Conflict and confluence: Anthony Burgess as novelist and journalist

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Abstract:
The overall argument of this thesis is that Anthony Burgess's literary journalism enables us to make a nuanced reading of his own Catholic novels. My definition of 'journalism' is necessarily wide: it takes in television and radio work, as well as published book reviews and interviews. Although previous commentators have established useful connections between Burgess's novels, his journalism has been consistently overlooked and undervalued. As a result of this neglect, there is no published study of Burgess's journalistic writing. This is also the first thesis to make extensive use of Burgess's manuscripts, letters, diaries and other archival materials. The Worm and the Ring (1961), Tremor of Intent (1966) and Early Powers (1980) offer useful examples of 'confluence' between fiction and journalism. These novels pick up and develop a variety of material - often, but not exclusively 'Catholic' - which Burgess engages with elsewhere, in essays and reviews. The act of reviewing is seen to be crucial part of the process of fiction-writing, and Burgess's journalism (on Greene, on spy fiction, and on the idea of the Catholic novel) appears to flow into these blocks in a fairly straightforward way. The 'conflict' of my title refers to A Clockwork Orange and Burgess's subsequent journalistic statements about it. His post factum prefaces and other journalistic articles on the novel's composition are shown to be at variance and typescript evidence. The theological implications of the variant endings are examined carefully, with reference to Burgess's writings about the theological dispute between Saint Augustine and Pelagius.

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