REWINDING A CLOCKWORK SELF: DISINTEGRATION AND UNITY IN THE BRITISH LITERATURE OF THE 60S: *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK* AND *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*

Ioana BACIU
"Al. Ioan Cuza" University of Iași

Abstract: The article is a psychonalitical-oriented exploration of the literature of the 60s, taking two representative case studies that discuss the main cultural obsessions of the decade. While Lessing's 'feminist bible' is involved with the effects of the sexual revolution, the polical turmoil in a world increasingly divided between Communism and Capitalism, East and West, and its effects on women as individuals and citizens, Burgess' dystopia is an apt summary of the violence of the decade and of the need to instill moral values in a disintigrating world. Ultimately, the two novels are guided by similar metaphors that re-instate the humanistic ideal of re- connecting an alienated self to the world by making use of the metaphor of the sphere. Finding a means to achieve 'roundness' for the shattered self – maturity, morality, a fair use of reason and free-will - is novels' main preoccupation, an attempt to resolve the decade's schyzophrenic split between order and anarchy.

Keywords: The Golden Notebook, A Clockwork Orange,anarchy, repetition compulsion, British, literature of the 60s

***This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133652, co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013.**

Was there, indeed, a cultural revolution *c*.1958-*c*.1974? This the question under which Arthur Marwick[1] legitimately posits his in-depth socio-cultural exploration of the effervescent sixties, followed by a long list of its achievements, persuasive to nostalgics and skeptics alike: 'For some it is a golden age, for others a time when the old secure framework of morality, authority, and discipline disintegrated'.[2] This conflagration of traditional values and the inherent vulnerability of the self are crucial to the literature of the decade. Doris Lessing (*The Golden Notebook*, 1962) and Anthony Burgess (*A Clockwork Orange*, 1962) interrogate the core values of society, posing uncomfortable questions about morality, freedom and artistic responsibility. Both novels are set in London, at the heart of First World, and the dissolution of the self (Alex's drug-fuelled sprees of violence, Anna's writer's block, followed by entire weeks on the brink of madness) progresses simultaneously with the breakdown of language. In what follows, I propose to show how, by accommodating contradictions, the two protagonists overcome dissolution and return to unity. I will begin by highlighting the apparent paradox of doubling and multiplicity within the self, making use of Freud's analysis of the systemic interdependence of the life and death instincts in the regulation of the ego, concentrating primarily on *The Golden Notebook*. I then propose to explore the way in which language is linked to artistic responsibility and morality. Last, but not least, I will conclude

[1] Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 3
[2] *Ibidem.*

BDD-A21914 © 2014 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:56:19 UTC)

my argument by examining the afore-mentioned texts in terms of the similarities of their organic structure.

In 1922, the year Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* essay was published, the theory of psychic life as governed by the tensions between the opposing life and death drives (libido and ego in Freud's terminology) was not entirely original[3]. The strife between the centripetal and the centrifugal, between order and chaos, culture and anarchy, is seen to weave the innermost fabric of psychic life, since the two cycles, of creation and destruction, are intimately interconnected : 'If we may assume as an experience admitting of no exception that everything living dies from causes within itself, and returns to the inorganic, we can only say '*The goal of all life is death'* and, casting back, *'The inanimate was there before the animate.'*[4]

The paradox governing all organic matter, as Freud points out, is the paradox of 'forces striving after change and progress (…) merely endeavoring to reach an old goal'[5]. Freud goes on to quote Aristophanes's myth of the androgyne and the Upanishads as examples of cosmogonies that endorse his conclusions: 'Are we to follow the clue of the poet-philosopher and make the daring assumption that the living substance was at the time of its animation rent into small particles, which since that time strive for reunion by means of the sexual instincts?'[6] Freud's theory is not prompted by mere convenient analogies between psychology and philosophy; his train of thought reaches this point as a continuation of clinical observations of repetition compulsion. Starting from examples of shell-shocked veterans who re-live their traumatic experiences in dreams, Freud concludes that the urge to repeat is characteristic of mental life, in the sense that the pleasure principle prompts the individual to re-enact a past unpleasant event so as to gain mastery over it. Just as the child tries to get over the loss of the mother[7] by repeatedly throwing and retrieving the toy, producing another, controllable instance of unpleasure followed by pleasure, the psyche creates similar reiterations of repressed difficult experiences, providing an explanation of the cyclical patterns of history.[8]

If we accept repetition as the overriding trope of the human mind, the many layers and palimpsests of post-WWII fiction mirror, in their turn, the patterns of trauma. The doubles and multiplications of *The Golden Notebook*, then, can be interpreted as repetition-compulsion, since Anna re-enacts the same abortive relationship patterns throughout her crisis in order to master and surpass them (and her writer's block). Connections between Lessing and psychoanalysis are inevitable given the fair proportion of symbolically rich dreams that her typically analytical heroines recount. Lessing makes clear her uneasiness about the overwhelming patriarchal influences of 'grandfathers Freud and Marx' [9], though, and her intention of undermining clichés by opposing to the masculinist modernist tradition a female main character. The famously defecating Leopold Bloom is opposed by Lessing's

[3] According to Sarah Kofman in *Freud and Fiction*, the 'father of psychoanalysis' admits deliberately having avoided reading Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, who had already advanced similar; Sarah Kofman, *Freud and Fiction*, translated by Sarah Wykes (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991) p. 26

[4] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, The International Psycho-analytic Library, no.4, ed. by Ernest Jones, (1922), p. 47

[5] *Ibidem.*

[6] *Idem*, p. 75

[7] The shell-shock and child examples are developed throughout the first four sections of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*

[8] See Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*.

[9] 'He recognized, had recognized for years, that he hadn't had a thought, or an emotion, that didn't instantly fall into pigeon-holes, one marked 'Marx' and one marked 'Freud', *The Golden Notebook*, (London: Harper Perrenial, 2007), p. 557

BDD-A21914 © 2014 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:56:19 UTC)

menstruating Anna, whose last name, Wulf, resonates with Joyce's feminist counterpart, Virgina Woolf. Her psychoanalyst, Mrs. Marks/Mother Sugar, is a female replacement of the joint looming authoritarian figures of Marx and Freud: she is a Jewish clinician, like 'the father of psychoanalysis', yet female, 'mother' Sugar, a maternal figure instead of a paternal one. It is Mrs. Marks who guides Anna throughout her healing process, explaining the inherent *coincidentia oppositorum* of the self, urging her to think beyond a reductively dualistic vision of the world.

What makes *The Golden Notebook* so compelling is precisely the fact that it transcends simplistic dyads through Anna's involvement in a plurality of selves, not only within herself, but also worldwide. Anna rationalizes her writer's block in terms of the inability to write truthfully, since her experience is that of a white, female Communist at the heart of the first World, falling short of being representative or relevant to issues outside her direct field of experience[10]. By connecting Anna/Ella to people of diverse extraction, the central consciousness of the novel joins in the state of things in England (Richard, Tommy, Paul Tanner, Paul of the Mashopi hotel), but also America (Cy, Milt, Saul), Asia (de Silva), Africa (Charlie Themba), Eastern Europe(Michael), to Jews (Molly Jacobs, Nelson, Julia), socialists (Willi, Harry), colonials (the Boothbys), homosexuals (Jimmy, Ronni and Ivor), 'free'(Anna, Ella, Molly) and married (Marion) women. In spite of Anna's attempt to neatly separate the areas of her life, they inevitably seep into one another. Ella's relationship with Paul is the closest we get to an account of Anna's affair with Michael. Paul, a working-class doctor, is the first-world equivalent of Michael, a political refugee from Eastern Europe: the frame of *Free Women* interlocks with that of the notebooks, it becomes impossible to preserve neat boundaries between the divisions of the self because, ultimately, a house divided within itself cannot stand. This is why *The Golden Notebook*, despite its many divisions, plots and sub-plots, is a complex manifesto of the unity of the self.

As the notebooks gradually replace personal entries with 'objective' newspaper cuttings, Anna's personal relationships are repetitions of her history with Michael. The initial double of this 'initial' affair - Ella/Paul Tanner – is replayed with slight tweaks in Anna's relationships with Nelson, an American Jew, De Silva (a Ceylon native), Milt (the name Saul is given in the last installment of Free Women), Ella's with the Canadian script-writer and with Cy Maitland, the American working-class doctor. Ella, Anna's fictional alter-ego, is a writer, too, the author of the novel within the novel within the novel *The Shadow of the Third*. Saul is the Hebrew spelling of Paul from the Ella story, while Ella is another an alter ego of Anna's. The preceding ideas for short stories in Anna's yellow notebook are strangely prophetic, preparing us for Saul's impending appearance.

Anna sees the world in oppositions: female versus male[11], 'real men' versus children and pansies, clitoral vs. vaginal orgasm, one versus many. Doubling and multiplicity are, as Claire Sprague underlines, means of incorporating otherness by creating male doubles for female characters[12], an uncommon practice in literature contradicted, until Lessing, only by Emily Bronte's Catherine/Heathcliff pair. Lessing's female/female and male/male pairs are eventually synthesized and transcended, in the last Blue notebook, by the female/male couple

[10] She tells Mother Sugar: 'You're suggesting I should write of our experience? How ? If I set down every word of the exchange between us during an hour, it would be an unintelligible mess unless I wrote the story of my life to explain it.'(*G.N.*,p.416)

[11] No wonder D.J.Taylor's *After the War* lists D. Lessing among writers who engage primarily with the sex war, a novel about women without husbands, mistakenly listing the publication date of *The Golden Notebook* as 1976. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), pp 257-8

[12] Claire Sprague, *Rereading Doris Lessing,*(Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp 6-7.

BDD-A21914 © 2014 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:56:19 UTC)

Anna/Saul. Like Anna, he is on the brink of madness, ill physically and mentally, a disillusioned Communist. Most importantly, he, too, keeps a journal (meant for Anna to read) where the Daisies, Janes and Dolores's paint a perfect counterpart to the men in his hostess' notebooks. Anna deplores that there are 'no real men' in the wake of her separation from Michael; Saul, too, finds himself at the end of a long string of failed relationships. Just as there are several Annas, there are several Sauls who switch personalities: 'the gentle brotherly affectionate man', 'a furtive and cunning child; or a madman full of hate.'[13]

By creating, in Saul, a male version of Anna, Lessing offers her the mature understanding of the mind that embraces the other within the self instead of projecting it outwardly. This most significant realization is finally accomplished when Anna is capable of dreaming her 'destruction dream' positively, acknowledging that creation and its opposite cannot exist but symbiotically:

I slept and dreamed the dream. This time there was no disguise anywhere. I was the malicious male-female dwarf figure, the principle of joy-in-destruction; and Saul was my male counter-part, male-female, my brother and my sister, (…). But in the dream, he and I, or she and I, were friendly, were not hostile, we were together in spiteful malice. There was a terrible yearning nostalgia in the dream, the longing for death. We came together and kissed, in love.[14]

The dream synthesizes the apparent oppositions of Eros-Thanatos, male-female, love-hate, creation-destruction. The reversal of gender bias and Anna's othering of the male is transcended at the level of names, as well. Anna and Ella, Saul and Paul might be symmetrically gendered doubles, but Janet, Anna's daughter, becomes Ella's son, Michael, paralleling Anna's former lover. As Claire Sprague puts it, 'The pattern begins with relatively fixed male and female values that sometimes become frighteningly unstable and lead finally to a reversal of gender signals and an acceptance of multiple, complicated, more androgynous selves.'(p.3) The totalizing drive is achieved though, when Anna is given the first sentence of her novel by Saul, and viceversa. Again, Saul is exposed as the perfect double of Anna, their mirroring destinies are perpetrated in their novel-writing. The Golden Notebook will become Saul's moderately successful novel about the French student and the Algerian soldier; the sentence he dictates to Anna is the opening line of *Free Women* – a hint that this is Anna's second novel, that she has finally overcome her writer's block and returned to oneness. This unity, however, presupposes multiplicity – the two women in the first line refer to one person: 'There are the two women you are, Anna. Write down: The two women were alone in the London flat.'[15] This brings us back to the beginning, reinstating the fact that Molly is another variant of Anna, but also that the cycles of madness and sanity can once again unravel.

The metaphor of the third seems to overarch the novel, giving it unity, not just at the level of the irony of the 'free' women - Anna/Ella, Molly/Julia - who are automatically cast into the roles of mistresses by the married men they attract. Just as Freud quotes Aristophanes and his myth of the two genders that strive to regain their initial integrity, odd numbers permeate the novel, because they reject the neat opposing categories of binaries, merging them into a superior final product. The two parts become a third, returning to the androgynous state, but without annihilating the integrity of its components. The four notebooks are contained by the frame of *Free Women* and transcended by fifth Golden Notebook. In her sessions with Mother Sugar, Anna claims that she wants 'to be able to separate in myself what is old and cyclic, the recurring history, from what is new…'[16] Wise mother Sugar replies

[13] *G.N.*, p. 514
[14] Idem, p. 519
[15] *G.N.*, p. 554
[16] Idem, p.416

BDD-A21914 © 2014 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:56:19 UTC)

that 'The details change, but form is the same.' What Mrs. Marks is saying, then, is that cyclicality is destiny - the structure of the novel, too, thus, will be cyclical, round, complete.

In the same discussion with Mother Sugar, Anna admits she can't separate form from content, although 'her people' (i.e. communists) do[17]. For Anna the writer, words are meant 'to show, not tell'; this is why the didactic tone of the sentimental Communist literature is devoid of artistic value. The novels produced by the comrades are ridiculously transparent Stalinist propaganda. The dangerous uses of ideological discourse, already apparent in its failure to produce genuine art, are exposed time and again: Anna realizes that she cannot communicate with a fellow communist, despite their speaking the same jargon, due to insurmountable differences in experience: 'The fact is that the phrases of our common philosophy were a means of disguising the truth.' [18] Intrigued by the phrase 'neither superstructure nor base' from Stalin's latest pamphlet, Anna concludes: 'surely that is either completely out of the Marxist canon, a new thought completely, or it's an evasion. Or simply arrogance.' [19]. Such random collations of words, are, indeed, an evasion, ready-made phrases meant to replace thought. In his delusional rants meant to conceal inner void, Saul resorts to such language precisely because it is so easy to produce it mechanically. Anna, as a connoisseur of the jargon, is not taken in by the meaninglessness of his speech:

If I had tape recordings of such times, it would be a record of jumbling phrases, jargon, disconnected remarks. That morning it was a political record, a hotchpotch of political jargon. I sat and listened as the stream of parrot-phrases went past, and I labeled them: communist, anti-communist, liberal, socialist. I was able to isolate them: Communist, American, 1954. Communist, English, 1956. Trotskyst, American, early nineteen-fifties. Premature anti-Stalinist, 1954. Liberal, American, 1956, and so on. [20]

The fact that the ludicrous story of Comrade Ted, who goes to Russia and has a friendly chat with Stalin over the foreign affairs of the Soviet Union, can be read as a parody is worrisome. Anna is a 'boulder pusher', committed to conveying truth in her work – her relationship to propaganda is conflicted because it misrepresents and idealizes things. Communist literature is an amalgamation of lies, a fact proven by the harsh experience of Harry Matthews, a real-life Comrade Ted. He teaches himself Russian, dedicating himself to the improvement of his students. But when he finally does visit the Soviet Union and the higher authorities do not approach him for foreign policy advice, his whole system of beliefs collapses.

Moreover, the thoughtlessness of jargon seems to infect and destroy Anna's artistic ability: 'words lose their meaning suddenly. I find myself listening to a sentence, a phrase, a group of words, as if they were in a foreign language – the gap between what they are supposed to mean, and what in fact they say seems unbridgeable.' [21] The parrot-phrases become symptomatic of breakdown, undermining the very substance of thought. Through the manipulation of language, George Orwell points out, there is just one small step left from ideological discourse to complete brain-washing:

When one watches some tired hack on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases — *bestial, atrocities, iron heel, bloodstained tyranny, free peoples of the world, stand shoulder to shoulder* — one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy: a feeling which suddenly becomes stronger at moments when the light catches the speaker's spectacles and turns them into blank discs

[17] Idem, p.417
[18] *G.N*, p. 267
[19] Idem, p.272
[20] Idem, p.515.
[21] *G.N.*, p. 272

BDD-A21914 © 2014 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:56:19 UTC)

which seem to have no eyes behind them. And this is not altogether fanciful. A speaker who uses that kind of phraseology has gone some distance toward turning himself into a machine.[22]

The idea of man as machine, deprived of free will and choice, is the main theme of *A Clockwork Orange*. Anna Wulf's sense of dissolution is transposed by Burgess in a dystopian society of the future that disintegrates into amorality and violence. Alex lives on the fringes of culture, which is a liberation from indoctrination, an escape from the confines of history. If, for Lessing, the ultimate proof of 'things cracking up' is the 'untruthfulness' of words, for Burgess the uneasiness about culture is epitomized in the use of classical music. But by associating the two – the physical pain of the psychological experiment with 'Ludwig van's' Ninth, the 'good' part of Alex is destroyed, as well as the bad. Despite the Ludovico technique, Alex is not reformed – physical discomfort prevents him from raping or killing, but his vile intentions remain. F. Alexander's book protests exactly against such manipulation of the system: ' - The attempt to impose upon man, a creature capable of growth and capable of sweetness, to ooze juicily at the last round the bearded lips of God, to attempt to impose, I say, laws and conditions appropriate to a mechanical creation, against this I raise my sword-pen - '[23]. By denying Alex the choice of willingly renouncing violence, the authorities are forging 'a mechanical creation', whose name is replaced by prison authentification number 6655321. Once the experiment is reversed, though, Alex renounces his violent phase organically. By yearning for a son, Alex symbolically takes his place in history, becomes a part of a grand narrative and accepts responsibility.

Each of the three parts of the novel is predicated by Alex's favourite question, 'What's it going to be then, eh?'. Throughout the first two parts, though, it is a mock-question, a rhetorical interrogation. Alex does not expect an answer; this is a verbal mannerism he uses to approach his victims. It is the introductory phrase of the bully, to whom whatever the victim is going to reply is going to be intentionally misinterpreted, a mere pretext for physical aggression. This question, alongside music, punctuates Alex's ritualistic immersion into violence. Nadsat, with its repetitions, is part of his mechanical existence. In the rape scene, for instance, Alex tears the manuscript apart 'razrew razreez' while the writers wife is 'creech creech chreech creeching' and the gang laugh 'haw haw haw' at their victims 'bo hoo hoo'-ing. 'Uncle' Alex, while raping the little girls, gets his impetus from 'the old Joy Joy Joy joy joy crashing and howling away'. The repetition of the nadsat words, with their onomatopoeic musicality, echoes the hits and blows inflicted by the droogs. It is as if the music Alex plays in his head when beating and raping drowns and sublimates the horror of his actions. The musicality of nadsat is as manipulative as it is deceptive – from the charming way Alex narrates, it is difficult to associate the gruesome reality of the blood and pain with his lively prose. The Communist jargon lies, but so does the nadsat. Alex's sprees of destruction are remarkably similar to the 'joy-in-spite' principle of Anna Wulf's nightmares. If Anna needs to learn that destruction is the twin of creation, Alex needs to undergo the process in reverse, to start from destruction in order to reach creation, be that in the shape of a son or of a novel.

There are two variants of the clockwork Alex: the first one is inflicted on himself by himself, through his immersion in repetitive violence; the second is inflicted by the state. The last part, however, parallels the preceding two in form only. For the first time, 'What's it going to be ?' is asked in earnest, acquiring an answer after Alex '(…)has understood that history grows out of the cycle of opposing forces and has accepted a similar clash of

[22] George Orwell: 'Politics and the English Language', 1946, http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit, Text source: Orwell Project by O. Dag. — ©1999-2004 www.orwell.ru, p.6

[23] Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p. 18

BDD-A21914 © 2014 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:56:19 UTC)

contradictory urges in his own personality.'[24] Like Anna Wulf, he has internalized his demons, come to realize that violence is part of youth, a necessary stage to be outgrown:

'(…)being like one of those malenky toys you viddy being sold in the streets, like little chellovecks made out of tins and with a spring inside and then a winding handle on the outside and you wind it up grr grr grr and off it itties, like walking, O my brothers. But it itties in a straight line and bangs straight into things bang bang and it cannot help what it is doing. Being young is like being like one of those malenky machines.[25]

The roundness of the fruit is a metaphor, opposing the circle to the line[26], but also, more importantly, the circle to the spherical shape of the orange, bi-dimensionality to three-dimensionality. For both Anna and Alex, whose names significantly start with the first letter of the alphabet, the fusion of the two cycles into a third, synthetic one, coincides with in-depth vision. The tripartite structure of the Burgess' novel, with each division consisting of seven chapters, amounting to a total of 21 - the number associated with the coming of age - seems to endorse this view.

However, to some critics[27], the ABA structure[28] of the novel – borrowed from the aria – is still unredemptive:

When he is born, Alex's son will not be free or blissful. He will be doomed, rather, to live through the error of his father's ways. Here, then, is that final flowering of the novel's structure: after A, B; after B, A again. After the freedom of the mature Alex, the imprisonment of his son. Could Alex somehow liberate his son, the structure of *A Clockwork Orange* would surely have to be ABC, which would signify progress without repetition.[29]

Similarly to *The Golden Notebook*, the structure of the novel cannot be ABC, since the premise of life is repetition: the future generation will inevitably reiterate the mistakes of the forefathers, but this does not necessarily prevent evolution. Freudian interpretations of Alex and F. Alexander establish an Oedipal connection between the two[30], reading Alex as F.(ather) Alexander's symbolic son, the child who needs to kill his parent in order to become him and establish a HOME of his own. Philip Ray points out that there are two authors of a novel entitled *A Clockwork Orange:* F. Alexander and Alex himself, who constantly refers to himself as 'Your Humble Narrator'. Like Anna Wulf, who has overcome breakdown by creating a new novel, Alex, too, becomes a creator. For skeptics who are not convinced by Alex's idyllic visions of baby and loving wife, the fact that he authors a novel can be a persuasive hint towards the authenticity of his maturation.

But perhaps one of Burgess' most disturbing points, by pairing, in Alex, the highest of culture with the lowest of abjection, is that the price of culture is aggression.[31] Lessing's

---

[24] Rubin Rabinovitz, 'Mechanism vs. Organism: Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, (1978/1979) 24:4, p. 540

[25] *C.O.* p. 140

[26] Rabinovitz, p.538.

[27] Rabinovitz compares Burgess to Hegel, but concludes that, unlike the German philosopher, in Burgess's novel 'the changes in one era are undone by a regressive process in the next, so there can be no true historical progress.', p. 540

[28] Philip E. Ray, 'Alex Before and After: A New Approach to Burgess' *AClockwork Orange*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, (1981) 27:3, p.479

[29] Idem, p. 487

[30] Philip E. Ray

[31] As Harry Lime puts it *The Third Man* 'In Italy, for thirty years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, they had five hundred years of democracy and what did that produce ? The cuckoo clock.' *The Third Man,* (Carol Reed, British Lions Films,1949)

BDD-A21914 © 2014 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:56:19 UTC)

epiphany is that multiplicity and unity are not mutually exclusive, since there are several 'truths' or 'realities' equally valid for the many consciousnesses of the world and of the self. Despite multiplicity and repetition, Burgess and Lessing manage to offer a vision of the world that transcends simplistic binaries. Freud's theory of the cyclicality of the life and death drives is especially useful, since both novels, although they start on the premises of disintegration and violence, are ultimately a celebration of organicity and unity. Nothing is disparate, all is interconnected. Both protagonists share a unified vision of life; Anna, during her 'naming' game, is able to see 'the world, a sun-lit ball in the sky, turning and rolling beneath me'[32], while Alex imagines 'old Bog himself (…) turning and turning and turning a vonny grahzny orange in his gigantic rookers'[33]. Being able to see things three-dimensionally rather than bi-dimensonally is proof of having mastered trauma, of having acknowledged and incorporated otherness – an 'other' that is male/destructive in the case of Anna, female/creative for Alex. The structure of these novels is crucial, because it must (and does) adapt perfectly to their content: Saul and Anna's last notebook, the golden one, and the twenty-first chapter of *A Clockwork Orange* reinstate order and sanity, a goal achieved by giving up the clockwork self, i.e. Anna's constant choice of unsuitable partners or Alex's addiction to violence. By brilliantly merging form and content, Lessing and Burgess reconcile culture and anarchy, having Alex and Anna hold the world in the palm of their hand.

Bibliography:

Barnouw, Dagmar, 'Disorderly Company: From *The Golden Notebook* to *The Four-Gated City*', *Contemporary Literature* (1973) 14:4, pp. 491-514

Burgess, Anthony, *A Clockwork Orange* (London: Penguin Books, 2000)

Davis, Todd F. and Womack, Kenneth, "O my brothers": Reading the Anti-Ethics of the Pseudo-Family in Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*', *College Literature* (2002), 29, pp 19-36

Freud, Sigmund, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* The International Psycho-analytic Library, no.4, ed. by Ernest Jones (1922)

Kofman, Sarah, *Freud and Fiction*, translated by Sarah Wykes (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991)

Lessing, Doris, *The Golden Notebook* (London: Harper Perrenial, 2007), p. 557

Marwick, Andrew *The Sixties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Orwell, George, 'Politics and the English Language', 1946, http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit, Text source: Orwell Project by O. Dag. — ©1999-2004 www.orwell.ru, p.6

Rabinovitz, Rubin, 'Mechanism vs. Organism: Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*', *Modern Fiction Studies* (1978/1979) 24:4, pp 538-41

Ray, Philip E., 'Alex Before and After: A New Approach to Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*', *Modern Fiction Studies* (1981) 27:3, pp 479-87

Sage, Lorna, *Doris Lessing*, (London: Methuen, 1983)

Sinfield, Alan, *Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain* (London: The Athlone Press, 1997)

Sprague, Claire, *Rereading Doris Lessing* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987)

Taylor, D.J., *After the War. The Novel and English Society since 1945* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993)

The Third Man, dir. by Carol Reed (British Lion Films, 1949)

[32] *G.N.*, p.481
[33] *C.O.*, p.141

BDD-A21914 © 2014 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:56:19 UTC)