JIM CLARKE

THE AESTHETICS OF ANTHONY BURGESS

FIRE OF WORDS

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This book is dedicated to my daughter Marianne Kehoe Clarke, who grew to adulthood during the time I have been researching this work, to the memory of my father Jim Clarke who always supported it, and to the memory of my sister Roisin Clarke, who tragically died before I ever commenced it.

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Jim Clarke

Contents

Abbreviations

ABBA	Burgess, Anthony, *ABBA ABBA* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977)
ACO	Burgess, Anthony, *A Clockwork Orange* (London: Heinemann, 1962)
Aggeler	Aggeler, Geoffrey, *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1979)
AOI	Burgess, Anthony, *Any Old Iron* (London: Vintage, 1992; 1st pub. Hutchinson, London, 1989)
Battlements	Burgess, Anthony, *A Vision of Battlements* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1965)
Bloom	Bloom, Harold, ed., *Anthony Burgess: Modern Critical Views* (New York: Chelsea House Publishing, 1987)
BRW	Burgess, Anthony, *Beard's Roman Women: A Novel* (London: Hutchinson, 1977)
Coale	Coale, Samuel, *Anthony Burgess* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1981)
Consolations	Morris, Robert K., *The Consolations of Ambiguity* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1971)
Conversations	Ingersoll, Earl G. and Ingersoll, Mary C., eds., *Conversations with Anthony Burgess* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2008)
Copy	Burgess, Anthony, *Urgent Copy: Literary Studies* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968)
Dead Man	Burgess, Anthony, *A Dead Man in Deptford* (London: Hutchinson, 1993)
DeVitis	DeVitis, A. A., *Anthony Burgess* (New York: Twayne, 1972)

Enderby	Burgess, Anthony, *Enderby* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982 [repr. *Inside Mr Enderby,* 1963; *Enderby Outside,* 1968; *The Clockwork Testament,* 1974])
EOTWN	Burgess, Anthony, *The End of the World News* (London: Heinemann, 1982, repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983)
EP	Burgess, Anthony, *Earthly Powers* (1980, repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981)
Heroes	Carlyle, Thomas, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (London: James Fraser, 1841)
Homage	Burgess, Anthony, *Homage to QWERT YUIOP: Selected Journalism 1978–1985* (London: Hutchinson, 1986)
LWBG	Burgess, Anthony, *Little Wilson and Big God: Being the First Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess* (London: Heinemann, 1987)
MF	Burgess, Anthony, *MF* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973)
MFS	*Modern Fiction Studies,* vol. 27 no. 3, Autumn 1981.
Mozart	Burgess, Anthony, *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* (London: Hutchinson, 1991, repr. London: Vintage, 1992)
Modernity	Roughley, Alan, ed., *Anthony Burgess and Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008)
NLTS	Burgess, Anthony, *Nothing Like The Sun* (London: Vintage, 1982, 1st pub. 1964)
NS	Burgess, Anthony, *Napoleon Symphony: A Novel in Four Movements* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974)
Portraits	Vernadakis, Emmanuel and Woodroffe, Graham, eds., *Portraits of the Artist in A Clockwork Orange* (Angers: Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 2003)
Real Life	Biswell, Andrew, *The Real Life of Anthony Burgess* (London: Picador, 2005)
Reflections	Robinson, David, *Reflections* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1978)
Ring	Burgess, Anthony, *The Worm and the Ring* (London: Heinemann, revised ed. 1970, orig. pub. 1961)
Sonnets	Burgess, Anthony, *Revolutionary Sonnets and other poems*, Jackson, Kevin, ed. (Manchester: Carcanet, 2002)
SP	Paglia, Camille, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1990, repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992)
TMAM	Burgess, Anthony, *This Man and Music* (London: Hutchinson, 1982)

TNN	Burgess, Anthony, *The Novel Now* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968, repr. 1971)
TPP	Burgess, Anthony, *The Pianoplayers* (London: Arrow Books, 1987; 1st pub. Hutchinson, 1986)
Trilogy	Burgess, Anthony, *The Malayan Trilogy* (London: Minerva, 1996 [repr. *Time for a Tiger,* London: Heinemann, 1956; *The Enemy in the Blanket,* London: Heinemann, 1958 and *The Beds in the East,* London: Heinemann, 1959])
TT	Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John Russell (New York: Criterion Books, 1961)
TWS	Burgess, Anthony, *The Wanting Seed* (London: Heinemann, 1962, repr. New York: Ballantine, 1964/1970)
Venus	Burgess, Anthony, *The Eve of Saint Venus* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1964, repr. London: Arena, 1987)
WG	Graves, Robert, *The White Goddess* (1948), ed. Lindop, Grevel (Manchester: Carcanet, 1997)
YHYT	Burgess, Anthony, *You've Had Your Time: Being the Second Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess* (London: Heinemann, 1990, repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991)
Young	Young, Julian, *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Burgess's Legacy

In death as in life Anthony Burgess has proved difficult to locate in terms of his relevance or importance within English fiction. He was an avowedly experimental novelist who nevertheless garnered significant popular sales for his novels and worked extensively in the collaborative fields of popular television and cinema. He espoused conservative politics, the aesthetics of modernism and aspects of Roman Catholicism during an era when all three were largely unfashionable, and yet found his opinion was sought by many prominent European newspapers on current affairs. He is known globally as the author of a single slim novella, yet wrote 33 novels, and almost as many non-fiction books. From outside academia, he produced volumes of literary criticism and pursued a career as a novelist who composed music, describing himself as a composer who wrote novels. He was an exile who wrote about England and an Englishman who wrote about the collapse of the British Empire, leavened by a proto-postcolonial perspective. He was unashamedly highbrow, yet habitually appeared on chat shows. He was simultaneously a reviewer, performer, editor, poet, dramatist, composer, journalist, educator and fiction writer. Critics attempting to survey the extent of his achievement are forced to encompass a range of literary forms, from poetry to cinema script, by way of literary criticism, translations of foreign works, drama, libretti, linguistics texts, coffee-table books on tea or sleeping, and his own prolific output of diverse fiction, ranging from slender, esoteric novellas to

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heavyweight blockbusters. Two decades after his death new work continues to be unearthed from his archives, in such volume as to provoke one biographer to muse "[m]y God, did this man never sleep?"[1]

Burgess's journalistic work for the press included a long-running current affairs column in Italian for the Milan-based newspaper *Corriere della Sera* and regular reviewing slots with *The Spectator* and *The Observer*, not to mention a bewildering array of occasional articles for a myriad publications, including semi-regular writing for *The Independent, The New York Times, The Times Literary Supplement, The Irish Press, The Irish Times, Il Giornale and Svenska Dagbladet* published over a career that spanned five decades. This promiscuous output was not restricted to periodicals, either. As Andrew Biswell has noted (*Real Life*, 392):

> An appreciation of Burgess's full achievement must take in the large body of writing (and talking) that he did in areas other than the novel, including book reviews, cultural criticism, interviews, and his work for television, radio and film. He was one of the first literary writers who was also a television critic, performer and script writer.

Burgess's book-length non-fiction also demonstrates the breadth of his interests and achievement. In his *oeuvre*, critical studies of James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence and Ernest Hemingway nestle next to coffee-table books about New York, tea drinking or the history of beds. He penned four reader's guides to literature in English and two linguistic studies of the language. He wrote two books on his relationship with his primary artistic love, music, and his shorter prose (mainly essays and reviews) has been represented by three collections. He translated European fiction and French and Greek drama, wrote two children's novellas, edited James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, generated two volumes of autobiography, and one each of poetry and short stories.

Burgess's seeming omnipresence in all forms of print was often to provoke comment from his less productive contemporaries. Aside from the dinner party jibes ("How's the monthly novel coming along?"), Burgess found his erudition and prolificity to be the subject of sneering dismissal in reviews of his work. The implicit accusation of such reviews, that quality could not cohabit with quantity, rankled with Burgess, and

[1] "Researchers find 20 unpublished Anthony Burgess stories", Stephen Bates, The Guardian, 11th May 2011; retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/may/11/unpublished-anthony-burgess-stories-manchester, 18th April 2012.

he often raged against the "costive" output of writers like E.M. Forster as a literary heresy inspired by the Bloomsbury set. In one such broadside (*Mozart*, 145), Burgess freely admitted working for money, and allied his prodigality with that of Mozart against "Bloomsbury gentility":

> The market is served but also God. Mozart wrote for money, which E.M. Forster did not have to do: the latter's scant production is appropriate to a *rentier* as Mozart's fecundity is right both for a serious craftsman and a breadwinner. Ultimately artists must be judged not merely by excellence but by bulk or variety.

It may be that his virtuosity and prodigality have precluded Burgess's work from receiving the attention it deserves. His novels must vie for attention with his music, his journalism, his academic ability and, not least, his media presence. The fame that followed Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation of *A Clockwork Orange* was, for Burgess, somewhat of a poisoned chalice since this association with one single novella has overshadowed consideration of his more substantial fictional efforts. Equally, he embraced the roles that followed the notoriety with gusto, settling into a routine of lecturing, journalism and chat show appearances that not only interfered with the work of producing fiction but also served to associate Burgess in the public's eye as an entertainer and commentator as much as a novelist. Yet his natural fecundity did generate regular and fastidious work, inspired by a wide-ranging imagination and, for the novelist William Boyd, this variety and scope of Burgess's work is his defining characteristic:

> What seemed to me to be extraordinary about Anthony is that the whole body of work represents the man, and to say that *Earthly Powers* is the masterpiece, or the *Enderby* trilogy is what he'll be remembered by, is in a way to ignore this prodigious fecundity and prodigious invention that never seemed to dry out. I mean, one was in awe of it.[2]

The Critical Response

Boyd's premise implies that Burgess's work ought to be read in its entirety for his vision to be comprehended, but such is the diversity and sheer scale of Burgess's output that it renders the likelihood of any unifying theory about his fiction implausible. Certain broad trends, including

[2] *The Burgess Variations*, episode one, dir. David Thompson, BBC, first aired 27 December 1999.

a thematic interest in Roman Catholicism and a tendency to revel in the English language, have long since been identified by reviewers and critics, nevertheless, seeking to link so many various fictions theoretically, and correlate them with his substantial non-fiction output, some of which is contradictory, remains at best daunting. Such a unifying theory did indeed emerge from Burgess's earliest generation of critics and has remained largely unchallenged to date. However, this theologically constructed argument was initially generated by Burgess himself, and the early dominance of Burgess's own voice in critical responses to his work provides an additional complication to constructing a viable unifying critical perspective on Burgess's importance or achievement. Any attempt to theorise about Burgess's fiction *in toto* or even *pars pro toto* must engage with this argument, but engagement need not mean blind acceptance.

The notorious episode of Burgess's sacking from the *Yorkshire Post* for reviewing his own novel, which had been published under a different pseudonym, Joseph Kell, functions as more than mere picaresque talkshow anecdote. It is indicative of Burgess's habitual desire to explain his work and guide critical responses to it. Despite being a reviewer and critic, many of Burgess's secondary writings reveal an irritation at reviews of his novels that, to his mind, ignored or missed the most important underlying elements of his fiction. In an effort to have his books understood in what he considered a proper context, Burgess developed the habit of answering his critics in essays, reviews, non-fiction works and his autobiography. These responses, though partisan, offer a unique perspective on his fiction. They function, in a sense, as a window into the creative workshop.

The caveat is that Burgess usually only stepped into explain his own work when riled sufficiently. In later life, with his reputation assured, Burgess felt less and less need to respond to critics that he felt had missed the point of his fiction. An examination of his two volumes of autobiography reveals that he generally only read the British reviews of his novels, occasionally augmented by reference to interesting or perceptive reviewers in the United States. Since Burgess felt that his work was at best misunderstood, at worst wilfully ignored, in Britain, many of his attempts to explain his own novels result merely in a defensive refutation of caustic British reviews. While analysing the response to his early novel *The Right to an Answer* (*YHYT*, 22), Burgess made a plaintive cry for help from reviewers[3]:

[3] https://www.books.google.co.uk/books?id=9AvZAgAAQBAJ&pg=PT45&lpg=PT45&dq=Burgess+%22monthly+novel+yet%22&source=bl&ots=L9LeytKiK9&sig=xLS1cd6CwB54Yrh8wK_Hu9QGjAo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwieqOaXmJ3WAhXKalAKHQVWDU4Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Burgess%20%22monthly%20novel%20yet%22&f=false.

> Do reviewers ever consider that novelists are desperate for help, that they are anxious to be told where they go wrong and what they can do to put things right, and that, before they achieve the dignity of *solus* reviews and academic dissertations, they have to rely on those lordly summations in the weekly press?

Whether Anthony Burgess fulfilled such a pedagogic role in his own reviewing is a matter for debate, though his reputation as a sympathetic or 'soft' reviewer is borne out by the large range of books whose latest editions still continue to bear his recommendation.[4] However, Burgess demonstrably felt his novels were often unfairly reviewed or misunderstood, especially in Britain. The scale of his public response to such criticism varied, depending on how important he perceived the work to be. In interviews, essays and non-fiction works, he returned again and again to explain his intentions in writing particular novels, especially *Nothing Like The Sun, Napoleon Symphony, MF* and, inevitably, *A Clockwork Orange*.

In particular, Burgess sought to explain an idiosyncratic and somewhat obscure philosophical position that formed his *Weltanschauung* and underpinned much of his fiction. He first laid out this vision in an essay for the *Times Literary Supplement*[5] but he had previously discussed it in interviews and essays and it had featured overtly in a number of his novels, dating back to his earliest, *A Vision of Battlements*. He termed this vision, somewhat inaccurately, Manicheism. In Burgessian Manicheism, fundamental reality is dualistic, composed of good and evil at perpetual war. However, he often reduced the components of good and evil to simple oppositional constructs, shorn of their moral elements, as abstract as x and y. In other contexts, Burgess applied this fundamental duality of existence to humanity, and described two opposing views on human potential, which he ascribed to two early Christian scholars, Saint Augustine of Hippo and the heretical British theologian Pelagius. This opposition focused primarily on the contradiction between human perfectibility and the Christian doctrine of Original Sin, a theme that permeates many of Burgess's novels, including *A Clockwork Orange* and *Earthly Powers*. Yet he also utilised these terms to describe a wider opposition between positivism and pessimism.

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[4] Andrew Biswell (*Real Life*, 310–311) notes that Burgess had a habit of "talking up the reputations of literary friends" in his reviews.

[5] "The Manicheans", Anthony Burgess, in *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 March 1966, pp. 154–155.

Burgess's Manicheism generates a number of critical difficulties therefore, since its definition continually shifts and changes, and because its component terms are inaccurately described historically. As one scholar wrote, "Burgess's use of the word 'Manichean' to define the nature of the Ultimate Reality that provides the transcendent 'Pattern' for all things is a convenient label to attach to any dualistic theology, philosophy or metaphysic".[6] When one considers Burgess's plethora of depictions of artists and the artistic process, his Manicheism becomes additionally problematic, since his theological terminology is an inappropriate lexis for the analysis of aesthetics.

The Critical Lineage

Burgess's substantial output has undoubtedly inhibited attempts by critics to come to terms with his literary achievement. Nevertheless, from an early juncture in his career, his work attracted the attention of a steady trickle of mostly American critics, for whom his importance remains predominantly that of a novelist. In recent years, centres to study his work have been created in his home town of Manchester and at the Université d'Angers in France, both built around significant donations of Burgess's personal papers and books contributed by his widow.[7] As a result, a growing corpus of critical work is emerging from both centres. Prior to their foundation, for many years such Burgessian scholarship as existed emanated primarily from the United States, where Burgess had inspired a small number of critical works during his four years as a visiting lecturer in the 1970s. Book-length considerations of Burgess emerged sporadically from America following that period, ranging from the early reviews of his fiction by Robert K. Morris and A.A. DeVitis to the more considered studies written by critics such as John Stinson, Samuel Coale and Geoffrey Aggeler. Harold Bloom edited a collection of critical essays on Burgess as part of his Modern Literature series, while Aggeler edited a similar volume. While partially limited in value (all these books appeared before 1991, and therefore none include appraisals of his final novels or posthumously published work), these works provide a primary resource for any critic wishing to consider Burgess's fiction.

[6] *Anthony Burgess's Mythopoeic Imagination: A Study of Selected Novels (1956–1968)*, Kenyon Lewis Wagner, Doctoral Thesis, Texas Tech University, 1974, p. 59.

[7] A third archive exists at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas in Austin.

The bibliographies of Anthony Burgess compiled by Jeutonne Brewer and Paul Boytinck reveal the extent of this early criticism on Burgess. Carol M. Dix's early pamphlet and Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn's published revision of her doctoral thesis provide the only non-American critical perspectives of Burgess longer than a magazine or newspaper article, or a few pages of text in a critical review of contemporary fiction, to appear prior to Burgess's death in 1993. In the United States, however, Burgess criticism quickly generated book-length studies by a number of academic critics. The earliest of these works is Robert K. Morris's *The Consolations of Ambiguity: An essay on the novels of Anthony Burgess*, which appeared in 1971, the same year as the Dix pamphlet. A.A. DeVitis's *Anthony Burgess* (1972) was followed by studies by Richard Mathews (1978), Geoffrey Aggeler (1979) and Samuel Coale (1981). John J. Stinson wrote a revised text on Burgess for Twayne in 1991 to update and replace the DeVitis text. In 1981 the academic review *Modern Fiction Studies* dedicated its autumn issue to a consideration of Burgess's work. This included essays by Stinson, Coale and Aggeler. Geoffrey Aggeler's edited volume of essays was issued in 1986 and Harold Bloom's volume in 1987.

There is a significant overlap of critical perspectives within this body of critical work, despite the variety of authors and the disparity in dates of publication. Many of the essays in the Bloom volume, for example, had either appeared in the *Modern Fiction Studies* edition, or had been written by one of Burgess's major critics, or both. The single-author studies, as is to be expected, cite each other as authorities. All cite Burgess himself, either directly through interviews, or by echoing themes introduced by Burgess in reviews and non-fiction works such as *This Man and Music* and *Urgent Copy*, and they all specifically repeat Burgess's Manichean critical framework.

It is clear that the high water mark of this early Burgess criticism in the United States followed the period between 1969 and 1973 when Burgess worked as a visiting professor at the University of North Carolina, Columbia University and the City University of New York, as well as engaging in lecture tours of North America. Most of these earliest critics were active and admitted admirers of their subject, and Burgess's own opinions are present in these works largely unchallenged, often in the form of personal interviews with, and letters to, the authors. The scale of Burgess's input to critical works about him is not a constant, however. When Burgess met his critics, his involvement ranged from

the brief pub meeting to clarify facts to the decades-long friendship he enjoyed with Professor Ben Forkner, which ultimately led to the posthumous foundation of a research centre in Burgess's honour.[8]

There are inevitable differences in critical approach in these works, but the most striking aspect is how homogenous they can be. Crucially, they all accept Burgess's proferred (and preferred) critical framework of Manicheism. Robert K. Morris's slight but perceptive *The Consolations of Ambiguity* presents itself as an analysis of how Burgess depicts the human condition, "the immediate collision of private ideas and personal visions against a collective that is not always sympathetic, but potentially (when not actually) hostile" (3). Like many of the critics who later showed an interest in Burgess, Morris openly acknowledges his "partiality for Burgess's works and [his] increased susceptibility to his vision"; that he is, in fact, "writing about an author he admires" (6). Overt admiration for Burgess as man and as author permeates all the book-length criticism on Anthony Burgess that emanated from the United States in the 1970s and 1980s. Negative critical opinion about Burgess's work was to be found elsewhere, in the realm of book reviews and literary articles in newspapers and popular magazines.

A.A. DeVitis's text divides itself into chronological periods, within which he makes a case for thematic continuity. Hence, texts as diverse as *A Vision of Battlements* and *Devil of a State* are considered alongside *The Malayan Trilogy*, on the basis that they share the milieu of an Englishman abroad. Richard Mathews's monograph also follows Burgess's fictions in chronological order. He posits a "metaphor of the clockwork universe" as "a useful touchstone for considering the ten novels" (3) that make up the focus of his text. However, Mathews's remit does not extend past this set of novels that were completed by the early 1960s, fifteen years before the emergence of his own critical work.

Geoffrey Aggeler, Samuel Coale and John J. Stinson are the most prolific of this first wave of Burgess's critics, and all three published full-length critical works based in part on published essays and articles about Burgess's work. Aggeler's text pursues and enlarges issues raised by DeVitis, and offers much useful analysis of some core issues in Burgess

[8] "Finally, my thanks to Anthony Burgess for clearing up some biographical questions in the Ratskeller of the Nittany Lion Inn and talking with his usual fine candour" (*Boytinck*, xxxvi).

studies, such as the debate between the Pelagian and Augustinian impulses and Burgess's treatment of artist-protagonists. Coale follows the, by now well-trodden, path of a chronological division of the *oeuvre* defined by theme. However, his treatment of Burgess's use of language and mythology is a valuable resource, as is the substantial volume of interview material he includes.

Stinson's text, which was published by Twayne in 1991 to supplant the decades-old work in the same critical series by A.A. DeVitis, possesses two factors that raise its critical worth higher than the other texts mentioned. Stinson is the only one of Burgess's early critics to have drawn particular attention to factors such as his use of history as an "imagined past" and the Promethean lineage of Burgess's artist-creators, analyses that have undoubtedly influenced later Burgess scholars.

Hence we can speak of an early tradition of Burgess criticism, a series of American texts that marry a high standard of exegesis to philosophical and structural insights largely provided by the subject himself. One need not doubt the validity of these critical works simply because they often come to similar conclusions, nor because they tend to take similar critical approaches to the same novel. Anthony Burgess was fortunate in attracting a high calibre of critics to his work. One of the challenges that faced a new generation of Burgess critics involved what relationship they intended to forge with this existing body of critical work.

The need to question the standpoints of Burgess's American critics derives from the fact that they wrote before Burgess's death. After his death in 1993, with his life's work complete, a fuller and more accurate assessment could be made as to Burgess's importance as a fiction writer by a new generation of critics. Later works, such as *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* (1991), *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993) and *Byrne* (1995) consciously draw on and repurpose elements of Burgess's earlier fiction, casting those previous texts in a new light.

Since Burgess's death a second wave of scholarship, largely based in Britain and Europe, has emerged. The creation of the Anthony Burgess Centre at the Université d'Angers in 1998 quickly led to a series of critical newsletters and symposia papers which challenged the previous, mostly American, critical approach to Burgess's output. The emergence, after lengthy periods of research, of two biographies that in very different ways cast light on Burgess's own life provided further scope to reconsider and re-evaluate many of the long-unquestioned critical assumptions about Burgess's achievement, artistic vision and legacy. Fundamentally,

the evidence that Burgess fabulated much of his personal history in interviews and his non-fiction writings has led many critics, including his biographer Roger Lewis, his long-standing editor Deborah Rogers and the author Craig Brown, to conclude that Burgess continually conflated fact and fantasy.[9, 10]

However, neither biography challenges the theoretical framework set up by Burgess and perpetuated by his American critics in the same way that they challenge the facts of Burgess's life as he depicted them. This is perhaps not the purpose of a biography in any case. Lewis's work is an idiosyncratic text that focuses on his personal relationship with Burgess, while it does contain elements of literary criticism these are piecemeal and subordinated to an overt tone of hostility expressed by author towards subject. The biography by Andrew Biswell is a significantly more sober text which focuses primarily on the life rather than the works. Biswell describes Burgess's Manichean dichotomy as "his obsession and his hallmark in his later novels", while acknowledging that it was "implicit" from *A Vision of Battlements* onwards. For Biswell, Burgess's opposition of Augustinianism and Pelagianism is "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).

Following the foundation of the two research centres in Angers and Manchester, a steady stream of conferences has helped to inspire the flow of Burgessian research. Conferences at Angers have generated collections of essays themed around *A Clockwork Orange*, Burgess's autobiographies, his Elizabethan novels and his relationship with France. The Anthony Burgess Centre at Angers also published seven editions of an online newsletter between 1999 and 2004, they featured some academic literary criticism among reminiscences, reviews and general Burgessiana. Beyond Angers, there have been volumes of essays on the interrelations of Burgess's literature and his music edited by Marc Jeannin, and two

[9] "With his sexuality, I think, as with everything else, the distinction between life and fantasy was completely blurred […] I think an awful lot of him was self-invented. If you have that sort of fertile mind, maybe self-invention is the most satisfactory way of being." Deborah Rogers in *Real Life*, 306.

[10] "Burgess—histrionic, loquacious, with deep voice and furrowed brow, often putting the emphasis on unexpected words—behaved just like a slightly hammy actor playing the part of Anthony Burgess." from "Don't Laugh: Comedians and Novelists", in *The Tony Years*, Craig Brown, London, Ebury Press, 2006, p. 176.

book-length studies of Burgess's music by the musicologists Paul Phillips and Alan Shockley.[11] The International Anthony Burgess Foundation at Manchester has fulfilled more of an archival role, but has hosted a number of conferences since June 2012, mostly on *A Clockwork Orange*. The foundation's first director Alan Roughley edited a volume of essays on Burgess and modernity in 2008, which considered the fraught question of locating Burgess within either modernism or postmodernism.

The most recent generation of Burgess critics have had the benefit of considering his work in its entirety and of accessing archival material that was not available to previous Burgess scholars. However, to date, there has been no significant analysis that has questioned Burgess's proferred critical framework, which he termed Manicheism, composed of Augustinianism and Pelagianism. These terms sprang naturally to Burgess from his Catholic education and the reading that he had amassed, but they require significant glossing to be rendered illuminating to the reader who lacks such a body of knowledge. Burgess's (mis)appropriation of terms such as Manicheism, Pelagianism or Augustinianism has been accepted by his critics without sufficient attention being paid to the problems raised by translating archaic theological concepts into a modern literary and aesthetic context.

Challenging 'Manicheism'

The primary reason for questioning Burgess's theological framework is because its definition is not consistent throughout his work. Furthermore, Burgess's use of the term Manicheism is problematic because it deviates so violently from the historical religious belief the term signifies. Even interpreted as a literary critical term, Burgess's usage is at best idiosyncratic. While his understanding of the opposition of the theologies of Augustine and Pelagius is largely sound, and though this opposition has played an overt thematic role in a number of his fictions, these theological constructs are inappropriate to describe his aesthetics. Burgess's aesthetics have attracted less critical comment than might have been expected, perhaps due to the broad sweep of his fiction, which precludes easy summation, and because his themes, in particular his explorations of the nature of evil and the role of free will, have tended to

[11] Paul Phillips, A Clockwork Counterpoint: The Music and Literature of Anthony Burgess, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010.

dominate critical analyses of his work. Burgess's aesthetics, however, are also thematic. Themes of artistic creation play a central role in his novels, which feature a predominance of artist protagonists. From the first novel he wrote in 1949, *A Vision of Battlements*, to his posthumous verse novel *Byrne* in 1995, musicians, painters and especially writers proliferate as protagonists.

In addition to historically verifiable artist protagonists, such as Shakespeare, Marlowe or Keats, Burgess's novels abound in fictional artists. The poet F.X. Enderby alone appears in four of Burgess's most popular novels, and the writer Kenneth Toomey is the subject and narrator of Burgess's most substantial work, *Earthly Powers*. Other novels that do not feature an artist protagonist are often mediated via an artist narrator. Azor and his son Sadoc, self-confessed fiction writers, present themselves as the putative authors of Burgess's two novels based on the New Testament, *Man of Nazareth* and *Kingdom of the Wicked*. In novels without an artist-protagonist or artist-narrator, the creative urge is still often present, sometimes as a thwarted impulse (such as Victor Crabbe's juvenile poetry or Fenella Crabbe's failed attempts to write in *The Malayan Trilogy*) or as the focus of rationality (such as the writer F. Alexander in *A Clockwork Orange*).

Notably, some of Burgess's artists appear divinely or supernaturally inspired, while others do not. This is most evident in the overt depiction of a Muse, which occurs in various forms across Burgess's fiction from as early as *The Eve of Saint Venus*. This distinction suggests a dual aesthetic at work in Burgess—two forms of artistic expression, one requiring divine inspiration and the other not—which in turn is consistent with the dualistic world view with which Burgess affiliated.

Art, especially music but also writing, fulfils a redemptive role in many of Burgess's fictions, or comes associated with redemptive moments or motives, but again this takes multiple forms. It is best illustrated in *A Clockwork Orange*, wherein writing is associated with the civilised and humane qualities of the author F. Alexander, while music is the catalyst for moments of rare transcendence beyond the mire of quotidian bestiality for the narrator delinquent Alex. Such a distinction again relates quite closely to the dualistic world view offered by Burgess, in which a Pelagian doctrine of human perfectibility is opposed by an Augustinian doctrine of human damnation requiring external (specifically divine or supernatural) agency to be redeemed.

The extent to which Burgess mined his own life for material cannot be underestimated either. The autobiographical elements in his writings extend far beyond the two volumes of "confessions" that emerged towards the end of his career. The experiences of protagonists in *The Right to an Answer*, *Beard's Roman Women*, *Honey for the Bears*, *The Clockwork Testament* and *The Doctor is Sick* all closely mirror episodes from the author's own colourful existence. Other novels, such as *The Malayan Trilogy*, *Devil of a State*, *The Worm and the Ring*, *The Pianoplayers*, *Any Old Iron* and *One Hand Clapping*, evoke environments that Burgess once inhabited and real people with whom he had associated.

Burgess's authorial voice is also identifiable in other fictions, including *1985* and *Mozart and the Wolf Gang*, in an editorial or curatorial role, and it is notable that in both fictions this voice is bifurcated into a duologue, again expressing a fundamental binarism at work. Within the context of confabulation identified by Burgess's biographers and associates, there appears to be a spectrum of reality functioning across Burgess's fiction, from those in which little or no autobiographical material is present, via those in which Burgessian avatars appear in ancillary or narratorial roles, to instances of simple fictionalising of real life events, through to the ultimate fictionalising of his own autobiography, in print and in person.

The interaction between these three elements—Burgess's vision of fundamental duality, his focus on the process of artistic creation and the function of being an artist, and his reliance on autobiographical material—is the subject of this book. In attempting a coherent synthesis of these elements, an aesthetic analogue of Burgess's theological duality is needed to account for the focus on artistic creation within his work. The aesthetic and cultural dichotomy of Apollo and Dionysus, which was first defined by Friedrich Nietzsche in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, offers one such dualistic analogue in the field of aesthetic philosophy. However, Nietzsche restricted his argument to the somewhat unrelated fields of Attican drama and the music of Richard Wagner. Therefore, a strict Nietzschean reading of this dichotomy cannot be applied to the work of Anthony Burgess.

Since the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, however, other cultural critics have borrowed and adapted the Nietzschean framework to their own ends, expanding it to encompass a much wider field of artistic and

cultural subjects in fields as varied as psychoanalysis and political commentary. There has been an extensive expansion of Nietzsche's core idea within the German philosophical tradition, where the dialectic of Apollo and Dionysus has been the subject of significant studies by Heidegger, Habermas and Sloterdijk.[12, 13, 14] Heidegger's work forms only a small part of a panoramic analysis of Nietzsche's entire philosophy, whereas Habermas's examination of the dialectic forms part of an attempt to relocate Nietzsche's work within debates surrounding postmodernism. Sloterdijk, who garnered a reputation as a somewhat controversial commentator on Nietzsche, dedicated an entire monograph to *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which he sought to recast Nietzsche's text as a performative event, wherein Nietzsche sought to depict life as an aesthetic condition. While all these interpretations indicate the potential of expanding the remit of Nietzsche's dialectic, they share a tendency to view the dialectic within primarily cultural arenas rather than the limiting topos of applied aesthetics.

Nietzsche's dialectic has also been influential within the French philosophical tradition, with poststructuralists such as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida all offering critiques or commentaries on Apollo and Dionysus.[15, 16] Again, these are primarily commentaries upon Nietzsche's own work which seek to apply those critiques to more expansive ends. Foucault's attempt in *Folie et Déraison* to depict insanity without circumscribing it within a rationalised critique co-opts this dialectic in its attempt to elide those boundaries. Derrida in turn critiqued Foucault's interpretation of Nietzsche more than Nietzsche's work itself.

Deleuze offered a different approach, depicting *The Birth of Tragedy* as the commencement of a lineage within Nietzsche's thinking that progressed from the dialectic of Apollo and Dionysus to a complementary relationship between the mythic figures of Dionysus and Ariadne, alongside an opposition of Dionysus to Christianity ("the Crucified"). While significantly influential within various philosophical fields, this French tradition, as

[12] In his four volume study of Nietzsche, especially volume 1, *The Will to Power as Art* (1979, originally written in German, 1936–1940 and published 1961).

[13] In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987, orig. pub. in German as *Der Philosophische Diskurs der Moderne: Zwülfe Vorlesungen*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985).

[14] In *Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche's Materialism* (1989).

[15] In *Folie et Déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (1961).

[16] In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1986, orig. pub. as *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, 1962).

with its German counterpart, does not seek to expand Nietzsche's dialectic outward from its core topic to a wider application to art.

In America, the dialectic of Apollo and Dionysus has attracted the attention of cultural commentators such as Ayn Rand and Camille Paglia. Rand applied the dialectic imaginatively to the cultural schisms opening up in the late 1960s in the United States.[17] The most significant adaptation of Nietzsche's Apollo–Dionysus dichotomy within the field of applied aesthetics is Camille Paglia's study of Western culture since prehistory, *Sexual Personae* (1990). Paglia grafts a proto-feminism onto the concept of Dionysus, which she argues is really a masculinised version of goddess worship adapted into the patriarchal era of history. By contrast, Paglia's interpretation of Apollo is firmly masculine, thus creating a gender dichotomy that lies above the original Nietzschean aesthetic opposition.

However, her genderised adaptation of Nietzsche's terminology widens the remit of art which can be considered in light of this dualism. Paglia's text encompasses works of art (primarily literary) from, as the subtitle of her study indicates, the bust of Nefertiti to the poems of Emily Dickinson, and her reformulation of the opposition also permits application to later works. Paglia's position is that the persona of Dionysus is itself an Apollonian subversion of the original archetypal feminine within the male hegemony of the ancient Greek world. To some degree she is supported in this interpretation by Helene Deutsch's pioneering reapplication of the dialectic into the realm of psychoanalysis in which she states that Dionysus "appears as a great social revolutionary – the first feminist in the history of mankind – in order to help enslaved women" (27).

Paglia's assertion of the fundamental femininity underpinning the Dionysus archetype is also legitimised by the existence of the Bacchic rites, which were restricted in the ancient world to women only, and supported by seminal analysts of Graeco-Roman culture and mythology such as Walter Otto, whose own study of the Dionysus myth assumed an underlying feminine principle at work:

> This feminine world (of Dionysus) is confronted by the radically different masculine world of Apollo. In this world not the life mystery of blood and the powers of earth but the clarity and the breath of the mind hold sway. However, the Apollonic world cannot exist without the other. This is why it has never denied it recognition. (142)

[17] "Apollo and Dionysus" (1969), in *The New Left: The Anti-Industrial Revolution* (1971).

Burgess was familiar with *Sexual Personae*, and reviewed it favourably on publication in 1990. He was also familiar with the work of Nietzsche, though he showed little interest in it.[18] The remnants of his libraries now archived in Manchester include a volume of Ronald Hayman's *Nietzsche: A Critical Life*, two volumes of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in French and German, and an Italian edition of *Dawn*, which may have belonged to his Italian wife Liana. An additional collection of Burgess's books archived in Angers contains an Italian translation of Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations*. Again, this may belong to Liana, though Burgess did speak and read Italian and once wrote about enjoying Orwell translated into that language. He was specifically aware of Nietzsche's dialectic from *The Birth of Tragedy*, yet made only one overt reference to it in his entire body of work, a sideline comment in a 1982 travelogue on Stockholm.[19] There is therefore little or no evidence that Burgess wrote under the direct influence of either Nietzsche or Paglia. Clearly, Paglia's work was published only towards the very end of Burgess's life, while Nietzsche's influence over Burgess's work is at best indirect, via the influence he bore on the high Modernists which Burgess held in such esteem. Instead, I suggest that Nietzsche's dichotomy of Apollo and Dionysus, as adapted by Paglia, offers a useful aesthetic analogue for the theological dichotomy Burgess had promoted.

The introduction of this duality into the realm of Burgess's aesthetics illuminates one particular trope of his depiction of the artistic process. Nietzsche and Paglia both describe two opposed forms of artistic sentiment and expression. Burgess, curiously, does likewise, populating his fictions with rivals to his artist protagonists. He opposes Shakespeare with Robert Greene, Marlowe with Thomas Kyd and Keats with the Roman dialect poet Giuseppe Belli. His fictional poet Enderby is opposed by the poetaster Rawcliffe, while Kenneth Toomey in *Earthly Powers* has as a lifelong rival his one-time lover Val Wrigley. Ronald Beard is challenged

[18] In an interview with Samuel Coale he once perceptively described Bergson and Nietzsche as the antecedents of George Bernard Shaw in an aside. See *Conversations*, 126. The only mention of Nietzsche in Burgess's fiction appears in his final work, the posthumous *Byrne*, where Nietzsche is one of the luminaries in the EU's Strasbourg-based House of Euroculture, from which Shakespeare has been excluded. Visitors to the House are greeted with a recording which states "'*Cogito ergo sum*' or 'God is dead.'" (*Byrne*, 111).

[19] "There are no raucous pubs as in London (which must count, for the Swedes, as a very southern city, a positive Naples). On the other hand there is a highly sequestered drink problem, the consequence of having the Dionysian element in all human nature suppressed by the Apollonian state." "Going North", (*One Man's Chorus*, 1998, p. 22).

by his wife's former husband, P.R. Pathan in his eponymous novel. This trope of rivalry or opposition among writers has an analogue in some of Burgess's more didactic experimental texts. The first (non-fiction) section of his homage to Orwell, *1985*, is interspersed with duologues performed by unnamed entities that seem to express the opinions of Burgess himself, and are not distinguished from sections written in direct prose, which are apparently intended to be read as the authorial voice. In *Mozart and the Wolf Gang*, when the technique is reprised, the debaters are overtly named Anthony and Burgess.

This is one of many points where Burgess's artistic duality elides with two other elements: his use of creative or fictional biography as a genre; and his reliance on autobiographical material as subject matter. In addition to Mozart, Burgess fictionalised the lives of Moses, Jesus Christ, Sigmund Freud, Attila the Hun, Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Napoleon and John Keats, and populated these and other novels with hundreds more historical characters, only rarely pseudonymously.[20] Burgess's extensive usage of the lives of actual people as subject matter has been addressed in part by at least one doctoral thesis.[21] His rewriting of history orbits around these famous lives, and is in its own way as radical an historical revision as the postmodernist anti-histories of Thomas Pynchon or Don DeLillo. The cypher of the factual Shakespeare's biography is fleshed out by Burgess through a vivid focus on his allegedly colourful sex life. Burgess's Freud is a man who can barely communicate, while by contrast his Attila is a verbose intellectual. The blunt facts of Napoleon's battles are mediated through a hallucinogenic kaleidoscope of narrative and typographical technique. This interaction reaches one apotheosis in *Earthly Powers*, where a fictional protagonist, the novelist Kenneth Toomey, proceeds through the twentieth century encountering dozens of famous, historically verifiable personages, from James Joyce to Heinrich Himmler, not unlike a Zelig or a Forrest Gump.

The central argument of Roger Lewis's biography is that Burgess only ever wrote about himself. All his heroes, even in his non-fictional biographies and literary studies, are, according to Lewis, simply proxies for Burgess, as if he sought to aggrandise himself by way of borrowed

[20] A rare example of a pseudonymous character is the aspirant intellectual rock star Yod Crewsy, a thinly veiled John Lennon, from *Enderby Outside*.

[21] *The Public Personage as Protagonist in the Novels of Anthony Burgess*, Anthony Levings, doctoral thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury, 2007.

plumage.[22] There is no doubt that Burgess drew heavily on his own experiences in some of his novels, as I have already detailed. However, Lewis debunks his own argument by astutely noting how Burgess inculcates himself into his narratives about real people as narrator or ancillary support:

> Why, the epigraph to that novel [*MF*] quotes the First Folio stage direction of *Much Ado About Nothing,* which marks the entry of 'Jacke Wilson', who played Balthazar and sang to the ladies to sigh no more. When Miles Faber – M.F. – wakes from a nightmare, his watch has stopped at 19.17, the year of the birth of John Wilson. *The End of the World News* presupposed that Burgess had died; the text was purportedly edited by John B. Wilson, B.A. (Manc.). And in *Abba Abba,* Keats and his acquaintance, the Italian poet Guiseppe Giacchino Belli, unravel a family tree that connects Romantic Italy with the Wilsons in Manchester. (46–47)

To this list can be added the 'Mr. Burgess' who narrates *Nothing Like The Sun*, and the 'Jacke Wilson' who narrates *A Dead Man in Deptford*, and a number of others. Additionally, Burgess does populate many of his fictions, often in thin disguise, as the protagonist. Edwin Spindrift, Paul Hussey, Ronald Beard and Enderby all live through reworked versions of events from Burgess's own life. However, in those novels where Burgess's protagonists are actual people of historical veracity, the Burgessian avatar is commonly relegated to an ancillary role. Such insertions of the author into their own texts have become a noted hallmark of postmodernist fiction, and this series of proxy Burgesses populating his fictions in bit-part roles or narrating them from a distance looks forward to the more overt forms of authorial insertion practised by later writers, such as Paul Theroux and Martin Amis, who were demonstrably influenced by Burgess. This postmodern complication of the traditional perception of Burgess as a late modernist has been acknowledged by Aude Haffen, one of a number of critics to locate Burgess in a liminal space between modernism and postmodernism:

> Mediated through a gang of semi-fictitious personae, Burgess's imaginary life-writing both purges and revives a cultural canon mummified into a

[22] "As with many of Burgess's biographical opuscules (Hemingway, Keats, Orwell, Shakespeare, and Joyce of course), the actual subject is Burgess himself, and the mood can be a bit swaggering and self-congratulatory, too." (Lewis, 9).

quasi-mythical tradition. His humanistic urge to follow in the footsteps of the great men of the past clashes with his obtrusive personal presence and idiosyncratic thematic prism – romantic sympathy clashes with both the postmodern hypersubjectivism and the modernist order-imposing, mythopoetic aesthetics.[23]

The Meaning of Burgessian Aesthetics

I use the terms artistic and aesthetic herein interchangeably. This convergence contradicts a school of thought, typified by critics like Peter Kivy, which seeks to distinguish between a narrow conception of the aesthetic and a wider understanding of that which is relevant to art. The reason for jettisoning this distinction is because this book seeks to explore the depiction of artistic creation rather than the perception of it. The term aesthetic itself admittedly derives from the Greek αἰσθητικός, meaning that which is sensitive to being perceived. It is a relatively modern notion in English, having arrived as a calque from the Latinate coinage constructed initially by the German philosopher and aesthetician Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his seminal 1750 work *Aesthetica*.[24] Baumgarten used the notion of aesthetics to describe how art may be appreciated, and introduced the desirability of beauty into philosophical aesthetics. Later German thinkers, especially Kant, Schiller and Hegel, explored the interrelationship between this notion of beauty and its correlation with truth, whether considered subjectively or objectively. The idea or practice of aesthetics predates its existence as a critical or philosophical term, and can be traced back at least as far as Plato.

There is no space for a full consideration of the history of aesthetics here, and such would not be pertinent in any case, since aesthetics, conceived as the philosophical consideration of art, has historically been an examination of the perception and reception of art, rather than an examination of its generation. The latter has primarily been of interest within psychological and psychoanalytical arenas rather than that of literary criticism. The relative paucity of literary works dealing with the subject of artistic creation, and a concomitant lack of a critical tradition considering

[23] "Anthony Burgess's fictional biographies: romantic sympathy, tradition-oriented modernism, postmodern vampirism?", Aude Haffen in Roughley, *Modernity*, 132.

[24] As late as 1735, according to Peter Kivy: *Once-Told Tales*, Peter Kivy, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, 2011, p. 12.