
Anthony Burgess' View of the Impact of Wrongful Actions in Humanity as Illustrated In His Book, A Clockwork Orange

A Clockwork Orange

Anthony Burgess, author of *A Clockwork Orange*, explains the theme of the necessity of evil in human nature in this novel. The main character, Alex, is despicable because he gives free rein to his violent impulses, but that sense of freedom is also what makes him human. This book was one that I thoroughly enjoyed, even though the language was hard to understand at first.

A Clockwork Orange is set in a futuristic dystopia governed by a totalitarian state. Ordinary citizens have fallen into obedient complacency, unaware of the growth of a violent youth. Alex, the protagonist of the story, leads a small gang of criminals (Dim, Pete and Georgie) through the streets, robbing and beating men and raping woman. Alex ends up getting caught in his latest act, breaking into a cottage and beat up the man inside before raping his wife while making him watch, ends up with Alex being taken to prison, where they attempt to brainwash him into being a model citizen.

First, I may warn potential readers that this book is not for the squeamish, when the book goes into extreme details about the violent crimes that Alex and his "droogs" (friends) commit, but the one thing that stuck with me throughout the book was the "Ludovico" technique, which was set in place by the government to brainwash the criminal into being model citizens. It effectively denies Alex, when it's used on him, the ability to be a 'moral agent' and being able to freely choose between right and wrong. Because of this, Burgess creates the debate of freedom versus enforced obedience and 'goodness' as being the best in and for the society.

In *A Clockwork Orange*, Burgess created a dissonant, hyperreal but easily recognisable world. The violence being slapstick and theatrical while also gruesome, and making some readers stomachs churn. The language is also a challenge, but pays off once you come to figure out what means things like 'friends' and 'blood.' The "Nadsat" (slang) spoken by the characters does more that confuse the readers at first, but it also draws the readers into Burgess' world and makes the reader want to figure out what "droogs," "Nadsat," and "bezoomny" means (friends, slang, crazy). The language compels the reader to think while reading, having them try to remember what each different word in "Nadsat" means in English. The way that Alex speaks, both formally and some recurring anticlimax in his voice makes this process seem more sinister and occasionally funny.

In this final chapter, Burgess has Alex growing out of his wrongdoings, looking back and regarding it as a little bit sad and embarrassing (the actions of dumb kids) and, as the cliché goes in books and film alike, determined that his own children won't make the same mistakes he did at a young age. It's the redemption, and the stunningly mundane lesson of real life that made Alex grow up and realize all of the mistakes that he made as a teenager.

A Clockwork Orange is an amazing book with advanced language, great descriptions and a book that thoroughly explains that theme of the necessity of evil in human nature, with the language, devices used in the text, and through descriptions.

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