Political Manipulations in Anthony Burgess' Dystopias

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Summary

Although the dystopian thought has been present in the literary tradition of the Western civilization for over two thousand years, not until the second half of the nineteenth century did the dystopian literature become recognized as a significant cultural force. The horrors brought about by the developments of the first half of the twentieth century have additionally reinforced the dystopian perspective on the humankind's potential and have led to the recognition of the dystopian literature as a separate literary genre. The authors of the dystopian fiction challenge the optimism contained in the utopian thought and critically examine the political and social practices of the real-world societies, undertaking thus the role of social critics. In *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed*, Anthony Burgess focuses on the shortcomings of the present-day society, in order to investigate the nature of the relationship between the individual and the society. Insights into this subject matter provided by some of the most influential social critics of the modern times, such as F. Nietzsche, S. Freud, and M. Foucault, only reinforce Burgess' own findings: the society is fundamentally hostile to the individual, since it will resort to any means necessary in order to ensure a predictable and controlled functioning of the societal life. In order to ensure that the citizens will make only those choices that coincide with the common good, the society employs mechanisms of mind manipulation intended to deprive the citizens of their free will. In this collision between the individual and the society, Burgess stands in defence of the individual.

Key words: dystopian literature, social criticism, animosity between the individual and society, free will, mind manipulation

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Introduction

We owe the word utopia to Sir Thomas More, who coined it in 1516. More used the term to name a fictional island with an ideal political system depicted in his book *Libellus uere aureus nec minus salutaris quam festiuus de optimo reip. stat, deque noua Insula Vtopia* (*Concerning the Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia*), which came to be known simply as *Utopia*. While the word utopia is generally interpreted as *outopos* (οὐ + τόπος; not + place), denoting a non-existent place, More actually combined two words that in Greek sound alike, *outopos* and *eutopos*. In the poem 'Six Lines on the Island of Utopia', More refers to Utopia as Eutopia, a place where all is well (εὖ + τόπος; good, well + place), using the play of words to suggest that a perfect place with an ideal society is nowhere to be found. Because of More's pun on the two meanings, *outopos* and *eutopos*, scholars cannot agree whether literary utopia should be defined as depicting a non-existent place, or a non-existent ideal place. Written in Latin, the book was soon translated into German (1524), Italian (1548), French (1550), English (1551), and Dutch (1553). Subsequently, the word utopia entered Western languages and became a standard usage.

Sir Thomas More coined the word utopia and wrote the novel from which the entire genre would develop. Nevertheless, he was hardly the first one to envision a prospect of a society more desirable than the existing one, and to describe it in a form of a literary work. The concept of utopia and its representations in literature have been present for over two thousand years and can easily be found throughout the entire literary tradition of the Western culture, starting from the ancient Greece. Most commonly recognized as the first and the most important utopian writing of the classical world is Plato's *Republic* (*Politeia*), written around 380 BC, a typical Platonic dialogue belonging to his early-to-middle period. In this dialogue, through a set of questions put forward by Socrates, Plato aspires to determine the nature of a just man and the workings of an ideal society. He uses the city-state (polis) as a large-scale picture of the soul. The ideal society described by Plato consists of three classes, each corresponding to one of the three fundamental elements of the soul. These classes are the philosopher-kings (wisdom), the warriors (courage), and the producers (moderation). All individuals in this well-reigned city-state are to be fitted into the profession that suits them the best: the philosopher-king is to create just

laws, the warriors are to make sure the laws are carried out, and producers are to provide for the society's basic needs. As a result, everyone is supposed to be happy and the society is supposed be just.

With *The Republic,* Plato set a pattern which has been followed by succeeding utopian writers to the present day. In fact, there is a lot of Plato in More's work as well, which can, for the most part, be attributed to More's close friendship with the Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus, a central figure of Northern humanism. Humanists were inspired by philosophers and writers of the ancient Greece and Rome and called for the revival of that tradition. Influenced by Humanists' ideals, Sir Thomas More too turned to Plato in search of inspiration, primarily referencing Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* in *Utopia*. In this respect, More's *Utopia* is both the product of More's and the Greek civilization.

The society that More describes in his *Utopia* is authoritarian, hierarchical, and patriarchal, with stern laws and ruthless punishments for those who disobey it. Such society can hardly seem like a perfect one for a twenty-first century reader. Nevertheless, the society of Utopia provides a much better life for its citizens than More's society did. In Utopia no one is rich or poor, everyone is working and sharing equally, living simply and happily, with their demands reduced to minimum. For these reasons, to a sixteenth century reader Utopia did seem like a paradise.

Today best known as one of the major representatives of the literary utopia, *Utopia* is far from being a one-dimensional reading, offering a single interpretation. On the contrary, as Lyman Tower Sargent points out, various interpreters have assigned *Utopia* 'radically different positions, from traditional Roman Catholicism to British imperialism to Marxism' (22). Sargent's explanation for this is that *Utopia* only seems to be straightforward on the surface, but in fact is quite satirical when interpreted correctly. According to him, the generations of readers have failed to recognize its complexity by not reading *Utopia* in Latin. The original *Utopia* has many puns in Latin, starting with the narrator's name, Raphael Hythlodaeus. His first name means 'healer from God', while his last name means 'speaker of non-sense', which makes it difficult for the reader to decide whether the narrator is to be trusted or not. In a similar manner, Sargent continues, the names Utopia, Anydrus, Amaurotum, and Ademus are satirical as they

denote the island that is nowhere, the city that is a phantom, the river that has no water, and a ruler that has no people (23).

Although *Politeia* and *Utopia* are both written in the form of a dialogue, they differ greatly in many respects. While More's society is based on egalitarianism, in Plato's society egalitarianism exists only within the clear-cut classes into which the society is divided. More's family structures are quite traditional, with the household as the smallest social unit. In contrast, Plato advocates abolition of the family, proposing that all women should be shared by all the men, and that all children should be raised by the whole community. The discrepancy between how Plato and More envisioned an ideal society is consistent throughout the genre. The variety found among the literary works classified as utopian goes to such an extent that defining the genre of literary utopia becomes a very difficult task indeed. The diversity in question can be attributed to the fact that a utopian work is always a response to a specific historical setting. An ideal society is always imagined in relation to the existing one, primarily its ills and injustices. Accordingly, utopias are shaped specifically at times of crisis when political or social changes are called for. For example, Plato wrote *Politeia* as a reaction to the disastrous state of legislation and the decline of the traditional moral values in the old Greek polis, which was conditioned by the long years of Peloponnesian wars. Plato's disappointment was primarily induced by the injustice inflicted on Socrates, the man whom Plato regarded as the most just man of his time; Socrates' death sentence had led Plato to pose the question of how life in polis could be changed for the better. More's *Utopia,* written during quite a tumultuous times as well, was an expression of More's discontent with the tensions and the corruption that pervaded the society of the early sixteenth century England.

As utopia represents a political and social alternative to the existing society of the author's own time, utopias inevitably differ from one another depending on aspects such as the historical circumstances within which a literary work is created, as well as the author's own position within these circumstances, that is, his/her social status and personal inclinations. One has to bear in mind that while all utopian authors strive to attain the same end, to propose what constitutes an ideal society, utopian visions still differ from one another in as to what the postulated perfection is. L. T. Sargent comments on this diversity as follows:

> Utopias have been written from every conceivable position: There are socialist, capitalist, monarchical, democratic, anarchist, ecological, feminist, patriarchal, egalitarian, hierarchical, racialist, left-wing, right-wing, reformist, free love, nuclear family, extended family, gay, lesbian, and many more utopias, and all these types were published between 1516 and middle of the 20th century, before diversity really took hold. (21)

However, what all these different works have in common is that they reflect the key issues of the period in which their authors lived. As Sargent notes, while most of these issues are recurrent – law and order, religious belief and practice, economic relations, authority, upbringing and education – their magnitude varies depending on the period in which utopias were written (21).

The lack of distinction between utopia as a literary genre and utopianism as a general category also makes the genre difficult to define. The idea of utopianism is in its common usage often assigned with derogatory connotations. In the common everyday usage, utopianism is related with something imaginary, illusionary, impossible and idealistic. Even the dictionaries often succumb to such common usage and define utopianism as 'a strong belief that everything can be perfect, often in a way that does not seem to be realistic or practical' (*Oxford Dictionary* 7th edition). Contrary to such common usage of the term, utopian scholars see utopia as a legitimate means of articulating humankind's omnipresent and everlasting aspiration for a better world. For that reason, Sargent defines utopianism as 'social dreaming' (5). Within this broad category of utopianism one can differentiate between literary utopia, utopian practice, and utopian social theory.[1]

According to the *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Motifs*, it is generally accepted among scholars that three major characteristics distinguish utopia from other literary forms: 'a utopia is fictional, it deals with a specific unit of society, and its basic theme is the political framework of that unit. Utopias vary in the degree of attention paid to each of these characteristics, but the work that does not pay some attention to all three is probably peripheral to the genre' (2: 1351). Regarding the purpose of utopian fiction, Sargent distinguishes at least six of them: 'it can be a

[1] L. T. Sargent provides a further explication of these terms: utopian practice refers to intentional communities or communes; utopian social theory includes: using utopia as a means of analysis, exploring utopia in relation to ideology as in work of Karl Mannheim, using utopia to explain social change as in work of Ernst Bloch, exploring the role of utopianism in colonialism and post-colonialism, as well as in the debate on globalization and anti globalization, and so on, p. 7

mere fantasy, it can be a description of a desirable or undesirable place, an extrapolation, a warning, an alternative to the present, or a model to be achieved' (8).

The greatest disagreement in defining the literary utopia stems from More's pun on the meanings *outopos* (non-existent place) and *eutopos* (non-existent good place). As a result, two fundamentally different definitions of literary utopia are used by the contemporary scholars. The first definition is provided by Darko Suvin:

> Utopia is the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where socio-political institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis. (qtd. in Sargent 6)

Suvin perceives utopia strictly as *eutopos*, as does another prominent contemporary utopian scholar, Krishan Kumar. Tom Moylan reports that Kumar, in *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (1988), limits the term to a literary genre of fictional depictions of perfect societies exclusively (129). The second definition is provided by L. T. Sargent:

> A non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space. In standard usage utopia is used both as defined here and as an equivalent for eutopia or non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a considerably better than the society in which that reader lived. (6)

Sargent sees utopia as a broader category, as *outopos*, with two possible modes: eutopia as the result of envisioning the humankind's future with hope and dystopia as the result of envisioning the humankind's future with fear (8).

The word dystopia (Greek: δυσ + τόπος; bad, ill + place) denotes a non-existent bad place. The imaginative dystopian society, which according to Karl Meyer, 'serves only as a lens through which every barbarity of our age is magnified' (qtd. in *The Dictionary of Literary Terms and Motifs* 1: 421), has also been referred to as futopia (future and futile) by K. Meyer, cacotopia (κακός + τόπος; bad + place) by Lewis Mumford, negative utopia by Erich Fromm, or, by many, simply anti-utopia. However, the commonly accepted term for scholarly uses became dystopia.

According to *The New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, the word was coined in 1868 by John Stuart Mill, who used it in a speech given before the British House of Commons (2: 607).

Literary dystopia is defined in relation to utopia; hence, depending on whether utopia is understood as *eutopos* or *outopos,* dystopia is to be understood as either a separate genre or a subgenre of utopia. Given that in contemporary literature dystopia is not only a genre separate from utopia, but also the dominant of the two genres, Suvin's definition will be accepted for the purpose of this paper, as it allows for understanding dystopia as utopia's equal counterpart. Therefore, the term utopia will be used from this point on as denoting *eutopos.*

A feature undoubtedly common to all utopias is that they describe an ideal society, one of fulfilment of humankind's hopes and undisturbed happiness. Such works include a firm faith in humankind's abilities, as well as certain optimism that people can better themselves and that a perfect society ultimately can be accomplished. Since this type of optimism is characteristic for the Age of the Enlightenment, M. Keith Booker concludes that in its modern formulation utopia is often seen as an Enlightenment related phenomenon (*Literature* 34).

The Enlightenment movement was intended to enable the humankind to take its destiny into its own hands. Kant saw the Enlightenment as 'man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity' (*An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?* 1). This intended liberation of humankind was based upon a strong confidence in reason and science. The new science brought about new possibilities and encouraged belief in the infinite advancement of knowledge and progress towards both social and moral improvement. Science was believed to have the potential needed to build a better world. Booker notes that the rise of science in the Age of Enlightenment led to an explosion in utopian thought as well (*Literature* 5). The meta-narrative produced by the Enlightenment movement, that would function as an authority discourse, was the dogma of the humankind's continuous emancipation. The dogma in question goes perfectly hand in hand with the notion of utopia, which relies on the premise that continuing improvement of humankind is possible and that it will eventually lead to acquiring perfection. The idea of humankind's continuous betterment, which can be found at the very foundation of both the Enlightenment movement and the utopian thought, was based upon history being perceived as a teleological, unitary process. However, it is precisely such understanding of history that became subjected to

constant criticism by many thinkers of the twentieth century, who have revealed the ideological character of such concept of history. Walter Benjamin, for example, suggests that there is no such thing as a unique and single history, only a certain view of the past, constructed by the dominant social groups in such a way that enables them to remain in power. In 1938 in his work *Theses on the Philosophy of History* Benjamin, influenced by Nietzsche and Marx, argues that history is made up of images of the past offered from different perspectives, without there being a single perspective that could unify all the others; for Benjamin, history is history of the winners. By the second half of the nineteenth century, various thinkers began questioning the notion of history as a smooth and continuous narrative. In *The Transparent Society* (1992), Gianni Vattimo asserts a correlation between the crisis of the idea of history and the crisis of the idea of progress: the Enlightenment dogma of continuous emancipation, progressing towards the form of the modern European man as the postulated perfection, could no longer function when it became impossible to perceive history as a unilinear process. The European ideal of man was exposed as just one among many ideals. European modern science, once perceived as the backbone of humankind's progress and improvement, as liberating, was now exposed as enslaving, as it proved to be the driving force of the European imperialism:

> By the nineteenth century many of the technological achievements predicted by early scientists like Bacon were being realized, but many of these achievements already offered hints that science would not have an entirely emancipatory effect on humanity. Most obviously, the technological advances made possible by the evolution of science contributed to an industrial revolution in Western Europe that made worldwide imperialism a practical reality even as it proved to be anything but liberating for the masses of exploited European workers who suddenly found themselves harnessed to machines in the service of industry. (Booker, *Impulse* 6)

As pointed out by the very first critic of the Enlightenment movement, Friedrich W. Nietzsche, since its beginnings, the Enlightenment movement contained seeds of doubt about the irreproachability of the founding principles it had produced, and an inherent inconsistency that would eventually lead to the collapse of the whole movement. The trouble with the optimism of the Enlightenment was that it had failed to acknowledge the fact that humans are rooted in the world of natural beings, and are capable of far more than the optimism of the Enlightenment

movement would give them credit for. The events of the first half of the twentieth century – 'the threat of nuclear extinction; the rise of the modern totalitarian state; the ecological crisis; the often questionable benefits of technological and social innovations' – reflected that dark side of human nature that the Enlightenment thought chose to overlook (*Dictionary of Literary Terms and Motifs* 1: 421). However, the turning point that had led to the change from the optimism introduced by the Enlightenment to the pessimism of the Modernism, and later even more of the Postmodernism, is for many the World War II, which took place so soon after World War I, often regarded as the war that would stop all wars. According to Jean-François Lyotard, the Enlightenment dogma of the emancipation of humankind was simply no longer possible after horrors such as Auschwitz, a one of a kind historical rupture in humanism (*The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge,* 1979).

Due to these events, it became easier for many to imagine a future much gloomier than that proposed by utopian authors. During the course of the nineteenth century dystopian thought became more recognized as 'an important and identifiable cultural force' (Booker, *Literature* 5). Booker notes that by the second half of the twentieth century the prevailing mood to be found in social criticism and literature alike, was that of a widespread pessimism, and a distrust in the possibility of achieving the utopian dream. He concludes that for a modern sceptic it became 'much easier to visualize nightmares than dreams of the future' (*Impulse* 15).

Although the dystopian fiction did not develop into a separate literary genre until the twentieth century, literary works voicing a distinctive dystopian energy can be traced back to the time of ancient Greece, the period in which the first utopian writings appeared as well. The first dystopian texts are considered to be plays written by Aristophanes, a comedy writer, who wrote satirical responses (*Ecclesiazusae* or *Women in Parliament*, 392 BC; *Plutus* or *Wealth*, 388 BC) to utopian writings of his time, primarily Plato's works. In a similar manner, Jonathan Swift intended the third book of *Gulliver's Travels* (fully titled *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World*, 1726) as a satirical reaction to Francis Bacon's utopia *New Atlantis* (1627). Description of the dystopian society is to be found in Swift's portrayal of the flying city of Laputa, inhabited solely by scientists who seek knowledge that is obviously futile, as they are physically cut off from the land and do not have any desire or opportunity to apply the acquired knowledge. B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948), a utopian novel that describes a small planned

community based on the principles of the behavioural psychology, was intended by its author to be a guidebook to establishing an ideal community. Still, some saw it as a depiction of a totalitarian society, and an incentive to provide a dystopian response, as did Anthony Burgess, who as a result wrote *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). Examples are many, and they all testify to the fact that dystopian fiction is as a rule a reaction to utopian fiction. As there can be fundamental disagreements regarding what constitutes a good or a bad place, whether a literary work is deemed utopian or dystopian is often only a matter of the point of view:

> Dystopia is utopia's polarized mirror image. While utilizing many of the same concepts as utopia – for example, social stability created by authoritarian regimentation – dystopia reads these ideas pessimistically. Dystopia angrily challenges utopia's fundamental assumption of human perfectibility, arguing that humanity's inherent flaws negate the possibility of constructing perfect societies, except for those that are perfectly hellish. (*New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* 2: 606)

According to the *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Motifs,* literary dystopias generally express their authors' disappointment in the promises made by various utopian programs, as well as a concern that, in the name of progress, human condition could be reduced to an absurd existence (1: 422). The condition of a society depicted in dystopian fiction is a consequence of that society's leaders' attempt to implement a utopian scheme. Such efforts, if they lead to success, do so at the cost of dehumanizing citizens. In this respect, the authors of dystopian fiction are most commonly anti-utopian: they believe that even if perfection of a utopia can be achieved, it would be at the cost of diminishing those qualities that constitute a human being – 'creativity, courage, humility, righteous anger, charity, perseverance . . . for these root only in the imperfect man in the imperfect world' (*Dictionary of Literary Terms and Motifs* 1: 422). A perfect world of human beings reduced to 'perfect' mechanical toys turns out to be a dystopia rather than a utopia.

During the nineteenth century utopianism reached its peak. As utopian authors of this period based their blueprints for perfecting the society greatly on science and technology, a recurrent theme to be found in dystopian fiction of that period is accordingly a distrust and animosity to science, which stems from a sobering realization that by conquering nature, science is conquering humankind as well. This hostility is not directed towards scientists or scientific

discoveries, but towards the failure of scientifically based utopias to comprehend and respect the human nature. Dystopian authors, who perceive technology as a source of anxiety, refute the common utopian dream of a golden age in which science and technology will ease humankind's life (*Dictionary of Literary Terms and Motifs* 1: 424). Dystopias show that humankind's obsession with progress actually leads to the dangerous terrain:

> Generally speaking, man's reckless, hubristic, and ignorant pursuit of progress is the founder of most dystopias. Writers of dystopian fiction seem to be saying that if man can do something preposterous and hurtful to himself he will likely do it; they warn us to pause before the treacherous terrain of innovation and resolve which paths must not be taken, what deeds must not be done. (*Dictionary of Literary Terms and Motifs* 1: 429)

While during the nineteenth century literary utopia peaked at its popularity, at the turn of the century, 'as the proud confidence of the nineteenth century crumbled when faced with the horrors of the twentieth' (*New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* 2: 607), the utopian impulse weakened immensely. At the same time, utopia's gloomy counterpart, the dystopian fiction, began developing into a separate literary genre. The most influential dystopian works were written during the first half of the twentieth century: Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1920), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949). These four works have reinforced the dystopian genre as being independent from utopia. During the course of the second half of the twentieth century, events such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and the threat of nuclear extinction, have 'lent strength and scope to the development of dystopian fiction, as horrific events and movements rendered the utopian ideal increasingly absurd and made it possible for dystopias to posit terrible fictive societies' (*New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* 2: 608). The dystopian fiction, during the second half of the twentieth century, ultimately emerged as the dominant out of the two genres.

1. Dystopian literature as a form of social criticism

In *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and a Research Guide,* M. Keith Booker provides a valuable argumentation in support of understanding dystopian literature as primarily a form of social criticism. He begins his explication by asserting that imaginative literature is a great asset to humankind: it enables us to see reality in new ways, always from a fresh and different perspective. Literature offers imaginative visions of the society, to which we can contrast the existent society and its ills, both actual and potential ones. For that reason, imaginative literature represents 'the most important means by which any culture can investigate new ways of defining itself and of exploring alternatives to the social and political status quo' (Booker, *Literature* 3). Such project is most obviously epitomized by utopian literature, which is by definition in a constant search for an ideal society. Since dystopian literature is as a rule a reaction to utopian thought, it necessarily includes a dialogue with the idealism present in utopian literature. Therefore, Booker concludes that dystopian literature is the embodiment of a project that critically examines both the actual condition and the possible abuses that might result from attempting to implement a utopian alternative. In other words, dystopian literature is 'the epitome of literature in its role as social criticism' (*Literature* 3):

> Briefly, dystopian literature is specifically that literature which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism. At the same time, dystopian literature generally also constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems, either through the critical examination of the utopian premises upon which those conditions and systems are based or through the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions. (*Literature* 3)

Booker establishes a kinship between the social criticism present in dystopian literature and the criticism found in the works of modern social and cultural critics, such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Mikhail Bakhtin, Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. He relates this accordance between the trends in literature and social criticism in their joint origins: both developed as a reaction to the omnipresent pessimism

regarding the prospect of achieving the perfect society. Booker references other prominent dystopian scholars in support of his reasoning. Robert C. Elliott likewise asserts that the developments of the twentieth century have caused a widespread distrust of utopian thought: 'To believe in utopia one must have faith of a kind that our history has made nearly inaccessible. This is one major form of the crisis of faith under which Western culture reels' (qtd. in Booker, *Impulse* 15). Mark Hillegas as well finds the modern turn to literary visions of 'the future as nightmare' to be 'one of the most revealing indexes to the anxieties of our age' (qtd. in Booker, *Impulse* 15).

Although the modern social critics and dystopian authors investigate the same specific concerns of real-world societies, they differ in their approach to the subject matter. The advantage of the dystopian fiction lies in its 'ability to illuminate social and political issues from an angle not available to conventional social theorists and critics' (Booker, *Impulse* 174). Booker explicates this advantage as follows: 'By focusing their critiques of society on imaginatively distant settings, dystopian fictions provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable' (*Literature* 4). According to Booker, such defamiliarization is the principal technique of dystopian literature.

In his dystopian novels, Anthony Burgess too employs the technique of defamiliarization – although set in the future, *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) and *The Wanting Seed* (1962) represent 'extensions of present conditions rather than forecasts of future ones' (Morris 56). The observed shortcomings of the real-world society were an incentive for Burgess to write his dystopian novels, in which he investigates the nature of the relationship between the society and the individual. Burgess' protagonists are strong distinctive individuals who attempt to exercise one of the most basic human rights, that of free choice. However, individual liberty is exposed in these works as a mere illusion created by the society in order to ensure that the individuals conduct themselves appropriately within the dictates of societal demands. Burgess warns against the dangers entailed in society's willingness to sacrifice the rights of an individual for the benefit of the social body as a whole: an individual that is deprived of the freedom of choice ceases to be human; such an individual is reduced to a predictable mechanical toy.

Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, and Michel Foucault, each from a different perspective and within a different context, entertained the same issue, analysing the mechanisms that society employs in order to govern its members more easily. Since both the authors of dystopian fiction and the modern social critics address the same issues observed in existing social and political systems, Booker concludes that 'an awareness of the work of such critics is extremely useful for gaining an understanding of the issues at stake in modern dystopian literature' (*Literature* 11). A similar viewpoint can be inferred from Burgess' comment on the literary allusiveness present in his works: 'Any book has behind it all the books that have been written. The author's aware of them; the reader ought to be aware, too' (*The Art of Fiction* 2). Following such reasoning, this paper will highlight those themes found in Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* that have been entertained by the modern social critics as well.

The central concern in both *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* is the conflict between individual freedom and social obedience. Burgess criticizes the tendency of the society to overlook the individual rights and liberties for the sake of the common good. Such criticism strongly resonates with Nietzsche's reflections on the matter. Advocating strong individualism throughout his opus, Nietzsche stresses repeatedly that the society should not exist for the sake of the common good but for the sake of the individual:

> One must renounce the bad taste of wishing to agree with many people. 'Good' is no longer good when one's neighbour takes it into his mouth. And how could there be a 'common good'! The expression contradicts itself; that which can be common is always of small value. In the end things must be as they are and have always been—the great things remain for the great, the abysses for the profound, the delicacies and thrills for the refined, and, to sum up shortly, everything rare for the rare. (*Beyond Good and Evil* 67)

As a part of his 'all-out assault' on the entire tradition of the Western civilization, Nietzsche rejects its fundamental underlying rationale, the notion of linear history. The Judeo-Christian tradition, the Enlightenment movement, and the modern science – the traditions that have shaped the present-day society the most – draw their utopian optimism regarding the prospects of humankind's progress precisely from such understanding of history. As an alternative, Nietzsche proposes a cyclical understanding of history as eternal recurrence. In his dystopian works, Burgess as well entertains the notion of cyclical history. The model envisioned by Burgess,

consisting of three phases engaged in a 'perpetual waltz', has several functions. Firstly, it provides the structure for *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed*. Secondly, it enables Burgess to refute the utopian dream of achieving the perfect society and to reinforce dystopian pessimism according to which progress of the humankind is impossible.

According to Burgess, society is constantly in search of a way 'to destroy the self' in order to 'save man' (Aggeler 184), which makes it fundamentally inimical to the individual. Freud's reflections on the matter led him to reach the same conclusion. Finding the discrepancy between the individual desire and social demand to be insurmountable, Freud asserts that no reform of social institutions or conventions could ever lead to individual's happiness, since the society is not interested in providing happiness for the individual, but security for the entire social body. Foucault as well explores the animosity displayed by the society towards the individual. Concluding that the present-day society is essentially carceral, Foucault asserts that the purpose of the constant surveillance, which all the citizens are subjected to, is to identify those who diverge from the official norm in order to marginalize them and thus provide a group against which the society can define itself.

2. The issues of the contemporary society addressed in Burgess' dystopias

In the second part of his autobiography, *You've Had Your Time* (1990), Burgess explains that the incentive to write *A Clockwork Orange* was a new phenomenon he encountered upon repatriating to Great Britain – the violence of adolescent gangs, which he had a chance to witness first-hand when he and his wife Lynne, during a trip to Hastings, saw Mods and Rockers, two conflicting youth gangs, 'knocking hell out of each other' (26). Burgess recognized in these youths a love of aggression for its own sake, predicting correctly that 'the Queen's Peace was going to be greatly disrupted by the aimless energy of these new young, well-fed with money in their pockets' (*You've Had Your Time* 26). The Mods and the Rockers were seen as such a serious threat to the modern British state that a British politician put forward a proposal suggesting that the troublemaking youths should be conditioned to be good. Such standpoint infuriated Burgess and led him to write a novel that would pose an existential dilemma: 'is it better for an individual to choose to be bad than to be conditioned to be good' (Morrison viii).

In regard to the moral dilemma that *A Clockwork Orange* poses, the novel is to be understood as an indirect response to B. F. Skinner's utopian work *Walden Two* (1948). Skinner, an American psychologist, who, after having carried out experiments on behavioural modifications in animals, believed the same was possible with human subjects. He noted that through such conditioning it would be possible to 'achieve a sort of control under which the controlled, though they are following a code much more scrupulously than was ever the case under the old system, now *feel free'* (qtd. in Morrison xxii). While claiming that the society he proposes in *Walden Two* is intended for the humankind, Skinner makes it clear that the humankind is to be redesigned in order to fit the society he had envisioned. Such scientific manipulation of the individual necessarily implies abolishing the notion of a human being as an autonomous and free agent. Alarming as Skinner's ideas might have been for Burgess, an even greater source of agitation for Burgess were accounts of new behaviourist methods of reforming criminals used in American prisons, intended to limit their freedom of choice to what society deemed good (Aggeler 170). British politicians were considering using those same methods as a means of dealing with the rise of violence of the British youths. Burgess warns us that 'once a society knowingly permits the dehumanizing use of one human being to achieve an end, it has

effectively set in motion a process that must eventually involve all of its members' (Aggeler 180). Believing that 'it is better to have our streets infested with murderous young hoodlums than to deny individual freedom of choice' (qtd. in Booker, *Literature* 95), Burgess intended his new novel to be an affirmation of free will.

The title of the novel is taken from a piece of slang, 'as queer as a clockwork orange', a Cockney expression meaning as queer as possible. Burgess recognized the potential of the expression, feeling that there was a meaning deeper in it than a metaphor of queerness, and decided to use it as a title for a novel, when appropriate story comes along. As it turned out, he had to wait for almost twenty years for that to happen. In his essay 'Clockwork Marmalade', Burgess elaborates on the matter:

> In 1945, back from the army, I heard an 80-year-old Cockney in a London pub say that somebody was 'as queer as a clockwork orange'. The 'queer' did not mean homosexual: it meant mad. The phrase intrigued me with its unlikely fusion of demotic and surrealistic. For nearly twenty years I wanted to use it as the title of something. During those twenty years I heard it several times more – in Underground stations, in pubs, in television plays – but always from aged Cockneys, never from the young. It was a traditional trope, and it asked to entitle a work which combined a concern with tradition and a bizarre technique. The opportunity to use it came when I conceived the notion of writing a novel about brainwashing. Joyce's Stephen Dedalus [in *Ulysses*] refers to the world as an 'oblate orange'; man is a microcosm or little world; he is a growth as organic as a fruit, capable of colour, fragrance and sweetness; to meddle with him, condition him, is to turn him into a mechanical creation. (qtd. in Aggeler 161)

Burgess envisioned *A Clockwork Orange* as depicting a nightmarish near-future society, set in the 1970s. The reader is somehow left with the impression of England being the setting of the novel, although Burgess never specified it. While working on a draft for the novel, Burgess encountered a problem of stylistic nature. The story was to be told by Alex, a young thug of the future, in his own version of English, partly slang of his group, partly his own personal idiolect. Burgess saw no point in writing the novel in the slang of the early sixties, in the language of Mods and Rockers, as by the time the book was published, that slang would be long outdated. As this ephemeral quality of slang vernacular seemed like an insolvable problem, Burgess decided

to put the draft away. A year later, in the summer of 1961, Burgess set about relearning Russian; while doing so, it occurred to him that he had found a solution for the stylistic predicament of *A Clockwork Orange*: 'the vocabulary of my space-age hooligans could be a mixture of Russian and demotic English, seasoned with rhyming slang and gipsy's bolo' (*You've Had Your Time* 37). The name of the teenage dialect would be nadsat, the Russian suffix denoting –teen.

The core of the nadsat language, the ingenious invention of Burgess, is a vocabulary of two hundred or so Russian loanwords. There is nothing random about Burgess' choice of words that make up nadsat – all of them work perfectly well in English, either as poetry or humour (Morrison x). For that reason, although reading the novel does require some puzzle solving, the meaning of nadsat words is often apparent from the context. There is no need to consult a dictionary while reading the book; in fact, Burgess strongly opposed the publisher's suggestion to provide a glossary along with the novel. Burgess intended his book, which had brainwashing as its main focus, to be a brainwashing device itself: by the end of the novel the reader is to be conditioned into learning minimal Russian. Burgess explains that the book was intended as an 'exercise in linguistic programming, with the exoticisms gradually clarified by the context' (*You've Had Your Time* 38).

Burgess chose to draw from Russian language primarily for linguistic reasons, claiming that Russian loanwords fit much better in English, than, for instance, German, Italian, or French. In addition, Burgess appreciated certain limitations of Russian vocabulary, which does not distinguish between leg and foot, using *noga* for both, or between hand and arm, which are alike *ruka*. According to Burgess, these limitations 'would turn my horrible young narrator into a clockwork toy with inarticulated limbs' (*You've Had Your Time* 38). The choice of Russian language conveys certain ironies as well: 'And there was a fine irony in the notion of a teenage race untouched by politics, using totalitarian brutality as an end in itself, equipped with a dialect which drew on the two chief political languages of the age' (*You've Had Your Time* 38). Quite ironically, Dr Branom, whose job is brainwashing, suggests that the nadsat language is the evidence of Russians having brainwashed the revolted youths. Aggeler interprets the Russian based nadsat language as a parody of the Western obsession over the potential influence of Communist propaganda on the capitalist youths (182). According to Sisk, the usage of Russian adds to the dystopian setting of the novel: 'The Russian words do what French or Arabic cannot

accomplish by conveying an atmosphere of oppressiveness, a feeling of curtailed freedom and the fear of a too powerful State' (66).

In his analysis of nadsat, Morrison concludes that in addition to Russian loanwords, nadsat includes often repetitions ('creech creech creeching away'), the Shakespearean and Biblical English ('Oh my father ... Fear not. He canst taketh care of himself, verily'), the abundant use of 'like' ('Then there was like quiet and we were full of like hate.'), and coinages derived from slang (*cancers* are cigarettes, *pretty polly* is money) (x). Nadsat is infused with ambiguity, as Burgess believed the more layers of meaning, the better. As an example of how a variety of possible readings can be assigned to a single word, Aggeler analyses *rabbit*, nadsat word for 'work' (171). The word owes something to Russian *rabotat* meaning 'working', but also suggests Slavic *rab*, meaning 'slave'; it also carries equally echoes of English words *robot*, 'mechanical slave', and *rabbit*, suggesting someone who is habitually meek and scared. All these connotations contained in nadsat word for 'work' reflect Alex's attitude towards adults; although there is a law that compels 'everybody not a child nor with child nor ill to go out rabbiting'(*CO* 28), Alex considers one who does so to be as spiritless as a robot, a compliant slave.

The structural and the moral integrity of the novel is just as carefully constructed as the nadsat language. To begin with, the novel is divided into three sections, through which, as Robert K. Morris puts it, Alex is damned, purged, and resurrected. Morris interprets this tripartite structure as a reference to the falling-rising pattern of comedy or the rising-falling pattern of tragedy (57). Furthermore, each section consists of seven chapters, which is an implicit reference to Shakespeare's seven ages of man. The total number of chapters rounds up to twenty one, representing thus a symbol of one's official coming of age. The twenty first chapter, in which Alex puts his violent past behind him as an act of maturity, completes not only the structural integrity of the novel, but its moral integrity as well. Burgess saw no point in writing a novel that did not allow for the moral growth.

The society of *A Clockwork Orange* is dealing with 'a youth culture in revolt, a corrupt police force, a government unable to govern' (Morrison viii). The mayhem of the adolescent aggression eventually reaches such a peak that the government resolves to put an end to it by means of Pavlovian techniques of negative reinforcement. The above mentioned moral dilemma, whether an evil human being with free will is preferable to a good zombie without it, is spelled

out by Burgess at several points in the novel. These are specified by Robert K. Morris: a note of caution is sounded by a prison chaplain on two occasions, and on one occasion by F. Alexander, an advocate of the right of moral choice (66-67):

> The question is whether a technique can really make a man good. Goodness comes from within, 6655321. Goodness is something chosen. When a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man. (*CO* 63)

> It may not be nice to be good, little 6655321. It may be horrible to be good. . . . Does God want goodness or the choice of goodness? Is a man who chooses the bad perhaps in some ways better than a man who has the good imposed upon him? . . . A terrible terrible thing to consider. And yet, in a sense, in choosing to be deprived of the ability to make an ethical choice, you have in a sense really chosen the good. (*CO* 71)

> You've sinned, I suppose, but your punishment has been out of all proportion. They have turned you into something other than a human being. You have no power of choice any longer. You are committed to socially acceptable acts, a little machine capable only of good. . . . But the essential intention is the real sin. A man who cannot choose ceases to be a man. (*CO* 115)

Robert K. Morris argues that Burgess wishes to sharpen our awareness of the matter, by issuing a warning: 'In a perfect society that has sapped our vitality for constructive choice, we are, whether choosing good or evil, zombies of one sort or another: each of us is a little clockwork orange making up the whole of one great clockwork orange' (67).

In *You've Had Your Time*, Burgess testifies that a folksong that has phrase 'wanting seed' in its refrain served him as an inspiration for the title of *The Wanting Seed*. With the seed representing semen, Burgess deemed the song in question to be overtly erotic and the expression to be adequate for the novel that was to deal with the effects of humankind's inability to restrain its reproduction urges (32). Burgess explains that he decided to deal with this subject matter influenced by the years spent living in the 'pullulating East'. An additional incentive was the work of Thomas Malthus, which Burgess was re-reading for the purpose of writing a study for an American journal (*You've Had Your Time* 33). Thomas Malthus, a prominent scholar of the

eighteenth century, did not share the optimism of his contemporaries, who believed in the possibility of uninhibited development of the humankind that would lead to the establishment of utopian society. Mathus claimed that such continuous progress would be precluded by the dangers entailed in the population growth. A clearly dystopian view of humankind as incorrigible and non-perfectible that is present in Malthus' reflections is a starting point for Burgess as well.

The future England described in the novel – 'a peaceful world that had forgotten the arts of self-destruction' (*WS* 61) – can pride itself on many achievements, such as the abolition of war and usage of scientific discoveries to better the life of the humankind: 'we learned to predict earthquakes and conquer floods; we irrigated desert places and made the ice-caps blossom like a rose' (*WS* 112). Although it appears that the humankind proved capable of conquering the nature, it is still incapable of restraining its most basic urges. Aggeler observes that the sardine-can society envisioned by Burgess is brought about by 'man's failure to deal realistically or responsibly with the main problem, which is his own procreative instinct' (163). The overpopulation is the problem of the whole world, which no longer knows division into countries on the basis of ethnicity. The world of *The Wanting Seed* is organized into language groups. The three superpowers, English, Russian, and Chinese Speaking Unions (Enspun, Ruspun and Chinspun), deal with the problem as each sees fit. Stricter Ruspun and Chinspun apply the death penalty for the citizens who violate the family regulations laws. Enspun, with England as its core, is more liberal and lax. Reflecting on *The Wanting Seed* in his autobiography, Burgess acknowledges that he should not have chosen England as the setting for the novel that deals with population explosion, and that a more suitable choice would have been Calcutta or Bombay. Nevertheless, Burgess notes that this novel is 'hypothetical fiction, and it was in order to import starvation from Africa and statutory family planning from China' (*You've Had Your Time* 33).

The desperate government of *The Wanting Seed* resorts to desperate measures in order to put an end to the population growth: firstly, it promotes non-productive forms of sexual activity with the aim of reducing the birth-rate; secondly, it reinstates war in order to cleanse the society from those citizens who are not contributing to the common good. By entertaining possible solutions to the problem of a demographic catastrophe, Burgess criticizes the present-day society and its willingness to make any sacrifice necessary in order to satisfy the societal demands. The

sacrifices made by the citizens of *The Wanting Seed* include accepting the imposed inversion of the sexual norms and accepting to wage a war that is an end in itself.

While acknowledging that social norms regulating human sexual behaviour are flexible and 'in a state of constant metamorphosis' (Aggeler 165), Burgess nevertheless ridicules a trend he had observed among his contemporaries, that of a liberal sympathy towards the homosexuals. When asked whether he saw homosexuality as a metaphor for 'the absurdity and grotesqueness of the modern world', Burgess replied: 'The manner in which homosexuality is on the increase: I mean, it's actually fostered. It's not purely biological thing; it's fast becoming very interesting, very glamorous to be a homosexual, a kind of radical chic' (Ingersoll, Earl G., and Mary C. Ingersoll, eds. 132). His treatment of the matter of human sexuality in *The Wanting Seed*, a novel that depicts a society in which homosexuality is the desirable norm, while the heterosexuals are discriminated against, has earned Burgess frequent accusations of being homophobic.

Considering the conflicts that took place during the mid-twentieth century, such as The Second World War or the Korean War, it is no wonder that in the early nineteen-sixties Burgess would reflect on the issue of war. A big part of *The Wanting Seed* is a condemnation of war and of the society that has come to terms with perceiving war as 'ordinary, as necessary, as giving a sense of mythic identity, of national cohesion, supporting the military-industrial complex so necessary to global capitalism' (Waterman 6):

> 'By "they" we mean the people who get fat through making ships and uniforms and rifles. Make them and destroy them and make them again. Go on doing it for ever and ever. They're the people who make the wars. Patriotism, honour, glory, defence of freedom – a load of balls, that's what it is. The end of war is the means of war. And *we* are all the enemy.' 'Whose enemy?' 'Our own. You mark my words. We shan't be alive to see it, but we're in now for an endless war – endless because the civilian population won't be involved, because the war will be conveniently far away from civilization. Civilians love war.' 'Only', said Tristram, 'presumably, so long as they can go on being civilians.' (*WS* 233)

3. The notion of cyclical history

Friedrich W. Nietzsche, one of the single most influential philosophers of the modern age, was the first one to question the self-confidence of the entire Western civilization. Throughout his entire opus, he consistently rejects the two traditions that have shaped the Western civilization the most: firstly, the Judeo-Christian tradition, and secondly, the rationalist tradition that had originated in the ancient Greece and had found a new authority in the scientific revolution of the Enlightenment Age. For Nietzsche, Christianity and modern science, the two prominent authority discourses in the Western tradition, are more alike than different. They both have a tendency to propose one-dimensional interpretations of the infinitely complex and extraordinary nature of the world, thus confining the individual within a limited field (Booker, *Literature* 36). Since both of these traditions rely heavily on a linear perception of history, in his determined assault on the legacy of the Western civilization, Nietzsche questions precisely the basic underlying rationale that the Western civilization was founded on – the notion of history as a continuing emancipation and progress of the humankind. Instead, Nietzsche proposes a cyclical model of history as eternal recurrence, according to which history is bound to repeat itself endlessly across infinite time. This model suggests that progress on a big scale is impossible. Although moving forward, due to the cyclical nature of history, the humankind is always inevitably brought back to its starting point. Such notion of history incorporates a pessimism that is characteristic for dystopian fiction. As Booker observes, precisely Christianity and modern science are two principal sources of utopian energy in the Western culture (*Literature* 34). Therefore, Nietzsche's abandonment of the faith in progress and reason marks the transition from utopian to dystopian energy as the dominant mode in the modern literature as well.

Influenced by Nietzsche, Michel Foucault as well challenges the conventional concept of history seen as a unilinear process developing along a single path with no deviations. On the contrary, he suggests that history is to be understood as a perpetual change that unfolds in a cycle of radical jumps between essentially different modes of thought (Booker, *Literature* 24).

Anthony Burgess too rejects a linear understanding of history and entertains an alternative concept – a cyclical model, as found in the social criticism of Nietzsche and Foucault.

The philosophical phases that make up the 'perpetual waltz' of the cycle envisioned by Burgess are the Pelagian phase, the Augustinian phase, and the Interphase. This concept of cyclical history functions as a backbone of both Burgess' dystopian novels – the unfolding of the phases of the cycle matches the development of the protagonists 'as their lives crisscross in the alternating historic cycles' (Morris 61). The tripartite structure of *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed,* far more clear-cut and explicit in the former than in the latter, is thus a reflection of the tripartite structure of Burgess' cyclical model of history.

Robert K. Morris explains that this 'philosophic rationale' enables Burgess to trace down the origins of liberalism and conservatism in the Western culture, only to provide criticism of both (61). The optimism of the liberalism that trusts humankind to be fundamentally good and perfectible is, according to Burgess, derived from the Pelagian denial of the original sin. The pessimism of the conservative thinking and its insistence on humanity as basically sinful is derived from Augustinian denial of the Pelagian doctrine.

Aggeler traces the beginning of the 'seminal debate' to the fourth century, and elaborates in more detail on its origins (159 – 162). Augustine and Pelagius, 'the venerable bishop-saint and the heretic monk' (Morris 62), clashed over the issue of free will, each proposing a different interpretation of the original sin and divine grace. According to Augustine, the human nature is corrupt as a result of the original sin: humankind lacks goodness and freedom ever since voluntarily choosing to abandon the prelapsarian state of innocence. Therefore, it is impossible for any individual to lead a virtuous life without the interference of the divine grace. While Augustine taught that the original sin had left mark on the whole humankind, as it is 'transmitted from parents to children throughout all generations through the sexual act (which, inevitably accompanied by lust, is sinful)', Pelagius taught that 'sin is continued in humankind only by force of habit, as it is a result of following the bad example of Adam' (Morris 62). Pelagius rejected the orthodox doctrine of the original sin, proposing that 'everything good and everything evil, is done by us, not born with us' (qtd. in Aggeler 159). He disputed the necessity of the divine grace arguing that an individual can earn salvation by exercising free will in a morally responsible way.

Aggeler observes that the fundamental issue in the debate is that of the human nature, concluding that 'the diametrically opposed assumptions of Augustine and Pelagius could be

taken as premises of diametrically opposed political philosophies as well as attitudes toward social progress as far removed as hope and despair' (161). The same is explained by Tristram Foxe, the protagonist of *The Wanting Seed*:

> He denied the doctrine of Original Sin and said that man was capable of working out his own salvation ... What you have to remember is that all this suggests human perfectibility. Pelagianism was thus seen to be at the heart of liberalism and its derived doctrines, especially Socialism and Communism ... Augustine on the other hand, had insisted on man's inherent sinfulness and the need for his redemption through divine grace. This was seen to be at the bottom of Conservatism and other laissez-faire and non-progressive political beliefs. (*WS* 10)

Pelagius' confident outlook on the potential of the humankind supports the belief that the fundamental goodness in people will inevitably guide them to achieve desirable social goals. According to Aggeler (162), stripped down of theology, Pelagianism becomes Rousseauvism, i.e. liberalism. On the other hand, Augustinianism incorporates a lack of confidence in human nature and a perception of an individual as 'an uncooperative and selfish creature, not much concerned about the progress of the community' (*WS* 11). Therefore, Aggeler continues, Augustinianism without theology is Hobbism, i.e. conservatism. Aside from Rousseau and Hobbes, as representatives of Pelagian and Augustinian principles respectively, many more scholars have contributed to the debate throughout the history. Aggeler names some of the most notable spokesmen of both the Augustinian and the Pelagian doctrine. The former group includes Luther, Calvin, Jansen, Pascal, Racine, Hobbes, and Swift, while the latter group includes Shaftesbury, Hume, Rousseau, Jefferson, Marx, Hegel, John Stuart Mill, Edward Bellamy, and majority of English and German romantic poets (161).

While the nature of the cycle can only be inferred from *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Wanting Seed* offers the most comprehensive and the most explicit elaboration of Burgess' model of history perceived as a cyclical oscillation between Pelagianism and Augustinianism. The course of the cycle is presented to the reader by Tristram Foxe, a historian and a protagonist of *The Wanting Seed.* Tristram's explication of the cycle conveniently starts with Pelagianism, since both *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* open with a depiction of a society undergoing a Pelagian phase. Benevolent Pelagians are guided by the belief that human nature is

perfectible, that the humankind strives to be perfect, and that that perfection can be attained by the efforts of the individuals:

> The citizens of a community want to co-operate with their rulers, and so there is no real need to have devices of coercion, sanctions which will force them to co-operate. ... Laws point the way to an emergent pattern of social perfection – they are guides. But because of the fundamental thesis that the citizen's desire is to behave like a good social animal, not like a selfish beast of the waste wood, it is assumed that the laws will be obeyed. Thus, the Pelagian state does not think it necessary to erect an elaborate punitive apparatus. (*WS* 17 – 18)

The blind trust in 'la volonté générale' (Aggeler 163) demonstrated by the Pelagian government proves to be overbearing for the citizens, who, having their freedom of choice acknowledged, choose extreme violence, as the nadsat youths do in *A Clockwork Orange*, or irresponsible procreation, as do the citizens in *The Wanting Seed*. Faced with 'compelling evidence that people are more selfish than the official credo dictates they should be' (Aggeler 165), the governors react with disappointment and resolve to force the citizens into being good: 'Disappointment opens up a vista of chaos. There is irrationality, there is panic. When the reason goes, the brute steps in. Brutality! ... Beatings-up. Secret police ... And all this because of disappointment. The Interphase' (*WS* 19). The pattern is to be observed both in *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed*. Thugs – the nadsat youths in the former novel and the brutish 'greyboys' in the latter – are recruited into the police force in order to intimidate the citizens into obedience. As the Interphase progresses, the governors become taken aback by the excess of their reaction. They realize that they were misguided by 'thinking in heretical terms – the sinfulness of man rather than his inherent goodness' (*WS* 23). In effect, the government relaxes its sanctions, causing thus an utter chaos.

Unlike the disappointed Pelagians, the Augustinians find a 'gloomy pleasure in observing the depths to which human behaviour can sink' (*WS* 11). The Augustinians interpret the corrupt behaviour of the citizens as a confirmation of their conviction that the humankind is essentially sinful. They restore order, form a new government, and deal with social problems in accordance with their own understanding of human nature. As opposed to the liberal Pelagians, the brutal Augustinians, who expect no good from the humankind, do not concern themselves with the

individual rights or liberty. Instead, the Augustinian government seeks to provide stability for the society. As a way of ensuring that the choices of the individuals do not diverge from the societal demands, the Augustinian government in *A Clockwork Orange* employs behaviouristic engineering, while the one in *The Wanting Seed* implements a large-scale war of the sexes as a 'drainage system'. Witnessing the compliance displayed by the citizens, who are left with no choice other than to follow the rules of society, the governors acknowledge the possibility that people are perfectible. A new optimism thus emerges, which will eventually lead to the establishment of a new Pelagian phase.

The nature of the 'perpetual waltz' envisioned by Burgess is intriguing in the context of the opposition between utopian and dystopian thought, since Pelagianism is essentially utopian and Augustinianism is essentially dystopian. Burgess' model of history may incorporate both the optimistic and the pessimistic phase; nevertheless, it is fundamentally dystopian. Firstly, since it is cyclical, Burgess' model refutes the utopian faith in progress that is based on a linear understanding of human history. Secondly, observing the workings of the society across a complete course of the cycle enables Burgess to assert that the society is essentially hostile to the individual. Regardless of whether it is governed by 'the Pelagian preoccupation with the tradition of liberty and the dignity of man' or by 'the Augustinian preoccupation with stability', the society does not hesitate to 'make any sacrifice for the good of man worthwhile, including the destruction of man himself' (Aggeler 178).

4. Societal marginalization of the individuals who differ from the official norm

In *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), Nietzsche differentiates between two types of morality – master and slave morality. According to Nietzsche, the struggle between masters and slaves recurs throughout the history; therefore, to understand the idea of master-slave morality means to have the key to understanding the whole Western civilisation. On the one hand, master morality promotes nobility, pride, strength, open-mindedness, and straightforwardness. On the other hand, slave morality esteems exact opposites: weakness, compassion, meekness, and empathy. Master morality is the morality of the strong-willed, morality of sentiment. While masters were the ones to create morality, slaves only respond to it, with their own, slave morality. Slave-morality is thus a reaction to oppression; it is resentment – pessimistic and sceptical.

Nietzsche rails against Christianity because it has enabled the triumph of slaves over masters – he interprets the Biblical teachings of turning the other cheek, of meekness, charity, and compassion as intended to spread the predicament of the slave onto the whole humankind. The victory achieved by Christianity, of mediocrity over individualism, was consolidated even deeper into the tradition of the Western culture by the Enlightenment movement. Much of the Enlightenment movement was governed by the principles of egalitarianism, which promotes the belief that everyone is born with equal abilities and capacities and deserves equal opportunities. Nietzsche criticized such egalitarianism, claiming that there is a fundamental difference between those people who affirm life – the master-type, and those who deny life – the slave-type. Consequently, according to Nietzsche, any act of levelling out the society members is an act of violence against the human nature, since it forces the strong exceptional individuals to adjust to the mass of mediocrity. In other words, for Nietzsche, the advancement of democracy that took place during the Age of Enlightenment represents a collective relapse of humankind. Nietzsche asserts that the traditions that have shaped the Western civilization the most – the Judeo-Christian tradition and democracy that ensued form the Enlightenment movement – favour the slave morality.

A society that relies on the principles of the slave morality discourages any attempt of the exceptional individuals to distinguish themselves from 'the herd', a term Nietzsche uses to refer to common people who share the same mass psychology and are content with mediocrity; such master-type individuals are bound to be treated as outcasts. Influenced by Nietzsche, Freud and Foucault as well reflected on the causes of marginalization of the individuals who differ from the official norm. According to Freud, the society uses these individuals as scapegoats – they represent an outlet for the law-abiding citizens to manifest their aggression. In its collective aggression directed against the isolated individuals, 'the herd' is made even more compact: 'It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness' (61). Foucault as well finds that the individuals who slightly differ from the official norm are exploited by the society – these individuals are excluded from the societal life, so that the society could define itself against such marginal group by exclusion (Booker, *Literature* 26). A similar fate awaits the protagonists of *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed.*

Alex is the fifteen-year-old protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange*, appallingly ferocious and consciously evil, nonetheless innocently likable. Instead of keeping him at a safe distance, Burgess allows Alex to be the one to tell his story. Alex presents himself as 'Your Humble and Suffering Narrator', and intimates and allies closely with the readers, whom he addresses as his 'brothers and only friends'. As the narrator, he manages to distinguish himself vividly from the society he despises. The same society is trying to cope with adolescent violence as its major problem, Alex being the infamous embodiment of that phenomenon: 'Everybody knows little Alex and his droogs. Quite a famous young boy Alex has become' (*CO* 50). An undisputed leader of his friends in violence, Alex displays a solemn commitment to violence. 'Too brutal to be wholly sympathetic and too strong to be a victim', nonetheless, 'like many a rebel-hero, he exudes diabolic charm' (Morrison xii).

Possible interpretations of Alex's name are numerous. Standing for either Alexander or Aleksei, it could equally suggest either English or Russian identity. If interpreted as Alexander, our protagonist is 'the defender of men', quite ironically as almost each of his interactions with others is an extortion of some sort of violence. On the other hand, he is a defender of what is human, in a sense that he epitomizes one of the most fundamental of human rights, that of the

freedom of choice. Further on, the combination of the negative prefix 'a' with the word 'lex', suggests at the same time lawlessness and wordlessness. While the notion of an absence of law is easily recognizable in Alex's behaviour, the notion of a lack of words is far more subtle and harder to comprehend. Alex seems to be a competent narrator, 'whether he happens to be snarling at his droogs in nadsat or respectfully addressing his elders in Russianless English' (Aggeler 173). Geoffrey Aggeler elaborates on the matter:

> He is articulate but 'wordless' in that he apprehends life directly, without the mediation of words. Unlike the characters who seek to control him and the rest of the society, he makes no attempt to explain or justify his actions in terms of abstract ideals or goals such as 'liberty' or 'stability'. Nor does he attempt to define any sort of role for himself within a large social process. Instead, he simply experiences life directly, sensuously, and, while he is free, joyously. (173)

His direct, unmediated, and unpremeditated experience of life is one respect in which Alex differs from the rest of the society. Alex sees no point in reflecting on one's actions in terms of causes or consequences, since he acknowledges that both goodness and evil are natural parts of every human being; each individual, as an autonomous agent, is to choose between good and evil. Alex is aware that the society wishes to deprive its citizens of freedom of choice, since free will implies the possibility of citizens making choices that do not concur with what is considered to be common good. By depriving individuals of free will, the state deprives them of 'the self', of what constitutes being a human being:

> But, brothers, this biting of their toe-nails over what is the *cause* of badness is what turns me into a fine laughing malchick. They don't go into the cause of *goodness*, so why the other shop? If lewdies are good that's because they like it, and I wouldn't ever interfere with their pleasures, and so of the other shop. And I was patronizing the other shop. More, badness is of the self, the one, the you or me on our oddy knockies, and that self is made by old Bog or God and is his great pride and radosty. But the not-self cannot have the bad, meaning they of the government and the judges and the schools cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self. And is it not our modern history, my brothers, the story of brave malenky selves fighting these big machines? I am serious with you, brothers, over this. But what I do I do because I like to do. (*CO* 31)

What intensifies Alex's experience of life the most are the pleasures of music and violence. These are inseparably interrelated for Alex, who finds the same ecstasy in committing the acts of violence, as he does in listening to classical music. Alex is a passionate devotee of classical music such as Beethoven's, Bach's, and Mozart's. As noticed by Morrison, the motif of music serves Burgess, a composer and a musician himself, to address the issue of whether high art is civilizing (xiii). At the time when Burgess was writing *A Clockwork Orange* there was an ongoing public discussion concerning the fact that men who ran Auschwitz read Shakespeare and Goethe and listened to Beethoven and Bach. Alex as well addresses the issue:

> I had to have a smeck, though, thinking of what I'd viddied once in one of these like articles on Modern Youth, about how Modern Youth would be better off if A Lively Appreciation of the Arts could be like encouraged. Great Music, it said, and Great Poetry would like quieten Modern Youth down and make Modern Youth more Civilized. Civilized my syphilised yarbles. Music always sort of sharpened me up, o my brothers, and made me feel like old Bog himself, ready to make with the old donner and blitzen and have vecks and ptitsas creeching away in my ha ha power. (*CO* 32)

Although Alex mocks the notion of art being humanizing, his love of classical music distinguishes him from his enemies. Unlike Alex, his enemies demonstrate a lack of good taste. Dr Brodsky, the government psychologist, chooses Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to accompany a documentary on Nazis shown to Alex during his conditioning treatments. Alex is thus conditioned into relating classical music with violence, both of which as a result become a source of nausea and physical pain for him. The opposing liberals are no better either, since they also use classical music to torture Alex and force him to attempt suicide.

Beethoven's Ninth becomes a dominant motif throughout the novel. Robert K. Morris explains that it is no coincidence that Alex's favourite piece of music is precisely 'the glorious Ninth of Ludwig van' (*CO* 132), considering that this symphony was deemed ugly by the rigorous harmonic standards of Beethoven's contemporaries, as it is rich in dissonances:

> Alex's language is, in its way, ugly, too; but place it alongside the bland and vapid professional or everyday language of the doctors and warders and chaplains and hear how hollow their language rings. Burgess was out to show how sterile and devitalized

> language could become without a continuing dynamics behind it; how, in fact, the juice had been squeezed from it; and how, contrarily, Alex emerges as something of a poet, singing dithyrambs to violence, but revealing through the terrifying beauty of his speech the naked beauty of an uninhibited psyche. (69 – 70)

The language that Alex uses is yet another feature that distinguishes him from the mainstream society. The nadsat language has several functions. Firstly, as already discussed, it acts as a brainwashing device. Secondly, it serves to disguise the actual content of Alex's narration and distance the reader from the horrors being told. For charming as Alex may be, his narration is a sequence of one violent incident after another, such as beatings, rapes, and murders. Burgess could not allow for any undermining of Alex's role as the protagonist of the novel and the symbol of freedom of choice. The musical and poetical quality of nadsat language is meant to distract the reader from the fact that the language Alex uses is undeniably related with the 'ideology of hatred and violence' (Booker, *Literature* 98): 'As there was much violence in the draft smouldering in my drawer, and would be even more in the finished work, the strange new lingo would act a as kind of mist half-hiding the mayhem and protecting the reader from his own bear instincts' (*You've Had Your Time* 38). The narration is most vivid, with the colourful expressions and musical rhythms of nadsat at their best, precisely when Alex speaks of violence. Morris concludes that 'the ferocious and coarse, partly archaic, partly mod, neologic nadsat captures perfectly the violence and pace of incidents' (57), while the use of the conventional English is adequate enough for relating incidents of Alex being brainwashed and stripped of personality.

Lastly, the nadsat language serves to interpret Alex's position within the society. Any language is social by its nature, and is used by an entire group. Likewise, nadsat is used by the entire body of youths, referred to as nadsats. Booker interprets the usage of the nadsat language as an act of linguistic rebellion – by rejecting the official language of the society, nadsats reject the official ideology of that society as well (*Literature* 95). Nadsat, spoken only by a group of youths, strengthens the feeling of solidarity among the group members and unifies them in their resistance to the official authority. In this opposition between the revolted youths and the ordinary citizens, youths gain a significant advantage through the use of nadsat. While the ordinary citizens do not understand nadsat, Alex understands the conventional English perfectly

well, and is able to use it when circumstances require him to do so; as he notes, 'I always used my gentleman's goloss govoreeting with those on top' (*CO* 62). This also testifies to the imaginative supremacy of Alex and the rest of the nadsat youths over the adults, who in return demonstrate a lack of imagination and linguistic flexibility by not understanding nadsat (Booker, *Literature* 97).

Nevertheless, as Booker points out, the nadsat language alienates the youths from the society (*Literature* 97). The greater the distance between them and the ordinary citizens, the easier it is for nadsat youths to extort violence and justify the crimes they commit. Likewise, since these youths do not even speak their language, the conventional English, it is easier for ordinary citizens to regard nadsats as not being part of their society, and for the authorities to rationalize, though equally brutal, still legal reactions to the cruel acts of violence of the nadsat youths. While 'using their own language may increase the marginality of the nadsats to the society in which they live', Booker concludes that 'it does not make them entirely independent of that society' (*Literature* 97). In the end, acknowledging the authority of the mainstream society or not, the nadsat youths still have to answer for their actions, as Alex ultimately does.

What distinguishes Alex the most from the rest of the social body is his understanding of the workings of the society. He recognizes the intentions of 'the State' to numb its citizens into compliance in order to ensure that the citizens will take on which ever the role the society has intended for them. Alex refuses to be subjected to such manipulations. The protagonists of *The Wanting Seed* as well demonstrate a capacity to identify the mechanisms of manipulation employed by the society. They possess an awareness of the cyclical nature of history and of the arbitrariness of the norms that regulate societal life. On the one hand, spouses Tristram and Beatrice-Joanna Foxe refuse to accept the way in which the society exploits this arbitrariness to reshape the lives of its citizens in accordance with the societal demands. On the other hand, Derek Foxe accepts the norms imposed by the society without questioning them. While Derek thrives, Tristram and Beatrice-Joanna are forced to struggle for their very existence. Waterman interprets the fate of the three protagonists of *The Wanting Seed* as follows: 'Burgess seems to be presenting a sort of pessimistic cultural evolution, where the survivors are those who are best able to adapt to a society in constant transition, without asking themselves too many questions' (4).

Derek Foxe, ‘a consummate Machiavellian bureaucrat’ (Aggeler 168), is preoccupied solely with advancing his career. During the Pelagian phase, Derek accepts the official sexual norms and, although he is heterosexual, he demonstrates ‘the perfect mime of orthodox homosexual behaviour’ (Waterman 3). Derek’s flawless performance earns him a major promotion within the Ministry of Infertility; he becomes the Metropolitan Commissioner of the Population Police (the Poppol). During the Augustinian phase, when heterosexuality becomes a prerequisite for officials to advance their career within the Ministry of Fertility, Derek adjusts once again; he sheds the mask of being homosexual and starts a family with Beatrice-Joanna. Derek understands the cyclical nature of history and, due to his ability to adapt to the requirements of every phase of the cycle, he thrives during each phase. As Beatrice-Joanna observes, Derek is ‘not the sort of man who would let himself be ruined’ (*WS* 21). In the society that requires its citizens to abandon their ideals and to shape their behaviour and convictions in accordance with what the society deems desirable, Derek does only what is necessary to survive.

Unlike Derek, Tristram is unable to utilize his knowledge to his own advantage. Aggeler infers an irony from the fact that while Tristram is a historian and has the most complete comprehension of the cycles in which history progresses, he nevertheless remains helpless and unable to control his own destiny:

> In one sense, he does illustrate the idea of Marx and Hegel that man's freedom depends upon, indeed consists in, his awareness of some inevitable historic process. In another, he contradicts these great Pelagians who saw in ‘man's’ growing awareness cause for optimism. Tristram's awareness, which is large to begin with and increases considerably, gives neither him nor us much cause for optimism since it leads him only to foresee endless repetitions of the cycle and no static millennium. (168)

Another irony is implied in Tristram’s given name, that of the ‘nonheroic quality of this future age’ (Aggeler 167). Aggeler compares Tristram Foxe to ‘Tristram of the old’, concluding that the irony lies in the diametrically opposed fortunes of the two:

> Like Tristram of old, he embarks on a quest that carries him throughout much of England, but there the resemblance ends. Instead of cuckolding his uncle, he is himself cuckolded by his brother. Instead of hacking and thrusting his way to immortal martial

> glory, he has the distinction of being the only soldier to escape an extermination session and entombment as canned meat' (167 – 168).

Tristram's misfortune is a result of his unwillingness to adapt to the societal demands. For instance, Tristram finds the sexual norms imposed by the Pelagian government to be unnatural, which holds him back in his professional life. Tristram was in line for a promotion to the chair of the History Department in the school where he teaches, but he is deemed not suitable for the job because he is heterosexual. The school principal stresses that, although getting married and having children is not against the law, 'The best people just don't. Just don't' (*WS* 30). Candidates considered more suited for the position are those who comply with the new sexual norm: 'Wiltshire's homo. Cruttenden's unmarried. Cowell's married with one kid, so he's out. Crum-Ewing's gone the whole hog, he's a *castrato*, a pretty strong candidate. Fiddian's just nothing. Ralph's homo –' (*WS* 31).

Tristram's fortune does not change with the change of the government. The Augustinian government orchestrates a large scale war in order to fight the issues of overpopulation and of hunger. Tristram realizes that the war they are about to wage is a theatrical war, with no real enemy. Since intellect and sound judgement are not the qualities the society of *The Wanting Seed* esteems in an individual, Tristram is sent off to a staged battlefield to take part in an extermination session. Tristram's fate seems to testify to the fact that 'sanity is a handicap and a liability if you're living in a mad world' (*WS* 151).

Much like her husband, Beatrice-Joanna as well is greatly disturbed by the inversion of the sexual norms imposed by the society. Burgess assigns Beatrice-Joanna with a traditional role of a wife and a mother, making her thus a critic of the current social situation:

> She was a handsome woman of twenty-nine, handsome in the old way, a way no longer approved in a woman of her class. The straight graceless waistless black dress could not disguise the moving opulence of her haunches, nor could the splendid curve of her bosom be altogether flattened by its constraining bodice. Her cider-coloured hair was worn, according to the fashion, straight and fringed; her face was dusted with plain white powder; she wore no perfume, perfume being for men only – still, ..., she seemed to glow

> and flame with health and, what was to be disapproved strongly, the threat of fecundity. There was something atavistic in Beatrice-Joanna. (*WS* 6)

Beatrice-Joanna, 'still a creature of instincts, after all these years of education and slogans and subliminal film propaganda' (*WS* 42), rebels against the society she scorns. In the society that promotes non-productive forms of sexuality, her act of rebellion is her pregnancy. Booker explains that this pregnancy is politically sensitive for several reasons (*Literature* 92). Firstly, since it is Beatrice-Joanna's second pregnancy, it represents a violation of the population regulation laws. Secondly, it involves a highly placed governmental official who publically presents himself as a homosexual – her brother-in-law Derek, with whom she is having an extramarital affair. In this respect, Beatrice-Joanna's name reveals an allusion to her namesake, the heroine in Thomas Middleton's play *The Changeling*:

> The term changeling can refer to a child or thing substituted by stealth, especially an elf child left by fairies. Derek, the Machiavellian pseudofairy, unintentionally impregnates his sister-in-law and thereby substitutes his own offspring for Tristram's child, whom she has recently lost. (Aggeler 168)

The chaos that pervades the relationships between the three protagonists – Tristram, Beatrice-Joanna, and Derek – is not only a consequence of their own personal choices but also a reflection of the changes that are affecting the society. The animosity between Tristram and Derek is a result of the state's efforts to promote fraternity hostility, 'as an aspect of the policy of discrediting the whole notion of family' (*WS* 48), while the deterioration of the relationship between the Foxe spouses is brought about by the death of their only child, a doing of a state that is desperate in its efforts to reduce the population growth.

The protagonists of *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* – Alex, Tristram, and Beatrice-Joanna – refuse to renounce their free will and to settle for the illusion of alternative offered by the society. They exercise their free will regardless of whether their behaviour is in accordance with what the society deems desirable. Burgess does not justify the transgressions committed by his protagonists, nor does he question the right of those governing the society to sanction these transgressions appropriately. However, Burgess disputes the right of those governing the society to degrade its citizens into anything less than human beings by depriving

them of freedom of choice. In his essay ‘Clockwork Marmalade’, Burgess emphasises that ‘if we are going to love mankind’, we have to love its ‘unrepresentative members’ as well; however, ‘towards that mechanism, the state, which, first, is concerned with self-perpetuation and, second, is happiest when human beings are predictable and controllable, we have no duty at all, certainly no duty of charity’ (qtd. in Aggeler 182).

5. The animosity of societal mechanisms towards the individual

Freud's theory of the conflict between the society and the individual, presented most comprehensively in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), is based on the premise that all humans have certain instincts that are innate and immutable. The most distinctive ones are desire for sex and tendency for aggressive behaviour towards authority figures and sexual competitors. While individuals are inevitably on a personal quest to satisfy their instinctual desires, the task of the society is to ensure conformity by restraining those very instincts. Inability of individuals to satisfy their instinctual desires will inevitably result in feelings of anxiety or discontent.

Freud emphasises the paradoxical aspect of the society. On the one hand, the humankind established the society believing that civilized life, as opposed to a primitive one, would alleviate human suffering and provide security. On the other hand, the security provided by the society comes at the cost of individual's happiness. Freud concludes that 'the essence of society lies in the fact that the members of the community restrict themselves in their possibilities of satisfaction' (42). The society is not interested in securing happiness for its citizens, but providing security through a joint authority, which restrains individuals' instincts, thus limiting their liberty. Freud concludes that the society is inimical to the most basic human desires since its sole purpose is to limit the individual's liberty.

Foucault as well perceives the society as interested primarily in achieving stability by means of limiting the liberty of its citizens. In fact, in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), Michel Foucault asserts a prison-like nature of the modern society. Exploring the transformation of the society over centuries, Foucault concludes that throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century there was a gradual shift 'from a schema of exceptional discipline to one of a generalized surveillance' (209). These mechanisms of surveillance have spread throughout the entire social body, and eventually have formed the disciplinary society. Foucault emphasises that disciplines are not to be understood as institutions or tools. Disciplines are methods of training individuals, meant to integrate the citizens into the general demands of society. Disciplines are a type of power, a mode for exercise of power; they regulate movements and clear up confusion (215).

Influenced by Nietzsche, Foucault traces the causes of the development of the surveillance society to the Age of Enlightenment. He asserts that 'the Enlightenment, which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines' (222). Foucault concludes that the modern society is carceral in its nature, noting that there is little difference between life inside and outside a prison; the modern prisons resemble modern factories, schools, hospitals, which all, in turn, resemble prisons. Both inside and outside a prison, the individual is subjected to constant surveillance, observed and examined at all times. In other words, the whole modern society, as fundamentally disciplinary, has become one carceral system.

In *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* Burgess deals exactly with the two forms of instinctual behaviour that are identified by Freud as 'the greatest hindrance to the civilization' – aggressive and sexual behaviour (89). The former novel focuses on the issue of the adolescent violence, while the latter one explores the consequences of a population explosion. As the societies depicted in both novels attempt to remedy these issues, they reveal themselves as antagonistic to the individual. Both societies employ mechanisms of manipulation in order to deprive the citizens of their free will, and thus preclude them from making choices that are not in accordance with the common good. Indeed, as anticipated by Foucault, the life of a law-abiding citizen of both the societies of *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* does not differ much from a carceral existence.

At the beginning of *A Clockwork Orange*, the political party in power is governed by the liberal Pelagian ideals. The enormous amount of crime taking place can be contributed, to some extent, to the excessive permissiveness of the society. Although it seems that Alex's actions are an expression of his free will, Morris argues that Alex's choice of evil is partially conditioned. Morris interprets Alex's behaviour as 'the gross product of welfare state overkill', asserting that Alex is not 'depraved because he is deprived', but because he is indulged (70). Alex himself testifies to that: 'I couldn't help a bit of disappointment at things as they were those days. Nothing to fight against really. Everything as easy as kiss-my-sharries' (*CO* 12). The citizens as well interpret the adolescent brutality as a failure of the liberal methods of governing; they react with disappointment and seek a political change.

The change takes place during Alex's imprisonment, as a new Minister of the Interior is elected, who is evidently leaning to Augustinian ideals. He soon realizes that the citizens,

intimidated by the adolescent brutality, are willing to sacrifice a portion of their liberty for a more peaceful life. The new government led by the Minister seeks to enforce order and stability, regardless of the means necessary. The Minister is actually not so much interested in suppressing the crime as he is in simply preserving the appearance of stability and order. He implements two policies in order to deal with two groups of criminals, those who are still on the streets and those who are imprisoned. The former group of the violent criminals is admitted into the police force. By turning the police force into a criminal body, the government is in fact encouraging violence, with the aim of contributing to the paranoia of the citizens, and ultimately achieving obedience through fear. The Minister relies on the modern behavioural technology to 'cure' the latter group so that they could be reintegrated into the society.

At the age of fifteen, after committing a murder in a robbery gone wrong, Alex is sentenced to fourteen years in prison, which he is to serve in Staja (State Jail Number 84F). The treatment of the prisoners there is aptly suggested by the name of the prison, as *staja* in Slavic languages denotes 'stables'. Here Alex is reduced to a number, a part of statistics – 'I was 6655321 and not your little droog Alex not no longer' (*CO* 57). Having a record of extremely brutal crimes, Alex is chosen to undergo an experimental conditioning treatment that will enable him to live the rest of his life as a submissive citizen. From the standpoint of the government officials, the treatment, called Ludovico Method as a play on Beethoven's first name, is highly effective, as indeed it renders Alex incapable of contemplating crime, let alone committing one. The procedure conditions Alex's body into associating the sight or thought of violence with unpleasant sensations, such as excruciating nausea and headaches. Having lost his capacity to choose what is deemed harmful by the society, Alex is considered to be rehabilitated. Now that he is 'ready to turn the other cheek, ready to be crucified rather than crucify, sick to the heart at the thought even of killing a fly' (*CO* 96), Alex is free to re-enter society as its harmless and helpless member, and as a living proof that the government, as it is dedicated to resolving social evils, deserves to be re-elected at the upcoming election.

Whilst the terms Pelagian and Augustinian are not mentioned explicitly in *A Clockwork Orange*, the representatives of both doctrines can be detected on the grounds of their opposing stands on adolescent brutality as the major social problem – the Minister of the Interior embodies Augustinian principles, while the Pelagian liberalism is embodied in F. Alexander's political and

philosophical ideals (Aggeler 176). F. Alexander and Alex represent each other's mirror-images; as opposed to Alex, who acts on impulse, F. Alexander is an 'intelligent type bookman type' (*CO* 18). Troubled by the accounts of the violence that takes place on the city streets, he analyses them only in terms of theoretical concepts, and from the safety of his cottage house. Able to think only in broad categories, F. Alexander finds it difficult to focus on particularities. For instance, when he finds Alex beaten up by the police, F. Alexander perceives him only as an abstract 'victim of the modern age' (*CO* 113). It is ironical that the same place where Alex now seeks mercy is the place where Alex's most brutal crime took place. F. Alexander, once Alex's victim, is now to act as his saviour.

Prior to his imprisonment, Alex and his gang broke into a cottage of 'a gloomy sort of a name' (*CO* 17), as Alex comments on the inscription on the cottage gate saying 'HOME'. In the cottage they found F. Alexander and his wife. After beating them up most brutally, Alex forced F. Alexander to watch four of them rape his wife. His wife's death, a consequence of the 'ultra-violence', as nadsat youths refer to rape, caused F. Alexander to dedicate his life to fighting the evils of the modern age. Interestingly enough, F. Alexander is the author of a book called *A Clockwork Orange*. As Alex picks up the manuscript and reads a section, the reader finds out what the book is about: 'The attempt to impose upon man, a creature 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' (*CO* 18). Morrison notices that through the character of F. Alexander, Burgess incorporated himself into the novel, creating thus an effect 'of an endlessly receding mirror' (xiv). Burgess and F. Alexander share more than just the novel of the same title and the same theme. In 1944, while Burgess was in Gibraltar, his wife Lynne was robbed and beaten in London by a gang of four American deserters, which caused her to suffer a miscarriage. Burgess suspected that her ill health and early death may have had something to do with the assault.

The comparison between Burgess and F. Alexander ends there. Burgess has been known to criticise the liberals, asserting that they claim that they want to improve the condition of the humankind, but they attempt to do so at the expense of the individual (Aggeler 177). The same tendency can be recognized in F. Alexander's attitudes and actions. F. Alexander claims that he wants to help Alex, but remains indifferent to Alex's predicament as a specific instance of social

injustice, perceiving him instead solely as an abstract 'victim of the modern age'. It is noble from F. Alexander to hold firmly to his belief that an individual is 'a creature of growth and capable of sweetness', especially as he has witnessed first-hand what people are capable of. Nevertheless, he readily exploits Alex, who as well is 'a creature of growth and capable of sweetness' (*CO* 18).

Blaming the government for the youth aggression, and therefore for the death of his wife, F. Alexander seeks to discredit the ruling party sufficiently to have them lose the next election. Alex is to serve as a propaganda device against the current, Augustinian government: 'What a superb device he can be, this boy. If anything, of course, he could for preference look even iller and more zombyish than he does. Anything for the cause' (*CO* 120). The liberals wish to exploit Alex's tragic story as a testimony to the dehumanizing effects of the governmental crime-fighting methods. F. Alexander and his fellow Party members are so dedicated to 'the Future and our Cause' (*CO* 122) that they push Alex, 'a martyr to the cause of Liberty' (*CO* 121), into attempting suicide, believing that Alex would be even more damaging as a dead witness to the horrors committed by the government than he would have been alive.

The ample negative publicity that was created by Alex's attempted suicide motivates the Minister, pragmatic above all, to act. The behaviouristic engineers intervene, using 'deep hypnopaedia or some such slovo' (*CO* 130), to restore Alex's capacity of moral choice. The Minister is content, as Alex's case cannot discredit the government any longer. So is Alex because he once again experiences a thirst for both violence and classical music.

The final chapter reveals an image of a changed Alex. He has become tired of the throat cutting and the 'old ultra-violence', and came to realize that the gratification he had previously found in acts of brutality is now to be looked for elsewhere. Upon a chance meeting with a former gang member Pete, now married and settled down, Alex becomes aware of the change he has been undergoing, and is now able to articulate it: 'I knew what was happening, O my brothers. I was like growing up' (*CO* 140).

Through Alex's reflections on his youth, Burgess once again implies that, like all members of society, Alex too has been conditioned long before being subjected to the governmental experiments, though in a more subtle manner. In order to highlight that brainwashing need not be obvious, David W. Sisk compares the image of Alex being strapped

onto a chair with his eyes held open during his 'rehabilitation' treatments, to the image of 'starry bourgeois drinking in the gloopy worldcasts' (*CO* 33). The two images contrast an unwilling viewer being forced to watch, with those who voluntarily pay attention. While the potency of the first image lies in its explicitness, the other image is just as alarming as it hints that conditioning is not necessarily conducted in a brute, overt manner (Sisk 62). Booker as well concludes that Alex and his fellow gang members have been subjected to such covert conditioning, as they 'like everyone, have been exposed to a number of forming influences throughout their lives' (*Literature* 95). Having realized this, Alex compares himself to a wind-up toy:

> But youth is only being in a way like it might be an animal. No, it is not just like being an animal so much as being like one of these malenky toys you viddy being sold in the streets, like little chellovecks made out of tin and with a spring inside and then a winding handle on the outside and you wind it up grrr grrr grrr 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 one of these malenky machines. (*CO* 140)

Burgess emphasises that instead of being treated as a wound-up clockwork mechanical toy, as a tool to be manipulated, each individual is to be treated as 'an orange capable of growth and sweetness'. Burgess defends Alex's human rights, but by no means does he justify or glamorize his brutalities. Every breach of the social contract should be adequately sanctioned; however, no transgression, even if of the magnitude such as Alex's, provides an excuse for society to deprive individuals of the freedom of moral choice, as attempted in *A Clockwork Orange.* The solution is not to be found in transforming individuals into controllable and predictable citizens devoid of mind and free will. Geoffrey Aggeler suggests that the hope fundamentally lies 'in the capacity of individuals to grow and learn by suffering and error', as 'suffering, fallen human beings, not behavioural technology or the revolutionary schemes of idealists, bring "goodness" into the world' (181). In the end, Alex must choose to be good, which, ultimately, he does.

The Wanting Seed as well opens with a depiction of a society governed by the Pelagian ideals. Just as in *A Clockwork Orange*, in *The Wanting Seed* Burgess suggests that the major social problem, the population explosion, is partially a result of the Pelagian precarious

confidence in the humankind. The laxness of Pelagianism allows the citizens to exercise their free will to the point of populating themselves out of existence (Morris 61). In a severely overpopulated world, the Pelagian government attempts to remedy the predicament of its own doing. The government exercises economic and social pressure, differently within different classes, with the aim of reducing the birth-rate.

Among the governing class, the government encourages homosexuality by making 'a life of blameless sexlessness' (*WS* 27) the sole condition for advancing one's career and thus one's social and economic position:

> 'Now, I know this sounds crazy, but what gets a man a job these days is not pry-merrily qualifications. No. It isn't how many degrees he's got or how good he is at whatever he does. It's – and I'm using the term in its most general sense – his family background ... I don't mean whether your family was up in the world,' he said. 'I mean how much of it there is. Or was.' He twitched. 'It's a matter of arithmetic, not of eugenics or social status.' (*WS* 29)

Tristram and Derek Foxe may have the same family background; nevertheless, Tristram does not get a well deserved promotion due to the 'aura of fertility' that surrounds him, while Derek is highly placed since 'being homo wipes out all other sins, the sins of the fathers' (*WS* 77).

The government uses propaganda and education to turn homosexuality into the norm. The Ministry of Infertility, in charge of propaganda, leads a publicity campaign. Posters, 'showing, in ironical nursery colours, an embracing pair of one sex or the other', featuring slogans such as 'It's Sapiens to be Homo' and 'Love your Fellow-Man', are doings of the Ministry (*WS* 6). The Ministry advertises day and evening classes on how to be a homosexual, offered at the 'Homosex Institute'. Education is as well exploited by the government with the aim of enforcing more desirable sexual codes. Teachers are expected to teach the acceptable version of history, not necessarily the correct one.

Aggeler notices that the government is stricter in insisting on the homosexual norm for members of the governing class, since 'the Pelagian leaders share Malthus's belief that the educated classes can be persuaded by reason to act for the common good while the proletariat cannot' (164). Recognizing that the working class cannot be reasoned with into accepting the

new sexual codes, the government allows for heterosexual families to exist, though limited to one birth per family: 'Alive or dead. Singleton, twins, triplets. It makes no difference' (*WS* 29). However heterosexuality is to be reserved solely for the members of the working class, since it is believed that 'the job of breeding's best left to the lower orders' (*WS* 30). For that reason Beatrice-Joanna is reprimanded for her pregnancy: 'Try to be modern. An intelligent woman like you. Leave motherhood to the lower orders, as nature intended... You've had your recommended ration. No more motherhood for you. Try to stop feeling like a mother' (*WS* 5).

While within the governing class the government promotes homosexuality as a precondition for acquiring a better social position, within the working class the government exercises economic pressure more bluntly. The state encourages infanticide and rewards it in a form of financially expressed condolences. A benefit is paid to parents who kill their children and make an effort to present the death as an accident:

> 'Got sort of sufflicated in the bedclothes. Only three weeks old to the day he was, too.' 'Scalded, mine was. Pulled the kettle right on top of him.' The speaker smiled with a sort of pride, as though the child had done something clever. 'Fell out of the window, he did. Playing, he was.' 'Money comes in handy.' 'Oh, yes, that it does'. (*WS* 20)

In fact, as a means of reducing the population, the governmentally sponsored health system does nothing to save lives of seriously ill children. The families are not even allowed to organize a conventional funeral for their departed ones, since each corpse is to be handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture, in order to serve as fertilizer. The official stand is that each death is to be seen in global terms: 'One mouth less to feed. One more half-kilo of phosphorus pentoxide to nourish the earth' (*WS* 4).

However, 'education and propaganda and free contraceptives, abortion clinics and condolences' (*WS* 43) prove to be ineffective measures as they fail to manipulate the citizens into restraining their reproduction urges. In effect, the society witnesses further increase in population and further dehumanization of everyday life.

As a result of an ongoing power struggle on the political scene, the conservative Augustinians take over the government, after which they implement more radical methods in order to solve the problem of overpopulation and achieve social stability; they see a large scale

war of the sexes as the solution. The war is expected to function primarily as 'the controller, the trimmer and excisor, the justifier of fertility' (*WS* 235), as a social drainage system that can reduce the population in an organized, efficient, and, according to the government, a humane manner: 'Everybody has a right to be born. But, similarly, everybody's got to die sooner or later ... and history seems to show that the soldier's death is the best death' (*WS* 278). By getting rid the society of 'the morons and the enthusiasts', 'the corner-boys and the criminals', 'the cretinous over-producers', and 'the ruffians, the perverts, the death-wishers' the state is ensuring 'A safe and spacious community. A full house of happy people' (*WS* 279).

The War Department that attends to the business of war is a privately owned corporation. The government and the civilians running the War Department are the only ones who know what kind of fate awaits the soldiers. In the society that has outlawed wars long ago, the civilians and the soldiers are generally ignorant of how a war is fought:

> I meant, you know, fighting. Armies. One lot having a bash at another lot, if you see what I mean. One army facing another army, like it might be two teams. And then one lot shoots at another lot, and they go on shooting till somebody blows the whistle and they say, 'This lot's won and this lot's lost.' Then they dish out leave and medals and the tarts are all lined up waiting at the station. That's the sort of war I mean, mister. (*WS* 197)

Holding firmly to the belief that a soldier has no right to ask questions or express opinions, the government expects the soldiers to follow the orders blindly. Any incident of a soldier seeking more information about the causes of the war or identity of the enemy is met with annoyance of the members of the governing class:

> The enemy is the enemy. The enemy is the people we're fighting. We must leave it to our rulers to decide which particular body of people that shall be... Why are we fighting? We're fighting because we're soldiers. That's simple enough, isn't it? For what cause are we fighting? Simple again. We're fighting to protect our country and, in a wider sense, the whole of the English-Speaking Union. From whom? No concern of ours. Where? Wherever we're sent. (*WS* 226)

Trained in complete isolation from the rest of the population, soldiers are shipped off to carefully staged battlefields for extermination sessions: 'Loud amplifiers. Magnesium flashes. Electronic

war, gramophony war' (*WS* 248). In a typical session male and female armies destroy each other completely. Being able to think independently, past the government propaganda, Tristram sees through the charade and realizes that this war is a theatrical one. He manages to survive the extermination session, only to witness the horrors of the governmental methods of fighting the overpopulation: 'It was slaughter, it was mutual massacre, it was impossible to miss... Three minutes from start to finish' (*WS* 259 – 260). The remains, 'lorry-loads of corpses' (*WS* 248), are gathered up and processed for human consumption. The state reinforces an assumption held among the citizens that cannibalism, as long as it is conducted in a civilized manner, is socially acceptable: 'It makes all the difference, if you get it out of a tin' (*WS* 172). War thus proves to be a very efficient method of fighting the population increase. In addition to reducing the population, it also provides food for those citizens who are lucky enough not to be selected for the extermination sessions.

Pondering why the government forces its citizens to go through the charade of an orchestrated war, Tristram finally concludes: 'Perhaps because we've a government that believes in everybody having the illusion of free will' (*WS* 242). Indeed, in the society of *The Wanting Seed*, the only two choices that an individual is free to make are to be 'persuaded to castrate himself, in one way or another' and to be 'eaten by a military/industrial complex' (Aggeler 169). In the end, the choices made by the law-abiding citizens must at all cost concur with the common good – the social stability.

It may appear that *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* end optimistically. Upon reaching the adulthood, Alex grows beyond the vicious thug from the beginning of the novel and renounces violence. Tristram, having survived the extermination session, is free to rejoin the society as a civilian; he wishes to be reunited with Beatrice-Joanna, who as well has come to realize that it is Tristram, and not Derek, whom she loves. Nevertheless, Morris detects a continuing pessimism in the happy ending of each novel (57). Alex realizes that the generations to come will have to go through the same chaos of adolescence as he once did. Tristram observes the first signs of faith in human perfectibility that will inevitably lead to the transition from the current Augustinian phase to a new Pelagian phase. Alex's and Tristram's reflections suggest that there are no means of breaking out of 'the dreary cyclic history' (Booker, *Literature* 94):

> And so it would itty on to like the end of the world, round and round, like some bolshy gigantic like chelloveck, like old Bog Himself (by courtesy of Korova Milk-bar) turning and turning and turning a vonny grazhny orange in his gigantic rookers. (*CO* 141)

At the end of both *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* Burgess reminds the reader of the cyclical nature of history. Not intended to be understood literally, the rationale of cyclical history serves Burgess to reinforce a pessimistic outlook regarding the prospects of humankind's progress towards achieving utopian society. Such dystopian pessimism is a result of understanding the mechanisms of society as inimical to the individual.

In order to demonstrate this animosity between the society and the individual, Burgess depicts societal life in 'both sieges of the historic cycle', using the terms of Pelagianism and Augustinianism merely as 'avenues to moral blindness and collective insanity' (Aggeler 182). By ridiculing the Pelagian and the Augustinian governments in *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed*, Burgess in fact criticizes the present-day doctrines of liberalism and conservatism. Both the optimistic liberals, who claim to be fighting for the liberty of the individual, and the cynical conservatives, who claim to be fighting for the stability of the whole social body, are governed in their struggle by such a narrow-minded understanding of the human nature that they 'leave little room for the uniqueness of individual men' (Aggeler 183).

Conclusion

The first dystopian works found in the literary tradition of the Western civilization date back to the age of the ancient Greece, when Aristophanes wrote his satirical plays as a reaction to the utopian works of his contemporaries. Ever since, utopian and dystopian thought have been engaged in a sort of a literary dialogue. Through this dialogue, instead of merely seeking to discredit utopian thought, dystopian literature acts as a healthy opposition to the utopian ideals. In addition to warning against the potential abuses that might result from the attempts to implement utopian blueprints for perfecting the society, dystopian fiction critically observes the existing political and social practices. Authors of the dystopian fiction situate the observed shortcomings of the real-world societies always in a new, imaginary context, in order to provide the readers with an impartial perspective and enable them thus to recognize the inconsistencies and the injustices at work in the existing present-days societies. By doing so, dystopian literature undertakes the role of social criticism.

By dealing in *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* with the real-world society issues, such as the adolescent aggression and the consequences of irresponsible procreation, Burgess in fact explores the conflict between the individual freedom and societal demands, only to ascertain that the society is antagonistic to the individual. The societies of *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* employ mechanisms of mind manipulation with the aim of ensuring a mechanical and unnatural functioning of the societal life. Such brute and inhumane mechanisms include conducting behaviouristic engineering and implementing a large scale war that is an end in itself. While Burgess somewhat exaggerates the manipulation mechanisms used by the societies of *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed*, he does so only to demonstrate to which lengths the society is willing to go in order to achieve uniformity of opinion and behaviour among its citizens.

In the both novels, Burgess emphasises that the mind manipulation, which is intended to deprive the citizens of their free will and manipulate them into satisfying compliantly the societal demands, need not be conducted solely in an overt manner. Burgess implies that all the members of the society are subjected to a covert conditioning through the subliminal propaganda

distributed by the means of media or education. Burgess' protagonists possess an understanding of the workings of the society and recognize that instead of the freedom of choice, the society will allow its citizens to have only an illusion of one. By refusing to play the roles that the society has intended for them, Burgess' protagonists differ from the official norm, posing thus a threat to the society that seeks to maintain a predictable, controllable, and efficient community. Unwilling to let go what makes them human, the capacity to make their own choices, these distinctive individuals are marginalized and perceived by the mainstream society as delinquents.

Burgess acknowledges that, when given the opportunity to exercise their freedom of choice, it is in the human nature to choose what is wrong over what is right. Nevertheless, Burgess stands in defence of the individual and his/her freedom of choice and insists that while the transgressions against the social contract committed due individual's exercise of free will are to be sanctioned, the sanctions should by no means include depriving the individual of the capacity to freely choose the course of their actions. The readiness of the society to deprive its citizens of free will and reduce them to mechanical toys, testifies to the fact that the society either has an inadequate understanding of the human nature, or is volitionally ignorant of it. In order to demonstrate that, Burgess entertains a model of cyclical history, which consists of three phases – the Pelagian and the Augustinian phase, with the Interphase as a transition between the two. Burgess traces the origins of liberalism and conservatism to the teachings of Pelagius and Augustine respectively, only to provide criticism of both doctrines. He concludes that regardless of whether it is governed by the liberal Pelagians, who perceive the humankind as essentially good and perfectible, or by the conservative Augustinians, who perceive the humankind as essentially corrupt and preoccupied solely with personal wellbeing, the society will employ mechanisms intended to manipulate the individual into fitting one of these preconceived understandings of human nature, denying thus the uniqueness of each individual. Burgess implies that the antagonism between the society and the individual stems precisely from the failure of the society to genuinely understand the human nature, which, according to Burgess, encompasses equally the both poles of the binary opposition, the goodness and the evil.

Through his dystopian novels, *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed*, Burgess articulates the contradiction that characterizes the relationship between the society and the individual. On the one hand, the necessary precondition for any individual to exercise freedom of

choice is to accept the social contract, since the freedom of choice cannot be exercised outside the civilized life. On the other hand, once the social contract is accepted and the society is established, the citizens are forced to renounce their free will so that the societal life could be governed in a predictable, controlled, and sterile manner. Burgess does not offer possible solutions for resolving this antagonism that pervades the relationship between the individual and the society. Instead, he leaves the reader with a rather grim thought: unless the humankind is willing to return to the chaos entailed in the unlimited freedom of the existence outside the civilized life, the only alternative left for the humankind is to accept that the stability offered by the societal life comes at the cost of freedom of choice.

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