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Title Sheet

Anthony Mannix: 'The Atomic Book'

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Gareth Sion Jenkins, Bachelor of Arts (Psychology), Master of Science
(Psychology), Bachelor of Creative Arts (Honors, 1st Class)

Faculty of Creative Arts, School of Journalism and Creative Writing

2008

Thesis Certification

CERTIFICATION

I, Gareth Sion Jenkins, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.

Gareth Sion Jenkins

27 March 2008

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Abstract

This thesis is the first and only investigation, academic or otherwise, of the oeuvre of the internationally recognised Australian Outsider Artist Anthony Mannix (1953-). Virtually unknown as a writer, it is this aspect of his practice that will be the focus of this thesis.

The central argument of this thesis is that, whilst Mannix's writing displays the extreme level of idiosyncratic thinking commonly associated with the work of Outsider Artists, it retains many traces of the literary, artistic and social environment in which he lives. Such traces are defamiliarised by his experience of schizophrenia and the episodes of psychosis that provide much of the subject matter for his texts. Rational language is refigured by madness in what Mannix calls his "outsider writing". It is argued that such writing presents a dialogue between madness and reason, resisting the propensity (as elucidated by Michel Foucault) of rationality to silence the voice of the insane. Mannix cites the work of Antonin Artaud as influential on his own ideas. This thesis contextualises Mannix's point of view in relation to theorists (predominantly post-structuralist and "anti-psychiatric") for whom Artaud was also influential in defining notions of madness.

Chapter One discusses the construction of 'The Mannix Atomic Book Digital Archive' ('The Atomic Book'), to which this thesis is designed as companion. The archive has been created to facilitate the detailed study of Mannix's writing; almost entirely unpublished, such work is predominantly held in singular volumes unavailable to the public. Thus, it is to the archive itself that many of the Mannix quotations discussed by this thesis are referenced. The archive contains digital versions of seventy-two artists' books (numbering in excess of four thousand pages), sound recordings, a video work and biographical material.

Chapters Two and Three discuss Mannix's engagement with the central theme of his work, madness. Chapter Two examines the influence of schizophrenia, and particularly psychosis, on Mannix's artistic world-view. Here he consciously situates himself within the lineage of Art Brut and Outsider Art as a shamanic figure documenting his own personal unconscious "cosmology".

Chapter Three discusses Mannix's dialogue with psychiatry. Mannix's oeuvre, what he terms his "book of life", can be read as a "speculative narrative" which counters the rational narratives with which psychiatry has attempted (in over twenty years of contact) to re/write him in a manoeuvre that sees the medical profession characterise the patient as an unreliable narrator of their own experience.

Chapter Four is focused on the second dominant theme within Mannix's work: the erotic. Mannix's psychotic episodes are often highly erotic in nature and the unconscious landscapes Mannix explores are dominated by erotic happenings and images. It is often through the erotic that Mannix experiences the subject / object confluence characteristic of schizophrenia, and the manner in which art-making facilitates such erotic unions is outlined.

The final two chapters of the thesis, Five and Six, rather than drawing from many works simultaneously, are dedicated to a close engagement with a selection of individual books and creative series produced by Mannix. Here it is the manner in which texts operate as narratives in their own right that is the focus of analysis. Chapter Five discusses the following texts: The Machines, or a Concise History of the Machine (as far as I know them...)....; Erogeny: a book of fables about Rozelle Lunatic Asylum, The Skull, The Chambers and The Demise.

Chapter Six focuses on what Mannix calls his novel, The Light Bulb Eaters. It is within this, his longest written work, that Mannix suggests he most comprehensively sets out his unconscious cosmology. Mannix details his "schizophrenic trek", a journey into the underworld of the unconscious in pursuit of the "power" required to take control of the very landscapes through which he moves. Ultimately, Mannix seeks release from this death-like realm; in order to achieve such a resurrection he must, literally, bring his artwork to life and this becomes the definitive aim of his entire oeuvre.

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www.vitalpoetics.com

‘Anthony Mannix: Translator of Strange Occurrences’. 2008 Adelaide Biennial Catalogue, Published by the Museum of South Australia.

‘Reality: A “Relatively” Private Anagram’ (Chapter Publication), Creativity, Madness and Civilization. Ed.: Richard Pine. Newcastle UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007.

‘Narratives of Self: ‘the missing piece / in the jigsaw of sanity’: Antonin Artaud, Anthony Mannix, Sandy Jeffs, Geoff Prince, Graeme Doyle and Francis Webb’, Catalogue essay in the publication, ‘For Matthew & Others: Journeys with Schizophrenia’. Sydney: University of NSW in association with Campbelltown Arts Centre and Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Penrith, 2006.

‘Anthony Mannix: A Being of Art’, artist’s profile in the publication, ‘For Matthew & Others: Journeys with Schizophrenia’. Sydney: University of NSW in association with Campbelltown Arts Centre and Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Penrith, 2006.

Sections of this thesis have been presented as papers at the following conference events:

2006 – University of NSW, College of Fine Arts (COFA). Conference: ‘For Matthew & Others: Journeys with Schizophrenia’: Paper entitled: “Anthony Mannix: ‘I am a playboy of the garbage tin but in it are the sun and moon.’”

2006 – University of Newcastle, ‘Critical Animals: Creative Research Symposium’. Paper entitled: ‘Anthony Mannix and The Atomic Book’.

2006 – University of Princeton (American Comparative Literature Association conference: ‘Human and Its Other’). Paper entitled: ‘Anthony Mannix: Riding the Beast Side-saddle – Resisting the Normal’.

2005 – The Durrell School of Corfu (Conference: ‘Madness and Creativity’): Paper entitled: ‘Reality: A ‘Relatively’ Private Anagram’.

2004 – University of Technology, Sydney (The Sydney Poetry Seminar). Paper entitled: ‘The Poetic Worlds of Antonin Artaud, Unica Zurn and Francis Webb’.

2004 – University of Wollongong (‘Vital Poetics Seminar Series’): Paper entitled: “The ‘above and the beyond of signs’: Towards a Schizophrenic Poetics”.

“I am a playboy of the garbage tin but in it are the sun and the moon.”

Anthony Mannix.

Introduction

A Playboy of the Garbage Tin.

The work of the Australian art-maker Anthony Mannix (1953-) has evolved over the past twenty-five years to include writings, drawings, paintings, sculptures and sound recordings. He is an internationally recognised Outsider artist and has exhibited in Australia, Europe and the United States of America.¹ Diagnosed with schizophrenia in the mid-1980s, Mannix's written work centres on the documentation and investigation of his experiences of 'madness' and, what is for him, madness' implicit creativity. Intensely emotional, philosophical, erotic and visionary, his creative expression has never been explored in an academic context. This thesis will focus on certain works contained in seventy-two artists' books produced by Mannix, which communicate, through textual (and at times pictographic) means his idiosyncratic world-view. The private nature of this work, in both its content and physical accessibility, required the construction of 'The Mannix Atomic Book Digital Archive' (a work of original digital scholarship in its own right) to which this thesis is designed as companion.²

The artists' books of Anthony Mannix contain writings in numerous forms, including diary, prose-poetry, short story, social commentary, philosophical observation and pictorial contextualisation.³ Mannix's work is predominantly an exploration of his experience of psychosis through which he gains access to the unconscious, erotic landscapes into which he travels. Thus Mannix writes: "my desire has always been paramount and fanatical to reach the 'core' of the unconscious via psychosis and chaos"

¹ For a full list of exhibitions see Appendix 1 of this thesis.

² The vast majority of the work discussed in this thesis is unpublished. It is held in singular artists' books privately stored in the artist's premises, which is not open to the public. Quotations from books contained in 'The Mannix Atomic Book Digital Archive' (supplied as a CD-Rom with this thesis) are organised and searchable via the quotation's 'Mo' (Mannix object) reference number (click the 'Select Mannix object' link on the digital archive 'home' page and type the required object number in the space provided). Each 'Mo' number pertains to a particular digital object (book/documentary material/sound recording/video work) stored in the archive. All books (and documentary material) are in Portable Document Format (PDF) and the page numbers that appear in the thesis references after the book title pertain to the PDF page from which that specific quotation was taken. All PDF files require 'Adobe Reader' to run. All sound and video works require the 'Quicktime' program to run. The construction, organisation and significance of this archive will be discussed in detail in Chapter One of this thesis. The archive will here after be referred to as 'The Atomic Book'.

³ Details of writings thus far published by Mannix can be found in Appendix 2 of this thesis.

(Mo046: Light 46).⁴ For Mannix, madness, the unconscious and the erotic are central aspects of human experience that are intimately linked.

Mannix's wide range of (often acknowledged) direct influences includes 'mainstream' artistic movements such as Surrealism, as well as a plethora of historical and contemporary Outsider artists. Mannix is also familiar with theorists of Art Brut such as Jean Dubuffet and Outsider Art such as Roger Cardinal.⁵ References to Ancient Greek, Egyptian and Biblical mythology and the writings of psychiatry, anti-psychiatry and psychoanalysis (with particular emphasis on the work of Carl Jung) also feature in Mannix's texts. Mannix refers to, or appropriates, the work of contemporary authors of fiction and history such as Antonin Artaud, D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, William S. Burroughs and Trevor Ravenscroft. Mannix's creative output is also influenced by popular culture and events, advertisements and pornography. Such influences seem to conflict with the claim made for Art Brut (the artistic tradition within which Mannix situates himself) by its founder Jean Dubuffet: a 'pure' art of the insane "unscathed by artistic culture" (35). This thesis will investigate the rich interplay between Mannix's creative expression and his sources of inspiration in order to elucidate his schizophrenic cosmology, analysing the manner in which Mannix's treatment of language and external stimuli intentionally voices rather than silences his madness. Hence, this thesis will argue that Mannix's work presents a dialogue between madness and reason and thus constitutes one articulation of the "common language" existent between such states, a common language that Michel Foucault suggests "modern man" has lost (Madness xii).

Dubuffet's conception of those creators who experience mental illness owes much to the view of madness and artistry in the Romantic era. Writing of the notion of artist as "Romantic outsider", Joanne Cubbs suggests: "Romantics finally equated creativity with madness, asserting that insanity was an exemplary mode of genius and a heroic form of opposition to both social and artistic conformity" (78). Such a conception of madness as an "exemplary mode of genius" is present in Western culture at least as far back as Plato

⁴ Mannix describes an experience of psychosis in a radio interview, which can be found in the 'Sound Works' section of 'The Atomic Book', listed as Mo116.

⁵ Mannix speaks of his discovery of Roger Cardinal's book Outsider Art and the artists mentioned within it in a radio interview which can be found in the 'Sound Works' section of 'The Atomic Book', listed as Mo111.

– who, importantly for the Romantic consciousness, linked one of madness’ positive incarnations with creative expression induced through possession and inspiration by the Muses⁶:

A third kind of possession and madness comes from the Muses: taking a soft, virgin soul and arousing it to a Bacchic frenzy of expression in lyric and the other forms of poetry, it educates succeeding generations by glorifying myriad deeds of those past; while the man who arrives at the doors of poetry without madness from the Muses, convinced that after all expertise will make him a good poet, both he and his poetry – the poetry of the sane – are eclipsed by that of the mad, remaining imperfect and unfulfilled (*Phaedrus* 24-25).

In Plato’s formulation, the madness of artistic inspiration comes from outside the individual; however, Romanticism and subsequently Dubuffet, emphasise madness’ link with the imagination, subjective interiority and privacy. Romanticism,

tended to focus on experience of a highly private character, on inner experience and on the introspective perception of feeling, intuition, and emotion...The madman was seen as the ultimate expression of the tendency to withdraw into a private world obedient only to its own laws, the visionary who alone could see realities invisible to others (*MacGregor* 71-72).

In many respects, Mannix embraces (in an experiential fashion which also acknowledges the pain and suffering associated with these states) such Romantic notions of insanity as offering access to interior visionary landscapes of a private and distinctive nature. He writes: “Art Brut⁷ comes immediately and with the creation process intimate and totally bound with Self and the inner, believed, sincere Cosmos” (*Mo046: Light* 97).⁸ Of central importance in both the lived experience and the authorial aesthetic of Mannix is a

⁶ In *Phaedrus*, Plato suggests that “the greatest of goods come to us through madness, provided that it is bestowed by divine gift” (23). According to Plato such a gift facilitates three positive aspects of madness: it facilitates prophecy, it serves as the antidote to “divine anger” (24), and inspires poetic production. Similarly in *Ion*, Plato writes: “the poet is an airy thing a winged and holy thing; and he can not make poetry until he becomes inspired and goes out of his senses and no mind is left in him...” (18)

⁷ In his writings Mannix intentionally conflates the terms Art Brut and Outsider Art (using them interchangeably), as both, according to him, are underpinned by the acceptance and exploration of altered states – he writes: “Those that make art brut and outsider art look to the ‘altered’ states, the ‘altered’ space and see no reason why it should be ‘altered’, see no reason why it should not be part of what is life” (*Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95* 161). As will be shown, Mannix shares an affinity with numerous Outsider or Art Brut artists, including Adolf Wölfli, Heinrich Anton Müller, Henry Darger, Raymond Morris, Michel Nedjar and William Fields. For a more comprehensive discussion of the relationship between Brut and Outsider Art see Chapter Two of this thesis.

⁸ Other Romantic notions, which form part of the discourse regarding Art Brut, are also important for Mannix because they have resonated with his own experience. Two ideas central to Mannix’s creative ethos are a connection with so-called Primitive cultures (particularly through the activity of Shamanism) and the related formulation whereby the psychotic experience is conceived of as a visionary, Orphic quest. Joanne Cubbs identifies each of these notions as present in both Romanticism and Art Brut discourse – see her essay “Rebels, Mystics, and Outsiders: The Romantic Artist Outsider”.

challenge posed to the notion of a fixed, rational, external reality, by such an “inner, believed, sincere Cosmos”. This Cosmos, however much it may be a unique, subjective realm, nevertheless still retains traces of a dialogue with the wider societal, intellectual and artistic reality in which Mannix lives and works – traces which he has subjectively defamiliarised⁹ in an act of creation he has called the art of schizophrenia: “the art of schizophrenia might be seen as a constant make-shift construction of a mental sculpture...[via which]...a separate¹⁰ reality is being brought into being” (Mo006: Erotic Journal of a Madman 23).

Erich Heller comments in relation to literary works of the Romantic and Symbolist tradition: “Now external reality has no claims any more to being real. The only real world is the world of human inwardness. The concrete form of this reality is the poem in its pure absoluteness...What is within, no longer passes show. It is for all to see and is a work of art. Imagination is reality” (98). In his life and work Mannix embodies the notion that “[t]he only real world is the world of human inwardness...Imagination is reality” – a reality simultaneously contained within and generated by his art-making practice.¹¹ Thus his work is the “concrete form of this reality” – he has at times called his art-making a “compass” by which to navigate through the shifting landscapes of the unconscious that the art itself comes to present.

The Romantic emphasis on imagination, and its association with insanity and the unconscious, is continued in Surrealism, a movement cited often by Mannix as influencing his work.¹² The founder of Surrealism, André Breton, in ‘Manifesto of Surrealism 1924’, defines the movement as follows: “SURREALISM, *n.* Pure psychic

⁹ Term used by Viktor Shklovsky in expressing his requirement for art “to make objects ‘unfamiliar,’ to make forms difficult” (18). For the schizophrenic individual the objects of ‘rational’ reality are defamiliarised by psychosis.

¹⁰ All grammatical and spelling anomalies within Mannix’s quotations transcribed into this thesis are consistent with his artists’ books; on this matter Mannix writes: “so-long ago i realized my grammer was my own, and decided not to change it, like wise spelling” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 89). Mannix speaks of this aspect of his writing in a sound recording accompanied by ‘The Loop Orchestra’. This recording can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’ in the ‘Sound Works’ section listed as Mo094. On rare occasions corrections have been made to the texts transcribed into this thesis when semantic clarification is deemed useful to this study.

¹¹ Such a confluence of art, imagination and life is expressed by Mannix when he describes his studio in a sound recording he created accompanied by ‘The Loop Orchestra’. This recording can be found in the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo108.

¹² Surrealism’s close engagement with madness is of particular interest to Mannix; indeed, a defining influence on Surrealism was Hans Prinzhorn’s seminal work, Artistry of the Mentally Ill (1922).

automatism, by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing, or by other means, the real process of thought. Thought's diction, in the absence of all control exercised by the reason and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations" (26). Breton's aim to explore thought outside of reason and the "aesthetic or moral preoccupations" of his society mirrors Dubuffet's claim that Art Brut is a visionary state capable of eluding culturally dominant constructions. As Breton writes: "Under the pretense of civilization and progress, we have managed to banish from the mind everything that may rightly or wrongly be termed superstition, or fancy" ('Manifesto' 10).

For Breton (as with Mannix), it is the unconscious and the imagination that have the potential to free humanity from this stifling "reign of logic" in which "[o]ur brains are dulled by the incurable mania of wanting to make the unknown known, classifiable" ('Manifesto' 9). Such Surrealist ideas and related techniques of automatic writing, practiced to elude such a "reign of logic", were known to Mannix, who states that his written work is at times "CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT AND PRECISELY DESIGNED TO TRIGGER THE UNCONSCIOUS" (Mo054: Outsider Writing 1).

Whilst interested in Surrealist writing, Mannix nevertheless believes his experiential contact with madness is the most powerful influence on his own textual production: "i might have been destined for an illustrious career in writing surrealism had i not gone mad and avoided them and gone mad in such manner as to lead to outsider writing¹³ and the aberrant paths..." [Ellipsis in original] (Mo054: Outsider Writing 2). In

¹³ The lineage of Outsider Writing in which Mannix is placing himself is linked to the notion of *écrits bruts*, as described in the following quotation by Allen S. Weiss: "Jean Dubuffet – who in 1945 began his research into *Art Brut*, those rare, radically inventive or bizarre artistic works of people situated at the margins of culture: the mad, the isolated, the eccentric – established the parallel notion of *écrits bruts* to account for those texts which do not fall under our standard cultural purview. Here, the standard genres and narrative forms of literary and discursive writing are overturned: vocabulary is reinvented, syntax shattered, and orthography transformed" (Weiss Phantasmic 59). The 'parallel' nature of Art Brut and *écrits bruts* (raw writing) is evidenced by the creators these categories share. Here Adolf Wölfli and Henry Darger are exemplary figures with whom Mannix bears comparison. For all three individuals, language is a site of investigation in its own right and a medium to convey an individualistic belief in the existence of a reality outside that commonly experienced by society. Charles Russell explains this position: "Outsiders struggle with an intensely personal subject; their creations bear more than mere aesthetic significance. They reveal a drama of being in the world, of making meaning, of conceptualizing and framing a world that is recognized – in all its strangeness – as our very own" (28). This notion of "an intensely personal subject" focused on "conceptualizing and framing a world", can be seen in Mannix's development of a "Cosmology" through artmaking. This preoccupation is shared by Adolf Wölfli, a figure whose work and biography has served to define notions of the archetypal Outsider. Through artmaking Wölfli escapes his solitary confinement (due to mental illness) in Germany's Waldau Sanitarium, and travels through vast celestial landscapes. Henry Darger, a contemporary figure, also used his creative practice to depart the shared world of society for a

producing creative work from within the chaotic experience of psychosis, Mannix creates “outsider writing”: work which bears relation to surrealist writing but exceeds it, just as the experience of psychosis exceeds imitative attempts to temporarily simulate such states for the purposes of artistic experimentation.¹⁴ Through his own artistic practice, Mannix brings madness and the rational into dialogue and thus attempts to realise Breton’s stated aim for Surrealism: “I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a *surreality*, if one may so speak” (‘Manifesto’ 14).

Breton may have posited such an “absolute reality”, but it was perhaps Antonin Artaud, the one-time member of Breton’s group, who most closely experienced it. Artaud’s writings are central to this thesis: Mannix himself is directly influenced by Artaud’s work, which he specifically refers to in his own texts. It is for this reason that Mannix’s world-view resonates with, and can be contextualised by, the many theorists and writers for whom Artaud was also a seminal figure in the areas of language and madness.¹⁵

fictional reality centred on the seven Vivian Girls and their battles against child slavery. For Wölfl, Darger and Mannix the creation of a metaphorical autobiography through language – one that could be lived – was central to their practice. Each figure foregrounded the materiality of their craft, presenting such autobiographical works in both pictorial and textual creations housed in extensive volumes of handworked books.

¹⁴ ‘The Possessions’ section of ‘The Immaculate Conception’, is one such attempt at simulated insanity by Breton and Paul Eluard. This work is itself arranged in sections with titles such as ‘Attempted Simulation of Acute Mania’ and ‘Attempted Simulation of Dementia Praecox’. In their introduction to this work Breton and Eluard write the following: “We...aim to prove that the mind of a normal person when poetically primed is capable of reproducing the main features of the most paradoxical and eccentric verbal expressions and that it is possible for such a mind to assume at will the characteristic ideas of delirium without suffering any lasting disturbance, or compromising in any way its own faculty for mental equilibrium” (175).

¹⁵ Such individuals mentioned by this thesis include the poststructuralists: Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason and Mental Illness and Psychology; Roland Barthes, ‘From Work to Text’, ‘The Death of the Author’, ‘Masson’s Semiography’, S/Z; Julia Kristeva, Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia, Language: The Unknown: An Initiation into Linguistics and Revolution in Poetic Language; Gilles Deleuze, ‘The Schizophrenic and Language.’; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia; Jean-François Lyotard, ‘Figure Foreclosed’, Luce Irigaray, To Speak Is Never Neutral and Jacques Derrida, Archive Fever, ‘Freud and the Scene of Writing’ and Of Grammatology; the anti-psychiatrists David Cooper, Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry, R.D. Laing, The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness, The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise, Wisdom, Madness and Folly: The Making of a Psychiatrist 1927-1957 and Thomas Szasz, ‘Intentionality and insanity: Some Lessons from Reflections on Art’; Art Brut/Outsider Art theorists Jean Dubuffet, ‘Art Brut in Preference to the Cultural Arts’; Roger Cardinal, Outsider Art, and ‘Within Us These Traces’; Michel Thévoz, ‘The Sorcery of Words in the body of the Text.’; and creative writers such as Leonora Carrington, Down Below, Unica Zürn, The House of Illnesses and The

Artaud's writings highlight the constructed nature of societal structures and the role played by language in enforcing its power relations (particularly where notions of insanity are concerned).¹⁶ In this way Artaud questioned the very foundations of rational reality. Similarly, Mannix's artistic expression, his "art of schizophrenia", becomes a powerful generative force set to "devour and reconstruct reality on a continual basis..." (Mo006: Erotic Journal of a Madman 23). Thus, Mannix's artistic practice constructs a reality that he comes to inhabit. Conventional notions of Subject / Object division¹⁷ are conflated in a state of mind described by Bill Ashcroft as "lived metaphor" (70)¹⁸. Here is revealed a reality of intense associative confluence. In a dialogue between madness and reason Mannix deforms and recreates conventional language in order to reflect his experience of lived metaphor, dissolving and reconstituting conventional reality in a stylistic aesthetic of extreme idiosyncrasy.

Man of Jasmine and William S. Burroughs, Naked Lunch, The Soft Machine, The Ticket That Exploded, 'The Algebra of Need' and 'White Junk'.

¹⁶ Artaud's dual nature as both a literary and Outsider figure makes him particularly influential for Mannix. Another author of this nature is Robert Walser. Walser's work displays both the drive to communicate and the intense focus on the deeply subjective, idiosyncratic nature of consciousness that can thwart semantic intentions. Walser shares with Mannix and Artaud a distrust of language as a transparent tool for communication and ultimately develops a form of writing that foregrounds the inaccessibility of meaning. Late in life, after entering a mental institution diagnosed as schizoid, Walser continues to write but in such a way that his texts cannot be read: "He now wrote in a tiny (2mm. high) handwriting full of abbreviations and with calligraphic ornamentation. After his death, Robert Mächler found 526 pieces of paper tightly covered with minute pencil signs – the so-called 'micrograms'. These texts would fill 2,000 pages if anyone had them deciphered and printed. Walser therefore left nearly half his writings in a form which denies a public" (Cardinal 62). Walser's final retreat into a form of private pictorial writing is echoed by Mannix in the hieroglyphic tendencies he displays in works created during psychotic episodes. For an extended discussion of Mannix's hieroglyphic texts see page 159 of this thesis.

¹⁷ Georges Bataille contends with such conventional notions of the Subject / Object division which separates individuals from others and their surroundings when he describes humans as "*discontinuous beings*" (Eroticism 12). For Bataille and Mannix, the irrationality of eroticism is one way in which this discontinuous state can be traversed. Such notions are dealt with in more detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

¹⁸ This notion of "lived metaphor" is a central concept for many authors who have theorised about the schizophrenic experience. Sigmund Freud suggested the schizophrenic is an individual who "can no longer distinguish between the objects of reality and the objects of fantasy, that is, distinguish between what is *perceived* in reality and *hallucinated* in fantasy. The individual's inner world (*Innenwelt*) and outer world (*Umwelt*) merge in schizophrenics, which allows the things belonging to the inner world, what is fantasized or hallucinated, to appear in the world of reality as if it were real, as if they were reality" (Qtd in Rosenbaum & Sonne 46). Likewise, Carl Jung suggests that, "To say that insanity is a dream which has become real is no metaphor" ('Psychogenesis' 241). Johnston and Holzman in Assessing Schizophrenic Thinking, label it "Concreteness" which entails "a loss of perspective in which ideas take on an apparent reality" (75).

It is the idiosyncrasy of what Mannix terms his “outsider writing” that will be the focus of investigation in this thesis. Pictorial aspects of his work will also be discussed where they function to inform or contribute to the written word; this is, in fact, a regular occurrence, as a distinctive feature of Mannix’s “outsider writing” is the confluence of linguistic and pictorial forms of expression.

In its fluidity, associative confluence and lack of linearity, Mannix’s “art of schizophrenia” inhabits the smooth, “nomad space” of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. They write: “The first aspect of the haptic, smooth space of close vision is that its orientation, landmarks, and linkages are in continuous variation, it operates step by step. Examples are the deserts, steppe, ice, and sea, local spaces of pure connection” (493). According to Mannix, psychiatry becomes the main barrier preventing him from creating and maintaining a reality of “pure connection”. In Deleuze and Guattari’s formulation psychiatry can be seen to function as a form of constraint inherent in that which they call “State space”: “One of the fundamental tasks of the state is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space” (358). It is in this sense that psychiatry attempts to reterritorialize the deterritorialized nomadic expression of Mannix. Psychiatry is a powerful enforcer of conventional reality’s State space, thus defining the borders of reality’s ‘outside’. Psychiatry becomes the natural obstacle to Mannix’s process of construction and expression – and indeed it is psychiatry, with its ‘objective’ narratives of rationality, that Mannix specifically suggests attempts to repeatedly destroy his outsider creations.

Psychiatry is an expansive and complex field, but it can be said that, predominantly, Mannix comes in contact with ‘mainstream’ psychiatry and its scientific, medicalised standpoint; thus psychiatric intervention in Mannix’s life has taken the form of incarceration and numerous pharmacological-based treatments. In this formulation Mannix is sick with a disease called schizophrenia. The anti-psychiatrist David Cooper characterises psychiatry’s medical stance:

The patient is affected, altered in such a manner that his own affecting and altering become relatively inessential. He is reified to become the object in which the disease-process works itself out...The disease happens to the person who, in so far as this is a mere happening, becomes quite literally no one at all. As the bearer of symptoms that result from a process, he is dispensable as a person and, therefore, is dispensed with. (41)

Mannix, influenced by his own experience and by the writings of Antonin Artaud and those of the anti-psychiatry movement itself¹⁹, rails against the dehumanising, disempowering, silencing effect of contact with the psychiatric profession and its diagnostic labels.²⁰ The anti-psychiatry movement, according to Zbigniew Kotowicz, criticised,

the power of the psychiatric establishment...[and]... argued that the psychiatric diagnosis is scientifically meaningless. It is a way of labelling undesirable behaviour, under the guise of medical intervention. Those who are diagnosed ill are subjected to treatment which is a violation of human rights and dignity. The situation amounts to psychiatry having a mandate to declare some citizens unfit to live in an 'ordinary' community. (4-5)

This line of thinking postulates that “mental illness is a construct, not an ‘objective’ fact” (Kotowicz 11). Such a construct is developed, maintained – but also challenged – through language, and Laing argues against psychiatric language in the following manner: “How can one demonstrate the general human relevance and significance of the patient’s condition if the words one has to use are specifically designed to isolate and circumscribe the meaning of the patient’s life to a particular clinical entity” (Divided 18).²¹ To rectify this situation a new language must be discovered by which a dialogue between reason and madness can be opened (Foucault’s “common language”). This begins, as far as Laing is concerned, with the patient’s language: their own perception of experience rather than their medicalisation as a “bearer of symptoms”. It is for this reason that existential phenomenology is important to Laing and this thesis:

[Existential phenomenology] attempts to characterise the nature of a person’s experience of his world and himself. It is not so much an attempt to describe particular objects of his

¹⁹ Both R.D. Laing and David Cooper were themselves directly influenced by Artaud. Laing specifically quotes from Artaud’s essay ‘Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society (1947)’ in his late work Wisdom, Madness and Folly: The Making of a Psychiatrist 1927-1957 (13). Zbigniew Kotowicz suggests that Laing “had come across it [Artaud’s essay] very early on [in his career] and apparently it had made a great impression on him” (62). David Cooper discusses Antonin Artaud in his work Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry in which he coined the term ‘anti-psychiatry’; he writes: “There is a sense in which Artaud’s ‘delusional statements’ represent a profound reality in life, a reality which, seventeen years after his death, we are only just beginning to appreciate; he had more to say relevant to madness than all the textbooks of psychiatry, but the trouble was that Artaud saw too much and spoke too much of the truth. He had to be cured” (47).

²⁰ Mannix specifically refers to R.D. Laing and his views regarding the unworkability of the psychiatric label ‘Schizophrenia’ in a discussion he recorded with the Outsider Artist Liz Parkinson. This discussion can be found in the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo104.

²¹ Michel Foucault describes “the language of psychiatry...[as]...a monologue of reason about madness” (Madness xii). The implications of such a statement for the presentation and discussion of expression created by individuals who experience mental illness is dealt with in detail in Chapter One of this thesis.

experiences as to set all particular experiences within the context of his whole being-in-his-world. The mad things said and done by the schizophrenic will remain essentially a closed book if one does not understand their existential context” (Laing Divided 17).

In this formulation Mannix’s world-view²² remains a closed book before the medicalised, diagnostic language of psychiatry. This does not, however, deter psychiatry from attempting to write/rewrite/reterritorialize Mannix’s experience. Mannix, however, counters what he calls this “bullshit history” perpetuated about him by deterritorializing psychiatry in a historical narrative of his own; to this end Mannix opens what he calls his “book of life” – of which each page in ‘The Atomic Book’ is a portion. Such a book offers his own vision of his “existential context” which shows a powerful “human inwardness” fuelled by an imagination which is, however, not entirely separated from culture (as Dubuffet may have argued). Instead, it is this inward sensibility that defamiliarises conventional reality, in a dialogue which adds to and reterritorializes the culture which surrounds it. In this way Mannix’s “book of life” at once contains and creates life. In an implicit act of resistance against psychiatry Mannix’s narrative presents a unique, at times irrational, form of expression which comes to constitute the individual himself.

Mannix suggests he developed this notion of a “book of life” from the writings of D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller. Lawrence employs the phrase in the following manner: “The novel is the one bright book of life. Books are not life. They are only tremulations on the ether. But the novel as a tremulation can make the whole man alive tremble. Which is more than poetry, philosophy, science or any other book-tremulation can do” (535).²³ For Mannix, however, his “book of life” is, in fact, life – a living fetishised object imbued with psychic presence that resonates with the “man alive”, a tremulation on the ether that is often a dialogue with psychosis and the unconscious “places” to which, Mannix believes, psychosis allows him access.

In attempts to excavate or enter into dialogue with such realms Mannix’s work has delved deeply into what the reader may perceive as ambiguity, where conventional

²² An individual’s world-view – in the tradition of existential phenomenology – is their experience of “being-in-the-world” (Politics Laing 17).

²³ Henry Miller’s use of the term is likely derived from his own deep engagement with the writings of D. H. Lawrence. For Miller, as with Mannix, the phrase represents a manner of writing which eludes artifice and accesses the truth regarding life’s lived experience. See Miller’s novel Nexus, page 217. This passage of Miller’s is discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.

linguistic systems meet and are consumed by an *écrits bruts* which refigures language.

Writing of *écrits bruts* Allen S. Weiss states:

The force of these texts reside...in what cannot be communicated, translated, transliterated, paraphrased, adapted: in the uniqueness of the neologism or the hapax as it inhabits an oeuvre or a language; in the radical disjunctions of agrammatism and malapropism, always grasped within their textual and historical context; in the infinite complexities of a text where a totally disjointed “narrative” reduces discourse to nonsense. (*Phantasmic* 71-72)

It is within the disjointed (“speculative”) narratives of Mannix’s ‘raw writing’, or that which he terms his “outsider writing”, that he attempts to present a dialogue between madness and reason, deforming the rational linearity of language until it becomes capable of presenting the ambiguity of non-sense. At the extreme point of such non-sense, madness perhaps speaks its own monologue, finding in glossolalian sound constructions its own voice. In such constructions, expression via denotative semantics is traduced, the relation between sound and sense becoming motivated, rather than “arbitrary” as Ferdinand de Saussure suggested of conventional language.²⁴ It is with this motivated view of language that Mannix further challenges the rational narratives of psychiatry as he creates his “book of life”: an expression of the intensely associative, animated landscape of the unconscious he feels underpins his world-view. It is this realm of the unconscious, with its erotic mysticism, that Mannix has spent the last twenty-five years exploring and documenting in a mode of investigation he terms “anthropological”. It is within these experiences, characterised by psychiatry as psychotic, and undergone by individuals treated as refuse by society, that Mannix discovers an erotic illumination: “I am a playboy of the garbage tin but in it are the sun and the moon” (*Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4* 28).

Superficially this quotation can be related to Mannix’s many periods of psychotic homelessness in which he lived an itinerant existence. During these times he experienced great hardships but also became aware of the freedoms and potential for enlightenment accessible to those living on the fringes of society. However, this statement also refers to a symbol within an illustration created in 1604 by the alchemist and occultist Basilius Valentinus, reprinted in Trevor Ravenscroft’s *The Spear of Destiny: The Occult Power Behind the Spear which Pierced the Side of Christ*, depicting “disciplines and trials

²⁴ *Course in General Linguistics*, page 67.

confronting a Knight searching for Grail Initiation” (Ravenscroft N.p.). Ravenscroft describes this symbol as,

the most strange and mysterious of all and has baffled the keenest minds in pursuit of the Grail – a Dustbin containing a discarded Sun and Moon! This enigmatic symbolism depicts the condition of soul of a man, however outwardly learned, who is still trapped in the three-dimensional “Dustbin” of consciousness – the world of measure, number and weight. That is, the soul who is not yet capable of the “sense-free” thinking which leads to transcendent consciousness. (72)

Mannix’s artists’ books are a record of his own Grail quest, detailing perilous journeys through the inner realms or “places” of the psyche – journeys through which personal and mystical illumination may be obtained.²⁵ Such a quest Mannix terms the “schizophrenic trek” (Mo046: Light 38), described as the descent into, and return from, the underworld of his own unconscious landscapes in the mode of a shaman journeying to and returning from the spirit world. Shamanism is an important system of beliefs with which Mannix associates his own experience of hallucinatory realities. In The Light Bulb Eaters Mannix writes: “It is difficult to know what to do. I was born a shaman, somehow already initiated into the occult...I feel i’m before my time. Look as i want in the unemployed advertisements, nowhere does it say ‘explorer of The Unconscious Wanted’. Adept at everything i am good for nothing” (Mo046 83).²⁶ When considering the links between

²⁵ In this formulation the Grail quest becomes for Mannix a form of spiritual and psychological awakening. The Grail legend has long been interpreted in this manner: “It is not only art and science which have concerned themselves with the Grail legend but also certain spiritual movements of our time, such as secret orders, anthroposophy and other fellowships of a similar nature, which take the Grail and Grail quest as subjects of meditation or of initiation ceremonies” (Jung & von Franz 12-13). The imaginative concreteness that facilitates Mannix’s unconscious journeys, previously discussed as “lived metaphor”, is, Ravenscroft suggests, an essential skill to be developed by an individual in pursuit of the Holy Grail or “Transcendent Consciousness” (73). Commenting on another aspect of Basilius’ illustration he writes: “A little way up the mountainside a large fat hen broods on a nest of eggs to signify the warmth and willpower which must be brought to the development of a picture building imagination, so that thoughts become as substantial as external objects, and take on a new clarity of form and permanence” (71).

²⁶ Mannix likens society’s disregard for the revelations he gains as this displaced shaman to the experiences of William Blake, suggesting such treatment is “nothing new, William Blake’s vehemence about the same thing is almost three hundred years old” (Mo046: Light 83). William Blake’s legacy of prophetic poetry and artwork is inspirational for Mannix (even though this is one of the only direct references to him in his texts). Like Blake, Mannix valorises the imagination and attempts to construct an entire cosmology using poetry, prose, printmaking, drawing and painting. Mannix’s incorporation of text into the picture-plane is reminiscent of Blake’s work, as are some of his illustrations depicting columns of entwined figures (see page 21 of Mo001: Journal of a Madman No. 4). Various presences inhabiting Mannix’s reality also echo those important to Blake, such as the “Shadow”, elsewhere discussed. Mannix’s capacity to converse with demons and spirits can also be linked with Blake’s world view – Blake writes: “I know that our deceased friends are more really with us than when they were apparent to our mortal part. Thirteen years ago I lost a

shamanic and schizophrenic experience the societal construct within which the experience is contextualised is of primary importance. Mannix highlights this fact in the above quotation when he suggests that being a shaman in his present culture actually renders him “good for nothing”. Julian Silverman expands on this matter: “Whereas the initial shamanic experience is most often highly valued and rewarded in primitive societies, no such institutional supports are available for the schizophrenic in modern society” (28).²⁷

A contemporary point of shamanic reference for Mannix is again Outsider art. Roger Cardinal links such art with shamanism when he suggests that the journeys through the imagination undertaken by the Outsider artist Michel Nedjar “may finally be seen as so many re-enactments of the archetypal shamanic journey into the underworld” (‘Within Us These Traces’ 50).²⁸ In his own work Mannix details the exploration and inhabitation of just such an underworld. In Mannix’s world-view such places of the unconscious often have the animated intelligence that Carl Jung also associated with this realm. Jung writes:

we might conclude that the schizophrenic state of mind, so far as it yields archaic material, has all the characteristics of a “big dream” – in other words, that it is an important event, exhibiting the same “numinous” quality which in primitive cultures is attributed to a magic ritual...The primitive valuation of insanity, moreover, lays stress on a special characteristic which we should not overlook: it ascribes personality, initiative, and wilful intention to the unconscious – again a true interpretation of the obvious facts...The primitive, therefore, does not seek the cause of insanity in a primary weakness of consciousness but rather in an inordinate strength of the unconscious. (‘Psychogenesis’ 243-44)

brother & with his spirit I converse daily & hourly in the Spirit & See him in my remembrance in the regions of my imagination. I hear his advice & even now write from his Dictate” (Qtd in Damon 154).

²⁷ Mannix experienced this situation acutely in his early twenties on his return to Australia from South-East Asia where his newly discovered animistic understandings of the world found far less societal reinforcement than he had been experiencing in Indonesia. This important event in Mannix’s life is discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.

²⁸ Such a journey resonates with Joseph Campbell’s writings (drawing on the work of Carl Jung) regarding the mythological adventures of the “Hero” and such an individual’s relation to the figure of the shaman. Campbell’s following description of the psyche’s “spiritual labyrinths” also resonates with Mannix’s own views regarding his journeys through unconscious “places”: “And so it happens that if anyone – in whatever society – undertakes for himself the perilous journey into the darkness by descending, either intentionally or unintentionally, into the crooked lanes of his own spiritual labyrinth, he soon finds himself in a landscape of symbolic figures (any of which may swallow him) which is no less marvellous than the wild Siberian world of the *pudak* and sacred mountains” (101). It is likely that this work directly influenced Mannix as he specifically writes of owning *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, the book from which this quotation was taken. (See, *Mo046: The Light Bulb Eaters*, page 86).

The thoughts experienced during schizophrenia are here associated with the significance of a “big dream” in which an imaginative event (the dream) is perceived by the figure of the shaman as having profound consequences for lived reality; this, in turn, is likened to the processes involved in magical ritual. The capacity of ritual action, via the notion of “sympathetic magic”²⁹, to effect physical or psychic reality is linked to the notion of lived metaphor wherein imaginative or metaphorical constructs are perceived as real. Clifford Geertz suggests: “in a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world” (qtd in Bell 66).

In Mannix’s schizophrenic world-view many aspects of existence take on the import of ritual. In particular, his Outsider artistic practice becomes a ritual act, which facilitates the realisation and exploration of the imaginative places of his unconscious: he writes, “Outsider art where in some Ritual...it makes the monstrous accessible, also the sublime and truly heavenly!” (Mo024: Erogeny 8)

It is the metaphorical that is made literally accessible in Mannix’s formulation of art as ritual.³⁰ Thus Mannix’s “outsider writing” practice is conceived of as a ritualistic activity that facilitates the realisation of imaginative realities, particularly those of the unconscious wherein the monstrous and sublime experiences he writes of become animate. Mannix’s conception of the unconscious resonates with Carl Jung’s belief in the “inordinate strength of the unconscious”; an unconscious inhabited by presences that have “personality, initiative, and wilful intention”. Such personalities Mannix perceives as possessing “power”. To conquer this realm via the “schizophrenic trek” is to acquire and wield its “power”, and this is of the utmost importance to Mannix. Early in his work,

²⁹ “Both branches of magic, the homoeopathic [assumes that things which resemble one another are the same] and the contagious [assumes that objects which have had contact retain this contact], may conveniently be comprehended under the general name of Sympathetic Magic, since both assume that things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy, the impulse being transmitted from one to the other by means of what we may conceive as a kind of invisible ether...” (Frazer 14)

³⁰ Similarly for Mircea Eliade ritual is a process of making present or reactualising metaphorical notions such as that of cosmogonic creation (The Sacred 77). In a related formulation, Edmund Leach, the anthropologist, “suggested that ritual is primarily based on a logic whereby metonymical relations are transformed into metaphorical ones...the metonymical relationship between a few strands of hair and the person [in the context of sorcery] is transformed into a metaphorical association between the sorcerer’s action on the hair and the action on the body of the person” (Bell 65). By extension, in a reality of lived metaphor, such a metaphorical association is transformed into a literal reality when the ritual attack on the body is perceived to have been efficacious.

The Light Bulb Eaters, he looks into the underworld of the unconscious through a hole that has opened up in his living room floorboards: “What concerned me was power and its acquisition. I had an obsession with regard to this. What i could see were places. Unscaleable, impenetratable places that contained what i wanted and i wished issue” (Mo046 6).

The possession of such “power” allows Mannix to create (in the mode of ritualistic artistic creation) within such realms so as to construct the environment in which he wishes to exist. Here Mannix signals art’s capacity to manipulate what he calls “power”: “If there is a Raison d’etre for my life it is the acquiring of power which can only come from from conquest...by power i do not mean weakness nor do i mean misused ego; i mean power. Art perhaps is the motion within this, power is the most violent, volatile and difficult medium that there is to exist, only art permits its working” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 7). Thus art becomes a tool that Mannix uses in his unconscious exploration to gain control over such imaginative realities and ultimately effect his return from the schizophrenic state. The notion that the schizophrenic experience can be a dangerous, insightful and instructive journey is thus central to Mannix’s world-view. Gregory Bateson postulated such a view of schizophrenia in his introduction to Perceval’s Narrative, an early subjective account of psychosis experienced by John Perceval between 1830 and 1832. Bateson writes:

It would appear that once precipitated into psychosis the patient has a course to run. He is, as it were, embarking upon a voyage of discovery which is only completed by his return to the normal world, to which he comes back with insights different from those of the inhabitants who never embarked on such a journey. Once begun a schizophrenic episode would appear to have as definite a course as an initiation ceremony – a death and rebirth – into which the novice may have been precipitated by family life or by adventitious circumstances, but which in its course is largely steered by endogenous process. (xiv)³¹

³¹ Gregory Bateson was responsible for the (now clinically obsolete) “double-bind” theory of schizophrenia which linked the condition with familial upbringing; for a further discussion of Mannix’s view on this theory see Chapter Five of this thesis. Many of Bateson’s notions regarding schizophrenia influenced anti-psychiatrists such as Cooper and Laing, including that of psychosis as a “voyage” or journey. Cooper cites Bateson in his work Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry, and Laing does likewise in both The Divided Self and The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise, wherein he describes psychosis as a “journey” in which “there are many occasions to lose one’s way, for confusion, partial failure, even final shipwreck: many terrors, spirits, demons to be encountered, that may or may not be overcome” (104).

In The Light Bulb Eaters, Mannix describes his descent into unconscious realms in just this manner, as a form of death and resurrection. Here he characterises the “schizophrenic trek” as a search for “power” and those missing aspects of his self required to effect resurrection. This search is conducted through art-making itself and Mannix’s resurrection is contingent upon his art also becoming animate; it is only by transforming his “body of work” into a “being of art” that he too is able to rise from the dead.³²

Thus, for Mannix, his “book of life” is not merely an autobiographical account of schizophrenia but a dialogue with a living entity, his “being of art”. Art-making is the most powerful of many ritualistic “tools” Mannix uses to navigate through, and effect change within, the unconscious labyrinth of psychosis. In his writings and drawings Mannix can be seen to simultaneously document and create his unconscious cosmology.³³ Writing becomes a form of mythologising with which Mannix attempts to make sense of a reality that is defamiliarised; one which the logical thought processes of rationality are incapable of elucidating.³⁴

Mannix contrasts his own world-view with that of rational society in his work The Demise: “we are breeding the inhabitants to de-mystify wonders” (Mo049 1), laments the narrator of his text. Mannix’s remedy to this demystified existence is to continually call upon the absent “Gods”,

and they keep appearing but with different names, different cataclysms and knowing them is like knowing heat in all it’s wonder – the flames that have poured from me in these 32 years sear the physical material around me. I am careful not to change this reality. at least not too quickly. It will be noted somewhere ‘hallucination’, ‘psychosis’, dementia, but still the names choked in the throat. (Mo049 2)

³² A detailed discussion of this process and the work, The Light Bulb Eaters, can be found in Chapter Six of this thesis. It is in this text, Mannix suggests, that he most completely describes his psychotic cosmology or mythology.

³³ “Cosmology” is a term Mannix himself uses to describe his artwork: “I used endlessly to refer to my action in accomplishing thus as both a documentarist and a historian and the product thus Art Brut Journals where the pictorial and the written catalyse completely to become the Duality that is the Documentary that is also the true Book of Life. Of Late it has occurred to me that the word COSMOLOGY bears the true import of what i am doing” (Mo006: Erotic Journal of a Madman 1990-91 6).

³⁴ In this respect Mannix’s project is akin to that of William S. Burroughs, who suggests: “In The Naked Lunch and The Soft Machine I have diagnosed an illness, and in the Ticket The Exploded and Nova Express suggested remedy. In this work I am attempting to create a new mythology for the space age. I feel that the old mythologies are definitely broken down and not adequate at the present time” (‘The Algebra of Need’ 55).

For Mannix the demystified age of contemporary society – the “modern urban”, is one of multiplicity and transmutation, devoid of stable foundations and origins; here it is a visionary schizophrenic mythology that becomes capable of making contact with the absent gods. In this way Mannix is in line with Carl Jung’s suggestion that such individuals are, through the experience of psychosis, reconnecting with the source of all human mythological constructions, the collective unconscious.³⁵ Writing of images experienced by individuals during psychosis Jung suggests,

that they are something like universally existent constituents of the unconscious psyche, which form, as it were, a deeper stratum of a collective nature, in contradistinction to the personally acquired contents of the more superficial layers, or what one may call the personal unconscious. I consider these archetypal patterns to be the matrix of all mythological statements. (‘Recent’ 254-55)³⁶

In Mannix’s own mythology the ‘objective’ names reason uses to describe the symptoms of his ‘illness’, those that “choked in the throat”, are brought into meaningful dialogue with the animated, irrational places within his unconscious. In creating his “book of life” Mannix voices subjective, perhaps archetypal, understandings existent within thought processes contemporary society seeks to silence.

The schizophrenic mythology Mannix creates and describes in his work is predominantly contained in singular artists’ books. ‘The Atomic Book’ is an attempt to make Anthony

³⁵ Joseph Campbell also suggests that “in a schizophrenic plunge one descends to the ‘collective,’ and the imagery there experienced is largely of the order of the archetypes of myth” (‘Schizophrenia’ 210). Here he is again drawing on the work of Jung – Campbell writes: “The psychologist who has best dealt with these [universal archetypes of mythology], best described and best interpreted them is Carl G. Jung, who terms them ‘archetypes of the collective unconscious’” (‘Schizophrenia’ 210).

³⁶ Artaud claimed a similar mythological primacy for another author who experienced psychosis, Gérard de Nerval. Artaud writes: “the poems of Gérard de Nerval, I mean the peculiar sonnets of his irrecusable Chimeras, are on the track of the explosions of the Great Work which were and will always be the plunge of the power of being into the delirium of revindications” (Watchfiends 52). This notion of the “Great Work” is analogous to Jung’s collective unconscious, “the matrix of all mythological statements”, and explains Artaud’s formulation “that history, Mythology and alchemy have come from this internal animistic current with which certain very rare great poets in history have wielded the power of being, and the creative emission of objects... Which means that far from seeing Gérard de Nerval explained through Mythology and alchemy, I would like to see alchemy and its Myths explained through the poems of Gérard de Nerval” (Watchfiends 56). In his conception of the Great Work Artaud is likely drawing on Stéphane Mallarmé’s formulation of the ‘The Book’ or “the magic concept of the Great Work...the perfect symmetry of the verses within the poem, of poems within the volume, will extend even beyond the volume itself; and this will be the creation of many poets who will inscribe, on spiritual space, the expanded signature of genius – as anonymous and perfect as a work of art” (‘Crisis in Poetry’ 41).

Mannix's work available to a wider audience while still preserving the unique and expansive characteristics that define it. The following chapter will discuss this digital archive in relation to the Foucaultian question: how (if at all) can madness be presented within rational language without being silenced, so that a dialogue between madness and reason is created, rather than a monologue of reason about madness? Further to this, how can the rational transformation of such work be limited when using the language of literary reason to discuss it? In the context of this analysis the materiality of Mannix's work is detailed as it pertains to the wider practice of artist's book production. The broad themes and underlying creative motivations evident within Mannix's oeuvre are here further introduced. It is these themes and motivations that are pursued in more detail throughout the remainder of the thesis in two distinct modes of analysis. Chapters Two, Three and Four draw from many of Mannix's texts to elucidate his central thematic preoccupations: madness and the erotic. Chapters Five and Six will more specifically examine the narratives and themes contained within individual creative works.

Chapter Two explores the influence of psychosis on the world-view of Mannix, and discusses the role of art-making in facilitating a dialogue with the unconscious landscapes through which he seeks to travel. In this endeavour Mannix finds inspiration in the figure of the shaman and in the Brut or Outsider Art movement. Chapter Three also focuses on madness, this time examining Mannix's dialogue with psychiatry. It explores the suggestion that psychiatry is an organization that silences the mad by rationally narrating their psychotic experience, thus depriving them of their own voice. Mannix's "book of life" can thus be seen as a form of resistance, which attempts, through the development of what can be called a "speculative narrative", to present a dialogue between madness and rationality in language – the central characteristics of this "speculative narrative" will here be discussed. Chapter Four focuses on eroticism and the central place it occupies in Mannix's world-view. Mannix's psychotic episodes are often highly erotic in nature and the unconscious landscapes Mannix explores are dominated by erotic happenings and images. It is often through the erotic that Mannix experiences the subject / object confluence characteristic of schizophrenia, and the manner in which art-making facilitates such erotic unions is outlined.

Chapters Five and Six focus on specific works within the archive, and analyse the progression of their internal events to further elucidate the notion of a “speculative narrative”, as postulated in Chapter Three. Chapter Five will discuss the works: Mo052: The Machines, or a Concise History of the Machine (as far as I know them...)....; Mo024: Erogeny: a book of fables about Rozelle Lunatic Asylum, Mo045: The Skull, Mo050: The Chambers, and Mo049: The Demise. Chapter Six will concentrate on the text Mannix describes as a ‘novel’ Mo046: The Light Bulb Eaters; it is here, he suggests, that his psychotic, unconscious cosmology is most completely articulated.

None of the above analysis would have been possible without the creation of ‘The Atomic Book’. This archive seeks to communicate Mannix’s idiosyncratic mode of expression – one that cannot be easily captured in extracts or paraphrases. The inclusion of the complete texts within the archive allows the claims made regarding Mannix’s work by this thesis to be contextualised, and ultimately critiqued, by Mannix’s words themselves. This thesis should therefore be seen as engaging in a dialogue with the archive, as this ensures that Mannix’s texts will retain the capacity to speak themselves, rather than existing only within a thesis that, otherwise, might come to speak for them.

Chapter One

The Archaeology of Silence: Constructing ‘The Atomic Book’

In the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman...As for a common language, there is no such thing; or rather, there is no such thing any longer; the constitution of madness as a mental illness, at the end of the eighteenth century,³⁷ affords the evidence of a broken dialogue, posits the separation as already effected, and thrusts into oblivion all those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax in which the exchange between madness and reason was made. The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason about madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence. I have not tried to write the history of that language but, rather the archaeology of that silence. (Foucault Madness xii)

Michel Foucault’s seminal statement encapsulates the role rationality or reason plays in stifling the capacity of those who experience madness to express their own lived experience. Here is described the submersion of mentally ill voices within a medicalised psychiatric discourse to the extent that no dialogue between the two parties is possible; however, this submersion is not confined to the medical profession and is of central relevance to the presentation and discussion of the creative work of Anthony Mannix.

Writing of Foucault’s assertion, Shoshana Felman suggests the central issue is this: “how can we comprehend *without* enclosing in ourselves, without *confining*? How can we understand the Subject, without transforming him (or her) into an object?” (42). Such questions are of paramount importance where mental illness is concerned, for here the enclosure of the Subject within a rational discourse has the potential to entirely silence his or her voice.

Much of this thesis will explore the manner in which Mannix’s work attempts to present madness in language without silencing it, thus opening a dialogue between the ‘irrationality’ of madness and the ‘rationality’ of denotative language – formulating one possible “common” language by which reason and madness may communicate. The challenge when approaching such work from an academic viewpoint is to preserve the integrity of Mannix’s psychotic presentations whilst simultaneously making them an

³⁷ This is the point at which those behaviours commonly known as ‘madness’ became the responsibility of the medical profession and were thus characterised as symptoms of illness: “the most decisive moment in the history of psychiatry was when the state handed over to the medical profession the mandate to identify and treat madness” (Kotowicz 11).

object of study. Thus the rational transformation that this process of study necessarily entails must be limited. For whilst this thesis does not speak with the language of psychiatry, it does speak a language of academic literary reason: a language all too capable of erasing the ‘madness’ that is Mannix’s central inspiration and artistic preoccupation. ‘The Atomic Book’ was therefore formulated to simulate the seventy-two works (artists’ books and unbound manuscripts) that constitute the primary material presently under investigation.³⁸ Whilst Artists’ books make up the vast majority of the

³⁸ In the archive the artists’ books can be found in the ‘Artists’ Book’ directory, which is divided into eight subsections; these subsections, and the titles of the works (dates and dimensions supplied where available) contained within them will now be listed:

1. Journal of a Madman: Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4. (1988: 28x35cm), Mo002: Journal of a Madman No.5. (1989: 34x27cm), Mo003: Journal of a Madman No.6. (1989: 26x34cm), Mo004: Journal of a Madman 1989. (20x26cm), Mo005: Journal of a Madman No.7. (1989: 26x37cm), Mo006: Erotic Journal of a Madman 1990-91. (45x52cm), Mo007: Journal of a Madman: The Hot War. (1991: 52x32cm), Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991. (25x36cm), Mo009: Journal of a Madman 1992. (12x18cm), Mo010: Journal of a Madman 1992-93. (12x18cm), Mo011: Journal of a Madman 1992-1994. (25x36cm), Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95. The Chasm. (28x35cm), Mo013: Journal of a Madman 1995. (30x37cm), Mo014: Journal of a Madman 1995. (22x35cm), Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-1996: The Sex Book. (28x35cm), Mo016: Journal of a Madman: Babylon. (1996: 28x36cm), Mo017: Journal of a Madman: Book of Life. (1996: 23x28.5cm), Mo018: Journal of a Madman 1996 & 2002. (46x32cm), Mo019: Journal of a Madman: Guts Are Always Insides. (1997: 20x26.5cm), Mo020: Journal of a Madman 1996. (44x47cm), Mo021: Journal of a Madman 1997. (37x28cm), Mo022: Journal of Madman 2000. (23x15cm), Mo023: Journal of a Madman No.15. (2004: 40x26cm), Mo024: Eurogeny: a book of fables about Rozelle Lunatic Asylum. (1995: 55x57cm), Mo025: Journal of a Madman 2003. (44x32cm).

2. Erotomania: Mo030: Erotomania No.1. (Island Press, Edition of 100: 1984, 21x30cm), Mo031: Erotomania 1994 & 1996: Myth of Sisyphus. (25x38cm), Mo032: Erotic Booklet. (1995 18x13cm), Mo033: Erotomania: Subterranean. (1995: 22x30cm), Mo034: Erotomania: A Churulish Tale. (1996: 20x34cm), Mo035: Erotomania 1996. (35x35cm), Mo036: Erotomania 1996: Sulphurescent. (26x37cm), Mo037: Erotomania 1996: Grains Passions. (30x43cm), Mo038: Erotomania: Book of Life (1996: 26x19cm), Mo039: Erotomania: Pastel Drawing Book. (Undated: 32x25cm).

3. Text-based works: Mo045: The Skull (Limited Edition: 1985-1986: 16.5x22.5cm), Mo046: The Light Bulb Eaters. (1993-1995: 21x30cm), Mo047: Night Owl Writings. (1996: 21x15cm), Mo048: Little Specks of Light. (2005-2006: 18x25cm), Mo049: The Demise (Unbound manuscript: Undated), Mo050: The Chambers (Unbound manuscript: Undated 21x30cm), Mo051: Water Writings (Unbound manuscript: Undated 21x30), Mo052: The Machines (Collected pages), Mo053: Outsider Art Statement (Unbound manuscript), Mo054: Outsider Writing Statements (Unbound manuscript, 2006).

4. Books of Drawings: Mo055: Drawings 1986. (24x31cm), Mo056: A view of Psychosis. (1988: 24.5x32cm), Mo057: The Dying Process. (1990: 50x34cm), Mo058: Moving Monuments (1995: 21x13cm), Mo059: Moving Monuments 1995. (13x18cm), Mo060: The Toy of the Spirit. (1995: 26 x 32 cm), Mo061: Drawings 1996, Mo062: Drawings 1996-1997. (46x64cm), Mo063: Cow. (1996: 26x38cm), Mo064: Creatures and Apparitions. (1997: 39x54cm), Mo065: Rupture. (1999: 23 x 30cm). Mo066: Angel. (Undated: 30x30cm), Mo067: Beast of the Unconscious (Undated: 46x34cm), Mo068: Mad Cow (With ornate box: Undated).

5. Books of Printmaking: Mo070: Documentary of Prints. (1989: 29x38cm), Mo071: Alchemical Etchings. (1988-1990).

6. Artery: Artist-run Gallery: Mo075: Artery (1993-1994: 29x38cm), Mo076: Artery: The Ideal. (1996), Mo077: Artery 1996. (30x18.5cm), Mo078: Motion. (Artery Collective, Undated).

7. Treated Books: Mo080: Where Time Stood Still. (1995: 27x24cm), Mo081: Tahiti: Journey Within Barred Windows. (1996: 29x24cm).

material held within 'The Atomic Book', the archive also contains Mannix's sound recordings, a video work and various forms of biographical documentation ranging from images of landmarks that feature in his work to letters from theorists which comment on his books.³⁹ The title of the archive was appropriated from the following quotation found in Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96, where Mannix writes: "every project i initiate emigrates thru the entire substance of my work. To date this 'book of life' is about fifty volumes strong...i spoke to Phillip Hammial during 1984...i told him i wished to make an "atomic book"...perhaps i meant anatomical bomb" [Ellipsis in original] (43).

The aim of the archive was to facilitate access to Mannix's work, in such a way that it retained the capacity to speak with a voice approaching its own.⁴⁰ Such an archive was essential if the works were to be studied in detail. In the context of this thesis, recourse to the original documents in the archive allows the viewer to assess the validity of any pronouncements made about them in this study.⁴¹ The archive signals towards an absent material original with each image, thus allowing Mannix's work to reach a wider audience without compromising the singularity of the artists' books themselves. In their materiality the books retain their privacy, an important aspect of the Mannix oeuvre.

Mannix's work engages with the notion of a private discourse in two main ways: very little of the work exists in the public domain; and the work itself details a cosmology constructed from multiple layers of personal symbolism, much of which remains

8. Unbound Manuscripts: Mo085: Red.Red.Red... (Pamphlet, 1986), Mo086: Dream-Psychosis-Sleep. (Unbound manuscript, 1996: 31x45cm), Mo087: Mechanism to Invoke Pressure. (Unbound manuscript, Undated: 38x27.5cm), Mo088: The Vulture's Appetite. (Unbound manuscript, Undated: 27x36.5cm), Mo089: Triton to Prompt. (Unbound text, Undated: 21x30cm).

³⁹ Each of these pieces of work have also been allocated a "Mo" number and can be found using the same search function previously described. The directories within which they appear and the titles within such directories will now be listed: 'Documentary Material': Mo082: Rozelle Hospital Rock Carvings, Mo083: Letters from Michel Thevoz, Mo084: Temple of the Dog Images.

'Sound Works': Mo092: A Concise History of the Machine (Mannix with Graeme Revell); Mo093: The Skull (excerpt) (Mannix with Graeme Revell); Mo091-Mo100: The Night Air - Radio National 'Outsiders Part 1/2' 20/07/03 (extracts), with Presenter/Producer Brent Clough; Mo101- Mo108: Radio Eye, 'Art Brut' (extracts), compiled by Matthew Leonard. Radio National, May 2000; Mo110 - Mo118: All in the Mind, 'Outsider Art' 11/03/06 (extracts), Mannix in conversation with Sherre Delys.

'Video Works': Mo120: Cerebral Odyssey, (Mannix reading with 'The Loop Orchestra', performed at The Joan Sutherland Performing Art Centre Sept. 2006. Mannix images collected and arranged by G.S. Jenkins.

⁴⁰ The process of remediation the material books undergo when they are digitalised alters their message to some degree. The nature and impact of this alteration will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁴¹ Where possible the images of original documents were taken under natural light to minimise colour distortion, however, due to the literary focus of this study, preserving the legibility of the writing within Mannix's work was the central aim.

submerged if the material is only casually observed.⁴² This cosmology was (prior to the construction of ‘The Atomic Book’) predominantly expressed in one-off artists’ books created since 1984. The majority of such material was stored in the private dwelling of Anthony Mannix. A number of artists’ books by Mannix are held in private collections within the community, in Australian libraries and in the ‘collection de l’art brut’ in Lausanne.⁴³ These books aside, the seventy-two works retained by Mannix and represented in ‘The Atomic Book’ constitute approximately ninety percent of his overall book production.⁴⁴

The books retained by Mannix have toured Australian and European art galleries, but access to the material was limited: at times only a small selection of the books were displayed, or they were presented in glass cases with only two pages visible. If it was possible to handle the material, the length of exhibition and art gallery setting were not conducive to the detailed, intense engagement that would be required if the work’s complex, often submerged personal cosmology was to be apprehended.

Thus the primary condition of any such intense engagement centred on access: not only would access be required to all original documents still in the possession of Mannix but these documents would have to be available over an extended period of time, so that the reading, rereading, cross-checking and transcription that would inevitably be required could be effected. The vast quantity of the material, and the fact that it was unique,

⁴² Mannix himself limits such privacy by excavating aspects of this personal cosmology in the explanatory notes he adds to numerous pages of his books – this is one more way in which Mannix fosters a dialogue between madness and the rational. In this way and through close analysis of the work itself the external influences that feature (in a defamiliarised form) in his texts can be elucidated.

⁴³ The exact number of books held in the community or institutions are not available due to a lack of records relating to sales or gifts of such material, however a small selection of artists’ books by Mannix are held in the collections of The State Library of NSW (Vehicles of refuge, abundance, repentance, jubilation, beatitude, transfiguration, supplication, etc. / drawings by Anthony Mannix ; poems by Philip Hammial; Erotomania; The Skull; Artery: repartee light discourse with feeling about matters of sentiment conducted on both a simple and profound level), Sydney University’s Rare Book and Special Collections Library (Vehicles Of Refuge), The State Library of Queensland (Rigor mentis, The Skull, Artery, Vehicles of refuge), National Library of Australia (RedRedRed, Vehicles of Refuge, Erotomania, The Skull), State Library of Victoria (Erotomania), Collection de l’art brut’ in Lausanne (Erotomania).

⁴⁴ In focusing on works still in Mannix’s possession, the study concentrates on those documents that Mannix deems too important to part with – and this is certainly an aspect of his rationale regarding book sales or gifts: there are works he would not sell for any price.

fragile and immensely precious to its creator, precluded the option of long-term borrowing. The only feasible solution lay with the construction of a digital archive.⁴⁵

The result is ‘The Atomic Book’: the digital rendering of over four-thousand images detailing each page of seventy-two artist’s books.⁴⁶ The works are arranged in eight subsections, with each subsection organised chronologically where dates have been established. Each text has been assigned a Mo (Mannix object) number and the archive is searchable in this manner. The use of Portable Document Format (PDF) files to store the images from each book has allowed all such pages to be numbered. This solved another major issue for the study – that of citation. The Mannix material mentioned in the thesis could, in this way, be referenced to the archive itself, enabling an image of the specified text or picture under discussion to be located and viewed efficiently. This facility ensured that Mannix’s work retains the capacity to speak itself. In this way it is hoped that Mannix’s creative output is enclosed but not confined, allowing the Subject to be understood “without transforming him (or her) into an object”. Mannix has transformed himself into an object in these works, but it is his own transformation, complete with the miss-takes, erasures, contradictions, incomprehensibilities, and the vast series of explanatory notes that Mannix incorporates into his work; such factors open the way toward the subject and the schizophrenic landscape he is exploring and documenting.

The accurate presentation of such work in ‘The Atomic Book’ aims to resist the transformations that can be effected upon the creative output of individuals who have experienced schizophrenia. Such transformations have occurred throughout the history of critical engagement with this form of expression and have served to both normalise and ab-normalise such material. One example of ab-normalisation can be seen in the limited selection criteria of Hans Prinzhorn in his foundational work Artistry of the Mentally Ill, published in 1922. This tendency is discussed by Bettina Brand-Claussen in relation to

⁴⁵ A meeting between myself and Anthony Mannix was facilitated by the poet Philip Hammial. At this meeting some material from one of the books was photocopied. At a subsequent meeting some six months later a comprehensive study of the creative work of Anthony Mannix involving the documentation of his artists’ books through digital photography was proposed and Mannix agreed to participate. The documentation took approximately two years to complete and arrange.

⁴⁶ The images were taken with a 5-megapixel camera. The first consideration in a study focusing on the textual works of Mannix was one of text legibility. Where possible the images were taken in natural light to preserve the true nature of the colours used by Mannix in his work.

the work of August Natterer included in Prinzhorn's book as one of his ten schizophrenia "masters"; she writes:

His [Prinzhorn's] choice concentrated on paintings that in his view portrayed "schizophrenic experiences quite nakedly" (Prinzhorn 1972,171). Consequently, Prinzhorn only included those works that illustrated his ideas of non-intentional, authentically schizophrenic painting. The result was that he allowed the representational side of Natterer's oeuvre that lacked a certain mystery to go by the board, for he viewed it as "soberly realistic" and "amateur" (1972, 163). He only reproduced poetically loaded works that were replete with the desired mystery, such as Natterer's *Antichrist* (ill. 1) or *Miraculous Shepherd* which shortly after were to be discovered by the Surrealists. (407)

'The Atomic Book', by reproducing approximately eight-five percent of all the artists' books Mannix has created, and displaying each in their entirety, resists any such processes of ab-normalisation that can be effected through limitation of selection. 'The Atomic Book' is thus present to resist any ab-normalisation inherent in this thesis that must, necessarily (due to the vast size of the Mannix oeuvre), make choices as to what it transcribes and the context in which it discusses such chosen material. 'The Atomic Book' shows the extensive range of Mannix's pictorial and linguistic works, which includes both the literal and abstract, representational and mysteriously metaphorical.⁴⁷

At the same time, the potential for normalisation in a project attempting to critically analyse work that is fiercely Outsider or Brut must also be addressed; a related concern is voiced by the psychiatrist Dr Leo Navratil, who founded the Artists' House "to provide a separate space in which his artist-patients might flourish" (Rhodes 92). He uses the expression 'normalisation' in relating his concerns regarding the limitation of the more idiosyncratic aspects of expression in artistic production by the mentally ill. He writes that, even in other departments of his own hospital, "the principle of "normalisation" holds sway, associated with notions of healing, resocialisation, and rehabilitation" (Qtd in Rhodes 96). Dr Leo Navratil continues: "the creative efforts of the artist-patients thrive precisely because of their deviation from the norm, drawing sustenance from those very psychological conditions which psychiatry ordinary attempts to eliminate" (Qtd in Rhodes 96). Similarly, it is possible that in reproducing only

⁴⁷ This also facilitates an approach to the work more in keeping with the practices of literary studies and art history whereby an artist's entire oeuvre is consulted in order to gain appreciation of it, rather than merely decontextualised fragments. (Brand-Claussen 412)

limited extracts, contextualised within an academic thesis, Mannix's work could be normalised.

One obvious example of this process can be seen in the rendering of text. Much of Mannix's work is hand written or (to a lesser extent) created on a typewriter and has been transcribed into this thesis. However, the archive allows access to images of the original works and thus draws attention to the idiosyncratic features of the script, which are lost in such a transposition. Michel Thévoz discusses the historical development of this practice. He writes: "[T]he history of writing is the history of normalisation. Letters gradually escape from the scribe's gestural and visual command, in order to be standardised by typography, photocomposition, and finally computer digitalisation" ('Sorcery' 39). The original texts within the artists' books are replete with contextualising signifiers such as illustrations and alterations, which can be highly illuminating. This is of particular importance when so much of the work is erotic in nature; Thévoz seems to suggest, part of libidinal expression is bound up in a work's hand-written nature. Thévoz writes: "The voice, like the hand, is associated with the intensities of corporeal discourse, while typographic writing suppresses these intensities within a zone of latency, a sort of unconscious of the text" ('Sorcery' 41).⁴⁸ Thus a thesis that only transcribed the texts without supplying the original would negate an essential aspect of the signifying matrix.

Whilst the computer can be responsible for the repression or normalisation of aspects of the text, it can also (through the digital archive) resist normalisation by reproducing Mannix's original gestural creations. Such reproductions reveal each work's existence as a manuscript, a form that is an essential feature of Mannix's language. Thévoz writes: "[T]he manuscript (with its additions, erasures, alternative versions and modifications)...is like speech which, by its intonations, hesitations and corrections, *betrays* the speaker's intent, both by being unfaithful to the intentional meaning and by divulging the latent meaning" ('Sorcery' 41).

Such is the case with Mannix's artists' books, yet the personal exposure that this mode facilitates is an intentional feature of his 'raw' aesthetic. The hand-written idiosyncratic interpretation of spelling and grammar; the erasures and additions; the

⁴⁸ Such libidinal aspects of hand writing are discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis with particular reference to the activity Mannix describes as "sex scribble".

confluence of the pictorial, poetic, fictional and autobiographical, all serve to draw the reader towards the unconscious from which the work emanates – thus it is essential for any study that such characteristics be preserved.

Marjorie Perloff describes such textual features as “noise”, after the work in this field of Michel Serres. Perloff writes: “Serres’s point [is] that noise is not only incidental but essential to communication...If, for example, a letter is written in careless or illegible script, there is interference in the reading process, which is to say that noise slows down communication” (Radical 15). This process of slowing down communication resonates with Viktor Shklovsky’s notion of “defamiliarisation”. In defining “defamiliarisation” as a literary term, Shklovsky suggests that “as perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic” (17). In the same way, habitual uses of language deaden its impact, which in turn serves to deaden humanity’s experience of the world. Shklovsky’s characteristically Modernist aim is to return to original experience, to feel and see as if for the first time, and to present such feelings to an audience in order that their vision is likewise renewed. The intensely idiosyncratic presentation of Mannix’s work is an essential aspect of its communicability. Such work can be seen to adhere to Shklovsky’s requirement for art “to make objects “unfamiliar,” to make forms difficult” (18). Shklovsky’s aim was to slow down the process of communication: the “noise” in Mannix’s work helps to achieve this, thus imparting what Shklovsky called “the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known” (18).

Such “noise” is also a way in which madness becomes present in Mannix’s discourse. “[A]ll those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax in which the exchange between madness and reason was made”, which Foucault suggests are thrust into oblivion, return in the language of Mannix. Mannix imbues the language of reason with madness, creating a dialogue that often subverts rationality’s sense-making drive. In this way the themes explored in Mannix’s texts are reflected in his rendering and arrangement of language. The following quotation by Foucault is relevant here: “[B]y the madness which interrupts it, a work of art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without answer, provokes a breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself” (Madness 273-74).

It is the voids and non-sense within Mannix's texts that a rational discourse would edit out, and yet it is precisely such absences that contribute to the depth and richly layered texture of the work. Such voids of noise (silent to those who only hear the rational) can be seen as points of chaos, a chaos that Mannix writes of repeatedly as being central to his understanding of existence. This existence is not experienced as a series of intellectual propositions to be distilled into definite principles, but is rather a shifting, mutable realm of layered, animated landscapes in a constant state of noisy flux.

'The Atomic Book' has been prepared and supplied to enable Mannix's landscapes to speak rather than be spoken for. Thus the thesis and the archive exist, in a state of tension, presenting a dialogue between the academic impulse to absorb and the Outsider's impulse to remain beyond reach. It is hoped that the very sensitivity to this tension will ensure that the thesis, in its presentation and discussion of the material, will also work to minimise any transformation of Mannix's work, but it seems inevitable that this process will, to some extent, be at play.

Such a transformation has in fact occurred even before the thesis begins since the remediation of the material artists' books into digital form dramatically alters the apprehension of the work by the viewer. Felman's questions are again of relevance here: "how can we comprehend *without* enclosing in ourselves, without *confining*? How can we understand the Subject, without transforming him (or her) into an object?" (42). The process of digitally archiving Mannix's work serves to doubly enclose the material in both digital and archival realms. As will be demonstrated, Mannix's work, in its original form, exceeds the boundaries of both the digital and archival zones in numerous ways – thus being confined (in the sense of limited) and escaping capture simultaneously.

In Archive Fever Jacques Derrida writes: "There is no archive without a place of consignment, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside" (10). The archive defines a place of limit – a limit which the work of Mannix exceeds: first, because the archive does not contain every book the art-maker has ever created; second, because the digital mode of the archive, while having the advantage of being able to store vast amounts of data, giving convenient access to more works instantaneously than would conventionally be the case, sacrifices the materiality of the books – an important aspect of their signifying matrix. Thus the archive both defines

a limited interior and suggests an unlimited exterior. Derrida writes: “[W]hat is no longer archived in the same way is no longer lived in the same way. Archivable meaning is also and in advance codetermined by the structure that archives” (Archive 18).

The meaning of the Mannix archive is thus codetermined, both by the archival technology and the material being archived. The structure of the archive defines an inside: that which is heard. In so doing it defines an outside: a silence in which Mannix’s voice continues to speak, eluding those who might try to listen through ‘The Atomic Book’. Mannix’s work can be generally characterised as possessing a private symbolic core known to him alone: the deep realms of an unconscious landscape into which no other has journeyed; thus it is fitting that the archive is unable to fully represent such private work. It is within the silence of just such an exteriority that Mannix’s schizophrenia is most powerfully present – for madness itself (like the archive), writes Susan Sontag, “is a concept that fixes limits; the frontiers of madness define what is ‘other’” (Iiv).

Such a silence is populated by the absent books of Mannix and by the materiality of his craft, which is flattened and abstracted by the digital image. The restricted capacity of the archive to simulate the experiential materiality of the books, due to their remediation into digital form, is perhaps the medium’s single most limiting factor, as far as offering an understanding of the work is concerned. N. Katherine Hayles defines the role of digital technologies in the practice of ‘remediation’ as follows:

Remediation, the re-presentation of material that has already been represented in another medium, has a long and rich history, as Richard Grusin and Jay Bolter point out in their pioneering book on the subject. But the cycling through media has been greatly expanded and accelerated by the advent of digital technologies. The computer has often been proclaimed the ultimate medium because it can incorporate every other medium within itself. (‘Saving the Subject’ 781)

Whilst digital technology can simulate all other mediums – allowing ‘The Atomic Book’ to house still digital images, sound works and works of moving image – it is the experience of materiality that is lost in the remediation process. The following call for a Media Specific Analysis of text by Hayles is particularly relevant where Mannix’s artists’ books are concerned, as aspects of the communicative power of the work are specifically linked to its heavily embellished material form. In such an analysis:

Texts would routinely be discussed both in terms of their conceptual content and their physical embodiments...Neither document, text, or work would be considered immaterial; all would be invested with nuanced senses of their materialities, a viewpoint that would further energize and foreground discussions of how physical characteristics, verbal content, and non-verbal signifying strategies work together to produce the object called “text”. (‘Translating Media’ 278)

Whilst the archive limits the experiential materiality of the object, it does – through its visual rendering – continually remind the viewer of this aspect of the original work. To this end each photograph of each page has been framed in such a way that its presence as part of a larger book is signalled. The archive, then, in its digital simulation, always attempts to indicate the absent original, the unique physical object that is central to the language of Mannix: a language which encompasses the weight and texture of sharp glass shards; of violently perforated copper plates; of copper wire; of waxed twine; of plastic button inlays adorned with the golden head of an ancient Greek soldier; of varnished muslin; of hand-made paper, rice paper, cartridge paper, butcher’s paper, blotting paper, sand-paper, card board, plastic and Perspex; that speaks through the weight of a solid timber box with delicately cast feet and the squeal of metallic hinges as an unwieldily wooden front cover is opened; a language of fragility, where each turn of a page imbues the viewer with the fear that the work itself will disintegrate. Mannix’s is a language of the hand-worked object: books stitched with cotton, with copper and industrial twine through holes bored, drilled and punched. Found books are appropriated and transformed: Guard Books, photo albums, company and accounting ledgers, diaries, small notebooks covered in blue plastic or bound in red and black paper; Universal notebooks, and entire published works embellished and transformed. A book of Braille which came to tell two stories: a submerged text signified by the physical landscape of Braille under the fingers and the textual and pictorial work which Mannix created over it.

Such material aspects of Mannix’s books are a component of his language that can only ever be suggested by the remediation of the archive. Yet with works that are otherwise unavailable for study, such a visual suggestion can be a powerful stimulus through which to approach the absent object. Mannix’s language can never be fully communicated by the digital form, thus the significance of the original is only heightened by its digitalisation.

Artists' Books

The important role of the material in Mannix's art-making practice and the fact that it is not adequately represented by the digital archive requires that it be the subject of discussion at the outset. Various material aspects of the books will be mentioned throughout the thesis when relevant to the work in question. A more general assessment of the materiality and its function within the Mannix oeuvre is aided by Johanna Drucker's study: The Century of Artists' Books. Mannix's work can be clearly identified as that which Drucker calls "a Rare and/or Auratic Object" (93). Speaking of such work Drucker mentions four subtypes, each of which have a relevance to Mannix's books, and which, taken together, offer a matrix through which to overview the various forms of work contained in 'The Atomic Book'.⁴⁹ The first subtype Drucker mentions is the "Unique Object": she writes, "Many of these books have an auratic quality an often inexplicable air of power, attraction, or uniqueness. Some are unique objects, one-of-a-kind works which emanate a precious or mystical or intriguing quality" (93).

The majority of the Mannix's artists' books are indeed unique objects, and this characteristic was of great importance in his decision to begin making such works. He writes:

But I had a feeling what it must have been in the early days, in the Middle Ages, when a book was a rare object, when it was sacred, when it was a mystery, a repository of rare information and also a very valuable object. All this appealed to me. Nowadays the sacredness of the book has unfortunately been lost. There is this mass production. You throw them away after you've read them. Even *before* you've read them! That's why I started to make each book different. Each book has a different feel and texture. I use different papers. In this one, I used varnished muslin. (Southerly 32)

The creation of one-off artists' books defamiliarises the object known as "book". For Mannix the creation of such work is concerned with the sacred transmission of unique

⁴⁹ Each of the works within 'The Atomic Book' can be located in one of the four subsections that Drucker identifies in the Rare and/or Auratic Object category. The only exception is a series of writing Mannix calls Mo050: The Chambers as only photocopies of the original typed pages have ever been found. This work will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five of this thesis.

ideas. The sense of sacredness with which the book is created becomes an aspect of the impression the work makes on a reader. Drucker suggests that this category of book, as “auratic or fetishistic” (94):

seem[s] to bear meaning just in their being, their appearance, and their form through their iconography and materials. It is as though they have been imbued with a power which animates them beyond their material limits generating a metaphysically charged atmosphere which surrounds the work...tapping into a certain level of the **fantasmatic** – a level of psychological engagement in which emotional energy attaches to an object for reasons which cannot be explained through reason and conscious analysis. [Bold in original] (93-94)

All Mannix’s art-making is underpinned by such an auratic or fetishistic world-view. At the core, the creation of each book is a journey through a private, animated landscape of mystical, metaphysical proportions. Mannix’s world-view can be likened to that of the shaman, the magician or the alchemist. He writes:

In tribal consciousness and experience it is the nervous, ill-fitting members that are driven out into the wilds to become yet again members of the tribe practising magic, shamanism, medicine...the occult. One must given thought to their achievement of balancing and putting into harmony both the natural and the supernatural. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 118-119)

At times book making is, in fact, an aspect of a shamanic-like ritual practice through which Mannix seeks to bring harmony to the natural and supernatural realms. He explicitly states this in relation to illustrations within the artist’s book entitled Mo025: Journal of a Madman 2003: he writes, “that’s what this book is about: recognising forces, digesting them, coming to a conclusion with them, where everything can be orderly and placid” (Southerly 46). In his experience of psychosis Mannix has suggested that within inanimate objects can be sensed presences of great power and mobility. During such times Mannix becomes aware of “a reality, of the world which is not perceived generally, and one that much more comprehensively takes into account the Power intrinsic to the nature of things and people” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 142). It becomes the role of the magician or shaman to engage with such forces, for this individual possesses a sensitivity capable of such perception – or, in Julia Kristeva’s formulation, they possess a disposition that eludes the societal repressions that prevents such appreciations. She writes: “Magic, shamanism, esoterism, the carnival, and “incomprehensible” poetry all underscore the limits of socially useful discourse and attest

to what it represses: the *process* that exceeds the subject and his communicative structures” (Revolution 16).⁵⁰ The making of Art Brut is Mannix’s greatest tool in this endeavour – an endeavour aimed (like that of the shaman) at maintaining or restoring equilibrium within animated energy fields.

The “Power” Mannix writes of, a power that exceeds the subject, is central to notions of the auratic or fetishistic artist’s book. Drucker suggests that such works “have been imbued with a power which animates them beyond their material limits generating a metaphysically charged atmosphere which surrounds the work” (93) – imbued, presumably, by the art-maker her/himself through the process of treating artistic creation as ritualistic.⁵¹ Roger Cardinal suggests a similar mechanism is at work in the creation of Art Brut. He writes:

One of the reasons why Art Brut is often so compelling is that it is a by-product of an unusually intimate engrossment, whereby the maker of an object engages so unreservedly with the materials at hand that the two entities – creator and created work – seem as one...[such processes]...re-enact within the dimensions of the contemporary and the commonplace something of the transfiguring upheavals of sensibility undergone by those great marginals of other ages and societies: the alchemist, the sorcerer, the witch-doctor, the shaman. (‘Within Us These Traces’ 46)

Drucker echos Cardinal when she mentions that such works also display “a level of psychological engagement in which emotional energy attaches to an object” (94). Underlying such activities is Mannix’s awareness that all objects are, through their very existence, already imbued with an intrinsic “Power”; Mannix’s Brut art-making becomes a ritualistic way of engaging with and intentionally manipulating such “Power”. As already suggested, Mannix explicitly characterises his Outsider Art practice as a ritual

⁵⁰ Jerome Rothenberg also connects shamanism and poetry: “the shaman can be seen as protopoet, for almost always his technique hinges on the creation of special linguistic circumstances, i.e., of song & invocation” (485).

⁵¹ Here the creation of the book and the artwork within it form aspects of a ritual act designed to communicate and subdue the powerful demons that Mannix perceives in his reality. Artistic creation is thus reunited with the sense of ritual action with which Walter Benjamin suggests (in his article: ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’) it was first associated: “We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual – first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function. In other words, the unique value of the “authentic” work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value” (223-224). As will be discussed further, Mannix is consciously associating the notion of the ‘original’ with its ritual function. In this way Mannix’s artwork reconnects with the magical power associated with ancient ritual; it is this animate power with which the artwork itself becomes imbued.

whereby he deeply connects with his surroundings: “outsider art where in some Ritual one end of the spectrum the poetical the other the demonic one becomes one with the environment and makes no classification naming or definition: no delineation between self or anything else it makes the monstrous accessible, also the sublime and truly heavenly!” (Mo024: Erogeny 8). In Mannix’s world-view the emotional energy that Drucker suggests becomes attached to an object is a product of a dialogue between the “Power” intrinsic to the object and Mannix’s emotional engagement with such a “Power” – in this way matter elicits a “profound attraction”, both for Mannix and ultimately for the viewer affected by such work. Celia Rabinovitch explains:

A fetish is an object for which we experience a profound attraction and repulsion that marks it out as different, special or extraordinary. According to mythic or archaic sources, a perception of power – the numinous or the holy – penetrates all things. The perception of an unusual power that resides in objects transmitted from a material connection to a person, a place, or an event evokes an elusive “sense of significance” that is the origin of all perceptions of the sacred, from the most abstract, crude, or archaic expressions to those that embody developed religious iconography. A magical or nonrational attachment of meaning to matter is the most striking feature of the fetish or power object as well as that of the surrealist object. (167-168)

The creation of artists’ books for Mannix becomes a method of maintaining or retaining equilibrium within a fluid, animated world of “Power” and energies.⁵² The artistic process, for Mannix, is often a process of recognising, and establishing relationship with, the powerful forces in his reality. It is the energy involved in such a dialogue (that of the force and that of Mannix) that comes to reside within his books, giving them the “elusive “sense of significance”” associated with a fetishised object – a significance alluded to by Drucker, Cardinal and Rabinovitch. For Mannix such a sense of significance is linked to the fact that it is through the action of writing about and illustrating the energies he perceives around him that he feels able to communicate with them, creating relationships with a harmonious potential. Speaking of the image on page 22 of the book of drawings entitled Mo025: Journal of a Madman 2003, Ulli Beier suggests to Mannix: “The person is at ease. He seems to have mastered the situation. He knows the forces he is surrounded

⁵² This is the world-view characteristic of the shaman. Jerome Rothenberg suggests: “the central image of shamanism & of all “primitive” thought, the intuition (whether fiction or not doesn’t yet matter) of a connected & fluid universe, as alive as a man is—just that much alive” (487).

by and he has them under his control.” To which Mannix responds: “I would say he is now communicating with these forces. He has established a relationship with them” (Southerly 46). Mannix’s artists’ books are the staging-ground for such relationships and herein resides the tension that animates such work “beyond their material limits”.

The second subtype of artist’s book Drucker mentions are those that “are issued in limited editions (often because some aspect of production was too costly or complicated to repeat through a larger number of books)” (93). Mannix has produced a number of books of this nature: Mo030: Erotomania No.1 (Island Press) was printed in an edition of 100, each of which is numbered; Mo045: The Skull was printed in a run of 50, yet each is a unique object as Mannix has drawn images in each copy and bound them by hand. This was of obvious importance to Mannix as the work ends with the hand-written statement: “Whilst the content of this book is printed matter, each book has been fashioned individually including original artwork so that each one is different” (18). Thus the focus on the uniqueness of the object is preserved even in these limited edition works, whether through the inclusion of original artworks or through the handwritten numbering of copies.⁵³

The third subtype Drucker describes are those books that are “fetish objects which make use of the book in an erotically charged way or to exhibit and/or demonstrate sexually charged behaviour” (93). The erotic nature of Mannix’s experience of psychosis and the unconscious, and the fact that the books are essentially explorations of these realms, mean that all the works he has created deal with erotic and sexual themes.

Within the seventy-two books contained within ‘The Atomic Book’ there are two titles that recur numerous times and can be seen to constitute two major series of books within the larger oeuvre: Journal of a Madman and Erotomania. The erotic takes many forms in Mannix’s work, and includes images of scantily clad women cut from what he describes as “girlie magazines”, erotic drawings (often based on such magazine images), discussions of erotic relationships, erotic fantasies or hallucinations, and discussions of

⁵³ In 2006 Mannix embarked on one further limited edition book-making project. He invited me to select twenty images from ‘The Atomic Book’. These images were then printed in high-definition colour on A4 photographic paper in a run of thirty. Mannix then individually bound in canvas each edition complete with hand written notes and hand-stamped cover design. This book was made available to private collectors and Australian art galleries. Once this edition was distributed Mannix instructed me to select a further twenty images, this time printing them and binding them in a run of fifteen. Mannix considers both sets of books to be part of the Journal of a Madman series.

the shifts from male to female sexuality Mannix believes he has experienced at times in his life. The erotic realm of the unconscious is a matrix of power, violence, pleasure and danger, and is intimately linked to themes of mysticism, magic, the supernatural and shamanism. The pervasive nature of such themes in Mannix's work ensures that his use of the book to "exhibit and/or demonstrate sexually charged behaviour" is extensive.⁵⁴

The fourth subset of book grouped by Drucker under the "Rare and/or Auratic Object" rubric are "[t]ransformed books [which] use an existing work as their base, and then make a palimpsest which is a combination of textual, visual, and material manipulations of the original" (93). Such work can be seen as a radical Midrash. The historical activity of writing a Midrash, or of "writing with scripture" (Hart 11-12), whereby the anomalies or inconsistencies within a scriptural text are explained so as to maintain the integrity of the original text, is radicalised by this practice which seeks, instead, to expose sub-narratives within the original, or introduce into this source text entirely new narratives.

Mannix has used this technique to create a number of works: at times through necessity and at times through conscious choice. The transformation of the pages from published books has been an act of necessity for Mannix whilst interned in mental institutions when art materials and paper have been scarce. One book he treated in this manner was Gulliver's Travels, pages from which appear scattered throughout numerous works in the Journal of a Madman series. Mannix suggests that Gulliver's Travels was not chosen intentionally for transformation, but the significance of using this work is not lost on him. He writes of this matter:

it one of those sublime classic things whereby in a mental hospital in the throes of an unknown and undecipherable sexuality and eroticism to pick up a second hand book and scribble notes only to notice over a year later that the title is not only the superb complement for what you are doing and what you have risked doing it but also one of the great parodies of reality. (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 86)

Whilst the choice of the book may have been random, the treatment of many of the pages are not, as Mannix engages textually and pictographically with the typography of the

⁵⁴ The erotic themes within Mannix's work will be explored in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

original page.⁵⁵ The original book, however, is not retained in any form; instead, individual pages from Gulliver's Travels appear in isolation within a number of Mannix's artists' books.

The second work to be cited is Tahiti – Romance and Reality by James Siers. Mannix writes, as a Preface to his treated version of this work: “this is the pictorial record of a journey within barred windows during 1996” (Mo081 1). Again the entire book does not remain, but rather one hundred of the original pages have been severed from their spine and arranged together. This series of loose leaves are not rebound as a book – Mannix presents them wrapped in paper and tied together with twine.

The final work to be discussed here is Where Time Stood Still by Bruce and Nancy Roberts, a treatment that Mannix suggests “was undertaken during 1995 as an exercise in adding yet more life to an already lively book” (Mo080 2). In this instance the book appears in its original bound form. Here Mannix engages with both the initial photographs and text to enhance rather than entirely transform them. Mannix's view that the work was “already a lively book” is reflected in the fact that of the three treatments mentioned here, Where Time Stood Still most retains its original form.

Much of this transformation work seems to have been conducted whilst Mannix was confined in mental institutions. The initial impulse to create such works was often, in part, influenced by the scarcity of drawing and writing paper. However, Mannix's deep engagement with the original images (textual / pictorial), ensure that the final works are (as Drucker suggests of this form) a palimpsest: a layering of signification that radicalises the original.

Drucker's formulation of the “Rare and/or Auratic Object” and its four subtypes – the unique object, limited editions, erotically charged and transformed books – aptly conceptualises the broad range of Mannix's artists' books and the impulse behind their formulation. For the vast majority of these works originality and singularity are of paramount concern. Such concerns seem to preclude the mass-production of books by Mannix; ‘The Atomic Book’ is therefore a useful way of providing access to Mannix's work without compromising or degrading this aspect of his aesthetic vision.

⁵⁵ In his treatment of the text Mannix's work echoes the practice of the artist Tom Phillips, who created A Humument by artistically treating W.H. Mallocks' novel A Human Document. There is no evidence to suggest Mannix knew of Phillips' work.

Whilst materiality has been shown to be important to Mannix's work, this thesis will argue that Mannix's landscapes are also ones born of ideas – ideas imagined with such intensity that Mannix experiences them concretely. Thus it is suggested that the digital space, which contains such ideas, still offers those with imaginations of sufficient power access to the physical landscapes they present.

Along with the previously undocumented artist's books thus far discussed, the archive also presents some of the various sound works recorded by Mannix. In these sound works Mannix reads from writing contained in the books and is backed by various musicians and musical collectives, including Graeme Revell and 'The Loop Orchestra'. The digital medium thus allows Mannix's hybridity to be emphasised, as it brings into dialogue writings, drawings, paintings, etchings and sound works for the first time. Mannix's art making entails the formulation of a language comprised of multiple, diverse forms, and 'The Atomic Book' seeks to reflect this aspect of his practice.

Of the many themes within Mannix's work it is madness that predominates: the work itself is an imaginative, radical, explosive, innovative dialogue with psychosis, which presents the search for a unique language, a form of self-expression unconstrained by reason. 'The Atomic Book' shares this aim, displaying Mannix's work in its 'raw' form; each production is a simulation of an absent original – an original which resists "normalisation" and "ab-normalisation", extending beyond its "material limits" in order (as Thévoz suggests of the "manuscript") to approach the condition of speech and living thought. Felman suggests:

It can now be seen that what is at stake, in Foucault's historical study, is in fact the philosophical search for a new status of discourse, a discourse which would undo both exclusion and inclusion, which would obliterate the line of demarcation and the opposition between subject and object, Inside and Outside, Reason and Madness. (42)

In many respects this is also Mannix's project: how to express the confluence of subject and object that so characterises the experience of schizophrenia within a body of creative work. To this end he offers the ongoing "book of life": here Mannix pursues a method of ritualistic art-making capable of bringing into dialogue the unpredictable experiences of life, expressed in living artworks with which he too converses. He writes: "They put across to me when i begin to examine them that they too should be accompanied by full, selfless writing and put together so that you have something living..." (Mo012: Journal

of a Madman 1994-95 87). It is for this reason that he has described his ongoing creative project as the “Atomic Book”, or the “book of life”, a book that is never completed or static. Rather, it is, as he says, “a being of art that one lives with as opposed to a ‘body of work’” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 191).⁵⁶

The presence of the archive is designed to counter the inevitable ab/normalisation of Mannix’s “book of life” effected by this thesis, which utilises both extracts and transcriptions of Mannix’s writing. ‘The Atomic Book’ is designed to reveal what this thesis inadvertently conceals, and in so doing excavate the very process of transformation at work when the academy attempts to draw towards itself a radical Outsider.

⁵⁶ Mannix first suggested this idea in his work The Light Bulb Eaters: “This making of art has been about constantly for a decade, and before but now a new idea has been literally striking me and that is i am on the threshold of creating a being-of-work rather than a body-of-work. It is often now that i am hunting about inside of myself to find that tiny vein which must be added to the body to make it a being” (Mo046 93). He again, later in the same work, writes: “It is something this creation of a being of work, a being of art, and the leaving behind the body of work which although with its million ways of seeing required me to operate its dyalysis machine” (Mo046 109).

Chapter Two

Mannix Narrating Madness: “the art of schizophrenia”

Anthony Mannix’s writings can be seen as autobiographical, and are designed to document experiences of schizophrenic psychosis and the unconscious, where lived ‘reality’ is limited only by the imaginative power of the mind. Hence the author’s suggestion that his work be gathered under the title of the “book of life”: he writes, “These Journals that i am doing are becoming a very great thing. There is becoming a union and a unity with all the different states and levels one can experience; or as Henry Miller put it: there are no lies, only Truth, no matter what you write and depict” (Mo002: Journal of a Madman No.5 67).

Miller associates his notion of the ‘book of life’ with truth in his work Nexus. He writes:

Still another thought now came to mind. *Why was I so obsessed about truth?*

And the answer to that also came clear and clean. *Because there is only the truth and nothing but the truth.*

But a wee small voice objected, saying: “*Literature is something else again.*”

Then to hell with literature! *The book of life*, that’s what I would write.

And whose name will you sign to it?

The Creator’s.

That seemed to settle the matter. (217)

Miller searches for a form within which to contain all aspects of life,

all these lovely dementia praecox cases, these star rovers, these diamond-backed logicians, these battle-scarred epileptics, thieves, pimps, whores, defrocked priests and students of the Talmud, the *Cabala* and the Sacred Books of the East? Novels! As if one could write about such matters, such specimens, in a novel. Where in such a work, would one place the heart, the liver, the optic nerve, the pancreas or the gall bladder? They were not fictitious, they were alive... (Nexus 220)

Similarly, Mannix’s artistic aim is to develop a mode of expression capable of bringing into dialogue all characteristics of his own lived experience; an experience dominated by psychosis and its unconscious landscapes. Mannix characterises his own work as follows:

My artistic output over the last twenty-five years has had one point and that has been to document the landscape of psychosis and the unconscious. It involves an intuitive invention of cultural anthropology to make some order of the plethora of hallucinations, visions, spirits, ghosts, apparitions, and creatures, which populate this, altered perspective. I have learned my trade myself; patterns, designs and artefacts I have observed in all worlds go to form a network of technique. (Mo053: Outsider Art Statement 1)

In the course of documenting the landscape of psychosis and the unconscious Mannix blurs distinctions between work that is recognisably autobiographical and that which is recognisably fictional. The close relationship between the two is a product of the phantasmic potential of madness. Mannix's autobiographical works describe actual psychotic experiences, and his fictional works often take the imaginative potential of psychosis as their inspiration. At times such imaginative constructions constitute the reality in which Mannix lives. In this way Miller's metaphorical statement regarding his characters being alive rather than fictitious is realised by Mannix, as aspects of his "book of life" (and ultimately his entire oeuvre) become animated. In this way all Mannix work is "truth" – life reflecting the contents of the book rather than the contents of the book reflecting life.⁵⁷

As will be shown, art-making becomes for Mannix a method by which a concrete reality is constructed; creative expression both documents and creates realms of the unconscious simultaneously. The capacity of individuals experiencing schizophrenia to inhabit metaphorical realities is noted by the psychiatrist Ronald Pies:

The schizophrenic, however, does not merely imagine [invented]...worlds - he inhabits them. And his language is not an invitation to join him in an imaginative and enriching journey; on the contrary, it is an excrescence of his psychic experience - a direct presentation of his private world. (18-19)

There are two core ideas within this quotation worthy of note. First, the inhabiting of imagined worlds refers to a state of mind described as "lived metaphor". Here, imaginative or metaphoric constructs, derived from the 'rationally' observable world,

⁵⁷ Kate van Orden makes an analogous point regarding Marcel Duchamp and John Cage, whom she suggests, "made the Book into life rather than making life into the Book" (178). Similarly, Roland Barthes, writing of Proust, states that "instead of putting his life into his novel, as is so often maintained, he made of his very life a work for which his own book was the model" ('Death' 144).

come, via a metonymic exchange, to constitute the individual's reality.⁵⁸ Mannix explicitly describes this process in relation to the "carnal circus", which features a number of times in his writing:⁵⁹

Like the circus of Okalhoma where i lived in 1987, the carnal circus is a real place, there are times in our lives when the imagination turns into a solid thing of life...this is where i am now amid the black and carnal magic of this intricate circus...everything is touched here by some divinity, luck or charm and in some way the world is plastic to the heat and fever of the circus. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo015: Journal of a Madman (1995-96) 39)⁶⁰

Thus Mannix comes to inhabit his own narration, as the narration inhabits him. A lived narration as a metaphor is lived in psychosis. In such worlds the subject and object are conflated, existing in an intricate cosmology where all is animated. It is within this radical mode of thought that the construction of an alternate schizophrenic reality is effected. Mannix writes of this process:

the art of schizophrenia might be seen as a constant make-shift construction of a mental sculpture. the thing is welded to reality but not part of it. this sculpture of thought and personal history is a very mobile thing and is being added to constantly throughout a schizophrenic experience becoming more and more complex, becoming more and more unmanageable and in need of alteration and repair. it is not exposed to the ravages of climate and vandals as such but to the destructive contact of reality and the real in this it is the incomprehensible. With the inverse of the concept and method of anarchism, for a separate reality is being brought into being. It must devour and reconstruct reality on a continual basis, that presents new implications and the possibility of new and novel semantic meanings for the word 'continuity'. (Mo006: Erotic Journal of a Madman 23)

The "new and novel" meaning of "continuity" arises in this metonymic reality as all things become exchangeable – continuity is complete. In this realm, which constitutes a mental art-making experience, the mental concept becomes inverted as it materialises via a creative process that both participates in the construction of Mannix's metaphoric worlds and documents their multi-various aspects. For Mannix art itself is a living entity

⁵⁸ Louis A. Sass seems to suggest a similar idea when he writes: "It is, in fact, almost as if they [schizophrenics] were living out some form of transcendental idealism, as if the world existed for them not as an independent substance but as a pure idea, a product or emanation of consciousness itself" (284).

⁵⁹ A short story set in the Carnal Circus can be found on pages 4-5 of Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95.

⁶⁰ Mannix describes the capacity of artmaking to create worlds or realities in a radio interview which can be found in the 'Sound Works' section of 'The Atomic Book', listed as Mo114.

born of the profound and instructive creativity inherent in the experience commonly known as madness. In a work titled “Dissertation or Distraction”, he writes:

Now, i am writing a dissertation about madness. One (1) it is a state that however much knowledge there is it is never explained. It is a Flux, about which hovers the soul and creative ardour of the ‘knower’... Out of madness is born a creative seed which can be used in many, many ways...One must make, really make; ... What madness supplies in the creative process is manifold, not least of all a great and uncomfortable projection in Realms where there are energies that cannot be denied. (Mo002: Journal of a Madman No.5 20)

Here can be seen the pervasive sense of animated confluence that renders life and creativity synonymous – “One must make, really make...”, he writes, and this process of making is often a dialogue with the energies that inhabit the realm of the unconscious into which he is projected. At times his writing and art can be seen as a medium through which he communicates with psychic presences of the unconscious he describes as: “Raucous beings committing intricate intrigues together which never take foothold but remain embryonic; that become children that never grow up be remain as shifty, noxious and ultimately life-giving – to call these things fantasies is to read the comic backwards” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 107).

In the realm of lived metaphor, the distinctions between subject and object are broken down amid feelings of ‘ontological insecurity’ – a state discussed by R.D. Laing in which an integrated sense of self is compromised (39). For such an individual, he suggests, the “elements of the world...” can take on “a different hierarchy of significance from that of the ordinary person...” (43). This questioning of the objective, fixed status of reality, and the self’s relation to it, is central to the work and perceptions of Anthony Mannix. For him, psychosis allows access to a reality existent within ‘normal’ reality: a psychic landscape of transmutable energies. He explains:

During psychosis Perception alters. In ‘sane’ times something might be perceived to be big, heavy, bulky, dark coloured and immobile. During a Psychosis the same might be registered as, without limit, bound to the earth by weight and size and yet animate and therefore immensely mobile, dark and emanating foreboding and of an evil and threatening nature or disposition. (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 142)

The sense of legitimacy Mannix affords such perceptual states is influenced by the culture and beliefs he experienced in his early twenties during two years living in South-East Asia. Mannix writes that whilst there he,

saw people who acted differently, but weren't censored for it...I became more closely involved with animism...I began to realise, that I too had beliefs. That I could stop at night and feel a green energy in the dark, which was the rice, growing and humming. I had strong feelings, walking around in the fields and on the beach; I felt in the presence of powerful, sometimes dangerous, forces. For the first time, I developed a systematic animism. I think I had these feelings and visions when I was young – but here, suddenly, it was legitimate! (Aspect 65)

The reaction to such ideas by those close to Mannix on his return to Australia powerfully displays the role societal norms can play in contextualising an individual's ideas and beliefs.⁶¹ Ideas which were an accepted part of South-East Asian culture were deemed abnormal by those with whom Mannix came into contact in Australia. Mannix recalls the pronouncements made to his family by the psychiatrist they had engaged to treat him at this time: "The psychiatrist told them that the change in me was dramatic and illogical; and 'there was no structure' in my being. Therefore I would find it difficult to live in Western society" (Aspect 68). The structures of Mannix's thoughts were incompatible with those of his present context and were thus deemed, not to be of a dissimilar structure, but to be devoid of any structural form.⁶² This experience resulted in the first of

⁶¹Dr Edmund Critchley makes a similar point: "In Western Europe from AD500-1500, people who heard voices or saw visions considered themselves, and were considered by their contemporaries, to have had an actual perceptual experience of either divine or satanic inspiration. They were not considered mad and were not dealt with as such" (5).

Foucault's view is also relevant: "One of the many reasons that lower the number of admissions to European asylums during wars and serious crises is that the level of the integrative norms of the environment falls sharply, with the result that the society becomes much more tolerant than in ordinary times, when it is more coherent and under less pressure from events" (Mental Illness 79).

⁶² Not only would Mannix have difficulty living in Western society but Western society cannot tolerate Mannix as the existence of a different structure of being has the potential to undermine the rational norm. Foucault characterises the insane in a similar manner, as possessing the power to corrupt the populus. He suggests the insane individual "places the Other world on the same level as this one, and on ground level, as it were. As a result, one no longer knows whether it is our world that is duplicated in a fantastic mirage; whether, on the contrary, it is the other world that takes possession of this world; or whether the secret of *our* world was to be already, without our knowing, the *other* world" (Mental Illness 77).

Such attitudes have a long history stretching back at least as far as Plato. The insane individual in contemporary Western society is banished in the same fashion as Plato suggests poets should be from his "city" – and for the same reasons: both are enemies of reason: "And lest she [poetry] condemn us as rather harsh and rough, let us tell her that there is an ancient feud between philosophy and poetry" ('The Republic Book X' 407). This is because "all poetic company from Homer onwards are imitators of images of virtue and whatever they put in their poems, but do not lay hold of truth" ('The Republic Book X' 400). The poet is excluded from society, not only because they circumvent rationality, but also because their 'imitation' of reality is persuasive enough to corrupt the rational populus, thus, potentially destabilising the order of rational society: "The imitative poet, we will say, does just the same with each private person; he establishes an evil constitution in his soul; he gratifies the unthinking part of it which does not know the

Mannix's many stays in psychiatric facilities, institutions charged with reinstituting logical rationality in their patients. Such structures have remained at odds with many of Mannix's perceptions; it is rather the systems of spiritualism, the occult, shamanism, and creative expression that he has embraced.

The tradition of shamanism, for instance, offers an alternative interpretation of experiences psychiatry may characterise as psychotic. Within a shamanic world-view Mannix ascends to the position of a leader in society as opposed to the feared and reviled position the mentally ill inhabit in western culture. Thomas W. Overholt elucidates this point:

the intermediary's (shaman's) behaviour is, broadly speaking, both defined and affirmed by his or her society. And if this behaviour seems to mirror one or another illness, then one must at least say with Eliade that the intermediary is "...above all, a sick man who has been cured, who succeeded in curing himself. Often when the shaman's or medicine man's vocation is revealed through an illness or an epileptoid attack, the initiation of the candidate is equivalent to a cure". Of great importance is that a person manifesting such (prescribed) behaviours is not treated by society as being simply "mentally ill," but as being in possession of powers at least potentially useful to the community... (11)

The potential for such alternative readings of madness is reiterated by Allen S. Weiss as follows:

Both madness and possession trance were long believed to be manifestations of divine inspiration. Those voices heard in one's head, auditory hallucinations common to accounts of both schizophrenic patients and tribal shamans, may be deemed either a sign of the gods or a hypostatisation of the soul, projected in a theological, paranoid, or aesthetic delirium. (Shattered 40)

In the following quotation, Mannix brings into dialogue the tension between multiple readings of madness by radicalising psychiatric language – not by personifying the labels of illness, but by showing these labels to be, merely, clinical terms for what he experiences as palpable, animated presences:

i am burning the last of my childhood photographs in neurotic annihilation, and the ashes remind me of the feelers of insects.

each night i am confronted with diaphaneous beings, personalities, possessivenesses.

Phobia comes one night, Dementia another and Apoplexia and Mania the next and whisper

difference between greater and less, but which believes the same things to be great and now small, by imagining images very far away indeed from the truth" ('The Republic Book X' 405-06).

their scream/stare/whisper into me. Its a trance of the low elongated keys, almost beyond the range of human perception, calling again and again. to call it moaning is to ride the Beast sidesaddle. (Mo012: *Journal of a Madman 1994-95* 16)⁶³

The beast mentioned here is the unconscious – at times a realm and at times an entity: to ride it “sidesaddle” is to feminise it or be feminised by it. There are numerous instances in his works where Mannix suggests he is becoming or has become female. Such changes in sexual orientation are aspects of Mannix’s deep engagement with sexuality and the erotic. Such themes play a major role in his lived metaphors, and, along with madness, can be seen as dominating his artistic vision.⁶⁴

In the above quotation Mannix describes a reality of lived metaphor in which the concept of limit has ceased to function; the subject is breached in this realm of animated flux: phobia, dementia, apoplexia and mania are not psychological conditions but physical and psychic forces that come in the night to terrorise him. Whilst the relationship Mannix has with these beings can be seen as a confluence of subject and object, the entities themselves blend aspects of aural and visual senses as they “whisper their scream stare whisper” into him. The impression is given of an unstable and ruptured existence. In such an environment creative expression becomes a potent tool, not necessarily to express ideas to an audience, but to re-establish a sense of equilibrium within an unbalanced psychic reality.

Audience: The “Second-Person” and the “Other”

The second idea raised by Ronald Pies is his suggestion that the language of people with schizophrenia is not intended as communication with what B. Rosenbaum & H. Sonne term a “Second-Person” receiver or audience, but is merely an “excrement” of subjective psychic experience: this results in their words, for him, being presentations rather than representations.

⁶³ This particular passage of writing was recorded by Mannix with accompanying music by ‘The Loop Orchestra’ and is listed in ‘The Atomic Book’ under ‘Sound Works’ as Mo090.

⁶⁴ The erotic aspects of Mannix’s work will be dealt with in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Such a presentation of subjective “excrescence”, called into question by Pies, is in fact an ideal for Mannix: the more idiosyncratic the form and content of the utterance the more authentic the message. He explains:

One still has this feel for the asethic with this work but strangely so-long ago i realized my grammer was my own, and decided not to change it, like wise spelling. what one wishes to get close to are the places where the very art comes from why should we labour with the envies and jealousies of the hardware store when we have been invited into the very Red-hot depths of the foundry sweaty and fluxen to make what-ever it is that we want. (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 89)

The hardware store can be equated with a contrived artistic ‘product’ created consciously to appeal to a specific audience. Mannix, however, attempts to write from the foundry, producing psychic excrescence from within the powerful ‘flux’ of unconscious “places” – a form of expression drawn from the subjective mind in a state of lived metaphor. In this manner Mannix concurs with Eugene Jolas’ edict that, “[t]he literary creator has the right to disintegrate the primal matter of words imposed on him by text-books and dictionaries...He has the right to use words of his own fashioning and to disregard existing grammatical and syntactical laws” (qtd. in ‘Logocinema’ Perloff 84).

Mannix does disregard such linguistic norms so as to create an art that accurately reflects his personal world-view, an art of and for himself. He explains: “i am sick and disillusioned with making an art that everyone plays games with...In this way i am making these journals for myself, for myself to own and enjoy. In this way i am a flower that has been impregnated and has folded up upon itself” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 46). Artistic creation becomes a form of self exploration, Mannix suggests: “The sole purpose of these journals - their writings and visual content is to bring myself closer to myself; to enrich my own life...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo002: Journal of a Madman No.5 55) Elsewhere Mannix has written: “At the beginning I drew only for myself. In fact, I wasn’t even doing it for myself. I was marvelling at what was occurring on the paper...The idea of exposing or even selling my work repulsed me initially. But when I came out of hospital, I was looking for a bit of credibility. I wasn’t so much looking for an audience, I wanted to be accepted as an artist, to be given a place in society” (Aspect 72).

Thus, much of Mannix's creative work is not sanitised by the desire to communicate with an external audience and can even, at times, constitute an internal dialogue – the spontaneous presentation of relationships with living beings, such as the “spirits, ghosts, apparitions, and creatures” Mannix mentioned at the outset of this chapter. Such beings are birthed from and absorbed back into the unconscious of the author through the creative act itself. Mannix writes of a drawing that he suggests depicts a “five-headed demon”⁶⁵: “That’s why I draw it, to assimilate it and take charge of it. Maybe I do something similar to what so-called tribal artists are doing. When confronted by something I don’t know, I often picture it and slowly absorb it” (Southerly 38).

Within a state of lived metaphor the creative process and resultant work cannot be separated from the reality in which it is produced: rather it is enmeshed within it, functioning as a power in its own right – a ritualistic dialogue with the surrounding psychic environment.⁶⁶ Here the strict limits between the subject and object break down to reveal an auratic or fetishistic world-view, as discussed previously in relation to the creation of Mannix's artists' books.

In this realm of lived metaphor, writing and other creations can be enlivened by traces of the psychic beings so central to the artwork's inspiration; it is in this way that such words have the potential to present rather than represent. As Michel Nedjar suggests, the doll he created did not represent his friend H  l  ne, but rather presented her: via the artistic process Nedjar had actually transmitted her inside the doll.

As has already been suggested, one instance in which a dialogue with psychic presences has directly inspired Mannix's artwork is in Mo025: Journal of a Madman 2003. Here Mannix talks about a psychic space as populated by powers or forces that

⁶⁵ This work can be found on page 9 of Mo025: Journal of a Madman 2003.

⁶⁶ The creative work of Raymond Morris provides an interesting parallel to Mannix's practice. Morris “refers to himself as an ‘extrakter’ (*sic.*), rather than an artist, because his pictures are a response to urging by spirits who reveal profound visions of a wholly animate universe; images are extracted from the forces around him” (Rhodes 121). In this way, considerations of artistic audience are absent from the creation of the work. The work of Michel Nedjar is also related – through the process of creating sculptural dolls the objects can come to embody the psychic presence of an individual. He writes: “Sometimes I bury things within my dolls... Things work on me from outside. It was later on that I felt, inside the doll, the presence of my friend H  l  ne. I had transmitted her inside it” (Qtd in Rhodes 163).

The visionary art of William Fields is also relevant to Mannix's practice of interacting with Demons through drawing. Fields writes: “I get so high from drawing that, for me, everything on the paper is alive, and these [spirit] figures start moving and talking to me. It's an interactive experience that's multi-dimensional, and the drawings are a transmission of what I'm experiencing” (Patterson 67).

have the capacity to infiltrate and disintegrate his ontologically fragile self. Language and creative expression become one way in which such forces can be managed. The following quotation describes the role of artistic creation in communicating and altering such invasive energies. “These forces are frightening at first, but once you have established a relationship with them, they also *give* you energy. Demons are threatening at first, but in the end they may become friends and give you things” (Southerly 46).⁶⁷

In this way Mannix’s drawings and writings can facilitate the digestion or processing of threatening demons in his metaphorical reality, in order to retain or maintain equilibrium. Such creations constitute a spontaneous dialogue with presences unmodulated by notions of a “Second-Person” audience. The works, rather than merely representing thoughts, give form to psychic entities. In this way the images encapsulate their own inspiration, their own origin. The creation of such images is motivated by a subjective impulse of the utmost importance: the continued integrity of Mannix’s psychic existence. Through the artistic process of objectifying these demons, he is able to reinstate equilibrium between the external and internal, the self and other.

Speaking in an interview about the drawing on page 9 of Mo025: Journal of a Madman 2003, Mannix suggests that it is “[b]ig and black and nasty. A five-headed demon that hasn’t been assimilated by me yet...It’s not friendly at first. The whole process [of artistic rendering] is to make them all friendly and communicative” (Southerly 38). Mannix goes on to describe an image on page 22 of this work, and in so doing expands on his idea of demons and the possibility of developing with them a harmonious relationship through art practice: “I would say he is now communicating with these forces. He has established a relationship with them...But such a positive relationship can only be established if you respect the demons, because they are powerful forces who can twist anybody this way and that” (Southerly 46). In this same interview Mannix also likens such demonic forces (depicted on page 5) to an expression he

⁶⁷ Mircea Eliade reports a similar situation in relation to shamanism whereby: “the future shaman is cured in the end, with the help of the same spirits that will later become his tutelaries and helpers...There is always a cure, a control, an equilibrium brought about by the actual practice of shamanism” (Shamanism 28-29). The notion that such an equilibrium is re-established (as least in part) via an engagement with such spirits facilitated by creative production or performance of songs or poems by the shaman is particularly relevant to Mannix’s world-view. Mannix’s creative practice can thus be characterised as a form of shamanic ritual act.

attributes to Antonin Artaud, namely – “vicious external will”⁶⁸, and the “elementals” discussed by Aleister Crowley (Southerly 34). Thus between Mannix and the demons that inhabit the unconscious realms through which he travels exists the possibility of communication and energy exchange, the ultimate aim being one of balance and harmony of “vicious external” forces capable of infiltrating the fragile borders of the self.

From Mannix’s discussions of various demons it appears that a hierarchical structure is present, but an overview of its arrangement is not fully articulated in any one passage of writing. Thus Demons seem also be called Gods and have titles such as “It: Son of shit” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 26) and “Kuij, one of the Gods of Fuck” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 34). Mannix does suggest some background to Demons and Gods in general when he writes,

In 1985 and 1986 I had developed a theory that maleficent Gods which affected culture and historic streams of consciousness were formed out of Nebulae. A nebula would be formed by the combined ‘karma’, or sexual (and often perverse manifestation) enterprise in the City. This “Shade of Aberration” would remain extant, and gradually would increase its consciousness & Intelligence. I had intimate dealings with four of these youthful “Gods” during 1985. I became in contact with them thru. my own expletive and perverse sexual practices. They all, CUMFEEL, FEELCUM, Polygr and Polykamus felt that my attention to them would be a useful way of increasing their stature and Power. (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 34)

In this way such “Nedulae” have the potential to affect many individuals and direct the streams of history. In Mannix’s case he suggests that Cumfeel preyed on his “extreme sexual lusts” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 34). Mannix uses sexual acts and, at times, magically oriented sexual acts to communicate with and protect himself from such entities. Sex, lust and perversion seem the only language that such entities engage in, and Mannix seems (at various times) both intensely attracted to and repelled from them. The above passage also introduces the concept of Karma into the intricate workings of Mannix’s cosmology. A karmic system of belief finds natural resonance with Mannix’s world-view, one which is acutely concerned with balance (or lack of balance) in the physical, emotional and psychic systems that underpin existence.

⁶⁸ Artaud writes often of such external forces that he perceives to be psychically attaching him: “these incantations, when I do them – and very often I cannot keep from doing them – cast out the evil spirits, and that the evil spirits, which are hundreds of thousands of men living and breathing all over the earth, do not want to be cast out either from my body or from yours...” (Selected 464).

Demons are one of three main groups of psychic beings that have populated Mannix's psychotic experiences, strongly influencing his world-view and artistic output. Collectively he calls such entities "appearances". Whilst the variety and range of such entities is vast, Mannix divides them into KREATURES, Demons and Doppelgangers. He explains:

Resplendent in my work and mind in the past decade has been the KREATURE. This is very different from Demons or Doppelgangers, the other two main kinds of 'appearances'. Compared to the other two groups these creatures are quite motive-less and bring a great deal of the Insect into my life. Their great quality is the embodiment of the impersonal. All sex, all deviation, all perversion are within the total body of the Demons, and all Self, obvious and otherwise is within the Doppelganger(s). (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 12)

An example of a "KREATURE" may be found in Mannix's description of "Them": "The Them are giant insect culture that live at Royal National Park and are a hybrid between a wasp and an ant" (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 70). Here the insect is enlarged to enormous hybrid proportions.⁶⁹ Such entities are nocturnal and afraid of the fire. Mannix suggests that, "it was only by this means [fire] that i was to survive a mass attack of them in winter 1986 while temporarily resident in the bush" (70).

Art making plays a central role in this establishing/re-establishing of equilibrium between Mannix and his psychic environment. In the realm of lived metaphor the borders of the self are fragile. This fragility of the self is also suggested by the third major category of "appearances": the doppelganger. In the following quotation Mannix describes his first interaction with this entity and suggests its appearance in his life has a possible literary origin:

reading in the 70's the occasion of Goethe coming into his study and seeing a direct imitation of himself waiting for him. The first time i confronted one of these things was when there was a knock on my flat door in Glebe in 1979. On opening the door a strange translucent 'double' of myself was there. It was strangely coloured and wore strange clothes. It disappeared after a split second. i was given quite a start. However, from then on this doppelganger would appear with more and more regularity. On many occasions i have been walking empty streets at night, where there is no noise, no motion, to have hundreds of

⁶⁹ Many insects inhabit Mannix's hallucinations and work. The "Them" may be related to the 1954 horror/science fiction film, 'Them!', in which mutant ants grow to be enormous in size after exposure to nuclear tests.

doppelganger appear and disappear on a journey. They are all identical and they are all different. (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 58)

Mannix's experience echoes that of Mephistopheles (dressed as a travelling scholar) knocking on Faust's door in Goethe's Faust / Part One. However, the work Mannix suggests he was 'reading in the 70's' is certainly The Spear of Destiny by Trevor Ravenscroft published in 1973. Ravenscroft dedicates a chapter to "The Doppelgänger" in which he writes:

Goethe, for instance, has spoken of the time when he entered the study at his home in Weimar and saw what appeared to be an exact counterpart of himself sitting in the chair behind his desk and looking brazenly back at him.

Suppressing an immediate feeling of alarm at this unusual experience, he stood and gazed for several seconds into the eyes and leering face of this momentarily visible counterpart of himself which he named the *Dopplegänger*. (290-91)

Thus it is possible that Mannix's own initial experience of his "doppleganger" is, at least in part, shaped by way of dialogue with these two literary sources, Goethe and Ravenscroft, from which he conjured his lived metaphor of a "doppleganger". Mannix's comment that they are "all identical and they are all different" reflects the extreme paradox inherent in the experience of seeing an entity that mirrors oneself.

The most comprehensive inventory of the demons, ghosts and spectres (amongst other things) that Mannix has encountered over his years of psychotic hallucinations are listed on pages 42 and 43 of the Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4. Both pages are titled "Dedication 1985" and each of the short dedications begin with the word "for". Each dedication is given equal status and this suggests that, as with so many of Mannix's constructions, there is not one fixed hierarchy relating to such entities. Mannix seems to possess a relationship with each being, and his descriptions often recall the experiences he has had with them; this can be seen in the following example: "for the re-incarnated Salome who danced with me at night in the empty city amphitheatre...later i found my pants wet, my wallet gone and my throat cut..." [Ellipsis in original] (Mo001 42).

Whist this list includes many supernatural entities it also mentions people of 'mainstream' society whom Mannix juxtaposes with the inmates of psychiatric wards. There are also dedications to words and expressions as well as concepts such as "Organisation and Method, Orientation and Mobility..." [Ellipsis in original] (Mo001

43). List-making is a feature of Mannix's work, and demonstrates here the inventive nature of Mannix's animated cosmology, specifying the vast range of entities in Mannix's metaphorical realm. Entities appear here that are not discussed elsewhere in his works, and the detail with which they are described suggests a deep knowledge of, and history with "appearances" which are at once the product of, and at times participate directly in, the production of his creative works. The list concludes with a dedication that demonstrates the role of one such "appearance" in the creation of a piece of creative writing. Mannix writes: "...for Mordrol, bloody dark fish, who when i was desperately seeking a title to a written work sent me to a Kings Cross john⁷⁰ where i found a desperardo masturbating ...'Genitalia' being the outcome..." [Ellipsis in original] (Mo001 43).

Mannix's "appearances" often function as entities Rosenbaum & Sonne term the "Other", fantastic beings which come between the "First-Person" speaker Mannix and "Second-Person" audience: "this third party, the Other, often virtually assumes control of the patient's speech. The Other interferes, interrupts, directs. Indeed, the Other structures the speech of the schizophrenic in such a way that often it is to the Other and no longer to the Second-Person receiver that the schizophrenic text is addressed" (56).

Mannix's work is often a dialogue between himself and the Other: rather than merely attempting to exclude the "appearances" from his sphere of consciousness, Mannix's art seems to create controlled perforations within the barrier separating the subject and the object, through which he can exchange meaningful energies with these entities. Mannix subdues the Other of Rosenbaum & Sonne, which "interferes, interrupts, directs", recognising within this entity potential friends who "can give you things". Mannix has suggested that this is akin to a process of digesting the Demons or entities and (as with the artwork of Nadjar) it is within the artwork that the entity comes to reside.⁷¹ Here the work presents rather than represents such appearances.

⁷⁰ The word "john" is colloquial expression meaning toilet.

⁷¹ In *The Light Bulb Eaters* Mannix writes of drawing the Beast of the Unconscious in similar terms: "for some reason he appears to disbelieve that i can capture his image, i, on the other hand am absolutely certain of what i am doing, it is that from his inflictions i know him better than any lover" (60).

Defamiliarising Language

This tension between presentation and representation is one between origin and simulacrum. The drawing does not merely represent the demon but comes to embody it – becomes its origin. Such a tension is of particular relevance to the written word, which since Plato has been seen as the derivative representation of speech. Speech is held to be more closely related to thought, in part because speech is perceived to be immaterial and more spontaneous than writing. Jacques Derrida, in Of Grammatology writes of this notion of speech as, “pure auto-affection that necessarily has the form of time and does not borrow from outside of itself, in the world or in “reality,” any accessory signifier, any substance of expression foreign to its own spontaneity” (20).

Writing entails a materialisation of, and hence separation from, immaterial thought. This separation is heightened when such a process modifies and tailors thought for – potentially – a reader. However, in the reality of lived metaphor inhabited by Mannix, writing and other forms of creative work are not always produced for an external audience. Far from only materially representing an interior mental landscape such activities participate in and inform subjectivity. Here, writing and other physical creations retain psychic links to the immaterial ideas that inspired them. In such a way Mannix reinvigorates the relation between writing and thought, calling into question Plato’s historical derision of writing. The written word in this formulation is spontaneous and enlivened, perceived as possessing the power to control and construct reality.

When such work is presented to an audience, some individuals will recognise within it aspects of their own psyche. For this work is not entirely disconnected from sanity, rather it is underpinned by a “defamiliarisation” of the “normal” world-view. The “abnormal” world-views of the insane serve to highlight the constructed nature of each individual consciousness, whilst also offering potential channels through which a homogenised populace can reconnect with their own unique vision of existence.

In Mannix’s psychotic world-view the object is already defamiliarised, the words he uses to describe it also unfamiliar – language itself is a defamiliarised object. By traducing conventional discursive references language is deterritorialized and amid a new

strangeness becomes ‘original’ and spontaneous. Each word constitutes its own lived metaphor, creates its own unique cosmology: Recast within Mannix’s individual subjectivity language becomes enlivened and poetic, capable of presenting psychic excrescence.⁷² It is this writing which is, at times, an integral part of the process which conjures such cosmological lived metaphors into being – thus presenting rather than representing them. Mannix explains: “If i depict anything it is those inaccessible forces in that part of the psyche known as the unconscious. Anyway the more one writes about this the more one is there even if the ultimate light in which one is does not change...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo012: *Journal of a Madman* 1994-95 98).

This notion of the “more one writes the more one is there” suggests that this process of writing descriptions of psychic realms on a page may, in fact, simultaneously write a reality which eventually envelops Mannix. This sense is palpable when he uses the first-person present tense:

i am meeting an entity....that is how i would describe it...yet it is a place... ... as yet i can only see it in black and white... [...] ...in everything is suggested the merriment of life... ...many marvels and feats are being conducted by this place as i draw close to it... ...it somehow is the boyhood fantasy of running off with the circus... ...Something strange is happening... ...it is like my being is being consumed but in an enormity and joyous well-being... ...shortly i can hear a myriad of sounds made by every cheap instrument and device and the pomp begins... ... “a-rump, a-vomp, a-ding a-vrom”... ... it is truly a place that is a circus with all its merriment... ...i will stay here for a little while. [Ellipsis in original⁷³] (Mo015: *Journal of a Madman* 1995-96 138)

This piece of writing accompanies a drawing that documents one of Mannix’s psychotic experiences. In this specific example, the process of writing about the experience depicted in the drawing results in the original psychotic landscape being reinstated around Mannix. In such work, writing becomes a ritualistic act, enlivened and possessed of the power to control and construct reality. Such a view of language conflates signifier, signified and referent: the written word “circus”, its mental idea and its appearance in reality become synonymous in the realm of lived metaphor where the signifier becomes

⁷² Here Mannix adheres to Martin Heidegger’s notion of a poet, as one who “uses the word – not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who have to use them up, but rather in such a way that the word only now becomes and remains truly a word” (48).

⁷³ In a quotation such as this one, where Mannix makes extensive use of ellipsis, added ellipsis will appear in square brackets.

dominant. Such a view of language is linked, Jean-Francois Lyotard tells us, “to the Freudian theme of belief in the omnipotence of thoughts. It means that the word itself can be regarded as an act and can be proffered with a view to transforming the external world: such is magic. It can be derived from the image/word pair in the following manner: it is because magic moves from the word-presentation of the object to its thing-presentation that the word is efficacious” (78-79).

The materialisation of thought through artistic production is made explicit in the following Mannix quotation:

I first found that the states of Reality, dream and psychosis would merge in these journals readily; but now more is happening. The realm of fiction is in its own way merging with the other three or as i call them...the ‘irreal’. I am finding myself writing about events and people and characters and creatures “as if they are real” – but in every effort they are real, being born like some strange assembled portion of my life out of the crucible that is madness and the irreal: So i am both documenting and deciding the fates of ‘entities’ or personalities that have been born through my mind. (Mo002: Journal of a Madman No.5 67)

Here then the Saussurian ‘arbitrariness of language’ is subverted. Gérard Genette cites W.D. Whitney’s and William James’ expression to encapsulate Saussure’s position: “the word *dog* does not bite” (360). For Mannix the word *dog* certainly does have the potential to bite, as the word has the capacity to bring what Mannix experiences as an autonomous dog into being. Thus for Mannix, language, in its various formulations, is a profoundly living entity – intimately connected with his physical and psychic reality. In the realm of lived metaphor, borderlines between signifier and signified collapse, reuniting the written word, thought and referent in such a way that language retains the psychic potential to affect directly the physical body and its surroundings. Language does not represent, it presents.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Such a conception of language resonates with Stéphane Mallarmé’s formulation of the illusive “supreme language”, he writes: “Languages are imperfect because multiple; the supreme language is missing. Inasmuch as thought consists of writing without pen and paper, without whispering even, without the sound of the immortal Word, the diversity of languages on earth means that no one can utter words which would bear the miraculous stamp of Truth Herself Incarnate...We dream of words brilliant at once in meaning and sound, or darkening in meaning and so in sound, luminously and elementally self-succeeding. But, let us remember that if our dream were fulfilled, verse would not exist – verse which, in all its wisdom, atones for the sins of languages, comes nobly to their aid” (‘Crisis in Poetry’ 38). For Mallarmé then, verse is a, forever futile, attempt to rectify the arbitrary nature of language, Mannix however, experiences creative expression as succeeding in this endeavour.

Mannix's view of language is influenced by Davey Brown, whom he visited at Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital, and whom he discusses in The Light Bulb Eaters. Mannix suggests that Davey possessed an "inescapable mania of the mysticism and associative symbolism of words and their components, so much so that they would talk to him...When one spoke to him at length he would let you in on the secret, that was all it took and you would be entranced into his own cosmology where words did what they were supposed to but had a secret function as well, and a personality, and an identity" (Mo046: Light 40). Davey Brown's exhibition of semiotic diagram drawings sees his "motivated" view of words come in contact with an "arbitrary" view. Mannix recounts the scene:

Davey's "sheets" were exhibited by the Australian Collection of Outsider Art in 1987, and I remember a man in a short-sleeved suit with a tie and shaven head that had just been polished, animated beyond content and flinging his arms about and saying repeatedly, 'don't you see, don't you see'. On the other end of this discourse was a professor of Semiotics from one of the universities who was in a fervour of excitement and who was on the precipice of his logical, historical knowledge about words looking into their irrational mystic and beaming, but still holding onto his ground for dear life. (Mo046: Light 40)

Such a conception of words as associated with an irrational mysticism echoes Eugene Jolas' notions regarding language. Jolas writes: "For it is the unconscious vision which created language, and we stand before the task of re-discovering the knowledge of the daemonic-magical things that lie hidden in words and have been lost to modern man" (44). Within the state of lived metaphor Mannix is experiencing the "daemonic-magical" aspects of language directly. In this form, language (and indeed the creative act itself) can be seen to operate much as it did in so-called 'primitive' eras. Language in such cultures, Julia Kristeva suggests:

is not conceived as a mental elsewhere, or as an abstract thought process. It participates as a cosmic element of the body and nature...Primitive man does not clearly conceive of any dichotomy between matter and spirit, the real and language, or consequently between "referent" and "linguistic sign," much less between "signifier" and "signified"... (Language 50)

Similarly, the creative act itself is not "considered as a mental elsewhere, or as an abstract thought process"; rather it functions through language as a literal physical force. The

resulting creative output entails an intimate dialogue with a living environment – the object is breached and all things can potentially intermesh.⁷⁵

Such a treatment of language is related to Mannix's long experiential investigations into the unconscious and psychosis as realms of magic and the occult, a realm where metaphors are lived – where language has the capacity to transform matter. Such ideas are evident in the following extract from his work The Demise:⁷⁶

Think carefully, the circle you draw in the dust becomes magic in the night. – and eats into the flesh. If there is a hell it is that I have not intruded far enough. That I am stuck in the uterus still and am choking. I mistake liberation for a life without pain. I wish to burn now. For how else is the penumbra changed? Give to me the taste of charcoal remnants. I defy. And yet the truth of these things keep me afloat. If I could assault with deadly violence my soul I would do so. We are on such terms.

I shake like a leaf and in using the 'simile' become the leaf and must fight. The words I hear around me are deadly potent. If I could wield the thought like solid matter how much would I destroy and how much would I make.? I want to see the madnesses expounded, for how else and [are] these unborn children that one sees in the plethora of beings to be laid to earth quietly, quickly and with appropriate ceremony.? (Mo049 2-3)⁷⁷

In the above passage the physical act of tracing a circle in the dust is seen as capable of transforming into a magical barrier that can impact upon the body. Such a transformation is also described in relation to the literary technique of the simile that becomes the

⁷⁵ Ernest Fenollosa suggests such an intermeshing is in fact the natural state of nature and it is for this reason that 'primitive' thought functions in a manner now considered metaphorical: "the primitive metaphors do not spring from arbitrary *subjective* processes. They are possible only because they follow objective lines of relations in nature herself" (515). Fenollosa suggests metaphor is poetry's "chief device...at once the substance of nature and language. Poetry only does consciously what the primitive races did unconsciously" (515). Thus for 'primitive' peoples metaphors are lived.

Ernst Cassirer similarly suggests: "[Primitive man's] view of nature is neither merely theoretical nor merely practical; it is sympathetic...Primitive man by no means lacks the ability to grasp the empirical differences of things. But in his conception of nature and life all these differences are obliterated by a stronger feeling: the deep conviction of a fundamental and indelible *solidarity of life* that bridges over the multiplicity and variety of its single forms" (82).

⁷⁶ Mo049: The Demise is discussed in detail in Chapter Five of this thesis.

⁷⁷ Mannix links magic with the materialisation of words, as does Jerome Rothenberg; in this magical formulation, "all words [are] substantive, measurable, having each a certain weight & extension, roots of words holding them firmly to earth, which the man cuts loose at will to let float up, then take root again so that their weights are again felt. And since the words are "real" (being measured by weight and extension), they may be called forth again or withheld, & being called forth are the things called forth? This is what the man believed once who made magic – "spells" & "charms" (*carmina*) being words in search of things. Measurable words as real as measurable things where both words & things are present in the naming. And the same tangible quality of words was felt whether they were spoken...or written or pictured or drummed. Something like that sensed then & there–rediscovered here & now" (Rothenberg 448-449).

conduit through which a magical substitution occurs. The act of bringing into comparison two objects in thought allows one to transform into the other – the metaphorical act becoming one of metonymy in a lived metaphor where thought is wielded “like solid matter”. In the suggestion that, “The words I hear around me are deadly potent”, Mannix accesses the occult history of the poetic treatment of language. On this matter the French poet and theorist Paul Valéry suggests:

One must not forget that poetic form was for centuries enlisted in the service of magic. Those who devoted themselves to these strange operations had to believe, of necessity, in the power of the spoken word, and even more in the efficacy of the word’s sound than in its signification...The *momentary being* who made this verse could not have made it if he had been in a state where form and content appeared separate in his mind. On the contrary, he was in a special phase of his domain of psychic existence, a phase during which the word’s sound and meaning take on or retain an equal importance... (Qtd in Genette 370-371)⁷⁸

It is not only the word spoken but also the word written that has the capacity to engage in a form of efficacious interaction, or spontaneous dialogue, with the psychic environment in which Mannix, at times, comes to exist. In Mannix’s formulation all forms of creative expression are not necessarily directed towards a conventional audience, but can be a mechanism through which a metaphoric reality is materialised, or changes in such a reality are effected.

One instance where Mannix uses artistic production to effect changes in his physical reality through a ritualistic, occult engagement with materiality occurs in the drawing that appears on page 32 of the Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4. Here Mannix has inserted a ripped piece of cardboard into the artist’s book, and included the narrative of its creation in the remaining space on the page. The drawing on the cardboard is a depiction of “Laurie”, one of Mannix’s fellow patients while in Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital in 1987-88. Mannix perceived within this man “a very distinguished air of

⁷⁸ In these views regarding the union of sound and sense Valéry is influenced by the writings of Mallarmé (discussed earlier). However, the notion that sound or incantation possesses magical powers of material persuasion is an ancient one, as elucidated by the following quotation which speaks of “the magical practice of reciting a single verse of Homer as a ‘charm for restraining anger’: a practice referred to repeatedly in the Paris magical papyrus...The story in Iamblichus forms an integral part of a discussion about the early Pythagorean use of music and song for magical purposes to counteract passion-and particularly anger-which can be traced back, via Aristoxenus, to the pre-Platonic period; it has been demonstrated that this incantatory use of poetry for harmonizing the emotions was a common magical practice among the Pythagoreans of Empedocles’ time; it has also been shown that this magical use of the spoken word for curative purposes meshes perfectly with what we can see of Empedocles’ healing methods from his own poetry” (Kingsley 247-248).

violence about him. I imagined him to be an evil Pirate quite given to acts of malice and violence. Several times he approached me in the day room and foyer of the Ward 25 and told me that if i continued.....he would ‘hurt me’ – but for what reason, i could never ascertain, as this was lost in his mumble and stutter” (32).

For this reason Mannix created the cardboard drawing, as “a talisman or charm against his evil and turmoil...i drew his like-ness and smashed the biro into the drawing, thus impaling Laurie’s unwanted and potentially violent Karma. After this i thoroughly perforated the picture which was to injure and drain Laurie’s ephemeral body, ‘just to be on the safe side’” (32). Mannix suggests that when Laurie saw this drawing attached to Mannix’s bed he stopped his aggressive behaviour. A drawing of this form gives Mannix the capacity to interact with an ephemeral, Karmic realm of psychic energies. The creation of the work was in fact a ritual, which assumed the magical principle of “sympathy”⁷⁹, wherein actions directed at a likeness of Laurie had the potential to impact on Laurie himself. In Mannix’s lived metaphor Laurie’s likeness and ephemeral body are conflated, allowing Mannix’s physical attack on the cardboard to affect the psychic realm. A sense of balance between himself and Laurie is re-established, so that Laurie no longer threatens to invade Mannix’s psychic self.⁸⁰

Mannix believes he possesses an awareness of a psychic (Karmic) environment (Frazer’s “invisible ether”) all humans exist within, but are unable to perceive. The powers and presences he is in dialogue with in the realm of lived metaphor are, conceivably, the psyche’s way of making sense of such traces which exist beyond the ‘normal’ human perceptual range. As Carl Jung reflects, in the closing sentences of On The Nature of the Psyche: “If one is unwilling to postulate a pre-established harmony of physical and psychic events, then they can only be in a state of interaction” (170).

⁷⁹ As previously quoted: “Both branches of magic, the homoeopathic [assumes that things which resemble one another are the same] and the contagious [assumes that objects which have had contact retain this contact], may conveniently be comprehended under the general name of Sympathetic Magic, since both assume that things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy, the impulse being transmitted from one to the other by means of what we may conceive as a kind of invisible ether...” (Frazer 14)

⁸⁰ Antonin Artaud uses similar techniques, attributing a power to writing and image making capable of influencing physical reality directly in his own use of spells: “[Artaud] began to cast spells on people he wanted to destroy. The spells were small pieces of paper, filled with curses and coloured ink spots, then burned with a cigarette in order to wound the body of the recipient” (Eshleman 18). Not merely an inert, external representation of thought, these spells were infused with the power to physically and psychically harm their addressee.

Presenting an Intentionally Brut Art

In his art-making Mannix attempts to move beyond the psychiatric pronouncements of Ronald Pies, creating works which present his animated psychic excrescence in all its multi-various detail; luring the reader into a challenging and, at times, ambiguous world. Such ambiguity is not, however, a failure to communicate but rather an inherent feature of the unstable, chaotic unconscious realm from which the message issues. The flux of the unconscious is ever present in Mannix's work, and he relates its creative potential to the realm of the "irreal" and the "eternal speculation". He writes:

The unconscious is the wand of a magician. The unconscious possesses its own life...It is a state of thought that is not entirely mental and eludes analysis. It is on terms to a degree with poetry, art and yet will savage these if their structures oppose it. Pure thought given its own form is a possibility. The irreal is the eternal speculation. (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 174-75)

Such a realm of "eternal speculation", depicted in what can be described as Mannix's "speculative narratives", again echoes the deterritorialized, multiple, shifting "nomad space" of Deleuze and Guattari: a space that, for them, was epitomised by the schizophrenic. Deleuze and Guattari contrast this nomad space with State space: a fixed realm where all is mapped out and ordered (384-385). The psychologists Mary Hollis Johnston and Philip S. Holzman seem to be making just such a distinction between the psychotic and creative mind in the following passage:

A crucial parameter in the differentiation of creative production from psychotic ravings is that of control voluntarism and purposefulness. The schizophrenic patient appears to be driven by his thoughts; the artist orders them. The patient's thoughts are peremptory and insistent; the artist's are formed and modulated. (17)

Louis A. Sass restates this point in relation to language when he writes of, "the oft-expressed view that whereas "the poet is a master of language, the schizophrenic is a slave to it." Such views generally presuppose a rather simplistic version of the act/affliction distinction, and one consequence of this is a failure to capture the complexity of either madness or art" (184-185). Perhaps, then, those writers who also experience schizophrenia are, at times, capable of produce a "peremptory and insistent" language, which circumvents regular processes of forming and modulating thoughts in

order, presumably, to make conscious ‘sense’ and thereby appeal to a conventional “Second-Person” audience. A lack of audience focus or awareness can be seen to contribute to the claim that such work lacks “purposefulness”. However, it may just be that the purpose of such creations lie on a deeper, unconscious plane – such as can be seen in Mannix’s use of creativity to communicate with psychic entities (Others) or construct realities. Mannix’s subsequent choice to present or frame such work as art, regardless of the intention with which the work was created, transposes what psychiatry might consider to be “psychotic ravings” into a form of artwork.⁸¹ Thoughts presented as art become art regardless of whether they are “peremptory and insistent” or “formed and modulated” and regardless of whether they were, or were not, first expressed intentionally as art.

The presuppositions regarding lack of intentionality are particularly evident in discussions of schizophrenic language, where such characteristics are a determining factor in the psychiatric diagnosis itself. The presupposed privacy of schizophrenic language can serve to further mystify such work, resulting in fixed, exclusive pronouncements such as the following: “Language can *represent* private experience and thoughts in a public, understandable communication or it can *present* thoughts without transformation, so that what is spoken is private and noncommunicative” (M. Johnston, P. Holzman 13).

Dr Ronald Pies makes just such a distinction between ‘normal’ representations of private experience as communicative and schizophrenic presentations of thoughts as noncommunicative. Pies also links this idea with the nature of intention, suggesting that because the schizophrenic is merely presenting a private world their language is not an invitation to embark on an enriching journey. The inverse is in fact true of Mannix’s uses of language – whilst much of his work can be characterised as the “presentation of a private world”, his artistic framing of this language as an art form is precisely an “invitation to join him in an imaginative and enriching journey”. Thus even thoughts, or

⁸¹ The quintessential example of this notion is supplied by Marcel Duchamp’s ‘Readymades’ and in particular his well known transformation (through recontextualisation) of a urinal into a sculptural work under the pseudonym Richard Mutt. After the piece was refused entry into the art exhibition to which he had submitted it Duchamp wrote the following: “Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object” (Qtd in Harrison 248).

psychic excrescence, presented “without transformation”, can still be a communicative dialogue between madness and reason, for it is not solely the language itself but the context in which the language is situated that dictates its invitational status.

Mannix himself directly addresses the question of intentionality when he writes:

THERE IS ALWAYS AN EYE TO MAKING THE WRITING COHERENT BECAUSE EVEN IF THE LUNATIC IS UNINTELLIGABLE HIS OR HER EXPERIENCE IS COHERANT AND BECAUSE FLAWLESSLY BELIEVED BEARS THE WEIGHT OF EXPERIENCE. (Mo054: Outsider Writing Statement 1)

Many of Mannix’s writings and artworks have private aspects, but this does not preclude them from being communicative; the communicative impulse extends from the “flawless” belief in the experience being presented, and it is in reference to this experience (not that of a conventional “Second-Person” audience) that the writing must be coherent. The notion of the psychotic experience as being “flawlessly believed” again speaks to the idea of the lived metaphor, wherein a referent from the ‘real’ world is subsumed within a metaphorical construction. It is this metaphorical construction (this thought without transformation) that Mannix often presents to his audience without reference to the referent on which it is based, creating what can be called an “unlabeled metaphor”.⁸²

When such thoughts are contextualized within an artist’s book they *precisely* invite the reader on an imaginative journey; what sometimes does remain private is the referential reality on which the imaginative journey is based. One clear example of this is in relation to a structure Mannix calls “The Temple of the Dog”. This temple surfaces numerous times in Mannix’s work as a place of worship and pilgrimage. This metaphorical temple is derived from the structure of a War Memorial on the grounds of the Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital in Sydney, at which Mannix has been a patient.⁸³ The following example of lived metaphor relates to the trees that surround the temple site. In

⁸² “The peculiarity of the schizophrenic is not that he uses metaphors or false-metaphors, an implication that we would draw from Laing’s thought, but that he uses unlabelled metaphors” (Gordon 67). Here then metaphorical observations are presented as literal observations, in keeping with the notion of a metaphorical belief that is lived.

⁸³ It is most completely described in Mannix’s work *The Demise*, and its status as a lived metaphor will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five of this thesis. Images of The Temple of the Dog can be found in the ‘Documentary Material’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo084.

Journal of a Madman 1994-95: The Chasm, Other Stories, drawings Other Things...and there reigns love and all love's loving parts... Mannix writes:

The Temple of the Dog

Where hanged and rocking back and forth like
the most translucent and succulent of tropical
fruit are the women in my life
the trees from which
they hang
are merciless like screaming bodies... (Mo012 34)

There is no reference to the temple apart from the work's title, but the image of the women hanging from the trees is an example of an unlabeled metaphor likely based on the large hanging root systems of the Morton Bay fig trees that grow around the temple site. These root systems have been imaginatively transformed into hanging women with such conviction that the root systems themselves have been entirely absorbed within the metaphor. Thus beneath the surface text exists the referent upon which the metaphor is based.⁸⁴ Here, thought is presented "without transformation" which would seem to be in line with language which M. Johnston, P. Holzman would suggest is noncommunicative. However, even without knowledge of the fig tree referent, the thought is capable of taking an audience on an imaginative journey. In the Symbolist formulation of Stéphane Mallarmé, this is precisely what elevates writing to the status of poetic literature. He writes: "To *name* an object is largely to destroy poetic enjoyment, which comes from gradual divination. The ideal is to *suggest* the object. It is the perfect use of this mystery which constitutes the symbol" ('The Evolution of Literature' 21).⁸⁵

Mannix does, however, make some efforts to limit the obscurity that can, at times be generated by such a practice. A technique Mannix often uses to frame his untransformed thought (and thus aid their coherence) is the inclusion of a second

⁸⁴ A literary example of such an unlabelled metaphor can be found in the modernist text by T.S. Eliot: 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'. In the third stanza Eliot writes: "The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes / The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes" (262). The fog can be thought of as a metaphorical construction based on the referent of a cat. The cat itself remains absent, as the fog subsumes its actions ('rubs') and its isolated body parts ('muzzle').

⁸⁵ Christopher Brennan, reiterating Mallarmé also makes this point clearly when he speaks of Symbolism as "a writing with the analogies alone; and this is, for instance, the whole secret of the much exaggerated obscurity of Mallarmé – the spoiled or lazy reader is deprived of his comfortable points for jumping-off" (269). This technique seems also related to the already discussed technique of defamiliarisation.

narrative element that acts as a contextualizing commentary to an original (more private) work. Even these works, however, retain their private aspects, producing the characteristic tension between the private and public, madness and rationality that undergirds Mannix's narratives.⁸⁶ A pertinent example, which displays these two major modes of textual production can be found on page 98 of Mannix's artist's book called the Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4.

In the rectangular picture-plane that dominates this page the text is rendered with a decorative finesse that emphasises the pictorial aspects of letters. The text itself resists and defers semantic meaning as if to further highlight its pictorial significance. The page is titled "Plurality and the Ollu-din" and the central passage reads: "consequently, with reference, / and reference to, it is considered, / [and to be considered], that in due / course and to some finalization, to / an extent and to a degree the / differences and differences that will / lead to alliance do not substantially / outweigh those of the same, as / mentioned above, respectively, which, / will not lead to alliance..." [Square bracket and Ellipsis in original] (Mo001 98).

In its formal layout and compressed style this work approaches a treatment of language that is poetic. It also resembles a text that Rosenbaum and Sonne suggest is indicative of those produced by schizophrenics: namely, one in which "anaphoric deixis – whose function is to maintain a stable structure of references within the text – seems more or less to cease functioning, so that references are made to elements that have not been mentioned before but that nevertheless are expected to be familiar, or to mutually contradictory times, places, persons, and circumstances..." (Rosenbaum & Sonne 52).⁸⁷

This can be seen in the fact that the passage begins by referring to an event that the audience has not been alerted to: "consequently, with reference, / and reference to". What is being referred to is never mentioned. The text continues in a fashion that suggests a sense of paralysis, culminating in a situation where the "differences that will / lead to alliance do not substantially / outweigh those of the same, as / mentioned above,

⁸⁶ In this technique Mannix's consciously posits his work as a dialogue between madness and reason. This tendency is used extensively in his artist's book Mo024: Erogeny, to be discussed in detail in Chapter Five of this thesis.

⁸⁷ In this manner the whole nature of a lived metaphor, displayed in unlabeled metaphors, can be related to a corruption of anaphoric deixis, in that the entire world/text presupposes a referent that is never mentioned.

respectively, which, / will not lead to alliance” (Mo001 98). Again this can be seen as an unanchored text referring to the differences between two or more parties that were “mentioned above”, when in fact they have not been mentioned. Yet this fact does not render the passage meaningless or lacking in intention.

The passage is dominated by a paradox: that the alliance between the parties is to be determined by their differences and not their commonalities. The creation of a paradox alone could be the motivational force behind this work, as Mannix believes that the paradox is central to his chaotic aesthetic. The speaker details an impasse wherein the differences between the parties that will lead to an alliance do not substantially outweigh the differences that would prevent an alliance – this seems to leave the parties poised, in stasis: the motivational force to join does not outweigh the motivational force not to join. The sense of indeterminacy within the work is also alluded to in the title, which includes the word “Plurality”. Another factor perhaps at work in this piece is that the language (and its seemingly circular, ineffectual nature) also resonates with the language of politics or bureaucracy – a language with which Mannix was extremely familiar after being employed for 18 months by the Public Service Board.⁸⁸

The other major text that can be seen on the page was written retrospectively, and it functions to contextualise the drawing. It doesn’t seek to specifically explain the illustration but rather, in an anthropological mode, to document the location and situation under which the original work was completed. It does however emphasise the original text’s status as a work of artistic production. Such retrospective texts, common in Mannix’s work, serve as literal autobiographical notes regarding his life and works.⁸⁹ This passage refers to the textual picture previously discussed and reads:

Done on the street whilst a derelict and itinerant during winter 1986. I drew and wrote this piece at night under the light from a telegraph pole at the rear of the Art Gallery of N.S.W., in the park there. This was a place where i would sometimes sleep with a bottle after being at Kings Cross.

⁸⁸ Mannix describes his Public Service Board experience as follows: “I wasn’t very good at it and soon they said to me: you can be the interviewing officer, because you’ve mucked up everything else! You’ve lost files; you’ve got the wrong signatures; you’ve been impossible...For seven months, i had to screen applicants. They would come in and say: ‘Well, I am on heroin and I need drugs; is it all right to take drugs in the Public Service?’ And I would say: ‘Sure, there is no problem’. Somebody came in and described himself as a schizophrenic; and I would say: ‘Well look – just keep quiet about it’” (*Aspect* 64).

⁸⁹ In this respect, much of the research work done in this thesis to expose the referents on which Mannix’s lived metaphors are based are in line with Mannix’s own project to contextualise his own creative works, extending his own notions of anthropological investigations.

The wet-wintery grass left you as stiff as a board when you awoke the following morning.
(Mo001 98)

On the surface these two modes of writing differ markedly in their accessibility for a reader; the first (perhaps indicative of madness) does not seem to consider the question of audience as it blatantly withholds (keeps private) information to which it nevertheless refers and on which it is perhaps based; the second text seems to presuppose an assumed “Second-Person” receiver to which it describes a predominantly public, rational reality.⁹⁰

It is not, however, accurate to suppose that the first text lacks intentionality, for it is what it doesn't say that communicates its message. The titling of the first text as “Plurality and the Ollu-din” may signal that the intention was to create a paradoxical work that an audience would find ambiguous and which could inspire multiple interpretations, confusion or chaos. The pictorial presentation or framing of this text, effected through a decorative rendering of the letters themselves and verse-like lineation, heightens its status as a form of imaginative creative expression. In this context its abstract linguistic manner is reminiscent of the Modernist poet Gertrude Stein.⁹¹

Whilst the second text appears as a public form of exposition, it continues from the above quotation to speak of quite private, metaphorical matters – such as the sex change temples Mannix believed to be nearby, from which emanated the “scream-stare-whisper” which accompanies occult sex change.⁹² Such sex change temples are likely public toilets which Mannix has metaphorically transformed as he has been shown to have done with “The Temple of the Dog”.

⁹⁰ A review of a recent exhibition of the Prinzhorn Collection of Outsider writing and art in Heidelberg, Germany noted such a tension between the public and the private as being indicative of Outsider Art: “The focus is on those talismans of privacy that are notebooks, folders and sketchbooks – all kinds of rehearsals on the edge between public and private (who do we really write our diaries for?). What could appeal more to that appetite for prying into secret places that characterises so much interest in Outsider Art? What could better seem to confirm the psychiatric assumption that psychotics are locked into ‘private worlds’?... There’s a whole thematic here, of people shut away from the world at large who, precisely because of the peculiar distance imposed by their confinement, set out to construct model versions of the world. But is it this world, as Crusoe reproduced it on his island, or some other parallel or virtual world? In either case, their systematic idiom both appeals to and frustrates our expectations of being able to understand. How much of this is some deliberate ploy, or how much is due to someone being caught up in the impersonal workings of a machine of their own construction, is impossible to tell...In the artists, I think one can detect an inherent dilemma, which belongs to the existence of two trends – the urgent need to communicate and the still more urgent need not to be found” (Maclagan 57-59).

⁹¹ The following extract from Gertrude Stein’s work ‘Carry’ shows this abstract linguistic quality: “Rest less, rest less in stephens regular hand book, rest less that makes a curve a curve has v, v / is c that is to say rest has not t, not in tea, not in t. Rest has in s s” (107).

⁹² This text and the sex change process will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Thus each mode of writing presents some thought without transformation: this, however (due to Mannix's contextualising devices) does not preclude them from being coherent, intentional or communicative. Rather it is as David Maclagan⁹³ suggests, that such work "reminds us of the extent to which we all, artists or not, need to inhabit a no-man's land in between the public and the private, for which there are no universally recognised passports" (59).

This second text also reveals a striking situation: Mannix, who self-identifies as an Outsider Artist, sits adjacent to the Art Gallery of NSW creating art whilst homeless – art which he preserves and incorporates into an artist's book which has subsequently become an artistic exhibit. The creation of work from within the defamiliarised lived metaphor of Mannix results in a "peremptory and insistent" art, which is characteristic of Art Brut or Outsider Art. Mannix often valorises Brut or Outsider Art in his books, and it is an artistic 'movement' within which he situates himself. He suggests that works of this nature move beyond contrived representations, instead presenting live, vital entities: "It is not so much that Art Brut represents something, it's that Art Brut is more the actual thing; if it's the entity it is the entity; if it's the raging chasm within you it is that and not just a representation" (Mo105 [Audio recording]).⁹⁴

Such work eludes the representative mechanisms of the conscious mind and maintains contact with its own inspiration, presenting or embodying the intense psychic forces unique to the core of each human subjectivity – in Mannix's view to be equated with the unconscious. The Modernist writings of the founder of Art Brut, Jean Dubuffet, are relevant here:

We understand by this term [Art Brut] works produced by persons unscathed by artistic culture, where mimicry plays little or no part (contrary to the activities of intellectuals). These artists derive everything – subjects, choice of materials, means of transposition, rhythms, styles of writing, etc. – from their own depths, and not from the conventions of classical or fashionable art. We are witness here to a completely pure artistic operation, raw,

⁹³ Maclagan is an artist, art-therapist and writer on Outsider Art.

⁹⁴ Antonin Artaud seems to say much the same of another artist, Vincent van Gogh. From 'Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society': "Under the guise of representation he welded an air and enclosed within it a nerve, things which do not exist in nature, which are of a nature and an air more real than the air and nerve of real nature" (Selected 502).

brute, and entirely reinvented in all of its phases solely by means of the artists' own impulses.
(35)

Whilst this statement does contain truths regarding the resistance of such an art practice to the homogenising forces of dominant cultural norms, the complete denial of external influence on such work is a construction that also serves to erode the intentionality of the art-maker and emphasises the work's abnormality or "unintelligibility" (Brand-Claussen 412). This is a product of isolating creative practice from the "constellation of relationships – which some authors viewed in a projective manner as a classic feature of schizophrenic artistry..." (Günther qtd in Brand-Claussen 414).

Such a presupposition regarding the creative work of individuals who experience madness is illuminated by Bettina Brand-Claussen, in her article, 'The Witch's Head Landscape'. Brand-Claussen illustrates how such assumptions have, at times, precluded an analysis of such creative works, an analysis which, when conducted, in fact reveals a highly communicative engagement with the social discourse of the time (412-413).

Such "projections" by authors regarding a sense of isolation in creative production speak to the lack of agency generally afforded the mentally ill. Thomas Szasz encapsulates the paradoxical position of art-makers who experience mental illness such as Anthony Mannix: "We view the artist as so rich in intentionality as to be superhuman: he is a genius who can will and do things ordinary persons can not. We view the madman on the other hand, as so poor in intentionality as to be subhuman: he is "mentally sick" and hence cannot will or do the things ordinary people can" (10).

The creative work of the insane can be seen to embody the intentionality which society attempts to strip from such individuals. Creative production functions within Mannix's world-view to unify two aspects of self-agency – first, the act of self-expression itself; second, the framing of such self-expression as artistic production.

In this formulation, such work is an attempt to regain or maintain agency; both in the realm of lived metaphor where powers and presences have the potential to exert control over Mannix and in societal and psychiatric circles where the framing of self-expression as artistic production serves to elevate Mannix to the status of the artist⁹⁵ – for

⁹⁵ Mannix suggests this himself when he writes the (already cited) comment: "But when I came out of hospital, I was looking for a bit of credibility. I wasn't so much looking for an audience, I wanted to be accepted as an artist, to be given a place in society" (*Aspect* 72).

it is the artist, Szasz suggests, who is regarded by society as reaching the pinnacle of agency or intentionality.

Mannix is driven by powerful subjective imperatives that afford his art a radical intensity and originality, but his status as an Outsider Artist should not presuppose a total isolation from his physical and social surroundings. Mannix interacted with the culture (both high and low) and environment of his time, reinventing the defamiliarised objects around him in what is ultimately an intentionally framed form of artistic communication which opens a dialogue between madness and reason.

Ulli Beier writes: “Dubuffet argued that ‘culture’ tries to simplify and unify art, that it makes art conform to artificial concepts of ‘beauty’. But beauty he says is a ‘pure secretion of culture, like gall-stones are of the liver’” (9). It is the artificial construction of the ‘correct’ artistic forms and aesthetics that the Brut artist eludes. Dubuffet seems to suggest they elude such influences through being unaware of or removed from them, but it is more accurate in the contemporary climate, and particularly where Mannix is concerned, to suggest that such Brut artists maintain the capacity to “defamiliarise” cultural influences according to their own idiosyncratic world-view. In this fact Mannix is not unlike many contemporary (and historical) Outsider artists. Colin Rhodes writes of three contemporary Outsider artists and their use of found images: “For Hauser, Arning and Van Genk the visual products of western mass culture served not as intellectual conduits into society, but as confirmatory statements of the reality of their own constructed worlds” (138). The artists are not drawn in and homogenised by the cultural machine but rather engage in a dialogue with culture transposing aspects of it into their own world-view, thus transforming it. Here aspects of western mass culture are refigured within the artist’s constructed worlds – influencing and confirming the nature of such worlds.⁹⁶

Such artists are neither ignorant of nor isolated from cultural values, but retain the capacity to resist their normalising tendencies. Ulli Beier, speaking again of Dubuffet’s legacy, suggests that: “When these artistic ‘values’ [of the cultural establishment] are

⁹⁶ This mode of creation is in line with Maurice Blanchot’s vision (a restatement of the Mallarméan Symbolist ideal) of the author of the ‘pure novel’; after the distinction made by Friedrich Gundolf regarding “attractive and expansive creation” (42), Blanchot writes that the author of the ‘pure novel’, “seeks to make of his self the symbol of the world. He draws it towards him in order to remake it in the light of his own vision” (42).

continuously being imposed on people, they not only lose their judgement, but also their creative instinct. They begin to feel that their own idiosyncrasies, their private visions, are something ‘illegitimate’” (9).

Mannix’s art is an exercise in documenting his idiosyncratic world-view, centrally concerned with his psychotic vision of the “places” in his unconscious.⁹⁷ To this end he creates an internal cosmology into which he has transposed many (often openly acknowledged) external influences, from many sources (personal, literary, artistic, cultural).⁹⁸ For this very reason, such work offers a unique vision of integrity and authenticity, delineating important nodes of dialogue between the private and public, subject and object, presentation and representation, madness and rationality.

Art Brut and Outsider Art has developed since the time of Jean Dubuffet’s statement to the extent that it must now be considered an artistic culture in its own right – one which is of central significance to Mannix’s own development as an art-maker. He himself writes:

People ask me why I consider myself an ‘Outsider Artist’. I use the term because it is the *only* term to use. I can think of a lot of reasons: I can say: hell! I hardly know anything about art; and the psychosis, and what it documents, is such an alien state, that if you can draw out of it, of this singular characteristic, then you are actually a maker of ‘art brut’. (Aspect 76)

Mannix suggests that it was reading Georgina Beier’s article on ‘Outsider Art in the Third World’⁹⁹, which was, in fact, an early influence in his artmaking (Aspect 69). Mannix, however, describes the genesis of his artmaking in terms of a spontaneous drive to create. Mannix speaks of his initial experience of artmaking in a radio interview which

⁹⁷ This notion of unconscious “places” finds its most complete expression in The Light Bulb Eaters, discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis.

⁹⁸ As has already been mentioned, Mannix’s artistic world-view is influenced by the animism of South-East Asia. His work is also directly influenced by Trevor Ravenscroft’s book The Spear of Destiny and Mannix explicitly mentions in his texts a range of authors, visual artists, musicians, composers and psychiatrists. A selection of such references are as follows: William Wordsworth (Mo046: Light 55), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 58), Dante Alighier (Mo024: Erogeny 18), Jonathan Swift (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 86), André Breton (Mo046: Light 80), D.H. Lawrence (Mo015 3), Allen Ginsberg (Mo046: Light 9), Henry Miller (Mo002: Journal of a Madman No.5 67), Franz Kafka (Mo046: Light 38), Antonin Artaud (Mo046: Light 80, Mo008 70) and Aleister Crowley (Mo046: Light 56); visual artists such as Salvador Dali (Mo046: Light 80), Pablo Picasso (Mo046: Light 80), are also mentioned as are musicians/composers Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin (Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 185), Claude Debussy (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 43), and Bob Dylan (Mo046: Light 53); the psychiatrist Carl Jung (Mo046: Light 107) is referred to numerous times as are individuals such as Heraclitus (Mo046: Light 44) and Rudolf Steiner (Mo046: Light 41).

⁹⁹ Aspect, Jan., 1978.

can be found in the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo110. Subsequently he has familiarised himself with the writings of theorists such as Jean Dubuffet and Roger Cardinal on the subject, as well as both historical and contemporary practitioners in the field.¹⁰⁰ Ulli Beier’s question is of relevance here: “Is a self-conscious ‘outsider artist’ not a contradiction in terms?” (Aspect 11) If the requirement of the Outsider artist is to maintain an idiosyncratic, subjective vision which, where it is influenced by stimulus outside of the self, transforms and refigures rather than mimics such stimulus, then Mannix has succeeded in remaining an Outsider due to his repeated experiences of insanity. His long, intimate engagement with powerful psychotic, unconscious landscapes, which spontaneously envelop him in an altered reality, has ensured the maintenance of a unique world-view. Jean Dubuffet and Roger Cardinal too, afford the insane a central place in the Outsider Art matrix for this reason. Cardinal suggests that such individuals adhere most completely with even Dubuffet’s most restrictive conditions wherein an

integral posture of dissociation from the cultural system is required before one can speak of genuine art brut. Only what grows naturally and is projected spontaneously from within the psychic depths of the artist can be considered valid as original form: all else remains tainted or distorted by *idées reçues*.

The strongest applicants for recognition under these conditions are bound to be the insane, since madness is *par excellence*, the refusal to conform and the cultivation of individualism. (Outsider Art 29)

The individualistic nature of Mannix’s work is a product of his embracing of art-making as a “tool” with which to navigate madness – thus he often produces writings and drawings during psychosis itself. As far as conscious consideration is concerned, Mannix suggests such texts are produced “unknowingly” (Mo024: Erogeny 1), thus coming directly from the psychic depths of his unconscious. Madness too is seen by Mannix as a state which has the potential to offer insight into the human condition thus his propensity to contextualise his work in such a way that a dialogue is opened between madness and the rational. As he suggests “THERE IS ALWAYS AN EYE TO MAKING THE WRITING COHERENT” (Mo054: Outsider Writing Statement 1) – he wants to communicate – but in this endeavor his allegiance is to the insane experience not

¹⁰⁰ See the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, Mo111 for a radio interview in which Mannix describes his discovery of Roger Cardinal’s text Outsider Art.

necessarily to a “Second-Person” receiver or audience. It is in this way that his work remains individual – requiring the viewer to enter his world-view rather than altering his world-view to cater to an audience.

Not surprisingly, Mannix too singles out as most inspirational artists who have also experienced mental illness: in particular Heinrich Anton Müller who, along with Adolf Wölfli, is one of the most important artists in the historical formulation of Art Brut. Mannix suggest that his own drawing of a “double-figure”: a figure with two heads that join in a fold reminiscent of a vagina, is one of the “consistent ‘designs’ i have drawn over the last decade...[He goes on to contextualise it in the following manner]... Sometimes i look at them and whimsically think that they are my mother and father looking at me, looking over me and talking while i am little in the cot. Definitely, the greatest master of them is Heinrich Anton Müller, the art Brut German whom Picasso studied at the Heidelberg Collection of Art Brut” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 4).

Mannix, along with Philip Hammial, formed the ‘Australian Collection of Outsider Art’ and he is familiar with many Australian Outsider artists.¹⁰¹ In his artist’s book, The Light Bulb Eaters, Mannix discusses the work of a number of Australian Outsider artists (who have again experienced mental illness), such as Colin Wilson, Phillip Heckenberg¹⁰² and Anthony Hopkins¹⁰³, ultimately suggesting that: “These are luminous people who have built true cosmologies for themselves independently of societies wishes that it only be accepted as source. Those that can bring into being the most powerful and subtly precise cosmologies knowing invariably that there is another gravity are the true exponents of invention” (Mo046 34). Mannix goes on to write of

¹⁰¹ Mannix discusses Art Brut with Philip Hammial in a recording which can be found in the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo105. Mannix has recently exhibited with a group of Australian Outsider Artists at the Orange Regional Gallery (2006), Hazelhurst Gallery (2006) and Hall St Pierre in Paris (2006-2007); individuals such as: Gunter Deix, Javier Lara-Gomez, Andrew Rizgalla, Janine Hilder, Juke Wyat, Liz Parkinson, Robert Pollard, David Morgan, Silvia Convey, Travis Mitchell and Damian Michaels. Mannix spoke about the work of Janine Hilder in a sound piece with accompaniment by ‘The Loop Orchestra’. This work can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’ under ‘Sound Works’ and is titled Mo096. Mannix also recorded discussions with Liz Parkinson about Art Brut and schizophrenia. These recordings can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo103 and Mo104.

¹⁰² Mannix spoke about the work of Philip Heckenberg in a sound piece with accompaniment by ‘The Loop Orchestra’. This work can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’ under ‘Sound Works’ and is titled Mo095.

¹⁰³ Mannix spoke about the work of Anthony Hopkins in a sound piece with accompaniment by ‘The Loop Orchestra’. This work can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’ under ‘Sound Works’ and is titled Mo098. Mannix also speaks to Hopkins about his work and creative process in a recorded discussion which can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo107.

Davey Brown's (already mentioned) "semiotics of the irrational" (Mo046 40), and his "fourty-five complex and large graph sheets with word interwoven and broken down to different coloured letters" (Mo046 40);¹⁰⁴ Mannix also discusses "George Karnikowski" whose artworks, he suggests, are "gems of rationality...carefully plucked from the eyes of the demons that possess them..." (Mo046 49).¹⁰⁵

These "true exponents of invention" have all experienced the altered, "alien states" Mannix associates with madness; this fact is important in the capacity of such people to create cosmologies whose source is not confined to society. Such cosmologies are independent landscapes of the unconscious. Mannix consciously conflates Art Brut and Outsider Art,¹⁰⁶ for underlying both art forms, for him, is the belief that expression is at its pinnacle when driven by the "peremptory and insistent" power of such altered states such as psychosis and the unconscious, which compel the practitioner to create a form of art that is living. He writes:

I can think of very few greater joys than to go through the writings of Dubuffet on the subject and remove and make an assemblage of the adjectives he uses to describe and illuminate this art. He does a task that is most difficult; What is Art Brut? What is Outsider Art? For these two terms we are obliged to the Europeans.

¹⁰⁴ Mannix discusses the work of Davey Brown with Philip Hammial in a recording which can be found in the 'Sound Works' section of 'The Atomic Book', listed as Mo106.

¹⁰⁵ Mannix spoke about the work of George Karnakowski in a sound piece with accompaniment by 'The Loop Orchestra'. This work can be found in 'The Atomic Book' under 'Sound Works' and is titled Mo097.

¹⁰⁶ Roger Cardinal, who is regarded as coining the term Outsider Art when he used the phrase as the title for his influential book on the subject, himself suggests an original equivalence between the two terms. He suggests that he merely "went along with that title. I've since looked back over it with a smile of amusement to think that, in fact, the title is the only place in the book where it actually says 'Outsider Art'. So the whole text is about Art Brut. So as far as I'm concerned that's what that book is about, and that's what the term 'Outsider Art' meant at that time" ('Roger Cardinal Interviewed' (Raw Vision 22 25).

Allen S. Weiss writes the following on the relationship between Art Brut and Outsider Art, elucidating the more contemporary situation: "It seems to me that the category of Art Brut is quite different in Europe from in the USA, because of the different paradigms which guide research on the two continents. In Europe, Art Brut has been considered mainly according to the category of art discovered in psychiatric hospitals, that is to say, according to a certain notion of 'madness.' In the USA, Art Brut-Outsider art is usually presented as a sub-category of Folk Art" (Qtd in Danchin 111). Putting to one side the fact that debates regarding definitions of Art Brut and Outsider Art are ongoing, Mannix can be seen to operate in both forms at various times. Work produced during psychosis is not necessarily created as art but more as a form of interaction with the surrounding environment and may be more accurately described as Art Brut. At other times Mannix's production and writings are created with artistic intentions and this seems to be more accurately Outsider Art. Allen S. Weiss writes the following on the subject: "It seems to me that the category of Art Brut is quite different in Europe from in the USA, because of the different paradigms which guide research on the two continents. In Europe, Art Brut has been considered mainly according to the category of art discovered in psychiatric hospitals, that is to say, according to a certain notion of 'madness.' In the USA, Art Brut-Outsider art is usually presented as a sub-category of Folk Art" (Qtd in Danchin 111).

There are different implications made to the two terms by writers; essentially, it is the same art which is REFERRED to in BULK – But an art that is really alive¹⁰⁷ tends to devour its definitions. (Mo046: Light 98)¹⁰⁸

In such states his Brut and Outsider Art influences are transformed and reanimated rather than mimicked. He suggests:

Those that make art brut and outsider art look to the ‘altered’ states, the ‘altered’ space and see no reason why it should be ‘altered’, see no reason why it should not be part of what is life. Exploring a landscape that is incongruent and has no sameness yet a one-ness: what is discovered is duly recorded. There can be no missing pieces for there are no theories or Formulae. It is an intangible, and inchoate reason that produces these works and any act to define has this awesome presence to contend with...The masterful way decoration is used prompts on[e] to suspect a motivation that is beyond contemplation. What wealth is it to have endless landscapes to explore. Self, ego, id – in this work you can find no line that parts such things. (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 161)¹⁰⁹

This lack of separation between aspects of Self that Mannix writes of is a common experience amongst schizophrenics where ontological security becomes tenuous. The historical associations between Art Brut, madness and the asylum have a central resonance for Mannix given the events of his life.

The Art Brutists: Those making Art Brut are an extremely strange particle of the world. They belong to it and yet they don’t. They are speaking from the deserts, the voids and the vortexes to give You messages but the messages are so disturbing so extreme that they are done away with in institutions. (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 6)

Here Mannix’s views are in line with one of his influences, the French thinker Antonin Artaud. In ‘Van Gogh Man Suicided by Society’ Artaud writes:

And what is an authentic madman?

It is a man who preferred to become mad, in the socially accepted sense of the word, rather than forfeit a certain superior idea of human honor.

So society has strangled in its asylums all those it wanted to get rid of or protect itself from, because they refused to become accomplices in certain great nastinesses.

For a madman is also a man whom society did not want to hear and whom it wanted to prevent from uttering certain intolerable truths. (Artaud Selected 485)

¹⁰⁷ In The Light Bulb Eaters, Mannix links this to Dr Frankenstein’s process of reanimating his monster.

¹⁰⁸ Mannix expresses similar sentiments in a recording accompanied by ‘The Loop Orchestra’ – this can be found in the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo101.

¹⁰⁹ Mannix speaks of Outsider Art and its capacity to access ‘Other’ or altered states in extracts from a radio interview which can be found in the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo112 and Mo115.

In such formulations the voice of the person experiencing madness is so extreme and individual that it has the effect of disturbing the ‘normal’ population, to such an extent that their “intolerable truths” must be silenced: they are confined to institutions from where their stories are often rewritten by psychiatrists who attempt to reinstitute a sense of order. Part of the “intolerable truth” that Artaud describes is that the rationality on which ‘normalcy’ is based is itself a construction: such a claim destabilises the fixed meanings and causal relations on which society’s narratives of sense are founded.¹¹⁰

Susan Sontag expands on this relationship between individuality, madness and sense making:

Whenever behavior becomes sufficiently individual, it will become objectively anti-social and will seem to other people, mad. All human societies agree on this point. They differ only on how the standard of madness is applied, and on who are protected or partly exempted (for reasons of economic, social, sexual, or cultural privilege) from the penalty of imprisonment meted out to those whose basic anti-social act consists in not making sense. (Lvi)

Mannix suggests that the Brutists write from “the deserts, the voids and the vortexes” and these realms take in at once the isolated, barren nature of the institution and the rich chaos of madness itself. Deserts, voids and vortexes are the nomadic landscapes of Deleuze and Guattari, and all share the instability and erosion of firm constructs that characterises madness and the unconscious. Such a world-view has the potential to destabilise the subjectivities of ‘normal’ individuals, as it serves to destabilise or deterritorialize the constructed, conscious origins on which life’s sense-making narratives are formed. Hence the insane and their “intolerable truths” must be invalidated via pronouncements stipulating that their words and deeds lack intentionality. Thomas Szasz explains:

Herein, then, lies the value to us of invalidating the Other as insane: we protect ourselves not only from being injured physically (by restraining him), but also from being injured spiritually (by invalidating him as insane and his intentions as non-intentional “symptoms”). (4-5)

The chaos which madness and the unconscious invite into the rational world, when individuals such as Artaud and Mannix open a dialogue between madness and rationality, serve to erode the historical notion of a singular, stable origin. Such an origin is

¹¹⁰ Such narratives constitute the fixed societal structures of Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘State space’.

supplanted by multiple, fluctuating unconscious origins, which have the potential to engulf the ‘normal’ individual if the constructed logic of the conscious mind is traduced. Such an engulfment in non-sense is the threat of madness. Here, we arrive at Derrida’s formulation, “It is a non-origin which is originary” (‘Freud’ 203).

This is in line with Mannix’s statement regarding the capacity of Brut art makers to create cosmologies that challenge society’s demand that it be the one source of all reality. Such work introduces the possibility that there is that there is indeed “another gravity” (*Mo046: Light* 34), another origin – which, in turn, suggests that what is in fact originary is a lack of origin: a “non-origin”. In this respect it is apt that the borders of the “Outsider” be blurred and this is certainly the case with Mannix and this thesis project specifically. As Mannix’s work is studied academically the ‘outsider’ is gradually drawn inward to inspire the ‘centre’¹¹¹ – a centre from which he himself has drawn, refiguring works of high and low culture, luring even the language of bureaucracy into the itinerant fringes of existence where it is “defamiliarised” and reinvigorated into a form of creative expression.

In Western society it is psychiatry’s role to protect the sanctity of the single origin of rationality from the other “gravity” of insanity. To this end, psychiatry can be characterised as attempting to rewrite insanity, thus stripping it of its own intentionality. Psychiatry attempts to absorb the chaos and paradox of madness, its non-sense, into the sense-making linearity of rational narratives. Here then both Mannix and psychiatry are narrating madness: Mannix from the subjective point of view and psychiatry from a supposedly objective stance. The reliability of each narration is a central point of tension that exposes the power relation that exists between psychiatrist and patient, between sanity and madness. Such a power relation, and its status as a dialogue or monologue, is the focus of the following chapter.

¹¹¹ The influence of Art Brut (particularly Hans Prinzhorn’s *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*) on artists such as Picasso, and movements such as Surrealism suggests that so called “Outsider Artists” have long been inspiring professional artists, in particular avant-garde practitioners.

Chapter Three

Mannix Narrating Psychiatry Narrating Mannix

The schizophrenic, it would seem, is psychiatry's quintessential other - the patient whose essence is incomprehensibility itself. (Sass 19)

Psychiatry's attempts to rewrite the incomprehensible patient (thus rendering him/her silent) are rewritten by the art-maker Anthony Mannix as he writes himself. Mannix's body of work, his Brut art, can be seen as a dialogue between madness and rationality which counters the monologue of rationality about Mannix and his madness produced by psychiatry in case notes over the last twenty five years.¹¹² As has already been seen the tension that exists between the narratives of Mannix and psychiatry is present throughout his oeuvre as he reports on and critiques the psychiatric pronouncements made about him and other patients. For Mannix psychosis is indelibly linked to a non-sense that renders the strict sense-making aims of psychiatry futile. Louis A. Sass elucidates the resistance of the condition schizophrenia itself to psychiatric attempts at rational categorisation:

It is in the realm of schizophrenia that all the vulnerabilities of taxonomic classification seem to be multiplied and underscored. Here the characteristic symptoms cannot easily be ascribed to disturbance of a single psychological function, whether of thought, emotion, will, or interpersonal judgment...on almost any dimension one might choose, this kind of person manifests a heterogeneity that is hard to explain on the basis of any commonsensical interpretation or standard model of illness...The illness therefore defies all attempts to bring its features within the grasp of an overarching theory or model... (25-26)

The overarching "illness" theories or models of psychiatry, which aim to explain schizophrenia, can be seen as attempts to rationally narrate the experience. Sass suggests

¹¹² A parallel exists between the patient of a psychiatric facility and the Art Brut practitioner: each, in their own way, has little capacity to control the dominant discourse (Psychiatry and Fine Arts respectively) of the field to which they are, none the less, interconnected. Each inhabits the position of an outsider, defined, rather than having the authority to define themselves. (Such observations were derived from a lecture given by Professor Colin Rhodes, entitled 'Outsider Art? Connais pas: the twentieth-century art mainstream and marginal creators', The Power Institute Foundation for Art and Visual Culture, 28th March 2007). In his work Mannix attempts to rectify such power imbalances. In speaking himself (mentally and artistically), Mannix counters the dominant discourses that seek to speak for him.

the condition escapes this drive to classify, order and causally link its aspects due to a heterogeneity that can perhaps be seen as its overriding feature. This inability of psychiatry to narrate schizophrenia is exacerbated by the idiosyncratic narrative style of schizophrenic individuals. Here the in/capacity of the individuals to create conventional narratives becomes a determining factor in judgements regarding their sanity; such a capacity is tested by the diagnostic tool, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), which consists of a series of images on cards that must be narrated. Sass suggests that most non-schizophrenic subjects end up “telling stories about fairly realistic people engaged in actions that have a comprehensible causal sequence and a normal narrative spread with a past, present, and future – what we might call a standard narrative form” (Madness 155). Schizophrenic responses, however, show variations in narration that suggest “a profound difference in the very structure of their experience...” (Sass 155). In this regard schizophrenic responses will display “the lack of a cohesive theme or narrative line, of conventional space-time structure, of comprehensible causal relations, and of the normal regulation of the symbol-referent relationship” (Sass 156). In this way the unconventional narrative techniques of schizophrenics reflect a world-view that does not adhere to the logical progressions that characterise conventional narrative structures; such conventional structures are thus inadequate if the lived experience of schizophrenia is to be presented. It is this absence of logic, which is a core source of conflict between Mannix and psychiatry, he writes:

Its being late at night with quitenesses and only the occasional scratching at the door by the dog a small-scale fellow but full of fervour. It is the time i love now until dawn when the silent majority of things are at play in the world and one is just as likely to sit on a ghost as on one's seat. all my life it has been the same and for twenty years i have had doctors shaking their heads over this thinking that it is a thing that you can settle with pills and drugs...They do not, not in the least...and the situation is so berefit of humour that i will tell you. I sat down with the doctor and he put one pill on the table “that is to stop you hearing things” he said to me. Then he put another pill on the table “that is to stop you seeing things” he said to me... ...thank god they didn't work and never have i still have my “supernatural” realms intact or at least those places where logic makes no sense. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo047: Old Night Owl 28)

Mannix's experiential relationship with psychiatry and various psychiatric facilities has served only to validate his psychotic experiences. It is via psychosis that Mannix believes

he enters his “‘supernatural’ realms” of the unconscious and thus experiences what he calls illuminated journeys. It is these journeys that are far more instructive than the “‘curative’ process” of the hospital.

It is most interesting this “curative” process. “They” will know more in the future, they will have to, they are already dreadfully lacking and psychiatrist is still a new word. I am very careful now what i say to a great many people. They feel you are being ‘naughty’ to profit from such dismal employ as to be a lunatic: They also dismiss you in an attempt to dismiss what i call the illumination of a journey albeit an a-social one which will confide in you and bestow talents and gifts but maintain its mystery and enigma...like any good woman or muse [...] It is obvious how this journal has turned to writing and words that the journey itself is anxious and friendly to communicate. (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 118)

Mannix’s resolve to continue to see his supernatural illuminations as valid and useful was achieved through his dialogue with madness and subsequent construction of a narrative with which to contextualise and support his experiences, a narrative which is, at times, “a-social” and animate, existing outside that of rational logic.

Rosenbaum and Sonne suggest that such a stance becomes a direct challenge to psychiatry and reflects the position of the chronically schizophrenic individual convinced of the validity of a world inaccessible to the therapist. They write: “To the extent that a totally autistic or defenselessly receptive patient gives no outward indication of any form of reality that the therapist’s words can capture or be adjusted to, the patient in a way deprives the therapist of his authority and power in the conversation” (118-9).

In his “book of life”; writing the reality in which he breathes, Mannix constructs a narrative that seeks to bring into dialogue the psychotic and the magical, the medical and mystical, the tragic and the elated. Mannix’s “outsider writing” is an implicit challenge to the authority of psychiatry in both its maintenance of a deviant world-view and in the direct criticisms it levels at both the profession and the treatment Mannix has undergone in mental institutions.

The central role of text or speech in such a power relation is discussed by Rosenbaum and Sonne in The Language of Psychosis, which analyses the “textual nature of therapy” (2): they write:

[T]he patient’s speech is perceived as the exercise of a relatively well defined pathological form of contact, the processes of which are located outside the therapist’s area of control. In contrast, the therapist’s speech is perceived as transmitting a realistic, sensible, and corrective

communication, the processes of which are located within the therapist's area of control. The therapist controls his speech and knows what it means. Thus, the therapist confronts the patient as the incarnation of power and knowledge. (120)

The position of the therapist as the "incarnation of power and knowledge" is reflected in the following passage, in which Mannix refers to them as "the Gods that be, who comprehend everything but understand nothing". The power struggle between madness and sanity, Mannix and psychiatry, becomes a battle for the very world in which Mannix exists. He writes:

I find the exact same circumstances occurring to me again & again. There is a night of 'drama' which is the culmination of months of madness. It is usually a very 'fast' night, the Police are there and usually the ambulancemen. My heart and soul sink as i am driven by them to the asylum. In the passing scenery i see the destruction of all the aspirations i held and the things i painstakingly built. I am "admitted". I have a terrible night. I[n] the morning the 'Process' begins.

Usually two or so weeks later, the Gods that be, who comprehend everything but understand nothing take my repeated pleas into account, and these Public Hospital Doctors 'allow' me again possession of my clothing. Whereupon i make my way to the local Newsagent, buy some very cheap paper and an artline pen. After i 'hide' anywhere on the Asylum grounds away from troublesome aspects (people) and draw. (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 40)

The incongruence of Mannix's metaphorical reality and that of 'normal' reality, which is most greatly felt when 'normal' reality is forced upon him in the above situation of institutionalisation, is partly responsible for the state Mannix describes as paradox. He writes: "To exist in a state of paradox is to experience a state of constant destruction from the dissolving of personal history. One should expect a significant amnesia. If chaos brings a storm than paradox brings an earthquake and levelling. The more paradox is experienced the less it is understood" (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 175).

The creation of art becomes not only a coping mechanism for the boredom and regimented depersonalisation of the institution, but it is through art that Mannix both preserves his "personal history" and begins again to re/create the world which 'reality' has destroyed. He writes specifically of this: "after two or three weeks of extreme agitation in a hospital, I would go out and draw – as if to piece things together again; as if not to lose the manner of seeing that existed" (Aspect 71).

As Mannix attempts to maintain and retain his idiosyncratic “manner of seeing”, psychiatry seeks to invalidate or silence such narratives by characterising the mentally ill as unreliable narrators of their own experience. In its monologue about madness the psychiatric profession attempts to regain authority and power over the world-view of the schizophrenic: this is shown by Sue E. Estroff in her article, ‘Subject/Subjectivities in Dispute: The Poetics, Politics, and Performance of First-Person Narratives of People with Schizophrenia’. She describes how the insane are silenced in the “mainstream academic press of psychiatry” (285) because, while the existence of “patient autobiographies” are mentioned, the content of such work is not: she continues,

Most in absence from the scientific/scholarly discourse are the chronicles of unrecognition, fear, danger, capture, sensate torture, annihilation, and indignant anger that pervade c/s/x narratives¹¹³...It is perhaps inevitable that a frequent response to the strong sentiments expressed in these narratives is to frame them as denial, lack of insight, transference, or evidence in direct contradiction to the narrator’s claim of validity. (285)

It is the narrative technique of “framing” that Estroff mentions when speaking of the numerous ways in which psychiatry recodes the voice of the insane. Thus, amid the general silencing of such voices (through exclusion), there is also the tendency to recontextualise (effectively rewriting) the narratives of the insane, which ultimately serves to render their vocabulary unreliable.

Thomas Szasz makes a similar point: “the oppressor [psychiatry] succeeds not only in subduing his victim but also in robbing him of a vocabulary for articulating his victimization, thus making him a captive deprived of all means of escape” (qtd in Felman 40). It is just such a vocabulary that Mannix continues to articulate in his writings, negating the rhetorical control of the medical profession to narrate his experiences.

Mary E. Wood, writing of the function of narrative in the psychiatric diagnosis of schizophrenia, draws attention to the role of the ‘Casebook’: “a volume designed to aid clinicians, teachers, students, and researchers in their use of the latest edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)” (196). Wood continues:

¹¹³ Estroff refers to those whose stories she is discussing as “consumer/survivor/ex-patients (c/s/x)...” (283) because, she writes: “it is the term of choice of most of the people with serious psychiatric disorders with whom I work, from whom I learn, and about whom I read” (300).

Where the DSM-IV itself provides catalogs of symptoms that characterize each diagnostic category, the Casebook presents narratives of individual “cases,” then teaches its readers how to interpret patient speech and behavior and to transform these signs into signifiers, or, rather, symptoms. These symptoms can then be matched to the diagnoses in the DSM-IV. (196)

Thus the patient is recontextualised in a narrative framework that determines the ‘meaning’ of their actions and words. In this way, the patient’s (unreliable) narrative is subsumed by the (reliable) narrative of the medical profession; Wood explains further:

In all of these cases it is the use of narrative that unravels that hegemony even as the Casebook attempts to teach, through narrative, the universal tenets of psychiatric diagnosis. Close reading of the narratives can help expose the fact that psychiatric diagnosis based on the reading and writing of patients through narrative is a fraught, highly subjective process that draws on a wide range of culturally specific histories and contexts, some scientific, some popular, some literary. (200)

The result is the silencing of the patient’s narrative, encased and transformed as it is into the symptoms psychiatrists want to see within it. However, Wood suggests that embedded within these medical narratives are the patients’ “shadow narratives”.

Traces of what we might call “shadow narratives” appear intermittently, and in the chronology of the case study they are virtually always superseded by the diagnostic narrative. However, these traces remain as interruptions or loose threads that subvert the process of diagnosis by an expert and open space for the voice of the person whose “case” is being narrated. (196)

A coherent (reliable) medical monologue is thwarted, showing it to be merely a construction, the reinterpretation of madness by a profession that ordinarily only ever witnesses, rather than experiences, such a state. Mannix’s creation of the “book of life”, in which he speaks or narrates his own subjective world-view, is motivated, in part, by his extended contact with a profession of narrators determined to rewrite his story so as to render it unreliable, thus erasing it. In Mannix’s dialogue with madness it is the voice of individual psychiatrists and psychiatry in general that are relegated to the position of “shadow narratives” within the rich, hallucinatory landscape of the Mannix cosmology.

In this formulation Mannix’s oeuvre can be read as a fluid, multiple text which counters the various psychiatric case-studies that have been written of him. The narrative Mannix’s has created – with its multiple voices, held in multiple books, at multiple locations – mirrors (as if to shatter the mirror) the narrative of the psychiatric profession, itself the work of multiple voices, held in multiple files, in multiple locations.

The existence of such a psychiatric narrative regarding Mannix is inferred by his numerous references to psychiatrists, other patients, and his experiences within mental institutions. The treatment of this narrative within his work echoes the manner in which, Estroff suggests, psychiatry treats the narratives of the mentally ill in its scholarly literature – in which, the words or deeds of psychiatrists are referred to or paraphrased without the actual words themselves appearing in the text. Thus such narratives remain as shadows submerged within the Mannix work that speaks them. Only once in the pages of ‘The Atomic Book’ does psychiatry speak itself, surfacing within the narrative as a fragment torn from a psychiatric report on the patient, “Mr Mannix”. Even here the psychiatric voice is limited and modified, as it is only a fragment of a larger text chosen and contextualised by Mannix himself. However, it does remain the only instance in which the actual words of the psychiatric profession are present. This fact, and the specific fashion in which Mannix has arranged and described this fragment, ensures that it presents one of the most dynamic expressions of the Mannix/Psychiatric, mad/rational, unreliable/reliable, abnormal/normal dialogue that undergird Mannix’s entire oeuvre.

The fragment in question occurs on the last page 56 of the artist’s book, Mo013: Journal of a Madman 1995: a small torn strip of white paper with black typed words printed on it by a computer. The page to which it is affixed is dark green in colour on which Mannix has written in black ink, thus the white psychiatric fragment appears to surface from within the text of the book. The ordered, computer-typed nature of the document is contrasted with the idiosyncratic manner in which Mannix has arranged his own hand-written text around it. Extending this contrast is the inclusion of erasures and spelling and grammatical anomalies in the Mannix text.

Here then is evoked Michel Thévoz’s suggestion regarding normalization; a process in which, “[l]etters gradually escape from the scribe’s gestural and visual command, in order to be standardised by typography, photocomposition, and finally computer digitalisation” (‘Sorcery’ 39). The ordered presentation and objective language of the psychiatric fragment contributes to its status within society as being more reliable than Mannix’s obviously subjective response. Mannix subverts the fragment’s status in numerous ways, beginning on a material level, by removing the section from its page by tearing rather than cutting. This creates ragged edges that fracture parts of the initial text,

compromising both its legibility and its ordered appearance. To further this process Mannix embeds this printed text within a text of his own which offers the reader his alternative version of the events referred to in the document; a document he calls a “little snippet from a bullshit history 1994 about how i attempted to murder myself or if you care for another view the ridiculous and culpible where the victim is sent to prison for the aggressor’s actions” (Mo013 56). The psychiatric version contained on the “snippet” is as follows:

THE EVIDENCE

The Board noted from the report of Dr H Napper that Mr Mannix was admitted to Rozelle Hospital on 28 September 1995 on a Schedule 2 and was discharged yesterday, that is, 31 October 1995. This admission had followed hostile and threatening behaviour to others, damage to property and non-compliance with his medication. (Mo013 56)

Mannix’s version of this incident is as follows: “I was the victim of an attempted murder whilst co-ordinator of a little art gallery i set up and now i find the papers have arrived this morning with a history already ‘grown’ with me as a threat to other and a damager to properties” (Mo013 56).

In this way the artists’ books of Mannix speak his own history and serve (at least in part) to counter those “bullshit” histories he believes are created about him by others; he seems to suggest this fact himself in the text which directly follows the psychiatric fragment. Here he asks himself the following question: “Why continue with these journals?” Part of the answer he supplies refers directly to the incident under question – he writes: “i like exposing incompetents” (Mo013 56). By incompetents he, presumably, means both the psychiatrists and the two individuals he goes on to name as being responsible for the accusations of violence and property damage that were part of the reason for his internment. This situation raises a central concern in Mannix’s writings: the presupposition that those who are, or have ever been, labelled insane, are unreliable sources of information. He writes:

To be mad, or to have been mad, is to have no credibility - Your mind has been deemed unfit and either, or dangerous to yourself or others. It is taken and thru. various means, which you may or may not desire it is ‘reestablished’ with “REALITY”, at least as others see it. After this occurs you are not regarded in the same light by the majority of those you come in contact with. You are regarded as a ‘being’ that must be constantly assessed to see if what you are purporting is indeed correct. If you are ever in error, as we all quite often are and

regularly are it is not the nature of error or imperfection but negatively, a display of a faulty mind. (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 103)¹¹⁴

The “little snippet” must here stand-in for the (presumably) extensive “bullshit history” of the psychiatric profession regarding Mannix’s madness; it operates as a dialogic conduit from the subjective history within Mannix artists’ books, to psychiatry’s ‘objective’ history: a monologic history written by narrators who are already convinced of his unreliability. Mannix closes his commentary on the “little snippet” with the suggestion that “there is some satisfaction in being able to have a look at the little tools that are used to create bullshit history” (Mo013: Journal of a Madman 1995 56). One such tool is the official psychiatric text itself, a tool Mannix has sought to use against itself.

The conflicting narrations of Mannix and the Psychiatric profession again crystallise around an incident that occurred, Mannix writes, in the Sutherland Royal National Park in 1986.¹¹⁵ This is an incident that Mannix refers to briefly a number of times in his texts; each time few details are given and it was only in subsequent conversations with Mannix that a more complete narrative became evident.¹¹⁶

One reference to this event can be found in the book Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4, in which Mannix writes: “But no sooner had i begun to make a significant recovery [from cuts incurred when Mannix broke through a glass door] than i was viciously shot by an unknown psychopath who tried to murder me” (22)¹¹⁷. At a later stage of this same work there is another reference to this shooting incident:

Towards the end of 1986, my grand mania with shootings, family death, altercations resulting in awful injuries, garbage can cuisine came to an abrupt end when the Police incarcerated me in Ward 24 of Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital...i became quite ‘re-adjusted’ after a while, forgot about the bullet lodged in my leg; left and got a little flat in Stanmore where for the rest of the year Sept-Dec i spent my nights alone drawing. (48)

¹¹⁴ Mannix here echoes the views of David Cooper regarding psychiatry’s propensity to medicalise the mentally ill: “This pre-structuring of the situation that arises when someone enters the mental hospital immediately implies that what has gone on between the elected patient and other persons has a significance (if it has any at all) that is secondary to the supposed disease” (41).

¹¹⁵ The Sutherland Royal National Park is a region of bushland approximately one-hour train ride south of Sydney.

¹¹⁶ This shows the private landscape that often underlies the texts contained in Mannix’s books. Mannix’s private cosmology is, of course, far more detailed than is revealed in the books, and direct contact with the author during 2005-2006 has greatly assisted my understanding.

¹¹⁷ This passage of writing is reproduced on page 1 of Mo056: A View of Psychosis. Mannix often renders certain passages of text in numerous locations throughout his oeuvre.

These two references are deepened by Mannix's more detailed narration of the events which he recounted during a conversation about his life. Much of what Mannix said in this conversation coincides with his various writings on the subject, but here the narrative became more complete. Mannix suggested that during the time directly after his mother's death he had been living on the streets, partaking in what he calls "garbage can cuisine". In order to get clean and a little healthier he would periodically travel out to the Sutherland Royal National Park.¹¹⁸ On one of these visits he spent a night in a Ranger's cabin and woke up to the sounds and lights of a car nearby. A gun was aimed at him through a window and a number of shots fired, one of which he claims hit him in the lower leg. He suggested that, as his reading glasses were balancing over his knee at the time, the gunman thought the area was in fact his head.

The bush location, the use of a gun, and the year has led Mannix to speculate that perhaps this attack may have been an early crime of the infamous 'back-packer murderer' Ivan Milat, whose first known victims disappeared in 1989. Mannix, bloodied and in pain, returned to Sydney by train and was soon after picked up by the police and taken to Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital. Once there he told the staff the narrative of the shooting and showed them his wounded leg. Mannix recalled that the staff countered with a narrative of their own, suggesting that the wound was merely a boil, promptly dismissing the shooting as an aspect of his delusory reality without either closely inspecting or X-raying the injured area. Mannix was then heavily sedated. Mannix suggests that the wound healed, with the bullet still inside, where it remains to this day.

Mannix describes this time as his "grand mania" and there is, in fact, at least one reference to the event which suggests Mannix links the incident to his contact with a supernatural realm of presences, ghosts and demons. This, however, makes the bullet and the incident no less real for him. This reference occurs in Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 and reads: "What greatly interests me is that for nights previous at the place of the attack (i received one bullet wound) i saw an entity, which i named ock. / on 15.2.92 Tiyanan did a psychometry on the part of my leg where the bullet is still lodged. She came

¹¹⁸ It is during this time that he battled with the large insect-like creatures he called "They", discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

under stress by what she called “some weird psychopath entity” with a black nonsense” (128).

The text becomes a space for Mannix to record and create his own world-view – one that counters the treatment he believes he received in the institution, where his claims were dismissed, in part, because he was considered mentally ill and therefore an unreliable narrator of his own experience. The hospital staff normalised Mannix’s narrative by rewriting it as something more likely to have occurred. Which narrative is more consistent with the evidence present at the time is impossible to say from this vantage point. Of central importance is the fact that Mannix’s artists’ books are a narrative of his own experience and even if such an experience is proven to be metaphorical, it is a metaphor that he lived and continues to live currently. In this way such narratives approach the concerns of the psychologist Lauren Slater and her text ‘Spasm’, as described by Brendan Stone: he writes,

‘Spasm’ mixes together fiction with memoir, with its author refusing to reveal what is ‘true’ and what ‘false’; it is couched in a poetic and postmodern style, in which the ‘end’ of the story occurs in the middle of the book, and a metanarrative is utilized to usurp any suggestion of a detached or transparent view; it includes letters to the reader and the publisher, and extracts from medical text books. The point of all this is that Slater wants to convey narrative (rather than narrowly referential) truth, by using a metaphorical (rather than an informational) discourse: ‘invention’, she claims, can ‘get to the heart of things’, while metaphor can gesture towards ‘the silence behind the story’: ‘through it we can propel silence into sound’ (24)

Shoshana Felman noted that “the historian’s problem is that of finding a language: a language other than that of reason, which masters and represses madness...” (41). Wood suggests that the narratives of psychiatry found in the DSM-IV casebook (and those regarding Mannix previously mentioned), are attempts to construct rational narratives to encapsulate the schizophrenic experience; such narratives only serve to subdue the voice of the individual in question, and yet even this submerged voice manages, through shadow narratives, to resist and derail the surface rationality of psychiatry’s so-called objective, constructed progression. To admit madness into language requires that a dialogue be opened between the inherent order of rational language and narrative and madness’ irrationality. Lauren Slater’s approach is metaphorical, intertextual and

fractured; Mannix's work also embraces such modes of production in his development of his "speculative narrative".

Chaos and the "Speculative Narrative"

The narration of madness is central to Mannix's project: his is an openly subjective account, metaphorical and inventive – in line with his ideas about the creativity he feels to be inherent in such a state of mind. His experience is one of chaos and disorientation, mysticism and the occult, illumination and elation, and it is just such a narrative he wants to produce: a loose, "speculative narrative" with which to approach the fracturing which he believes resides at the core of psychotic illumination. He writes:

Why have i gone to these places [Psychiatric Hospitals]? it seems there is no easily understood answer. When one takes a path, one should fulfill it. Mine has been to an immersion in occult things, mysteries, mysticism, the psychic and psychosis. When i learned that 'Schizophrenia' meant broken i learnt that it is with this core that we come to learn everything broken or intact and that it is always in a situation of challenge and change. How else would i be able to use words such as seething, simmering, splintered, sibilant, turmoil, asunder, parted, divided, diverse, creative, co-hesive, co-herent, clear, lucid, illuminated. (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 114)

Mannix here refers to the etymology of the word Schizophrenia: "*Schiz* – 'broken'; *Phrenos* – 'soul or heart'" (Politics Laing 107). In the last sentence of the above passage Mannix lifts the reader from a broken and "seething" core, towards lucidity and coherence. Such a transition reflects Mannix's experience of schizophrenia itself, as a destabilisation of fixed principles, a splintered dissolution from which he attempts to construct a personal world-view. Such a destabilisation is reflected in the centrality of the term "chaos" in Mannix's discussions of reality and creativity. Mannix admits chaos into language and narrative structure in an attempt to move closer to the truth of his psychotic experience; thus developing a voice with which to speak the "unspeakable". This is a topic taken up by Brendan Stone in the following passage:

[T]he problematic of the unspeakable arises in the question of whether it is possible to fit the limit experience of shock, psychical chaos, crisis, or acute suffering into a narrative, when such experiences are in themselves profoundly anti-narrational in character. Moreover, if we

do narrate the limit experience, surely this narration would transform trauma into something that it was, and is, not - something governed by order, sense, reason and progression. And would not such a narrative be a false story, one which is dissonant with the self's distress? (17)

Mannix's development as an art-maker can be seen as the search for a form with which to express such "limit" or beyond-limit experiences. His "book of life" is a "speculative narrative" in which to incubate live, chaotic thoughts, preserving them from becoming "formed and modulated": fixed, impotent and dead as they might appear in the ordered, rational diction of the DSM-IV casebook or the TAT. In order to do this Mannix creates the chaotic narratives that he terms his "eternal speculations". For Mannix it is only the "raw" hand written journal that is capable of presenting his experiences without limiting and confining them. Looking through a journal he has just created he concludes that I,

have succeeded with this 'idea' of chaos to my satisfaction...the book gives a constant chaotic feel and pleasure which i think is the reward for not forcing it into any preconceived order. I find in its page the ingenuous, the professional, and the acute, all in certain and accurate ways...this also brings immense pleasure...there is more also...when i create something good that hasn't been processed, something that remains raw and roughly hewn but nevertheless complete it seems to bring me closer to the source of what i do... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo012: *Journal of a Madman 1994-95* 191)

The notion of chaos is here (and in the following passage) associated with spontaneity and life itself: an antidote to the planned and artificial.

It is interesting this putting chaos in a book and calling it the book of life...it is not the artwork you must settle with first, it is yourself and what you are about. It seems you must let these things of the unconscious find their space and diction in your 'everyday' life without fear of them or of the alteration they make in how life is experienced...indeed it is sharing with yourself. The thing it frees one from is this logic of planning which no matter how well is done promotes the artificial. (Mo015: *Journal of a Madman 1995-96* 26)

In Mannix's work chaos features as both a thematic concern and a methodology for the generation of artistic narratives and their presentation within his artist's books. Chaos represents a state of unlimited or "unerring" flexibility with unbounded combinatory powers. He writes:

For two to three years now i have been vitally interested in chaos: in the idea of it as an experience and what it would do to the body as well as the psyche: it remained the only thing that living in the unconscious had not revealed to me [...] The unconscious is such an impersonal, impartially place you can not hold any ill to it because of its make up of forces

and violence¹¹⁹...But i had already discovered this...i was obsession about how to put this stuff chaos into the format of works such as books and yet have them as comprehensible works, otherwise this great allegiance i had to “the book(s) of life” would be a parody... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 127-28)

For Mannix chaos constitutes the core of the unconscious. Like the unconscious itself chaos is at times described as a landscape to be journeyed through or even a medium to create in or with. This sense of journeying through physical landscapes can be applied to the artists’ books within Mannix’s “book of life” – and they are ‘comprehensible’ not as conventional sequential narratives that can be paraphrased, but experientially: each book a landscape to be explored, linked by the traveller in the same way that that a traveller links aspects of an environment in the act of passing through them. Such a view evokes Roland Barthes’ notion of the “Text” which “is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination” (‘From Work’ 159).

Mannix’s narratives possess a connotative expanse and, in line with Barthes’ notion of the “writerly text”, the reader is required to metaphorically link widely disparate ideas or citations, thus giving them the experience of associative confluence present in the psychotic, unconscious or dream state. Here it is the imagination (of both Mannix and the audience) that provides the narrative with cohesion, thus in Barthes’ terminology the reader is “no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text” (S/Z 4). In this way each reader is afforded their own personal sense of coherence and their own personal text.¹²⁰ Such connotative expanse is evident at the level of the Mannix narrative¹²¹, but it is prefigured by a similar treatment of language itself. The subversion of language’s linear rationality (and ultimately language’s entire breakdown into sound or

¹¹⁹ Mannix’s suggestion that the unconscious is “impersonal” resonates with Jung’s notion of the deepest regions of the unconscious, the collective unconscious; Jung writes: “A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the *personal unconscious*. But this personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the *collective unconscious*” (Four 2).

¹²⁰ Barthes extends his discussion of the ‘writerly’ text in his work S/Z, by suggesting its relation to such a textual plurality: “the writerly text is *ourselves writing*, before the infinite play of the world (the world as function) is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages” (5).

¹²¹ This speculative narrative will be further demonstrated in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis where individual books and their narrative sequence are analysed in detail.

music) by Mannix as he embraces chaos, is both an expression of his idiosyncratic world-view and a challenge to logical power structures such as psychiatry. It is through this use of language that Mannix explores and maintains the metaphoric structures of thought that he believes psychiatry, through his institutionalisation, is attempting to silence.

Ceasing the Substance of the Concept.

Chaos can be seen as the core of Mannix's psychotic world-view – the unstable, shifting origin offering unlimited generative opportunities. For Mannix the move towards chaos represents a subjective, metaphoric vision that is turned in on itself, directed towards its own elemental unconscious: a spontaneous, animated realm where distinctions dissipate and all the linguistic categories that impose limit on the rational mind dissolve. He writes:

To cease to have definition in some way is the access to traversing the unconscious as journey. To pursue this to its root, one must cease the substance of the concept. Then the Myriads do not oppose you.¹²²

When the architecture of concept is dissolved one is hit by the storm. This is chaos. No logical argument will deliver you from this place and yet no logic can oppose successfully what you wish to build. Chaos is the climatic and elemental.

Where reality is not subject to vague or bloody connotation one finds the irreal. Its escape from colonization or denotation means that it is mobile, and powerful. (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 174-75)

Such a realm of the “irreal” – the chaotic core of the unconscious – resonates with the words of Jesse Watkins who spoke of his psychotic episode to R. D. Laing, saying: “I mean I’d just read a headline and the headline of this item of news would have – have quite sort of – very much wider associations in my mind” (Politics 124). The irreal is thought which eludes the fixed conventional connotations of language and thus enables radical associations between multiple, divergent ideas to be formulated (even if

¹²² Henri Bergson, also cited the limitations of concepts: “Concepts, according to him [Bergson], impede the ceaseless flow of reality, and being essentially static in nature are inherently incapable of rendering the idea of change underlying all experience” (Kumar 18). Also of relevance here is Mannix’s practice of materialising concepts, which sees them dissolve as fixed mental notions. This is shown in Mannix’s realisation of Carl Jung’s concept of the “Shadow”, discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis.

only momentarily).¹²³ Mannix writes: “It is that with psychosis there is a discoordinate expansion of reality making readily possible the working, and competently so of direct oppositions” (Mo046: Light 38).¹²⁴ Here is suggested a limitlessness free of fixed connotation – not meaninglessness, but the belief that all denotative linguistic connections which define ‘normal’ reality are by their nature repressive constructions, as they limit the relation of one subject to another subject.

The lack of punctuation in Mannix’s work, particularly commas, is also indicative of this associative looseness. Here, different sections of a sentence, which pertain to separate semantic ideas, become conflated. This can be seen in numerous passages of text including the following:

Perplexing fires burn piano-playing fingers so that the light is neither here nor there but hangs languidly between thoughts based on protruding existentialities moss growing on tongue-licked side the hairy vegetation infested with morose/sad memories of distant worlds dead giants fill a fly-speck as automated anti-bodies and extrapersons whirl by in a symphony of extraordinary perceptiveness illustrated every fantasy that has come to a shuddering halt wide-eyed margins stare from a myopic page littered with fabrications about yesterday, today, tomorrow; all are wrapped in a glossy assumption transparent to the gaze and sensuous to the touch. (Mo048: Little Specks 7)

The conception of psychosis as a landscape is evident in this piece as whirling images encase the reader in a shifting panorama: the lack of punctuation allow ideas to extend from, and collapse into one another as “protruding existentialities” evolve and decline before the eyes of the author in a living, breathing environment of imaginative flux.

For example, the lack of punctuation clarifying the relation between the passage and the

¹²³ Emanuel Swedenborg, makes a related point regarding the associative continuity of the speech of the angels which spoke to him from a higher, heavenly realm: “Their speech is quick, flowing like smooth water. There are words, indeed, but they are, as it were, continuous, or rather, the ideas are continued like a stream in which is the thought which quickly falls into words with me. In short, there is, as it were, a stream of ideas to which the words correspond, but they do not adhere to them. When I answered, I observed that my speech was broken, that is, divided by the words and of another sound, not fluent, thus not heavenly... Thus heavenly discourse, when spoken, is the infilling sense of the words taken together, in those cases in which the words do not suffice...” (Spiritual 309) As will be shown, Mannix too, experiences the separation of ideas and words to the extent that ultimately in the deep regions of the unconscious, thought ceases and the realm is experienced as sound or music.

¹²⁴ For William S. Burroughs such an expansion of consciousness through radical associations was also of central importance. Burroughs used writing techniques to train himself to think in this manner: “The scrapbooks [books in which he records resonances between his own writing and newspaper articles] and time travel [analysing the correlation between various activities and thoughts undertaken at a specific point in time] are exercises to expand consciousness, to teach me to think in associative blocks rather than in words” (‘White Junk’ 65).

phrase, “wide-eyed”, allows it to become read in multiple ways. It can be associated with the phrase before it whereby it describes the manner in which “a symphony of extraordinary perceptiveness” comes to a halt; it can also be associated with the phrase after it, in which case it describes the manner in which “margins” “stare” from “a myopic page”. The events described within the work mirror (or are mirrored by) such formal, associative aspects: here the giant can be enclosed in the microscopic and fantasies and fabrications can be extraordinarily perceptive. The author has seen beyond the “glossy” assumptions of rationality and the revealed landscape has an intensely physical and sensuous nature.

Mannix has written of his work: “THIS REPERTOIRE OF WRITING IS DESIGNED TO DOCUMENT THE STATE OF PSYCHOSIS AND ITS LANDSCAPE. IT IS AN ATTEMPT SOMETIMES TO REPRODUCE SCHIZOPHRENIA...” (Mo054: Outsider Writing Statement 1) Such an aim seems pertinent to the previously quoted passage in which Mannix expresses a metaphoric mode of thought that brings rational language into dialogue with madness, revealing a “speculative” language of diverse, shifting interconnectivity.¹²⁵ Andrea Bachner too, in her essay ‘Anagrams in Psychoanalysis’ offers a view of language that presupposes such a reality of dense confluence:

Metonymy makes metaphor possible, it is the “substructure that is always hidden”. Indeed if we give this a radical reading, metaphor is only the isolation of a double meaning, of a specific thickness that is cut out from the swarming of contiguity around a signifier. (14)

Bachner seems to be illustrating the capacity of language to foster a thinking without limit – so dense as to allow a radical “looseness” of association; a looseness which shifts language from its fixed denotative function towards metaphorical connotation, and then into the metonymic realm of signifier contiguity.¹²⁶ One of the criteria for the diagnosis of schizophrenia is, in fact, the presence of such associative “looseness” indicated by one

¹²⁵ It is such a metaphoric mode of thought which is required to generate Mallarmé’s ideal form of Symbolist poetic expression: “It is not description which can unveil the efficacy and beauty of monuments, seas, or the human face in all their maturity and native state, but rather evocation, allusion, suggestion” (‘Crisis in Poetry’ 40).

¹²⁶ This progressive loosening of association ultimately leads to a breakdown of language’s sense-making function resulting in expressions of glossolalia and the prioritising of sound and music over denotative language.

of a number of, so-called, “deviant verbalizations” (Johnston & Holzman 57) such as “inappropriate metonymy, in which one word is substituted for another of which it may be an attribute or that it may suggest” (Johnston & Holzman 79).¹²⁷

Rosenbaum and Sonne also note a link between metonymy and schizophrenic language use. “The speech [of some schizophrenics] becomes *metonymically substitutive*. This means that words and sentences are substituted for one another as the result of phonetic and semantic similarities and contiguities. The Second-Person instance in the enunciation is invalidated as these metonymies come to dominate the text” (64). In this formulation the text ceases to be generated in conjunction with the notion of an implied listener (audience or psychiatrist), but instead progresses via a series of metonymic transformations of the signifiers themselves – here the signifier comes to dominate the text and its generation.¹²⁸ This can be seen in a work Mannix recorded for performance with the ‘The Loop Orchestra’ at the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre in September 2006.¹²⁹ Such a work highlights Mannix’s interest in the creative use of word lists; it is here transcribed in its entirety:

Maid-house, maiden-house, mist-house, house-mad, maid-house, flower-house, flower-house, beast-house, flower-beast, house-beast, house-boat, boat-house, broad-house, broad-maid, broad-maid, clown-broad, broad-mist, bed-house, bedlam, bed-lam, bed-lams, house-bed, house-lam, bean-broad, bean-broad, maiden-bean, broad-puncture, penetration-broad, broad-bed, sword-broad, word-sword, word-broad, whore-word, word-whore, word-house, house-word, house-hold-whore, house-whore, whore-house, heaven-house, whore-paradise, paradise-whore, whore-moon, whore-moan, moon-whore, paradise-moon, paradise-moan, moan-whore, mad-whore, ant-whore, ant-brain, end-brain, brain-whore. (Mo120)

Such a text proceeds via phonetic and semantic associative transformations, repetitions and rearrangements. The repetition of the word “house” is initially paired with phonetic

¹²⁷ Johnston & Holzman write “If the associative train of thought is not controlled and is more free flowing, then it should be scored as *looseness* (.5)” (75). The reference to scoring and the number (.5) relate to the ‘Thought Disorder Index’, one diagnostic tool used to diagnose schizophrenia.

¹²⁸ “In linguistics the usual stability of the relation between the signifier and the signified is related to the concept of *the sign*. In schizophrenic speech, this stability has given way to a situation where the signifiers are dominant” (Rosenbaum & Sonne 55). This is consistent with the magical conception of language previously mentioned where the signifier is capable of transforming material reality; hence its primacy.

The domination of signifiers within texts and texts that proceed via signifier transformation can also be related, Jerome Rothenberg suggests, to an aspect of “A typical ritual song practice...[which]...is to repeat (often also to distort) the one line indefinitely—or as long as the dance & ritual demand...” (454)

¹²⁹ An audio recording of this performance with the projected images that accompanied it can be found in the ‘Video Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo120 (Note: first minute of recording the screen is black).

transformations of “maid”, “maiden”, “mist” and “mad”. In the second line “Beast” is phonetically transformed into “boat” then into “broad”. “Broad” is then repeated as the words “house”, “maid” and “mist” are recycled back into the progression. “Broad” shifts into “bed”, leading to “bedlam” which divides into “bed-lam” and “bed-lams”. “Bed” shifts into “bean-broad” followed by words semantically associated with piercing, culminating with the rhyming sequence “sword-broad, word-sword¹³⁰, word-broad” after which “word” becomes “whore” and “house” is again repeated to anchor the sequence. “Whore” and “heaven” are phonetically substituted and coupled semantically with “paradise”. “Whore-moon” is likewise transformed into “whore-moan”, which plays phonetically and semantically on the word hormone. The phonetic sequence of “moon”, “moan”, “mad” leads to the semantic resonance with the phonetically related “ant-brain, end-brain, brain-whore” – this final sequence perhaps reflecting various views held regarding a brain that experiences madness.

In a text of this nature the desire to communicate with a “Second-Person” audience is not the prime generative force; instead, the associative transformations of the signifier become paramount.¹³¹ Thus Mannix does not play the conventional communicative language game. It is as Luce Irigaray suggests: “A schizophrenic would...be someone who could not, or who would not play the game, who recalls what lies underneath, the reverse side, the prerequisites, or the balance, lack of recognition and the price to be paid for it. The schizophrenic would signal (the way toward) the above or the beyond of signs” (191).

¹³⁰ The construction ‘word-sword’ appears in Ravenscroft’s *The Spear of Destiny*. Ravenscroft says the following of the text *Parsival*: “At the very heart of this fascinating medieval romance...there is a wonderful description of how the human word is also a sword which proceeds out of the mouth of man. It is mentioned as a “Word-Sword” which has grown old, atrophied, shattered and lost its power. Only by discovering the original source of its power can this “Word-Sword” be renewed” (180-81). Such an idea bears relation to Mannix’s belief in the magical potential of words to effect change in physical reality.

¹³¹ The following comments by Jane Palatini Bowers, regarding the prioritising of the signifier in Stein’s poems ‘Objects’ and ‘Food’ seem equally relevant to Mannix’s work: “Both ‘Objects and ‘Food’ begin with a deconstruction of language systems, and both move toward the free play of signifiers released from their prisons of syntax. Syntax becomes increasingly fragmented, and the hypotactic structures parodied in earlier poems are replaced by what Jayne Walker, borrowing from Roman Jakobson, descriptively calls ‘word-heaps’, like ‘black ink best wheel bale brown’ and ‘Apple plum, carpet steak, seed clam, coloured wine, calm seen, cold cream, best shake, potato, potato and no no work with pet’. The value of these ‘word-heaps’ is that they allow us (and Stein too) to concentrate on the words themselves, on how they sound and how they look” (94-95). This notion of ‘word-heaps’ aptly describes the Mannix text presently under discussion.

It is characteristic of Mannix's challenge to psychiatry that in this narrative he embraces what the psychiatric profession would likely call "deviant verbalisations". His use of such techniques as the basis for an imaginative text makes it clear that it is not that he cannot, but that he will not play the communicative game. For Mannix such techniques are an attempt to establish a dialogue with what lies underneath conscious, rational signification by accessing unconscious associations.¹³² It is in this way that he signals the way towards the beyond of fixed, denotative signs designed to communicate with the "Second-Person" audience. Mannix's generation of text according to phonetic and semantic transformations, and such a technique's associations with the unconscious,

¹³² The anagrammatic experiments of Unica Zürn also radicalise conventional communication by exploring what lies underneath/within the signifier. For Zürn anagrams were not merely an exercise in rearranging the letters of a phrase. The anagram is a world into which she descends until it constitutes the reality around her. "Looking at one sentence and searching for another is an inexhaustible source of pleasure for her. The concentration and enormous quiet this work requires provide her with the chance to shut herself off completely from her surroundings – indeed to forget reality, which is what she wants" (Man 36).

The lines derived from an initial sentence are messages with great significance for Zürn. She enters into an anagrammatic dialogue in which she poses a question, then proceeds to search within the letters of this question for its own answer. Beginning with the phrase, "Our number of destiny in ninety-nine", she creates the anagram [The original German language compositions are anagrams.]: "Now his contemplative eye seeks you as its target. Short / are our days and they sink all too fast to ice – Oh! (Man 35). She then poses the question: "Shall I meet you some day?" Within the letters of this question she 'discovers' the following anagrammatic answer.

After three paths in the rain, from
your counter-image on waking: He –
the magician! – Angels weave you into
the dragon's body. – Rings in the way –
I shall be yours for long, in the rain. (Man 35)

Here Zürn descends into a metaphoric, self-referential world based on the power of words as real presence, every sentence a psychic vessel pregnant with contingent messages. The anagram folds writing into itself in order to open again in a varied but related formulation. In this way the written word or letter becomes the impetus for the spontaneous generation of ideas, radicalising the primary relation historically attributed to speech and thought. In Zürn's work it is the written word and thought, which become enmeshed. Though the anagram, Zürn transcends her own self-imposed limits, investigating the semantic relation she believed inherent in reconfigurations of finite sets of letters. Zürn's questions (and the anagrams she derives from them) constitute an originary subjective world: answers are not sought from without but from within. Like Mannix, Zürn engages with the physicality and actuality of language - with its potential to affect and create realities.

In her essay "Anagrams in Psychoanalysis", Andrea Bachner suggests: "Through the combinatory play with what is conventionally seen as the building blocks of univocal signification, through a spatialization, one (or more) potential text(s) under/in/with/a text, the anagram foregrounds the materiality of language and deconstructs conventional notions of signification and representation" (3). The anagram is a form of reading *into* the text, which challenges the linearity of writing, reading and the objective realities they suggest. The linearity of the text is physically disrupted and because Zürn treats the new arrangement of letters as intimately, perhaps psychically, related to the original an internal text/narrative is uncovered. To *really* understand the original phrase you need to read and re-read it in a non-linear manner, thus accessing its 'prerequisites', its 'underneath'.

is also influenced by the Surrealist practice of “automatic writing”. André Breton in ‘The Automatic Message’ suggests,

We propose, I repeat, to bring automatic writing, which is tempting and easy, within reach of *everyone*, by freeing it from the intimidating and unwieldy apparatus of hypnosis, because we think this writing can achieve, without all its disadvantages, what von Schrenk-Notzing saw in hypnosis “a reliable way of allowing psychic faculties to flourish, especially artistic talent, by concentrating consciousness on the task at hand, and freeing the subject from inhibiting factors which hold him back and disturb him often to the extent of completely preventing the exercise of his hidden gifts.” (27)

In automatic writing, consciousness is concentrated on the signifier and this allows factors that inhibit unconscious expression to be nullified. The signifier is thus more important than the “Second-Person” audience and even the “First-Person” author; Roland Barthes makes a similar point regarding such a technique when he suggests that the Surrealists “contributed to the desacrilization of the image of the Author...by entrusting the hand with the task of writing as quickly as possible what the head itself is unaware of (automatic writing)...” (‘Death’ 44). It is the conscious (authorial) self (ego) that is sacrificed in order to facilitate contact with the unconscious. This is, however, not a dissociation of psychological personality but, according to Breton, represents its unification: “[T]he Surrealist’s aim [in practicing automatic writing] is nothing less than to unify that personality. Which means that for us the question of externality of – I repeat for the sake of simplicity – the “voice” does not even arise” (‘Automatic’ 25). Thus, dialogue with the unconscious represents the unification of an individual’s personality, a unification that Mannix also sought.

Mannix acknowledges that the use of such techniques by the Surrealists directly inspired some of his text-based work. He suggests: “IN PLACES THE WRITING IS AUTOMATIC, TO REPRODUCE, WITH A DEBT TO THE SURREALISTS TO TRY TO WOO YOU INTO A SIMILAR STATE THAT MAY HINGE ON YOUR OWN RELEVANT LIVE-TIME RECOLLECTIONS” (Mo054: Outsider Writing Statement 1). Here, then, the pathological and the intentionally creative unify in a technique of writing based on Sigmund Freud’s notion of free association, wherein the signifier is privileged so as to access the unconscious. Given Mannix’s fascination with exploring this realm it is not surprising that he would be drawn to such a mode of writing. It offers the prospect

of dialogue with the unconscious in a technique which exercises the capacity for associative looseness that underlies the thought processes of an individual experiencing schizophrenia, thus its ability (according to Mannix) to “woo you into a similar state”. Here then Mannix’s narrative utilises the precise thought patterns that psychiatry would seek to limit in a patient.

To Cease to have Definition: The Music of non-sense

As has been shown, a lack of audience focus is an important factor in the “outsider” creative expression of Mannix and has implications for the generation of chaos within Mannix’s texts. These texts also corrupt the conventional role of the First-Person author, exercising schizophrenic thought processes in order to access the unconscious. The role of the First-Person schizophrenic in challenging the rational dialogue of psychiatry is further elucidated by Rosenbaum and Sonne; they suggest that the schizophrenic individual does not present what could be termed a stable authorial point of view, the result being that “the conversation partner’s connection with the text is gradually effaced or obliterated: the psychiatrist [or reader] cannot find himself in the patient’s [or author’s] speech” (56).

Here the “First-Person” speaker disregards the presence of the “Second-Person” receiver or listener, primarily through a fracturing of a singular “First-Person” point of view. As a result, a text or “utterance lacks anchorage. It seems to presuppose the presence...of many different Second Persons...The Second Person varies from one phrase to the next. The implicit assumptions change. Therefore, the First Person of the enunciation is also not the same throughout. It is not the same voice we hear speaking. The I of the speech has almost disappeared” (66-67).¹³³ This is reminiscent of Barthes’ claim for all writing when he suggests that “writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject

¹³³ This unsignalled shift in the authorial point of view will be discussed in more detail with specific reference to Mannix’s work Mo030: Erotomania No. 1 in Chapter Four of this thesis.

slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body of writing” (‘Death’ 142).

Mannix would again seem to live this metaphoric notion of loss of identity within a text. The sense of contradiction that accompanies such a destabilisation of the First-Person point of view is linked to Mannix’s lived experience of psychosis and to his interest in chaos, paradox and the unconscious. Such internal contradiction is present in much of Mannix’s work. The following extract from Mannix’s book The Skull shows this clearly:

! The Moon was in the The Head but this was wrong because the bone was too dirty but it was like the moon born dead and rotting and toxic but this was wrong because The Moon was big & open & moist in The Sky...it was like The Head was made from a shit of the moon. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo045 7)

“The head” (or “The Skull”, terms which Mannix uses interchangeably in this work) and Mannix’s relation to it, is the focus of the story in this artist’s book.¹³⁴ The above example clearly shows a constant shift in the implicit assumptions on which the text is based, which leads to a breakdown of anaphoric deixis as perceptual contradictions overwhelm both the speaker and the text. “The Moon” is first in “The Head” but also in “The Sky”. “The Head” and the bone of the head are linked to “The Moon”; firstly “The Head” contains “The Moon”, then “The Head” is like a dead moon, and then “The Head” is “made from a shit of the moon”. The repetition of the phrase “this was wrong” emphasises the instability and inherently contradictory nature of the perceptual field. The image does not appear to be changing in the manner of a hallucination, but rather, it seems that the viewer is unable to accurately perceive what is before him or her. The referential instability of the text (which Mannix suggests is the transcription of a psychotic experience) reflects the instability of the author’s point of view and here is another example of Mannix’s propensity to open dialogue between madness and rationality, as he creatively embraces experiences and thought patterns, which the psychiatric profession would likely describe as symptoms of mental illness.

Ultimately, the linguistic stability of Mannix’s self breaks down altogether as the deep regions of psychosis and the “irreal” unconscious are experienced. The self lacks definition in regard to its surrounding as the Subject and Object become conflated.

¹³⁴ This work will be discussed in its entirety in Chapter Five of this thesis.

Here where “the architecture of the concept is dissolved one is hit by the storm. This is chaos. No logical argument will deliver you from this place and yet no logic can oppose successfully what you wish to build.” The fracturing of authorial stability is exacerbated as the unconscious is entered and the “Second-Person” audience or psychiatrist is completely excluded from the encounter. Such realms are characterised by intense associative confluence, gaining its most complete expression in experiences of sound, vibration and music. An example of this is the “screamstarewhisper” that Mannix often writes of. This synaesthetic confluence of terms suggests the erosion of fixed denotation, and is linked with music when he states that this “screamstarewhisper” is “a trance of the low, elongated keys, almost beyond the range of human perception, calling again and again” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 16). Mannix’s reference to “the low elongated keys” is echoed in a passage from the Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 which reads: “it is that i have had the pieces to build the piano for some time now and the music began today...the soft blacks, the sadness and sorrow, and melancholy” [Ellipsis in original] (185).

During journeys (which Mannix calls the “schizophrenic trek”) through the psychotic landscape of the unconscious depicted in The Light Bulb Eaters Mannix happens upon a room full of simultaneously talking and murmuring heads. He begins, through magic, to create music from the chaotic soundscape and this reveals to him further unconscious realms:

I decided to practice magic on the heads. It was that the mouths of these heads were never silent. I began to compose a music with them. It was that i could find in these symphonies, each head being an instrument, the great sagas, the great passions. I fell into them as a weighted body slips below the surface of an absolutely still and crystalline water...Combined in the expanse and throes of music they made one golden head with which i saw the ever-varied, the ever-repetitious and the ever constant. It was that i began to see pictures, that i travelled on a fine chariot to places and it was pulled by a great golden head. It gave forth music and arias and singing as we went from one place to another seeing the workings of the very illusion itself. (Mo046 43)

Here it is music that ultimately facilitates a journey that offers insight into the workings of the illusions of the unconscious.¹³⁵ Mannix's notion that psychosis and the unconscious involve an abstract, elemental force free from fixed denotation or association – a landscape associated with sound that defies dimension, to be explored experientially rather than intellectually – can be related to concepts of musicalisation and the appeal of such creative forms for poets such as Stéphane Mallarmé. Mallarmé writes: "I know, it's to Music that people want Mystery confined; when writing lays claim to it. The supreme rifts produced by instruments at play, a flowing from short-lived whorls, explode more truthfully, more directly; in light-bathed argumentation, than any stretch of reasoning ever pursued...('Mystery' 49) In this way, suggests van Orden:

Mallarmé likens poetry to 'absolute' or 'pure music'. Usually understood to be instrumental music such as the symphony, nineteenth-century critics believed that pure, untexted music could awaken the sense of infinite truths in the listener...poets valued music's ability to signify metaphysical truths in an indeterminate language that circumvented the intellect and spoke directly to the soul...While later twentieth-century modern aesthetics replaced the aim of expressing any transcendental Ideal with that of exposing the unconscious, the emphasis on an expressive metalanguage remained intact. (162)

For Mannix too, it is the unconscious that is the central staging ground for access to truths – and such truths involve the emotional or physical experience of engaging in dialogue with an unstable foundation of chaotic indeterminacy and paradox. Mannix's many descriptions of the psychotic and the unconscious in musical terms speak to music's capacity to elude the strict denotations of language – denotations which Mannix experiences as dissipating during psychotic states. In the following poetic quotation from Mo030: Erotomania No.1, language itself sheds denotation – dissolving into sound in an example of glossolalia.

strange silken

¹³⁵ There are many such references to Mannix's musical experience of psychosis and the unconscious. In a hallucination recorded in the Mo006: Erotic Journal of a Madman, Mannix describes the scene of a "'swamp' of female devils..." who, he suggests, "are teaching me music – how wondrous how a thousand notes are within one note and again and again the same..." (3). Here then Mannix seems to hear all the individual tones within each note of music.

In a long inventory of ghosts and presences, Mannix lists one as "Hatim, master Javanese whore who in the dark recesses of her eyes i first beheld the music of Debussy, and who informed me that i was to go mad" (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 43); and another as "The Eggmen who sent the wonderful resonant percussion music of their planet to me and who for a good portion of a mania infected my life with their pathos and their humour" (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 43).

words suck with
 strange
 silken lips
 la illaha
 el lill Allah
 only the
 wet things
 are holy (5)

It is the musical, sound value of words, devoid of semantic meaning, that is emphasised in the middle section of this passage. Such a passage ending with Allah is suggestive of a devotional chant, and is perhaps a form of worship dedicated to the holy “wet things” mentioned at the end of the quotation. This work, created while Mannix was experiencing psychosis, elides the three major contexts in which glossolalia is found: pathological, religious and poetic.

Glossolalia appears as one of the outer edges of language, as a moving threshold, as an uncertain border between sense and nonsense...Language and the world are felt emptied of meaning: voice, as if suddenly relieved of an overwhelming burden, breaks free from meaning and enthusiastically announces the coming of a new world. (Courtine 54)

Antonin Artaud's glossolalian sound constructions also operate in this manner, as a fracture within conventional structures of both language and idea, a dense aural node that speaks outside of established meaning. For Artaud, such sound constructions are able to transcend the repressive language of representation. As he writes in “Interjections”:

What's going to happen is that men are going to show their instincts
 repressed for so long,
 and I my true language;

a ta aishena
 shoma
 shora
 borozi
 bare... (Watchfiends 250)

Such semantic voids within the work of Artaud and Mannix, have an intense immediacy, generated by the decomposition of the relation between signifier and signified. The signifier (sound construction) no longer represents a specific signified (mental idea) but collapses such distinctions. Perhaps it is here that madness finds its own voice and

speaks. Such expressions become their own origin: no longer a derivative representation of thought, they engage the reader in a spontaneous bodily experience. Gilles Deleuze writes of such a non-sensical schizophrenic language: “Non-sense has ceased to give meaning at the surface; it absorbs, it engulfs all meaning from both sides, that of the signifier and that the signified. Artaud says that Being, which is nonsense, has teeth” (292).

Such writing does not seek to direct the mind to a specific thought, but conflates mind, body, vision, sound and breath. Artaud's “true language” detaches writing and sound from the constraint of semantic meaning and the concept: language for both Artaud and Mannix is defamiliarised in these instances, approaching the non-referential characteristics of music. In this formulation the power of literature is not based on denotative communication of intellectual concepts, but rather on sonic and vibrational effects experienced physically and emotionally.

Foucault notes the vibrational impact of music on the body and emotions in his discussions of the history of music based treatments for madness (Madness 169-171). By experiencing music, he writes:

man no longer played the negative role of the anti-instrument; he acted as if he himself were the instrument...The nervous system vibrates with the music that fills the air; the fibers are like so many “deaf dancers” whose movements keeps time to a music they do not hear. And this time, it is within the body itself, from the nervous fiber to the soul, that the music is recomposed, the harmonic structure of consonance restoring the harmonious functioning of the passions. (170-71)¹³⁶

Mannix's emotional experience of music during psychosis often involves just such a bodily, vibrational aspect; he writes,

I must commune with a piano with a sirens head for only she can give me what i want;
Meanwhile her music turns my heart black and threatens to sink it in a black sea.
i feel the boxes music most from my feet. I[t] sends every refuse that dishearten into my
body. at times there are Chopin like notes... (Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 185)

This passage, which ends with “i am due to have a meeting with the Beast of Psychosis” (185), sees Mannix experience a bodily music as a form of communication with the

¹³⁶ Foucault's comments regarding the capacity of sound to harmonise an individual's mental state resonates with the already mentioned notion that sound and incantation possesses powers of material persuasion illustrated by “early Pythagorean use of music and song for magical purposes to counteract passion-and particularly anger...” (Kingsley 247-248).

entities he perceives around him. In the following description of psychotic hallucination, music is again a focal point:

i am floating over a land which is like a dog...it has a single woman's nylon rolled up into a ball instead of a tail...the entire land is a charcoal colour...it moves...it has intelligence...and it has sound? tone? language of some fine string instrument...a cello or mandolin... ...the music it is making is a slow dissonance, unharmonic...it is more like the character of speech you feel only with your emotions and nothing else...your mind is blank... ...or rather it is just not functioning... ...it is in such an aware state...has so much clarity... ...that its no longer part of the world... ...there is no similarity...no semblance with which to communicate with the world... ...the mind is not frozen...it is eminently placid...it is like this land...it been burnt-out to charcoal...and as after a catastrophe silence is everywhere... [...] ...for a short time but what i would call experientially a lengthy duration there is a union between this place and myself... ...i hear its music very fully... ...when i know the place and i suspect it me i begin to depart from it... ...i can give no description in details of time... ...that process is no longer operating... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 139)

Mannix perceives that the psychotic landscape over which he is floating possesses a dissonant music created by a stringed instrument – a music felt with the emotions rather than heard. It is through a process of hearing the place's music “very fully” that Mannix and the place experience communion. Such a union suggests a breakdown of the Subject / Object relation, as Mannix experiences a loss of definition regarding his own self. Perhaps the ‘sounds’ Mannix perceives in this instance are not “almost beyond the range of human perception” – as he has elsewhere suggested of the “screamstarewhispers” – but in fact outside the auditory range: “silence is everywhere”, he writes of this musical place.¹³⁷ He perceives this musical union as lasting a long time, however, this fact is uncertain as conventional notions of time too have been eroded and are “no longer operating”. Thus in the unconscious realm Mannix experiences an associative confluence,

¹³⁷ The notion of a silent, vibratory music which exists outside the auditory threshold of human beings but is, nonetheless, present in the world and in fact underpins all matter, is the foundation for theories of “speculative music”. “The first postulate of speculative music...is that sound (or tone, or music) is *ontologically prior to material existence*. One way of giving assent to this is through recognizing that underlying the apparent solidity of matter there is nothing but a network of vibrations, which may be allegorised – as no doubt they have been since time immemorial – as “sound,” the name given to the vibrations in the human audible frequency range. However, according to this view none but sound vibrations are actually perceived as sound. Speculative music often goes further and asserts that the whole cosmos is audible in its superior modes of existence, just as heaven and its inhabitants are visible to certain mystics, even when there are no light vibrations striking the eye” (Godwin 13).

not only within language but also through a vibratory union with the landscape itself; a union perceived as a state of clarity beyond the intellectual or rational – the “pure music” that eludes literal denotation.¹³⁸ Mannix’s “speculative narratives” display this erosion in the instability of authorial points of view, the use of lists, “word-heaps” and musical metaphors. Ultimately in their glossolalia such narratives contain no words, as such, communication is no longer based on semantic concepts, the individual has descended into their own stream of consciousness; there no longer remains an outside within which the psychiatrist can situate him or herself with any sense of stability. Perhaps it is here, in the depths of psychosis, that Mannix’s dialogue with madness in fact becomes a monologue as madness finds a voice with which to speak itself.

For Mannix, psychiatry has proven incapable of understanding this psychotic voice and it is again Shamanism that he proposes as a counter narrative with which to contextualise his experience and shape his “book of life”.¹³⁹ He writes:

¹³⁸ Such a form of perception seems to coincide with Henri Bergson’s notion of “Intuition”: “According to Bergson, there are two ways of knowing reality: one adopts a point of view in relation to an object and “stops at the relative”, while the other seeks an intuitive identification with the object in order to “possess the original” (Kumar 19). On this matter Bergson writes: “Could reality come into direct contact with sense and consciousness, could we enter into immediate communion with things and with ourselves, probably art would be useless, or rather we should all be artists, for then our soul would continually vibrate in perfect accord with nature. Our eyes, aided by memory, would calve out in space and fix in time the most inimitable of pictures” (*Laughter* 150). Such an intuitive interrelation with reality, whilst an impossible idealisation for Bergson is realised in the world-view of lived metaphor, where in, consciousness and reality becomes synonymous; here where “the most inimitable of pictures” are literally carved “out in space”. Leonora Carrington, too, experiences such an “immediate communion with things” during a psychotic episode, as described in her text *Down Below*: “everyone one found a twin correspondence in me and gave me a perfect answer” (175). This passage is discussed in more detail in relation to Mannix’s work *The Light Bulb Eaters*, Chapter Six.

¹³⁹ Shamanism and the occult are important to Mannix because he experiences a correspondence with his animated environment that is incompatible with modern logic. Margaret Wertheim describes the schism she suggests occurred in the 17th Century between magical and mathematical modes of thinking.

The basic difference between the magician and the new mathematical men was that whereas the magician sought to *internalize* the world, to draw it into himself, the mechanist sought to *externalize* the world, to separate it completely from his own psyche. Yates has proposed that “when mechanics and mathematics took over from animism and magic, it was this internalization, this intimate connection of the [mind] with the world, which had to be avoided at all costs.” In opposition to the old magical way of knowing, the new mathematical science was to lead not to an emotional, subjective engagement with the world but to a detached and supposedly objective understanding. (96)

For Mannix, during psychosis, objects take on an animated, mobile aspect, as he connects with the silent ‘music’ within matter. It is such beliefs that underlie the occult possibilities of an “intimate connection of the [mind] with the world”, and this is certainly an experiential truth for Mannix, for whom the subject and object are often intermeshed in his metaphoric reality – a reality by which Mannix seeks to “internalize the world, to draw it into himself”. Therein lies the appeal and relevance of the magician or shaman for Mannix: the individual who bridges the gap between the subject and object, between real and the

The last “episode” as the psychologist call it was an extreme reversal of what modern life is all about. it was an “acute” coupling of emotions and an intently aroused sexuality to a point where as in a shamanistic ritual great changes in physical body chemistry were required. This thing thought ceased to be for months. It was not in anyway a dislike or rejection it was that in the landscape i was exploring it had no place no necessity. When these places had been passaged and traversed thought returned with a delicious fertility. (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 127)¹⁴⁰

In this state “thought” ceases because the landscape is no longer experienced via the mind’s thinking. This is a feature of the degree to which Mannix becomes enmeshed within the environment, to the extent that thinking about the environment is neither possible nor necessary, as he has become an aspect of it; his dialogue with madness has become a monologue.

One must expect a disorientation that classes as chaos if one is going to practice occult things and an exploration of the unconscious and this chaos spares nothing. What, tell me is the alternative, an armchair exploration with a lap full of empty bubblegum wrappers?’ (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 117)

Here Mannix characterises psychiatry as engaging with the unconscious via “an armchair exploration”, merely observing the realm as opposed to entering it. In The Light Bulb Eaters, Mannix writes of feeling lost within chaos to the point that “as a being that you could approach an abstract force” (Mo046 8). If the metaphors that Mannix creates are conceived of as abstract structures of thought, then in living them as if they were reality, Mannix himself becomes an abstraction or abstract force. It is at this point that an awareness of thinking seems to cease, as Mannix comes to exist within his own thoughts – no longer possessing the ‘objective’ distance required to perceive them as separate from

supernatural so as to bring such realms into balance through a subjective engagement; a world-view which challenges the “detached and supposedly objective understanding” of both “mathematical science” and medical psychiatry.

¹⁴⁰ Mannix’s suggestion that his psychotic episode was a reversal of modern life to the extent that the experience could only be contextualised by the so-called primitive world-view of shamanism, seems to relate to Carl Jung’s comments regarding the schizophrenic state. “I seriously consider the possibility of a so-called “arrested development,” in which a more than normal amount of primitive psychology remains intact and does not become adapted to modern conditions...In the course of years the distance between the unconscious and the conscious mind increases and produces a conflict – latent at first. But when a special effort at adaptation is needed, and when consciousness should draw upon its unconscious instinctive resources, the conflict becomes manifest; the hitherto latent primitive mind suddenly bursts forth with contents that are too incomprehensible and too strange for assimilation to be possible. Indeed, such a moment marks the beginning of the psychosis in a great number of cases” (Psychogenesis 244).

experience – his dense, associative, stream of consciousness constitutes his entire reality; a “reality of flux as all of the river” (Mo046: Light 44).

it has long been the associative narrative of psychotic thought that has interested me. When i came upon the philosophy of Heraclitus as reality of flux as all of the river and all at once i feel there was a knowing about this narrative which is outside of the bounds of what one can understand if one gives discourse with it or involvement. (Mo046: Light 44)

Mannix does not only observe and describe the fluid nature of his consciousness in his “speculative narratives”, he steps into the stream itself and in so doing descends into the deepest regions of the unconscious, which he equates with the “Chasm”. Of this place of indescribable sound, he writes:

i will have to hurry into the chasm at great speed now...i can no longer find adjectives, the place is beyond it...i am accepted by it also in an absolutely impersonal way...but i will have to hurry, my body will give me only a certain amount more of time...already i am continuously six months on this journey, and ferociously so.

...i am at the lowest point of this place now...there is a din, a making of sound about me i cannot describe because of its magnitude...i am laying on the heart of this place and in everyway dimension is defied. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 36)¹⁴¹

Such depictions of the “Chasm” describe a chaos in which all fixed dimensions are defied.¹⁴² Such a place is beyond language and thus beyond psychiatry. It is from here, a place where “no logic can oppose what you wish to build”, that Mannix births the “presences” that inhabit his reality, the Others whom he engages in madness’ dialogue; the Others whom psychiatry can not hear.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ A few pages on from this quotation Mannix affixes into his book a letter written to him by Philip Hammial. By positioning this letter here Mannix himself seems to suggest a connection between his notion of the Chasm and that of the void, as part of Hammial’s letter reads as follows: “Your description of the ‘core’ as an all-pervading 24 hour-a-day, non-stop lightning storm of pure white pulsating energy that at the same time is beyond all description that at the same time is 6-sided & can be manipulated corresponds, or seems to, exactly with the all-pervading white light energy that the Tibetans call Void or Mind-only...” (Mo046: Light 39)

¹⁴² The concepts of the Chasm and the void are analogous to Friedrich Holderlin’s notion of the ‘abyss’ in which the poet can access the mystical, Heidegger writes: “In his hymn “The Titans” Holderlin says of the “abyss” that it is “all perceiving”. He among mortals who must, sooner than other mortals and otherwise than they, reach into the abyss, come to know the marks that the abyss remarks. For the poet these are the traces of the fugitive gods...Poets are the mortals who...stay on the god’s track, and so trace for their kindred mortals the way towards the turning” (93-94). The narrator in Mannix’s work Mo049: The Demise, connects, through psychosis, with such ‘fugitive gods’; gods that have withdrawn from a social reality he suggests has become “de-mystified”. This work will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six of this thesis.

¹⁴³ Such a place bears relation to the “void” from which, Artaud claims, Gérard de Nerval (another author who experienced madness), was able to birth poems so powerful and immediate that they constituted “new extraordinary beings” (Watchfiends 51). “Poetry is a magnetic innervation of the heart, which the being of

In the creative expression of Mannix the traditional language and narrative techniques used to create psychiatry's monologue of reason about madness, are subverted, not strictly for the purposes of literary experimentation, but instead because such conventions are unable to communicate the fluid, chaotic lived experience of psychosis and the unconscious. Brendan Stone writing of Julia Kristeva's work Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia makes a related point, he writes:

Traditional narrative form, in which raw events are recodified into a coherent plot, and also language's inherent quality of producing meaning via order and sequence, may be inimical to the expression of what Julia Kristeva (1989:33), writing of melancholia, has called the 'excess of an unorderable cognitive chaos'. (16)

Kristeva goes on to suggest that one reaction to this chaotic world-view is to treat language as "alien to itself in order to discover, in the mother tongue, a 'total word, new, foreign to the language' (Mallarmé), for the purpose of capturing the unnameable" (Black Sun 42). This, it seems, is Mannix's reaction to the chaos he experiences. In his "outsider writing", his "book of life" Mannix has sought to capture his chaotic world-view by embracing chaos as both theme and structural methodology. Thus, chaos becomes a central aspect of Mannix's aesthetic, encouraging dialogue between madness and rational language via associative looseness and pursuing a method of narrative that fractures the stable authorial point of view and corrupts anaphoric deixis. As this metaphorical mode of thought becomes metonymic exchange, concepts dissipate and imaginative realities solidify: as Mannix inhabits his unconscious, metaphors become lived and a dialogue with madness becomes a monologue by madness. Mannix by describing in his work this monologic state in which thought ceases, can even at this extreme point, be seen to foster a dialogue between psychosis and rationality by attempting to transcribe the very voice of madness; a voice that speaks in his glossolalian voids.

Gérard de Nerval kept all his life a cavern, one of the principal transmitting caverns of a void where all poetry is remade. Not one of the poems in *The Chimeras* does not make you think of the physical torments of primitive childbirth" (Watchfiends 56-57). Artaud claimed for Nerval (and himself) access to voids of originary inspiration that enabled the "innervation" of written works. Mannix too, delves into his own subjective zone of uncertain multiplicity on his "schizophrenic treks". Womb-like and elemental, an inside before outside, site of the ultimate union before differentiation, locus of birth's unique disassociating trauma: the unconscious void over which the conscious mind is forever constructing, a space Artaud describes as "the uterine being of suffering into which all great poets have dipped" (Quoted in Deleuze, Textual 279).

Mannix's artistic process is, at once, the creation and exploration of another "gravity": an unconscious "Chasm" of unlimited imaginative potential. For Mannix, such explorations in the "Chasm" represent the ideal, a journey toward the unlimited: the generative core of creativity. The psychiatric profession, however, advocate a movement towards limit; such mental chaos, in the world-view of the medical profession, represents non-sense, darkness and silence.¹⁴⁴

Along these lines the psychiatrist Ronald Pies suggests the language of the insane is too "private" and interior to communicate anything, and within this very interiority literary forms such as "automatic writing" find its ideals. The literary and artistic avant-garde have always embraced madness, finding in this "outside" a realm full of inspiring, idiosyncratic voices. Here, the relation between the signifier and thought is reinvigorated through spontaneous creations possessing deeper motivations than the communication with a "Second-Person" psychiatrist or audience. The reader must traduce the objective reality they know and embrace an other's lived metaphor; a world of limitless possibility, in which all things are imbued with monumental significance.

In producing his own narrative of his psychotic experience Mannix creates ambiguous creative works that require an audience to engage their own subjectivity and search within their own mind for meaning. Again Barthes' notion of the "Text" is relevant; he suggests that such a work is "a score...[which]...asks of the reader a practical collaboration" ('From Work' 163). Mannix himself makes this point regarding Art Brut: "Following this path of The Ingenuous, all possibilities become apparent. It is not the art that must "work"; on the contrary, it is the viewer and the experiencer who must work" (Mo046: Light 98). In this way the reader begins the spontaneous journey towards their own unconscious "Chasm", deriving from an unfamiliar reality their own unique perceptions. In so doing they are afforded the opportunity to reinvigorate their habitualised vision and open a dialogue with the deep regions of their own being.

¹⁴⁴ The limit/unlimit relationship can be traced back to the very foundations of rational philosophical thought, Zellini commenting on the ancient Greek concepts of limit and unlimit suggests the following: "The unlimited...appears to be a negative and destructive principle. For disrupting the order imposed by limit clearly means bringing reality back to an amorphous and disorganised state, in which each thing loses its recognizable form as a concrete entity, and in which events appear disconnected, unpredictable and liable to evolve irrationally" (4).

The work of Anthony Mannix operates as part of the ‘private’ narrative within or beneath the ‘public’ – traces of the unconscious, Brut dialogues influencing both artistic expression and the psychiatric profession. In this present context madness becomes the insider – orbited by modern art forms and psychiatry – embraced by the narratives of the former, invalidated by the narratives of the latter, an inspiration to both – two radically divergent perceptions of the one “stammering” void.

If there is an impulse that serves as the core of Mannix’s void, his “schizophrenic trek” through the “Chasm”, it is that of eroticism. For Mannix the unconscious is pre-eminently a realm seething with a powerful erotic sexuality. Mannix writes: “i have been trying to name this chasm...it doesn’t need a name though, i known it called The Chasm of doom [...] early morning broke on this place today, i saw it as a vast vagina of violent volcanic ashes, infinite dangerous lest it be travelled in correctly, one of the moons of the esoteric KOSMOS...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 35)

Chapter Four will explore the eroticism that goes to the foundation of Mannix’s experience of life, and infuses the central concerns of his art-making: madness, shamanism, the occult, the unconscious, chaos, and the journey.

Chapter Four

Opening the Venus Box: An Erotic Chasm

The Venus Box is not one illusion, but every illusion.¹⁴⁵

Within is an amber globe that belittles the book of history, it is named “captivity”, with this globe of amber is an insect, tart, green, outlandish, which is mummified. It is not uncommon for the amber to become soft, then molten like a narcotic honey from the heat of the globe, then for its embedded creature to know release. The only colour that has complete union with amber is black, the black of silk, the black of sheer nylon, the black of the Unconscious.

(Mo012: *Journal of a Madman* 1994-95 51)¹⁴⁶

‘The Venus Box’ is an abstract, poetic work, which presents the reader with complex series of illusory images. The Venus box contains the unconscious, which is the imaginative generator of all illusions. The womb-like image of the embedded creature achieving release relates to the freeing of such an unconscious during psychosis. The erotic nature of this realm is suggested by the “silk” and “sheer nylon” of women’s stockings. Images of the softening amber add to this sensuality and reflect the fluid nature of Mannix’s hallucinations.

This prose-poem can be further illuminated by reference to another passage in Mannix’s artist’s book The Light Bulb Eaters. In this work the vagina of a woman is the site from which a variety of hybrid animals and insects are birthed. Later, psychosis itself speaks to Mannix from its home within a woman’s vagina. In such images can be seen the confluence of psychosis and sexuality, each powerful forces that Mannix describes as having the capacity to possess him – hence, “it is named “captivity””. Thus the “Venus box” can be seen as a vagina that contains within it “every illusion”.¹⁴⁷ In this

¹⁴⁵ Here the myth of “Pandora (‘all gifts’)” (Miles 37) could be an inspiration.

¹⁴⁶ This text was recorded by Mannix accompanied by ‘The Loop Orchestra’ and can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’ under ‘Sound Works’ listed as Mo091. In this recording Mannix reads “belittles the book of history” rather than “belittles book of history” (as it appears in his artist book).

¹⁴⁷ In The Demise Mannix again writes of the vagina as encompassing all things: “I wish to touch the black monolith that I see in my mind that hums, that quivers that is like the cunt of cunts, that holds every smell, that holds every sight, that knows every sound that will free me” (Mo049 13). This black vagina of the

formulation the “amber globe” becomes a visualisation of the womb; the capacity of the womb to generate life is thereby associated with the capacity of psychosis to generate illusions; illusions which appear to live autonomously. The “narcotic honey” can also be linked with vaginal fluid, as again in The Light Bulb Eaters Mannix suggests that “[w]hen hungry i ate honey that came from the fur” (Mo046 14).

In Mannix’s world-view the vagina becomes a sensual zone, which has the potential to create and release all manner of amorphous entities. This can again be seen in the following passage:

ladies legs in sheer black nylon are the finest musical
instruments like a sweep in the surge about sharp surf rocks
none other can create this singing nectar that is like a great beehive
that is slowly decaying and melting and dissolving in upon itself...
waves of bees hum, their wings enmeshed in the sticky substance,
the black moon casts a silent light and strange beasts are seen,
or were... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 35)

Images of honey or nectar are again evoked amid a scene of frenetic activity: a site of melting, dissolving and morphing forms. Here are present the beasts Mannix so often associates with the unconscious. The final lines of ‘The Venus Box’ also evoke this realm: Mannix suggests that the only colour that has complete union with the womb-like amber globe at the core of the “Venus box” is black, the “black of silk, the black of sheer nylon, the black of the unconscious”. This final coupling of the unconscious to women’s undergarments signals once again the close relationship Mannix believes exists between the erotic and the unconscious, readily accessed during psychosis. For Mannix, contact with psychosis can reveal the profound truths of the unconscious, one of which is the central role played by the erotic in human experience.

In this, as with other aspects of his world-view, Mannix is influenced by the time he spent in South-East Asia and the culture he found there. Of this period he writes: “I had an interest in Buddhism, but I saw it in a very personal, a very perverse manner. I saw the nature of the energy, the nature of Nirvana as essentially sexual!” (Aspect 65). For Mannix the erotic impulse or energy has the potential to connect physical, mental and spiritual realms of existence. The psychotic, unconscious landscapes Mannix explores are

mind again seems to relate to the unconscious, and the fact that it knows every sound that will free Mannix also suggests the power it possesses over him.

infused with a sexual impulse that energises body and mind, and it is through the power inherent in this impulse that Mannix explores the mystical transformations of shamanism, magic, alchemy and the occult.

Such transformations involve the disruption of the Subject / Object separation, a disruption that is characteristic of schizophrenic thinking in the realm of lived metaphor. Georges Bataille restates this Subject / Object division when he describes humans as “*discontinuous* beings” (Eroticism 12). The discontinuity mentioned by Bataille refers to his view that each human exists autonomously: thus he states, “This gulf exists, for instance, between you, listening to me, and me, speaking to you. We are attempting to communicate, but no communication between us can abolish our fundamental difference. If you die, it is not my death. You and I are *discontinuous* beings” (Eroticism 12). It is such fundamental differences that must be bridged if shamanism, magic, alchemy and the occult are to function and Bataille suggests that it is the erotic act that carries within it such a capacity: “with sexuality particularly a sense of the existence of others beyond the self-feeling suggests a possible continuity as opposed to the original discontinuity” (Eroticism 102) and elsewhere: “Erotic activity, by dissolving the separate beings that participate in it, reveals their fundamental continuity, like the waves of a stormy sea” (Eroticism 22). Central to eroticism’s power to dissolve such barriers is its capacity to move beyond the rational. Bataille writes of the lovers: “They are animated by a violence outside the control of reason, swollen to bursting point and suddenly the heart rejoices to yield to the breaking of the storm” (Eroticism 92).

Mannix too, associates the erotic with the irrational and it is often through eroticism that Mannix’s dialogue between madness and the rational is conducted. Eroticism becomes a central method by which to regulate and explore the mystical realms of lived metaphor (the irreal unconscious) where the boundaries of all things are porous and malleable. Bataille also explicitly links the erotic and the mystical or sacred: “The temples of India still abound in erotic pictures carved in stone in which eroticism is seen for what it is, fundamentally divine” (Eroticism 134).

Mannix’s central act of erotic unification, effected through mystical or occult means, is that of sex-change. Mannix suggests on a number of occasions that he has become or is becoming female. In one illustration Mannix depicts himself as an

androgynous figure with breasts and male genitalia.¹⁴⁸ Like many of the women he depicts, he represents himself without arms. Extending from his head appears to be antlers or wings. The caption reads in part: “It is impossible to describe pure chaos. This is where i was at the time and still functioning, although a great toll was taken on my health and resources” (Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 6).

Mannix’s own desire for such a conversion is suggested when he contextualises another of his erotic drawings by writing, “Also at that time i was dreaming of being a female, so it [the drawing] could possibly be my conversion to such” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 52). Here again it seems possible that Mannix is suggesting that art-making is a form of ritual which participates in the process of effecting changes in physical reality, in this case his own sexual orientation. Another manner in which this transformation can occur is through attendance at a “sex-change-temple”. Mannix writes:

Sexuality is different when you are mad and particularly when you are approaching madness which seems pertinent and although particular, the escape for sane or mad is futile. If one is lost in psychosis one may experience the sex sounds or sex screams or venture into a sex-change-temple and undergo a scream–stare–whisper, or a sigh–scream–moan and this energy might heat the body and keep it on heat for months. Needless to say such a ritual can only be conducted at night in an incalculable blackness. (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 9)

The “scream-stare-whisper” is a confluence of the visual and aural, which is repeatedly recorded by Mannix. He suggests that within a “sex-change-temple” such a “scream-stare-whisper” has the capacity to infiltrate and affect the body with a heightened sexual energy. In undergoing a “scream-stare-whisper”, sexuality is rendered fluid in the same way that many fixed categories of ‘reality’ become permeable when he experiences madness.¹⁴⁹ The use of the words “temple” and “ritual” suggest a mystical or occult

¹⁴⁸ Mannix’s repeated exploration of sex change and androgyny may be influenced by his interest in mythology and his reading of Joseph Campbell’s Hero With a Thousand Faces (a book Mannix acknowledges owning (Mo046: Light 86). Campbell writes: “Male-female gods are not uncommon in the world of myth...[t]he cabalistic teachings of the medieval Jews, as well as the Gnostic Christian writings of the second century, represent the Word Made Flesh as androgynous – which was indeed the state of Adam as he was created, before the female aspect, Eve, was removed into another form. And among the Greeks, not only Hermaphrodite (the child of Hermes and Aphrodite), but Eros too, the divinity of love (the first of the gods according to Plato, were in sex both female and male” (Campbell 152-153).

¹⁴⁹ This potential for sex change is also described by Daniel Paul Schreber in his work Memoirs of My Nervous Illness. Schreber locates this change as occurring in connection with “nerves of voluptuousness”: he writes that his “body has been filled with these nerves of voluptuousness through the continuous influx of rays or God’s nerves. It is therefore hardly surprising that my body is filled through and through with nerves of voluptuousness to an extent which cannot be surpassed even by a female being...When the rays

connotation: Mannix makes this explicit as he discusses the creation of a drawing he completed “at the rear of the Art Gallery of N.S.W. in the park there...Nearby were the sex-change temples where the SCREAM/STARE/WHISPER – MOAN/SIGH/lick would accompany all alterations of sex from male to female by mental & Occult journey” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 98).

Such ideas of sex change and the occult unite in a striking scene from Mannix’s work The Light Bulb Eaters. Again, it is sound (a woman’s moan) that functions to effect a sex change in Mannix. He writes:

I hear another woman moan. its unearthly how such things can be heard thirteen years later. Many had the ability to turn one into a woman with all a woman’s internal finery with a magical power she hardly unstood. Two scorpions, we became joined at the genitals and all division ceased. While we did this ritualistic dance we inbided drunken fluids made from carnivorous plants and the genitals and glands of animals and the secret places of our own bodies. (Mo046 14)

A woman’s moan (one of the “sex sounds” Mannix often mentions) has the capacity, through a form of “sympathetic magic”, to turn him into a woman. In Mannix’s lived metaphor the sexual moan is, presumably, a concentration of psychic femininity with the capacity to infiltrate and transform the male body into the female or the bring to dominance the suppressed feminine aspect of the male self;¹⁵⁰ thus the two lovers are unified within the one sex – this is a prelude to a further unification that represents the complete breakdown of individualisation. Mannix suggests that this process is aided by the imbibing of fluids from the plants, animals and “the secret places of our own bodies”; which again links this ritual to occult practices.¹⁵¹ Mannix describes the final dissolution of borders between the lovers in the following manner: “all that water that we held between us by our zodiac could not contend with any containing and a confusion started

approach, my breast gives the impression of a pretty well-developed female bosom; this phenomenon can be *seen* by anybody who wants to observe me *with his own eyes*. I am therefore in a position to offer objective evidence by observation of my body” (247-248).

¹⁵⁰ This notion is discussed in more detail later in this chapter as it pertains to Mannix’s experience of the Jungian concepts of the “Animas” and the “Anima”.

¹⁵¹ Mannix’s notions of the erotic occultism are influenced by both Alestair Crowley and the work of Trevor Ravenscroft who writes the following of Crowley: “he graduated to the highest degrees [of magic] in which the sexual act took the central place in the ceremony, the participants partaking in an ‘Elixir of Life’ concocted from the mingling of male and female secretions” (167).

with us that took the last dregs of the intellectual from us and firmly buried our bodies in the primevally erotic with a force and concussion that was shattering” (Mo046: Light 15).

In the “primevally erotic” all differentiation is shattered.¹⁵² It is the male that is absent from this heightened sexual experience. In this instance Mannix does not objectify women as sexual objects to be used by a man, but situates women at the core of eroticism. He is drawn towards the erotic female to such an extent that he is transformed (by an occult force) into a female, after which the limits of both parties dissolve.¹⁵³

For Mannix, erotic physicality is a conduit to mystical states of unconscious eroticism. In such a formulation metaphorical erotic states materialise for Mannix, becoming places and landscapes through which he can travel. It is within these (lived) metaphorical landscapes that Mannix feels able to access shamanic, alchemical and occult powers:

Its a strange game Romance – you play and gamble with gold coin of the most valuable kind, and of magical nature. Its that love-making will eventually change and become the wildest shaminism.

The erotic is the place where things are done. If there is any such thing as alchemy then it lies here. Some places defy also description. I remember having the door to my room kicked in with an untoward violence; eroticism is like this with one thing, amidst the brokenness is an aura of pleasure that is solid and when one notices further a beast of every other colour made up of every other beast stands at the threshold with mercurial and sulphurescent eyes. The room SEEMS to be exploding with ignited phosphorus. (Mo031: Erotomania 1994-96 12)

Here, as elsewhere in Mannix’s work, eroticism offers power, but it is also a powerful autonomous force in its own right. In his conception of eroticism Mannix conflates (as does Bataille) pleasure, violence and violation in an act that moves beyond the rational. In the above quotation Mannix characterises eroticism as “a beast of every other colour made up of every other beast”: this irrationality underscores the capacity of the erotic, in Mannix’s world-view, to draw together many powerful aspects of his unreal cosmology. This depiction of the beast is reminiscent of Mannix’s ‘Beast of the Unconscious’, again reiterating the erotic nature of the unconscious places.

¹⁵² Elsewhere Mannix associates the descent into the “primevally erotic” with the dissolution of the Ego by the Id (Freud’s realm of primitive desires such as hunger, rage and sex). Here Mannix writes: “The Id infects everything” (Mo030: Erotomania No.1 6).

¹⁵³ This scene does, however, allow Mannix to participate in the common male fantasy of lesbianism.

i have manourved the ground for my contest in life to the more outlandish, exotic and alien places; particularly to places and landscape of the erotic...for this warm and spectacle i have brought about a balance out of the occult places, the place of dimensionless ambiguity, those places in mysticism which are unbalanced, in that there are only speculations, that force that i also find as a landscape, chaos [Ellipsis in original] (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 129)

Perhaps here Mannix is suggesting that through a process of bringing balance to mysticism's chaotic places of "dimensionless ambiguity" he is able to create (or, as he suggests elsewhere, build or construct) other places in the unconscious, in particular the "erotic" places. It is in this way that the mystical, occult and erotic are indelibly linked. This transformation from "dimensionless ambiguity" to the erotic, he later suggests, is effected through the use of "the psychic" which he describes as "a powerful 'tool' to move mountains" (Mo015 129). Though Mannix admits he never completely understood this force, it allowed him to "choose where to be and how to work there..." (Mo015 129). This mental "work" that Mannix describes, which he has also called "mental sculpture" (Mo006: Erotic journal of a Madman 23) links his construction of unconscious psychic landscapes to the activity of art-making and the occult practice of evocation: each, for him, centred around the erotic. Extending the analogy with art-making Mannix describes the unconscious as a medium with which to build, possessing its own inherent challenges, as would the artistic mediums of wood, oil paint or bronze. He writes:

Since 1989 i have been in a fanatical study of chaos, sexuality and the esoteric so much so that i colonised part of the unconscious and built there. it is a strange medium to work in this unconscious for changes there mean remarkable change and alteration in your day to day conscious your action and ultimately your being. (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 4)

The building that occurs within the unconscious also affects consciousness and the experience of daily life; so too the art-making of Mannix can be used to generate change within the psychic realm – the physical and mental becoming synonymous in lived metaphor. The erotic nature of Mannix's art, then, both documents and constructs the erotic landscapes of the unconscious through which he travels. The central link between documentary art making, the erotic and the unconscious is made explicit in the following: "After almost twenty years of exploring the Unconscious and ten documenting it in what is currently known as Art Brut, i have come to the conclusion that we live an erotic life in our unconscious" (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 149).

Mannix channels the energies of the body's eroticism into his artwork, in part, to actually access and construct those erotic realms of the libidinal unconscious that he is simultaneously exploring. In this way the erotic energy of the body impacts on the material of his craft to facilitate the birth of a libidinal lived metaphor that Mannix comes to inhabit. The birth of such erotic landscapes is a feat explained by shamanism, mysticism, magic and the occult – hence their dominant position in Mannix's understanding of his experience. As Novalis writes: "The greatest of sorcerers would be the one who would cast a spell on himself to the degree of taking his own phantasmagoria for autonomous apparitions" (qtd in Maurois 12). In this formulation, Mannix is certainly a sorcerer of high degree, and it is the erotic art-making within Mannix's artist's books which is central to this practice of creating and engaging in dialogue with his "autonomous apparitions".

Erotomania

Every title in 'The Atomic Book' contains artwork which is erotic in nature, however it is of such importance to Mannix's world-view that a series of books exist within the larger oeuvre more solely dedicated to the exploration of this theme. This series is titled Erotomania. The centrality of the erotic in Mannix artistic output is suggested by the fact that the first artist's book he ever produced was entitled Mo030: Erotomania No. 1, a title which was then used for many subsequent works. The quotation on the back cover of this book reflects its primary status in the Mannix oeuvre, suggesting also that Mannix always thought of his artistic output as consisting of one large work – it reads: "These thirteen plates represent the beginning of a Worke that is anticipated to total ten thousand pages when complete" (18).¹⁵⁴

Mannix mentions this first publication and the inspiration for its title in a typed letter to an unknown Editor subsequently pasted into the journal called, Journal of a

¹⁵⁴ Considering the vast size of Mannix's output since this time it is likely he is very close to this prediction.

Madman 1994-95: The Chasm, Other stories, Drawings and Other things...and there Reigns love and all love's loving parts.

Dear Editor,

i've been with Erotomania since 1984 when i published a book of erotic work via Phillip Hammial and Island Press. I was well interested before. "Erotomania", the word was a magistrate's pronouncement upon a woeful individual who had been caught for a romantic rampage; for a rampant three months of looking at women where he shouldn't, of touching them where he shouldn't and of indulging in the unbridled kissing of individuals who did not solicit the same. The magistrate called him an "invertrate erotomania", i imagine him continually blushing, perhaps smelling of sperm like William S. Burroughs Virus B23 victims. The good thing though was that he remained recalcitrant to the last and would not repent. He was sentenced to six years imprisonment. He took his chances like the rest of us. (Mo012 148)

Here Mannix, as he has been shown to do elsewhere, appropriates psychiatric or judicial terminology used to categorise and describe 'abnormal' behaviour, at once reclaiming and radicalising the original terms.¹⁵⁵ The "Erotomania" which was so powerful that the individual in question could not control it, and which led to the infringement of the rights of others is, in Mannix's life, directed into his art-making and its rich metaphorical worlds. The unrepentant stance of the individual reflects Mannix's own experience of an unconscious eroticism that is so powerful and all encompassing that, within his world-view, it can only be deemed a truth.

Each page of the work, Erotomania No. 1, contains an erotic illustration indicative of Mannix's treatment of the body, which is depicted as an amorphic entity with missing or additional limbs, heads, breasts, vaginas, horns and eyes.¹⁵⁶ Numerous times the shape of the vagina is evoked by the replacement of the head with a single staring eye.¹⁵⁷ On this point Mannix suggests that the vagina's "similarity and total unalikeness to the eye can be noted" (Mo030 11). In this publication all figures tend towards the female, and

¹⁵⁵ Mannix's attraction to the word 'erotomania' may also be related to Artaud's use of the term to characterise psychiatrists: "And I do not believe that the rule of the confirmed erotomania of psychiatrists admits of a single exception" (Selected 484).

¹⁵⁶ Mannix's pictorial treatment of the body is echoed by that of the Outsider artist William Fields who has created a series of illustrations dominated by figures that are "dense composites, with multiple, variously oriented heads, faces, phalluses and other body parts. These many-faceted figures suggest complex life-forms in states of perpetual change and transformation, seething and pulsating with superorganic energy" (Patterson 67).

¹⁵⁷ This is reflective of Mannix's interest in the opening of the 'third eye' as reflective of mystical illumination, the ultimate goal of the grail quest, Mannix's "schizophrenic trek".

whilst this is characteristic of Mannix's work his wider oeuvre also contains male and hermaphroditic depictions of the human form.

The presence of male and female body distortions in his work, and his own repeated assertions regarding the possibility of sex change, suggests that Mannix's rendering of the body reflects that which Rosenbaum and Sonne call the schizophrenic "imaginary body" (76), wherein the body is depicted as "fragmented and can furthermore be described as being deterritorialized, that is, without stable local identity...The fragmented imaginary body has abolished the boundaries of the territory of speech. The speaker's own body can merge with any other body...the First Person disappears from the space of speech precisely because the fantasmatic body appears in the form of fragmentation" (76-77).¹⁵⁸ Thus the deterritorialization of Mannix's own psychotic or unconscious conception of his body (his "imaginary" or "fantasmatic" body) is co-generated by or at least reflected in the instability of his "speech" or text: the unstable first-person perspective from which the text is written, the instability of the linguistic construction of the text itself and the deterritorialization of the bodies depicted in the images within this work. In the destabilisation of these three aspects of Mannix's expression – point of view, textual semantics and pictorial body image – madness is brought into dialogue with rationality.

¹⁵⁸ Here Rosenbaum and Sonne are deploying Deleuze and Guattari's notion of deterritorialization in relation to the schizophrenic conception of the body. Deleuze and Guattari conceived of this in relation to Antonin Artaud's formulation of the "body without organs", postulated in 'To Have Done With the Judgment of God'. Artaud sought to recreate the body of "Man" without the organs through which he felt controlled: "Man is sick because he is badly constructed. / We must decide to strip him in order to scratch out this animalcule / which makes his itch to death / god / and with god / his organs. / For tie me down if you want to, / but there is nothing more useless than an organ. / When you have given him a body without organs / then you will have delivered him from all his automations and restored / him to his true liberty" (Watchfiends 307).

It is through organs that Artaud feels unconsciously controlled; this is the manner in which God resides within the body, through those drives that Artaud battles with, including nourishment and sexuality. Artaud was attempting to deterritorialize his body. He wanted to destabilise the organs that divide, label and categorise the body into segments. The organs represent the body's interior map. The body without organs is the body returned to the crucible, where flow can be re-established. It is this impulse that is present within Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the "body without organs" ("BwO"). "Why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breathe with your belly... 'Let's go further still, we haven't found our BwO yet, we haven't sufficiently dismantled our self.' Substitute forgetting for anamnesis, experimentation for interpretation. Find your body without organs" (A Thousand 151). The "BwO" is fluid, eternal creation that never settles. It remains nomadic, and as such can never be reproduced: the BwO is active potential. Mannix's own deterritorializations of the body also seem designed to return the body to the crucible where it can be remade with a fluid, amorphous eroticism.

Each erotic image in Erotomania No.1 is surrounded by handwritten text that details an environment of intense eroticism in which “only the wet things are holy” (Mo030 5) – showing again the confluence of the erotic and the mystical or occult in Mannix’s thinking. The instability of the First Person perspective in this work is reflected in the unsignalled range of speakers within the text, which include: a depersonalised, unnamed narrator in the guise of a news reader who relays information such as the following: “Fifty-five women are building a lovebox reports indicate gargantuan proportions are involved the thing is said to already be the size of a small postage-stamp European Kingdom” (Mo030 4)¹⁵⁹; the more intimate voice of “me” and “I” who observes and describes events first hand: “This building here in front of me now in the night, a small squatting structure seems to be a female thing forever pregnant with it self it seems composed of some creamy-pale substance, translucent and curved and smooth and rounded and humming as if filled with paper-lanterns and crickets, I seem to have caught it performing some vast and intimate female act” (Mo030 5); the “you” and “yourself”, which seems more to refer again to the narrator rather than an implied “Second-Person” audience: “You undress and dream yourself into her mouth, ears, cunt, ass, nostrils, nipples, there are moons: plural, and let loose with a live electric deluge and let loose with a spurting, spluttering fountain of demons and the tarnished golden rinds of your ancestors” (Mo030 6-7); One further voice that surfaces within the text is that of the author Trevor Ravenscroft. In the following quotation Mannix has inserted the words of Ravenscroft into his own text with limited but revealing transformations. Mannix writes:

The astonishing gifts of the medium, a simple and illiterate yet pretty peasant wench were discovered by Dr. Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, a devious character. In deep trance this shapely and Raven-haired woman emanated from her vagina ectoplasmic heads and shrouds which manifested as in some ghostly birth from the nether world. (Mo030 13-14)

The above quotation is directly taken (with slight adjustments) from Ravenscroft’s The Spear of Destiny. Ravenscroft’s “simple and illiterate peasant woman...” (104) becomes both “pretty” and a “wench” in Mannix’s rewriting. Otherwise Mannix’s sentence ending with “a devious character” is as Ravenscroft has written it. However, Mannix has neglected to include the continuation of this passage, which reads: “a devious character

¹⁵⁹ This passage displays the lack of punctuation which encourages associative confluence as discussed in the previous chapter.

who acted as “Press Agent” for the large circle of White Russians who had settled in Bavaria” (104). From here the Mannix’s text again mirrors Ravenscroft’s, however Ravenscroft’s “simple hulk of a woman...” (104) becomes “shapely” and “Raven-haired” in Mannix’s formulation. Thus Mannix transforms the medium into someone who is more attractive (“Pretty” and “Raven-haired”) than in the original work, and more sexually available (“wench”). The reference to “Raven” is perhaps also Mannix’s oblique allusion to the author from which he has drawn this material – *Ravenscroft*.¹⁶⁰ Erotomania No.1 departs from The Spear of Destiny at this point to further elaborate on the vaginal emanations, suggesting that:

Jabbering idiots, imbeciles and morons made their appearance singly or in groups. So feverish and animated were some of these impromptu displays that the woman would break into an acute hysteria. So profound was this mystical gift considered to be, and so potentially enlightening that she was placed in the care of one Hercule Vaaaut, an adept at magic. This fellow, however, was of rather uncertain character with a diabolical and intriguing nature. He could not resist a fascination centred upon her unearthly organ and the aspect that it lent to her rather sensous form and appearance and for a period of several months made intensive and involved sexual use of her, including acts of penetration while occultic activity was occurring. (Mo030 14)

The illusions emanating from the vagina are considered mystical in nature, and it seems that the penetration of this zone helps to affect the “occultic activity” that is being simultaneously conducted. Here Mannix refers to the notion that hysteria was originally linked with women and the womb¹⁶¹, a hysteria that results (in this instance) in the woman being put under the “care” of a male magician. The preceding passage (quoted earlier) mentions a Dr. Nemirevitch-Dantchenko who “discovered” the woman in

¹⁶⁰ Mo030: Erotomania No. 1, with its wide range of authorial voices (and particularly the unsignalled inclusion of the work of another published author) epitomised Barthes’ notion that the text is “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture (‘Death’ 146).

Burroughs’ ‘cut-up’ technique, involving the combination of fragments of multiple texts also destabilises the notion of a singular author who produces unique works. One expression of this is in Burroughs’ fictional creation, the “writing machine”: “A writing machine that shifts one half one text and half the other through a page frame on conveyor belts – (The proportion of half one text half the other is important corresponding as it does to the two halves of the human organism) Shakespeare, Rimbaud, etc. permutating through page frames constantly changing juxtaposition the machine spits out books and plays and poems –“ (The Ticket that Exploded 53-54).

¹⁶¹ On this matter Ilza Veith writes: “The term “hysteria” is obviously derived from the Greek word *hystera*, which means “uterus.” Inherent in this simple etymological fact is the meaning of the earliest views on the nature and cause of the disease. It was formerly believed to be solely a disorder of women, caused by alterations of the womb” (1).

question. Here then the references to mental illness and doctors suggest that this magical subjugation of the female is being conducted by a psychiatrist.¹⁶²

This generative conception of the womb, the associations of a vagina with a mouth – as well as William S. Burroughs’ creation of a talking anus in his work Naked Lunch – gives some context to the presence of the numerous talking vaginas in Mannix’s texts.¹⁶³ In this formulation, vaginas, whilst still physically connected to the body of a woman, develop a level of autonomy and an association with prophecy and madness as “the vagina talk can be, on occasions, be so intense that one becomes both blinded and deafened in the manner of biblical revelation. Occassionally, a womb will go crazy and start uttering absolute gibberish. In this situation the women usually adopt an embarrassed and aloof look and quickly disperse” (Mo030: Erotomania No.1 11). Thus, vaginas themselves can be seen as yet another narrative voice within the work. This is not uncommon in erotic fiction, as noted by Rosenbaum and Sonne, who suggest that “in pornographic fiction the sexual organs can think and speak” (76).

Another voice within the work tells, from a third-person perspective, a series of mini-narratives regarding the characters Rosey Spite and Tony Terror: Rosey Spite first surfaces in Erotomania No.1 in the following fashion: “Rosey Spite came skipping along the cobbled path thru the gardens the short pleated apple-red skirt rising with each upward motion thinking himself safe from observation and disturbance, Tony Terror was intently engaged in auto-sexual-stimulation...” (Mo030 10). Rosey goes on to reprimand the masturbating Tony Terror by giving “him a good hard lick across the chops don’t you know that every time you masturbate you kill an angel she yelled, Meanwhile, in heaven an angel that had lapsed into delirium thinking himself a goner, was being revived” (Mo030 10-11).

Erotomania No.1 ends with Tony Terror chasing Rosey Spite, who evades him as she has an orgasm and falls to the ground. As in much of Mannix’s work, whilst women

¹⁶² Artaud also links psychiatry with (black) magic in ‘Artaud the Mōmo’: “Insane asylums are conscious and premeditated receptacles of black magic, / and it is not only that doctors encourage magic with their inopportune and hybrid therapies, / it is how they use it” (Watchfiends 161).

¹⁶³ In The Light Bulb Eaters (Mo046 32) Mannix describes a conversation between himself and the woman’s madness, which again takes the form of an ectoplasm exuding from her vagina – the vagina in which her madness actually lives. The desire of the madness to leave the vagina and become autonomous is reminiscent of the desire of the ‘ass’ in Burrough’s Naked Lunch: “the asshole would eat through his pants and start talking on the street, shouting out it wanted equal rights” (110).

are the focus of sexual advances they are very often powerful figures who, more often than not, come to control the situation: of this Rosey Spite is emblematic. Rosey Spite is mentioned in many of Mannix's works and can be seen as a metaphor that becomes lived; she is, for Mannix, a real companion with whom he has had a relationship for over ten years. In the above examples Rosey Spite has erotic connotations, at other times she is a more platonic confidante. In The Light Bulb Eaters Mannix, in a passage which ultimately describes their first meeting, introduces her in the following manner:

Whether buying a shipment of the fine cigars she smokes in Havana and being personally hosted by Fidel or off on a secret journey to Seville, Spain with a confidential plan to uncover a lost cash of Edward VII whisky and motoring the backroad there in her 1929 jalopy, Rosey Spite is indubitably herself (Mo046 41)

Mannix goes on to write: "I never met Rosey Spite, it was just that she was spontaneously there...I looked out the window and there was myself walking down the street with Rosey Spite beside...Rosey wore a pin-stripped black suit with cravat with diamond pin and black, short hair slicked back and she had a prominent short bird's beak..." (46). From this time on Rosey becomes a regular companion for Mannix.

In a work titled Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 he describes her as "Rosey Spite – Master of the illusion" (7), suggesting that "it is now over a decade that Rosey and i have been with one another. We have seen a great many places and have had trials and tribulations. We have no secrets. Or rather i have no secrets; i think Rosey is still keeping a couple. There is not much i would have done without her" (Mo008 7). Rosey is then a powerful and enduring multi-faceted companion to Mannix, but one that often retains the balance of power in their relationship.

Adhering to the "Master of the illusion" title, Rosey appears in Mannix's work in many guises – one final erotic guise contextualises her as the "remains" of Mannix's own "feminine eroticism". In this respect Rosey can be seen as Mannix's "anima": a term used by Carl Jung to describe the feminine aspects of the male personality.¹⁶⁴ Mannix suggests he "would whisper and chatter" to the entity Rosey Spite during the sex described in the following passage, asking her "if she was going to take forever to do the

¹⁶⁴ Mannix explicitly signals his interest in Jung's concept when he writes: "What does one make of the Jungian concept of anima?" (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 148). For a more detailed discussion of these ideas see Chapter Six of this thesis which analyses Mannix's work The Light Bulb Eaters.

job” (Mo008 70). The “she” in this passage is not Rosey, but rather the woman Mannix is actually having sex with. Rosey can here be seen as an “Other” who comes between the “First-Person” speaker and “Second-Person” receiver in the ‘conversation’:

thru. force of will “successful” sex – the action of maintaining a rigidity long enough to the point that ejaculation could occur and did occur in a vagina occurred...the long, long, grinding lathe process of cutting masculinity down to nothing seemed to interest her and here she was uninformed for if she had sought its death i would have been trapped forever, inside the delirium...(Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 70)

This quotation also suggests that Mannix believes actual sex has the capacity to strip away masculinity, a process which in this instance, allows him contact with his residual erotic femininity – in the guise of Rosey Spite.

One final mode of address present within Erotomania No.1 engages with Mannix’s already mentioned interest in list making. In this particular book such a device utilises individual words, which Mannix uses to describe women; in the following example each psychiatric categorisation is preceded by the word “Miss” and located in direct relation to the female bodies drawn on the same page:

Miss Mania,
Miss Phobia,
Miss Dementia,
Miss Apoplexia,
Miss Paranoia,
Miss Schizophrenia,
Miss Hysteria,
Miss Monomania,
Miss Necromania,
Miss Nymphomania,
Miss Xenophobia, (Mo030 7)

The second list contains diseases or conditions of the body rather than mind. Other lists relate to the commodification of sex: “Miss Bargain, /Miss Barter, /Miss Purchase, /Miss Exchange, /Miss Acquire, /Miss Bribe, /Miss Swindle,” (Mo030 12). Still others contain words associated with the physical sex act: “Miss Spank, /Miss Lick, /Miss Thrust, /Miss Suck, /Miss Swallow, /Miss Pinch, /Miss Probe, /Miss Nibble, /Miss Bite, /Miss Tease, /And Many Many Others” (Mo030 13). The last list includes words that relate to more flirtatious behaviour: “Miss Pucker, /Miss Pout, /Miss Wink, /Miss Smile, /Miss Smirk,

/Miss Giggle, /Miss Titter, /Miss Laugh, /Miss Moan, /Miss Blubber, /Miss Swoon, /Miss Tickle” (Mo030 15).

Such a fracturing of language within Erotomania No.1, mirrors the multiple, amorphous bodies depicted beside each list in the numerous illustrations within the work. This close relationship between the writing and the figure creates an association recognised by the theorist Michel Thévoz, who had the following to say about the work:

I’m very grateful to you for the gift of your publication “Erotomania” to the Collection of l’art brut. The treatment of the body of the woman, as well as the one of the letter, by Tony Mannix, is striking. It’s a new alliance between the writing and the figure, under the sign of eroticism. (Mo083: Thévoz Letters 1)¹⁶⁵

Mannix therefore began his oeuvre with “a new alliance between the writing and the figure, under the sign of eroticism”, and it is an alliance he has continued to develop and expand.

The fragmentation of the authorial voice within Erotomania No.1 is compounded by the fragmentary nature of the linguistic text itself. There are many instances within this text where syntax and semantics are undermined, including an example of glossolalia discussed in the previous chapter, where the semantic function of language breaks down entirely to emphasis the underlying sound construction of words. Erotomania No.1, which Mannix has suggested was created whilst in psychosis,¹⁶⁶ shares the associative linguistic and narrative looseness of a work such as The Skull. Erotomania No.1, however, is unified by its erotic drive in much the same way that Roland Barthes suggests Georges Bataille’s Story of the Eye functions: “The narrative is simply the flow of matter enshrining the precious metaphorical substance...” (‘Metaphor’ 123). The substance, in Mannix’s case, is the female form itself as it mutates, in metonymic fashion, with the various fractured environments and narratives depicted within Mannix’s text. Barthes highlights the essential eroticism of such metonymic shifts:

¹⁶⁵ One copy of Erotomania No.1 was sent to Michel Thévoz by the book’s publisher, Philip Hammial. Thévoz accepted the work into the Collection de l’Art Brut in Lausanne, as confirmed by a letter found amongst Mannix’s private papers. An image of this (and one other letter pertaining to Hammial’s own work) can be found in the ‘Documentary Material’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo083.

¹⁶⁶ Conversations with Mannix: Recollections of G.S.Jenkins 2005-2008 (This reference refers to the many informal conversations that have taken place between Jenkins and Mannix during the course of this study; no written records exist of such conversations but they often yielded information that became useful in analysing Mannix’s work).

the transgression of values that is the avowed principle of eroticism is matched by—if not based on—a technical transgression of the forms of language, for the metonymy is nothing but a forced syntagma, the violation of a limit to the signifying space. It makes possible, at the very level of speech, a counter-division of objects, usages, meanings, spaces, and properties that is eroticism itself. ('Metaphor' 125-126)¹⁶⁷

In this way, then, the eroticism that goes to the core of Mannix's experience of madness can also be seen to be at work in the drive towards the loosening of denotative language. In Erotomania No 1, transgressive erotic content is reflected in a metonymic treatment of language. Mannix writes:

The Id infects everything...one is liable to encounter anything...silken honey-thighed ottoman concubines, Egyptian Se temples with their screamstarwhispers, evil breasted cross-eyed factories with black toothless transparent mouths gulping down iron spines and laryngitis, the scent of Oedipus and Se and sweet milks...The fruit of this country is female on the plate and female on the tree... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo030 6)

Here Mannix presents a lived metaphor composed of the erotic female form, which in turn becomes the metonymic substructure that underpins every observation and experience. The associative confluence that such, seemingly automatic, writing presents (typified by the "screamstarwhispers") emphasises the capacity for the limits of all objects and entities to become permeable when drawn into the unconscious libidinal drive of Mannix's eroticism.

The tension between Mannix and the feminine is, in this way, a tension between his existence as an individual physical entity and the entire erosion of his sense of self, as "the Id infects everything". In Erotomania No.1 the Id (wherein are contained the psyche's 'primitive' drives, in this case sexuality), does indeed infect everything: the authorial voice, language and the human form become porous, bleeding into one another as madness and rationality engage in a dialogue that creates a disorientating erotic ocean within which a reader is prone to drown:

a thousand womens legs come back to me. One takes a handful of this Ocean and one insults, one drowns in its totality and one knows. Both this is inescapable. One must insult the cunt because it is so wonderously good. This i call Erotomania, i have published an illustrated book about it and many manuscript. it is a crime and deserves a good flogging but it is awesome and from the meaty groin of the Goddess. (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 9)

¹⁶⁷ The sense in which eroticism is here considered a violation of limit is reminiscent of Bataille's notion that eroticism transgresses the barriers established between "discontinuous" beings.

Mannix further details the experience of the drowned man in the following text, which shows how all-encompassing the sexualised female form can become during times of psychosis. Here Mannix reaches the point where he feels dehumanised and lacks any coherent sense of self; the Ego has been subsumed by the Id:

I would see female flesh, eventually as a silken river with no difference from the internal to the external. There were times coming like lightening or the gasps of beast when i would go into shock and not be able to differential between the sensation of seeing a stocking'd calf and the dolorous slippery feel of a tight cunt...i would walk at great pace thru. central train tunnel with The Cunt on one side of me, The Anus on the other and lipsticked lips made monstrous by the imagination would be sucking me off. as this, integrating, merging, becoming a component in a Sex-Feel Machine lost to all hope of stability or coherence i would have wonderous visions of a realistic nature in my mind. With an unparalleled graphic quality, a hundred nubile nude women would finger themselves to orgasm in my sight in every contrived submissive pose and then press their cunt into my face. With this image predominate and indelible it became that i was eating, drinking, sleeping nothing but female cum. it was a good deal of time later that i realized that without any reference i had drowned.¹⁶⁸ (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 11)

As Mannix himself observes, this incident occurs when all the references of reality have been subsumed within the imaginative, hallucinatory world of psychosis. Mannix's experience of the internal and external becomes fluid, and the experience is one of "integrating" and "merging" with a larger entity which he calls a "Sex-Feel Machine". Mannix becomes a "component" of this machine – thus it is the machine that controls what is occurring, and Mannix is merely a part caught up in its workings. The machine seems solely aimed at eliciting the sensation of sex, creating hallucinations that Mannix perceives as entirely real and enveloping. Machine imagery (particularly that of the "influencing machines" (Sass 217-18)) has been known to feature often in the hallucinatory expressions of the schizophrenic, and is frequently linked (as in this case) to a perceived lack of control on the part of the individual.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Carl Jung also uses the metaphor of drowning to express the force with which unconscious material can overwhelm the schizophrenic person: "He is not just overcome by a violent emotion, he is actually drowned in a flood of insurmountably strong forces and thought-forms which go far beyond any ordinary emotion, no matter how violent. These unconscious forces and contents have long existed in him and he has wrestled with them successfully for years" ('Psychogenesis' 239).

¹⁶⁹ Mannix himself has produced a series of works that integrate the pictographic and the textual under the theme of the machine. Mannix has called these works, 'A Concise History of the Machines' and they (and

Mannix's reference to a lack of "stability and coherence" seems a retrospective statement regarding the great deviation this hallucination has made from the stable, coherent reality of 'normalcy'. The experience itself, while it may have felt unstable and shifting, seems to have had some sense of internal coherence as Mannix's concrete descriptions of the events suggest. The fact that visions of "The Cunt" and "The Anus" appear to Mannix whilst he is passing through a tunnel, reflect some associative connection between his 'actual' physical surroundings and the physiology of his lived metaphoric hallucinations. It can be supposed that Mannix has projected his fantasies of submissive, masturbating women with such imaginative force that he has created visions of them, which he perceives as autonomous entities. Their autonomy is, however, tenuous, as he is constantly imbibing their fluids, thus drawing them back into his own self in a form of psychic dialogue. Mannix expresses no sense of discomfort or panic in what could potentially be a smothering, claustrophobic situation – it is less the experience of an individual drowning and more that of someone who has, as he suggests, already "drowned".

This hallucination also reflects the compartmentalised fashion in which Mannix depicts the female body in many works within his oeuvre, including Erotomania No.1. The female form is the most predominant figurative erotic image in Mannix's illustrations. The torso and legs of the figures are often rendered relatively realistically. It is the head and arms that become amorphous and shifting in Mannix's work. Heads at times become breasts or vaginas or animals, or are horned or missing from the bodies altogether. Often the arms of the figure are entirely absent – such an absence is the single most common alteration Mannix makes to the female form.

It is clear from Mannix's descriptions of hallucinations, previously discussed, that such visions often entail an isolation of, or emphasis upon, the sexual regions of the body, to the extent that it is just an anus or just a vagina that he sees. In this way such regions are conceived of as autonomous. These depictions are often the primary focus of the drawings, with faces – and particularly arms and hands – relegated to a secondary position. Thus a certain amount of objectification and depersonalisation is present. The

the role of the machine in schizophrenic thought processes) will be discussed further in Chapter Five of this thesis.

lack of arms and hands reflects the sexual redundancy of these areas. The images also suggest a vulnerability and powerlessness in the female form. In his written work, women are often depicted as powerful, dominant figures capable of enslaving Mannix, and his drawings could be an effort to restore balance this power relation:

Essay on Slavery: The creation of a state of erotic slavery is based on sexual possession. One partner has that content in being, and is allowed the space and lack of inhibitions needed to assume to this aspiration. A penalty is inherent in this practice. As the slave becomes more and more bound and obedient because of the erotic fervour then so the slaver falls into HER own garden of Eden. (Mo007: Journal of a Madman 1991: The Hot War 177)

Here it is the woman who ascends into the powerful role of “slaver”, and in so doing returns to the mythical state of primacy and innocence. In another passage Mannix singles out the face, and particularly the eyes, as sites related to possible enslavement:

“Meanwhile, slow footsteps are heard in a moisanded dark passageway and where the earth is tapped emerges the idea of enslavement like a fountain of the most outlandish and erotically-clad woman and I cannot bear to look into their black eyes” (Mo031: Erotomania 1994-96 17).

Perhaps it is the great power associated with the eyes, and indeed the face as a whole, as a site for possible enslavement, that precludes Mannix from rendering them pictorially.¹⁷⁰ Mannix’s tendency to isolate various parts of the female anatomy is also, however, a feature of the complexity Mannix feels is inherent in the female form, as the following passage suggests:

Amalina comes in and complains that i have been looking at ladies legs. it is true. Amanda thinks for a while and then says that it is alright if the totality of the woman is taken into account...What she says is ridiculous, it would take ten lifetimes, one hundred lifetimes to know the totality of this one woman, but i get what she means. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 138)

¹⁷⁰ This notion can be related to the studies into facial recognition, which reveal a lack of attention paid to the features of the face by schizophrenic patients. Studies suggest that such people may lack the ability to “form the initial integrated percept [holistic complex face template] into which feature details might be inserted” (L.M. Williams 197). This results in an inability to recognise faces and facial expressions. This in turn could affect Mannix’s ability to render faces. The standard hypothesise that the schizophrenic’s avoidance of the eyes, nose and mouth of individuals is due to cognitive deficits again separates the subject from intention. A radical interpretation of this data may suggest that schizophrenic subjects avoid the salient features of faces such as eyes/nose/mouth intentionally due to their fear of dissolution or “enslavement” through these orifices.

Perhaps, then, it is Mannix's perception that the female is too complex an entity that contributes to his observation and depiction of her isolated parts.¹⁷¹ Art-making becomes a method through which to explore the female form, and his depictions are always, Mannix suggests, prefaced by a love of the figure. Mannix explains: "one of my inner loves is the figure the always varied dance that it is: the splendid expression that they possess has been made possible by a type of looking where you absorb everything as the seancé medium does" (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 110).

Mannix explores the varied dance of the figure through his own illustrations, and in images inserted into his artists' books from the advertisements and "girlie magazines" from which he often draws. In contextualising his use of such images he shows himself to be aware of the capacity for such material to objectify women. Mannix's awareness of female objectification and commodification is made explicit in a caption that accompanies two images cut from a lingerie advertisement from the department store 'Target'.

The culture of the object...why buy penthouse and playboy when the daily advertisements in the letterbox are sexier? or rather they are a different genre of eroticism. These mailbox advertisements were my first models for erotic drawing...i knew them intimately before i had any money for girlie magazines...but when you take a look here you find a very alluring eroticism for "mature audiences". [Ellipsis in original] (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 33)

The title, "culture of the object", alludes to the fact that these images include price tags suggesting the savings that can be made on each garment being advertised; as a result, monetary ideas become associated with the body parts located in these areas. There is also, however, an appreciation of the eroticism within such images. Mannix often highlights the inherent eroticism in advertisements for material goods that feature women who are scantily clad, or whose poses can be seen as alluring.¹⁷² Here Mannix emphasises the pervasive nature of the sexual in Western culture. The sometimes crude, explicit illustrations Mannix adds to such advertisements, whilst designed to titillate, also expose both Mannix's own thoughts and the implied or unconscious messages Mannix

¹⁷¹ His statement "but i get what she means" also, however, suggests he understands that the concern of Amalina is based on his compartmentalisation of the female form.

¹⁷² See pages 58, 114, 120, 122, 126 of Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96.

believes are existent within the advertisements.¹⁷³ Thus, Mannix's treatment of such images brings into dialogue their conscious and unconscious meanings. This duality between the power of the erotically charged image to pleasurably titillate, and the aspects of exploitation that can accompany it, inform much of Mannix's work. Beneath such ideas exists his belief that human beings are centrally erotic entities. Mannix writes:

I was once told by an instructor of drawing at one of the city technical colleges that everything is erotic...i disagree...however since then my exploration has told was is Definitely is! It is this immediate, before any decision can be or will be made titillation with the erotic display of the C20th that i find myself compelled to use, enjoin and augment...there is nothing else like it...and that momentum and velocity that immediately inhabits even the most hardened business man's steps as he walks by the girlie magazine stand is what i wish to see about in the Sex Book...it never flags this immediate titillation and as well possesses all the darknesses of the neurotic, psychotic and psychopathic...the greatest lie i have come across is that it is a shallow, facile thing...Other than this its exploitive issue is horrendous...but there indeed is the special duality...a book like this can not help but parody that artifice and omni-present exploitation of both sexes simply by being what it is: and there you have the Duality i and a great manys others are fascinated and obsessed by... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo015: *Journal of a Madman* 1995-96 49)

The central place of eroticism in human experience ensures that material engaging in such ideas cannot be shallow or facile, but instead goes to the heart of the "neurotic, psychotic and psychopathic" tendencies within humanity. Mannix here mentions the exploitation of both sexes, yet all his examples of advertising included in this *Sex Book* depict women. It is the calculating way that eroticism is used in such advertising that has the potential to exploit all those who look at them. This point is made more clearly in the following quotation:

i am much given over to the erotic picture and to this end have collected hundreds of pages of erotic "girlie" magazine poses: studying their: the pictures language of artifice is something which has occupied me since university days. it is as if it is a language of hieroglyphics: the leg here demands suggestion of a certain kind of sex act: there a look in the eyes dictate a vulnerability of the soul made by the exposed body, endlessly as the camera slices the dance into microsecond in this matter in reality amid a sea of artifice all artificiality evaporates and we are left with a raw punnet of language and accidents i think the poses are absolutely hopeless from model to camera and back again but therein lies an overlap which may and

¹⁷³ See pages 48, 64 of *Mo015: Journal of a Madman* 1995-96.

does instruct about the body that everyone excluding the artist or those without passion are being exploited is painfully obvious. (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 147)

This text inhabits the frame of an illustration depicting a naked woman. In this way, ideas regarding a “language” or “hieroglyphics” of the body are further reflected in the pictorial elements on the page. The contrived poses of the models offer narratives of possible sexual acts in a “language of artifice”. Whilst the “look in the eyes dictate a vulnerability of the soul”, that is perhaps an aspect of the initial artifice, the fracturing of reality into microseconds, via the camera, is able to capture a latent spontaneity or accident in the eyes and body which reveals a truth. There is a sense of hopelessness in the woman’s poses before the camera, but in the overlap between the two (which constitutes the produced image) the painful exploitation of the body is captured. Mannix suggests that only those without passion and the artist escape such exploitation. The passionless are immune to the erotically charged image and the artist, in this case Mannix himself, eludes the exploitation as he redraws or reinterprets the image via an engagement with the imagination. Mannix makes this clear in the following passage:

a great deal of my work has had an erotic flavour to say the least. Its my attempt to turn ugly depictions and exploitation into beauty – it’s the most that can be done. Usually i will start out with a found or given girly magazine, or buy the cheap one at the corner store and then i will draw and redraw and redraw the models until the attitude has imagination. (Mo020: Journal of a Madman 1996 10)

In drawing and redrawing the figures Mannix suggests he is attempting to negate the image’s “exploitation” of women through a reengagement with the imagination – thus attempting to effect a transition from ugliness to beauty, wherein the original image is translated into an artistic work. For Mannix this process of drawing and redrawing such images directly accesses the libidinal drive; of this he writes: “The erotic drawing to me now is first hand; takes no thought. Comes directly from the wrist and the crotch and the innard” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 86); here form and content reflects the creative impulse.

“Sex Scribble”

Mannix’s erotic art-making is an attempt to access and express this primary libidinal drive. The process of drawing and writing in Mannix’s world-view directly links with this erotic force. Within this practice no activity is more primary than that which he calls “sex scribble”: here form and content become entirely unified in a signifier which brings into dialogue the body’s action and passion. On this matter Deleuze writes: “In the primary order of schizophrenia...there is no duality except that between the actions and passions of the body; language is both of these at the same time and is entirely resorbed into the body’s gaping depths” (292). “Sex scribble” is language reabsorbed into the body: a physical activity that facilitates a direct dialogue with his unconscious libidinal drive. In the following passage Mannix describes its discovery:

Sex Scribbles derived from my first work in sexuality, “Erotomania” a very finely illustrated and hand-written pencil world of 16 pp. I found after doing this work my attitude to erotic drawing became more dimensions and although i like to work patiently for hour after hour on an erotic illustration that i also have a need to create the immediate work: one that can be dashed off in seconds with the Libido hot on the paper. (Mo002: Journal of a Madman No.5 77)

The tight, rapid circular movements that generate “Sex Scribbles” create an immediate, spontaneous link between the libido and the page. Allen S. Weiss suggests that Hans Prinzhorn, in his seminal work Artistry of the Mentally Ill,

described the crucial, central role of scribbling in the creative act. Scribbling is understood to be the key structural feature underlying the expressive gestalt of all artistic forms.

These “unobjective disordered scribbings” bear chronological and structural primacy within expression: not yet a “language,” such pure expressive traces are signs of corporeal activity, limited by the very nature of the materials at hand. (Shattered 21)

Such a “corporeal activity” is certainly present in the work of Mannix, but it is anything but “unobjective”. For Mannix scribbling is intimately linked with the libidinal drive of eroticism; the activity is elevated beyond “unobjective disordered scribbings”, becoming what Prinzhorn describes as a symbol in which “an otherwise neutral ‘sign’ becomes the bearer of meaning...” (15). Prinzhorn himself suggested that there may be significance to that which appears to be disordered scribbles, when he perceives “an expressive language in this apparently noncommunicative mess [scribbles] which disposes of a not

inconsiderable scale of nuances. Even the smallest loop and even more the sweeping curve can be understood as an expressive gesture and interpreted, if only to a small extent” (40).

Mannix has supplied the reader with his own interpretation that clarifies the intentional, objective nature of this expressive gesture. Perhaps Mannix has articulated an impulse and motivation common to many who engage in such activities, thus suggesting the possibility that all scribbling activities are libidinally related. He again contextualises this physical, repetitive gesture as a form of libidinal expression in the following quotation:

I first began experimenting with what i call “sex scribble” in my second journal. My early works in sexuality and eroticism were all to précis and not always was i able to express the erotic in a patience, detailed drawing. all too often i would destroy the effect by being forced by the energies i was utilizing to make a ‘hasty’ drawing. I decide that what was right for the situation was just that and made up ‘Sex Scribble’ for the times when the expression had to be alacritous. (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 49)

Mannix returns to, rather than evolves from scribbling. The primary nature of the scribble is part of its appeal for Mannix, and Weiss suggests that the scribble constitutes “a primal moment of creativity at which we still cannot quite speak through it. Here, it is the body that ‘speaks’; here the troubled, awkward, undexterous gesture paradoxically manifests an adequate expression of the spirit” (Shattered 21). Through Mannix’s commentary regarding the inspiration and meaning of “sex scribble”, the audience becomes aware that what might have been seen as a form of creativity that “cannot quite speak”, is in fact a signifier whose signified is private. The excavation of this signified (by Mannix himself) ensures that the audience can semantically comprehend this form of libidinal expression. In this manner the expression gains semantic meaning through language – however, “sex scribble” derives its initial impact from its connection with the libidinal unconscious at the exclusion of denotative language. Through Mannix’s “sex scribble” it is indeed the body that speaks. Weiss suggests that such a voice is capable of expressing what he calls the “spirit”; for Mannix such a “spirit” is a spontaneous unconscious eroticism akin to prelinguistic modes of signification such as the breath, sound, gesture, and the human mark. As with Mannix’s glossolalia, “sex scribble” is an example of his preoccupation with exploring the outer realms of language – the cusp of rationality and irrationality –

where madness finds its own speech, this time imbued with the unconscious eroticism Mannix suggests is inherent in his experience of psychosis.

This activity also exists at the cusp between the linguistic and the pictorial – a signifier that comes to inhabit the picture plane. On occasion it is used to fill in the body of entities associated with the sexual. In an example of this, Mannix writes of a “Vision – Creature” and the images this creature revealed to him: “Some of the visions it brought were sexual, but all were horrific. It swamped me with visions until my psyche felt raw and denuded” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 71).

At other times the “sex scribble” can enclose another drawing associated with the sexual, as in the case of a work Mannix describes as follows: “This small coloured drawing is about the poetical enchantment of Karleen and particularly the idea of her having a cunt” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 10). In another illustration “sex scribble” surrounds a number of figures, accompanied by writing which details the position of Art Brut practitioners as “outsiders”, suggesting that, “[t]hey are writing things and drawing things and saying things, which somebody will-pick up on and become very fearful of and so as if to put a frame around the picture or put familiar grammar in the writing they put the outsider in a frame of reference – The Hospital” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 6). The figure in question is depicted with breasts protruding from his skull and “sex scribble” flowing from his mouth. The combination of these two pictorial devices suggests the nature of the message spoken by such individuals. In the use of this motif to depict the speech of individuals society labels insane, Mannix himself seems to be drawing an analogy between “sex scribble” and its position as a primal, mad, erotic language.

At times “sex scribble” appears without concrete linguistic or pictorial relation to the sexual. However, for the reader familiar with Mannix’s work, the distinctive circular motif attains the status of a signifier, communicating the erotic drive. This is the case in a drawing captioned only with the words “tonight I have seen a Demon!” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 51). The demon appears as if encased in a womb surrounded by “sex scribble” which denotes the erotic nature of the vision.

Mannix's "sex scribble" can be seen as the bodily trace of the unconscious' libidinal drive – its repetitive, circular form a primary link between drawing and writing; and writing, according to Thévoz, is likewise an expression of the erotic:

The act of writing, in effect, brings into play all the libidinal impulses combined in the 'polymorphous perversity' of infancy: the urethral libido of flowing ink, the sado-anality of staining, the onanistic rhythms of the hand, the pen caressing the fecund paper 'defended by its whiteness', etc. The alphabetical characters themselves have a libidinal charge going back to the time when the little child was enchanted by the intrinsic configurations of the letters when it began to draw. ('Sorcery' 37)

The elements of writing that Thévoz links with "libidinal impulses" seem more related to drawing than to writing – a drawing that precedes the ability to write – a form of scribbling. Writing, then, expresses a "libidinal charge" most completely when writing is illegible. No longer does each word represent an abstract idea divorced from the gesture that created it – instead, the mark and the bodily gesture remain unified. In "sex scribble" the physical act of creating the mark accesses, activates and employs the energy of the unconscious. Roland Barthes, writing of the "semiograms" of the surrealist artist André Masson, suggests that all legible writing by hand represses the body's capacity to connect with this libidinal drive.

Thanks to Masson's dazzling demonstration, writing (imagined or real) appears, then, as the very *surplus* of its own function; the painter helps us understand that the writing's truth is neither in its messages nor in the system of transmission which it constitutes for current meaning, still less in the psychological expressivity attributed to it by a suspect science, graphology, compromised by certain technocratic interests (expertise, tests), but in the hand which presses down and traces the line, i.e. *in the body which throbs* (which takes pleasure). ('Masson's Semiography' 240)¹⁷⁴

A conception of writing as a form of powerful psychic drawing is also evident in the work of Antonin Artaud.¹⁷⁵ Every instance of mark making, according to Artaud, is "the commentary of an action that has really taken place, / the figuration / on circumscribed

¹⁷⁴ Antonin Artaud also describes his passionate response to a painting by Masson: "And each of my fibers uncurls and finds its place in fixed compartments. I return to it as my source; in it I sense the place and arrangement of my mind. The person who painted this picture is the greatest painter in the world. To André Masson, his due" ('The Umbilicus of Limbo' 67).

¹⁷⁵ Of further relevance are the works of 'mainstream' artists Cy Twombly and Susan Hiller as well as 'outsiders' J.B. Murry and Joseph König. In such work "the reductionism of the script actually intensifies meaning" (Rhodes 64). Here it is a sense of bodily, rather than linguistic, intensity and emotion that is communicated.

paper / of a thrust that has taken place / and has produced magnetically and magically its effects” (qtd. in Thevenin 44). Artaud’s drawings and writings are not art as such, but rather traces of a battle for survival that has already taken place, markings alive with unconscious psychic content – the magical residue of a body’s ritualistic dance, reverberating in, and impacting on, reality:

And since a certain day in October 1939 I have never written without drawing.
 Now that I am drawing
 these are no longer themes of Art transposed from the imagination onto the paper
 these are not affecting figures
 these are gestures, a word, a grammar, an arithmetic, a whole Kabbala and which
 shifts at the other, which shifts on the other,
 no drawing made on paper is a drawing, the reintegration of a sensitivity misled, it is a machine that
 breathes... (qtd. in Thevenin 41)

Here Artaud emphasises the physical and animated nature of writing and mark-making. Rather than being only a representation of thought, each mark is enlivened by the psychic energy the body expended to create it. Deleuze suggests, “Artaud is the only person to have experienced absolute depth in literature, to have discovered a “vital” body and its prodigious language (through suffering, as he says)” (295). Mannix too is exploring the connection between language and the body in his “sex scribble”; producing a bodily language of “Rupture” through which he accesses his libidinal unconscious. In a caption to an erotic drawing, which has within it text regarding “sex scribble”, Mannix writes of: “the rupturing of a relation...the language of Rupture...and the undiluted Feeling of Physical Rupture of the body” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 20).

“Sex scribble” can be seen as Mannix’s “language of Rupture”, whereby the body speaks the mad voice of an unconscious eroticism in a ‘text’ of disrupted semantic relations: an illegible script inhabiting a region between the textual and the pictorial. Similarly, Barthes suggests when writing becomes illegible it becomes more recognisably drawing, and it is only then that it becomes a form of truth, communicative of its primary message – that of the body’s unconscious desire. He writes:

for writing to be manifest in its truth (and not in its instrumentality), it must be illegible: the semiographer (Masson) knowingly produces, by a sovereign elaboration, the illegible: he detaches writing’s pulsion from the image-repertoire of communication (legibility). This is

what the Text desires as well. But whereas the written text must still – and ceaselessly – struggle with an apparent signifying substance (words), Masson's semiography, directly resulting from a non-signifying practice (painting), achieves from the start the utopia of the Text. ('Masson's Semiography' 241)

Like Masson's semiography, Mannix's "sex scribble" eludes the limitations of legibility and thus directly express the libidinal urgency of the unconscious. Its position at the cusp of the pictorial and textual is again suggested by the propensity of the scribble to, at times, resemble a primal form of writing. This is effected when Mannix organises the scribble into lines across the page and where, periodically, from within the repetitious circular design, alphabetic letters surface: the shape of o, e, a, c, d, p, f – all spontaneously manifesting. Perhaps then, "sex scribble" expresses a libidinal impulse that becomes repressed and directed through the childhood process of learning to write. The continuous, spontaneous scribbling impulse of the libido is fractured and subdued by the practice of consciously forming the isolated letters within alphabetic writing. Such alphabetic writing, Luce Irigaray suggests: "constrains the servile hand to arbitrary gesture, without direction (except from left to right, horizontally), without a plan" (130). And elsewhere she writes: "Gesture, enslaved in writing, is excluded from specularization; constrained in writing, in specularization it is totally frozen, immobilised, at least for the time of *one* image" (124).¹⁷⁶

In this formulation alphabet writing is a repression of the libidinal drive which Mannix's speculative "sex scribble" expresses. Thus the process of learning to write is less an unconscious expression of coitus (as suggested by the psychoanalyst Melanie

¹⁷⁶Perhaps "sex scribble" can be seen as one possible material trace of Derrida's "psychical writing" or "archi-trace": He writes: "in terms of the labor of writing which circulated like psychical energy between the unconscious and the conscious. The "objectivist" or "worldly" consideration of writing teaches us nothing if reference is not made to a space of psychical writing" ('Freud and the Scene of Writing' 212). Such "psychical writing" Derrida describes as a "discourse which might be coded without ceasing to be diaphanous. Here energy cannot be reduced; it does not limit meaning, but rather produces it. The distinction between force and meaning is derivative in relation to an archi-trace" ('Freud and the Scene of Writing' 213). "Sex scribble" which is both "coded" whilst retaining ambiguity is a subversion of the alphabetic writings that Irigaray suggests are, "instruments blocking archi-writing's process, its purpose. Turning it away, knocking it off course, even neutralizing it, despite everything, alphabetic writing prevents deferral, thenceforth deferred, in the future, threatened in turn with some kind of hypostatic suspension, from taking effect" (131). The over-determination of semantic meaning which alphabetic writing affects is deferred by "sex scribble", which communicates and participates in generating the erotic drive of the unconscious, thus being a material trace of a form of "psychical writing" or "archi-trace".

Klein) but a repression or ordering of its very impulse. Klein suggests the following relationship:

In the boy, writing is the expression of masculine components. His ability to write words and the stroke of the pen with which he forms his letters represent an active performance of coitus, and are proof of his possession of a penis and of sexual potency. Books and exercise-books stand for the genitals or body of his mother or sister. (Psycho-analysis 255)

In Mannix's formulation, however, "sex scribble" is more powerfully "an active performance of coitus" than the writing of legible words or detailed erotic drawings, even though these latter activities retain traces of the erotic impulse. "Sex scribble", then, is the most primary expression of the erotic drive that dominates Mannix's psychotic experience, the most intimate expression of Mannix's dialogue with his erotic unconscious and the foundation on which his erotic drawings and writings are constructed.

The Oedipal theories of sexuality guiding Klein's conclusions seem to be consciously explored by Mannix in the erotic work contained within his books. In his writings he frequently mentions the Oedipal Complex, and his work abounds with womb imagery, milk filled breast or "udder" imagery, and occasionally with specific sexualised references to the Mother. One instance of this occurs on page 7 of Mo036: Erotomania: Sulphurescent Mind – when on one of Mannix's "girlie magazine" images he has written a speech bubble which reads "Moth-er". Another suggestive reference is as follows: "The Minohn woman whom after setting up the bull for veneration found their electric nipples motherly" (Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 153).

Such imagery refers to the central bond between Mother and child in the womb and during breastfeeding as the first and most complete union a human being experiences. It is not surprising that such a relationship will be conflated on some level with the sexual, given Bataille's notion (evident in Mannix's texts) regarding the capacity of the sex act to bridge the human / human divide that consciousness ensures. Here sexual intercourse can be thought of as an attempt to explore the human interconnectedness experienced while in the womb, and to a lesser extent while being breastfed. Mannix writes: "She always smells of soft milk and nylons. her nipples are perennially erect and about her and them is a soft subdued plea to be milked" (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 29).

In the following example Mannix describes the process of sucking at “udders” as linked to the opening of a conduit or dialogue between consciousness and the unconscious. This text inhabits the space around a dominant black ink drawing of an animal with many teats, from which a humanoid figure drinks. “Ludicrous animals of the imagination, luminous half-lite creatures camped in the penumbra of the unconscious roar and bellow thru a thousand different horns and instruments everywhere a damning screaming...real beasts from where the unconscious bleeds into the conscious” (Mo015 Journal of a Madman 1995-96 89).¹⁷⁷

Here Mannix is depicted drinking from the breast of the “Beast of the Unconscious”: breasts are dominant in his cosmology for their erotic qualities and because they are the conduit – the point of contact through which a dialogue can occur between the unconscious and consciousness, madness and sanity, the irrational and rationality.

Often images of the womb suggest that it is Mannix who is in fact inside. This is made explicit in an image of an encased human form accompanied by the text “i am asleep within her” (Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991 15). At times, however, the womb is depicted as containing another woman, within which is yet another woman – this can be seen in the image on page 164 of the Mo008: Journal of a Madman 1991. The caption here suggests that this womb state is linked to “lost states of eroticism which demand an independence of each to keep alive” (164). Thus the womb state, due to its intimacy and interdependence, is viewed as an erotic union between mother and child. The womb of the woman becomes an originary, generative crucible capable of producing life.

Thus the female holds a powerful place in Mannix’s erotic cosmology: a figure at once outside and inside his own self, whose sensuality and power is envied and valorised as well as resented and resisted. Women in Mannix’s world-view are not, however, entirely confined to the role of Oedipal generative vessel or occult sexual object. As has already been suggested, entities such as Rosey Spite are often long-term companions in all aspects of life. Likewise, women often appear in Mannix’s work as partners in more emotional, romantic notions of a mental or spiritual union that also has the capacity to

¹⁷⁷ As will be discussed in Chapter Six, page 3 of Mannix’s work Mo046: The Light Bulb Eaters includes an illustration reminiscent of the one just described. Thus it is supposed that to be a light bulb eater is in fact to act as a conduit between conscious and unconscious states.

bridge the divide between “discontinuous” humans. This is evident in the following passage: “the thought of Jayne becomes more and more alluring and i have given up my sadness regarding Romance: it is a very strange and unusual time the beginning of a dance...i already feel her having enter some of the secret recesses of my body effortlessly...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 27). Whilst the accompanying illustration does suggest erotic connotations, it is the heads of the two figures that are fused together rather than the body’s more obvious sexual sites.

Mannix’s multi-dimensional conception of women is encapsulated in the following passage: “being alone is what most people fear the greatest not to be able to express that special link with someone intimate, sex, love, lust and companionship; to have them all partake in a way that is both ravenous and gentle...” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 143) The female character, emblem and energy hold a powerful place in Mannix’s cosmology; here eroticism and nurturing are embodied by the female form; the breast and vagina are at once erotic symbols and conduits into the body and the realms of unconscious.

Genital Books

In Mannix’s reality of lived metaphor it is through the creation of erotic writings, images and sex scribble that he is able to open a dialogue with the erotic realms of the unconscious. In this way the creative work inhabiting Mannix’s books can be linked to the erotic impulse – however, it is not outside the realms of possibility that Mannix’s propensity for book making and for working within books themselves is linked to Klein’s notion that such objects stand for the genitals or body of women and the mother. It is certainly the case that Mannix conceived of the book as a specifically apt form within which to contain the erotic – even if his erotic impulses were, ultimately, too powerful to be housed therein. He writes:

in 1993 i set out to make erotic books...all was ordered, planned project...i can only think that it was the nature of the force behind the work that my plan for a neat little pile of books was thwarted...definitely i was aware of a physical sensuality that often blacked me out into unconsciousness and i just made it to the lounge in time i was also aware of tunnel vision

aimed at the female form which i had never experienced before...ultimate the work exploded in every way thru my work from a torn fragment to a pristine book, from a documentary account to an object of pure pleasure...Eventually i was to discover when dealing with the violence of eroticism no plans give an guarantee and ultimate i wasn't thwarted by this prliferation and diversity but enriched. Again i see how pointless it is to make a little antiseptic ordered corner for your work if it is real it has force and violence and will go into the red hot chouldren as every else do to make of itself what it will. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 187)

For Mannix the erotic is a powerful force that, like the madness with which he links it, eludes his attempts at control and containment; a force of multiplicity and metamorphosis that comes to inform and enrich his entire book-making practice.

Mannix's preoccupation with the erotic reflects his belief that he is thereby connecting with an essential psychic energy that resides at the core of the human experience, an unconscious energy that is always at play in the interactions between sentient bodies and their animated environments. He explains: "Eroticism is a fixed point in front of the eyes...by rights it should be possible to keep their always...it is in no way a performance least it dance: other: its something thats listened to with the sentience of the body" [Ellipsis in original] (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 25). To listen to such a "dance" is to become entranced, lured onto the "schizophrenic trek" through the "red hot chouldren" of the unconscious – where language, narrative and creative production are brought into dialogue with madness, and are remade in the unstable image of Mannix's own erotic "imaginary body": a fractious sentience which enlivens a metaphoric reality to such an extent that creative production has the capacity to simultaneously document and construct realities.

This thesis has, thus far, drawn into dialogue many works from 'The Atomic Book' in order to introduce the major themes and preoccupations within the creative production of Anthony Mannix, which presents a world-view shaped by the interconnected subjects of psychosis and its eroticism in which madness and the rational are brought into dialogue. However, the true experience of Mannix's "speculative narratives" lies in the "trek" the reader is required to make through the individual books themselves. The final two chapters of this thesis are dedicated to such individual journeys.

Chapter Five

Reading closely: “The gift is all package” or is it?

The following chapters will analyse, in a media-specific manner, individual books or writing series by Anthony Mannix in order to elucidate the internal dynamics of his “speculative narratives”. Aspects of Mannix’s wider oeuvre relevant to these works will be incorporated into the discussion. The works discussed in Chapter Five are: Mo052: The Machines, or a Concise History of the Machine (as far as I know them...)....; Mo024: Erogeny: a book of fables about Rozelle Lunatic Asylum, Mo045: The Skull, Mo050: The Chambers and Mo049: The Demise. Chapter Six will discuss the longest written work Mannix has produced, Mo046: The Light Bulb Eaters.

The Machines, or a Concise History of the Machine (as far as I know them...).... demonstrates Mannix’s tendency to conflate the pictorial and textual. Mannix’s use of machines in a variety of other works within ‘The Atomic Book’ will also be discussed. Erogeny: a book of fables about Rozelle Lunatic Asylum, as has already been mentioned, clearly shows Mannix’s propensity for works that contain narrative dialogues between madness and rationality. This work was originally created whilst Mannix was a patient at Sydney’s Rozelle Mental Hospital. At a later date Mannix has added a second retrospective narrative, which documents the initial work’s creation. The Skull is an artist’s book that tells a short story in paragraph-length vignettes; it possesses a dense ambiguity and a submerged privacy of meaning. Discussion of The Skull will be followed by an analysis of a group of writings Mannix collectively calls The Chambers: Mannix has suggested that whilst The Skull is a transcription of a psychotic experience, The Chambers takes the imaginative possibilities of psychosis as the inspiration from which to create fictional works.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ Here Mannix’s project is not unlike that of Gerard de Nerval who used much the same method to create his work *Aurélia*. Nerval suggest that he was rewriting an earlier draft completed in the mental asylum in the manner of a roman-vision: “The term *roman-vision* (visionary romance) not only underlines Nerval’s

This mode of production is also true of The Demise, a typewritten short story; it constitutes the first twenty-one pages of an unbound collection of written works that number fifty pages. In the later stages of these pages Mannix's intentionally chaotic or "speculative narrative" style is elucidated in his creative work, "Dr. Benz's¹⁷⁹ formula for illumination from the embryo of a mania". It opens as follows:

so the invisible vein of time passes, passed. And the vein was an open one, dripping on the drum of the floor, dripping on the drum of the skull. The city came to terrorize me more and more. Words, descriptions were no longer possible. Only a distorted narrative was able to sink its head between an unknown vocabulary's legs and that narrative like an epoch was unfathomable...and never of the human being. Never, i caress paper with the word. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo049: Demise 39)

Mannix's narratives are certainly distorted, with ambiguous associations and sudden shifts and fluctuations. They are infused with an instability that renders time, location, character and point of view fluid, bringing madness and rationality into dialogue. Mannix's work does descend, at times, into the unfathomable, where illumination and confusion meld in psychotic thought-process. Mannix's narratives are visceral journeys for the reader – as they were unconscious journeys for their author, who does not merely write words. Rather, the words reflect the movement of a physical body and its psychic energy engaging the paper with its hand writing; or, in the case of the works produced with a typewriter, such as The Demise, the narrator writes of physically integrating with the typewriter as he becomes a "constructivist machine" (Mo049 4). The creation of such narratives for Mannix entails a physical interaction with the work, as he caresses the page or feels as though he is "typing in blood. in bloods" (Mo049 4). Such narratives are landscapes to be experienced and journeyed through, existing in each of their many, often tenuously linked moments. As Mannix writes in one of his pictorial books: "There is no time sequence in this work only moments" (Mo006: Erotic Journal of a Madman 16).

The Skull is chaotic at the level of sentence and word-sequence, with meaning constantly slipping away from the reader. By contrast, in works such as The Light Bulb

conscious decision to novelise (or fictionalise) the raw biographical memories excavated in his earlier drafts, but also indicates the specific literary mode he now saw himself working within, namely, the tradition of visionary romance..." (Sieburth 258). The notion of a visionary romance also resonates with Mannix work (particularly The Light Bulb Eaters) in which a form of mystical illumination is effected by a female figure.

¹⁷⁹ The name Dr Benz is perhaps inspired by William S. Burrough's character Dr Benway featured in Naked Lunch.

Eaters, chaos operates not at the sentence level but at the level of narrative. Here it is the relation of one coherent textual vignette to the next that is ambiguous, lacking the causal links that would conventionally define such passages as elements of a plot or narrative. The Light Bulb Eaters is a series of mini-narratives linked only, at times, by proximity on the page or in the book, and in this way they are best described as aspects of a metaphoric landscape that the reader moves through, to be gradually enticed more deeply into the metaphorical space of the text. This is apt, as much of the action within The Light Bulb Eaters is concerned with the “schizophrenic trek”: descent into, trials within, and return from, an underworld of the unconscious – here form meets theme.

“The gift is all package”, writes the narrator in The Demise, seemingly of himself, adding that the “true present has been broken and thrown away eons ago” (Mo049 17). Mannix’s texts can, at times, appear to be textured surfaces without grounding: so far this thesis has attempted to probe such surfaces. The following exegesis is an attempt to descend into individual works to ascertain the nature of their foundations: “The gift is all package”, or is it?

The Mannix Machines

Mo052: The Machines, or a Concise History of the Machine (as far as i know them) is the first exploration of the machine by Mannix. This series of works will be discussed with reference to the other machines that have come, over time, to inhabit the Mannix cosmology. Mannix details the inspiration for this first series of textual drawings in Mo001: Journal of a Madman No. 4 where he writes:

in the winter of 1985, Philip Hammial came to my flat at Crown St and asked if i would illustrate his book of Poetry. I agreed and drew more than a score of illustrations in a week. They were strange Vehicular entities to match his vehicle poems. The book was of course entitled, “Vehicles”¹⁸⁰: after which the strange, little animated Vehicle became a permanent recurrence in my drawing. I in turn, one very psychotic night and morning wrote: ‘The

¹⁸⁰ This work: Vehicles Of Refuge, Abundance, Repentance, Jubilation, Beatitude, Transfiguration, Supplication, Etc: drawings by Anthony Mannix; Poems by Philip Hammial can be found in numerous public collections including Sydney University’s Rare Book and Special Collections Library.

Concise History of the Machine'. a score or more of little poems relating to the Machine which were recorded by Graeme Revell for a section of a European distributed record. (81)

Referring again to the first work in this series, Mannix offers further details regarding the its genesis: “this is machine No 1 of a dozen or so survivors from my writing days during 1984-85...These machines were done all together and with tailored “designs” at the Economic Pacific Hotel During 1986 while my mother was dying – i will paste the works in in total in this, or another like it...Journal” (Mo002: Journal of a Madman No.5 43). This quotation is taken from Mo002: Journal of a Madman No.5 and scattered throughout the following 15 pages appear nine of the works Mannix writes of. Another copy of these works was found in a large box of miscellaneous writings. From these two sources a series of nine works have been compiled. This includes two versions of number one, which contain the same text but different drawings. Number ten is also based on this text but again is accompanied by a different pictorial element.¹⁸¹

As Mannix suggests in the first passage quoted, these works form the basis for a collaboration with the composer Graeme Revell. Entitled A Concise History of the Machine, it features Mannix reading these works with a musical score by Revell. Here Mannix reads fifteen individual “Machine” pieces – thus the recording is the most complete record of the original textual creations.¹⁸² The “Machine” works are unique in the Mannix oeuvre as they engage in each of the major aspects of Mannix’s creative practice: the textual, pictographic and sonic.¹⁸³

Mannix describes these works as “little poems” and it is clear that the pictorial aspects of language are being emphasised. The handwritten script is embellished to highlight the design potential of letters as shapes. The language is compressed and each work is self-contained, in the mode of a poem or prose-poem. The text is often written

¹⁸¹ These collected works can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’ listed as Mo052.

¹⁸² This recording can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’ in the ‘Sound Works’ section listed as Mo092. This work appears on the record, A Bead To A Small Mouth, released in 1989 on the Barooni Music label. This release also includes Mannix reading from The Skull (listed in ‘The Atomic Book’ as Mo093), entitled The Skull (excerpt). Graeme Revell was happy to offer his support to ‘The Atomic Book’ project by giving full permission for these recordings to be included on the CD-Rom.

¹⁸³ Mannix’s various sonic works involve him reading his writings. These readings are generally recorded first with no musical accompaniment, after which composers create a soundscape to complement the reading. Mannix has created two works with Graeme Revell (A Concise History of the Machines and The Skull (excerpt)), as well as numerous recordings with ‘The Loop Orchestra’. Mannix delivers his readings with an intentionally flattened affect. The following quotation, though part of a creative work, seems to typify the approach that motivates his reading style: “The narration of the prose is being done in a very, very, very flat monotone, emotionless and slowly, no sopranos or tangos” (Mo049: Demise 39).

around the accompanying drawing and regularly the drawing and the text intersect; these facts and the decorative nature of the script serve to present a unified picture-plane in which the pictorial and the textual complement one another.¹⁸⁴ Mannix describes the process of creating integrated works of the pictorial and the textual as akin to welding with a powerful and precise machine: “The marvel i think one never accepts is that immense constant Potency where by with nothing more than a pen one can weld together picture and word as if one is using precise and powerful means of machinery that inchoate point is the end of the welding tip where everything is flux” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 88).

As has been noted, this is a series of self-contained works and, whilst numbered, there appears no be no central narrative which the works collectively constitute. In this regard these works resonate with The Chambers, in that each piece is a variation on a central structural schema: a rectangular shape defines the picture-plane within the body of the page. Each text begins “The Machine” and proceeds to describe the working of just this singular contraption. All, except one, have an accompanying line-work drawing depicting abstracted mechanised shapes: clocks, dials and spirals predominate. The lack of perfect symmetry with which these mechanised shapes are rendered gives them organic overtones. This is also reflected in the texts, as the machines spoken of are animate, powerful and often predatory, exhibiting control over the humans that come to interact with them. In this respect they echo various “influencing machines” described by individuals who have experienced schizophrenia. Victor Tausk writes the following in his work: ‘On the Origin of the Influencing Machine in Schizophrenia’:

The schizophrenic influencing machine is a machine of mystical nature. The patients are able to give only vague hints of its construction. It consists of boxes, cranks, levers, wheels, buttons, wires, batteries and the like. Patients endeavor to discover the construction of the apparatus by means of their technical knowledge...All the discoveries of mankind, however, are regarded as inadequate to explain the marvellous powers of this machine, by which the patients feel themselves persecuted. (521)

¹⁸⁴ Such characteristics bring these works in contact with the contemporary field of Concrete Poetry which has its roots in the pictorial/textual works by Guillaume Apollinaire in Calligrammes: Poems of Peace and War (1913-1916).

Likewise, Mannix's machines become emblematic of an animated psychotic force engaging in sporadic dialogue with rationality.¹⁸⁵ As with Tausk's notion of the "influencing machine", Mannix's devices are indeed mysterious and powerful, portrayed, at times, as inflicting themselves upon individuals. This can be seen in Machine No. 10.

...the Machine appears and
disappears with relish and One is
Liable to find oneself encumbered
with it at the most inappropriate
and inopportune of times; or
alternatively, grow so fond of it
that its Disappearance comes
as a catastrophic blow..... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo052 11)¹⁸⁶

Here the machine is beyond the control of the individual and in fact seems to do the opposite to that which is desired. The image that accompanies this text depicts a device made up of interlaced cogs and dials. The largest and foundational cog appears to be internally cracked; all the cogs lack symmetry, suggesting the organic, unstable nature of the device that "appears and disappears with Relish".

In Machine No. 8 it is not an individual that is plagued by the device but humanity itself; a humanity that is being progressively fed into the contraption:

The Machine is used solely for
executions, and contained
therein on black steel walls
displayed with all pre-eminent grace
as in the sancity of a MUSEUM are all
the devices of the TRADE, and as each
member of the human Race awaits,
Singularly, in prolepsis up on the
dimpled IRON Ramp, there comes the
Regular sounds (with accompanying
intervals) of the Machine's' function

¹⁸⁵ Rosenbaum and Sonne link Tausk's notion of the "influencing machine" with their (already discussed) formulation of the "Other": "The schizophrenic experiences the Other as a foreign body. It is an 'influencing machine' operating from somewhere else, whose construction is inexplicable, incomprehensible, or invisible to the schizophrenic but that he must at all times seek to give expression to and describe" (58).

¹⁸⁶ This text is also listed as Machine No.1 with a separate illustration. See Mo052 page two.

function being sated... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo052 9)

It is possible that this Machine is an unlabelled metaphor for Western society and the capitalist economic system. The emphasis on the word “TRADE” through capitalisation, and Mannix’s writings regarding Machine No. 9 make this interpretation more plausible. Machine No. 9 “Produces articles again and again and again to the same Design” (Mo052 10). Paradoxically, “the articles it’s production / enshoes are all unique, are all / individual, for the machine with its / thoroughness and totality marks, scars, / each article with the profundity of / itself; trade mark, trade-name, patent, / Place of Manufacture, etc., , and in / doing so, ensures that each such article is struck in it’s own base / image...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo052 10). In this formulation each “article” is a human being, created in the “image” of god the machine or manufacturer: a product, individualised by the “trade mark” or “trade name”. Mannix is emphasising the all-pervading nature of the capitalist system: humans seek to define themselves through brand names whilst simultaneously ensuring their uniformity.

A concern with trade and materialism can also be recognised in the functioning of a machine that consumes everyone in society for the purposes of homogenisation. Such a machine features in Mannix’s work The Demise where he writes: “The swiss clock is alive and well, AND growing. Soon there will be a place for us all in it. excentrics to the left please and then INTO the mechanism. Those normal or pretending so for their reasons up front, ACHTENSION” (Mo049 14). The “normal” individuals are those able to adhere to the regularity of the clock’s time, thus they reside on its face – the rest are hidden in the workings of the device. Again this machine is all-powerful and humanity’s consumption is inevitability.

In another example of such sentiments, Machine No. 4, a complex clock which is “heir to the property of the human race...” functions by “Constantly setting and resetting itself, in the anticipation of the DOOM of it’s Masters” (Mo052 5).

Clocks appear repeatedly in the Machine series and often the function of the Machine is related to the control or manipulate of time. Time again features in Machine No. 6:

...The Machine of Perpetual Motion
defies description, however, somewhere
in its inert core are lying the past,

the Present, and the future, and
this trio are involved in a
ProFligacy,
with open gaping jaws and
Rampant Genitalia that is ‘Precis’,
& competent to the point of cold-
bloodness and for which there is
no PREhensiLity..... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo056 7)

It is possible that Mannix was influenced in this work by Heinrich Anton Müller, who during certain stages of his creative life “was occupied with the design and construction of perpetual motion machines, and with covering the walls of his room with drawings of a symbolic nature” (MacGregor 305). Mannix’s interest in Müller’s work has already been noted, and the often-reproduced image of Müller’s mechanic construction of caged cascading wheels¹⁸⁷ resonates with Mannix’s own machines and their (often) interlocking wheels and cogs.

Mannix's "Machine of Perpetual Motion" displays his pervasive interest in paradox. The machine is in "Perpetual Motion" yet its core is inert. Within such an inert core exist the divisions of time – past, present and future¹⁸⁸ – engaged in an activity (which contradicts the "inert" nature of this core) of extravagant, organic interaction that conflates eating and sexual intercourse (gaping jaws and / Rampant Genitalia). Such an image resonates with Michel Carrouges notion of a "bachelor machine": he writes, "A bachelor machine is a fantastic image that transforms love into a mechanics of death" (Otd. in Weiss 'Prinzhorn' 51).

In Mannix's image jaws (death) and genitalia (love) are brought into relation in an activity which is "Precis', / & competent" in the manner of a well functioning machine, a functioning that whilst described in this work also defies description, eluding one's mental grasp. Here again is emphasised the inadequacy of human knowledge to truly understand the machine. This work's illustration depicts a rectangle divided into three zones: two triangles either side of a central spiral edged by teeth reminiscent of a zipper –

¹⁸⁷ Such images are reproduced in numerous publications including: The Discovery of the Art of the Insane page 305, Outsider Art: Spontaneous Alternatives page 71, Marginalia page 24.

188 Another instance where Mannix mentions this confluence of past, present and future is when the Akashic Record is viewed – perhaps the Machine of Perpetual Motion refers to such a record.

as if they have opened to reveal the spiral, perhaps representing the interrelations of the past, present and future.

The powerful, dominant presence of the machine in the works discussed seems to bear relation to Louis A. Sass' suggestions regarding the function of such machines in the schizophrenic world-view. He writes:

[T]he notion of some kind of influencing machine, one of the classic delusions of schizophrenia, may stabilize the world by filling it with a quasi-external symbol of the subject's own hyperreflexive consciousness, and by providing some way of accounting for the distorted, passivized experiences being undergone. (229)

Whilst the machines described by Mannix do seem to fulfil such functions it is important to note (as stated at the outset) that the majority of the machines discussed up to this point were not necessarily aspects of Mannix's delusory world-view. Even though they were, he suggests, created whilst psychotic, their initial inspiration was the creative project suggested to Mannix by Philip Hammial, namely the illustrating of Hammial's text, Vehicles Of Refuge, Abundance, Repentance, Jubilation, Beatitude, Transfiguration, Supplication, Etc. This is not to say that machines do not feature as specific aspects of Mannix's hallucinatory cosmology. The final three machines to be discussed seem to be influencing machines in their own way: what differentiates them from those already discussed is the degree to which Mannix himself feels he merges with and is engulfed by such mechanisms.

The first of these machines is "The Sex-Feel Machine". Here, Sass' suggestion that such devices "may stabilize the world by filling it with a quasi-external symbol of the subject's own hyperreflexive consciousness", seems not to be applicable; even the "quasi-external" status of the machine is eroded, an erosion that precipitates a complete loss of stability for Mannix. The "Sex-Feel Machine" (discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis), a machine with which Mannix feels he has merged during psychosis, and which is responsible for the generation of a myriad of intense erotic sensations and hallucinations, is an "influencing machine" which does not exist outside Mannix. Rather, he is absorbed within it: "as this, integrating, merging, becoming a component in a Sex-Feel Machine lost to all hope of stability or coherence i would have wonderous visions of a realistic nature in my mind" (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 11). Mannix's absorption into the device is precisely what allows the machine complete influence over the reality he

experiences; here the “solipsist circuit of desire” described by Allen S. Weiss becomes complete. Weiss writes of the schizophrenic “influencing machine”:

Suggestion apparatuses, anxiety producing machines, influencing machines, bachelor machines, infernal machines: the solipsist circuit of desire, surveillance, and punishment prefigured in many myths and tales bred by the early history of the image and sound recording inaugurated a central stylistic trope of modernism. (‘Prinzhorn’ 49)

Whilst such themes of desire, surveillance, and punishment are found in various combinations within many of the Mannix machines already discussed, all three appear to culminate in the following work.

The Mother-Machine.

...the brilliant fits and starts are piled up into a
familiar pictorial structure so immense, that it defies
any global analysis...

... it is not quite locomotived but nevertheless has an extremely fluid mobility which is of all directions and seemingly of none, for you approach it, it does not approach you. and once You touch at its shiny surfaces, you are overawed, for it is as tall as the tallest skyscraper and just as magnificent as the most modern blueprints...in it's windows you at first see yourself and this leads to some satisfaction, your reflection being most complementary, however, the windows give way to an infinity which despite how much of it you consume in an agitated paroxysm and other moods, still leaves an infinity and not an iota less, which cunningly, lays behind the mirror surface...arms, legs, members, whirl into this infinity, this mirror, this aperature, which when the presence of mind is achieved to consider, is apparent is not a mirror, an aperature at all, but many, as of the multi-faceted eye of the insect, and all intent upon their own formulae, their own substance. you are deceived, you are not delivered into the hands and discretions of one, but of many... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 46)

In ‘The Mother-Machine’, the desire, surveillance and punishment Weiss writes of unite in Mannix’s startling vision of an organic machine that undergoes a series of fracturing changes. It is firstly so large that its entirety cannot be comprehended. Its surface appears reflective, so that one initially desires and consumes oneself; however, no matter the rate of consumption “an infinity” remains behind the mirror that one can never possess. Desire is never satisfied, merely extenuated and frustrated. The surface of the structure, which one believed to be unified, then reveals itself as fragmented: rather than observing oneself, it is the machine that observes, with its many eye-like mirrors all intent on

showing different reflections. Thus the punishment is the deceit practiced by the “Mother-Machine” – it is not one entity, but many.

Mannix describes the initial, agonising realisations of childhood, as the individual comprehends the fact that their mother fulfils other roles apart from being their private provider. Also of relevance is the theorisation of the (now clinically obsolete) “double-bind” explanation for schizophrenia, where the contradictory signals of parental figures contribute to the mental instability experienced by their children: in this way, the hands of one become the hands of many. Mannix writes of such theories in relation to his motif of the “double-figure” (humanoid figures made up of multiple bodies or faces) which he suggests has remained a preoccupation over his years of art making. He writes: “There is a bit of talk around psychiatry about the double-bind situation. it was documented in regard to schizophrenia by Radcliffe – Brown, anthropologist in the New Guinea Highlands.¹⁸⁹ i wonder if the ‘doubles’ and shared eyes are not the depiction, or better, the expression and illumination of what this is and what this feels like with the ‘Terror’ that goes with it” (Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 4).

Such a description of the “Mother-Machine” bears resemblance to the notion of “the body of the other” discussed by Rosenbaum and Sonne, who write: “The body of the other is the place where the child carries out its identification with other human beings (frequently the mother)” (111). In the schizophrenic, they argue, “the body of the other becomes a mirror construction that is alienated, that is, located outside of the individual’s control and that more or less systematically distorts the modes of address in the speech, the speaker’s particular representation of himself and his relationship to the world about him” (111). Such a distortion in turn distorts both the individual’s perception and imaginary projection of self (the fragmented “imaginary body” discussed in relation to Mannix’s distortion of the erotic body). Such a distortion is echoed in Mannix’s formulation of the “Mother-Machine”, as the initial reflection of self is replaced by a myriad of distorted reflections which then precipitate a dissolution of self as “arms, legs,

¹⁸⁹ E. Fuller Torrey outlines the development of the “double-bind” theory as follows: “In 1956 the ‘double-bind’ was born, destined to become the cornerstone of family interaction theorists. Basically it postulated that schizophrenia arises when parents give their children heads-I-win-tails-you-lose messages. The lead author of the original paper describing this theory was Gregory Bateson...According to a later essay by Bateson, the inspiration for the ‘double-bind’ came from his studies of communications theory, cybernetics, rituals among natives in Papua New Guinea, the communications of dolphins, and Lewis Carroll’s Through the Looking Glass” (169).

members, whirl into this infinity, this mirror, this aperture” (Mo012 46). The “‘Terror’” Mannix writes of is embodied by the Mother-Machine’s multi-various instability: it becomes the site of reflection and an unfulfilling consumption, which culminates in an annihilating absorption into its mechanised infinity.

This sensation of absorption into the device is central to the last of Mannix’s machines to be discussed: the “engine room”. This is a space in which Mannix at times finds himself contained during deep psychosis. He describes it as the “bowels of a grey metal ship of gargantuan proportions steaming from pole to pole” (Mo046: Light 15). In a more detailed description of the actual space, he writes:

I was in the ‘Engine Room’ again. All this nuttage and boltage of grey dissonate karma i was sure could be got at and quite possibly for profitable usage... i went on dismantling engines, great big bloody grey monstrosities that had been vibrating and jolting me down a subterranean passageway that was becoming smaller and tighter and no passageway at all, in an effort to find the stop button. This particular voyage was already ten constant weeks in progress... We (Mannix and Rosey Spite) went back to my place to discuss finding the central nervous system of the engine room. Rosey had great plans, she felt we should take over the whole ship and plunder it, that we would never have an opportunity like this again. (Mo046: Light 41)

Sass’ “influencing machine”, that “quasi-external symbol of the subject’s own hyperreflexive consciousness...providing some way of accounting for the distorted, passivized experiences being undergone” (Sass 229), is of most relevance here. For Mannix it is the ship and the machines within it that are responsible for the vibrations and jolting that he can feel. These animate machines are in control but Mannix’s energies seem directed towards breaking out of the passive role in order to regain a position of power. To this end he is constantly taking the engines apart in order to get at their “grey dissonate karma”: trying to find the stop button and then (at Rosey’s suggestion) contemplating finding the central nervous system of the engine room so as to take over the whole ship. Thus Mannix’s “influencing machine” deviates markedly from those described by Tausk, where “[t]he patients are able to give only vague hints of its

construction.” Mannix seems intimately familiar with the machines, to the extent that he can in fact access and dismantle them.¹⁹⁰

Sass’ assertion that the schizophrenic “influencing machine” delusion could serve a stabilising function in an individual’s world-view appears plausible here: the ship and the engine room is a metaphor in which Mannix comes to live: this construct contextualises the various psychological and physiological experiences Mannix undergoes in his psychotic journey, and even provides him with the hope that he can, in fact, regain a sense of control and equilibrium.

Mannix’s machines traverse the zone between fictional creations and the lived experience of hallucinatory psychosis. All such machines possess a sense of psychotic animation that imbues them with the capacity for life. In this formulation Mannix’s dialogue with the machines is a dialogue with psychosis, one he makes available to rationality in his creative depictions. Such a dialogue is also one of the central features of the next work to be discussed, Mo024: Erogeny: a book of fables about Rozelle Lunatic Asylum. Here, in a work that again conflates the pictorial and the textual, Mannix brings the lived experience of psychosis into conversation with his efforts of unconscious anthropology.

Mo024: Erogeny: a book of fables about Rozelle Lunatic Asylum

Erogeny measures 55 cm wide and 57 cm long and is thus the largest work in ‘The Atomic Book’. It is an artist’s book that can be located in Drucker’s category of a “unique object”. On the front cover of the book Mannix describes its contents and the mode of its creation in the following manner:

this book is a documentation of the unconscious psychosis and what would best be called the incomprehensible as it were ‘in situ’, on the grounds of Rozelle Mental asylum. a great deal of the work was done “unknowingly”: the temporal place, the mental state undefinable, a type of indeterminate chaos of the psyche and of mysticism reigned. (Mo024.1)

¹⁹⁰ William S. Burroughs also writes of attempting to dismantle a type of “influencing machine”: “Equipped now with sound and image track of the control machine I was in position to dismantle it...” (Soft 56)

This work constitutes twenty-one leaves (including back and front covers) of thick, coarse brown paper, which is drawn and written on directly. Also affixed to such pages are a variety of office-like stationary: lined and graph paper as well a white paper bags on which Mannix draws. The range and type of materials used in this work communicates the inventive, opportunistic nature of Mannix's art-making. These physical artefacts from the asylum draw the viewer back toward the scene of creation. The size of the work also contributes to the idea that within these pages Mannix set out to record and construct an alternate world within which to exist. The book itself was made whilst Mannix was a patient in the Rozelle Mental Hospital¹⁹¹ and experiencing psychosis. The narrative created at this time consists of drawings, found text and what Mannix calls prose-poetry, and these modes of expression have the associative ambiguity conducive to recording states of madness and the unconscious. There is however another narrative present in the book, a narrative written retrospectively which begins with the above quotation and continues throughout the work, explaining the complex thoughts embedded in the original expressions.

Thus, two complementary narratives are brought into dialogue in the work: the original, highly ambiguous narrative created by Mannix while experiencing psychosis, and a subsequent commentary which rationally interprets this work and gives context to his state of mind at the time of creation.¹⁹² In this way Mannix himself is distinguishing between expression created during madness and that added while sane. Allen S. Weiss writes of the importance of this distinction as it pertains to writing, suggesting that "[t]he latter sort often tends toward a theological narrative account, while the former tends toward the fragmentation of the linguistic system" (*Phantasmic* 70). Mannix's retrospective text is indeed a narrative of mystical creation, documenting the occult experiences that accompanied the creation of the initial poetic and pictorial language which itself helped bring a mystical reality into being. This initial writing, with its repetitions, scissions and neologisms, can be viewed as a fragmentation of the "linguistic

¹⁹¹ Otherwise known as "Callan Park". The grounds of the hospital are the setting for *Erogeny* and Mannix did an audio tour of the facility for ABC Radio National in 2006. Such extracts can be found in the 'Sound Works' section of 'The Atomic Book', listed as *Mo117* and *Mo118*.

¹⁹² In this way Mannix text is akin to Nerval's 'Aurélia': Richard Sieburth suggests "Nerval's text becomes the self-reflexive enactment of its own genesis, the narrative of how its central consciousness eventually matured into the author of the very pages that now lie before our eyes" (260).

system”. Aspects of the original pictorial work also engages with ‘language’, as Mannix creates illustrations which approach the pictogram; here each small element of the linked drawing represents an idea – albeit an idea known only to Mannix himself. In this way the pictorial also approaches a fragmented linguistic system.

On the front cover of Erogeny Mannix reiterates a claim he makes for much of his creative work: “This book is a Documentary account of altered states, the realm of the unconscious and the exploration of a blackness hither to only thought of in terms of illness; that is psychosis” (Mo024 2). Both the initial and retrospective texts have documentary functions: the initial directly documents psychotic experience – the retrospective excavates the experience’s rational context. It is in this way that Mannix here, and elsewhere, consciously fosters a dialogue between madness and reason.

Mannix goes onto describe his secret inhabitation of an abandoned house on the hospital grounds in which he sets up an “art factory” (Mo024 2).¹⁹³ This text is part of the retrospective contextualising narrative. The work done “in situ” on this page comprises three drawings on graph paper¹⁹⁴ in blue and felt highlighter pens. These drawings depict contraptions that consist of women’s legs and breasts coupled with mechanical shapes; such combined constructions are often set on small spoked wheels. Such drawings are common in Mannix’s work and he has suggested that any object he depicts as riding on wheels is in fact the representation of a specific idea.¹⁹⁵ Thus these drawings can be seen as a form of private hieroglyphics – a type of language in which Mannix seeks to express himself while psychotic. The drawings have a pervading sense of interconnectivity and many of the objects have funnel shaped openings from which some of the adjacent shapes have perhaps been birthed. In some of the objects Mannix has followed the small grid

¹⁹³ Antonin Artaud had a similar experience at the Ivry clinic, where he found an abandoned “eighteenth-century hunting lodge deep in the clinic’s wooded grounds. In spite of its having no running water, electricity or central heating, he insisted on moving in, under the impression that Gérard de Nerval had once lived there” (Eshleman 31).

¹⁹⁴ Mannix often uses graph paper in this work and this is partly due to its availability but also could be influenced by the linguistic drawings of Davey Brown’s “semiotics of the irrational” (Mo046 40), created on graph paper and valorised by Mannix in The Light Bulb Eaters.

¹⁹⁵ Conversations with Mannix: Recollections of G.S.Jenkins 2005-2008. Such a depiction of ideas is akin to Ernest Fenollosa’s characterisation of Chinese notation as “thought-picture[s]”: “based upon a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature” (510). In this way Fenollosa argues that the relation between a character and its meaning is not arbitrary. This is also true of Mannix’s thought-pictures, which are, however, based on the private, imaginative nature of his lived metaphor and are thus unavailable to the reader.

pattern on the page to create what appears as brickwork.¹⁹⁶ The common theme with such works appears to be that of eroticism's capacity to dissolve division.

The retrospective narrative on page three describes Mannix's discovery of "implements of art" within the abandoned house: with this discovery "it was as if the dementia praecox¹⁹⁷ had miraculously altered into a heaven of awareness" (Mo024 3). Mannix now spends less time in the psychiatric ward, though is still careful to be present to get pills (absence at this time, Mannix suggests later in the book, can draw unwanted attention). In the art-factory Mannix explores the "unknown", suggesting that "[t]his house suited my personality like a drug it was where everything miscellaneous or undefinably with the hospital was kept – a sort of a paraphernalia paradise" (Mo024 3). Again such comments have been made in retrospect, and surround a blue pen ink work drawn onto a white paper bag and affixed to the page. This drawing is a figure with numerous heads in its body – a body inhabited by small text which reads: "one should learn that the figure is not neat; This is illusion the only thing neat is the illusion of who we are and what we are. It seemed to get very dark again with a loss of words as if a tunnel vision of nothing but moments", and elsewhere on the arm of the figure is the expression "a place for words" and "words, words, words have a certain compact energy" (Mo024 3-4). Here, words have descended into the body, materialising as flesh. This is again reflected in a similar image on pages 5-6. The text within this image reads, "This long arm seems to reach into the very depths of darkness without penalty" and, "The emotional thoughts can manifest anything into being" (Mo024).

Thus, the magical or shamanic capacity of words to affect the material world, already noted within Mannix's work, is again present within these drawings (and the text within them) created while in the institution. This foreshadows the narrative to come, which sees Mannix connect with the past and progressively transform his surroundings with the power of his mind. Again Novalis's quotation is relevant: "The greatest of sorcerers would be the one who would cast a spell on himself to the degree of taking his own phantasmagoria for autonomous apparitions" (qtd in Maurois 12). This is indeed

¹⁹⁶ The repetition of the brickwork motif in this and other works created by Mannix is perhaps linked to his experience of the Chasm of Doom. In Mo046: *The Light Bulb Eaters* he writes: The Chasm of Doom / in Chaos / i listened to the rocks move in this place chaos, the rocks were masoned, like pyramid masonry yet they came at all angles and all valley..." (95).

¹⁹⁷ The original term used to describe the condition now known as Schizophrenia.

what Mannix proceeds to do. Around the blue ink drawing on page four Mannix recounts some of his thoughts during this time. Commenting on the age of the hospital “est. 1865”, Mannix suggests: “There are underground passages where in the hideous visage of last century’s lunatic was shielded to prevent up roar and horror. the monstrous and incomprehensible were rowed thru. the waterways at night and I was in the back of the rowboat floating on this dark, inky black silent mind of mind” (Mo024 5).¹⁹⁸ In the two drawings just discussed, both mention a loss of words that Mannix may also be referring to when he writes of this “inky black silent mind of mind”.

Page seven is again dominated by two drawings on graph paper. As with page two, Mannix juxtaposes a blue ink line drawing with one that is intensely coloured. The retrospective contextualisation details the beginnings of a complex magical, theological narrative which references the Grail legend – this narrative recurs throughout the work. He writes: “Beyond when i looked out the window i saw the sandstone tower of the previous hospital callan Park; i though[t] of enlot tabot the magical citardel of the 11th century magician Klingsor who was reputed to have dominated Europe with black magical powers” (Mo024 7).

Mannix is referring to the magician who features in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s epic poem Parzival, commonly known through Wagner’s opera Parsifal.¹⁹⁹ One major source of information about Parsifal for Mannix is again Trevor Ravenscroft’s The Spear of Destiny. In this work Ravenscroft quotes from von Eschenbach who writes that Klingsor’s use of black magic was preceded by his castration: “In the famous castle of Kalot Enbolot he (Klingsor) became the mock of the world” (172).²⁰⁰ It is likely that Mannix’s “magical citardel”, “enlot tabot” is derived from the name “Kalot Enbolot”.

¹⁹⁸ Mannix suggests a tunnel system did actually exist within the grounds of Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital, and was used (in the 1800’s) to transport patients to and from the nearby Parramatta River, a major transport route at the time (Conversations with Mannix: Recollections of G.S.Jenkins 2005-2008). Such facts were not able to be confirmed.

¹⁹⁹ Emma Jung and Marie-Louise Von Franz suggests: “Wagner’s Parsifal is an extremely gifted revival of the Grail legend, of a pronouncedly psychological character” (12).

²⁰⁰ Emma Jung and Marie-Louise Von Franz write of this figure Klingsor as a variation on the notion of the magician Merlin. They suggest his name was “Clinschor” but it is clear from the following description that it is the same character referred to by Ravenscroft: “Clinschor is a eunuch who was castrated in the course of a love affair, after which he devoted himself solely to magic” (397). Mannix’s association with such a figure is interesting in the light of his writings regarding the possibility of undergoing sex change from male to female and of having his genitals ground down by the act of sex.

Page eight is again dominated by two drawings on graph paper – one in blue pen the other in a combination of blue ink and felt-tip colour. The blue ink work is again concerned with women's body parts and small organic-like machines with radiating funnels. A dark shape with many eyes is also present in this drawing, seeming to stare out at the viewer. The second coloured work depicts three female entities in what appear to be a field of dislocated blue breasts with pink nipples. Another feature of this page is a small white sheet of paper on which are written a list of aims: "To be in Concert Shows, To be healthy, Polite, Listening to the musics, Doing movies – Dancing, Doing Conferences" (Mo024 8). When this was written is not clear.

Mannix's retrospective commentary contrasts the "white magic" of "art therapy...where in all environments internal and external are altered in the name of a healthier lifestyle" with "art Brut or Outsider art", a "ritual" which at one extreme is the "poetical" and the other the "demonic" and through which an individual "becomes one with the environment and makes no classification naming or definition: no delineation between self or anything else it makes the monstrous accessible, also the sublime and truly heavenly!" (Mo024 8). Here the confluence of subject and object in psychotic perceptions is recognised by Mannix himself and, as is stated in the closing sentences of The Demise, Mannix feels this state gives access to both the monstrous or horrific and the heavenly or divine.²⁰¹ The primary narrative in Erogeny is an example of art-making conducted as a "ritual" designed to orientate an individual for whom definitive boundaries of self no longer apply. The retrospective text functions to integrate the psychotic experience into Mannix's rational conception of self. The madness/reason dialogue that characterises Mannix's work, then, is an attempt to re-establish a sense of unity in his world-view.

On page nine small illustrations of isolated breasts or female figures with no arms and many protruding breasts (which at times replace their heads), are positioned down one side of the page with a 'found' text beside it. The original work makes no mention of this found text, but the reader finds out through Mannix's retrospective commentary that it was discovered in "the hospital's Rubbish dump" and is part of the "journal/notebook

²⁰¹ In The Demise Mannix writes of psychosis: "I have touched the hollow in myself where amid the monstrous also lies the divine" (Mo049 21).

of a girl possibly in her teens possibly in her early twenties which documented her love relationship and sexual feeling” (Mo024 9). The found text on this page appears to be a letter sent to this young woman from a love interest who tells her that he or she misses her and wonders if she is angry. Mannix has illustrated this sheet so the name of the addressee cannot be read and the entire textual passage becomes the rectangular brick-like head of another female nude without arms.

Page ten contains a series of small coloured erotic drawings. Two blue ink drawings dominate the page, one again a construction of mechanic ‘ideas’, the other – which is another page from the young woman’s journal – has erotic drawings surrounded by the repeated word “and”, which has been embellished to represent two eyes in a pair of glasses. This repetition of “and” is emblematic (semantically and pictorially) of the state of associative confluence linked with psychosis.²⁰² “Sex scribble” is also present in these erotic figures and in some of the letters – letters presumably written on the page by the young woman whom Mannix names in his retrospective commentary as Lyndal. Mannix tells the reader that Lyndal appears to be in a love triangle with two men: Scott and Jason. Mannix suggests that he doesn’t take on the role of neither of these two men but, “Rather i held the akashic Record of 500,000 year of erotic history in my hands; The most common document on earth yet the most profound; the most proliferate” (Mo024 10).²⁰³

The Akashic Records Mannix mentions refers to a notion written of by Ervin Laszlo in his work Science and the Reenchantment of the Cosmos: The Rise of the Integral Vision of Reality. He states:

In modern times the occult spiritual teacher Madam Blavatsky spoke of the Akasha as an emanation of Mulaprakriti, the deeper root of reality. Her student Rudolf Steiner developed this notion as the Akashic Chronicles, a kind of universal “diary” from which humanity can acquire full knowledge of its past and present, as well as its future. (26)

²⁰² This repetition of “And” as a pictorial motif is also used by Mannix in an illustration featured on page 12 of Journal of a Madman No. 4. Here again this repetition of the word “And” creates a sense of claustrophobic union in the picture-plane.

²⁰³ Mannix also mentions the Akashic Record in his book Mo016: Journal of a Madman where he writes: “This book is an effort at drawing from the Unconscious, the Racial Memory and the Akashic Record erotic things about what made Babylon” (3). He also mentions it in Mo046: The Light Bulb Eaters wherein he experiences the “sound of the akashic record in my ears like the scream of a creature that is uncontemplatable” (37).

Mannix's main source of knowledge regarding the Akashic Records or Chronicles again comes from Ravenscroft²⁰⁴ who relays a story in which "[i]nitiates were able to unravel the relationships of spiritual existence and by which they acquired the art of 'reading' from the 'Cosmic Chronicle' of human destiny in which past, present and future were united in one uncoiling ribbon of Time" (76). On the following page the Akashic Record is specifically mentioned, as a record that "could be read more simply and quickly but equally effectively through practice of the black arts!" (77). There is also, it seems, a link between the Akashic Record and the notion of lived metaphor, for it is described by Ravenscroft as pertaining to "'universal currents of divine thought'...ethereal realms where thoughts are yet more concrete than material objects on earth..." (84-85). One way of accessing such a realm, Ravenscroft suggests, is through the Pineal Gland²⁰⁵:

it is the Pineal Gland which when opened and activated becomes that organ of vision which Eastern Systems call the "Third Eye". And it is with this highest of spiritual organs that the secrets of Time are unlocked and the "Akashic Record" is revealed. It is also with the same "Pineal Eye" that events which took place in previous lives on earth are perceived as pictures in a form of transcendent memory. (73-74)

Lyndal's writings then, provide a doorway or portal through which Mannix believes he can access the erotic history of the Akashic Record. Spiritual illumination, represented by the opening of the third eye to reveal the Akashic Record, is again linked with the creation of text (Lyndal's) and the reading of such a text. Mannix suggests, on page nine, that his aim was to use such a record (Lyndal's journal) to document or excavate "humankind" through symbols, and the letters that make up his texts and his various small (hieroglyphic) drawings are perhaps such symbols. Page eleven again contains a sheet from Lyndal's journal as well as a series of elliptical shapes some containing words such as "Prink and Romp-Rump". Mannix has also included the following poem written at the time of the book's creation:

The dark damp night smelt dank
like lingerie in the dark night
and walking amidst a juicy,
wet, cushy, succulent cupidity

²⁰⁴ Conversations with Mannix: Recollections of G.S.Jenkins 2005-2008.

²⁰⁵ Mannix mentions the Pineal Gland numerous times in his writing, for instance in Mo049: The Demise where the "glittering pineal gland" (12) is characterised as the centre of the city – a city the narrator journeys through, in the mode of a Grail Quest, as a method of purification and illumination.

doll...and put through purpose
 and moonlit paces through the dark
 wet green. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo024 11)

A sense of claustrophobia is created by the dense, repetitious language in this poem. The smell of the night is infused with the erotic as Mannix compares it to both lingerie and a “succulent cupidy doll”. A distortion of subject and object is evident as Mannix suggests that he was “walking amidst” the singular doll. As he does in *The Light Bulb Eaters*, he conceives of the female form, here represented by the doll, as a landscape within which he can walk. The final section is unanchored to the rest of the poem due to the lack of specificity regarding what it is that is “put through purpose / and moonlit paces”, and can thus be characterised as a destabilisation of anaphoric deixis. It seems, however, most likely that this passage refers to the sex act with the “doll”. The flowing rhythm of this section and the alliteration of the “p” in “put”, “purpose” and “paces” simulates this erotic act. This section relieves the tension created by the fragmentary, staccato phrases of the preceding lines.

Page twelve includes a drawing of an elephant and tears, most likely created by Lyndal, which Mannix has embellished. Mannix’s commentary defines his relationship with Lyndal, in which he posits himself as her analyst. He is not a “voyeur” regarding her situation, but rather a “scientist”: “I set down no rules, no regulations, I just listened with the aplomb of a psychiatrist with only one thought – when was morning tea” (Mo024 12). Thus, whilst Mannix himself is likely to be having some therapeutic sessions whilst in the institution (perhaps from bored, distracted or frustrated therapists waiting only for “morning tea”), he has discovered a patient of his own and assumed the role of therapist.²⁰⁶ He affords Lyndal the honesty he wished for from his own psychiatrists, when he writes: “Further, i stated to Lyndal at the very first instance that no cure could be made, no solution could be found, no hope or promise supplied: From that point onwards we had a happy profession relation; in fact that forth with was naught but the entire cure” (Mo024 12). The entire cure then centres on both self-acceptance and acceptance of difference by the psychiatrist and society.

²⁰⁶ Nerval’s ‘Aurélia’ is again relevant. The “simmering hostility” towards psychiatry that Sieburth suggests exists within the work is emphasised in Mannix’s text. Nerval’s “narrator-hero covertly attempts to usurp the place of his doctor, hoping in the process to transform himself from son into father, from patient into healer” (264); however, such covert impulses are made explicit in Mannix’s work.

On page thirteen Mannix suggests that he could see no harm in “delving into my imagination about Lyndal and creating artworks and prose-poetry” (Mo024 13). The resulting erotic works dominate this page; again sheets from Lyndal’s journal are embellished by Mannix. One of the prose-poems featured here is as follows:

A love-box entrapping
fifty-five screaming
prink women...,
wearing yell and
screaming lingerie
and opening the
pussy of Open Lady
with whore moans
and sluttery...,
and meanwhile lady fur and
lady mouth felt wet love and
hot love and mouth love with
open lady...
...and golden glittering thoughts came from
her clear nylon udders and verdant nipples. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo024 13)

In a practice not uncommon in Mannix’s oeuvre this poem begins with a reworking of a passage from another text, Mo030: Erotomania No.1. “Fifty-five women are building a lovebox reports indicate gargantuan proportions are involved the thing is said to already be the size of a small postage-stamp European Kingdom” (4). In Erogeny, however, the women are not building the “lovebox” but are instead trapped inside a “lovebox” which perhaps symbolises a vagina. In this work Mannix presents descriptions that may first appear metaphorical (“yell and screaming lingerie”) as literal. This is because such descriptions are likely to have been based on the events of hallucinations where Mannix literally experiences the dramatic and revealing nature of such garments in a sonic fashion. The women become completely identified with the sexual activities they are performing and their sexualised body parts; this is reflected in their names, such as “Lady mouth” and “Open Lady”. The use of the words “whore moans”, and the repetition of “lady”, “mouth” and “love” is reminiscent of the performance text discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. In both instances the signifier dominates the text and its generation.

The work ends with another seemingly metaphorical description of thoughts coming from the breast of the women. Again it is more likely that this refers to Mannix's experience of actually 'receiving' thoughts from these hallucinatory women, watching their thoughts physically manifest and float through the air. Such ideas are often present within Mannix's writings, as has already been shown in a quotation from The Demise: "I shake like a leaf and in using the 'simile' become the leaf and must fight. The words I hear around me are deadly potent. If I could wield the thought like solid matter how much would I destroy and how much would I make.?" (Mo049 3).

As this quotation suggests, Mannix himself conceives of his hallucinatory experience of language in a literary fashion, making clear that he is materially rendering the transpositions literature affects in language. Mannix's literal treatment of metaphorical notions is not necessarily an artistic technique but rather (as has been discussed already) part of the process of ushering such visions into being – in this way the texts within Erogeny begin to participate in the creation of the 'reality' Mannix exists within. This becomes more evident on page thirteen, which again features two pen ink drawings of small, interconnected erotic machines and brickwork. In the retrospective commentary on this page Mannix suggests that at this time he was "redesigning the hospital grounds...i then set about on architectural plans to transform the hospital to an erotic fantaise on par with Versailles" (Mo024 15). The drawings included here are possibly such plans; which in their very creation effect the changes in Mannix's reality that they depict on the page. The small machines with their wheels are each an idea or thought that Mannix is wielding with precision.

Mannix continues this theme on page sixteen when he suggests that due to Lyndal's inspiration his "psychologist office" had "altered into an architect's office" (Mo024 16). To gain further inspiration for his refashioning of the hospital, he consults past patients of the asylum: "I paid a great many visits to the rocks overlooking the beach to the north and coast of Callan Park where there are rock carvings by inmates of the hospital done last century and these inspired me further" (Mo024 16). Such rock carvings do indeed exist where Mannix suggests they are, and images of them can be viewed in the 'Documentary Material' section of 'The Atomic Book' listed as Mo082.

Page seventeen depicts what is perhaps a blue line drawing of Lyndal. Mannix's retrospective narration suggests his thoughts returned to Lyndal at this point with the determination "that she should never be deserted" (Mo024 17). As in much of Mannix's work, tender attitudes of protection and companionship towards women co-exist with a vision of them as highly eroticised entities. Also on this page Mannix describes the central place that medication inhabits in the mental hospital regime, and makes clear that he was quite conscious of the dangers involved in not being present for the "dispensing of pills and i was loath to disregard that least the hospital crack wide apart and Kingsor tower topple down on my head" (Mo024 17). With the return of the tower Mannix directly reengages with issues of magic and the occult. Such issues are further explored on page eighteen, where the final transformations occur in the buildings that surround Mannix – buildings which he himself has already begun altering. For the first time he becomes aware of the karmic pain of past inmates manifesting "grotesque unhappiness and apparitions that turn the spine to a cold freeze" (Mo024 18). A "roaring sexual energy" awoke in Mannix and in the buildings that surrounded him, until they "took on the character of a raging magenta and black inferno...i could have called myself Dante and be legitimate...living in the place was like experiencing one long, continuous never ending sexual assault – i left my sperm everywhere was impregnated by everything[...]" [Ellipsis in original] (Mo024 18).

Later Mannix retrospectively describes this experience as "a fertility gone mad and beyond comprehension" (Mo024 18): the erotic becomes all-encompassing, eroding the boundaries between Mannix and the environment. Mannix's status as male or female is conflated as he both ejaculates into the environment and is impregnated by it. Such fertilisation is the final stage in the alterations Mannix began to make in the architecture of the place with his drawing – albeit a refashioning that he has now ceased to consciously control. This final stage results in the buildings becoming animate: Mannix writes, "Not a great amount of time past before i was regarding these buildings as lifeforms in themselves" (Mo024 18). The central presence linked to such an animation is the psychic residue of past activities conducted in the space; Mannix describes it as "the spirit of murder, inseperable from piercing blued steel blade that was part of it" (Mo024 18). Beside these writings are four small drawings produced in felt pens, which show

variations on brickwork pattern and figures, which are perhaps the spirits of past mistreated mental patients Mannix writes of. Drawings of this nature continue on the next page, which again contains four pictorial sheets. Here a figure has breasts protruding from the back of his skull as if it were hair or thoughts; a many breasted figure stands before brickwork titled with the words, “Rumpwise” and “Mouthwise”: sexual neologisms common to Mannix’s oeuvre; three breasts on stalks, as if flowers or trees, extend from brickwork; and finally three insect faces are drawn suspended before brickwork. Mannix has written inside this drawing: “Insect creatures on the grounds of the Rozelle hospital. drawn march 1995” ([Mo024](#) 19). Mannix repeatedly describes his art-making as a process of documenting what he sees – thus each of the drawings on this and the preceding page can be viewed as recording images Mannix actually saw around the hospital grounds.

Page twenty returns to blue ink drawings, one again featuring small wheeled illustrations and brickwork architecture. Another image features erotic humanoid figures, one of which has an expanded head constructed from many interconnected lines, which gives the impression of a mind expanded by swirling thoughts. A face with many extended eyes also features atop a small house on wheels. Below these drawings Mannix’s retrospective commentary suggests that he kept Lyndal with him during the “sexual and dark furore about which i knew nothing” ([Mo024](#) 20). In this way Mannix suggests he had lost touch with the conscious realm. Lyndal’s journal came to represent an ancient document linked to the Akashic Records which exists outside of temporal time; thus Mannix writes: “these beings she (Lyndal) spoke of and the attitudes could have occurred 50,000 years in the past...Upon reflection many themes come to mind – the magician, the phantom of the opera, Frankenstein...” [Ellipsis in original] ([Mo024](#) 20). As he often does, Mannix here links his ideas and experience with characters from works of literature: powerful characters, in this instance, who are nevertheless misunderstood outcasts. This association with fictional texts reflects Mannix’s awareness of the interconnection between worlds created through artwork and worlds created through hallucination – a process intimately linked in Mannix’s world-view.

Page twenty-one of Erogeny contains six small felt-pen illustrations predominantly erotic in nature. In the head of one such figure is written another of the poems Mannix composed at the time of the book's initial creation:

Horrordeed came in with dishes
serving ambergre. Dr. stranglewenah
came in..., with him came dairy-
belt and udderglance. Tangomunch and
leg-up came along...Meanwhile inside
Udderism, [Ellipsis in original] (Mo024 21)

The names of characters in Mannix's work are often neologisms that indicate the entity's characteristics. At times these relate to sexuality, as with "udderglance" and "leg-up", or a more general description such as "Horrordeed". In the two latter cases the character is defined by an activity they engage in: "udderglance", however, could refer either to the propensity of the individual to glance at udders, or more likely the activity the writer engages in with respect to this individual.

The main activity in this textual fragment is the serving of "ambergre" which is the French spelling of amberggris²⁰⁷, defined as an "ash-coloured substance, taken from the intestines of a sperm whale...used chiefly in perfumes" (Macquarie Dictionary 27). Perhaps then this suggests the reason for Horrordeed's name whilst also relating to Mannix's propensity to blur distinctions between the internal and external – here the characters are to ingest the insides of the whale.²⁰⁸ The final comment also relates to this theme – "Meanwhile inside / Udderism,": the comma at the end of this fragment and the use of the word "Meanwhile" suggests that this text goes on to tell of the activities within "Udderism". Whilst no further text exists, the unresolved nature of this fragment is suggestive of a shift in the narrative from its present scene to the inside of this space or character termed "Udderism": such shifts between inside and outside are common in

²⁰⁷ There are a number of examples of Mannix using French words and phrases in his texts, including: "Raison d'être" (Mo046: Light 7), "The Danse de Boire" (Mo049: Demise 12).

²⁰⁸ The use of this image may also be related to the notion "that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth symbolised in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale" (Campbell 90). This relation is more likely given the fact that Mannix writes of owning the book (The Hero with a Thousand Faces) from which this quotation was taken.

Mannix's narratives (particularly those created during psychosis) where aspects of the work, at times proceed via a series of enveloping manoeuvres.²⁰⁹

Beneath these drawings can be found Mannix's last retrospective contextualisation, which speaks of the shocks and physical pain associated with entering psychosis' "deepest pit" (Mo024 21). In order to survive the self is "chained to an ice cold slab of stone", as if during the exploration of these realms the self goes into a form of timeless stasis. It is a realm of great risk and Mannix writes that the pain "becomes a relic, a curio, a momento, a completely dulled cherished for the bravery of the nerve to fight to stay alive..." (Mo024 21) Thus this is a narrative of survival, growth and the expansion of knowledge, in the mode of a Grail quest – for the psychotic realms are, in Mannix's view:

an alladin's cave not so much of the gem or treasure but of the incomprehensible and obviously non-existent. It is a strange thing to examine these things which don't exist with a scientists eye, with a documentarists hand, ultimately that act, perhaps nothing else brings into life what can't be brought into life. (Mo024 21)

Mannix returns to one of his central preoccupations: his anthropological role as an explorer and documenter of unconscious, psychotic realms. As has already been suggested, this documenting activity of art-making ultimately contributes to the solidification of Mannix's hallucinations, and thus "brings into life what can't be brought into life". This quotation also refers to the final document – in this case the book Erogeny, in which are recorded the events of psychosis experienced when the self has fallen out of life; the book then transports "into life" or conscious reality "what can't be brought into life."

Mannix here touches on one of the central questions posed at the outset of this thesis: how can madness be voiced rather than silenced by language or artistic expression? Fittingly, Mannix presents this as a paradox which suggests that the possibility of expressing madness lies in a form of impossible expression – one which, in its obscurity, exists in life but points (through perforated scissions in the veneer of meaning) out of life. Erogeny contains such a text in the pictorial and poetic narrative

²⁰⁹ This is clearly evident in Mo030: Erotomania No.1, as illustrated by the following quotation: "Voices from the tiny flash bag the woman is carrying gush into voices from the tiny flesh bad that is carrying the woman..." (8).

created whilst Mannix was psychotic – which, but for Mannix’s retrospective commentary, would remain a predominantly hermetic, private text – “impossible” as far as the generation of coherent meaning is concerned. Mannix’s secondary text, written some months after the initial experiences, excavates a public significance from this more private pictorial and poetic narrative, showing the depth of meaning that is in fact present in the original, ambiguous documentation. The retrospective text is a narrative of a rational self-consciousness which contextualises work Mannix suggests he created “unknowingly” whilst psychotic – the dialogue that exists between these two narratives is one between madness and rationality. This situation is elucidated by Octave Mannoni when he writes the following of psychosis: “What gets lost is whatever agency may be capable of critiquing the originally given hallucination...of constituting it elsewhere in fantasy, where it can freely be without being” (qtd in Phantasmic 70). The initial text documents the original hallucination, but it is the secondary text that situates it “elsewhere in fantasy”. Here psychosis speaks itself through the pictorial and the poetic, and is spoken by the prosaic commentary – ultimately it is the dialogue between the two that offers the greatest insight into madness.

In this work, once again, Mannix validates his own world-view over that of ‘sanity’ or the psychiatric institution. The psychotic episode allowed him to explore and document a rich world of mystical transformation. Mannix’s final comment is a post-script emphasising the value of such an experience. It ends by characterising his time in the Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital, during which Erogeny was created, in the following manner: as an “explorative feat it was sublime in the truest sense of the word as a curative exercise it was a failure” (Mo024 21).

Mo045: The Skull²¹⁰

Whereas the artist's book Erogeny includes an extensive reflective narrative – the retrospective interpretation of a psychotic experience by Mannix – this is not true of the next work to be discussed, The Skull. This work documents a psychotic experience with a sense of immediacy that draws the reader inside the metaphoric shifting reality of the narrator. Even this work, however, does include the following brief, prefacing contextualisation: “The individual endeavour of this work ‘The Skull’ is to present the concrete and positive of psychosis and its landscape which within our milieu appear as a common way of exploring the unconscious” (Mo045 2).²¹¹ The Skull is a “limited edition” artist's book created in a run of fifty. Each is printed on a fine textured paper and embellished with original cover artwork and the handwritten introduction quoted above.²¹²

This narrative is the concrete rendering of psychosis, an attempt to directly present a psychotic experience in language, with all its paradoxes and impossibilities intact. The final printed page reads: “This Worke ‘occurred’ during deep psychosis in 1981...& was transcribed into manuscript during the summer 1985-86” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo045 17). The Skull, then, is the direct transcription into manuscript of an original (perhaps psychic) ‘text’ which constitutes the psychotic experience itself during which the “Worke ‘occurred’”.²¹³

The Skull is a text of shifting instability which frequently resolves into paradoxical impossibility: points where definitive denotation breaks down, and meaning spreads into multiple connotations where the limiting forces of rationality fall away, until the only result seems to be the confluence of ambiguity. Thus the dialogue between

²¹⁰ As previously mentioned, excerpts of The Skull were recorded by Mannix with accompaniment by the composer Graeme Revell and released (along with works by various artists) under the title A Bead To A Small Mouth in 1989 on the Barooni label. This can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’ in the ‘Sound Works’ section listed as Mo093.

²¹¹ Such an aim is also in line with Gerard De Nerval's contextualisation of his work ‘*Aurelia or Dream and Life*’: “I shall attempt to transcribe the impressions of a lengthy illness that took place entirely within the mysteries of my own mind – although I do not know why I use the term illness here, for so far as I am concerned, I never felt more fit” (265). Here Nerval, as Mannix does in many of his works, also questions the negative characterisation of his madness as an illness.

²¹² The textual pages are numbered, but for the purposes of this study all references refer to the pages of its corresponding PDF file, Mo045.

²¹³ The images present within The Skull are an interpretation of this text by the artist Carlo Catalano.

madness and reason is played out in language itself as a tension between non-sense and sense. It is at the points of radical associative confluence within the text that true communication occurs. Mannix stresses the importance of such ideas in the quotation from Marcus Aurelius that he uses to close the text.

Cease not to think of the Universe as one living Being, possessed of a single Substance and a single Soul; and how all things trace back to its single sentence; and how it does all things by a single impulse; and how all existing things are joint causes of all things that come into existence; and how intertwined in the fabric is the thread and how closely woven the web.
(Mo045 17)

Denotative thinking (which characterises ‘normal’ thought patterns), whereby a limited number of ideas are linked at any one time, can be viewed as a gesture which unifies such ideas. However, in Aurelius’ and Mannix’s formulation, the limiting of associations in this manner actually prevents the mind from realising that it is all things which are interlinked, not merely a selection of them. In this formulation denotation does not link but divide, drawing out isolated (constructed) relations from what is in fact a unified whole. The points within Mannix’s text at which the conventional sense making function of language break down become opportunities to experience the limitlessness of the whole.

The elusive nature of this work is characterised by its opening epigraph from T.S. Eliot:

At the still point of the turning world
Neither flesh nor fleshness;
Neither from nor towards;
at the still point, there the dance is. (Mo045 6)

As with Eliot’s quotation, The Skull is a series of densely layered paradoxes evoking a reality of experiential impossibilities. The text begins:

! For a while The Head was a piece of wood, but it was pretending a masquerade...and then little black moons like trapdoors crept open & these eyes started to growl and stare violently at my feet which on its own world, in its own territory is/are possessed by The Enemy; & these eyes, they ran with a hatred like gigantic waterfalls in a trickle & in Reason which was like an insect made into bone. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo045 7)

Mannix begins his work with an inversion: a head that is pretending to be a piece of wood. Here the reader is presented with the moment after the onset of psychosis. The

piece of wood, which is the referent from which Mannix initially creates the lived metaphor of the head, does not transform into a head but is, in fact, already the head in disguise – in Mannix’s conception he has not constructed a psychotic reality over the physical world but is discovering his invented reality within the physical.

In this paragraph the reader is offered two alternate views: that of the narrator who looks at “The Head” and that of the head viewing the narrator’s feet; feet “which on its own world, in its own territory is/are possessed by The Enemy”. Thus the narrator is “The Enemy” as far as “The Head” is concerned. This antagonistic dynamic marks the opening of the work, which, from the first isolated exclamation mark, is imbued with anxiety and instability. The reader is taken inside Mannix’s “irreal” reality where denotation becomes elastic to the point of disintegration.

This reality is dominated by the entity “The Skull” which is also often called “The Head” – this interchanging of names reflects the mutability of this entity. The text proceeds via a series of close observations of The Skull’s various characteristics, activities and transformations. Of particular interest to the narrator are the eyes of “The Skull” which are the first and most expressive aspect to be mentioned, as they “growl and stare violently...”. The use of the word “growl” to describe the function of eyes conflates the sense of sound with vision: as has already been suggested, this is a common mode of expression for Mannix, derived from his experiences of synesthesia during psychosis. These eyes, which the narrator falls in love with and which he describes as “black cockroaches” (Mo045 8), are replaced by “swirling corkscrews boring at a silver storm...” (Mo045 8).

At this point Mannix suggests that “The Skull” “had not voice” (Mo045 8), yet one paragraph later the narrator notes that “[s]omething began to talk in my Sleepe, something began to talk in the black airs inside my head...in The Black Place where it is like a frozen stomach...where it is a joyous place...where it is a black place...where little specks of light are eaten by the darkness” [Ellipsis in original]. Of this talking it is then suggested that “it was not like sound at all, if anything it was like Thought” (Mo045 8). Mannix seems here to be describing a deep space within the unconsciousness of his “Sleepe”: “The Black Place”. This place is then infiltrated by a “Thought” that cracks the

floor and this event is all that signals to the narrator that the floor has “limit” (Mo045 8-9).

Later in this same paragraph it is also noted that “The Skull” had developed lips, which suggests that the talking emanates from “The Skull” – however, the two are never explicitly linked. This talking comes to be known as “The Voice”, and takes on a presence of its own: the physical manifestation of the sound which the narrator suggests he must shake “to dust” (Mo045 9) if he wishes to silence it.

Throughout the work the narrator oscillates between waking and sleeping with little to differentiate these states; in this way Mannix makes clear the connections he feels are inherent between psychotic and dream states.²¹⁴ On page ten “The Head” tap dances in the narrator’s dream. This is a dream, however, that “never finished” (Mo045 10) implying the merging of the dream and psychotic states. This is also reflected in the next mention of the dream state, where the narrator suggests: “After many hours I fell into the heat which was sleeping because it was night and because it was black. Before the weight of my body fell into my body i had already begun to see into a dream” (Mo045 11). In this formulation it is not the narrator but the “heat” that sleeps; perhaps it is also the heat that dreams, explaining why the narrator sees into the dream before coming to inhabit it. On page eleven Mannix also introduces the notion that the skull is fluctuating in size and that this suggests it is a form of music.

! The Skull is changing all the time in size, slightly, but is not going in a direction, is ultimately getting no bigger or no smaller. But this change, now that i have seen it is like a music, a music that is made on a big, pure silver & fine instrument; a music that is of water as if planets were revolving & orbiting in water. (Mo045 11)²¹⁵

The skull ultimately gets no bigger or smaller because it is changing all the time, oscillating within a range; it is in this way that the change is “like a music”, running up and down a scale of notes. Mannix (as has already been suggested in relation to the doctrine of “Speculative Music”) perceives a primal music generated by the vibratory

²¹⁴ Gerard De Nerval makes a similar observation to open his work ‘*Aurélia: or Dream and Life*’ when he writes: “Dream is the second life. I have never been able to cross through those of ivory or horn which separates us from the invisible world without a sense of dread” (265).

²¹⁵ Such an image echoes Artaud’s writings in ‘The Umbilicus of Limbo’: “The sun has a kind of look. But a look that would look at the sun. The look is a cone that is overturned on the sun. And all space is like a frozen music, but a vast, profound music, well constructed and secret, and full of congealed ramifications” (Selected 66).

ocellations of matter. Mannix links this music with the sounds planets make “revolving & orbiting in water”, and such ideas coincide with the Pythagorean belief “that the heavens were like a musical scale, that the stars produced harmonies...” (Collinson 9). In this way Mannix seems to be living Charles Baudelaire’s “Doctrine of Correspondences”.²¹⁶

The dream that Mannix begins to “see into” is an extension of the musical fluctuations in size that he notes in “The Skull”. In the dream, however, such fluctuations begin to affect or infect Mannix himself – he suggests: “The Head was close to me & I began to expand; soon I would be increased in size enough to put out my hand and touch It, perhaps hold It with the fingers of my hand. I did not want this to happen” (Mo045 11). In this way Mannix loses autonomy over his actions. This is also reflected in his understanding of the fear which the thought of physically touching “The Skull” induces; it is a fear which Mannix inhabits rather than experiences – thus giving the fear an autonomy which makes it more powerful and threatening: it exists outside Mannix’s sphere of control, as he writes: “I became inside a great black fear that twisted as if it was injured & which walked as if it was part of a bat, part of a man” (Mo045 11).

Throughout the text the physical location in which the action occurs shifts from an ‘inside’ with a beam of wood overhead, to an ‘outside’ under the stars and with earth below, into which holes can be dug. These sudden shifts in environment reflect the ambiguity of the action taking place; this ambiguity is heightened on page 6 where the narrator brings the various locations together, saying: “When I awoke I found The Skull was bigger. But also was the beam of wood on which it was, and the hole and the shovel and the ground...i was slowly lost in a speculation with many arms and many legs but without a face” (Mo045 12). The profound sense of fluidity and instability present within psychotic states is hereby presented. Such a “speculation” is also representative of the narrative of The Skull – a narrative with many arm or leg-like tangents but without a central focus or “face”.

²¹⁶ “The mythopoetic imagination, which finds voices and begins in nature...Romantic poets such as Wordsworth saw nature animated by an indwelling spirit. Baudelaire and Nerval supported their intuitions of hidden vitality with Swedenborg’s idea of ‘correspondences’ between the spiritual and the natural worlds” (Rabinovitch 189). Of this the Symbolist poet Christopher Brennan writes: “What corresponds in the world, viewed as matter for art, are rhythms and melodies. Aesthetically, we must view the world in a somewhat Pythagorean way, as a system of answering rhythms, rhythms differentiated into melodies, as a counterpoint, a repeating arabesque” (268).

Such an instability is also reflected in the next three paragraphs: the narrator first observes that “The Skull” looks familiar to him, “like the memory of a friend that has drowned in the moving grey sands in my mind...” (Mo045 12), which has the effect of making all things look familiar; then, for the first time, the narrator is able to look at “The Skull” without it looking at him, as if it has, up until now, been his reflection. It is this act of differentiation from “The Skull” which leads the narrator to finally suggest (in the first paragraph to be prefaced by two exclamation points instead of one) that “The Head”, “is no more familiar to me than when it first became apparent” (Mo045 13).

!! It rained forcefully today. The bone of The Head stood against the gun-blue sky like a monument, a monolith. I stared continuously at it, in an unbroken gaze and It at me also, as the rain made a great long noise upon the tin roof. Never before have I known a hate such as there was for no reason, nor seen such a beauty in it. At last The Skull became an apparition to me; as a ghost: dream. (Mo045 13)

The image of the forceful rain ushers in a definitive moment in the relationship between the narrator and “The Head”, which stands before him massive and imposing. The rain is described as so strong that it is one continuous noise and creates a sense of intense enclosure. It is the intensity of The Skull’s unreasonable hatred (a hatred that mirrors that described at the beginning of the book as coming from the eyes of “The Skull”: “a hatred like gigantic waterfalls” (Mo045 7)) that the narrator finds beautiful, as “The Skull” shifts form once more, becoming a ghost – and dreamlike. Concerns of differentiation continue for the narrator as he entertains the notion that “The Skull” and himself are in fact similar in nature after all.

The final events in the book see the dream-state infiltrated by “The Skull” who (possibility due to its hatred) inflicts a “potent & horrific nightmare” (Mo045 13) on the narrator. For the first time the narrator suggests that he may in some way be controlling “The Skull” which is reflective of the final stages of the psychotic episode. The narrator begins to rationalise the experience, saying: “I do not embody It [The Skull] with...power to effect any other than myself. Another might find it entertaining or of The Absurd. I find this view puts the experience somewhat within the competence of the philosophical & somewhat less disagreeable...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo045 13-14). Here then Mannix begins the process of situating the experience “elsewhere in fantasy” – an experience that

ultimately signals the beginning of the end of the psychotic episode as the existence of a dialogue between madness and reason becomes consciously explicit.

The nightmares get worse before abating altogether, after which time he suggests: “I realize myself to have exited powerful delirium. I am somewhat changed, at least to myself” (Mo045 14). He goes on to suggest that “The Skull” the reader has just been shown is in fact many skulls, each as different as the state of mind in which they were seen. Similarly, in a work as ambiguous as The Skull, any effort at rational interpretation such as the one undertaken here, exists as but one of many possible interpretations, a “face” constructed from what is in fact many tangential “arms” and “legs”.

Whilst this work is dominated by the various depictions of “The Skull” and “The Head”, another repeated image involves insects. Insects feature in many of Mannix’s works and The Skull is no exception. Mannix’s various uses of this motif are suggestive of the various narrative impulses at work in the text. At times Mannix describes seeing insects as if they are aspects of his hallucinatory world; at other times he uses insects within literary devices such as similes. Here the line between Mannix the documenter of psychosis and Mannix the storyteller becomes blurred, in a manner characteristic of this work which purports to “present the concrete and positive of psychosis” (Mo045 2) whilst also being subtitled “a story” (Mo045 5).

The eyes of “The Skull” are initially seen as cockroaches (“Cockroaches were in its eyes...” (Mo045 7)) which subsequently fall from The Skull’s sockets onto the ground and are “devoured by red ants” (Mo045 8). This act of consumption of insect by insect is described as if it were seen by Mannix, and leads him to suggest that an interconnection between himself and “The Skull”/“The Head” was beginning – “that I was coming to know the The Head and it me” (Mo045 8). Moths and slugs are then used in the following two similes: “Our eyes came back again like moths in the night...” (Mo045 8) and “thousands of silver lights like fat slugs” (Mo045 8-9). Here it seems Mannix the storyteller is using these images to illuminate rather than document the psychotic experience. Mannix is making explicit (or concrete) the metaphorical connections that are naturally elided during psychosis; in this way he works back from a psychotic experience of metonymic lived metaphor where eyes may become “moths in the night” to one of simile, where they are “like moths in the night”.

Insects are again obliquely evoked as a literal entity when Mannix writes, “I was slow in my thought because of the dissolving sleep and because of the little creature of change that was crawling and hurting my skin...” (Mo045 9). This “little creature of change” (put there by “The Skull”) is perhaps psychosis itself, described as it was literally experienced rather than metaphorically, as a crawling, painful creature.²¹⁷ Thought itself is also likened to an insect when Mannix writes, “I had a little thought that was like a drunken summer insect...” (Mo045 9-10). This again seeks to clarify Mannix’s literal experience of thoughts languidly moving about in his mind. Mannix ends this same paragraph with another insect reference: “I imagined that my moustache was a fuzzy-fat caterpillar” (Mo045 10). This phrase again describes as a metaphoric thought what was possibly a literal transformation of moustache to caterpillar for Mannix.

The next mention of insects occurs to describe neither Mannix nor “The Skull”, but rather to denote the distance between them at their closest physical point: “When my fear became most & I was about to cry out, when my fingers were as close as a tiny insect to The Skull, then I would begin to shrink away...” (Mo045 11-12). At this moment of prominent stress insects are again evoked.

The work ends with Mannix’s assertion that “The Skull” (or Skulls) have “laid and deposited roe, eggs inside of me & by their presence in my layers of flesh and fat, by their weight, have turned me into a patience which I have never known & which I find comical. This patience, this dung of contentment, I find neither welcome nor unwelcome” (Mo045 14). Mannix’s reference to the depositing of the roe eggs of a fish within his body, coupled with his description of his patience as “dung” again suggests the activity of insects as they lay eggs in flesh or faeces. In this formulation such eggs represent psychosis itself.

Thus the psychotic experience stays with Mannix in thoughts or memories deposited like eggs, which have the potential to hatch and grow into an imaginative

²¹⁷ Artaud also writes of insects in relation to madness when he talks of an “[a]nguish which drives men mad...an anguish that comes in flashes, that is punctuated by abysses as dense and serried as insects, like a kind of tough vermin whose every motion is arrested, an anguish in which the mind strangles and cuts itself off – kills itself” (Selected 70-72).

reality.²¹⁸ Mannix is left patient, full and accepting because “[i]n The Skull I see a fine purity which that it exists within something within my sight brings me a small but brilliant happiness. It has made me think and to look.....” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo045 14). Here, in one final conflation, the entity “The Skull”, which featured in the book, and the book entitled The Skull are elided, both presented as “a fine purity” that makes one “think and to look”. In this way the psychotic experience and its documentation (which includes occasional literary tendencies) are brought into dialogue within the frame of the book, and it is its presentation which contextualises the work as an artistic creation rather than as “psychotic ravings”. Each word of the next series of writings to be discussed, The Chambers, are created with just such a transformation consciously in mind.

Mo050: The Chambers of the Secret Circus

The Chambers of the Secret Circus use autobiographical psychotic experiences and the imaginative potential of psychosis to create works that are ultimately rational and fictional. Mannix describes them in the following way:

To be frank, ‘the chambers’ are deeply autobiographical and are written from experiences that occurred, mostly in the multifarious-eyed and ever-aware City, in the crucible of night. On one occasion, i left the Madhouse when my jailor’s were unattentive and had a wondrous time, as happy as Larry roaming the city as a certified and immune madman. However, this immunity proved only to be of a limited kind and there were many things that inexplicably and unexplainably occurred that bored into the mind like a ferocious bug and held reign over the character and the action. After two weeks of this penumbra and penury, i returned to the

²¹⁸ Burroughs also employs numerous insects references in his work. From Naked Lunch: “C pleasure could be felt by a thinking machine, the first stirrings of hideous insect life” (33); “His flesh jerks in the fire with insect agony” (34); “He laughed, black insect laughter that seemed to serve some obscure function of orientation like a bat’s squeak” (52); “Traffickers in the Black Meat, flesh of the giant aquatic black centipede...” (54); From The Soft Machine: “I witnessed some executions and saw the prisoners torn body and soul into writhing insect fragments by the ovens...” (56).

On the matter of insects and Burroughs, Tony Tanner suggest: “The City of Interzone is the place where all human potentials are spread out in a market, and here all possible agencies of human degradation and all evil diseases congregate and lie in wait – ‘Larval entities waiting for a Live One’. These worms waiting for a human host point to that parasitology which was a crucial part of Burroughs’s vision” (117). In Mannix’s formulation psychosis is akin to such parasitic creatures.

Madhouse...The experiences did not lay down however, and evolved into the chambers of the Secret Circus... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 1)

Comprising approximately²¹⁹ twenty-one individual short works, The Chambers, each on their own page(s), follow the same basic structure: a descriptive title, such as “The Chamber of Disrupted Sensation” (Mo050 25), followed by a sentence of the form, “To enter this chamber, one must...”. The word “Enter” is then printed on its own line followed by a paragraph of text (primarily written in the present tense, second-person) that describes the reader’s passage through the aforementioned chamber. The various situations and locations described in these chambers have a dream-like or hallucinatory quality, and all have erotic aspects. This initial paragraph (which even pictorially suggests a chamber) is followed after a line break by another isolated sentence which begins, “To exit this chamber, you must...”. This is followed by the word “Exit”, again isolated by a line break before and after. The final short passage, written again in the second-person, describes the immediate repercussions (mental and/or physical) of the reader’s foray into the chamber just described; in this way the chamber is never entirely escaped.

Each work follows this structure except for a short passage on its own page which is entitled “Intermission”. Written in the first person, it begins: “...(…the Circus ceased for the moment...i took off my make up...left silently with the others...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 10). Thus all the events which are experienced within the chambers are constructed – part of a circus orchestrated by “the others”. The artifice and invention of hallucination are evoked, and yet even this “Intermission” is “irreal”, to use Mannix’s own terminology. The passage in question continues as the narrator “quietly slid five fingers into the belly of the moon and declared it to be an evolving, devolving, involving, burping, bursting, and bulbing body planted in the rawness of the night, and all it would say was ‘Bong-bong, bong bong’...” (Mo050 10). After thinking over the things that had occurred it is time for the speaker to “put the make-up on again and go inside again)... the primeval dressing-room slid out of her like the placenta from a newly-delivered woman, the second time I rammed ‘em in hard, trying to reach the brain...)...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 10).

²¹⁹ The Chambers as they appear in ‘The Atomic Book’ were assembled from a large collection of loose leaves containing writing.

As in much of Mannix's work notions of inside and outside are brought into question in a reality of continual transformations. As Mannix writes, this is a reality of "evolving, devolving, involving, burping, bursting and bulbing". Any present reality can evolve or devolve into another; new realities can be burped or burst out whole, or can grow within like a bulb. The fact that the "dressing-room" slides from within the woman's body suggests that it is from here that the circus players all initially exited. Thus the call to "go inside again" actually means to go back inside the woman. The womb, for Mannix, is often characterised as the generative zone from which creation (including hallucinations) comes, and here it is linked (via the simile of the placenta) with "the primeval dressing-room" in which the circus players prepare for their roles in the chambers. Where the actual chambers are located is never resolved, but the fact that the requirements of entry often relate to one's mental state or ideas suggests that they are themselves imaginary realities portrayed as real, in the vein of a psychotic lived metaphor. Thus to cross the threshold is to consciously enter into dialogue with a psychotic state, aspects of which you retain after you exit.

Five works within the series will now be discussed in detail. Such works are representative of the central motifs present within The Chambers, which include the lived metaphor, the journey, the erotic, the amalgamation of woman and machine, union through music, the disruption of conventional notions of time, the paradox, the power of words to construct realities, the entities Mannix describes as "presences" (such as the Doppelganger), and the inescapable nature of psychotic experiences. The first chamber to be discussed is,

The Chamber of Assorted Splendour

To enter this chamber, one must have the ability to manufacture one's own reality, and of manufacturing it in such a way that it is indistinguishable from the real McCoy... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 2)

This quality of lived metaphor is the central state of mind required to enter any and all the chambers Mannix describes.

enter

One is on one's way to see a woman (letters having been exchanged). The last time you were in her presence was twenty years prior. (Mo050 2)

As is the case with a number of the chambers, a journey is involved – “You are on your way to a down-town store...” (Mo050 21); “One is on one’s way to the Opera House to hear the great composer’s Work” (Mo050 25); “You are walking along a dark and deserted part of town...” (Mo050 16) – one which often has a specific purpose. In this way the reader is quickly implicated in a narrative with a well-developed history. This is true of “The Chamber of Assorted Splendour”, which opens with the revelation that you have exchanged letters with a past acquaintance, and almost immediately find yourself sitting in her impressive house waiting to enter her boudoir: “You find her seated on a very low crimson velvet settee beared to the waist with sixteen mammoth, melon-like breasts exposed and a young girl with her mouth implanted on the nipple of each breast” (Mo050 2). The narrator tells you that in this reality the scene is perfectly normal, and that you have a chat with the women and leave.

To exit this chamber, you must realize that in manufacturing your own reality, you are indeed drowning in the common reality... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 2)

Thus in order to exit the chamber you must come to understand that the lived metaphor you are inhabiting is in fact a metaphor which you have manufactured; your recent behaviour viewed from within “common reality” is that of a person who is “drowning” – through being entirely out of mental touch with the “common reality”. Drowning could also be related to the disregard for self-welfare, in terms of nutrition, hygiene and shelter, that the author has experienced whilst psychotic: “roaming the city as a certified and immune madman”; thus an individual in this state appears to the “common” populace to be sinking towards self-destruction. As has already been discussed, Mannix uses the expression “drowning” to encapsulate his actual experience of psychosis. The Chambers resituate such experience in a creative context.

exit

You have made the journey to see your childhood sweetheart (letters having been exchanged) of twenty years prior. (Mo050 2)

After this chamber has been exited the initial scene is replayed, except now the woman is your “childhood sweetheart” and you look through the window at her and see only one young girl attached to her many breasts. In this and in many of the chambers the “exit” does not necessarily entirely release the protagonist from the experience. In this way

Mannix is suggesting that a psychotic experience can remain with an individual long after the actual episode has occurred. This is made explicit in the following chamber piece.

The Chamber of Vaginal Majesty

To enter this chamber one must have no qualms about living continuously in the past tense...

enter

One finds oneself in conversation in intimate surroundings with a beautiful and unclad woman. You are reclining on couches, drinking fine wines and the whole affair is somewhat in the ancient Roman manner" [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 7)

If the reader chooses to enter the chamber (by reading past the word "enter"), they find themselves suddenly enmeshed in an erotic scene. Mannix again uses the second-person 'you' to evoke in the reader a sense of complicity in the action at hand. As the woman kisses "you", "she opens the lips of her vagina and a procession of little figures march out, complete with banners, flags, coloured feathers, minute musical instruments, little guns, swords, pikes and lances, to a mechanical military march..." [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 7). This image clearly shows the way in which actual psychotic experiences have been absorbed into a fictional form. In Mo001: Journal of a Madman No.4 Mannix writes of the many "Kreature[s]" he has witnessed: "There is no limit furthermore upon the dimensions of the creatures. I have watched a miniture army march across the carpeted floor of my parents house complete with banners, weapons, and armour and the procession went on for hours..." (12). This hallucinatory experience is then absorbed into the creative world of The Chambers. The detail with which Mannix describes this procession in The Chambers is a product of him having actually 'seen' it, and this detail makes for a vivid and convincing image.

To exit this chamber, one must have a dull but infinite belief in the rational... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 7)

Again, to exit the lived metaphor the rational must be re-established. Interestingly enough it is upon leaving the chamber that the protagonist realises that "this procession is in some way indeed a reality..." (Mo050 7). It is, however, the woman and her vagina that have dissolved under the pressure of the rational, revealing that the referent for her metaphorical existence is "the crack in the wall besides the water pipe" (Mo050 7). The

directive that opens the work, regarding living in the past tense, is echoed in the final sentences where Mannix suggests that “[f]or the rest of your life, you know, you will be imagining piped military marches emanating from the crack in the wall beside the water pipe...” (Mo050 7). The protagonist is, once again, profoundly changed by the events experienced within the chamber and whilst he or she has been able to exit the space, aspects of the imaginary world of the chamber have followed them into the world of the ‘real’.

The disruption of conventional linear time, which appears often in Mannix’s texts, specifically in relation to his experience of psychosis, is evident in the next of the Chamber works:

The Chamber of Alternative Mechanical Cure

To enter this chamber, one must at some time have considered or have been tempted to consider the illusion of time...

enter

Having grown bored with walking the pavement of a busy street at night, one decides on a whim, to exit the present and reappear one thousand years hence, and one does so... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 12)

The prerequisite to enter the chamber – the capacity to see time as a constructed illusion – is in fact realised as the individual enters. Time now comes under the control of the protagonist as he/she, “on a whim”, travels to the future. Much to the horror of the individual everything, at first, seems entirely unchanged. Mannix’s fascination with organic machines and eroticism unite in this vision of the future where the only noticeable change is in the automobiles.

It is with a magnificent shock that one realizes that young and beautiful females are now incorporated into the mechanical workings of the Automobile. A car screams by with a red hot mechanical device attached and entering and turning in the sexual organs of two young women with the purposes of forcing them in a total madness to pump gears; (Mo050 12)

As in many of the Chambers the images of violent, erotic female subjugation are perceived by the protagonist with a certain revulsion rather than excitement. This is also the case here with the speaker suggesting that the sight induces a “blinding horror that is

insufferable” (Mo050 12). As if searching for a way of explaining the appearance of this sight the speaker seems to contribute the image to the will of language itself: “To exit this chamber, one must realize that one cannot continually use strange and exotic words and concepts without them trying to take control...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 12). As already discussed, language, for Mannix is a powerful, at times animate force and this notion is in evidence here. It is the strange and exotic words that have taken control of the narrative and conspired to create a scene the protagonist finds thoroughly disturbing. As with all the works in the Chamber series the experience stays with the individual even after they have returned to normality (or in this case the present time). In this instance the sight of normal vehicles are always infused with an unnerving, violent eroticism: “The Automobile becomes a strange and avoided contraption and no manner of advice or reasoning can alter this attitude. One occasionally breaks into screaming directed at road-working machinery...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 12).

The doppelganger is a figure that has materialised for Mannix during some periods of psychosis, and if one is to enter the next chamber to be discussed it is this doppelganger that must shed.

The Chamber of Solicited Intimacy

To enter this chamber, one must be capable of shedding one’s doppelganger like the reptile sheds it’s skin...

enter

This chamber is putrid and rich, indeed, wealth-laden with the odours of a continuous sex being conducted between two bodies. The symphony of passion which began this union has now become only the sounds of wetness, and of moistures. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 19)

The sexual union of the individuals is characterised as a symphony and the entire piece becomes an extended musical metaphor with “passion” characterised as “delicate and vibrant musical notes...” (Mo050 19). These notes, first heard in the sex act, also materialise on the bodies of the lovers: “One body has earrings fashioned as to be musical notes which seem to be calved out of a jet-like substance with no reflection of light. On the other body are tattooed black musical notes and score in purple and dark blue inks” (Mo050 19). The link between erotic union and music is suggested numerous times in

Mannix's work, most completely when he describes the synaesthetic experience of the erotic "screamstarewhisper" as the "trance of the low elongated keys" (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 16). Mannix associates the musical symphony and the sex act, as each having the capacity to connect directly with the emotions or instincts of an individual, thus eluding the rationalisations of the intellect. This subversion of the rational is again suggested by the only other device within the chamber: "a clock which has been damaged. It ticks loudly, and twice a second, but it's numeraled face is missing and its working components are revealed" (Mo050 19). The damaged watch evokes a disruption of linear time. The absence of its face to reveal the inner cogs creates an image of interacting parts, which echoes the continuing interaction of the sexual partners. The entire chamber can, in fact, be likened to the inner workings of a damaged watch. To enter one must remove the watch's face and this is achieved when one's doppelganger is shed. The doppelganger is thus akin to Jung's notion of the "persona"²²⁰ – that aspect of oneself presented to the public – or R.D. Laing's formulation of the "mask".²²¹ To enter into the chamber and a union evoked by music and eroticism such a mask must be shed – to exit the chamber the mask must be refixed: "To exit this chamber, one must not be embarrassed at the process of trying to locate shed doppelganger" (Mo050 19).

Again the experience stays with the speaker, this time evoking one of Mannix's repeated themes: the paradox. The final paragraph reads as a series of paradoxes wherein the experience of the chamber is both rich and barren; the spectacle within the space is seen though there were no lights. Such paradoxes, in their own way, mirror the power of music and the erotic to elude the rational and connect directly with emotion, as they "attack the pre-conscious crocodile brain that balances on the stump of the neck, producing a feeling akin to melancholy, or that feeling that occurs when something small and of no great value, but of irreparable richness, is lost..." [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 19). This notion of the crocodile brain and its association with paradox is detailed in Mannix's work The Light Bulb Eaters. Mannix situates this brain in the "7th Circle" of his psychotic cosmology: a realm of constant fluctuation as might be induced by

²²⁰ Jung's formulation of the "persona" is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six of this thesis.

²²¹ On this matter Laing writes: "'A man without a mask' is indeed very rare. One even doubts the possibility of such a man. Everyone in some measure wears a mask, and there are many things we do not put ourselves into fully" (Divided 95).

paradoxical thinking, a region of the “primoidal back brain which remains after the human brain and the primate brain have been peeled away and which is of the same substance as the crocodile brain” (Mo046: Light 24-25).²²² Thus, once again, the chamber maintains its capacity to affect the deep regions of the mind even after its exit, this time through paradox.

The theme of the symphony is continued in the fifth and final chamber to be discussed.

The Chamber of Disrupted Sensation²²³

To enter this chamber one must be prepared to accept that the imagination is greater than the sum of all it's parts...

enter

One is on one's way to the Opera House to hear the great composer's Work. One goes through the usual procedure; the obtaining of reservations and tickets the appropriate attire, a beautiful woman to accompany one and the 'correct' mental disposition. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 25)

The performance of the “great composer's work” begins and progresses in a very satisfying manner until “a slight and subtle movement takes place within the orchestra which disturbs the audience like a dull tooth ache. Four girls in dresses come onto the stage and bend over pointing their buttocks at the audience. This seems incongruous with the music you have been hearing and leads silently within you to apprehension” (Mo050 25). The music, which Mannix describes as “of the spirit” (Mo050 25), is greater than the sum of all its parts (the orchestra). Taking this image as a symbol of the imagination, it communicates the notion that there remains something undefinable about the capacity of the imagination to create such experiences.

In this chamber the eroticism is not the focus of pleasure but actually disrupts the initial enjoyment of the musical performance. This can be seen when one of the

²²² Mannix's notion of the “back brain” is also perhaps influenced by William S. Burroughs' use of this same term and its associations with schizophrenia, Burroughs writes: “Other drugs that have produced experiential schizophrenia – mescaline, harmaline, LSD6 – are all backbrain stimulants. In schizophrenia the backbrain is alternatively stimulated and depressed” (Naked 34).

²²³ The chamber piece is the only one to have been published to date: Aspect No. 35, 1989, page 77.

musicians “begins to pound out a percussion movement on the skin and flesh of the bare rumps of the girls” (Mo050 25). As with previously discussed chambers the graphic, sadistic nature of the eroticism disturbs rather than thrills the protagonist. The composition thus ends and there is a complete and leaden silence. “It has the character of a silent Caesarian birth, in which the baby is stillborn. Eventually isolated incidences of applause are heard...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 25). The protagonist appears stunned by this display, and from the distanced description of the applause he or she seems not to be one of those participating. This event, which occurred at the crescendo, results in a tragic anticlimax akin to the birth of a stillborn child. Such an event alienates the audience of which the protagonist is part, thus resulting in the realisation that allows exit from the chamber.

To exit this chamber one must be aware that the imagination is liable to place you in an environment in which YOU may be the ‘alien’... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 25)

In this way, whilst the imaginative lived metaphors that Mannix inhabits are his own creations, they are externalised to the point where Mannix himself can feel as if he is an alien in his own created reality. The protagonist exits this chamber disturbed by the musical potential of erotic parts of the body. This leads to the notion that, “[i]n a crowd you are liable to hear the most outlandish musics...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo050 25). An orchestra of sorts is again suggested, and it is this awareness of the human body’s musicality that stays with the protagonist; such a crowd, as with the imagination, is indeed greater than the sum of its parts.

The mini-narratives of the chambers, with their repetitive arrangement of entry and exit points, provide a useful structure in which to contain Mannix’s imaginative extravaganzas. The reader moves through the works as if through a landscape of rooms, finding that each reality leaves its mark upon the psyche. It is as if the fixed structure of insides and outsides, employed here by Mannix, are only used to display the porous nature of such distinctions. The works draw attention to Western culture’s practice of unequivocal categorisation through the repeated isolation of words such as “entry” and “exit”. However, the repeated capacity of emotional or imaginative ideas to cross such boundaries shows the futility of such attempts to install limits where psychic existence is

concerned. Fixed borders between reason and madness and between the autobiographical and fictional are conflated in these works, replaced by a sense of exchange and dialogue. Thus Mannix can characterise The Chambers as a fictional work, which is still “deeply autobiographical”. The following text, The Demise can be similarly described. Here Mannix remains cloaked behind the hallucinatory voice of his unnamed narrator as he desperately attempts to resist the automation of Western society so as to maintain his connection with the divine through his “god”: “The recurrent psychosis, the spitting wheel of knowledge, the burnt out eyes that have destroyed beauty to accomplish knowledge” (Mo049 19).

Mo049: The Demise²²⁴

The Demise is one of the most consciously literary texts held within ‘The Atomic Book’, with its frequent self-reflexive references to the “Dear reader” and detailing of the actual mechanisms of its writing.²²⁵ The Demise is a 21-page typed work on blue paper (unbound) mounted on white textured cardboard.²²⁶ Corrections in black pen have been made to the original text, which shows evidence of a process of drafting that is less evident in Mannix’s artist’s books. This is a text concerned with words and the power (often mystical) they have to affect the mental and physical reality of the author and reader. It is a text concerned with literary techniques such as metaphor and simile – techniques by which words, at times, ascend to the realm of magic.

²²⁴ Mannix has recorded a reading of the first three pages of The Demise with accompaniment by ‘The Loop Orchestra’. This recording is to be mastered and released in 2007-2008. A short extract of Mannix reading from this text unaccompanied can be found in the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, listed as Mo119.

²²⁵ Both tendencies found in a text such as Comte de Lautréamont’s Les Chants de Maldoror (258) which Mannix’s interest in Surrealism may have lead him to explore. Burroughs, echoing Lautréamont’s warning to readers at the outset to Les Chants de Maldoror, also uses such techniques: “Gentle reader, the Word will leap on you with leopard man iron claws, it will cut off fingers and toes like an opportunist land crab, it will hang you and catch your jissom like a scrutable dog, it will coil round your thighs like a bushmaster and inject a shot of rancid ectoplasm...(Qtd in Stull 17). The power of language, a central concern for Burroughs, is also a primary focus in The Demise.

²²⁶ The Demise is accompanied by a further 88 pages of miscellaneous writing and drawings which are similarly mounted. Whilst these works are not elements of The Demise, they will be held in the same ‘book’ within ‘The Atomic Book’ as this is how Mannix himself has arranged them.

The Demise brings into erratic association the poetic, the narrative and the polemical: in this way it resonates with a work such as Antonin Artaud's 'Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society' and Unica Zürn's House of Illnesses.

The "demise" mentioned in the title and referred to within the text itself, does, on one level, relate to the fate of the author, but to a greater degree it is a comment regarding the state of a human race that has lost the capacity to connect with the mystical or divine. It is the mad (or those deemed mad) that retain this capacity, and here the connection with Artaud is explicit: Artaud writes that "a tainted society has invented psychiatry to defend itself against the investigations of certain superior intellects whose faculties of divination would be troublesome" (Selected 483). Mannix's The Demise is the investigation of just such an intellect: a dominating first-person authorial voice that tells of the illumination and confusion present in a dialogue with psychosis. A voice that tells of itinerant journeys through the city streets and bushlands, of random meetings in art galleries, parties and coffee shops, of the pain of isolation and the wonder of mystical interconnection.

The two predominating landscapes within the work are that of the urban (Sydney), juxtaposed with the natural (Royal Sutherland National Park). However, the narrator also, at times, situates himself in the desert, as an outsider. This is an apocalyptic text, its landscapes bristling with biblical resonances, ancient gods, doppelgangers, the ghosts of beautiful and disturbing women, and a narrator aware that such experiences can be interpreted as mystical illumination or psychotic delusion. For the protagonist the propensity of psychiatry (and thus society) to characterise such experiences as meaningless delusions is symptomatic of humanity's "demise" – it is a dialogue with such an experience, not a monologue about such an experience, which is required. As Mannix writes in the opening paragraph: "we are breeding the inhabitants [of the town] to de-mystify wonders" (Mo049 1). He does, however, also relate the "demise" to his own sense of self:

I wish to purchase myself, but the price is far in excess of anything I had previously contemplated. I am cold in the stomach. There is the balance there. and the scales. and the ruthless. I have sold myself to every possible demise but I still lived. I wonder if and regularly that am I not the walking sacrifice that am I not totally incompetent in the art of self-slaughter? can I not rid myself of myself. (Mo049 2)

The use of the word “sold” in relation to “demise” relates to the materialistic activities of society which the narrator has, at times, indulged in and which have contributed the wider cultural demise of society. The selling of oneself to substances and actions that are life threatening is also another possible explanation for this passage. However, unlike other members of society who are entirely seduced by such things (he later describes them as automatons), he “still lived”, retaining the capacity to connect with the divine. As he writes later on this page: “I welcome the change that will strip away the colours with which I comfort myself to see the reality. The face. The knowledge” (Mo049 2).

The attempt to “rid myself of myself” is a yearning for purification that is a recurring theme within the work: a purification that would reveal a mystical reality by destroying the conscious mind and exposing the unconscious. The narrator is “continually calling upon the Gods” as if to re-sanctify the world. The narrator experiences these gods directly by their names and their sacred texts, as he writes:

I am continually calling upon the Gods. and they keep appearing but with different names, different cataclysms and knowing them is like knowing heat in all it's wonder – the flames that have poured from me in these 32 years sear the physical material around me. I am careful not to change this reality. at least not too quickly. It will be noted somewhere ‘hallucination’, ‘psychosis’, dementia, but still the names choked in the throat. (Mo049 2)

Purification through fire is repeatedly mentioned in the text and here the narrator's experience of the gods is characterised similarly, as “heat in all it's wonder”. He is conscious of the fact that such experiences characterise him as insane. As with numerous works by Mannix he contrasts the lived experience of schizophrenia with the terminology of psychiatry – names which choke the throat. For the narrator the lived experience is best described in mystical terms, not clinical – he writes:

It appears that the harvest is continual. That I must reap myself continuously. That I must gather the crop. – and give to those their subsistence. I know not what I see. I am lost in the canyons of the desert without Jaweh. Where is the water. I am on fire and curse the Lord's name. and rightly so for he has left me in this demise. Bring forth the plagues for even these would nourish, would satisfy. (Mo049 4)

The “demise” then is the state of godlessness experienced, at times, both by the narrator and the wider populace. The narrator, however, still retains a hunger for the mystical, which even the plagues (evidence of the god's existence) would nourish. Mannix here has

crossed out the word Lord in his document to reflect pictorially his cursing of the name and to evoke the notion that it cannot be transcribed or spoken. In this way the “demise” within the work is both global and personal, intimately related to the inability of an “alienated” populace to connect with the spiritual or divine.

The notion that this state is reflective of an automaton-like adjustment to an environment of social alienation – and that “true sanity” is in fact closer to that which this society calls madness – coincides with the anti-psychiatric views of R.D. Laing, who writes: “True sanity entails in one way or another the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality: the emergence of the ‘inner’ archetypal mediators of divine power, and through this death a rebirth, and the eventual re-establishment of a new kind of ego-functioning, the ego now being the servant of the divine, no longer its betrayer” (*Politics* 119). It is just such a rebirth that the narrator of *The Demise* craves for himself and the world, as he searches within a societal and environmental landscape that has been fractured. A stable foundation based on a connection with such “‘inner’ archetypal mediators of divine power” has been lost; the personal experience of the narrator is indicative of the condition of wider society devoid of stable, meaningful foundations.²²⁷ He writes: “I search for any mark to orientate but everything has been dug over again and again as if there walks in front of my life the spectre and it brandishes a broom of skulls. The furrows in the path I tread connatate such a thing. It is almost that I have to devour the earth to cross it” (*Mo049* 1).²²⁸

Images of a searching confusion, as described above, are followed by descriptions of the narrator as lost within a forest, or trapped in a uterus. Such notions of powerlessness are countered by the mention of magic and its connection with language. This is evident in the following quotation:

²²⁷ The appearance of the Gods to Mannix and his focus on methods of purification resonates with Plato’s discussion of madness induced in individuals by “divine dispensation”: “madness comes about in them and acts as interpreter, finding the necessary means of relief by recourse to prayers and forms of service to the gods; as a result of which it hits upon secret rites of purification and puts the man who is touched by it out of danger for both the present and the future, so finding a release from his present evils for the one who is rightly maddened and possessed” (*Phaedrus* 24). Perhaps the benefit of this form of madness is that those who endure it come to realisations about “secret rites of purification” that in fact benefit the entire community; a community, in Mannix’s case, that no longer knows how to relate to the gods.

²²⁸ This sense of disorientation is also described by Artaud in ‘Fragments of a Diary from Hell (1925)’: “That the soul deserts language or language deserts the mind, and that this rupture plows in the fields of the senses a vast furrow of despair and blood, this is the great pain which undermines not the outer skin or the framework, but the STUFF of the body” (*Selected* 95).

I shake like a leaf and in using the 'simile' become the leaf and must fight. The words I hear around me are deadly potent. If I could wield the thought like solid matter how much would I destroy and how much would I make.? I want to see the madnesses expounded for how else [are] and these unborn children that one sees in the plethora of beings to be laid to earth quietly, quickly and with the appropriate ceremony.? (Mo049 3)²²⁹

One manner in which the narrator comes to “wield the thought like solid matter” is through writing; in this way the text before the reader is the site at which he expounds the “madnesses” and thus the “unborn” immaterial beings are offered burial in the text. The act of writing becomes a form of purification in itself.²³⁰ Mannix’s actual experience of this process of “digesting” presences through ritualistic creative production has already been discussed, and here, such a sentiment finds its way into a work that, whilst autobiographical and documentary, is framed as fiction. In this formulation the “marks” the author searches for to “orientate” himself are the marks of language itself. The creation of such marks in *The Demise* via the typewriter is described numerous times by the narrator, and the scene of sitting before this machine is a recurring image within the work. In this self-reflexive mode the narrator and his narrative repeatedly draw attention to the fact that it is a text in the process of being written. This is affected by repeated references to “Dear reader” and depictions of the author before the typewriter imprinting the words the reader sees before them. The return of the protagonist to the typewriter and the text, grounds the narrative: it provides a central point around which the many other varied events orbit. The first of numerous such references occurs on page four.

I tire people with the analogy. They see scream again and again on paper and are not impressed. I have not the wit to offer fancy alternatives. Besides, this affair is what occurs. If I could burn down myself I would begin immediately gathering combustion. The same symbols appear again and again and I run from them. They follow in front and grimace. Soon we will expect each other in some rapport or common manner. When I type it seems I am typing in blood. in bloods. I have become like the constructivist machine. I operate. I am efficient. But I betray for I wish to destroy. and I am dangerous for I do not know wholly what it is I wish to destroy. If I do not succeed there is penalty. I will be taken and asked. The

²²⁹ This quotation has already been discussed on page 58 of this thesis but different aspects of it are here emphasised.

²³⁰ The notion that the act of creative expression is itself a purification rite elides Plato’s aforementioned category of madness with that which he describes as madness from the muses: wherein an individual is aroused “to a Bacchic frenzy of expression in lyric and other forms of poetry...” (*Phaedrus* 24)

questions already are torturing me. For I know no semblance between them and the language.

They are manifest and seem to spew from the earth in a volcano. (Mo049 4)

In this passage the author's self-conscious awareness of language and the writing process becomes part of the narrative. The author shows literary concerns regarding the repetition of the word "scream", whilst concluding that it is, after all, the most accurate way of describing his experience. In fact repetition exemplifies his experience, "the same symbols appear again and again". The only way to resolve this is for the narrator to burn himself down; this reduction to primary particles in another example of a yearning for ritual purification. Such a reduction towards a form of wholeness is mentioned a number of times in the text, for example: "Would that I had collapsed at birth into a more complete form..." (Mo049 4); "I am left with a primoidal molecule which I must harvest and know not how" (Mo049 4); "I am in the desert and all about me is the fire of the purity. I wish to remain here forever. I wish to become part of the desert. I wish to cut from my body all the chancre and growths and be one with the pure desert. I am husk and inside a raging turbine. I wish to harvest to crop. To make the bread of life" (Mo049 13). Such ideas regarding a state of purity or understanding associated with collapse and disintegration resonate with Artaud's vision of van Gogh's world-view: "That the world should be organised under the command of its own womb, should resume its compressed, anti-psychoic rhythm of a secret festival in the public square and, in front of the whole world, should be returned to the extreme heat of the crucible" (Selected 497).

The writing of The Demise itself, like the process of painting for van Gogh, is one way in which the narrator seeks the purification associated with engaging in dialogue with the "raging turbine" within – the stream of the unconscious from which the writing issues. In this formulation the symbols the author mentions, those that "follow in front and grimace", are the letters imprinted on the page by the typewriter. Such letters appear again and again as the word "scream" is typed. These symbols both "follow" and are "in front", suggestive of the narrator's inability to step outside the stream of the unconscious in which this writing is created. At such times distinctions between the subject and object collapse as the author and the typewriter become unified. The narrator is now like a

“constructivist machine”²³¹ – “efficient” yet harbouring an unfocused desire to destroy. The uncertainty expressed here by the narrator continues through the remainder of this passage. The statement, “If I do not succeed there is penalty”, could relate either to the need to create efficiently or the need to destroy, and this paradoxical situation is the premise which ensures the questions that will follow this failure (questions that, again paradoxically, have already begun) are torturously incomprehensible. In this way the passage becomes unanchored: here the reader (and the narrator) have no firm context on which to imagine the type of questions the narrator writes of; similarly, the interrogators remain unnamed and their anonymity contributes to such instabilities. The questions, then, evade linguistic meaning, and the author’s method of comprehension becomes metaphorical, a lived metaphor in which the questions physically manifest as a spewing volcano. Thought becomes “like solid matter”, yet thought wielded against, rather than by, the protagonist.

The textual space becomes a site of control and contest for the narrator. Here he negotiates between the shadowy figures that are waiting to take him away for questioning, and the often referred to “Dear Reader”. This text then, whilst having an implied “Second-Person” audience, also includes a third party, the “Other”, the interrogators whose existence, it has been shown, serves to fracture the focus of the text and disrupt its linguistic chain of coherence. Thus the writing of the text serves a twin purpose: it is at once a dialogue between forces that exist within the writer’s subjectivity and a missive to an audience the author wishes to free or awaken from the automation of societal control and mystical hibernation.

The evil mentioned at the outset of the following quotation is that of knowledge, preceded, as this passage is, by allusion to the biblical story of the tree of life, snake and apple. In the narrator’s formulation the apple is replaced by the space of the text he is writing, a space to be consumed by the reader so that a new awareness may be achieved.

The evil of which I speak is freedom. All doors lead to it. Fear not. It is suitable for common consumption. It is not poison. Soon you will be intrigued, Soon you will open your own windows and shout too. If only for the marvellousness of voice. I wish to take you[r] hand

²³¹ Here Mannix invokes the artistic movement of Constructivism, which came to prominence in Russia after the 1917 revolution (Honour 830). The Constructivists’ metaphorical embracing of the machine is made literal by the author as he becomes part of the typewriter.

reader, and kiss it and look into yours dark eyes. I wish to know you all. I bequeath to you a space, somewhat in the manner of the ramshackle which I have managed to construct amid the confusion of a life. Do with it as you wish. Treasure it or piss on it. It is yours to do with as you wish. Have you thought, dear reader of your own life while reading this? Aha, you think, you feel the needs do you not? I am newly returned from a womans bed and mind. I have been drinking her all night and now I am really hungry. What I am delivering up to you is the feast I have prepared for myself. Please eat freely. C'mon, devour, don't be reticent. Go for your life. The words occur and reoccur. There is no escape. Simply you must strap yourself in and pray. What for you yourselves will decide. I am writing a storm of words, I am sending down upon you the plagues. It is as if I must ask you to free me and not anything else. I am bathing in the storm. (Mo049 10)

The transformation that the protagonist wishes to effect within the reader is the re-mystification or defamiliarisation of existence. As he writes in a previous paragraph to that which was quoted, he wants the reader to become aware of “[t]he things that perform just for the individual...the pattern the dirt makes on an unironed suit worn by a beggar...” (Mo049 10) and later on the same page: “Do you see the complex that I am drowning in? All is wonder. All is of the nature of the divine” (Mo049 10).²³² Thus the author’s intention is to make the reader aware of the “marvellousness of voice”. This is a quintessentially Surrealist aim, wherein the imagination can apprehend the marvellous within the ordinary and thus give access to the unconscious. Breton writes: “Let us not mince words: the marvellous is always beautiful, anything is marvellous is beautiful, in fact only the marvellous is beautiful” (‘Manifesto’ 14). For the narrator of *The Demise*, the world around him is, at times, infused with the “marvellous”, and it is this perceptual sense that he wishes to translate to the reader. His text becomes an offering up of his world-view, and whilst he suggests the audience has the freedom to “Do with it as you wish. Treasure it or piss on it”; he follows this with his hope that his observations will trigger contemplation in his reader as he writes: “Have you thought, dear reader of your own life while reading this?”

For the author, living is an intense experience of desire, an experience which only makes the author more hungry – the act of writing (within the reality of lived metaphor)

²³² Here the protagonist possesses a world-view in line with that which Mircea Eliade calls “religious man”, Eliade writes: “For religious man, nature is never only ‘natural’; it is always fraught with a religious value. This is easy to understand, for the cosmos is a divine creation; coming from the hands of the gods, the world is impregnated with sacredness” (*The Sacred* 116).

becomes the act of experientially devouring thoughts and events as they are depicted on the page, thoughts and events then consumed by the reader as the words “occur and reoccur”. In this way the author has constructed the space of the text from the flux of his life and bequeathed it to a devouring reader. The use of the word “bequeath” reconnects with the work’s title The Demise, as demise has connotations of property transfer upon death – thus the textual space, a “ramshackle” construction, is handed to the reader, and this process implies the author’s death; or as Roland Barthes suggested: “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (‘Death’ 148). In many respects Mannix kills the singular author long before he is consumed by multiple readers. Mannix’s work, as has already been observed, regularly destabilises the speaking ‘I’ of the text so that multiple, often contradictory, speakers fracture the narrative voice.

This sense of instability has already been observed in The Demise and is also present in the above quoted passage. Here the author first posits himself as a god issuing forth with plague, “writing a storm of words” – yet in the next sentence he asks the reader to free him from this compulsion. Thus the reader is constantly reminded of the author’s (multifarious) presence, suggesting a referential world upon which the surface of the text rests. Such autobiographical intrusions positively invite the reader to look beneath the surface narrative. The writing of Mannix, for he makes much effort to ensure it bears his signature²³³, is often based on his experience of lived metaphors which have shed the referent upon which they are based. To pierce the text at such points can reveal the fascinating relation between the metaphor and its dormant referent, and add details to an oeuvre, his “book of life”, which he himself characterises as an autobiographical undertaking.²³⁴

²³³ Writing in the context of post-structuralist suspicion of terms such as ‘author’ and ‘signature’, Marjorie Perloff states: “Indeed, if our purpose is to understand specific writing practices, individual as well as generic, we can hardly avoid noting their individual stamp or mark of authorship” (‘Language Poetry’ 137). This is particularly the case with Anthony Mannix, as he has gone to great lengths to connect himself with his works in their form as singular objects that retain his handwriting; and at times, coffee stains, blood and saliva. Also his own fracturing of the speaking ‘I’ in his texts, whilst it destabilises the authorial voice, also serves to create a mode of communication that more accurately reflects his own unique world-view and thus further stamps his self upon the text.

²³⁴ Such a practice is in contrast to Barthes’ notion that “there is nothing beneath [the text]: the space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced; writing ceaselessly posits meaning ceaselessly to evaporate it carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning” (‘Death’ 147).

One such incision can be made over the site of the “Temple Of The Dog”. Whilst this temple is mentioned numerous times in Mannix’s artists’ books, and has already been briefly discussed in this thesis, it gains its most complete description in The Demise. The “Temple of the Dog” is an example of a lived metaphor based on the structure of a small War Memorial ‘To Those Who Served’ in the First and Second World Wars. In Mannix’s cosmology it is defamiliarised. The following quotation suggests the manner in which it has been appropriated. The narrator writes:

I am just returned from the Temple of the Dog. An eerie experience. The dog’s head was put up as decoration only and to signify something which is now well and truly lost. But the Age of the Dog has taken over. In the slow slum night around it derelicts come from all places to offer their dicks for veneration and to piss below the head of the dog. In return the dog blesses their dicks and rot their livers. Someone has poured crimson/red paint into the dog’s gaping mouth. (Mo049 12)²³⁵

The “Temple of the Dog” is located in what the narrator describes on the previous page as “the great garden of the mental asylum” (Mo049 11). This is Sydney’s Rozelle Mental Hospital and its extensive grounds, in which Mannix was repeated interned. The Rozelle Hospital site features often in Mannix’s work and it is the sole location for the events detailed in Mannix’s (earlier discussed) book Mo024: Erogeny.

In the above quotation Mannix makes it clear that the dog’s head once signified a meaning that has now been lost. The site has been re-mystified, in Mannix’s imagination, into a temple with its own particular form of veneration, in this case pissing. The text makes clear that the structure has been transformed, but Mannix locates this transformation outside his own mind – it is the passing of time that is responsible for the shift from original signification, to temple as “the Age of the Dog has taken over”: in this way the metaphor has become lived.

The making real of metaphors or thoughts by way of the imagination is of great concern to the narrator of The Demise, who describes the process in the following manner:

Every thought I think impales me through the vital organs. Through every tender thing that I possess. It is as if becoming clearer this exile. It seems. And in seeming it becomes. I can not venture forth in my imagination for the fear that it will become the real article that it will

²³⁵ For images of this location see the ‘Documentary Material’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, Mo084

become solid matter. The imagination that I am dealing with is that horrendous, that apocalyptic, that bizarre. Such a small thing as beauty will take me into the realms of demons of animalism, to the great waterfalls of the neurotic speculation, to the great iron floor of psychosis. I think therefore I am. (Mo049 16)

This real-isation of the imagination is experienced by the narrator in one of the numerous social situations he finds himself in throughout the course of The Demise. At a party, he writes: “A woman speaks to me of puppets. I am to become a puppeteer. But I am too engrossed in taking from my limbs the myriad of strings and devices that are there for me” (Mo049 7). While a woman speaks to him of becoming a puppeteer he is, in fact, attempting to remove strings or devices from his limbs. Perhaps the conversation itself has led his imagination to fashion from his body a marionette attempting to free itself from the cords that the puppet master, the imagination, has attached.²³⁶

Writing of the generation of images that manifest themselves via the imagination during psychosis the narrator suggests:

It is raining to earth tiny green frogs, nails, tongues, intestines, mayhem. It is my personal storm. But I have no control over it. Quite the reverse, it dominates and directs my life. In it people vaporise, disappear, everything is swept into it...This is my God. The recurrent psychosis, the spitting wheel of knowledge, the burnt out eyes that have destroyed beauty to accomplish knowledge. (Mo049 19)

In this formulation it is the imagination that fuels psychosis, for it is the imagination that makes thoughts real, that takes the narrator to the “realms of demons of animalism”. It is in this way that the protagonist can write: “I have just been in my imagination and am visibly shaken” (Mo049 14). Here the imagination is also experienced as physical space, in much the same way that Mannix has often described the unconscious as a space through which he is able to travel.

The imagination is conceived of as a powerful, generative force, and it is a dialogue with this force that has been repressed by the populace and which has the potential to reconnect ‘normal’ individuals to the divine.²³⁷ The lack of tolerance for the imagination, or the powerful effects of a lived imagination, such as that experienced by

²³⁶ In a similar image in The Light Bulb Eaters, Mannix describes himself as “too tied up by the Gulliverian little strings to take her aside and order our clothes off...” (Mo046 71).

²³⁷ Such a view of the imagination is also voiced by Nerval who writes the following of his experience of madness: “I seemed to know everything, understand everything; my imagination afforded me infinite delights. Having recovered what men call reason, must I lament the loss of such joys?...” (265).

the narrator, results in his exclusion from society. From this excluded viewpoint, the viewpoint characterised as insane or eccentric, the narrator journeys the city, a homeless vagrant. This experience crystallises for him the “dismalness of what modern, ordered, life is about...The swiss clock is alive and well, AND growing. Soon there will be a place for us all in it. excentrics to the left please and then INTO the mechanism. Those normal or pretending so for their reasons up front, ACHTENSION” (Mo049 14). This previously discussed quotation posits society as an animated machine of consumption. The “normal” populus mentioned in this quotation are also however characterised as machines²³⁸ or automatons.

I look upon those around me and see the incredible. The glue that keeps all their parts together still continues its function. The grease that they eat to oil their gears is still functioning. The lubrications they apply to their organs is still working. I am in dread of this army around me, this populus. For they are pulling in everydirection. They are so totally sane that they have superceded the clinically insane. In a state of catatonia each single entity stares into a full length mirror and caresses himself, herself. And the caressing is hopeless and helpless. They are just wearing each other away. Each touch brings the destruction of the Temple, brings the dead of the cells. But this is the modern urban. This is the city and the Delusion by which these people sleep peacefully; or delude themselves into thinking that they do. I would like to write dear reader with the intent to do some damage. (Mo049 19)

This is the scene of The Demise – the de-mystification of existence resulting in a population devoid of depth; all is conscious surface, people merely abrade and wear one another away. The totally sane are more disturbed than the clinically insane. Again R. D. Laing’s views are relevant: “I would wish to emphasise that our ‘normal’ ‘adjusted’ state is too often the abdication of ecstasy, the betrayal of our true potentialities, that many of us are only too successful in acquiring a false self to adapt to false realities” (Divided 12).

Homelessness and vagrancy, outside or on the fringes of society, becomes the only form of existence possible for the narrator, eating from garbage bins because “any other form of life was too fraught with traps and dangers to persue” (Mo049 14).²³⁹ In

²³⁸ Carl Jung, who Mannix mentions numerous times in his work, makes a similar comparison in On the Nature of the Psyche: “The living body is a machine for converting the energies it uses into other dynamic manifestations that are their equivalents” (49).

²³⁹ Unica Zurn also writes of being surrounded by traps in her work House of Illnesses. For her such traps are set for her by a presence she calls the “trapper”. “Since yesterday I know why I am making this book: in order to remain ill for longer than is correct. I can slip in a fresh page every day. It can keep on growing fatter and fatter if I want. And I shall remain ill just as long as I keep slipping in fresh pages which then

this formulation the insane become those who are unable or unwilling to conform to repressive societal structures – this is the form of strangulation Artaud had in mind when he wrote: “There is in every lunatic a misunderstood genius whose idea, shining in his head, frightened people, and for whom delirium was the only solution to the strangulation that life had prepared for him” (Selected 492-93).

The undefined “wish to destroy” mentioned by the narrator earlier in the text gains definition with the last line of Mannix’s above mentioned passage: “I would like to write dear reader with the intent to do some damage.” The writing is designed to agitate the populace from their repressive delusion of complacency that characterises the “modern urban”. It is not that people delude themselves into sleeping peacefully, but that this supposed peace is a delusion beneath which rages the turbine of the unconscious. The narrator’s writing is designed to re-establish a dialogue between the populace and their repressed unconscious.²⁴⁰ Mannix’s interest in the Grail quest, or the “schizophrenic trek”, is also relevant here, as Ravenscroft describes the quest in a very similar manner, he writes: “The word Grail was apparently derived from “graduale” which means gradually, step by step, degree by degree. The search for the grail was deemed to bring about a gradual development of the inner life of the soul from dullness akin to sleep, through doubt, to a positive spiritual awakening” (49).

have to be filled. But the trapper continues his pursuit. He has now set duty-traps and consideration-traps” (45).

Here Zurn links her text with her physical and mental state, exemplifying the role artistic creation played in her perception of reality. As with Mannix, Zurn’s act of creation becomes an inherent element of her world-view, having the power to effect changes within it. Zurn’s writing is thus a negotiation between conflated mental and physical states; it is a potent tool with which she attempts to maintain power and control. Such control is forever being threatened by an Other, in this case taking the form of the ‘trapper’. The trapper is an invading presence determined to undermine the book’s creation by setting snares designed to force Zurn to reengage with her sane ‘duties’ and show ‘consideration’ for her “surroundings, which, incidentally, are not very large” (House 45). This last trap is meant to remind her that she is taking up a place in the institution that could be used by someone who is *actually* sick. As in Mannix’s case, creative work becomes a clash of wills between Zurn and the malevolent psychic entities inhabiting her reality. Similarly, the “dangers” and “snares” that the narrator writes of in The Demise, may also be those situations which will lead to his incarceration in a mental institution and the eventual de-mystification of wonders; the return to the reality of the automatons he sees around him. Like Zurn, his is, in one sense, a desire to remain in the state society defines as ‘ill’.

²⁴⁰ Surrealist techniques such as “automatic writing”, practiced to elude the numbed rationality of modern thinking (thus accessing the unconscious), were of particular interest to Mannix as was the related notion that his writing “MAY BE CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT AND PRECISELY DESIGNED TO TRIGGER THE UNCONSCIOUS” (Mo054: Outsider Writing 1). It is possible that both ideas are at work in The Demise, a text that certainly seems written in an automatic fashion but one which is also attempting to induce an imaginative intervention in its reader, in order to re/establish a dialogue with their own unconscious realms.

The narrator has written earlier, “Do we not all wish some form of cold-blooded slaughter to free us?” This writing, typed in “blood, in bloods” is such a cold-blooded slaughter. Here the narrator echoes Artaud’s project of waking the masses from delusory sleep, the “catatonia” of repressive conformism. For Artaud, Van Gogh is likewise inclined:

As if under the terrible staggering blow of that force of inertia which the whole world talks about cryptically and which has never been so obscure as it is now that the whole earth and all of life have combined to elucidate it.

Now, it is with a bludgeon stroke, truly with a bludgeon stroke, that van Gogh never ceases striking all forms of nature and all objects.

Carded by van Gogh’s nail,
the landscapes show their hostile flesh,
the anvil of their eviscerated folds

which one knows not what strange force is in process of transforming. (Selected 488)

For Breton, Artaud and Laing it is the insane who epitomise the resistance to the modern culture of logic and scientific rationalism; Mannix too, echoes such sentiments: “We are in an age when all is known, yet I think that the many stray atoms of the human beings that wander with madness and the sacred surge of an intent not even calculated will have an impact on those that pretend to the accomplishment, the perfection” (Mo049 17).

The world of The Demise is de-mystified, accomplished, perfect – yet the stray atoms of the mad still wander and they have the capacity to re-reveal the gods and the sacred mystery that contemporary existence has repressed. The mad, and in particular the schizophrenic, defy psychiatry’s attempts at unified categorisation or understanding. Such understandings optimise the rationality of society, and the schizophrenic condition resists all the fixed labels applied to it, retaining within itself an essential mystery epitomised by the psychiatrist Karl Jaspers’ characterisation of the condition as “the ununderstandable” (Qtd in Sass 26).

Those who experience the “sacred surge” of schizophrenia are the “stray atoms” that escape singular, stable definitions; the narrator writes: “I am perpetual. The motion I engender seems to me a grinding, grinding, - the grain must be ground to flour, but in this instance it is not grain but bone and they are most dissicated to begin” (Mo049 2). The sense of fluidity evoked here by the mention of “perpetual” and “motion” and an image that shifts quickly between “grain”, “flour” and “bone” is emphasised further by the

author as he writes: “every direction has me placed in a position where a thousand more addiments, condiments, accompaniments come. The state of duplicity has long since passed into an extraordinary multiplicity” (Mo049 14). *The Demise* itself records such a chaotic world view: a myriad of images, scenes, ideas and events cascade upon the reader who becomes caught up in the “storm of words” that surge from the narrator. In this respect the work is akin to Artaud’s descriptions of van Gogh’s paintings: “these kinds of organ peals, these fireworks, these atmospheric epiphanies, in short, this ‘Great Lifework’ of an incessant and untimely transmutation” (Selected 489).

As in many of Mannix’s texts such conditions of transmutation are associated with the state of chaos. For the narrator the forces of the imagination, at times, exert control over his experiences and in the following quotation the idea of “karma” is introduced in a similar manner. It is less that the protagonist feels controlled or manipulated by this force, rather, as with psychosis which he previously described as his “god”, the force is directing him through the chaotic state which necessitates a movement towards enlightenment: “The winds of karma which drive me are their own purpose. I will not question them. I will not speak of the knowledge. It is there and this is enough. It will one day lead me through the chaos and out into eternity. I long for the day but I will not prompt it or pre-empt it. It will come as surely as death. And it may very well be that it will be accompanied by death” (Mo049 13).

The process of writing, and the writing of this chaotic text in particular, is one manner in which the protagonist moves through this chaos, a movement or journey that constitutes a dialogue with psychosis: the mode of purification required for enlightenment to be achieved. Even the homeless wanderings already mentioned are characterised in this way: “It is the process of purification that forces the feet from one spot to another. From the spleen of the city right to its glittering pineal gland” (Mo049 12). Again the notion of a Grail quest is pertinent, as Ravenscroft’s book links the ultimate enlightenment at the culmination of the quest with the “pineal gland situated beneath the brain—the Third Eye! And the whole purpose of this romance of the Grail, its plot and the sequence in which its sixteen adventures were written, was to open and activate this ‘Pineal Eye’ to a vision of the hidden secrets of Time and the meaning of

human destiny!” (50).²⁴¹ Thus the “schizophrenic trek” undertaken by the narrator towards the “glittering pineal gland” is emblematic of the journey the reader undergoes, through a text designed to activate their own third eye; this again resonates with Mannix’s desire to create texts that have the potential “to trigger the unconscious”.

Mannix’s assertion that the purifying transition from chaos to eternity may well “be accompanied by death”, is explicitly linked with the writing process in the following quotation: “the pure is becoming more distilled...I am trying to put myself on a sort of gallows with this writing. With this constructivism. But once more I am the bungler, the inept, the fool. for the gallows I build are for the child. The hangman’s noose would not fit my big toe” (Mo049 16). The narrator associates such a purification, a distillation, to the uniting wholeness of re-mystification which constitutes the only way of rectifying society’s demise. Such aims are again linked to the text the narrator is actually writing:

Most of the love i practice these days, I do not practise, I commit. I wield the phallus through the air and it is pink and electric. It is black magic. The great night clouds dance. The moon hums. The elements unite. Gone is the scattered order and [in] it it’s place the wholeness of the rite. of the Ideal. I take a rock and after painting it pink and black in the manner of one of Guillime’s drawings pray to it. It is the Idol. And I know not what even prayers I give issue to. The process is enough. I am adoring the life in myself. I am praying to the human race, to the esprit. But the disenchantment, the distaste is not so easily dispelled...throughout the night strange chants fill the air and the night seems to shudder black on black. When it feels that I have written enought of myself, when the description is replete, again the magic borders begin to merge, begin to diplopiate and I must continue. Do not mistake me, I mean to finish. I will not deliver a half baked vegetable to your plate. I mean to write to you a true account. One that may give you indigestion, heartbeurn and flatulence but nevertheless one you can get your teeth into. (Mo049 17)

The practice of writing The Demise is one aspect of the narrator’s ritual work aimed at re-mystifying the world. In the final pages of the text the narrator expresses a brief compassion for those automatons he sees all around him in society, encased and isolated within their shell of consciousness, he writes:

I find them as fragile in their hopes and pretenses and joys as myself. I weep for them. That the slightest fracture will cause the egg to burst. That the slightest tremor will cause the cup

²⁴¹ In Ravenscroft’s work such speculations regarding the purpose of the Grail romance are apparently derived from the free-hand annotations of Adolf Hitler in his copy of an “early German version of Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Parsival” (47).

to spill the contents so laboriously prayed to, awaited for, made into thus. Amid all the paradises that you and I can manufacture in a lifetime lies the rapine and the asunder. The flowers sink in the mud; the songs choke in the distance. Even the dream which materialises which seems to maintain itself will someday go mad with a meat-cleaver in one hand and the carving-knife in the other. (Mo049 21)

The realities each human builds for themselves are evoked: those fragile constructions which determine boundaries and through which the world is viewed and shaped. Like the life that creates them, such realities are transient and prone to dissolution and death. The narrator then speaks of Sisyphus, refiguring the futility of this mythic figure with the suggestion that, “I would rather think that we will manage to climb the devastated mount, but, arriving exhausted and expired at it’s summit callopse, dead into some pit of anti?climax” (Mo049 21). In a text that speaks so much of its own progression and creation it is possible that the narrator also speaks of the text here; a text which does indeed end in an anti-climax, without a sense of resolution or finality. In the following quotation the narrator is again conflating life and the text:

We stare at the great flames that erupt from the furnace and stand dumb, but the fuel is the life of our souls, the image with us since we began. So it is that we should see the sham that is our manufacture and not the dust. Would that it was dear reader a composition so inert and without deceitful connation. But in amongst this great auraeole of the cursed lie the delights, like hottentots on a rampage. (Mo049 21)

Mannix has elsewhere linked the unconscious to a foundry and it is possible that here the furnace is the unconscious, central for Mannix to the imaginative life of human kind, an imaginative life that has been repressed – hence humans now “stand dumb” before it. The “sham” then becomes the conscious constructions of the mind, those fragile world-views of “deceitful connation” by a demystified populace; however, the composition of these realities (and The Demise text also) is not as inert as it seems: instead it harbours within it delights capable of re-mystification.

At this point, the narrator, who began the page empathising with the de-mystified populace realises that his textual voice has likewise begun to reflect this – he states: “But why should I become so involved with the human race? What are they to me? I am surprised. I have been speaking in the common plural and this is unusual. Better to stick to the undenyably singular and not suffer the refutation of those that think rotten eggs are petunias. Do you know that I am luniacle?” (Mo049 21) The narrator extricates

himself via his language, shifting his authorial point of view from the collective ‘we’ to ‘you’, at once directly addressing the reader and distinguishing himself. The protagonist emphasises this distinction by evoking his lunacy, that which has always separated him from the ‘normal’ population – a lunacy which engages both the horrific and spiritual within his unconscious as he writes: “I have touched the hollow in myself where amid the monstrous also lies the divine” (Mo049 21).²⁴² In one final reference to the purifying powers of the flame the narrator suggests that within psychotic visions there were,

sparks of fire, real fire that have blistered into raging storms of flame, that have penetrated to the innermost and burnt asunder all the confusion of a life filled with mayhem and distraction. In the bowels of the filthiest concoction angels have arisen singing and in the witness is the divine for it is not beyond you to realize that this performance, (call it what you will), is for you alone, singularly, ad entity. (Mo049 21)

The return to the second-person mode of address in this concluding phrase creates a sense of intimacy, as the reader is embraced and strengthened by the suggestion that “it is not beyond you to realize”. The chaos of the narrator’s life has been transformed by a purifying psychotic fire – a fire linked to the writing of the text through which the reader becomes a witness to such acts of purification. In Mannix’s formulation his kaleidoscopic, “speculative narratives” born of a dialogue with his “god” – the “recurrent psychosis, the spitting wheel of knowledge” – draw the reader into a chaotic realm which offers insight into the illumination Mannix believes to be present at the culmination of the “schizophrenic trek”.

The journeying continues in the final work to be analysed in this thesis, The Light Bulb Eaters, which further discusses Mannix’s notion of the “schizophrenic trek”. This text combines many aspects of Mannix’s practice, ranging fluidly between documentary, fictional and pictorial. It is here, Mannix suggests, that his psychotic landscape of the unconscious, is most completely articulated.²⁴³ The last chapter of this thesis, Chapter Six, is dedicated to an analysis of this work.

²⁴² It is through creative production that Mannix is able to touch this “hollow” within himself. For it is in practicing the ritual of Outsider Art, Mannix suggests in Erogeny, which allows contact with both the monstrous and the heavenly.

²⁴³ Conversations with Mannix: Recollections of G.S.Jenkins 2005-2008.

Chapter Six

The Light Bulb Eaters: Taking the blinkers off

Mo046: The Light Bulb Eaters, which Mannix describes as his ‘novel’²⁴⁴, is one-hundred and twenty-five hand-written pages bound in an A4-sized artist’s sketch book. It is the presentation (at times possessing the spontaneity of a diary²⁴⁵) of a sequence of discussions and images in which thoughts, memories and created stories are brought loosely into relation.²⁴⁶ The resulting text is a chaotic or speculative collection of narrative threads, ranging between passages of self-reflection regarding the nature and experience of living with madness to detailed descriptions of hallucinatory journeys. This exegesis will follow the progression of the text to ascertain the loosely associative manner in which its various narrative threads are arranged.

Mannix considers The Light Bulb Eaters to be the text that most clearly defines his psychotic cosmology.²⁴⁷ A cosmology possessing an underworld consisting of unconscious “places” through which he travels on the “schizophrenic trek”. On such journeys Mannix describes his pursuit of “power” – a power which allows him to control and create within these places and is, ultimately, capable of effecting his resurrection from the death-like realm into which he has descended. The trek itself is effected via art-making (Mannix’s “navigation device” (Mo046: Light 17) for the psychotic), thus the creation of the text is Mannix’s technique for navigating through the unconscious places he describes within it. It is in this way that he is, he suggests, an anthropologist of the unconscious.

The Light Bulb Eaters begins with a justification for Mannix’s exploration of the darker, psychotic regions of the human experience. Mannix’s views are imbued with a sense of intention not normally associated with the insane. He writes:

²⁴⁴ Conversations with Mannix: Recollections of G.S.Jenkins 2005-2008.

²⁴⁵ The inclusion of dates within the text itself contributes to this diary-like impression. These dates show that the majority of the text was written in approximately nine months: pages 1 – 118 created from 20/05/93 to 04/02/94. The final seven pages being written at much greater intervals. Two dates appear in these later pages, 20/11/94 and 16/11/95.

²⁴⁶ The text possesses a spontaneity indicative of thought rather than writing: the hand-writing includes the mis-takes and erasures that Michel Thévoz suggests links such work to speech and thinking.

²⁴⁷ Conversations with Mannix: Recollections of G.S.Jenkins 2005-2008.

I suppose that there is some value in keeping the blinkers on, in treading the straight and narrow, in following the letter of the bible and giving them a quick polish while you're at it and NOT selling your soul, but then when your card comes up, its only worth a few miserable nickels and most of it gets thrown away, uneaten as with an exotic over-ripe cheese that you buy when you are being extravagant... [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 4)

At the outset, psychosis is proffered as a choice made by Mannix, and whilst the events within the unconscious realm are often out of his control he suggests the decision to enter initially was his – here he conducted what he describes as the “prolonged study of chaos” which “brought about a Psychic Typography which was one of extremes” (Mo046: Light 5).²⁴⁸ Mannix compares his own experience of chaos to that of “Charon the Boatman” on a river that “is hideous and blinding” in a boat “beyond any sense or logic” (Mo046: Light 5). In this formulation Mannix situates himself as a conduit for spirits of the dead: the figure of Charon restored to the land of the living in the manner of a shaman, Orpheus or Joseph Campbell’s notion of the mythological hero, able to travel to the spiritual underworld of the dead and return.²⁴⁹ This theme of descent into a deathlike psychotic state²⁵⁰ and eventual resurrection is the overarching narrative of The Light Bulb Eaters. It is the journey, Mannix suggests, that “strikes you dead” (Mo046: Light 103) – a journey that culminates in the final stages of the text with Mannix shedding his “body of work” in favour of the animate “being of art” (Mo046: Light 109) – at once bringing art and self to life.²⁵¹

In an example of the associative shifts in this narrative, at the mention of “Charon” and the chaotic spirit underworld, a portal seems to open in the text: Mannix suddenly moves from contextualising his creative practice to a description of the appearance, beneath the floor boards of his house, of “a vast, gnashing black cavernous

²⁴⁸ Octavio Paz suggests that Henri Michaux’s Mescaline writings are evocative of contact with “the revelation of pure chaos. The visible entrails, the reverse side of presence, chaos is the primordial stuff, the original disorder, and also the universal womb” (xi). The notion of the universal womb as it relates to Mannix’s work will be returned to shortly.

²⁴⁹ Campbell suggests: “The inward journeys of the mythological hero, the shaman, the mystic, and the schizophrenic are in principle the same; and when the return or remission occurs, it is experienced as a rebirth: the birth, that is to say, of a ‘twice-born’ ego, no longer bound in by its daylight-world horizon” (‘Schizophrenia’ 230).

²⁵⁰ Such sentiments are captured in a reading Mannix conducted accompanied by ‘The Loop Orchestra’ where he describes his hallucinations as his gravedigger. Mannix reads this text from page 110 of The Light Bulb Eaters and the recording can be found in ‘The Atomic Book’ in the ‘Sound Works’ section listed as Mo102.

²⁵¹ Thus, with the figure of Charon and notions of a journey through the underworld of psychosis, a strong resonance with the Inferno of Dante, is present from the outset.

mouth which issued forth an unbelievable stink as decayed molars oszed voluminous pus from the abcessed remains of their roots while the mouth gnashed like the percussion section of a symphony orchestra playing at twice the tempo and blind drunk” (Mo046: Light 5).

Whilst this cacophony continues, Mannix sees “the disorder in life trying to eat through the floorboards. anyway, i had a point fixed before my eyes as if it was welded to the air. What concerned me was power and its acquisition. I had an obsession with regard to this. What i could see were places. Unscaleable, impenetratable places that contained what i wanted and i wished issue” (Mo046: Light 6). Here is revealed another central preoccupation of Mannix: the capacity of psychosis to facilitate the exploration of the unconscious as a physical landscape, “places” containing the promise of great power – erotic, magical, and shamanic.

As if the mouth in the floor is a conduit for spirits, a woman is released to infest the house. Mannix escapes, attempting to “find a way to ordinariness”, but instead he is “taken further towards the core in a locomotive that could not exist even in one’s wildest dreams, driven by a one-eyed Monomaniac accelerating faster and faster towards a destination that could bear no life” (Mo046: Light 6). A small illustration at the bottom of the page shows the large figure of the Monomaniac driving a small car towards a pair of breasts. The disembodied head of Mannix floats, as if under glass, at the front of the car. The one large eye of the driver perhaps relates to Mannix’s belief that psychic illumination is linked to the opening of the “third eye”.

“Another Order of Life”

On this journey into the unconscious, as the speed relentlessly increases, Mannix is stripped of the last vestiges of conscious control, and in the visions that appear to him he sees “another order of life...it was the realm of the irrational” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 7). Notions of the “core” or the “source” fall away at this point amid a zone of “ceaseless change” – change which effects Mannix as well, who transforms as much as the environment. “This is the true dream where everything is imbued with it’s

own life and independent Raison d'être and definition and it's classification unknown and unwanted" (Mo046: Light 7). Classifications and definitions epitomise rationality for Mannix and, as has been seen in other works, their solidity is often eroded as the counter realm of the "irreal", with its ethos of chaos, offers Mannix a genuine alternative reality. Such a realm is imbued with a violence related to the fracturing of the placid stability of firm denotation. Mannix writes: "I found that when one enters into an arrangement with chaos one becomes on a singular stance with violence."²⁵² The delight was that all connotation would be absent. I found myself lost in a place of inestimable power and unbroached beauty. It was that as a being that you could approach an abstract force" (Mo046: Light 8). Such a realm is at once a body and a

city that can never be mapped, where today's freeway is tomorrow's impasse, where familiar landmarks are gone in an instant like beasts burning in the field whilst standing up, where a houdiniesque power is needed simply to go from step to step, where to imagine is the deadliest of all arts for you bring that into being, and it has an untamed life of its own, where one day everything is inanimate and the next animate, where in dismantling one wall creates many more, where one might be accosted by a thug and one can be in no way sure that it is not a product of the mind or something from another dimension, where everything overwealms to such a crescendo that one could be in the middle of the Atlantic during a pitched storm and sitting on a piece of board. (Mo046: Light 8)

The connection between Mannix's experience of the unconscious during psychosis and the nomad space of Deleuze and Guattari has already been noted: here again the inability to map this realm suggests the deterritorialized characteristics of this nomadic zone. Mannix emphasises the mutability of this region, and the futility of his own descriptions, by following the long passage quoted above with this line: "Yet this is only a town in a place where yet there is the wild country" (Mo046: Light 8).

Here can be seen the contrary mix of heightened and diminished intentionality that typifies the instability of this psychotic reality. In one sense this space, devoid of fixed denotation, grants the imagination the power to bring the imagined into being –

²⁵² Mannix's characterisation of this chaotic reality as bringing him in close contact with violence, and his desire to depict it in his "speculative" narratives, echoes Georges Bataille, who writes: "Realism gives me the impression of a mistake. Violence alone escapes the feeling of poverty of those realistic experiences. Only death and desire have the force that oppresses, that takes one's breath away. Only the extremism of desire and of death enables one to attain the truth... Humanity is faced with a double perspective: in one direction, violent pleasure, horror, and death – precisely the perspective of poetry – and in the opposite direction, that of science or the real world of utility" (The Impossible 9-10).

here the intent of the individual is all-powerful, having the capacity to change material surroundings. However, such creations, once they become part of the material fabric of the environment, gain independence and (along with the environment itself) act in ways the individual cannot predict or control. The image of upright beasts, burning in fields where once were familiar landmarks, is particularly evocative of the unstable, ominous nature of this space.

This is a world of dramatic animation, though even this characteristic is not fixed, as it can also appear inanimate. Such contradictions, and the notion that diverse contradiction is a central trope of schizophrenia, is noted by Louis A. Sass: such contradictions lead him to suggest that, “if schizophrenia is to be comprehended psychologically, I would suggest that its interpretation must be intimately tied to its very diversity and incomprehensibility” (*Madness* 27). Similarly, schizophrenia, for Mannix, entails the experience of a chaotic realm where constructs of comprehension such as categorisation and organization through rational denotation have dissolved. This is precisely why Mannix is so frustrated with psychiatry – those “theoriticians who were deluding themselves that they could fit the idea [chaos] into their file cabinets” (*Mo046: Light* 7). Madness is a state that must be experienced if it is to be understood, forever eluding the rational monologues written about it. Metaphoric ideas become lived – psychosis is a landscape, consisting of towns, cities and wild country. It is a zone that changes as Mannix moves through it, eluding anything but momentary descriptions – one which Mannix could sense beyond the fabric of the rational, and which he entered intentionally:

My exploration of such towns and cities was seventeen years long. I found the entry as difficult as the exit. As a child i would often sit and entrance myself upon the visual trying to find a door. It was as much because i was assured that an incomparable joy lay within as to escape the emotional barrage of family which was already attempting to tailor me for a useless pedestrian life. Later, the delights of manicness became accessible after a concerted effort at sleep deprivation. (*Mo046: Light* 9)

Such comments are reminiscent of Arthur Rimbaud’s famous letter to Paul Demeny:²⁵³

The realm Mannix comes to know is one of innumerable possibilities, mobile and

²⁵³ “I say that one must be a *seer*, make oneself a *seer*.”

unstable, similar to the realm of Rimbaud's "unutterable, unnameable things" wherein a unified sense of self becomes disordered. Leo Bersani in A Future for Astyanax "compares the schizophrenic's loss of self to the ecstatic surrender of self ('the delights of self-scattering') that he finds in the writings of Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Genet, and Artaud, and which he contrasts with traditional literature, where the self exists as 'an ordered and ordering presence'" (Sass 219).

In a related passage Bersani further contextualises such scattered selves: "As an alternative to both the socially defined self and the free or universal or transcendent self, there are marginal or partial selves or, perhaps most interestingly, a scattered or disseminated self" (x). It is just this sense of self-scattering that Mannix expresses through the dis-order of The Light Bulb Eaters: reflective observations give way to detailed hallucinatory descriptions of great immediacy. Conventional time is manipulated, accelerating amid reflective passages that can summarise years of activity, and decelerating as particular narrative journeys through hallucinatory landscapes are described in minute detail. Thus the work is fuelled by a tension between objective distance and immersive immediacy, reflecting Mannix's own schizophrenic experience, which he describes at this point in the book as a contrast between "a serotinal fit [in which] one would eat up ideas as at a banquet, and in the prolonged, elongated, disembowelled, distended organs of the night create wonders of the imagination" (Mo046: Light 9), and "the obscene come-down of the morning and as in the poem *Howl* by Ginsberg one would be the owner of handfuls of jibberish and not really sure what to do with them" (Mo046: Light 9). Ultimately, however, Mannix unifies his scattered self and this coincides with his resurrection from the death-like psychotic state into which he has descended during the course of this text. In the later stages of The Light Bulb Eaters he writes: "it is that i am coming alive that i am so testy, birth has its throes just as death has...it is that all the pieces of myself that i have left in other places are now returning to me and i am becoming no longer divided" (Mo046: Light 110).

The poet makes himself a seer by a long prodigious, and rational *disordering of all the senses*. Every form of love, of suffering, of madness; he searches himself, he consumes all the poisons within him, and keeps only their quintessences. This is an unspeakable torture during which he needs all his faith and superhuman strength, and during which he becomes the great patient, the great criminal, the great accursed – and the great learned one! – among men. – For he arrives at the *unknown!*...and even if, crazed, he ends up by losing the understanding of his visions, at least he has seen them! Let him die charging through those unutterable, unnameable things..." (11).

In an example of the narrative contrasts between passages of artistic self-reflection and fiction-like accounts of events, the above quotation associating his work with that of Ginsberg is directly followed by:

...I awoke; the sky had that steelly
grey colour mixed with it's blue to

indicate that it was afternoon. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 9)

This marks the sudden transition into another journey through illusory realms: “What movie theatre had i fallen asleep in and then what was a moist usherette doing in my lap oh! with her pussy spread like an angel about to fly? Surmises, guesses, speculations – here for the first time these were not my enemy and i entranced duality as a state of existence” (Mo046: Light 10). The confluence of the erotic female and the angel is a recurring theme, and Mannix dedicates an entire book of illustrations, aptly entitled Angel, to this theme. Mannix has accepted Rimbaud’s “unknowability” embracing speculation as a form of knowledge: as he has written elsewhere “[t]he irreal is the eternal speculation” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 175). In this way Mannix is freed from the need for certainty and can continue on a journey which takes him into “a closely contained room that paradoxically contained endless shelving” (Mo046: Light 10). On the shelves are a myriad of severed heads (an image already discussed elsewhere in this thesis): “Each was still living, by some concoction of magic and collectively every Manner of base emotion, vice and mood was represented...[they speak]...endless ruminations, murmers, screams, historical narratives. I found this place a-kin to musical composition and terrorless and with the hidden things i gained access to, began to build a contraption within myself which i named the toy of the spirit” (Mo046: Light 10). Such a room can be seen as a living archive containing “hidden things” which, once revealed, enable Mannix to control the place; for whilst he does not reveal what the “toy of the spirit” might be, he does suggest that its “purpose was coherent” (Mo046: Light 10).

Mannix makes further reference to this room later in The Light Bulb Eaters, when he recounts Rosey Spite’s interest in this space:

Rosey expressed a strong interest in the room full of heads that i kept. It was in this catacomb that i would often sit and as they screamed and ranted and raved and recanted their deeds of horror in horrific manner i would speculate on a greater self and a greater world. The horror of this place mattered not to me, in fact i found it calming. (Mo046: Light 41)

Such a space seems to relate to the findings of practical research conducted by Wilson Van Dusen. He suggests two categories of schizophrenic hallucinations: one which constitute the “lower order voices” (122) which are crude, deceitful, accusatory and can involve the shouting of multiple voices. Van Dusen contrasts these with a second category, voices of a higher order which, he suggests, don’t often speak but rather “communicate with the inner feelings of the patient” (124).²⁵⁴

The voices Mannix describes in this room seem most compatible with Van Dusen’s lower order voices. What seems inconsistent with Van Dusen’s observations is Mannix’s reaction to them. Instead of being troubled and distressed (as Van Dusen suggests his patients were) Mannix views this cacophony of voices as a “musical composition” and “calming”.²⁵⁵ Such positive feelings, and the belief that within psychotic experience there lie important lessons to be learned, imbues much of Mannix’s creative work. Mannix’s belief that he can manipulate the realms of the unconscious he discovers through psychosis, in order to create realities (a practice already discussed) posits him as a magician or shaman in dialogue with and affecting change within such realms. This is also evidenced by Mannix’s activity later in The Light Bulb Eaters where he begins, by magical means, to control the heads, creating a symphony with them. Thus Mannix, in order to influence such realms, studies them in what he calls an “esoteric” fashion. Directly after his description of the heads, Mannix writes: “Meanwhile, i had an enigmatic and esoteric study. I regard paradox as both a state of being and a place rather than the conventional systemization. This place was my workshop where i could turn the ugly things i had acquired into the opposite” (Mo046: Light 11).

The word “Meanwhile” here tacitly connects the narrative to that which preceded it, namely the construction of the “Toy of The Spirit”, to which the narrative never returns.²⁵⁶ Mannix now introduces another of the terms he commonly associates with the

²⁵⁴ Van Dusen also notes this range of voices in the spiritual writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Swedenborg in his Journal of Dreams writes of a dream that bears resemblance to Mannix’s hallucination. He writes: “Hideous dreams: how the executioner roasted the head he had struck off; and laid one roasted head after the other in an empty oven that never got full” (43-44).

²⁵⁵ The importance of music in Mannix’s experience of the unconscious has already been noted.

²⁵⁶ “Toy of the Spirit” is also written repeatedly on the paper sleeve that covers one of Mannix’s pictorial books containing drawings created in Ward 26 of Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital. As no other references to the “Toy of the Spirit” are found in the actual book its meaning remains obscure. However, Mannix himself has suggested that the “toy of the spirit” refers to that state within schizophrenia where the spirit can be played with and manipulated like a toy, and where toys and other useful things can be made.

landscape of psychosis and the unconscious – that of Paradox: a “state of being” and a realm in which “ugly things” could be dismantled and transmuted into “the opposite”. Such a transmutation is reminiscent of the power Mannix affords art-making – specifically the capacity of drawing to transform “girlie magazine” images into beautiful illustrations. As if to expound on this notion of transmutation Mannix suddenly suggests “I had an illusion” (Mo046: Light 11): the landing and dismantling of a “flying device” from which he builds a car. Thus begins the second extended psychotic trek within the narrative.

The Female Landscape

It soon becomes apparent that Mannix is journeying over the body of a naked woman. Mannix finds himself minute in relation to the female form: erotic overtones are evident, as is the powerful impact the female entity has on Mannix’s life. Beginning amongst the follicles of the hair on her head he travels down the face before dancing in erotic abandon around the nipples. He then makes his way onto the stomach: “This place was luminous, composed out of the fibre of the moon and in its midst was a circular chasm from whence i could hear talk of every type of life” (Mo046: Light 12). Thus, with the navel and its umbilical connection, is introduced another preoccupation within the Mannix cosmology: the womb as a realm of transmutation and creation. Mannix’s formulation echoes the notion of the World Navel common to the mythology of many cultures and specifically discussed by Joseph Campbell in The Hero with a Thousand Faces, a book Mannix writes of owning later in The Light Bulb Eaters. Campbell writes: “the World Navel is the symbol of the continuous creation: the mystery of the maintenance of the world through the continuous miracle of vivification which wells within all things” (41). Such an

(Conversations with Mannix: Recollections of G.S.Jenkins 2005-2008.) At such times Mannix experiences his spirit as having materialised so that he can work on it like a physical object. Perhaps the ugly things he has “acquired” are aspects of his own spirit that he is attempting to transmute into “the opposite”. It is in this way that changes made in the unconscious can also come to effect consciousness. As already quoted, Mannix writes: “It seems you must let these things of the unconscious find their space and diction in your ‘everyday’ life without fear of them or of the alteration they make in how life is experienced” (Mo015: Journal of a Madman 1995-96 26).

association posits the woman over which Mannix travels as the Universal Mother whose womb is described by Campbell as “the hub of the wheel of the earth...whose fire is the fire of life” (42).

Ultimately however, for Mannix, it is the vaginal opening to the womb that is the most powerful symbol of creation and it is onwards towards this zone that Mannix journeys. He depicts this site as a powerful source of primordial pleasure and animation which can control and draw him in: “It was as if i was in bondage with my destination and held there by the tentacles of an octopus covered with fur...[w]ithin pulsed antiquities of the blood, bloods from other places, bloods from other being” (Mo046: Light 12). From its depths evolve all manner of hybrid creatures: “miniture pink flamingoes that burst into flames, butterflies with the heads of cats, small white lilies and magenta lotus that were multi-legged and jumped like outrageous grasshoppers, insects bearing many heads with perfectly formed smooth legs covered by sheer nylons...” (Mo046: Light 14). As has already been noted, the “sheer nylons” mentioned are also a recurring erotic motif within Mannix’s work. He has, elsewhere, described his own writing as being “like the stocking on a woman’s leg; it is a shadow that makes the leg barer” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 57). The stocking, as with writing, builds up an ambiguous gauze or framework through which to imagine a unique, unattainable nakedness – allowing each viewer or reader to imagine their own ideal erotic meaning.

As the description of this female landscape continues, a woman’s moaning begins to be heard and it is this sound that seems to draw Mannix (and the reader) from one illusion to another. Mannix suggests that this female moan has the power to actually turn him into a woman, and in this way ‘he’ and the woman become unified: “Two scorpions, we became joined at the genitals and all division ceased” (Mo046: Light 14). As Georges Bataille writes: “What does physical eroticism signify if not a violation of the very being of its practitioners? – a violation bordering on death, bordering on murder?...The transition from the normal state to that of erotic desire presupposes a partial dissolution of the person as he exists in the realm of discontinuity” (17). Eroticism allows humans to partially dissolve the “discontinuity” that isolates them, and Mannix’s suggestion that all genital division is dissolved echoes this idea. Such notions are emphasised by the illustration on the subsequent page that depicts two naked women caressing one another,

one of them presumably Mannix; beside this illustration Mannix describes a scene that encompasses the ideas Bataille believes are inherent in eroticism: violation, violence, death, murder and dissolution.

Making love on that bed for months amid an enormous herd of cattle being slaugh[t]ered by a pick-axe through the cranium, and waiting to be slaughtered brought about a physiological change whereby we became awash constantly with enormous volumes of adrenalin, and to be able to co-habit with the sheer hysteria of the herd, endomorphs. Orgasms became blackly terrible and held an unsurpassed addiction, the house contained many more things than it should have, when i listen i hear screams of lovers tortured by pleasure in one of the hells of Dante and the woman beside me moaning in her sleep as i lay entranced in pleasure. (Mo046: Light 15)²⁵⁷

Mannix conflates the erotic with violence, and this is powerfully communicated in the image of copulation amid slaughter – the specificity of the word “pick-axe” punctuates the description, giving the scene a disturbing intensity. For the second time in the novel Mannix evokes Dante and his infernal circulations, a symbolic schematic that Mannix will return to on page twenty-eight of the text as he represents his cosmology as a series of concentric circles.

The Engine Room

The narrative suddenly shifts again, and instead of the bed with its herd Mannix finds himself in a space, already mentioned in this thesis, which he calls the “engine-room”. Here, in the “bowels of a grey metal ship of gargantuan proportions steaming from pole to pole i was jarred and vibrated by a mechanical, crystalline ferocity intent upon destroying everything about me...What’s more, to make concrete the analogy, i found myself locked in a dim, miniscule dirty grey-white room in the local bedlam” (Mo046: Light 15-16). Thus, through a series of linked extended analogies, the narrative reengages with a concrete reality: the interior of a dismal mental asylum room. Mannix has taken the reader through a series of wild hallucinations that dissipate to reveal (as must often be

²⁵⁷ Here Mannix graphically dramatises Bataille’s suggestion of a “similarity between the act of love and the sacrifice. Both reveal the flesh. Sacrifice replaces the ordered life of the animal with a blind convulsion of the organs. So also with the erotic convulsion; it gives free rein to extravagant organs whose blind activity goes on beyond the considered will of the lovers” (92).

the case) the depressing reality of institutionalisation. A deep sense of erotic union is thus followed by an annihilating isolation in the “engine room”: Mannix uses the word “aftermath” to describe this period and in this way suggests that the isolation is the ‘comedown’ from the ‘high’ of his intense unification with another human being. Thus the contrary emotions of connectivity and alienation attributed to those who experience schizophrenia are brought into meaningful dialogue. This is in contrast to the following statement by Sass: the “Schizophrenic can be hypersensitive to human contact but also indifferent” (26). The suggestion is that such characteristics are manifested randomly – in Mannix’s experience, however, such states are intimately related to one another.

Another factor in Mannix’s life that has led him to see a relation between such paradoxical states is his experience of the flow of chemicals (natural and administered) through his system. Mannix, who has been hospitalised repeatedly, is all too aware of the dramatic effects such chemicals can have on the body and mind. Amid his discussions of physical and psychological experiences, he mentions various chemicals which he feels are linked to such processes. Two such chemicals mentioned by Mannix are adrenalin and Serotonin.²⁵⁸ In Mannix’s world-view the elevation and the ‘comedown’ associated with these substances greatly influences his frame of mind, inducing mental states that can appear paradoxical.

Mannix finds himself “amid the unrelenting boredom” (Mo046: Light 16) of the institution and its inmates: “Every known form of freak and mutation inhabit there and this includes the staff” (Mo046: Light 16). Mannix describes the institution as inspiring a “numbness deep in the brain...” (Mo046: Light 16), which is the cause of much of the frustrated behaviour of the patients. It is “why people are gnawing at raw stones, why Peter Linford has to be dragged up the stairs by his heels...his head plonk! plonk! plonk, like a pendulum clock with its neck broken[...]

[Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 16). Mannix stresses that the so-called incomprehensible behaviour of the patients is not devoid of meaning, quite the contrary: “People are incorrect when they consider lunatics to be aimless. For each there are the set destinations, the places to visit and explore, the

²⁵⁸ It has been postulated that schizophrenic thought is related to be as “as-yet-unexplained imbalance in the way nerve impulses are transmitted at the synapses or how they are processed by collections of neurons in distinct parts of the brain” (Veggeberg 73). Serotonin is one of the neurotransmitters that facilitates the transmission of such nerve impulses.

re-routings, the detours and reembarkments, the final destination” (Mo046: Light 16).²⁵⁹ As if to illustrate this Mannix describes the flight of a patient across the lawn as a journey towards the “promised land” pursued by a syringe-wielding nurse. The two end in a sexual embrace that punctuates the otherwise realistic description.

The perceived aimlessness of the lunatic (as has already been discussed) is particularly pertinent in the case of schizophrenia, and shows again that such behaviour is as Karl Jaspers has suggested: “We call the behaviour [of schizophrenics] crazy or silly but all these words simply imply in the end that there is a common element of ‘the ununderstandable’” (qtd. in Sass Madness 26). Schizophrenia is still surrounded by this aura of “ununderstandability” which is why a detailed engagement with the narratives written by individuals who have experienced psychosis is so important; behaviour which is seen as bizarre, “aimless” or lacking in intentionality by the sane observer is often heavily laden (overladen) with meaning from the perspective of the experiencing individual. The stone-gnawing behaviour mentioned above is a good example: when Mannix returns to this narrative he reveals that it is only the “ones made of chocolaty-coloured ironstone...” (Mo046: Light 19) that are chosen for chewing.

Art Brut: The Psychotic Compass

Individuals who have experienced psychosis, and who have been capable of articulating the experience in such a way that madness is not silenced by rationality, often describe a detailed cosmology of forces and personalities. Three such individuals are Antonin Artaud, Unica Zurn and Leonora Carrington; the work of Anthony Mannix can be situated within such a matrix. For Mannix, who conceives of psychosis as a cosmology within which he travels, the problem is not how to exit but how to navigate through the landscape itself. “Perhaps, when exploring the psychotic, if one had a wish to use, one

²⁵⁹ Unica Zurn’s Man of Jasmine, also describes the monotony of the mental institution and the actions of the patients laden with private significance: “For a long time she had watched the woman who had unravelled for the fiftieth time the grey sock she had been carefully knitting for twenty years. The sock will never be finished. / For a long time she had watched another woman who keeps placing five chairs in a circle around herself and flies into a rage when anyone touches them. Also the woman...oh...everything repeats itself here...” (114).

would wish for a navigation device, some form of compass to indicate the direction of things. But none, no matter how ingenious would work. The nearest one can get is art” (Mo046: Light 17).²⁶⁰

As the scene of the asylum dissolves (to abruptly reappear two pages later) Mannix, for the first time in The Light Bulb Eaters, introduces an interest that underlies all of his work, that of Art Brut and Outsider Art. This artistic tradition is central to the aesthetic of Mannix for whom the creation of art functions as a method of interacting with and manoeuvring through the deterritorialized landscapes of the psyche. He explains:

This habitation in the wilder poetical places of the mind is an ancient art in itself. When one looks at the cave paintings of Lascaux, reads the epic of Gilgamesh, considers the initiations of the Egyptians or looks at the old testament, one is given access to an almost unending procession of recalcitrant and self-possessed lunatics bent on only one purpose and that the exploring of the inner sanctum. (Mo046: Light 18)

It is within such traditions that he has discovered alternate systems of understanding which validate his illuminated experiences, as an antidote to the condemnation of psychiatry. An individual vision is stressed here, created in dialogue with the deepest regions of oneself, and in many respects not to be distinguished from it.

Art brut and what it showed of individual’s internal cosmology made known that lunatics are not a homogenous group in toil, that in fact there is the wildest of individual variations to a degree that is not comprehensible or cataloguable. The wide appeal to viewing audiences who say they connect directly with the work lead us to understand that we can not point in any one place at the lunatic, and if we do we are invariably pointing at ourselves. (Mo046: Light 18)

Mannix refuses fixed definitions of psychotic realms, continually stressing the individual nature of understandings characterised only by terms of multiplicity and change: chaos, paradox and duality rather than static, concrete systems. It is art and poetry’s ability to generate ambiguity and dissonance that allows it to access the nomadic realm of the psychotic mind. As if to emphasize such dissonance Mannix’s cast of insane characters, of which only Peter Linford bears a name, suddenly resurface in the narrative, in a bus, as if

²⁶⁰Mannix also mentions this idea in his book Mo006: Erotic Journal of a Madman when he writes: “‘My style of art is a dance to maintain control, to establish a compass with which to navigate the schizophrenic experience’ ..., i note with interest that the reference I use when using the word dance as analogy is always as the heartbeat of life or motion of existence” [Ellipsis in original] (27).

they have been journeying under Mannix's text for the last two pages. They reappear in the following manner: "Madness is liberation of the soul. It seems to be the Old Testament zealots who were fundamentally and innately aware of this. A large bus pulls up beside a large sandstone rock that is branded with red feldspar" (Mo046: Light 18).

The bus releases the lunatics into the desert where they "perform every manner of useless task" (Mo046: Light 19). The nurses are portrayed as disinterested, condescending and frustrated – a frustration which sees them bury the hapless Peter Linford up to his neck in what turns out to be a nest of desert ants. The provocation for this treatment by the nurses is his repeated assertion that "he shouldn't be here, he should be home with his mother" (Mo046: Light 19).

What appears as a darkly humorous vignette captures the powerlessness, abandonment, and misunderstanding experienced by many individuals incarcerated in mental institutions. It is with this image of the restrained Peter Linford that the inmates and their keepers are submerged again within the novel. Peter reappears in the latter half of the work, prostrate on the hospital stairs about to be dragged away. Still confused as to why the staff won't let him go home to his mother, Peter wanders the grounds of the hospital like so many of its inmates without the tools of art which enable Mannix to come to terms with the state he calls "unerring chaos". It is a discussion of this chaos that directly follows Linford's burial with the ants.

I do not mean entropy, this expansion of things into confusion, nor complexity, which when it becomes daunting, i talk of that place which has as its pure core violence. Unerring chaos. Chaos that presents itself as what it is, an elemental force capable of anything in anyway with landscapes that do what they wish of their own volition. (Mo046: Light 19)

Such cerebral discussions are interrupted by an experiential description of a state without dimension – of plummeting into death or falling up into his own skull – where conventional time has been traduced: "Moons ago...days, months, are as if the frames of an over-exposed film whipping of[f] a spool..." [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 20). Differentiation between the subject and object has dissolved, as the environment "seems to be moving with me inside of it...how to get born seems to be the problem...how to find out what one is inside another...now it seems to be inside me and it feels no more comfortable..." [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 20). It is powerful experiences such as this that are the inspiration for the womb and containment imagery

present in Mannix's work. This notion of containment is also of relevance to Mannix's most explicit statement regarding the structure of his cosmology, formulated as seven concentric circles. It is to a description of this matrix that he now turns, after a short passage that informs the reader that he has (while writing this book) moved to a new dwelling with an outhouse toilet full of voices that captivate him.

"A Cosmos of Concentric Worlds"

Mannix begins his discussion of the seven worlds as follows:

I have often thought of a cosmos of concentric worlds with unbridled passage of what is between them. Central is the beast of psychosis, its core...If one gathers about the concentric worlds we see their scope – there is infinity about all of them and they are restructuring irrationally, illogically, beyond the scope of the wildest reproducing organisms...the place is of the same stuff as its inhabitants, imbued with a hole, a broken core that is it[s] centre, and here you have the beast. (Mo046: Light 22)

This sense of brokenness, as already mentioned, is historically associated with the etymology of the word schizophrenia, and here Mannix inverts the notion of deficit that the term often implies. For Mannix, such a realm of brokenness also has the potential for illumination and power, and it is a series of such realms that Mannix articulates as he now takes the reader on a journey through the seven cosmological zones.

The next page is headed by a drawing showing three concentric circles surrounding a beast who supports another circular symbol (resembling a broken pane of glass) in its body. This resonates with Dante's circles of hell and also resembles a strange esoteric compass – perhaps the psychotic navigational device Mannix wrote of. R.D. Laing, too, writes of the need for such a device, for without it psychotic individuals "have no *orientation* in the geography of inner space and time, and are likely to get lost very quickly without a guide" (Politics 136). For Mannix the creation of "outsider writing" and art is just such a guide.

In each of Mannix's circles stand nine stick-figures whose heads show only one eye. Again this could refer to the opening of the "third eye", signifying mystical illumination. The figures are spaced relatively equidistant from one another in the manner

of the directional indicators on a compass. The entire set of circles is contained within a square of “sex-scribble”, suggesting the all-encompassing nature of the erotic. Around this square stand other figures (mostly portrayed with one eye) that seem to be talking to one another.

The text beneath this illustration is titled “The Beast”, and it appears Mannix is beginning his journey through the seven realms not from the outside and moving in, but as if waking up in the sphere of the beast (which constitutes the innermost eighth realm), where “how to get born seems to be the problem”. Rather than sharing this space with the beast, it seems that existing here is to be inside the creature – around Mannix “there is the eternal sound of lungs” (Mo046: Light 23) – and this notion of containment within a womb is heightened by the following line: “It is as i am in the sea amid a vast swarm of electric tentacles and these have touched everywhere my life” (Mo046: Light 23).

Womb images are common within Mannix’s pictorial and textual oeuvre and it is significant that the central image within Mannix’s attempt to depict his cosmology is that of containment within the womb-like beast. This “Beast of the Unconscious” is also a recurrent personality within Mannix’s work. In Mo023: Journal of a Madman No. 15 Mannix describes this creature as “the re-incarnation of the beast of Revelations” (33). Mannix has also created a book entitled Mo067: The Beast of the Unconscious, in which he writes: “this book is about the BEAST Of the Unconscious. I always have found the Unconscious and the landscape of the psychotic widely and wildly populated with things including one Mr Beast” (4). The use of the title “Mr Beast” coincides with a caption to a drawing later in this same book that reads, “Sometimes the beast of the unconscious appears almost human” (20) – the related drawing depicts a beast with a human head. Thus Mannix’s beast takes many forms, but is repeatedly located in the depths of the unconscious as a powerful and at times invading force. In the book Mo064: Creatures and Apparitions Mannix writes the following caption to a colourful many-legged drawing of the beast: “Its only a matter of time but the beast of the unconscious will get at every idea great and small” (19). The repeated association between the unconscious, psychosis and the beast in Mannix’s work mirrors the historical association between madness and the beast discussed by Michel Foucault:

Madness borrowed its face from the mask of the beast. Those chained to the cell walls were no longer men whose mind had wandered, but beasts preyed upon by a natural frenzy: as if madness, at its extreme point, freed from that moral unreason in which its most attenuated form are enclosed, managed to rejoin, by a paroxysm of strength, the immediate violence of animality. (Madness 68)²⁶¹

Mannix too, enclosed by the creature, wears “the mask of the beast”, inhabiting a realm where objects have lost their substance – and it is here that Mannix experiences a deep communion with matter: “the innate feeling of things and not their ostensible apparition which we take as their only reality. Moreso now it feels that i am experiencing a language with things, rather than just looking at their portraits” (Mo046: Light 23).

This comment bears a striking similarity to an experience described by Leonora Carrington in Down Below: “It was no longer necessary to translate noises, physical contacts, or sensations into rational terms or words. I understood every language in its particular domain: noises, sensations, colours, forms, etc., and everyone one found a twin correspondence in me and gave me a perfect answer” (175). Such correspondence, for Carrington, is linked to the experience of vibration, and this is also a feature of the space Mannix finds himself in as he is surrounded by “a thunder made out of absolute silence...” (Mo046: Light 23). Ultimately, for both authors, a deep interconnection between the individual and the environment is experienced, to a point where the borders of the self are felt to be porous – it is this permeability that offers both the chance for revelation and the threat of self-dissolution. Dialogue is experienced on a deep physical or psychic level, beyond the surface of semantics; it is “the innate feeling of things” that Mannix connects with.²⁶² For Mannix artistic production is often a way of regulating this sense of permeable connection – the seven circles of his cosmology are a rendition of the leaking boundaries of psychosis.

²⁶¹ In the context of Romanticism madness and the animal are also related: “Madness served as an excuse for the liberation of instinct. Within Romanticism animals emerge as powerful symbols of unrestrained emotion; battling lions become images of pure instinctual energy and violence; the horse appears in endless contexts and variations expressive of a host of different intense psychological realities, included unbounded masculine sexuality and lust. The image of the madhouse can also be understood as an equivalent of these animal symbols, a vision of natural man unleashed and of the force of pure emotional intensity” (MacGregor 69-71). Mannix’s choice of ‘the beast’ as the central image for that of psychosis thus resonates with a long history of association between madness and unbridled animality.

²⁶² Elsewhere in this thesis this form of communication has been linked with music and vibration.

“The 7th Circle”, the next to be described, is one of fluctuating proliferation, where the entire landscape shifts from moment to moment. Such a fluid environment enables “you to project your order, your logic upon it. When that reflection vaporises so does what you were. Only after that does one feel part of what is” (Mo046: Light 24). Thus each time you define the environment you define yourself as well. Perhaps this is the realm of which Mannix has elsewhere written: “No logical argument will deliver you from this place and yet no logic can oppose successfully what you wish to build” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 174). Mannix goes on to suggest that this “7th Circle” is linked to the functioning of the “primordial back brain which remains after the human brain and the primate brain have been peeled away and which is of the same substance as the crocodile brain” (Mo046: Light 24-25).

Of “The Sixth Circle” Mannix writes, “Here i can seem to find every ghost, spectre, apparition and impossible aura with intelligence that is possible. More so. Yet to enter into these things is to risk them walking away with your presence” (Mo046: Light 25). A sense of transference is a feature of this realm, to the extent “that you might think yourself another sex or invisible” (Mo046: Light 25). This place is imbued with horror, but a horror in which Mannix becomes complicit: “The dictionary one uses in this place is rife – Murder, genocide, waste, ravage, suicide, rape, pox, plague, monstrosity, abomination, heinous, horror, cadaverous, hideous...and so forth and so on” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 25). This circle is inhabited by the many “appearances” that populate Mannix’s texts. It is also whilst within this realm that Mannix has the capacity to undergo the sex change from male to female.

“The Fifth Circle” sees a sense of differentiation from the landscape return as Mannix finds himself “inside a flagrant dream from the subconscious...it is the very instep of great Magicianship – it is possible to dream into the experience what you will, albeit the force of this dream reality is so potent it seems impossible even to lift the smallest stone even with your ‘Real’ hand” (Mo046: Light 25-26). This realm is given over to the forces of the unconscious mind, which the individual can, to some extent, control – without, however, the possibility of waking up: “That you cannot leave this place by waking up because you are already awake brings a horror with icy teeth” (Mo046: Light 26).

“The Fourth Circle” is “black and electrically storming and when i realized that none of the circuitry and context of mundane life would operate there yet the basis of being and individuality continued; i was fulfilled and delighted” (Mo046: Light 26). Mannix suggests this circle is the wild centre of psychosis that took him seventeen years of journeying to discover: “the clitoris...the most inaccessible places...its pulse...wilful violence...” (Mo046: Light 26). Fittingly, such revelations dissolve the artificial logic of Mannix’s numbered sequence of circles. The illusion that Mannix is describing a linear journey or transition from one state to another is shattered, and it is realised that the beast is not the centre after all – or, as Mannix puts it, “the beast is not [the centre], at least not in the same way” (Mo046: Light 26). Thus there are multiple centres in Mannix’s alternate “gravity” – each central in a different way. The logical thread being followed (or inferred) by the reader unravels into the contradictions and eternal speculations that Mannix suggest characterise his chaotic experience of psychosis and the unconscious. Mannix’s desire and capacity to allow such contradictions to surface within his works is a feature of an art that seeks to present thought and experience in its raw, untransformed, Brut form; in so doing the logic inherent in language is often traduced allowing the voice of madness to surface and create within the text a dialogue between the rational and the irrational.

In “The Third Circle” a scantily clad woman flogs a man, and “the sound of the whip striking is the evoking of an era of peace, passion, fertility and normality. The vision changes to another. You watch as you in a future incarnation as the opposite sex are stripped and made love to on a beach; you become wildly aroused by yourself and fall in love” (Mo046: Light 27). This scenario, and the use of the second-person to draw the reader into the narrative, is reminiscent of the writing in Mannix’s work The Chambers.

These visions occur in a place that “is a Machine which begets other machines. They attack you with what they are, with themselves, with their substance” (Mo046: Light 27). Again, it is a place characterised by the irrational and contradictory. Mannix suggests that Western culture’s roots are bound to this irrational mindset, present when the cave paintings of Lascaux were created. It is this irrational language that has the potential to communicate “absolute reality” (Mo046: Light 28), a language Western society terms ““nonsense”” (Mo046: Light 28). The separation of contemporary culture

from the continued relevance of such an “irreal” language (and the need to bring the two into dialogue) has been shown to be one of Mannix’s central concerns.

“The Second Circle” is an intelligence that “is so powerful and so undefinable that your own intelligence becomes riddled with cracks and fissures and places where the common does not meet the common...It is that you drain out the quality that is reason from your brain and in its place is put the kaleidoscope which is accessible to thought and associative narrative” (Mo046: Light 28). This may describe the early stages of psychosis: reason drains from the mind as it is fractured by a growing awareness of a vast and enigmatic intelligence which is psychosis itself: that which Mannix describes in The Demise as his “god”. A narrative of a kaleidoscopic nature is an apt description for the work under consideration, one which itself is liable to produce cracks and fissures in the mind of the reader as the tenuous narrative connections are pursued. Such thoughts are pertinent to “The First Circle” to which the text now turns.

This is a place of erotic seduction, yet another “basement” to the edifice that is psychosis. Mannix returns the reader to one of the first images in the text, as he suggests that in the first circle “one must dig through the floorboards and at the most alacritous pace possible, for then the hazards are less that one will be eaten by some creature of trauma” (Mo046: Light 30). The Light Bulb Eaters opened with such a hole in the floorboards revealing a thrashing mouth. Then, as now, Mannix descends into this basement, which is revealed to be an erotic party in “full full-frontal swing” (Mo046: Light 30). “[T]his is where you get your first blowjob, it is the admission booth to madness” (Mo046: Light 30). This space is one of intense sensation: a fantastic confluence of sound, movement, colour and smell – erotic and dangerous, mysterious and intoxicating. Once this realm has been entered there is no way of leaving – “The party just gets bigger and everything expands in order to let it be, and there is no exit” (Mo046: Light 31). It is with these words that Mannix ends his description of his circular cosmology, offering the following post-script to the reader: “But before you feel that i have taken you for a ride i will have to again say that there is no structure or definition with this place i am writing about, only experience and therefore the truth of it is not muddled or obscured by games about how many doors it has or whether the windows are clean or not” (Mo046: Light 31).

The same could be said of The Light Bulb Eaters: the truth exists in the experience of a fluid, kaleidoscopic narrative moving at pace. No sooner has the cycle of the seven circles been brought to a conclusion than the narrative voice is assumed again, shifting focus with no more indication than the indenting of a new paragraph, which begins with the words: “Madwomen are unusual in bed” (Mo046: Light 31). So ensues another of Mannix’s vignettes regarding sexual intercourse, in which unification is so complete that the insane lovers “transfer worlds between each other and propagate them as you exchange body fluids and the elixir of life” (Mo046: Light 31). Mannix retires to the couch and detects “a luminous haze which developed into a contorted ectoplasm” (Mo046: Light 32) emanating from his lover’s vagina. A conversation ensues wherein it becomes clear this is his lover’s madness wishing to escape her body. Mannix warns against this, suggesting, “if you did try to make it on your own you’d be terminated on some non-descript therapist’s couch” (Mo046: Light 32).

The transition from this imaginative vignette to a survey of Outsider Artists is effected in the following passage:

The moon in chaos, the sun asundered and in fragments, Jupiter vanished as if abducted, Neptune in never-ending deluge, the moons of the solar system turning frantically on their own axis, the rings of Saturn transfixed by pluto, uranus an ice-cube that has dropped out of the heavens and shattered somewhere below, the earth and venus in incest, the endless burning passion irresolving all time, Mercury that has split. We are dealing with the enormities of personal cosmology... (Mo046: Light 33)

The “personal cosmology” is a reconfiguration of the solar system, fluid, frantic and erotic. In this respect Mannix feels a kinship with the Outsider Artists he now discusses, Colin Wilson, Phillip Heckenberg and Anthony Hopkins.²⁶³ The narrative shifts focus again at this point, reengaging with a more autobiographical, diarising tone in which Mannix speaks of his current illness: fever, dehydration and an inability to eat. He is surrounded by chaos, “there was no place yesterday only violence in motion...” (Mo046: Light 35), a violence which leads him into the deep unconscious beyond language through “The Chasm of doom” (Mo046: Light 35), which he characterises as “a vast

²⁶³ The substance of this discussion has already been mentioned in Chapter Two of this thesis.

vagina of violent volcanic ashes” (Mo046: Light 35).²⁶⁴ Here all sense of dimension and rationality is lost and Mannix comes in contact with a “more ancient sensory empathy” (Mo046: Light 36). These hallucinatory events are punctuated by a realistic account of an evening out: “Also last night i attended a benefit film night for U.F.O abductees” (Mo046: Light 37). The link is again the rejection of rational, logical thinking that a belief in such an experience requires. The description of this event is quickly replaced by the sense of confusion, chaos and dimensionlessness of the “chasm” from which it seems Mannix is unable to escape:

There is a tremendous noise – din, cacophony, confusion, commotion – it is like my life is blowing away – there are the sounds of steel girders being torn loose, of the clatter of things not properly secured, or needless being blown in front of a wind that is ferocious and relentless and the sound of the akashic record in my ears like the scream of a creature that is uncontemplatable (Mo046: Light 37).²⁶⁵

The narrative then has become as disjointed and various as Mannix’s state of mind, where nothing is “properly secured”. The “akashic record”, the universal diary containing the past, present and future, is experienced as a screaming creature which disperses Mannix’s sense of self. At this point Mannix tells the reader that it has been “months since i slept in a bed, but i don’t think of these things – i am too intent upon my destination, that is the only way that i will eventually be there. It is like a journey through a great alien body” (Mo046: Light 37-38).

“The Schizophrenic Trek”

The journey, so much a part of The Demise and the early pages of The Light Bulb Eaters, returns here with a sense of immediacy that suggests the author is presently on the move, writing-book in hand. The tone of the following sentence is, however, far more distant

²⁶⁴ The notion of ‘the chasm’ and femininity was also linked by Carl Jung: “Finally, it should be remarked that *emptiness* is a great feminine secret. It is something absolutely alien to man; the chasm, the unplumbed depths, the *yin*” (Four 35).

²⁶⁵ Such a “chasm” is reminiscent of Artaud’s “abyss” which he describes in ‘The Umbilicus of Limbo (1925)’: “A GREAT VERVOR, conscious and teeming, bore my soul like a filled abyss. A carnal and resonant wind was blowing, and even the sulphur was thick with it. And tiny rootlets filled this wind like a network of veins, and their intersections flashed. Space was measurable and grating, but without penetrable form” (Selected 59-60).

and contemplative: “There is a certain ‘ethic’ to the schizophrenic trek. Its that one gets to one’s destination if one dosen’t bemoan the altered consciousness and non-rationale of the journey” (Mo046: Light 38). The “schizophrenic trek”, Mannix suggests, is an expansion of “interwovenness” which should be embraced rather than cured. Here he comes close to R.D. Laing’s writings on the psychotic journey:

The person who has entered this inner realm [of psychosis] (if only he is allowed to experience this) will find himself going, or being conducted – one cannot clearly distinguish active from passive here – on a journey.

This journey is experienced as going further ‘in’, as going back through one’s personal life, in and back and through and beyond into the experience of all mankind, of the primal man, of Adam and perhaps even further into the being of animals, vegetables and minerals...If the human race survives, future men...will see that what we call ‘schizophrenia’ was one of the forms in which, often through quite ordinary people, the light began to break through the cracks in our all-too-closed minds. (Politics 104-107)²⁶⁶

This in turn resonates with Trevor Ravenscroft’s suggestions that the Holy Grail relates to a mental enlightenment akin to the opening of the third eye through trials encountered on the journey. Ultimately, for Mannix, the psychotic state and its “trek” must be accepted like a “trusty old car...Start kicking the car and it will turn on you like a pack of ravenous timber wolves” (Mo046: Light 38).

Mannix then discusses Davey Brown and his “semiotics of the irrational”, already mentioned in this thesis. This is followed by Mannix’s account of his first meeting and ongoing relationship with Rosey Spite. Here the notion of the “grey metal ship of gargantuan proportions” surfaces again in the narrative, replacing the “trusty old car” as the vehicle in which the psychotic trek is undertaken. Mannix is joined in the ship’s “engine room” by Rosey, and it becomes clear that the many other rooms of the ship contain other aspects of the psychotic experience. The ship becomes the materialised landscape of the unconscious through which Mannix travels, while the unconscious itself continues its own journey – “steaming from pole to pole”.

Another room specifically mentioned (one Mannix has already introduced) is that which contains the screaming, ranting disembodied heads. Mannix admits Rosey into this

²⁶⁶ On this matter Kotowicz writes: “Laing came to think that some psychotic experiences may have a healing dimension, akin to rituals of initiation, where through the loss of the sense of ego and after a voyage into a mystical sphere a new, more enlightened person could emerge” (3).

room and “she would calmly and adroitly question them to see if perhaps it were possible for them to go elsewhere where they’d be happier” (Mo046: Light 41). The wind that was blowing Mannix’s self away is still present even after Rosey’s arrival: now he experiences it as a “searing, infectious desert wind that knew every vernacular and dialect...” (Mo046: Light 42). It is at this point, when the self has been obliterated by the all-knowing wind, that Mannix suggests he becomes a magician and proceeds to take control of the heads and create music from their utterances. This process of music-making creates a sense of unification which materialises in the shape of a singing “golden head” which pulls Mannix (now in a “fine chariot”) “from one place to another seeing the workings of the very illusion itself” (Mo046: Light 43). Mannix is here journeying through an imaginative “flux” he associates with a river, in which creatures evolve and devolve at will. The “conversation” that constitutes the journey through this reality, he suggests, “becomes a sort of natural poetry – one of the visions to conceive is how in the intricacies of language one travels a vast structure of escalators making continuous connections and journeys...” (Mo046: Light 44).

Language itself is here a materialised landscape, the space between words navigated via a series of escalators. The landscape of language is then described as a “mandala”, a maze in which the madman is encased: “he will not gradually wander his way out to a host of applauding Psychiatrists but will digest it like a mad bug in an onion and have a party belching, farting, sneezing and picking his nose” (Mo046: Light 44).

Whilst writing of his own experience Mannix seems to have had Davey Brown in mind, and he returns to Brown’s work at this point, suggesting that he uncovered “all the bones of the English language, bones that make a living luminous creature that one might have a discourse with...” (Mo046: Light 45). Such individuals are

the natural poets of madness...[for whom]...paradox becomes a malleable thing...[and]...sometimes like a trained but wild circus animal it will perform effortless impossibilities...the thing that makes the dematerialisations and rematerialisations possible through the maze of paradoxical indices...is an inward brutality that sets the madman apart; without this quality the circus cannot be paid; without it it would run to wrack and ruin. (Mo046: Light 45)

This “brutality” is conceived of as a weapon, tool or knife, which when used on oneself, “sweeps away every illusion, what remains is a ground you can stand upon” (Mo046:

Light 45-46). Thus the ground of Art Brut involves dialogue with unconscious realms through “a pairing away of the redundant, of the social, of the emotional unnecessary, one gets closer access to the beast and is freer with it, and the beast is rewarding” (Mo046: Light 46). For Mannix this is achieved via psychosis and chaos. In answering his own question as to why he might have been chosen to “journey in these extraordinary realms” (Mo046: Light 47), he suggests he had “the feeling that i was a modern-day Job in a bible of a very different sort. It was when i discovered an old photograph of myself at twelve years of age²⁶⁷, dressed dapper and at a catholic Holy Communion. I am in communication with this Christ beside me – its that we have made a pact to do and experience everything illicit that there is...already i am seeing strange creatures in strange places and calculating how to get there” (Mo046: Light 47). The god of psychosis sends down hallucinations, and Mannix’s notion that such experiences must be embraced rather than resisted suggests a Jobian acceptance. To submit to such forces is to embrace the irrational: “a chaotic wind that comes from an impersonal pureness to remove a logic that has gone wrong...To be involved in part with this chaos is to be involved with it all – it is a place that bears no divisions” (Mo046: Light 49). Here Mannix suggests (echoing Laing) that the lunatic must be allowed to undergo the psychotic journey: “give him what he wishes and need, an arena to be centurion, to be general, to be historian and poet, to be tactician....these incursions into the unconscious have their armies, have their cities that are fought for and against with every resource, the stakes are high, these are cities of the self...each journey is particular and there are no maps to unexplored territory” (Mo046: Light 50).²⁶⁸ Mannix suggests the deepest points of such journeys are a series of pits: “Why go down into the pit?...and after that yet another and another. It is because one ends up owning them. They and their Resources become part of the Realm one is establishing in the unconscious...Meanwhile, the centre of one’s being falters between life and death” (Mo046: Light 51).

²⁶⁷ See image on page 114 of The Light Bulb Eaters.

²⁶⁸ Laing writes: “Instead of the degradation ceremonial of psychiatric examination, diagnosis and prognostication, we need, for those who are ready for it (in psychiatric terminology often those who are about to go into a schizophrenic breakdown), an initiation ceremonial, through which the person will be guided with full social encouragement and sanction into inner space and time, by people who have been there and back” (Politics 106).

One such pit, perhaps the deepest (if such a thing exists in this landscape of plurality), is the “Chasm of Doom” which Mannix conceives of as “the female sex organ – it had that wildness about it...” (Mo046: Light 51). To undertake this “trek” Mannix selects entities to accompany him. So begins a narrative involving Rosey Spite and Tiberia, “the little voice who rode Untuck, one of the minor spirits of death” (Mo046: Light 51). In another example of Mannix’s exploration of an unconscious realm that he perceives as entirely material (accompanied by entities he perceives as entirely real) the group journey down into the Chasm: “Rations were short, the place was never-ending, smouldering chunks of basalt loosen under Untuck’s hooves and fell to a depth i could not comprehend much less fathom...” (Mo046: Light 51). Within the “unceasing din” of the Chasm’s base “[e]ach heard what they wished, it was never-ending, it was blinding, expanse, incapable of being divided, broken down, vivisected, it was a whole, of which there are few” (Mo046: Light 51).

The narrative of the journey through the dense, noisy unity of this place is here suddenly interrupted (perhaps by that which Mannix hears in the “unceasing din”) and permanently discarded, as Mannix writes, “i remember a great wind, i was saying goodbye to Samantha, it was night, that elegant balminess of late summer seemed cinemagraphic...” (Mo046: Light 52). The ensuing vignette surfaces in the text as if it is a moment of conscious lucidity within the “schizophrenic trek”. However, as the passage continues, the wind that has punctuated the last ten pages of the narrative returns, and with it a violence that again casts doubt on the actuality of this event as well: “this black wind blowing everything in my life away was murder itself, i was going to kill something, to execute something, killing things always made me insane, the act makes immeasurable sense but none at all, the last thing i saw was sam’s blond face like a lantern and then i was filled with murder...” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 52).

The next paragraph begins with the word “Spirits” written in large font, and it becomes clear that Mannix conceives of Samantha as a spirit when he writes that no classification of spirits is possible – that each must be regarded “individually for what they bring into one’s life, the intolerable, insanity, despair, illumination, power. It of course was a spirit i was out to murder...i butchered the body in the early morning sunlight, i[t] was that sharp light that always reminds me of knives...i could feel the

screaming in my head, and the morning looked like a wall of luminous paint in the dark” (Mo046: Light 52). These events also suggest that this entire vignette was perhaps associatively inspired by the phrase Mannix used to describe the Chasm: “incapable of being divided, broken down, vivisected...”. Mannix’s powerlessness in the face of such unity is thus followed closely by a display of the utmost control over a spirit: the capacity to murder and dissect it.

As he does in The Skull, Mannix here uses imaginative descriptions and simile, indicative of fiction, to evoke for the reader his psychotic experiences. In the lived metaphor of psychosis, the morning perhaps presented itself to Mannix as nothing but a luminous wall; however, Mannix connects such a wall back to its referent (dawn) in order to make clear the analogy for the reader.

Mannix again juxtaposes this fictional tone with the drive to document: “It doesn’t seem inconsistent to me that i should experience days of an overwhelming lucidity in the grounds of a mental hospital...” (Mo046: Light 53). Such a lucidity seems to be the antithesis of the state of mind educed by psychiatric drugs: “It just shows you how widesweeping and unlimited such a thing is when it can cart away the clozapine the doctors are giving you as well” (Mo046: Light 53). This implied positivity regarding madness, which imbues much of Mannix work, is made explicit later on this page: “It is societies misconception that lunactics are unprivledged people that they are somehow handicapped with an incomprehensible negative...it is not so, in reality they are handicapped with an incomprehensible positive almost as if they are an evolutionary experiment for the future” (Mo046: Light 53-54).

Page 54 also includes four illustrations. The three illustrations of women are reminiscent of those contained in Mo030: Erotomania No.1 and Mo024: Erogeny: a female body without arms, her head absent or transformed into a single staring eye. The fourth illustration is of a male, and includes even less detail: this figure, crudely drawn in bold back lines, possesses a head but not a face; if it has arms at all they are barely differentiated from his torso. The caption beside this figure reads: “This man does not appear to register closed doors” (Mo046: Light 54), makes reference to Jung’s description (discussed in more detail below) of the entrance to the unconscious as a “door”.

The female figure most finely drawn (in the mode of those contained in Mannix's artist's book Angels) appears at the top of the page, and beside its one, large eye Mannix has written: "the Anima / the Persona / Muse / the gap with the moon in its teeth" (Mo046: Light 54). Each of the titles, here linked with the female form, relate to the capacity for possession by the muse, a well-developed theme in philosophy and literature. The "Anima" and "Persona", in Carl Jung's formulation, also have the capacity to take possession²⁶⁹: as Jung defines this process, "some content, an idea or a part of the personality, obtains mastery of the individual for one reason or another" (Four 65). The persona "is the individual's system of adaptation to, or the manner he assumes in dealing with, the world. Every calling or profession, for example, has its own characteristic persona...One could say, with little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is" (Four 65-66). Thus the true nature of the individual is obscured from him/herself. Jung's notion of possession by the anima is also relevant. Jung writes: "this transformation of personality gives prominence to those traits which are characteristic of the opposite sex; in man the feminine traits [anima], and in woman the masculine [animus]" (Four 67). In this formulation, Mannix's experience of becoming a woman through sex change can be characterised as possession by his anima: the feminine aspect of his own self. Elsewhere Mannix has postulated the idea that Rosey Spite is just such a feminine aspect of himself. Conversely, those times when Rosey materialises as an autonomous being in Mannix's reality represent not his possession by, but the freeing of, his anima. In Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 he writes: "When the anima is liberated from one, there the scope of erotic drawing is boundless, such is the excitement, the art-makers seeing nothing of themselves in what they do" (148). Mannix is suggesting that the erotic excitement is paramount at this time because he has become entirely male – freed of his feminine aspect; thus when he draws an erotic woman he is seeing nothing of himself in the illustration. In this formulation his male desire for the female reaches its pinnacle and as a result the capacity to draw erotically becomes limitless.

²⁶⁹ Mannix's references to Carl Jung and his concepts of "anima" and the "shadow" (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 148), as well as the "Collective Unconscious" (Mo046: Light 90), make it likely that he is also using the notion of "Persona" in a Jungian context.

In the next two pages of The Light Bulb Eaters Mannix introduces the region of the unconscious he calls “The Obstacle”, which he suggests: “has been grinding it’s strength upon mine for months...i can think of nothing more than a countless barrage...the cold of an ice that should not exist and endless tearing by endless teeth, if my endurance was not paramount it would have ripped open a crevasse in my brain, that is where all its impact is felt” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 56). “The Obstacle” is an intelligence opposed to Mannix’s own, which he compares to that which Aliester Crowley termed “elementals” (Mo046: Light 56). Mannix suggests this entity needs to be devoured, rather than defeated: in this way equilibrium is restored between Mannix and this part of this unconscious landscape being explored via what he again calls the “schizophrenic trek” (Mo046: Light 57). The Light Bulb Eaters itself seems an exploration of such a trek, or a selection of the treks Mannix has experienced. In this way the book mirrors the “visionary” aspect of this landscape “where the forgetfulness of self and others is not irresponsible but a response to the intoxicating and drugged airs where one is...nothing more to do than sit there and imbibe the sensation of inspecting each grain of the schizophrenic trek knowing full well that they are mountains as well” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 57).

The Keys to Freedom

The notion of communicating with the psychic environment as a form of devouring is replaced by images of erotic union: “what is keeping me here is my desire to know this place as one understands a lover, then it will be on my side, then it will be with me, i just have to find the right places to place my fingers and the right place into which to place my tongue” (Mo046: Light 57). This interconnection with place then becomes the pursuit of a “luminous entity”, called “small radio”, hidden within a desolate landscape of no light. Mannix writes: “it is as if my body feels intimately the transmissions that he makes and is relentlessly hunting him, and he feels my coming with both timidity and the key to freedom, it makes the barrenness illusionary” (Mo046: Light 57-58). The “small radio”, with its radio wave-like transmissions, is reminiscent of the “influencing machines”

discussed earlier in this thesis, which send messages to the schizophrenic person. For Mannix, however, the messages from the “small radio” machine are not oppressive but instead the “key to freedom”. It is Mannix who hunts the timid machine, rather than the machine hunting Mannix. As he does with other entities and demons he has perceived, Mannix pursues a relationship with his version of the “influencing machine” – and it is the deepening of this relationship that seems, ultimately, the most powerful “key to freedom”.

The moon is a recurring image within Mannix’s unconscious landscape, often associated with the erotic. This is also true in The Light Bulb Eaters: “Its night. A full moon seems to make a contusion in a night sky wearing a lingerie of mist, there’s a smoke from somewhere, at the cornice of my mind i feel an urgency about its fire, earlier i make a mistake thinking a projected spotlight on the cloud was the moon, it seemed like the clipped pelt that covers a girl’s public mound, hardly noticeable but also blinding” (Mo046: Light 59). The commonly-held association (also held by psychiatrists, Mannix suggests) between the full moon and insanity is a corruption of Mannix’s image of the moon: “i’ll have my moon as the delightfully recurrent erotic filament it is, nobody is going to hang any Saturnine foreboding on it for me, these quacks will just have to peddle their statistics down the road...I am sure after our psychiatrists have dissolved we will still have our moon” (Mo046: Light 59). The image Mannix has drawn below this text is of a man (presumably himself) with a hole in his belly the shape and size of a moon in the sky to which he is floating. Below this floating figure is a dark mass with tentacles extended as if attempting to prevent him reaching the moon. This then is a pictorial depiction of Mannix evading the comments of those who wish to corrupt his image of the moon – a moon which is in fact an aspect of himself.

The Beast of the Unconscious

Mannix’s interactions with landscapes and entities continue, with the reappearance of the Beast of Psychosis. The place Mannix now finds himself in is unknown, but the Beast is

his

old nemesis...it is years since i ceased to be his victim, now there is more joke than threat. It is strange being in such intimate relationship with one's torturer [...] at last he has run out of ploys, at last i am as wiry and as wry as he is. He is sitting still while i draw a picture of he [...] for some reason he appears to disbelieve that i can capture his image, i, on the other hand am absolutely certain of what i am doing, it is that from his inflictions i know him better than any lover. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 60)

Mannix again conflates love and pain in the image of torture as a form of sexual union. Through dialogue, over time, Mannix has ceased to be the victim and has instead achieved a sense of balance (even light-heartedness) in the relationship. As has already been discussed, creative expression, in this case drawing, plays a part in facilitating dialogue with presences. In this instance Mannix is attempting to "capture" the image of the Beast; in this context "capture" suggests both the capacity of Mannix to produce a likeness of the Beast and, in effect, the capacity of the drawing to actually contain the psychic presence of the Beast.²⁷⁰

The place that the Beast exists within becomes enlivened: "like a woman's sheer black stockinged legs, the place is growing by the minute, by the second..." (Mo046: Light 60). It is these "places" of the unconscious, Mannix writes, that "hold my addiction, my obsession, beyond anything else they are the way i see the world...I have so much lust for these places and such phenomenal success in their conquest that i barely know what to do with the plethora of powers i possess" (Mo046: Light 61). From such a position of power Mannix then takes the reader back to 1989 when the "pillars of my world are shattering one after another as i advance further into chaos, as i journey deeper into the chasm. There are times also when i can confine my presence in the bare inner city flat although the chasm never leaves my sight" (Mo046: Light 62). The mouth of the underworld, which opened in Mannix's floorboards at the beginning of this work, is again evoked. Similarly, spirits are present, as well as aspects of Mannix himself which have become autonomous beings: "My intuition is about the place as a separate entity; what's more it is having meetings with my shadow on the balcony, the neighbours are already calling me a black magician..." (Mo046: Light 62).

²⁷⁰ As already mentioned this notion echoes the practice of numerous Outsider Artists including Raymond Morris, William Fields and Michel Nedjar.

The Shadow

The “Shadow” is a concept mentioned numerous times throughout Mannix’s work, a notion again derived primarily from the writings of Carl Jung. Mannix writes: “Its uncanny to see some transsexuals, all self and ego has been cut away leaving nothing but the anima and shadow” (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 148).²⁷¹ Jung suggests: “The darkness which clings to every personality is the door into the unconscious and the gateway of dreams, from which those two twilight figures, the shadow and the anima, step into our nightly visions or, remaining invisible, take possession of our ego-consciousness” (Four 66). For Mannix such figures step out from his unconscious and become autonomous beings. The “shadow”, in Jung’s formulation, has the characteristics of a trickster: “a puerile and inferior character, not unlike the personalities who announce themselves at spiritualistic séances and cause all those ineffably childish phenomena so typical of poltergeists” (Four 168). Whilst, over time, Mannix’s intuition re-enters his body his “shadow” does not: “the shadow dies and for what seems a great period of time i am without one but death is different for him and he is not permantly so although the grief of parting even temporarily between us is agonising” (Mo046: Light 62). Echoing the regenerative capacity of the “shadow”, Mannix contextualises the pain he has suffered in his experiences of madness: “Its strange to look at such devastation as has occurred in my life and i do not use the word lightly, but therein was the first great gift that i asked of madness, a child’s wish, that nothing be terminally broken” (Mo046: Light 62).

The “BLOC”: Paradox and Power

For the first time Mannix now mentions the “BLOC” (Mo046: Light 62) (reminiscent of “The Obstacle” and the desolate place containing the “small radio”), a place of dark crushing intensity. The “BLOC” will recur throughout the remainder of the text

²⁷¹ There are also echoes of William Blake’s notion of the Shadow: “a mournful form double, hermaphroditic, male and female in one wonderful body...” (Qtd in Damon 368-69)

(variously spelt: “BLOC”/“BLOK”/“Block”), and coming to terms with the “BLOC” is a gradual process of reanimation for Mannix, who from the outset of this work has linked his descent into, and trek through, the unconscious with the descent into the underworld of death.

A further discussion of Mannix’s experience with spirits is followed by the introduction of Gunther Diex into the narrative. Gunther is another of Mannix’s favoured Outsider Artists and, Mannix suggests, his art is dominated by “an obsession in every detail which the spirit world which the spirit world seems not only to tolerate but to promote...The man paints death with choice little lipstick hearts” (Mo046: Light 64). Mannix injects him into the narrative by writing: “I have been getting messages from gunther – “pay up or else”!!! When i purchased Gunther Diex’s oil painting i knew it would involve a virtual fight to the death and now that there is only a paltry twelve dollars left to pay he is fuming under the collar; if he could afford the train fare he would probably come from Mittagong on no less than the express and demand satisfaction” (Mo046: Light 64). In both Gunther’s capacity to paint death with “little lipstick hearts”, and the suggestion that Gunther would spend more than twelve dollars to collect twelve dollars, Mannix foreshadows the notion of paradox to which the narrative now returns.

As with Ravenscroft’s (already discussed) interpretation of the Grail quest, Mannix conceives of his experiences of madness as a series of quests for self-knowledge, wherein he seeks the secret with which to understand the death of various “wounded and dead things of self” (Mo046: Light 65); the “journey” or “trek” being the only way of unlocking

the secrets of their deaths and for their ‘Resurrection’...One journey that produces a horror in the soul begets another that produces a coney island of the mind. Somewhere in that derelict fun fair you have come upon in that Isthmus of the unconscious is an empty ice cream cone with a message in it explaining all and giving the unknown location of that missing part of yourself... (Mo046: Light 65)

Mannix will later write of attempting to find the missing piece with which to animate his body of artwork: here it is his own reanimation that he is striving for. The “schizophrenic trek” becomes the search for that aspect of his self that will allow him to rise from the dead. This achievement of self-knowledge is the key to gaining the capacity to wield power over the unconscious. However, this capacity for transmutation and resurrection,

which Mannix elsewhere associates with art-making, is underpinned by paradox: a state wherein the seemingly impossible, illogical and contradictory gain the capacity for union.

The next page in the work begins with an illustration: a humanoid figure with the word “Paradox” extending from his head stands upon a black shape with the one-eyed head of a beast. This is perhaps the “Beast of the Unconscious”, and from his mouth pours “sex scribble”, indicating that the nature of the creature is erotic. The figure appears to ride the beast and echoes Mannix’s line, discussed earlier, “I am riding the beast side-saddle”. The text below this illustration appears to be an invocation of the paradoxical:

Lava flows of supercooled ice through catacombs volcanic eruptions of molten dust through the labyrinth these things embedded in the eye of some creature some Diety i have discovered for i always thought the Core of the animalistic would be a place not a beast and to find these things embedded in its eyes leads to a surprise that leaves the beast forgotten (Mo046: Light 66)

This place of paradox reveals the “secrets of life” with a sensation of “goring”. Here Mannix is shown the “seams” of existence, which are, paradoxically, both the answers to the mystery of life and the theft of such answers. In comparison to this place, psychosis is the ordered dark and light squares of a chessboard, and Mannix suggests it may have been a mistake to have left them behind. The theme of reanimation is again present, as Mannix watches a creature he calls the “Termite Lion” return to life. The illustration of this creature depicts it as an armless one-eyed woman contained within the head of an insect. This “totem is a lucky one though, although within constraints it is similar to the Egyptian scarab and is not wholly terminated by death – it can passage the Nether world should it be snuffed” (Mo046: Light 67).²⁷²

In a passage that again shows Mannix’s propensity for list making, he finds that his vocabulary becomes “Realer and Realer”. This relentless listing of signifiers is thus designed to express Mannix’s experience of the materialisation of language.

Onslaught, seething, impaired, pented, broken, impaled, devastated, deforested, splintered, reduced, disassociated, made into pieces, aphyxante, made finite, made apart, made separate, asundered, damaged, split, fractured, cracked, divided, made a portion, starved, inflamed,

²⁷² The “Termite Lion” is yet another example of host of insects that populate Mannix’s work.

broken into, sacked, immolated...Yet this is only conceivable in a duality and there is its option, entranced, enraptured, enthralled, captivated, titillated, expanded, made more, widened, deepened, enriched, given divinity, given power, made resolute, becoming unconquerable, a land in oneself. [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 68-69)

This stream of thought is interrupted by the return of the “Termite Lion”, which “came back one night with a woman in its jaws, she was meant for me”. Perhaps it is because it brings him a woman that Mannix considers the creature a “lucky” totem. The place Mannix is inhabiting (and battling in order to understand and thus possess its power), is again referred to as the “BLOC”: the “BLOC” is attempting to consume Mannix and Mannix it. Within this place Mannix sees a series of visions:

i see women wrapped in giant leaves like the tobacco inside cigarettes, i see the enormous veridant growing from the cunts of women that gives an import to the word lush that my body has never known, i see the dead illusions of my life in a jocular man who approaches me with his hand outstretched saying “lest we forget,” i see the blood wash from my hands and the police car take the wrong street turnoff as i leave his body complete with a cut throat... (Mo046: Light 70-71)

The use of anaphora in the repetition of “i see” (which continues for two pages) serves to evoke the visions themselves, whilst simultaneously reinforcing their veracity and suggesting a certain distance between the viewer and the observation. This culminates in a rare (within The Light Bulb Eaters) direct address to the audience:

It is of interest, i would like to inform you reader, both with this monstrosity i find myself within and this book. Both are becoming richer, less subsequent to control, more fecund, mistakes are more prevalent but there is better ground to stand on, I am starting to thirst less, it is like someone has given me a cup of blood to slake my thirst. This place has awaked me, i see things growing everywhere, i see spring even though it is still winter... (Mo046: Light 72-73)

The monstrosity of visions is evoked by the relentless repetition of “i see” within the book: thus both Mannix’s hallucinatory reality and the text become “richer” and less subject to control. As spontaneity increases so do the mistakes in the text, but this only supplies a more truthful rendering of experience, providing a more accurate landscape for the reader to stand on. Here the narrator engages with the “place”, the “BLOC” once more, losing any consciousness of the reader; the repetition of “i see” now recurs, as visions again take control of the authorial voice. In the latter part of this paragraph, “i see” becomes the reflective “i saw”: of central importance is the fact that Mannix saw the

“intelligence of this place...” (Mo046: Light 73), rendering it an animated thinking creature. This reflective tone continues on the following page where Mannix seems to suggest that, whilst he is currently in the “place” of the unconscious he calls the “BLOC”, he is in fact newly returned from another area, the “Core” of the unconscious: “The things seem to be returning after my issue from the Core” (Mo046: Light 74). This is confirmed on page 85 where Mannix writes:

As i have said earlier i can make almost no sense of 4 months spent in the core of psychosis; there is no time sequence for this four months although i can map it off roughly on a calender, but i wont apply to seconds, minutes, hours, days, or weeks. Indesputably it is the core...Learning the infinity of the Unconscious was a big thing...The other thing was a poetry of life so beautiful to be intoxicating and heartbreaking at the same time... (Mo046: Light 85).

Thus the core of psychosis (which offers access to the core of the unconscious) is eternal and poetic, the complete annihilation of “contemporary reality”:

on the level of contemporary reality i have an unaccountable cold, violent blaze of four months of amnesia, one cannot expect such reality to be factual or content and i am loath to alter my current reality to examine those four months, i will just have to remain the iceberg below the water as the journey was; but don’t be mislead, i know where it is, and [can] is put my hand below the water to take from it. Its what i always wanted, my own personal chunk of the Unconscious – i regard it with the same affection one has when one keeps an old tooth filling in the top draw of the desk.” (Mo046: Light 74-75)

In this way Mannix retains aspects of his journeys through the unconscious.²⁷³ This “personal chunk” is a collection of amnesic memories (the unconscious of the unconscious), which Mannix imagines as a series of artefacts and curios stored for future investigation. The illustrations on pages 74, 75, 76 and 77 show humanoid figures with, or surrounded by, multiple heads to indicate the expansion of his consciousness that, Mannix feels, is effected by his unconscious treks. Each of the multiple heads (it is later made clear) represent the “intelligences” or “power” Mannix ‘collects’ when he defeats each of the “places” he challenges in the unconscious.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ As has been shown, this notion is also one of the ever-present themes of the writing series, The Chambers.

²⁷⁴ Later in this work Mannix links the title of a book he believes to be “The Hero with a Thousand Heads” (Light 86) with the experience of madness. Mannix often depicts figures with multiple heads and the title of this work (which is in fact Joseph Campbell’s The Hero with a Thousand Faces) was perhaps also inspirational in this regard.

Powering the powerlessness

In keeping with notions of surface and submerged meaning (“the iceberg”), Mannix now discusses the prevalence of decoration in Art Brut, suggesting of such work that “for a while the building seems nothing but façade” (Mo046: Light 77). However, the deep interconnection between idea and feeling within such an art practice “make this decoration a force rather than a digression” (Mo046: Light 77).²⁷⁵ This force is linked to the pursuit and manipulation of “power” by Art Brut makers: “Art Brut makers are cunning users of power...With this ‘ascent’ there also comes the obedience to the fragilities and vulnerabilities of the endless expression of devices, illusions, decorations, repetitions, animations, systems and dreams” (Mo046: Light 77). In this way, Mannix suggests, the dense, decorative nature of some Art Brut²⁷⁶ is an attempt to bring into dialogue or reconcile the many forces the artist is aware of in his or her reality, thus gaining control or power over them.

“Power” (as already mentioned) is another key term used repeatedly by Mannix. Much of his unconscious journeying is a quest to possess the “power” he believes resides in these “places”.²⁷⁷ On one level this relates to the ability to control the unconscious landscapes and its presences: “What of the madman using the creative powers of the unconscious, yin²⁷⁸, anima, persona, ego to reassemble or re-iterate the core?” (Mo046: Light 79). Mannix’s repeated search for “power” is, however, also likely to be a reaction against his many experiences of powerlessness during stays in psychiatric facilities. In this regard Mannix writes:

The lunatic is in a score of places at once, travelling a landscape of violence, performing burials and resurrection, births and deaths; it is with a singular quality though that a madman

²⁷⁵ Mannix reads from this page of writing accompanied by ‘The Loop Orchestra’. This work can be found in the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’ and is titled Mo100.

²⁷⁶ In this respect the work of Adolf Woffli is exemplary.

²⁷⁷ At the outset of this text Mannix characterises the unconscious as a series of places containing Power: “[w]hat concerned me was power and its acquisition...what I could see were places. Unscaleable, impenetratable places that contained what I wanted...” (Light 10).

²⁷⁸ As with the other terms here listed (and already discussed) ‘Yin’ is also mentioned by Carl Jung in relation to the chasm of femininity (see footnote 258 of this thesis).

stands apart, is an outsider and usually creates an unpredictable terror and that is he or she, for a period of time at least controls his or her own destiny and absolutely so. When the hounds and straitjackets are called for the first thing the screws in hospital operate on is this. It is not allowed. You are lucky if you are allowed a partial imagination and some memory.

(Mo046: Light 79)

As if to illustrate this sentiment Mannix draws the reader back inside the Rozelle Psychiatric facility where the inmate Peter Linford, the epitome of powerlessness, resurfaces in the narrative, desperate to regain control over his life: “The breakfast proceeds peaceably, i am proceeding from my bacon to my eggs when peter mutters ‘what the hell’, he then takes a knife from the table and holds it to my throat, ‘My name is Peter Linford and i want to go home’, he says” (Mo046: Light 80). Mannix doesn’t resolve this situation – instead suggesting that:

There’s nothing very much new you can teach [a] and Psychiatric patient about Surrealism. It is like you enter a surrealist exhibition when you come to one of these places. It is the gap between illusion and reality and most of the time is taken up trying to forget the works after you’ve seen them. Breton, Picasso, Dali all missed out on a wealth of material by avoiding being interned. (Mo046: Light 80)

This passage gives context to Mannix’s claim (mentioned previously in this thesis) that he has avoided Surrealist writing by actually going mad (rather than merely attempting to simulate it), and has instead produced “outsider writing”. The Surrealist exhibition within the mental hospital is, likewise, an authentic, living exhibition, not a contrived imitation.

Mannix then lists three other writers whose views on mental hospitals he does respect: William S. Burroughs, Antonin Artaud and Peter Koch²⁷⁹; all of whom actually spent time interned in such a facility and experienced the drugs that, for Mannix, are one of its most dominant aspects.

[M]ost sunny days at Rozelle you can judge an hours passing by the number of patients that collapse on the grounds, when ten or more bodies are prone its time to go in for lunch. In fact since clozapine²⁸⁰ has been introduced in quantity the place has gone deathly [quiet] quite;

²⁷⁹ Mannix writes that “I read Peter Koch on his years internment in morrisset for trying to blow away McKew, the Federal Govt Opposition leader” (Light 80). This confirms that Mannix is actually referring to Peter Kocan, an Australian author who attempted to assassinate Arthur Calwell, the then (1966) Federal Government’s Opposition Leader. Kocan wrote two works about his experience in the Morisset Psychiatric Hospital where he was subsequently interned for ten years: The Treatment and The Cure.

²⁸⁰ Clozapine is an antipsychotic drug administered to some schizophrenic patients. It blocks the neurotransmitter dopamine, and is used because “the [limbic] system’s neurons seem to dump too much dopamine into the synapses between neurons” (Veggeberg 27).

that is except for breakfast, pills are administered fifteen minutes before breakfast, they generally need half-an-hour before becoming effective. (Mo046: Light 80)

Thus the behaviour of Peter Linford at the breakfast table is partially explained, and it is to Peter and the experience of psychiatric drugs that the narrative returns; such drugs, according to Mannix, induce an “atmosphere of anguish [which] stands with the most desolate chords of French Existentialism” (Mo046: Light 81). Mannix again uses Peter to illustrate such desolation: “Today is the fifteenth day in succession he has unsuccessfully tried to masturbate. He is on Modecate. His dick is raw he says. Its in there somewhere he says. It’s a small enough right to ask” (Mo046: Light 81). However, Peter is devoid of rights. In contrast, Mannix (also on Modecate) is still able to perform sexually (and draw erotically), but the drug has caused these erotic impulses to become aggressive and psychopathic. This level of aggression in the sexual act (which seems directed at the nurses rather and other patients) is yet another attempt to regain power – a counterbalance to the position of extreme powerlessness occupied by the mental patient.

The brief mention of Mannix’s practice of erotic drawing in the mental hospital is followed by a page of such illustrations comprising the numerous interwoven breasts, vaginas and bodies of armless women in high-heels seen so often in Mannix’s sexually charged pictorial works. The accompanying caption again mentions “power”, as accessed by drawing erotically. Such an activity, Mannix suggests, “brings to the forefront those esoteric and occult matters of a pluralistic existence...perhaps one deals with a power, like the mind, virtually untouched, yet it is different, it is completely unclad” (Mo046: Light 82). The occult power of erotic drawing is alluded to on the previous page, when Mannix suggests that after the sex act he beings to “draw erotic pictures of my next victim” (Mo046: Light 81). In Mannix’s world-view, the process of ritual drawing – as with the cardboard likeness of Laurie, which Mannix created then perforated in order to defend himself²⁸¹ – seduces, via sympathetic magic, the intended target of his erotic attention. Alternatively (as Mannix has been shown to do elsewhere in his creative work) the process of drawing could conjure up an entirely imaginative presence, which Mannix then perceives as a material companion.

²⁸¹ See Chapter Two (page 59) of this thesis for a discussion of this event.

Such a world-view, as has been discussed, is consistent with shamanism, and here Mannix makes explicit his identification with such a tradition: “Its difficult to know what to do. I was born a shaman, somehow already initiated into the occult...I feel i’m before my time. Look as i want in the unemployed advertisements, nowhere does it say ‘explorer of The Unconscious Wanted’. Adept at everything i am good for nothing” (Mo046: Light 83). Thus Mannix considers himself a modern-day shaman and visionary, persecuted for his revelations – he continues: “But this is nothing new, William Blake’s vehemence about the same thing is almost three hundred years old. But this is an evolutionary change, this unconscious” (Mo046: Light 83). The unconscious is, Mannix suggests, infinite, timeless and irrepressible: “The sooner we come to live our five thousand year mythology the better” (Mo046: Light 83). Here Mannix links his notion of the unconscious with both Jung’s Collective Unconscious and the Akashic Record. Mannix’s exploration of this realm, in which one must “open yourself to everything” (Mo046: Light 83), is an act of unequalled vulnerability, which transcends the individual’s sense of self, and thus offers the potential to transcend linear time, history and rationality in an experience of visionary expanse.

It is Mannix’s understanding that he, at times, inhabits the unconscious itself, that separates him from someone like Peter Linford, whom Mannix now suggests: “didn’t realise that he was in the unconscious, he still thought he was at school before he got that bump on his head which turned him into a cripple, he couldn’t understand why he was seeing things, it was the devil” (Mo046: Light 85). Thus Peter is condemned to being controlled by the unconscious rather than, through exploration and dialogue, coming to understand (and ultimately harness) the metamorphic power of this landscape. Again the relation between this practice and that of magic and shamanism is emphasised: the “sanely person can effect reality and be affected in turn by it, the lunatic is incongruous and alters it. With every lunatic there is something of the shaman, something of the Magician...” (Mo046: Light 86). In this regard Mannix specifically mentions an anthropological text entitled “The Hero with a thousand heads”.²⁸² Mannix links the title of this work with the “madman”, and such notions relate to the room full of speaking heads that Mannix discovers (and importantly, through magic, comes to control) in his

²⁸² This is most likely Joseph Campbell’s The Hero with a Thousand Faces, as mentioned.

unconscious as well as his repeated depictions of bodies with a proliferation of heads. One such illustration appears on the following page with reference to the Outsider Artist, Phillip Heckenberg: “He has command of things now, he never had to alter himself, just alter his altered environment. The thousand heads are all one for him, all have right to speak or not, depending upon how they feel” (Mo046: Light 87). From Heckenberg’s reconciliation with madness Mannix turns again to his most pressing concern, “the BLOC...It has a slow eroding power which gains a little ground every day” (Mo046: Light 88). Now Mannix characterises this conflict between himself and the “BLOC” as a battle “for one more head” (Mo046: Light 88). In conquering each place within his unconscious he takes its power and controls it, adding one more head to his own “imaginary body”.

Continuing the focus on heads, the illustration on the following page shows a humanoid figure with a single disconnected head, and Mannix now suggests that his “Shadow” has removed his head. Again it is his realisation that this has happened that is important: “It is good i have noticed this because the strange feeling of not having a head was driving me to distraction” (Mo046: Light 88). Mannix accepts that the “Shadow” gives great gifts (as well as takes much away) and waits to grow another head as has happened in the past.

Perhaps linked to this shedding of his head, Mannix suggests: “i have come to top of the heap in this matter of madness and like a reptile shedding its skin will bite anything trying to disturb my reverie of passage. I am no longer an alien looking out through some subterrean watery sight upon your workings and doing, i am one of you now and you’ll just have to put up with that. Or almost” (Mo046: Light 89). The second-person ‘you’ connects Mannix with his sane reader (“Or almost”), but one paragraph later this connection dissipates once more as he writes: “I am in a place, the old is dissolving...I can see to the very bottom of this chasm” (Mo046: Light 89). This capacity for insight has evolved from the experience of years of schizophrenic trekking through the unconscious, during which time he has learned to harness the “power” present in its various “places”. This experience has afforded him access to Jung’s Collective Unconscious – a contact which allows him to see into the core of some people: “I have been in the unconscious so long that this collective unconscious is often very transparent

to me. Likewise i can see into the chasm of some individuals with an alacrity that is frightening” (Mo046: Light 90). Mannix then suggests that an event of paramount importance in this regard occurred when he was attacked by a “psychopath” in the Sutherland Royal National Park.²⁸³ “I survived his gun by psychic force and stones, what i struck him with were more than small pieces, but the developed violence of the Unconscious peaked by a massive dose of adrenalin. After i was shot the reality of him and i and what was about us changed, and it changed the way i wished. As i put a yell into his centre in the way people have of affecting each other i felt the beams give and an ore mine of sanity cave in” (Mo046: Light 90). In this moment, Mannix suggests, he harnesses his own psychic potential to affect the reality around him – akin to the materialisation (or real-isation) of the wish’s mental force. The mental wish to harm this psychopath, so as to defend himself, was actualised in a psychic attack upon the assailant which amounts to the ability to see (and penetrate) into the chasm of this individual and subsequently other individuals.

At this point the “termite-lion totem” surfaces again in the narrative: “i suppose this matter of the termite-lion totem should be solved...The thing returned, i again gained more, the thing came back neither smaller nor larger, the same species but with slightly different markings, i became different again, it doesn’t seem to live by memory although it has an absolute one towards feeling” (Mo046: Light 91). Yet Mannix, typically, does not resolve the matter, merely expanding and embellishing his original formulation regarding this creature which has the capacity to attack and plunder nests “millions of times its bulk” (Mo046: Light 91), whilst “[i]n another place, another time, it’s the scarab really, good luck, the after-life and the underworld” (Mo046: Light 91). In its transformative capacity and link with the underworld the creature is associated with the scarab of ancient Egyptian worship, and it is the creature’s experiences of conquest within this underworld (or in Mannix’s formulation the unconscious) that causes Mannix to become more powerful (“i again gained more”) when it returns.

²⁸³ For further discussion and location of references to this incident in Mannix’s texts see Chapter Three of this thesis.

Reanimation: Creating a “being of art”

The return of the termite-lion also causes Mannix to once again consider the “BLOK”: “Here in this place everything is riches and everything is impossible – a bloody truncated dog’s head is its totem.”²⁸⁴ It is a place of sores – even the landscape has sores, and where the most outlandish thoughts mix with the most mundane and are indistinguishable from each other” (Mo046: Light 91). The chaotic nature of this place can only be explored if certain ritualistic “tools” are employed:

i use a variety of weapon, tools and implements to savage, journey, enamour and plunder my way through states of being that don’t solely reside within me, but are more. There is one alone though that is constant and unerring because it will always integrate the elements of chaos, with this which i have never let a point become affixed i can determine where it is and what i am, anywhere. (Mo046: Light 91)

The one tool that Mannix always uses to make his way through such states as the “BLOK” is that of art-making. Just as with the book he is presently creating, he attempts to “integrate the elements of chaos” he experiences through the creation of expression that resists the fixed structures of conventional narrative. Mannix’s ‘novel’ with its discontinuous vignettes and randomly recurring themes and characters, maintains an open, expansive structure to which material of any nature can be added. The next page displays an erotic illustration, a practice that is a central “tool” Mannix uses to navigate his altered states. The following page is again dominated by an erotic drawing, but the caption clarifies Mannix’s message regarding the role of art in his world-view:

This making of art has been about constantly for a decade, and before but now a new idea has been literally striking me and that is i am on the threshold of creating a being-of-work rather than a body-of-work. It is often now that i am hunting about inside of myself to find that tiny vein which must be added to the body to make it a being...i am well aware this is a most fragmentary vision and an undeveloped one...i am aware also it is the first glimpse of a place where i will be, its harbinger, the first point of its metaphor. (Mo046: Light 93-94)

Thus Mannix is seeking to create the metaphor of a place, through art, that he will then come to animate in an inhabited lived metaphor: “In this role as Frankenstein with my world of art i see nothing but success, sometimes i think that what is happening is reverse

²⁸⁴ Such a reference is linked to the “Temple of the Dog” previously discussed. On page 96 of The Light Bulb Eaters, an unsigned typed story again describes Mannix’s encounter with this temple. Mannix has subsequently confirmed that the story was written by Phillip Hammial.

and it is its intelligence recreating retrieving me from a violent and horrible death past” (Mo046: Light 94). Mannix becomes both Victor Frankenstein creating life from inanimate matter, and the creature being slowly brought back to life by the intelligence present in the artwork itself. The reference to Victor Frankenstein is also relevant to Mannix’s drawings of figures (erotic and otherwise), which are typically an amalgam of amorphous body parts. The illustrations that accompany the text on this page are no exception – the head of one of the (partial) women being constructed from two roughly joined sections.

Mannix makes clear the transition from metaphor to lived metaphor in the following passage: “i heard an old woman fall through her floor²⁸⁵, i heard the she-wolf scream, i heard the clown shriek, i heard the sadist whine, i heard the animal hold itself in its own jaws; eventually i could hear nothing more except the din of which there became no metaphor” (Mo046: Light 95). For Mannix, his artwork (and Art Brut in general) is inseparable from the desire to create work that is, like Frankenstein’s monster, living. Conflating the distinctions between Art Brut and Outsider Art, Mannix writes that “an art that is really alive tends to devour its definitions. One realizes very soon that one is given to constructing a beast that will not sit comfortably in the FRAME, and it is the viewer who must adjust to it and not vice versa” (Mo046: Light 98).

This theme of reanimation takes on added significance when Mannix, as he did at the outset of this book, links the journey through the unconscious with the journey through the underworld of death – an underworld from which he now begins to seek release:

I believe in the wheel of rebirth; i cannot suffer a void, no matter what its character...When one deals and is dealt cards year after year, unceasingly and the subject is chaos, the secrets of being of the human chasm, psychosis and its irrational, unreal and incomprehensible, paradox, duality, and they are not treated as philosophical studies but core matters, it is incontrovertible that one dies. One has something of a hand in one’s re-incarnation for these things do not leave one barren. (Mo046: Light 99)

Mannix’s artworks are the key to his reincarnation, and it is their creation that ensures such places do not leave him barren. The following pages reveal that Mannix is now battling the centre of the “BLOK” (“its intelligence” (Mo046: Light 99)), that Rosey

²⁸⁵ This image again resonates with the hole in Mannix’s own floorboards at the start of this work.

Spite has returned to accompany him, and describe an internal city Mannix has built within himself but cannot fathom. The theme of death and resurrection is continued here:

i have been dead for so long now that i don't know if i can come alive again. It is the passage to the journey, of course, that strikes you dead, it is impossible otherwise, otherwise you are all the time packing, finding place for all the essentials and things possibly needed. So free just to be struck dead and leave in your naked skin...Still, i would like to be alive now, being dead for five years i have started to find haunted houses rather mundane, although i don't honestly see how i could have committed the vast plunder of the unconscious except in this state – to those lands that i came my army of walking dead was irresistible. (Mo046: Light 103)

Such plunder is the reward for his conquest of such regions and constitutes his creative output. Each drawing, sculpture, artist's book and painting is at once a tool with which to navigate the unconscious and a curio retrieved from this realm:

It has become obvious that i am going to need more storage space because of the plunder i have collected in the unconscious. Rosey thinks that we should rent a large bank vault. People i come into contact with seem profoundly disappointed when i tell them i have no money and sense a lie, at this point i take them for a tour of the amassed art and collectables of the unconscious that is fifteen years duration. They are never quite the same again. (Mo046: Light 104-05)

In order to travel and plunder his way through the unconscious, Mannix has also developed tools other than artwork which he calls weaponry: “The two weapons i mentioned earlier, brutality²⁸⁶ and the inhuman²⁸⁷ will eventually get you anything that you wish there. So eventually you are so rotten with wealth you despair. [It] In was in this mood that i set out to build a city in the unconscious” (Mo046: Light 106). The accompanying illustration is perhaps such a city: an organic structure with brickwork indicative of that which features in the constructions undertaken in his work Mo024: Erogyen, complete with a sun or moon in the form of a breast.

²⁸⁶ Discussed previously in this chapter.

²⁸⁷ Earlier in The Light Bulb Eaters Mannix discusses society's propensity to characterise madmen and women (and other social outcasts) as inhuman. In a typical inversion Mannix embraces this label suggesting that: “To become part inhuman is the first step in no longer even recognizing cruelty and that is liberation, it also a damn good thing to have for it is a ticket to run riot when you are in the lunnybin and want something to do, there's really no hole deep enough that they can put you where that you will be repentant” (Mo046 97). Mannix reads from this page of writing accompanied by ‘The Loop Orchestra’. This work can be found in the ‘Sound Works’ section of ‘The Atomic Book’, titled Mo099.

Another example of Mannix's capacity to build a metaphoric city or reality, which then becomes lived, can be found in the presence of the "Shadow" which now reappears in the narrative: "It is interesting that the Shadow has returned. As you may know Carl Jung wrote about this part of ourselves which as a concept interested me greatly until it became three-dimensional, then it became of more than interest" (Mo046: Light 107). In this way the mental concept loses its fixed, static nature and becomes a physical, literal reality; as already mentioned, it is in this way that Mannix suggests "one must cease the substance of the concept" (Mo012: Journal of a Madman 1994-95 174), in order to journey through the unconscious. Mannix, in a formulation that echoes that of Jung, suggests he invites the "Shadow" into his reality through a dream.²⁸⁸ The "Shadow", which after six months, disappeared (as already discussed) has now returned with a "very familiar tapping in the other vacant room" (Mo046: Light 107).

A page-long, typed short story entitled "A drive with Dr. Plotz" (Mo046: Light 108) continues the theme of returning presences. In the story Young Anthony Glitz resists his psychiatrist's (Dr Eva Plotz) attempts to banish his demons into the woods. Instead of diminishing, the demons multiply and begin to surround Dr Plotz as well.

The ultimate of these presences or animations is art itself: Mannix's notion of creating,

a being of work, a being of art, and the leaving behind the body of work which although with its million ways of seeing required me to operate its dialysis machine. It was so difficult to carry in the extreme places i explored, it was the last thing to go – when my endurance finally did break and i dropped this body, had to lay it on the road beside me i saw something new that made me get up and continue even though i had to leave the body behind" (Mo046: Light 109).

This "something new", the animation of his body of work, takes the form of a beautiful girl: "the great threshold was in seeing her, simply to adjust the eyes created a monumental explosion" (Mo046: Light 109).²⁸⁹ The "Shadow", in its Jungian formulation, as that aspect of the psyche determined to thwart the individual's success, briefly threatens to murder Mannix's newly animated being of art: "With something so

²⁸⁸ In a previously cited quotation Jung writes: "The darkness which clings to every personality is the door into the unconscious and the gateway of dreams, from which those two twilight figures, the shadow and the anima, step into our nightly visions..." (Four 66).

²⁸⁹ Here Mannix, in linking spiritual and artistic awakening to the figure of a woman echoes the tradition of the Visionary Romance within which both Dante and Nerval can be situated.

precious i have seen The Shadow take a wicked implement from within him with the intent that harm will meet harm, but in this case not and he too is silent tonight” (Mo046: Light 109). In the end it is Mannix’s successful animation of his being of art that affects his own reanimation:

it is that i am coming alive that i am so testy, birth has its throes just as death has, moreso, death may be so quick that nothing can be said or done; it is difficult to hold this in the mind. I don’t feel reborn, i don’t look to another god, it is that all the pieces of myself that i have left in other places are now returning to me and i am becoming no longer divided; also i am advancing upon the block, and i recognize it. (Mo046: Light 110)

In this respect the text has shown (over the last fifteen pages) the progressive return of Mannix’s “pieces” including the “termite-lion”, “Rosey Spite” and the “Shadow”. It seems that the text itself, in its exploration of language, affects both the return of such “pieces” and Mannix’s ultimate recognition of the “Block”: between the previous passage and the statement, “I have met the Block now” (Mo046: Light 111), Mannix expresses his belief in the efficacious power of words: “i am in love with the great fireworks of words; it is that there is no escape, nor would one want one when words have absolute reality. And you are dealing with a medium, you cast and you wrought within yourself... (Mo046: Light 110). Words, like other artistic medias, are manipulated in order to construct the realms Mannix inhabits. Now that Mannix has met the “block” he is in “the chamber of colour where awesome things meet...things i touch bears the unclad and breathtaking likeness of parts of woman...I name this place the Chamber. It is eight years since i began to loosen the knots to unveil it” (Mo046: Light 111). Mannix here takes the reader back to one of the initial images in the text, landscape in the form of the female body. Mannix’s own re-animation coincides with the animation of his being of art and his contact with this chamber: “The chamber like a star glistens and becomes more affectionate each day. Still i have a fondness for my time as a cadaver for everything was as poetic as everything else and i could alter anything i wished within the long wail of hours because reality did not exist” (Mo046: Light 113).

“A punch-drunk stammer”

The dates included in the text now indicate a gap of nine months. These final pages, in what first appears an attempt to bring the narrative to a rounded conclusion, look back over Mannix's search for power in his places of the unconscious. The most profound realisation that this experience afforded him relates to language itself:

i'd live[d] in the glossary and bibliography of what i was about²⁹⁰ when it was such an obvious action to live the language you are about...I picked the word 'seething' to live and therein was a five year Saga, the violence thereof being honed to such a degree and with such an impact that although i now speak the language of the things that are, real, i suppose i speak it with a punch-drunk stammer that make people not only sit and listen but wonder if their ear are telling them the truth. (Mo046: Light 115-16)

As has been suggested elsewhere in this thesis, language in Mannix's formulation, is a living entity, which both describes and creates what he perceives as 'real'. Mannix's idiosyncratic language, his "punch-drunk stammer", creates a unique landscape, both for himself and his reader, which draws madness into an impossible narrative which utilises and exploits what Foucault described as "stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax" (Madness xii) in order to facilitate a loud dialogue or "exchange between madness and reason" (xii).

On the following page, Mannix offers a passage which seems to embody the entire project of The Light Bulb Eaters, with its wild host of recurring characters and varied settings:

i think of the people that populate my life; for is it not so that this thing life makes you a city and you house them all, from the saintly to the barbarian, from the abberated to the rife, from the mundane to the exceptional. Needless to say it is ferocious to venture into the underground, subterranean caverns of the city for that is where the mutants are kept, and the most extraordinary and powerful erotic delights and sexual acts. (Mo046: Light 117)

If this were a conventional narrative the book would finish at this point, inviting the reader to reflect on the people in their own life and the cities one houses them in. However, Mannix has five more pages to fill, and he does so with new characters, one of which is David Bishop who balances on the electrified tip of an incomprehensible pyramid. "The pyramid is red and labelled 'Neurosis'. He sits cross-legged upon the little

²⁹⁰ Perhaps this formulation is again inspired by the writing of Jung who writes of the danger of being possessed by ones 'persona'. For an individual who acts only as they believe others wish them to "lives exclusively against the background of his own biography" (Four 66).

sharp tongue at the very apex of the hilt of this dagger with Zen eyes burnt black like one of the Mongol hordes” (Mo046: Light 117).²⁹¹

The resolved, contemplative mood is further shattered when in the final pages of the work (written a year after the last entry) Mannix describes feeling “fiery with a power i can not explain...as if i swallowed an asteroid...” (Mo046: Light 118). Mannix again turns to ritual for explanations: “the ritual of the Catholics and the host...each sunset i swallow it [asteroid] into the bowel of a furnace in my body where it remain white-hot to just before dawn” [Ellipsis in original] (Mo046: Light 118). Thus Mannix, like the scarab beetle he has written of, seems to take possession of the sun, controlling the progression of night and day. This does not, however, represent an ascension by Mannix to an all-powerful god-like state – instead, the many realisations he has detailed in this book seem to have been eroded: “I don’t any longer maintain to know anything about madness however the emotional insanity has left my life. The feeling when it did so was as of a dense mass of entrails, unstriated muscles, tissue and gut being cut loose from a steel cable which wrapped them so tightly that the word ‘agony’ became the most commonly used word in my vocabulary” (Mo046: Light 118-19).

The final page of The Light Bulb Eaters begins with “II”, as if this one remaining leaf is part two of the work. Here it is made clear that the trek through the unconscious is not over, and that the quest for power and influence continues. The contest this time is with “Fate”: Mannix and his accompanying “strange voice” enter the landscape of “Fate” and find it

full of enormous beautiful woman in see-thru glass nylon body-stockings with their breasts unclad with sharp knives and incomprehensible wheels that were crushing and cruel even to look at. In between it was deep and filled with black madness. We set out to reconnaissance among [the] to girls. We walked thru a door and didn’t the place stink, like a Turkish brothel. (Mo046: Light 120)

Here, in the concluding lines of the book, Mannix again opens a dialogic door to an all-encompassing, erotic madness and advances across the threshold to continue his “schizophrenic trek”. This time the reader does not accompany him, merely watches as

²⁹¹ The following comments written by Tony Tanner regarding Naked Lunch are also extremely pertinent to The Light Bulb Eaters: “Naked Lunch (1959) is a book with no narrative continuity, and no sustained point of view; the separate episodes are not interrelated, they co-exist in a particular field of force brought together by the mind of Burroughs which then abandons them. Slapstick scenes from some dark carnival and what could be frames from a strip-cartoon alternate with passages of cool scientific analysis...” (114)

he is inexorably drawn into this new unconscious landscape of sex, violence and incomprehensibility.

The light bulb eaters?

The question remains to be asked, who or what are the light bulb eaters? This phrase, the title of the work, appears on the first page of this book and nowhere else. The illustration that accompanies this title shows a figure sucking from a light bulb that seems to possess a nipple-like teat. This image evokes the notion of an individual sucking at the teat of the unconscious (a formulation that Mannix has elsewhere specifically elucidated), emblematic of the opening of a dialogue between rationality and a psychotic unconscious, which the text has attempted to effect. Mannix suggests that the title came from an article he read as a boy in Reader's Digest.²⁹² The article describes the failing attendance at a circus. The sword swallows employed there attempt to generate interest by swallowing lit light globes mounted on long poles. In this way the innards of the individual were illuminated for the brief amount of time that the performer could keep the bulb in their throat. Thus the light bulb eaters make visible the inside to the outside, a notion that again resonates with Mannix's project to externally document the unconscious landscapes within his mind.

Roger Cardinal, the theorist of Outsider Art also makes an appearance on this opening page in a quotation, the veracity of which, fittingly, cannot be verified – it reads:

“it was nice to see the images of
Anthony Mannix that intensifer supreme”

Roger Cardinal

University of Kent. (Mo046: Light 3)

In The Light Bulb Eaters, Mannix the “intensifer supreme”, attempts to express a form of “outsider writing”: a chaotic, “speculative narrative” that encompasses the fictional, documentary and pictorial, defying conventional literary categorisation. Mannix has created a landscape through which the reader is required to travel, drawing their own imaginative associations from a loose amalgam of butchered body parts cobbled together

²⁹² Conversations with Mannix: Recollections of G.S.Jenkins 2005-2008.

and electrified by madness. As Mannix himself suggests: “an art that is really alive tends to devour its definitions. One realizes very soon that one is given to constructing a beast that will not sit comfortably in the FRAME, and it is the viewer who must adjust to it and not vice versa” (Mo046: Light 98). This analysis of the text (from its title onwards) is, therefore, just one narrative reading among numerous possible readings; one beast exhumed from a textual landscape inhabited by many.

Conclusion

“I wish to harvest the crop”

This thesis is the first and only investigation, academic or otherwise, of the oeuvre of the Australian Outsider art-maker Anthony Mannix. Virtually unknown as a writer, it is this aspect of his practice that has been the focus of this thesis. The fact that the vast majority of his texts are unpublished and unavailable for public viewing required the construction of a digital archive, ‘The Atomic Book’, wherein are contained the seventy-two artists’ books on which this thesis is based. ‘The Atomic Book’, is thus a work of original digital scholarship in its own right, for the first time making available to a wider audience the texts, images, sound recordings, and biographical details of Anthony Mannix.

The decision to write a doctoral thesis focused on the work of Anthony Mannix evolved out of the process of material documentation undertaken in order to create ‘The Atomic Book’. This process foregrounded the extensive and diverse nature of Mannix’s creative output, making possible, for the first time, a detailed engagement with the material. Such engagement, realised in this thesis, made evident the quality and importance of Mannix’s work within the domestic and international creative landscape. One of Mannix’s great strengths in this regard, is his capacity to express the lived experience of psychosis, while creating texts that also reflect on this experience from the perspective of one well informed regarding the culturally dominant constructions of madness. This unique perspective, and the sensitivity, sophistication and invention with which Mannix expresses it, ensures his importance as a creative artist worthy of this and future studies.

The central argument of this thesis highlights Mannix’s unique perspective, suggesting that whilst displaying the extreme idiosyncrasy commonly associated with Brut or Outsider Art, his work in fact retains many refigured traces of the literary, artistic and social environment in which he lived; similarly Mannix refigures rational language in terms of his “altered” world-view. Thus what he calls his “outsider writing” represents a dialogue between madness and reason. For Mannix, the work of Antonin Artaud was

inspirational in this endeavour, as it also was for the post-structuralist and anti-psychiatric theorists deployed by this thesis to contextualise Mannix's position.

Mannix expressly links his "outsider writing" with his experience of schizophrenia and it is this very madness, he suggests, which differentiates his work from the modernist avant-garde texts (with which it has been shown to share some affinity) produced by artistic movements he has, never the less, been influenced by, notably Surrealism. In his madness, and its characteristic "lived metaphor", Mannix realises the imaginative yearnings of Surrealism for a unification of the dream state and that of empirical reality. Such a unification accurately reflects, not the extreme isolation of madness, but its capacity to draw from and refigure many aspects of conventional reality.

The fundamental role played by 'The Atomic Book' in accurately presenting (rather than ab/normalising) Mannix's work and in preserving the dialogue between madness and reason that exists within it, was outlined in Chapter One of this thesis. Whilst the very presence of such a dialogue in Mannix's work may seem to compromise his status as an Outsider (as far as theorists such as Dubuffet are concerned), it has also been suggested by this thesis (in Chapter Two) that the extreme isolation from external stimulus said to characterise Brut or Outsider expression has, from the beginning, been somewhat overstated. Certainly in the contemporary climate it seems far more relevant to suggest that in fact the creative process at work is one of "defamiliarising" or "deterritorialising" external stimulus in terms of an internal or idiosyncratic world-view. It is thus the extreme individuality of Mannix's world-view (dominated by repeated psychotic episodes) that affords him his status as an Outsider. Guided by such concerns this thesis has sought to elucidate the central aspects of Mannix's world-view, or schizophrenic cosmology, as it is expressed in his artists' books.

Chapters Two, Three and Four drew from many works within 'The Atomic Book', so as to broadly outline the major characteristics of this cosmology, which is dominated by the related themes of madness and eroticism. Chapter Two examined the influence of madness, and particularly psychosis, on Mannix's artistic world-view. Psychosis is seen by Mannix as a state which facilitates his descent into, and exploration of, the realms of the unconscious. It is this exploration, which he later calls the "schizophrenic trek", that is the central theme of his artistic production. Art-making is

characterised as a ritual technique which allows Mannix to navigate through the unconscious. At times it serves as a method for opening dialogue with the many presences that inhabit this realm, at others it seems to actually conjure up such presences and realms. Thus Mannix inhabits a lived metaphor in which subject and object become conflated, as imaginative realities are realised. In these experiences Mannix does not remain entirely isolated, engaging in dialogue with the shamanic and esoteric beliefs and practices of so-called ‘primitive’ cultures, a point of reference to contextualise his own descent into, and return from, worlds inhabited by demons and spirits. His oeuvre is thus an attempt to develop his own cosmology with which to make sense of an individual reality that does not always adhere to conventional logical processes. In this regard he also finds a community in the history and contemporary practice of Art Brut and Outsider Art practitioners, a community with which he consciously associates himself.

Chapter Three discussed Mannix’s dialogue with psychiatry. The cosmology Mannix articulates in his “book of life” can be read as a narrative that counters the narrative created about him by the medical profession over the last twenty-five years. Here is brought into stark relief the resistance of Mannix, and schizophrenia itself, to the sense-making categorisation of psychiatry. Language is shown to be the central staging ground for the power relation between doctor and patient, wherein the patient (through that which Foucault calls psychiatry’s “monologue”) is systematically posited as an unreliable narrator of his or her own psychotic experience. In a dialogue between madness and rationality, Mannix elides rational language and those linguistic characteristics psychiatry labels “deviant verbalisations”; he thus destabilises language and narrative – ceasing the “subject of the concept”. This move, while being an implicit challenge to the medical establishment, also draws Mannix’s work towards modernist avant-garde practices such as automatic writing; Mannix himself suggests he moves beyond such practices into what he calls “outsider writing”. Ultimately in such a treatment of language the relation between sound and sense is conceived of as motivated rather than “arbitrary”, leading to communication via the non-denotative means of music, sound and bodily vibration. Here Mannix’s ideas again intersect with those of shamanism and the “sympathetic magic” that underpins such belief systems. It is at these points that Mannix’s psychosis in fact silences reason, and his dialogue with madness becomes a

monologue by madness as it speaks with its own voice. Thus Mannix counters the rational narrative of psychiatry with a nomadic “speculative narrative” of radical confluence and association. It is within an account of this nature that Mannix is able to reliably narrate the chaotic experience of psychosis.

Chapter Four focused on the second dominant theme (after madness) within Mannix’s world-view: the erotic. A deep connection exists between these two concepts as Mannix often experiences his madness and its unconscious realms as charged with eroticism. Eroticism becomes central to the process of subject / object conflation whereby Mannix experiences deep interconnections between himself and the environment around him. Mannix also experiences a deep interconnection between himself and others during the sex act, believing that the irrationality of the erotic impulse has the capacity to facilitate a union between essentially “discontinuous” human beings. This sense of confluence is reflected in Mannix’s belief that he has at times become a woman through a process of esoteric, psychic sex-change. Mannix’s art-practice participates in or facilitates such erotic unifications, as the process of writing and mark-making is characterised as a uniquely erotic act typified by a technique he terms “sex scribble”, wherein he believes he can most directly express the libidinal drive of his erotic unconscious.

The final two chapters of the thesis, Five and Six, rather than drawing from many works simultaneously, were dedicated to a close engagement with a selection of individual books and creative series produced by Mannix. Chapter Five analysed the way in which the texts, The Machines, or a Concise History of the Machine (as far as I know them...)...., Erogeny: a book of fables about Rozelle Lunatic Asylum, The Skull, The Chambers, and The Demise, operate as narratives in their own right. Here is highlighted Mannix’s propensity to create dialogues between the pictographic and linguistic and to produce multiple narratives within the one work, which constitute (in the case of Erogeny) an explicit dialogue between madness and reason. The works discussed in this chapter also show Mannix’s tendency to both anthropologically document his psychotic experiences and use them as the inspiration for consciously fictional works; language and narrative are destabilised in such texts, and require the reader to engage their own imagination in order to navigate their amorphous literary landscapes.

Chapter Six looked closely at the narrative Mannix calls his ‘novel’, The Light Bulb Eaters. It is within this, his longest written work that Mannix suggests he most comprehensively sets out his unconscious cosmology. This text brings into exchange the various aspects of Mannix’s modes of communication: pictorial, documentary and fictional. He describes the seven psychotic realms of his cosmology, which take the form of concentric circles. Such an organised schema is shown (by Mannix himself) to be merely a construction, one which cannot remain unified: the chaos and confluence of psychosis renders all such borders porous, to the extent that even the supposed centre of this cosmology is unstable and multiple.

It is only in experiencing the unconscious landscape that it can be described or understood. Thus Mannix details his notion of the “schizophrenic trek” (his own version of the Grail quest), which takes him on challenges through the underworld of the unconscious, an ultimately death-like state. Mannix’s own resurrection becomes entwined with his capacity to animate his creative production. His claim, repeated throughout his oeuvre, regarding his experience of art as a living entity, one with which he engages in dialogue, is most fully articulated here. In the culminating pages of The Light Bulb Eaters, can be found the final realisation of his belief in the creation of an animated art, one which facilitates his dialogue with, and hence navigation through, psychosis and the unconscious realms such a state provides access to: in this formulation, Mannix’s oeuvre, his body of work, becomes “a being of art”.

Ultimately, all such pronouncements made about the work of Anthony Mannix by this thesis are aspects of a subjective commentary that ‘The Atomic Book’ stands ready to critique – one possible reading of material, whose ambiguity ensures its openness to multiple interpretations. Thus, as has already been suggested, this thesis should always be viewed as being in dialogue with the primary nature of the archive and the material within it. This collection does not seem antithetical to the spirit of Mannix’s artistic aims for he believes all of his works to be intrinsically linked – he writes: “i have an ambition, and that’s to put all of my work, art and life of the last twenty years into books; really into one very, very big book: it just has many parts” (Mo047: Night Owl Writings 14).

The archive is just such a book, one which is, never the less, itself a construction, a simulation of an absent material original. In this way Anthony Mannix’s actual work

will always elude such modes of containment, standing apart and above such representations.

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Appendix 1

A list of exhibitions by Anthony Mannix are as follows:

1980: Outsiders Gallery, Balmain, Sydney.

1984: Boronia Gallery, North Sydney.

1986: Co-founded 'The Australian Collection of Outsider Art' with Phillip Hammial; Artspace Inc., Surry Hills, Sydney.

1986-88: Kelly St Kolektiv, Ultimo, Sydney – exhibitor and co-curator participating in twelve group shows.

1987: Roundhouse, Adelaide; Seymour Theatre Centre, Sydney; Street Level Gallery, Penrith; Bay St Theatre, Ultimo, Sydney; Rondeau Gallery, Newtown, Sydney.

1989: Iwalewa-Haus, Bayreuth, Germany.

1990: Cannibal Pierce Galerie, St Denis, France; Bockley Gallery, Minneapolis, USA; Orange Regional Gallery; Julie Green Gallery, Surry Hills, Sydney; Site de la Creation Franche, Belges, France; 'Artists Make Books' in the Linden Gallery, St Kilda, Victoria; Chameleon, Hobart, Tasmania; La Trobe Valley Arts Centre, Morwell, Victoria; Contemporary Arts Space, Cambera, ACT.

1992: Julie Green Gallery, Surry Hills, Sydney; In Sheds Gallery, University of Sydney.

1996: 'Important Works by Self Taught Artists', Calvin Morris Inc., NY, USA; 5th International Outsider Art Fair, NY, USA.

1997: OZ Gallery, Katoomba, NSW; Wollongong City Gallery, Exhibition of 28 Artists' books.

1999: 'Bodies of Transgression: Hedging the Edge by Self Taught Artists', Calvin Morris Inc., NY, USA; 'In My Bedroom', Camperdown, Sydney; Neve Kunst aus Australien und Paupa Newguinea in der Schmidtbank Selb, Germany; Baileau Library, University of Melbourne, Artists' Books; Site de la Creation Franche, Begles, France.

2000: Australian Convention of Psychiatrists, Adeliade, Australia; Corridor Gallery, Blackheath, NSW.

2003: B & D Gallery Sarl, Geneva, Switzerland (Group show black and white drawings).

2004: 'Sardines on the Wall', Geneva, Switzerland; James Harvey Gallery, Clovelly, Sydney.

2005: Kunst Im Regenboden, Bayreuth, Germany; Geneva, Switzerland 'From Australia, with Art'; Orange Regional Gallery.

2006: 'Australian Outsiders', Hazelhurst Regional Gallery; 'For Matthew and Others: Journeys with Schizophrenia' – Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Bundoora Homestead Art Centre; 'Australian Outsiders', Halle St Pierre, Paris; Art d'Ailleur d'Aujourd'hui, Paris.

2008: Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, 'Handle With Care' Art Gallery of South Australia.

Appendix 2

A List of textual publications by Anthony Mannix are as follows:

Mannix, Anthony 'Anthony Mannix Talks to Ulli Beier: Coming to Terms with Demons: The Latest Book of Drawings.' Southerly 64:1 (2004). 31-46.

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---. Artery : repartee light discourse with feeling about matters of sentiment conducted on both a simple and profound level. Limited Edition, Sydney, 1996.

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---. 'In some ways I have come to An End', and 'Dear Liz Parkinson'. A + T [Art & Text] no. 27 (Art Brut: Madness and Marginalia), December-February: 1988. 68, 72.

---. 'The Chamber of Disrupted Sensation', Outsider Art in Australia, Aspect No. 35, 1989. 77.