

Good wound up by
god or the devil



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Good afternoon everyone! today I will be discussing the topic about man's free will and the ability of one to choose their own destiny, no matter good or evil, in A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess. In Burgess' 1986 introduction to A Clockwork Orange, he wrote that when a creature who can only perform good or evil, it is called " a clockwork orange-meaning that he has the appearance of an organism lovely with colour and juice, but is in fact only a clockwork toy to be wound up by God or the Devil or, since this is increasingly replacing both, the Almighty State. Through A Clockwork Orange, Burgess expresses the concept that man cannot be purely good or evil in order to create a moral choice, but that they must be both. The book suggests changing a criminal's behaviour by brainwashing them with only good morals and triggering an automated response to evil, which is more of a feeling of disgust and terror. Burgess suggests his concept of the medical model of corrections, in terms of rehabilitating a criminal, and that the rehabilitation is completely up to the individual.

Afterwards, a cause of rehabilitation is determined and an exclusive treatment is found to resolve that individual's problem, then applied it on the said individual. In A Clockwork Orange, this is the case with Alex, the main character of the book who is a juvenile delinquent and was imprisoned and then is conditioned to the government's ideal moral standards. Throughout the whole process, the lack of personal moral choice imposed upon Alex creates scenarios in which he lacks control over, which is very clearly seen when Alex is attempting to fit back into society. In A Clockwork Orange, Alex is created as a juvenile delinquent, and he is also the leader of a small gang. Living in his own world, his gang's use of the old Londoner language, Nadsat

and their attire reflects their non conformity with the dystopian society.

Throughout the book, Alex has committed crimes such as rape and assault.

Sooner into the novel, Alex is arrested and labelled as an adult offender.

Attempting to lessen the punishment, Alex emphasizes his innocences and tries to put the blame onto his gang members, saying, “ Where are the others? Where are my stinking traitorous droogs? One of my cursed grahznzy bratties chained me on the glazzies. Get them before they get away. It was their idea, brothers. They like forced me to do it.

” However, the police did not buy into his excuse and Alex is beaten by them and he complies and confesses to all the crimes he had committed. The whole time during his imprisonment Alex hated the treatment and conditions of the local jail, as seen in the quote here. Getting a taste of what it was like living in the prison, Alex starts to be familiarized with prisonization. Defined by the US government, Prisonization means the process of accepting the culture and social life of prison society. It can be described as a process whereby newly institutionalized offenders come to accept prison lifestyles and criminal values. However, in *A Clockwork Orange*, prisonization stands for the effect when an offender is subjected to the culture, morals, rules and values of a penal institution. Then this is applied into the individual’s behaviour and considers them fit as a norm.

The example of this in the book is when Alex has to prove his worth by beating another prisoner. Although being violent seems to be more comfortable for Alex, he soon realizes that the only way to have him released is to repent and display good behaviour in front of the officials. In

order to be seen as a criminal who is willing to repent and reform, Alex turns to religion.

As we can see here the prison minister says this to persuade Alex to follow the path of the Divine word, and that the main part of his reforming is in the hands of God, as well as individual moral choice. Through religion, Alex externally becomes a model prisoner, however internally only behaving like so in order to get out of prison. When one is a juvenile in an adult prison, he or she would have the utmost urgency to get out as soon as possible – so when Alex found out that there was a new experimental reforming process which gave him the opportunity to be released early, he immediately jumped to it.

However, in order to be chosen to be able to partake in the experiment, Alex had to constantly pressure and question the officials, and also display behaviours of his willingness to reform. However, Alex's main reason on reforming was not because of his new found belief in religion, but rather because it was the quickest way to do so. Even though this new experiment seemed like a good idea to Alex, it did not appeal to the minister and he had doubts about the medical treatment techniques involved, such as forcing an individual to become morally better – then brings up the question of what actually makes a moral person. However, this still does not change Alex's mind about being able to be released early, and instead, intensifies his desire to do so.

The rehabilitating technique used on Alex was to condition his responsiveness using drugs and visual aids. Conditioning is the

implementation of either teaching or forcing one to feel or think a certain way when given a decision. In the experiment, Alex was forced to feel and think negatively when evil sites or thoughts were displayed. However, a problem had arisen when the scientists were conditioning the evil out of him by using classical music to go along with the treatment, and Alex expressed that the technique of implementing the classical music was cruel. As the treatment comes to an end, the sick feeling is associated and appears when Alex is confronted with evil. With this mindset set in Alex's head, he is finally released and is considered healthy and pure of all morals.

Alex's readjustment into society's values seems to be the main question. And now I would like to ask all of you a question. Was the act of conditioning a person to strictly good morals proper and humane? For those who think yes, please raise your hands.

For those who think no, please raise your hands. As the title A Clockwork Orange suggests, one cannot be purely good or evil to be a man - they must be both to create humanistic choices. If not, the individual would be more of a robot like person, who is incapable of feeling things or self awareness.

Within the conditioning techniques of turning Alex away from violence, the experiment also resulted with him being forced to hate music. The use of this so-called correctional treatment had failed due to the implementations on morality of human choice. Is it better to have a criminal who can make humane choices, no matter good or bad, or a purely good person who is incapable of making any choices? A generalisation would be that all criminals should be imprisoned or managed in some sort of harsh manner., and there

are also people who believe that these criminals are diseased and should be cured. However, in Alex's case, the efforts to transform Alex did not work, which means that perhaps the best way to teach him a lesson would be to let him pay his debt to the society. The only correct method of transformation is that of self correcting ones, and not ones that are forced upon people.