

A Major Addition to the Angers Burgess Collection: D. Thompson's gift from the files of "The Burgess Variations"

By [Valérie Neveu](#)

David Thompson (with Kevin Jackson) produced and directed the BBC documentary on Anthony Burgess's life and works, "The Burgess Variations," shown for the first time in Great Britain in December 1999 (Kevin Jackson, in the 2nd issue of the **Anthony Burgess Newsletter**, retraced the various steps and stages in the origins and in the making of the film. Work on the actual film itself began in earnest in 1998 and included a week-long trip with the entire BBC crew to the newly opened Burgess Center).

David Thompson had taken care to keep and store all the documents, tapes, and rushes used in "The Burgess Variations," and early last summer (2001) decided to give them to the Anthony Burgess Center. The boxes containing this material arrived at the University Library at the end of the summer. A detailed and complete inventory is not yet possible, since the numerous tapes and recordings will require a great deal of time to classify and transcribe. However, the following brief survey should give our readers a general idea of the wealth of new material this generous donation has brought to the University Library and to our Center:

Audio Recordings:

There are several recordings of BBC radio programs written by Burgess ("A Meeting in Valladolid" and a dramatic version of **A Clockwork Orange**) or devoted to his life and work ("An Airful of Burgess"). In addition, there are several recordings of Burgess reading from his own work (**Enderby**, **The Eve of St Venus**, **Nothing**)

Like the Sun

, **A Clockwork Orange**

) or from the work of other writers (T.S. Eliot, for example). As far as Burgess's music is concerned, there are recordings of his musical version of Joyce's

Ulysses

, **The Blooms of Dublin**

, and of various concerts (directed by Paul Phillips). There are several other recordings that remain to be heard and identified.

Video Tapes:

During the 1970s Burgess appeared on a number of British television shows ("The Late Show," "Arena," "The Book Game," etc.). Many of these are included in the donation. There are also several television documentaries devoted to Burgess in other countries and in other languages, including one made for the French series, "Un siècle d'écrivains." Finally, there are several recordings of Burgess's own work for the television, the cinema, and the theatre, together with a little-known dramatic version of **A Clockwork Orange** performed by a British company (The Northern Stage Ensemble).

Rushes from "The Burgess Variations"

The various sequences of material filmed for the documentary are contained in over fifty video cassettes (Betacam and VHS). There are thus many hours of film, much of which was not used for the final version, now on deposit at the Center, and available for Burgess scholars. These cassettes are accompanied by full transcriptions (on paper or on floppy disks) of the interviews and conversations recorded for the documentary: interviews with J.J. Annaud, Gore Vidal, A.S. Byatt, William Boyd, and others (including the Angers interviews with Liana Burgess, Ben Forkner, and Maureen Turquet).

Printed Documents (Newspaper and Magazine Articles)

In making the documentary, David Thompson gathered together a great number of newspaper and magazine articles on Burgess, going back to the beginning of his literary career, and up to his death in 1993. One of the most interesting series of these articles concerns the reaction to the film version of **A Clockwork Orange**. There are also several examples of Burgess's early writing, including the poems he published in the journal

The Serpent

. Noteworthy too is an article by Burgess on the James Bond novels.

Photographs, Photocopies, and Miscellaneous Personal Documents

There are several large-size photographs of Burgess (and of his two wives), as well as several photocopies of photographs. Among the photographs is a very interesting series of portraits taken of Burgess in Malaya. Finally, there are photocopies of private and professional correspondence, and a dossier on the school in Banbury and the legal action taken against the novel **The Worm and the Ring**.

The Anthony Burgess Center would like to express its gratitude to David Thompson for a valuable and generous gift. These documents enrich our permanent collection immensely, and will provide a unique source of information for Burgess scholars in the years to come. Thanks to the kind permission of David Thompson, all this material can be freely consulted in the University Library. Any other use of these documents must be authorized by the BBC.

On a personal note, I would like to add that the Thompson archives have already allowed me to discover a number of the items I used in setting up the **Clockwork Orange** exhibit during last December's colloquium. Obviously, there is much more waiting to be explored and brought to light, and I invite anyone interested to contact me and arrange for a visit.

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