

Double Vision: The Manicheism of Anthony Burgess and Its Aesthetic Analogue

For ultimately, it is very doubtful whether any novel, however trivial, can possess any vitality without an implied set of values derived from religion...Fiction can do little more than suggest that the world is bigger than it looks and that it is in order to seek a pattern in it. If it persuades us to meditate on life, it is fulfilling a sort of religious purpose.

(“The Manicheans”, Anthony Burgess, *The Times Literary Supplement* 3340, 3 March 1966, p. 154)

BURGESS’S RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

In 1966, Anthony Burgess wrote a substantial article for the *Times Literary Supplement* in which he laid out his conception of the relationship between fiction and the religious experience. The article, entitled “The Manicheans”, expanded Burgess’s core understanding that “ultimately, it is doubtful whether any novel, however trivial, can possess any vitality without an implied set of values derived from religion” (154). Burgess’s religious framework of reference was Roman Catholicism, a faith he was born into and educated within. So extensive was his knowledge of Roman Catholicism that the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* commissioned many articles from him commenting on Vatican

I take my title from an essay by Jean Kennard which places Burgess’s fiction in the context of a response to existentialist philosophy.

developments, and he regularly wrote on religious themes, primarily Roman Catholicism, for a wide range of publications. His formative cultural framework inevitably influenced his fiction writing. Catholicism provided Burgess with many of his protagonists and most of his major themes. He acknowledged his theological inheritance and predisposition in a 1971 interview with Thomas Churchill when he admitted “what I write looks like Catholic writing” (*Conversations*, 12).

However, as Thomas Woodman notes: “Anthony Burgess is [a] ... problematic case since he is not a Christian believer, yet claims that he has always written from a Catholic perspective.”¹ By the time of his undergraduate career at Manchester University, Burgess was a self-described “renegade Catholic who mocked at Hell but was still secretly scared of it” (*Copy*, 279). In adulthood he described Catholicism as a “solar fertility creed”, but his adolescent apostasy from the mother church was a drawn out and agonised affair, as it was for James Joyce before him.^{2,3} The intellectual imperative to deny inherited doctrines was complicated by his notions of familial and regional loyalty and identity. Raised a ‘Cat-lick’ rather than a ‘Proddy Dog’, in the slang of his childhood, Burgess felt alienated from the Anglican cultural mainstream of England from an early age.⁴

Burgess’s Catholic roots connected him to three interlinked traditions, all located outside the mainstream of English letters. His Catholicism was a primarily a regional identity. Redolent of Ireland and Lancashire recusants, Catholicism in Britain from the time of the Penal Laws until the twentieth century was primarily practised by immigrant or working-class communities located for the most part in the North of England. Recognising the source of the sustained Catholic presence in the region, Burgess acknowledged that he was “probably three-fourths

¹ *Faithful Fictions: The Catholic Novel in British Literature*, Thomas Woodman, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1991, p. xi.

² “Thomas Robert Malthus 1766–1834”, Anthony Burgess, in *The Horizon Book of Makers of Modern Thought*, intr. Bruce Mazlich, American Heritage Publishing, New York, 1972, p. 267.

³ Harold Bloom, contrasting Anthony Burgess’s relationship with James Joyce to that of Samuel Beckett, noted that “Burgess has a more limited ambition, and enters into no *agon* with Joyce, however loving. Toward Joyce, he is the thankful receiver or good son” (*Bloom*, 1).

⁴ See *LWBG*, 29.

Irish and one-fourth something else, whatever that is" (*Coale*, 2). Culturally, being a Catholic placed Burgess outside the history of mainstream English Literature from John Bale onwards, but, equally, connected him to the tradition of art and civilisation that flourished on the European continent, especially in Mediterranean countries. His long exile in Mediterranean Europe, including four years in Rome itself, may be seen as a sort of homecoming. It is perhaps the tension between his sense of exile and his ease in other cultures that differentiates Burgess's novels from those of the two other English Catholic writers with whom he is most often compared, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh.⁵

Burgess's cultural Catholicism was ruptured by his adolescent apostasy, however. This had inevitable painful consequences for his sense of personal identity. To turn his back on the Roman Catholic faith was effectively to refute his recusant cultural origins:

I have a portrait of an ancestor who lost his land to the Crown because he was a Catholic; there is a tradition of an earlier ancestor who lost his life. The family suffered, apparently, so that I could achieve apostasy; an ironical end to the fight for freedom of worship. I am far from happy about this situation, but nobody can actively *will* loss of faith.⁶

The pain caused by leaving the Church stayed with Burgess throughout his life, and he remained obsessed by its behaviour and beliefs. His later engagement with Roman Catholicism, especially following the Second Vatican Council, often closely resembled the criticism offered from conservative quarters within the Church. He even considered a return to Catholicism, despite lacking the "spark of faith". However, the Church of his youth was no more, and he found the reforms of Vatican II impossible to tolerate on an aesthetic level. The turning of the altar was "like a butcher's shop", priests were wearing "flamboyant neckties", and the ecclesiastical music of Handel and Purcell had been replaced by excerpts from *Godspell* (*MFS*, 439). These "vulgarities", which he attributed to

⁵"It's all right if you're a Catholic convert like Graham Greene or Evelyn Waugh," he once explained. "You can have the best of both worlds, but if you're a cradle Catholic with Irish blood, then you're automatically a renegade to the outside." (*MFS*, 436).

⁶"On Being a Lapsed Catholic", Anthony Burgess, in *Triumph*, vol. 2, no. 2, February 1967, p. 31.

the influence of John XXIII, inhibited any possibility of Burgess returning to Catholicism:

I tried to get back in [to the Catholic Church] ... and just at that moment the Pope came up with a new absurdity and I had to turn my back again.⁷

His Old Testament conception of God the Father, distant and vengeful, inspired the title for his first volume of autobiography, *Little Wilson and Big God*. If God was envisaged as a “vindictive invisibility”, Burgess was later to rationalise, perhaps He took no direct interest in the lives of his creatures on Earth.⁸ Equally, He might be the wrong God. This idea became increasingly prevalent in Burgess’s fiction after the Second Vatican Council, which proposed a God of love inconsistent with the dark and mysterious deity familiar from his childhood. Burgess summarised his theological trajectory in the following terms:

I was brought up a Catholic, became an Agnostic, flirted with Islam and now hold a position which may be termed Manichee—I believe the wrong God is temporarily ruling the world and that the true God has gone under. (*DeVitis*, 15)

Burgess’s childhood intuition of an evil God was centred on a fear of hell, a Dantesque vision of flames and torture into which the damned were to be cast without hope of salvation. The third chapter of James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which Burgess evoked in his “Silence, Exile and Cunning” essay for *The Listener*, accurately depicts the nature of how the doctrine was presented to Catholic secondary school children in Britain and Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century and start of the twentieth, and reading this chapter inspired Burgess to return briefly to the Church during his adolescence:

The effect of the book was to put me in the position of Stephen Dedalus himself, who’s horrified by the sermon on hell. I was so horrified that I was scared back into the Church. I swore I’d never read Joyce again, which was really very ironical. (*MFS*, 437)

⁷“Anthony Burgess: Pushing On”, interview with Walter Clemons, *New York Times Book Review*, 29 November 1970, p. 2.

⁸The God I Want, ed. James Alexander Hugh Mitchell, Constable, London, 1967, p. 57.

Burgess's later career as a writer is heavily indebted to the influence of Joyce. He became the author of two critical book-length works on Joyce and once edited *Finnegans Wake*.^{9,10} His first experience of affinity with Joyce, however, was in the arena of faith rather than art. Towards the end of his life, Burgess's definition of his childhood faith remained coloured by this Joycean vision of hell:

It's not about glory and about eternal rest, it is about going to hell and burning in eternal fires. I think with later generations this no longer applies. But with my generation certainly it did, and with James Joyce's generation before.¹¹

Burgess remained intrigued by any creed that emulated the austere Augustinian beliefs of his childhood. He briefly flirted with converting to Islam during his time as a colonial officer in Malaya, as it evoked for him the "puritanical element" which he felt existed in the "Anglo-Irish brand" of Catholicism of his youth (*MFS*, 436). Burgess was never interested in converting to any form of Protestantism, which he airily dismissed, following Joyce, as an illogical absurdity. Similarly, despite living in the East and exposing himself to all manner of Oriental beliefs, he felt unmoved by other major religions:

I've never had any feeling for Buddhism at all. Never had any feeling for Hinduism. I cannot go along with the Californian Vedantists. I cannot go along with Hinduism at all, nor with Buddhism. But I can go along with Islam, because it's pretty close to us. (*MFS*, 438)

The version of Islam that Burgess encountered in Malaya, which he considered "gentle and permissive" (*LWBG*, 407), was destined to be the object of a flirtation only. It married the attractiveness of a familiar austerity to a laxness in practice caused by its forced interaction with

⁹Burgess, Anthony, *Here Comes Everybody: An Introduction to James Joyce for the Ordinary Reader*, London: Faber and Faber, 1965.

¹⁰Burgess, Anthony, *Joysprick: An Introduction to the Language of James Joyce* (London: 1973; repr. New York: Harvest and Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975).

¹¹*Writers Revealed*, ed. Rosemary Hartill, BBC (London: Peter Bedrick Books, 1989) p. 16.

other religions in the melting-pot of Malaya.¹² Though “charming” when placed alongside “Shintoism and Buddhism and Christianity and atheism and what you will”, the “monolithic” aspect of Islam became “repulsive” to Burgess (*MFS*, 439). Initially attractive, primarily because Burgess hoped that “if I worshipped Allah the God of the Catholics would leave me alone” (*LWBG*, 408), the reality of converting to Islam raised issues that both Burgess and his character Hardman found unacceptable. Although Islam features prominently in *The Malayan Trilogy*, *Devil of a State* and *1985*, and forms part of the cultural background in *Napoleon Symphony* and *Earthly Powers*, his rejection of Islam was based primarily on a criticism of what he perceived as hypocrisy among Islamic authorities, which is depicted in both *The Enemy in the Blanket* and *1985*. However, by the time of the Iranian fatwah against Salman Rushdie in 1989, his opinion had hardened further to the point where he condemned what he called “Islam’s gangster tactics” in *The Independent* newspaper.¹³ Later again, in *Byrne*, Burgess depicts Islam as a faceless terror campaign. A fuller consideration of Burgess’s interaction and ultimate rejection of Islam can be found in Ralph Harrington’s essay, “‘The Old Enemy’: Anthony Burgess and Islam”.¹⁴

Despite his theological predisposition, Burgess was insistent that religious fiction was an undesirable diminution of the purpose of fiction. In “The Manicheans”, Burgess questions whether “the novel is an unredeemably profane form, and that saints can’t belong there”, but concludes that they “can, so long as they are willing to be sinners first” (154). This goes some way to explaining the particularly rational depiction of Christ in Burgess’s two novels, *Man of Nazareth* and *The Kingdom of the*

¹²The character of Rupert Hardman in *The Enemy in the Blanket* may be Burgess’s depiction of this brief infatuation with Islam. Hardman converts to Islam in order to marry a rich widow who will pay his debts. He enters the religion, though not the marriage, as a token gesture, but soon finds that his new wife, ‘Che Normah, intends to make him hold fast to the rules of Mohammed. His fascination with the exoticism of his new faith soon gives way to the reality of the austerity of pious Muslim behaviour. He is forbidden to drink, eat pork or associate with his former friend, a Catholic priest. When Hardman accompanies his newly pregnant wife on a pilgrimage to Mecca, the full impact of his conversion sinks in, and he escapes from both the marriage and the religion.’

¹³“Islam’s Gangster Tactics”, Anthony Burgess, *The Independent*, 16 February 1989, p. 27.

¹⁴“‘The Old Enemy’: Anthony Burgess and Islam”, Ralph Harrington, 2008. <http://www.artificialhorizon.org/essays/burgess.html>. Accessed 10 September 2012.

Wicked. Burgess worked on two television mini-series about the origins of Christianity for Franco Zeffirelli (*Jesus of Nazareth* and *A.D.*) and adapted his research material for fictional purposes. Unlike the television projects, Burgess had no religious advisers to keep him on the path of orthodoxy while creating his novels, and hence they differ quite radically, despite being written by the same author from the same research.

The dual role of the Christ figure, as both god and man, provided Burgess with a binary paradigm, yet the opposition of perfect divinity and fallen man within the same entity has presented many artists with difficulty. How may one depict both adequately and simultaneously? Burgess's depiction of Christ evades this conundrum by presenting a very human Christ, mediated through the narration of a sceptical fictional author who shares Burgess's own conception of a duoversal reality. Azor, the Greek narrator of *Man of Nazareth*, expresses his understanding of reality in terms reminiscent of Heraclitus or Anaximander:

[T]he world is a two-fold creation; indeed I have never yet met any man who would deny it. The stability of living things, and even of man-made, seems to depend on the conflicting of opposites ... In the universe of the spirit, at least as it appears to us in the Mediterranean lands, the twofold nature is held to be seen in the unresolved conflict between good and evil, though these are no more easily to be defined as to their true respective essences than are right and left, or light and darkness, since the one can only be understood in terms of the other. (6)

Burgess's Jesus is primarily human rather than divine, as the novel's title suggests. The narrative depicts a Christ who argues, drinks and even marries. Meditations on the nature of divinity, such as those that can be found in Graham Greene's fiction and which one might expect to find in a novel about the life of Christ, are strikingly absent. The presence of the divine is restricted to a brief intervention by an invisible quiddity, the disembodied voice present at Christ's baptism, praising the Son in whom He is well pleased.

By creating a human rather than a divine Jesus, Burgess finds himself in keeping with the trend of Christological depiction in late twentieth-century literature. Jim Crace's 1997 novel *Quarantine* attempts to understand Christ's forty-day fast in the desert from an atheist's perspective. His Jesus is little more than a "man in the mood to divine grand meanings in the simplest acts" (128). Yet Crace is a lifelong atheist, exploring the origins of Christ's mission in a world without God. Norman Mailer,

a novelist who, like Burgess, expressed interest in the Manichean paradigm, attempted to fictionalise the life of Christ in his thirtieth novel, *The Gospel According to the Son*. His book also depicts a predominantly human Christ, and largely follows the narrative of the synoptic gospels. The most noteworthy aspect of this novel is its use of anachronism—Judas is presented as a proto-socialist and Capernaum as the homosexual hang-out of the ancient Middle East. Nikos Karantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1953; first English translation 1960) similarly focuses on the mystery of Christ the man and, like Crace's novel, functions as an answer to a "What-if?" question. Karantzakis is the only one of these writers to address the issue of Christ's divinity, when he tempts his Christ with life as a normal man. The ultimate rejection of this destiny is presented as the real reason for Christ's acceptance of the passion. The passion is necessary because it affirms his divinity.

Burgess's televisual Christ veers closer to orthodoxy than his fictional counterpart in *Man of Nazareth*. The latter marries, has sex, drinks and rages, while the former follows closely the path set out in the gospels. For the television series, Burgess was forced to create a syncretic Christ acceptable to the widest possible television audience. "There are the theologians, professional and amateur, to satisfy," Burgess explained. "There is the need to reconcile a myriad sectarian images of Christ (including, in this post-Johannine age, the Jews if not the Arabs)... Theological advisers were ten a penny, all seeking commemoration in the credits. I said I would trade them all for an adviser in carpentry." (*Homage*, 37)

This familiarity with the basic realities of life in Christ's time is the most memorable aspect of *Man of Nazareth*. Though Burgess promised Christ the man to the press conference which launched the *Jesus of Nazareth* project, he was careful not to stray too far from the Western canonical image of Christ as miracle worker and Son of God. In the "preliminary novel" that Burgess created by way of preparing to write the script however, Burgess indulged himself in depicting the version of Christ that he, rather than the army of theological advisers, wished to see on the screen. Burgess knew that his paymasters

would not have been pleased by my presenting Christ as a married man. That he *was* married, though briefly, entering on his mission a somewhat embittered widower, seemed to me very likely: a state of bachelorhood lasting into the late twenties would have been unusual in a tight Jewish community. If there was a marriage feast at Cana, it may well have been Jesus's own. (*YHYT*, 306)

The wedding at Cana illustrates the difference between Burgess's own fictional depiction of Christ and the Christ he created for television. In *Man of Nazareth* the wedding is indeed Christ's own marriage. In *Jesus of Nazareth*, the episode does not even appear. It is *Man of Nazareth* that is truly "a highly realistic evocation of the Roman Palestine that produced [Christ], with sweat, dirt, humanity, Jesus the Man" (YHYT, 303), not the television series that followed. The sense of Christ's divinity present in Lew Grade's production is noticeably lacking in Burgess's solo effort. If, in *Man of Nazareth*, Burgess successfully represented "what I had wanted on the screen", then his own conception of Christ posits the same distant and abstract (or absent) deity that permeates his other work. One might almost interpret such a human Christ as Pelagian, offering us *exemplum* rather than salvation through grace. "Of the revolutionary nature of his programme and its feasibility, given hard work and self-denial, I became more convinced than ever I had been when I was a good son of the Church," revealed Burgess in a later article (*Homage*, 38).

As with Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*, the Jesus of *Man of Nazareth* is pitted against the power of the state. The dualism in this novel is not that between divine and human, but between individual and state. Burgess's Pelagian, human, revolutionary messiah is contrasted with the oppressive authoritarian bodies of the political Roman and ecclesiastical Jewish states. This renders the text curiously unreligious in theme for a novel about Christ, less so even than Crace's atheistic but meditative narrative in *Quarantine*. Burgess's fiction does not engage with religious revelation, though he does equate art with religious transcendence and the practices of both ascetism and narcotic euphoria as a potential route to perceiving what he terms "the Ultimate Reality". He states:

I suppose the very concept of a "religious novel" could exist only in an era of unbelief... when we call a writer a religious novelist we are implying a falsification, a looking at life from an unnaturally narrow angle (deliberately and perhaps coldly chosen), or a perverse pleasure in brooding on points of doctrine.¹⁵

¹⁵"The Manicheans", Anthony Burgess, *The Times Literary Supplement* 3340, 3 March 1966, p. 154.

Although Burgess was immersed in cultural Catholicism from an early age, and remained well informed about the church's doctrines, activities, politics and theology for the rest of his life, he was estranged from it intellectually. If there is a distinction between him and writers like Greene or Waugh, it is not due to their conversions so much as it is due to him having left the Church while they had moved towards it. Burgess's unorthodox *Weltanschauung* is undoubtedly theological in origin, and has its roots in early Christianity, but it is not recognisably Roman Catholicism.

BURGESS'S THEOLOGICAL WORLD VIEW

Burgess habitually described his world view as "Manichean", by which he meant that "Ultimate Reality" is the binary duoverse described by Azor and not the traditional omnipotent God of monotheist revelation. Even singularities such as beauty or art are for Burgess a transient accommodation of opposing principles: "Art is concerned with beauty, a value which we take as a representation of the Ultimate, under its aspect of unity, formal harmony, Brunonian reconciliation of opposites."¹⁶ Burgess was familiar with the work of Giordano Bruno from his extensive research into James Joyce, who drew extensively upon Bruno's metaphysics in both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. In *Here Comes Everybody*, Burgess glosses *Ulysses* as a "Blakean Prophetic Book based on ... Swedenborgian revelation of reality", and highlights the Blakean element of *Finnegans Wake*, subordinating these mystic elements to what he perceived as Joyce's engagement with "Bruno ('the Nolan')" (79). In *Joystrick*, Burgess addresses the more extensive Brunonian component of *Finnegans Wake*, citing "the doctrine of Giordano Bruno of Nola—called 'The Nolan' by Joyce in earlier writings—to the effect that all opposites, in a divinely governed universe, must cancel each other out" (147).

The doctrine Burgess refers to is Bruno's notion of *coincidentia oppositorum*, or the coincidence of opposites, which was drawn substantially from the theology of Nicholas of Cusa, a fifteenth-century German cardinal who proposed, in *De Visione Dei* (1453), a cosmology

¹⁶"The Manicheans", Anthony Burgess, *The Times Literary Supplement* 3340, 3 March 1966, p. 153.

of an infinite godhead within which all finite binary opposites were reconciled. However, this notion that reality is ultimately composed of the unity of opposites is one of the oldest in Western philosophical thought. The pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximander suggested that binary opposition in flux, emerging from the infinite, was the fundamental state of reality. His thinking was pursued and amended by the monist Heraclitus, whose theory of eternal flux encompassed the notion that the existence of any thing or situation is dependent upon at least two opposing conditions.¹⁷

Bruno's binarism is in the tradition of Nicholas of Cusa, which ultimately descends from Heraclitus, but Burgess's espoused Manicheism is less Brunonian than deriving ultimately from Anaximander, in that it posits an eternal war between binary opposites rather than any kind of Hegelian synthesis within an infinite godhead.¹⁸ When applied to the art of fiction, this fundamental war of opposites suggests for Burgess that "there is something in the novelist's vocation which predisposes him to a kind of Manicheism. What the religious novelist often seems to be saying is that evil is a kind of good, since it is an aspect of Ultimate Reality; though what he is really saying is that evil is more interesting to write about than good."¹⁹

By parsing this binarism within the confines of cultural Catholicism, Burgess sought to define an internal tension based on the opposing doctrines of two early Church theologians, St Augustine of Hippo and

¹⁷Anaximander's philosophy exists in only a single fragment preserved in the writings of the Neo-Platonic scholar Simplicius. Its brevity and obliquity has led to significant disputes down the centuries over exactly what Anaximander meant. However, there is a consensus that a distinction exists between his concept of the *apeiron* as a realm of possibility from which reality emerges, and Heraclitus's notion that flux is bound within the infinite *logos*, a rational ordering of reality evocative of the mind of God.

¹⁸I am deliberately restricting consideration of the lineage of Burgess's binary *Weltanschauung* to Western thought, despite significant and influential analogues existing in Eastern theology and philosophy, notably Taoism, Zoroastrianism and Vaishnavist Hinduism. While Burgess encountered some of these modes of thinking while working in the Far East, he is on record as being unmoved by them philosophically. Longxi Zhang's comparative study *The Tao and the Logos: Literary Hermeneutics East and West* (London, Duke University Press, 1992) contains a comprehensive examination of the overlap and contrasts between the two traditions.

¹⁹"The Manicheans", Anthony Burgess, *The Times Literary Supplement* 3340, 3 March 1966, p. 154.

the British monk Pelagius. Within this Catholic or Christian framework, Burgess focused on a theological debate that had raged within the early Christian Church as an analogy for the themes that he attempted to explore within his fiction. That debate provided Burgess with a set of terms that he and his earliest critics would later use to describe these aspects of his work.

Burgess once wrote that “the novels I’ve written are really Medieval Catholic in thinking”,²⁰ but his fiction owes little more to Aquinas and the Schoolmen than an occasional tendency towards didacticism. Equally, he has insisted that “there’s not a great deal of theology in them [his novels]” (*Conversations*, 91), though this is demonstrably not the case. Burgess’s fiction lacks the Roman Catholic orthodoxy of Cardinal Newman or Robert Hugh Benson, and similarly his novels veer away from the doctrinal concerns of Graham Greene or the cultural Catholicism expressed in Evelyn Waugh’s works.²¹ However, the underpinning theological component in Burgess’s work is not Medieval Catholicism but the debate over Original Sin held between Saint Augustine and the British heretic Pelagius. For Burgess, Roman Catholicism was about punishment and the Augustinian doctrine of man’s fallen nature. He found that this given of orthodox Catholicism clashed with his own innate sense of the primacy of human free will, closely analogous to Pelagius’s doctrine of Man’s perfectibility. In other words, since Man’s freedom of choice between good and evil seemed to be curtailed by the Augustinian notion that we are born damned, in need of salvation via divine grace, Burgess constructed a personal religious position that accommodated both Augustine and Pelagius, which he termed Manicheism.

The term Manicheism derives from the name of its first exponent, the post-Christian prophet Mani. Robin Lane Fox states that “Mani was the son of Iranian parents and was born in April 216 in southern Mesopotamia, a region which was then under Parthian

²⁰“Interview with Anthony Burgess”, John Cullinan, *The Paris Review Interviews*, 4th series, ed. George Plimpton, New York, 1978, p. 345.

²¹In 1971, he told Thomas Churchill, “I will not allow Catholicism to go over to the converts and I will not allow the Protestants to attack it... Now people like Greene and Waugh are converts, they’re not real Catholics. They’re just using Catholicism to further private ends of their own. I think Greene wanted this, but mainly he wanted evil, and Waugh did it because he wanted an endless aristocracy.” (*Conversations*, 12–13).

rule”.²² Obviously a member of a literate aristocracy, Mani grew up among a sect of strict baptists who “honoured Christ and Elchesai, the ‘post-Christian’ prophet, a counterpart of Hermas, whose books had appeared in Mesopotamia in the early Second century”. Granted a vision of his “heavenly twin”, Mani preached a theology based on the opposition of matter, considered to be evil, and spirit, the creation of a benevolent Father-Creator. Human existence was, in Mani’s conception, the product of particles of heavenly light ensnared in “base matter”, or flesh, created by the Prince of Darkness for that very purpose. An ascetic life, involving strict vegetarianism and the avoidance of procreation, would release the particles of light from their material shackles and return them to the kingdom of Heaven. Devout Manicheans expressed through their piety a “deep urge to flee the world”, since their anti-materialist existence abhorred marriage, sex, owning property and work.²³ Only those sparks of divine light encased in the corruption of flesh could ultimately be saved, and only then by the pursuance of such a rigorous and pessimistic existence. The religion as Mani preached it lasted until the sixth century CE, when severe persecution in both the Western and Eastern churches largely succeeded in suppressing it. But though the creed itself may have receded into history, its name remained current, as Samuel Lieu acknowledges:

The term Manichaeism was used by church leaders to stigmatise the teachings of a number of Christian heretics such as the Messalians, the Paulicians, and the Bogomils in Byzantium and the Paterenes and the Cathars or Albigensians in the west who had in common the view that the human body is intrinsically evil and therefore cannot be the creation of a good God.²⁴

After its suppression Manicheism continued to be influential over Christian thinking via the work of Augustine on mankind’s fallen status.

²² *Pagans and Christians: In the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine*, Robin Lane Fox, Viking, London, 1986, p. 564.

²³ *Mani and Manichaeism*, George Widengren, trans. Charles Kessler, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1965, p. 62.

²⁴ *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*, Samuel Lieu, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985, p. 6.

The two ideas are very similar, and this is probably due to the fact that Augustine, prior to his conversion to Catholic Christianity in August 386 CE, had himself been a Manichean. Both philosophies agree on mankind's fundamentally sinful status, but Augustine introduces the novel concept of original sin. This allowed Augustine to attribute all creation to God, and to source evil within man's own free will. Augustine's explanation has been the dominant Christian position on the issue of evil ever since. Burgess was aware of the proximity of historical Manicheism to Augustine's doctrine, since he held a stated position between the two:

I'm only a Manichee in the widest sense of believing that duality is the ultimate reality; the original sin bit is not really a contradiction, though it does lead one on to depressingly French heresies, like Graham Greene's own Jansenism, as well as Albigenianism (Joan of Arc's religion), Catharism, and so on.^{25,26}

It is worth examining Augustine's conversion as it casts light on one of Burgess's major themes; the argument for and against Original Sin. Augustine's sense of evil and his emphasis on the need for penitence and the grace of God have their origins in his early interest in Manicheism. The famous episode in his *Confessions*, when Augustine expresses his heartfelt sorrow at having stolen an apple from a neighbour's orchard as a child decades previously, is often cited as an example of the extremity of Augustine's sense of evil and sin at work. B.R. Rees has examined how Augustine's early Manicheism may have had an influence on his later teachings:

No doubt it [Manicheism] had first appealed to him [Augustine] because of its dualism of good and evil, which corresponded to his experience as a young man, tugged this way and that by bodily desires and repugnance to the actions to which they led him. Evil seemed to him at that time, as

²⁵Writing on Zoe Oldenbourg's novel *Destiny of Fire*, a historical drama dealing with the persecution of the Albigenians, Burgess, in very Manichean terms, defines them as "a sect which, seeing the universe as a continuous struggle between God and the Devil, not as a beneficent creation merely pricked by evil, was accused of devil-worship by the powers of orthodoxy" in "History and Myth", *The Novel Now*, new ed., Anthony Burgess, London, 1971, p. 137.

²⁶"Interview with Anthony Burgess", John Cullinan, *The Paris Review Interviews*, 4th Series, ed. George Plimpton, New York, 1978, p. 347.

it did to the Manichees, to be a powerful force dragging him down to the depths of degradation, in other words, to be the root of all sin.²⁷

Augustine's maxim "By grace are we saved through faith" came about as a result of his Pauline conversion to Christianity. As he read deeply into Paul's epistles, he began to formulate his doctrine of grace and theory of Original Sin. "Hitherto these two ideas had developed quite independently," believed Rees, "insofar as they could be said to have developed at all; now [Augustine] was to elaborate and combine them in one great intellectual system, identifying the origin and true nature of sin and indicating the only remedy for it, that *amplior medicina*, that grace which was infinitely more potent than the evil with which man was infected."²⁸ Pelagius was not the first to question what seemed to be Augustine's invention of a pessimistic doctrine, that man was born tainted by the evil of his primal forefather. However, the names of many early theologians who opposed Augustine's interpretation of Adam's sin as the source of death and human failing, such as Celestius and Theodorus of Mopsuestia, have faded back into the late antiquity from which they came.

Pelagius's prolific writings and wide travelling in order to proselytise his beliefs obtained for him a higher profile than other theologians. He also appeared before Popes and synods to get the blessing of orthodoxy for his doctrine. Seen as the most fervent critique of the doctrine of Original Sin, the heresy of human perfectibility without divine grace became indelibly associated with Pelagius. In his famous commentary on St Paul, Pelagius denied the primitive state in paradise and Original Sin, and insisted on the naturalness of concupiscence and the death of the body.²⁹ He further ascribed the actual existence and universality of sin to Adam's primal rejection of God's will, which introduced to mankind an imperfect mode of behaviour. The value of Christ's redemption was, according to Pelagius, limited mainly to instruction (*doctrina*) and example (*exemplum*), which Christ intended as a counterweight against Adam's wicked example. Pelagius's view of man was not of a perfect

²⁷ *Pelagius: A Reluctant Heretic*, B.R. Rees, Boydell Press, Bury St Edmunds, 1988, p. 15.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.

²⁹ "Insaniunt, qui de Adam per traducem asserunt ad nos venire peccatum", in *Commentarii in epistolas S. Pauli*, XXX, 678, written before 412 CE.

being corrupted by the sin of Adam, but of one who began to sin as a child, by consciously emulating the sins of its elders. Man's will had not been corrupted by Adam's sin, but by bad example and bad habits.

Pelagius placed special emphasis on man's power to save himself, on the fact that he was in fact responsible to do so by exercising his free will. Cleverly, this was the same argument that Augustine had deployed against the Manicheans following his conversion to Christianity. Pelagius adapted this earlier argument of Augustine's to support his own position. The controversy came to centre on two contrasting interpretations of grace and free will. Each side appeared to its opponents to place excessive emphasis on one of these elements at the expense of the other. However, Pelagius's policy of indulging in semantic retractions in the face of inquisition eventually came undone, and he was excommunicated and condemned as a heretic in 417 CE.

Church history, perhaps more than most history, is written by the victor, since the stigma of heresy attached to unorthodox doctrines have tended to invite their vigorous suppression. Although M.R. James described Pelagius's writings as "the earliest extant work of a British author", his two major treatises, *On Nature* and *On Free Will*, are now lost.³⁰ Many spurious documents have hence been attributed to Pelagius and his followers, while their own accredited views tend to be filtered through the pens of their opponents, including Augustine's. The original and complete Pelagian position is now irretrievable, and the adjective Pelagian has been utilised by Church fathers to anathematise a wide variety of unorthodox beliefs, some of which bear little resemblance to authentic Pelagianism. Our modern understanding of the doctrine of Pelagius is therefore tainted by the deliberate misunderstandings of fifteen centuries.

Curiously, the debasement of this dispute over time has actually functioned to place greater difference between the positions of Augustinianism and Pelagianism than originally existed. Indeed, contemporary Christians, seeing the influence of Manicheism upon the views of Augustine and of the Stoics on both, and considering how Pelagius had turned Augustine's anti-Manichean arguments against their own author, might have had difficulty in distinguishing between the three positions.

³⁰ *The Cambridge History of English Literature I*, M.R. James, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1908, p. 65.

P.R.L. Brown has convincingly argued that “for a sensitive man of the fifth century, Manicheism, Pelagianism and the views of Augustine were not as widely separated as we would now see them: they would have appeared as points along the same great circle of problems raised by the Christian religion”.³¹ When Anthony Burgess referred to Augustine and Pelagius, it is to this amplification of the historical controversy that he turned:

English Catholics, even converts, are tempted by more heresies than are the children of Mediterranean baroque Christianity. The greatest temptation is provided by the British heresiarch Pelagius, a monk who denied original sin, doubted the need of divine grace to achieve salvation, and thought that man could attain some kind of perfection by his own efforts. (*Copy*, 20)

Burgess effectively flattened and simplified Brown’s argument that Pelagianism and the doctrine of Augustine were related early Christian positions differentiated primarily by emphasis and nuance. For Burgess, the historical debates between Pelagius and Augustine are transformed into a polarity, with Pelagius’s position misrepresented as a fundamentalist version of free will and human perfectibility, in contrast with an almost fatalistic doctrine of damnation due to Original Sin which he attributes to Augustine. These elements permeate many of Burgess’s fictions, most overtly in the novels *The Wanting Seed* and *The Clockwork Testament*. In the former, these theological positions are transformed into the oscillating philosophies of a dystopic future state. In the latter, the clerics themselves debate the issue of human perfectibility in a hallucinatory film treatment envisioned by the novel’s protagonist Enderby.

Burgess believed that the “terms Pelagian and Augustinian, though theological, are useful in describing the poles of man’s belief as to his own nature” (1985, 55). Yet critics such as Geoffrey Aggeler have struggled to explain the reason behind Burgess’s use of antiquated, theologically centred terminology. Liberalism and conservatism are adequate descriptions of *The Wanting Seed*’s Pelphase and Gusphase, as they summarily describe what are essentially political ideologies in recognisably political terms. The attempt to transpose theological terminology on to

³¹ *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, P.R.L. Brown, London, Faber, 1967, revised ed., University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000, p. 373.

political ideology inevitably raises anomalies, such as the role of God. "In secularising these views of man," acknowledges Burgess, "we tend to forget about sin and concentrate on what is good for society and what is not" (1985, 56). For such an analogy to be useful, it is essential to remove from Pelagianism the concept of God, and from Augustinianism the concept of sin, significantly distorting the original meaning of both. This is the scenario depicted in *The Wanting Seed*. Burgess's novel sets out to demonstrate that both the liberal and the conservative positions, depicted in ill-fitting theological terms, are ultimately unsustainable. Man's true nature, he implies, is complete only when it encompasses both in an eternal waltz of thesis, antithesis and volatile synthesis, such as that described by Tristram in the novel. Burgess's Manicheism is an oscillating flux of opposites in which the debate may only resolve itself in order to commence a new cycle of opposition. As he writes in 1985:

We are all both Pelagian and Augustinian, either in cyclical phases, or, through a kind of doublethink, at one and the same time... It sometimes seems that the political life of a free community moves in the following cycle: a Pelagian belief in progress produces a kind of liberal regime that wavers when men are seen not to be perfectible and fail to live up to the liberal image; the regime collapses and is succeeded by an authoritarianism in which men are made to be good; men are seen not to be so bad as the Augustinian philosophy teaches; the way is open for liberalism to return. (56–57)

In *The Clockwork Testament*, the third instalment of the Enderby quadrilogy, the debate between Augustine and Pelagius is literalised as a television drama watched by the poet-protagonist. Presented in the form of a film script, the drama unfolds in Enderby's hallucinating mind. Having suffered two heart attacks earlier in the day, Enderby is wracked by the thought that mortality will rob him of the opportunity to draft an epic poem on the theme of Pelagius's encounter with Augustine. The drama that unfolds is dreamt by Enderby, who relates to it as both author and viewer.³²

³²There is an obvious echo of Joyce's *Nighttown* in the drama of Pelagius and Augustine that closes *A Clockwork Testament*. Just as *Nighttown* is (largely) the emanation of Bloom's subconscious, so the drama of Pelagius and Augustine is the product of Enderby's. Both texts share the written theatre script format and feature the apocalyptic appearance of the end of the world. Whereas Joyce's *End of the World* (*Ulysses*, Garland, New York, 1984,

In Enderby's vision Pelagius appears as a rational man, citing "sweet reason" rather than divine grace as the key to Man's redemption.³³ Augustine, by contrast, is wracked by guilt, begging God's help to save him from his human love of sin. Burgess's (or Enderby's) Pelagius denies that Christ's sacrifice "in Godflesh" is anything other than *exemplum*:

PELAGIUS: Ah no, he came to show us the way. To teach us love. Be ye perfect, he said. He taught us that we are perfectible. That what you call evil is no more than ignorance of the way. (*The Clockwork Testament*, 472)

The debate, tantalisingly but inevitably, remains unresolved. The television drama is suddenly interrupted by an advertisement break ("A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR"). The sponsor's word is, like the thunderwords in *Finnegans Wake*, a marker that denotes death and the end of an historical cycle. On this occasion, the death is Enderby's. His attempt to resolve the Pelagian/Augustinian dilemma, no less than the cumulative effects of the ulcer-inducing stew that he eats at every meal, provokes his death.

Burgess intended *The Clockwork Testament* as a final comment on the scandal surrounding the film version of *A Clockwork Orange*. Enderby's treatment for a meditative film on Gerard Manley Hopkins's *The Wreck of the Deutschland* is distorted by the director into a violent orgy of bloodletting and rape. By concluding the book with this debate between Pelagius and Augustine in the writer-protagonist's mind, Burgess seeks to reinforce his intended meaning of *A Clockwork Orange*

pp. 413–414) is a surreal and comic figure, a drunken Scot seeking a partner for a dance, Burgess utilises the motif to a much more literal effect. In Enderby's dream-drama, Rome is being sacked by the Goths, bringing the Roman era of history to a close. On the metanarrative plane, Enderby's world is also coming to an end, as the drama is interrupted by an earthquake and lightning which signify Enderby's death from cardiac arrest, the lightning being a Joycean reference to the thunderwords which mark the closing of historical eras in *Finnegans Wake*.

³³Pelagius's appeal to reason as the panacea of man's ills echoes that of Socrates, as depicted by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*. For Nietzsche, Socrates represented the paragon of Apollonian thinking. Hence parallels may be drawn between Pelagianism (as imagined by Burgess) and Nietzschean Apollonianism. These parallels, and the corollary relationship between Burgess's Augustinianism and the impulse Nietzsche described as Dionysian, are addressed later in this chapter.

as a meditation on the issue of free will. Pelagius's statement that evil is "ignorance of the way" compacts the philosophy of the state system that attempts to impose good on Alex, the protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange*, by way of mind control.

It is demonstrable that the way Burgess uses these terms differ radically from their original historical referents. His simplification of Augustine's many doctrines and writings to a single pessimistic insistence on Original Sin does much damage to Augustine's vision. His attempts to secularise Augustine's argument also function as a radical reimagining of Augustine's doctrinal works. While there is a degree of historical support for his positioning Augustine and Pelagius in discursive opposition, his simplification of their arguments in order to polarise them is a significant deviation from the actual level of distinction between their respective theologies.

Further, the fact that Pelagius's own writings are mostly irretrievable and must be interpreted through the prism of his opponents raises significant questions as to what exactly can be attributed to him. There is little doubt that he was a proponent of Christ as *exemplum*, and advocated free will as a route to grace, opposing the doctrine of Original Sin as Burgess suggests. However, the close proximity of both these doctrinal positions to historical Manicheism does not legitimate Burgess's recasting of them as two halves of a binary whole called "Manicheism". Even within the remit of theology, Burgess's use of all of these terms is highly problematic, and doubly so when (mis)applied to the arena of his aesthetics. Nevertheless, Burgess's critics largely accepted this structure unquestioningly.

THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF BURGESS'S THEOLOGICAL AESTHETICS

Burgess's novels are imbued with themes derived from this dialectic of Augustine and Pelagius which examine the relationship between man and his putative creator, the role of evil in human existence, and the extent of human free will. These themes, explored in many ingenious ways in different novels, form the core of Burgess's fictive vision, and the conclusions that can be drawn from them amount to no less than Burgess's own world view. Since the publication of his 1966 article "The Manicheans", it has become commonplace for his critics to use his

own suggested theological terminology to describe his work. With their substantially inaccurate theological referents, however, these terms—Manichean, Augustinian and Pelagian—are not innately suited for use in literary criticism without a significant degree of explication.

Manicheism as a modern cosmogony has become almost entirely divorced from the historical religion or heresy, and commonly (and erroneously) refers to a simple opposition of good and evil as being equipotent and eternally at war. However, Manicheism may also refer to a literary critical device that facilitates the setting up of oppositions within a text. Within the American tradition the critic Samuel Coale has identified Nathaniel Hawthorne as initiating this motif, and his book *In Hawthorne's Shadow* tracks its lineage to the work of modern authors such as Norman Mailer and John Updike. However, Coale is also an extensive critic of Burgess and he may have borrowed this construction from Burgess himself. Manicheism has also been used to designate a variant of Jansenism in the work of Catholic authors such as Graham Greene. Finally, there is Burgess's own Manicheism, a term he has used to define his personal theological position, which often draws heavily on the Roman Catholic opposition of Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin to Pelagius's heretical view of man as perfectible. Each of these manifestations of the word carries a unique though related meaning, and Burgess's frequent use of the term only becomes clear when his fiction is considered in relation to these other Manicheisms. Both Burgess and Coale struggle to decouple their analytical use of the term from its theological referents.

Problematically, Burgess's self-definition as a Manichean was not consistent throughout his career. It functioned as a way of distancing himself from post-Vatican II Catholicism, which, despite his apostasy, he found personally offensive.³⁴ Similarly, the dualism inherent in his understanding of Manicheism permitted him to incorporate conflict into his fiction. By 1972 the "Brunonian reconciliation of opposites", of which he had written in 1966, had broadened into a vaguer notion of Manicheism as an analogue for dualism. He told John Cullinan,

³⁴"I go mad at the various changes of the Church very much from the Catholic angle. I hate this ecumenical business and I hate the use of liturgical changes and the use of the vernacular. I loathe it but who am I to loathe it? I've no real stake in the Church at all now." (*Conversations*, 13).

Novels are about conflicts. The novelist's world is one of essential oppositions of character, aspiration and so on. I'm only a Manichee in the widest sense of believing that duality is the ultimate reality (*Conversations*, 64)

This clarifies the conclusion expressed by Hillier in *Tremor of Intent* when he states "We need new terms. God and Notgod. Salvation and damnation of equal dignity, the two sides of the coin of ultimate reality" (218). By 1978 Burgess's theological perspective had dissolved into an entirely structuralist position. He told John Cullinan,

Structuralism is the scientific confirmation of a certain theological conviction—that life is binary, that this is a duoverse and so on. What I mean is that the notion of essential opposition—not God/Devil but just x/y—is the fundamental one, and this is a kind of purely structuralist view.³⁵

By 1980 Burgess had gravitated towards incorporating an almost gnostic concept of the demiurge into his personal theology. He seemed to be on the brink of finally abandoning the dualism that had driven his beliefs and his fiction when he wrote:

Perhaps it is too easy to think in terms of a perpetual war going on between God and the Devil: the universe is not sustained by so simplistic a dichotomy. Perhaps God, if he exists, is beyond good and evil, and is merely an ultimate power to whom human morality is of no interest. He is on nobody's side.³⁶

However, by the time of his second volume of autobiography in 1990 Burgess had returned to a conception of the binary universe, albeit with a new pessimistic twist. Writing about *Earthly Powers*, in which a dying child who is miraculously saved goes on to commit mass murder, Burgess proposes not the idea that God and the devil are the same entity, nor a conflict between co-eternal opposites, nor that God stands aloof from this universe, but the suggestion that God has become his opposite:

³⁵"Interview with Anthony Burgess", John Cullinan, *The Paris Review Interviews*, 4th Series, ed. George Plimpton, New York, 1978, p. 354.

³⁶"The Genesis of 'Earthly Powers'", Anthony Burgess, *Washington Post*, Book World section, 23 November 1980, p. 13.

God, permitting the miracle, clearly intended its beneficiary to perform an act of great evil... What curious game is God playing? If God is also the devil, the prince of the powers of the air, then it is as likely that evil will come out of good as the other way round. Perhaps more so. If our century is to be explained at all, it is in terms of God becoming his opposite. (YHYT, 356)

This Protean nature of Burgess's understanding and usage of Manicheism has misled many of his critics into simplistic definitions, predicated on a single stage of Burgess's development of the concept, or on his throwaway comments about Manicheism in articles and interviews. While the first generation of Burgess scholars tended to follow Burgess's own lead on the subject, later critics have either avoided the matter or else have failed to develop Burgess's expressed Manicheism beyond the confines and definitions set by the author himself.

The mishandling of Burgess's theology commenced with the first critical publication on Burgess's fiction. In 1971 Carol M. Dix failed to mention Manicheism at all in her brief monograph, referring to it erroneously as "some new belief" (21). Robert K. Morris's more substantial work from the same year demonstrates the initial critical difficulty in coming to an understanding of Burgess's obscure theological terminology. Morris fundamentally struggles with, or evades, any attempt to construct a meaningful definition of Burgess's Manicheism. For him, Burgess's Manicheism can connote anything from a contrast between Christian and classical literature to a duality of opposites or the conflation of morality with psychoanalysis.

This confusion continues in A.A. DeVitis's 1972 analysis of Burgess. He refers to "the religious element" and "the religious import of the theme" in *Honey for the Bears*, identified as the theme of ambiguous polarity between "East and West", or "[t]he argument on Manichaeism" (139). This "argument", as DeVitis delineates it, amounts to a fundamental "contest" of "Manichaean 'great duality'" in which evil inhabits "neutrals" who "fail to engage" (166). To the extent that DeVitis attributes a theological component to this duality, he defines it as "man's struggle between the 'perfection of spirit' and 'the mire of evil'". Many of Burgess's characters are failed or despondent Catholics and are fully aware of the 'heresy' that tempts them" (96). DeVitis's understanding of Burgess's Manicheism veers from a surface analysis of

Tremor of Intent to a clumsy grafting of simplified historical Manichean ideas on to Burgess's work.

Richard Mathews's slender 1978 monograph *The Clockwork Universe of Anthony Burgess* is the first critical text on Burgess to define Manicheism accurately. He describes it as "the doctrine, regarded as heresy by the Catholic church, that life is a constant conflict between light and dark, spirit and matter, with matter being seen as dark and evil" (12). Mathews is also aware of the composite nature of historical Manicheism, "composed as it is of Gnostic Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and various other elements", but makes no attempt to incorporate these nuances and influences into his analysis of Burgess's work or world view other than to suggest "it is a fascinating background for the internationalism Burgess deals with". He describes *A Clockwork Orange* as "Manichean" without clarifying what he means, but does acknowledge the "rather obscure attributes of Pelagianism and Augustinianism" in *The Wanting Seed* (46).

Geoffrey Aggeler is the first critic to identify the structuralist element in Burgess's Manicheism, which extends his *Weltanschauung* beyond the merely theological into a fundamental condition of binarism. In *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist*, Aggeler notes:

To an extent, he subscribes to the Manichean heresy, although he agrees with the Church that it should be condemned as heresy. He shares the Manichean belief that there is a perpetual conflict between two forces that dominates the affairs of the universe, and whether the forces can be accurately labelled "good" and "evil" is by no means certain. They might as reasonably be designated by terms such as "right" and "left", or "x" and "y", or even "hot" and "cold". (28)

Aggeler's analysis weakens when he addresses the political ramifications of Burgess's Manicheism. Aggeler describes how "so many of the conflicts in his novels are between *Pelagian liberals* and *Augustinian conservatives*. By the use of these *terms*, Burgess intends to remind us of the ultimate origins of much of the so-called liberalism and conservatism in Western thinking" (158). This origin is open to significant dispute, however. Political conservatism and liberalism as social philosophies are commonly dated to the political climate of post-Restoration Enlightenment England, while the ethicist Benjamin Wiker has traced the opposition back to Aristotle's *Politics*, in which Aristotle distinguished his political

perspective from those of the Sophists and Epicureans. Aggeler suggests that we “set aside, or at least look beyond, the narrowly theological aspects” (161) of this debate, but can only offer two further theological disputes as the intellectual lineage of the conflict between Pelagius and Augustine.³⁷ His list of Augustinian and Pelagian worthies, intended to illuminate Burgess’s theological terminology in more familiar philosophical terms, reads as little more than a who’s who of conservative and liberal thinkers respectively.³⁸ Aggeler notes apologetically that “[t]he validity of these classifications depends of course upon a willingness to view the debate in terms of its social and political as well as its religious implications”—in other words, on Burgess’s idiosyncratic terms.

Samuel Coale dedicates an entire chapter of his 1981 study *Anthony Burgess* to the issue of “A Manichean Duoverse”. Astutely, he notes that Burgess’s lists of opposites form “part of the Western Christian’s outlook on the world” (55), and create “a dynamic dialectic” (55) wherein opposites “interpenetrate one another ... not to the point of ultimate synthesis, but to the point of continuing, unresolved conflict” (55). For Coale, Burgess’s Manicheism amounts to “an essentially conservative Catholic eschatology”. While he acknowledges Burgess’s “structuralist” love for dialectical materialism is aesthetic rather than moral, he does not attribute the same structuralist attraction to Burgess’s theological-trope *Weltanschauung*. For Coale, Burgess’s “essentially comic view of existence” (175) lacks the pessimism of historical Manicheism. He diverges from other critics, and from Burgess himself, by treating the issues of Manicheism and Pelagius versus Augustine separately, as thematic constructs. Coale parses the latter as “the same conflict between free will and Original Sin that has appeared in nearly all of Burgess’s novels” (175). Coale’s text marks the beginning of the long process of diverging from the perspective offered by Burgess himself.

Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn’s published doctoral thesis *Anthony Burgess: A Study in Character* (1986) addresses “the philosophical basis

³⁷ “[T]he fourteenth-century clash between Bradwardine and Ockham and the conflict three centuries later between the Jansenists and the Jesuits” (Aggeler, 161).

³⁸ “Outstanding Augustinian spokesmen include Luther, Calvin, Jansen, Pascal, Racine, Hobbes, Swift, and Edmund Burke. Some of the more notable Pelagians are Shaftesbury, Corneille, Hume, Rousseau, Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Marx, Hegel, John Stuart Mill, Edward Bellamy, and most of the major English and German romantic poets.” (Aggeler, 161).

of Burgess's characterisation" in a way which almost entirely accepts Burgess's own idiosyncratic perspective on the meaning of Manicheism, and its components Pelagianism and Augustinianism. However, she does note the vagaries of this critical definition and offers a useful departure point in considering Burgess's Manicheism as a response to Existentialism:

Burgess's interpretation of the underlying philosophy of Manicheism is extremely personal, and often eclectic. He is neither the Manichee that DeVitis and Coale claim him to be, nor an Augustinian in the true sense of the word. The philosophy behind his novels is a mixture of both, together with a touch of twentieth century existentialism. (44)

Ghosh-Schellhorn's argument has much merit. Burgess used the term Manicheism eclectically, as a shorthand for his own evolving belief in a binary cosmogony. This cosmogony often depicts a fractured world in which each faction is co-equal and co-eternal. The opposition Burgess sets up is not merely moralistic, a simple good/evil divide, but ultimately abstract, the contrast of x with y, an eternally shifting, all-permeating flux. Burgess posits a universe at war with itself, a constantly fluctuating battle between two forces (whose only real definition is in opposition to each other), which serves no purpose other than to fuel another clash, a further cycle of thesis–antithesis–unstable synthesis. This response to the angst of the generation in which he grew up, the existential vacuum of human purpose delineated by writers like Camus, Sartre and Beckett, posits an eternally shifting opposition as the core tenet of reality, as Jean Kennard noted:

Burgess is directly answering Sartre's and Camus's notion that there is no essential pattern in the universe and that the relationship between man and his universe is therefore irrational.³⁹

Yet even this is a simplification of the processes involved in the development of Burgess's double vision. As a prolific reader, an accomplished linguist and a constant traveller for much of his life, Burgess encountered and was influenced by a myriad religions, philosophies, mythologies and

³⁹ "Anthony Burgess: Double Vision", Jean Kennard, in *Anthony Burgess: Modern Critical Views*, ed. Harold Bloom, Chelsea House, New York, 1987, p. 64.

cosmogonies. Burgess's Manicheism, then, is complex, the sum total of these influences. These diverse components are merged and manipulated by Burgess to create a genuinely original and modern understanding of man's place in the universe. Esther Petix has best summarised the ingredients that Burgess manipulated to create his response to existential malaise:

He has drawn upon Eastern and Western philosophies, concocting a novel brew of Eastern dualism, heretical Manicheanism, Pelagian/Augustinianism, the cultural mythologies of ancient civilisations, the philosophy of Heraclitus, the implicit teachings of the Taoists, the Hegelian dialectic. The impact of Burgess's metaphysics, however, is not so much the clever jigsaw effect of a master eclectic; rather, it is that out of this syncretism Burgess has presented a serious allegory of the contemporary malaise, which has been diagnosed by all recent Existential and nihilistic thinking. (Bloom, 91)

If Burgess's fiction represented a positive response to existentialist thought, it is a cautious one. The vindictive invisible deity of his Roman Catholic youth still haunted his work. Burgess's dualistic construction allowed him the hope that the "right" God exists, and has merely gone under or become his own opposite, but such a cosmogony does not necessarily place mankind in any less absurd a position than that expressed by existentialism. Burgess offered free will, the Pelagian belief that through exercising correct choice man can improve and perfect his existence, only to counter that optimism with the doctrine of Augustine, that man perennially disappoints and requires the salvation or intervention of a higher power. Identifying Heraclitean flux as fundamental reality does not resolve the challenges of existentialism except by rendering them potentially ludic, nor does it provide a useful model by which Burgess's aesthetics can be examined.

Later critics have not substantially deviated from this early adoption of the author's own theological frame but instead have sought to problematise its simplistic binary elements. In *Portraits of the Artists in A Clockwork Orange*, few of the critics address the underlying Manichean paradigm. Emmanuel Aretoulakis suggests intriguingly that the "exclusion of the dichotomy 'good–evil' from the ethical system of Alex" in *A Clockwork Orange* "aestheticizes his thought by blurring any pure categories of good and evil" (*Portraits*, 42). He parses this as an example

of Lyotardian deconstruction of the good–evil paradigm, as expressed in *Postmodern Fables*. To Aretoulakis, Alex’s violence is infused with a theatrical unreality that blurs the distinction “from the beautiful to the horrific, from purity to a Holocaust” (*Portraits*, 48).

Although occasional attempts have been made to examine Burgess’s Manicheism critically, and both Aggeler and Petix have attempted to elucidate it in the arenas of political philosophy and existentialism respectively, there has been no substantial examination of how Burgess’s theological duality might apply in terms of the aesthetics of his fiction.

MANICHEISM AS LITERARY CRITICAL TERM

Burgess is not unique in utilising the term Manicheism to describe a particular artistic vision. Samuel Coale has delineated an American tradition of literary Manicheism running from Nathaniel Hawthorne, through writers like Herman Melville, to Burgess’s near contemporaries John Updike and Norman Mailer, and beyond to postmodernist fabulists like Thomas Pynchon. Coale posits a continuity of fictive vision based on polarities, underpinned by a dark, almost nihilistic sense of dread:

To the Manichean mind the world remains a prison, created in a demonic cosmos by someone other than God, some Demiurge or evil Jehovah sprung from the hosts of darkness. In that prison man languishes, a prisoner of his own flesh and desires. He often seems possessed by others, by some dark fate not of his making, and whatever spirit lingers and flickers within him, it can only view itself as violently separated from all that surrounds it.⁴⁰

Hawthorne found a Christian vision in Puritanism that came close to historical Manicheism, a cosmogony that acknowledged the role and power of evil almost to the same extent that it acknowledged the power of grace and God. He imbued his fictions with a series of radical polarities, the inner world versus the outer, the real versus the supernatural, which always resolve into ever more intricate polarities and disunities. Coale suggests that a “notion of irreconcilable conflict, of insoluble contradictions and polarization at the center of things,

⁴⁰ *In Hawthorne’s Shadow*, Samuel Coale, Kentucky University Press, Lexington, 1985, p. 4.

underlies Hawthorne's Manichean vision".⁴¹ This analysis is not entirely original; it is at least partly present in D.H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923). Nor is Coale alone in associating Melville's Calvinism with Manicheism. Kingsley Widmer noted how "Melville's art in *Benito Cereno* testifies to our enslaving Manicheanism"⁴² and Joyce Carol Oates identified a "perhaps feigned Manichean dualism"⁴³ in *The Confidence-Man*. Bruce Franklin posits that Melville's Manicheistic conclusions from Calvinism were inevitable because:

Most of the mythologists read by Melville tended to conceive of the periodic avatars of these conflicting principles in Manichean terms, comparing them most often to Ormuzd and Ahriman of the Zoroastrians and Osiris and Typhon of the Egyptians.⁴⁴

In the twentieth century some American novelists began, like Burgess, to adopt the term Manicheism overtly to describe their fictive vision. Norman Mailer, who does not share Burgess's interest in Catholicism, has nevertheless echoed his Manichean diminution of God from ultimate being to one aspect of a binary cosmic battle:

God ... is not all-powerful; He exists as a warring element in a divided universe, and we are part of—perhaps the most important part—of His great expression.⁴⁵

For Mailer, Manicheism denotes the clash of oppositions that underpins his fiction. Mailer's "rigidly Manichean categories—self and society, instinct and consciousness, sex and stasis, the primitive and the civilised—permeate that constant battle" between God and his

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴² *The Ways of Nihilism: A Study of Herman Melville's Short Novels*, Kingsley Widmer, California State Colleges, Los Angeles, 1970, p. 75.

⁴³ "Melville and the Tragedy of Nihilism", Joyce Carol Oates, in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 4, 1962, pp. 11–29.

⁴⁴ *The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology*, H. Bruce Franklin, Stanford U.P., Palo Alto, CA, 1963, p. 180.

⁴⁵ "Hip, Hell and the Navigator", in *Advertisements for Myself*, Norman Mailer, Putnam, New York, 1959, p. 351.

opposite, according to Samuel Coale.⁴⁶ “Conflict,” for Mailer, “is vision.” This conflict is played out on a human stage in Mailer’s fiction, however. Mailer’s heroes encounter the clash of opposites within an almost existential absence of divine presence. Stanley Gutman has accurately described this process as Mailer’s “man-centred revival of Manicheism”.⁴⁷

John Updike has also expressed a very human sense of dualism. However, unlike the paradigm of clashing opposites presented by Burgess and Mailer, Updike favours an understanding of Manicheism that is more in keeping with the tenets of Mani’s historical doctrine. If, as Updike has claimed, to be human “is to be in a situation of tension, is to be in a dialectical situation,”⁴⁸ that tension is as Mani conceived it, between flesh and soul, between materiality and spirituality, between man’s animality and his self-awareness:

Manicheanism, denying the Christian doctrines of the Divine Creation and the Incarnation, radically opposes the realms of spirit and matter. The material world is evil. Man is a spirit imprisoned in the darkness of the flesh. Women are Devil’s lures designed to draw souls down into bodies; on the other hand, each man aspires toward a female Form of Light, who is *his own true spirit*, resident in Heaven, aloof from the Hell of matter... an Eternal Feminine that preexisted material creation.⁴⁹

For Updike, Manicheism represents the opposition of spirit with the material world. Tensions between these two impulses exist within every human being, and any sense of stasis or calm in human existence may be best understood as an equilibrium, poised to erupt into conflict at any moment. Mailer’s Manicheism emphasises the conflict rather than the equilibrium. As in Updike’s work, the conflict in Mailer’s fiction is played out on the human level of existence, expressed in terms of

⁴⁶ *In Hawthorne’s Shadow*, Samuel Coale, Kentucky University Press, Lexington, 1985, p. 24.

⁴⁷ *Mankind in Barbary: The Individual and Society in the novels of Norman Mailer*, Stanley J. Gutman, University Press of New England, Hanover, NH, 1975, p. 79.

⁴⁸ *John Updike and the Three Great Secret Things: Sex, Religion and Art*, George W. Hunt, W.B. Erdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1980, p. 126.

⁴⁹ “More Love in the Western World: *Love Declared* by Denis de Rougemont”, in *Assorted Prose*, John Updike, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1965, pp. 284–285.

the experiences of humanity, shorn of the supernatural to be found in Burgess.

Coale's efforts to delineate an American tradition of literary Manicheism are convincing, but they do not construct a lineage into which Burgess can easily be fitted. The ultimate reality of Burgess's Manicheism is not Hawthorne's Puritan pessimism nor Melville's dark Calvinism, nor the tension between spirit and matter depicted by Updike, nor even Mailer's man-centred conflicts. To the extent that Burgess's Manicheism is consistent throughout his work, it is the simple polarity of opposition. Everything for Burgess, even God, exists in opposed duality.

When Anthony Burgess refers to his own Manicheism he uses the name of the historical heresy as a shorthand to connote his own mutable conception of the binary and polarised quality of reality, just as he uses the tropes of Augustine and Pelagius to signify his particular obsession with the intellectual contradiction between free will and Original Sin. There are degrees of overlap with the tradition outlined by Coale, but Burgess's more protean conception of duoversality distances his work from the more coherent and consistent application of the term as a literary critical framework in the American context, rendering Coale's work on the generation of such a frame inapplicable to Burgess.

THE NEED FOR AN AESTHETIC ANALOGUE

Burgess's use of the term Manicheism to describe his world view is demonstrably inaccurate on a purely historical understanding, and his own personal definitions have proved to be inconsistent. Most often, Burgess's conception of Manicheism designates merely the omnipresence of a metaphysical dichotomy or dualism within the text. This dualist structure is complex and fluid throughout Burgess's work, and hence the chosen terminology of the author is often unhelpful in aiding the reader to establish the core attributes of the twinned impulses he usually ascribes to Pelagius and Augustine.

In *A Vision of Battlements*, the protagonist Richard Ennis "becomes" a Manichean, but this, it is quickly clarified, means simply that he identifies "essential opposition" everywhere, the "eternal stalemate" of X versus Y. In *Honey for the Bears*, Europe is described as being "all Manichees", but again this references simple divisions and opposites—good and evil, male and female, gay and straight, east and west. In *The*

Wanting Seed, Burgess identifies the components of a politically conceived duoverse, and calls them Augustinianism and Pelagianism.

This opposition recurs as a theme in Burgess's work in *The Clockwork Testament*, and less overtly in novels like *A Clockwork Orange* or *Earthly Powers*. Yet clearly the theological terms do not adequately describe the philosophical positions being presented. Aggeler suggests that in *The Wanting Seed* and *A Clockwork Orange*, where these positions are embodied in rival political movements, the vying forces ought to be more accurately called Hobbesian and Rousseauvian (34). Insofar as Burgess's chosen terminology illuminates the politico-philosophical spectrum, Aggeler's proffered alternatives make much more sense, though there is little of the *Social Contract* in the dystopic Pelphase in *The Wanting Seed*. In such contexts, there seems little reason to avoid using the established political terms of conservatism and liberalism.

Augustinianism in Burgess's work likewise bears little relation to the *City of God*. Rather, Burgess's use of the term is defined by his understanding of Augustine as the most prominent opponent of Pelagius's heretical doctrine of human perfectibility. In novels like *Earthly Powers*, Burgess remains close to this theological opposition. Carlo Campanati's blind faith in the perfectible potential of all humanity is exhibited by his attempt to transform a Nazi into a caring, tolerant human being. This is contrasted with Kenneth Toomey, whose position as a homosexual Catholic has led him to a belief in his own inevitable damnation. Elsewhere, Burgess uses the terms more loosely. While Original Sin plays a thematic role in the Enderby novels and *A Clockwork Orange*, the opposition depicted is moral and only partly theological in nature.⁵⁰ In *The Wanting Seed*, Burgess extends this dichotomy into the arena of political science. He utilises the term Augustinianism to designate dominance of the state, often martial or conservative, over the individual. Pelagianism, by virtue of its core value of human perfectibility, is distorted by Burgess into a loose analogue for socialism.

Problems arise in works that neither overtly address this debate nor even reference it, however. In the majority of Burgess's novels, there is no mention of Augustine or Pelagius, nor does the debate over Original Sin versus free will and human perfectibility significantly arise. Often,

⁵⁰Enderby's long narrative poem, *The Pet Beast*, is a meditation on the inherence of Original Sin beneath man's civilised exterior.

they are fictions about the act of artistic creation itself, featuring as their protagonists professional writers or practitioners of other art forms. In depicting the application of binarism to the processes of artistic creativity, rather than those of morality or politics, Burgess brings his duoversal philosophy into the sphere of aesthetics.

The examination of what makes an artist create art, or how art comes about, is a prominent theme in Burgess's work. A substantial number of his fictional protagonists are artists, beginning with the would-be composer Richard Ennis in his first novel, *A Vision of Battlements* written in 1948, and ending with Byrne, the eponymous hero of his final written work. While a minority of Burgess's artist-protagonists are musical, such as Ennis and Byrne (who seems pathologically capable in all art forms), most are writers to either an amateur or a professional degree. Victor Crabbe, the colonial officer in *The Malayan Trilogy* is a former poet, Enderby practises poetry and drama, and Kenneth Toomey and Ronald Beard, like Burgess himself, are journeymen writers, able in all formats, but preferring the novel.

The phenomenon of the writer-protagonist in Burgess's work intersects with another of his predominant motifs, the fictional biography. Burgess fictionalised the lives of Napoleon, Attila the Hun, Leon Trotsky, Sigmund Freud, Moses and Jesus Christ, but was inevitably drawn to recreate the lives of famous writers. Shying away from his greatest influence, James Joyce, who makes only a brief cameo in *Earthly Powers*, Burgess generated fictions from the lives of Keats, Shakespeare and Marlowe. His slender Keats novella, *ABBA ABBA*, concerns itself with the final year of the Londoner's life in Rome, and focuses on his imagined interaction with the Roman dialect sonneteer, Giuseppe Belli.

In *Nothing Like the Sun* and *A Dead Man in Deptford* Burgess attempts to re-imagine the creativity of these Elizabethan dramatists throughout their careers, from their earliest adolescent experiments with writing through to the moment of death. In *Nothing Like the Sun*, Burgess offers a vision of Shakespeare held in thrall to his vocation and the squalid animality of existence by a Muse figure. In *A Dead Man in Deptford*, Marlowe's artistic impulse is determined by his intent to supersede human nature. Will's art is goddess-inspired; Kit's art forms part of his Promethean attempt to replace God with a world shaped by himself. These opposing impulses of art and reality stretch Burgess's theological terminology beyond breaking point. It seems at best tangential to refer

to Will as Augustinian, and Kit Marlowe as Pelagian. Burgess developed these terms outside the realm of aesthetics, and their application to the question of artistic creativity requires them to travel a considerable intellectual distance from the original early Christian concepts.

In order to frame Burgess's dichotomy within aesthetics, it is necessary to dispense with his chosen terminology. In the context of an aesthetic opposition, neither Pelagius and Augustine nor Original Sin and human perfectibility come close to describing the differing methods of artistic creativity being contrasted in many Burgess novels. It is essential to find a new terminology of opposition that functions within the aesthetic realm, a terminology that may be mapped on to Burgess's opposition of Augustinianism and Pelagianism while retaining particular relevance to the issue of artistic creativity.

THE NIETZSCHEAN DIALECTIC

One such analogue is the dialectic popularised by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who described opposed impulses of an artistic duality with the Hellenic terms, Apollonian and Dionysian. In his first work, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (1871–1872), Nietzsche introduced the concept of art as the product of a clash and collaboration between two impulses, which he named after the Greek gods Apollo and Dionysus. It is important to note that Nietzsche never engaged meaningfully with the theological dichotomy that prepossessed Burgess. As Julian Young states, “Nietzsche suggests that free will is nothing more than a piece of bad propaganda, a fiction invented by priests in order to be able to make us feel sinful” (267). Similarly, his frequent references to Original Sin are used, as Martin Henry notes, “obliquely or backhandedly, in order to turn the tables on Christianity”.⁵¹ In *Human, All-too-human*, Nietzsche dismissed the doctrine as “untrue”,⁵² and elsewhere

⁵¹“Original Sin: A Flawed Inheritance”, Martin Henry, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 65 (1), 2000, pp. 2–3.

⁵²“[C]onsider ... that none of the propositions over which they were then contending in Regensburg—neither that of original sin, nor that of redemption by proxy, nor that of justification by faith—is in any way true or has anything whatever to do with truth, that they are now all recognized as undiscussable:—and yet on their account the world was set in flames, that is to say on account of opinions to which nothing real corresponds”, *Human, All-too-human*, vol. 2, pt. 1, Friedrich Nietzsche, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, p. 270.

used it as a term of abuse to refer to, *inter alia*, Christianity, theology in general, and a lack of enjoyment in human existence. Similarly, Burgess at no point in his extensive output referred to Nietzsche except in the most passing manner. He did not examine Nietzsche's philosophy of Apollo and Dionysus, though it is clear he was aware of it. There is no obvious direct analogue between Nietzsche's opposition as set out in *The Birth of Tragedy* and Burgess's pseudo-Manichean dualism. Yet the Nietzschean terminology is preferable to the author's own for a series of reasons.

Both writers were fluid in their understanding of the dichotomies they described, but Nietzsche's terminology possesses the benefit of greater historical accuracy and much wider critical acceptance.⁵³ Nietzsche's terms have been augmented and adapted by subsequent critics, justifying a certain flexibility of emphasis. This adaptive critical literature, including such expansive texts as Camille Paglia's *Sexual Personae*, has explored avenues within Nietzsche's dichotomy, especially in the consideration of non-classical literature, which were left undeveloped by *The Birth of Tragedy*. These explorations offer further insights into the opposition inherent in Burgess's novels than those supplied solely by Nietzsche's version of the paradigm.

Nietzsche's application of duality to the arena of aesthetics has been an enduring one, and it offers a useful aesthetic analogue to Burgess's duality when considering Burgess's treatment of artists and artistic creation. Scholars have argued that Nietzsche did not originate this opposition, drawing his ideas from the poet Friedrich Hölderlin⁵⁴, the art historian Johann Winckelmann and his own tutors.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, it is the Nietzschean version of this radical dichotomy which has become

⁵³See *The Origin and Early Form of Greek Tragedy*, Gerald F. Else, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1965, for a wider discussion about Nietzsche's accuracy in describing Greek culture and art.

⁵⁴"Nietzsche analyses Greek art in terms of a celebrated duality which ... was probably inspired by the 'favourite poet' of his schooldays, Friedrich Hölderlin: the duality between the 'Apollonian' and the 'Dionysian'. He distinguishes two principal types of Greek art, the Apollonian art of, above all, Homer, and the Dionysian art of Greek tragedy, of Aeschylus and Sophocles." (*Young*, 125).

⁵⁵Hans Reiss believes that Nietzsche's polar terms—Apollonian and Dionysian—for the nature of art and reality had actually been developed by a previous generation of classicists who, in influencing Nietzsche, may have found their conceptualisation appropriated and expanded by the younger academic: "Earlier scholars, such as F.G. Welcker and Friedrich Wilhelm Ritschl, his own teacher, had used them, but Nietzsche put them in the very centre of his argument and dramatised them with great skill." *The Writer's Task from Nietzsche to Brecht*, Hans Reiss, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1978, p. 19.

seminal. Both the German and French philosophical legacies arising from Nietzsche's earliest text expand its remit implicitly or explicitly to address contemporary cultural concerns.⁵⁶ Yet Nietzsche's stated topic in *The Birth of Tragedy* was the production of art itself, specifically the generation of the tragic mode arising from the collision and conflation of two opposing routes to art, which he associated with Dionysus and Apollo.

It was not Nietzsche's intention to construct a radical aesthetic for art in *The Birth of Tragedy*. As Michael Tanner notes, this dichotomy of Apollo and Dionysus was only one of a number of key elements which drove the text. "Nietzsche had three major concerns (at least) going on in tandem", according to Tanner, "a political-cultural one, a claim to be worked out about the nature of metaphysics, and a consideration of a specific phenomenon in the history of art".⁵⁷ It is this latter concern, evoked by Nietzsche in his opening line, which can be considered as an aesthetic analogue for Burgess's Manicheism.⁵⁸

Nietzsche shared Burgess's sense of a duoverse in flux and conflict. However, he differed from Burgess in actively welcoming this as a gauge of the health of society, whereas Burgess's more pessimistic perspective often veers towards a yearning for impossible unity or synthesis or a concern that the "wrong" aspect is dominant in the conflict.⁵⁹ According to Julian Young,

⁵⁶The German philosophical tradition of Heidegger, Habermas and Sloterdijk, and the French poststructuralist tradition of Bataille, Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida and Deleuze, and other cultural commentators including Theodore Adorno, Ayn Rand and Camille Paglia, have all sought to adapt Nietzsche's dialectic to different, but more expansive aesthetic ends.

⁵⁷*The Birth of Tragedy*, Friedrich Nietzsche, trans. Shaun Whiteside, ed. and introduction by Michael Tanner, London, 1993, p. ix.

⁵⁸"We shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics when we have succeeded in perceiving directly, and not only through logical reasoning, that Art derives its continuous development from the duality of the *Apolline* and the *Dionysiac*", *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Shaun Whiteside, p. 9.

⁵⁹"The thing we're most aware of in life is division, the conflict of opposites—good, evil; black, white; rich, poor—and so on. We don't like to live in the middle of this conflict (it's rather like trying to picnic in the centre of a football field) and we rush eagerly to any saint or pundit or prophet who will convince us that all this conflict is really so much illusion,

Nietzsche's insight, then, an insight which some might regard as tragic, is that a healthy society exists *always* in a state of dynamic tension. More or less open and more or less acute tension between the forces of reform and reaction does not represent a temporary, social malfunction but is, rather, an essential condition of communal health. (329)

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche evokes the epitome of a great culture founded upon the bedrock of great art, which he identified in pre-Socratic Greece. The underlying strength of this culture was due to the relationship between the primordial tribal impulse and the emergence of individualism and order, which he saw in both Greek drama and society. Nietzsche used the mythological figures of Dionysus and Apollo to represent these two elements. Though Nietzsche was to refine and, in part, refute his earliest doctrine, he never entirely abandoned it. He distinguishes the impulses as follows:

I see Apollo as the transfiguring genius of the *principium individuationis* through which alone the redemption in illusion is truly to be obtained; while by the mystical triumphant cry of Dionysus the spell of individuation is broken, and the way lies open to the Mothers of Being, to the innermost heart of things.⁶⁰

So the Apollonian may be considered as the impulse that leads us to believe that each man is in fact an island, an illusion supported by an act of will, an impulse which, as in Burgess's *Any Old Iron*, can result in a fatalistic solipsism. The Dionysian, on the other hand, becomes the impulse that compels us to the visceral revelation that we are part of a body of humanity, visceral because it emerges at moments of

that behind it all exists a great shining ultimate unity which is eternal and real. The trouble is that this ultimate unity, whether it be God or the Classless Society, is always presented as being a long way off or away or above. I like my pie here and now. That's why I trust the artist more than the Marxist or the theologian. That's why I regard the artist's trade as not merely the most honourable but also the most holy." (*Copy*, 265–266).

⁶⁰ *The Birth of Tragedy*, Friedrich Nietzsche, trans. and ed. by Walter Kaufman, Vintage, New York, 1967, pp. 99–100.

intoxication, such as while drugged, during sex, under divine inspiration, or while engaged in group euphoria which involves all of these elements, such as the Bacchic rites:

[The Dionysian impulse is] most immediately understandable to us in the analogy of *intoxication*. Under the influence of the narcotic potion hymned by all primitive men and peoples, or in the powerful approach of spring, joyfully penetrating the whole of nature, those Dionysiac urges are awakened⁶¹

The theory propounded by Nietzsche is that Attican drama originated from the communal celebrations of the Bacchic rituals, sublimated by the introduction of the chorus, a narrator intersecting the worlds of the drama and the spectator, interpreting the one and representing the other. The chorus, while Dionysian in nature, introduced an Apollonian *principium individuationis* into the art form of dramatic tragedy, perfected in the eyes of Nietzsche by dramatists like Sophocles and Aeschylus. Nietzsche ascribes the downfall of this art form to the overly Apollonian influence of Socratism on Euripides, which led to a fatal imbalance in the synthesis of Dionysian and Apollonian elements within the form. He argues that this imbalance has informed Western culture ever since. Reiss glosses the two prerequisite elements as follows:

For Nietzsche, great Greek tragedy ... combines these elements or forces to which the Greeks had given the names of two Gods, Apollo and Dionysus. Apollo, the god of measure and harmony, symbolises the principle of individuation, while Dionysus, the God of ecstasy, stands for the dissolution of individuality in the original unity of all life. In other words, Apollo is the power that gives form to the inchoate, primordial, irrational forces that Dionysus represents, and art will only be great when both elements completely coalesce. (19)

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Greek drama dies by suicide, or rather, it is killed by one of its own. The last dramatist of the Greek golden age, according

⁶¹ *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Shaun Whiteside, p. 17.

to Nietzsche's thesis, was Euripides, who became dissatisfied with the legacy of his forebears, specifically Sophocles and Aeschylus, because he did not fully understand their work. Nietzsche posits that Euripides set out to create a new art, but succeeded in writing not for the people but for two spectators only.

The first of these is Euripides himself, as thinker or critic of his art rather than creative artist. The other is Socrates. Aesthetic Socratism, according to Nietzsche, came to dominate Euripides's drama. Socrates, for Nietzsche, was the paragon of rationality who believed that human evolution was predicated on the development of intellectual knowledge. However science, even in the primitive form of the Socratic method, is not the ground on which to build art, and so Greek tragedy became impoverished of its Dionysian roots, and died.

PAGLIA'S EXPANSION OF THE DIALECTIC

The most comprehensive (and controversial) expansion of Nietzsche's duoversal origin for artistic creativity has been Camille Paglia's *Sexual Personae*, which examines the development of this dichotomy across a vast historical period within culture, primarily visual art and literature. Her most significant deviation from Nietzsche is on the basis of gender, for she reads Dionysus as an Apollonian masculine cover for the prehistoric Earth-mother deity whose worship was prevalent in early Europe, as the prevalence of Sheela-na-gigs and Venus of Willendorf-type statuary in the archeological record reveals. Hence, the Dionysian impulse becomes representative of the primordial feminine, in which case Paglia often substitutes the term chthonic. She sets out her thesis as follows:

Dionysus is identification, Apollo objectification. Dionysus is the empathetic, the sympathetic emotion transporting us into other people, other places and other times. Apollo is the hard, cold separatism of western personality and categorical thought. (*SP*, 96)

This posits an expansion of Nietzsche's dialectic which he himself might have approved. Indeed, in *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian seems to accept the grafting of genderisation on to his dichotomy. Paglia also widens the remit of the Apollonian

impulse to encompass the “separatism of western personality” that extends from Nietzsche’s chorus figure to include an entire tradition of Western individualism. She traces this wider Apollonianism backwards from Proust’s subjective perspective, via Voltaire’s primacy of reason and the Cartesian assertion that thinking begets the status of existence, all the way to Plato’s knowledge of knowledge and Aristotle’s insistence that it is the faculty for self-consciousness that permits the experience of existence.⁶²

This tradition of Western thought, which Paglia seeks to define as Apollonian, focuses on the primacy of the ego as the defining component of being, while incorporating the fragmentation of society and the development of the scientific method. If the Apollonian, for Paglia, is the principle towards human perfectibility, it is also, of necessity, an individualist escape from the group intoxication expressed by Dionysianism, which Paglia sees as inspired by the chthonic ur-goddess of prehistory. For Paglia, the Apollonian is the cold, individualist eye of rational man, anxiety-driven, isolated, but aspiring to a greatness that requires the grace of no god. G. Wilson Knight clarifies this meaning of the Apollonian impulse in the context of aesthetic creativity: “The Apollonian is the created ideal, forms of visionary beauty that can be seen, sight rather than sound, intellectually clear to us” (268). For one Nietzschean critic, the image of Apollo presented in *The Birth of Tragedy* can be considered as the divine representation of the individualist vision, a suggestion of the ego as God which Burgess’s Kit Marlowe endorses in *A Dead Man in Deptford*.⁶³

For Paglia, an inherent and dormant paganism is always threatening to explode over the topography of Western culture like a lava flow. From

⁶² “[I]f one who sees is conscious that he sees, one who hears that he hears, one who walks that he walks, and similarly for all the other human activities there is a faculty that is conscious of their exercise, so that whenever we perceive, we are conscious that we perceive, and whenever we think, we are conscious that we think, and to be conscious that we are perceiving or thinking is to be conscious that we exist (for existence, as we saw, is sense-perception or thought).” *The Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle, *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 19, trans. H. Rackham, London, 1934, 1170a.

⁶³ “We might even describe Apollo as the glorious divine image of the *principium individuationis*”, writes Michael Tanner in his introduction to Shaun Whiteside’s translation of *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 16.

subterranean, chthonic origins, it wells up through the group mind, the *homo gestalt*, via the intoxication of emotions and, jolted by the great Earth-mother goddess of prehistory, artists are inspired to explore a long-latent Dionysian impulse. Paglia replaces the post-Olympian masculine construct of Dionysus with the pre-Olympian Great Mother deity, setting up a gender opposition between the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

The introduction of Paglia's recalibration of the Dionysian as chthonic and fundamentally feminine raises a significant problem in the context of Burgess however. Although Paglia's introduction of the Great Mother deity allows the form of the Muse figure in Burgess's work to be explained as a Dionysian avatar, it also generates an historical opposition between the Augustinian and Paglian conceptions of the Dionysian which requires a resolution. Writing about the followers of Cybele, a Phrygian Great Mother deity, in 415 CE, Augustine refers to her rites as "obscene", "shameful", "filthy", "the mad and abominable revelry of effeminate and mutilated men". He proclaims: "If this is purification, what is pollution? The Great Mother has surpassed all her sons, not in greatness of deity, but of crime." The deity herself is described as a "monster", exceeding even Jupiter in abomination:

He, with all his seductions of women, only disgraced heaven with one Ganymede; she, with so many avowed and public effeminate, has both defiled the earth and outraged heaven.⁶⁴

It is clearly impossible to reconcile the pessimistic ascetism of Augustine with the Bacchic excesses of late Mother goddess worship. Neither Nietzsche's original hypothesis of the Apollonian–Dionysian dialectic nor Paglia's augmented interpretation of it can be applied successfully to the realm of theology. But Burgess's theological terms bear little engagement with the theological positions from which he derives them. Rather, when applied to the arena of artistic creation, they tend to lose their ontological meaning and begin to function as metaphors for two opposing impulses in human existence and aesthetic creation.

⁶⁴ *The City of God*, Saint Augustine, trans. Marcus Dodds, Modern Library, New York, 1950, pp. 232–233.

Therefore Paglia's variant of the Apollonian and Dionysian dichotomy can function as an aesthetic analogue for Burgess's opposition of Augustinianism and Pelagianism. Paglia remains largely faithful to the tension between impulses that Nietzsche's text describes. She concurs with Nietzsche's verdict that there is a direct lineage from Socrates to modern science which is entirely and extremely Apollonian. She agrees with the objective hypostasis of Apollo that Nietzsche calls "Being" and the dynamism of Dionysianism that Nietzsche calls "Becoming". Yet Paglia also develops the terms in the context of the late twentieth century in which she wrote *Sexual Personae*, offering an expanded understanding of their meanings to accommodate the vast range of subject material that her text considers. She summarises this expanded opposition of creative impulse succinctly:

Dionysus is energy, ecstasy, hysteria, promiscuity, emotionalism—heedless indiscriminateness of idea or practice. Apollo is obsessiveness, voyeurism, idolatry, fascism—frigidity and aggression of the eye, petrification of objects. (*SP*, 96)

The addition of such dualities as gender, or the late eighteenth-century tension between classicism and romanticism, or the opposition of paganism with monotheist Judaeo-Christianity, all assist Paglia's agenda to expand Nietzsche's terminology to the point where it might legitimately encompass all of Western art. Nietzsche had claimed that his thesis applied throughout the history of Western culture without actually demonstrating it. His *exempla* were restricted to the Attican drama of his academic specialisation and Wagner's music, his highly subjective representative of the potentiality of late nineteenth-century art. Hans Reiss notes how:

Greek culture for Nietzsche was the prototype of a great culture; for it reflected the wholeness of a nation's life where unity was revealed in all its particular manifestations. He never questioned, let alone examined, this assumption which struck him as self-evident.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ *The Writer's Task from Nietzsche to Brecht*, Hans Reiss, London, Macmillan, 1978, p. 17.

This is one of the fundamental achievements of Paglia's epic study. For over a century scholars had utilised Nietzsche's compelling distinction between Apollo and Dionysus in relation to Western art and culture without ever demonstrating that it could legitimately be mapped on to the cultural space they were inspecting. In fact, Nietzsche himself had failed to demonstrate that it was applicable to ancient Greek culture. Paglia's exceptionally comprehensive efforts to demonstrate its universality as an applicable theoretical device inevitably imposed significant augmentation and addition upon Nietzsche's outline concept.

Paglia's insightful overview of Western culture does clarify many issues that Burgess raises within his fiction. Her astute, though not original, perspective on Rousseau as the most significant of Western philosophical optimists is clearly useful when examining texts such as *A Clockwork Orange*. Although Burgess's text centres around his favoured theme of human free will, encouraging an analysis predicated by his own preferred opposition of Augustinian and Pelagian doctrines, Paglia's perspective on the influence of Rousseau in Western liberalism leads us rather to consider *A Clockwork Orange* as an analysis of the social failings of such a system on the level of the individual:

[F]eminism, like all liberal movements of the past two hundred years is heir to Rousseau. *The Social Contract* (1762) begins: "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains." Pitting benign Romantic nature against corrupt society, Rousseau produced the progressivist strain in nineteenth-century culture, for which social reform was the means to achieve paradise on earth. (*SP*, 2)

This "progressivist strain" not only encompasses the thinking of Marx and his followers, but also underpins the general breadth of modern Western liberalism. Movements as diverse as feminism, social democracy, minority rights and communism all share the medium of social reform as the predicated action towards perfecting society. Paglia correctly traces these movements back to Rousseau, whose optimistic analysis of man's inherent nature—"born free"—is shared by Pelagius. Whereas Pelagius offered individual change as the predicated action to improving the human condition, encouraging his followers to base their behavioural patterns upon those of Jesus Christ, Rousseau recommended programmes of social reform, such as access to education:

Rousseau rejects original sin, Christianity's pessimistic view of man born unclean, with a propensity for evil. Rousseau's idea, derived from Locke, of man's innate goodness led to social environmentalism... It assumes that aggression, violence and crime come from social deprivation—a poor neighbourhood, a bad home. (*SP*, 2)

Burgess critically examined the efficacy of such Rousseauist social experimentation in a number of his novels, notably *A Clockwork Orange*. In this regard both Paglia and Burgess can be seen to associate the Apollonian impulse with a nexus of social progressivism and transgression of traditional societal norms. This relates not only to the Pelagian impulse to perfecting the individual, which can come at a cost as Burgess warns in *A Clockwork Orange*, but also to the transgressive impulses that Paglia identifies in the overthrow of traditional goddess worship and the spiritual migration from group mind to individual eye, and which Burgess diagnoses in the reversed social norms of the Pelphase in *The Wanting Seed* and in Kit Marlowe's espousal of atheism and homosexuality in *A Dead Man in Deptford*.

However, the Dionysian impulse is also transgressive, since both are progenitors of aesthetic creation. The distinction is between transgression inspired by the intellect that seeks to improve on the existing paradigm and is therefore Apollonian, and transgression fuelled by natural emotions, which in this dichotomy may be read as Dionysian intoxication, inspired by the earth goddess. Paglia delineates this distinction succinctly:

The quarrel between Apollo and Dionysus is the quarrel between the higher cortex and the older limbic and reptilian brains. Art reflects on and resolves the eternal human dilemma of order versus energy. In the west, Apollo and Dionysus strive for victory. Apollo makes the boundary lines that are civilisation, but that lead to convention, constraint, oppression. Dionysus is energy unbound, mad, callous, destructive, wasteful. (*SP*, 96)

Curiously, in this discussion of earth goddesses and sky cults, Paglia's dichotomy actually proves compatible with the original conception of Manicheism as expressed by the prophet Mani. The goddess figure to whom Paglia attributes the Dionysian artistic impulse, a goddess simultaneously capricious and inspirational, resembles the eternal feminine, the spiritual double revealed to the Persian visionary. This goddess can

also be found in the works of Ted Hughes, Robert Graves and some American Manichean writers.

Paglia's expansion of the Apollo–Dionysus dichotomy, unlike Burgess's shifting definitions of Manicheism, adheres closely to the theology of the prophet Mani. Yet it also draws an almost Platonic distinction between earthly womanhood and a spiritual feminine ideal. Paglia resolves this through reference to a chthonic prehistorical goddess archetype. In *Sexual Personae*, she develops an opposition between two forms of early religion, earth cult and sky cult, which also finds echoes in Updike and Burgess. The distinction is that Dionysian (or chthonic) religion, being based upon the feminine principle of the Great Mother, is rooted in nature and the natural world around us. Apollonian religion, which superseded goddess worship at the dawn of recorded history, places its masculine deity or pantheon outside the knowable world (up in the sky as a sun god, on Olympus, or in a notional Heaven or spiritual plane) so as to impose order upon chthonic chaos and inspire humanity towards subduing and improving upon the natural world. Samuel Coale has noted this opposition of earth cult and sky cult in the work of John Updike:

Radical polarities pervade and permeate Updike's books. Matter and spirit clash and duel relentlessly; woman and man, earth-goddess and sky-god, sex and religion, past and present grapple and interpenetrate one another completely.⁶⁶

Burgess's understanding of the prehistoric Goddess religion and its influence over the creation of art came not from Paglia or Updike, but from Robert Graves, who popularised the idea that the creation of poetry was an intuitive act of worship of the ur-Goddess, mediated via her avatar the Muse or through her image, the moon. Graves's book on the subject, *The White Goddess*, was well-known to Burgess, and he even referenced it when attempting to define the central role of the Muse in his Enderby cycle. Burgess knew Graves personally and, as with many more prominent writers, provoked an argument which later rankled into a feud. They met at a poetry reading at Manchester University during Burgess's

⁶⁶ In *Hawthorne's Shadow*, Samuel Coale, University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, KY, 1985, p. 124.

undergraduate days and he criticised Graves in a student magazine review afterwards. Graves angrily rebutted Burgess's review point by point in a letter, leading to a long-standing animus held by Burgess against the older writer. As Andrew Biswell writes,

This letter sparked the beginning of Burgess's off-and-on campaign against the poet, which he pursued in reviews of Graves's *Collected Short Stories* (1965) and his translation of Omar Khayyám's *Rubáiyát* (1967). The vendetta was resumed in 1971, with dismissive remarks on Graves's "pot-boiling" fiction in *The Novel Now*, and again in 1982, when Burgess wrote a long article on Martin Seymour-Smith's biography of Graves. (*Real Life*, 68)

Despite the apparent rancour, Burgess made use of Graves's work, especially in delineating the process of artistic creation pursued by characters such as Enderby or Will. The heavy influence of *The White Goddess* upon the texts of the Enderby quadrilogy and *Nothing Like The Sun* has been noted by critics, and has even been acknowledged by Burgess himself. Kevin Jackson has noted the influence of *The White Goddess* in the construction of the poetic voice and mythos of Enderby:

Put another way, Enderby is, *toutes proportions gardées*, something of a William Empson, with perhaps a jigger or two of Robert Graves (the goddess mythology) and W.H. Auden for good measure. (*Sonnets*, xii)

Graves's idea for the book that was to become *The White Goddess* originated in his identifying a stylistic disconnect in the tradition of English poetry. Given his significant interest in mythology and the works of the early social anthropologist James Frazer, Graves developed his idea beyond an analysis of the structural dissonance he had identified into a consideration of the mytho-historical developments which he posited may have led to it. Grevel Lindop notes that,

by July 1943 Graves was writing to [Alan] Hodge about the links between poetry and "primitive moon-worship" and suggesting that "The history of English poetry has been the modifying of the original moon-poetry, which is stressed, with sun-poetry (intellectual, Apollo poetry) which is measured in regular beats and metres." (*WG*, viii)

As Graves explored the mytho-historical development of patriarchal rationality and attempted to track its growing influence over European culture in recorded history, he identified the artistic impulse with the early Goddess religion and came to the conclusion that the “function of poetry is religious invocation of the Muse; its use is the experience of mixed exaltation and horror that her presence excites” (WG, 10). For Graves the prehistoric Goddess worship demonstrated by the existence of feminine religious totems like Sheela-na-Gigs could be intuited in early art, and could therefore be considered as the source of art itself. Like Paglia, Graves argued that a patriarchal turn caused a rupture in cultural production. Early in his delineation of this argument, Graves highlights the role of Socrates as a key desacralising rationalist, in terms that evoke Nietzsche’s similar summation in *The Birth of Tragedy*. For both, Socrates represents a pivotal moment in which the balance of power shifted crucially away from supernatural mythology and towards a scientific rationality:

One of the most compromising rejections of early Greek mythology was made by Socrates. Myths frightened or offended him; he preferred to turn his back on them and discipline his mind to think scientifically. (WG, 9)

Graves, like Paglia, can therefore be understood to be theorising at least partly within the lineage of thought initiated by the Nietzschean dichotomy. Both offer an augmentation of Nietzsche’s thought primarily by way of conceptualising the desacralising process identified with Socrates within a lengthy historical process wherein the Dionysian (or Goddess-inspired) impulse was slowly suppressed, and eventually replaced by a hegemonous patriarchal and rationalising impulse. For both, their theory is problematised by the historicity of the late Medieval and early Modern era, primarily in terms of how they could locate their posited tension between two opposing impulses within the dominant Christian culture of Europe at that time. Both utilise the cultural disconnect of the Reformation to recast Roman Catholicism, especially in its pre-Reformation form, as a subverted development of the Dionysian (or Goddess) mythos. For Graves,

the popular appeal of modern Catholicism is, despite the patriarchal Trinity and the all-male priesthood, based rather on the Aegean Mother-and-Son

religious tradition, to which it has slowly reverted, than on its Aramaean or Indo-European “warrior-god” elements. (WG, 56)

This sentiment is echoed in *Sexual Personae* repeatedly, as Paglia attempts to construct a Catholicism in which its superficial sky-cult appearance is a veneer, a mere mask of convenience, thinly veiling an underlying chthonism. When Paglia writes that the “Romanism in Catholicism is splendidly, enduringly pagan, spilling out in Renaissance, Counter-Reformation, and beyond” (SP, 139), she is not only delineating a Catholic regionality, a specifically Mediterranean form of Catholicism, but also seeking to emphasise that Catholicism in general maintains a “vestigial paganism”, sexualised and decadent, which may be contrasted with “austere” Protestantism (SP 53).

Although Paglia is clearly familiar with Graves’s work, he receives little attention in *Sexual Personae*. She cites *The White Goddess* on only two occasions—once to dispute Graves’s interpretation of Keats’s *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and again to accuse him of being “addled by homophobia” (SP 672) in his assessment of Sappho. Nevertheless, both Graves and Paglia seek to chart a trajectory of thinking and artistic creation in Western European thought from before recorded history to the twentieth century CE. Within that, they both identify an original impulse to art which they co-identify with primitive goddess worship, and which is initially challenged by a patriarchal turn and then later, as Nietzsche delineated, in Attic Greece by early rationalising intellectualism as represented by Socrates. They also concur that this goddess-inspired impulse to art is later finally overthrown in the early modern period by an opposed pseudo-secular impulse whose lineage can be tracked back ultimately to the initial emergence of patriarchal culture and religion. For Nietzsche and Paglia, these opposed impulses can be termed Dionysian and Apollonian. Graves does not apply this terminology, but nonetheless his vision of the White Goddess closely tracks the same trajectory delineated by Paglia in *Sexual Personae*.

If we accept Paglia’s merging of Nietzschean Dionysianism with ur-Goddess worship and its varying debased forms in the historical patriarchal era, then it becomes clear that Graves has identified a form of Dionysian art arising from the chthonic figure of the Great Goddess, which Burgess utilises overtly in *Nothing Like The Sun*, the Enderby cycle and a number of other fictions. The Shakespeare of *Nothing Like The Sun*, and many other Burgessian artist-protagonists are clearly delineated

within the parameters of the Goddess myth as Graves has mapped it. However, given the cultural and political manifestation of this myth, especially within the Nietzschean dichotomy, then it must be opposed by an equal, if not even more potent myth.

In the Elizabethan era, this Apollonian paradigm is expressed as a proto-rational pursuit of human perfectibility that strongly evokes Burgess's depiction of Pelagianism. In Burgess's fiction it is personified by Raleigh's School of Night, inspired by the occult Neoplatonism of John Dee and Giordano Bruno. According to Paglia, within only a few decades it had ultimately led to the poetry of Milton, the birth of modern scientific inquiry with the Royal Society and the overthrow of the British monarchy by Cromwell. As an origin of artistic creativity within Burgess's work, this impulse opposes the methodology expressed by novels like *Inside Mr Enderby* or *Nothing Like The Sun*, which propose overt goddess worship via a muse avatar as the source of artistic inspiration. The alternative to the muse is the opposing element of the Nietzschean dialectic, Apollonian art that requires no external power to inspire its potency. This line of artistic creativity finds its most fervent Nietzschean proponent in Attican drama after Socrates. The Socratic method, for Nietzsche, was a development that placed Western culture on a path that over-stressed the role of the analytic in human existence. As Magnus and Higgins note:

Although granting that Socrates was a turning point in world history, Nietzsche contends that Socrates was responsible for directing Western culture towards an imbalanced, exaggerated reliance on the Apollonian point of view. A defender of reason to an irrational degree, Socrates had taught that reason could penetrate reality to the point that it could correct reality's flaws. This had become the fundamental dream of Western culture, a dream that was later manifested in the modern approach to scholarship.⁶⁷

Paglia expands on this when she writes that "Western science is a product of the Apollonian mind: its hope is that by naming and classification, by the cold light of intellect, archaic night can be pushed back and defeated" (*SP*, 5). Since the net result of the transition from earth cult

⁶⁷ "Nietzsche's Works and Their Themes", Bernd Magnus and Kathleen M. Higgins, *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996. p. 23.

to sky cult is the distancing of man from god, as the Apollonian influence in Western culture increased so did this distance increase, Nietzsche argues, until man came to assume a position of atheism. God is dead, Nietzsche's madman pronounces. Secular Western culture has invested its faith in science instead. This supercession of god, especially by an ego-driven rationality which itself threatens to become godlike (or *übermensch* in Nietzschean terms) is the ultimate Apollonian stance. From it stems the impulse to improve upon the world that manifests as Apollonian art, in which man is forced to assume the responsibilities of a divinity and recreate the world so as to improve upon nature.

Where Nietzsche isolates the man versus god motif within *The Birth of Tragedy*, it is to emphasise the equality and struggle inherent in the interdependency of the Dionysian and Apollonian impulses. Nietzsche's Everyman, the Aryan, discovers that "the contradiction at the heart of the world reveals itself to him as a clash of different worlds, e.g., of a divine and human one, in which each, taken as an individual, has right on its side, but nevertheless has to suffer for its individuation, being merely a single one beside another".⁶⁸ This equivalence is later unbalanced to accentuate the Dionysian impulse as that which should be enhanced in order to restore society and art. Though Nietzsche argued in *The Birth of Tragedy* that both impulses are required for an artistic optimum such as he found in Attican tragedy, he later argued increasingly in favour of a more Dionysian approach as a response to what he perceived as an excessively Apollonian modern existence, the ultimate legacy of Socrates. Daniel Conway has acknowledged this imbalance, which is based on a distinction between Dionysian reality and Apollonian appearance:

Notwithstanding his characterisation of tragedy as a collaboration between Apollo and Dionysus, *The Birth of Tragedy* reveals that the two gods are not equal partners in the business of delivering an aesthetic justification. While Greek tragedy owes its provenance to the patronage of both gods, Nietzsche assigns a certain priority to the "tragic wisdom" of Dionysus. While Apollo presides cheerfully over those simulacra of life that sustain the illusory meaning of individual existence, Dionysus affords his epopts a glimpse of life as it is.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufman, p. 71.

⁶⁹ "Returning to Nature", by Daniel Conway in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, ed. Peter R. Sedgwick, Oxford, 1995, p. 45.

Paglia assumes a similar position in terms of her understanding of the Dionysian, emphasising goddess-inspired art as somehow more valid or complete than the Apollonian version. Her choice of contrasts, such as Apollonian Sidney and Dionysian Shakespeare, exemplifies how she balances her argument. “Shakespeare is a metamorphosist and therefore closer to Dionysus than to Apollo—Shakespeare’s elemental energy comes from nature itself,” she claims (*SP*, 195). Burgess also seemed to favour the Dionysian (or Augustinian) impulse initially, but he slowly reversed this opinion, or at least alternated his focus, from *MF* onwards to the end of his life, especially in novels such as *Mozart and the Wolf Gang*, *A Dead Man in Deptford* and *Byrne*.

The prejudicial paradigm being drawn by Nietzsche, Paglia—and perhaps also by Burgess—emphasises the Dionysian as the ‘natural’ state of man. Nietzsche’s Dionysus offers life “as it is”, Paglia’s pre-Dionysian triple Goddess represents “primeval nature”, and Burgess’s Augustinianism is a rationalisation of mankind’s status in a world where the “the wrong God is temporarily ruling the world and the true God has gone under”. If the Dionysian impulse perceives nature as fallen and suffers from it, the Apollonian perceives nature as fallen and seeks to improve it.



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