

T. C.
BEYKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
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**EXAMINATION OF CHARLES BUKOWSKI'S PROSE
THROUGH BAKHTIN'S CONCEPT OF
CARNIVALIZED LITERATURES**
(Yüksek Lisans Tezi)

Tezi Hazırlayan: **Gökhan BULUT**

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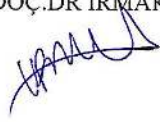
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ÖZET

Bu tez Charles Bukowski düzyazısının, Rus edebiyat kuramcısı Mikhail Mikhaïlovich Bakhtin tarafından karnavallaşmış türler diye tanımlanan edebi türlere olan özdeşliğinin incelenmesidir. Bakhtin eski Yunan'dan 19. yy Rusya'sına kadar incelemiş olduğu bu karnavallaşmış türlerin bir edebi kalıttan yararlanarak sürekli yenilendiklerini ileri sürmektedir. Genel anlamda Bakhtin'in kuramı, karnaval ritüellerinin gayrı resmi doğasından esinlenen bu edebi türlerin, karnavallara benzer bir şekilde, gayrı resmi ve alternatif biçimler altında kendilerini ifade ettikleri düşüncesi üzerine kurulmuştur. Karnavallaşmış türler, folklorik temaların tahrip gücünden kendi edebi stilleri lehine yararlanarak, ana-akım edebiyat anlayışının yazar odaklı, otoriter yapısını ve tek taraflı ciddiyetini baş aşağı etme gayreti içerisindeyler. Karnaval zamanlarında, alt ve üst sınıfların birbiriyle kaynaşması sonucunda ortaya çıkan kozmopolit yapı ise edebi yansımasını, romanda bütün karakterlerin söz sahibi olmasını izin veren bir diyalojizm olarak bulur. Bu tez, Bukowski düz yazısının da Bakhtin'in kuramsallaştırdığı bu karnavalesk öğeleri taşıdığı iddiasındadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Karnaval, Karnavalesk, Gülüş, Mizah, Tahrip edici, Gayrı Resmi, Maddi, Bedensel

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the consubstantiality of Charles Bukowski's prose with the literary sorts which are defined as carnivalized genres by Russian literary theorist Mikhail Mikhaïlovich Bakhtin. Bakhtin maintains that those genres, which he scrutinizes from ancient Greece to 19th century's Russia, constantly regenerate by utilizing a literary heritage. In its general meaning Bakhtin's theory is based on an idea that those literary genres, which are inspired by the unofficial nature of carnival rituals, express themselves in a similar way to carnivals, under some alternative forms. Carnivalized genres, utilizing the subversive energies of those folkloric themes for the benefit of their literary styles, attempt to subvert the author-based, authoritarian one-sided seriousness of the main stream literature conceptions. On the other hand the cosmopolitan structure, which occurs as a result of a fusion of lower and upper classes during carnival times, finds its literary reflection as dialogism in novel; which enables all the characters to have their own voices. This thesis asserts that Charles Bukowski's prose also bears those carnivalesque items that Bakhtin conceptualizes.

Key Words: Carnival, Carnavalesque, Laughter, Humour, Subversive, Unofficial, Material, Bodily

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INTRODUCTION

These genres always bear a special stamp by which we can recognize them. The sensitive ear will always catch even the most distant echoes of a carnival sense of the world. (Bakhtin "Problems" 107)

A sense of rhythm and humour, and its openness to public accessibility may be some of the most featured characteristics of Charles Bukowski's literature. Therefore, after having their first encounter with Bukowski's text, people generally commentate on his writing style as if it is a kind of magic formula that has facilitated their reading performance and allowed them to empathize with the author's viewpoint; as a common cliché, it is possible to hear Bukowski readers generally state that they have had similar feelings or experienced similar cases like Bukowski, but they have never contrived to express their impressions the same way as he does: such simply but literarily. One of the main reasons which give way to such a eupepsia is Bukowski's close contact with public life and his direct applications to its language, preserving the liquidity of its spoken form; additionally his enhancement of its attractiveness by a sort of humour which is fair and non-discriminatory, even at times, directed upon its creator.

Actually what Bukowski literarily achieves with this public grammar is to convert it into a written language with little blows and minimum artistic intention. He does the same thing in choosing his subject matters; which means, he makes use of simple realities and daily pursuits, the low-life of the ordinary man and his ordinary feelings, not yet taken seriously by mainstream literature; or whenever dealt, carried out in a lecturing seriousness which is utterly humourless or mixed with a sense of compassion.

Bukowski never breaks with the people of low culture and the slums where he spends most of his life even after he acquires a reputation as a writer and moves to high and elite San Pedro. As he foresees in the first place when he was a teenager, those people, who belong to the lowest castes, will become an important part of his destiny. Chinaski, who shows up as the alter ego of Bukowski in his writings, complains about this compulsory companionship in a humorous way in his semi-autobiographical novel *Ham on Rye*:

It was like grammar school all over again. Gathered around me were the weak instead of the strong, the ugly instead of the beautiful, the losers instead of the winners. It looked like it was my destiny to travel in their company through life. That didn't bother me so much as the fact that I seemed irresistible to these dull idiot fellows, I was like a turd that drew flies instead of like a flower that butterflies and bees desired. (*Ham* 155)

Bukowski's prose is a body of vivid lines quoted from his own life experiences; in it, he avoids idealizations of any issue unlike the high-brow literatures and he never deeply cares about meta-narratives or celestial affairs; to the contrary, his literary policy is to drown all the idealistic obscurity in the muddy waters of agnosticism. It should also be noted that, there is an undisputed role of individualism in Bukowski's stance as a writer. Rather than supporting massive transformations, he bases his political vision on the idea of restoration of individual liberties by showing a "personal revolt" (Harrison 70). Let alone participating in group activities, he even satirizes them in a highly ironic way; especially the ones carried out by his coevals, the *Beat generation*. However this individualist life view does not make him apolitical. On the contrary, he strongly criticizes capitalist system and exploitation of labour no less than any political text (Harrison 69). For instance he satirizes the trickiness of the American Dream on every occasion, which he sees as elusive as the false paradise that was once pledged by the medieval church through the indulgences: just like this old trick, the American Dream is also used to build a sense of loyalty in people to make them protect the interests and ideologies of a small minority imprudently. In a letter to Patrick Foy, he criticizes the American Dream for it usually ends in battlefield;

Yes, it looks like this country is in for another one. The idiot concepts of our leaders are endless. It all makes me sick straight on through. Nothing has been learned from the past. Just new bodies, new waste, new hell.always a new excuse for a new war. And the family structure, religion and the daily newspapers leading us on in. (*Reach* 153)

Looking beyond his joyful narratives, one can easily capture the sense of responsibility in Bukowski's work that he feels for the working class. He frequently criticizes the social inequalities and the systematic exploitations to which poor people are being exposed. That idea may be best exemplified by Chinaski's reproach

where he asserts that poor people are abused like guinea pigs; “They experimented on the poor and if that worked they used treatment on the rich. And if it didn’t work, there would still be more poor left over to experiment upon” (*Ham*136). Later he defines their irreversible destiny in a naturalist sense, saying that: “Instead I learned that poor usually stay poor...Wealth meant victory and victory was the only reality” (*Ham* 193).

Along with contemplating on social issues and defending public rights, Bukowski never glosses over the disturbing facts of those low-class people or does not try to euphemise their rough reality; he shows a kind of political dualism in order to provide objectivity. That’s to say, although he frequently pleads poor people who are oppressed under wild capitalism, he also criticizes their scuffle, the work place rivalry that they show to supplant each other for the sake of little benefits. To a certain degree his attitude can be accepted as social Darwinism of course; speaking on behalf of Bukowski, this is the unreliability of human nature which should be hold against them through the mirror of arts, as Russell Harrison states “Ultimately, Bukowski is refusing exploitation. Relationships are treacherous because, owing to the power struggle on which they are based, they inevitably end up in one person exploiting and/or dominating the other; mutuality, rather than dominance is rare” (63-64).

The same dualism prevails all over the items that Bukowski deals with; such as sexuality, literature, art and so on. Writing in such a lucid way, his literature never becomes a literature of abstinence, to speak somewhat simplistically, one can say that Bukowski avoids uncoupling the wholeness of the “ideal” and the “imperfect” for the sake of an authorial elitism; he would rather deal with the things by preserving their entwined form as they exist around him. Therefore it is not surprising to see him, on the one hand dignifying a woman with praises to her beauty, on the other hand, degrading her beauty by pointing at the faecal stain on her underclothes, within the same passage. In this respect, Bukowski’s literary viewpoint may be considered as over-naturalistic since the reality that he offers becomes highly annoying and inextricable at times. This idea can be best supported with his own words from their interview with François Duval, where he says “I only photograph society” (158). On the other hand, Gaylord Brewer states that Bukowski’s life is “an integrated life dedicated to something dynamic, vital and wild” (xi). Here what

Brewer tries to stress is the unsophisticated, mirror-like nature of Bukowski's narratives which allow people to see themselves in an objective way: his writing becomes wild because humanity is wild by nature, that's to say, the reality in Bukowski's writings is formed according to people's attitudes.

Much as Bukowski harshly criticizes the systematic pressure, and the people who become instruments of it, he achieves his purpose in a humorous way; actually, humour is the barrier that separates Bukowski's letter from classical naturalism: he couples humour with sincerity and social criticism to distil a specific mechanism whereby he converts even the most disturbing facts into something comic and bearable. Stephen Calonne states that Bukowski "addresses the reader directly, removing any barrier between writer and audience. And he strengthened his vulnerable, hurt self by muscling it with irony, by a subversive, mocking, irreverent sharpness of observation" (xviii).

Since Bukowski's prose bears such contrasting qualities together, the existence of social responsibility in his literature has always been met with scepticism. One of the most familiar discussions that is always kept on the agenda is whether Bukowski is one of the dutiful authors of America, or just an ascetic who suffers with alcohol and melancholy and simply recounts his experience in a comic way for the sake of material profit. Unfortunately, the criticism on Charles Bukowski's literature is most often carried out through that latter, unfair logic; his works are questioned in terms of their lack of political vision. Even Allan Ginsberg—who once pushed away conformism, and addressed a generation that backed up an independent life formula—criticizes him by asserting that "Bukowski? I think his star probably will fade a little" as if he has sensed a lack of seriousness in his literary style (Duval 11). On the other hand, whenever Bukowski is to be praised as an author, we see him rising on the shoulders of those who feel closer to him thanks to an idea of vandalism which they base on some quotations from his booze tales, debauchery and fights. Substantially the problem arises for Bukowski from his being unclassified and ignored as an author for a long time; another reason of course is his own resistance to such literary taxonomies.

However this study aims to classify and define Bukowski's prose in a suitable framework. Here, in the given qualities for Bukowski's prose above—such as the specific mechanism that distinguishes Bukowski's literature from solid naturalism in

which he mitigates tragedy with humour; the democratic vision that he creates through simplicity and publicity in his literature; or his individual revolt against authoritarianism—it is possible to see strong references to an ongoing, folklore-based literary convention which is theorized by Russian literary critic M.M. Bakhtin.

Bakhtin, coining some new terms mainly in his two works *Rabelais and His World* and *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, expresses a concept of carnival-based literatures. He transfers the unofficial and subversive dynamics of public carnivals to the field of literary criticism as a multi-dimensional concept to denote the authors who internalize a literary style that shows parallelism to the peculiar logic of public carnivals. Those subversive qualities can be shortly explained as the liberal use of language with swearwords and under belly elements; liberal sexual acts; and some unofficial rituals which are set to degrade and debase the authority of church and all kind of official pressure.

It goes without saying that, not any piece of literary text can be considered as a form of carnivalized literature; just because it represents a joyful atmosphere or uses swearwords, or is equipped with subversive elements. Actually what becomes a problem for this dissertation and maybe for the similar studies—which set out to associate Bakhtin's ideas with contemporary works—is the classification criteria for the authors to be registered as a member of carnivalized literature. Such difficulties arise from the comprehensive template that Bakhtin uses to discriminate carnivalized genres from the others: as his scale looks like open-ended and proper to be applied to many authors and works, it requires to be examined carefully. Briefly, today any attempt, which sets out to get a carnivalesque vision from a contemporary text, should necessarily observe the incognito modes or some abstracted and conceptualized states of carnival elements, rather than striving to discover any visible and materialized images of carnival clowns, marketplace quacks or people who run and cheer in the streets besmirching excrement to each other. Actually this is a problem of extracting the necessary details from Bakhtin's concept; or in other words, acquiring an average idea to adapt it to the day; as Bakhtin puts it “these archaic elements are preserved in it only thanks to their constant *renewal*, which is to say, their contemporization” (*Problems* 106). He authorizes researchers to label novels as the examples of carnivalized literature with their own ways, saying that “in fact, every movement and creative method interprets and renews it in its own ways”

(*Problems* 160). Thankfully, he eases such labelling attempts by qualifying those genres finely and photographing them from various angles by tracking them down from the period of Socrates respectively to Rabelais and Dostoevsky. Since the main purpose of this study is to figure out the imprints of carnivalesque elements in a contemporary text like Charles Bukowski's, it becomes a necessity to draw a convenient scheme to be used for this specific purpose. Or in other words, an archetype should be distilled from Bakhtin's concept, maybe applying to the vision of Plato who, by looking beyond the material world, sees the idea of "horseness" lying beyond the horse's image (Schenck54).

To begin with, in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* Bakhtin puts forward some subtle connections between Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky's writings with a carnival sense of the world, detecting some deeply rooted imprints of carnival rituals in his novels; at the same time, he refines his concept by establishing some secondary connections for various genres- such as Socratic Dialogue, Menippean satire and Serio-Comic- to the same folkloric motifs. According to Bakhtin both Dostoevsky's novels and those genres are strictly tied to a carnival sense of the world; and they also make use of carnival symbolism in their writings. Bakhtin gathers such literary efforts under the title of *carnivalized literature* (*Problems* 107); and he also defines the authorial applications to the carnival sources as the act of *carnivalization* (*Problems* 122).

On the other hand, in *Rabelais and His World* he introduces the carnival performances and its language within a historical aspect and in detailed analysis. In his work he produces the term *carnavalesque* to denote both literary and political aspects of those folkloric activities which were carried out for the sake of *carnival laughter* (*Rabelais* 218). That laughter becomes the key point of Bakhtin's arguments. However the laughter that he introduces is a type of a furtive laughter which sometimes does not look like a real laughter owing its indebtedness to the ambiguity it bears. Actually Bakhtin draws the characteristics of that laughter from various aspects, according to him this laughter symbolically refers to the unofficial and anti-authoritarian public acts that they perform as an unobtrusive rebellion. To sum up, Bakhtin seems to have theorized the confliction of the officialdom with its reciprocals in apolitical sense, defining the carnival as the "secondary life" of folks which they base it on "laughter" (*Rabelais* 8). Here Bakhtin uses the term *laughter*

vaguely to refer to the free acts of publics who go their own way in the realm that remains out of authority and religion's eyesight. Taking that idea into consideration *secondary* will be a key term for the purpose of this dissertation. Thus, what one should infer from Bakhtin's notion of carnivalesque is people's secondary and unofficial conduct and attitudes: such as their second religion other than the imposed; or their second language that they use in friendly dialogues, rather than the authoritarian language of mainstream literature and media which cannot tolerate the free twists of tongues as it is characteristically purist. Similarly Bakhtin also refers to a furtive laughter that erupts during leisure times of reunited and tanked people who, all the day, have been forced to push and shove each other for the sake of capitalist progress. As it is clear, the laughter that Bakhtin characterizes bears an ambiguity; its ambiguity may be best explained by comparing its projections in both Dostoevsky's and Rabelais' works.

Throughout Bakhtin's examinations on Dostoevsky's works, a hazy atmosphere is recognizable at first glance which owes its vagueness to Dostoevsky's encoding carnivalistic traits with an implicit system of symbols, and which therefore requires a more careful look. To put it more clearly, it can be said that where Bakhtin will have to fathom a piece of bread which is left on a tomb, or to go behind an equivocal sentence which is uttered during a funeral scene in order to prove the carnivalesque elements in Dostoevsky's work; however, he will produce more tangible links between Rabelais' works and folkloric activities by capturing some straightforward and glittering images of carnivals; such that, reading Rabelais's works through Bakhtin's examinations, one would factually recognize that Rabelais efficaciously reflects some apparent visions "free winds blowing from market place" where carnival activities were sustained during his age (*Rabelais* 275). According to Bakhtin, Rabelais could benefit from carnival source directly; from its boisterous booze-ups where people curse, fight and drink; and from the language which includes various symbolic references to profanities, genitals; eating, drinking and defecation; or the debasement of the high, idealized and the official repression through some items like crowning and decrowning (*Problems* 130).

In any case, Bakhtin already makes a classification of carnival based genres with respect to their direct and indirect use of carnival sources; so he notices a distinguishing feature of subsequent genres which utilize carnivalesque elements

rather different from the preceding literature that was directly involved in carnival culture where “The source of carnivalization was the carnival itself” (*Problems* 131). According to Bakhtin, the subversive power of carnivals weakened and its body was fragmented in time. As a conclusion of such dispersal, the particles of this public folklore were absorbed by other forms; such as chamber masquerade line and circus which today sustain their existence (130-131). Bakhtin also asserts that, especially by the second half of the seventeenth century “there occurred a deterioration and dissipation of carnival and the carnival sense of the world after it lost that authentic sense of a communal performance on the public square” (*Rabelais* 31). However it should also be underlined that, whether the images be tangible or not, the carnival elements are already ambiguous by nature; thus they give way to a sort of dualism either way (*Problems* 126).

Among the most essential qualities that give way to carnival laughter is a public controversy with the official culture and its one-sided seriousness. Bakhtin explains that point as follows;

To understand correctly the problem of carnivalization, one must dispense with the oversimplified understanding of carnival found in the *masquerade* line of modern times, and even more with a vulgar bohemian understanding of carnival. Carnival is past millennia’s way of sensing the world as one great communal performance. This sense of the world, liberating one from fear, bringing the world maximally close to a person and bringing one person maximally close to another (everything is drawn into the zone of free familiar contact), with its joy at change and its joyful relativity is opposed to one-sided and gloomy official seriousness which is dogmatic and hostile to evolution and change which seeks to absolutize a given condition of existence or a given social order. From precisely that sort of seriousness did the carnival sense of the world liberate man. (*Problems* 159-160)

On the other hand, among the other qualities that Bakhtin puts forward is an alternative look, which makes it possible to capture the hidden vision, the carnival sense beyond public life. For example, citing from a city vision from Dostoevsky’s *Petersburg Visions in Verse and Prose*, he suggests that carnivalization of Dostoevsky depends on “city and city crowd” to some extent, where the narrator senses something deeply carnivalesque beyond the faces of an ordinary crowd whom

he calls as “fantastic titular counsellors” (*Problems* 161). Referring to that vision of Dostoyevsky, Bakhtin captures some “characteristic accessories of a carnival complex” which includes “guffaw and tragedy, a clown, comical street farces, a crowd of masquerades” (161). In *Petersburg Visions*, the narrator, looking beyond those faces and manners, observes a connotation of a carnival sense of the world:

Someone grimaced in front of me, hiding behind that fantastic crowd and jerked at some strings and springs, and these puppets moved and he guffawed how he guffawed! And then another story occurred to me, in some dark corners, some titular heart, honest and pure, moral and loyal to the authorities, and alongside it some little girl, mistreated and melancholy, and this whole story rent my heart deeply. And if one could gather together that whole crowd which I dreamed of then, it would make a wonderful masquerade. (qtd. in *Problems* 161)

As Bakhtin puts it straightforwardly, in order to sense the carnivalistic elements and reach the *festive laughter*, Dostoevsky should go beyond the appearances of people who are “moral and loyal to the authorities” and whose faces are tragic and pale. To the contrary, Rabelais’s works presents people who overtly mock the current seriousness of his age. He mitigates the one-sided seriousness of the official culture of his age by mixing it with banquet images, joyful performances which consist of intoxication, fights and intimate conversations. For instance, in *The Palaver of the Potted*, the reader sees that Rabelais converts some serious philosophical methods into a drunkards’ dialectic where people, in a banquet atmosphere, make an argumentation to conclude “which came first, thirst or drinking?” (*Gargantua* 15). At the same time, they create humorous paradoxes such as; “Do you wet your whistle to get dry, or dry yourself to get wet?” to give way to the carnival laughter (15). What Rabelais does, albeit in an exaggerated form, is not much different from Socratic dialogues by nature where the high seriousness of philosophy is also mixed with a state of intoxication. The significance of drinking becomes clear in Gargantua’s words where he defines alcohol like the blood “changed into wine” (20). For example, in a mock-heroic scene in *Gargantua*, it is also possible to see Friar John fighting with the enemies to save the wine of monastery. Actually in the passage Rabelais mocks the seriousness of heroic

narratives and he inverts Church's earthly priorities; by doing that he consequently blesses a carnival sense of the world (65-69).

In *Rabelais and his World* Bakhtin also states that "every age has its own type of words and expressions that are given as a signal to speak freely, to call things by their own names, without any mental restrictions and euphemism" to denote some alternative and unofficial ways of communication which emerge as a concomitant conclusion of such banquets and liberal carnival acts (188). Those alternative motifs are presented in an idea of incompleteness within a verbal system which emerges from the binary oppositions of some biotic items such as birth and death; eating drinking and defecation (26). Due to that opposition philosophy, most often some grotesque images are drawn to picture "two bodies in one" (26). Bakhtin states that;

In the literary sphere the entire medieval parody is based on the grotesque concept of the body...Finally the grotesque concept of the body forms the basis of abuses, oaths, and curses...Abuses exercises a direct influence on the language and the images of this literature and is closely related to all other forms of "degradation" and "down to earth" in grotesque and Renaissance literature. (27-28)

Therefore, if a text is carnivalesque or it is saturated with folkloric elements as Bakhtin asserts, the verbal motifs or the swearwords in it should reflect such an ambiguous and dualist nature-philosophy which stresses some incomplete images of human body that stand "on the threshold of the grave and the crib" (*Rabelais* 26). Therefore, the words *incompleteness* and *imperfection* become some other major codes in Bakhtin's notion of carnivalesque which he uses to denote an ambiguous life philosophy that nature has offered to humanity.

In general context of Bukowski's works, such banquet visions, abuses and fights play the deterministic role. Alcohol is frequently praised in a similar way to Rabelais; for example in *Ham on Rye*, the reader sees that Chinaski manifests a Bukowskian approach to intoxication in a similar way to Rabelais's characters saying that "Drink was the only thing that kept a man from feeling forever stunned and useless. Everything else just keep picking and picking, hacking away. And nothing was interesting, nothing" (244). In another occasion Chinaski reports his first encounter with alcohol in a highly humorous manner "Never had I felt so good. It

was better than masturbating. I went from barrel to barrel. It was magic. Why hadn't someone told me? With this, life was great, a man was perfect, nothing could touch him" (*Ham* 96). This attitude, which is to say his company with booze, later on will become the general characteristics of his literature.

In a political sense, both Rabelais and Bukowski's works bear the same connotations to the human- liberty, or to individual desires for freedom; in his *Theleme Abbey*, Rabelais pictures nearly the same vision as the desires of hippies of the 1960s. Having been educated as a monk, Rabelais is highly aware how religion can become an instrument of pressure when the opportunity arises. Maybe he is not in pursuit of a total revolution but he is definitely in pursuit of his personal liberties. For those reasons he constantly puts himself in trouble with system and stands against the official pressure. The same trouble can be easily observed in Bukowski's novels which can be concisely explained by Chinaski's words as follows: "Take the family, mix with God and Country, add the ten-hour day and you had what was needed" (*Ham* 192).

On the other hand Bukowski's text represents an orchestration of the characters from the low-life. He structures his novels in so democratic way, even one can say that Bukowski's novels are being written by the characters of low life who take part in them. Again he shows great similarities to Rabelais with respect to the similarity of their target group. One of Bukowski's poems is titled as 'something for the touts, the nuns, the grocery clerks and you' which is strikingly similar to Rabelais's very first sentence in his prologue to *Gargantua* where he shows the same interest to the low life by saying that "Most illustrious toppers, and you, most precious poxies-for to you, not to others, my writings are dedicated" (3). Such a literary cosmopolitanism in Bukowski's literature will also intersect with Bakhtin's notion of dialogism in which Bakhtin sees a kind of a democratic structure, a participation of different views as it is in the banquets where Socrates and his pupils gather in the symposia to collide their ideas to give way to truth (*Problems* 110).

Actually Bukowski is similar to Socrates by all means; such as in his cynicism, dialogism, and his stance as a maestro in the middle of various identities from various classes. It can be said that Bukowski mostly becomes a mediator who conducts those differences to give birth to a stable reason. Those who express their ideas in his banquet-like novels can be shortly defined as *everyone*. In his novels it is

possible to see the “humiliated and insulted” from the lowest stratum of the caste system collided with the self confident and prosperous; this is another binary opposition which should be noted for Bukowski’s prose; or referring to Bakhtin’s words on Dante, Bukowski’s novel is a medium “where multi-leveledness is extended into eternity, where there are the penitent and the unrepentant, the damned and saved” (*Rabelais* 27).

Bakhtin frequently emphasizes the relationship of Socratic Dialogue with carnival roots. At the same time, it is a historical fact that cynicism owes much to Socrates. Diogenes of Sinope is the major figure of cynic movement. Even in a famous anecdote, when Plato is asked to express how he saw Diogenes as a person, he describes him as “A Socrates gone mad” (Laertius 55). At the same time Cynicism is a counterproductive philosophical school in which Menippus of Gadara, the founder of Menippean Satire, was practiced (Branham, Kinney xvii). Bakhtin already sets a relationship between cynic school and carnival via Menippus of Gadara, and establishes fourteen main items to characterize the Menippean satire (Problems 112-118). Bakhtin also puts some relationships between Rabelais and cynicism. According to Bakhtin Rabelais shows a cynicism which “belongs to the city marketplace, to the town fair and the carnival square of the late Middle ages and of the Renaissance [which] “belongs to the most ancient stratum of his novel” (146-147). Actually what we find in Rabelais’s renaissance type of cynicism is, in a sense, widened rhetorical probabilities of cynic philosophy through a purposeful usage of the language of the market place and verbal instruments of carnival culture of his own era (146). A subtle humour, witty sayings, minimalism in language and life style, and most important of all, in its modern sense, a civil disobedience are the main characteristics of cynic philosophy.

It is also possible to see the imprints of cynicism in Bukowski’s life as well as his writings. Bukowski also uses the verbal opportunities of cynicism to put forward his struggle with officialdom and to express his individual liberty, or practically to govern his social relationships. However, Bukowski mostly rejects being a cynic by humiliating cynic attitudes; but it should be noted that his rejection depends on a false perception which will also be proved in the frame of this study. Actually we can easily dare to establish a relationship between him and cynic thought exclusively taking his *dirty old man* pseudonym that he uses gladly; that nickname, and the social

criticism he represents under it is, in a sense, identical to the achievements of Diogenes of Sinope, who was called as *Dog* in ancient Greece. It is also possible to diagnose a *Diogenes syndrome*, or see the outlooks of a post war cynicism looking beyond Bukowski's dirty old man identity.

Especially, Bukowski's whole political vision and his resistance to official pressure can be simply explained with Diogenes' famous retort to Alexander the Great whereby he refuses the favour that Alexander offers him by saying "Stand out of light" (Laertius 41). A similar philosophy will prevail over a large section of Bukowski's life. The proof of that are the short term menial jobs which he takes just for the sake of supplying his daily requirements. For all those reasons, cynicism and cynic philosophers will be also examined in the context of this study.

Regarding all the points discussed so far, this thesis will consist of three parts; including an analysis of Bakhtinian terms and concepts; then Bukowski's feasibility to the defined items and lastly a literary examination of Bukowski's prose in context of carnivalized literature.

Therefore, the first chapter of this study will be on a complicated analysis of Bakhtin's concepts of carnival with references to his two main works, *Rabelais and His World* and *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* where he makes large scaled argumentations of the terms *carnavalesque*, *carnivalization* and *carnivalized literature*. Throughout that first chapter a detailed examination of carnival laughter and its ingredients will also be discussed and concluded referring to Rabelais, Dostoevsky and some ancient genres and authors. At the same time a necessary connection will be established between the cynic school and carnivalized genres, due to its closeness to a carnival sense of the world, and as it is defined above, due to its being a philosophical school in which Menippus of Gadara, the founder of Menippean satire, was practiced. Therefore Menippus of Gadara and his satire will necessarily be examined in that first chapter in detail.

The second chapter of this study will be on ensuring a harmony with Bukowski and carnival-based literatures through the items which are discussed in the first chapter. Bukowski's kinship to carnivalized literatures will be examined through some items such as slum naturalism and the social responsibility he reveals through humour, his cynicism and scandalous acts. As Bakhtin draws a portrait of a seasoned

author who shows an experimental interest to various issues, in order to see the coherence of theory and practice between Bukowski's life experiences and their projections in his literature, his life experiences will also be in question within some applications to the biographies most of which are achieved by his close friends and entourage.

Due the context created during these two chapters, the final chapter will examine Bukowski's writing style exemplifying the carnivalesque motifs and symbols in his prose. In the light of Bakhtin's argumentation, whereby he asserts that the carnivalized literatures are transferred through a literary heritage, Bukowski's dealings with preceding literatures will also be examined in that last chapter; therefore his literary cultivation progress and his linguistic philosophy will also be scrutinized throughout that final chapter.

Fundamentally, this study is structured as a feasibility check of Charles Bukowski's prose to be registered as a form of carnivalized literatures which acquire their energies from the lively folkloric activities of publics; in other words, which are literarily saturated with the relative *public mania* and its laughter that erupts as soon as people get rid of the official pressure in certain times of the year.

According to German Philosopher Friedrich art creation process requires the mania as much as the wisdom. He discusses this idea in his work *The Birth of Tragedy* through the skirmish of two dissimilar god figures of ancient Greeks; *Apollo* and *Dionysus*. Nietzsche supposes that Greek people, by transfiguring their artistic ideas to the bodies of these two gods, concreted the way through which an art work is created; and thus they comprehended the shapeless and abstract ideas better (19). Nietzsche considers Dionysian folly as the most powerful and indispensable element of the art creating process. And he also considers Apollo as the god of all plastic energies and yet the god of prophecy; therefore, he distinguishes Apollo with respect to his discretion (21). As a conclusion, Nietzsche presents us two terms as a gift which correspond with the purpose of this dissertation: one of them is *intoxication* whereby he refines from his examination of Dionysian energies, and the other one is *calm wisdom* which he uses to explain Apollonian wisdom (21-22).

In conclusion, a symbolic correlation can established with the achievements of those ancient gods and Charles Bukowski's stance as a writer. The documentary

film *Born into This* is a proper visual opportunity to see Bukowski in his poetry readings. In those readings, he sits on a desk alone in the stage, and reads his poems in a stable tone of voice; next to him, there is always a refrigerator full of drinks which he sometimes opens to take a drink, and as the reading progresses he gets more and more drunk. He is constantly provoked by an insane audience, most often he does not correspond but now and then he snarls and replies them with his quick wit. According to Stephen Calonne Bukowski “became a “literary hustler,” and he satirizes himself, and depoeticizes and deromanticizes poetry; he turns the lofty poetry reading into a ritual in honor of the god Dionysus, complete with rivers of wine and ecstatic maenads” (19).

Actually the vision of that stage can be accepted as a simulation of an art creating process that Nietzsche figures out in the confliction of Apollonian *calm wisdom* and Dionysian *intoxication*. There Bukowski, on that stage, stands as if he is performing a spectacle of such an ancient Greek symposia, as he looks similar to Socrates who sits in the middle of his pupils in a symposium where they booze and make their ideas collide. Bukowski’s performance in that hall with all its decorative elements– from the refrigerator to Bukowski himself as a seasoned male figure with a cold posture questioning various subjects within a sense of humour; and also to the fevered audience who look ready to be provoked– may also be considered as a symbolic representation of Bukowski’s sense of carnival.

1. CARNIVAL, CARNIVALESQUE AND CARNIVALIZED GENRES

1.1. Rabelais in Context of Carnival

And, in truth, all these higher men, the two kings, the retired pope, the wicked magician, the voluntary beggar, the wanderer and his shadow, the old soothsayer, the conscientious of spirit and the ugliest human being – they all kneeled there like children and devout little old women, and they worshiped the ass. (Nietzsche “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” 254)

Rabelais and his World is one of Mikhail Bakhtin’s major works where he discusses his concept of *carnivalesque* profoundly. Within the scope of the book, Bakhtin’s overall interest is to survey the projections of medieval carnivals on world literature; but specifically, he focuses on how François Rabelais draws on those folkloric elements as a literary device in his works.

According to Bakhtin, Rabelais’s text is *carnivalesque*. Bakhtin uses the term *carnivalesque* to refer to a body of verbal and performance-based folk rituals to denote some literary aspects of carnival rituals as well as political (*Rabelais* 218). Kinser states that Bakhtin deals with Rabelais’s text within “historical, ideological as well as structural and semiotic methods of analysis” (x). Additionally Kinser defines that Bakhtin achieves his purpose “by alluding to something inherent in the text, its structure, and its semiotics: the carnivalesque spirit” (x).

Bakhtin sees carnival as an unofficial means of communication “A boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture” (*Rabelais* 4). Within the context of his studies, he focuses on the linguistic destructiveness which reveals throughout carnival season; and he also underlines the subversive and critical functioning of the market place language which is used as a linguistic weapon by folks against their rulers. Carol D. Lee briefly summarizes Bakhtin’s concept of carnival as “a site in which humor serves to undermine authoritative relationships of power and critiques dominant discourse” (133). Similarly Bazerman states that carnivalesque “typically aim to deflate oppressively powerful ruling forces rather than to stigmatize the powerless” (58).

Bakhtin, in order to elaborate on his concept of *carnivalesque* via Rabelais, firstly draws attention to a double entendre in Rabelais' works, which comes through a conflict between a central text and a political subtext thanks to his sandwiching a social criticism between low-brow, blasphemous syntaxes of the marketplace language. Bakhtin, pointing out the genre making capacity of that scurrilous language, states that the abuses "while humiliating and mortifying they at the same time revived and renewed" which according to him also "determined the genre of speech in carnival intercourse" (16).

The main characteristic of that language is its strong stress to an incompleteness of human body and an idea of anti-idealism that it bears. According to Brandist Rabelais makes an efficient use of this language and its lower bodily references putting it against the stereotypes of classical aesthetic;

Rabelais's celebration of corporeality, his dwelling on images of collective feasting, of urination, defecation and the like, Bakhtin sees a presentation of the person as at one with the world, with ingestion and defecation showing the openness of the body which is incomplete and in the process of the becoming along with the world. This is contrasted with the complete, perfectly proportioned body of classical aesthetics. Similarly in Rabelais's lively evocation of the language of the market place, in which praise is marked with irony and abuse is tinged with affection, Bakhtin sees the ambivalence of carnival. (144)

Rabelais, using such a fork tongued linguistic style, is in pursuit of both fulfilling the literary necessities and creating a rift with what is official and serious; his language bears a social criticism which reflects his anti-authoritarian stance as an author; therefore, by courtesy of his novel the "one-sided, serious and official culture meets the ambivalent images and anti-conventions of the carnival world within the space of the novel" (Brandist 144).

Such an ambiguity is prevailed in all carnival rituals and its language as a part of their peculiar logic which is based on destructiveness. Actually what Rabelais literarily achieves is to draw on his carnival experiences and create a political stance using the ambiguity of that archaic system of symbols. In his prologue to *Gargantua*, he whispers his clandestine political purposes into his readers' ears by referring to a

Sileni metaphor which takes part in Plato's *Symposium* whereby Alcibiades makes an analogy between Socrates and Silenus-figures sculptures. Those figures are generally used to preserve valuable drugs and formed as "a fat jolly old man riding on ass, crowned with flowers, and always intoxicated" (Lemprière 719). In *Symposium* Alcibiades uses the versatile structure of Sileni sculpture to refer to the wisdom which underlies Socrates' drunk and ugly image, saying that "I think he's very like one of those Silenus-figures sculptors have on their shelves. They're made with flutes or pipes. You can open them, and when you do you find little figures of the gods inside" (50). In a similar way to Alcibiades, Erasmus uses the Sileni sculpture as a metaphor to point at the hidden meaning in his own text; according to Erasmus "Scripture too has its own Sileni. Pause at the surface, and what you see is sometimes ridiculous; were you to pierce to the heart of the allegory, you would venerate the divine wisdom" (*The Adages* 248). Here Erasmus tries to explain how the outer appearance of a text can be misleading at first sight; quoting the Adam and Eve parable from the *Old Testament*, he also warns the reader to be careful in decoding the embedded meaning which backs the symbolical expression (248). He maintains his idea as follows; "Yet under these wrappings, in heaven's name, how splendid is the wisdom that lies hidden! The parables in the Gospels, if you judge them by their outward shell, would be thought, surely, by everyone to be the work of an ignoramus" (249). From his words, it is clear that Erasmus intends to make a clean sweep of a probable pressure of church and authority by presenting his messages in such an ambiguity. Likewise, Rabelais, in order to draw attention to the subtext of his own, refers to the same Sileni metaphor;

Sileni were in olden times little boxes, such as we see nowadays in apothecaries' shops, painted on the outside with merry frivolous pictures, such as harpies, satyrs, bridled goslings, saddled ducks, flying goats, harnessed stags, and other such paintings imagined at will to set everyone laughing (such was Silenus, master of good old Bacchus); but inside they preserved fine drugs such as balm, amergis, amomum, musk, civet, precious stones, and other valuables. (*Gargantua* 3)

Later on, he reinforces his metaphor with another one, a Spanish cape; "A man may wear a Spanish cape who in courage has no relation to Spain" he says, "That is why you must open the book and carefully consider what is expounded in it" (4). Then he

advises his readers (whom he calls as his disciples) to consider the hidden meaning in his book carefully; then they will “recognize that the drug contained inside is of quite other value than the box promised, that is to say that the matters here treated are not so foolish at the title above claimed” (4).

It is clear that Sileni sculpture becomes a symbol figure of literary dualism. On the other hand, if that metaphor is re-examined, one can clearly recognize that, other than the box itself, the valuable drugs which are preserved in that box also remain as a secondary metaphor; which figuratively indicates the curative effect of literature. Douglas McFarland draws attention to the relationship between drugs and Rabelais’s literature;

The narrator’s claim for the medicinal value of his distilled text reflects similar claims for the philosopher’s stone. Both are offered as that rare and precious drug which has been extracted or distilled from crude matter, but which also possesses its own power to transform the base and diseases into the valuable and healthy. (93)

Bakhtin also underlines an “ancient connection between the forms of medicine and folk art which explains the combination in one person of actor and druggist” (*Rabelais* 159). Similar to Bakhtin, McFarland underlines the fact that Rabelais derives his literary style from the carnival atmosphere and the voice of carnival barkers; as he states “They are delivered through the voice of a carnival barker hawking his wares in the hyperbolic language of the marketplace. At the heart of Rabelais’s comic perspective, as well as that of comedy in general, is the distrust of any exaggerated, utopian, miraculous, and above all, instantaneous panacea” (93).

The relationship between panacea and the curative power of laughter is also exemplified by Bakhtin with a citation from the prologue of Rabelais to his work *Pantagruel* in which the reader sees Rabelais announcing the facilities of his book “with the accent of the quack and the barker of the fair” (162). “Find me a book,” he says “in whatever language, whatever faculty and area it maybe, that has such virtues, properties, and prerogatives, and I’ll pay for a pint of tripes. No, gentlemen, it is peerless, incomparable, and unmatched (134).

All those points discussed so far, focus on the sincerity and the dialogical advantages which exist within the communication system of carnival. Bakhtin sets

his argumentation on the idea that those elements are adopted and internalized by Rabelais: being inspired by the symbolic fertility of medieval festive system, he develops a literary style of his own which he puts against the high seriousness of both highbrow literature and the official culture of his age. Rabelais frequently points out the existence of a subtext under the images of cheerful clowns and fools which he represents in his works; as Bakhtin puts it “Rabelais covers his novel with the fool’s cap” (*Rabelais* 284). Later he clarifies his “fool’s cap” metaphor as follows;

He uses the popular-festive system of images with its charter of freedoms consecrated by many centuries; and he uses them to inflict a severe punishment upon his foe, the Gothic age. It is a merry play and therefore immune, but a play without footlights. In this setting of consecrated rights Rabelais attacks the fundamental dogmas and sacraments, the holy of holies of medieval ideology. (*Rabelais* 268)

Jean Plattard in *The Life of François Rabelais* writes that Rabelais “on his father’s side, belongs to the legal world, one of the most enlightened classes in French society of the time” (2). Plattard reports that Rabelais comes from a wealthy family and receives a good education as well; his father is a senior advocate at the Siège Royal of Chiron, a licentiate of laws; later he becomes a friar at Fontenay-le-Comte and is educated there (2). However, after having close contacts with the humanists of his age, his life views changes and he starts to experience some struggles with both church and authority; his Greek books which he preserves in the monastery are confiscated during his monastery years; and he is also condemned by Sorbonne and The Roman Catholic Church due to the obscene content of his own books (Higman 32). In order to publish his first book *Pantagruel* he even needs the pseudonym *Alcofribas Nasier* which is an anagram of his own name (C. Clark 2-3). However, it is also striking that the language that he derives from the marketplace has many supporters in his time. Although he chooses an obscene and an impertinent language as the narrative style for his works, he is surrounded by various cultural groups including common men and elites. Kinser argues that “Rabelais’s firmest source of support was not the king and his ministers but his anonymous readers”, and he also adds that by 1552 nearly fifty thousand copies of his first book was printed (22). Similarly Bakhtin notes that the unofficial language of the market place “penetrated also to the tongue of the upper classes” (*Rabelais* 154). Kinser also notes

that *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* were reprinted seven times as a conclusion of Rabelais's intellectual background that helped him to reach a wide broad number of readers; according to Kinser; "Pantagruel was written to appeal to both broad popular audiences and intellectual elite, for it combined tall tales with elaborate erudition" (2). Likewise Brandist explains the integrative power of Rabelais' text referring to its dialogism; as he defines "In and through the Rabelaisian novel these dimensions of spirit recognize each other and themselves from the point of view of the other (144-145).

Those points above make it clear that the language of the marketplace—although it reveals an opposition against official institutions and authority of the church—has the potential to pervade the upper classes owing its indebtedness to its intimate sound. It can be shortly defined that Rabelais uses the language of the marketplace as a tool of subtle sarcasm in an unobtrusive way. Regarding his ability to combine criticism with humour, Bakhtin defines that Rabelais goes beyond the border lines those were drawn by Cervantes or Shakespeare as his "images have a certain undestroyable unofficial nature (*Rabelais* 3).

The unofficial nature of his writings and his struggle with Church cause a great trouble for Rabelais throughout all his life. He can never compromise with the established order and traditional authority both in fields of politics and literature; as Kinser states Rabelais leaves monastery in 1530 which ends up with his receiving a medical degree at Montpellier and becoming a secular priest as a conclusion (3). According to Kinser the reasons what made Rabelais attack the Church and elites is that "Rabelais believed in Christ and continuously preoccupied with Christian teaching and practices, but he suspected Christ's Church and especially its imperious, censorious elites" (3-4). Plattard notes that during his monastery years Rabelais criticizes the monks by calling them as bad monks; according to Plattard "He was indignant at the ignorance, the impudence, and the hypocrisy of certain monks, exploiters of the credulity of the mob, seller of false relics" (57). Rabelais's obsession with false religion and hypocrisy of monks will find its best criticism in his utopian picture of *Theleme Abbey* which takes part in his book *Gargantua* as an imaginative picture, and a manifestation of Rabelais's utopian, anarchic and revolutionary life vision that he reflects in a humorous manner.

In the passage Friar Jean, in return to his service, asks Gargantua's permission to found an abbey and to institute his own religious order which he will build after his "own mind and fancy" (116). Gargantua offers him his property of Theleme next to the Loire River, but he orders him not to build any walls around the abbey since "all other abbeys are proudly walled" (116). The monk shares the same idea since he thinks that "where wall is front and rear, there is abundant murmur, envy, and mutual conspiracy" (116). Gargantua also warns him that there should not be any clocks in the abbey either; according to Gargantua "the greatest waste of time he knew was to count the hours" (117). Later on, within a sense of eugenic idealism, they together decide to receive only well-formed, well natured women and well-formed and handsome men; and they also decide that "both men and women received there should leave them when they saw fit, freely and wholly", but most important of all, in the abbey everyone would be married and rich and also "live at liberty" (117). As the narrative processes the reader recognizes that Gargantua, in fact, stands as a god-figure who makes decisions and issues commands; and Friar Jean, like a prophet, practices those directives. Finally they hang an inscription over the gate of the abbey including a list of *personae non gratae*; such as "hypocrites... bigots... imbecile sneaks... furred belly bumpers... shysters... clerks... lawyers... bishops' officials... doddering Judges" and so on (120). Then a heaven-like description of the abbey is given to tell the beauties of Theleme. However, the most striking part of the narrative of Theleme is on a *prophetic riddle* which is written by an unknown author who foresees an impending apocalypse which is about to destroy humanity. The riddle points at some men "as if a certain race" (127) who will come "to suborn men in every walk of life/to disputation and to outright strife...will soon inflame to conflict past amends/Friends and close kinfolk against kin and friends" (128). In the following lines the riddle continues as if it is giving a prior notice of savage capitalism and concomitant greed and ambition as its side effects "No longer shall enjoy the force of law,/For they will say that all in turn should go/Right to the top and then return below" (128). Then the riddle heralds in an apocalyptic voice that this corrupted situation will end up with a deluge: "O what a baneful deluge all shall see!" (128). According to the riddle the deluge is a result of a "pact" which may symbolically refer to the old testaments and the promises never kept by humanity; that becomes clear in the denouement part where the riddle warns people that ultimately "each man may have his own predestined fate" (130).

Apparently Rabelais is engaged with the false religion and with the hypocrisy of humanity in general. Theleme Abbey is simply based on a “Do what you will” principle which resembles the communal desires of hippies; as Demonet states Theleme Abbey is “an ideal clearly set out as utopian, constructed the opposite way around from a real monastery or college, but practicing explicit exclusions against hypocrites and sneaks” (76). Although Theleme Abbey is a religious institution, the lack of a church in it is also remarkable. Febvre states that “Theleme, let us not forget, was the anti monastery” (158). He also notes that there is no abbot in charge in the abbey, reminding us Friar John’s rejecting the proposal of Gargantua to charge him as the abbot (158). It should be also noted that the narrative of Theleme is typically carnivalesque with regard to its volatile tone which abruptly changes from a comic atmosphere to a serious prophetic admonition by which Rabelais seems to be attempting to daunt tyranny and traditional authority which exercises pressure on free thought and human rights.

Edward Muir states that carnivalesque “produced the richest symbolic imagery; had the greatest influence on European culture, especially on comic drama; and celebrated the materiality of everyday life, the realm of the body” (94). On the other hand Bakhtin argues that carnival symbolism –which is presented through that public grammar and carnival performances–is related with the fundamental dynamics of life, such as change and renewal, and it has a “peculiar logic of the inside out” which results from a sense of the “gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities” (11). In short, owing its indebtedness to those regenerating and evolutionary factors, a marketplace language is structured by publics throughout the history.

From the discussions so far, one can easily recognize the fact that Rabelais puts forward his struggle against the official pressure and the authority of Church, choosing that market place language consciously which is subversive, regenerating and renewing at the same time; and with regard to its symbolic depth, the marketplace language becomes a fertile ground for Rabelais to plant ambiguous means of expression; this means that, through that language, he can conduct serious debates mixing them with joyful narratives. Therefore, in order to see the basic structure of that language, it becomes necessary to have a close look on the main characteristics of that special public grammar and carnival rituals which give birth to that language.

1.2. Carnival Rituals and the Language of the Marketplace

We shall examine first of all those elements of Rabelais's language that, from the seventeenth century on, were a stumbling block for his admirers and readers, those that La Bruyère considered "filthy depravation" and Voltaire "impertinence". (Bakhtin "Rabelais"145)

Bakhtin, in *The Language of the Market Place* section of his book, discusses Rabelais' literary style as a part of public folklore and a "culture of folk humor developed through thousands of years" which according to him, expresses itself through some words, rituals and gestures which are decorated with urinal and scatological elements (*Rabelais* 152).

Scatology is a 'folklore concerning excrement, flatulence, urine, and bodily organs involved in the process of defecation' (DuBois 755). Persels and Ganim define scatology as an isolated function which is excluded from literature due to some aesthetic concerns, although it is "an even more universal function than sexuality [which still] retains the power to make us blush, to provoke shame and embarrassment" (xiii). According to Persels and Ganim "Human waste is separated from the individual who created it and from the society who rejects it" (xiv). They also add that, as a result of a "civilizing process" formed by such a sense of embarrassment and shame, "Rabelais's 'bathroom humor' becomes the cause of an embarrassed snicker, the object of academic dismissal, the reason we read him in private over the 'dirty bit' in public" (xvi). D. Rollfinke and J. Rollfinke make some similar definitions on the exclusion of scatology from the world of literature; they assert that excrement, as a basic fact of human reality, is most often ignored by many artists "with a tendency of idealize" (3). According to them, another group of artists apply scatology in their works since it "provides light humor" and as a part of their "biting satire"; and it is also used by some authors as "a reversal of the standard societal values" (3). D. Rollfinke and J. Rollfinke also add that "Although many critics will not hesitate to comment on literary examples of sadistic and masochistic practices of a sexual and nonsexual nature, almost no one wants to deal with a given author's treatment of the fact that all human beings have digestive systems and produce waste matter" (4).

On the other hand, Bakhtin maintains that “excrement represents bodies and matter that are mostly comic; it is the most suitable substance for the degrading of all that exalted. For this reason it plays an important part in comic folklore and in the grotesque realism of Rabelais’ novel, as well as in current degrading familiar speech” (*Rabelais* 152). Bakhtin asserts that Rabelais uses such a language as a literary tool since “the intrinsic value of the “lowly” language in creating literary forms was considerable” (*Rabelais* 182). According to him Rabelais also benefits from this language in constituting “an absolutely gay, frank and fearless speech” which he can direct it upon “gothic darkness” (195). Additionally Bakhtin supposes that Rabelais applies the linguistic form of the marketplace, which is exceedingly replete with the images of defecation and urinal elements, for “stylistic purposes” since it keeps the initiative to create sincerity and intimacy, due to its having “great power of travesty, of debasement, and materialization which render the world more carnal” (*Rabelais* 195). Bakhtin states that “This gesture and the words that accompany it are based on a literal debasement in terms of the topography of the body, that is, a reference to the bodily lower stratum, the zone of the genital organs” (148). Accordingly, he emphasizes the important role of the street *cries*- especially the ones which are performed in Paris- since they play an important role on Rabelais’ literary style with respect to their focus on the lower levels of human body. According to Bakhtin Rabelais makes an efficient use of these cries and the symbolic richness of world of advertising in his age (*Rabelais*181). And he also underlines that Rabelais applies to that marketplace language – which included abuses, curses, profanities, and improprieties as “the elements of freedom” in speech– since they are beneficial for his literary style, as they stand as a “breach of the established norms of verbal address; they refuse to conform to conventions, to etiquette, civility, respectability” (187).

According to Bakhtin the most perfect example of this language was reflected in Rabelais' novels where he draws on his carnival experiences that he received during his classical education in Fontenay-le-Comte in Lyon. For Bakhtin those folkloric acquisitions, which he derives from the atmosphere of the carnivals, seem to be Rabelais’s real education: the carnival atmosphere which is constituted by the participation of “itinerant hawkers, gypsies, and the obscure declasses” carries his relationships with humanity “closer and more intimate” level (*Rabelais* 155-156).

Carnival language mainly bears an idea of debasement and degrading, therefore, it mainly deals with the lower stratum of human bodies. Bakhtin asserts that such a linguistic focus on the lower stratum of the body is not just a matter of jocularity or impertinence, to the contrary, such a folk tradition derives its roots from a very old ancient vision that refers to some qualities like death, rebirth and fertility. Therefore, the language of the carnival should be taken as a public expressionism which refers to cyclical mechanism of life. Bakhtin clarifies that idea as follows: “This signifies destruction, a grave for the one who is debased. But such debasing gestures and expressions are ambivalent, since the lower stratum is not only a bodily grave but also the area of the genital organs, the fertilizing and generating stratum (148).

From Bakhtin’s argumentations so far, one can clearly see that the language of the marketplace is a ritualized expression of a nature-philosophy for the folks. Actually Bakhtin puts forward the strong ability of such rituals to refer to the on-going process between death and life, decaying and regenerating and so on; in other words, the carnival rituals and its language focus on the physical labour that the nature represents to keep the universal sustainability in order.

Looking through Bakhtin’s vision, it can be said that such a corporeal realism—with regard to its functions of procreation and decaying—can be accepted as the most concise and effective literary method to explain natural phenomena, among the literatures which have been produced by the common sense throughout the history; as Bakhtin puts it “in the images of urine and excrement is preserved the essential link with birth, fertility, renewal, welfare” (148). Therefore carnival language bears a symbolism which densely refers to the under belly, the lower stratum of the human body to establish a linear approach to the functioning of nature and its continual cycling. Muir defines this point as follows;

Food, sex and play comprise the bodily pleasures, and Carnival celebrates, in particular, the desires and drives associated with belly and genitals, what might be called the lower body. Eating food and having sex may be understood as bodily functions, ways in which the borders of the body are breached through ingestion and phallic penetration. (91)

According to Bakhtin, the marketplace language is a product of the people of the *base* who get the opportunity to shake off the impact of the *superstructure* now and then; therefore it is different both from “the language of Church, palace, courts, and institutions [and from the] tongue of official literature or of the ruling classes” (154). Similarly Berrong defines that “Rabelais was able to throw off the intellectual shackles worn by those who had only the language of official culture at their disposal” (12). Berrang also notes that Rabelais and his readers “became able to think in a language other than that created by official culture, and so to see this official culture from the outside, objectively, as it really was” (12). La Dousa also emphasises the communication making power of that language, stating that “Rabelais’s work is a metacultural expression, reflection on the sixteenth century marketplace and carnival that represents that world by incorporating its language” (57).

Edward Muir states that “carnival opens up the underworld of festive laughter and market place language” (*Ritual* 99). This means that every performance in the marketplace is charged with the sense of carnival humour that helps to create the festive laughter; even the performances like thrashings, beatings and community fights are also related with the reversal mechanism of carnival which, as a subversive practice, pulls down what is placed on a higher level. Bakhtin asserts that “thrashing and abuse are not a personal chastisement but are symbolic actions directed at something on a higher level, at the king” (197). Such violent-based rituals are also dominated with an emphasis of integrity. Bakhtin explains that point as follows;

The carnivalesque character of this chastisement is obvious. We even see here a carnival within carnival but with realistic consequences for the beaten slanderer. The very custom of the gauntlets is a carnival rite, linked with fertility, with procreative force, with time. Custom grants the right of a certain freedom and familiarity, the right to break the usual norms of social relations. (*Rabelais* 200-201)

Therefore becoming hurt, maybe not physically, but in an emotional sense has no place during the carnival rituals as “the beating itself has a gay character; it is introduced and concluded with laughter” (203).

It goes without saying that, social criticism through laughter is not an unusual manner. In this regard, Rabelais simply goes after an old literary convention, that's to say, he puts forward his political purposes through an ambiguity which is an admixture of humour and seriousness. However, what distinguishes Rabelais's literary style from the classical forms of satire is his using the carnival symbolism which has been produced by public efforts throughout the history.

To sum up, Bakhtin asserts that Rabelais literary achievements simply depend on his literalizing the carnival rituals and language. He also maintains that those carnivalistic elements bear deep symbolic expressions under their "joyful relativity" and all the performances are designed to create the carnival *laughter*. According to Bakhtin, the laughter that erupts during carnival times is a folkloric laughter which bears a high ambiguity. The ambiguous structure of that laughter can be explained through two items: first of all, it is a revolutionary laughter since it bears some subversive functions like debasement and uncrowning; through that laughter, the authority, Church, and all sorts of high ranks and statues are degraded and pulled down to ground. Secondly, it is structurally evolutionist since it regenerates and renews; and it offers a kind of dialectic which emerges from the conflation of material bodily functions; such as birth and death or eating, drinking and defecation. In parallel with those materialist and subversive denotations which dominate his whole concept of carnival, Bakhtin's political vision has been mostly discussed in terms of Marxist dialectic. Kinser states that "Rabelais's world view, elite and popular by turns, is always non official and frequently subversive, inverse, and carnivalesque" (249). And additionally Kinser asserts that "Bakhtin's idea of "materialism" is dialectically Marxist" (249-250). According to Kinser, Bakhtin frequently refers "to the regenerative nature of the body in Rabelais's work, whereby that which dies is already a stage in that which is reborn" (250). On the other hand Michael Holquist, highlighting the theme of populism in Bakhtin, considers the world of Rabelais as "a hymn to the common man" (*Rabelais* xviii). Muir similarly states that "Centered as it is on the body, carnival invokes not only bodily pleasure but also violent social conflict and protest (*Ritual* 91).

At that point Bakhtin's notion of laughter stands as a simple explanation of all those revolutionary public activities which is marked by a materialist point of view. While achieving its purpose, the body, the genitals, the profanities and

scatology become the main instruments of that *carnival laughter*; at the same time, the grotesque body - which “stands on the threshold of the grave and the crib (*Rabelais* 26) - with respect to the materialist bodily dialectic it bears, is among the major elements that help that laughter erupt. Simon Dentith, referring to Bakhtin’s work *Rabelais and his World*, notes that “the book undoubtedly articulates an aesthetic which celebrates the anarchic, body-based and grotesque elements of popular culture, and seeks to mobilize them against the humourless seriousness of official culture” (64). Taking all those ideas into consideration, from that point on, it would be useful to examine those elements, which contribute to the creation of that carnival laughter respectively.

1.2.1. The Carnival Laughter

The laughter of the carnival is not simply parodic; it is no more than tragic; it is both at once, one might say that it is *serious*. This is the only way that it can avoid becoming either the scene of law or the scene of its parody, in order to become the scene of its *other*. (Kristeva ‘word’ 50)

It is quite clear that while Bakhtin is discussing the *carnival laughter* he does not actually signify pure comedy, or an action which makes people burst in to laughter. It may be more precise to say that the word “laughter” denotes a clandestine public relief which people manage to get in certain times of year; that’s to say, it symbolizes the resistance of ordinary people against the authoritarianism and official pressure.

The festive laughter emerges through “numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crowning and uncrownings” (*Rabelais* 11). In *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Bakhtin explains the debasing power of carnival laughter as follows; “Deeply ambivalent also is carnival laughter itself. Genetically it is linked with the most ancient forms of ritual laughter. Ritual laughter was always directed toward something higher: the sun (the highest god), other gods, the highest earthly authority were put to shame and ridiculed to force them to renew themselves” (126-127).

Thus, Bakhtin’s work linguistically focuses on that sense of humour which emerges through medieval activities in defiance of the official pressure of the age. In

a sense, saying that “carnival is the people’s second life, organized on the basis of laughter” Bakhtin refers to a revenge philosophy of low class people who have been muzzled throughout the year (*Rabelais* 8). He also emphasizes its revolutionary potential, defining it as an ambivalent laughter which is “gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives” (12). Ronald Knowles supports Bakhtin’s point, saying that “for Bakhtin the triumph of life is always expressed by the laughter of the people” (36).

Bakhtin considers the carnival laughter as the laughter of “all the people [which is] universal in scope [and] directed at all and everyone, including the carnival’s participants” (*Rabelais* 11), additionally, he also states that, through that laughter, the serious demeanours were pushed a way and “it made a man renounce his official state as monk, cleric, scholar, and perceive the world in its laughing aspect” (13). Later Bakhtin explains the efficacies of that laughter as if he is introducing a curative drug: “Laughter purifies the consciousness of men from false seriousness, from dogmatism, from all confusing emotions” (*Rabelais* 141).

Talking specifically about the medieval folklore, Bakhtin suggests that the carnival laughter is accomplished in three ways; the first of these is “ritual spectacles” which are configured to mimic serious rituals of the age. For instance, during those rituals, in order to create the comic effect, a king and a queen are elected to conduct a banquet which also stands as a symbolic reversal of authority and publics (*Rabelais* 5). The purpose of such statue exchanges is to create an *uncrowning* effect to debase the authority of the king. According to Muir “Carnival denigrates pretensions, formality, and authority: the Carnival King replaces the symbol of regal authority with a humble symbol by wearing a crow- meat pie for his crown” (*Ritual* 91). Bakhtin also notes that all hierarchical ranks and precedence are suspended during carnival time and people become equal in their social statues (*Rabelais* 10).

The destructive power of carnival can be mainly depended on two concepts; those are *uncrowning* and *decentralization* (*Rabelais* 369). The concept of decentralization can be accepted as a materialistic notion, or in other words, it is the energy which is responsible for the fair distribution of the celestial power in the universe; that is to say, it suggests that the centre of the universe is not located in the heaven but the centre is everywhere. Bakhtin points out that “This new aspect

permitted the author to transfer the relative centre of the universe from heaven to the underground, that is, to the underworld, which according to the medieval conception was farthest removed from God” (369). According to Bakhtin, the subversive power of carnival is related with a “downward movement [which is] also inherent in all forms of popular- festive merriment and grotesque realism”, and he explains its subversive potential by defining it as a “Down, inside out, vice versa, upside down” movement (370). Additionally Bakhtin suggests that “All of them thrust down, turn over, push headfirst, transfer top to bottom, and bottom to top, both in the literal sense of space, and in the metaphorical meaning of the image” (370).

Accordingly, Bakhtin explains a second category which consists of *comic verbal compositions* which are organized to mock the deity, through some parodies of the sacred issues (*parodia sacra*) (*Rabelais* 12-14). Maybe those parodies find their most striking symbolism in a “donkey” image which is included in church masses to accompany each mass with its comic braying, “hinham!” (*Rabelais* 78). Bakhtin states that, the donkey, with its braying, is the “central protagonist” of the *feast of the ass* or *asinine masses* as “one of the most ancient and lasting symbols of the material bodily lower stratum which at the same time degrades and degenerates” (78). On the other hand, he also maintains that the *feast of fools* which is celebrated during the medieval period is one of the “most colourful and genuine expressions of medieval festive laughter near the precincts of church” (78). There are also some other parodies, such as *Liturgy of the Drunkards*, *Liturgy of the Gamblers*, *Money Liturgy*, which also aim to destroy the seriousness of Church (85).

The last category, *various genres of billingsgate*, consists of some performances which are achieved through an abusive use of language including “curses, oaths, popular blazons” (*Rabelais* 5). According to Bakhtin, the content of this last category is achieved by an informal but sincere way of communication which is familiar between close friends, and which breaks the usual norms of speech with an accent of intimacy and sincerity (16).

As it is clear, the carnival laughter breaks out from a number of performances which are achieved through an abusive and informal marketplace language. Humour is set to reduce the prestige of the high seriousness of medieval religion and official culture. Bakhtin explains this idea in a more concise form in the following lines;

They were first of all freed from the heavy chains of devout seriousness, from the “continual ferment of piety and the fear of God.” They were freed from the oppression of such gloomy categories as “eternal,” “immovable,” “absolute,” “unchangeable” and instead were exposed to the gay and free laughing aspect of the world, with its unfinished and open character, with the joy of change and renewal. (83)

In a similar way Clark explains those public performances as “the observances set to express popular resentment against rulers and the Church which closely ordered people’s lives” (28). According to Clark, carnival gives way to a symbolical exchange of statue between the powerful and rulers with the low class people;

Carnival observances were often of an apparently subversive kind; at feasts, someone might be designated by lot as king for a day and allowed to give orders to his social superiors. Some towns or courts even chose a “lord of misrule”, while in some cathedrals a Boy Bishop was chosen from among the choristers to go up in to the pulpit and preach a facetious sermon while other junior clerics performed a parody of the usual rites. (28)

Briefly, carnival— rather than being a folkloric activity performed by a masked mob of people—is a temporary disobedience to the authority. Muir states that “carnival expressed popular discontent by serving as a means of examining social categories, particularly for the illiterate and weak” (*Mad* 115). Carnival is beyond a game or a convention, it is a spirit embodied by the participants; as Bakhtin puts it “Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participate because its very idea embraces all the people” (7). Muir also suggests that “according to Bakhtin, the basic mechanism by which carnival achieved its liberating effects was through turning the world upside down” (*Ritual* 99). During those rituals people become free from all earthly bounds; they laugh and communicate with an intimate kind of speech. The most important fruit germinated by this relatively illegitimate reunion is a highly integrating and perfect way of communication.

Bakhtin suggests that, in order to create the laughter, carnival rituals focus on the human body, mostly the lower parts of it. He calls that special deal with lower stratum of the body as the *material bodily principle* which he explains as the “images of the human body with its food, drink, defecation, and sexual life” (18). Muir also

notes that during carnival “At the most rudimentary level the dichotomy between the lower and upper body was represented through competing ritual behavior and formalized gestures of the body as in the etiquette of dining, courting, playing games and fighting” (*Rituals* 94).

Such a focus on the lower parts of human body bears the stamps of a dualist approach, or in other words, it takes its energy from the binary oppositions of bodily functions such as birth and death; eating drinking and defecation; or youth and aging. Bakhtin points out some hyperbolic expressions of bodily images which emerge as a natural conclusion of a folkloric attempt in which those conflicting qualities are presented in a “double body” (*Rabelais* 318). The main purpose of this exaggerative symbolism is to refer to the life cycle and its dualism. Bakhtin states that “In the endless chain of bodily life it retains the parts in which one link joins the other, in which the life of one body is born from the death of the preceding, older one” (*Rabelais* 318). Accordingly Bakhtin sets another concept, the *grotesque realism*, to refer to that hyperbolic expressionism which plays part in the creation of festive laughter by focusing on the dualism that is presented by human nature through contrasting biological qualities (18).

1.2.2. Grotesque Realism and Material Bodily Principle

...and that our delights and our excrements have been lodged together pell-mell, and that the supreme pleasure is attended, like pain, with faintness and moaning; I believe that what Plato says is true, that man is the plaything of the gods (Montaigne “Essays” 668).

Grotesque Realism is a part of the folk literature in which the existential controversies are pictured in a doubled body since it bears the idea of dualism. Doing that, it gives birth to hyperbolic and exaggerated images, in which an old and a pregnant woman or a young and an aging man are described in the same body. According to Bakhtin, Rabelais, in order to constitute his own literary form and style, takes the advantages of the carnival language which consists of those exaggerative means of body descriptions, the “grotesque image” (*Rabelais* 24). Bakhtin, to emphasize the role of such a hyperbolic use of language, states that “the importance of abusive language is essential to the understanding of the literature of the grotesque” (27). He also describes Rabelais’s language as a form which is saturated

from a folk humour convention “somewhat modified by the Renaissance” in which the lower bodily parts are represented in an exaggerated and dualistic way; Bakhtin calls this hyperbolic and dualist public grammar as *grotesque realism* (18).

According to Bakhtin, for the grotesque realism, the bodily element is deeply positive; as he states that “it is presented not in a private, egoistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal, representing all people” (*Rabelais* 19). Additionally he maintains that “The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation [which pulls down the] high, spiritual, ideal and abstract” to the material level with a purpose of level synchronization (19). Therefore, grotesque realism transfers those idealized images to the “material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity” (19-20). Simon Dentith, states that grotesque realism “emphasizes the material and bodily” (65). He explains the symbolic role of grotesque body depictions as follows;

The grotesque body celebrated by Bakhtin; which appears in artistic forms and periods way beyond Rabelais and the sixteenth century, is a body in which becoming rather than completion is evident, a body whose openness to the world and the future is emphatically symbolized by the consuming maws, pregnant stomachs, evident phalluses and gargantuan evacuations that make it up. (66)

Actually here what Dentith emphasizes is that the grotesque body, taking the body as an incomplete figure, stands against the ideal and completed body imagination of highbrow art forms. To clarify thoroughly, it can be said that for Bakhtin, the role of grotesque realism is to provide a social equality and remove the artefact in human relations; that’s to say, it is an opportunity to restore the reputation of the natural functioning of the world. Therefore he especially underlines that grotesque realism is “opposed to severance from the material and bodily roots of the world” (*Rabelais* 19). Grotesque realism can be accepted as a literary way which stands against the unnatural, and heavenly, thus “it makes no pretense to renunciation of the earthy, or independence of the earth and the body” (19).

It is clear that grotesque realism stands as a passionate and realistic bash towards a polished understanding of classical literature which, according to Bakhtin, can be finely observed in the disparity between the images of Sancho and Don

Quixote. Sancho, with his fat belly and great appetite, contrasts with Don Quixote's idealistic chivalry imagination (22). Bakhtin, confronting those two opposite natures, reveals a contradiction between the idealized and completed stereotypes of classical literature and incomplete, becoming images of public folklore; and he also explains Rabelais's literary intention as fulfilling a body imagination which is incomplete and becoming rather than completed, and which "stands on the threshold of the grave and the crib" (*Rabelais* 26).

According to Bakhtin grotesque depiction of body is figuratively refers to a cyclic existence of human beings "who are continually growing and renewed" (*Rabelais* 19) and whose distinctive characteristics is "its open unfinished nature, its interaction with the world" (281). Grotesque realism does not accept the earth and body independent from each other; therefore it combines both the pregnant and the death in the same body; thus, becomes "grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable" (19). In this respect, grotesque realism opposes the literatures that destroy the accord between life and death, eating, drinking and defecation by preferring the most idealized and supreme side for the sake of aesthetics profits; to the contrary, grotesque realism rejects all sorts of idealisms that cause such factions in the integrity of the universe. Brandist, underlines such a notion of anti-idealism in Rabelais's work as follows;

Rabelais's celebration of corporeality, his dwelling on images of collective feasting or urination, defecation and the like, Bakhtin sees a presentation of the person as at one with the world, with ingestion and defecation showing the openness of the body which is incomplete and in the process of becoming along with the world. This is contrasted with the complete, perfectly proportioned body of classical aesthetics. (144)

According to Bakhtin "Degradation digs a bodily grave for a new birth; it has not only a destructive, negative aspect, but also a degenerating one" (21). Therefore, the appearance and attitudes of Sancho—who looks like a deliberate choice of its creator to be put against the pretensions of Don Quixote—are pure carnivalesque. Bakhtin clarifies that point with a highly strong metaphor, putting that Sancho's grandiose and hyperbolic appearance is a "bodily grave which has been dug for Don Quixote's abstract and deadened idealism" (22).

As it has been sufficiently stressed so far, Rabelais makes an apparent use of the symbolism of medieval carnival culture, drawing on his marketplace experiences and its language whereby he takes the opportunity to develop his own rhetorical style which he uses to degrade the one-sided seriousness of the official culture of the medieval period. Muir states that, through verbal degradations and its focus on the underbelly, language of the carnival achieves a great social role: “The orientation toward the lower body means that as a commentary on social life, Carnival denigrates pretensions, formality and authority” (*Ritual* 91).

All the discussions have been carried out so far set forth some links between Rabelais’s literature and public folklore and clarify the way he distils his own literary style by utilizing the marketplace symbolism of his age. As Bakhtin states, there are many other genres and authors that make use of the same carnival sources, even though the carnival images are not as articulate as it is in Rabelais’s works. He examines some of those genres in his work *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, once again within a historical perspective taking those from ancient Greece, Socrates and Socratic dialogue, cynic Menippus and Menippean satire to Dostoevsky’s period, where the genre making efficiency of carnival culture is reduced to some insignificant levels, and where all its symbols have to cloak and maintain themselves under some degenerated and modernized forms. Therefore the following section will scrutinize some more obscure forms of carnival laughter, which sometimes hide themselves beyond a sullen face or which will hardly be figured out in a word uttered by a person who is on the verge of suicide.

1.3. Carnivalized Genres: Socratic Dialogue, Menippean Satire, and the Serio-Comical

According to Bakhtin not only Rabelais’s text is carnivalesque; but also Dostoevsky’s work bears the stamp of a carnival sense of the world (*Problems* 109). Bakhtin, in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, goes in search of the subtle connection between Dostoevsky’s novels and the public folklore. He coins the term *carnivalized literature* to characterize the sorts of literary genres which are influenced by folk carnivals and he explains it as a literary sort “that was influenced-directly and without meditation, or indirectly, through a series of intermediate links-by one or another variant of carnivalistic folklore (ancient or medieval)” (107).

Bakhtin argues that “neither the hero, nor the idea, not the very polyphonic principle” in novel of Dostoevsky’s period were enough to saturate his literary requirements; it was not also possible for him to accomplish his ideological purposes with the “plot-compositional forms of a biographical novel, a socio-psychological novel, a novel of everyday life or a family novel” which were the dominant novel forms of his age and used by his contemporaries such as Turgenev, Goncharov, and Leo Tolstoy (*Problems* 101). Bakhtin mainly accepts Dostoevsky’s hero as a nonconformist type who is always in pursuit of the experience, especially observing the low-life and the lowbrow attitudes of people.

The plot in Dostoevsky’s works rejects the predictability of classical form of novel; this means that, it refuses being embodied in a chain of predetermined events within a reduced and a stable statue, therefore, the hero is tested in some realistic conditions, which are organized by the author as the simulation of reality, to produce the most natural and organic results as much as possible. Thus Dostoevsky’s hero “excludes nothing from his life except one thing- the social respectability of fully embodied hero of the family or biographical novel” (102). To elaborate on that idea, it can be said Dostoevsky’s hero is of a living and processing type whose destiny cannot be predetermined within a familiar plot setting; he never becomes a property of the plot composition and is never “fully embodied and strictly localized in life” (104). According to Bakhtin, hero in Dostoevsky is partially similar to the hero of the adventure novel who is not also connected to any fixed qualifications and familiar syllabuses. Therefore the main, “very external and very crude similarity” between Dostoevsky’s hero and the adventure hero is that the adventure hero “has no firm socially typical or individually characterological qualities by which a stable image of his character, type, or temperament might be composed”, thus, the character becomes open to all type of changes, so that “to the hero anything can happen, he can become anything” (*Problems* 102). According to Bakhtin, the adventure plot “offers favourable material for the realization of Dostoevsky’s artistic design” (105) since it is “a precisely clothing draped over the hero, clothing which he can change as often as he pleases” (104). However, as the adventure hero is “a corporeal and corporeal-spiritual man” he does not have the power to set any “extra-plot connections with any other characters” and he is “quite empty” outside the plot, and the “adventure plot cannot therefore be the ultimate binding force in Dostoevsky’s world, but as a

plot it offers favorable material for the realization of Dostoevsky's artistic design" (105).

It is clear from his ideas above, Bakhtin tries to stress that Dostoevsky's aim is to create a type of an elusive plot setting which is unfamiliar and unpredictable by nature; and consequently it gets the initiative to create the dialogical effect. To achieve his purpose, Dostoevsky uses some opportunities of the plot designation peculiar to adventure novels. However, to achieve his ideological purposes—as if he is executing a literary experiment where both the hero and the idea are living and processing together—he puts his hero in some unusual situations to see how it will result. Bakhtin proves that idea as follows;

In Dostoevsky, the adventure plot is combined with the posing of profound and acute problems; and it is, in addition, placed wholly at the service of the idea. It places a person in extraordinary positions that expose and provoke him, it connects him and makes him collide with other people under usual and unexpected conditions precisely for the purpose of testing the idea and the man of the idea, that is, for testing the "man in man" (105).

Therefore, Bakhtin associates the novel formation of Dostoevsky with the *serio-comical* which, during Hellenistic period and classical antiquity, was accepted as an inclusive genre that covered such genres like Socratic dialogue, Menippean satire and many others. According to Bakhtin, those genres are "united by their deep bond with carnivalistic folklore" although they show differences with their external qualities (*Problems* 106-107). In the serio-comical Bakhtin observes the dialogic element which opposes the "one-sided" literary dogmatism that accepts the author as the mere authority in a text; thus, he sees a literary destructiveness in it which is directed to the "serious genres—the epic, the tragedy, the history, classical rhetoric" and so on (107). According to Bakhtin there is also a "strong rhetorical element" in all genres of the serio-comical, however, as it maintains its existence "in the atmosphere of joyful relativity characteristic of a carnival sense of the world", this rhetorical element loses its "one-sided rhetorical seriousness, its rationality, its singular meaning, its dogmatism" (107). Here what Bakhtin exactly stresses is the existence of a similar subversive motif that is inherent in Rabelais's works which he derives from the linguistic symbolism of public folklore, the market places and directs it to the renaissance seriousness and dogmatism; this motif can also be

accepted as the central element, or in Bakhtin's words, the "carnivalistic leaven" (*Problems* 107) that underlies his whole concept of carnivalesque.

In the next phase Bakhtin argues that two genres, *Socratic dialogue* and *Menippean satire*, play the most important roles in the development of novel; and he also asserts that both genres depend on a "folk carnivalistic base and is thoroughly saturated with a carnival sense of the world" (109).

The main purpose of Socrates' dialectic method is to make conflicting ideas collide in order to give birth to the truth. As he forces his pupils to "war against error and to refute false opinions" with the help of his method, this provocative method is named by Socrates as *maieutics*, "the art of giving birth to ideas" (Compayre 23). As Bakhtin defines, Socrates, who calls himself a "pander", brings people together and draws them into a dialectical discussions from which the "truth was born"; for that reason, Socrates calls himself a "mid-wife," since he assisted at the birth and his method is called as *obstetric* method (*Problems* 110).

According to Bakhtin, Socrates' method is a dialogic type which seeks the truth with a dialogic method which is "counterposed to official monologism" (*Problems* 110). The main purpose of this dialogic provocation is to get the steadiest results from the conversation of conflicting brains. Bakhtin states that, Socrates, using the mobilizing and provoking power of *syncrisis* and *anacrisis*, creates a specific mechanism through which the truth is born.

Syncrisis is the juxtaposition of various point of views on a specific subject, on the other hand *anacrisis* is "eliciting and provoking the words of one's interlocutor, forcing him to express his opinion and express it thoroughly", and as this method was most efficiently used by Socrates, according to Bakhtin "Socrates was a great master of the anacrisis, he knew how to force people to speak" (*Problems* 110). At the same time, Bakhtin suggests that the participants of Socratic dialogue are all "ideologists", in other words, everyone who participates in Socrates' dialogue becomes ideologist as well; "his pupils, the Sophists, the simple people" are provoked to response and converse in the dialogue (111). Bakhtin defines that the "prime ideologist is Socrates himself" (111). According to Bakhtin the European novel owes its current hero-philosopher model to the dialectic method of Socrates; as he states "The Socratic dialogue was thus the first to introduce into the history of

European literature the hero ideologist” (111). According to Bakhtin, a similar function of Socratic Dialogue is to give way to a state of confession, or to a “summing-up and confession of a man standing on the *threshold*” (111).

On the other hand, in Socratic Dialogue the consistency of the idea and its carrier plays a great role; Bakhtin maintains that “In the Socratic dialogue the idea is organically combined with the image of a person; its carrier...The dialogic testing of the idea is simultaneously also the testing of the person who represents it” (111-112).

However Socratic dialogue will be changed by an enforcement of a one-sided truth and will be systematically degenerated “in to a question-and-answer form for training neophytes (catechism)” (110). Bakhtin sees Socratic dialogue as a starting point for the European prose and also for Dostoyevsky’s novel (112). According to him, the dialogic quality of Socratic Method is applied in many forms of carnivalized genres like the Menippean satire.

Bakhtin argues that Menippean satire partially has its roots in Socratic dialogue since it was formed during the disintegration process of Socratic dialogue; but he also adds that Menippean satire is not a “pure product of the decomposition of Socratic dialogue [...] since its roots reach *directly* back into the carnivalized folklore, whose decisive influence is here even more significant than it is in the Socratic dialogue” (112).

Booker states that Menippean satire benefits from the democratic structure of Socratic dialogue. According to Booker “The first and most fundamental characteristics of the carnival (and therefore of Menippean satire) is its ambivalence – different points of view, different worlds, may be mutually and simultaneously present without any privileging of one over the other, so that the different worlds can comment on each other in a dialogic way” (2). As Booker states, dialogism is one of the major characteristics of Menippean satire; however, there are many other items that make it a specific genre among all carnivalized literary sorts. Bakhtin calls Menippean satire simply as the *menippea* and he examines it under fourteen items; those are briefly;

1. The specific weight of the comic element
2. Liberation from “limitations of the history and memoir
3. Bold and unrestrained use of the fantastic and adventure

4. Slum naturalism
5. Boldness of invention and the fantastic element are combined in the menippea
6. In connection with the philosophical universalism of the menippea, a three-planed construction makes its appearance: action and dialogic syncrisis are transferred from earth to Olympus and to the nether world
7. Experimental fantasticality
8. Moral psychological experimentation
9. Scandal scenes, eccentric behaviour, inappropriate speeches and performances...violations after the generally accepted and customary course of events and established norms of behavior and etiquette, including manners of speech
10. Sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations
11. The menippea often includes elements of *social utopia* which are incorporated in the form of dreams of journey, to unknown lands
12. Wide use of inserted genres
13. The presence of inserted genres reinforces the multi-toned nature of menippea
14. Its concern with current and topical issues (114- 118).

Actually, before Bakhtin's studies have been introduced to the west, Northrop Frye also dealt with Menippean satire in his work *Anatomy of Criticism*. Frye explains his perception of Menippean satire defining it as a genre which "deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes" (309). Frye argues that;

Pedants, bigots, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts, rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds, are handled in terms of their occupational approach to life as distinct from their social behavior. The Menippean satire thus resembles the confession in its ability to handle abstract ideas and theories, and differs from the novel in its characterization, which is styled rather than naturalistic, and presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they

represent... At its most concentrated the Menippean satire presents us with a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern". (309-310)

According to Frye, Menippean satire can be applied to many types of prose. He suggests that, if Menippean satire is accepted "as the name of an attitude" it would reveal as a "combination of fantasy and morality" ; on the other hand, when it is "confined to literature" it becomes "more flexible" and more proper to be applied to many types of works and becomes "either entirely fantastic or entirely moral" (310). Frye asserts that, from Lewis Carol's *Alice* books to Tolstoy's works, many works can be suggested to be using Menippean satire since the "Menippean satirist, dealing with intellectual themes and attitudes, shows his exuberance in intellectual ways" (310-311). Frye supposes that the name Menippean may be substituted with "a convenient name to replace the cumbersome and in modern times rather misleading Menippean satire", therefore, he proposes it to be changed with the name "anatomy" which he takes from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* since he thinks that Burton's work is the "scholarly distillations of Menippean forms" and the word "anatomy" accurately expresses "the intellectualized approach of his form" (311-312).

Besides having similarities, Bakhtin's and Frye's texts also show some great differences; as Dustin Griffin states "it almost seems as if Frye and Bakhtin are describing different forms" (33). For example Bakhtin, to the contrary of Frye, excludes those writers—such as Tolstoy, Goncharov, Turgenev—from the literary perspective that he bases on Menippean satire by pointing out the difference between those writers and Dostoevsky. He maintains that "Dostoevsky's work clearly belongs to a completely different generic type, one quite foreign to them" (101). Griffin also evaluates Frye's analysis as "immensively suggestive" but at the same time "abstract and overarticulated" (31), according to Griffin, Frye's theory does not have a great influence on theorists as it is "dazzling but has not proved critically useful" (32). Griffin also argues that Frye's theory is suitable to be applied to many other types of fiction but it "remained sketchy and resolutely a historical" (32).

At the same time, a paradoxical difference emerges between Frye and Bakhtin's visions with respect to Bakhtin's suggestion in which he accepts the satirist of Menippea as a person who deals with lowbrow experiences. According to Bakhtin, the menippea makes use of various situations—generally the lowest—as its literary sources, whereby "the ultimate philosophical positions are put to the test"

(*Problems* 114-115) which is rather different from Frye's argument where he suggests that the menippea shows an interest in "intellectual themes and attitudes" (Frye 310- 311). Griffin highlights that point by referring to Bakhtin's idea where he accepts the Menippea as a genre of "ultimate questions"; according to Griffin, different from Frye, Bakhtin explores menippea "not just a presentation of a vision of the world in terms of an "intellectual pattern" but the testing of that pattern" (41) . Actually Griffin's definition is a key one to reach a proper understanding of the concept that Bakhtin tries to reveal through menippea. For Bakhtin, the hero of the menippea is intimate with all kinds of experience. It should be noted that, here Bakhtin does not point at photographic, classical realism in novel which depends on the observations of existing conditions thoroughly; on the contrary, he emphasizes that, in Menippea, observation depends on "some unusual point of view" which he calls as *experimental fantasticality* which gives way to radical changes "in the scale of the observed phenomena of life" (*Problems* 116). This means that Bakhtin, while pointing at the role of experience in the menippea, rather refers to the creation of some unpredictable results which come through a collision of different outlooks in novel; as it is in a scientific experiment. Therefore in the menippea the hero is pushed into various conditions, from lowest to highest, whereby both the truth and its carrier is tested; as Bakhtin puts it "The menippea loves to play with abrupt transitions and shifts, ups and downs, rises and falls, unexpected comings together of distant and disunited things, *mésalliances* of all sorts" (118).

A similar logic also prevails over the linguistic style of the menippea. This means that, the menippea literarily shifts between various genres, as well as it shifts between different circumstances, the lowest conditions which no other literary genres dare to condescend. Branham and Kinney suggest that "Menippean mode of writing permits movement up and down the literary scales (high and low, oral and literary, verse and prose) and between genres and forms of speech that would either not appear in literary discourse at all" (xx). That is to say, the menippea makes use of various literary opportunities in order to reach its goal. Kharpertian defines Menippean as a genre which is "loose, mixing serio-comic prose and verse, and its principal emphasis is on the forms of variety (13). According to Branham and Kinney, Menippean satire is "a self-consciously written form, the product of a learned, chirographic culture and as such it is a literary composite" (xviii). In the

same way Booker states that “Menippean satire contains by its very nature a diverse collection of competing styles and voices, that it tends to interrogate and satirize various philosophical ideas (usually in a highly irreverent way), and that is certainly informed by the energies that Bakhtin simply explains as “carnavalesque”” (1). Similarly Branham and Kinney define that Menippea is “accordingly radically mixed in form, critical in intent, and satirically estranging in its effects” (xviii), they also add that “Its sophisticated and irreverent play with inherited literary forms contrasts sharply with the conservative stance toward the classical canon assumed by romance, just as its *recherché* subject matter contrasts with the more popular themes of romance” (xviii-xix).

Bakhtin maintains that, Dostoevsky’s novel bears many characteristics of the menippea. According to Bakhtin those characteristics have passed to him through a literary heritage, as he “linked with the chain of a given generic tradition” which is preserved in the “objective memory” of the genre, rather than the “subjective memory” of Dostoevsky (*Problems* 121). Bakhtin also states that the main characteristics of the menippea are reborn and renewed in Dostoevsky’s work (121).

Menippean satire is named after Menippus of Gadara who becomes a disciple of cynic Crates (third century B.C.) and “whose influence is remarkable but whose writings are lost” (Branham, Kinney xvii). Therefore we cannot encounter with a work written by him but it is possible to see his impact on other philosophers and writers that lived after Menippus: he is reported to have written *Witty Letters Written as by the Gods*, a *Necyia* and *On Sacrifices* (Goulet-Cazé 75). Lucian’s *Menippus or Necromancy* and *On Sacrifices* reflect an earlier work by Menippus on the same theme (75). Bakhtin defines that this satire is used by roman scholar Varro as *saturae menippeae*, but perhaps its first representative is cynic Antisthenes, who is a pupil of Socrates (*Problems* 113).

In a sense Menippean satire can be considered as a perfect reflection of the cynic point of view; of their unfamiliar, scandalous attitudes and also their verbal destructiveness. Northrop Frye states that “Cynicism is a little closer to the satiric norm: Menippus, the founder of the Menippean satire, was a cynic, and cynics are generally associated with the role of intellectual Thersites” (230).

Cynicism plays an important part in Bakhtin's concept of carnivalized genres; it is also influential on both Rabelais and Dostoevsky's works as well as it underlies Menippea as a carnivalized genre. Diogenes of Sinope is one of the major figures of cynic movement who is called as *dog* in ancient Greece with respect to his dog-like attitudes. Rabelais mostly refers to cynicism and Diogenes as a backing force for his literary style. In *Gargantua* the reader sees him praising Diogenes and his philosophy by saying that "Did you ever see a dog coming upon some marrow bone? That is as Plato says, Book 2 of *The Republic*, the most philosophical animal in the world" (4). On the other hand it is also possible to figure out some subtle connections between Dostoevsky's work and cynic philosophy.

1.3.1. Cynic Philosophy and Diogenes of Sinope: Minimalism in Life Style and Language

Being a *dog* was a philosophical choice for the *cynics* of Ancient Greece. *Cynicism* was a "popular philosophical movement which had its origins in classical Athens, and which returned to prominence in the Roman Empire, thereby encompassing the period from the fourth century B.C. to the sixth century" (Roberts 4). Cynics were identified symbolically with the *dog* due to their animal-like attitudes and their life views which were mainly based on a notion of minimalism and a quest to gain a level of self-sufficiency through lessening their material dependencies; and also with their behaviours "in accordance with *physis* not *nomos*" (Rankin 229).

The cynic school was originally established by sophist Antisthenes who respectively became a student of Gorgias and Socrates (Laertius 3-5). Sophist thought, in which Antisthenes was moulded, dealt with virtue and promoted the natural laws rather than the artificial ones. In the beginning, the emphasis of cynic thought was on acquiring the real virtue which could only be possible through living in harmony with nature and becoming self sufficient. According to Laertius, Antisthenes thought that "the wise man is self sufficing" (13). Laertius also states that Antisthenes supported the idea that "the wise man will be guided in his public acts not by the established laws but by the law of virtue" (13). Additionally, Thompson and French state that "The original philosopher cynic sought happiness through virtue, rejecting the obsessions of the time: pleasure, fame, fortune and

power” and even Antisthenes once declared that “I would rather go mad than experience pleasure” (6).

However rather than Antisthenes, Diogenes of Sinope, who lived in the fourth century BC and became a disciple of Antisthenes, hallmarked the cynic movement with his disregard and excessive behaviours, and he changed the movement’s current route with his way out kind of attitudes and indifference to authority. It was actually Antisthenes who gave Diogenes the impulse of indifference (Laertius 15), but although the movement was planted by Antisthenes, it was raised by Diogenes who combined the modest quest of sophist virtue with a state of folly and scandalous behaviours, and who, in the end, became the “archetypal representative” of that movement (Roberts 3). Therefore the movement owes its current definition to Diogenes who has always been accepted as “the first cynic” (Rankin 228).

Over time, the tales about Diogenes were multiplied by the public contributions and by the people who behaved after the fashion of him. Chaloupka defines that Diogenes as a “character who so resonated with his audience that they kept adding lines, creating stories, and reinventing him” (3). Most of their followers started to imitate their stance rather than the content. Roberts states that such degeneration was inevitable because the cynic school produced “a set of performance or rhetorical stances and not a theory” (4). Rankin draws the main characteristics of the cynic vision, which were restated after the participation of Diogenes, as follows;

With him began the formulated version of the cynic way of life with its values: *apatheia*, indifference to hardship and suffering (one’s own in particular); *autarkeia* self-sufficiency, rejection of a share in society’s responsibilities; *parrhesia*, open blunt freedom of speech on all topics; *anaideia*, lack of shame in the performance of all bodily actions and rejection of that time honoured heroic Greek concept of personal honour which came down from Archaic times and found its most striking exemplification in Achilles. He believed in hard striving and in *arête* which may be attained by means of it. (229)

For cynics *parrhesia* is an important verbal technique which they use to struggle with their opponents. Foucault defines *parrhesia* as a conversational art “to say everything”, and the *parrhesiastes* as “someone who says everything he has in

mind” (*The Fearless* 12). According to Foucault, a parrhesiastes takes many risks by saying the truth, such as being killed, exiled or punished or to be socially isolated from the society (16). Foucault also discusses parrhesia with regard to its role in criticism and he asserts that parrhesia, as a verbal mechanism of opposition, can only belong to the lower classes by which they criticize the upper classes; he defines it as a sort of frankness in speech which “comes from below” and is “directed towards “above””(18). In a sense Foucault’s definition reflects Bakhtin’s ideas on the verbal destructiveness of the medieval marketplace language which is directed towards the upper classes, elites and official culture of medieval period. Foucault establishes some major characteristics of parrhesia as; 1) critical preaching, 2) scandalous behavior 3) provocative dialogue, which are also involved in Bakhtin’s definitions on Socratic dialogue and the Menippea (119).

Diogenes was connected with a *chreia* tradition which is defined as “a brief saying or action making a point, attributed to some specified person” (Theon 5). He developed a peculiar form of pun and wordplay with his smartness which he used against the verbal offenses that annoyed him. According to Branham “the chreia tradition suggests that Diogenes’ most brilliant invention was not a set of doctrines, let alone a method, but himself a concrete yet malleable demonstration of a *modus dicendi*, a way of adopting verbally to (usually hostile) circumstances” (“Defacing” 87). However this does not mean that they did not have interest in theoretical philosophy (Foucault “Fearless” 117). As Roberts states “Joking, parody and satire are not only integral parts of Cynic ideology, but they are precisely what distinguish Cynicism from other ancient philosophical schools” (8). Roberts explains Diogenes’ influence on field of rhetoric as follows;

Diogenes’ comic and outrageous philosophy has led successive generations to formulate their own responses to his engaging yet shocking example. Analyzing the nature of these responses invariably leads to a fuller understanding of how the past imagined a life of radical freedom and consequently of some of the ways in which it conceived of humour, morality, the body and the self. Representations of cynicism regularly constitute a site for the exploration of strong and paradoxical ideas in playful and humorous ways. (4-5)

Among the most famous tales attributed to Diogenes and his quick wit is his encounter with Alexander the Great while he was sitting in the sun. According to the story, when Alexander asked him that he can choose any favour from him, Diogenes replied as “Stand out of my light” (Laertius 41). This famous retort of Diogenes can be considered to be the cynic motto; or in other words the most concise expression of their disregard, and antiauthoritarian attitudes best.

Over time, cynicism ceased to be a philosophical school and became a set of attitudes; Rankin states that “with the cynics the idea of nature as a standard for the conduct of human life took a more extreme direction” both in terms of rhetoric and performance (Rankin 227). This means that, cynicism over time became a movement of rejection and opposition both in words and actions: asceticism, disobedience, free speech and free act became their defining characteristics. According to Laertius Diogenes was in a habit of doing everything in the market place, and he was one of the first persons who folded his cloak, just because he slept in it; he carried a wallet to keep his aliments; and he also used public places for the sake of eating, sleeping and conversing with people (25). Even in once occasion, when he saw a child drinking by using his hands, he threw his cup and said that “A child has beaten me in plainness of living” (39). Shamelessness in their attitudes also became one of their most prominent facilities which caused cynicism to lose its quality as a school of philosophy and to be “degenerated more and more into insolence indecency” in its later days (Ueberweg 94). Cynics began to practice any humanly acts in the middle of the streets, even the acts which were considered to be immoral. Among those acts there is also a sexual- liberation thought. Diogenes saw no harm in masturbating in public places. Even one day, he jokingly said that that “it were easy to relive hunger by rubbing an empty stomach” (Laertius 47). But this sexual liberty finds its most striking example in Crates who had sex in public with his wife Hipparchia who had a reputation of being the only known female philosopher in ancient Greece (Roberts 4). Crates participated in the movement in its following period and became one of Diogenes’s most important heirs and made great contributions to the cynic saga with his unusual behaviours. He came from a wealthy family and he had a highly original personality. Laertius states that he threw his money into the sea by taking the advice of Diogenes (Laertius 91). Other than this he also maintained constant relationships in order to habituate himself “to meet their abuse” (93).

In brief, an average idea of cynicism is generally introduced as an admixture of rule violations, anarchism and folly which is released by bold verbal challenges, frankness, asceticism and misogyny and so on. In a scholium written for Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, cynics are described as follows;

There are four reasons why the *Cynics* are so named. First because of the *indifference* of their way of life, for they make a cult of indifference and, like dogs, eat and make love in public, go barefoot, and sleep in tubs and at crossroads. The second reason is that the dog is a shameless animal, and they make a cult of shamelessness, not as being beneath modesty, but as superior to it. The third reason is that the dog is a good guard, and they guard the tenets of their philosophy. The fourth reason is that the dog is a discriminating animal which can distinguish between its friends and enemies. So do they recognize as friends those who are suited to philosophy, and receive them kindly, while those unfitted they drive away, like dogs, by barking at them. (Navia 94)

Cynicism, with its tenets—which are based on countercultural attitudes, frankness and virtuosity—seems to have had a great influence on the contemplating souls; from this aspect, it is even accepted as a preparation phase of Christianity. Craig Evans defines that “both Cynics and Jesus were in some sense counter-cultural” (25). However he also notes some differences between cynic thought and Christianity with respect to the way they oppose the established order; according to Evans the most distinguishing factor of cynicism is the existence of satire in their philosophy, rather than subversion;

In fact, it is probably not correct with regard to Cynics to speak of “opposition.” Cynics did not *oppose* their respective cultures and establishments, as much as they *despised* them. There was no interest in reforming or restoring society, as probably in the case of Jesus. Cynics poured contempt on society and what they regarded as its vanity and futility. They were the vandals and anarchists of late antiquity. They ridiculed what society regarded sacred. (25)

As a conclusion, it can be said that cynics ridiculed the public approvals and the values that the society accepted as true. They also showed a great disregard to the

great doctrines of their age within a sense of self-sufficiency and disregard; and also with their nature-friendly philosophy. As a result they prepared a strip map for the subsequent ideologies and literatures which attempt to stand against the authority and official pressure.

Cynicism is a self-testing way of thinking which never eschews pushing the limits. At that point, Bakhtin— who realizes the movement’s carnivalesque components and its acute penetration to some literary genres—takes it historically from Socrates and cynic Menippus to Dostoevsky together within his theory of carnivalized literatures. With an overview to cynic thought, it can be easily asserted that this counterproductive philosophical school, with all its qualities – such as the notion of indifference, self-sufficiency, or liberal acts and free speech— has been an archetypal idea that gets ground in the very basis of transgressive forms of literature throughout the history. For example, one can observe that the Cynics and Stoic outlook “the theme of absolute indifference to everything in the world” (*Problems* 151) is transformed into a kind of nihilism in Dostoevsky’s works. That idea finds its most striking example in Kirilov who, as a reason for his suicide, manifests that “It’s all good, all. It’s good for all those who know that it’s all good” (*Devils* 229). Albert Camus senses “a little humour” in that suicide (102). According to Camus, Kirilov kills himself for some philosophical purposes; for the sake of taking his revenge from the nature as it brought him “in order to suffer” and just because “on the metaphysical plane, he is vexed” (102). At the same time that suicide also shows a great parallelism to the death of Diogenes who kills himself “voluntarily by holding his breath” most probably for the sake of same philosophical reasons (Laertius 79). On the other hand, it is also possible to see the impact of cynic insubordination in Knut Hamsun’s *Hunger* whose starveling hero, instead of accepting any favour from anyone, gnaws a piece of bone and vomits (*Hunger* 153), just like Diogenes once tried to eat raw meat and could not digest it in the same way (Laertius 37).

And for sure, nearly whole cynic attitudes— such as their obsession with simplicity and self-sufficiency; their indifference to authority; their shamelessness, scandalous attitudes and public place exhibitionism and so forth— can be easily observed and exemplified in many works of Charles Bukowski’s prose as well as his life style: first of all, Bukowski’s struggle with the system—which he performs by running from one menial job to another, just for the sake of surviving as an author

and affording his daily requirements— should be regarded as a proof of his cynicism on its own.

2. CHARLES BUKOWSKI IN CONTEXT OF CARNIVALIZED LITERATURES

2.1. Defining the Carnival Sense in Bukowski's Life and Work

At first sight, the panoramic view of the carnivalized literatures presents us three notable qualities which may help us to relate a given author and his works to it. Those qualities can be listed as: freedom in invention and language; large-scaled experiences in public life, and a special type of humour. To achieve their purpose, carnivalized genres refer to the regenerative energies of life-circle, in other words, they show a close interest to the lower stratum of human bodies.

As it is examined in the first chapter in detail Bakhtin in his work *Rabelais and his World* exemplifies such an independent use of language profoundly. From the beginning to the end of his work, he discusses Rabelais's language as a liberal type which does not fit the classical moulds and intends to subvert the familiar rhetoric of his age. According to Bakhtin Rabelais' language involves a popular jargon which is "an absolutely gay and fearless talk, free and frank, which echoes in the festive square beyond all verbal prohibitions, limitations, and conventions" (*Rabelais* 167). As Bakhtin defines, Rabelais literalizes the language of the marketplace which is equipped by the elements of common grammar—such as curses, underbelly elements, genitals and scatology; this is what causes him to be excluded from literary circles for a long time, and this language is also one of the common qualities that make it possible to establish a relationship between his and Charles Bukowski's literary styles.

Even with a cursory glance, one can easily observe that the general tone of Charles Bukowski's literary style is marked by such frank and free syntaxes which also causes him to have a constant bust-up with mainstream literature same as Rabelais. In a letter to John and Louise Webb, referring to Henry Miller, Bukowski considers such a linguistic style as a necessity for literary works as it enables authors to contact with the reader easily; "Henry understood that the only way to get to a man was to speak the language of the day, the present tongue" (*Screams* 96). Paul Varner also states that "Bukowski seemed to pour out an endless stream of short, crude vulgar lyrics that were irresistible for editors but did little to build a career"

(38). In *Hollywood* the central character Hank—criticizing the idea of such literary elitism—reflects Bukowski’s literary outlook best; as he says “if I worried about what the people cared about I’d never write anything”(36). On the other hand, according to William Corrington Bukowski uses a type of “a language devoid of the affections, devices and mannerism that have taken over academic verse” which according to him is “the spoken voice nailed to paper” (qtd. in Sounes 63).

Bukowski’s controversy with established mainstream rules becomes a never ending quarrel whereof he never capitulates; from punctuation to the plot composition, he opposes to the high seriousness of classical format of writing which he achieves by a literary ambiguity powered by an efficient use of an elusive type of humour. It is worth to be noted that, keeping the language in a material level, he avoids abstractions as much as possible. François Duval states that “Buck attacked polished turns of phrase, conventional style and words rolled around the mouth like a good wine” (106). Actually here Duval directly refers to the subversive motifs that are inherent in carnival language, which according to Bakhtin is aimed upon “the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture” (*Rabelais* 4). Bakhtin argues that humour becomes the main instrument in that language which is used as the “gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities” (11). Consequently, Jean Duval becomes one of the first to notice the carnival sense and its subtle humour that generates the literary tone of Bukowski; Duval states that “Buk’s life and work never lacked humor and sense of the comical. If there are elements of Boccaccio, there are also elements of Gargantua in Hank, and some Poe, the sense of grotesque and bizarre, occasionally macabre (127).

Humour, or in Bakhtinian words “the specific weight of the comic element”, is a *sine qua non* quality for carnivalized genres (*Problems* 114). Bakhtin presents carnival laughter as a genre-making quality which is utilized in varying dosages, changing to the specific characteristics of the genres. He exemplifies his suggestion by defining that “the comic element is very great in Varro, for example, but it disappears, or rather is reduced, in Boethius” (114). Additionally he states that, although in some applications of carnivalized literature, humour is deeply buried in the background, however it still “continues to determine the structure of the image, but it itself is muffled down to the minimum” (164).

Bukowski is also aware of the role of humour as a communication wizard. In a letter to Evan Russell, pointing at some literary authorities, he states that “ Places like that and, say the New Yorker think that good writing should be dull and tedious, and the less it says the better it seems to them. Creating boredom, to them, is a sign of class” (*Reach* 191). As it is clear, those words put forward his conflict with the mainstream type of literature, or in Bakhtin’s words, with its “one- sided and gloomy official seriousness” (*Problems* 160).

On the other hand, Bakhtin supports the idea that also a concomitant freedom occurs in plot composition as a natural consequence of such a free use of language: after the language has overcome the literary obsessions, a kind of a successive action is possible to be observed from now on; that is, at that point the carnivalized genres require the same independency in fixing their subject matters. Bakhtin provides his concept with various examples from world literature, referring to some authors such as Rabelais, Dostoevsky, Menippus and his heirs Lucian and Varro. He suggests that the carnivalized genres, especially the menippea, are marked by “an extraordinary freedom of plot and philosophical invention” (*Problems* 114). While he is analyzing the Menippea with respect to its bond to public folklore, Bakhtin points out the “Boldness of invention and the fantastic element” in that genre (115). According to Bakhtin those two elements are “combined in the menippea with an extraordinary philosophical universalism and a capacity to contemplate the world on the broadest possible scale” (115). In this respect it is possible to assert that menippea intends to expel the usual literary concerns from both its language and its subject matters; therefore, in it, the “academic” fell by the wayside, complex and extensive made of argumentation also fell away and there remained essentially only naked “ultimate questions” with ethical and practical bias” (115). Therefore Bakhtin draws an author portrait that stands out for “provoking and testing a truth” (*Problems* 114). On the other hand, for the serio-comical, he also characterizes an ideologist hero who is deployed by the author for “the dialogic testing of the idea” where the idea and its carrier is telescoped which is also necessary for “testing of the person who represents it” (111-112). Actually Bakhtin points at an experimentalism which emerges from hero’s shifting in extraordinary situations where he both “ascend into heaven [and] descend into the nether world” (*Problems* 114). As it is clear from Bakhtin’s definitions, there is an important relationship between the author and the low-life by

which the aforementioned boldness in both language and plot composition is provided.

As to Charles Bukowski's literary style, it can be easily recognized that both his plot composition and language are marked by all those carnivalistic liberalities discussed so far. Barry Miles seems to have sensed such a connection between Bukowski's literature and the literary convention which Bakhtin categorizes as *carnivalized literature*. Miles argues that, in Bukowski's prose there is "no overall story except in the broadest sense, no character development, no development and no dénouement. It is the oldest storytelling form: used in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in Boccaccio's *The Decameron* – one of Bukowski's favourite books-in Rabelais' *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* – which Bukowski surely enjoyed-by de Sade, Swift and many others" (179). Bukowski-like Menippus, Rabelais and Dostoevsky– mainly draws on his lowbrow life experiences. Actually the thing that he achieves is, in a sense, similar to what Marcel Proust accomplished by touring back and forth in time, and in the remotest and most fashionable venues of social life; and also in some occasions, by forcing the limits of experience. Miles makes a comprehensive definition of that point, showing the similarities between two authors as well as the differences;

Proust drew heavily on his experiences, as did F Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Nathanael West, Graham Greene, Aldoux Huxley, George Orwell and many others, but they tended to fictionalize the material into something more universal. Bukowski is closer to Denton Welch, Henry Miller or Knut Hamsun where the raw autobiography is little changed. (179)

Charles Bukowski, owing to his inquisitive personality, accumulates a great variety of data related to many layers of social life. As a conclusion of such efforts, he writes a great deal of novels and poetry based on those experiences. Looking from this aspect, the interval from *Ham on Rye* to *Hollywood* can be considered as a modern odyssey which starts from his childhood and extends to the years that he spends as a wealthy and a renowned author in Hollywood. Drawing on those large scaled experiences, including both the bottom and the highest layers of L.A. society, he literarily matches the qualifications of both Menippean satirist and its hero; he becomes both the author and the hero of his novels as he reflects an autobiographical persona in most of his writings. Usually he shows up as Chinaski, but sometimes he

confronts the reader as Hank, or Henry. Using those pseudo-identities as the sileni of his scripture, Bukowski reveals various unstable psychological and social states which are similar to the qualities that Bakhtin notes for menippea: “the emperor who becomes a slave, moral downfalls and purifications, luxury and poverty, the noble bandit, and so forth” (*Problems* 118). It should be also noted that according to Bakhtin, owing its indebtedness to the variety of experience, the novel and the author are ideologically intertwined in most representations of carnivalized genres, for the sake of creating the dialogical effect. He explains this item as follows;

Finally, in a novel the individual acquires the ideological and linguistic initiative necessary to change the nature of his own image (there is a new and higher type of individualization of the image). In the antique stage of novelistic development there appeared remarkable examples of such hero-ideologues - the image of Socrates, the image of laughing Epicurus in the so-called “Hypocratic” novel, the deeply novelized image of Diogenes in the thoroughly dialogized literature of the cynics and in Menippean satire (where it closely approximates the image of the popular mask) and, finally, the image of Menippus in Lucian. (*Dialogic* 38)

Also Bukowski can be observed in such constant changes. However, he finds the most interesting literary qualities in low life. The proof is his Hollywood years; although he mostly deals with the upper society affairs there, he speaks out his sympathy for the hard times and adventurous life that he had in slums in every occasion: “I’ve had bad times, I’ve been beaten by the police, for instance, for nothing. Well, almost for nothing. But looking at those dumb buttocks I felt worse than when the police were beating me for nothing” (*Hollywood* 22). According to Howard Sounes—who devotes himself to figure out Bukowski’s autobiographical consistency – Bukowski tells his own life in a perfect way; however he achieves this “by manipulating his experiences to create adventures for Henry Chinaski” (xv), or as Bakhtin defines, he acquires “the ideological and linguistic initiative” (*Dialogic* 38). Sounes, comparing Bukowski’s works with the documentary evidences related to him, consequently comes to an average conclusion and suggests that “the biographical truth of Bukowski’s life becomes tantalizingly obscure (xv). Nevertheless, he also underlines that this does not make literary Bukowski too much different from the living and suffering Bukowski who “was writing about his own

adventures in poetry and prose, but in doing so he had made so many little alterations and mixed up the order of events to such an extent that his life had become hopelessly entangled with the legend of Henry Chinaski” (xvi).

As it is clear, in Bukowski’s work, the hero and the author is telescoped; for that reason, Bukowski has usually been accepted as an autobiographical writer who writes about the events from his idle living in skid rows, in low life, and who also embroiders the subsequent period in Hollywood; this enables him to use various adventure opportunities in his novels. Owing its indebtedness to the variety of inserted social layers and situations, in Bukowski’s novel, the hero, or Bukowski, becomes a type who, in Bakhtin’s words, “collides with worldly evil, depravity, baseness, and vulgarity in their most extreme expression” (*Problems* 115). Miles states that Bukowski uses “the experiences of his life as the basis of the narrative which is presented as a picaresque novel” and therefore he is closer to Henry Miller, Denton Welch, Knut Hamsun tradition “where the raw autobiography is little changed” (179).

Having been commonly revered as an autobiographical author, Bukowski usually becomes one of those whose literary styles frequently go under the polygraph; such an accuracy test somewhat depends on his frequent emphasizes on *hard-living*, or on his own pretensions that he draws on his life experience with minimum distortion: “it’s 94 percent true. The rest is just polishing” he says, when François Duval asks him the reality percentage of his tales (139). And he mockingly adds that “It’s really all true except parts I left out that shouldn’t be in” (139). On the other hand, Duval defines that “All the Beat writers are autobiographical by nature. And it is clear that Bukowski’s prose texts and poems, even when he presents Henry Chinaski, do not escape this rule” (95).

However, as it becomes problematic with every study conducted to figure out the consistency percentage of authors, a similar ambiguity arises in making a decision on whether Bukowski’s prose is fully autobiographical or fictional. Unfortunately, a clear cut answer to such a question may not exist since some gene incompatibility occurs while transferring reality to fiction. In any case, a perfect comparison to distinguish fiction from chronological facts does not completely seem possible as it is also possible for the chronological facts to turn out to be fictitious. It

is because most often fiction and reality intertwined each other in many representatives due to the author's intention to create the most effective literary taste.

Among the approaches which are set to clarify Bukowski's autobiographical ambiguity, Michael Gray Baughan's expression seems to be one of the most realistic and average ones; Baughan states that "Though used interchangeably in the pages that follow, each of these names carries a slightly different connotation, each identifies distinct personality traits and legacies, and each is a combination of hardcore reality and (sometimes self-) perpetuated myth" (3). According to Baughan we need to accept all these seemingly different characters as fragmented, scattered ego of Charles Bukowski himself; because "The real man lies somewhere between these names" (3). As Baughan puts it, the whole body of Bukowski's works—except a few experimental and fictitious ones whereby he tries to demonstrate his power of imagination—actually consist of his life experiences. Therefore Chinaski, whom Bukowski uses as one of his most famous protagonists in his novels, has usually been accepted as Bukowski's alter ego and autobiographical personality (Oakes 62).

Discussing all the ideas so far, it can be asserted that Charles Bukowski writes from direct experience, that is, he himself testifies the real conditions before he pushes his heroes in them. Actually Gaylord Brewer practically solves the problem by defining that; "The writing act is essential, indeed inseparable, from the man; he just can't help it, and that's his and our good fortune" (ix). Therefore, it becomes a necessity to focus on the content of the experience, rather than the author. In order to prove the connection between Bukowski's prose and a carnival spirit, it is also of a great importance to retrace his literary route in order to see where he met up the heritage of this public culture and how he benefited from that ancient source.

Regarding both Bakhtin's concepts on carnivalized genres and also the pertinent views of scholars on Bukowski and his writing style, Charles Bukowski and his prose stand as a fertile area for such a literary experiment in order to demonstrate a contemporary application of carnivalized literature. Like Rabelais and Dostoevsky, his writing philosophy either seems to be perfectly matching the qualities of those genres which are deeply rooted in ancient public folklore.

From that point on the salient features of the carnivalized literature, which have been covered up till now, will be scrutinized in Charles Bukowski's life and his

literary style. As a starting point, the following parts of this chapter will specifically focus on testifying the applicability of Charles Bukowski's literature to Bakhtin's perspective of carnivalization. Therefore, this chapter will be an examination of his life style, his relationship with the city, his political vision, as it is necessary to figure out his stance as an author before embarking on a review of his linguistic style.

2.2. Bukowski and the City: Slum Naturalism, Intoxication, and Punk Carnival

In his *Rhetoric* Aristotle reports that "Diogenes the Dog called taverns 'the mess-rooms of Attica'" in order to demonstrate the variety of rhetorical opportunities that a language can provide through vivid and attractive phrases (110). For the main purpose of this study, Aristotle's words may be adapted to connote the philosophical and literary use-value of pubs, alcohol and night- life for Bukowski; and also to refer to how substantial is the city and its festive atmosphere on his progress as a writer; therefore, as an analogy to Diogenes, one can say that for Charles Bukowski pubs are the mess rooms of L.A. He is commonly known as a writer of intoxication; his close interaction with L.A. city, especially with its night life, offers him the material that he needs for his literary style. On the other hand, with an eye to his intimacy to the poor classes, *Time magazine* calls Charles Bukowski as the "Laureate of American Low- life" (Flood "Bukowski Letter Sells"). Therefore, this section will be a crosscheck of the accuracy of this ascription with references to his novels where he deals with both the systematic exploitation of labour and the life in skid rows; at the same time, his close contact with city life will be examined throughout this section.

Bakhtin points out a hero type who fears no slum naturalism in menippea (115). Also in *Rabelais and his World*, he criticizes Veselovsky's definition on Rabelais' cynicism where Veselovsky discusses Rabelais in terms of a village cynicism, saying that Rabelais is "cynical, but as a healthy village boy who has been let loose from a smoky hut into the spring air" (qtd. in Bakhtin "Rabelais" 146). Bakhtin opposes this idea; according to him "the image of the village boy is inadequate. Rabelais' cynicism belongs to the city marketplace" (146). Regarding his ideas, it can be briefly asserted that Bakhtin signifies that the carnival sense is related with city life, rather than the countryside.

In *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth- Century Literature in English* Bukowski's whole literary style is simply summarized as; "painful relations with women and a brutal father, survival as a bum and self-taught writer in low rent Los Angeles; gambling, sex, and drink; contemplation of death and ageing; defiant insistence on freedom and continued creation" (99). On the other hand, Gerald Haslam writes that "No work has been more harshly urban than the waterfront-bar, skid row poetry of Charles Bukowski" (169). Actually, Bukowski's literature is usually marked by an emphasis on his suburbanite and his relations with city life. According to Sounes "Bukowski has lived his whole life in and around LA and the city became an integral part of his writing. Indeed, few writers of literature have been so closely associated with, or so lovingly described the city, a place often dismissed as ugly, dangerous and culturally desolate" (9). In this sense, his relationship follows the same trajectory with Rabelais who draws on his market place experiences in Lyon and Fontenay-le-Comte. Bakhtin states that Rabelais "lived, as did his contemporaries, in the world of these forms; he breathed their atmosphere, used their idiom with assurance, and had no need of constant abstract self-control" (*Rabelais* 212).

The movie *Barfly*, whose screenplay was written by Charles Bukowski, is one of the scarce visual opportunities to see what kind of a carnival he faces every day. The film stars Mickey Rourke and Faye Dunaway. It is a fictitious accounts of Bukowski's life his booze tales and his people with whom he drinks, swears and fights. However, Bukowski harshly criticizes the film since he thinks that it does not match his life realities. His girlfriend Linda states that "Hank really was not happy with the film. He didn't think that the actors really expressed those people whom he had known, I mean they were really living people of his life" (Duval 124). Nevertheless, the most notable thing in the movie is the sly expression of Rourke, which can be counted as a sign of Bukowski's image in the eyes of the reader; that's to say, the way that the director Schroder and Mickey Rourke interpret Bukowski's life stories, in fact, becomes a mirror that shows how Bukowski is perceived by other people. One can easily observe that Rourke's acts are marked by a sense of humour all along the movie; with a smile and a puzzled expression, he poses a posture which is steadfast and unwavering in the face of beatings, sufferings and the hard life that he sustains. Regardless from its distortion of the autobiographical realities, even if

the movie is singly taken into account with its humoristic manner, it may be accepted as an exposition of the carnivalesque sense that Bukowski draws on in his novels. Actually both Schroeder and Rourke seem to have realized the carnivalesque ingredients. The film *Barfly* proves that, although Bukowski considers himself as an author of rough bravado and booze tales, to the contrary of his own presumption, he is commonly perceived as an author who radiates a joyful sense of carnival. This also explains the reason why most of his books are marketed with a description of “the funniest book ever written” on them, despite all the serious issues and the tragedy they contain.

For Bukowski, Los Angeles is a city that satisfies his primary literary requirements by providing him with skid rows, dynamic night life and pubs, where he lets loose himself without self-control and can have the opportunity to curse and punch up with other drunkards. Bill Mohr states that “Furthermore, in contrast to the peripatetic Beats, Bukowski lived almost all of his life as a writer in Los Angeles, a city for which he had an affection that belied his cantankerous persona. This endearment probably made him seem all the more unlikely to Kerouac and company as a genuine member of any literary avant-garde (27).

On the other hand, Michael Hemmingson, consubstantiating John Fante and Bukowski, defines that Bukowski and the city is in an interaction. According to Hemmingson “Bukowski and Fante are not only writing about, and addressing, the city of Los Angeles—they are reacting to the city, and the city reacts back: it is a relationship” (54). True, Bukowski reacts to the city, but not as a whole, rather to the lower parts of it; he writes about the people, the criminals, outcasts, prostitutes and drunkards, among whom he has lived the most important years of his life; at least, until he gains fame and starts to write about upper society of San Pedro.

Bukowski’s literary search in low-brow social layers starts the day he leaves home due to some problems with his family. However this departure also becomes an opportunity for him “to store up some experiences he might be able to write about” (Malone 22). The departure scene that he narrates in *Ham on Rye* has a great symbolical depth where he is kicked out with his typewriter and his short stories thrown on the lawn by his father (*Ham* 246). Writing in that way, it seems as if he implies that he was pushed into an odyssey in low-life to get a career in writing; he immediately starts a life in skid row in the Filipino district (*Ham* 248). Both the part

before his departure and the one following it would be later put into writing and constitute a great body of prose and poetry.

During his high school years, Bukowski makes friendship with the boys from lowlifes; with them, he meets the entertainment places, burlesque shows, which according to Baughan, gives him “his first taste of women” (Baughan 10). Baughan underlines an important fact that these days play a great role in his choice of girlfriends during the following years, other than this, he also points out that “this exposure at such a young age to the seedy side of sexuality and social drinking played a large role in establishing Hank’s future relationship patterns, in which sex and alcohol played the primary catalysts” (10).

Bukowski’s friends were some “pretty criminals” as Baughan states; among them, there was also an elderly man “who plied them with whiskey and provided a spare apartment where they often had drinking contests” (Baughan 10). Actually, even only these relations are enough to associate him with Menippea, in which “The dregs of society are represented in the spirit of slum naturalism: prisons, slaves, thieves, fishermen and so forth (Bakhtin “Problems” 121). Charles Bukowski, coming from such a carnivalesque past, not only would choose his girlfriends accordingly, but would also design a scandalous and tumultuous future even after he reaches to the top of Hollywood.

Bukowski is known as an author of intoxication, as he frequently states he can only write when he is drunk. His obsession with alcohol is frequently manifested nearly in whole his works; as Chinaski states “With alcohol “life was great, a man was perfect, nothing could touch him” (*Ham* 95-96). On the other hand, Bakhtin also suggests that there is a parallelism between drunkenness the carnivalized literatures which he conceptualizes as “drunken creativity”; he reminds that the name Gargantua in Rabelais’ work comes from Gargantua’s first words as soon as he was born; that is “Drink! Drink! Drink!” (*Dialogic* 178). As a notable coincidence, the first word that Bukowski’s daughter Marina learns to read is also *liquor* (76).

Bukowski always explains his passion for drinking in a rationalized form. In *Women* he declares that drinking cannot be separated from his life since all his moods are accompanied with alcohol; as he puts it: “If something bad happens you drink in an attempt to forget; if something good happens you drink in order to

celebrate; and if nothing happens you drink to make something happen” (171-172). Similar to Rabelais’ banquets, the drinking contests are also among the most carnivalesque elements in Bukowski’s life; as he tells Duval proudly that “The drinking contests? Yeah, I often won them” (141). Thomas Nordegren, characterizes Bukowski’s relationship with alcohol and lower stratum of Los Angeles as;

Bukowski’s voluminous works unconventional, unrevised; uneven-powerfully evince a negative world view in their depiction of the Los Angeles low life from which he seemed to draw creative strength. He wrote about alcohol, drugs aging and his vagabonding life, he was an anarchistic outsider who described USA’s obsessions with drugs, sex and violence, probed into the life of the inner city and the inner self and described what he found there in uncompromising, often crude language. (139)

Here Nordegren explains Bukowski’s addiction using an academic language, however, there is no doubt that Bukowski would prefer the word *passion* instead of *obsession*; as he says to Duval during their interview: “So the wine is the best for creation. The blood of the gods” (Duval 142). In another example he praises Russians for they produce vodka: “I took my choice. I raised the fifth of vodka and drank it straight. The Russians knew something” (*Women* 177).

Bakhtin especially emphasizes the unofficial nature of the carnivalesque rituals stating that every age has its own way of having its carnivalesque manner; according to Bakhtin, the carnival sense of the world “offered a completely different, nonofficial, extra ecclesiastical and extra political aspect of the world” (6). He accepts it as a “second life outside officialdom, a world in which all medieval people participated more or less, in which they lived during a given time” (6). Some scholars, referring to that Bakhtinian vision, discuss the concept of carnivalesque with respect to the punk culture. One of them is Chris Barker who reinterprets some Bakhtinian terminology for the benefit of *Punk* movement; such as the games, mockeries, profanities rituals that are set for the reversal of the order, and also the uncrowning theme, excessive eating, drinking and sexual liberalities “that offended the borders of polite decorum” (21). Accordingly Barker makes a reasonable conclusion whereby he asserts that “aspects of spectacular youth cultures such as punk could be seen as carnivalesque subversions of the order of power” (20-21).

Lindberg et al. present a similar approach to categorize punk as a modern carnivalesque spectacle. They maintain that,

Now, in the case of punk it seems possible to talk of “carnivalism” in terms of a tradition and not in a merely metaphorical way. To begin with, excessive abuse is an essential ingredient of carnivalism as well as of Punk. And in both cases it’s ambiguous. Just as punk “gobbing” redefined spitting as an act of affection, abuse turns into praise in the tradition of grotesque realism examined by Bakhtin. (217)

Linberg et al. reconceptualise Bakhtin’s vision that accommodates carnival in a location between life and art, and assert their own argument which is an amalgam of punk culture and carnivalesque. According to them;

The Sex Pistols mocked, parodied, turned down anything sacred—the queen, the political system, the multinational corporations, the holocaust, the rock canon, the hippie worship of the head. Finally, the borders between artist and their audience were often blurred in a carnivalesque way at punk concerts, making all those contributors. (217)

Those punk activities—with respect to the genial violence they include—also remind us the medieval banquets where, as Bakhtin states, “the beating itself has a gay character; it is introduced and concluded with laughter” (203).

Actually Bukowski is most often associated with the punk movement of 1980’-1990’s (Trueman 116). When Timothy Leary divides the Beat generation into four categories in *Chaos&Liberty* in 1996, the third category he establishes a connection between the Beats and punk culture (Duval 19). Duval argues that, if Charles Bukowski’s name is to be registered as a member of the Beat generation, he would better fit to Leary’s third category with respect to his image and attitudes: “There is no doubt that Bukowski’s “destroy” mythology—dirty and perpetually drunk, surrounded by a pile of beer bottles and boxes—matched the punk aesthetic more closely, and it is probably no accident that Buk’s international recognition in the ’70s coincided with the adventure of No Future philosophy” (21). Bukowski also receives praise from punk magazines; for instance although *Forced Exposure*—which was published in Massachusetts by Jimmy Johnson and Byron Coley—was a punk magazine, it gives place to the stories about counterculture figures like William

Burroughs and Bukowski (Hannon 42). Bukowski's affinity to Punk movement can also be confirmed by an anecdote from his work *Women* where Chinaski is called for a poetry reading by Marty Seavers who is the owner of Manhattan Beach Nightclub. Actually this story is a narration of a real experience. In fact, he attends a poetry reading at Baudelaire's nightclub in Santa Barbara. During the reading he makes an argument with a heckler who shouts him as "Cliché! Cliché!" for he reads a soft poem (Sounes 144). After that moment he raises and darkens his poetic tone. Sounes defines that "They expected an exhibition of crudity from the dirty old man: sex poems, drinking poems and scatology" (144). Those requests of the audience, such as sex, drinking and scatology, also remind us the way the ritual spectacles were carried out during the medieval carnival. Sounes notes that, Claire Rabe, the owner of the club who watches the performance in astonishment, and says that "He was the first kind of punk event" (145).

Actually the idea here is that if the punk attitudes bear the stamp of carnivals as Barker and Lindberg et al maintain, then Bukowski's sympathy for that carnival-based music culture can be also interpreted as an indirect reference to his affinity to the carnival sense of the world. In other words, one can maintain that Bukowski recognizes the relationship between carnivalesque and punk culture by his subconscious, and considers it as a renewed version of the ancient carnival rituals. He accepts to participate in that poetry reading at Baudelaire's night club for he feels a sympathy for those rockers who stand against the classical and pretentious means of entertainment, as he puts it "Rock groups played there. It was a different audience than at the colleges. They were as obnoxious as I was and we cursed one another between poems. I preferred it" (*Women* 145). Rather than asserting that Bukowski was a punk, the relationship between Bukowski's literature and the carnivalized genres can be reinforced via his sympathy for the punk movement since he shares the same mood with the punks. Actually such a carnival sense in Bukowski's work is already recognizable; for instance, S.A. Griffin underlines that spirit, which prevails over Bukowski's literary tone as,

A one- man revolution, he changed the way we view writing, and especially the poem. Once again, coming from a carnival childhood full of dysfunction inside and out, with gamblers, drunks and buggering monsters...A genuine

working class hero, he was a literary alchemist, turning the most common of experiences into pure gold. (9)

A title of working class hero may be appropriate for Bukowski to an extent, since he frequently becomes a spokesman of labourers; however, it should also be noted that Bukowski deals with such social issues in an unobtrusive way by mixing his politic outlook with humour: although he amuses and entertains, there lies a more serious Bukowski under the *Sileni*, who according to Trueman, puts a considerable criticism against capitalist values: “Although the role of the outsider and loner is a constant theme in all of the Bukowski’s writings, his rejection of the “American Dream” as related to a work ethic is an ongoing and important element in much of his works” (116). In this context, it is possible to set a correspondence between Bukowski’s literature and *naturalism*; by taking some points into consideration—such as his literary dealings with lower layers of humanity and his never ending attempts to find the ideal job— it is also possible to see the consubstantiality between him and some naturalist writers like Jack London (Harrison 2). It should be noted that Social Darwinism plays an indisputable part in Bukowski; as he uses the main instruments, the scientific methods of naturalism to converting his experience into literature. During their interview with Duvall, he states that “I only photograph society. If it’s decaying, if it’s violent, then my writing will be decaying and violent” (158).

In any case, Bakhtin has already set a relationship between carnivalized literature and naturalism; or at least he sees naturalism as a sub-genre which is utilized by all forms of carnivalized literatures. Bakhtin states that the adventures in *menippea* “take place on the high road, in brothels, in the dens of thieves, in taverns, marketplaces, prisons, in the erotic orgies of secret cults, and so forth... The idea here fears no slum, is not afraid of any life’s filth” which according to him is an “organic combination within it of the free fantastic, the symbolic, at times even a mystical-religious element with an extreme and “crude slum naturalism (115). Aubrey Malone states that Bukowski “wrote for a niche following, for people like him who weren’t afraid to walk down the dark side of the street and take the consequences” (6). On the other hand, Miles states that “Not since Steinbeck had anyone described the lot of working people with such objectivity. Hank is not sentimental, in fact the book is filled with violent, brutal images directly presented in

the German tradition. That is its great value; it is honest and unromantic about the daily grind; written from direct experience” (180).

As Miles puts it, honesty and objectivity are the major qualities of Bukowski’s political vision. In addition to Miles’ suggestion, it should be also noted that Bukowski, in order to declare such political views, or to present his observations related to working class people, uses a peculiar short-cut style which is mixed with humour and common grammar in which he insistently avoids *pleonasm*. For instance, one can see him satirizing the post war conditions and the concomitant unemployment problem with such a specific means of expression, shortly saying that “The war had always been at best a vague reality to me, but now it was over. And the jobs that had always been difficult to get became more so” (*Factotum* 100), or another time, he expresses his twelve years efforts with a simple statement like: “it began as a terrible mistake” (*Post* 13).

Above are some of the reasons which make Bukowski’s political approaches different from any other literary works. To sum up, Charles Bukowski’s text, besides having the political and social sensitivity, radiates humour different from classical satire. Sometimes, owing to the high dosage of mockery, even his text appears as if it is making fun of the working class rather than defending it. According to Harrison that sense of humour is also one of the main reasons that keeps him from having a voice as political writer and causes him “unjustly, to be taken less seriously than he should be taken and it is another aspect of his work that bears comparison with Brecht, another writer who never shied away from using humor for social criticism” (180). Whenever Bukowski imagines a utopia for the working class people, he also achieves this by using the same manner which also becomes reminiscent of the humorous approaches of Rabelais, say the one that he represents in his *Theleme Abbey*. One of the best examples of this idea is a passage in *Factotum* where Chinaski works in a hotel as a manager. After showing obedience for a few days, he gets drunk and loses his control, and starts to lecture his boss on how to direct the hotel properly. He advises his boss that he should give each employee a “live lobster to take home each night in a specially constructed cage that could be carried on buses and streetcars” in order to cut down the theft; and he also proposes that some prostitutes should be registered on the first floor (195). Harrison, referring to that passage, states that “What is ultimately so powerful in this, and many, many other

passages in Bukowski's novels, is how Bukowski weds social demands to humor" (180). Here what Harrison signifies is that Charles Bukowski's literature, despite its political subtext and all the responsibility and the sympathy he feels for the working class, owing to the humour and objectivity it radiates, is usually excluded from the literatures which make use of the grand doctrines. For all those reasons Bukowski's political vision requires a new location; which may be put in somewhere between the political manifestations of meta-narratives and the flipside issues neglected by them.

2.2.1. Bukowski's Social Responsibility with an Analogy to the B-Side Tracks

Another reason that contributes to the political ambiguity in Bukowski's work is his frequent address to sexuality as well as the sarcastic and joyful public rhetoric and humour he uses. Laure Hapke, in *Labor's Text* touches upon this item as follows;

Another neo-naturalist, Charles Bukowski, writes as if to rebuke the edgy Banks of workingman. It is difficult to classify in labor terms an author whose 1970s storytelling, under the aegis of the Beats' iconoclastic City Light press, included *Erections*, *Ejaculations*, and *General Tales of Ordinary Madness* (1972). The hedonistic counterculturalism- though seeking "beatitude", the Beat literary movement denounced capitalist greed- acquires a blue-collar overlay in Bukowski's fictionalized autobiography *Post Office* (1971). (307)

Hapke, despite being a little sceptical about Bukowski's social sensibility, discusses him as a social critic in spite of the sexual content in his works. As it is clear from the citation, Hapke's scepticism emerges from Bukowski's literary style which he bases on a combination of hedonism and political vision. Actually, this is what Charles Bukowski intends to achieve in his literature: merging humour, hedonism, and social criticism together in order to create his own voice. He eschews no hedonism; for example, according to Bukowski sexuality is one of the most important qualities of life. This idea can be best exemplified by a passage from *Ham on Rye* where Chinaski feels disturbed by the noise next door and he furiously steps out in his shorts to warn those noisy people. According to the passage, after Chinaski discovers the room where the sound comes from; he pushes the door and gets in, then he comes face to face with an old couple who are having sexual intercourse at that

moment. But suddenly, noticing the lovely decoration of their room, he begins to feel sympathy for that old couple in spite of all his fury; and his previous act starts to grieve him: "The place was very nicely fixed-up with curtains and a little rug" he says "I closed their door and went back to my place. I felt terrible" (275). Actually one can say that there is nothing extraordinary in the narrative so far; that's to say, looking on his penitence, the reader comes to know that what a sentimental personality is Chinaski whose hidden sympathy for the low class people is revealed by seeing the simplistic design of the old couple's room and the humanly act they perform. However, here what is peculiar and distinguishing in Bukowski's style is the final part where Chinaski will put across his social message in his own way, saying that; "The poor had a right to fuck their way through their bad dreams. Sex and drink, and maybe love, was all they had" (275). As it is clear from the narrative of that old couple, to the contrary of familiar political texts, Bukowski deals with the disregarded issues of poor classes in an unfamiliar way, in the most unlikely places, preserving his specific linguistic style.

Apart from authors, who glaringly exhibit their connections with grand narratives, Bukowski's writing style presents an admixture of objectivity, individuality, humour and also sexuality; and of course, an ambiguity occurs as a result of such conflicting ideas together. Russell Harrison points out that "The content of Bukowski's writing has been close to everyday life. However, one person's everyday life may not be another's and thus the phrase, for all its familiarly embodies a vague concept and undoubtedly owes its easy currency to this vagueness" (11-12). Duval explains Bukowski's unfamiliar political stance pointing out his difference from the other writers of his generation;

One can no more imagine Buk by Ginsberg's side than one can picture him climbing on a barrel with Sartre to harangue the workers at the gates of the Renault factories. On the other hand, from the Sartrian perspective, Buk's lack of social and public commitment cannot be held against him. Bukowski's books, which reached a wide audience even if he did not write them with this intention, are perhaps the best evidence that despite himself Hank acted as a revolutionary factor for social change. The notion that Buk was a Sartrian character can even be defended. As a barfly, his situation was

frequently comparable to that of the characters in Sartre's play *No Exit*, where "hell is other people". (119)

On the other hand Aubrey Malone notes that "The people he wrote for, and who he represented, were those who don't read books" (9). Those are the main reasons which arises the necessity to locate Bukowski's political vision on a secluded terrain which stands in the middle of politics, hedonism and humour.

Harrison argues that the literary exclusion of Bukowski or his being accepted as a non-political writer also depends on his discomforting people by contacting their passivity and their submissiveness. According to Harrison, besides all his social responsibility, Bukowski's prose and poetry points at and tease a group of self barring people at the same time. According to Harrison "The rejection and ignoring of Bukowski is a result of many American's reluctance to acknowledge the fact that ours is a class society, something Bukowski's work constantly reminds us of[...]Americans don't like to be reminded of barriers of social class" (12). To support Harrison's definition, an extract can be taken from *Factotum* where Chinaski notices an argument between two women workers while he is working in a magazine publishers distributing house. He tries to calm them down, and says that there is no need to argue for the books which aren't worth reading. Thereupon, one of the women mockingly says that "we know you think you're too good for this job" (17). Here Bukowski's aim in writing this event is to prove that it is their comfortable numbness and passivity which cause people to be exploited. Here the idea is that people have a gratitude for the simple life given in return for their hard labour; and they satirize the others for not having it; as Chinaski finally says "That's when I first learned that it wasn't enough to just *do* your job, you had to have an interest in it, even a passion for it" (17).

It is clear from the notes above, Bukowski is ideologist and political as much as he can, however, he deals with the untouched sides of people's lives, even at times makes fun of them or upbraids their demerits. This means that, he does not blindly follow great political teachings which imprudently strike populist attitudes and accept the main problem as the enforcements of the *superstructure*, ignoring the own shortcomings of the *base*. Bukowski does not show such favouritism to any classes. In this sense, Bukowski's novel reflects a practice of the *post modern condition* which Lyotard defines as "incredulity against meta-narratives" (xxiv). According to

Lyotard “The narrative function is losing its functors” and it is losing “its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal (xxiv). One can say that Bukowski’s prose is also a product of such a great loss of confidence which emerges from postmodern conditions. That is why, his writing style cannot be discussed in a classical context; any expectation would fail to replace his prose in familiar grand ideological manifestations, or with references to those meta-narratives which are adopted in the works of other political authors.

From the discussions above it becomes clear that Bukowski deals with the most pristine areas of the society he lives in; his social responsibility lies in details of the other face of the social life, or in other words, in the fragments of the grand doctrines that went into the pieces after they have lost their credibility. Bukowski undertakes the plea of basic social rights, especially the ones which are not taken seriously. Maybe such a suggestion finds one of its most effective proofs in the narrative of that old couple where Bukowski defends their innocent and basic life pleasures. This means that, basic acts of ordinary people are also included as a quality in Bukowski’s writings which are mostly ignored and excluded from the works that have great political purposes. For that reason Bukowski usually remains outside the classical ideological circles which address the masses, as Harrison states “Politics repels him because one inevitably loses one’s individuality in the crowd” (167). Whereas, Bukowski is a type of an author who also deals with economic irregularities; but he achieves this without flattering people and having no fear to show them their own inadequacies. At that point a necessity arises to draw a new schema to position Charles Bukowski’s idiosyncratic political vision. If a conceptualization of his political stance is necessary to be achieved, there is nothing wrong in calling Bukowski’s political outlook as *B-Side Socialism*, since he deals with the flipside public issues which are even ignored by left wing ideology and socialism.

The term *B-Side* is mainly used in music industry as a “catchphrase and sub-icon of the 45 r.p.m. record era” to denote the flipside tracks which are less valuable than the A-Side tracks (Plasketes 6). George Plasketes defines that “B-Side is situated in a cultural crevice that straddles or lies somewhere between the mainstream and the underground” (6). The term is highly suitable to explain Bukowski’s unusual political outlook that does not fit any ideological patterns. On

the other hand Malone states that; “He captured the dark odour of brothels, the death of hope for those born on the wrong side of the tracks, the muggy dawns in bad rooming houses as he lay between broken sleep and imminent hangover, between abusing and abused whore and a job he would leave on payday because he couldn’t face its humiliations any more” (7).

It is true that Bukowski uses the observation tools of naturalism, in other words, he writes what passes before him; however, as Gray defines that “what passes before him is the other America: life among the underclass, the dropouts, the dispossessed who cast a shadow over the national dream of success” (293). Also Harrison, touching upon that point, states that “With respect to much of Bukowski’s writings, we can substitute “working class life” for “everyday life” and better capture that content as well as the reason for his appeal to those readers who are not usually viewed as part of the audience for serious literature” (12).

Bukowski’s purpose while he is talking about all those menial jobs and his struggle with the bosses is in fact a social criticism whereby he exposes the exploitation of labour. Terry Trueman states that “In spite of being a self declared non-political writer, Bukowski presented a consistent rejection of work for wages as in any way ennobling” (116). Duval, in a similar way to Rabelais’ Sileni metaphor, makes a definition to point at Bukowski’s social responsibility underlying his text which is rather different from the appearance;

The only way to discover the real Buk is to reread his work, including his poems, of which a small amount is translated into French, German, Italian, etc. Between the projected image of Buk, the perpetually drunk poet, the agitator, bum, tramp sprawled in a pile of beer bottles, between lays, vomiting and insults, there is another Bukowski, less immediately visible, with a more discreet presence. But this Buk is more real, more human, one that we never knew or wanted to know because we had not read him properly. A buk hiding a great sensitivity to human pain under the appearance of Quasimodo: kindness, beauty, and paradoxical sensitivity that only an Esmeralda could see. (126-127)

Harrison also states that “In Henry Chinaski we have examples of both the plebeian tradition and the “rational utopian” response, the latter embodying a kind of

pre-conscious socialist impulse in that it takes into consideration the welfare of more than the individual (179). The difference is that he never shows favouritism to any classes, even the one that he belongs to; he never avoids criticizing them harshly and he never becomes a blindfold defender of the masses which have the responsibility in their own tragedy; as Malone puts it “Nobody had the answers, he knew, neither those who lived in ivory towers nor on skid row. In fact you were better off in the latter place because at least there was honesty there, even if it was of the grubby variety” (6). This idea is also supported by Chinaski in *Ham on Rye*;

I made practice runs down to skid row to get ready for my future. I didn't like what I saw down there. Those men and women had no special daring or brilliance. They wanted what everybody else wanted. There were also some obvious mental cases down there who were allowed to walk the streets undisturbed ...Skid row was disgusting. The life of the sane, average man was dull, worse than death. (274)

In brief, Charles Bukowski's prose can be evaluated as a self-reproaching sort, in which Bukowski does not eschew slamming himself and the low class people within a sense of humour. Such humour, which is also directed upon its creator, is a defining and distinguishing quality in Bukowski's prose. One can easily associate Bukowskian type of humour—which keeps his literature away from the one-sided seriousness of grand doctrines—with the carnival laughter that Bakhtin defines as a laughter which “is also directed at those who laugh” (*Rabelais* 12). According to Bakhtin, festive laughter also shows no favouritism to anyone; as he states “The people do not exclude themselves from the wholeness of the world.... They, too, are incomplete, they also die and revived and renewed. This is one of the essential differences of the people's festive laughter from the pure satire of modern times” (12). The qualities of this carnival laughter and its decisiveness on Bukowski's prose will be occasionally referred throughout this study. However, it should be underlined that that ambiguous carnival laughter reaches its most efficient expressions throughout cynic movement. The Cynics use a special type of humour by which they become able to show their criticism in such an ambiguous way. Even one of them, Diogenes of Sinope, puts Alexander the Great in his place by using a special type of biting satire. Diogenes was called as *dog* in his time; even this pseudonym may singly represent the cynic way of satire which cynics use to bite their opponents and

also themselves. In some ways, it is also possible to assert that Charles Bukowski owes his sense of humour particularly to that offbeat philosophical school.

2.3. Bukowski as a Cynic

To go some place to work every day and to return. It was impossible. To do things, simple things, to be part of family picnics, Christmas, the 4th of July, Labor Day, Mother's day...was a man born just to endure those things and then die? I would rather be a dishwasher, return alone to a tiny room and drink myself to sleep. (*Ham* 192)

Different from the ancient Greeks, living dog-like is accepted as a psychological disorder in the modern times. The term *Diogenes Syndrome*, which is inspired by the attitudes of Diogenes of Sinope, refers to a set of behaviours “characterized by severe self-neglect, domestic squalor, hoarding behaviour, and social withdrawal” (Larner et al. 191). However the name Diogenes Syndrome has been generally criticized for being a misnomer since it does not match the true content of the cynic thought properly (O'Brien et al. 3). Actually through such a psychiatric definition, which ignores the original philosophical content of the cynic school and just focuses on their outer appearance, it can be also proved how misleading is the modern outlook on cynicism.

William Chaloupka also criticizes the incorrect use of the term in public; according to Chaloupka “the term cynicism is often used where simpler words would do. Some uses of the word are simply non sequiturs –people call something “cynical” when they mean that it was mistaken, ill-tempered, tone-deaf, boring, or disagreeable” (5). Chaloupka also states that cynicism is actually “a subtle and elusive cultural mood, misunderstood by those who issue broad pleas for civility” (xvi). Likewise, Caldwell argues that the term has been degenerated and lost its original meaning; according to Caldwell “the flamboyant cynicism of H.L. Mencken and the aging Mark Twain is gone...The American cynic is no longer a witty, worldly critic...Gone are the clever sarcasm, the poignant irony, the knowing wink, and self assured sneer” (3). Caldwell also asserts that the cynic of the modern ages hides himself behind some kind of private “redoubts of unremitting mistrust” and in this context, he defines the modern cynic as “Alone, disappointed and bitter, he is most often melancholy and withdrawn” (3).

It is clear that an incorrect image of cynicism is adopted by the common sense. Also Charles Bukowski is among those who see cynicism as an accusation by considering a modern paralogism as true cynicism. Therefore he complains about being called as a cynic during his interview with Sean Penn:

I've always been accused of being a cynic. I think cynicism is sour grapes. I think cynicism is a weakness. It's saying "everything is wrong! EVERYTHING IS WRONG!" You know? "This is not right! That is not right!" Cynicism is the weakness that keeps one from being able to adjust to what is occurring at the moment. Yes, cynicism is definitely a weakness, just as optimism is. "The sun is shining, the birds are singing -- so smile." That's bullshit too. The truth lies somewhere in between. What is just is. So you're not ready to handle it...too bad. ("Though Guys Write Poetry")

Actually, one can clearly see that Charles Bukowski offers an ideal place for cynicism in his statement above by pointing a terrain that is "somewhere in between" optimism and opposition; it can be said that true cynicism lies in the location between optimism and such antagonism; this means that, the cynics are dissidents just because they reject authoritarian pressure, which is reflected in the example of Diogenes and Alexander thoroughly; at the same time, they are optimist since they welcome an happiness which occurs from a compliance with the laws of nature. Bukowski seems to have realized this fact vaguely in some of his other writings. For example in *Ham on Rye*, the reader comes across with a more correct analysis of cynic philosophy. In the passage a boy stares at Buk and his friend Becker at the park, and most probably with an eye to his appearance, asks Buk if he is happy being a cynic, "Yes" says Buk, but the boy retorts immediately "then you are not a cynic because cynics aren't happy" (229). Later when Becker asks the same question that if he was a cynic, this time Buk answers in an enlightened mood "I am unhappy" he says "If I was a cynic it would probably make me feel better"(229). Those words completely proves that, in his subconscious, Bukowski seems to have perceived the fact that cynicism is a philosophical stance which tries to reach the real virtue by restoring the principles of nature and living in accord with its rules; he thinks that he would be happy if he manages to compromise with the nature, and reject the artefact.

A concrete explanation of the diversity between modern perception of cynicism and its original form is made by David Mazella as follows;

The largest difference lies in the modern cynic's evasion of the demands of either philosophical reflection or moral self-regulation, demands that were paramount for the uncompromising ancient Cynics. Diogenes faces down the conqueror of the world; the modern cynic accommodates himself to whoever is in power. The ancient Cynic flouts conventional values because he is a philosophical hero, devoted to the cosmopolitan reason that permits him to recognize the customs, forms, institutions, and authorities around him as local, contingent, even unnatural. The modern cynic, however, has lost all interest in philosophy and lacks the Cynics' asceticism or freedom of speech. (14)

Understanding Mazella's point here is of a great importance since he underlines that many important qualifications of Cynic philosophers is omitted out of the standardized and modernized scheme of cynicism and the term is reduced to a statue of simple displeasure where it has no philosophical purposes; or again in Mazella's words "This joyless, anti-intellectual and self-enclosed version of cynicism only travesties the fearless, physically active philosophy of Diogenes the Cynic and his followers (14).

Regarding the former ideas, cynicism can be defined as a whole which contains human pleasure, wisdom and social responsibility together. Considering Antisthenes' cynicism one can say that in cynicism, hedonist point of view stands as a symbol of the indispensable liberties for human beings; and wisdom is the main instrument to get all those mentioned liberties. In addition, true happiness can be acquired through simplicity, minimalism and apathy in behaviours.

Peter Sloterdijk sets a considerable relationship between hippies and cynic thought. Sloterdijk maintains that "As the original hippie and proto-Bohemian, Diogenes has left his mark on the European tradition of intelligent living" (158). Referring to Diogenes, he also asserts that "we could not picture his external appearance today or gain an impression of his effect on the Athenian environment if we did not have the visual instruction of the hippies, freaks, globetrotters, and metropolitan Indians" (158). Navia also points at such a correlation between cynicism, beatniks and the hippie movement in the years 60s and 70s, with respect to their similarity in appearance and some attitudes; "long hair, shamelessness in performing private acts in public, and panhandling, as well as an anti-materialistic

stance and a denunciation of consumerism, a rejection of racism and nationalism, and, above all, a spirit of rebelliousness vis-a-vis all forms of political authority (Navia 5). Navia also notes that “the differences are greater than the similarities, and the social protesters of recent times do not appear to have the philosophical foundation on which classical Cynicism stood” (5). Returning back to Bukowski’s cynicism, one can easily say that, Charles Bukowski is one of the pure models of ancient cynics with slight differences even though he rejects being a cynic; as Malone states “He was a hippie before hippies became fashionable” (8).

Bukowski divides writers into two parts: the ones who take part in group activities and the others who act individually. Especially he aims at the Beat Generation whose members densely participate in group activities for the sake of performing their sense of political responsibilities. As he always rejects being involved in such activities, Bukowski is never commemorated as a part of dominant social ideologies of his era. According to Jack Sargeant, this sense of individuality and indifference is a sign of Bukowski’s cynicism; he states that “Where Charles Bukowski differed from the Beats was in his cynicism- which occasionally border on the nihilistic. While the central Beat writers explored mysticism, magic and occult, Bukowski celebrated the godless void” (228). As Sargeant defines, the Beat generation shows a great interest in group activities and they make use of the eastern mysticism to constitute a spiritualism-based political stance. However Bukowski mocks their togetherness as he finds it artificial and pretentious;

...they hang in the parks with Che idol, with pictures of Castro in their amulets, going OooooooooMMMMooooooooMMM while William Burroughs, Jean Genet and Allen Ginsberg lead them... it’s one thing to talk about Revolution while three jackass writers of international fame have you dancing to the OooooooooooooooooMMMM game. (qtd. in Duval 34)

In some of his novels Bukowski presents his cynic vision in an indisputable clarity. For instance, in *Factotum* Chinaski envies the bums living in the L.A River, and praises their unplanned way of living: “They were tan and relaxed and most of them looked a hell of a lot healthier than the average Los Angeles business man. Those guys down there had no problems with women, income tax, landlords, burial expenses, dentists, time payments, car repairs, or with climbing into a voting booth and pulling the curtain closed”(164). As it is clear, the people whom he talks about

exactly do the same things as the ancient Greek cynics who lived in public places in such an uncivilized way. This leaves no doubt that Bukowski is spiritually cynic; it should also be noted that his pseudonym the *dirty old man* that he uses in a newspaper column, shows a great similarity to Diogenes' epithet *Dog*. In addition to those, it is also possible to set a symbolic relationship between the tiny *rooms*—where he spends nearly all his life—and the *tub* of Diogenes of Sinope, where Diogenes fulfilled all his requirements. Barry Miles describes the scene that he sees when he gets to Bukowski's house to make a spoken word album as follows;

Single storey wooden- frame house had peeling paint and there were holes in the screen doors. Hank's house had a struggling hedge to one side, and his '57 Plymouth was parked on the patchy remains of his front lawn. The overflowing garbage cans had paper sacks filled with bottles and beer cans were stacked around them, awaiting collection. The screen door opened straight into his living room. The shades were drawn. Rickety bookshelves were overloaded with books, magazines, old newspapers and racing forms. The settee had a hole where the stuffing was bursting out. There was a pile of car tires in the corner and empty beer cans. In another corner was Hank's desk with huge, battered, sit-up-and-beg, black cast iron Remington, dusty but for the carriage and keys, surrounded by cigar butts and ash, crumpled paper. (2)

This scenery is also confirmed by his publisher John Martin. Martin reports what he saw for the first time he met Bukowski "He had this absolutely destroyed room... There were rusty razor blades round the sink, the toilet didn't flush properly and the work surfaces were covered dust and bits of food" (Soules 79). However those are some shallow signs of Bukowski's cynicism. Actually, Bukowski's political qualities should be researched in the light of Diogenes' famous retort "Cease to shade me from the sun" that he utters when Alexander the Great asks him "any favour you choose of me" (Laertius 41). There is no doubt that that response is the symbolic demeanour which integrally represents the cynic posture; in it, there exists a rejection of sovereignty and a sanctification of individual thought and freedom. One can say that Charles Bukowski politically achieves the same thing by opposing the systematic exploitation of labour and rejecting the so-called American Dream. He also rejects being a part of a so-called American nationalism; accordingly he

criticizes the reality of wars on every occasion as he finds it weird to fight in order to strengthen somebody else's wealth. As Chinaski states "I could make it. I could win drinking contests, I could gamble. Maybe I could pull a few holdups" instead of joining the army (*Ham* 265). Finally, in order to dismiss that sordid and hypocrite call of would-be American Dream—which intends to seduce people by exploiting their national sentiments – he nearly paraphrases the words of Diogenes of Sinope: "I didn't ask much, just to be left alone" (265). In this context, it can be said that the shadow of Alexander is symbolically substituted with another shadow—the American Dream—in Bukowski's work; a dream whereby the people are pushed into a materialistic passion.

2.3.1. The American Dream as the Shadow of Alexander the Great

Actually many sensitive litterateurs, who have recognised that the American Dream was nothing more than an illusion, have rejected and criticized it in both direct and indirect ways. For example, J. Fitzgerald refers to that dream using the symbolism of "valley of ashes" where ashes take the forms of the objects and people and turn them to "ash-grey" (29). On the other hand Arthur Miller in *Death of a Salesman* criticizes the useless sufferings of mankind to attain such a dream. In the play Biff clearly explains what the American Dream has brought to the average men of working class, through his words after his father death: "He had the wrong dreams. All, all, wrong" (110). According to Biff, the American Dream means "To suffer fifty weeks of the year for the sake of a two – week vacation, when all you really desire is to be outdoors, with your shirt off. And always to have to get ahead of the next fella. And still—that's how you build a future. (16). Another writer, Tennessee Williams also criticizes the way American people are manipulated and misinformed in front of the screen with an insidious propaganda. He manifests this idea through Tom of *Glass Menagerie* who states that "People go to the movies instead of moving! Hollywood characters are supposed to have all the adventures for everybody in America, while everybody in America sits in a dark room and watches them have them!"(61). Tom properly recognizes that the concept of the American Dream is nothing more than an advertisement in a paper which is used to charm people for the sake of marketing. As a last example the same irony and criticism is put across by one of Bukowski's coevals Allen Ginsberg, in his poem *America*.

Ginsberg through his poem questions the artificial threats—such as a potential attack by Russia or China—which are used by the system to keep the fear warm in people's hearts. Ginsberg personifies his country and asks her what she gave him in return for the efforts that he made to fulfil the dream: “America I’ve given you all and now I’m nothing/ America two dollars and twenty-seven cents January 17,1956” (154-155).

Bukowski follows the same route and makes a subtle criticism of the American dream in all occasions. According to Harrison, Bukowski is one of the major writers who push a way the American Dream and its routine working conditions which subdued great masses; and he mainly shows his anti-capitalist attitude by his “anti consumerist trait” (13). Harrison maintains that the greatest symbol of Bukowski’s frugality maybe the small radio that he uses all life; he carries it with him from the small rooms to the big houses which have two garages (13). In this respect it is also possible to set a connection Between Bukowski’s attitude with Sloterdijk’s definition whereby he explains that “Everything kynics own, they carry with them” (158). As Harrison states “Use- value takes precedence over exchange-value in Bukowski’s work” (Harrison 13).

Bukowski reacts to the enforcements and standard acceptances. He also rejects his father’s life philosophy saying that “Take the family, mix with God and Country, add the ten-hour day and you had what was needed” (*Ham* 192). According to him there is no reason to be killed in a war for the sake of rich people’s wealth. He sees war as an economical necessity as the history of wars is written by the rich and the powerful; as he asks “what would I be protecting? Somebody else. Somebody else who didn’t give a shit about me?... the war. Here I was a virgin. Could you imagine getting your ass blown for the sake of history before you even knew what a woman was? (*Ham* 265). Bukowski, as he tells in *Ham on Rye*, chooses R.O.T.C. (Reserve Officer Training Corps) during his high school years for some private reasons rather than a sense of nationalism; he thinks that R.O.T.C is a suitable haunt for the misfits like him; it is a place to hide since he does not want people to see his boils that cover all his body (170). According to him, rich people want their children to take R.O.T.C as they need to “be more patriotic because they had more to lose if the country went under” (170). So he shows a civil disobedience, being aware that such an individual challenge would make nothing better; but at least, in that way he would prevent himself from being exploited:

The problem was you had to keep choosing between one evil or another, and no matter what you choose, they sliced a little bit more off you, until there was nothing left. At the age of 25 most people were finished. A whole god-damned nation of assholes driving automobiles, eating, having babies, doing everything in the worst way possible, like voting for the presidential candidate who reminded them most of themselves. (*Ham* 174)

He thinks that all he needs is to become alone and write, and then the muses will find him. He rejects the rat race which is performed by people for the sake of little profits; “How in the hell could a man enjoy being awakened at 6:30 a.m. by an alarm clock, leap out of bed, dress, force-feed, shit, piss, brush teeth and hair, and fight traffic to get to a place where essentially you made lots of money for somebody else and were asked to be grateful for the opportunity to do so?” (*Factotum* 127). Therefore he decides to work in low-levelled menial jobs enough to support his life; and hide in humble small rooms—the modernized versions of Diogenes’ tub.

2.3.2. Bukowski’s Rooms as the Tub of Diogenes

I often feel inferior. I just wanted to get away from them. But there is no place to go. Suicide? Jesus Christ, just more work. I felt like sleeping for five years but they wouldn’t let me. (*Ham* 174)

Virginia Woolf in her famous essay states that “give her a room and five hundred a year, let her speak her mind and leave out half that she now puts in, and she will write a better book one of these day” (621). Woolf’s words are aimed upon the patriarchal pressure and the negativities which prevent women writers from writing towards their own voices. Those obstacles can be listed as the lack of economical independence and private time and also a quite place to work. In the same way Bukowski nearly emphasizes the same necessity in one of his letters: “I didn’t want the road. I wanted to write so I needed walls for that” (*Reach* 210). Such solitude between the walls is actually what Bukowski tries to acquire for nearly half of his life.

Coming from a problematic family and a childhood under his father’s pressure, he tries to get a way and hide on every occasion. In his novels the reader constantly sees him longing to have his own life and loneliness; he is in pursuit of a place where he

can reach his wisdom: “I wasn’t a misanthrope and I wasn’t a misogynist but I liked being alone. I felt good to sit alone in a small space and smoke and drink. I had always been good company for myself” (*Ham* 275).

Bukowski has a great passion for writing, so he wants to be left alone to achieve his purpose. He leaves home and works in menial jobs; these efforts end in a post office where he starts working as a postal clerk for years which he embroiders in his novel *Post office* within a sense of perfect social criticism. *Factotum*, nearly a documentary work, presents such a criticism whereby he tells the reader the difficulties he suffered while he was working in menial jobs and the rooms he lived. In *Factotum*, nearly all chapters start with a sight from a room, or Chinaski’s search for a room of his own. Each time he tries to find a better job, which is less tiresome and lucrative enough to afford his alcoholism and other daily needs. After getting off the bus in New Orleans, he immediately looks for his class, that’s, the poor section where he can set up his life “I took my suitcase and went out in the rain and began walking. I didn’t know where the rooming houses were, where the poor section was” (*Factotum* 11). As the story progress the merry solution comes, and he becomes alone in his room; “It was the first time I had been alone for five days. I was a man who thrived on solitude; without it I was like another man without food or water. Each day without solitude weakened me. I took no pride in my solitude; but I was dependent on it. The darkness of the room was like sunlight to me” (40). Solitude is a thing which he always desires but he rarely manages to acquire; he protects himself from writers, especially from the ones who want to be writers like him; he thinks that their companionship would damage his art. This attitude of him provides a new connection between Bukowski and Diogenes, as Sloterdijk defines, Diogenes “was a teacher who wanted no pupils who imitated him. In this he resembles the Japanese Zen masters, whose effect is achieved by teaching through nonteaching” (157). This is also typical for Bukowski; he is known as an author who refuses to be imitated by other authors. In *Women* Chinaski explains it in his own jargon and with a perfect metaphor; “I disliked them all immediately, sitting around acting clever and superior. They nullified each other. The worst thing for a writer is to know another writer, and worse than that, to know a number of other writers. Like flies on the same turd” (53). In one of his letters, he suggests that such collectivism also caused a degeneration in

authentic Beat culture; according to him, the Beats lost their souls because of the same imitator culture:

Now the original beats, as much as they were knocked, had the idea. but they were flanked and overwhelmed by fakes, guys with nicely clipped beards, lonely-hearts looking for free ass, limelighters, rhyming poets, homosexuals, bums, sightseers-the same thing that killed the Village. Art can't operate in Crowds. Art does not belong at parties, nor does it belong at Inauguration Speeches. (*Screams* 40)

This one and similar explanations are familiar for Bukowski by which he teases and criticizes the Beatnik togetherness. According to Sounes Bukowski "hated himself for hustling his ass in the home town of the beat writers, a group he neither liked nor considered himself part of" (2). Nevertheless, he becomes well in with some of them or participates in some poetry readings now and then. May be the closest contact he has with them is the time that he spends some time with Neal Cassady in one occasion (Sounes 91). In *Women* he writes that "writers were to be avoided, and I tried to avoid them, but it was almost impossible. They hoped for some sort of brotherhood, some kind of togetherness. None of it had anything to do with writing, none of it helped at the typewriter" (140).

However, by some scholars Bukowski is accepted as a beat writer. Such a classification is depended on his having a group of readers some of whom also have the sympathy for Beat movement. Sounes defines that "Bukowski liked to mock the counter-culture, having little time for drugs, pop, music or radical politics. But many of the young writers and publishers who liked his work were deeply involved in these things and Bukowski was inevitably drawn into what was happening in the late 1960s" (83). Actually Beatnik life has many similarities to his life; it is hard and cool; and has a style which is marked by alcohol, fights and juridical or narcotic experiences; however those can never be substituted for the experience of solitude; as Chinaski states "The greatest men are the most alone" (*Women* 27). Group activities, such as pilgrimages to the shores of river Ganges, or gathering in Lincoln Park for political protestations are not convenient to him. In a letter to Tom McNamara, he praises Kirby Congdon whom he takes as a role model with respect to his experiences, as he "lived, and learned, and not to be bullshitted" (*Screams* 218). He talks about his plan to go and see him and his friends, he says that "each man

seems to come up with something good, something to make me laugh, and they do it so easily and with grace honesty” (*Screams* 218). He continues his letter by teasing the beat generation;

If I could only realize that right now there are at least 1,000 people on earth better than Christ was; I mean if Christ was not a fable; I mean, people who don’t do tricks likes raising the dead and being glorious and so forth. these people stay hidden. They know that contact means the plague, this is what disgusts me with the Ginseberg/Corso mob. they suck to the human adulation bit and soon swallowed. (219)

Like Diogenes, who did everything in public places, there is no doubt that the city is the most appropriate place with respect to the useful material it offers Bukowski for his literary purposes. Bukowski’s condition—that’s, his living in the middle of the city turmoil with a strong desire to be left alone—may look like a paradox. However even if it is a paradox, it enables us to set another connection with him and cynic Diogenes who also lives in a tub that he locates in the middle of the market place and crowds with the same contrasting request to be left alone. In this respect Bukowski’s seclusion in tiny rooms bears a powerful symbolism that ties him to Diogenes’ philosophy. The psychological aspect of such a dilemma may be best clarified with Sigmund Freud’s following words;

As regards intellectual achievements, it is true that the great decisions of mental endeavour, the discoveries and solutions that truly matter are possible only for the individual working in isolation. But the mass mind, too, is capable of inspired, intellectual creations; witness above all language itself but also folksong, folklore, and other things besides. (33)

Evaluating Freud’s words, one can easily perceive that the city, with its cosmopolitan cultural density, offers the genius the raw material, but when the material is needed to be embroidered, the genius needs to be alone. Freud’s words may also be useful to reinforce the connection between Bakhtin’s idea of carnivalesque and the cynic isolation. Consequently, Bukowski shows great similarities to cynic Diogenes in terms of individuality. Other than this, it is also possible to establish some other relationships between Bukowski, Diogenes and his heirs with respect to some scandalous attitudes including the liberalized sexual behaviours they perform

shamelessly. Especially Bukowski's relationships with women represent great parallelism to Hipparchia and Crates—an offbeat couple in ancient Greece—who also contribute the cynic saga with their unusual behaviours.

2.3.3. Scandalous Acts, Sexual Liberty and Hipparchia-Crates Syndrome in Bukowski's Life

Cynic Crates - the advisor of Menippus of Gadara- is said to have abused prostitutes “designedly, for the purpose of practising himself in enduring reproaches” (Laertius 93). Likewise, Charles Bukowski is reported to stand and watch the street prostitutes or collect information about the sex parties from his neighbour Tina Darby, who is an exotic dancer, for the sake of acquiring some wisdom related to woman soul (Sounes 149). From Crates and Bukowski's behaviours, one can easily sense the existence of an experimental sexuality by which they try to acquire a kind of wisdom related to human nature. Supposedly, Bukowski takes this experimentalism a little further; and experiences with homosexuality even if the event has not been properly confirmed (Sounes 95-96). Another link that combines Crates and Bukowski is their similarity in the way they carry out their relationships with their girlfriends. Laertius reports that, Crates took his wife Hipparchia with him everywhere; they together went to the banquets (Laertius 101). Hipparchia is the only woman philosopher known in ancient Greek. She falls in Love and chooses Crates against all the pressure of her family; as Laertius states, despite Crates' minimalist life-style, “adopting the same dress, went about with her husband and lived with him in public”(101). According to Long Hipparchia was a “wholly liberated woman”; as Long states she “shared Crates' interests and did not differ in her public behaviour from her husband” (42). But the most striking claim on Crates and Hipparchia is their having a sexual intercourse in public place (42). Long also adds that “On the conventional view of a Greek woman's proper place that will have counted as a shocking example of sexual exhibitionism” (42).

Those may be nothing more than speculation, however, here the point is to underline the relationship between Crates and Hipparchia as an excessive model for male and female relationships: it is clear that they present a type of liberty in their relationship as a couple. Charles Bukowski also exhibits such publicity similar to that ancient couple in his relations with women; especially with Linda King, whom he

took with him everywhere, to many activities such as parties and horse races (Sounes 129). Maybe they did not show reckless sexual exhibitionisms in public places like Crates and Hipparchia did but they were similar to that couple with respect to their maintaining their private life -which is unusually scandalous- in the public eye. One of the most striking examples to that publicity is reported by Sounes;

One weekend they had a big party at the house and, when Bukowski was drunk, he accused Linda of being a lesbian, which infuriated her so much she pulled him out of his chair and threw him in the fireplace. He landed on his backside with his beer in his hand, not having spilt a drop...Linda hurled herself at him and they brawled on the floor until dragged apart by their guests. (130)

Another example is his beating his wife in front of the cameras during an interview which takes part in the documentary *Born into This*. Such scandalous acts look like endless. In another one, after Bukowski and a visitor of him have been pushed out of the house by Linda for an unknown reason, a fierce fight starts between the couple; the neighbours stop the case by calling police to prevent the following clamour which ends in Bukowski's arrest (131). Sounes also reports that Bukowski was arrested three times due to the fights and drunkenness, he and Jane were evicted from the places many times for their fights (29-30). One day, in a note that Bukowski finds under his door, he is warned to live the apartment with his girl friend due to "excessive drinking, fighting and foul language, disturbing other tenants" (Sounes 30).

Although Bukowski's relationships with his girlfriends resemble the Hipparchia-Crates model, with respect to sexual avant-gardism, he seems to have borrowed some of his specialities from Diogenes who is said to have masturbated in public place (Laertius 47). Even regarding some of his unexpected expressions on sexuality, one can say that no one has had the courage to write in that way since Marquis De Sade. After his story *The Fiend* has been published—which is about Martin Blanchard an unemployed drunk who rapes a little girl about 9 in a garage—Bukowski states that he wrote the story after he sees a little girl who plays out while he is writing; and he also accepts that he masturbated and felt like raping her. However, upon the responses from the public, he defends himself saying that "I

didn't do it, no. I felt like doing it," (Sounes 148). He also makes a plea of this situation in a letter to his friend William Wantling;

I said desire, not actuality. in other words, if you had an eleven year old daughter staying with me you might consider her pretty safe, at least a lot safer than with men who won't admit their desires even to themselves, then not to the rest of the world. I am not saying that I am anything special but as I say that if you take offense at my naturalism, at that which nature has put into me, then you are a damn fool. (*Screams* 229)

Those attitudes of Bukowski perfectly match Bakhtin's menippea in which Bakhtin sees some unfamiliar attitudes that contrast with the norms of society. Bakhtin defines those qualities as "scandal scenes, eccentric behavior, inappropriate speeches and performances violations of the generally accepted and customary course of events and established norms of behavior and etiquette, including manners of speech" (117). Accordingly, another item in menippea that also perfectly suits Bukowski is the "moral psychological experimentation" (116). Bakhtin states that this moral psychological manner is "a representation of the unusual, abnormal moral and physic states of man-insanity of all sorts (the theme of the maniac), split personality, unrestrained daydreaming, unusual dreams, passions bordering on madness, suicides and so forth" (116).

Likewise, Bukowski always lives on the borderline between life and death, madness and reality: "I had no interests" says Chinaski, "I had no interest in anything. I had no idea how I was going to escape. At least the others had some taste for life. They seemed to understand something that I didn't understand. Maybe I was lacking. It was possible" (*Ham* 174). Supporting that point, Aubrey Malone states that "He was always in the eye of storm [...] whether with his father, with women, with publishers, with the police, with himself. His life was a war zone and that was the way he liked it" (79). Suicide always takes its place in his agenda as a literary subject as well as an item that he is obsessed with in his real life. As Miles states;

In 'On and Off' he wrote that his first thought of suicide came at the age of thirteen and it stayed with him ever since. He botched some attempts and some were not really serious, he was just playing at it as if he was rehearsing.

But there were other times when he tried hard, though it must be said, he couldn't have tried *that* hard as he always survived. (29)

Actually Bukowski lives most of his life just like a suicide; that's to say, he lives most of his life within an experience which is closer to death. In *Ham on Rye* he says that "I considered suicide, but I felt a strange fondness for my body, my life (274). He postpones the idea of suicide every time because, according to him, at least a suicide has to have a use-value; as Chinaski puts it "if you're going to go, you might as well take eight, or ten or twenty of them with you" (*Ham* 274).

Referring to Bakhtin's words, Bukowski may be considered to be testing the idea, "testing the man in man" as it is in *menippeia*; as Malone states was "testing himself against its stern limits time and again, rolling boulder up the hill like Camus's Sisyphus, or even his Meursault from *The Outsider*"(7), which we can be accepted as approximately true. It is true because, philosophically, Bukowski is aware that his life is not so different from the course of Sisyphus with regard to their monotony; therefore it needs to be demolished like the *fourth wall* in Brechtian theatre, in order to arouse some excitement or disrupt the established order of the things. In this respect Bukowski, with such scandalous attitudes, show great similarities to Diogenes. To make that point clear, it would be useful to juxtapose two anecdotes which take part in different times. As it is reported by Laertius, Diogenes begins to whistle and dance in the middle of a serious discourse in order to attract the attention, as he realizes that no one is listening to his serious lecture. When people gathers around him he reprehends them "for coming with eagerness to folly but being lazy and indifferent about good things" (226). Barry Miles reports a similar frenzy for Bukowski which he exposes in a Paris TV channel, in Bernard Pivots's prestigious program *Apostrophe* "in which intellectuals and writers engaged in high-flown discussion about books and issues of the day" (231). Miles defines that, as Bukowski wanted to become the centre of attention, he interrupted the other guests in a state of intoxication, and provoked the audience which made them cheer and yell (231).

3. EXEMPLIFYING THE CARNIVALISTIC ELEMENTS IN CHARLES BUKOWSKI'S PROSE

3.1. Examining Bukowski's Linguistic Technique in Context of Carnivalized Literature

The genres of the serio-comical do not rely on legend and do not sanctify themselves through it, they consciously rely on experience...and on free invention; their relationship to legend is in most cases deeply critical, and at times even resembles a cynical expose. (*Problems* 108)

Regarding the subversive motifs that Bakhtin puts through his notion of carnivalesque, many social theorists discuss his ideas in terms of Marxist theory (Clark, Holquist 3). Amongst them is Dustin Griffin who criticizes Bakhtin for taking no account of the role of cultivation for the authors who draw on the carnivalesque material. Griffin maintains that "His Marxism disposes him to idealize the "folk" and all folkish ways. He does not see the element of erudition that Frye finds central or the tradition of "learned wit" that links Erasmus, Rabelais, Burton, Swift and Sterne" (33). Additionally Griffin asserts that, for Bakhtin "the Menippea" grows out of the market place, not the study" (33).

It is quite natural for Griffin to question what the fundamental discriminator between the author of the carnivalesque and an ordinary participant of the carnival is; if there is no tangible role of authorial efforts in converting the market place experience into a literary work. However, if Bakhtin's whole ideas on carnivalized literature are carefully inspected, it would be clearly seen that he theorizes a specific storage behaviour for the carnivalized genres by listing some special efforts for the writers to benefit from that repository. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin argues that "A literary genre, by its very nature, reflects the most "eternal" tendencies in literature's development. Always preserved in a genre are undying elements of the *archaic*" (106). He also underlines the role of the author's literary efforts as a necessity, maintaining that Dostoevsky - one way or another - "linked up with the chain of a given generic tradition at that point where it passed through his own time" (121). Here in that citation, Bakhtin is likely to have used the word "to link up" instead of some other words which can possibly be used to refer to the

theoretical studies of authors. Additionally Bakhtin also suggests that this genetic transmission is not related with Dostoevsky's "subjective memory", to the contrary "the objective memory of the very genre in which he worked, that preserved the peculiar features of the ancient menippea" (121). From his suggestions, one can exactly see that, talking specifically about Dostoevsky and Menippean tradition, Bakhtin generalizes a conception in which he does not disown authors' theoretical endeavours that enable them to achieve their own linguistic styles. On the other hand, if the curriculum of such theoretical studies is fully examined, it would be seen that Bakhtin points at some inter-textual efforts relevant for the authors of the carnivalized genres; for example he suggests that it is possible to observe a "deliberate multi-styled and heterovoiced nature of all genres" in serio-comical as a carnivalized genre (108). Bakhtin explains that point as follows;

Characteristic of those genres are a multi-toned narration, the mixing of high and low, serious and comic; they make wide use of inserted genres-letters, found manuscript, retold dialogues, parodies on high genres, parodically reinterpreted citations; in some of them we observe a mixing of prosaic and poetic speech, living dialects and jargons. (*Problems* 108)

According to Bakhtin the main purpose of such a rainbow-like structure is to protest "the stylistic unity (or better, the single-styled nature) of the epic, the tragedy, high rhetoric, the lyric" (108) since the language in all carnivalized genres intends to lower the serious tone of the high and idealized manners in literature. It is clear that Bakhtin sees such a literary deconstruction only possible through blending various "inserted genres"; accordingly, he detects similar qualities in the menippea, such as "Wide use of inserted genres: novellas, letters, oratorical speeches, symposia, and so on; and characteristic is a mixing of prose and poetic speech" which are presented in "varying degrees of parodying and objectification" (118). Parody for Bakhtin is an "integral element in Menippean satire and all carnivalized genres in general" (127).

In the previous chapter, various conditions—which were examined under some main headings including Bukowski's experiences in low life and his mutual affinity with public culture; or his extraordinary attitudes—helped us to prove Bukowski's connection with the carnivalized genres. As a compulsory footstep, the focal point of this chapter will be mainly on a linguistic examination of Bukowski's prose, substantially through Bakhtin's ideas above in order to demonstrate how Bukowski

literarily use that aforementioned carnivalesque repository. As it has also been profoundly examined in the second chapter, Charles Bukowski's writing style especially matches the fourteen main qualities which are listed by Bakhtin whereby he draws the main characteristics of carnivalized genres (*Problems* 114-119). One can even claim that Bukowski has fabricated his own style by aligning his prose in accordance with Bakhtin's Menippea and Serio-Comic, which according to Bakhtin is the convention that also harboured Dostoevsky's literary style. In any case, with regard to both writers' valiant literary investigations inside slums and illegality- rather than making imaginative desk studies- a subtle connection which associates Bukowski and Dostoevsky does not go unnoticed; as Aubrey Malone puts it "Even though the tone is harsh, it's never gratuitous or self pitiful. He writes like a Dostoevsky raised in Los Angeles sewer in the 1920s" (168). However, the carnivalesque motifs in Dostoevsky's prose are mostly intangible thanks to his indirect use of carnival sources. At times, Bukowski's writing style becomes as cryptic as Dostoevsky's; but it is also possible to see some lucid carnivalesque references similar to Rabelais' work. This means that, like Dostoevsky, Bukowski has also internalized preceding genres in one way or another. Therefore in that chapter, it also becomes necessary to trace back to the route which Bukowski followed to acquire such theoretical background for his writing style.

3.2. Bukowski's Literary Progress and his Battle with Legends of Literature

L.A. public library is a haunt that brings Bukowski and the archaic souls together. He frequently refers that library as a place of his seclusion where he goes through with a self-paced literary training "to find literature to which he could relate" (Baughan 9). Bukowski's literary process in the middle of the book shelves stands as a compulsory conclusion of his physical and spiritual problems which arise by the year that he starts high school. "Acne Vulgaris" is the main reason that causes him to take an extensive treatment and prevents him from attending to the school for the first semester (Sounes 15). Baughan states that "Mortified by his appearance Hank completely withdrew from society, refusing to see even the few friends who stopped by to check him" (9). The disease can also be deemed to be one of the most influential elements which cause the pessimistic tone in Bukowski's writing style and

also his subsequent alcoholism (Hemmer 30). After the acne has erupted on every surface, on his eyelids, his nose, behind his ears and on his head, he expresses the devastating effect of the disease in a highly tragic way saying that “the poisoned life had finally exploded out of me” (Sounes 12).

Actually, while he is talking about a poisoned life, Bukowski vaguely points out his father’s brutality which also causes him to withdraw from the society and choose that library as a shelter. He is constantly beaten by his father; and his mother, Katherine, usually justifies his husband’s violence. Baughan states that she does not show any attempt to stop the violence, on the contrary she participates in “the ludicrous judging process” (8). A famous anecdote is frequently told both by Bukowski and some biographies about his forced labour in their garden which usually ends in his father’s beatings. His father Henry always commands him to cut the lawn in their front garden, and after the work is finished he checks to see if he left any lawn uncut; as Miles reports whenever he finds even one hair left, he beats his son (26). However, finally the trend is reversed and Bukowski hits his father (Baughan 10) which becomes a breaking point of their family relations. In the following years, his father’s brutality and his intrusive personality even cause him to identify himself with Nazism and Adolph Hitler “whose own father had also tried to dictate his future and was constantly full of criticism” (Baughan 12).

Due to those reasons above, Bukowski becomes a bibliophile. In the preface that he writes for John Fante’s *Ask the Dust* he depicts those library seclusion as follows; “I was a young man, starving and drinking and trying to be a writer. I did most of my reading at the down town L.A. Public Library” (5). However, in the beginning, he makes random book choices using a trial and error method; as he states “I tried other rooms in the library. The section on Religion was just a vast bog-to me. I got into philosophy. I found a couple of bitter Germans who cheered me for a while, then that was over” (*Ask* 5). From this aspect, his literary quest shows great similarities to Rabelais’s experimental efforts to find his own literary style by abandoning one course and going over another; such as law, medicine and religion; he even participates in anatomical dissections on human bodies during his medical education in Lyons (Sorsby 20). Bukowski, in order to find the proper area to locate his talent, metaphorically does the same thing by shifting from one book shelf to another;

I tried Mathematics but upper Math was just like religion: it ran right off me. What *I* needed seemed to be absent everywhere. I tried Geology and found it curious but, finally, non-sustaining. I found some books on Surgery and I liked the books on Surgery: the words were new and the illustrations were wonderful. I particularly liked and memorized the operation on the mesocolon. (*Ask* 5)

It should also be defined that for those two writers, to reach an identical type of language by following two parallel routes reinforces Bakhtin's suggestion in which he sees carnivalesque in a "constant renewal" (*Problems* 106).

During those years, Bukowski deals with a wide range of literary works and authors; such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Aldous Huxley, e.e. Cummings, Conrad, Steinbeck; and he also reads many classical works of the authors like Turgenev, Tolstoy, Shakespeare, Boccaccio (Duval 92). After long researches, he manages to meet some other cult names such as Sinclair Lewis, D.H. Lawrence, John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway and Sherwood Anderson (Sounes 15). The *Catcher in the Rye* is one of his most favourite novels (Sounes 200). In *Ham on Rye* he writes about his impressions for the preceding literatures in a well-defined passage. For example, he praises Upton Sinclair with regard to his rigid opposition against mainstream literature saying that "The first real book I found was by a fellow named Upton Sinclair. His sentences were simple and he spoke with anger. He wrote with anger. He wrote about the hog pens of Chicago" (151). He shows the same respect to Sinclair Lewis for he also "peeled back the layers of hypocrisy that covered people" (151).

On Josephine Lawrence's book *Bow Down To Wood and Stone*, he commentates as "I opened the pages. But they were like many of the other books: milky, obscure, tiresome. I replaced the book" (151). Later he finds another Lawrence; this is D. H. Lawrence. Chinaski defines him as "This Lawrence of the tight and bloody line. I had never been told about him. Why the secret? Why wasn't he advertised" (*Ham* 152). On the other hand, he expresses his feelings for Dos Passos as "Not too good, really, but good enough", and for Dreiser he says that "Dreiser didn't work for me" (152). And then comes Ernest Hemingway, whom Bukowski owes his spontaneity in his literary style; he defines Hemingway's literary style stating that; "What a thrill! He knew how to lay down a line. It was joy. Words

weren't dull, words were things that could make your mind hum. If you read them and let yourself feel the magic, you could live without pain, with hope, no matter what happened to you" (152). According to Dobozy "Frequently acknowledging his debt to Hemingway, Bukowski's prose is laconic, even crude; equating its rejection of embellishment with writing "from the gut" suggesting that artifice masks an ugly banal reality" (474). However, Miles notes that there is a slight difference between Hemingway and Bukowski. According to Miles "Hemingway wrote fiction whereas all of Bukowski's important work involves the author himself as the central character, being thinly veiled autobiography" (39).

Bukowski explains the influence of classical writers stating that "I was reading the Russians now, reading Turgenev and Gorky [...] To me, these men who had come into my life from nowhere were my only chance. They were the only voices that spoke to me" (*Ham* 152). This can also be accepted as a general expression for his curative relationship with literature, as he later explains "Reading all those good lines while suffocating. It was magic" (153).

Rabelais is also included in Bukowski's long array of writers; besides he shows a deep interest to German Philosophers like Schopenhauer, Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche (Polimeni 15). William Saroyan's *The Daring Young Man On the Flying Trapeze* will also have a great influence on Bukowski; according to Miles "Hank really liked his easy flowing line and his uncluttered style, and picked up on it right away" (46). Especially Bukowski's daring body naturalism, which will be examined during the following sections in detail, may bear the imprints of Saroyan's rules which Saroyan establishes in his preface to his own book *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*. In his book Saroyan opposes to the highly oriented way of writing, as he states "I immediately began to study all the classical rules, including Ring Lardner's, and in the end I discovered that the rules were wrong. The trouble was they had been leaving me out, and as far as I could tell I was the most important element in the matter, so I made some new rules" (10). As it is clear, Saroyan's desire is to locate man in the centre of his writing. Therefore he complains about classical rules which leave the human body out of literature. Some of his rules are also related with death-renewal philosophy that Bakhtin frequently addresses for the carnivalized genres. Saroyan states that "If you write as if you believe that ultimately you and everyone else alive will be dead, there is a chance that you will write in a

pretty earnest style. Otherwise you are apt to be either pompous or soft” (12). Saroyan, in order to provide literature with a balance of life and death, continues as follows; “on the other hand, in order not to be fool, you must believe that as much as death is inevitable life is inevitable” (12). Bukowski seems to have taken his advice since he shows such an interest to the human body, especially to the lower parts, since those parts are the representative organs for such death-renewal philosophy.

In Bukowski’s list Henry Miller is also included. Richard Gray states that Bukowski was influenced by Miller whose work is “a distrust of art and the artistic establishment, a commitment to living his own life outside the norms of American society, a related commitment in forms that hovered between the fictive and the autobiographical” (293).

Apart from all those authors above, there is no doubt that the most obvious influence comes from John Fante. Fante’s flowing lines play the leading role for Bukowski to find his own voice. As a sign of gratitude, he provides Fante’s forgotten works to be re-printed after he gains a prominence as a writer. Later Bukowski would state that “Fante was my god” (*Ask* 6). Actually he owes whole frame of his literary style to Fante; as Baughan puts it Fante’s “spare prose and underdog protagonists served as lifelong models for Bukowski’s own writings” (Baughan 12). He immediately sympathizes with Fante’s low brow experiences, his living style and also the way that he draws on these experiences in his writings. According to Miles John Fante’s *Ask the Dust* changes “the way he looked at writing” (46). Miles explains Fante’s influence on Bukowski as follows; “Fante was raised a Catholic and became an alcoholic; throughout the early 30s he lived and wrote in cheap rooming houses in Bunker Hill. It would not be long before Hank emulated him in that” (47). Also Baughan states that after discovering Fante “He loses his faith in the latter-day works of better-known writers like Hemingway and Henry Miller” having been inspired by “Fante’s ability to find powerful subject matter in such a quotidian reality (Baughan 12-13).

As soon as Bukowski completes scanning the preceding literature, he gets into a battle with legends of literature, or in other words, with the names who have been commonly accepted as the authority in literature. This means that, in addition to his discoveries of many useful sources to profit for his carrier, he also sorts out some books never to be read again. This battle exactly bears the signs of Bakhtin’s

definitions on carnivalized genres, especially for the satirist of Menippea who, for the sake of a dialogism, looks for his peculiar voice by shifting between genres and rejects the “the stylistic unity” and the authoritarian percept of literature (*Problems* 108). Duval confirms Bukowski’s intentions for such a literary revolution of his own; as he states “It is breath taking to picture him spending so many hours of his life devouring books in public library reading rooms, to reject them all in the end” (92). Additionally Duval defines that “He swallowed everything from Boccaccio to John Fante and from Shakespeare to Artaud. But it only made sense to him if afterwards he could make a clean sweep of everything that had gone before, to return from it to the expression of a raw and uncut experience” (92). Stephen also notices Bukowski’s desire to create his own voice; according to Calonne Bukowski “often seemed particularly concerned to distinguish himself as a solitary creator separate from the various “schools” of American poetry” (xiii).

Bukowski’s literary elimination is simply based on a rejection and embracing conflict; for example he becomes indecisive about Miller, for whom he feels a great respect in the beginning. Later in *Factotum* he writes that “He was good when he was good, and vice versa” (122). On the other hand, in a letter which he writes to John and Louise Webb, he tells an imaginary fight between him and Miller, he criticizes Miller for he does not write from full experience;

I got the idea that Henry Miller the ALL-KNOWING didn’t know much more about fucking than to talk it, and that’s the way most non-fuckers are. But then, it’s easy and simple to knock great names or kill 1/ 4 great men, and I remember when I was very young, Hem used to work out in the ring, you know, and I always dreamed that I would volunteer to sit in the opposite corner, and in my dream, of course, I kayoed HEMINGWAY, and therefore I was a great writer, I was a greater everything. (*Screams* 96-97)

One can easily observe that Bukowski does not show any favouritism to any movement or any literary circle; on the one hand, he rejects some classical writers accusing their idealized and high structured writing style, on the other hand, he praises some others for their passion. Most probably talking about Russian writers like Dostoevsky, he states that “One had to go back to the pre-Revolution writers of Russia to find any gamble, any passion” (*Ask* 5). Sounes also recognizes his captiousness; “The books which first excited Bukowski influenced his literary tastes

for the rest of his life. He never got over his youthful passions and prejudices: loving Hemingway's early stories, for instance, but having no time for his later novels; enjoying Turgenev, but never getting to grips with Tolstoy" (15).

It is clear that Bukowski tries to pick the useful material for the unfamiliar literary style that he intends to formalize; so he arranges organized raids to the classical writing techniques from all quarters. Punctuation also gets its share from his linguistic efforts; he derides the classical rules of punctuation with his irregular use of punctuation marks which may also be accepted as a symbolic attack to the established, academic rules of classical literature. Evaluating his struggle with the preceding literature and its rules through Bakhtin's ideas crystallizes his affinity to the carnivalized genres and their subversive alternative ways of writing. It is also obvious that he is aware of what he is literarily doing; Sounes draws attention to his consciousness as follows: "Bukowski wrote his column using slap-dash syntax and irregular spelling. He rarely bothered to capitalize letters or use conventional punctuation. But the apparent sloppiness was a stylistic experiment and, despite appearances, he was fairly serious about what he was doing" (86). Similarly, Duval states that "It was a return to square one. An aesthetic demand reflected, for example, in Buk's systematic return-in particular after a full stop-to to lower case where you would expect upper case: an apparent casualness of style, neglecting a major rule of punctuation, scorn of convention (192- 93). With his words, Duval underlines the literary revolution that Bukowski tries to achieve; later he consolidates his ideas related to Bukowski's revolutionary attempts with a more exact and explanatory definition: "Bukowski's genius lies in this use of language. Something like poetry erupts through the rawest words from this stripping of language, from this violence that bursts open the straightjacket...His use of linguistic violence makes Bukowski an innovator somewhat like Beckett, for example who used language to deny language" (Duval 107). Calonne does not overlook the same issue, he also states that Bukowski "experimented frequently in his prose with punctuation, type size, ellipses, idiosyncratic spellings, and repetitions-some of his narratives were entirely composed in lower case, thus transporting into prose some of e.e. Cummings' poetic typographical playfulness" (xviii).

It can be clearly seen that Bukowski shows such a linguistic destructiveness consciously. The thing he achieves by subverting the linguistic order is similar to

what Bakhtin structurally finds in the nature of carnivalized genres: according to Bakhtin, those are the genres which are constantly renewed by referring to previous genres and making a wide use of them. Similarly Bukowski makes use of various genres and constitutes his literary style mainly on three forms; these are letters, poetry and prose.

Bukowski's poetry is almost a parody of the classical poetry format: it can be said that he deliberately combines it with the straightforwardness of prose as if he wishes to destruct the high seriousness of poetry. Lawrence Ferlinghetti concisely explains that point saying that "Bukowski's poetry was essentially stories, just like his prose" (Soune 82). Like Ferlinghetti Calonne also notices that "Bukowski alternated between composing fiction and poetry, but when he wrote essays, they were most frequently devoted to literary polemics" (xiii).

Apart from his prose and poetry, anticipating their future value, he uses letters as another medium where he sustains his attacks to literary stereotypes as if he is aware that one day those letters will also be a part his corpus. Seamus Cooney, the editor of some of Bukowski's letter collections, notes that Bukowski preserved his mails neatly since he predicted that "his correspondence was of value to collectors and libraries and it would be eventually published" (5). This prediction comes out right; many publishers collect his essays and letters both during his health and in some posthumous collections. Those collections can be counted as some essays on literature, arts, on politics, sexuality and social issues.

Bukowski's dealings with visual arts should be also noted as another important quality which he uses for the benefit of his literary style. It can be said that it is a great luck for him to be born after the invention of the cinema, since he avoids detailed descriptions of space; this means that, he makes well use of the visual opportunities offered by the world of cinema with his technique which resembles the film screenplays. He evades long descriptions of place as if the reader has foreknowledge about the places he narrates; and he does not care much about space as a literary element. As an analogy to Lars Von Trier, one can simply say that Bukowski's place descriptions are identical to what Trier recently achieves in his films like *Dogville* and *Manderlay* by using minimalist and caricaturized decors simply drawn by chalk. In a sense, Bukowski reduces the literary role of the space to

a minimal level and provides his writing with more perceivable and universal qualifications. Gray notes his cinematic eye as in the following lines;

And novels like *Notes of a Dirty old man* (1969), *Post office* (1971), *Women* (1978), and *Ham on Rye* (1982) turned his life on the seedy edge of things into hardboiled narratives that combine the eye of the camera, with its disposition for empirical detail, with the inner eye of the fabulist, alert to the nightmare of the streets. There are no large gestures in Bukowski's work. Using an off-hand, free flowing line or sentence a casual idiom he simply records things as they pass in a cryptic sardonic way. (293)

On the other hand, Stephen Calonne also associates his efficient use of painting and drawing—which are later used on many of his book covers—with an effort “to make text itself into an image” (xviii). Calonne sees the liberty of expression which is common in both Bukowski's literary style and Jackson Pollack's dripping technique; Calonne asserts that;

Bukowski devoted a serious amount of time to his drawing and painting, and many of the deluxe editions of his works are accompanied by original art...he tried to make words perform, act out their meaning in a quasi-visual way in the same fashion that Jackson Pollack performed the spontaneous act of creation by “randomly” yet accurately flinging paint on canvas. (xviii)

Bakhtin emphasizes an experimental quality for the carnivalized genres which are fed from efficient applications to various genres. It is clear that Bukowski exerts great efforts to create such a peculiar literary style which apparently have common denominators with those carnivalized genres in many ways. From that point on, it becomes a necessity to have a look at the literary concept that he distils from his extensive literary efforts. Even though the focal point of this study is to set a relationship between Bukowski's prose and the carnivalized literature, it would be useful to take a look to one of his poems -*Christmas poem to a man in jail* (*What Matters* 115-118) - which may be considered as Bukowski's *Ars Poetica* where he profoundly expresses his literary vision in a highly refined and poetic style.

3.2.1. Bukowski's Ars Poetica

Poets wish to either benefit or delight us, or, at one and the same, to speak words that are both pleasing and useful for our lives. Whatever lessons you teach, let them be brief, so that receptive spirits will quickly perceive and faithfully retain what you have said. (Horace 333-46)

Indeed, I disagree very much with those who are unwilling that Holy Scripture, translated into the vulgar tongue, be read by the uneducated, as if Christ taught such intricate doctrines that they could scarcely be understood by very few theologians, or as if the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men's ignorance of it. (Erasmus "the Paraclesis" 101)

Erasmus was in pursuit of a vernacular translation of the Holy Bible to present it to the public in a more perceivable form (George 91). As an analogy to Erasmus, it can be said that Bukowski has also stood as an apologist of such a writing style which can be perceived by the reader easily. In *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature in English* Bukowski's "declared" poetic style is defined as "to 'humanize' poetry, lowering the rhetorical tone by structurally simple language flavoured with slang and swear words, asides to the reader, and other humorous interjections" (99). He seems to have felt the same necessity as Erasmus to popularize the linguistic form of current literature, as he puts it: "what I'd read first, the classical literature, is not raw, and simple. It is confusing, contrived, cloudy and devicious. I want to get rid of these things" (Duval 157). For him, literary techniques should provide the text with a sort of realism not much different from the life itself; and he clearly knows that such a fluency in writing can only be achieved through using the common grammar which is freely spoken in the market place; at that point, he is in consensus with Rabelais who chooses the market place language fluent by nature. However, Bukowski is also aware that a published material must show slight differences from its raw form so as to be called as literature; but he also thinks that it should never be contaminated with pretentiousness. In *Women* Chinaski defines that "Most people are much better at saying things in letters than in conversation, and some people can write artistic, inventive letters, but when they try a poem or story or novel they become pretentious" (72). Similarly H.R. Mulloch, the central character of the short story *How to Get Published* states that "Genius might be the ability to

say a profound thing in a simple way” (*Hot* 151). Other than this, the reader comes across with a more extended version of such an argument of realism in a dialogue between Chinaski and his two girl friends- Gertrude and Hilda- who look as if to be gathered in the passage to carry out a discussion on how long should be the distance between a writer’s works and his standpoint. Hilda asks Chinaski if he really knew all those women whom he writes about in his books, and Chinaski tells her that he is a fiction writer. At that point Hilda wonders what the fiction is? “Fiction is an improvement on life” Chinaski replies, “You mean you lie?” Gertrude interferes, Chinaski retorts in a quite revealing way: “A little. Not too much” (197).

As it is clearly seen, for Bukowski there should be a certain distance enough to preserve the thin line between life experience and literature. When Jean François Duval asks him the question that “Was it not the style that disappointed you in all those books?” Bukowski replies as “they took too long to say too little. And they said it in an uninteresting fashion. They wasted a lot of pages” (144). On another occasion, he also states that he tries “to use the easiest smallest word possible to say anything”, and also adds that he never used a dictionary since he liked his writing “raw, easy and simple” (Duval 157). He also explains his main purpose as to get rid of classical literature’s “confusing, contrived, cloudy and devious” patterns (157). According to him “The language must be a basic language that doesn’t change” (106), however using such a “Basic language does not mean easiness” (qtd. in Duval 97). His life witnesses also define that Charles Bukowski’s writings should not be seen as different from his life. One of them is John Webb, who strives hard to publish Bukowski’s poems in small press with limited budget. Webb expresses that Bukowski has shown himself to be worthy of their hard work; according to Webb Bukowski is a person who “said it like it was” (Sounes 69). Webb’s wife Gypsy Lou also states that they were impressed with the “realness” of Bukowski’s writing, which was “not phony at all” and as an author Bukowski was “very honest and down to earth” (Sounes 48).

As Bukowski writes in the preface to John Fante’s work, the classical writers play “word-tricks” and he supposes that “those who said almost nothing at all were considered excellent writers” (5). He also states that their writing style is “an admixture of subtlety, craft and form” which is nothing more than “a comfortable contrivance, a very slick and careful World-Culture (5). Accordingly, Charles

Bukowski divides the writers into two parts; the ones having the sincerity, and others who do not have it. The most striking expression of this idea is perfectly manifested again by Chinaski in *Women* where he says that “People were usually much better in their letters than in reality. They were much like poets in this way” (187). This is what Bukowski accepts as pretentiousness in writing; according to him, the poetic sound and the real person do not usually match each other “I didn’t have much luck in person with most poets even when their letters and poems were good” (*Women* 167). He opposes people’s admitting idealized images of things or persons in their narratives which make the reality unrecognizable. This idea adducts him to a heartfelt and an abusive language of the market place for the sake of creating a peculiar, laconic form of narrative.

In order to reach a refined summary of Bukowski’s poetic manifestation, his poem *Christmas Poem to a Man in Jail* might be useful where he sums up the poetic style that he idealizes. The poem is mainly built on a literary polemic between prisoners; and he writes it in a highly creative and humorous manner so as to make his ideas easily perceived. He perfectly manifests his literary views about form and content in a highly concise way by using the possibilities of the poetic language: within a few lines, as much as he pictures an idealized writer, he also draws a compatible reader profile as well. In his choosing a prison as the space of his poem, one might even see a symbolism, or some indirect references to a carnival sense of the world; which is to say the prison here, with respect to its being the lowest caste in the system of hierarchy, may represent the lowest level that art may have to land on.

A poet sends his poems to his buddy staying in a neighbouring cell in prison. Bill Abbot is the receiver of the poems, at the same he is the mediator who delivers the poems to the other prisoners. In the first stanza, the poet declares his ideas about how a writer can get on the reader with an emphasis on simplicity and intimacy. He tells that a writer should sense the requirements of the readers at the outset, within a sense of empathy;

but literature, you know, is difficult for the
average man to assimilate (and for the unaverage man too);
I don’t like most poetry, for example,
so I write mine the way I like to read it. (115)

These lines above may be accepted as Bukowski's motto of *smallest word as possible* which he would defend all his life. From that point on, the poem goes on with praises to William, since he longed for a clear language to provide poetry with a recruitment; the poet says that "w.c. Williams came along and asked everybody to clear up the language" and then turning the attention to himself assertively, he adds that: "then/I came along" (115). Next stanza continues by the poet's complaints on art since it could not have reached its potential to compete with the life; he maintains that "maybe if we write well enough/and live a little better/life will improve/just out of shame" (115). Later he defends the idea that the artists must be accused for their comfortably numbness and their incompetence;

maybe the artists haven't been powerful
enough
maybe the politicians, the generals, the judges,
the priests, the police, the pimps, the businessmen have been too
strong? I don't. (115)

For the sake of protesting the abstractions in literature, he emphasizes the lack of poetic subjectivity; "that art hasn't improved life like it /should, maybe because it has been too/private? (116). These lines may be symbolically referred to Bakhtin's definitions on Rabelais's imitators who according to him, by starting a mitigation in "the character of genre and manners" weakened their universalism (62). According to Bakhtin "When the grotesque is used to illustrate an abstract idea, its nature is inevitably distorted [...] The abstract idea distorts this nature of the grotesque image. It transforms the center of gravity to a "moral" meaning" (62). Here the imprisoned poet calls for a similar type of objectivity which he prescribes as a point of view for poetry; although all the poets in the history and also the living ones have had the same troubles as he has practiced; with "women/ government/ God/ love/ hate...wives, and so forth" (116), they pretend as if the real problem were not those. The poet here emphasizes that the current poetry deals with nonexistent, the abstracted and idealized issues, whereas life itself presents the most valuable issues enough to make poetry.

Other than the content, in the poem Bukowski also manifests his ideas related to form; he says that he heard some prisoners didn't like his punctuation, such as the

way he places the commas; and he adds that “and also the way I digress/in order to say something precisely” (116), so he starts to unburden himself on the occasion, on both form and style; “ah, he doesn’t realize the intent/which is/to loosen up, humanize, relax, (117). He maintains his ideas on minimalism in literature in a metaphorical manner;

...the word should be like

butter or avocados or

steak or hot biscuits, or onion rings or

whatever is really

needed.

it should be almost as if you could pick up the words and

eat them. (117)

One of the most striking parts of the poem is the stanza where the reader can easily see a parallelism between Bukowski’s literary concepts with Bakhtin’s ideas again. In the following lines, as if he is discussing Bakhtin’s notions of polyphony or dialogism, he signifies the same entailment for the artists to empathize with other lives without capitulating from their literary styles.

However

an artist can wander and still maintain

essential form. Dostoevsky did it.

he usually told 3 or 4 stories on the side

while telling the one in the center (in his novels, that is). (117)

Considering Bukowski’s criticism above, one can easily say that the literary concept, that he distils from his self cultivation process is marked by realism in subject and liquidness and frankness in technique. In this respect his poetic desire may also be associated with the *parrhesia* which was used as a tool of rhetoric in ancient times, which according to Foucault, was most efficiently used by cynics (*Fearless* 119). In order to become a *parrhesiastes* Bukowski uses the dirtiest words that he derives from the streets similar to what Rabelais previously did in his age. In brief, it can be stated that Bukowski eschews censoring himself as a precaution to be censored; he

never capitulates from his language or from choosing his subject matters freely, and this is what makes him a little bit closer to the spirit of the carnivalized literature. As Sounes states the reason for Bukowski's enduring appeal is his being an "extraordinarily honest man" (xi). This is one of the main qualities of his literary style on which most of the critics acknowledge; this quality is something on which he builds his literary career, and which delays his success at the same time. Duval defines Bukowski's obsession with realism in a concise way: "The brutality of reality is matched by the brutality of words. His blows are precise and tight" (Duval 106). It should be also noted that being a parrhesiastes creates great problems for Bukowski's in his literary career; his frankness causes him to be excluded both from literary circles and to have some problems with legacy as well. John Bryan, who publishes one of Bukowski's explicit stories in which he tells the "sexual antics of an underage girl", is arrested by police (Sounes 93). And his bluntness also ends his friendships. Even John Bryan, one of his publishers, getting angry with Bukowski's outspokenness, makes a word play of his name as "Bullshitski" (Sounes 93).

As Bakhtin states "Every age has its own norms of official speech and propriety" (*Rabelais* 188). In his age, Bukowski's literary technique is frequently associated with *dirty realism* which denotes a language far away from euphemism. Dirty realism is close to the language of public place with its focus on the lowlife and the underbelly elements; it is conceptualized as a new kind of a literary etiquette in the 1980s to refer to a genre that deals with the lower and repulsive human realities. Amongst the most prominent figures are some short story writers such as Raymond Carver, Jane Ann Phillips and Tobias Wolff (Baldick 91-92). Most often the term is used to refer to "a tendency for their stories to recount incidents of impoverished life among blue-collar workers in small-town America, in a bare, unsensational style" (92). The term is coined by Bill Buford, editor of *Granta*, to refer to a "comparatively small school of down beat minimalist short fiction writers" (Ousby 260). *Granta* #8, which is published in 1983, is on Dirty Realism and here the term is described as "a fiction of different scope-and devoted to the local details the nuances, the little disturbances in language and gesture" (qtd. in Hemmingson 11). The term is explained in *Granta* 8 as follows:

The fiction of a new generation of American authors. They write about the belly-side of contemporary life-a deserted husband, an unwed mother, a car

thief, a pickpocket, a drug addict-but they write about it with a disturbing detachment, at times verging on comedy. Understated, ironic, sometimes savage, but insistently compassionate, these stories constitute a new voice in fiction. ("Dirty Realism")

However, it is highly surprising that Bukowski is not included in the list where many authors are registered as the first wave representatives of this literary manner. Even when *Granta* handles the subject for the second time in *Granta 19* as the "more dirt" Charles Bukowski is not given a seat again, in this second conceptualization attempt. However according to Hemmingson Charles Bukowski – who is accepted as "the godfather of this sub-genre, followed by Carver" by many other critics– is one of the most important representatives of the movement (11). Hemmingson asks the question that " Bukowski's Dirty Realism is too obvious-the drunk, the unemployed, the hopeless-does it get any more lower middle class American than that?" (15).

As Hemmingson puts it, Bukowski obviously represents the American middle class in his writings; he deals with people's second language, their second life, or which can be shortly defined as American people's carnival for the benefit of this study. In this respect, all the discussions so far can be accepted as the proof of a relationship between Bukowski and a carnival sense of the world, which is properly explained through Bakhtin's vision and conceptualizations. Bukowski's literary style– whether it is categorized as dirty realism or not or involved in any other literary manners– bears the energies of a kind of self renewing public expressionism which is replete with archaic symbols and which, according to Bakhtin, owes its immortality to its being protected and literalized by literary genres. Bakhtin asserts that the carnivalistic elements may represent themselves in various forms by showing some differences due to the special characteristics of the age in which they reincarnate. Bukowski combines his desk studies in L.A. public library with his succeeding life experiences; and by using his special talent, he sustains a literary convention which is marked by an offbeat sense of humour and folkloric language. As it has been adequately defined so far through Bakhtin's vision, this type of writing may be traced back to classic antiquity, later to renaissance and it can be also exemplified in the subsequent genres as a result of an ongoing literary convention: from his interest that he shows to the veiled parts of human bodies using the dirtiest words as possible, to the humour and criticism that he never leaves out in his works, Bukowski shows a

great similarity to the preceding authors of carnivalized literature. In Bukowski's prose it is possible to observe the traces of such a carnival convention with both obvious and subtle references. At times his characters present the Rabelaisian gaiety in market places fighting, swearing, drinking and laughing; in some instances it is possible to see them in symposia-like atmospheres, paraphrasing some Socratic dialogues to clear up some philosophical issues; or they show up in some gloomy places like cemeteries while they are contemplating on death within a pathetic sort of humour. To exemplify all the points discussed so far, this chapter will respectively extract the most illustrative examples from Bukowski's novels.

3.3. Socratic Method, Dialogue, and Dialogism in Bukowski

Socratic Method - which is structured by Socrates to drag out the true words from his pupils' mouths- is named as *maieutike* by Ancient Greeks since they see a correspondence between his method and an incident of birth. Socrates called himself the *midwife* as he provoked and compressed his pupils to give birth to truth (Hallo 86). Compayre and Pane argue that Socrates, through his dialectic method, "wished to make war against error and to refute false opinions" (23). Bakhtin also points out that this provocative technique of Socrates functions by: "juxtaposing various points of view on a specific object" which is called *syncrisis*; and also by "eliciting and provoking the words of one's interlocutor, forcing him to express his opinion and express it thoroughly" which he calls as *anacrisis* (*Problems* 110). According to Bakhtin,

Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction. Socrates called himself a "pander": he brought people together and made them collide in a quarrel, and as a result truth was born: with respect to this emerging truth Socrates called himself a "midwife," since he assisted at the birth. (110)

Actually the dialogic factor—which Bakhtin signifies as a novel making facility—is a product of an author's intuition and vision and it is acquired by large scaled experiences and observations in a sense of scientific curiosity. The dialogic function

in novel is mainly used to reinforce the ability to empathize; as Holquist puts it “in dialogism consciousness is otherness” (*Dialogism*17). Regarding Holquist’s words one can say that the dialogic effect in the novel is possible to be achieved through a kind of author’s scepticism or as a consequence of some unauthorized permeations to other people’s minds. Similarly, Bakhtin explains the dialogism in Dostoevsky’s prose as a factor resulting from such a scepticism and obsession with the truth; Bakhtin maintains that Dostoevsky constantly provokes his characters to refine the most realistic results; he states that “Dostoevsky seeks words and plot situation that provoke, tease, extort, dialogize” (39). According to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky develops his plot situation in a manner similar to the symposia where Socrates and his pupils incite their ideas until even a single crumb of truth does not remain latent in their minds. Bakhtin later suggests for Dostoevsky that “Where others saw a single thought, he was able to find and feel out two thoughts, a bifurcation; where others saw a single quality, he discovered in it the presence of a second and contradictory quality. Everything that seemed simple became, in his world, complex and multi-structured (*Problems* 30). On the other hand, Bakhtin asserts that Socratic Dialogue is carnivalesque: he argues that it is “not a rhetorical genre. It grows out of a folk-carnivalistic base and thoroughly saturated with a carnival sense of the world” (*Problems* 109).

Symposia are drinking parties in the ancient Greek world which are “convivial occasions for passing the cup, reciting snatches of poetry, singing songs, telling jokes, and performing pantomimes” which are also marked by their male dominated structures (Cooksey 1). Frye accepts the symposium as “the extreme limit of social comedy” which according to him can be best observed in Plato’s work (286). Additionally, he argues that the vision of Socrates in Plato’s dialogues “moves toward an integration of society in a form like that of the symposium itself, the dialectic festivity which, as is explained in the opening of the *Laws*, is the controlling force that holds society together” (286).

Accordingly, even if some fundamental presentations in Bukowski’s novels—such as the parti-coloured structure constituted by participations of characters from all layers of social classes, or the evident masculinity and the free public language—are singly examined, one might easily say that Charles Bukowski’s works evidently bear the stamp of a dialogism which is fed from a carnival sense as it is held in the

symposium descriptions in Plato's works. In Bukowski's novel it is possible to see different lives and personalities are collided; prostitutes or thieves, businessmen and artists given right to speak in an entertaining and engrossing atmosphere. Generally speaking, this cosmopolitan structure can be symbolically referred to the gatherings of Socrates and his pupils in the banquets. Considering it through Bakhtin's vision, it can be suggested that the truth in Bukowski's text is not produced by a single brain; but by such a subscription of the people to his novel.

On the other hand, as it is frequently defined by his entourage, Bukowski is extremely obsessed with revealing the truth. According to John Martin, the founder of Black Sparrow press, Bukowski expresses the matters in a so clear way that he does not leave any doubt; Martin states that "He hated any kind of dishonesty, he hated deceit" (Sounes xi). Actually, the quality that Martin underlines is one of the most prominent factors that endear Bukowski's writings. Later Martin concisely explains this special quality stating that "here comes this voice out of nowhere and you have no doubt what he means, and what he is trying to say" (Sounes 83).

The dialogical factor, which is defined as the general characteristics of Bukowski's work above, can be observed in a one-to-one similarity to the rawest forms of the Socratic dialogues. Bukowski, as it is in the Socratic Method, structures his dialogues in a way that enables him to compress his characters, most often for the sake of revealing a truth. In his dialogues, he mostly parodies some political or philosophical debates, and deals with the artefact in human relations, sexuality, love, art and so on. If some of his dialogues are deeply examined, it can also be seen that Bukowski paraphrases or retells some classical arguments of ancient philosophy with his own jargon which can also be counted as an important proof of his applications to the preceding literary genres. Such restructurings unavoidably remind us Bakhtin's definition whereby he states that the carnivalized genres use "retold dialogues, parodies on high genres, parodically reinterpreted citations" (*Problems* 108).

A typical example exists in one of Bukowski's short stories in *Hot Water Music* where the central character of the story benefits from the favours of *syncretism* and *anacrisis* in order to comment on sexuality and love. According to the story Meg and Tony take Tony's wife to the airport. Right after the plane takes off they decide to sit in the airport bar to have a drink. As soon as they are seated, Tony immediately attempts to seduce Meg, but Meg, even though he shows a recognizable enthusiasm

for the idea, withstands this temptation since she both feels a loyalty for Tony's wife and considers such an act as adultery; "I wonder if I can trust you?" she says. Tony vulgarly asks in a provoking tone "Don't you like to be fucked?", "That's not the point" the woman replies. Tony wonders what the point is. The woman again remarks that she and Tony's wife are friends, but Tony does not retrieve and continues his attack "We can be friends" he says, "Not that way" replies the woman. Tony at that point tries to agitate her by teasing her saying that she is old fashioned: "It's the modern age" he says "People swing. They're uninhibited. They fuck from the ceiling. They screw dogs, babies, chickens, fish" (67). The dialogue so far, regardless from the dirty language Tony uses, recalls those which take part in ordinary sexual stories. However, as the dialogue progresses, it becomes clear that it bears some deeper connotations being more than basically sexual. In fact Tony's real purpose is to drag the woman into a conversation by which he wishes to question what the real love is. He clearly knows that the woman, sooner or later will join it; so he provokes her: "I like to choose" says the woman "I have to care" (67). Those words allows Tony to start his argument "That's so damned corny" he says, "The caring is already built-in. Then if you cultivate the caring long enough the next thing you know you think it's love" (67). However the woman cannot still recognize what is wrong with love; Tony explains it: "Love is a form of prejudice" he says "You love what you need, you love what makes you feel good, and you love what is convenient. How can you say you love one person when there are ten thousand people in the world that you would love more if you ever met them? But you'll never meet them" (67).

Actually the dialogue between Tony and Meg is remarkable with its similarity to one of the Socratic dialogues included in Plato's *Lysis* where Socrates and his pupils question the same issue. Socrates, following a similar discussion with his pupils, states that "So whenever one person desires or lusts after another person, boys[...]he wouldn't feel desire or lust or affection unless he were in some respect to close to his beloved, thanks to his soul or to some cast of his mind or to his personality or to his appearance" (95). Strikingly both dialogues end nearly with the same words which finally persuade people: In Bukowski's dialogue Meg says that "All right, so we do the best we can" (67) on the other hand, Socrates' dialogue ends as follows " 'Quite so,' Menexenus said, but *Lysis* kept quiet" (95).

Such a similarity, rather than being a plagiarism, in a way reinforces Bakhtin's suggestions about the existence of a literary repository once again; this is a literary heritage for carnivalized genres, which is renewed and reinterpreted through ages by being adapted to the changing conditions. In this respect, one can say that Bukowski achieves the same thing as Plato who also reproduces Socrates' dialogues in his own way, as one of his pupils. This means that, the literary material, which Bukowski acquires through his readings on classical literature may have turned up as some renewed and reinterpreted versions in his up-to-date dialogues. However, the main point here is how Bukowski uses the Socratic Method, and his techniques, such as *syncrisis* and *anacrisis*, to prove a fact or to unmask a reality in a similar way to Socrates. In the dialogue above, he argues love as a product of some sexual desires, and as a conclusion of bodily requirements; therefore, he tries to rename and redefine the conception of love in a realistic way. As it is in that example the sexual issues which are held by Bukowski mostly have more serious expansions under their appearances. In addition to the artificiality in love, he also discusses the same hypocrisy in the (so-called) gender equality alleged to exist in male and female relations. Looking through Bukowski's vision, in a world of competitiveness and greed, love and sexuality become subjects which frequently speculated for economical exploitation, or referring to Foucauldian perspective, which are speculated for the sake of "intensive work imperative" (*The History* 6). Bukowski like Foucault, discusses the relationship between production efficiency and the systematic pressure on sexuality and sexes. The difference is that Bukowski parodies and simplifies those highly complicated topics in his own way and own jargon. Such an argument finds one of its most striking expressions in a dialogue between Becky and Chinaski where the woman complains about inequality in their relationship; "Me working and you lying around. All the neighbors think I am supporting you" she says, and Chinaski replies as "Hell, I worked and *you* laid around" (*Post* 54). However these two events are different from each other according to the woman; as she says "you are a man, I'm a woman" (54). But Chinaski does not believe in such an idea of equality between sexes. He thinks that equality is something that is easily abandoned by women as the opportunity arises; thus he retorts as; "Oh, I didn't know that. I thought you bitches were always screaming for equal rights?" (54).

Actually what this and other examples have in common is that they all bear a subtle humour which is at the same time one of the main characteristics of Socratic dialogue. Even though it is not too evident at first glance, in Bukowski's subtext there is always a social criticism.

As it has been exemplified so far, Bukowski uses various writing techniques, most often to provide a problem with an answer, or to demonstrate an irregularity that he recognizes in any issue. He maintains his arguments with an effective use of dialogues; at the same time he applies to various other genres; such as articles, poetry, prose or letters, even at times, he benefits from visual opportunities. But most important of all, regardless of whatever he explains, he definitely adds humour to his writings as a digestive element. If it is deeply examined, one can see that he sometimes benefits from a type of humour which may have possibly passed to him from his predecessors, from some classical authors like Dostoevsky, Turgenev, or maybe a little from James Joyce. Actually, it is possible to find some former examples of that type of humour in the works of Dostoevsky or Joyce. For the purpose of this study this type of humour can be conditionally named as *graveyard humour* which will be exemplified with some quotations from the passages of those which take part during funerals where the characters contemplate on death within the similar places and manners.

3.4. Laughter and Graveyard Humour in Bukowski

The dead themselves the men anyhow would like to hear an odd joke or the women to know what's in fashion. A juicy pear or ladies' punch, hot strong sweet. Keep out the damp. You must laugh sometimes so better do it that way. (Joyce "Ulysses" 138)

There is nothing wrong in considering Bukowskian type of humour in terms of a well-known pragmatic approach that idealizes an act of thinking through laughter—which is mostly ascribed to the purposeful literary works. The carnival laughter also has such specific purposes beyond laughter; so does Bukowski. At that point what becomes questionable is the object of the contemplation that Bukowski wants to direct his readers; in other words, the sort and the aim of humour should be defined in Bukowski's prose.

Northrop Frye defines that “Even in laughter itself some kind of deliverance from the unpleasant, even the horrible, seems to be very important” (46). On the other hand Dobozy seems to have found such dark motifs in Bukowski’s writings that Frye supposes to be existing in laughter; Dobozy states that “Bukowski plays with a generic ambiguity between fiction and autobiography to present a fatalistic but comic view of the American underclass” (474). It is clear that Dobozy senses the dark humour underlying Bukowski’s text. At times, the object of humour becomes the most serious issues for Bukowski; that is to say, not only he deals with social issues but also achieves it in a humoristic way: even the people, whom he socially defends in his novels, become the object of such humour in some occasions.

Previously, we set up a connection between Bukowski and naturalist connection for he cared about labour and its exploitation; and also he dealt with the dead-end in which people live hopelessly. It was also noted that Bukowski blended his observations on society with a subtle humour which distinguishes him from classical naturalism. As Hemmingson states “Bukowski finds humor in tragedy around” which properly distinguishes Bukowski’s odd realism from the other manners of realism (15). Hemmingson, comparing Bukowski with Raymond Carver, states that Bukowski’s characters do not bemoan as Carver’s do; according to Hemmingson “The Carver character hopes for better days, waits for them; Bukowski’s characters know there won’t be better days and so they live it the best they can in the moment” (15). According to Hemmingson “Bukowski’s characters have accepted their fates and condition” (15). Actually, Hemmingson’s point can be easily associated with Sisyphus who is convinced to carry a rock on his back and who later becomes happy by sympathizing with his penalty. Albert Camus defines that the gods punish Sisyphus thinking that “there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labour” (115). Camus associates Sisyphus’s condition with today’s proletariat; “The workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks and this fate is no less absurd” (117). He considers Sisyphus as a happy person for he finally gets the gods out of the way by recognizing that “His fate belongs to him. His rock is his thing” (118). Camus finds an idea of optimism in that infinite struggle of Sisyphus; according to him “The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy” (119). Likewise, The characters in Bukowski’s novels manifest themselves in such a Sisyphus-like

submissiveness; that's to say, they are not same as those who chase their fates like the dogs chase their tails; they have already given up longing for better conditions or better living and enjoy the burden on their shoulders instead.

Baughan notes that Bukowski's *Factotum* –is usually categorized by some critics as a work characteristically similar to John Fantes's *Ask the Dust*, Hamsun's *Hunger* and George Orwell's *Down and out in Paris and London*; and comparing *Factotum* with those three books, he concludes that the thing that makes Bukowski's work different from those authors' is "its edgy intermingling of nihilism and humor, somehow maintaining a revolutionary stance against capitalism without taking itself very seriously or to resorting to political polemic" (87). For example, to the contrary of its dramatic content, *Post Office* is most often considered as a comic work, as Sounes states "Post Office is very funny, a humor which leavens all the other ingredients. As Bukowski was fond of saying, Hemingway was a great writer but his books aren't a barrel of laughs" (105). According to Hemmer "Bukowski's staccato prose and maverick grammar take us through the underbelly of city life that is full of horror and humor" (84). Here Hemmer's applying those conflicting terms together—such as *horror* and *humor*—constitute one of the most enabling word combinations as it explains the reason why Bukowski's prose is proper to be examined as a genre of carnivalized literature. What Hemmer apparently defines is a juxtaposition of laughter and seriousness in the same text; this is actually a reference to the carnivalization of the one sided seriousness of high literature. Miles also draws attention to the compliance of another conflicting terms in Bukowski's work; as he states Bukowski "wrote a very serious melodrama with a lot of humour, and it often had a lot of soul" (39).

However Bukowski's satire does not too much stray from the reality. With an analogy, the humour in his works can be symbolically referred to a *carnival mirror* which, as a comic reflector, distorts the image but preserves its real form recognizable at the same time; this means that, through Bukowskian type of humour, an object which is tragic in real life may become ridiculous after it has been redacted; that's to say, the laughter occurs as a reflection of readers who see their own reality within that distorted image. In *Ham on Rye* Chinaski makes that point clear with a reference to Turgenev; "Turgenev was a serious fellow but he could make me laugh because a truth first encountered can be very funny. When someone else's truth is the

same as your truth, and he seems to be saying it just for you, that's great" (153). Bukowski's humour is also reflexive: in the mirror he reflects both the society that he lives in and himself in a self critical manner, as Sounes states "Humour is often the companion of honesty, and Bukowski was the first to laugh at himself, as he laughed at the crazy world around him" (xi). Sounes' words stiffen the relationship between Bukowski's humour and carnival laughter; as Bakhtin suggests the festive laughter "is also directed at those who laugh" (*Rabelais* 12). Therefore, it would be useful to remember the characteristics of the laughter which Bakhtin conceptualizes.

As it is discussed in the preceding chapters, Bakhtin portrays a festive laughter which is unofficial in nature; and it intends to destroy the high seriousness of official pressure. Secondly, it varies in dosage which shows differences from one genre to another; even sometimes it may not look like a real laughter as it becomes dark, quiet and deep. Regarding those points, one can say that the laughter that Bakhtin characterizes is similar to a surreptitious laughter which is necessarily suppressed under some serious conditions; say the one that erupts in the serious atmospheres of funerals. The festive laughter that Bakhtin points at is similar to that furtive *graveyard laughter* which is "deeply buried in the background" just like the dead people underground; but it still "continues to determine the structure of the image" (*Problems* 164). For those reasons, Bakhtin also elaborates on the main characteristics of such laughter also by examining it in such funeral atmospheres. He figures out such a graveyard humour in Dostoevsky's story *Bobok* which he calls as "one of the greatest menippea in all world literature" (*Problems* 137-138). He states that the protagonist of the story, Ivan Ivanovitch, is a drunkard, an ostracised author who "polemicizes with the editors who refuse to print his words [...] and with the contemporary public not capable of understanding humor", according to Bakhtin he is simply "not like everyone else" as a person (138). Bakhtin focuses on some odd behaviours of Ivanovitch that he shows during a funeral: he chuckles, indifferently goes to eat something leaving the funeral, and also contemplates on death with an unusual manner: "I kept glancing at the faces of the dead cautiously distrusting my impressionability. Some had a mild expression, some looked unpleasant" (qtd. in *Rabelais* 139). Bakhtin finds various carnivalistic images analyzing Dostoevsky's symbolism in that funeral scene; for example in Ivanovitch's throwing a piece bread to the ground, he sees an apparent sense of the ancient folklore. According to

Bakhtin, there is something about harvest and renewal in that act of Ivanovitch, as he says “throwing bread on the ground is permitted, for that is sowing, fructification; throwing it on the floor is forbidden, for that is barren soil” (139). Bakhtin also senses a subtle humour in Ivanovitch’s listening in the conversation of the dead people in the graveyard (139-140).

On the other hand, in order to elaborate on Bakhtin’s point some other expansions can be acquired from Joyce’s work *Ulysses* in which Joyce also presents such an odd type of graveyard humour in the *Hades* part of his book *Ulysses* where he narrates Paddy Dignam’s funeral (107- 146). Actually the passage parodies Odysseus’s descent to Hades which takes part in Homer’s *Odyssey*. The event is narrated through a set of jokes and obscene talks. At the same time, using the technique of *stream of consciousness*, Joyce also sneaks into people’s brains to fish out raw ideas yet unshaped. Both this passage and Joyce’s work in general bear some carnivalistic qualities according to some scholars. Kevin Dettmar states that the jokes during Dignam’s funeral aim to destroy “the high seriousness of the occasion” but at the same time “everyone else realizes that there is nothing truly disrespectful about this graveyard humor” (198). Dettmar additionally states that “for despite the “grave” deportment dictated by the English way of death, a native Irish carnivalesque spirit strains to breathe through” (198). May be the most distinctive argument to prove this idea is Bloom’s inner voice which says; “Far away a donkey brayed. Rain. No such ass. Never see a dead one, they say. Shame of death. They hide” (139). Looking through Bakhtin’s vision, Bloom’s words are completely charged with references to a carnival sense of the world and they can easily be associated with the carnival perception which accepts decease as a regular incident within a death- renewal philosophy. However with a special focus on the donkey image, one might also realize that the donkey here stands as a typical carnivalesque figure whose distinctive characteristic is also explained in the first chapter of this study. Here, in the passage, the donkey looks as if it is deliberately placed in the funeral scene by Joyce to manifest the commitment of his text to the carnival sense of the world; looking from that aspect, here Joyce seems to be attempting to restore the ass’s reputation in the modern world.

Bukowski fictionalizes his father’s funeral in his two short stories titled as *The Death of the Father I, II* where he shows some similarities to both Dostoevsky

and Joyce. In the first part Henry, the central character, meets his father's girlfriend during the funeral. Even though they have just met, not long after a scandalous kissing scene they go home and make love; and they even miss the burial next day. Later, Henry explains that situation ironically: "We had forgotten to drive to the cemetery to watch the old man dropped into the hole. I had wanted to see that. That was the only good part of the thing" (165). In the second part, he shows up scattering his father's commodities, bestowing them upon the neighbours; such as the pictures on the walls, the sofa, the toaster, silverware, garden tools, fruits and marmalade except a fifth of whiskey. Henry warns the neighbours to leave the whiskey and adds in a humoristic way "They left me the garden hose, the bed the refrigerator and stove, and a roll of toilet paper" (169). While he is narrating the funeral Henry says that "My father's funeral was a cold hamburger" in a dualistic way referring to the theme of death and decay, and the dullness of funeral atmosphere. In the following lines he says that "I sat across from the funeral parlor in Alhambra and had a coffee" (161), which resembles Ivanovitch's act in *Bobok* who also goes to eat and drink something leaving the graveyard. At the same time, during the funeral, like Bloom and Ivanovitch, Henry contemplates on death within a sense of humour: "Death was so dull" he says "That was the worst thing about death. It was dull. Once it happened there wasn't anything you could do. You couldn't play tennis with it or turn it into a box of bonbons. It was there like a flat tire was there. Death was stupid" (164). This contemplation immediately reminds us Bloom's words in *Ulysses* who describes death as in the following lines: "Broken heart. A pump after all, pumping thousands of gallons of blood every day. One fine day it gets bunged up and there you are. Lots of them lying around here: lungs, hearts, livers. Old rusty pumps: damn the thing else. The resurrection and the life. Once you are dead you are dead (133).

Above are some extracts from three stories which were written in different times and locations; it is clear that they show great similarities with respect to both their manner and the humour they contain. It is evident that all those stories have a partnership on a certain issue, and the cemetery looks like a deliberate choice of stage for each writers. The common point here is that each author finds something laughable in such a serious event like decease. In this respect, such graveyard humour symbolically gives us a formula of the carnival laughter which bears a dualism by nature: undoubtedly, people become most serious while they gather in a

cemetery for a funeral; however, for Bakhtin, this seriousness is inconsistent with the ancient carnival sense of the world in which death was accepted and welcomed within a sense of death-regeneration philosophy. In the former passages there is a recognizable attempt to regain such a carnival sense. Bakhtin maintains that “the public at large almost completely forgot the principle of laughter presented in macabre images...The theme of death as renewal, the combination of death and birth” (*Rabelais* 51). In this context, if the graveyard is taken as a symbol of formality and conventionality, then such a graveyard humour—which undermines the seriousness of that atmosphere—may be symbolically referred to carnival’s unofficial and opponent structure which destroys the one-sided seriousness, and the entrenched prejudices of the world of formality. Actually there is no evident information to say whether Bukowski wrote his stories taking those narratives of Joyce and Dostoevsky as trailblazers or not. However in all cases, writing in a similar way to Dostoevsky and Joyce on the same issue, he shows his enthusiasm and tendency to yield in accordance with the tradition which is accepted by Bakhtin as a part of carnivalistic folklores. According to Bakhtin Dostoevsky’s work is carnivalized; however, he makes no comment on Joyce; but this does not mean James Joyce is not a part of the tradition that Bakhtin conceptualizes. Bakhtin’s reticence is mostly associated with his living under the oppressive conditions of Stalin’s period; as Clark and Holquist state Bakhtin “effectively had two choices as regards Joyce, to attack him or not to mention him” (317).

Briefly, laughter in Bukowski’s work is sometimes identical with that graveyard humour which is mostly deep, vague and silent; even at times it is so cryptic that it looks like a serious act rather than laughter. However, sometimes the laughter, that Bukowski puts against official pressure and authority, becomes an overt challenge which he presents through more apparent carnivalesque images similar to the examples in Rabelais work; this means that, like Rabelais, Bukowski also achieves humour through a successful usage of a cheerful, sarcastic and joyful public rhetoric. Charles Bukowski’s language consists of such daily speeches, curses, insults, degradations, or in Bakhtin’s words, the “characteristic accessories of a carnival complex” (161). That’s to say, he also makes efficient use of the marketplace language as well as that insidious graveyard humour in order to destroy the built-in values and create the festive laughter.

3.5. The Marketplace Language in Bukowski's novels

"Most illustrious toppers...most precious poxies" are the opening words of Rabelais's prologue in *Gargantua* (3). "This address," says Bakhtin "immediately creates the familiar tone of the further conversation with the readers", which according to him, mimics "the announcement of a barker speaking to the crowd gathered in front of his booth" (168).

This type of addressing is also familiar in both Bukowski's works and his real life, which can be best observed during his poetry sessions where he praises his own poetry or teases the audience by using this manner. Sounes argues that "Bukowski manipulated the crowd of sixteen hundred with consummate skill, asking them disarmingly: 'Isn't this boring? Before giving a captivating reading'" (140). Sounes also reports an interesting anecdote between Allen Ginsberg and Bukowski, which takes part during one of the poetry readings they participate in. Sounes states that Bukowski announces Allen Ginsberg within a "mock-seriousness" addressing the audience as "Ladies and gentleman, we've got Allen Ginsberg as guest of honor tonight. Can you believe it?" (141). In his next sentence, praise, teasing and mockery intertwine, as if he is trying to convince people to sell them something with an address that recalls a Barker in the marketplace: "Allen Ginsberg!...A man of genius, the first poet to cut through light and consciousness for two thousand years and these bastards don't even appreciate it" (141). Later he starts mocking Ginsberg directly addressing him "Everybody knows that after *Howl* you never wrote anything worth a shit"; then he turns and asks it to the audience "Has Allen written anything worth a shit since *Howl* and kay-dish?" (141). But it is surprising that, instead of showing a susceptibility, Ginsberg joins the mockery and corrects the misspelling of his book as "Kaddish" as if he is hooked on the fluency of that common language (141). Here Ginsberg's involvement in this swordplay also recalls the structure of the carnival laughter in which everyone participates. Consequently, Bukowski increases the tone of his mockery: "Allen, you're tearing me apart. You're barracuda, Allen, eating me up with your tongue" (141).

It can be said that such conversations in Bukowski usually find sympathetic responses, as in the example of Ginsberg, owing their indebtedness to their recognizable carnivalesque nature. A part from his poetry readings, Bukowski

practises upon that easy communication style as a rhetorical vehicle to support his prose, and poetry. He uses it to degrade, to criticize, and also to create laughter. One of the most striking examples of such an address can be observed in *Factotum* where the reader sees Chinaski as a manager in an employment office, bespeaking to the people again in a Barker's tone. According to the passage, some dishwashers are needed to be hired for the company where he works; Chinaski gathers a number of bums around him to choose some of them for the job: "All right now," he says, and adds within a sincere tone "we need five good men! Five *good* ones!" (193). He continues his speech as if he is making an announcement in the market place: "No winos, perverts, communists, or child-molesters!" and he maintains the dialogue with scatology; "Hey, buddy, over here! Give a guy a break!..O.K., you with the shit-stain on your collar...Step forward" (193). From now on a mutual dog fight starts between the parties. The bum who is subjected to the teasing is also fluent in the same language, he retorts using the same humorous tone preserving the marketplace tongue: "That's no shit stain, sir. That's gravy" he says (193). Finally Chinaski finishes the dialogue with his Diogenes-like quick wit, "Well, I don't know, buddy, looks to me like you been eatin' more crotch than roast beef!" (193). Then comes a typical market place laughter; "Ah, hahaha," went the bums, "Ah, hahaha!" (193). As a result of that laughter, the reader knows that nobody is offended and that is nothing more than a common and sincere type of communication.

Bukowski's works are usually charged with numerous examples of such dialogues. Yet another striking one can be extracted from his work *Post Office* where Bukowski applies the same manner above; but this time referring to the lower bodily stratum, and genitals. Chinaski, who gets angry after a debate with his supervisor, shouts at him as; "If I stay on that stool much longer I am going to leap up on top those tin cases and start running around whistling *Dixie* from my asshole and *Mammy's Little Children Love Shortnin' Bread* through the frontal orifice" (187). In another one Jorg, the central character of the short story *Less Delicate than the Locust*, responds his girlfriend "You will eat, sleep, fuck, piss, shit, clothe yourself, walk around and bitch", when she asks him the question "What will I do when you die?" (*Hot* 11). Likewise, almost all his characters, regardless of their gender, are vocalized by the same public place language; also the female characters use that

public language; just like Chinaski's girlfriend who – in order to describe a sense of fear– says that “Jesus, I almost shit myself!” (*Post* 95).

Bukowski excludes too little from that common grammar, on the contrary he enriches it. He preserves the folkloric references to genitals, scatology and elements of lower bodily stratum of this language as they are; at the same time he decorates it with bizarre body descriptions, which can be counted as typical examples of *grotesque realism*. He uses those hyperbolic images as a tool of a specific kind of criticism, even sometimes to accomplish a revenge philosophy aimed against formality; as Miles states “his only weapons against authority were irony, sarcasm and silence” (40).

3.5.1. Grotesque Realism and the Material Bodily Principle in Bukowski

Bakhtin essentially explains grotesque realism as “Not only parody in its narrow sense but all the other forms of grotesque realism degrade, bring down to earth, turn their subject in to flesh” (*Rabelais* 20). Additionally he states that “The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all which is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity” (19-20). Related with that item, Duval argues that Bukowski's writings can be perfectly identified with the grotesque characters which are represented in Charlie Chaplin's movies:

In life, as in his writing, Bukowski observed the same rule. He overdid things a little in order to both endow them with more expressive strength and to accurate their grotesque element. With regard to this caricatured, and thus comic, element (certainly one of the reasons he admired Boccaccio and his *Decameron*), no one-I believe-has commented on the remarkable parallel that can be established between Charlie Chaplin and Charles Bukowski). (108)

As Duval states Bukowski uses the grotesque depictions of the body exactly in a similar way that Bakhtin explains above; that is to say, he uses material bodily elements in an exaggerated way. Firstly he uses them to oppose to the *body idealism* by which the physical flaws are usually sorted out. During their interview with his friend Sean Penn, he criticizes people for the artefact that they cause by negotiating the natural bodily functions by means of euphemism;

You know, we're monstrosities. If we could really see this, we could love ourselves...realize how ridiculous we are, with our intestines wound around, shit slowly running through as we look each other in the eyes and say "I love you," our stuff is carbonizing, turning into shit, and we never fart near each other. It all has a comic edge. ("Though Guys Write Poetry")

Bukowski does not distinguish himself from those monstrous creatures, or in Bakhtin's words, he does not place "himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to" (*Rabelais* 12). This idea can be best exemplified with an example in *Ham on Rye* where he depicts himself and his school friends as if he is talking about a kind of supernatural animals grown up by toxic effluents in sewers; "It was difficult to understand. We were the children in the poorest school, we had the poorest, least educated parents, most of us lived on terrible food, and yet boy for boy we were much bigger than the boys from other grammar schools around the city. Our school was famous. We were feared" (48). Here Bukowski makes an irony of the great gap between his social conditions and the upper class. However, as it is clear from the citation, he does not miss the grotesque opportunity by which he can create laughter: he parodies himself and the children of his society. He describes himself and his friends like Giants, with an impressive and humorous example of insulting his own body by comparing his people with the upper class children from rich districts, which can be counted as a perfect representation of the reflexive carnival humour. Later he continues his mockery telling that, when they lined up for the gym classes, most of them look bigger than gym teachers; "We were a joke but people were careful not to laugh in front of us" (*Ham* 91).

Secondly, Bukowski represents a kind of a revenge philosophy by drawing some distorted images of human bodies. Most often he uses such grotesque degradations in his struggle with officialdom and official personalities. Actually the term "official" here also refers to those who are reconciled with the system and do not have the class consciousness. Bukowski's revenge philosophy through grotesque degradations can be best conceptualized with the words of his spokesman Chinaski who says that "I had imagined myself special because I had come out of the factories at the age of 50 and become a poet. Hot shit. So I pissed on everybody just like those bosses and managers had pissed on me when I was helpless (240). As it is explained in the related chapter, urinary motifs are the most integral elements for the ancient

public folklore which are used to debase and degrade; here Chinaski by using the word “to piss” shows a reflection to the labour exploitation, which can be easily associated with Bakhtin’s terminology for carnivalesque degradation. Bukowski applies grotesque descriptions, in both his struggle with authority and the artificiality in human relations by putting human bodies in funny, caricaturized and ugly shapes; as Sounes states “A heightened sense of absurd is in almost everything he published” (xii). Other than this, he achieves his purpose of degradation by using some other qualities of public folklore: for example he frequently applies to scatology which Bakhtin considers as one of the major items of carnivalistic language; and which also has various symbolic expansions in the world of carnival. Therefore, it becomes a necessity to see how Bukowski adapts that carnivalesque factor to his literary style.

3.5.2. Banquet Image, Scatology

Ham on Rye seems to be one of the most fertile works to scrutinize the role of banquet image and scatology in Charles Bukowski prose. This semi-autobiographical novel draws a straight line from his discoveries of these bodily principles as a child to his integrating them into his language when he grows up. Through some images of bodily functions, Bukowski refers to an ancient life philosophy which is simply based on some conflicting qualities of human body; such as death and renewal, eating drinking and defecation.

In the very beginning of his novel the reader encounters a symposia-like atmosphere where people sit around a table and converse. Chinaski shows up as sitting under the table and questioning the essences of life with references to food consummation. His first epiphany comes with his recognizing people’s inevitable material dependency to the nature; he comes to know where life begins: “People eating, always eating. I ate too” (9). He grasps the life-giving and imaginative power of eating and drinking which according to Bakhtin “are one of the most significant manifestations of the grotesque body [with respect to the body’s] open unfinished nature, its interaction with the world” (*Rabelais* 281). Under that table Chinaski comprehends the significant role of eating as a gateway for the man to understand his true position in the life circle. Chinaski continues to contemplate on those physical functions and vaguely discovers the life making functions of swallowing, growing, decaying and renewing; so he concludes that “Eating seemed very important”(10).

Then he gives a long Rabelaisian list of food which they consume especially on Sunday; such as mashed potato, scrambled eggs and so on (10). He sustains his constant attention towards food consummation all along the book; at the beginning of the second part he also gives a depiction of foods in a picnic basket (13).

According to Bakhtin, there is much more philosophy under the banquet image; he states that, with the help of eating and drinking “man tastes the world, introduces it into his body, makes it part of himself” (*Rabelais* 281). Therefore, for the man to explore the relationship between life and some functions like eating drinking would be a great philosophical profit for him;

Man’s awakening consciousness could not but concentrate on this moment, could not help borrowing from it a number of substantial images determining its interrelation with the world. Man’s encounter with the world in the act of eating is joyful, triumphant; he triumphs over the world, devours it without being devoured himself. The limits between man and the world are erased, to man’s advantage. (281)

Chinaski is also aware of the philosophical benefit that he can get by dealing with such bodily principles. Later on he has a second epiphany whereby he discovers that, not only human life, but completely all creatures progress by the same qualities; this time he observes such food consummation and defecation principle prevailing all over the living species not only human beings, as he says “I closed my eyes and listened to the waves [...] Thousands of fish out there, eating each other. Endless mouths and assholes swallowing and shitting. The whole earth was nothing but mouths and assholes swallowing and shitting, and fucking” (*Ham*167).

Bukowski will integrate all those natural qualities to his literary style. One can analogously say that, by overtly presenting such scatological images, Bukowski achieves the same thing as medieval carnivals where people besmirch each other with excrement. This means that, writing on those issues, he symbolically throws those scatological motives to the people who ignore such bodily functions; in a sense, he reminds them that they are a part of nature. Stephen Calonne expresses Bukowski’s purposeful applications to the bodily functions as follows;

One area of common ground with the Beats was Bukowski’s development of his own style of “spontaneous prose composition” which sought to depict

everything about the human body and imagination normally ignored, shunned, and rejected as “vulgar”. In “The Absence of the Hero,” Bukowski struggled to record violent, scatological, fascinating, grotesque images as they emerged unbidden in convulsive patterns from the depths of the unconscious. Here the words seem to be energetically thrown upon the page randomly but nevertheless they fall into a vital pattern. (xvii)

For example in *Hot Water Music* the reader would hear from Jorg that “Shit...everything shits until it dies”(12), on the other hand, in *Post Office* Chinaski would stress the naturalness of defecation underlining it with capital letters as if he is making a *material bodily* manifestation:

WHAT’S WRONG WITH ASSHOLES, BABY? YOU’VE GOT AN ASSHOLE, I’VE GOT AN ASSHOLE! YOU GO TO THE STORE AND BUY A PORTERHOUSE STEAK, THAT HAD AN ASSHOLE! ASSHOLES COVER THE EARTH! IN A WAY TREES HAVE ASSHOLES BUT YOU CAN’T FIND THEM, THEY JUST DROP THEIR LEAVES. YOUR ASSHOLE, MY ASSHOLE, THE WORLD IS FULL OF BILLIONS OF ASSHOLES. THE PRESIDENT HAS AN ASSHOLE, THE CARWAS BOY HAS AN ASSHOLE, THE JUDGE AND THE MURDERER HAVE ASSHOLES...EVEN PURPLE STICKPIN HAS AN ASSHOLE! (87)

The event above occurs while Chinaski is dining with his girlfriend, Joyce. He cooks snails for dinner. While they are eating them, Chinaski, with a sense of enlightenment, recognizes the life circle noticing the defecation organs of the snail, and he shows them to his girlfriend; which results in the girl’s vomiting. With a careful focus on that narrative, one can easily recognize that here Bukowski presents the reader a confliction of *id* and *superego*. Through the act of Chinaski it is possible to see that his desire is to remove the artificiality which prevents people from becoming a part of nature; on the other hand, woman’s vomiting reveals how people prefer the natural functions and bodily realities to remain veiled. Miles states that Bukowski’s obsession with scatology can be depended to his early childhood; he reports an interesting event from Charles Bukowski’s kindergarten years:

Hank was very strictly toilet trained and had been taught that everything to do going to the bathroom was 'dirty'. This created big problems for him at kindergarten because he was ashamed to tell the teacher or to let the others know that he needed to go, so he held it...When the other, less-repressed children, came back from using the toilets, Hank would look at them and think they were dirty, that they did something dirty there. (12)

In great majority of his writings Bukowski deliberately drags scatology into the literary area stressing it as a normal activity. The strict bathroom rules as Miles defines might have been decisive on Bukowski's constant emphasis on an idea of reconciliation with human nature. He never excludes that issue from his agenda, even when he writes about the way he dreams a woman; he depicts her as naturally as possible: "I visualized Carmen's lightly shit-stained panties draped over one of my toes as we lay in bed together in her shack on Main Street" says Chinaski, in an unfamiliar way opposing the classical body descriptions of highbrow literature (*Factotum* 93). Regarding the frequency and regularity of such examples, it would be misleading to consider the scatological leitmotifs in Bukowski's works as coincidence, or to take their role only as an attempt to create an alienation effect. After a few examples, it becomes clear that Bukowski sustains the symbolism of ancient festivals in his writings. In *Ham on Rye*, he praises the odour of excrement in a Rabelaisian manner;

People always talked about the good clean smell of fresh sweat. They had to make excuses for it. They never talked about the good clean smell of fresh shit. There was nothing really as glorious as a good beer shit-I mean after drinking twenty or twenty-five beers the night before. The odor of a beer shit like that spread all around and stayed for a good hour-and-a-half. It made you realize that you were really alive. (268)

According to Bakhtin, Rabelais refers to scatology to show his commitment to the carnival sense of the world. For example in a passage, Gargantua discusses an issue of lustration as a matter which is of a great importance. He gives a long speech on how to find the best "abstersion for the faecal matter" and he lists the tools that he used for that purpose in a humorous way saying that, he even tried some animals for that purpose; such as a cat and a rooster (34- 37). A similar scene shows up in *Factotum* where Chinaski emphasizes the importance of lustration: "Even the most

horrible human being on the earth deserves to wipe his ass” (152). He finalizes the passage with a Rabelaisian advice on lustration in case there is no paper left “The one I find most satisfying is to wipe your ass with your shorts, dump them in there too, flush, and clog the toilet” (152).

To sum up, Bakhtin detects an anti-idealist attitude which is achieved by bodily degradations that underlies carnival activities. Such degradations may occur in various forms. Bakhtin depends his idea mainly on the material bodily principle which “knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb” (*Rabelais* 21). He also points at a “belly theme” which he sees in connection with “eating, swallowing, laughter and death” (*Rabelais* 126). In one way another, this belly theme also seems to be properly internalized by Bukowski; as Chinaski puts it “A man’s soul was rooted in his stomach” (*Factotum* 63). Scatological representations and other lower bodily functions in Bukowski’s novel symbolize a submission to the circling reality of life, death and rebirth, and also become the means of opposing the high-structured literature. Bukowski achieves his opposition not only by using scatological motifs, but also he shows his contradiction through the way he depicts female bodies, in a similar way to medieval *blazons*. A *blazon* is a poetized way of describing female bodies “in terms of individual body parts and not as a collective whole” most often it is represented in an “elaborate, ornate and eroticized” way (“Blazon” 85), on the other hand, an *anti-blazon* differs from a blazon in its rejection of the idealization of female body whereby “an individual women is fragmented, but this division is done to describe reality, not to create (or sustain) an idealized portrait. (85). According to Bakhtin those poetic ways of depicting female bodies also inherent in the medieval carnival language.

3.5.3. Female Bodies: Between Blazon and Anti-Blazon

Bukowski rejects the common view that considers him as a misogynist. During his interview with Sean Penn, he defines that his dealings with woman body through a vulgar language is not a matter of chauvinism, but is a matter of realism;

They just hear "Bukowski's a male-chauvinist pig," but they don't check the source. Sure I make women look bad sometimes, but I make men look bad too. I make myself look bad. If I really think it's bad, I say it's bad—man,

woman, child, dog. The women are so touchy; they think they're being singled out. That's their problem. ("Though Guys Write Poetry")

He actually finds women as marvellous and magical beings; as Chinaski says "*Women*: I liked the colors of their clothing; the way they walked; the cruelty in some faces; now and then the almost pure beauty in another face, totally and enchantingly female" (*Women* 241). He believes in his own inferiority against women; in the beginning of *Women* he writes that "many a good man has been put under the bridge by a woman" (5). Actually Bukowski lives most of his life being humiliated and ignored by women due to his physical appearance. It is possible to see him constantly in a kind of a self-reproach which he achieves within a sense of humour. One of the best examples of such a self-humiliation is included in *Women* which is a reminiscent of Rabelais's words in *Gargantua* that he uses to describe Socrates: "ugly in body was he and ridiculous in bearing, pointed nose, glance like a bull's, face of a madmen, simple in manners, rustic in clothing, poor in fortune, unlucky in women" (3). Bukowski's words in *Women* are;

I was 50 years old and hadn't been to bed with a woman for four years. I had no women friends. I looked at them as I passed them on the streets or wherever I saw them, but I looked at them without yearning and with a sense of futility. I masturbated regularly, but the idea of having a relationship with a woman-even on non-sexual terms-was beyond my imagination. (7)

As it is clear from the citation above, he puts himself in the centre of the humour. This attitude is maintained all along the book, he frequently despises himself and praises women since he sees many of them unapproachable for him; "How did one get a Selma?" he asks himself "The dogs of this world never ended up with Selma. Dogs ended up with dogs" (*Women*32). It is also possible to catch a glance of his admiration to female bodies in his depiction below;

Flesh alone, without love. We were filling the air with stink of pure sex. My child, my child. How can your small body do all these things? *Who* invented woman? For *what* ultimate purpose?.. Tanya was a faithful reader of all my works. She bore down. That child knew something...we were caught up together in the oldest and most exciting game of all. (*Women* 281)

Only focusing on the obscene language that he uses, it would be wrong to say that Bukowski is in pursuit of creating a pornographic attractiveness as a marketing strategy. Sounes defines that many of Bukowski's pornographic writings, such as the ones he wrote for porn magazines, do not reflect his true ideas on love and sexuality. He writes them just for the sake of money; in fact love is a subject that "Bukowski wrote about with tenderness and wit" (xii). Sounes asserts that "Chinaski is an endearingly fallible lover: sexually insecure, sometimes impotent and often jealous" (xii). Sounes also underlines that, most often, women are not offended with his way of taking women body or sexuality in that manner, on the contrary, there are many women "who were attracted to the honest way he wrote about sex and relationship" and send him mails (132). Also his girlfriend Linda King states that "he had the capacity to love and love deeply and a lot of men don't even have that capacity" (Sounes 132). For Bukowski, women's life-making power, as a natural gift, deserves a further emphasis; this means that, he cares about women's true position in nature rather than their roles in social life. He expresses his admiration for the miraculous bodily functions of women within a dilemma which alternates between *blazon* and *anti-blazon*. Analogously, it can be said that he uses this poetic style similar to an elevator: both to raise them up and lower them to the ground. Within this act, one can find the carnivalesque dualism that Bakhtin locates in the centre of his concept. Bakhtin argues that "all the images of carnival are dualistic" (*Problems* 126). As it is discussed in the previous chapters, such a dualism basically emerges from a deep philosophical thought that accepts universe as becoming; not complete and perfect. Accordingly, Bakhtin considers it as a universe where things are in a constant clash but "They unite within themselves...both poles of change and crisis: birth and death (the image of pregnant death), blessing and curse (benedictory carnival curses which call simultaneously for death and rebirth), praise and abuse, youth and old age, top and bottom, face and backside, stupidity and wisdom" (126). He detects the same dualism for *blazons*: Bakhtin defines a blazon as a dualistic "literary manifestation [which] has the dual connotation of both praise and abuse" (*Rabelais* 426- 427). To exemplify his idea he chooses Clément Marot's poems, whose names are "The Ugly Breast" and "The Beautiful Breast" in which the poet blazons "women's mouths, ears, tongues teeth, eyes, and eyebrows, performing a systematic dissection and anatomization of woman in a tone of humorous, familiar praise and denigration" (427). As to Bukowski, his depictions of female bodies are also replete with such

binary oppositions which Bakhtin observes in the blazons: Chinaski in *Women* depicts one of his friends' wife in a grotesque form: "A cow of a woman, cow's breasts, cow's eyes" (173), in another example, he describes a woman again in such a humorous tone; "April was on the heavy side but not too fat. She had big hips and a large ass and her hair fell straight down. There was something about the size of her-rugged, like she could handle an ape" (35). His dualist approach to female body may be best conceptualized with a citation from *Post Office* where Chinaski says that;

God or somebody keeps creating women and tossing them out on the streets, and this one's ass is too big and that one's tits are too small, and this one is mad and that one is crazy and that one is a religionist and that one reads tea leaves and this one can't control her farts, and that one has this big nose, and that one has boney legs... But now and then, a woman walks up, full blossom, a woman just bursting out of her dress...a sex creature, a curse, the end of it all. (138)

It is true that Charles Bukowski was an anti-feminist. However this does not mean that he was a misogynist at the same time; female bodies have always been his focal point. Rather than being their enemy, he is overly fond of them; as the reader hears from Chinaski "Women, I thought, women are magic. What marvellous beings they are!" (*Factotum* 80). Even he writes one of the most daring books on women which he mostly derives from his real experiences with women. He looks forward a kind of life philosophy through sexuality; according to him the magic of life should be searched especially in female bodies. He realizes that women genital is the centre where life begins in a miraculous way. His ex-girlfriend Linda Lee defines that "I was basically one of his guinea pigs'...one of those he researched like a curiosity" (Sounes 185). For Bukowski the female body, to the contrary of classical approach, is an issue which he deals with in its utmost naturalness; he does not ignore its humanly flaws and dependencies. Therefore he avoids useless abstractions and articulations in his own literature; he thinks that extreme idealizations in literature sow discord between nature and humanity.

From his approaches to female bodies, one can easily see that Bukowski attempts to pull down what is high and ideal; by mocking, humiliating and degrading them; which is the peculiar logic of carnival laughter; as Bakhtin puts it "Ritual laughter was always directed toward something higher" (*Problems* 126). Likewise

Bukowski makes an efficient use of that laughter throughout all his writings; which is to say, he mocks, teases, despises, and consequently eliminates the inequalities: talking specifically about his depictions of female bodies, he attempts to remove the disparity between him and the women. Other than this, he applies similar degradations in his struggle with authority and official pressure by using hyperbolized depictions of body in a similar way to the uncrowning rituals of medieval people.

3.5.4. The Theme of Uncrowning and Parodia Sacra

Making grotesque depictions of body, using derogatory adjectives in a comic and hyperbolical manner are some of the main roads by which Bukowski achieves his criticism on various issues that disturb him as an author; as it is in the example of Chinaski who degrades one of his colleagues, whom he does not like much, by depicting his body in a way that recalls typical Rabelaisian frames of travestying the official figures;

I worked with a little fat man with an unhealthy looking paunch. He had an old-fashioned pocket watch on a gold chain and he wore a vest, a green sunshade, had thick lips and a meaty dark look to his face. The lines in his face had no interest or character; his face looked as if it had been folded several times and then smoothed out, like a piece of cardboard. He wore square shoes and chewed tobacco, squirting the juice into a spittoon at his feet. (*Factotum* 18)

It should be noted that the man whom Chinaski fastens upon is highly keen on his job, flatters his boss; with reference to Rabelais's work *Gargantua*, it can be said that the man is amongst those whose qualities are defined in the list of undesired personalities which is hanged on the door of Theleme Abbey. Like Rabelais, Bukowski creates humour through humiliating, despising or degrading the high seriousness of official characters and their henchmen by caricaturing their physical appearances. Through the end of the passage Chinaski decides what the man looks like: "He is a frog, I thought, that's what he is" (*Factotum* 19).

Bukowski in *Factotum*, fictionalizing his work experiences, makes a humorous criticism of working conditions, labour exploitation, workplace rivalries in

America, telling a number of comic events via his alter ego Chinaski. In one of them Chinaski gets a job in an auto parts warehouse which is one of the temporary jobs that he starts and leaves quickly. This time he draws a manager's picture in such a comic manner accentuating his physical flaws. He describes the manager simply as a man who is "tall ugly man with no ass" (34); in order to reinforce the comic effect he converts the manager's physical appearance into an adjective and constantly repeats it "He had a sandy moustache, sandy hair and no ass" (34). That manner becomes a defining characteristic of the book, later on the reader sees Chinaski working in a dog biscuit factory. Here again he represents the same way of grotesque degradation for his instructor who looks like an austere personality: "I was given instructions by a toothless elf with a film over his left eye; the film was white-and-green with spidery blue lines" (*Factotum* 45). After a few lines, it becomes clear that he degrades the man regarding his commitment to the job, as he says "He had been on the job nineteen years" (45).

Post Office is also highly fertile with respect to such degradations where Bukowski displays Chinaski in conflict with religious and civil institutions, and makes him collide with tabooed and serious issues. He achieves his criticism through metaphors and veiled allusions through a chain of semi-fictional, comic events. Amongst those events, one of them is quite notable with its direct references to carnivalesque type of degradation in which Chinaski sees himself elected as the mayor of New York: "I was riding a white horse down Broadway, New York City. I had just been elected mayor. I had this big hard-on, and then somebody threw a hunk of mud at me" (*Post* 83). From the citation one can clearly recognize the carnivalesque codes even at first glance, which have been examined throughout this study: here a higher statue, an official personality is dishonoured with mud. According to Bakhtin "To besmirch means to debase", but he also underlines the fact that, as an original ancient gesture, "debasement did not besmirch with mud but with excrement and urine", as he states mud is "a far too tame and modernized metaphor" (147). To put it more clearly, it can be said that "mud" is a euphemised form of excrement used during the carnivals as a means of degradation and uncrowning. Far more than a coincidence, Bukowski here substitutes besmirching excrement with its up-to-date version, in order to create a debasement effect as a part of his eternal controversy with official characters and their high statues. By preserving the act of

besmirching, he adheres to the original form of that ritual which has been passed to him most probably from some modernized and renewed versions of carnival, or as a second possibility, it may be a result of his studies on classical literature in L.A. public library.

Bukowski frequently applies such carnivalistic motifs of uncrowning in most of his works. Actually, his antagonism can be traced back to his childhood. For example in *Ham on Rye* Chinaski's teacher, Mrs. Fretag, deploys her class to write an essay about President Herbert Hoover's visit to Los Angeles. Nevertheless Chinaski is charged by his father to do some other works during the president's visit; therefore he has no choice other than inventing an imaginary essay on the ceremony. He begins his essay quite normally by depicting the president's arrival, cheering people, and the band playing music. However his intention becomes clear towards the conclusion part where he creates a subtle sarcasm using a hyperbolism which can also be identified with the typical carnivalesque way of uncrowning. Bukowski tries to lower the statue of the presidents by applying the classical ambiguity of carnival laughter in which he combines humour with seriousness; in other words, he praises the president in order to lower and degrade him: "The seagulls circled overhead as if they too knew it was the President...The president stood up in his car, and just as he did the clouds parted and the light from the sun fell across his face. It was almost as if God knew too" (82).

Using the manner above, not only Bukowski organizes humorous attacks to the state but also he intends to lower down the authority of the church. It should be noted that his method by which he mocks the high seriousness of Church shows great parallelism to the medieval church parodies. Bakhtin, while he is explaining *parodie sacra*, points out that "it builds its own world versus the official world, its own church versus the official church, its own state versus the official state. Laughter celebrates its masses, professes its faith, celebrates marriages and funerals, writes its epitaphs, elects kings and bishops" (88). The reader frequently encounters similar degradations of church in Bukowski's writings. In one of them Chinaski and his friend Frank attempt to baptize a dog (*Ham* 71- 73). According to the story Chinaski and Frank attend to Church and Catechism classes together. One day, while they are sitting on the porch Chinaski reads Frank the Catechism which says "God has bodily eyes and sees all things"; Frank asks in a surprised tone "bodily eyes?", then he

clenches his hands into fists and place them over his eyes to make fun of it “He has milk bottles for eyes” (71). Suddenly the narrative shifts to another scene where they show up asking some odd and childish questions to one of the priests; such as the physical appearance of God, how tall is he or does he sit in a chair all day (72). Later on they see a dog; Frank claims that dogs cannot go to heaven for they are not baptized, so they decide to baptize it. They take it to the church and sprinkle the holy water on his forehead. (72). At that point, it is worth to be noted that Bukowski here uses the dog image to create his own sacred parody in a similar way to the medieval folks who use the “ass” as one the central figure in their church parodies. Chinaski and Frank dip their fingers into the holy water and make the sign of cross (72). From now on, the text starts to show its most linear intersection with the medieval carnival parodies; urinal, scatological elements are incorporated in the passage which looks as if Bukowski is rewriting a modernized version of a Rabelaisian passage. Chinaski recognizes a woman coming behind the curtains of the confessional booth; he asserts that she smells urine. He humiliates both the Church and the woman who represents loyalty to the religious institutions referring to that smell of urine: “Her smell was mixed with the smell of the church, which smelled like piss. Every Sunday people came to mass and smelled that piss-smell and nobody said anything. I was going to tell the priest about it but I couldn’t. Maybe it was the candles” (73).

Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* gives an account of a number of parodies which are used for the sake of debasing the cults of the church and its official teachings especially around eleventh century (85). Among them most prominent ones are the *liturgy of the drunkards*, the *liturgy of the gamblers* and some funeral spectacles and epitaphs which are created by folks for the sake of laughter (88). Surprisingly it is possible to observe the signs of those carnival rituals and parodies in Bukowski’s *Post Office* where Chinaski shows up as a mailman. In one of the narratives Chinaski stops by a church to deliver some mail but he cannot find anyone in the church and cannot find a mail box either. Eventually he notices the stairways leading down to the basement. He follows the steps and discovers an open door through which he sees toilets and showers; he gets in. The place is dark inside. As he switches the lights he comes across with the priests’ room where he finds a bottle of wine. He drinks the wine without hesitation; and he also uses the toilet and smokes in there. He even thinks of taking a shower but stops himself as he envisions the

possible newspaper headlines in case he is caught while having a shower in a state of intoxication: “MAILMAN CAUGHT DRINKING THE BLOOD OF GOD AND TAKING A SHOWER, NAKED, IN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH” (21-22).

The foreseeable mockery in Chinaski's words and acts above can be characteristically identified with the jargon of some medieval carnival performances like *parodie sacras* or *burlesques*. However, looking from another aspect, the scene has a symbolism lying under those overt taunts: for example the mailman's descent to the basement of the church can be easily identified with the legendary ancient odysseys to the netherworld which are most often organized to reveal the hero's request to obtain wisdom or to find an answer to a complicated philosophical question. Chinaski's descent to the dark underground can be symbolically matched with the Odysseus' visit to Hades. Even the row of showers that he sees in the basement may be accepted as some decorative elements, involved in the narrative to symbolize the five rivers Hades which were supposed by the ancient Greeks to exist in underworld (Westmoreland 68). However, what is far more beyond symbolism in Chinaski's mock-epic short odyssey is his throwing a light upon the darkness of the church which sees itself as the caliph of God on earth, that's to say, his switching the lights becomes a symbol of a kind of enlightenment, or in other words, his discovery of the true location of heaven. To put this idea more clearly, and to see its relationship with the carnivalized genres, it would be useful to refer to Bakhtin's expressions where he defines such netherworld visits as one of the most philosophical characteristics of carnivalized literatures; especially of the *menippea*. According to Bakhtin “action and dialogic syncrisis are transferred from earth to Olympus and to the nether world” in the *Menippea* within a concept of “philosophical universalism” for the sake of contemplating “the world on the broadest possible scale” (*Problems* 115-116). Similarly the basement scenery in the mailman's narrative reflects a philosophical quest as it has a strong reference to the underbelly, the dark side of the church; and it also represents the mailman's quest to learn the lowdown of church. This lowdown offers Chinaski happiness by giving him wine and a place to bathe. Here Bukowski makes an implicit comparison between church's hidden and visible sides by using wine as the symbol of abundance; and he accuses church for having a confidential wealth which it hides underground; while it constantly advises people a puritan and an anti-materialistic vision during the

sermons. The story obviously intersects with a carnivalesque function which Bakhtin calls as *decentralization* (*Rabelais* 369). Bakhtin, citing Rabelais's words "most wonderful things lie underground" suggests that "This new aspect permitted the author to transfer the relative center of the universe from heaven to the underground, that is, to the underworld, which according to the medieval conception was farthest removed from God" (369). Regarding Bakhtin's ideas, another symbolical relationship can be established between the mailman's narrative with one of the menippeas which was written by Lucian. Lucian, having been inspired by Menippus, writes *Menippus or Necromancy*. According to the story Menippus descends to the netherworld in order to learn from Tiresias what the best way of living is, however, when he asks Tiresias his question Tiresias "advises him to stop speculating on what is going on in heaven and wanting to understand primary and final causes, and instead to make his preoccupation *to paron*, the present situation or what immediately concerns his life" (Goulet-Cazé 75- 76). Looking through that vision, Chinaski seems to be implying that the teachings of the church are misleading: he thinks that the true heaven must be located in the opposite direction, maybe it lies underground, and therefore one should look at the dark side of church instead of following after the false light the church irradiates on earth. So that his descent to the basement becomes a philosophical epiphany for Chinaski just like Menippus takes the advice of Tiresias for not to wonder or speculate on the way of living. Consequently Chinaski finds what to do in earth; he decides not to regard the teachings of the church anymore; so he says that "I'll know where to shit and shower when I'm down and out" (*Post* 22). At that point there is no need to repeat the role of excrement as a debasement element in ancient festivals.

Yet another example is a passage in *Ham on Rye* where Bukowski narrates a pupil who masturbates during an English class. In the narrative the reader can find nearly complete motifs of the medieval uncrowning rituals. The event takes part during an English teacher's lecture on English language. Miss Gredis, the English teacher, is dressed in a short skirt and whenever she crosses her legs her lower bodily parts are slightly exposed which becomes tempting for the male students. Richard Waite, one of the pupils, starts to masturbate surreptitiously. However the sound can be heard by both the teacher and the other students as it remains within the earshot of them; but Miss Gredis pretends not to hear it and continues her serious lecture.

Henceforth the narration goes shifting between the “THUMP, THUMP, THUMP” sounds coming from Waite and with some extracts taken from the teachers lecture on the development of English language (102-109). Even with a general overview to the passage, one can easily see that it has more profound purposes than being a mere sexual representation, as it combines a dignified lecture of a teacher with an instinctive act which is performed by one of the students. It is clear that the high seriousness of the chosen text is deliberately mixed with Waite’s masturbating by Bukowski so as to parody his eternal struggle with formalism using a carnivalesque onset. The way that Bukowski handles the issue— which is, his gathering some different personalities purposefully—offers highly fertile possibilities to see a perfect simulation of Bakhtin’s concept of carnivalesque. Here the main characters stand as if they are positioned to generate a spectacle of a carnivalesque atmosphere. First of all, Richard Waite is the one who symbolizes an intoxicated participant of carnival. In this sense, where Waite’s act represents the unofficial and undisciplined carnival gaieties, then Miss Gredis and her serious lecture become symbols of officialdom. Waite’s masturbating may also be used as a symbolic act to refer to the irregularity that was shown by publics during festive times; in other words, the masturbating act alludes to the cheerful ancient carnival activities which were maintained by the people who freed themselves from all the official pressure, participating in a rank of observances; amongst which are degradation of the high, the holy, the idealized and also some liberated sexual activities. There is no doubt that Bukowski deliberately chooses a classroom as the setting of his argument. In short, Bukowski, amalgamating an instinctive action with a high levelled lecture of an English teacher, provides the reader with an exemplary condition where the official is collided with the unofficial; that is to say, he organizes that scenery to show the confliction between the spontaneous flow of nature with the artificial and official. Bukowski’s point can be supported by a similar argument by Foucault from his work *The History of Sexuality*. According to Foucault, as a part of a capitalist process, some rules have been established to restrict sexual conversations and to decide on “where and when it was not possible to talk about such things...in which circumstances, among which speakers, and within which social relationships” (18). Foucault maintains that the classroom is also one of the prohibited areas for sexual discourse; he also adds that “if not utter silence, at least of tact and discretion: between parents and children, for instance, or teachers and pupils, or masters and domestic servants” (18). Bukowski

may be unaware of Foucault's views on sexual discourse, nonetheless he locates a similar argument in the centre of his parody and he discusses a notion of repressed sexuality within a subtle sense of humour and sarcasm. As it is clear from the passage, here we have a multi-dimensional symbolism far beyond a crude, raw erotic approach. Chinaski, through that collective peeping and masturbation performance, observes the way that nature processes, and he also gets a vision from the life cycle: he contemplates on the event saying that "I looked down at my desk top for a moment and saw the grain in the wood heightened as if each pattern was a pool of whirling liquid" (104). He apparently experiences an epiphany through Mrs Gredis's body, and begins to intuit that the genitals are the parts of the body where the life begins within a magic formula which is similar to the philosophical acquisitions of old folks through a number of nature-based liberal activities: it is just for that reason carnival rituals are overloaded with the images of lower part, and genitals. Chinaski explains his epiphany within his peculiar style: "it was terrifying, beautiful, wondrous and dirty. Such legs, such thigh, we were very closely to the magic" (104). He grasps the reality that the lower stratum of the body, the genitals are something related with death and renewal; he grasps the ambiguity that life represents: "like the world ending and beginning and ending again, it was everything real and unreal, the sun, the thighs, and the silk, so smooth, so warm, so alluring" (104). For all those reasons, here the English teacher stands as a multi-functional character in the passage. One can even draw a parallelism between Miss Gredis's attractive sexual exposition and the *sibyl of Panzaoust* who, in Rabelais's *Pantagruel*, is described as a woman informing her guests by pulling his dress high and showing them her genitals (*Pantagruel* 307). On the other hand, it is also possible to catch a glance of a *steam boiler* syndrome—which is used to refer carnival as a controlled activity, rather than a free public act (Muir "Ritual" 98). According to many, the carnival is a "safety valve" for the authority to protect the established order, which is mostly explained by a steam boiler "that releases excess steam when the pressure builds too high" (98). If Miss Gredis' attitudes are carefully examined, it would be seen that she controls the anarchy in the classroom with her silence and indifference: by ignoring Waite's unofficial act and releasing it to a certain extent, she shows how the authority allows publics to go off the rails under certain circumstances (104). Chinaski analyses her calm attitude in the face of the event as follows: "Miss Gredis went on sitting there as if nothing was happening and she kept

talking as if everything was normal. That's what made it so good and so terrible: the fact that she pretended that it wasn't happening" (104).

Finally, as the carnival laughter is directed upon everyone who participates in it, a grotesque depiction of Richard Waite is not neglected: "you didn't want to look at those big lips, that big unfolding mouth like the mouth of a bruised frog" (106).

CONCLUSION

There are men who from lack of experience or from stupidity turn away in contempt and pity from such phenomena as they would from ‘folk diseases’ with a greater sense of their own good health: but these poor men do not suspect how cadaverous and ghostly their ‘health’ looks, compared to the glowing life of Dionysian enthusiast which roars past them. (Nietzsche “The Birth of Tragedy” 22)

Having been inspired by the humour and unofficial leitmotifs of carnival, Mikhail Bakhtin establishes some relevant literary conceptions mainly in his two works *Rabelais and His World* and *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, and also particularly in some of his essays. According to Bakhtin, some subversive patterns that are inherent in carnival rituals aim to deflate the high seriousness of authority, religion and all kind of official pressure in any age they are applied; likewise, putting them against the high seriousness of classical forms of literature, some literary genres utilize those carnival ingredients and its unofficial elements in order to achieve the same subversive effect in their letters: Bakhtin calls these literary sorts as *carnivalized genres*.

Bakhtin suggests that, as much as the festive energies have deterministic effects on ancient genres—such as Socratic dialogue and Menippean satire—they are also efficient on the works of some subsequent authors like Rabelais and Dostoevsky. He also underlines that the literary projections of carnival may show some differences from era to era. However what is common for all genres is the ambiguity that they reveal through carnival symbolism; in other words, the symbolic power of carnival language operates through a harmony of some binary opposition; such as death-regeneration, youth and aging, or eating drinking and defecation. Concomitantly the language of carnival becomes as natural as its ingredients, due to its emphasis on spontaneity of vital functions; which means that, carnival language eschews no profanity, so it focuses on the lower parts of human body. According to Bakhtin such a liberal use of language determines “the genres of speech in carnival intercourse”, and the abuses renew and regenerate, as well as they degrade and mortify (*Rabelais* 16).

Regarding all those liberties and public enthusiasm during festive times, Bakhtin portrays a *carnival laughter* which is materialized through a set of rituals and performances; and that laughter becomes the key point of his whole concept of carnivalesque. Bakhtin applies laughter in a dualistic way: firstly he takes it as an integrative element which gives way to democratic formations through an equalization of social statuses; and secondly, he refers to that laughter to denote a public dissidence which is achieved through some unofficial and anti-authoritarian performances. Bakhtin suggests that all the hierarchical ranks were suspended during the carnival, and people from various social classes are gathered round the festive performances for the sake of that laughter. At the same time, he detects the same cosmopolitanism, and democratic structure in some literary genres which he traces from ancient Greece to 19th century. Therefore, he suggests that one of the most prominent characteristics of those carnival-based literary genres is their dialogic structure: according to Bakhtin, by means of such dialogism those genres substitute the one-sidedness of classical form of literature (in which the author-function is accepted as the mere dominating power of the novel) with polyphony. On the other hand, since he accepts the carnival laughter as an outbreak of relative low-brow public performances and rituals, he sees a connection between low life and carnivalized genres as a natural conclusion. He refines this idea within his conceptualization of Menippean satire, elaborating on some items; such as “slum naturalism” or “bold and unrestrained use of the fantastic and adventure” (*Problems* 114-118). Ultimately, Bakhtin explains his conceptions coining some brand new terms like *carnivalesque* and *carnivalization* to denote both the authorial applications to the carnival sources and to refer to a democratic formation in novel; in other words, Bakhtin’s work incorporates the *base* in the art creating process as well as the *superstructure*. Consequently, Bakhtin gives way to some new conceptualizations in fields of literary criticism. His terminology provides scholars with convenient grounds to plant their studies and to develop new visions.

The vast majority of Charles Bukowski’s novels show a great feasibility to that transgressive form of writing which has its roots in public folklore and is also marked by a powerful sense of humour. In Bukowski’s prose, it is possible to observe both direct and indirect applications to those folkloric acquisitions. Bukowski shows his affinity to the carnivalized genres both using the public

grammar in its natural form, and also referring to the carnivalistic symbols which have survived by means of a literary heritage. He also puts forward a subtle social criticism in a similar way to the folkloric ambiguity in which criticism is presented vaguely, within a mock-seriousness. Another quality which may reinforce Bukowski's kinship to those genres is the close attention that he pays to low-life, the most neglected and unspoken issues.

Regarding the applicability of Bukowski's prose to Bakhtin's concept of carnivalized genres, this thesis tried to implement Bakhtinian terminology on Bukowski's prose. Throughout this study, it has been asserted and discussed that Charles Bukowski chose a parallel literary route to those carnivalized genres, and he also achieved his literary fulfilments using the major formulae which is inherent in those genres. In order to prove the accuracy of that hypothesis, as much as a compare-contrast method, a carnival archetype was tried to be reconceptualised specifically for the purpose of this study. Mainly Bukowski's *five novels; Factotum, Post Office, Ham on Rye, Women and Hollywood*, were chosen as they were favourable to illustrate the carnivalesque motifs in his literary style. On the other hand some short stories from his work *Hot Water Music* and some collections of his letters were examined since they included also some proper presentations to prove Bukowski's applications to the carnivalistic folklore and its subversive dynamics.

The main objective of this study has been accomplished within three chapters. During the first chapter, a large scaled analysis of Bakhtin's concepts was accomplished to prepare a background for Bukowski's text, with references to the authors such as Rabelais, Dostoevsky and to some preceding genres like Socratic Dialogue, Menippean Satire and Serio-Comic. At the same time, a linguistic examination was achieved to determine how carnival symbolism was reflected through public language. Some explanatory cross-sections were taken from some authors, later to be matched with Bukowski's language style in the following chapters. Since Bakhtin—specifically examining Menippean satire and Socratic dialogue—points out that there is a strong bond with cynicism and carnivalistic roots, during that first chapter, a necessary link was also set with cynicism and cynic philosophers. Bakhtin establishes fourteen main characteristics of Menippean satire whereby he sorts out the methods that are adopted by carnivalized genres. Bakhtin's examination on Menippean satire and its unfamiliar contact with low-life, lowbrow

situations provided this study with another vision which also enabled this study to determine of different aspects of carnivalistic literatures.

After a general conception of carnivalized genres was acquired, the feasibility of Bukowski's literature to the carnivalized literature was examined in the second chapter, within the context of Bukowski's life views and his impact on modern literature. In order to demonstrate the kinship of Bukowski's literary style to carnivalized genres the main items of the first chapter—such as slum naturalism, the scandalous cynic vision—were also discussed and exemplified on Bukowski's works with references to his life and his political vision. Since Bakhtin sees authors' close contact with the low-life as an essential quality for the carnivalized genres, some items like Bukowski's relationship with American working class people and their unofficial second life—which they sustain as a clandestine carnival during their leisure time—were also examined in that chapter. In order to see Bukowski's consistency in theory and practice, his life experiences were also questioned within some applications to various biographies, most of which were achieved by his friends and entourage. As a conclusion of those examinations, it became clear that Charles Bukowski was an autobiographical writer who drew on his own life experiences.

Bukowski reflects a specific type of social responsibility in an ambiguous form by mixing social criticism with a peculiar manner of humour which is similar to the one that people of the carnival achieve through entertaining activities that underlies an idea of rejecting authoritarian pressure. Likewise, Bukowski forces the limits of social norms and attempts to turn them upside down both by his scandalous attitudes that he performs in his real life, and also by the provocative verbal attacks that he puts forward through his writings. Tabooed issues—such as sexuality and religion—are also among the most prominent items that he deals in his novels, as well as a subtle criticism of official pressure and capitalist progress. From many aspects, Bukowski shows great similarities to the cynic philosophers, who had prominence in ancient Greece, with respect to the social criticism they reflected through witty sayings, scandalous attitudes, and their minimalist life philosophy which they based on the idea of anti-materialism. Regarding their consubstantiality, Charles Bukowski was necessarily examined in context of modernized expansions of cynic philosophy.

The last chapter mainly dealt with Bukowski's literary praxis and his literary achievements through Bakhtin's vision whereby he suggests that the carnivalized

genres make efficient use of preceding genres to distil the most organic type of literature. According to Bakhtin those genres become highly critical at times and they never sanctify legends; that's to say, carnivalized genres avoid all sorts of idealism and stereotypes. Another factor which is revealed by Bakhtin is that, those genres sustain their existences through a literary heritage which is transferred to new eras with some authorial efforts. Therefore, regarding Bakhtin's arguments, Bukowski's literary cultivation process and his applications to preceding literatures were deeply examined in this chapter. In the final chapter, in order to prove the assertion that Bukowski's novels bear carnivalistic traits, a literary examination is accomplished with references to his novels and by comparing them with some examples of carnivalistic literatures.

All those examinations make it clear that Charles Bukowski supremely benefits from the symbolism of public folklore and its literary projections. As a conclusion of all the items discussed in this study—from the dialogic factor which he achieves by incorporating various people from various social levels in his novels, to the language which is replete with carnivalistic references, and also to the humour he always keeps in stock—Charles Bukowski's prose is one of the most considerable examples of carnivalized literatures.

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