Portrait, mirror, ghost: the motif of the artist in Anthony Burgess’s *Enderby* novels.

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MA Modern and Contemporary Literature and Culture

Department of English and Related Literature

University of York

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Para mi ‘oso grande’. Porque en ti radica todo el arte y el amor que alguna vez conocí.
Abstract

This dissertation examines the motif of the artist in Anthony Burgess’ Enderby novels: *Inside Mr Enderby* (1963), *Enderby Outside* (1968), *The Clockwork Testament or Enderby’s end* (1974) and *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984). It analyses the character of Enderby the poet through three metaphors: the portrait, the mirror and the ghost. I argue that whilst Burgess inevitably echoes James Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), he also distances from the late Romantic motif of the artist: he depicts a grotesque poet who defamiliarises and estranges its previous narrative assumptions. Lastly, I demonstrate how a postmodern reading of a pastiche is not enough to represent Enderby. Enderby is thus a parody of the sublime artist: a convergence of historical and literary tradition, and a versatile artist-author-writer whose fictionalised aftermath needs yet to be explored.
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Introduction

“The day, and all the days to follow till the end of the world, were presented to Enderby as a linear process, not the fall-rise cycle of the poet.” (Burgess Enderby’s Dark Lady 616)

I.

Artistic self-awareness is prone to a variety of entanglements from both literary and historical pressures. Although the motif of the artist is commonly perceived as the isolated but convergent literary epitome and embodiment of art, in what follows I argue that Anthony Burgess self-consciously rewrites this notion by conspicuously challenging the affirmative late Romantic concept of the artist in the figure of Enderby, the main character in the Enderby novels: Inside Mr Enderby (1963), Enderby Outside (1968), The Clockwork Testament or Enderby’s end (1974) and Enderby’s Dark Lady (1984). My premise is that for Burgess, the ultimate function of the artist in fiction is to prompt and sustain a reader’s meditation on the processes and assumptions behind the artist through a grotesque style, whilst remaining skeptical towards the narrative treatment the artist character has previously received. I will argue that the identity of the artist will be then strongly connected with the immediate historical and literary context. Hence, instead of a postmodern reading that merely subverts and makes of Enderby a pastiche of the modern artist, my argument proposes that it is in the grotesque metaphor of the portrait, the mirror and the ghost, and their dismantling, that Enderby offers a reflection and examination of the identity and representation of the artist. Inevitably, thus, the starting point for this study is James Joyce’s Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916) both as Burgess’s great influence and as part of the canonical modernist instance of the artist-novel. In what follows I examine the historical and literary precedents of what Burgess
calls, in his critical book about Joyce’s fiction, the conventional “artist’s rounded personality” (Here Comes Everybody 69). I will proceed in the following chapters with the indeterminate and impossible representation of the artist, unimpressively labelled as a “tension-producing” (Thomson 61) “process of self-liberation” (Parrinder 113), where the artist is simultaneously and paradoxically empowered by his self-awareness and made powerless by his own condition.

II.

The most general definition of an artist can be taken from The Oxford English Dictionary that defines the artist as “a person who pursues a craft or trade; a craftsperson, an artisan” (“Artist,” def. 1a). Moreover, the artist is the writer, novelist or poet, as in Joyce’s Portrait, committed to one of the seven muses of art, as Raymond Williams describes (41). We can infer that the artist is in a continuous and dynamic state of pursuit, changing according to the pursued art. In fact, according to Burgess, it is in this mutability that the mystery of the motif of the artist lies: “the artist, the maker, is himself a creation of unknown arts - the ignotae artes of the epigraph: he is enclosed by mystery” (Here Comes Everybody 69). Burgess refers to the epigraph from Joyce’s Portrait: an indication of the motif he develops in his novels based on Joyce’s artist and also, guided by mystery. Hence, notwithstanding the historical period we relate the artist to, the artist’s definition will vary according to the chosen art. Yet, in its mutability, the motif of the artist refuses a fixed meaning whilst it simultaneously encloses its own unfathomability.

III.

Some scholarly research about and by Anthony Burgess should be noted to facilitate the understanding of the relation between this author and art. In fact, Burgess’s
own relation to the term *artist* is undoubtedly complex. The author of the Enderby novels was not only a novelist, but a poet, linguist, musician, who also worked as a journalist, editor, reviewer and script writer. Due to his varied relation with different arts, some critics have asserted that he was a “constellation... a gigantic mass of ostentation” (Lewis 29). However, critical reception has mainly focused on *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), due to the success of Stanley Kubrick’s film version with the same name in 1971. Another point to consider at this point is Burgess’ relation with James Joyce. Burgess persistently recognised his influence: for example, in a BBC documentary in 1999 he said that “Joyce summoned it all up for me in *Portrait of the Artist*” (“Burgess variations ½”). As a matter of fact, he also wrote about Joyce’s narrative and influence in *Here Comes Everybody* (1965), *ReJoyce* (1965) and *Joysprick: An Introduction to the Language of James Joyce* (1973). Accordingly, Burgess himself acknowledged his work had been criticized for being narrow and limited (*You’ve had your Time* 95) mainly due to the risky and blatant “joycean intertext” (Haffen 131), reducing his “self-conscious literariness” (Haffen 132) to his being absurdly and exclusively “saturated in Joyce” (Lewis 408). Unsurprisingly, Morris denominates the Enderby novels as “a portrait of the middle-aged man as a young artist” (75) overlooking Burgess’s own voice about the artist’s journey. Indeed, every phase of the traditional novel-hero is endorsed by Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist* maturity journey and at the same time challenged through Burgess’s divergence from the canonical artist-hero’s forebears. The above critical texts, thus, give a tantalising glimpse of how much is in play in

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2 References to Dedalus’ maturity journey can be found in Aggeler’s criticism of the artist-novel (“Faust in the Labyrinth” 518; “Incest and the Artist” 530), Bergonzi’s review of the Enderby novels (“A Poet’s Life” 765), Burgess’s book about Joyce (*Here Comes Everybody* 49), Freeman’s essay about the artist’s in fiction (“Modernists at Heart?” 122) and Klein and Woalleger’s study about Joyce’s *Portrait* (293;6).
Burgess’s fiction, invoking but cancelling Burgess’s viewpoint about artists, and especially ignoring Burgess’s own fascination yet agitation by the motif of the artist.

IV. Modernism, I argue, is one of the milestones for the development of the Enderby novels, since it is both a historical and literary precedent in the artist-novel. Instead of the artist’s visceral glorification that took place in Romanticism, Modernism takes the artist down to earth. I understand Modernism as the aesthetic cultural movement taking place between 1910 and 1930, whose “inwardness . . . for human experience and verisimilitude” (Mackay 21) takes the form of experimentation, such as the case of James Joyce’s Portrait, especially considering the use of interior monologue. But Stephen Dedalus, Joyce’s artist, is also based on a broader tradition: much of Burgess's aesthetic artist ideal is predicated on the model of the artist-novel within this modern context. In this genre, the artist-hero traverses from innocence and naivety towards “self-knowledge and success” (Attridge 83), passing through isolation, exile and suicide (Goldberg 24; Mackay 152), along with the subsequent abandonment of “the identity given by family and school” (Parrinder 103), where nevertheless the artist is “bound to fail” (Griffiths xvi). The defining moment in this process of estrangement is the suicide of the artist-hero, but it can alternatively be replaced by, Goldberg says, the “concern for self-definition” (25). Briefly introduced, this suggestively implicit overture anticipates a change in the quest for a more flexible representation of the artist, which does not enclose him into a single metaphorical framing. It is not a coincidence, as McHale notices, that the coda of most of Joyce’s novels, excepting Portrait, end with the simulacra of death (233), as it does the story “The Death” in Joyce’s Dubliners (1914). There is indeed a hidden openness towards the possibilities of the artist after being enclosed by a
portrait – or a definite identity – towards the usefulness of the mirror and the ghost metaphor as artefacts and mediums to delve into the motif of the artist.

The motif of the artist has not received much or specific scholarly attention in literature. The only area that has slightly received attention is the relation between artist and politics. However, there is no such a theory that offers a significant account in this respect. Some interesting literature, however, can be found regarding the relation between art and the bourgeois (Goldberg 13) or namely, the relation between the artist and the past bourgeois context (Lyotard 74). For example, Charles Baudelaire’s essay *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863), Franz Kafka’s *The Hunger Artist* (1922), or Thomas Mann’s *Doctor Faustus* (1947) are some of the most significant works of fiction depicting the political idea in the artist. Burgess’s novels, however, are “meticulously documented and depoliticized” (Bradford 178) because he takes distance from any kind of political engagement. For example, neutral art is a recurrent theme in the Enderby novels: “art blamed as always. Art was neutral, neither teaching nor provoking, a static shimmer” (Burgess *The Clockwork Testament* 425). Furthermore, in his book about Joyce’s fiction, *Here Comes Everybody* (1982), the author of the Enderby novels asserts that Dedalus is “the last of the artist-heroes of bourgeois fiction” (69), reasserting his commitment with neutral art in his autobiography too: “writers do not fit into any known village hierarchy” (You’ve Had your Time 18). In wielding control of form and also avoiding character development, educated and self-centred characters are repeatedly present in modern artist-narratives, and whilst mostly isolated from society, Burgess follows this tradition in presenting an artist who does not mark, until now, an exception.

V.
“Contemporary history,” Burgess says, “begins with the Second World War” (The Novel Now 22). Moreover, “the past to me is the period before the Second World War, everything after is the present” (Burgess, You’ve Had your time 84). In Burgess’s view, art had to undertake a new task after the Second World War, which was that of assimilating a new radically different society. Furthermore, Burgess says in his autobiography: “I wanted to escape the sixties, but I found it was impossible” (You’ve Had Your Time 139). If everything after the war was the present, then all the Enderby novels do engage with the sixties and thus the post war theme, despite the different publishing dates. The emergence of the Enderby novels is deeply rooted into the post war context and they are, therefore, committed to depicting the quest for an identity in the new English scenario.

The “post war scenario” (Mackay 152) refers to art’s response to the abrupt changes in British society after the Second World War, from the year 1945 to, roughly, the 1980s. The population witnessed not only material impoverishment and general scarcity, but also the dismantling of the British Empire and the subsequent destruction of economic and social resources (Bradford 11; Mackay and Sonebridge 6). Britain lost control and power over the material resources: the empire was aggressively demolished. For Mackay and Stonebridge, this specific context meant a sinking in literary terms and a shrinking in geographical ones (10), resulting in the decline of experimentation, and eventual turn into realism or “mimesis” (Bradford 11). A new reality began after the war, and consequently, a new kind of literature came to light. Post war literature tried to progressively acknowledge those losses but also attempted to embrace these new changes, leaving behind the “anemic” and “well-executed trivia” (Gindin 7) that characterized previous pre-war English fiction.
In literary terms, self-narratives with self-contained meta-characters are deployed to offer an account regarding the loss of identity. The Enderby novels belong indeed to this particular tendency where “Burgess indulges a more sceptical recognition of metafiction” (Bradford 9). Nevertheless, the artist is not particularly pointed at as a symbol or literary artefact to carry out such self-awareness. In fact, Enderby is indeed an artist, but he also belongs to the post war pattern of male, middle-class main characters. To illustrate them, we can mention for example the hesitant and existential attitude of Nicholas Jenkins in Question of Upbringing (1961) by Anthony Powell, Iris Murdoch’s Jake Donaghue, a frustrated artist in constant effort to re-define and re-position himself in Under the Net (1954), Kingsley Amis’s Lucky Jim (1954), a comic character surrounded by “digression and irrelevance” (Gindin 37) and finally, Ian Fleming’s methodical and self-reflective James Bond in Casino Royale (1953). As a whole, these protagonists strive to re-forge British identity, each one of them with their own apprehensions and uncertainties. They are all “highly educated and privileged men” (Bergonzi Wartime and Aftermath 174), coming from the very same cradle and “indistinguishable one from another” (Bradford 8). They belong to the same social class, a middle ground between aristocracy and the working class with access to education, pubs and women (Gindin 2). They do not provide a critical response to their immediate context, but they embody the post war unrest in a contemporary and urban society, reflecting on “the assumptions of the pre-war society” (Mackay and Stonebridge 17) but also trying “to relate with the new social reality” (Bradford 11).

Indirectly referring to the categories that limited these men in fiction, Burgess will recall but maintain those patterns from a meta-narrative perspective. Regarding gender, for example, he asserts that “the novelist is a hermaphrodite, prefigured in Greek myth in
the seer Tiresias, who knew strange things and was man and woman at the same time” 
(The Novel Now 121). This affirmation is suspiciously similar to what Rawcliffe, a fellow poet in the Enderby novels, says about Enderby in Inside Mr Enderby (1963): “Un poeta,” said Rawcliffe, ‘that’s what he is. Poeta. Feminine in form, masculine in gender.’ (…) ‘As a matter of fact,’ said Rawcliffe, ‘it’s my belief that all poets are really a sort of blooming hermaphrodite. Like Tiresias, you know” (119). Burgess is implicitly making reference to the genderless novelist as a kind of romantic seer, distanced from the rest of society, probably related to the “sublime notion of the artist” (Lyotard 74) invoked by Joyce. Hence, the artist is travestied as “a degrading interpretation of certain images . . . [with] universal connotation” (Bakhtin 311) who cannot be male or female, but a hybrid entity. English identity needs then to be restored through, for example, the clarification of “Englishness” (Bradford 177), including reflections about gender, social class and roles in society. Thus, these characters look for a comradeship in a common ground of interaction, hitherto non-existent. Indeed, stultifyingly, Enderby replicates the pattern: he is male, middle class, educated, and probably white. Burgess’s critique is contained in the same structure he apparently opposes.

VI.

Inside Mr Enderby was published in 1963. The story begins with a suspicious school excursion into the sleeping artist’s bedroom where Enderby is presented. Afterwards, we follow Enderby’s moment of poetic inspiration on his toilet and his sudden success with a prize in London. Enderby marries a magazine publisher called Vesta, but the marriage lasts only three days. Enderby cannot find inspiration to write and after a brief malady, attempts to commit suicide. He survives, but is taken to a rehabilitation centre where the
main task is to leave behind poetry and change his name to Hogg. This novel ends with Hogg working as a bartender. The name Enderby and his poetry are both part of his past.

Now we must consider the context for the next publishing dates of the Enderby novels. From the 1970s on, there were new political commitments that resulted from the “outcome of Britain’s transition into capitalist modernity” (Bradford 21). Namely, the facilitation of privatisation policies has a direct impact on the artistic field (Freeman “Artistic Creativity” 121). Regarding literature, there was a progressive rejection of realism, leading into new voices embracing “multiplicity, uncertainty and possibility” (Mackay 150). However, despite these elusive changes, the literary blooming of the 1960s still had resonating consequences in the seventies and eighties. It is thus in this context that Enderby Outside (1968) and The Clockwork Testament (1974) were published.

In Enderby Outside (1968) Hogg is accidentally accused of the murder of a pop singer who, he discovers, has plagiarized his poems. Enderby then runs a bar with Rawcliffe, a fellow poet who also plagiarized one of his works and with whom is involved in a sequence of misunderstandings in the exotic land of Morocco. Here, Burgess starts writing again and finds inspiration in the Muse, a sort of phantasmagorical woman who guides him in the writing process. This novel ends with a new school excursion, again describing Enderby’s body, and with an “Appendix” including five poems under the title “Some Uncollected Early Poems by F.X. Enderby”.

North America is the new setting in The Clockwork Testament (1974) and in Enderby’s Dark Lady (1984). “The adventures of the English man in America” (Bergonzi “The British novel in 1960” 170) becomes a new genre, where The United States are visible and also virtually present as a ghostly presence through the media sway over English society. Accordingly, Americanisation enforced a general and limited realism in
fiction, where “the novel had turned inward upon its own parochial concerns . . .
stylistically complacent and self-satisfied. . . going nowhere in particular” (Bradford 242). However, in the Enderby novels, the change of setting works as the collapse of the boundaries within the English novel: cunningly provoking “the construction and multiplication of worlds” (Mackay 140), and echoing the emergent and “complacent conventions of postmodernism” (Bradford 15).

In *The Clockwork Testament* (1974) then, Enderby has acquired certain popularity with one of his poems. He is invited to New York to work as an academic in creative writing. The university world acquires a special treatment in this novel, including debates about plagiarism, biographical reading, creativity and minor literature. American influence is pervasive in the novel: for example, Enderby is invited to a TV program to talk about poetry, then the novel structure changes into a TV script. Enderby at the end is killed by one of his students, but the novel finishes with the excursion and the teacher’s apprehensive recognition about Enderby’s death.

Finally, *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984) opens with a “Prefatory Note” by Burgess reflecting on dying characters and the necessity to bring Enderby to life, but fails to provide a reason. The first chapter is “Will and Testament”, Enderby’s story about Shakespeare that will be adapted into screen. For that reason, in the following chapters, we see how Enderby travels to Illinois to form part of the adaptation. Poetry, script, prose and Hollywood mingle in form, while Enderby falls in love with an actress and commits himself to write science-fiction. The final chapter is entitled “The Muse”, which is the science-fiction short story Enderby apparently writes, in which interesting dilemmas about author and representation take place.

VII.
Why does my argument take a distance from the apparent chronological course of literary history? It would be chronologically accurate to relate Enderby to the emergent Postmodernism of the 1960s, so that Enderby would become a counterforce and subsequent response to Modernism (Díaz 28; Eagleton 21; Fuery and Mansfield 107; Hutcheon 8; Jameson 111; McHale 7). Instead, I attribute the identity issues in the artist to the grotesque style (Kayser 185) rather than to a pastiche, the essential parody form for postmodernists. Hence, Enderby does not merely subvert and dismantle, as a postmodern character would do, but he estranges and defamiliarises the traditional motif of the artist. I must warn the reader, however, that the definition of Postmodernism can be renegotiated depending on the author we choose to exemplify it; resembling, endorsing or even contradicting Enderby’s embodiment. For example, the main similarity is what Díaz, Eagleton and Jameson refer to as the erosion of the distinction between high and popular culture (27; vii; 112). This tension is a constant playfulness between the portrait of the artists of the past and Enderby’s “grotesque world of becoming” (Bakhtin 308). The differences, however, are varied. Firstly, Postmodernism confronts the discourse of art with the discourse of history (Habermas 5; Hutcheon 20; Jameson 125; Ruland & Bradbury 319), through “skepticism, plurality and difference” (Fuery and Mansfield 107). In turn, Burgess renders history, saying for example, that Enderby “could not go on with this ahistorical nonsense. Christ, they were dealing with real and documented situations” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 608). Burgess then plunges us into the historical awareness of the development of the motif of the artist, paying special attention to one of the grandest narratives from Modernism: Joyce’s *Portrait*. Burgess does challenge the margins and conventions (Díaz 99; Hutcheon 11; McHale 180) of the former narrative, but he remains skeptical of the plurality and difference in the artists’
narrative treatment. Finally, the main point of rupture between Postmodernism and the character of Enderby is, in fact, that this trend has imposed the unveiling and study of minorities, triggering post-colonial and feminist studies, for example. However, Enderby, from his own marginalisation, speaks of those minor artists that just as women and former colonies maintained anonymity until scholarly attention paid attention to them. Furthermore, with the aim of demystifying conventions (Eagleton 27), but distanced from “radical politics” (Eagleton 22), Enderby embodies the artist “as a critical interpreter of his culture” (Ruland & Bradbury 347): he is a self-reflective void of transition and thus a remnant of the modern assumptions. Therefore, Enderby “inevitably embrace[s] the logic one refuses” (Eagleton 30) so that he cannot be conceived as a radical force of breakage.

Some agree that “Enderby shadows all of his creator’s ventures with caricatured equivalents” (Lewis 47), or that Enderby is “funny, disgusting and endearing” (Bergonzi “A Poet’s Life” 766). Others, based on Burgess’s the writer, say that Enderby is “a brutal auto-caricature. . .the author’s own personality” (Biswell 221). Finally, Robert Morris in *The Consolations of Ambiguity* (1971) devotes a whole chapter to the Enderby novels but he only focuses on the relation between the biography of Burgess and Enderby himself. Indeed, none of these scholars provides a consistent explanation for Enderby’s case; they rely too much on biographical reading or otherwise, on comedy as Burgess’s ultimate end (Morris 76). Bergstrom, on the contrary, recognizes a certain merit in Burgess’s use of parody where “his purposes were not simply art for art’s sake” (2). However, they do not account for the significance of the mockery in the character of Enderby, nor the immense historical and literary tradition he is attached to.
Another aspect to consider is that pastiche is the main postmodern parody. Based on the absence of a stable language, the pastiche works as an ironic imitation without humor and laughter (Jameson 114). An irony, on the contrary, relies on the consistency of language to carry out a mockery. I argue that pastiche, which would be accurately applied chronologically speaking, overlooks the fact that Enderby relies upon and manipulates language. In fact, he says, “all you’ll have is language, the great conserver, and poetry, the great isolate shaper” (Burgess *The Clockwork Testament* 457). It is not a coincidence that Enderby is a poet, because he confidently works with words. According to Burgess, indeed, Enderby is capable of an absolute “management of language in terms of metrics, rhythm and sound” (*You’ve Had your Time* 225). The grotesque, in this sense, is based on irony (Thomson 19), and gives consistency to Burgess’s “intentional imprecision” (Lewis 279), not only as “mere exaggeration” (Jameson 301), but as an integration of the parody object with the world imitated. Hence:

The object transgresses its own confines, ceases to be itself. The limits between the body and the world are erased, leading to the fusion of the one with the other and with surrounding objects. (Bakhtin 310)

Enderby is, from the modern perspective, an “object” who “transgresses its own confines” when his identity can be grasped beyond the limits of the metaphorical modern frame. He “ceases to be itself” when he abandons the modern world imitated and discovers “the fusion” between his personae and grotesque features. I argue, then, that Burgess exhausts the metaphorical treatment of the portrait and that of the mirror, and posits instead a meta-experience from the artist about his identity. My argument relies then on the grotesque rather than in pastiche, because the grotesque encourages the subject’s consciousness regarding their own “body, sweat, blood, smell, breath and
physical aspects” (Diaz 106). However, Diaz says, “with the consequences of the new postmodern techniques, the subject is now dematerialising in another sense” (106). The dematerialization, in the case of Diaz, triggers the virtual subject in the internet era. However, I argue that it is through the dematerialization of the artist identity or Post Identity, that the artist’s own representation acquires Diaz’s “another sense”: the subsequent impossibility of the literary portrait culminates in the grotesque artist identity embodied by Enderby the poet. Thus, “the day, and all the days to follow till the end of the world, were presented to Enderby as a linear process, not the fall-rise cycle of the poet” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 616). Leaving behind the modern connotations of the poet, Enderby discovers that his representation can be shifted from portrait, towards mirror, and perhaps, towards complete disappearance.

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3 Translated from Spanish by the author of this dissertation.
Chapter I

The Portrait

“You’ve been softened by somebody or something. You’re frightened of the young and the experimental and the way-out and the black dog” (Burgess Enderby Outside 381).

I.

The English Oxford Dictionary defines a portrait as “a drawn or painted framing, especially one depicting only the face or head and shoulders” (“Portrait,” def. 1b). The history of the visual portrait harks back to a “long romantic tradition” (Parrinder 125) with close ties to an elite social status. In using this same description, the literary portrait serves to illustrate the artist’s development in fiction. Arguably, the most significant and memorable use of the portrait comes in Joyce’s Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916). Delineating the person, but revealing “nothing interior” (“Portraiture,” def. 1a), the portrait becomes then an “impenetrable façade” (Bakhtin 320) that preserves “various consciousness from doubt” (Lyotard 74).

Because of portraits, “artists came to be envied, indeed ‘enthroned’ by many members of the middle class” (Freeman “Artistic Creativity” 112) in an idealisation of the sitter, the portrait assigned a special aesthetic dignity. In more recent years, the portrait has been moved to the covers of books, as Wall notes, conveniently “edifying conventions of elite portraiture” (123). Be they visual or literary, portraits carry within them a “special pleading on behalf of the artist” (Parrinder 125). Hence, I attempt to disclose the limits of the portrait, as a device, using a grotesque frame of analysis, so that the artist becomes a “travesty of the divinity” (Bakhtin 351). A certain aesthetic and
ethical superiority, largely attributed to the modern artist, is then reversed in the figure of Enderby.

II.

From *Inside Mr Enderby*’s opening line, Enderby is presented to readers in the form of an artefact with special emphasis on the grotesque “bodily lower stratum” (Bakhtin 312): “A posterior riposte of Mr Enderby” (10). Enderby’s exaggerated description opens with the joke using “posterior” and “riposte”, omitting the word fart, as if it were possible to dignify Enderby’s own secretions and bodily expulsions. We are introduced to both Enderby and to the Enderby novels through indirect descriptions of little school children and their teacher’s explanations. In fact, in isolated chapters, the only way to get to see — read — Enderby is through the various exhibitions in all the Enderby novels. What is common, for example, is that the attendees are not part of the rest of the argument. They conveniently appear and disappear to highlight Enderby’s apparent greatness and to freeze, if only momentarily, the development of Enderby the artist: “Do not touch, Priscilla. Mr Enderby is not a thing to be prodded; he is a great poet sleeping” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 9). When the teacher strictly claims that “Enderby is not a thing to be prodded,” an inverse irony is invoked in Enderby’s treatment, precisely because he is treated as an inert thing. Enderby’s grotesque features are then mediated and enhanced by the children’s peculiar and convenient curiosity. This is especially evident through the imperative sentences followed by a proper name as in “Do not touch, Priscilla”. This call to order provokes thus a complete visualization of the poet. Take for instance the following description: “that gentle nose, Harold, is snoring. That is so, Christine; his teeth, both upper and lower, are removable: they have been removed to that plastic-jar there” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 9). The curious and distinctive description of his teeth
and mouth take the reader’s attention to the portrayal of face, just as the traditional image of the artist was made in portraits. More intriguing, however, is the emphasis on his removable teeth in “his teeth, both upper and lower”, since the mouth is the main human feature for the grotesque (Bakhtin 316). Because of its importance in the articulation and reliance of language upon them, the remarkable teeth may explain Enderby’s reliance on manipulating and moulding language as a poet. His mouth then has an important characteristic: “Enderby was suffocated by smells: sulphuretted hydrogen, unwashed armpits, halitosis, faeces, standing urine, putrefying meat – all thrust into his mouth and nostrils in squelchy balls” (Burgess Inside Mr Enderby 186). Surrounded by unpleasant smells, the mouth is a disgusting source of halitosis, an illness that provokes a hideous breath smell. In fact, it is not only acknowledged by the narrator, but by others characters too: “your breath smells horrible’ It did too. Perhaps that was the origin of sodomy: avoiding partner’s halitosis” (Burgess Enderby’s Dark Lady 630). This ironic approach is the way to take away idealisation from the poet, and to convert him into the real and grotesque body of the artist.

The following example marks Enderby in a radical opposition with greatness, but in its grotesque style, the concept is intimately introduced to the artist: “Mr Enderby. . . Ugly, hairy, fat; ah yes, he always was. . . He seems, dear dear, to have been somewhat incontinent in his sleep. Gracious, the weakness of the great!” (Burgess The Clockwork Testament 508). The retrospective approach to compare Enderby’s defects with his greatness again talk about a talent that is still obscure and unknown for the reader. The adjectives “ugly, hairy, fat” demonstrate a grotesque image of Enderby, since it focuses on unpleasant views, orifices and defects of his body. Unsurprisingly, these images are enclosed and inversely hyperbolised by the final mention of both “gracious” and
Enderby’s description as “great”. Despite the ugliness of seeing Enderby alive, the descriptions suggest that Enderby’s art is however memorable. As can be seen, the frequent emphasis on Enderby’s grotesque features distances him from an artist absorbed in a harmonious and pleasant image.

Enderby’s portrait continues to be lovingly elaborated. Descriptions include not only Enderby’s face, hair, belly but also “the extremities. (...) but the essence of the hand – what is that? A divine machine that has made our lives more blessed” (Burgess Inside Mr Enderby 11). Enderby’s hands are a depiction of his talent given by the parallel between “essence” and “machine” which speaks of the “demand for reality” (Lyotard 75) as a producer of art in the figure of Enderby. Moreover, he is worshipped through the words “divine” and “blessed”. Colloquially, “divine” is used as an intensifier, an empty hyperbole that ironically glorifies the “machine” of Enderby’s hand. Also, “divine” can be used in the original sense, associated with extraordinary, godlike attributes, in correlation with the word “blessed”, used to describe the effect of poetry on readers. But all these references are ironic, since Enderby dwindles into a false “ordinary fictional artefact” (Bergonzi “A Poet’s Life” 764). There is nothing “divine” or “blessed” about his poetry, only the past of the motif of the artist: the late Romantic and sublime tradition where the artist had heavenly powers. Most importantly, however, is the apparent power implied by the word “machine”, where we visualize the artist’s talent as an idealisation that ignores the ordinary persona behind it. The teacher, later on, asks “but what has prettiness to do with greatness, eh?” (Burgess Inside Mr Enderby 10). These questions constantly interplay contraries, prettiness with ugliness or greatness with inferiority, because they emphasise everything Enderby is: grotesque, where Enderby becomes a temporary fictionalisation inside his own fiction.
III.

Enderby’s fictionalisation is constructed within the institution of education. Art becomes dogma once it is imparted by the discourse of education, through the teacher’s assertions and through the metaphorical presence of the portrait. Through these “expeditions” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 13), readers witness Enderby’s appropriations, where for example, the teacher asserts that “yes, Mr Enderby himself is our property, the world’s property, but his carpet is his landlady’s” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 10). There is an exclusive possession of Enderby as part of a world, but on the contrary, as the second part of the sentence states, Enderby does not possess anything: “but his carpet is his landlady’s”. Moreover, in *The Clockwork Testament* (1974) the narrator also highlights Enderby’s lack of possessions: “Enderby had never got or gotten anything” (487). These different ways to appropriate the poet evidence his objectification in the form of a portrait with a certain purpose: “we are here, under the aegis of Educational Time Trips, Inc., to seek out our poet” (Burgess *The Clockwork Testament* 508). In here, the specific role of the expedition is related to corporate enterprises associated with art as a force that has conquered and manipulated the position of artists and art in society. It is feasible to refer at this point to Walter Benjamin’s essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936). In acknowledging a certain institution behind the artist’s objectification, the teacher’s interruptions speak of the artist’s loss of aura. Original pieces of art, says Benjamin, have a certain aura or essence that is destroyed once works of art are mechanically reproduced (12). Enderby exemplifies the loss of aura in the modern sense, that is: he loses the sublime, the beauty and aesthetic distinction of the artist to become a marginal poet. Furthermore, he belongs to the discourse of education and has lost, therefore, a unique and pure identity: it is precisely in this leakage that he
can embody new discourses and issues of art, beyond the constrained and modern identity. Hence, in their grandeur, portraits have become objects held in museums rather than intimate projections of the artist’s identity. Portraits therefore endure in institutions, continuously absorbing social and historical context.

IV.

Another crucial element, I want to argue, is the marginal location of Enderby. If the portrait’s “basis image is the individual” (Bakhtin 320), then the individual must occupy the centre of the portrait, or the essence of the metaphor. However, in true grotesque style, Enderby’s experience of poetry is conveniently “performed on the confines of the body and the outer world” (Bakhtin 317). Enderby creates, reads and gets inspiration in toilets, corners and cheap hotels; he dwells in margins and peripheries associated with former historical centres of ideological power, or on geographical borders. For example, “back in Morocco, as previously in England, Enderby was used to working in the toilet, piling up drafts and even fair copies in the never-used bath” (Burgess The Clockwork Testament 420). Indeed, the topography of the image is the most important feature of the grotesque style (Bakhtin 312). The artist’s location speaks of identity as well: Enderby’s location is then rigorously pertinent in the post war context and directly related to his portrayal, as shown in the following example:

Why are we here? A fair question, Pamela. What has all this to do with literature? I am very glad you asked that. Well, let me say this. Here you have expatriates of Northern rock, interwoven with the Moors and Berbers and Spanish. . . And among the exiles from the North are artists, musicians, writers. They have sinned, but they have talent. (Burgess Enderby Outside 396)
The description this time moves from the negligible space of his private room in *Inside Mr Enderby* (1963) towards the foreign and peripheral space of Morocco in *Enderby Outside* (1968). We see groups of people as “expatriates” “exiles” and within them, “artists, musicians, writers” who nevertheless “have talent”, as if their localisation changes their artistic accomplishments. In fact, Enderby repeats the idea of “outsiders” elsewhere, as in “Poetry’s made by rebels and exiles and outsiders, it’s made by people on their own” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 153). In *The Clockwork Testament* (1974), however, the city is New York, yet in its massive cultural influence, it ambiguously represents a powerless metropolis in its current state as a former British colony:

This, children, is New York. A vicious but beautiful city, totally representative of human condition. . . No, Adrian, this is no longer a British city: it is part of a great free complex of federation. (508)

New York is hyperbolised and used as a synecdoche of all “human condition”. This city then represents an intellectual and cultural power over the rest of the world, which can also be inferred by the wry reference towards a “free complex of federation” but with the particular remark that “it is no longer a British city”. Former colonies are places of neglect for those who live in oblivion as poets of *Low Art* – not recognised by popular audiences or scholars – as in the case of Enderby.

I want to illustrate the marginalised geography and by extension, scholarly and popular interest in art, with an example from *Inside Mr Enderby* (1963). Here the coast represents a metaphorical land limit: “And this sandy seaside address is the only we have. Can you hear the sea, children? It is the same sea that we know, cruel, green, corrupt” (13). The sound of the sea represents, by extension, the coast’s presence as a border. Thus, Enderby represents fellow artists that have abandoned Europe – understood as a
centrality of intellectual power – and move towards the margins or borders. By saying in fact that the sea is “the same sea that we know” the teacher bridges the gap between the artist and, what is for them, the real palpable world by including the artist into the description of “we”. The artist is continuously commemorated as a historical landmark, but ironically, he is brought to the grotesque space of the marginal and why not, quotidian space. The personification of the sea under the adjectives “cruel, green” and “corrupt” talks about those lands that were conquered as British colonies. The teacher, thus, talks about their own reality and how the artist equally belongs to that. In fact, Enderby does not occupy central towns, or main cities, neither great apartments or luxurious places to write. In turn, all his immediate surroundings are reduced, small, part of a geographical periphery or former British colonies that have stopped being part of the centrality of the British Empire, as in the case of New York.

When Enderby is invited onto a TV program, he acknowledges his lack of popularity: “Enderby, sweating hard under the lights and the awareness of his unpopularity, looked at this hard woman. . . the name, he was thinking: as artificial as the huge aureate wig” (Burgess The Clockwork Testament 474). He realises the artificiality surrounding him, but he is also taken to the centre of popularity: TV. Mass media are gaining control and power in England in the 1960s, dictating what is popular and what is not. He is then taken to the centre of attention “sweating under the lights and awareness of his unpopularity” but also paying attention to the artificiality of the hostess’ name, of her own identity. He is definitely aware that he is part of what is called Low Art, and he knows he has artificially been taken to the centre. TV acts as a medium where the dialogue between High and Low generates tension and uneasiness in the artist.
Enderby’s ironic centrality twists what is consider *High and Low Art*. In grotesque terms, Enderby manages to “degrade high literature” (Bakhtin 305) with apparent unintentionality in the following terms: in *Inside Mr Enderby* (1963), his own marginal poetry is not central despite his centrality as a character, but in turn, it is a pop singer who plagiarises one of his poems and attracts a popular audience’s attention. Hence, Vesta, an editor of a popular magazine, says the following words to the poet: “an artist needs a place in the world, he needs to be committed to something, and he needs to be in touch with the current of life . . . the feeblest teenage pop-singer is a million times more regarded than you are” (155). Her speech is contrary to Enderby’s values, especially the connection with “a place in the world” and the fact that he needs to be “in touch with current of life”, highlighting Enderby’s both marginality and isolation. Enderby then replies with the following words: “oh, I know one *is* insignificant, really, but you’ve got to ignore that if you’re to get any work done at all” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 55). Hence, in the attempt to collide with the traditional artist-novel, isolation acts as the extension of marginalisation: “I’m not the sort of man who has friends. The poet has to be alone” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 177). Enderby’s marginalisation is both secure and personal, as acknowledged by the narrator: “the outer world was not safe. He must go back home and closet himself, work at his poem”, so that “poets don’t need anybody except themselves” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 22; 153). Enderby is at the centre of the novels but in the periphery of art, isolated from popular culture, being the beginning and the end of the motif of the artist’s quest.

Enderby’s name sheds a light on the marginality of his character. In the Prefatory note to *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984), Burgess explains that one of the origins of Enderby’s name is “the remote and uninhabitable Antarctic territory called Enderby land” (526) and
Lewis adds it is a remote town associated with Burgess’s second wife (315). In his essence, therefore, Enderby is likened to an unapproachable and distant point, naturally displaced to the border and never associated with a centre. He is, also, the end or the one who ends things up if we consider the syllables “end” and “er” and the fact that “by” signifies place as it is Whitby or Selby, for example. Enderby is actually a town in the United Kingdom, but again, a small town distanced from metropolis. Whether a person, a place, or a point of convergence, “Enderby’s name” says Burgess, does “imply loneliness” (Burgess *You’ve Had Your Time* 15). In Enderby’s inability to reach a centre he cannot feel identified with a portrait, and moreover, he cannot fill the space of centrality, therefore, of *High Art.*
Chapter II

The Mirror

“He looked with interest at a naked man with spectacles on and no teeth in. This latter deficiency he fumblingly rectified. Better, but how much better?”

(Burgess Enderby’s Dark Lady 574)

I.

The framing of the artist is not reduced only to others’ observations, but also, through the mirror, Enderby tries to describe and thus mirror himself as a poet. The progression from a given portrait towards a self-reflection in the mirror is unsurprising, given the development of the portrait in history, as explained by The Oxford Companion to the Photograph. In 1849, for example, the portrait was a product of “reversed ‘mirror’ images” so that the painted image was a reflected one, but not directly the real person (“Portraiture,” def. 1a). Imbued with a specific social background, the use and addition of a mirror speaks of the falseness associated with the representation of the portrayed person that “really never existed” (Jameson 115). Indeed, one of the definitions of the mirror is “a thing regarded as accurately representing something else” (“Mirror,” def. 3a). Yet, the mirror simultaneously frames and allows movement, working with the same pattern of a portrait: representation. Indeed, in a middle stance towards identity, the mirror coercively captures movement in terms of representation and identity.

The mirror thus projects a spontaneous personal and intimate gaze that can take a myriad of forms, while the portrait remains impersonal, public and static. It is then important to consider how the mirror projects the grotesque style in the poet. Hence, “the confines dividing it [in this case, the grotesque artist] from the world are obscured,
and it is most frequently shown open and with its interior exposed” (Bakhtin 355). The grotesque blurs the radical division between the poet and his interior identity, being then “exposed”. For example, in the following interruptions by the narrator, Enderby is described suspiciously bestowing conventional middle-class attributes on his appearance: “he was pleasantly surprised by the decent gravity of the figure that bowed from the wardrobe mirror. Urban [sic], respectable, scholarly, a poet-banker, a poet-publisher, teeth a flashing two double glow” (Burgess Inside Mr Enderby 38). The act of being observed reinforces again the limitation in space through the word “urban”, but also a delimitation of action, through the subsequent divisions as “banker” and “publisher”. These adjectives gradually counter Enderby’s volatile identity as an artist, somehow foreseeing the subsequent variability of Enderby’s identity. Moreover, Enderby also remarks upon his teeth as an important feature of his description in “teeth a flashing two double glow”, thereby rendering the mirror with a similar function: representation, but this time using the mouth as a synecdoche of the entirety body of the grotesque style.

II.

Unsurprisingly self-centred, Enderby creates the following poem representing his own experience in front of a mirror:

Of man, rather. To most it seemed a mirror:
They strained their necks with gazing in the air,
Proud of those stony eyes unglazed by terror.
Though marble is not glass, why should they care?
There would be time for coughing up in error.
Someone was bound to find his portrait there. (Burgess Enderby Outside 280)
The rhyme scheme known as *Petrarchan* is used in the above poem with the pattern ABBA. This Renaissance pattern contrasts with the innovative transparency and openness regarding the artist’s appearance offered by the mirror. The anonymous “they” are presumably the poet’s audience, as if they were witnessing from behind, how the poet mirrors himself. However, they do not care for the transparency of the artist’s as seen in the rhetorical question “why should they care?” Rather, they think that the poet acts as a mirror of reality in “to most it seemed a mirror”. I would like to call the reader’s attention to the use of the mirror in this sestet as it was once used as a romance symbol. Arguably, the American writer Henry James trusted in the metaphor of the mirror to talk about imagination, not as a device to copy reality, but to reflect inner conscious processes or imagination (Greenwald 14). Burgess is aware of this tradition, and in using the metaphor to speak of the motif of the artist, he is also referring to the literary attempts to represent reality, where writers such as Henry James and Nathaniel Hawthorne, among others, have seen in the mirror the artefact that represents more faithfully their narrative style.

For Enderby, however, the issue is outrageously more complex: the mirror does allow a certain flexibility in representation, nevertheless it encloses the limits and boundaries of the reality depicted, in this case, by the artist. The sestet highlights the mirror as a facilitator of “essential elements of the grotesque” (Kayser 184): suddenness and surprise are implied by the use of “error”, which lead us to acknowledge possibility rather than a fixed framing. For Enderby, the poet errs, separates, exaggerates, diminishes reality, manipulates and transforms them into a rich form of marble that does not necessarily

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present reality faithfully and transparently: “Though marble is not glass, why should they care?” The narration then continues after the poem:

This was what happened in a humanist society. . .They worshipped themselves for being so clever, but then they were all personified in an autocratic leader like this Franco up there in Madrid. Humanism always led to totalitarianism. Something like that, anyway. (Burgess Enderby Outside 280)

Again we find the presence of an unclear “they” that belong to a “humanist society” endorsing the purpose of a massive audience that both worships and ignores artists: “they worshipped themselves for being so clever”. The reference to the “autocratic leader” refers to the presence of certain voices of power that determine the value of art and thus of poetry, as were those of education in the portrait of Enderby. This can be seen especially in critics and teachers, who are unexpectedly the ones who have objectified him. This is the same collective necessity of associating him with an image with which he must feel identified: “the strip light above the mirror suddenly granted him a grousing image of The Poet” (Burgess Enderby Outside 378). The reflected image of the poet is thus continuously revisited with the aim of reconciling it with the ideal image of The Poet with capital letters, recalling the characteristics of the sublime, late romantic and unique poet. Moreover, the above passage also suggests that artists are inevitably restricted by canonical images behind the generalising words of “totalitarianism” and “humanism”. The power and institutionalisation behind these words work upon Enderby, making of himself someone who is “governed by the institutions which in a particular society regulate the circulation of discourses” (McHale 200). In saying, moreover “something like that, anyway” the narrator focuses on the uncertain and
unstable image of the mirror. The portrait takes time and accuracy to have it done by a painter. The mirror, in turn, allows movement from different angles, yet it nevertheless delimits the image. Unlike the portrait, the mirror is indeed accessible in toilets, while the portrait had an exclusive social accessibility.

III.

In *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984), finally, we find the last image of Enderby’s failed portrayal, once again using a mirror:

> Then, naked as he was, he put on his glasses to examine himself with some care. . . But there was also the matter of a long bathroom mirror. . . Here you were cordially invited to look at yourself all over, no extra charge. He looked with interest at a naked man with spectacles on and no teeth in. This latter deficiency he fumblingly rectified. Better, but how much better? (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 574)

There is a dissociation between the man that is looking and the man that is being observed: “He looked with interest at a naked man” that is apparently there by chance, and whose only defect are his teeth, combining then the grotesque and the representation in the sentence “long bathroom mirror”. In his nakedness, in fact, Enderby is not described, but it reassures his total deployment and surrender as a poet for others in “you were cordially invited to look at yourself all over”. “He looked with interest” the variability the mirror offers, with an undoubtedly grotesque mockery of the modern artist: “with spectacles on and no teeth in” because his reflection is undoubtedly unpleasant. Enderby tries to imitate as far as possible how The Poet should look like. Hence, Enderby’s last attempt to be portrayed is done by himself, as the narration continues:
Bronzedness had a flattening effect: the Enderby that looked with interest and even faint approval out of the mirror was a less three-dimensional Enderby than the one he had occasionally seen before in the old days, that was to say, in other bathrooms. The encroaching baldness he did not approve. (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 575)

On the one hand, the use of the article “the” to refer to Enderby emphasises his use as an object-poet. On the other hand, and most importantly in the aim to mirror him, is the “less three-dimensional” Enderby reflected in the mirror. The contrast between “the flattening effect” can be associated with the profundities overlooked in an artist, in contrast with The Poet he represents and unfortunately, is not. Given the “less three-dimensional Enderby” in comparison with “the old days”, the narrator acknowledges certain profundities that have not been reached, but in turn, a grotesque approach is invoked through the use of “in other bathrooms”. The presence of the past absorbing the artist pervades then the sentence “the encroaching baldness he did not approve” as baldness is not a dignified characteristic of an artist. Artists are not easily describable in the flatness of a portrait, but in the profundities of the dimension that only the mirror permits, reaching the necessary flexibility for the identity of the poet. Hence, from the grotesque point of view, “the image consists of orifices and convexities that present another, newly conceived body” (Bakhtin 318), so that Enderby sustains the embodiment of a new understanding of his body based on the use of the mirror. Orifices and convexities are actually highlighted in Enderby’s description, as it is Enderby’s baldness and lack of teeth; characteristics that otherwise, would have been ignored or unknown from the description of the artist to maintain his greatness and empowerment.
Chapter III

The Ghost

“The dead seem to have their own way of responding to the law of libel. If anybody’s going to be made to suffer, it’s going to be me. A fellow poet” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 601).

I.

From the very beginning of the Enderby novels – the last line of the first paragraph of *Inside Mr Enderby* – we are given a hint about Enderby’s own process of representation: “to be a ghost one has first to die or, at least, be born” (9). Enderby was indeed born in a state of objectification and has been forced to shape his representation in terms of a portrait or a mirror. He has, in other words, been born and died as a modern artist, because he “must be dead before he can return” and “he must continue to be dead though he has returned” (Burke 29). Postmodernism also adds another dimension to the idea of the ghost, in the sense that it is a continual state of uncertainty: “like some unquiet ghost, [Postmodernism] can neither resuscitate itself nor decently die” (Eagleton 134), which can be easily associated with Enderby the character. Hence, to be a ghost consistently suggests the failure to portray and mirror the artist, but paradoxically, it also confirms the artist’s endurance, i.e., the ghost’s immortality. Indeed, it is only through death that authors or artists become memorable, or in other words, alive. However, “in the grotesque body. . . death brings nothing to an end” (Bakhtin 322): there is no end for Enderby. Enderby dies as a portrayed artist, but survives as a grotesque embodiment of the coherent and contained modern artist.

II.
Burgess’s assertions in the prologue to *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984) provoke an immediate and intense debate regarding authorship, which works as an extension of the ghost metaphor. In Burgess’s own words:

> His poems are, inevitably, written by myself, but only myself in disguise as Enderby. . . I have no opinion about either Enderby’s poems or Enderby himself. I do not know whether I like or dislike him; I only know that, for me, he exists. I fear that he may probably go on existing. (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 516)

Both Anthony Burgess and Enderby are ghosts of their own works. The difference between Burgess and Enderby lies in the fact that Enderby is himself a fictional character who can still be read, whilst Burgess will be inevitably be a ghost through his own inevitable death and the reading of Enderby. Arguably, Burgess is the “principle of unity” (Foucault 238), but instead of “neutralizing contradictions” (Foucault 238), he converges and embraces them in the figure of Enderby, since it is by reading Burgess’s claims that Enderby’s reading becomes ambiguous and uncertain. Burgess’s claims, however, lead us to the embracement of the ghost in the form of an author. When Burgess asserts that “he exists” he is acknowledging the power and endurance of his writing, but also recognising the vulnerability of the author to disappear with the hope to be remembered through the reading of his work. In fact, Burgess and Enderby share the same poems: “his poems are, inevitably, written by myself”, where Burgess uses “inevitably” as if Enderby were a different non-fiction persona as himself. Inside the world of fiction, Burgess implies that Enderby has plagiarised his work as well, or alternatively, that Burgess is himself an invention (Lewis 311). Burgess then asserts that Enderby is a ghost due to his endurable presence: “He will, of course, eventually die, but only because his creator will die. On the
other hand, being a fictional character, he cannot die” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 516). Once Enderby “learn[s] how to write what’s memorable” (Burgess *The Clockwork Testament* 458) he will become a ghost of his own work that comes to life with his art and through his name. By saying, then “inevitably,” “I have no opinion,” and “I do not know whether I like him or not”, Burgess creates a “dialogical ambiguity” (Burgess *You’ve had your Time* 14) with Enderby, both as a literary character and as an artist. Enderby and Burgess become “faceless creator[s]” (Burgess *You’ve Had your Time* 136), creating an unreliable and ambiguous reading of the motif of the artist.

In the Enderby novels, reality and fiction equally convolute the relation between author and text. Haffen and Regard use the term *bricolage*, in which fragmentary pieces are assembled from various fictional and historical sources to create Burgess’s fiction (143;162). Hence, Burgess himself asserted that he was a product of fictionalisation (Biswell 213) and considered he was an “innate liar” (Lewis 205) whose writing consisted in the distortion of the real world (Burgess *You’ve Had your Time* 8; Haffen 132). For example, Burgess’s tendency to twist reality can be seen in the works about others’ – fictionalised – lives, as Haffen notices (131): Burgess re-creates the life of Shakespeare in *Nothing Like the Sun* (1964), Keats in *Abba Abba* (1977), of Jesus in *Man of Nazareth* (1979), of Freud in *The End of the World News* (1982), of Mozart in *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* (1991), and of Marlowe in *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993). Shrewdly, Haffen then denominates Burgess a *vampiric* author because he extends the life of his dead artist predecessors (143). Endlessly towards the past and the present, the lives of fictional and real characters will acquire a pervading ghostly presence in the totality of the Enderby novels.
The case is, however, more complicated: there are two biographies about Burgess, Roger Lewis’s *Anthony Burgess* (2002) and Andrew Biswell’s *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess* (2005). The transition here can be taken from the titles themselves: from a journalistic view of Burgess’s life in Lewis’s towards an unreachable personal reality in a scholarly skeptical tone in Biswell. Furthermore, *Little Wilson and Big God* (1986) and *You’ve Had Your Time* (1990) are Burgess’s two autobiographies, where we will find a number of perilous contradictions. The most illustrative example in this regard considers the manipulation of names and identity indeterminacy: Anthony Burgess is in fact a pseudonym to replace John Wilson, and Joseph Kell an alternative to avoid Burgess’s over publication. Moreover, the publication of *Inside Mr Enderby* (1963) transpires within a particular situation: Burgess reviewed his own book *One Hand Clapping* (1961) in *The Yorkshire Post* in 1963, yet the book was published under the name Joseph Kell (Biswell 273; Burgess *You’ve Had Your Time* 73; Lewis 33). Unsurprisingly, Burgess ironically disregards Joseph Kell’s talent and the quality of the novel. Hence, this particular situation points up Burgess’s own playfulness and subversive notion of authorial power, “obsessively passing through multiple roles, costumes and designations” (Lewis 33).

Critical writing about the Enderby novels has adopted a single perspective, correlating the motif of the artist of Enderby and his author Anthony Burgess. For example, Lewis asserts that “Enderby is Burgess’s fictional sibling” or even emphatically “his more. . . palpable and comically ideal incarnation” (Morris 75). Bergonzi, however, emphasises the Joycean abundance of Burgess’s writings saying that Enderby is a combination of Dedalus and Bloom (“A Poet’s Life” 765). Another similar example between them two is that Enderby as well as Burgess were maligned: “the insults and obscenities were usually meant for Enderby” (Burgess The *Clockwork Testament* 409).
Burgess introduces us to Enderby’s accusation resembling his own experience with Stanley Kubrick’s version of his book *A Clockwork Orange* in 1971, and the book’s alleged responsibility for violent crimes in the US and the UK\(^5\). Even if the reader is not aware of Burgess’s biography, it is implied that these are the *real* problems a writer must face. Hence: “I share with him a nostalgia for a kind of dualism in which the freedom of spirit is better confirmed by the filth of the body . . . his visceral obsession used to be my own” (Burgess *You’ve Had Your Time* 14). Burgess’ position is uncertain: we do not know if he is being empathetic or he wants us to feel pity for a fictional character or for himself. However, Burgess’ “visceral obsession” and “filth of the body” are nothing less than his reactionary aesthetic focusing the reader’s attention on the grotesque approach to the poet’s body. Regardless their shared grotesque approach, however, they are not representations of each other, nor a mirror of themselves as Biswell and Haffen assert (220; 141). What they share, in fact, is a “grotesque realism” (Bakhtin 315) regarding the representation of the artist. “Simultaneously present and absent” (McHale 30), these two authors are presented in a “mode of ironic farce” (Lodge xviii) situated in the text as abstraction, and facilitating the symbolic embodiment of a ghost. I argue, then, just as Burke claims, that the relationship between fiction and his creator’s biography is a “ceaseless and reactive interplay” where none of them “has any claim to necessary priority” (31).

The absent presence of the figure of the author in the text touches upon the theme of authoriality as analysed by, for example, Roland Barthes’s “The Death of the Author” (1967) and Michael Foucault in “What is an author?” (1969). The Author, with a capital letter, is an authority who imbues the text with certain discourses of power: in a

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\(^5\) For a thorough account of the consequences for Burgess, see Peter Kramer’s *A Clockwork Orange* (2011).
biographical reading, his personal aesthetics and ethics enclose the text into a unique meaning. When the Author disappears, those discourses are revealed to the reader, opening a broader understanding of the text. I would like to associate this metaphorical death with the metaphor of the ghost, since biographical reading is necessary but it is by no means the end of the foray. In fact, Burke implicitly points at this idea, saying that the author is “a spectre spirited back into existence” that must be carefully assessed to avoid an “authocentric apprehension of the text” (Burke 28; 23). Furthermore, from this post-structuralist view, language acquires a primordial concern, and regardless postmodernism’s skepticism about language, it is only through language that the text acquires meaning. Language is indeed the main foundation upon which the author-writer-artist legitimates their art and it is to language that they owe their identities. I would like to take from this perspective the fact that the author does not disappear completely, but is a hybrid entity: he might or might not intrude the text, thus it would be naïve to completely ignore his influence. Burgess and Enderby’s authorships are, therefore, equally strong voices, media and sources of ambiguity, yet differently presented in the narration: Burgess is a ghost created by the reading of Enderby, and Enderby is the ghost of Burgess’s fictional voice when reading his fiction. I argue in favour of the eternal presence of the author in the form of a ghost because Burgess matures this idea through the writing of the Enderby novels, where the artist-writer-author in the motif of the artist becomes not only a bricolage, but “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (Barthes 128). This argument is strengthened by the following section, where the images of portrait, mirror and ghost collapse with the presence of the reader. III.
Unlike the rest of the enumerated chapters, the last chapter in *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984) is called “The Muse”, a science-fiction story that, we infer, Enderby writes as the culmination of his career. We only know that Paley, the main character, is a writer who desperately wants to prove the historical fact of Shakespeare’s talent. He travels to the past because “I have to know whether William Shakespeare really wrote those plays” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 649). When he knows the real – as it were – Shakespeare, he sees himself facing the patterns of a portrait, rather than a personification of the writer:

> The Droeshout portrait of Shakespeare, square in frame, the lips moving but the eyes unanimated. Paley tried to call but could not. . . Paley could do nothing; his paralysis would not even permit him to shut his eyes. The solid body became an animal shape, indescribably gross and ugly-some spiked sea-urchin, very large, nodding and smiling horrible intelligence. Paley forced it into becoming a more nearly a human shape. His heart sank in depression totally untinged by fear to see standing before him a fictional character called ‘William Shakespeare,’ an actor acting the part. (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 660)

Droeshout refers to the most famous and posthumous portrait of Shakespeare made by Martin Droeshout and published in 1623 with the First Folio. The reference to the solid image of the portrait in “square in frame” and “the solid body” contrives the ambiguous and dynamic image of the real character in “animal shape, indescribably gross and ugly-some spiked sea-urchin, very large, nodding and smiling horrible intelligence”. The grotesque style can be seen in the comparison between the artist with the “animal shape”,


and the emphasis on “gross”, “ugly” and “smiling horrible intelligence.” This comparison
generates rejection in “by fear to see standing before him a fictional character”. Paley
then claims that the patterns of a portrait contradict the human shape as two extreme
images of the same representation. The details of the “square in frame” and the
lifelessness in “the eyes unanimated” speak of the inflexibility both in form and content
of those fixed portraits of artists, or namely, the innumerable attempts to represent
Shakespeare the persona. This excerpt evokes the portrait’s historical and social
background but also its grotesque twist by comparing the writer with an animal shape.
What characterises this passage, however, is the paralysis by which Paley cannot stand the
similitude between the portrait famously associated with Shakespeare, and Shakespeare
the historical figure: “Paley could do nothing; his paralysis would not even permit him to
shut his eyes”. In his perplexity, Paley confuses him with any of the thousand actors that
have performed Shakespeare through history. Their encounter is meaningfully and
intensely confusing: Paley associates Shakespeare with innumerable people, including
performers, writers, and the thousands of scholars that have spoken on his behalf. In
fact, in his amusement, Paley cries “’You’re not real, any of you. It’s you who are the
ghosts! I’m real, it’s all a mistake, let me go, let me explain’” (Enderby’s Dark Lady 663).
Paley acknowledges that the reality he sees is that of ghosts, those who have inhabited a
physical space but are not in fact, the representation of artists he anticipated: sublime,
authorial, modern. Shakespeare then replies: “You will be a sort of ghost from this other
world you speak of” (Burgess Enderby’s Dark Lady 660). Here we found a reciprocal
allegation of falseness, where reality and fiction try to legitimise the author, Shakespeare,
and the viewer-reader, Paley. They mutually jeopardise the other’s identity, accusing and
attacking the other as an imagined and invented entity. However, and regardless of
Paley’s frustrating attempt to prove Shakespeare’s credibility, the story speaks by itself, because it finishes with Shakespeare starting to write *The Merchant of Venice* (1605) in the last lines of the plot of *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984): “Then on he went, not blotting a line” (664). Paley is indeed the reader who strives to demonstrate the closure of representation in the artist’s identity. He represents in this last chapter or short story the reader, the one who would like to know the real person behind the authorial artefact called Shakespeare.

As a reader, Paley is asked to “accept the truth of what is being said” in the name of the author, performing a continual “act of intention and interpretation” (Burke 16; 203), who refuses to relinquish. Indeed, using a science-fiction story, Burgess suggests that realistic narrative made so far might not be sufficient to account these difficulties.

IV.

Perhaps posthumous life was better than the real thing. Oh God yes, I remember Enderby, what a man. Eater, drinker, wencher [sic], and such foreign adventures. You could go on living without all the trouble of still being alive. Your character got blurred and mingled with those of other dead men, wittier, handsomer, themselves more vital now that they were dead. . . It wasn’t death that was the trouble, of course, it was dying. (Burgess *The Clockwork Testament* 439)

The word *posthumous* is here used differently from the popular term *posthumous* novel, associated with those works published after the author’s death. Inversely, the narrator refers to posthumous life as if the written art were the one that has died, and the poet continues in a life after the dissolution of his work. The comparison between posthumous narratives and “the real thing” implies the contrast between the transitional state of posthumous life and the status of artists who actually write and hope to reach an
audience with that writing. Posthumous life works then as an irony upon the state of artists, though it is uncertain what “the real thing” is, such endeavour is difficult to grasp if the artist is unknown. Enderby indeed lives a posthumous life as a professor or script writer. Nevertheless, he is still inevitably connected with poetry when the narrator says, for example, “I remember Enderby”, as if he has already disappeared from the physical world. Namely, Enderby’s attempt to survive his own written art has been as an “eater, drinker, wencher, and [having] such foreign adventures”, that is, reversing the sublime artist’s journey of wisdom into grotesque and pleasurably activities. Hence, the body images and pleasures exhaust the passage, as the grotesque style states (Bakhtin 351).

Given the contrast between “go on living” physically, and “still being alive” as a ghostly presence in his texts, Enderby has the chance to quit poetry. It is, however, thanks to his written art – language – that he feels alive, according to the sentence “you could go on living without all the trouble of still being alive”. In the next sentence, where “your character got blurred and mingled with those of other dead men”, the narrator connects Enderby with all the other artists that have been shaped according to a style, institution, or social rank. Then, in “themselves more vital now that they were dead” the narrator asserts that those dead authors are more alive because of the automatic interest that the death of authors produces in scholars and ordinary readers. In “it wasn’t death that was the trouble, of course, it was dying”, we will find, lastly, how death becomes a problem for Enderby: to what extent does the written art survive after the author’s actual death? How does the author become a ghost if there is not a definitive identity? death implies the physical process of the artist, but dying is troublesome once the work of art is forgotten or ignored. “‘The trouble is,’ said Enderby, ‘that nobody knows who’s really great till they’ve been a long time dead. The great ones, I mean. Dead, that is’” (Burgess
Enderby Outside 257). Enderby refers to “the great ones” recalling well-known authors that die but whose works are continuously being revisited, given a “mythic glamour” (Haffen 134), or in other words, despite the recognition of certain names, “nobody knows” who these names associated with High Art are. They are voids of meaning: ghosts of the motif of the artist.

V.

At this point it is important to highlight the fact that the artists’ biography is an emerging film genre in the 1950s. This is relevant for the context of the Enderby novels because it speaks of a tendency in the arts with no exception in literature: mingling fiction and reality in biographies. In cinema, then, films which merge history and fiction in the form of biographies become part of pop culture around the time that Burgess is starting to write the Enderby novels. Hence, “irrespective of historical status or social provenance,” says Higson, “the lives of these diverse authors are all transformed into tasteful, literate. . . conventional heritage films, catering for a well-defined, middle-class audience” (108). In fact, by taking historical characters into fiction, Burgess is moving those artists from the periphery to centrality and vice versa, broadening the audience and blurring the conventional boundaries between High and Low Art. Most importantly, this kind of cinema helped to create “multiple manifestations of the same author” so that “authorship” becomes a “function of writing, reading and rewriting” (Higson 112). Burgess utilises here what is a carnivalesque turn, that is, an inversion of the traditional forms of power. High and Low Art are not only debated, but deliberate and grotesquely interchanged in an unreal atmosphere (Lewis 16; Lodge xviii) characterized by hyperboles and inaccuracies in Burgess’s own mystification (Lewis 122).

VI.
Enderby survives as a ghost thanks to language and so do the rest of authors regardless their status of *High* or *Low Art*. For example, Enderby is recognised in the airport: “How did you know it was me? Recognition. I mean,” to which the airport guard replies: “there’s a book in it with your name on” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 548). His name, his poetry and his personae, take the same meaning and one whole identity. In America, in fact, when people doubt of his job, he also brings up his poems and therefore this linkage: “If you want a proof,’ Enderby said, coldly pointing to his messed-up shirts, ‘these are my poems” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 547). Note, indeed, the grotesque reference to “messed-up shirts”, as if being slovenly were a characteristic of the poet. In addition, and because he does not recognise his poems, he can be mistakenly addressed as another person: “I didn’t write that,’ said Enderby. ‘You’re getting me mixed up with somebody else” (Burgess *Enderby Outside* 386). This confusion speaks of the artificiality of assigning names, since proper names do not have fixed meanings and are also easily changeable. However, the confusion evokes both the poet’s reliance on language manipulation and his own ambiguous ghostly experience as an author. Also, language is present as the recognition given to the name “Enderby” and the language of his written poetry too. Take for example the following mixture of names:

‘I mean, damn it, it could have been William Shakespeare, couldn’t it?


‘Shakespeare’s dead,’ she said reasonably. ‘So may the other two be, whoever they are. But you’re alive. You’re here. I’ve waited a long time for this’. ‘How did you know I was there?’ ‘Irrelevant irrelevant.’

(Burgess *The Clockwork Testament* 491)
Enderby mingles the names of Shakespeare, Bridges and Grigson with his own in order to cancel the disparity between their great or High art and his own. In doing so, he defamiliarises the aura of legends, says Haffen, attributed to the great names of literature and history (136). The question “How did you know I was there?” suggests Enderby’s irrelevance once he has given up on writing: he assumes he cannot be identified. When he is told “you’re still alive” we find that he has not yet become a ghost, but he is in the process of becoming a name once he is capable of creating memorable poetry. The repetition of “irrelevant” emphasises his own marginalisation and also his meaningless name, which cannot yet be associated with those names of High Art. More intriguingly, nevertheless, is the fact that Enderby is killed after this episode. Death becomes “a moment of life” (Bakhtin 329) in the grotesque representation of the artist, so we know he is in fact in his way to become a ghost. We also know that Enderby’s Dark Lady (1984) is published after this final passage, unsurprisingly introducing the transformation of the artist-writer-author into a ghost.

When walking through London, Enderby wonders if it would be possible to have a plaque marking where he lived, as a sort of symbol of his popularity or at least, of his poems’ greatness. Certainly not, adds the narrator, because “he was one of a dying race, unregarded by the world. Hurray” (Burgess Inside Mr Enderby 18). On the one hand, Enderby is associated with a “dying race”, which means a group of outsiders and marginal artists who consciously reject the metaphorical framing in a portrait or mirror. On the other hand, he is explicitly part of the “dying” group so that the narrator acknowledges the process of the poet’s death, both as a concept and as a physical process. The last expression “Hurray” does indeed recall the grotesque, and most importantly, the wry revision of Enderby’s representation, explicitly making fun of his
decadent state. Enderby thus endures exclusion from the understanding of the traditional motif of the artist, as he himself recognises: “I’ve published my Collected Poems, to no applause. What I do in that bloody theatre or theater is nothing. Pure craft. Not so pure either” (Burgess Enderby’s Dark Lady 611). Hence, the state of ghostliness “dying” poet facilitates and endorses his own self-consciousness of his state, as can also be seen in the following example:

It is writers mostly. Up that hill lives a man who has already produced twenty-five volumes of autobiography: he tears at each instant of his pre-exilic past as though it were a prawn. Another man, on the Calle Larache, eats into his unconscious heart and mounts the regurgitated fragments on fragments of old newspaper. Another man again writes sneering satire, in sub-Popean couplets, on an England already dead. They are small artists, all. Here there is a rue Beethoven, also an avenida Leonardo da Vinci, a plaza de Sade. But no artist here will have a square or thoroughfare named for him. They are nothing. (Burgess Enderby Outside 398)

These male artists are implicitly separated into two groups: one group includes the “small artists” and the other group, we can infer, includes the most famous artists as Beethoven, Leonardo da Vinci and Marquis de Sade. The latter ones have alternatively survived as merely names, while the small ones are haunted by the past through their connection with “pre-exilic past”, “fragments of newspapers” and finally with an “England [that is] already dead”. These artists have become ghostlike because they are clinging to a phantasmagorical presence that distances them from the present. However, those renowned names are the only survival feature, although their works of art are not
immediately associated, if ever discussed, within the superficiality of the name. In fact, their names present a void of meaning so that “they are nothing.” It is precisely by naming streets, centres of arts and buildings with names of artists that they are revisited as marks of “originary absence” (Burke 226). Elsewhere, Enderby also blurs this line between his “dying race” and another indeterminate one, saying for example, that “both politicians and pop-singers,” Enderby said, ‘are boils on the bottom of the body” (Burgess Enderby Outside 368). Enderby directly associates those who are nothing, including himself, with “the bottom of the body”, emphasising the grotesque approach by which he understands the motif of the artist. The following poem by Enderby in Enderby’s Dark Lady (1984) reinforces his own state of false glorification and superficiality:

My name in the sky
   Burning for ever
   Fame fixed by fate
   Never to die
   At least I feast on that dream
   The gleam of gold, my fortunes mounting high. (639)

The theme of the poem is the superiority of the name over the figure of the poet. Hence, “the name in the sky” is an omnipotent force that lives in perpetual fame. The alliteration of the sound /f/ in the line “Fame fixed by fate” recalls the voiceless sound as a voiceless belief. But the justification to be remembered is given by the last two lines and the dreamy obsessions with economic benefits in “At least I feast on that dream/The gleam of gold, my fortunes mounting high.” This recognition is not given by the richness or deepness of the work of art. “Gold”, “high” and “fortunes” are ironic and inverse hyperboles of the lack of economic rewards that artists receive, despite the popularity of their names. Consequently, their infiniteness as ghosts is implied of the words “sky”, the
phrase “for ever” and the line “never to die”. As can be seen, Enderby is uninterested now in his own portrayal, yet he is focused on his own ghostly experience diminished to the absurd glorifications of “names in the sky”.

The idea of an interminable experience is also present in the rest of the novels, as when Vesta asserts that: “Enderby in a void. Enderby spinning round and round in an eternal lavatory” (Burgess Inside Mr Enderby 135). The “void” defines Enderby as a spectre, and by extension, as a presence that might be related with a ghost. In this respect, McHale asserts that it is in the tension between “existent” and “non-existent” that a metaphor is possible (133), reasserting Enderby’s capacity to portray that metaphorical task. Again, the infiniteness of an “eternal” and endless “lavatory” presents Enderby’s grotesque experience as a permanent state. Thus, the artist’s remembrance is achieved not merely through their work’s greatness, but through the infinite adaptability of the name. Burgess, suspiciously addressing the reader in the prologue to Enderby’s Dark Lady (1984), claims in this regard the following:

It seems that fictional characters, though they sometimes may have to die, are curiously immune to death. Is Don Quixote dead or alive? Is Hamlet? Is Little Nell? Enderby’s demand to be resurrected has come inconveniently, for I am engaged on a longish novel about Nero and St Paul. (515)

Enderby is ambiguous because he is both “immune to death” and also he “may have to die” inside the reality of the fiction. We know Enderby’s infinite existence and recognition is possible because of his written art, as we have seen previously, so too are the cases of “Don Quixote” and “Hamlet”. Their authors, Miguel de Cervantes and Shakespeare, are recurring names whose infinite repetitions have led them to signify nothing, to become ghosts of High Art. In fact, Foucault asserts that these type of
authors are “initiators of discursive practices” (240). Their names speak of the status of *High Art* in contrast with Enderby’s marginalised art. They are all, however, ghosts.

Furthermore, in Enderby’s “demand to be resurrected”, he is a fictionalised character acknowledging his susceptibility to an Author-God. By extension, we can relate Burgess’s power to “resurrect” Enderby with his own consciousness of the transcendent and omnipresent authority circumscribed in a Christian belief: God, Burgess, sent his son, Enderby, to grotesquely represent the artist and save the rest of authors from repetitive narrative treatments for artists.

When Enderby dies and his body is presumably discovered by the school expedition at the end of *The Clockwork Testament* (1974), we find the following poem:

> The work ends when the work ends,
> Not before, and rarely after.
> And that explains, my foes and friends,
> The spiteful burst of ribald laughter. (509)

“The work” refers to written work or to an art piece, having a limited time in collective memory. The absent presence of names is implied when the lyrical speaker says the work ends “rarely after” with the aid of language. The readers, or “foes and friends”, are an unreliable audience who easily forgets content and names. Then, “the spiteful burst” is possible with the grotesque “laughter” made by the “ribald”, a *carnivalesque* poet who embodies the grotesque style and laughs at the endurance of meaningless names related with *High Art*. It is an ironic twist, however, since *The Clockwork Testament* (1974) is not the end for the character of Enderby. Enderby then does not end, but continues living as a ghost in fiction “exceeding the limits” (Foucault 241) of his author’s work in the next novel.
Enderby mentions “Dedalus” in *Inside Mr Enderby* (16) and “Mr Prufrock” in *Enderby Outside* (391), using a proper name rather than the whole title to evoke T.S. Eliot’s poem *The Love song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1915), to whom he also refers as the one who “had started all that” in *Inside Mr Enderby* (32). Finally, the narrator makes an indirect reference to the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges: Enderby remembers a “story by that blind Argentinian he had been urged to read” (Burgess *The Clockwork Testament* 408) whom we know Burgess personally met according to his autobiography (*You’ve had Your Time* 352). This ghostly presence – the sudden appearance and disappearance of these names – pervades the Enderby novels. At the narrative level, these intertextual relations illustrate the power of these names, who can be directly related with works of art who belong to *High Art*. At the thematic level, we find that intertextuality is also indirectly referred by other characters. For example, Rawcliffe, in talking about the poet’s life, says that the poet “has drunk the milk of paradise, but it has long passed through his system, Enderby, and unfortunately for him, he remembers the taste” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 159). Rawcliffe’s reference to drink “the milk of paradise” is a direct reference to the final line in the Romantic Poem by Samuel Coleridge, *Kubla Kahn* (1816). This final line refers to the sublime artistic creativity in the form of extreme imagination: the access to paradise is possible through the exalted idea of the artist in a rhapsodic, visionary, and narcotic state. The line also speaks of the bodily pleasure of drinking and by extension, of experimenting with drugs: a grotesque idea that again pervades the novel. In fact, the use of “milk” to signify a drug or new feeling has already been employed by Burgess in *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). “Unfortunately” the poet has rendered this tradition, and in remembering “the taste” the poet is aware of the Romantic exaltation but is disappointed
once he does not possess the same social and political hierarchy The Poet used to have. Indeed, this is not the only reference in the novels to a Muse or to Romantic poets.

From the Hellenic tradition of poets, the Muse has served as the inspirational source from which Romantics felt identified with too, but for them she was only reachable through great poetic imagination. The Muse in the Enderby novels is indeed a woman whom Enderby interprets as the source of his inspiration. She appears every time he is about to write a poem. The Muse directly addresses Enderby, guiding him into the rise of self-consciousness regarding his own process of representation:

‘You lack courage. You’ve been softened by somebody or something. You’re frightened of the young and the experimental and the way-out and the black dog. When Shelley said what he said about poets being the unacknowledged legislators of the world, he wasn’t really using fancy language. It’s only by the exact use of words that people can begin to understand themselves.’ (Burgess Enderby Outside 381)

The Muse recalls the attempt that Enderby has gone through in order to be represented beyond the portrait. As a poet, he has been manipulated being both “softened” and “frightened”. The Muse also tries to take Enderby down to earth rather than cherishing an image of the Romantic poet. To illustrate this, the Muse explicitly wields the image of the Romantic poet Shelley, recalling then the image of the artist as a seer that the Romantics variously endorsed. Yet, as “legislators of the world” poets incarnate a political superiority which Enderby is clearly not part of. In turn, the last sentence “it’s only by the exact use of words that people can begin to understand themselves” implies that Enderby reaches a new awareness through language, given the emphasis on “words”, “understand” and the turn towards “themselves”. It is in the power and the substance of
poetry, as a work upon language, that the poet surpasses himself in a portrait, so that artists “can begin to understand themselves”. Thus, the presence of the Romantics Shelley, Coleridge and the Muse, speaks of Burgess’s sceptical approach on the mystification and glorification of the poet. Furthermore, their presence acts as a ghostly remembrance of the Romantic tradition in an intertextual relation. The Romantic intertextual reading is an apparition that recalls the imagined and glorified motif of the artist but also, it illustrates the progressive debasement of great names of High Art that become repetitive and infinitely meaningless.

VIII.

Enderby’s then initiates a new phase of the identity quest due to the unsatisfactory results given by the portrait and the mirror. Enderby embraces what I call Post Identity: a relentlessly interchange of names, which speaks of a fearless reliance on the manipulation of language, and of the versatile ghost that cannot be identified with a single portrait.

One of the most representative episodes of the interminable transitions among identities is when Enderby voluntarily gives his passport away in Enderby Outside (1968). Enderby says “I’m entitled to an official identity of some sort,” to which the narrator adds “but was he? And, if so, why? . . . anyway, did bearing a name matter?” (364) Enderby is confident that he should be given a certain identity, though it is uncertain which one he desires. The significance of having a well-known name related with High Art is challenged through the ghostly experience of the author by saying “anyway, did bearing a name matter?” However, we do not know if it is Enderby or the narrator who is the one thinking about the significance of names. Moreover, the role of an institution that provides such is implied too, especially with the use of the word “official”. It is the
name thus, in its plurality and adaptability, the sign that provides the necessary shallowness for the artist in order to perilously alter identities and hamper representation.

The first name Enderby acquires is Hogg, as part of Enderby’s “rehabilitation from failed suicide to useful citizen” (Burgess *Enderby Outside* 216). Hence, poetry must be part of the past and so should be the name Enderby. The narrator explains this further: “My name is Enderby-Hogg.” It was part of the process of his cure; a gently contrived change of identity” (Burgess *Inside Mr Enderby* 192). Interestingly, the abandonment of the name Enderby is a frustrated attempt to abandon a state of insanity correlated with the world of creativity (Kayser 184). Furthermore, Kayser explains that creativity and imagination are circumscribed inside the “estranged world” of “madness”: “the basic experience of the grotesque” (184). At the beginning, the names Enderby and Hogg interconnect in the person of the poet, but eventually the name Hogg disappears, and Enderby embodies the grotesque rather than the sanity of a world without creativity. The contradiction implied by the adjectives “gently contrived” in the “change of identity” allow a transitory identification as a ghost. As the narration continues, Enderby as a name is further fragmented and it progressively disappears. It is worth quoting in full what Enderby—or Hogg—says about this process:

‘Enderby,’ said Hogg, ‘was the name of a prolonged adolescence. The characteristics of adolescence were well-developed and seem likely to go on for ever. There was, for instance, this obsession with rebelliousness towards religion and society. . . The poetry was a flower of that adolescence,’ said Hogg. ‘It still remains good poetry, some of it, but it was a product of an adolescent character. I shall look back
with some pride on Enderby’s achievement. Life, however, has to be lived.’ (Burgess Inside Mr Enderby 195)

Enderby’s “prolonged adolescence” refers to the unavoidable process of growing, but beyond the artist’s maturity journey enhanced in the artist-novel, it refers to the discovery of new possibilities of identity just after suicide⁶. “Adolescence” refers also to a naïve stage associated with creativity and therefore, insanity in the grotesque style. Indeed, growing means the abandonment of a dream-like reality, while in turn, implying the metaphor of the ghost, Enderby becomes part of a dream-like too. Later on, “the characteristics of adolescence were well-developed” suggests a strong relation with the adolescent rebelliousness found in Joyce’s Dedalus. The sentence “and seem likely to go on for ever” precisely refers to the eternal endurance of the ghost representation specifically due to the emphasis on “for ever”. When the narrator says that “life, however, has to be lived,” he offers an ironic contradiction: life, from a chronological viewpoint, must continue behind the name of Enderby, and by extension, living as a ghost means to leave behind the superiority associated with names. “I shall look back with some pride on Enderby’s achievement” acknowledges the poet’s historical awareness of the past by “looking back”, and conveys to the reader a sense of the comradeship and empathy between the two authors, Burgess and Enderby.

Another name Enderby acquires is that of Rawcliffe, to whom I have already referred to: we know Rawcliffe plagiarised Enderby’s poems, so that the ghost of Rawcliffe appropriates some part of Enderby’s own identity. Indeed, these two characters intermingle in the light of an interconnected concept: death and the prevalence of art

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⁶ For a full insight about the cult of artists into suicide, see The Savage God: A Study of Suicide (1974) by A. Alvarez.
over the author. Hence, in his anxiety at making permanent his variability as a poet, Enderby tries to keep Rawcliffe\(^7\) alive. Rawcliffe is ill and close to death, but Enderby, despite knowing of Rawcliffe’s plagiarism, takes care of him: “It’s not your job to keep me alive, is it, Enderby?... You’ve no bloody idea,’ he said with slow seriousness, ‘of the bloody agony. You wouldn’t think it possible. Don’t leave it too long, Enderby” (Burgess *Enderby Outside* 353). Rawcliffe’s agony in dying is of concern for Enderby: both men looked for permanent visibility disregarding their own persona. However, Rawcliffe deliberately gave up his own identity by presenting Enderby’s poems as his own, betraying the permanence of the work of poetry and therefore metaphorically falling on deaf ears. Naturally, Rawcliffe has to die without the glory of the poet, because he has abandoned the essence of art: communicating his name through, in this case, the written word. However, the relation between Enderby and Rawcliffe continues after Rawcliffe’s death, because Enderby depicts a ghost by adopting others’ names and by possessing others’ identities. For example, Enderby re-appropriates Rawcliffe with his own possessions, wearing a “swordstick, also formerly Rawcliffe’s property” (Burgess *The Clockwork Testament* 439). Also, as a ghost, his name is interchangeable with the fellow poet’s: “’What do you think Rawcliffe?’ ‘I really have no opinion in the matter,’ said Enderby” (Burgess *Enderby Outside* 368).

IX.

The following changes of names are briefly if even temporarily given to Enderby. In his ghostly experience of being, Enderby “mocks the whole Shakespeare industry” (Cullinan 220) but especially, “the academic institutionalisation of Shakespeare” (Bergstrom 11).

\(^7\) Due to Burgess’s concern for language, we might associate Rawcliffe’s name with the origin from Old English meaning ‘Red Cliff’. Hence, Rawcliffe might also be related with a poet of the border, but this time, with the inevitable border of the cliff and subsequent abrupt and forced decadence given by his physical death and lack of popularity. Also, Rawcliff is a small town in England, just like Enderby is.
Burgess in fact wrote a novel about Shakespeare entitled *Nothing like the Sun* in 1964 and a biographical and critical study called *Shakespeare* in 1970. Indeed, speculation, hypothesis, fantasy and fiction of Shakespeare is arguably, fiction of English culture. Particularly, I argue that the use of Shakespeare refers to art’s transcendentalism in the form of a ghost, yet it reflects upon the frustration and hyperbolic glorification of certain artists’ names associated with *High Art*, directly addressing also, the power, use and abuse of language.

No longer as a poet, but as a scriptwriter, Enderby is told to write a cinema adaptation about Shakespeare’s life in *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984). Here, Burgess mingles author, performer and artist by balancing the figures of both Enderby and Shakespeare: “He pointed at Enderby, or Shakespeare” (643), and also when the power of authorship is questioned, as “‘A sonnet. A sonnet. He takes out a sonnet. Shakespeare didn’t write this sonnet. I did.’ Enderby enWilled himself again’” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 582).

Most significantly, *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984) centres on Shakespeare as a disturbing representation, not merely as the “voice of literature itself” (Regard 162), but as the voice of language, power and art, by being in constant tension with Enderby as a writer and both, as authors. Unsurprisingly, in a 1971 interview Burgess asserts that Shakespeare is not only an important historical and literary figure, but he indeed “made the English language. . . that is the English we’ve got” (“Anthony Burgess speaks: 1971”). Burgess’s playfulness with Shakespeare name also recalls for Burgess’s reliability on English language. Also, Shakespeare is undoubtedly a name of *High Art*, but his name has nevertheless lost meaning in similar conditions to those of Enderby. “His [Enderby’s] or Shakespeare’s heart beat hard and hot” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 642). And yet the game begins in an overwhelming play with syllables, articulating endless possibilities of combination and therefore in a negligible hierarchy between one and the other author:
“Will Enderby” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 581), “Enderspeare” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 581), “Shakesby” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 582), “Shenderspeare” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 583) and “Spearesby” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 583). The variations on the name of Enderby and Shakespeare suggest, once again, the term *bricolage*, since words are seen as fragments with which Burgess can play and manipulate, creating and destroying fictional characters. For example, we find an intruder name, that of “Anthony”, in “And that fag Oldfellow as you rightly call him is not Shakespeare or Anthony either” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 612), where Burgess might be including himself into this mixture of artist-writer-authors. Furthermore, the name William is also manipulated: it loses the connotation of art and becomes a mere pun with which the narrator enjoys himself, as when he says that “Enderby felt he himself was there as for the reading of a will, which in a sense he was” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 550). “Will” implies willingness and William Shakespeare, but it is also a noun, a will that Enderby receives as the heir of the tradition of modern idealisation.

As a ghost, Enderby also appropriates Shakespeare’s body when conveniently, the actor performing him disappears from the theatre. Enderby is the only one who knows the dialogue and uses, interestingly, his mouth: “Enderby as Shakespeare went on stage and opened mouth but no words come out” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 633). The intertextual relation with Shakespeare’s own experience of performing is clear. However, it is interesting that Enderby also enacts a ghostly possession of Shakespeare’s body: “So I get up on that stage as William Shakespeare” (Burgess *Enderby’s Dark Lady* 636). Though lacking the mystique, Enderby, acts on Shakespeare’s behalf and communicates through his body, using his words through the poet’s mouth. I argue that it is at this moment that Burgess challenges the futile usefulness of great names, as well as the
interminable congresses, books, presentations and studies of Shakespeare that have been created around a scholarly construction of the artist. The name “Shakespeare” is a victim of the “transcendental genius”, Cullinan says, “that excludes the value of [Shakespeare’s] plain hard work” (217). The narrator actually refers to these useless and innumerable approaches to Shakespeare:

A musical play on the career of William Shakespeare to celebrate. . . the second American centennial conjoined with the three hundred and sixtieth anniversary of Shakespeare’s death. It was not immediately clear what connection there could be between death of a poet and the birth of a sort of nation (Burgess Enderby’s Dark Lady 543).

The narrator shows his unease with the relation between the “death of a poet” and a “sort of nation” because Shakespeare has not only become a ghost, but a void where any meaning can be easily planted. Unsurprisingly, Enderby then concludes he is “‘a mask, a copy, a travesty. The poet turned into a motley to the view. You have heard of the A-Effect? Alienation. I am not Shakespeare, he is not Shakespeare. We mock, we defy, we admit absurdities” (Burgess Enderby’s Dark Lady 639). Enderby ironically abuses the name of Shakespeare by revisiting his power as an artist; but his powerlessness as a historical and now a pop figure has been detrimental to his art: multiple, contradictory and chaotic meanings can possess him. Burgess is compelled, in this sense, to acknowledge and question the saturation of literary names such as Shakespeare by grotesquely dissolving his idealised attributes. Names then mystify the figure of the author and endorse their ghostliness, regardless of the association of Shakespeare with High Art and Enderby’s with Low Art. In their shallowness, names evoke, transform and mystify. They endorse and encourage the artist’s ghostly motif.
X.

I would like to examine, finally, the closing lines of *Enderby’s Dark Lady* (1984). This example reinstates the confusion and superficial change of identities, but most significantly, it resumes the device of the mirror, this time with an interesting twist:

Well, Enderby said stoutly, ‘poetry has to go on. Nobody wants it, but we have to have it. There’s something else I have to write first, though. A little story. Leave Well Alone or Leave Will Alone, some such title. About Shakespeare. If he’ll allow it.’ ‘You wanna get that stuff off?’ the dresser asked. Meaning the beard and the wig and the 5 and 9. Shakespeare looked at Enderby from the mirror and coldly nodded” (646).

Poetry goes on with the name of Enderby, and with a posthumous piece of written work. Given the play with “Will” and “Well”, the narrator does not abandon the ghost of Shakespeare. Enderby and Shakespeare are, more than historical figures that belong to the past of poetry, examples of names that can be remembered and mistakenly recognised. Hence, the use of fake “beard and the wig” brings alive a ghostly and artificial atmosphere: the spectre of the author appears in the narration as the climax of a terror story, where the ghost is standing just in front of Enderby: “Shakespeare looked at Enderby from the mirror and coldly nodded”. The presence of the author then becomes “mysterious, overloaded, oneiric” (Burke 182) in a literary cliff-hanger that speaks of both representation and the motif of the artist, where the inexplicable ghost acquires the central attention. The hair-raising sentence pushes the encounter as a paranormal experience in which the mirror reflects the ghost: from a radical satiric grotesque world of representation, we see the movement towards a “fantastic grotesque of the oneiric
world” (Kayser 186): “Shakespeare looked at Enderby from the mirror”. Hence, the mirror reflects them both in their indistinctiveness and in their movement. There is space for both, no matter the name and no matter who we are reading to. Hence, Shakespeare “coldly nodded” entails that they have both survived as ghosts and they both approve it, so that “the grotesque instils fear of life rather than fear of death” (Kayser 185). Writers must be scared of living, because that is when they perish and easily vanish. Being death, however, they and their art are memorable. Furthermore, Enderby acknowledges how “the theory of authorship too has its tenebrous place in our sense of human destiny and its narratives” (Burke 198), offering a horror climax that distances from all the rest of the Enderby novels, abandoning “the ideal of pure mimesis” (Burke 43). This indistinguishability between artist-writer-author in the form of a ghost take the form of character of Enderby, because “it’s going to be me. A fellow poet” the one who “is going to suffer” through debasement and sudden shock. Indeed, “the dead seem to have their own way of responding to the low of libel” (Burgess Enderby’s Dark Lady 601), and that is, through the ambiguous personification of the artist in his personae.
Conclusion

Anthony Burgess’s Enderby novels are a rhapsody of meta-narrative and artistic self-awareness; different and unreliable voices work upon cinema, literature, pop-culture, Modernism, Romanticism, Postmodernism. They all converge in Enderby. He embodies an elusive identity rooted in the post war context that expands towards post identity.

Enderby ends up as a ghost, but first he had to be born, and develop his own powerless condition as artist. Fascinating and complex, Burgess’s imprecision or failure to give us a clear depiction of the artist is intriguing. The novels, in their theme and language, extends endlessly, so that Enderby is both the point of departure and the final destination. He makes visible the constraints, passing through anxiety, redemption and manipulation.

Joyce’s ghost is there, as well as all the other sources and fragments that find a shelter in Enderby. We learn that there is no end for the artist, that death is a stage and that multiple frames can delineate the ultimate absent presence of the artist. We also know that paradoxically, Enderby is not subversive, but in continuous movement, he will be evolving, travestying, reversing, questioning, affecting. We also learn that Burgess laughs at the transition, and plays with the reader presence by including him as Paley, or by assuming that we expect a special treatment for Shakespeare. At the same time, Burgess refuses to give us answers to the question of the artist; we are mischievously teased as readers: where we expect representation we are offered a void. In fact, we witness the journey of a reversed portrait: the frame progressively loses strength and so do the margins. We know the inside of Mr Enderby the poet in Inside Mr Enderby (1963), then the outside of someone simply named Enderby in Enderby Outside (1968). Then we lost track in a testament in The Clockwork Testament (1974) and the supposedly final episode in his life that is not an end in Enderby’s end. Finally, we are presented with a dark lady in
Enderby’s Dark Lady (1984): outrageously chaotic, we lose Enderby’s exclusivity and we focus on two margins: “dark” and “lady” are two words detonating and foreseeing future debates in literature. High or Low, inside or outside, Enderby is inevitably including and excluding; juxtaposing opposites, and precisely pointing at those crossings as points of convergence and debate between the reader and the text.
Works Cited

Dictionary Entries


Works by Burgess


Works by others


