CHAPTER 9

VOICES OF DESIRE : ANIA WALWICZ AND *SOFT*

I am reworking language and taking it apart,
slicing the top layer off it, peeling it away and
revealing the subconscious and unconscious
levels of language...I am producing this
language, reworking and rearranging it until
it comes closer to the actual process of feeling
and thinking.
                                    Ania Walwicz

Ania Walwicz is one of Australia's best-known experimental writers and performers.
Originally from Poland, her work is marked by her experience as a female migrant. Much
of her poetry uses experimental techniques to write against white male settler colonialism
and its construction of migrant women as 'other'. Walwicz's writing has an
autobiographical element. She says of her approach to writing: '...the writing started out

from diaries. It arose out of a need to record my own experience, and the aim emerged as one of notation and enactment of inner states of feeling and being' (FitzGerald, 1987: 2). She aims to write herself into existence, acknowledging,

> Of course, language, the renegotiation of language, and the renegotiation
> of identity very much connect. This goes back to my early writing, especially
> if you think of diary statements as being bound up with the emotional need to
> express oneself, to form oneself in language, to have some grasp of oneself,
> as it were. It is a form of creating oneself (FitzGerald, 1987: 8).

Walwicz has achieved a place in the Australian literary landscape, printed in numerous anthologies and performing in Arts Festivals. She defies the male Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition which has dominated such domains. Responses to her work indicate the complexity of the grammar and difficulty for the reader. Rosemary Sorenson's review of *Boat*, from which *soft* is taken, includes the comment: 'Only occasionally does my anger and impatience rise, when I cannot pick up the rhythms that are behind the voices...The refusal to give any cues is certainly an integral part, but it is always frustrating to be left with insufficient information to find the cue yourself' (Sorenson, 1989: 34-35). And this from Ivor Indyk: '*boat* is not for the faint-hearted. It is often difficult and exasperating, yet it more than rewards the effort of attention' (Indyk, 1989: 88). Other critics, as I discussed in chapter 2, have analysed her work according to the Kristevan semiotic. I have outlined the limitations of this position and indicated the advantages of a close reading of the grammar to release meaning potential.

Walwicz identifies with the avant-garde. She sees herself as part of a European tradition of modernism that is absent in Australia. She says: '...my work has expressionist aims, which are to present, to create, heightened states of emotion. So I don't portray ordinary everyday states' (FitzGerald, 1987: 5). To achieve her aims, she adopts a fragmented style reminiscent of Stein, Lautréamont, Joyce, Beckett and Artaud. In seeking to express her feelings she says 'I am rebelling against order, the father, the language of the father, that I am again producing a polymorphous text, a rebellion against power, an act of reversal, the master of words does become the minor...the language regressing – assuming different positions, the crossing of the barrier' (Walwicz, 1996: 61). She is attracted to the heightening of exaggerated states present in expressionism and the disruption of perception evident in Surrealism.

In the work *soft*, from her collection of experimental prose poems *Boat* (1989), Walwicz uses no written punctuation, preferring to create ambiguous descriptions and associations. *Boat* further develops the work of *Writing* (1982), which contains an obvious sensitivity for the marginalised, but *soft* marks a shift to a more subtle female migrant experience. Walwicz uses the language of a migrant or a non-standard English which is marked by child-like regression. This creates an interface between the subject persona as woman and migrant, both marginalised positions characterised by repression, displacement and desire. The enunciative position of the migrant woman is realised through pivot words and collocation of the textual fields and the dialogic relationships at the interpersonal level. The subject revealed is displaced by language and culture in her adopted home. Reading the grammar of her text reveals the unconscious desires that mark her position of enunciation embedded in a non-standard English that creates further obscurity. The truncated grammar also reveals the simultaneous existence of various subject positions of female, child, lover and migrant. Her work offers a new way of seeing the relationship between language and power as she subverts the dominant discourse of English by constructing a subject position for the migrant woman outside of hegemony. This is an emergent voice that subverts by appropriating the language that constructs her in her new colonial culture and discourse, transforming a non-standard English dialect into an expressive form.

Migrant Subjectivity

Walwicz explores the female migrant's subject position as a place of intersection between struggle with the new language that results in non-standard English and the desires that erupt as traces on this language in dialogic structures. The migrant subject remains defined by the codes of her homeland. In her adopted home she remains constantly defined by these 'foreign' attributes. Walwicz's experimental poetry creates a unique female migrant discourse that subverts the dominant forms of meaning finding a place of expression by subverting dominant modes of meaning-making. The experimental genre best enables this expression.

Walwicz creates quite a new direction for experimental poetry by transplanting subjectivity onto a new context and therefore generating a new hybridised communication. The multiple epistemological orientation informing her discourse is derived in her language. Her subject does not take up a position in accordance with the principles and constructs of the dominant discourse. Instead, her identity or foundation in her culture of origin resists the dominant. She defies Australian culture as she never completely adopts the knowledge and values that the subject requires to live and function within the dominant construct. Subjectivity depends on discursive relations within which one is located. The foregrounding of hybridity calls attention to central and peripheral discourses allowing the negotiation of the multiplicity of subject positions. Walwicz, operating both on the periphery and in between her culture of origin and adopted culture, writes, in cultural theorist Homi Bhabha's terms, at 'the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the inbetween space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture' (Bhabha, 1994: 38). Bhabha claims the enunciative space, in carrying the inscription of a culture's hybridity, is a positive conceptualisation of subjectivity removed from focus on multiculturalism and the diversity of cultures. Through an approach to hybridity 'we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves' (Bhabha, 1984: 39). While creating a corporeal discourse of her own, the speaker is aware of her own corporeal markings revealing the linguistic fields of dress, food and names as markings that differentiate her. Multicultural theorist Sneja Gunew (Gunew, 1994: 4) uses Althusser's concept of interpellation to explain how the migrant's subjectivity remains constantly marked by her difference. Gunew sees this as a negative place problematising the migrant subject's ability to be accepted in the new culture. By contrast Walwicz's speaking position creates a dialogic subjectivity operating between past and present modes, creating a hybrid construction. This is a positive rewriting that can be mapped by considering the multifunctionality of her language.

Walwicz draws attention to the authority of language by exposing the power-base of language as a system. By enacting the deployment of that power against its struggling victim, she breaks down the dominance of the Father and prepares a space for the existence of other languages and realities. This results in a voice for all repressed bodies. The strength of the voice she forges is derived from registering the traces of her

formative origins within a discourse that consciously fails to reclaim and re-speak these origins. This alienated discourse becomes a new fragmented language that expresses, not a pure self, but a multi-layered, multi-cultural and multi-tongued self. The positionality of migrants, particularly women, in Australian migrant literature is outside the experience of the dominant culture. The migrant conjures up subjects whose presence in the dominant culture is merely temporary and whose orientation is towards a past nostalgically conceived of as a lost motherland and mother tongue. There is much debate over ethnic minority writing and its paradoxical position as reiterating its difference while seeking a legitimate place in the dominant discourses. As Walwicz's work is experimental, it operates outside the mainstream. Within the experimental genre it has a legitimate role in its subversion of hegemony. Walwicz writes against the original white male settler colonising discourse. The rewriting of her experience serves to summon up the history and cultures of ethnic minorities that are excluded by the mainstream. Therefore experimental writing has much to offer ethnic minority writers in their quest to write their experiences by enabling a writing marked by the past and present. The systemic approach I adopt offers an analysis of the grammatical features acting on enunciation. It allows feminist and ethnic writing, both peripheral, to be analysed in the context of social communicative action without judging it in terms of being non-canonical.

Traces of origin

Walwicz uses the voice of a child to parody the dominant culture and its view of migrants who are unfamiliar with the dominant language. The supposed 'infantile' speaker is given space to speak in Walwicz's work. She privileges the position of the non-English speaker who has knowledge of (at least) two tongues. The foreign tongue, being inaccessible to the host culture, subverts the domination of one language and culture over another. This creates an intertextual dialogue where traces of origin and adopted cultures intersect. The traces of origin found in the adopted non-standard English enables Walwicz to rewrite the old into the new. It is an act of translation that allows a rewriting outside the understandings of both codes: in Walwicz's case, Polish and English. Exchanges of

meaning are not guaranteed by the laws of significance rather she produces states of feeling.

Walwicz's grammar is not fixed. She engages a form of code-switching which means that her use of grammar is inconsistent. This is indicative of the hybrid position that switches between two grammatical codes. At the textual level of language, for example, she sometimes uses verbs accurately but with absent subjects: *(I) hurt my eye (5)* and at other times her grammar is marked by problematic use of verbs: *now it (is) so cold (12)*. The structure is also ambiguous with *soft foam rubber lay back pillow* instead of the possible 'I lay back in a soft pillow'. Her purpose is to play with the ambiguities of grammar and suggest by association.

She also repeats words and has difficulty formulating grammatically correct interrogatives and verb agreement:

how how was when tell him look can't remember what next now what to say what what and what and what soft 16-17

This construction marks her language with non-standard structure reminiscent of baby-speak and migrant-speak. She forces the reader to make meaning from her appropriation of English as she positions herself outside the dominant culture. Other examples of questions phrased like the language of a child are: *how much before better 30* which could mean 'how much longer will it be before I am better?' and *just what see now 34* or 'just let me see now'. These ungrammatical phrases also indicate a child-like substitution as 'much' is multifunctioning, indicating both duration and quantity.

The experimental poetry genre enables Walwicz to play with language and its role in constructing subjectivity by exploiting the multivariate possibilities of the clause. The structures of Walwicz's phrases usually consist of two-word meaning units expressing either pragmatic commands or actions, or non-pragmatic descriptions. The two-word structure is typical of children learning language, a grammatical feature identified by Halliday. The two-word structures function as pragmatic (*tip me*), expressing demands and acting on reality and mathetic functions (*hot laundry*), expressing comments and reflecting on reality (Halliday, 1975: 46). These functions demonstrate the child learning

about his or her environment. The child leaves out the rest of the clause but also suggests other functions such as 'I want you to tip me' where the phrase can enter dialogic function and 'There is some hot laundry' using the transitivity system and existential process. There is functional ambiguity created by the absense of proper clauses. She does not adopt an adult grammar but her language functions to express adult ideas such as imparting information and interrogatives.

In her use of child-like speech structures, Walwicz's text invokes a sense of hysterical babble. The repressed silence can be contained no longer and it breaks out in an appropriated hybrid English that is somewhere between English and outside it. Questions of her displacement remain important as the text reveals her desire for comfort and acceptance. Her displacement, however, finds a subversive role, upsetting cultural imperialism by inserting other tongues into the prevailing English language. She negotiates a new symbolic. The speaker has to renegotiate language and therefore renegotiate identity. In doing so she creates a discourse that addresses the experience of dislocation and displacement while resisting the language of the dominant culture. She is able to protest against the coloniser by using a multifunctioning discourse that represents both non-standard English and hysterical babble, and therefore retreats from the symbolic order that would absorb her. Dialoguing with the past and present also subverts the notion that the migrant voice is heard as a reduced babble within the colonial power's discourse. The discourse she constructs is rather a positive form of expression. It represents a process where traces of her origins and adopted culture might intersect.

These functions of child-speak and migrant-speak often overlap by use of syntactic forks. The language on the page is ambiguous, allowing for a variety of possible readings where certain pivot words confuse the syntax:

watch fly so quiet everyone went can't hear walk crispy night moon white so soft snow first too cold shiver 18-20

The words *fly, night, soft, first* and *snow* create syntactic forks as their function pivots from noun/thing to verbs or classifiers to maintain a continuous flow of thought. This overlapping enables the possible choices of: *watch the fly* or *fly so quiet, so quiet, everyone went, can't hear, walk, can't hear walk, crispy night* or *night moon white, so*

soft or *soft snow* or *snow first* or *first too, too cold, shiver.* The imperative *watch* functions at the interpersonal level suggesting she is dialoguing with herself or an 'other' as she comments on her surroundings and her actions. The truncated phrasing is typical of non-standard English. Other grammatical features of non-standard English will be considered as the analysis proceeds.

The position of enunciation is also marked by dialogic traces of the speaker's culture of origin where certain fields of dress and food are present. These markings of the body differentiate her from the adopted culture by positioning her in hybrid subjectivity, never wholly belonging to her past or present. The image of the glitter dress positions her through metonymy as a migrant attracted to the brilliance and richness of bold colours: *wear a glitter dress a glitter dress lurex red red lurex nylon sweats wear dress sparkle heat got me...fever make fever this is soft* 46-47. The migrant woman is marked by her conspicuousness as she attracts attention in the dominant culture. This represents further marginalisation but also an escape from the dominant culture. She transports the cultural values of origin to the adopted context and remains between cultures, displaced between the two sign systems. She carries traces of her body from the original context. The repetition of *wear a glitter dress a glitter dress* and *lurex red red lurex* emphasises her need to maintain her ethnicity as she chants it to herself. The collocation of word associations between *red, fever* and *heat* suggests another semantic field of illness which is a way of escaping the dominant culture. She is marked by the contradictory positions of difference, her need to fit and her need to escape. The overlapping fields expose the subjectivity of a speaker whose enunciative position contains traces of her origin or her retreat. The phrase *glitter dress* is also a childish or unsophisticated description for a sequined dress which further indicates her migrant/child-speak. Walwicz turns negative positions into positive places of expression. Similarly *black eyes shine bright* 40 is another acknowledgement of her difference. She shines, she stands out in this country and she challenges the sedate settler colony's values. The use of positive finite verbs reconfirms her identity through positive modality.

Migrants have been indentified with introducing a variety of food to the Anglo-Celtic diet of 1950s Australia. Here the woman is being identified by and effectively appropriated by food. *me chocolate drink me bit by bit eat me all over again* 50. She is a

threatening difference which must be eaten up: *my skin eat a cake with almonds almondine a little pip lemon in my drink get out don't like him 52.* The subject here parodies those who want to dispose of her difference, those in power who encourage assimilation. *cocoa melt icing sugar stick to my finger lick me lick me 79.* Identifying as food, the subject reverses our assumption that she will be digested by the host culture. Instead she invites the host to consume her and thereby leaves her trace on the 'body' of the adopted culture. She invites the association of food with migrants. The combination of fields shows how the woman is positioned by her ethnicity and femininity and how this acts upon the creation of new subjectivities in her adopted home.

Foreign languages or subversive linguistic practices threaten meaning and subject-formation. The subject of *soft* is on the borders. She is separated from her motherland, and her speech, appearance and desires mark her difference in the new land. Walwicz's work is an enactment of the physicality of language and emotive experience, avoiding literal language which would be an imposition of order onto a chaotic experience. Although displaced from the dominant adopted culture, the speaker is able to rewrite and dialogue with her past, bringing it into her present. Her subversion challenges the unified meaning of the dominant language. Such dialogism allows the existence of her past and present at once.

Traces of the Father

The speaker relates to a silent or absent party who forms her audience and source of distress. She is in conversation with an imagined other, a dominant patriarchal, colonising, powerful figure and her reactions to him shape her. Such a crucial shift in the grammar reveals the 'other' as metonymic of the host culture and the dominant culture. Walwicz's text is marked by the dialogical play of voices interacting with herself and dominant others. The woman is in a dialogical event as her position switches amongst lover, foreigner and child. The dialogic features of the overlapping clauses and word associations create this effect. She moves through these roles, playing different parts for the lover/coloniser. *rock me* indicates the vulnerable child/lover in need and *wear a glitter dress*, the confident foreigner. From here her unconscious desires reveal

themselves. Her intonation also registers the effect of the generalised other's presence upon her thoughts where her fears are revealed further. The effect of intonation on these grammatical structures will be discussed in the following chapter.

Walwicz allows voices of the other to merge in dialogue with the voice of the female speaker, creating a polyphonic text. In order to engage in dialogue, she must be able to apprehend, internalise and recreate the utterances or voiced thoughts of others. The voice of the migrant merges with that of the yearning woman through shifting tenors. She is in dialogue with an oppressive voice which has penetrated her being. Therefore the meanings of textual elements are always part of a much greater system than her word or the text.

The speaker dialogues with her lover/coloniser at the interpersonal level of language, indicating the power he has in this relationship. Although she uses imperatives and demands, we sense her vulnerability and need of affection in her pleading tenor: *just hold me jumper hold me wool kiss me kiss me 21-22*. Simultaneously the collocation of *hold me...kiss me...* in the field of displacement and need is broken by *jumper...wool* which operate in a different field of comfort. Another example is: *now be good to me don't go out stay turn over to warm now cold before now mmmm sheets clean comfort stick nightgown 7-9* where the imperative tenor suggests traces of the lover or colonial father and her yearning to be accepted as well as her satisfaction with her own warmth. Her female migrant discourse is rearticulated or transposed to another context of power relations as the moment of utterance reshapes it. The genre itself always dialogues with the discourses it embeds, creating new and complex kinds of interactions between voices and positions. Traces of the father's power remain embedded in her discourse but there is evidence of her counteracting this presence.

The field of reading also reveals traces of the Father as the subject rejects communication with her new home. Her words: *world now can't read* (4-5), *won't read my book* (15) and *newspaper too tired* (18) suggest she is not comfortable reading a foreign language. She seeks comfort in softness and affection instead.

Traces of desire

At times the speaker cannot avoid dialoguing with the Father who takes on the persona of a thoughtless lover. At other times, evidence of her marginalisation breaks through from repression in desires for comfort. The speaker's grammar is marked by an ambiguous relationship with the adopted culture. Traces of desire can be found in the enunciative position where the speaker's unconscious erupts into consciousness as childish regression. Using a stream of consciousness, the subject in *soft* demonstrates how the mind moves in many directions. Stream of consciousness or interior monologue creates a flow of impressions, associations, lapses and hesitations, incidental worries and sudden impulses that constitute the self. The release of repressed desires gives voice to corporeal functions.

Fields of comfort and illness overlap as emerging desires break through into the consciousness as a stream of fragments. The field of illness reveals a corporeal trace where the trauma of displacement is relocated in the body. The traces erupt in the grammar in hysterical babble resembling non-standard English. Simultaneity is common in the piece where the clauses overlap on certain pivot words to realise at least two images and sensations at once: *touch cheek trees soft wave me to well too hot head ha hot head girl cough tablets swallow fly to sleep too quick hours go over my shoulder 3-4.* At the textual level of the phrases the modifier or group of words which further explain the head or noun are compounded on each other. This creates a multivariate structure or a constellation of elements, each with a function relating forward and backward and to the whole.

touch	*cheek*	*trees*	*soft*	*wave*	*me*	*to*	*well*
verb	thing	thing	< classifier>	verb > < thing	< thing>		classifier

too	*hot*	*head*	*ha*	*hot*	*head*	*girl*	*cough*	*tablets*
adverb	classifier	thing		classifier	thing	thing >	< thing classifier >	< thing >

swallow	fly	to	sleep	too	quick	hours	go	over	my	shoulder
verb >	< thing	< verb		adverb	classifier	thing	verb		deictic	thing
	verb >		thing >							

The interpersonal meaning is embodied in the person system where the thing *me* and deictic *my* indicate the presence of the speaker and her desires. Her fears are present in the adverb *too* as in *too hot* as she suffers from fever. Here *trees soft wave* becomes *wave me to well* to become *well too hot* and finally *hot head*. The image of the outside scene connotes a hot breeze which then transforms into feelings of illness with *hot head*. Pivot words *wave*, *well* and *hot* create syntactic forks which lead phrases in various directions. *girl cough, cough tablets swallow, swallow fly, fly to sleep* and *sleep too quick hours go* overlap. Walwicz plays with the mood system at the interpersonal function as *touch cheek, wave me to well, fly to sleep* could be imperative as the subject demands affection, or declarative as she tells us of her actions or those of time past: *(I) touch (my) cheek* or *(you) touch (my) cheek*. The absence of pronouns creates an ambiguous dialogue using material processes suggestive of her own actions or her lover's. Functional ambiguity reflects her own expressive space where she is in need of comfort and acceptance by the coloniser, indicating her feelings of detachment while she also remains removed from any control. The subject position is ambiguous as the fields of warmth and illness make it unclear if the tree, the breeze or an absent mother or lover is touching the cheek. Similarly, the reader is unsure whether it is the tree or the absent person waving. The verbs *touch* and *wave* collocate at the textual function in their caressing movement to indicate the subject's need for comfort. Such evocation of mood is typical of the work where the audience always seems aware of a sensation or feeling, but never of any linear plot or singular image. She is in a constant process of constructing subjectivity through dialogue.

Metonymic chains are present at the experiential level of *soft*. They serve to link the unconscious desires to the conscious description of actions. Metonymic connections are modelled by the relations of the connection between a term and what substitutes for it. Desire is based on a chain of substitution whereby the first (lost) object of desire generates a potentially infinite chain of (only partially satisfactory) substitutes (Lacan, 1977: 146-178). The speaker of *soft* is not a fixed entity, but a fluctuation of rhythms and

words. The subject identifies with marginality, constantly repositioning or ambiguously positioning herself. This occurs by subversion through language, expressing the vulnerability of being situated on the margins. Analysis of the lexicogrammar reveals metonymic chains in the text that act as forms of displacement in Freud's terms (Freud, 1991: 414). Halliday describes how metonymy derives from circumstantial relationship processes where the 'thing' is directed from, located in, or maintained by the object it relates to (Halliday, 1994: 341). Metonymic chains are forms of lexical variation that serve to expand on states of feeling through elaboration. Walwicz often displaces feelings of pain and discomfort onto objects.

The desire for comfort is revealed through regression to a childhood state of security and protection. The speaker as lover is vulnerable. Sexual undertones suggest the woman is in a regressed state escaping from an unhappy relationship with the coloniser or patriarchal figure. Her needs and desires are expressed through the flow of dream-like fragments of ambiguous signals. *touch spot what turn soft toe suck wrap right around coat hand in* 38. The imperatives give the illusion of control but the imagery moves from sex (*touch spot*) to the lover leaving (*coat hand in*). The speaker, as a vulnerable little girl, acts out imaginary scenes to comfort herself:

lovely things for me only soft me chocolate drink me bit by bit eat me all over again all over again laugh laugh laugh have you got a cold have you lost your shoe why is my feet bare under the sheet peek a boo foot hello it slid back goodbye then if you want my hot hand touches me and touches me and touches me snakes bite hide your foot under the blanket silly girl silly girl soft float 49-56

The text moves from commentary, questioning and childish conversation with her lover to scolding herself. The subject takes on new identities such as a chocolate drink that eats itself playing heartily, while the concerned mother asks *have you got a cold*. Such question and command grammatical formulas are hidden in the unpunctuated text. The lost shoe becomes a *feet bare* and a game of *peek a boo*. The woman acts as a child escaping from reality at every instance as she uses her own foot as a substitute for her lover and imagines her lover's affection. She speaks to her imaginary lover's foot, a sense of engagement she yearns for. Her own foot replaces her lover in an enactment of Freud's forte-da game. Here she regresses to childhood again as she replaces the lost object of identity, her homeland, with an imaginary one.

Fields of illness, cure and food overlap at the textual function to suggest her desires. The text also evokes the semantic chain of food which becomes metonymic for comfort throughout.

cough mixture take hours little measure how much before better hmmmm pill one two but not milk don't feed it annoys apple eats too slow don't like frankfurts flush fever rouge cheeks red tip finger touch this is my what not to care dissolve in soft fizz fizz fizz 29-34

The phrases *cough mixture, little measure, pill one two, don't feed it, dissolve in soft fizz* collocate to describe the speaker's need to cure herself. She takes cough mixture and pills, pivoting on *don't feed it* which suggests the expression 'feed a cold, starve a fever'. Red images and food also indicate her desires with the words *apple, frankfurts, flush, fever, rouge cheeks* and *reds tip finger*. The words here collocate at the textual function moving from *apple*, a form of sustenance, to *frankfurts*, also red in colour, a European food and a typical food at a child's party, back to illness with *flush fever*. *Rouge cheeks* indicates both her illness and make-up leading to *reds tip finger* suggesting she is painting her nails. Her desire to be well is replaced by her need to be desirable. She operates in a vulnerable regressed childish state that marks her discourse both grammatically and semantically.

Images of heat and sex are frequent in the text. Heat represents the fever which she desires to escape and sex is her desire for affection:

put a heater in my body to warm me was a cold now fire hot me hot me is there someone knocking on my door had such a good time last night a soft band just touch so soft in coat play now soft more soft don't be scared put quilt cold night soft soft 62-66

Overlapping of metonymic chains evoke feelings: *heater-body-fire-hot me* suggest sex, *soft-touch* suggest intimacy and *scared-cold* suggest fear. Each word suggests the next creating a network of associations and simultaneity. The woman continues the imaginary game of courtship as a means of comforting her loneliness. Walwicz creates a new form of expression that remains deliberately ambiguous to escape the coloniser.

Conclusion

soft uses language to express the random thoughts of stream of consciousness that ultimately reveal the unconscious needs of the subject. Systemic Functional Grammar foregrounds the social construction of the subject and the role of language in this construction. Reading the grammar of Walwicz's text demonstrates how the female migrant subject is marked by construction of both her past culture and newly adopted one, dialoguing with both subjectivities to form her own unique expression. The use of non-standard English marks the subject's ethnicity in the dominant culture. Reading the grammar, particularly the function of textual fields, reveals how the subject dialogues with the culture of origin and is marked by it. Through the experimental poetry genre, Walwicz rewrites female migrant subjectivity into a positive place of expression. Systemic Functional Grammar demonstrates how the subject's use of a childlike or migrant language only appears to remain in its developmental stages and evolving function. Her language consists of a complex system of functions that serve the subject in expressing her hybridity and in turn her femininity. The speaker articulates cultural difference, renewing the past (or origin) and refiguring it as an in-between space that interrupts the present.

CHAPTER 10

PERFORMING *SOFT*

*In performance, fragmented forms find
powerful completion in canonical
recurrence. On stage, controlled by breath
and tempo, writing becomes drama, its
surface tension so tight that no other, it
seems, can break in.*
                     (Liddelow on Walwicz, 1996)

To experience Walwicz's performance is to engage fully with the states of emotion of the
text. She does, however, insist that the work does not need to be performed to be
appreciated. She says of performing 'I sometimes think that it interferes with my work to
read it in public because then I am delivering the author's interpretation – the 'authorial
authority'. And I don't want to do that...It limits the variations of interpretation that the
reader can impose on the work' (Digby, 1992: 882). Walwicz has received mixed

responses to her performances. She recalls a performance in England where 'a Bishop complained that my work was obscene' (Digby, 1992: 832). She recognises that women in public doing very emotive work and expressing themselves defies cultural hegemony which normally alienates women's bodies. Walwicz admits she had to grow into the role of performer: 'At first I was very nervous and I just read. But then I realised that the situation had the potential of drama and I began to read in different ways' (FitzGerald, 1987: 14). At the performance of *soft* at the Palimpsest festival in 1996, from which this analysis is drawn, she evoked great humour with her vocal timbre and intonation.

Walwicz believes her work reads well in the mind's ear and does not need to be read aloud. Nevertheless, in her performance of *soft*, the subject positions emerge to reveal a multi-vocal subjectivity of the migrant woman voicing her difference, her desires and her relationship with the coloniser. The non-standard English and position of language acquisition are sonically represented in her accent and baby-talk. Her position of enunciation reveals her character as the movement of thoughts is captured in the immediacy of the delivery. The semantic markers of grammatical subject-object relations and segmentation are now greatly enhanced by a variety of phonological markers such as the prosodic cues of intonation, disjuncture and key as well as the pronunciation of phonemes and the indexical entailment of Walwicz's accent or child-speak and clarity of syllables. A functional approach to the performance discloses how the sonic qualities of the words and prosodic function of the delivery reveal the subject positions and how they overlap to create a multifunctioning sonic discourse.

As the audience, we are constantly listening for markers in the grammar which might indicate meaning to us. The difficulty in analysing *soft* is that the grammatical markers are not obvious because they are deliberately subverted and displaced by the double effect of non-standard English and stream of consciousness style. This enhances the multi-vocity of the speaker. The phonological markers of pronunciation in *soft* reveal the relationship of speaker and addressee. The pronunciation and accentuation of syllabic onsets, nuclei and coda reveal semantic relationships that represent the subject's moods and responses to her original and adopted culture.

For the purposes of performance, I am more concerned specifically with utterance and the intonation of the speaker operating at the interpersonal level of the clause.

Intonation, as the immediate interface between the said and unsaid, is able to register the presence of both the father and culture of origin. Through the speech patterns and inflections used, the audience can determine the relationship between the speaker and addressee. The dominance of rising intonation indicates an orientation towards the hearer. This emphasises the vulnerability of the speaker who is playing a number of roles, often simultaneously, to herself or her lover, in her mind. Use of stressed syllables emphasises information within the intonational contours where we may not be aware of any linear plot but are always aware of the sensation of emotional pain or attempts to escape from it. The social function of the voice and body and their role in production is realised through the functional model of multimodal theory.

Mechanics of Performance

Walwicz's polyphony of voices is written into the text but in our mind's ear we do not gain the effect of her Polish accent which creates quite a different interpretation when performed or recorded. From the performance, the audience gains a close encounter with the female migrant persona. From my survey of listeners (see appendix 1) it was obvious that the Polish accent of the speaker impacted on the audience and their interpretation. In live performance, Walwicz reads her work with little body movement. Her facial expressions are perhaps the main element gained from watching her where the raising of an eyebrow or narrowing of the eyes might relay feelings of irony and pain. At other times she will tilt her head and crouch slightly to indicate her vulnerability.

Walwicz uses a variety of devices to create a texture out of words such as a soft whispered voice with wavering pitch so that the articulation of individual words becomes blurred and indistinct. She combines dynamic variation by manipulation of timbre such as a hoarse, breathy voice or a clear one. Certain words are grouped which might belong together semantically or collocate, so a different performance could be devised through combining words irregularly such as semantically remote words which could forge new types of association or new metonymies. The multi-vocity of the text is revealed through prosodic features of disjuncture and intonation at the interpersonal function. This function

allows for both the stream of consciousness writing and the suggestion of dialogue. The repetitive grammatical and prosodic functions are constantly being renegotiated by listeners who are fully immersed in the variety of subject positions presented by Walwicz.

Voicing subjectivity : The mark of the body

The simultaneous representation of the non-standard English of a migrant and childish regression of the hysteric is enhanced sonically through Walwicz's accent and the enactment of baby-talk. The voice is marked by Walwicz's accent and the associated trace of her origin. She is therefore bodily marked by her difference. She is further marked by the adoption of a childish speech, indicating regression and dissociation. These marks on the voice are deliberately exaggerated by the speaker as she forges her enunciative position, voicing her presence and existence. The hybrid subject speaks in a voice marked by numerous subject positions. Mapping the prosodic features of her discourse shows the patterns that characterise her subject position and adds to my analysis in Chapter 9 by further refining an understanding of her enunciative position.

The speaker performs her subject position by exaggeration. This enables a subversion of the Father that would construct her. Walwicz's Polish accent is characterised by exaggerated phonemes typical of foreign language speakers. This takes the form of emphasising the onset, nuclei or coda of words that might be stretched out or clipped in an abrupt manner. For example, in her delivery of the word *soft*, the nuclei /ɒf/ is stretched out and the voiceless fricative onset /s/ and plosive coda /t/ are emphasised. It is this breathy timbre produced close to the microphone that marks her language with Polish accent. Other words such as *night* where the plosive of the coda /t/ is tongued heavily and *warm* where the nuclei is pronounced /æ/ instead of /or/ by flattening the vowel sound indicate her accent. The voice is therefore indexically entailed with an alternative resonance to the dominant Australian accent.

Walwicz's cultural difference and hybridity forges a minority discourse or counter-discourse to the dominant discourses that represent themselves as universal. As discussed in Chapter 9, the voice constantly shifts positions, dialoguing with the past,

present and unconscious desires. This shifting, marked by the position of enunciation or pronunciation, demonstrates the important prosodic features of the voice in the subversion of dominant discourses and writing of the female migrant subject into hybrid subjectivity. Walwicz's use of the voice is by no means naïve. She uses it for parody, employing the powerful trope of reducing adult migrants to children where femininity and ethnicity are exaggerated as masquerades that can escape definition. This is where the voice embodying the subject's experience is used to speak a new position. The voice emphasises the words as translations that rupture linguistic imperialism. Her voice constantly reminds the colonial power of her presence. She refuses to function as a 'self-confirming other' in Spivak's terms (Spivak, 1980: 226). Rather she incorporates a plurality of tongues in the new discourse. Her voice, marked by her Polish accent, constructs a multicultural soundscape. It cannot be digested by the coloniser, remaining an integral element of her subjectivity. The voice is semantically loaded with dialogical traces of the soundscape of the culture of origin and the adopted culture.

Dialogue with the Father

The audience become aware of the speaker's relationship with an absent lover as she relays her memories of dialogue with him. The shift to this dialogue is marked by childish pleading for acts of love and affection and imitation of baby-talk. Prosodic analysis of the performed words furthers the discussion of Chapter 9 by indicating the performed roles Walwicz engages.

The speaker plays with enunciative positions. Here she expresses her needs.

read/ too tired/ not think// be good to me now// be good to me// don't go out/ stay // turn over to warm/ (6-7)

Her word stream about illness turns quickly to her lover after the word *think* where the pause allows for a shifting position. She speaks slowly. The use of disjuncture on the phrase *be good to me now* emphasises the presence of a lover, at least in her mind, as pauses occur as they would in a dialogue. The pleading tone of *be good to me now be*

good to me don't go out (6-7) suggests that the woman is uncertain of her lover/coloniser's treatment. The slight falling intonation on *now* is wary and although imperatives are used they are marked with desperation as she expresses her feelings. Her pained facial expressions and limp body also express her pleading.

```
/   ∧  \  \  v   /  ∧  \  ∧   /   /  ∧
3   1  3  3  2   4  1  3  2   2   3  2
be good to me now // be good to me/ don't go out
```

Stress on the word *good*, narrow pitch range and breathiness express the woman's longing. The fall-rise intonation is uncertain as she hopes to persuade her lover of her needs. The same intonation is used on *hold me jumper hold me jumper wool kiss me kiss me (22-23)* and *just rock me rock me hot see soft lay back (42-43)*. She becomes quite upset, almost choking on *just let think what forget see how was when tell him look can't remember what next now what say what and what and what* (15-16). Her reaction to her marginalised position as a female migrant is to regress to this baby-speak, recognisable in the high key and rising intonation. Walwicz's body language also indicates her vulnerability as she tilts her head to the side in a typically childish female gesture.

```
/      ∧    /   /    \
bed/ won't/ read/ my/ book/ just/ let/ think// what / forget/ see how/ how was //
                ∧    ∧          ∧    ∧    ∧
when tell him look// can't remember/ what next now/ what to say/
```

```
/        /        /
what    what     what
   \        \
   and/     and/                          (lines 15-16)
```

The repetitive *what and what and what* sounds like yelping with rising intonation. Slight resonance between the words emphasises her sobbing and demonstrates the effect of intonation on meaning. The repetitive *what* is heard at a higher pitch and attracts our attention to the new situation where she speaks of her lover. The repetition of *what* is abrupt and nervous. It is said with an upward inflection as if questioning. The woman is confused and bewildered. She is regretful of not being able to express herself to the father. Enacting the little girl in her mind, she turns real pain into farce.

Another example of regression is:

have you got a cold/ have you lost your shoe/ why is my feet bare under the sheet/ peek a boo foot/ hello/ it slid back/ goodbye then/ if you want/ my hot head touches me/ and touches me/ and touches me/ snakes bite hide your foot under the blanket/ silly girl/ silly girl/ (52-56)

The intonation of the questions with rising inflection and high key is coupled with the slow pace of the delivery to create a seductive scene. The rise and fall suggests a dialogue, as do the words *hello* and *goodbye*. The fall-rise on *hello* suggests she is not pleased at the parting. The mood then shifts to her as an adult, marked by the pronoun *me* and *my* and the mid key. She accents the plosive /t/ on *touches* to emphasise the sensuality of the scene. She then returns to the voice of a chastising adult punishing herself for being so foolish as to want comfort: *silly girl silly girl*. These shifting positions of enunciation from adult to child are represented in the key. Continuous movement represents subjectivity in the process of construction. She uses the parody of a migrant woman as a child to remain outside the dominant discourse. Throughout, Walwicz performs these roles to write them into the soundscape of the dominant colonial discourse.
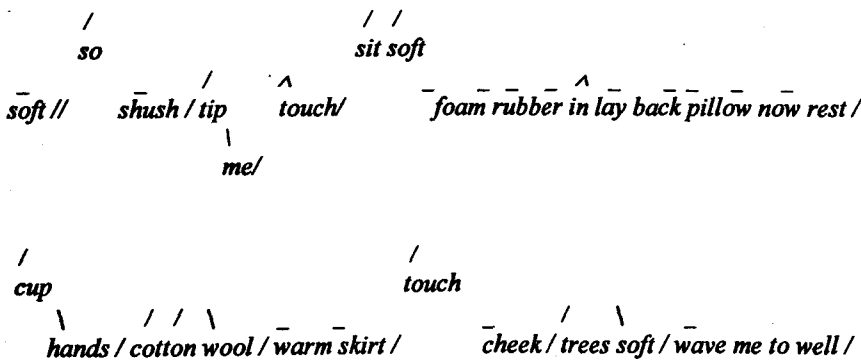
Voicing subjectivity: desire

The speaker voices her desires by shifting from a carer to a vulnerable girl who is ill and in need of comfort. Through the gradual shifting of roles she exaggerates her hybrid position situated between two cultures. This regression is underlined by her speech, indicated by the intonation, key and use of disjuncture. The interpersonal function of the dialogue is revealed in the rising tone of the prosody, marking the position of enunciation in her role as mother and child. The oscillation and simultaneity between the roles reveal the subject in a constant process of construction, performing her vulnerability and giving voice to her experience as a female migrant, marginalised in the dominant discourse. Prosodic use of level tone and mid key pitch is commonly used for longer word stream descriptions of action, while a wider range of disjunctures and intonations are found when she expresses her feelings or desires. Usually the syntax is displaced and, as listeners, we must use a variety of prosodic markers to make meaning. In the opening of

the performance the woman describes her actions and desires. The title *soft* emerges in a sharp whisper, followed by:

soft so shush tip me touch sit soft foam rubber in lay back pillow now rest cup hands cotton wool warm skirt touch cheek trees soft wave me to well (1-3)

The word *soft* functions metaphorically as it is represented by the whispered vocal timbre and sibilance of other words that collocate through sound. The word and its delivery operate together to suggest the speaker's position is both a secretive escape and a yearning for comfort. She wants to avoid attention, operating against the dominant discourse in a subtle manner through quiet articulation of her feelings. These soft expressions resonate to construct the subjectivity of the female migrant by voicing her desires. She forges a voice or minority narrative rejecting universalising discourses and voices. Her voice is one of potential and possibility: the corporeal mark of a subject in process.

The intonational contours with rise on *so, sit soft, touch* and *cup* suggest the presence in her mind of the coloniser where she desires comfort. She adopts a high key indicative of baby-talk as her desires sonically mark her voice erupting in a childish regression.


```
        /                        / /
       so                      sit soft
     _      _    /     ^     _   _ _ _ ^ _   _ _   _   _
soft //   shush / tip   touch/    foam rubber in lay back pillow now rest /
                      \
                     me/


   /                        /
  cup                     touch
    \    / / \    _  _        _   /   \    _
  hands / cotton wool / warm skirt /   cheek / trees soft / wave me to well /
```

The disjunctures determine many of the imperative phrases: *tip me, touch, cup hands, touch cheek* as she describes her actions. The two-word constructions marked by pause, constantly mark the enunciative position as babble and non-standard English simultaneously. Her voice therefore operates indexically, carrying traces of her origins

and adopted culture. The two-word phrases create discourse segments that are prosodically marked to indicate the relationship between the segments but there is deliberate lack of dominance. Each phrase continuously merges into the next without climax. This deliberate stream of consciousness style subverts the dominant discourse of English that relies on subject-object relations and falling intonation to finalise clauses.

The fricatives /s/ and /ʃ/ in *soft* and *shush* are emphasised, as is the plosive /t/ on *soft, tip* and *touch*. The open juncture between words helps to expose the onset and coda of each syllable, emphasising these words as commands as the speaker yearns for attention. From here the stream of words *sit soft foam rubber in lay back pillow now rest* using level tone draws to a whisper with slower pace as if she is soothing herself as a mother would a child. Again the phonemes /s/ and /ʃ/ are emphasised. The level tone is more secure than the insecure rise and fall of intonation at the beginning. We sense subtle mood shifts by listening to the intonation. These mood shifts represent the hybrid subjectivity of the female migrant who both desires comfort from her coloniser and release from her displacement.

A pause is heard after the word *rest* (2), an appropriate word to breathe on. *Now rest* (2) is whispered with stretched syllables. The woman moves from talking to a child to taking on the persona of a child with *cup hands / cottonwool*. The disjuncture between the paired actions or noun groups is typical of baby talk as she enacts her regression in speech and physically crouches to diminish her size. The sudden rise and stress on *cup* and *touch* then falling intonation and widening of the eyes expresses the surprise of an infant. A variety of voices and assumed audiences merge as one in the mind of the speaker whose ambiguous position is emphasised by the polyphony of voices. Her hesitancy and whispers reveal her deliberate rejection of hegemony and the strong plosives and articulations have been subdued. Walwicz changes her style from open juncture to slur or run-on the coda of one word ending with the onset of the next:

warm skir(t) ouch cheek and tree(s) oft

The sustaining of these phonemes gives them greater verbalisation. It also gives a sleepy dream-like effect to the series of actions. She no longer commands as if there is a real

other. This drift from commanding imperatives to subdued uncertainty is marked by the articulation, intonation and disjuncture. The woman speaks of her illness, as patient, both as a burden and escape. Close listening is encouraged by the whispering, creating intimacy between the audience and the speaker. Prosodic elements of pitch and intensity are crucial to imparting the effect of the vulnerable subject.

Rhythm and pause are also important for creating hesitancy and wariness. *too/ hot/ head/ ha/ hot/ head/ girl/* (2-3) is punctuated by disjuncture and a slight pause between each word, building the intensity of her discomfort and need to escape. The pitch is higher and slightly emphasised while *girl* is lower as if to emphasise a second party. The speaker has removed herself from the position of being touched and calmed to describing her illness. The sound of swallowing is heard before *cough tablets swallow* as she acts out her illness. There is some word painting on *fly* (4) as it is stretched out with rising intonation like a child would imitate the gliding of a bird or plane.

At other times the woman remains an adult in dialogue with herself. She is marginalised by her use of non-standard English revealed in the disjuncture and the fields of desire she repeats. Here the listener uses sonic and semantic markers as cues to her mood and meaning.

warm now/ cold before now mmmm/ sheets clean comfort stick nightgown put clean one/too hot laundry did my quiet// shush// hush// take soft tissue/tissue/ hot dryer tumble/ take off coat/ jumper/ soft too touch// took my stockings/ boots off slid hold my finger/ my warm legs/ warm now/ it so cold// (7-12)

She describes her actions to us with long streams of thought: *sheets clean comfort stick nightgown put clean one*. Our sense of syntax is distorted but we use the nouns and adjectives as semantic markers. She whispers the words *shush hush* as if speaking to an audience. Disjunctures between these words create a waiting pause as if she is listening. Such a theatrical delivery suggests other players, emphasising the woman's place as she acts out scenarios in her imagination. The rise-fall intonation on words like *tumble, finger* and *warm* creates a song-like sensuousness, as does the moving pitch range. Her voice resonates with yearning on these words, in contrast to the level tone of *take off coat jumper*. As a female adult she is again marked by desire.

```
/                                    / \          \
hot      ∧ _ _    _ _  _ _  soft too/ _   took   \ _  _  _  _
   _ _ tumble/ take off coat/ jumper/      touch/      my stockings/ boots off
 dryer

                    /·              ∧
                   my             warm
    _  _  _ ∧ _      ∧ \          \
 slid hold my finger/  warm legs/    now
```

The slurring of coda and onset between *soft tissue* and *soft too* emphasises the plosive $/t/$ and the words *soft* and *tissue* imitate a sneeze. The use of level tone on longer descriptions is typical, suggesting the mundanity of action in contrast to her personal feelings and interpretations. The listener senses her desire for warmth as the older woman in need of affection and love. She then regresses, through this need, to a little girl with:

```
∧ _ ∧ ∨
got a cold now (13)
```

The rising intonation and slide on *cold* coupled with baby-talk imitates a regressed state of desire for comfort. Her hope is to achieve attention and protection.

Repetition of *hot hot hot* (14) attracts attention to her illness where she again acts the little girl by pouting and saying:

```
/  ∧  ∨                          /   ∧  \  \   ∨
roll over now (14) with the same intonation as be good to me now. bed won't read my
```

book (15) takes on a rather sulky tone as the words are disjointed.

Another example of desire is evoked through the timbre of:

warm now/ it so cold// breath vapour/ warm now/ smug jacket got a cold now/ hot // hot// hot// fever warm hot soft heater/ roll over now/bed (12-14)

She wavers between close disjunctures which indicate her contemplation, to longer streams as if she is really affected by fever. We know from the absent subject and object in the grammar that she is speaking about herself being warm. We fill in the gaps as we know her desire is for warmth. She becomes too hot, emphasised by *hot// hot// hot//* where the plosive $/t/$ is sounded with energy to the point where she is suffocating. While the grammar indicates mainly positive polarity, the delivery of the words suggests modality where the intonational contours indicate the uncertainty of questions with

frequent rising intonation. Prosodic markers embedded in her speech enhance her roles and desires.

The speaker adopts the personas of mother and child where she enacts the mother of herself as child. Self and other dialogue simultaneously.

shut door my room chocolate cough mixture take hours little measure how much before better hmmmm pill one two but not milk don't feed it annoys apple eats too slow don't like frankfurts flush fever rouge cheeks reds tip finger touch this is my what not to care dissolve in soft fizz fizz fizz (29-34)

The rising intonation and key on *hmmm* as if questioning herself is marked by disjuncture after a long stream of words. She speaks as a child, reflecting the other of herself. She is subordinate, taking on the weaker, patient role and dialoguing with this position. The intonation and disjuncture continue to reflect an 'other' and she uses imperatives to inform them of her position.

pill/ one/two// but not milk/ don't feed /it annoys// apple eats too slow/ don't like frankfurts/ flush fever/ rouge cheeks/ reds tip finger touch this is my/ what not to care// dissolve in soft fizz/ fizz/ fizz

The disjunctures mark phrases so the listener can hear how the subject matter shifts through fields of illness to food to illness. The intonation also helps mark the shifting position as the baby-talk on *apple eats too slow don't like frankfurts* indicates an aside from the discourse of illness. Throughout, the subject performs a variety of roles to express her desires. The sonic prosodic features of her delivery operate at the textual function of meaning potential as disjuncture indicates the semantic phrases, at the interpersonal level where intonation indicates the presence of others and at the experiential level where her Polish accent and emphasis of certain sounds marks her position of enunciation as foreign.

Conclusion

Throughout the performance Walwicz changes her position and addressee. Prosodic elements of intonation, disjuncture and key as indicators of the interpersonal function are most pertinent to the projection of the dialogic as they allow us to detect where the

utterance is intended to be addressed. The speaker is migrant, woman, child and lover speaking to herself and a dominant coloniser. Her performance is a dynamic interplay between these shifting positions. Walwicz's vocal modulations are crucial for the effect of the stream of consciousness style. Analysis of the vocal performance confirms her as a subject positioned between two discourses. Considering the position of enunciation and delivery as a function of her rewriting and reconstruction demonstrates how her performance subverts the dominant discourses as she exposes their inadequacy to contain her. She refuses to surrender to such discourses. Therefore the performance of experimental poetry enables the voicing of corporeal lived bodies, forcing standard English genres to understand migrant perspectives and subjectivity as valid expression.

CHAPTER 11

MARGINAL VOICES:

HAZEL SMITH AND *POET WITHOUT LANGUAGE*

My work revolves around the creation
of a new language, the interrogation of
linguistic and literary conventions, and
the resituating of narrative as oral event.
                    (Hazel Smith, 1999)

Hazel Smith's poetry incorporates a wide variety of contexts and styles. Her interest in

the rhythmic qualities of words and their semantic associations is evident in *Poet Without*

Language (1991). As Smith's work has developed, she has become more inclined to label

her writing according to her aim to find a new language between word and sound. Smith

comments on the growth of experimentation in this way:

   Sound poetry and concrete poetry were extremely important historical

movements, but I think these movements have really moved on and greatly transformed and diversified. I prefer terms like sonic writings, intermedia and hypermedia, which are broader and more indicative of recent developments in the field. My own sonic writing, for example, brings together prose and poetry, narrative and dramatic elements, improvisation and sound-play, and most of it is heavily semantic (Bennett, 1999: 19).

Here she calls her work 'sonic writing' but she has also referred to is as 'Feminist Performance Linguistics' (Smith, 1995: 26), a label which encompasses the enormous range of technical devices and registers which she employs throughout her work, as well as the politics of gender.

Smith's work is well published. Her volumes *Abstractly Represented: Poems and Performance Texts 1982-1990* and *Keys Round her Tongue: Short Prose Poems and Performance Texts* (2000) demonstrate experimentation with language, rhythm and intertextuality. Smith's recorded work includes *Poet Without Language* (1991), *Nuraghic Echoes* (1993), *Secret Places* (1995) and *Riting the Runda* (1996) which play with oral storytelling and racial identity. She appears in broadcasts and writer's festivals around Australia but is most well known for her work in AustraLysis where she collaborates with Roger Dean. *Poet Without Language* was commissioned by the ABCs Listening Room and recorded by AustraLysis.

Smith's work explores the relationship between word and sound. She says: 'Writing poetry for me is always a matter of questioning what poetry is. I am interested in how we can push the limits of language. I am particularly concerned with the way we can make words speak, beyond their normal meanings' (Smith, 1996: 131). In a poem published in *Shampoo* she further describes her attitude to writing:

Arbitrarily she threw down and swept them into foreign
combinations. From alien states she longed to draw new maps.

Systematically she dug up signs even when they failed to yield to
excavation. Through stability she hoped to rock the unstable.

Tentatively she sought techniques to lasso passing strangers in, and
squeeze the hands of everything they failed to speak.

(Smith, 2001)

Smith creates a new experience in listening as she explores the relationship between sound and semantics, and the possibilities of verbal or vocal performance. Such challenging of the boundaries of language has led her to a study of language where

meaning is full of possibilities. This challenge to meaning, by using words as sounds in various contexts, has created a less specific sonic language which inspires new possibilities for listening and for the creation of subjectivity. Smith aims to promote the sheer materiality of words, achieving this by pushing at their semantic limits. Her latest work includes hypertext, using the internet to publish interactive reading and listening.

Poet Without Language is about identity and how we are constructed through language. Smith explores the otherness of women, marginalised races, poets and poetry. She both seeks to find a place for the other through her diverse range of techniques and explores this place in her content. Her use of polyphony, morphological play, word-play, sound patterning, word chains and interrogatives are subversive forms which create a new place for the marginalised which is beyond the confines of phallocentric grammatical syntax.

Smith's work requires consideration of all linguistic features including syntax, semantics, phonology and morphology. I will consider the words and phrases as a process rather than a product, as a living interpretation. This corresponds with the project of Systemic Functional Grammar to seek meaning in the text at the level of the word. Smith uses experimental poetry to challenge the structure and prevailing models of knowledges, effectively rupturing these socially dominant knowledges and rewriting them for the marginalised. Her work does not just react against male knowledges but it creates a positive way of writing female or marginalised experience. Her dialogic structure of collocating word chains and interrogatives challenges the underlying structure regulating, organising and positioning gender, ethnicity and artists. She subverts the legitimation of patriarchy and colonialism, refusing to represent female experience in masculine terms. Those usually marginalised by universalising discourses are transformed from the object of knowledge to the subject of knowledge. Joy Wallace comments on the main concerns of Smith's work:

> Smith brings to the composition of her poems an analytic awareness
> of the main revolutions in twentieth century cultural, and specifically
> linguistic, thinking...While we shall see that such sophisticated technical
> experimentation has important links with feminist writing on language and
> literature, we also find that Smith's poetry reflects contemporary feminist
> concerns in accessibly thematic and materialist ways...convincing proof of
> the arrival for good of the female poetic voice (Wallace, 1995: 136).

Smith is a champion of the marginalised voice. She uses the dialogic structure to rewrite and reconstruct the subjectivity of poets, women and ethnic minorities. At the experiential level of language Smith's clause structures play with relationships and identity, subverting accepted knowledge into multiple possibilities. Interrogative tenor and superimposition of voices operate at the interpersonal level of language and collocation creating semantic fields is present at the textual level. At the textual level, I have also focused on the cohering qualities of morphological conflation, and at the interpersonal level on the dialogic relationship between the two voices which operate vertically and horizontally to expand the possibilities of meaning. Words are broken into their phonological status of syllables, emphasised by the rhythmic patterns applied to them. Smith's work refutes Kristeva's notion that the experimental avant-garde might resemble the thetic stage of subjectivity (Kristeva, 1984: 43-45). Far from instinctual, her work suggests, through its rhythm, that the semantics of words and their musical properties are intellectual. This reveals the morphological construction of the words, including morphemes and phonemes, going beneath the semantic etymology to the systemic. Beneath the conflicting meanings and confusing juxtaposition of words, a phonological relationship is revealed.

Smith's use of the dialogic construction is compatible with the interpersonal function of meaning. Emotive functions of dialogues are crucial to the construction of subject positions. Smith subverts hegemony that would dominate the construction of poets, women and non-Anglo ethnicity by writing these marginalised subjects into a dialogic process that escapes universal definition as negative. She works against the renewal of hegemony by working towards the renewal and rewriting of the experiences of emerging subversive groups. Stewart's enunciative position is multiple as she uses two voices in dialogue to create a continuous process. This dialogical process enables the rewriting of subjects, not according to hegemonic universalism, but as dynamic emerging voices. Systemic Functional Grammar is again the best way to analyse such language. It is a theory compatible with the aims of dialogism, considering language as a resource where function, structure and pattern create meaning. Smith's work, by using word-chains and interrogatives, works towards what Irigaray describes as a feminine syntax where 'there would no longer be either subject or object, 'oneness' would no longer be

privileged, there would be no proper meanings, proper names, 'proper' attributes...instead that 'syntax' would involve nearness, proximity...' (Irigaray, 1985: 134). Smith works towards proximity without suggesting the seeming impossible notion of Irigaray's new 'syntax' that can be spoken but not spoken about. In fact Smith embraces structure and multivariate functionality and, like Threadgold, sees this as a move forward in feminine expression. The use of word-chains and interrogatives adopted by Smith is also found in the writing style of Irigaray (Irigaray, 1993: 39-40) and Cixous (1975). It is a feminine style of writing that undoes the hegemony of the dominant discourses and amplifies disruption. Playing with grammatical functions is a feature of experimental poetry used to suggest a dialogue and desire for a relationship that is on going, a poeisis.

Morphological properties interact with and relate to both phonology and syntax. Such an interface is crucial to the workings of *Poet Without Language,* the effect of which relies on the relationship between these aspects of language for its effect. Smith's text relies on the composing and decomposing of words, of sounds and of syntax. By this I mean she uses conflation to create a compound word and allows it to form relationships with other words through sound and semantics. Smith takes the material phonemes and combines them by dismantling traditional grammatical structures in favour of sonic collocation. Interesting results emerge when sonic associations are deciphered. The morphological construction of the words is combined with collocating chains to create multiple meanings. In turn, this grammatical play subverts any notion of patriarchal truth and allows for a female expression. Another technique used by Smith is to juxtapose words of similar sound to create original semantic units. Playing with semantics and sound imitates the etymological process of language creation, only in this case a new emphasis is on sound and rhythm and the voice of the marginalised. The notion of constructing or building is played out here. This continual generation of meaning demonstrates the subjects in the process of construction.

Dialogic voices: Poets and Poetry

Threadgold's position that close analysis of the grammar of texts can realise the meaning potential of dialogic or intertexual resources is related to Bakhtin's dialogism. Smith exploits dialogism to reconstruct the subjectivity of the marginalised and explore ways of making meaning outside the dominant discourses. Smith subscribes to Bakhtin's notion that:

> The contexts of dialogue are without limit. They extend into the deepest
> past and most distant future. Even meanings born in dialogues of the remotest
> past will never be finally grasped once and for all, for they will always
> be renewed in later dialogue. At any present moment of the dialogue, there
> are great mazes of forgotten meanings, but these will be recalled again at a given
> moment in the dialogue's later course when it will be given new life. For
> nothing is absolutely dead; every meaning will someday have its homecoming festival
> (Bakhtin, 1981 :373).

Smith's whole work demonstrates the limitations of language and the need to subvert syntax and grammar in order to explore and express. It does this by playing with individual words, their associations and their combinations. Throughout this demonstration she makes direct reference to the nature of language, thought and identity. The continuous exploration of how our language works is explicit in the text. Smith's stream of consciousness style is set to a notated rhythm. These streams of words operate dialogically in both a linear and vertical manner as they depend on both forward and backward movement and the superimposing of voices for the creation of multiple meanings. In both her word choice and the structure of her phrase, she demonstrates that language is fluid. Smith sees poets and poetry as a possible place of subversion. This reflexivity is demonstrated in the content and form of her work.

Voice 1 which word | wilted worlds | lang - uage faked | forked witch craft

Voice 2 memory · moodmoons | landslide landscape | poetry piles pyramid | paraphrase hones hemisphere

loss as a language | which wordhunt | hounds | hunt poet as

language as loss ti——ed up tales liberty limousine | learnt lan - guage | poet

The notion of our identity and its association with language is explored at the interpersonal and textual functions of the text with *loss as a language which wordhunt hounds hunt* (voice 1 bars 37-39) dialoguing with *language as loss tied up tales liberty limousine learnt language* in voice 2. Contiguity of the phrases *loss as a language, tied up tales* and *learnt language* express the plight of the other who cannot express their experiences within the symbolic order. The loss of freedom is associated with gaining an identity where the marginalised, by entering the symbolic, remain eternally the 'other'. The intertextual reference to Lacan's Real is explored with *language as loss*. Identity is formed in language and the Real is lost (Lacan, 1968: 161). Smith plays with relational processes at the experiential level of the clause to reverse the claim to *loss as a language*. She equates loss with a language to suggest the place of the Real might be a space of communication. This place is based around rhythms which she exploits in notations of words. The dialogic structure allows the voices to play with the function of language. Semantic fields of finding and hunting (voice 1) and loss (voice 2) are evident at the textual level. The dialoguing of these two positions allows Smith to rewrite accepted positions and present possibilities.

Smith continues to question the construction of subjects within dominant discourses. The interrogative nature of the text in *section 2* raises questions that are not answered and the interrogative tenor marks the position of enunciation as sceptical of truths. The clauses operate at the interpersonal level of exchange by revealing the presence of the 'other'. The question *why worship signs?* (2a V1 10) requires exchange

of information. By asking why signs or words are worshipped, she attacks the structuralists and their systemic approach. The collocation of *worship* and *signs* also suggests scepticism of religious foundations. The polyphonic dialogue that results from voice 2 repeating and imitating voice 1, effectively enunciates by suggestion. The questions *what is mind? what do you miss in words? what can we save in speech?* (4b 38) are placed against the chant *poet without language*. Such themes of the inadequacy of words continue as impossible questions are asked. The answer might be that we do not know what we miss in words because we cannot think outside them. This undermines the symbolic while elevating the voice of the interrogator who questions the power of language. Constant interrogative structures suggest we do not have all the answers and language cannot provide them. The piece therefore subverts notions of truth and in turn questions whether words are *meanings* or *manacles* (4a 19) suggesting they just inhibit human expression. Smith's text is reflexive in this way as it demonstrates, through its structure, the theories to which it subscribes.

The technique of using interrogatives at the interpersonal level of language is also useful for demonstrating the ambiguity of identity. *who are you? what are you looking for? whose are you? where does your longing lie?* Direct questions invite answers and mock the fact that there are none. The speaker, enacting logic and the symbolic, questions the irony of words and plays with meanings: *why follow fate?* The question asks why one would believe in fate by suggesting this is just another human way of searching for meaning which is ever elusive. The nature of these questions refers back to *why worship signs* forming collocating associations, questioning the meaning of life. The superimposition of questions in both voices opens up closed dominant discourses to possibilities.

Poetry is a place where the rewriting of dominant discourses can occur and therefore the poet's role is crucial in this process. The poet as writer is explored as a marginalised artist and composer. Titled ironically, *Poet Without Language*, the poet is without or outside symbolic language, using the sound of the words to explore. The poet's ability to subvert meaning is both spoken and demonstrated through a stream of words that represent an unconscious flow. Unity is created through sound patterning and repetition while dialogue between the voices creates a polyphonic texture. The repeated

phrase *poet without language* suggests the poet might depend on sound rather than the symbolic value of the word as a form of expression. Therefore a certain sense of freedom is associated with the poet's role.

The poet takes on numerous roles. The opening clause structure suggests a state of being with the relational circumstantial identifying process: *poet (is) without language*. The other identities for the poet are: *poet (is) within process* and *poet disrobes penpower* (1b V1 5-6) where a material process is added to show that poets *do* things, they are not just *in* situations. This sense of role reversal has the poet stripping down writing. Writing is simply a means of representing speech, a technical device or external accessory. Speech is the natural, direct form of communication and writing is an oblique representation. The poet strips the power of the *pen* or writing because it consists of physical marks that are removed from the thought that produced them. It functions in the absence of a speaker and gives uncertain access to a thought. The poet *disrobes*, takes off or undresses *penpower*, privileging sound and performance over written words. Similarly the poet is without language or outside it. The normally intransitive *disrobes* becomes transitive in Smith's context and produces new meaning. Smith here also dialogues with Sandra Gilbert's research in *Literary Paternity*. Gilbert considers how an overwhelming number of male authors have attributed their creative capacity to their bodily configuration: the pen being a metaphor for the penis (Gilbert, 1986: 489-493). Gilbert suggests this metaphor has been internalised by women and may have prevented many from writing. Smith seeks to redress this notion by using sound and word as the tools of writing female experience.

Section 1b 5 – 8

Voice 1: *po* ... poet within process | poet disrobes penpower | po popo popo po po | po po popopo po po

Voice 2: *po* ... poet ry | po | po etry | po et in scribes inscape | pend - ul - um as locus

At the textual level of language Smith plays with the morphemes by contrasting *within process* and *without language*. The poet is part of something on-going where *in* marks the bounds of continuous process and *without*, a lack. The morphemes *in* and *out* are played with as fluid affixes as the poet continues to define herself by operating on the borders. The binary of *in* and *out* is merged here to show how words and their parts are dependent on context and morphology. Smith exposes the unreliable nature of words and the way they might be read as a fluid process.

The poet *disrobes penpower*, relying on speech to undress patriarchal discourses. The piece then in dialogue through the response of voice 2, suggests *poet inscribes inscape* (1b V2 7). The poet writes the unique quality of inward expression. *Inscribes* suggests 'writing' but perhaps more loosely, 'a mark' of some sort. Smith uses Gerard Manley Hopkins' invention of the term *inscape* as an intertextual resource. Hopkins meant *inscape* as the individual distinctive form, or the oneness of a natural object (Cuddon, 1991:451). Smith's positioning of *inscape* and *penpower* rewrites Hopkins' term into feminist discourse, proclaiming the subversive powers of the poet. The poet possesses the mystical insight into the underlying order or unity of creation. The lines work in dialogue at the interpersonal function, as the poet, as other, by-passes the pen, a symbol of writing and power, and yet she has the ability to perceive and capture the essence of objects. Smith again suggests that pens being metonymic of the penis or patriarchy cannot express for poets who wish to express outside dominant discourses.

The activity of the poet continues as Smith defines the poet using relational identifying processes and sound patterns: *poet without tyrannous poles* (1b V2 10-11) placed against *po po politics poet language liberty* where both lines use textual collocation to suggest the poet's freedom. The ambiguity of *without* suggests the poet is advantaged by what she lacks. It also means 'an outside place' which is free from the confines of syntax. Beyond the restrictions of binary oppositions or *poles*, the poet is free to express. The alliterative *p* and *l* punctuate the words by drawing the ear of the listener to both the sound and semantic functions. Unity and rhythm in the text rely on prediction of this sound. *politics poet* and *language liberty* are juxtaposed nouns with disparate meaning. *politics* and *language* connote corrupt systems where *poet* and *liberty* connote freedom from such systems. The placing of terms in opposition suggests the struggle still

exists. The state of being *in* is related to *pen,* as both represent enclosures. The fragmented sound *po* connects *politics* and *poles* as both connote conflict or opposition. *liberty* and *tyrannous* are political terms in opposition. The poet operates outside binaries but remains committed to liberation which is a political position.

Section 1b 9–12

Similarly, *po po pose poet without musical tools* (1b V2 12-13) is placed against *life long learnt po process* where sound patterns create semantic links. The sound *po* /pou/[11] is developed further with *pose* meaning 'to put forward' or 'suppose' which relates to the poet's action who can merely pretend without sound. Smith plays with the contentless phoneme, demonstrating how it comes to signify. The alliterative /l/ emphasises the making of poetry as a continuous process that develops throughout a lifetime.

The musicality of the poet continues with the material processes of *Poet blows semisung paradise* and *probes within playpen in play worldwide* (1b V2 13-16) where the pun on *in play* suggests 'performing a role', 'employed in a game', 'amusing oneself' and 'being in a specified condition'. The poet does all of these things. As a noun the poet could be on a metaphorical stage or in a game of words. The poet is confined by their very role and the very nature of language. The paradox of *playpen* is that *play* suggests freedom and *pen* suggests enclosure. The line harks back to the restrictions associated with *penpower.* The systemic function of language allows for such freedom or play within the syntax, showing how the words as a social semiotic are clarified by their context. *playpen* also connotes infancy. Smith's original collocations are often conflicting in semantics, yet related by sound. Her position of enunciation is realised in the

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[11] For a full table of phonemic symbols see appendix 2.

lexicogrammar where her textual collocations and clausal processes rewrite the position of poets. The dialogue with intertextual sources and other contexts as well as other lines within the text itself presents a woven textual map that keeps reiterating the process of poetry and the roles of poets.

Section 1b 13 –16 >

| Voice 1 | po | process |
| Voice 2 | tools | post post post | blows semisung paradise | probes within play - pen | in play world-wide |
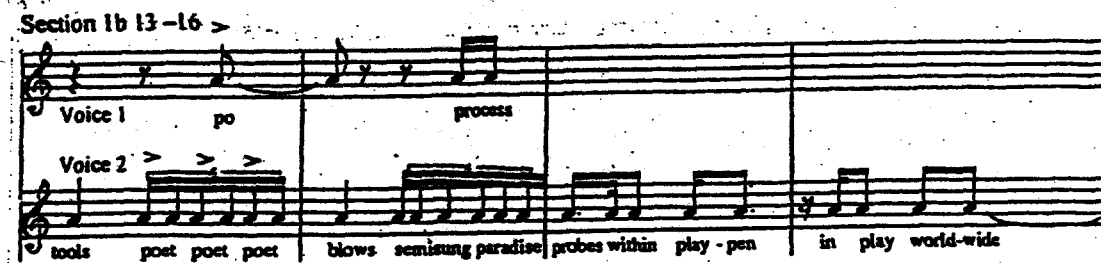
The status of the poet and poetry is clarified with poetry later described *as wordpower* (1b V2 17-18) which dialogues with voice 1with *proud prose* suggesting prose promises more than it delivers. The clause goes on with processes at the experiential level: *poetry as word power women within world peace lost*. Alliteration of *poetry, power, peace* and *word, women, within* and *world* create rhythmic patterns unifying the two disparate clauses. Semantic association might be made in various ways between these words. Poetry might have the ability to find a place for women where world peace has not. Continued ellipses of verbs by the use of conjunctions or prepositions, emphasises the contiguity of things, the density of imagery, and preference for rhythmic word qualities as communicative functions. Poets and poetry cannot be separated, nor can the performer and the performance, the utterer and the utterance. The dialogic structure of the text demonstrates multi-vocity of concepts and the word streams demonstrate the multi-vocity of words.

Section 1b 17 – 18
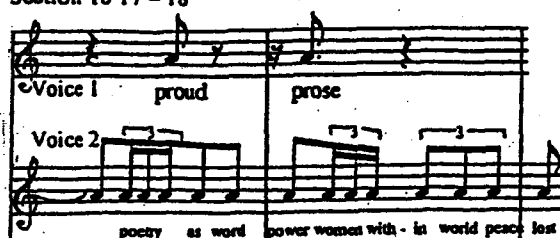
Poetry is an oral act that relies on exchange for its realisation. *Poet Without Language* performs this function with its audience and internally between the two voices. Smith performs a dialogue that makes statements or questions the audience by conjuring a reaction in them. Smith furthers the actions of the poet placing *live land lies within wedded to words* (1b V2 19-22) against *within without* in voice 1. The intertextual link to Austin's theory (Austin, 1962: 6) of the performative suggests poets and poetry perform an action such as the wedding vows *I do.* To a certain extent, all literature is performative. It uses language within certain conventions in order to bring about certain effects in a listener, achieving something as a material practice or discourse as a social action. Smith suggests poetry achieves this goal.
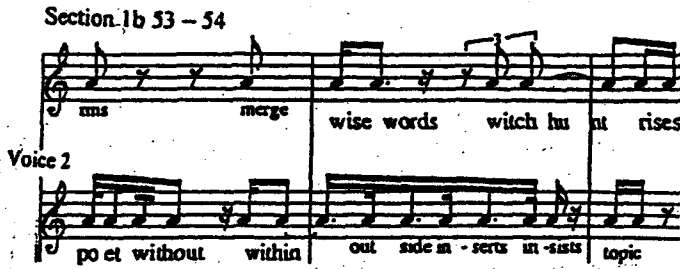
Section 1b 19 – 22
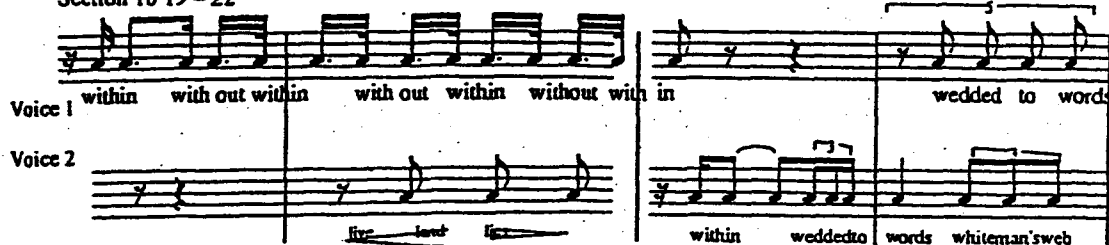
The politically marginalised poet is developed by the contiguity of positioned others: *poet as showman showpiece shaman omen oracle odyssey* (1b V1 42). Tension occurs through the crossing over of meanings. The semantic fields suggest the participants or performers/creators with *showman, shaman, oracle* and the performed or created with

showpiece, omen and *odyssey*. All act as relational identifying processes as the poet's identity is defined in many roles. The poet is a *showman* or 'manager of a performance' which collocates with *showpiece* or 'an excellent specimen used for show'. The poet is both director and participant, creator and performer. The common morpheme *show* as in 'to bring into vision' refers to the bringing forward of new ways of seeing. Interestingly the person poet is used rather than the object poetry to emphasise the poet as a performer who cannot be detached from her work. Again while not excluding writing as an important form, the performance claims new respect here. The semantic information then shifts to the superhuman aspects of the poet as *shaman* or 'witch doctor' claiming to have contact with God; as *omen* or 'a prophetic sign'; *oracle* or 'a medium of divine communication' or 'gaining knowledge or guidance'. All of these are contiguous with *odyssey* or 'a long journey' and all concern a quest for a higher level of meaning outside of the conventional one. *Odyssey* is also a reference to Homer's poetry. Collocation of positioned others and mystical lessons suggest poets are on the fringes. The sonic movement relates the words through the phonemes sh /ʃ/, man /mæn/ and o /ɒ/ and /oʊ/.
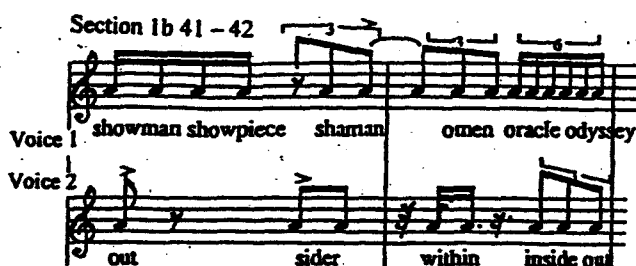
Against this is *outsider within inside out* (1b V2 41-42). This tangle of morphemes playing with binaries *in* and *out* refers to the poet who is attached to the 'wrong' side of society, of literature and of knowledge.

Furthering this is *poet without outside inserts insists* (1b V2 53-54) compounding the morphemes *with, out* and *in*.

Section 1b 53 – 54

Voice 2

(Sung text fragments): ...ms   merge | wise words   witch hu nt   rises

po et without   within | out side in - serts in -sists | topic

The text plays with the morphemes *out* and *in* displacing binaries to show how each has its own meaning depending on what it is attached to. Here the word *outside* means 'beyond the boundaries' and *without* means 'lacking'. The poet is so marginalised she is outside or even lacking the outside. She tries to be heard. The poet is 'other' but Smith uses dialogic structure and word-play to sound the poet's cause.

Dialogic voices : Women

Like Stewart, Smith is a feminist semiotician dialoguing with feminist theory while using that very dialogue to create a new discourse. Smith adds her voice to the feminist challenge of hegemony that operates to exclude feminine expression. Again the generic feature of experimental poetry, dialogue, is used by Smith to maintain the fluid construction of the subject. Smith simultaneously invites and frustrates the desire of the reader to make unified wholes out of the fragmentary word associations. Reading the text or its functions in context through collocation enables possible meanings to emerge.

As discussed, Smith's work resembles what Irigaray describes as feminine syntax. This involves nearness and proximity but in such an extreme form that it precludes any distinction of identities, any establishment of ownership, thus any form of appropriation (Irigaray: 1985, 134). Like Irigaray, Smith has had to reconcile the post-structuralist project to displace identity with the feminist and ethnic project to reclaim it. Irigaray won't define, she only approximates. Smith does similarly by juxtaposing units of sound

which stimulate new meanings, positioning theories and asking questions without making whole clauses of truth.

Women are the other in a system that operates to oppress them. Smith's work plays on horizontal and vertical relationships between the voices to demonstrate a place where multiple meanings exist. She places theories in direct dialogic relationships, privileging neither, sounding both. In voice 1 (1b V1 26-27) we hear *token rights tearaway timorous tyranny trades* while voice 2 (1b V2 25-26) has *sound sister system systemic*. Smith creates rhythm and sonic relations through the word play and sound patterning of alliterative phonemes /t/ and /s/: *token rights* is a common collocation for rights lacking or devoid of substance. *token* is an ambiguous word that means 'anything representing something else' or 'something exchangeable for goods'. This conflicts with a *token* as 'a distinctive mark or guarantee'. The conflict obviously concerns women where the acknowledgement of women's rights, in principle, does not manifest itself in reality. *tokens*, like the rights of women and women themselves are exchangeable for goods or objects of trade. The notion of *token rights* contradicts *timorous tyranny* or those who wish to maintain the lower position of women and *trade* in women.

Section 1b 25 – 28

Tyranny harks back to *poet within tyrannous poles* (1b V1 10-11) aligning the poet and women together as marginalised entities. The collocation of *sound sisters system systemic* (1b V2 25-26) and the repetition of /s/ and /sɪst/ emphasises the sonic relationships of the words. *Sound* here refers to both 'an aural sensation' and 'a healthy condition', so the possibilities are expanded. Smith could mean the sisterhood is operating well (sound) or it needs to speak out or (sound) itself. She promotes the position of women because *sister*

might refer to 'a female member of a union' or a women's movement. It also presents images of female occupations like nursing or the nunnery. A *system* is 'an organised body of things or set of connecting parts'. It is akin to a union or 'whole resulting from the combination of parts'. This demonstrates the contiguity of meanings as *sisters* are part of *systems*. *System* is also 'a method', suggesting a means of organising women: *tyranny trades*. *Sister* and *system* would be otherwise incongruous as women are excluded from the patriarchal system. *Sound* and *system* also collocate in a linguistic sense to suggest the working of language and in the discourse of electronic equipment. Both possibilities forefront sound as communication. Here the dialogical relations are obvious as the two voices operate both vertically and linearly to make different meanings. Neither voice is privileged. Constant interaction at the interpersonal level allows the other to speak while the stream of consciousness style enhances this multi-vocity.

The marginalised female activity of *witchcraft* is explored as Smith plays with the sonic and semantic qualities of words: *which word wilted worlds language faked forked witchcraft* (1b V1 33-36). This is another form of sisterhood. Language is also *faked*, *forked witchcraft* or a creator of illusions. Playing with the homonym of *witch* and *which* and the phonemes /f/ and /w/, the word streams have a phonemic relationship. The collocation of *wilted worlds* and *language faked* suggests language is pretend; it does not communicate reality. Language is *forked* as it leads in many directions and remains open to contextual use.

Semantically, the functionalist stance that women are part of a system which forms their social status is suggested. This oppressive system is further attacked by lines such as *women within malespeak* (1b V2 31) and *manmade myths* (3a V2 17). The patriarchal system which serves to confine and restrain women is attacked. Women are *within* the symbolic, associated with the patriarchy and spoken for by men. The compounding of words about male language and male speech culminates in *myths*. Smith questions the myths that have been used to control women. She dialogues with Cixous' 'Laugh of the Medusa' (Cixous, 1975: 309-320). Cixous claims that men have interpreted Medusa as a deadly Gorgon but in fact 'You only have to look at Medusa straight on to see her. And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing' (Cixous, 1975: 355).

She believes it is the unknown that drives men to create false fear in myths. It allows them to maintain control.

Dialogic voices : Race

The text also explores the nature of race and ethnicity and the dominance of white culture. *Race* can connote power or marginality. *live land lies within wedded to words whiteman's web* (1b V1 20) is placed against *within without*. The grammatical function of each word is ambiguous. *live*, meaning 'to be alive, subsist or experience' and *land* meaning 'to arrive, the soil or to win' have different meanings depending on whether they are taken as nouns or verbs. There are also compounded verbs such as *lies within* suggesting 'naturalisation'. Placed together the two work best by connotation: to subsist on the soil or racial and national identity. The play on *lies* as in 'situated, telling untruths and undisturbed' refers to the words of *whiteman*. The words of white men or the dominant patriarchal figure are actually all of these things as white man lied about the history of indigenous land owners. Here *wedded to words* suggests our language is connected to territory and performs the function of racial identity. Therefore the language of the dominant land-owner will be adopted by all.

As with (1b V1 5-6), Smith furthers the morphology of *within* and *without* by playing with the ambiguity of morphemes *in* and *out*. *within* suggests 'inside boundaries' and *without* 'a lack or to be out, the other or marginalised'. The paradox of the

morphemes in and out of *within* and *without* is that *with* suggests 'togetherness'. These binaries are juxtaposed to demonstrate that in practice they mean the same thing. That is, to be *within* can be as confining as to be *without*. This emphasises the dialogic nature of the voices as the same morphemes are heard.

Questions about the way ideas are perpetuated, especially those about race, are asked. The questions posited without answers contradict any notion that there is a definite or universal answer or truth. By very nature an interrogative suggests an addressee and in this case the failure to find answers undermines the dominant and brings forth the other. This interrogative stance allows Smith to explore the words and concepts by connecting them sonically. Repetition of /rei/ and the chant-like structure of the questions is easily remembered by the listener. *what is a race? what is a racist? how were you raised? is thought a racehorse?* (2a V1 1-2) This plays on the sound of *raised* and *racist* linked by the idea of how we are taught to be racist. *Race, raise* and *racehorse* connote class or breed. Smith here points to the social construction of subjects beyond biology.

At the textual level of language *race* and *racist* are brought together by *raised. Racehorse* introduces a new meaning of race which links to an alternative meaning of *raised.* Raised means not only 'to breed and nurture' but 'to increase in value and promote a race or contest'. *Raised* is also a familiar gambling term. This shows the mapping of form and content through sonic and semantic connections. The words connote ideas and question concepts of origin and certainty suggesting our lives are more about acquired values and risks. A *racehorse* appears incongruous to *thought*. Our thoughts or reasoning powers would be faster than a *racehorse*. So the suggestion is that thought or perhaps our notion of self is tied to our race and culture. *Race* is constructed power that represents the marginalised otherness and the racism which exists to exclude minorities: *what say the serbs?* (2a V1 5) *are ghettos host grown? why were jews blamed?* (2b V1 8). Such questions cannot be answered, therefore subverting the value of words and their meaning.

These questions about race that begin in *section 2a* are developed in polyphony in *section 2b* through dialogue and repetition between the two voices. This interrogative chaos is then transformed in *section 2d* where voice 1, through a series of word chains and syntactic forks, displaces the logic completely. *what is a race? is thought a*

237

racehorse? becomes *race is a static thought.* Here the meanings are developed so fewer possibilities occur. *Race* or the notion of human genetic division is an unchangeable thought or idea. The word *thought* suggests people's lack of acceptance of other races. *is thought a racehorse? why follow fate?* becomes *a racecourse follows fate.* The play on *racecourse* seems most important. The progression of a race is preordained by a society which chooses who shall lead and who shall be slaughtered. The speaker asks *why follow fate?* suggesting it is oppressive to believe we cannot change things. Alternatively belief that a horse race is determined by fate is absurd and suggests a certain amount of corruption is involved in the results. Those who determine the fate of people, horses and money are in control of language and social structure.

By *section 4b what is a race?* (2a) and *race is a static thought* (2d) have become *what is a state? what is race stasis?* Aurally, the familiar sounds are heard but the morphing of these into different words leads to the evolution of the collocations *race* with *state* and *static* with *stasis.* Similarly, *why were jews blamed? goal post or ghost goal?* (2a b8) becomes *jewish jokes gyrate genetic ghosts who masturbate* (2d) and then *why were jews blamed god's ghost or ghost gold memory massacre* (4b bars 20-23). Intertextual rewriting of the holy ghost and genetics link these semantic units. The holy ghost or Christian notion of God merges into *genetic ghosts* alluding to the centuries of Christians blaming Jews and the holocaust that resulted. Smith uses semantic fields to comment on human nature.

The culmination of these notions of otherness occurs in *section 2d.* This word stream does not use a defined metric rhythm. It is rather recited according to the natural rhythm of the words. Each word is still evenly spaced in time, not allowing any to emerge as a dominant. This allows the notions of race, women and poetry to merge. As listeners, our sense of grammar pulls us towards clause endings even though the performer or punctuation does not recognise them.

are serbs croations music text regales a rhythmic tribal loss whose separate songs are meshed mutate in words wake woman's shipwrecked speech spills dream

One interpretation of this might be the questioning of why Serbs and Croatians were at war when they are genetically alike. Music and text celebrate the loss of tribal culture.

This loss is similar to the loss of women's speech. We gain some sense of grammar from the reflexive pronoun *whose* and the positioning of the verbs. Smith plays with sonic and semantic collocations to expose how language constructs subjects. She both speaks of the other while demonstrating how it might express itself in experimental language.

Conclusion

Poet Without Language is about how language is fundamental to our human existence and its fluidity suggests the same of our identity. Smith plays with the language, notating the rhythmic structure and making sonic and semantic links to demonstrate that language is a culmination of evolutionary and multifarious layers. Smith creates new word associations by juxtaposing words that have the potential to resignify others. She dismantles traditional grammatical structures in favour of sonic and semantic collocation and morphological play to expand the potential of meaning. Smith's word combinations allow marginal others to express by using language in a manner that encourages fluidity of meaning. Consideration of otherness and language through dialogic structure raises questions and brings forward the voices of the poet, women and minority races. The horizontal and vertical relationships of the vocal lines expand the semantic potential.

CHAPTER 12

PERFORMING *POET WITHOUT LANGUAGE*

*We must inure ourselves to a demanding
game in which we are pounced upon by
both symbolic and semiotic orders, unsure
of whether we are being disciplined and
pleasured by one of 'poetry's wide and
windswept pilgrims' or by a jeering...
rabble who fragment the very word poet.*
                   (Wallace on PWL 1995)

Poet Without Language demonstrates Smith's interest in exploring a new language which
combines musical and linguistic elements, dislocating language from confirmed semantic
function and resynthesising it through sound. Written and performed in collaboration
with Roger Dean for speaking voice, pre-recorded voice, sampler, synthesizer and violin,
the piece combines various techniques to achieve a multi-directional mosaic. I have taken
the performance from The Performance Space as the primary object of analysis but the

work on CD has been an important resource for close analysis. The work was commissioned by the ABCs The Listening Room and broadcast on radio in 1994. The CD has also met with enthusiasm. Gail Brennan reviewed the CD saying:

> If you are interested in the way rap uses the syllable as a percussive unit, you might find Hazel Smith's complex verbal rhythms an exciting extension. Sometimes these word constructions evoke the sprung rhythms of Gerard Manley Hopkins and sometimes the musical/verbal webs of Berio...I hesitate to use the term avant-garde, lest you think it is inaccessible. It is not at all (Brennan, 1994)

In *section 1* the initial tension between sound and meaning, and word and text emerges. The voice and tape work independently and interactively. *Section 2* questions the listener *what is a race?* presenting issues of racial difference. Here Smith engages two perceptions of the mind, the psychological and scientific, which conflict and interweave as the voice takes on a freer poetic style rather than being musically notated. *Section 3* consists of a simple repeating melodic line played on the violin, pre-recorded on tape and accompanied by the voice. *Section 4* overlaps previous material.

A number of sound techniques combine to create sonic interest so it seems fitting to consider each in turn. These include sound sampling, the precise setting of words to rhythm, sonic dialogue, acoustic instrumentation and words associating freely by sound and sense. Verbal allusions and statements are accompanied by culturally prescribed sounds which create new associations and explore otherness. Smith comments on her aims in composition with: 'Bend words further towards music, or juxtapose words with music, and you greatly extend what language can do' (Bennett, 1999: 18). Through the use of such diverse sonic techniques, Smith demonstrates a new place for meaning, one beyond language that uses sound for a new means of communication.

A multimodal theory of performance is most relevant to *Poet Without Language* because this work is inscribed with indexically entailed music and corporeal functions of vocal accent at the interpersonal level and cohering repetition and sound at the textual function. These elements of sound, word and text-sound have potential meaning as structural relationships within the work and beyond to cultural contexts. Multimodal theory is therefore able to account for the way sounds and words are used by Smith to formulate an enunciative position verbalising the experience of the marginalised to write against hegemonic discourses. Multimodal discourse theory, informed by functionalism,

is also able to account for the dialogic possibilities operating between the vocal and instrumental parts as they refer to each other within the work and beyond to each other as both structural units of sound and contextual reference. All elements of the performance are important in discovering meaning potential.

Mechanics of Performance

Smith's score is well detailed, as she believes in the importance of having her work performed by others in the way she intended. Detailed performance instructions of the sampled sounds and synthesizer required are provided. Similarly, sampled strings and the type of percussion (Western, Asian and African) are outlined.

One aspect common to the work of Mann, Stewart and Smith is the use of electronic manipulation and sound. This enhances the variety of sound combinations and demonstrates the intersection between sound and words. By using electronic technology, these performers are able to push the limits of sound and create new effects. In Smith's work, most of the electronic sounds occupy a transitory and elusive moment, but repetition and the return of various devices and text-sounds allow the listener, through memory, to create a source of reference. From these reference points a variety of interpretations might be formulated, involving language, poetry and the other, concerning race and women.

Smith often makes use of the full acoustic space while at other times she uses silence between sparsely positioned phonemes. Thus she responds to a pre-recorded voice creating a polyphonic texture; she also plays the violin, and varies the tension by using silences as a necessary feature of the linguistically driven sections.

Smith works in collaboration with Roger Dean in a dynamic interaction of electronic and acoustic voice. In live performance Dean can be seen in the background on computer and synthesizer, fiddling with sounds and pressing keys in response to Smith on microphone who follows her score while listening to Dean's sounds and improvising in response. They operate dialogically in the sense that Dean's electronic sounds are indexically entailed with cultural reference to the essential subject matter of Smith's text. Obviously, although Dean and Smith provide detailed performance notes, each

performance will be different, depending on the dynamics of the occasion and the improvisation at various times throughout.

A Diverse Sonic Vocabulary : Electronic Sound Sampling

Sound sampling has a number of functions. First, it contrasts to the timbre of acoustic sounds. In this case, distortion of the voice renders it genderless so the subject is further displaced. Second, the use of electronically sampled sounds creates a listening space where fragments of the text-sound appear and disappear as individual sound objects within a wide space. Electronically sampled sounds give the piece a contemporary experimental sound that immediately captures the listener's attention. It is original and interesting, giving the piece a sense of unified timbre as the sounds become familiar to us, and our lexis of sonic manipulation is expanded. Working against the other words and rhythms, these electronic sounds work well against acoustic voice and other instruments, thereby creating a dialogue of sounds.

The piece opens with electronic sound samples in *section 1a* where the samples of the title *po, et, poet, lan, guage, alea* and *meter* are heard. They are indicated by number on the score. These fragments operate at the interface of sound and word. Each is an articulated sound with pitch and a recognisable syllable.

The manipulation of speech sound ranges from long *po* /poʊ/ sounds, thick droning *alea* /əleə/ and sparse popping /p/ high pitches. The piece plays with language and the rhythm of the phonemes, making the text like music, dependent on temporality. A single po /pʊ/ is followed by silence and then *poet* interjects as the sounds evolve and overlap with each other. The audience becomes engaged with the soundscape by recognising the phonemes and words they represent. Reverberating phonemes with multiple nuances seem to evaporate into the space. Other heavily textured sections tend to engulf the audience with menacing droning chords.

The performer is given the freedom to improvise with the sound samples. Improvisation instructions at the beginning might result in radically different versions of this introduction. As listeners we hear the phonemes of *poet* /poʊɛt/, *language*

/læŋ/gwidʒ/, *alea* /ʌleə/ and *meter* /miːtə. Resonance and stutter effects are used on these phonemes to represent the difficulty of operating within language.

               po//
po//poet//   *poet// et et et et et// la la la la la la //*

These sounds then develop with a variety of pitches:

```
                    la la
      po        la                              alea
po              la                      po
      po    la            guage  guage      guage
```

This single line becomes a polyphony of random phonemes, creating confusion and contrast. The combination of stutter effects and fragmentation allows the listener to hear speech as a sound pattern, exposing the inherent rhythmic stress and sonic qualities of the word. Stress on *po* /poʊ/ emphasises its plosive quality. Such attention is drawn to the material sonic qualities of the sound rather than its place within a word. Sounds that read as words with semantic value on the page are here known for their sonic quality. This enables Smith to subvert the phallocentric power of the word as symbolic, allowing it to express freely in a new space where rhythmic pulses are emphasised.

Sampled sounds distort the word, making its aural dimension rather electronic and unnatural. They are crucial to the effect of this work and the play of word and sound as they radically change the voice and its cultural implication by shifting through human, non-human, feminine and masculine. Against the sampled sounds the deep sustained string sounds provide a bass, moving from a longer two-note motif to beating on the one string in short rhythmic succession. Smith is not recognisable as a female until her longer words are heard. This linguistic 'cross-dressing' (Smith, 1999: 129) renders the performer genderless, allowing the focus to remain on the sonic quality of the language. Smith uses sound sampling to distort her vocal timbre and thereby erase her gender in an act of subversion. By confusing the enunciative position, the poet escapes labels and extinguishes binary oppositions. Her affirmative resignification occurs through sound. She is, according to Butler's theory, reconstituting the feminine subject by these

244

performative acts (Butler, 1990: 6). She deliberately writes against gender, using text-sound as a unique mode of communication.

Hearing parts of words gives us enough phonetic base to create the rest in our minds. The phonemes /la/, /pou/ and /ʌleə/, /gwidʒ/ distort our semantic sense when recombined into various fragments. The result is the effect of numerous voices overlapping each other in a struggle for expression. The disjunct vocal lines are unified by these repeated sounds where all sense of expectation is lost through the irregular disposition of stresses and rhythmic units. Some repeated rhythmic units provide unifying sound. The purpose of the phonemic fragments seems to be to introduce us to the concept of the poet as a composer without language and the notion of aleatory or improvisatory composition. Aleatory composition seems to be rather incongruous with the rigid rhythmic structure that follows but relates to the themes of otherness and the multiplicity of language presented. This opening section ends with the sustained sounds of /pou/ /ɛt/ /læŋ/ /gwidʒ/ /pou/ /ɛt/.

The sound samples have a textual function, unifying the piece with their disjuncture and tone colour. They have become a part of the listener's sonic vocabulary which gradually builds throughout the performance. Their presence reminds the listener of the main concepts in the text and that the fragmented subject can make its own meaning through sound.

The Musicality of Words

Smith employs rhythmic notation to control the delivery of her words. She draws attention to the rhythmic properties of speech by notating the precise rhythmic setting of the words. The words therefore operate for both their sound and semantic properties. The setting of words to rhythm means these sections, when performed by another musician, will be as Smith intended whereas other sections will contain the performer's privileges. Smith's position of enunciation is marked by the musicality of prosodic features of disjunctures, stess and intonation. She uses prosodic variety to reconstitute marginalised

subjects. Throughout Smith's recitation she articulates perfectly, maintaining a serious facial expression to complement her text.

Each syllable is given a rhythmic value fitting each phrase into a bar of two main beats.

In *section 1b* Smith uses a repeated pattern to emphasise the musicality of language. Her words *poet without language* are ironic as she creates a multimodal language:

1 6 3 4 2 5
poet without language

The 1 and 2 stresses fall on the main beats of the bar /poʊ/ and /læŋ/. Smith makes us aware of the short clipped syllables on /poʊ/ /ɛt/ /wIe/ and /aʊt/, while /læŋ/ and /gwidʒ/ both have longer duration. We are aware of rhythmic structure controlling the length of each syllable, while recognising the familiarity with regular speech. Repetition of this rhythm creates an ostinato effect that becomes familiar to the listener and inscribed on their ever-increasing sonic vocabulary.

The single voice is joined by a second in bar 5 creating contrapuntal texture. Voice 2 is pre-recorded so Smith's voice is heard in both parts. This creates a unified tone colour as each voice spits out its part. The prominence of alliterative word qualities and sound patterns is a feature of the performance. The sounds from *poet within process* (bar 5) become *pppopopo* where the plosive /p/ is emphasised. Smith uses many triplets and sextuplets which inject energy and tension into phrases. From her initial speech-like natural maintenance of the phrases she begins to experiment further with the words as sounds. The two voices continue with a syncopated rhythmic polyphony against each other. These voices operate in a sonic dialogue unified by alliteration, losing meaning in rhythm. Smith now removes them from the familiar rhythms of speech and uses them as sounds or musical notes with rhythms which begin to take on their own meaning through sound. The rhythm is well suited to the noun-verb/preposition-noun syntactical structure. For example *poet disrobes penpower*. Some words maintain their natural speech sound while others interject between syllables on rhythms for effect. This is indicated by the

rhythmic notation and each bar line creates a disjuncture. In voice 2, bar 5 *po poetry po* has a sonic unifying effect while *poetry* maintains its natural speech rhythm.

Section 1b 5 - 8

Smith maintains the same mid-key pitch in a rather flat tone, lacking intonational change. She relies more on duration and disjuncture for effect. The tension created by rhythmic conflict between the lines ironically emphasises the piece as poetry. As the piece progresses, Smith diminishes the rhythmic values further, including more syllables per bar. For example in bar 26 voice 1, we hear *tearaway timorous tyranny* and voice 2 bar 27 *poetry prosody mind soundscape*. This gives a continuous effect without the disjuncture between the words that is heard in previous lines. Use of alliteration in most phrases adds to the unity of sound.

Section 1b 25 - 28

The listener can commit this repetitive structure to memory as Smith depends on rhythm and sound patterning to stress the musicality of the words.

In *section 2a* Smith posits multiple questions that cannot be answered. The words are again set to rhythm, creating an interrogative chant at the interpersonal function. The

falling intonation on the final word of the question is unusual as Smith gives the impression of certainty and finality not congruent with the nature of questioning. She uses the same style of rhythm as the opening with a complex rhythm or triplet on the first beat with rising intonation and an even pair of quavers on the second beat. This leads the listener to the stressed final word of each phrase.

```
2    3 4 1    2    3 4 1    2    3   4   1
/    _ _ \    /    _ _ \    /    _   _   \
what is a race? what is a racist? how were you raised?
```

As with the opening, each syllable has been allocated its part of the beat. This breaks each phrase and emphasises the sonic qualities of the parts. The repetitive rhythm serves to remind us of the many unanswerable questions about identity and the construction of subjects. The speaker's position is elevated here as Smith renders silent those who would provide single answers. She emphasises multiple discourses.

In *section 2b* the questioning continues with voice 1 and 2 working in repetition.

what is a race   what is a racist?   how were you raised?
        what is a race   what is a racist   how were you raised?

Each question is now asked twice, adding to the effect that these questions are not answerable. Through her constant questioning, she subverts hegemony. A long sustained note is held against the vocal confusion and the percussion becomes more active. By bar 32, voice 2 has a syncopated rhythm against the steady repetition of voice 1. This breaks the dialogue by creating a chaotic polyphony. The stress on the final beat of the phrase draws the listener's attention to words that would not naturally be stressed. Where the subjects *race*, *racist* and *racehorse* would be stressed, the verbs *raised* and *compute* would not be. Smith's concern is with rhythmic ostinato rather than common grammatical stress. The rhythmic setting of words forefronts the parts of words and the sound of each syllable emphasising the pulses of language. It also creates a regular pattern easy on the listener's ear and memory. Such patterns lull us into a sense of security while the content of the questions and statements is far from secure. The functions of text for its semantic content and sound operate at the textual level of

structural coherence while the interpersonal functions are realised in the interrogatives emphasised by the prosodic inflection.

Semiotic Exchange: new metonymies

Smith and Dean create a multimodal discourse of expressive styles ranging from the enunciative female voice in polyphony to the use of morphological word fragments. Through this variety of sonic effects, Smith explores the way word sounds, sounds, music and words might form a new expression for those marginalised by hegemony and the dominance of white males, science and myths. Through multimodal discourse Smith and Dean create new metonymies where the modes might overlap and relate. Metonymy operates at the experiential function of sound and word to suggest meaning potential.

Smith is front stage and intense in her delivery in contrast to Dean who does not interact with the audience and rarely looks up from his synthesizer. He uses a variety of instruments in polyphonic texture, operating against each other and the voice. Such texture creates, at times, a rather chaotic sound-scape where words operate as sounds for their rhythmic qualities. They are also heard as symbolic referents as are some of the culturally learnt instrumental sounds. The instruments and voices form a dialogue of opposing rhythms, word sounds and ideas. This serves to highlight multi-vocity and diminish any dominant voice. Such a technique is compatible with the themes of otherness emerging in the text.

Section 1b contains all of the elements that are repeated throughout and come to unify the piece. The contrapuntal voices with alliterative qualities overlapping and the rhythmic fragmentation of the words become a feature of the piece's style. The syncopated percussion and sampled phonemes are also a feature. Sustained electric piano notes are played on the synthesizer. Their entry is staggered in layers of rising pitch which provide a sustained muddied accompaniment to the voice, creating a sombre mood. The activity in the voice is already split into two parts working in dialogue. These sparsely heard notes create suspense as we expect them to resolve in some way but they never do. Percussive elements join in bars 13 and 21-24. They add interest to the voice by contrasting in rhythm and tone colour. By bar 29 the long sustained piano notes have

been replaced by the sampled sounds from the opening. This adds more layers to the texture. A low percussive rhythm on electronic tom toms continues gradually by expanding with quintuplets, sextuplets, rests and other syncopated rhythms which create a confusing sound-scape. The use of African tribal drums is metonymically linked to the text that speaks of colonialism with *live land lies* and *whiteman's web*.

All parts are in conflict, forcing the listener to turn to the words to make sense. As there is no continuous narrative, we hear metonymic phrases which operate by alliteration and semantics. The fragmentary and disjointed phrases contrast in each bar both vertically and linearly.

token rights tearaway timorous tyranny trades
            system   systemic   poetry prosody (bars 25-27)

It is impossible to follow both lines. They are rhythmically interesting, making use of triplets in full and half beats conflicting with the drum beat. So much of the polyphony relies on complex rhythms for tension and interest.

By bar 45 the piano plays a repetitive pattern to complement the repetitive *ling lang* of voice 2. Such repetitive elements give the work unity and some predictability. The parts also crescendo at this point which builds the tension as long sustained electric piano notes, the percussion and sampled sounds such as shattering glass are added. Again the effect is chaotic and confusing. Instead of dissonance of tonality we hear the clashing of phonetic qualities. For example *poetry poet poet poet poetry* is heard against *ling lang ling lang ling lang*.

The use of acoustic instruments and their indexically entailed sonic material work both with and against the electronic sounds generated by sound sampling. In *section 3a* the violin repeats a melancholy motif. The use of minor 2nds D - C#, minor thirds D - F and diminished fourths F - C# is reminiscent of Eastern European melodies. The ethnic gypsy style music is recognisable and therefore adds to the context and message of the piece which promotes thought about difference and questions conflict. The smooth phrasing of the violinist has rich tone quality on the long tonic note D. The poet now uses music to express her melancholy expression. When the sampled sounds /læŋ/ /poʊ/ /ɛt/, /ʌleə/ and /mitə/ are heard they reverberate slightly which gives them a solemn quality.

This blends with the tone of the violin melody. Both the juxtaposition of softly spoken alliterative words which work both semantically and sonically and the culturally learnt conventions of music interpretation are working here. The music is both self-reflexive and entailed by cultural identity of certain melodic intervals and tonality. Semiotic exchange occurs in section 3a where melancholy gypsy melody expresses the lament of marginalised races. The melody is semiotically entailed with cultural origin. Smith's text of collocating associations raises debates over constructions of subjectivity considering science and social aspects such as *man made myths* (V1 bar 17), *nature nurture and the natural history of the mind movements mechanistic manmade* (V1 29-31). The voice and violin melody are metonymically related by their representation of marginalised voices in sound and word. The melody expresses cultural marginality while the text expresses the way dominant discourses have promoted myths.

Smith enters in bar 13 with a soft word stream under the violin melody. Again the alliteration of her words makes them merge together. The synthesizer enters in bar 14 with an eerie dissonance which pulsates against the violin. This is a very smoothly articulated section with layers of sound entering and retreating with subtlety. The voice maintains a rhythm for the words but Smith does not spit them out, rather the predominance of triplet quavers allows her to softly speak the words without punctuation. She speaks of the mysterious, inexplicable or controversial aspects of human experience while the violin melody expresses her sorrow at this.

The section ends with the repeated violin melody and sustained dissonant chords on the synthesizer. Scattered sound samples /ʌleə/ and /poʊ/ enter intermittently. They unify the section with others and reiterate the message of the work which is to create meaning from sound outside the confines of written text, while recognising the conventions of music and the taught conventions of sound and meaning.

Section 4b is another section that makes use of polyphony. Voice 2 begins a repetitive chant like the opening *poet without language*. When voice 1 joins, it groups the words in syncopated triplets but they are now greatly expanded as Smith stretches out the words in a rather more determined manner than before. The conflicting rhythms create tension between the voices. It is as if Smith is more serious and wants to draw attention to her questions. We are familiar with these rhythmic phrases, both semantically and

sonically, as challenges to the dominant voice. Smith combines the rhythmic word stream, questions and free association with chant. This creates tension between the regular repetitions where *poet without language* operates as an ostinato, heard more as a musical tool than as meaningful words. Some irregular drum beating interjects.

By bar 12 Smith diminishes the rhythm into quintuplets against the 2/4 regularity of the chant. Here she returns to a stream of consciousness style that merges with the questions. The rhythmic drum movement becomes more chaotic with cymbals sounding as the texture thickens. The percussion has its own aggressive mood against the words. The cymbals sound like a side show almost mocking the rather serious comment on politics. Randomness of the percussion is excited, contrasting to the ironically morbid voice.

As the voice draws to a climax, Smith uses rhythms with demi-semi quavers to fit more words into the bars. This gives the effect of urgency. The chaotic impact of overlapping parts begins to resemble the chaos of indeterminate language reflected in the text. We are drawn to the sounds of the words, outside the confines of the symbolic. The vocal lines become no longer audible, taken over by the synthesized and sampled sounds. Here Smith diminishes the symbolic power of language at the interface where words become sound. Throughout, the questions are forefronted because their structure of interrogative pronoun-verb-noun structure is distinguished by the repetitive chant of *poet without language* and electronic sounds. The sampled phonemes return and the long sustained eerie synthesized chords join and build to the end. The tension created here is a Western interpretation of learnt conventions. We as listeners have come to associate such sounds with suspense, almost fear. Smith is trying to scare us out of our complacency.

Conclusion

Smith's work, the most traditionally 'musical' of the works studied here, uses a simple band of acoustic instrumental, vocal and computer technology to create an original listening experience. Her accented voice is distinctly heard as a feature of the piece injecting energy into the rhythmic words. She operates at the interface between words and sounds by playing with the possibilities of such semiotic resources.

Smith achieves the diminution of the power of language through a number of techniques that maintain musical and linguistic contrasts. As with the other performers, her text comes to reflect, in its structure, the scepticism of patriarchal language as a source of truth, preferring to expand the rhythmic and alliterative properties of words and their relation to electronic and acoustic instruments. She creates a diverse sonic vocabulary in the listener who recognises the sonic play of otherness beyond phallocentric grammatical syntax. The performance adds layers of function to the semantics of the text by introducing sonic elements of delivery at the textual and interpersonal functions and music at the experiential function.

Conclusions : Interpreting Subversive Voices

In this study I have analysed the text and performance of experimental poetry in order to consider the meaning potential and subversive possibilities of the genre. The analytical model used provided principles that can be applied to other works of experimental or multimodal nature. I consider experimental poetry as a multimodal and multimedial genre that draws on multiple sonic and textual devices. My aim was to provide a way of reading these texts and the texts in performance to demonstrate that, what at first appears to be nonsense, might actually provide a new way of rewriting and rethinking the dominant positions of society and culture. Therefore, while providing a method of analysis, I show that experimental poetry provides a real place for subversion of power in its use of language and sound. The results of this study demonstrate generic features of experimental poetry such as the rewriting of intertextual sources through linguistic play and mulitmodality that offer new forms enabling subversion. These small but significant resonances can be further developed and understood to offer alternatives to the dominant discourses.

In the early chapters I discussed some of the debates over experimental poetry that have emerged in response to the breadth of semiotic resources, both sound and word, used by poets of the genre. I settled on the term 'experimental poetry' to describe a broad body of work engaging generic features such as complex linguistic and sonic grammars developing from the avant-garde tradition of innovative use of text and sound. I found the subversive nature of experimental work was best conceptualised by using Raymond Williams' notion of the emergent. His political approach to subversion, along with the notion that emergent groups exist to challenge hegemony and facilitate change, was particularly appropriate for conceptualising experimental poetry that mounts a challenge to dominant discourses as part of the development towards a new artistic form. The important predecessors in the field of experimentation that have influenced experimental

254

poetry in Australia have all used linguistic and sonic play and been engaged in the intertextual rewriting of discourses. I described these artists as 'emergent subversive voices' and placed them within a history of social context and historical innovation. The language and sound techniques developed by Futurists, Dadaists, Ultralettristes, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets and others have influenced the Australian community of poets and composers working in the field. Such development of expressive forms has assisted in the rewriting and renewing of experience, challenging established modes of meaning.

The particular method of analysis used here focussed on functional approaches to text and performance that engage with the way these poets write against dominant discourses by rewriting intertextual resources with subversive grammar and sound. The relevance of the functional analytical models of Systemic Functional Grammar and Multimodal Discourse theory was discussed. The second section of the project consisted of application of these theories to the texts and performances. Here the experimental nature of composition operating at the interface of sound and semantics and the contribution of experimental poetry to rewriting dominant discourses was illuminated. The method of analysis demonstrated how the collective strata of discourses alter and shape each other to create a new subject position.

I began my discussion of an analytical model with consideration of Julia Kristeva's theory of 'the semiotic' as it has been commonly used to conceptualise the subversive nature of experimental works. I outlined why I believe this to be an unsatisfactory model, including its foundation that subversion occurs by escaping language. I found the lack of linguistic tools in Kristeva's theory meant it was not able to realise the potential rewritings of dominant discourses occurring in experimental poetry. A more effective analytic approach to the subversive use of language was found in Systemic Functional Grammar which enabled close analysis of language as a system of choice where grammar forms a theory of human experience and celebrates this evolutionary process. The functional models of Systemic Functional Grammar formulated by M. A. K Halliday (Halliday, 1978: 1985) and developed by feminist socio-linguistic theorist Terry Threadgold (Threadgold, 1999) proved to be most effective in realising meaning potential in experimental works. Threadgold refashioned Systemic

Functional Grammar by demonstrating how Halliday's notion of register can be used to realise new meanings in texts. By adopting Threadgold's method of applying Systemic Functional Grammar I was able to realise the intertextual sources in texts and how they can be traced using Halliday's semiotic construct of register which engages three functions of language: the ideational/experiential, interpersonal and textual functions. I was able to analyse these functions of language to realise subversive positions. Systemic Functional Grammar revealed a dialogue of enuciative positions in the experimental texts under study which are marked by intertextual references that critique philosophical and social practices and theories. Systemic Functional Grammar, as a probabilistic theory of language as choice, was most useful in mapping the patterns that have meaning potential contained in the text. It was effectively used to analyse experimental texts because it complemented the basic intention of experimentation and the need for such texts to be studied within their discourse environments. It considers language as a resource, not just a set of rules and offered a way of looking at language that allowed me to see patterns and predictability in the most complex of texts. In the particular works this meant that Chris Mann's challenging of philosophical theory was revealed. Close analysis of his text showed how Mann dialogues with intertextual resources, rewriting them in Australian vernacular in an embedded structure. Amanda Stewart, similarly challenges the social construction of subjects and of women as the 'other' by rewriting subject and object positions into multiplicity. Ania Walwicz rewrites migrant hybridity by playing with non-standard English and infant speech and Hazel Smith challenges the notion of poet, woman and racial minorities as 'other' by playing with collocation.

My approach to the performances of these works engages Multimodal Discourse theory developed by Theo Van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). I found this theory offered a method for realising the meaning potential of experimental poetry in performance. Multimodal Discourse theory uses a functional model to realise possible functions of visual, textual and sonic semiotic resources. Realisation of these functions is aided by close attention to prosody and indexicality. I began the discussion of performance by outlining the advantages of Multimodal theory over formalistic or hermeneutic approaches. I found that traditional musicological analysis and the methods of Tarasti (1978) and Nattiez (1976, 1990) had limitations when

256

analysing experimental sound, particularly their inability to refer beyond the internal structure of the work. I also found limitations in 'new musicology' that relies too heavily on hermeneutics at the expense of the valuable structural features of the work. The limitations of both of these approaches was resolved in the functional model of Multimodal Theory which takes account of both the internal structure and how this relates to an outside context. The manner in which I informally surveyed audiences in order to find a method that would address audience concerns was a helpful guide for my own analysis as it illuminated the concerns of audience members and indicated listening experiences. The shared experiences of most listeners justified my decision to proceed in the privileged analyst's role.

Multimodal theory provided a semiotic practice able to realise the multiple articulations operating in such works. I found the theory useful for considering how discourses are rewritten within the genre of experimental poetry using text and sound. Kress and Van Leeuwen point to the ability of Halliday's three levels of language to explain the function of performance elements. The use of Halliday's three tiered system of functionality, when applied to sound and performance, showed the potential of sound to refer in multiple articulations and functions. For example, the textual function realises the internal structure; the interpersonal level realises dialogism, modality and gender; and the experiential level realises indexical representation of sounds. The importance of gender and visual mode proved to be important when speaking of the poet. While analysing the performance I discovered how sound semiotics were developed in the experimental poetry genre, then how indexicality realises the meaning potential of sound and how prosody might map the intonational meaning in the delivery of the text. I found the use of prosodic analysis particularly valuable for realising the positions of enunciation of the speakers which is an important place from which to analyse the subversive positions of the works.

An important result of this study has been the discovery of multifunctioning discourses and ways of analysing them. The ability of both the verbal and sonic modes to relate meant the realisation of a new way of seeing a relationship between the semiotic systems of text and sound. It was discovered that Chris Mann's questioning of philosophical theory is evident from his text. His ironically positive modality conflicts

with the colloquial language and extemporary style which tends to trivialise the theories he discusses. In performance, his Australian accent dissolves class hegemony, appropriating the scholarly English of philosophical discourses to the language of the 'common man' at the representational or experiential function of language. Added to this is the sonic narrative of indexically entailed sounds that mirror the conflicting relationship Mann has with culture. Here the interpersonal function of the text works with the experiential function of the performance. Walwicz's text is written in fragments that contain traces of non-standard English and baby-talk, creating a hybrid communication that escapes standard English. Certain words collocate to reveal both traces of her origins and the impact of the dominant culture or Father. In performance these traces at the textual function are enhanced by her voice which is entailed with the prosodic markers of Polish accent. The mark of the body is therefore rewritten at both the textual function of the text and the experiential function of the performance. Stewart plays with the experiential function, sarcastically listing negative semantic values for women in her subject and object parts of her text. She then engages the interpersonal level to disperse these values in a dialogic polyphony. Smith uses collocative word-play at the textual function, crossing this at the interpersonal level with dialogic polyphony to expose the injustices towards women and minority groups. In performance she uses indexically entailed ethnic melodies to express the lament of marginal races.

There is greater potential to understand the meaning of such works if we look to the ways such functions overlap. Recognising this multifunctioning network increases the potential for rewriting dominant discourses as the way that systems refer to each other can be exploited. It is a way of recognising choices have been made and analysing these choices according to their effect within a work and in combination with other choices. For example, the indexicality of sound might dialogue with the semantic content of the voice or the prosodic variation of the voice might add much to the written text. This study therefore offers tools for the analyst but also composers who wish to subvert the expectations of their listeners or say something new. I add to the work of Threadgold by demonstrating the usefulness of prosody and indexicality to realise the meaning potential of enunciative positions and other semiotic resources in performed Multimodal works.

The implications of my findings are significant for literary critics, linguists, composers, poets, teachers and cultural studies in general. For the critic, rethinking the importance of grammar and close reading of texts might improve the often-problematic application of critical frames. The analytical model used here shows the importance of close reading of texts. By modelling new ways of using complex grammars to subvert dominant discourses, experimental poetry was found to have an important place in contemporary culture. By providing an analytical model able to realise complex grammar, including visual modes and sound, the study has further implications for the composition and analysis of complex multimodal texts, including theatre, experimental music and performance art. The study of performance and composition of such works is still limited by public approval and canon-driven English departments. Perhaps with greater understanding of the genre and analytical methods to realise the potential of the work, a more positive approach to experimentation will be encouraged. A useful analytical model, such as that posited, will also encourage interdisciplinary studies that can further embrace such works through analysis and composition. The method of analysis posited here enables further study into the composition and realisation of all performing arts. As this study enables a cohesive study of experimental poetry, it could be used to revisit older works to better illuminate their subversive potential.

This project can contribute to the development of experimental texts and sound in general. It adds much to demonstrating an actual analysis of sound semiotics by showing the need to search outside the sound system for cultural relevance. It goes beyond traditional musicology and suggests 'new musicology' may not be the answer to realising the meaning potential of sonic art-forms. The importance of a functional model for the analysis of performance will have implications for musicology that has grappled with the inadequacy of considering purely structural features of a work. New musicology, which takes a hermeneutic approach, might be mediated by maintaining analysis of important structural features of a performance.

For the artist, I have placed these works as part of an emerging and continuing poiesis that reveals the importance of the artist's craft. The model applied removes the problem and criticism that the avant-garde creates nonsense and therefore has limited subversive potential. Through the findings of this study, experimental poetry can be

considered a model for making subversive texts able to rewrite intertextual resources to challenge dominant discourses. As part of a lively community of artists that have historically been innovative in their use of technology, it is hoped that this study could encourage the increased experimentation of hypermedia, internet and installations in general and in interdisciplinary work. There is great potential for multimodal works to produce new ways of making meaning and consideration of the functions of all modes of communication within the work can take the composer on a significant journey into the exploration of their craft. The method of analysis used here enables a reflective way of considering experimental work and identifies such work can be inspirational for future compositions.

This study takes an inclusive approach, encompassing the labels and debates around experimental poetry that have surrounded studies of the genre. A unified analytic approach such as that presented shows how the same tools can be used to conceptualise the systems of music, sound and text without diminishing the status of any of these disciplines. Poetry is never too far out of step with its own time so experimental poetry will continue to be an emerging subversive voice.