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Intermediality and Intertextuality: Clues to Reading Anthony Burgess's "Murder to Music"

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RÉSUMÉ. Cet article propose une analyse de la nouvelle d'Anthony Burgess « Meurtre en musique », qui a été publiée dans le recueil de nouvelles *Le Mode du diable* (*The Devil's Mode* 1989, publié en 1999 en français) et qui est un pastiche d'une aventure de Sherlock Holmes. Malgré le crime résolu par Sherlock Holmes grâce à l'indice musical laissé par la victime, le lecteur-détective se retrouve avec plusieurs questions sans réponse une fois l'histoire terminée. Ces indices pointent vers « La Ligue des rouquins » de Doyle comme hypotexte et offrent la possibilité de lire cette nouvelle comme une réécriture postmoderne du martyre de Thomas Becket. Les subtiles références intermédiales et intertextuelles permettent à Burgess de créer un véritable jeu littéraire.

ABSTRACT. *This paper gives an analysis of Anthony Burgess's short story "Murder to Music," which was published in his only short story collection* The Devil's Mode *(1989). "Murder to Music" is a Sherlock Holmes pastiche, in which Sherlock Holmes solves the crime thanks to the musical clue left by the victim. However, Burgess has hidden other intermedial and intertextual clues for the reader-detective to find and piece together once the story has finished. These clues point to Doyle's "The Red-Headed League" as a hypotext and offer the possibility of reading this short story as a postmodern retelling of the martyrdom of Thomas Becket. By using subtle intermedial and intertextual references, Burgess creates a challenging and rewarding literary game for the reader-detective.*

MOTS CLÉS : intertextualité, intermédialité, Anthony Burgess, Sherlock Holmes, Thomas Becket, nouvelle

KEYWORDS: *intertextuality, intermediality, Anthony Burgess, Sherlock Holmes, Thomas Becket, short story*

Part of the appeal of reading a *whodunit* consists in being able to play the detective. Generally, crime stories allow the reader to piece together information along with the investigator in the story until the crime is finally solved and the loose ends are tied up. Anthony Burgess's "Murder to Music," a Sherlock Holmes pastiche published in 1989 in a collection of short stories entitled *The Devil's Mode* invites the reader, however, to find solutions to several mysteries that remain unsolved at the end of the narrative.

Because of the nature of the short story, the reader is incited by the text to play a more active role than in other types of narratives. As Suzanne C. Ferguson explains, "the deletion of traditional plot elements also demanded a more attentive reading, one in which the reader is conscious of narrative technique and style as keys to meaning" (Ferguson 227). To remain concise, a short story does not develop the plot in the same way a novel does. The readers are invited to use their imagination to complete what must be left out due to a restriction of space and may be encouraged to look at how the story has been constructed in their attempt to make sense of the story. "Murder to Music" may be read as a postmodern collage of different hypotexts, and in this short story identifying and untangling the texts is part of the literary game. In her study *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Julie Sanders argues that "it is the very endurance and survival of the source text that enables the ongoing process of juxtaposed readings […] and the ongoing experiences of pleasure for the reader […] in tracing the intertextual relationships" (Sanders 25). Intertextuality is a technique that has been identified as a frequent characteristic of short stories: "The […] effect of condensation and depth of short forms is obtained by their games of intertextuality or inter-iconicity – which link them to collective culture –, and thus of collaboration between producers and receivers" (Meynard & Vernadakis).[1]

In Burgess's *The Devil's Mode*, intertextual and intermedial references abound: "A Meeting at Valladolid" imagines William Shakespeare meeting Miguel de Cervantes; "The Most Beautified," begins with Hamlet and Horatio (both unnamed) being summoned home because of the death of the King during one of Dr. Faust's (unnamed) lectures at the University of Wittenberg; "The Cavalier of the Rose" is an adaptation of Richard Strauss's opera *Der Rosenkavalier*; and "1889 and *The Devil's Mode*" imagines a young Claude Debussy going to Dublin with Stéphane Mallarmé, where he meets Robert Browning and crosses paths with James Joyce[2] as a child. Typical of Burgess's use of intertextuality, some of the references to other works, events, and real-life people in "Murder to Music" are obvious, while other references are hidden. Little clues have been left in the text, but they require a true detective's work to make sense of them. What stands out about this story though is the role music plays in creating and linking these clues together. In creating mysteries that are not solved within the story, Burgess inscribes a reader-detective posture into his

[1] *My translation*.

[2] The reference to James Joyce is hidden, but Michael Holloway offers a convincing argument identifying the boy in the story as James Joyce. See Holloway 162.

text, encouraging the reader-detective to be imaginative and astute to get the most out of this short story.

Treating the text as a puzzle creates the risk of over-reading. To avoid this pitfall, Umberto Eco writes:

> How to prove a conjecture about the *intentio operis* [intention of the text]? The only way is to check it upon the text as a coherent whole. This idea, too, is an old one and comes from Augustine (*De doctrina christiana*): any interpretation given of a certain portion of a text can be accepted if it is confirmed and must be rejected if it is challenged by another portion of the same text. In this sense the internal textual coherence controls the otherwise uncontrollable drives of the reader. (Eco 181)

One possible reading of "Murder to Music" will be offered here based on a close examination of an accumulation of intertextual and intermedial clues. While the approach is perhaps unconventional, this reading fits in with the story and with Burgess's oeuvre as a whole, coherent with his writing practices and his aesthetics.

As music is key to solving many of the enigmas in the text, after a short summary of the story, I will explore some of the music in this narrative. Then, in highlighting three of the mysteries that remain unsolved by the text, I will argue that Doyle's "The Red-Headed League" may be read as a logical hypotext for "Murder to Music," which can also be understood as a retelling of the historical assassination of Thomas Becket. Finally, I will consider as to why the criminal remains free at the end of the story. The goal of this analysis is to show how Burgess uses music and intertextuality to create a true literary game, transforming a simple Sherlock Holmes adventure into a challenging and thought-provoking reading experience.

"Murder to Music"

At first glance, "Murder to Music" seems to be a run-of-the mill Sherlock Holmes pastiche, in which Anthony Burgess has appropriated the world of Sherlock Holmes created by Arthur Conan Doyle. While there are elements of humor and irony throughout the story, Burgess does not appear to mock Doyle's work or characters allowing the reader to eliminate the idea that it is a parody.

In the story, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson witness a murder while attending a concert at St. James's Hall. The victim is the pianist Gonzáles, who accompanied the world-famous Spanish violinist Sarasate's performance. Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908) was an actual composer and violinist whom Burgess fictionalized in his short story. As the investigation proceeds, the reader learns that Sarasate and Gonzáles are members of a Catalonian separatist movement and that Gonzáles was murdered under Sarasate's orders because he wanted out. Dying, Gonzáles repeatedly plays a "delirious phrase of a few different notes" on the piano (Burgess 1989, 274). During his investigation, Holmes deciphers this melody as a code and as a result, is able to save the Spanish King, also in London at the time, from a bomb planted on the train by Sarasate himself.

Much of the action of "Murder to Music" has a musical setting and several musicians are main characters, including Holmes himself. Intermediality is present throughout the work. In musicalized fiction, intermediality generally appears in either one of two ways: thematization or imitation. According to Emily Petermann: "Thematization consists of an explicit reference to a medium that is not materially present in a given media product" (Petermann 24). In other words, thematization refers to when a piece of music (real or fictitious) is referenced or described, but is in no other way present in the work. With thematization, musical notation in the form of notes or solfège, does not appear in the text, the author does not try to imitate music, nor does the author employ techniques that can be designated as specifically musical.

Imitation, on the other hand, is "when techniques of the medium that is materially present are used to metaphorically suggest the presence of a foreign medium, as when the structure of a poem is modelled on a fugue or a piece of music evokes a specific painting" (Petermann 24). Thus, when a literary work imitates a musical work, the music becomes metaphorically present in the text. As Werner Wolf explains, "[t]he verbal text appears to be or become, to a certain extent similar to music or to effects connected with certain compositions, and we get the impression of experiencing the music 'through' the text" (Wolf 51). With occurrences of imitation, readers can imagine hearing the piece of music with their mind's ear.

In "Murder to Music," there is a description of one of the pieces played by Sarasate during his concert, which Watson identifies as a *zapateado*. In the "Preface" to the Henle Verlag musical score, María Nagore Ferrer explains that the *Zapateado* (Op.23, no. 2) was first published in 1880 in "Book II" of Sarasate's *Spanish Dances* for violin and piano. (Ferrer v) It was commissioned by the German publisher Fritz Simrock, and "immediately became one of the violinist's most successful pieces." (*Ibid*. v-vi) Watson describes the *Zapateado* as "a wild piece in which never fewer than three strings of the four were simultaneously in action […]. It ended with a furious chord and a high single note that only a bat could have found euphonious" (Burgess 1989, 273-274). Because the description of the piece does not imitate the music, this is an example of thematization. The reader does not experience the piece of music through the text, but can identify the real work being referenced. While Burgess has given no concrete reason in the text or in his other writings as to why this particular composition was chosen, as one of Sarasate's most famous works, the *Zapateado* should be known to the musically-literate reader. As a result, the reader can recognize that Watson's description of the *Zapateado* is somewhat exaggerated, comical, and slightly inaccurate. A description of this sort is, of course, expected from Watson, who is representative of those who are less musically cultured within this short story. Were a less familiar work used, the humor here would mostly likely be missed. As written, the humor holds the reader's attention, keeping the reader engaged in the reading process.

Puzzlingly, Holmes says the *Zapateado* is in the key of D Major, but the real composition is in A Major. While this could be a mistake, it is more likely that

Burgess changed the key for the sake of the narrative. With the composition now in D Major, Holmes can interpret the notes Gonzáles played as he was dying:

> First, Watson, he hammered out the note D. I have not the gift of absolute pitch, and so was able to know it for what it was only because the piece with which Sarasate conclude his recital was in the key of D Major […] Now, Watson, what we call D […] is called by the French, Italians and Spaniards *re*. In Italian this is the word for 'king,' close enough to the Castilian *rey*, which has the same meaning. (Burgess 1989, 288)

The melody is revealed to be a warning about the Spanish King. If the piece were in A Major, this clue would not have worked. Using music as a clue within the narrative is also possible because Holmes has been depicted as a proficient musician in both Doyle's oeuvre and throughout this short story. Before the murder, for example, Watson describes Holmes enjoying the concert: "Meanwhile Holmes, eyes half-shut, gently tapped on his right knee the rhythm of the intolerably lengthy equation which was engaging the intellects of the musically devout" (*Ibid.* 273). It is no surprise, then, that Holmes is musically competent enough to decipher the musical clue and solve the case.

Returning to Gonzáles's melody, Holmes explains, "It forms a melody of no great intrinsic interest – a kind of deformed bugle call – but the meaning is clear now that we know the code" (*Ibid.* 289). According to Holmes, this code uses the Chinese musical notation system where numbers are associated with the different notes of the scale with one being the tonic, five the dominant, *etc*. "In whatever key they were played, the notes would yield the numerical figuration one-one-one-five – C-C-C-G, or D-D-D-A: the pitch is of no importance"[3] (*Ibid.* 288-289). Because the reader is given the exact pitches and can aurally imagine them, this is an example of musical imitation. In understanding the notes to represent numbers, Holmes discovers what the melody means: "the king is in danger at eleven fifteen on the morning of the eleventh day of July" (*Ibid.* 289). Upon cracking the code, Holmes races to the station and evacuates everyone – including the Spanish king – from the train before it blows up. The reader is told that Sarasate had hidden a bomb in his violin case and had planted it on the train before fleeing the scene.

Music is an important element in the plot of the story as it is the key to solving the crime and enables Holmes to prevent a second one. However, finding the murderer and saving the king are the only mysteries Holmes solves for the reader. There are other mysteries that the detective-reader is left to solve alone. Given that music was used to solve the crime, it is logical to look for other music-related clues to answer some of the remaining puzzles in the text.

[3] "[T]he pitch was of no importance" may be understood as Burgess acknowledging that he changed the key of the original *Zapateado*.

Mystery 1: Who is the Red-Bearded Man?

Through the faithful use of Doyle's characters, "Murder to Music" falls in line with other Sherlock Holmes pastiches. Consequently, the reader might not bother to explore any specific cases of intertextuality, but rather assume Burgess has constructed his narrative from the general collection of Holmes adventures. However, within the story, Burgess offers the reader-detective a clue as to which Holmes story in particular may serve as a hypotext.

In "Murder to Music," directly after the murder of Gonzáles on stage at the end of the concert, an order is given for everyone to evacuate the concert hall to allow the police to begin their investigation. At this point, a "red-bearded young Irishman" comments, "it was a bad business: that young Spanish pianist had promised well" (Burgess 1989, 274). This character is unnamed in the story, but Watson states that he "was making his name as a critic and a polemicist" (*Ibid.* 273). Thanks to Watson's descriptions, this character can be identified as George Bernard Shaw, who was Irish, had red hair and a red beard, and who worked as a music critic in the late 19th century. Burgess owned three volumes of Shaw's musical criticism and wrote an article entitled "Shaw as Musician" in 1981 (Burgess 1998, 176-179).[4] The real George Bernard Shaw wrote in praise of the real Sarasate, calling Sarasate one of the "greatest living violinist[s]" (Shaw 966). Because of this real-life connection, Shaw's identification as the red-bearded man in "Murder to Music" is plausible. Anthony Burgess often fictionalized 'real' people[5]; however, the reader-detective may wonder whether George Bernard Shaw's presence in this particular short story serves a special purpose.

It is possible that George Bernard Shaw's red beard may function as a clue to connect "Murder to Music" to Doyle's "The Red-Headed League," first published in *The Strand Magazine* in August 1891 and then republished in 1892 in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. The consideration of "The Red-Headed League" as a hypotext offers a new reading of the text with a threefold impact. First, as "The Red-Headed League" was the second published Holmes adventure, Burgess adds legitimacy to his pastiche by paralleling events from Doyle's story. Second, in comparing the two stories, the contrast in the endings may lead the reader to question why Burgess's story finishes somewhat differently and what that may mean. Third, knowing the story has its roots in a different text may encourage the reader toward metafictional reflection.

In adapting certain events from "The Red-Headed League," Burgess attempts to inscribe his story into the classical cannon of Holmes adventures. Several incidents in "Murder to Music" resemble events from "The Red-Headed League." In the

[4] These three volumes can be found in the archives held at the library of the University of Angers, reference: BUR 1270, BUR 1271, and BUR 1272. "Shaw as Musician" is published in *One Man's Chorus*.

[5] For example, in "1889 and the Devil's Mode," a short story also published in *The Devil's Mode*, Stéphane Mallarmé, Claude Debussy, Robert Browning, James Joyce, and George Bernard Shaw appear as characters. As in "Murder to Music," Shaw is not identified by name, but by his red beard and the fact that he is looking at a score of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* on the train (Burgess 1989, 91). See Holloway 161.

opening pages of "The Red-Headed League," for example, Holmes is able to discern that his client has been writing a lot lately, has visited China, uses snuff, and is a free mason solely by observing the man's appearance. While this is typical of many Sherlock Holmes stories, not all of them start in this way. "Murder to Music," however, begins similarly with Holmes determining that Watson has come from visiting Sir Edwin Etheridge in St. John's Wood Road based on a leaf stuck to the bottom of his shoe and from the mint smell on his breath. It is of particular interest that only in these two stories do Holmes and Watson attend a concert given by Sarasate at St. James's Hall. Furthermore, at the end of both stories, Holmes shows that he is impressed by the criminal. However, the irony that characterizes Holmes's praise of Sarasate, along with the fact that Sarasate has not been arrested, invite the reader to give full consideration to the final part of Burgess's story, which will be considered below.

While the identification of "The Red-Headed League" as a possible hypotext is not essential to understanding "Murder to Music," the connection between the two stories creates another puzzle for the reader to solve and adds another layer of text for the reader to consider. Through the identification of specific hypotexts, the reader can dialogue with the author-as-reader exploring the literary experiences that have shaped Burgess's art. By fictionalizing real people – Shaw and Sarasate, among others – and making them interact with other fictional characters like Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, Burgess inscribes into his text the figure of an active reader, who is capable of metafictional reflection on how the narrative has been fashioned blending the real and the make believe, while at the same time giving the reader more clues to use in the literary game.

Through the creation of his pastiche, Burgess can activate the reader's prior knowledge of Holmes, Watson, and the world and time in which they exist. The relationship between intertextuality and brevity becomes clear: intertextuality allows Burgess to tell his own story without having to take up space developing all of the characters, the setting, etc. For example, the reader, already familiar with Holmes, allows him to assume his natural authority – both as a detective and a musician – and Watson is as likeable and relatable as ever. Intertextuality can serve the economy of the short form by affording the text a means of reduction. In returning to the first mystery, understanding the red-bearded man as George Bernard Shaw points the reader to a possible hypotext, but he may serve an additional purpose in the text, as can be seen in trying to solve the next mystery.

Mystery 2: Why is Gonzáles's death described using equestrian imagery?

The description of Gonzáles's death is striking in "Murder to Music." As mentioned above, he is murdered onstage at the end of a concert which is described as follows: "His head collapsed onto the keys of his instrument, producing a hideous jangle, and then the head, with its unseeing eyes and an open mouth from which blood relentlessly pumped in a galloping tide, raised itself and seemed to accuse the entire audience of a ghastly crime against nature" (Burgess 1989, 274). The words

"jangle" and "galloping" conjure up associations with horse riding, as in the jangle[6] of the spurs or the jangle of the reins, which can be taken as a clue to another narrative level: "Murder to Music" can be read as a hidden retelling of the assassination of Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered by four knights.

Thomas Becket was killed on 29 December 1170 in Canterbury Cathedral by four of King Henry II's knights. Henry II and Thomas Becket had been in conflict over the division of royal and papal authority. Thomas Becket was Lord Chancellor before Henry II also appointed him as Archbishop of Canterbury. Becket, however, resigned as chancellor shortly after becoming archbishop, clearly positioning himself on the side of the Church in this power struggle. Becket appeared before a council in October 1164 where he was convicted of contempt of royal authority and subsequently fled to France. Six years later, Thomas Becket returned to Canterbury only to be attacked and murdered by Henry II's knights in the cathedral on his way to Vespers. Becket, viewed as a martyr, was quickly made a saint.

In looking past the Sherlock Holmes frame, the basic structure of the two stories is the same. Gonzáles represents Thomas Becket, the knights become the unnamed Spanish assassin who carried out the murder as ordered by Sarasate, and Canterbury Cathedral turns into St. James's Hall. Sarasate is Henry II and the Catalonian separatist movement serves as the political conflict. The events of the story follow the same basic pattern: two associates find themselves on opposite sides of a political conflict leading to the eventual murder of one of them by an assassin. The perplexing description of Gonzáles's death now makes sense in recalling that Becket was killed by knights. Gonzáles was shot in the head, which parallels Becket's death caused by sword wounds to the head (Halsall). The description of this act as "a ghastly crime against nature" also fits the murder of an archbishop in a cathedral. These similarities are enough to recall this famous historical event as it is retained in British common knowledge. Matei Călinescu has identified a common, though not exclusively, post-modern practice of "extensively rewriting earlier literature in secret, invisible ink" (Călinescu 247). While here Burgess is retelling an historical event, Călinescu's description, nevertheless, describes his technique.

As a consequence of using "invisible ink," no word-for-word intertextuality from any specific versions of this historical event can be found in "Murder to Music" itself. However, several clues invite the reader to consider T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, in which Thomas Becket's murder is depicted, according to tradition, as a martyrdom,[7] as another possible hypotext to "Murder to Music." Burgess was

[6] While jangle, which describes an unharmonious metallic ringing or rattling, is not exclusively an equestrian term, it is used often enough to describe the sounds of horse riding for this association to be made. For example, below the definition of "jangle" in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, "the jangle of spurs" is given as a sample phrase.

[7] John Peter's analysis describes the main themes of the play as "the persistent conflict between the values of the world and those of the spirit, and the idea of redemption of sin through the death of a martyr" (Peter 366).

familiar with Eliot's play,[8] and in his essay "Our Eternal Holmes," which was also originally published in 1989 (the same year as *The Devil's Mode*), Burgess reminds the reader that T. S. Eliot was guilty of plagiarism: "T. S. Eliot, the greatest literary authority of our century, was a Holmes addict – he lifted eight lines of his *Murder in the Cathedral* from *The Musgrave Ritual*, totally without acknowledgement – but he never wrote a line in praise of Doyle" (Burgess 1998, 342). Through this comment, Burgess creates a link between *Murder in the Cathedral* and Sherlock Holmes. While this could be a coincidence, the presence of literary games and hidden references in many of Burgess's works may lead the reader-detective to consider "Murder to Music" as a reaction to *Murder in the Cathedral*.

In "Murder to Music," the murder is presented as a shame and a waste when the George Bernard Shaw character trivializes it by describing it as "bad business," as cited above. The reader understands it was unfortunate that Gonzáles was assassinated, but there does not seem to be any real sense or virtue found in the death. As Gonzáles represents Becket in this story, it is likewise unfortunate that Becket was assassinated. There seems to be regret for a future that will never come to pass through the words of the Shaw-character cited above: "[he] had promised well." The comments made by the Shaw-character raise a doubt about Becket's death as a martyrdom in Burgess's text, and they seem to take on more weight given the literary and musical authority of the real George Bernard Shaw. However, as cited above, the narrator describes the dying Gonzáles as "[seeming] to accuse the entire audience of a ghastly crime against nature," which would favor viewing the death as a martyrdom, ultimately leaving the question to be answered by the reader.

In transposing this historical event into a musical context, Burgess can also raise questions within the reader about both art and religion simultaneously. In Burgess's aesthetics, art and religion are often connected. For example, in an article housed in the International Anthony Burgess Foundation archives entitled "Art and Horse Manure" (Article nº 386), Burgess writes:

> I will attempt, here and now, a simple definition of art. Art is the shaping of natural materials into a form or pattern. […] Our lives are chaotic […] We require the occasional vision of order: That is why British people go to their Anglican or Methodist churches on Sunday – in order to be reassured that God has a design for their lives and a pattern in the universe. Art does the same thing as religion, but it speaks to the imagination rather than the soul and it is rather more entertaining. (Burgess 1981, 2)

For Burgess, who was raised Catholic but gave up his faith as a teenager, art fills a special role of creating order through patterns. A new organization of what had previously been unordered (sounds, colors, etc.) can be perceived as reassuring. The

[8] For example, Burgess's biographer Andrew Biswell notes that in 1948, Burgess "directed an amateur production of *Murder in the Cathedral*" (Biswell 69). Biswell also explains that as a student, Burgess wrote harsh criticism of Eliot's plays, writing specifically that they were "full of 'superficial profundities' and inferior to Auden-Isherwood plays" (*Ibid.*).

comparison with religion, which follows traditional Christian belief, puts God in the role of a creator who has structured the universe according to a plan. In both art and religion, a person can recognize a pattern or a structure and understand – and be reassured – that everything is not chaos. In recontextualizing the martyrdom of Thomas Becket from a cathedral to a concert hall, the reader is challenged to reflect on ways in which art and religion might be similar and the implications of this new contextualization.

In "Murder to Music," Sarasate and Gonzáles appear to be criticized for not limiting their activities to their art having also become involved in politics. For example, Holmes explains why Sarasate had not been considered an initial suspect in the case: "one always considers a great artist as somehow above the sordid intrigues of the political" (Burgess 1989, 289). If in "Murder to Music," artists are to avoid political involvement, could the same be said for religious leaders like Thomas Becket? Once Holmes realizes that Sarasate is the culprit, he comments, "My head spins to think of the master's [Sarasate's] approbation of such a murderous afterpiece to what was, you must admit, a recital of exceptional brilliance" (*Ibid.*). Burgess seems to play on stereotypes about classical music, and more widely, "the popular 19th century idea, still held today, that Art is Good for You, that the purpose of the fine arts is to provide moral uplift" (Hughes 59).[9] The identification of Sarasate as the criminal catches the reader by surprise because art is generally considered to be a non-violent outlet for the emotions. Following this line of reasoning, as a composer and a violinist, Sarasate should not also be a murderer. In regarding Sarasate as an artist *par excellence,* the reader-detective is confronted with the final mystery of the story.

Mystery 3: Why does Holmes argue that Sarasate should remain free?

At the end of "Murder to Music," Sarasate has escaped and no one will go after him. Watson asks Holmes, "you do not, I take it, propose to pursue Sarasate to condign punishment, to cut off his fiddle-playing career and have him apprehended as the criminal he undoubtedly is?" (Burgess 1989, 290). As a response, Holmes expounds the nature of being an artist. In speaking of Sarasate, he states, "He is a supreme artist whom the world could ill afford to lose […] I am forced to the belief that art is above morality" (*Ibid.*). Holmes goes on to imagine Sarasate coming in and murdering Watson in cold blood for his musical insensitivity. Holmes explains that he would turn a blind eye to the act and even help in covering up the crime "so much is the great artist above the moral principles that oppress lesser men" (*Ibid.*). This passage is highly ironic and open to a variety of interpretations. Similarly to how "The Red-Headed League" ends with Sherlock Holmes admiring the intelligence of the criminal, it could be understood that Sherlock Holmes admires Sarasate's musical talent to create a parallel situation between the hypertext and the

[9] This quotation comes from a review of Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation of Burgess's novella *A Clockwork Orange*, which also raises questions about the limits of an aesthetic education.

hypotext. In "The Red-Headed League," the criminal Clay is apprehended, though, and there is no irony in Holmes's compliment. Through the hyperbole and irony found in the parallel passage of "Murder to Music" cited above, the reader may understand the text to be highlighting the absurdity of letting a murdering artist go free just for the sake of his art. Is art really worth sacrificing justice before the law? At the end of "The Red-Headed League" when Watson praises Holmes for the contribution to society he makes through his detective work, Holmes replies, "'*L'homme c'est rien – l'œuvre c'est tout*,' as Gustave Flaubert wrote to George Sand" (Doyle 68).[10] This quote, when applied to "Murder to Music," supports reading this passage as completely ironic.

At the same time, a contrasting reading may be equally valid. In discussing the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes in Doyle's oeuvres, Eduardo Oyarzun writes "Sherlock Holmes is not a detective, but an artist" (Oyarzun 185). He argues that despite some interpretations of Holmes as a "champion of law enforcement and justice […] the truth is Holmes cares very little about justice and the law" (*Ibid.*). Rather, Holmes solves crimes to escape boredom. Oyarzun explains:

> that which makes Holmes to be what he is […] does not lie solely in the display of his "brain-work," but rather in his experiencing the pleasure exacted by and in his own subjectivity. This experience, of course, is aesthetic in nature and befits the decadent, Wildean aesthetic and individualistic trait the character displays" (*Ibid.* 187).

As an artist himself by trade, and also as a violinist, Holmes's defense of other artists and recognition of the value of art at the end of "Murder to Music" makes perfect sense. With no specific allegiance to uphold justice, it is plausible that Holmes could favor affording a certain lenience towards the extremes that may result from an 'artistic temperament.' In being tolerant of the excesses of certain artistic temperaments, society can still reap the benefit of their great art. For Burgess, art has an intrinsic value in that it can encourage the reader to think about difficult choices and provide an emotional release – catharsis – in the sensitive, willing reader. In his essay "Can Art Be Immoral?" Burgess explains that "art [arouses] the emotions which [are] then cleansed or cathartised [sic] by the rhythms of the artistic medium itself. This, of course, is pure Aristotle" (Burgess 2018, 236). For Burgess, the author's task is to present life's problems, but it is up to the reader to 'solve' them. Reading "Murder to Music" as promoting a certain tolerance towards the misbehavior of artists in exchange for their art is coherent with Burgess's aesthetics. However, the irony in the text makes it impossible to settle on one reading with full certainty.

[10] Ed Gilnert notes: "The quote should be '*L'Homme n'est rien, l' œuvre tout*' – 'Man is nothing; work is everything', which Flaubert wrote in a letter to George Sand in December 1875." (Doyle 516)

Conclusion

By using hidden musical and intertextual references in "Murder to Music" to create a literary game, Anthony Burgess transforms the process of reading a detective story into a real-life mystery-solving activity. In doing so, the reader glimpses the author-as-reader and the author-as-listener, coming into contact with the wealth of past literary and musical experiences that have influenced Burgess in his writing process. The incorporation of real musical works and an historical event into a fictional story leave the reader-detective with much to consider not only by the implications of the transformation, but about the way in which the text has been constructed. The musical references in this story have served to create interest and complexity, which, along with the Sherlock Holmes frame, have been keys to keeping the narrative short. By using a melody as a warning, Burgess has revealed yet another way in which music can communicate. In playing with stereotypes about classical music and artists, the reader is gently confronted with existing biases. Finally, the transposition of a martyrdom into a musical context invites readers to further explore Burgess's aesthetics and to reflect on their own views of art and religion. Despite this new investigation into three of the text's unsolved mysteries, Burgess's short story leaves the reader with more questions than answers, as is typical of short stories. Cécile Meynard and Emmanuel Vernadakis explain: "short forms thus appear to invite collaboration between producer and receiver. But, at least in the case of art and literature, they also undoubtedly require from the recipient a greater presence and acuity, a taste for interpretation and deciphering, but perhaps also for insoluble mystery" (Meynard & Vernadakis).[11] At the founding conference of the *Journal of the Short Story in English* (*Les cahiers de la nouvelle*) at the University of Angers in 1983, Burgess spoke on the short story: "I approach the short story from a rather negative angle because it is not a form I practice" (Burgess 1984, 31). With "Murder to Music," he has contradicted himself, offering the reader a rich and enjoyable mystery-filled Sherlock Holmes adventure.

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[11] *My translation.*

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