CHAPTER V

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Geoffrey Aggeler deals with Pelagius and Augustine concepts used in A Clockwork Orange, whereas, Philip E. Ray attempts to present the content and the form of the novel which falls into an ABA pattern. "It is a bitter satire on the welfare state". I have dealt with the title of the novel besides exploring the good and evil in the novel.

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Burgess wrote A Clockwork Orange in 1962. The title has a symbolic meaning. Commenting on the title of the novel Burgess says, "The book was called a Clockwork Orange for various reasons. I had always loved the cockney phrase 'queer as A Clockwork Orange,' that being the queerest thing imaginable, and I had saved up the expression for years, hoping some day to use it as a title. When I began to write the book, I saw that this title would be appropriate for a story about the applications of Pavlovian, or mechanical, laws to an organism which, like a fruit, was capable of colour and sweetness. But I had also served in Malaya where the wood for a human being is orange." Moreover, Burgess declares his will to write this novel
in the 1st Part of *A Clockwork Orange* through his antihero who enters into the cottage named "Home along with his droogs. Inside that "Home" they find a person writing and typing when the writer enquires about the reason for their entering the "Home" without permission. Alex replies:

'It is a book,' I said. 'It's a book what you are writing.' I made the old goloss very coarse. 'I have always had the strongest admiration for them as can write books.' Then I looked at its top sheet, and there was the name *A Clockwork Orange* — and I said: "That's a fair gloopy title. Who ever heard of a Clockwork Orange?"

Then I read a malenky bit out loud in a sort of very high type preaching goloses:

'... The attempt to impose upon man, a creature of growth and capable of sweetness, to oose 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.'

Four points emerge from this. Burgess, it can be seen, is trying from the very start to go deep into the consciousness in order to write this novel. From the title one can discern the following:

Firstly, Burgess is keen on showing the imposition of laws and conditions on human beings and the consequences
which they have to face. Secondly, he wants to combine a certain amount of realistic writing with a description of what goes on inside the minds of the characters. Thirdly, the title throws light on how the novel is concerned with the conflict between good and evil and ideal and real. Fourthly, the title shows that the novel is anti-utopian and a dystopic nightmare about a traditionalist's fear of future. It brings before us a whole vision of society of future, especially, Burgess satirizes American and Russian societies. Alex, a young criminal is shown in the opening pages of the novel, narrating the story in the first person using complicated slang, half Russian and half English. The language called 'nadsat' is the derivative vernacular of Alex, and his teenaged gang of 'droog'. For Alex and his gang, the only entertainment is beating up people they meet on the streets at night. Alex is cruel and ruthless, and usually cheerful. Besides this, they rape girls and destroy books. Alex derives a certain aesthetic pleasure out of violence. The title includes how Burgess makes evil the thematic nexus in the novel, basing his idea of it on European and Russian societies in particular and the world in general.

Further, Anthony Burgess adds a remark on the title of the novel in his essay on 'Clockwork Marmalade' that "A Clockwork Orange is a brain washing primer". It
is nothing but how the writer manages to kill only the 'clockwork' inside Alex's head in order to make him a good and normal human being. This idea is very well expressed in the Second part of the novel, where a series of brain washing sessions are performed by the Reclamation. Different types of violent films are shown to him which he begins to hate. He is made to realize his motiveless evil deeds. All his passions and emotions are killed after he is being injected with a liquid. He gets neurotic feelings towards violence. He is made to meditate on divine suffering and to realize the importance of religion, and the difference between good and bad. Alex is still doubtful whether such a technique can really make a man good. 'Goodness comes from within - goodness is something chosen. When a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man' (84). It is a story on an individual with his own social reality. One of the things that will determine the nature and the outcome of this struggle is the protagonist's quality of mind. The novel is an expression of the relationship between mind and the world. The hero believes in freedom of choice. It is a moral evil. Moral evil is explained in the context of human freedom. If a man is free to act, he must be free to originate evil acts too. As Professor Grave observes: "Moral evils are not necessary but necessarily possible consequences of freedom." Moral evil is essentially a product of human conditioning.
Even so it originates through the exercise of free will. Man is made into machine; rather he is treated mechanically to change him from bad into good. Alex says, "The new view is that we turn the bad into the good. All of which seems to me grossly unjust" (94).

Burgess once again comments on the title of the novel. "The title of *A Clockwork Orange* refers to the attempt to impose on man a mechanical arrangement antithetical to his growth as a human being; it symbolizes, in brief, the idea that the machine is perfect, man is imperfect."^8

Burgess is partially influenced by the behaviourist psychologists who tried to reform criminals through different methods used in American prisons. Burgess is satirizing the modern methods of reforming the criminals, and especially B.F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* which describes the schemes of imposing goodness on the human mechanism. B.F. Skinner believes that if men are free they are not capable of behavioural conditioning, and man must change himself if he is going to survive. Burgess thinks that the notion of improving a criminal by behavioural techniques may not be liked by every one. In the present there will be a new kind of human being, one who will see nothing wrong in having his aggressiveness trimmed. According to Burgess, freedom is important in
choosing between good and evil, and that comes down by choosing not to do evil. (Beyond freedom and dignity means beyond evil, and Skinner does not define evil). Burgess satirizes the genius of modern behavioural technology, especially the branch of it that aims at the total control of human will. In the novel, Alex is controlled and put in prison to be transformed into a good human being through the methods of behavioural technology.

Commenting on the title of the novel, Philip Ray observes: 'Having 'Clockwork' in his heart and brain may mean that Alex will be the same moreover... for F. Alexander manages to kill only the 'clockwork' inside his head.'

Here, Burgess develops a conditioning technique that can turn a thing like Alex into a little machine capable only of good. The novel is about brain-washing, and manipulation of feelings. Alex is, however, a clockwork Christian, a doer of good, in spite of himself. Apparently, the title of the novel is about the cult of violence. Burgess intends it to be a theological novel. Basil Gilbert opines, "This violence racked novel is a serious theological work? Apparently so for as Burgess tells it, the story is intended to be a moral fable (my parable) based on the, Judaeo Christian ethic, a sermon on the power of choice written by the most unviolent creature
I partially agree with the view held by Gilbert Basil and Bernard Bergonzi. The latter says, "Alex has deliberately chosen evil as an assertion of spiritual freedom in a world of subhuman conformists". In my opinion Alex is too immature to choose between good and evil. He is just an ill-guided adolescent, spoiled by lawless society. His observations spring from his animal instinct rather than from his awareness of theological dimension of good and evil. Therefore, it cannot be called a moral fable nor a theological novel, as the author wants us to believe.

*A Clockwork Orange* has three sections - A B A: Alex, 6655321 and Clockwork man and Alex. The first section deals with Alex's innocence and brutality, the second with his treatment and cure, and the third, with Alex's transformation into a good human being. Alex does not want himself to be blamed for what has been happening. He thrusts the responsibility of his violent acts on the elders..." It was the adult world that could take the responsibility for with their wars and bombs and nonsence. So that was all right. So he knew what he talked of, being a Godman so we young innocent malchicks could take no blame. Right right right..." (44). He declares himself to be innocent and confesses that he is led into acts of violence by others:
'Speak up for me sir, for I am not so bad. I was led on by the treachery of the others, sir' (70).

Through this confession it can be made out that Alex is innocent and is led into the world of villainy by others. In the part III of the novel, when the owner of the house asks Alex to tell about himself, Alex replies:

'Little enough to tell, sir, I said, all humble. There was a foolish and boyish prank, my so-called friends persuading or rather forcing me to break into the house of an old Ptitsa-lady, I mean. There was no real harm meant. Unfortunately the lady strained her good old heart in trying to throw me out, though I was quite ready to go of my own accord, and then she died. I was accused of being the cause of her death. So I was sent to prison, sir (153).

Through the dialogue we come to know Alex's innocence and immaturity. He is neither able to understand the world, nor his boyish pranks which led him into the world of treachery and villainy. Alex and his gang have chosen evil as their way of life; as an assertion of their will. They do what comes to their mind. There is an absence of law and order in their world. There is lawlessness in Alex's behaviour. He faces the world as it comes. He takes pleasure in violence. Commenting on this theme of the novel, Carol M. Dix observes:
"Alex symbolizes violence as an act of assertion, as a positive force." 12

According to me it is only because Alex and his gang have taken a moral holiday. They break social and spiritual laws. Alex observes the Duke of New York, a filthy young man, singing a song, who tells Alex and his company that he does not like the stinking world. To that Alex asks, '... what's stinking about it'? (26). To which, the Duke answers that it is a lawless world. The boys do not pay any attention to what he says, but they cry in and go away. Through this conversation we know that evil is born in society out of lawlessness. But Burgess's view of it is different. He does not believe in imposition of laws on men from outside. But, as for him one can be reformed not by punishment but through education, or by power of free choice of good and evil. Burgess is satirizing the modern world and the mechanical laws which have been imposed on man. Burgess's view of violence is traditional and it is not good for a contemporary society, which leads to totalitarianism. Alex is asked by a post corrective adviser, P.F. Deltoid to give up violence. Alex meditates on this and soliloquizes:

"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 not our modern history, my brothers, the story of brave makenky selves fighting these big machines? I am serious with you, brothers, over this. But what I do I do because I like to do" (43).

Through this Burgess declares the will of his anti-hero. He condemns the government and the schools because they "cannot allow bad as they cannot allow the self." Here Burgess's emphasis is on the self and freedom of choice. For Burgess, free will is of great value. It is man's privilege as well as his great responsibility. As for the existentialists, man is condemned to be free. The problem of evil and of wrong doing is bound up with the problem of freedom of choice. Without freedom of choice, evil is inexplicable. If there were no freedom, then god alone could be held responsible for evil. The whole secret of human life and destiny depends on this notion; freedom is irrational, therefore it can create both good and evil. To reject freedom on the pretext that it can bring forth evil is to make the evil twice as bad because, if unconstrained good be the only good, then compulsion and enforcement, so far from being desirable are an aspect of anti-Christ. Man is free continually to make himself other than what he is and a deep dread accompanies the awareness of that destiny. It is
characteristic of human freedom that it cannot bear, from
day to day, to face the shattering awareness of its own
reality. According to Burgess evil is (perhaps) not a
negative but a positive concept. It is regarded as a
chastening and purifying agent, a detergent of the human
soul. The process of living inevitably soils man, and
evil is the furnace that burns out the element of dross
in us.

The hero cannot make out what is good and what is
bad, but he is made to understand it in the second part
of the novel when he is controlled, punished and given a
treatment in order to be changed into good. Alex's fate
resembles the fate of Orwell's hero in 1984. Winston
Smith, whose intellectuality is controlled beyond imagina-
tion. There is no clockwork in Winston Smith's mind but
he is not allowed freedom of speech and thought. When he
has it, he is imprisoned and tortured to be reformed in
order to make him act according to the desire of the party.
On the contrary, Alex is imprisoned because of his violence
and for committing murder. The method of reclamation Test
is used by the totalitarian government. Burgess, like
Orwell, indicates that the most serious shortcoming of a
totalitarian state is the all-pervasive character of
Government and the lack of freedom of dissent. What the
reader sees in the terrifying method of treatment given
to the criminals is to make them good human beings and
bring a sort of salvation for them. The method of the 
Government is torture and brainwashing. It is necessary 
that Alex understands exactly what is happening to him 
before he is saved.

In the third section when Alex is finally released 
from the treatment, he returns to his parents who reject 
him, and then he goes to his friends, Dian and Billyboy. 
They too not only neglect him but make fun of him. Finally, 
he visits the cottage named "Home" which is mentioned in 
the first part of this book.

We know that in that 'Home' he commits robbery and 
burglary, assault and even murder. The owner of this House, 
P. Alexander, fails to recognize Alex, and provides him 
with food and shelter. Later on when he recognizes him, 
he does not punish him nor does he take revenge on him, but 
welcomes him. The owner of the 'Home' thinks of his dead 
wife and identifies Alex with her when he says to Alex:

'I think I know who you are' he said. 'If you are 
who I think you are, then you've come, my friend, to the 
right place. Wasn't that your picture in the papers this 
morning? Are you the poor victim of this horrible new 
technique? If so, then you have been sent here by 
Providence. Tortured in prison, then thrown out to be 
tortured by the police. My heart goes out to you, poor 
poor boy' (152).
At every step in the novel Burgess condemns the modern techniques of purifying criminals. Burgess thinks that man is capable of sweetness and he should not be turned into a piece of clockwork. F. Alexander is filled with hatred against the State. He sees only "Another victim of the modern age" who is in need of compassion. He thinks of using Alex as a propaganda device to embarrass the government. Alex is not an unfortunate being, but "A martyr to the cause of liberty", who can serve "the Future cause and purpose" (155). Alexander wants to make him a future victim. The revolutionaries want Alex to be destroyed completely by the government. F. Alexander and his three friends lock him in a flat with books, food, pyjamas etc., and fill the room with sounds of a loud and violent symphony with the hope that he would be driven to suicide. Their plan succeeds as the hero could not tolerate the violent music. Out of frustration he decides to commit suicide. Frustration is another important theme in the novel. It is frustration that motivates Alex to commit suicide. As a consequence of this, he becomes an alienated individual. No one understands him nor does he understand any one. Like Camus's, Meursault, he is an outsider. This results in his decision,

"to blast off for ever out of this wicked and cruel world. What I viddied was the slow DEATH on the cover of a like pamphlet, even though it was only DEATH TO THE GOVERNMENT. And like it was
fate there was another like malenkly booklet which had an open window on the cover, and it said:

"Open the window to fresh air, fresh ideas, a new way of living?" And so I knew that was like telling me to finish it all off by jumping out. One moment of pain, perhaps, and then sleep for ever and ever and ever' (164).

Therefore, Alex jumps to achieve total liberation from the wicked world but he fails to do that. His attempt to commit suicide leaves him injured. He is nursed back to health and thus he changes into a different normal man. He is sent back to his real home. It is a story of Alex's liberation as Philip E. Ray puts it: 13

'But Alex's tale is still a story of liberation: he has escaped from not only the literal prison of staja 84 F but also the figurative prisons of adolescent boyhood and "Clockwork" humanity. And the reader who recalls that "music is a figure of celestial bliss" will want to translate "liberation" as "salvation". But it is the individual capable of growth - the "creative of growth and capable of sweetness"'(21).

Burgess depicts in the novel how a man could be transformed into an unfeeling machine and he sees such threats of barbarism in the modern age. He could not accept
the optimistic belief that the state of the world improves with every technological advancement. He sees the rise of totalitarianism. He is as much disturbed by what he sees in the liberal Western government's method of oppression and brutality as in the Fascists and Communists in fighting those ideologies. The novel is a caustic satire on the modern methods of the government in reforming the criminals, and the so-called scientific, progress of the modern times. For Burgess any psychological process such as the reclamation test for Alex fails to transform him from evil into a reformed being. The change should come from within. If it is imposed from outside, it will, at best, bring about superficial change in the criminals. It is only through freedom of choice that man can attain intended transformation from evil into good.
REFERENCES


