within these contemporary discourses, some of which reanimate a past iteration of domestic femininity (rooted in the patriarchal rhetoric of Article 41.2) we see the legacy of enduring histories and cultural ideals. This legacy fuels the hauntology of the domestic spaces in Enright’s fiction, particularly in how spectres emerge out of histories that have been made silent or are left unarticulated in the present

Interiors/Exteriors

One of the ways in which we see spectres of silence play out in Enright's fiction is through the interconnected relationship between domestic space and exterior place. In comparison to Moore, Enright does not overtly invoke the Irish landscape as necessarily Gothic or uncanny. Enright's technique shares more with Munro's approach through the diffusion of domestic images and ideas—notions of home, belonging, and femininity in particular—into outside spaces, particularly urban and rural landscapes. The symbolic import of landscape in Ireland and Irish culture is particularly present in Enright's fiction. Gerry Smyth argues that the concept of home, in Ireland, is more readily associated with landscape and nation, rather than with the built space (*Space* 153). However, as I have argued previously and as is evident in Enright’s fiction, it is difficult to fully separate the two spatial entities. When speaking of landscape, perhaps especially in the Irish context, values of the domestic space are always present. Out of the three cultural contexts examined in this project, Ireland is perhaps the nation state in which the landscape has been most conspicuously tied to women, with the nation being

‘experienced [...] as and through the female body’ (Meaney 3).¹⁴ As such, if landscape in the Irish context inevitably invokes images of the feminine, then it must also conjure up those of the domestic space, given that the two are intimately connected, as the preceding overview of public and legal discourses evidences. Enright’s use of Irish landscapes in her fiction is imbued with spectralised discourses of domesticity.

Across the span of Enright’s fictional works, two main geographical areas are of import to her depiction of haunted domestic space: Dublin city and its suburbs, and the west of Ireland.¹⁵ As Nolan argues, Enright is not so much interested in the divide between the Republic and Northern Ireland but between Dublin and rural settings (173). Dublin settings include the suburbs of Terenure, Booterstown, Clonskeagh, and Mount Brown to the south and Drumcondra, Glasnevin, and Broadstone to the north of the city. The depiction of this particular landscape draws upon a history of modernisation, primarily through infrastructure and increasing suburbanisation in post-independence Ireland. The exurban locale of County Wicklow, as well as the west of Ireland are also notable settings in Enright’s texts. The western-seaboard counties of Donegal and Sligo are frequently mentioned, particularly as spaces of escape for urban characters. Most significantly, *Road’s* invocation of the iconic landscape of County Clare, including the Cliffs of Moher and the Burren, evokes a range of cultural narratives, within which ideas of femininity and domesticity are central.

Frequently in Enright’s fiction place is initially set up in opposition to the pressures and pleasures of the domestic space. Many of Enright’s characters regard spatial values of inside/outside in fixed terms only to find them unsettled through

¹⁴ See also Innes’ study which illustrates that this conflation between the nation and the symbolic feminine is threaded throughout Irish history, but has shifted in intensity and forms over time (17). A continuum of feminine figures, from Hibernia, to an tSean-Bhean Bhocht, to Mother Ireland, have personified the nation as a woman.

¹⁵ New York also frequently features as a locale in Enright’s fiction—in *Like* and *The Green Road* predominantly—however, as it cannot be considered in detail in this chapter which is focused solely on Irish contexts.

experiences of haunting. What is significant about Enright's treatment of interior and exterior space as haunted is that it reflects the shifting conception of land in Irish culture 'from soils to sales' (Hanna 122) but does so without invoking the image of the 'ghost estate'; uncompleted housing estates, characterised as 'new ruins' in the Irish landscape (Kitchin et al 1070), a powerful symbol of post-Celtic Tiger economic ruination and austerity. As the ghost estate is clearly open to a hauntological reading and present in a number of post-Celtic Tiger texts in Irish literature (including the work of Mike McCormack, Donal Ryan, Anne Haverty, and to an extent, Sally Rooney), this absence is significant. The absence of a major cultural phenomenon and literary image of the post-Celtic Tiger era is reflective to an extent of Enright's use of established Dublin suburbs (and their affluent population) as settings in her fiction. Furthermore, the lack of ghost estates—but not the lack of spectral presences—in Enright's fiction allows for an examination of haunting presences in Irish dwelling within a broader temporal continuum which both predates and follows the Celtic Tiger.

The landscape of Dublin city and its suburban surrounds can be easily understood as haunted. This most clearly pertains to its colonial past, the trace of which is still evident in the city's residential architecture and planning (Carville 11). Dublin's past as the British Empire's 'second city' is still felt through its existing architecture in the contemporary landscape. A particularly 'national' residential architecture in Dublin did not seem to emerge until well after independence,¹⁶ yet it did not necessarily erase pre-independence architecture associated with British rule.¹⁷ The changing profile of the city, particularly its development from the 1990s onwards and its suburban expansion

¹⁶ It should be noted however, that this claim itself is contestable. The work of architectural firms associated with a modern 'Irish' architecture, such as Michael Scott + Partners, is marked by the influence of continental or international modernist design, which complicates conceptions of cultural nationalism.

¹⁷ Some attempts at erasure were made, perhaps most notably the demolition of a series of Georgian houses on Fitzwilliam Street Lower in order to allow for the building of the new ESB head offices in 1965.

westward, was seen to overwrite its colonial past. It was the Celtic Tiger and its construction boom that was promulgated as the conclusion of post-independence modernising projects, as a break in the link to British colonialism—wherein ‘Ireland could finally shrug off the history of colonialism and embrace a new vision of itself as a nation with wealth and global influence’ (Buchanan 51). Yet, this ‘shrugging off’ of history during the Celtic Tiger is problematised specifically by Enright’s depiction of the suburbs. Colm Tóibín has argued that Enright presents a ‘post-Freudian and post feminist and [...] post-nationalist’ (xxxiii) Dublin in her fiction. Yet, it is clear that Enright’s interest in these totemic values and ideas are not so neatly ‘post-’ as they may appear. Tóibín’s claim that Enright’s Dublin is post-nationalist is perhaps the most interesting to consider here. Certainly, Enright’s focus on the modern and contemporary Irish suburb, rather than the city’s pre-Free State landscape might suggest a moving-away from nationalist concerns. However, discourses of nationalism, even if they appear changed from those that are intimately associated with the revolutionary period of the early twentieth century, can never necessarily be absent from the landscape, as will be illustrated in the following close reading of interior and exterior spaces.

The Dublin suburbs in Enright’s novels are associated with modernisation projects of the nascent Republic, as well as with contemporary prosperity. Suburban landscapes in *Wig* and *Like* are united through recurring images of the Republic’s modernising projects. Although the exact suburban location goes unnamed in both novels, various signifiers of the Dublin landscape indicate a history of Dublin’s post-independence modernisation and its relation to domestic space. Both novels make mention of the state-owned Electricity Supply Board (ESB) and the institution’s impact on both landscape and domestic spaces. Although the supply of electricity in Ireland predates the foundation of the ESB (Manning and McDowell 1), the institution’s

founding in 1927 had clear national import.¹⁸ In *Wig*, the ESB as an institution is embedded within the protagonist Grace's family history and her own life. Her father (the bewigged patriarch of the novel's title) had worked for the ESB during her childhood: he 'switched the nation on' (9). Arguably, Grace's livelihood is also implicated in the founding of the ESB, as her career in television would not exist without the presence of electricity in Ireland. As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the television in *Wig* is a domestic technology and object which irrevocably changes the spatial arrangement of the Irish house, collapsing temporal and spatial values.

More so than *Wig*, which is not an ahistorical or apolitical text by any means, *Like* is more conspicuously concerned with the silencing of various histories and experiences linked to Irish women, and how these silences return in the present moment as spectral entities. Place and space play their role in communicating this concern throughout the novel. Although the novel contains a range of places and landscapes, from Donegal, to Surrey, London, and New York, *Like*'s most immediate landscape is that of Dublin. This landscape is conspicuously marked as modern, again through references to the ESB. It is part of family lore: when Maria asks how her father Berts met her now-deceased mother, Berts jokes that they met sitting on top of the Pigeon House chimneys, part of the ESB-owned Poolbeg Power Station which remain an iconic feature of the Dublin skyline. Such a surreal image situates the family, and Maria's very existence, within a discourse of modernisation and its impact on the Dublin landscape.

Similarly, a family trip to Turlough Hill, a power storage station in the Wicklow Mountains, not only foregrounds electricity within the modernised Irish landscape but also links the two iterations of the family, which includes Maria's stepmother Evelyn.

¹⁸ For example, one of the first major achievements of the Free State government after the Civil War was the construction of the hydroelectric powerplant in Ardnacrusha, on the River Shannon in 1929: 'the Shannon scheme was seen both home and abroad as a concrete, tangible proof of Ireland's independence and separate statehood' (Manning and McDowell 51).

The experience of visiting Turlough Hill is focalised through Evelyn. She interprets the technology of the power station's mechanism, which supplies electricity to innumerate houses, in domestic terms: 'like *pouring milk from cup to cup*, over and back with nothing spilt, and it eased Evelyn to sleep, the thought of the electricity spinning out all day, the water flowing uphill while she slept' (77, emphasis added). The modernisation projects of the state, including that of the ESB, can be read as domesticating projects: changing the use of the land, and harnessing it in order to modernise domestic spaces in turn.

The presence of the ESB on the landscape of Dublin and in its suburban domestic spaces alludes to broader understandings of the suburb as a modernising space. While perhaps more often commonly associated with popular images of its North American iteration, a specifically Irish modern suburbia is implied in these novels through the allusion to ESB infrastructure. Modernisation was particularly evident in ESB advertising during this time, which was orientated toward the nuclear family and presented the electrified domestic space as a site of comfort and prosperity in contrast to its traditional image. However, within the contemporary settings of both novels, the promise of this modern suburb, and perhaps the nation's modernisation project itself, is shown to be an unrealised one. The modern landscape continues to produce dichotomies between past and present; it cannot account for the silences which mark both texts regarding public and private histories, and even perpetuates them.

In both novels, this is communicated through haunting presences, which undermine the modernisation project and bleed into the contemporary suburb. This is particularly evident in *Wig* in which the contemporary suburb becomes a site of destruction in reaction to spectral silences. In order to exorcise spectral presences in her own house, Grace destroys her living room, bringing the destruction outside its domestic confines and into the suburban landscape. The debris from her home—

symbolising a hidden or ‘spectral feminine’ presence, as Anne Mulhall argues (67)—comes out into the street, ‘landing in the neighbour’s gardens, sticking to the hub-caps of their nice cars and sucking up against the holes in their wire fences’ (90). The reference to suburban prosperity through the image of the neighbours’ ‘nice cars’, is undermined by the mention of ‘holes’ in the wire fences.¹⁹ These holes contradict the concept of the suburb as a protective space, one of secure boundaries. While distinct from the North American concept of the ‘white-picket fence’, the wire fence here is a similar conceit yet one that forefronts its own intrinsic porousness. The suburb, and its sanitised and modernised space, is infiltrated—even contaminated—by the secrets of the interior. This destruction is evident in Munro’s “Vandals”, while its opposite effect colours Moore’s work, in which the outside world of the suburb traverses into the domestic space.

In *The Gathering*, the explicitly modern vision of the Dublin suburbs found in previous novels is replaced by a different invocation of history. Three Dublin locations predominate in the novel: Veronica’s childhood in Drumcondra,²⁰ her grandmother Ada’s home in Broadstone,²¹ and Booterstown, the affluent suburb Veronica calls home as an adult. The use of these settings is both specific and general—the landscape of Drumcondra is suggestive, while Broadstone and Booterstown, positioned as opposites, are more immediate. Beginning with Broadstone, while many of Veronica’s childhood

¹⁹ Similarly, in *Waltz*, the narrative begins with Gina in the fenceless garden of Fiona’s new home in suburban Bray: ‘the house sits like a missing tooth in the row of new homes’ (5).

²⁰ Griffith Way, a fictional street, is the location of Veronica’s childhood home. The name Griffith is associated particularly with the areas of Drumcondra and Glasnevin. Given her father’s employment in a nearby teacher training college—presumably the Marino Institute of Education, located on Griffith Avenue, Drumcondra—we can infer that Griffith Way is situated in Drumcondra.

²¹ Although Broadstone is a residential area it does not occupy the same status of suburb as Drumcondra or Veronica’s adult home in Booterstown. Broadstone is very much within cultural and bureaucratic understandings of the city. It is the site of the former Broadstone railway station, the headquarters and terminus for the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland (Killeen 140). While the railway station was still operational, Broadstone was a meeting place for the urban and the rural, linking the capital to the countryside via agricultural markets. This use of Broadstone, as Bracken suggests, ‘as a location of the vehicular machine thus stands in for a narrative journeying’ that is at play in the novel (*Feminist Futures* 91).

memories single out definitive places such as Blessington Basin or the bus depot on Constitution Hill, the specific address of Ada's house—the site of Liam's abuse at the hands of Ada's neighbour and landlord, Lamb Nugent, and Liam and Veronica's shared trauma during the year they lived with Ada in the 1960s—is not disclosed. In fact, the exact location is one that confounds Veronica even in adulthood. The absence of an exact location or address contrasts with the highly detailed account of the domestic space associated with Ada and the abuse. This simultaneous specificity and vagueness indicate traumatic memory, as it is envisaged in its presiding conception as an 'unspeakable void' (Balaev 1): sensory details and emotion are highly specific, while authoritative 'facts' such as exact location are hazy and perhaps irrelevant or misremembered by the survivor.

Broadstone as a spatial and mnemonic gap leads Veronica to investigate the area in her car, trying to find the exact location of Ada's house. During these investigations, Broadstone's streets are rendered childlike in Veronica's narration: '[t]he streets are tiny. These are toy houses, children's houses' (150).²² However, this association with children is ironic in its seeming lightness, as Veronica and Liam have experienced Broadstone as a space in which children are neither valued nor sufficiently protected. Broadstone becomes a microcosm of the state's attitude towards children during this period of history. The description of the exterior of Ada's house reveals the blurred nature of spatial boundaries, which is suggested as a contributing factor in the occurrence of the abuse, as will be elucidated further in this chapter. Veronica describes the exterior façade: the front door 'was flat against the street. There was no garden or path up to it so people passed by, very close, without ever coming in' (98). As well as faithfully depicting the residential architecture characteristic of the north city centre,²³

²² The reference to toys and children with regard to houses will recur again in *Waltz*.

²³ See Natalie de Róiste's description of city centre residential architecture, particularly the Dublin Artisan Dwelling Company (DADCo) housing in the neighbouring area of Stoneybatter. These are notably smaller in scale than those typologies found in the outer suburbs. de Róiste describes these

this description fortifies the specificity of place that goes beyond an exact geography in *The Gathering*: the landscape of this particular area of Dublin cannot be understood through an official geographical history. Therefore, references to landmarks and placenames recede in the face of Veronica's gap in her memory; the obliterating silence of trauma impinges on and breaks down the spatial values of exterior/interior and makes small detail and description central.

If Broadstone, as a residential but unequivocally urban landscape, is simultaneously crowded with meaning, yet lacking specificity, then Veronica's adult home in the prosperous suburb of Booterstown is set up as its opposite. Unlike the suburbs in *Wig* and *Like*, the modern suburb of post-independence Ireland is not invoked here. The association between blurred spatial boundaries and abuse in Broadstone directly opposes the relative safety, if not sterility, of Veronica's home in Booterstown. The suburban estate (rather than 'tiny' streets) appears hermetically sealed, each neighbouring family kept separate from one another: '[t]here is something so bare about our little estate at night; the neighbours, each in their madness, asleep in a row. Nothing matters' (149). While Broadstone is marked by elisions of traumatic memory married with an overwhelm of detail, Booterstown signifies a different kind of absence, one that seeks to obliterate trauma, rather than being a symptom of it. Yet, at night, the time in which Veronica is most attendant to her grief in the aftermath of Liam's death, the quiet of the suburb allows spectres to emerge. The 'bare' suburb illustrates a different type of absence to those silences or gaps in memory that Veronica associates with Broadstone. Although Veronica notes that her neighbours have their own palpable 'madness' it is kept ordered and separate through the spatial organisation—the rows—of the contemporary suburb. Unlike the image of the wire

dwelling as 'small, generally with two bedrooms, either one or two living rooms [...] a small scullery and a yard to the rear with outhouse and coal store' (92). Many of these houses are set on or close to the road with no space for a front garden, and with or without short terraces and railings.

fence in *Wig*, in which the contemporary suburb also features, there appears to be no porous boundaries in this landscape that might allow for connection.

The Dublin suburb remains predominant in *Waltz*. This suburb is distinct from the modernising suburb in *Wig* and *Like*, as well as from the contemporary suburb in *The Gathering* which elides trauma. Rather, in *Waltz* the suburb is employed to challenge the values it comes to represent during the Celtic Tiger. The chronological scope of *Waltz* covers Gina Moynihan's life from 2002 to 2009 through a non-linear narrative and in doing so, captures Irish suburban living at its Celtic Tiger apex. This vision of the suburbs is constantly excoriated throughout the novel. Clonskeagh, the site of Gina's marital home, is noted only for its proximity to the city centre, while the landscape that receives most attention in the novel is the surrounds of Fiona's, Gina's sister, home in Enniskerry, just outside the boundaries of Dublin in County Wicklow. The novel begins with Gina surveying the space around Fiona's home: a fence protecting the house from the elements—and crucially, the enviable sea view—has been removed, transforming the garden into 'a little stage set, for this afternoon, of happiness' (5). The performativity inherent to this landscape is mirrored in Fiona's performance of 'a beautiful mother forward slash hostess in her beautiful new house' (8). Thus, the performative nature of suburban affluence and happiness is encoded in the 'stage set' of the house and garden itself.

Given the derision of suburban ideals communicated through Gina's narration, her affair with Seán Vallely, an acquaintance of Fiona's, expresses a latent desire to reject and destroy the smug certitude of Celtic Tiger suburbia. This is inevitably destroyed due to the occurrence of the financial crash halfway through the narrative, yet is bookended by their affair and eventual partnership. As will be explored further in this chapter, Seán and his wife Aileen's union represents Celtic Tiger values at their strongest and most successful. Hence, Gina's part in the breakdown of this marriage has

obvious symbolic importance. Indeed, Gina understands the affair as a physical destruction of suburban housing: ‘we did the bold thing [...] pulled the houses down around us; the townhouse and the cottage and the semi-d’ (23). In relation to the suburban landscape as stage-set, the image of Gina and Seán’s affair as a dismantling (as one might do with a set once a theatrical performance is over), communicates the inherent instability of the suburban landscape, predicated as it is on pretence.

The desire to visit destruction on the suburb, evident in Enright’s fiction since *Wig*, is intensified in *Waltz* through the discursive connection between Gina and Seán’s affair and various forms of property: the private, sexual relationship becomes public and with that revelation, the signifiers of suburban prosperity are ultimately turned to ‘bricks and rubble and stone’ (185), undermining the cultural power of the suburb during the Celtic Tiger era, and its domestic discourses. In Enright’s evocation of the Dublin landscape—both city and suburbs—spectres are evident. Although not directly conjuring established image of haunting through a colonial history or the ghost estate, Enright’s Dublin landscape is haunted by more nebulous elements, from modernisation to personal trauma and the obliterating performance of happiness of Celtic Tiger suburbia. As in Munro and Moore’s work, domestic elements underpin depictions of exterior space, illustrating that spatial divisions become fractured through the presence of spectres.

The Dublin suburban landscape is of clear significance to Enright’s fiction, given its recurrence. However, the west of Ireland is also employed by Enright in many of her novels as a setting and counter-setting for domestic life. Enright’s use of this landscape is self-consciously aware of the legacies and traditions associated with this location. The role of the Irish landscape in the nation’s literary and cultural imagination has been well documented, particularly with regard to the symbolic connections between the female body and the landscape of the west of Ireland (Nash 44). As such,

the landscape is filtered through, and thus experienced, as a culturally inscribed topography. Although in other novels, Enright's characters provisionally escape from the city and suburb to rural areas—Grace moves to the country at the end of *Wig*; Maria visits her mother's family farm in Donegal in *Like*; Gina and Seán take several romantic excursions to Sligo and Limerick in *Waltz*—it is *Road*, named after a real location in Clare, that centralises the rural landscape of the west to the greatest degree.

That is not to say that various urban and suburban landscapes do not feature in *Road*. Indeed, it is, alongside *Like*, one of Enright's most geographically expansive novels, featuring the landscapes of Clare, Dublin, New York, Toronto, and Mali. However, as the one novel, thus far, in Enright's career in which the rural landscape of the west of Ireland is central particularly with regard to its domestic subjects, this will be the focus of my analysis of the text. The novel foregrounds the vistas of the Aran Islands, Galway Bay and the Cliffs of Moher, which are enshrined, not only in the Irish literary tradition but also in Ireland's contemporary global image as tourist destination, in which images of Ireland, particularly during the Celtic Tiger era, seamlessly blended images of tradition and futurity together for a global audience (Bracken, *Feminist Futures* 6).

In an essay in *The Guardian*, written on the publication of *Road*, Enright highlighted her awareness of the west of Ireland landscape as literary trope. Regarding her fiction up until *Road*, she notes that: 'I had avoided what I call "the landscape solution" in Irish prose, whereby the writer puts the word "Atlantic" or "bog" into the story and some essential yearning in her character is fixed'. While *Road* does gesture to this idealisation of rural landscape (especially through a lens of Celtic Tiger prosperity) via the figure of Constance, one of the Madigan siblings who lives in 'bungalow bliss'

(90),²⁴ largely the text challenges any positive associations between rural place and dwelling. The way in which Enright subverts the 'the landscape solution' is through, as found in Munro and Moore's work, the evocation of the rural landscape as deathly. Unlike the more amorphous spectres found in suburban landscapes, the rural setting of *Road* foregrounds haunting in direct relation to death. The deathliness of the landscape promises a form of escape from domestic dissatisfactions in *Road* for the characters of Rosaleen and Hanna in particular. While similar dissatisfactions plague Enright's other characters (Grace, Evelyn, Veronica, Gina) in their suburban confines, it is death, rather than structural destruction, that predominates as a seeming solution in *Road*.

The cultural import of this landscape looms large in the novel. Rosaleen's frequent recitations of the Emily Lawless poem "Fontenoy, 1745" and of the traditional Irish song, "Róisín Dubh", connect the landscape to a literary and cultural history which emphasise the maternal connection. In particular, the invocation of Lawless' poetry aligns Rosaleen with a rather 'harsh and ambiguous' construction of the Mother Ireland trope (Nolan 187). Similarly, Hanna's awareness of the cultural legacy of the landscape is clear, and significantly this awareness has been inherited by her from the maternal figures in her life, her grandmother and Rosaleen:

[the Green Road] was the most beautiful road in the world, bar none, her granny said—*famed in song and story*—the rocks gathering briefly into walls before lapsing back into field, the little stony pastures whose flowers were sweet and rare (15, emphasis in original).²⁵

Although the family as a whole respond to and are affected by the landscape, it is Rosaleen and Hanna who appear most connected to it, as illustrated in the novel's

²⁴ The term originates from the architecture plan book by Jack Fitzgerald, first published in 1975, which provided plans for affordable bungalow-style houses. The term—and the associated 'Bungalow Blitz'—has come to describe idyllic rural domesticity and also the proliferation of small bungalows in rural areas that eschew vernacular architecture, seeming to disregard the historic and topographical contexts of the landscape.

²⁵ Here Enright alludes directly to "Fontenoy, 1745": Lawless' phrasing, "Oh, little stony pastures, whose flowers are sweet, if rare!", is interpolated into Hanna's impression of the land, further connecting her to Rosaleen.

climax. Rosaleen leaves the family's last Christmas dinner after revealing her decision to sell the family home and goes to the Green Road. This escape is an expression of Rosaleen's dissatisfaction with her circumscribed role as a mother and an ageing woman. In her singular maternal role, Rosaleen's escape to the Green Road dislocates her from her 'rightful' situation in the domestic space. Protesting the obliterating maternal identity she is associated with, she shouts an expression of passivity connected to the role of the Irish mother: 'Oh, don't mind me!' she said. She roared it. She stuck her fists down straight by her sides. 'Don't mind me!'" (260). Although Rosaleen is not without a voice in the novel—and indeed, her children associate her with a particularly critical voice—this shouting, a disruption of literal silence and that passivity associated with her maternal role, is significant.

This escape is the culmination of Rosaleen's previous provisional attempts at escape, which are alluded to in her chapter in the first half of the novel, entitled 'Leaving'. Throughout, Rosaleen's dissatisfaction, both as a young mother and older woman, with her domestic role is made clear, not only in her admonishment of her children but in small details of her reading habits ('She used to read while the place fell apart around her [164]); her invocation of 'Our Lady of Loreto [...] Her house flying through the blue Italian sky' (145); and 'her constant allusions to her driving and walking alone' (Estévez-Saà 49). These are all forms of contingent escape from the domestic space. Similarly, Rosaleen's memories of walking this same road during her courtship with her husband Pat in their youth signifies a time embedded in the landscape in which Rosaleen had an identity outside her maternal role. Despite this, the escape is not straightforward. Rosaleen vacillates between bruised pride and fear of death. Death is spectrally inscribed into the landscape of the Green Road in the second section of the novel (entitled "Coming Home"), its description dark and subsuming: '[t]he sea was glittering under a black sky and Rosaleen could not tell black from black

[...] She might as well be dead. She might as well be underground' (265). The grave-like image of the landscape that Rosaleen escapes to is a manifestation of the life-long spectrality inherent to the subsuming maternal and domestic expectations placed upon women of Rosaleen's generation.

Hanna, although belonging to a generation that on some level has more mobility to the domestic space than their foremothers, views the landscape of the Green Road in a similar fashion to Rosaleen. They are connected by their shared impetus to reject the domestic space and embrace the deathly associations of the landscape. Although Rosaleen's suicidal ideation is ambiguous, Hanna's is clear: 'if she walked out of [the house] now and kept walking, she could reach the famous Cliffs of Moher and there she could, unfamously, die' (253). Hanna's conflation between her own identity, as an out-of-work actress, and the Cliffs through the notion of fame (or lack thereof) recalls her awareness of the landscape as being culturally and imaginatively significant—a cultural actor in its own right. Her suicidal impulse is linked explicitly to an escape from the domestic space, from 'the food, the candles, the glassware' (253) of her mother's house.

In both Rosaleen and Hanna's experience, the landscape is positioned in direct opposition to the domestic space. This opposition appears conventional, as does the link between the wild landscape of the west with the uncontrollable feminine. However, Enright, in employing this binary, illustrates a fundamental issue with the construction of the feminine in the Irish literary imaginary: either associated with the ordered domestic space or with the uncontrolled and uncultivated land, Irish femininity has no space to call its own. Hence, both Rosaleen and Hanna's respective desire for death on the Green Road—the suicidal impulse that links them—suggests the impact of this lack of a space in which women can be free from their symbolic function. With regard to rural landscape in particular, the binary of interior space/exterior place in the Irish literary imagination relies on certain reified images of nationhood and gender, typically

employing women as a symbolic objects. As many feminist critics have elucidated, this tendency has historically silenced women's literary and actual voices (Ingman and Ó Gallchoir 4; Fogarty 2) but has also created the conditions for contemporary women writers to flourish in defiant response to that tradition.

In examining Enright's use of the interplay between interior space and exterior place or landscape, accepted spatial divisions are disturbed and unsettled. As in the fiction of Munro and Moore, landscape, whether urban, suburban, or rural, does not offer concrete solutions of freedom or alternatives to Enright's characters. Although in the suburban confines of the majority of Enright's novels attempts at literal and symbolic destruction are evident, because of the confining domesticity they represent, such destruction does not give way to alternative living situations or organisation of space, recalling the immutable structures of Moore's domestic spaces. With regard to the seemingly concrete solution of death inherent to the rural landscape of the West of Ireland, most dominant in *Road*, Enright does not privilege any easy solutions either. In *Road*, despite the overwhelming spectre of death, both Rosaleen and Hanna's demise is ultimately deferred in the narrative, perhaps in an effort to deviate from the tendency in Irish fiction of invoking a female—and particularly maternal—figure only in death. Therefore, although Enright engages with numerous signifiers and legacies associated with the landscape of Dublin city and suburbs, and the west of Ireland in her novels, she is successful in avoiding the 'landscape solution', as she has termed it. Regardless of the landscape or topography invoked in her fiction, entrapment and irresolution related to the domestic remains evident in Irish women's lives and amount to a spectral presence.

Domestic Architecture

The historical silences which manifest as spectres in Enright's fiction can also be understood through architectural forms and the organisation of domestic spaces in her

novels. The dominance of the single-family home in Enright's novels, as in Munro and Moore's fiction, reflects the discursive dominance of the family in Irish understandings of domestic space and domesticity. This section will examine how spectres of silence manifest through descriptions of domestic architecture and interior space in Enright's novels in ways which highlight the domestic discourses established by policies and legislation and augment the disruption of spatial values through various haunted landscapes. In Enright's treatment of domestic architecture, recognisable spectral figures are present: either the returned dead or uncanny, non-human figures who disrupt the overall realism of the texts and force characters to reckon with silences in national and familial history. Domestic haunting may seem to reach its apex in Enright's fiction with *The Gathering*, a text overtly concerned with conversing with the dead and with attempting to figure how haunting can, if at all, be lived with. However, in Enright's subsequent novels, haunting is not absent, as I will argue, but is rather more nebulous and situated in response to the silencing capacity of money in the Celtic Tiger era. Overall, through the domestic architecture of Enright's fiction, the spectral silences which feature expose the limitations of the private space of the home. As in Munro and Moore's work, the dominance of maternal figures in the domestic space are difficult to elide and spectral silences become an inheritance between mothers and daughters.

In *Wig*, silences within families are made spectral. Grace's experience of growing up within a household in which certain subjects—such as her father's baldness or her mother's gynaecological illness—are proscribed and filter into her adult home. Throughout this novel, as will be explored in the consideration of domestic objects later in this chapter, various silences regarding women's sexuality are spectrally inscribed into the interior design of Grace's adult home. On the level of architecture, the house Grace lives in as an adult responds to the cultural silences inherited from her family primarily through the presence of the spectral figure of the text, Stephen. As a ghost-

angel hybrid, Stephen is a refashioned Angel in the House. Enright has put forward this link:

Sometimes, when I was writing [*Wig*], I thought I was like a Victorian male writing about a female “angel” of domesticity, virtue, and grace, who saves the man from opium, or embezzlement, or some other terrible shame, the same old problem but, wherever possible, I like to flick the coin (qtd. in Moloney 59-60).

In ‘flick[ing] the coin’, Enright not only challenges the gendered notion of the Angel in the House (also evoked in Moore’s “Wings”) but also the concept’s relation to death.

Although Mulhall argues that Stephen, through his lack of a naval (proof of a maternal connection via the umbilical cord), can be understood as ‘the self-birthing, self-sufficient phallic subject, born of a repudiation of the feminine’ (71), in many ways Stephen also occupies a more traditionally feminine role within the space, in comparison to Grace’s increasing destructive tendencies. He cooks and cleans and takes over the decoration of the house. Stephen as domestic angel is not only recast as male but as inherently connected to death. While the Victorian (feminine) angel was associated primarily with life-sustaining behaviour and labour, according to Enright Stephen is ‘at least half “Death”’ (qtd. in Moloney 59), due to his status as both angel and ghost. Stephen describes his fellow angels as ‘ordinary men who killed themselves once when times were bad’ (1), interpolating a discourse of the mundane into the celestial, as well as subverting a traditional Catholic doctrine which classified suicide as sin.

Crucially, Stephen shifts the domestic space through his domestic practices. He is frequently depicted renovating and redecorating Grace’s house, knocking down walls and repainting. Beyond the domestic work he carries out, Stephen also appears to fulfil, to an outward gaze, a male absence in Grace’s home. As an unmarried woman with no children occupying a single-family home, Grace’s presence in her own home suggests, if not a rejection of, then a disregard for the directive of Article 41.2, in which the home is the site of the heteronormative family. As Grace’s mother remarks, seeming to speak

on behalf of the nation, “‘A house needs children’ [...] She wanted to say that only a baby understands a carpet’ (85). Yet, Grace’s singleness is not depicted by Enright in celebratory terms. Rather, Grace is dispossessed from rightful ownership of her own home. The architecture of the single-family home privileges the family and alienates the single woman. This is signalled by the haunting of the house by its previous owner, Mrs O’Dwyer, through her furnishings. Known only by an honorific signalling her married status, Mrs O’Dwyer remains as the rightful owner of the home. Stephen’s sudden arrival into the domestic space allows Grace to take ownership of the house, to give up her ‘spinster ritual’ (82). From the outside, Grace and Stephen appear to be a normative, cohabiting couple. However, what appears legitimate is ultimately made strange by the fact of Stephen’s spectrality, his simultaneous being and non-being.²⁶

Within larger cultural discourses, both Grace and Stephen—as unmarried woman and a man who has died by suicide—represent identities and narratives that have been culturally silenced, and in the case of the unmarried woman, historically dispossessed from a claim to the domestic space. Thus, their relationship to the domestic architecture of Grace’s home, as representative of the national home, is a challenging one. Grace and Stephen, as a spectral odd couple, subvert the legacies of the Irish space in their very act of habitation.

As in *Wig, Like* is another novel in which a spectral presence is clearly defined and effects the domestic space. Anna, the dead/undead wife of Berts, mother of Maria and Rose, can be understood as a model for how spectral silences manifest in the architecture of the single-family home, even as it is occupied by a family. For Anna, her relationship to the domestic space as housewife is marked by absence. The temporal lull between marriage and becoming pregnant is deftly surmised by Anna as a time of

²⁶ Other characters in the novel perceive Stephen as human and indeed he has human qualities, as well as a spectral mobility, appearing and disappearing suddenly. Enright portrays Stephen’s spectrality self-consciously. For example, Stephen and Grace’s sexual relationship is depicted as both a real physical act and a metaphysical impossibility.

spatial emptiness. In this time waiting to become pregnant, both Anna and the house are empty: ‘I was always pregnant. I was never pregnant. I walked from room to room [...] this empty, waiting house, my blank body in the centre of it, like the gap in the middle of a hole’ (246). Both Anna’s body and the house are aligned through absence, and even—befitting with the central conceit of the novel—as a *doubled* absence, a gap in a hole. Other characters conceive of Anna through the idea of absence as well—Berts notes the pathological forgetfulness that heralds her illness; Maria and Rose know her only as absence because she dies during their birth. However, when Anna’s voice interrupts the narrative in her own section, a different type of silence is foregrounded.

Anna has inherited a kind of domestic, material ‘language’ of remembering from her mother, who made lists through ‘things that she shifted around the kitchen; the tea cosy placed on the table for more tea, the lid of the bread bin propped open for flour [...] The whole room was a reminder to her’ (234). Anna inherits this physical listing, which recurs when she is dying and explains her unusual domestic practice—‘the crockery in the hot press, the cutlery in bed’ (5)—as a signal to Berts of her illness. As such, Anna’s inheritance of her mother’s listing portends her death and results in her haunting of the house through her absence and the silencing of the events surrounding her death. While alive, Anna is attuned to the silencing of maternal figures in her own life. In death, this same silence will be imposed on her. The familial silencing of the circumstances surrounding her death, circumstances that were legitimated by the gender and reproductive ideologies of the state, are brought to light by the presence of her two daughters, Maria and Rose, in her home at the end of the novel. In *Like*, the history of the state’s rigid conceptions of women’s reproductive role—refracted through Anna’s death and Maria and Rose’s birth and subsequent adoption—is a spectral presence which colours descriptions of houses in the novel.

Spectres also emerge out of silences in *The Gathering*, in an amplification of the

cultural silences present in *Wig* and *Like*. The silencing of Liam's experience of sexual abuse as a child—mainly through the lack of safe spaces and appropriate vocabulary for its articulation—renders Liam spectral and he haunts multiple spaces during his life and after his death, from Ada's house, his and Veronica's childhood home, and Veronica's affluent Celtic Tiger abode. Ada's house is the primary site of harm in the novel, as the site of Nugent's abuse of Liam. Veronica's narration repeatedly emphasises the compact size of Ada's house—'her surprisingly little house in Broadstone' (85); 'a little enclave of artisan cottages' (46)—which at once belittles Ada's space, particularly as it contrasts with Veronica's solidly middle-class detached suburban home, as well as undermining the significance of the house to Veronica's life and memories. Of primary significance is the 'good front room' (142) of Ada's house, in which Veronica's traumatised memory situates Nugent's sexual abuse of Liam. Although Veronica later concedes that 'Nugent would not have been so stupid. The abuse happened in the garage, among the cars and bits of engine that Liam loved' (223), the fact that Veronica's memory places the abuse initially in this room reveals the way in which traumatic memory functions through deflection and aberration. This act of misremembering is also, according to Carol Dell'Amico, 'evidence of the insecurity of the family home, breaking the myth of family solidarity and normativity in Irish history' (62). Veronica's repeated emphasis on the front room's proximity to the street outside (as explored in the above section on interior and exterior space) initially suggests that the private space has failed in its protective role: the front room is both public and private and in this blurring of boundaries, becomes a space where abuse becomes permissible.

Such blurring of boundaries also highlights the lack of acknowledgment of child sex abuse in Ireland—its 'behind closed doors' nature, in which the privacy of the home creates the conditions for it to happen and legitimates its silencing. As Smith notes

regarding state knowledge of institutional and domestic abuse, invoking a language of the spectral:

in concealing actual crimes against women and children, the discursive distortion [of the State] neatly collapsed sexual abuse into the disembodied discourse of sexual immorality. But by suppressing the compromising realities of sexual abuse within this broader discourse, the politics of abstraction helped to constitute a fiction of Irish cultural purity on which the national imaginary depended (4).

The repeated cultural silencing or lack of articulation of such events and behaviours in Ireland is repeatedly highlighted in Enright's fiction, but nowhere more urgently and poignantly than in *The Gathering*. In the testimonial imperative of the contemporary moment, which the novel responds to, Veronica's situating, however falsely, of the abuse in the 'good front room' makes such abuse highly visible, as well as incongruous with the very values of goodness. Veronica's spatial repositioning of the abuse from garage to front room echoes the cultural shift towards acknowledging the testimonies of survivors of various forms of domestic and institutional abuse: showing on a domestic, spatial level, the movement of testimony from the private, secretive, and repressed to that of spoken, public knowledge.

Ada is fundamentally implicated by Veronica in Liam's abuse, due to her ambiguous relationship to Nugent. She is 'the source of familial malaise' (Dell'Amico 61) and, indeed, a regime of silencing. However, Ada's alleged complicity is complicated itself through the revelation that Nugent was Ada's landlord, and arguably had complete control of the space and of Ada.²⁷ However, the power dynamic between Ada and Nugent is made even more ambiguous by the fact that the reader's knowledge of events is shaped by Veronica's various imaginings of her family's history.

Ultimately, such ambiguity cannot be made certain in the novel because, as Veronica repeatedly asserts, the parties involved (including Liam) are dead, no longer available to

²⁷ This relationship echoes Yeates' postulation regarding access to housing impacting women's independence mentioned earlier in this chapter.

articulate their experiences. In this way, such lack of resolution in the narrative operates on a level of haunting, through Veronica's conversations with the dead. While Ada's responsibility with regard to Liam's abuse cannot be settled by the novel, certainly a line of inheritance with regard to silence is evident in Veronica's childhood home.

This house, in which Veronica's mother—a figure who is rendered as invisible throughout the novel (Dell'Amico 71)—still resides, has its own architecture of silences. The unarticulated fact of Liam's abuse manifests within the space. As Veronica notes, the family has no vocabulary to name the effect of the abuse on Liam's behaviour: '[w]e looked at the likes of Liam and had a whole other story for it, a different set of words. *Pup, gurrier, monkey, thug, hopeless, useless, mad, messer*' (163, emphasis in original). The house bears evidence of this lack of articulation and acknowledgment which manifests by non-verbal means—Liam's presence is still evident in the space by 'a nick in the wall, over by the door, where [he] threw a knife at our mother, and everyone laughed and shouted at him' (6). Liam is the novel's central spectre: he is 'completely there, and not there at all' (29). His spectrality is mobile as he haunts numerous spaces in the text, seeming to shadow Veronica at all times. The home becomes an explicitly haunted space after Liam's death and is occupied, not only by Liam's body for the wake but by a host of other, long passed relatives and family connections. In *The Gathering* it appears as if the presence of one ghost welcomes or reveals the presence of more. Namely, during Liam's wake—in which he curiously loses his ghost-status ('There are no ghosts in with Liam's body, not even his own' [216]), Veronica's childhood home is haunted by a 'procession of other revenants' (Harte 200): her maternal uncle, Brendan; Ada; her grandfather, Charlie; and Nugent. It is Veronica's search for proof of Nugent being Ada's landlord that seems to disturb and summon these ghosts:

I have disturbed the ghosts, they are outside the door of the room, now, as the ghosts of my childhood once were [...] Their story is there, out on the landing of Griffith Way, waiting for me one more time (215).

These ghosts are an intrinsic part of the domestic space. While Ada and Charlie are relatively benign spectres, Nugent is ‘a slick horror on the landing’ (215) and Brendan’s ghost is a horrific embodiment of those individuals who were institutionalised in psychiatric asylums: ‘his ears leak the mad and the inconvenient dead’ (216). Brendan’s presence, like Liam’s, illustrates the mobility of the hauntological spectre. Although he has never resided in Veronica’s childhood home, having lived in St. Ita’s (a psychiatric institution in north Dublin) since before Veronica was born, Brendan is present in the space to symbolise those individuals whose histories, much like Liam’s, have been silenced within both domestic space and national discourse. The spectres of Liam and Brendan are characteristically hauntological because of their ‘inconvenient’ nature: they return to reveal and destabilise a narrative which has been put forward for the sake of a national image of progress, at the expense of their own existence, and without the ‘inconvenience’ of proper acknowledgement and redress.

Hence, various forms of silence are represented by different spectral figures. Other figures, both living and dead, are made responsible for such regimes of silence within the family home and the nation state. Yet, the roaming nature of silences or lack of articulation about abuse in both cases ultimately implicates everyone, including Veronica. This spectralisation of silence in the home shared with her husband and two young daughters evidences this. In contrast to her childhood home and that of her grandmother, Veronica’s adult home first appears as a space to counter or even defend against spectral presences which emerge out of familial silences, through money. Veronica’s home is replete with Celtic Tiger affluence: ‘a new five-bedroom detached. It’s all a bit Tudor-red-brick-with-Queen Anne-overtones [...] inside I have done it in oatmeal, cream, sandstone, slate’ (36). It is a ‘daytime house’ (36) and there is a sense

of architectural harmony to the space, with rooms that ‘open into each other so nicely’ (36). In comparison to her childhood home in Drumcondra, in which memory is directly inscribed into the walls of the house, Veronica’s adult domestic space is marked by a sense of absence—from the blandly eliding colour scheme of the décor to the open plan of the rooms; its ‘single flow of space’ (38). Despite the neo-Tudor façade, which might suggest some link to history, there are few traces in this space which allow for memory to be retained. Even the house’s detached construction suggests distance and singularity. Veronica’s mantra-like repetition of the space’s colour scheme—‘oatmeal, cream, sandstone, slate’—suggests that she views her house as space of safe sterility, one that can silence connections to the past, and her family.

Yet, the silencing tendency of economic prosperity and affluence represented by the house becomes another form of haunting in this text. Veronica mentions that there ‘is no blood here. There is no blood in this house’ (130).²⁸ This mention of blood suggests both an absence of harm as well as an absence of kinship or family relation, both meanings in direct contrast to her childhood home and Ada’s house. As Dell’Amico notes, Veronica’s adult domestic space with its Celtic Tiger affluence is ‘a determined, but ultimately futile, attempt to tamp down necessary reckonings and vast tracts of pain’ (64) associated with her family and their domestic spaces. Yet absence necessarily signals presence. Despite the desire to silence a painful history through the presence of money, Veronica continues to be haunted in the sterile, moneyed spaces she inhabits. Her adult home is, after Liam’s death, marked not only by the horror²⁹ of grief (she imagines a ‘corpse’ in her car: ‘a slumped figure in the front seat who turns out, on

²⁸ This mention of blood has obvious links to the ‘menstrual image’ in *Wig* and *Like*, which is explored in more detail in the section on domestic objects later in this chapter, and in similar language found in Hanna’s home in *Road*. It also connects to the images of blood in Munro’s “Wigtime”, as elucidated in Chapter 2.

²⁹ Grief is primarily experienced as a haunting by Veronica: ‘I am in the horrors [...] Here it comes—the four o’clock wake-up call. It creeps into me and I wake to the slow, slick, screaming heebie-jeebies’ (133).

examination, to be the titling headrest' [132]) but by memories of Ada, the sovereign figure of silence:

I think of her [Ada] when I do the dishes. Of course I have a dishwasher, so if I ever have to cry, it is not into the sink, quietly like Ada [...] I have a stainless-steel Miele dishwasher. And if I have any crying to do, I do it respectably, in front of the TV (89).

Despite such material changes in Veronica's life—and the lives of many women in Celtic Tiger Ireland—from sink to brand-name dishwasher, historical legacies connect Veronica and Ada.

Although economic prosperity, now at the heart of the Irish domestic space in opposition to its historical image of poverty and tradition, is routinely shown to be insufficient in exorcising spectres or protecting against their infiltration, Veronica's inclination to purchase Ada's house in Broadstone, as revenge for Nugent's role in Liam's trauma and death, is framed explicitly in economic terms. Although this is an imaginative act on Veronica's part, she views it as a form of reparation in light of the abuse Liam suffered:

I will wear my sober trouser suit and incredibly silly heels and click-clack my way across the bare boards [...] I will rent the house out for a while. And I will be nice to the tenants. And when I am finished. When I am good and finished. When I have beaten the shit out of the place and made it smell, in a wonderfully clean but old-fashioned way, of wood soap and peonies, I will sell it on for twice the price (238).

Veronica's desire to exorcise Nugent's spectral ownership of Ada's house through, in effect, inhabiting his former role is significant as a circumscribed form of justice. By 'sell[ing] it on for twice the price', this justice would be ultimately reparative and mirrors the Celtic Tiger setting of the novel in which homes are ultimately figured and valued in economic terms. Nolan argues that the novel focuses on 'banishing the Gothic Irish past of flimsy extensions, shared beds and stuffy parlours' (178) through the presence of money. Indeed, Nolan takes issue with the novel for gesturing towards but ultimately evading the psychological impact of poverty as it pertains to Liam in the

novel. Veronica's disavowal of Liam's small life through her own prosperity is read by Nolan as being ultimately conservative:

Veronica's plan to recommit herself to her own family [at the end of the novel] may be entirely positive for a woman currently haunted by memories of her doomed brother, but it is a matter entirely of the private sphere. It is the spectre of others who are 'drowning in shame' that makes it possible to be so affirmative of domestic normality and a heroine fluent in brand names (179).

Nolan is correct in diagnosing Veronica's unproblematic belief in the reparative powers of prosperity. Yet in reading that material layer of Celtic Tiger on the level of 'brand names' alone, Nolan fails to consider how spectral presences emerge in Veronica's adult home to complicate the Celtic Tiger image of protection and safety through individual prosperity. This tension between Enright's first-person narrators, in *The Gathering* as elsewhere, and the agency of the spaces they exist in is not approached in Nolan's critique. Furthermore, in this line of analysis, a public/private divide is sustained by Nolan: the manifest interconnection of the two spheres, or even the dissolved boundary between public and private that occurs not only in this novel but across Enright's work are not touched upon here. That a 'matter entirely of the private sphere' may speak to the public sphere (and vice versa) is not entertained by Nolan in her analysis, with the result that the significance of Enright's invocation of the domestic is ultimately underestimated and maligned.

The ambivalent role of money—as reparative but silencing of certain narratives—during the Celtic Tiger, is also a feature of Enright's fiction after *The Gathering*. In both *Waltz* and *Road*, the presence of money within the domestic space appears to silence connections to the past, allowing individuals to become wholly contemporary subjects. Yet, Enright depicts these Celtic Tiger dwellings, marked as they are by the presence of money, as inherently insecure and open to infiltration. The domestic spaces in *Waltz* and *Road* reflect how money changes the domestic space, yet characters' experiences of these spaces undermine the simplifying terms of progress.

Spectral figures may not be immediately present in the structures of the dwellings in *Waltz*³⁰ and *Road*, but, by examining Gina and Hanna's respective experiences of Celtic Tiger dwelling—which appear more mobile and positive in comparison to their mothers' generation—spectral presences come to light through the invocation of surreal and Gothic imagery. In this way, we see that Enright's *oeuvre* repeatedly shows how haunting is present in the Irish home.

Waltz is perhaps Enright's most pronounced 'Celtic Tiger novel', as it tracks Gina and Seán's relationship through the highs and lows of Ireland's social and economic change as a 'romance plot' (Ingman, "The New Woman" 243). The novel attempts to capture the latter half of the Celtic Tiger era, in which property acquisition, housing construction, and the home as consumerist space was at its apogee. Through Gina's temporally layered narration, which although it covers the years spanning 2002-2009 does so in a fractured way, various relationships and life events—her marriage, her meeting with Seán and their eventual affair, her mother's death—coalesce around property. There is a clear distinction made throughout the novel between the domestic space as dwelling and the domestic space as property. It is the transformation of dwelling into property that renders Gina's experience of domestic spaces as unreal, which then effects the relationships which are housed within these spaces. Gina's marriage to Conor is overwhelmingly rendered in economic terms. Saving for a mortgage and viewing property turns their relationship into 'something frantic and lonely [...] Mortgage love. Shagging at 5.3 per cent' (15). Viewing houses is the central activity in Gina and Conor's relationship, with their weekends devoted to 'tramp[ing] around other people's houses—three-bed semi, Victorian terrace, penthouse flat' (12).

When Gina and Conor do eventually buy property, a townhouse in Clonskeagh,

³⁰ As Nolan notes, in *Waltz* the 'Irish past is not particularly Gothic' (181) and this is particularly evident when the novel is contrasted with *The Gathering* or *Like*. Indeed, *Waltz*'s surface-level connection with popular genres such as romance may also appear to preclude it from a discourse of haunting.

it is a space that is rendered in financial terms: not a house but ‘an investment’ (13).

Gina’s scepticism of narratives of financial and hence personal success via the Celtic Tiger home is subtly communicated when she compares the architecture of the townhouse to a child’s toy: it is described as fitting ‘Lego-like with its neighbour’ (15).³¹ Although this image has positive connotations, the subsequent invocation of illness in the description of the townhouse’s split units—‘it was like the place had suffered a stroke’ (15)—suggests that on a structural level, this Celtic Tiger home is fundamentally unhealthy. This is further intensified in descriptions of the house’s interior, which take on an uncanny quality:

[t]he place was going up by seventy-five euro a day [...] you could almost feel it, a pushing in the walls; the toaster would pop out fivers, the wood of the new-laid floors would squeeze out paper money and start to flower (14).

Here, the supposedly secure domestic space is infiltrated by money. Yet, this money offers no security: the house itself is poorly structured and finished. As Gina notes, ‘the sockets moved in the wall every time you stuck in a plug’ (15). The house is an ‘investment’ property rather than a home so it has been created with profit in mind first, rather than the pragmatic function of dwelling as physical shelter. Relatedly, this lack of structural security either impels or reflects the increasing destabilisation of Gina and Conor’s marriage, as she becomes drawn to Seán.

Seán’s home with his wife Aileen is the text’s paragon of Celtic Tiger domestic aspirations. On the surface, Seán’s own seemingly inviolate marital home contrasts with the mundane disrepair of Gina’s own Celtic Tiger dwelling and appears to suggest, to other characters in the novel at least, a successful home in which the presence of money bolsters, rather than destabilises the lives of those who live within it. On visiting the house for New Year’s Day celebrations, Gina explores and taxonomizes the domestic space with a mixture of anthropological interest and envy. The space is marked by the

³¹ This comparison to toys differs in intent from a similar image found in *The Gathering*.

subtle presence of money, from the carefully manicured front garden, the food served to guests, and ‘the Filipino [woman] circling for the refill with a bottle in either hand’ (81). This latter detail illustrates the way in which the Celtic Tiger home appears to elide the drudgery of feminised labour through a redirection of the responsibility of domestic work from the housewife/mother to an anonymous migrant workforce. Hence, the problem of gendered domestic labour is not solved through any major change in patriarchal structures but by the influx of money and the outsourcing of labour. Furthermore, Enright’s desultory inclusion of the anonymising term, ‘the Filipino’ evidences a jarring elision of the subjectivity of this domestic worker. This further reflects the racial and class signifiers of *Waltz’s* Celtic Tiger setting: within the moneyed milieu of the Vallely’s festive celebrations, the Filipino worker is spectral, made visible in the space only through their labour. Given that the outcome of the 2004 Citizenship referendum, which removed citizenship rights for children born on the island of Ireland to non-Irish citizens, unambiguously revealed the racism undergirding Irish national identity, this worker and the marked anonymity in which Enright, through Gina’s narration, renders them, is not incidental. It illustrates the way in which, as Meaney identifies, the economic and social liberalisation of the Celtic Tiger era simultaneously obscures and relies on racism, with postcolonial structures mapped onto other identities: ‘the work of national scape-goat has simply been outsourced, as so much other domestic labour, onto immigrant women’ (50). Although Enright positions Gina as an interloper and observer of this economic excess, she replicates an existing division, undermining Gina’s position as outsider within the space.

The interior design is minimalist to the point of eliding the reality of human presence. Gina notes that it appears as if Seán and Aileen ‘had very few things. In a way, that was what I envied most’ (87). Touring around the house, of her own accord, Gina expresses a desire to blight the supposed perfection of the space. In effect, her

desire is to reveal her affair with Seán, to leave some evidence of herself in his secure marital home: '[t]he cupboards were flush, the floorboards tight, but there might be a gap or crack somewhere, where a hex of mine might rot, or grow' (86). In this sense, Gina not only occupies the role of interloper but a more malevolent presence³² in this tightly controlled and protected space, revealing the illusory nature of the security of Seán and Aileen's marriage, and of the Celtic Tiger home more generally.

The novel's description of domestic spaces utilises surreal and Gothic imagery to undermine Celtic Tiger prosperity. However, in conversation with Enright's previous novels, historical silences and elisions are also evoked in *Waltz* but in more subtle ways. History is latently evident in Seán's reticence to leave Aileen due to their co-ownership of property, which reveals the legacy of gendered property ownership laws in Ireland. As Gina notes, '[i]n Ireland, if you leave the house and there is a divorce, then you will lose the house [...] You have to sleep there to keep your claim' (153). A sense of silencing is also evident through maternal spectral presences in the novel. Gina's mother Joan is rendered spectral before her sudden death midway through the narrative, due in part to Gina's retrospective narration. Yet in Gina's description, Joan was rendered spectral through her seeming invisibility when she was alive: '[i]f I had been able to see her, instead of being surrounded by her, my beautiful mother, then she might still be alive' (47). Joan is a clear example of the hauntological spectre. Gina experiences memories of her mother in haunting terms. On a sensory and material level, Joan appears to still occupy her home: Gina 'catch[es] [her] mother's trail around the kitchen' (132); a collection of old perfume bottles found on top of Joan's wardrobe 'conjure' (132) her presence in the room. Yet, Joan's ghost is somewhat unwelcome and Gina, as much as she is impelled to revisit the past by virtue of living in her childhood

³² A malevolent feminine presence is further signified through the presence of Aileen in Gina and Sean's relationship as 'the zombie wife who still twitched at the light' (156).

home after the breakdown of her marriage, also wishes to exorcise her mother's presence:

I wanted to open the windows, bash the upholstery, and chase the smell of her death away; the butts I found in the garden ashtray floating in rainwater, the yellow tinge on the ceilings, the cloying old glamour of Je Reviens (133-34).

Joan dies in May 2007, just before the national and global property markets crash, and so her death—and continued spectral presence—is highly significant. Joan as spectre represents not only the 'death' of the Tiger but the endurance of old ghosts which were elided or silenced through the presence of money. Although Joan's domestic space is situated, or attempted to be, in financial terms by solicitors, estate agents, and Seán's studied gaze ("I mean this is a very desirable sort of house" [138]), her spectral presence, linked as it is to the past and the verifiable end of the Celtic Tiger, appears to shield it from the destabilising unreality of money.

In *Road*, as in *Waltz*, connections to or invocations of the spectral mother are key to the description of domestic architecture. In *Road*, Rosaleen is an overwhelming presence in the domestic space. Her power seems to reside in the fact that she owns the family home, Ardeevin, through inheriting it from her father and re-inheriting it again after the death of her husband. This power is felt implicitly by her children, marking not only their own relationship to the space but seeming to infiltrate into their adult homes as well. Yet, Rosaleen is just as often figured in spectral terms—indeed, this is the source of her power. In the opening pages of the novel, upset by her son Dan's announcement to join the priesthood, Rosaleen confines herself to her room and this confinement has a physical impact on the domestic space. To her younger children, particularly Hanna, the house becomes 'so silent and large without her. It all looked strange and unconnected' (13). This silence is figured explicitly as a type of haunting: it is 'corpse-like' (13) and Hanna refers to Rosaleen as 'her dead mother' (32). Again, as in *Like*, *Waltz*, and *The Gathering*, the maternal presence is equally associated with death,

as it is with life. The silencing that the spectral mother signifies is that of the erasure of agency inherent to this generation of maternal figures in Enright's fiction.

The legacy of this silence is invariably inherited from mother by daughter. As Hanna is most closely aligned with Rosaleen in terms of their relation to the domestic space, she, rather than Rosaleen's eldest daughter, Constance, will be examined here.³³ Through Hanna, beginning the novel with her focalisation as a child in 1980 and introducing her again as an adult in 2005, Enright gives us a figure onto whom a shift in relation to the domestic space can be traced. However, while there is a clear material change in the type of domestic space Hanna occupies, a line of inheritance can be drawn from Hanna to Rosaleen, and even Hanna's paternal grandmother. Hanna is haunted by previous generations' experience of domesticity. The domestic space is, through Hanna's childhood experience, a site of constant work and distraction that is ultimately meaningless, 'useless pother' (16), or, in the case of Rosaleen, a space of circumscription. Hence, when read within these models of inheritance, the source of the haunting which colours Hanna's adult home becomes clear.

The narrative returns to Hanna in 2005, in a scene that recalls horror film tropes: she lies in a pool of her own blood in her kitchen, after falling while drunk. The kitchen—and the domestic space, more generally—is signified as belonging to Hanna's partner Hugh and their unnamed baby. On many levels Hanna is displaced from ownership of the space through the danger it poses to her: the safety locks designed to protect the baby are contrasted with the harm Hanna has suffered in this space. The prominence of blood in this scene through repetition—'it looked like she was cleaning up *blood*. Then she remembered that it was *blood*. It was her *blood*' (185; emphasis added)—is reminiscent of Hanna's visit to her paternal grandmother's house in 1980 in

³³ Constance, although she is at the receiving end of Rosaleen's domestic dissatisfaction by virtue of still living close to her mother, interestingly has a more positive relationship to the domestic space than Hanna or Rosaleen.

which she helps her grandmother and father butcher a chicken for the Sunday lunch.³⁴ Here blood (animal rather than human) presides, echoing the injury present in Hanna's adult home. The mundane violence of the act of killing an animal upsets Hanna and is described viscerally: 'the thing [...] flapped and twisted over the space where its head used to be' (19-20).

Violence, at least in its symbolic form, is echoed in Hanna's adult home. The bloody undercurrent of her childhood is again evoked in the morgue-like aesthetic of the kitchen of her adult home:

Hugh wanted a kitchen that looked like an operating theatre or like a butcher's shop [...] In a tiny little semi-detached. Hugh wanted a man kitchen. A serial murderer's kitchen, with a row of knives pinned to a magnetic strip along the wall (184).

Images of butchering and murder contrast with the supposedly comforting space of the kitchen, and yoke together the mundane and the horrifying. Hugh and Hanna's relationship also evokes the heightened emotional tenor of Ardeevin in Hanna's childhood. Although Hugh is not physically violent, there remains the suggestion of emotional or psychological threat in Hanna and Hugh's relationship, not least through his 'serial murderer's kitchen', but in the implied intensity of their sexual relationship: 'this massive penetrative intent that felt like murder, at least to Hanna' (189). Hugh's irritability at Hanna's lack of domestic prowess ('He got upset if there was a scratch on something [...] if there were used tea bags on the kitchen counter' [189]), as well as at her alcohol dependency, echoes in many ways the emotional turmoil evident in the relationships fostered in the space of Ardeevin.

As such, when Hanna revisits Ardeevin as an adult, the connection between the two spaces, and Hanna's adult and child selves, is evident. In Ardeevin, Hanna senses

³⁴ This visit is in itself reminiscent of Maria's visit to Anna's family's farm in Donegal in *Like*. In both cases, Enright foregrounds the almost mundane visceral quality of farm life and in both texts, animal blood is a recurring motif.

spectral presences within the house: as a child in 1980 she perceives ‘a shaft of cold air twisting in front of the cracked hearth in the front room that was actually someone’s ghost’ (32); while in 2005 this ghostly presence is felt by her again in the house, and leads to her excessive drinking.³⁵ In her final return to the house at the end of the novel, in order to ready Ardeevin for sale, Hanna is again confronted by the spectral presences of her childhood, which appear to be manifestations of her own ambivalence. After Hanna and Hugh pack up the contents of the house, they have sex in her childhood bedroom, ‘releasing all her scattered selves into the room: Hanna at twelve, at twenty, Hanna here, now’ (299). Indeed, the next day, after being thrown out of the house by Hugh for drinking again, Hanna lies in her childhood bed.

[she] looked at the ceiling and remembered looking at the same ceiling, as a child. She wondered what it was she had wanted, before she wanted a drink.

A life. She had wanted a life. She lay in this bed as a child and she thirsted after the great unknown (300).

This desire for the ‘great unknown’ connects Hanna again to Rosaleen, and their shared imaginative escapes, as well as their shared dissatisfaction in their domestic roles.

Unlike Constance, Hanna feels little contentment in motherhood, as it does not give her the same fulfilment as her (now stalled) acting career. As such, Hanna’s narrative appears to suggest that there is no clear-cut solution for the contemporary woman in Ireland in their relationship to the domestic space, which is so haunted by an unarticulated sense of dissatisfaction, itself an inheritance from the spectral mother. Through Hanna, Enright provides a highly ambivalent narrative of contemporary progress with regard to women’s identities and domestic space.

The architecture or structure of the domestic spaces found in Enright’s novels are imbued with various forms of cultural and familial silences. Absences in public and personal discourses surrounding difficult subjects such as the oppression of women or

³⁵ This presence is also felt by Rosaleen, another connection between the two characters: ‘Her father’s ghost was a cold twist of air turning on the broken hearth’ (164).

mistreatment of children are represented by the presence of spectres who haunt the halls of these houses as a means of highlighting these oft-unspoken issues. Although these novels move back and forth through time, as characters occupy the present moment and the past simultaneously through the physical occupation of domestic spaces, they are concerned with contemporary values and discourses. The seemingly eliding presence of money in the Celtic Tiger home in particular is used by Enright to strong effect, as she undermines the belief in the ability of money to provide closure on a history that has yet to be reckoned with.

Domestic Objects

Further to Enright's use of domestic architecture in her novels, the function of objects is key to understanding the spectres which haunt these domestic spaces. As Mulhall notes, objects in Enright's fiction are 'saturated with the spectral [...] ghostly palimpsests of past, present and future, artefacts that hold the sedimented interconnections across generations' (67), thus they are open to varied meaning as well as symbolising temporal fractures. This section will discuss this function of domestic objects with reference to wallpaper and televisions, two objects which communicate spectres of silence. These material elements signify and, in some cases, articulate on behalf of the occupants of the domestic space, silenced narratives and events which have taken place in the space, and across other homes in the nation. Objects—silent, non-sentient things—have the ability to speak out or identify what has been left unspoken. Similarly, Liam Harte, with regard to the use of objects in *The Gathering*, notes the spectral energies of Enright's objects: material things are 'shadows and traces' (192-93) in the novel, used to aid memories struggling to grapple with ghosts of the past. The use of domestic objects across Enright's work suggests that what continues to go unacknowledged or unarticulated, manifests itself materially and is hidden in plain sight within the home.

Wallpaper, as in Munro's fiction, is a recurring motif in Enright's novels. As

well as attesting to Enright's eye for period detail of the domestic space, wallpaper functions as a symbolic object of the hidden or unexpressed. Enright, in her 2003 interview with Moloney, speaks about Irish history through a domestic discourse, linking the gaps and elisions in official histories to both domestic space and feminine embodiment. Enright states:

it's all buried under the wallpaper. We are living in it; it's in bits, it's half-mad, the wallpaper and all the historical bits and scraps which are all real things. That's a menstrual image—we have to rip at the linings of this for something new to happen (qtd. in Moloney 64).

The menstrual image of the wallpapered room as a conduit for hidden family and national histories is invoked in two of Enright's novels, in *Wig* and *Like*. In these novels there is something archly Freudian to this sublimation between domestic space and female body as a means for expressing unarticulated national histories. The menstrual image of the wallpapered room gestures towards Freud's interpretation, in "The Uncanny", of the womb as a primordial or eternal dwelling space, the basis for its haunting affect. The image of the wallpapered room as a menstruating womb, shedding its lining, takes on further symbolic function in an Irish context, as it interpolates the historically silenced or obfuscated functions of the female body directly into a discourse of national history.

In *Wig*, Grace's destruction of her living room can be understood as symbolic menstruation—the material that Grace removes from the living room walls is akin to the womb shedding its lining. Wallpaper covers over two linked entities: national history and female sexuality. As the central moment of spatial exorcism in the novel, Grace removes the layers of wallpaper in her living room to reveal the material that lies beneath. The wallpaper, under Grace's own modern magnolia paint, is Mrs O'Dwyer's 'wet dream of orange cartwheels' (85). This suggestion of the sexual is linked to a Gothic literary idiom: the orange cartwheels reveal the presence of 'murdered wives, of

misery, the axe in the head and a corpse bricked into the wall' (85).³⁶ Grace's destruction of the space uncovers obscured feminine desires—sexual, religious, and cultural—hidden under the material surface the domestic space. As Grace starts stripping the wallpaper off the wall, the presence of Ireland's cultural history is revealed in the form of printed ephemera: paper flyers, prayer cards, letters, and pages from cookery books. The material that Grace finds underneath this base layer of wallpaper is specific to post-independence Irish history. The advert for The Theatre Royal, an art deco theatre on Hawkins Street that was later demolished to make way for modernist office blocks,³⁷ points to the theatrical culture of pre-television Ireland and the shifting architectural heritage of the city. A butcher's bill stained with blood recalls the mundane horror of domestic labour. A prayer card reproduced in fragments provides a discordant reminder of the centrality of Catholicism to both national identity and women's experience of the domestic space.

This bricolage of printed material, beneath Mrs O'Dwyer's wallpaper and its suggestion of repressed female sexuality, points towards the sublimation between the feminine and the hidden or unexpressed in Irish culture, which extends throughout Enright's work. This, according to Cahill, is central to the 'feminist aesthetic' of the novel in refusing to silence the past in the contemporary moment, but rather to reveal its underpinning presence ("Celtic Tiger Fiction" 430). This aesthetic (and its undergirding ethical imperative), via the menstrual image connected to wallpaper as a domestic object, recurs in *Like*. Anna's decoration of her home is likened to the body preparing for pregnancy. Just as the uterine lining thickens in preparation for pregnancy, Anna spends the early months of her marriage 'getting it ready, laying down carpet, putting

³⁶ These allusions correspond to the tale of Bluebeard and Poe's 'The Cask of Amontillado', which also feature in Munro and Moore's fiction.

³⁷ Significantly, the Theatre Royal was where John Logie Baird gave a lecture on the new technology of the television in February 1927. Further to the Royal's connection to mass media, Ellen Rowley links the closure of theatre to the popularity of the television as a source of entertainment (38).

paper on the walls—building up a debt to the bank that only a baby could pay’ (245). This recurrence connects Enright’s domestic hauntology to Moore’s in “You’re Ugly, Too”. In both texts, the link between the accumulation of domestic objects and reproduction is made by situating the consumption of domestic goods within a biomedical discourse of menstruation. While in *Wig* such a domestic lining is shed—the wallpaper is removed—Anna’s womb-room will eventually come to ‘house’ life; life that will be the consequence of her death. Again, the uncanniness of the analogous relationship between the female body and the domestic space arises in this novel.

In *Like*, Anna and Evelyn both understand and interpret their pregnant/non-pregnant bodies in relation to the decoration of the domestic space. Their occupancy of the same space over different periods of time connects them, despite their opposing identities—mother/stepmother; first wife/second wife; dead/alive.³⁸ During Evelyn’s tenure in the house, wall-coverings are also associated with reproduction and childbearing. To help cope with her miscarriages, and the silence around them, (‘the unmentionables’ [78]), Evelyn imaginatively decorates the walls of the bathroom to process the emotional pain: ‘In her head she tiled the bathroom blue-for-a-boy, pink-for-a-girl. Finally she settled on Scandinavian pine, because there was something heartless about grouting, the way it told you how liquid the body was, inside’ (78). Again, Enright links the walls of the house to feminine corporeality. The bare fact of the body’s liquidity (and through this, its vulnerability and permeability) is represented by the materiality of the domestic space, since, in the repressive atmosphere of the novel, it cannot be articulated aloud.

Unlike *Wig*, material referents to state history are not so conspicuously present

³⁸ In many ways, Anna and Evelyn are the ‘other’ doubles of the text, alongside Maria and Rose. The first letters of their names—A and E—becomes the differentiating factor in Maria and Rose’s names, when they are baptised by Sr. Misericordia as Maria and Marie. Sr. Misericordia’s decision is founded in her own naming problem: as a novitiate she wished to be called Sr. Misericordiæ (after the Mater hospital in Dublin) but was told to split the character into either an ‘a’ or ‘e’. This letter-play in *Like* recalls the anagrammatic structure and plot of Moore’s *Anagrams*.

beneath the wallpaper, imaginative or otherwise in this novel. Rather, although the wallpaper has a corresponding hauntological purpose in *Like*, it gestures towards a national history by more subtle means. The spectre at the heart of *Like* is the unarticulated and unacknowledged circumstances of Anna's death (and hence, Rose and Maria's birth), which comes to haunt all domestic spaces in the text. Evelyn and Berts' house—once Anna's home—is haunted both by her absence and a history of the colluding patriarchal forces of state and Church which lead to Anna's death and Rose's adoption under dubious, yet authorised, circumstances. Catholic ideology, primarily represented by the figure of Sr Misericordia who is witness to the adoption of Rose, and baptises and names the twins, is at play in every level of the narrative. Berts' power over Anna's pregnant and ill body—his decision to let her die so the twins can be born—is authorised by and accepted within Catholic Ireland, as the proper function of the female body.³⁹ In *Like*, medical institutions in mid-twentieth century Ireland, run almost entirely by religious organisations, were meeting points of state and Church collusion, imposing their power upon women's bodies.

The legacy of this power extends beyond the space of these institutions, however, and comes to haunt the domestic spaces in *Like*. Anna and Evelyn's shared ownership of the same domestic space through the menstrual image of the wallpapered room connects to historical legacies surrounding the female body. Anna and Evelyn's understanding of their bodies as wallpapered rooms can be seen as the discursive product of a society which reduces the female body to its intersecting domestic and reproductive functions—and ultimately links these functions with death as morally correct. Enright's belief that the linings of the menstrual image must be 'rip[ped] at' in order for societal understandings of national history to change is a distillation of the

³⁹ Berts' reasoning for his decision to allow Anna to unknowingly go untreated for cancer so that she can resume the pregnancy is underscored by a patriarchal logic that underlies so much rhetoric regarding women's reproductive rights in Catholic Ireland: 'The baby would live and that is what babies are for. She would die because people do' (7).

ethical imperative at the heart of her fiction. This imperative is expressed on a number of levels, yet it is significant that in these early novels it is done so through the materiality of the domestic space.

While wallpaper's association with the processes of silencing is relatively unambiguous once understood as a menstrual image, Enright's use of the television as a domestic object with a similar function in the revelation of repressed personal and national narratives is perhaps less so. Indeed, *Wig* is the only example in Enright's *oeuvre* in which the television is a marked material object within the domestic space. Bracken argues that while Enright's work is produced in a contemporary, postmodern Ireland, it places more importance on modern technologies of the twentieth century ("Machines" 185).⁴⁰ The television in *Wig*, as both a symbol of a modernist future and a conduit to the past, disrupts fixed meanings of temporality and progress. The novel itself is structured as a kind of narrative 'channel surfing' (Hansson 59), moving between Grace's memories of her childhood home and a contemporary setting in the early 1990s. The novel's concern with television infiltrates beyond plot,⁴¹ and it is self-consciously televisual in its quick-paced narration and in the reproduction throughout the text of TV guides, closing credits for an episode of the LoveQuiz (the television programme Grace works on as a producer), running orders, and live broadcast transmissions.

Television, and its introduction into Irish homes, is typically employed, along with institutions such as the ESB, as a symbol of the Republic's modernisation process. Often, the foundation of state broadcaster Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) in 1961 is positioned as a key moment in the nation's shift from post-independence insularity to a more outward-looking, progressive, and postcolonial state. However, as cultural

⁴⁰ As is evident in the invocation of the modernised suburban space in *Wig* and *Like*, and their relation to the modernising projects of the ESB.

⁴¹ Although she is hesitant to acknowledge it in interviews, undoubtedly Enright's own work as a producer for the RTÉ comedy programme, *Nighthawks*, in the late 1980s, influences this televisuality.

historians of Irish media note, Ireland’s broadcasting history is a different one to Ireland’s viewing history (Morash and Savage 9; Brennan 426), hence making a straightforward understanding of television as a material object in the Irish domestic space more complex. The presence of the television in the Irish home in the 1950s—one that could access BBC broadcasts from mainland Britain, and from Belfast since 1953, and UTV broadcasts from 1959—points toward an appetite for television long before RTÉ’s first broadcast (Morash 168) as well as complicating the notion of a national television history as one located solely within the borders of the Republic.

The television in particular can be thought of as a hauntological object. It is a medium or technology that collapses notions of linear time, public and private space (Spigel, *Dreamhouse* 33), shapes the way in which memory is processed and accessed (Morley 444) or shifts the act of witnessing into the domestic realm (Ellis 1). The television brings the public, wider world, into the living room. While television shapes time, creating a ‘televsual temporality’ (McCarthy 93) through broadcasting schedules, ‘live’ news, and taped transmissions, it also shapes physical space, including the space of the contemporary home, wherein at least one television can be found. The concentration on the temporal effects of the television obfuscates its simultaneous function as a material object, which impacts space on various levels (McCarthy 93). The proliferation of the television in the Irish home from the 1950s onwards meant a change in the material culture of the home, as an inevitable reordering of space.

Achieving a comprehensive impression of the spatial impact of the television in Irish homes is difficult due to the lack of research in this area.⁴² The television’s primary status as broadcast media and technology rather than domestic object may be a factor in this gap in research on Ireland’s domestic and material history. *Wig* gives a

⁴² Research conducted on the electrification of Irish homes more generally may offer some insights—for example, Sorcha O’Brien’s research project, “Electric Irish Homes: Rural Electrification, Domestic Products, and Irish Women in the 1950s and 1960s” and the resulting National Museum of Ireland exhibition, *Kitchen Power*, acknowledges the spatial impact of a number of electronic consumer products.

sense of this material impact. The television is introduced to Grace's home in 1969. The television is described as a small box 'balanced on a chair in the corner by the curtains' (28). Its peripheral positioning in the room suggests a sense of trepidation over its function in the space. As Lynn Spigel's analysis of television in the US domestic space attests, the television inculcated anxieties about spectatorship in the private space of the home on its introduction as a domestic consumer technology ("Domestic Gaze" 14-15). Despite uncertainty over the television's authority and position in the room, in Grace's memory of her childhood home it is absolutely central. This connection between television and memory underpins the text. As David Morley suggests, a parallel can be drawn between Bachelard's understanding, put forth in *The Poetics of Space*, of the physical structure of the house as a kind of 'trellis' for the formation of childhood memories, and the television as a kind of mediated memory trellis (444). The television as memory trellis in *Wig* is evident: the television is an object through which memories are made and the television broadcast then models how past events are remembered by Grace. Despite the seeming clarity and authority of Grace's memory of the television arriving in her home, it is later revealed to be as constructed and artificial as her work on the LoveQuiz, which in turn disrupts neat understandings of historical events.

While Grace remembers her father buying the television in anticipation of watching the first manned moon landing, Apollo 11, she initially remembers it to be Apollo 8 and her mother later reveals that they listened to the moon landing on the radio. This reconsideration of a singular memory is figured by Grace in televisual terms as an interrupted broadcast, as 'a kind of misalignment of pixels, the shadow of another channel breaking through' (31). This televisualisation of memory and history is extended to ephemera related to the television, namely television guides or listings. A listing from the night of Apollo 11 is reproduced in the text, not as an exact replica but instead imbued with Grace's subjective memories. Under the listing for '6.40 Apollo

11', Grace's memory intervenes: 'I can't remember this without sad and spurious 2001 soundtrack. I can't remember this without David Bowie singing Major Tom' (32). A childhood memory is therefore made a part of official history by appearing here as a printed television listing, illustrating the ways in which official histories and individual memory, although both highly subjective and mediated by and through popular culture, are accorded different forms of authority.

Just as wallpaper functions as a means for indicating and articulating repressions and silences, the television occupies a similar role, in tandem with the spectres that haunt the domestic architecture of Enright's novels. Grace's destruction of the television in her own home, by dousing it in water, results in 'a shower of correction marks' (91). This suggests that Grace views this destruction as a corrective action, which has implications not only for how the television as domestic object can be viewed within *Wig* but also speaks to the ethical imperative of Enright's fiction, of giving voice to those historical silences which haunt Irish culture and domestic space. Beyond various material changes, the television's impact on Irish homes in the late-twentieth century has been theorised as a means of articulating hidden or unspoken cultural traumas. Irish television broadcasting increasingly became the means by which Ireland's history of institutional and domestic abuse was publicly acknowledged (Kilfeather 111). Documentary series such as *Dear Daughter* (directed by Louis Lentin, 1996) or *States of Fear* (directed by Mary Raftery, 1999) posed a major challenge to Ireland's understanding of itself as a moral nation (Quinn 137). Although the LoveQuiz in *Wig* is not a paragon of the power of the fourth estate, it does reveal and transmit into the domestic space the paradoxes of Irish sexuality which have been culturally entrenched since the foundation of the Free State. The programme's female contestants must appear as reproductive yet sexually pure bodies while the programme operates around constant sexual innuendo.

The television is an object and technology that uncovers hidden and often traumatic histories—many of which have taken place within domestic spaces—and then retransmits them back into the nation’s living rooms. As Declan Kiberd suggests in *Inventing Ireland*: ‘[t]elevision became the device by which a long-repressed community learned once again how to talk to itself; and in the process that society was forced to confront much that had long gone unadmitted’ (567). While Kiberd’s argument errs into hyperbole,⁴³ and perhaps elides the role of literature⁴⁴ in bringing taboo or repressed subjects to light, this impetus of the television, and the media more generally, as means of revelation is reflected in several of Enright’s novels. Through Enright’s use in *Wig* of the televisual memory that asserts and then undercuts notions of authority, clarity, and linearity, the fragmentary mode of television can be understood as a useful analogue for the way in which traumatic memory is processed throughout Enright’s fictional *oeuvre*.

In *Wig*, however, this examination of repressed memory is more allusive than Enright’s explicit treatment of trauma in subsequent fiction. In *Like*, a text more overtly concerned with the uncovering of what is hidden within the Irish family unit, Evelyn articulates a frustration with this new appetite for public testimony in the latter years of the twentieth century in Ireland. Listening to the radio, Evelyn hears: ‘[h]undreds of people talking over the airwaves about being ignored or hit, or loved, or raped’ (66). Evelyn’s feelings of frustration and disbelief towards such testimony which infiltrates her domestic space foreshadows the secrets enclosed in her own home that are brought to light at the end of the novel. As in *The Gathering*, *Like* orbits around simultaneous states of repression and acknowledgment. In this sense, Evelyn’s frustration at the radio

⁴³ One might ask if the nation ever knew how to ‘talk to itself’ in the first place.

⁴⁴ Specifically, it is important to note the impact of Irish women’s writing in this regard: Edna O’Brien and Jennifer Johnston are but two of Enright’s forebears who have placed taboo subjects within the public discourse through their novels. With regards to connections between the two forms—television and literature—the connection between Irish writing and Irish public broadcasting is notable; Enright is just one of many writers associated with RTÉ.

stems from knowing, on an unconscious level, something that cannot be vocalised or articulated within the space of her home. It is in *The Gathering* that this connection between broadcast media and the shift in the Irish mindset toward acknowledging survivor testimony, rather than the acceptance or repression of abuse, is made clear. Veronica explicitly links her recollection of Liam's abuse to Irish broadcast media as a means of articulating a traumatic national past:

over the next twenty years, the world around us changed and I remembered Mr Nugent. But I never would have made that shift on my own—if I hadn't been listening to the radio, and reading the paper, and hearing about what went on in schools and churches and in people's homes. It went on slap-bang in front of me and still I did not realise it. (172-73).

The television, and broadcast media more generally, is an object that symbolically infiltrates the private living spaces of the Irish home with the uneasy acknowledgment of the nation's silenced traumatic history. As Bracken argues, regarding the medium of television in *Wig*, rather than the object itself, it confers both 'an expression of (post) modern urban Ireland and the correlative disorientation that cultural change can bring' (*Feminist Futures* 95). It is destructive, yet Enright regards this as generative and even corrective. *Wig*'s concern with the television as a means for understanding the authority (or lack thereof) of official histories, and their production of spectres through silence and repression, is one that underscores each of Enright's novels to some degree. Through the objects of wallpaper and the television which predominate in Enright's early novels, the ethical thrust that marks her fiction throughout her career is evident. Thus, through these objects, Enright privileges the domestic space as a site in which the spectral silences of both family and nation can be productively explored.

Conclusion

Following Enright's directive that one must 'read the silences', this chapter has focused on the ways in which silences of the past manifest as spectres in her novels published from 1995 to 2015. These silences, as explored through close reading analysis, are ones

surrounding the enduring legacy of women's domestic role, grounded in the wording of Article 41.2, as well as in the family structure and the treatment of children. In Enright's fiction, the history of post-independence Ireland and the Celtic Tiger era are placed in conversation. Enright typically positions these points in time as mirrors of one another and, in doing so, it is clear that a cultural inheritance of a contradictory framework of national and gender identity continues to align women with the domestic space in the twenty-first century. Yet, Enright simultaneously queries the contemporary narratives of the Celtic Tiger, predicated on the neat separation between past and present, aided by the presence of new-found wealth in the country. What Bracken has termed Enright's 'time-travelling' illustrates the intimate closeness of the past to the present moment. Spectral silences in the domestic space fight against the inclination to allow the past to recede.

The use of spatial values in urban, suburban, and rural landscapes in Enright's novels foreground the inherently destabilising spectrality of the interiors of domestic spaces. Different landscapes contain different values in relation to spatial organisation generally and the domestic space specifically, which are ultimately challenged in their fixity. Enright's rejection of the 'landscape solution' is just one instance in which traditional spatial values, and the cultural concepts which underpin them, are disturbed in her writing, as is the allusion to modernising infrastructure and suburban development on the post-independence suburban landscape. As well as frequently collapsing the values of interior and exterior through her depiction of the landscapes of Dublin and the west of Ireland, Enright also illustrates temporal as well as spatial continuities and connections.

This collapse between spatial values and their relation to the domestic discord of Enright's protagonists is also felt in the domestic architecture in her fiction. Domestic architecture is shaped by and shapes spectres of silence. In particular, the obfuscation or

silencing of traumatic events within family narratives—secretive adoption, sexual abuse, death—leads to spectral presences within homes, even those seemingly separated from the past by the presence of Celtic Tiger affluence. Enright depicts domestic architecture as intrinsically haunted. In particular, the maternal figure as rendered spectral by her domestic associations is a recurring factor. This recurrence, evident in all novels, foregrounds that neither the influence of the maternal figure, nor the history of domesticity can be easily elided or disinherited. As a haunting, the maternal presence in the domestic space is highly ambivalent, a product of the mother's historical silencing, which daughter-figures must then counter with in their own domestic spaces.

The revelation of secrets and silences in Enright's depiction of domestic objects, wallpaper, and television, recalls a similar presence in Munro's fiction of the narrative supplement. Enright's use of the symbolism of domestic objects marries Munro's revelation of familial secrets through wallpaper and furnishings with Moore's decidedly more overt political stance on objects as consumer waste as the productive failure of US materialism. Enright combines these functions of objects to the speak specifically to the spectres at the heart of the Irish domestic space. In contrast to Munro and Moore, however, Enright's novels feature not so much locked rooms as rooms that appear not to exist, or that have their existence resolutely ignored. A general Gothic idiom or intertext is engaged with, particularly in early novels, but for Enright spectres are rooted in shared national histories rather than being solely literary. Repression or obfuscation becomes foundational to the structure of entire domestic spaces, not just symbolised by a secret cellar or attic. As such, the hauntology of domestic space present in Enright's novels rests on the paradoxical knowing and not-knowing that has marked Irish culture, on political and personal levels.

As Smith has argued, the official revelation of systemic and institutional abuses now forms 'part of the national heritage' of contemporary Ireland (90-91). In many

ways, although her stories are not solely concerned with institutional abuse, Enright is in communication with this inheritance through the illustrated blurring of boundaries between home and state, and between institutions and domestic space: as Fionnuala Dillane posits with regard to *The Gathering*, Enright's decision to centralise child sexual abuse in the domestic space deliberately draws attention to 'the gaps that remain in the national debate' on systemic or institutional abuse (146). When it comes to welcoming the spectre, however, in acknowledging the ghosts of the past, state-sanctioned reports and apologies can only go so far. As Emilie Pine et al argue with regard to the publication of the Ryan report, while such official investigations and their centrality to public discourse may suggest the closure of a particular period of Irish history, the scope of the report 'make it one of *the least read*, though one of the most important, texts in Irish history' (199, emphasis added). Thus, the way in which Ireland's history of systemic abuse and its tolerance in the private sphere is officially recorded, made public, and most importantly made accessible to the public as *readers*, is also at the heart of national atonement. In this way, Enright's fiction, and the ethical imperative that drives it, is a significant—and arguably, as explored through the medium of *literary* texts specifically, an immediate and intimate—contribution to an extended, and perhaps continual, moment of recognition and redress of spectral presences in the Irish context. Ultimately, as in Munro and Moore's fiction, spectres are addressed and welcomed in Enright's novels and they set in motion complex and ambivalent reactions. This ambivalence inherent to a hauntology of domestic space in contemporary women's writing, which recurred throughout this thesis, will be returned to and reflected on in the following concluding chapter.

Conclusion

Since March 2020, when Ireland and much of the rest of the world commenced lockdown as a measure to curb the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, the prevailing message has been: ‘stay home’. This imperative to remain within the private, domestic sphere as part of a global emergency health response has in many ways re-centred domestic matters in the public realm. The mass relocation of much economic activity to the private space of the home appears to have revived an awareness of the function of the domestic space as not only a space of living, commerce, and pleasure but as one of economic and household labour (including cooking, cleaning, care-work), entertainment, study, exercise, among a myriad of other functions. Governmental policies regarding the make-up of ‘households’ and ‘private homes’ as units of organisation during this time have also raised questions regarding assumptions of family life and dwelling practices. Crucially, in positioning the domestic space as a site of safety and protection (from pathogens and other people), this moment has refocused attention on the paradoxes and tensions at the heart of the domestic space.

Typically the purview of feminist theory, cultural studies, and women’s writing, the problematics of the domestic space—in particular the unequal division of labour and its spatial dynamics—have become urgent public discourse. As has been explored throughout this thesis, there is a long history of shifting social attitudes towards the domestic space since the emergence of separate spheres ideology in which its contemporary form is rooted. Although this project’s prescience with regard to the global pandemic is circumstantial, similar questions have arisen in this thesis as part of a long epistemological conversation regarding the domestic space and its import through the work of feminist theory, architectural theory, material culture studies, and

women's writing.

The deeply embedded paradoxes and tensions of domestic space predate the era of COVID-19. Within the contemporary moment under study in this thesis, with its roots in the economic and political shifts of the 1980s, the ideals of home have been shaped by increasing wealth disparity and economic precarity. Housing is just one area of contemporary life marked by these conditions but it is a critical one, as the way in which people dwell is shaped by and reflects the anxieties and priorities of the moment. In Canada, the US, and Ireland the ideal of individual homeownership—historically present in all three contexts, bolstered by legal definitions of property ownership—has intensified in the contemporary period. The ideal is fortified by and prevails due to the simultaneous reduction in other opportunities or forms of housing tenure (social housing programmes, rent controls or caps, co-operative housing schemes) since the 1980s and the increasing unaffordability of the private housing market (lending and renting) in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Such conditions, gestating from decades of neoliberal economic policy and austerity measures, have made security of tenure within a dwelling space impossible for many people: individuals and communities have been displaced, lives orientated towards economic survival, and political power and individual agency effectively stymied. The economic systems and political structures of the neoliberal period nullify opportunities for collective dissent, action, and change regarding the deep economic, class, racial, generational, and gender inequalities of contemporary housing and dwelling. The 'cost' of living is as much existential as it is economic. The way in which the two are bound in the contemporary moment evidences the necessity of an interconnected and relational framework of analysis.

This project did not initially begin as a hauntological analysis. It began with the fiction of Munro, Moore, and Enright and a hypothesis that all three authors wrote about domestic space in striking ways, which crucially spoke to each other on a textual level.

This use of affiliation, rather than direct influence, was deliberate in order to capture a sense of how contemporary women's writing figures the experience of dwelling in domestic spaces, using the work of three writers who privilege this space—its materiality and its history—in their fiction. It was the realisation, achieved through close reading, that domestic space in the fiction of these three authors was overwhelmingly depicted as haunted that impelled the need to examine why this haunting prevails, with the aim of accounting for textual and contextual motivations and to imagine haunting as a literary and cultural entity beyond established models and frameworks.

As this thesis has argued, employing hauntology in the study of domestic space is a necessary epistemological approach to the space and its ideological function in the contemporary era. Malcolm Sen has argued, regarding the literary depictions of homes in post-Celtic Tiger fiction, for the need for

a language and a critical lens that is able to withstand the boom-bust-boom cycle of the [...] housing sector and its neoliberalization in general without fetishizing the spectacular but concentrating on that which is structural, and which remains under the surface (25).

Although Sen articulates this within the boundaries of Irish Studies (which, through the inclusion of Enright's fiction, this project is in conversation with), it is applicable to the three cultural contexts considered in this thesis, which through the presence of Munro and Moore's fiction, encompasses the literary and cultural contexts of Canada and the US as well. This project is not only the first to combine the work of Munro, Moore, and Enright in an analysis of domestic space (and the first analysis of domestic space in Moore's existing body of work, which remains under-theorised in both American Studies and contemporary women's writing) but also the first to advance hauntology as a critical theory with specific pertinence for the study of literary domestic spaces.

Hauntology provides a critical vocabulary and form of analysis which attends to the structural, the temporal, as well as the spatial through its focus on the spectre.

Expanding beyond its intellectual legacies, which includes the Gothic, hauntology acknowledges how political discourses and structures manifest as spectral presences in wider cultural contexts and in the lives of individuals. The openness of the hauntological framework through its resistance to ontological and epistemological certainties make it particularly salient to discussions of haunted domestic space.

This openness, in contrast to the tendency towards closure in Gothic fiction, is what makes hauntology particularly agreeable to the study of haunted domestic spaces in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction, which is decidedly outside the parameters of the Gothic mode. As I have argued, via Mieke Bal's theory of the 'travelling concept', hauntology—and additionally, the literary image and concept of the haunted domestic space—is part of a conceptual movement with connections to the Gothic but is not necessarily confined to its boundaries.

As articulated in Chapter 1, hauntology can productively theorise domestic space due to the discourses of haunting which pervade both the spatial turn in critical theory and domestic analyses in feminist theory. The close reading analysis of Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction that put this hauntological lens into practice illustrated the ways in which each author articulates a certain spectral presence which responds to a broader cultural discourse regarding domestic space. Close readings revealed how haunting is typically portrayed as mundanely disturbing rather than outwardly terrifying, in opposition to the Gothic affect of fear. The threat of spectral presences is disarmed in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction through irony and humour, and an often-self-conscious awareness of the trope of the haunted house as it has been established in Gothic literature and popular culture. Yet, these spectral presences ultimately signal issues, both cultural and individual, at the heart of domestic spaces specifically in relation to women's lived experience. The haunted domestic spaces in the fiction studied in this thesis go beyond clear-cut literary genres or traditions. Although

Munro, Moore, and Enright all invoke a literary intertext that gestures towards the Gothic (primarily via the haunted house tale, the ghost story, the fairy tale, and a female literary tradition theorised by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*), the presence of spectres in the domestic spaces in their fiction are related to broader cultural issues and discourses—ones that are specific to their respective national contexts and that speak to the legacy of the domestic space as ‘woman’s sphere’ in the West.

The spectres present in Munro, Moore, and Enright’s fiction written over a thirty-year period—spectres of memory, failure, and silence, respectively—provide significant literary examples of the way in which the domestic space, shaped by a history of separate spheres ideology, remains a problem in the contemporary era. Evoking the COVID-19 pandemic in the introductory paragraph of this conclusion illustrates the problems of defining and studying the contemporary moment. This study of contemporary women’s writing has covered the fiction of three writers published from 1985 to 2015, and so cannot take into account the changes that the pandemic has inculcated in the domestic space. How writers will face that imaginative challenge remains to be seen. However, given the way in which the pandemic has highlighted the fundamental gender (and other) inequalities of the domestic space, it will be interesting to see if haunting will continue as a primary mode or motif in contemporary women’s writing.

Although in its chronological scope, this study has risked, ‘turn[ing] [the contemporary] into a phenomenon that exists only in the past tense’ (159) as Timothy Bewes has expressed, it has also firmly asserted that the contemporary moment is not only a temporal entity or period in time, but a standpoint from which the past and future can be examined. Thus, while the findings of this research are situated in a specific point in time and space, this thesis proposes questions regarding the future import and

manifestation of literary and cultural understandings of domestic spaces. In Munro, Moore, and Enright's hauntological depiction of domestic space, a teleological understanding of social change with regard to the status of women in the contemporary moment is disrupted. The fiction studied throughout this project reflects the domestic space and women's position within it as a hauntological recurrence, deeply connected to the past, as it is to the present or future, rather than a seismic shift from the past.

The scholarly and critical reputations of the three writers considered in this thesis are ever in flux, even in the case of Munro, who, being of an earlier generation but still writing contemporaneously to Moore and Enright, appears to have finished producing new work. This thesis and its articulation of hauntologies of domestic space in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction evidences an original contribution to existing critical conversations in the spatial turn and in contemporary women's writing. In viewing these writers in a new light, the original contribution of this thesis goes beyond offering close readings of either under-examined writers (Moore) or original readings of more established writers (Munro and Enright). It also offers an example of examining literary domestic spaces, following Susan Fraiman and the work of other feminist critics, which privileges the domestic space not for its conservatism but for its multiplicity of meaning. The 'domestic' label is at times an obscuring entity, at least to certain readers and critics, seeming to undermine or even negate the more intellectual and political currents of the work. However, that division in itself is a product of long-held conceptions of public and private as opposing spheres of organisation and meaning, rather than a reflection of the work which, as I have argued, in many cases seeks to uphold the domestic space as one of intrinsic political importance, not a diversion from it.

Particularly in analysis of critical reviews and scholarship, it is significant to note the frequency in which the public/private binary is upheld and the way in which it

has been unquestioningly subsumed into a critical vocabulary within literary and cultural criticism. This is one of the challenges of examining the domestic space in contemporary women's writing, or even more generally in the contemporary moment: how can writers and scholars find a new vocabulary for imagining the domestic space, without upholding or absenting the ideologies and practices that make up its history and its present. How to speak of the domestic space without vaunting a conservative image of it? How to discuss an author's relation to the domestic without inadvertently reducing their work to essentialist discourses regarding gender, maternity, or authorship? The openness of the hauntological lens for understanding the past, present, and future of the domestic space and its meanings is one means for expanding the intellectual and imaginative boundaries of the domestic space.

Examining the contemporary domestic space it is clear that its fundamental structure, both architecturally and ideologically, has not been radically changed. Discourses have shifted in rhetoric and language but the prevailing notions of the domestic space remain embedded in a separate spheres ideology, one that has transmogrified over time yet retains its essential divisions. In analysing Munro, Moore, and Enright's fictional domestic spaces, the origin of spectres—whether of memory, failure, or silence—lie in a number of areas which relate to the organisation of Western society. The domestic spaces invoked across this fiction are primarily individualistic or familial, shaped by a capitalist understanding of the nuclear family as an essential unit of production. As a space rooted in patriarchal structures too, these fictions rarely depict domestic spaces founded in intentional communality, such as those imagined in utopian fiction, or alternative forms of dwelling outside of the heteronormative marriage and family. Escape from the capitalist, patriarchal, heteronormative domestic spaces in this fiction is frequently imagined—but very rarely achieved—through death. Moreover, women are rendered spectral by their own domestic spaces and the structures that

sustain them so that death itself is not an escape, but another entrapping structure.

As noted in the introduction, the insular orientation of this fiction towards individualism and familialism illustrates the way in which hauntology is an especially salient model for exploring the domestic space in the contemporary era. Rarely venturing beyond the family unit (as an overwhelming presence or a haunting absence), Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction evidences the political failures of the contemporary era as explored in *Specters of Marx*: a lack of alternatives, an acceptance of capitalism's absorbing inevitability, and suspicion of communality. This fiction reflects a contemporary pessimism regarding social change and a re-entrenchment of interiority as a mode of survival within the schisms of the contemporary moment and haunting impositions of the past. The presence of haunting in the single-family home can be interpreted as a latent or implicit critique of this social structure and its dominance in contemporary domestic discourses and dwelling practices. Yet, the narrow generational focus of this fiction leaves something of a lacuna. Scholarship developing on from of this thesis could productively compare the latent critique present in the work of this loose generational grouping of authors with a younger generation of writers—those considered under the banner of 'millennial fiction'—whose relationship to domestic space and dwelling is impacted by a more extreme set of political and economic conditions in comparison to preceding generations.

The gaps emerging from the narrow range of experience and identity captured in Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction go beyond generational structures. In many ways, this thesis has been implicitly concerned with the interconnected notions of whiteness, middle class identity and heterosexuality as they are embedded within the domestic space. The experiences of the contemporary domestic space for working-class women, queer women, women of colour, minority ethnic or migrant women who are placed at the margins of normative ideals of domesticity have not been explored in this thesis.

The narrow scope of this thesis was a limitation bound by the work of these three authors and does not reflect the experiential expansiveness of domestic space for all individuals and communities in Canada, the US, and Ireland. Applying a hauntological reading to representations of domestic spaces beyond the white home and further integrating a broader range of theoretical perspectives—particularly from queer, black, postcolonial, and materialist feminist thought—would shed light on the specific haunting presences in domestic spaces and further illustrate the use of a relational comparative framework regarding domestic discourses, architectural forms, and material and spatial relationships. Widening the scope of the hauntological reading of domestic space may indeed also challenge the inevitability of haunting as found in the white homes of Munro, Moore and Enright’s fiction.

Hauntology seeks to examine what resides between the categories of life and death, through the figure of the spectre which dis/embodyes both categories simultaneously. The central ethic of hauntology is that haunting can be lived with, rather than exorcised. As noted in the exploration of hauntology as a methodology in Chapter 1, the living must learn how to ‘live *with* ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts’ (Derrida xviii). The ‘commerce without commerce of ghosts’—in classic Derridean double meaning, the dialogue or communication of ghosts outside of the political and economic structures of the living— may be the solution to entrapping discourses of domesticity. This is reflected in many of the narratives considered in this project. Characters who welcome spectres—from Nita in Munro’s “Free Radicals”, to KC in Moore’s “Wings”, and Grace in Enright’s *The Wig My Father Wore*—exist more freely in relation to the domestic space.

Yet, as discussed in Chapter 1 and explored throughout the close reading analysis of each writer, a certain ambivalence is inherent to welcoming the spectre.

Spectres in the fiction of Munro, Moore, and Enright frequently represent or manifest from traumatic ruptures within characters' lives—violence, death, physical and sexual abuse, the dissolution of relationships and familial connections. This ambivalence leaves intact an intellectual and ethical problem. In living with the ambivalence of haunting, how can 'the stories, and griefs, the old puzzles you can't resist or solve' (227) be left behind, as Euphemia, the narrator of Munro's "The Progress of Love" articulates. Hauntology impels an acceptance of death, not a rejection of life: the spectre is a reminder, in its paradoxical state of both/either, that life and death are interdependent and cannot be separated. Moreover, as this fiction illustrates, narratives—whether they come in the form of literary texts, theoretical works, or cultural discourses—engender imaginative spaces in which the ambivalence of haunting can be tested. Such narratives may have the power to concretise and reify but they also have the capacity to manifest other potentialities.

Thus, Munro, Moore, and Enright's fiction illustrates what co-habitation with the spectre might look like, particularly as in the fiction considered in this project, such spectres emerge out of difficult and even traumatic conditions. Living with the spectre requires an embrace of discomfort, irresolution, and ambivalence. Arguably, this may not appear to be a positive message, seeming to privilege stasis rather than transformation. Yet, from the ethical directive of hauntology and its political response, and particularly with regard to women's material lives, living with the spectre and welcoming haunting is a radical gesture within a contemporary culture which increasingly insists on resolution, closure, and consensus.

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