

Articles

COMBAT OF VOICES: FEMALE VOICES IN IRIS MURDOCH'S *NUNS AND SOLDIERS*

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Abstract

Iris Murdoch, a writer with a profound understanding of the importance of creating voices/selves, often explored human truths that are timeless in her novels. Bakhtin developed a frame of work in which he mainly aimed at describing a democratic language which was "dialogical" or "carnavalesque". A world of interchange, of a dialogue between many voices is what Bakhtin hoped for. One of the great contributions of Bakhtin is the concept of polyphony (multivocality or multi-voicedness). He suggests that "the polyphonic novel as a whole is thoroughly dialogical" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 40). To Bakhtin the language of a culture is full of intersecting language uses - those of class, profession, activity, generation, gender, region and a rich variety of interacting significances. Iris Murdoch's novel *Nuns and Soldiers* has often been studied in relation to the ethical, moral and philosophical issues. However, it is also significant to explore how these issues are voiced for female characters. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore the voices of female characters in Iris Murdoch's *Nuns and Soldiers* on the basis of Bakhtinian theory of the novel.

Key Terms

dialogism, polyphonic (multi-voiced), carnivalistic (carnavalesque), monologic (single-voiced), female voice, Iris Murdoch.

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SESLERİN ÇARPIŞMASI: IRIS MURDOCH'IN RAHİBELER VE ASKERLER ROMANINDA KADINLARIN SESLERİ

Öz

Seslerin/benlerin yaratılmasının önemini derinden anlayan bir yazar olan Iris Murdoch, çoğunlukla romanlarında zamansız bir insan gerçeğini keşfeder. Bakhtin, “diyalojik” ya da “karnavalesk” olarak tanımladığı demokratik bir dili anlatmaya yönelik bir çerçeve geliştirmiştir ve içinde birçok sesi barındıran bir diyalogun yer aldığı bir dünya umudunu taşımıştır. Bakhtin’in en önemli katkılarından biri “polifoni”, “çokseslilik” kavramıdır. Bakhtin polifonik romanın “tamamıyla diyalojik olduğunu” ileri sürmektedir. (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 40). Bakhtin’e göre kültür dili, kesişen dillerin - sınıf, meslek, aktivite, nesil, cinsiyet, bölge - kullanımı ve çok çeşitli etkileşim anlamları ile doludur. Iris Murdoch’ın *Nuns and Soldiers (Rahibeler ve Askerler)* romanı etik, ahlaki ve felsefi konularla ilgili olarak sıklıkla incelenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, bu konuların kadın karakterler için nasıl ses bulduğunu keşfetmek de önemlidir. Bu sebeple, bu makalenin amacı Iris Murdoch’ın *Nuns and Soldiers* adlı romanında yer alan kadın karakterlerin seslerini Mikhail Bakhtin’in roman kuramı ışığında incelemektir.

Anahtar Terimler

diyalojizm, polifoni (çokseslilik), karnavalesk, monoloji (tek seslilik), kadın sesi, Iris Murdoch.

Introduction

Voice, Bakhtin and Feminist Dialogics

The term *voice* has become a sign of identity, power and self-recognition. Voice and voicing are two fundamental concepts critics explore the most when dealing with women’s narratives. The two terms cover disciplinary and theoretical differences by appearing in many disciplines that converge with feminist and women studies: history, philosophy, sociology, literature and psychology. Some critics have focused on the question of how women voice their silenced bodies and liminal identities, *identities on the threshold*.

Mikhail Bakhtin’s work, with its socially oriented focus on language and the construction of meaning, has come to the attention of scholars in various fields. Anthropologists, for instance, write about *heteroglossia* and the *carnavalesque*; literary critics focus on Bakhtin’s concept of *voice*, *dialogism*, and *intertextuality*. The range and depth of Bakhtin’s ideas present an opportunity to look not just at one aspect of the reader, writer,

or text, but to weave these ideas together into a more comprehensive perspective of reading.

Bakhtin's theories have allowed the inclusion of multiple voices, such as race, class and gender. The importance of Bakhtin's thinking lies in his perception of language as dialogic. Dialogism, in Bakhtinian terminology, is opposed to monologism- that allows only one version of truth, thus disregarding the plurality of voices. A dialogic discourse incorporates a plurality of consciousnesses orchestrated in a text where no voice appears dominant. This conception of language as dialogic opens infinite possibilities in discourse. A variety of social languages enter discourse in a multiplicity of voices, a "polyphony". This approach has paved the way for narratives that were excluded before. For this reason, Bakhtin's theory of dialogism has been in the centre of feminist criticism and in other subversive currents in their struggle for a position of power in symbolic language. The links between Bakhtin and feminist criticism are established mainly through their view of language and its relation with a societal attitude and power. Feminist dialogics benefits from Bakhtin's concept of a multi-vocal speech to integrate the marginalised voices into discourse and challenge the dominant, uni-vocal word.

Several feminist critics embraced Bakhtin's theory of dialogism for its ability to provide a platform for marginalised feminine voices to be heard above the roar of the monologic, authoritative and hegemonic voice. For instance, Dale Bauer (1991), applies dialogism to expose the dominant community's attempt to subvert and silence females. Bauer's discussion of feminist dialogics is a conjunction of Bakhtinian reading with feminist vision as developed in her *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic*. In the book, Bauer explores the dimensions of using Bakhtin for a feminist analysis and discerns the connections between feminist dialogics and cultural materialism. Bauer refers to the power relations between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses and argues that feminist dialogics enables an understanding of critical subjectivity that shows genders, classes and races in dialogue rather than in opposition. However, this dialogue is always in process and in flux, and allows the reader to recognise the way in which authoritative ideologies and the persuasive resistances to it come into conflict. Through the recognition of this conflict a feminist critic can approach the dialogic, multi-voiced structure of a text that produces the dominant discourse but at the same time indicates potential resistances to oppressive conventions.

Feminist criticism has appropriated the concept of double-voicedness, as a kind of "active" form. Elaine Showalter writes that "women's writing is a 'double-voiced

discourse' that always embodies the social, literary and cultural heritages of both the muted and the dominant" (1981, p. 141). Feminist dialogics is a mode of resistance through language against the exclusion of gender, class and race, and an agency for change. Bauer describes the aims of this feminist practice: "For the object is not, ultimately, to produce a feminist monologic voice, a dominant voice that is a reversal of the patriarchal voice (even if such a project were conceivable), but to create a feminist dialogics that recognizes power and discourse as indivisible, monologism as a model of ideological dominance, and narrative as inherently multi-vocal, as a form of cultural resistance that celebrates the dialogic voice that speaks with many tongues, which incorporates multiple voices of the cultural we" (Bauer, 1991, p. 4).

Bakhtin and Murdoch's Notions - Exploring Female Voices

Iris Murdoch believes that the novel is a marvellous form in that it attempts to explore timeless human truths. To Murdoch, the novel explains people to themselves. However, Murdoch believes that there are theories which tend to attack the reality of the individual; "one could begin to be persuaded that one did not exist all that much, that one was really the product of one's society, or one's culture, or one's linguistic code" (Bellamy, 1977, p.130). To Murdoch this seems to be "the wrong move", for she attaches great importance to creating free characters and she highly values fairness and objectivity to her characters. She wants her characters to have their own voices and challenge the audience asking them to take part in the exploration of human truths. Instead of imposing her own appreciation of a given situation, Murdoch invites the audience to create their own voice by cooperating in the exploration process.

Similarly, Bakhtin supported a world of interchange, of a dialogue between many voices and he developed a frame of work in which he mainly aimed at describing a democratic language which was "dialogical" or "carnavalesque". To Bakhtin, the essence of polyphony is a plurality of unmerged consciousness, a mixture of "valid voices" which are not completely subordinated to authorial intensions or the heavy hand of the omniscient authorial/narrational voice. That is, the character's voice is equally important and "fully weighted" as the author's own and the former cannot be simply viewed as an "appendage" of the latter (Gardiner, 1992, p. 24). In other words, the hero's word possesses extraordinary independence in the structure of the work; it sounds, as it were, *alongside* the author's and with the fully and equally valid voices of other characters' (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 7). This autonomous but interacting ideological world embodied by particular characters within the text affects every element of the novel itself - plot,

narration, style, imagery, or the portrayal of time and space- the chronotope (Gardiner, 1992, p. 24).

Bakhtin believes that the attempt to make one's own point of view is useless because of the dialogic nature of language. Nicol demonstrates how Bakhtin and Murdoch are similar in their philosophy of point of view. To him, Murdoch's philosophy runs on parallel, more explicitly ethical track. Nicol argues that Murdoch stresses the need to respect all these other points of view and thereby recognize the individuality of other person, to acknowledge the contingent aspects of life and accept what we cannot control. All discourse, no matter how forcefully or persuasively articulated, can be challenged by other voices, even in its expression (Nicol, 1999, p. 55). The value Murdoch places on authorial tolerance and her commitment to "centre of consciousness" narration is similar to Bakhtin's conception of the "polyphonic" author, "one who does not impose a single vision upon the reader but presents characters' points of view without attempting to show where they stand in relation to his or her own" (Nicol 1999, p. 66). Murdoch explores, what Kristeva calls, "a logic of relations and analogy rather than of substance and inference" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 8). Murdoch argues that art is an important source of inspiration for mankind, as it constitutes a powerful revelation of people's inner lives. To Murdoch the artist's task is to provide new perspectives and enable readers to experience aspects of human life with which they are unfamiliar. As voicing of the silent feminine voices has been of great importance and interest in recent studies, the concepts, "voice" and "voicing" have become fundamental in exploration of the silenced identities, lost voices when dealing with (women's) narratives. Thus, it is significant to explore the voices of female characters in *Nuns and Soldiers* as Iris Murdoch's characters are designed to question the world, the word and they resist against the monologic finalization. They never give up their struggle against the imposed, single point of view. While focusing on the voicing of silent feminine voices in (women's) narratives, Bakhtin's notions are amenable to exploration of power relations, social and cultural marginalization (and political subversion) of women. Bakhtin suggests, "a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 6).

To Bakhtin, the subordination of such elements of the novel to the interaction of consciousness was the essence of Dostoevsky's artistic genius. Dostoevsky, Bakhtin writes, creates not voiceless slaves but *free* people who are capable of standing *alongside* their creator. They are capable of not agreeing with their creator and even of rebelling

against him. Bakhtin claims “*a plurality of independent unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristics of Dostoevsky’s novels*” (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 7). He believes that Dostoevsky’s works do not unfold “a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness.” The consciousness of a character is given as *someone else’s* consciousness, another consciousness, yet at the same time it is not turned into an object, is not closed, does not become a simple object of the author’s consciousness, multiplicity of interacting consciousnesses is essential; however, not a sufficient characteristic of a genuine polyphony. Behind the verbal structuring of the novels as a whole, Bakhtin suggests that a “fully-fledged” world-view must form the basis with the author’s confirmation of a character’s right to be treated as a subject and not an object behind a world beyond the text it represents (Gardiner, 1992, p. 25). Therefore, Bakhtinian dialogue is a communicative interaction between the speaker and the listener rather than persuasion directed by the speaker to the listener. In Bakhtinian dialogue there is multiplicity and diversity of voices, thus, there is a relationship of collaboration among participants in a dialogic discourse.

Characters, in a polyphonic novel, as Bakhtin writes, are not static traits; cannot be understood as “amalgams of fixed”. They act and react. They are responsible for their own behaviours, good or bad. Their actions and thoughts are not wholly predictable. They are existential beings (Gardiner, 1992, p. 24-25). All voices in polyphony, Bakhtin claims, are autonomous, brought together in the artistic event. Unlike poetry, the language of prose is heterogeneous, and multiple social voices come forcefully together in the discourse, even though some of these voices remain unacknowledged.

“The term ‘dialogism’ means ‘double-voicedness’ rather than relating the dialogue” (Vice, 1997, p. 45). Bakhtin uses the term to refer to particular instances of language, perceptible in novels and popular speech; and also, to refer to a defining quality of language itself, and its most fundamental sense-making capacities (Hirschkop, 1989, p. 6). Thus, for Bakhtin, dialogism refers to “the presence of two different voices in one utterance” (Vice, 1997, p. 45). Dialogism, in its wider sense, gains more precise characteristics; for instance, the mixing of intensions of the speaker and the listener...the creation of meaning out of past utterance, and the constant need for utterances to position themselves in relation to one another (Hirschkop, 1989, p. 9).

The implication of Bakhtin’s discussions of dialogism is that, “culture consists in the discourses retained by collective memory (the commonplace and stereotypes just as

much as the exceptional words) discourses in relation to which every uttering subject must situate himself or herself" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 10). "Double-voicedness" causes a clash of discourses rather than a peaceful relativity as Bakhtin focuses on [t]he authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogised heteroglossia, anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance." (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 272). Thus, "dialogised heteroglossia" refers to the combative relations among different utterances when they come into contact. Heteroglossia makes it possible to exist within a single cultural system, or text, "two or more national languages" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 431). Bakhtin likens languages of heteroglossia to mirrors that face each other, each of which in its own way reflects a little piece, a tiny corner of the world, forcing us "to guess at and grasp behind their inter-reflecting aspects for a world that is broader, more multi-levelled and multi-horized than would be available to one language" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 225-26).

Bakhtin says the centripetal versus centrifugal phenomenon is inherent in the process of creating free characters: it is what makes characters dynamic. Bakhtin describes two types of discourse - "privileged language that approaches us from without" and "language that is the retelling of a text in one's own words" and he continues that "human coming-to-consciousness...is a constant struggle between these two types of discourse." (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 424). The former corresponds to "an attempt to assimilate more into one's own system," and the latter to "the simultaneous freeing of one's own discourse from the authoritative word, or from previously earlier persuasive words that have ceased to mean" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 25). Bakhtin's dialectical method, which sets dialogue centripetal and centrifugal forces, provides the possibility for different voices to be heard. Bakhtin argues that language is never unitary and he argues that actual social life and historical becoming create within an abstractly unitary national language, a multitude of concrete worlds; "a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief systems; within these various systems ...are elements of language filled with various semantic and axiological content and each with its own different sound" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 288).

To Bakhtin an identity absolutely free from the others is a false one that is promoted by those who are in power in the society; and the novel is a privileged genre as it affirms the plurality and essential difference between the identities and ideas of the people. It is impossible for two persons, in a novelistic, Bakhtinian approach to have the same identical identity/ideology. They may have common ideas, but this, in itself, is not so great

as to hide or blur the fact that they are different in some other features (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 264-5).

“Carnival” is another key Bakhtinian term, the basis of his study of *Rabelais*. Bakhtin suggests that the old world’s major cultural manifestation was the carnival, and particularly laughter. To Bakhtin “[i]t could be said that the medieval man lived, as it were, *two lives*: one, the *official*, monolithically serious and gloomy life, subject to a strict hierarchical order filled with fear dogmatism, reverence and piety and the other, *the life of the carnival square*, free, full of ambivalent laughter, blasphemy, the profanation of all that was holy, disparagement and obscenity, and familiar contact with everyone and everything. Both of these lives were legal and legitimate, but were divided by strict temporal limits (Bakhtin, 1973, pp. 106-7). To Bakhtin, the Socratic discovery of the dialogical nature of thought and truth assumes the carnivalistic familiarization of the relationships among the participants in the dialogue and the abolition of all distance between them (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 109). The nether world, Bakhtin writes, “equalizes representatives of all earthly circumstances” (Bakhtin, 1973, pp. 109-110). In this world to Bakhtin, the emperor and the slave, the rich man and the beggar meet on equal terms and enter into familiar contact. “Death discrowns all those who wear crowns in life” (Bakhtin, 1973, pp. 109-110). To Bakhtin, in the representation of the nether world, the carnival logic of “the world upside down” was often applied. He writes, “in the nether world the emperor becomes slave, and the slave – emperor, etc.” (Bakhtin, 1973, pp. 109-110).

Carnival, in the theories of Bakhtin, is associated with laughter. It, like novel and laughter, is another centrifugal element in culture. Laughter, in a sense, can be considered as fundamental, subversive and essential; it is a *centrifugal* element that disturbs all the things that have some sort of power, all the things that because of some nationalistic, religious, or cultural reasons have found an established position with great power and sanctity. Laughter brings down these established institutions into the “crude zone of contact” with everyday reality. Without this bringing down of the powerful and canonical elements in culture, true dialogue is impossible (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 11). The carnival is an event in which all the established norms and institutions of the society are satirised. In this event “the people” with all their diversity and plurality find power, and “the King” along with the other canonical institution of the society becomes just one among the many. The people show themselves as they really wish themselves to be; clowns and the fool become the privileged figures of this cultural event. This is not an exact reversal of values. The new privileged figures are not as tyrannical and monologic as “the King”, or the other

established authorities; they laugh at everything and satirise everything, including themselves. Therefore, there would be no point of authority for one specific person or ideology. To Bakhtin, everybody takes an active part in the carnival. He writes: "Carnival is a pageant without a stage and without a division into performers and spectators" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 100). In the carnival, Bakhtin believes, everyone is an active participant and everyone communes in the carnival act. Carnival is not completed, not even played out. Bakhtin writes that "its participants *live* in it, they live according to its laws, as long as those laws are in force, i.e. they live *carnivalistic life*. The carnivalistic life drawn out its *usual rut*, it is to a degree "life turned inside out", "life the wrong way round" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 101).

During this popular cultural event, the people experience an alternative form of identity for themselves. Those who are in power try to impose the socially identified identity as the true one. This new identity, however, is truer than their established one as it is free from the dominant ideology. Their previous identity has been determined and dictated by the ruling institutions of the society to them; therefore, it cannot be a true identity. The suspension of all hierarchical precedence during the carnivals was of particular importance to Bakhtin. He says, all were considered equal during the carnival. People were born for new, purely human relations. As Bakhtin writes, "these truly human relations were not only a fruit of imagination or abstract thought; they were experienced. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged in this carnival experience, unique of its kind" (Bakhtin, 1984, p, 10).

The Female Characters in Search of Voice in Iris Murdoch's *Nuns and Soldiers*

*Nuns and Soldiers*¹ mainly centres on the love affair between Anne and the Count, Daisy and Tim, and Gertrude and Tim. As the novel progresses, the three women characters are

¹ The novel is set in London in a large, prosperous family. The interest centres in Gertrude, whose ideal husband is heavily sick in bed. She is surrounded by sympathy and consideration. Consolation comes to her with the arrival of her old friend Anne Cavidge, who, having lost her faith, has just left the nunnery after spending fifteen years there. She moves in with the Openshaws and is a great help to Anne and Guy. Just before he dies, Guy urges Gertrude to live a full and happy life and suggests that she might marry again. He mentions the Count as a possible suitor since they both know that the Count is in love with Gertrude. After Guy's death, Anne and Gertrude begin to plan a life together. Anne is unsure about what to do with her life, and Gertrude is equally unsettled but has been left with some considerable wealth, which she is eager to share with Anne. The Count waits patiently and honourably to ask Gertrude to marry him. What upsets this fragile world is the intrusion of a younger man, Tim Reede, who, badly in need of money, asks Gertrude for a loan and is given the job of taking care of the Openshaw vacation home in France. He goes off to do that job, and shortly after, Gertrude follows him in order to sell it. They fall in love but are both so sensitive to the fact that it happens so quickly after Guy's death that they want to keep it a secret. Tim, in comparison to Guy, is undistinguished,

observed at the centre of action, where they experience a struggle due to different voices they hear; they go through some kind of change; they act, react; they voice themselves. The three women have their own voices at different volumes depending on the level of their struggle and strength in gaining a voice.

Female Characters in Search of Their Voice

The carnivalistic structure includes contrasting images. In this world, everything lives on the very border of its opposite. To Bakhtin, “love lives on the border of hate, which it knows and understands, and hate lives on the border of love, and also understands it. Faith lives on the very border of atheism, sees its reflection in atheism and understands it, and atheism lives on the border of degradation and baseness [...] love of life is neighbour to the thirst of self-destruction [...] purity and chastity understand vice and voluptuousness” (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 148). Similar to this carnivalistic world, *Nuns and Soldiers* is full of contrasts. For instance, sacred and profane; faith and lack of faith; death and rebirth and so on. Anne Cavidge, who was a member of an enclosed religious order for fifteen years, comes to stay with Gertrude when she leaves the convent. Her stay coincides with Guy’s final illness. Anne, with a first-class degree in history from Cambridge, experiences an evaluation of the past and tries to fit herself in this new world. To Bakhtin, how the world appears to the hero and how the hero appears to himself is essential in a dialogical pattern. He writes, “[t]his is an important and fundamental characteristic of the hero’s perception” (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 38). Anne’s illumination is observed as a tough journey, for she feels invisible, unnoticed by others. Her perception of herself as being invisible causes her to question her being: “Anne went into her own room. She combed her hair and looked at her thin colourless head in the mirror. Had those

with little reputation for either success or basic honesty. They try but fail to conceal their love, and ultimately, after much difficulty, they marry, despite the reservations of Gertrude’s friends. They are happy together, yet Gertrude feels guilty about remarrying so soon after Guy’s death and about the fact that Tim is so different and so much less socially acceptable than Guy. Tim has not told Gertrude of a former lover, Daisy, and the rumour gets about that he has married for money and is keeping his mistress on the side. The marriage breaks up despite Tim’s protestations that he loves Gertrude and that his old affair is over. Anne and the Count must again console Gertrude. However, Anne has fallen in love with the Count and believes that in all fairness the Count, who still loves Gertrude, should be given a chance to win her. The Count, in turn, feels that he must do as much as he can to bring Tim and Gertrude back together again. Once that fails, he feels able to begin his very tentative wooing. Yet Tim, in a strangely magical way, comes back, and the Count is once again a loser. Now Anne feels free to woo him, but before she can, Gertrude reaches an accommodation with the Count (with Tim’s approval) which allows the Count to love her innocently and to receive her innocent love in return. They are to remain very close friends, and the Count is satisfied with this modest relationship. Anne has lost him and goes off to America to work in a religious organization. Gertrude mourns the loss of her closest female friend, whom she had wanted to be part of her ideal life (Magill, 2017, *e-notes*).

years 'inside' really made her invisible? Was invisibility the gift she had been given by a discerning and just God, in lieu of *great* gift which she had sought, the pearl of great price? Innocence, the lack of any power to hurt, even to touch, the innocence of an invisible strengthless spectator!" (Murdoch, 1980, pp. 146-7). Her questioning here is significant, for as she questions her "invisibility", Anne is in a struggle to gain visibility, to create (her)self.

The carnivalistic dream element can also be observed in the experience of Anne. As Bakhtin mentions, "the person who dreams becomes a different person, he reveals in himself new possibilities (sometimes worse ones sometimes better ones)" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 122). Anne's vision begins as a dream in which she encounters two angels. She wakes up and remembers the dream. "Then again, she became aware, she knew, that there was somebody in the next room, somebody standing in her kitchen in the bright light of the early summer morning. And she knew that the person was Jesus" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 295). When Anne asks the visitor what she must do to be saved, he replies: "You must do it all yourself. As for salvation, anything you can think about it is as imaginary as my wounds. I am not a magician, I never was. You know what to do. Do right, refrain from wrong" (Murdoch, 1980, pp. 297-98). Then at this time the combat of voices becomes louder for Anne.

Jesus - as Anne dreams - instructs her to wash at the sink. Although Anne follows his directions, she replies, "It's-no good-it-won't work" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 299) and reaches out her dripping hands toward him. After brushing the sleeve of his shirt, she feels "a searing pain in her hand and her eyes closed and she fell to her knees and then flat to the ground in a sudden faint" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 299). When she wakes up, her hands are still damp and she has a raw burn on one of the fingers of her right hand, apparently tangible evidence that her vision has been real. Thus, there is an "extraordinary situation" which is impossible in usual life and which "serves the same basic goal of the menippea: to test the idea and the man of the idea" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 122). Anne has had an awful view of the solitary nature of her journey. "Was what she now felt herself to be a permanent condition, or was it the anaesthetic numbness which preceded the ghastly suffering attendant upon a change of being?" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 146). In Anne's case the change is other way round; "she was destined to become wingless and weak and small. Only for now she was dead, pale, unseen and without significant images of her life" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 146).

The description of Anne is often associated with goodness. She shows the signs of capability of abdicating her ego and the comfort accompanying it. These kinds of actions are often associated with the good by Murdoch. Anne demonstrates good behaviour when she undertakes the task of helping Gertrude run the household and she can spend hours talking with Guy. Anne's illumination concerns her becoming good and doing so by letting go of her consolations: "She had left the convent to come out into loneliness and a sort of renewed innocence and a sort of peace" (Conradi, 1989, p. 303). However, once she is in the world, she realizes that she cannot merely perform good works; she also finds herself entangled in the concerns of her own, like her love for the Count and the manipulation of others to bring him closer to her. In order to perform the good deeds; thus, to renew her spiritual journey, what she needs is to relinquish the comforts of human love and faith and open her path to her duties as the *good*.

Anne goes on with her endless struggle to find a way out as she experiences the combat of two different voices: the voice of faith and the voice of passion of love. Throughout her journey, she has her failures and crises. She fails to suit herself into life. She envisions that "[e]veryone will always see [her] as a failed nun" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 304). She is right in her vision as the Count "saw her as a holly woman" and Anne "for him had a priestly function which she could not prevent herself constantly fulfilling" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 304). At times, "Anne longed to destroy this imprisoning image, to cast it down violently at his feet and trample on it" she would love to have the chance to change the world. "Gertrude had said it could take four seconds to change the world" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 304). Although "Anne could do it in two," (Murdoch, 1980, p. 304) she tortures her thoughts by including a sideward glance to her self - consciousness and it narrates, "but suppose she were thus to *change* before his eyes and he were to recoil in horror, disgust – pity?" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 304). On the other hand, she is aware of the fact that she cannot be a faithful servant back in there, in the convent. Her lack of faith made her leave the convent and now she belongs nowhere: "If I were a priest and if I had even a little faith left, I would let myself die of being torn apart rather than destroy the cool innocent icon which is perhaps a unique consolation to him in his present travail" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 304).

Her consciousness does not let her at peace. Her passion of love for the Count and her duty to serve as the good to him and to others are at fight in her heart and mind. Thus, she cannot bear to be so close to him only "three feet" away as the Count comes to her in a desperate need for consolation. What Anne wants to do is to "send him away and to

think about him" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 307). However, then arrives the time when the different voices capture Anne causing an outburst of craziness followed by another consciousness. Anne, in tears, goes into the sitting-room and attacks the room. She overturns the chairs and hurls the cushions about. She kicks the rug and the wainscot and beats her hands against the wall. She kicks the gas fire and breaks one of its panels. She throws her books violently onto the floor. She tugs at her dress and drags off a button. She tears her hair and drums on her brow. At last, sobbing and groaning, she stands still, and then gradually becomes silent, "wet-eyed, wet-mouthed, staring blankly into her bedroom and lay down" (Murdoch, 1980, p.309).

Anne begins to question her present situation right after her out bursting craziness. Her analysis of herself does not know what her word about herself is: has she really surrendered to devils? Is she to become a loser, a complete failure? The interference of the self-censuring voice deprives Anne of her self-sufficiency. The signal of the danger of collapse is at the threshold as Anne questions: "What is happening to me, thought Anne, am I given over to devils? Is this the beginning of the darkness? Is this madness of being in love just a symptom of a breakdown which has been coming upon me for a long time? Was leaving the convent part of it too? They warned me that it would be worse, that I would collapse later. Is the dark night beginning? Am I collapsing now, will I need help, will I, I have to confess that I can no longer manage my life?" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 308).

Anne's questioning her life follows a confessional self-definition with a loophole which, according to its sense, becomes her last word about herself and her final definition of herself, while in fact it inwardly reckons the other person's counter-posed assessment of her. Her confession about herself and condemning herself hope to hear the other person dispute with her self-definition; in other words, she demands a voice that would save her from collapse. However, she in her new "cell", her solitude, thinks: "I am back in the hell of the personal, the very place I ran away from to God, back in the criminal mess I got myself out of when I thought I would seek and find innocence and stay with it forever. I am mad, I am a danger to myself and others." (Murdoch, 1980, p. 308).

Anne's confessing voice can be heard again and again. Her seeking the truth is dialogical since she does not accept the "ready-made truth" of official monologism. However, the ready-made-truth is there like a phantom to fight against. It makes the journey a really tough one. As Bakhtin puts it, "[t]he truth is not born and does not reside in the head of an individual person; it is of the dialogical intercourse *between people* in the collective search for the truth" (1973, p. 90). Therefore, the self-confident belief of an

individual who claims that s/he possesses the truth is counter-posed by a dialogical, collective search for the truth. Anne goes on her confession in search of the truth in every corner, in every possibility: She had left the convent to come out into loneliness and a sort of renewed innocence and a sort of peace. Perhaps she could never have been “empty and clean like and amoeba carried by the sea” (Murdoch, 1980, p. 309). But she had thought of her new life and her new solitude as a sort of simple austerity, and perhaps in her heart she had really seen herself as God’s spy, a secret anchoress hidden in the world. She had felt this in her rediscovery of Gertrude, she had felt it when she talked to Guy. Her life “inside” had, after all, a continuity with her life “outside”. Perhaps the God whom she had lost had spoiled her for the world, but she would live as she could in the world, as a silent invisible crippled serviceable being. “This was the pain of hell, envy, jealousy, resentment, anger, remorse, desire, the pain that leads terrorism. She had thought, if I cannot have what I desire I shall die. Now, in more despair, she thought, if I cannot have what I desire I shall have to live on with some unredeemable horror of being myself” (Murdoch, 1980, p. 309). All these questions Anne asks to herself may be because of the possibility that the last consolation that she must overcome is her reliance on faith. Only after she is freed from any consolation can she act alone, without hidden reasons. Her endless questioning has the signals that she might get stripped of other ulterior motives: “Was God playing a game with her? [...] She wondered earlier whether belief in God would ever return, sweep over her one day like great warm wet cloud. Now she felt more absolutely godless than she had ever felt in her life. Her good was her own, her evil was her own.” (Murdoch, 1980, pp. 309-10).

The combat of different voices against centripetal forces continues throughout the novel. The ongoing and the most significant struggle begins between the voice that embraces change, growth, disintegration, and risk and the one that depends on integrity. The “voice of integrity” (Murdoch, 1980, p. 503) often interrupts and fights for Anne’s wholeness, attempting to pull her back together. Anne is glad she has kept her mouth shut about her love, her need for companionship, and her impatience with the normative cultural obsession with heterosexual love, which at one point she calls a disease. She, of course, never finds integrity, but she does find that the world has its beauties.

One of the dialogic, centrifugal voices presented struggling against the monologic, centripetal forces is in the language of religion: Anne, a nun who has left the order, should have directed her energy toward assisting someone else “instead of fretting about her own fate...Why had she not imagined Daisy’s loneliness, her possible plight, her possible

despair?" (Murdoch, 1980, pp. 500-1). Maybe, this voice is responding with a "sideward glance" from the convent. Her vanity is being criticised by the law of religion. She concludes that the loss of Daisy was a professional one. She "had been too absorbed in her own hopes," too cold and hostile. The narrator can even sum up the self-criticism with "her selfless, masochistic morality" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 501).

In addition, the interrupting voice of romantic love is heard. However, this voice, hesitates between feeling the pain and torturing the spirit for not having been "interested in his interest in Christ" (Murdoch, 1980, p, 501). The voice criticises past times, questioning the possibility of reasonable arguments: "proper scruples, reasonable prudence, self-punishing masochism, [...] demonic pride [...] censorious coldness" (Murdoch, 1980, pp. 501-2). In brief, "in order to survive a terrible loss one has to become another person" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 503).

Bakhtin writes that a loophole is the retention for oneself of the possibility to alter the final ultimate sense of the word. If the word leaves this loophole open, then that fact "must inevitably be reflected in the structure" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 197). This possible other sense; in other words, the open loophole, accompanies the word like a shadow. According to its sense, the word with a loophole must be the last word, and it presents itself such, but in fact it is only the next-to-last word, and is followed by only a conditional, not a final, period. Bakhtin continues that "[t]he sullyng and destruction of one's image in the eyes of another person as a last desperate effort to free oneself from the dominion of the other person's consciousness and to break through to oneself for oneself..." (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 197).

As Bakhtin points out, a loophole creates a special type of fictive and final word about oneself. He says that its tone is unclosed and "it peers importunately into the other person's eyes, demanding a sincere refutation" (1973, p. 196). A loophole makes the hero ambiguous and elusive for himself as well. He must travel a long path in order to break through to himself. The loophole profoundly distorts his attitude towards himself. The hero does not know whose opinion, whose assertion is the final analysis, or the ultimate judgement about him. His own penitent is critical one. On the contrary, the one which he desires from the other person is the one which accepts and justifies him (Bakhtin, 1973, pp. 196-7).

Anne's whole confession represents a loophole and sideward glance. To Bakhtin, a loophole causes the hero to utter such a final word that it leaves the hero with an ambiguous and elusive situation not allowing a final word about him. Anne does not

know whose opinion or assertion is the ultimate judgement about her. When Anne confesses, she demands a sincere refutation from the other person. It is for this reason she makes her own word about herself deliberately a negative one. She wants to destroy any desire in herself to look like a heroine in other people's eyes and in her own. "Sometimes more simply she thought that she had been a coward and would pay a coward's price. That was one way of looking at it. She would have played a bolder and more positive role, questioned the Count, not respected his secrecy and his reserve" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 504). However, Anne is left with ambiguity. Change is painful, takes time and requires effort. Anne chooses to leave and she justifies her decision: "But I have to survive, Anne said to herself, and survive on my own terms. To stay, that would be heroism, yes: but I don't want to be that sort of hero. And she recalled Gertrude's words, in order to survive a terrible loss one has to become another person, it may seem cruel, survival itself is cruel, it means leading one's thoughts away from the one who is gone" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 505).

Anne carries on with herself the same kind of endless dialogue that she carries on with the other person. She is not able to completely merge with herself in a unified monologic voice, leaving the other person's voice wholly outside herself (without a loophole, regardless of what other person may say), since, her voice must also function as the surrogate for the other person. She cannot come to an agreement with herself, but neither can she stop talking with herself. The style of her word about herself is alien to the period and alien to the finalization, both in its individual elements as a whole. This is a style that Bakhtin calls "internally endless speech which can be mechanically cut short, but cannot be organically completed" (1973, p. 197). The confessional self-definition of Anne with a loophole is her last word about herself, the final definition of herself, while in fact it inwardly reckons the other person's answering, counterposed assessment of her. Anne who is confessing herself in fact only wants to provoke praise and acceptance by the other person. In condemning herself she wants and demands that the other person dispute her self-definition, but leaves herself a loophole for eventuality that the other person will indeed suddenly agree with her, and with her self-definition, not making use of his privilege as the other person: "About the Count Anne felt awful pain but, although she continued to speculate, her speculations did not disturb her present plans and motives..." (Murdoch, 1980, pp. 502-3).

Anne's confession or self-analysis at the end of the novel as she sits in the pub, the Prince of Denmark - waiting to discover Daisy's whereabouts- is an example of dialogism

in the relation of character to narrator. At this point in the novel, Murdoch employs terms - self-analysis and voice of pride (Murdoch, 1980, p. 503), and metaphors like “dodging a blow” (Murdoch, 1980: 506) - to convey the struggle Anne goes through regarding her future attitude toward herself her life, and the world in general.

Anne’s word about the world is both openly and furtively polemical. It polemizes not only with other people, other ideologies, but also with the object of its thinking itself; that is, with the world and its order. Moreover, in her word about the world she hears two voices, between which she cannot find herself and her own world, for the world she defines has a loophole as well. The world, nature and society seem to her full of interferences. In her thoughts about them there is a struggle of voices, assessments, points of view. She senses in everything all the will of the other person, the will which pre-defines her. She perceives the social order all from the point of view of this foreign will. Her thought is developed and constructed as the thought of a person personally debased by the world order. This allows her word to become tightly intertwined with her word about herself. Her word about the world, like her word about herself is deeply dialogical; she attacks the world order.

It seems that Anne’s inner speech is filled with other people’s words which she has heard in the immediate past. She fills her inner speech with the words of others, complicating them with her own accents, or re-accenting them, and entering into an impassioned polemic with them. Therefore, her inner speech is constructed like a succession of living, replies to all of the words of other people which has heard her. She addresses everyone with whom she polemizes. All the voices Anne introduces into her inner speech come into a sort of contact dialogically.

The confessing voice which condemns Anne’s past egoistic perspective is never mute until the end, and throughout it blends in with the others and continues its struggle. She criticises herself for not thinking of the happiness of Gertrude and the Count, realising that they need to play out a superficial game of knight and lady. She knows now that the Count could not take the full intensity of Anne’s love for him - that he could survive only small doses. She has been interested in the opportunity of giving him her devoted attention, and she has not tried to imagine his need, which was considering how much attention Gertrude needed and how many admirers she needed to secure her happiness. Anne is peeved with herself for having ignored her age-old policy of ignoring her own interest (Murdoch, 1980: 501), which can be a policy that has the strong sign of masochism.

Her experiences in the novel's closing paragraphs - a time of her coming to consciousness as a striking example of the hero's consciousness in carnivalized literature - prepares the final scene for the time into which Anne has been "peering ahead". Anne and Daisy have such problems at the end of the novel is because of the fact that neither has friends who can be reflectors for her. Both must move to the United States to find appropriate lives. The hero looks at him - or herself "in all the mirrors of other people's consciousnesses he knows all the possible refractions of his image in those mirrors" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 53).

There is also the discourse of unselfish love - a discourse that looks and listens - which interrupts the confessing voice later and decides that Gertrude has certain rights, and that one such right is access to the Count: "She saw him transfigured, saw his beauty which she was sure so few could see, and her body ached for him and she mourned" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 503). Others seem to see him not as a whole person but as no more than a servant to Gertrude. Making people feel less anxious - to Anne's realisation - becomes her goal in life is.

Another voice heard in the novel is of pain - similarly the critical voice - begins to torture Anne. This voice has been too patient, "if I had only told him then and then" (Murdoch, 1980: 501). "She should have played a bolder and more positive role, questioned the Count, not respected his secrecy and his reserve. What, in these reflections, she tried at all costs to avoid was the terrible love-yearning, the I want him, I want him, I shall die without him which kept returning and rising up in her heart" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 103.) Anne opposed herself and was cold, cold. That way indeed madness lay (Murdoch, 1980, p. 503). Anne does not put herself in a negative situation by just feeling sorry for herself. For the first moment Anne feels shock and distress at the image of her which has escaped somehow and is wandering abroad, bandies about over the drinking glasses. Then she relaxes and smiles. "And by what privilege could she be exempt from so general a human fate? We are all the judges and the judged, victims of the casual malice and fantasy of others, and ready sources of fantasy and malice in our turn" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 508). She recognises that now she can open herself completely to pain, including the very real pain she associates with her brother's death. In the space of several pages, to the accompaniment of the falling snow, she has emerged from the inability even to acknowledge the pain resulting from her brother's death: "And now, with a swift dart of memory, she thought she could recall how ever in the moment of hearing that Dick was dead, fallen from a cliff face in the Cairngorms, she had instinctively closed herself against

pain, instinctively peered ahead into a time when she would be someone else who could be conscious of this loss without anguish" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 503).

Although her quest is a different one compared to Anne's, Gertrude is another female character in search of her own voice. After Guy's death Gertrude sends Tim to France because she feels that she must continue to be responsible for him as Guy had been while he was alive. Tim is to become caretaker for the Oppenshaw summer house and arrange for its sale. When Gertrude joins Tim in the summer house, the place turns into their carnival square where they break free from the chains of social order and rules. The reason for Gertrude's arrival is to revisit and say good-bye to her valuable places before selling the house. However, before she leaves the enchanting landscape she has her significant swim in the stone basin, and she becomes the goddess of the crystal pool for Tim. She takes him to the same place, to the "great face" where Guy used to like a lot. And the place becomes a kind of renewal for Gertrude herself and for Gertrude in the eyes of Tim (Murdoch, 1980, p. 174).

The renewal on Gertrude's side is a significant one that changes the route of her life. She awakens and she realises the drawbacks in her life. She starts to question her present life. On this stage, in this carnival square, which is full of Guy, Gertrude experiences crisis: "Lying on her bed Gertrude had started to cry again. She cried quietly, wearily, it was like a natural function. She lay limp, unable to even to get up to find a dry handkerchief" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 178). She needs to make an ultimate decision, die or be born anew. "Since Guy's death she had watched herself suffering, she had seen herself wanting to suffer, then very gradually wanting not to suffer, wanting to recover, wanting to live" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 178). Now, in this place, so full of Guy, full of his thoughts and ways, his knowledge and his happiness, she seems to be surviving as she decides to re-born, gain a new self. She starts to act against the natural flow of the actions accepted by the society. It was her own voice she is listening to after all that suffering.

Gertrude in her new mood, renewed, more conscious and open to question her life, her surroundings, starts to do so. She is ready to pave her way towards a new life where she can liberate herself from the relationships and positions she has in her surroundings: "Only now, when she had escaped from it, did Gertrude feel how tired she was of the solicitous curiosity and busy sympathy of those who had surrounded her: a sympathy which, it occurred to her, was many cases insincere" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 179). Thus, a situation which causes Gertrude's consciousness is created. Gertrude freed from all conditions, positions, obligations and laws of her usual life, experiences carnivalistic

liberties and celebrates her feelings towards Tim: “Gertrude thought, I’m at the edge, I’m over the edge. I’ve got to come close to him, I’ve got to touch him. It is to do with the present moment and the necessity of it and how it’s all complete, all here, all in *him*. Everything that is necessary is here, there is nothing left outside, and I have to act, I have to move” (Murdoch, 1980, p. 189).

Similar to Anne and Gertrude’s quest, Daisy is another female character in the novel seeking her own voice. Daisy’s ideological word, its personal orientation and its dialogical appeal to its object stand out with its extraordinary vividness and clarity. Her voice is filled with dissatisfaction, rejection, non-acceptance and criticism. Daisy’s dialogue with Tim - right after Tim returns from France where he has fallen in love with Gertrude and starts an affair with her, which is decided to be kept as a secret for the time being - exemplifies how her voice is unique (Murdoch, 1980, p. 222).

Daisy’s style is determined by the cynical, pointedly deliberate disregard of the other person although what she hears is sad and unacceptable. It cannot be true. Daisy wants to deny it and wants to believe in her own reality. The utterances are rudely harsh and cynically precise. This is not sober austerity and precision. She wants everybody believe her and at the same time she wears a deathly, motionless, cynical and strict mask. That is Daisy’s usual attitude to the world. The cynical tone in her voice; in other words, her carnivalistic attitude to the world is vivid throughout the novel. She is against all kinds of authoritative set systems. Bakhtin says “carnival is an eminent attitude to the world” and he writes it “is an attitude toward the world which liberates from fear” and which “liberated man from precisely this sort of seriousness” (1973, p. 133).

Daisy has her own voice of curse and terrorism and at any chance her voice of attacking to all official systems and languages can be heard: “Fucking awful. How are the pussies getting on?” (Murdoch, 1980: 132); or, “Oh shit!”, “Bloody Christ” (75) are only a few examples of her many other uses of similar words. Her accent itself is not a pure one; that is her voices carries different accents and becomes a dialogical bearer of different voices: “Her voice, a curious mixture of a French accent and a Canadian accent, dominated by the Bloomsburian upper class voice of her mother, grew more strident. Her language, always lurid, grew more foul, and she laughed at Tim’s shudders. Tim was old-fashioned enough to object to the words “shit” and “fuck” occurring constantly in the mouth of the woman he loved” (Murdoch, 1980, p. 83).

Bakhtin, with reference to *Rabelais and His World*, explores grotesque images of the body, the speech of carnival (marketplace) as well as other manifestations of what Bakhtin

terms “unofficial” or “carnival” culture in the Middle Ages. Bakhtin rethought the opposition of “official monologue” to the dialogical principle, and of official culture to the official carnival tradition of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. In *Rabelais*, the “unpublicized sphere”, (1984, p. 422), freed from the hierarchy and prohibitions of official language, are opposed to it as a special language with a corresponding collective-the carnival “marketplace crowd” (1984, p.188). Bakhtin analyses carnival language as one formed in specific situations (feast-day, marketplace) of unofficial communication. Daisy not only conveys the grotesque, carnivalistic marketplace language, but also has the whole spirit of carnival act in her entire life, in her “unpublicized sphere”. In all scenes where Daisy is presented, she is in the carnival square and experiencing an alternative form of identity in the carnival act. She shows herself as she really wishes to be, freed from the imposed socially identified identity. For instance, they learnt to play chess and had hilarious incompetent contests which ended with Daisy pushing the board on the floor. Tim even learnt to cook a little; Daisy despised cooking. However, by the time Daisy had finished her second novel they were living in a smaller, nastier flat and coming to the conclusion that though they would stay together they could not live together. Close proximity brought on endless tiring quarrels which Tim felt were Daisy’s fault and she said were his fault. Tim was obsessively tidy, Daisy wildly untidy, and it became necessary for him to get away so as not to live amid perpetual mess. He was appalled by her unwillingness to clean or embellish. He wearied of picking her clothes up off the floor and washing them. He needed more space in which to paint, while Daisy said his presence distracted her from writing. They both really feared proximity, lack of privacy; cohabitation was becoming altogether too exhausting (Murdoch, 1980, p. 87).

Another carnivalistic element in the novel is the theme of absolute indifference to everything in the world. This typical of carnival attitude to life appears in the novel specifically in Daisy’s attitude towards life. Daisy’s domestic life is a way of life in which she is almost never sober; she mostly drinks and almost never cares about cleaning, tidying or taking care of the place where she lives. Usually it is Tim who keeps on tidying up her mess. The way of life she has is her own carnival way; she lives a carnivalistic life, which is a life “turned inside out”, or “life the wrong way round”. The flat she lives in is one of the substitutes of the carnival square: Daisy’s flatlet consisted of one room, with a sink and a gas stove behind a lattice partition. The bathroom next door was shared with other tenants. The room was quite large, with a dirty window looking out onto a tree and a wall and a narrow strip of sky. The walls were painted pale blue and Daisy had at different

times stuck posters on them with sellotape. Some of the posters regularly came unstuck and hung out like flags. On the mantelpiece and on the window edge, surrounded by dirty glasses and cosmetic and dust, stood Daisy's potted plants, donated mostly by friends who were leaving London. There was also a mahogany chest of drawers, quite handsome but extremely marked and battered, a cheap deal wardrobe, some crippled kitchen chairs, a monstrous armchair, a solid table covered with a cloth beside the window where Daisy wrote her novel (she used a typewriter) and a divan where Daisy now lay propped up, the two-litre bottle of wine and a glass upon the floor beside her. She had pinned a gay pattern of beer mats onto the lattice partition. As soon as Tim came in he had started, as he always did, to tidy up. He picked up Daisy's clothes off the floor and folded them and put some in the armchair, others into drawers. He picked up plates and glasses from various surfaces and took them through to the sink and put them in a basin to soak. The sink smelt of sour milk. The room smelt of alcohol and dirty clothes. There was no hot water (Murdoch, 1980, pp. 220-1).

Bakhtin points out that carnival celebrates the anarchic, body-based and grotesque popular culture, and seeks to mobilize them against the humourless seriousness of official culture. In addition, there is also the material and bodily becoming, which Bakhtin calls "gay relativity", and he writes, "this gay relativity, this ambivalence in which, affirmation springs from degradation.... language of the market - place, banquet, imagery, the grotesque body, and material bodily lower stratum" (1984, p. 68). Daisy, in her carnival square, constructs her opposing, ambivalent grotesque space. Ready to take her place in the carnival act - and already in the act, she gets dressed, puts on her make-up and welcomes her (unexpected now) but usual visitor - another participant in the carnival act: "Daisy was dressed in a shirt and a housecoat. She had, before Tim's unheralded arrival, made up her face, accentuating her dark brows and reddening her dropping mouth and making blue rings and black lines round eyes. She looked, though grotesque, rather pretty. She had combed her short shiny dark hair, there was not much grey in it. Her eyes sparkled. She was glad to see Tim" (Murdoch, 1980, p. 221).

Carnivalistic Attitude to the World: Female Characters on the Threshold

Carnival language proves to be means of connecting the lower levels of inner speech with the broader social sphere; in other words, a means of re-translating the individual - biological into the social and vice versa; thus, a means of dialogising the connections between them. To Bakhtin biological and biographical factors were important for the lower

strata of behavioural ideology. Bakhtin believes that what is usually called “creative individuality” is nothing but the expression of a particular person’s basic, firmly grounded, and consistent line of social orientation. Thus, “what is involved here are words, intonations, inner-word gestures that have undergone the experience of outward expression on a more or less ample social scale and have acquired, as it were, a high social polish and luster as a result of reactions and responses, resistance or support, on the part of the social audience” (Volishinov, 1973, p. 93).

Bakhtin writes that in Dostoevsky “the participants in the performance stand *on the threshold* (the threshold of life and death, truth and falsehood, sanity and insanity). And they are presented as *voices* which ring out “before heaven and earth” (1973, p. 121). Significantly, the three female characters are observed standing on *the threshold* asking the ultimate questions of life and death. Anne, Gertrude and Daisy are presented on the threshold and questioning life. What they are doing is not judgement of the world; it is their non-acceptance of the world, their rejection of it, their criticism directed to the world they live in, to the world order they need to struggle against.

Conclusion

As observed in the examples above, in *Nuns and Soldiers*, Murdoch uses free indirect discourse and confession, and also significant dialogic presentations of what Bakhtin names “the sideward glance” and “the loophole” The female characters’ heteroglot, dialogic, centrifugal discourse struggles against the dominant, hegemonic, monologic, centripetal discourse confronted by a marginalised, heteroglot, dialogic, centrifugal discourse. The unifying and disunifying exist in continual dialogue and struggle with one another. Thus, in order to acquire the truth, they have a continuous conflicting and contradictory dialogue and struggle to place themselves against the monologic discourse. That is to say, their polyphonic centrifugal discourses struggle against the centripetal force of the monologic discourses. The female characters with this attitude towards the world do not surrender the attempt of the hegemonic forces to silence them. Therefore, they become free and dynamic characters. To Bakhtin human coming-to-consciousness is a significant example to confront the authoritative word as observed frequently in Murdoch’s presentation. The characters are presented as dynamic and free characters not accepting any kind of final description of them. They are able to recognize the presence of other voices that they will communicate dialogically in order to bring meaning to their dialogues with the world and with themselves.

All three female characters in the novel are presented on the *threshold*. At the edge of life and death, sanity and insanity and truth and falsehood, they question life, they seek the truth and struggle to settle themselves in the world. Of the three women, especially, Gertrude and Daisy have their carnival attitudes towards the world. This kind of attitude towards the world liberates them from fear and from the seriousness of a world outside of the carnival festivities. Bakhtin says “carnival is an eminent attitude to the world” and it “is an attitude toward the world which liberates from fear” and which “liberated man from precisely this sort of seriousness” (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 133). Anne, because of the fifteen years in nunnery, creates her own carnival square in her mind. However, her carnival square is more filled with the questions of be-coming, taking part in the carnival action. It takes her more time to get on the stage, to let the festivities begin as her voice used to be muted for so many years. She needs more time to learn to speak on her own and with her own voice, without fear. All in all, each woman has her own struggle in gaining her own voice against all the authoritative, dominant voices. During their quest, they try to learn how to speak loud enough - among all the other louder voices that have been there all the time - to hear themselves and to make themselves be heard by the others.

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