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**Beyond the Words of a Storyteller: The Cine-semiotic Play of the Abject, Terror and Community in
the Anti-hunting Trilogy of Thornton W. Burgess**

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Beyond the words of a storyteller:
The cine-semiotic play of the abject, terror and community
in the Anti-Hunting Trilogy of Thornton W. Burgess

Kathleen-Marie Connor

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Abstract

Thornton W. Burgess (b. 1874, d. 1965) was a children's writer who attained great popularity and commercial success, with stories such as *Old Mother West Wind* (1910) and *The Adventures of Peter Cottontail* (1914) published by Little, Brown and Company, and with reprinted titles now published by Dover Press. His stories have been read from their initial publication in the early 1900s until the present day, and numerous titles have been translated to languages such as Japanese, French, Italian, and Gaelic. However, at times his works were not well-reviewed by children's literary critics, and so his mixed reception creates a mystery around "What is it about Burgess that readers either loved or hated?"

My conceptual framework grounded in ideas of New Historicism and cultural studies draws upon psychoanalytic concepts (after Kristeva, others) and film theory (after Bordwell, others) to explore the narrative appeal of three related Burgess works: *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* (1917), *The Adventures of Bob White* (1919), and *Lightfoot the Deer* (1921). I was able to trace how Mr. Burgess conveyed his inner-most thoughts of primal drama (after Freud, Kristeva and Adler) of the lived and imagined stories of family and domestic affairs of friends and family, co-joined with a political message of the early 20th century show-down between nature and encroaching urbanization. I found that Burgess practiced an economy of story-telling known for cinema and film (after Heath). The result in his well-known stories was an emergent aesthetic experience of seeing/feeling/meaning I term the **cine-semiotic**, evoking notions of *le semiotique* = psychoanalytic semiotics and *la semiotique* = filmic or sign operation semiotics (Rosen, 1986). It seems that Burgess shares a visual aesthetic with other children's writers such as Beatrix Potter, the English creator of Peter Cottontail (Carpenter, 1989).

Through a close reading, documentation, and interpretation of three selected stories of Burgess which I term his Anti-Hunting Trilogy, this study seeks to understand the enigmatic nature of his mixed reception in early 20th century children's literature. I

have used archival-historical primary research materials along with readings of his stories to provide data around the nature of his popularly appealing narrative aesthetic. I became aware of a mode of address to the reader that I have termed the “cine-semiotic,” which speaks to the language of Mr. Burgess’s stories based in deep renditions of psychic dynamics which emanate through: a. scripted movements of the abject and abjection, terror and anxiety, and community and wholeness; and b. telling and showing aspects of narrative that play out through visual iconicity and other cinematic operations of the story language (after Bordwell, 1985). The results of my study provide a new means for interpreting, understanding and expressing the social, cultural and psychic effects resident within three stories written and published by Mr. Burgess from 1917 to 1921, and republished into the 21st century by Dover Publications for an avid and devoted contemporary readership. The implications of the study are that, under the conditions of language looking in at language, scholars looking in at children’s stories can begin to discern meaningful patterns of cultural discourse that may otherwise go undiscerned.

Acknowledgments

For her unflagging belief and insistence that the Burgess study was worthwhile and significant, I thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Judith Robertson. I have been inspired by her scholarship in Cultural Studies and in psychoanalytic approaches to children's literature. I have also been inspired by her academic contributions and her career in the Faculty of Education. Also, thanks to her partner in every sense of the word, Allan Kathnelson, who assisted with this work's completion on several occasions.

My work in the archival-historical component of this study has been aided by the example of the rigorous and innovative research of Dr. Timothy Stanley. I thank him for his continued interest in my thesis; and I also thank him for his role in my initial acceptance into the program of study in Education Administration and Foundations at the university. Without his belief that I had the desire and ability to achieve a PhD. this work would not have begun.

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Preface

Thornton W. Burgess was a prolific writer of stories, a successful and highly - consumed and circulated children's author who has had a curiously mixed reception in child literature circles. He became a millionaire in his time through dint of his efforts and proficiency in story-writing. Yet he believed in modesty, and in spite of his success, he lived frugally and carefully. Burgess was known as a nature-educator who held the acquaintance of influential and powerful personages such as William Hornaday of the early twentieth-century nature conservation movements. Burgess was touted as an educator of young and old in the ways of nature. Burgess devised his iconic animal characters and fantasy nature settings as a means to reach a market of children, and he collaborated in the commodification of his story features. These presentations tendered an appeal to me as researcher in education and literacy, specializing in children's fantasy literature. Burgess's popular success in selling his created characters and world of the Green Meadows and Green Forest, contrasted with disdain from several critics who contested the value of his stories as literature for children, beckoned me to know more of this savvy author and his investments in storytelling.

This dissertation addresses two aspects specific to the study of children's literature. Firstly, it is about tracing the self invested in childhood, whether self as author of children's books, self as teacher of children, self as writer of a dissertation in education, or any other place where there are intersections of personal and professional identity with the space of childhood. The implication for work within the constructed space of childhood, whether as classroom educator, coach, drama instructor, or writer of children's literature, is that the background and means of arrival to this place ought to be

made explicit and clear. Does a person who is working within the space of childhood know why he or she is doing what he or she doing?

Secondly, this thesis is concerned with some of the unacknowledged aspects of the work of being a writer for children, and is also concerned with the project of taking children's literature seriously, as texts in culture meriting reflection and investigation. Through personal experience I know that being a writer involves equal parts of creativity and initiative, to get over difficult moments and spaces in the process of presenting what one knows, what one does not wish to forget, and what one is compelled to share with others. As attested by studies of authors, including writers for children (see for example Lanes 1980 on Maurice Sendak, Marcus 1992 on Margaret Wise Brown, and also the movie based on the creative life of *Peter Pan* author James Barrie, *Finding Neverland*), being a writer involves difficult work.¹ Although there are outwardly manifested aspects of what goes into writing, overlooked are the more hidden aspects of the dynamics of the mind that allow writers to express things to their audiences using their chosen forms or genres.

My study is intended to provoke insights into how one writer, Thornton W. Burgess negotiated an opening into childhood space and time. This study recognizes that the author draws unconsciously- and consciously - held personal meanings into this space and those moments bounded by the work. These are the meanings and messages that enter circulation within society and culture. These meanings and messages are further adopted and adapted by children and their peers, their parents and their teachers, literary

¹ One of my favorite stories on the vicissitudes of writing is connected to an interview with Toni Morrison. The interviewer stated to the writer that she found Morrison's books to be "difficult to read." Morrison fired back, "Good, for I find them difficult to write."

critics, visual and electronic media, and made 'real' (much as the Velveteen Rabbit). The iconic images of well-loved animal characters and bucolic country places were skillfully evoked by Burgess to address his early 20th century audience. Burgess's images continued over the century and into the 21st century, attesting through their longevity and world-wide reach that something dwells in the stories that exerts a reach over imagination into the present-time. My study is focused on three Anti-Hunting, conservationist-themed stories that I have dubbed Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy (1917-1921) and seeks to explain the aesthetic workings of the stories that carried their appeal so far and wide.

This dissertation on children's literature is attached to intense interest in and memories of engagement in literature as a young person, and my desires to see children derive pleasure and inspiration through reading books. My earliest memories of reading as a child are part of my identity in seeing myself as a literate, educated person in the world. As a parent, I have become concerned about how much more my own children have been drawn into electronic media. They still read, but less than I did as a child and teen, I feel certain. In this day and age of television, videos, internet and other electronic diversions, a traditional reading of books, although still part of home and school life, is not as central in the lives of young people. To be sure, the weight and value allotted to reading printed matter varies from family to family, community to community, school to school. It seems that we, as present-day educators, parents, and other promoters of literacy, must consider electronic media as texts.

There arises the question of to what extent critical, aware readings are engaged in by members of society in the snangled (my invented word for snarled and tangled) open

arena of the electronic, globalized texts of mass media, including cinema, television, the worldwide web and internet, as well as traditional written forms. As says Cultural Studies, texts are everything that has been communicated. All things including billboards, advertisements on page and airwaves, classic books, musical and dramatic performances, MTV videos, reality shows, webcam broadcasts, and all other human communications, are readable. It only leaves the question about what strategies will be used to do the reading and how are these culturally transmitted, along with the messages and meanings?

New interpretive strategies in reading these texts may be needed for education and other fields of inquiry on learning culture. In this thesis, I read the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy² texts under the notion of film readings due to movements of a visualizing nature that I detected through my close readings of the three selected stories. Out of the naïve theory that the Burgess stories contain an aesthetic working aligned with cinema grew my analysis and interpretation of the stories and their aesthetic appeal, driven by a word I have adapted for purposes of this study: the **cine-semiotic**. This compound word has appeared in several scholarly works, as will be traced in Chapter One, p. 57, "Some prior configurations of cinema semiotics and cine-semiotics." I have adapted it for my purposes in tracing moving pictures created by specific semiotic conditions or appearances of the psyche (after Kristeva) in Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy.

In order to narrow down the research universe for my study of Burgess's aesthetic patterns and to be able to concentrate on a focal set of writing and reading and dynamics, I decided to examine selected stories from a specific period of Burgess's career as a

² I identified three works of a recurring "against hunting" theme and I have called *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* (1917), *The Adventures of Bob White* (1919) and *Lightfoot the Deer* (1921) the Anti-Hunting Trilogy due to the common theme, and as will be described, a story cycle held in common by all three; and also due to their consecutive first publication appearances as story-books from 1917 to 1921.

children's writer (Wright 1984 discusses the use of texts linked in time and theme for a case study approach). I realized that Burgess engendered mixed receptions due to: a) His subject matter of anthropomorphized animals and moralizing nature lessons packaged as "nature education"; b) his writing style and marketing strategies (storytelling, links to visual expression via Harrison Cady illustrations, toys and products based on the stories, linked to politicized causes such as conservationism) and; c) his personal investments and drives, including unconscious investments (psychic, hidden memories and yearnings of the child Thornton Burgess, and resonance with his adult history), and conscious investments, such as his interest in making a living for his family through writing. A prior Burgess study by Royer (1984) investigated a, but not b and c. above, and these are the two aspects I will concentrate on.

A case study is an in-depth study of one thing, an institution, a person, or any defined cultural group; it may employ historical and document analysis, interviews, and observation in data collection; and it uses vividness and detail in presenting the immediacy of the research setting (Marshall and Rossman 1999). My investigation made use of primary materials; including the three Burgess stories in both their original forms and in reprinted forms, and my readings of the stories produced transcribed notations used as data. The investigations made use of archival materials, including diaries and personal correspondence, business letters and papers, reviews in the media of the time period, and Burgess's autobiography.³ In my study, I used linked stories by Burgess

³ Archival research of the correspondence and diaries of the author was accomplished at the site of the Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections & Exhibits, located in Sandwich, MA, and led to insights into some personal as well as the social and cultural forces that shaped his work.

from a specific time frame fairly early on in his writing career. Through a close reading of the three selected, inter-related stories I hoped to gain insights into their popular appeal and reasons for their immense following with readers over the span of a century. His works continue to be introduced to and read by children through widely available Dover Press reprints and through other publishers, and so his influence as a writer continues.

While considering how to approach Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy, some intriguing questions emerged: What specific features or aspects of narrative language and audience appeal have allowed the Burgess literature to persist into the 21st century? How was Thornton W. Burgess invested in his public persona of writer-naturalist-educator? What did his writing mean to Burgess – what else did it do for him besides earn him and his family a living? Could it have been a means of wish fulfillment (Freud 1994, pp. 405–426), for Burgess to gain a profitable living as a writer, to fulfill desires of class position and economics; to become respected as an educator on nature? How was his writing of children's nature stories expressive of identity positions, including conscious but also unconscious and repressed aspects of inner worlds and personal identity? These questions led to and figured into my formulation of the formal research questions of the study (see Chapter One "Research Questions").

What is the life of an idea for a dissertation in the field of education?

When I arrived at doctoral studies at the University of Ottawa, I had already begun work at another Canadian university toward a PhD. thesis that would deal with, I thought, an issue in aboriginal education.

After my first year of course work at U of Ottawa in the Education Faculty,

that no longer seemed desirable as a thesis topic that would sustain me.

Where was I to go for the topic? Working with Judith Robertson on a book review for Canadian Children's Literature, I gravitated toward the idea of one of my 'first loves' – children's literature. Would it be possible to formulate an idea for a study using children's literature?

Children's literature is one of my loves because I recall fondly my engagements with the books of youth. As a child and teen, I lived for reading. Years later, as a parent, I could see a blossoming into language facilitated for my own three children as they were read to from storybooks of all sorts, and then began to read to themselves.

In creating a space for myself to engage in doctoral level research, I had to reflect on a topic that would sustain me through the time of the dissertation. In considering what it is that draws me into engagements with children's literature as an adult, I wonder about who is the person who lies behind the words, reaching out, as it were, to child readers who flock around the pages of the book? What constitutes the basis of his art in words, his grace and achievement in storytelling, in weaving the magic of language for children? My work with the stories of one Thornton Waldo Burgess was not based in childhood memories of engagement with his created world. I myself did not read the Burgess stories as a child. I read some nature stories, and I fondly recall Sterling North's *Rascal* (mainly because we had a pet raccoon for a year when I was a child) but I did not encounter the Burgess stories until my research. I have now talked to several people who read him and remember the characters and places of his stories, but I myself

cannot recapture the childhood urgency connected to acquiring the next Burgess book. I can only imagine the spell cast over his readers as they awaited the next newspaper serial installment (from the early days of Burgess's story writing publication, as syndicated columns) or waited for a parent to read the next chapter of the *Bed-Time Storybook* in progress.

What attracts me now, as an adult researcher, is the creative process that came out of Burgess's unique personal and social history, a history in some senses the same as that of other white, New England males of his era, and in some respects, singular enough to bear examination to see how his storytelling was effected. Burgess was a consummate storyteller for his time, and his popularity and appeal continues for a devoted audience of readers. Burgess's aesthetic sense carried through his words has somehow endured, and this research seeks to know why. Burgess made choices as a writer, just as a film-maker makes choices that affect the film form. Indeed, the idea of film form entered into and became central to my reading of the Burgess stories, helping me to detect one possible reason for his enduring appeal.

This dissertation is the story of how the Burgess stories were communicated to readers through the fortunate alchemy of a pre-symbolic **cine-semiotic** language sense and the (un)usual psychic dramas of childhood and of growing up. I propose that the Burgess stories carried a filmic sensibility of language and movement pre-figuring a 20th century children's literature movement toward an increasingly visual mode in narrative. For this study of Burgess's aesthetic, I have reconfigured and operationalized the term

cine-semiotic⁴ in order to arrange my ideas around the visual appeal to the mental and psychic dynamics of the reader. The term evokes **cine** – (moving picture) and **semiotic** (signing meaning) aspects of the Burgess stories as culturally and historically significant modes of appeal that contributed (and still contribute) to the success of the author.

Burgess made considered and deliberate use of the reach and commodifying force of newspaper syndication at the turn of the 20th century as well as political ties in his quest to attract and keep a large popular audience of readers and consumers of mass media.

While Burgess has been *fêted* and received as a nature-writer-educator, it appears also that he was an *auteur*-director (in the French cinema sense) who entered the post-modern world of the author-producer by a unique intertextuality invented from his observation of existing children's literature, from his early career background as an "ad-man," and by his self-admitted drive to earn a living for his family through writing children's stories.

⁴ In Chapter One I explain my own specific use of the term in this study, and I refer to recent scholarly uses of the term cinema semiotics and the cine-semiotic. Also in Chapter One, I provide a concise working definition of the term for this study.

Chapter One - Introduction and Conceptual Framework

Introduction and background information

This study utilizes a design based on a reading approach I outline and discuss using three Burgess “Anti-Hunting” stories as a case study. This approach employs note-taking of a close reading¹ of the three inter-related stories I selected. Analysis of the reading notations on the case study stories provides an informed internal verbal discourse produced in the course of reading. This informed internal discourse is an “*internally persuasive discourse* [which] is discourse which uses one’s own word, which does not present itself as ‘other’, as the representative of an alien power” (Goring, 2001, p. 233). In my research, the reading notations from my readings of story join with the internal verbal discourses created from readings of the Burgess archives, autobiography, critical reception (scholarly and popular reception over the span of his writing career) and the like to construct interpretations of publicly- and privately-held images of a writer and his works. This approach is akin to a critical discourse analysis in paying attention to issues of social and cultural context (Goring, 2001) of Thornton W. Burgess and his animal-nature series of stories featuring Peter Rabbit and other characters in the setting of the Briar Patch, Green Meadow and the Green Forest.

Chapter Two of this study makes use of resources from the Thornton W. Burgess Department of Collections and Archives to address how social provocation works through text-based language to enlist conditions of ideological sympathies in the minds of

¹ Close reading is a “detailed analytic interpretation” (Eagleton 2001, p. 38) that pays attention by both limiting and focusing attention to a text. Culler explains close reading as involving “attention to the rhetorical mode or status of important details” (1982, p. 245) employing close readings focused on crucial passages or rhetorical manifestations in the structure of the text. Culler states that close readings include possibilities that would not otherwise be considered.

children and their guardians. In Chapter Three, I present the results of reading with psychoanalysis of the selected texts, using ideas of the abject, abjection, and semiotic activity from Kristeva (Kristeva, 1980; Lechte, 1990; Fletcher and Benjamin, 1990). I demonstrate that reading with psychoanalysis (and with ideas from Brooks 1984, 1987; Freud, 1994, 1998) brings rich texture and new dimensions to previously held notions on an author's works, in tracing how these works may create specific effects for the reader. My analysis led me to construe that the success of the widely popular Burgess stories emanates, in part, from a **cine-semiotic** (re)presentation of fantasized dramas of the child world and child body. The resulting co-construction by the author and reader of an imagined social world permits the young reader to readily visualize and encounter otherwise unimaginable things.

In Chapter Four, I argue that **cine-semiotic** language and effects of the Burgess stories work to orient the reader to a visualizing apprehension of narrative. Chapter Five provides information and background on a visual turn in storytelling carried out in the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy. Chapter Five brings a reconsideration of what has been previously thought of as Burgess's legacy. Whereas he has been previously held as an educator in terms of animal nature writing, I have found that his writing legacy contains further dimensions that speak to his success in representing important events in the life of the child (Corsini, 1994 citing the use of Adlerian theory to think about childhood memories). Burgess had phenomenal success employing an aesthetic that was not fully understood, but that was successful as a mode of address to his readers. *Beyond the words of a storyteller* lies the power of presenting to his/her audience (un)told dramas in the life of the mind.

Throughout my study, I refer to materials that I collected from my research trip to Sandwich, Massachusetts to access the collection of archival materials housed at the Thornton W. Burgess Society Museum (See Chapter Two for more information on the Thornton W. Burgess Society and my approach to the archival materials). Some of the archival materials are news articles such as obituaries that might be accessed through other data bases; but most of the archival holdings were diaries, personal papers, business correspondence, manuscripts and other items not preserved elsewhere or easily accessible. At the Burgess Museum, I had access to a wide representation of materials on Burgess at one location. The collections were in part amassed and donated by two individuals in particular, Ernestine Johnson, who was the writer's trusted secretary in his later years, and David Cesan, a relative of the Burgess family.

Primary materials that I use as part of the data for this thesis were specifically accessed from the Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections & Exhibits. These are indicated with TWBSDCE, with a further notation on the item according to its appearance in the catalog for the materials (For example, "Thornton W. Burgess, The Bedtime Story Man" Compliments of Little, Brown & Company Publishers Boston, prob. c. 1925, TWBSDCE, Ernestine Johnson Collection). I refer to each item by title or other description as there were no consistent accession numbers assigned at the time of my initial research, in the summer of 2002. In addition to the archival records, I received some significant historical articles courtesy of Ms. Nancy Hladik of Rochester, NY who has been a long-time member of the Burgess Book Collectors Club. I was assisted in my research by Ms. Bethany Rutledge, at that time the curator of the collection; and by Mr.

Wayne Wright, who is noted for his comprehensive annotated bibliography of Burgess's works and for articles that appear in the Burgess Book Collector's Bulletin.

Thornton W. Burgess (b. 1874 d. 1965) was a Massachusetts native well-known for his serialized children's stories featuring the spaces of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest, and characters Peter Rabbit, Reddy Fox, Johnny Chuck, Sammy Jay and other animal denizens. The stories appeared in syndicated newspaper columns in the United States and Canada, beginning in 1912, following the success of his *Mother West Wind* books published by Little, Brown and Company, and continuing syndication until 1960 (Wright 2000, Dowhan, Jr. 1990). Burgess's syndicated stories were published in book format, and these books were disseminated in English, as well as around the world in various language editions. Although the height of his popularity was from around 1920 into the 1960s, Burgess's stories continue to have a loyal following. Parents who read the stories as children in the 20th through to the 21st century continue to introduce them to their children and grandchildren, through popular and inexpensive reprint versions published by Dover Press, Long Island, NY.

The success of Burgess' stories was developed over the span of the author's career. His stories began as serialized "Bedtime Stories" carried in national newspapers in the early 1900s in the United States and Canada (Wright, 2000, p. 39 and p. 143) and were wildly popular with children and adults interested in nature and animal life. Burgess is credited with writing 15,000 syndicated newspaper stories and 170 children's books (Wright, 2000; Cech, 1983). By the time he died, at age 91, he had successfully introduced his stories about animal characters on the radio, in books, in the Woodcraft

League and Boy Scout venues, for school filmstrips, and on television (Records of author, Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections & Exhibits).

Through various publicity and promotional means, the popular appeal of the author was established, alongside his authority and national reputation as an educator/naturalist (Obituary in New York Herald Tribune, "Thornton W. Burgess, 91, et al" obtained from TWBSDCE). Burgess has been examined at length as a "nature educator" and conservationist in a dissertation by Royer, 1984.

Burgess had the idea to present morals and values through his animal characters so that it would not appear that he, or any adult, was preaching to children. He felt that children of the day would not be amenable to an overt moralizing approach (Burgess, March 1923), and his view was consistent with "The absence of a deliberately pointed moral" along with the "abdication of the author as preacher" pioneered in late 1800s books that persisted into the 20th century (Dusinberre, 1999, p. xxi). The animal talking characters he popularized and that children came to love and respond to thus became 'talking heads' for those lessons that parents espoused – certainly the Burgess stories could not have continued in popularity and presence without parental approval and endorsement - and that children seemed receptive to because of the way they were presented. One other way to assure a non-preachy type of narrative prose would be to remove the voice of the adult-narrator away from the dialog and discourse in the story. Burgess was a self-made writer; he began in the advertising field writing jingos and advanced to editorial and writing work for *Good Housekeeping and People's Home Journal*, popular magazines at the turn of the century; decided that this was the life for him, and found a niche, writing 'simple' little nature stories for the younger set; he took

an active hand in the marketing aspect of the serialization/syndication of his stories, proposing clubs such as The Green Meadows Club to attract and retain readership, offered material items, as recorded archivally through the ads for merchandise spin-offs inspired by his stories. This was very cutting edge for the time and helped him create a loyal following, tied to him from love of his characters, his stories, and his mission to teach about animals (nature educator) and to preserve/conserve animals and spaces for them.

Burgess did not realize this career success early on, but after a lukewarm business career as an accountant, went into writing. In a sense, he did the quintessentially American thing: he re-invented himself. His constant tweaking of his public image can be traced through the trajectory of press releases his publishers gave out to newspapers and other public outlets, for example, Little, Brown and Company issued promotional material for the Burgess stories from 1913 to 1918 (TWBSDCE, David Cesan Collection); and the same publisher issued a brochure titled “The Bedtime Story Man” circa 1919 (TWBSDCE, Ernestine Johnson Collection). Burgess went along with and promoted these versions of himself that established his public image, and which supported his self-image as a village storyteller invested in narrative. In appealing to his largest target audience of approximately Grade 2 to 4 boys who wanted to know about animals and nature, but also appealing to a wider audience in terms of age and gender, Burgess seems to have been applying a personally held theory about language workings. The savvy author Burgess knew enough to represent himself as a traditionalist storyteller, and this can be discerned in his *Rotarian* 1923 article “Writing Stories for a Million Children”, as well as his article in *The Book News Monthly* “How I Came to Write the

Bedtime Stories”(December 1916). His publicists at Little, Brown & Company Publishers also knew to capitalize upon the storyteller appeal aimed at the nostalgia of an early 20th century parent consumer-audience.

Literature review: Tracing the tensions of Thornton W. Burgess’s writing reception

The works of Thornton W. Burgess may be generally assigned to a genre called realistic animal tales in classic children’s literature. May (1995) discusses categories for stories such as Burgess’s that feature personified animal characters, anthropomorphic animal characters, and realistic animal characters. The Burgess stories appear to incorporate elements of all three of May’s categories. Because he is so well-known as a naturalist, Burgess’s animal characters are thought to behave ‘realistically.’ Peter Rabbit, Reddy Fox, Old Mr. Toad and Paddy the Beaver are among the most recognizable figures that children encounter. Humans such as Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown’s Boy (sometimes named as “Tommy”) do appear, but they seem peripheral as the main dialogue and inner life emanate from the animals and other nature figures (including the personified Merry Little Breezes). The animal figures of Burgess’s tales are anthropomorphized to the extent that they are given speech, morality, and clothing; but, true to their animal natures, they retain the form of rabbit, fox etc., and some behavioral/instinctual characteristics such as living in burrows or preying upon other animals for food.

The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature (1984) entry under T. Burgess dismisses his works as “whimsical tales” populated by “creatures” such as Johnny Chuck, Reddy Fox, Peter Rabbit, and Grandfather Frog (p. 92 and p. 386). Burgess’s

work is further characterized as an “undistinguished mish mash” (ibid.) imitating *The Wind in the Willows*, Beatrix Potter, Kipling’s *Just So Stories*, and Joel Chandler Harris’ Uncle Remus. However, the *Oxford Companion* entry admits that Burgess’s work was “very popular in its time” (pp. 24-25). A critique by Avery (1995) asserts that Burgess’s brand of American whimsy in his “cosy little animal tales” (p. 211) are derivative of Beatrix Potter and Joel Chandler Harris’s works, with “an added moral element of the simplistic sort so often deemed appropriate for the young” (p. 211) of that time period (Interestingly, Burgess had stated in his 1923 article “Writing for a Million Children” that he felt he resisted overt moralizing).

Agosta presents details of Burgess’s life and career accompanying an incisive and complete critique of several stories and elements of the Burgess works (1983, pp. 71-87). Agosta’s coverage has probably been the most authoritative and comprehensive scholarly perspective of Burgess. Agosta notes Burgess’s “anthropomorphic filter” for viewing animal life and how to present life to children, and he assesses the author’s role in the conservation movement. Agosta points to an “obviously formulaic” style² as the potential reason why Burgess was spurned by children’s literary critics. Agosta points to the immense popularity and loyalty of Burgess’s reading constituency, and concluding his assessment with the observation: “A gentle whimsy and simple charm thus suffuse [Burgess’s] works and account for their wide appeal, even to a reader acutely aware of their literary flaws. In short, Burgess’s works have the appeal that all formulaic popular literature has: simple and clear and familiar, it affirms conventional, often idealized ways of seeing and being in the world” (1983, p. 86). Agosta’s entry has been influential in

describing Burgess's literary style and content within children's literature. Although Agosta agrees that Burgess's works are not the best prose, he sees that there is an unmistakable appeal to readers.

Bixler and Agosta (1984) assert that popular fiction, including children's stories such as Nancy Drew or the works of Burgess, must be evaluated much as oral stories or written versions of folktales. They attribute the success of two early twentieth authors, Burgess and Frances Hodgson Burnett (*A Little Princess*, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *The Secret Garden*) to the employ of formulaic patterns in a manner appropriate to time and place for the enjoyment of the audience. Bixler and Agosta feel that Burgess's journalism ties when he was starting out as a writer led to his knowledge of how to play to a popular audience. They conclude that Burgess's narrative appeal lies in his ability to safely secure his audience with familiar prose renditions of new information about animals and evolution. Bixler and Agosta's analysis of "Formula fiction and children's literature" using Burnett and Burgess sought to have children's literature taken more seriously, on a par with considerations of adult-oriented literature. However, their emphasis on the social and aesthetic function of child literature ignores motivations by particular desires in child reading engagements.

Goldthwaite (1996) explores some influences on Burgess' works, including Charles Kingsley and E.T. Seton. Seton is credited by Goldthwaite with "virtually invent(ing) this order of realistic animal biography" featuring animals that lived and died according to the laws of nature and survival, and also with the ability to balance a "knowledgeable empathy and the tendency to anthropomorphize his subject" (both quotes p. 340).

² Agosta characterizes Burgess's works as "obviously formulaic," following a recipe which would serve a "daily dose" of moral lessons, resulting in "didactic works burdened with conventional, often naïve moral

Burgess's admiration for Seton's *Wild Animals I Have Known* is, according to Goldthwaite, echoed in *Old Mother West Wind* and *Old Granny Fox*, where the lessons of natural law have been somewhat muffled for the nursery audience. Goldthwaite finds Burgess's language simple and uncontrived, and he characterizes Burgess's works as "not without variety – there are trickster tales here, and creation myths, nature lessons, and stuff about boys prowling about being boys (albeit muskrats and skunks and rabbits) – but it all goes down like the same glass of warm milk" (p. 337). He sees Burgess's language as "transparently simple and utterly lacking the saturation of pleasures to be found in Uncle Remus or the Edwardians," and terms the author a "syndicated caretaker" who wrote stories about "belonging to a place and "having friends" (all quotes pp. 337-338). Although he remains uncertain about the exact workings of the craft, Goldthwaite concludes that: "There is a simple power to these stories that may be inaccessible to adults and that rather confounds... The easy conclusions about Burgess, that he was either a commercial drudge or an emotional recluse, simply do not hold up" (p. 338). Goldthwaite is a children's literary critic who grew up on Burgess, and his memories express an appreciation of the contested author's writing. Goldthwaite contributes his childhood memories of reading Burgess. He recalls

In my own childhood, before I took up with such pleasing stuff as Donald Duck and D.C. Comics, the humbler fare was *Old Mother West Wind* and *Uncle Wiggily*, good stories too easily despised today, appearing in none of our many so-called studies of children's books, save in passing – a misplaced snobbery and a shame. Thornton Burgess and Harrison Cady were hardly Joel Chandler Harris or Beatrix Potter; nonetheless, they created an inexhaustible landscape in their nature tales of the Green Meadows and Dear Old Briar Patch and deserve to be remembered for honest and often magical stories... Where is there anything like these today? Where is the generosity of effort? (p. 402)

lessons," with stock characters and situations leading to racial and sexual stereotyping (p.86).

Goldthwaite's recollection brings out several aspects of the Burgess stories and their reception. It reminds us that Burgess has been understudied or ignored in children's literary studies. It indicates that the child critic is seeking things from the stories other than what the adult critic is seeking. It shows that a connoisseur of children's literature who has thought long and hard about children's stories finds some redemptive value in the Burgess literature. It brings into question: What exactly are these critics looking for in children's literature, and do they have any understanding of the work of play in childhood language?

A survey of children's literature by Meigs, Eaton, Nesbitt and Viguers (1969) echoes critics of the Burgess stories with a general disapproval of the class of "bedtime stories" that are seen as "footless, inane, and without character, usually treated fancifully, but not imaginatively" (p. 340). Meigs et. al. wonder if a kind of critical disapprobation may have settled upon Burgess's *Old Mother West Wind* series at the time when he first gained note as a child author. Meigs et. al. offer some generosity toward the Burgess prose with a claim that the *Old Mother West Wind* stories are told "simply and with charm" (p.340). In their final pronouncement in a volume designed for the use of educators in selecting literature for the classroom, the surveyors evaluate the Burgess animal personifications as "convincing and interesting" (p.340), presumably giving critical assent to use of his stories in the classroom for early reading and animal-nature study.

Not all children's literaturists have been as kind to Burgess. Lukens in *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature* (1990) finds the Burgess stories to be coy and cloying, and she hypothesizes that Burgess lacks respect for his readers, his characters,

and his stories. The main flaw or crime of Burgess's stories, in Luken's estimation, is their sentimentality bordering on condescending address, for which she presents various passages as evidence. However, Goldthwaite (1996) has a different view of Burgess's tone of address. Goldthwaite finds that Burgess is "extending a courtesy to his five-or-seven year old reader" (p. 338) in creating repetitions thus allowing the child reader to truly become involved in the prose, and alerting him or her to the idea of event sequence, that something is about to happen next (a cue of sorts). It is instructive to contrast the interpretation of Burgess's tone of address from two eminent child literary critics in order to illustrate the mixed critical reception of his prose.

Significant literature in the field of children's literary studies evinces the tensions that inhabit critical evaluations of the Burgess stories. Judgment calls 'for' and 'against' the Burgess stories stem from engagements of noted critics with their field, and cannot be lightly dismissed. However, the idea that the stories were so popular with a general audience and so enduring in terms of their publication creates a here-to-forth un-noted and unexamined paradox. Such a highly conflicting response to an author's works merited, in my estimation, a closer look in terms of what exactly might be occurring in the case of Burgess's animal-nature stories.

Aims of the study

To understand ideological and historical conditions around the Burgess stories

Burgess's 1917 story of the plight of Poor Mrs. Quack and her unfairly hunted duck comrades was a hit in the new conservation movement of the Progressive Era. Poor Mrs. Quack the Mallard Duck became the poster child of the anti-hunting campaign. *The*

Adventures of Bob White (1919) couched the conservation pleas as a patriotic act for the War Effort, in that quails were touted as Mother Nature's own pesticide in eating insects and worms that would eat crops. *Lightfoot the Deer* (1921) capped Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy, further mobilizing child readers to resist the pursuit and slaughter of their animal friends. However, it should not be imagined that the support for the conservation movement was unilateral, for there were as many white male voters for hunting as against. The early 20th century conservation movement, particularly with respect to migratory, seasonal hunting of game, did not necessarily seek to curtail all hunting, just to place the hunting within a licensed season, as exists today.

Burgess had dove-tailed his campaign for children to speak out against hunting with the work of early 20th century power broker, William Hornaday. Hornaday was the President of the Metropolitan New York Zoological Society, and he founded the Permanent Wildlife Protection Fund to preserve wildlife.³ Then followed the influential National Committee of One Hundred, a select group of affluent patrons who felt they should lobby for interests and causes they deemed worthy of rallying behind. This was an interest group that saw themselves as the inheritors of the responsibilities of a by-gone ruling elite, reformulated from the Founding Fathers for the Progressive Era. They considered themselves caretakers of America's vast resources- animal, vegetable and mineral. For example, the Florida Everglades are an example of early conservation management in the Progressive Era during which was espoused a 'wise use' policy toward nature. The land was there to be managed as sanctuary or turned to profitable

³ The letterhead of the Permanent Wildlife Protection Fund states "The Wildlife of today is not wholly ours, to dispose of as we please. It has been given to us IN TRUST. We must account for it to those who come after us and audit our records." Letter of May 29, 1917 from William Hornaday to Burgess, thanking him for the story of Poor Mrs. Quack, for the cause.

account. Napoleon Bonaparte Broward suggested of the Everglades, after being elected governor in 1904. 'They should be drained and made fit for cultivation' (*New York Times* Wed. Mar. 8/06 Review, E6). This is a view of 'wise use' management of resources that the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories collaborated with to speak out against uncontrolled hunting of ducks, deer and quail.

In joining in with political leaders of the conservationist movement such as Hornaday and the Group of One Hundred, Burgess lent his persuasive literary talents and his sway over a youth audience. In the Burgess "Anti-Hunting Trilogy" the individual child reader was urged toward the cause of conservation, specifically, the cause of animal migration protection. The fact of early conservation movements in vogue around the 1920s in the United States speaks to the development of new nexes of power for industrial capitalist entrepreneurs. The anti-hunting conservationist movement was not at first fashionable, but promoted by power brokers such as William Hornaday, and President Teddy Roosevelt, it became a 'darling' movement, the *cause célèbre* of the moneyed set called the National Committee of One -Hundred (Letters from William Hornaday to Burgess bear the letterhead and the names of supporters of this group, TWBSDCE, See Appendix A). The fledgling conservation movement presented itself as in support of patriotic war efforts, to assist farmers growing crops.

Burgess joined the bandwagon, apparently willingly conscripted by the Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund, which honored him with awards (Letters to Burgess from Hornaday December 18, 1913 and January 21, 1916), and also under the author's own initiative to start up a wildlife sanctuary-making contest called the Green Meadow Club.

A button with Harrison Cady's Peter Rabbit illustration and an engraved certificate of membership was mailed to the two hundred thousand boys and girls who promised to protect and aid animals in the Green Meadow Club (Meigs, 1998, p. 33). In his syndicated newspaper stories, and later in his Anti-Hunting Trilogy beginning with *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* (1917), Burgess used the persuasive power of 'show and tell' via his pages detailing the terrors of hunting and the terrible guns for defenseless animals.

Burgess apparently perceived support for his desire to make a living for his family by writing in going along with the socio-political current of conservationism. He had gone the route of business and advertising in corporate settings, but needed to branch off and become self-sufficient in order to make his mark (Lovell, Jr., 1974). Somehow, he was able to join his advertising knowledge of successful jingle-writing from his earlier business career (see Frances B. Meigs's *My Grandfather Thornton W. Burgess*, and Burgess's autobiography *Now I Remember*, Chapter 6 "Out in the World") with stories that stemmed from his early experiences out on the land as a child in Sandwich, MA. I have pointed above to some political forms of persuasion working on the author as he sought to make his works noticed and successful. Burgess was not a neophyte in the business world of publishing. A story sells in the modern mass media through its success in prose and storyline as well as in its promotion.

What is not traced so well are the workings behind the storytelling machinery that allowed Burgess to transcribe onto the page personal and family dramas that allowed his animal, nature stories to connect with his readership. What do we really know of authors of children's stories, these strangers invited into our houses and children's lives –

why do they gain this access? Who said to let them in? Why do we? How do we know what these writers think of childhood and what will they do to our children's childhood?

I'm asking these questions because I undertook the construction of a methodological approach to analyze the Burgess literature in order to understand the workings of story offered to children that feature consciously-offered messages such as appreciation of animals and nature, along with the things that bob to the surface from the author's unconscious. Framed with regard to "What kind of child was the writer, and what does that mean, and did it appear in a story?" researchers may rightly wonder about the unconscious story-workings of writers who became classic and favored authors for Western children's literature (names such as Louisa May Alcott, Lucy Maud Montgomery, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, Joel Chandler Harris and others come to mind). Often the question of what impulses from childhood experience lies behind the stories produced by writers goes mostly unexamined, and unanswered. Recently there have been some in-depth studies of L. Frank Baum (Swartz 2000) and of Maurice Sendak (Cech, 1995) as well as Margaret Wise Brown (Marcus, 1999) that address some of these influences.

Steedman (1982) writes of how working class Grade 3 British girls compose stories.⁴ She theorizes that children's writing demonstrates what they put into circulation, and that a study of children reading would undertake what they take out of works in circulation as material and what influences them, particularly their daily life experiences. Steedman's study is relevant to my consideration of Burgess as author: Is there a way to

⁴ Steedman positions her ethnographic research as a wider reaching narrative of cultural knowledge and future aspirations about the lives to be of the girl-writers. That is, she points out that we are not to read just a simple little cute story of a "tidy house" but of the personal, social and cultural dynamics informing the stories.

read a story written for children to understand what an author thinks about childhood, and what s/he believes children will be compelled to take out of the book and into circulation in their lives and imaginations? Steedman writes of a methodology to understand the workings behind the writing of her working- class British school female audience. She demonstrates ways of reading the children's stories in light of extant theories about child language. She addresses her pedagogical research with teachers and educators in mind as her audience in order to answer questions based in the unknowable about how children write what they write: where does the stuff come from, where does the content and expression come from, how is it deployed?⁵ These are some of the questions I wondered about Burgess's writing, and so I examined Steedman's approach for clues of how to proceed.

The challenge was *how* was I to understand the makings of Burgess's drive to write successful children's stories, his ensuing popularity over time with children and adults alike, and his stature in 'childhood'? If we honor the publishing industry story of how Burgess got his start, of writing a bedtime story to his distant young son, temporarily placed with maternal relatives in another U.S. state after the death of Burgess's first wife, we may think in our readings of the author's stories that we encounter an overt moral philosophy of how children were to be nurtured, and how they were to behave in their social and moral lives (particularly imperative when placing a child with older relatives who would expect a certain standard of child behavior). Burgess denied overt moralizing,

⁵ These girls produced a space for themselves out of want and hardship, a triumph of the human capacity to not just survive, but to imaginatively prevail in the world that didn't make it easy for them to do so. In my study, I wanted to understand the workings behind the writing of Burgess, a middle-class New England white adult male who grew up in genteel poverty and who was not overly, as far I know, beset by adversity or injustice.

saying that in *his* stories, it was disguised by addressing language through animal characters (1923). The publishing industry created a market for stories said to be tendered by parenthood concern, and Burgess appealed to children and new notions of parenting by disavowing stern moral chastisements. Somewhere between the lines lay a provocative aesthetic to read, discern and describe for this study.

To understand the aesthetics of the successful Burgess “nature” stories

Initially my study of the Burgess “Anti-Hunting Trilogy” was focused on ideas of how was rhetoric used in a 20th century instance of children’s literature in the service of ideologies such as “The individual working for the greater good”- for the cause of conservation, in the cause of animal migration protection. Publicity attached to the publishing house promotional brochure (Thornton W. Burgess, *The Bedtime Story Man*, Compliments of Little, Brown & Company Publishers Boston, prob. c. 1925, Ernestine Johnson Collection of the Thornton W. Burgess Society) promoted the idea that the stories were written for his young son sent out to live with distant relatives. Another research focus might have been to study how the stories were designed to address idealized forms of comportment for child bodies, disguised as animal bodies in the bedtime stories. For my initial readings, I followed a reading approach outlined by Goring (2001).

As data collection progressed through notations of the readings I performed of the three selected case study stories, the Anti-Hunting trilogy, I began to detect recurring language dynamics that drew my attention. Thoughts of the historical and personal career context for Burgess began to enter my theorizing about influences on his writing

aesthetic. From various promotional and other materials held in the Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections & Exhibits, from his 1960 autobiography, and from his step-granddaughter's biography, it was apparent that Burgess was persistent and canny in his re-invention of himself as a children's writer. As an advertising copy-writer, it would have been plausible for him to have a pulse on the language of sales and popular parlance. The character and place names in the stories for which Burgess achieved popular acclaim as a children's writer appear to have sprung from a specific story tradition emerging at the time, and include influences from the places and names used by Beatrix Potter and Joel Chandler Harris in their reknowned animal tales, as observed by Goldthwaite (1996). The illustrations of Harrison Cady served to reinforce this new genre performance, and they play a part in the reading effects produced in the Burgess stories.

As I progressed in my readings of the selected Burgess "Anti-Hunting Trilogy" stories of 1917-1921, I experienced a premonition that there was 'something about Burgess.' My intuitive feelings about why and how Burgess stories gained a wide popularity grew into a conviction that Burgess had somehow invented something tied in to a new version of 20th century storytelling. As I read and analyzed the texts, I realized that I was seeking recourse to analytical terms other than the standard literary terms to describe the visualizing language within the Burgess prose. Because I detected a dynamic visual component and a scripted sense of storytelling, I decided to call upon contemporary film theory and terms used to convey meaning from texts in cinema, the presentation of moving pictures.⁶ The eclectic time-traveling approach to the deployment

⁶ There is a question of periodization of film styles and film history, and whether or not this constitutes an essentialization or repression of difference in the Western tradition of declaring an entity such as the 1930s film or genres such as the 'spaghetti Western'. What of films not as well-known or that resist placement within film periods? (Brunette and Wills 1989). My use of Bordwell and Bordwell and Thompson's film

of film theorizing is inspired and grounded by the fact that Burgess's stories transcend various periods of time from the early 20th century to the present time in their appeal. His stories were popular at the time of the earliest film-making historical moments, and they were wanted by producers of the 1950s and 1960s for animation. The Burgess stories have been reprinted and are sold and read right up until the present-day.

I have found three insistent categories of analysis from a reading with psychoanalysis in the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy, and they serve to illuminate the language I have termed the **cine-semiotic**, which denotes a merging of the written word with a visual and sign meaning to convey moving images to the mind that have a specific outcome in the service of the reader and his/her reading of the story-text. (A concise working definition of cine-semiotic as used for this study appears on page 32). The categories are the **abject** (based on Kristeva), **terror** and anxiety, and **community** and wholeness. Metz in *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (1974) discusses, among other things, how cinema gives an impression of reality to a projection of a moving image captured on celluloid (and now subject in the 21st century to new film-making technologies of digital images and computer graphics). It is not outside the realm of literary and textual analysis to consider that a writer attempts a moving picture with a dynamic thought narration in his works. This idea forms part of my representation of the paradoxical hold that Burgess seems to have cast over a spell-bound audience for his serialized and book form Bedtime Story Books series.

The **cine-semiotic** which I am proposing as the narrative technique contributing to the wide fan base and success of the Burgess stories seems allied to the Cine Langue

study approach seeks out a composite construction of how film works, and it spans various periods of time, as do the Burgess stories in reprints of the original forms, or new (but same) editions of the 'old' stories.

that Metz states allowed cinema to develop as an art-form in its earliest days when “through its excesses – theoretical as well as practical – could the cinema begin to gain a consciousness of itself” (Metz, pp. 56-57). Early filmic constructs such as Eisenstein’s montage and the shot were the building blocks of the foundational films (Metz, 1974; Eisenstein, 1947). Metz considers that filmic discourse works through composition and through image (p. 58). Many prose texts also do their work through composition and image. Using the cine-semiotic construct, I consider how an apparent filmic discourse style, contained in or presaged in written texts such as the Burgess nature stories for children, can work to structure meanings or interpretations of reality (which may actually be fantasy) through a moving image-feeling sense that works by means of unconscious appeals provoked in the reader.⁷

In my survey of the historical and literary context of the three Anti-Hunting stories, I was struck by the paradox of the Burgess critical reception, that it was so mixed - loved by a general populace audience of children and nature lovers, and booed by critics with objections to the stories. The *Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature* (1984) characterization of Burgess’s works as an “undistinguished mishmash”(pp.24-25) and Avery’s (1995) dismissal of Burgess’s stories as derivative of Beatrix Potter and Joel

⁷ A reading of Steedman’s (1998) analysis of the Mignonette figure of 19th century popular literature supports the notion of the cine-semiotic in literary texts as she explores Raymond Williams’ ‘structure of feeling,’ a contested and little understood aspect of cultural dynamics in lived experience. Steedman found that the figure of the child Mignonette was used as a central literal-figural device that helped shape feelings in the reader, and to structure feeling into thought. Steedman invokes Raymond Williams, insisting that he came close to describing this process as the ‘activation of specific relations’ when poems are read, stories told, plays enacted and watched. He further elaborated these specific relations as ‘real processes...physical and material relational processes’ Steedman, p.19 citing Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 1977, p. 190). Williams’ description of ‘the poem first “heard” as a rhythm without words, the dramatic scene first “visualised” as a specific movement or grouping, the narrative sequence first “grasped” as a moving shape inside the body’ helps articulate the perceived movements of relationship, between people and other people, and between people and things and refer to a means of cognition and ways of thought (Steedman, p. 19).

Chandler Harris comes to mind (see above). As I proceeded to identify the means of narrative persuasion that allowed the Burgess stories to succeed as a body of literature that has survived the test of time and that has remained in demand by a devoted reader audience, I began to see the language and structure as exhibiting aspects that were “curiosier and curiosier” (Alice, in *Alice in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll).

In performing my readings of the Burgess stories and in formulating ideas from the on-the-ground contact with the story-narratives, I began to ask questions about the compelling and circular nature of the psychic force of the stories, wherein the same story of wounding of a defenseless animal was presented to children in a haunting and, according to Burgess’s own stated ideology on children’s stories, not tragic way. Nevertheless, loss is part of tragic performance, and some of his characters were lost for a while. It appeared to me that what worked in the Burgess narrative approach was participation of the reader-viewer in a visualized performance of story and plot melded with favorite, iconic characters in repetitious, familiar and yet deeply compelling activities.

The notion of not just what was going on, but how it was going on was magnified in my readings of the stories. I began to see the **cine-semiotic** as a merging of three strands: visual aspects of “looking on” at a moving picture, semantic contextualizing evoked through words, and the dynamics of the mind that speak to manifest and latent “levels” of meaning and significance moving forward and backward in time and space. The **cine-semiotic** is invested with the dynamics of the mind at play, and helps create sustainable plot and dramatic structure in the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories. The **cine-semiotic** is a term that owes a debt to the concepts defined and used by various theorists

in psychoanalysis and film studies. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, Kristeva's idea of the *chora* figures in, which may be coincidental with the idea of cinema as a container for spoken language with visual perception.⁸

The term cine-semiotic in this study

In this study, the construct of the **cine-semiotic** means a visual representation of the underlying dramas of the mind and psyche, that evokes and allows outward expression to those underlying internal dramas. It could be written, set to music, spoken or filmed either silently or in narrated form. The **cine-semiotic** is a specific creative language that allows a definable space of negotiation between the artist and his/her audience. It is urgent and immediate, and presents a viable mind's eye picture which can be readily apprehended by a reader/viewer. In Chapter Five of this thesis, I discuss the implications of the **cine-semiotic** language discovered in Burgess's stories, in terms of its interiorization and outward expression of felt relations between readers and the worlds of fantasy presented to them.

Definition of cine-semiotic as used in this study

Cine-semiotic – Visual provocations of narrative that call upon psychic and symbolizing semiotic processes.

⁸ Sarup (1993) writes of Lyotard's famous *Discours/figure* that dealt with tension between the discursive and the figural, otherwise termed the verbal and the visual. It seems that part of Kristeva's theorizing on the pre-Symbolic and the semiotic *chora* serves to address this tension.

The use of the term cinema semiotics or cine-semiotics appears in various works stemming from post-structuralism and film theory of the 1960s and 1970s. I mention some of the contexts in which these terms have been used as I conclude this chapter. In my study, I specifically operationalize the notion of the cine-semiotic as an engine of aesthetic that draws explicitly upon film reading and reading with psychoanalysis in the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy.

Situating Burgess and the Burgess texts

In this study, the works of Thornton Burgess are viewed in terms of text/language and also their presence in the material world as an outcome of various historical, social and cultural forces.⁹ In order to situate Burgess and his texts to locate and articulate the workings of his mode of address in appeal to an audience, I needed to be familiar with new directions and possibilities for research in children's literature. Hutcheon (1988) states that "Thanks to the pioneering work of Marxists, feminists, gays, blacks and ethnic theorists, there is a new awareness in these fields that history cannot be rewritten without ideological and institutional analysis, including analysis of the act of writing itself." Clifford Geertz's *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) and *Local Knowledge* (1983) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) were instrumental in pointing toward a pluralistic, interpretive, open-ended perspective including the use of semiotics and hermeneutics to explore cultural processes, and ethnographic or ritual theories to analyse literature. How one knows becomes as significant in research as what one knows. This is the interface

⁹ Jerome Bruner, in *Acts of Meaning* (1990) states how meaning making can be seen as a both personal and social experience simultaneously, for it is an interchange that relies upon cultural narrative for its sense. Thus the author is mixing personal with cultural narrative to result in a social product that the reader mixes with her personal and cultural narrative to result in meaning.

whereby writing as a method of inquiry demonstrates where fieldwork (or interpretive analysis of a text) and writing/ethnography “blur into one another” (Richardson 2000, p. 17).

Burgess’s work had been competently described and discussed by Agosta (1983) and Goldthwaite (1996) but I wondered if new details would emerge through my examination of archival materials, and from my readings of selected stories. Through contact with ideas from my advisor, approaches from cultural studies and psychoanalysis beckoned alluringly as a means to understand the paradox of popular appeal of an author who was so critically panned by literaturists.

I have been reading the Burgess stories. I started off with the Old Mother West Wind stories in a book I bought in a bookstore in Burlington, Vt. during an overnight trip with my parents and my three children. My father is seeing a heart specialist and an eye doctor in Burlington. After talking with Judith, my advisor, she feels I could make a study out of Burgess, whom she had considered research on. I am coming at the Burgess stories from a different place: whereas she had memories of reading Burgess as a child, I had none. I am encountering the stories for the first time as an adult. Would I have read him as a child? I think not, the stories seem to me puerile and uninteresting, or, as I imagine I would have critiqued them as a child, simple little animal stories for babies. But the story of his mixed reception seems so compelling to me, as a student of culture and a

*would-be researcher of children's literature. I will read more attentively -
something lies beyond these words, it must be...*

The abiding intrigue of this study lies in the seeming 'disconnect' between how Burgess was received by the general public, which was his target audience, and his critical reception from the esteemed children's literary critics. In the discourse¹⁰ of the public who loved Burgess, and the discourse of the critics who loved to hate Burgess's works, there existed a problem ripe for theorizing. It called for a provocation of dramatic confrontation through a third discourse constructed from my own reading of his works as a researcher in child literature. The issue of why I would want to engage with these discourses is part and parcel of the strategic conceptualization of my research (after Eagleton 1996), and will become clearer through the presentation of my research.

Theorizing children's literature

Avenues of theorizing within the often undervalued field of children's literature have suggested approaches based in post-colonialism, emancipatory childhood studies, psychoanalytical work, and deconstructive analyses or memory work for understandings of juvenile literature and associations within education and classrooms (Bradford, 2001; Galbraith, 2001; Robertson, 1999; Stanley, 1999; Thacker, 2000; Morawski and Gilbert 2000; Palulis, 2003 – and more will be said about these contributions). Critical pedagogy points out that middle-class values and norms are

¹⁰ In linguistics pragmatics, the term discourse means "language in use" rather than language as an abstract system. Discourse can also mean "communication of thought by speech" or Samuel Johnson's definition "Mutual intercourse of language." Foucault terms discourses "large groups of statements" comprising rule-governed language terrains which Foucault (1972) also refers to as "strategic possibilities". Bakhtin derives the meaning of discourse as a "method of using words that presumes a type of authority" in line with Foucault's use. Discourse is seen as "language in its concrete living totality" or as a concrete phenomenon of utterance (Goring 2001, pp. 232-233).

known to form the basis of educational formulations of how schooling and knowledge should be structured and presented (Giroux, 1992 and 1994; McLaren, 1989; Contenta, 1993), shutting out other ways of knowing. It would be interesting under critical pedagogy formulations to ask if Burgess's writerly construction be construed as inclusive or exclusive in terms of presentation of the imaginative world? Do his texts have the ability to be reconstituted with different meanings when recontextualized by readers of varied backgrounds? The fact of translation of the Burgess stories into languages such as Japanese, Chinese, French, Italian, Swedish and Norwegian possibly attests a cross-cultural appeal of his stories, or else it speaks to a commodifying and colonizing desire to import North American child literature and thus Western ideals of childhood. This idea may be worth exploring in a future investigation.

These avenues of theorizing are much changed from a past study and explication of children's literature. Peter Hunt (1990, 1994, 2006) has shown that as a field of academic study, children's literature has changed drastically since the 1950s. Children's literature has moved away from a descriptive phase to a deeper examination of the social and psychological *whys* and *wherefores* of writing for children and for reading as children. Educators and resource people such as school librarians who introduce young people to literature in formal settings may understandably wish to keep up with this movement. Among the changes in the critical literature, approaches evaluating literature for children have also changed. Crago (1990) introduces a psychoanalytical approach to the reading processes of a young child, posing the question of what is the power of early aesthetic experience in terms of reader preference, as in what parents read aloud to pre-

literate children, and investigates how this preference persists in terms of choices of difficulty of reading level, quality, topic and genre.

Jack Zipes is a leading Marxist/feminist critic in children's literature who argues for children's literature to be viewed as a socio-psychological agent (1984/85), asserting that literature may be analyzed as a form of indoctrination. Marxist/feminist critics in children's literature field have also conveyed the idea that adult interpretations of reality are reproduced by specific language usages targeted to child readers/audiences.

According to Marxist and feminist critics, some authors of classic children's stories have been suspect in communicating and perpetuating certain kinds of master narratives located in definable historical time periods,¹¹ thus socially constructing how a child reader views the world (see also Egoff, et.al., 1996; Hunt, 1994; May, 1995; Zipes, 1997; Rose, 1984). Marxist and feminist scholars have investigated how rhetorical style of an author can influence the reader's response in line with how that particular author views child life within a specific cultural setting. Rhetoric can be used to present favorable or unfavorable views of past human acts in history texts, as well as in fictional narrative (May, 1995).

Trites (2000) asserts that literary studies has been engaged with post-structural theory over the past twenty years allowing the critic of children's literature to operate with the assumption that the text under scrutiny warrants study. The post-structuralism which leads away from aesthetic valuations of texts grounded in elitism has had an

¹¹ If Zipe's ideas were operationalized to examine speech patterns or pictorial depictions of characters in the Burgess stories it may be possible to read in racialized attributes of the minstrel shows popular in Burgess's youth that he describes enjoying with the residents of his New England town. This analysis would lead to how is the 'other' represented in Burgess's stories and his personal history with race, as well as to questions of how difference was presented to his readers (T. Stanley, personal communication, May 2004).

important impact finding one's way in children's literature, and psychoanalytic readings and reports become what teachers, librarians and critics want to know about the relationship between cognitive and emotional development, including "concepts such as language and literacy acquisition, the relationship between self and other, gender identity, and the child's struggle with authority" (Trites, p. 66).

Questions of agency are addressed for the child reader in relation to the literary and cultural texts designed with them in mind. The production of childhood and the place of varied children's texts are addressed by researchers such as Honeyman (2006) who reports on postindustrial toy narratives in a deconstructive approach. The merchandising role of publisher-producers in the *Gossip Girl* series is examined by Pattee (2006) vis a vis the polysemic readings engaged in by the product's audience. The dynamics of pictorialization come under study by Wylie (2006) who sees that picture books are read as performance at some level, promoting play as "legitimate work" (Flynn 2006, pp. 107-108). These are only some examples of edgier work being done in the erstwhile under-examined world of children's literature and ventures of imaginative narrative. In Chapter Five, I discuss recent research by children's literature scholars that supports my venture into the theorization for a cine-semiotic movement in Burgess's early 1900s stories.

Burgess and writing for the child

Writing means many things. Writing is a conveyance to structure and transfer conscious and unconscious knowledge about being. Authors, writers of narrative, have in mind the idea of provoking thoughts or a process of conscious 'thinking-about story' production within the reader. Although linked with the landscape of Cape Cod in the

Eastern US seaboard, Burgess's legacy extends globally, in that his stories have been translated to over a dozen languages for export to countries outside the United States (Wright, 1999). Over time, Burgess retains a following through the reprints offered by Dover Press, and he is referred to across generations. Burgess resurfaces in various and surprising current contexts: in a *Boston Globe* article dated July 14, 2004, columnist Eileen McNamara refers to Burgess animal character "Chatterer the Squirrel" in discussing a warning by US Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge.

Writing can be viewed simultaneously as a means of performance and as a device for remembering and recalling. Galbraith writes, speaking of the child who grew up to write for other children:

Though biographical interpretation of literature has fallen on hard times over the past forty years, such interpretation, like that of psychoanalysis, can be not only contributory but central to the understanding of literature – the chief difficulty with such deep-structure analysis is that it has to be done clumsily without an adequate theory of what it attempts. (2001, p. 195)

Burgess's autobiography points out that he wished to instruct and inform children about life. In reading his stories, there are intimations that his stories were a way of thinking through some things he thought about childhood and how (child) reality should or 'ought' to be construed, as would be expected for other writers of his generation. These "thinking through" processes might be credited in part for the aesthetic appeal of the Burgess animal-nature stories, beyond the vaunted nature-educative lessons they held.

Rose (1984) has investigated the adult writer's quest to recapture a childhood state, and the "impossibility" of this quest. What was Burgess after - a wistful recapturing, as was thought to be the case for Peter Pan author James Barrie - or was Burgess recapturing what he thought childhood 'ought' to be, passing unspoken lessons

along to his estranged son, and perhaps to himself, the fatherless son? The deep structure of narrative must shed light upon hidden things that are possible to think about by means of stories. It is not just the 'what is' but also the understanding of what is concealed by design or by not knowing that one knows. Galbraith (2001) advocates a search for a childhood self of the author, in this case, Thornton Burgess, who created a social microcosm within such imaginative-real surroundings as the dear Old Briar Patch, the Green Meadow, and the Green Forest. Burgess settled on his genre of animal-nature stories with whimsical Harrison Cady illustrations to fulfill his ambition to make a living from the craft of writing, a decision which ultimately led him to be known internationally as a naturalist-educator.

In researching the workings of Burgess's works, I could not overlook that his drive to be a commercial success in writing was influenced by what he realized would sell.¹² In terms of narrative style, it appears that what Burgess unerringly detected and was able to (re)produce on page were stories that children wanted. As one example, one views the rhythmic language patterns and repetitions, with the didactic, almost intoning stock dialogue of cheerful, peppy creatures exhorting their friends to action in Chapter XI, "Shadow the Weasel Gets Lost" in *The Adventures of Peter Cottontail* (Burgess, 1991, Dover reprint version). Other stories provoke tension in the simultaneous sense of comfort in familiar speech patterns, and discomfort/unfamiliarity of sensory information and emotions (preying on other animals) that impels the young reader to finish the story.

¹² As I progressed in the study, checking between the raw data of my readings of the three selected texts and the biographical and archival supporting materials, I thought that the rhetorical structures and distinctive use of words in Burgess's stories were likely forged from his personal and social history of engagement with the field of advertising communication. It seemed possible that the author's style emanated from recollections of New England boyhood days out on the land spliced with his early adult career in advertising jingles in coming up with story-lines and language that appealed to one and all (except some critics).

This tension would have been particularly evident for the readers of the stories in serialized form awaiting the next newspaper appearances. His public audience looked for his stories, they knew his voice, and his serialized column was a huge success. In their newspaper serialized and book forms the stories which came to number 15,000 became a bonafide site of cultural production characterized within a context of an emerging consumer-oriented economy and attendant social values in early 20th century industrial-commercial North America.

How did Thornton W. Burgess establish his public persona of writer-naturalist-educator? In his 1960 autobiography and in his step-granddaughter Frances B. Meigs's 1998 biography, the lines are laid out clearly, that in spite of some set-backs and a slow start, Burgess persevered. His perseverance in the field was matched by how he developed his reputation as a writer for a children and as a naturalist-educator through pursuit of various opportunities and self-promotion. In terms of an author study approach and the dynamics of writing as one's career, it appears that at some point in time in his writing career, his public and private personas melded, so that the seams of constructing himself as a nature writer for children were no longer evident. What does this dynamic of joining of public and private persona mean for the author, and for the shaping of childhood literature? In addition, there is evidence that at various times, Burgess accepted, negotiated, and resisted the blandishments of literary success. Desire and wish fulfillment (after Freud, 1994, pp. 405-426) shaped Burgess's writing: he sought to gain a profitable living as a writer, and to become respected as an educator on nature.

This dissertation on Thornton W. Burgess is, in part, the story of how one man imagined the world of children. Adult writers write for children. The question is, from

what position or perspective do they write? As an adult writing what they think children will or ought to read? As an adult writing what they would have liked to have read as a child? As how they remember childhood writing for children when they were childhood readers? Have they cast themselves back into their childhood memories and impressions in an attempt make a world that becomes real to readers as they turn the pages? ¹³

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

New Historicism employing psychoanalytic readings and film readings informs my conceptual framework.¹⁴ New Historicism seeks to reconstruct texts as historical objects by means of the use of documents and methods that were denied by 'traditional' literary and aesthetic study (Shea in Makaryk 2000, p. 124). According to Stephen Greenblatt, who is credited with placing the term "New Historicism" into circulation (Goring et al, 2001, p.187): "The new historicism erodes the firm ground of both criticism and literature. It tends to ask questions about its own methodological assumptions and those of others" (Shea, 2000, p. 124, citing Greenblatt, 1982). Some of the documentation used for my Burgess study obtains from primary, archival sources, and some obtains from my close readings of the selected Anti-Hunting stories. An

¹³ *The Chronicles of Narnia* author C.S. Lewis addresses these questions in his essay "On three ways of writing for children" originally written in 1952 (1980, in Egoff, ed).

¹⁴ Williams (1984) calls the conceptual framework "an organized think-piece" (p. 135) that includes what you are thinking through in the research. He states that theoretical refinements rarely result in large-scale changes in existing theory. In addition, insights or breakthroughs in theory are the result of various steps and contributions rather than sudden insight of one perceptive individual.

unconventional reading with film studies approaches is also used to procure information on the contested Burgess prose.

New Historicism is a mode of literary criticism with “a consolidation of ‘themes, preoccupations, and attitudes’” (Shea, p.125) that may be held useful in reading systems of representation as texts. Simultaneously opposing yet making use of structuralism and deconstruction, New Historicism harbors practices of “Structuralism [which] facilitates the analysis of the signifying practices of literary and historical texts as systems, while deconstruction locates the gaps, absences and silences which constitute the traces of the metaphysical assumptions of such textual systems” (Shea p. 125). Among the claims in their emerging methodologies and approaches, New Historicists hold that history is a process that is joined to literature rather than viewing history as a ‘background’ or wallpaper for literature; that the idea of a collective mind is fallacy; and that the reification of a high culture of literary aesthetic is not productive in terms of understanding the operation of texts in social and cultural contexts (Shea, p. 125). The agency of alternative reading practices is embraced by New Historicism, and this facet of New Historicism is of interest to educational research in general, and to my research in particular.

The American school of New Historicism places emphasis on the past and concentrates on written texts. Cultural Materialism is a British form which derives theory and method from the work of Michel Foucault and Raymond Williams to point out political connections, and also accepts a wider range of materials as ‘text’ in the world. According to Williams, the idea of cultural materialism embraces

A theory of culture as a (social and material) productive process and of specific practices of ‘arts’, as social uses of material means of production

(from language as material 'practical consciousness' to the specific technologies of writing and forms of writing, through to mechanical and electronic communication systems). (Williams, 1980, p. 243)

Williams is known for his interest in how causal influences are mediated through discursive practices. Another British scholar, Holderness attributes cultural materialism with accepting a wide range of 'textual' materials as appropriate objects of study, whereas he sees New Historicism accepting a more constrained definition of the 'textual' (Goring p. 189). In cultural materialism, even though the text is under study, it may be said that "the focus of study is not the text, but the birth and life of the text in culture and history" (Goring, p.191). In my study, I consider the specific technologies of writing and forms of writing by examining Burgess's storytelling as effected through a cine-semiotic production mode tied to psychic dynamics of the narrative. Language and communication in the pages of a children's storybooks are central as formative social forces, and in turn, have social forces acting upon them.

It seemed that close reading of the texts of Thornton W. Burgess could be expected to reveal patterns of narrative language whereby an adult writer, culturally influenced by his or her time and place in society, presented his version (or vision) of social reality to child readers. In children's stories, the language is often disarmingly simple or simplistic, even as very powerful ideas and images are projected into the imaginative life world. Arguably, a skillful, practiced writer who has a demonstrated appeal to readers (such as Burgess) can carry a reader into his or her world. A willing captivity to a writer's rhetorical style allows a (child) reader to be swept away to a 'real' world that seems better, or that more clearly delineated and thus more comprehensible (Radway 1991, p.188). In turn, each reader supplies a personal reading of narrative that,

while subject to the craft of the writer/author, will remain unique. Therefore, any study of reading effects is limited by the interpretive lens of the researcher.

Myers (1988) insists that New Historicism for a study of children's literature would serve to integrate texts under study with a socio-historic context. Myers feels that besides "shaping the psychic and moral consciousness of young readers" that other cultural work is underway: "satisfying authorial fantasies ...legitimizing or subverting dominant causes and gender ideologies...popularizing new knowledge and discoveries...addressing live issues like slavery and the condition of the working class" (p. 42). The book's material production and publishing history including promotional work, public and cultural reception, and all would be considered in order to examine the links between social and aesthetic forms.

Cultural studies and texts

A text is a thing produced in time and space/place by a writer; but a text has the nimbleness to transcend confines by offering spaces to the reader. Richard Johnson offers ideas of "What is a text anyway?" and submits that "By capturing something of the contemporaneity and combined 'effects' of different systems of representations, [such as children's literature] we also hope to get nearer to the commoner experience of listening, reading and writing" (1996, p.97). In holding up a text as an object of study to provide the "raw material" from which to abstract forms such as narrative language, mode of address and subject position, the "*social life of subjective forms*" in their moments of circulation may come to light (p. 97). If texts may be viewed as "cultural artifacts" (Brady 2000, p. 949), then an inquiry into the construction of the text, the authority of the text, signs and symbolism written into the text, and issues of the production of

cultural meaning is appropriate to consider in a systematic approach to investigate the text. This dissertation takes the text of the author as material central to the study, and also recognizes contextualizing materials such as archival documents about the author's life and socio-cultural milieu as significant for data and interpretive purposes.

Johnson's cultural circuit as an approach to explain cultural processes is presented in diagrammatic form (1996, p. 84) to illustrate moments of the production, circulation, and consumption of cultural products. Through readings, cultural products take on their real life in predictable and unpredictable ways. Poles between public and private representations and between abstract/universal and concrete/particular allow interpretations which speak to how the text of the animal or nature stories of Burgess were situated in relation to the cultural and social forces that gave rise to the deployment of particular literary conventions he successfully employed from early to late 20th century. The narrative form and language of Burgess's stories may be seen as pedagogical, in the sense of informing about the natural world (Royer 1984). Were his stories structured in such a way as to promote a certain way of seeing the world, besides sending the reader a message about nature?

Reading with psychoanalysis

The unusual tensions in the aesthetic dynamics of the Burgess literature seemed tailor-made for an reading calling upon psychoanalytic concepts and approaches. The suspicion that these tensions were based in language and psyche was founded upon the nature of the paradoxical response to the Burgess stories: that they were loved unconditionally by some readers (fans, the general public, children) and scorned/hated by other readers (academics, literary critics). In addition, the very elusiveness of the

Burgess stories in defying categorization as a certain type of literature pointed to a need to address contradictory and possibly unconscious workings in the minds of author and reader. Were the stories children's literature, even though read by adults? Was it educational and entertaining literature, even though it was political in its anti-hunting message? Was it fact or fantasy, as it featured animals who mimicked naturalistic behaviors, yet who wore clothing, talked and stood upright?

One attraction of reading with psychoanalysis in a New Historicism/cultural materialist approach is the idea that psychoanalysis is a form of authority that depends upon demolishing authority (Phillips, p. 30), as well as a means to uncovering things about the interior world. Diving into the depths of the psyche, then emerging, gasping for breath, but exhilarated to be back on the surface - and to be able to tell about it - seems one of the leading attractions of reading below the surface of things. Lacan discovers some secrets within Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that articulate what may be the reader's fascination with the play, why the viewer cannot just turn away, but must watch. The pull of relationships of desire, betrayal, mourning are there for the reading, and as explained by Lacan, contribute to a knowledge of the aesthetic workings that animate the text (Lacan, in Felman, 1980, pp.11-52). Reading with psychoanalytic concepts at play then, yields far more material about desire than formalist literary approaches of excavating elements upon which to form aesthetic judgments of a text.

Reading outside authority results in unique and productive spaces that help explain the workings of a text in non-essentializing ways. This idea seems particularly fortunate for the arena dubbed 'Children's Literature'. Rollin (1999), for example, discusses "Childhood Fantasies and Frustrations in Maurice Sendak's Picture Books"

using ideas of the ‘Freudian child’ at play in Sendak’s works to explain why adults found his picture book trilogy of *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), *In the Night Kitchen* (1970) and *Outside Over There* (1981) so disturbing. In Sendak’s text and illustrations, Rollin discovers a pungent juxtaposition of images which are presented around the motif of ‘how children learn to control their feelings,’ a theme that Sendak borrowed from Freud’s conceptualization of self-mastery without surrender of identity which is aided through participation in a fantasy world.

My research on Burgess considered the question of mixed reception of Burgess’s works, and so I found Rollin instructive in the insistence upon reading with psychoanalytic ideas in order to encounter the contradictory nature of child vs. adult readings. Another use of reading with psychoanalysis is seen in the work of Robertson as she studies Beatrix Potter and her works (2000), Margaret Wise Brown’s *Good Night Moon* (2000-2001) and other studies on children’s literature. As will be articulated in Chapter Three of my study, Robertson’s uses of psychoanalytic conceptualizing illumine my interpretations of Burgess’s stories. The use of psychoanalytic readings to understand child literature outside of authority inform my ‘think-piece’ along with an application of cultural studies concepts and film theory. My use of psychoanalytic readings in the arena of children’s literature seeks to contribute to an evolving understanding of how texts for children work aesthetically, psychically, socio-historically, and culturally, and that these ‘areas’ are all of a piece.

It seemed that reading with psychoanalysis could potentially answer some of the more frustrating questions circulating around the mixed reception of the Burgess prose. The readings of both fans and of critics of the Burgess stories emanate from engagements

with psychic effects produced from the contents and style of the writer's text. It just appears that his fans read him differently from his critics. Why did the Burgess stories engender a dramatically contradictory reception from critics and readers? What was it that so tempted and attracted his fans, and incited negative reviews from critics, or worse, a refusal to even include his stories in reviews of children's literature? Burgess had many devoted readers over more than one hundred years, and his stories were translated to many languages, and reprinted in American and international versions. If they were such 'bad' literature (as claimed by Lukens, 1990, and traced by Meigs, et. al., 1969) how is it that his works have endured so long in a variety of popular editions and reprints?

Reading with film studies

The task in formulating a conceptual framework in which to present one's research involves a rationale of linking specific research questions to larger issues (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). It may also involve formulating theory or refining or modifying (adapting) existing theory. My conceptual framework involves an alternative or unconventional reading practice (after Harkin, 1991) of adapting film theory to the Burgess literature rather than through the use of conventional literary approaches.

I am seated at my desk one hot, sweltering summer day. It is July 28 of 2004, to be precise. I have almost completed the rigorous note-taking of my reading of Burgess's Anti-Hunting stories. I have read them in the order of their book publication, starting with Poor Mrs. Quack, then to Bob White, and lastly, Lightfoot. I would rather be out on the river in my kayak than seated here...In a

page of my research notes I am compelled to write some scribbled ruminations on seeing the Burgess stories as filmwork. Where has this direction come from? I am aware from the archival records that Burgess was offered film production deals for his stories, but... ? My notes insist to me that there was an anticipation somehow of filmic representation in the way Burgess was writing. Have you ever read a contemporary novel – a Times Best Seller, perhaps - that as you are reading it or upon completion, you remark to yourself: I bet the writer was aiming for a movie deal, she was definitely writing this in a style that anticipated a film production. Sure enough, months later, there's the movie of the book I was reading. During my readings of Burgess, I had to grapple with this unshakable notion that he somehow was writing to film style...

Why did I insist that film narration would be relevant to explaining Burgess's narrative style? There was the background information that his stories had been considered for film strips and animation by Hollywood producers. There was my reading of the stories that produced a feeling that Burgess was writing in a manner calculated to promote visualization of his character's activities and of the landscape the activities were set against. Figurative language is no stranger to writing and verbal communication.¹⁵ It wasn't exactly figurative language that I was after, but the idea that Burgess went to work to place thoughts and emotions into an arena of visualization or seeing - much as a film would do - was insistent. Seeing the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories configured as

¹⁵ Literary texts are amongst those that use tropes, such as "Peace on Earth" or "Time is money" and all texts and communications use figurative language in order to describe one (unknown) experience in terms of another (known) experience. Scientists have been known to explain, for the edification of a general audience, the structure of the DNA molecule as like a spiral staircase (after Harkin 1999). Thus, the 'building blocks' of human biology are configured in knowledge transfer as an architectural feature.

film narrative may seem unconventional, but is reasonable given the productive forces of aesthetic appeal that have emerged for audiences of the past century.

Film theorists Bordwell and Thompson have been instrumental in the explication of film studies theories and methods to a wide audience. I have never been a formal student of Film Studies, and now I found myself in the position of needing to self-learn elements of film narrative in a limited time-frame. I turned to Bordwell's *Narration in the Fiction Film* and to Bordwell and Thompson's *Film Art* to acquire a knowledge of some of the concepts of film narration. The biggest leap is not in the actual adoption or use of film readings for the Burgess stories, but in making the warrant for the use of film conventions to explain the narrative workings of my case study stories,¹⁶ and the associated case for the Burgess works containing a cine-semiotic language. In the work of signing meaning in a visual way that moves in the perception of the reader, I had to decide how to consign what might be construed as literary signs of a semiotic analysis to the filmic semiotics¹⁷ that I propose are applicable to the Burgess stories.

An aspect of this study is to understand how the writer writes so that texts are understood by the spectator or reader. This informs my inquiry into how Burgess was able to be so phenomenally successful as a writer-marketer, in what drove his popularly-received aesthetic. Once I had detected the presence of visualizing language movements, I wondered: How could I apprehend and communicate the patterns in his aesthetic

¹⁶ Christian Metz was one of the first film theorists to assert that a number of semiotic codes appear in multiple types of media, and that similar narrative structures exist for both film and literature, including conventional devices such as flashbacks and parallel story lines.

¹⁷ "The aim of film semiotics is 'to understand how films are understood' " (Buckland 2000, p. 59 citing Metz's well-known statement). Films are of course, texts, and often the arena of inquiry into texts is placed primarily with how the spectator or reader receives them. Film studies also looks at how the author conceived and communicated a screenplay. Film semiotics combines theory with mechanics.

workings? An initial idea in the early stages of my reading, that Burgess was writing to a formula (after Cawelti, 1976) seemed too one-dimensional as an explanation for his popular reception, along with the idea that he was successful solely due to the nature-educational content of his stories. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, he did receive acclaim from educational gatekeepers of the 1920s for the educative value of his stories. However, it seemed that there were further dimensions to the Burgess aesthetic and reception, and so these needed to be identified.

Research Questions

How could I address the Burgess aesthetic appeal at work in three interrelated works I term the Anti-Hunting Trilogy, and thus contribute to an exploration of the mixed reception of his stories? In order to address this issue, I formulated two research questions:

1. What is the nature of the interplay between ideological and historical conditions in the promotion of Burgess's works in society and the mode of address fabricated by the author/ storyteller in attracting and retaining his audience?
2. How may ideas and concepts from psychoanalysis and film studies help to understand the likely ways in which Burgess's popular stories can be read?

To approach these questions I searched for patterns within the Burgess stories and from the supporting materials such as his autobiography and archival holdings on the author.

Significance of the study

Despite his enormously popular appeal, Burgess as a topic of scholarly discussion has been under- studied. His works have been dismissed, marginalized and trivialized in

serious circles within children's literature. An example of the carelessness that some children's literary critics have reserved for Burgess is found in Marcus Crouch's *Treasure Seekers and Borrowers Children's Books in Britain 1900-1960* published by the Library Association London (1962), where Crouch mistakenly identifies Burgess as a Canadian author for his story of *Joe the Otter*.¹⁸ In this study, I present some of the complexities surrounding Burgess's reception as a means to emphasize the value of a cultural studies approach to works in children's literature.

In this study, I employ the notion of the **cine-semiotic** as a bridging theory, in an attempt to address the textual aesthetics Burgess's popular stories. Using the idea of the **cine-semiotic** in describing specific patterns in the Burgess texts, I summon further thinking around the conditions of mass communications as they relate to literature for childhood. In the case of the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy, I demonstrate how a social and cultural project of producing media directed toward early 20th century childhood has links with visual provocations of narrative. It is likely that these visual provocations embedded in the Burgess stories led to a 1950s and 1960s pursuit of the author's cooperation with proposed film-strip and animated shorts endeavors, when he was approached by film industry producers for the story-rights.

The thesis contributes to understanding how (child) readers make meaning from stories through, in the words of Carolyn Steedman, who studied the role of fairytales,

Easily assimilable metaphors for children's social and
personal feelings, confirming both that pain and the possibility

¹⁸ This mistake may have occurred due to the fact that Burgess's syndicated stories appeared in the major Canadian newspapers (see Appendix A for the "New York Herald Tribune statement of January 12, 1927, Burgess Bedtime Stories – Canadian Sales". There were also Canadian editions of his book titles. Burgess's biographer R.A. Lovell, Jr. states that the animal-nature story "was popular in Canada" and in 1960, the year Burgess's autobiography appeared, "In October [of that year] a Canadian TV squad came to Hampden" (1974, p. 72) for a one-half hour Canadian television special that aired on December 20, 1960. In addition, Burgess and his wife had visited Canada on several occasions, including one lengthy tour and stay in the Maritime Provinces in the early 1900s.

of comfort are real, and that through action there may be resolution. (1982, p.141)

In readings that I perform ‘with psychoanalysis’ I demonstrate the play of the abject, of terror and anxiety, and the play and pull of the child’s hope for community and wholeness as these things are addressed by Burgess in his Anti-Hunting Trilogy. I also theorize that psychic **semiotic processes** (after Kristeva) can work in conjunction with a **cine-text** (see Robertson 2003, p. 6) to produce the aesthetic appeal of the **cine-semiotic** in child stories and thus assist literacy pedagogy, a place of arrival into language, society and culture.

Some prior configurations of cinema semiotics and cine-semiotics

Christian Metz is known for his endeavors in the 1960s to establish a framework for a semiotics of the cinema to uncover and explain the rules that govern film language. This went along with 1960s Structuralist theory and ideas of Saussure on *langue* and *parole*, and was engaged in the notion that director as *auteur* was part of the underlying structure of the film. **Cinema semiotics** proclaimed that the text is a series of signs producing meanings (Hayward 1996). As a term, cinema semiotics is operationalized in film theory as derived from “the conceptual impact of structuralism” and “the extent to which cinematic signification can be comprehended in terms of a systematics.” (Rosen 1986, p. 3). In the history of cinema semiotics, the foundational moment has been based in structuralism, while later uses of cinema semiotics embrace the notion of human subjectivity,¹⁹ and thus are within post-structuralism.

¹⁹ Here the term subject denotes a “fundamental human mental activity of interacting with things in the world by opposing them to one’s own consciousness, as in the distinction subject and object (after Rosen p. 156).

Within film theory literature, it is possible to find books and articles that utilize the term “cinema semiotics” or merely “semiotics.” It is less common to find scholarly works that use “cinesemiotics” or “cine-semiotics” specifically to refer to the operation of signs and icons in film works.²⁰ An article by Plantinga in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Summer 1993) refers to “the cinesemiotic Marxism derived mainly from French theory” (p. 449); and so it is that the compound “cinesemiotic” appears with frequency in literature of French literary and film studies. The specific term “cine-semiotic” makes an appearance in a Master’s thesis from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Kelliher, May 2001) in the context of the author’s discussion of signs, icons and how they mediate meaning in film. Kelliher also refers to “Cine Semiology” (p. 41) in a discussion of Language and Film and the study of figurative language under Russian Formalism. Kelliher traces this study of the poetic function of art over to a transformation within structuralism to explore the concept of cine- language, and its subsequent motion as “film semiotics” pioneered in the 1960s by Umberto Eco and Christian Metz who “expended considerable effort in investigating the literal equivalences between the signs and structure of natural language and those of cinema” (p. 42).

²⁰ If the term “cinesemiotics” or “cine-semiotics” is googled or otherwise searched electronically, it may access articles that use the words “cinema semiotics” and also “semiotics” but not necessarily the co-joined or compound word I have used and defined particularly for this study.

Chapter Two – Methodological Approaches in Reading Burgess

Introduction

The study of Burgess's paradoxical reception called for a mixed methodological approach to works I have termed the Anti-Hunting Trilogy. I sought to combine information from reading archival records, available at the Thornton W. Burgess Museum in Sandwich, MA., with information from my readings of the stories. The archival search yielded historically-based materials used to support my analysis of how Burgess enlisted the ideological sympathies of child readers and their parents through an aggressive campaign to market himself and his works. The second part of my study employed close readings of three selected case study stories to yield data on specific content and formal structures of the texts. The close readings led me to detect specific dynamics of psychic and visual appeal in the selected texts. These readings in turn led to the notion of the **cine-semiotic** as a specific aesthetic movement within Burgess's early 20th century animal-nature stories.

The case study design

Selection of the three related stories

This study features three stories that are connected by the intent to portray hunting as cruel and wasteful. They share themes and images of terror, persecution, bodily wounding, hiding and recovery. *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* was originally published in book version in 1917 by Little, Brown, and Company, Boston. I have used a 1993 reprint by Dover Publications, Mineola, NY and in Canada by General Publishing Company, Ltd, Toronto. *The Adventures of Bob White* was originally published in book version in 1919 by Little, Brown and Company, Boston, USA. I have used a 1964

“Canadian Edition” by Little, Brown and Company (Canada) Limited. *Lightfoot the Deer* was first published in book version in 1921 by Grosset & Dunlap, New York, and I have used the 1998 Dover Publications reprint version for my readings.

I chose the reprint versions because they represent easily accessible continuations of the Burgess literature. The idea that the Burgess stories first published at the beginning of the 20th century continue to have currency with today’s readership has import for the study of his reception. His storytelling is perceived as viable and vital by a publishing industry through the 20th and into the 21st century. The publishing industry continues reprint versions on the basis of reader interest and response.¹ In order to see if I thought the readers of the originally published versions were exposed to a similar textual experience to the latter-day readers, I requested copies of the early published versions from the North Country (Northern New York State) Public Library system. I received original versions of *The Adventures of Bob White* and of *Lightfoot the Deer* from two local public libraries within 30 miles of where I live. These original early 20th century versions are still circulated in Northern New York State. I have every reason to think that this situation reflects the circulation of Burgess books today, and that original versions are readily available.² Original print versions of *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* are more difficult to obtain, as this title may have become more of a collector’s item due to its focal association with Burgess’s anti-hunting campaign.

¹ Early in my research of the selected books, I contacted an editor at Dover Press, who affirmed their commitment to publication of the Burgess titles based on reader interest, as well as the (non-financial) support of the Thornton W. Burgess Society.

² While I was in Sandwich, MA, I was a patron of the local lending library. I found original, signed versions of Burgess’s books on the shelves, and these were permitted for circulation at that time (Summer 2002). Back at home in Morristown, NY, the school librarian at my children’s K-12 rural school indicated that Burgess’s books (in reprint versions) still are signed out by, predominantly, Grade 3 boys.

The reprints simulate closely the books in the original versions. The two Dover Press inexpensive reprints are paperbacks, and so they do not have the heft of the hard cover of the originals. (The Canadian version I used of *Bob White* was hard cover). Within the covers, the reprints faithfully reproduce the text in its unabridged form, as advertised by the publishers. The black-and-white line drawings by Harrison Cady are faithfully reproduced in the reprint versions. One notable difference between the original versions and the Dover Reprint versions is larger print type in the originals; thus, *Lightfoot the Deer* 1921 version is 205 pages rather than the Dover version's 87 pages. This difference in print size in the original versions indicates the originals were oriented toward early readers, or tailored to be read at bedtime with larger print more readily visible in a darkened room prior to sleep.

The Adventures of Bob White was written before *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, but this order was reversed in book edition publication. The reversed book publication was probably to get Mrs. Quack the Mallard Duck in immediate circulation to support the burgeoning conservation movement. *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* bolstered sympathy for the plight of migratory ducks shot down by hunters during the Fall and Spring migrations. However, it is noteworthy that, in Burgess's imaginative endeavor, the story of the wounded young Bob White appears first; and the story of Poor Mrs. Quack's duck husband who was shot down, missing, presumed dead, and recovered, appeared second in the author's story-telling. *Lightfoot the Deer* is a young male stag who is relentlessly pursued by and must hide from a human hunter, and this traumatic recital appears last in the anti-hunting series under study, both in syndication and in book form.

The Bedtime Story – Books series was published from 1913 to 1918 by Little, Brown and Company of Boston. *The Adventures of Reddy Fox* and *The Adventures of Johnny Chuck* were the first two of the twenty titles in this series. They were illustrated by Burgess's favorite artist, Harrison Cady. The settings for the Bedtime Story – Books series are the Green Forest and the Green Meadow. According to Wright (2000), who has compiled the relevant publication information in his descriptive book bibliography of Burgess's works, the style and structure of each of the twenty Bedtime Story – Books conforms to a division into two or three mini-plots. Wright describes how

The first few chapters make up the first adventure, which is practically a separate story in itself. In *The Adventures of Peter Cottontail* [the third in the series, published in 1914], the first three chapters tell how Peter Rabbit changed his name. Then the books launch into the second plot, which is generally longer and composed of related adventures. (p. 40)

Each related adventure involves a nature lesson on predation, hibernation, and the like, and “the point of view in each book is that of the main character, and the reader empathizes with him whether he is Reddy Fox or Poor Mrs. Quack” (p. 40).

Wright describes each chapter as being “practically a separate story in itself” and this effect is a result of the original newspaper syndication format that the stories appeared in. (See Appendix A for “Bedtime Stories by Thornton W. Burgess, copyright 1926 Farmer Brown's Boy Speaks His Mind” to illustrate the sequential and self-contained nature of a Burgess syndicated story). The stories appeared first as syndicated series installments in major North American newspapers. As traced by Wright (1999) *The Adventures of Bob White* appeared in Burgess's syndicated newspaper story column from September 20 through October 23 and also on October 30 of 1915. *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* ran in the syndicated column from March 20 through April 13 and

also on May 1, 1916. *Lightfoot the Deer* appeared in newspapers on October 19, 1916 and from October 29 to December 9, 1919 (Wright 1999, pp.143-144).

Background of the three “Anti-hunting” stories

By April 1915, Burgess had written a series of syndicated newspaper stories (contiguous with his book publications that year of three Bedtime Story - Books published by Little, Brown and Company) that tells about Peter Rabbit’s special Quaddy Club for his four-footed friends (quadrupeds). *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, 1917, was issued under the Burgess trademark name of “Quaddies”, as was *The Adventures of Bob White*, 1919. *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* resulted from Burgess’s response to a request by Dr. William Hornaday, at that time Director of the New York Zoological Park, to help in the cause of conservation of the duck population he felt was endangered by indiscriminate hunting practices. Burgess responded with first a syndicated column series of stories on Mrs. Quack the Mallard Duck that portrayed hunters as unscrupulous and unsavory sorts, which did not sit well with sportsmen at the time (Wright p.60).

Simultaneously with writing his syndicated newspaper column and the publication of his books in the Bedtime Story-Books series, Burgess had a regular feature in the popular *People’s Home Journal* (PHJ) that lasted from 1911 to 1929. This PHJ endeavor came after his association with *Good Housekeeping* ended, and he was casting about for another column opportunity to help him keep a regular income for his family. Burgess suggested to editor Moody Gates the idea of the “Green Meadow Club,” and that he would supply a page of animal stories accompanied by contests, prizes and other activities for “members.” Gates realized that Burgess was on to a good idea. Since the

PHJ featured special columns geared toward women (see Rutledge July 2001, “Now only a pleasant memory: Thornton W. Burgess and the *People’s Home Journal* 1911-1929”) the child audience was naturally expected to follow.

The activities of the Green Meadow Club generally involved ‘write-ins’ to the columnist Burgess who judged contests and dispensed prizes. By February 1918, Burgess charged his club members with a campaign to create sanctuaries for migrating fowl and birds. “Burgess initiated the campaign to voluntarily enlist American landowners to set aside one acre or more where birds would be safe from hunters. Green Meadow Club members were recruited to urge their parents and neighbors to participate.” (Rutledge, 2001, p. 2). One has a vision of very insistent young recruits persistently badgering their elders to sign over land under ‘the pledge’ to create safety zones for their feathered friends. Unlike modern conservation movements such as the Nature Conservancy or trust organizations, there is no indication that this was a legal transfer of land to a registered organization; rather, the Green Meadow Club was more of a ‘gentleman’s agreement’ to post land with ‘No Hunting’ signs to discourage duck hunters and other bird hunting activities. There was, of course, an incentive for the most diligent and productive of the young land solicitors. Rutledge (2001) writes that by December 1920 there were three and a quarter million acres of private property under the protection of the Green Meadow Club.

Burgess’s successful foray into a politicized arena encouraged his stories to be accepted by a new demographic of young and old conservationists rallied to the cause of preservation of wildlife species and the formation of sanctuary places and legislation on hunting seasons. He followed *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* with *The Adventures*

of *Bob White* published in book form in 1919. Its story of a quail or partridge family presented this fowl as a species beneficial to farmers because they were portrayed as diligent and willing predators of pests that fed on the agricultural crops, which were also needed for the War Effort (World War I). It was number 19 of the 20 books in the Bedtime Story-Books series. A group of four book titles appeared in a Green Meadow Series (1918 –1920) that Wright refers to as “like a continuation of the Bedtime Story-Books series – telling the adventures of four more animals, all of whom live in the Green Meadows” (p. 75). The Green Forest Series with four books published from 1921 to 1923 was inaugurated by *Lightfoot the Deer*, which appeared under the Quaddies trademark imprinture. As described in Wright’s bibliographic notation: “This anti-hunting book shows the terrors of deer hunting from the deer’s point of view,” and it was meant to “ ‘in some degree aid in the protection of the innocent and helpless’ ...” according to the author’s dedication (p.85).

The success of the Green Meadow campaign, an example of an early 20th century ‘Children’s Crusade,’ established Burgess as a conservationist. His nature column series in the PHJ had a wide circulation in rural and small town populations. It established him as a nature authority who always had ready educative questions and answers for his young readership. The three “Anti-hunting” books I have chosen for my case study appear fairly early in Burgess’s writing career, but they appear after he was an established writer, known for his *Old Mother West Wind* story books, for his syndicated newspaper columns, and other writing contributions for assorted journal publications. The books under study appear within a cohesive time period, 1917 through 1921, a five-years time span. They are consistent with a conservation movement that was as

politically motivated as it was constructed with concern for the welfare of animal beings. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, these three stories are united by a similar story arc that portrays the ill effects of hunting for the unprotected wildlife of the meadow and forest imaginary-but-real environs beloved of child enthusiasts of Burgess's book

Primary materials – Selection of archival documents and reading texts

While in the process of selection of the three texts to use as the case study for this dissertation, I made a trip to the Thornton W. Burgess Museum, located in a small frame house in his birthplace of Sandwich, MA, and its Archives Collection, located in the upstairs of the house. The goal of the research trip was to acquaint myself with the area of Cape Cod in which Burgess had set his stories, and to access primary materials from the archival collections that had been gathered in the museum. My advisor, Dr. Judith Robertson, had made a prior research trip to the Burgess Museum and Archives due to her idea that she might study the Burgess stories and the conditions surrounding his appeal within children's literature.³

My search through the archival collections was defined by the time period I could afford to the trip, one week, or five working days in the archives; by my initial impressions of what might be significant to the study without actually knowing ahead of time its specific parameters; and by the assistance that could be given to me by the Curator of Collections at the time, Ms. Bethany Rutledge, whom I contacted before the research trip. I planned to work for at least six hours per day in the small upstairs archival

³ By the Summer of 2002, when I made the research trip subsequent to my course work and my oral defense of the comprehensive exam for graduate studies in the Faculty of Education, Dr. Robertson had decided she would not pursue the study, and had introduced the subject of Burgess and his stories to me as a potential research topic.

room, to take hand-written notes on primary materials such as fragile diaries kept by Burgess, and to obtain photocopies of less fragile archived materials kept in the David Cesan and Ernestine Johnson (donated) materials in the rather informal repository. That is, the materials were organized in such a manner that the curator was able to place her hands on things that I requested, such as correspondence between Burgess and his mother Caroline, or the letters between Burgess and film production companies. However, the materials at that time were not formally nor consistently assigned accession numbers, and so my citation of the materials reflects the way in which they are referred to in a typed catalog compiled and organized by Ms. Rutledge during her tenure as the curator.

I have arrived in Cape Cod, Massachusetts to research the Burgess archives and to soak up the atmosphere of 'Old Cape Cod' to assist in my understanding of the author and his world. Sandwich, MA is the author's birthplace and where the Museum and Archives are located, and it is indeed the quintessentially quaint New England town, replete with historical structures such as Daniel Webster's Inn. My trip has been made solo, as I felt my three children (at that time pre-teens) were too young to accompany me to the archives daily, and also too young to supervise themselves in the town while I researched.

On the way to Sandwich, my car broke down. I had to be towed off the highway to a repair shop, and rent a car in order to continue the trip. I wondered what this disaster might presage (my car, a trusty Subaru, was found to be beyond repair) as I off-loaded the contents of my car to the trunk of the rental car. I had in my car not just luggage and notebooks, but also camping gear, including a tent and sleeping bag, and scuba equipment. Besides the horror and expense of

my car breakdown, it was a hassle to have to reload and drive an unfamiliar car. I had planned to camp during my research, figuring that I could stay in Sandwich during tourist high season much more cheaply at the local campground, Shawmee Crowell State Park, than at a toney bed and breakfast or inn.

The inconvenience of my car breakdown only underlined the improbability of the research I had committed to in order to gather data for my project. Here was a single parent, working with uncertain and limited financial resources, attempting to find meaning for her study using the archives of a distant place. It was a romantic, but not very practical notion. However, despite the difficulties, I persevered, and immersed myself in the adventure of the archives. Bethany was very helpful, and knew where everything was. She did not intrude or hover, but retrieved items and made photocopies for me. Sitting in the hot, humid conditions of the attic of the Burgess Museum, I read and took notes on the Burgess papers, diaries and the like. The urgency of getting the materials I would need was central, as I knew it unlikely that I could afford time or money to return.

Upon my return from the archival research trip, I reviewed the materials, trying to decide upon the main problematic and the area of concentration for the study. Dr. Robertson and I had discussed Burgess's association with the conservation movement and how his nature writing had permitted him a groundswell of following by children committed to saving animals from the destructive forces of hunters. I also became interested in the personal circumstances of Burgess's life: that his father died when he was very young and that he and his mother relied upon one another very closely;

Burgess's attempts in the business world followed by his determination to make it as a writer; that Burgess's first wife died while giving birth to their son, and that Burgess appeared to have had a rather difficult relationship with his son Thornton W. Burgess, Jr.; Burgess's happy and successful second marriage; his fulfillment as a children's author while happily residing in Hampton, MA, not far from his place of birth; and his fruitful partnership with a favored illustrator and adored personal friend, Harrison Cady.

The Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections and Archives

The Thornton W. Burgess Society webpage (www.thorntonburgess.org) indicates under the heading "About the Thornton W. Burgess Society" that it is

A non-profit educational organization founded in 1976 to carry on the pioneering conservation work of author/naturalist Thornton W. Burgess (1874 – 1965). Mr. Burgess, who was born and grew up in Sandwich, MA., went on to achieve national and international recognition for his children's stories that teach lessons of conservation and love of wildlife. Over 170 books and 15,000 stories by Burgess chronicle the tales of Peter Rabbit and his animal friends, including Jimmy Skunk, Grandfather Frog, Johnny Chuck, Sammy Jay, Reddy Fox, Hooty Owl and many others. Through these engaging stories, generations of young people have learned about the natural world and have developed an understanding of the importance of conservation of our natural resources.

On the webpage, mention is made of the two facilities operated by the Society, the TWB Museum (and Archives) in Sandwich village, and the Green Briar Nature Center and Jam Kitchen outside the village, and contact information and links to programs are provided.

The society periodically publishes and distributes to its members catalogs of year-round nature and educational programs and a newsletter, the "Briar Patch Observer." (Annual dues are \$25.00 U.S. funds per year for an individual to support the society and to receive its notices, plus 10% off in the gift shop). In Winter 2005, the Society was

conducting an Annual Appeal to support its educational programs and other projects.

The appeal letter from Bob King, President, dated Winter 2005 on Thornton W. Burgess Society letterhead illustrated with an illustration from the Burgess books, and addressed to "Dear Friends," speaks of personal admiration for Burgess and his works:

One of the first things I became acquainted with was the work of the man himself, Thornton Burgess, and what an incredible tool it provides to an amazing educational staff that instills in children a respect for wildlife and the natural environment. I came to understand that it is this environmental education programming that is central to the mission of the Society. I often draw the analogy that Thornton Burgess was "the Mr. Rogers of his day," and have come to learn that his work and its teachings are more important than ever in providing today's youth with the means to save our planet.

The tone of zeal and fervour in this commentary signals the continuous appeal that Burgess holds for his readers and supporters. The important work that is attributed to the author stems time and time again from his reputation as a supporter of wildlife preservation and education about wild animals and places.

The main work of the Society is to run thematic family-oriented programs at the museum (for example, "Peter Rabbit's Animal Day" on Wed. Aug. 9, 2006; "Cape Cod Cranberry Day" on Saturday Sept. 30, 2006) and nature-educational programs at the Green Briar Nature Center and Jam Kitchen. These educational programs include outdoor nature opportunities ("Junior Naturalists", "Paddle and Picnic") and teacher education programs for teachers to learn how to integrate nature literature with lesson plans, and also the Project Wild workshop is offered. A summer institute provides a professional development opportunity and credit for school educators, with the Green Briar Nature Center one of four Cape Cod science sites involved in the program (information on page 18 of Thornton W. Burgess Society Spring & Summer 2006

Program Schedule and also on www.mits.org). Currently there is a capital campaign to provide an improved educational facility at the Green Briar Center and an updating and improvement of the grounds for public access and use.

It appears that the small museum that houses the archives in the Village of Sandwich is currently a secondary priority of the Society, with the focus for development on the educational center outside of Sandwich at Green Briar. I found the small house museum charming and the archival facilities basic but adequate. In the Introduction to the Dover Edition of *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* (1993), the editor writes: "This story and others by Thornton Burgess, along with books, papers, photographs and memorabilia of his life, are part of the collections of the Thornton W. Burgess Society in Sandwich, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod, and are displayed at the Burgess Museum there. This is the town where Burgess spent his youth and discovered the Smiling Pool and dear Old Briar-patch of his stories. The Society, which was formed in 1976, also maintains a widely used environmental education center in order to carry out the goals that Burgess espoused through his life" (*The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, Dover Children's Thrift Classics edition, edited by Philip Smith, 1993, p.vi).

Thus, the Society and the facilities it maintains are a tribute to the lasting impression that Burgess and his works made on a devoted following of readers who style themselves naturalists and conservationists, interested in carrying on his work. His following in grade school educators, home schoolers, local Cape Codders and other enthusiasts, including a Book Collectors group, at times seems short of messianic, and he is fondly invoked as a gifted story-teller and educator. This is the image I looked for in the primary materials including the pages of his texts, in his autobiography; and in my

work in the archives, reading through and taking notes on his manuscripts, diary entries, and correspondence in differing categories, including business letters and letters to his mother. The impression of Burgess that I came out with in this study does not contradict his naturalist story-teller and educator legacy, but it does add another dimension, that of a writer-on-the-make, moving with his times to create a narrative mode of appeal to modern readers, all to support his family in his preferred career-persona, as an author.

Analysis of the archival materials: Marketing stories as commodities

The humanized animal characters that populate Thornton Burgess's stories are an unmistakable trademark of his tales. Burgess was able to turn that trademark into lucre resulting from spin-off products. The Promotional Materials Section of the Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections & Exhibits (David Cesan Collection) demonstrates commodities linked to the Burgess literature, including Bedtime Stories Poster Stamp Sets; Quaddy Toys and Novelties, including the Quaddy Cloth and Quaddy Blankets, and the Burgess Animal Game Board issued by the Saalfield Publishing Company (See Appendix A. – Archival Materials, Advertisement for Quaddy Cloth and Quaddy Blankets and Advertisement for The Saalfield Publishing Company – Games). These coveted products reflect that the beloved characters of the narrative were accepted and promoted as “transitional objects” through childhood (after Winnicott) that adults, who had the buying power at the time, wished to provide to their young.

The object produced by Burgess's artifice served numerous child and adult readers in many ways, as evidenced by my readings of salutatory and admiring letters from readers across the U.S. and internationally (“Fan Mail”: Correspondence from

readers in the TWBSDCE, 1910 – 1965). The trademark characters also became transitional objects for adult-parents who found themselves awash in an age of new currents in what was demanded of parents, adrift from the familiar comforts of extended family as America in the service of fledgling corporations and industrial work left the farm or village and became mobile across the landscape. The Burgess stories were further promoted and popularized through various nationalistic/war-time and consumer-oriented ventures. In the archives, I uncovered materials related to these war-time consumer messages, including a manuscript titled, “Watch Your Step, Peter Rabbit,” written for Federal Reserve Savings Division, WWI; a Promotional Photo w/ wartime slogan, 1918; Thrift Stamp sketches (n.d.), and ads for WWII Bond Sales.

Burgess was an author writing in new modes of literary media that in the late 1800s and beginning of 1900s were catching on as popular and widespread forms of print communication, along with penny-dreadfuls, pulp novels and the dime-store novel. His children’s stories were part of the serialized tradition that newspapers were promoting to sell daily editions, by appealing to the story wants of an audience that might bring the newspaper into the house for news and political updates, housekeeping articles, farming and stock reports, and advertisements. Early in his transition from ‘writer’ of serial stories for newspapers to ‘author’ of the Old Mother West Wind and Bedtime Story - Book series around 1912 (see Appendix C – Chronology), Burgess was always looking for the main chance, opening his characters to promotion of merchandise such as board games, Quaddy Blankets, nursery accessories, and later, patriotic items such as War Bonds.

Even when his career as a children's author was well-established, Burgess makes no apologies or excuses for exploiting this genre and form of text in a letter to his long-time friend and sometimes business associate, Moody B. Gates. On April 10, 1939, Burgess writes to Moody: "Listen, I am continuously getting letters asking if my Nature Stories appearing in the Herald Tribune can be purchased in book form. [They weren't available and he thought of how they might be made available in order to make a profit]. Now why not a ten cent pulp magazine with a showy but cheap cover in color and containing one of these stories for each day in the month!" Burgess expands the idea pitched to Moody Gates by suggesting supplementing the magazine with "interesting nature stuff" and that they could "pick up a page or two of advertising" and ends with "Make it a news stand proposition. Parents take it home to the kiddies – cheap but good" as the means to capitalize on the 6000 stories he claims are available from the Herald Tribune column. In a letter dated November 13, 1939 to Moody Gates, Burgess again pitches an idea: to produce "The Burgess Story Scrapbook" which would be "neither magazine nor book" with "the Woolworth and other ten cent trade in mind" (Both letters in TWBSDCE, Correspondence with Moody Gates 1934-1954 in Ernestine Johnson Collection).

The Burgess stories were immensely popular in Canada and the United States during a specific and extended time period ("Ten Million Children love the THORNTON BURGESS BOOKS! For years Canadian and American children have read them, etc" Advertisement from Publishers' Circular and Booksellers' Record, October 10, 1931, reproduced in Wright, 2000, 142) and they still have a devoted following in book reprint versions. When *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, *The Adventures of Bob White* and

Lightfoot the Deer first appeared, they were syndicated and appeared in one page story format ‘To be continued’ the next day.⁴ Each serialized chapter must have been eagerly awaited by each child or adult reader as to what would happen next. Burgess apparently did not scruple over leaving his readers on tenterhooks in terms of the suspense they were left in about the situation of the familiar and sympathetic characters.

In Appendix A – Archival materials: “Bedtime Stories by Thornton W. Burgess, copyright 1920 by Thornton W. Burgess Farmer’s Brown Boy Speaks His Mind” is an example of one installment for Burgess’s syndicated column. In the story, Farmer Brown’s Boy speaks out very explicitly about the unfairness of uncontrolled duck hunting. He gives his exposition in the course of anticipating the arrival of Mr. And Mrs. Quack to the Smiling Pool so that he can feed them and shelter them, as a friendly human. The story space allotted Burgess in his column format no doubt influenced the narrative language and the content. Burgess would have been concerned to meet the specific needs of a story told in serial. The writer needed to pick up interest in the story from the preceding installment, and provide some sense of continuity. He needed to provide just enough information, by showing as much as possible rather than telling, or preaching about the duck hunting issue. Thus, characterization and language needed to be economical but detailed enough. The language and the story arc needed to evoke things in the reader’s mind. The serialized stories were often read aloud amongst members of a family that subscribed to the paper, or at bedtime by parent to child (Lovell, Jr. 1976; Burgess 1960; and see Appendix A – a pictorial of “Reading the ‘Bedtime Story’” that

⁴ With one possible exception: Wayne Wright, a Burgess authority, notes that he is not certain if Chapters 1 – 3 of *Lightfoot* appeared at all as newspaper stories (Wayne Wright, personal communication, email, Friday June 11, 2004).

appeared in the *Kansas City Star* Sept. 12, 1913). Thus, the newspaper formatted stories needed to be succinct but colourful in tone, to convey the story- of- the- day to the mind's eye of the listener. Burgess was successful at this sort of storytelling.

In his public releases, Burgess portrayed himself as a naturalist-conservationist and as a storyteller with ties to a bardic past. A writer such as Burgess, who gained access to a dedicated and loyal readership, realized how to achieve a "close, empathetic, communal identification with the known" (Ong citing Havelock 1963, p. 145-6). Burgess kindled and nurtured his persona of storyteller, encouraging his readership to recognize him as "The Bedtime Story Man." Collections under the titles of *Tales from the Storyteller's House* and *While the Story Log Burns* portrays him as a benevolent children's bard. A dust jacket from the *Big Thornton Burgess Story Book* shows him sitting around the fire, reading to assembled children (Wright, 1999, p.100). It seems obvious that Burgess attempted to manufacture a singular closeness with his audience base, fostering the trustworthy and nurturing image of gathering children round. It may be this compelling image-persona of a traditional storyteller with a contemporary twist that encouraged the influential educator-librarians of the early twentieth century to promote Burgess's stories as 'good' literature for children, for both the classroom setting and for out-of-school reading.

Early twentieth century educational acclaim for Burgess

Several articles written by educationalists in the 1920s helped establish Burgess's reputation as a nature-educator. The time period of the 1920s coincides with the Progressive Movement in education and other areas in the United States (see Appendix C, Chronology). In the early portion of his writing career, Burgess's stories were well-

received by the gatekeepers of educational literature, the librarian-reviewers, predominantly female professionals (see Lundin 2004 on the early history of the professionalization of children's librarianship and children's literature studies). These influential educator-reviewers recommended certain of the Burgess stories for classroom use. This connection with the world of school no doubt enlisted parents, educators and others involved in formative activities for children as Burgess fans.

In 1916, the Milton Bradley Company of Springfield, Mass. published a teacher's and librarian's guide titled *For the Story Teller: Story Telling and Stories to Tell* by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey. Bailey had authored other child-oriented guides such as *For the Children's Hour*, *Firelight Stories*, *Stories and Rhymes for a Child*, and *Every Child's Folk Songs and Games*. In "Planning Story Groups" she lists a section on stories appropriate for "Nature Programs" (pp. 254-255) and includes Hans Christian Anderson's "The Snowdrop" and "The Ugly Duckling." Curiously, none of Burgess's works are listed under this heading. Rather, Bailey introduces a Burgess story under a category "Stories Selected Because of Their Suspensive Quality" in recommending "How Johnny Chuck Found The Best Thing In The World" in *Old Mother West Wind*. Bailey included Burgess's stories among those that act with an

appeal that a successful drama makes to an audience. We have discovered that the opening paragraph, the first sentence of a child's story should have the quality that characterizes the scene disclosed on the stage when the curtain rolls up – *compelling interest*. Following this curtain raising of the story, there should be a series of pictorial scenes that carry the events that go to make up the story plot, strung upon a slender thread of curiosity, and giving the element of suspense to the story. (p.82, underlining mine for emphasis)

She goes on to mention the logical end of the story: the curtain dropping before the eyes of the child audience. I found Bailey's description of Burgess's "suspensive quality" in

story, emanating from a child literacy authority (Bailey) contemporaneous with Burgess and his early story-writing ventures, compelling for two reasons: that she appears to have been equating the ideal story for children with a theatre-like “showing and telling” experience; and because she implies that she has also detected, and approves of, the moving picture mode of story-on-page that I have identified as the cinematic feature of Burgess’s storytelling style.

In further support for the idea of Burgess as the writer of educationally-inspiring tracts, *The Essentials of English Middle Grades* was published in 1921 by the American Book Company (New York, Boston, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Chicago), authored by Henry Carr Pearson, Principal of the Horace Mann School, Teachers College, Columbia University and Mary Frederika Kirchwey, Instructor in Horace Mann Elementary School, Teachers College, Columbia University. Under the heading of “Appreciation of Good Literature...A Talk About Books” Pearson and Kirchway address the middle school student:

If you were asked what kind of stories you like best, a great many of you would probably say ‘stories of brave deeds’ and others would say ‘animal stories.’ As most boys and girls love animals, they naturally enjoy stories about animals, and they all love the thrill that comes with the reading of heroic deeds. Among the books listed on page 153 there are a number good animal stories and several stories of great heroes. Look the list over and try to get either from the school library or from the public library one of the books that seems to you particularly attractive. (pp.152-153)

The authors endorse the idea of selecting a story from a list provided for oral recital to classmates for an interesting report or “talk about books” within a language period that “your teacher will set aside” and “Try to make it so interesting that the other children will want to read the book too” (p.153). The Book List on page 153 of this document follows

this instruction from the authors and recommends: *Adventures of Old Man Coyote* by Thornton W. Burgess, *Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling, *Uncle Remus and the Little Boy* by Joel Chandler Harris, *Bird Stories* by John Burroughs, and *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell. Thus, we see that prominent educators of the early days of Burgess's publication were invested in promoting Progressive Era ideas about child engagement in literature.

Although Burgess's tales sometimes received only minor mention in an article or review by an influential educational taste-maker of the time, the saying 'a little goes a long way' rings true. *New Roads to Childhood* is a guide to children's books written by Anne Carroll Moore and published in 1923 by George H. Doran Company, New York. Under the category of "Some Unusual Books" appears a brief reference to the "Burgess Animal Book for Children" by Burgess and illustrated in colour plates by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Only the title, author and illustrator appear, and there is no description nor recommendation of the book. However, just the merest reference to the book in a guide meant to inform teachers and librarians of 'the best' books for children's development is indicative that Burgess, by 1923, had "arrived" as a serious writer and naturalist for the child audience, at least in the minds of the educational elite.

In 1923, well-known children's librarian Avis Freeman Meigs, who held posts at the Detroit Public Library and as a school librarian in Long Beach, California, briefly described varied titles of popular books for her column on children's books. *Doctor Dolittle's Postoffice* is reviewed, and in a listing at the end of the column, Meigs names the "Burgess Flower Book for Children... Thornton W. Burgess, Little, Brown & Company" suggesting to the child reader that these titles, including the Burgess book, can be obtained "when you go to a public library or to a bookstore or make up your list of

Christmas wants”, adding that “May you be delighted many times and not disappointed even once”(in “Our Book Friends” *Child Life*, November 1923, pp. 745-6). The instances of educational acclaim I have presented bolstered Burgess’s reputation as a writer of worth. The publishing industry promoted him as a storyteller writing in parental absence, and thus the child could be safely under the sway of a parental surrogate who also held the authority of ‘teacher’.

Consumer culture and visual appeal

Consumer culture is predicated on a highly complex symbolic system used to negotiate identity and power. Young people have become the most avid and sophisticated analysts of visual texts yet produced by the world to date. In terms of commodities designed specifically for, but not by children (Nikolajeva 2005), there must be a factoring in of the power wielded by those who originate and are mostly responsible for circulating texts and images. Much of the Burgess stories are tied up with the visual and visualizing picture aspects of storytelling in the mind’s eye using culturally apprehensible signs and motifs. Goodwin (1994), analyzing the filmwork of director Akira Kurosawa detected the workings of visual iconicity as part of a cinema-text code. Visual iconicity, Goodwin feels, makes subject matter instantly recognizable to the viewer and works through technical aspects of filming. This instant recognition factor is a powerful appeal to its target audience, and was successfully wielded by Burgess in the pursuit of his writing career. In my study, I look at how Burgess may have focused upon certain images in order to produce salient effects that worked with the child psyche in provoking response through recognition and identification of signs. Through the employ of iconic, familiar and instantly recognizable characters and settings, reference to color

and texture, shifting narrative positions, and the like, Burgess presciently appears to have known about the powerful effects of cinematic language for his animal-nature stories.

A very palatable visual-kinesthetic form of presentation of story was suited to symbolizing changes taking place in society and simultaneously in the imagined growth life of the (child) readers. The Burgess stories were scripted in such a way that a film approach such as plot segmentation, montage identification, and looking for specific linkages of signs and ideas were appropriate for my analysis. Things stood out in the stories, such as scenes in the stories that approximated camera shots, vernacular language rather than formal language, and visual gazes and framing to draw attention to certain moments in the stories. The nature of the aesthetic movements of the Burgess stories is such that my notion of the cine-semiotic is linked to the symbolization that pervaded the popular culture of his time, and also led to the stories' continuing sway over modern-day reader-consumers of culture.

The approach of close reading for the selected texts

The study involves an emerging heuristic research design (see Langenbach 1994, p.98) emanating back to a close reading method I developed and followed for the Burgess "Anti-Hunting" case study. The recorded data of my readings (called "Notations", see examples of Notations in Appendix B.1) of the three Anti-Hunting stories, along with the texts themselves, comprise the raw data of the study. In this inductive exploratory investigation, I used myself as a subject for reading Burgess and producing notes on the experience (after Langenbach 1994 citing Wyatt 1990). The approach used for these readings/ "Notations" is intended to be transparent and reproducible to other researchers

or readers. Through these readings, I uncover and use some of the normative and pragmatic aspects of reading print to sift through questions about the interpretive process involved in making meaning from a text. I referred to the reading data, which I have termed “Notations” (examples in Appendix B.1) to inform my observations of how an internal discourse of the reader joins in with other discourses to form a specific or particular image of a writer and his works, in this case, TW Burgess and his nature-animal series of stories featuring Peter Rabbit and other characters in the setting of the Briar Patch, Green Meadow and the Green Forest.

Description of the three selected stories

Narrative outline of the three stories: *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack (PMQ)*, *The Adventures of Bob White (Bob White)* and *Lightfoot the Deer (Lightfoot)*

When I read *PMQ*, *Bob White* and *Lightfoot*, I detected that these three stories were interrelated by the narrative events recounted in the texts, as well as by their investment in the public discourse of anti-hunting. The stories mirrored or shadowed one another in the story-telling of what befell the animal characters, what action was taken, and what resulted. Through my interpretation of the categories of analysis which emerged in reading with psychoanalysis, I found that the stories contained a re-curring story arc, and I have described this story arc in Chapter Three. Each of the stories I have used for the case study has been briefly synopsized in the Dover Publications edition’s frontispiece (for *PMQ* and for *Lightfoot*) and in Wayne Wright’s bibliography of the Burgess Books (for all three). I here present outlines constructed out of my close readings and the frontispiece descriptions of the stories to provide a familiarity with each story.

The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack Dover Children's Thrift Classics Edition. Mineola, NY, Dover Publications, Inc., 1993 (originally 1917), 87 pages with line illustrations.

One day, at the Smiling Pool, Peter Rabbit meets Mrs. Quack, who is in trouble. She is fleeing from hunters with terrible guns on the Big River, with many of her flock, including her children and her husband, missing in action. Mrs. Quack tells the story of duck migration to the Sunny South (probably Florida) and of the terrible duck massacre in which Mr. Quack was lost. We learn that she was wounded by a terrible gun just before Mr. Quack disappeared, and now she must rest before she goes to look for her mate. The friends of the Green Meadow and the dear Old Briar Patch volunteer to fly over the Big River marshes to look for Mr. Quack. Mrs. Quack is learns that her husband is alive, and they are reunited. Small Quacks are born, and they take up residence in safety in the Smiling Pool of the Green Forest.

The Adventures of Bob White A Bedtime Story-Book. Canadian Edition. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, Toronto, 1964, (originally 1919), 117 pages with line illustrations.

Bob White, unbeknownst to his good friend Peter Rabbit, is house-hunting. Although Bob White and Peter Rabbit are good friends of many years, Bob will not tell Peter where the new house site for he and his family will be. We learn that Bob White and his family are cheerful, hard workers who help farmers clear their fields of insect and worm pests that eat valuable crops. Everyone loves Bob White and his darling family, including Farmer Brown's Boy, who mathematically calculates how many pests the Bob Whites consume to help their own fields. Even though Bob is always cheery, one of Bob's problems is that Reddy Fox and Old Man Coyote are trying to find out the location of the new home. So he cannot tell his friend Peter, because Peter might give them away. However, one day Bob confides to Peter that they will soon be new neighbors! Bob will

not tell the exact location, and Peter is offended that he is considered non-trustworthy (with reason, as we know of Peter's character from previous tales). However, Peter is pleased about the new neighbors. Small Bob Whites are soon seen nearby, but unfortunately, the happiness and industry of the quail family is disturbed by a hunter with a terrible gun who chases the Bob Whites from their nest and who injures Bob White Jr., the eldest son of Bob White. The young quail, injured and alone, must hide until he knows the hunter and his dog have left the area. Finally, the young Bob White is found, resting and recovering with the chickens of Farmer Brown's Boy who has set his injured wing. The Bob Whites are re-united, and they find a safe home on Farmer Brown's property.

Lightfoot the Deer Dover Children's Thrift Classics Edition. Mineola, NY, Dover Publications, Inc., 1998 (originally 1921), 87 pages with line illustrations.

Lightfoot the Deer, an inhabitant of the Green Forest, is introduced. He shows off his new antlers to Peter Rabbit, who worries about the hunting season and what will happen to the Quacks and his other friends. Soon enough, Lightfoot finds himself pursued by a hunter with a terrible gun. For a while, the Green Forest friends are able to help him by warning of the hunter's approach. One day, the hunter brings hounds who relentlessly chase the terrified young stag. After a long pursuit, Lightfoot comes to the shore of the Big River where he seems to be trapped. Summoning the last of his fading energy, Lightfoot, exhausted, swims to the opposite shore to safety on a friendly human's land. The friendly human hides Lightfoot in his shed and drives away the hunter. Lightfoot finds refuge for the rest of the hunting season. When Lightfoot returns to his friends in the Green Forest, he fights a rival stag from the Great Mountain for the love of Miss

Daintyfoot, a doe who has come to the Green Forest. By story's end, Lightfoot has found true love and a happy home in the Green Forest.

Reading notations – A close reading of the texts

The aim to understand the underlying aesthetic appeal of the Burgess case study stories required a “close reading” that involves “attention to the rhetorical mode or status of important details” of the text (Culler 1982, p. 244). Culler explains that

Reading is an attempt to understand writing by determining the referential and rhetorical modes of a text, translating the figurative into the literal, for example, and removing obstacles in the quest for a coherent result, but the construction of texts – especially of literary works, where pragmatic contexts do not so readily justify a confident distinction between the literal and the figurative or the referential and the non-referential – may block this process of understanding. ‘The possibility of reading,’ writes de Man, ‘can never be taken for granted.’ (*Blindness and Insight*, 107). (Culler, *On Deconstruction*, p. 81, underline mine)

Close readings of three selected stories were undertaken in order to provide empirical information/data for the analysis in line with the conceptual framework bearing inspirations from cultural studies and psychoanalysis introduced in Chapter One.

The Notations of the three case study stories are my entry point to examining the Burgess “Anti-hunting” stories in a systematic and disciplined manner in support of claims made about the language and psychic workings of the stories.⁵

I wrote down the entries for my close readings of the three case study stories by hand on numbered legal pads with entries corresponding to lines in each photocopied page of a Burgess storybook. I had struggled with how to design an approach to reading

⁵ In formulating my approach, I also consulted multiple chapters in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* (ed. Denzin and Lincoln 2000), including a chapter on case study approach (Stake in Denzin and Lincoln), and a chapter on considering texts using a Cultural Studies approach by Frow and Morris.

that would be clear and unambiguous in providing notes to recall my impressions of the stories. At that stage, I was mostly uninfluenced by notions of what might be going on with the Burgess text. The intention was to produce data of a reading, my particular reading, of Burgess. It was my first time reading all the way through these stories, thus making the **Notations** the data of a first-impression, albeit by a better-than-usually informed reader since by the time of the reading I had some background on Burgess.

When typing up my handwritten “Notations” on the stories I used the book versions to refer back to in order to clarify some points. In both my handwritten and my typed **Notations** of the close readings, there are two aspects of Burgess’s prose that I have preserved verbatim : a. The little rhyming couplets that feature a social or moral lesson, that became a well-loved “trademark” of Burgess’s stories; and b. Some of the wording or expression used by Burgess within the body of the story chapter, which I have indicated by placing within <....>, a punctuation that is similar to the means of indicating quotations in French texts.⁶ I attributed some of these wordings to the ‘folksy’ speech mannerism assumed by Burgess in his storyteller persona that seems directed toward realizing a rapport with children, while showing that his animal characters are ‘just folks’ and therefore familiar to the reader. It is a way for the former advertising copywriter turned serious author to insert and insinuate himself, through a heard-daily, familiar speech pattern into the reader’s consciousness.

Additional notes in the left margin that I thought might be useful at later stages of interpretation and were somewhat incorporated into my typed up notations, but I found that they were less useful than I had first supposed since the body of the first-pass reading notation already contained adequate commentary of my impressions of the reading

performance of the text. What seemed more natural in typing up my systematically-entered reading notes was to insert some commentary on the readings of an on-the-ground or as-it-happens nature: my initial thoughts in processing the story information presented by Burgess. These were impressions of how the characters were acting as male spectators, my feelings that Mrs. Quack was justified in being suspicious of men/mankind/hunters, ideas that food was talked about a lot - and how these recurring little things seemed to contribute toward the detection of significant patterns in the stories.

As an internal reading discourse, my notations *precis* the unfolding stories 'in my own words' and provides an immediate translation of the author's words. As mentioned, I kept some of the author's words verbatim when I found that that particular wording finely evoked a certain sense of things. For example, in *Lightfoot*, Chapter XXXVI, page 2 of the chapter, lines 17-18, I preserved the author's words in my < > encapsulation notation form because it was a perfect example of Burgess's prose in conveying to the reader that Sammy Jay is a 'snitch' in advertising the presence of a rival deer in Lightfoot's territory. The exact words are : <As soon as he saw him, Sammy began to scream at the top of his lungs>. This visual picture of outrage is what typically permeates Burgess's story-telling style of 'showing, not just telling'.

With the question of how might young readers read and then re-tell the stories of Burgess, it is not unlikely that they would demonstrate a version of the inner discourse that can be read in my "Notations" on each story. In a social setting, a child reader would decide how long his or her re-telling of the Burgess chapter or entire story was to

⁶ This choice was arbitrary and idiosyncratic, and does not claim a connection to French text quote marks.

take, what are the high points or climatic and pivotal portions, and thus deliver a narrative of Burgess's story in her or his own words. This ability to re-tell is part of literacy, in being able to convey to an audience what is the meaning of a story or event (O'Donnell and Wood, 1999; Searfoss, Readence and Mallette, 2001; Winters and Schmidt, 2001; Temple and Gillet, 1989).

Use of the reading notations for analysis of the stories

Reading the "Anti-Hunting" Stories of 1917-1921

In my initial data collection for the three "Anti-Hunting" stories, I systematically recorded reading notes on all chapters in each of the three selected stories. To give an idea of the kind of data set I worked from for my explorations of the dynamic workings of the Burgess texts, in Appendix B – Methodological materials and data sets, I have presented sample reading notations. For *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack (PMQ)*, Chapter II or 2 "Mrs. Quack is Distrustful" is presented in typed form (one page). Appendix B "Sample Reading Notations" also contains the notes for Chapter II or 2 "Bob White has Visitors" from *The Adventures of Bob White* and for Chapter II or 2 "Lightfoot's New Antlers" from *Lightfoot the Deer*. The typed version that resulted from my handwritten line-by-line reading of original text was a condensed form that carries forward my initial sense or impression of the story. Along with a description of the narrative action, from time to time I recorded 'mental notes' or notes of my interpretation of Burgess's narrative. For example, in *PMQ*, Chapter 2, Mrs. Quack is described as homeless, and I 'read' her as a refugee member of a harassed minority group forced to wander from place to place.

The line-by-line reading notation transcribed as raw data could be re-read for analysis line-by-line, taking note of significant quotes and Burgess's unique wording in the story that I have indicated by pointed ellipses, "<....>". These exact, or verbatim wordings have been preserved in certain spaces of my data/note-taking, particularly where I believe they carry forward Burgess's theme or the structure of feeling (after R. Williams, 1958) evoked by the language of the phrase. Similarly, the reading notations could be presented in synopsisized fashion, which carries the sense of the story along. I realized that even in a synopsis, I could present and preserve as data some of the whimsical, first-hand language for a more finely nuanced transliteration of the stories. It emerged that the three Anti-Hunting stories pattern themselves after, but also contain departures from one another in terms of language and structure. This means of presenting the Notations on my close readings of the stories served the purpose of presenting relevant "raw" research data on the story language and patterns.

Notations of the three case study stories approximate an on-the-ground experience with reading and recording. It has been my intention to present a simulation or 'simu-cast' of what goes on as the reader reads and processes the story in terms of his or her immediate apprehension and understanding-in-progress of the story. This understanding-in-progress is part of literacy and is featured in the school classroom, the reading circle, and as an underlying part of any critical analysis and discussion of the book. Often the first reading may be the only reading by a student, for example, and the first reading or impression of the message of the written word is often the basis for comprehension and re-telling of the story, perhaps in a classroom discussion setting.

Notations may be thought of as a reading transcript, after a discussion of transcript use in qualitative research by Silverman (2000). The Notations demonstrate that a lot is going on in performing a reading. In the data set resulting from my close reading, it is evident that a reader is not passively in-taking words written by an author, but that s/he is simultaneously translating them in terms of her own experience and background information, processing the text into a social discourse with ‘her stuff’ informing the discourse. The reader’s discourse may then be shared with others, either out in public, and the reader’s discourse then joins in with several other strands of discourse of the text. Each discourse will have similarities to one another, but also differences. Rather than a full presentation of each reader’s discourse, what generally occurs is that each reader gives an interpretation, or a shortened version, of her discourse in discussion circles. Sometimes a reader’s discourse emerges in written form, as a book report or a critique of a book (literary criticism). In Appendix B, Methodological materials and data sets, I present a sample of my typed Notations from one chapter each of the three selected case study stories.

The Adventures of Bob White is an example that demonstrates the typical structure of the Burgess animal nature story. The personification of beloved animal characters is followed by an introduction and development of situations and events that the characters must contend with as individuals and in community. The theme started out in *The Adventures of Bob White* is that cheerfulness and industry are admirable traits, and it should be one’s aim in life to be of service to others and to “have a part in the work of the Great World.” This theme is seen through the verbatim rhetoric that I have bolded in my transcription of how the story read to me (see sample Notations, in Appendix B), a

mixture of the story information presented by Burgess, along with my internal monologue commentary, resulting in an “abridged” version of the plot of the story as the data (this same data inscription approach was taken for the two other case study stories, *Poor Mrs. Quack* and *Lightfoot*). In *Bob White*, a terrible thing happens to a good person and family: the eldest child of Bob White is horribly injured by a “terrible gun”; and then undergoes an ordeal of isolation and separation from his family as he hides from the hunter’s dog. Farmer Brown’s boy finds, protects and heals the young bird, who is reunited with his father Bob White and the family.

In my Notations, I found it useful to keep track of the items mentioned in the Goring (2001) checklist, such as narrative technique, including voice and perspective, tone, characterization, speech and dialog, thoughts and mental processes, dramatic involvement, themes, duration, setting, symbol or image, action, and your own responses as a reader. This approach or reading method created a body of Notations with immediacy. Further, these notes assisted me to see that the Burgess prose might possibly be read using a film studies approach to understanding narrative. Bixler and Agosta (1984) recognized that something modern was at work in Burgess’s stories. Their analysis stops short of suggesting that the stories hold sway in a time that audiences were increasingly exposed to visual forms of media such as magazine or billboard ads, and films at the movie house. To address the movements of the Burgess case study stories, I began to consider analytic units to trace emerging patterns that led to the notion of a cine-semiotic language and flow in the writing of Burgess that staged terse but effective dramas on-the-page.

Beginning to read in the cine-semiotic

Umberto Eco is a noted semiotician, literary critic, novelist (*The Name of the Rose*) and journalist whose range of analysis embraces the medieval to the modern time. He has studied ‘high’ and ‘low’ literary productions, including visual works and has contributed to theories toward a culturally-engaged version of semiotics. Influenced by Charles Sanders Peirce, a founder of semiotics study in North America, Eco has gone after the codes and sign systems at work in cultural productions (Goring et.al., 2001, 330). I began to think about the performance of the Burgess texts in terms of semiotics in a cultural setting. It seemed of potential to consider if the stories read as a semiotic ordering of narrative in terms of specific and evocative signs and codes placed throughout the stories: the “terrible guns,” the characters named Peter Rabbit and Johnny Skunk, the nature lessons (quails eating insects from the fields, how ducks bathe, the instinctual behavior of deer fleeing danger), and all the familiar environmental signposts that are recurrently invoked, such as the Dear Old Briar Patch and the Green Meadows.

In order to understand the performance of the Anti-Hunting works and how readers might interpret them, I thought to query my own perspectives as a cultural reader produced by a definable tradition to what I thought might be going on at the time Burgess wrote his stories for an emerging subset of mass culture in the early 1900s. Lacking a time machine to zip back to 1917 through 1921, I decided to conjure up the dynamic visual mode of a new way of storytelling, the cinema, and how this narrative newcomer may have influenced Burgess and his readers. In my close readings, I saw something that pointed to a visualizing type of writing, the kind of writing that wanted to be expressed as a film or movie. My first impressions were of a type of writing that used a

great deal of dialog, as with a script; that had visual references in terms of vivid colourizing; certain name cues that called up a mind's eye view of place (Green Forest, Smiling Pool); and, of course, Harrison Cady's line illustrations to leave no doubt what the characters looked like, poke bonnet, shawl, and all (as for Poor Mrs. Quack's character). As I became conversant with film studies ideas, I was able to identify aspects of plot segmentation, montage sequence, and shots and stills (see Chapter Four).

Reading with thoughts of semiotic signs as part of the literary 'code' of Burgess, it is possible to render patterns of text and language that were introduced by the author to prepare and signal for the reader what happens next, and next – a central activity of inquiry in narrative forms, whether book or film. Previous interpretations of the Burgess literature had been intent on proving out his symbolization of the natural world. Burgess's literature was stated to be, quite simply and straightforwardly, to teach children about nature and animal behavior, and also to guide them through some socially conventional dramas of home and hearth, friendship and family. And, of course, there was the political aspect of the conservationist appeal. However, my close readings led me to suspect that there was more to the Burgess stories, and that this 'more' was a hefty contributor to the success of the Burgess literature. A reading with psychoanalysis confirmed this 'suspicion' by leading me to incidences of several psychic appeals to the (child) reader. These psychic appeals of material item signs as semiotics worked with the version of semiotics proposed by Kristeva in her psychoanalytic contributions and elaborations of Lacan's work with language and the triad of Imaginary, Symbolic and Real. I will introduce and discuss Kristeva's version of the semiotic in Chapter Three.

The Notations produced from my reading demonstrate that reading is multi-leveled and layered. *Not one simple thing is going on in a reading*. Many thoughts are entertained by the reader, depending upon her or his background and experience; and a reading by the same reader of the same text can vary from one time to another. The internal discourse of the child reader of Burgess will not be less complex than that of the adult reader, but it will be based on different degrees of knowledge of the external world and of experiences to refer one's reading back to. Some of the reading of Burgess also depends on what one is reading for. As one example to demonstrate the multiple reading potential in Burgess's stories, in *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, Chapter IX, my attention is first drawn by the detailed, and from my own observations of ducks, accurate description of a duck bathing. It is a fairly quiet scene of Mrs. Quack bathing and grooming herself first thing in the morning. Peter Rabbit happens to come upon her, and he curiously observes her ablutions. The preferred reading of the Burgess stories would inform us that this is a nature lesson for curious children. It is intended to a. instruct them on how to observe nature (discretely and with enjoyment) and b. what do ducks do when they wash up?

A second impression of this section on Mrs. Quack bathing and being viewed by Peter Rabbit reveals the potential for an alternate reading of this particular scene. The very voluptuousness of the description (see Burgess, 1993, Chapter IX "Peter Rabbit Makes an Early Call," pp. 33-34) and its Notation in my close(r) reading goes beyond simple nature writing for children. It gives me the idea that Burgess, within his naturalistic scene of a rabbit watching a duck bathe, is recalling - in veiled detail that 'reveals without revealing' - something that he is compelled to communicate. Freud's

concept of the screen memory informs questions about the scene: Is Burgess recalling from childhood inadvertently watching his mother bathe, perhaps having come upon her and then spying on her? Is Burgess telling of his growing attraction to the young widow Fanny, the wife of his friend and first literary agent, who later became the second Mrs. Burgess? Did he somehow see Fanny as vulnerable and desirable in her young widowhood, transferring his longing to a somewhat passionate scene involving a man watching a woman bathe? (In terms of visual theory, this scene might be construed as a version of male scopophilia, the pleasure of the gaze directed in cinema, as discussed in Laura Mulvey's work).

What is this reading of the duck bathing scene in Poor Mrs. Quack that I now seem to prefer? My reading has produced an erotic nursery fantasy, not a simple animal-nature realistic story. Are these the fevered imaginings of a sophisticated adult reader trying to find some pleasure beyond mind-numbing boredom from the fatuous ramblings of little clothed creatures on the bucolic New England countryside? Or is this reading I have received (as a sophisticated adult reader of story, culture and society) the one that Burgess really meant?

The potential for multiple reading levels or versions of Burgess's three Anti-hunting stories led me to wonder about an expressive reading and interpretive conduit to address the complexities. Because I noticed that my alternative (i.e. not just simple nature stories) readings seemed most operative when specific scenes created a vivid impression of 'time- to- read -otherwise' (after Felman) I considered film theory. I was particularly interested in the question of where is Burgess, the *auteur*, directing the gaze

of the reader, what is he inviting the reader to see, and how is this performed through his particular version of prose writing?

A warrant for film reading of the Burgess texts from post-structuralist theory

In establishing a research-worthy protocol for the presentation of my think-piece on the Burgess aesthetic, the application of a film reading strategy is simultaneously 'otherwise' (after Felman) and also part of the 'logic' of deconstructive work, to show something previously not considered. The employ of a film reading both points out and makes of the Burgess works a 'difference', as the strategy reinforces while decentring the previously-held notions of what the Burgess literature is and how it works in society and for the reader. Film reading and literary reading both reside in language. The question of material or medium is thought to have an influence on the application of theory from one body to another, but post-structural theory would say that this effect is minimal or nil (Sarup 1993). The deconstructive strategy⁷ used in this study to demonstrate a film reading of Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy is based, in part, on a warrant derived from readings of French philosopher Jacques Derrida, by way of film theorists Brunette and Wills (1989).

Although I present a reading of the Burgess stories for purposes of constructing and developing ideas around the proposed cine-semiotic of visual and psychic play, a post-structuralist concern of reading, *that there exists no one true reading*, informs my work. I acknowledge that my reading is at play alongside the readings of additional

⁷ Derrida's texts critique the logocentric and oppositional hierarchies through which authority and power constitute themselves, and deconstructive strategy seeks to reverse and displace this hierarchical thinking (Brunette and Wills, p. 23).

readers. The work of subverting oppositions, particularly in binary oppositions, provides a warrant for more fluid thinking of narrative reading (Sarup 1993; Brunette and Wills 1995). Thus, in this study I 'permit' the reading of the selected Burgess works as 'film reading', which simultaneously decentres and contains the analysis of the narrative work of the Bedtime Stories. The film readings operationalized for this study are presented in Chapter Four.

Who is an author in the context of power?

Understanding biographical information about the author, and using it to read into the texts he produced, is of significance for the conceptual framework of this study.⁸ Terry Eagleton (1976) asserts that the author is a producer in the sense of providing a commodity with value. I believe that Thornton W. Burgess accomplished this sense of an author through his cooperation with production of his Bedtime Story-Book series, The Green Meadows Series, and The Green Forest Series and other commodities having economic and social valuation. A certain set of social relations resides in this particularized relationship between artist and audience/consumer. Foucault in his consideration of "What is an Author" looks to "the singular relationship that holds between an author and a text, the manner in which a text apparently points to this figure who is outside and precedes it" (1977, p. 115). Foucault also looks to the work of the author as a social act that preserves the author for all time.

Foucault conjures up the image of Scheherazade, the storyteller of the *Arabian Nights*, who told a series of narratives to defer and ultimately to defeat death. Foucault

⁸ Nikolajeva, in her textbook *Aesthetic Approaches to Children's Literature* (2005) discusses The Aesthetic of the Author as a primary means to explore children's books. What is the origin of the story, and who is this person writing for childhood consumption?

considers the role of the French notion of *écriture*, a reference to the act of writing and to the primordial nature of writing as an entity unto itself (after Derrida). Foucault considers that “the function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society” (p.124). After providing four aspects of the author-function in society, Foucault concludes with a summation of the author function. Within his discussion of the author in society and culture, I am intrigued by Foucault’s idea that “a text always bears a number of signs that refer to the author” (p. 129); and he refers to “the enigmatic link between an author and his works” and the idea that an author stamps a “definite signature” on a book or series of texts” (p. 136). Although I do not base my study around Foucault’s concept of author, I do treat Burgess as a pivotal figure who wrought a definite signature upon his written works and who thus influenced writing production.⁹

The study of Burgess as a pivotal figure (de Wet 1997) in his writing can be approached with the knowledge that certain forces acted upon him. Material conditions of the publishing world, not just talent or perseverance of an author, definitely constrain or promote who will be heard. Societal and authorial discourses negotiate the terrain of public presentation, with accompanying practices of self-formation and identification (Foucault, 1977). Cultural studies, with its systematic study of culture in relation to power structures (Couldry, 2000; Kelly, 1997; Storey, 1996) is an appropriate lens under which to place the Burgess animal tales: the stories typify how early 20th century ideals of what constitutes childhood knowledge intersect with materialist conditions of an

⁹ In my reading of Foucault, I perceive that author study can be useful in an examination of “the manner in which discourse is articulated on the basis of social relationships” (1977, p. 137).

emergent aggressive marketing culture.¹⁰ The Burgess Society archives provided primary material that demonstrates the reach of Burgess's life-time works, proving out their meaning in society. Cultural studies intends to ascertain how stable cultural meanings and associations were produced (such as characters who were in charge of teaching certain values or ideals, or settings that signified safety or danger for his animal characters); what texts were produced and how they circulated (Burgess first wrote serialized stories for newspapers, then transferred some of these and new stories to book form); and the various ways that the textual resources were employed.

Couldry (2000) suggests areas to examine the formation of the self in complex cultures, framed by one's recourse to available discourse and practices of self voice. My Burgess study deals with the mixed reception and alternative readings of Burgess in a Western societal context, that may hold for other predominantly English-speaking settings, but may not hold necessarily speaking for other cultural settings. Based on my concepts and notions of Who is a children's author? it seems clear that as a cultural storyteller Burgess held pronounced personal investments of identity and livelihood in his work of writing for children. The inquiries I make in my study of Burgess are grounded in the context of 20th century flowing into 21st century Western culture. For example: How is cultural production of children's books concentrated and influenced by competitive economic forces as seen in media industries of newspaper syndication or in book publishing houses? At the time of the "Anti-Hunting" works, Burgess was trying to

¹⁰ Couldry (2000) maintains that the textual environment can be systematically studied from a cultural studies framework as the result of a number of flows he outlines (p.81, figure 4.1). Couldry asserts that the methodology of cultural studies creates an approach to the text and its to its contexts, in this case, the archival evidence of further social, political and economic reach.

make a name for himself in the nascent conservation movement that was championed by influential Americans attempting to wield a moralistic power influence over the masses. In terms of who could buy or read the Burgess stories, keep in mind that only some individuals have access to cultural/consumer goods (unequal distribution), and by extension, to certain ideas and values present and working in society. Thus, awareness of the multiplicity of mediated culture and questions of power become hallmarks of using a cultural studies approach for a study of literature.

Before I conclude this overview of relevant concepts and methods, I wish to point to one more important aspect of the material culture that constituted Burgess's work. Aspects of the technology of print and encoded meaning accompany emerging modes of literary expression and transferal of thought through texts. The time when Burgess was writing his Anti-Hunting stories was concurrent with what is known as the "Era of Consolidation, 1890-1920" (Watson, 1936, p. 50) in the newspaper syndication business in the United States. Various entrepreneurs in the regional news branches aspired to build empires, and the competing rivals included the Western Newspaper Union, the American Press, the New York Herald Syndicate, and the Hearst syndicates. The New York Herald (Tribune) Syndicate ran features such as Sunday comic pages, daily comics, and syndicated columns, including the Burgess columns from the 1920s into the late 1950s.¹¹ He also wrote for the Associated Newspapers Syndicate including *The New York Globe* and the *Boston Globe* (Wright, 1999). According to Wright, "This daily column provided the text for many of the books, a day's story being generally equal to a

¹¹ In his 1936 *A History of Newspaper Syndicates in the United States 1865-1935*, Watson states that syndicate owner George Matthew Adams "had started on their careers such well-known writers and artists as Thornton Burgess, Dr. Frank Crane, Edgar A. Guest, J.N. ("Ding") Darling, H.T. Webster and "Believe it or Not" Ripley" (p. 59)".

chapter” (1999, p. 143). Other Sunday page gems that boosted the readership circulation for the New York Herald Syndicate were Windsor McCay’s “Little Nemo” and “Dream of a Rarebit Fiend” (Watson, 1936). In 1923, the Doubleday book-publishing company was the first publishing house to enter the syndicate field (*ibid.*), distributing book material to the newspapers.

The demands of writing for a daily column had an impact on the Burgess writing style.¹² In his autobiography, Burgess recalls the rigors of the writing schedule, and worrying about where the next day’s story would come from. But he adopted a disciplined approach to his chosen career, or otherwise he could not have been so prolific nor successful. Although driven by his own desire to be an author, part of what my study proposes is the idea that Burgess was situated in a time and place of opportunity with regard to how narrative could be presented to the audience of the early 20th century. These opportunities were tied to political, technological, social and narrative conversions that accompanied ways of visualizing and thinking through the issues presented through mass communications such as children’s stories in print. Filmic conceptualizations, coming into vogue and greater familiarity to the early 20th century masses, seem an appropriate and productive means to understand the **cine-semiotic** modes of address in the Burgess stories, that is, the images, actions and worlds invented by Burgess. (The topic of early film reach is further addressed in Chapter Five). The notion of the Burgess

¹² Writers of serialized columns generally had at most 700 words a day to adhere to. The aphorisms that head the Burgess stories served, as news headlines did, to ‘telegraph’ to the reader the moral or social import of that day’s column. The descriptive ‘show not tell’ language and the stock characters and settings contributed to the success of stories and were dictated by the unique needs of the condensed formula required for newsprint media of the day (T. Stanley, personal communication, December 2006). Obviously, Burgess was able and willing to write to these demands of the newsprint page. He kept to this tried and true formula for his Storybook series.

Anti-Hunting texts as a doubly articulated discourse that can be read using cine-semiotics derived from film semiotics and psychoanalytic semiotics occurred to me out of my readings and notations of the stories.

Burgess: *Not* just another animal-nature author

Through archival and autobiographical materials, I had ample recourse to Burgess's public and private statements on what he was doing and why he was doing it.¹³ As one example, his article for *Rotarian Magazine*, March 1923, "Writing for a Million Children" (TWBSDCE) seems to provide a 'blueprint' for his writing agenda. It outlines four main areas in which he thought his animal nature stories would have effect and purchase on the child reader (in addition, he realized that adults, including parents, read and vetted his stories). Firstly, in the *Rotarian* article, Burgess reinforces the powerful public relations notion that he wrote the *Bedtime Stories* to mail to his own young son who was away visiting relatives while he tried to begin a writing career. Burgess then boasts about his success in the daily newspapers in the United States and Canada, stating his column is circulated in almost one hundred papers. In the *Rotarian* article, he states that his primary aim was to "Foster a love of nature by presenting in story form the truth about the daily lives of the birds, animals, and lower forms of life most easily observed by the average child." He held four goals in "child psychology," which was beginning to be of interest at that in concert with a progressive education movement as advocated by John Dewey and others. Burgess felt that he accomplished the following goals: He

¹³ Knowing the Burgess yen to present to his public the persona of a respected, kindly storyteller, I read his statements using the proverbial 'grain of salt' in terms of what he said he intended to do, and what he actually did, as detected in my readings of his stories.

presented morals without giving offense; he conveyed lessons on how to adapt to life's circumstances; he led children to the politically correct movement of American war thrift efforts via the Happy Jack Thrift Club; and he helped children to feel through their emotions and to develop their characters. Finally, he claimed to provide pleasure via amusement and entertainment.

Burgess in an Excerpt from "Nature as the Universal Teacher" for *Natural History Magazine* in 1922 (TWBSDCE) reveals the crux of the philosophy that he presented to the public in effect to solidify his (self) representation as the foremost animal-nature writer for children in North America. To bring to this study a flavor of his own reflections on his writing career, and in order to preserve his voice, I use the following excerpts from Burgess's autobiography. Burgess recaps his *Natural History* magazine essay in Chapter 23 "Teaching and Taught" of his 1960 autobiography *Now I Remember*:

Intuitively the smallest child is conscious that he is superior to any animal. He knows that he is superior to any animal. He knows that he is a higher being. No child will admit that any animal knows more than he does, and this is especially true in regard to the smaller animals. Much as the adult looks down to the level of the child, the child in turn looks down to the level of the squirrel and the rabbit. This attitude has been singularly illustrated in the matter of moral lessons. The old-time story with an obvious moral aimed at the reader will not be read by the average child of today. The child has no greater liking for a preachment than the average adult. (pp. 210-211)

Burgess recognized that children 'resent' a direct moral address and prefer instead

...an animal story [which] may have a moral introduced in the very beginning without giving the slightest conspicuous moral, without bringing a single protest from my readers. Yet should I write one of these stories with no change whatsoever save that of substituting human characters for the animal characters, the story would not be read. The psychology of it is that those morals are pointed at the animal characters and not at the children. The latter not only do not resent those morals but heartily approve of them. If Peter Rabbit has done that which is wrong or foolish, they desire that he should

be taught his lesson. Unconsciously they absorb these morals themselves as I have abundant proof in many letters. (p. 211)

Children are known to make metaphoric use of symbols within a system available to them (Steedman, 1982, p.137) and thus, as students of and within a cultural system, they are able to understand or decipher the metaphoric use of symbols by an author. Burgess animal characters employ metaphoric meanings, with a fox (Reddy Fox, Granny Fox) indicating a sly, treacherous foe; a rabbit (Peter Rabbit), indicating guilelessness and sociability; a beaver (Paddy the Beaver), representing the right and trustworthiness; and so on. Each character also demonstrates 'human' faults, foibles, and fallibility to imbue added dimension and teachable moments.

Burgess evidenced an ethic of personal responsibility, which interestingly seems aligned with a basic assumption in Adlerian psychoanalytic theory that people have and make their own choices and cannot fall back upon environment, heredity or past mistakes (H.H. Mosak in Corsini, 1994). Conditioned partially by his upbringing as the only (male) child in a single parent household, Burgess took economic responsibility seriously very early on, and had various means to assist his beloved and frail mother with their living expenses. It seems that Burgess is demonstrating poignant lessons to readers, permitting them to live vicariously the costly nature of a mistake, and pointing out to children that mistakes could be avoided and care should be taken, and elders listened to all without overt moralizing but by lively example - a 'book lesson' learned in the comfort of the armchair rather than in the school of hard knocks. For Burgess's animal cast of characters, it is possible to see each with his or her own natural characteristic attributes added to in order to demonstrate specific human personality traits that would be embodied by that animal: curious Peter Rabbit (who is basically good-hearted);

resourceful Mrs. Quack; noble, but flawed Lightfoot; alert and canny Sammy Jay, wise Grandfather Toad, et. al. These iconic characters could then present themselves to the child reader to be tried on in formative fittings of identity.

In the search for the aesthetic behind Burgess's works, my study proposes the emergence of a cine-semiotic narrative design for children that was able to grow into a popular and wide-reaching 20th century body of work around childhood as a subject.¹⁴ The fears, hopes and dreams of childhood intersect with what adults intend to invest in children. In accounts of his process of story writing, Burgess professes that he does not know where inspiration will next spring from (Burgess, 1960, p. 99). Over time, he learned that he did, after all, appear to have a limitless supply of over 15,000 stories (Lovell, Jr., 1974) and that inspiration would develop from imagination and desperation to keep going to support his family and himself. A testament to his perseverance and his commitment to making a living from writing is that he did come up with a story for the next day's column, or the next book. Burgess does not specifically document his creative process, other than that he went away to his studio, there to apply himself before emerging, perhaps availing himself of nature books in his library (Wright, 1999).

Through my readings and interpretations of film theorists Heath, Bordwell and Thompson, Metz, Mulvey and Eisenstein, and my readings of the stories of Burgess and working through them in an attempt to grasp the aesthetics of the case study stories, I began to consider how the *cine-semiotic* assists in calling up moving pictures from signs

¹⁴ A reading of Homi Bhaba (1984) along with Bradford (2001) led to a question: Are children a 'colonial subject' of Burgess as a writer of childhood, allowing him to situate them as he sees fit in relation to the adult world, for example? Can the state of childhood from the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century in North America be thought of as a colonial subject with animals as population performing for the subjugated, but enthralled state (and see Connor 2004 for ideas on E.T. Seton's possible colonial complicity in his use of animal characters).

of life, as a bridging theory to explain the words working on the pages of the animal-nature stories to bring necessary pleasures and unpleasant necessities to the world of the child. In Chapters Three and Four, I present data which led me to hypothesize a configuration of cinema semiotics which considers film semiotics via material-image signs that flicker on the screen of the psyche (see Chapter Four); accompanied by a psychoanalytic notion of semiotics, *le semiotique* of Julia Kristeva, which brings the child to the threshold of language and which, theoretically speaking, allows returnable passage of movement between a pre-linguistic stage and entry into the Symbolic. For Chapter Three, I will read with psychoanalysis the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories to see the way in which unconscious and significant elements of story led to the attachment of reader sympathies and emotional investments of self.

Chapter Three – Reading Effects in the Burgess Anti-Hunting Stories

Introduction

How narrative casts its web of fascination over the reader claims the attention of literary theorist Peter Brooks (1985). He found a means in psychoanalytic approaches to reading to “loosen the grip of formalism” (p. xiv). Brooks feels that a “dynamic model of psychic processes” is a model “pertinent to the dynamics of texts” (p. xiv).

Psychoanalysis, after all, is a primarily narrative art, concerned with the recovery of the past through the dynamics of memory and desire. And Freud’s own project was much more closely concerned with the use and the understanding of signs, especially narrative signs, than has usually has been acknowledged, as the rereading of Freud proposed by Jacques Lacan can help us to see. (p. xiv)

Brooks proposes seeing the text as a “system of internal energies and tensions, compulsions, resistances, and desires” (p.xiv). This was how I began to perceive the Burgess study texts as a result of my close readings.

The reading effects produced in the Burgess stories result from the unique melding of symbolization via image-signs with formal elements of address to child subjectivity. In my reading analysis, it was important to provide demonstrable categories evincing Burgess’s deployment of recognizable aesthetic modes of address. In reading with psychoanalysis I present in this chapter three categories of analysis that arguably reverberate within the psyche of the child reader enmeshed in the pages of the stories. The psychoanalytic theorist I engage with most directly in interpretation of my readings is Julia Kristeva. Her reformulations of Lacan’s work with the Real, Imaginary and Symbolic assisted my readings of Burgess. As will be demonstrated, I found her ideas about the abject and abjection resonated in terms of the semiotic (*le semiotique*) and thinking about child passages through language via the Bedtime stories.

Julia Kristeva

Julia Kristeva is a French literary critic and psychoanalyst who maintained a clinical practice alongside her academic teaching and research agenda. She was influenced by ideas from Bakhtin in her explorations of poetic language in the 1960s. She is noted for her influential theories of the 'symbolic' and the 'semiotic' in the 1970s, which expanded to analyses of horror, love, melancholy, and cosmopolitanism in the 1980s. Her work on ellipsis and specular seduction has found a place in the study of film narrative (Kristeva 1975, in Rosen 1986). Besides her work in poetics and narrative, I was interested in her ideas about what sorts of tensions exist in the psyche that fuel creative processes. Art can be viewed as a process that takes and makes meaning from, for example, some crises of subjectivity that show forth through the work and play of signs to result in a body of works. Kristeva's work as a psychoanalyst found "no fundamental discontinuity between the production of a work of art and the life of the individual" however, "this does not mean that a work of art is to be seen simply as a representation of the intentions or personality of the artist " (Lechte 1990, p.24). It seemed that her contributions in psychoanalytic and literary theory would productively illuminate my study of the aesthetic appeal of the Anti-Hunting stories.

Psychoanalytic readings of literature

Evaluating the merits of reading with psychoanalysis

Formalist literary theory has looked toward themes such as the theme of the *bildungsroman*, the formative journey of the young individual toward the realization of adulthood by acquiring knowledge and experience of the joys and obstructions of life.

The formative process that is followed generally documents the growth of the individual in terms of emotional and intellectual maturity, and physical growth is not always stated, but could be inferred by the reader. Some literary examples that can be examined in terms of this theme include nineteenth-century children's classics such as *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, both by Mark Twain, *Kidnapped*, by R.L. Stevenson, *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott and lesser-known stories written to both demonstrate and inspire paths to adulthood such as E.T. Seton's *Rolf in the Woods*. The traditional literary analytical construct of theme may broadly ground a study in demonstrating the linkages between individuals and society through address of underlying dynamics of how the author is able to write compelling literature that appeals to broad audiences through time.

Sigmund Freud is well-known for his interest in and uses of literature to demonstrate the intricacies of psychological states and processes in his clinical work with patients. Freud's interest in a nexus of literature and examinations of the dynamics of desire and other movements of psychic life led to an interest in how psychoanalysis could be used to illuminate literature. According to Wright in *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice* (1984), Freud's psychoanalytic practice, which has been influential within the field, addresses itself to language and particularly the effects of desire¹ in language and other symbolic interaction:

...Psychoanalysis explores what happens when primordial desire gets directed into social goals, when bodily needs become subject to the mold of culture. Through language, desire becomes subject to rules, and yet this language cannot define the body's experience accurately. What is of peculiar interest to psychoanalysis - some would say peculiar in the sense of both special and bizarre - is that aspect of experience which has been ignored or prohibited by the rules of language. (1984, p.1)

¹ Wright uses Freud's term *Wunsch* - desire associated specifically with particular images, leaving the English word 'desire' for the underlying energies not yet bound to specific aims, or unspecified but unmistakable drive toward 'something.'

Furthermore, Wright looks at the process that occurs when words fail the speaker, when the emotions or desires exceed the ability to express them. Wright's idea implies a visualization that comes prior to the working of words in language, the pre-symbolic awareness that has no social expression (yet).

Words fail to match it but it is actual none the less. The energies of this desire become directed outside conscious awareness, attaching themselves to particular ideas and images which represent unconscious wishes. (1984, p.1)

The notion of attachment of desire to ideas and images representing unconscious and unspoken wishes seems relevant to a search for the specific nature of the aesthetic appeal of children's literature, and particularly Bedtime stories.

Skura (1981) discusses how Freudian psychoanalysis has been useful in studies of modern literature from Shakespeare to Faulkner. She describes productive outcomes for the process of applying psychoanalytic readings to a wide variety of works.

Psychoanalytic readings of children's literature have chosen certain ideas particularly appropriate to explore insights into human nature written into the pages of stories for children. Some basic psychoanalytic ideas have been found particularly productive for application to reading children's literature, with the central questions of the uses of psychoanalytic criticism for children's literature kept in mind: What is psychoanalysis and what implications does it possess for literature? What makes psychoanalytic conceptualizing an appropriate lens through which to interpret the force of children's literature? What problems with psychoanalytic theories might scholars have? (Rollin and West, 1999, p. xi).

Psychoanalytic theories have provided useful and illuminating insights to educators and other practitioners invested in the psychological dramas of childhood.

Articles with titles such as “Childhood Fantasies and Frustrations in Maurice Sendak’s Picture Books” (Rollin 1999) and “The Psychological Uses of Ruthlessness in a Children’s Fantasy Tale: Beatrix Potter and The Tale of Peter Rabbit” (Robertson et. al. 2000) demonstrate unsuspected dimensions of stories written for and presented to children as theirs – ‘children’s literature,’ literature written for children by adults.² Choosing childhood literature as a research topic extends into fascinations with reading past and present. A psychoanalytic approach to reading and to interpreting text makes sense in terms of the kinds of insights that are brought forward for examination, which are things previously hidden, not discussed nor even considered. This may be thought of as allied to the feminist recovery of subject matter that has been denied by other approaches to the study of literature (Butler 1990). Readings of the psychic responses provoked by the Burgess narratives became integral to each text I examined. When set against the backdrop of what I could uncover from primary sources about Burgess’s life and formative influences, the psychoanalytic readings seemed natural, to “make sense” in terms of a writer writing in messages from his deeply-felt own experiences.

Specifically-delineated psychoanalytic theorizing in children’s literature include Tribunella (2006), Jenkins (2004), Robertson (2002), Galbraith (2000), Wilkie-Stubbs (2000), Nikolajeva (2000), Trites (2000), West (“Regression” 1999), Coats (1998) and other essays that have appeared in *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly*, *The Lion and the Unicorn* and other journals treating new movements in interpreting children’s

² The very conundrum that childhood literature is, by and large, written for children by adults who have moved out of the state of childhood - and who now inhabit the world of adult roles, rights and responsibilities, while looking back to see what to write for children - is in itself an argument to apply psychoanalytic theorizing to how children’s literature is read and used, in the classroom and elsewhere (Nikolajeva 2005).

literature. These essays go beyond the conventional attributions to children's literature of entertainment, solace, learning and emotional entanglement to apply specific concepts from psychoanalytic theorists to case studies in children's literature.

Robertson considers the "uses and effects" of literature, and states of the Harry Potter series that "Readers experience uncanny effects when strangeness and familiarity are made to co-mingle in provocative tension"(2002, p. 204). Robertson's work led me to hypothesize personal effects on the implied child readers in Burgess's stories. In *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, betrayal is achieved through invocation of the experience of horror and terror, in unprecedented fantasized attacks on an animal's body. For the audience of child readers, what is being worked out in seeking the possible enticements or painful aspects of stories of wounding the body, of the sustained terror of being pursued? The workings through articulations with the body are further explored by Wilkie-Stibbs (2000) who discusses a metacognitive device used by author Gillian Cross in the book *Pictures in the Dark*. Peter, the young protagonist of *Pictures* escapes into the body of an otter, thus returning (safely) to a natural condition that Kristeva's work might point out as locating Peter in the body of the "primordial mother" (Wilkie-Stibbs, p. 83). Considerations of the feminine in speech, or language of the maternal body – "*le semiotique/ Semiotic*" (Kristeva 1980) deriving from pre-lingual experience, appear in my analysis of the animal characters in Burgess's texts. Burgess consistently presented to the child reader various incarnations/invocations of maternal subjects such as Mother Nature, Old Mother West Wind, Granny Fox and Mrs. Quack. The question is, Were these in psychic service to children in performing their (or their parents') desires for

nurture and mother-figure? Was there a service to Burgess himself, in terms of fulfilling a phantom need or desire?

In another example of reading with psychoanalysis, Nikolajeva addresses how the contradiction of adult's "almost compulsory need to socialize children" accompanies adult's "nostalgic idealization of childhood" (2000, p. 68) in the classic children's story *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri. Nikolajeva works with Lacan's concepts of the Imaginary (non-verbal, pre-verbal) and the Symbolic Order (verbal language) to read Heidi's schooling experiences. Alternatively, an essay on "Regression and the Fragmentation of the Self in *James and the Giant Peach*" (West, 1999) operationalizes theories of Melanie Klein. The story of *James and the Giant Peach* contains the narrative of a young orphan who is "faced with ego threatening problems and anxieties" (West, p. 18) and who, in response, fragments his personality into four bugs that assist him in a quest process that leads James, the protagonist, to resolve his problems. These examples of psychoanalytic theorizing in children's literature provided exemplars in demonstrating to me the potential reach for insights into the dynamics residing in stories such as Burgess's.

Private, unconscious workings of the author are transferred to a public domain such as the book page or film screen (see Galbraith, 2000 for a consideration of Wanda Gag's *Millions of Cats* and the merging of private imagery with public imagery during the crisis of the Great War). There they meet to construct an agreed upon or communally understood meaning. These are aesthetic and meaning operations that I believe may be illuminated through formal theory in psychoanalysis. I have chosen to work most closely with the concepts of Kristeva and her ideas about language and the psyche. In making linkages between the semiotic energies reforming themselves into the symbolic *vis`à`vis*

Kristeva's thetic stage, it is important to recall the distinctions between *la semiotique*, the established science of signs after the work of scholars such as Pierce and Saussure, and Kristeva's formulation of *le semiotique*, the rhythmic disposition of the mother-child symbiosis that is sometimes termed 'pre-oedipal' to refer to the so-called instinctive drives inscribed within the body (with thoughts from Oliver 1993, 34-5 and Kristeva, 1977, pp.17-18).

Semiotics in analysis of the stories

Groden and Kreiswirth (2004) state that semiotics may be thought of as a domain to investigate the nature and function of signs as well as the systems and processes that underlay representation, communication and expression. In cultural traces such as musical performance and recording, paintings and sculptures, rock carvings, pottery, houses, television shows, movies and all others, humans have always posted questions of meaning signified by form and content. Literary semiotics seeks specifically to study the signs of literary discourse, and of course must deal with the fact that linguistic markers are abstract means to represent things and ideas. Saussure viewed semiology as a science to study the life of signs within society (Groden and Krieswirth 2004) and this view is significant for my work which looks at the life of the Burgess story-texts and the life of their sign - creating within society. The Burgess signs came to life from a fantasy formation, and they carried on a life beyond the pen of their author. Further, I have found, the signs wrought by and employed by Burgess placed them within a unique visualizing discourse that simultaneously roiled and placated a child audience.

The categories of analysis

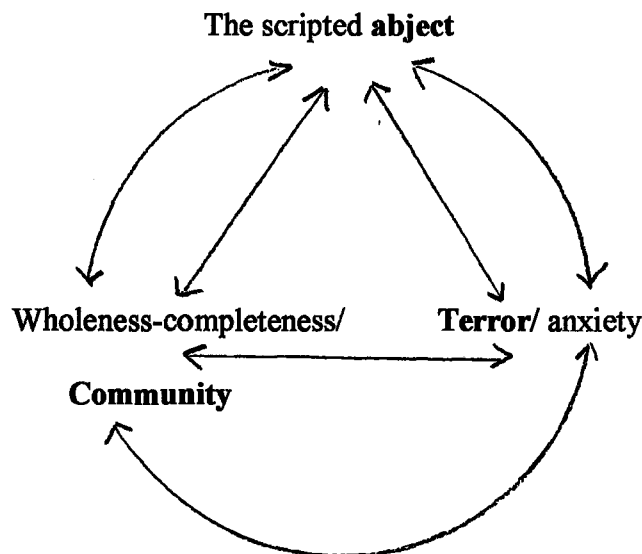
The question of *how* the images evoked by Burgess address the reader speaks to how the reader-audience is beckoned to view signs and the symbolization of life effects. Going into the reading with psychoanalysis and with an eye to supporting the idea of the cine-semiotic, it seemed I must follow the path of the narrator addressing the subject, a canny narrator who used a recurring set of categories to line the narrative route. Burgess's use of his stories about costumed animals in the Green Meadows and the Green Forest as a creative canvas speaks of a vast address to the desires and meanderings of childhood, and even for adults wandering back. The notion of the cine-semiotic combining cine – moving picture, and semiotics – the use and understanding of cultural signs, underlay the centrality of identifying psychic dynamics at play in the Anti-hunting case study stories. What would these categories turn up or overturn in the interpretation of Burgess as a nature animal story writer with a light hand on moralizing and with an apparent ken as to what his (child) audience wanted?

Silverman exhorts the researcher to: “Have a clear analytic approach” developed such as, for example “Foucauldian discourse analysis” and to treat it as a toolbox containing a set of concepts and methods to select data and illuminate analysis (2000, p. 828). “Analyzing talk and text” as discussed by Silverman requires the discernment of the “everyday home” (p. 822) of the phenomenon which is held up as a means to plausibly account for the form and content. This guideline led me to systematically read for psychoanalytic categories with potential meanings for the child psyche. In thinking of the role of the author writing for the child reader, what did the adult dialogue say to the child psyche, in terms of teaching, guiding, or comforting the child mind and body?

In my initial analysis, I found a repeated story arc of cyclical events (happiness in community, hunting/danger arrives, hurting and wounding and hiding, healing then re-incorporation into community/family). From this location, I identified prevailing categories of analysis, categories that presented themselves with urgency and constancy. The categories of analysis that clearly emerged and that I have taken up for this case study are

- A) The scripted **object**, realized in terms of the representations of animal characters;
- B) **Terror** and anxiety, realized in terms of danger, hunting, haunting, and persecution;
and,
- C) Wholeness-completeness, in terms of returning to or rejoining the **community** and the family.

Diagram 3.A “Figuration of categories of analysis for Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy”



In Diagram 3 A, I have presented the categories of analysis in pictorial form, showing them in a circular configuration. The circular configuration is of importance in the way of thinking of the categories of analysis and the way in which they are presented and work in the Burgess stories. Firstly, the circle indicates a sense of flow, and possibly even a fluid directionality, although in my analysis, I have preferred to follow the categories as they are plotted by Burgess from beginning to end. The fluidity speaks to the idea that the categories are not intended as fixed stages of progression. Secondly, the circle allows the categories to 'look across' at one another to see what is happening in the big picture of the narrative. Those who know Burgess's stories trust that wholeness and completeness are in sight of the abject and terror/anxiety, leaving these provocations as redemptive trials of loss, hoping, wanting, being, belonging and returning. Thirdly, the circle evokes movement within a complete entity, in this case, within the text, and can be transferred in thinking of the dynamic nature of the complete experience for the reader provided by Burgess the storyteller and director-auteur. For each of the categories it appears that very specific symbols were presented by Burgess to his readers in order to conjure up, within the imagined texts, a meaning. In my presentation I hold out one or several possible meanings, entertaining the idea that Burgess's symbols might be read polysemically (based on ideas from Fiske, 2003; Morley, 1992; and Hall, 1973) and that in post-structural readings readers have the 'right' to read differently, and to contribute their versions to the discourse.

The category of the scripted abject

ABJECT: Abject and Abjection are closely linked. According to Wolfreys, et al. (2002), Kristeva identifies the abject as “neither subject nor object” which opposes the ego by taking it to a place where “meaning collapses”. The abject throws off balance any logical, known certainties previously obtained in a subject/object contrast, or what also may be referred to as the self/not self (and anything in-between)³. Abjection (the state of) is then a psychic experience or process of slippage across the boundaries of self, partially erasing any borders of the psyche defining the ego. Furthermore, and of interest for child identity formation and entry into language, the abject is “the fluid locus of forbidden desires and ideas whose radical exclusion is the basis of the subject’s cultural determination.” In Kristeva’s formulation of meaning, the process of abjection is “that which threatens the self is not simply, necessarily locatable outside the self but rather emerges or erupts within subjectivity” (Wolfreys, 2004, p. 3). This term posits a definitive relationship between psyche and soma, in almost physical revulsion that is described for the process, it simultaneously revolts (within) the body and yet belongs to the body.

In literary or filmic forms, such revulsion and rejection need not be figured literally. While it can be the case that the image of a corpse, a character vomiting or the metaphor of vomit may be employed, it is often the case that the abject is symbolized, given a determinate form outside the self and other than the self and yet causing a visceral, often violent response. (Wolfreys, p. 3)

³ In my analysis of the category, I will consider the self/not self as a dyadic construction rather than as a binary opposition. I will also prefer the self/not self as the means of referring to subject/object.

Another definitive reading of Kristeva's formulation of a definition of abject follows

John Lechte's (a former student of Kristeva) instructive reading:

[The abject is] above all the ambiguous, the in-between, what defies boundaries, a composite resistant to unity. Hence, if the subject's identity derives from the unity of its object, the abject is the threat of unassimilable non-unity: that is, ambiguity. Abjection, therefore, is fundamentally 'what disturbs identity, system, order.' (Lechte, 1990, p. 160 citing Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*)

The abject and abjection in the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories

In my work with the three Burgess Anti-Hunting stories, I discovered in some versions of his characters the workings of the abject and abjection. The primary sign-symbol for the category of the scripted abject is here identified as the talking, clothed animal. These are well-known and beloved actors that became one of Burgess's hallmarks or trademarks, due to his economical prose characterizations, the skillful drawings of Harrison Cady, and Burgess's unstinting efforts toward brand-name recognition of the Quaddies and other beloved and iconic critters such as Peter Rabbit, Sammy Jay, Paddy the Beaver, and like characters. As this category of analysis emerged from my readings, I began to query not just how these versions of the abject and abjection were written into his Anti-Hunting Trilogy, but also why, and what were the processes and effects within the production of these stories.

Viewing the Burgess stories as scripted or staged productions, the characteristics to look for reside within the realm of theatrical literary discourse, which considers body movement and physical setting as well as dialog or verbal language. Extended dialog creates character development, and it may function in the narrative flow inserting 'facts' as a way to educate, providing the Burgess signature with little nature lessons which were

also read by his public as fictionalized representations of 'real life.' It is a calculated move on the part of Burgess to hand over the agency of narrative voice to the animals through their peppy, candid dialog in which they speak to one another, and to the child. Burgess exploited the knowledge that children love and trust animals while at the same time he recognized that they can feel a bit superior to them ("Writing Stories for a Million Children" in *The Rotarian*, March 1923).

I considered that admitting animal characters into his/her imaginative activities allows the child to have available pliable, biddable actors who can be bossed around while being loved, which seems positive for ego and identity development. Looking at the abject animal stand-in (for lowly status, child, apprentice) in terms of dialogue and staging may be a productive venture, but I thought instead to turn toward the abject representations offered by Burgess as "dramatic symbols representing meaning or significance beyond the intrinsic identity of the symbol itself" (Roberts and Jacobs, 1992, p.999). Playwrights are known to use what are considered universal symbols, crosses, flags, skulls; and also private symbols, such as a tree growing in Brooklyn, or a cat on a hot tin roof, that become symbolic within the context of a specific play.

In a discussion of "Children and Other Talking Animals" Morgenstern (2000) confers with Lechte's notion of the semiotic, the rhythmic, word-playing prosody that attempts to show the material basis of the symbolic, leading to a counter-balance in literary works that is termed 'the poetic'. Morgenstern considers that a C.S. Lewis work for adults which features a talking animal the 'hross' demonstrates Lewis's awareness of a complicity between language and bodies, a secret that the adult is supposed to know. Morgenstern aims to validate a poetics of children's literature by tapping psychoanalysis

as developmental theory and considering how the child moves from “the semiotic disposition toward the symbolic by a process of rejection of the maternal body and a consequent creation of the ‘abject’” (pp.114-5). Morgenstern cites Elizabeth Grosz’s observation that “the abject defines a pre-oedipal space and self-conception: it is the space between subject and object, both repulsive and attractive, which threatens to draw the subject and its objects toward it, and space of simultaneous pleasure and danger” (p.94).

Wolfreys (2004) identifies *Abject/Abjection* as a term used in Kristeva’s work to “destabilize the binary logic of much psychoanalytic thought” (p.3), particularly in relation to the opposition of desiring subject and the object of desire. The abject is posited as “absolutely essential to all cultures, the abject is, amongst other things, the fluid locus of forbidden desires and ideas whose radical exclusion is the basis of cultural development” (p.3). Talking animals are a suitable abject sign for children’s literature because they stand at the threshold of nature and culture, and somehow are able to communicate a permeability between the ‘pre-oedipal’ semiotic and entry to the symbolic. Ambivalent feelings result from the movement into the symbolic and throughout the course of socialization. Lewis is better known for his use of the talking animal in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series ostensibly for child readers, and Morgenstern points out that Lewis must have at least half-consciously understood the device of the talking animal and its power in linguistic and psychic positioning for the reader. Morgenstern asserts that “the device of the talking animal works not by simply effacing the abject but by naming it, by giving it a certain amount of play and he suggests “the more ‘play’ the better” (Morgenstern, p.118). The cartoon talking animal is a valid

example of the axiom ‘the more play the better’ as the characters survive visual distortions of distended body parts in getting children to laugh with the idea of bodily danger while themselves viewing the animation intact and complete.

The talking, clothed animals that Burgess scripted in terms of moral and life lessons sketched out in the pages may be seen to have a precedent in his own play-acting imaginative yearnings. Burgess’s step-granddaughter Frances Meigs recounts how her mother Helen told her of playing imaginative games with her collection of china dolls with Burgess on the parlor floor (Meigs, 1998, p.28). In addition, Burgess had scripted for various New York City performances his hit play “Peter Rabbit in Dreamland,” 1915-16. For the Cincinnati Children’s Theatre, a production of “The Adventures of Peter Rabbit & Reddy Fox,” 1919, was dramatized by a Mrs. Helen Schuster-Martin through the author’s permission (Letter of Publicity from The Children’s Theatre of Cincinnati, Helen Schuster-Martin, Director, April 15, 1919, see Appendix A). Burgess was no stranger to the use of doll, animal or actor stand-ins for the re-enactment of dramatic moments in childhood affairs.

My analysis of the stories of the Anti-Hunting Trilogy identified several individual players in the category of the **abject**. Below is a presentation of my findings, with a consideration of one central character portraying abjection for each of the three stories.

Mr. Quack, the hidden spouse abject

Compared to the character of Peter Rabbit, Mr. Quack is a remote and hazy figure within the Anti-Hunting story of *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*. Mr. Quack remains off-stage for most of the story except when in Chapter 16 (of 20 chapters) he is finally

espied in hiding by Sammy Jay. The reader realizes that Mr. Quack is a piteous and lamentable figure after having been shot down from his leadership position at the head of the duck flock migrating southward, and we learn from no less than Mrs. Quack that it was through a momentary mistake, or lapse in judgment, that he led his followers into dire peril at the hands of unscrupulous hunters who conned him with decoys. When, in Chapter 16 Mr. Quack finally surfaces, it is as an insignificant green spot hidden under a pile of brush espied from the air by Sammy Jay's over-fly of the Big River.

Mr. Quack is soon lifted from ignominy as he is subsequently described as <a stranger with a beautiful green head and neck and a white collar> who is joyfully welcomed home by the redoubtable Mrs. Quack who has won the admiration of the Green Forest comrades for her steadfastness in the face of adversity. Indeed, much of the emotional intensity (and perhaps the arena of greatest personal identification by girl readers) of the story is conveyed through the masterful portrayal of Mrs. Quack as the knowing, sensible, patient, and self-sufficient albeit vulnerable partner of the hidden abject, Mr. Quack. It is not difficult to envision that Burgess drew upon his observations of his widowed mother throughout his childhood, or his observations of Fanny, the widow with three children who he courted over two years, to create a sympathetic portrait of a duck-woman (see Harrison Cady illustration of Mrs. Quack in a poke bonnet, "Several times she circled around, high over the Smiling Pool" Appendix A) who selflessly and courageously overcomes the odds.

Mr. Quack, the paramour of Poor Mrs. Quack, is not the central figure of the story, but he is the *raison d'être* of the story, driving the narrative by the fact of his loss, the longing for and need by Mrs. Quack, the search for him, and his recovery, through a

team effort. He is made significant by his very elusiveness, or temporary absence, and once returned, not unlike Lazarus from the dead, the reader understands what the fuss is all about. The three anti-hunting case study stories are linked by the theme of loss and reunion, and in *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, the scripted abject sign of Mr. Quack is the pivot upon which the theme turns, not the title character Mrs. Quack. In *Black Sun*, Julia Kristeva refers back to the classic psychoanalytic scholars Freud, Abraham and Klein who each studied depression. Her formulation of the idea of abjection and its location in depression states that

[Depression] like mourning, conceals an aggressiveness toward the lost object, thus revealing the ambivalence of the depressed person with respect to the object of mourning. 'I love that object,' is what that person seems to say about the lost object,' but even more so I hate it; because I love it, and in order not to lose it, I imbed it in myself; but because I hate it, that other within myself is a bad self, I am bad, I am non-existent, I shall kill myself. (Kristeva, 1989, p.11)

The displacement tango of love-hate is probably a defensive means for the ego to practice going out in the world and retreating gracefully when required by the depletion of one's capacity to bear only so much. Or, another version of Fort-Da, the infant's throwing - away and learning to trust recovery - and - return game noted by Freud, but this time with one's identity formation under trial, trying on the things that work and that don't work. Thus, Burgess has worked through for the reader the exigencies of having to give something up that is loved or thought to be loved and having to move along to the next level of maturity and social grace. Certainly, the cleverly concealed moralizing power of Burgess's stories resides partially in the fusing of their psychic dramas with pragmatic concerns of how to get along with others in society.

In Burgess's own life story, he can be seen to have sustained several losses: the death of his father when he was very young, the death of his first wife in childbirth, and the casting off of his son, Thornton W., to live with maternal relatives when he could no longer care for him. The psychic dilemmas and dynamics of working through his feelings on these losses cannot have been strange to Burgess, who, in my eyes, made a remarkably healthy adjustment to his losses by insisting that he would become his heart's desire, a well-known writer, by remarrying and raising a step-family, and by stepping into a role and identity as a nature conservationist of national and international stature. The lessons that Burgess had available to share, of ways to overcome loss, depression, and melancholy were presented in the vocabulary of his authorial persona.

It is interesting to speculate about how the hiding of Mr. Quack in the story of Poor Mrs. Quack be read in relation to Burgess's own childhood: Does it chronicle psychic movements of residual guilt experienced by Burgess in recording his feelings about the early loss of his own father (based on Schwartz, 1994)? Freud's work on mourning and melancholia considers that the loss of a loved object may lead to the libido formerly invested in that object being "withdrawn" into one's psyche in an identification that allows one to hold onto the object (see Tribunella, 2006, pp. 77-78). In Kristeva's considerations of language, the melancholic denies loss, and language begins with depression born of mourning. Melancholics are believed to "act out what needs to be elaborated in signs and primary symbols formed in response to the loss of the object (mother)" (Lechte, 1990, p.35). What we can say with certainty is that the memory of early loss of a father imbues the abjected figure of Mr. Quack, the former high-flier, who is only remembered and recovered through the efforts of the remarkable Mrs. Quack.

If Mr. Quack functions as a veiled sign for the elder Burgess who was probably barely known by his son, then his shooting down and suspected loss is not a surprise. What is a surprise, perhaps, is how and why Mr. Quack was resurrected. If Mr. Quack is a personal stand-in for Burgess's dead father and therefore a signal for image(in)ings of paternal identification, then it seems that Burgess's father was indeed hidden to him, an unattainable mystery that is wondered about nonetheless. Burgess was raised in a small Cape Cod town by his mother, surrounded by but not overly supported by his paternal side of the family. At times, Burgess seemed to prefer a minimum of contact with his paternal grandparents and relatives (Letters to his mother Caroline Burgess 1894-95 and 1899, 1903 and Typed Notes, "Extracts from Early Letters, from 1894-95 correspondence with mother, TWBSDCE; Burgess, *Now I Remember*; and Meigs *My Grandfather Thornton W. Burgess*), so what did he really obtain or retain of his father, who passed away when Burgess was only an infant?

Kristeva (1989, *Black Sun*) refers to a finding by therapist-theorist Hannah Segal and the capability of the self in making use of symbolization. Kristeva presents Segal's hypothesis that in separation (from mother, from what is known) an individual may produce symbolic equivalents of what is lacking. Attempts to signify the overwhelming sadness are met in symbols produced from elements of the self, to deal with the outer world. Rage, depression, mourning and the reparation process can all be addressed in a self-address. Kristeva further theorizes that

[W]hat makes such a triumph over sadness possible is the ability of the self to identify no longer with the lost object but with a third party – father, form, schema. A requirement for a denying or manic position ("no, I haven't lost; I evoke, I signify through the artifice of signs and for myself what has

been parted from me”), such an identification, which may be called phallic or symbolic, insures the subject’s entrance into the universe of signs and creation. (1989, p. 23)

This entry into language takes place at a time when the child can associate abstract symbols/letters with meaning. Psychically, the individual may at this time be able to muster the ability to transit away from the loved object to find a new love object. The capability to express one’s loss using language is a formidable accomplishment, one that artists and creative writers use in outward statement of inner thoughts.

Why is the ‘dead’ duck brought forth at the story’s end? Did Burgess do it in an attempt to ‘invent’ a memory of a father, or as Kristeva would say, an “imaginary father” or Freud’s primary identificatory father, the father in individual prehistory (after Kristeva, 1989, p. 23)? In terms of literary practicality, Burgess realized that the ultimate tragedy of irrevocable loss of the spouse of the by- now -beloved Mrs. Quack must be scripted out. The recovery of Mr. Quack was a psychic invention first, but canny Burgess must have also realized the appeal to his young readers and their parents to have a happy ending. The finding of the missing duck husband may be read as a conscious bow to his readers; and arguably, it was unconsciously satisfying for Burgess to resurrect Mr. Quack.

In a diary entry of Friday, November 9, 1934, years past his Anti-hunting stories, Burgess admits to feeling depressed.

Home all day, getting out two stories. Depressed. Cannot see my way.
To B’s in evening. Fine day [meaning the weather].

Prior to this particular entry entered in his usual terse and mainly non-revelatory style, Burgess records earlier in the year troubles with his son, Thornton, Jr. On the next day, November 10th, he records

Another fine day. Cool but clear. I have from bank that [non-readable, but looks like Chester, his step-son, the eldest son of his second wife Fannie] has not take care of his notes due all of ten days ago. Will have to pay the interest on these. More burden. What's the use of carrying on! I wonder...Again what's the use! Ruby [non-readable, looks like "H"] here for brief time in afternoon.

In many ways, Burgess appears to have been a sensitive person toward his loved ones: his mother, his second beloved wife and companion, Fanny, his step-daughter, and in feelings of failure and frustration toward his son Thornton. Burgess's diary entries throughout 1934 bear evidence of personally mourning the waywardness of his only son when Thornton Jr. turned out to be less than successful in his early family life and career. Perhaps some of this melancholia and guilty feeling of having failed his young son by sending him away to be raised (prior to writing of Mrs. Quack published in 1917) do permeate the parts of the abject character of Mr. Quack, but the final triumph of Mr. Quack's reunion with his family trumps any purely depressive qualities of the narrative.

Young Bob White, the wounded child abject

The character of Bob White the elder is the title character of *The Adventures of Bob White*. The story was published in 1919 and it intended to portray the quail as a helpful consumer of insects and worms that destroyed farmer's crops. The quail or partridge had always been a favored game animal, but now Burgess wished to reinvent it as an unsung, lowly hero of the war effort, a cheerful bird helper who protected gardens and fields. Uniting conservation of animal species with patriotism was a master stroke for Burgess in getting all of America behind his Bedtime Story-Books.

The young Bob White, the child of Bob White the title character, takes the brunt of a ferocious, heartless attack against the happy quail family one fall day when everyone's hearts should be light and at a time when the helpful species should be thanked and protected rather than facing termination at the hunter's <terrible gun>. From Chapter XVII "A Beautiful Day Made Dreadful": Bob White<loved all the Great World, and he felt that all the Great World loved him>. Thus the stage is set for the beautiful day and then the contrast of tragedy, which apparently never lies far beneath happiness in the world of literature and nature. The man who <came tramping> is happy to be out on this day with his dog, toting <his terrible gun>. It is a good day to wreak carnage on the defenseless and lowly.

The hunter intercepts the quail family, the <terrible gun> gives a <Bang> and <down dropped that little brown bird>. All of the rest of the Bob White family got away, but the young Bob White was wounded. What did he do? – he escaped the hunter and ran into an abandoned burrow of Johnny Chuck. <He squatted close to the ground and drew his feathers as close to his body as possible>, an instinctive move of self-preservation after a bodily and psychic trauma. In this abject position of self-preservation and unknowing fear, Bob White lay faint with suffering and in <dreadful fright> with a broken wing, not knowing if the hunter and dog would return to drag him from the burrow. Placing myself as a child reader, recalling the special hurts and terrors of childhood, the abject position of the little Bob White seems of particular effect in showing the lowest point of imagined human experience, the feeling of being buried alive, the feeling of being locked in a dark closet, the feeling being in dire need and not knowing from which corner help will (if it will) come.

The Young Bob's predicament produces an uncanny effect of horror and helpless dread. The logical certainty of the child is threatened in the splitting effect of self/not self, trapped/wanting to escape binary identification with the small, wounded bird/child. Identification with the abject as it is here invoked in the symbolization of wounding the small quail, could arguably produce in the reader a psychic experience of slippage across boundaries that ordinarily define ego (Wolfreys, p. 3 ; Robertson, personal communication, July 2006). It is possible to position this abject placement of the young Bob White as an appeal to understand and condemn the persecution of innocents, particularly during war-time (see Galbraith for an analysis of the work of Wanda Gag as commentary on the Great War of 1914-18, or World War I). As Burgess was writing in North America during the distant rumblings of the First World War, why could not his animal abjects carry warnings for times of persecution of innocents that would be caught in wartime atrocities - or what the U.S. now terms 'collateral damage'⁴ of war. Burgess's warning of the terror of firearms pointed at children's animal friends may be read as a warning about the threat of <terrible guns> pointed at the young and innocent in all times.

In Chapter XIX "Frightened, Wounded and Alone" the young Bob White crouches in the abandoned burrow while <tears filled his eyes, tears of fright and pain>, and at this point, the sympathetic child reader would likely try to comfort the small

⁴ Collateral damage is a term that has entered circulation in the late 20th century via the news media. It was originated by the U.S. Department of Defense to refer euphemistically to lives and property destroyed as an unavoidable consequence of war-time activities. The United States Air Force (USAF) Intelligence Targeting Guide of February 1998, in Attachment 7 gives detailed information of the terms: "Broadly defined, collateral damage is unintentional damage or incidental damage affecting facilities, equipment or personnel occurring as a result of military actions directed against targeted enemy forces or facilities. Such damage can occur to friendly, neutral, and even enemy forces." (<http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/usaf/afpan14-210/part20.htm>, accessed 1/16/2007)

abjected figure on the page with mouthed words of encouragement: hang on, little bird. In this way, a child could identify with the sign of abjectness while also feeling stronger and braver than someone in more need than s/he. In a passage in this chapter of the small Bob's bed of pain, the narrator addresses the reader directly in order to define the word bewildered: <To be bewildered is to be so upset you cannot understand what has happened or is happening.> A little later on, the wounded small Bob White asks that question that ultimately all who undergo grievous hurt ask – why me?, what did he do to deserve this damage, this horrible ordeal?

A strong portion of the characterization of the small Bob White in the condition of being abject seemed to have to do with a threshold stage, of being "betwixt and between" as Turner discusses for the liminal stage in the neophyte's induction as a full-fledged member of society. Oliver (1993) discusses Kristeva's "thetic stage" the point at which, in the movement of subjectivity through language, the break into the boundary of the Symbolic occurs. It is a break (with what is prior in identification) whereby the subject/self takes up a new position or identification. The thetic stage is necessary for any symbolic or social functioning. The semiotic (*le semiotique*) embodied in drives and their articulation are what give rise to the thetic break. Some theorists, including Lacan, have seen this process as the lead up to the mirror stage.

There is a 'breaking', or what Kristeva calls a 'rejection,' already within the body that becomes, at a certain threshold, the thetic break. The thetic break is the result of the mirror stage where the child recognizes itself as a separate subject through the other of its image. In fact, the mirror stage is characterized by the thetic break. At this point the thetic break *positions* the child as a subject ready to enter language. (1993, p. 40, italics Oliver's)

Furthermore, a sacrifice is required, and sacrifice and art are two components of the thetic stage. Oliver notes that Kristeva's interpretation of sacrifice shows clearly the

relationship between the semiotic and the thetic. The sacrifice replaces pre-symbolic violence with a positioned violence, a violence focused against a victim, which may be a formulation of the self or someone close to the self. Random or instinctual violence is replaced by a localized or socially-sanctioned violence in order to enter into formal language, the Law of the Father. This becomes a socially acceptable form, a precondition for society. Kristeva notes that art forms reveal a specific practice that weaves into language “the complex relations of a subject caught between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, ...between ‘desire’ and the ‘law’, the body, language, and ‘metalanguage’” (1980, p. 97), and that this marks the subject’s condition of remaining “caught” between instinctual drives and the entry into social practice or language practice.

Who knew that Thornton W. Burgess, the modest support of his family and ardent homebody was writing with fundamental notions of human subjectivity, performing in his Bedtime Stories versions of the thetic stage, the mirror image and pre-symbolic violence years before Lacan’s and Kristeva’s theorizing? The effort of writing out a Bedtime story for children involved, for Burgess, an exploration into his inner-most memories of childhood, and articulated what he thought children must know.⁵ We are presented with the publishing company public relations story that Burgess wrote the Bedtime stories for his own son who was away with relatives after his wife Nina’s death. In the Rotarian article (Burgess March 1923) he states his interest in child psychology. Marketed to parents as conservationist animal-nature stories portraying a battle between unfair men/humans and noble, helpless creatures of the Greens Meadows and the Green Forest, Burgess was able to brand his stories with lessons of peril and redemption. In the

⁵ Kristeva reminds us that writing is a form of meditation, an “aesthetic formulation-sublimation that is for the author, albeit unconsciously, indistinguishable from therapy or self-analysis (Kristeva, 2004, p. 168).

ferocious sacrificing of a helpless, defenseless little bird, Burgess (almost) ruthlessly made a path to social reality for his readers; but he was not quite ruthless enough to let the young Bob suffer the ultimate tragedy. As many children who recall unhappy formative moments from childhood know - experiencing unkindness or worse, bodily and emotional abuse – death seems preferable to abject moments of fear and despair. Burgess portrayed these moments of greatest darkness in childhood via the abject sign of the young, wounded Bob White.

Lightfoot, the noble abject

In the book bearing his name, Lightfoot the Deer is introduced to readers as a visitor calling upon Peter Rabbit, just as Peter has said a sad farewell to the Quack family on their hazardous journey south for the winter. The initial chapter “Peter Meets Lightfoot” begins with the anti-hunting conservationist message of the peril to animal species of <the terrible guns> of <heartless hunters> who unfairly wait in ambush for them to pass by. Peter feels the gaze of eyes upon him, and he espies Lightfoot standing behind a hemlock tree. Peter tells of the unfairness of the <heartless hunters with terrible guns> and, as Lightfoot listens, his <great soft eyes were filled with pity>. As he listens to Peter’s rant, Lightfoot remains regal and calm, although we know he is touched, he demonstrates sensible and reserved emotion. Lightfoot responds to Peter, <Men are strange creatures, I do not understand them at all> thus positioning himself as the philosopher-king of the Green Forest, seemingly remote and aloof, yet caring. As Lightfoot continues, he evinces greater emotion: <Sometimes I think I’ll hunt one some day just to teach him a lesson> at which Peter laughs, thinking that Lightfoot was too

timid and gentle to harm any living creature. At this challenge to his masculine deerness, Lightfoot springs in front of Peter, stamping his sharp hooves and lowering his antlers into combat position toward Peter. His eyes, which had seemed so <soft and gentle now seemed to flash fire>.

If the child reader was not excited at this masculine display, certainly Peter Rabbit was suitably impressed at this visual and visceral performance by Lightfoot to scare Peter, to show that he can be bold and dangerous. Peter evinces a startled response to the demonstration of aggression, stammering and opening his own eyes wide in wonder and suspicion that this seemingly gentle king of the forest is capable of violence. Peter then spies tatters hanging from Lightfoot's antlers, and now we are led to the next chapter, a nature lesson on "Lightfoot's New Antlers." As Peter Rabbit learns about how stags grow antlers, he expresses, over and over again, incredulity that <those wonderful great antlers had grown out of Lightfoot's head in a single summer>. The sign of Lightfoot's burgeoning male sexuality are unbelievable to Peter, who suspiciously views the <queer rags hanging to them> which would be the old skin. Lightfoot boasts and preens before Peter in a male ritual display. In a burst of bravado, Lightfoot asserts he will fear no one, except for man with his <terrible gun>, apparently recognized as a phallic icon that trumps his antlers.

The magnificence of Lightfoot, majestic king of the Green Forest, at the height of his young stag glory is not sustained. In Chapter VI, "A Game of Hide and Seek," Lightfoot holds his own against a stealthy hunter who has entered the Green Forest in search of big game. However, the chase becomes more and more desperate as Lightfoot, canny as he is (as portrayed in Chapter VIII "Wit against Wit") is gradually worn down

by the hunter's intense persecution. Lightfoot grows increasingly suspicious and anxious, particularly when the hounds are brought in to join the pursuit. The reader visualizes the increasing one-sidedness of the chase, no longer a fun game of "Hide and Seek" as Lightfoot is <feeling the strain> and growing thin and nervous through the horror of being continually hunted. He feels safe only at night. Here the slippages of subjectivity characterized in the abject are felt as the reader's sense of 'not me' crosses boundaries (through identification) of 'me'. The passionate identification of feeling in the reader is heightened with the predicament of entrapment, or of feeling cornered with nowhere to go. Now, he hears the baying of the hounds following his trail, and his desperation increases. Finally, Lightfoot is cornered on the bank of the Big River, and has to swim for the opposite shore. While resting on a sandbar, exhausted, his great soft beautiful eyes showing helplessness, he hears the approach of the hounds and the hunter with them, and knows that <He must swim or be shot>. Arriving on the opposite shore, he staggers up the bank and <Not a speck of hope remained to Lightfoot> as he collapses, the once noble young male deer brought to his knees.

At the location he has landed, Lightfoot is fortunate at having arrived onto the land of a conservationist who fiercely chases the pursuing hunter off his land. However, Lightfoot's life has been saved by a human, and his fate hangs in the balance based on the whims of the saving human. The once independent and mighty Lightfoot is dependent upon another. With his erstwhile identity as *primo uno* of the Forest now extinguished, "deferred until death" (Burgin, 1990, p.118), Lightfoot's abjection gives opening to the chance for a new identity, a rebirth, that actually turns out to allow his once rather one-dimensional, shallow, masculinated, buff - stag identity to become more

rounded and dimensional. Lightfoot rests, meditates, and upon return to the Green Forest, he is able to pursue Miss Daintyfoot, fall in love, and marry. This happy outcome, from (shallow) nobility, to abjection, to adjustment and actualization as a good male seems to conform to a *bildungsroman* narrative form, insofar as the young male heroic figure is brought to fruition in character and life's hetero-normative destiny. Lightfoot has gone in search of a new love object which, in maturing, he must do (after Westwater, 2000, p.11). This narrative in the Anti-Hunting Trilogy 1917-1921 case study seems the only one to fit a classic model of *bildungsroman*, and so I found it set *Lightfoot the Deer* slightly apart from the other two stories.

Lightfoot the Deer was relentlessly pursued, until almost nigh to death, he reached a stage of dependency on an erstwhile enemy, an outsider to him, a human male. An interesting feature of the concept of abjection in its effects is that "as Barbara Creed explains, the abject is irreducible to any particular type of experience" (Wolfreys, 2004, p. 4). As a particular element of individual identity, what repulses oneself may not signify abjection to another self. While I, as a female reader with a specific personal history, may not necessarily identify deeply (with) Lightfoot as an abject sign, it may be that an identification of the sensations of dissolution working through Lightfoot's character are palpable for other readers. Burgin writes of Kristeva's statement in *Soleil Noir*, or *Black Sun*, that her phrase 'Beauties which strike a sort of melancholy' resonated with him in thoughts of reflection on objects lost to the self, through abandonment and the masking of depression as anger or violence (1990, p. 17).

Burgin cites Klaus Theweleit in *Male Fantasies* who articulates a location of disgust and inchoate dislocation

If that stream reaches me, touches me, spills over me, then I
 will dissolve, sink, explode with nausea, disintegrate in fear, turn horrified into
 slime that will suffocate me, a pulp that will swallow me like quicksand.
I'll be in a state where everything is the same, inextricably mixed together.
 (1990, 117, emphasis Burgin's)

In concert with Burgin's citation of Theweleit, the productive symbolization of a young male deer brought to the limits of endurance, only to be forced to withstand more indignity and humiliation *vis à vis* being penned up and nurtured by the former enemy, does have a resonance for me. The beautiful stag Lightfoot, a male sign, is brought low, is mixed with the sands and sludge of the riverbank upon which he takes refuge, before plunging onward to an unknown fate. It turns out that the fate Burgess assigns Lightfoot is to incorporate the earthbound abjection that is often assigned the female (Burgin, p.117) and to become a more actualized 'person.' One can only guess that, had Lightfoot continued on his prior path of unidirectional nobility and aggrandizement, he may have extinguished his noble character through some ruination brought on by aggressive pride. Perhaps if not 'saved' through abjection, he would have been run out of the forest by a rival for Miss Daintyfoot, but that is not the story's ending. As the new improved Lightfoot, he vanquishes a rival stag from the Green Forest and wins Miss Daintyfoot. Would Lightfoot have earned the love of a worthy mate without having undergone his misadventures, as chronicled by Burgess? It appears that Lightfoot is a 'better man' for having undergone his trial by abjection.

Kristeva in *Powers of Horror* proposes that abjection as a pre-symbolic moment in subject formation is needed in the process of separation and a transference to the imaginary father.

The immediate transference toward the imaginary father, who is such a godsend that you have the impression that it is he who is transferred

into you, withstands a process of rejection involving what may have been chaos and is about to become an object. (1983, p. 41)

Furthermore, in relation to the narrative of the maturation of the individual (as is found in the literary device of *bildungsroman*) abjection is a moment of instability in a struggle with me/not me and inside/outside dyadic structures. Abjection as a psychic play of the physical separation from the mother's body and the pre-symbolic condition seems, as evidenced in Burgess's narratives, to be a means of semiotic reading to provide a safe means to experience the otherwise unimaginable things that can happen in the struggle to be a self in the world. Mapping the body and psyche through semiotic movements in and out of me/not me are part of the aesthetic appeal of the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories. To read them in terms of a political construct of conservation was a fitting 'cover' for the books. Through his interest in the fight to save animals from the guns of the hunter, Burgess was also invested in a creative act of knowing about psychic operations.

Terror and anxiety

Having sworn to abstain from tragedy in his children's stories, specifically, the "ultimate tragedy" of death, due to his belief that "tragedy enters into human life soon enough at best" (Burgess, "Writing Stories for a Million Children" in *The Rotarian*, March 1923, 137) - what did that leave Burgess with for serious and grave material?

It left him with the age-old fairy-tale standard, **terror**. The main tyrannical ogre of Burgess's Anti-hunting stories is, of course, man in the form of <the hunter with the terrible gun>. In the context of the Bedtime Story, the hunter is a threatening shadow on the wall of the night-time room, a 'bad man' who compels the child reader-listener to draw closer to the comfort of the parental presence. The hunter with the terrible gun is

invoked as a spectre, a symbol of power and intrusion into a peaceful and harmonious world of the Green Meadows and Green Forest. The image of the hunter and his menace looms on the edge of the reader's awareness that the beloved animal friends are threatened with harm. The psychic unease that ensues in the reader undoubtedly assists the conservationist message that uncontrolled hunting (or any hunting) is bad and that animals deserve better things than persecution and buckshot.

Terror is a state of fear that may result from the menace of something seen, known and imminent, or perhaps also of something unknown, unseen but sensed, unnamable but dreaded none-the-less. Terror may be self-induced out of experiences, rumors and premonitions, or terrors may be announced as impending by an authoritative pronouncement that something 'terrible' is coming. Whereas fear is based in the real, and the material, anxiety (which is linked to terror) lacks a specific object to point out as the source (after Phillips, 1997, *Terror and Experts*, p. 58). Terror can be deployed with narrative effect, to invoke a sense of something is going to happen next. Terror may also be invoked to produce a feeling of powerlessness and dependency, the impression that something is coming out of nowhere, wreaked by nobody. The terror of an immanent threat of horrific violence and carnage has been invoked in the world everyday, but increasingly in the consciousness of Western populaces since September 11, 2001. In the world of Burgess writing his Anti-Hunting Trilogy around the years 1917 to 1921, was he invoking personal terrors, social terrors and anxieties, or both?

Burgess's renditions of terror are not subtle. In *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, the massacre of the migratory duck flock led by Mr. Quack is such a horrible, violent event that it must be distanced in the narrative by a re-telling back through time, a

flashback, in movie parlance. When Peter Rabbit visits with Mrs. Quack after her toilet at the Smiling Pool one fine morning, he had received only intimations of a terrible event in which Mr. Quack and her flock were lost. Now, he is seated and is prepared to hear first hand from a survivor all about the event. It is an intense and visceral retelling that is introduced, in Chapter XI with a violent aphoristic couplet: <Bang! Bang! Bang! Not a feather spare! Kill! Kill! Kill! Wound and rip and tear!>. The effectiveness of this astounding couplet derives from Burgess's understanding of the power of orality in the listener's 'minds-ear'- 'minds-eye' linkage: The emphatic thrice repetition of a voiced-consonant verb of aggressive meaning <Bang!> with the negation <Not>, followed by a velor (voiceless)-consonant emphatic thrice repetition of the verb command <Kill>. Making use of a language acquisition level of "Grammatical morphemes and the modulation of meaning in a simple sentence" (after Brown 1973, cited in Eastman 1978, p. 185), Burgess experimented with prose whose psychic impact served to destabilize meaning by drawing the child into a place where personal safety, and meaning, collapses (based on Robertson, personal communication, July 15, 2006).

In preparation for the retelling of the event, Mrs. Quack first affirms her feelings of being deceived by man the hunter. She then proceeds to delve deeply into her memories and feelings about the central incident of the duck massacre, and she begins the narration with <It was still and peaceful there and not a thing to be seen that looked the least bit like danger>. The fact of no indication of visible or clear and present danger is often a fact of true terror, the terror that seems to spring out of nowhere, seizing the reader by the throat with its sudden violence. In Burgess's version, the child reader is aware of being safely seated between the two countervailing witnesses of tragedy and

loss: Mrs. Quack and Peter Rabbit, and this presumably facilitates a state of receptivity and heightened attentiveness for incoming information or testimony provoked by balancing the reader between a safe place (Mischeff, 1998) and a space of terror.

Mrs. Quack recalls the moment of destruction and loss with the memory <there was a terrible bang, bang, bang, bang> and how her heart almost stopped beating, but she flew on, unknowing and unseeing, away from the direction of the conflict. Peter, the witness, assists her in memory through prompts such as <Where were the others?> in asking her about other survivors. Mrs. Quack further summons her feelings of tragic loss in the aftermath of the scene of violence, describing bereaved ducks who refused to fly on because <what was the use?> they had lost their mates and a chance for nests and young. This poignancy and pathos is, of course, in the service of Burgess's anti-hunting campaign, but what is the young child reader to visualize and imagine in the way of broken bodies and plundered dreams?

In another of the Anti-Hunting stories, Lightfoot in *Lightfoot the Deer* is at first presented as a noble, yet accessible figure, a creature who is driven from his natural habitat and secure comforts by the fearsome agency of Man the Hunter (perhaps foreshadowing the Big Fire in Felix Salten's 1931 *Bambi*). The game of hide and seek turns into a far more serious relentless pursuit-to-the-death, with the reader turning page-by-page to learn of the hunter's stratagems for deer-stalking. A great apprehension mounts as to whether or not Lightfoot will meet his end at the end of the hunter's <terrible gun> in chapters such as Chapter IX "Lightfoot Becomes Uncertain" and Chapter XI "The Hunter Watches the Hunted." The terror becomes palpable as the reader witnesses how shrewd and relentless is the hunter, and seemingly untiring in his

quest to bag Lightfoot. The greatest terror of all is when the hounds are brought in to aid the hunter in the chase: how can one escape these great panting, slaving beasts?

The visceral body is subjected to an exteriorized monstrous persecution through these images. Bullets fly as Lightfoot is chased by the dogs, and although Lightfoot desperately wishes to stop and lie down, he can't if he is to survive the onslaught. In the enactment of terror "The abject threatens life... Although the subject must exclude the abject, the abject must, nevertheless be tolerated for that which threatens to destroy life also helps to define life..." and as Creed (1993, p.9) describes, the abject can be experienced as it relates to biological bodily functions and also in terms of symbolic or ritual enactment. As Lightfoot, exhausted in body, reaches the shores of the Big River, he faces the ultimatum of <He must swim or be shot>. In this ultimate scene of entrapment by terror and anxiety, the sensation of being at the end, "that the abject threatens and creates a violent sensation of disorientation is very clear" with implications for sense of identity:

Whether individual or communal, social or private, personal or national, its unnerving force comes from the fact that, however much a part of us the abject may be, it is radically, irreducibly other than any element of our identities which we take to be normal or healthy. What we therefore reject, or whatever it is we are repulsed by, belongs to being. (Wolfreys, 2004, p. 4)

The inchoate terror of facing the collapse of meaning (via the collapse of the once strong and trustworthy body, for instance) is that which opposes the ego and is part of the human impulse in the rejection of loss of the known, of losing the self to others. The abject has a hand in producing an "uncanny effect of horror," threatening the logical certainty of the me/not me that has existed in the psyche *before* (Wolfreys, p. 3). The

anticipated violence once the slippage is in process can create effects of terror-anticipation, and these effects can be harnessed in film or novelistic narrative.

In Burgess's stories, there are some heart-stopping renditions of actual sites of terror, but perhaps of more event in his narratives are those small moments leading up to the terror event, moments provoking anxiety. In *The Adventures of Bob White*, the scene of violence when the Bob White family is shot at by a hunter, causing them to scatter to the seven winds, and resulting in the wounding of Young Bob, is, assuredly, a moment of marked horror and destruction: <Bang! Went the terrible gun, down dropped that little brown bird>. It must give the young reader cause for concern in wondering what will happen to all of them, particularly the young, wounded Bob. We are pulled into close quarters in hiding with Young Bob into the intimate space of the abandoned burrow, and thus a feeling of respite (Misheff 1998), but for how long?- there is no promise of final safety in sight as we co-suffer the pain of hurt and separation. The young Bob begins to plan his return to his family, but he is too weak and afflicted to drag himself toward the direction of his father's whistle as the elder Bob tries to call together the scattered brood. At this point of helpless striving, the <poor suffering, wounded little Bob White> (Burgess really lays on the pathos) encounters Farmer Brown's Boy, who tenderly lifts him and bears him to safety, a temporary resolution of anxiety until he is returned to his family.

Kristeva (1975/ 1986 in Rosen, ed.) speaks of a terror/seduction node that operates in the child psyche and is related to the specular, "the earliest point of origin for signs, for narcissistic identifications, and for the phantasmatic terror one speaking identity holds for another" (p. 240). Kristeva identifies the workings of the

terror/seduction node in cinema, and particularly, the horror flicks of Hitchcock and Eisenstein. In cinema the node provides for what she terms a “cut-rate seduction” the “three-buck seduction” in the “mediocre pot-boilers” tailored to, in her perception, petty bourgeois taste (1975/1986 Rosen, p. 241). Terror is captured in specular fascination and restored to the symbolic order, as in the artworks of Christianity. However, according to Kristeva, there are uses for terror and seduction outside cinema and the art of Christianity, potentially including analytic effects in psychoanalysis. From my reading of Kristeva’s “Ellipsis on Dread and the Specular Seduction” I hypothesize that terror is a productive site of narrative unfolding that can figure into the child’s development and the functioning of the adult. The question is, *what* forms does terror take and *how* is it deployed, particularly by writers for child viewing?

What permitted or impelled Burgess to writing scenes of such anticipatory terror and ensuing carnage? Was it merely a literary device of horror, designed to compel a reader’s attention? The intertwining of terror and anxiety in Burgess’s stories *is* an effective means of literary suspense in obtaining and holding attention, and may have served to endear him to the young boys of Hitchcock’s boyhood days who were attending the moving pictures in order to witness murder mysteries and other mayhem thought to be so dear to boyish hearts. It may also be seen as a mirror of what life is like for the small child who is subject to the moods and vagaries of the adult, decision-making world. In the 20th century, a child was subject to residence in the homes of adults who seemed at times remote or indiscipherable as to whether they would be happy or sad, calm or violent. These people were parents to the child, and there was a bond, but also a removal in terms of what to expect in terms of their emotions. There are also terrors that

come from ‘outside’, or threaten from outside, and these are the terrors that are most closely portrayed by Burgess in the persona of the hunter with the terrible gun, who also brings braying hounds (of hell?) into the peaceful environs of Green Meadow and Green Forest.

In response to those educators or parents who may question the appropriateness of moments of terror to be experienced by a child in the pages of a favored author, some answers come from the corner of contemporary author Robert Cormier. In an interview with Mitzi Myers, Cormier, the author of *The Chocolate War*, defends the insertion of dark themes into kid lit. Although Burgess did not directly portray the terrors and depravations wreaked by crazed serial killers, stalkers, Nazis, and other brutalizers, the comments of Cormier, who did portray these terrors, are relevant. Meyers comments to Cormier that young people today grow up with an “unprecedented exposure to violence”; and the author esponds that this is one reason why teachers must take the risk to present books such as his *The Chocolate War*, as has been done in the classroom for twenty-five years (2000, pp. 447-448). The Cormier interview addresses a view of literature for children as a rehearsal and a vicarious participation and preparation for the otherwise unimaginable. The interview also addresses views on what should be written for children, and who should write it.

The iconic and repeated images of the <terrible gun> and <the hunter with the terrible gun> recurs throughout the three case study stories as a sign of sinister intent, relentless and ever present. Burgess’s stories feature animals who are maimed, hurt and missing but they will be later revealed to be all right, thus allowing neophytes, the young of society and culture, to rehearse how to handle life’s events and misadventures without

lasting tragedy; a slippery device, on the part of Burgess, but successful. Through the anti-hunting, persecution theme, a very serious tone is set for children, but, arguably, most child readers respond affirmatively to it, and they can handle the prospect of trauma privately because they know they are in a community of book readers who share common sentiments. It is possible to posit that the stories perform a vital form of cultural bibliotherapy, instructing how to transcend the hurt of bodily and psychic injury, and how to bear loss (Morawski and Gilbert, 2000).⁶ Westwater (2000) sees that Kristevan theory aligns with an orientation toward the therapeutic effects of literature on both the writer and the reader, and I agree that this may be acting in the Burgess literature (some specifics will be addressed below in the section “Internal dramas of the writer”).

Wholeness and completeness – community

At this point, two recurring narrative structures or symbols used by Burgess to address and pull in child readers have been presented. The symbols of the scripted abject figure and narrative emplotments of terrorization and safety have been explored through the case study literature. Now, I wish to present a third analytic category at work in the narrative address of Burgess: the symbolization of wholeness and **community**. One of the undoubted attractions of the Burgess stories for readers is the (re)created community of familiar characters residing within a well-inhabited landscape that combines security and ownership with some adventures and dangers. It is a little community, not unlike Tolkien’s shire for his Hobbit-folk, or the safe-house for the Pevensie children and their

⁶ Bibliotherapy, or encounters in literature and other texts such as photographs, paintings and sculptures, music and musical instruments, can provide rich spaces of transaction in working and reworking personal history (C. Morawski, personal communication, December 2006).

ventures into the closet in the *Chronicles of Narnia*. The idea and sense of community is always a popular sign within children's genres, for them to come into and go out of in their testings and tryings- on vested in identity formations and seeking experiences of life other than with the natal family or local community. Burgess's stories are well-known and well-loved for their cast of familiar faces and places ("Fan Mail" a collection of letters in the Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections & Exhibits, DC and EJ Collections), and they lent themselves to the skillful stylings of illustrator Harrison Cady, who provided the perfect visual accompaniment to his imaginings, according to Burgess (Burgess, 1960, p.119-120).

For any child wishing to clamber into the book pages to join the community, it was an interesting and memorable ride. The story cycle favored by Burgess has the reader join the cast at the beginning of the stories which featured a tableau of cozy gatherings or meetings with favorite characters. For the Anti-Hunting stories, the dilemma of Man the Hunter is soon introduced, a narrative device which serves to bring the community closer together as they unite to discuss and fight the peril of <the terrible gun>. At the climatic point, the featured abject figure is separated from the herd, and must go into ignominious exile, cast out, dead to all, and even defiled through bodily injury or hurt. At the story's end, the outcast returns to join the tribe, and is welcomed back by the loving community, the band of brothers who never really gave up on their lost member.

The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack begins with the opening spotlight on Peter Rabbit, and we are introduced to Peter Rabbit's spatial and temporal world (not unlike Mr. Roger's Neighborhood) as he goes about his daily visits to friends at the Smiling

Pool. The threat of the <terrible gun> is inserted via the traumatic story of Mrs. Quack the Mallard Duck who has taken shelter with the community. The vague, slightly mysterious figure of her spouse Mr. Quack is already outcast, although there is a flashback to the scene of his ritual expulsion. Mr. Quack is ensconced off-stage, not yet a member of the community, except in memory and relationship to Mrs. Quack (who has been accepted) only. Members of the community are called in aid of the rescue and recovery of Mr. Quack, and they willingly join in, despite some certain peril to themselves from the <hunters with the terrible guns> - particularly to Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow whose exploits expose them to the hunters' guns. But in Burgess's moralistic narrative line, these heroic friends minimize any threat to themselves, demonstrating altruism in a stunning disregard for personal safety by aiding a friend in need. Mr. Quack is triumphantly returned to Mrs. Quack, and the community at large, who, through the act of rescue, grow their numbers by not only the happy duck couple, but also by ten young ducks who one morning are <proudly led forth for their first swim> and <Oh, those were happy days indeed for Mr. And Mrs. Quack in the pond of Paddy the Beaver>.

In a continuation of the theme of community, *The Adventures of Bob White* features the quail Bob White, who is a lovable, cheery character introduced as a member of the Green Meadow, Green Forest, Old Orchard populace. He is also introduced, significantly for the Anti-Hunting message, as an important figure for the human community, because he helps farmers. Through this connection with helping farmers, a creature derives worth though his value to humans, and this moralistic nature-message is a development by which Burgess hoped to ally his conservationist campaign with the

idea that animal helpers serve the war effort by eating pests that eat crops. Bob White is in the process of trying to find a new home, as he and the Missus are about ready to set up housekeeping and lay eggs. They locate a suitable home-site near Bob's good friend, Peter Rabbit. The invocation of communal action on the home-front during the time of World War I was a shrewd choice by Burgess the *auteur* who used political developments to make his stories relevant to readers, and to provoke idealistic identifications of unity and nationalism. Even though the two 'menfolk' were not at the warfront, they could do their part for the war effort.

One sunny fall day, just as things are going well for the animal community, including the happy domestic scenes of the homes of Peter Rabbit and of Bob White, and the home-schooling of their children in the ways and whiles of survival in the wild, there is a terrifying intrusion. A hunter with a <terrible gun> flushes the Bob Whites, wounds a Young Bob, and forces the young bird into hiding and separation from his family and his community. (After the death of Burgess's first wife, Nina, young Thornton was sent away to live with relatives in the Midwest while Burgess, Sr. concentrated on his writing and courted his second wife, Fanny). The Young Bob endures some frightening trials, but by the story's end he is found by his father and returned to the community. (Young Thornton eventually returned home, only to endure further trials such as being locked out of the house by an angry step-mother when he was thought to be errant, according to Frances Meigs, his step-granddaughter in her biography of Burgess).

Community is portrayed slightly differently in the last book of the Trilogy, *Lightfoot the Deer*. Lightfoot is a bit of a loner, the single young male 'stag', who from time to time shows up to join in communal activities in the Green Forest whenever it suits

him. He is portrayed at first as being independent, with no particular ties or holds on his loyalty. He meets up with Peter Rabbit at the beginning of his spotlighted adventure in the Green Forest series for a chat, to show off his superior antlers, and to otherwise preen and prance before his friend. Peter, although married, is the perpetual adolescent who is duly impressed by Lightfoot's show of strength and supreme maleness. The fearsome male display sets Lightfoot apart from the more lowly creatures of the community, who are closer to the ground or airborne, and must flee for their defense from the normal predators of Reddy Fox and Red-tail the Hawk. Via shaded characterizations of animal personalities, Burgess was successful in portraying the dynamics of community life. The Green Meadows and the Green Forest harbor a group of denizens who co-exist and at times cooperate, but it is clear from Burgess's characterizations that a community is comprised of different personalities.

Lightfoot cannot escape the unwanted attentions of the <hunter with the terrible gun> who single-mindedly pursues the young stag, chasing him from the protection of the community of his animal friends. He is forced to seek shelter in the barn of a friendly (unnamed) human conservationist. Here Lightfoot rests, recoups, and emerges once the danger from the hunter is past. In a surprise cameo appearance, Lightfoot returns to the community, and all the Green Forest friends rejoice. Burgess demonstrates that even through his disappearance from the community, Lightfoot was not forgotten. Lightfoot is further ensconced as a full-fledged community member when he courts and takes a mate, Miss Daintyfoot, who in the narrative, seems to be his full complement and completion in every way.

In reading the sign of separation from and re-integration into the community, it is tempting to see how some of Burgess's own personal history may have influenced the story-lines and characterizations. For instance, is it possible to read the small, wounded Bob White as Burgess's own banned son Thornton, Jr. until Burgess was able to bring him back to the fold of his family life? Is the character of Miss Daintyfoot, the love object of Lightfoot, to be read as his second wife Fanny, whom he courted after his first wife's death and after the death of Fanny's husband? The question of the autobiographical component of the novel has always been addressed to writers in the minds of their devoted readers: Did this really happen? Who is this person in your story? Did you really do that? I do not feel it is all that likely that the Bedtime Story - Book readers would have read 'The Life of Burgess' into the nature-animal stories. The readers of the Burgess stories knew a little of his life, but only as Burgess cared to reveal to his public. Burgess was the master of his own spin, writing articles for the Rotary Magazine that gave his philosophy of writing for children, or creating the aura for his stories that they emanated as tales for his son when Thornton Jr. was away. His personal life and formation was finally revealed (in greater detail but still under his control) to acclaim and interest by his story readers in his *Now I Remember, Autobiography of an Amateur Naturalist*, but not until 1960, close to the time when he had finished with his writing career.

In a reading with psychoanalytic theory, the intrusion of the <terrible gun> into the Burgess imagined community may be interpreted as a phallic threat, perhaps the remembrance or fantasy of some type of unwanted masculine interference into Burgess's childhood idyll of life with his widowed mother. As a widow, Caroline Burgess was not

unlike other single parents of her era, subject to oversight by the paternal family, her son's extended family, who asserted certain customary claims. Another means to read the <terrible guns> is as a sign of the incursions of the symbolic into the pre-nursery idyll of the pre-symbolic, semiotic, pre-oedipal wish-world. The maternal community/child body and psyche becomes aware of a general threat to its being and identity, and alerts the animal characters/parts of child body and psyche of the impending arrival. The <hunter with the terrible gun> embodying the demands of the adult world and the Law of the Father (from Lacanian theory) enters the Green Meadow and Green Forest to hunt and wound the animal/child abject. The chase ensues, with separation of the featured abject from the group, the sheltering community/ pre-symbolic ego, and there is a trial of terror.

But a ray of hope lies behind the ritual of terror, and that is the hope of return to the community, to love, home-shelter and belonging. In the end, survival of the trials of the <terrible gun> always makes the subject stronger, and more able to endure and grow in the social world. The imagined community has always been a sign of wholeness, and a return to wholeness if there has been a source of breakage or disarray. The rupture and the return always provides the greatest satisfaction, as attested by the popular appeal of the stories of *The Prodigal Son*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor*, *The Odyssey of Homer*, and numerous other narratives of similar theme. A theme of community is a strong pull in the aesthetic appeal of the Burgess trademark Bedtime Stories, both in serialized newspaper format and in the book form. One visualizes the early readers of Burgess flocked around the kitchen table lamp at night, reading the words aloud to family members, knitting, sewing, or just listening. Or perhaps the

mother/child or a father/child dyad in the bedroom prior to sleep for the child. Both real world invocations of community were re-embroidered and wished for in the words of Burgess, the communal storyteller of the early 20th century.

Discussion of categories of analysis

I have borrowed from and reconstructed a use of the abject in play derived from some of the famous ideas of Kristeva. She derives the basis of her theorizations from Jacques Lacan, and she also borrows from theorist-practioners such as Klein and Winnicott. Looking at other practitioners who have adapted theory in psychoanalysis, and what these formulations may specifically denote for my study, I turn to Ellman who writes of Freud's discovery of the death drive through his grandson's "ritual expulsion of his toys" (1990, p. 196). In the game now termed Fort-da and identified by Freud as he watched the early play of a young grandson, the child masters his mother's absences by staging them in the manipulation of a sign that acquires meaning through experience. Ellman asserts that "It is important, however, that the *drama* fascinates the child rather than the toy itself, for the bobbin belongs to a series of objects which he substitutes indifferently for one another" (p. 196). The idea that it is the drama that the child is invested in is, I think, very telling for narrative literature that seeks to engage the child entering language in various increments of involvement, as I have demonstrated for the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories using Kristevan analytical tools, and other tools. Ellman describes also the mirror game, whereby the infant hides from his mirror reflection, and realizes, in the game, that he has disappeared, and that he has made himself disappear. Thus through various rehearsals in play, including language play, kinaesthetic play,

specular experiments and the like, the child explores me/not me, image and illusion, and also, according to Kristeva, flirts with annihilation.⁷ Apparently this is all in a day's work for harmless, twee animal-nature stories.

Through my close readings of the stories, it became apparent that the abject characters are play things structured by the writer to be cruelly and unusually outcast out in the rhythm of coming to terms with the semiotic *chora*, Kristeva's word for the pre-socialized space in which the child can find its identity, in rehearsing fort-da with the mother, the link that must be broken yet retained with the mother as part of the self in what is sometimes termed 'pre-oedipal' and later in adolescent ruptures and reunions. As something that is cast out and cast about, the animal characters can be toyed with by the child reader and their low stature can be observed and loved simultaneously. The abject here is not waste, as in bodily excess, for it is useful and can be used in growth and transition, in readiness and watching. Rather, here the abject is something useful, transitional in play, an object standing in for a stage of being.

Although the theme of pursuit of small helpless animals by hunters is accepted by Burgess readers and fans as part of his conservation message, those same readers may be surprised that it would be seen as a theme of terror, horror, and perhaps punishment of child bodies and psyche. Because he was so careful to avow that he did not place tragedy in his stories, this aspect may have permitted child readers and their guardians to

⁷ "Hiding from his own reflection in a mirror, he lisps, 'Baby o-o-o-o!' [Baby gone!]: like an abject Narcissus, fascinated by his absence rather than his image. Casting himself out, the child finds his subjectivity by rehearsing his annihilation in a game that can only end in death. As Kristeva writes: 'I expel myself, I spit myself out, I abject myself within the same motion through which "I" claim to establish myself.' Moreover, by attempting to control his world with signs, the child has become a function of the

overlook the violence of the duck massacre, the small quail's wounding and abject hiding, and Lightfoot's persecution at the hands of a hunter. Sometimes parents themselves have employed terror, or threats evoking terror, as a disciplinary device: "Just wait until your father gets home, young man"; or "The boogie man will get you if you don't get in bed now." At other times the use of terror can be experienced as a delicious thrill, breathing one closer to life through danger or risk, as in the roller coaster at fairs, or watching divers in cages feed swarming sharks, or an animal-trainer showman placing his head in the mouth of a lion.

There had been many writers of terror and horror before Burgess's time. Burgess appears to have embraced the concept of 'virtual terror' in a childhood space, in creating stand-ins for traumatic experiences. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Four, Burgess projected images of fear and provoked delicious anxieties via the cinematic process of symbolization with characters and montage effects evoking realism. Simultaneously for his readers, he invoked the knowledge of what to do in the face of adversities experienced in the 'persons' of Mrs. Quack, Bob White, and Lightfoot. Burgess meant for his teaching role to be in moral values via the cause of nature conservation, but his latent messages, apprehended through unconscious projection of important images of the psyche, effected transferences vital to child emotional processes.

Humans survive through community. It is said by anthropologists to be one of the hallmarks of successful human adaptation, to be interdependent and cooperate with one another. Growing up in a small New England turn of the century village, it is not surprising that the Burgess animal nature stories would call upon the idea and the ideal of

sign, *subjected* to its ineluctable trajectory (Ellman, p. 196, citing Kristeva, *Powers of Horror, An Essay on Abjection*, p.3).

relationships with family, friends and neighbors. Not only content to celebrate the bonds and allures of community life, Burgess also depicted the ruptures and upheavals of being outcast, but returning triumphant. The theme of loss and return is much celebrated and written in classical Greek literature, Biblical literature, and other world mythologies and narratives. Ethnographic observations of various tribal peoples (including the Western Industrial Tribe) have demonstrated to anthropological theorists the centrality of Victor Turner's (1979) identification of separation and re-incorporation as part of rituals of coming to adulthood. The idea of belonging to someone and that there will always be someone to return to is age-old, and is one of the comforting notions that children are supposed to be able to hold about their place in the world. Even when circumstances are difficult, under conditions of war, famine and other deprivations, children have managed to keep in community, as with street children around the world, who seek out each other as surrogate parents or families. The Burgess stories capitalize on the sign of community as the ideal, and as a means for survival in the world.

Excess and visual dynamics

Burgess disavowed the appearance of tragedy for his stories, although there were such horrendous incidents of betrayal (duck decoys), wounding (by terrible guns), temporary loss and bereavement of loved ones, and the like. The child reader entering the pages of the stories could possibly have expected a retreat from the traumas brought forth, or perhaps a reversal of trauma, but there could certainly be no erasure of the events that happened upon the bodies of his or her friend-in-the abject. Through his very disclaimer of writing tragedy, Burgess makes the potential for tragedy present by invoking the thought. Tragedy, by its very 'absence,' was present in the stories, it was

the elephant sitting in the middle of the living room. Certainly, Burgess as a child knew the tragedy of the loss/lack of his father, with the attendant need for an economically circumscribed lifestyle for his widowed mother and himself. Even his dreams of enrolling in an academic program at university were affected by the early loss of a male parent, leading Burgess to a stint in business school before going on to work as an office boy.

What to do with the excess of emotions wrought by the immediacy and excitement of dire perils and their eventual evasion written in the pages of Burgess's Anti-hunting stories? I contend that it is this very excess that Burgess, knowing what to do with it, turned to use in the visualizing language he used to address and stroke the reader-audience. Just as the favored uncle appears at bedtime to whip young nephews and nieces into a frenzied orgy of rough-and-tumble play, then leaves them to the less-than-impressed parents to settle down and put to bed, so Burgess stirred his readers to the precipice of concernment and curiosity. However, Burgess was the responsible parent as well as the mischievous and oblivious uncle, so via a calming effect of visualizing language, he put children to bed by taming the excess, or overflow of emotions provoked by trials and situations faced by the favored characters. The overflow was not presented as visions of sugarplums, but rather visions of how abject subjects could treat with terror and anxiety through the agency of a safe, yielding, supporting cast of community in a safe, secure environ of Green Meadow, Green Forest, and even (prickery, but safe) Briar Patch.

The abject as a scriptable stand-in for state of mind and being plays well into the notion of the cine-semiotic in guiding a reading for movement-through-things and dynamism of growth of the individual. As the reading-through occurs, there are also

pauses with images that remain and images that pass through to be replaced by new ones. In the reading of the abject sign in the Burgess stories, the Winnicottian notion of a transitional object or a transitional phenomenon makes sense also in terms of the successful commodification of Burgess real objects for the 20th century market of toys, games and nursery accouterments. Visualized, and placed, or displaced out there, away from one's immediate body, the fantasized notion of the exigencies and vicissitudes of being abject, then placed in harm's way, then saved were a means of experiencing vicariously the notion of trauma and how to survive it. These vicarious experiences encapsulate a reserve of energy that cannot be completely organized or incorporated into the symbolic. In remaining between the pre-symbolic and symbolic, just beyond reach of linguistic articulation, the need was generated for a "semiotic polyvariance" (after Jenkins 2004) which became an excess useful in the cinesemiotic stylings on the pages of the Burgess stories.

Allied with the pleasures of the gaze, the semiotic energy of Burgess's writing 'busted out' in a cinematic language that has carried readers along from the early 1900s until this day, and that later enticed would-be producers to request his stories for film format. Two recent researchers in children's literature have noted what they term "suspended animation" (Op de Beeck, 2006) and "the drama of potentiality" which is effected by "the interanimation of narration and pictorialization" (Wylie 2006, p.176) in their case studies of children's picture books. The cine-semiotic that I propose for Burgess's stories does not rely upon the accompanying Harrison Cady illustrations, as Op de Beeck and Wylie see for an interdependence of written text with illustrations for their examples, but the Cady illustrations do enhance the effects.

In Chapter Four, I explore aspects of the narrative workings of the Burgess stories that lend themselves to film reading and film theory. The use of semiotic signs in scripted psychic and social lessons presented by Burgess for the use of children evinces a storytelling appeal that encouraged an entry into the symbolic function of language. In Chapter Four, I show that Burgess's simple nature stories went beyond teaching about animal behavior and nature conservation, presenting timeless lessons of how to get along in the world (or as attributed to Maurice Sendak, "How the hell do they [children] survive?" cited in a review of his re-staging of an opera production of "Brundibar," *The New York Times*, February 10, 2006). The way of narrative approach by Burgess was to present the stories in a sharp, focused, visualizing manner that could conjure up in the mind's eye of the child a moving picture formation of watching beloved animal characters go about the daily business of wishing, hoping and wanting alongside enduring, thinking, playing and cooperating with others. These internalized lessons borne of imagery and rhythmic presentation are analyzable via film-reading techniques. This semiotic/ *la semiotique* presentation, along with *le semiotique* of Kristevan theory, visited significant effects upon readers of the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy.

Chapter Four – Narrative Workings of the Burgess Stories

Introduction

Burgess had hoped that his animal-nature stories would be instructive, and today the exhibits, curation and programs of Thornton W. Burgess Society in his birthplace of Sandwich, MA are based around the idea that his stories teach and inform children about nature, particularly in the Cape Cod region. In his article “Writing Stories for a Million Children” (*The Rotarian*, March 1923) Burgess expounds his philosophy behind writing for children, and describes his agenda of pedagogical and moral character-building goals. Royer (1983) in an unpublished dissertation study on nature symbolism in the stories of Thornton W. Burgess addressed authorial motivation and reader effects in the popular animal stories. Burgess constructed a storyteller persona through titles such as *Tales from the Storyteller’s House* (1938) and *While the Story-Log Burns* (1938). In fact, the Burgess stories could be considered as ‘spoken aloud’ story-making process in line with a concept of primary orality (Ong 1982). Later in his career, Burgess dictated stories aloud to his secretaries, including his step-daughter (Meigs 1998). Burgess appears to have been interested in crafting the content of his stories and the meanings conveyed by his word choice, inflections and social nuances of dialog and description. The closely oral nature of the story language, including dialog, descriptions and nature explanations made the Burgess stories socially-oriented tales featuring the companionable animal characters created by Mr. Burgess as a trusted guides. As an apprentice of language, the child listener is ever alert to the introduction of new aspects of social language in their environment (Langacker, 1973, pp. 239-259); and they learn the structural sequence of conversation through listening-observation (Trudgill, 1983, pp.127-129).

Aspects of meaning in social language are present in Burgess's texts. For example, in *The Adventures of Bob White*, Chapter II "Bob White Has Visitors" page 7, Peter Rabbit and Bob White exchange morning salutations and then philosophically discuss 'cheerfulness.' In their long run, the Burgess stories form a continuing and enduring source of information for the child learner of language and mores through the entire 20th century, enduring through many social and economic transformations up to the time of the current readership of today. But what lay beneath the surface of the stories? The overall movements and structure of the three Anti-Hunting Stories did not at first seem to present an appearance out of the ordinary. They seemed to be plotted with an Aristotelian format of three acts with a beginning, climax, and end, a formulation which became the convention in modern English narrative. Out of close readings of the stories grew a conviction that I must look at aspects of the story structure that addressed and compelled fans over such a long-standing time period. There is something compelling in the language and the staging of the characters and the actions, and in the descriptions of the story settings.

My reading of the three Burgess Anti-hunting stories prompted me to explore the dynamics of the psyche that were prompted by the prose style as well as its content.. The agendas of the child: the "push toward language and socialization" as seen in acceptance of differentiation and boundaries; and "the pull toward image, wish and fantasy" (Spitz 1993, p. 275) are borne out in the pages of Burgess's stories. Patterns of repetition, simplicity of speech, and didactic or transparent setting out of lessons are all hallmarks of the nursery, known from oral tradition and folk wisdom to work on child consciousness (Robertson 2002 and 2000). As I crept further and deeper into the Briar Patch that

Burgess had (re)created from the material of his Cape Cod boyhood and with interpolations from Joel Chandler Harris's *Brer Patch*, I began to see that the reassuringly familiar, normalized surroundings together with the disarming congeniality of his animal characters, and accompanied by illustrations by his dear friend Harrison Cady, harboured psychological dilemmas of childhood, including experiences of wishing, wanting, hoping, and feeling anxieties of separation and loss from parental and authority figures. For a child reader to inhabit this world took very little work on the surface, since the reading level was tolerable and the characterizations and plots were straightforward, and the pleasures were those of removal from the everyday world and placement within a busy, sociable, imagined landscape.

Reading as an internal discourse

The three Burgess anti-hunting stories are framed as a case study in terms of their socio-cultural significance in the phenomena of child-enlistment to a political cause. This externalized reading is embedded in historical conditions surrounding the stories. My systematic line- by- line reading approach provided notes that reflect back to me my reading and understanding of the stories "In my own words." These close reading notes brought home the idea that a private, internal discourse also resides in the readings of the Burgess stories, and that this is a reading that has not been researched for his stories. As demonstrated in Chapter Three of this study, the stories resonate in terms of their psychic appeal for messages of child trauma and coping. In my research of the Burgess story dynamics and hypothesized reader effects, the concept of internal discourse is of interest for several reasons. One, it is important to be able to recognize internal discourse as part

of the cognitive process for reading, particularly for early child readers (Temple and Gillett, 1989). The recognition that an internal discourse is constructed by the reader while he or she is negotiating the meaning of the author's words could be useful to reading and literacy teachers. Secondly, in framing the idea of how *le semiotique* of Kristeva may work in unconscious reception of messages from the author's story, internal discourse is hypothetically part of the way in which a chain of reception can be seen to occur, leading the reader to apprehend and interpret a message received from the reading of story. For my study's proposal of the play of the cine-semiotic effects of the abject, terror and community as integral to Burgess's own inner-most thoughts and integral to his writing, the outward manifestation of those thoughts, it is significant that various theorists in film studies have looked to ideas from psychoanalysts and cognitive psychology. and also in terms of their psychic appeal for messages of child trauma and coping.

In a study of the how the moving picture works in the dynamics of the mind, the idea of the internal monologue or discourse has been taken up in Heath's *Questions of Cinema* (1981). Lev Vygotsky was interested in "inner speech" in his work *Thought and Language* (Heath p.209). Heath also cites Freud's analytical work in looking toward dreams as a visual presentation of the unconscious since they are "essentially visual" thus leading to film theorist notions of cinema as dream and dream as cinema (1981, p. 203). The visual impressions of abstract signs turning into pictures in the mind produces meaning in the reader. Heath cites Eisenstein's 1949 *Film Form* :

Freud looked from the beginning towards the development of a conception of inner speech, near to what Eisenstein would call 'the quivering inner words that correspond with the visual images' ... (p. 204, underlined words Eisenstein's)

Inner speech may make use of a verbalized association with words we have read, forging a meaning. How is it that an 'inner join' of word and thing come about? "Word and thing are linked by the sound-image alone and inner speech is the constant – or not, as in aphasia – link of the two, the point of transmission of their relation ..." describes Freud's discovery and elaboration of the unconscious assisted understanding of the link of sound to thought processes. Freud's unconscious "is a kind of archaic present in language, the assertion of a history; thus the idea, briefly referred to earlier, of a material established during the historical development of speech and which has to be repeated in the case of the development of speech in each individual" (Heath, p. 205).

Film theorist and director Jean Mitry discusses internal language in reading or viewing as a decoding process that takes, in the viewer's mind, the form of a discourse or a secondary film running simultaneously with the one on screen. Mitry feels that this internal language is guided by but not determined by semiotic/ *la semiotique* (the science of signs) elements and rather than speech thought it may also comprise a visual, instinctive level thought (2000). Mitry extends his notion of a "simple logical organisation of mental images on which judgment is based" (p. 155) to consider the operation of a child learning to read who discards associative images to the words and starts to master the abstract nature of language. It is a process involving moving back and forth from image-association to abstract level language that seems to me to parallel Kristeva's ideas around *le semiotique*.¹ In this way, the process of movement in pre-symbolic to symbolic is foreseen as a forgiving entry to language and entry into the law

¹ *Le semiotique* as used in (Kristevan) psychoanalysis refers to the organization or disposition within the body of instinctual drives as they affect language and its practice (Roudiez, 1980).

of the father and society, a process whereby the child/learner may go back and forth with confidence.

Reading and co-creation of meaning between author and reader

My study is concerned with the dynamics of construction, by a writer, of a world of symbolic and productive significance in the early 1900s (see Burgess, 1923, "Writing for a Million Children" for a statement on why and how he wrote for children). I at first considered Burgess's Rotary magazine article as a framework for analyzing his writing, then decided that the article was arguably too influenced by his desired public persona, in spite of its insights into his *stated* intent in writing. The world co-created by Burgess and participated in by his audience was a fantasy formation that resonated with a widespread group of increasingly influential child readers. This world had a distinct influence over a targeted population of consumers. The stories were commodified in specific marketing format of "Bedtime Nature Stories" or "Green Forest Stories" and in terms of the "Quaddies" trademark name. Even while Burgess gained a reputation of trust as a kindly, nurturing educator/writer, storyteller, he was brandname spokesman for his stories and a male 'breadwinner' as much as he was an author. Burgess's diary entries and financial records, as well as his autobiography, indicate how seriously he took his role as sole support for himself, his mother, his second wife, and his growing family - his son, stepson and stepdaughters - and later on, his son's wife and their children. Recent scholarly literature has gone into the area where children of the turn of the century and early twentieth century began to figure in the realm of commodification which claimed a hold over American culture. Cook's *The Commodification of Childhood* (2004),

Sammond's *Babes in Tomorrowland: Walt Disney and the Making of the American Child, 1930-1960* (2005), Zelizer's *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (1985), and Honeyman's article on "Manufactured Agency and the Playthings Who Dream it for Us" (2006) all point to a sea change from the 19th century conceptualizations of children as romanticized mini-adults to the children of the 20th century who (in the middle class) were co-opted into "an ideology of conditional empowerment and perpetual commodification as imagined through a passifying gaze" (Honeyman, p. 110).

Lundin (1999) details the burgeoning world of economic opportunity for authors of children's books in the early twentieth century. Lundin's study focuses on the works of Kate Greenaway, whose publication association with Routledge was in its prime in the late 19th century. Lundin outlines several features for the literary discourse of the late nineteenth century that she feels carried over to the twentieth century: children's books treated as commodities; elevation of children's books as artworks; an emphasis toward illustrative and pictorial effects in texts; a lack of rigid lines between adult and child literature; a growing gender diversification; and the diversification of a didactic tradition accompanied by a debate on fantasy and realism for child works (1999, p.158). Lundin finds that "In a self-conscious 'art culture,' Greenaway was successful in impressing aesthetes, critics, book artists, and, most important, the consumer market of parents" (p.164), and that "the culture industry around Greenaway perpetuated a singular vision that was well replicated in the popular culture" (p.165).

Burgess has a trademark pattern involving characters, settings and mannered, whimsical social transactions that readers come to expect and enjoy (after Bixler and

Agosta, 1984; Cawelti, 1976). But there is more - the Bedtime Nature Stories may be predictable, but they are suspenseful. The Burgess nature stories begin, build, climax and are resolved according to story pattern conventions around a conflict surrounding the safety of the protagonist-animal character. Due to the plotted pleasures expected by the reader, it doesn't seem to matter that *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, *The Adventures of Bob White* and *Lightfoot the Deer* are basically the same story, it is actually preferred that they are. In the three case study stories, each narrative replays and resolves catastrophe involving separation and loss. In the tried and true formula that Burgess followed, the Bob White, Poor Mrs. Quack and Lightfoot characters are introduced (enter stage right), there are little preliminary lessons that precede the main moral lesson when hunters pursue/persecute the animal, he or she is hurt, friends all rally to aid the afflicted, the animal hides from pursuer (man with gun), animal is saved, next story is announced – almost as for radio format, an announcement of the next exciting installment!

Part of the pact between a writer known for a certain type of commodity is that his writing is like a brand name with certain expectations for the reader built in to the purchase of the book, or buying in to the fantasized world. Burgess produced a distinctive 'brand' of literature featuring recognizable, beloved animal characters, special places and recognizable locations, and an anticipatory specifically-worded prose prolog of short rhyming aphoristic couplets to preface (or sometimes to enfold within chapters), all dotted with peppy, 'with-it' dialog of the day. This name brand of stories was tied to production in an increasingly industrialized and capitalist society that leaned toward the creation of and gratification of desires of child consumers who wanted and wished for the

next story to come in the next newspaper, who wanted the next new Burgess book, who wished for the *Quaddies*™ products.

In the demand for the material items associated with the Burgess stories, the critic of commodification may see a manipulation of the wish to possess the ideal world, where one can voyage out to adventures acted upon animal bodies and come back unscathed. Parents became more affluent, with families smaller and more contained within the nuclear family structure, and these new middle-class, prosperous folks wanted to fulfill their children's wishes and indulge them when possible. If children wanted Burgess things, parents wanted them for them, and enjoyed providing access to the nature stories that seemed so wholesome, character-building and educational, as well as providing a little indulgence of fantasy and style. Early advertisements for the *Burgess Bedtime Story Books* were geared toward this marketing sector (one example is a Burgess advertisement in The Book World Column in *John O'London's Weekly*, October 31, 1931, p.154), as were the advertisements for *Quaddies* brandname cloth and blankets, and for *Quaddies*™ items of personal care, circa 1914-20 (TWBSDCE, Ernestine Johnson Collection) that the growing children's book and toy industries could rely upon to generate interest and revenue.

Patterns and movements at work in the Burgess Anti-Hunting case study stories

The Burgess books comprise an example of the success of the early 20th century children's book industry in exploiting the commodifiable aspects of parental hopes and dreams for their children, and the desires of children for things that seem bright and attractive. There are also tangible literary reasons for the success of the stories.

Although the writer was self-taught as to the ways of literary composition, he seems to well evince lessons he gained as a reader of books and as a reader of culture (Burgess, 1960). Elements common to modern Western writing conventions appear in the three Anti-hunting stories. Burgess used the Aristotelian normative format corresponding to three act structure of beginning, climax and ending. His narrative technique made use of modern, normative conventions of dramatic involvement, the use of speech and dialog, duration, symbol or image, and theme (Goring and others, 2001, pp.35-36). There is also an element particularly essential to children's stories - rhyme and reason (an opinion held by children's author Margaret Wise Brown as presented in Marcus, 1992). In line with what I detected of a visualizing trend in narrative, some of the literary narrative conventions observable for Burgess's stories are akin to cinematic or film conventions (after Fell 1974).

In order to present some of the workings of the Burgess literature that work along with the psychic play of the stories, I operationalize selected elements mentioned in Goring in several examples from Burgess's three Anti-hunting works. A complete operationalization of the stories would comprise an entire chapter of a thesis, and is not within the scope of my study which explores the interplay of cine-semiotics with specific categories of analysis from reading with psychoanalysis. However, it is informative and instructive to see several places where conventional elements of narrative (both literary and filmic) can be identified in Burgess's works.

Narrative technique - Wright describes the Burgess stories as narrated from the point of view of the main character of the title (1999, p. 40). I have found that the point of view is not strictly from the title character or from another main character such as Peter Rabbit,

but that the point of view shifts throughout the story, from Peter Rabbit, to Mrs. Quack, to Sammy Jay, and that there is an omniscient narrator who gives the perspective of the character under view at that particular time. At other times, the omniscient narrator directly addresses the reader, actively soliciting his or her involvement in the narrative predicament (as with *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, page 42, where a narrating voice advises the reader of Mrs. Quack's unease as she begins to recount her tale of the duck massacre to Peter Rabbit).

Relevant to the idea of the Burgess stories as performing as a film language, Bordwell and Thompson in their discussion of narration in *Citizen Kane* state that the use of several narrators to transmit a story serves a number of functions: it conveys a 'realistic' depiction of the plot and subplot; it shows different sides of the title character or situation under consideration, depending on who is speaking; and it keeps the viewer in suspense about the outcome, conveying and concealing information (1986, pp.110 - 111). For both written stories and for film, point of view is a pivotal organizer for the images that appear to the viewer. In film, the point of view is usually where the (unseen) camera shoots from, corresponding to the *auteur's* idea of the position from which an observer should witness a scene (Casetti, 1998, p. 19) and resulting in a moving picture effect.² Burgess could be said to have made use of 'panning' from one point of view locus to the next in his narrative variety.

² It is interesting to note that children's literature of around this time period is said to have possessed visual-imaginary traits. Writes Fell: "We have always had a go at moving camera shots, albeit gravity controlled, just by walking. Lewis Carroll wrote a traveling shot into his introduction of Humpty Dumpty: 'The egg seems to get further away the more I walk towards it...So she [Alice] went on, wondering more and more...at every step, as everything turned into a tree the moment she came up to it, and she quite expected the egg to do the same...' Movement, then, like camera angles, was to be perceived either by the author...or by the characters" (1974, p. 67).

In Chapters XXIII and XXIV of *Lightfoot the Deer*, where the hunter is chasing Lightfoot before the young stag finds shelter and ease, the point of view swings back and forth between Lightfoot and the hunter, with the result of heightened dramatic tension. This shifting approach to thoughts and mental processes keeps the narrative constantly changing and in motion, and it is a lively means of bringing new information to the reader-viewer of the stories, while soliciting loyalties and keeping close to the child reader.

Dramatic involvement – In the old folk story “Stone Soup” a primordial scenario of cooperation for survival is evoked. An elder (wise) woman encourages various actors to contribute to her soup that she starts off with a stone and boiling water. Once everyone comes together to make whatever contribution they can, the soup turns into something nourishing enough in a time of want. Burgess as a canny creator knew that audience involvement in the dramas of his serialized stories would help carry interest over to the next day. He knew that the reader must get caught up in the unfolding pictures and actions.

In the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories, as with most other of his animal nature stories, the various individual characters/actors contribute their gifts or talents to result in a successful outcome for the good of the Green Meadow or Green Forest community. In *Poor Mrs. Quack*, Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow act as scouts for missing Mr. Quack, and they stand guard over Mrs. Quack to alert her of hunters. In *Lightfoot*, Paddy the Beaver warns Lightfoot of approaching hunters. In *The Adventures of Bob White*, Mr. and Mrs. Bob work together to establish a nesting site and to raise the young quails, a lesson in cooperation taken from observation of gendered roles in the natural world. The moral

message modeled for is that through collaboration, there can be great results that could not be achieved by a single person acting on his or her own; and this appears quite opposite to the heroic endeavor that comprises the literary model for dramatic movement in much of Western juvenile literature.

The use of speech and dialogue - Burgess employs a limited but effective and complete range of response for characters placed in specific situations which convey his moralistic and mannered messages, particularly those lessons of relating responsibly to one's friends and neighbors. In *The Adventures of Bob White*, Chapter IV "Bob White and Peter Become Neighbors," Peter Rabbit and Bob White discuss a hypothetical ethical situation whereby Peter could reveal the location of Bob White's home. Peter explores the implications of an unintended disclosure to a predator:

Of course if I should just happen to *find* your home all by myself, you wouldn't be angry, would you?" he [Peter] asked (p.19, italics Burgess's).

Bob White is cast in the role of friend and also sage counsel on how not to place a friend into a compromising or dangerous position.

Bob White laughed. 'Of course not,' said he. 'Just the same I would advise you not to *try* to find it. Then you will have nothing to trouble your mind if you should be followed, and something dreadful did happen to me or mine. You see there are just as many who would like to make a dinner of me as there are who would like to make a dinner of you, and I would a whole lot rather sit on a fence-post and whistle than to fill somebody's stomach. (p. 20, italics Burgess's)

Although the unimaginable spectre of betrayal of a friend is raised, there are no existential conversations. The conversation is as one friend to another, with Bob White advising Peter Rabbit in a non-didactic but also no-nonsense manner of the correct way in which to conduct himself. In the Burgess stories, the dialogue is direct, to the point, and oriented toward telling as much as possible and reaching solutions or resolutions in a

serialized manner, with some prolongation of events due to spanning one installment (or chapter) to the next.

Speech and dialogue are known to attract and keep child interest (as in the social dialogue of the Harry Potter stories, including classroom exchanges about witchcraft and extracurricular exchanges about how to foil demons) - and this is true for the Burgess stories that employ a rather large amount of dialogue, considering that we are speaking of talking animals (or is that talking of speaking animals?). It is interesting to note the ways in which talking animals work for child readers. Morgenstern (2000) finds that, in a C.S. Lewis story, the device of the talking animal effaces the abject and provides a sense of play occasion. Morgenstern further considers the talking animal “as it is translated into the visual medium of the cartoon” in the characters of Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, and the Ninja Turtles – his children’s especial favorite. The appeal of the animated animal seems culturally immense (for example, Maurice Sendak had a life-long love affair with Mickey Mouse as described by Sonheim) and somehow significant in terms of identification, attachment, and probably, how they express things that children cannot or will not in front of adults or other children.

Duration – In the Burgess stories, duration is used in a manner which simultaneously preserves time, and also allows time to elapse, but in a measured pace that allows a sense of the workings of the natural world that Burgess based his stories upon.

[Lightfoot] spent that night browsing not far from Paddy’s pond. With the coming of daylight he lay down in a thicket of young hemlock-trees near the upper end of the pond. It was a quiet, peaceful day. It was so quiet and peaceful and beautiful it was hard to believe that hunters with terrible guns were searching the Green Forest for beautiful Lightfoot. (From *Lightfoot the Deer*, Chapter XIV “How Paddy Warned Lightfoot,” p. 33)

Although a series of events occur and the passage of time is alluded to <With the coming of daylight> the words <quiet and peaceful> are evoked and repeated, leading to a dream-like suspension of time. Time seems to 'stand still' for the *Bedtime Story Book* reader who can return to a practically unchanged cast of characters with confidence that they will be there. The three Anti-Hunting stories feature anchor characters such as Peter Rabbit, Sammy Jay and Paddy Beaver who are always present in the dear old Briar Patch, the Green Meadow and the Green Forest. The familiar place names that the reader returns to time and time again also add to the sense of security and timelessness.

While preserving the sanctity of contract of the writer with the reader for a time-immune world, a co-created world where time and cares can stand still and outside of oneself, Burgess does honor the passage of time working in the biologic life spans of his animal characters. The Bob White family is born and the young quail progeny grow up, including the Young Bob White who undergoes a very specific rite of passage of terror and violence. The search for Mr. Quack spans a period of days during which Mrs. Quack frets over Mr. Quack's absence, and the Green Forest friends spend time in the on-going search for him during the hunting season. *Lightfoot the Deer* permits the reader to follow the natural life-span change of a young stag to greater maturity, with the young reader sensing that the deer 'grows up' over a passage of time. However, the young stag does not seem to emerge too changed - he is still the same old Lightfoot that the friends of the Green Forest know and love when he returns to the community after his ordeal.

Symbol or image: In a conventional literary reading, the critic-analyst wants to point out those things in the story that stand-in for things beyond themselves, that have a social or cultural meaning. In the Burgess Anti-hunting stories, the invocation of the <terrible

guns> or <the hunters with the terrible guns> of course stands for immediate violence against migratory or defenseless animals. Because it is repeated so often and seems to serve in the overall cast of the stories in their effects, the image of terrible guns takes on the significance of something primal and universally threatening in significance. For example, the <terrible guns> evoke a phallic threat, perhaps of coercive or bullying behavior, of unwanted intrusion into otherwise happy affairs, or other attempts to wield power over others. While sometimes the terrible guns are heard and not seen, and are often in the distance and seem therefore out of sight and mind, they remain on the edge of consciousness, always potentially there. At other times, the reader reads of actual damage by the guns, as of Mr. Quack and the flock shot down, or of Mrs. Quack or little Bob White being wounded.

Other symbols or images that are sustained through the stories are the animal characters, as with Peter Rabbit, a major player, whose personality is a mixture of competence and concern, error, transgression and curiosity. Asking children to observe and return to Peter Rabbit as a hero or mainstay of the stories written by Burgess shows that this image is not meant to moralize (how can a flawed Peter Rabbit preach at others?) -but to demonstrate the reality of humanity and foibles, and the idea of loyally supporting a friend (Peter Rabbit) during quandary of behavior and action during childhood endeavors, or, colloquially – ‘through thick and thin.’

The settings become similarly iconic, with the dear Old Briar Patch the haven or safe refuge of Peter Rabbit when he is about to be eaten by Reddy Fox; or the Green Forest, which mirrors the leafy woods known to Burgess in his boyhood near Sandwich, MA, and is an environ known to children of rural areas and small towns by their own

explorations. One wonders how comfortable the Briar Patch actually is, for it sounds hazardous by its very concealment of prickly vegetation. The Green Forest is not always a secure haven or home, attested to as Lightfoot was driven out by a wily and persistent hunter. Thus, the Burgess symbols are two-edged and tricky, but they appear to offer some stable, enduring meanings that readers return to.

Theme – The overall, general theme of the anti-hunting stories seems obvious, on the surface (manifestly) but the recurrent cycle of the plot that I refer to in greater detail in Chapter Three indicates a hidden (latent) thematic element. The themes of the Burgess anti-hunting stories might be stated as man's hunting practices and their unfairness to defenseless animals. A second thematic element uniting the stories is that animals (children) can band together to save themselves (paralleling the activist conservation message for children to form a campaign); and that nature, although dynamic, is a harmonious community that can be easily unbalanced and disturbed. For primary grade readers, the themes might be more simply stated, as animals helping other animals (therefore you should help when you can); providing lessons of animal behavior (that ducks migrate, that male deer shed antlers and fight rivals, that Reddy Fox would like to eat Peter Rabbit). In Burgess, the themes are almost synonymous with the messages of the story, which places them in the category of moral teaching stories but not, as Burgess asserts, as moralizing. The reader sees the differences created by choices made without any overt direction or judgment, but with natural consequences carried through, leaving the reader to decide what he or she thinks.

Rhyme and reason for (child) audience reception: Great literature is often equated with lasting literature, and the Burgess stories have had a long run of almost 100 years.

However, Burgess has not entered a mainstream literary teaching canon, and it seems that his canon will not appear among the Greats of Western Literature. That is not to say that his works have escaped literary attention. Former Burgess Museum curator Bethany Rutledge communicated that *The National Review* had published a “brand new anthology of Burgess books, a hardcover book with dust jacket and includes ten of the Bedtime Storybooks” (burgessbooks@yahoogroups.com, Thursday, April 27, 2004). The fan base and long readership sustained by the Burgess stories indicates that there is an appeal or pull of the literature to its audience that so devotedly stands by Burgess.

The audience has to possess a certain level of cultural literacy in order to receive and respond to a message from a text, be it a book, work of art, religious ritual, or song event (Crapanzano, 1992). The storyteller or narrator has a personal and cultural background, and his task is to tell or present the story in a transference to the audience of ‘what he knows about something.’ Crapanzano asserts that the audience needs to know how to read the narrative and what it means, and points out that there are culturally assigned forms, icons, symbols and culturally assigned contexts. The steps of whether to accept or reject messages and texts stem from an evaluation of characters, language, acts and actions which are considered by the reader who responds to conditions created by an author toward effective communication of a message and accompanying reader receptions such as anxiety, belief, disbelief, love, hate, real and ‘not-real’ perceptions, fear, comfort, etc. In literature directed toward children of western and other traditions, a certain approach to language using rhythm and patterns suggests that rhythm is common. Sometimes rhyme is strongly looked for and is obviously missed if it does not appear.

American poet Josephine Miles recalls how she grew up with “strong rhyme” and how she looked for this feature in things she read, and how it later influenced her own writing.³ She feels she merely remained in a tradition of poets who accepted rhyme, unlike some “new” poets who did not (Miles interviewed in *American Poetry Observed: Poets on Their Work*, 1988). The place of traditional and rhythmic story patterns expected by the audience of children appears to figure in to Burgess’s literary appeal.

The formula of whimsical animal characters with well-developed and recognizable personas, speech and adventures to ponder and grow upon was supplemented by Burgess’s trademark aphorisms that are little rhyming couplets that either foreshadow or encapsulate a lesson to be learnt. Burgess’s stories are also noted for the device of repetition, of commonly repeated phrases, for example, in Chapter XXIII of *Lightfoot the Deer*, page 51, as Lightfoot flees the hunter’s dogs:

On the bank he had left, he could see two black-and-white specks moving about, and across the water came the barking of dogs. Those two specks were the hounds who had driven him into the Big River. They were barking now instead of baying. Presently a brown form joined the black-and-white specks.

The repetition of the descriptive phrase “black-and-white specks” stands in for the dogs or the hounds as seen at a distance by a beleaguered Lightfoot. It is a device that leads to criticism from Lukacs that Burgess is condescending to young readers, but which receives praise from Goldthwaite who sees this repetition as a courtesy to young readers learning about variation in literary form, as in the use of synonyms. Ignored by critics

³ Miles states: “This is, of course, a big area. I grew up with strong rhyme. It’s my world: there are all the ballads and children’s verse with a lot of strong rhyme. You know, folk verse of one sort or another. And since all that meant a great deal to me when I was very young – I memorized lots of poems and said them to myself over and over again – strong rhyme is very deep in me.”

inattentive to play of Burgess's language is the obvious semantic richness of the word "speck" and its striking resemblance and association with the more gruesome "spectre."

Kristeva discusses the effects of children's counting-out rhymes, or the "obscene folklore of children" (1980, in Roudiez, ed., p. 143) that fuses words of jarring semantic meaning with a rhythmic motion or cadence that serve to catharize repressive relationships. There are many ideas around the working of rhyme and its significance in meaning and entry into language, and it is not surprising that Burgess the self-styled storyteller of the 'old' tradition would think to employ small rhyming couplets and other rhythmic patterns in his prose.

Discussion of narrative elements

Psychically, the Burgess stories fulfilled wish images of talking animals, charmed spaces, and settings for exploration established far away from adult humans, except for the intrusions of violent hunters. The fact remains, there is some sort of charm or enchantment that resides within the Burgess stories that is an alchemy of textual factors, and that 'makes sense' for its culture of readers. The elements of narration I have traced are the hallmarks of good writing and narration (Goring and others, 2001), and when I traced these elements for the Burgess stories, it was apparent that they held intimations of a language used in film and cinema. For example, the alternation of stable to shifting point of view used in the narrative technique holds a similarity of effect to the fixed or moving camera holding in view one character or setting, and later moving from one face to another, or from one location to another.

Cine-semiotic language in the Burgess stories

Fell (1974) notes the transcendence of disciplinary boundaries of storytelling technique. He points out that “The notion of finding movies in old documents, fiction or otherwise, is hardly original” (p. 54), and he gives the example of a study that identifies visual sequences in *Beowulf*, titled “Point of View and Design for Terror in *Beowulf*,” ed. Fry *The Beowulf Poet*. Fell considers the phenomenon further, in that “Indeed, the rather literary term *cinematic*, first conceived to distinguish movies from other forms, seems to be popping up across campuses in English literature classrooms” (1974, p. 54). Archival research at the Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections & Exhibits indicated that I was not the only one to perceive moving pictures in the animal nature stories. Ardis Smith, a Princeton Film Center scriptwriter writes in the Analysis section of a screen treatment of an “average story” by Burgess (meaning representational of any of the Burgess stories):

We think that any reader of this script will agree that the Burgess tales are so promising for visual representation they might have been written with the television screen in mind. They have unity and continuous movement and are so compact and tidy in construction that there is almost nothing excessive or extraneous to be trimmed away. Every sentence suggests action and the viewpoint of the camera. (“It Happened One Spring” *A Thornton Burgess Tale Adapted for Television, The Princeton Film Center*, First Draft of Manuscript, 6 July 1949, underline mine)

Along with prose talent for visual representation of his animal dramas, Burgess was experienced with the technological workings and results of photography. He went on field trips to Martha’s Vineyard with naturalist friend Dr. Alfred O. Gross to document the last remaining heath hens using concealed photographic techniques. His written

description of the movements and behavior of the doomed heath hens are very detailed and cinematic in terms of drawing a picture of appearance and action of the birds (Chapter 20 "The Last of His Race" in *Now I Remember*). In September and October 1927, Burgess made a trip to the world's first tropical rain forest preserve in Panama to assist ornithologist Dr. Gross by filming the mammals, birds and reptiles they found there. Burgess wrote an article "Filming Wild Jungle Life with a Eyemo" for Bell & Howell Filmo Topics, January 1928. The Eyemo was an early portable field camera. An entry in Burgess's diary for January 10, 1928 states: "Took Panama films to H. & L. to be waxed and forwarded to state inspector." H. & L. was a Springfield photo developer.

There are also "extensive notes" about Burgess's motion picture photography activities while on an expedition to the Labrador coast in Canada in 1931 (Personal communication with Curator Bethany Rutledge, TWBDCE, January 11, 2005). In Chapter 21 of his autobiography, Burgess calls up the excitement and adrenaline rush he associates with nature filming "On the Labrador" (the title of this chapter):

With cameras we settled ourselves in the blind for a long patient visit. In less than half an hour, to our somewhat startled surprise, the big bird [a nesting loon] appeared as if by magic at the water's edge beside precious eggs. From the other side of the pond she had approached under water. For several moments she sat on the water in a strained attitude, looking and listening. Then clumsily she climbed out to settle herself comfortably on the eggs. As she looked a bit suspiciously at the blind, it seemed as if those keen eyes must see right through the burlap covering. The cameras whirled and clicked as we made movies and stills...At the end of another half hour, we had all the pictures we wanted of the beautiful bird, a red-throated loon (*Gavis stellata*), swimming, diving, climbing out to sit on the eggs, changing her position from time to time. (1960, pp.193-194)

Some black and white film footage of a the observation trips with Dr. Gross to Martha's Vineyard and to Labrador is still in existence, along with some color footage of his trips to Tobago in the winters of the 1950s (Bethany Rutledge, Curator of Thornton

W. Burgess Museum and Archival Collections, personal communication, January 2, 2005). Rutledge supposes that Burgess's interest and skill in motion picture filming was a logical growth from his still photography when he was the illustrator-photographer for his freelance magazine and newspaper stories, before he was able to earn a living as a children's author. These evidences for Burgess's first-hand experiences with filming were intriguing to think about in terms of their relationship to his written prose. Burgess obviously found the medium of film of interest for his nature-study work, and one cannot help but think this interest would have been manifested in his work in other media.

Semiotics, visual cues and visual iconicity

Eco (1976) tells us that

Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be *taken* as a sign. A sign is everything which can be take as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands in for it. (p. 7)

Books, movies, and all texts are semiotic phenomena.⁴ Icons are "true signs" (Keller p. 108) and include pictures of stylized men and women to signify the doors for sex-segregated bathrooms. An icon may be based on a similarity of resemblance, but it also has to call up an association with the real thing. "Icons work as impulses for association" (Keller p. 109) and there are certain characters or phrases that I believe work in an iconic manner in the Burgess stories under study. For example, the phrase <the terrible guns> or the place location of the Smiling Pool, quickly establish a mental picture for menace (guns) or for tranquillity (Pool).

⁴ However, cautions Eco, "The semiotic approach to the phenomenon of 'semiosis' must be characterized by an awareness of its own limits, not to fall into an "ideological fallacy" that might permit practitioners or devotees of semiosis to think it more than a theory or intervention in thinking of phenomena (p.29).

...a thing (a gesture, figure, sound, etc.) becomes an icon when it is used to bring an addressee to a certain recognition by means of association. To a modest extent, one may speak of iconic repertoires, whose members, however, are gravely endangered. Anything that is in a position to bring forth associations can be used, in appropriate circumstances, as an iconic sign. (Keller, p.111)

Use of a sign as a symbol requires greater knowledge of meaning behind the intended communication in order to get the sense of the symbol. For example, a Swiss flag as a symbol of neutrality presupposes a knowledge of the whole chain of history behind the idea of Switzerland as a neutral country; however, once this is known by two communicants, it can be used in a shorthand signing form. Or, to operationalize an example from the Burgess stories, to know Peter Rabbit as a symbol of good-natured curiosity is to have to know one or more of the stories associated with him.

Danesi (1999) recalls some well-known but often overlooked ways in which we are attuned to signs in an everyday context. Cigarettes are signs, Danesi assures us, for they stand for something other than themselves – they stand for sophisticated sexual courtship, for rebellion (James Dean), for gender equity and daring (Flappers in the 1920s). The device by which a sign such as a cigarette works is the actual object, what it is (rolled up tobacco that one smokes by inserting into mouth and setting fire to it); then what it refers to, which may be deciding to spend one's money on a non-food item that is a luxury; and what it means, that is teen-aged independence or rebellion in terms of how to treat one's body. Saussure, who coined the terms 'signifier' and 'signified', thought that meanings of a sign were fixed by social convention, and we see this idea transferred to movie-making. For example, a cigarette often signifies the after-math of love-making in movies, the post-coital activity of choice (according to movie convention). Danesi

traces out the idea that signs function for human everyday life; in a Westernized context, “Cigarettes and high-heel shoes are props that allow human beings to act out their constantly varying roles on the stage of everyday life” (p.14).

Semiotic method has largely been considered structuralist in approach due to its emphasis on meaning systems as “reflexes of innate psychic structures” (Danesi p.18). Eco considers how the field of structural semantics takes examples from the field, from everyday life, that demonstrate the kinds of psychic associations with signs (pp.75-76). While there will be debate on the universality of signs and meanings, semiotics can at least be considered in indicating possibilities in the relationship of signs to making meaning. In Chapter Three, I discussed categories of analysis for reading with psychoanalysis in the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories. It seems from my readings that Burgess’s animal characters serve to convey dynamic operations of psychic responses. Specific word associations in the Burgess stories also appear to have been employed to provoke meanings in the child reader, such as <the terrible guns> for danger or <The Smiling Pool> for serenity and safety.

Emotional possession and the power of the look

A field of social and cultural study called “literary anthropology” (after Geertz in Brady 2000, p.953) asserts that texts, in order to be read or readable, presuppose the existence of knowledge of ways of reading or how to discern meaning from the written word as it is presented by an author. As I proceeded in my readings-through and note-taking/Notations of the three selected Burgess “Anti-Hunting” stories to obtain my raw data for the study, Clough’s ideas in *The End(s) of Ethnography* began to resonate in terms of what I was beginning to detect as the page- image-thought dynamic of Burgess’s

writing. Clough (1992) discusses “Cinematic Realism and the Production of ‘The Look’” and notes how images, pictures, and concepts stand in for reality by positioning the viewer in a narrative plot or scenario of desire experienced by moviegoers:

Emotional possession refers to experiences wherein impulses which are ordinarily restrained are strongly stimulated...The individual identifies himself so thoroughly with the plot or loses himself so much in the picture that he is carried away from the usual trend of conduct. His mind becomes fixed on certain imagery, and impulses usually latent or kept under restraint gain expression or seriously threaten to gain such expression. (p.189)

Viewers have a tendency to apprehend filmic images with immediacy and imagination that is satisfied promptly when “Images are supplied, so to speak, ready-made. They have a vividness and a clean-cut character which makes easier their absorption in a ‘whole-cloth’ fashion” (Clough, citing Blumer, p.189). I began to see how the prose supplied by Burgess to his devoted readers, and so savaged by literary critics, worked in the emergence of a new text construction coeval with the so-called Jazz Age of new movements in social mores and communications (see Eisenstein, 1947, p. 94 on Jazz Age aesthetics).

Literary anthropology to read texts in the context of culture agrees with my idea to use film readings for the Burgess stories. We recognize that film works partially through an image discourse of cinema, but part of the problem of film discourse is that “The image paradigm is fragile in film” and “Everything is present in film: hence the obviousness of film, and hence also its opacity” leading Metz (1974) to assert that “A film is difficult to explain because it is easy to understand (all quotes Metz, p. 69). The image impresses itself on us, blocking everything that is not itself” (Metz p.69). Speech comes into the consideration of the cinematic image as inner monologue or discourse

produced by the viewer as to what is happening and its significance (see Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, 1947, pp.237-239, 242, and 272 on the inner monologue of viewer). Since Burgess was working with a distinctively visualizing language form in his writing it seemed important to address how aspects of his prose presented itself to readers or listeners to invoke a mind's eye impression of the story workings.

The play of the psychoanalytic categories of analysis in the three Anti-Hunting stories indicate the significance of semiotic dynamics of the unconscious in narrative written 'for children'. My examination of language and structure in the stories identifies specific examples that demonstrate the idea that the stories relied upon a nexus of visual/showing and telling to create a moving picture in the viewer's 'minds-eye' that works to structure feeling and response to the stories. The cine-visual linked with semiotics-as-signs considers the symbolic along with the 'real' and imaginative meanings evoked for the reader-viewer. In the following analytic section, I convey several illustrative examples of cine-semiotic aspect presentations that I believe serve as cues or prompts to the reader in terms of evoking emotional or idealistic responses. They appeared in Burgess's writing as a kind of 'trademark' and performed part of the fast action and quick read with a lasting (visual) impression wanted for the serial stories written for his syndicated columns.

Cine-semiotic aspects in Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy

The cine-semiotic aspects I decided to focus on after reading through the Notations or produced reading notes are noteworthy in their frequency of occurrence.

Because they recurred in the stories, it must be that these aspects in the story carry significance. For purposes of demonstration, I have here presented some specific occurrences from the Anti-Hunting stories. I worked with these emerging signs in order to detect and note some patterns to begin thinking of how to apply a film-reading strategy to the stories. Of themselves, they do not indicate filmic movement, but in isolating out and noticing some aspect-presentations such as the three examples briefly presented below, I began to have a systematic view of the measure of Burgess's writing aesthetic linked to visualizing, fast-working yet soothing and effective prose.

A. Recurring significant words - As one prominent example in the Anti-Hunting Trilogy case study stories, the word group <terrible gun(s) > signifies alternately danger, violence, threat, overt power structure and (potentially) the phallus (after Lacan). The frequency of this word grouping is highly noticeable in *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, a story where Mrs. Quack and her flock have been steadily persecuted by hunters, where it occurs 51 times. In *The Adventures of Bob White*, <terrible gun (s) > occurs only seven times, but there are four references to a terrible "firestick", a gun from the perspective of the quail. In *Lightfoot the Deer*, the <terrible gun (s) > occurs 32 times.

The word <eyes> appears with frequency at the beginning of *Lightfoot the Deer*, seeming to signify gaze - how a gaze is directed, on the self and upon others, and perhaps indicates longing or possession via viewing. The emphasis of the narrative upon a word indicating gaze ("eyes") seems allied to aspects of scopophilia in modern cinema. "Scopophilia" is "Literally the pleasure in seeing or looking" (Blandford et al, 2006) and is featured as a key element in psychoanalytic theory. Mulvey (1999) linked cinematic gaze to male gaze or male-centric scopophilia, the pleasure of the camera's gaze in looking

upon the figure of the woman. Taking a step forward into my engagement with film theory, The Bathing Scene (featuring Peter Rabbit watching Mrs. Quack bathe) that I present later in this chapter is a demonstration of how a montage sequence is constructed and works in the Burgess texts seems emblematic of male gaze.

B. Eating, food and hunger: In *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, as well as in *Bob White* and *Lightfoot the Deer*, numerous references to eating, food and hunger signal some links in the mind of the reader with nourishment, survival, and satiety. The entrapment of Mrs. Quack with corn, luring her to trusting and relying upon Farmer Brown's Boy where she has otherwise been leery of humans, may be viewed as a portrayal of a first connection with food, allied with maternal/natural sources, but then there is the necessity to enter societal law of the father and be fed by Farmer Brown's Boy. Mrs. Quack feels satiated and of well-being by accepting the lure of food, and learns that her mistrust has no foundation. Food and its fascinations are a well-noted bribe in children's literature (see Robertson's 2000 essay on Harry Potter and the fantastic feasts of the wizard boarding school's table), and Burgess apparently knew to employ the bribe of food to engage child interest and participation. Part of the message of the Burgess conservation stories was to urge children to go out and feed animals to befriend them, and so they would learn that food is a bribe they can work on others. Hunger in the form of an empty stomach is mentioned, particularly with respect to Mrs. Quack as she flees hunter persecution, and so one wonders about the personal acquaintance of Burgess with hunger as a young adult in his early career, living alone at a boarding house and trying to economize. Potentially, food has a readily perceived visual/sensory aspect that translates to readily apprehended and primal feelings of satiety

or lack. A screen version or scripting of Burgess stories would presumably benefit from a careful structuring and inclusion of food pictures and references in the narrative progression.

C. Aphorisms are little pithy sayings or rhyming poems that are found within a chapter.

For example from *The Adventures of Bob White*, at the beginning of Chapter X :

Who proves himself a neighbor kind

Will find content and peace of mind.

They are presented double-spaced and generally preface a chapter. The small poems are simultaneously a sign, an orientation feature by which the reader is to pay attention or to be alerted to a message, and a condensation of the story meaning (In Chapter Ten, the Bob White family moves to a new neighborhood). The aphorisms attest to Burgess's skill as a culturally-astute adman, or salesman. The frequencies are generally one per chapter, are part of the trademark formula employed by Burgess, and they were expected by the reader.

These briefly-outlined examples of presentations indicate the cine-semiotic language appearing in the three Burgess Anti-Hunting stories of the case study. The language devices can be characterized as forms of marking (as through repetition), mythification (through use of primal images such as food to translate emotion) and condensed meanings found in the aphorisms. I propose that in their dynamic aspects these devices speak to Cine = showing a moving picture, and semiotics = sign linked in telling or creating a little voice (interior verbal discourse) alongside a vision in the reader's mind. The cine-semiotic aspects are linked to film-work terms and effects, and are accompanied by the use of iconic images that are linked with recurring words such as

<terrible gun>. The iconic images include the use of iconic characters such as Peter Rabbit, Reddy Fox and all the other named characters populating the story settings. The concept of iconic images cannot be underplayed in the study of media and cultural dynamics. Film theorist Kavin (1995) cites Metz in observing that the existence of an image indicates that it has been “selected and arranged by some narrating intelligence, whether that be the intelligence of the filmmaker, of ‘the film itself as a linguistic object’...” (p. 13) or of another linguistic focus connected with the film(making). Burgess shrewdly made use of the power of iconic images as he negotiated the placement of his stories in (child) popular culture, and it is possible to see how this iconic deployment was noticed by film producers of the 1950s and 60s as they considered animation of the Burgess stories.

In the Anti-Hunting stories, there is a basic structure of the recurring story arc or pattern whereby happiness and a normative domesticity reign in the setting of Green Meadow or Green Forest. However, the reader soon gets a sense that *something* is about to happen. The intrusive event of the hunting of a poor defenseless animal and the wounding of animal(s) takes place. This injury is as much to the animal community as well as to the family and the immediate body of the injured character. The animal, in two instances (Bob White and Lightfoot) aided by a Good Human (Farmer Brown’s Boy) hides away until the peril is gone. The animal heals from physical and psychic trauma, and is re-united with family, re-incorporated into the community at large. It seemed that if a narrative structure in text could be shown to conform to the narrative structure used in film, the case could be further made for a writing science devoted to making a ‘moving

picture' in the child's mind's eye, as I propose for Burgess's cinesemiotic style or mode of endeavor that accounts for the success of his 'simple nature stories.'

Plot segmentation of the Anti-Hunting stories: Applying a film narrative analysis to the Burgess stories

In studies of popular mass consumption, literary theorist Peter Brooks identifies plot as the engine of popular literature:

Plot has been disdained as the element of narrative that least sets off and defines high art – indeed, plot is that which especially characterizes popular mass-consumption literature: plot is why we read *Jaws*, but not Henry James. (1984, p. 4)

Although children's stories may be slated as 'classic' they are still generally placed within the provenance of 'low culture' rather than high. Brooks (1984, p.9) reflects on the place of narrative in folktale and myth, often considered low culture, and often reserved as children's literature, as a form of thinking through a situation. Encountering the otherwise unthinkable is a beneficial providence of children's stories in providing instruction on life in a pleasurable and entertaining way. Fantasy works may productively describe and work through both happy and unhappy events. Works have been known as tragic, as in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, or Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, and readers are led to expect that things will end badly for the protagonists. Brooks describes film theory as a means of narrative analysis that employs symbolic and figurative speech that attempts to avert an impression of tragedy. In addition, there is a type of writing for the plot in works intended for children that seeks to soften or cover up the unthinkable. Burgess is himself well-known for statements that the ultimate tragedy, namely death, has

no place in the child's story (Burgess 1965).⁵ In spite of his aversion to death for his characters, Burgess had no trouble with subjecting them to untold horrors that stressed their physical and emotional beings to the limit of endurance. Burgess's trademark style of Bedtime story presents deep tragedy while averting its impression, and this appears to line up with Brook's idea of narrative plot in a visualizing mode, and that is also appealing to child readers (or to readers looking for a childlike read).

An empirical demonstration of the fit of the Burgess stories into a mode of filmic plot narration seemed ideal to bear out my thesis that his stories were leading into a moment of cinematic representation of story on page.⁶ Via readings of applied film theorists, a method of how one can trace the organization and arrangement of the Burgess plots and scenes came to hand. Plot segmentation is a means employed by film theorists Bordwell and Thompson to demonstrate the major divisions of plot and how scenes are organized within the film. Bordwell and Thompson claim that plot segmentation is the first step in analyzing any film (1986, p.101). The three Burgess stories I employ for this case study appear to fit readily into a scheme of plot segmentation used in analyzing film according to the sequences, or "distinct phases of the action occurring within a relatively unified space and time." (Bordwell and Thompson, pp.101-102). Plot segmentation provides "at a glance the major divisions of the plot and how scenes are organized within

⁵ The pragmatic Burgess reasoned in "Please Spare Peter Rabbit" his 1922 published letter to Harold Pulsifer, the editor of the "Mailbag" feature in *The Outlook* how would he as the author continue to eat and feed his family if he killed off his characters?

⁶ This demonstration is representative rather than all-inclusive of the stories and their chapters. I have performed a plot segmentation of all three stories; and I have presented one montage sequence to illustrate of a strategy of explication for the filmic or cine-working of the Burgess stories. An expanded study would wish to present more montage sequence explication-examples, and other approaches in film analysis such as shot/reverse shot samples to explore suture (after Silverman) or other productive film readings.

them” (p.102), and also reveals story causality and story time.⁷ Through the plot segmentation, I was able to clearly trace the story cycle common to all three stories that presents them as not only invested in an anti-hunting, conservationist political-ideological message, but also that clearly evoke psychic workings that invite while revoking tragedy. In all three stories, an animal character endures the repetition and re-enactment of personal trauma from being hunted down, bodily and psychically injured, healing through time naturally aided by the wise ministrations of a human mentor, and finally, a triumphant return to the community.

Before I came to the field of education, I was in anthropology and archaeology. One of my favorite areas was an examination of cross-cultural religious formations, including beliefs and ceremonial aspects that pervade and permeate the social fabric of communities. Victor Turner did some interesting work on liminal stages of social standing that could have some productive tie-ins with the psychoanalytic concept of the abject. Burgess's dramatic re-creations of propelling a lovable neophyte into the depths of danger and darkness held reverberations with Turner's configurations of the stages that a tribal inductee goes through. Burgess's 'animal nature stories' looked to me as social-personal dramas evocative of the movements of tribal investitures of adolescents into adulthood – including their casting out into a liminal (dangerous) stage, and their subsequent re-incorporation into the group (after Turner 1979). It seems that for

⁷ Segmentation in film studies has proceeded by recourse to classic manuals such as Metz's "Grand Syntagmatic of the Image Track" and Bellour's "To Analyze, to Segment" (Bordwell and Thompson, p. 43). Bordwell and Thompson explain that "[Film segmentation] is not difficult to do, though most often we do it intuitively" (p.43).

writers, the recreation of age-old rituals is never far away from the work of inscribing child memory. The storyteller is ever-compelled to cast primal shadows dancing in the firelight.

Emanating from and belonging to Burgess's private explorations, social and psychic encounters are shared with readers. Burgess's dramatic recitations of childhood experiences are so closely recounted that they are charged with immediacy, a virtue of the successful story. That he possessed a mastery of sequencing by scenes is no surprise, given his experience writing for serial story markets of the early 20th century media syndicates. Bordwell and Thompson in their textbook/primer *Film Art* model film segmentation as the first step to analyze a film. The meaningful units known as scenes can then be further analyzed for the meaning and the way in which meaning is arrived at. Segmentation allows for the major divisions of the plot and how scenes are organized to drive the plot.

Results of plot segmentation of the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories

For my presentation of plot segmentation as it can be applied in the three stories under study, I have chosen to spotlight the compelling story of Poor Mrs. Quack, the Mallard Duck. In the Dover Edition forward, we learn that Mrs. Quack the Mallard Duck became the poster child for the conservation movement "[I]n 1916 at a time when the wild duck population of the United States faced serious threat of extermination. There were no laws establishing seasons, limits, or methods for duck hunting. The result is that

some species were nearly gone.” (Introduction to the 1993 Dover Edition of *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, p. v). This forward presents the context of the time period Burgess wrote for, and, in a parallel to film form, serves as an introductory voice-over that film viewers would hear prior to the start of the story. The forward is a modern-day addition to the Dover reprint version, presenting what the reader contemporary with the 1917 book publication of *Poor Mrs. Quack* would know through familiarity with Burgess’s Green Meadow Club for conservation.

Below is a demonstration of plot segmentation for *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*. Note: Plot segmentations for *The Adventures of Bob White* and for *Lightfoot the Deer* appear in Appendix B. These three plot segmentations support the argument I make that the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories can be read using a film-reading approach. It is not definitive proof that the stories were shaped using a cinematic intent, but the ability to readily work the stories from book form to an arrangement used in preparation for shooting a film script reinforces for me that Burgess’s story form approaches a cinematic form.⁸ This aesthetic may bear relevance for his appeal lasting into the 21st century, besides the persuasions of his beloved animal characters and gentle pastoral settings, and the vaunted nature lessons. I have based the plot segmentations on the model presented by Bordwell and Thompson (1986, pp. 102-103).

Plot segmentation for *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*

Bordwell and Thompson state that plot segmentation demonstrates the major divisions of plot and how scenes are organized within the film, that it is the first step in

⁸ It generally takes screenwriters many concentrated hours to transform a book to a script. My task was made easier by the fact that Burgess’s stories are abbreviated compared to a full novel. I found that Burgess’s form readily conforms to the plot segmentation used to explicate story-line of a film. The plot segmentation ‘proof’ is thus contributes to empirical information on the cinematic aesthetic of the stories.

analyzing any film, and that it proceeds intuitively (1986, p.101 and p. 43). Before presenting my version of plot segmentation of the Poor Mrs. Quack text, with plot segmentations for the Bob White and Lightfoot stories presented in Appendix B - Methodological materials, I will further explicate my approach modeled after Bordwell and Thompson. They explain that plot segmentation proceeds by identifying sequences in narrative film called scenes, a term used in the theatrical sense to refer to distinct phase of action in the story that occur in a relatively unified space and time (Bordwell and Thompson 1986, pp. 101-102). An effective plot segmentation used to outline and understand the story allows one to "see at a glance the major divisions of the plot and how scenes are organized within them" (ibid., p. 102). It supports a sense of how the plot organizes story time and story causality.

My plot segmentation of Poor Mrs. Quack took into consideration the way in which Burgess had divided his story into chapters, based on prior serial installments for newspaper publication. However, in my reading I found that Burgess's chapter divisions at times did not strictly correspond to a scene, but that sometimes a scene or segment spans two or more chapters. *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* is twenty chapters in book form, and I have assigned eleven segments to my plot segmentation. Plot segmentation proceeds according to where one's reading sense of a significant character and or action resolution picks up and where it ends. A storyline moves forward by this device. In addition, each scene was grounded by the centrality of location, one or two central characters, and a pivotal action for the scene that can usually be characterized by a central verb for the scene. These aesthetics characteristic of a cinema sensibility further encouraged me in finding out more about the visualizing dynamics employed by the

writer Burgess. Let us now consider my plot segmentation for *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*:

1. At Smiling Pool: Peter Rabbit meets Mrs. Quack, who is in trouble. Terrible guns are heard off in the distance. Mrs. Quack tells Peter and three other characters that Mr. Quack is missing.
2. Mrs. Quack begins the story of migration (nature lesson), minus her later telling of the terrible duck massacre in which Mr. Quack was lost.
3. Farmer Brown's Boy meets Mrs. Quack. We learn that she was wounded by a terrible gun just before Mr. Quack disappeared.
4. Smiling Pool: Mrs. Quack looks for food in the pool (nature lesson) in view of mixed male animal audience("bathing scene" number one).
5. Smiling Pool: Peter goes out early in the morning to see Mrs. Quack. He happens upon her making her morning toilet, having a bath and grooming while Peter, concealed, watches with fascination ("bathing scene" number two). A *tête à tête* ensues between Mrs. Quack and Peter Rabbit.
6. Flashback to the Big River: The "Terrible, Terrible Guns" and the duck massacre where Mr. Quack the leader and others of the flock are shot down. Peter Rabbit listens to Mrs. Quack tell the event; later we learn that Jerry Muskrat was also listening.
7. Jerry Muskrat and Peter ask where is Mr. Quack? Is he dead or alive? There is a replay of the scene of the massacre where Mr. Quack tumbles down from the sky.
8. Movement from Smiling Pool to Old Briar Patch home of Peter Rabbit. Montage as Peter considers what to do.

9. Sammy Jay is introduced and volunteers to fly over the Big River marshes to look for Mr. Quack. The search is on for Mr. Quack, and the searchers are endangered briefly by hunters.

10. Sammy Jay spots a small patch of green – Mr. Quack's head. Mrs. Quack is finally informed of the good news – her husband is alive!

11. The Quacks are reunited. Small Quacks are born, and swim out in the Smiling Pool. The family relocates to Paddy the Beaver's Pond, and then makes the yearly migration to the Sunny Southland. The narrator promises that the next story will feature Bobby Coon. The End.

The plot segmentation approach to realizing the story dynamics and their connection to cinema let me to consider other aspects of film narration and imagery that might be played out in the Burgess stories under study.

Film Narration and Imagery

The connection between the act of narration and the imagery are determined in film by framing and the angle of view that portrays the narrating agency or authority. The spectator is considered in terms of implied position with respect to the action, the way it is structured, and the specific features of the reading process. Part of the co-creation of filmic narration becomes a matter of how the imagery is structured to deliver the intended message, and how it is structured for the message to be received. The spectator position becomes one of immediate identification with characters, places and actions, rather than a matter of interpretation. Interpretation occurs, but more secondarily and after-the-fact. Use of conventions of this type of narration has the potential to hold

fast to viewer-readers which Burgess intuited for his nature-animal stories. In writing for the visual trajectory, the placement of the viewer's eye 'out there' deflects attention from what the author is doing, and simultaneously gives the feel of being guided by an internal narrative authority that emanates from a feeling that the viewer/reader has that s/he is watching. The "structures of presentation" (Browne, 1982, p.13) of filmic narration are articulated through the techniques of shots and set-ups that present views and point of view. Browne espouses the method of the "study of stills"(p. xii) as a means to get at the relation of filmic structures to general issues of narratology.

Browne's idea of structures of presentation in film modeled for me how to consider an alternative approach to understanding the mode of address to the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories. If Burgess's stories were made into a filming script they would be further worked from its plot segmentation (see above) and would, in an expanded study of his narrative workings, be broken into shots and set-ups. A film script "It Happened in Spring" (An Adaptation for Television of A Thornton Burgess Tale by Ardis Smith, The Princeton Film Center, Draft, 6 July 1949) demonstrates how a Burgess story was translated from prose to a filming script. Browne's analysis of the rhetorical components of narration via breaking a film into shots and systems of suture as a paradigm in construction of narrative space is complex, and beyond the scope of my study in which I merely wish to establish the idea that a moving picture, filmic, cinesemiotic language was at work in Burgess. However, a reader of the Burgess stories might be attentive to the way in which the Harrison Cady illustrations worked with the Burgess prose,⁹ and these

⁹ Had Burgess's stories been more plentifully illustrated, or if it had been the case that Burgess and Cady had worked in a studio together rather than living and working quite distantly from one another, the Cady illustrations could have been viewed as a form of story - boarding used by animators and film-directors

might be productively considered as a means to show how the device of the still worked for the Anti-hunting case study stories. For the sake of exploration of the Burgess prose and the device of the still in moving pictures, I present below an still explication of a Burgess scene that is illustrated by Cady.

A still explication from Poor Mrs. Quack

The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack, Dover Edition (1993), an unabridged republication of the work first published by Little, Brown, and Company, Boston in 1917, contains an adaptation in line format of the Harrison Cady original halftone illustrations. The 1993 book which I used has six drawings, including the Frontispiece, to illustrate the story, and the illustrations are interspersed equidistantly within the book's pages. On page 25, the second page of Chapter VII "Mrs. Quack Returns" there is an illustration captioned "Several times she circled around, high over the Smiling Pool." (underline mine). It shows a poke-bonneted and be-shawled Mrs. Quack up in the air, above a shoreline setting on which Peter Rabbit and Jerry Muskrat stand, gazing up at her, with Peter waving. The section of the chapter that the drawing is meant to accompany reads:

Jolly, round, red Mr. Sun was just getting ready to go to bed behind the Purple Hills when Mrs. Quack returned. The first Peter knew of her coming was the whistle of her wings as she passed over him. Several times she circled around, high over the Smiling Pool, and Peter simply stared in open-mouthed admiration at the speed with which she flew. [underline mine] It didn't seem possible that one so big could move through the air so fast. Twice she set her wings and seemed to just slide down almost to the surface of the Smiling Pool, only to start her stout wings in motion once more and circle around again. It was very clear that she was terribly nervous and suspicious. The third time she landed in the water with a splash and sat perfectly still with her head stretched up, looking and listening with all her might. (p.26)

such as Martin Scorsese to develop their film narratives (Martin Scorsese, Public Address at Lake Placid Film Festival, Lake Placid, NY, June 2003).

The impression of a still “shot” of Mrs. Quack comes from a visual impression of her frozen in motion as she is circling to land (see Appendix A for Harrison Cady line illustration captioned “Several times she circled around, high over the Smiling Pool”). The still shot is related to the sequential event in the plot of her return to the Smiling Pool upon being scared away by Farmer Brown’s Boy. Along with the still shot rendered in the prose and the illustration, the reader also formulates an auditory impression of her wings whistling as she begins the overpass. The still presented to the reader in the prose account “Several times she circled around” gives the impression of motion and movement with the reader looking up from a fixed camera position. Mrs. Quack is in motion, and Burgess uses the reader-viewer’s agency to visualize, and thus participate in, what is occurring in the story. In my reading of this still shot, the active cine-moment is accompanied by a visual engagement obtained of Peter staring open-mouthed in admiration at her speed and skill in flying, not unlike screen renditions of a child watching barn-storming stunt-fliers at an airfield.

Through the still I have recreated of Mrs. Quack high above Smiling Pool with Peter gazing up at her, I extrapolate that the reader might be led to the idea of the strength and grace of Mrs. Quack the Mallard Duck. She is certainly portrayed as ‘someone to look up to’ as she is a noble creature who does not fear, and who faithfully searches for her missing mate. Burgess was raised by his mother alone, with very little familial help it seems, after his father’s death. Burgess’s second wife, Fanny, was, by all accounts, a lively and strong person, herself a widow with three young children when she married him. Mrs. Quack the Mallard Duck is a poster child for the conservation message

of Burgess, and she is also a portrayal of a strong woman who overcomes adversity. Mrs. Quack was a strong and loyal mate, resourceful in recovering her husband, and this may reflect what Burgess sought in his own mate, or perhaps even how he viewed himself as a son and husband. In Chapter Three, I also discuss the potential relationship of the portrayal of the recovery of Mr. Quack and the death of Burgess's father and also of his first wife, Nina Osbourne.

The narrative device of the still shot, sometimes accompanied by a Harrison Cady drawing, as in my example from *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, served to establish iconic, cozy, teaching moments to the mind's eye of the child reader. As with film, the Burgess stories entered through a mind screen of the child reader to become incorporated as one's own self-narrated thoughts on the subject. Thus, the Burgess stories had the knack of working closely with the psychic workings of the reader.

Filmic narrative workings in the Burgess stories

As will be further outlined and discussed in Chapter Five, historical contextualization places Burgess's narrative forays contemporary with the surgence of cinema as an increasingly significant movement in mass communication. Fell (1974) has studied the graphic art of early 20th century comics, particularly Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo* series. Fell finds sequence panels of early comics "surprisingly filmlike, both in the character of their movement and in the optical definition of the field" and that McCay's optical effects employ "strikingly 'visual' techniques" including an "impressive trucking shot" in one adventure sequence/strip from *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend* (1974, pp. 92-93). Fell has further examples of film technique employed in early comic strips. While I

cannot at this time prove that Burgess used a template of narrative structure based on cinematic principles, I can argue that he was an artist-writer-producer constructing successful popular narrative at the time that cinema was becoming a popular preoccupation.

How is the spectacle of the film produced, and how might these production tricks be translated to the page for the Burgess stories? In *The Film Sense*, Eisenstein states of montage that it assists in the creation of the dynamic, meaningful image. Eisenstein, a master filmist and early film pioneer, asserts that a work of art (text or film) must create an image such that “new images are built up in the human consciousness and feelings”(p.18), and that to create an image “a work of art must rely upon a precisely analogous method, the construction of a chain of representations” (p.19). An example of montage scripting proffered by Eisenstein is taken from, not a film, but from a work of literature, Maupassant’s *Bel Ami*, in order to provide a model for this difficult- to- place-into-words concept that results in a visual impression. Eisenstein frames his chosen literary example as a demonstration of the film technique that leads to the effects on the viewer, discussing how an example from Maupassant serves as an exemplary model for montage scripting. A film narrative can be thought of as a sequence of partial representations that makes up a whole. The notion of these partial representations in cinema assists my theory of the cine-semiotic that blends ideas taken from a sense of film semiotics with psychoanalytic semiotic considerations that were considered in Chapter Three. To demonstrate the Burgess film-like writing aspect, I analyzed a pivotal scene in *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* as a montage sequence, to see how a sequence of

partial representations built up in my reading an understanding of the characters and the activity they work through.

Montage sequence and the Burgess anti-hunting stories

A montage is the semiotic interrelation of things seen on the screen of the cinema. The montage is what moves a film beyond a “mere moving photograph” due to its involvement with a cultural sense of a specific sign system (Jakobson, 1987, p.460, *Semiotic Vistas*). The expectations of the readers attuned to the familiar, known rhythms of the Burgess story cadence were carried along by his fluent cinematic language sense. In terms of aspects of actual cinema that ‘work’ and that seem apparent in Burgess, his creative montages layered upon the scenery of the Green Meadow and the Green Forest added to the dynamic effects of predictable sequences of performances by the animal-actors. The codes of behavior of the animals were understood to be based in nature and thus reality was invoked. Burgess’s storytelling was able to prompt, and prompt again, reflection on codes of behavior in storytelling genres, in childhood imagination, and in real life (that is, what adults expected of children).

Co-creation of meaning through montage

The spectator is compelled to proceed along that selfsame creative road that the author traveled in creating the image. The spectator not only sees the represented elements of the finished work, but also experiences the dynamic processes of the emergence and assembly of the image just as it was experienced by the author. (Eisenstein, 1947, p.32)

This effect is said by Eisenstein to be produced in the viewer to result in “the highest possible degree of approximation to transmitting visually the author’s perceptions and intention in all their fullness, to transmitting them with ‘that strength of physical

palpability' with which they arose before the author in his creative work and his creative vision" (p. 32). The montage method permits the co-creation of an act of art that fuses the individual interpretations of the spectator/reader with the individuality of the author and his intention, to result in an "image that was planned and created by the author, but this image is at the same time created by the spectator himself" (Eisenstein, p.33). Eisenstein views Maupassant's *Bel Ami* as a literary example of the effective deployment of montage-in-writing; I see Burgess's writing as an approach beyond merely documenting but as a means of art to creating exciting force and emotional effect, co-created between reader/viewer and author/director. This co-creation of creativity is a tremendous and vital force to hand over to children via storytelling. It most definitely goes up against what the critics such as Lukens have said about Burgess condescending to child readers.

Sample montage sequence from *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*

In Chapter Two I have addressed the way in which I formed a reading impression of Burgess's scene of Mrs. Quack bathing, watched by Peter Rabbit. My 'adult' version was posited as being hypothetically different than the normative child reading of a nature scene. In that initial reading, I presented an intuitive or naïve impression without considering the mechanics of the narrative act. Inspired by thoughts from Eisenstein on early film workings, I thought to explore the bathing scene by analyzing it as a *montage sequence*. A *montage sequence* is "A segment of a film that summarizes a topic or compresses a passage of time into brief symbolic or typical images; the segment is often set off by the use of filmic techniques that contrast with the treatment in the other segments" (Bordwell and Thompson, 1986, p. 387). The scene is reconstructed from my

reading Notations of Chapter IX, Page 33 (1): lines 1-20, Page 34 (2): lines 1-28, Page 35(3): lines 1-28, and Page 36 (4): lines 1-17 from *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*. It corresponds with Number 5 in the plot segmentation, above, of PMQ.

Preparatory to presenting the scene as a studio-style montage script, I wrote it in a prose format from which I would write the scripted format:

Peter Rabbit approaches Smiling Pool before Mr. Sun has kicked off his rosy blankets and begun his climb up into the blue, blue sky. As Peter approaches the pool, Mrs. Quack has set out on the waters to bathe. He watches her. Her actions are described <as if she sat up on the end of her tail as she stretched her neck and wings just as far as she could>, and Peter <wanted to laugh right out> and later as she ducks her head <so that the water rolled down over her back> Peter again wants to laugh, but doesn't. Mrs. Quack, still unaware of Peter, is dressing her feathers, that is, she is now donning her clothes, carefully grooming herself, she completes her toilet, and she <appeared satisfied that she was looking her best> Peter waits for her to eat so she will feel <better natured> with a full stomach.

I identify this as a central scene in the story because, in the film convention of a heterosexual relationship trope (Mulvey, 1999) it clearly identifies the interest that Peter Rabbit shows for Mrs. Quack the Mallard Duck. Also, this is the place of departure for the solution to finding Mr. Quack through a concerted search organized by the forest friends after Peter's *tête à tête* with Mrs. Quack.

Now, as montage sequence:

Peter Rabbit approaches Smiling Pool (Camera distant, concentrating on two

figures, PR and the Pool). Mr. Sun sleeps so it is still a grey dawn with of rose, gold and blue to announce a nice day (Mr. Sun is off-stage).

Peter watches (medium range shot, a quick close-up of Peter's face) as Mrs. Quack swims out on pond (distant shot). She sits up on the end of her tail stretching neck and wings (distant shot), Peter suppresses a laugh at this (camera cut to P) and when water rolls down her back(close up). Mrs Quack dons her clothes, grooms herself and looks satisfied. She eats her breakfast. (Medium range shot, then closer with her and Peter together talking about what to do about Mr. Quack).

The montage sequence is a hypothetical presentation of the Burgess story scene in a modern film-writing format. Compared to a prose version, it reads more crisply or sparsely, as written by a scriptwriter rather than a prose writer. The information about camera framing and shots is parsed from ideas of how the camera can be deployed in telling the story. My example demonstrates that the Burgess stories are transferable to a film form without too much effort. The example also demonstrates how film writing brings certain things to the attention or view of the reader. In my readings, I have found that Burgess was a master of directing viewer attention onto things he wanted to show, and likely also away from things he did not want the viewer to see.

Reading the Burgess duck bathing montage sequence

The concept or image of approaching a duck for nature observation (or approaching a bathing female for male scopophilic purposes of the pleasure of the gaze) is made up of a series of shots from different camera angles, including distant, as Peter approaches the Pool, with the triangulation of Mr. Sun off stage (but present now in the

reader/viewer's mind) as both a witness and as a chaperone for the child audience observing the *tête à tête* of (married) Peter Rabbit with (married, but perhaps widowed) Mrs. Quack. Peter/camera comes nearer, until he has a normal (medium) range shot of Mrs. Quack bathing that cuts to distant. In spite of the distance, we feel pulled by a sense of immediacy and intimacy evoked by the detailed observation of her every move, for its delights of duck grooming nature lesson and also hypothetically the child's attentive watch of a female parent at her dressing table. Now the camera is on Peter as we see his reaction, he laughs (ostensibly at Mrs. Quack, but more likely in terms of his delight at the spectacle and the cleverness of concealing himself). Camera back on Mrs. Quack, normal-medium range.

A reader interpretation of the montage sequence of PMQ Bathing Scene

In order to describe the hypothetical effects on a reader of the Burgess text, I use myself as the reader and interpreter of the form that the story takes, inserting my thoughts *in italicized words* on what is wrought by the montage sequence associated with *PMQ* Bathing scene No. 2.

My reading: Peter Rabbit approaches the Smiling Pool before Mr. Sun has kicked off his rosy blankets and begun his climb up into the blue, blue sky. *Thus even as the reader is advised that Peter Rabbit is sneaking out to see/sneaking up on Mrs. Quack in a pre-dawn greyness (evincing child curiosity) , the setting of later-in-the-day with the miraculous colours of nature is evoked for the in the reassuring normalcy of the Green Forest environ. There is the premonition that it will be a beautiful day in which things will turn out all right. As Peter approaches the pool, Mrs. Quack has set out on the waters to bathe.* He watches her. Her actions are described <as if she sat up on the end of

her tail as she stretched her neck and wings just as far as she could>, *thus she is portrayed as infinitely graceful, acrobatic, and all together desirable, Laura Mulvey's image of the feminine object of universal male desiring, and Elizabeth Cowie's fantasy figure of desire set out in a "veritable mise-en-scene of desire."* (1999, p.361). In this instance, Mrs. Quack is not seen as a matronly duck, she is a swan figure, a mundane image transformed to a fantasy love. After having evoked desire, Burgess must break the tension with a declaration that Peter <wanted to laugh right out> and later as she ducks her head <so that the water rolled down over her back> Peter again wants to laugh, but doesn't. Mrs. Quack, still unaware of Peter, is dressing her feathers, that is, she is now donning her clothes, carefully grooming herself, *she takes pride in her appearance. The spotlight or the focus of the viewer's attention shifts back and forth between the two protagonists rather than having the sense they are both sharing the stage, we feel as though we must shift attention to first one character, then the other. The nature lesson that ducks are careful and thorough self-groomers is inserted to further release the tension of desire elicited by Peter watching. Mrs. Quack completes her toilet, and we are assured that she <appeared satisfied that she was looking her best> and Peter waits for her to eat so she will feel <better natured> with a full stomach, and this is a very civil gesture, almost courtly to wait for Mrs. Quack to finish and to be sated.*

As a result of the scripted montage sequence meeting of Peter Rabbit and Poor Mrs. Quack in a central scene, I felt that I knew both characters better. It seemed that the dynamic tension of desire between two central characters was carried to a logical end and resolved. This resolution is the production of a new image (Eisenstein 1947, p.18) so

central to the dynamism of narrative, including film narrative. The emotions that I experienced were complex: feeling honored to be at the scene of this intimate meeting, yet anxious that I was witnessing something I should not, as a child who gazes upon the primal scene. In Burgess's text, this is a scene, whether in nature observation and appreciation of duck habits, or as the idea of a specific male with female social intercourse, that is skillfully presented in that it shows rather than tells about watching a duck, or being fascinated by a vision of desire. Through the shots and angle choices associated with the subject matter - a female duck bathing as she is watched by a male rabbit - the reader experiences the semiotic sense of a real object standing in for something else. Depending on who is reading - it may be the child looking at and wondering about physical sexual difference, or the adult reader of Burgess thinking of the pleasures of courtship. The acting of the two central characters of the scene is a Burgess command performance showing simultaneously longing and pleasure, companionship and distance, perhaps reflecting his own life experience with courtship of Fanny, his second wife, the widow of a publisher friend.

In a visual paradigm for the success and appeal of the Burgess stories, I envision a gathering of the ideal audience seated in the theatre wearing their special effects glasses and waiting for the film to 'bring it on.' They are an audience attuned to the signal cues of the Burgess stories, designed to provoke and invoke specific desires. The visual and mental cues that Burgess hands out in his stories are reminiscent of moments in the Rocky Horror Picture Show, where savvy spectators of a spectacle are enjoined to react to certain stock phrases and

visual representations, thus aiding the semantic construction of a story event via recognition of semiotic aspects.

In fixing aspects pertinent to dynamic visualizing workings of the montage for the Poor Mrs. Quack bathing scene I have identified the ways in which Burgess, coeval with the early age of cinema, wittingly or unwittingly followed the conventions of cinema ¹⁰ in realizing the use of the montage sequence with its visualizing effects and potential psychic readings. Aspects of lighting, (along with music, thought to 'set the mood') costume, setting and behavior or expressions of characters, contribute to the staging of montage sequences in film-writing. It is possible to recreate the Burgess stories as complete modern dramatic scripts for stage or screen for all aspects of sight and sound (dialog, other effects) seem provided- for in his prose. Thus, I contend that the use of visualizing conventions of form aligned with carefully chosen wording serves to construct cine-semiotic language in Burgess's on-the-page texts for child readers.

Mixed methods in reading Burgess.

In Chapter One I presented my conceptual framework incorporating the notion from New Historicism that encourages alternative reading practices. I also noted that cultural materialism allied with New Historicism makes use of the idea of the birth and life of the text in culture and history. Reading the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories as a form of cine-semiotic production tied to psychic dynamics of the narrative, I have considered how the Burgess prose may work its appeal to the reader. Film theorist Staiger, speaking in *Perverse Spectators* (2000), discusses problematic aspects of pinning down the

activities and the appeals to a spectator (or reader) using conventional means of analysis. Her solution is to embrace multiple theorists and Sigmund Freud, Jerome Bruner, Mary Douglas, and Victor Turner may show up in the same essay. One of her analyses uses psychoanalytic and sociological theory to consider audience reception in terms of the aesthetic pleasures of a perverse reading of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* as a comedic adaptation of *Psycho*. Intertextuality may have played a part in the postive reception of Burgess's works, as suggested by his borrowing from author predecessors Beatrix Potter and Joel Chandler Harris. This intertextuality is part of a lively domain of the antics of animal characters acting upon child imaginations at the turn of the century.

In my study I have isolated out some cine-semiotic cues in Burgess that may work as schema within the stories and which may work with the viewer-reader's experience to condition a meaning-making discourse toward specific outcomes. Buckland (2000) explains that a cause-effect schema serves as the context in which the narrative film is processed by the viewer to enable a more complete understanding of the story. Thus the spectator is constrained in ways structured by a cause-effect schema to interpret film cues in a particular way, "combin[ing] cues and inferences into a coherent mental representation" (Buckland, p. 30). To frame the meaning in the Burgess stories, we may consider the context established by Burgess: that the stories are in service of a conservationist nature and patriotic movement to save animals to help farmers to aid the war effort. This is a distinctive and apparently non-negotiable parameter that Burgess and his publisher declared to his readers via his publicity campaigns, and performs as a meta-schematic or overall meaning making device. Within each of the Anti-Hunting

¹⁰ Fell (1974) writes that "By 1911 a narrative structure for film had more or less established itself. The devices of any television thriller today are little different in essence from those one- and two-reelers which

stories, there is an inscription of coded words and movements of story that work also to suggest further messages and meanings to the reader audience. The <terrible guns>; the gaze of the 'eye'; references to hunger and eating; to persecution and rest/safety; and other cinesemiotic cues, are words with everyday, English language meanings, but were calculated by the writer to go beyond in structuring mental responses to the stories. My argument for presenting the Burgess stories as an example of film language in a children's story resides in the notion that Burgess the best-selling writer had an intuition to communicate with his target audience in a manner that would appeal to a moment in story construction which he detected. Furthermore, the author intended to capitalize on his discovery, and he constructed for and out of his writing world an ideal spectator: the child animal – and – nature - lover who dreamed of saving things, and who subscribed to acts of morality and fairness.

The positive reader reception of Burgess's stories is known through their widespread circulation and sales of books and products. Archival materials such as Fan Mail also speaks to a widespread popular appeal of the stories. The negativity of some critics and reviewers cites aspects of the language that did not resonate or jibe with what they felt should occur with writing for children (see Chapter Two). The mixed reception of Burgess's works created a paradox that needed to be addressed with a methodology of mixed approaches, including archival, to read the documents directly addressing critical reception and to understand historical contexts and conditions of the writing form; reading with psychoanalysis, to address the pull on the child psyche; film studies reading to understand the extent of the visualized operations evoked through the Burgess story

came from the old Biograph studio just off New York's Union Square."

style; and reflections through cultural studies to consider the circulation of the mode of address of the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories through its target population.

Story-telling in the early age of film

The modes of address for storytelling were undergoing a sea-change at the time of Burgess's emergence as a children's author. Prior to Burgess's arrival on the storytelling scene (around 1910, with his publication of *Old Mother West Wind*) there was a cultural and social readiness (and eagerness) to see narrative projected on a screen rather than in a book or on stage. In 1889, a patent was taken out on a film projector in London, England and in 1895, the Lumiere brothers held private film screenings for the Photographic Congress in Lyons and for the *Revue Generale des Sciences* in Paris. Pioneers of early film relied at first on the spectacle rather than narrative force of the moving pictures in the Victorian era of the "spectator-worker" who attended sporting matches, music halls, theatres, and now the movie parlors:

Like the assembly line when it developed the possibilities of mass production, the astounding growth of the modern mass media fed on people's need for diversion and novelty and their willingness to pay for it. Manufactured by showmen and marketed by showmen, the cinema was born at a time when the arts – like the benefits of science – were becoming available to the masses (Spoto, 1983, p. 49).

It must have been an exciting and stimulating time of aesthetic immersion into an unthought-of medium, the internet of its time, but more publicly spectated.

In April 1896, New York City was the site of the first public projection of a motion picture in the United States.

Audiences were quickly enthusiastic on both sides of the Atlantic. 'Why did it arrive at this moment?' historian Ernest Betts has asked. It arrived because the means existed. Every invention has its hour, and the hour for

the cinema struck at the close of the nineteenth century. Its development beyond its circus origins can be traced to the social needs of the time. There was little amusement for the working class. The whole [British] nation yawned with boredom during weekends and was ready to put a fortune into the hands of anyone who could relieve the tedium. (Spoto, 1983, p. 48)

Syndicated comic strips and features of newspapers of the time also allayed the tedium. Now there were exciting new mediums competing with book reading to inform and entertain. How was a children's story writer to stay atop the demands of new media competing for the reader's attention? Even prominent literary figures such as George Bernard Shaw began to embrace the new medium as a popularizing mode of artistic and intellectual dissemination, seeing its potential in how it was readily accessible and 'user friendly' to all social classes.¹¹ I can only speculate upon Burgess's involvement or engagement in thinking over such currents as a democratizing force in artistic expression. He may have had a normal interest or appetite for keeping up with trends, but it seems certain that whatever he detected of trends would be turned toward making his stories profitable in line with writing for a living. In the Burgess Anti-Hunting trilogy, there is presented in the guise of entertainment (palatable to child readers) a moral world for children's edification (desired by parents). It seems likely that he was attentive to whichever means would make his works popular and attractive within a new milieu of storytelling. A livelihood for the writer Burgess and his family depended upon his works' success and continuance. Burgess was very clear on this aspect and his investment in

¹¹ George Bernard Shaw observed in *the New Statesman* in 1914 that the early cinema was a revolutionary social power for the times. Shaw detected its democratic and popular appeal, noting that the manual laborer who picks up a book in the evening falls asleep; but cinema can keep him "not only awake but fascinated" and can also reach the illiterate. Shaw concluded "And that is why the cinema is going to produce effects that all the cheap books in the world could never produce." (Costello, 1965, pp. 1-2)

writing for children as his market (Thornton W. Burgess "Please Spare Peter Rabbit!" in *The Mail Bag*, a column of *The Outlook*, 17 May 1922, p.120).

Behind Burgess's storytelling aesthetic were personal and social productive forces linked to various conditions and pre-conditions. Burgess spent time as an apprentice in the writing trade via involvement in advertising and the early 20th century journal and newspaper industry. With the emergence of cinema and its representations of narrative in a readily-apprehended visual form, the time may have been right for Burgess's story style which could be seen as influencing and being influenced by other media forms. Fell (1974) notes that the Victorian era provided preconditions for cinema to emerge as a popular past-time. He sees "filmlike predispositions" in Victorian prose (p. 54). The idea that people/ a populace or general public could be made ready for a visual-film movie representation of narrative can be sited within the famous cultural circuit concept of Richard Johnson in his seminal article "What is cultural studies anyway?" (1996, p.84). Within conditions of production for texts the social relations and capabilities of lived cultures support the emergence of certain forms; and the texts further the social and productive relations of lived cultures in advancing ideologies and manufactured realities.¹² The way for the emergence of new things is paved by a circulation of conditions and ideas that are tried on and taken out, improved upon, gradually nudged forward, forced through or discarded by historical and political agendas.

The place of individuals in assisting with change in society cannot be overlooked in siting texts within cultural circulation. Pioneering animator Walt Disney was a

¹² In support of my foray into identifying ties between literary and filmic conventions is the notion that the forms of media are interdependent: "Film and television rely very much on 'literary' convention, while printed communications rely on a wide diffusion of iconic images as a frame of reference" (McQuail 1975 cited in Fiske and Hartley, 1992, p.96).

charismatic force in media of the 20th century, and his legacy lives on for the 21st century via his creative endeavors carried on in studios founded by him. Gabler's (2006) research of Disney's personal papers suggested that Walt Disney never thought of his characters as moving drawings. He saw them as living, feeling, thinking creatures, which is why he believed audiences responded to them. The technologies he advocated were simply ways to enhance the anima. It seems entirely probable that Thornton Burgess's literary inventiveness and appeal to millions of children over generations, which also featured animated animal characters (but on the pages of books rather than on the screen) could also have been rooted in a belief that his audiences would see the characters as living, feeling, thinking creatures; and that he determined, in order to make his characters come alive, he would animate them through a special approach of the use of a visualizing language.

The early and continued success of the Burgess stories suggests an aesthetic that was both compatible with and competitive with new media versions of narrative, the cinema presented in movie houses. As a bonus to the visual - emotive aesthetic evident in Burgess Bedtime Story-Books' mode of address, there appears a working through of psychic issues that were a necessary compulsion to the author, and which presumably also addressed the compulsions of his readership. This combination of visual – feeling dynamics with psychic dynamics completes my notion of the social moment of the cinesemiotic in creating vital and relevant signs with meaning that were/are recognized and incorporated into the completion of the narrative contract with the reader of the Burgess animal stories. Thus, the Burgess mode of storytelling aligned with the

emergence of cinema as a new medium of narrative becoming widely accessible to people of the early 20th century.

In Chapter Five, I turn to scholars in children's literature who have recently commented on the aesthetics of early picture books in support of my notion of the cine-semiotic workings in Burgess's animal-nature stories. Burgess was successful in utilizing visual iconicity and other dynamics of mind's eye and play of psychic processes in the life of the mind. This form of story was suitable for commodification and wide circulation, and Burgess's success was a result of perfecting craft and authorial persona. Finally, as presented at the close of Chapter Five in my Conclusion, this study of Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy demonstrates that memory and imagination are personal sites of signification and selection of story that co-join with the workings of social forces to result in cultural texts.

Chapter Five – Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy and its significance to literacy and education

My study of the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy published in book form in the period 1917 to 1921 has traced the structure of address that made the popular children's author's stories a significant part of the landscape of literacy and education at that time (see Chapter Two for early educational acclaim for Burgess). In addition, I am interested in how the stories went on from their initial publication to endure as contested standards in children's literature. There was something about the Burgess stories that withstood the test of time, with the stories embraced by successive generations of Burgess readers and fans. As evidence of his enduring appeal, in the late 1940s through the early 1960s, Burgess was approached to bring his stories to the screen, via proposed children's television shows (Correspondence between Burgess and production companies such as Leonard Sydney Fields, Murphy-Lillis, Inc., The Armand S. Weill Co., Inc., Kudner Agency, Inc., Advertising, and William Morris Agency, TWBSDC&E – see Appendix A). It is apparent that the would-be producers detected something in the Burgess stories that possessed the type of movement needed to translate them to the screen.

In my study, I have traced the workings of a pictorial idiom that I have termed the cine-semiotic, which can be detected in Burgess's animal stories. It seems possible that this idiom was part of a literary paradigm that was maintained over years of readership, coeval with an age of increasing media use including radio shows, film, and television. The fact that Burgess's stories started out as serialized newspaper productions contributes to the argument that they were, in accordance with writing for the column, expressed in a language of immediacy and visualization. The stories were designed for reading aloud around the kerosene lamp at the kitchen table, for being read to at bedtime and to be

recalled in a sequential fashion of ‘what happens next’? Burgess was somehow prepared to be attentive to the story-telling mediums of writing and of new media outlets. After 1924, Burgess wrote for radio as attested to by Manuscripts for the Radio Nature League Radio talks for May 13, 1925 through August 19, 1925, broadcast live out of Station WBZA in Springfield, MA (TWBSDCE, Ernestine Johnson Collection). Prior to that his works were adapted for children’s theatre, with “The Adventures of Peter Rabbit and Reddy Fox,” staged by Cincinnati Children’s Theatre in 1919 and “Peter Rabbit in Dreamland” staged in various performances in New York City from 1915-1916 (Manuscripts in TWBSDCE, David Cesan Collection). The writer seems to have been engaged with a literary paradigm that could ‘keep up’ with readers in the 20th century, readers who were becoming increasingly engaged in visualizing forms of narrative (I am including radio as a medium that listeners visualize, in the mind’s eye, the story according to cues that evoke the cine-semiotic response).

It may be that the pictorial idiom that Burgess employed for his animal-nature stories came out of a sense of play and capacity for play that the writer possessed. The adult Burgess entered the imaginative world of play-acting using various dolls and props to enact dramas with his step-daughter. This occurred during Burgess’s early writing years:

She [Helen, daughter of Fannie, Burgess’s second wife] played with the many beautiful china dolls she had collected over the years, and she talked to Grandpa about them as though they were real. Helen gave them charming names such as Isadora, Cinderella, Penelope, and Rosalinda, and Grandpa entered into the make-believe dialogue that actually addressed real-life joys and sorrows, attributing them to the dolls. Through the magic of their imaginations, they watched Peter Rabbit go ‘lipperty, lipperty, lip’ down the crooked little path. (1998, p. 28)

This delightful view of the role of imaginative play-life in the co-construction of theatrical narratives speaks to Burgess's ability to visualize a world for and with children. It may be the workings of this capacity for imaginative play that sustained Burgess's long sessions of writing in his studio, to duly churn out the next story installment in time for the syndication deadline or the book submission. Hedges (1991) points out that Freud sees repetition central to the activity of play; and Piaget links children's play to unconscious fantasies and a means of acting out psychic conflict. Play and fantasy serve as a recombinant dramatization of primordial themes. Identification with various characters is "playful and hypothetical" (Hedges, p. 109) and scripting the characters through dramas of action and desire can address questions of origin and identity, power and efficacy, and other vicarious enactments of unconscious wishes. Through play, there is immediate somatic participation in the recreated dramas, with attendant physical sensations of satisfaction and sense of release. Play is said to be directed toward mastering reality (Hedges, p. 110) but it may also achieve pleasure of the moment in symbolic and imaginary configurations within the psyche. It appears that Burgess was able to place his imaginative play into action in real play time; and it is arguably his facility with imaginative play that contributed to his successful mode of address to the child reader. It was as though 'Papa Burgess' was leading the reader through the scripted play-on-page to participate in the animal-nature dramas of the Anti-Hunting Trilogy and other stories.

Representing internal dramas of the writer through storytelling

What are the internal dramas Burgess replayed in his writings – family secrets, childhood obstacles, emotional intensities related to his observations of his Cape Cod

environment, of growing up and moving out as a young man to make a living? These are all the internal dramas of any other writer, but particularly as a writer for children and as a noted educator-naturalist, it is important to ask How do his inscriptions of his experiences play out for readers? Furthermore, what tied Burgess to his readers, whose imaginative life and his desire for making a living from writing was closely configured within his narrative stylings? In inventing narrative, Burgess unconsciously wrote his story through memory placed into words, with a drive that created a unique style.

Language made fertile soil creative for workings of the psyche (after Kristeva, 2000), and melancholia appears to have strongly informed Burgess's three Anti-Hunting stories. It is important to consider what a writer for children may be working through.¹ For example, in explanations of the uncanny, the death instinct and transference, Rashkin (1992) has proposed implications of the phantom for speaking of the "other" in using psychoanalytic, philosophical and literary concepts to actively pursue meaning. Taking her interpretation of the phantom into Burgess's stories, I suggest that his animal figures may stand in for the phantom that has a secret to tell, "propelled by transgenerational haunting." Here the "other" can be perceived as depicting an unconscious knowledge brought to light in the author's text; perhaps indicative of repressed things excavated by a moment of recognition. In addition, Burgess's characters reappear/resurface in endless tellings of re-embroiderments or new versions of old incidents.

Burgess's stories were avidly received by children and their parents as teaching morals and about nature. At the turn of the century, nature was rapidly being replaced by urbanization, and thus a connection to the past life in the countryside was retained

¹ Hutcheon's 1984 study of Charles Mauron refers to Freud's theory of the unconscious as the root of artistic creativity. She states that Freud's thoughts on the matter speak to the reception of art as well as to

through the Burgess stories, touted for their animal-nature lessons. In my close reading with psychoanalysis, I ask: Can I identify the Burgess supposedly 'simple nature stories' as 'messy texts' out of the neat little tidy packets he marketed as *The Bedtime Story-Books*, or *The Wishing-Stone Series*, and the like? Do we "[J]ourney together in a chiasmatic two-way flow – in a site of struggle – in a messy text" (Low and Palulis, 2000, p.76) in Burgess's stories? These stories, I have found, are beyond the simple nature stories that children thought they were reading, with parental blessings. The Burgess stories features language that *knows* about itself, and I contend that this is part of the pull and the appeal of the disarmingly simple, straightforward stories. For the Burgess animal soap operas, an aspect of their popularity is that realness of life situations and dilemmas is imbued with imaginative drama. The likable, familiar animal characters are animated to project outward those inner workings of the most private nature. In the case of family secrets, concepts from Freudian psychoanalysis such as the 'primal scene,' the moment of private conception history and simultaneous inclusion/exclusion (Gunn, 1988, p.190) have to be viewed by the child/adult audience obliquely rather than straight on.

Unconsciously, it seems that Burgess gave out lessons about the potential for phallic violence in the guise of 'bad men' taught at the mother's breast as she read the Bedtime Story in the security of the child's bedroom. The Burgess stories claim an effect of providing security while entering the symbolic, or at least considering it for a taste, exploring its possibilities, while reserving for final committal. Issues surrounding a concept of 'childhood space' or space created in or for childhood are of interest in thinking of the implications of the fantasized world of Burgess. Wright (1984) outlines Kristevan theorizing about the implications of the *chora* for initial entries into or

its creation, for the viewer or reader must share a pleasure linked to that of the creator or artist.

experimenting with language play.² My understanding and operationalization of the Kristevan idea of the semiotic in language movements and growth, is that the pre-symbolic is an active partner in growth, not merely something to be shed. It is a 'stage' that never really goes away, and is entered and re-entered through performances in language. This formulation is significant in that readers of Burgess stories have always included adults as well as children (Burgess, *Now I Remember*; Frances Meigs, *My Grandfather Thornton W. Burgess*; Fan Mail, numerous correspondences 1910 through 1965, in TWBSDCE). The idea that the Burgess stories contained a form of language that continued to have an appeal to adults at all stages and walks of life suggests a need that was met through a return to story written ostensibly for children. The likelihood that Burgess was writing for his own psychic satisfactions in no small measure would account for his popularity with adult readers, both those reading to children and those reading them for themselves, as correspondence to Burgess indicates (Fan Mail, TWBSDCE).

Repetition is a feature of Burgess's literary style, and repetition is generally identified with literature for the nursery or for young children. Burgess repeats certain words with seeming intent: <the terrible guns> and <eyes> recur; and certain ideas are also featured time and again (man's/adult's unfairness toward animals/children, Peter Rabbit is curious, etc.). The device has pedagogical impact and comforting or security implications. A grand story is enacted through the Burgess Bedtime stories. In the Anti-Hunting Trilogy, I have detected that the cycle of being is reinvented in each, using

² Semiotic functioning depends on the *chora*, the private experience of the bodily drives, which has a key part to play in the learning of language, in enabling the child to participate with some equality in the fun of meaning. The zest of experimentation, the *chora* disrupting the order, does not cease at some critical point at which language becomes mature and complete; the pre-symbolic is as active as ever (Wright, p. 99, and see also O'Connor, 1990).

slightly different actors and circumstances. Existing as a marked creature through abjection, enduring expulsion and exclusion (death by disappearance) and making a triumphant reappearance (rebirth) and re-incorporation into society are repeated over and over. Reading with psychoanalysis, repetition may be construed as a symptom or signal of dynamic mental process, particularly for adult mental defenses, signaling distresses and growth (Wright, 1984). Burgess's three anti-hunting stories cycle through a re-enactment of a safety-danger-safety, a cycle within a bounded, familiar environment. Enacted with differing casts of characters and slightly differing circumstances and story lines, they seem limitless in their (re) tellings. Indeed, Burgess built an entire literary reputation upon endless re-embroiderments of the tales of the Green Meadow and Green Forest 'folk.' To say that Burgess was exploiting the aesthetic-narrative device of repetition may be going a bit far, but perhaps not.

In Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy, the hunter with the terrible gun comes on scene over and over again, repetitively, obsessively, to announce some trouble with the primal scene. The sure-shot hunter causes Mr. Quack to be absent from the marital bed; the horrid hunter of Bob White wounds the fruit of the marriage bed of Mr. and Mrs. Bob White; and the persistent hunters and dogs relentlessly pursue almost to the point of death the young male stag in his prime, before he reaches the marital bed. All this recurrent trouble in the primal scene bespeaks something dwelling in the psyche of the author, and the life events of Burgess could certainly be trotted out to attest to these moments. How is the author of children's stories allowed or permitted to tell stories related to deep and personal dramas such as that of the primal scene? It appears that the *guise* of nature stories allows or permits the storyteller to bring the gaze of children onto these dramas of

the primal bed. Given what we know of Burgess's popular reception, this storytelling was/is enacted with the full consent of the parents who bought, and today buy and promote the books for their children.

Recent ideas about the aesthetic workings of the early picture book

Recent study into the category known as picture books, whereby pictures predominate the text or are more or less equally balanced, is relevant to thinking of the Burgess story dynamics. The Burgess stories of the Anti-Hunting Trilogy have a lower ratio of Harrison Cady's illustrations proportionate to written text, and they are not strictly considered to be of the picture book genre. However, the ideas presented by researchers into the workings of picture books for children inform my study, supporting an argument that the Burgess stories contain verbal visualizing aspects of an aesthetic understood and derived coterminous with early film narrative. Op de Beeck's contribution of "suspended animation" (2006) and Wylie's (2006) contribution of the "drama of potentiality" and "pictorialization" in metafictional picturebooks assist my theorizing that the three selected Anti-Hunting stories from Burgess's storybook series from 1917–1921, contain the moving narration aesthetic I call the **cine-semiotic**. In Burgess's stories, the moving narration aesthetic is accomplished not so much by the interaction of illustration with text, but by the style of written narration involving choice of iconic characters, choice of dialog and sequence of action, plot segmentation, and use of stills and montage. My conceptualization of the cine-semiotic residing in Burgess' animal nature stories brings in considerations of the workings of psyche to intersect with the workings of language in the arena of the story.

Theorists in the area of Children's Literature have identified a turn in the aesthetic dynamic of stories offered for children in the early part of the 20th century. Op de Beeck (2006) portrays what she identifies as the workings of suspended animation in William Nicholson's 1926 picture book *Clever Bill*, comparing it to Kingsley's earlier version of *My Little Doll*, the story of a lost toy. She sees the stories as indicative of relationships between children and commodities at that time. Her comparison of *Clever Bill* with *My Little Doll* shows a shared theme of separation and a happy reunion. However, the newer story *Clever Bill* uses a material color-printed form which along with its "sequential verbal and visual imagery, its dramatic momentum, and the particular closeness of child and doll situate it at a remove from nineteenth-century fare" (p. 55, underlined emphasis mine). Op de Beeck has demonstrated ideas pertaining to a new aesthetic dynamic of illustrated stories. She finds that "The true twentieth-century picture book necessitates a different kind of literary and visual consumption than had been required of the reader in previous decades" (p.62). Op de Beeck concludes that the "good fun" of Nicholson's *Clever Bill* is achieved partly through an intersection of technology and the portrayal of the common children's past-time of playing with and loving toys:

Clever Bill's sequential images, fragmented written narrative, and briskly hand-lettered words suggest a chain of instants sketched from one of the film features or flickering newsreels that fascinated audiences after 1895. Its unfinished aesthetic, homemade-looking sketches, and hand-lettering express the anti-academic spirit, which flourished after Impressionism, and suggest the increasing value placed on capturing the moment – a value Nicholson expressed so much in his work. *Clever Bill* is also indebted to nineteenth and early twentieth-century photographers who, like the Impressionists, sought to represent fleeting instants in time, and to cartoonists who drew loosely drawn comic strips as popular entertainment for young readers and adults. Its framed images, paired with an unrhymed, sparsely punctuated sentence that continues from page to page make evident that changes are under way in twentieth century storytelling, visualization, and perception. (p.71)

This passage reciting the aesthetic dynamics of the Clever Bill stories at the early part of the twentieth century, contemporaneous with Burgess's writing for children, links prose text accompanied by picture with new visualizing movements I have detected for the Anti-Hunting Trilogy works.

Theorizing about visual aesthetics residing in literature has been applied for other authors and works of the picture book genre. Nikolajeva and Scott (2000) considered the interaction of text with image, citing studies of "imagetext" (Mitchell, 1994), "iconotext" (Hallberg, 1983) and "synergy" (Sipe, 1998) to convey the "complex relationship between text and image" (Nikolajeva and Scott, p. 225). In *How Picturebooks Work* (2000) they outline some dynamic workings of pictures with words on page (Burgess's works with limited but highly thought-of illustrations by Harrison Cady, the author's preferred illustrator, would fall under their category of works with minimal enhancement that are thought to go along quite closely with the text). Nikolajeva and Scott do not consider how the words and style of writing itself acts to create or activate pictures on the mindscreen of the reading or read-to child; they apparently feel that the dynamic effects they have located in selected picturebooks emanate from the placement of illustrations in close partnership with text. Sipe (1998) engaged in a semiotically – framed theorization of how picture books work in his discussion of the back –and – forth dynamic of children using pictures to read text and text to read pictures.

Uses of Literary Anthropology to approach children's literature

Literary anthropology can contribute to the project of taking children's literature seriously and seeing it as foundational to children's learning of culture. The dynamic comforts and tensions of reading culture through texts come to the fore in literary

anthropology and its aims. Works of literature have long been recognized as a means of encapsulating and presenting cultural phenomena and the events of life, both mundane and extraordinary. Literature draws life from the interaction of imaginary, conscious and perceptual activities (Iser, 1989, p. 280) and helps to embody how and what we know. New paradigms for exploring what is behind literature and media as mirrors of history and society are needed (Iser, p. 263). "Fictions are inventions enabling humankind to extend itself -" (Iser, p. 265) and are part of the infinite variety in creative expression and expressiveness. Successful storytellers have been able, throughout time out of mind, to capture means to spark imagination, and to blow the embers when called upon to tell a tale around the fireside of shadows and light.

How authors understand and present the human condition, which is the stuff also of anthropology, is sometimes mysterious in its composition. Iser, 2000, invokes the anthropological ethnographic approach of 'thick description', the reading of culture not in a pared down essentialist manner, but in a celebration of complexity and a means to generate "semiotic webs" (p. 161) that lead to further thinking about culture and what it is to be human. Child readers and their teachers and parents have likely always been aware of the potential of literature for self-interpretation on a personal level, but literary anthropology contains the potential for how literature lends itself to reading culture; and to better understand relationships with the self and with others. It is encouraging to consider the potential of literary anthropology, 'reading with culture', aligned with reading with psychoanalysis applying concepts such as the abject me/not me, embodiments of terror and the ideals and realities of community.

Additionally, the aesthetics developed throughout the history of human culture are reflected through mode of address in storytelling. The study of the cine-semiotic mode of address (with ideas derived through reading with film studies) in the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy stories illuminates a sense of how an imaginary world is brought to life and belief in the eyes of an audience. "Phenomenologically, the imaginary must be viewed as an act of consciousness" Iser (1993, p. 195) states in connection with his discussion of Sartre's examination of perception, ideation and consciousness. Grasping the exact nature of the dynamics by which Burgess and other writers 'for children' are able to practice their craft is elusive, but literary anthropology provides a means to explore the terrain of culture, imagination and creativity.

Writing and childhood memory: Burgess and the beached whale

Part of the link for writing for children may come out of childhood memory. The ability to recall moments of childhood, what it was like and what it meant, *how* it meant, may be the basis for the most appealing children's literature. An appeal that is successful in engaging child readers must emanate from something of value shared with children, and represented to them in a manner that they can appreciate. A mutuality of pleasure and purpose between author-presenter and reader-audience rightly involves some questions regarding the historical-cultural surroundings of the event of a text. Beyond Peter Hunt's project of reading from a "childist perspective" Mary Galbraith sees the need to articulate and theorize the childhood in conjunction with the adult self positions "using all the philosophical, historical, critical, literary and personal tools at our disposal" (2001, p.198). Really good writing reaches within to expose the things that an author knows and believes and is compelled to show. Beyond the revealing, hard-wrought content material,

there are questions of how does the successful author know which form of presentation is going to reach her or his audience in its particular time and place?

My work is driven by wanting to know about Thornton W. Burgess, and about his influence over child readers. One particular image from Burgess's autobiographical account of his childhood days haunted me: the barber-pole red-and-white striped flensed whale Thornton Burgess saw on a New England beach through the eyes of a child, but recalled much later, as an adult (Burgess 1960). Burgess's childhood lens in writing this vivid account is without doubt refracted by the adult lens fraught with adult experiences such as disappointments, obligations and concerns of the adult world. But Burgess, as a successfully imaginative writer for children, retained, in this particular account some of the child perspective so integral to child literature writers.

It is difficult to 'get into the head' of a writer for children through their published stories. Interviews with authors such as Maurice Sendak (Cech 1995) and Robert Cormier (Myers 2000) have yielded helpful insights into this area of interest. Engaging with Galbraith's call for understanding the childhood self in conjunction with the adult self is significant for authors, educators, counselors and other professional and avocational workers in fields for the benefit of children. In my study of the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy, I have approached the dynamics of the psyche via an exploration of the recurring story cycle of contented communal life, rupture by danger/hunting and hurting/wounding; hiding, and healing, then re-emergence into community life to complete the circle. I have examined these particular stories with categories of analysis: the abject, terror and community that strongly work within the cycle to create effects for

the reader. These are all aspects of story that must arise from the writer's unconscious life, and they can then be read from the page.

But a reading is also under the agency of the reader's conscious personal life, and thus readings are subjective interpretations that have some things in common with things held by the writer, and some things of divergence, depending on the particular formation of the reader. In the case of the animal-nature trilogy wrote by Burgess, a central interpretive community of readers who loved and desired to learn about animals, the outdoors, and how to conserve/defend and appreciate 'Mother Nature' is a centrifugal value that permits some commonality of reading. Additionally, I propose that the emotional experiences of childhood which informed the Burgess stories are also recognizable enough to create a central interpretive community of readers who can readily apprehend and appreciate the metaphoric "Anti-Hunting" stories written for them by Burgess, the adult male author of the early twentieth century.

In his early childhood recollection of a beached whale, Burgess represented himself as speaking from the child angle (1960, *Now I Remember*). It is a solemn recollection of a ceremonial view to a tragedy, one of his first nature tragedies, much as a funeral parlor viewing of a dead relative is often thought to impact children. Let us go down to the beach along with young Burgess in the pages of Chapter 1 "Striped Whales." The church bells are ringing in the Cape Cod town, summoning townsfolk down to the local beach where the whaling ship is anchored out past the surf. They are called to witness the great event of seeing two harpooned whales sighted out in the bay:

... With startling abruptness a never-to-be-forgotten scene burst upon us [the five-year-old Thornton is with a six or seven- years- old cousin and the cousin's grandfather].

In the immediate foreground, in the shallows of low tide, was the ocean monster we had come to see. Some distance off-shore, sharply etched against the flattened gray-green sea- for the wind was offshore – rode the whaling-ship. Boats were plying back and forth between shore and ship, those going out deeply laden while those returning were empty save for their crews.

But it was the huge, bulky mass of the monster in the foreground that challenged and held the wide-eyed gaze of the small boy [Burgess] clinging with one hand to his hat and with the other grasping tightly the elder's hand, catching his breath partly in awe at the strange scene and in part lest it be sucked away by the relentless wind. He was filled with awe and a bit frightened by the unexpected, unfamiliar, overwhelming sight of his first whale —a striped whale, a red-and-white whale. There it lay before his very eyes. I can still see it.

Since that long ago day of my first field observation I have seen many whales, but in their black or gray drabness none has ever looked as a whale should. None has ever appeared in what I knew to be the true colors, red-and-white stripes like a barber's pole. Even when I read *Moby Dick*, the whale was the wrong color. (Burgess 1960, p. 7)

He continues on to give an "explanation" (1960, pp.7-8) attributing the impression of red and white "barber pole stripes" to the flensing process by the whalers as they stripped blubber from the red underlying flesh of the whale.

At the end of the chapter on the whale, he refers to another, later beached whale as a "Goliath." The image of the whale symbolizes something of massive proportions to the young boy's eyes, possibly a Biblical reference from religious background (Jonah and the Whale), and also of a monstrous aspect. Could this fantastic, indelible visually - recorded memory of a red – and - white -striped whale refer to the phantomic presence of Burgess's dead father - "The 'thing' he had heard of 'at home, in school, in brothel and at church' finally appears in reality under the guise of a paternal corpse" uniting Father and Death but still split and separate (Kristeva, 1980, p. 149)? The death of his father must have been of massive significance in his life; and also, in the fact of death and non-availability to Burgess in his childhood, was this reality monstrous and grotesque to look/think upon? The whale is vivid and uncompromising in memory: it is red and

white, the colors stand out against a grey - green background. Burgess insists on equating the whale's image with a "barber pole" of the sort hung out by the old - fashioned neighborhood barber shop. Burgess refers to the idea that he feels awed, frightened, and disoriented or deluded by the experience:

Since that long ago day... I have seen many whales, but in their black or gray drabness none has ever looked as a whale should look. None has ever appeared in what I knew to be the true colors, red-and-white stripes like a barber's pole. Even when I read Moby Dick, the whale was the wrong color. (p.7)

Lastly, but not insignificantly, is the writer's shift in subject position: "He was filled with awe and a bit frightened by the unexpected, unfamiliar, overwhelming sight of his first whale [first whale = first father]- a striped whale, a red-and-white whale [the mortal wounding of the father]. There it lay before his very eyes. I can still see it" (emphasis mine). What does this apparently unconscious position shift mean? I know that Burgess was trying to show the distance between himself as adult autobiographer and the little boy he was on the beach, but there is no transition indicated. It is a shifty shift, a saving of self, moving away from the unimaginable horror and spectacle of *something*.

As a man of eighty-plus years old writing his autobiography, what did Burgess see himself seeing as a child that day on the beach? Using the approach of viewing his own childhood memory-story within the cycle of story I detected in his Anti-Hunting Trilogy, how could this particular memory-fragment piece be considered in terms of psychic writing? As well, did the categories of the abject/abjection, terror and community play out somehow within this revelation of something vivid that the author retained from a childhood recollection? It is told as though Burgess viewed it and could see it vividly. In placement within a story cycle of communal life, then to danger-tragedy,

to hiding and healing, then return to community, the childhood memory appears to contain something of each of these components. As Burgess goes down to the shoreline, he is with family members, in solidarity with his kin, and also within the larger community of the village. He views the whale, and from the account, he has a pretty good 'look-see' at the tragedy, the death, the corpse of the whale, and he is awed by the encounter. The child Burgess appears to hide the memory behind the declaration that it is not as he expected, it is not a whale, it is a red-and-white-striped barber pole, a common-enough sight in small-towns across the country. The hidden-away memory appears to have carried him away and transported his thinking into a focus upon expressing what he has seen, a compulsion to document something of experience. At that particular moment of memory, Burgess has not physically left the community, and so when he comes back to the moment, to the beach, he is still with the cousin and older relative in the company of other townspeople-spectators.

In a physical representation of **abjection**, the child Burgess has commented on the sheer physical size and bulk of the gigantic monster before him. Does being small and alive in the presence of something great and dead signify abjection? The only clues available from the adult writer Burgess may obscure any presence of abjection as a state or condition, for the adult Burgess admits only to awe and some fright, but he does mention the unexpected, the overwhelming and the unfamiliar. He (the child Burgess) is thrown off balance and perhaps at the threshold of the me/not me, but again the adult Burgess recovers the memory and places it within scientific observation, a field observation that gives credence to his description of the flensed white blubber-and-red flesh appearance of the whale as a barber pole.

How is **terror** present in this memory? Certainly, although the scene is presented as an almost pedestrian albeit unusual seaside occurrence, at the end of the whaling hey-day of New England communities, it was an event. Again the screen of the adult Burgess uses words such as awe, fright, startling abruptness, strange scene, and so any aspect of terror is somewhat sedate(d) in the impression invoked by the viewer. This recollection of childhood from the distance of the adult remembering casts out horror in favor of adult dignity. **Community** is certainly present, with the only sense of far-away from one's kindred evoked from a slight solitariness admitted through a separation of viewing: "There it lay before his very eyes. I can still see it"; an admission, almost, of an out-of-body experience. But we are soon back to earth with intertextual references to Melville's *Moby Dick* and to the barber's pole.

Childhood recollections have been studied and theorized in Adlerian psychology. Early childhood recollections are thought to be especially significant in what they reveal as a projective technique to assess the meaning a person has given to his or her life. "They reveal the child's interpretation and response to the early challenges of life, its ability or lack of it to overcome difficulties, and the master plan for coping with the contingencies of existence" (Corsini, 1994, p. 21). Burgess projected his whale memory purportedly from early childhood, very convincingly and realistically, onto the pages of his autobiography, written in his sunset years, and actually only five years prior to his death. In Adlerian practice, the earliest recollections are significant because the patient has remembered them, not on the basis of whether they actually did or did not occur, or if they transpired differently than the recollection reads. Whether Burgess's whale memory was a 'real' experience or a "nonconscious fabrication" (Corsini, p. 19), it reflects a

significant moment in “the story of my life” (p. 19) and so Adlerian theory suggests it must be paid attention to in terms of what it says of Burgess’s identity construction and his life choices, which encompass not going to college even though he wished to, choosing to go to business school even though he wanted to be a writer, leaving advertisement and journal editing to become an independent, syndicated writer of children’s stories, remarrying after being widowed, sending his young son away several times during his childhood, remaining in the vicinity of his New England birthplace all his life, and choices of like ilk.

Is this a “fugitive memory” that has “materialized only by chance” (Chessick, 1987, p. 21) or is it a practiced observation by Burgess casting back to his New England childhood days? My first impression is that, in style of presentation, Burgess’s whole account seems imbued with commendable writerly traits of immediacy and attention to realistic detail. However, strangely lacking in Burgess’s recollection is an ‘emotional’ report, how did he feel about it, what does he think it was really all about? As with his animal-nature stories, the emotions are handled carefully. This ‘lack’ of overt emphatic emotion may be attributed to cultural and societal expectations, or perhaps indicates that Burgess was really only willing or able to go so far, after all, in his revelations. I detect in Burgess’s memory-inscription a cinematographic approach in breaking the memory up into a series of images and frames (after Chessick, 1987, p.22) seems to be at work in Burgess’s account of that day on the beach. Thus, perception is individuated in recollection and capturing memory in language by “individuating things in space” (Chessick p. 22).

Heath (1981) notes how performance is remembering, and involves a memory force such that there occurs

In psychoanalytic terms, ...the conversion of the process into the reflection of a fixed memory, an invulnerable imaginary, the object – and with it the mastery of the subject – regained. (p.123)

The visual and immediate style of the recollections and the subject matter of observing a phenomenon in nature are unmistakable features of the beached whale recollection. The adult Burgess's recollection is so indelibly insistent upon the colourizing of the moment, investing the dull, drab, wind-swept beach with Technicolor touches including the pivotal iconic vision-analogy stand-in of a "red and white striped barber pole" for the flensed flesh of the mammoth sea-mammal. The seductions of this childhood recollection of a beached whale invoke terror and dread/death alongside security in holding the hand of an older relative and viewing the whale as part of his birthplace community. This seeming contradiction of danger and security, peril and salvation provides part of the resonating impact and popular aesthetic appeal on the stories Burgess wrote for children

In his autobiography written in 1960 toward the end of his life, the whale was one "secret" personal and private experience or impression he shared with "his public"(after Jameson, in Felman 1981). Even in his own diaries (Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections & Exhibits), he seems wary of sharing inner workings in an explicit manner, but he must have felt compelled to share this particular memory of the flensed whale. What truth about the body unveiled (Robertson, 2002, p. 201, citing Brooks, p. 19) coheres to the vivid, blubbery mass of the red and white striped whale on the beach of Burgess's memory? Fincke (2001) found that children used narrative and created useful metaphors to launch themselves out of the traumas they had experienced.

In one session, a young girl created crayon images of a sleeping girl and a screaming alligator (from the expression 'see you later, alligator' used by the analyst in parting) "to convey yet again the specificity of her grief – the color, the shape, the heft" (p. 264). It may be that the beached whale conveys the colour, shape and heft of Burgess's unspecified childhood grief. Something about the personal conditions of his identity formation resides in the whale memory, and picking the lock of this particular memory provides rich reflection.

In a film version of Burgess's life, the whale memory would make a compelling opening scene! The way it is scripted within the pages of the autobiography screams out for the vision of a director to build a busy scene of whale scavenging with a wild sea-wind a-blowin' and sailors singing sea-chanties as they row back and forth from ship to shore. Burgess wrapped in a wool pea jacket and wool toque is being dragged down to the shore by cousin and elder. There on the grey cobbled beach it lies, a huge red-and-white striped whale. Burgess rubs his eyes – it's not a great grey whale, it's a barber pole. How, I wonder, will the clever director present the analogy in Burgess's mind of the barber pole? Will there be a cheesy flashing inter-cut of a red-and-white-striped huge mass of whale-shaped flesh with a huge red-and-white barber pole lying on its side: flash - whale, flash-barber pole, flash -whale, flash-barber pole, as Burgess rubs his eyes and we hear him wail in a voice over, "That's not a whale, it's a barber pole. They lied to me - I want to see the Moby Dick" ...?

Re-thinking the Thornton W. Burgess legacy

The success of the Burgess aesthetic lay in the way he founded to bridge nostalgic storytelling moments based on “Nature As The Universal Teacher” (Burgess, 1922) and language designed for the new age in the early twentieth century. My identification of the **cine-semiotic** in his writing style indicates a studied revolution of narrative prose linked to visual-imaginary icons and movement that has served to carry his stories to audiences for over a hundred years. Within my close reading of the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy, an insistent trace emerged of an unsuspected cine- language and how it gave life to the Burgess story-texts. Another researcher of Burgess’s stories seemed to intuit that his writing reached beyond simple nature stories and conservation messages. Burgess’s biographer R.A. Lovell, Jr. (1974) reveals his impression of Burgess’s prose:

[In Burgess’s books] There was a timeless and safe quality here as the adventures of the forest creatures went on and on, talking and clothed, always escaping death, poison and the trap. Admittedly this was dreamlike and unreal but it was a familiar and comforting sequence, and behind its security TWB could and did do much more which had specific impact and value. (p. 67)

“Timeless and safe” /going “on and on”/ “dreamlike and unreal” invoke qualities of imagined worlds found in dreams and in cinema.

I found Lovell’s reading of Burgess’s prose style supportive of my idea of a cine-semiotic language speaking out of Burgess’s stories. Lucien L. Agosta, in an entry on Thornton W. Burgess for “American Writers for Children 1900-1960”, describes his impression of the activities of the central characters of the Burgess works: “Predators chase their prey in the manner of a perpetual roadrunner cartoon, prompting one reviewer to ask ‘What Does Old Man Coyote Eat?’” (1983, p. 73). Although Agosta was pointing

to the avoidance of death, the ultimate tragedy (that Burgess states he would avoid in writing for children), this single sentence of Agosta's scholarly evaluation of Burgess's style unwittingly demonstrates the cinematic quality detectable within Burgess's works. This cinematic quality is partially what would have prompted later interest by movie producers in Burgess's works, when they proposed animated renditions of some of the stories. It appears, in my study of prior documentation of Burgess, that scholars had suspected the Burgess prose of more complexity than had otherwise been accorded it.

My faith that there was 'something about Burgess' who inspired a wide-ranging popular following for his stories, led me to apply a conceptual framework and a methodology to go beyond previous thoughts on his works. I found that the de-centring paradox of Burgess's reception; beloved by his reader-audience, booed and heckled by his critic-audience, inspired the identification of the aesthetic of a visualizing language allied to psychic dimensions of the reader, the play of the cine-semiotic. In Burgess stories, the cine-semiotic language of page to screen parlance unites the child psyche with 'acting out' desire and motions through an imagined world of fantasy, adventure and beloved characters. With animal figures as stand-ins children can romp through the Green Meadows and the Green Forest, eluding pursuit, hiding to save themselves, and ultimately to reunite with their family of origin. Burgess thus united his own desires for survival, security, effective action and community-reunion with those of his readers.

In this study, I have read the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories with psychoanalysis and have drawn upon categories of analysis: the abject and abjection, terror and anxiety, and community and wholeness. In turn, these categories have been used to establish cine-semiotic registers of address in Burgess's discourse to children. The cine-semiotic mode

of address is conditioned through the presence of particular aesthetic structures and mechanisms, including: visualizing language used in repetition such as the <Smiling Pool> or the <Merry Little Breezes> or <hunters with terrible guns>; and by montage sequences such as the bathing scene with Poor Mrs. Quack, in which a nature scene is arguably a screen for heterosexual desire. Burgess presents memorable still shots of his writing camera, such as Mrs. Quack in poke bonnet circling above the Smiling Pool. This particular shot device entrenches the picture of Mrs. Quack's return to a secure place after her steadfast search for a missing spouse, and it receives assistance from an illustration by Harrison Cady, Burgess's trusted friend. The examples of montage sequence and the shot I have worked up for this study demonstrate the presence of a cine-semiotic narrative element in Burgess's stories. Further analysis would reveal other instances of montage and shot lending a cinematic sense for the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories.³ For this study I have been able to present several examples to demonstrate that these exist and work with the psychic dynamics evinced in the categories of analysis.

The cine-semiotic language allied with the new moving picture medium of storytelling tells the story of Burgess the rebel story teller whose seemingly innocuous prose troubled some critics of literary standards for children. It seems that children responded to the lively immediate nature of visualizing prose. They were engaged and entranced by the fusion of psychic effects with entertaining and accessible language that allowed them to participate in the world created by Burgess. It has been suggested that other children's literature of the early 20th century contains elements of visualizing prose

³ Screenwriter Ardis Smith for his 6 July 1949 Princeton Film Center script "It Happened in Spring: A Thornton Burgess Tale Adapted for Television" (TWBSDCE) would have been able to draw upon Burgess's shot- and montage- conducive form in order to script Burgess stories for the screen.

I have identified for Burgess. Carpenter writes in “Excessively Impertinent Bunnies: The Subversive Element in Beatrix Potter” (1989) of the cinematic nature of Ms. Potter’s book Mr. Tod. He identifies it as “The blackest of Beatrix Potter’s books” and singles out the “hilariously macabre passage” where Mr. Tod plans revenge on the badger:

Trying to think of some comparison, one thinks not of literary parallels but of early film comedies featuring such grotesques as Mack Sennett. The Potter story, of course, is heavily illustrated, but even without the pictures (which are, uncharacteristically, mostly in black and white) it would resemble the violent comedies of the silent monochrome cinema, the sort of film that was being made at the time Mr. Tod was published. [in 1912] (p. 295)

This statement linking grotesques, violence and silence works to invoke Heath’s identification of the intersection of the psychoanalytic to the apparatus of cinema, with its direct economic system, the organization of the structure of production, distribution, and consumption entering popular discourse (1981, pp. 221-236). Burgess’s stories linked the psychoanalytic categories of the abject, terror and community to cinematic apparatus, and this connection of *le semiotique* to *la semiotique* created his success with appreciative readers, but also confounded children’s literary critics who just didn’t ‘get it.’ The simple complexity of children’s writing is confounding, but children seldom err in their discernments of the literature right for them.

It is not seemly that some conventional literacy practice in school proceeds by prescriptive steps and formulas-of-the-month; this is only another way to ‘layer on’ knowledge (after Ashton-Warner). What of the deeply felt psychological processes informing the distinctive human capability to communicate experience in writing and other story-telling modes? What of the adventures of making meaning out of worlds of desire, fantasy, need, affliction and hope shared with children and other readers/viewers?

My study of the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy concludes with the idea that children often know what they want out of reading the writing ‘for them.’ It involves going beyond the words of the storyteller to see what children discerned for themselves out of the Anti-Hunting stories and other Burgess works. The pedagogical dilemmas posed by a prescriptive notion of literacy education and schooling (after Kelly 1997) can be addressed by studies such as mine that seek to find ways to demonstrate how reading ‘otherwise’ may translate to research and practice (see Conclusion: Future directions for study and Pedagogical suggestions).

Seeing education as “part and parcel of ‘the engagement of being human’, i.e., the shared act of making meaning of meanings inherited from others” (Stanley, 1999, p. 41). I consider the connections in storytelling and the pedagogical moments of the story *beyond the words of a storyteller ...*

These connections necessarily are not just to the things that we like, or would choose for ourselves. They also include our connections to things we would rather forget or rather not know. Education understood in this way is rarely easy, often dangerous, but through its dialogue with others always affirms our humanity. (Stanley, p. 41)

Children’s storybook writers are often dangerous people in society, as evidenced by the contradictory reception of Burgess the teller of simple animal nature stories. He is dangerous because he reached so many impressionable readers with messages about being in the world. He is dangerous for trying to reach out through that most volatile of agents, language, to effect changes in meaning – what the reader knew before reading the Anti-Hunting Trilogy and what the reader knows afterward.

In the media of children’s book and story, authors have attempted the work of education and feeling in their work with cultural texts. One example is Maurice Sendak,

author of *Where the Wild Things Are*, *In the Night Kitchen*, and other works he both wrote and illustrated. For his unflinching and uncompromising representations of the childhood world, Sendak has received, in his lifetime, both applause and disparagement for his books that combine visual art and written text (Cech, 1995). Sendak wrote and illustrated unforgettable characters and situations out of the contradictions of his own childhood: raised by immigrant Polish-Jewish parents in the new fast-paced urban setting of New York City, he learned that the world contained restrictions and opportunity, danger and pleasures. Sendak went on to obey the muse that prompted him to reveal his unconscious immersion in the timeless, fantastical aspects of childhood by producing his well-known and sometimes controversially received books, including *Where the Wild Things Are* and *In the Night Kitchen*. He has also participated in other genre renditions of his stories, such as the 1975 animated film *Really Rosie Starring the Nutshell Kids*, the 1980 opera of *Where the Wild Things Are*, the 1985 opera of *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* (Sonheim, ix-x). I insert Sendak into my study of Thornton W. Burgess because of what Sendak, as a children's book writer, has articulated about how those in his craft appeal to and reach their audiences (see Sipe, 1996; Sonheim, 1991; Cech, 1995). Firstly, it seems that a truly effective writer writes for her or himself. Secondly, a writer who wishes to reach publication must have a message that lies behind the writing. Thirdly, it is sometimes a matter of being in the right place at the right time. Finally, it does not hurt to have a drive or a belief in oneself, and a perverse perseverance to get out there in print form. Sendak, as did Burgess, waded through several obstacles, but does not seem to have questioned his goal and his belief that he should, in the first part of his career, illustrate books 'for children' - and later on, to write and illustrate his own books. Sendak

allowed his artistic vision and feelings about what to communicate to come through in his literature for a child audience. Thornton W. Burgess had, I contend, a similar drive and belief, and became a widely-read childhood author one or two generations ahead of Sendak.

Burgess's stories were avidly consumed by devoted readers voracious for all things to do with his animal-populated universe. Although he was not always kindly received by critics who maligned his works in various ways, he did not let the nay-sayers deter him, and kept on writing for children in his own inimical way. Authors of various time periods have faced criticisms that give a window onto the dissatisfactions experienced by literary critics.⁴ The site of some literary critics' discontents with stories well-received by the general populace may be grounded in the notion that they are not 'high culture' enough. The critical discontent or dismissal of the Burgess canon may have occurred because the stories had a target audience of little boys and girls. This assigned positioning within low culture in literary endeavors often occurs wherever there is an audience of children and a populist approach to storytelling, and includes the general scope of works of broad access that appear in newspapers and inexpensive book or other print publications, such as comic books.

⁴ At the time of publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, the critics of *The Athenaeum* stated: "We fancy that any real child might be more puzzled than enchanted by the stiff, overwrought story" (Pudney 1976, p. 243). At times, it seems that critics have wildly erred in their evaluations of the popular reception of works.

Conclusion

This study was conceived to consider the paradox of Burgess's critically negative and popular, positive reception. The inquiry into why did the Burgess stories engender mixed reviews from critics (see Chapter One), and why and how were the stories able to endure in popular appeal over time led to a search for the specific nature of the textual energy of the narratives. My close reading detected a visualizing language that used elements shared by cinema. In addition, I have presented psychoanalytic categories of analysis (the abject, terror, and community) which uncover specific evidences of dynamic effects of language in the psyche and in the life of the mind. I have selected and applied film semiotics along with a psychoanalytic notion of semiotics (after Kristeva) to propose the **cine-semiotic** as the aesthetic at play in Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy. This structure of address to the reader was uniquely Burgess so as to imbue his stories with a popularly-appreciated *cachet* and led to the commodification of his syndicated newspaper and storybooks in trademarked products. The unique and sought-after structure of address served to adhere faithful readers over time and space, and made Burgess a sought-after author of well-known publishing houses such as Little, Brown & Company, Grosset & Dunlap, and Dover Press.

My archival research shows evidence for the conscious construction of an appeal to ideological sympathies for nature conservation. In addition, the archival research indicates that some Burgess stories were considered for animation (see letters of inquiry from producers in Appendix A, Archival materials), but he ultimately declined participation in these ventures according to letters between Burgess and agents in 1959-

1961. The evidence of studio interest indicates that the Burgess stories were realized for their potential in the new medium of narrative transmission, and thus must have possessed a recognizable and discernible moving picture or cinematic sensibility. Burgess had disseminated his stories on early radio broadcasts, and had also embarked on the recording of the stories via Columbia Gramophone. But, as later archival records show, he seemed unable or unwilling to make the transfer from the auditory medium of the radio age to the visual or TV era. It is apparent that the stories had potential and perhaps this is where their enduring appeal into the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century lies in that the dramas appear before the reader visually in imagination, in a cinematic parlance.

Burgess's wide reading audience approaches an imagined community in its nature teaching, and this is part of its productivity as a cultural form. Burgess knew he not only needed to write to create a world for children to consume, but that he also needed to create a community to ensure avid subscription to his stories. And he surely did, through his various strategies and endeavors such as War Bonds, *Quaddies*™ products, games with the signature Cady-Burgess artwork, and other maneuvers documented through archival materials at the Thornton W. Burgess Society Department of Collections & Exhibits. The reading of Burgess stories took on many levels and tiers, with ties to intellect, emotion, psychic life and the virtual and real physicality of roving over pasture, wood and forest intersected with burgeoning material desires of the 20th century. For, as much as children could consume the Burgess stories inside on a rainy day, they were also inspired to get out into the last of America's wild spaces to experience nature. The Thornton W. Burgess Society today is predicated partially upon the offering of some of

these bodily, field-based experiences, comprising nature rambles and talks around the property holdings in Cape Cod. (Of course, Burgess – related commodities are on sale at the Museum gift shop to benefit the Society).

Contributions of a mixed methods approach

In my study, I looked to a mixed methodological approach to generate the optimal insight into Burgess's contested reception into children's literature circles. This mixed methodological approach, incorporating empirical, historical and theoretical interpretive methods of narrative, historical documents study and reading/viewing experience, was inspired by a conceptual framework predicated in New Historicism. New Historicism embraces new methods and approaches for the study of criticism and literature (Shea, 2000). It is not uncommon in post-structural work to embrace several discursive strands as has Staiger (1992) in her studies in the historical reception of American cinema. She gathers information through "four major intertextual discourses: psychoanalysis, authorship, generic conventions of Hollywood filmmaking, and current social issues" (1992, p.89). I have used several discursive strands in my work on Burgess's Anti-Hunting Trilogy. I anchored the close readings with psychoanalysis and with film studies of the three Anti-Hunting stories with my archival work. The story of Burgess's life and social interactions came from his autobiography, biographies, his diaries and his correspondence. I accessed the correspondence between Burgess and William Hornaday of the early twentieth century conservation movement. There were telling letters of interest from film and motion picture companies that wanted to option his stories, because they seemed to be well-suited for translation to the screen according to the

producers who approached Burgess (See Appendix A for Television industry related letters from producers and agents such as Program Productions, NY; Leonard Sydney Field, NY; Murphy-Lillis Television, Film, Radio Productions, NY; The Armand S. Weill Co., Inc, Buffalo; and New World Productions, Hollywood, CA). These letters of inquiry were not addressed to Burgess until the late 1940s and 1950s.

My mixed methods approach uses materials to a collaborative effect in looking at the specific dynamics of the Burgess Anti-Hunting Trilogy that contributed to their popularity with readers and that generated controversy in the field of children's literature. To construct the notion of the cinesemiotic in terms of reading effects means reaching for the thought-and-feeling imaginative world of the reader, to try to discover what the reader 'knows' and also 'knows but does not know she/he knows' (after Felman 1987). Johnson in "What is Cultural Studies?" calls for up- close- and -personal readings of text as a means to try to articulate the personal with the social and cultural meanings of text. Johnson identifies deficits that appear in formalist, literary, psychoanalytic and marxist readings in bridging text and reader, contending that they are procedures bound to (re) produce the same old effects rather than new ideas (1996, p.103). He names a self-reflexive reading as perhaps the way out of the conundrum of reading (with)in only one category.

Johnson finds that a close reading may point out the way in which humans consume narrative and image, and how they pay attention to the flow of inner speech and narrative that contribute to notions of subjectivity (p. 103). Johnson's wonderful rhetoric about being "resourceful and frenetic users of narrative and image" (p. 103) sparks my notion to consider the role of internal discourse in making meaning of texts we are

constantly exposed to, including new editions of old texts on the internet and elsewhere. We are constantly thinking, thinking about our intakes of text, and trying to find out the meaning of their content and their form. After reflecting about positioning of self through the reading of the varied story genres available, Johnson concludes, “It makes it possible to recover the elements of self-production in theories of subjectivity” (p.103), a self-production which is simultaneously personal and cultural-contextual. As a reader 100 years later, I bring what I know about all the kinds of texts I have encountered into my reading of Burgess, and recognize the presence of film language and the transformation of a literary notion.

Contributions of the study

In looking to the puzzle of the mixed reception of Burgess’s stories, I carried with me a curiosity and a determination to go beyond the stated reputation of Burgess as an animal-nature conservationist writer and educator. As previously mentioned in Chapter One, I did not read his stories as a child, and my first acquaintance with his stories revealed to me literature that I thought perhaps charming, but inconsequential. However, I chose to keep faith with the millions of child readers. I knew had found something of consequence within the pages of Burgess’s stories. Thus, I decided to read *more closely*, drawing upon inspiration from the work of Sylvia Ashton-Warner, who kept faith with the discerning knowledge of the children in her classrooms.⁵ I decided that to begin to understand the appeal of the Burgess stories, I would need to carefully note the structure

⁵ Educator, writer and iconoclastic thinker Sylvia Ashton-Warner insisted upon her observations of the child’s participation in making up his or her pedagogical content and entry into language via her “key words” idea of assisting children with literacy using words and experiences from their own daily lives, particularly the Maori children in her New Zealand country-side classrooms (Ashton-Warner, 1958).

of address to his readers, to tenderly discern what made it unique and compelling for them. The archival collection of Fan Mail (TWBSDCE) demonstrates that his audience was devoted, and they were avid in their declarations of fidelity to his prose. To keep faith with the child reader is a contribution that educators can make daily in the classroom. I have attempted to contribute to the idea that children's literature is a worthwhile and productive field of inquiry to understand the many facets of what makes up literature, and what are all the backgrounds in knowing of the reach of literacy.

My mixed methods approach uses several strands that have been operant within the field of children's literature: historical-archival and psychoanalytic studies. In addition, I have looked at conventions of narrative form in the Burgess stories. However, an original contribution in my approach to the three case study "Anti-Hunting" stories is the way in which I employ film narrative concepts and terms to study the Burgess texts. It was liberating to go beyond the use of traditional literary terms and concepts to address the Burgess case study texts in a non-conventional literary manner. Tracing the emerging story around: How was Burgess able to take command of the imaginative yearnings of the child reader in forging an immediate and insistent narrative mode? it became apparent that Burgess was taking a new turn into an up-to-the-minute language for twentieth century child sensibility and consumption – and I have termed this the cine-semiotic.

The cine-semiotic language relies on visuality and feelings evoked by language, placing the stories as much within the provenance of film studies or cinematic terms as within a traditional literary lexicon. The term cine-semiotic describes my conviction that the linguistic detail and structure of the Burgess Anti-Hunting stories (1917-1921) can be conveyed by looking at his pioneering movement into child literature that shows as well

as tells (visual/cinematic). That mode of address to his readers turns upon feelings evoked by the picture, or 'shot' and how these come together in the montage sequence, as well as by the words and intonation of lines and chapters. Burgess's wildly successful nature Bedtime Stories feature forays into the dynamics of the mind as they interact with the well-scripted and orchestrated adventures of the animal characters.

In my study, I have placed under consideration the Burgess stories and the conditions for their wide appeal, for their sustainability as literature for 90 years, and their translation into multiple languages. Children's literature as a textural phenomena may not seem to hold an overt manifestation of power in society, and Cultural Studies as a field has largely dismissed the workings of children's literature. However, consumers of popular books know otherwise, as do the publishing houses. The phenomenon of the Harry Potter series has recently demonstrated the power of previously-overlooked children's literature franchises (Robertson, 2002). Cultural studies theorists have studied youth culture as popular culture. Concepts and practices from cultural studies can contribute more than an ethnographic study of 'pop culture' to the field of education and children's literature by operationalizing ideas that point to hegemonic structures and how power is used. Children's literature researchers have begun to explore issues such as how boarding school stories such as the Harry Potter series or other stories that portray British middle-class upbringing appeal to categories of children outside this bounded world (Nikolajeva, 2005).

I have reintroduced the term cine-semiotic to the conversation of aesthetics in 20th century text as it relates to a case study in children's literature. This study of Burgess looks at an intersection of early 20th century consumer culture and increasing

commodification of the child world to reveal the power and appeal of storytelling in that child world. Relevant to ideas of twentieth century children's storytelling, Clough asks Did the "mass-produced narrative" (1992, p. 3) displace the storyteller? Clough states:

It is for this reason that a post-structural approach to use of the semiotic refers to the subject of reading and writing as an effect of narrative desire, thereby reiterating the psychoanalytic understanding that the subject is constructed in unconscious desire. (Clough, p. 3)

Burgess consciously desired to re-invent himself from failed businessman to successful author of children's stories. This conscious desire was readily traced through archival, autobiographical and biographical information on the author. Unconscious desires in Burgess's writing had to be established through close readings using psychoanalytic categories of analysis and through film readings which yielded evidence of a visualizing film form.

Limitations of the study

This study has not made use of a convened interpretive community that could offer multiple readings of Burgess. The study has theorized an interpretive community based on common interest in reading Burgess as an animal nature writer. It has sought the underlying aesthetic appeal of the popular literature through a personal reading and narrative analyses, using a methodology of close reading with psychoanalysis and film studies. It would be of interest to extend a study of the Burgess works to a focus group of readers; and then to design a qualitative research project around several sample populations of readers to gain additional insights into the Burgess reader appeal.

Future directions for study

With a concentrated focus on the Anti-Hunting Trilogy of 1917 to 1921, I have employed the archival-historical primary resources from the Burgess Collections to support and anchor my claims about the aesthetic response and mode of address that made the Burgess stories enduring and wide-spread in their appeal. Out of his initial success with the *Old Mother West Wind* and *Bedtime Storybooks*, Burgess appeared on radio shows of the Radio Nature League from 1924 to 1934 (Lovell, Jr., 1974). I have touched upon the relevant documentation for stories that were poised to enter the early industry of children's films, namely, the inquiries by early film producers as to Burgess's interest in seeing his stories brought to screen. Burgess eventually turned down these offers to see his stories enter the 'big-time' of animated films and potentially compete with the Walt Disney storytelling franchise. A further study could address the lesser-known aspects of Burgess's story empire during the hey-day of his popular radio shows, and also could address the time period of approximately the 1940s through 1960 when he was being approached for film rights to his stories.

In asking the question of : What do stories do for children? experienced reading teachers know that the exploration of different forms of storytelling, as well as varied types of content such as non-fiction, historical fiction and romantic fiction, are crucial in language learning in the classroom (Temple and Gillet, 1989). The reading of Burgess as a film studies site (see Chapter Four) is an approach that commands further attention regarding the potential of interdisciplinary approaches to literacy and reading. Film is a significant rhetorical form of address and argument for belief and feeling (Bordwell and

Thompson, 1986), and it is worthwhile learning about it for cultural literacy. Film writing is structured to bring certain things to the attention or view of the reader.

How could film readings of classics and other children's literature assist in Language Arts classrooms? Could children analyze standard reading texts as filmic writing in order to approach skills in understanding how rhetoric captures the interest and emotions of the reader? ⁶ Children may productively and intimately learn significant skills of critical literacy by analyzing and engaging in the way in which messages in writing are brought to our attention. Therefore, a future direction for this study would be to design a classroom pedagogy for guiding children to understanding how stories they are familiar with can be written in film format, and how filmed stories can be understood in terms of other narrative genres. This fluency and comprehension of how story is presented has potential to assist in re-conceptualizing ways to address the silencing effects of dominant notions of literacy pedagogy in the classroom (after Kelly, 1997).

Could the notion of the cine-semiotic aesthetic be operationalized for multiple examples of first-half of the twentieth century children's literature, including those that have received acclaim and those that have had a mixed reception. My study does not intend a claim that Burgess's *Anti-Hunting Trilogy* are the sole works for children, or for that matter, in adult literature, that evince a cine-semiotic dynamic. As I have pointed out, other theorists in children's literature area have posited visual dynamics at work in

⁶ Classroom teachers who experiment in drama in the classroom have their students write up stories as scripts, as though they were to be acted out or presented dramatically (see Temple and Gillet, 1989 on Reader's Theatre, pp. 92-93). Why not engage children's interest in popular culture of the TV and movie screen and encourage them to write their experiences and fantasies, and to analyse stories they read, in terms of the language of the cinema?

various examples of 'stories for children'. Further work in constructing the argument for a cine-semiotic dynamic at play and in providing empirically-derived instances from readings of works are a potential research direction in the field.

In this study, I have looked at the phenomenon of the wide popular appeal and enduring fan base of Burgess's stories, with his Anti-Hunting Trilogy as a case study. I consider how the stories acted upon and were acted upon by social and historical conditions of their formation as popular literature. A further study in a Cultural Studies framework might look more closely at how the stories have circulated within the later part of the twentieth century, and particularly how Burgess's reputation as a storyteller has been promoted via his webpage, and in email circulation.

Pedagogical suggestions

In light of what I have presented about the cine-semiotic play of the abject, terror, and community in Burgess's children's stories, how might classroom teachers and their charges be inspired to interpret and incorporate these ideas of readerly and writerly involvement in the world into their own practice?

1. Action research on the part of teachers curious about my ideas might lead to classroom activities such as taking literature under study in the classroom and trying out analyses of narrative form in film studies terms. A complex choreography (Sumara and Davis 1997) using the ideas from this study might involve taking a story and trying out plot segmentations, directing and acting story for a camera, visualizing the story through storyboards and other visual art avenues, and other learning trials inspired by a film studies approach to literary texts. Alongside this cine-approach, teachers might be encouraged to read with psychoanalysis in order to be able to

understand and be prepared to support dynamics of the mind that may occur for their readers. Using reflective teaching practices and practitioner inquiry (Dana and Yendol-Silva, 2003) teachers may take on inquiry into selected psychoanalytic concepts encountered in their on-going professionally-and-personally motivated reading of articles in the *Lion and the Unicorn* journal, or in volumes such as Rollins and West on psychoanalysis and children's literature.

2. Reader and Writer Workshops in the classroom may be organized around the tenets of Action Theatre that insists upon creative involvement of its participants, mining the material of their own experience. Taking their engagements with literature, either texts (books, movies) assigned in the classroom, or possibly material from outside the classroom, students in concert with teachers - or teachers complicit with students (Sumara and Davis 1997) may choose to read presented, published texts, engage in close reading approaches as presented in this study of Burgess's *Anti-Hunting Trilogy*, and then write out personalized cultural responses in a variety of forms, including a form that may be presented to an audience. Re-telling story (O'Donnell and Wood, 1999; Searfoss, Readence and Mallette, 2001; Temple and Gillet, 1989) is an accessible means of literacy learning, and it is possible to envision classroom time organized around dyads, triads, or quartets of Story-Buddies who might retell story to one another, using personal and cultural lenses for creative embellishments.

Implications of the study: The children's author as a pivotal figure in literacy and culture

Frederic Jameson (1981) addresses the issue of the narrative as a socially symbolic act. He feels that the tradition of the communal storyteller and the "face to face

storytelling institution” was “effectively disintegrated by the printed book and even more definitely by the commodification of literature and culture” (p. 155). Burgess styled himself a storyteller as a means to appeal to his audience, even as he must have realized that the old style of oral storytelling was being replaced by a new screen or film storytelling genre. It is worthwhile to ask what sorts of social forces and aesthetic facilitations are available to the storyteller who seeks for his/her work some fresh creative avenues that will assist in his/her personal need for expression and will also appeal to an audience. The cine-semiotic that Burgess employed both conveys and conceals the psychic dynamics of the mind; that is he simultaneously denies and avows his message of tragedy in childhood.

For example, the deeper, hidden structure of the story of Poor Mrs. Quack screams “Tragic, tragic” and painful, the terror wreaked by hunters, and the wounding and disappearance of Mr. Quack, a beloved spouse. The visually-oriented and often casual vernacular of the characters (as in slang and idioms) ‘lightens up’ the story, allowing child readers to remain on the scene as witnesses without (perhaps) being scarred by trauma. I have found that Burgess at the turn of the 20th century, the time of mass introduction of the cinema via films, turned to the vehicle of a cinematic language that projects the stories of the mind’s eye onto the page. It is not outside the realm of possibility that Burgess grasped the opportunity afforded by the new story-making machinery simultaneously with a realization that films would make it more difficult to get audience attention for his stories, and so decided to make his prose more ‘film-like.’

Burgess was a self-invented writer who fled the world of adult business and advertising to construct for himself a space in business and advertising grounded in the

world of children. Although Burgess was not a literary giant, he was a big part of American culture throughout the 20th century. His name is important in 'nature story' and home schooling circles today for his animal stories set in the pastures and woods of New England. Burgess imagined himself a writer, then made it a reality to construct a career for himself out of constructing a small universe for children to 'play' in. In this dissertation, I contend that Burgess succeeded in constructing an important and definitive psychic space that became, for his readers, a haven both for the readers and for the author.

In constructing the world, the canny author used language structures and effects to result in a filmic, 'lived' sense of character interaction and events safely unfolding on the written page. Within the psychic space, children found a haven where animals speak, where there are things familiar (woods, trees, ponds) and comforting things (friends, food, dens and burrows) all set off by the occasional hint of the intrusion of outside danger (the terrible guns, hunters) to make it all the more cosy. It is interesting to note conscious repressions of story that none-the-less appeared in the pages Burgess wrote. For example, Burgess is famous for his vow that he could not let "stark tragedy" happen for his stories (1960, p.222). It didn't happen, not in the form of death.. However, his stories have lots of tragic situations that the child reader must live through, dying a new death each time, as I have demonstrated with the abject characters of Mr. Quack, the young Bob White, and Lightfoot the Deer.

In the use of signs and symbolizations around the experiences and emotions of childhood, Burgess succeeded in making the strange familiar, and the familiar strange, in new editions of old conflicts, thus (wittingly or unwittingly, but cannily as far as

commercial success) responding to the social needs of his time. His success in procuring a receptive audience throughout the entire 20th and into the 21st centuries no doubt partially resides in the craft of the time-traveling storyteller, who knew how to package his texts. Burgess may be thought of as a pivotal figure for his body of works,⁷ and the resulting cult of popularity flowing from his writing and the marketing of his writing. De Wet points out the efficacy of “defin(ing) markers by which both the particular pivotal figure and the nature of the literary discourse generated by him/her and conducted with him/her can be recognised” (1997, p.15). The systemic forces of canonization versus marginalization bearing on the author (in the case of Burgess, his popular canonization strongly contrasts with his academic marginalization) and the stir generated by the author by his participation in the anti- hunting campaign in his *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*, *The Adventures of Bob White*, and *Lightfoot the Deer* indicate him as an overlooked social and cultural force.

⁷ Studies of L. Frank Baum and of James Barrie of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Peter Pan* fame, respectively, portray these widely-read authors as pivotal figures in the reception of their works.

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Appendix A – Archival materials

1. Letter to Burgess from Hornaday, March 29, 1917.
2. Letter to Burgess from Hornaday December 10, 1918
3. Letter to Burgess from Hornaday April 7, 1926
4. Listing of Burgess Bedtime Stories – Canadian Sales, January 12, 1927
5. Pictorial advertisement for Quaddy Cloth and Quaddy Blankets, 1915-1920.
6. Pictorial advertisement for Thornton W. Burgess Animal Game, The Saalfeld Publishing Company, 1927.
7. Sample of syndicated column “Bedtime Stories: Farmer Brown’s Boy Speaks His Mind”, Copyright 1926 by Thornton W. Burgess.
8. Pictorial representation of “Reading the ‘Bedtime Story’” appeared in Kansas City Star Sept. 12, 1913.
9. Publicity letter for the play “The Adventures of Peter Rabbit” from The Children’s Theatre of Cincinnati, April 15, 1919.
10. Harrison Cady illustration of Poor Mrs. Quack circling the Smiling Pool, from *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack*.
11. Letter to Burgess from Program Productions, NY, April 2, 1948.
12. Letter to Burgess from Leonard Sydney Field, NY, October 27, 1948.
13. Letter to Leonard Sydney Field from Burgess, October 29, 1948.
14. Letter to Burgess from Murphy-Lillis, Inc. Television, Film, Radio Productions, NY, April 21, 1949.
15. Letter to Burgess from The Armand S. Weill Co., Inc. Buffalo, NY, May 9, 1949.
16. Letter to Armand S. Weill Co. Buffalo, NY from Burgess, May 12, 1949.
17. Letter to Burgess from The Armand S. Weill Co., Inc. Buffalo, NY, May 16, 1949.
18. Letter to Burgess from The Armand S. Weill Co., Inc. Buffalo, NY, October 3, 1949.
19. Contract provisions for Burgess titles from New World Productions, Hollywood, CA, April 17, 1959.

New York Herald Tribune

First to Last - the Truth - News - Editorials - Advertisements

105

January 12, 1927.

BURGESS BEDTIME STORIES- CANADIAN SALES.

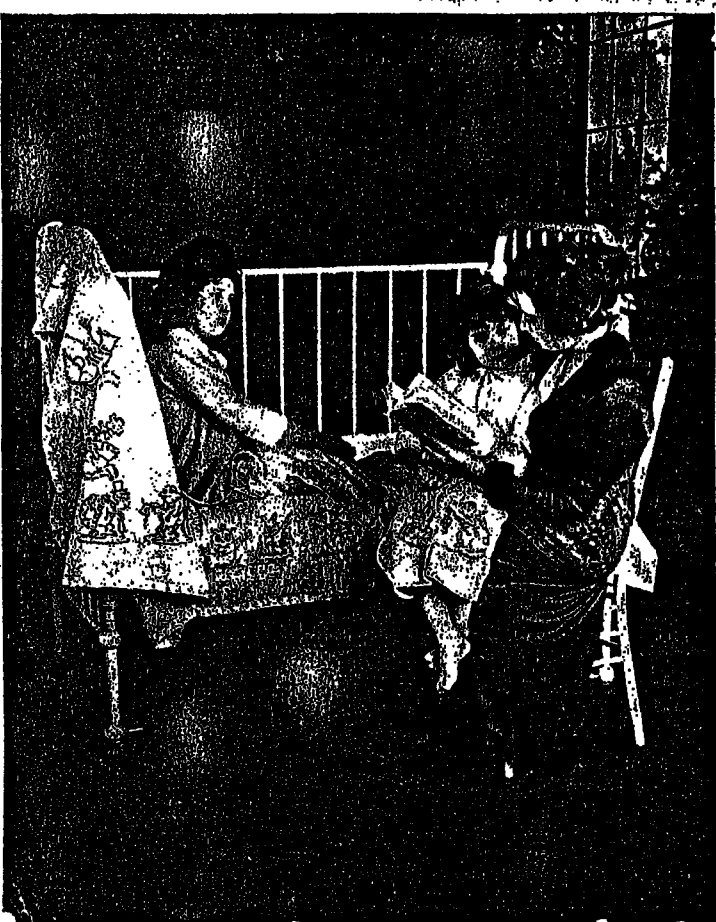
NEWSPAPER

LOCATION

The Daily Star	Saskatoon
The Free Press	Winnipeg
The Journal	Edmonton
The Herald	Lethbridge
The Herald	Halifax
The Province	Vancouver
The Evening Times	Moose Jaw
The Standard	Kingston
The Mail Printing Co.	Toronto
The Daily Star	Montreal
The Transcript	Moncton
The Advertiser	London
The Telegraph Journal	Saint John
The Sentinel Review	Woodstock
The Observer	Sarnia
The Sun Times	Owen Sound
The Standard	St. Catharines
The Record	Sherbrooke
The Patriot	Charlottetown
The Times Journal	Fort William
The Herald Beacon	Stratford
The Times Journal	Saint Thomas

NOTE

Radio Nature League articles not just now sold in Canada.



Quaddy CLOTH and **Quaddy** BLANKETS
WILL APPEAL TO EVERY CHILD WHO
KNOWS THE **Quaddies** ILLUSTRATED
IN "THE BEDTIME STORIES" (SEE BORDER).
ABOUT 4,500,000 COPIES OF THESE STORIES
APPEAR IN THE DAILY PAPERS THROUGH-
OUT THE COUNTRY, BESIDES THOUSANDS
IN BOOK AND MAGAZINE FORM.

Quaddy was
a TWB trademark
1915.

Blankets prod by
French & Ward

1915-1920

Quaddy Play Things
Mamie Co

Roman & Co
(Gann)

GAMES

The Donkey Party Game has been popular the country over for many, many years. Other similar Games have been made for seasonable use. Now comes one from Thornton W. Burgess to claim all-year-round attention—the famous Peter, the bunny beloved by old and young.

These Games are lithographed on heavy stock, in color, making most attractive game sheets. Each game in an envelope.



(One dozen of a kind in a package.)

THORNTON W. BURGESS PETER PARTY, No. 2.
DONKEY PARTY GAME, No. 1
DONKEY PARTY GAME, No. 2
BILLY WHISKERS PARTY GAME, No. 1
PETER RABBIT PARTY GAME, No. 1
HALLOWE'EN PARTY GAME, No. 1
WITCH PARTY GAME, No. 1
POODLE PARTY GAME, No. 1
ARCHERY PARTY GAME, No. 1
BASEBALL PARTY GAME, No. 1
VALENTINE PARTY GAME, No. 1

CLOTH GAMES

GAMES—Lithographed on muslin, in colors, each game in an envelope.
(One dozen of a kind in a package.)

THORNTON W. BURGESS PETER PARTY GAME, No. 4.	BILLY WHISKERS PARTY GAME, No. 3
DONKEY PARTY GAME, No. 3	HALLOWE'EN PARTY GAME, No. 3
DONKEY PARTY GAME, No. 4	POODLE PARTY GAME, No. 3
PETER RABBIT PARTY GAME, No. 3	ARCHERY PARTY GAME, No. 3
WITCH PARTY GAME, No. 3	BASEBALL PARTY GAME, No. 3
	VALENTINE PARTY GAME, No. 3

THORNTON W. BURGESS
HOOT!

A fine deck of fifty-three cards designed by Harrison Cady, showing the animal characters made famous by Thornton W. Burgess in the Bed-time Stories, in full colors.

There is so much excitement in this new game of HOOT! that it takes someone much more solemn than the proverbial owl to even sit by unmoved at the cleverness of the game. When one is a player there's no chance to remember anything but the intense fun of HOOT!

Cards in colors and handsomely boxed.



A NEW CARD GAME No. 602
By
Thornton W. Burgess and
Harrison Cady.

GAMES—Concluded

THORNTON W. BURGESS ANIMAL GAME, No. 601

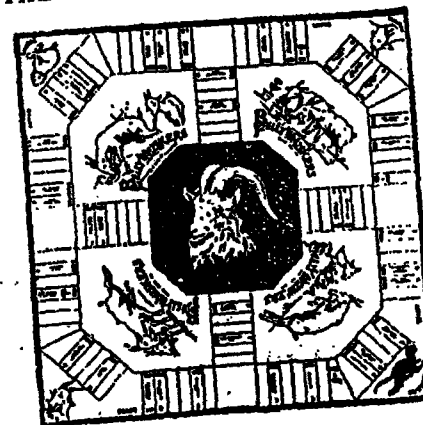
A new board game designed by Harrison Cady. Lithographed in colors.

Peter Cottontail, Johnny Chuck, Happy Jack and Reddy Fox are the players on the board, and there is the Smiling Pool, Green Meadows, Briar Patch, Old Stone Wall, Farmer Brown's Barn, Green Forest—just everything needed to make a perfect game for the children who have enjoyed the Bedtime Stories.

Lithographed in colors, each game attractively wrapped and labeled, board is 18½ inches square. Per game\$1.00



THE BILLY WHISKERS GAME, No. 280



A board game handsomely lithographed in colors and of superior mechanical excellence.

Billy Whiskers, of story-book fame, lends fun for the four players of the game, and it is such good fun that, if sales tell the story, it is the close rival to the best board game ever published.

Lithographed in colors each game attractively wrapped and labeled. Board is 18½ inches square. Per game.....\$1.00

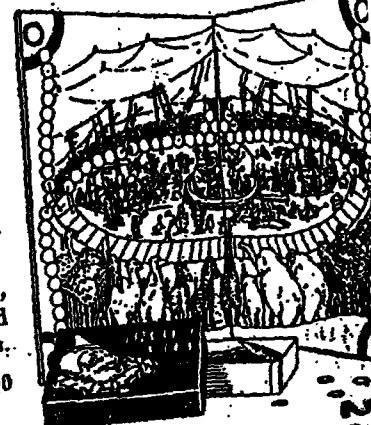


THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
Game No. 361

No fun quite like going to the Circus! Then keep its frolics at hand in this new board game, THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. Just as everybody enjoys going, so everybody enjoys playing.

The board game is most handsomely made, is lithographed in colors, well wrapped and attractively labeled. Board is 18x24 inches.

Per game\$1.00



7 Apr 1926

BEDTIME STORIES

By THORNTON W. BURGESS

Copyright, 1925, by Thornton W. Burgess.

Farmer Brown's Boy Speaks His Mind

Some people seem to never care
if what they do is most unfair.

—Farmer Brown's Boy.

Farmer Brown's Boy keeps a watchful eye on the Smiling Pool. He has many friends there and he likes to know what is going on. Little happens at the Smiling Pool that Farmer Brown's Boy doesn't find out about. So the day after the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Quack, the Mallard Ducks, Farmer Brown's Boy paid them a visit. Now, the Quacks and Farmer Brown's Boy had been the best of friends the year before. Yes, sir, they had been the best of friends. Farmer Brown's Boy had fed the Quacks every day, and the Quacks had never thought of flying when they saw him coming.

But now it was all different. Mr. and Mrs. Quack took to their wings long before Farmer Brown's Boy was anywhere near the Smiling Pool. Their eyes are keen. They had seen him coming across the Green Meadows. Farmer Brown's Boy saw them jump into the air and watched them fly swiftly over the Big River.

"My, but they are scary!" exclaimed Farmer Brown's Boy. "It means that they have been shot at so much that they are afraid to allow a man anywhere near. I suppose I've got to tame them all over again. It is a shame. Yes, sir, it is a shame. I suppose it is all right to have a shooting season, but when Ducks have been so hunted that weeks and weeks after the close of the hunting season they are as wild as ever, something is all wrong." I understand that in some places the law allows a man to kill 25 ducks and do it day after day for more than three months. That sort of thing may have been all very well when Ducks were shot for market, but now that they cannot be lawfully sold there is no excuse whatever for killing so many. I don't know how anybody can call it sport. Sport lies in giving the other party a fair chance. I'd like to know what chance a Duck has when a hunter can fire six shots at him without reloading his gun. The more I see of hunting the less I see of sport. It's a wonder to me that Mr. and Mrs. Quack have lived to get back here from the

Sunny South. I think I'll go back to the barn and get some corn."

So Farmer Brown's Boy trudged back to the barn and got some corn. This he took over to the Smiling Pool and put in the water where the year before Mr. and Mrs. Quack used to feed.

"Probably they'll think I'm trying to bait them the way some of those hunters do," said Farmer Brown's Boy. "I really don't see how we have any ducks. No, sir, I don't. Men talk about being fair-minded, and then will put out food for ducks day after day until the ducks get into the habit of coming to that particular place. That is baiting them. Then some day, when the ducks think that they are perfectly safe and come flying in to get their usual meal, they are met by those terrible guns in the hands of the hunters. That isn't my idea of hunting, at all. I don't know how anyone can call it sport. And it's just as bad when the hunters use live ducks to call the wild ones in. That is treachery."

He carefully hid, and then possessed himself in patience. Now, patience brings its own reward. After a while he saw Mr. and Mrs. Quack coming in from the Big River. They flew high, and they circled round and round, still flying high. It was some time before they ventured to drop lower. Farmer Brown's Boy knew that if he lifted so much as a finger they would be away again. That was because they were so suspicious. It meant that they had learned that it is never safe for a duck to feel sure that things are as they look. It meant that they had been shot at so much that they trusted nothing, not even the dear old Smiling Pool where they so often had been fed.

And when at last they did drop down and alight in the Smiling Pool they were still suspicious. They had discovered the corn, but it was a long time before they ventured near enough to pick up any of it. Farmer Brown's Boy knew exactly how they felt, and he didn't blame them in the least. "It's unfair—it's dreadfully unfair," muttered Farmer Brown's Boy.

The next story: "Peep-er Stops Peep-ing."

Kansas City Star Sept 12 1913

A. B. / 285

READING THE "BEDTIME STORY."



If you have passed the Shukert Building, between Eleventh and Twelfth streets on Grand Avenue, recently and seen this picture in the display window of Cornish & Baker, photographers, you probably have said: "There is the cut head of the picture at the head of The Star's 'Bedtime Story.'" The resemblance is so marked that it is impossible to see they are companion pictures. However, the sequence is the other way around, the cut head of the "Bedtime Story" having been the model for the photograph. The portrait reproduced here is that of Mrs. E. O. Hersh of 236 Grand Avenue and her daughter, Hortense. Little Hortense is a great admirer of Mr. Burgess's stories, and when she and her mother went recently to have their picture taken she was enthusiastic about the suggestion of Mr. Baker that she and her mother pose as the now familiar little girl and her mother readers of The Star know so well because of "Lambdin's" drawing.

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The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati

Helen Schuster-Martin, Director

Cincinnati, Ohio April 15, 1919.

Mrs. Blank, Pres.
--- School Mother's Club,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Madam:-

A very interesting plan has been completed and is being demonstrated in the education of the child.

Many of the most progressive organizations of the city, including the Work Shop Theatre of the Woman's Club, are vitally interested in this most modern form of child education, The Children's Theatre.

The possibilities of securing interesting material for films has proven expensive and unsatisfactory, therefore we have launched this movement for the Children's Theatre, the first performance to be given April 25th at the Lyric Theatre.

We have chosen for our initial performance, "The Adventures of Peter Rabbit," from the Beatrix Stories, which appear daily in the Times-Star and which promise to become a children's classic. These have been dramatized by Mrs. Helen Schuster-Martin by permission of the author, Thornton Burgess, and will be given by sixty trained children under the direction of Mrs. Martin.

Our plans include a monthly performance of a different play by Cincinnati children at some downtown theatre, the educational advantages of which you will readily appreciate. Therefore we need the cooperation of every mother and child in the city to insure the permanent success of the Children's Theatre.

Will you please, Madam President, call upon us at the next meeting of your Club? We will also appreciate it if you will send us the name of any child who may be interested in future performances.

"The Adventures of Peter Rabbit" will be given on Friday, April 25th, at 3.30 o'clock at the Lyric Theatre. Admission is 25c to \$1.00.

Thanking you for your co-operation in this educational movement in Child Education, we beg to remain,

Cordially yours,
HELEN SCHUSTER-MARTIN, Director

Robt. L. Martin



Several times she circled around, high over the
Smiling Pool. *Page 26.*

May 12, 1949.

Mr. Robert K. Weill
The Armand S. Weill Company
170 Franklin Street
Buffalo 2
New York

Dear Mr. Weill:

It is indeed long since our efforts to find a sponsor for a radio program built on Peter Rabbit and his friends proved futile. Now it is very pleasant to hear from you again.

Unfortunately I am not on a position to take up with you the matter of a television program at least I am not at the present time. I have already granted another company an option for six months in which to produce and endeavor to sell a Peter Rabbit TV show. With my experience with radio in mind I am keeping my fingers crossed. If the option is allowed to expire or is dropped I will keep you in mind.

I agree with you that Peter Rabbit stories are a natural for television. Whether a sponsor with sufficient vision to see this can be found is something else. Perhaps it will interest you to know that 40 of my books are now being published in England, six in French in Brussels and more to follow, and my Canadian publishers have just published five in French for the French Canadian trade. Also the German and Dutch language rights for the world have been sold.

As I said above it is good to hear from you again. Incidentally you are the seventh to contact me in the last few months on the matter of a TV program. With kindest regards I remain

Most sincerely yours,

NEW WORLD

PRODUCTIONS

A19/
296

NEW YORK
BOSTON
CHICAGO

13273 VENTURA BOULEVARD

NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA . . . STANLEY 3-3580

April 17, 1959

Mr. Louis W. Doherty
Doherty & Murphy
Court Square Building
Springfield, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Doherty;

I must apologize for the delay in getting this material to you but travel has made it unavoidable.

I must once again ask you to make provisions to the contract. My attorney states that Item 6 and Item 8 are standard in motion picture contracts and he would want them or the sense of them incorporated in the contract.

Item #1 should have the following titles made part of the agreement:

1. An Adventure of Chatter The Red Squirrel
2. An Adventure of Reddy The Fox
3. " " " Honker, The Goose
4. A Mystery For Peter Rabbit
5. Peter Rabbit Hibernates
6. An Adventure of Grandfather Frog

Appendix B– Methodological materials and data sets

1. Sample of Reading Notations for the three case study Anti-Hunting stories
2. Plot segmentations for *The Adventures of Bob White* and for *Lightfoot the Deer*

1. Sample of Reading Notations

The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack – Reading notations from Chapter 2 “Mrs. Quack is Distrustful”

Chapter II: “Mrs. Quack Is Distrustful”:: We are introduced to Jerry Muskrat who inhabits the Smiling Pool along with Grandfather Frog and Spotty the Turtle. They have all spent their lives in the small pond. And thus <know little about the rest of the Great World>. These three set about reassuring Mrs. Quack that no <two-legged creatures><with a terrible gun> can find her there. Even the resident human, Farmer Brown’s Boy (FBB) has put away his terrible gun (reminiscent of Burgess’s autobiographical note in *Now I Remember* that he gave up hunting in his late boyhood due to compassion for the animals). FBB used to hunt and trap (as did Burgess) which is worse than the terrible guns, but he’s now reformed. Mrs. Quack remains anxious and suspicious of any two-legged creature (now the established circumlocution for men or mankind), even FBB. I do not blame her for being distrustful, and, as the reader, I’m cheering her on in her caution. Thus, PMQ has been established as a sympathetic character who has been wronged in life, as she has (as will be revealed) survived a great trauma.

Peter Rabbit confirms that FBB is a human, but that <he is the best friend we Quaddies have got> and that, furthermore, <he is such a good friend that he ought to be a Quaddy himself> - high praise indeed! The proofs are that FBB fed them, and he saved Mrs. Grouse who was caught in a snare (another female in peril) – and here the snare is explained :<which you know is a kind of trap>. PR assures PMQ that FBB won’t harm her, but Mrs. Quack is still mistrustful because, after all, FBB is <one of those two-legged creatures>, and that feeding PR’s friends may be a trick <to win you over>. PMQ explains to PR and JM that she has seen men scatter food to lull ducks into a false sense of security, and she recounts how hunters set up this ruse, then fire their <terrible guns> and kill, hurt or maim her friends. No, she concludes, she will not trust them.

Peter is shocked by the behavior that PMQ describes for men, but he asserts that FBB wouldn’t do that and that there is nothing to fear from him. Still, Mrs. Quack will not trust him, not at all, and she is determined to depart from Smiling Pond if FBB is likely to stop by. She is not sure where she will go to feel safe, however. Jerry Muskrat is a bit indignant at her quandry, and states <You are safe right here, if you have sense enough to stay here.> It seems she may doubt his and P.R.’s word, for still PMQ can’t believe, nor can she trust, due to the traumatic experiences she has suffered. It is tragic that, to her mind, no place is safe, and she can never trust a <two-legged creature>. In literary terms, she seems like a wandered, a “woman without a country”, or perhaps persecuted like Gypsies and Jews and other minority groups, with no place and no one to turn to at a time of unjustness. She has been harassed by the men for weeks, and she hasn’t had a square meal for ages. Also, she is all alone, for – Where is Mr. Quack? At this point, there is a sob in her voice and tears in her eyes, so we know she is on the verge of breaking down. This pathos that Burgess places at this point, showing PMQ’s vulnerability, comes just as Mrs. Quack will tell about her persecution and suffering.

The Adventures of Bob White – Reading notations from Chapter II “Bob White Has Visitors”

<Bob White! Bob White! I bid the world good cheer!

Bob White! Bob White! I whistle loud and clear!>

Bob White had <taken it into his head> to live adjacent to the

Dear Old Briar-Patch of Peter Rabbit. Peter didn’t know it yet –

It was serendipitous that Bob White happened over and liked the area

(but did he consult with Mrs. Bob? – it doesn’t seem so, yet; but N.B. that later, in Chapter III:4: 12,13 that Bob White does consult Mrs. Bob on the specific location after deciding on the neighborhood. *Any naturalist knows that the nesting or denning female has the final say of domicile for the young.*)

Peter Rabbit and Bob White go way back in friendship (makes me Think of Burgess and Cady association).

Underlined above are two “intertextual” features of Burgess stories: he has borrowed The Briar Patch of Brer’ Rabbit of Joel Chandler Harris and also seemingly the character name of Peter Cottontail from Beatrix Potter, although in one of the first of Burgess’s books published in 1914 (after the Old Mother West Wind volume of 1910) titled The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Burgess’s Peter Rabbit changes his name from his original (read “natural” –sounding) “Peter Rabbit” to Cottontail (aka B. Potter) and then back again, remaining Peter Rabbit through all the remainder of Burgess’s storytelling. Yes, Peter and Bob knew of each other and had crossed paths, dropping by to see one another from time to time. <Bob is such a cheery fellow that somehow Peter always felt better for just a word or two with him.>

Again, makes me think of the Cady and Burgess mutual regard, with photos of the two together, conspiratorally and Burgess’s words on how he enjoyed Cady.

Bob was whistling as <Peter hurried over, lipperty, lipperty-lip>. Bob was right nearby, on a fencepost near the dear Old Briar Patch. Bob White says being cheerful is great!

Peter grumpily replies <It must be that you don’t have much to worry about, retorted Peter.> Bob White’s eyes twinkled (this shows his sense of fun). Now, dear reader, will Peter be given a little lesson? Bob White’s lesson to Peter is that a lot of people grumpily think only they have worries – what about others with problems? Bob White raises the alarm to Peter: here comes Reddy Fox. Peter panics, but Bob White says – Well, guess what he’s coming after me, not you Peter <Don’t think you’re so important>. Peter decides to leave anyway. Peter reached the Briar Patch just as Reddy Fox reached the fence with Bob White sitting upon it. [Does this show a collapse of time?]

Reddy pretends to welcome Bob White to the neighborhood (the Old Fox!). Now we see an example of how Burgess, the writer, portrays duplicity and insincerity to children:

As Bob White says how nice it is of Reddy Fox to stop by, the quail’s eyes twinkle (again) and he can see through Reddy’s enthusiastic greeting. Quail dinner is apparently on Reddy’s projected menu, but Bob White continues cheerily to enthuse about how everyone is most neighborly. Peter Rabbit was just here, Bob White tantalizes Reddy. Reddy Fox looks around slyly and hungrily – where is Peter? Bob White responds that Peter has departed, but – Look there’s Old Man Coyote, who is Reddy Fox’s predator (the food chain is thus explained). Reddy decides he must leave now. Reddy Fox politely takes his leave, saying that he hopes to see more of Bob White, as Bob White

says under his breath, <I hope I see you first> reminiscent of the folk saying “See you later” being responded to with “Not if I see you first.” for someone you wish to avoid.

Lightfoot the Deer – Reading notations from Chapter II “Lightfoot’s New Antlers”

Now we will get the nature lesson on what happens when deer grow new antlers. [there have been myths and mis-information on antlers – do male deer actually lose them each year to grow anew, what happens to the old ones, how do deer do this regeneration each year]; Peter looks suspiciously at Lightfoot to explain the tatters (could they be someone else’s fur coat, someone that the fierce Lightfoot has injured?)

Playing to the fears and terrors of the child – playground fighting, or perhaps being beaten by an adult- elicited by the fearsome sight of tatters, like a beggar’s rags

The tatters seem an implicit or hidden threat of something lurking

Peter asks twice Have you been tearing somebody’s coat? Presumption of violence Lightfoot explains, the tatters are all his, from new antlers, Peter is amazed, gives a very visual representation of interest and discovery (much as Burgess would wish to see his enraptured storylisteners sitting around him) Peter sits up straight and has his eyes fixed on Lightfoot during the telling; Lightfoot seems a bit indignant and impatient with Peter not knowing, almost like a teen saying to a pre-teen “you didn’t know” and feeling superior in knowledge; Lightfoot also seems a bit vain about his new antlers, and competitive, that he would be seen to have the most handsome antlers in the Green Forest. We hear what a deer does: Lightfoot rubbed his ragged antlers against a tree to polish them: Peter did not understand what he was seeing, he spoke up to ask; and seems to accuse Lightfoot of lying <what kind of a story are you trying to fill me up with?> vernacular; PR does not believe those are new antlers, he wants proof – show me! Antlers don’t just grow like plants, he insists; PR takes the example of a domestic animal, Bossy the cow, who does not grow new horns!

Lightfoot affirms <You are quite right Peter, quite right> and uses logical reasoning to explain: so what if Bossy doesn’t get new horns, he is different than Bossy, so Peter concedes the point. We learn that Lightfoot was lying low over the summer, Peter asks why. Lightfoot mysteriously says he was waiting for the antlers to grow – reminiscent of an adolescent boy saying to a younger “you’ll see” someday in terms of secondary sexual characteristics; Lightfoot seems also to be indicating it was an uncomfortable process, and during it <I want to be alone> *It really sounds like a rite of initiation to adulthood, similar to what young men or women must undergo in tribal societies studied in Africa or North America, the young people are often secluded while they undergo rituals of transformation, pain and isolation are usually involved in the “liminal” stage (Victor Turner)*

Peter continues on <but still Peter couldn’t, he just couldn’t believe that those wonderful great antlers had grown out of Lightfoot’s head in a single summer.> so he asks where are the old ones and when did it happen? It seems he seriously doubts Lightfoot’s story because he didn’t witness it, so he expresses a lot of doubt and skepticism here, so much that Lightfoot becomes impatient rather than more patient or tolerant of him (is this an underlying message, that if you don’t believe your elders or others, they will be impatient and dismissive of you?)

Peter's doubt is expressed through repetition of questions about the antlers, each question phrased differently, but each one related to the phenomenon of antlers being shed and regrown: "But still Peter couldn't, he just couldn't believe that those wonderful great antlers had grown out of Lightfoot's head in a single summer." And so he asks where are the old ones? - Is this significant in terms of the device of repetition, how it is deployed, as a means to ascertain truth, as a way to express inexperience, as a means of reassurance – if you ask 3 times and the same thing is given, you can believe (magical thinking, from fairy stories)???: p. 4 line 2-3: "Have you been tearing somebody's coat?" he asked again. And associated with it, p. 4 line 9-10: "Then what are those rags hanging off your antlers?"; p. 4-5, lines 27 (4) and 1-3(5): "Do you mean to tell me that those are not the same antlers that you have had as long as I've known you? How can anything hard like those antlers grow?"; p. 5, lines 31-34: "Where did you leave your old ones and when did they come off?" he asked, and there was doubt in the very tone of his voice.

Page 6: Lightfoot continues his story, he recalls being happy to be rid of the old antlers, they were loose and uncomfortable (Burgess projecting himself into the story in terms of how a male deer would feel physically and emotionally about shedding his antlers??- Great stuff!!!) and pragmatically states that he had no more use for them, plus <I knew that my new ones would be bigger and better. I've got one more point on each than I had last year> *this seems to fulfill male boasting and also appeal to the hunters who want to bag a stag with more points* as well as being educative in nature lore

Example of where Burgess seems to enact three way narrative for a three-"pronged" audience. Now Lightfoot begins rubbing his antlers <to get off the queer rags hanging to them and to polish the points> Peter watches this visual display
This is a male display that is under watch or gaze, scopophilia – watching a grooming ritual, scene in contrast to the PMQ scene of Peter watching Mrs. Quack bathe, now Peter watches Lightfoot polish his antlers, makes Peter quite the voyeur/nature watcher. Makes sense in terms of Burgess family history, where both he and his son are separated from father in early childhood, "given over" to the maternal side and influences more so (not exclusively, but male influence not so prevalent in their homes as where a pater would be present); so they (covertly) observe: What is maleness? And it seems through the writing evidence that Burgess demonstrates greater access to What is femaleness? (though association with his mother, his wives) This comes out in the writing in terms of what and how to portray animal habits in nature?

2. Plot Segmentations for *The Adventures of Bob White* and for *Lightfoot the Deer*

Plot Segmentation for *The Adventures of Bob White*

A. A trademark opening verse/aphorism about cheery whistling to help the work along. (Recall that later Walt Disney used “Whistle While You Work” in Cinderella, the animal friend helpers sang and whistled while she laboured for the step-mother and step-sisters).

Nature intro: Bob White is the colloquial name for the North American quail or the European partridge, He and his brood help on the farm by keeping down the weeds and insects. Moral intro: Farmers and the consumers of farm produce benefit from the Bob Whites’ work.

1. Bob White, unbeknownst to his good friend Peter Rabbit, is house-hunting. Bob is cheery today, Peter is grumbly. Bob White tells Peter “I have problems too” but it’s better to be cheery anyway. Reddy Fox and Old Man Coyote are trying to find out the location of the new home.
2. Bob cheers Peter up by confiding that they will soon be new neighbors! But Bob will not tell the exact location, and Peter is offended. However, Peter is pleased about the new neighbors.
3. Peter Rabbit decides to try to find out the location of the new home, but Bob White poses the ethical question of “Do you really want to know, and thus be responsible for leading harm our way, even if unintended?”. At this point, Peter appears satisfied.
4. Reddy Fox and Granny Fox are prowling around seeking the new home. As Peter observes this activity, Jimmy Skunk sneaks up behind Peter. Jimmy is also hungry for quail eggs, but fortunately, Peter doesn’t know where the nest is.

5. Mr. Bob brings Mrs. Bob to look at the new nest site, which she must approve.

Although always in danger from predators, they are brave and also skilled at escaping detection. They energetically begin to build the nest. Later, 15 eggs are laid in the well-concealed nest. Montage: The philosophy of <all's fair in love and war> is reflected on by Mr. Bob as he bustles about to prepare for the family to come.

6. The Bob White chicks appear and are paraded out for the friends of the Briar-Patch to see. Peter now learns of the nest's location since it is no longer so crucial to keep it hidden. All admire the baby Bob Whites. But they are still in danger, from Redtail the Hawk, for instance. The young quails grow and learn daily.

7. The Bob White family must now move to the Green Meadow to find enough bugs and worms to eat, returning each night to the safety of the Briar Patch. Bob White "schools" his brood on what to do to survive. Indeed, all the Green Meadows offspring go to their parents' "school". So the little Bobs grow and flourish.

8. Farmer Brown's Boy is introduced. His father Farmer Brown praises him for the exemplary garden, and FBB figures out quantitatively how much the Bob Whites help in keeping down pests and increasing crop production. A happy and productive summer passes.

9. It is Autumn, Jack Frost arrives <to paint the Maple Trees red>. The forest animals are industriously preparing for Winter. Now is the season of the hunters. FBB has a talk with his father and he decides to give up hunting, which he used to enjoy. Farmer Brown's Boy has the idea to spearhead an anti-hunting, conservationist sign-posting movement to keep animals in safety that might otherwise be hunted!

10. One morning, a hunter flushes out the young Bob Whites, who are scattered. One young quail is wounded, pursued and goes into hiding. He huddles in emotional terror and physical agony until the hunter and dog leave.
11. The hunter returns for the wounded quail, and is confronted by Farmer Brown's Boy. The young quail abjectly waits to hear of his fate. FBB carries young Bob to safety and nurses him back to health.
12. Bob White Sr. goes out to find his son. He is located in Farmer Brown's henyard, eating with the chickens, and the Bob White family is re-united under the protection of FBB. The next story promised is about Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

The End.

Plot segmentation for *Lightfoot the Deer*

- A. In the Introduction to the Dover Edition (p. iii), editor Susan L. Rattiner summarizes the story from its happy and peaceful inception, through the intrusion of the hunter into the Green Forest and the pursuit of the "graceful and majestic" Lightfoot, the aid of all the Green Forest friends to Lightfoot's cause, and finally, the happy ending where Lightfoot meets his mate, Miss Daintyfoot.
1. Peter meets up with Lightfoot in the Green Forest. They discuss the terrible situation of hunters with guns who plague all the animal friends, particularly the Quack Family. Then the attention turns to Lightfoot's new antlers (a nature lesson ensues).
2. Autumn arrives, and fear stalks the Green Forest in the guise of man the hunter. Lightfoot is aided by all the Quaddies as he eludes the wily hunter.

3. Lightfoot and the hunter continue to match wits through the autumn. Lightfoot must be constantly alert and on the move. A game of “cat and mouse” is evoked.
4. At the Smiling Pool, Lightfoot approaches Paddy the Beaver for a partnership to each be on the alert for the hunter. Paddy is able to warn Lightfoot, and Sammy Jay, in a parallel minor plot, warns the Quacks who are at the Pool of the approach of Reddy Fox. All the predators are temporarily foiled.
5. The foiled hunter returns to the Green Forest, this time with hounds to flush out Lightfoot! This strategy of terror is used to relentlessly pursue Lightfoot until he is trapped on a sandbar in the Big River. Giving one last effort, Lightfoot swims to safety on the opposite shore, and collapses at the feet of a sympathetic human stranger.
6. Lightfoot recovers his strength and slowly heals from the trauma of pursuit. The new human friend sends the hunter away. The hunter vows to wait until Lightfoot leaves his protector-benefactor’s land.
7. Sammy Jay is here introduced as a central character who worries about his friend Lightfoot, whose whereabouts and fate are unknown to the Green Forest friends. He mourns what he feels is the certain demise of his noble friend. The hunting season comes to an end, and still no word of Lightfoot. All the animals mourn him.
8. Big River: Mr. And Mrs. Quack are startled by the appearance of a strange sight – a big branch coming toward them in the water. The mysterious branch grows nearer and nearer – it is Lightfoot’s antlers visible above the water as he swims home to the Green Forest!

9. There is a thanksgiving for Lightfoot's deliverance by his neighbors. All seems well.

One day, Lightfoot becomes aware of dainty footprints in his territory – who is it?

The young stag pursues the signs of the newcomer, until one day he catches sight of the beautiful stranger. He goes after her with great longing, searching for her high and low.

10. Now Lightfoot spots large deer footprints, and knows there is a rival in the Green Forest. In a jealous rage, he seeks the new stag. All the Green Forest friends are excited over the impending dual between Lightfoot and the big stranger.

11. Paddy the Beaver's pond is the arena of the Great Fight. All arrive to witness the epic battle between the stags. Miss Daintyfoot watches, concealed, awaiting the outcome of the fight. When Lightfoot emerges the victor, Miss Daintyfoot admits her love for him to herself, then steals away.

12. The victorious Lightfoot continues his search for Miss Daintyfoot, whom he finally encounters. They are united, and all the Green Forest friends pay their respects to the couple. We learn that Miss Daintyfoot had to leave her home in the Great Mountain, pursued by hunters, but that it all worked out for the best. The next story will be about Blacky the Crow.

The End.

Appendix C – Chronologies

- I. Thornton W. Burgess Life Events
- II. Key Dates of The Gilded Age and Progressive Era
- III. Children's literature publications from 1874 - 1924

- I. Thornton W. Burgess Life Events, centering on period of beginning of writing career, 1905- 1924

(Thornton W. Burgess, Author, b. 1874 d. 1965)

1874 – Born in Sandwich, MA (Cape Cod)

1874 – Father Thornton Burgess Sr. dies of consumption at age 24, leaves widow Caroline to raise one child, Thornton Waldo

1891- Graduated from Sandwich Academy H.S., took course in commercial accounting after graduation

Fall 1895 - Fall 1911 worked for Phelps Publishing, Springfield, MA

1905 – Married Nina Osbourne in West Springfield, MA.

1906 – Nina died, Thornton W. Burgess III born

1908/9 – Began publishing stories in Good Housekeeping

1910 – Old Mother West Wind published from Good Housekeeping stories, followed by Mother West Wind

1911 – Married Fannie Johnson, widow of his editor friend Willis Johnson, after a two year courtship. Step-children Chester age 14, Helen age 9 (mother of Frances Meigs who wrote "My Grandfather Thornton W. Burgess," 1998)

1911-12 – Burgess still in advertising. Thornton W. Burgess III age 5/6 lived with Osbourne relatives; The Boy Scouts of Woodcroft Camp by Burgess published.

1913 – Burgess gave up advertising, brought TWB Jr./III home with Fannie and children.

1914 – Medal from Wildlife Protection Fund for conservation work, presented by William Hornaday.

1916 – Begins Burgess Bird Book, with Louis Agassiz Fuertes as illustrator.

1917 – *The Adventures of Poor Mrs. Quack* was published.

1919 – Burgess Bird Book is a bestseller.

William Hornaday of the Audobon Society congratulates him.
 Meets illustrator Harrison Cady. *Adventures of Bob White* is published.
 Burgess writes for *People's Home Journal*.

1921 – *Lightfoot the Deer* is published. WWI – The Green Meadow conservation and war effort club is started to create sanctuaries for birds, who help farmers clear fields of pests.

1924- Radio Nature League Program is begun. Bought Laughing Brook estate.

Sources for Burgess time-line: Frances B. Meigs, *My Grandfather Thornton W. Burgess. An Intimate Portrait*. Beverly, MA: Commonwealth Editions. 1998.

R.A. Lovell, Jr. *The Cape Cod Story of Thornton W. Burgess*. Thornton W. Burgess Society with Sullwold Publishing, Taunton, MA. 1979.

Thornton W. Burgess, *Now I Remember*. Boston, Toronto. Little, Brown and Company (published simultaneously in Canada). 1960.

II. KEY DATES OF THE GILDED AGE AND PROGRESSIVE ERA, 1873-1917

THE GILDED AGE

1873 Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age*

1873-78 Economic depression

1876 -Disputed Presidential election (Hayes-Tilden);
 -Sioux Indians annihilate Custer's federal troops at Little Big Horn

1877 -Congress elects Republican Rutherford B. Hayes
 -Withdrawal of federal troops from the South; end of Reconstruction
 -Railway workers and others in first national strike against wage cuts

1878 Edison Electric Light Company founded

1881-82 Chinese Exclusion Acts

1882 Standard Oil Trust founded

1884-1885 Economic depression

1886 - Haymarket bomb at Chicago rally against police attacks on labor protesters

- American Federation of Labor (AFL) founded

1887 Dawes Severality Act

1889 Thomas Edison inventions motion picture and viewing device

1890 - Wounded Knee massacre

- Census Bureau announces closing of the Western frontier

- Sherman Anti-Trust Act outlaws "combinations in restraint of trade"

- Publication of Alfred T. Mahon's *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*

1892 - Homestead steel workers strike against Carnegie Steel Company

- Populist convention of People's Party in Omaha, Nebraska

1893-1897 Economic depression

1894 Strike against Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago

1896 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* establishes racial segregationism's doctrine of "separate but equal" as Constitutional

1898 - U.S. annexation of Hawai'i

- Spanish-American War (mostly fought in Cuba and the Philippines)

The PROGRESSIVE ERA

1898 Racist riot, Wilmington, North Carolina

1901 Theodore Roosevelt assumes presidency after assassination of William McKinley; Roosevelt re-elected in 1904 (serves 1901-1908)

1903 Platt Amendment to Cuban Constitution

1904 Roosevelt Corollary declares U.S. "police power" of hemisphere

1906 - Racist riot, Atlanta, Georgia

- Publication of *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair

- Pure Food and Drug Act passed

- Meat Inspection Act passed

1908 *Muller v. Oregon* upholds constitutionality of limits on women's working hours

- 1909 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) established
- 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire in New York City, 146 dead
- 1912 Woodrow Wilson (Dem.) elected president (serves 1913-1920)
- 1913 - Henry Ford begins moving assembly line in automobile manufacturing
- Sixteenth Amendment legalizes federal income tax
- Seventeenth Amendment provides for direct election of U.S. Senators
- Federal Reserve Act establishes central banking system
- 1914 - Federal Trade Commission established to investigate unfair business practices
- U.S. troops invade Mexico to attempt to subdue Mexican nationalist revolution
- Panama Canal opens (following 1903 granting of canal rights to U.S.)
- First World War breaks out in Europe
- 1915 - D.W. Griffith directs *Birth of a Nation*, one of the first accomplished feature-length movies—a justification of the Ku Klux Klan's role in ending Reconstruction
- 1917 - U.S. entry into First World War following upon German announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare
- Espionage Act limits freedom of speech
- Racist riot in East St. Louis, Illinois
- 1918 - Sedition Act further limits freedom of speech
- U.S. troops intervene in Russia against Bolshevik revolution
- Armistice ends First World War
- 1919 Eighteenth Amendment establishes prohibition of alcoholic beverages
- 1920 - Nineteenth Amendment accords women right to vote in federal elections
- Majority of American population for first time live in cities (51.4 percent)

III. Children's literature publications from 1874 - 1924

Chronology of Children's Literature publication dates shortly preceding and around the time of publication by Little, Brown and Company of the Burgess "Anti-Hunting" trilogy (based on Hunt 1994, 189-196).

- 1874 Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book*.
- 1899 Helen Bannerman, *The Story of Little Black Sambo*.
E.S. Nesbit, *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*.
- 1900 Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*.
- 1902 Walter de la Mare, *Songs of Childhood*. Rudyard Kipling, *Just So Stories*. Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*.
- 1903 Kate Douglas Wiggin, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*.
- 1904 J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan* (first performance).
Laura Lee Hope, *The Bobbsey Twins*.
- 1906 Arthur Ransome, *A Child's Book of the Garden*.
- 1907 Selma Lagerlof *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*
- 1908 Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*. Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*.
- 1909 Gene Stratton-Porter, *A Girl of the Limberlost*.
- 1910 Rudyard Kipling, *Rewards and Fairies*.
- 1911 Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*.
- 1912 Howard Garis, *Uncle Wiggley's Adventures*.
- 1914 Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan of the Apes*.
- 1915 Edmund Dulac *Fairy-Book*, Arthur Ransome, *Old Peter's Russian Tales*.
- 1920 Hugh Lofting, *The Story of Dr. Dolittle*; 'Rupert Bear' appears in the Daily Express
- 1922 Margery Williams Bianco, *The Velveteen Rabbit*; Carl Sandberg, *The Rootabaga Stories*
- 1923 Enid Blyton, *Child Whispers*; Felix Salten, *Bambi*.
- 1924 A.A. Milne, *When We Were Very Young*
- 1926 A.A. Milne, *Winnie -the- Pooh*.
- 1927 'Franklin W. Dixon', *The Tower Treasure* (Hardy Boys Series).
- 1928 A.A. Milne, *The House at Pooh Corner*.
- 1931 Jean de Brunhoff, *The Story of Babar*.