BETWEEN ORDER AND TRANSGRESSION:
AMBIVALENCE IN THE NOVELS OF ANTHONY BURGESS

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INTRODUCTION

I. General Considerations and Methodology.

Burgess's novels, particularly the novels from the Sixties, have been studied for their exploration of social issues, their controversial depiction of violence and their satirical indictment on the decay of moral and social values in the modern world, mainly due to the success of *A Clockwork Orange*, a novel which examines these themes. Throughout his career, however, Burgess was also concerned with the process of artistic and literary creation, and many of his novels engage in an active exploration of novelistic form and literary language. Burgess's experimentations with language, not only in *A Clockwork Orange,* his most widely-studied work, but also in works like *Nothing like the Sun,* his fictional biography of Shakespeare—or *Napoleon Symphony*, where he employs musical structure as the pattern for the narrative—are well known amongst Burgess's critics and reviewers. Bernard Bergonzi, in his entry on Burgess in the 1976 edition of *Contemporary Novelists,* describes Burgess's work, from his "early fiction" as "basically conventional" but technically, marked by "verbal brilliance," and an obvious interest in experimentation.[1]

According to Andrew Biswell, Burgess's novels from the Sixties (his most prolific decade in terms of output) are mainly concerned with the exploration of social-realist issues, despite having some experimental elements.[2] From the Seventies onwards, Burgess became more focused on formal experimentation; some of the more notable

[1] Bernard Bergonzi, "Anthony Burgess," in *Contemporary Novelists*, ed. James Vinson (London: St James Press, 1982), 112.
[2] Andrew Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess* (London: Picador, 2005), 224.

examples are, as noted above, his use of Beethoven's *Eroica* in *Napoleon Symphony*, the tripartite narrative structure of *The End of the World News* or the use of the narrative poem form in *Moses* and *Byrne*, his last work.[3] These experiments, however, were not always understood or accepted. As Andrew Biswell remarks, many reviewers found Burgess's "enthusiasm" for experimental writing quite "disconcerting."[4] John J. Stinson also refers to those critics (although he does not name them) who dismissed Burgess's linguistic experimentations as "mere technical display or some predictable form of ostentatiousness,"[5] rather than serious attempts to extend the boundaries of the novel.

Despite the negative responses to the formal aspects of Burgess's novels, the fact remains that Burgess was always concerned with the process of writing and with notions of meaning and novelistic structure. Early critics like A. A. De Vitis and Carol M. Dix called attention to Burgess's "linguistic explorations"[6] and his concern with the form and structure of the novel, although not as a way of challenging or subverting established

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[3] Many of the works from this period, at the same time, are varied and eclectic, including historical novels like *The Kingdom of the Wicked,* the monumental and encyclopaedic *Earthly Powers*, as well as film scripts and theatrical adaptations.

[4] Andrew Biswell, review of *Byrne* by Anthony Burgess, *Times Literary Supplement,* September 29, 1995, 26.

[5] This view is offered by John J. Stinson as a summary of negative critical appraisals of Burgess's linguistic experimentations. Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited* (Boston: Twayne English Authors Series, 1991), 17. Samuel Coale, another early Burgess critic, described Burgess's manipulations of narrative form and genres as the collapse of the novels' higher artistic principles "blatant artifice, two-dimensional characterization, black comedy, manufactured camp ... [and] linguistic distortion." Coale, *Anthony Burgess* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1981), 124. In *The Doctor is Sick,* Coale argues, narrative coherence is distorted in a "scramble of absurd encounters ... weird characters, crazy encounters and undigested bits and pieces of incidents and episodes." *Anthony Burgess*, 110. *M/F* is another novel that attempts to construct order out of the chaos of existence, this time using a structuralist pattern, but soon becomes "artificial" and contrived, a "fanciful yellow-brick road to some absurdist fairy-tale world." Ibid., 123. On the other end of the scale, some critics ignore the experimental elements in Burgess's writing, like Geoffrey Aggeler in what is still considered the best introduction to Burgess's novels Anthony *Burgess, The Artist as Novelist* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979) or Robert K. Morris in *The Consolations of Ambiguity: An Essay on the Novels of Anthony Burgess* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971). In his analysis of *A Vision of Battlements* in his biography of Burgess, Andrew Biswell argues that a knowledge of the novel's mythical structure (borrowed from the *Aeneid*) is "not really necessary" to a full understanding of the novel's main themes. Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 102.

[6] Carol M. Dix, *Anthony Burgess* (London: Longman, 1971), 21.

concepts of authority, meaning and structure, but as a means to create a sense of order in the face of uncertainty and disorder or, as De Vitis remarks, to "wrest meaning from the stuff of human existence."[7] Burgess himself would continue to claim, as we shall see later on, that the purpose of the novel is the representation of real life and that the writer's duty is "the organization of words into meaningful patterns."[8] At the same time, other critics like John J. Stinson and Robert O. Evans, while aware of Burgess's concern for order and meaning in the novel, also identify a subversive or transgressive force operating in his writing. Stinson notes a disruptive impulse behind Burgess's "fusion" of popular and high literary discourses in some of his so-called "social-realist" novels of the Sixties,[9] while Robert O' Evans remarks on the "anti-novel quality" of much of Burgess's writing.[10]

Looking at these different critical perspectives we can identify a conflict in Burgess's writing, between a traditional or "conventional" notion of the literary text as a structure of meaning and order, and an impulse to transgress and subvert those structures which manifests itself in what critics call Burgess's experimentations with language. Recently, scholars like Alan R. Roughley, Carla Sassi and MY Chiu have begun to examine the subversive and experimental aspects of Burgess's texts, along with their more conservative elements, from post-structuralist and Bakhtinian perspectives, opening up

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[7] A. A. De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess* (New York: Twayne, 1972), 16.
[8] Burgess, quoted in De Vitis, 16.
[9] John J. Stinson, "Anthony Burgess: Novelist on the Margin," *Journal of Popular Culture* 7, no. 1 (1973): 143–46.
[10] O' Evans is exploring Burgess's dystopias *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed*, but his assessment can be extended to other Burgess texts. The important point is that he is identifying a subversive element in Burgess's writing which he believes had previously "gone largely unmentioned." Robert O' Evans, "The Nouveau Roman, Russian Dystopias and Anthony Burgess," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* VI, no 2 (1973): 28.

new avenues into the complexities of his writing.[11] This thesis situates itself amongst these new theoretical approaches to Burgess's writing. A brief summary of two of these critical approaches will provide a background for the argument developed in this dissertation.

In her chapter "Lost in Babel: the search for a perfect language in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*," in *Anthony Burgess and Modernity,* (2008) Carla Sassi[12] begins by positing the novella's obvious textuality and transgression of accepted linguistic codes, and then moves on to identify a conservative impulse at work in Nadsat which has received less critical attention.[13] This conservative impulse, she notes, is "symptomatic" of a deep-seated longing in Burgess for the old connection between the word and the world which characterized medieval theories of language, a link which was severed with the arrival of the science of Linguistics in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries.[14] Using Foucault's theories, Sassi examines how, for all its subversiveness and rebelliousness, *A Clockwork Orange* is in fact marked by a deep sense of nostalgia for "the lost order of things," an order based on the "coherence ... between the theory of representation and the theory of language" which, Foucault argues, characterized "classic literacy."[15]

It can be argued that this "nostalgic" mood is evident in other of Burgess's novels. It pervades Spindrift's perception of language in *The Doctor is Sick,* where it is also

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[11] It is important to note here that *A Clockwork Orange* has attracted attention in the area of Linguistics in particular, as well as in other areas in Literary Studies. *A Clockwork Orange* is not analyzed in this study.
[12] I should also note here that Sassi has already produced a full-length analysis of *A Clockwork Orange*'s linguistic strategies entitled *Un'arancia panlinguistica*. Trieste: I.R.S.E.T., 1987, (in Italian).
[13] Carla Sassi, "Lost in Babel: the search for a perfect language in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*," in *Anthony Burgess and Modernity*, ed. Alan R. Roughley (Manchester: MUP, 2008), 268.
[14] Ibid., 261.
[15] Ibid., 259. Sassi's argument in this chapter is, of course, more complex than this short summary suggests.

coupled with a sense of joyful elation at the possibilities of unrestrained linguistic play which exacerbates his feeling of separation from the real world even further. At the same time, the text of the novel works to break down the distinction between representational and non-representational language and to create a sense of the literariness or "poeticalness"[16] of all language. Alan R. Roughley identifies a similar ambivalence in the structure of *The End of the World News*.[17] In this work Burgess plays with the traditional linear narrative structure of the novel by creating a "contrapuntal pattern" from three separate narratives. But this is not the only organizing "principle" at work in this novel. Roughley draws attention to the "uneasy" co-existence of an "encyclopaedic" impulse to "write a totalising narrative of the twentieth-century"[18] and one "which works towards setting writing free from the ideological concept of the literary novel."[19] Roughley's analysis in his chapter focuses on this co-existence of ordering and transgressive impulses in Burgess's writing. Burgess, Roughley concludes:

> seemed to have enjoyed experimenting with the forms in which [he] wrote to the point where the logic and solemnity of [its] production had to give way to a playful writing that challenges the limits of thematic criticism and opens up serious yet simultaneously playful questions about the forms of literature, the power of writing and the playful exuberance of a writing that is willing to throw its own being ... into question.[20]

This thesis explores further the tension between conservative and transgressive (or experimental) impulses which, critics suggest, marks Burgess's writing, using Julia Kristeva's notion of "ambivalence," as she employs it in her seminal essay "Word,

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[16] I explore this concept in more depth later on in this introduction. The notion of language's inherent "poeticalness" is part of the analysis of ambivalence in the chapter on *The Doctor is Sick.*
[17] Alan R. Roughley, "*The End of the World News*: 'the End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing'" in *Anthony Burgess and Modernity*, 58–75.
[18] This same impulse is also evident in *Earthly Powers* and *Any Old Iron.*
[19] Roughley, "*The End of the World News*: 'the End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing,'" 69.
[20] Ibid.,73–74.

Dialogue, Novel."[21] "Ambivalence," in Kristeva's terms, describes the dynamic interaction between monologic (conservative) and dialogic (transgressive and disruptive) impulses or forces at work in the discursive structures of the "subversive" modern polyphonic novel as theorized by Bakhtin.[22] Ambivalence, thus, describes the process by which the novel, in Kristeva's words, "transgresses its own constituent characteristics" and becomes open and plural. [23] The main argument of this thesis is that Burgess's texts are structured by the ambivalent co-existence of ordering (monologic) and transgressive (dialogic) impulses or forces which operate on the level of structure (in the novels' formal composition) and on the level of language. In this dynamic, Burges's texts become plural and playful, subverting their own structures and challenging established notions of order, meaning, subjective identity and authority.

Burgess's literary output was vast; he published thirty-four novels and one collection of short stories, as well as several works on literature, linguistics and music, countless reviews, newspaper articles, interviews and two volumes of autobiography over a period of over thirty years.[24] It would be impossible to explore the operations of ambivalence in

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[21] This essay first appeared in *Sémeiotiké* (Paris: Seouil, 1969), 143–73. An English translation by Leon S. Roudiez is published in the collection *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 64–92. This translation is also included in Toril Moi's edited collection *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 34–61. All the quotations from "Word, Dialogue, Novel" in this dissertation are taken from the version published in *Desire in Language*.

[22] My argument here is not whether Burgess's novels are specifically polyphonic in Bakhtin's terms (Bakhtin's polyphony is examined elsewhere in the thesis). For Kristeva, the novel becomes polyphonic as an effect of its dialogic and ambivalent structure. I will explore this aspect in more depth in my analysis of Kristeva's theories.

[23] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 86.

[24] Here is a complete list of Burgess's novels, in order of publication. Details on the specific editions which I have used are included in the Bibliography: *Time for a Tiger* (1956); *The Enemy in the Blanket* (1958); *Beds in the East* (1959) [the three are collected in *The Malayan Trilogy*]; *The Right to an Answer* (1960); *The Doctor is Sick* (1960); *The Worm and the Ring* (1961); *One Hand Clapping* (1961) [As Joseph Kell]; *Devil of a State* (1961); *A Clockwork Orange* (1962); *The Wanting Seed* (1962); *Inside Mr Enderby* (1963) [As Joseph Kell]; *Honey for the Bears* (1963); *Nothing like the Sun* (1964); *The Eve of Saint Venus* (1964); *A Vision of Battlements* (1965) [written between 1949–53] ; *Tremor of Intent* (1966); *Enderby*

the thirty-five novels in one dissertation. My aim is to explore, through close textual analysis, how ambivalence operates in five novels from the 1960s, Burgess's most prolific period in a career spanning three decades. These are *A Vision of Battlements* (published in 1965, but composed some time between 1949 and 1953),[25] *The Doctor is Sick* (1960), *Inside Mr Enderby* (1963), *Nothing like the Sun* (1964) and *M/F* (written in 1969 but published in 1971).[26] Although Burgess had already published *Time for a Tiger*, *The Enemy in the Blanket* and *Beds in the East* in Malaysia at the end of the 1950s,[27] he did not become a professional writer until 1960, the year when he was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour.[28] Some critics, like Andrew Biswell, see the Sixties as Burgess's "social-realist" period, as mentioned earlier. I would argue, however, that the novels from the Sixties are all, to an extent, concerned with the process of writing and with the conflictual nature of that process for the writer—a preoccupation stemming from Burgess's Modernist aesthetics and his reading of Joyce's and T. S. Eliot's writing.

Burgess's novels at this time engage with important social and philosophical issues (*A Clockwork Orange*, *The Right to an Answer*, *The Wanting Seed*) while at the same time exploring, sometimes in a self-conscious way, the writer's (and Burgess's own) struggle between order and transgression, between the desire to experiment and the need to set limits. Much of Burgess's writing at this time is preoccupied with the artist's place within

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Outside (1968); *M/F* (1971); *The Clockwork Testament; or, Enderby's End* (1974); *Napoleon Symphony* (1974); *Moses: A Narrative* (1976); *Abba Abba* (1977); *Beard's Roman Women* (1977); *1985* (1978); *Man of Nazareth*(1979); *Earthly Powers* (1980); *The End of the World News: An Entertainment* (1982); *Enderby's Dark Lady; or, No End to Enderby* (1984); *The Kingdom of the Wicked* (1985); *The Piano Players* (1986); *Any Old Iron* (1989); *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* (1991); *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993); *Byrne: A Novel* (1995)[posthumously].

[25] The controversy surrounding the novel's date of composition is examined in Chapter One, note 241.

[26] See Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 339.

[27] Later collected in *The Malayan Trilogy* in England and *The Long Day Wanes* in America.

[28] An experience that Burgess fictionalized in *The Doctor is Sick*.

tradition, which, for Burgess, involves an unresolved conflict between the desire to uphold the principles, ideas and forms of Western literary tradition and a need—almost an "urge"—to break down all boundaries, ideological or formal. Kristeva's theories of novelistic ambivalence, poetic language and its effect on the poetic subject—her very understanding of subjectivity as a dynamic between meaning and being—offer a theoretical account of the process of writing as we see it articulated in Burgess's texts: as a process-struggle between structural, linguistic and narrative order and the transgression of that order through experimentation and textual play.

In a certain way, we can say that Burgess's texts illustrate Kristeva's theories or, even, function as a "prefiguration" of those theories.[29] We do not know if Burgess was aware of Kristeva's work, although he certainly was acquainted with Barthes, Lacan and Derrida. The three names appear in Burgess's review of David Lodge's *Working with Structuralism*, "Signals," as "the three French post-structuralists."[30] We cannot, however, assume that Burgess knew Kristeva's semiotic and psychoanalytic work[31] or Bakhtin's theories of novelistic discourse and the carnivalesque.[32] At the same time, the lack of any evidence of an encounter between Burgess and these theorists does not preclude a reading of Burgess's and Kristeva's texts as engaged in a kind of dialogical exchange in which

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[29] I would like to thank Carla Sassi for suggesting this term.

[30] Burgess, "Signals," in *Homage to Qwertyuiop. Selected Journalism 1978–1985* (London, and Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1986), 200.

[31] For one thing, Kristeva's essay on Bakhtin "Word, Dialogue, Novel" was not published until 1966. *Revolution in Poetic Language*, where she elaborates her theory of poetic language and the poetic subject, was published in France in 1974, and in its English translation in 1984.

[32] On the other hand, there is no doubt that Burgess had read Rabelais. See Chapter Four on *Inside Mr Enderby*, particularly note 399. Furthermore, in his interview with Jacques Cabau, Burgess claims that "Rabelais is the kind of tradition I like to work in: the tough, intensely physical and satirical." Jacques Cabau, "Anthony Burgess par lui-même. Un entretien avec l'auteur," *Trema* 5 (1980): 96. As Á. I. Farkas remarks, "Burgess did not "have the benefit of post-Bakhtinian scholarship," but was nevertheless very aware of the carnivalesque elements in Joyce's work, and in his own work. Á. I. Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer: Anthony Burgess's Joycean Negotiations* (Budapest: Académiai Kiadó, 2002), 33.

one illuminates the other in an equal way. Much of my analysis in this thesis calls attention to the way in which Kristeva's theories help analyze the particularities of Burgess's writing, but very often we can see how Burgess's texts illuminate or illustrate Kristeva's notions.

Although I explore Kristeva's notion of ambivalence at greater length in Chapter One of this thesis, a brief overview of this concept and the way in which I employ it to analyze Burgess's writing is appropriate here. In this dissertation, I use ambivalence, not as a meta-theory or an overarching concept subsuming all other Kristevan concepts like semiotic and symbolic, subject-in-process, carnivalesque discourse or intertextuality, but as a platform or foundation from which to explore the dynamic or dialogic process which underlies and structures them. Ambivalence, in fact, is not strictly a concept or a notion, but a descriptive term for a specific textual relational dynamic. In its ordinary use, the word ambivalence refers to the co-existence of opposing values, and therefore, suggests uncertainty and lack of finality or fixity. Kristeva's use of the term retains the connotation of uncertainty, but also adding a sense of movement and transformation; for Kristeva, the interaction between monologic and dialogic forces in the text and in language has a subversive and transformative effect—it is destructive but also productive—in the text and in the speaking-writing subject.

My analysis of the novels in this thesis focuses specifically on two modes or dimensions of ambivalence. One mode of ambivalence operates both on the level of the novels' overall formal composition and at the level of language, as a dynamic between an impulse towards narrative order and fixed meaning, and a subversive impulse manifested in a plural, playful, carnivalesque and productive (and at times also disruptive) writing.

The other mode of ambivalence involves the artistic subject's experience and articulation of the process of creation, conceived by Kristeva as a process or dynamic conflict between the "symbolic" (systematic) and "semiotic" (bodily and material) modalities of language. Kristeva uses the term "subject-in-process/trial" to describe this dynamic or process.

According to Bakhtin, polyphonic novels are "dialogized"—and therefore rendered "ambivalent"—by the incorporation of the double, ambivalent logic of carnivalesque and Menippean discourses within their narrative and linguistic structures.[33] For Kristeva, ambivalence refers to the co-existence of "monological" and "dialogical" elements within the structure of the polyphonic novel. Kristeva's notion of monologism includes Bakhtin's "unitary" and "official" discourses, the notions of the "transcendental signified" and "self presence" highlighted by Derrida and other post-structuralist critics, as well as elements specifically associated with the realist novel, like representation, "definition of personality," "subject development, " "plot coherence" and "narrative progression."[34] As we shall see later, these notions would remain a very important concern for Burgess throughout his novelistic career.

The polyphonic novel, thus, exploits the inherent plurality and dialogism of language, but without eschewing representation. For Kristeva, the discourse of the novel articulates a dynamic which marks the continuous ambivalence between the two. Kristeva moves away from a linear conception of the novel as a narrative, to adopt the vision of visual

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[33] See Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis of this process of dialogization or carnivalization in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (London, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 101–42. In Bakhtin's theory, polyphony and dialogism are not clearly separated. See David Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 86.
[34] Kristeva discusses all these in "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 65, 77, 70.

metaphor of the novel as a "space" that is "regulated by two principles: monological and dialogical."[35] As Megan Becker-Leckrone argues, the word "novel," in Kristeva's use of the term, actually comes to signify an "open-ended" structure which constructs meaning as a process between traditional "form" and the plurality, multiplicity and dialogism of its language.[36] Like the subject, the novel is also a process or ambivalence. This is the way in which I examine Burgess's novels in this dissertation, as open-ended and dynamic structures marked by ambivalence.

Kristeva's notion of ambivalence offers a practical way of analyzing how Burgess's fictional structures transgress their "constituent characteristics" to reveal a playful and intertextual (in Kristeva's sense of the term) writing which challenges and subverts established forms and structures, but, at the same time, conveys a sense of the subject's anxiety over the collapse of those structures. Burgess consciously uses myth, musical structure (*Napoleon Symphony* is the best-known example, but it can be found in other novels),[37] archetypal patterns and even structuralist pattern (in *M/F*) in order to convey a sense of structural control, while at the same time subverting these structures by means of linguistic and textual play. Burgess's writing is constructed as continuous dialogue between traditional and experimental forms, between an idealized "vision" of the literary work as a structure of order and a desire to play with form and language, derived from a musical approach to language and from his study of Joyce's writing. The influence of Joyce on Burgess's work is widely acknowledged by Burgess scholars, critics and

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[35] Ibid., 72.
[36] Megan Becker-Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory* (London: Palgrave, 2005), 160.
[37] Scholars have identified musical structures and motifs in the narrative structures and the language of *A Clockwork Orange* and *Tremor of Intent*. For *A Clockwork Orange* see note 114. See also James I. Bly "Sonata Form in *Tremor of Intent*," in *Critical Essays on Anthony Burgess*, ed. Geoffrey Aggeler (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986), 158–72.

reviewers, as we shall see later on. This dissertation does not intend to provide an in-depth analysis of Joyce's influence on Burgess, but mark some of the intertextual relations between the two.

Furthermore, Kristeva's understanding of writing as an experience of conflict and transformation for the subject, articulated in the novel as a double structure which moves from narrative to a multiple, plural, "polyvalent" and poetic "text," offers a theoretical framework to explore the conflict between stability and disruption which all his (male) protagonists experience. In this context, the notions of the semiotic and symbolic modalities of signification offer a way to situate this conflict at the level of their language, in the process of meaning production. Critics agree that Burgess's characters are subjects in continuous conflict with their social environment and their own selves. Stinson describes Burgess's protagonists as individuals "who feel a sense of estrangement from themselves, their surroundings, their society, their culture, and even the world itself."[38] A sense of the "otherness" and strangeness of the subject's experience of the world pervades many of Burgess's novels. This is more evident in Burgess's early novels, particularly *The Malayan Trilogy* and the novels of the Sixties, but it can also be discerned in his later work.

The majority of Burgess's characters are either artists (writers, composers) or individuals who feel the urge to create but are also impelled to challenge and disrupt established notions of order and authority; they are unstably poised between the need for stability and order in their lives and their artistic work, and the desire to challenge that order. In narrative terms, as Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn argues, many of Burgess's novels

[38] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 24.

can be classed as traditional *bildungsromans* or novels of personal development, usually structured according to the traditional pattern of the quest.[39] These narrative structures convey the sense of order which the protagonists seek. At the same time, as she remarks, the characters' quests are usually disrupted by "picaresque" adventures and absurd events which reflect the characters' sense of being "at odds" with their environment.[40] Many times, the struggle is internal, between their minds and disruptive unconscious and bodily desires. As Thomas Stumpf remarks, "most of Burgess's characters" feel constrained by anxiety and fear, the fear of being out of control or assailed by "forces of disorder." For Stumpf, these are the unruly forces of language, "a difficult servant and an impossible master," and the body, especially, the corruptibility of the body and the threat of disintegration, "the breakdown of an organic whole into its constituent elements ... corruption."[41] Although using different terms, Stumpf's description outlines the same dynamic which Kristeva describes as the "process" or "trial" of the subject who is ambivalently poised between symbolic stability and the unstable rhythms of the semiotic.

Another useful notion provided by Kristeva's adaptation of Bakhtin's terms is that of transgression. Bakhtin recognizes the disruptive and transgressive forces at work within the double logic of the carnivalesque and of Menippean Satire, the genre which Bakhtin most associates with the carnivalesque in literature.[42] Many of Burgess's novels have discernible carnivalesque elements in them. Burgess's characters are usually placed in situations where they cannot control the events happening to them. Many of the settings,

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[39]Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn, *Anthony Burgess: A Study in Character* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1986), 38–39.
[40] Ibid., 41–2.
[41] Thomas Stumpf, "The Dependent Mind: A Survey of the Novels of Anthony Burgess," *Anthony Burgess Newsletter* 3 (December 2000), http://bu.univ-angers.fr/EXTRANET/AnthonyBURGESS/NL3/NL3dmind.htm (accessed 24 December 2010).
[42] I explore Bakhtin's notion of the Menippea in more depth in Chapter One.

like London's criminal underworld in *The Doctor is Sick* and Fonanta's Circus in *M/F* are clearly carnivalesque. Also, Burgess's tendency to satirize his characters and their social context is characteristic of the Menippea. Carnivalesque and Menippean discourses, according to Kristeva, transgress narrative and linguistic boundaries, and this is why they are considered subversive. The modern polyphonic novel incorporating carnivalesque and Menippean elements, Kristeva argues, transgresses its own internal narrative logic, which is linear and causal, to become dialogized, and therefore, ambivalent. In the polyphonic novel's ambivalent space traditional narrative and linguistic structures, based on "identity, causality, and definition" are transgressed, and other forms of logic are adopted, an "ambivalent" logic based on "analogy, relation, opposition, and dialogism."[43]

The notions of ambivalence and transgression that Kristeva uses to describe the operations of the polyphonic novel are also useful to explore her other important "literary-theoretical"[44] concepts which she developed at the time and in later works. Her notions of poetic language (or poetic *signifiance*), intertextuality, the subject-in-process and even abjection articulate the same ambivalent dynamic between order and disruption which Kristeva first identified in Bakhtin's polyphony. I would like to point out here that my analysis focuses on the specifically literary elements of Burgess's writing, but also considering the wider cultural context, in the way in which Kristeva's "translinguistic" always approach operates. For instance, notions of the feminine, the maternal and the (female) body are examined briefly in some of the chapters (*Inside Mr Enderby*, *A Vision of Battlements* and *Nothing like the Sun*), though not within specific gender-inflected or feminist perspectives, as this approach would require a separate study, given the range

[43] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 85–86.
[44] I am borrowing Megan Becker-Leckrone's term. *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, xi.

and complexity of the subject.[45] Nevertheless, it is worth noting that an analysis of the relationship between language and "the feminine" in Burgess's writing would be particularly interesting. Similarly, the notions of "border" and "laughter," which are part of Kristeva's theoretical-critical vocabulary (she speaks continually of "borders," "boundaries" and "thresholds") and which I employ in that sense in my analysis, have been re-visited in recent times in Post-colonial Theory, and specifically in Border Studies. I will return to these notions of "border" and "laughter" in the next chapter, briefly pointing out ways in which they could also be fruitfully employed to open up new dimensions in Burgess's writing.

With regard to the concepts of intertextuality, poetic language etc. mapped out above, these ideas are all examined in more depth in Chapter One. However, it will be useful to consider briefly how some of these notions can be productively used to explore how ambivalence operates in Burgess's texts. In Kristeva's psychoanalytic theory, the subject

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[45] Although Kristeva has always been interested in exploring notions of femininity, motherhood, the mother's role in language, and the nature of women's writing and art, as she remarks in one of her interviews ("Julia Kristeva in Person," in *Julia Kristeva Interviews*, ed. Ross M. Guberman [New York: Columbia University Press, 1996], 7) her relationship with feminism and the feminist movement has remained problematic. Toril Moi talks about Kristeva's "continuing unease with feminism," which she explores in her introduction to *The Kristeva Reader*, 9–12. Despite this, many feminists have turned to her work in order to expand and develop various debates in feminist theory and criticism. One such theorist, amongst many others, is Elizabeth Grosz, who considers Kristeva as one of the main three French feminists, alongside Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous. See her monograph *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*. See also Kelly Oliver, "Julia Kristeva's Feminist Revolutions," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 8, no.3 (Summer 1993): 94–114. Other feminist critics have rejected Kristeva's linguistic and psychoanalytic theories as too "essentialist." One of Kristeva's most vocals critics is Nancy Fraser. See in particular "The Uses and Abuses of French Discourse Theories for Feminist Politics," *boundary 2* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 82–101. See also Domna C. Stanton, "A Difference on Trial: A Critique of the Maternal Metaphor in Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva," in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 157–82. Another vocal critic of Kristeva's theory of the feminine and the body is Judith Butler. Her best-known critique of Kristeva is encapsulated in "The Body Politics of Julia Kristeva," in *Gender Trouble* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 107–17. Finally, to complete this (necessarily) short survey of feminist responses to Kristeva, it is worth mentioning *Revaluing French Feminism*, ed. Nancy Fraser and Sandra Lee Bartky (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992)

is a composite of "semiotic" unconscious and drive energies and the "symbolic" realm of fixed meaning and social communication. Kristeva adopts Freud's model of the drives as simultaneously destructive and pleasurable. The subject of poetic language, and of any artistic practice, is a subject caught between the symbolic social realm and the semiotic, a mode of signification (though not in the strict sense) which is always disruptive: s/he is a subject-in-process between maintaining order and transgressing that order. Poetic language, carnivalesque discourse and the text of the novel, conceived as an intertextuality or dialogue of different texts, all articulate the semiotic by consciously foregrounding the material (phonic and graphic), rhythmic and polysemous elements of language.

Burgess was a trained linguist and he often used his linguistic knowledge in order in order to sustain and often subvert the structures and the language of his novels. His liking for linguistic play is well known. One of Burgess's earliest reviewers, Carol M. Dix, describes Burgess as one of the few contemporary English novelists "who makes the fullest use of the raw material of writing."[46] John J. Stinson calls Burgess a "word-boy"— a playful way to refer to Burgess's obsession with words, an obsession that, as Stinson points out, Burgess shared with James Joyce, "another writer who extended language to its limits."[47] In his monograph *Will's Son and Jake's Peer: Anthony Burgess's Joycean Negotiations*, Á. I. Farkas argues that "the entire Burgess ouvre [is] haunted by the Joycean presence" from the "adaptation of the Master's methods, self-conscious textual allusions, thematic preoccupations and motivic borrowing" to the use of specific Joycean linguistic techniques, like "polysemic and portmanteau words," and "the

[46]Carol M. Dix, *Anthony Burgess* (London: Longman, 1971), 21.
[47] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 16.

more ambitious enterprise of turning the novel into a symphony."[48] Frank Kermode playfully describes the linguistic complexity of Burgess's writing as "a swarm of language waiting for a structure to settle on."[49]

Despite this "exuberant exploration of language and display of sheer linguistic power"[50] in most of his novels, some critics, like Bernard Bergonzi, see Burgess as a "conventional writer" with "a taste for Joycean manipulations of language."[51] Stinson notes that most of Burgess's novels remain circumscribed within the traditional structure of the novel, sometimes because of Burgess's fear of alienating his reading public.[52] Edward Pearce, in his "Portrait" of Burgess for *Prospect Magazine*, describes Burgess's novels as mainly "narratives, often rattling good yarns ... set with prose tropes and allusions."[53] It is clear from these different critics that Burgess's novels are equally moved by narrative and, we could say "poetic" impulses, if we take the word poetic in its widest sense, as the exploitation of the non-signifying elements of language. Burgess's novels exploit—sometimes to excess—the poetic elements of literary language which are suppressed in the traditional realist novel, while still operating within its established parameters. Burgess seems to understand this tendency to excess in his writing. In one of his articles he refers to his obsession with words as "a debased aesthetic pleasure, infra-literary."[54] Despite the critical tone, Burgess's comment suggests that he has an understanding of writing as an "experience" which affects the writer on physical as well

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[48] Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer,* 133.
[49] Frank Kermode, "Anthony Burgess," in *Modern Essays* (London: Collins, 1971), 289.
[50] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited,* 16.
[51] Bernard Bergonzi, "Anthony Burgess," in *Contemporary Novelists*, 112.
[52] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 17.
[53] Edward Pearce, "Anthony Burgess," *Prospect,* December 2000, 50.
[54] Burgess, quoted in Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 17.

as intellectual levels. This conflicting experience, as we shall see, is articulated in his texts.

In Kristeva's theory, the term poetic also has a psychoanalytic dimension. Certain types of poetry, like the Avant-Garde, can articulate unconscious and bodily drives connected with the semiotic through rhythmic, phonic and polysemous play. Poetic prose and the intertextual and self-conscious writing of polyphonic writers like Kafka, Proust, Sollers and Joyce,[55] can also articulate this drive-based aspect of language, which Kristeva borrows directly from Freud. Although Burgess does not acknowledge any specific influence from Freud's psychoanalysis it is clear that he knew Freud's work, and in particular Freud's theories of the libido and artistic creation. The above reference to the "infra-literary" pleasures of language implies a sexual element. At the same time, Burgess sometimes treats this theme parodically in his novels, as in *The End of the World News* and in both *A Vision of Battlements* and *Inside Mr Enderby*, where he employs Freud's theory of the libido and art to reveal the psychologically contradictory elements of his characters. Burgess creates characters (male characters, mainly) who are divided by their internal desires and a simultaneous drive to comply or to conform to external norms. Ennis, Enderby, Spindrift, struggle against a restrictive society in their works of art or with linguistic play, but they are also drawn to a vision of order. WS struggles between traditional approaches to poetry and drama and a language that transcends the limits

[55] Some questions have been raised over Kristeva's somewhat eclectic choice of writers in her discussion of the subversive polyphonic novel in "Word, Dialogue, Novel." Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, for example, argue that Kristeva singles out these specific Modernist writers as the heirs of the Menippean and dialogic tradition outlined by Bakhtin (including Rabelais and Dostoevsky) but does not examine the specific points of continuity between them. "Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality," in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, ed. Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein (Madison, WA: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 20. Megan Becker-Leckrone makes a similar point with regard to Kristeva's inclusion of other writers within this "subversive" tradition (Swift, Sade, Lautréamont and Bataille are also mentioned in Kristeva's essay). For a full discussion see *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 102–4.

imposed by tradition. Miles Faber embraces a philosophy of pure disorder but follows strict logical principles in his daily life. In Kristeva's dual theory of language and subjectivity, they can all be described as subjects-in-process between symbolic control and semiotic disruption.

We can see how the novels that Kristeva considers "ambivalent" are organized on this tension between symbolic control and semiotic disruption. Kristeva does not use these terms in "Word, Dialogue, Novel," as she is still working within a structuralist framework, even though she is also subverting it by introducing Bakhtin's fluid and non-scientific notion of dialogism. She develops the notions of the "semiotic" and the "symbolic" modes of language in *Revolution in Poetic Language*. However, as Megan Becker-Leckrone points out, these notions and others like poetic language or "borderline discourse" remain connected to the notion of ambivalence that she develops in her essay on Bakhtin.[56] In "Word, Dialogue, Novel," she defines ambivalence in the novel as "'the co-existence' of 'the double of lived experience' (realism and the epic) and 'lived experience (linguistic exploration and Menippean ambivalence).'"[57] Later on in her work, ambivalence is replaced by intertextuality, and the process between semiotic and symbolic. The earlier notion, however, remains a useful way to approach the novel, and novelistic discourse. I explore these issues in more detail in Chapter One.

Before the analysis of each of the texts, Chapter One provides an overview of Kristeva's theories, beginning with an elaboration on the notion of novelistic ambivalence outlined above, and maps out the connections between her early reading of

[56] Ibid., 102.
[57] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 89.

Bakhtin's theories, her theory of poetic language and her articulation of semiotic and psychoanalytic theories of literary language in her most influential work, *Revolution in Poetic Language*. My aim in this section is to trace the development of concepts of practice, intertextuality, *signifiance*, semiotic and symbolic, as well as abjection—the notions for which she is best known—to an early concept of the literary text as a place of transgression and transformation. This combined approach enables me to establish connections between all the terms and to explore how they can be employed to analyze the ambivalent co-existence of order and transgression in Burgess's writing.

The five novels analyzed in this dissertation articulate the two dimensions of ambivalence outlined above in different, though also related ways. My choice of the five novels is motivated by the similarity of their themes and the plurality and intertextuality of their writing, combined with an impulse to maintain narrative and linguistic order and coherence. In formal terms, they appear to be consistent with traditional novelistic notions of representation, character definition, plot development or psychological motivation. At the same time, these texts are characterized by a high degree of self-reflexivity and an active resistance to mimetic representation, expressed in a conscious foregrounding of the material—phonic and graphic—aspects of literary language, a playful exploitation of linguistic ambiguity, paradox and polysemy and a self-conscious manipulation of fictive structures by the incorporation of mythical and musical patterns. Thematically, all the novels explore the conflict of the artist (or linguistically creative individual, as in *The Doctor is Sick*, whose main character is a Philologist) between conformity to tradition and established notions of order, and the desire to play with form (musical form in *A Vision of Battlements)* and language. In all five novels this conflict is

articulated either at the level of the characters' discourse, their speech and thoughts (Spindrift, Enderby, WS and Miles Faber) and/or in the narrative discourse (*A Vision of Battlements* and *M/F* are prime examples), which calls for a psychoanalytic and theoretical approach to analyze the specific narrative and linguistic elements of the novels—an approach provided by Kristeva's concepts.

A Vision of Battlements, Burgess's first novel, was published in 1965, although its first draft dates to circa 1949.[58] Elements of this novel appear in the other novels, like the characterization of the artist as a "double" figure always in conflict, the use of carnivalesque elements and the logic of the dream to explore the character's psyche and the plurality and productivity of language, as well as a concern with maintaining a sense of purpose and meaning, despite the linguistic and formal play. My argument in the chapter is that in his first novel Burgess constructs a dialogic structure which combines musical and epic structures, as a means to convey the multiplicity and diversity of language and experience, while still maintaining a sense of coherence and order. This double structure, at the same time, is playfully transgressive. This ambivalence between order and transgression is also articulated at the level of the protagonist's subjectivity, as a "process" or "trial" between symbolic control and semiotic disruption.

The next three novels, *The Doctor is Sick* (1960), *Inside Mr Enderby* (1963) and *Nothing like the Sun* (1964), represent other dimensions of ambivalence. Chapter Two examines *The Doctor is Sick*. This chapter explores the trial of the subject in a text that operates on the threshold between narrative and poetic structure. To analyze the idea of

[58] Most of Burgess's main scholars (Geoffrey Aggeler, Samuel Coale and J. J. Stinson) as well as his biographer Andrew Biswell, agree that *A Vision of Battlements* has all the makings of a first novel. See note 241.

the "poetic" I use Kristeva's notion of poetic language as an articulation of the ambivalence process between symbolic and semiotic in signification. *Inside Mr Enderby*, analyzed in Chapter Three, is part of a tetralogy of novels spanning nearly twenty years.[59] Although Burgess claims that the novel has to be read in conjunction with the second novel, *Enderby Outside*,[60] the novel can be examined on its own; in fact, *Enderby Outside* revisits most of the themes and strategies of the earlier novel, as Frank Kermode remarks.[61] This chapter explores the trial of the poetic subject and the process of poetic composition as an ambivalent conflict with the maternal as a force that disrupts symbolic coherence. In my analysis of the novel's text, I use Kristeva's notion of "abjection" to explore how Burgess's writing articulates, and also contains, the force of the semiotic.

Chapter Four examines *Nothing like the Sun*, Burgess's fictional biography of Shakespeare. My analysis in this chapter focuses, also, on the trial of the poetic subject as it is articulated in the text, and on the novel's subversion of notions of authority through intertextual play. Chapter Five examines *M/F*, best known as Burgess's experimental "structuralist" novel. This chapter analyzes *M/F* as a carnivalesque text marked by a continuous transgression of the binary oppositions which sustain it. Finally, the Conclusion examines some of the issues and themes emerging in the analysis of ambivalence in the texts, and also poses the question of continuity or progression between the novels.

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[59] First part in a tetralogy of novels depicting the trials and tribulations of a traditional poet in the modern world which spans twenty years. The other novels are *Enderby Outside* (1968), *The Clockwork Testament or Enderby's End* (1974) and *Enderby's Dark Lady; or No End to Enderby* (1984).

[60] See Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 94. *Inside Mr Enderby* was published under a pseudonym, Joseph Kell.

[61] Frank Kermode, "Anthony Burgess," in *Modern Essays*, 289.

Having begun to establish the significance of ambivalence in Burgess's work, Section Two in this introduction addresses Burgess's own aesthetic and novelistic theories as a background in which to situate Burgess's ambivalent writing practice. Throughout his career as a novelist Burgess wrote extensively on literary and artistic issues. Many of these essays are collected in *Urgent Copy*: *Literary Studies* (1968), *Homage to QWERTYUIOP* (1986) and *One Man's Chorus* (1998). In addition, Burgess, as John Burgess Wilson, wrote a study of English literature entitled *English Literature: A Survey for Students* (1958) and a monograph on the novel, *The Novel Now*: *A Student's Guide to Contemporary Fiction* (1967). Furthermore, his three studies on James Joyce, *Here Comes Everybody: An Introduction to James Joyce for the Ordinary Reader* (1965), *A Shorter Finnegans Wake* (1966) and *Joysprick*: *An Introduction to the Language of James Joyc*e (1973), provide some insights into his theories on the novel and on novelistic language.

Burgess also wrote two full-length studies on Linguistics, *Language Made Plain* (1964) and *A Mouthful of Air* (1992), where he shows his understanding of linguistic issues, in particular in phonetics and phonology. In this section, I explore Burgess's ideas on the role of art in the contemporary world, the influence of William Empson's theory of poetic ambiguity in Burgess's understanding of literary language and Burgess's taxonomy of Class 1 and Class 2 novels, among other related issues. Burgess's theories show a degree of tension between conservative and subversive impulses which, to a certain extent, parallels the dynamic in his writing. An analysis of the relation between the two would certainly be interesting and productive, but would fall outside the scope of this dissertation. My survey of Burgess's poetics, however, does mention the similarities

without making a case for a causal relationship between them, which would require an independent study.

II. Anthony Burgess's Artistic and Literary Theories

Umberto Eco, in his study *The Middle Ages of James Joyce*, distinguishes between the terms aesthetics and poetics. Aesthetics answers the question "What is Art?' Poetics answers the more specific question of "how does one make a work of art according to a personal program and an idiosyncratic world-view?"[62] Joyce's "poetics," very briefly summarized, evolves in the "opposition between a classical conception of form and the need for a more pliable and 'open' structure of the work and the world."[63] I would like to posit that Burgess's "poetics" of the novel develops on similar principles,[64] although in Burgess's the main opposition is between maintaining order and coherence and a vision of the novel as a space of ambiguity, multiplicity and play—both in form and in language. "The fundamental purpose of any work of art," Burgess claims in *Here Comes Everybody,* "is to impose order on the chaos of life as it comes to us."[65] WS, in *Nothing like the Sun*, believes that his ultimate duty as a writer is to create "images of order and

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[62] Umberto Eco, *The Middle Ages of James Joyce*, trans. Ellen Esrock (UK: Hutchinson Radius, 1992), 1.
[63] Ibid. 2. Eco's analysis of Joyce's work is much more complex than this cursory summary suggests.
[64] There are many other parallels that can be drawn between Burgess's and Joyce's work, but detailed analysis of these lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, the introduction of Joyce at this point is motivated by the important place that his writing holds in Burgess's work, as some critics have pointed out. In *The Western Canon*, Harold Bloom refers to Burgess as Joyce's "devoted disciple." *The Western Canon* (London and Basingstoke: Papermac, 1995), 426. Robert Martin Adams sees Burgess as a "fringe-Joycean" with a particular "fond[ness] for using language harmonically or impressionistically and [who] likes to strip words of their representational values and use them for their tonal values" in novels which, otherwise, "are of a pretty common order." Robert Martin Adams, *After Joyce: Studies in Fiction After Ulysses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 166–69. For a full analysis of the relationship between Burgess and Joyce, which takes issue with Bloom's claim, see Á. I. Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer: Anthony Burgess's Joycean Negotiations*. See also Alan Roughley's article "*Nothing Like the Sun:* Anthony Burgess's Factification of Shakespeare's Life," *Anthony Burgess Newsletter* 3 (December 2000) http://bu.univ-angers.fr/EXTRANET/AnthonyBURGESS/NL3/NL3nlts.htm, and, more recently, Max Saunders's chapter in *Anthony Burgess and Modernity*, "Burgess, Joyce and Ford: modernity, sexuality and confession," 190–206. Joyce's texts are woven into Burgess's writing in a relationship which is dialogical, intertextual, and always profoundly ambivalent, an interaction which is analyzed in this dissertation as part of the novels' dynamic of transgression.
[65] Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody: An Introduction to James Joyce for the Ordinary Reader* (Middlesex: Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1982), 87.

beauty" out of "wrack, filth, sin, chaos."[66] This feeling is echoed by Enderby in *The Clockwork Testament*, when he claims that the poet's "task is the task of conservation. To hold the complex totality of linguistic meaning within a shape you can isolate from the dirty world."[67]

As Á. I. Farkas argues, Burgess's almost "religious" obsession with formal control—his "rage for order"[68]— derives in fact from an early allegiance to a "Joycean and Eliotian modernist aesthetic of craft and aesthetic control."[69] Burgess, Farkas adds, admired Joyce's image of the artist as "engineer," putting together "with clockwork precision the 'Wandering Rocks' episode of *Ulysses*."[70] Burgess's obsession with this vision of the novel as a piece of engineering is, according to Farkas, the main drive underlying the use of mythical structures to underpin the narratives in *A Vision of Battlements*, *The Worm and the Ring* and *M/F*, and also Burgess's "skilful handling of musical techniques adopted to the purposes of narrative composition."[71] Burgess himself admitted to holding a "strictly mechanical, or journeyman's approach to novel-writing"[72] which "prevented [him] from moving too far away from received notions of plot, character, dialogue, diachronic presentation of action and so on."[73] This practical

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[66] Burgess, *Nothing like the Sun. A Story of Shakespeare's Love Life* (London: Allison & Busby, 2001), 159.
[67] Burgess, *The Clockwork Testament,* in *The Complete Enderby* (London: Vintage, 2002), 430.
[68] Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 38–9. For a full elaboration see the chapter entitled 'Raging for order: the philology of composition' in the same monograph, 37–47.
[69] Ibid., 38.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., 134.
[72] Burgess, "Craft and Crucifixion—The Writing of Fiction," in *One Man's Chorus*: *The Uncollected Writings of Anthony Burgess,* ed. Ben Forkner (New York: Carroll & Graff, 1998), 261.
[73] Burgess, "Foreword," in *Beyond the Words. Eleven Writers in Search of a New Fiction*, ed. Giles Gordon (London: Hutchinson, 1975), 20. In another interview Burgess expresses this sense of frustration. Writing a novel "can be a matter of producing an artefact to a formula ... or else it can be producing a work of literature, an aesthetic artefact which at the same time will sell enough copies to enable you to live." Burgess, "Entretien: Interview with Pierre Joanon," *Fabula* 3 (1984):159.

approach to form, at the same time, is coupled with a certain degree of self-consciousness towards matters of fictional construction as David Lodge has recently remarked:

> Burgess's approach to writing was pragmatic, professional and ludic. He enjoyed playing metafictional tricks on his readers by manipulating his authorial personae, and he eagerly pillaged popular culture for ideas and forms.[74]

This self-conscious and ludic approach to novel writing is already operating in his first fictional work, *A Vision of Battlements*, Burgess's first attempt to construct a novel on a mythical framework. The mythical parallels are, however, not made explicit (it was a "tyro's" work, as Burgess explains in his introduction to the novel)[75] and most early readers of the novel were unaware of it.[76]

Andrew Biswell, for instance, argues that "a knowledge" of *A Vision of Battlements*' mythical structure is "not really necessary" to a full understanding of the novel's main themes.[77] This may well be the case from a thematic perspective, but, in formal terms, once the framework becomes explicit (Burgess himself points out its existence in the Introduction to the 1965 edition) an analysis of its operations reveals the existence of an even more complex network of musical and archetypal narrative patterns. These combined patterns are part of the novel's polyphonic structure within which the linear narrative of Ennis's artistic and personal journey is developed. *A Vision of Battlements* is made ambivalent by the playful co-existence of monological and dialogical discourses in continuous dialogue. In *M/F* Burgess also employs a mythical narrative, seen through the prism of structuralist theory, to organize its plot. At the same time, this structuralist plot

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[74] David Lodge, "Foreword," *Anthony Burgess and Modernity*, xviii.
[75] Burgess, introduction to *A Vision of Battlements* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), 8.
[76] Another example of a novel with mythical pattern that goes unnoticed is *The Worm and the Ring*.
[77] Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 102.

is transgressed by a carnivalesque parody of structuralist principles in such a way that the novel actually becomes a critique of the very theories underpinning it. This kind of textual "self-analysis," as Kristeva points out, is a mark of the dialogic novel's ambivalent structure "constructing and understanding itself through itself."[78]

Burgess appears to have had an understanding of the novel's ability to reflect on its own processes, although for Burgess this is part of a totalizing vision of the novel as an independent, self-sustaining structure of relations, not very different from the "clockwork" image examined before.[79] In an early article for *The New York Times Review of Books* "The Novelist's Sources are Myth, Language and the Here-and-Now" (1964), Burgess claims that the novel's purpose, like that of poetry or music, should be the creation of a "static, almost heraldic" image out of the "representation of action."[80] Some years later, in *This Man and Music* (1983), he moves from a pictorial metaphor to a musical: the novel is a structure that aspires to the "form" of music, which has "an apparently self-referring language, cannot preach or inform, and totally identifies form and content."[81] This analogy conveys Burgess's vision of the novel as a form that exists independently from its creator, or from its creator's ideological control, a vision that is

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[78] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 84.

[79] This "clockwork" image is very important in Burgess's work, not only because it forms part of the title of his best-known work, but also because he seems to have held an ambivalent view about this "clockwork" vision of the world and of the work of art. Whereas Burgess is clearly against all forms of totalitarianism or social control, whether from the State or from the media, he is also drawn to a vision of art and of God as self-sufficient, self-sustaining machines. These two ideas are not necessarily opposed to one another, but they reveal a certain eclecticism in Burgess's use of his metaphors. For a full elaboration of Burgess's "clockwork" metaphor in his early novels see Richard Matthews monograph, *The Clockwork Universe of Anthony Burgess* (San Bernardino, CA: The Borgo Press, 1978). Judith E. Dearlove's chapter "A Structuralist God and a Redemptive Art: Anthony Burgess since 1964," also deals with this theme. In Hedwig Bock and Albert Wertheim, eds., *Essays on the Contemporary British Novel* (München: Hueber, 1986), 7–25.

[80] Burgess, "A Novelist's Sources are Myth, Language and the Here-and-Now," *The New York Times*, 19 July, 1964, 25.

[81] Burgess, *This Man and Music* (New York: Avon Books, 1983), 158.

derived in the first instance from Stephen Dedalus's theory of the dramatic form as a purer aesthetic vehicle on account of the absence (or apparent absence) of a controlling author.[82] In a statement which resonates with Bakhtin's critique of novelistic monologism, Burgess appeals to the novel to:

> [P]roclaim its freedom from the chains of propaganda on the one hand and pornography on the other by learning how to move as music moves, by taking note of the possibilities that lie in pure structure, by exploiting words as musicians exploit sonorities.[83]

At the same time, however, there is a certain essentialism in Burgess's positing of a "pure" structure which suggests that, in theoretical terms, Burgess is still working within a monologic conception of the novel. In practice, on the other hand, Burgess's writing stages an active and playful attack on the concept of a pure structure by foregrounding the plurality and multiplicity of novelistic language, and more importantly, its irresolvable ambiguity and its polysemic richness.

At the start of this section I used Umberto Eco's notion of an "open" or dynamic structure to contextualize Burgess's own method. I would like to posit that Burgess's dynamic poetics is based on his belief in the fundamental ambiguity and polysemy of literary language. Literature, Burgess remarks in one of his reviews, "exploits language and language is notoriously an ambiguous medium."[84] Burgess's obsession with formal control is ambivalently married with a conception of literary language which is dynamic and plural. It could be argued, however, that the two are intrinsically connected: in order

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[82] This is Stephen Dedalus's theory of the writer as "like the God of creation," who stands "within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails." James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Triad Grafton, 1990), 194.
[83] Burgess, "A Babble of Voices," *Index on Censorship* 1, no. 2 (1980): 41.
[84] Burgess, "'Two's Company:' Review of *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* by Karl Miller," *Observer Review*, 30 June 1965, 22.

to exploit language and its potential for polysemy and ambiguity the writer needs to have a good understanding and control of the formal elements of language. In *Here Comes Everybody*, Burgess describes the language of the novel in terms that echo Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic word, and more significantly, Kristeva's notion of intertextuality:

> Words … have an endless range of possible meaning and … time itself … has a habit of opening up new significations in a book, shifting stresses, achieving new topicalities, suggesting fresh patterns of relationship with the rest of emergent literature.[85]

Burgess has a particular interest in the polysemy and ambiguity of literary language, possibly influenced by William Empson's seminal study *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. In his biography of Burgess, Andrew Biswell explains how Burgess employed Empson's analysis of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* to frame his own Bachelor's dissertation. The key argument, which Burgess followed in his own analysis, is based on Empson's seventh type of ambiguity, "in which the words mean both what they say and the opposite of their apparent meaning."[86] According to Biswell, Burgess was also indebted to Empson's "complicated, riddling verse" for his own poetic efforts.[87]

In an interview for the French journal *Trema*, Burgess emphasizes the importance of linguistic ambiguity for his thinking on literary language, using as an example the word "violence," which also one of the most important themes in his work:

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[85] Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody.* 178.
[86] Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 48. In the "seventh type" of poetic ambiguity, opposites are not reconciled or harmonized but "always suggest one another." William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Hogarth Press, 1984), 224. Like Kristeva in her description of the "0–2" logic of the poetic word, Empson also uses mathematical language to explain this paradoxical linguistic form which is "at once indecision and a structure." *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 192. Also, and quite significantly, Empson associates this type of ambiguity with the "Freudian use of opposites" in dream analysis. Ibid., 226.
[87] Ibid., 58.

> We should associate the language of literature with the free swinging of words. So that a word like 'violence' has the suggestion of 'viol' and 'violon.' This was clearly recognized in 1930 when Empson wrote 'Seven Types of Ambiguity,' in which he showed how great a part ambiguity plays in British poetry.[88]

Burgess's example emphasizes how words can have two opposing meanings simultaneously; in the case of "violence" the possibility of non-violence is contained within the word itself, in the musical meaning. Conversely, music can also convey violence, a theme that Burgess exploits in *A Clockwork Orange* and in *Napoleon Symphony*. Empson's concept of linguistic ambiguity has some similarities with Bakhtin's notion of the ambivalence of carnivalesque symbols, which "always include within themselves a perspective of negation (death) or vice versa."[89] Despite the similarities, Empson's notion remains static, implying a totalizing vision, whereas Kristeva's notion of ambivalence emphasizes movement and disruption; interestingly, Burgess's phrase "free swinging of words" suggests a dynamic movement which is not implicit in Empson's image, which emphasizes containment rather than freedom. Containment, or fixity, and their obverse open-endedness or motility, are both inscribed within the word "violence," in Burgess's reading. These two aspects are always part of the ambivalent relationship between language and violence in Burgess's texts, a dynamic which this thesis examines briefly, within the specific analytical context of each chapter.

Critics have long been aware of the co-existence of opposites in Burgess's novels, particularly in themes and characters. The terms that critics use to explore this aspect of Burgess's writing are diverse: ambiguity, essential opposition, Manichean Dualism or

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[88] Burgess, "Interview with Jacques Cabau, 'Anthony Burgess par lui-même. Un entretiene avec l'auteur,'" *Trema* 5 (1980): 102.
[89] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. and ed. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 125.

simply Manichaeism, terms used by John J. Stinson[90] and Geoffrey Aggeler.[91] These notions have in common that they express an essential dualistic vision. Dualism, however, is a form of binary thinking, and binarism, as Kristeva remarks, is the logic of either/or or non-contradiction, and thus monologic. It cannot be denied, however, that Burgess's artistic theories have strong affinities with this kind of dualistic thinking. In an essay entitled "Epilogue: Conflict and Confluence," Burgess claims that "Art ... wouldn't [sic] exist if we were sure that the universe was really a universe and not a duoverse, a unity and not a duality."[92] A dualistic interpretation of the universe is, for Burgess, a precondition for the very possibility of art. We exist in a "duoverse," a dual universe in continuous conflict, and art must strive to capture this dualism without attempting a synthesis which erases the fundamental duality of human existence.

Other critics, like Robert K. Morris, see ambiguity as the central theme in Burgess's novels. In *The Consolations of Ambiguity*, he argues that "Burgess's heroes choose to live ... accepting imperfections and divisions and consoling themselves with the ambiguities built into life and human nature."[93] Other critics, instead, speak of an unresolved dualism (similar to Burgess's "duoverse") in Burgess's vision of the world and of the novel. Thomas Leclair calls it Burgess's aesthetic of "essential opposition." For Leclair, Burgess's "most fundamental characteristic as a novelist" is "an obsessive interest in the

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[90] For a detailed analysis see John J. Stinson's essays, "The Manichee World of Anthony Burgess," in *Anthony Burgess: Modern Critical Views*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), 51–62, and "Better to be Hot or Cold: 1985 and the Dynamic of the Manichaean Universe," in *Modern Fiction Studies,* 27, no.3 (1981): 505–15.

[91] Aggeler, *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 194. Also see his essay "Pelagius and Augustine in the Novels of Anthony Burgess," *English Studies*, 55, no. 1 (1974): 43–55.

[92] Burgess, "Epilogue: Conflict and Confluence" in *Urgent Copy* (London: Penguin, 1973), 265.

[93] Robert K. Morris, *The Consolations of Ambiguity,* 3–4.

relation of opposites to one another."[94] This dualistic vision, Leclair argues, is not "static" and the emphasis in Burgess's novels is always on a continuous "interchange of opposites" without synthesis.[95] But with this interchange of opposites there is no change or transformation. My argument is that in Burgess's writing the conflict between opposing forces is disruptive of order, but also transformative, and this transformation takes place at the level of narrative structure and language, which become dynamic and plural.

Whichever label we use, it is clear that Burgess's vision is one of continued, dynamic conflict, or rather, dialogue. The title of his essay in *Urgent Copy*, "Conflict and Confluence," suggest that Burgess understands art in general, and the novel in particular, as a dynamic space where opposing elements—thematic, linguistic, of character—co-exist in continuous relations. In his interview for *Trema*, Burgess describes his novels as fictional vehicles where conflicting ideas "are dealt in play, through the medium of language, the medium of imagination."[96] Life is complex and contradictory and the novel is the vehicle for the expression of this ambiguity. This is John J. Stinson's view of Burgess's writing. For Stinson, Burgess conceives of human experience as "an endless drama of shifting flux full of ambiguity and paradox"[97] and most of his experimentations with fictional and linguistic forms are attempts to articulate this irresolvable ambiguity.

Stinson has been one of the few critics to identify an ambivalent co-existence of "elitist" and "popular" forms in Burgess's novels, which Stinson sees as totally congruent

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[94] Thomas Leclair, "Essential Opposition: the Novels of Anthony Burgess," *Critique* 12, no. 3 (1971): 77.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Burgess, "Interview with Jacques Cabau, "Anthony Burgess par lui-même. Un entretiene avec l'auteur," 109.
[97] John J. Stinson, "The Manichee World of Anthony Burgess," 62.

with Burgess's "prime thematic technique—the dark and forceful coming together of opposites."[98] Stinson does not use the term "ambivalence," and he does not explore Burgess's work from psychoanalytic or post-structuralist perspectives. He does, however, refer to the "intriguing" and "disconcerting" mixing of genres and modes in Burgess's fiction,[99] in particular to the mixing of the comic and the tragic grotesque in novels like *Inside Mr Enderby* or *Nothing Like the Sun*,[100] which he interprets as motivated by Burgess's desire to encompass the "at-onceness of the contemporary existence."[101] Although Stinson does not use Bakhtinian terms in his study, we can establish some correspondences between his ideas and Bakhtin's and Kristeva's analysis of carnivalesque and Menippean discourses, which are also infused with this sense of the connectedness and the ambivalence of human experience, as Kristeva remarks, "carnivalesque structure ... *exists only in or through relationship.*"[102]

Burgess's texts incorporate the ambivalence of the carnivalesque in their incongruous mixing of opposite themes, images, genres and languages. More recently, MY Chiu has explored this carnivalesque ambivalence operating in *The Malayan Trilogy* from a specific post-colonial perspective. In his paper "Ironies and Inversions: The Carnivalesque in Anthony Burgess's *Malayan Trilogy*," argues that the *Trilogy*'s discourse is imbued with a carnivalesque irreverent spirit which subverts any attempts at any finalizing reading of the novels as "another piece of colonialist fiction" (even though

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[98] Stinson, "Anthony Burgess: Novelist on the Margin," *Journal of Popular Culture* 7, no. 1 (1973): 149.
[99] Ibid., 147.
[100] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 89–95.
[101] Stinson, "Anthony Burgess: Novelist on the Margin," 148.
[102] Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue, Novel," 78.

there are many elements in the novels which critics have identified as colonialist)[103] through a consistent "mocking of the conventions of the Empire novel.[104] Instead, Chiu argues that postcolonial readings which try to bring to the surface Burgess's essentialism are "incomplete" because *The Malayan Trilogy* is fundamentally structured around an "irresolvable ambivalence" between notions of Imperial order and an irreverent mocking of those conventions.[105]

This "irresolvable ambivalence" that Chiu identifies in the ideological structure of *The Malayan Trilogy* is also at work in many of Burgess's theories on the form and

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[103] Chiu does not refer to these specific studies but he is probably referring to Zawiah Yahya's chapter in her seminal study *Resisting Colonialist Discourse* (1994), where she analyzes *The Malayan Trilogy* as a fundamentally "imperialist" text, despite its claims for a "realistic representation of Malaya." Zawiah Yahya, "Identifying Ideological Contradictions," in *Resisting Colonial Discourse*, 2nd ed. (Penerbit, Malaysia: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2003), 153–190. Patrick Parrinder similarly sees the *Trilogy* an "end-of-empire" novel in the tradition of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. Parrinder, *Nation and Novel: The English Novel from its Origins to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 337–40. More recent readings of Burgess's *Trilogy* offer a similar analysis. In the 2009 *Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*, James Acheson and Robert L. Caserio argue that "Burgess's *A Malayan Trilogy* [sic] draws a giddy, horrible picture of empire's decline, and equally of post-colonial independence." James Acheson and Robert L. Caserio, "History in Fiction," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*, ed. Robert L. Caserio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 180.

[104] All references and quotations are taken from MY Chiu's paper, delivered at the Third International Anthony Burgess Symposium in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 27–30 July 2009.

[105] Ibid. Although this dissertation does not engage specifically with *The Malayan Trilogy* or with colonial or post-colonial readings of Burgess's work, it is evident from the above short discussion of ambivalence and the carnivalesque that these notions can be fruitfully applied to a post-colonial study of some of Burgess's novels which deal with changing notions of "empire," "colonization" and current theories of multiculturalism and transnational identities as examined in contemporary works operating at the intersection of post-colonial, literary and globalization studies, in particular *Rerouting the Postcolonial. New Directions for a New Millenium*, ed. Janet Wilson, Cristina Sandru, Sarah Lawson Welsh (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2010). These novels include *The Right to an Answer* and *Devil of a State*, and also *A Vision of Battlements*, with its depiction of WWII Gibraltar as a crossroads of cultures. From this new, revised perspective in post-colonial studies, scholars have begun to afford Burgess's *Malayan Trilogy* its due recognition. Tamara S. Wagner, for example, argues that "Burgess's Malayan novels are an important stepping-stone in the development of postcolonial fiction in its detailing of the slow demise or changing nature of colonial (or "post-" and "neo-colonial") influence after official and unofficial ends of colonial days." Tamara S. Wagner, "Anthony Burgess's *Malayan Trilogy*," in *Post-Colonial Web,* http://www.postcolonialweb.org/uk/burgess/trilogy.html (accessed 3 May 2011). This view of Burgess's *Trilogy* as a work that "anticipates" later post-colonial and transnational theories was developed in Carla Sassi's Keynote paper "Cosmopolitan Laughter: Anthony Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy* as a colonial comedy of (potential) reconciliation," delivered at the Third International Anthony Burgess Symposium in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

function of the novel. One of these theories involves Burgess's interest in the musical structure of the novel, an interest derived from his own training as a musician but also from his reading of Joyce's writing, which he describes in the following terms: "If fiction is the art of fitting the sensations and emotions of life into a structure which shall have some of the shapeliness and autonomy of a piece of music, then Joyce is all our daddies."[106] Burgess also claims that his "desire to thicken the texture of fiction through underlying myth and/or ambiguous language derives from a musical background."[107] Prose is "monodic" but he "would prefer [it] to be harmonic or even contrapuntal."[108] This tendency to "dialogize" prose, to use Bakhtin's terms, leads Burgess to experiment with the poetic elements of language which communicative and referential language suppress. At the same time, he argues that "the novel form calls for a rigidity of control of the linguistic medium which forbids the freer art of the poet."[109]

Burgess is also aware of the many forces at work in the writing of a novel, for example, the dialectic between conscious and unconscious, as he explains in his Foreword to Giles Gordon's collection *Beyond the Words*:

> The experience of writing novels ... has taught me that the bulk of the work is done at the preconscious level, but I knew that already form the experience of writing music. But in art some kind of control is exerted by the conscious – the shaping mind as it is called.[110]

Without going into the specifics of Burgess's use of Freud's terms (conflating preconscious with unconscious), it is clear that Burgess has a sense of the role played by the unconscious in artistic creation, and therefore in writing. Although he satirizes this

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[106] Burgess, "Joyce as Centenarian," in *Homage to Qwertyuiop,* 436.
[107] Burgess, "Craft and Crucifixion—the Writing of Fiction," 260.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Burgess, "Contrary Tugs," *This Man and Music* (New York: Avon Books, 1983), 154–5.
[110] Burgess, "Foreword," *Beyond the Words. Eleven Writers in Search of a New Fiction*, 18.

theme frequently in his novels—particularly in the *Enderby* novels, but also in *A Vision of Battlements* and *The Malayan Trilogy*—many times Burgess's writing articulates the disruptive energies of the semiotic. *Inside Mr Enderby*, *The Doctor is Sick* and *Nothing like the Sun* in particular articulate the subject's *jouissance*[111] in infinite linguistic play, the joy of language for its own sake. In *Language Made Plain*, Burgess refers to the role of literature in simply expressing "the pleasure of language for its own sake,"[112] which takes the speaker back to "a remote era that had speech but no language."[113] Literature, according to Burgess, has maintained a connection with this non-communicative, pleasurable aspect of language in "Surrealism, the nonsense-poem ... the pleasures of double talk, the delight in strange or invented words."[114] For Á. I. Farkas, this aspect of Burgess's poetics contrasts sharply with the image of the "artist-engineer" which Burgess cultivates in many of his literary criticism.[115] Farkas also remarks on Burgess's very vocal opposition to "spontaneity" in art in his essay "A Deadly Sin—Creativity for all,"[116] where he contends that 'the debasement of art' began with the surrealists, who equated creation with free association."[117] Farkas, a little ironically, points out how Burgess ignores the many surrealistic elements in Joyce's writing, to focus his attention on what he believes is "the sacred duty of art: to communicate ... a sense of order."[118]

Farkas notes how Burgess calls attention to a "dichotomy" in his writing. In "The Muse and Me," Burgess explains how, as a writer, he is divided between the need to

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[111] The term *Jouissance* is usually italicized in Kristeva's and Barthes's writing. I am following this practice in this dissertation.
[112] Burgess, *Language Made Plain* (London: Flamingo, 1975), 25.
[113] Ibid., 24.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 38.
[116] This essay is included in his collection *Homage to Qwertyuiop*, 100–102.
[117] Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 40.
[118] Ibid.

"push on with the narrative" and the desire to play with language.[119] These two impulses underpin his taxonomy of the Class 1 and Class 2 novel, which, on a practical level enables Burgess to divide the twentieth-century novel between purely realistic novels and those texts which also (or mainly) draw attention to their language and to their structuring processes, like Joyce's novels. Class 2 fiction exploits the "opacity" of language—its non-referential elements, its ambiguity and polysemy—and its "structure has a [symbolic] significance apart from mere plot."[120] Class 1 fiction "yearns towards … [the] direct presentation of character and actions without the need for the intermediacy of words."[121] Class 1 is close to film (many literary critics would contest this, though); Class 2 is close to music—with a major difference. Music, as Kristeva remarks, is "a differential system without semantics, a formalism that does not signify."[122]

Burgess, a trained musician, is aware that music and literature can work together in areas where musical structure can provide ways of opening up literary structure to the ambiguity and polysemy of language. In an early article published in *The Listener*, "The Writer and Music," Burgess reflects on the possibilities of applying musical structure to prose:

> I think that the novelist has much to learn from musical form: novels in sonata-form, rondo-form, fugue-form are perfectly feasible. There is much to be learnt from mood-contrasts, tempo-contrasts. Music can also teach him how to modulate, how to recapitulate; the time for the formal presentation of his themes, the time for the free fantasy.[123]

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[119] Ibid., 50.
[120] Ibid., 156.
[121] Burgess, *This Man and Music*, p. 156.
[122] Kristeva, *Language: The Unknown* , trans. Anne M. Menke (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 310.
[123] Burgess, "The Writer and Music," *The Listener*, 3 May 1962, 761.

This correspondence between musical and novelistic form in Burgess's own texts has recently received some scholarly attention. Christine Gengaro and Sandrine Sorlin, in particular, focus on the ways in which musical and literary structure and language achieve a perfect correspondence in *A Clockwork Orange*.[124] But Burgess is also aware that a purely musical approach to language is problematic. Kristeva also addresses this problem. There is point at which the musical approach to literary language opens up "the problematics of the sign" identified by modern Linguistics— the gap between sign and referent brought about by the arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified. Music, Kristeva remarks, "takes us to the limit of the system of the sign" because it opens up the possibility of a system of differences (like language) that "is not a system that *means* (something)."[125] Burgess understands this implicitly. The Class 2 novelist can take a musical approach to language and concentrate solely on form but, as Burgess points out, "if he concentrates too much on form he ceases to be a novelist."[126] Again, Burgess is concerned with what we could call an "excess" of form—either on structural or linguistic levels—as a threat to the novel's meaning.[127]

It is apparent that, despite his obvious interest in exploring the ambiguity and polysemy of language, Burgess remains tied to a concept of the literary text as a structure

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[124] See in particular Christine Lee Gengaro's chapter in "From Mann to Modernity: Anthony Burgess and the Intersection of Music and Literature," in *Anthony Burgess and Modernity,* 95–108 and her chapter "Music as Subconscious in the Novels of Anthony Burgess," in *Anthony Burgess: Music in Literature and Literature in Music*, ed. Marc Jeannin (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009) 175–86. Sandrine Sorlin's chapter "*A Clockwork Orange*: A Linguistic Symphony," is included in the same collection, 45–56.

[125] Kristeva, *Language: The Unknown*, 309.

[126] Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 158.

[127] Burgess addresses this problem in the Epilogue to *Napoleon Symphony*. Jonathan Raban certainly agreed with Burgess on the impossibility of Burgess's task. See "What Shall We Do About Anthony Burgess?" *Encounter*, 43, no. 5 (1975), 83–88. See also Alan Shockley's chapter on Burgess's *Napoleon Symphony* in *Music in the Words: Musical Form and Counterpoint in the Twentieth-Century Novel* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 75–117.

that brings control and order to all this ambiguity. Burgess's envisions the novel as a space of "conflict and confluence" where order and play can co-exist in continuous dialogue, but always within a tightly-controlled structure. At the same time, an conflictingly, his writing practice, on the other hand, reveals not a structure of order but an open, plural, and subversive intertextuality co-existing with more traditional novelistic methods in continuous disruptive, yet also productive, play. This co-existence of order and disorder-play is reminiscent of what Umberto Eco, with reference to Joyce's writing, calls the "poetics of chaosmos." According to Eco, *Ulysses's* method (as T. S. Eliot claimed) is not simply to "give a shape" to the confusion and destruction of the modern world but "to find the form of disorder."[128] Joyce's writing "dissolves the ordered Cosmos [of Medieval thought] into the polyvalent form of the Chaosmos"[129] in a way that articulates the chaotic nature of the modern experience and also creates a new novelistic form which "violates" traditional conventions and "demonstrates all the possibilities of language," while maintaining a sense of form.[130]

Without going into the complex issue of Joyce's relationship with Medieval Scholasticism, we can see that Eco's notion of a "polyvalent Chaosmos" offers a suggestive metaphor for the operations of Joyce's writing, as Eco analyzes it.[131] The term "chaosmos" calls to mind Burgess's vision of the work of art as an articulation of a dynamic "duoverse"—a simultaneously (dis)ordered structure, a paradox, an "anomalous" ("incongruous" [OED]) system moving ambivalently between fixed order

[128] Umberto Eco, *The Middle Ages of James Joyce. The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, trans. Ellen Esrock (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1992), 44.
[129] Ibid., 11.
[130] Ibid., 56–61. This description applies to *Ulysses* in particular. *Finnegans Wake* requires a different approach, as Eco readily admits.
[131] No summary of Eco's monograph could do justice to his analysis of Joyce's complexity. Such an analysis is clearly outside the scope of this thesis.

and transgressive multiplicity. I examine this image of an "anomalous" or "incongruous" ambivalent order in the Chapter on *M/F*, precisely in the context of the creation of a "new world" or "new order" which transcends oppositions and divisions. At this point I would like to add that this dynamic ambivalence is also at work in the novels' characters in Burgess's novels, who are unstably poised between conformity to society, tradition and Art (with a capital "A"), and the desire to express, to rebel, to experience art and language, and ultimately to transcend all structures of order.

The following chapter examines Julia Kristeva's notion of ambivalence as transgressive and also productive dynamic operating in the narrative structure and the text of the modern novel. The chapter also offers a reading of other Kristevan concepts and examines how they can be considered as different forms or dimensions of ambivalence, as well as marking the ways in which they can be productively used to explore the dynamic between order and disruption which structures, and yet destabilizes, Burgess's texts.

CHAPTER ONE

Julia Kristeva's Notion of Novelistic Ambivalence

Kristeva is best known for her semiotic and psychoanalytic theories, which have been widely used by critics working in linguistics and semiotics, psychoanalytic literary criticism and cultural studies, including feminist theory. Although her semiotic work was from the beginning bound up with novelistic discourse (one of her first monographs is *Le Texte du Roman*, [132] a full-length study of the emergence of the French Roman and its impact on the development of the novel), Kristeva's work is not generally associated with the novel as a specific genre, mainly because Kristeva's field of study, as Leon Roudiez argues, is literary language in general, or "poetic language," as she refers to it in her early analyses.[133] Nevertheless, her work of the 1960s shows a particular interest in the novel, specifically in what she calls the "modern polyphonic novel," using the generic term coined by Mikhail Bakhtin to analyze the novels of Dostoevsky. At that time, Kristeva, like Bakhtin, had a view of the novelistic discourse as a specific kind of literary language with a particular dynamic, a dialogic transgressive dynamic which operates not only on the level of the word but also on the level of theme, narrative structure (plot, story, and narration), character and ideology. In a 1985 interview with Margaret Waller, Kristeva

[132] In *Le Texte du Roman*, Kristeva analyzes Antoine de la Sale's *Histoire et plaisante chronique du petit Jehan de Saintré et de la jeune dame del Belles Cousines* (1456) as an example of the shift from the Medieval notion of the symbol to the Renaissance notion of the word as sign. This work has not been translated into English, but one of its sections can be found in Toril Moi's *The Kristeva Reader*, under the title "From Symbol to Sign," 62–73.

[133] Leon Roudiez, introduction to *Desire in Language*, 1–5.

refers to the novel in broader terms as "an intersection of genre and a generalized form of intertextuality,"[134] rather than a specific literary form (like the poem).

In this exposition of Kristeva's notion of ambivalence, I bring together Kristeva's earlier, more "formal" concept of the novel and her later notions of the text and intertextuality (and semiotic/symbolic), as they provide a useful critical vocabulary to explore the dynamic between order and disruption in Burgess's novels. Kristeva's analysis of the novel is not bound by specific literary periods, unlike her work on poetic language (which is specifically modernist). Kristeva does not distinguish between modernist and post-modernist novels, at least not in the accepted sense (she uses the term "modern novel") because her primary interest is in the polyphonic and transgressive novelistic tradition outlined by Bakhtin in his work on Dostoevsky, derived from the carnival and Menippean Satire, "one of the main carriers and channels for the carnival sense of the world in literature."[135] This "tradition of otherness," as Megan Becker-Leckrone refers to it, is not bound by genre, historical period or culture, and is characterized mainly by "its generic hybridity, its tonal ambivalence and its resistance to normative logic and values."[136] The novels that Kristeva includes in this "tradition of

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[134] Kristeva, "Intertextuality and Literary Interpretation," in Julia *Kristeva Interviews*, 192.
[135] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 113. According to Bakhtin , Menippean Satire is derived from Menippus of Gadara, a philosopher of the third century BC. His writings are lost but we know of their existence through the Roman scholar Varro (first century BC), and through the different variations of the genre in the writings of Roman writers Petronius (*Satyricon*), Lucian and Apuleius (*The Golden Ass*). In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* Bakhtin provides quite an extensive list of the characteristics of the genre in its relation to the carnivalesque (see 114–19). In "Word, Dialogue, Novel," Kristeva lists most of these features, and is particularly interested in the way in which the Menippea appears to transcend generic boundaries , surviving "through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Reformation through to the present (the novels of Joyce, Kafka and Bataille." Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 82.
[136] Megan Becker-Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 100.

otherness" are eclectic, which, as Becker-Leckrone remarks, has led to some criticism from literary scholars, as already noted.[137]

In "Word, Dialogue, Novel," the essay where she introduces the notion of novelistic ambivalence, Kristeva refers to "the polyphonic novels of Rabelais, Swift, Sade, Lautreamont, Kafka, Bataille [and] Joyce," as the representative figures of a "subversive" tradition of writing which attempts to "break out of the framework of causally determined substances and head toward another modality of thought that proceeds through dialogue."[138] She describes this dynamic as "ambivalence," which suggests both the dialogic co-existence of opposing values and also the movement or oscillation between the two:

> The novel's ambivalent space thus can be seen regulated by two formative principles: monological … and dialogical …, where symbolic relationships and analogy take precedence over substance-causality connections. The notion of *ambivalence* pertains to the permutation of the two spaces observed in novelistic structure: dialogical space and monological space.[139]

As Becker-Leckrone points out, Kristeva's specific focus is on the "modern" novel, which coincides roughly with the modernist novel (Kafka, Joyce and Bataille) but also incorporates post-modernist writers like Sollers (Joyce straddles the two). According to Becker-Leckrone, what interests Kristeva is the way in which some of these writers' novels articulate "the problematic of meaning" that she sees operating in poetic language and in the literary text:

> Their works generate meaning in a way that radically disrupts the normative representational relationship of a signifier to a signified, a 'shattering of

[137] See my discussion in note 46 above.
[138] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 86.
[139] Ibid., 72.

> discourse' that coincides with changes in the status of the subject- his relation to body, to others and to objects. [140]

The dynamic of transgression and transformation can be found operating in other Kristevan concepts like practice, text, intertextuality, poetic *signifiance*, semiotic and symbolic, and even abjection, as I mentioned earlier. My examination of Kristeva's theory of the novel engages with these concepts in order to convey a sense of their inter-connectedness in Kristeva's thought. My exposition of Kristeva's complex psychoanalytic and semiotic theories is necessarily simplified, given the limitations of this study, and is restricted to Kristeva's works from the 1960s and 1970s, although the notion of abjection appears in *Powers of Horror*: *An Essay on Abjection*, published in 1980. This is also the period when most of her theories on language, literature (the novel in particular) and the subject are elaborated.[141]

Kristeva's understanding of literary language as dynamic, fluid and contradictory emerges from the dialogical interaction between two distinct philosophical and theoretical approaches: structuralism (particularly the work of the Russian Formalists), with its scientific approach to the literary text, and Bakhtinian dialogism, an approach "centered on the word and its unlimited ability to generate dialogue"[142] These two approaches meet in Kristeva's seminal essay 'Word, Dialogue, Novel," one of two essays in which she explores Bakhtin's (at that time little-known) contribution to the analysis of

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[140] Megan Becker-Leckrone *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 107.
[141] I work with the published English translations of her works and, at times, with the Spanish translation of *Sémeiotikè, Semiotica. Volumenes I y II*, trans. Josè Martìn Arancibia (Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos, 1969) as there is no complete English translation of this work.
[142] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 88.

literary language being carried out in Formalist circles.[143] Toril Moi argues that this essay is in itself:

> a divided text, uneasily poised on an unstable borderline between traditional 'high' structuralism, with its yearning for 'scientific objectivity' … and a remarkably early form of post-structuralism or the desire to show how the pristine structuralist categories always break down under the *other* side of language.[144]

In her analysis of Bakhtin's notions of the dialogic word and the polyphonic novel, as we saw briefly in the introduction, Kristeva identifies an ambivalent dynamic of transgression which, in turn, provides her with a productive way to analyze the operations of language and other signifying structures as productive processes rather than static systems.[145]

Bakhtin, Kristeva claims, "was the first [critic] to replace the static hewing out of texts with a model where literary structure does not simply *exist* but is generated in relation to *another* structure."[146] Kristeva recasts Bakhtin's double-voiced word in semiotic terms, as a "semic complex" that works in three dimensions: in relation to the writing subject, addressee (reader) and other texts:

> The word's status is thus defined *horizontally* (the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee) as well as *vertically* (the word in the text is oriented towards an anterior or synchronic literary corpus.[147]

The word in the space of the literary text is "an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read." In Bakhtin's work the horizontal and vertical

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[143] The other essay is "The Ruin of a Poetics," in *Russian Formalism*, ed. Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), 102–19.
[144] Toril Moi, introduction to "Word, Dialogue, Novel," The *Kristeva Reader*, 34.
[145] Kristeva, "The System and the Speaking Subject," in *The Kristeva Reader,* 29. Structuralist linguistics "took as its object of study *texts* considered as *processes*" which were studied through a system of "self-consistent and exhaustive descriptions through which it could find the *system* of *la langue*. … linguistics' only aim was to describe these relations." Kristeva, *Language: The Unknown*, 233.
[146] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 64.
[147] Ibid.

axes are combined in a relationship of "dialogue and ambivalence" to create the sense of the text as a combinatory space or a space of relations, not in the traditional structuralist model, which considers the text as a self-contained system of oppositions, but as a "mosaic of quotations [and] the absorption and transformation of another."[148] The text is, thus, not a finished product but "a productivity"[149] and an "intertextuality," as it is better known amongst critics. I will return to this notion at the end of this chapter, as it is one of Kristeva's most important and widely-analyzed concepts. It has also undergone some changes over the course of Kristeva's intellectual development. It is worth noting at this point that the term "intertextuality," as Marko Juvan points out, enabled Kristeva to move beyond "Bakhtin's understanding of the person-subject of writing" to a notion of "the ambivalence of writing."[150] Thus, intertextuality contributed to Kristeva's thinking on poetic language and her re-conceptualization of the novel, or novelistic discourse as an "ambivalent space," as we shall see later.

As pointed out earlier, in "Word, Dialogue, Novel," Kristeva's focus is on the modern polyphonic novel analyzed by Bakhtin in *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* as an example of dialogical literature, as opposed to the monological tradition of Russian realism exemplified by Tolstoy. Kristeva also adopts the monologic/dialogic distinction drawn by Bakhtin, not only to show how the two co-exist dialogically in the polyphonic novel but, more precisely, but also to show how the polyphonic novel incorporates monologic forms within its dialogical structure. In order to explain this dynamic, Kristeva turns to the logic of "poetic language" as studied by the Russian Formalists. In

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[148] Ibid.
[149] Kristeva, "The Bounded Text," in *Desire in Language*, 36.
[150] Marko Juvan, *History and Poetics of Intertextuality*, trans. Timothy Pogačar (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University, 2008), 101.

her analysis of poetic language Kristeva draws from Roman Jakobson's notion of "poeticalness," an earlier and more suggestive term than that of "poetic function," by which he is better known. The term "poetic function" refers to language's ability to suggest or call attention to its formal or material elements. [151]

According to Kristeva, Jakobson's notion moves away from other formalist concepts of the poetic such as deviation from the norm or defamiliarization (coined by Victor Shklovsky) and, instead, focuses on the textual relations which poetic language makes explicit, and which are normally suppressed in ordinary communication.[152] For Kristeva, poetic language is not a deviation of ordinary communication or dialogically opposed to it. As Leon Roudiez notes, Kristeva's notion of poetic language "stands for the infinite possibilities of language." It is "an exploration and a discovery of the possibilities of language; ... an activity that liberates the subject from a number of linguistic, psychic and social networks; ... a dynamism that breaks up the inertia of language habits."[153] Poetic language "expands" communicative or representational language because its structure is double: it signifies and at the same time exceeds signification.

In order to explain the distinction between referential and poetic language in her own formulation, Kristeva uses Bakhtin's notions of monologic and dialogic discourse, which she describes as conforming to two distinct logics. Referential, communicative language operates according to a "0–1" or true/false logic—the law of syntax, grammar and

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[151] "Poeticalness" is a concept introduced by Formalist critic Roman Jakobson in his essay 'Qu'est-ce que la poèsie?' (1933), and which he later renamed the "poetic function" of language. In Jakobson's theory, the poetic function or poeticalness is an aspect of all uses of language and not simply of poetry. "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in *The Stylistics Reader: From Jakobson to the Present*, ed. Jean Jacques Weber (London and New York: Arnold, 1996), 10–35.
[152] Kristeva, *Language: The Unknown*, 290.
[153] Leon S. Roudiez, introduction to *Desire in Language*, 2–3.

semantics.[154] "God, Law, Definition" and "narrative and epic discourses" all conform to 0–1 logic, which Bakhtin calls "monologic" or "monological": "Realist description, definition of 'personality,' 'character' creation, and 'subject' development—all are descriptive narrative elements belonging to the 0–1 interval and are thus *monological*."[155] This logic cannot account for the operations of poetic language, "by definition an infinity of pairings and combinations."[156] Poetic language is dialogic, that is, its logic is always ambivalent, both "one and other", "true and false" simultaneously. Kristeva finds the same logic in the operations of the dream-work, as examined by Freud, "In the logic of dreams, two signifying units are found condensed into a single one which can have a signified that is independent [of the two]."[157] The only logical relation in the dream is constructed by "similarity, consonance or approximation."[158] The unconscious, like poetic language or the carnivalesque, "does not know contradiction."[159]As Freud noted, in dreams "the category of *antithesis* and *contradiction* … is simply ignored; the word 'No' does not seem to exist for a dream."[160]

The co-existence of opposites within one image is one of the specific features of the dream-work and its mechanisms of representation of repressed drives and unconscious feelings and desires.[161] Poetic logic transgresses the "1" of "linguistic, psychic and social

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[154] Kristeva, "Towards a Semiology of Paragrams," *The Tel Quel Reader*, ed. Patrick Ffrench and Roland-François Lack (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 31.
[155] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 70.
[156] Ibid., 69.
[157] Kristeva, *Language: The Unknown*, 269.
[158] Ibid., 271.
[159] Ibid.
[160]Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. A. A. Brill (London: Wordsworth Classics, 1997), 202.
[161] Sigmund Freud, "The Antithetical Sense of Primal Words," in *On Creativity and the Unconscious. Papers on the Psychology of Art, Literature, Love, Religion*, ed. Benjamin Nelson (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 55.

prohibition"[162] and become the site of meaning-production. As John Lechte remarks, "poetic language is not a meaning to be thought but presents itself as the production of meaning."[163] "In the operation of the mode of conjunction of poetic language," Kristeva adds, "we can observe the dynamic process whereby signs take on or change their significations."[164] Poetic language is ambivalent because in it the "binary 0–1 space" of "Aristotelian, scientific or theological logic" is transgressed and another form of logic is adopted. This "transgression" marks the *ambivalence* of the poetic word as "a co-existence of the monological (scientific, historical, descriptive [discourse]) and the discourse that destroys this monologism."[165]

This notion of ambivalence as a transgressive and productive textual dynamic operating in the novel resonates with other notions which Kristeva develops at the same time, like the carnivalesque, Bakhtin's influential concept, and later on, through her "semanalysis"[166] and her involvement with psychoanalysis. As Becker-Leckrone argues, Kristeva's reading of Bakhtin's carnivalesque, while still considering its social and cultural significance, focuses on its significance for the novel and novelistic language.[167] Poetic language and carnivalesque discourse share the same ambivalent structure or relational dynamic "where prohibitions (representation, monologism) and their transgression (dream, body, dialogism) co-exist"[168] in a continuous dynamic. Carnivalesque discourse "breaks through the laws of language censored by grammar and

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[162] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 69–71.
[163] John Lechte, *Julia Kristeva* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 111.
[164] Kristeva, "Towards a Semiology of Paragrams," 28.
[165] Ibid., 31.
[166] Semanalysis is a double form of theoretical discourse between semiotics and literary analysis. For a full elaboration see Kristeva's essay "The System and the Speaking Subject," 25–33.
[167] Becker-Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 153.
[168] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 79.

semantics" and is also "a social and political protest."[169] It can transgress or "break through" official discourse because it "adheres" to a logic of "analogy, relation and non-exclusive opposition,"[170] which is also the logic of poetic language and the dream. The carnival, according to Bakhtin, brings together disparate elements and effects a reversal of order of hierarchical categories and bringing opposites together: "the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid."[171] The ambivalent laughter of the carnivalesque, Kristeva adds, is "an indication of a permanent dualism in the human being—that is, the power of being oneself and someone else at one and the same time."[172] By "adopting a dream logic," therefore, the carnivalesque "transgresses rules of linguistic code and social morality."[173]

As Pam Morris points out, in Kristeva's reading the carnivalesque becomes a "traversable boundary" or "threshold site between order and its subversion, inside and outside, body and culture."[174] In Burgess's *A Vision of Battlements,* the Spanish town of La Linea, on the border between British Gibraltar and Spain becomes a carnivalesque "threshold site" where social laws and laws of morality are mocked and transgressed; it is also a dream-scene where linguistic laws are subverted by the double logic of the dream. The logic of non-exclusive opposition characteristic of the carnivalesque is also at work in *M/F* (the island of Castita and Fonanta's Circus are carnivalesque worlds). At the same time, although it "parodies and relativizes itself, repudiating its role in representation" ultimately carnivalesque discourse "remains incapable of detaching itself

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[169] Ibid., 65.
[170] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 79.
[171] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 123.
[172] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 223.
[173] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 70.
[174] Pam Morris, "Re-routing Kristeva: From Pessimism to Parody," *Textual Practice* 6, no.1 (1992): 36

from representation."[175] The carnivalesque structure constructs itself in relation to that which it subverts. Rather than destroy "representation" carnivalesque discourse draws attention to what exceeds it. The notion of the carnivalesque as an ambivalent structure informs my reading of Burgess's "structuralist" novel *M/F*. *M/F* self-consciously constructs its text as a system of binary oppositions based on the fundamental distinction nature/culture and the prohibition of incest which guarantees social order, and a conscious carnivalesque mocking of this structure.

Borders and thresholds have been recurrent metaphors of intersection and confluence in Kristeva's writings, as critics have remarked. Marilyn Edelstein notes how much of Kristeva's work on language, the maternal, the subject and limit-texts, as well as the carnivalesque and the polyphonic novel, has explored "the processes through which … boundaries are both broached and maintained dialogically and relationally."[176] For S. K. Keltner, Kristeva's "central object of concern" is the signifying process, always understood as "a *frontier*, a *border*, a *limit,* a *crossroads*, or a *threshold*" —a "dynamic site of meaning and subjectivity that may be articulated within, but is ultimately resistant to, the fixed oppositions of binary thinking.[177] In my analysis of Burgess's text, I employ the notions or "border," "boundary" or "threshold" in this way, while also marking their elements of carnivalesque subversion. I would like to point out, at the same time, how the notion of the "border" has received special attention in post-colonial and cultural studies, particularly in the field of "Border Theory" or "Border Studies." Emerging from Chicano Literature in the United States, and more specifically from Gloria Anzaldua notion of "La

[175] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 79.
[176] Marilyn Edelstein, "Metaphor, Meta-Narrative, and Mater-Narrative in Kristeva's 'Stabat Mater,'" in *Body and Text in Julia Kristeva*, ed. David Crownfield (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 27.
[177] S. K. Keltner, *Kristeva. Thresholds* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 2–3.

Frontera" or the "borderland" territories between Mexico and the States, "Border Theory" has gained critical currency in recent times.[178] The fields of Chicano Literature and Border Studies are broad and well beyond the limited scope of my thesis. However, the notion of border deployed by critics working in these areas can provide a useful critical tool to examine Burgess's writing, in a way that complements and expands on Kristeva's notions.

For example, Anzaldua's metaphor of "la frontera" or "borderland," as Candida N. Hepworth argues, operates as "a site of resistance against the binary order of self and other and promotes instead a region of encounter in between, an area of … consort between cultures."[179] D. Emily Hicks expands this concept, which is literally "grounded" on the existence of the border as a geographical site, by re-conceptualizing the "border" from its meaning as a line of separation into a space where cultures, subjectivities, languages interact in a dialogical way, but are also subjected to fragmentation and decentring.[180] This notion of the border as a space is very similar to the notion of "liminal space" employed in cultural theory, an "in-between" or "transitional" site, a "signifying space across which polydiscursive communication and exchange can take place."[181] Derived from the Latin "limen" meaning "threshold" [Lewis], like the border, the liminal space operates as a transitional site and also as a metaphor for the continuous movement

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[178] See in particular Scott Michaelson and David E. Johnson's collection *Border Theory: The Limits of Cultural Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) and D. Emily Hicks's *Border Writing: The Multidimensional Text* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press), 1991. There is also a *Journal of Borderland Studies*, an on-line interdisciplinary forum for the Humanities and the Social Sciences, http://www.absborderlands.org/2JBS.html

[179] Candida N. Hepworth, "Chicano/a Literature: 'An Active Interanimating of Competing Discourses,'" in *Post-Colonial Literatures: Expanding the Canon*, ed. Deborah L. Madsen (London and Sterling, VI: Pluto Press, 1999), 165.

[180] See Hick's discussion in her introduction to *Border Writing*, "Border Writing as Deterritorialization," especially pages xxiii–xxvii.

[181] Introduction to *Mapping Liminalities. Thresholds in Cultural and Literary Texts*, ed. Lucy Kay et. al (London and Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 10.

or dynamic between two places. As Kay et.al argue, the notion of liminality always entails "doubleness" and is "ultimately fluid and unfixable"[182]— much like Kristeva's ambivalence. We can also see the points of correspondence between this notion and the carnivalesque. From this expanded perspective, the border town of La Linea in *A Vision of Battlements* can be interpreted as a "borderland," a place of encounter between cultures and languages, and also between the "old" and the "new" worlds, like the island of Castita in *M/F*,[183] and also as a "liminal" space where these notions become problematized and subverted. In a sense, we could say that Burgess's "La Linea" foreshadows the later use of the term in post-colonial and cultural theory.

The notion of "laughter" which I employ in my analysis of Burgess's texts is based on Kristeva's reconceptualization of the parodic and mocking laughter of the carnivalesque, in Bakhtin's terms, as a practice which unsettles established notions of order and meaning, while at the same time articulating the anxiety of the subject who experiences the excess of meaning as pleasurable and threatening. This notion of laughter is associated with the carnivalesque, and retains a sense of transgression, which is relevant to my analysis of ambivalence in Burgess's writing. Recent theories of laughter also focus on its potential for the disruption of social order. For Manfred Pfister, for example, laughter, as represented or generated in literary texts, can "reveal the faultlines of the anxieties and the social pressures at work at a given historical moment."[184] Post-colonial theorists have re-examined the function of this "textual" laughter as an

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[182] Ibid.

[183] Clearly, there are many implications to this kind of analysis of La Linea and Castita, implications which I cannot fully address here, although I make passing reference to some possible avenues for exploration in the relevant chapters.

[184] Manfred Pfister, *A History of English Laughter from Beowulf and Beckett to Beyond* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), vii.

expression of the multidimensional experience of the colonial/post-colonial subject, as the very "*subjectivity*" of laughter "disallows limiting it to a one-dimensional function."[185] These notions of laughter are very useful for an understanding of the wider subject of the comedic and satirical elements of Burgess's writing, as already noted by critics[186] and in its more current post-colonial dimension and transcultural dimensions.[187]

Returning to my exposition of the major Kristeva's concepts, I would like to explore her notion of the polyphonic novel. Kristeva analyzes what she calls "the modern polyphonic" novel as the only form that, by "incorporating carnivalesque structures,"[188] adopts the ambivalent logic of the dream and poetic language as its formative principle. The novel is made polyphonic, as it were, because it absorbs the ambivalence of carnivalesque discourse, with this discourse's continuous dynamic of transgression and disruption of the monologic structures (narrative, plot, character, meaning and identity) that sustain it. Kristeva offers the following scheme to illustrate this relationship (fig. 1)[189]:

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[185] Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein, introduction to *Cheeky Fictions: Laughter and the Post-Colonial,* ed. Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 13. Another interesting account of laughter and humour in recent multicultural and transcultural studies can be found in *Hybrid Humour*: *Comedy in Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Graeme Dunphy and Rainer Emig (Amsterdam and New York, NY: Rodopi, 2010). The multicultural approach to laughter in this collection can also be fruitfully employed in an analysis of Burgess's use of comedy and laughter in works like *The Malayan Trilogy* or *Devil of a State*, especially in their approach to "identity as negotiation." *Hybrid Humour*, 23.

[186] Particularly in relation to his Dystopian writing. See Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 48–9. Also John W. Tilton, *Cosmic Satire in the Contemporary Novel*, (Lewisburgh, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1977).

[187] As elaborated in Chiu's and Sassi's papers mentioned above.

[188] Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue, Novel," 70.

[189] Ibid., 88.

Practice 'Discourse' Correlation Logic Phrase Carnival	God 'Dialogism' Monologism System Narrative
Ambivalence Menippean Discourse Polyphonic Novel	

Figure 1

The double structure of carnivalesque discourse "constructing and understanding itself through itself"[190] is transposed into the space of the novel, which is transformed into a "plurality of linguistic elements in dialogical relationships"[191] and "a reading (quotation and commentary) of an exterior literary corpus"[192]—an intertextuality. At this point we see how intertextuality and ambivalence connect in Kristeva's thinking about the novel, and novelistic language. Ambivalence here describes the dynamic of intertextuality, which has become more fluid than the earlier notion of ambivalence as the "permutation of two spaces in novelistic structure: dialogical space and monological space," quoted above. I will explore the notion of intertextuality in more depth at the end of this chapter, as it forms an important part of my analysis of Burgess's texts.

Through the "staging of its dialogical structure," the ambivalent text becomes a "questioning" of its own status as writing.[193] Like poetic language, the ambivalent text enters in dialogue with itself to reveal the laws of its own production; it is both a "meaning to be thought" and the process of meaning production. The ambivalent

[190] Ibid., 84.
[191] Ibid., 85.
[192] Ibid., 87.
[193] Ibid.

polyphonic novels of Joyce, Kafka and Bataille, Kristeva argues, are the site of the emergence of this "self-consciously textual production" that "cannot be reduced to representation."[194] This self-conscious textuality is apparent in Burgess's writing, and it is especially foregrounded in the novels analyzed in this dissertation. *A Vision of Battlements* and *Nothing like Sun* draw attention to their framing narrative devices in an open, even mocking way. *The Doctor is Sick* is both the autobiographical account of Burgess's stay in a neurological hospital and an active and self-conscious (and joyous) exploration of language's infinite productivity. *Inside Mr Enderby* and *M/F* also (and playfully) exploit the productivity and materiality of language.

The carnivalesque is one of those "heterogeneous signifying practices" which Kristeva explores in her later semiotic and psychoanalytical work, practices that "attest to a 'crisis' in representation and in the structure of the human subject."[195]As Carol Mastrangelo Bové argues, Kristeva transforms Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic and the carnivalesque (which are not clearly distinguished in Kristeva's texts) into the structuring principle of those texts which articulate the dynamic between order and disruption that she sees taking place in language and in the subject (as well as in all other structures: social, political, religious, philosophical etc).[196] In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva refers to signifying practices in "the arts, religion and rites" which "underscore the limits of socially useful discourse and attest to what it represses, the process that exceeds the subject and his communicative structures."[197] Kristeva calls this kind of

[194] Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 34.
[195] Becker-Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 163.
[196] Carol Mastrangelo Bové, "The Politics of Desire in Julia Kristeva," boundary *2*. 12, no. 2 (1984): 220.
[197] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language,* 16.

signifying practice *signifiance*,[198] in itself a double or ambivalent term which suggests both a fixed signification (significance) and the process that produces and exceeds it, "the constant work of drives towards, in and through language."[199] *Signifiance* is, then a double process, a "structuring and de-structuring *practice*."[200] In fact, it has much in common with Kristeva's formulation of poetic language as both signifying and at the same time exceeding signification. What *signifiance* adds is a psychic and bodily dimension to her ongoing exploration of language. Kristeva rethinks language as a "signifying process" or *signifiance* between the symbolic, the realm of meaning and social constraints, and the semiotic, "the organization, within the body, of instinctual drives"[201] always latent in the psyche. *Signifiance* refers to "the heterogeneous articulation of semiotic and symbolic dispositions [which] enables a text to signify what representative and communicative speech does not say."[202] For Kristeva, "biological forces are socially controlled, directed and organized, producing an excess with regard to social apparatuses."[203] This "instinctual operation" becomes "a practice [and] a transformation" when it enters into the code of linguistic and social communication."[204] It is at this point that, Kristeva argues, language becomes "*jouissance* and revolution"[205]

Kristeva uses the term "*jouissance*"[206] here to signify "a certain relation to language, an extreme state in which language and subjectivity mutually break down."[207] Barthes

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[198] The word is usually italicized in Kristeva's texts.
[199] Ibid., 15.
[200] Ibid., 17.
[201] Leon S. Roudiez, introduction to *Desire in Language*, 18.
[202] Ibid
[203] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 17.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.
[206] "*Jouissance*" has been used by Lacan and Barthes, as well as Kristeva. For a summary of their various uses see Becker- Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 156–60.
[207] Becker- Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 157.

finds this disruptive *jouissance* at work in "the text of bliss," the text that "brings to a crisis [the reader's] relation to language" by staging its radical plurality.[208] The "text of pleasure," on the other hand, is "linked to a comfortable practice of reading."[209] The experience of *jouissance* (or bliss) is profoundly ambivalent; the subject who experiences *jouissance* in language, as Barthes argues, is "'a living contradiction': a split subject who simultaneously enjoys, through the text, the consistency of his self-hood and its collapse, its fall."[210] Barthes plays with the sexual, bodily aspect of the word *jouissance* and its connotations of loss and death. The parallels with the carnivalesque are obvious. According to Kristeva, the carnival "exteriorizes the structure of reflective literary productivity … bring[ing] to light this structure's underlying unconscious: sexuality and death."[211]

The carnival participant, both "actor and spectator," undergoes the "loss" of its coherent individuality and "splits into a subject of the spectacle and object of the game."[212] The structure of the subject "emerges as anonymity that creates and sees itself created as self and other, man and mask."[213] This ambivalent subjective dynamic is clearly at work in Burgess's novels, where the main characters (Enderby, Ennis, Spindrift, WS and Miles Faber) are always double—split between self and other, mind and body, subject and object. They seek some sense of coherence and unity in creation: in music, in poetry, in linguistic exploration and in narrative construction. At the same time,

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[208] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 14.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid., 21.
[211] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 78.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.

they are driven by an uncontrollable desire to transgress limits. They are "subjects-in-process," in Kristeva's terms.

The term "subject-in-process/trial" (both contained in the French word *procès*) describes the dynamic of subjectivity in language, continually oscillating between grammar, syntax and signification, or "symbolic" register, and the bodily drives and rhythms discharged through the "semiotic."[214] Understood as a dynamic process, Kristeva's notion of subjectivity resonates with her notion of ambivalence. For Kristeva, the process of signification articulates the movement, oscillation or "pulsation of sign and rhythm, of consciousness and instinctual drive"[215]—language as system and the body and its "semiotic," fluid mode of signification. Kristeva's elaboration of the semiotic is complex and no summary can do justice to this complexity. However, as it is an essential part of Kristeva's semanalytical theory a brief explanation is appropriate here. Her theory of subjectivity departs from the Husserlian notion of a "*transcendental ego*, cut off from its body, its unconscious and … its history" in order to posit a subject continuously divided between conscious, "social constraints, family structures [and] modes of production" and unconscious, "bio-physiological processes …what Freud labelled 'drives.'"[216]

These processes, which for Kristeva are both "energy charges as well as physical marks,"[217] articulate a modality of signification which is both anterior to and simultaneous with the symbolic, understood in Lacan's sense as "the law-abiding

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[214] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 37.
[215] Kristeva, "From One Identity to an Other," in *Desire in Language,* 139.
[216] Kristeva, "The System and the Speaking Subject," 28.
[217] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 25.

operations of sociolinguistic systems."[218] Kristeva employs the term "semiotic," with its etymological echoes of "sign imprint, trace [or] figuration,"[219] to refer to this modality of signification. Kristeva gives emphasis to the drives' "pre-Oedipal semiotic functions and energy discharges" which "connect and orient the body to the mother."[220] The semiotic is therefore both instinctual (marked by the workings of drives) and maternal (dependent on an archaic relation with the body of the mother pre-"mirror-stage"). As Terry Eagleton remarks, Kristeva's semiotic is "fluid and plural, a kind of pleasurable creative excess over precise meaning, and it takes sadistic delight in destroying or negating such signs."[221]

The subject is put in trial/process by the emergence of the semiotic within the symbolic; the moment of "the destruction of the creative identity and reconstitution of a new plurality."[222] We can see how Kristeva's notion of a divided subject in process maps onto her notion of intertextuality. Like the text, the subject cannot be fixed. This subject in process/on trial is a speaking being always "caught up in an unending dynamic of transgression,"[223] the same ambivalent dynamic between order and transgression that Kristeva maps out in her analysis of the structure of the polyphonic novel. Kristeva explains how this concept recognizes the ambivalence of the speaking (and the writing) subject who, on the one hand, "submits to a law" but who, on the other hand, cannot entirely submit and is always "in a state of contesting" that law, "either with the force of violence, of aggressivity, of the death drive, or with the other side of this force: pleasure

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[218] Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Crows Nest, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1989), 42.
[219] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* , 25.
[220] Ibid. 27.
[221] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 1996), 163.
[222] Kristeva, "Intertextuality and Literary Interpretation," 191.
[223] Kristeva, "A Conversation with Julia Kristeva," in *Julia Kristeva Interviews*, 26.

and *jouissance*."[224] The speaking being is, for Kristeva, "a being moved by violence and Eros."[225] As she puts it in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, the subject of a signifying practice is "an excess: never one, always already divided."[226] *Inside Mr Enderby* articulates this semiotic excess in the consistent use of onomatopoeia to convey Enderby's bodily "expulsions." Burgess's writing also articulates this disruptive excess in images of disease, filth and corruption. WS's bodily disintegration in *Nothing like the Sun* can be analyzed as a manifestation of the excess of the semiotic.

The "maternal" is another complex and fluid notion in Kristeva's theory and one that has received much critical attention in feminist literary theory.[227] The figure of the mother and the mother's role in the psychic development of the subject are integral elements in Kristeva's analysis of poetic language and artistic expression. The mother/ the maternal is a disruptive force associated with the subject's physical life and pleasure. The maternal plays an important part in Kristeva's semanalysis and her formulation of the semiotic as a signifying system in its own right, mediated by the language and body of the mother. The maternal semiotic modality for Kristeva finds its expression in poetic language. The way in which the subject's bodily drives and the body of the mother make their way into language is through the process of *signifiance*, which can thus be understood as the "reactivation"[228] of the semiotic in the discourse of the symbolic

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[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* , 204.
[227] Kristeva explores the maternal and its function in subjective expression and artistic expression in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, *Powers of Horror* and *Tales of Love*.
[228] The term suggests the existence of signifying processes operating behind or in excess of a text's denoted meanings. Poetic language and the modern ambivalent (carnivalesque and intertextual) novel both articulate language's *signifiance*. These forms of writing are organized according to a dynamic which ensures that disruptive maternal and bodily energies are discharged without compromising the integrity and coherence of the structure.

through the foregrounding of the musical, rhythmic and graphic (the material) aspects of the signifier. In this way poetic language "reinstate[s] the maternal territory into the very economy of language"[229] to the point that, she argues, it can be said that poetic language "utters incest."[230] Language as symbolic function "constitutes itself at the cost of repressing instinctual drive and continuous relation to the mother."[231] Kristeva even goes as far as to say that symbolic matricide is necessary to the formation of the subject; it is "our vital necessity."[232] The "unsettled" subject of poetic language, on the other hand, "maintains itself at the cost of *reactivating* this repressed instinctual, maternal element."[233] Because it "utters incest," poetic language is associated with the breakdown of social order and "evil."[234] It also, as Mallarmé puts it, introduces "music into literature."[235] The process of poetic writing, and of artistic creation in general, for Kristeva involves "a certain lifting of repression," an activation of the always present "drive-based call from the archaic mother" and its potential for *jouissance* and destruction (of meaning and subjectivity).[236] Modern art, the modern polyphonic novel (with its attempt to "reconcile representation with the play of form"[237]) and certain forms of modernist and avant-garde poetry (in particular the poetry of Mallarmé) are an attempt to integrate the unconscious of the drives and the maternal within the language of communication. But this integration, Kristeva reiterates, is always a disruptive process.

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[229] Kristeva, "From One Identity to An Other," 137.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Kristeva, "From One Identity to An Other," 136.
[232] Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 27.
[233] Kristeva, "From One Identity to An Other," 136.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Kristeva, "'*une femmes:*' The Woman Effect," in *Julia Kristeva Interviews,* 109–10.
[236] Ibid., 10
[237] Kristeva, "Intertextuality and Literary Interpretation," 191.

In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva takes the disruptive power of the poetic and the maternal one step further in her theory of abjection. On a physical level, abjection is the feeling of nausea and disgust brought on by anything that suggests "defilement, sewage and muck."[238] This feeling of disgust has a psychic dimension. It is connected, for the subject, to the time between separation from the body of the mother and the constitution of a separate identity, an "in-between" stage still dominated by the figure of the mother which is now perceived as a threatening presence, "an external menace" that is also a "menace from the inside."[239] In Kristeva's analysis, furthermore, the word "abject" comes to stand for what is "radically excluded" but at the same time "not radical enough to allow for a secure differentiation between subject and object."[240] Because of its ambivalence, the abject "disturbs identity, system [and] order."[241] The abject is not a "something"; it is what lacks borders, the "in-between," the ambiguous.[242] Miles Faber, the protagonist in *M/F*, represents the abject: as the product of incest he signifies total disruption of order; at the same time, however, he is the restorer of order in his family. Enderby's grotesque stepmother and WS's Dark Lady in *Nothing like the Sun* are both articulations of the abject.

In terms of language's semantic production, the abject is the "outside-of-meaning"; it is no-thing, meaning-less, but also the possibility of an unbearable "weight" of meaning, of an uncontrollable excess, "the unnameable and the absolute."[243] Here we see the connection between the ambivalent logic of the carnival and poetic language and

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[238] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 2.
[239] Kristeva, "Feminism and Psychoanalysis," in *Julia Kristeva Interviews*, 119.
[240] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 7.
[241] Ibid.,14.
[242] John Lechte, *Julia Kristeva*, 160.
[243] Kristeva *Powers of Horror*, 74.

Kristeva's notion of the abject. For Kristeva, writing—especially the kind of writing that calls attention to its materiality and which pluralizes meaning—"causes the subject who ventures in it" to confront this maternal "archaic authority" and to "come face to face" with the abject.[244] As the production of the word, writing enables writers imaginatively to articulate abjection and "to thrust it aside" by means of "the displacement of verbal play."[245] It performs the "symbolic matricide" which is the subject's "vital necessity," but at the same time, it takes both language (and the writer: the speaking subject) "to the place where it kills, thinks and experiences *jouissance* all at the same time."[246]

The disruptive effect of the act of poetic composition is playfully explored in Burgess's *Inside Mr Enderby*. The novels stages a conflict between an idealized notion of poetic inspiration as emanating from a pure feminine form, and the poetic as an expression of the urges of the body, the poet's body as an extension of a grotesque and abject maternal body—for Enderby, the body of his loathed stepmother. The stepmother is depicted in the text as an excessive carnivalesque, grotesque figure whose borderless, abject body "extends" itself to engulf other female figures in the novel and even Enderby's own body. This excess of materiality is articulated in a writing which foregrounds language's plurality and materiality as expressions of abjection. *Nothing like the Sun* also foregrounds the disruptive materiality of language and its ambivalent creative/destructive effect on the writer; when language becomes a language of the body, it leads to the disintegration of language and body. This is the limit of the poetic experience, for Kristeva, the moment when the subject-in-process of art is "lost,"

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[244] Ibid., 175.
[245] Ibid., 16.
[246] Ibid, 206.

"reduced to zero" (echoes of the carnivalesque experience), "in a state of crisis."[247] The narrative experience, on the other hand, offers the subject "more options for working things out with respect to moments of crisis."[248]

Kristeva makes this distinction between narrative and poetic experiences in a 1985 interview with Margaret Waller, but I think that it is always already implicit in "Word, Dialogue, Novel." At this point, it is also interesting to note an evolution in Kristeva's thought (even in this short summary of her ideas) from a consideration of narrative as monologic and prohibitive, to a view of narrative as necessary to the subject who wants to communicate and create. This shift in her thinking about novel is not as radical as it may appear at first. It is useful to remember that her early notion of novelistic ambivalence always included the "monologic" as an important impulse always already at work in the dialogic structure of the polyphonic novel. Her notion of the subject-in-process between symbolic control and semiotic disruption implicitly acknowledges the subject's need to communicate and seek meaning, even as s/he is thrown into crisis by the very language used to do so.

At this point, I would like to re-introduce the notion of intertextuality which was mentioned briefly above, as it plays an important role in my analysis of Burgess's writing. As I noted before, intertextuality and ambivalence, for Kristeva, are related notions. There are two aspects of Kristeva's notion of intertextuality that are relevant to my analysis of Burgess's texts in this thesis. One is the idea of the text as a "mosaic of

[247] Kristeva, "Intertextuality and Literary Interpretation," 190.
[248] Ibid., 193.

quotations" and an "intersection" of other texts.[249] This image is later transformed by Roland Barthes into his well-known metaphor of the text as a "tissue" or "woven fabric,"[250] which shares Kristeva's emphasis on the plural, playful and open quality of texts, "The plural of the text depends ... not on the ambiguity of its contents but on ... the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers."[251] Intertextuality also suggests a form of relation between those texts, which Kristeva calls "textual ambivalence." The novelistic text is always in a process of "constant dialogue with the preceding literary corpus" and of "perpetual challenge of past writing."[252] This intertextual process "permits the writer to enter history by espousing an ambivalent ethics: negation as affirmation."[253] Burgess's texts are marked by this ambivalent intertextual relation to other texts, particularly Joyce's texts.

The other notion of intertextuality emerges from Kristeva's psychoanalytic reappraisal of her own term, and comes to describe the dynamic of subjectivity as it is articulated in the literary text. In an article on intertextuality published in 2002, "'Nous Deux' or a (Hi)story of Intertextuality," Kristeva explains how her psychoanalytic practice led her to "reframe" the once "formal phenomenon [of] the plurality of texts" as "a mental activity able to open a psyche to the creative process."[254] In her rethinking of the term, intertextuality does not only refer to the way in which texts intersect and interact but also to the way in which this process affects the writer himself/herself:

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[249] Ibid., 189.
[250] Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Flamingo, 1982), 159.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 69.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Kristeva, "'Nous Deux' or a (Hi)story of Intertextuality," *Romanic Review*, 93 n. 1–2 (2002) http://ezproxy.hope.ac.uk:2166/searchFulltext.do?id=R04272236&divLevel=0&area=abell&forward=critref_ft. (accessed 7 February 2011).

> [T]he discovery of intertextuality at a formal level leads us to an intrapsychic or psychoanalytical findings concerning the status of the "creator," the one who produces the text by placing himself or herself at the intersection of this plurality of texts. ... This leads me to understand creative subjectivity as a kaleidoscope, 'a polyphony' ... 'a subject in process.'"[255]

This understanding of intertextuality points to the dynamic of the "destruction" of the creative identity and reconstitution of "a new plurality" referred to earlier on. As Becker-Leckrone remarks, Kristeva sees intertextuality as "not just a dynamic of texts among other texts, but as a dynamic that involves speaking subjects in process."[256] Her open understanding of intertextuality, at the same time, provides a way to explore the dynamic between symbolic order and semiotic disruption at work both in Burgess's texts and in the main characters' psyches. This notion of a "creative identity" as an intertextuality offers a productive way to analyze, for example, *Nothing like the Sun*'s play with the notion of authorship in the different inscriptions of Burgess's name in its text. One of the more widely known features of intertextual theory, as Graham Allen remarks, is the notion of "the death of the Author," as posited by Barthes in his famous essay.[257] In this essay, Barthes questions the validity of the notion of the "Author" (with capital "A") as the origin of the meaning of the work.[258] As Allen argues, Barthes, like Kristeva, believes that the subject "always suffers a loss when entering into writing," which leads him to "a recognition that the origin of the text is not a unified authorial consciousness but a plurality of other voices, other utterances and other texts."[259] Barthes celebrates the disruptive power of intertextuality in *The Pleasure of the Text.* Burgess's texts,

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[255] Kristeva, "Intertextuality and Literary Interpretation," 190.
[256] Becker-Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 108.
[257] Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, 70.
[258] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, 145.
[259] Ibid., 72.

particularly *Nothing like the Sun* and *M/F,* articulate the intertextuality of writing, while at the same time, exploring and subverting established notions of authority and origin.

This overview of Kristeva's best-known concepts has aimed to show how the notion of ambivalence which she developed from her reading of Bakhtin's dialogism resonates with some of her other, best-known concepts. The notion of the novel that emerges from this analysis, whether we consider it a "double structure," a "space" or an "intertextuality," all terms employed by Kristeva, combines narrative and poetic impulses (monologic and dialogic; order and transgression) in an ambivalent but always transformative dynamic which articulates the crisis in the creative subject (the writer) who wants to contain, structure and give fixed meaning but is simultaneously impelled to enter in dialogue with the language and culture in which s/he creates, and in which s/he is also created. This emphasis on the impossibility (or at least the impracticability) of separating the ordering and disruptive aspects of language and creativity makes Kristeva's theories very useful for the analysis of the ambivalence which, this thesis argues, structures Burgess's writing.

The next chapters explore, through an examination of narrative structure and close textual reading, the different dimensions of ambivalence presented above, as they are articulated in five novels by Burgess which concern themselves with the conflictual process of artistic creation and with the plurality, multiplicity and playfulness of language. The process of creation is articulated in the texts in the way which Kristeva understands it, as an open dialogue (intertextuality) within the artist/writer and between the artist/writer and other texts in relation to which he situates himself. In formal terms, the novels articulate this conflict as an ambivalence between narrative stability and

simultaneously productive/disruptive poetic and intertextual play. In my analysis, I have tried to examine both aspects and dimensions of ambivalence, although I do not suggest that there is a causal relation between them. Instead, I see them as manifestations of the conflictual, dynamic and subversive ambivalence which structures Burgess's writing.

CHAPTER TWO

A Vision of Battlements: The Novel as Ambivalent Space

Vision of Battlements occupies a seminal position in Burgess's oeuvre. Published in 1965, the actual date of its composition is still a subject of debate amongst Burgess critics.[260] For the purposes of my analysis, I adopt Andrew Biswell's view that Burgess wrote the first draft of the novel sometime between 1949 and 1952, making it "Burgess's first sustained attempt at fiction."[261] As his first work, thus, the novel traces the beginnings of the development of Burgess's artistic vision through his engagement with some of the literary texts and aesthetic theories which shaped his thinking on the nature of artistic creation and the role of the artist in the modern world. As Geoffrey Aggeler argues, *A Vision of Battlements* deals with many of the themes which Burgess would develop in subsequent works, like "the plight of the artist oppressed by a philistine Establishment, the attractions of Manichaeism, the inescapable hold of Catholicism, the Pelagian heresy in the twentieth century."[262] Robert K. Morris remarks on the novel's "fascination for order in the face of disintegration,"[263] which, as we have seen, would continue to be one of Burgess's most important artistic concerns.

From the start, *A Vision of Battlements* also displays a clear concern with matters of formal order and structure. This concern is apparent in Burgess's use of an epic frame to structure the narrative. As he explains in his Introduction to the novel, the use of Virgil's

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[260] Suggested dates (given by Burgess himself on different occasions) include 1949, 1953 and 1952. Andrew Biswell believes that Burgess wrote the first draft of the novel at some point between December 1951 and January 1954. Biswell also notes that the book was rewritten "at least twice" before it was published in 1965. Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 101.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Geoffrey Aggeler, *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 36.
[263] Robert K. Morris, *The Consolations of Ambiguity*, 7.

Aeneid as a narrative frame is both a "tribute" to Joyce's *Ulysses*, but also "a tyro's method of giving his [own] story a backbone."[264] This preoccupation with structure and narrative order co-exists with an equally strong impulse to dynamize and open up that structure. In *Little Wilson and Big God*, Burgess describes *A Vision of Battlements* as "a realistic comic novel with a cunningly disguised mythical under-score."[265] This description emphasizes the novel's generic plurality, bringing together realism, comedy, myth and music, at the same time that it suggests a certain playfulness in the way in which all these elements are "cunningly" combined. This playfulness is also evident in the novel's parodic treatment of the epic parallels, which are "diminished" and "made comic" (AVOB, 8) by their re-contextualization within the chaotic, disordered but also highly diverse world of Gibraltar's British colony.

This pluralizing and playful impulse is already evident in the title of the novel, which plays on the ambiguity of the phrase "a vision of battlements." In *Little Wilson and Big God*, Burgess explains how he borrowed the title from *The Illustrated Family Doctor*, from the entry for "migraine," where "vision of battlements" appears listed as one of the symptoms:

> Warning of an attack may be given by tingling sensations in the limbs, impairment of vision, flashing lights, a vision of battlements, noises in the ears, mental depression or other phenomena.[266]

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[264] Burgess, introduction to *A Vision of Battlements* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), 8. Hereafter cited in the text as AVOB. The mythical and archetypal frame is also his way to the method used by modernist writers to give a sense of order and meaning to a chaotic world. This is T.S. Eliot's theory about Joyce's use of myth in *Ulysses*. Eliot's poem *The Wasteland* is one of the texts in *A Vision of Battlements*' intertextual network.

[265] Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God: Being the First Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess* (London: Penguin, 1987), 364.

[266] Ibid., 364.

We can see how this phrase works on two levels simultaneously: while it retains a referential meaning (the word "battlements," according to Burgess, refers to Gibraltar's fortifications as they are "seen" from the sea),[267] it also, and mainly, operates metaphorically to suggest order and containment (the battlements as a solid defensive construction) as well as the disorder which threatens stability, suggested by the phrase's "other" use as a symptom of a migraine attack. Thus the title "a vision of battlements" already combines opposing ideas of stability and disruption in a dialogic and ambivalent dynamic.

The notions of order, conflict and disruption which sustain the novel's structure also underlie the novel's themes and character development, which centre on the artist and the process of creation. *A Vision of Battlements* explores the process of artistic creation as a continuous struggle with external forces but also as an internal conflict in the artist. The protagonist, Richard Ennis, is a man torn between conformity and rebellion; as an artist, he is caught between an idealized vision of art as the means to control a chaotic world, and the desire to transgress all structures of order and express the multiplicity and diversity of real experience. He is a "subject-in-process/trial" between symbolic order and semiotic disruption, in Kristeva's sense. An important part of my analysis in this chapter explores how the "trial" of Ennis's subjectivity is played out within the novel's ambivalent structure in a continuous transgression of boundaries. Ennis is a Sergeant in the Army Vocational and Cultural Corps and as Samuel Coale explains, "a visionary of sorts" and "a rebel opposed to the forced conformity of army regulations."[268] Like most

[267] Ibid., 365.
[268] Coale, Anthony *Burgess*, 19.

Burgess's (male) characters, he is also an artist, in this case a musician[269] who dreams of "building a city of sound and ultimate meaning" (AVOB, 109) in his compositions. As it common with Burgess's artists, Ennis experiences the process of creation as a continuous conflict between control and disruption, between a "rage for order"[270] and an equally strong "yearning to be creative, to be free."[271] While the epic tone of the novel reflects Ennis's grand designs and dreams, the parodic inversion of the epic parallels works to convey Ennis's "anti-heroism," as Geoffrey Aggeler points out.[272] At the same time, the epic narrative patterns express Ennis's ambivalent position between stability and rebellion and between his ideal of order and the disruptive forces (internal and external) that threaten it.

My argument in this chapter is that *A Vision of Battlements* is structured on the ambivalent co-existence of two impulses: an impulse towards formal and structural order and an opposing drive to pluralize and dynamize (and thus subvert) that order. Stability and disruption underlie the novel's formal structure, at the level of narrative. Burgess uses the epic form of Virgil's *Aeneid* as a way of "giving his story a backbone" and, simultaneously, adding a mythical and symbolic dimension to Ennis's actions; at the same time, he dynamizes and disrupts this structure of order by means of parody, inversion and continuous intertextual and linguistic play. In this dynamic space, Ennis's

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[269] This was Burgess's first artistic interest, as he tells the reader in *Little Wilson and Big God*, 363. The plot of the novel is also based on Burgess's own experiences in Gibraltar, where he was stationed with the British Army during WWII, as an educational officer. Burgess provides this information in his autobiography and in many interviews. Scholar Alan Shockley believes that the novel is Burgess's "first attempt at resolving his composerly impulses with his day-to-day career as an author." Shockley, "Useless creation": *A Vision of Battlements* and Composing in Prose," Paper presented at the Third International Anthony Burgess Symposium, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 27–30 July 2009.

[270] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 84.

[271] Matthews, *The Clockwork Universe of Anthony Burgess*, 15.

[272] Aggeler, *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 31.

creative conflict is articulated as a process between symbolic stability and semiotic disruption. The image of the "vision of battlements," then, works as a metaphor which conveys the novel's ambivalence as a "double" structure (like the "double" vision triggered by a migraine attack) where narrative and symbolic order continually give way to the disruptive, ambivalent play of the semiotic through the text.

Before beginning the analysis of the text I would like to examine how this ambivalent space is created. *A Vision of Battlements*' ambivalent structure is constructed on the pattern of a musical score. Some critics, in fact, have identified a correspondence between the form of the novel and Ennis's musical composition, the *Passacaglia*.[273] My concern at this point is not with the parallels between the two forms, but with the idea of the musical score as a visual metaphor for the novel's ambivalent dynamic space (the idea of the score suggests a "space") as a linear narrative and as a simultaneous structure of multiple elements which work in relation to one another—a dialogical structure. As already noted above, this musical patterning is suggested by Burgess himself in *Little Wilson and Big God*, when he refers to the mythical frame of his novel as an "underscore." Also, in his Introduction to the novel, he mentions his training as a musician, and describes the novel as a "composition." (AVOB, 8) In "Word, Dialogue, Novel," Kristeva refers to the way in which the ambivalent novel "exteriorizes[s]" its double organization "on the level of textual occurrence."[274]

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[273] Stinson claims that the *Passacaglia* "teasingly mirrors, to some fair extent, the form of the novel," although he does not explain how. Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 86. Richard Matthews also believes that the *Passacaglia* "sets the form of the book." Matthews specifically focuses on the *Passacaglia*'s pattern of "variations over a constantly repeating ground bass." "The echoing motifs" from the *Aeneid* provide the variations, "all played against the recurring bass line of history and of myth." Richard Matthews, *The Clockwork Universe of Anthony Burgess*, 10.

[274] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 76.

I would like to remark as this point that my aim in this section is not to provide a reading of the novel's musical structure. An analysis of *A Vision of Battlements* as a musical structure is certainly beyond the limited scope of this chapter. However, I believe that the image of the score helps create a visual image of the novel's double construction as a narrative and a text (or intertextuality), while the idea of musical movement provides a sense of Ennis's artistic development as a dynamic process. In *This Man and Music*, Burgess describes a musical score as "a graph with temporal and spatial coordinates."[275] On the horizontal level of the score, the notes "travel from left to right in a representation of time"; on the vertical level, at the same time, "notes are higher and lower than each other, and we seem to have entered a world of spatial relations."[276]

A Vision of Battlements' narrative structure can certainly be analyzed in terms of the double, melodic-harmonic structure of a musical score. In this structure, the mythical parallels/associations operate like harmonic chords, creating associative chains and opening up new levels of meaning while the melodic line provides the narrative with its linear and sequential-causal development. Both melody and harmony suggest agreement and accord and, in this sense, can be considered as suggestive of order. This is what Burgess calls the "musicalization" of the novel, as we examined earlier in the Introduction, the combination of stable patterns, and multiple linguistic play, or "word harmonics."[277] Burgess's understanding of linguistic harmony, however, is more complex and less restrictive than its musical counterpart, as French scholar Sandrine Sorlin has noted. In her study of *A Clockwork Orange*'s musical structure, Sorlin shows how

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[275] Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 47.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Burgess, "Here Comes Everybody," 139.

Nadsat, in fact, works in "paradigmatic-harmonic" terms as a "combination of contrasting notes and surprising concords."[278] *A Vision of Battlements* does not display the same level of linguistic complexity as *A Clockwork Orange* but employs similarity and contrast in the organization of the epic parallels, by means of puns and word-play exploited in a musical sense, as we shall see later.

In strictly formal terms, the epic parallels provide most of the key characters and events in the narrative, creating the structure that sustains the linear progression of the plot, and providing the narrative with its underlying epic impulse. The novel begins with Ennis/Aeneas caught in a storm on his way to Gibraltar (Carthage). This storm is taken directly from Book I of Virgil's text. Andrew Biswell identifies the German bombing of Manchester as "the destruction of Troy," while Dido finds "her equivalent" in a Spanish woman named Concepción, with whom Ennis has a failed romance. Many of the correspondences work on the level of character. Burgess himself notes the parallels between Julian Agate, a homosexual dancer[279] and Ennis's closest friend, and Aeneas's loyal Achates. The brutal Turnus becomes the ridiculous Sergeant Turner, and Iarbas is metamorphosed into the playfully "anagrammatised" Barasi (AVOB, 8) The goddess Venus becomes a music-hall singer called June and Ennis has a brief relationship with an Army WREN called Lavinia (named after Aeneas's wife).[280] In terms of plot

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[278] Sandrine Sorlin, "*A Clockwork Orange*: A Linguistic Symphony," in *Anthony Burgess: Music in Literature and Literature in Music,* 52.

[279] The only scholar to remark on Agate's potentially subversive role in the novel is Andrew Biswell. *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 102. Most scholars interpret Agate as a representation of the order and stability that Ennis needs in order to create. See De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess*, 34; Richard Matthews, *The Clockwork Universe of Anthony Burgess*, 13; Aggeler, *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist* , 36.

[280] These correspondences are noted by Marianthe Colakis in her article"Sum Ineptus Aeneas: Anthony Burgess's *A Vision of Battlements*," *Classical and Modern Literature* 14 (1994): 145. She also notes other, minor parallels and correspondences: Ennis's "disastrous voyage to Crete parallels Aeneas'" and his encounter with the "one-eyed toughs" in Glasgow (AVOB, 57) mirrors that of "Aeneas and the Cyclopes in

development, the founding of Rome in *The Aeneid* corresponds, as Biswell remarks, to "the prospect of post-war reconstruction," although this parallel is never explored in full, only suggested.[281] The confrontation between Aeneas and Turnus is replayed as a fight between Ennis and the ridiculous Sergeant Turner, and Aeneas's journey to the Underworld becomes Ennis's and Agate's journey to the border town of La Linea in search of Concepcion.[282] The novel's Epilogue places Ennis back on the same ship which brought him to Gibraltar, now on his way back to England and a new life in pursuit of his artistic dreams. The tripartite structure formed by the Prologue, the main narrative and the Epilogue also creates a sense of the novel as an ordered structure: Prologue and Epilogue mirror each other, as they are both set on the same boat moving to/away from Gibraltar, while the narrative follows a strictly linear progression in chronological time.

But Burgess had another reason for using myth. In *Little Wilson and Big God* he explains that he used myth in his novel not only to "say more about modern life, either through mockery or elevation to a plane of genuine heroism, but because myth justified textual inspissation."[283] "Inspissation" means to "thicken," or "to make dense." [OED][284] Burgess uses this term to refer to Joyce's method of prose "musicalization" or "thickening" of the text of the novel by means of puns, allusions and polysemous linguistic play.[285] Like Joyce, Burgess also found "narrative simplicity too monodic to be

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3.121–91." The "Alexandrian fortune-tellers" (AVOB, 57) are lifted directly from Virgil's text. See pages 141–47.

[281] Andrew Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 101–2.

[282] These parallels are noted by both De Vitis in his monograph *Anthony Burgess*, 30, and by Matthews in *The Clockwork Universe of Anthony Burgess*, 14–16.

[283] Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God*, 365.

[284] The word also appears in *Finnegans Wake*, where it is vaguely associated with Joyce himself as a "semidemented zany amid the inspissated grime of his glaucous den" and Ulysses, in particular, "his usylessly unreadable Blue Book of Eccles." *Finnegans Wake* (London: Minerva, 1992), 179.

[285] Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God*, 365.

acceptable."[286] At the same time, however, the word "inspissation" carries connotations of confusion and even of irreverent mockery (of "piss-taking," in plain terms). This irreverent playfulness is already at work in the novel's parodying of its epic structure. Marianthe Colakis has mapped out the novel's "systematic inversion" of all the parallels between Virgil's epic and Ennis's narrative. Heroic Aeneas becomes "anti-heroic" Richard Ennis, Achates, a paragon of masculinity becomes the homosexual (and rather silly) Julian Agate and Aeneas's goddess mother Venus is metamorphosed into a vulgar music hall singer named June, to name but a few.[287] In structural terms, parodic inversion works also as a destabilizing force in the text. Inversion is one of the characteristics of carnivalesque discourse, and the means by which established categories and hierarchies become subverted and mocked. In this carnivalesque inverted structure, Ennis's "epic" actions are comically diminished, heroic episodes become absurd, and the epic logic that sustains the narrative is subverted and replaced by "other" logics which, as Kristeva argues, operate through dialogue, opposition and infinite play.[288]

"Inspissation" also describes the novel's playful intertextual and linguistic play—its harmonic dimension. Mythical and archetypal correspondences open up further symbolic and intertextual levels which trigger a dialogue between *A Vision of Battlements* and the "authoritative" texts in relation to which it situates itself. The most important ones are T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (already an intertext within Eliot's poem) Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the "Circe" episode in *Ulysses*. As with Virgil's epic, the relationship between Burgess's text and his precursors is one of ambivalence. Burgess

[286] Ibid.
[287] For a full account see Colakis, 141–47.
[288] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 83.

simultaneously imitates and parodies elements of these texts, while also engaging in an active exploration of their (and his own) language and structures. Burgess's linguistic experimentations in *A Vision of Battlements* are connected to music. Burgess "musicalizes" language not only to trigger off its polysemy and ambiguity, but also to foreground the material and non-referential elements of the sign—the same elements which Kristeva associates with the disruptive forces of the semiotic modality of language. These forces emerge in the text in those parts of the novel exploring Ennis's personal and artistic development. Ennis's development as an artist is played out in the text as a dynamic conflict or "process" between symbolic control and semiotic disruption. Ennis, as critics have noted, struggles between a "rage for order"[289] and an equally strong "yearning to be creative, to be free."[290] As John J. Stinson remarks, this freedom eventually leads to "a lot of disorder"[291] in his life as well as in his art.

This ambivalence is articulated in his musical composition, the *Passacaglia*, which attempts to combine order and disorder in a total vision. This "disorder" is not only an effect of chaotic external forces; Ennis is also torn by desires which he cannot (or sometimes will not) control. Samuel Coale hints at this struggle in Ennis when he describes him as "trapped somewhere between his ideal world of music ... and the sordid, real world of lust,"[292] while Robert K. Morris remarks on Ennis's "ambivalence towards flesh and spirit,"[293] an ambivalence which ultimately paralyzes him, and makes him

[289] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 84.
[290] Matthews, *The Clockwork Universe of Anthony Burgess*, 15.
[291] Stinson, Anthony Burgess Revisited, 84.
[292] Samuel Coale, *Anthony Burgess*, 25.
[293] Robert K. Morris, *The Consolations of Ambiguity*, 15.

unable to create.[294] Ennis does create, but not the complex work that he envisions. In this struggle, Ennis emerges as a creative individual (in Kristeva's terms) in "process" between symbolic control and semiotic disruption – a subject who "submits to the law" but is also and always "in a state of contesting the law" through "aggressivity" and/or "pleasure and *jouissance*."[295]

The novel's ambivalent dynamic is already at work in the Prologue that precedes the main narrative. The Prologue shows Ennis in a ship transporting the men of the Army Vocational and Cultural Corps to Gibraltar. A. A. De Vitis maps out the first parallel between the novel and Virgil's text.[296] Ennis is being forced to stay away from his wife Laurel while she remains in England, "a Troy that a ten-thousand year siege could not shatter." (AVOB, 31) The goddess Juno, who sends the storm which destroys Aeneas's ship, is an Army WREN named June who is also playing the part of the goddess in the ship's concert. While Ennis is staying in Gibraltar, June is headed for Crete, "where Venus was born."[297] The prologue provides the setting for the playful subversion of the parallels between the two texts; it also opens up a whole network of playful and irreverent symbolic associations with other texts. Like Aeneas's men, the men of the AVCC are on course to an unknown destination decreed by higher powers (the British Army), unsure of what their purpose is, waiting "with something like the apprehension of children who fear they are lost, but also with a quite irrational half-formed hope." (AVOB, 22) This line conveys the drama and noble, yet purposeless, heroism of the men, who are victims of the

[294] Ibid. This is also Enderby's conflict. In *Nothing like the Sun,* Burgess turns desire into the creative force which drives Shakespeare's powerful tragedies, although it also becomes his destruction.
[295] See Introduction to this dissertation, note 126.
[296] De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess*, 31.
[297] Ibid.

caprices of the Gods.[298] Burgess's text subverts this heroic tone by recasting the scene in which Juno becomes angry at Aeneas as a concert with the Goddess played by June, the "big blonde Wren" with a broad English accent, and Ennis as the piano player. As Richard Matthews remarks, this scene expresses a sense of "confusion and a more general difficulty of conveying meaning."[299] More than confusion, this passage plays with traditional distinctions between highbrow and lowbrow discourses. The high rhetorical and poetic language of Juno's plea to Aeolus to "lull the waves or to rouse them with a wind" (*Aeneid,* I: 51-82)[300] is playfully transformed into one of the soldier's call to the god to "shut your mouth and cool your senseless rage." (AVOB, 15) Ennis's "educated" speech also contrasts with June's colloquial language, "I reckon I can talk refined. I can talk as high society as what he can." (AVOB, 15) This playful exchange of two different linguistic registers is made more irreverent by the sudden call from the "epicene"[301] captain of artillery, "Are you readah?" (AVOB, 15) The marked opening of the vowels in "readah" is suggestive of the affected and mannered speech typically associated with male homosexuals.[302]

This irreverent play also characterizes the discourse in the rest of the Prologue, which describes Ennis's attempts to compose against the chaos of the storm released by

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[298] This is a constant theme in Burgess's novels and the main theme underlying the plot of *M/F.*
[299] Richard Matthews, *The Clockwork Universe of Anthony Burgess,* 7.
[300] Virgil, *The Aeneid,* ed. and trans. W.F. Jackson Knight (London: Penguin, 1977), 29.
[301] The "epicene" would become a recurrent character, as well as motif, in Burgess's later novels. In Latin and Greek grammar, the epicene denotes "nouns which have but one form to denote either sex." It later came to mean "one who shares the characteristics of both sexes." [OED] Epicene characters appear in many of Burgess's novels (some examples are Ibrahim in *Time for a Tiger,* and Southampton in *Nothing Like the Sun)* Christopher Ricks, in his article "The Epicene," also refers to this ambiguous (and I would add ambivalent) figure in Burgess's novels, particularly evident in *Honey for the Bears*, which, he argues, deals with homosexuality—or rather, bisexuality, in a playful and subversive way. Christopher Ricks, "The Epicene," in *Anthony Burgess. Modern Critical Views*, 9–12. See also Andrew Biswell's discussion of the character in *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 102.
[302] This stereotyping is certainly not subversive, although the introduction of this variety of speeches in the novel, at the time, can be considered quite innovative.

Juno/June's anger at Ennis's linguistic pretensions. Ennis is lying in his hammock, "shaping in his mind ... against the creaks and groans of the heavy ship, a sonata for violoncello and piano." (AVOB, 16) For Ennis, this composition is "more real than the pounding sea" and a construction of order, "a pattern that time could not touch." (AVOB, 16-17) Against this vision of order, the storm marks a disruptive rhythm articulated in a playful discourse which calls attention to language's polysemy and disruptive materiality—the materiality that Ennis's wants to silence in his vision of ideal order:

> The world burst noisily asunder. The North Atlantic's black back cracked. Howling sea-ghosts scrabbled at the rigging. Soldiers lurched along the troopdecks, howling also, slopping tempestuous mess-tins of tea. Over the decks salty knouts of broken sea lunged and sloggered. Acres of frothing marble leered monstrously, as though Rome had melted. Riding the bitter uncertain ranges, the troopship soared and plunged in agony. A dry ship (ha ha, dry!) with nightly lemon squash drink, like a ghastly parody of drinking, in pint mugs, and now the decks struck at one, unprovoked. Men tottered and spewed and were heaved into their bunks and hammocks without the satisfaction of knowing they had brought it all on themselves. It was not fair. [...] the Nonconformist chaplain (more of a Unitarian really) felt his nausea churn in him like a sermon (terrible aboriginal calamity; sin grows wild, as God-made as an apple) (AVOB, 16)

As Marianthe Colakis remarks, the overall style of this passage, in contrast with Virgil's text, is of disorder. Colakis points out the "slapstick" comedy conveyed by the "tempestuous mess-tins of tea," and "the absurd comparison of the men's fear to drunkenness."[303] The comparison is made more absurd by the fact that all that the soldiers are allowed to drink is "lemon squash." A closer examination of the language, furthermore, reveals how the text "literally" mimics the effects of the tempest. Like the sea bursting "noisily asunder" the text breaks into its constituent parts, each one signalling its musicality and materiality by means of alliterative and onomatopoeic effects: the ocean's "black back" cracks; "sea-ghosts" "scrabble" at the "rigging"; the sea

[303] Colakis, "Sum Ineptus Aeneas: Anthony Burgess's *A Vision of Battlements*," 142.

breaks into "salty knouts." At the same time, all these fragments of text are arranged according to a musical pattern created by the to-and-fro movement of the ship as it is rocked by the waves, "slopping tempestuous mess-tins of tea"; "the North Atlantic's black back cracked"; "over the decks salty knouts of broken sea lunged and sloggered." The phrase "tempestuous mess-tins of tea" playfully brings together two clichéd expressions, the English "a storm in a teacup" and its American form "a tempest in a teapot," marking the gap or dissonance between the highly dramatic tone of the passage and the soldiers' "totter[ing]" and spew[ing]."

The word "tempestuous" also triggers off an intertextual connection with *The Tempest*, signalled in the text by the parallel between the "howling" of the soldiers "lurching" along the decks and the Boatswain lines "A plague upon this howling! They are louder than the weather or our office." (I. i. 34–5)[304] The invocation to Aeolus in this context also operates as a double signifier that triggers off an intertextual play with the "Aeolus" episode in Joyce's *Ulysses*, an episode known particularly for its foregrounding of the material, non-signifying aspects of language by means of its inflated verbal style, its cataloguing of rhetorical devices, and its polyphony of voices and sounds.[305] Within the context generated by its intertextual connection to Joyce's text, the passage emerges as a parody of the ostentatious style of the epic and a mocking of the art of Rhetoric, represented by the Nonconformist chaplain "groaning" in his bunk, his "nausea" growing like "a sermon."

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[304] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford and New York: OUP, 1994), 99. The correspondence with *The Tempest* is developed further in Chapter Six, when Ennis, drunken and disoriented after the wedding between his lover Concepción and the corrupt Gibraltarian businessman Barasi, boards a ferry leaving for the mainland and, before reaching land, falls overboard.

[305] Jennifer Levine, "Ulysses," in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 143. Also See Jeri Johnson's commentary in her edition of *Ulysses* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 1998), 809.

The Prologue also introduces Ennis's creative struggle, though not as a conflict that is internal to Ennis but as a confrontation between his internal vision and external forces which he needs to control in his art. This struggle is represented by the image of Ennis composing a sonata "against the creaks and groans of the heaving ship." (AVOB, 16) Ennis wants to create a vision of unchanging order "more real than the pounding sea," (AVOB, 16) a mythical pattern "that time could not touch." (AVOB, 17) Throughout the narrative, Ennis maintains a firm belief in art as a vision of order but many of his actions suggest that he is also moved by an impulse to challenge and disrupt any constructions of order – even his own. This conflict is articulated in the musical composition that occupies him in the first part of the narrative, his *Passacaglia*. The composition is conceived as a wedding march to celebrate the marriage of his Spanish lover Concepción (Aeneas's jilted Dido), but soon becomes Ennis's main endeavour outside (and sometimes instead of) his Army duties. Ennis describes the *Passacaglia* as "his dream of order ... a tune that will hold together the most fantastically divergent variations." (AVOB, 70) This vision of order, as Ennis's description suggests, is potentially transgressive, as it aims to bring together stability and disruption within one structure.

In strictly formal terms, Ennis's composition is a personal interpretation of the traditional "Passacaglia," a traditional "variation form" characterized by the combination of "a constant musical factor with a changing musical factor."[306] The constant factor is a "continuously repeated bass line" while the changing factor is "a series of melodic or rhythmic variations unfolding in the upper musical lines."[307] Ennis's use of "divergent"

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[306] Miles Hoffmann, *The NPR Classical Music Companion* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 48.
[307] Ibid.

rather than "melodic" or "rhythmic" variations for the composition suggests that he is moved by an impulse to transgress traditional structures; at the same time, he still sees the composition as a way to control or "hold together" its diversity. In his attempt to combine multiple and "divergent" variations which mirror his personal vision Ennis creates a musical form which cannot contain the chaos that Ennis, obstinately, is imposing on its traditional form. Ennis's composition fails when the many variations sustained by the "strong eight-bar theme" eventually dissolve into "a welter of dissonance," (AVOB, 110) followed by "an agony of mutation" and then "silence." (AVOB, 110)

Ennis's *Passacaglia* is also disrupted by the incorporation of non-musical elements within its musical structure. The notes which "trigger" the composition in Ennis's mind are suggested by Concepcion's and Barasi's names, "Already the wedding march was stirring in that compartment of his mind which dealt with musical creation: the three C's of Concepción's name; Barasi—B flat, A, A, E flat—become a Schumannian 'Sphinx.'" (AVOB, 63) A "Sphinx" is the musical pattern which Robert Schuman created for his set of pieces *Carnaval*. Schumann was known for his use of musical themes based on combinations of letters whose function went beyond the purely musical, and which remain indecipherable.[308] As Slavoj Žižek points out in *The Plague of Fantasies*, in Schumann's *Carnaval*, the "Sphinxes" section "is merely written and cannot be performed."[309] By inserting an (empty) linguistic signifier within a musical space, Žižek argues, Schumann is transgressing rules of musical composition, with the Sphinx acting as an "absent, impossible-real point of reference: a series of bare notes without any

[308] Eric Frederick Jensen, *Schumann* (New York: Oxford University Press US, 2005), 150–52.
[309] Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 206.

measure or harmony"[310] which have a destabilizing effect on the composition as a whole. In Ennis's *Passacaglia*, the "Sphinx" is the origin or centre of the composition but it has no meaning within a musical context. Ennis's dream of artistic order in a structure which can contain a multitude of fantastic and divergent variations is too rebellious, too experimental to work.

The *Passacaglia*'s formal excess is also connected to the operations of Ennis's unconscious. Ennis himself is aware of the role of the unconscious in artistic creation, as he explains to Lavinia in the second part of the narrative:

> You don't create anything with any real conscious intention. Your unconscious throws up a theme and a faint glimmering of its possibilities, then you get another theme, or even a whole crowd of them, and you're being more or less ordered to get down to work. Then you're so concerned with hammering the work that you haven't the time to think about expressing emotions, ideas and so on. (AVOB, 137)

From this description it becomes apparent that Ennis views the process of composition as the taming or shaping of powerful and potentially disruptive unconscious forces,[311] with the artist in the role of engineer or builder—like Stephen Dedalus's famous "artificer" or Burgess's image of the engineer working with "clockwork precision," which Burgess associates with Joyce. This image of the artist assailed by unconscious and bodily forces recurs in Burgess's novels—Enderby's frantic struggles with the poetic muse or WS discovering that poetic language emanates from the body. Burgess's artists are ambivalently poised between their "duty" to the symbolic order, and their disruptive internal, unconscious and bodily impulses. In *A Vision of Battlements*, Ennis experiences the same conflict. Christine Gengaro notes how in Burgess's novel sexual desire is

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[310] Ibid., 207.

[311] Significantly, in his introduction to the novel Burgess claims that he had used a mythical frame in order to "tame" his conflicting and painful feelings about his time in Gibraltar. (AVOB, 8)

directly connected with artistic creativity, "Ennis's compositional impetus is woven into sexual energy."[312]

As Bruce M. Firestone points out, for Ennis "sexual excitement becomes almost a necessary precondition for the creation of art."[313] As in *Inside Mr Enderby* and *Nothing like the Sun*, disruptive semiotic forces becomes associated with "dark" or "excessive" feminine figures. In *A Vision of Battlements*, Ennis's desire and creativity become associated with his Spanish lover Concepción. Concepción's name is highly ambivalent, fusing the virginal and carnal aspects of femininity. Concepción herself, by contrast, is the stereotypical dark female, whose obvious physical sensuality awakens Ennis's sexual desire. This desire sometimes is a paralyzing, rather than a liberating force, "His body had always responded to the mere sight of [Concepción] … [in] a slight sweat, a twitching of the hands, a constriction of the larynx." (AVOB, 141) Other times, however, her physical presence is the trigger of creativity and vice-versa:

> Excited as a new theme appeared or an old theme began to develop new possibilities, his pulse would start to race, and his nostrils would be suffused with that maddening smell of musk, his ears would tickle with the softness of her loosened hair. (AVOB, 69)

The negative, destructive effects of desire are also, and very playfully, explored in Burgess's text in a scene which also works both as a parody of Freud's libidinal theory of art and as an articulation of the process of artistic creation as a conflict between symbolic forces and transgressive, semiotic bodily forces. Bruce M. Firestone has remarked on the novel's somewhat ironic portrayal of the connection between sexual desire and inspiration. Firestone (quite ironically himself) notes how, in one scene, Ennis

[312] Gengaro, "Music as Subconscious in the Novels of Anthony Burgess," 179.
[313] Bruce M. Firestone, "Love's labor's Most: Sex and Art in Two Novels by Anthony Burgess," in *Critical Essays on Anthony Burgess*, 108.

becomes "inspired" by the copulation of flies on the ceiling, "Ennis need only watch two flies copulate on the ceiling and his bountiful muse descends."[314] The image of the flies is taken directly from one of Freud's *Delusion and Dream in Wilhelm Jensen's Gradiva*,[315] where he explores the relationship between art and unconscious desire:

> Ennis drank his tea, cutting off thought like a motor. And then, as he watched the copulation of flies on the ceiling, he listened to the emerging of a new theme in his mind. It had formed itself out of the "CCC" of Concepción and the "B flat AAE flat" of Barasi. At least he recognised the germ there. But now, a sturdy eight-bar bass was striding up and down, a passacaglia bass, a tune that would hold together the most fantastically divergent variations. He heard 'cellos, basses, two bassoons and a tuba. He began to make sketches, letting his second cup of tea go cold. When little Juanito appeared it was almost absent-mindedly that Ennis gave orders for the obscene savaging of Gregg's billet. (AVOB, 70)

In Jensen's story *Gradiva*, the main character is Hanold, a man who sublimates his desires in artistic images, but who is assailed constantly by the same sexual desires which he tries to repress. Freud's analysis of the text uncovers a network of images which, he argues, are a manifestation of Hanold's unconscious desires. One image of flies copulating arouses powerful feelings of disgust triggered off by the "gross animality" of the image.[316] In *A Vision of Battlements*, conversely, the vision of the flies stimulates Ennis's creative impulse, leading to the emergence of a new musical theme.[317] The process of artistic creation is depicted in this passage as the "emergence" of semiotic desires through the symbolic. The semiotic, as Kristeva notes, is ambiguous, both "assimilating and destructive."[318] In this passage, symbolic control is signified by the

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[314] Ibid.
[315] Sigmund Freud, *Delusion and Dream in Wilhelm Jensen's Gradiva*, trans. Helen M. Downey (Copenhagen and Los Angeles, CA: Green Integer, 2003), 41.
[316] Elizabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984), 31.
[317] Also, In Burgess's text, physical disgust is playfully associated with creativity, in a way that prefigures the exploration of the same theme in other novels, like *Inside Mr Enderby, Nothing like the Sun* , *M/F* , all examined in this dissertation, and also in *ABBA ABBA*.
[318] In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva associates the semiotic with the death drive. See 27–28.

"sturdy eight-bar bass" sustaining the linear development of the composition while the energies of the semiotic are articulated in the variations and harmonics from the "cellos, basses ... bassoons and tuba," and by Ennis's quick "sketches." As Kristeva points out, the process of creation also involves a confrontation with the destructive element of the semiotic and its connection to the death drive.[319] In this passage, the destructive impulses triggered by the process of creation are playfully conveyed by the image of Ennis "absent-mindedly" ordering Juanito to destroy the Sergeant's billet.

Ennis's internal conflict is articulated on the harmonic level of the text, as outlined above. As the narrative follows its linear progression, describing Ennis's actions in a causal way, the language of the text begins to "sound all its harmonics,"[320] triggering off the disruptive play of the text. One of these playful patterns works on the double logic of the pun to convey the simultaneous co-existence of stability and disruption in Ennis's psyche. This dialogue is set to work in the expression "his art got in the way," (AVOB, 37) which refers initially to Ennis's neglect of his duties as a husband and as a soldier for his artistic vision:

> Ennis... tried to see himself transformed into a worthy consort for Laurel. It was not easy. And yet he desperately wanted conformity, stability. There was no lack of offers: the Army said "Do try and be a good soldier"; the Church said "Come back"; Laurel now came along with "Elevate yourself to my world." The trouble was, of course, that his art got in the way. (AVOB, 37)

The word "art" is a pun on "heart" (pronounced without the "h") and "art," and signifies, in a playful and ironic way, Ennis's double-bind, his inability to separate his emotions from his ideal artistic vision. In linguistic terms, furthermore, the pun recalls the distinction between formal and informal forms of language as a marker of social class

[319] Ibid., 29.
[320] Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody*, 138.

already foregrounded in the novel's Prologue, in June's colloquial speech. In this context, the expression "Ennis's 'art'" suggests Ennis's insecurities and sense of inferiority over his social class in relation to his wife's middle class family, "He was aware of his base stock, of her family's condescension to him." (AVOB, 88) This insecurity manifests itself in his speech: "Sometimes ... a Lancashire over-correction would disfigure a vowel at the dinner table; it was so charmingly ignored by the family, who breathed out Received Standard as they breathed in air." (AVOB, 88) The pun on "art," then, articulates Ennis's ambivalent position in relation to his social standing, his speech and his artistic vision. Ennis inhabits the boundary between "either/or"—between the ideal and the real worlds, conformity and rebellion, reason and the irrational. The novel conveys this ambivalence by means of double patterns and dialogic structures which mark the dynamic co-existence of opposing elements in Ennis's psyche. These structures include puns, poetic and musical patterns, and dream and carnivalesque logics, which articulate both Ennis's instability and also trigger the play of the text.

The passage leading up to Ennis's speech to the Dockers and the ensuing fight at the end of Chapter Two employs musical rhythm to convey the ambivalence in Ennis's "art." At the same time, the passage is structured as counterpoint, with Ennis's speech working as a parodic and carnivalesque inversion of Aeneas's address to his men in Book I of *The Aeneid*, and simultaneously as a playful critique of the "art" of Rhetoric. The passage begins with Ennis walking towards the lecture room where he is to deliver a talk about "the future of the British Empire." (AVOB, 39) As he walks Ennis is preoccupied with thoughts about his role as "a mere mouthpiece for the inchoate feelings of the many inarticulate." (AVOB, 38) Ennis's thoughts, in the meantime, are "orchestrated" by "the

march and countermarch" and "the throb and rattle" rhythms from the brass band rehearsing in the square. (AVOB, 38) The double movement of the march and the "throb" of the drums creates a rhythm suggesting the beat of Ennis's heart. The correspondence between musical rhythm and heart-beat is emphasized further by the "copper-bright harmonics" of the drum-major's staff, spinning "up in the air, down again" and flashing in the sun, which suggest Ennis's fear and excitement as he approaches the lecture hall. This steady movement is abruptly disrupted by the appearance of the men of the Docks Operating Group, "simian, distrustful, the hardest men on the whole rock to handle" (AVOB, 39) and the cacophonous noise of their "dissentient growls" (AVOB, 39) and "animal noises." (AVOB, 40) Ennis soon loses control of the situation and the lecture hall is transformed into an irreverent carnivalesque scene where a grotesque "near-bald simian" soldier "with the light of lunacy in his eyes" takes Ennis's role and begins chanting a "dreadful lunatic singsong." (AVOB, 40) Ennis, in turn, joins in with the "curses" and "sobbing noises" from the other soldiers, who have begun to follow the lunatic's song, and "with an actor's loud sob" (AVOB, 41) delivers a passionate speech on the hardships endured by the troops which is no more to him than a mere rhetorical gesture, "a bard's utterance" in which "the act of expression meant everything, the content nothing." (AVOB, 38)

The lecture, then, becomes then a "three-ring circus" with Ennis playing the part of a "stuffed dummy … spouting yards of tripe about the British Empire," surrounded by a "tashed gangster," a "demented jack sobbing inarticulate curses." (AVOB, 41) This grotesque parody of an army lecture reaches its culmination in a carnivalesque celebration of disorder, as Ennis becomes their "crowned" fool: "The men rose, cheered,

knocking over benches and trestle-tables. … "Good old Sarge!" "He is alright, he is." (AVOB, 41) Marianthe Colakis observes that Ennis's lecture to the Dockers works as a parodic inversion of Aeneas's famous address to his men ending with the line "forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit." (1.203)[321] In the *Aeneid* Aeneas's presence and words succeed in calming his men, while in Burgess's novel Ennis's words, as Colakis notes, "meet with only jeers until he admits the hypocrisy of their mission and ends up crying 'To hell with this lecture!'"[322]

The scene then moves from the hall to a Spanish bar where "an orchestra of ladies was playing." (AVOB, 41) The movement from an exclusively male environment to a female one is consistent with the ambivalent dynamic of the text set up earlier on by the "march and countermarch" of the brass band. If the previous scene was an expression of Ennis's "art" and a parody of the "art" of Rhetoric, this scene articulates the disruptive power of his "art-heart" in a setting that brings together a cacophony of disparate elements: the brute dockers, an orchestra of piano and violins in the background, and, quite incongruously, a flamenco singer reciting a poem by the subversive Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca, set to a musical arrangement by Ennis himself. The emotive tone of the poem is set against the raucous noises from the dockers whistling at the musicians and shouting obscenities at the Spanish waiters. The scene breaks into chaotic farce when the singer is interrupted by "a rude noise" from "a private with a false left eye." (AVOB, 43) This sends Ennis into a paroxysm of rage and a string of insults, delivered in a playful musical repetitive rhythm: "You mannerless bastard. You moronic imbecilic animal sod.

[321] Colakis, "Sum Ineptus Aeneas: Anthony Burgess's *A Vision of Battlements*," 143. The line translates as "perhaps one day you will enjoy looking back even on what you now endure" (Virgil, *The Aeneid*, I.180–210, 33).
[322] Ibid.

You mindless get." (AVOB, 43) The scene ends ambiguously with a narratorial comment which repeats the line which framed the start of the passage, "This was what was meant by his art getting in the way." (AVOB, 43) In narrative terms, the repetition of the line emphasizes the circularity of the passage's structure; at the same time, the ironic tone calls attention to the passage's playfulness and irreverence.

At times in the novel, playful carnivalesque inversion gives way to a breakdown of boundaries between reality and dream, and the emergence of fantasies and hallucinations, the "visions of battlements" which disrupt (but are also a part of) Ennis's dream of order. As Kristeva remarks, carnivalesque discourse transgresses "rules of social morality" to expose what morality represses, its "underlying unconscious: sexuality and death."[323] One of these hallucinatory scenes takes place on a day that brings three events together: Concepción's wedding, the anniversary of Ennis's father's death and the end of the war in Europe. These events take place not long after the last passage on Ennis's "art." Thoughts of death send Ennis down a spiral of drunkenness and despair through bars and soldiers' quarters. Ennis's loss of control is articulated in a carnivalesque scene which operates on the borders between reality and the dream-world to signal Ennis's progressive loss of consciousness, and the irruption of the irrational. As Ennis loses control of his senses the scene takes on the quality of a nightmare populated by grotesque figures:

> Sergeants crammed in roaring – Ennis, Williams, a Scotsman with incipient D.T.s, an infantry pioneer sergeant called, because of his beard, John Player, an Air Force man in shoes of glace leather, a C.S.M with a wall-eye, a bomb-disposal sergeant with splayed feet, a young master gunner, a lean quartermaster and a fat one. (AVOB, 74)

[323] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 78.

Observing the scene is Scruffy, the "senior rock-ape … scuffled across the road, bear-like, with a silent snarl." (AVOB, 75) The ape's silent presence contrasts with the men's rowdiness and vulgar gestures, "[their] spotted bellies inflated with stirabout and [their] lousy shoulders rubbing the dirt off on [their] scratching-posts." (AVOB, 76) The animal and human worlds become playfully inverted and animal and men "ape" one another. Focalized through Ennis's drunken "swimming eyes," the scene becomes a grotesque "Hogarthian scene" where "petty officers and chiefs" alike become drunk and "snake ... around" performing dubious sexual acts. (AVOB, 76) The irreverence of the scene conveys Ennis's confusion and his progressive loss of control, as well as a sense of the progressive collapse of social order.

Ennis's total psychic breakdown is signified by his fall into the harbour, which takes place after the grotesque scene at the officers' quarters. According to De Vitis, the fall signifies Ennis's "attempt to establish a semblance of order out of the chaos of [his] life."[324] De Vitis interprets the symbolism of the "fall" in archetypal terms; Ennis must undergo a "sea-change"[325] before he can rejoin society and develop his artistic vision. Richard Matthews interprets the fall in specific religious and Biblical terms, as "a sort of ritualistic baptism ... a cleansing and sobering ceremony" which sets him on the path towards order and artistic creation.[326] My reading of this scene takes into account both interpretations, but focuses on Burgess's use of "linguistic" harmonics, and his symbolic use of the water and of logic of the dream as a way to explore the passage as an expression of the disruptive desires of the semiotic, and also as an articulation of the

[324] De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess*, 33.
[325] Ibid.
[326] Matthews, *The Clockwork Universe of Anthony Burgess*, 12–13.

intertextuality of the literary text. The passage begins with Ennis's literal fall into the slimy waters of the harbour:

> [D]own he went. The cold green oozy murk belched open to welcome him. He went straight down, the fathom of his height, then another, then another, with a splash and a glug, to the stillness of the men's surprise, blank as his own, then calls, the cries from above, the gurgling in green water, fathom by fathom down out of the light, the oozy coffin embracing him, his heavy boots, soaked clothing, down, down. In the close green world time was suspended, and events were laid out on a checkerboard: Concepción in bed, Laurel at home polishing her nails, his father opening a bottle, the line "*Wer reitet so spät?*" a chord of superposed fourths. He was happy as he gurgled in the water-air, in his element, he thought for a moment, prayer for a happy death, sin somewhere else, die in harness. (AVOB, 79)

The language and syntax of this passage convey the downwards pull of the body as it sinks down towards the bottom of the sea, "he went straight down ... then another, then another ... down, down." The sound of the water and its "thick" consistency are conveyed by phrases like "a splash and a glug" or "oozy murk." The image of the "oozy coffin" suggests solidity rather than the fluid movement of water—the solidity of the material world from which Ennis tries to escape in his art. In its foregrounding of the material elements of language, this passage offers an articulation of the process of "textual inspissation" or harmonic musicalization which Burgess aims to achieve in his writing. The description of Ennis's fall through the green oozy water articulates, almost literally, the "thickening" of the text, while the image of the "superposed" notes/images/thoughts suggests the confluence of musical and literary form, a confluence that Burgess sought throughout his writing career. One of the "notes" in Ennis's dream, "*Wer reitet so spät?*" articulates this desire. The line comes from *Erlkönig,* a poem by Goethe which was set to

music by Schubert. Schubert's composition is known for its perfect marriage of poetic and musical form.[327]

At the same time, in psychoanalytic terms, water signifies the unconscious and also the dream world, as well as desire and the maternal, both disruptive forces. Burgess's use of the water image to represent the unconscious is evident. Ennis enters "a close green world" where linear "time is suspended" and replaced by the simultaneous logic of the dream. Images from his past are "laid out on a checkerboard" and he experiences them simultaneously as a "chord of superposed fourths." Ennis appears happily "gurgl[ing]" in "his element," music, a perfect world from which he does not want to emerge. At the same time, this "element" is ambiguous for Ennis, as elemental as the mother's womb but also threatening, because it signifies the end of time and desire, "a happy death." The sea-water here also represents the maternal as a threatening, excessive and engulfing material and destructive force—an image which will re-appear in other Burgess novels. In *Inside Mr Enderby* and later in *Enderby Outside*, the green sea is associated first with Enderby's stepmother and then simply with the image of the mother as "*la belle mer* or *la belle-mère*."[328] In its articulation of poetic plurality, the language of this passage also conveys the threat of dissolution associated with the semiotic impulse and its connection with the death drive.

As well as exploring language's poetic and musical elements and their connection with the unconscious, the passage's dream logic triggers the intertextual play of the text, by establishing a dialogue with other texts which also explore the metaphor of rebirth.

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[327] In *Erlkönig* poetic and musical forms converge in a "visible image." Kenneth S. Whitton, *Goethe and Schubert: The Unseen Bond* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1999), 135.
[328] Burgess, *You've Had Your Time: Being the Second Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess* (London: Penguin, 1990), 16.

The word that triggers this intertextual play is "fathom," repeated exactly five times to invoke the line from Ariel's song in *The Tempest*: "Full fathom five your father lies/Of his bones are coral made." (I. ii. 398–9). [329] This line re-appears in *The Wasteland*, recited by Phlebas the Phoenician sailor, another character who undergoes a transformation in the water, "As he rose and fell/He passed the stages of his age and youth/entering the whirlpool." (IV. 316-9) [330] Like Phlebas, Ennis also experiences "the stages" of his life simultaneously. In the game of chess section of Eliot's poem the ancient and the modern worlds are juxtaposed in a way that the two seem to co-exist in one moment of time, "suspended" like Ennis in the "close green world." Intertextuality here also works as a metaphor for Ennis's fragmented sense of self as he emerges from the stability of womb/unconscious to the instability of the outside world.

As Ennis emerges from the sea in a playful re-enactment of the birth process, "he slid up the embracing body of the water, towards the now alien light, towards braining himself on the boat's bottom," (AVOB, 79) he is confronted by a fragmented reality, made up from a plurality of images, languages and "pieces" from other texts: the "helpful faces" of the Spanish sailors, whose hands "held out" are also the hands stretched ("*tendebant manus*") by the souls of the unburied in Book Six of the *Aeneid*; the Spanish word for watch, "reloj," Ennis's "passport to time reclaimed" (AVOB, 79); the first line from Baudelaire's poem "L'Albatross," "*Souvent pour s'amuser les homes d'equipage,*" which triggers off an association between the "clumsy" albatross captured by the sailors in Baudelaire's poem and Ennis. Ennis is also associated with the figure of Lycidas, in Milton's elegy for his friend the poet Edward King, who died by drowning,

[329] Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel,123.
[330] T. S. Eliot, *The Wasteland* in *Collected Poems, 1909–1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), 75.

"Where were you Nymphs when the remorseless deed Clos'd the head of your lov'd *Lycidas*?" (AVOB, 79) In this passage (which is also Ennis's rite of "passage" and an articulation of the passage of the semiotic into the symbolic) subjective identity, like literary language, is constructed as a plurality of texts—a fragmented rather than unified "totality," not unlike Ennis's *Passacaglia*. Like Ennis's *Passacaglia*, however, fragmentation leads to instability and disruption: of identity, of language, of structure.

The plurality and productivity of the text is articulated further in Ennis's journey through La Linea, the border town between British Gibraltar and Spain, before the end of the novel. La Linea, as its name suggests, is a carnivalesque threshold or "liminal" space where social laws and laws of morality and mocked and transgressed; it is also a dream-scene where language becomes open and fluid. It is also, as I already pointed out in Chapter One, a "border space," a geographical location where diverse cultures meet and interact and where identity and language become multiple and fluid.[331] For Ennis, this journey is the last stage in his artistic and personal development, the point where he is forced to confront and experience the disorder which threatens, but is also part of his ambivalent artistic vision. Within the epic framing of the novel, this section corresponds to Aeneas's journey to the Underworld in Book VI of the *Aeneid*. Burgess pluralizes this structure further by borrowing elements from literary texts which also incorporate the classical archetypal journey, particularly the *Inferno* section in Dante's *The Divine Comedy* and "Circe" in Joyce's *Ulysses*, although there are also some intertextual references to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *The Wasteland*, two texts which employ archetypes in their structures and also explore linguistic fragmentation and

[331] As D. Emily Hicks puts it, the inhabitant of the border, "the border crosser," is "both 'self' and 'other.'" *Border Writing: The Multidimensional Text*, xxvi.

multiplicity. Each intertext has a specific thematic relevance to Ennis's narrative, while at the same time self-reflexively calling attention to the "literariness" of the passage.

At the border, Ennis and his friend Julian Agate (as Aeneas and the Sybil, and also Dante and Virgil) encounter a group of ill-uniformed guards at the "shabby rococo façade of the frontier" (AVOB, 220) and their leader, called Dogface—a humorous reference to Cerberus, the mythical guardian of the Underworld. After they enter "the proscenium arch of a cold inferno" they pass through "the shining neutral stretch," which is similar to Hell's first circle or "Limbo" in Dante's *Comedy*. Immediately after they enter the second circle reserved for carnal sinners[332] like the adulterers Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini, to whom Ennis and Concepción had been associated earlier on in the text.[333] La Linea's "Hell" is figured as a place of decay and sexual corruption. As Ennis and Agate enter the Spanish border town, they are approached by animalistic figures: a "skeletal sexless" beggar child "whining like a caged monkey" and his "flatfooted" companion, "wailing like a lost soul," (AVOB, 221) or prostitutes "rub[bing] up to the unwary soldiers, galvanising their plucked painted skulls into a grimace of proffered abandon." (AVOB, 225)

Ennis and Agate are confronted by a landscape that recalls Eliot's "Unreal city" in *The Wasteland* and the images of disorder and decay in *A Portrait of the Artist*:

> They walked down the main street, picking their way through a mess of cabbage leaves, avoiding a dead cat—its mangy fur jewelled with rain—as they went. Ragged urchins played with bits of filth – mud dollops, old cigarette packets, abandoned condoms; there were limping, crutched, eyeless veterans of the Civil War begging

[332] The place where "The sensual sinners who subject the reason/Beneath their lusts …" (Canto V, 38–39) Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Peter Dale, (London: Anvil Press, 2003).
[333] Ennis compares his relationship to Concepcion to that of the two doomed lovers in *The Divine Comedy*, "'Paolo and Francesca, said Ennis.' He grinned wearily: [Concepcion] hadn't read Dante." (AVOB, 25).

> with held out boxes and tin mugs. Black widows roamed the streets hopelessly; everywhere whores made clicking noises, jerking their heads in invitation. An old man pushed a handcart loaded with rubbish-sacks up a ramp, patiently, weakly, suffering the handcart's pushing back. A younger man without many teeth rode a trick monocycle grimly, a boy taking the hat around. (AVOB, 221)

The image of the "mess of cabbage leaves" echoes the "faint sour stink of rotted cabbages" that assails Stephen Dedalus when he returns to his family home, and signifies the corruption of the real world and the "the misrule and confusion of his father's house,"[334] while the "mud dollops" and "cigarette packets" conjure up the "battered canisters and clots and coils of solid excrement" lying among "the tufts of rank stiff growth"[335] in his path. The "limping, crutched, eyeless veterans" and the "black widows" roaming the streets hopelessly recall the lines in *The Wasteland*, "A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many/I had not thought death had undone so many," (I. 62-3)[336] while the "eyeless" veterans are like the "hollow men" in Eliot's poem, "The eyes are not here/There are no eyes here/In this valley of dying stars." (IV. 52-4)[337] These images of chaos, physical decay convey the more disturbing aspects of the material and real world that disrupt Ennis's dream of artistic order.

The other intertext with which this section establishes a close dialogue is the "Circe" episode in *Ulysses*, a text which Burgess analyzes at length in *Here Comes Everybody* and in *Joysprick*. Burgess is particularly interested in Joyce's use of "dream language" in this episode. According to Burgess, in "Circe" Joyce "contrive[s] an oneiric language" by means of "musical" effects such as free lexical combinations, modulation, fracturing and the "ridiculous deformation" of images, words and sounds in order to present "the human

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[334] James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Triad Grafton, 1990), 148.
[335] Ibid., 126.
[336] T. S. Eliot, *The Wasteland*, 65.
[337] T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men," *Collected Poems, 1909–1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), 91.

mind set upon by bad magic which kills the rational and promotes the bestial."[338] Joyce's fashioning of a kind of oneiric or hallucinatory language in this episode has been widely explored by critics. Daniel Ferrer, in particular, focuses on how the "hallucinatory technique" subverts the "principle of representation"[339] without denying its validity. For Ferrer, the world represented in Circe is a double scene in the Freudian sense, where "or" is replaced by "and"—"the theatre of dream or phantasy" and a "copy" of reality.[340]

The Hell of "La Linea" in *A Vision of Battlements* is also a "hallucinatory" landscape in this sense, a carnivalesque "borderline" space between the real and dream worlds, with Ennis and Agate as parodic versions of Stephen and Bloom. The carnivalesque scene, as Kristeva notes, is a space of linguistic exploration as well as a dream scenario where boundaries are transgressed and hierarchies overturned. In the carnivalesque ambivalent structure language "becomes conscious of itself as *sign*"[341] and stages its operations as "drama in three dimensions."[342] The name La Linea itself articulates this ambivalence, a signifier of both "representation by language and experience in language," in Kristeva's terms.[343]

On the one hand, La Linea refers to a real place, a destitute, dilapidated old Spanish town plagued by poverty and social injustice, populated by beggars, skeletal children and old prostitutes, "the rash, pox and caries of the sick state." (AVOB, 223) This depiction of the borderland between British Gibraltar and Spain as a "hell" in fact adheres to

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[338] Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody. An Introduction to James Joyce for the Ordinary Reader* (Middlesex: Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1982), 145.
[339] Daniel Ferrer, "Circe, Regret and Regression," in *Post-Structuralist Joyce*, eds. Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 142.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 84.
[342] Ibid.
[343] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 85.

conventional colonial stereotypes about the border as "a place of deplorable cultural mixing, intellectual and creative vacuum and moral depravity."[344] At the same time, within the dream structure of the text, "La Linea" triggers the play of the text through a pun generated by its full name, "La Linea de la Concepción," a pun which transgresses the "linearity" of the proper name and releases language's multiplicity—a feature of the border territory. The name "Concepción" refers to the patron of the town, the Virgin Mary, the Immaculate Conception. In contrast with its holy name, the town is now a brothel for both Spanish and British visitors. The "venerated" figure of the Immaculate Conception has become a "venereal shrine" and the pilgrims "suppliants … each with his heavy bag of seed to throw on the rotten, barren ground." (AVOB, 225) In the transitional and carnivalesque space of La Linea the sacred and the profane merge in the punning between the words "venerate" and "venereal," both etymologically derived from "Venus," the Goddess of love. The sacred and the profane are not only brought together but also inverted in La Linea's ambivalent space. In a café called "La casa de papel," (a parody of the Church, which was built on a rock, a punning on Peter's name), a "hell of heat ... and infernal gleams," Ennis recites religious poetry by St John of the Cross while, in a parody of the Eucharist, he drinks wine that is "blood, earth, iron, dirty water" and eats "platters of unleavened bread," (AVOB, 224) while the jukebox plays the part of the priest, accompanied by a choir of old Spanish prostitutes singing "tortured Latin" in "harsh andalusian voices." (AVOB, 226)

Another scene, set in a different bar, becomes an active exploration of linguistic variety and hybridity (characteristic, again, of border territories) triggered by the

[344] Debra A. Castillo, "Border Theory and the Canon," in *Postcolonial Literatures*, 182.

onomatopoeic word "jig-a-jig," used by one of the prostitutes in Ennis's company as a code-word for sexual intercourse. Within the text's intertextual network, "jig-a-jig" echoes (literally) the sound of the quoits in Leopold Bloom's bed "Jigjag, Jigajiga, Jigjag," a signifier of Molly's adultery with Blazes Boyland.[345] Adultery, as we saw earlier on, is one of the sins punished in Dante's second circle of Hell. The word also prompts a humorous and incongruous "discussion" about language between Ennis and the prostitutes, which is reminiscent of Edwin Spindrift's linguistic lectures to an audience of thieves and petty criminals in London's "underworld" in *The Doctor is Sick*. This "linguistic exchange" articulates the plurality and playfulness of all language, not only literary discourse, thereby moving away from the negative depiction of La Linea as a desolate and barren "hell" to a more positive vision of this borderland as a space of linguistic and discursive productivity. As in *The Doctor is Sick,* the setting for this mock linguistics discussion is a tavern and the audience a group of condom-sellers and prostitutes "sitting bored in a corner." (AVOB, 222) The word discussed is "mungie," a corruption of the Italian "mangiare," (to eat) employed by both "Spanish workman and English tommy" as a derogatory term to refer to "the food in the Spaniard's basket." (AVOB, 222) "Mungie" also suggests the Latin word "mingere," meaning "to mix," [Lewis] an appropriate term for the "mixing" of high and low social groups and academic and colloquial registers in this scene. While Ennis is focused on the "meaning" of the word "mungie," the prostitutes play with the adjective "Italian" in the phrases "Italiano, poor a pi" and "poor as piss," articulating the productivity of language, the plurality that Ennis is attempting to fix into one single meaning.

[345] Joyce, "Circe," *Ulysses*, 444.

Ennis's search for meaning in the carnival and dream word of La Linea is tied in with his search for Concepción, his abandoned lover and also a symbol of artistic creation, although in its more disruptive form. The death of Concepción, which Ennis discovers when he meets Barasi at the end of his journey, signifies the end of his artistic dream of bringing together many divergent variations within one structure, although not the end of his artistic ambitions. In the Epilogue to the novel, which re-establishes the linear progression of the narrative, Ennis is on his way back to England, and as De Vitis notes, with the hope of regaining "some sense of purpose" in his life.[346] His last words before leaving La Linea, "I must learn to grow up," (AVOB, 236) according to De Vitis, convey this sense of purpose. Ennis's need for purpose and order is expressed in the musical composition which begins on the ship, a work of total "Economy. Absolute unity of construction." (AVOB, 240) But behind Ennis's symbolic control, desire continues to pulsate:

> Images droned through his brain without sequence as he stared steadily at the bay. From among the drift of his mind a theme emerged. With a tiny pulse of excitement he heard its possibilities. A string quartet obviously. Last movement. There must be another theme logically anterior to this one; that would make the first movement. No real sonata form, no great length. (AVOB, 240)

The "droning" images, the "pulse of excitement" and the piece's lack of form are all expressions of potentially disruptive desire, while the concern with a logical progression conveys his need for fixity, for control. Ennis's artistic journey, "[t]his slow agonising exultant process of useless creation," (AVOB, 240) will always be "orchestrated" by the conflicting demands of his ambivalent, disruptive and subversive "art." *A Vision of Battlements* voices a strong critique of excessive order and control: Ennis's *Passacaglia*

[346] De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess*, 39.

ultimately fails because it is too controlled and does not allow for the expression of the diversity, plurality and materiality which are such an important part of his experience of the world—the experience which he attempts to "capture," rather than "express." The ending suggests that art must be conceived as a dynamic encounter between opposing but also complementary forces, not a rigid structure of containment.

In formal terms, A *Vision of Battlements* can also be considered subversive of established notions of order and fixity, even if its main concern appears to be the construction of a structure of order. From the start, in fact, the novel is very much engaged in the subversion of its own structuring principles. Through the carnivalesque inversion of its epic pattern and the dynamic musicalization of its language, *A Vision of Battlements*, quite self-consciously, creates an ambivalent space where order, structure, representation and meaning become disrupted and transgressed by linguistic plurality, playful word-play and intertextuality generated within its new open and dynamized structure. At the same time, and in spite of this playfulness and subversive spirit, the notion of order remains an important concern, a concern which is also apparent in the next four novels examined in this thesis, and which emerges out of the ambivalence between order and transgression which structures Burgess's writing and his texts.

CHAPTER THREE

The Doctor is Sick: The "Trials" of the Poetic Subject

Generally known amongst critics as one of the novels of his "terminal year,"[347] *The Doctor is Sick* is regarded as one of Burgess's most autobiographical novels as it presents itself as a fictional reconstruction of one of the most publicized (and self-mythologized) events in Burgess's life: his collapse while teaching in a college in Brunei (which prompted his early return to England), followed by the diagnosis of a brain tumour, his retirement from colonial service and the beginning of his novelistic career.[348] Andrew Biswell argues that after his return to England from his colonial service, Burgess "made a firm decision in favour of domestic social realism,"[349] motivated by his concern with what he deemed the decay in moral and cultural values in England at the time.[350] Biswell lists *The Doctor is Sick* amongst these "social-realist" novels, which include *The Right to an Answer*, *Devil of a State*, *One Hand Clapping* and *The Worm and the Ring*, all published between 1960 and 1961. At the same time, as De Vitis argues, *The Doctor is Sick*'s preoccupations go beyond social commentary to encompass important philosophical and linguistic issues which were of particular interest to Burgess at the

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[347] Samuel Coale, *Anthony Burgess*, 105. The novels of this period include *The Doctor is Sick* (1960), *The Right to an Answer* (1960), *Devil of a State* (1961), *One Hand Clapping* (as Joseph Kell,1961), *The Worm and the Ring* (written in 1951) and also *Inside Mr Enderby*, published in 1963 but written three years earlier.

[348] This statement requires some qualification, though. As we have seen, Burgess had already written *A Vision of Battlements*, and he had also published three novels while working for the Colonial Educational Service in Malaya, as it was modern Malaysia was known then: *Time for a Tiger* (1956), *The Enemy in the Blanket* (1958) and *Beds in the East* (1959). These novels examine Malaya's transition from protectorate to independent state and were later published in one volume as *The Malayan Trilogy* (in England) and *The Long Day Wanes* (in America).

[349] Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 224.

[350] Ibid.

time.[351] One of these issues is that of linguistic representation, and the distinction between communicative or referential, and literary or self-referential language.[352] In *You've Had Your Time*, Burgess makes a distinction between the novel as representation of reality and the novel as a work in language by arguing that "[the] task of [a work of fiction] is to present or distort the real world through words."[353] *The Doctor is Sick* situates itself between the representational and non-representational aspects of language by focusing on what Denis Donoghue calls "the ambiguity of words."[354] *The Doctor is Sick* is particularly concerned with the plurality of language and the subject's unstable position within it, both articulated in a dynamic and playful writing which is ambivalently poised between referentiality and poetic play, continually tracing the movement between the two.

The previous chapter explored *A Vision of Battlements*' ambivalence between narrative stability and productive/disruptive intertextual (and linguistic) play, and the crisis in the creative subject who wants to conform but is always disrupted by his internal, transgressive impulses, and by external forces. *The Doctor is Sick* also explores the crisis or "trial" of the subject, although this time the character is not an artist but a doctor in Linguistics called Edwin Spindrift, who finds himself caught between the referential and communicative aspects of language and its material and poetic dimensions.[355] Spindrift is so obsessed with language's material and formal elements that he has forgotten its

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[351] De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess*, 80.
[352] These questions emerges from Burgess's study of Linguistics, one of his other academic interests, as manifested in his two monographs on language, *Language Made Plain* and *A Mouthful of Air*.
[353] Burgess, *You've Had Your Time*, 8.
[354] Denis Donoghue, "Experiments in Folly," *The New York Review of Books*, 9 June 1966.
[355] In one of his reviews on Linguistics in *Urgent Copy*, "On English in English," Burgess describes his joy in "watching [the] philologists at work" against "the continued autonomy of what they would all like to control." *Urgent Copy,* 212. This comment describes Spindrift's quandary in the novel, his attempts to fix and control language's multiplicity.

communicative and referential dimensions: "Apart from its accidents of sound, etymology and lexical definition did he really know the meaning of any one word?"[356] The novel explores the physical and psychological effects of Spindrift's obsession with words in a narrative which traces his treatment in a London neurological hospital, where he is reduced to a thing to be probed and dissected much in the same way that he had reduced language, and his subsequent adventures in London's criminal underworld, where, as Stinson remarks, he encounters "a world of material phenomena that everywhere reaches out to contact him as he moves through it."[357]

In a more radical way than Ennis, Spindrift articulates the "process-trial" of the linguistic subject who moves between symbolic order and semiotic disruption, always uncertain about his place in the world but still trying to establish a point of reference, looking for certainty in language while delighting in the sounds, rhythms and polysemous meanings of his "whirling world of words." (TDIS, 152) Spindrift's ambiguous and polysemic "poetic" discourse bears the mark of the continuous making and unmaking of his subjectivity in the dynamic between symbolic coherence and semiotic disruption. His name, "Dr Edwin Spindrift," suggests this ambivalence. Spindrift is a doctor in Linguistics—a "scientist" of language with "the most poetical name" in his university department. (TDIS, 93) The title "doctor" itself suggests a permanency that oppresses language's semantic play, connoted by the ambiguous "spindrift." The two separate words which form his name, "spin" and "drift," at the same time convey the continuous movement of his identity, always in process, never stable. "Spindrift," as one word,

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[356] Burgess, *The Doctor is Sick* (New York, London: W.W. Norton, 1997), 152. Hereafter cited in the text as (TDIS)
[357] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 69.

means "sea spray," and is also a line from a poem by Kipling;[358] in the second part of the novel, it becomes the name of a detergent and the title of a film. As his name suggests, Dr Spindrift inhabits a dynamic world of linguistic ambiguities, polysemous meanings and word-play, a world where signification is a changeable and fluid process rather than a static system. Spindrift delights in the experience of linguistic play for its own sake. As a result, he is no longer able to communicate with his wife and is unable to draw clear boundaries between his internal linguistic "reality" and the "real" external world. Spindrift is an individual in crisis, searching for a fixed meaning and a stable sense of self, and at the same time, continuously seduced by the joy of linguistic play for its own sake, a play which undermines the stable meaning and stable self that Spindrift seeks through the novel.[359]

This chapter explores how *The Doctor is Sick* articulates the trial of the poetic subject in an ambivalent discourse which oscillates between fixity and polysemy—between referential and poetic modes of language, to construct itself on the borders between the two. While *A Vision of Battlements* constructs itself on the model of a musical score to create the movement between narrative and linguistic play which constitutes the novel's ambivalence, *The Doctor is Sick* employs the double structures of the carnivalesque and dream discourses to convey the disruptive ambiguity and plurality of language, and the anxiety of the subject who wants to and at the same time *cannot* remain fixed within the symbolic.

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[358] This line is misquoted by the mysterious clergyman who visits Spindrift in his hospital bed at the end at the end of the novel as "something, something spindrift and the fulmar flying free." (TDIS, 244)

[359] Aggeler analyzes the novel as a man's "quest" for a better "understanding of himself." *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 126. Coale also interprets the novel as "the universal or mythic quest for self-identity and understanding." *Anthony Burgess,* 105.

Spindrift's ambivalent oscillation between fear and joy in the "meaning-less" play of language is articulated in this double, carnival and dream structure which marks the rhythm of Spindrift's trial" in language, as he moves between reality and his internal, linguistic-poetic world, with no clear distinction between the two. At the same time, the narrative follows a linear progression, tracing Spindrift's experiences in the hospital and, later, his search for his wife through London's criminal underworld. Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn has remarked on the parallels between Spindrift's search for his elusive wife Sheila and Orpheus's mythical search for Eurydice. In Burgess's recasting of the myth, however, Sheila becomes the link between Spindrift and the real world, "escort[ing] him back to the world of the living, namely the hospital world."[360] The association between Spindrift and Orpheus is particularly significant here: according to traditional myth, Orpheus is a skilled poet and musician who can "set rocks and trees in motion by his singing."[361] Similarly, Spindrift experiences language as fluid, motile—musical.[362] Spindrift is "set in motion" by his poetic, "Orphic" impulses.[363]

This narrative is divided into two sections. The first section takes place in the neurological hospital where Spindrift is undergoing clinical examinations for a suspected brain tumour. The hospital section of the novel points towards the real world; but this is still a "reality" structured by Spindrift's fluid and plural discourse. The second part, Spindrift's Orpheus-like search for Sheila through London's criminal "underworld,"

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[360] Ghosh-Schellhorn, *Anthony Burgess: A Study in Character*, 143.
[361] Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, trans. Robin Hard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 30.
[362] I would like to thank Will Rossiter for calling my attention to the significance of Orpheus in *The Doctor is Sick*.
[363] Significantly, the "Orphic" cults attributed to Orpheus include rituals to Demeter or similar Great Mother figure, as well as Dionysius (or Dionysos) and other Bacchic figures. Radcliffe G. Edmonds III, "Orphic Mythology," in *A Companion to Greek Mythology*, eds. Ken Dowden and Niall Livingstone (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 83.

takes place in Spindrift's dream-world, or, as Samuel Coale describes it, in "the comic nightmare of [Spindrift's] own diseased mind."[364] For Ghosh-Schellhorn, Spindrift's journey is a quest for self-recognition and self-knowledge to be achieved through an understanding of the role of language in representing reality and bringing order to the chaos of experience.[365] The transition from one section to the other in the narrative is signaled in the text by Spindrift's passage from conscious to unconscious, after falling asleep on the eve of his operation. The boundaries between the two, however, remain undefined as he wakes "with mechanical suddenness, with no hint of a margin between dead sleep and complete wakefulness." (TDIS, 75) In this double, carnivalesque space between reality and fantasy Spindrift's sense of identity becomes fragmented and plural, and undergoes a continuous "process" between fixed meaning and linguistic ambiguity and play, always marked by anxiety over the possibility of total subjective disintegration and meaninglessness. This anxiety pervades Spindrift's "comic nightmare" through London's carnivalesque dream underworld, and prompts him to seek reassurance from his wife at the end of the novel that his experiences were are real and not the effect of the operation.[366]

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[364] Coale, *Anthony Burgess*, 109.

[365] See Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn, *Anthony Burgess: A Study in Character*, 150–3. Coale also analyzes Spindrift's "night journey" as a traditional mythical quest for "self-revelation." *Anthony Burgess*, 108–9. For Coale, however, the novel ultimately fails to achieve any clear resolution due to its propensity for the absurd: "Spindrift and his journey sink beneath the on-going rush of weird characters, crazy encounters, and undigested bits and pieces of episodes and incidents." Ibid, 110. What Coale sees as a weakness can in fact be interpreted as a mark of *The Doctor is Sick*'s ambivalent structure between linguistic order and textual subversion, as examined in the rest of the chapter.

[366] The issue of the "ontological" status of Spindrift's adventures has been the object of debate amongst Burgess's critics. Neither Samuel Coale nor John Stinson has paid much attention to the reality/dream nature of Spindrift's adventures. For Stinson, the issue is "not pivotally important" within the symbolic structure of the narrative, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 70. Farkas, on the other hand, devotes some space in his monograph to unravelling the dream/reality conundrum of Spindrift's adventures. See *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 69–70. See also Ghosh-Schellhorn, *Anthony Burgess: A Study in Character*, 151–52.

The novel opens with a scene in which Spindrift is undergoing a neurological examination. This scene dramatizes the "trial" of meaning and subjectivity as both fear and joy, at the same time that it articulates the subject's double-bind between the need to re-establish the connection between signifier and signified, which secures meaning and position, and the heterogeneous operations of the signifiers which deny this unity. Sense and non-sense, language and rhythm combine in a carnivalesque double scene where referentiality and linearity give way to linguistic play. The examination is conducted by Dr Railton, whose name suggests linearity and solidity against Spindrift's insubstantiality. Spindrift's symptoms include synaesthesia, or confusion of senses, and an inability to provide linguistic definitions. In medical terms these are evidence of neurological malfunction; in poetic terms, on the other hand, both "symptoms" are expressive of language's ambiguity and indeterminacy. The scene begins with the dialogical encounter between Dr Railton's authoritative linear and "punctual" discourse and Spindrift's fluid and poetic use of language:

> 'And what is *this* smell?' asked Dr Railton. He thrust a sort of ink-well under Edwin's nose. 'I may be wrong but I should say peppermint.' He awaited the quiz-master's gong. Beyond the screens that had been wheeled round his bed the rest of the ward could be heard eating. 'You *are* wrong, I'm afraid,' said Dr Railton. 'Lavender.' Gong. But he was still in the round. (TDIS, 1)

Dr Railton's demand for meaning is continually frustrated by Spindrift's inability to assign the correct name to the sensation. Dr Railton's claims for meaning are also undermined by his double position as expert and as "quiz-master."

Soon, the examination moves from playful game-show to judgement day scenario, with Dr Railton in the role of the devil pouncing "with a tuning-fork … sizzling like a poker, up to Edwin's right cheek." (TDIS, 2) This combination of different settings in the

text creates a carnivalesque space where the limits that Dr Railton tries to impose on Spindrift are immediately transgressed and dissolved by disruptive play of the semiotic, articulated in sounds and noises. Linearity is transgressed by the rhythm created by Dr Railton's "conducting" of the examination (in the musical sense), accompanied by the sound of the other patients' knives and forks "percuss[ing] and scrap[ing] weakly; an invalids' orchestra." (TDIS, 1) These sounds are accompanied by the "rattling at the ward windows" of "the dying English year … begging for a bed" (TDIS, 1) and the sound of the "ice-cream-eat[ing]" audience watching Spindrift' tests. (TDIS, 2)

The carnivalesque ambivalence of the scene is emphasized by Dr Railton's playfully ambiguous manner, masculine and authoritative but also "gentle" and "womanish," (TDIS, 1) reminding Spindrift that "none of this had to be taken *too* seriously." (TDIS, 3) The revelation at the end of the examination that Dr Railton is also "Eddie Railton," trumpet player and television star, adds to the sense of carnivalesque absurdity permeating the scene. The text's injunction not to take things "*too* seriously" is, however, undermined by a sense of nostalgia for the lost security once provided by meaning. This nostalgia for meaning is expressed by Spindrift's continuous mental and physical anxiety over his inability to provide a correct answer for Dr Railton.

This anxiety is articulated in Spindrift's failed attempt at defining the word "spiral." When Spindrift attempts to define the word "spiral" he realizes that no single definition can fix its meaning, simply because the term itself is unfixable:

> Dr Railton got in quickly with: 'How would you define "spiral?' 'Spiral? Oh, You know, like a spiral staircase. Like a screw.' Both of Edwin's hands began to spiral in the air. 'Going up and up, turning all the time, but each turn getting progressively smaller and smaller till the whole thing just vanishes. You know

what I mean. ' Edwin begged with his eyes that his definition be accepted. (TDIS, 2)

Spindrift's description of the spiral, in fact, offers an apt textual articulation of the process that Lacan describes as the "incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier"[367] along the signifying chain. Lacan uses the image of the signifier that becomes the subject for another signifier in a chain that resembles the "rings of a necklace that is a ring in another necklace made of rings,"[368] not dissimilar to Spindrift's ever-gyrating spiral. In Lacan's model, there is always a gap between signifier and signified, and this gap can never be filled by any one meaning. In contrast to Lacan, Kristeva believes that poetic language "replet[es] the arbitrary void that separates the signifier from the signified" by opening signification up to the heterogeneous energies of the semiotic.[369] Spindrift's description of the spiral articulates this act of "repletion" when, in a desperate attempt to fix signifier to an elusive signified, he uses analogy ("like a spiral staircase" and "like a screw")[370] and gestural language in a way that to conveys the spiral's mobility and unfixity. Instead of vanishing, in this process, the "spiral" emerges in the passage as an intertextuality, connoting Spindrift's own plural and unfixed identity.

Spindrift wants to communicate meaning but he also needs to express (and share) his *jouissance,* his joy in linguistic ambiguity and play. The expression of *jouissance*, at the same time, is highly unsettling for the subject as it can lead to the collapse of meaning.

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[367] Jacques Lacan, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious," in *Ecrits. A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London and New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 154.
[368] Ibid., 153.
[369] Kristeva, "The Speaking Subject," *On Signs*, ed. Marshall Blonsky (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 215.
[370] We could also say that Spindrift is acting out the operations of a "trope." A trope is a turning "from a commonplace mode of signification," to mean "something more or something else." *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 833.

The unsettling operations of *jouissance* in language are articulated in the text in the operations of Folk Etymology, an area of linguistic study which holds a particular fascination with Burgess.[371] Folk Etymology is "the process of altering otherwise incomprehensible words in order to give them a semblance of meaning."[372] This is one of the ways in which foreign or unusual words are absorbed into speech, although the process tends to be arbitrary. Spindrift describes Folk Etymology as the process of "assimilating the unknown to the known [and] refusing to admit that a foreign word is really foreign." (TDIS, 6) This description seems to favour reason over the irrational: language has a tendency to erase differences. At the same time, however, it hints at hidden processes within language which resist normalization. The "foreignness" of the original term cannot be completely erased, emerging in the same process of analysis which aims to categorize it. Folk Etymology, it can be argued, displays the same type of ambivalent, double logic that Kristeva sees as specific of poetic and carnivalesque discourses. The incorporation of the "foreign" word within the socially accepted term betrays a desire to assimilate and erase all differences. At the same time, etymological analysis reveals the continuous existence of the "foreign" term within the normalized form, as both a "remainder" (what is "left over") or cannot be assimilated after signification, and a "reminder" (the echoes) of language's unending ability to generate new forms and meanings. It fixes meaning while, at the same time, exceeding it.

This process of continuous generation of sense unsettles meaning and the subjectivity of the speaking subject, who experiences linguistic multiplicity as pleasure (and thus as

[371] In one of the essays in *Homage to Qwertyuiop*, Burgess posits that "the overwhelming mystery about language lies in the arbitrariness of naming." "Abiding Mystery," in *Homage to Qwertyuiop*, 161.
[372] Anatoly Lieberman, *Word Origins and How We Know Them* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 46.

excess). The word "apricot," an example of folk etymology, arouses this "pleasure" in Spindrift, a pleasure derived from the confusion in its origins, which led to its current form as playful co-existence of the sacred and the profane:

> Edwin lay awake thinking of the wonder of the word 'apricot.' 'Apricock' in Shakespeare, the later version due to a confusion of stop consonants. 'Apricock ' led back to an Arabic form, 'al' the article glued to the loan-word 'praecox,' early, an early-ripe fruit. How charming divine philology. (TDIS, 40)

Spindrift's methodical analysis produces a linear and logical account of the linguistic changes that led from the Latin "praecox" to the modern English "apricot." This "charming" account is, however, simultaneously disrupted by the insistence of the word "cock" in the Shakespearean "Apricock," with its irreverent sexual undertones, emphasized further by the image of the "early-ripe fruit" and the alliteration of the liquid consonant in "al," "glued" and "loan," all of them resonating with "libidinal" echoes. "Divine philology" may be "charming" but it is also disruptive. Spindrift is caught between the pleasure of linguistic play and the call of reason, articulated in his final reflection over the value of etymology, "But did it really have any greater validity than the nightmare in the corner, the dream football results?" (TDIS, 40) This "nightmare" is the collapse of meaning, represented by one of the hospital mental patients, a "sneerer" who is continually reciting football results, with no sign of awareness or understanding.

The unsettling *jouissance* of the poetic subject (his "crisis") is articulated further in the section describing Spindrift's neurological tests. As Spindrift is subjected to more invasive tests the neurological hospital becomes a vision of Hell, a torture chamber where Spindrift's body is turned into "a mere thing" (TDIS, 39) to be dissected and classified, in the same way that he had once treated words "as things to be analysed and classified, and

not as part of the warm current of life." (TDIS, 153) Now, he is imprisoned in a ward, waiting to be cured of his obsession with word classification and be returned to "normal" life. (TDIS, 42) Ironically, this process of normalization is undermined by the very methods employed by the doctors, which result in disintegration rather than re-integration. Spindrift feels his vertebrae "collapse" during a spinal tap, and an electro-encephalogram floods his mind with "obscene" images of "cones, cubes, globes in malevolent colours which he could not define." (TDIS, 44) Spindrift comically tries to counteract the feeling of "disintegration, however subjective" (TDIS, 38) by literally holding on to his linguistic specialism, the bilabial fricative: "In his brain arms seemed to close around the bilabial fricative, to protect it from all these people with their white coats and lights and humming machines." (TDIS, 43) But to protect the "bilabial fricative" is also to protect language's fundamental ambiguity: the bilabial fricative is a single phoneme which can be actualized as either "v" or "w."[373] Spindrift may be horrified by the obscenity of the disparate images that the encephalogram projects in his brain, but he remains fascinated by what cannot be "defined."

During another test, an arteriogram, Spindrift experiences something close to simultaneous pleasure and pain, as his veins are injected with "dye." (TDIS, 49) A "confused" Spindrift experiences a coming together of disparate senses, a "synaesthetic miracle" as "a pain that seemed green in colour and tasted of silver oxide," accompanied by a feeling of total disintegration, "[a pain] shot down his face, gouging eyes out,

[373] The "bilabial fricative," like Folk Etymology, is one of Burgess's obsessions. In *A Mouthful of Air*, Burgess explores the function of this phoneme in Dickens's writing. *A Mouthful of Air* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1992), 45. This explanation is repeated by Spindrift in "Sam Weller did not, of course, interchange 'v' and 'w': he used a single phoneme for both: the bilabial fricative. But a recorder like Dickens, untrained phonetically, would think that he heard 'v' when he expected 'w,' 'w' when he expected 'v.'" (TDIS, 43)

extracting teeth with cold pliers." (TDIS, 49-50) And yet, this is not physical pain, but "the sick realisation of what perverse experiences lurk waiting in the body" (TDIS, 50). This sense of a "perverse," "other" subjective experience, counter to and beyond what is considered normal is conveyed ambiguously in the text. This ambiguity lies in the double status of the examination as symbolic ritual and a parody of that ritual, "The test became a ritual. And so, the repetition of the processes on the other side of his neck gave Edwin a strange image of beauty" (TDIS, 50). This image of beauty, which Spindrift associates with the process of repetition by which the "insignificant" can be turned into "the significant," disintegrates into absurd chaos: Spindrift's head "posed under the flying machinery," a "hysterical cry from the distance" followed by "the complex of oxide taste, green pain—as though a tree were shouting out" (TDIS, 50).

This process of subjective disintegration-reintegration is what Kristeva calls the "descent into the hell of naming … of signifiable identity."[374] The subject of language wants the security of meaning but has to contend with the possibility of nonmeaning or of an excess of meaning which is his/her unconscious; for Spindrift, the poetic subject, nonmeaning and excess are both a threat to his stability *and* a pleasure, a *jouissance* which he cannot but must experience. In the "hell" of the neurological hospital, Spindrift is broken down into his constituent parts, "twisted" and then "fixed," like the sneerer, into "an *homme qui rit* mask" (TDIS, 59), a laughing mask, his speech turned into meaningless sounds. At the same time, the sense of disintegration, if horrific, has a strange, perverse appeal for Spindrift. He experiences a "new and voluptuous sensation" as his head is shaved in preparation for his operation. (TDIS, 72) The pleasure he feels as

[374] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 207.

his "hair is coming down" is compared in the text with "a whole of Koran of Arabic letters mingled with a Pitman manual."[375] (TDIS, 72) This playful image conveys the materiality and also the fluidity of Arabic script, which is described by Burgess in *A Mouthful of Air* as "the most sensuously satisfying writing imaginable."[376] At the same time, Spindrift feels ashamed and disturbed by his naked scalp; without his hair, a marker of his social identity, Spindrift is transported back to his childhood, "He saw little Edwin in his pram," (TDIS, 73) but as a grotesque "little Edwin with sharp mistrustful eyes, a jowl, and a day's growth of beard." (TDIS, 73)

For Kristeva, the ambivalent pain/joy that the subject-in-process experiences is a manifestation of a desire to return to an archaic semiotic state, a time of undifferentiated union with the body of the mother. The next chapter on *Inside Mr Enderby* explores this ambivalent relationship with the body of the mother in more detail. In *The Doctor is Sick*, the force of the semiotic manifests itself in the plurality and materiality of Spindrift's language, and through the play of the text, rather than through explicit association with the body of the mother.[377] Spindrift's journey through the ambivalent, dream world of London's underworld can be interpreted as his return to the semiotic, conceived here as a space of unfixed meaning and fragmented identity. This journey is marked by joy and anxiety, as Spindrift experiences the playful multiplicity of language, but also the fragmentation and "non-sense" of excessive linguistic play. When he leaves the hospital, Spindrift is exhilarated at the prospect of freedom in a world where he can exercise the right to "live—however briefly—and die—however soon—as he was, whether sick or

[375] The Pitman Manual is a system of phonetic shorthand invented by Isaac Pitman. *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/462091/Sir-Isaac-Pitman (accessed 22 November 2010)
[376] Burgess, *A Mouthful of Air*, 83.
[377] Kristeva's semiotic is always already bound up with the maternal as a force articulated in language.

well." (TDIS, 75) Spindrift celebrates his escape from the "death" of ward conformity into the "life" of radical, fluid individuality by fashioning himself as a carnivalesque clownish figure, dressed in a mismatching combination of "tie, trousers, … pyjama top" (TDIS, 77) and "woollen cap." (TDIS, 81) Transformed into an ambivalent carnival figure, at the same time, Spindrift becomes split between "subject of the spectacle and object of the game,"[378] and moves from celebration of his new plural identity to anxiety over his authenticity (a symptom of his disintegrating psyche)—a feeling manifested in the narrative by a sense of "urgency" for "something" that assails him continuously. Caught in this ambivalent movement, Spindrift looks for the certainty and stability afforded by a "telephone directory," with its organized list of names and numbers, and then for the reassurance of "the solid walls of his passport" (TDIS, 81) as evidence of his identity.

Echoes of other "fictional" figures (for Spindrift is also a character in a book as well as a "chunk of morphology" [TDIS, 76]) resonate in the next section, as Spindrift, like Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses* and Peter Walsh in *Mrs Dalloway*, reaches into his pockets for the reassurance of the objects in them, "a few odd rupees … a nail file and a tiny pocket knife." (TDIS, 82) Reversing the masculine symbolism of the pocket knife in Virginia Woolf's novel, Spindrift's "tiny" knife and his nail file become symbolic of the loss of his libido and of his emasculation by his promiscuous wife. But more significant here is Spindrift's experience of linguistic liberation, which mirrors his sense of physical liberation but which is tempered by a parallel sense of anxiety over his disintegrating sense of reality.

[378] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 79.

This is why the playing-out of Spindrift's linguistic joy takes place within the safe confines of a phone box, "encased in his tiny pharos," (TDIS, 83) and in the safe exchange between Spindrift and an unidentified person from whom, in contrast with Dr Railton, Spindrift does not need recognition or approval. This interlocutor is the nameless night porter at the hospital, who pays no attention to Spindrift's message that a patient has escaped from the hospital: "'It strikes me,' said the voice, 'that you are barmy. People don't *escape* from here. This is not a loony-bin.'" (TDIS, 83) Spindrift replies to this in some sort of low-class slang, mixed with religious images, "'All right, me boyo … Don't say ye haven't been warned. May the blessed Virgin Mary and all the holy angels and saints guard ye and keep ye.'" (TDIS, 83) Spindrift, playfully "humm[ing] a little tune," (TDIS, 83) ends the exchange by pressing the change button on the phone; unfortunately, there is "no free gift of coin, no—he laughed—metallic evacuation or nomismatorrhea." (TDIS, 83) Spindrift has, appropriately, just coined a new word, "nomismatorrhea" for the evacuation of coins, and his laughter is the expression of his *jouissance* in the materiality and productivity of language.

This *jouissance* is also the joy of intertextuality. Spindrift, himself also a "intertextual" construction, is put in the midst of cigarette dispensing machines, magazine stands featuring pornographic magazines with titles taken from Gerard Manley Hopkin's "The Windhover" ("*Brute Beauty,*" "*Valour*," "*Act*" and "*Oh*")[379], disparate snippets of language taken from advertisements ("Exotic Coffee-coloured model 41–24–39," "Anette, Specialist in Correction," "Baby's Pram Going Cheap."), cacophonous

[379] Biswell refers to the magazine titles as "indecent allusions" to Hopkins' poem, echoing Christopher Rick's comments about Burgess's irreverent playfulness in his review of the novel for *The New Statesman* (5 April 1963). Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 217.

sounds ("Milkchurn-censers clanged," "a hooter bellowed *Oremus*") and synaesthetic effects ("sulphuretted hydrogen" sweetened to "something meadowy") (TDIS, 84–85) The description brings the real, material London to "life," by creating a feeling for the texture of the material elements of the word which is characteristic of poetic language. At the same time, and conversely, the description foregrounds the artificiality of the world depicted, its existence as a text in Barthes's sense, a "multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings blend and clash."[380] And yet, Spindrift's textual world does not wholly partake of Barthes's *jouissance* in the "disconnected, heterogeneous variety of substances and perspectives"[381] that textuality releases; Spindrift's "disconnected" experience of the world is also plagued by anxiety.

This ambivalence between joy and anxiety is also articulated in the text as a carnivalesque blurring of boundaries and norms. According to Kristeva, the ambivalent logic of carnivalesque discourse "challenges God, authority and social law."[382] Spindrift's encounter with "'Ippo" the "sandwich man" articulates this challenge in its subversion of the authority of religious discourse. 'Ippo's real name is never revealed in the text but Spindrift immediately associates 'Ippo's nickname with "St Augustine of Hippo," when he meets him in the hospital; 'Ippo, sent by Spindrift's wife Sheila, has gone to the hospital to steal Spindrift's watch as payment for a gambling debt. Spindrift is fascinated by the paradox of the name's scholarly connotations and the man's illiteracy and his job carrying advertising boards. His fascination grows as he discovers that 'Ippo is familiar with the name St Augustine, or "Sinter Gastin" in his literalized transcription

[380] Barthes, "The Death of the Author,"146.
[381] Barthes, "From Work to Text," *Image, Music, Text*, 159.
[382] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 79.

of the name, as this was the name of a school "round the corner from where we was." (TDIS, 60) The comicality of the situation is heightened by 'Ippo's ignorance of the significance of his name, "Sinter Gastin. We used to knock 'em about a bit comin' 'ome." (TDIS, 60) In Spindrift's dream scene, 'Ippo appears as an ambivalent symbolic figure, playfully bringing together sacred and profane discourses. The sandwich boards that he carries on his body are inscribed with lines from the Bible; to illiterate 'Ippo they are an advertisement for "some decent caffy" (TDIS, 98):

> The fore-board said: MARVEL NOT, MY BRETHREN, IF THE WORLD HATE YOU. I St John 3. On the rear board was written: THE FOOLISH BODY HATH SAID IN HIS HEART: THERE IS NO GOD. Psalm 53. (TDIS, 96)

'Ippo's association with St Augustine introduces the theme of original sin in the text,[383] suggesting that Spindrift is symbolically in a state of sin after denying the authority of God and meaning by entering the subversive double logic of carnivalesque and poetic language.

This section dramatizes further Spindrift's split between "subject of the spectacle and object of the game"[384]already initiated at the moment when he crossed through the threshold separating reality from his dream-scene. Spindrift approaches 'Ippo with the security granted by his middle-class, educated speech, "All I want is my watch or the cash equivalent thereof," (TDIS, 97) which contrasts with 'Ippo's heavily dialectal speech: "never seen you before in me bleedin' life"; "goin' round with these 'ere boards." (TDIS, 97) Spindrift's linguistic assurance is challenged when one of the by-standers

[383] For Geoffrey Aggeler, this "Augustinian presence" suggests that Spindrift's "descent ... from concepts to percepts is likely to lead one to a fuller, "Augustinian" awareness of human depravity." *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 130.
[384] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 78.

watching the exchange between them assumes from Spindrift's absurd attire, in pyjamas, suit and woolen cap, that he is a foreigner or an immigrant, and accuses him of illegal appropriation of the English language, 'learning our language. Too soft with them the government is, way I see it." (TDIS, 97) In a scene which parodies (and parallels) the novel's initial examination scene, Spindrift is subjected to a "trial" by the crowd of bystanders (as he was subjected to the "ice-cream eaters'" sonorous disapproval) for his inappropriate use of language. The accusation is initiated by a "man in overcoat and spectacles," (TDIS, 97) and seconded by a woman dressed in conservative "tweeds," both representatives of the "Law." The accusation emphasizes Spindrift's sense of "estrangement" from his own culture, "he had not been in England for over three years," (TDIS, 81) which is "exacerbated" (TDIS, 82) by a parallel sense of instability at the level of his psyche, in "his nervousness, his sense of being a quarry." (TDIS, 81) The word "quarry" expresses this ambivalence. A "quarry" is an excavation in rock and also an "object of pursuit." [OED] At the level of Spindrift's unconscious, "quarry" articulates the "process/ trial" of his subjectivity, exposed and undergoing a continuous fragmentation, and constantly "in pursuit of" and "pursued by" a meaning which cannot be fixed.

Within the text's ambivalent logic the bystander's tone of indictment at Spindrift's "illegal" appropriation of "his" language can be also interpreted as an indictment of Spindrift's inappropriate shifting between registers—inappropriate to his social standard—as Spindrift finds himself drawn to, and begins to mimic, 'Ippo's colloquial and dialectal speech. "Now [Spindrift] was (lovely word) skint." (TDIS, 96) Spindrift's search for a more stable sense of identity is undermined by a simultaneous drive for

instability and play. This ambivalence is articulated at the end of the scene, when Spindrift attempts to take on 'Ippo at his own linguistic game by appropriating the latter's prison slang, "I know all about you. You did a tray on the moor." (TDIS, 98) Spindrift's choice of slang term is "sparked off" by an "intuition," (TDIS, 98) but also informed by his knowledge of Cockney slang, which results in a playful blurring of boundaries between linguistic theory and discursive practice. 'Ippo's response, "It wasn't a tray ... it was only a stretch," (TDIS, 98) is defensive; Spindrift has made an accusation that only 'Ippo can understand, and this gives Spindrift a sense of power over 'Ippo, at the same time that it draws attention to his own ability to switch registers. This joy in linguistic play also comes as a response to the crowd's earlier indictment of Spindrift's eccentric physical appearance and peculiar use of language.

A careful reading of Spindrift's choice of prison slang in this passage, furthermore, reveals its irreverent religious connotations, only discernible within the text's own symbolic structure. The religious associations are triggered off by the word "tray" in the expression "a tray on the moor." A "tray" is an old slang term for a three-year prison sentence, from the Old French and Anglo-Norman *treis* and *trei*, meaning "three."[385] The number three takes the reader to the Trinity and to the biblical texts which 'Ippo carries, as well as strengthening his association with St Augustine and original sin. Only in this context do Spindrift's thoughts about the crowd's "shamefaced" retreat (TDIS, 98) make any "sense." This retreat is triggered by the appearance of the Law in the figure of a policeman marching down the street. Spindrift interprets the crowd's departure from the

[385] John Ayto, *Oxford Dictionary of Slang* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 112. The dictionary in fact uses the same line from *The Doctor is Sick* to illustrate the use of this particular term. This, no doubt, would have pleased Burgess very much, as it is evidence of the interconnection between linguistics and literature, of which he was a firm believer. See "The Proper Study of Literary Man" in *Urgent Copy,* 230.

scene as proof of their sense of collective "guilt … the state's substitute for universal sin." (TDIS, 98) Ironically, it is Spindrift's willing flouting of convention that becomes sinful, with his anxiety as a manifestation of his continuous sense of guilt. This sense of guilt is fundamental to Spindrift's subjective and linguistic crisis (and a constant preoccupation with Burgess).[386] At the same time, the playfulness and irreverence of the novel's text points to another dimension of human experience which cannot be and will not contained within any boundaries, whether religious or linguistic. Spindrift is not only caught in this ambivalence: Spindrift *is* the textual articulation of this ambivalence. His character articulates "literary" or poetic "productivity" by constantly reflecting upon its own structuring processes; that is, Spindrift continuously draws attention to its existence as a textual construction, a "chunk of morphology," a symbol and a metaphor.[387]

The obvious symbolism of the name (explored at the beginning of this chapter) is part of the text's self-reflective "productivity." "Dr Spindrift" emphasizes the name's borderline positioning between meaning and non-meaning, not in stasis, but as a continuous movement, what Kristeva in another context calls "the actual *drifting* of a possible metaphoricity."[388] On the one hand, the double name "acts out" the process of

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[386] Most Burgess scholars have explored this important theme in Burgess's novels. Burgess himself talks about his own fear of sin in his autobiographies. For a brief but very clear introduction which summarizes these critical views see Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 21–22. The most recent exploration of sin in Burgess's novels is J'annine Jobling's chapter in *Anthony Burgess and Modernity*, "Human nature, sin and grace in *The Wanting Seed*," 38–58.

[387] I am not using the terms symbol and metaphor as cognates here, although I am not establishing any particular distinctions between them as a way of suggesting their own unfixity and fluidity. I am aware, however, that in strictly semiotic terms, symbols and metaphors are not synonyms. For an analysis of the particularities of the symbolic operations of language see Umberto Eco's chapter "On Symbolism," in *On Literature*, trans. Martin McLaughlin (London: Vintage, 2006), 140–161.

[388] The "metaphoricity" invoked by Kristeva is not that of the classical rhetorical trope, based on the distinction between figurative and referential language, but one which takes account of modern theories of metaphor that "decipher within it an indefinite jamming of semantic features one into the other, a meaning being acted out; and, on the other, the drifting of heterogeneity within a heterogeneous psychic apparatus,

metaphoric meaning in all its polysemy and ambiguity. At the same time, "Spindrift" enacts the "drifting of heterogeneity" in the oscillation from "drives" to symbolic meaning. This "drifting" is articulated in the text in the associative chain of meanings created by the establishment of a pun between "shm" and "sham." "Shm" is a letter in the Sanskrit alphabet and also a sound commonly used in Yiddish American. Spindrift's doctoral dissertation is a study of "the semantic implications of the consonant group "shm" in colloquial American speech." (TDIS, 15) When Spindrift, during one of Dr Railton's examinations, insists that he be addressed as "doctor" Spindrift, "I'm *Doctor* Spindrift," (TDIS, 15) he is asserting an authority that he is not allowed to posses in the novel. Spindrift tries to establish his position by drawing attention to his scholarly credentials, his doctoral thesis "on the semantic implications of the consonant group shm." Dr Railton points out the irony of Spindrift's position, with a thesis (Greek for "position") on semantics: "'Semantics,' said Dr Railton, 'You didn't do very well with that "spiral", did you?'" (TDIS, 15) The possibility that Spindrift's doctoral degree may be a fraud is already implicit in this early section of the narrative. This possibility returns later on in the narrative, after Spindrift's mock-lecture in the Stone Brother's club and his more significant encounter with Bob Courage, the masochist gangster. As Spindrift travels towards Soho he feels "so much himself a sham," like "the sham pleasures of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street." (TDIS, 170) He has been "playing" at being a gangster, excited by his ability to use their slang and to pass himself off as one of their gang, but the doubt over his real identity persists. The possibility of finding one's

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going from drives and sensations to signifier and conversely." Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 37.

authentic self continues to echo throughout the narrative, despite Spindrift's progressive (and sometimes very comical) subjective dissolution.

In this context, Spindrift's awareness (or fear) of his existence as a "sham" becomes associated with the consonant group "shm" in his doctoral thesis. The correspondence between the two terms "shm" and "sham" is based on a relationship of "continuity by resemblance of signifiers" which, according to Umberto Eco, characterizes the semantics of metaphoric association.[389] At this point in the narrative Spindrift has already shown his ability to be a fraud and "a spurious imitation," both synonyms of "sham." [OED] Spindrift's "doctor" credentials have been subjected to doubt from the start: he is neither a medical doctor nor a "real" expert in linguistics. His specialty is phonetics, the study of sounds—language as "a mouthful of air."[390] His head is full of "air," sounds without fixed referents. "Air" is also "hair" with a dropped "h" in Cockney slang. In one of his London escapades, Spindrift, whose head has been shaven in the hospital, steals a wig of "reddish Byronic curls" (TDIS, 140) from a group of students performing an opera in a cellar. Sporting "a casque of curls" (TDIS, 142)—as well as the "armour of shirt and socks [and] the talisman of a ring" (TDIS, 142) in his finger, Spindrift begins his transformation into "quite the little poet," (TDIS, 140) a role foreshadowed in Mr Chasper's earlier description of Spindrift as having the "the most poetical name in the whole department," (TDIS, 93) at the Council for University Development. By this process of association, Spindrift "the linguist" becomes Spindrift "the poet." However, the association between Spindrift and poetry is a spurious one: he only *looks* like a poet.

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[389] Umberto Eco, "The Semantics of Metaphor," in *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 73.

[390] "A mouthful of air" is also the title of one of Burgess's monographs on language, as mentioned earlier.

According to the associative logic of the text, Spindrift himself is a metaphor for a linguistic "acting-out." His interest in etymology, the study of the origins of words, is also spurious. Spindrift is not interested in the "origins" of words or in words' meanings; he is fascinated by what lies beyond meaning. This is why he is particularly interested in Folk Etymology, which is also known in Linguistics as "false etymology." More significantly for Spindrift, the playfulness in Folk Etymology gives him pleasure. Edwin's "mock" lectures on folk etymology and slang articulate (sometimes in a very comical way) language's potential to excite other meanings by creating associative chains, as in the lecture on cockney rhyming slang in the Kettle Mob's pub:

> Arse, said Edwin loudly, will do for an example. Arse becomes bottle and glass. There is then a kind of apocope, intended to mystify. But bottle itself is subjected to the same treatment, becoming Aristotle. Apocope is again used and we end with Aris. This is so like the word originally treated that the whole process seems rather unnecessary. I've picked a rather exceptional case, but from this you can see … (TDIS, 119)

The process by which a slang word like "arse" can function as the signifying proper name of a Greek philosopher (in the same way that Spindrift is both a signifier of a proper name and a detergent) is intended by Spindrift as (quite an irreverent) illustration of how a signifier can suggest other multiple meanings. Aristotle is both a proper name and, in cockney slang, "arse." Arse suggests "aris" which is associated with Aristotle, which in turn suggests another word, "bottle," so on until we get back to the original word: "arse." Spindrift's sense of joy in this process of association is, however, undermined by the circularity of the process, which mirrors language's own circularity and its inability to produce an unchanging or fixed meaning within its system. The signified gap at the end of Spindrift's speech is the missing object in the sentence, which is also the gap between language and the real world which Spindrift wants but cannot (or will not?) fill.

Spindrift is a "performance," the acting out of neither a self nor an (other) but a continuous oscillation and process between the two. This is clearly the case in the second section of the novel, where Spindrift spends most of his time pretending to be someone else. Bob Courage, the masochist mobster at the Stone brothers' club, accuses Spindrift of being a "fake" when he realizes that Spindrift is not "kinky," like him (TDIS, 219) despite Spindrift's obvious "kinky eyes." (TDIS, 219) But within the metaphoric organization of the text Spindrift is "kinky." He both sports a wig of "curly" hair ("curly" is a synonym for "kinky") and he is also "deviant" or "perverse," though not in an obvious sexual sense, at this point. Spindrift's penchant for "perversion" is more linguistic than sexual—the reason why his wife lost any physical interest in him.[391]

The scene in "kinky" Bob Courage's flat, on the other hand, explores the idea of perversion in a linguistic and also a sexual sense. The relationship between language and perversion is one of the areas explored by Kristeva in her work.[392] An in-depth analysis of this relationship would be beyond the scope and length of this chapter. However, there are some aspects of this relationship which are pertinent to my analysis of Spindrift as poetic subject. Kristeva's discussion of the relationship between poetic language and fetishism is particularly relevant to this section. Bob Courage is a masochist with a penchant for whips; they are his fetishistic object of choice. Spindrift's fetishistic objects are language's material signifiers.

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[391] Spindrift himself suggests this possibility at the beginning of the novel. After catching Sheila in the act, Spindrift becomes enraged. Sheila, "very sweetly" forgives his rage, "after all, the failure of his libido had already taken place. He was not quite normal." (TDIS, 14) This failure of the libido is at the end of the novel explicitly connected with his excessive interest in language. "You are a kind of machine," his wife tells him," You have a use. But I don't need a machine. Not to live with and go to bed with, anyway." (TDIS, 255).

[392] I am referring specifically to her analysis of "fetishism" in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 61–67.

In Freudian psychoanalytical terms, fetishism is "the disavowal of maternal castration,"[393] the child's simultaneous denial and acceptance of the mother's lack of penis. For Kristeva, both the fetishist, with his/her attachment to particular objects, and the subject of poetic language (especially of modern poetic and textual practices) share this attachment to the maternal. Since the practice of art "necessitates" the release of semiotic drives into the symbolic, it "lends itself to so-called perverse subjective structures."[394] But there are also differences. For Kristeva, the operations of poetic language differ from "the fetishistic mechanism" in that poetic language and textual practice "maintain … signification" even as they "pluralize it."[395] This is an important distinction, and one which has a bearing on any analysis of the correspondence between Bob Courage's and Spindrift's respective "perversions" in the novel.

By establishing an analogy between Bob's sadomasochistic practices and Spindrift's linguistic practice, the text opens up into an exploration the relationship between linguistic pleasure and violence—the destructive impulse of semiotic *jouissance*. At the same time, from the start of this section, any potential excess (either of language or images) is subjected to the control of the symbolic. The impact of Bob's collection of torture instruments is attenuated by the form of its presentation, as a catalogue and a list of synonyms: "stock-whips, a nine-tailed cat, a horsewhip, a long one for a mule train, one handled in mother-of-pearl, a child's top-whip, one cruelly knotted, a knout, a lash with spikes: whips." (TDIS, 146) In the precision of the details, on the other hand, this description gestures towards the reality of the violence implied by the instruments; even

[393] Elizabeth Grosz, "Julia Kristeva and the Speaking Subject," *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Crows Nest, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1989), 57.
[394] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language,* 65.
[395] Ibid.

the sounds of whipping are evoked in the repetition of the consonants ("s" "p" "k"). A further link between flagellation and writing is established when Bob displays his back "gnarled and wealed with lashes" (TDIS, 146)—flagellation as writing on the body. As Spindrift encounters the reality of violence and his own violent leanings, "the joy of the sadist arising in his loins," (TDIS, 147) he seeks refuge from the "foul flat flagellation" (TDIS, 153) in the "flat" mechanisms of linguistic analysis. Ironically, the pleasure which he is trying to deny has its articulation the very linguistic operations of displacement designed to repress it:

> And in this foul flat flagellation had been real whips, not Roman *flagellum*, diminutive of *flagrum*, and look gentlemen, how fascinating this interchange of 'l' and 'r.' And what pleasant alliteration, he thought, that was: foul flat flagellation. And what interesting ambiguity. 'Oh shut up,' he said aloud. Kinky, that was right, he was kinky. 'L' in Spanish and 'r' in Portuguese: *blanco*, *branco*. And 'glamour' was, ha, ha, really 'grammar.' Remarkable. Oh shut up. (153)

This passage is organized as a dialogue between several voices, all articulations of Spindrift's ambivalent and "drifting" selves: the linguist with a fascination for etymological variations, the poet with a gift for alliteration, the comedian with a penchant for self-deprecating irony and an angry voice calling for all the other voices to be silenced. This is a demonstration of how poetic language and textual practice maintain signification while also pluralizing it.[396]

Another scene, also in Bob Courage's flat, pushes this polyphony even further, almost to the limits of non-sense. In the passage before the dialogue of voices dramatizes Spindrift's fragmented identity in continuous conflict between pleasurable linguistic ambiguity and the need for a fixed meaning. In a broad sense, the exchange between the

[396] There is a lot of potential in an analysis of parts of The *Doctor is Sick*'s text as articulations of perverse and fetishistic discourses. My own analysis in this section offers only a very cursory look at the complexities of a full psychoanalytical engagement with Burgess's texts.

different voices is meaningful. This next scene involves one of Bob Courage's gang members known as the "Gorbals man,"[397] and an unknown gangster, and it is carried out entirely in a mix of code language and thick Glaswegian dialect:

> 'Partcrock mainly at finniberg entering. Word fallpray when chock veers garters home 'Wait. Weight. Wate.''Vartelpore wares for morning arighters. Jerboa toolings in dawn-breakers make with quicktombs.''Good' (148)

The physical violence which Spindrift had inflicted on Bob finds its analogue here in a kind of linguistic violence.[398] Andrew Biswell finds Burgess's "invented criminal slang" "impenetrable." For Biswell, this distortion of the language of the novel only makes sense in the context of Burgess's later experimentations which led to the creation of an artificial language in *A Clockwork Orange*.[399] The text of this dialogue, in fact, resonates with echoes of Joyce's esoteric linguistic playfulness in *Finnegans Wake*, from the obvious "finni" in "finniberg" to the use of made-up compound words: "fallpray," "partcrock," "quicktombs." The second line is a series of homophones straight from any phonetics primer, "Wait. Weight. Wate." The third line is composed of two sentences with the same syntactical structure and rhythm of an aphorism or a proverb. The outline of a famous proverb can almost be discerned from "morning," "dawn-breakers," "arighters" and "make." In the end, however, no final meaning can be reached, only the play of language in the logic of the dream, as Burgess himself puts it in the context of *Finnegans Wake*,

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[397] Gorbals is a notorious slum area of Glasgow.

[398] Gareth Falmer identifies a similar analogy in *A Clockwork Orange*. The reader experiences violence not only through its graphic descriptions but also through "the violent deviations from linguistic norms inherent in the style of the novel." These "deviations," Falmer claims, "enhance" this experience, and make it "more effective." Gareth Falmer, "Language as the Affect of Violence in *A Clockwork Orange*," in *Portraits of the Artist in A Clockwork Orange*, ed. Emmanuel Verdanakis and Graham Woodroffe (Angers: Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 2003), 51–67. The issue of "linguistic violence" in *A Clockwork Orange* has received some attention by critics. *The Doctor is Sick* offers a prefiguration of the relationship between language and violence which preoccupied Burgess in later works.

[399] Burgess was "already warming up to do this sort of thing at novel-length in *A Clockwork Orange*." Andrew Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 215–16.

"[its dream language] is not intended for total elucidation, since it *is* a dream, and … dreams may only be partially understood."[400]

The same irresolvable tension between linguistic heterogeneity and order that assails Spindrift can be seen operating in this passage. But here a certain nostalgia can be discerned, a desire for "sense" that finds its articulation at the syntactical level of the men's garbled sentences (in a sentential rhythm which gives the illusion of meaning), a nostalgia which is conveyed also in the conversation that ensues between Spindrift and the Gorbals man:

> 'Yü,' he said, 'duckterer fellosserfee?''That's right,' said Edwin. 'PhD.''Deevid Hüme,' said the Gorbals man. 'Berrrkeley. Immanuel Kant.' It was not really surprising to hear such a parade of names from such a person. French criminals would, Edwin knew, quote Racine or Baudelaire in the act of throat-cutting; and Italian mobsters would at least know of Benedetto Croce. It was only the English who failed to see the human experience as a totality. (TDIS, 149)

This passage is clearly marked by carnivalesque ambivalence, with its mockery of Spindrift's idealized figure of the criminal who "quotes" poetry "in the act of throat-cutting." On the other hand, his call for an understanding of human experience as "a totality" is also an articulation of the desire for unity which becomes the driving force of his experiences in London's underworld. This impulse towards harmony is already discernible in the operations of folk etymology, even if the word changes are "deliberate and conscious perversions of standard forms," (TDIS, 118) as Spindrift remarks of Cockney slang. The fundamental drive of linguistic change, whether as the natural

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[400] Anthony Burgess, *Joysprick: An Introduction to the Language of James Joyce,* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973), 10. Burgess admired Joyce's linguistic experimentations, but had his doubts about *Finnegans Wake*. In this context, this passage can be read as a parody of Joycean language. See Roughley, "Enten: Subjects: Burgess, Shakespeare, Joyce (Text; hypertext, vortex)," and particularly the section entitled "Burgess's 'Ambiviolence' towards Joyce," in *JoyceMedia: James Joyce, Hypermedia & Textual Genetics*, ed. Louis Armand (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2004), 156–57.

"dialectal development" (TDIS, 118) or as false etymology, Spindrift believes, is human beings' need to "assimilate the known to the unknown." (TDIS, 6) This drive to assimilate and integrate is a response to the "violence *of* language"—both against and inherent to language, a theme that pervades the first half of the novel, and also a theme which recurs in other Burgess novels, notably *Inside Mr Enderby* and *Nothing like the Sun*, as I examine later in this thesis.

The last part of Spindrift's journey through his unconscious (linguistic) underworld is marked by this desire for assimilation, as Spindrift searches for evidence of a natural correspondence between word and world. He finds it in Renate, Harry Stone's German mistress, who constructs English sentences in the syntactical order of German. "If he the hat not back brings, then who is the thief," Renate advises Spindrift (quite poetically) after his borrowed hat is stolen in the pub, "Perhaps when he back it brings you will money have." (TDIS, 112) Similarly, the eating-shop where Renate later takes Spindrift is appropriately called "JUNG," a detail which gives him "much pleasure," as the place is filled with "various archetypal, though non-Teutonic-looking, layabouts at with-white-clothes-unbedecked tables." (TDIS, 113) The linguistic system, Burgess argues in *A Mouthful of Air*, is arbitrary. Only the poet "can invent a Golden Age of iconic language in which thing and word enjoyed a blissful marriage."[401] Burgess's invocation of a Golden Age when words were "married" to referents betrays the same nostalgia for what Foucault calls the "primitive being of language"[402] before the theory of representation

[401] Burgess, *A Mouthful of Air*, 11.
[402] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock, 1974), 42.

effaced the signifier in favour of the signified.[403] Foucault, like Burgess, believes that literature remains the privileged space where language can "find its way back from the representative …to this raw being that had been forgotten since the sixteenth century."[404] For Foucault, the literature of the modern period (modernist and post-modernist) hails the "return of language" but not as the indissoluble union between word and world but as "an enigmatic multiplicity that must be mastered" into "an impossible unity."[405] What speaks now in literature is not "the meaning of the word" but its "enigmatic and precarious being."[406] The modern text traces "the traversal of this futile yet fundamental space" where language "has not point of departure, no end and no promise."[407] From this space, Foucault argues, what emerges is the realization that

> man has come to an end, and that, by reaching the summit of all possible speech, he arrives not at the very heart of himself but at the brink of what limits him; in that region where death prowls, where thought is extinguished, where the promise of the origin interminably recedes."[408]

Spindrift's search for a natural correspondence between language and the world is marked by the same ambivalent sense of promise and futility outlined by Foucault. Word and world can meet in Spindrift's dream scenario but they can never be fixed into an "original" unity; Spindrift's "being" in language is as a poetic subject in continuous process between unity and multiplicity.

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[403] "In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the peculiar solidity and ancient existence of language as a thing inscribed in the fabric of the world were dissolved in the fabric of representation." Foucault, Ibid, 43. Carla Sassi remarks on the same nostalgia for a correspondence between words and things in her analysis of *A Clockwork Orange* in "Lost in Bable: the search for the perfect language in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*," as already mentioned in the Introduction.
[404] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 44.
[405] Ibid., 305.
[406] Ibid.
[407] Ibid., 44.
[408] Ibid., 383.

A scene in the Stone Brothers' illegal club illustrates this search for an ultimately impossible certainty. Spindrift hears Leo Stone speak to a barmaid in "what sounded like gibberish, rapid, rhythmical." (TDIS, 104) The passage, like the scene with 'Ippo before, focuses on dialectal and slang varieties of English. But here, the emphasis is on the intelligibility of the slang:

> Edwin was a philologist and knew that this was one of the *trompe-l'oreille* auxiliaries of old London. Syllables of genuine words were separated from each other by the vocable 'boro.' It was much too fast to follow, however. (TDIS, 104)

Like the speech of the Gorbals man, the Stone Twin's "lingo" may appear impenetrable but this is only so to those who, unlike Edwin, do not have a grounding in Philology. The distinction between Philology and Linguistics becomes pertinent here. The linguist "dissects" language in its separate components, whereas the philologist, like the poet, is a true "friend" of language; his aim is to connect. Spindrift's explanation of the *trompe-l'oreille* illusion created by the Twins' speech playful combination of sounds is mirrored by its visual counterpart, the *trompe-l'oeil*, in this playful rendering of the open "a" sound in Harry Stone's Cockney pronunciation of the word "money" as "manny":

> '[...] Vat bald 'ead means many.' He struck Edwin with flailing arms in his excitement. 'Manny,' he repeated. Edwin admired the stressed vowel. 'Manny.' Centralised, lengthened, spread, so that Harry's mouth seemed to open greedily as to snatch at flies of money floating in the London air. (TDIS, 105)

As with the pictorial illusion, however, the effect of this correspondence between sound and mouth is double: towards referential reality and simultaneously away from it. As Lois Parkinson Zamora remarks, "Trompe l'oeil deploys the same conventions" of realistic painting "but to their extreme, manipulating them self-consciously in order to distort or

undermine their own mimetic claims."[409] The grotesque distortion of Harry's mouth in this description points at the artificiality of the image, thereby breaking the connection between word and world attempted here. Burgess's description of the work of fiction as a presentation and also a distortion of the real world mentioned at the start of the chapter also resonates through this passage.

Spindrift's naivety over the possibility of fixing word to referent is ruthlessly mocked and exploited in an irreverent, carnivalesque scene which dramatizes the crisis of the subject who desperately wants to makes sense of the chaos around him but is ultimately drawn into the disordered world of which he is also a part. In this scene, part of a farce in which the Stone Twins groom a clueless Spindrift to enter a "Bald Adonis" competition on television, the perfect unity of word and referent is transgressed by heterogeneous linguistic play. The scene begins with Harry and Leo Stone examining Spindrift's bald head, while he engages in a game of "shove-ha' penny" with Les and Larry, two small-time con-men who also work at the opera in Covent Garden. Spindrift's sense of outrage at being manipulated by the twins, "'If you think I'm going to be exploited in some bloody side show or other ---' He settled his cap with dignity," (TDIS, 106) is undermined by his own delight in another kind of manipulation, "Edwin felt a sudden games-players' joy." (TDIS, 101) The "game" refers both to the illegal gambling and also to Spindrift's "other" games of linguistic manipulation, one of which involves his attempt at word-play, triggered by Les's irreverent song, "'Your tiny --- is frozen; let me --- into life.'" (TDIS, 107) The gaps in the text stand for two obscene words which cannot be

[409] Lois Parkinson Zamora, "Trompe l'oeil Tricks: Borges' Baroque Illusionism," http://www.uh.edu/~englmi/gallery.php?mygal=trompe&title=Trompe%20L%27Oeil%20Paintings%20and%20Borges (accessed 29 November 09).

uttered even in this context. Undeterred, Spindrift uses his knowledge of etymology to make manifest the hidden content of the song, rejoicing in the playfulness of language beyond any connection between word and world:

> 'That word you used has a more interesting history. You find the Middle English form *coynte*. Earlier forms have a more definite initial *kw*. Cognate with *quim*, of course, and also, not perhaps as surprisingly as you might think, with *queen*. The quimtessence of womanliness, you might say.'(TDIS, 107)

From a psychoanalytical perspective the passage also offers a textual articulation of the mechanisms by which the unconscious, according to Freud, manages to discharge repressed thoughts and libidinal energies while avoiding the censorship of the superego. The unutterable term, the antecedent of the demonstrative "that" in Spindrift's phrase "that word," is cleverly displaced along the signifying chain from *coynte* to *kw*, both of which play with the similarities between their initial vowel sounds and their modern counterpart, along to *quim*, an obscure old slang term for vagina,[410] and finally to the socially acceptable *queen*. Spindrift's final pun irreverently associates women's essence and social status to their sexuality. The playful ambiguity of the pun, which exploits and at the same time exposes language's covert sexism, is lost on his "audience": "He was pleased with his pun, but nobody seemed either edified or amused." (TDIS, 107) For Spindrift, however, the pun is highly significant on a personal level. His search for his wife has all along been motivated by his jealousy and anger at her continuous sexual promiscuity. The playful and seemingly innocuous pun in fact conceals Spindrift's rage and the "desire for violence" (TDIS, 151) always latent in his psyche, the same disruptive

[410] *Online Etymology Dictionary,* http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=quim&searchmode=none, (accessed 28 November 09)

and ambivalent (both painful and pleasurable) "violence" which he will give vent to in Bob Courage's apartment later on in the narrative.

As the narrative moves deeper and deeper into Spindrift's unconscious dream world, binary distinctions between order and chaos, meaning and non-sense, reality and fantasy, and linguistic unity and semiotic excess begin the process of disintegration into the "multiplicity" which Foucault argues is the new "being" of language. Spindrift, nevertheless, continues his journey, driven by the "futile yet fundamental" process from order to transgression, a circular movement which eventually leads him nowhere—back to his place of departure.[411] The circularity of his journey, already foreshadowed in the image of the "spiral," is articulated here in the word "TWISTER" written on a piece of toilet paper by a prostitute named Coral, with whom Spindrift has a brief sexual experience. Coral has a "metallurgical brassness" (TDIS, 179) to her which is tempered by the softer, yet still material connotations of her name, "the name made the hardness seem less metallurgical, drew attention to mouth and nails; its marine associations turned her eyes sea-green." (TDIS, 181)

This textual correspondence between human being and proper name is immediately undermined, however, by Spindrift's doubt, "But then, of course, it probably wasn't her real name." (TDIS, 181) The awakening of Spindrift's libido could be a manifestation of the "marriage" of word and world; at the same time, this awakening is only the beginning of "an establishment of definite proof that rehabilitation was possible," (TDIS, 187) and, thus, uncertain. Caught in this spiral, Spindrift's multiple identities (linguist, poet, sham,

[411] We can see a similarity with Ennis's "journey" in *A Vision of Battlements*. This circularity undermines the narrative's linearity and progression, articulating its ambivalence.

kinky) converge in "TWISTER." The word triggers a "litany" in Spindrift, a confession of sins and a celebration of irreverent word-play:

Ineffectual fornicator.
Purge of poor publicans,
Kettle-mob catamite,
Cheater of Chasper,
Furniture-fracturer,
Light-hearted liar,
Counterfeit cash-man,
Free meal filcher.
Prey on us. (TDIS, 188)

Formally, this poem conveys order and control. The lines are packed together tightly, and the rhythm within each line is a strict binary, "one-two" rhythm. At the same time, the repetition of strong consonant sounds—p, k, t (plosives), and also r—and the sexual references are suggestive of an excess which the tight structure attempts to contain.

Spindrift has accepted that Dr Edwin Spindrift is a fake, a twister—a performance and a plurality of meanings. This acceptance also brings "tiredness, loneness … [a] sense of betrayal [and] anxiety about the future." (TDIS, 227) The narrative, however, continues its forward movement towards Spindrift's encounter with Aristotle Thanatos at his lavish party, which constitutes the climax of Spindrift's wanderings through London's underworld[412] and of his "descent" into the semiotic. In this context, Aristotle Thanatos' highly symbolic figure can be seen to encompass, for Spindrift, the joy and the excess of linguistic play: Spindrift associates the name with the Cockney rhyme "bottle-and-glass" and with the Greek word for "death." (TDIS, 234)[413] Aristotle is also the father of Western metaphysics. His philosophy is based on the study of the phenomena of the

[412] There are many other adventures in this journey. I have explored the scenes which were most relevant to my discussion of poetic language and the subject in process.
[413] Geoffrey Aggeler remarks on the character's double aspect as a harbinger of death and as a Dionysian celebration of life and "the possibility of regeneration." *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 127.

natural world from which the essences of things can be discerned.[414] Ironically, there are no essences or meanings to be discerned here, only more linguistic "play."[415] The setting is a "mammoth Edwardian hotel" (TDIS, 228) where Spindrift goes to take his last drink, "his hemlock of viaticum" (he is now playing the part of Socrates) before "becom[ing] finally passive, an ultimate thing." (TDIS, 229) His encounter with Aristotle Thanatos takes place, absurdly though also appropriately in Spindrift's view, in the lavatory of the hotel, "a fine palace of marble and glass with alabaster steps to the row of urinals" (TDIS, 229)—the height of luxury for the most common of human functions. "Aristotle to the British has always had a ring of the unclean," (TDIS, 230) comments Spindrift, hinting at the playful Cockney pun.

The scene's surrealist atmosphere is emphasized by abrupt scene changes and absurd combinations; but nothing here is completely non-sensical. Every element, every character, is part of a Dionysian celebration of excess, and appropriately so: wine pours from "Hellenic" jars, "girls with lifted skirts crush grapes" while boys "with strong" Greek noses stand about; even the wines have "heroic" names like "Odysseus" or "Achilles." (TDIS, 232) The discordant note in this scene, however, is good old 'Ippo, dressed as Roman Bacchus, "artificial grapes instead of a cap" and carrying two advertising boards, one urging the celebrants to "FILL HIGH THE BOWLS WITH THE

[414] "Aristotle," *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch (W. W. Norton: London and New York, 2001), 86–89.

[415] It is worth remarking here that Aggeler and Farkas interpret Aristotle Thanatos as a representation of "the world of tangible reality." *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 127; Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 71. This interpretation fits in within their wider reading of Spindrift's journey through London's underworld as a quest, and this is one of the many respects in which it parallels the quest of Leopold Bloom through Dublin. It is useful to consider some of the other ways in which *The Doctor Is Sick* can be seen as "Burgess's own treatment of the major themes in *Ulysses*."Aggeler argues for "the extent to which Spindrift's descent from disembodied philology into the world of tangible reality is like the progress of Stephen Dedalus from a world of words, in which he is an acknowledged master, to the world of Leopold Bloom." Aggeler. ibid, 123. Farkas elaborates on this point in his analysis of the novel in his monograph. *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 63–71.

SAMIAN WINE," and the other playfully telling them to "TAKE A LITTLE WINE FOR THY STOMACH'S SAKE." (TDIS, 231) The "secular" and "religious" functions of the character have "at last fused." (TDIS, 231) This sense of unity in difference pervades the whole scene, which is characterized by a tension between order and meaning, symbolized by the grave though somewhat ridiculous figure of Aristotle Thanatos, and the possibility of excess embodied in a progressively drunker Spindrift:

> 'Look,' said Edwin, 'I'm not always like this. You should see me when I'm got up proper.' He gaped with horror at his elocution. ...'ansome I look, 'smiled Edwin desperately, 'with a big 'ead of curly 'air' He laughed loudly and gripped Aristotle Thanatos. 'I see, I see, I understand [Thanatos replied] Well I think that you might want to come and see me some time, when you are feeling better.' (TDIS, 233)

Spindrift's total loss of control is signaled by the vision of his wife Sheila in bed with another man. At that moment, he loses consciousness and re-emerges in a hallucinatory borderline space, a Lewis Carroll wonderland of "philological curiosities," curious word and image combinations including, a handful of shillings begging him to "whip" them, a dog which appropriately has a "bark" on a "tree," Coral "sneer[ing] corally," and Les the gangster and opera singer walking on "the sky-ceiling" singing "skylight in the Gods." (TDIS, 238) The two signifiers insisting through this spiraling chain of associations, however, are "love," the "hardest collocation of phonemes ever bored by questing squirrel" and Sheila making love with a strange man. "Noises of love" rise in "crescendo" and Spindrift, in a bid to stay in control begins a philological analysis of the word "crescendo," though the meaning of the sounds prove "hardly susceptible to "linguistic analysis." (TDIS, 239) Spindrift (and the text) has "to draw the line somewhere." (TDIS, 240) The dream has come to an end; a line has been drawn to separate Spindrift's unconscious from the real world to which he must return. The transition into the

referential world is abrupt, though less so than the last movement in *A Vision of Battlements*, which also follows from its main character's journey into the unconscious. Here Spindrift's move from unconsciousness to consciousness is marked as he "blink[s] a solid white ward" and its occupants "into existence." (TDIS, 241) His prophesized "death" is, in fact, his return to the physical world, to the lifeless hospital ward, with its immobile patients in "dark glasses, bandaged heads [and] dithering limbs." (TDIS, 240) Death is for Spindrift a return to referential reality.

In narrative terms, Spindrift's return to reality is marked by a parallel shift from the double structure of the foregoing sections to a more linear story pattern. This short section (chapters thirty and thirty-one) attempts to provide a logical explanation for Spindrift's absurd adventures, and bring a resolution to the novel. Spindrift, it turns out, went into a coma after his operation and has really been "wandering in imaginary worlds." (TDIS, 251) Ironically, those imaginary worlds have, for him, a much stronger "reality-tone" (TDIS, 245) than his immediate reality. For Spindrift the poetic subject, "reality" is multiple, complex, fluid—like his language. To live in the referential world is to die, to silence this plurality. Although this section attempts to grapple with the "truth" of Spindrift's experiences, providing plausible explanations for his encounters with the Stone twins or for the existence of a "Bob Courage" (TDIS, 251), and helping him and the reader "straighten out fact from fantasy," (TDIS, 250) it is still pervaded by a sense of playful ambiguity. Spindrift wants to conform, to know, "we can't go through the world in a state of confusion about reality," (TDIS, 250) but, at the same time, is driven by a drive to lose himself, be "dispersed" in the continuous trial of meaning—between sense and non-sense. The last chapter in the novel takes Spindrift to the only "place" where he

can continue to experience "reality" in all its plurality and materiality: his unconscious dream-world. The last stage of his journey begins with the same "mechanical suddenness" (TDIS, 259) as the first stage, his escape from the hospital. But now, Spindrift knows what he is going to encounter, a "land … full of fruit ripe for the picking," a world of intense experiences, "the Great Bed of Ware of the World, a bed lively with wriggling toes and hopping fleas." (TDIS, 259) Dressed in "what was nearest at hand and most suitable" (TDIS, 260) Spindrift goes in search of Mr Thanatos, with no particular hurry, relishing the "plenty of piquant adventures" (TDIS, 261) yet to be experienced in the ambivalent space of the unconscious, where meaning is plural, fluid – free from the fixity of system and order.

The Doctor is Sick's open ending suggests that the subject's experience of and in language is always an open process. In this sense, Spindrift's journey through the narrative cannot be interpreted solely, as Ghosh-Schellhorn and Coal have suggested, as "a journey of self-recognition" through an understanding of the role of language in representing reality and bringing order to experiential chaos; it is also a journey into the chaos of language, a hallucinatory "trip." Although Spindrift seems to move forward towards a point of recognition or understanding, this progression is continually transgressed by language's disruptive plurality and excess, and his joy in it. For Spindrift, this "trial" in language is both unsettling and joyous, simultaneously destructive and productive.

In an analogous way, the novel in which Spindrift's subjective trial is articulated constructs itself as an ambivalent movement between narrative progression and playful and disruptive textuality. In this sense, it moves away from the all-encompassing

musical-spatial model created by *A Vision of Battlements* to focus on the dynamic movement or oscillation between external and internal worlds, symbolic order and semiotic plurality, or the referential and self-referential modes of language. In fact, we can find a correspondence between this structure and the "La Linea" episode in the earlier novel, which also constructs an ambivalent dream-space and/or carnivalesque world where order is continually subverted.

The next three novels examined in this thesis are also constructed as a dynamic between narrative progression and playful text; they also situate the subject's "trial" in dream and carnivalesque textual spaces which articulate the dynamic co-existence of order and disruption in language, but specifically within the context of art and the process of creation, like *A Vision of Battlements*. Chapter Four focuses on the process of poetic composition and on the role of the maternal and the feminine as ambivalent creative-disruptive forces, an issue briefly touched upon in the first two chapters, always within Burgess's serious yet playful (playfully serious) understanding of language and subjectivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Inside Mr Enderby: the Ambivalence of the Maternal

The first in a Tetralogy of serio-comic novels about a solipsistic minor poet F.X. Enderby[416] and his struggles to find his own creative voice and his own identity as an artist in the modern world, *Inside Mr Enderby* was published in 1963, under the pseudonym Joseph Kell. In 1968 Burgess published a sequel to the novel entitled *Enderby Outside*. A third instalment appeared in 1974: *The Clockwork Testament; or Enderby's End*, in which Enderby dies. In 1984, however, Burgess resurrected his character for the final novel in what would become the *Enderby Tetralogy*, *Enderby's Dark Lady; or No End to Enderby*. Although all the novels are concerned with artistic creation and with the role of the artist in the modern world,[417] *Inside Mr Enderby* offers the most sustained examination of the process of literary creation in the way explored so far, as an ambivalent dynamic between order and disruption. Like the other novels analyzed in this dissertation, *Inside Mr Enderby* articulates the process of novelistic writing as a dynamic interaction between narrative order and linguistic multiplicity and play; here, as in *Nothing like the Sun*, examined in Chapter Four, the more disruptive

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[416] The initials F.X. stand for Francis Xavier, a nod to Burgess's old days as a pupil at the Xaverian Grammar School.

[417] Samuel Coale sees the character of Enderby as a minor poet who "weeps for the defilement of the modern world around him and relies on poetry, his art, the writing of old-fashioned sonnets to see him through." *Anthony Burgess,* 163. Michael Rudick summarizes the first three novels as "the story of a poet battling for the life requisite both to his freedom and to his art." "Enderbyan Poetics: The Word in the Fallen World," in *Critical Essays on Anthony Burgess*, 112 John J. Stinson focuses on the novels' satirical elements. For him, *Inside Mr Enderby* is both a serious exploration of the role of art and "a comic treatment of the familiar theme of 'the problems of the artist,'" *Anthony Burgess Revisited,* 94, while the other three novels question the validity of the very notion of the "artist" in the modern world of mass media and mass consumerism. This is a view shared by Geoffrey Aggeler, who sees Enderby as an artist "besieged by the great world." *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 93. In *You've Had Your Time* Burgess emphasizes Enderby's "dogged individualis[m]" and his commitment to "affirming the creative impulse, even to no useful end." *You've Had Your Time*, 14.

aspects of the process of writing are associated with the feminine as a potentially destructive, yet necessary force in the artist. Like WS, Enderby experiences the process of poetic composition as a conflict between formal control and language's fluidity and multiplicity, which is associated in the text with an ambivalent, potentially destructive feminine power embodied in the figure of his grotesque stepmother.

The introduction of the feminine and the maternal within the novel's larger theme of artistic creation enables me to analyze poetic process and its articulation in Burgess's text through Kristeva's notion of poetic language as a dynamic interplay between symbolic, or communicative, and semiotic, or unconscious and bodily, modalities of language. So far these terms have been briefly touched upon in the previous chapters in relation to the trial of the subject. My analysis in this chapter makes closer reference to these different modalities in language, as the interaction between the two creates much of the ambivalence in Burgess's text. Furthermore, in its positing of the maternal semiotic as a potentially destructive force, *Inside Mr Enderby* can also be analyzed using Kristeva's formulation of the process of literary creation as a "struggle" and a "confrontation" between "symbolic authority" and "the drive-based call from an archaic mother."[418] This "archaic mother" embodies the semiotic dimension of language that she develops in her early semanalytical work of the seventies and the "abject" mother in *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva's study of abjection and its articulation in art and literature. Kristeva's concept of the abject mother builds on her notion of the maternal semiotic, placing a special emphasis on the maternal body as a signifier of all that is impure and threatening to the subject's stability.

[418] Kristeva, "'une femmes': The Woman Effect," in *Julia Kristeva Interviews*, 111.

Two aspects of her complex notion are relevant to my analysis of Burgess's text: abjection as a physical expression of borderline subjective experience, and her positing of poetic and carnivalesque discourses as "vehicles" for the expression of abjection in language. The experience of abjection, according to Kristeva, is connected to the subject's archaic memories of the maternal body. Artistic representations of the maternal body as grotesque or excessive, she argues, express the subject's disgust and fear of the mother (and the female) as engulfing and destructive.[419] Enderby's stepmother is one of these grotesque maternal figures—a gross, swollen, malodorous and loathsome virago who has total control over Enderby's father and his family, and who continues to assail Enderby even after her death. Abjection, however, is not simply an expression of the subject's horror of the maternal. Abjection "speaks" of the always ambivalent, love/hate, attraction/repulsion relationship between the subject and the maternal as "an other as prohibited as it is desired—abject."[420] The other aspect of Kristeva's theory of abjection involves an active analysis of how language "involve[s] not an ultimate resistance but an unveiling of the abject: an elaboration, a discharge, and a hollowing out of abjection through the crisis of the Word."[421] The discourses which articulate this crisis of language are, for Kristeva, poetic language and the carnivalesque.

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[419] For a full elaboration of Kristeva's theory see the chapter "From Filth to Defilement," in *Powers of Horror*, 56–89. The image of the grotesque, excessive body in carnivalesque literature and art is examined by Bakhtin in *Rabelais and his World*, where it is set in opposition to the "atomized, individualized ... 'private' bodies" of Classical art. The grotesque body represents life, "the ever-growing, inexhaustible, ever-laughing principle which uncrowns and renews," in contradistinction with the contained body, a symbol of social order. *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 24. Renaissance realism, for Bakhtin, was characterized by the ambivalent co-existence of the two "bodies."

[420] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 47.

[421] Ibid., 208.

My argument in this chapter is that *Inside Mr Enderby* can be read as both an exploration of the productive co-existence of order and disruption in language and as an articulation of the borderline experience of abjection. Both aspects are evident in Burgess's text, and sometimes one develops from the other. In the first part of the chapter, my analysis focuses specifically on the first part of the novel and how it dramatizes the confrontation between the writer and the maternal in a carnivalesque and intertextual writing which is organized as a dynamic oscillation between symbolic order and semiotic disruption. Polysemy, puns, paradoxical constructions as well as rhythmic, musical and sound effects operate semiotically to disrupt the syntactic and semantic fabric of the text, articulating linguistic productivity and opening up a network of textual relationships with other poetic and non-poetic texts. The interaction between semiotic and symbolic shaping and transforming the novel's text is not always unproblematic. There are times when the joy of linguistic play threatens to give way to semiotic excess and the collapse of meaning.

This threat is articulated in the text as abjection, represented either as a carnivalesque disruption of boundaries and borders or as an excess of semiotic over the symbolic. The second part of the chapter analyzes *Inside Mr Enderby*'s articulation of abjection in its ambivalent discourse. This section is centred on the second and third parts of the novel and focuses on the poetic dynamic as an articulation of and a defence against the threat of the abject, embodied in a series of maternal figures which include Enderby's stepmother, his wife Vesta and the Catholic Church, and draws on Kristeva's notion of the carnivalesque as one of the literary discourses which, along with poetic language, both articulates and protects against the abject as a threat to meaning and subjective stability.

The first part of the novel traces Enderby's daily routine as an artist, which is marked by a pattern of stability and instability which mirrors the rhythms of his body: "he would rise at dawn or just after, winter and summer alike; he would breakfast, defecate, and then work, sometimes beginning his work while actually defecating."[422] (IE, 76) Enderby's "ordered" creative routine is playfully set against the background of his squalid and dirty apartment, strewn with unwashed clothing, left-over food and discarded poetic drafts. In this setting, writing becomes associated with the fundamental bodily process of excretion, a connection that Joyce had already explored in *Ulysses*, and which Burgess himself notes.[423] This connection also plays on the idea of poetic catharsis; for Enderby, writing on the lavatory is the ultimate cathartic experience, a literal purging of linguistic waste. "The poet," Enderby claims, "is time's cleanser and cathartizer" and the lavatory is his "appropriate" place. (IE, 16) At the same time, and in spite of his efforts to maintain a separation between the ideal and real worlds, the material waste that Enderby tries to purge in his poetry keeps irrupting through.

The "symbolic" order of his daily pattern and his bodily rhythms is continually disrupted by "semiotic" bodily expulsions that playfully and literally "rip through" his compositions. Instead of a regulated activity, here the process of writing is depicted as a violent—yet funny—bodily urge. An early passage illustrates this process. On the

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[422] Burgess, *Inside Mr Enderby*, in *The Complete Enderby* (London: Vintage, 2002), 76 [hereafter cited in text as IE].

[423] In "Calypso," Leopold Bloom is depicted sitting on the lavatory, reading a newspaper as he "eases his bowels." Joyce, *Ulysses*, 66. Both activities prompt thoughts of writing in Bloom, who muses about "jotting down" some of Nora's witty sayings. Stimulation, movement, control and release, pleasure and discomfort (or pain)—these are all terms which can be used to describe the body's most primary libidinal rhythms (introjection and rejection in Freud's account of the drives) See Geri Johnson's notes to the text, 792–93. Burgess alerts the reader to this Joycean intertext in *You've Had Your Time*, "Up to the time of my writing the novel, fiction, with the exception of *Ulysses*, where Mr Bloom spends more than a page in his outdoor jakes, preferred to ignore the bowels." *You've Had Your Time,* 14. Burgess also mentions Rabelais as another writer who, like Joyce, "did not ignore" the workings of the body.

morning when he is about to receive an invitation to an Awards Ceremony, Enderby awakens to "heartburn," (IE, 17) which he attempts to cure by taking some sodium bicarbonate; the "relief" that the bicarbonate brings is signified by a loud and appropriately musical "Aaaaaaarp," accompanied by a "a fierce and shameless hunger," which he appeases with "half a tin of sardines," consumed "with fingers that he then wiped dry on his pyjamas." (IE, 18) The ingestion of bicarbonate soda prompts a movement in Enderby's bowels which, in turn, triggers a simultaneous urge to write. "Like a man in a comic film," he runs to the lavatory, where he picks up the manuscript of an epic poem that he has been writing for some time entitled "The Pet Beast," a re-casting of the legend of the Minotaur as a Christian allegory of sin and redemption.

This poem is Enderby's attempt to create a vision of order in the face of chaos and sin, by fusing Christian and pagan myths. This order, however, is built on an irresolvable ambivalence. In Enderby's poem, the Minotaur is a paradox, a monster that "was no horror, its gentle eyes were twin worlds of love. … Gentle as a pet, with hurt and forgiving eyes, it looked on humanity." (IE, 19) The Minotaur is constructed as an ambivalent figure, "a monster" that is "no horror," but who, as a result of its paradoxical nature—a human soul in a monster's body—becomes both the "unspeakable" and a signifier of the state's "guilt" as well as its scapegoat and liberator.[424] This "god-man-beast" composite becomes a Christ-like figure and is hidden by his father in a labyrinth which is also a home of "Cretan culture," a library constructed on the "peripheral corridors of the labyrinth." (IE, 19) The monster in the labyrinth is designed to represent the human condition: "beauty and knowledge built round a core of sin." (IE, 19) The

[424] This paradoxical figure re-appears later as Miles Faber, who is cast as an incestuous/non-incestuous/sinner/saviour figure in *M/F*.

poem's serious intent and lofty theme is playfully undermined by the text's ironic and mocking tone:

> A winged bull swooped from heaven in a howling wind. Wheeeeee. The law-giver's queen was ravished. Big with child, called whore by her husband, she went incognita to a tiny village of the kingdom, there, in a cheap hotel, to give birth to the Minotaur. But the old gummy trot who tended her would keep no secret; she blazoned it about the village (and this spread beyond the towns, to the capital) that a god-man-beast had come down to rule the world. Prrfrrr. In hope, the anarchic party of the state was now ready to rise against the law-maker: tradition had spoken of the coming of a divine leader. … Brrrrbfrrr. (IE, 19)

The bodily sounds are a mocking response to Enderby's grandiose dream of a meaningful fusion of the two myths. "Wheeeeee" mimics the sound of the wind and is also linked to a series of onomatopoeic words like "swooped" and "howling," which to an extent mimic the actions which they are trying to express. The insertion of sound effects in the account of Enderby's poem, if irreverent, is also significant within the text's construction as both symbolic structure and as an implicit critique of that structure. The lofty tone of the passage and the grand symbolism are irreverently undercut by one of Enderby's "posterior ripostes" and by the image, in brackets, of Enderby's toilet roll, "Prrrrf. (Enderby's toilet-roll span)." (IE, 19) The whole passage, then, constitutes a playful and carnivalesque overturning of the poem's serious theme of the dual nature of the human condition, not only "beauty and sin" but also sin and bodily expulsions.

Enderby's bodily expulsions and "posterior ripostes" (IE, 13) punctuate the text in the first part of the novel. The novel opens with a loud, "PFFFRRRUMMP," (IE, 13) followed by "Perrrrrp" and "Querpkprrmp," (IE, 14) which are set ironically against Enderby's moments of sleeping "afflatus," as he recites his poetic lines "*My bedmate deep/ In the heavy labour of unrequited sleep.*" (IE, 15) This association between

inspiration and "afflatus" situates Burgess's novel within Swift's satirical tradition.[425] These lines parody the style of romantic love poetry by equating love with sleep, and creating an oblique link between "heavy labour" and Enderby's flatulence. "PFFFRRRUMMP," (IE, 13) "Perrrrrp" and "Querpkprrmp" can also be analyzed as markers of what Kristeva calls the operations of *signifiance* in the text: the discharge of the semiotic through the symbolic. As purely iconic signs, the notation of noise becomes a textual articulation of the non-signifying, non-referential and material aspects of signification—the signifying processes of the semiotic, which "encompass … the material body, and language itself."[426]

The inscription of sound within the text also, and more significantly, links Burgess's text with Joyce's experimentations with the mimetic rendering of sound in *Ulysses*. In "Sirens," Leopold Bloom's drunken recitation of the Irish rebel Robert Emmett's last words is humorously interrupted by the sounds emanating from his own body:

> *Nations of the earth.* No-one behind. She's passed. *Then and not till then.* Tram. Kran, kran,kran. Good oppor. Coming. Krandlkrankran. I'm sure it's the burgundy. Yes. One, two. *Let my epitaph be.* Kraaaaaaaa. *Written. I have.* Pprrpffrrppfff.[427]

In *Joysprick*, Burgess praises Joyce's exploitation of different techniques to render sound, sometimes by means of letter combinations that "suggest the presence of a noise through

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[425] "The joke about afflatus and inspiration is, in fact, Swift's." Frank Kermode, "Anthony Burgess," in *Modern Essays*, 290. Swift launches a satirical attack on the "learned Aeolists" in Section VIII of *A Tale of a Tub* by stressing the connection between the word "afflatus," used by many learned people to signify spirit and inspiration, and the word wind, "giving occasion [also] for those happy epithets of *turgidus* and *inflatus*." *A Tale of a Tub* (London: Penguin, 2004), 77. Joyce also mocks newspapers' empty rhetoric in the Aeolus section in *Ulysses*. In Burgess's text, flatulence is associated with excessive verbosity; flatulence also, and paradoxically, comes to signify the materiality of language.
[426] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 16.
[427] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 279.

the absence of lexical sense,"[428] in constructions like "Rrrpr. Kraa. Kraandl," in the Sirens episode of *Ulysses*; [429] other times, by the use of "iconic tropes," like Stephen's ashplant calling him "Steeeeeeeeeephen."[430] "Prrfrrr" and "Brrrrbfrrr" also imitate sound – Enderby's flatulence – and, unlike the expulsion that opens the passage, "Pfffrumpfff," their function is purely iconic. "Pfffrumpfff," as Alan Roughley notes, "also includes a semantic signifier of the posterior orifice or "rump" from which it is expelled."[431] It is, furthermore, a modified version of the "posterior riposte" which opens the novel, "PFFFRRRUMMMP," jocularly directed as his readers, "the posterity to which [Enderby] hopefully addressed [himself]." (IE, 13) Enderby's "posterior riposte" is a transposition of Leopold Bloom's more mimetic "Pprrpffrrppffff," which occurs at the end of 'Sirens.' As Roughley notes, the transposition of "the system of signs by which Joyce signifies Bloom's burps" into "the system by which Burgess signifies … Mr Enderby's posterior flatulence" creates an intertext in which the semiotic and semantic functions of "the winds of Bloom and Enderby" are exchanged, [432] with Enderby's more "meaningful" flatulence taking the place of Bloom's more mimetic and semiotic "fart."

In this irreverent and playful textual dialogue, Burgess is "writing back" to Joyce, paying homage to Joyce's groundbreaking experimentations with novelistic language but at the same time expressing a certain anxiety over Joyce's obsessive attention to form over content, as he remarks in *Joysprick*, "[For Joyce] words must not only stand for their

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[428] Burgess, *Joysprick*, 22.
[429] Quoted in *Joysprick*, 22.
[430] Ibid, 23.
[431] Alan Roughley, "Enten: Subjects: Burgess, Shakespeare, Joyce (Text; hypertext, vortex)," in *JoyceMedia. James Joyce, Hypermedia & Textual Genetics*, ed. Louis Armand (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2004), 159.
[432] Ibid., 158

referents: they must mimic them as well, even at the risk of their own disintegration."[433] As an intertextuality—that is, a transposition of the signifying system of Joyce's text into the signifying system of Burgess's text—the text becomes the space of polysemous semantic and semiotic play, and words can "ring freely, sounding all [their] harmonics."[434] And yet, Burgess's text reveals a certain anxiety over the unlimited semiotic play or excess of *signifiance* generated by this transposition of the "body" into the "text." *Inside Mr Enderby* responds to this threat, as it were, by shifting from the semiotic to the symbolic—thus making those noises "significant."

Like Enderby's bodily sounds, which punctuate the narrative discourse and break through the text releasing its semiotic disruptive force, Enderby's encounters with his stepmother create rhythm which sustains and, at the same time, disrupts the novel's linear narrative structure. A comical-grotesque figure in the tradition of the virago,[435] the stepmother figure is also connected to the Rabelaisian carnivalesque tradition[436] as an

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[433] Burgess, *Joysprick*, 22. This aspect of Joyce's writing, and of his own writing, was the source of concern for Burgess throughout his career. In an interview for the magazine *Connoisseur* in 1982, Burgess ponders on "the mystery of the satisfaction of form," to an extent "the job of the imaginative writer." At the same time, he adds, "if one thinks words are a kind of reality, one shouldn't really be practising the novel at all." Burgess, "Polymath," Interview with Michael Wood, *Connoisseur* 211 (1982): 95.

[434] Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody* (Middlesex: Hamlyn, 1982), 266

[435] The character of the stepmother has received little critical attention from Burgess scholars, who tend to consider her as a minor comic character in the tradition of the Virago or Swift grotesques. John J. Stinson describes her simply as "repository of all bodily lowliness." *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 93. Samuel Coale sees her as a "representation of the archetypal bitch, graceless and coarse"—a symbol of the "gross reality" which Enderby attempts to escape "in the craft of his verse." *Anthony Burgess*, 166–67.
In *You've Had Your Time*, Burgess claims that none of his reviewers noticed or cared for the stepmother's symbolic function as both "mother" and "all women." Burgess, *You've Had Your Time*, 16. The only critic to hint at the stepmother's more complex role in the text is Jean E. Kennard, who argues that the stepmother represents in fact "the ugliness and vitality of the reality [Enderby] needs in order to write, his sexual feelings for her the guilt which is 'creation's true dynamo.'" Jean E. Kennard, "Anthony Burgess: Double Vision" in *Anthony Burgess. Modern Critical Views*, 74. Although Kennard does not explore the connection between the stepmother and the process of creation, he does point to the conflicting, and also possibly productive, relationship between the two.

[436] It is worth noting here that Bakhtin's grotesque body is always regenerative, although it is ambivalently connected with death, as the passage between life and death. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 25–6. Sue Vice also remarks on the distinction between Bakhtin's grotesque body and Kristeva's abject. See Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 163.

embodiment of the muse in "the tradition of the lowly genres—apocalyptic, Menippean, and carnivalesque,"[437] as opposed to Enderby's Muse, his idealized image of femininity, "a willow-wand creature … of infinite refinement and smelling sweet as May." (IE, 75) Enderby's Muse is shaped in response to the unbearable reality of his stepmother's excessive physical presence, "in terms of what she should not be, namely his stepmother ... slender and laughing and, above all, *clean*." (IE, 75-6) In contrast, the stepmother presents herself to Enderby in all her fleshy, odorous and sonorous materiality,

> Oh she had been graceless and coarse, that one. A hundredweight of ringed and brooched blubber, smelling to high heaven of female smells, rank as a long-hung hare or blown beef, her bedroom strewn with soiled bloomers, crumby combinations, malodorous bust-bodices ... Her habits were loathsome. She ... made gross sandwiches of all her meals or cut her meat with scissors, spat chewed bacon-rind or pork -crackling back on her plate, excavated beef-fibres from her cavernous molars and held them up for all the world to see. (IE, 26)

This description combines dialogically Swift's hyperbolic style, designed to emphasize the female anatomy as physically repulsive, with a carnivalesque celebration of bodily excess, expressed in a discourse which draws attention to its own materiality through sound repetition (the /r/ in "fibres," "cavernous" and molars"), alliteration ("crummy combinations") and the use of parataxis (by accumulation of details) to mirror her body's exhuberant and overflowing physicality. The stepmother's power stems from her position as an authoritative maternal figure in the Enderby household. She has taken the role of the father, who, in order to "escape from that bitch of the second wife," spends his time hidden away in the tobacconist shop, "ruling lines in the ledger with an ebony sceptre of a ledger-ruler," (IE, 26) both empty symbols of lost phallic authority. However, the stepmother's "law" is not the Law of the Father and of the symbolic, but an "other" law,

[437] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 169

articulated in a speech which does not follow grammatical conventions and is punctuated by a language of the body expressed in "loud belches" and "vigorous tromboning" from the lavatory. (IE, 26)

The stepmother is a manifestation of the more disturbing and threatening aspects of the maternal semiotic in its potential for *jouissance* and destruction. Enderby senses her presence as a threat to his subjective and linguistic stability; at the same time, her presence in the text operates as a trigger for linguistic productivity. In the first part of the novel, her ghostly apparition in a pub during one of Enderby's daily outings, prompts him to return to the safety of his home and his narrative poem. (IE, 25) As he leaves the pub, however, the image of a "widow in antique tweeds" (IE, 24) provides Enderby with the germ of a new poem in the word "widow," a reference to his stepmother and, proleptically, to his future wife, a widow called Vesta Bainbridge. The poem begins to builds itself by a process of association. This poetic process is mirrored at the level of the novel's text. As Enderby approaches his lodgings he makes a detour by the Freemason's Pub to pick up a hare for his New Year's meal. The word "hare" suggests a connection to the stepmother (she has already been described in the texts as "rank as a long-hung hare"). In the pub Enderby meets "Arry, [the] head cook at the Conway" (IE, 28) who hands Enderby a "long bloody parcel, blood congealed on a newspaper headline about some woman's blood." (IE, 28) Out of this parcel, grotesquely, "the head of a mature hare stared at [Enderby] with glass eyes." (IE, 28) Within the text's symbolic network the hare signifies the stepmother, whose smell is "rank as a long-hung hare or blown beef." (IE, 26) The blood on the parcel, at the same time, foreshadows Enderby's performance of a mock sacrifice later on in the narrative. At this point, though, the focus is on the

polysemy and ambiguity of the word "blood." The adjective "bloody" in the phrase "bloody parcel" can be understood in its referential sense and as a curse, one sometimes considered blasphemous because of its implicit association with the "blood" of Christ. The "congealed" drop of blood resting on "the newspaper headline about some woman's blood" (IE, 28) brings together the sign "blood" and its referent, the drop of "real" blood, so that the newspaper page becomes a playful intertextuality of linguistic and non-linguistic signs.

The double vowel "oo" in "blood," furthermore, is visually associated with other words in Arry's Oldham dialect, an association which prompts a further sound correspondence:

> 'Red coorant jelly,'said Arry, 'What a generally do is serve red coorant jelly on a art-shaped croutong. Coot out a art-shaped bitter bread with a art-cooter. Boot, living on yer own, a don't suppose yer'll wanter go to that trouble.'(28)

"Redcoorant" and "cooter" are literal transcriptions of the sound /ü/ in Arry's speech. In standard notation the "oo" in "blood" is rendered as /bl d/. In Arry's heavily dialectal speech, however, it becomes /blüd/. The combination of the liquid consonant "l" and the long vowel "oo" suggests a correspondence between the sounds and the consistency of the real blood- liquid and viscous. This combination of the representational and the iconic is characteristic of poetic language. It is also, as Burgess himself notes in *Language Made Plain*, a feature of primitive languages and of dialectal and conversational speech.[438] Enderby's stepmother is unable to read or write using the conventional alphabet; however, she can transcribe her name as an "ideogram," an iconic sign. The stepmother's ungrammatical use of language, her "ranting without aitches" (IE, 26) and her misuse of

[438] Burgess, *Language Made Plain* (London: Flamingo, 1984), 21.

pronouns, "the pains in me legs," (IE, 26) are mirrored in Arry the cook's own heavily dialectal English, which contrasts with Enderby's carefully articulated speech and obsession with grammatical correctness.

The section that follows the meeting with Arry at the Freemason's pub dramatizes the act of poetic composition as a confrontation between Enderby and his stepmother, which will end with a hilarious act of "step-matricide." The passage is a carnivalesque celebration of poetry as a total experience involving mind and body and an active exploration of the process of writing as a dynamic intertextuality. Enderby's poem is literally put together from bits and pieces that he collects in his manic journey from the pub to his kitchen. The first line comes to Enderby when he is observing an exchange between three lesbians at the pub: a "peroxided Jewess named Gladys" and two other women, one named Prudence and the other, a "fierce-looking thin woman in a dress as hairy and simple as a monk's habit." (IE, 29) The "fierce-looking" lesbian greets her companion with the words "Prudence, my duck," (IE, 29) a phrase that releases the "fragments of a new poem … into Enderby's head." (IE, 29) Immediately, Enderby feels compelled to organize these pieces into a coherent pattern, "He saw the shape, he heard the words, he felt the rhythm." (IE, 29) "Duck" triggers off a correspondence with another bird, a "pigeon" and the ensuing line reads "*Prudence, Prudence, the pigeons call.*" The line that follows is suggested by Enderby's earlier encounter with the widow in tweeds, "*The widow in the shadow*," a reference to the stepmother and his future wife Vesta. Excited by the lines calling him to "act" and "give voice" (*Act, act, the ducks give voice*) he writes them down on the newspaper wrapping for the hare, in the gap below "two forlorn football results." (IE, 29) The contrast between Enderby's poetic exaltation

and the farcical tone of the scene is humorously emphasized by Gladys singing some "pop garbage."

Back in his flat, as he is busily skinning and quartering the hare for his New Year's stew, Enderby recalls the earlier association between the hare, the body of the stepmother and sacrificial murder. Comically, Enderby sees himself transformed into an executioner, with arms "soaked in blood to the elbows" and "a murderer's leer, holding the sacrificial knife." (IE, 30) The image of Enderby holding a sacrificial knife also triggers an intertextual connection with Mallarmé's essay 'The Book: A Spiritual' in which he argues for a rethinking of the form of the book and calls for a writing that resembles the format of the newspaper, "a plain sheet of paper upon which a flow of words is printed in the most unrefined manner."[439] The image of the blood "congealed" on the newspaper page offers a playful example of this "unrefined" form of writing; Enderby's poem as a "crumpled mess of news, blood [and] inchoate poetry." (IE, 29) The other link with Mallarmé's text is the image of Enderby brandishing the kitchen knife—a parodic and mocking replay of the French poet's impassioned gesture against those books that are produced in an "ordinary" manner, "rais[ing] [his] knife in protest, like the cook chopping off chickens' heads."[440]

While the passage mocks the conventions of the French Avant-Garde, and in particular the French Symbolists' manifestoes on poetic intuition and free association and Mallarmé's theory of writing as "a total expansion of the letter" and as "a system of

[439] Stephane Mallarmé, *Selected Prose Poems, Essays, & Letters*, trans. Bradford Cook and Stephane Mallarmé (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956), 27.
[440] Ibid., 25.

relationships,"[441] simultaneously, it offers a demonstration of this process by foregrounding, even in comical terms, the intertextuality of the writing process.[442] The whole scene is poised ambivalently between an irreverent mockery of Modernist formal experimentations and a celebration of the text as an intersection of multiple materials and voices without a unifying or finalizing meaning. The passage is full of references to "fragments," "shapes," "lines," "rhythms"; at one point "a gust shatter[s] and dispers[es] the emerging form of the poem" (IE, 29) only to spring again from the tap itself in the line, "The running tap casts a static shadow." (IE, 30) New poetic lines suggesting themselves to Enderby from the material world around him, "The water flowing from the faucet cast a faint shadow, a still shadow, on the splashboard. The line came, a refrain: *The running tap casts a static shadow.*" (IE, 30) A "silly jingle" insinuates itself, from the "meaningless onomatopoeia" of the pairing between "widow" and "meadow" in an earlier line "*The widow in the meadow. Drain the sacrament of choice.*" (IE, 29) Suddenly, a whole stanza "blurt[s] out":

> 'Act! Act!' The ducks give voice.
> Enjoy the widow in the meadow.
> Drain the sacrament of choice.
> The running tap casts a static shadow.' (IE, 30)

His "excitement mounting," Enderby continues his process of association, comically looking for inspiration in other birds: "What were they? The cuckoo? The sea-gull? What was the name of that cross-eyed lesbian bitch in the Freemason's?" (IE, 30) Sporting the attire of Mallarmé's revolutionary poet, "knife in hand, steeped in blood to the elbows," Enderby "dashes out" of his flat in search of the newspaper wrapping that he had thrown

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[441] Ibid., 25–26.
[442] Interestingly, the poetry of Mallarmé constitutes for Kristeva one of the prime examples of the workings of the semiotic in language. She explores some of his works and ideas in *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

in the rubbish, and that has the first lines of the poem that Enderby had started to write in the pub. The poem is now "a crumpled mess of news, blood [and] inchoate" fragments, (IE, 29) lying amongst bits and pieces of rubbish, a playfully named "Black Magic box" (a box of chocolates and a reference to the mock-sacrifice of the hare), "banana peel," and "a Senior Service packet" with its allusion to the Xaverian Service. These pieces represent the materiality of the linguistic sign; together they also constitute a signifying system—a poem, albeit as a playful and disruptive process.

As Enderby frantically searches for "the defiled paper that had wrapped the beast" he finally finds his written lines amongst three headlines which seem to be speaking directly to Enderby, "THIS MAN WILL KILL, POLICE WARN. NOW BOY IS LOVED," and a line from an advertisement for antacid tablets, "Most People stop Acid Stomach with Rennies." (IE, 30) Out of the detritus one line stands out, "Now boy is loved." The three lines together appear incoherent, but in the context of Enderby's life and his ambiguous relationship with his stepmother, the text articulates his desire to be loved and accepted. In this context, the next line from the advert describing the effect of the antacid tablets, "the pain is beginning to go," (IE, 30) becomes an expression of Enderby's unconscious desires. For Enderby, however, the "meaning" of a text is not a concern; his interest lies in the connections between the words. This passage mocks Enderby's poetic efforts and his obsession with making connections but also points out the anxiety that underlies this obsession with form over content, a fear of an excess of meaning, of emotion, of reality, which overwhelms Enderby and which prompts him to control the "flow." Finally Enderby finds the lines that he had written on the newspaper before and can now proceed to separate them from the other fragments and the scattered headlines and the pieces of

rubbish, and finally silence the chaotic cacophony that is the voice of the stepmother. So, when a policeman confronts him about the knife that he is still wielding in his bloody hands, Enderby confidently replies "I've been murdering my stepmother." (IE, 31) He is now ready to finish his poem, which he does, sitting on the toilet, shielded from the world. And yet, as he recites the last stanza, "'Act! Act!'/ The ducks give voice. /'Enjoy the widow in the meadow. /Drain the sacrament of choice…'" (IE, 31) he can still hear the water, signifying the flow of language, "flooding away" in the kitchen sink.

If the symbolic function of language "constitutes itself" against "instinctual drive and continuous relation to the mother," the subject-in-process of poetic language, as Kristeva argues, "maintains itself at the cost of reactivating this repressed instinctual element."[443] In this sense, poetic language "would be the equivalent of incest."[444] Because "it utters incest," Kristeva adds, poetic language is linked with "evil" and with the "break-up of social concord."[445] This association between poetic creation and incest[446] is playfully explored in *Inside Mr Enderby* in the section narrating Enderby's train journey to London, at the end of Chapter Two, Part One. Enderby has been awarded a poetry prize and is on his way to the city to collect it. For Enderby London represents the chaos of the outside world, "The very name evoked the same responses as *lung* cancer, overdrawn, stepmother." (IE, 32) While he is on the train, the sight of a mundane object, a poster advertising domestic gas becomes the trigger for an incestuous and blasphemous poem involving the stepmother and the Virgin Mary:

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[443] Kristeva, "From One Identity to An Other," *Desire in Language*, 136. The connection between language, transgression and incest is explored later in *M/F*.
[444] Ibid.
[445] Ibid., 137.
[446] Burgess explores the connection between poetry and incest (or art and incest) in *M/F*, where it is explored in carnivalesque fashion.

> He passed a block of bright posters. One of them extolled domestic gas: a smiling toy paraclete called Mr Therm presid[ing] over a sort of warm Holy Family. Pentecostal therm: Pentecostal sperm. (IE, 44)

Enderby's reading of the image is heavily imbued with his stepmother's particular brand of Catholicism, a religion of "relics and emblems and hagiographs used as lightning conductors." (IE, 46) The advertisement's exploitation of religious imagery for the sale of gas excites Enderby's sense of the paradoxical, evoked in the marrying of religion and science in the line "Pentecostal therm," which is suggestive of physical warmth, but introduces a Biblical text: the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of "tongues of fire" on to the Apostles and the bestowal of the gift of "many tongues."[447] Biblical fire, linguistic multiplicity, scientific language and the language of advertising all come together in this playful double image.

It is precisely this playfulness in the associative processes of the poem that triggers the next rhyme between "therm" and "sperm," which is appropriate to the developing incest theme of the poem. The connection between poetic inspiration and physical (sexual) excitation is made explicit in the description of an inebriated Enderby "short of breath, his head martelling away as though he had just downed a half-bottle of brandy." (IE, 44) The comedy in this scene derives from the disjunction between the poem's progressively more obscene and heretical tone and Enderby's innocent excitement at each word association (not unlike Spindrift). One particularly funny section involves a fragment of conversation he overhears, "Rain one day, snow the next. Be pissing down again tomorrow," (IE, 44) which is rapidly turned into the line "*The Pentecostal Sperm came pissing down.*" (IE, 44) Almost unconsciously, Enderby changes the second half

[447] *New American Standard Bible*, Acts 2. 1–4.

into "*came Hissing down.*" Enderby's excitement becomes anxiety as he begins to feel that an evil force has taken control of his language: "The line was dealt to him, like a card from a weighing-machine." (IE, 44)

Still engrossed in composition, though, and excited by the word-play generated by the juxtaposition of sexual and religious images, Enderby's poem, like the train, continues its onward march. Soon it begins to take on incestuous connotations, as an image of the "Virgin Mary at a spinning wheel" brings on thoughts of the stepmother, and a new line, "In this spinning womb, reduced to a common noun/The Pentecostal sperm came hissing down." (IE, 44) The "womb" signifies the maternal; the "common noun" is language as symbolic law. In Enderby's imagery (which is also Burgess's), the "Pentecostal sperm" combines the notion of language's multiplicity, signified by the miracle of Pentecost, with the irreverent image of the Holy Spirit as "sperm." The sacred and the profane are, again, playfully brought together in this image. This association, however, is not new. It can be found in Shakespeare's Sonnet 129, "Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame/Is lust in action," where "spirit" works as an euphemism for semen.[448] What is playful punning in Shakespeare (on the correspondence of body and spirit) almost becomes an obscenity in Burgess's text, through the literal rendering of "spirit" as semen or "sperm." Some readers may find the image obscene (rather than playful). For Kristeva, the obscene word is in fact "the mark of a situation of desire" linking the speaking subject to a

[448] See Nora Johnson, "Body and Spirit. Stage and Sexuality in *The Tempest*," *English Literary History* 64 no. 3 (Fall 1997): 638–701, 695. According to Stephen Booth, one of the meanings of "expense" in Sonnet 129 is "expenditure." Stephen Booth, ed., *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 441. "Expenditure" is also the term which Kristeva uses to refer to the movement of material contradiction (the workings of the life/death drives in Freud's terms) which generates the semiotic function.

"desiring and desired mother,"[449] where the identity of the signifying subject, "if not destroyed, is exceeded by a conflict of instinctual drives."[450]

The word "sperm" discloses a repressed desire for his stepmother, which is immediately displaced and condensed in the poem's playful imagery. Displacement occurs at the level of the rhyming patterns. Immediately after the line "The Pentecostal sperm came pissing down" is "dealt to him" Enderby has a sudden image of "the whole poem like a squat evil engine, weighing, waiting," (IE, 44) which brings back the sense of an external mechanical force expressed in the image of the card machine above. The image's sinister tone is destabilized by the playful internal rhyming between "weighing" and "waiting." This movement of destabilization continues as Enderby tries to find the form for the poem, "That was not it, the rhythm was wrong, it was not couplets." (IE, 44) The word "couplet," however, triggers an association with the image of the "doves" in "the Queen's speech in *Hamlet,* in which Gertrude reflects on Hamlet's "madness" after Ophelia's death:

> And [thus] a while the fit will work on him;
> Anon, as patient as the female dove,
> When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
> His silence will sit drooping. (V. i. 285-288)[451]

The "golden couplets" in Shakespeare's text are "a pair of baby birds, covered with yellow down."[452] This association between "doves" and "couplets" is part of the symbolic network generated by the correspondence between writing and the maternal developed in *Inside Mr Enderby*'s text. The incest theme re-emerges at this point, not in the image of

[449] Kristeva, "From One Identity to An Other," 142.
[450] Ibid, 144. Obscenity and its relationship to the maternal are explored, quite irreverently, in *M/F.*
[451] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Edwards Blakemore (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 1180.
[452] Editor's note, ibid., 1180.

the "doves" but in the figure of Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, whom the Ghost describes as "that incestuous, that adulterate beast." (I. v. 42) In his Shakespeare monograph, Burgess argues that Gertrude's "faithlessness" and "her incestuous marriage" are the roots for the decay and "rottenness" in the State.[453] The theme of incest in Shakespeare's play extends beyond the marriage between Gertrude and Claudius. Freud found in Hamlet's hesitation to avenge his father by killing his uncle a sign of his unconscious guilt, triggered by "the obscure memory that he himself had meditated the same deed against his father because of passion for his mother."[454]

Contemporary psychoanalytical readings of the play have also focused on the role of the maternal in the crisis of the masculine subject. In *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays Hamlet to The Tempest*, Janet Adelman argues that all Shakespeare's tragedies and problem plays are preoccupied with "the nightmare of femaleness that can weaken and contaminate masculinity."[455] Enderby's fear and loathing of his stepmother's body links him to Hamlet, as also does his incestuous desire for her, both of which are triggered by the word "doves" in the text. Enderby's "train" of thought (significantly, he is on board the "train" to London at this point) moves from "doves" to "loves" to "leaves." (IE, 44) As in the previous scene, the process of poetic composition becomes dramatized in the text, as Enderby's physical movements trigger

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[453] Burgess, *Shakespeare* (London: Penguin, 1970), 195.

[454] Freud in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess, cited in Octave Mannoni, *Freud: The Theory of the Unconscious*, trans. Renaud Bruce (London: Pantheon Books, 1971), 47. According to Harold Boom, *Hamlet* in fact provided Freud with his model for the Oedipus Complex, which Bloom renames the "Hamlet complex." Freud, he argues, "suffered from a Hamlet complex (the true name of the Oedipus Complex) or an anxiety of influence in regard to Shakespeare." Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry.* 2nd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xxii. In this light, the reference of the "Holy sperm" in Enderby's poem is suggestive of an affinity between Enderby and Hamlet. This association is reinforced at the end of the novel, when Enderby muses on whether to kill himself (to end or be), examined later on in this chapter (cf. page 163).

[455] Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays Hamlet to The Tempest* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 4.

off more word associations and vice versa, and his incestuous desire is displaced along the signifying chain.

Looking for "an–eave rhyme somewhere" (IE, 44) Enderby boards the train. There he reflects on the word "dove", which in turn takes him back to "paraclete" ("dove meant paraclete") and then to the line "A dove in the leaves of life," to end in a series of rhymes, "Eve, leave, thieve, achieve, conceive." (IE, 45) This continuous displacement creates a rhythm which, as Kristeva notes, destabilizes meaning and "wipe[s] out sense through nonsense and laughter."[456] Like the operations of the obscene word, the creation of a textual rhythm by sound-equivalence and rhyming pattern "mobilizes the signifying resources of the subject"[457] to disclose another scene of signification, one characterized by *jouissance* and laughter. For Kristeva, laughter is the prototypical instance of a truly innovative and revolutionary writing practice. Laughter "always indicates an act of aggression against the Creator … [It] is what lifts inhibitions by breaking through prohibition."[458] Yet, for the subject, this breaking through symbolic law is deeply unsettling: "the laughter of the one who produces that laughter is … always painful, forced, black."[459] Both the prohibition to be lifted and the prohibition necessary for the articulation of the utterance "weigh heavily upon [the subject]"—like Enderby's image of the poem "weighing, waiting."[460] For Enderby, this prohibition involves both his

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[456] Kristeva, "From One Identity to an Other," 142.
[457] Ibid.
[458] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 224
[459] To explain laughter's ambivalence and its effect on the subject Kristeva quotes Lautréamont in *Maldoror and Poems*: "My reasoning will sometimes jingle the bells of madness and the serious appearance of what is, after all, merely grotesque, although, according to some philosophers, it is quite difficult to tell the difference between the clown and the melancholic man, life itself being but a comic tragedy or a tragic comedy." In Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 224. Enderby can certainly be described as a "melancholic clown" in Lautréamont's sense.
[460] The homophones "weigh, wait" also appear in *The Doctor is Sick*, as we have seen. See page 124 in this thesis.

incestuous desire for the maternal figure (either as the Virgin or as her "other"—the stepmother) and the (related) desire to transgress, to break through all accepted norms: literary, religious, linguistic, social.

In Burgess's text, this (double) act of transgression is comically enacted in the last section, when Enderby is on the train, engrossed in his "rhyming" exercise. His concentration is disrupted by the authoritative voice of a woman "sitting diagonally opposite" to Enderby in the compartment, "I beg your pardon?" (IE, 45) Her cool and contained demeanour, "thin, blonde … smart with a mink cape-stole and a hat like a nest" (IE, 45) prompts another sequence of rhymes, "Peeve. Believe. Weave" followed by the vision of the train "pant[ing] north-east with urgent love of London" like "a sperm to be swallowed by that giant womb." (IE, 45) The next line is complete: "'Swallowed … by the giant stomach of Eve,' Enderby exclaims "with loud excitement." (IE, 45) The connection between poetry and incest is not completely lost on Enderby, who finds beneath "the obvious surface myth … something about the genesis of the poet," (IE, 47) in the ambiguous lines by the Virgin Mary, "I was nowhere, for I was anyone –/The grace and music easy to receive:/The patient engine of a stranger son." (IE, 46)

Meanwhile, the train reaches its destination, completing the incestuous act: Enderby, "the Pentecostal sperm, reduced to a common noun" is "swallowed" by London's/Eve's/the stepmother's "womb" to produce a poem and, therefore, to be reborn as "the poet." And the son. Despite the passage's obvious ironic and mocking tone, Enderby's final triplet resounds with a sense of loss, perhaps a reminder (by Burgess) of the power of poetic language to evoke what cannot be presented to consciousness: "And though, by dispensation of the dove/My flesh is pardoned of its flesh, they leave/The

rankling of a wrong and useless love." (IE, 47) Although the "I" speaking these lines is the Virgin Mary, the reference to a "wrong and useless love" hints at the forbidden nature of the relationship between mother and child.

For Enderby, the line signifies both excess and loss—the unbearable gap left by his real mother's absence, along with the intolerable presence of the ubiquitous stepmother, both constituting an excessive maternal-feminine force. Enderby senses that this force is somehow connected to his development as a writer when he reflects on the theme of the poem as a whole, "something about the genesis of the poet." (IE, 46) This is an important moment; he has somehow fixed the confusing and chaotic jumble of images into a complete poem about the "genesis" of the poet. With confidence, after finishing the poem (as always, sitting in the lavatory), he writes the line "Every woman is a stepmother" on a piece of toilet paper, a statement which he feels "has universal validity." (IE, 46) The form of sentence implies that this is a statement of fact or a logical conclusion. And yet, there is nothing logical about the stepmother, certainly for Enderby. She is ambiguous; both desired and rejected part of his "self" and other to him.

Her ambiguity and excessive physical attributes align the stepmother with Kristeva's "abject" mother, the engulfing and destructive maternal figure of the subject's archaic memories. In Kristeva's theory, already outlined in Chapter One in this dissertation, the abject mother is sensed as "threat" that transgresses the border between inside and outside, "that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside."[461] This disturbing image is then projected to anything which "does not respect borders, positions [and] rules

[461] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 1.

… the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite."[462] In literature, Kristeva argues, abjection finds its expression in the "crisis of the word" articulated in the ambivalent operations of poetic language and carnivalesque discourse. The semiotic modality of language can "disclose the abject" but also "purify" from the abject by allowing it some expression within the symbolic. Like poetic language, which productively incorporates the disruptive semiotic within its symbolic structures, "abject language"[463] allows for a controlled articulation of the horror and joyful excess of the archaic experience of the maternal through the play of "style" (Kristeva's word) and through carnivalesque laughter.[464]

This very short and simplified account of the abject cannot attempt to account for the range and complexity of Kristeva's concept, but it offers an appropriate critical tool to explore the disruptive power of the maternal semiotic and its specific manifestations in *Inside Mr Enderby*, some of which are not covered by the notion of the semiotic alone. In the first instance, the notion of the abject accounts for the ambivalence in Enderby's desire/loathing for his stepmother, and more importantly, offers a means to analyze the physical effects of the stepmother's presence on Enderby—his feelings of nausea and dizziness—as more than comical effects or a representation of Enderby's fear (which they are also) and to read them as textual manifestations or expressions of the somatic

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[462] Ibid., 19.

[463] I am using Kelly Oliver's phrase. Oliver uses the expressions "abject language" and "abject literature" to differentiate this kind of writing from poetic language. Kelly Oliver, *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-Bind* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 103. Oliver's distinction is useful methodologically. Kristeva's lack of terminological specificity, on the other hand, allows her readers to consider the overlap between her notions of the semiotic and the abject. At least, this is how I have interpreted her concepts in this chapter.

[464] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 204–5. This notion has met with some controversy and criticism. See Kelly Oliver, *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-Bind*, 103–4.

experience of "abjection."[465] Abjection, however, is not simply an expression of the subject's horror of the "archaic mother." Abjection "speaks" of the always ambivalent, love/hate, attraction/repulsion relationship between the subject and the maternal, "an other as prohibited as it is desired—abject."[466] Enderby loathes his stepmother but he is also strangely attached to her: he drinks "stepmother's tea, potent with tannin," (IE, 76) shares the same "loathsome habits" in the kitchen (IE, 26) and is beginning to look more and more like her, "[A]s middle age advanced, his stepmother seemed to be entering slyly into him more and more. His back ached, his feet hurt, he had a tidy paunch, all his teeth out, he belched." (IE, 27)

Enderby's abjection of his stepmother stems from a fundamental (and disturbing) ambiguity in their relationship which is rooted in her existence, to the young Enderby, as a double embodiment of the maternal (even as a substitute of the mother) and the sexual: "The step-relationship was, with women, practically the only one he had experienced." (IE, 105) Kristeva argues that in order to become autonomous "it is necessary that one cut the instinctual dyad of the mother and the child and that one become something other."[467] In Burgess's novel, this "instinctual" dyad is replaced by the pair constituted by stepmother and stepson. As they are not blood relatives, there is nothing to prevent Enderby from feeling sexual attraction towards his stepmother; at the same time, within

[465] Since I began work on this dissertation, there has been an increase in interest in the depiction of the feminine as an ambivalent force in Burgess's *Enderby* novels. Aude Haffen's paper "The Flesh, the Other and Artistic Resolution: Anthony Burgess's Sexual Mythology of Writing," a paper presented at the Second International Anthony Burgess Symposium, Liverpool, UK, 26–28 July 2007, explores the ambivalent role of the "Muse" in particular in a selection of Burgess's biographical and autobiographical works. In her paper, "Representations of (M)others in Burgess's *Inside Mr Enderby,*" delivered at the same Symposium, Tina Green uses Kristeva's concept of the "abject" to explore the role of the stepmother in *Inside Mr Enderby*. Green's paper focuses on the physical elements of the grotesque and on the images of excess in the novel; my analysis here pays attention to issues of representation but is more concerned with the articulation of abjection in the text.

[466] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 47.

[467] Kristeva, "Feminism and Psychoanalysis," in *Julia Kristeva Interviews*, 118.

the family structure, any sexual relationship between family members (even if not blood related) would still constitute incest. The stepmother's continuous and assailing presence in Enderby's life stems from this ambiguity in their relationship. A passage describing an early event in adolescent Enderby's sexual awakening serves as an illustration:

> When Enderby was seventeen, his father went off to Nottingham to be shown over a tobacco factory, was away for the night. July heat (she showed up badly in that) broke in monsoon weather with terrifying lightning. But it was only the thunder that scared her. Enderby awoke at five in the morning to find her in his bed, in dirty winceyette, clutching him in fear. He got up, was sick in the lavatory, then locked himself in, reading till dawn the scraps of newspaper on the floor. (IE, 27)

This passage describes the moment Enderby both internalizes and "abjects" his stepmother's imagined desire; imagined, because the only indication of a possible sexual contact with her step-son is by the reference to the "winceyette." The adjective "dirty" refers to her unkempt appearance, but also suggests a perverse sexuality. But the possibility of sexual attraction remains implicit, if repressed, along the signifying chain. The act of vomiting is a somatic revolt against a desire which is dirty and incestuous, and therefore against symbolic and social law. This breakdown in the symbolic is represented by the "scraps" of newspaper on the bathroom floor, while Enderby's act of reading signifies a "re-asserting" of the symbolic and his subjectivity. But abjection also marks that which is desired as permanently other: Enderby's desire will always be for the stepmother. The abject is that which at one time was coveted but now "reflect[s] aversion, repugnance."[468] Kristeva uses the images of lightning and thunder as metaphors to convey the return of the abject, the "forgotten" which "crops up suddenly and condenses into a flash of lightning, an operation that ... involve[s] bringing together two

[468] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 8.

opposite terms [and] ... is discharged as thunder."[469] In the passage above, "lightning" and "thunder" signify that moment when desire and disgust are brought together and released as abjection.

This scene between Enderby and the stepmother is re-played in the second part of the novel, during Enderby's honeymoon with his new wife Vesta Bainbridge, in a carnivalesque parody of a wedding-night. As Megan Becker-Leckrone notes, the carnivalesque, with "its fundamental dialogism … sheer ironic noise [and] dizzying irreverence,"[470] and its mixing of horror and irreverent mockery creates a space in which abjection can be both released and controlled. The wedding-night scene in *Inside Mr Enderby* combines horror and mockery to bring to light Enderby's abject relationship with his stepmother and with all women. Vesta is the "widow" prophesized in Enderby's bird poem and a polar opposite of Enderby's stepmother. While the stepmother's body is excessive and overflowing, Vesta's is tightly-contained within her expensive and fashionable clothing:

> She wore with grace a Cardin sugar-scoop hat of beige colours, and, from the same master, a loose-jacketed suit with only a hint of flare to the peplum. An ocelot coat swung open over this. Chic shone from her demurely. Such cleanness and fragrance, thought Enderby with deep regret, such slender and sheer-hosed glamour. (IE, 52)

The words "master," "peplum," "ocelot" and "shone" associate Vesta with demure and intelligent Goddess Athena, her clothes as a suit of armour, protecting her from any physical excess. Enderby's "regret" at her appearance suggests a sense of personal inferiority; it also suggests a lack in Vesta. What she lacks in Enderby's eyes is the

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[469] Ibid.
[470] Becker-Lekrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, 67.

stepmother's voluptuous physicality. During their honeymoon in Rome, Enderby notes his wife's "thin arms and shoulders uncovered. Not a voluptuous woman; her body pared to a decent female minimum." (IE, 113) This, he muses, is "as it should be." (IE, 113) But he has no sexual desire for her. One stormy night, however, a flash of lightning sends a terrified Vesta into Enderby's arms, a gesture that triggers off a memory of his stepmother stripping off in the bathroom, the image of his stepmother, "panting with the exertion of one of her rare over-all washes, flesh shaking, fat tits swinging like bells." (IE, 144) In a grotesque parody of sexual intercourse, Enderby feels Vesta's body "try[ing] to push herself inside him as though he were a deviscerated rabbit of great size and she a mound of palpitating stuffing." (IE, 143)

"Retching" with disgust, Enderby "swung out of bed with unwonted agility and stood shivering on the worn mat." (IE, 144) Here, the scene takes on a farcical tone which turns the horrific—Enderby's abjection of his mother's body—into carnivalesque laughter. Seeking the refuge of the lavatory, Enderby finds "to his horror" that "the lavatory was not a sane comfortable English WC but a Continental crouch-hole. … Once many years ago he had fallen into one of these holes." (IE, 145) His fantasy of falling into or being engulfed or "entered" by the other's body is comically replayed here as his fear of falling into the toilet hole. His sense of shame is at the same time compounded by the fact that he is naked. Assailed by a voice "desperately" demanding to use the toilet Enderby searches in his mind for the correct Italian phrase and finally cries his nakedness out "*Io sono nudo, completamente nudo.*" The phrase has the expected effect, and the man walks away from the shameful situation in silence, leaving a naked Enderby sitting in the style of

Rodin's sculpture "Il Pensatore," "in thinking pose, feeling at his lowest ebb," (IE, 145) but in his safe space once again.

Inside Mr Enderby articulates abjection not only through carnivalesque laughter but also through the joyful, yet unsettling, excess generated by the text's playful exploitation of paradoxical and irreverent imagery, as well as linguistic materiality and sound effects. Enderby's and Vesta's coach journey from Rome to Lake Albano, where the Pope has his summer residence, in the second part of the novel is both an irreverent parody of a holiday tour/ religious pilgrimage and an articulation of abjection through linguistic play. The travellers are described as a Babel of "jabbering polyglot" voices. (IE, 134) Their descriptions foreground sound over image. There is a "snor[ing]" Portuguese, "two chortling negroes" and "a large ham-pink German family" speaking of Rome "in serious and regretful cadences, churning the sights and sounds into long compound sausages-words." (IE, 134) This "intermittent drone" is playfully "finneganswaked" by Enderby's sleep-talk "into a parachronic lullaby chronicle, containing Constantine the grandgross and battlebottles fought by lakes which were full of lager." (IE, 135) "Grandgross" and "battlebottles" emphasize size and sound through the repetition of synonymous adjectives (grand and gross) and the use of children's basic rhyming patterns; they are also imitative of Joyce's compound word technique in both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*[471]—an intertextual connection that is reinforced by Burgess's playful transformation of *Finnegans Wake* into a verb, "to finneganswake," which playfully refers to Joyce's use of paradoxical puns to render the language of the dream in his famous work.[472]

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[471] Burgess, *Joysprick*, 67.
[472] Burgess calls this method "Oneiroparanomastics." See *Joysprick*, 135–61.

Significantly, Kristeva sees *Finnegans Wake* as Joyce's fullest articulation of abjection in language: "In [*Finnegans Wake*] it is the Word that discloses the abject. But at the same time, the Word alone purifies from the abject."[473] Burgess's writing in this section effects a similar, though less radical, disclosing and protection from the abject in a carnivalesque parody of the Pope's traditional addresses to the crowds. The parody begins with Enderby's comical attempt to bring order to a fight over a stolen seat between a "small cocky Frenchman" and German who "barked and sobbed indignant denial," (IE, 136) followed by a "tipsy lean Portuguese" and "an innocent red cheese of a Dutchman." The ensuing chaos is momentarily controlled by Enderby's intervention: "Who the hell do you think you are – the Pope?" (IE, 136)

In a parody of Pentecost, which in turn opens an intratextual link with Enderby's poem about the Virgin Mary, Enderby's words are "translated swiftly into many tongues" and interpreted as a reminder of "the purpose" of the journey, to bring all Catholics together under the aegis of the Pope. Aware of the purpose of the journey, Enderby is gripped by his old irrational fears about his stepmother's apocalyptic Catholicism. As they arrive at their destination, the Pope's residence, Enderby is confronted by the vision of his stepmother "in the guise of a holy man blessing his portrait painter." (IE, 137) Horrified, but also fascinated, Enderby hears the "holy roar, tremendous, hill-shaking" that precedes the Pope's address to the crowd. A "disembodied" voice speaking in "very fast Italian," induces ecstasy in the pilgrims, "the open static mouths drank the air, their black eyes searching for the voice above the high stucco buff walls ... Joy suffused their stubbled faces at the loud indistinct words." (IE, 138)

[473] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 23.

Enderby is "terrified, bewildered" by this display of religious fervour; at the same time, the power of this fervour is undermined by the scene's mocking and parodic tone:

> Now the French became excited, ear-cocking, lips parted in joy, as the voice seemed to announce fantastic departures by air: Toulon, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Avignon ... Now the voice began to speak American, welcoming contingents of pilgrims from Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Delaware. And Enderby felt chill hands clasp his hot body all over as he saw the rhythmical signals of a cheer-leader, a young man in a new jersey with a large blue-woven P. (IE, 138)

In this passage, linguistic plurality is irreverently linked with sexual desire (the mystically-entranced French pilgrims) while the Americans' response humorously emphasizes the vulgarity of what once was considered a sacred event. Confronted with chaos and ambiguity, but also simultaneously horrified and excited by the exuberance and impropriety of the crowds' response to the holy figure of the Pope, Enderby is assailed by abjection. Nausea wells up in Enderby as he attempts to "get out again, lifting his legs as though striding through treacle." This image is reinforced by Enderby laboriously trying to "cut through the vast cake of kneelers." (IE, 139) "Almost vomiting" and "blind with sweat" Enderby reaches the gate and walks out. The sense of disgust pervading the scene is reinforced by the "greenish look of the atmosphere as though the atmosphere proposed, sooner or later, to be sick." (IE, 141) At the same time, the unsettling effect of the text's articulation of abjection in its insistent foregrounding of disgusting imagery is undermined by the farcical tone of the scene, with Enderby and Vesta hurrying to catch their coach as it moves off like "a kitten in a chase-me play." (IE, 141) This mixing of horror and comedy is, for Kristeva, the way in which "abject" writing discloses and at the

same time protects from "what lies hidden" beneath the symbolic, "a universe of borders, seesaws, fragile and mingled identities."[474]

The same carnivalesque mixing of horror and comedy characterizes Enderby's near-death experience during his suicide attempt, at the end of the novel. Thematically, Enderby's suicide follows from his failed marriage to Vesta (the marriage is irredeemably broken after their Roman experience) and the critical reviews of his published poems hailing "the passing of the lyrical gift." (IE, 176) His chosen method is very prosaic and almost farcical: an aspirin overdose. The thought processes which lead him to this choice are presented in a writing which is an intertextual patchwork of images, poetic lines, and textual fragments articulating the theme death without redemption, beginning with the 'Hades' episode of *Ulysses*. This intertextual dialogue with Joyce's text is triggered off by a "splinter" from Bloom's interior monologue during Paddy Dingham's funeral, in which he ponders over the suicide of Martin Cunningham's father and its effect on his widow. The line fragment "... And lie no more in her warm bed" (IE, 177)[475] is prompted by Mrs Bamber, the housekeeper, intoning a song "smelling of oysters and ruby port." (IE, 177) This synaesthetic image emphasizes the oddness of the "oysters" in this context; "oysters", however, refer across to Joyce's text: "oyster eyes" is Bloom's epithet for one of Dublin's "living dead," John Henry Menton.[476]

"Oysters and ruby port" are also a celebration of life; conversely, death can also be the cause of celebration, though of a different kind. Enderby fantasizes about Mrs Bamber's reaction on seeing the unexpected corpse of Enderby: "she was a Lancashire

[474] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 135.
[475] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 98.
[476] Ibid, 111.

woman, and Lancashire people rather enjoyed death." (IE, 177) This thought leads him to a consideration of his own corpse. Along with the abjected body of the mother, the corpse represents, for Kristeva, the "utmost of abjection."[477] Without the faith of religion or the reassurance created by science the corpse is "death infecting life."[478] In *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom finds the decay of the flesh unbearable and muses on how to make its unspeakable horror more acceptable, "Then the insides decompose slowly. Much better to close up all orifices. Yes also. With wax. The sphincter loose."[479] Here, language both discloses and protects from the unbearable abject. Enderby, similarly, reminds himself that he must "effect a total evacuation of his body before making it a corpse," (IE, 177) thereby avoiding the confrontation with the abject – at least for now.

The thought of death has never been very far from Enderby's mind. His own name—a pun on "End or be" (Hamlet's dilemma) suggests Enderby's duality. In this section, Enderby-Hamlet's dilemma is recast in comical terms, as the poet begins his journey with a parody of a purification rite: "He had washed his feet and scrubbed his dentures, scoured his few pots and pans," ending in the consumption of "a piece of chocolate left over from some weeks back." (IE, 178) This gesture is in accordance with Enderby's continuous recycling—pieces of clothing, food scraps, waste, lines from other texts. Enderby's preparations become a simultaneous commentary on other literary treatments of death, beginning with T.S. Eliot's paradoxical association of April with decay in *The Wasteland* ("Enderby had spent April brooding over pain in his chest" [IE, 176]), continuing with Bloom's musings on death and the disintegration of the body in *Ulysses*,

[477] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 4.
[478] Ibid.
[479] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 95.

to culminate with Dante's Nether Hell, reserved for those who had committed "self-slaughter …of all sins the most reprehensible." (IE, 179) Musing on the significance of this literary allusion, Enderby reflects on the fact that Dante's Third Ring, reserved "for those who had been violent against God and art and nature," (IE, 178) does not differ much from the Second Ring: they are all "Sins of the Lion," they are all related to human violence. The word "violence" also signifies, for Burgess, the inherent ambiguity of literary language.[480] But, what does this sin of violence against art consist of? The answer is in Burgess's study of Joyce's language, *Joysprick*. To force words out of their referential strait-jacket into their semiotic and iconic functions—Burgess's assessment of Joyce's linguistic techniques in *Ulysses*—is to do violence to language. The artist's real duty, Burgess continues, is to exploit language, to subject it to "violence"—to break down the barrier between signifier and signified, and between material sign and real referent[481] — what Jean-Jacques Lecercle calls "the linguistic violence of literalness."[482] But the violence which art inflicts on language can also be interpreted as the destruction of signification and the collapse of meaning. This anxiety pervades the articulation of abjection and semiotic play in *Inside Mr Enderby*.

Enderby imagines a scene with "bleeding trees that were the suicides" and "harpies fluttering about with a rattle of dry wings" that imitate "the magnified noise of a shaken aspirin bottle." (IE, 179) The punishment for those who have committed violence against art is a constant cacophony of noises: a flutter, a rattle, the crackle of the dry wings and the sound of the bottle containing the aspirins that Enderby has already ingested. Even as

[480] The relationship between language and violence in Burgess's writing is discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation.
[481] Burgess, *Joysprick*, 21–22.
[482] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *The Violence of Language*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 232.

he ingests the aspirins, Enderby cannot help but wonder about the connection between the movement of the aspirin bottle shaking in his hand, like the leaf of an aspen tree, and the alliteration between "aspen" and "aspirin." (IE, 178) Enderby's descent into his own Third Circle of Hell is in fact a passage into the unconscious where either/or, as Freud remarked, becomes "and" and language becomes fluid and words "ring freely."[483] There, Enderby is comically greeted by a "fanfare of loud farts" and a "cosmic swish of lavatory-flushings," a cacophonous prelude to the appearance of the stepmother, who undergoes a process of transubstantiation: from flesh to "ineffable Presence … humorously offering Itself as a datum for mere intellection," and then from pure form to base matter ("base" in all senses of the word). "Farting prrrrrrp" and "belching arrrp" as the whole universe "roared with approving laughter" (IE, 179) in a carnivalesque festival of "solid laughter and filth," (IE, 179) the stepmother finally takes Enderby to the place where meaning collapses.

And yet, like Spindrift, Enderby does not die, at least physically. In his final confrontation with the abject, Enderby loses his sense of identity and is "reborn" in the last part of the novel into a new character and a new identity. In a similar way, the playful textuality of the previous section gives way to the symbolic stability of narrative resolution.[484] In its own way, this third section provides closure to Enderby's struggle with poetry and with the maternal and at the same time provides a transition between *Inside Mr Enderby* and its sequel, *Enderby Outside*. As such it is an open-ended text, like *A Vision of Battlements* and *The Doctor is Sick*, unstably poised between the desire for meaning and closure and the urge to break through the barriers imposed by novelistic

[483] Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody*, 266.
[484] Some critics find it "disconcerting." See De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess*, 129.

form in order to, in Kristeva's words, "compel language to come nearest to the human enigma, to the place where it kills, thinks and experiences *jouissance* all at the same time."[485] This is the challenge Burgess undertakes in *Nothing like the Sun*, a novel which also explores the trial of the poetic subject between symbolic control and semiotic disruption, but in which the poetic subject (incarnated in William Shakespeare) finally succumbs to the force of the semiotic. The next chapter examines *Nothing like the Sun*'s articulation of the conflict in the creative subject, as well as its text's playful subversion of fictional and discursive conventions. In formal terms, *Nothing like the Sun*, like *A Vision of Battlements*, also constructs itself as a double structure or dynamic space where novelistic order is transgressed by the play of the text, articulated in a playful subversion of the notion of the "author" of the work, who, instead, becomes pluralized and "dispersed" as a plurality of texts—an intertextuality.

[485] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 206.

CHAPTER FIVE

Nothing like the Sun: From Authority to Intertextuality

Burgess published *Nothing like the Sun* in 1964 during the fourth-hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death. Subtitled "*A Fictional Biography of Shakespeare's Love Life*," *Nothing like the Sun,* traces the development of Shakespeare the artist, renamed WS in the text, and his journey from young glove-maker and crafter of simple verse and historical plays to the more complex writer of the great tragedies. As in *A Vision of Battlements* and *Inside Mr Enderby*, in *Nothing like the Sun* the process of artistic creation is dramatized as a conflict between symbolic control and semiotic disruption. In formal terms, simultaneously, *Nothing like the Sun* engages in a self-conscious examination of its own artificiality and fictionality which, in particular, calls attention to notions of authority and originality. Burgess's approach is serious and playful: on the one hand, the novel reclaims the notion of the author as the origin of the work; at the same time, it subverts this very notion by presenting authority as a textual construction and as a plurality of texts and voices which are fragmented and dispersed through the text. These are the two dimensions of ambivalence which this chapter explores.

From the start, it is apparent that *Nothing like the Sun* is concerned with exploring "otherness," both in the creative subject (also a writer) and in the literary work. Burgess clearly states in "Genesis and Headache," his critical reflection on the novel's composition, that the title is intended to suggest that the "reality of the artist bore no

resemblance to the shining golden image that time had made."[486] The word "fictional" in the subtitle suggests that the novel is also quite openly concerned with matters of form, as critics have noted. Stinson describes *Nothing like the Sun* as a "tour de force,"[487] and a work of "elaborate artifice."[488] This aspect of the novel, Stinson remarks, caused some adverse reviews at the time of its publication.[489] In contrast, Stinson argues that *Nothing like the Sun*'s "artificiality" is "fully purposeful" and "an important part ... of the novel's form."[490] Aggeler comments specifically on the novel's "verbal mastery" and on the "poetic" qualities of its prose: "[In *Nothing like the Sun*] we have Burgess's prose at its most poetical."[491] We can say that, like *A Vision of Battlements*, though in a more self-conscious manner, *Nothing like the Sun* engages in an active exploration of novelistic structure and of the process of fictional creation, a process articulated in the text as a dialogue between traditional form and playful, disruptive intertextuality – the ambivalent process which structures the novels examined in this thesis. This chapter analyzes *Nothing like the Sun*'s articulation of the "trial" of the writing subject, as well as its playful subversion of fictional conventions, in particular the notion of the "author."

The narrative traces WS's artistic development as an ambivalent struggle between his need for artistic and linguistic control and the disruptive, bodily and sexual forces that threaten this stability—as an ambivalence between symbolic control and semiotic

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[486] Burgess, "Genesis and Headache" in *Afterwords. Novelists and Their Novels*, ed. Thomas McCormack (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 29.
[487] Stinson, "*Nothing like the Sun:* The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," in *Critical Essays on Anthony Burgess*, 86.
[488] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 91.
[489] Stinson refers specifically to D.J. Enright's review, "A Modern Disease: Anthony Burgess's Shakespeare," in *Man is an Onion. Reviews and Essays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), 39–44. In *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 89.
[490] Stinson, "*Nothing like the Sun:* The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," 89.
[491] Aggeler, *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 80.

disruption. WS's vision is ambivalent because he has a conception of language as an instrument of control and also a source of joyous, but also disruptive play. This notion of the playfulness of language and art, as we know, is very important in Burgess's writing: disruption and play, joy and fear are, as we have already seen, always part of the experience of art and language articulated in Burgess's texts. This ambivalence between order and disruption in WS's artistic vision is also articulated in the novel's formal organization. Burgess constructs his fictional biography of Shakespeare as a traditional *bildungsroman* and, simultaneously, as a playful text that, as mentioned above, subverts narrative conventions and reflects on its language and its own fictional processes.[492] One of these conventions is that of narrative progression, very important in Burgess's novels as we have already seen. The linear progression of WS's narrative of personal development is dynamized by diverse narrative modes which move away from strict narrative parameters to convey a sense of WS's internal world—his conscious and unconscious processes. These forms include free indirect discourse blending into stream of consciousness, first person monologue, dramatic dialogue and, at the end of the novel, a "mock catechism" style which, as Biswell notes, "imitates the penultimate "Ithaca" chapter of Joyce's *Ulysses*"[493] (the novel's relationship with Joyce's texts is explored later in the chapter).

[492] It is obvious that *Nothing like the Sun* is first and foremost concerned with the conventions of the biography. An analysis of how the novel specifically subverts traditional biographical discourses falls beyond the scope of this dissertation. For an examination of Burgess's engagement with the genre of biography see Aude Haffen's chapter in *Anthony Burgess and Modernity* Aude Haffen, "Anthony Burgess's fictional biographies: romantic sympathy, tradition-oriented modernism, postmodern vampirism?" *Anthony Burgess and Modernity*, 131–47.
[493] Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 290.

This complex narrative structure is complicated further by means of some "crafty" (both in "skill" and in "cunning") manipulations by Burgess,[494] who situates his story of Shakespeare's artistic development within a "lecture" by a "Mr Burgess" to a group of "special students." This information is contained in a preface to the narrative, which works as a framing device which, as in *A Vision of Battlements*, underpins the novel's narrative development, and also grounds it in reality through the authoritative voice of its narrator, a lecturer whose knowledge of Shakespeare's life is based on scholarly information. In fact, Burgess himself refers to his use of "a framework of historical data" to "support the structures of fancy" in the novel.[495] The lecturer, however, turns out to be drunk throughout his narrative (Mr Burgess has been drinking from a bottle of "samsu" or "rice spirit")[496], which casts some serious doubts over his reliability. This blurring of boundaries between reality and fiction calls attention to the novel's status as a fictional artefact—a work of fiction.

The boundaries between fact and fiction are further destabilized when, at the end of the narrative, WS's dying voice blends with that of Mr Burgess, who is also Anthony Burgess's alter ego, to create the possibility of a fusion between the two. In "Genesis and Headache," Burgess remarks on the presence of the framing device before the start of the narrative, referring to his "trick" of fusing Shakespeare's voice and his own voice as a way to effect "a comic identification with Shakespeare."[497] In moving from Shakespeare to himself as the author of the work, Burgess is also moving from the level of story (the

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[494] In "Genesis and Headache" Burgess refers to his "craftiness" in putting together a biography of Shakespeare. Burgess, "Genesis and Headache," 37.
[495] Burgess, "Genesis and Headache," 39.
[496] Anthony Burgess, *Nothing like the Sun. A Fictional Biography of Shakespeare's Love Life* (London: Allison & Busby, 2001), Preface. Hereafter cited in the text as NLTS.
[497] Burgess, "Genesis and Headache," 34.

narrated story) to the process of narration, foregrounding the process of fictional creation. This playful manipulation of the narrator's and character's voices calls attention to the figure of the author-creator of the work but also and, more importantly, foregrounds the novel's status as a text, a dynamic productivity rather than (or as well as, perhaps) a finished product.

The novel's textuality is emphasized by the continuous references to "playing" in language through the narrative, and also in the many instances of word-play and punning in WS's language; it is also emphasized by the plurality, fluidity and intertextuality of the narrator's voice, a composite of Mr Burgess, WS, Shakespeare and Anthony Burgess. In *Nothing like the Sun*, WS's linguistic instability, his simultaneous joy in, and fear of, language, is articulated in an intertextual, plural and polyphonic writing which also articulates Burgess's own linguistic and artistic joy, as well as his ambivalent relationship with the writers and texts in relation to which the novel situates itself.

Burgess's novel is complex and offers multiple avenues for exploration. My analysis in this chapter, however, will be limited to an examination of WS's ambivalent poetic vision and an examination of the novel's intertextual identification between Burgess and Shakespeare using Kristeva's notion of intertextuality as a transformative process for both the text and the writer. This sense of the narrator and/or writer as an intertextuality emerges from Kristeva's analysis of the "transformational" aspect of writing as a creative-destructive dynamic for the writer, who is also fragmented and pluralized in the process between communication and expression.[498] This aspect of Kristeva's notion of intertextuality informs my analysis of *Nothing like the Sun*'s subversion of notions of

[498] See note 58 in the Introduction to this thesis.

authority in this chapter. My exploration of intertextuality also considers Burgess's text's dialogic encounter with other texts and authors (Joyce and Shakespeare, mainly). The link between the two sections is the notion of "play." WS's artistic journey is depicted as a movement from symbolic control to semiotic play and disruption, through an understanding of language as both striving towards the ideal, while still remaining grounded on the reality of the body and human desire. This is also Enderby's and, to an extent, Spindrift's experience of language in *Inside Mr Enderby* and *The Doctor is Sick*. *Nothing like the Sun* conveys this sense of play as creative, but also potentially disruptive (and even destructive) both for its main character and for its "author," who is no longer a single, identifiable entity known as Anthony Burgess, but a "writing subject," a "subject-in-process" and an intertextuality formed by the different positions which he (and his name) occupies at different points in the text. The following section deals with WS's artistic journey "in process" between symbolic control and semiotic fluidity, and is followed by an analysis of the identification between Burgess and Shakespeare as an example of the intertextuality of the writer, in Kristeva's terms.

WS begins his artistic journey as a man divided between his mind and the desires of his body; between WS, "that prim boy ... the gentleman" (NLTS, 6) and Will "some outlandish and exterior beast to which he must needs, and all unwillingly play host." (NLTS, 11) "Unwillingly" hints at the struggle in WS, a struggle against his "will" – his desire – and his "unwillingness" to accept what the Goddess eventually reveals to him, that, as Auden Haffen remarks, "creation stems from the flesh as much as from the

spirit."[499] At same time, the word "play," as well as its obvious dramatic connotations, also conveys the joy in his desire and in language that WS also finds disruptive. There is also an element of playfulness (playful play) in the combination of "will," "Will" and "unwillingly"—echoes of Shakespeare's Sonnet 135 "Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy mill," in which the word "will" operates as a proper noun and a verb indicating futurity and volition and as a multiple signifier for lust, the male sex organ and the female genitalia.[500] The continuous punning on "Will" through the text, as a signifier of lust and as part of an intertextual network generated by the play on "Wilson" (explored later in this chapter), can thus be seen to articulate the movement of WS-Will's desire as desire in and through language.

Burgess critics have noted the ambiguity in WS's character, the fact that he is split between mind and body, although the idea of play has not received consideration. For John J. Stinson, *Nothing like the Sun* is fundamentally a narrative about the "monumental struggle between flesh and the spirit in the man Shakespeare."[501] WS, Stinson argues, is "excruciatingly racked by the pain of being human and out of his incessantly bursting humanness his art is created."[502] WS's concept of language, as he grows from the innocence of youth to experience and maturity, moves away from a traditional, highly formalized notion of language as form and "craft," not unlike "glove-making," his

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[499] Aude Haffen, "Anthony Burgess's fictional biographies: romantic sympathy, tradition-oriented modernism, postmodern vampirism?" 136. For Stinson, *Nothing like the Sun* demonstrates how "the desires of the flesh ... may be directed into art to produce great triumphs of the human spirit." *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 89. As we saw in the analysis of the double meaning of the word "spirit" in Shakespeare's writing in relation to Enderby's "Holy sperm" poem, Burgess understands "spirit" as both mind and body.
[500] Stephen Booth, ed., *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 466.
[501] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 89. This view is shared by De Vitis, "Burgess's Manichean bias is fully operative in his portrayal of Shakespeare, and the reconciliation of the angel and the demon into the artist is what the novel chiefly considers." De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess*, 145.
[502] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 89.

father's trade (NLTS, 79) to an awareness of a language that transcends meaning and brings together the two aspects of the human experience that are fundamental to WS's vision: mind and body, the ideal and the real, flesh and the word. In his vision, however, there is no balance or harmony, but instability and disorder, as disruptive bodily desires transgress his highly-crafted compositions.

A. A De Vitis notes how WS's practical approach to his poetry and his plays is a constant in the novel, set alongside and in no less important terms than the poems or plays themselves, "The references to the plays and sonnets are made simply, as one would describe a tailor's or a plumber's work."[503] At the same time, as Samuel Coale points out, the novel also "celebrates the possibility of language to create a world of complex mystery."[504] Through the narrative, WS struggles between a Platonic notion of art as an ideal construction and a developing sense that art is also connected to with the negative aspects of human experience: filth, corruption, evil, excessive and uncontrollable sexual desire, "it was as if beauty was nothing to do with either truth or goodness." (NLTS, 199) As Samuel Coale puts it, WS finds that "from [the] poisoned source that is man springs the creative impulse of all art."[505]

The revelation that language is "no vehicle of soothing prettiness" or "ornament for ladies or great lords," but "a potency of sharp knives and brutal hammers" (NLTS, 230) comes late, as he is dying of syphilis at the end of the narrative, but brings with it an awareness of the power of language, not as synthesis or reconciliation between body and mind, but as the process in which the disruptive semiotic tears through the symbolic order

[503] De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess*, 146.
[504] Coale, *Anthony Burgess*, 159.
[505] Ibid.

with the force of its desire. This process, at the same time, entails an awareness of the power of linguistic play. This is WS's "other" revelation, a revelation of a reality beyond representation: "He saw dimly, a vision lay coyly, beyond the tail of his eye. There was a reality somewhere and with God's grimmest irony, it might only be grasped through playing at play, thus catching reality off its guard." (NLTS, 183)

The narrative traces the development of WS's linguistic and artistic vision to an understanding of language as an expression of powerful and disruptive desires which need to be controlled, but also of language as an expression of the joy of play. From the beginning of the narrative, WS is depicted as divided between his mind, his consciousness, and his bodily desires. As Alan Roughley points out, WS "experiences his own sexual desires as something from which he is alienated because he *is* nothing other than the will to create poetically."[506] This poetic "will" is expressed in powerful semiotic forces which, as Kristeva remarks, are as disruptive as they are creative. The first scene of the novel, depicting WS's poetic awakening, is also a dramatization of the emergence of the semiotic in the symbolic and of its disruptive effect in the young poet. Here WS experiences a heightened awareness of linguistic association and play, accompanied by a sense of *jouissance* but also anxiety over language's power to excite violent emotions.

The setting is the Avon's left bank, where WS "mark[ed] with storing-up spaniel eyes the spurgeoning of the back-eddy under the Clopton Bridge." (NLTS, 3) The setting by the river is significant: in psychoanalytical terms water is associated with the unconscious and with the feminine. The word "spurgeoning" suggests the movement of the water; it is

[506] Roughley, "*Nothing Like the Sun:* Anthony Burgess's Factification of Shakespeare's Life." http://bu.univ-angers.fr/EXTRANET/AnthonyBURGESS/NL3nlts.htm (accessed 29 December 2010).

also a "literary trick" by Burgess, a combining of the verb "to spurge"[507]and the name of Shakespeare scholar Caroline Spurgeon, who, according to Burgess, "noted that [Shakespeare] introduced the peculiar behaviour of the Avon under that bridge as a simile in his poem "The Rape of Lucrece."[508] More than a being a simple "literary trick," however, the word "spurgeoning" establishes an intertextual dialogue with traditional Shakespearean scholarship as the authoritative discourse in relation to which (and against which) *Nothing Like The Sun*'s ambivalent biographical-intertextual narrative situates itself.

The emergence of the semiotic in the text is triggered by the sound of "young beasts dying maaaaaa for fine appetites," a sound that WS associates with "the moans of another sort of dying, another sort of beast" (NLTS, 3)—his parents in bed one "Maundy Thursday afternoon," a scene WS watched "in all maaaaaaa innocence." (NLTS, 3) WS's loss of innocence is marked here by a deeper awareness of language as play and its possibilities outside signification. The trigger of linguistic play is a warning to his brother Richard to "Go not near the water ... Water hath a trick of drowning and, at best, is a wetter." (NLTS, 4) The alliteration between "water" and "wetter" prompts a "jingle": "wetter, water, wetter, water, wetter. And then the jingle ruled him, already a word-boy." (NTLS, 4) This is a moment of linguistic *jouissance* for WS; this joy is soon followed by anxiety, triggered by Anne's next riddle, "Poor Will is mad Will. Will he nill he. Chuck Will's widow ... A goatsucker." (NLTS, 4), His sister's word-play triggers a string of word associations in the text, all connected with his future events in his life: the

[507] Burgess, *You've Had Your Time*, 81. There are some echoes of Spindrift here. His name also means "water spray."
[508] Anthony Burgess, "Genesis and Headache," 35.

composition of his poem "The Rape of Lucrece," his cuckolding by his brother and the beginning of his career as a writer of tragedies, "Goat. Willow. Widow. Tarquin, superb sun-black southern king, all awry, twisted snake-wise, hath goatlike gone to it. So tragos, a tragedy." (NLTS, 4) The word "goat" operates as a cluster of signifieds which, at the same time, act as signifiers in other associative chains: "goat" is "tragos" in Greek and the origin of the word "tragedy"; "goat" is also associated to violent sexual desire and the devil in his other incarnation as a "snake"—in Shakespeare's Lucrece poem the heroine is brutally raped by Tarquin.

His sister's playful riddle signals the moment when WS's language and identity are put in process: he is WS and "mad will." The jingle "Will he nill he," articulates his ambivalent position, unable to act, driven by a desire that is disruptive (willy-nilly) and which he cannot control (willingly or not). The image of the goat relates metonymically to the stock character of the "cuckold," a proleptic reference to WS's cuckolding by his wife Anne Hathaway and WS's own brother Richard later on in the narrative. The joy of word-play then gives way to anxiety as WS becomes unsettled by "some dark image" insinuating itself "just beyond the tail of his spaniel eye." (NLTS, 4) The "dark image" suggests a negative power, the graphic violence in *The Rape of Lucrece* and WS's own taste for violence later on in the narrative, during the public execution. It is also a harbinger of the Dark Lady, the powerful female force which represents the "darker" aspects of WS's desire and who will come to be associated in the text with the instinctual energies of the semiotic. The sense of a sudden irruption of the disruptive semiotic in WS is conveyed in the text by Gilbert's alliterative and rhythmic speech, "Tha didst go all a shudder then ... Shudder, shudder, shudder." (NLTS, 4)

This Dark Lady is an important figure in WS's artistic journey. She is a fictional representation of the Dark Lady of Shakespeare's sonnets. At first, she appears as the negative other of WS's "gold goddess," his "Muse of sacred inspiration."[509] The "gold" or "golden" goddess embodies WS's platonic vision of art as a vision of ultimate order and knowledge, a vision by which "he would be possessed of all time's secrets and his very mouth grow golden and utter speech for which the very gods waited and would be silent to hear." (NLTS, 9) In contrast, the "dark goddess," who appears at the opening of the narrative, is "dark, hidden, deadly, horribly desirable," (NLTS, 3) *no thing* like the sun. As a dark force, this goddess/muse is, as Aude Haffen remarks, the "natural, primal, archetypal source of [WS's] sexual and creative energy."[510] In her association with a primitive and archetypal power the Dark Lady is close to Kristeva's notion of the "apocalyptic" or carnivalesque Muse, which combines the laughter of the archaic mother with the "dark, abominable and degraded power" of unrestrained female sexuality.[511] The Dark Lady/Goddess finds its physical embodiment in the character of Fatimah, the East Indian courtesan who teaches WS the ambivalent pleasure/pain of the flesh (her English name is Lucy Negro, light/dark): with her WS experiences "the glorification of the flesh" (NLTS, 150) but also terrible shame. (NLTS, 155) Eventually, Fatimah becomes WS's destruction as she is the source of the syphilis which eventually kills him.[512] She also

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[509] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 91.

[510] Aude Haffen, "The Flesh, the Other and Artistic Resolution: Anthony Burgess's Sexual Mythology of Writing," a paper presented at the Second International Anthony Burgess Symposium, Liverpool, UK, 26–28 July 2007. I am grateful to Aude Haffen for allowing me to quote from a revised version of her paper.

[511] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 168–69. It is possible to draw a parallel between this dark muse and Enderby's maternal force, who in this novel has found her way into a more "acceptable" female figure, although the association between the female, physical excess, decay and disease, already explored in *Inside Mr Enderby*, finds its apotheosis in the Dark Lady's transformation into the spirochete (syphilis) at the end of the novel.

[512] This characterization of the female as a dark and consuming force has much of that is stereotypical about it, and in this sense she is not different from Enderby's stepmother or other "dark" feminine figures

becomes an embodiment of the pleasure of language and the possibility of poetic creation, "the word made flesh," (NLTS, 151) but also art's destructive power.[513]

WS's encounters with this ambivalent Muse mark the rhythm between control and disruption in his artistic development. In his early poems, the Muse appears when WS is trying to hold on to his conception of poetry as a way to control language within a structure (an echo of Burges's own vision of the novel). Here she embodies his desire—his poetic "will"—which irrupts through his composition, disrupting their formal order. We see this dynamic at work in a comical scene depicting WS at work in a sonnet in the midst of domestic chaos. WS's conflict between the need to maintain order and the desire to express is articulated in a carnivalesque, playful text that conveys WS's desire in a comical, but also serious way. The comedic tone of the scene may appear paradoxical in the context of WS's serious struggle for expression, although it fits in with Burgess recurrent use of the laughter of comedy and farce to express the ambivalence of the artist's vision, and of man's position in the world, what Kristeva describes as the power of laughter to convey the "permanent dualism" of the human being.[514] Kristeva also sees laughter as a way to express the ambivalent pleasurable/disruptive energies of the

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in Burgess's novels. Aude Haffen notes the essentialism and "oversimplification" in Burgess's "pronouncements" about women and the feminine in general. In the paper mentioned above she refers to Burgess's description of the female in his monograph *Shakespeare* as "the irresistible lure of the primal darkness that resides in all women, whether white or black." *Shakespeare* (London: Vintage, 1996), 130.

[513] The specific association between art and syphilis derives from Christopher Marlowe, who is mentioned in the text as an artist who, like WS, "marched towards an all-consuming vision." (NLTS, 85) Å.I. Farkas notes that Burgess "pays homage to" Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*, "as the source of the general idea that great tragic art could possibly be related to the venereal disease." Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 94. Burgess refers to this borrowing directly in *You've Had Your Time*, 79.

[514] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 223.

semiotic, "Laughter is what lifts inhibitions by breaking through prohibition ... to introduce the aggressive, violent, liberating drive ... as well as pleasure."[515]

This scene uses the fast rhythm and physicality of slapstick comedy articulate the movement of WS's disruptive desire, while repetition of sounds and rhymes convey WS's attempts to maintain a sense of order and stability. The theme of the poem is the poet's struggle with his desire "for the dark," (NLTS, 18) which goes against the conventional association between poetry and goodness. WS's approach to the poem, however, is mechanical. While he counts lines and plays with rhymes, his sister taunts him, "Will is crazy and lazy" (NLTS, 19); at the same time, his mother complains about his "idle versing." (NLTS, 19) These taunts on his idleness or laziness can be interpreted in a double way: as a call for WS to stop playing with "silly" jingles and engage seriously with language's poetic power, and as a decree from his family to stop playing with "verse" and employ his energy on something useful—to work on his "craft." Sensing that poetry is also a form of "work" (a productive work) WS focuses more closely on the rhymes, "Right light fight wight tight," (NLTS, 20) and the number of lines on his sonnet, "And now the clinching couplet, whose work was full seven times more than all twelve precedent lines." (NLTS, 19) Angered, his father asserts his authority and "seize[s] the script ... as if to tear it." (NTLS, 20) WS stands up and "quick to his feet" confronts his father with rage: "[he] would have none of it." (NLTS, 20)

At this point, and in a dramatic scene which borders on farce, the Goddess appears "rushing down the chimney in a wind, making the fire flare gold" and "sm[ites]" WS

[515]Ibid., 224.

hard on the back, "thrusting him into a fight against father, mother [and] sister, all enemies. (NLTS, 20) Her appearance resonates with Enderby's angry Muse, sending her inspiration to Enderby in the form of "afflatus," and "hurling" poetic lines at him. (IE, 76) WS finds himself wrestling with his father "for possession of thirteen lines" (one line missing to complete the poem) and finally strikes his sister "hard on the cheek" while "crying words like FOR THEE BITCH." (NLTS, 20) "Glow[ing] in anger and poet's triumph" but "with no shame or fear" WS utters the last line, "For to seek light beyond the reach of light," which sustains and completes the structure of the poem, achieving symbolic control, but also expressing the "dark" power of the poetic, its semiotic dimension. WS will later come to understand this power and its connection with sexual desire, but also desire's corrupting effect on the mind and the body.

This understanding begins with his homosexual relationship with Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, the mysterious Mr WH of Shakespeare's sonnets. A. A. De Vitis sees Southampton as the antithesis of the Dark Lady, "the bright golden boy," and, somewhat paradoxically, sees a symbolic connection between his figure and "the most holy sort of love, platonic and good."[516] Southampton also embodies the decadent corruption of the court concealed under the pretence of culture and sophistication. Under Southampton's patronage and protection WS writes poetry that indulges in "melodious conceits" and "mellifluous facetiousness." (NLTS, 119) And yet, WS knows that, somewhere, there is "a verse of a very different order." (NLTS, 119) Not a poetry of *dis*order (emphasis added) but a poetic language that expresses the other—his other, "this essence, at the bottom of a well, of a Will." (NLTS, 51) And so, it is Southampton who

[516] De Vitis, *Anthony Burgess*, 145.

shows WS the power of a kind of art which takes the subject to the darkest recesses of human desire. The "work of art" which Southampton shows WS is the public execution of Dr Rodrigo Lopez, and two other men convicted of treason, at Tyburn Common.

This scene depicts the relationship between art and violence which is a constant theme in Burgess's writing, and art's function as catharsis. The description of the violent executions also offers an articulation of the ambivalence of the artistic process and its power to express, but also to contain, the semiotic and its destructive power—the artistic vision which WS seeks through the narrative. Burgess's text conveys the horror and the fascination that graphic violence arouses in the subject in a writing that combines conventional representational discourse with the comedy and horror of the carnivalesque. These two opposing discourses articulate the ambivalent co-existence of semiotic and symbolic impulses in all art, and also, and specifically, in Burgess's writing in this novel.[517]

The move from symbolic containment to semiotic expression is articulated through WS's changing perspective. The first execution is depicted in cold detail. WS is fascinated by the "art" of the executioner, "more exact than his own." (NLTS, 129) This precision is conveyed in a similarly precise and clinical style:

> The hangman approached with his knife, fire in the sunlight, before the neck could crack, ripped downwards from heart to groin in one slash, swiftly changed knife from right to left, then plunged a mottled fist inside the swinging body. The

[517] The graphic detail of the scene and its mocking carnivalesque tone, on the other hand, are also symptomatic of Burgess's continuous exploration of the relationship between art and violence. In this sense the scene echoes carnivalesque, yet horrific, depiction of violence in *A Clockwork Orange,* a novel which, as Carla Sassi remarks, establishes a "deep and apparently indissoluble bond between violence, beauty and art." Sassi, "Lost in Babel: the search for the perfect language in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*," 253.

> first assistant took the bloody knife from his master and wiped it with care on the clean cloth, while his eyes were on the artistry of his drawing. The right hand withdrew, dripping, holding up for all to see a heart in its fatty wrappings; then the left arm plunged to reappear all coiled and clotted with entrails. (NLTS, 129)

The description has the graphic exactness of a vivisection and the cold brutality of butchery, which creates a distancing effect from the brutality of the act. Each step is depicted with precision and clarity, in simple syntax and using parataxis to convey the swiftness of the "operation." This style achieves a representation of the violence, but not an expression of its horror. And yet, despite its clinical tone, some of the brutality finds expression in the material and semiotic quality of the words, expressed through alliteration and sound "effects," in "neck" and "crack," the "fatty wrappings" of the heart, and the arm "coiled and clotted with entrails." This combination of descriptive detail and linguistic playfulness continues through the passage, conveying the oscillation between control and disruption in WS. Progressively, the tone of the description becomes more comical and carnivalesque, expressing the force of semiotic expression over the control of symbolic signification.

The "clean" action of the first execution is transformed into comedy in the second, as Ferrara, the convicted man, is lifted, "his three chins wobbling to the crowd's pleasure, his eyes rolling like those of some insentient doll." (NLTS, 130) Here artistry becomes grotesque parody, and the abject horror of the scene brought to the fore, "Here was comedy, a sort of Kemp ... There was a great fat heart, crammed like a goose's liver, dripping treason, treason, treason; the entrails were endless, an eternity of pink sausage." (NLTS, 130) This mixture of horror and carnivalesque laughter is a manifestation of what

Kristeva calls "the *jouissance* of destruction,"[518] which is released by the "discharge" of violent emotions through art. This purely semiotic release is rendered literally in the execution of Lopez whose body "*in articulo mortis* spurted but not with blood." (NLTS, 130) At this point, "parents, shocked, covered the eyes of their children" and control is regained. In this passage, symbolic control makes the articulation of violence possible, yet its excess is also suggested if not fully expressed, an indication of Burgess's anxiety over the disruptive power of its own writing. This crisis of writing is explored in the second part of this chapter, in relation with the novel's intertextual structure.

In terms of the development of WS's ambivalent artistic vision, this section is the prelude to the arrival of his Dark Lady, incarnated in the character of Fatimah/Lucy. Fatimah comes to embody the simultaneously destructive/creative power of the semiotic in language.[519] Fatimah herself articulates the more creative and joyous aspects of the semiotic in her voice and her heavily accented speech, "Her voice is prettily foreign. She cannot say *th* or *w*. I tank. Bwait, I bwill geef ... I drank in her goldenness." (NLTS, 146) The combination of "B" and "w" into one long sound and the open vowels conveys the sense of "oral pleasure" and the "delight in raw material" from which, according to Burgess, "all art springs."[520]Fatimah's words, embedded in WS's discourse, articulate poetic *signifiance* as Kristeva conceives of it, as the release of the semiotic through the symbolic. WS's new-found sexual joy finds its expression in a "river" of words, poured into his journal, which is also a record of his developing vision, "I pore with squinnying eyes on a mole on that browngold rivercolour riverriple skin." (NLTS, 151) In WS's

[518] Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language,* 180.
[519] As in *Inside Mr Enderby*, in *Nothing like the Sun* the destructive/productive power of language is associated with the feminine as a disruptive force.
[520] Burgess, *Language Made Plain*, 24.

language, the compounds "browngold," "rivercolour" and "riverripple" express his joy in her mixed beauty and his own joy in word-play.[521]

In Burgess's text, these compounds are part of the intratextual network created by the association between the Avon, water, desire and the feminine, an association sustained through the narrative by the image of the "river" and the method of association (by compound) and all part of an intertext with Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*: "riverrrun" is the word that begins Joyce's text. Joyce's word also replays the sound as well as the image of the Avon from the start of the narrative. For WS, the association between Fatimah and a river brings back the joy in language that he experienced as a child, by the Avon when "the jingle ruled him":

> It was yesterday and I have scarce breath to write. Liveried barges to Greenwich and then the great roaring fires and brazier against the bright thin cold as we deck ourselves, wine too and ale and chimes and boarheads and a tumbling profusion of kickshawshes, then we gasp in to the Great Hall, the Queen chewing on broken teeth in her magnificence ... [T]ittering ladies and the Queen's bead-eyes on my lord E, amethysts bloodstones carbuncles flashing fingers jewelled swordhilts the clothofgold bride and silken yawning groom. (NLTS, 147)

This passage (this is a shortened version of a much longer tirade) conveys the "joyous" elements of the semiotic through breathless (punctuation-less) flow of words and through the repetition of certain "soft" sounds (w, s, l). At the same time, "stronger" consonants, like "r" (great roaring fires and brazier) or "k" (kickshawshes, the Queen chewing on broken teeth) suggest the more violent forces of the semiotic.

Despite the strong semiotic element in this passage, the symbolic maintains some control, signalled in the text by the capitalization of "Great Hall" and "Queen." This is an

[521] The connection between Burgess's text and *Finnegans Wake* is noted by Farkas in *Will's Son and Jake's Peer,* 92.

indication of WS's continuous struggle against his "will" and his desire, expressed in the move from semiotic to symbolic in the text. During their relationship, as it is documented in the journal, WS's language moves from poetic manifestations to a controlled sense of language, and a focus on the practical aspects of his job as a playwright, "In a fever I take to my play-making and theatre business ... I cleave my brain, writing of England's past, a cold chronicler" but "feel despair at the power of words." (NLTS, 150–1) This struggle is, at times, expressed in a more playful, mocking way (a mocking of WS's "will), which, nevertheless, still manages to articulate this ambivalent co-existence of semiotic and symbolic in language and art. At times, Fatimah's sexual appetite manifests itself to WS in carnivalesque parodies of the names of Saints, "I fancy ... saints with uncouth names—Saint Anguish, St Cithegranade, St Ishak, St Rosario, St Kinipple, St Pogue, plumpy Bacchus with pink Eyne." (NLTS, 154) Exhausted, WS seeks rest in his play-acting, "This afternoon I must to act." (NLTS, 155) But even his plays cannot control his unruly "will," because acting is also an art and all art, for WS (and for Burgess) is an expression of desire. As he plays the role as Antonio in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, WS's desire is playfully inscribed in the lines from the text, "Muse not that I thus suddenly proceed;/ For what I will, I will, and there an end." (NLTS, 155) Even as he hides in his lodgings, gripped by guilt and shame, WS cannot help some delivering some word-play, "I sit in mine own lodgings feeling truly in a wretched dim hell of mine own making, spent, used, shameless, shameful." (NLTS, 155)

The final section of his journal, however, indicates that WS has come to the realization that sexual desire is corrupt and that this is the same corruption which plagues Elizabethan society. This association comes to him in a dream: "I lie on my unmade bed

listening to time's ruin, threats of Antichrist, new galleons on the sea, the Queen's grand climacteric, portents in the heavens." (NLTS, 159) His realization is that the artist owes his duty to "that image of order that we all carry in our brains ... the keeping of chaos under with stern occasional kicks or permanent tough floorboards." (NLTS, 198) His role as an artist must be to "coax images of order and beauty out of wrack, filth, sin, chaos." (NLTS, 159) But in order to do this, he must enter the "dark way" that has been shown to him earlier and literally assume the destructive but also creative power of language's semiotic *within* him. The disruptive power of language here becomes synonymous with disease. WS contracts syphilis and it is in his syphilitic hallucinatory state that his language comes to express the semiotic.

The conduit between the two, again, is the Dark Lady, first as Fatimah, who infects WS with the disease, and finally as the goddess of WS's imagination, as the disease itself "disintegrat[ing] into many particles" that enter WS's body. (NLTS, 230) WS's delirium takes place in the Epilogue to the novel. WS's language, like his body, becomes "infected" with playful words, "Words, words, all words with you, you are naught but a word-boy," (NLTS, 212) and "jerking harsh words [and] a delirium of coinages and grotesque fusions." (NLTS, 228) He imagines the creation of the Globe arising from his groin (literally an "erection"), representing, irreverently, the triumph of WS's "will": "From his own groin the new building steadily arose, a playhouse from a tangled garden, and he laughed in triumph." (NLTS, 218) He sees the fusion of the corrupt city and his own diseased body, "the bloody holes, the burning hand. The fall of the commonwealth is so terrible because it is the fall of the body." (NLTS, 229)

WS's "fall" is documented in the Epilogue to the novel, narrated in the first person by WS. The Epilogue also marks the breakdown of boundaries between the framing and framed narratives. As *Nothing Like the Sun* reaches its conclusion, the distinctions between the voice of Burgess's narrative alter ego and that of WS start to disappear, and when we reach the Epilogue, the voice of Mr Burgess, the Lecturer, speaks from within the narrative: "I am near the end of the wine, sweet lords and lovely ladies, but out there the big wine is being poured-thin, slow, grey." (NLTS, 224) As Geoffrey Aggeler remarks, this identification had already been made earlier on in the narrative, during WS's apocalyptic dream. Although at first the narrating voice appears to be that of WS's conscience, in the tone and the language of "a hellfire Elizabethan preacher," it soon becomes apparent that this is "also the voice of [the] samsu-swigging schoolmaster," Mr Burgess, as Aggeler notes, "the identification of Burgess with Shakespeare has become so strong by this time that we are not surprised to hear him discoursing from within the poet's conscience, troubling his dreams."[522]

Alan Roughley agrees with Aggeler that the emergence of Mr Burgess's voice from within the narrative in the Epilogue "signals the culmination of the dialectical synthesis bringing together the voices of WS and Mr Burgess."[523] In the last part of the Epilogue, as Stinson notes, this identification between Mr Burgess and WS is pushed further, as John J. Stinson argues. This is the voice of "Mr Burgess" the lecturer identifying himself with WS, the fictional character, and by association with Shakespeare himself, "This is

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[522] Aggeler, *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, 73.
[523] Roughley, "*Nothing Like the Sun:* Anthony Burgess's Factification of Shakespeare's Life." http://bu.univ-angers.fr/EXTRANET/AnthonyBURGESS/NL3nlts.htm, (accessed 3 January 2011).

no impersonation, ladies and gentlemen." (NLTS, 233)[524] Mr Burgess in fact "becomes consubstantial with Will the father" through a concealed association between WS-Will and "Wilson," Burgess's paternal surname (Burgess's full name is John Anthony Burgess Wilson.[525]) At the end of the narrative, as Stinson remarks, "Burgess' persona, presumably also a Wil-son, proclaims his descent from Shakespeare."[526] The link is Fatimah's child, "I am of his blood. The male line dies in the West. It was right it should continue in the East." (NLTS, 97) Stinson sees in these words a reminder of Fatimah's promise to send her son back to the East "no doubt to the Malaya from which she came and where 'Mr Burgess'... gives his farewell address."[527]

Samuel Coale interprets the identification between Mr Burgess and WS in the novel as symbolic of Burgess's sense of connection with Shakespeare, who "like Burgess, was a great creator in the language of his craft."[528] Burgess establishes his name and his own creative identity as part of a line of language crafters which, of course, includes Joyce, a constant presence in Burgess's texts. As Roughley points out, the novel models itself on Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, as "a *bildungsroman* and a *künstleerroman* depicting Shakespeare's growth from adolescence to maturity as well as his artistic development."[529] A substantial number of the fictional elements of WS's life in the novel are borrowed from Stephen Dedalus's theories on Shakespeare in the library

[524] Stinson, "*Nothing like the Sun:* The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," 97. Burgess provides his own analysis of this section in "Genesis and Headache," 42–43.
[525] Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 3.
[526] Stinson, "*Nothing like the Sun:* The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," 97.
[527] Ibid.
[528] Coale, *Anthony Burgess*, 161.
[529] Alan Roughley, "*Nothing Like the Sun:* Anthony Burgess's Factification of Shakespeare's Life," *Anthony Burgess Newsletter 3* (December 2000), http://bu.univ-angers.fr/EXTRANET/AnthonyBURGESS/NL3nlts.htm (accessed 29 December 2010) This is not the only parallel with Joyce's novel or indeed with other Joyce's texts. In his article, Roughley explores the relationship between Burgess and Joyce in the novel using Harold Bloom's theory of "the anxiety of influence."

scene in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses*, in particular details pertaining to Shakespeare's "unwilling" seduction by Anne Hathaway, his cuckolding by his brother Richard, and the suggestion of a homosexual relationship with the Earl of Southampton.[530] The intertextual relation between the two texts has been analyzed by a number of scholars including Harold Bloom,[531] Farkas, Stinson and Roughley. These scholars agree that Joyce's "presence" can also be sensed in *Nothing like the Sun* in the narrator's and WS's language, in the use of symbols, intertextual allusions and linguistic devices characteristic of Joyce's writing style.[532] Joyce's texts, both *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist* resonate through *Nothing like the Sun,* creating a network of associations between WS and Stephen Dedalus, and WS and Leopold Bloom. In "*Nothing like the Sun*: The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," Stinson traces these associations to the "Circe" episode of *Ulysses*, to a scene in which Stephen and Bloom together look into Bella Cohen's mirror and see "the sad-eyed and beardless face of

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[530] These details (amongst others) are noted by Stinson in "*Nothing like the Sun:* The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," 90–94. Stinson, in fact, argues quite convincingly (echoing Harold Bloom) that in *Nothing like the Sun* "Stephen basic operating premise (that the man Shakespeare can be known through the poems and plays) becomes the basis for the whole fiction." Ibid., 90. Burgess himself admits to this borrowing in "Genesis and Headache," 42. See also *You've Had Your Time*, 79.

[531] See his introduction to his edited collection *Anthony Burgess*: *Modern Critical Views*, 1–4. In *The Western Canon*, Bloom describes *Nothing like the Sun* as "a Joycean extension of Stephen's theory" about Shakespeare's life and art in *Ulysses.* Bloom, *The Western Canon,* 416. In the preface to the 1997 edition of *The Anxiety of Influence*, Bloom recognizes that the link between Joyce and Burgess is Shakespeare, "Joyce [and] Burgess ... in their different ways acknowledge the contingency that Shakespeare imposes on us, which is that we are so influenced by him that we cannot get outside him." Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, xxvii.

[532] For a full analysis of all the Joycean elements in *Nothing like the Sun* see Stinson's article cited above, and also Á. I. Farkas' s chapter "*Rival Poets*: Nothing like the Sun" in *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 87–106. Alan Roughley also maps out some of the obvious Joycean elements in the novel, although his essay works towards a re-evaluation of Shakespeare's importance as an intertext in the novel. Alan Roughley, "*Nothing Like the Sun:* Anthony Burgess's Factification of Shakespeare's Life." *Anthony Burgess Newsletter 3* (December 2000), http://bu.univ-angers.fr/EXTRANET/AnthonyBURGESS/NL3nlts.htm (accessed 29 December 2010)

Shakespeare, crowned by the reflection of the reindeer antlered hatrack in the hall.'"[533] This Shakespeare, Stinson argues, "bears close resemblance to Burgess's WS."[534] More significantly, Stinson adds, "it seems apparent" that Burgess wants the reader to "see himself, Bloom and Stephen returning the gaze of Shakespeare on the other side of that mirror."[535]

The most important intertextual relation in the novel, evidently, is that between Burgess and Shakespeare, as Burgess himself admits.[536] As pointed out at the start of this chapter, Burgess, very playfully, contrives to create a link between himself and Shakespeare which begins with the identification between the voices of the narrator and the character and ends with Anthony Burgess the author of *Nothing like the Sun* as a direct descendant of Shakespeare himself. Burgess's ambivalent, playfully disruptive text creates a biography of Shakespeare's life that has "nothing" to do with traditional critical approaches to the playwright but which, at the same time, manages to convey the complexity and ambiguity of Shakespeare's his artistic vision and powerful language, as Burgess conceives of them.[537] It also creates a portrayal of Shakespeare which follows the pattern of other Burgess characters struggling between life and art—a modern individual in conflict between order and disruption by also a subject in a process of continuous transformation, like Burgess himself.

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[533] Stinson, "*Nothing like the Sun*: The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," 96. Stinson maps out several identifications between Joyce's and Burgess's characters, including Anne Hathaway and Molly Bloom, and between Stephen-Bloom and Burgess himself. See 96–101.
[534] Ibid.
[535] Ibid.
[536] Burgess, "Genesis and Headache," 43.
[537] In the Foreword to the Vintage edition of the novel, Burgess claims that it is "only a novel and it was never intended to add to Shakespeare scholarship." He also adds that "the book is intended to be a presentation of life and real people." Burgess, *Nothing like the Sun* (London: Vintage, 1982), 2. The edition of the novel that I use in this dissertation is by Allison & Busby, published in 2001.

My aim in the following section is not to explore the intertextuality mapped out by the critics referred to above, but to examine the process of intertextuality in the novel as an articulation of the crisis in the writing subject in Kristeva's terms: the dynamic involving the destruction of the creative identity and its "reconstitution" into a "a new plurality" of textual interventions. We have already explored the intertextuality of the fictional character in *A Vision of Battlements* and, in more depth, in *The Doctor is Sick*, in relation to the fragmentation of Spindrift's name through the text. In *Nothing like the Sun*, the author's name (Anthony Burgess) becomes fragmented and dispersed through the novel's text, a movement which calls attention to the plurality and unfixity of the "author." At the same time, conversely, we could argue that the very association between Burgess and Shakespeare created in the text works towards fixing Burgess's status as the "author" and "origin" of the work, as Coale suggests, and as the "creator" of this fictional Shakespeare out of the craft of his language.[538]

Implicit in this figure of the "creator" is the established idea of the author as a locus of authority, either as the originator of the text or as the totalizing presence constructed by readers, as Foucault remarks, "the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning."[539] In place of this authorial presence, Kristeva posits a "pluralized subject" of writing "occupy[ing] not a place of enunciation but permutable, multiple and mobile places."[540] My argument here is that *Nothing like the Sun* posits an "author" who is neither a fixed presence nor a multiplicity of positions, but the dynamic movement between the two. We can see this ambivalent dynamic at the

[538] Ibid., 162.
[539] Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Harari (London: Methuen, 1980), 159.
[540] Kristeva, "How Does One Speak to Literature?" 111.

end of the novel, in the last section of the Epilogue when this new pluralized writing subject emerges precisely at the moment when the identification between Burgess and Shakespeare is established.

This section effects a shift in the novel from narrative to text by the introduction of a Joycean style "question and answer" section (or "mock catechism," as Biswell describes it) which breaks the boundary between framed and framing narratives with a direct address to the reader, "You wish to know how ventriloquial all this is, who is really speaking?" (NLTS, 223) This voice, which is first identified with that of Mr Burgess, becomes associated with that of Anthony Burgess, the author of the book, who has transgressed the barrier separating the fictional and the real worlds to introduce himself to the reader. The trigger for this association is the word "poisoner" in the next sentence: "When the Poisoner comes, he comes to break, and walls are among the things he breaks." (NLTS, 233) "Poisoner" is a reference to WS's "poisoning" by syphilis, but in this borderland between fact and invention, the word also suggests a higher agent, the author or writer of the text.

In fact, the association between writing and poison can be traced back to Joyce's text, in this case to *A Portrait of the Artist*, through the figure of "Thoth, the God of writers" who, as Burgess notes in *Here Comes Everybody,* makes his appearance to Stephen Dedalus at the moment when the young artist prepares to leave Ireland. [541] The link between Thoth, writing and "poison" or "poisoning" appears in Plato's *Phaedrus*, a work which engages explicitly with the purpose and value of writing. In this dialogue Socrates tells the myth of Thoth, the Egyptian God of writing, who attempted to convince the king

[541] Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody*, 66.

of Egypt of the value of the written word by describing it as a "pharmakos," a "remedy" to aid men's memories. As Derrida demonstrates in his deconstructive analysis of Plato's text in *Dissemination*, however, the word "pharmakos" or "pharmakon" in Greek has an ambivalent meaning as both a cure and a poison.[542]

The "walls" that the "poisoner" has come to "break" at the end of *Nothing like the Sun* are not only the boundaries separating the fictional and the real world, but also the very notion of the "integrity" of the author. "Anthony Burgess" the writer becomes part of the text, not as the author in control of his work but, rather, as Barthes puts it, "as a 'guest' ... inscribed in the novel like one of his characters, figured in the carpet; no longer privileged, paternal ... his inscription is ludic."[543] This ludic and plural "author" is an intertextuality in Kristeva's sense, a "fragmented" plurality which becomes dispersed (like the Dark Lady, who upon releasing the poison over WS "disintegrates into particles") amongst all the other "fragments of character, fragments of ideology or fragments of representation ... at play in the text."[544]

The trigger of this "shattering" of Burgess's "creative identity" in *Nothing like the Sun* is the name WILSON. In "*Nothing like the Sun*: The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," Stinson identifies Anthony Burgess's "real name" John Wilson inscribed twice in the novel. The first time the name appears only as WILSON. And the context is the birth of WS's twins Hamnet and Judith; when his brother Gilbert enters to announce the news

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[542] Derrida examines the concept of the "pharmakos" in relation to the binary opposition speech/writing in his essay "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 65–156. "Plato's Pharmacy," 70. *Here Comes Everybody*, 66. It is clear that Burgess was acquainted with Plato's myth and it is quite possible that he would have been aware of the double meaning of "pharmakos."

[543] Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Image, Music, Text*, 161.

[544] Kristeva, "Intertextuality and Literary Interpretation," 190.

WS is "blotting the name WILSON that [he] had just engrossed." (NLTS, 79) As Stinson remarks, "Will's son, Hamnet, seems thus identified with Burgess."[545] The second inscription of Wilson in the novel, Stinson adds, is as the actor "John Wilson," who appears at the opening of the new Globe theatre, and whose role is to christen the new theatre with some strong wine, as he intones the words "Ego te baptizo, in nomine Kyddi et Matlovii et Shakespearii." (NLTS, 215) Stinson notes the playful irreverence of this line, and "its lighthearted blasphemy" in equating Burgess with Shakespeare.[546] We could say that Burgess is also associating himself (as John Wilson the christener) with both Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe, both of whom represent the more transgressive aspects of art: Kyd wrote the graphically violent, but very influential, *The Spanish Tragedy*, while Marlowe represents the demonic in art, according to Burgess's reading of *Dr Faustus*.[547]

The name "John Wilson" triggers a further network of intertextual associations with Shakespeare's texts through the name "Jack," a nickname for "John." Á. I. Farkas has mapped out this intertextual network, beginning with the association between "John Wilson" and "Jacke Wilson," a character in "the First-Folio version of *As You Like It*,"[548] which Farkas then follows up to Shakespeare's nickname "Jakes peer," used derogatorily by WS's mother early in the narrative. (NLTS, 22) Farkas reads a playful reference in "jakes" to the word for "portable toilet," as well as further associations with "Jaques, the

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[545] Ibid.
[546] Ibid.
[547] See Biswell, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess*, 47–50.
[548] Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 90. He also notes the re-appearance of "Jack Wilson" in *M/F*, as one of the three epigraphs to the novel, "Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio and Jacke Wilson." Stinson also remarks on this re-appearance of the name in *M/F* as proof that "Wilson" has a symbolic meaning in Burgess's texts. Stinson, "*Nothing like the Sun:* The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," 95. This epigraph is explored further in Chapter Five of this thesis.

melancholy philosopher of *As You Like It*," and "King James I, under whose reign," Farkas adds, "both the domestic convenience and the comedy are likely to have become known in wider circles."[549] Farkas follows this "lavatory" word-play further, to find it inscribed as "a fragment [in] WS's interior monologue" in the scene in which WS is surveying his new house, "New Place," upon his return from London. As he walks into the landing, the sight of "five closed doors" triggers the name "John Harington," the playwright author of *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, in his mind, followed by a chain of associations from "Ajax" to "A Jakes" and to "water-closet." (NLTS, 191) As Farkas remarks, "jakes" rhymes with "Jaques" in "its anglicised pronunciation." He also notes how in his monograph *Shakespeare*, Burgess "speculates that *As You Like It* was perhaps meant, among other things, to supply the groundlings with 'lavatory mirth ... in a very refined form.'"[550] For Farkas, the word-play created by "Jakes peer" is part of Burgess's wider association between art and purgation, also explored in the *Enderby* novels. He does not, however, remark on the way that in this playful intertextual network the name "John Wilson" actually becomes a signifier for the highest (King James) and the lowest (a toilet). More than that, the name becomes unfixed, fluid (like water) in the associative chain beginning with John: Jack: Jacke: Jaques: Jakes: water-closet: water: poetic language and the unconscious.

In this playful intertextuality created by Burgess's "crafty manipulations" with the proper name (his proper name), then, WILSON becomes both the signifier of authority (as Shakespeare's son) and at the same time articulates the "shattering" of this authority,

[549] Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer*, 89.
[550] Ibid.

not only in the irreverence of the associations but also in their multiplicity, which in turn express the multiplicity and fluidity of the creative identity, which creates and at the same time sees itself created (and "shattered") within language and the text. In *Nothing like the Sun*, WS wants "the perpetuation of [his] name" (NLTS, 166) and seeks the assurance that "the name Shakespeare will not die." (NLTS, 108) At the same time, he fears that language is inadequate as "It was for lying, he saw hopelessly, that words had been made. In the beginning was the word and the word was with the Father of Lies. 'But I am a mere nothing.'" (NLTS, 108) By contrast, Master Quedgeley (whose sons become WS's pupils) reminds WS that identity *is* a lie, and a performance, "We watch ourselves act everyday ... One inside the other watching the other. And so I am John Quedgeley and Jack Quedgeley and Jockey Quedgeley and Master Quedgeley Justice of Peace. It is all acting." (NLTS, 51)

The sense of identity as performance and "play," the well-known *topos* of the world as a stage found in Shakespeare, Cervantes and Calderón de la Barca,[551] is evident here. Master Quedgeley's many personae resonate with Jaques's "All the world's a stage" speech in *As You Like It*, particularly the line "And one man in his time plays many parts." (II. Vii. 142)[552] Here Quedgeley is also celebrating his own plurality—his freedom from one fixed and unified identity—and is contemptuous of WS's anxiety over the "proper" name, "Oh God, preserve us from cheesy cant." (NTLS, 51) The notion of identity as performance suggested here is reinforced by the world-play between Jack-Jacke-Jaques as examined above.

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[551] This famous commonplace or "theatrical metaphor," according to Ernst Robert Curtius was already a well-known cliché in Shakespeare's time. See *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 140–1.

[552] William Shakespeare, *As You Like it*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare,* 381.

Although WS articulates this multiplicity—he is not only a poet and a playwright, but also a craftsman (glover) and a businessman—WS cannot fully share Quedgeley's joy. Greene's description of Shakespeare in his famous pamphlet *A Groatsworth of Wit* as an "upstart crow" and a "Johannes Factotum or Jack-Do-All," (NLTS, 87) the cause of much dismay for WS in the novel, emphasizes this instability. This is also Burgess's instability within the text —"Jack-do-All" can also be identified as John Wilson through the network of associations mapped up before. From a biographical perspective, furthermore, the "Jack-do-All" description (with its implied second meaning that he is "a master of none") suggests a closer connection with Burgess, who was many times described by critics as "a bundle of clevernesses [and] a writer devoid of genuine vision."[553]

Burgess, unlike WS, recognizes the multiplicity and plurality of language, and the creative potential of play, understood not only in its performative meaning but also in its ludic sense. Samuel Coale remarks on this aspect of Burgess's approach to fiction: "The sense of the writer as myth-maker, as manipulative game-player ... aware of his conscious conjuring and spirited illusions, pervades Burgess's vision."[554] This ludic sense extends to Burgess's own vision of himself, Coale adds, "He once wrote, 'I see myself as a creature of gloom and sobriety, but my books reflect a sort of clown.'"[555] Burgess's reference to himself as "clown" suggests a carnivalesque approach to the issue of identity, an approach which we have already seen at work in the characters of the other novels explored in the previous chapters, and which we see again in *M/F*, in the next

[553] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 141.
[554] Coale, "The Ludic Loves of Anthony Burgess." *Modern Fiction Studies* 27, no. 3 (1981): 456.
[555] Burgess, "Epilogue: Conflict and Confluence," *Urgent Copy*, 369. Quoted in Coale, Ibid.

chapter. As Pam Morris argues, "Kristeva's sense of identity as performative and 'in process'" owes much to Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque, and especially the "carnival's comic figures."[556] These figures—the clown, the rogue and the fool—are "life's maskers; their being coincides with their role, and outside their role, they simply do not exist."[557] We could say that identification with the carnivalesque figure of the clown betrays a sense of insecurity over his unstable identity —the same sense of uncertainty which is articulated in *Nothing like the Sun*'s "Burgess-Wilson-Will's son" intertextual play explored above. At the same time, as we have seen, this intertextuality expresses the sense of joy and liberation to be found in this new, intertextual, plural and ludic "identity" which, in fact, is identical to "nothing" as it reflects or represents "no thing" but the productivity of the language in which it is constantly created-destroyed.

In *Nothing like the Sun* the trial of the artistic subject, articulated in WS's narrative of artistic creation and conflict in language, merges with the trial of the writer who makes and un-makes himself in the process of writing. As such, Burgess's novel can be seen as a carnivalesque ambivalent celebration of the instability and multiplicity of language and identity which, at the same time, casts a nostalgic gaze towards the lost notion of artistic originality. WS and Burgess are both "lost" in the process of creation, emerging the composite of a historical and fictional William Shakespeare whose creator is also a fictionalized version of a real, historical subject. Like the composite figure of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, whose figures merge into a likeness of Shakespeare in Bella Cohen's mirror in the "Circe" episode of *Ulysses*, the fictional Mr Burgess who gives the

[556] Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 155.
[557] Morris, "Re-routing Kristeva: From Pessimism to Parody," 36. We see the same notion of identity as performance in the figure of Pongo the Clown in *M/F*. Here the theatre is replaced with the circus, the carnivalesque space *par excellence*.

lecture that turns into a novel merges with a father, Shakespeare, who is "nothing" (no "thing") like the Sun.

CHAPTER SIX

An (im)possible Order: Carnivalesque Ambivalence in *M/F*

M/F[558] is widely-known amongst critics as Burgess's "experimental structuralist" novel. In fact, it was Burgess himself who, in a series of interviews around the time of the novel's publication used the adjective "experimental" to describe his latest work.[559] As Stinson argues, this was an attempt by Burgess to "call attention" to the novel's formal concerns and, in particular, to its structuralist framework.[560] In *You've Had Your Time*, Burgess explains that in *M/F* he aimed to apply Claude Lèvi-Strauss's structuralist analysis of myth to the novel, focusing particularly on the correlation between incest and riddles which Lèvi-Strauss had explored in his essay *The Scope of Anthropology*, and also on the notion of the binary opposition as the fundamental way in which human beings make sense of the world.[561] As we can see, in *M/F* Burgess is still very much concerned with notions of order and meaning both in life and in art, his main preoccupations since *A Vision of Battlements*, here recast within the framework of structuralist theory. In fact, in a 1982 interview Burgess describes *M/F* as "a perfect novel" and as a structure where "every item works."[562]

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[558] The novel is published under two titles, *M/F* and *MF*. I am using the Penguin Modern Classics edition with the title *M/F*.
[559] See in particular Thomas Churchill, "An Interview with Anthony Burgess," *Malahat Review* 17 (1971): 126. Also John Cullinan, "Interview with Anthony Burgess," (1972) in *Conversations with Anthony Burgess,* eds. Earl G. Ingersoll and Mary C. Ingersoll (Jackson, IL: University Press of Mississippi, 2008.), 70.
[560] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 105.
[561] Burgess, *You've Had Your Time*, 208. Burgess had reviewed Lèvi-Strauss' *The Scope of Anthropology*, his inaugural address to the University of Paris, for *The Washington Post Book World* in 1967. Stinson, ibid.
[562] Michael Wood, "Polymath," Interview with Anthony Burgess, *Connoisseur*, 1982, 97.

A review of the different critical appraisals of *M/F* shows that the novel's emphasis on formal order is supported by a similarly strong attack on excessive artistic experimentation. *M/F* delivers a strong critique of experimental art—so strong that some critics believe that the novel is Burgess's manifesto for order in art and in the novel. This critique is delivered by one of the characters, Z. Fonanta, as a lesson to Miles Faber (the novel's protagonist and his grandson), a rebellious experimental artist himself. According to Fonanta, experimental art "seeks insignification,"[563] and cannot be truly considered "art"; it is, rather, a form of "anti-art." True art, conversely, "takes the raw material of the world around us and attempts to shape it into signification." (M/F, 201) The artist's "job" is to "impose manifest order" on his materials, to seek "signification" over the "spurious joy" of "meaningless" free artistic expression. (M/F, 201) Geoffrey Aggeler has no doubt that these are Burgess's own views on art, and consequently, interprets the novel as a satire on contemporary Western culture and its "spurious concept of freedom of expression."[564] Donald Barton Johnston reads *M/F* in the same way; for him the novel is "a traditional *bildungsroman*," tracing Miles's growth from "jejune worshipper of art as rebellion" into a responsible artist and member of society.[565]

The argument that Burgess's novel is a clear attack on experimental art and all forms of "free" expression gains force from Z. Fonanta's association of "anti-art" with incest, the ultimate act of social transgression, whose prohibition constitutes the boundary which separates culture (the symbolic order) from chaotic nature (desire, the body, the unconscious). Fonanta employs the concept of incest as a signifier of disruption, "I use

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[563] Burgess, *M/F* (London: Penguin, 2004), 200. Hereafter cited in the text as (M/F).
[564] Aggeler, "Incest and the Artist: *MF*," in *Critical Essays on Anthony Burgess*, 183.
[565] Donald Barton Johnston, "The Labyrinth of Incest in Nabokov's *Ada*," *Comparative Literature* 38 no.3 (1986): 247.

the term in its widest sense to signify the breakdown of order, the collapse of communication [and] the irresponsible cultivation of chaos." (M/F, 200) This association is not simply metaphoric; it underpins the novel's plot, which is constructed on the structural correlation between riddles and incest in primitive mythical thought, as identified by Claude Lévi-Strauss in *The Scope of Anthropology*.[566] Burgess openly acknowledges that he employed Lévi-Strauss's incest-riddle correlation as the basis for *M/F*'s plot in his essay on the novel, "Oedipus Wrecks." Here Burgess explains how the plot combines elements of the Oedipus myth (the answer of a riddle leads inevitably to incest) and an Algonquin incest legend featuring riddles, talking animals and incest, which Lévi-Strauss interprets as proof of a universal link between certain forms of language use and the collapse of the social order. [567] In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, published two years after *The Scope of Anthropology* (1967), Lévi-Strauss reinforces this connection by identifying further correlations in different cultures between the "immoderate use of language" (by laughing, making noises, using non-human sounds or conversing with mirror images or talking animals) and incest. These acts, he argues, "constitute a *misuse of language* and on this ground they are grouped together with the incest prohibition."[568]

M/F certainly seems to uphold this structural law. Miles (like Spindrift) loves to play with language, is an expert riddle solver and riddle maker, and is drawn to materiality and multiplicity of language, "my brain loved to be crammed with the fracted crackers of

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[566] See Claude Lévi-Strauss *The Scope of Anthropology*, trans. Sherry Ortner Paul and Robert A. Paul, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 38. Burgess had reviewed the book for the Washington Post in 1967. The review is included in *Urgent Copy*, "If Oedipus Had Read his Lévi-Strauss," 258–61.

[567] Burgess, "Oedipus Wrecks," in *This Man and Music,* 163. Burgess explains his use of the myth to build the plot of the novel in *You've Had Your Time*, 208–9.

[568] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship,* trans. James Harle Bell and John Richard von Sturmer (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 495.

useless data." (M/F, 10) The words "crammed," "crackers" and "fracted" suggest the materiality of language, as well as conveying the idea of fragmentation: Miles likes to put together disparate fragments; he also likes to break language apart. In this sense, Miles "misuses" language. According to the mythical "law," therefore, it follows that Miles is also the product of incest, and destined to commit incest himself, with his own sister. His obsession with language, and some physical ailments, "I had cardiac rheumatism, various kinds of asthma, colitis, nervous eczema," (M/F, 10) are a direct result of his incestuous nature. And the novel pushes the incest connection even further: Miles's search for the works of an experimental artist called *Sib Legeru,* where he hopes to find confirmation of an art that is "totally free because totally meaningless," (M/F, 15) turns out to be a search for incest. *Sib Legeru*, Fonanta informs Miles at the end, is Anglo Saxon for "to lie with one's sib, it means incest." (M/F, 199) This supports the idea that Miles must reform, cure himself from his obsession with linguistic play and realize that meaning is innate in man; the prohibition against incest, deeply embedded in mythical thought, is proof of man's need for order and meaning.

As Lévi-Strauss argues, myths work "from the awareness of oppositions towards their resolution."[569] Even *Sib Legeru*'s works manifest a desire for meaning and order, even if banal, "they derive their structures from the alphabetic arrangement of encyclopaedias and dictionaries." (M/F, 199) Miles has begun the process of "reformation" into an acceptable member of society already: throughout the narrative, he refrains from answering the riddles posed to him (which according to structural law mean the disruption of order) and he does not commit incest with his sister. Even the act of

[569] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jakobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 224.

narrating his story is an exercise in "order," as Miles puts together events and experiences into a coherent narrative. At the end of the novel, furthermore, Miles has grown out of his incestuous and experimental impulses, and, in a way that recalls Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*, he is a married man and father, and has become an important poet and valued member of society.

This short reading of the plot certainly appears to provide evidence that *M/F* is fundamentally, as Frank Kermode suggests, a "culturally conservative" text which defends order, in art and in language, over "anticultural disorder."[570] However, as Kermode himself admits, this is a very simplified and simplistic interpretation of a novel which so self-consciously, and playfully, foregrounds its own existence as a text. Other critics have also identified the playfulness in *M/F*'s writing, though they have interpreted in different ways. Stinson argues that *M/F* "provides bracing play with the most important questions of form and meaning"[571] while Samuel Coale finds the novel's self-reflexiveness and linguistic playfulness at odds with its main theme, the need for order in a chaotic modern world.[572] In a later article, however, Coale claims that *M/F* is engaging in the same critique of the notion of "structure" carried out by other experimental writers like Nabokov or Pynchon.[573] As Stinson remarks, *M/F* can be read simultaneously as "a structuralist novel and as a 'send-up' of structuralist theory,"[574] which makes any totalizing claims on the novel very difficult to sustain. Kermode sees these two impulses at work in *M/F*. The novel, he argues, self-consciously constructs itself as a stable, ordered and meaningful linguistic structure, while at the same time "enact[ing] the

[570] Frank Kermode, *Essays on Fiction : 1971–1982* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 81
[571] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 109–10.
[572] Coale, *Anthony Burgess*, 123–24.
[573] Coale, "The Ludic Loves of Anthony Burgess," *Modern Fiction Studies* 27 no. 3 (1981): 454.
[574] Stinson, "*Nothing like the Sun*: The Faces in Bella Cohen's Mirror," 97.

arbitrariness, the chanciness of such order."[575] Its writing is "an agitated jostle of events, puzzles, riddles, jokes, connections and disconnections ... it has a touch of *Sib Legeru*."[576]

We can see from the different critical perspectives outlined above that, like the other texts analyzed in this dissertation, *M/F* is ambivalently poised between order and disruption, stable meaning and playful textuality. It calls attention not only to man's innate need to create systems of order (as set down in Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myth) but also to disruptive forces which lie buried underneath those systems and which are articulated as desire—to express, play and subvert.[577] In its concern with structures and the transgression of those structures, we can say that *M/F* is carnivalesque in Kristeva's sense: it is structured as a double discourse or "scene" where "prohibitions" and "their transgression" co-exist in a continuous and disruptive dynamic.

Kristeva's delineation of the carnivalesque as a double structure which is always already transgressed and disrupted offers a useful critical paradigm to analyze *M/F*'s ambivalence between structural order and playful textuality, between seriousness and mockery. My argument in this chapter is that in *M/F*, the structuralist drive towards order is undercut by the resistance of the carnivalesque, as a disruptive force which is always already operating in the text, and which manifests itself in a continuous, mocking transgression of the novel's (self)-established narrative, discursive and linguistic boundaries. Carnivalesque ambivalence, for example, is already at work in the novel's

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[575] Kermode, Essays *on Fiction: 1971–1982*, 89.
[576] Ibid.
[577] Lévi-Strauss himself hints at the loss of the playful element of language brought about by its development (necessary for social advancement) as a system of communication: "To the extent that words have become common property, and their signifying function has supplanted their character as values, language, along with scientific civilization, has helped to impoverish perception and to strip it of its affective, aesthetic and magical implications, as well as to schematize thought." *The Elementary Structures of Kinship,* 496.

title. As Burgess explains in "Oedipus Wrecks," there are two versions of the title, "My structuralist novel is entitled either *MF* or *M/F*."[578] *MF* stands for Miles Faber, a name which, Burgess argues, "combines two main attributes of man—the aggressive and the creative," while *M/F* "symbolizes a structure."[579] Both, Burgess adds, are contained within another title, the irreverent "*Mother Fucker*," suggested to him by the American actor William Conrad, who had "expressed a half-serious desire to make an all-black film on Oedipus."[580] The same carnivalesque, irreverent and playful impulse pervades the novel.

From the start, *M/F* is set in a fictional world where values are not only inverted (inversion is the mark of the carnivalesque) but in constant flux, or in a continuous dynamic of transgression—an "anomalous" world, as Miles describes it ("unequal," "unconformable," "incongruous" [OED]). This is a world where "order has both to be and not to be challenged"—a "Chaosmos" in the sense explored in the Introduction—a world where "exogamy means disruption and also stability" and "incest means stability and also disruption." (M/F, 183) *M/F* resists the logic of non-contradiction or either/or to articulate the ambivalent oscillation between the two. Within the novel's ambivalent logic "incest," the novel's central signifier of transgression of order, becomes a carnivalesque ambivalent signifier: like the carnival, which brings together opposing poles (high and low, life and death, laughter and tears), incest brings together elements which must remain separate, like riddles and puzzles in the primitive myths which Lévi-Strauss

[578] Burgess, "Oedipus Wrecks," 164.
[579] Ibid., 165.
[580] Ibid. In fact, at the end of *M/F*, the reader discovers that Miles Faber and his whole family are black. According to Burgess, this revelation demonstrates that the binary white/black is a false or insignificant opposition. The implications of this "revelation," from the perspective of cultural studies, are interesting and could be developed further. This kind of analysis, however, falls outside the scope of this chapter.

explores, "Like the solved puzzle, incest brings together elements doomed to remain separate."[581] The act of incest is an expression of the semiotic. At the same time, in *M/F*'s ambivalent structure, incest also signifies an excess of order, through the repetition of the same, like "a book in which every sentence is a tautology," as Pardaleos tells Miles. (M/F, 46) Incest fixes pluralities into single meanings. Therefore, it brings order—an imposed and fixed order—to multiplicity and difference. The "order" which *M/F* seems to uphold, is an "order" based on multiplicity, plurality and difference —an "unequal" or "anomalous" order.

Some of the specific features of the carnivalesque are outlined in the Introduction and Chapter One of this thesis. It will be useful, nevertheless, to review those elements which are specific to *M/F* in order to identify how they operate in the novel. We have already seen how carnivalesque discourse "suspends" traditional narrative logic to give way to other "logics" operating through "relation": dialogue, connections, non-exclusive opposition. As Kermode describes it, *M/*F's discourse is constructed as a network of "connections" and "disconnections," riddles and word-play. The text becomes writing in operation"—what Barthes calls "the space of combinative play."[582] Carnivalesque language, as Bakhtin and Kristeva note, also tends towards the "scandalous and eccentric."[583] *M/F*'s many puzzles and riddles are examples of "eccentric" language, language outside the norm; we could even say "misused," like the language prohibitions examined by Lévi-Strauss. Blasphemies, expletives and obscene words are also included within the category of the scandalous; Llew's (Miles's double) discourse is scandalous

[581] Lévi-Strauss *The Scope of Anthropology*, 38–39.
[582] Roland Barthes, "Theory of the Text," *Untying the Text*, ed. Robert Young (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 37.
[583] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 83.

and blasphemous in this way. Another important carnivalesque notion, and one which is particularly relevant to an analysis of *M/F*'s ambivalent text, is that of "excess." Carnivalesque excess is the excess of the semiotic, encoded in a form of play. While poetic language encodes excess through the process of *signifiance*, carnivalesque language exploits the multiplicity and ambiguity of language in order to subvert established norms, whether social, religious, political or linguistic. As a dialogic and plural discourse, carnivalesque discourse "challenges God, authority, social law" as well as the "laws of language" based on representation and linear order.[584] At the same time, and despite its continuous "relativizing" of all order and structure, carnivalesque discourse "remains incapable of detaching itself from representation."[585] Law and its "other" co-exist within the ambivalent structure of carnivalesque discourse. Miles's search for meaning in disorder, or Z. Fonanta's explanations, or lessons, delivered to Miles at the end of the narrative, suggest that *M/F* remains tied to the notion of resolution or closure which is the mark of representational and monological discourses. My analysis of *M/F* as a carnivalesque text focuses not only on its obvious subversiveness, but also on the drive to order and stability in order to mark the movement (or ambivalence) between the two. *M/F*'s text dramatizes the ambivalent dynamic between desire and the structures of order that (must necessarily) limit it, but also allow its expression.

M/F is concerned with exploring, and challenging, the structuralist approach to the human sciences and language and its system of binary oppositions and hierarchies, in order to offer a vision of language, the novel and the human experience as multiple, contradictory and plural. These hierarchies include order/disorder, fixed

[584] Ibid., 79.
[585] Ibid.

meaning/linguistic play and author/intertextuality—all examined in the previous chapters, and in different contexts. Here, my analysis focuses on how these binaries, and related ones, are transgressed and subverted in the novel's ambivalent carnivalesque space.

The novel sets up several prohibitions: against disorder in art; against "the misuse of language" ("Riddles are there for a good reason—not to be answered" M/F, 183); against incest; against meaninglessness and "insignification"—all articulations of semiotic desire, and disruptive of symbolic order. These can be articulated as hierarchical binaries: signification/insignification; art/anti-art; meaningful language/riddles; culture/nature (as chaos); symbolic/semiotic; order/desire. These hierarchical structures are supported and sustained by the novel's agents of order: Z. Fonanta, the lawyers Loewe and Pardaleos and Dr Gonzi. Their role is to prevent Miles from committing incest and, thus, re-establish social and artistic order in the family. At the same time, these agents of the law are themselves transgressive figures because they set riddles and their names are also riddles (Burgess explains this in "Oedipus Wrecks"[586]); within the novel's carnivalesque logic, "the riddler has to be itself a riddle," (M/F, 183) a mystery which "forbids solutions," as Kermode argues.[587]

Their transgressive nature is signalled by their duality: they are half-human, half-animal beings like the Sphinx in the Oedipus myth, although the Sphinx in the Theban Saga is a more complex creature, combining "the face of a woman, the body of a lion and a bird's wings."[588] Z. Fonanta, Pardaleos and Loewe combine animal and human attributes: they have animal names and they can talk. They are "talking animals" or *Zoon*

[586] Burgess, "Oedipus Wrecks," 166.
[587] Kermode, *Essays on Fiction: 1971–1982*, 79.
[588] Mark P. O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology* (New York: David McKay, 1977), 292.

Phonanta ("language animals"), the classical Greek definition for human beings.[589] Z. Fonanta is, therefore, the archetypal talking animal, man. He constructs structures of meaning; he explains his own significance to Miles (and the reader) (M/F, 198), thus bringing closure to some of the novel's "mysteries." In doing so, however, he is committing incest "symbolically"—something which he has already done "literally," by sleeping with his own mother, like Oedipus, thereby causing the pollution of the state. Like Oedipus, Z. Fonanta is a threshold figure, as Burgess himself describes it, "the cause of the state's disease and disruption but also, through his discovery of and expiation for sin, the cause of its recovered health."[590] For Burgess, this ambivalence is the mark of the tragic hero; Fonanta, on the other hand, is not a tragic figure, but a carnivalesque double figure, serious but also comical. After his act of transgression, "the gods punished [him] with exemplary speed" by having him, ironically, "run over by a tramcar," (M/F, 198) not a very "speedy" vehicle. After his accident, he "decided to conduct a business of illegal import and exports" through association with the circus, a typical carnival space. As well as being involved in illegal activities, Fonanta became a "dabbler" in art and scholarly work, "music, literature, light philosophy. Art." (M/F, 199) He is one of the gangster-philosophers who appear in other Burgess novels, notably in *The Doctor is Sick*.

The other talking animals, Pardaleos and Loewe, are also carnivalesque double figures, hybrids in their own different ways. Loewe is introduced as "the lawman" by Miles, when he meets him early in the narrative. His "leonine hairiness" as well as his name prompts Miles to put together a riddle, "Behold the sheep form side by side; A

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[589] George Steiner, *My Unwritten Books* (New York: New Directions, 2008), 101.
[590] Burgess, "To the Reader," in *Sophocles Oedipus the King*, trans. and adapt. Anthony Burgess (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press in association with Guthrie Theatre Company, 1972), 6.

Teuton roarer of the pride." (M/F, 9) Burgess explains the riddle in "Oedipus Wrecks," "*Lo* means behold, *ewe* is a sheep, and in German *Loewe* is a lion."[591] Pardaleos (whose name means leopard)[592] is an animal and a god, "he was fair and pale, almost albinoid, and wore an exquisite suit of a glistening cranberry colour. He was of the gods, not demos." (M/F, 43) In his exquisite deportment and taste for decadent pleasures, he resembles Aristotle Thanatos in *The Doctor is Sick* and Harry Wriothesley in *Nothing like the Sun*, both figures symbolic of decadent excess. Pardaleos and Loewe have a role to play in upholding the law; they must steer Miles away from the incest curse that has been hanging over the house of Faber since Z. Fonanta committed incest with his mother. They are under "orders" from Miles's father; they are "in loco parentis." (M/F, 25) At the same time, both appear to take great delight in tempting Miles towards incest by "arousing" his desire; in this way, they also become agents of disruption, demonic creatures, like the Sphinx in the Theban legend. [593]

Loewe, smiling with "horrible saccharinity" tempts Miles with a puzzle "torn from some newspaper or other," (M/F, 14) a random movement which causes rebellious Miles, who loves all that is random and useless (like a piece of discarded paper), to become sexually aroused, "I now throbbed from prepuce to anus." (M/F, 14) The answer to the puzzle, "Up, I am a rolling river; down, a scent-and-colour giver," which Miles knows immediately is "flower." Miles muses on "the *up* and *down*" of the clue, which refer to "the tongue-positions that started off the diphthongs off *flow* and *flower*." (14) His

[591] Burgess, "Oedipus Wrecks," 166. We could say that, in answering the riddles, Burgess is engaging in the transgression of order that his novel condemns.
[592] Ibid.
[593] According to Greek myth, the Sphinx originated from the same race as Cerberus, the hound of Hades, and a host of other monsters like Chimaera, the Harpies and the Sirens. Morford and Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, 97.

description articulates the sounds of the words, the "flow" of language. Miles does not give the answer to the riddle—he does not know why, but a strong "throb," this time signalling a warning, tells him not to, "Loewe was being, for some reason, deceitful." (M/F, 14) To answer the riddle would also mean to fix it into a meaning which stops the "flow" and silences its music, something that the riddle, with its playfulness, conveys. Loewe's duplicity is signalled in the text by the "horrible saccharinity" of his smile. Saccharinity is part of a symbolic network which associates incest with lavish foods and physical decay, and sugar is one of the main symbols in this network.[594] Miles's sister, also incestuous, is addicted to sugar. Z. Fonanta is also known as the "jelyf scholar," a pun on "jelly."[595] But Loewe's reaction is ambiguous; when Miles refuses to answer, he seems "pleased." Order has been maintained, after all.

Pardaleos uses food to suggest a connection between incest, the theme of his conversation with Miles, and excess. The setting is the Savarin hotel. The name Savarin is part of the associative network "incest and sugar consumption"—a "savarin" is also the name of a cake soaked in syrup. The food that Pardaleos orders for breakfast is rich, though not excessive; however, something in the combination of different elements suggests "excess," "trout kedgeree with chilli sauce, cold turkey pie, Virginia ham very thick with a brace of poached eggs, a chilled strawberry soufflé." (M/F, 44) From a

[594] The association between excess, decay and sugar appears in Roland Barthes's 1961 essay "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption." In this essay Barthes explores "food" as a signifying system with important cultural implications. See *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2008), 28–36. It is quite likely that Burgess was acquainted with this essay by Barthes, although the only evidence I have found is only suggestive of this possibility. In "The Language of Food," an essay collected in *Homage to Qwertyuiop*, Burgess remarks on how "the linguistics philosophers of France, especially the late Roland Barthes, have been aware of how the French cuisine relates to French couture, and how the two relate to structuralist philosophy." *Homage to Qwertyuiop*, 202. A semiotic analysis of *M/F* reveals that food works in the text very much in the way that Barthes discusses in his essay, suggesting an intertextual relationship between the two texts, to add to the existing and foregrounded intertextual relationship with Lévi-Strauss.

[595] This pun is examined in more depth later in this chapter.

structuralist perspective, the breakfast plate brings together elements which should remain separate: hot and cold, sweet and salty. It is unstructured. There is also too much meat—an excess of "flesh," though it is processed (pie, ham). The food transgresses culturally-imposed limits, and, thus, becomes a signifier of incest. Pardaleos's aim is to induce "primal revulsion" in Miles, and he does so by creating a "primal scene" in the psychoanalytic sense—an incestuous scene between a boy and his mother, and the same boy and his sister.[596] Miles imagines the scene that Pardaleos has "bidden [him] see" played out in a surrealistic mode in "a red room crammed to the limit with chairs and a sort of fiery paraclete dancing." (M/F, 45) In it, a faceless mother and her "bony" and "overeager" son engage in "urgent" sex. Framing this scene is Pardaleos calmly eating his way through a lavish breakfast of "trout kedgeree with chilli sauce." (M/F, 45)

Miles shows his disregard for the moral implications of the incestuous scene by giving it a title, a shocking "SON FUCKS MOTHER." His "primal sense" is not "revolted" at this point. But when Pardaleos reveals the "unspeakable"—Miles's incestuous family history—the food on his plate undergoes a metamorphosis into grotesque shapes which suggest the beginning of Miles's subjective collapse:

> The ham, dead flesh, arrived, along with the blind staring eyes of the poached eggs. I tried to read the plateful like a cryptic message from the underworld. I borrowed the stare. The sickness of my body seemed to be gathering its parts together to sing a diabolic motet to a Father Giver of All Things. I tried to speak. (M/F, 47)

Miles is reacting in the expected way: he is horrified, and physically nauseated by the revelation. In Burgess's texts, as we have seen, nausea is associated with semiotic excess and subjective collapse. Miles has lost the ability to speak. At the same time, however,

[596] In a way, the scene is reminiscent of Alex's Ludovico treatment in *A Clockwork Orange*.

Miles is also forcing himself to decode the "cryptic" message, to fix the unfixable. His reaction, to "sing a diabolic motet" to his father (the "giver" of the curse on his family, and the maker of the Law) is a sign of rebellion against the fixity of his imposed order, and a call for multiplicity; a "motet" is a polyphonic choral composition.[597] The "diabolic motet" is also a profanation of the sacred (as well as a rebellious act against the father), as the traditional motet was a religious composition which was sung during Catholic services.[598]

There is still more carnivalesque ambivalence in this passage, and in the whole breakfast scene. The "blind" eyes are a reference to Oedipus, who pulls his own eyes out as a punishment for his transgression. Despite the sense of horror conveyed by the blindness and the sickness, there is also something quite comical about the idea of a plate of ham and eggs as a "cryptic message." The incestuous scenes that Miles imagines which such detail are triggered off by the image of the waiter trying to open a bottle of champagne. The "easing-off" of the champagne cork suggests sexual arousal (of the boy in the incestuous scene). Miles finds the association amusing, "The cork shot, and the waiter gave the fuming overflow to my flute. I couldn't help grinning. I said: premature ejaculation." (M/F, 45) The word "flute" has both sexual and musical connotations: the "overflow" suggests, once again, the flow of language. The comicality of the scene is emphasized by the contrast with Pardaleos's solemn tone when he reminds Miles of the "magnitude, subtlety and horror of life's hidden engines." (M/F, 48) The serious and the irreverent intermingle; boundaries are transgressed, culminating in a parody of the Eucharist, as Miles imagines that he has eaten his father: "I felt as though I'd eaten my

[597] *The Oxford Companion to Music*, ed. Alison Latham, 802.
[598] Ibid.

father, a vast coffined ham with poached eggs for eyes, his brain a soufflé, his fingernails alive and pricking." (M/F, 49) We see here the power of carnivalesque ambivalence to transgress all structures of order and challenge "God, authority and social law."

We see this carnivalesque challenge to authority in the ambiguous religious procession which Miles witnesses upon his arrival on the island of Castita, a celebration which transgresses the boundaries between the "sacred" and the "profane." Like the town of La Linea in *A Vision of Battlements*, Castita (which means "chastity") operates as a "borderland" space, a crossroads of cultures and religions, signified by the "great mosque—cathedral" on the main square, Fortescue Square, named after a British governor from the old "raj or *rigija*." (M/F, 63) The name of the island is ironic; it is the place where Miles is destined to commit incest with his sister, according to the family curse. The procession is part of the Festival of Senta Euphorbia, a parody of Catholic festivals and official celebrations, as Brian McHale notes.[599] The religious image carried through is that of Senta Euphorbia "eight feet high, in meticulously carved soft wood." (M/F, 62)

Although the text signals the move from sacred to profane at the end of the procession (by the appearance of a clown) we can see that, from the start, the whole scene is marked by carnivalesque ambivalence. The procession has the solemnity which characterizes traditional Catholic celebrations: the image is carried by "four men in claret habits with hoods, " followed by "priests in surplices," children "in a kind of scout costume" and women weeping "for the saint's agony or for the sweet innocence of the children," all accompanied by a "slow trite march with sentimental harmonies." (M/F, 62) The

[599] Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987), 173.

solemnity of the ritual contrasts with the image of the saint, a paradoxical combination of symbolism and realistic detail that borders on the grotesque: "Eyelashes of blackened hog-bristle were glued to her wooden eyelids, and I could see the pink swell of a tongue in the mouth that was half open in her last pain and first glimpse of the ultimate." (M/F, 62) The "swell" of the tongue makes explicit the sexual connotations which are implicit in images of martyred saints, and in the mystical experience, which is emphasized by the "the great phallic spike of her martyrdom," not openly displayed on the body but suggested (it is "decently hidden") and by the saint's name "Euphorbia," very close in sound to "euphoria."

The procession is accompanied by a chant in the language of Castita, a carnivalesque transformation/parody of the traditional Litany of the Saints. The litany operates in the way in which Kristeva describes carnivalesque language, language that parodies and "relativizes itself" but at the same time "remains incapable of detaching itself from representation." The litany goes:

Senta Euphorbia
Vijula vijulata
Ruza inspijnata
Pir spijna puwntata
Ura pir nuij. (63)

Despite the apparent incomprehensibility of the language, there are some familiar elements which suggest that this is a prayer. The tone of the litany is suggested by the repetition of the ending "-ata" in the three lines, and by the combination of two-word and three-word lines; the last line, furthermore, is reminiscent of "ora pro nobis," which accompanies every invocation made by the priest during the litany. Those familiar with Latin or Romance languages can identify the words "spine" or thorn (L. *spina*) in

"spijna" and "point" in "puwntata," (L. Past participle *punctus* of *pungo* "prick, puncture, mortify" [Lewis]) All these words—point, spine, stab—suggest fixity: the fixing of signifier and signified into one single meaning (representation), which, at the same time, is subverted (resisted, almost) by the playful use of the consonants to separate and fragment the words—suggesting almost that the language is being subjected to the same violence inflicted on the martyred saint.[600] As we have seen already, the word "violence," in Burgess's texts, can signify the fundamental ambiguity and plurality of language (and literary language in particular)—the existence of opposing elements in continuous and productive dialogue. Burgess's description of Castitan in "Oedipus Wrecks," emphasizes the conflicting productivity and expressivity of the literary word: "It is a [fictional] Romance language in which the original vowels have been raised to the limit [and] are trying to break out of their vocalic bounds to become consonants."[601]

This image of language attempting to "break out" of the "bounds" imposed by its phonemic system echoes Kristeva's description of the carnivalesque as a discourse that "breaks through the laws of language censored by grammar and semantics," and also works as a form of "social and political protest."[602] In this passage, the social and political elements are suggested, briefly, by the reference to the history of the island as a colony of one empire after another: first the "nameless" settlers who had enslaved the original population; then the Christians, followed by the Muslims, and, finally, the British "raj or rigija," (M/F, 63) There is a sense of "conflict and confluence " (to use Burgess's own phrase), rather than active protest, in the account of Castita's history. Confluence is

[600] Conversely, the "violence of language—on language" could be interpreted in the opposite way: the violence which fixed meaning inflicts on the innate multiplicity and plurality of the linguistic sign, suggested by the stake which "fixes" Senta Euphorbia to the scene of her martyrdom.
[601] "Oedipus Wrecks," 170.
[602] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 65.

suggested by the image of the Dwumu or mosque cathedral" at the centre of Fortescue Square, named after the last British governor. (M/F, 63) It is at Fortescue Square that the procession, to Miles's "surprises," "turns[s] brusquely secular," becoming a full-fledged carnival. The transformation is signalled in musical terms in the text, which develops into a long parade of carnivalesque floats, a celebration of the variety and divergent plurality of Castitan "culture":

> The enharmonic chord or chordee that was responsible for the modulation was a huge wooden phallic spike, painted red seeming to ooze from its crown like the jam of a caramel cream, and this was held in the arms of a Punch-like clown who leered from left to right as he shambled along in his clumsy boots. Behind him came floats with young people's tableaux—The Jazz Age (Eton crops, Oxford bags, Nöel Coward cigarette-holders, a horned gramophone), Prison Reform (lags drinking champagne with silkstockinged wardresses on their knees), Castitan Agriculture (a papier-mâchè cornucopia spilling bananas, pomelos, pineapples, corncobs and jackfruit, with plumplimbed girls striking poses in the scanty garments of Ceres), The Fruits of our Seas (Neptune and court with a huge nettle catch, including a still-writhing octopus), Silent Movie Days (megaphoned director in knickerbockers, camera cranking, Valentino, Chaplin, etc.), God Bless his Excellency (blownup photograph of a fat handsome face with clever but insincere eyes, garnished with flags and saluting Ruritarian children). Then came a circus band ripping off a redhot march with glissading trombones. (M/F, 64)

The overall ambiance of the scene is not of disorder, but of ordered, if manifold, "confluence" of diverse elements. Each "tableaux" is given a title or label, followed by a descriptive list in parentheses. The passage "flows," like the parade. Some of the descriptions lack commas, which accentuates the sense of linguistic fluidity, emphasized by the appearance of Joycean compound words ("silkstockinged, plumplimbed") alongside present participles suggesting continuous movement ("lags drinking," "cornucopia spilling," "striking poses," "still-writhing," "saluting children"), all accompanied by the "glissading trombones." The sense of confluence is emphasized by Miles's observation that "this did not clash with the solemnity of the earlier march,"

suggesting the "seamless" blending of the sacred and the profane. This sense of order, however, is irreverently challenged by the image of the "Punch-like clown" carrying the "wooden phallic spike," and referred to in the text as an "enharmonic chord or chordee." In musical terms, "enharmonic" describes "a difference in pitch."[603] "Chordee" is also an old medical term for "a painful inflammatory downward curving of the penis." [OED] This "enharmonic" "phallic spike" is a mocking parody of the "phallic spike" of Senta Euphorbia's "martyrdom," and an irreverent pun. It marks an "abrupt transition" from the gravity of the celebration up to that point.

Scandalous language, abrupt transitions, and everything that is other and "eccentric," (outside the norm) are characteristic of the carnivalesque, as already noted above. In linguistic terms, "scandalous" refers both to language that is inappropriate, "defamatory" and also "irrelevant," [OED] that is, not meaningful (in a relevant way; ineffectual), and therefore meaningless or "insignificant," in Fonanta's sense. Lèvi-Strauss himself uses the term "scandal" to refer to cultural practices and behaviours which resist categorization in oppositional terms because they "combine ... the conflicting features of two mutually-exclusive orders."[604] It seems that the term "scandalous" encompasses also some of the features associated with poetic language. As Kristeva notes, carnivalesque scandalous, irrelevant or "inconsequent statements become "connected" within another logic, the logic of non-exclusive opposition, and thus become "meaningful." We can

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[603] *The Oxford Companion to Music*, 425.

[604] Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship,* 8. The prohibition of incest, in fact, is one of these "scandals," as "it constitutes a rule, but a rule which alone among all social rules, possesses at the same time a universal character." 8–9. Derrida takes on and develops Lévi-Strauss's notion of the "scandal" or self-contradictory "rule" in his critique of the discourse of Structuralism in his seminal essay "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," (1966) *A Postmodern Reader*, ed. Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 223–43. It could be argued that Burgess's novel engages in a similar critique of the concept of "structure." An examination of this issue, however, would require a separate chapter.

describe *M/F's* discourse as "scandalous" in this sense." As Brian McHale remarks, *M/F* opens with the "classic carnival *topos* of scandal," Miles's "shameless public copulation" (M/F, 9) on the steps of a college library.[605] For Miles, the act is a form of political protest and a violation of appropriate social behaviour; at the same time, and within the novel's ambivalent structure, it is also appropriate to his incestuous "nature." Loewe's judgement of Miles's act is equally playful and ambiguous, "Thrown out of college for a shameful, shameless..." (M/F, 10) Despite their opposite forms (based on the opposing suffixes "-ful" and "-less") the two adjectives are employed indistinguishably: the original difference marking them has been erased—they are a 'scandal." In the context of the novel's incest theme, Miles's act is "shameful" because it contravenes social rules regarding sexual intercourse outside the family; it is also "shameless" because Miles, as a product of incest himself is a creature of nature and in nature there is no "shame." The pair shameful/shameless, therefore, is both oppositional in form but equal in sense, an example of the plurality and ambivalence of language beyond structuralist impositions.

In its articulation of the multiple and contradictory operations of the linguistic sign, *M/F* offers a vision of language as always operating beyond oppositions and in excess of meaning—"scandalous" to the structuralist. Miles is obsessed with the irrelevant: "the useless, unviable [and] unclassifiable." (M/F, 10) But Miles seeks some sense of meaning in "the formless," a meaning which is not based on taxonomies and "the evil of divisions." (M/F, 10) In the works of *Sib Legeru,* Miles is hoping to find a way to "make inconsequentiality yield significance." (M/F, 53) In *M/F*'s carnivalesque text, the scandalous, the irrelevant and the apparently inconsequential become relevant and

[605] McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*, 173.

meaningful when operating within a symbolic network. But this is a plural and unfinalized "meaning" released through the unlimited play of the text. One of the novel's "meaningful" symbolic networks is built around the word "jelly," which, as we saw earlier, works as a signifier of incest in the text, through its association with sugar and decay. This connection is established during Miles's first encounter with Z. Fonanta at an "eathouse on the Avenue of the Americas," after his "shameless-shameful" act of protest early on in the narrative. Miles's breakfast plate combines "ham fat" and "strawberry jelly," a mix of sweet and savoury which Miles interprets as "a vestigial something or other." (M/F, 21) In "Oedipus Wrecks" Burgess remarks that "synchronic sweet and savoury" are "inadmissible" to "the structuralists"[606]—a hint at the implied critique of structuralism in that scene.

The association with incest is reinforced by other textual signs. Miles has a "saccharine-tasting" drink called "Coho-Coho" from an "owl-shaped" cup; "coho-coho" means "owl" in Algonquin and owls appear in Amerindian incest myths, asking riddles under pain of death.[607] There is yet another, very playful signifier of incest in this section: the word "incest" appears as an acrostic in the breakfast menu at the "the next morning, "Indiana (or Illinois) nutbake; Chuffled eggs; Saffron toast," (M/F, 20) followed by another acrostic reading "mother": "Michigan (or Missouri) oyster-stew; tenderloin; hash, egg; ribs." (M/F, 22)[608] The reference to the "mother" opens up an intertextual dialogue with *Oedipus*, suggested further by the word "royal-jellyites," which Miles uses to refer to the people who advertise Royal Jelly on "those offpeak television shows that give the

[606] Burgess, "Oedipus Wrecks," 176.
[607] All these explanations appear in "Oedipus Wrecks," 168.
[608] Burgess calls attention to these two obscure acrostics in "Oedipus Wrecks," 168.

eccentric their brief say." (M/F, 22) "Royal" suggests Oedipus the King, while "jellyites" becomes associated with Oedipus's act of self-punishment by gouging out his eyes through a connection with the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear*, and specifically Cornwall's (the perpetrator) words "Out, vile jelly!" (*King Lear*, III. vi) [609] Modern media and classical tragedy merge, incongruously, in the word "royal-jellyites." Old and new also merge in the playful "Jelyf," a pun on "jelly" (as noted above) and also both an Early Middle English word for penis and a brand of "sweet" or dessert, "Jellif, canned peaches with whipped cream on top." (M/F, 119)

"Jelyf" is part of a riddle which Z. Fonanta poses to Miles during his performance in a Castitan bar as "Mr Memory Junior." The riddle itself is a fragment from a fifteenth-century seduction carol in which a chapman presents a riddle to a woman whom he wants to seduce:[610]

I have a jelyf of godes sonde,
Withouten fyt it can stoned,
It can smytyn and hath no honed
Ryde yourself quat it may *be*. (M/F, 70)

According to scholar Martha Bayless, the chapman is "ostensibly alluding to the joys of sex" when he refers to his body (or a part of his body, suggested by the obscure word "jelyf"), while the playful riddling articulates the joy of language in the "discovery of meaning [which] like that of the body is more satisfying if the object of desire is veiled."[611] At the same time, the riddle establishes a close connection between "meaning"

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[609] *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1281.
[610] The manuscript, edited by Thomas Wright, is kept at the British Museum. There is an electronic version, http://www.archive.org/stream/songsandcarolsf00musegoog/songsandcarolsf00musegoog_djvu.txt. The carol is also collected in R. L. Greene, *The Early English Carols* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977)
[611] Martha Byless, "The Text and the Body in Middle English Seduction Lyrics," *Neophilologus*, 93 (2009):166.

and the "phallus," the signifier of the Symbolic order. This connection is emphasized by the fact that Z. Fonanta is also known in the narrative as the "jelyf man" and "zoon phonanta," the talking animal and the creator of the system of language. In this context, Miles's refusal to give the answer to the riddle (he claims that it is "too obscene") can be interpreted as the text's refusal to fix itself into a single, final and authoritative meaning, and an expression of the unlimited joy of poetic play, articulated in the playful intertextuality generated by the punning between "jelly" and "jelyf." There is a meaning in the text; this meaning, however, is not fixed but plural and changeable. It is "incestuous," not (solely) in Fonanta's sense (as the collapse of meaning and order) but in Kristeva's sense, "incest as destroyer and generator of any language and sociality,"[612] or in Miles's words, as "stability and also disruption." (M/F, 183)

We have already examined the relationship between incest and poetic language in *Inside Mr Enderby*, and the problematic relationship that Burgess's characters have with the feminine and the maternal, always conceived as destructive/productive forces. In *M/F* we find the same connection between the material-semiotic elements of language (sound, graphic trace) and the feminine-maternal. Z. Fonanta, the representative of symbolic order, is also, as we have seen, a transgressor of order—he committed incest with his mother. Fonanta is also *Sib Legeru*, and his artistic works are an expression of the excess of the semiotic taken to the limit of "insignification": musical compositions which cannot be played (like Ennis's *Passacaglia*) or which disintegrate in dissonance, "You can't have five crochets in a bar when the time signature is three-four" (M/F, 195); grotesque Surrealist paintings displaying metamorphosing limbs, "a naked thigh strove to become a

[612] Kristeva, "From One Identity to and Other," 137.

glass jar in a coruscation of noisy firework colour that settled in to the delicate pink, green and white of the segment of the human arm" (M/F, 131); a "meaningless" poem made with random words "London Figaro infra pound/threejoint dackdiddy Solomon"; (M/F, 132) and, finally, a composition entitled *Olfact Number One*, a combination of different substances, "old meat, cheese, fragments of dogmerd" inside a box. (M/F, 202) Although the above can also be interpreted as a satire on the Avant-Garde, as Aggeler argues,[613] the style of the writing conveys, to an extent, the sense of movement, the fluidity and also the materiality of language, even if it does so in a parodic way.

In *M/F*, as in *Inside Mr Enderby*, the maternal is a disruptive force threatening the subject's stability. This disruptive maternal power is embodied in the figure of Aderyn the Bird Queen, the Mistress of the Owls in the Algonquin incest legend and the mother of Miles's "double" Llew. Echoing *Inside Mr Enderby*, the "birds" in Aderyn's performance signify the disruptive power of the feminine and the material, semiotic elements of language, which threaten the subject's integrity and the integrity of the linguistic sign. *M/F*, however, does not focus as much on the maternal body, or the grotesque female body, exploring instead the playful symbolism of the word "bird." As Kermode notes, Aderyn is a transformation of the Welsh for bird, "averyn."[614] When she first appears as part of Senta Euphorbia's procession, Aderyn is surrounded by "fluttering birds, mynahs, parakeets, starlings, all chattering or screaming human language—fracted words drowned in band noise." (M/F, 164) The birds' "noise" is an articulation of the semiotic, material and poetic force of language, or the "magic" of language; "a speaking

[613] Geoffey Aggeler interprets these "works of art" as irreverent parodies of the Avant-Garde, expressing Burgess's dislike of experimental art. "Incest and the Artist: *MF*, 181. We find a similar attempt to satirize Avant-Garde style in *Inside Mr Enderby*, in the kitchen scene.
[614] Kermode, *Essays on Fiction: 1971–1982*, 77.

bird," Miles observes, "is a kind of enchanted man," like a shaman or a poet. There is also an element of playful irreverence in the phrase "speaking bird"—a woman who speaks and who has the power of speech, like Aderyn: "I was given the great *anrheg* of power over living things, meaning birds. Birds, girl." (M/F, 160) Aderyn has the "gift" (*anrheg*)[615] of bestowing language to animals, thus transgressing the boundary between culture and nature—the same boundary transgressed by Z. Fonanta and the other "talking animals" in *M/F*.

The suggestion that Aderyn may harbour incestuous desires towards her son Llew makes her character doubly transgressive. Like Enderby, Llew is threatened by the maternal body, "She comes to kiss me goodnight, me, at my age, man, and she stinks of all those birds." (M/F, 100) Aderyn's forbidden desire is playfully signified by an inflammation in one of her eyes, "One of her eyes was red and sore," (M/F, 151) which establishes a connection with the "jellies" in the "jelyf-jelly" symbolic network, and with Oedipus; at the end of the novel, after forcing Miles to answer a riddle (the equivalent of the act of incest) Aderyn is attacked by her own hawks. Also, Aderyn's transgressive desire is articulated in her speech, "Welsh tinged by American" (M/F, 150) and also American punctuated with Welsh words, suggesting the multiplicity and plurality of the semiotic over the fixity of the symbolic.

One of her first exchanges with Miles (who is posing as Llew) articulates the flow of language:

> [Llew's] mother said:

[615] *Geiriadur*. Welsh-English and English-Welsh Online Dictionary. http://www.geiriadur.net/index.php?page=ateb&term=anrheg&direction=we&type=all&whichpart=exact. (accessed 7 February 2011).

> Nothing about the sea? Giorgio said the sea came into it.
> How pure that vowel in *sea* was. I said:
> -Something about the sea, yes. It wasn't all that good, mam. (M/F, 150)

The sea is always a signifier of language and the feminine in Burgess's texts. Here, at the same time, we there is a playful exchange between "sea" and the Spanish and Italian words for "yes," "si," whose open vowel resembles the Welsh sounding of /ea/. The word "yes," at the same time, triggers an intertextual connection with Molly Bloom's monologue in *Ulysses*, where "yes," interspersed through the text, articulates Molly's "erotic and linguistic *jouissance*," as Noëlle McAfee remarks.[616] What is significant in this passage is that it is Miles who utters the word "yes," articulating his desire, a desire connected with Aderyn, and also with the circus, "a horrible ... grossly exciting place, warm with animals." (M/F, 95) Both Aderyn and Llew are part of Fonanta's circus, the second significant carnivalesque space in Castita, along with Fortescue Square (it could be argued that the island Castita *is* the novel's carnivalesque scene).

The circus, according to Bakhtin, is the representative of the ancient carnival square, a space of "communal performance" and "free and familiar contact."[617] The circus also operates as a threshold site or ambivalent space where order and transgression co-exist. Fonanta's circus (like Fonanta himself) is a place of subversion of established notions of order: its master of ceremonies is a Catholic priest-turned-clown called Father Costello-Pongo. It is also the place of the incongruous and the scandalous, where clowns "argue metaphysics" in "their tomato noses" (M/F, 174) and "the lady of the seals" speaks "in debased Sophocles." (M/F, 174)

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[616] Noëlle McAfee, *Julia Kristeva* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 16.
[617] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 125.

In *M/F* the circus operates as the space where the notion of a single and unified identity, both subjective and linguistic, is challenged and transgressed, and where the hierarchical distinction self/other becomes blurred, as we see in the ambivalent carnivalesque figure of Father Costello-Pongo the clown. We could say that the circus is the space where subjectivity is put in process or on trial. As Kristeva argues, in the carnival space the subject or "participant" is both actor and spectator, "subject of the spectacle and object of the game."[618] The carnival split subject "sees itself created as self and other, as man and mask."[619] In *M/F* Miles is *literally* split between "self" (Miles) and "other"—Llew, Miles's physical "double" and also his uncanny "other"—his "extrapolated id" (M/F, 192), a threat to Miles's symbolic identity, "a counterfeit of [his] self." (M/F, 90) Llew is described in the text as a simulacrum, "a clockwork model" of Miles (M/F, 92), "I myself ... changed to not-me" (M/F, 93)

At the same time, however, Miles is "fascinated" by his double, and begins to question whether he may not be Llew's "other," "Had I whistled this wraith into being ... Or was I *his* wraith?" (M/F, 103) Part of the fascination lies in Llew's colloquial and vulgar speech, which contrasts with Miles's correct English. While Miles's voice is "a standard machine for communication," Llew's appears to him as "the key to the ... total variousness of life," (M/F, 91) a musical blend of American and Welsh phonemes. In its use of colloquialisms, vulgar expressions and profanities, at the same time, Llew's language is specifically carnivalesque and an expression of the disruptive forces of the semiotic.

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[618] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," 78.
[619] Ibid.

As Kristeva remarks, carnivalesque language is "fascinated" with "the notion of the double" and with the "logic of opposition replacing that of identity in defining terms."[620] Like poetic language, carnivalesque language is also double, "one and other"; the carnivalesque word calls attention to "its own activity as graphic *trace*" (signifier) and as "doubling an "outside" (signified).[621] Thus, the carnivalesque text becomes an exploration "of language and writing" and an articulation of "defiant linguistic productivity."[622] We have already seen an example of carnivalesque linguistic productivity in the pun "jelly-jelyf." The name "Llew" also offers an articulation of the double logic of poetic and carnivalesque discourses by drawing attention to its materiality as sound and as graphic trace. When Llew appears for the first time, Miles calls attention to the name's different phonetic values, "something like Clew or Tlew, a lot of foreign nonsense." (M/F, 85) Fonanta also describes him as "unnecessary" (M/F, 195); like the signifier or graphic trace, which in communicative and representational language is only the transparent window into the signified, the meaning. In *M/F*'s productive carnivalesque text, however, Llew is not "nonsense" or insignificant, but works as a "clue" in the novel's "incest-riddle" semiotic network, and as a signifier (a "clue") for the text's productivity and capacity to generate disparate meanings. Thus, Llew can be interpreted as a "clue" (clew) in the Welsh pronunciation of the "Ll,"[623] while in its graphic form the name resembles the adjective "lewd" ("common," "low"; "base"; "worthless" [OED]).

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[620] Ibid., 83.
[621] Ibid.
[622] Ibid., 71.
[623] In Welsh "Ll" stands for a voiceless lateral fricative sound. The IPA signifies this sound as l with belt ( ). According to this pronunciation, "Llew" would sound close to the "ch" of "loch." The International Phonetic Association, http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/IPA_chart_(C)2005.pdf (accessed 8 April 2010).

In its playful ambivalence, Llew operates as a linguistic signifier articulating "defiant linguistic productivity," and as Miles's "lewd" other. Llew's "lewdness" is expressed in his speech, which is scandalous and irreverent; all his sentences are strewn with obscene words, blasphemies and expletives. He calls himself "Llew the fucking free," (M/F, 103) reads only pornographic literature with titles like "*Giant Cock*," and listens to music groups with the names "*Shove Up*" and "*Stick and the Snatches*." (M/F, 92) Obscene language, according to Kristeva, is the "mark of a situation of desire where the identity of the signifying subject ... is exceeded by a conflict of instinctual drives."[624] In the obscene word "we decipher the relationship of the speaker to a desiring and desired mother."[625] So, in his over-use of obscene language, Llew articulates the incestuous desire that links him to his mother Aderyn, an overpowering desire from which he wants to liberate himself, "Birds, Birds ... A man can't live all his life as a fucking servant to birds," (M/F, 158) and which eventually, and ironically, leads him to his death.

Llew is the excess and the total freedom of expression which Miles is seeking, and which he fears and desires simultaneously, "Let me ... remove myself from the presence of this obscene abomination. But I delayed leaving, nodding, fascinated." (M/F, 93) Llew is an embodiment of all the riddles which Miles encounters in his journey and to which he is drawn but which he must not answer. When Llew dies, after attempting to rape Miles's sister (he is killed by her nanny, Miss Emmett), Miles has to impersonate his double in order to hide the crime from Aderyn. For Miles this should not be a difficult impersonation, as Jean E. Kennard notes, as Llew "shares Miles's philosophy of life" and

[624] Kristeva, 'From One Identity to Another,' 143
[625] Ibid., 144

calls himself "Llew the Free."[626] But Miles abhors Llew's obscene language, which he must employ to protect himself from Aderyn's rage, "for me it was monstrous that such speech should be a device of safety." (M/F, 159) When confronted with chaos, Miles seeks order, but this is an order always transgressed by disruptive desire.

We see this process at work when Miles begins to reflect on the existence of a higher power which gives meaning to the incongruous. Miles's reflections are focused on his innocence in Llew's death. What is interesting about this passage, however, is the way in which its language articulates the ambivalent "process" between symbolic and semiotic:

> In a mad way I was enjoying this. Despite the danger of innocence in a naughty world there is something comforting about the knowledge of one's innocence. It is the comfort of knowing that there must after all be a protective God (different from the cunning providence that was playing the destructive game); otherwise there would be no point in anybody being innocent. It is exhilarating to have an irrefutable proof, however discardable it may be later, that a good God exists. Vitally integral, pure of scelerities, no exigency of Moorish jacules. (M/F, 158)

At first, the focus of the passage appears to be on the act of "knowing" that God exists, that there is "irrefutable proof" that there is a higher force which brings order to the "destructive game" played by other, disruptive forces (a "cunning providence") beyond human control.[627] At the same time, however, we can see something illogical about the way in which the sentences are formed: Miles is convinced that total knowledge is possible even if that knowledge can, ultimately, be "discarded," and he finds this "certainty" (which is also a non-certainty, if it can be discarded later) enjoyable and "exhilarating." The passage is pervaded by a tone of confidence which is undermined by

[626] Kennard, "Anthony Burgess: Double Vision," 82.
[627] This passage could also be interpreted as an expression of Burgess's Manichean Dualism in its positing of two opposing, good/evil, divine forces sustaining the universe (or duoverse). However, the choice of a "good" God over an "evil" force would not be a reflection of Burgess's Manichean beliefs, which, according to Stinson, involve the co-existence of both opposing forces in continuous struggle. *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 22–23.

the use of adversative conjunctions—"despite," "however," "otherwise"—which suggest doubt and uncertainty. Although the passage appears clear and logical, the language and the structure seem to resist the logic of non-contradiction which is the mark of the symbolic, allowing for doubt and incongruity to emerge as a contradictory joy *and* fear over the lack of certainty and order in the universe. As the passage progresses, Miles reflections move from knowledge to expression (from knowing to being, symbolic to semiotic) and the last sentence, which is open ended, becomes fluid, less focused on the meaning of the words than on their sounds: "scelerities" (villainy [OED]), "Moorish," "jacules" (connected to "jaculate," to hurl or throw," [OED]and thus to "ejaculation").

Form a specific literary perspective, this passage can also be interpreted as a call for, but also a challenge of, the existence of an author in control of the work. Like *Nothing like the Sun*, *M/F* is concerned with the notions of authorship and authority from the very start; Burgess's "other" name, Wilson, is inscribed in the last of the three epigraphs before the narrative, taken from the First Folio of *Much Ado About Nothing*: "*Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio and Jacke Wilson.*"[628] There is another, obscure reference to Burgess at the end of the first chapter. Miles has a premonitory dream featuring an Indian sorceress and gyrating owls, and wakes up to notice that his watch stopped at 19.17 (M/F, 19) — the year of the birth of John (or Jack) Wilson, as Burgess notes.[629] It becomes apparent that Burgess is playing with the notion of authority when he calls attention to the appearance of the initials of his name, A and B, in musical notation on the novel's title page, " Beginning a scale and beginning an alphabet, it is meant to stand for a structure which is not quite a structure. For neither a scale nor an alphabet is a *significant* structure,

[628] Burgess himself alerts the reader to this personal "riddle" in "Oedipus Wrecks," 165.
[629] Ibid., 167.

it is merely the code out of which significant structures are made."[630] His authorial inscription, his signature as it were, is simply a code—in itself meaningless. In *Nothing like the Sun* we see the author transformed (by and in writing) into a plurality of voices and texts; *M/F* explores the disappearance of the author—what Barthes calls the "death of the Author"—as the origin the meaning of the work, and the emergence of the text or intertext as a "multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash."[631] As Kristeva argues, the work of intertextuality in language and with the subject "constitute[s] a de facto claim against the constraints of the traditional ideology of meaning and originality."[632]

The challenge to the traditional notion of authorship is, at the same time, marked in *M/F*'s text by a sense of anxiety over the loss of certainty and originality associated with "the Author." We could say that *M/F*, in carnivalesque fashion, celebrates the disappearance of the author while at the same time mourning its demise ("its" because I am referring to the concept of the author). We can see this ambivalent dynamic at work in Aderyn's bird performance in the circus. Out of all the various and variegated performances, there is one which stands out as an articulation, and also a parody, of the process of intertextuality in the literary text: Aderyn's performance is a parody of a game show (echoes of *The Doctor is Sick)* in which "literary" birds show off their talking skills by performing a "sort of ornianthology of familiar quotations." (M/F, 99) The passage, first of all, brings together, in typical carnivalesque fashion, the human and animal worlds

[630] Ibid., 165.
[631] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, 146.
[632]Kristeva, *Sémanalyse,* 334, quoted in Barthes, "Theory of the Text," 41.

in the same way that the riddling sphinx in the Oedipus myth operates as a symbol of transgression, by creating the incestuous union of nature and culture.

The connection with the Algonquin and the Oedipal incest legends is also apparent in the punishment meted out to those who fail to answer the riddles correctly: the birds, like the owls in the Algonquin myth, "peck [their] fucking jellies out," as Llew plainly puts it. (M/F, 99) The punishment is also appropriate to the riddles being asked: they are quotations (textual fragments) from canonical works by Shakespeare, Blake and Auden, along with a popular and irreverent Victorian children's song, all of them re-played as the birds' discussion in Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls*, a text which is also echoed in *Inside Mr Enderby*'s chorus of seagulls. And so, a starling "in Hamlet black appropriately" recites "*To be or not to be that is the kwaaaark question,*" while a mynah follows with Auden's line "*We must love one another or die*" and one of Blake's *Auguries of Innocence*, "*A robin redbreast in a cage/ Puts all heaven in a hahahahahahahahaha rage*." (M/F, 99) These are followed by two lines from an irreverent Victorian children's song, "*Oh mummy dear what is that stuff that looks like strawberry jam? ... Hush hush my child it's only dad run over by a tram.*" These two lines gain further significance within the context of the novel's incest plot: Z. Fonanta was run over by a car for committing incest, and "jam" is part of the sugar-incest semiotic network (which includes the "jelly-jelyf" pun also).

The birds, furthermore, are playfully named after twentieth-century English and American novelists, male and female (so "bird" partly loses its specific gender connotations), all of whom were reviewed by Burgess as some point in his career as a literary critic. "Iris" could be Iris Murdoch; "Angus," "Muriel" "Saul" and "Ivy" could be

interpreted as Angus Wilson, Muriel Spark, Saul Bellow and Ivy Compton-Burnett; and "Anthony" could be Anthony Burgess himself, as Kermode suggests.[633] As in *Nothing like the Sun*, Burgess's name is inscribed in the text, this time amongst the names of contemporary writers, but the context is different. Although the passage can be read as an articulation of the polyphony and intertextuality of the literary text and a celebration of linguistic and generic plurality (the mixing of Victorian song and canonical Shakespeare), there is also a sense of anxiety or unease expressed in the ambivalent carnivalesque laughter irrupting through Blake's line—unease about the very plurality which the passage celebrates. We suddenly see the process of writing as a repetition or parroting of past texts, without a point of origin, and the voices as ghostly echoes from dead authors, the writer's "precursors," in Harold Bloom's terms.[634] We can see how this passage articulates the sense of elation and freedom but also the fear over the disappearance of the authoritative voice in the literary text.

One of the most persistent ghostly echoes in this passage comes, not unexpectedly, from Joyce's texts. As we have already seen, Joyce is the absent-presence that haunts Burgess's writing; their dialogical encounters are always marked by ambivalence. In this passage, the dialogue is triggered off by the starling—Hamlet's line (*Hamlet* is a text about ghosts and dead fathers): "*To be or not to be that is the kwaaaark question.*" The iconic trope "*kwaaaark*" imitates the sound of the bird and at the same time calls echoes

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[633] Frank Kermode playfully hazards a guess in his review of the novel, "This is a list of Burgess birds. Who is Anthony? As the sequel may show, this is a question you should try not to answer." Frank Kermode, "*M/F*," *Anthony Burgess Newsletter* 3 (2000) http://bu.univ-angers.fr/EXTRANET/AnthonyBURGESS/NL3mf.htm (accessed 21 November 2009) Kermode also interprets the names as Burgess's "private joke" on a passage in Edmund Leach's book on Lévi-Strauss "which attacks the French Anthropologist for being very un- English about the naming of animals." *Essays on Fiction: 1971–1982*, 80.

[634] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 14.

the sound of Bloom's imaginary gramophone in the "Hades" episode of *Ulysses*. In this episode, Bloom walks through a cemetery musing on how the memory of the dead could be preserved by placing a gramophone by their graveside or in the house, which would record the ghostly sounds and replay them afterwards, "Put on poor old greatgrandfather Kraahaark! Hellohellohello amawfullyglad kraark awfullygladseeragain ..."[635] In Burgess's text, "*kwaaaark*" is a variation on the sound of the gramophone "Kraahaark," which in turn triggers off a connection with Bloom's thoughts on the dead and memory. At the same time that it draws attention to the sound of the voice as guarantee of presence (of the living self), the intrusion of the bird's sound in the delivery of Shakespeare's line acts as a reminder that the bird, like the gramophone, is only a machine, an automaton. The text itself, if reduced to a "parroting" of old quotations, becomes a metaphor for a cemetery; or perhaps a corpse, awaiting its "wake."

The intertextual process triggered by the iconic trope continues from *Ulysess*, through the image of the "wake" and the idea of the text as the place where the dead are "awakened" and speak again, to *Finnegans Wake*, the text where according to Burgess, Joyce moves from "waking literature" to "dream literature."[636] The link is strengthened by direct reference in Burgess's text; as Miles and Llew walk outside the tent at the end of the performance they notice a "parakeet doing something it was charitable to think of as coming from *Finnegans Wake*." (M/F, 100) Joyce's text here becomes a signifier for the "incomprehensible" and even the "unspeakable"—what cannot be expressed or understood within traditional logical parameters, but which makes sense within another

[635] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 109.
[636] Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody*, 267.

logic, the "irrational" logic of the dream. For Burgess, *Finnegans Wake* is the ultimate example of "oneiric" literature, as he remarks in *Joysprick*:

> Joyce, having exhausted the potential of waking English in *Ulysses*, was compelled, in his next book, to "put the language to sleep." Freed by sleep of the rigidities of daytime modes of interpreting time and space, language becomes fluid. Opening itself up to the incursions of images from man's collective unconscious, it is also willing to be fertilised by many of the other languages of the world.[637]

Although the notion of intertextuality was not available to Burgess at the time, we can detect in this passage an implicit understanding of the diversity and plurality of language, as well as a sense of the literary text as "productivity" in Kristeva's sense, suggested in this passage by the participle "fertilised." Joyce's text is productive, transformative and open. *M/F*'s text is also transformative: onomatopoeic effects break up the quotations; "*kwaaaark*" is itself a transformation of Joyce's text, not a repetition; and the line "dad run over by a tram" suggest the death of the "Author," the paternal symbolic and its repressive order.

At the same time, as Burgess notes, Joyce's text works like a "palimpsest," in the sense put forward by Edmund Wilson, where "one meaning, one set of images is written over another," allowing for the co-existence of simultaneous meanings. [638] In *Finnegans Wake*'s dream text, each signifier is overlaid with multiple signifiers which, in turn develop chains of "connotations," like the connotative chains created by the word "jelly" in *M/F*, or the consonant group "schm" in *The Doctor is Sick*. Burgess, quite playfully,

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[637] Burgess, *Joysprick*, 138–9.
[638] "Palimpsestuous," the term first used by Edmund Wilson to describe the compositional style of *Finnegans Wake*. Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870–1930* (London and Glasgow: Fontana Library, 1961), 187–8.

refers to the "piling of extra connotations" as "the essence" of *Finnegans Wake*'s "palimpsestuous – or palincestuous—technique."[639] The change from "palimpsest" to "palincest" suggests that Burgess sees much of *Finnegans Wake's* linguistic play as "palincestuous," that is, concerned only with its own functioning as a closed, rather than open, system.[640] Burgess's playful punning on Wilson's term creates a connection between linguistic play and incest, the same connection which structures *M/F*'s ambivalent structure, to imply that there is much in Joyce's experimental writing which is just a repetition of the same (or tautology, as defined by Fonanta in *M/F*). Stinson certainly sees *M/F*, in part, as a "parable" about art's "incestuous" tendencies, "In the sense that art tends towards endless series of couplings of the creator's own solipsistic ideas, it can be seen as incestuous."[641]

Furthermore, according to the ghostly metaphor developed earlier, we can see that the image of the palimpsest is another metaphor for the text as a "cementery" of dead quotations. According to Carmen Lara-Rallo: "any writing, or palimpsestic creation, is haunted by earlier text(s) which it superimposes."[642] We could say that the birds' performance passage is "haunted" by its own ambivalence. It can be analyzed as an articulation of the productivity and intertextuality of literary language, and also, ambivalently, as an incestuous (or "palincestuous") act, as the birds are simply repeating (parroting) fragments from past writings. In both cases, however, there is the recognition that the literary text is constituted as a plurality of voices, languages, fragments or signifiers—not a stable, meaningful work created by a unified authorial consciousness.

[639] Burgess, *Joysprick*, 146.
[640] Ibid.
[641] Stinson, *Anthony Burgess Revisited*, 108.
[642] Carmen Lara-Rallo, "Pictures Worth a Thousand Words: Metaphorical Images of Textual Interdependence." *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 8, no. 2 (2009), 103.

This recognition, at the same time, is always accompanied by a sense of anxiety over the loss of certainty once guaranteed by the presence of the author.

This ambivalence between celebration and anxiety over the loss of the old order is articulated in the passage that ends the narrative, which is also an opening into the future, a future based on a "new" order of multiplicity and plurality. The passage is long but worth quoting in its entirety as it is an expression of *M/F*'s carnivalesque ambivalence between order and its transgression. The narrator is still Miles, as a "responsible" adult "cured of his youthful and misguided "mania for total liberty," which "in reality" was only "a mania for prison ... by way of incest" (M/F, 205) The adult Miles has become a poet, practises exogamy and is father to many adopted children "of various colours and nationalities." (M/F, 203) Order has prevailed, but in a new form, a form which transcends oppositions in order to encompass the variety and multiplicity of human experience (very much like Ennis's *Passacaglia*):

> My daughter Bruna has, she tells us, been seeing rather a lot of my son Romolo lately. At least he's been coming down to Rome from Siena at weekends to ask her out to dinner and the latest movie of Fellazione or some other old master. I'd be delighted for any daughter of mine to marry any son of mine. I enjoy the movement of life—kids falling in love, performing birds (there was an article on Aderyn the Bird Queen is a popular periodical just after she died), new *gelato* flavours, ceremonies, anthills, poetry, loins, lions, the music of eight tuned Chinese pipes suspended from an economically carved and highly stylized owl head at our window facing the lake maddened into sweetest cacophony by a *tramontana* that will not abate its passion, the woman below calling her son in (his name is Orlando and she says his father will be *furioso*), the *ombrellone* on our roof terrace blown out of its metal plinth, the spitted *faraone* for dinner tonight with a bottle of Menicocci, anything in fact that's unincestuous. (M/F, 206)

The passage is a celebration of multiplicity and plurality, of "the movement of life." It rejoices in the "new" ("new *gelato* flavours," children, love) while also celebrating

linguistic plurality and word-play—Italian words woven into the text; the music of Chinese pipes accompanied by the sound of the wind; the word-play between "loins" and "lions" (lions and sphinxes abound in the text, as we have seen) and "Orlando" and "furioso" (the title of a poem by the Italian poet Ariosto). At the same time, there is a totalizing impulse underlying all the variousness of life. All this multiplicity and diversity is made significant by being enclosed within one vision, Miles's vision. But there is still a threat of disorder in this plurality, the threat of an excess that cannot be contained, suggested by the "sweetest cacophony" of the *tramontana* ("sweet cacophony" suggests antithetic attributes) against the "stylized" and "economically carved" Chinese pipes. Excess, or its possibility, is also suggested by the "spitted *faraone*" or "roasted hen"—roasted meat is symbolic of the incestuous union of nature and culture according to Lèvi-Strauss.[643] The possibility of incest is also implied in the developing relationship between Miles's son and daughter Romolo and Bruna. Although they are originally from different families and races, they have been raised within the same family or kinship group; consequently, their marriage would constitute incest. It becomes apparent, as the passage unfolds, that Miles's vision of exogamous order has always already been transgressed and disrupted by the threat of incest. Order is always threatened by the "other" within.

This is the dynamic which I have tried to trace in my analysis of the novel in this chapter. *M/F* is organized as a structure of order which has already been disrupted and transgressed by the carnivalesque force of its plural, open and playful text. At the same time, and in spite of this force, the desire for order remains a powerful impulse in the text,

[643] According to Lévi-Strauss's "culinary triangle," food that is roasted "incarnates the ambiguity of the raw and the cooked, of nature and culture," as it remains "grilled on the outside but raw within." Lévi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle," in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2008), 42.

manifested not only in Z. Fonanta's call for order but also in Miles's dream of a totalizing vision which encompasses the plurality and disorder of language and experience. The last passage in the novel, however, works as a reminder of the (im)possibility of order. This is *M/F*'s carnivalesque ambivalence. *M/F* moves between the need for order and its impossibility, to construct itself on the unstable boundary between the two.

CONCLUSION

The previous chapters have explored the ways in which ambivalence, in the sense outlined in Kristeva's writings—the disruptive and productive co-existence of monologic and dialogic impulses in language and the text—operates as the dynamic force which structures Burgess's novels. This conclusion examines the main dimensions of ambivalence explored in this thesis and some of the issues which have emerged from the analysis of Burgess's writing, ending with a consideration of a possible progression between the novels analyzed. The thesis title, "between order and transgression," outlines the two main impulses which can be seen operating in the texts, and which also describe Burgess's unstable position as a writer, poised between a belief in a traditional or "conventional" (Bergonzi's description) approach to novelistic form and a desire to transgress and transcend norms and conventions. This transgressive impulse is manifested, first and foremost, at the level of language. Burgess's literary analyses and his critical essays on other writers demonstrate that he has an understanding of language as multiple, plural and productive. He is particularly fascinated by the non-referential, material elements of the linguistic sign, those aspects which exceed signification. At the same time, Burgess is wary of excessive linguistic play as it can lead to the collapse of meaning. His novels' focus on narrative order, linear development, framing structures and binary patterns can thus be interpreted as an expression of Burgess's need to maintain control over language's disruptive force—the same force which his writing articulates.

This ambivalence, which is clearly apparent in Burgess's own considerations on novelistic writing, manifests itself in his texts as a dynamic between traditional narrative form and playful, disruptive textuality. In my analysis of Burgess's novels I have

employed the terms "narrative drive" and/or "narrative progression" as the specific features of the monologic in Burgess's writing. Terms like narrative "structure" or "construction," which I have also used, are imbued with the sense of order and stability which is so important to Burgess, and, thus, can be seen as monologic, even if Kristeva still makes use of them in her formulation of the ambivalent subversive novel.[644] In my analysis, Kristeva's notion of a co-existence of monologic and dialogic forces or discourses becomes an ambivalence between narrative structure and textuality, which I understand as unfinished and open-ended, and as productive linguistic play. Much of my analysis has focused also on Burgess's texts, to explore how fixed meaning is always transgressed by the play of language, and by the material, traditionally non-signifying elements of the word.

In Burgess's ambivalent texts notions of stable meaning, order and certainty continually give way to multiplicity and ambiguity and a sense of disorder and instability. Traditional, linear and causal logical parameters are disrupted and transgressed by "other logics" (or, rather, non-logical forms) operating in the text—forms of expression which Kristeva terms poetic logic, dream logic and carnivalesque logic. These "other logics" express that which is beyond traditional representation, what exceeds communication: unconscious desire and bodily drives—the internal operations of the speaking subject or "subject-in-process." Burgess's "artists" are caught in this dynamic; intent on creating structures of order, they always find their creations transgressed by desires which they cannot control. Ambivalence is also a descriptive term for the operations of intertextuality in Burgess's texts. The relationships between the texts which make up the novels'

[644] See Toril Moi on the "ambivalence" of Kristeva's "Word, Dialogue, Novel" (note 127 in this thesis).

intertextual space are marked by ambivalence towards the social, cultural and literary contexts in relation to which Burgess's texts situate themselves. Ambivalence also marks the new, fragmented and unstable "writing subject" which emerges out of this intertextuality, and which replaces the traditional notion of the author.

In the Introduction to this thesis I map out two dimensions of ambivalence as the focus of my analysis: one that operates on the levels of composition and the text, as referred to in the previous paragraph, and ambivalence as another term for the oscillation between symbolic and semiotic in the artistic "subject-in-process." I would like to re-examine these here, along with other dimensions of ambivalence which have emerged in the analysis of the texts. It is apparent that the figure of the artist, or the creative individual, which emerges out of Burgess's novels is one of a subject always divided between conscious and unconscious, stability and disruptive desire. Ennis, Enderby and WS want to create structures which control but also express the ambiguity and multiplicity of experience. They exist in this continuous ambivalence between control and expression, between symbolic order and semiotic disruption. This conflict is articulated in different ways in the texts. For Ennis, the ambivalence between order and the desire to transgress is articulated, quite playfully, in the expression "his 'art," a pun on art-heart which plays on the idea of art as an expression of emotion, contrasting it with Ennis's rigid notion of art. Ennis's failed *Passacaglia*, on the other hand, embodies Ennis's effort to transcend traditional notions of order in order to encompass diversity—something which, the novel suggests, cannot be done, at least in music. Enderby and WS also use traditional poetic structures to control the chaos which they see around them, and their own disruptive desires. This conflict is dramatized in the process of poetic

composition, which involves a confrontation with disruptive semiotic forces articulated in the text as sound effects (flatulence for Enderby) or word-play and "jingles" (WS). In *M/F*, semiotic forces are expressed in obscene and scandalous language and punning (the jelly-jelyf riddle), while in *The Doctor is Sick*, semiotic forces are articulated in continuous, punning and linguistic play.

Puns, word-play, sound transcription, are also articulations of the material, non-referential or self-referential elements of language. In all the novels examined in this thesis, this kind of linguistic play articulates the characters' (and also Burgess's) joy in language. This sense of joy, at the same time, is also marked by anxiety over the possibility of non-meaning or "insignification," the term used by Z. Fonanta in *M/F* to describe the effect of excessive experimentation. This anxiety-joy is what Kristeva and Barthes call *jouissance*. Spindrift experiences this *jouissance* during his examinations in the hospital, as a sense of linguistic and psychic fragmentation which is both disturbing and pleasurable. He experiences the same *jouissance* during his journey through London's underworld (also his dream-world), where he experiences language in its multiple and plural materiality. The experience of *jouissance* is highly ambivalent, joyful but also disturbing. The process of composition, as it is articulated in *Inside Mr Enderby*, is also an expression of *jouissance*. Enderby "suffers" language, he is "attacked" by it; at the same time, there is a sense of irreverent joy in the articulation of dyspepsia and flatulence—Burgess's joy in the iconic notation of sound, a joy which he shares with Joyce. Enderby also experiences the limit of *jouissance*—abjection, the total collapse of subjective borders brought on by the return of what has already been cast out: the maternal body.

The idea that linguistic play can be disruptive to the subject who engages in it maps onto the next dimension of ambivalence which we can see operating in the novels by Burgess analyzed here: the ambivalence between creation and destruction. The process of creation, for some of the characters, is also destructive. This is most evident in *Nothing like the Sun*, where WS is literally annihilated by his desire, his "will" to create, which is "materialized" as syphilis, a disease which destroys mind and body and takes the subject to the edge of madness. We could say that the descent of WS's Goddess at the end signifies WS's own descent into the destructive semiotic. In symbolic terms, at the same time, the death of WS signifies the birth of Shakespeare, and a new kind of writing which transcends traditional forms. In a more playful way, Enderby's comical and grotesque "descent" into the unconscious and his return as reformed, useful member of society Hogg, articulates this ambivalence. While the emphasis in *Inside Mr Enderby* is, at the end, on the fixity of identity (Hogg has learnt to use language only in its referential mode), in *The Doctor is Sick*, Spindrift celebrates his new plural and unfixed identity by abandoning referential language and returning to his dream-world, in a final journey which could be interpreted as Spindrift's complete immersion in the semiotic. *A Vision of Battlements* also articulates this descent into the semiotic as a literal immersion in the sea, which, in turn, operates as a signifier in the text for the flow of language and also the unconscious.

Some the novels examined here engage in an exploration of modes of language which can articulate the experience of the dream or the unconscious. In the last section of *A Vision of Battlements,* the border town of La Linea is constructed a threshold space between reality and the unconscious. The passage between the two is marked in the text

by the emergence of ambiguous images and intertextual play. Enderby's suicide scene also articulates the passage between referential reality and the unconscious as linguistic excess. Of all the novels, however, *The Doctor is Sick* offers the most consistent articulation of dream language, not only in the second part of the narrative, purportedly set in Ennis's unconscious, but also in the Hospital scenes. Ennis's dream world is a textual world, a tissue of connections and disconnections, an ambivalent scene continually oscillating between fixed meaning and linguistic multiplicity. Through the use of dream-logic, these texts not only convey a sense of "reality" as multifaceted, but they also create a sense of language as a complex "experience" by articulating the passage between meaning and that which exceeds it. A sense of the complexity and ambiguity of reality is also conveyed through the use of carnivalesque language and images. The parodic and mocking laughter of the carnivalesque unsettles established notions of order and meaning, while at the same time articulating the anxiety of the subject who experiences this excess.

Linguistic and poetic excess are articulated in the texts in similar ways. Two obvious ways are through musical and sound "effects" and through the use of puns to generate multiple and ambiguous meanings in a process which could be termed "unlimited semiosis."[645] This process of meaning-generation through punning is evident throughout all the texts. The obvious examples are the "shm-sham" pun in *The Doctor is Sick*, and the "jelly-jelyf" pun in *M/F*, already mentioned above. There are other examples: the "therm-sperm" rhyming pun in *Inside Mr Enderby*, the aforementioned "heart-art" pun in

[645] Although I have not used this term in my analysis it is apparent that in their continuous generation of meaning through punning, Burgess's texts articulate the "unlimited semiosis" which Umberto Eco argues is implicit in the very definition of "sign." Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 69.

A Vision of Battlements and the punning in "Wilson-Will son" in *Nothing like the Sun* (although this pun was analyzed in another context in the chapter). All these puns articulate linguistic productivity (unlimited semiosis), but also the excess which threatens signification, and the stability of the speaking subject. All the characters in the novels are threatened by the excess which they cannot contain, and which they are also, and paradoxically, "compelled" to articulate. Similarly, Burgess's texts articulate the ambivalent movement between fixity and excess as semiotic effects tear through and are released through the symbolic structure of the text.

An important signifier of excess in some of the novels examined is the notion of "incest" in its relation with artistic creation; *Inside Mr Enderby*, as we have seen, playfully depicts the process of poetic composition as an incestuous act (something always implicit in art, as Kristeva argues). In *M/F*, we find the most sustained exploration of incest as a double or ambivalent signifier of disruption but also creation in literature (in art in general). Artistic creation involves a transgression of order in order to create a "new" order. Language must renovate itself, even if this productive process always involves an element of destructive excess. In the novel, incest also signifies the complex relationship which texts have with other texts—what Harold Bloom refers to as "anxiety of influence" which emerges in the relationship between artists and their precursors or literary fathers. This conclusion is not the place to analyze Burgess's texts in relation to Bloom's theory, but we can point out the obvious connection between the notion of "incest," as articulated in *M/F*, and Bloom's fundamental argument that literature "can only imitate previous texts."[646] This idea ties in with the text's other meaning of "incest,"

[646] Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, 134.

(as well as a signifier of disorder) as "tautology," that is, the repetition of the same. *M/F*'s playfully intertextual writing expresses a joy in the process of literary creation which is always tempered by a sense of the always (potentially) incestuous relationship between writers and their literary fathers. In this sense, Burgess's term "palincestuous," which Burgess uses to describe the multiple semantic operations in Joyce's writing, comes to express the always ambivalent relationships that are generated within texts.

As already noted, and also examined in Farkas's monograph, Burgess's texts exist in a continuous intertextual relation with Joyce's texts. Although my analysis in this study was not focused on this particular relationship (which would require a separate study), it is clear that an exploration of Burgess's writing and its specific linguistic strategies cannot ignore Burgess's relationship with Joyce. It will suffice to point out here how some of the novels construct themselves in relation with and also against Joyce's texts: *A Vision of Battlements* is the most obvious example, but we can also discern a similar dialogue in *Nothing like the Sun*.[647] The novels in this study also establish intertextual relations with other writers and texts, as already noted: T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*, Shakespeare's plays and poems, the poetry of Manley Hopkins and Dante's *Divine Comedy* are the most obvious examples. All these relations are marked by ambivalence, or what Bloom calls "anxiety." A certain "anxiety" is evident, also, in *Nothing like the Sun*'s playful subversion of the author's proper name. In fact, we could say that *Nothing like the Sun* offers an articulation of what Kristeva calls the ambivalence of writing, the process by which the writer enters the text to become "another text." And so, Burgess "inserts" himself into the text of *Nothing like the Sun* as a multiplicity of texts: he (no

[647] We could argue that all the novels in this dissertation, to an extent, are constructed "in relation" with Joyce's texts. This issue alone, however, would constitute the topic for a separate study.

longer "a person") becomes a multiplicity of positions in ambivalent relationships with one another and with other textual positions. In one sense, the novels appears to celebrate this new fragmented and unstable subject of writing; in another sense, however, the text betrays a certain nostalgia for the figure of the author, manifested in the "fusion" of Burgess with Shakespeare. Separation and fusion, ultimately, mark the ambivalent rhythm of *Nothing like the Sun*'s text.

An issue emerging from the analysis of ambivalence in Burgess's texts which I would like to examine briefly here is that of "linguistic violence" or "violence in language," a theme which recurs in the novels examined here. "Violence" is Burgess's preferred trope for the multiplicity and instability of language, as we have already seen, derived from William Empson's study of poetic ambiguity. Empson's analysis is the starting point for Burgess's own exploration of the dynamic between order and disruption in language, the process which is articulated in his texts.[648] Fundamentally, there are two ways in which "violence" is associated with language in the novels examined in thesis. One involves linguistic play and intertextuality as "violence" against language, by tearing apart the bond between signifier and signified. This dimension is explored in *A Doctor is Sick*, through the relation between language and perversion, and in *M/F*, through Castita's "artificial" language. Violence against language, on the other hand, can also signify the fixity of the linguistic sign, which denies the play of language. Miles Faber's injunction in *M/F* not to answer riddles can be interpreted in this sense, as a call against the (forced and violent) fixing of language's innate plurality.

[648] Again, this theme would constitute the topic for a separate study.

The final issue I would like to address is that of the subversiveness of Burgess's texts. All the aspects of Burgess's writing highlighted above—its playfulness, its productivity, its carnivalesque excess, its articulation of *jouissance*, the ambivalence between narrative and intertextuality—can certainly be interpreted as subversive of established novelistic conventions, something already remarked upon in my analysis of the texts. However, a mark of the constant ambivalence in Burgess's writing is also a sense of nostalgia for the sense of stability and certainty granted by traditional notions of order, meaning and authority. These two senses converge in the depictions of the maternal and the feminine in the texts. Although it could be argued that there is a touch of misogynism in the depiction of the female characters, they can also be interpreted as subversive of traditional notions of feminity.[649] This double approach is apparent in *M/F*'s ambivalent carnivalesque structure, in which notions of structure, order, meaning, the sacred and authority are brought to the fore at the same time that they are subverted.

In the Introduction to this study I began my exploration of ambivalence in Burgess's texts by remarking on the co-existence of "conservative" and "experimental" impulses in his writing already noted by some critics. My argument through this dissertation has been that these impulses are always at work in the five novels analyzed, whether at the level of narrative structure, theme, word or text. However, at this point one question arises: can we also discern a progression from conservative to experimental from his first work, *A Vision of Battlements* to *M/F*? The obvious answer, given that *M/F* self-consciously presents itself as his most experimental work up to that point, is "yes." The issue, however, is not as simple as that. *A Vision of Battlements* cannot be strictly termed

[649]I have already mentioned current studies on the representation of the female in Burgess's novels. See note 427.

"conservative" and, as we have already seen, *M/F* is not as radically "experimental" as it purports to be. Rather than speak of progression or development, it would be more productive to talk about changes or shifts in the dynamic between these two impulses, which still suggest movement and transformation, though not in a strictly linear way. This approach renders a different conclusion. In *A Vision of Battlements* we can discern a strong emphasis on moving away from a totalizing vision of the novel as a work of art towards a more dynamic, less restrictive form which can articulate the plurality of language. The next four novels can, then, be seen as different "experiments" in this opening-up of the form of the novel: to the unconscious (*The Doctor is Sick*), to the forces of the maternal and the feminine (*Inside Mr Enderby*), to its own fictional operations (*Nothing like the Sun*) and to the play of the carnivalesque (*M/F*). In fact, we could say that the last novel, *M/F*, marks the collapse of all traditional linear and binary thinking and suggests a possibility for a new kind of novel which encompasses the totality of experience.[650] At the same time, *M/F* could also be seen to return to the totalizing vision first put forward in *A Vision of Battlements*. Any progression which we think we can find in Burgess's writing is, ultimately, also marked by ambivalence.

[650] Not so new, however, as Joyce had already done this in *Ulysses*, as Burgess was well aware.

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