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AND HONOR: Anthony Burgess, author of "A Clockwork Orange," is the latest to sing the praises of Louisiana's latest Pulitzer prize winner.

Writing in the London Observer about John Kennedy Toole's "A Confederacy of Dunces, Burgess says:

"This is the kind of book one wants to keep quoting from. I could, with keen pleasure, copy all of Jones' dialogue out and then get down to the other characters. Apart from being a fine funny novel (but also comic in the wider sense, like 'Gargantua' or 'Ulysses'), this is a classic compendium of Louisiana speech. What evidently fascinated Toole (a genuine scholar, MA Columbia and so on) about his own town was something that A.J. Liebling noted in his 'The Earl of Louisiana': the existence of a New Orleans city accent close to the old Al Smith tonality; 'extinct in Manhattan, living alongside a plantation dialect which cried out for accurate recording. At the same time Liebling emphasized the not-quite-American qualities of New Orleans, fascinating to any visitor but never, before Toole, properly exploited in literature. 'The Mediterranean, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico form a homogeneous, through interrupted, sea.' New Orleans, we see at last, needed a novel like this, but apparently the New York publishers didn't."

New York publishers, you will recall, turned down Toole time and time again. And it wasn't until several years after Toole committed suicide that his mother prevailed upon National Book Award winner Walker Percy to read the manuscript. He did and it was he who put a little polite pressure on LSU press to publish it. And now it's all Pulitzer prize-winning history.