

# Exposition

# Foreword

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DÁNIEL PANKA & EVGENIYA LAVERYCHEVA

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The idea for the *Anthony Burgess Special Issue* of *The AnaChronisT* was prompted by a conference held at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) on 10 November in 2017 as a celebration of Anthony Burgess's centenary. Aside from plenary talks and individual sessions, the conference also featured the continental premiere of Burgess's musical setting of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, performed by members of the Department of Music Culture and the School of English and American Studies at ELTE, who were also helped by then-current and former students of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. Perhaps even Anthony Burgess would have approved of such a conclusion to the conference proceedings, since he considered himself first and foremost, as it stands on the homepage of the International Anthony Burgess Foundation in his own words, "a musician who writes novels, instead of a novelist who writes music on the side."

Besides honouring Burgess's own self-image as a composer, the conference focused on the author's literary output and his relationship to other media. Collected in this volume are extended versions of the papers presented at the conference, selected on the basis of the generous offers of the participants to take part in this project and elaborate on their talks. It is the editors' hope that the assortment of scholarly essays captures the multidimensional and interdisciplinary spirit of the event, as well as providing a deeper insight into Burgess's work and a look beyond the traditional cornerstones of Burgess scholarship.

Anthony Biswell's essay looks at Burgess's biographies of Ernest Hemingway and D. H. Lawrence and addresses important questions

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in connection with Burgess's own endeavours to write his own biography. Biswell's contention is that a new insight into Burgess's two autobiographies can be gained by understanding the way Burgess constructed biographies about others and how these texts operate.

Gábor Bodnár looks at Burgess's musical setting of *The Waste Land* through the lens of Robert Schumann's work. (Not coincidentally, Bodnár's help was also instrumental in the staging of the performance at the end of the conference.) In the essay, Bodnár attempts to outline a method (or a map) for the curious reader/listener that would facilitate a comprehensive understanding of Burgess's work, which is filled with interdisciplinary and intertextual allusions throughout.

Jim Clarke's essay focuses on the various invented languages in Burgess's fiction. Clarke argues that numerous forms of constructed language in the writer's oeuvre, from mock-Elizabethan in *Nothing Like the Sun* to Nazi newspeak in *Earthly Powers*, deserve just as much attention as Nadsat, Burgess's arguably best-known invented language. The article provides a full taxonomy of created languages in Burgess's novels, offering a new approach to analysing these linguistic inventions outside the science-fiction genre where they notably belong.

Zsolt Czigányik and Júlia Bánházi discuss Burgess's idiosyncratic view of history based on his dystopian novel, *The Wanting Seed*. Czigányik and Bánházi argue that cyclicalality (as opposed to a linear teleology) and the Pelagian–Augustinian dichotomy play an important part in forming Burgess's paradoxical fictive world that the writer presents in the novel. The authors claim that *The Wanting Seed* takes nothing less than the nature of history as its subject matter.

Ákos Farkas and Evgeniya Laverycheva explore the possibility of reading *The Clockwork Testament* as a campus novel by demonstrating how the narrative is primarily centred around a university campus, a genre-defining feature of academic fiction. They argue that such a reclassification of the third instalment of the "Enderby Quartet" may offer fresh insight into the thematic and stylistic aspects of Burgess's work as well as place the novel among other important representatives of the genre of academic fiction.

Hajnal Király investigates Stanley Kubrick's creative strategies in the filmmaker's 1971 screen adaptation of Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*.

Király discusses the intermediality of the novel and how its audio-visual aspects are adapted and transformed by Kubrick in his screen version, representing the manipulative effect of media on society. She suggests that the connection between the novel and the film goes far beyond the narrative or stylistic level, opening a new path to their interpretation.

Károly Pintér's essay discusses Burgess's third and last dystopian novel, 1985, as an extraordinary combination of essay and fiction. Analysing the string of non-fiction texts from 1985, Pintér argues that Burgess not only offers his views on Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* but also contemplates a number of related political, social, philosophical, and other issues. In view of this, 1985 is regarded as Burgess's "cacotopian (his preferred term for dystopia) ars poetica," involving the reader in a "complex intellectual game" of the genre.

Rob Spence's essay focuses on various representations of Burgess's home city, Manchester, in the writer's prose. The article explores how Burgess's childhood memories of his birthplace provide copious material for such of his novels as *The Pianoplayers*, *Little Wilson and Big God*, *Honey for the Bears*, *Any Old Iron* and others, where Manchester appears in one form or another.

The issue also features a review by Mária Palla of a recently published Burgess biofiction written by Sean Gregory, and a brief personal reflection on 2021 Nobel Prize Laureate, Abdulrazak Gurnah, by Anthony Levings of how he wrote his PhD dissertation on an important aspect of Burgess's work. The crown jewel in the printed version of the issue is the edited but unabridged typescript of a thus far unpublished lecture by Burgess entitled "Imperfect Man," with an introduction by Andrew Biswell, director of the *International Anthony Burgess Foundation*. It is here that we wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to Professor Biswell for allowing us, on behalf of the Burgess estate, to include this valuable addition to the Burgess *oeuvre*. We do hope that this special issue will prove to be stimulating and worthy of interest both for Burgess scholars and for the general readership.

# Development

# Anthony Burgess as Literary Biographer

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ANDREW BISWELL

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*This chapter addresses some questions of literary form and biographical method arising from Anthony Burgess's biographies of Ernest Hemingway and D.H. Lawrence. A new connection is established between Burgess's unsuccessful first attempt to write an autobiography in 1977 and his growing interest in the potential forms of biography, which he explored in novels and non-fiction books in the 1970s and 1980s. A close examination of two specific works, Ernest Hemingway and His World (1978) and Flame Into Being (1985), allows us to chart the evolution of Burgess's biographical method, which he went on to redeploy in his two volumes of formal autobiography, Little Wilson and Big God (1987) and You've Had Your Time (1990).*

In 1977, as Anthony Burgess approached his sixtieth birthday, he was asked by Robin Skelton, the editor of a Canadian journal, the *Malahat Review*, to write an autobiographical essay. The piece he sent to Skelton was titled "You've Had Your Time: Being the Beginning of an Autobiography." This essay, written in February 1977, should not be confused with the full-length book he published under the same title in 1990, the content of which is entirely different.

Despite its brevity, Burgess's seven-page article, which has never been reprinted elsewhere, is of the greatest possible interest to students of his work. It seems that the larger autobiographical work, of which the *Malahat Review* article was intended to be the opening chapter, was abandoned a short time after the article was sent to the journal. When Burgess returned to the project

of writing his memoirs a decade later, he did not include the 1977 fragment, which might be characterised, following his own practice of deploying musical metaphors, as an overture without an opera.

The alert reader will notice significant factual differences between the family history given in the journal article and the alternative version of the same events which appears in *Little Wilson and Big God*. For example, in 1977, he tells the reader that his mother's family were devout Scottish Jacobites, one of whose members died while fighting in the rebellion under Charles Edward Stuart, known as Bonnie Prince Charlie. None of this Caledonian fantasising survives into the 1987 text of *Little Wilson and Big God*, which simply tells us that his mother's family came from the north of England. How they lost their Scottish roots remains a mystery.

The curious pre-history of Burgess's two autobiographical volumes is not considered in either of the published biographies written by Roger Lewis (2002) and myself. What I want to argue is that Burgess abandoned his autobiography in 1977 because he was not yet ready to write it. He spent the next ten years trying to find the distance and objectivity he would need to examine the events of his own remote past, especially the infancy which saw him traumatised by the deaths of his mother and sister when he was not yet two years old, followed by a period of separation from his father and his eventual reintegration into an unhappy step-family. He also recalls childhood sexual abuse at the hands of a maid with whom he was forced to share a bed while living above the Manchester tobacco shop kept by his father and stepmother. Given the difficulties of addressing this sensitive subject matter, it is remarkable that Burgess was able to overcome his hesitations and return to the autobiographical mode in 1987. The non-fiction books that he wrote in the interim provide some clues as to how he was able to accomplish the task.

*Ernest Hemingway and His World* emerges from a period of intense creativity in the fields of literature and music. The archive of the International Anthony Burgess Foundation in Manchester contains an uncatalogued typewritten page headed "Work done in 1977," in which Burgess lists the completion of 24 substantial writing projects, including novels (a first draft of *The Pianoplayers* and the novella, 1985), 100 pages of the book which became *Earthly Powers*, a song cycle (*The Brides of Enderby*), the lyrics and

music for a stage musical comedy titled *Trotsky's In New York*, three long articles for the *New York Times*, monthly reviews for the *Irish Press* and the *Observer*, two film scripts (*Merlin* and *Cyrus the Great*), treatments of two television series about Aristotle Onassis and General Joe Stilwell, a film script about Rome for the Canadian director John McGreevy, reviews for the *New Statesman* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, and three articles in Italian for *L'Espresso*. The other item on this list is a "Book about Ernest Hemingway," completed in Monaco on 2 July 1977.

The Hemingway biography was one of 38 illustrated literary lives which appeared in a series commissioned by Thames and Hudson, a commercial publisher who specialised in books about art, architecture, and design. Each of the early volumes was written by a prominent British or Irish writer: other titles in the series included *Rudyard Kipling* by Kingsley Amis, *Virginia Woolf* by her protégé, John Lehmann, and *Somerset Maugham* by Frederic Raphael, better known as a novelist and Oscar-winning screenwriter.

The books in this series were attractively designed by Ian Mackenzie-Kerr, the in-house art editor at Thames and Hudson. The first edition of Burgess's Hemingway volume contains 116 black-and-white photographs, which are missing from recent translations and paperback editions. The absence of these images for the contemporary reader is to be regretted, not least because the photographs and the captions which accompany them, written by Burgess himself, form a crucial part of the meaning of the book. The effect of reading the original version of the book is similar to the experience of watching a documentary about Hemingway: the presence of half-page and full-page photographs means that the text of the biography is occasionally demoted to a secondary role, although the Burgess-voice is still present through the flavoursome picture captions.

The research materials for the Hemingway biography have survived in the book collection of the Burgess Foundation. Through my work as the Foundation's director since 2010, I have had the opportunity to inspect these books while they were in the process of being catalogued, working closely with the archivist, Anna Edwards, and the librarian, Tina Green. As with all of Burgess's non-fiction, he relied heavily on one main source, adding supplementary information as required from other biographies and volumes of letters. The 900-page biography, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* by Carlos Baker

(1969), provides the factual spine of Burgess's narrative. He also quotes from *Papa Hemingway*, the memoir by A.E. Hotchner, *A Reader's Guide to Ernest Hemingway* by Arthur Waldhorn, and the *Selected Letters 1917–1961*, edited by Carlos Baker. Not including primary texts, there are 27 critical works listed in the bibliography, indicating that Burgess researched his subject with the same level of seriousness that he had brought to his earlier biography of Shakespeare, published in 1970.

Beyond this evidence of wide research, the most striking feature of *Ernest Hemingway and His World* is the presence of Burgess himself as the intrusive biographical narrator who approaches the task with strong opinions about Hemingway's life and work. He affirms the authenticity of *Death in the Afternoon* with reference to the enthusiasm for bullfighting he witnessed in Gibraltar when he was posted there by the British army. Measuring his own experience of the Second World War against Hemingway's self-aggrandising account of liberating Paris, Burgess is inclined to grumble: "It is hard for any British soldier who served out the full five and a half years to work up enthusiasm about the brief and glamorous Hemingway saga" (Burgess, *Ernest Hemingway* 86). He tries to puncture the myth by describing George Orwell "a real fighter" wounded in the Spanish Civil War, quietly working away in London on political journalism and the novel, *Animal Farm*, during the Second World War, "while Hemingway basked and boasted, was a boor and a bore" (86). Elsewhere, we find anecdotes enlivening the text: "[Hemingway] became a very formidable drinker. The manager of the Gritti Palace in Venice tells me that three bottles of Valpolicella first thing in the day were nothing to him, and then there were the daiquiris, Scotch, tequila, bourbon, vermoutheless martinis" (58). Burgess also articulates doubts about the self-mythologising he finds in Hemingway's publications. Commenting on the safari travelogue *Green Hills of Africa*, he writes: "Perhaps the most embarrassing part of the work, as of much of Hemingway's later work, is the endless need to prove virility, not a notable trait of the genuinely virile" (56).

Despite these apparent reservations about Hemingway's self-created myths of hyper-masculinity, Burgess's book is motivated by a strong wish to defend Hemingway against his detractors. Speaking of *A Farewell to Arms*, Burgess writes: "What, at a superficial reading, seems to be a bare scenario with crisp film dialogue turns out to be a highly wrought verbal

artefact in which meaning resides wholly in the rhythms of the language” (55). Arguing that Hemingway is a major force in twentieth-century literature, Burgess declares the best of his writing to be “as considerable as that of Joyce or Faulkner or Scott Fitzgerald” (116). This was high praise indeed from a writer who dedicated much of his adult life to promoting James Joyce and his work, through two published critical books, *Here Comes Everybody* and *Joysprick*, and a stage musical, *Blooms of Dublin*, based on Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

Writing about his own 1964 novel, *Nothing Like the Sun*, Burgess said that Shakespeare was such an enigmatic figure in literary history that he demanded “to be probed with the novelist’s instruments” (qtd. in Biswell 287). Something of the same kind might be said of his technique in the Hemingway biography, where we find a number of episodes written in a hybrid style which should perhaps be termed creative non-fiction. For example, Burgess gives a memorable account of Hemingway “moving towards dementia” and paranoia towards the end of his life, representing this episode in close third-person narration, which gives the impression of allowing the reader access to Hemingway’s disorderly thoughts and anxieties:

The “Feds” were after him, he said. He had imported that Glasgow girl met in Spain into the United States and was paying for her course in dramatic training; the FBI would interpret that as a cover for gross immorality. Those two men working late at the bank were “Feds,” checking his bank account for irregularities. Those in the bar, over there, that looked like travelling salesmen, they were “Feds” too: let’s get out of here. (Burgess, *Ernest Hemingway* 110)

This passage, moving towards reported speech at the end, provides a vivid portrait of the artist in decline—but the source of the biographical information is unclear, making it difficult for us to disentangle fact from authorial invention. Declining to show the footprints of his research, Burgess comes close to turning Hemingway into one of his fictional characters—and indeed, he makes a fleeting appearance in the novel *Earthly Powers*, published two years after the Hemingway book appeared. We might reasonably

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draw the conclusion that Burgess as literary biographer could not overcome the urge to fictionalise.

One other unconventional aspect of this biography is the humour it directs against its subject. Describing a near-fatal plane crash in Kenya, Burgess paints the scene in broadly comic terms:

The plane, which seemed moderately airworthy, bumped over an airstrip full of stones and furrows, lifted, dropped, fell, burst into flames. Hemingway butted a jammed door open with his head and damaged shoulder. ... Tradition has it that Hemingway emerged from the accident waving a bunch of bananas and a bottle of gin and shouting: "My luck she is running very good." A popular song with this refrain was recorded by Rosemary Clooney and her husband José Ferrer shortly afterwards. (104)

The novelistic irony which is on display in this extract would become a key element in Burgess's writing when he returned to his autobiography in 1987. For example, when he describes the death of his father, he insists on the comic elements of the story: a drunk priest administers the last rites, and the old man evacuates his bowels at the moment of death (Burgess, *Little Wilson* 192). It is likely that Burgess's biographical engagement with Hemingway provided an opportunity to experiment with a distanced narrating voice, which helped to solve the stylistic problem of how to tell his own life's story.

Reviewing *Ernest Hemingway and His World* in the *Spectator* on 25 November 1978, Richard Shone wrote: "What is curious is that, in spite of the mauling his character gets (and often deserves), Hemingway emerges as an affecting, even invigorating figure—like his heroes, destroyed but not defeated" (23). William Ott in the *Library Journal* was more direct: he claimed that Burgess's biography was "a coffee table book with spunk" (1510). It is interesting to note that female critics were also quite well disposed towards the biography. In a review published in the *Hornbook*, Mary Silva Cosgrave wrote: "In an admirably terse and incisive style, Burgess has assessed Hemingway's literary achievement and reputation during his lifetime and afterward and

has vividly drawn a portrait of the man—as much a creation as his books, and a far inferior creation” (669).

The most perceptive review came from William Sternman, writing in the journal, *Best Sellers*. Describing Burgess’s book as “a valuable initiation to one of America’s greatest writers,” Sternman proposed that Burgess had “not so much interpreted Hemingway’s work as recreated it in his own image” (363). This comment was provoked by a passage where Burgess provides a summary of *Fiesta* or *The Sun Also Rises*, translating the novel’s action and preoccupations into recognisably Burgessian terms:

Hemingway’s personages pursue an empty alcoholic life in Paris, then, at Pamplona, are involved in the regenerative cleansing ritual of the bullfight. There is something of Eliot’s *The Waste Land* in the book, though Hemingway—who read it when it first appeared in 1922—never professed any admiration or even understanding of the poem. Jake is a kind of Fisher King, aware of the aridity of life without love but stricken, cut off from the enactment of desire like any Prufrock. Salvation depends on sacrifice—not that of the Mass (Jake is Catholic, as Hemingway—allegedly converted in Italy—nominally was), but of a ritual in which real blood flows. Enough blood flowed in the war, but the conflict of man and bull elects the confrontation of death and, in a sense, controls death. All this, of course, is grossly to oversimplify. (Burgess, *Ernest Hemingway* 48)

Foregrounding his own preoccupations, Burgess reads Hemingway’s novel through the distorting lenses of *The Waste Land* and “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” at the same time as acknowledging that these interpretations would not have been welcomed by the author of *The Sun Also Rises*. In this and other comparable passages, it becomes clear that one of Burgess’s intentions as a biographer-critic is to claim Hemingway’s writing as part of the modernist canon, even if this means overlooking the surface meaning of the texts and imposing unexpected new critical signatures upon them. Partly because of its stylistic hybridity, *Ernest Hemingway* is a complex and engaging work which deserves a place on the same shelf

as Burgess's *Shakespeare* biography (1970) and *Nothing Like the Sun* (1964), his earlier Shakespearean novel. Nevertheless, the Hemingway-biography remains a relatively obscure part of his canon, which is not as widely discussed as it deserves to be.

In September 1978, fourteen months after he had completed the Hemingway book, Burgess spent two weeks in Chicago, Idaho, Kansas, and Key West with the director Tony Cash and a camera crew, making a film about Hemingway titled *Grace Under Pressure*. This was broadcast on the British television channel ITV on 3 December 1978 as part of the long-running arts series *The South Bank Show*. Copies of the film and the script may be found in the Burgess Foundation's archive. Although Burgess had written a shooting script before he arrived in the United States, there are substantial differences between his script and what was actually shot. In fact, much of the film seems to have been improvised to camera in the locations which had been familiar to Hemingway. *Grace Under Pressure* provides a series of second thoughts about Hemingway, and some of its judgments are bolder than the ones he had advanced in the published biography.

The film begins with a montage of toreadors, big-game hunters, and sea-fishing boats. Burgess gives a commentary in voice-over:

I have nothing in common at all with Hemingway except the vocation of writer, and Hemingway's way of life is not mine. I don't care much for shooting, fishing, bullfighting, the safari. But I love Hemingway, regard him as immensely important. He of all writers brought the novel out of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Hemingway forged a new way of writing. This is why he's important.

The film commentary clarifies a point which is never directly addressed in the biography: why was Burgess interested in a writer with whom he had so little in common? The answer he provides does much to justify the amount of energy he invested in these book and film projects. Inevitably, perhaps, the claim about Hemingway having "forged a new way of writing" is better evidenced in the biography than in the film, which is rather light on quotations from the work.

Visiting Hemingway's residence in Key West, Burgess walks around the property and offers some speculations about the nature of Hemingway's masculinity as it is revealed in the letters and published works. He throws out a series of rhetorical questions:

What was the matter with Hemingway? Why the aggression? Was he really aware of sexual incapacity? Was it guilt and, if he was guilty, what was he guilty about? Was it his desertion of [his wife] Hadley? Was it his unwillingness to bring in the social revolution by writing about it? Was he guilty about not being able to write as well as he had done in the creative 1920s? Was he guilty about trying to become one of his own heroes?

At significant moments in the film, Burgess's commentary goes beyond the polite formulations of literary biography. When he considers Hemingway's sex-life, there is further uncertainty: "We must ask the question: did his sexual capacity really match the great shouting virility?" In the final scene, when he visits Hemingway's grave in Ketchum, Idaho, we have the spectacle of one writer confronting the ghost of another, seeking answers but finding the dead man unwilling to disclose his secrets. This closing sequence leaves us with a different representation of Hemingway from what we find in the published book. Burgess improvises a resonant statement about the disjunction between literary writers and their work: "[Hemingway] didn't realize the abiding truth that the artist is always smaller than his art, and he tends to be smaller than ordinary people, if not physically then certainly morally." Once again, it is clear that Burgess is determined to challenge Hemingway's self-created image of a man-of-action with an insatiable sexual appetite. This questioning of popular myths takes a muted form in the biography, but it is foregrounded more strongly in the film.

If we want to gain a fully informed understanding of Burgess on Hemingway, the best approach is to consider the documentary as a supplementary discourse which expands on specific points that are gestured at in the biography. The overall effect of the film is to bring the arguments of the published biographical text more clearly into focus.

Seven years after *Ernest Hemingway and His World* appeared, Burgess produced a much longer tribute to D. H. Lawrence, published in 1985 to mark the hundredth anniversary of his birth. This was *Flame into Being: The Life and Work of D. H. Lawrence*, commissioned by William Heinemann, the firm responsible for publishing Lawrence's collected works and most of Burgess's novels until 1968. In the opening chapter, Burgess makes an explicit comparison between Hemingway and Lawrence, raising the possibility that the American writer was still in his thoughts as he warmed up to examining Lawrence:

It may be that Hemingway's prose is the biggest stylistic innovation of our century. ... Next to him Lawrence looks very old-fashioned, but he was rejecting the rational civilisation which foundered in the Great War while Hemingway was still a schoolboy. In a sense his cult of Natural Man is complementary to Hemingway's: Hemingway's heroes are solitary men, often with guns; Lawrence's fight with women in the intervals of loving them. (Burgess, *Flame into Being* 8)

The main sources for *Flame into Being* were the primary texts of the novels and Aldous Huxley's edition of *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, published by Heinemann in 1932. The biography of Lawrence by Richard Aldington seems to have entered the Burgess household shortly after it appeared in 1950, and this book has been annotated by his first wife, Llewela. The book collection of the Burgess Foundation includes Lawrence's poems, essays, and non-fiction works. My survey of this library has yielded the following information: there are 47 books by Lawrence in the collection, and nine critical and biographical books about him. Burgess owned five different editions of *Sons and Lovers*; he also wrote introductions to three of Lawrence's travel books and an Italian translation of *Women in Love*. The earliest edition of Lawrence owned by Burgess, a hardback reprint of *The Rainbow*, was published in 1930, the year in which Lawrence died. The only significant gap in Burgess's collection seems to be the plays, about which he has nothing to say in *Flame into Being*, possibly because he had never read them or seen them performed. Many of the Lawrence-books are annotated by Burgess

himself, which is quite unusual: among more than 7000 surviving volumes in the collection, fewer than one per cent are annotated, but the Lawrence editions are more heavily marked than any other area of the collection, including the numerous books on Shakespeare and James Joyce.

Lawrence is one of the key modernist writers discussed by Burgess in *They Wrote in English*, a two-volume literary history and anthology, published in Milan by Tramontana in 1979. Lawrence appears both in the narrative history (volume 1) and in the anthology (volume 2), where he is represented by two long poems, “Song of a Man Who Has Come Through” and “Bavarian Gentians.” Burgess’s enthusiasm for Lawrence as a poet and travel writer emerges very clearly from the summary of his career provided in *They Wrote in English*. In 1979, he characterised Lawrence not as a thinker or a philosopher, but as the prophet of primitivism who looked back to the “dark gods” worshipped by the Aztecs and the Etruscans. Comparing him with Joyce and T. S. Eliot, Burgess proposes that Lawrence “lacks the shaping, polishing instinct” associated with these other writers, but he argues that the excitement of reading him comes from his spontaneous style: “it is as though we were in the poet’s workshop, watching the poem being made” (Burgess, *They Wrote in English* 74; vol. 1). He claims that the best of his writing is to be found in the poems and the Italian travel books, especially *Sea and Sardinia*.

By the time he wrote *Flame into Being*, having re-read most of Lawrence’s works in preparation for the task, Burgess had changed his mind about which parts of the canon were the most significant and enduring. While generally valuing all of Lawrence’s longer novels, he makes a strong case for the two novels composed during the First World War as being at the heart of Lawrence’s vision: *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* emerge from Burgess’s reassessment as works that should be ranked among “the ten great novels of the century” (*Flame into Being* 99). Despite the appearance of formlessness, these novels reveal themselves, on careful re-reading, to possess a quality of “relentless motion” towards a conclusion “with no sense of contrivance” (100). Lawrence’s letters are also said to be a vital part of the *oeuvre*: they are, in Burgess’s view, no less full of “fire and conviction” than the poems, and often they are indistinguishable from his utterances in free verse (202). In fact, there is a sense in which Burgess sets out to remake Lawrence in his own image, as a prolific author who never

suffered from writer's block, and who roamed freely across the boundaries of genre. "Lawrence's entire output," he writes, "adds up to a unity to be read rather as one reads the Bible" (11). The argument that it is necessary to consider the *oeuvre* rather than any individual work has also been made by critics of Burgess's writing, most recently by Jim Clarke in his critical study, *The Aesthetics of Anthony Burgess* (2017).

Other affinities between the two writers are outlined by Burgess in a chapter titled "Myself and Lawrence When Young" (*Flame into Being* 1–11). Like Lawrence, Burgess grew up in a working-class district in the north of England, in a household where dialect was spoken and effete Londoners were regarded with suspicion. Both belonged to the first generation of their families to achieve a university education, then to discover that the opportunities available in their local areas were insufficient to fulfil their ambitions. Although Burgess was initially drawn to Joyce's *Ulysses* as a teenage reader, he also read *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *The Fantasia of the Unconscious* (Lawrence's response to Freud), along with novels by Aldous Huxley and Radclyffe Hall. As a young man, Burgess was inclined to think that Lawrence was a great writer because he was subversive and had been banned. In his mature years, he valued him as a stylist who wrote out of a compulsion to express himself: "Lawrence is impatient with the techniques of literature; to read him is to feel oneself in contact with a personality which has broken through form and rhetoric and confronts one in a kind of nakedness" (9). The figure of the author which emerges from his writing is, in Burgess's view, unformed, irrational, and composed of shifting personalities: he always seems to be in a state of becoming rather than being. Composing this semi-autobiographical chapter gave Burgess the opportunity to examine his early life by comparing his own family circumstances with those of Lawrence. The account he gives of his adolescent reading (Joyce, Lawrence, Huxley) is replayed with only minor variations in *Little Wilson and Big God*. Lawrence emerges from both *Flame into Being* and *Little Wilson and Big God* as a crucial formative influence, first encountered in 1930 when Burgess was just 13 years old. Reading the two books in tandem, it is possible to see that the opening section of *Flame into Being* provides a condensed version of material that Burgess expanded in the first volume of his memoirs, the manuscript of which was completed the following year.

Burgess was unusual among critics in the 1980s for insisting on the centrality of Lawrence's poems. *Flame into Being* offers sympathetic readings of two poetry collections, *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* and *Nettles*. There is a useful commentary on one of Lawrence's last poems, "Bavarian Gentians," written in 1929 when he knew that he was dying, in which the flowers of the title represent "torches which would lead him to the underworld" (191). The poem appealed to Burgess's sensibility as a musician; and he pursued his argument about the modernity of Lawrence beyond the constraints of formal biography when he wrote musical settings of four poems by Lawrence, performed in Nottingham in 1985 and later broadcast on BBC radio. These are the same poems which appear in *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, the anthology edited by Michael Roberts, two copies of which appear in the catalogue of Burgess's private library. From a musical point of view, his Lawrence songs share certain qualities with *Winter Words*, Benjamin Britten's melancholy song cycle for tenor and piano, based on the poems of Thomas Hardy and first performed in 1953. Scoring these songs for a male voice in the higher range, Burgess deploys a small ensemble of flute, oboe, cello, and piano to achieve similar effects: he borrows the principle of fragmented melodies from Britten's song cycle, translating Lawrence's poems into a recognisably modernist musical idiom. Through the composition of a Lawrentian song-cycle, Burgess admitted Lawrence into the small group of modernist writers (the other members were Joyce, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot) whose poems he set to music. There is further research to be done into music as a form of creative expression through which Burgess reworked and remade poems by others.

Reviewing *Flame into Being* in the *London Review of Books* on 19 September 1985, Frank Kermode wrote: "What gives this small but quite ambitious book its quality is simply the freedom of comment and the independence of opinion that a good craftsman may enjoy as he contemplates, without envy, a great one." Although Kermode disputed some of the unorthodox judgments on individual novels, the overall impression was a favourable one: "Burgess's book never ceases to remind one that Lawrence was a great writer, and that argument about him should always begin from a shared assumption of that greatness." If there were not many other reviews, this was largely because Burgess's book was one of numerous centennial volumes published

in 1985. *Flame into Being* was also partly overshadowed by the simultaneous appearance of the Cambridge edition of Lawrence's works, which included previously unpublished novels and drafts.

Lawrence famously described himself as "infinitely an outsider. And of my own choice," and the same might be said of Burgess's series of voluntary expatriations to Malaya, Malta, Italy, and Monaco, and his ambivalent outsider's attitude towards his own Englishness (qtd. in Worthen vii). Looking in detail at Burgess's critical statements about Lawrence, we can see that his influence on Burgess's apprehension of the forms of writing has been underestimated. It is clear that Burgess had been reading Lawrence and thinking about him for a period of more than 50 years before he wrote *Flame into Being*. His influence was an enabling one: he offered an encouraging model of how to be an expatriate English writer and a literary craftsman who was driven by the need to discover new techniques and modes of expression with each book.

After completing *Flame into Being*, Burgess revisited his family history at greater length in *The Pianoplayers* (drafted in 1977 but not completed until 1985), a novel which celebrates the music halls and silent cinemas where his parents had made their living before and after the First World War. The book draws extensively on the unreliable legends about Burgess's family as music-hall performers in Manchester and Glasgow, although no evidence has emerged to confirm that they were employed on a regular basis as musicians. Burgess's claim that his mother, Elizabeth Burgess Wilson, had performed on stage at the Gentlemen's Concert Hall in Manchester is undermined by the factual record, which indicates that the building was demolished in 1897, when Elizabeth was nine years old (Biswell 10). On his marriage certificate in 1908, his father, Joseph Wilson, gave his profession not as a musician but as a "publisher's clerk." Nevertheless, the novel aims to reflect the oral legends about his parents passed down to Burgess by his extended family, and at no point does it advance any claim to be rooted in verifiable fact. Much of the narrative is characterised by the humour and irony that we also find in the Hemingway biography.

The next book he wrote after *The Pianoplayers* was *Little Wilson and Big God*, which provides an expanded account of his Manchester childhood and upbringing. This book takes us through the Second World War and the years

he spent in colonial Malaya. It ends with Burgess's decision to become a professional writer in 1959, provoked by an apparent medical misdiagnosis in Brunei. He returned to the autobiographical project that he had abandoned in 1977 with newly-discovered confidence in his ability as a non-fiction writer. Working on biographies of Hemingway and Lawrence had taught him how to establish a certain distance from his subject-matter, and the ironic narrative voice he had used in these books is also a prominent feature of his memoirs. This helps us to understand why there is so little analysis of his emotional condition in *Little Wilson and Big God* or its successor volume, *You've Had Your Time*.

In an unpublished letter to A. S. Byatt, dated 14 February 1986 and sent while he was working on *Little Wilson and Big God*, Burgess writes: "the young man I'm presenting in the autobiography is not someone I really know. I certainly don't like him much" (uncatalogued correspondence, Burgess Foundation archive). There is a strong implication that he had achieved the objectivity he needed to examine his early life as if it were someone else's. I would argue that Burgess arrived at this position as a result of undertaking his biographical work on Hemingway and Lawrence. He had discovered an approach to narrating other writers' lives which could be redeployed when he came to composing his autobiographical volumes.

It seems reasonable to conclude that further research into Burgess as a biographer would be worth pursuing, and the focus might be widened to accommodate his fictionalised lives of Shakespeare, Napoleon Bonaparte, John Keats, and Christopher Marlowe. There is no doubt that his lives of Hemingway and Lawrence are complex literary artefacts, carefully researched and written with the insight of a professional writer considering the work of others. As critics were not slow to recognise, readers of *Ernest Hemingway* and *Flame into Being* are invited to share Burgess's deep imaginative sympathy with the literary lives he narrates. But these two non-fiction books are also important because they laid the foundation for the two volumes of "confessions" that followed, *Little Wilson and Big God* and *You've Had Your Time*, which are widely considered to be among the most rewarding books in the Burgess canon.

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# How to Lose a Musical Compass in a Few Hundred Lines? (And How to Find it again?):

Adventures of a Twentieth-Century and an Early  
Romantic Composer in a Waste Land

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GÁBOR BODNÁR

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*This paper attempts to explain the collective incomprehensibility of The Waste Land. Of course, this attempt does not only apply to the music of Anthony Burgess, since, for one, it is inseparable from the poetry of T. S. Eliot, and it also multiplies the number of quotations and associations in the literary work, be it obvious or more or less hidden. Therefore, this paper will embark on a special task: through the compositional methods of a nineteenth-century composer, Robert Schumann, it will try to demonstrate the real and metaphorical ambiguity of the tonality resulting from fragmentation, creative and playful musical gestures, and the various personae—this method may help to find an individual way to experience the effect of Burgess's music.*

The following lines were stimulated by the account of one of the Antarctic expeditions (I forget which, but I think one of Shackleton's): it was related that the party of explorers, at the extremity of their strength, had the constant

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delusion that there was *one more member* than could actually be counted. (Eliot 74–75)<sup>1</sup>

Was it light?  
Was it light within?  
Was it light within light?  
Stillness becoming alive,  
Yet still?

A lively understandable spirit  
Once entertained you.  
It will come again.  
Be still.  
Wait. (Roethke 20)<sup>2</sup>

Anthony Burgess considered himself most of all a composer. He composed around 200 pieces of music, and with this amount proved more prolific in the field of music than in that of literature—thus it is not really possible to classify his creative activity into solely literary or musical works. In the case of such an exceptional artist, talented in two different art forms, there is no way to differentiate him as a literary artist or a composer alone, nor would it be right to do so. The reverse is true for those composers whose musical work is permeated by literary influences and musical effects, and whose work is rich in linguistically-inspired musical inventions. Thus, reading Burgess's books can make the reader associate to different kinds of musical pieces (and not only those often referred to by the author, but also those of our own imagination); and similarly, when listening to his music, we might think that what we hear might as well be a short story. (The so-called “storytelling manner” in different types of musical works was already very common in early Romantic music.) *The Waste Land* was classified as a melodrama by Burgess himself, a category much favoured by Romantic composers.

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- 1 T. S. Eliot's notes on the part of his long poem *The Waste Land*, beginning with ‘Who is the third who walks always beside you?’.
  - 2 Theodore Roethke, *The Lost Son* (1948)—the closing lines of the long poem.

This “multi-authored” composition—besides the work of T. S. Eliot and Burgess, other musical pieces also appear in it—had never been performed live in Hungary in its full length until recently. In 2017 in the chamber room of the Institute of Arts Communication and Music (formerly Department of Music) within Eötvös Loránd University’s Faculty of Humanities, excerpts of the original piece were performed. The Department of English Studies within the School of English and American Studies, and the International Anthony Burgess Foundation organised a symposium in November 2017 to commemorate the centenary of the author’s birth,<sup>3</sup> and at the closing concert of this conference, parts of the musical transcriptions of the long poem were put on by students and professors.<sup>4</sup> Strange as it may sound, this was also a continental premiere due to various reasons not to be specified here; the piece had not been performed in its full length in Europe until that date.

The above story reflects the composer’s (and perhaps the poet’s) idea well, since fragmentation is in full effect: the audience hears a few mosaic-like fragments of the event featuring a poem composed of mosaic-like excerpts accompanied by music similarly made up of mosaic-like pieces—as if written by Burgess himself. The musical concept of fragmentation is also rooted in early Romanticism, primarily in Friedrich Schlegel’s *Athenaeum Fragments*, where the philosopher defines the concept of a fragment as follows:

Ein Fragment muß gleich einem kleinen Kunstwerke von der umgebenden Welt ganz abgesondert und in sich selbst vollendet sein wie ein Igel (Schlegel, *Athenäums-Fragmente und andere Schriften* 56).<sup>5</sup>

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3 More on the conference: <https://b100b.wordpress.com/about/>

4 Some audio excerpts: [https://music.elte.hu/burgess\\_100\\_budapest](https://music.elte.hu/burgess_100_budapest) (with commentary in Hungarian). Full piece: <https://www.anthonburgess.org/the-music-of-anthon-burgess-exhibition/the-waste-land/>, score: <https://www.anthonburgess.org/app/uploads/2017/01/II-Waste-Land-SCORE-PDF.pdf>

5 “A fragment, like a miniature work of art, has to be entirely isolated from the surrounding world and be complete in itself like a hedgehog” (qtd. in Rosen 48). Charles Rosen, in his analysis of the song, correctly translates the original word “Igel” as hedgehog instead of the more commonly used porcupine (Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments* 45), with the following reasoning: “The hedgehog (unlike the porcupine, which shoots its quills) is an amiable creature which rolls itself into a ball when alarmed” (48).

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According to Charles Rosen, one of Robert Schumann's Heine songs, "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai" (the opening song of the *Dichterliebe* cycle), is a perfect musical example of this fragmentation, as it "begins in the middle, and ends as it began—an emblem of unsatisfied desire, of longing eternally renewed" (41). In her book on Schumann, however, Beate Julia Perrey also points out that the fragment is a very important part of Romantic thought.

... whilst both maxim and aphorism are self-sufficient and self-satisfied in their confident claim to reveal an essence as it were in one stroke, and in the most concise and linguistically most efficient way possible, the fragment depends on other fragments in order "to make its point"—the "point" being that through its very opposition and otherness, it denies the system, of which it is a vital part, the articulation of an absolute truth. Here, no one part leads into, or grows out of, the other, and hence there develops no organic whole—the archetypal idea of "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." (32)

In his musical repertoire Burgess preferred to use the harmonies of Pre- and Post-Romanticism rather than those of the early Romantic period; still, he often uses Romantic examples and was indeed a prolific composer of the so-called Romantic "Lied," which was a typical genre of nineteenth-century music. In addition to fragmentation, irony, and allusion/self-allusion, he is comparable to Schumann through his creativity and the playfulness in his musical gestures, which are also characteristic of artists talented in two separate art forms. He often applied the traditional forms of "puzzle" in his literary as well as musical work, in which composers form words from notes to convey a secret message or simply leave a musical signature. Of course, this technique was already apparent in stylistic periods much earlier than Romanticism—for example, the proliferation of the well-known B-A-C-H motif from Bach to Burgess and onwards—but the true admirer, conceptual cultivator, and exemplar of the "*lettres dansantes*" was Schumann. Moreover, the different musical terminology used in English and German result in new puzzles and a series of confusions. For example, the note the English call B is H in German, whereas in German, B is the same

as the English B-flat.<sup>6</sup> The title of Teodóra Wiesenmayer's study on the musicality of Burgess's novels, "Prelude and Fugue in B(urgess) major," may refer to this ambiguity, because it can be interpreted in one way in Hungarian and German, and in another in English (Wiesenmayer, "Prelude and Fugue in B(urgess) major" 1394).

The accumulation of allusions gives *The Waste Land* considerable scope for play: Eliot is clear about employing a number of musical and literary references in his work, but Burgess makes his intention even more explicit. This multi-character game encourages the emergence of the so-called persona characters, a feature characteristic of vocal music since Romanticism. One of the first to describe this phenomenon was Edward T. Cone, who later worked out his own ideas in his study "Poet's Love or Composer's Love," mainly in the context of *Dichterliebe*, in which the various persona characters (vocal, instrumental, and that representing the totality of the musical piece) are integrated within the personality of the composer (Cone 181–182). As an antithesis to this, Berthold Hoeckner, in his essay "Poet's Love and Composer's Love," identifies independent persona-players.

My proposal, then, is to keep the basic conception of Cone's earlier model, while accommodating his later modification: to adopt the notion of a single creative mind, while still hearing independent voices. What is more, where Cone heard a complete musical persona constituted by instrumental and vocal personae, I hear a triple voice, which includes a poetic persona that remains on a par with the musical ones. Even when a poem has been molded into a through-composed song; even when its words have lost the rhythm of their original meter; and even when its text has been altered by the composer: the poetic text still remains an independent component of a song. Even sung,

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6 The highly educated Burgess was obviously well-aware of all this, just like Schumann, who made the musical "sphinx" of his *Carnaval* with two possible interpretation of A-S-C-H or A-SCH, the key motif of a piano piece with a French title and subtitles. (In French specialised language, the German H or English B sound is called "si," while the German B and English B-flat is called "si bemol.")

the words assume their own dramatic agency within what may be called a composer-poet's multiple voice. (Hoeckner 2.6)<sup>7</sup>

Everything is set for a “joint nineteenth- and twentieth-century investigation” in a romantically overheated context, for which the cross-generational connection is once again provided by an alliance created by Schumann's “The League of David” or “Davidsbund.”

Schumann discovered the idea for the *Bund* readily enough in contemporary literature. The idea for Florestan and Eusebius he borrowed from Jean Paul.<sup>8</sup> ... Schumann may have created the name Raro from an amalgamation of his own name and that of Clara: CLARAROBERT. The first public appearance of Florestan, Eusebius and Master Raro was, oddly enough, in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* ... Schumann's great admiration for Chopin's music led ... to his writing a review ... But his review ... was unlike any other, giving the appearance not a work of criticism, but an excerpt from a novel or a short story. (Jensen 108–109)

It is thus possible to write about music in the form of a novella or, like Eliot, to express the message of an opera in a poem, and to use the leitmotif technique in the same work, as Teodóra Wiesenmayer argues in her dissertation, *Words Embedded in Music* (92–101).<sup>9</sup> In *The Waste Land*, a fragment of a quotation from an opera presents two contexts at the same time and it is up to the reader to juxtapose these texts, even if the process

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7 In my opinion both versions are possible depending on the particular work we are talking about.

8 Jean Paul Richter (born Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, 1763–1825) was a successful contemporary writer and philosopher. He used his pseudonym out of respect for Rousseau, but tradition holds that Jean was pronounced in the French way, while Paul in the German way. With Florestan and Eusebius, Schumann portrayed the dual character of his own personality, modelled on Jean Paul's novel, *Flegeljahre*.

9 Since leitmotif in musical terminology is usually associated with larger scale (vocal or program music) works, which during the musical process can exclusively and regularly be heard in the context of a given dramatic poetic moment, it is more appropriate to use the term characteristic motif or, as defined by Akido Mayeda, a motto (501).

of reading or listening to the poem is linear—thus creating simultaneity through imagination.

The act of waiting, along with the emptiness and desolation of the sea, reinforces Eliot's theme, since in *The Waste Land* desolation (of the land and of the people's lives) and waiting for redemption are also central topics. The first and the second quotation from Wagner are thematically connected. When the piper watches the empty sea ("Oed' und leer das Meer."), and Isolde is not seen yet, the question arises: "Mein Irisch kind, wo weilest du?"—this may be Tristan's question as well, waiting for Isolde's arrival. This frame strongly holds Eliot's passage together, strengthening the effect of the characters' feeling of yearning and desolation. (Wiesenmayer, *Words Embedded in Music* 101)

But to what extent do literary or musical quotations remain the same in another context? Are we really talking about the music of *Le sacre du printemps* or *Tristan und Isolde* when they are transformed as quotations or collages in another work? (Similarly, is it really Schubert's symphony in the second song of *Dichterliebe* or a waltz by Schubert in the opening piece of *Carnaval*?) We can try to trace the messages of the somewhat "confused" musical world of Burgess's *The Waste Land*.

THE "WATER-DRIPPING SONG" AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

If there were the sound of water only  
 Not the cicada  
 And dry grass singing  
 But sound of water over a rock  
 Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees  
 Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop  
 But there is no water (Eliot 67)<sup>10</sup>

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10 *The Waste Land*, part V. (What the Thunder said).

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Goodbye, goodbye, old stones, the time-order is going,  
I have married my hands to perpetual agitation,  
I run, I run to the whistle of money.  
Money money money  
Water water water  
How cool the grass is.  
Has the bird left?  
The stalk still sways.  
Has the worm a shadow?  
What do the clouds say? (Roethke 18)<sup>11</sup>

Since we can move through the loosely structured and collage-like musical structure in Burgess's *The Waste Land* as we please, let us begin at the sources. In the fourth movement, as Nikolett Mayer observes, "the flute plays soft, repetitive chord progressions that symbolise the ripping sound of water. The cello only contributes with a few ... notes to the flute's surface ripping, and so making the sea three-dimensional" (Mayer 64).<sup>12</sup> However, since the associations of the listener are crucial to truly understand the musical messages in this work—not only in relation to the quotations but the independently composed passages as well—the listener (and perhaps even the composer) should recall the flute-Sprechgesang dialogue in Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, a defining chamber work of the early twentieth century, as a medium of the feelings of the errant protagonist. The portrayal of water is multi-layered, but its absence is expressed by the nostalgic recollection of the above-mentioned flute solo, which as a result becomes its own refutation; and then the general pause of "But there is no water" can rightly appear. Similarly, there is a general pause to acknowledge the fatality of water after the performance of "Fear death by water." However, the piano motif here, which bursts out like a stream and drops back like a wave, is more important than the words themselves, and is not in harmony with the text. The "walking and contemplative" music of the passage about the longing for water ("If there were only water amongst the rock"), which has the word "water" repeatedly, is not about the portrayal of water

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11 *The Lost Son*, part III (The Gibber).

12 Shortly after, though it takes over the flute motif for the length of a bar.

either. Besides, it also ends in a sudden general pause to give way to the “ripping sound of the flute.” Furthermore, at the opening part of the work, the E-flat major of the key passage can be associated with *Rheingold* or even Schumann’s *Rheinische Symfonie*.

From another point of view, *The Waste Land* almost aleatorically alternates between musical passages conveying a sense of tonality and the lack thereof. (But the reverse is also possible: tonal passages make us feel the absence of quasi-atonality, which is more in line with the message.) Atonal interludes surprise the listener after the passage “With a wicked pack of cards”; however, just as unexpectedly, after a long period of tonal insecurities, the jazz-like part follows at the end of “And puts a record on the gramophone,” although at this point it is justified by the message. Paul Phillips has an interesting observation as to Burgess’s works: “curiosity compelled him to experiment with twelve-tone music, but his conservative musical tendencies led him no further in the direction of the *avant-garde*” (9). Phillips also remarks on the composer’s general composing style: “an angular, vigorous style, often dissonant although mostly tonal, characterises much of Burgess’s music—a hybrid of Holst and Hindemith” (16). Thus, the question is if the atonal and tonally ambiguous passages in *The Waste Land* are there to reinforce a sense of tonal ambiguity in the listener, or if they wish to represent the ad hoc nature of unexpected thoughts and impressions. It is probably best to let the listener decide.

It is essential to take into consideration Burgess’s views on Eliot’s work. Jonathan David Mann quotes the following from an interview in his dissertation: “Burgess found both *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* are ‘intensely conservative works,’ whose intertextual Modernist style is a means ‘of conserving the past’ whilst being “presented in a totally revolutionary technique, which, on closer examination, seems to have its roots in conservatism” (Cabau 103, qtd. in Mann 48). Mann also quotes Cary di Pietro who states with reference to Burgess: “Shakespearean allusion in *The Waste Land* is one of the ‘numerous particles of literary texts ... scattered through’ the poem” (di Pietro 28, qtd. in Mann 57). Besides, as Burgess writes about his own music, for him *The Waste Land* is “among other things, a collage of literary citations” (99–100).

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So, we are back to square one: in music evoking quotations, perhaps because of their accumulation the quotations become a “collection of music” whose proper reception is most similar to that of neoclassical works—seemingly nostalgic, but in fact provoking real emotions in the listener, who is flooded by memories and forced to reflect on them.

*The Waste Land*, therefore, can be experienced and presented in a myriad of ways. But it is not enough to know the work of T. S. Eliot or Anthony Burgess or even both, nor the quotations in the poem and the music: it is all these factors taken together that form the whole picture, showing the unity that is created using all the separate parts. But still, we will never get a homogenous picture, as each person can only sum up their impressions of each topic, and, therefore, of the whole. Besides the poet and the composer, a “powerful third” is needed,<sup>13</sup> in this case the listener. This way we may find the lost son (or *The Lost Son* itself), which may be hidden in any or all of the literary and musical mosaic pieces.

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13 A reference to music historian Tibor Tallián’s *Chamisso, Schumann and the Powerful Third*, referring to Géza Gárdonyi’s novel *The Powerful Third*, who is the one dominating the relationship between two people because he “does not yet exist, but wants to” (Gárdonyi 20).

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Currently, Gábor Bodnár is a member of the presidency in the Psalmus Humanus Association for Arts Education, expert of the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development, and a professional advisor of the Parlando online review on music pedagogy. Besides, he was the President of the Committee of Arts Communication in the Hungarian Rector's Conference until 2021.

# Beyond Nadsat:

## The Many Invented Languages of Anthony Burgess<sup>14</sup>

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*Anthony Burgess is best-known for his 1962 novella, A Clockwork Orange, which is famously written in Nadsat, the invented language of the protagonist Alex and his gang of droogs. Burgess's invention of Nadsat has gone on to inspire the proliferation of invented languages in fiction, especially in Science Fiction. Just as Burgess's other fictions are less well-known, however, so too are his other forays into invented literary languages. Burgess spent almost the entirety of his career exploring the parameters of invented language in his fiction, and this article aims to describe and taxonomise these many linguistic inventions.*

### INTRODUCTION

Nadsat is Anthony Burgess's best-known invented language, just as Elvish is J. R. R. Tolkien's. But Tolkien did not only invent Elvish, nor indeed only one version of Elvish. Indeed, he created multiple Elvish variants, and a whole raft of other invented languages besides. What is less well-known is that so did Anthony Burgess. This article seeks to explore Burgess's *other* encounters with invented languages.

There is no clear scholarly consensus on the identification of what an invented language is. Even the terminology shifts from context to context,

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and scholar to scholar. The vast majority of constructed languages, that is, languages which are consciously devised rather than arising organically via the development of human communication, are created for either aesthetic or philosophical purposes, to assist in computer programming or machine learning, or to facilitate experimentation in cognitive or linguistic science. These attract a range of specific terms, such as artificial languages, planned languages, or conlangs (an abbreviation of constructed language). In the field of literature, we are dealing with the subset known as art languages or fictional languages. These are languages which exist primarily or entirely for the purpose of conveying an artistic vision, usually fantastical, and are most commonly found in fantastical sub-genres, such as science fiction or high fantasy literature. However, this article intends to demonstrate, via close examination of the novels of Anthony Burgess, that linguistic invention need not be solely restricted to such fantastical silos.

Art languages are most commonly associated with J. R. R. Tolkien. In his famous essay *A Secret Vice* (2016), he explained how his fictional world of Middle Earth developed out of his obsessive interest in inventing languages. The extensive invented linguistic sub-structure in Tolkien's mythos was the product of what he termed *glossopoeia*, deriving from *mythopoeia*. He extensively theorised, alongside the mythopoeic methodologies he described in "On Fairy Stories," this glossopoeic practice as his chosen method of story-telling, or myth-making (Fimi and Higgins 10). For Tolkien, this practice of inventing languages began in childhood and was a lifelong hobby which inspired his creative work. For Anthony Burgess, himself a polyglot and philologist, it arguably began with the creation of *A Clockwork Orange*, though there are hints and precursors in the macaronic *mélange* of languages found in the *Malayan Trilogy* (1956–1959).

There is a clear distinction between the Tolkienian practice of fully inventing languages, which are then judiciously inserted into a creative text, and Burgess's creation of Nadsat, which functions as a pervasive lexical superimposition upon a grammatical basis of standard English (Vincent and Clarke 249–254). A wide range of modes of linguistic invention exist in literature, from fully functioning Tolkienian languages to mere allusions as to the existence of an invented language. This article aims to identify the varying forms which Burgess's other invented languages take.

Most writers who have engaged with glossopoeic creativity have not taken it to the extremes of Tolkien, whose totalising approach finds its lineage primarily among communities of Conlangers, who aim to invent fully functioning languages for fun or for philosophical inquiry. One exception is Suzette Haden Elgin, who developed the invented feminist language Láadan out of her novel *Native Tongue* (1984). Instead, most writers who invent languages tend to be minimalist in two modes. Firstly, they tend not to create full languages but instead offer only fragments and hints, or alternatively, for the benefit of the reader, they base their “language” on a new lexicon while retaining the basic syntactic structure of English or another existing organic language. As Yaguello notes, “the modern science-fiction novels which contain a fully worked-out original language are few and far between” (56). To present a science fiction novel (henceforth SF), or any other text, entirely in a constructed language would obviously not be conducive to reader comprehension. Burgess, a trained philologist, was well aware of this, hence Nadsat accounts for barely 6.5% of the total text of *A Clockwork Orange* (Vincent and Clarke 256) with the remainder delivered in various forms of standard English.

Most linguistic invention in literature takes place within the genre of SF, with a further large sub-set occurring in the related sub-genre of Fantasy fiction. Indeed, SF is replete with invented art languages, often attributed to sentient alien cultures, but also occasionally located in extrapolated terrestrial futures, since the estranging quiddities of sentient aliens, artificial intelligence, or future existence presuppose significant shifts from our existing languages and modes of communication. Additionally, the emphasis on language invention in SF as a means to express aspects of speculative philosophy, as in Elgin’s novel, has its origins at the dawn of Utopian literature, in the invented language and script created for Thomas More’s *Utopia* by the book’s dedicatee (and a character therein), Pieter Gillis. Equally, following Tolkien’s lead, linguistic invention in Fantasy literature has become a regular component of fantastical worldbuilding or sub-creation.

Therefore, we must look to SF studies to find the most fully developed taxonomy of invented languages in literature. Ria Cheyne examined how invented languages in SF function in terms of reader reception. Though largely focused on languages attributed to alien civilisations, Cheyne's taxonomy is useful, because it attempts to examine the totality of invented languages which feature in SF, no matter how fragmentary they appear or how they manifest in the text. For Cheyne, "a science-fictional created language exists and is complete in the totality of information given about the language in the text (or texts) in which it appears" (390). This does not mean that constructed language development outside of the text, for example, in Tolkien's notebooks, or fiction by fans, is irrelevant. Cheyne is rather saying that we can adequately address the nature of an invented language by way of examining what we are given of it, in its in-text manifestation. This suggests a stylistic approach to invented languages. Based on this approach, Cheyne gives us nine possible forms:

1. Utterances in, or purported to be in, the created language.
2. Translated utterances from the created language.
3. Information about how a word or phrase from the language was translated.
4. Subjective impressions of the created language's sound, or shape in the case of written languages.
5. Information about how the sounds in a particular language are to be pronounced.
6. Phonemic information.
7. Information about grammatical structure.
8. A glossary of terms from the language.
9. Descriptions or discussions of other properties of the language, or of notable features within the language. (391)

This refocuses attention beyond the mere alien utterance; Cheyne emphasises rather "how created languages consist of more than simply the words in the language: the examination of neologisms alone does not fully address the created language" (391–392). We can see how Cheyne's model might

apply to *A Clockwork Orange*. There is the Nadsat uttered by Alex and the droogs (1); and both in in-text contextualisations by Alex or others we get explanations if not full translations of Nadsat terms (2); Dr Branom speculatively defines the characteristics of Nadsat (9); and in many instances commencing with Stanley Edgar Hyman in the 1963 Norton edition of *A Clockwork Orange*, we find the publication of a glossary accompanying the text (8), though this was against Burgess's own wishes. *A Clockwork Orange* is an SF novel, and Nadsat is, therefore, an invented SF language by Cheyne's taxonomy, qualifying on multiple criteria.

But can this schema be usefully applied to texts outside of the SF genre? Burgess is a valuable case study to test the hypothesis. He was not primarily an SF author, yet invented languages appear in many of his notably non-SF texts. Cheyne's focus on the reader reception of invented language allows for an expansion beyond the kind of fully-developed functioning languages developed by Tolkien, which are otherwise rare in literature.

Burgess might be thought of as more of a dabbler in invented literary languages than a fully-committed glossopoeiac. However, he consistently introduced elements of linguistic invention into his work throughout a lengthy career in fiction, and was even at one point commissioned to invent a language for a screenplay. Initially, however, Burgess's foray into linguistic invention with Nadsat was anomalous. The other novels he allegedly wrote during his infamous "death sentence" year do not feature any invented languages, with the exception of his other great dystopian novel, *The Wanting Seed*, which depicts a Malthusian future Britain oscillating politically between authoritarianism and excessive liberalism. As a result of the population crisis and the concomitant increased demand for food and goods, there is a shortage of paper, hence readers have to deal with phonetically truncated texts in a pre-digital era. This is illustrated in the novel when a commuter is seen reading a book entitled *Dh Wks v Wlm Shkspr* (Burgess, *The Wanting Seed* 76). This spavined reduction of a title synecdochally suggests how literature itself has been debased linguistically in the dystopia Burgess created in *The Wanting Seed*.

This is a linguistic as well as cultural diminution of quintessential literary English. It goes beyond the bowdlerisation and simplification work done by Charles and Mary Lamb, for example. Indeed, it fulfils two of Ria

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Cheyne's criteria for a created language in its sole appearance—we get phonemic information (her point 6), in that the phonemes have been replicated in truncated presentation; and we get a description of properties and features of the language (Cheyne's point 9), implicit in the minimalist quality of English intended to reduce length and hence paper.

One might cavil that an unorthodox representation of English is, nonetheless, still English and hence not an invented language. This opens up an interesting debate about the extent to which Nadsat is also English, or indeed whether James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939) is a novel written in English. If we accept that *Finnegans Wake* is Anglophone literature, despite its extensive multilingual punning lexis and elaborate morphological creativity, then obviously so is Nadsat with its dual sources of lexis and minor morphological amendments. However, neither case is an instance of orthodox use of English, and both require some intellectual exertions on the part of the reader beyond mere knowledge of English to fully comprehend them.

Bettina Beinhoff, in responding to Cheyne, notes that if we, like Cheyne, define an artificial language as “a deliberate construct designed at a particular time for a particular purpose”, then “technically any language which has been (re)constructed is a conlang” (5), or constructed language. This, therefore, applies to Burgess's reconstructed English in *The Wanting Seed*. Perhaps then, we can expand our understanding of invented literary languages to encompass the concept of invented literary dialects also. In that case, we can then account for Nadsat and Wakeese as linguistic inventions that function not as invented languages but rather as invented dialects or grammatical variants of English. Certainly, Nadsat is demonstrably an idiolect, the endpoint of dialect, in that *A Clockwork Orange* is narrated solely in his voice. In Cheyne's schema (and Beinhoff's gloss), I will argue that the many creative variants of English invented by Anthony Burgess, including Nadsat, all qualify as invented languages, or dialects thereof.

## MOCK-ELIZABETHAN

Burgess's fiction abounds in linguistic invention. Following Nadsat, Burgess's next extensive experiment occurs in *Nothing Like the Sun* (1964), which is written in an utterly convincing attempt to replicate the Elizabethan

English of Shakespeare's day. Burgess took enormous care to avoid any lexical anachronism in the text, including only one word, "spurgeon," which did not exist in Shakespeare's time as a sly tribute to Caroline Spurgeon, the Shakespearean scholar. The text is an invented language due to its form rather than lexical content, however. It attempts to execute a modern prose narrative in a form of English current four centuries previously. It is fundamentally anachronistic in this respect due to the disconnect between the lexis and the genre, and hence structurally dissimilar to actual Elizabethan prose such as might be found in prose pamphlets, like Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* (1592). Rather, it is a modern novel in structure, characterisation, and pacing, delivered through the linguistic medium of a reproduction of early Modern English.

It could be a clever fake except it does not purport to be a genuine Elizabethan (or Jacobean) narrative. Instead, it is, like Nadsat, an invented literary dialect. Writing of Walter Scott, Burgess once described such contrivedly archaic forms as "Wardour Street English," named after a street in London famed for shops selling fake antiques (Burgess, Introduction 9–10). But this does a disservice to Scott's historical novels and to Burgess's achievement in *Nothing Like the Sun*. In both instances, the inventive purpose is not to fool the reader into thinking they are reading a genuinely archaic text, but to instead generate a sense of immersive diachronic distance via language, akin to the distance generated between reader and Alex by Nadsat. *Nothing Like the Sun* is, therefore, a modernist novel written in a plausible mimicry of Elizabethan voice.

Burgess slyly acknowledges this sleight of hand to attentive readers, as his narrative is actually a nested one, located within a frame in which a lecturer in Malaya, a metafictional "Mr Burgess," is telling students in his farewell class the story of Shakespeare while becoming progressively drunker on rice spirit (*You've Had Your Time* 80). The frame is not only metafictional but implausible—who could lecture in perfect Elizabethan, after all? Furthermore, the narrative is no less lengthy than those of Conrad's Captain Charles Marlow, who purportedly tells the entirety of *Heart of Darkness* in a single evening. A sample paragraph will give a sense of how effective Burgess's mock-Elizabethan is:

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January 13th

So cold and kibey a day that I laugh in scorn of our trade that we represent midsummer, all leafy and flowery. She has kept indoors, her house all muffled up with shutters as it too feels the cold. I am sick of these sugar rhymes. I dream after dinner (a drowsy one of fat pork and a pudding) that I am ass-headed Bottom in the bower of a tiny golden Titania. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful. The mirror shows bad teeth and beard fast greying, a wormy skin. Old dad. (Burgess, *Nothing Like the Sun* 146)

The Elizabethanisms are self-evident: archaic adjectives, like “kibey,” and pronouns, like “thou,” catch the eye of modern readers due to their contemporary unusualness. Nevertheless, this is utterly unlike any prose actually written in Elizabethan times. It is 1960s English prose with an Elizabethan veneer. It has standardised spelling, and critically, a modern sensibility towards characterisation and plot. It is additionally a novel, a literary genre dating from the eighteenth century rather than the Elizabethan era. In the passage above, a diary section, the narrative voice in first person moves from descriptive mode to personal, to oneiric, then back to prosaic reality. This is not merely poignant, but also a very modern (and modernist) narratology for all the antiquated setting and language. When we recall that this diary entry is purportedly part of a larger narrative which functions in both first and third person, with at times an omniscient narrator who, in fact, transpires to be a lecturer in a nested narrative, we can even see postmodernist complexities at work.

In practice, this is also how Burgess claimed the linguistic invention came about. In a 1973 interview, he told Charles Bunting that his intention was to avoid his “mock Elizabethan” from becoming “Wardour Street English”:

What I had to do ... was to try and teach myself the language and make it sound as though people meant it. It meant for a long time I was thinking in Elizabethan, using it in shops and in the home, and looking for a means of eventually seeing how far I could sit down and write it naturally. After a long

labour I was able to do this, I think, to some extent, although it is not completely Elizabethan English; it's rather Joycean. (qtd. in Ingersolls 79)

Though the suggestion that Burgess spoke in Elizabethan locution in shops sounds extremely fanciful, it is certainly true that the (re)construction of Shakespeare's language owes a debt to James Joyce, and specifically to his linguistic experimentation in *Finnegans Wake*. Additionally, it qualifies under Cheyne's first point in her schema for invented languages, as it purports to be Elizabethan English and illustrates Beinhoff's argument that (re)constructions are also invented languages. The inventive component herein relates to adapting the reconstructed lexis to a modern genre form.

Burgess was to replicate this particular linguistic experiment for one of his final novels, *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993). Just as *Nothing Like the Sun* presents the life of Shakespeare, so does the latter novel the brief life of Christopher Marlowe, about whom Burgess had written his undergraduate thesis at the University of Manchester. A sample paragraph from Kit Marlowe's last supper scene gives a flavour of how Burgess's command of mock-Elizabethan has actually improved in the intervening decades since *Nothing Like the Sun*:

The Widow Bull herself brought in the crusted mound, her girl the trenchers and horn spoons not knives. It was, said the widow, stewed soft for them without teeth. But all had teeth and strong ones. They ate smokily, Frizer left his day-bed limping but limped not in his steady devouring. Good, he said, excellent good. Thou eatest but little, he said daringly to Kit. Thou drinkest overmuch of the wine. Eating and drinking should be nicely in equipoise. (Burgess, *A Dead Man in Deptford* 264)

The slight imbalance of tone found in *Nothing Like the Sun*, wherein he was prone to flights of sub-Shakespearean poeise in between more workaday sections is here elided. The archaisms here all function to serve the purpose of the narrative to render as (hyper)realistically as possible the life

of Christopher Marlowe. Burgess's Kit illustrates the principle espoused by Umberto Eco's *Faith in Fakes* (1973/1995) and Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981/1983), that the sufficiently developed fake can displace the real. His reconstructed Elizabethan reifies Marlowe in a manner that no sober biography ever could. Despite this, Burgess was obviously self-conscious of how effective his reprised language experiment had been, and especially whether it did serve its purpose of functioning as a fitting tribute to Marlowe.

The final paragraph of the novel sees a sudden switch in narrator. The text up until then has been narrated in the voice of "Jacke Wilson," a self-described "small actor and smaller play-botcher" and intermittent lover of Kit Marlowe. Jacke Wilson was a real Elizabethan actor, but functions also a sort of pseudonym for John Anthony Burgess Wilson. As with *Nothing Like the Sun*, Burgess has positioned himself as the narrator of an Elizabethan playwright's life from a spectator's point of view. On this occasion, though, somewhat like the unveiling of the Wizard of Oz, he shatters the illusion at the end of the novel:

Your true author speaks now, I that die these deaths, that feed this flame. I put off the ill-made disguise and, four hundred years after that death at Deptford, mourn as if it all happened yesterday. The disguise is ill-made not out of incompetence but of necessity, since the earnestness of the past, becomes the joke of the present, a once living language turned into the stiff archaism of puppets. Only the continuity of a name rides above a grumblng compromise. (Burgess, *A Dead Man in Deptford* 269)

Burgess here acknowledges the artifice of his mock-Elizabethan language even as he claims a kind of legitimacy for linking his own name to that of his namesake who worked alongside Marlowe. We are in murky though heartfelt metafictional waters here, but we can at least accept that Burgess himself viewed the Elizabethan veneer he placed over a contemporary novel to be a "grumblng compromise" between attempting, impossibly, to tell the story as the Elizabethans themselves might have, in the style perhaps

of a Nashe or Greene pamphlet, or alternatively taking the road of many other novelists (from Philip Lindsay's *One Dagger for Two* [1932] up to Allison Epstein's *A Tip for the Hangman* [2021]) by rendering the story of Marlowe in straight, contemporary English. Both *Nothing Like the Sun* and *A Dead Man in Deptford*, therefore, are examples of invented dialects, functioning as a kind of diachronous ventriloquism, impossibly channelling the language of Elizabethan England into the modern(ist) novel form.

ENDERBY'S STRINE

Burgess's second volume of the *Enderby* tetralogy features an extended sequence involving a much more overt invented slang. *Enderby Outside* was first published in 1968 as a sequel to his 1963 volume, *Inside Mr Enderby*, which featured the eponymous poet-recluse F. X. Enderby. On the run and suspected of murder, Enderby washes up in Morocco, where he encounters one Easy Walker, a man with an "accent and vernacular" described as "a sort of British colonial English" (Burgess, *Enderby Outside* 117). Walker, whose name may have been inspired by the release of an album of that title by jazz saxophonist Stanley Turrentine in 1966, later admits to being from "West Rothgar in New Sunderland. Fifty or so miles from the capital, boojie little rathole" (Burgess, *Enderby Outside* 118). There is no such place as New Sunderland, so Burgess herein invented not only slang but geography (Rothgar perhaps references the Danish king in *Beowulf*). Nevertheless, much of Walker's vernacular suggests a significant stratum of Strine, the accented demotic language of working-class Australia in the 60s.

Walker, who travels for a period with Enderby, speaks exclusively in a heavy and highly idiosyncratic slang, some of which is Strine, and some of which appears to derive from one of Burgess's favourite sources, Eric Partridge's dictionary of slang. "Strine" first achieved prominence as a cultural object in the mid-1960s, and Burgess may have been exposed to the work of Alistair Morrison, who wrote a series of humorous books on the topic. Douglas Milton's analysis of Easy Walker's slang remains to date the most extensive examination and offers extensive plausible explanations and definitions for most of Easy's utterances. As Milton explains: "Some of the idioms—as earthy and colourful as anything in Burgess—are true examples of Australian

or Strine, while others may be derived from Eric Partridge's *Slang Dictionary* ... but the majority would seem to be the delightful inventions of the man himself ... Burgess reviewed a dictionary of Australian slang round about the same time as he was working on *Enderby Outside*."

Nevertheless, some items of Walker's slang remain without etymology or even explanation, and Burgess may have extrapolated beyond Strine and Partridge to invent some items, just as he expanded beyond the confines of Russian and Partridge in the generation of Nadsat (Vincent and Clarke 255). Easy Walker's language functions much like Alex's Nadsat does, in that it is a superstructure of unusual words and phrases draped over a conventional English grammatical structure. As with Nadsat, it features creative morphology, humour, punning, and a range of other inventive forms, but it lacks the distinctive alienating quality of Nadsat, which was achieved by the superimposition of Russified lexis. Rather, Easy Walker's slang is a strongly opaque allusive form of English, drawing upon Strine and Partridge for some of its qualities while other components, though their broad gist may be discernible from the context, are the product of Burgess's linguistic creativity.

Terms like "sprids" or "jalooty" evaded Milton's attempts to uncover their etymological origins, and it is, therefore, highly speculative to suggest that "sprids" may derive from the Irish "sprid," meaning spirit, or that "jalooty" might be a typographical error for "jabooty," a homonym for Djibouti, and hence a very attenuated reference to the origins of the character Abu, who the term describes. Most of Easy's slang is identifiable either from Strine directly or else from some variant or other of rhyming slang. Easy speaks his own idiolect, in other words, and despite language existing primarily as a means of communication, he lacks the kind of droogs Alex possesses with whom he can engage in his anti-language. The opacity of Easy's slang, therefore, serves to isolate him from society rather than to bond him to others in opposition to it. This fact is not lost on the occasionally perceptive Enderby, who identifies it as "a home-stitched patchwork of patois" (Burgess, *Enderby Outside* 195). This patois, however, is constructed like Nadsat, as a combination of allusive components superimposed on a broadly English grammatical structure.

The early 1970s were somewhat of a golden era for Burgess in terms of language invention. Burgess's fiction began to transcend the novel as genre or form, and migrates beyond created dialects of English. In 1971, following a couple of years digesting the anthropological research of Claude Lévi-Strauss (Clarke, "Anthony Burgess's Structuralist Turn" 107–108), Burgess released one of his most curious and for many people perplexing novels, *MF*. As Clarke notes, "*MF*, despite its misleading brevity, is probably Burgess's most carefully considered work prior to the publication of *Earthly Powers*" (*The Aesthetics of Anthony Burgess* 132). Burgess's inspiration arose from a suggestion by the actor and producer, William Conrad, that someone should update the Oedipus myth (Burgess, *You've Had Your Time* 208). The conflation of myths as well as the structuralist form of the novel suggest that Lévi-Strauss was a major influence.

Both Lévi-Strauss's work and Sophocles' drama are interested in the unfolding of riddles and prophecies in the lived experiences of their subjects and audiences. Likewise, *MF* is predicated on the practice of riddles, and the reader is challenged throughout to puzzling out their meanings. Ultimately, it transpires that this is Burgess's point—his conclusion in *MF* is that meaning is inescapable. There can be no arbitrary relationship between cause and effect, nor between event and interpretation. One of the layers of riddles to be solved by *MF*'s readership is its stratum of invented language. Much of the novel is set on the fictional Caribbean island of Castita, and Burgess offers examples of the Castitan language in terms of fragmentary phrases and placenames. Castitan allegedly "derived from the Romance dialect spoken by the first settlers, who themselves had gone to settle on the Cantabrian coast from some nameless place in the Mediterranean" (*MF* 63). This renders a familiarity to many of the given fragments of Castitan while maintaining an unsettling alien quality. Castitan appears to be cognate with Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese, and may even be recognised by speakers of these languages, yet is clearly not any of them.

For example, the Castitan word for "festival" is "fista," clearly cognate not only with the Portuguese "festa" and Spanish "fiesta" but also with the English word. We see similar broad familiarities with other terms,

such as “senta” for “saint.” Toponyms, however, seem more unfamiliar due to the vowel choices in terms like “Strèta Rijal” (Royal or Regal Street) or “Dwumu” (Duomo, or cathedral). By the time we encounter the phrase “Todij cwéjstijonij” (“all the questions”), even readers familiar with Romance languages may find this occupying the limits of their frame of reference due to its unfamiliar orthography, even though its pronunciation does not deviate severely from Latinate linguistic norms.

*MF*'s earliest critics extrapolated from Castita's similarities to Burgess's home at the time of writing the novel, Malta, and made the reasonable assumption that Castitan's unorthodox spelling was somehow related to Maltese. But the Maltese language is primarily derived from Arabic, despite its Latin alphabet. Eventually, the Maltese scholar Arnold Cassola identified Burgess's key inspiration in creating Castitan. As Cassola explained, “[t]he Castitan language is more closely related to the Italian language and to its Sicilian variants rather than to Maltese” (“Anthony Burgess's *MF*” 29). Drawing on Malta's close cultural relationship with its nearest neighbour, Burgess based Castitan on Sicilian. Cassola even quantified the extent of the Sicilian influence upon Castitan in a glossary (“*MF*: a glossary”). However, this does not mean that Castitan is disqualified as an invented language, any more than we would think to disqualify Nadsat due to the prominence of Russian lexis in its construction. Castitan is the language of Castita, inherently woven physically (via placenames) and culturally into the fabric of the island. And as Cassola and others have noted, Castita also bears a series of parallels with Malta, where Burgess lived while writing the novel. As Cassola explains, “[t]he island of Castita, with its language and customs, would not have been what it actually is in *MF* without the Siculo-Maltese influence” (“Anthony Burgess's *MF*” 31).

Burgess's Castitan, therefore, functions as another riddle in a book which is built upon the concept of riddling. It is not quite Sicilian, just as Castita is not quite Malta and not quite in the Caribbean (its given geolocation, in reality, is open water). *MF* borrows from Sophocles, Anglo-Saxon kennings and structuralism to make a cunningly simple point: nothing is arbitrary. Whether destined, or structured, or simply cleverly euphemised, patterns pervade everywhere, and in particular in art and language. It is the relocation

of Sicilian lexis to the Caribbean, and specifically to a fictional Malta relocated to the Caribbean, which renders Castitan an invented language.

PALEOLINGUISTICS

Burgess's interest in the Oedipus myth progressed further in 1972, when he was commissioned to produce a new translation of *Oedipus Tyrannos* by Sophocles for the Tyrone Guthrie theatre in Minneapolis. It is unsurprising to discover that he incorporated an invented language into his translation. Much of the singing and chanting in the play is conducted in what was referred to by Burgess and the production staff as "Indo-European," a paleolinguistic attempt to dig deep beyond even the roots of European literature represented by Sophocles. The International Anthony Burgess Foundation in Manchester preserves a file on the project which includes "an etymological dictionary," possibly not compiled by Burgess himself, and "draft lyrics for a sacrificial chant in reconstructed Indo-European" (Burgess, *Oedipus the King*, International Anthony Burgess Foundation Archives), though on Burgess's order these chants were not included in published versions of his translation.

According to Burgess's autobiography, *You've Had Your Time*, the idea to do this was that of the Guthrie's artistic director, Michael Langham:

Langham wanted the chorus to sing, not just recite, and had the idea of their singing in a language very remote, to suggest the antiquity of the legend. The remotest language possible was Indo-European (which Langham's typist rendered as "Indoor European"), and this meant dragging out of the more scholarly etymological dictionaries those hypothetical roots marked with an asterisk. (Burgess, *You've Had Your Time* 276)

Despite the clear intent to evoke a lost and hypothetical (hence invented) language, we may argue that these chants do not amount to an invented language at all. It is not possible to derive any semantic meaning from them. However, this experimentation was the basis for Burgess's later paleolinguistic creativity in relation to recreating Proto-Indo-European for Jean-Jacques Annaud's film, *Quest for Fire*.

## BEYOND NADSAT

### ITALISH AND ANGLIANO

Later in the 70s, Burgess became mildly obsessed with a local literary figure whose statue stood (and still stands) within a few hundred yards of his former home in Trastevere, Rome. The nineteenth-century sonneteer, Giuseppe Belli, is a marginal literary figure, but a curious one. By day a censor for the Vatican, involved in the banning of books, by night he wrote excoriating and often inflammatory sonnets in Romanesco, the street dialect of Rome.

Burgess was neither the first nor the last to translate Belli's work, though there are more than 3,000 extant sonnets in total, many on Biblical themes. Belli's sonnets have been translated into a range of Anglophone dialects, including Tyke (Yorkshire), Strine, and Mid-Ulster Hiberno-English (Clarke, "Dialect to Dialect Translation" 180–181). However, a volume of sonnets translated from nineteenth-century Roman dialect into twentieth-century Mancunian was not a viable publishing project for Burgess, so he prefaced the sonnets with a novella, entitled *ABBA ABBA*, which featured a fictional encounter between Belli and the English Romantic poet, John Keats, in the year of the latter's death.

From an invented language perspective, the sheer proliferation of dialect on display in such a short piece of writing is astounding. Belli's Romanesco poetry is present, as is Burgess's Mancunian translation thereof, though these are organic and not invented dialects. But as Arnold Cassola notes, the text is brimful of other forms of dialectal language, including Scots, French dialects and hybrids, and also what Cassola calls "Italish" and "Angliano"—two hybrid variants of English and Italian conflation which bear structural similarities to the Anglo-Russian of Nadsat ("The Role of Dialects" 220). For Cassola, "Burgess's viewpoint is clear: real, fictitious and semi-fictitious languages and dialects are to be considered on the same footing, and deserve the same degree of dignity" (222). The brief text of *ABBA ABBA*, in fact, teems with forms of language, only two of which are invented creoles based on Italian-English hybridity.

By the late 70s, Burgess had received a series of TV biblical commissions to write scripts for adaptations of firstly the Moses story and later the New Testament. In each case, he repurposed his research and writing for these various televisual commissions into novels, hence his work on *Jesus of Nazareth* was transformed into the novel *Man of Nazareth*, which is notably different to the screenplay and presumably closer to Burgess's own conception of Jesus.

There is an inevitable process of translation and interpretation, complicated in no small measure by theological and doctrinal concerns, when attempting to render an interpretation of the Bible. Indeed, the mere act of comprehending it led to the development of exegesis, the discipline which underpins literary criticism and a number of other critical hermeneutics. The Bible is a heterogenous set of works written over a lengthy period of time by many authors and in a range of ancient languages. There have been attempts, such as Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), to adapt Biblical narratives in the languages of the Biblical era. However, the process initiated by the Septuagint in the third century CE, of rendering the Bible into the contemporary language of believers (and by extension non-believers also) is much more common. *Jesus of Nazareth* was the Gospel stories transposed into the language of global television—English. Burgess, however, aspired to retain a slight flavour of the original in his own work.

The archives of the International Anthony Burgess Foundation contain documents which Burgess prepared for his work on *Man of Nazareth*, which feature an as yet unpublished invented language, a kind of fusion of English, Arabic, and Hebrew, again not structurally dissimilar to how Nadsat features Russian grafted onto English. Only three paragraphs from chapter one survive, beginning:

“Not thee, yeled,” they yelled. “We who have been catching samaki are going to be catching raguls now, and thou art a catcher only of evil-reek-ing smoke or aschan in the ria or lungs, and none of this, yedid, is for thee.” (Burgess, Fragment of *Man of Nazareth*)

This functions in terms of reader comprehension in the same way that Nadsat is rendered comprehensible to readers on first encounter. Terms are

embedded in contexts which suggest their meaning (e.g. “yeled,” meaning “boy” in Hebrew, as a dismissive form of address) or else are cleverly glossed by the speaker for the addressee, and by extension the reader, as with “aschan” defined as smoke, and “ria” as lungs. “Yedid,” meaning beloved, is obviously intended sarcastically. “Samaki,” an Arabic word meaning “fish,” and “raguls,” Arabic for men, are not immediately obvious, but as with *A Clockwork Orange*, one assumes Burgess intended for their meaning to become apparent through repetition and context. In any case, the meaning here is to evoke the line attributed to Jesus in Mark’s gospel (1:17): “Come, follow Me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

We find “Yeled” again in the sequel novel, *Kingdom of the Wicked*, which is broadly based on the Acts of the Apostles, and which derived from the work Burgess did on the script for *AD* in 1985, the sequel television series to *Jesus of Nazareth*. In a brief interlude between two servants discussing John the Baptist, Burgess depicts one who macaronically blends Hebrew and Arabic with Greek (English standing in for Greek in Burgess’s text). In lieu of excavating the actual Aramaic terms for these words, Burgess uses the related Semitic languages of Hebrew and Arabic somewhat interchangeably, as he did in his early drafts for *Man of Nazareth*. As he carefully embedded them just like Nadsat terms in *A Clockwork Orange* so that their meanings are discernible, it seems that Burgess was inclined to use Semitic terms with which he was already familiar, rather than seek to depict actual first century Aramaic. Here is the passage from *Kingdom of the Wicked*:

“The man that was supposed to have his rosch cut off.” She had the habit of mixing her nurse’s Aramaic into her Greek. “The one who used to catch dagim and then preached, the one with the white sakan,” stroking her pretty smooth chin.

“Speak plainly, child.” Her father was up on his elbow, looking at her fiercely.

“Well, they were all talking about it in the schuk, so old Miriam said, they knew the old yeled whose rosch was really cut off, some of them saw it after it was done, the rosch I mean, and said that’s old whatsisname. And the other one, he got away, and he’s alive in somebody’s cellar, there was a naarah

who saw him, she thought it was his ghost at first but it wasn't. There's been a bit of trickery, old Miriam said, and it's a king's job not to be tricked, she said. That's what I heard in the kitchen," Bernice said. (194)

In this section, "Rosh" or "rosch" is Hebrew for "head," "dagim" are "fish" in the sense of food, "sakan" is Arabic for "house," "schuk" or "souk" is Arabic for "market," while "naarah" is Hebrew for "girl." There is no attempt, as in Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, to reproduce the Aramaic of two millennia ago. Nor does Burgess attempt to repurpose the still extant Eastern Aramaic dialects for use. Instead, in both Biblical novel adaptations, he uses a combination of the two most prominent Semitic languages, Arabic and Hebrew, to give a linguistic flavour of the era, albeit one which is no more authentic than the English spoken by Robert Powell in Burgess's telescript. Burgess's biblical rewrite thus is a macaronic invented language, based on elements of Semitic organic languages, intended to suggest Biblical era Aramaic, just as the mock-Elizabethan aims to evoke sixteenth-century England in *Nothing Like the Sun*.

#### ORWELL AND THE WORKERS

In 1978, Burgess published a tribute to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, entitled *1985*. This rather odd book is made up of a number of sections, including a dialogue between two aspects of Burgess himself. One section is a novella, an attempt by Burgess to update Orwell's dystopian vision to the 1970s. In it, Britain becomes Tucland, a failing state dominated by union leaders and the infiltration of Arab money. It is, therefore, very much the vision of an expatriate who had not lived in Britain for some time and was reliant upon newspaper reports for his perspective on the nation.

In this Burgessian version of Orwell's dystopia, we find a revisioning of Alex and his gang of droogs. Here, however, they are positive agents of subversive change rather than violent agents of chaos. Implausibly, they arrange underground classes in Latin to keep culture and education alive as civilisation collapses. Perhaps as a nod to the increasingly multicultural nature of 1970s Britain, Burgess calls them Kumina gangs, "kumi na" being

the Swahili equivalent to the English suffix “teen,” just as Nadsat is in Russian. These gangs speak in an in-group anti-language, using a macaronic mix of English and Arabic:

The kumina leader, black with an Aryan profile, pulled out a pack of Savuke Finns and said: “You want a cank?”

“Thanks, but I had to give it up.”

“You out of a job? Union mashaki? You antistate?”

“Yes yes yes.” (Burgess, 1985 133)

It has been suggested elsewhere that this slang was perhaps based on Hindi, but if “mashak,” the Hindi for “leather waterskin” or “mosquito,” was intended, this makes little obvious sense. Alternatively, the word more likely signifies the Arabic for furious—سكاشم, which is in keeping with the plot of the novel, which features an attempted Arabic Islamic overthrow of Britain. In a text purporting to be a reaction to Orwell’s dystopia, Burgess could not resist introducing a linguistic invention in response to Orwell’s famous invention of Newspeak.

In an appendix to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, entitled “The Principles of Newspeak,” Orwell explains the nature and purpose of his futuristic language. Newspeak is not merely “the official language of Oceania,” sitting alongside current English (known as “Oldspeak”) until it can replace it. It is a consciously invented language which “had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism” (Orwell 241).

Orwell’s linguistic vision for Airstrip One was based partly on the development of “Basic” English in the 1930s, a simplified version of English with a vocabulary of only 850 words. In 1930, C. K. Ogden had proposed Basic English as a global lingua franca, a project that surprisingly received strong support from Winston Churchill. But *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also draws upon ideas of linguistic relativity, especially the concept underpinning the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, that language can shape thought. The atomic physicist, Niels Bohr, once stated that “[w]e are suspended in language” (qtd. in Hayles 52), and the ideas of Benjamin Whorf, which derived in part from his teacher Edward Sapir, are an extension of Bohr’s conceit that we cannot psychologically or semantically escape the medium in which

we formulate our own thoughts. Orwell's dystopia attempts to circumscribe language in order to circumscribe what may or may not be thought.

As he writes, the purpose of Newspeak "was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that, when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought—that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc—should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words" (Orwell 241).

In Burgess's dystopia by contrast, the oppressors are syndicalised unions rather than a totalitarian government, and Burgess opted for a class-based satirical language. "Worker's English," he tells us, "represents the rationalization of a general pattern of proletarian language" which was later "made compulsory as a subject and as a medium of instruction in State schools," and was based upon "the urban workers' speech of the Home Counties, with a few additions from the industrial Midlands and North-West" (Burgess, 1985 221). Burgess hereby aggrandises what is a satirical reverse of RP (received pronunciation) snobbery in class terms by grafting it to a satire of the process by which academics and state agents seek to paternalistically guide civilisational development. WE is supposedly "a rational kind of language, in which grammar should be simplified to the maximum and vocabulary should achieve the limitations appropriate to a non-humanistic highly industrialised society" (Burgess, 1985 221). It is denied that this is "part of a political programme" and instead is defended as "a social achievement with no political bias, with the two philologists concerned activated by a scientific desire for the reduction of entities and only secondary ambitions in the fields of class domination and pedagogic economy" (Burgess, 1985 221).

That final clause gives the game away. This is linguistics as class warfare. Burgess distinguishes this from the then nascent, now much more prevalent trend towards degendering pronouns in English by noting that "an attempt, in early pedagogic experiments with WE, to replace she and her with the invariable Lancashire oo (from Anglo-Saxon heo) was greeted, even in Lancashire industrial towns, with strong resistance" (Burgess, 1985 223). WE is not about correcting oppression in general; though it may pay token

tribute, it is neither feminist nor PC. It is a comic aggrandising of demotic working-class urban English, the tongue of Burgess's own youth.

WE is also scathingly anti-intellectual, no less so than Orwell's Newspeak: "WE is not concerned with the abstractions of philosophy or even science, though, for rhetorical purposes, an arbitrary sub-lexis of polysyllables of Latin or even Greek origin is available, whose lexicographical definition is regarded as otiose" (Burgess, *1985* 224–225). Burgess's WE is the institutionalisation of a form of debased demotic English, prone to statements of the obvious and mostly lacking in the facility to express abstract thinking. It is a highly dismissive perspective on the British working class, but by the time Burgess invented WE, he had long ceased to be part of that demographic himself.

For such a slight novella, *1985* is replete with a range of spoken and written Englishes, all of which reiterate Burgess's thesis that society is dumbing down, with the possible exception of his curious droog-students and their Arabic-inflected invented slang. Burgess often used dialect and accent as a shorthand for character differentiation in his fiction, such as the dubiously exaggerated Scots spoken by Bev's fellow prisoner on the train to Sussex: "Sae, ye dullyeart horse-punckin, ye'd hae it that the Laird's worrrd is kilted in a tippit?" he asks, implausibly, later adding "Ach, yon thieveless sook-the-blood. Ye scaut-heid reid-eeen'd knedneuch mawkin'-flee" (Burgess, *1985* 155).

More caustically, Bev's underage daughter Bessie, who is addicted to soft pornographic TV shows, watches "Spiro and Spero" (Latin for "I breathe" and "I hope" respectively), who transpire to be "a pair of cartoon dolphins who spoke English on the Chinese model: You Say He Not Come I Know He Come I Know He Come Soon" (Burgess, *1985* 111). Later, she sends him a postcard from the city of Ghadan (Arabic for "tomorrow"), where she has become part of the harem of an Arab sheikh, which reads "der dad i am alrit ere tely very gud i am ok luv besi" (Burgess, *1985* 216).

As in *A Clockwork Orange*, the prominence of one invented language operates to mask what is actually a rich and inventive linguistic topography. Whereas *A Clockwork Orange* featured three registers of English, as well as three different forms of teen slang, *1985* more perfunctorily features a range of linguistic creativity which seems either jaundiced, ill-considered, or simply intellectually derivative of his own work or Orwell's. By Cheyne's schema for

invented languages, both WE and the Kumina slang qualify. The degraded forms of English found in Bessie's poignant letter and the TV dolphin cartoon, though orthographically and grammatically distanced from standard English in creative ways, are, however, intended to convey the degradation of society and do not function as linguistic invention *per se*.

PALEOLINGUISTICS AND PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN

Burgess's most substantial foray into invented languages was, curiously, not created for a novel. Intended as a (re)creation of Proto-Indo-European, Ulam is a simplistic language with a slender grammar and limited lexis of terms, containing around 160 words in total, according to Andrew Biswell. In this sense, it can be considered as a more fully realised development of the chanting which Burgess had appended to his version of *Oedipus*.

Ulam was created for Jean-Jacques Annaud's 1981 movie adaptation of J.-H. Rosny's 1911 novel *La Guerre du Feu*. Annaud's 1981 film, entitled *Quest for Fire*, required its Paleolithic protagonists to act and speak like the first Europeans who occupied the continent some 80 millennia ago. Working in conjunction with Annaud, and with the zoologist Desmond Morris (the final version of Burgess's Ulam dictionary includes Morris's proposed accompanying gestures), Burgess was charged with generating their language. His preparatory papers are archived at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation.

In an interview with *Starlog* magazine, Annaud explained that

[w]e always wanted to create a new language for the film. But a friend at Fox suggested that we might as well go all the way and have one concocted that was as historically valid as possible. We went to Anthony Burgess. He's a linguist. He speaks 13 languages. Right about that time, we thought of coupling Burgess's work with that of Desmond Morris. We wanted our movie to be as authentic as possible. Since the film is fiction, however, we asked these two great minds to improvise for us. (qtd. in Naha 28)

Improvise they did. Burgess in particular, despite his stated reliance on etymological dictionaries, had to speculate not only what concepts would have been cognitively available to Paleolithic man, but also how they might organise those concepts and then depict them in oral form.

This was obviously a far from straightforward task. It is hypothetically possible to run the kind of linguistic changes over time described by the Grimm brothers and others in reverse, in order to approximate languages, which we know must have existed but for which we have no written examples. The more recent the language, the more accurate this process can be. But as with all forms of archeological research, and this is a form of linguistic archeology, it is subject to a certain amount of guesswork. For Burgess, reaching back to the very dawn of man's existence in Europe, the guesswork had to predominate. Ulam, thus, is very much an act of creativity and invention.

Burgess was a philologist by training but not a professional linguist. "His method was based on the traditional comparative philology he had been taught as a student" suggests Biswell. Burgess initially researched "some of the books he had studied as an undergraduate student at Manchester University in the 1930s. He relied quite heavily on the account of the evolution of Indo-European languages given by Otto Jespersen in his book *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, published in Leipzig in 1930" (Biswell). Burgess's understanding of Proto-Indo-European and how it might be reconstructed was, therefore, informed by very outdated research.

More contemporary research in the field of paleolinguistics is somewhat divided. Advocates of the process, such as Don Ringe, accept that paleolinguistics may be somewhat speculative at times, but insist that it is possible to peer back towards the origins of Indo-European languages. By contrast, critics of long-range historical linguistics question the underlying hypotheses of linguistic paleontology. Some critics, such as Mallory, argue that both the cases for and against paleolinguistics as a discipline or methodology are overstated.

Burgess sought to draw upon "Indian, Armenian, Hellenic, Albanian, Italic, Balto-Slavic, Celtic and Germanic languages" to reconstruct Proto-Indo-European, paying "special attention to Sanskrit" (Biswell). However, Proto-Indo-European did not exist in Europe at the time in which the movie (or indeed Rosny's novel) is set. It is a much later arrival, perhaps as recent

as 6,000 years ago, and the inhabitants of Europe previously would more plausibly have spoken some early Afro-Asiatic language, perhaps a proto-ancestor of Arabic or Hebrew. Even more likely is that whatever rudimentary language existed among Cro-Magnon man in Europe at the time has not directly led to today's tongues, given the process of language death, the multiple waves of human immigration from Africa to Europe, and the lengthy timeframes involved.

It does not assist Burgess's case that, in a media article, he mistakenly identified the film as taking place some half a million years ago ("Creating a Language for Primitive Man" 102), a time when hominids in Europe were not Cro-Magnon man, i.e. modern humans, but restricted to *homo erectus* and *homo heidelbergensis*. Later in the article, he locates the piece as taking place 80 millennia back.

Burgess has also acknowledged that some of his decisions, such as the choice to use "atr-" as the root form for "fire," were utterly arbitrary. Additionally, the "Ulam" language is almost entirely made up of nouns, and these nouns themselves compound, often in metaphoric or imagistic ways, to generate other nouns. "Dondr," meaning "tree," multiplies to become "dondr-dondr" or "forest," which in turn compounds with "tir," meaning "animal," to generate "tir dondr-dondr," meaning "stag." It is literally a forest animal, and metaphorically an animal with a forest of trees, or antlers, on its head. Burgess explained this feature to *Starlog*: "primitive language was what we call agglutinative: it was gluey. Words were glued together in a long stream" (qtd. in Naha 28).

Ulam is a cunningly constructed yet rudimentary form of communication, not designed to facilitate abstract communication, and this was intentional: "There will be no metaphysical discussions or theological wrangles: we are right at the beginning of human society with no agriculture and hence no astronomy and hence no gods, with a fear of the dark and a great awe at the mystery of fire," explained Burgess ("Creating a Language for Primitive Man" 102). In the movie, it is primarily an observational, declamatory language, used to communicate simple concepts. It also relies heavily on suffixes to convey specialisations, distinctions, and even relationships between concepts, and again this was deliberate.

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Taking into account the choice of pursuing a form of Proto-Indo-European, the decision to agglutinate via suffixes, the somewhat arbitrary choice of word root forms, and the open admission of the director that the process was both creative and collaborative, we must acknowledge Ulam as one of Burgess's most inventive created languages. It is also the closest Burgess ever came to a Tolkienian, fully developed invented language.

## MACARONIC MUGGERS

Anthony Burgess's curious compendium novel, *The End of the World News*, was published in 1982, though most of its contents had originated in some form during the late 1970s. A tripartite narrative, it features the story of the dying Sigmund Freud, alongside a musical version of Leon Trotsky's visit to New York. This is glued together via a frame narrative depicting a disaster movie scenario in which an asteroid is set to collide with Earth. All three were developed separately for TV and cinema projects which did not ultimately come to fruition and Burgess salvaged them for *The End of the World News*. Recently, Paul Wake has untangled the *Puma* SF narrative from the other material, and it has since been published as Burgess's lost third SF novel as part of the Irwell Series of Burgess's works.

Despite the presence of a science fictional frame narrative, there is only a single brief paragraph of an invented language, which seems to reprise once more the Hebrew hybrid slang he had intended for *Man of Nazareth*, adding to it elements from other projects which had occupied him during the 1970s. Here is the passage in full: "Underprivileged Teutprot youth picked quarrels with privileged blacks and browns and blackbrowns, jeering and provoking in their underprivileged argot: 'A sniff in the kortevar, that what you crying for, yeled? A prert up the cull, a prang on the dumpendebat?'" (Burgess, *The End of the World News* 58). "Dumpendebat" derives from the hymn "Stabat Mater," and means "while it/he was hanging," but had accrued the slang meaning of "penis" during the Middle Ages, and is an unlikely term of use among the disaffected youth of the near future, though it also appears in *ABBA ABBA*. Burgess was ever imaginative in the slangs he attributed to youth gangs. His perennial favourite "Yeled," the word for boy in Hebrew, replaces droog here. Kortevar is Danish for "short-term" or "short-lived," and

“cull” likely derives from the French “cul” which has a vulgar street usage. “Prert,” though unidentified, suggests some sort of assault in this context.

Burgess clearly relished the enrichment that macaronics or code-switching offer in the creation of invented slangs, and while it is unlikely that such diverse and obscure components would ever organically come together in any “underprivileged” youth dialect, no matter how multicultural, he painstakingly placed these elements within a tight syntax and context to aid comprehension by the reader. As in *A Clockwork Orange*, these exotic lexical imports are legitimised by both the sheer otherness of this alien and debased underclass, and by the underlying standard English structure upon which the vocabulary is suspended.

Burgess acknowledged the implausibility of this lineage of educated teen yobs. In a review of Kenneth Hudson’s *The Language of the Teenage Revolution*, he noted that “[a] major characteristic of our young is their rejection of literature. Their vocabulary is not fed by the past, which has no meaning for them” (Burgess, “Codes of Youth” 26). Burgess reiterated this opinion in the 1987 BBC documentary *Burgess at 70*. In his review of Hudson’s book, he went on to state, following Halliday, that “[t]he language of the young is really an ‘anti-language’—defined as ‘the special language of people who choose to be outside society.’ It is, if you like, a secret code, and its users are always aware of the attempts of the established world outside to break the code” (Burgess, “Codes of Youth” 26). All of Burgess’s teen “codes” are in fact invented anti-languages, and all, from Nadsat onwards, are created primarily through macaronic creolising of existing organic languages in exotic combinations with English, often involving creative morphology.

#### NAZI NEWSPEAK

With the exception of the reprise of Burgess’s mock-Aramaic in *Kingdom of the Wicked*, and of the mock-Elizabethan language of *Nothing Like the Sun* in *A Dead Man in Deptford*, Burgess’s later years did not feature the plethora of language invention which he had indulged during the 1970s in particular. However, in 1980, his own masterpiece, the epic *Earthly Powers*, which he had been writing for nearly a decade, was finally published. The story of the twentieth century as seen through the eyes of an ageing gay writer,

Kenneth Toomey, *Earthly Powers* is widely considered to be Burgess's finest and most substantial fiction.

Midway through its lengthy narrative, Toomey goes to Nazi Germany to meet with Jakob Strehler, the winner of the 1935 Nobel Prize for literature. However, *Earthly Powers* is a kind of alternative history, and Toomey recollects its events from his dotage and hence is an unreliable narrator. In reality, no such prize was awarded in 1935, and Strehler is entirely fictional (no less so than Toomey) in a narrative otherwise jammed with depictions of real-life people and events, and especially writers. Strehler allegedly won the Nobel for a novel called *Vaterdag*, or "Father's Day," in which "the language of the narrator is full of rare slang and Slav loanwords and neologisms" (Burgess, *Earthly Powers* 265), very like *A Clockwork Orange's* Nadsat. In August 1939, the same month as the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Toomey pleads with Strehler to return with him to safety.

However, Strehler wishes to finish the project he is currently working on first. This is a translation of a poem "of about a thousand lines, Latin hexameters, the title *Vindobona*" (Burgess, *Earthly Powers* 418), which Strehler tells us is Latin for Vienna. The poem is by "a Latin author called Frambosius" (meaning raspberry), who according to Strehler is a pseudonym for "Wilhelm Fahirof of Klagenfurt," who died in 1427 (Burgess, *Earthly Powers* 418). The obscure medieval poem (which, like Frambosius, Strehler, and Toomey, does not actually exist) transpires to be "a remarkable prophecy" in which human-sized rats flood into Austria from the North and occupy it. "Their flag is of four legs stylized on a black ground," says Strehler. "Those who will grow whiskers and glue on long tails and walk like beasts are accepted into the community of rats. The king rat is called Adolphus" (Burgess, *Earthly Powers* 418).

Strehler has 100 lines yet to translate. He is at a place in the poem where the "king rat Adolphus is enforcing the teaching of the rat language in human schools." Strehler, or Toomey, or Burgess does not give us an example of the rat language because he, or he, or he does not need to. We are informed solely that "[i]t has a very limited vocabulary" (Burgess, *Earthly Powers* 419).

Burgess's final foray into the world of invented languages, apart from his swansong with mock-Elizabethan, is in some ways the most audacious despite

not actually involving the work of inventing a language himself. Instead he co-opted perhaps the most famous invented literary language of them all, Orwell's Newspeak, and blew a raspberry at the Nazis by way of an imaginary author, a non-existent Nobel Prize-winner, and a phantom Medieval poet. That we are given no examples of it does not matter. Its mere evocation and description qualify it as an invented literary language by Cheyne's and Beinhoff's criteria, as in various ways, do all of Burgess's invented dialects and languages mentioned.

What is notable about Burgess's fiction, with the exception of the SF novels, *A Clockwork Orange* and *Puma (The End of the World News)*, is that they are not fantastikal. These are primarily realist novels written in a late modernist manner. Nevertheless, by reference to the reader (or, in the case of *Quest for Fire*, audience) response methodology for identifying invented languages introduced by Cheyne for application to SF fiction, we can identify a range of linguistic invention in Burgess's fiction. The boundaries of fantastika in general are acknowledged to be porous, but are not commonly extended to historical fiction, such as Burgess's Bible-based and mock-Elizabethan novels, nor to the more realist mode Burgess utilised in novels like *Enderby Outside*, *MF*, *ABBA ABBA*, or *Earthly Powers*. We can, therefore, conclude that Cheyne's schema, and Beinhoff's gloss may be equally applied beyond the confines of SF to non-fantastikal genres of fiction.

Furthermore, Burgess's prolific and wide-ranging fiction output allows for a potential expansion of what we might consider as art languages beyond the Cheyne-Beinhoff schema. While many of Burgess's linguistic inventions are macaronic dialects constructed from exotic graftings onto English grammarology, many others are not. Burgess's range of linguistic invention extends almost as far as Tolkienian or Conlang totality, as in the case of Ulam, while his careful (re)construction of mock-Elizabethan in two novels functions as an intervention of invented language into the historical novel genre. Therein he evades both the "Wardour Street" archaisms of Scott or the anachronistic approach of most historical novelists, by transposing one era's language into another era's literary mode, thereby extending invented language from being simply a linguistic medium into a (post)modernist strategy in itself.

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# The Cyclical Nature of History,

according to Anthony Burgess in the Light of the Augustinian–Pelagian Dichotomy of *The Wanting Seed*

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*The interpretation of time has been a challenge to philosophers, writers, and common people alike since the dawn of mankind, more precisely, since the appearance of ancient, natural religions. This paper, after giving an overview of the various responses in the history of philosophy to the challenge of the concept of time since Augustine and Averroës, analyses the circular notion of history expounded in Anthony Burgess's 1962 novel, *The Wanting Seed*. Linear time, the roots of which are found in both Antiquity and Judeo-Christian religious texts such as the Bible, is mainly the prerogative of "modern man," whilst circularity is more engraved in the (sub)conscious of natural religions, "primitive societies," as Mircea Eliade calls them. In Burgess's book the protagonist, a fictive teacher describes a view of history in cycles that change according to the anthropological aspects of the dominant ideology. The holders of power may either view their citizens optimistically as essentially good-willing and obedient, or through the lenses of Augustinian pessimism. The novel demonstrates through quick changes in the approaches of the governing groups how the lives of individuals are influenced by such changes, while the paper investigates how human freedom is impacted through a cyclical, hence deterministic view of history. The paper examines the central question whether the circular, paradoxical historical pattern described in *The Wanting Seed*, which deletes most opportunities for human freedom, free will and progress, can be called history at all.*

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There are two basic metaphors we use when we want to describe the passage of time: we either speak of it as linear, the present constantly moving toward the future and fading into the past; or circular as we experience it in the recurrence of the cycles of nature, such as the seasons. Accordingly, human history can either be seen as linear or cyclical. Mircea Eliade (1907–1986) in *The Myth of the Eternal Return* emphasised that the cyclical notion of time is the more archaic one, and rituals enacting such circularities as the mythical beginnings of the cosmos (like new year rituals) are very significant. During these rituals, it is not only the individuals who are freed from sins and get a fresh start but the whole universe around them is supposed to be “born” again; hence, the ritual is like a full reboot. New year rituals are basically constantly erasing time itself. The periodical deletion of time is one of the most important attributes of cyclical temporal schemes: it makes it impossible to keep track of linear progress (Eliade 52–53). Whilst cyclical time was mainly the reigning temporal scheme in ancient civilizations it never fully disappeared from the collective subconscious and has been present in both philosophy and literature since then. As we will see, this periodical deletion echoes in a twisted, modern version in Anthony Burgess’s novel, *The Wanting Seed* (1962, henceforth *TWS*) as well. In our paper we would like to investigate whether this cyclical temporal scheme can be considered history at all in the traditional sense of the word or if the idea of the constant and automatic recurrence of fixed phases eliminates the opportunities for humans to shape history.

Eliade emphasises that, in new year rituals, traditional societies express “their revolt against concrete, historical time, [and] their nostalgia for a periodical return to the mythical time of the beginning of things” (ix). He claims that the acceptance of linear, historical time is one of the causes of anxiety in modern individuals (as for an individual within this world linear time offers nothing but death in the long run). Humans’ harmony with the cosmos and cosmic rhythms (Eliade xiii) is expressed in cyclical time, as opposed to the modern concept of the linearity of time embedded in the Enlightenment’s notion of progress. “The interest in the ‘irreversible’ and the ‘new’ in history [attributes of linear time] is a recent discovery in the life of humanity. On the contrary, archaic humanity ... defended itself, to the utmost of its powers, against all the novelty and irreversibility which

history entails” (Eliade 48). The circular notion of time redeems humanity from the dangers of novelty and the horror of death: as in such a system catastrophe is never final, “death is always followed by resurrection” (Eliade 100) and nothing is irreversible. Nevertheless, if nothing is irreversible or final, human actions and decisions become relativised—if history keeps repeating itself in one way or another, our actions may not change the course of history; hence, freedom is an illusion. It is this conundrum that we propose to discuss with the help of Eliade and the twentieth-century English writer, Anthony Burgess.

The linear concept of time became dominant with the Enlightenment, yet, as Eliade argues, the Judeo-Christian religions and worldview essentially support the linear notion of time as a certain *teleology*: the salvation of mankind is assumed in human history. Tamás Ungvári, upon discussing Eliade, adds that this modern, linear time sadly brought with itself the loss of transcendence in human life: the modern individual is left in a self-isolated bubble of nothing but immanence (168). The notion of the cyclical nature of time and history has been expounded by thinkers as diverse as Averroës, Joachim a Fiore, Giambattista Vico, Friedrich Nietzsche, or Oswald Spengler. Anthony Burgess seems to follow this trend, at least in the first chapters of *TWS*, where the protagonist Tristram Foxe, a teacher of history explicates the theory of political cycles, whereas the rest of the novel serves as an illustration of this theory. This 1962 dystopian novel, published the same year as *A Clockwork Orange*, is set in an overpopulated future England, where food shortages lead to chaos, and after a cannibalistic anarchic interval, the army restores order and also offers food. It turns out, however, that the food they provide is processed from the victims of battles—battles that are only fought to provide corpses for the food industry.

As the protagonist of *TWS* explains, in this future world, three phases of history follow each other: an Augustinian, a Pelagian, and an Interphase, after which the cycle repeats itself.<sup>15</sup> In the *Augustinian* phase anthropological pessimism prevails as those in power expect nothing of the people and

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15 The Augustinian–Pelagian system also appears in *A Vision of Battlements*, a book written by Burgess in 1949 but only published in 1965. As Andrew Biswell argues, “the germ of [the] idea [was] outlined almost at random by a stranger in a Gibraltar drinking-den, and Burgess would make it his obsession and his hallmark in his later novels” (106).

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exercise *laissez-faire* techniques. In the ensuing *Pelagian* phase the expectations towards everyday people grow, yet if these expectations are not met, only mild measures are taken—Pelagianism is also called “Indifferentism” in *TWS* (Burgess 100). But when such measures continue to prove insufficient, we move into a so-called *Interphase*, where the government becomes authoritarian and applies draconic measures. Yet as coercion is once again proven futile, the political system returns to an Augustinian phase. Or as Ákos Farkas summarises, the change of political cycles in *TWS*, “the bloodless liberal humanism of the Pelagian political regime of the ‘Pelphase’ of history is replaced by society’s temporary relapse into the ritual-driven, cannibalistic atavism of the anarchic ‘Interphase,’ which in its turn heralds in the grimly authoritarian conservatism of the Augustinian ‘Gusphase’ in a kind of Viconian-Joycean circularity” (112).

Before we discuss Burgess’s system in detail, we would like to offer a very brief overview of the theories that envision time and history in a cyclical mode. One of the first seminal thinkers to ponder on the cyclical nature of time was Muslim Andalusian Ibn Rushd (1126–1198), often Latinised as Averroës. Adrian Bardon and Heather Dyke write that

[b]ased upon his reading of a passage in Aristotle’s *Physics* (4.14 223 b 24–224 a 2), Averroës ... suggested that time is not necessarily linear but cyclical. The idea is that cosmic events ultimately reoccur in great cycles linked to the rotations of the heavens around the earth. Time, then, is just a way to measure and mark off this continuous and perpetual cyclical motion of the cosmos. Therefore, like the cosmic events it measures, time too is cyclical. (81)

Averroës claimed that cosmic events in the universe repeat in great cycles based on the rotation of the heavens around the Earth. His claims were of vital importance in an era where the most prominent discussion on time was simply to debate whether at some point there was a moment of divine intervention and the universe was created (so time has a beginning at some point), or the universe has been existing forever (so time is infinite). According to St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430), arguably the most

prominent thinker of his period in this particular matter, the universe was created at a certain point in time: before creation itself, there was no time either.<sup>16</sup> Most thinkers, including Augustine, approached solving the problem of a created versus an infinite universe by unapologetically rendering time linear in both cases; however, Averroës's argument is from a cyclical point of view, hence underlining the argument that the universe is eternal. If time is cyclical, there is no need to search for a beginning or an end. With cyclical time, all the problems vanish that may arise whilst viewing the universe and time in it as linear, unless, as Averroës says, there is some sort of "supertime" mapped over this circular universe, rising above and measuring the cycles themselves. But Averroës denies the existence of such super-time. For him, as Bardon and Dyke mention, "there is no God's eye view, as it were, of time" (82). As we will see in the case of *TWS*, there is a possibility to interpret the chronotope of the novel as an Averroësiian one complete with a God's eye view (circular history, observed by history teacher and "beholder of linear time" Tristram Foxe).

Averroës's idea may seem a little far-fetched with strange rotating heavens marked off as systems of inertia, but the idea of a perpetually existing cosmos is not an alien one even to modern quantum physics. For example, Stephen Hawking in *A Brief History of Time* describes the possibility that the universe is comparable to the shape of a globe, which has boundaries but is without a firm end or beginning point. There is no Big Bang, no Big Crunch, only a forever-moving construction like a *perpetuum mobile*. The way he arrives at this possibility is by calculating with a so-called "imaginary time," which, given its nature, "is really more basic, and what we call real is just an idea that we invent to help us describe what we think the universe is like" (158–159). Hence, circularity might be carved into the fabric of the universe more deeply than we think, and linearity may be a human idea to account for what the individual perceives reality to be.

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16 "SEE, THERE ARE the heaven and the earth. They cry aloud that they were created; for they change and vary. Whereas anything which exists but was not created cannot have anything in it which was not there before, and this is just what is meant by change and variation. They cry aloud also that they did not create themselves: 'We exist because we were created; therefore, we did not exist before we were in existence, so as to be able to create ourselves'" (St. Augustine 254).

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Yet, however intriguing the deep mysteries of the universe may be, we essentially live in a modern, linear, historical temporal reality, and, according to Eliade, this temporal reality has its earliest roots in Judaism and Christianity, more specifically in the Bible itself: Noah created his ark, Moses received the Law, Christ died at specific points in time. These events stand alone and are never repeated. History is slowly formed by individual events suffered through or overcome by individual beings and communities alike, recorded and remembered for their own lives and deeds, and separate from the fabric of the faceless masses. The chronological framework of Christianity and, thus, of European culture is essentially linear.

The first significant Christian thinker to contemplate the cyclical nature of history and the recurrence of patterns in history was the Cistercian abbot Joachim a Fiore (1135–1202, also known as Gioacchino da Fiore). In his Trinitarian scheme,

history [is] divided into three stages (*status*) according to the [Holy] Trinity: the *status* of the Father, from Adam to Christ; the *status* of the Son, from Christ until about the abbot's own present time; and the *status* of the Holy Spirit ... . The third status was due to flower soon, within two generations of Joachim's own lifetime, as history fully entered the era of the Holy Spirit. (Whalen 91).

An important concept of Fiore's is that studying the patterns of the past provides templates and makes it possible to write the "history of the future" (Whalen 102). Fiore established three phases just like Burgess, yet in Fiore's system the phases are much longer. Certain elements of history recur, but Fiore's system has a teleology rather than a mere repetition, as in the case of the structure described in Burgess's novel.

Five hundred years after Fiore, historian Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) explained the appearance and decline of civilisations in terms of returns or *ricorsi*. According to Vico, all civilisations have a rude beginning, then passions are transformed into virtues and bestial nature is subordinated to the rule of law. The stages that civilisations go through are similar because Vico considers human nature constant across history (Little n.p.). As Timothy

Costelloe argues, “[s]ociety progresses towards perfection, but without reaching it ... , interrupted as it is by a break or return (*ricorso*) to a relatively more primitive condition. Out of this reversal, history begins its course anew, albeit from the irreversibly higher point to which it has already attained” (n.p.). Similar patterns were sought later as well. As Daniel Little argues, the effort “to derive a fixed series of stages as a tool of interpretation of the history of civilization is repeated throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; it finds expression in Hegel’s philosophy, ... as well as Marx’s materialist theory of the development of economic modes of production” (n.p.). The Enlightenment rejected religious notions concerning history but brought its own teleology in the form of the idea of progress. In the twentieth-century, both Oswald Spengler (1880–1936) and Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975) sought to interpret world history in terms of the rise and fall of civilisations. Despite their significant differences, they both “portrayed human history as a coherent process in which civilizations pass through specific stages” (Little n.p.) or cycles until they reach their climax and then stagnate or perish. These stages are sometimes likened to human life, like youth, maturity, and senescence, or the rounds of the seasons (spring/summer/autumn/winter). Even though Toynbee claimed that history cannot be predestined as its course is never independent of the free will of individuals, both of them argued for the existence of inevitable cycles and claimed that the modern West was repeating patterns already present in ancient Greek and Roman civilisations. The pattern set by Fiore in the twelfth century (and Averroës before him) proved to be irresistible; cyclical temporal structures suggest that studying the past provides templates for the future.

As far as cyclical time in modern philosophy is concerned, one cannot disregard Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) and his *Thus spoke Zarathustra* (1883), in which, 6,000 feet above man and history, a new time is reigning in a perpetual present which forever repeats in cycles. For Nietzsche, this circular repetition meant freedom. Just like in the case of the “primitive man,” as Eliade and Ungvári argue, the repetition serves to take the terror of ends out of time, altogether abolishing concepts such as complete annihilation and perishing (in the minds of “primitive men,” a memoryless, ahistorical “selfless self” survives after death and unites with a greater world spirit in forever circular time). However, as we will see, in the case of Burgess, this

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repetition is not a means of salvation. On the contrary, the repetitive heaven of Nietzsche is turned into a transcendence-lacking dystopian hell in *TWS*.

Having looked at the most interesting cyclical patterns of meta-historians and philosophers, we go on to discuss Burgess's three phases in detail. In the futuristic world of *TWS*, there are no political parties, the opposing movements appear one after the other in a diachronical fashion, forming political eras or phases. The system of political change focuses on the anthropological notions of the elites. These notions are recurrently pushed to their extremes; either to extreme optimism or to extreme pessimism concerning the capabilities of humans, as if a pendulum was swinging back and forth.

Gusphase is named after the theologian, St. Augustine of Hippo, who claimed that original sin had depraved human nature to such an extent that it may not be restored without the intervention of divine grace. Mankind without divine redemption for Augustine is a mass doomed to damnation. He considered people to be incapable of good deeds out of their natural benevolence (Chadwick 217). In other words, as the secular followers of Augustine claim (those who do not trust in divine intervention), people are essentially selfish, material, and antisocial by nature, and there is no hope of making them change. According to Geoffrey Aggeler, this pessimistic conviction is typical of the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes: if we extract theology out of Augustine's anthropological notions, we are left with the Hobbesian philosophy of a perpetual "warre of every one against every one" as a natural state of affairs in human society (162). And indeed, it is the secular version of Augustine's philosophy that provides the basis for Burgess's Gusphase. The phase is Augustinian in as much as it refers to the source of anthropological pessimism in European thought—a kind of pessimism that strongly influenced early Protestantism. John Calvin taught in an Augustinian vein that original sin had thoroughly depraved human nature and, hence, human freedom is destroyed.

In Burgess's Gusphase, the proponents of political power use *laissez-faire* methods, as they expect nothing good from people. As Tristram (or perhaps Burgess disguised as Tristram) argues in *TWS*, "[i]f you expect the worst from a person, you can't ever be disappointed. Only the disappointed resort to violence. The pessimist ... takes a sort of gloomy pleasure in observing the depths to which human behaviour can sink" (11). This pessimism results

in the fact that no coercion is used, as changing people's ways to the better is considered hopeless. The result from the individual's point of view is somewhat paradoxically a fairly free and acceptable social structure without dictatorial attitudes: average people are faced with minimal expectations. In fact, some commentators disregard this fact and claim that the "repressive, bureaucratic or totalitarian state is seen as an Augustinian construct" (Biswell 105), whereas actually, most dystopias that describe quasi-totalitarian systems are set in the Interphase (see later), when rulers become disappointed. The political leaders of Gusphase sooner or later recognise that people whom they view as useless and incapable of any good are actually capable of benevolent actions. This recognition leads to another phase, in Burgess's terminology *Pelphase* or Pelagian phase.

This phase has been named after Pelagius, the monk who was a native of Britain and the first British writer we know of (Chadwick 447). He probably died in 418 AD and was one of the major adversaries of St. Augustine in the theological debate over the role of divine grace. As opposed to Augustine, Pelagius claimed that man is created with a good nature and is capable of good deeds even without divine intervention, as original sin has not completely depraved humankind. As Chadwick argues, "Pelagius begins from the proposition that in humanity there exists the possibility of free choice, and therefore by the constitution of human nature sin is not inevitable" (448). He looked at sin more as a bad habit which is hard but not impossible to break. Augustine and Pelagius agree that there is a tendency to evil in humans, but not in the power and scope of this tendency. The consequences of this fifth-century theological debate in anthropological thought are complex and far-reaching. In political philosophy, Pelagianism means the optimistic view that humans and their interactions may develop and reach a more perfected stage. Tristram in *TWS* finds Pelagianism at the roots of leftist political ideologies, namely liberalism, socialism, and communism, but the adherents of political anarchism may also be listed as Pelagian.

As Tristram claims,

[a] government functioning in the Pelagian phase commits itself to the belief that man is perfectible, that perfection can be achieved by his own efforts, and that the journey towards

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perfection is along a straight road. ... The citizens of a community want to co-operate with their rulers, and so there is no real need to have devices of coercion, sanctions, which will force them to co-operate. (Burgess, *TWS* 17)

Laws are there as guides, and transgressions are punished with small fines if punished at all, as rulers believe that citizens want to be good anyway; there is no need of coercive measures. “No happier form of existence can be envisaged” (Burgess, *TWS* 18), yet sooner or later disappointment destroys the dream and leads to the *Interphase*.

Disappointment, in this case, means the rulers recognise that people are not as good as they had assumed. “It becomes necessary to try and force citizens into goodness” (Burgess, *TWS* 19). The beginning of the so-called interphase is usually chaotic and brutal. Pelagians consider people good, so there is no need for coercion, while Augustinians do not use coercion because people are considered to be irredeemably bad; therefore, coercion is useless. In the Interphase, however, people are no longer considered good, but capable of goodness; thus, coercion to good behaviour becomes the primary function of the state. This is the condition for most dictatorships, fictional or political. Yet as Tristram argues “the interphase cannot ... last forever [because] the governors become shocked at their own excesses ... and a kind of philosophical pessimism supervenes. In other words, we drift into the Augustinian phase. ... The wheel has come a full cycle” (Burgess, *TWS* 23).

Having acquainted ourselves with the details of Burgess’s cycles of political change, let us now take a closer look at the character of Tristram, his relationship to the fictive universe around him, and how he and this universe align with the aforementioned philosophical ideas on cyclical time and history. *TWS* includes a narrative where the cycles described by Tristram in the first chapters follow each other in an accelerated fashion, the so-called “historical” cycles (as we will argue later on, the question arises whether we can still call these phases historical at all) repeat in a mind-bogglingly rapid manner. The cycles in the narrative do not come hundreds of years apart, instead they swiftly fluctuate within a single individual’s lifespan. As Tristram says to a cellmate in prison: “the Interphase is coming to an end. The shortest on record. The State’s reached the limit of despair”

(Burgess, *TWS* 120). Appropriating this fluctuation to the ideas of Mircea Eliade on past-abolishing new year rituals, we can claim that each time we shift from Gusphase to Pelphase to Interphase, essentially a “new era” starts. Years, months, days, and other attributes of physical time are deeply rooted in our physical relationship with the Earth, the sun, and the moon; yet, however practical and observation-based such units of measurement are, they are rooted in human convention and could be easily overwritten by other, more fitting concepts, should the need arise (such an attempt was the so-called French Republican calendar or French Revolutionary calendar, used between 1793 and 1805). In the case of *TWS*, years can simply be overwritten by phases, and each “new year” is marked off by stepping into one of the three phases. Hence, the fictional world of *TWS* is much closer to the universe of Eliade’s “primitive men” than the modern, linearly-thinking ones. At the start of each new cycle, the previous one is abolished with all its principles and parameters. It is like turning a new page, except the new page always contains one of the three repeating ideas. But what does this mean for history, when most thinkers agree that history is “free” and forever-changing?<sup>17</sup> It is nature in which “there is nothing new under the sun”; yet, strictly speaking, this is also the case with history in *TWS*, as the “new” cycles are always one out of three repeating phases. Ungvári and Eliade both argue that history has a role to carve out individualism, meaning that the unreproducible human self is manifested through historical recollection, starting with, as we stated earlier, the historicised recollections within the Bible. For the modern European mind, history entails the appreciation of the irreversibility of events, and most importantly, it is not strictly repetitive and is marked off as linear.

In *TWS*, whatever the individual decides, the cycles inevitably follow each other; the structural change overwhelms personal agency. This parallels Spengler’s understanding of history, who claims that “[s]ince the momentum of these huge historic cycles is so great, the implication is that nothing can be done to stop them. Once you recognise you are in a particular phase of a cycle, there is no point in behaving as if you were somewhere else” (Magee n.p.). In *TWS*, history behaves in an automatic fashion, as progress

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17 “Hegel regards history as an intelligible process moving towards a specific condition—the realisation of human freedom” (Little n.p.).

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is replaced by repetition. Tristram argues that, “[i]n this modern world, the circle had become an emblem of the static, the limited globe, the prison” (Burgess, *TWS* 13–14). This corresponds to the structural view of history expounded by the protagonist of another book by Burgess, *1985*. “You can’t fight history. ... And who makes history? Movements. Trends. Elans. Processes. Not who, what” (Burgess, *1985* 407). The consequence of the structural view of history is that human freedom, in the long run and in a larger scope, is an illusion. Whatever we do may not alter history, individual acts only have relevance on an individual level. As the adventures of Tristram in *TWS* reflect, according to Burgess, this does not eliminate the responsibility of the individual for his or her own life, as personal life is not completely dependent upon political circumstances. Yet, the anxiety Mircea Eliade referred to concerning linear, historical time also appears in Burgess’s cyclical version where the feeling of inevitability is the chief cause of anxiety. The notion of inevitability corresponds to Eliade’s notion of history as well. “It is becoming more and more doubtful ... if modern man can make history. ... For history either makes itself ... or it tends to be made by an increasingly smaller number of men. ... Modern man’s boasted freedom to make history is illusory for nearly the whole of the human race” (Eliade 156).

In this system of perfect repetition, we can witness all the attributes of the circular universe of “primitive men” re-appear: individualism disappears and events lose their irreversible significance (these are uplifting experiences for the “primitive men,” yet major causes of anxiety for the modern one). In fact, events are reduced to either nothingness or what Eliade, based on Brahmanic texts, classifies as events helping the individual to reconnect with “sacred time”: such events are mating, eating, fighting, and working). The difference between the primitive circular universe and Burgess’s circular universe is that in ancient times these events were held as sacred and did mean to bring the individual back to that transcendental, holy time that can be shared with both ancestors and gods, while in *TWS*, these rituals are twisted, disfigured, mutilated, and made vile and repulsive. The consummation of food in *TWS* equals the consummation of each other, war is just a means to reduce the population, and sex is considered dangerous and is frowned upon as it may be linked to fertility. The dystopian person cannot even find solace in “sacred” rituals, the traditional immersion in sacred

time, because all transcendence is taken out of these rituals—only a perpetually repeating profane circularity remains, a perfect dystopic temporal hell, which is the complete opposite of Nietzsche’s temporal utopia.

But in this hellish chronotope, there is one character who rises above the chaos, at least figuratively: Tristram, a history teacher. In the Averroësiian circular universe, he is the missing God’s eye view: he is the beholder of linear time. Hence, one of the most important attributes of his character is his profession itself. This may not be the most appealing, awe-striking, or “dramatic” profession one could imagine for a protagonist, but in Burgess’s cyclical dystopia, he could not have found a more pertinent position for Tristram. While linear time is constrained within the boundaries of the hellish circularity of Gusphase, Pelpphase, and Interphase, Tristram does his best to guard the essence of history and linear time itself in multiple ways.

First, strictly from a narrative point of view, he undergoes a journey in a linear story going from A to B; in a metatextual argument, we can claim that him being the protagonist of a novel that has a beginning and an end in itself drives our attention more towards linearity than circularity. Within the fictive domain of the novel itself, one of the most important ways in which he tries to grasp linearity is by chronicling the events around him and recording the changes in the world and history. Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854) called the historian a “backwards-looking prophet”<sup>18</sup> and insofar as backwards and forwards have any meaning left in Burgess’s dystopic world, Tristram is such a person. He fulfils the need poets fulfilled in Eliade’s “primitive” societies: to record the passage of time in stories and to carve out some sort of individuum from the faceless stream of time.

Another issue by which linear time is guarded is the nature of Tristram’s quest. Whilst discussing the Bible, Ungvári argues that recording or keeping track of a family line also serves as a means to stay in touch with the linearity of time (79), and alas, Tristram’s quest is to reunite with his wife, and his most painful but cherished memory is linked to his deceased son. Hence, Tristram is even subconsciously clutching at straws of historical, linear time in a circular hell.

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18 “Der Historiker ist ein rückwärts gekehrter Prophet” (“Athenäum Fragmente,” no. 80, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*. Ed. Hans Eichner, vol. 2. Munich and Vienna: Schönigh, 1967. 176.).

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Yet, the struggle and suffering of Tristram, however shocking at times (like eating human flesh without knowing it), eventually feels like an unglorified, impersonal, and inevitable but almost unbearably futile and traumatic string of actions. This is very typical of dystopias, and, if we were inclined to make parallels between Eliade's "cyclical time of primitive societies" and Burgess's modern dystopia, here we need to establish a striking difference. Whereas in primitive societies, suffering was viewed as necessary and endurable (since at every new year, one could cleanse themselves of sin), and with the arrival of Judaism and Christianity, this suffering was even further glorified, in the case of dystopias, suffering is totally devaluated. The individual necessarily has to suffer immeasurable traumas; yet, the futility and vileness of these acts scream through the pages, and we are always left with the haunting feeling that all this suffering was for nothing. In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or Burgess's *TWS*, suffering is unbearable and further corrodes the otherwise fragile individuality. Time is an empty skeleton pushed by some invisible power structure to crush what little is left of our human character. Tristram in *TWS* is an individual, whose essence and every ounce of being is meant to make us believe that there is such a thing as modern, linear, historical time; yet, the whole universe around him seems to have forgotten it. He is a lonesome hero from a dying breed: someone who still remembers and is able to construct linear narratives from this remembrance.

Burgess's cycle focuses on the anthropological background of political ideologies and, although in this respect it may be used for the analysis of political phenomena, the system describes the political structures of literary works (particularly dystopias) even more aptly than it does non-fictional political reality. As a demonstration of this point, let us finish with a brief analysis of some literary examples. Amongst Burgess's dystopias, in *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) attempts are depicted to change the lenient Pelagian phase and to move into the Interphase: the police force is increased, they become more brutal, and generally the law is enforced more strictly. Yet, the conversion is not straightforward, as the instalment of the Lodovico technique is reconsidered due to public outrage. It seems that the individual (or small groups) may still have some influence on the course of history despite the inevitability of structural changes. In the narrative of *1985*, the state is also

in the later stage of Pelphase: deviance is dealt with benevolently; yet, if transgressors (such as Bev, the protagonist) do not show signs of change, they are severely punished, which is a symptom that the rulers no longer have a deep belief in the goodness of mankind. *1985* focuses on the shortcomings and contradictions of the realisation of the Pelagian theories. But the Augustinian–Pelagian system is applicable to works of other writers as well. Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* also describes a Pelphase, with the difference that rulers may believe in the “goodness” (or rather aptness) of citizens, because they have been formed that way through hypnopædia; this is the reason why no drastic measures are needed to keep them obedient. A good test of the situation of political power is how infringements are dealt with. In *Brave New World*, one may be safely late for a meeting, say Orgy-porgy, whereas in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this results in more serious consequences. In this dystopia we are in an Interphase (which seems to last forever) and as the rulers do not consider party members good or capable of goodness, coercion is a significant aspect of the system.

Having acquainted ourselves with the details of Burgess’s fictive universe and cycles of political change, in the last part of the paper we would like to focus on some problems these cycles of political change pose. First of all, it is not clear whether it is only the rulers’ ideology that changes or citizens’ behaviour, as well, reflects the state’s attitudes. The theory, as Tristram expounds it, does not reflect on the temporal aspects—we do not learn how fast the wheel usually turns. *TWS* describes a fictional historical period where changes are extremely fast—one single generation experiences all three phases. Although the personalities of the main characters hardly change during these times, a great deal of adaptation can be experienced in their behaviour. In the Pelphase, lenience is allowed but discipline quickly becomes armylike in the Interphase. People feel that they are under surveillance, and this changes their attitudes. In the novel, as the phases follow each other very quickly, the long-term consequences cannot be observed; but since there is an interaction between expectations and one’s behaviour, we may assume that, if a phase lasts longer and if generations grow up under the same circumstances, behaviour effects the deeper structure of one’s personality (unless one assumes, in agreement with Giambattista Vico, human nature to be unchanging). This also entails that the longer one

phase lasts, the more chances there are that time retains some sense of linearity, as opposed to completely gaining a “primitive” circularity. Yet, this new circularity is a “modern primitive one” that can no longer be separated by the binary distinction of sacred and profane time, only maybe by that of the *damned* and the profane.

One of the basic concepts of Burgess’s theory of the cyclical nature of political change is *goodness* that he considers an intrinsic feature of humans; yet, the meaning of this broad concept depends very much on the circumstances. The rulers essentially consider good that which is in accordance with their interests. In the overpopulated world *TWS* describes, bearing children is seen as a harmful act, whereas homosexuality as an unproductive way of sexuality is propagated and rewarded, and so is castration. Perhaps this last example makes it obvious that in this system good is what the state considers good, and the same applies to sin. Morality becomes dependent on power structures.

In conclusion, we can argue that, in Burgess’s system, binary oppositions of Augustinian and Pelagian worldviews usually appear in their extremes and ignore mankind’s complexities, the fact that man is good and bad at the same time. As Robert Taubman argued, Burgess was “a tough-minded Augustinian himself ... but an Augustinian with a sense of fun” (qtd. in Biswell 268). And as Andrew Biswell argues, the “Augustine/Pelagius distinction might be thought of as the engine which drives Burgess’s mature imagination; it gave him a set of home-made theological spectacles with which to view history and politics” (106). This idiosyncratic view of history with a very limited human agency that appears in *TWS* poses the metaphysical question whether we can still call it history. Whether Burgess intentionally played on this theme or not, in *TWS*, he managed to create a fictive universe which in itself is a blissful contradiction, a true human paradox: everything in the story shifts the universe back to “primitive” circular time, but it does so not by travelling to the past but by travelling to the future, keeping “modern man” as its hero, and putting this modern human being in a quasi-historical context. *TWS* unravels what is left of humanity, once both the spirituality and the linearity of time is taken out of the life of an individual, hence, even possibly giving us the recipe or scheme for the perfect dystopian chronotope. Burgess and Tristram talk about history, but this history is an enigma. It is hellish, it is paradoxical, and it is circular. In *TWS*, not less than the questions

of the essence of history itself and what it means to mankind are at stake. The question it really puts forward is whether history has a teleology towards which it could head in a linear or spiral fashion, as it appears in Fiore's system, or it keeps recirculating, as implied in Anthony Burgess's fiction.

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# Lilies that Fester:

## *The Clockwork Testament* as a Campus Novel

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ÁKOS FARKAS & EVGENIYA LAVERYCHEVA

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*This article endeavours to examine Burgess's mid-career novel, *The Clockwork Testament*, to establish whether the third instalment of the "Enderby Quartet" can, or indeed should, be reclassified as a piece of academic fiction. What is at stake here is not only a matter of generic taxonomy but also the question of how such a possible reclassification could impact our understanding of Burgess's thematic and stylistic preoccupations and how, in a broader sense, this particular novel of his fits into an important segment of twentieth-century English-language fiction highlighted by the names of Kingsley Amis, David Lodge, or Philip Roth. Informed by theoretical insights gained from the works of Michel Foucault, Elaine Showalter, and others, this piece could also make a notable contribution to what is known as the poetics of place on the one hand and our knowledge concerning the writer-environment nexus on the other. Taking a close look at the biographical and historical context in which *The Clockwork Testament* was written is meant to suggest the ethnic, cultural, and sociological tensions that beset the refurbishing of higher education in America at the time. All in all, the authors offer their answer to the question whether *The Clockwork Testament* is a campus novel in any meaningful sense of the word and, if so, what that tells us about Burgess and his fictional excursion into academia.*

As must be obvious to most readers, the quote in the title above comes from Shakespeare, specifically his 94th sonnet, where it opens the closing line of the poem likely addressed to the poet's aristocratic patron conventionally

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referred to as the Fair Youth. The sonnet endeavours to admonish its addressee to refrain from using his power to hurt and by exercising self-restraint to protect his own, personal, excellence from being corrupted by “base infection.” “For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds; / Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds,” draws the conclusion the sonnet’s closing couplet (Shakespeare 569). If excellence is taken to refer to academic, rather than aristocratic, distinction, and the “deeds” in question constitute the behaviour of college instructors, students or, possibly, administrators, instead of the loyalty of a poet’s sponsor, friend or lover, then the relevance of the quotation in the title to a paper on academic fiction must also be self-evident. This would be the case even if one were to overlook the verbatim reference to Shakespeare’s festering lilies in a piece of free indirect discourse in Anthony Burgess’s work that comes closest to qualifying as a campus novel—*The Clockwork Testament; or, Enderby’s End* (1974) (44).

As argued below, the third instalment in the “Enderby Quartet” (1963–1984), a series of four novels whose overarching narrative revolves around the person of the monastically reclusive, misanthropic and misogynous poet F. X. Enderby,<sup>19</sup> comes quite close to being a full-fledged campus novel without actually typifying the genre. However tentative, such a qualification needs some explaining in an article offering to reclassify *The Clockwork Testament* as a piece of academic fiction.

Although Burgess was very much aware of Malcolm Bradbury’s and David Lodge’s academic fiction, praising them in tandem as “Britain’s outstanding novelists of campus life” (*Ninety-Nine Novels* 124), he never mentioned the campus novel as an independent genre or sub-genre. And yet, his fiction and non-fiction address issues and contain characters or situations central to our understanding of what constitutes this particular branch of imaginative literature. Reminiscences of his own student days at Victoria University,

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19 It is important not to attribute Enderby’s misanthropy and misogyny to Burgess himself. Andrew Biswell posits, correctly, that “Enderby is more than Burgess’s shadow: he is a demonic, monastic, spermatic worst-self, a brutal auto-caricature” (221). In an interview made shortly after the publication, in America, of *The Clockwork Testament*, he answered this to the imputation that “Enderby is pretty much” him: “Of course, you tend to use a lot of your own experiences. But he’s not like me in the deeper respects, you know. He’s sort of misogynous. He’s never married and I am very much a married man. He’s scared of women, he cooks badly, I cook rather well” (Interview 99).

Manchester, as well as descriptions of his professorial assignments at various Asian and American institutions of higher education, occur with great frequency in his two-volume autobiography, “Confessions.” More importantly, perhaps, he repeatedly gave voice to his views on the state of higher education in his occasional publications from open letters to manifesto-style essays such as the one headed “My Dear Students” in a 1972 issue of *The New York Times*, or the piece titled “The Writer Among Professors” in the *Times Literary Supplement* ten years later. Just as importantly, many of his novels, written between the early 1960s and the late 1980s revisit the university as a character-forming and destiny-shaping location. These novels include *The Doctor Is Sick* (1962), whose main character Dr Edwin Spindrifft is a professor of linguistics and is affiliated with the (fictional) International Council for University Development, the structuralist incest-novel, *M/F* (1971), narrated in the first person by Miles Faber, a hippy-style dropout of an Ivy League college, and the narrator of *Any Old Iron* (1982), Harry Wolfson, is a philosophy student at the University of Manchester—Burgess’s own alma mater. None of these novels, however, keep their thematic focus as firmly on a particular university or on higher education in general as Burgess’s mid-career novel, *The Clockwork Testament*, the third part of the tetralogy known as the “Enderby Quartet.” The adventures and opinions of the novel’s protagonist F. X. Enderby, a character whose autobiographical traits have been variously contested and affirmed by Burgess as well as his critics, have so much to do with the perceived mission and supposed failures of university education that it is a minor miracle that the title fails to show up in any of the major monographic assessments of English-language academic fiction. Even more surprisingly, Burgess’s scholarly interpreters have also consistently overlooked the novel’s qualities that would legitimise its classification as a piece of academic fiction. To explain, and possibly to fill, these lacunae in genre theory and Burgess-criticism, it is needful to offer a brief overview of what has been established in the theory of academic fiction at large.

The existing body of scholarly writing on the topic is multitudinous and diverse, the latest research turning its attention from a more traditional Anglo-American academic fiction to specimens of the genre produced in Eastern and Western Europe, Canada, and South Africa (Fuchs and Klepuszewski). However, despite the general interest in this genre, some earlier researchers

considered it necessary to mention its supposedly dubious significance and inferior quality. On the last pages of his book, *The College Novel in America*, John O. Lyons comments unfavourably on “the lack of distinction in the novels about academic life,” noting that worthy examples of the genre “are few indeed” (186). Almost half a century later, Elaine Showalter, on the first pages of her book devoted to the topic, makes an apologetic remark about the “ultimate narcissism” of her being interested in a subject that, by definition, should be of interest to a very narrow circle of people having a stake in the state of higher education (3). Over the last few decades, scholarship on academic fiction has been animated by a debate on the future of the genre. Even a quick glance at the titles, ranging from Adam Begley’s “The Decline of Campus Novel” to Jeffrey J. Williams’s “The Rise of the Academic Novel,” speaks volumes of the scale of discrepancy. Nevertheless, the very existence of incessant academic debate, an inexhaustible number of new campus novels published each year together with unchanging readerly interest suggest that the genre deserves serious scholarly attention.

One divisive issue seems to be a certain controversy among critics over the question of the central character or characters in the campus novel. Ian Carter notes that there is a tendency to exclude student-focused novels from the genre, “restricting this term to novels treating university teachers’ joys and troubles” (54). Williams goes as far as to set up a binary opposition contrasting “campus novel” with “academic novel,” traditionally used interchangeably, arguing that the former centres on students and their campus life while the latter primarily features academics (561). Although the authors of this study do not insist on such rigid terminological distinctions, they are convinced that *The Clockwork Testament* would neatly fit into Carter’s restrictive definition of the campus novel, as it is centred on the character of a university professor or, more precisely, a writer in residence doubling as visiting professor. The post-war democratisation of higher education involved, among other things, the introduction of creative writing courses in Anglo-American universities (McGurl 24). Writers of campus novels responded by introducing “visiting writers among their characters” and “interspers[ing] [their novels] with pieces of other fictional texts” (Anténe 8). Burgess’s novel features both the character-type and fragments of his literary work, which “Professor” Enderby himself considers his real work as opposed

to such “pseudo-work” as giving classes, marking papers, and seeing his students. He is generally not very impressed with what he sees as “teen-age garbage treated as art,”<sup>20</sup> and is appalled by the university programme, which he regards as “progressive intellectual abdication” (*The Clockwork Testament* 44). Regardless of the extent to which Enderby’s views coincide with those held by Burgess, Enderby’s very strong opinions concerning the state of affairs at the University of Manhattan—a fictional institution modelled on Burgess’s City College New York—where he teaches creative writing and literary history are characteristic, in their satirical tone and campus-related subject, of academic fiction in general. And, even more saliently, the setting of most of the novel’s plot, lecture halls and seminar rooms on campus, Enderby’s apartment turned into the site of informal tutorials, and even his subway rides to and from work, add up to what can be seen as a genre-defining feature of academic fiction.

The location, of course, is of prime importance here. The former British academic and prominent master of the genre, David Lodge, describes the campus as “a unified, self-contained site in a pastoral or park-like setting,” which had been more typical for American universities until the late 1950s when new universities started to be built in Britain on the American model (“Nabokov”). Showalter goes beyond that, describing the university as “the site of pastoral, or the fantasy of pastoral—the refuge, the ivory tower” (Showalter 3). Bruce Robbins modifies such romanticising conceptions by noting that pastoral idealisation was subtly subverted by “a threat that the outside world will penetrate and destroy the idyllic space it has fenced off” (251).

Traditional private universities used to be regarded as elitist, closed, all-male communities, characterised by class-based admission policies, thereby excluding those who had neither class nor gender, nor ethnic privilege (Findeisen 286). However, the expansion of higher education in the post-war period, university transformation, and the institution’s changing social role found their way into the campus novel. Commenting on the liberalisation of higher education, Showalter observes that the university “is no longer

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20 While categorically rejecting that he should be identical with Enderby, in the interview cited above, Burgess admits to being somewhat similar to his creation in terms of some general “attitudes to art and life,” adding that the two of them do in fact “share a very intransigent attitude to art” as reflected in Enderby’s impatience with his students’ lack of creative discipline (Interview 99).

a sanctuary or a refuge,” as it turns into “a fragile institution rather than a fortress” (60). Therefore, the university campus is not perceived any more as a sacred space, even though it remains a—more or less—secluded place. Although one might think that a closed community based on the limited grounds of a university campus is principally preoccupied with their own very specific problems, Lodge argues that the university “provides ... a ‘small world’ which is a kind of microcosm of the larger world” (“Nabokov”), thereby reflecting typical human behaviours and characters.

It could be argued that the idyllic campus with its specific mode of being, seemingly isolated from the outer world, bears the marks of what Michel Foucault called a heterotopia and defined as a counter-space where “the real sites are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (24). In other words, a heterotopia is both material and mythic; it is physically present in our world, yet exists concurrently. Indeed, the university is a real-world place albeit separated from it and inaccessible for an outsider, suggesting that one has to be initiated to be let in. Even an urban university, like the one where Burgess’s novel is set for the most part, despite the absence of campus walls and the presence of an open admission policy pursued by its administrators, still remains a place for initiates only, namely students and teachers. Another mark of the Foucauldian heterotopia is its ability to overturn time traditionally understood, which is easily applicable to academic time. The latter is more circular than linear, flowing smoothly past recurrent milestones—the start of the term, the midterms, the vacations, the final exams—and returning to the same point each September. Every academic year “has its boundaries, its rhythms, its predictable points of crisis” (Moseley 17). In this regard, the university bears the traits of a heterochronia, a temporal anomaly, “organising a kind of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in a place that will not move” (Foucault 182).

Such a mythical and in a way illusory character of the heterotopia is especially keenly sensed by Enderby, who is not a career academic but a visiting professor and, to a certain extent, an outsider. Once inside the university, he cannot avoid the experience of otherness and displacement (a situation exacerbated by his status as a foreigner—a British national in America—and a co-creator of a scandalous film, the sex- and violence-ridden adaptation of the poet G. M. Hopkins’s religious ode, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*).

Unbeknownst to himself, he is exposed to the heterotopic reality of the university. When he suddenly realises that all his knowledge of the subject he is supposed to teach has inexplicably evaporated from his head, the professor gives a talk on the life and works of a fictitious Elizabethan author he calls Gervase Whitelady, enthusiastically making up details of the imaginary dramatist's biography and reciting his non-existent texts. Enderby even creates, in passing, a new, counterfactual, subject facetiously named by himself Creative Literary History, and he briefly muses over a feasibility of learned articles written on this unique teaching technique. Having left the classroom, he is still haunted by the experience of transgressing reality: "lose sensation, he kept thinking, and I become a fictional character" (54).

One might argue, however, that the boundaries of the University of Manhattan are not at all impenetrable. After all, it has an open-admission policy in play, similar to the regime in place at City College New York, where Burgess himself occupied a teaching position as a Visiting Professor of English Literature and Creative Writing. In fact, the University of Manhattan draws directly on City College, just as Enderby's lodging at 670 West End Avenue is the apartment where the Burgess family resided during the writer-professor's stay in New York (Biswell 351). The apartment belonged to Adrienne Rich, an American poet and university professor, who was on the permanent staff in City College. The university had opened its gates to underprivileged racial and gender groups of young people. Adrienne Rich, whose previous experience in education was limited to elitist institutions, such as Harvard, Radcliffe, Swarthmore, and Columbia University, undertook the job of teaching Creative Writing to the "disadvantaged" students here. She observed that compared to the "quadrangle of gray stone dormitories, marble steps, flowered borders, wide spaces" of the traditional universities, City College was a sore sight:

... overcrowded campus where in winter there [was] often no place to sit between classes, with two inadequate bookstores largely filled with required texts, two cafeterias and a snack bar that [were] overpriced, dreary, and uncondusive to lingering, with the incessant pressure of time and money driving at [the students] to rush, to get through, to amass

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the needed credits somehow, to drop out, to stay on with gritted teeth. (Rich 60)

The picture was completed by the immediate environment surrounding the college in the Upper West Side with its uncollected garbage, street muggers, policemen, who “had become a threatening figure to many whites as he had long been to blacks” (53), and “all its historic, overcrowded, and sweated poverty” (54). Enderby’s way to work lies through the same “foul streets, that, like pustular bandages [wrap] the running sore of his university” (*The Clockwork Testament* 43).

As he enters the building, this “officially desecrated chapel” (47), and walks along overcrowded corridors and into “a hot room with a long, disfigured conference table” (57), he encounters his students, eating and drinking in the classrooms, smoking marijuana, stripping in protest in the halls, listening to loud music outside his office and showing no respect for him as a teacher. It seems that in the new democratized system of higher education, the borders between the university and the city dissolve, letting the street inside the college walls. All those “potential black and brown devils ready to rob, slice, and rape” (46), against whom Enderby carries about a weapon hidden in his cane, have now entered the academe and cannot be ignored. Despite the occasional pang of sympathy that he feels for “the poor orphans, manipulated by brutal statesmen and the markets of tooth-eroding sweet poisonous drinks” (52), Enderby generally demonstrates very little tolerance for the “incurious lot of young bastards” (48) that he sees in his charges. It is important to note that, unlike his character, Burgess was much more tolerant and sympathetic towards his own students in City College. One of his colleagues, the novelist Joseph Heller, best known for his satirical war novel *Catch-22* praised by Burgess for its “mythopoeic power” (*Ninety-Nine* 79), remembered that Burgess demonstrated enormous generosity and kindness when it came to his students, however rude or ignorant they were:

He made himself available to them, and the students made enormous demands on his time, excessively so, but then wasted his time because they had only come to him for another

anti-establishment raving session. I admired the way Burgess could take even the most hostile of these students seriously. He knew and remembered their names. He gave serious thought to even their most absurd statements. He wanted to know their backgrounds. (qtd. in Biswell 350–351)

Enderby demonstrates the exact opposite of such a benevolent attitude, forgetting his students' names (even such memorable ones as Running Deer), engaging in heated disputes and even calling them names, which can often be regarded as ethnic slurs. His bitterness about the new type of "pseudo"-university spreads further on to the city of New York and the whole "hypocritical" America (43), which he would like to escape but cannot, at least not until the next salary cheque arrives (64).

Enderby's professional life extends beyond the lecture halls and campus corridors of the university, but this by no means disqualifies *The Clockwork Testament* as a campus novel. While Enderby's movements seem to be more related to his role as a poet than as a teacher, the academe is deeply embedded in his life. His day begins with a phone call invitation to a television talk show. When the caller addresses Enderby as "professor," he remarks with feigned modesty that this title is "a lot of nonsense" (24). However, at the end of the day, when his unexpected visitor calls him "Mr Enderby," he corrects her: "Or Professor" (99), therefore accepting his "fancy dress" (24). The morning continues with a visit from one of his students, supposedly wishing to interview him for a college magazine. Annoyed with such a violation of his privacy, Enderby nonetheless reminds himself that welcoming his visitor in his private apartment is part of his professional responsibilities: "Still, his duty. One of his students. He was being paid" (34). Later, at the talk show, where he is asked to comment on the increased cases of violence in connection with the release of his ill-fated film, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, he gets involved in a heated debate with another academic. Their dispute about the nature of violence and evil, free will and an individual's autonomy, in which Enderby's philosophical views collide with those of a professor of psychology, behaviourist Dr Balaglas, could well have taken place within the walls of the university. Another meeting with a late-night visitor posing as a fellow academic awaits the professor at home. After answering

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two late and rather unpleasant calls from students, Enderby experiences another breach of privacy, this time by a woman who introduces herself as Professor Greaving of Goldengrove College. His final meeting of the day, however humiliating and dangerous it turns out to be for him, involves him in yet another intellectual dispute. It can easily be argued, therefore, that while Enderby goes out of his way to emphasize that his status as a professor is “absurd” (27), he is nonetheless constantly involved in interactions with colleagues, students, and academic debates of all kinds, even if these educational or intellectual encounters occur outside of the campus walls. And even if that were not the case, it is not uncommon, as Robert Scott observes, for a campus novel to actually depict the main characters doing anything but teaching: “in the vast majority of academic novels, the overriding implication seems to be that teaching is not an essential component of higher education” (84).

Decentralisation of the university, its position within the urban community had occasioned multiple transformations in the genre of academic fiction, which is no longer enclosed within the campus walls. Showalter, reflecting on this tendency, sees it as troubling: “the university fully merges with the rest of society. ... [A]cademia is only one of many quirky institutions, comparable to Wall Street, haute cuisine, medicine, big business, cruise liners, or families” (142). Jeffrey Williams, however, argues that relocation of the action outside the university is a positive sign of genre transformation:

... academe is no longer a marginal place and academic fiction is no longer strange or quirky but common, effortlessly merging with mainstream culture. This evolution also indicates the tendency of contemporary literary fiction to absorb formerly low or coterie genres, such as science fiction or noir as well as academic fiction, knitting them into the fabric of the literary. (573)

In view of this, *The Clockwork Testament* does not only fit in the category of academic fiction but even follows the trend of fusing the campus novel with other genres—most consistently and deliberately exemplified by David Lodge’s *Nice Work*, where town and gown, academia and industry, feature equally large. As Williams remarks, by doing this, “the academic novel has

taken a more significant position because it has become a major vehicle for middle class, adult experience” (569). In that regard, *The Clockwork Testament* is not an exception but a relatively early instance of the rule.

If that is so, why is it then that all the major critics of *The Clockwork Testament* as well as theorists of the campus novel have so far consistently ignored the third instalment of the “Enderby Quartet” as a significant addition to the genre? One reason could be the fact that Burgess’s reputation both as an innovator of the novel form and his even greater fame as a major dystopian writer immensely popular with scholars as well as successive generations of young readers (and movie-goers) have deflected critical attention from the equally important part he played in raising the campus novel above the lowly status of “genre” fiction. Burgess as a somewhat subversive follower of Joyce and Orwell as witnessed by his “musicalising” fiction in his *Napoleon Symphony* and *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* here and his contribution to dark dystopian fiction with *The Wanting Seed* and *1985* there is far more interesting a phenomenon than as yet another Kingsley Amis, Malcolm Bradbury, David Lodge, John Barth, or Philip Roth—to mention but the best-known practitioners of academic fiction on the two sides of the Atlantic.

If all the foregoing were insufficient to explain the absence of *The Clockwork Testament* both from the major studies of the campus novel and of the entry “academic fiction” from the indexes of the monographs devoted to Burgess’s life and work, then there is yet another important reason for this dual blind spot of literary criticism. This additional factor is the place this short novel occupies within the “Enderby Quartet,” a novel sequence whose multiplicity of characters, multifarious locations, and complex themes do not add up to anything that could be regarded as a drawn-out but straightforward exercise in academic fiction. If anything, the tetralogy named after its protagonist can be seen as an extended *Bildungsroman* or *Künstlerroman*—an idea argued for by one of the co-authors of this article elsewhere (see Farkas 76). Within that, *The Clockwork Testament* represents but one of the four major stages of Enderby’s lengthy journey of the self. This long psychic as well as physical journey of Enderby’s involves his engagement with a mostly hostile world in his successive roles of reclusive and alienated poet, colonial expatriate, visiting professor, and playwright-actor, in the instalments respectively titled *Inside Mr Enderby*, *Enderby Outside*, *The Clockwork Testament*, and, finally,

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*Enderby's Dark Lady*. Taken separately, these interrelated novels could each be tagged with its own generic label: the first, set in the Britain of the sixties, could well be called period-fiction, the second, located in Morocco, colonial fiction, and the last, putting Enderby on the stage of a theatre in the American Midwest, might be termed a showbiz-novel of sorts. It is questionable, though, whether such rather haphazard categorisation would make quite as much sense as assigning *The Clockwork Testament* to what is possibly the most fascinating developments in the recent history of the satirical novel in the English language: the campus novel.

What animates *The Clockwork Testament* and secures it a place in the academic fiction of its time among such prominent masters of the genre as Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim*, John Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy*, Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man*, David Lodge's "campus trilogy," or, somewhat more recently, Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* is the intrinsic interest of its narrative set in the heterotopic space of "the groves of academe" where such great power-conflicts of our-times are acted out as the science wars, also known as the clash of the two cultures, the ethnic conflicts periodically erupting in America and the western world at large, or the radical restructuring of gender relations. If academic fiction can no longer be dismissed as a collection of "readerly" novels of marginal, if exotic, interest, neither can *The Clockwork Testament* be overlooked as an important representative of the genre. To conclude, Burgess was, somewhat like Dickens, Tolstoy, or Joyce, all things for all readers—including the author of at least one important campus novel: *The Clockwork Testament*.

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# The Ludovico Effect of Intermediality in *A Clockwork Orange*:

The Novel and the Film<sup>21</sup>

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*During the intensive critical debates around the adaptation of Burgess's novel, which mainly raised the issues of fidelity and obscenity, Stanley Kubrick repeatedly claimed "[i]t's all in the plot." By saying this, he was not only referring to a narrative fidelity to the plot, but also to the inherent intermediality of Burgess's text. Indeed, beyond the obvious tense duality between the orality represented by the nadsat slang and the literary, written text, the novel presents a complex texture of sensorial—visual, auditory, tactile, and even olfactory—cues that acquire culturally determined meanings in the novel and as such reflect on each other metaphorically. In order to avoid falling into the trap of a comparative criticism claiming the impossibility to adapt visual (or "sensorial") literature to film, I will regard Kubrick's adaptation as a discursive practice that adapts, beyond the plot, Burgess's view on the manipulative, conditioning effect of audio-visual media on society. I argue that by irony and excess, achieved with audio-visual stylisation, Kubrick also thematises the contemporary criticism of these media effects. Moreover, he is not only representing but also modelling the central issue of socio-psychological conditioning through audio-visual exposure.*

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## THE LUDOVICO EFFECT OF INTERMEDIALITY

### REFRAMING *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*

Adaptation theory can be regarded as an endless discourse about the competition between literature and film, the questions of authorship, fidelity, and the linguistic and signifying competences of the two media. Intriguingly, this debate did not cease with the maturity of cinematic forms of expression in the 1960s when European modernist cinemas emerged. Breaking with the burdening classical literary and cinematic traditions, these new cinemas turned to contemporary literature that had already incorporated the cultural experience of film, often thematising its institutional, social, and psychological processes. The adaptations of this new literature most often served as opportunities for cinematic self-reflection for modernist directors like Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, Federico Fellini, and Stanley Kubrick, just to name the most prominent of them.

Despite this obvious turn in the cinematic practice of adaptation, it is almost impossible to speak about *A Clockwork Orange*, the novel and the film, without falling into the trap of repetitions, the comparative approach, and the fidelity discourse. Stanley Kubrick's film is one of the most often-debated examples used in Adaptation Studies to epitomise the relevance of medium specificity in breaking and translating a coded written language into an audio-visual system of signs and significations. In the homonymous novel by Anthony Burgess, contemporary with Kubrick's film, the medium of written language is deliberately deconstructed with slang lexical elements that come to the fore by effacing signification and undermining the transparency of language. In the first-person narration of Alex, the young main protagonist embarking on a series of violent acts and ending up exposed to similarly aggressive treatment serving his social rehabilitation, human language itself becomes a "disturbing noise" that we need to get used to in order to reach the message.<sup>22</sup> Kubrick's adaptation cannot build solely on the coded language of the protagonists, as the images of the film instantly reveal the meaning of slang words by showing everything. Consequently, Kubrick,

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22 The idea of the disturbing presence of the medium which acts against transparency and the reality effect was introduced in Semiotics by Roland Barthes who considered it a "third meaning" and brought examples from cinema (317–333). Departing from the semiotic grounds, Joachim Paech contends that intermediality appears between mediums that can be (self)reflexively observed (n. p.).

in his film, relies on the stylisation of two other signifying systems: that of the moving image and the musical score, in order to achieve an equivalent of the coded textual layers of the novel. The diegetic and extradiegetic occurrences of Beethoven's *9th Symphony*, its symphonic and electronically orchestrated versions by Wendy Carlos and Rachel Elkind, together with the contrast between hyperrealistic and highly stylised visuals, participate in a sort of artistic study on the effects of film as both visual and auditory medium. This tendency, of course, is in line with Kubrick's statement in his well-known interview with Michel Ciment, saying that "writing the screenplay of the book is much more of a logical process—something between writing and breaking a code," the subsequent purpose being to achieve "a cinematic equivalent of Burgess's literary style, and Alex's highly subjective view of things" (Ciment n.p.).

Instead of a detailed comparison of the stylistic solutions of the novel and the film meant to convey social and cultural criticism, in what follows, I will focus on Kubrick's creative strategies to represent on film Burgess's view on the manipulative, conditioning power of audio-visual media on society. While the reader of the novel learns to understand the language without understanding the words, in the case of the film the spectator is conditioned by a familiar soundtrack and its relationship to the unfamiliar scenes of aggression. By an inventive use of the soundtrack that contains excerpts from Beethoven's *9th Symphony* and musical references to ideological discourses of freedom and violence, and by a problematisation of the visual representability of violence, Kubrick is not only representing but also modelling the phenomenon of socio-psychological conditioning through audio-visual exposure. As Kate McQuiston argues, Kubrick's conception of violence has "less to do with graphically depicted physical aggression and harm than unexpected violations of associations one has with things one holds dear" (112).

The analysis of the social effects and affects of the audio-visual medium will follow two main lines related to a figurative use of mediality and intermediality in Kubrick's film, already conceived in Burgess's novel: first, the recurrent scene of looking, observing, watching, dreaming, and imagining as a self-reflexive figuration of cinematic spectatorship and the visual effect; and second, the relationships of congruency, competition, and contrast between the visual and the auditory as described in the novel but

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used by Kubrick as a kind of study on medium specificity. Relying on existing musicological approaches, I will argue that metaphorical correlations between musical scenes and visual stylisation also reveal the director's view on the deliberate appropriation of music by audio-visual media and the subsequent conditioning of the spectator.

### FIGURES OF CINEMATIC SPECTATORSHIP AND EFFECT

We must emphasise that the inherent intermediality of Burgess's novel does not simply consist of its so-called visuality, the thematisation of the act of looking, the detailed and sensual descriptions, or a musical structure (some have discovered a sonata structure in the novel), but also of a coherent discourse on the audio-visual medium both as technique and an institutionally, socially, and politically regulated apparatus. Thus, while remaining faithful to his own artistic credo formulated in the interview with Ciment, according to which "in a film the images, the music, the editing and the emotions of the actors are the principal tools," (n. p.) Kubrick does not adapt, but rather *models* or *simulates* the audio-visual program of social conditioning described in the novel, achieving an effect similar to that described by Susan Rice:

This is Stanley Kubrick. He produced, wrote the screenplay for and directed *A Clockwork Orange*. I'm not sure that Kubrick sees himself as a practitioner of the Ludovico Technique, but I think he comes very close. Has it occurred to anyone that, after having our eyes metaphorically clamped open to witness the horrors that Kubrick parades across the screen, like Alex and his adored *9th*, none of us will ever again be able to hear "Singin' in the Rain" without a vague feeling of nausea? (39)

I argue that Kubrick's great invention is exactly that while he models the Ludovico effect with scenes of aggression throughout the film and allegorically concentrates it in the scenes of treatment, he also manages to visually alienate "old ultra-violence" with carefully choreographed movement, décor, costumes/masks (Figure 1), and both diegetic and nondiegetic music.

From the very first scene, stylisation questions the credibility of representation and makes our identification with Alex problematic. Instead of simply producing the Ludovico effect, on a more general level Kubrick draws attention to the dangers of aggressive content manipulation through form in all audio-visual media. The Ludovico treatment scene is his most explicit statement on the possible brainwashing effect of film, a deliberate combination of image and sound: as Kate McQuiston points out, just as Alex is not able to turn away his eyes, while watching the film we lose our ability to think of and cope with violence. This scene is an analogue of our helpless position as spectators watching the film up to this point (McQuiston 114).

“Horrorshow is right, friend. A real show of horrors” (Burgess 112)—this is how the educative film screening to which Alex is exposed is described by the doctors. In Burgess’s book, as Alex describes his experience, he could not resist the effect of images of violence: “I knew it could not really be real, but that made no difference. I was heaving away but could not sick, viddy-ing first a britva cut out an eye, then slice down the cheek, then go rip rip rip all over” (Burgess 80). This shocking image is a striking allusion to one of the most memorable opening film scenes in the history of cinema, Luis Buñuel’s and Salvador Dalí’s surrealist *Le Chien Andalou* (*An Andalusian Dog*, 1929) that features the close-up image of an eye cut open, following the sight of a cloud obscuring the moon. As Michael Koller points out, this scene is a key to the rest of the film and has been interpreted by its early critics, among others Jean Vigo as a coded message to spectators meaning that what follows should be looked at in a different way, “with a different eye,” i.e. knowing that what we are to see is a different, new reality (Vigo 81). This incongruence is also reflected in the relationship between the title and the film: *An Andalusian Dog* sounds exactly as surrealist and apparently has as little to do with its stream of surrealist images as *A Clockwork Orange* has with its story. This famous image of the Buñuel-Dalí film is not used as a direct quotation by Kubrick—the connection would be too obvious. Instead, he refers to it in the conditioning scene by a forced immobilisation of the body and the eye, i.e. with figurative motifs and a conceptual background conveying a similar message about the hypnotic effect of manipulated visual and auditive signification. A more direct reference to *An Andalusian Dog* appears earlier in *A Clockwork Orange*, in a scene about the obscenity

of looking and the limits of the visual representation of obscenity. While enrolled to the correctional institution, Alex is thoroughly searched with a tiny, pencil-like lantern in all his orifices, including anally. With this quotation, which is a close reproduction of a similar scene from the Buñuel-Dali film, Kubrick warns against the intrusive omnipresence and aggressive control of visual media upon our bodies and lives (Figures 2–3).

The prologue of *An Andalusian Dog* can also be interpreted as a kind of warning that the film that follows will be difficult to watch due to its content featuring aggression and sexuality. Just like the episode of the Ludovico treatment, the scene of cutting the eyeball is an allegory of the hypnotic effect of cinema: in a dark room and in a state of motoric inhibition, just like Alex, we cannot resist the cinematic effect, although we know that what we are watching is fiction and illusion (Figures 4–5). The Ludovico method works on Alex and spectators as well, who cannot close their ears either: the effect of the shocking images is increased by their pairing with fragments from Alex's beloved *9th Symphony*, a traumatizing experience due to the tantalizing emotional incongruence.

The aggressive, phallic, voyeuristic nature of the gaze is a recurrent topic in both novel and film, but in the latter it becomes a self-reflexive tool participating in a long theoretical discourse on the visual representability of obscenity, initiated by Buñuel and Dali. These all together make *A Clockwork Orange*, as Robert Kolker suggested, an antirealistic film: “[t]hat is, it works against the usual codes of framing, cutting, narrative construction, character formation, viewer positioning, and thematic conventions” (26). Actually, the very first scene in the film prepares the spectator for this anti-illusion effect: the loud music and Alex's monologue, delivered while staring directly at us, crushes the fourth wall of the cinematic screen and makes us aware of our voyeuristic spectatorial gaze. This first scene introduces Alex, as Margaret DeRosia argues, as both subject and object of the gaze: wearing eye-catching costume and make up, he is both looked at and looking intensively (16). The central position of the eye on the posters of both *An Andalusian Dog* and *A Clockwork Orange* points at a common tradition of a self-reflexive film practice highly aware of both the possibilities and dangers represented by a controlling camera and an audio-visual medium.

It also alludes to the centrality of the act of looking, the gaze and voyeurism, as well as to the signification of what has been coined “the Beethoven stare.”

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Thomas Allen Nelson suggests that the image of Beethoven staring intently from under a lowered brow is intentionally echoed in the film’s first image of Alex’s face (153). As Krin Gabbard and Shailja Sharma observe, the purposeful stare from beneath a lowered brow would eventually become a standard Kubrick index for madness (98). In *A Clockwork Orange*, Beethoven is intermedially (and synaesthetically) represented as image (poster), sculpture, and music, and is a common denominator and a signifier of a semantic content related to freedom and self-determination. As musicologist Scott Burnham argues, there is a long line of writers who have assigned to Beethoven’s music “the highest values of their age, those of freedom and self-determination, as well as the decidedly human (as opposed to godlike or demigodlike) nature of the heroic type” (25). Besides unfamiliar settings, decors, and objects, the scherzo and the finale of the *9th Symphony* are the most familiar elements in the signifying system of the film and are also closely associated with Alex. Kate McQuiston points out that Beethoven’s music, always played diegetically, belongs to the world of Alex, while other pieces of music, played extradiegetically, like Rossini’s *La Gazza Ladra*, to that of the spectator. McQuiston also provides a musicological background to the competition between Beethoven’s and Rossini’s music: as an opponent of Beethoven’s learned and elevated music, the sensual and popular music of Rossini stands for the loss of Alex’s popularity when accompanying the fighting scenes at the casino and driving to the writer’s house (109).

In both the novel and the film, Beethoven’s music stands for a misunderstood freedom, or freedom interpreted by Alex as a lack of boundaries and moral restrictions. Ironically, this apparent freedom turns into a trap: when there are no boundaries, there is nothing to cross, hence freedom becomes increasingly difficult to be experienced. Consequently, Alex can only experience freedom after being completely deprived of it. Gabbard and Sharma offer a different interpretation of the Beethoven-reference:

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according to them, by creating a character who is literally deprived of his “freedom and self-determination,” Kubrick would dignify Alex’s struggles by invoking this tradition of the myth of freedom associated with Beethoven (103). Actually, as Kate McQuiston argues, Kubrick does much more than that: by invoking the freedom, brotherhood, and joy of the *Ode of Joy* that can be heard three times in the film in different contexts and interpretations (in the milkbar, sung by a girl; in the conditioning scene march; and in the coda), he calls attention to the promiscuous reception history of the *9th Symphony*, as well as the dangers of political appropriation (121).

Kubrick pointed out in his interview with Ciment that, as far as he is concerned, the most memorable scenes in the best films are those which are built predominantly of images and music (Ciment n. p.). In the case of the adaptation of *A Clockwork Orange*, images and music are brought into an intermedial dialogue in order to display meanings and correlations that often remain hidden in the narrative of the novel. Alex’s room, with its Beethoven posters, discs, and a mirror, while loud with Beethoven’s *9th Symphony*, is designed as an intermedial space reflecting on the apparently harmless monomania of his that feeds, however, an unspeakable violence (Figure 6). Moreover, as McQuiston emphasises, in the scherzo scene the camera seems to animate the objects in the room, following the rhythm of the music and suggesting, as she puts it, “the apparent power of the cinematic apparatus to combine music and images in ways that make them seem to belong together, but [Kubrick] shows the even greater power of the spectator to read meaning into these coincidences” (111).

It has often been argued that the novel explores violence tied to listening in scenes where Beethoven’s or Mozart’s music evokes images of violence and instigates even more violence. In the novel, listening to the *6th Brandenburg*, Alex actually realises that he should have been fiercer in his attack earlier in the evening: “I would like to have tolchoked them both harder and ripped them to ribbons on their own floor,” he thinks (Burgess 40). As Peter Rabinowitz points out, while Burgess’s standpoint stems from Plato’s attack on music in *The Republic* due to its emotional and ethical dangers, Kubrick already uses pre-packaged associations with music (and film) and manipulates the spectator’s attitudes toward violence (119). Moreover, he conditions the spectator by associating violence and aggression with the *9th*

*Symphony*, the only familiar element in the diegesis to which we associate human values and beauty.

The existing critical debate around the correlation between music and violence as thematised in the novel and the film can be completed with a cognitive and phenomenological interpretation of musical and visual meaning-making and, as we have seen, our spectatorial “conditioning.” As Juan Chattah points out,

It is primarily through embodiment, a hardwired process grounded in our physiology and cognition, that music functions phenomenologically in film. Embodiment mediates signification, enabling the music to guide the audience’s attention toward particular visual events, to shape the perception of segmentation at micro- and macro-levels to trigger a myriad of bodily states, and ultimately to present a unique perspective on the discourse of characters and cinematic narrative. (81)

Chattah relates the use of music in film to metaphorical thinking or “mapping,” establishing metaphorical music-image correlations like “pitch frequency is motion in vertical space,” “psychological tension is loudness, consonance/dissonance, pitch frequency or timbre” (85–90). In terms of their intensity and effect, these correlations are characterised not only by congruency (when image and music harmonise completely, for example, in the opening futuristic scene and the electronic music), but also by competition (when the loudness of music seems to catch up the acts of violence) or by contrast (the scene of rape and the playful presentation of *Singing in the Rain*).

One of the recurrent questions of the criticism of *A Clockwork Orange* is whether the reader or the spectator can identify with a narrator protagonist who commits violent acts. While in the case of the novel our attitude oscillates between rejection and empathy (the first-person narration is very effective in this sense), in the case of the film our detachment is greatly ensured by a diegetic music that, instead of depicting the protagonist’s state of mind, provokes and conditions it. The embodied simulation of emotions through music, which according to Chattah is responsible for the activation

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of mirror neurons in most films, does not work here. We do not feel what the protagonist feels when listening to music or moving to the rhythm of music. We cannot identify with a protagonist whom we hear thinking of and committing violent acts. However, simply due to our spectatorial position, we undergo a conditioning “treatment” similar to that of Alex when watching images that we find disturbing, an experience enhanced by a familiar soundtrack related to cherished values and memories.

In *A Clockwork Orange* the unconventional use of the musical score does not simply consist of an incongruence between music and movement and between music and image, but rather of the way they together relate to the meanings of different actions. The diegetic *9th Symphony* is often contrasted with its electronic version extradiegetically. In the scenes of conditioning treatment, the symphonic version occurs as the musical score accompanying the images of violence projected to Alex, this time unstylised and realistic. Instead of simply emphasising the effect of the displayed images, in this scene the musical score itself acquires the meaning of crude violence and as such contributes to the reprogramming of the behaviour of the protagonist. As already mentioned earlier, the *alla marcia* portion of the *9th*, dissonant and alienating as heard through the phase vocoder of Wendy Carlos and Rachel Elkind, is a metaphor of Alex’s cognitive dissonance upon hearing his beloved Beethoven over images of unspeakable cruelty.

The occurrence of *Singing in the Rain* in the scene of the assault against the Writer and his wife drastically overwrites the conventional filmic correlation of congruency between music and scene content. By doing this, Kubrick de-stabilises the spectatorial meaning-making process, simulating once again the effect of surprise when coming across the many layers and faces of violence. The aggression from this scene is “doubled” as an “aggression” against the spectator’s expectations. *Singing in the Rain* is, along with Beethoven’s music, not simply the only familiar piece of music but the only familiar *object* in the diegesis. At its first appearance, sung by Alex in the most disturbing scene of the film, in the presence of the writer tied down and forced to watch and hear (just like Alex later in the Ludovico treatment), the discrepancy between image and sound creates a cognitive dissonance in the spectator.

The three occurrences of *Singing in the Rain*, fulfilling in turns the role of contrasting, replacing, and reinforcing the content of images, also participate in a figurative representation of Alex's development process. It appears for the first time diegetically in the scene of the rape of the writer's wife, as a contrast to the images of violence. The song performed by Alex, together with the choreographed dance movements, costumes, and decor add up to a stylised language that—paradoxically, instead of alienating the spectator from the horrors of the scene—makes it more unbearable. Musical and visual stylisation here is not a modernist tool to represent the alienation of the protagonist, but rather a metaphor of Alex's lack of empathy, his distanciation from his own emotions and actions. The second occurrence of the song helps the Writer identify Alex as the perpetrator of his wife: by replacement, the diegetic sound contributes indexically to the evocation of a past traumatic event. The third and final occurrence of the song, this time extradiegetically and in the original interpretation of Gene Kelly, represents on the one hand Alex's regained freedom, controversial as it is (he might return to the same "old ultra-violence"); on the other hand, it also reflects upon our first disturbing experience with it. As McQuiston puts it, this second presence "reminds us of the violence we have seen, and of the unpleasant conditioning we have undergone" (109).

Kubrick applies in some of the musical action scenes the so-called Mickey Mousing effect, originally used for cartoons and denoting a synchronised visual and aural information, achieved by "mapping physical movements onto sonic space" (Chattah 84). This effect can be observed in the casino fight and the scene of speeding towards the Writer's home, for example (Figure 7). The extradiegetic music of these scenes, Rossini's *La gazza ladra*, brings in its entire musicological context, i.e. its traditional use in Warner Brothers cartoons and a cartoonish effect associated with destructive violence (McQuiston 108). But apart from this "speed is tempo or loudness" conceptual metaphor, other conceptual music-image metaphors described by Chattah (85–90) refer to the protagonist's state of mind only once, in the conditioning scene where dissonant electronic music denotes the discrepancy between the emotions provoked by what is seen and what is heard. The same is true for the novel: Alex speaks a lot about the effect music *has* on him and not about how it *expresses* his feelings.

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While turning the classical music invoked in the novel into a major semantic factor, Kubrick is not faithful to all its musical references: for example, he renounces to confer sound to the imaginary, non-referential music (by Plautus and Glittenfenster) from the novel by making somebody compose equivalents for the non-existent scores, instead he relies on electronic versions of classical masterpieces in order to convey a futuristic atmosphere, equivalent to that of the nadsat language and stylised visuals. Despite these original solutions regarding the image-sound relationship, Burgess at the time considered Kubrick's adaptation "faithful," in line with Kubrick's own conception of "good adaptation." In both the novel and the film, the moral content and attitude, as well as the critique of the conditioning power of audio-visual media are converted into a system of codes that denotes the irrational nature of violence and our spectatorial puzzlement when facing it. In Burgess's novel, the obscurity of the slang used by Alex is as incomprehensible as his acts of violence. By making it opaque, Burgess pushes language itself to the fore in the spirit of an understanding that was revolutionary at the time of the publication of the novel and has remained valid since: the underestimated cultural relevance of spoken and written language. Kubrick remains faithful to both the novel and his own medium by converting the language of violence into visual and auditory signifiers, with a single common denominator, "Beethoven," a cultural code misused by different ideologies. The most powerful representation of the "music is ideology" metaphorical correlation is realised in the conditioning scenes, clearly referring to Beethoven's music as a tool of Nazi propaganda, as "phallic music," and as such, aggression in itself.

To sum up, in my article I attempted to highlight new perspectives in the criticism of *A Clockwork Orange*, both the novel and the film. I argued that the most exciting dialogue between the two media is detectable not so much on a narrative or stylistic, but rather on a discursive, metanarrative level, referring to the socio-political function and manipulative power of the audio-visual media. The connection with the Buñuel-Dali project is representative of this discursive layer: while Burgess in the description of Alex's treatment refers to the introductory scene of *An Andalusian Dog* (the cutting of the eyeball), Kubrick refuses to adapt something that is ready-made and obvious and instead connects to it by subverting all our

expectations and learned spectatorial mechanisms. Burgess's novel is rich in vivid and atmospheric descriptions responsible for its acclaimed "visuality." But, as we know, literary visuality is the greatest trap for adaptation, easily leading to the disappointment of the spectators who fail to recognise in the film their own images triggered by the novel. Instead of struggling to adapt somebody else's images, Kubrick creates his own stylised, futuristic world. But even more than that, he plays with the effect of the surprising, subversive approach to the image-music relationship—just like Alex, we end up conditioned by the discrepancy between images of violence and music associated with subjective values; after watching this film, listening to Beethoven or *Singing in the Rain* will never be the same. Kubrick's skilful adaptation adds a new meaning to another metaphor, that of the title, illuminating the effect a technically accomplished audio-visual medium has on our innermost values and subjectivity.

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FIGURES



Figure 1. Visual alienation of “old ultra-violence” with décor and costumes





Figures 2–3. *A Clockwork Orange* and *An Andalusian Dog*: a discourse on the limits of visual obscenity





Figures 4–5. The scene of social conditioning as a reference to *An Andalusian Dog* by Buñuel and Dalí



Figure 6. Images, discs and loud music: Alex's room modelling an “inter-medial Beethoven”



Figure 7. The Mickey-Mousing effect in the driving scene to the writer's home in *A Clockwork Orange*

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# Burgess in the Orwell Game:

1985 as Cacotopian Ars Poetica

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KÁROLY PINTÉR

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*The book 1985 is the third and last dystopia in the oeuvre of Anthony Burgess. It can be considered unique since it contains a string of non-fictional texts reflecting on Orwell's classic as well as related philosophical, political, social, and theological issues, followed by a dystopian novella entitled "1985." The essay argues that the book, but especially the essays, can be read as Burgess's "cacotopian ars poetica," or his last and most extensive statement on the genre.*

If there is anything like a "triptych" of English literary dystopias in the twentieth century, the three most obvious candidates would be Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), and Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). While some critics may argue for the imaginative or literary qualities of other novels, I can think of no other works that approach the well-established popularity, wide-ranging impact, and cultural penetration of these classics. Written within a 30-year period, they display some distinctly similar concerns, such as the possibility of individual freedom vis-a-vis the modern oppressive state, the threats presented by scientific advances and various collectivist ideologies, and the futility of rebellion in an unheroic age. All three stories are also distinctly British in their cultural preoccupations, taking place mostly in and around London and satirising aspects of the social class system or invoking English literary classics, especially William Shakespeare.

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Each novel, however, represents a strikingly different cultural era. Huxley, profoundly disgusted by both the scientific Wellsian utopia and the industrial-commercial United States of the 1920s, presents an artificial and mechanised far future whose quasi-human society functions smoothly like a well-constructed machine because its human parts are also purpose-built and rigidly standardised and organised, with almost any shade of individuality and human particularity carefully bred and educated out of them. Orwell's nightmarish vision is much closer to its empirical present in fictional time, projecting its ultimate totalitarianism less than 40 years into the future, and the wretched existence under the absolute control of the adjectiveless, therefore, absolute Party and its symbolic leader, Big Brother, offers an oppressive essence distilled from all the gruesome experiences of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union.

Compared to these two audacious and horrifying visions, Burgess's novel looks less ambitious and less shocking too: his fictional world is hardly futuristic at all, its Britain still recognisably contemporary (i.e. 1960s—Burgess himself suggested that he did not project his fiction more than 10 years into the future [*You've Had Your Time* 26]), except for the violent youth subculture and a more authoritarian government ready to experiment on convicted criminals. The boldest invention of *A Clockwork Orange* is arguably its language, the brilliantly realised Nadsat slang in which the story is told by his teenage narrator, Alex, the least sympathetic character of the three main heroes. *A Clockwork Orange* owes a lot of its success to the ingenious 1971 movie adaptation by Stanley Kubrick, which was a worldwide success but scandalised conservative audiences with its (by contemporary standards) explicit depiction of violence and rape, and forced Burgess into the uncomfortable position of defending a story that significantly departed from his own original and preferred British edition.<sup>23</sup>

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23 Burgess discussed his problems with Kubrick's movie in several subsequent writings, emphasising that Kubrick—accidentally—was unfamiliar with the original British edition, in which Alex finally chooses to give up violent crime to become a more responsible adult. Therefore, the conclusion of the movie version—in line with the truncated American edition—presented an unregenerate criminal finally free from behavioural constraints, whereas Burgess's original ending was meant to emphasise the benefit of free will and moral choice. But Burgess was even more irritated by baseless accusations after the movie came out that he promoted or celebrated mindless violence: "I was also sickened

*A Clockwork Orange*, however, is not the only dystopia written by Burgess: there are two other books by him whose fame and success never came close. *The Wanting Seed*, also published in 1962, imagined England in an unspecified future time suffering from the consequences of overpopulation, food shortages, and political repression. *1985*, written in 1978, was a peculiar tribute to Orwell's classic: a string of nonfictional writings discussing and dissecting *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as well as several issues related to the story, followed by a short dystopian novel entitled "1985," once again taking place in the very near future and presenting a chaotic and authoritarian Britain dominated by the TUC, or the Trades Union Congress. It is this work, *1985*, that I wish to discuss in the following, since its rare combination of essay and fiction, meant to be read in conjunction, reflects on both Orwell and Burgess's own views on the dystopian genre, amounting to an ambiguous statement that can justifiably be considered his cacotopian *ars poetica*. Cacotopia is Burgess's preferred term for dystopia because he believes—incorrectly, actually—that utopia was originally neutral, encompassing both positive and negative versions,<sup>24</sup> and partly because "[i]t sounds worse than dystopia" (*1985* 330).

The book displays a rather complex structure. The first part consists of nine texts of (mostly) non-fictional character, although in Burgess's case the line is sometimes blurred: the whole series, for instance, opens with a short Q-and-A session entitled "Catechism," which sets out the underlying assumptions and principles of Orwell's *1984*, from its fictional alternative

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by the manner in which a book that, all of ten years before, had made very little impact on the reading public was now becoming a kind of invisible primer of evil" (*You've Had Your Time* 257). He finds an opportunity to vent his grievance in *1985* as well when discussing his earlier book: "The novel was not well understood. Readers, and viewers of the film made from the book, have assumed that I, a most unviolent man, am in love with violence" (*1985* 371).

- 24 Thomas More's original coinage of "utopia" deliberately included a pun: the Greek compounds of "eutopia" (goodplace) and "outopia" (noplac) are both transcribed in Latin as "utopia." The pun is made explicit by one of the prefatory materials of the early Latin editions of More's *Utopia*, a poem on Utopia by an unknown poet called Anemolius entitled *Hexastichon* (see e.g. More [4]). While it cannot be determined whether the poem was actually written by More (it may be an addition by Peter Giles or other Humanist friends who contributed the ancillary writings), it does reveal that the earliest readers of the book were clearly aware of the dual meaning of the term and its implication of an "ideal human community" as opposed to "any imaginary human society."

history to the ideology and organisation of the Party. After a brief statement of intentions, Burgess presents a self-interview with “an old man,” and later on there is another mock-conversation with himself. The remaining five pieces are straightforward essays presenting wide-ranging reflections on Orwell’s classic as well as broader excursions into related philosophical, political, social, and theological issues. Then follows the novella entitled “1985,” Burgess’s attempt to present his “Orwellian” dystopia from the vantage point of the late 1970s. Finally, there are two appendices, one of them clearly a deferential parody of Orwell’s summary of Newspeak at the end of his book, the other is an Epilogue which continues the series of mock-interviews of the first part and contains some musings on possible future developments in the world.

At the time of its publication, the volume generated mostly negative critical responses: Martin Amis in *The New York Times* summed the book up as “the first half is reasonable [sic] good, the second half unconscionably poor,” then described the novella as a “stoked-up 1976,” the year of the deepest economic and political crisis in Britain. Clive James in *The New York Review of Books* commented that “Burgess would probably like *1985* to be thought of as a teeming grab-bag of ideas. In fact it is a scrap heap” because of the lack of coherence in his vision and because his political insight is limited to an antipathy to soulless bureaucratic government. Burgess “is an individualist by instinct—a valuable trait in a personality, but a limited viewpoint from which to criticize a whole society.” In his massive study on utopia and anti-utopia, Krishan Kumar offered a similarly bipolar opinion about the book: while he praised the essayistic first half as “lively and provocative in the best sense,” he had no more to say about the novella than it is “excruciatingly awful” (Kumar 469n3).

The only significant exception to the predominantly dismissive tone of criticism is John Stinson’s essay, in which he made an effort to interpret the novella in the context of Burgess’s Manichaeic world view (while completely neglecting the essays): the world is made up of opposites in constant and ceaseless conflict, and above all, the struggle between good and evil is necessary and eternal. Since these two principles presuppose each other, evil is an ineradicable part of both human nature and human society, and those who try to pretend it does not exist and this way avoid moral

choice by staying neutral are mocked, dismissed, and condemned in quite a few novels of Burgess. “Apathy—torpor, moral neutrality—Burgess insists, is a deadly and all-pervasive sin of our times” (Stinson 512). The England of “1985” is presented exactly as a morally “lukewarm” place which casts out people with strong moral convictions.

Stinson’s dedicated defence notwithstanding, I tend to agree with those critics who believe that the novella entitled “1985” does not belong to Burgess’s notable fictional achievements. It suffers from problems characteristic of other mediocre Burgess novels (weak, random plotting, and few convincing characters) without many compensating virtues, since his vision of the near-future Britain lacks true originality and creativity despite occasional hilarious satirical episodes. He did endeavour to model the story on Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, especially in the opening part, but a direct comparison of the two novels is not flattering to Burgess. This may be at least partly accounted for by the fact, revealed by the author in his autobiography, that the entire book was written on the initiative of an American publishing house and not out of his own creative inspiration, and was a product of a period of severe depression. His own wife, Liana, wrote secretly to Little, Brown in Boston and asked them to commission a book from Burgess, “anything to make [him] feel that [he] was still wanted” (Burgess, *You’ve Had Your Time* 351). He commented on this entire period of his career (the late 1970s) the following way: “When a writer writes about other writers it is a sign of a loss of creative vitality or else an evasion of the generation of it” (350). Nonetheless, even if the fictional element is not truly inspired, Burgess’s idiosyncratically creative mind was sufficiently stimulated by the discussion of Orwell’s classic and produced perhaps the most extended set of critical and theoretical reflections about *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and related issues of literary dystopias by a fellow first-rate British writer and a younger contemporary.

To my mind, the fact that Burgess was a contemporary of Orwell is a significant factor: although a generation younger (there was a 14-year age gap between them), Burgess claimed to have met Orwell during the war years when he and his first wife fell in with a number of writers and artists during their weekend pub crawls in London. He even suggested that Orwell took the idea of Winston’s phobia of rats from a painter, Gilbert Wood, another regular of these drinking bouts, who was terrified of rats (Burgess,

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*Little Wilson and Big God* 291), and that the Chestnut Tree Café was inspired by a popular contemporary haunt, the Mandrake Club:

Orwell, whom I saw briefly at the Mandrake Club, which specialised in dubious gin flavoured with cloves and a large number of chessboards. It was run by a man named Boris. I had brought back with me from Gibraltar a number of tins of Victory cigarettes, which were a very briefly maintained army ration and were quite unsmokable. ... Orwell's noncommittal eye took in the tin I had on my table at the Mandrake, which became the Chestnut Tree Café, but did not accept a cigarette, preferring to roll his own. But his description of the Victory cigarettes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is accurate, and his Victory gin is Boris's. Odd members of the club sat in dark corners doing chess problems. (*Little Wilson and Big God* 334–335)

These claims are impossible to verify, of course, as they may well be imaginary embellishments of very brief encounters; it is at least suspicious that none of these anecdotes feature in Burgess's essays and remembrances written as part of *1985*, except for a brief hint that the Mandrake Club may have indeed served as a model for the Chestnut Tree Café, "a place where you drank gin of mysterious provenance and played chess" (*1985* 303). In his autobiography, written a decade later, Burgess may not have been able to resist the temptation of expanding his personal mythology and attributing some minor personal influence on one of the best-known English novels of the twentieth century.

However, being a younger contemporary offers Burgess a unique perspective to reveal how closely Orwell's dystopian vision is rooted in the experience of a bombed-out, dilapidated, decaying London of the late 1940s whose inhabitants were suffering from all sorts of post-war hardships and deprivations. In the playful mock-dialogue entitled "1948: an old man interviewed," Burgess astonishes his readers with a perplexing declaration: "Orwell's book is essentially a comic book" (*1985* 298). At first sight, it sounds like a *non sequitur*: how could the darkest, most horrible nightmare vision of twentieth-century literature be comic? Yet Burgess succeeds in pointing

out that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not lack comedy, especially black comedy and satirical or absurdist parody, which he has a particularly sharp eye for. He goes on to argue, utilising plenty of specific examples and parallels, that Orwell's Airstrip One is an only slightly distorted view of London in 1948, the "comedy of the all-too-recognizable" (298) from war-torn, shabby Victorian houses through didactic, in-your-face propaganda posters to such everyday discomforts as power cuts, shortages of goods, and bad food. He supplies some revelations that may even be shocking to some Orwell fans, for instance that the infamous name Big Brother is rooted in the pre-war advertisements of the Bennett Correspondence College of Sheffield: "You had a picture of Bennett *père*, a nice old man, shrewd but benevolent, saying, 'Let me be your father.' Then Bennett *fils* came along, taking over the business, a very brutal-looking individual, saying: 'let me be your big brother'" (299–300). And Burgess's memory is correct, as this 1936 newspaper ad illustrates (see image of the advertisement).<sup>25</sup> Telescreens are merely extrapolations of the pre-war Baird television sets with the twist that the screen is also an eye observing the viewers (300–301); the four towering ministries are an imaginative extension of the headquarters of the BBC (the Ministry of Truth), where Orwell broadcast propaganda aimed at colonial India from a basement room numbered 101 (303).

Of course, the claim that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is essentially comic is itself an obvious exaggeration for comic effect, and Burgess is fully aware of it. Yet, his strikingly unusual perspective is a helpful corrective against the majority view of the novel as a universally and unflinchingly bleak vision of the future. Newspeak can also be seen as a grim joke, for instance, the name of the four government ministries that are called Minitrue, Miniluv, Minipax, and Miniplenty, with their punning suggestion that merely a minimal amount of these virtues is represented by these institutions (an obvious example that Burgess failed to cite). Burgess's powerful sense of black humour gets full rein in the next essay devoted to Ingsoc, when he joins Orwell's language game by translating the most famous part of the Declaration of Independence into Newspeak, which turns out like this:

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25 Source: <<https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/File:Im19360130MEE-Bennett.jpg>>

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We say that truth writed is truth unwrited, that all mans are the same as each other, that their fathers and mothers maked them so that they are alive, free from all diseases and following not food but the feeling of having eated food. They are maked like this by their parents but Big Brother makes them like this. Big Brother cannot be killed but he is to be killed, and in his place there will be himself... (323)

Translating a foundational document of the United States of America is not an accidental choice; in Burgess's own admission, the book was intended to correct widespread American misconceptions about Orwell's novel: "American readers ... had thought that Orwell was an arch-conservative warning against Soviet communism, and the vapid use of the term 'Orwellian' for any vision of the future ... had to be rectified" (352). Burgess, as a fellow Englishman and a contemporary, recalls in detail how the majority of the country, and the ordinary soldiers in the British Army in particular, were fed up with the conservatism of Churchill and hoped for a left-wing turn by voting for Labour at the 1945 parliamentary elections. They experienced the British class system in a particularly perverted way in the armed forces, with all the officers being "gentlemen," speaking in a recognisable educated, upper-class accent, and treating their lower-class subordinates accordingly. "If a man entered the army as a mild radical, he approached the 1945 election as a raging one. A Welsh sergeant summed it up for me: 'When I joined up I was red. Now I'm bloody purple'" (307).<sup>26</sup> The fact that the main character of Orwell's novel is named Winston Smith is not an expression of admiration for Britain's war-time leader and the glorious past of the Empire but another comic gesture, juxtaposing a rare and aristocratic first name with a most ordinary surname to create a hilariously improbable combination: "The name Winston Smith is comic: it gets a laugh from British readers" (305).

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26 The same sentiments are recalled by another contemporary of Burgess and a fellow World War II veteran, science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, in a letter written almost exactly at the time *1985* was published: "Another memory: with what glee did I rush into the C.O.'s office, in May '45, to break the good news that we had just thrown out Winston! I find it hard to believe that I was such a typical parlour pink in those days."

Burgess is careful to emphasise that the Ingsoc of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has precious little to do with the existing English Socialists, that is, the Labour Party that came into power in 1945. Orwell, a committed Socialist, did not write a pamphlet against the Labour government at the time, but he observed the fanatic tendencies of his fellow left-wing intellectual compatriots with a good deal of suspicion and distrust. He was distinguished by a strongly idiosyncratic, liberal, and individualist Socialist conviction tinged with a strong sense of English patriotism and a powerful nostalgic love for the traditions and popular culture of his homeland:

Orwell prized his English inheritance—the language, the wild flowers, church architecture, Cooper’s Oxford marmalade, the innocent obscenity of seaside picture postcards, Anglican hymns, bitter beer, a good strong cup of tea. His tastes were bourgeois, and they veered towards the working class. (310)

Burgess astutely points out that such patriotic nostalgia for the past—and partly for a working-class life he could not have due to his middle-class family and upbringing—is irreconcilable with doctrinaire Socialist convictions. Orwell yearns for an imaginary Dickensian England “of farmhouse kitchen with hams hanging from the rafters, a smell of old dog ... kindly policemen, clean air, noisy free speech in pubs, families sticking together, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, the fug of the old music hall” (311), while he has a distinct fear of the future. That is why the past functions as a subversive element in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a source of pragmatic values to be set against ideological ones: the beautiful blank notebook and the old-fashioned pen, the nursery rhyme Winston is trying to recall throughout the first half of the novel, the words of Shakespeare, the glass paperweight with the coral in it.

In my opinion, Burgess discerns Orwell’s nostalgia-tinged conservative bent so well partly because of the similarly paradoxical nature of their intellectual outlook in relation to their social background. As an Eton-educated former imperial policeman, Orwell is committed to egalitarian Socialism out of empathy for the plight of the poor, yet he is still unable to love the workers as his equals: they remain an essentially different group of people to him,

“noble animals” like Boxer in *Animal Farm* (1985 311) or the singing proletarian woman in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 180–181). His patriotic and nostalgic cultural conservatism prevents him from becoming a conventional Socialist faithful with a firm belief in the bright future of English Socialism. Burgess, a recusant Lancashire Catholic of modest lower-middle-class background (see *Little Wilson and Big God* 7–88),<sup>27</sup> would have made a much more typical Labour supporter, yet he never shared Orwell’s faith in Socialism but displays a similar nostalgia for the distinctive curiosities of English culture,<sup>28</sup> as well as a distrust of growing state power and repressive bureaucracies. Burgess, who clearly disliked the entrenched British class system and never missed an opportunity to lampoon the aristocrats and the wealthy of his country, nonetheless stuck to a certain individualist or even libertarian political attitude throughout most of his life, which may be described as “conservative” only in the sense that he consistently disliked the inexorable trend of twentieth-century democracies (not to mention dictatorial regimes) towards more regulations and restrictions in every area of life, fewer individual liberties, and higher taxation. He was obviously a cultural conservative, however, excoriating modern mass cultures, the decline of education, and the debasing impact of mindless entertainment provided by television.<sup>29</sup> As a self-conscious intellectual who struggled to make a living as an independent writer, he had a sobering view of intellectuals in modern society:

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27 Jim Clarke in his essay identified Burgess’s family origin as “poor working-class background” (28), but this designation is contradicted by Burgess’s own autobiography, who described his father as a bookkeeper who played the piano in music halls at nights, while his stepmother owned a pub and later a tobacco and a liquor store. It is certainly true that his paternal uncles were manual labourers and his stepmother was practically illiterate, but apparently Burgess’s family lived a notch above the working class: he wrote that he was often mocked by other kids due to his family being “rich” (Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God* 80–83).

28 See his long diatribe against the metric system, those “Cartesian abstractions of France” (1985 311) and his somewhat unconvincing argument that the old British coinage represented “empirical common sense, not abstract rationality” (312).

29 See, for instance, his remarks in the essay entitled “Bakunin’s children,” a rumination on anarchic youth movements and revolutions: “Education consists in taking swift and economical meals out of the larder called the past. ... The young very logically reject the past because it seems of no use to people living in an eternal present. ... The young do not necessarily reject educational establishments, however, since being taught involved

[I]n a free society, intellectuals are among the under-privileged. What they offer—as schoolteachers, university lecturers, writers—is not greatly wanted. If they threaten to withdraw their labour, nobody is going to be much disturbed. ... They lack the power of the capitalist boss on the one hand and the power of the syndicalist boss on the other. They get frustrated. They find pure intellectual pleasures inadequate. They become revolutionaries. Revolutions are usually the work of disgruntled intellectuals with the gift of the gab. (1985 315)

In Burgess's reading, Ingsoc was not an imaginary extrapolation of Labour government in Britain but a radically different fantasy: the ultimate totalitarian dictatorship of fanatic intellectuals. Burgess points out the blatant impossibility of such an occurrence as a historical development, emphasising the absurdity of such a scenario and coming to another radical conclusion: "Orwell gave us nothing new. ... He was playing the intellectual game of constructing a working model of a utopia, or cacotopia. How far, he seems to say, can I push things without seeing the careful structure collapse?" (1985 317).

By declaring Orwell's book an "intellectual game," Burgess has also revealed his own attitude to the construction of cacotopias. The element of game playing has been an inherent part of all major literary utopias from Thomas More onward: satirising and parodying real-life phenomena and characters, creating an aura of credible storytelling while carefully placing alienating markers in the text to signal the fictionality and the impossibility of the narrative, presenting absurd imaginary social or political institutions with a straight face—all these are among the methods employed by utopias and dystopias alike, methods of a complex intellectual game.<sup>30</sup> Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* served as a widely popular model for such sarcastic literary playfulness at the expense of contemporary politics and society for generations of English writers, and Orwell was also a great admirer of Swift (see his essay "Politics vs. Literature" written in 1946

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being in communities of their own kind, with teaching as an irrelevance or as a purveying of things to be rejected, such focuses of protest being welcome to the idealism of youth" (1985 353).

30 For a more detailed explication of the parallels between utopias and games, see Pintér (41–43).

[Orwell, *Collected Essays* 241–261]). Burgess identifies several key elements of game-playing in Orwell's fiction: the grim parody of contemporary London with the defamiliarising effect of the characters using Newspeak phrases, paying with dollars, terrified by telescreens, and confronted with the face of Big Brother wherever they go. In the essay "Ingsoc Considered," he focuses on the philosophy of the Party, which he describes as a form of collective solipsism, aiming at the political community to think like a single mind and utilising the mental technique of doublethink to achieve that. Since the Party denies the existence of objective reality and arrogates to itself unlimited power to control all aspects of not just the present but also the past, doublethink is necessary for Party members to constantly adapt to the alterations issued by Party leaders whenever the past is "rectified." Newspeak, another initiative to guarantee absolute orthodoxy, stems from the ambition of removing all shades of ambiguity and all opportunities for heretical thought from language. Burgess, however, also points out that all these are also stimulating intellectual games: "Newspeak is, God help us, fun. Doublethink is, God help us again, absorbing mental acrobatics. There may be dangers in living in 1984, but there is no need for dullness" (324).

He also spots the contradictions in the totalitarian game that Orwell has constructed. The simple and static pleasure derived from unlimited power, cruelty, and violence is not enough to maintain a regime; human nature is more complicated than that. He offers an insight that echoes the German political philosopher Carl Schmitt's famous thesis about the sovereign (Schmitt 5–15): "We recognize power when we see a capacity for choice unqualified by exterior factors. When authority is expressed solely through doing evil, then we doubt the existence of choice and hence the existence of power" (327). This claim is an interesting complement to Burgess's definition of individual freedom, i.e. the capability for moral choice, which is denied to Alex in *A Clockwork Orange* due to his psychological conditioning: a person or a body exercising absolute power also loses its freedom of action if all they do is evil. "O'Brien is talking about not of power but of a disease not clearly understood. Disease, of its nature, either kills or is cured" (328).

Burgess underlines the outer limits of controlling reality by the collective solipsistic mind of the Party as well: doublethink fails as a method of collective adjustment when faced with such irrefutable natural phenomena

as emergencies, disasters, earthquakes, epidemics, or the destruction of the environment. Even the language of Newspeak would not remain eternally unchanging under extreme restrictions, and would probably develop its own slang; Burgess, never missing a comic opportunity, offers a characteristically entertaining example: “If *doubleplusungood* ... is applied to an ill-cooked egg, we shall need something stronger to describe a sick headache. *Unbigbrotherwise uningsocful doubledoubledoubleplusungood*, for instance” (329).

But true to his Manichean worldview of thinking in terms of opposites, he switches his perspective once again at the end of the essay by pointing out that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not just a “Swiftian toy but ... an extended metaphor of apprehension ... an apocalyptic codex of our worst fears” (329). The Orwellian game may be entertaining, but it is far from light-hearted: the threat of totalitarian nightmare, the total loss of individual freedom has been haunting humanity at least since the early twentieth century.

In the next essay entitled “Cacotopia,” Burgess offers a brief but insightful survey of Orwell’s antecedents, beginning with a quote from Thomas More’s *Utopia* (which could easily be interpreted as a frightful dystopia by a modern reader) but focusing primarily on Zamyatin’s *We* and Huxley’s *Brave New World*,<sup>31</sup> books Orwell had read and publicly commented on: he was impressed and inspired by the former while disagreeing and arguing with the latter. Burgess cannot resist the temptation to bring into the discussion his own cyclical theory of history, which revolves around two conflicting views of human nature, both rooted in early Christian theology. The Augustinian view, classically formulated by St. Augustine of Hippo in the early fifth century, is a sceptical and austere understanding of human nature, which is tainted by the original sin of Adam and Eve and, therefore, always tempted by evil, making salvation impossible without divine grace. The opposite view is termed Pelagian by Burgess after Pelagius, a monk and theologian of British Celtic origin, who was Augustine’s contemporary: he denied the doctrine of original sin and insisted that humans can achieve salvation guided by their own free will. Augustine considered

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31 Somewhat surprisingly, Burgess ignores what is arguably the earliest modern dystopia in English, *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) by H. G. Wells. He must have been unaware of the strong impact Wells made on Zamyatin and *We*, which has since been uncovered by criticism (see e.g. Parrinder 115–126).

Pelagius a dangerous heretic and managed to get him condemned in 418 at the Synod of Carthage. Burgess insists that the entire history of humanity can be captured in the struggle of these two interpretations of human nature, one pessimistic and one optimistic, which continue to influence modern thinking in secularised form as well.<sup>32</sup> The Pelagian impulse is dominated by the optimistic view that humans are perfectible and general human progress is inevitable since most humans wish to be good; Pelagian phases of history are characterised by liberal laws and a minimum of coercion. The Augustinian view is suspicious of human frailty and sinfulness; therefore, Augustinian governments introduce strict laws, enforce conservative morals, and bring about a more authoritarian exercise of power. Utopians are typically secularised Pelagians, and the textbook example of Pelagianism for twentieth-century educated British readers was the Wellsian utopia with its optimistic promise of both malleable human nature and the unlimited potential of scientific progress.<sup>33</sup> As Burgess remarks, “[t]he Wellsian brand of Pelagianism blamed criminal impulses on environment. What priests called ‘original sin’ was a reaction to poverty, slum tenements, enforced ignorance and squalor. A scientific socialism would extirpate what was called crime” (1985 334). Dystopians tend to subscribe to an Augustinian view of humanity, seeing the potential of humans to commit evil greater than their potential to do good. But Burgess does not picture these two views as polar

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32 The most extensive treatment of the Augustinian-Pelagian dichotomy can be found in *The Wanting Seed*, in which Tristram, a history teacher, explains the cycle as three phases constantly following one another: “We have a Pelagian phase. Then we have an Intermediate phase. ... This leads into an Augustinian phase. ... Pelphase, Interphase, Gusphase, and so on, for ever and ever. A sort of perpetual waltz” (Burgess, *The Wanting Seed* 17). The entire novel is an illustration of how these cycles work out in an overpopulated Britain of the future. Jim Clarke argues, however, that Burgess’s theological labels are ill-fitting to what are essentially political attitudes and suggests that “the vying forces are ought to be more accurately called Hobbesian and Rousseauvian than Augustinian and Pelagian” (Clarke 31).

33 This is not to say that H. G. Wells was actually a simple-minded optimist, and his early SF novels from *The Time Machine* (1895) to *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) offer ample testimony to his pessimistic anthropology. The utopian visions of his mature career represent conscious efforts to show a way to humanity to prevent a global catastrophe; in this sense, he was an eminent representative of Augustinian and Pelagian views mixed in the same person.

opposites because they are present in all of us: “Orwell was Pelagian in that he was a Socialist, Augustinian in that he created Ingsoc” (335).

This theological diversion leads Burgess to the discussion of good and evil, in which he offers some crucial observations. First of all, he separates these concepts from the terms “right” and “wrong,” which are impermanent values determined by State laws and changing circumstances. Burgess distinguishes between moral and aesthetic goodness: the pleasure offered by a delicious meal or a beautiful piece of music is morally neutral, and—in a startling twist of argument—Burgess suggests that God’s goodness is easier to be imagined as analogous to this kind of aesthetic pleasure, “eternally gratifying and of an infinite intensity; self-sufficient, moreover, with the symphony hearing itself and the eaten also the eater. The goodness of art, not of holy men, is the better figure of divine goodness” (336). Moral goodness consists of selfless, altruistic acts intended to promote or restore the capacity of humans to act freely. These acts are characterised by disinterestedness, just as pure evil is disinterested, but evil acts aim at removing or restricting human freedom. Whoever exercises power at the helm of the State has a vested interest in expanding their scope of action, which requires restricting the scope of freedom of the ruled. In Orwell’s cacotopia, the state commits evil for its own sake, without a specific purpose, chiefly for the delight of cruelty. But Orwell, due to his entirely secular world view, could see evil only in the State and not in individuals, a conviction shared by modern Western culture as a whole:

The view that evil is somehow outside the individual still persists in a West that has discarded all but the rags of its traditional beliefs. ... [I]t is comforting to believe that this evil is not built into the human entity, as Augustine taught, but comes from without, like a disease. The devil and its attendant demons own the monopoly of evil ... but evil does not grow in man himself. The superstitious feel happier about their own backslidings if they can attribute them to the Father of Lies. The Orwellians blame it all on Big Brother. (338)

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The problem of individual free will remains in the centre of the next two essays as well. In “Bakunin’s children,” focusing primarily on the anarchic youth movements whose memories were still strong in the late 1970s, Burgess argues, faithful to his cyclical view of history, that the conflict between the young and the old is yet another eternal and recurring phenomenon. The young of all ages react to demands of conformity from mature society with resistance and their own counterculture. The main slogan of youth movements is the demand for more freedom, but they tend not be interested in the lessons of the past transmitted by tradition and education; therefore, they lack the knowledge necessary to understand the full meaning and implications of free will, which potentially renders them unwitting allies or tools of adult manipulators:

Youth groups are very useful engines: young people have energy and sincerity and ignorance. They have all the qualities that would make them valuable for the professional agitators who want to bring in Ingsoc. The young could easily be made to love Big Brother as the enemy of the past and the old. He is, after all, careful not to call himself Our Father. (354)

For Burgess, the primary condition of free will is the ability to exercise judgement in three crucial areas: truth, beauty, and goodness. No matter how much humans are determined by their genetic heritage, their social environment, their history, and their unconscious, they should still be able to make individual judgements aided by their education, which “is the first condition of freedom” (357). Then they should be free to act or not to act on those judgements or to act contrary to them: Burgess’s own example is his decision not to quit smoking even though he is fully aware that smoking is bad for his health (he ultimately died of lung cancer). He insists that people should have the right to commit even illegal acts as long as they have full knowledge of the consequences of their acts.

In the following essay, entitled “Clockwork Oranges,” with a characteristic Burgessian reversal he subverts his own previous manifesto for individual free will by examining the various possibilities offered by modern science and technology to influence and manipulate individual minds.

In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, such technologies are not employed by O'Brien and the Thought Police (except in one single episode, almost as an illustration of the unlimited potential of the Thought Police to break down the resistance of the mind), primarily because the Party's whole theory of power requires individuals with a recalcitrant mind to be broken and "cured." As Burgess puts it, "Ingsoc depends ... on a kind of exercise of free will, for acceptance of its authority is nothing unless it is free acceptance" (364). It is all part of a strategic game symbolised by chess in the novel, and Winston's final meditation on the eternal victory of white over black in chess problems is a gut-wrenching summary of how much he has capitulated to the superior power of Big Brother.

Other dystopias before and after Orwell have, on the other hand, utilised contemporary scientific breakthroughs; Huxley, for instance, relied on Pavlovian conditioning in *Brave New World* (Burgess discusses Pavlov's career in some detail as an example of the ultimate Pelagian who wished to perfect the human brain) or B. F. Skinner on behavioural psychology in *Walden Two*. Burgess also cites a late book by Arthur Koestler entitled *Janus*, in which Koestler expresses his hope that the evolutionary "error" that made the human brain susceptible to aggressive instincts and blind submission to authority could be "cured" by drugs in the future. Burgess remarks with characteristic sarcasm that it is "[s]trange that the expert beings who are to administer the cure are themselves men. Can we really trust the diagnostics and remedies of these demented creatures? But the assumption is that, though all men are ill, some are less ill than others" (369).

Burgess himself takes a firm stand against any such approaches that treat the imperfections of human nature as some sort of a disease to be cured, and he cites his own *A Clockwork Orange* as proof of his dissent. His statement is perhaps his most essential utterance of the entire essay cycle and deserves to be quoted in full:

I recognise that the desire to cherish man's unregenerate nature, to deny the possibility of progress and reject the engines of enforced improvement, is very reactionary, but, in the absence of a new philosophy of man, I must cling to whatever I already have. What I have in general is a view

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of man which I may call Hebreo-Helleno-Christian-humanist. It is the view which the Savage in *Brave New World* ... brings to the stable utopia of AF 632: "I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin." The World Controller, Mustapha Mond, sums it up for him: "In fact, you're claiming the right to be unhappy." Or the right, perhaps, not to find life dull. (372)

This apparently utterly serious proclamation of his creed is, however, immediately subverted in the conclusion of the essay. Burgess, who describes his faith as a "residual Christianity that oscillates between Augustine and Pelagius" (372), proposes that the teachings of Jesus Christ could be applied in a secular context. Readers follow his proposal with genuine interest until they realise that they have been taken for a ride, that is, they are offered an elaborate parody of a renewed emergence of Christianity:

The serious practitioners of the game, or *ludus amoris*, will find it useful to form themselves into small groups, or "churches," and meet at set intervals for mutual encouragement and inspiration. They may find it valuable to invoke the spirit of the founder of the game. Indeed, they may gain strength from conjuring his, in a sense, real presence in the form of a chunk of bread and a bottle of wine. ... Men and women must practise the technique of love in the real world and not seal themselves off into communes of convents. ... The practice of love has nothing to do with politics. Laughter is permitted, indeed encouraged. Man was put together by God, though it took him a long time. What God has joined together ... let no man put asunder. Pray for Dr Skinner. May Pavlov rest in peace. Amen. (373–374)

This ironic, secular recreation of the cult of Jesus Christ is repeatedly referred to by Burgess as a "game," and it is the various and surprising manifestations of this whimsical ludic spirit that is left behind as the predominant impression of his essay series. Burgess clearly loves playing mental games

and enjoys involving his audience in them. In an interview, he suggested that God created the world as a form of entertainment and “set the principle of evil free in terms of a game” (Coale 440). Games are a source of fun, relieving the dullness of ordinary life in a harmless way.<sup>34</sup> Games are also a sort of ritual, giving an opportunity to bridge the gap of antagonism between inescapable dialectic opposites. To quote Burgess again, “[y]ou can make rituals out of language. And it is in the ritual that opposites are reconciled, of course” (qtd. in Coale 441). Literature is obviously a game for Burgess, and dystopias—or cacotopias, to remain faithful to his preferred terminology—are a very special kind of literary game, somewhat analogous to horror stories. Dystopian authors toy with ideas and potential scenarios that look terrifying or ominous, and by giving a sort of free rein to their nightmares they manage to diminish them and distance them, this way exorcising fear, worries, and anxieties. Burgess dabbled in this game three times in his eventful literary career, finally opting for a centaur genre of essay-cum-fiction to pay his tribute to Orwell.

In his final essay, “The Death of Love,” Burgess offers his ultimate assessment of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: he claims that Winston fails because of his inability to love Julia. Their clandestine affair is an act of rebellion, but there is little that connects them beyond their physical attraction. They are aware that their relationship would not last, that they would be exposed and caught, that their love is condemned to death from the start. Big Brother’s ultimate victory is that love as a deep bond that cannot be broken by Thought Police no longer exists in the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. And Winston’s failure mirrors Orwell the author’s failure: his inability to love the workers made him imagine them as a generalised grey mass, the “proles”: they are either romanticised as the ultimate but vague hope of humanity or despised as little more than animals. “*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not a prophecy so much as a testimony of despair. Not despair of the future of humanity; a personal despair of being able to love” (1985 380).

It may sound like a harsh judgement on a book Burgess obviously holds in high regard, but if we consider his concluding remarks in conjunction

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34 Cf. Burgess’s remark from *1985*: “Life ought to be adequately fed and fairly dull. That’s civilization. And if we don’t really like the dullness, then we’d best do something about expanding our own inner vision. We can go to a George Orwell class.” (346)

with the previous essay in which he presented his playful project for a recreation of Christianity as a kind of game whose main slogan as well as driving force is “love,” we may be able to discern Burgess’s proposed antidote against dystopian despair: as long as love survives in the world, there is some hope left for humanity.

How are we to assess *1985* then as a “cacotopian ars poetica,” to recall my earlier proposition? I believe that in his string of non-fictional texts Burgess offered a splendid demonstration of why he considers utopias and dystopias “complex intellectual games” and how he himself is playing that game. Critics, like Jim Clarke who seek in *1985* a reductive critical assessment of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and blame Burgess for getting it wrong,<sup>35</sup> miss the larger point entirely. Burgess deliberately concocts his cocktail from self-interviews, essays, and disparate topics, in which he does not pursue a single line of argument or critical viewpoint but offers several different, occasionally even contradictory insights about *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, while also musing on a number of related political, social, philosophical, and theological issues. Occasionally he adopts multiple personae (e.g. when interviewing himself) to present a dialectical debate, like Thomas More did in Book One of *Utopia*; he seems to maintain a predominantly serious essayistic tone, but then switches to parody and satire; he offers the provocative idea that “Orwell gave us nothing new” only to investigate the creativity of his invention of Ingsoc and Newspeak; in sum, he is playing the game of cacotopia, and invites readers to join the fun.

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35 Cf. his opinion of *1985*: “Burgess’s attempt to parse *1984* as a darkly comic novel borne out of the deprivations of mid-century Britain would have been unconvincing had it emerged in the immediate aftermath of Orwell’s novel; coming as it did some decades on, his misreading of one of the most influential novels of the 20th century through the perspective of his own conservative expatriate perspective on Seventies Britain seems perverse” (Clarke 32). I hope my analysis provides ample evidence to prove that Burgess offers a lot more complex, more ambiguous, and also more tongue-in-cheek assessment of Orwell’s classic than this simplifying account suggests, which raises the doubt that Clarke never got further with the essays than the first self-interview.

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# Fictional Manchesters

in the Work of Anthony Burgess

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ROB SPENCE

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*Manchester, the birthplace of Anthony Burgess, has a prominent position in his fiction. This paper shows how Burgess repeatedly returned to his memories of the city as material for his narratives. In particular, his childhood and early adulthood in the city are shown to be important factors in the construction of several important novels from different stages of his career.*

Probably the way in which Manchester has impinged on a wider consciousness most recently is as a result of the bomb that killed concert-goers on 22 May 2017. A suicide bomber killed 22 people and wounded 250 when the device he was carrying exploded as people emerged from a concert at Manchester Arena. This was not the first time Manchester has been the target of terrorist violence—an IRA bomb caused huge damage in 1996—but this was the worst incident. The response in the city was an outpouring of love and solidarity, and the hashtag, #westandtogether, became a very common sight in the city. It is indicative of the spirit of Manchester that its collective response to the atrocity was, to use that famous phrase, to “keep calm and carry on.” The defiance and community spirit of the people of Manchester has a long history, and Anthony Burgess, as a Mancunian, was able to incorporate many references to it in his work. Before examining representations of Manchester in Burgess, it might be instructive to rehearse some of the city’s history, in order to highlight the traditions that Burgess draws upon in his writing.

## FICTIONAL MANCHESTERS

The bee is a ubiquitous symbol in Manchester, appearing everywhere from the city coat-of-arms to street furniture (Figure 1). Many buildings in the city are decorated with bee motifs, which stems from their incorporation into the coat of arms of the city in the nineteenth century. As Manchester was at the heart of the Industrial Revolution, the city quickly became a hive of activity, populated by citizens working away in mills and factories to produce the goods which created the city's wealth. In particular, Manchester was known as "Cottonopolis," since cotton was the raw material of the mills. A third of all cotton production in the world was processed in Manchester and the surrounding Lancashire mill towns in the late nineteenth century. This busy industrial scene was likened to a beehive, with a quickly growing population as the worker bees. Some mill owners took the bee metaphor to its logical conclusion, adding appropriately-named "beehive mills" to the skyline. Whilst the machinery which powered them has long since fallen silent, there is still a Beehive Mill in the Ancoats district of the city. The bee seems an appropriate metaphor for Burgess too, whose workaholic writing habits are well-documented. He saw himself as a jobbing writer for hire, so as well as thirty-three novels, there are books on linguistics, critical biographies, two hugely entertaining volumes of autobiography, film scripts, adaptations of Rostand and Sophocles, musical plays, hundreds of reviews, some collected into three books, a book about New York, a book about the Grand Tour, a book about Going to Bed, a book about Tea. In addition, of course, there is a large corpus of music composed in time snatched from his writing schedule. Thus, Burgess the Mancunian epitomises the busy spirit of the place, and frequently referred to his birthplace in his work.

In addition to its industry, Manchester is also known for its radicalism and non-conformity, traits that again one might associate with Burgess. Perhaps the most famous manifestation of this is the Peterloo massacre of August 1819 (Figure 2). This took place at St. Peter's Fields, roughly where St. Peter's Square is today in the heart of the city, and where Central Library, an important building for Burgess, stands (Figure 3). The massacre is the subject of Shelley's poem *The Masque of Anarchy* (1819/32). A peaceful demonstration for universal suffrage was broken up by cavalrymen wielding sabres as they rode through a crowd of about 60,000 people. At least 15 people perished, and many more were wounded. This is a presence

in the background of Burgess's Manchester: he writes in the first volume of his autobiography that Peterloo was "well-remembered by my great-grandfather" (Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God* 15) and that the family wanted to live away from the city centre, which is how they ended up in the suburb of Harpurhey, a few miles to the north.

Shelley's rousing ballad poem catches the spirit of defiance that animated the crowd, and which persists to this day, epitomising a Manchester that is grittily resilient in the face of disaster:

Rise like Lions after slumber  
 In unvanquishable number,  
 Shake your chains to earth like dew  
 Which in sleep had fallen on you—  
 Ye are many—they are few. (Shelley 400)

Burgess's early life in north and east Manchester was spent in a very tough, working-class setting. Harpurhey, where he was born, was, as recently as 2007, named the most deprived area in England. Certainly, life for the boy Burgess in the years following the First World War were hard, but it provided rich material for his fiction. For example, The Golden Eagle pub in Miles Platting where his father was the landlord (Figure 4), forms the raw material for the early passages of *The Pianoplayers*, which will be considered presently. Burgess described the streets in which he grew up as "an ugly world with ramshackle houses and foul back alleys, not a tree or a flower to be seen, though Queen's Park and a general cemetery were available to the northwest if a breath of green was required" (Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God* 23).

The influence of place on Burgess is almost Proust-like in the way that childhood memories permeate his work, but where Proust recalls the hawthorn trees of the Guermantes way, Burgess has a strictly urban, cartographic recall: he remembers the street names of the north Manchester of his childhood:

A walk down Carisbrook Street on to Lathbury Road brought one to Rochdale Road and its intersection with Queen's Road, great arteries along which rattled the Manchester trams. Rochdale Road led south to Shude Hill, where my father worked.

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Shude Hill led through Withy Grove to Corporation Street and the Royal Exchange. Then Cross Street carried on to Albert Square and the assertive hideous Town Hall, all neogothic spires and sprockets. (Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God* 16)

Burgess's antipathy to the architecture of the Town Hall, despite its status as one of the finest examples of Neo-Gothic architecture in the United Kingdom, is a motif in his writing about Manchester, both fiction and non-fiction.

*The Pianoplayers* is the work where Burgess draws most directly on his Manchester upbringing, which is transplanted almost wholly intact to that of the character, Ellen Henshaw, whose rags-to-riches story forms the basis of the narrative. The image of Manchester that emerges from *The Pianoplayers* is, at first glance, of a dull, grim, and relentlessly unpleasant milieu, almost exactly as depicted in *Little Wilson and Big God*. Ellen's impulse in the novel is to escape, which she does—we first encounter her as an elderly lady of leisure in the south of France, again echoing the latter part of Burgess's life. The first half of *The Pianoplayers* is an imaginative reconfiguration of Burgess's early years, with Ellen Henshaw replacing the author as the survivor of the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. The parallels go further: just as Burgess's father was a cinema pianist, so Ellen's is an inventive supplier of live soundtracks in the Manchester fleapit cinemas of the early twenties; and just as Burgess's mother was the Beautiful Belle Burgess, music hall artiste, so Ellen's mother is Flossie Oldham, Queen of the Soubrettes; both Ellen and Burgess attend Catholic elementary school, and both are traumatised by a painting of gypsy women on the bedroom wall; Burgess's moves to Delaunays Road, Crumpsall, a north Manchester suburb adjacent to Harpurhey, thence subsequently to a big pub in Miles Platting, which Ellen calls a "slummy district" (Burgess, *The Pianoplayers* 32), and on to Moss Side, are all exactly mirrored in the novel. The alignment with Burgess's autobiography is almost total, and there is a certain element of *nostalgie de la boue* about the passages in the novel which so exactly mirror the author's early life. It is perhaps significant that Burgess was working on the novel in 1977, from his home in Monaco and reconstructing the events of his youth fifty years earlier. Here is Ellen's description of the pub she moves to with her father:

“The pub ... was big and full of brass rails, and it had two singing rooms, as they were called, as well as a lot of odd snugs and ladies’ parlours and the like. ... My father served behind the bar and played the piano in the big singing room” (Burgess, *The Pianoplayers* 32). The similarity to the passage in Burgess’s autobiography covering his sudden move to The Golden Eagle pub is striking: “The Golden Eagle of Miles Plating was well known, a boozier of Victorian amplitude, gleaming with brass ... There were three singing rooms, a vast spit-and-sawdust, and a number of snugs” (Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God* 22–23). Both Elle Henshaw’s and Burgess’s toughness and resilience (at least outwardly) are attributed tacitly to their working class upbringing in the slums of Manchester.

Despite his years of exile in Gibraltar, Oxfordshire, Malaya, and Sussex, Burgess retained a strong sense of his northern city origins, even when, as in *One Hand Clapping* and *Honey for the Bears*, it appears under the pseudonym of “Bradcaster,” a portmanteau coinage perhaps inspired by J. B. Priestley’s invention of an archetypal Yorkshire town, “Bruddersford” in his 1932 novel *The Good Companions*. The “-caster” suffix in English place-names is cognate with the similarly common “-chester” and derives from the Latin “castrum” signifying a Roman military encampment. Thus, Burgess can evoke Manchester in the second element of Bradcaster. The “Brad” element is also present in Priestley’s invention, which combines the Yorkshire town names of Bradford and Huddersfield.

In *Honey for the Bears*, Paul Hussey, the protagonist, feels strangely at home in the otherwise alien surroundings of Soviet Leningrad:

Waiting, Paul tried to smell Soviet Russia, knowing that only to the rawest newcomer does a country reveal its smell; after a day, it becomes deodorised. He smelt his schooldays in Bradcaster—a whiff of brewery, tannery, burning potatoes, dust, a bourdon of tobacco which suggested Christmas, the pantomime, for, with the British, only festive smokes were aromatic. (Burgess, *Honey for the Bears* 47)

That description of the archetypal smell of the city includes a typical Burgessian trope, the use of an obscure item of lexis. “Bourdon” is here

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a musical term being pressed into use to suggest a background smell. Pleasingly, and perhaps serendipitously, the word derives from the French for bumblebee. The identification of Leningrad with Bradcaster is, then, based on their olfactory similarity, and Burgess evidently based this aspect on his own experience. In an interview with John Cullinan, he reflected on his first impression of Leningrad as being reminiscent of Manchester:

I think it was the sense of the architecture, the rather broken-down architecture of Leningrad, the sense of large numbers of the working class, rather shabbily dressed. And I suppose in some ways the *smell* of Manchester—I always associated Manchester with the smell of tanneries, very pungent smells, as you know. I got the same smell out of Leningrad. It's a small thing, but these small things have a curious habit of becoming important. (Ingersoll and Ingersoll 66)

Paul goes on to immerse himself in his new surroundings, which continue to remind him of his upbringing in the northern city, overlaid with a sense of history: “Childhood Bradcaster, yes, but an even older Bradcaster, heard of in childhood, uncovered. Despite the canals that suggested a factory-workers’ Venice, the bald Cyrillic signs saying MEAT, FISH, MILK, VEGETABLES, as though the town were a vast house and these shops the larder, Leningrad was not a foreign city” (Burgess, *Honey for the Bears* 48).

Leningrad, visited by Burgess in the summer of 1961, his experiences providing much of the material for this novel, was Manchester’s twin town in the days of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the twinning arrangement was made in 1962, the year before the publication of the novel. It promoted the concept of fraternal relations between the cities and included provisions for civic, cultural, educational, and scientific co-operation. This was a bold move by both cities at the height of the Cold War, and Burgess must have been aware of the development as he wrote the novel.

In *One Hand Clapping*, the connection with Manchester is not so immediately noticeable. The Shirleys, Howard and Janet, live in a new council house in an anonymous estate of the type that proliferated after the Second World War. The district is named by Burgess as “Shortshawe,” which

is probably a nod at the big post-war housing development of Wythenshawe in south Manchester; and when the Shirleys travel to the TV centre, they do so in a long train journey from London Road station to Euston, as they would have done in real life from the major railway station in Manchester, whose name changed from London Road to Piccadilly in the year before the novel's publication. Otherwise, the urban environment plays little part in the narrative, reflecting Janet's limited perspective. Even so, the bland modernity of the new estate is a counterweight to the more characterful Victorian housing of Burgess's other evocation of Bradcaster. The common practice of naming clusters of streets after a common theme is playfully mocked in Burgess's choice of the Oxford martyrs Ridley Latimer and Fisher, together with Archbishop Laud, another executed clergyman, as street names.

A later Burgess novel which draws extensively on his Manchester background is *Any Old Iron*, several of whose central characters attend university in Manchester in the 1930s. The novel relishes the sights and sounds, and indeed smells, of the Manchester of the time, starting with the evocative "very Manchester meal with fried egg and chips as the main course" (Burgess, *Any Old Iron* 62) consumed at the Kardomah café. Clearly Burgess draws on his own university experience for the sequences of student life in the novel. Burgess's characters congregate in what is now the Samuel Alexander Building (Figure 5), which housed the English department where Burgess studied, newly built when he was there, and with the Epstein bust of Alexander (Sammy's Bust) already installed. Samuel Alexander, a philosopher best known for his book, *Space, Time and Deity* (1920), is perhaps the model for the character Professor Pears, who, like Alexander, convened seminars at his home for advanced philosophy students. There is probably some Burgessian onomastic play in the fictional professor's name, since a variety of the common European pear is *Beurre Alexandre*, or Alexander.

*Any Old Iron* is a wide-ranging saga which takes in some of the major events of the twentieth century, and uses the Manchester of the twenties and thirties—the Manchester thus of Burgess's childhood, adolescence, and early maturity—as the setting for part of the narrative. Manchester's cosmopolitan, multi-cultural nature is key to this, as characters from widely varying backgrounds collide. The Wolfsons are Manchester Jews, and the Jones family initially come to Manchester from Wales via America and the Soviet Union

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after the First World War to run a restaurant owned by Jewish businessmen. There are plenty of specific references to Manchester, especially drawing on Burgess's experience of being a university student in the city. For example, the cultural life of the city is explored in the figure of Zipporah, a percussionist in Manchester's Hallé Orchestra, which was just about possible historically, as Sir Hamilton Harty, who had dismissed the orchestra's few women players after the First World War, ended his tenure as conductor in 1933. There are other touches of local colour, familiar to readers of Burgess's autobiography: fish and chip suppers, the Midland hotel, student flats on Wilmslow Road, the student union refectory. Burgess's wartime Manchester fights against the forces of darkness, but is also figured as a place somewhat culturally hampered by a hidebound traditionalism. Nevertheless, Manchester is presented as a site of resistance in the novel, both to the threat of fascism, and to conformity. Or at least, the characters associated with Manchester show that typically Mancunian quality. Significantly, Manchester is also presented as a place from which to escape, as Burgess himself did. The coda to the novel finds Reg and Wolfson, the Manchester Jewish narrator, relocated to the new land of Israel, where they will once again be involved in a struggle for existence.

It is perhaps food that most characterises Burgess's construction of the Manchester of his memory. Not for him the delicacy of the "*petit madeleine*" of Proust. Burgess revels in the robust cuisine of his childhood: fish and chips, tripe and cowheels, black puddings. The "very Manchester meal" that Harry Wolfson and Reg Jones eat in the Kardomah café in *Any Old Iron* is just one example of how Burgess evokes place through the senses. While the evocation of Manchester as a place of grime and poverty pervades Burgess's fictional descriptions of it, his attitude softens when it comes to the cuisine. Burgess reminisced in a late newspaper article about the distinctive food of his Manchester youth, such as the chip butty—a hot chip sandwich, which is "a genuine coarse feast" (Burgess, *One Man's Chorus* 46). Ellen Henshaw in *The Pianoplayers* also reminisces about the chips of her youth, which were "gold and fat and crisp, I remember, and I liked nothing better when I was clemmed coming home from school on a winter's day for my dinner than a chip butty" (Burgess, *The Pianoplayers* 76).

These memories animate Burgess's descriptions of Manchester, and provide a touchstone for his characters.

It seems that Manchester, though occasionally disparaged in its modern form by Burgess, remained a vital part of his artistic vision. The Manchester that Burgess returned to in his fiction is that of his childhood and young adulthood: he never lived in Manchester after his army service. The older Burgess seemed to resent what he saw as a homogenising blandness in the cityscape, and also, paradoxically perhaps, its embrace of different ethnic cultures. When revisiting Manchester in the sixties for a Belgian television programme, Burgess laments the changes he finds, particularly the influx of Asian and Afro-Caribbean people in Moss Side. He is asked to leave a pub that is now a West Indian haunt, notices that his old house had become a shebeen before being demolished, and reflects on the changes in the city's culture:

Very good—accept change: the Friday call of the muezzin instead of the Sunday summons of the bells, an Asiatic Manchester instead of the European one of my youth. (Burgess, *One Man's Chorus* 75)

Unexpectedly, Burgess does try to reconcile his contradictory impulses about his home city. It is, clearly, not the same city he knew as a boy, although The Midland Hotel and Central Library still stand as beacons of remembrance for him. He resents the change but is also self-aware enough to realise the futility of resistance: "If I regret the disappearance of the shabby tiger I used to know,<sup>36</sup> I am proving myself stupidly resistant to the current of history. But memory preserves reality, and my own memory will not allow that greater Manchester to die" (Burgess, *One Man's Chorus* 79). In what is probably his last printed comment on Manchester, written in the year of his death, Burgess noted that the city had changed, but would live on: "The Luftwaffe tried, but Manchester has proved unkillable" (Burgess, *One Man's Chorus* 91). And as long as Burgess's novels and other writings are read, we can be sure that his version of Manchester will not die.

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36 A reference to Howard Spring's novel of Manchester, *Shabby Tiger* (1935).

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### FIGURES



Figure 1. Bee mosaic in Manchester Town Hall

By David Hawgood, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=13832088>



Figure 2. The Massacre of Peterloo

The Massacre of Peterloo image: George Cruikshank's cartoon, 1819.



Figure 3. Manchester Central Library

Manchester Central Library by David Dixon, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons  
Manchester Central Library by David Dixon, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons

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Figure 4. Golden Eagley  
public domain



Figure 5. University of Manchester Samuel Alexander Building  
By Vita Student - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/147346595@N06/33972447826/>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=109737832>

## ROB SPENCE

### CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Rob Spence was, until retirement, Associate Head of English at Edge Hill University, UK. He has written extensively on Burgess and other twentieth-century authors, including Ford Madox Ford, Wyndham Lewis, and Penelope Fitzgerald. He is currently completing a monograph on Burgess for publication next year.

# Recapitulation

# The Private, the Fictional, and the Musical in Anthony Burgess's Lives: Intersections of the Biographical Kind

Sean Gregory, *Three Graves*  
(Hebden Bridge: Bluemoose Books, 2021)

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MÁRIA PALLA

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Sean Gregory's biographical novel is the latest addition to the series of volumes exploring the life and times of Anthony Burgess, one of the most multifaceted English authors of the twentieth century. In these various contributions, different aspects of Burgess's life are highlighted, and the meaning and importance attributed to them varies according to the generic qualities of the work in which they are addressed. Geoffrey Aggeler's *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist* (1979) together with Samuel Coale's *Anthony Burgess* (1981) are the earliest comprehensive scholarly studies to examine Burgess's works in the context of his biography. Focussing more emphatically on the details of his professional and private life are two more recently published volumes: Roger Lewis's *Anthony Burgess* (2002) and Andrew Biswell's *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess* (2005). While a quote from *The Independent* on the cover of the paperback edition of Lewis's book advertises it as "[a] grotesque, off-the-wall book-biz satire,"

Biswell's thoroughly researched biography, supported by carefully analysed factual evidence, acts as a corrective to Lewis's tabloid-style sensationalism, as Biswell's title suggests.

Their subject, Burgess himself added to the above studies his own take on his life story in the two volumes of his "Confessions." *Little Wilson and Big God: The Confessions of Anthony Burgess* (1987) and *You've Had Your Time: The Second Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess* (1990) are the two parts of his extended autobiography, as the genre is specifically identified by the subtitle of the American edition. But to dispel any false expectation of gaining access to nothing but the factual truth that the words "confession" and "autobiography" may create for some readers, Burgess states in his Preface to the first part of his "Confessions" in good Joycean style: "As a good deal of real life has got into my fiction, I forbear to unscramble it all into what has been fabled by the daughters of memory, though I have unscrambled some" (viii). The process of remembering is only one of the acts that destabilise the possibility of ever knowing the truth about one's life.

Furthermore, the nature of truth itself has become rather elusive since the turn of the twentieth century when an ever-deepening epistemological uncertainty appeared to determine the thinking of modernist authors in search of meaning and truth in an increasingly chaotic world surrounding them. The quest for truth became further complicated by the later challenge posed by postmodernism, a trend that does not only question whether the truth can be found and known but even raises doubts about the very existence of such a thing as one singular truth. These problematic questions concerning the nature of truth relate to the Burgess biographies as well as his autobiographical writing and fictional output. His novels include biofictions of his own about such outstanding literary figures as William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, or John Keats, in which he imaginatively recreates controversial episodes in the lives of his protagonists that still lack unambiguous and consensual explanations. Not surprisingly, his attitude to, and use of, modernist and postmodernist ideas and techniques, some of which are connected to the above issue of factual and fictional truth, is the subject of numerous essays, most notably those collected in *Anthony Burgess and Modernity* (2008) edited by Alan Roughley or an earlier collection titled *Anthony Burgess, Autobiographer* (2006) edited by Graham Woodroffe.

That invention in the form of fiction plays an ever-increasing role in recreating one's life to gain a better understanding of it can, at least partly, be ascribed to the more recent phenomenon known as post-truth. The early twenty-first century when regarded as a post-truth era allows for more "freedom with the known facts" (Lane 9), although some even question if facts can be known at all. Sean Gregory's biofiction appears to stem from this post-truth world as he mixes biographical data from Burgess's life with his own peculiar vision of the biographical subject. Admittedly, as he explains in his "Acknowledgements" at the end of *Three Graves*, he has "always seen in [Burgess's] work a demand for dialogue" (324), thus offering one possible way of reading his own novel.

Dialogue takes many forms while Gregory traverses the famous predecessor's private, fictional, and musical universe. It starts in the opening Manchester section, in which the novel's present is situated, although the exact year is never identified by date. It can only be guessed at with some certainty from the fact that the fictional Burgess returns to his native Manchester to promote his latest book, which, again, is not identified by a specific title. It is only when Burgess, autographing a copy, makes a mistake and writes the title as *Any Old Burgess* that the reader, familiar with the author's *oeuvre*, assumes that it should be *Any Old Iron*, a historical fantasia published in 1989. This slippage leads to others of its kind when Burgess's Mancunian relatives also appear in the John Rylands Library: their presence inadvertently makes the author recall his childhood in what was then still known as Cottonopolis and, under the influence of his intruding memories, he ends up signing his name as John Wilson, his name given at birth. Visiting a pub also conjures up images of his father, who used to play the piano in his step-mother's pub, as well as painful memories of the death of his birth mother and sister.

This novel of four main parts and further divided into shorter sections follows Burgess's life as it unfolds in various locations on three different continents in almost chronological order, which is indicated by the years given in the section headings. However, Gregory returns to the Manchester of 1989 in three more chapters interspersed in the novel at different points to emphasise the impossibility for Burgess to leave his birthplace behind mentally and emotionally, even though he has made his home elsewhere in Europe, not

unlike one of his highly regarded predecessors, James Joyce. Memories keep surfacing as they are triggered by similarities to previous events or people in the course of Burgess's life throughout the whole book. The most poignant of these are connected to Burgess's father, son, and two successive wives. This technique of Gregory's seems to be borrowed from modernist writers, who often broke the straight chronology of the events narrated in their works, thus expressing their view of how the human mind works, in which thoughts and memories float as if in a stream, an idea inspired by the American philosopher and psychologist, William James. By emulating their style, Gregory pays homage to modernist authors as well as to the quasi-modernist Anthony Burgess at the same time. As a result of this strategy, Gregory's novel reads more like a series of snapshots in which flashbacks intersect with more recent experiences, leading to the final sentence of his novel: "The past lives" (322).

Intertextual borrowings from Burgess's works represent another form of dialogue, further enriching Gregory's biofiction. The text on his Dedication page comes from an early part of Burgess's *Little Wilson and Big God*, expressing both authors' tribute to the art of writing: "Mastery never comes, and one serves a lifelong apprenticeship" during his career as a writer is the conviction of both novelists (Burgess 6). Other borrowings shed light on Burgess's creative process as he incorporates elements of his life into his fiction. This is especially prominent in the Malayan section of Gregory's novel about Burgess's time in the British colonial service in the 1950s. His thoughts run parallel to those of Victor Crabbe, the protagonist of *The Malayan Trilogy*: Crabbe's dilemmas on the approaching independence of the region, the responsibility of the colonisers, his fascination with the locals, and his convoluted marital relationship with his wife, Fenella, who feels estranged and threatened in the alien society, appear to reflect those of Burgess. Gregory also presents various people Burgess may have met and have employed them as models for his characters such as the local policemen Lofty and Ibrahim, appearing as Nabby Adams and Alladad Khan, respectively, in Burgess's first-published novel, *Time for a Tiger* (1956).

1968 is a year in Burgess's life that is given special emphasis in Gregory's book by being the main temporal setting of six sections, and not without good reason. This is the time when Burgess's first wife, Lynne, dies, then he marries his second wife, Liana, leaves England for good, works

on the musical, *Will*, to bring Shakespeare's life to the stage in America, and negotiates the film rights of his cult novel, *A Clockwork Orange*. In these chapters, parallels are also established between Burgess's and Shakespeare's lives: the wives of both of them are presented as cheating on their husbands while the latter are away making money and fame for their families, and having affairs of their own, too. Even the letters to their illicit lovers share similarities when Lynne accidentally reads Burgess's letter to Liana, which Burgess claims to be Shakespeare's letter to his Dark Lady in his work-in-progress at the time.

The similarities between the two authors run deeper than their personal lives: both are preoccupied with the question of why to write and what art is. Both Shakespeare and Burgess are hard-pressed for money; so, writing plays for the former and writing novels for the latter are presented as mere ways of paying the bills and putting food on the table. It may not be by chance either that in another episode where Burgess meets George Orwell, Orwell is working on his essay titled "Why I Write." For Burgess, his real passion is music: throughout Gregory's whole novel, he has musical tunes in his mind and is constantly preoccupied with musical compositions; and the more emotionally intense events are, the more musically inspiring they appear to be.

Music is also represented to form a connection between Burgess and his father, who earned his living by playing the piano, as well as the writer's adopted son, Andrea, whom he wants to teach how to play the piano in an effort to develop a bond with him. Images of the three male figures swirl on the last pages of the novel while Burgess's first symphony is performed, although he claims it to be the third he composed: "Anthony reaches out his hand to his son. His dad takes his hand and says, *Stay close, Jackie*" (Gregory 318). At the University of Iowa, Burgess is encouraged by several people to keep on writing, but he insists on being a composer first and foremost, which is the exact image readers are left with at the end of the book presenting a dream come true for him.

The Burgess presented in this biographical novel is usually arrogant and grumpy, hard-pressed for money, haunted by his dead wife, annoyed by distracting children, preoccupied with drinks and smoking his cheroot, and struggles with demanding and exploiting publishers, agents, and producers. Due to the broken chronology, the novel is episodic, which obscures

## THE PRIVATE, THE FICTIONAL, AND THE MUSICAL

cause-effect relations and does not allow for any coherent character development. As a result, personal relationships and motives are often hard to discern and the reader might lose interest were it not for moving moments like the death of Lynne or the uplifting reunion of fathers and sons to the accompaniment of musical scores at the very end. This biofiction also manages to project its author's appreciation for the exuberant energy, undeniable talent, and technical virtuosity of its subject as it tries to grapple with the questions of creating great art while maintaining fulfilling personal relationships.

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### CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

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# Abdulrazak Gurnah:

## A Brief Reflection

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ANTHONY LEVINGS

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*This year, Abdulrazak Gurnah received the Nobel Prize for Literature following over three decades publishing novels and short stories inspired by his exile from Zanzibar and Tanzania. He was my PhD supervisor at the University of Kent from 2001. I wrote “The Public Personage as Protagonist in the Novels of Anthony Burgess” under his guidance. I share here some brief reflections of that time.*

Dr Gurnah’s office was downstairs in the School of English at the University of Kent. He never taught the MA in a classroom; we were always huddled into his tiny office, nine or ten of us, three or four rows deep. His module wasn’t one that I’d signed up for. I was in his class because the mid-twentieth-century literature one was dropped due to a lack of numbers. And this is how my intention to study a straight line from modernism through the twentieth century became disrupted. I ended up learning about colonial literature instead.

Once on this track of study, I decided to stay for the second MA module Abdulrazak was teaching that year, completing the journey through postcolonial writing.

I’m not sure whether he agreed with my assessment of *The English Patient* that it was rather dull when everything is revealed at the beginning and there is no reward in reading the book to the end, or my viewpoint on Joseph Conrad that irony travels poorly across time, making it impossible

to unquestionably uphold accusations of racism against the writer. But he listened and everyone discussed.

There was a group of students highly driven by postcolonial studies, who knew the line to take, while I thrashed about, trying to find my way. These were the same students who connected with Derrida, and Deleuze and Guattari, while I preferred the company of Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard. They knew the right things to say, I was out of my depth, and my pronunciations sounded funny, they sounded funny even when no one in the class knew the correct ones.

In the year that my PhD began (or perhaps it was the year after), Abdulrazak was promoted to the Head of English and gained the status of Professor Gurnah. From then on, he resided in an office on the top floor about four or five times the size of his previous one. I would arrive, sit down in the comfy chair, and talk, talk, talk.

Among the general advice he gave me on surviving the PhD, he told me not to worry too much about the teaching. Advice that was impossible to take given the need to teach drama from Shakespeare to Beckett, another area where I was out of my depth.

I was juggling all this time my first child's sleeping, eating and nappy changing routine, while working as a freelance copy-editor alongside sessional teaching to pay the bills. I was sleep-deprived and my brain was in a haywire state. Every meeting with Abdulrazak was a welcome break and a moment of calm.

I remember once there was a special seminar on Abdulrazak's work at Kent and this was the first time that I was able to ask him about the style of his writing, with its limited use of dialogue, in preference for narrative. It was a question he'd been asked before and his reply was simple: he found it easier to write in this way.

Everything was always relaxed with Abdulrazak, he didn't make time to be flustered or stressed about anything. His office was tidy, especially in comparison to others in the department and he never looked buried by his work.

I don't think he directly shared any thoughts about Anthony Burgess when I was writing my thesis, except perhaps that I shouldn't venerate the writer or presume he knew what he was talking about in any great depth. He did put me in contact with A. S. Byatt, after she'd received an honorary

## ANTHONY LEVINGS

degree from Kent, and I asked her about her inclusion of Burgess as a character in her novel, *Babel Tower*. For the rest of the time, Abdulrazak acted as a sounding board.

If I'm honest, often his feedback would annoy me a little because it seemed off-key, but then I'd go away and realise that what he'd said opened entirely new avenues and a sense of clarity on the revisions I should make to my text.

The best thing about researching under the guidance of Abdulrazak was that he just let me get on with it. He knew I was putting the work in, and he didn't have an agenda to push me one way or another, it simply was what it was, and I went about the research in my own way.

### CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Anthony Levings is managing editor at Gylphi Limited, an independent arts and humanities publisher with a strong focus on the twentieth century and beyond. He received his doctorate from the University of Kent in 2007 on the subject of the public personage as protagonist in the novels of Anthony Burgess, and has published chapters in several essay collections on the writer, including *Anthony Burgess and Modernity* (ed. Alan Roughley, Manchester University Press, 2008) and *Anthony Burgess, Autobiographer* (ed. Graham Woodroffe, Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 2006).

Encore

# Imperfect Man<sup>1</sup>

ANTHONY BURGESS

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*Introduction, by Andrew Biswell*

*Very little is known about the context of this late lecture, written by Anthony Burgess to be delivered before an audience. A photocopy of the typescript survives in the archive of the International Anthony Burgess Foundation. It was rediscovered in 2019 when a large collection of literary papers, mostly consisting of journalism and book reviews, was transferred to the Foundation from the offices of Burgess's former literary agent. It was unusual for Burgess to make such detailed notes for a lecture. He prepared less carefully when he delivered the T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures at the University of Kent in 1980, apparently improvising most of his material in the lecture room and at the piano. It is possible that the lecture was delivered, with minor variations, on more than one occasion: there is a second typescript, titled "The Novel and Imperfect Man," among the Burgess papers at the Harry Ransom Centre in Austin, Texas.*

*"Imperfect Man" offers a rapid and well-informed tour of modern literature, with reference to many of the twentieth-century writers about whom Burgess was most enthusiastic. James Joyce and T. S. Eliot will be familiar reference points to those who know Burgess, but it is surprising to see him writing in such detail about Aldous Huxley, Franz Kafka, and Rex Warner. The approach is more personal, and more engaging, than readers might expect if they have waded through Burgess's more sober*

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<sup>1</sup> *The AnaChronisT* would like to express the editors' sincerest gratitude to the International Anthony Burgess Foundation in Manchester and director Prof. Andrew Biswell for giving us permission to publish this most valuable essay for the first time. The only changes made by the editors were some very minor corrections concerning a few obvious typographical errors and the standardisation of certain recurring expressions.

## IMPERFECT MAN

*works of literary history, such as English Literature: A Survey for Students (originally published under his real name, John Burgess Wilson) and They Wrote in English, a two-volume literary history and anthology, produced for the educational market.*

*The lecture was written in 1992, the year in which Burgess travelled to Italy to launch a translation of his novel, Any Old Iron. In October 1992, while on another book tour in the United States, he was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. Nevertheless, the final phase of his career was highly productive: he completed three more books, A Mouthful of Air, A Dead Man in Deptford, and the posthumously published novel in verse, Byrne. Burgess's translation of Griboyedov's stage play, Chatsky, was presented at the Almeida Theatre in London in March 1993. As his health declined over the following months, he continued to review books for the Observer, and to compose music for his son. His final composition, a sonata for piano and great bass recorder, was completed at the Hospital of St. John and St. Elizabeth in London on 12 November 1993. He died ten days later, with his wife by his side and a copy of Joyce's Ulysses in the room. (Andrew Biswell)*

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to give you a little history. A history of the loss of faith and the search for a new faith. I will recount this history in terms of the medium in which I find it—the medium of literature. Specifically, the medium of Anglo-American literature.

As you know, this year we celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of the birth of an English king who built a new church. This was King Henry VIII of England, whose need for a divorce from a barren wife and marriage to a dark-haired girl who would give him a successor to the throne forced him to renounce the authority of the Pope in Rome and declare himself head of the Catholic Church of England. The Church was called Catholic because it maintained the doctrines of Rome while denying the supremacy of the power of Rome. As the years went on, these doctrines changed, but the British monarch maintained leadership of the Church. This still continues.

But in the nineteenth century, the Church of England began to lose its power and its authority. Other religious bodies—the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Anabaptists, the Quakers—had fiery adherents. And in the middle of the nineteenth century two new forces—the theory of evolution, the doctrine of materialism—shook the foundations of the Church

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