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A Clockwork Orange: the End of the "Angry Young Man" Era

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ABSTRACT

Anthony Burgess's novel is more than an exercise in the language of violence: *A Clockwork Orange* is a satiric testament to an era which recognized the need for social conformities and new scientific discourses as a means to control the revolting youth. The teenage angst and violent rebellion which encompasses the very essence of Burgess's protagonist, Alex, is attributed to the British "Angry Young Man" movement prevalent during the 1950's as a way to show how this literary "voice" ends with the arrival of *A Clockwork Orange* on the literary scene. By utilizing Alan Sillitoe's novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and three novellas from *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* as a way to lay the foundation for this prolific genre, I will focus on how these novels and their respective heroes gradually progress into *A Clockwork Orange*, the final "chapter" in this highly influential movement. I also wish to focus on how the anger expressed in Sillitoe's works reaches a pinnacle stance upon *A Clockwork Orange's* inception as Alex represents the horrific parody of the rebellious youth.

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Without your knowledge, the eyes and ears of many will see and watch you...
- Cicero

'A Clockwork Orange': A creature who can only perform good or evil; he has the appearance of an organism lovely with color and juice, but is in fact only a clockwork toy to be wound up by God, the Devil or the 'Almighty State'.
- Anthony Burgess

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1962, Anthony Burgess published a novel of then unnoticed brilliance whose ornate language, controversial thematic elements, violence and shocking vision of the future lay dormant and unchallenged for nearly a decade. The novel's impact on British society at the time of its publication was virtually non-existent and it was not until Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation that Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* began to be recognized as both an important piece of literature and a frightening opus of Good versus Evil. Unfortunately as a result of the film's torrid success, young, obsessed fans began donning the attire worn by the protagonist and his cronies while reenacting the scenes of gratuitous violence on the streets of London. The film became something of a phenomenon as Kubrick was criticized unmercifully for his

glorification of the novel's violence, an amplification which detracted from the author's literary essence.

Burgess's novel is much more than an exercise in the language of violence: *A Clockwork Orange* is a satiric testament to an era which recognized the need for social conformities and new scientific discourses as a means to control the revolting youth. Prior to the acts of violence set in motion by the formidable fans after viewing the film, the novel recognized that if certain control mechanisms were not established, ordinary, law-abiding citizens would reside in a constant state of fear while violent hoodlums roamed the streets. Michel Foucault's seminal work, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* will be referenced later in this essay as several pertinent methodologies outlined by the philosopher are utilized to expound on the social issues made famous in Burgess's novel. Not only is *A Clockwork Orange* an exercise in dystopian science fiction, but is also a cautionary tale which provides insight into the not-too-distant future and what could potentially happen if there is a lack of proper disciplinary control.

Before discussing the proposed Foucauldian tactics, the teenage angst and violent rebellion which encompasses the very essence of Burgess's protagonist, Alex, is attributed to the British "Angry Young Man" movement prevalent during the 1950's as a way to show how this literary "voice" ends with the arrival of *A Clockwork Orange* on the literary scene. By utilizing Alan Sillitoe's novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and three novellas from *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* as a way to lay the foundation for this prolific genre, I will focus on how these novels and their respective heroes gradually progress into *A Clockwork*

Orange, the final "chapter" in this highly influential movement. I also wish to focus on how the anger expressed in Sillitoe's works reaches a pinnacle stance upon *A Clockwork Orange's* inception as Alex represents the horrific parody of the rebellious youth.

CHAPTER II

RISE OF THE "ANGRY YOUNG MAN"

After World War II, there was an economic shift in the world as Great Britain, a proverbial superpower, was no longer considered by economic standards to be as dominant of a force. The country was riddled with hardships, decimated by economic turmoil and common citizens braced themselves for a complete collapse of the once exceedingly fruitful government foundation. Alistair Black, author of *False Optimism: Modernity, Class, and the Public Library in Britain in the 1960's and 1970's,* states, "During the immediate post-1945 years, any optimism that could be detected as a result of the improvements in social and cultural policy set in motion by the Second World War was barely reflected" (203). British society began to lack the confidence to excel on a global scale and government regulations became such that many of the country's citizens no longer embellished the newfound complacency.

Even with the odious signs of a crumbling economy and a workforce depleted of its ability to withstand the lack of positive government action, Great Britain was moving towards a more modernist approach to governing its citizens. "Despite economic depression, international and political tensions, and dystopian fears

concerning the dehumanizing influence of science" (202), the country as a whole "could not fail to ignore the astounding everyday and, in many ways, futuristic changes occurring around them" (202). The attempt to evoke a certain political message which promoted fresh modernist ideologies to the populace resulted in "a wide-spread frustration with both the slow pace at which the class system in Britain was being eroded and the continuing lack of opportunities that existed for social emancipation" (205). The lack of opportunities indirectly promised by the new regime attributed to a feeling of animosity towards the government responsible for the livelihood of its citizens. The working-class suffered the most, having ample time to question the lack of assistance from a government which had begun to gradually lose its credibility. The extreme disillusionment of post-war Britain and lack of opportunities for the working-class allowed for a fellowship of liberal-minded writers to constructively channel this anger and frustration. The end result was the unofficial development of the "Angry Young Man" movement, a much reviled moniker for the participants of this literary genre, which captured the mood of an entire generation.

The established "Angry Young Man" writers (and to a later extent, Burgess) had much disdain for the post-war ideologies of the British government and wished to promote change. The "change" many of the writers in this movement promoted fell into the demographic of a radical socialist agenda, one which campaigned for more government intervention with regard to the equal distribution of wealth and other services; this movement, however, saw a drastic decrease in such government subsidies. John Osborne (considered by many literary scholars to be the quintessential "Angry Young Man" after the publication of his seminal work *Look*

Back In Anger), Kingsley Amis, John Braine and one of the primary authors discussed in this essay, Alan Sillitoe, used their literary prowess to write novels which targeted the British government's newly formed modernist policies, while openly voicing their contempt for the state of British society in the mid-to-late 1950's.

The protagonists of such novels as *Look Back In Anger* (Jimmy Porter), *Room At The Top* (Joe Lampton), *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Arthur Seaton), and *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* (Colin Smith), were highly opinionated young men, slightly anarchistic, with a profound sense that the foundation of Great Britain's government was askew. There was a sense of paranoia as these protagonists believed the government which existed prior to World War II would no longer have the means to provide for its people. Luc Gilleman, author of *From Coward and Rattigan to Osborne: Or the Enduring Importance of* Look Back in Anger, writes:

> The "Angry Young Man" is synonymous with the following: impatience with the status quo, refusal to be co-opted by a bankrupt society, an instinctive solidarity with lower classes, an undisciplined energy and unbounded rebelliousness, and an angry ambition that leads to unsuitable matches with the upper-class (104).

These heroes of the "Angry Young Man" novels were infused with the realization that something groundbreaking needed to occur to ensure Great Britain's status as a collapsed superpower would remain an isolated incident. The "Angry Young Man" established his place in the literary scene by writing important, humorous and poignant novels which appealed to the confused, frustrated working-class demographic who found solace in knowing their frustration was being chronicled in a constructive forum. As stated in the introduction to this essay, I wish to focus on Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long-*

Distance Runner and how the figurative weight of these heroes' anger gradually progresses into the dystopian *A Clockwork Orange*, the novel which marks the unofficial conclusion of the "Angry Young Man" movement.

CHAPTER III

ALAN SILLITOE'S HEROES

3.1 Arthur Seaton's Roguish Charm

Alan Sillitoe's first novel, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, was published in 1958 and is considered by many scholars of the "Angry Young Man' movement to be one of Sillitoe's finest works. The novel's primary focal point is the young Arthur Seaton, a brash, charismatic bicycle factory worker whose days are spent earning a hard wage (a wage which is much higher than those of his peers and elders) and nights are spent cavorting in the local pubs in pursuit of sexual congress and decadence. Arthur's shrewd pragmatism and carefree attitude towards his friends, co-workers and conquests grants him the ability to re-assess what is most important in a life which temporarily does not have much opportunity for prosperous growth. This cavalier stance confirms that Arthur "couldn't care less, couldn't care less, couldn't care less'- in answer to questions that came into his mind regarding sleeping with a woman who had a husband and two kids, getting blind drunk on seven gins and umpteen pints, falling down a flight of stairs, and being sick over a man and a woman" (Sillitoe, 12). Arthur is often times proud of his sanctimonious behavior,

the ability to imbibe copious amounts of alcohol and somewhat oblivious to any wrongdoings until he is laying drunk, battered and bruised in an alley after another Saturday night of debauchery.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning is typecast as an "Angry Young Man" novel, but it is more than just a diatribe about a young bloke quietly rebelling against the state of British society. Arthur Seaton makes a sincere attempt to live the life he has been given to the fullest, a personal vendetta which grants him the ability to thwart off most of his bottled up anger and frustration. True, Arthur is cognizant of the fact he presently occupies an expendable position in which he is overpaid, but this does not deter him from examining the positive aspects of his existence. If the habitual drinking and promiscuity is a façade for numbing contempt for his working-class upbringing, Arthur valiantly excels on numerous levels. These voracious appetites allow for Arthur to maintain his sanity, strengthening his resolve in both body and mind.

There is a consistent theme throughout *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* in which Arthur takes into serious consideration: "It's a fine world sometimes, if you don't weaken, or if you don't give the bastards a chance to get cracking with that carborundum" (37). The "bastards" in reference here are more than likely any authority figure or regime which may hinder Arthur from flourishing, an irony which is rather perplexing as the government during this era was anything but economically fruitful and in turn did not provide many the ability to flourish. Arthur's stance as an "Angry Young Man" is such that he is willing to work hard and perform well in his profession at the bicycle factory, but will continue to do so on his terms. Resentment

would be outright if someone or something prevented Arthur from continuing on his life's journey. Sillitoe's hero is a bright enough individual to discern that if he were to be more vocal with his disdain for the authoritarian regime (or lack thereof); this retaliation would be seen as a blatant act of defiance and a potential detriment to his future. Therefore the "weakening" Sillitoe proposes coincides with the working-class male succumbing to the blasé stipulations set forth by a disinterested government.

Along with trying desperately to not show any apparent weakness in society, Arthur is mindful that one's luck has the propensity to change in a tumultuous environment. As a working-class youth trying to survive in a society which does not have much to offer by means of successful positions, Arthur is aware of the Establishment's ability to thwart off any potential meteoric rise up the industrial food chain with political rhetoric. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* introduces how Arthur and other "Angry Young Man" heroes created in his wake have become aware of the British government's lack of aid for those in need, an anger which will continue to emanate and increase throughout the course of the period. Arthur narrates:

> Factories and labour exchanges and insurance offices keep us alive and kicking – so they say – but they're booby-traps and will suck you under like sinking-sands if you aren't careful. Factories sweat you to death, labour exchanges talk you to death, insurance and income-tax milk money from your wage packets and rob you to death. And if you're still left with a tiny bit of life in your guts after all this boggering about, the army calls you up and you get shot to death. And if you're clever enough to stay out of the army you get bombed to death. Ay, by God, it's a hard life if you don't weaken, if you don't stop that bastard government from grinding your face in the muck, though there ain't much you can do about it unless you start making dynamite to blow their four-eyed clocks to bits" (220).

It is apparent in Sillitoe's novel that an ailing government is attempting to have a larger role in determining the quality of life for those who have no choice but to

accept whatever position may be available in the workforce; the working-class ideals which, despite his brazen attitude, Arthur struggles to maintain are indirectly decided by a much larger entity. Therefore, the reader is under the impression life in the "Angry Young Man" movement is nothing more than a giant façade as you become a glorified clockwork toy to uphold governmental mandates.

Knowing he could be one false move away from termination allows Arthur to build a barrier against the foreboding presence of vulnerability. Arthur's armor is akin to being in a survival mode, to one day defeat the bureaucracy which could be responsible for his arrested development later in life. "To win meant to survive; to survive with some life left in you meant to win...before the Government destroyed him, or the good things turned sour on him" (222). *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is an excellent example of how a working-class hero, utilizing unconventional methods, curtailed the political agendas in his personal life from a government responsible for the profound anger of an entire generation. The precocious Arthur Seaton's whiskey-soaked anger for the state of British society does not appear to provoke him to vehemently defy the system nor does it induce any such violence beyond his own personal vices. This is an important precursor as I explore the novellas of Sillitoe's *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* and finally *A Clockwork Orange* and how the anger of this movement intensifies to the boiling point of anarchistic subversion.

3.2 Mr. Raynor's Student Body

The novellas in *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* (1959) when compared to *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* are representative of a narrative shift in the literary "voice" of the "Angry Young Man". Sillitoe chose to expound not only on the growing anger attributed to the movement, but on the paranoia associated with the onset of more visibly negative government intervention. The light-hearted fluidity of the prose in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is virtually non-existent in *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* as Sillitoe begins to critically examine the inner psyche of his heroes and tackles thematic elements such as discipline, loneliness, mind control, panoptic surveillance and suicide. There are also dire warnings surrounding the consequences of youthful rebellion and the need for a change in government ideologies. This collection of novellas is a bleaker, more stark representation of how societal standards began to drastically decay as the working-class demographic continued to receive little support from a government expanding without truly providing a service to the public.

The student body in *Mr. Raynor the School-teacher* could be seen as a precursor to even the title novella as far as the state of youthful defiance at the time of its publication: it openly defines a generation possessed by ennui and the complete disregard for any authoritarian presence. Mr. Raynor, a pathetic excuse for an instructor who lacks both the enthusiasm for teaching and the conviction to enforce discipline on society's next generation of working-class denizens, wastes his days fantasizing about being anywhere else but behind the confines of his lectern. It is obvious Raynor is aware of his distribution of unchallenging and uninteresting

assignments to his students, knowing full well they will not amount to anything more that what society deems absolutely necessary to justify their existence. "The one feasible plan was to keep them as quiet as possible for the remaining months, then open the gates and let them free, allow them to spill out into the big wide world like the young animals they were, eager for fags and football, beer and women" (71). The reader is under the assumption the young men under his laughable tutelage will not be granted any further opportunity to succeed as it appears there is an unwillingness to promote the value of proper education.

Any authoritarian presence, whether it is a teacher, the government, prison system, or psychiatric hospital will intervene to become the primary advocate of ensuring the affected individuals' psyches are properly disciplined and trained to adhere to what is deemed appropriate by society's standards. Educational or psychiatric institutions, with their large populations, their hierarchies, their spatial arrangements, their surveillance systems are another way of distributing the interplay of power and pleasures (Foucault, 46). Mr. Raynor's student body will more or less acquiesce to society's demands as the educational system will continue promote an agenda which may indirectly cause a harboring of deep resentment for those responsible (a la Mr. Raynor) for the regurgitation of political rhetoric. This mentality is already apparent as Bullivant, one of Raynor's notorious hooligans, disrupts a class reading by provoking a peer with violence. As Raynor rushes to discipline the culprit, Bullivant displays a blatant disrespect for his superior.

Bullivant is a prototype used by Sillitoe to inform the reader of the narrative shift in how the impressionable youth have begun to channel their anger and

frustration. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Arthur drowned his frustration in alcohol and women while generally maintaining his composure to narrate salient points to the reader throughout the course of the novel. The reader does not necessarily sympathize with Arthur, but is mindful that he may not amount to much beyond a playboy factory worker and somehow, this is perfectly acceptable. In *Mr. Raynor the School-teacher*, however, the reader is challenged with the notion that the system is gradually losing its control of the revolting youth and there is an increase in the amount of anger expressed by said youth. The contempt Bullivant has for Mr. Raynor is directly attributed to why he actively disobeys orders and provokes classmates. Despite the terseness of this novella, *Mr. Raynor the School-teacher* intricately portrays how the mindset of the "Angry Young Man" movement is starting to begin even as early as elementary school, in which Bullivant and his peers' angst for authority figures are indicative of the genre's overall mood.

3.3 Colin Smith's Lonely Rebellion

In continuation of the framework surrounding the progression of anger throughout the course of the "Angry Young Man" movement, the first novella, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner,* presents the reader with a life-altering proposition: if given the opportunity to leave a correctional facility early, would you subvert your core values and abide by the rules of a despicably biased authoritarian regime? This is the predicament of Colin Smith, Sillitoe's belligerent protagonist, a poor teenager from a depleted working-class neighborhood. A rebellious youth with no constructive interests beyond petty crime, Colin harbors a deep resentment towards the authoritarian presence at Borstal, the correctional facility for delinquents, after the police linked him to a local robbery. While at Borstal, Colin reverts to long-distance running as a method to constructively channel his anger at his current predicament. As he is later given the opportunity by the authorities at Borstal to compete in a long-distance running competition, Colin dutifully accepts as a means to ensure the prison school does not win.

What is most obvious early in this novella is Colin's ulterior motive with regard to his desire to lose the competition and the symbolism behind such an act of defiance. In *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner,* Colin moves yet another step closer to the pinnacle moment when the entire movement subverts itself in *A Clockwork Orange* as he assumes the unofficial role of a young revolutionary. Colin's narration is such that he does not shy away from explaining to the reader, in often time's laborious detail, his contempt for the correctional facility's methodologies. There is a growing sense of paranoia "and a sense of tension between

a sense of belonging and a feeling of suffocation" (Hughson, 41) throughout Colin's futile training as he mindful of being constantly surveyed by the authorities who have taken a great interest in his well-being, a methodology which counterbalances the lack of positive involvement the government actually has in place. Colin narrates, "So the thing is that they know I won't try to get away from them: they sit there like spiders in that crumbly manor house, perched like jumped-up jackdaws on the roof, watching out over the drives and fields like German generals from the tops of the tanks" (Sillitoe, 8). This surveillance approach is comparable to that of the panopticon prison structure, a tactic to be outlined by Michel Foucault later in this essay.

With regard to the panopticon, Sillitoe's imagery is that authority is no more above a common vulture awaiting prey on its next "victim" should the individual being monitored not adhere to certain protocols. Colin remains steadfast in assumptions that authority figures, in Borstal and beyond, have the power to control and transform the mindset of the youthful rebel. "There *are* thousands of them, all over the poxeaten country, in shoppes, offices, railways stations, cars, house, pubs" (Sillitoe, 10). For many readers of the novella, it "is a metaphor for Colin's personal isolation, as well as, isolation from his class with whom he can never hold confidence" (Hughson, 45). There is an almost unbearable sense of loneliness, one which is indirectly attributed to his need to rebel and his quest for a revolution.

The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner is symbolic of the pseudo-war between rebellious teenagers and the authoritarian presence assigned to enforce a submission to their disciplinary tactics. The frustration with such authority in the

"Angry Young Man" movement has now progressed from relative indifference, to rebellion, to a complete unwillingness to uphold certain standards. The Borstal correctional facility is a repressive force, one which promotes the abolition of free will. If Colin were to concede and win the race, he would be no more "free" than when he first arrived. By losing the race, Colin is setting a precedent that no government mandated institution will take away his freedom of choice. What Sillitoe employs in this novella is the notion that no matter how many opportunities Colin is given to conform, he will continually refuse to compromise. Colin narrates, "Winning means the exact opposite, no matter how they try to kill or kid me, means running right into their white-gloved wall-barred hands and grinning mugs and staying there for the rest of my natural long life" (45). As the disinterested British government becomes more overbearing and paranoia increases throughout the movement, there is the potential for the eradication of free will.

3.4 The Deterioration of Frankie Buller

In progression to *The Decline and Fall of Frankie Buller*, the hero of this novella, as well as, the thematic elements addressed are probably the most relevant to the proposed Foucauldian discourses in Burgess's dystopian satire to be discussed in the next chapter. It is with this novella that the narrative shifts towards the utilization of psychological disciplinary tactics as a means to correct rebellious citizens who no longer uphold a certain societal standard is seen as an eerie omen to what Foucault discusses in *Discipline & Punish. The Decline and Fall of Frankie Buller* is the tale of tactician and army leader Frankie Buller whose ultimate demise from a stellar war hero to a miserably decrepit seasoned veteran exemplifies both the positive and negative outcomes of instilling proper psychological disciplinary tactics.

Despite being labeled by society as a rebellious young adult, Frankie did not fall into the demographic of someone who had a penchant for performing genuine evil deeds. "Although Frankie was often in trouble with the police he could never...be accurately described as a 'juvenile delinquent'. He was threatened regularly by the law with being sent to Borstal, but his antics did not claim for him a higher categorical glory" (Sillitoe, 159). If anything, Frankie's "threat" on society throughout the first section of the novella was one in which he openly became a strict disciplinarian and tyrannical drill sergeant, one who demanded a certain level of respect from his troops while government standards indirectly labeled him as a caricature of military irrationality.

Throughout the course of the second half of the novella, the reader is re-introduced to Frankie years later after having what most could believe to be a

complete mental breakdown. After Frankie is reunited with one of his soldiers from years prior, it is obvious to the novella's narrator that he has completed a highly confidential mental rehabilitation program. The British government's target was the rehabilitation of the mind, a pre-cursor to the Foucauldian disciplinary scientific discourse, as a means to evoke a sense of power and ensure Frankie leads a "normal" existence. This newly formed government standard shows a complete collapse of conventional disciplinary tactics as there appears to be a shift from the use of physical force to that of a dominance of the psyche. In *Mr. Raynor the School-teacher*, Sillitoe depicts how teachers were granted the ability to use physical force on students who misbehaved. In *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*, Borstal's authoritarian regime demanded a certain level of physical punishment, hence Colin's strict exercise regime, but there were the beginnings of a shift in physical disciplinary power to that of mental discipline through the use of the pseudo-panopticon prison school foundation. *The Decline and Fall of Frankie Buller* is the most subversive of the three novellas, completely shifting away from the use of any physical disciplinary tactics while focusing primarily on curing the mind. The "decline and fall" Sillitoe alludes to corresponds to Frankie's change in demeanor after undergoing his treatment; the use of extreme mental rehabilitation will ultimately cure Frankie's psyche and allow him to become a worthy "instrument" for society.

The Decline and Fall of Frankie Buller is quite prophetic in which Sillitoe seemed to recognize a shift in government policy throughout this period. This novella is a testament to how British government during the "Angry Young Movement" was moving beyond the indifferent complacency established previously

in, for example, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* to something more ambitious and innovative with regard to regulating its citizens. The ability to exercise one's freedom of choice was beginning to be seen as more of an act of defiance in the eyes of the authoritarian regime instead of a god-given right. Despite undergoing such psychological treatment, the novella's narrator states that Frankie's cognitive ability to exercise free will may appear to have been altered, but there is a fleeting moment of clarity as he remembers his military experience. According to Sillitoe's narrator,

> I realized that Frankie's world was after all untouchable, that the conscientious-scientific-methodical probers could no doubt reach it, could drive it into hiding, could kill the physical body that housed it, but had no power in the long run really to harm such minds. There is a part of the jungle that the scalpel can never reach (Sillitoe, 174-5).

Frankie's electroshock treatment is symbolic of a British authoritarian regime taking a more active role in the lives of citizens. Unstable individuals are no longer made to uphold a certain level of discipline; they are being completely reprogrammed to eliminate the root cause for the poor behavior and uphold a certain standard of living. Rebellion and anger now have a price tag attributed to it as Sillitoe employs a disciplinary tactic made famous in Anthony Burgess's novel. *The Decline and Fall of Frankie Buller* represents a significant shift in the "Angry Young Man' genre, creating a society run by a slightly corrupt government regime in which the free will of its citizens is disposable and its disciplinary tactics redefine what it means to be truly human.

CHAPTER IV

A FOUCAULDAIN APPROACH TO *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*

As the state of the "Angry Young Man" movement progressed from the late 1950's to the 1960's and beyond, many of the writers in this era abandoned their socialist, leftist political agenda and veered more towards the center. This political shift marked an end to the anger of a rather prolific genre and its impact on the British working-class. However with the publication of Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* in 1962, the radicalism alluded to in the works referenced earlier was completely subverted to that of complete anarchy. If the "Angry Young Man" movement's primary cause of disdain was that the government was not doing enough to help its citizens, *A Clockwork Orange* satirizes how government can become *too* involved, a concept Sillitoe began to recognize late in *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*. *A Clockwork Orange,* the unofficial final installment in the "Angry Young Man" movement, further examines the erudite literary framework as established by Sillitoe, while brutally satirizing the atypical young rebel and the government mandates surrounding disciplinary power.

Alex, the fifteen-year old hoodlum and narrator of the novel, is an anti-hero like no other equipped with a penchant for illegal substances, promiscuity and ultra-violence. He is the so-called "droogan" leader of a gang of thugs who roam London's underbelly searching for mischief. After a heist goes awry and Alex is awarded a hefty prison sentence for the accidental murder of a wealthy estate owner, the Governor grants a pardon on his sentence if he agrees to participate in a new government sanctioned rehabilitation program: Ludovico's Technique. Being a futuristic dystopian twentieth-century England, Burgess's satiric prison system recognizes the need to discover advanced methods of treating common criminals as the government assumes a larger role in determining the fate of the condemned; the use of Foucauldian methodologies assist in structuring Burgess's vision.

In Michel Foucault's seminal work, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, he discusses the eighteenth-century prison system and how at that time a new, scientific discourse moved away from gratuitous physical punishment of prisoners to a more progressive form of rehabilitation. Perhaps one of the most well-known aspects of Foucault's work is his compelling analysis of power and how the limitations and capabilities of the body are directly related to a certain power dynamic (Cahill, 46-7). The prison system began to realize the savagery behind such blatant physical punishment, deeming the acts of violence as "equal" to the crime committed; the prison system began to resemble a "criminal" for succumbing to such horrifying spectacles (Foucault, 9). These spectacles brought about incentive for drastic change to the overall prison status quo.

With regard to the new discourse for prisons as introduced by Foucault, the body is said to be an instrument or intermediary in which physical pain is no longer considered to be the primary tactic for penalizing prisoners. "The body no longer has to be marked; it must be trained and re-trained...and becomes a locus for manipulation of social authority both political and professional" (Snyder, Mitchell, 295-6). During an "age of spectacle" when the commoners enthusiastically viewed the heinous punishment of the prison population, a transformation occurred in which disciplinary power sought "to establish a subjection of the body that is first premised primarily on knowing the body's nature" (Reid, 132). The physical punishment of the body as the primary disciplinary discourse was replaced with a certain "punishment" of the mind; this new discourse targeted the "inner" psyche or soul of the individual as a replacement for the physical body. New forms of mental rehabilitation and treatment were mandated by the prison establishment to ensure the affected criminals were mentally "fit" for society upon release from prison; the treatment programs also granted the prison system complete control over the behavior of the condemned.

The entire state apparatus appeared to be more disciplinarily organized and equipped with more disciplinary laws to coincide with the new discourses (Breuer, 244). Scientific discourse would assist in determining why the affected prisoner is prone to acts of violence, sexual deviance and other detrimental perversions, in hopes to reform the individual's psyche by instilling strict regiments of mental rehabilitation. With the rehabilitation of the mind and soul, a certain control mechanism has been instilled and is juxtaposed to the "clockwork orange" analogy in

which a human, replete with the juiciness of life, will become a clockwork toy for Good or Evil.

Alex's body becomes an instrument, a viable organism capable of reformation with the proper discipline and guidance. "Man is the orange, that natural fruit...Man's clockwork is the steady, rhythmic heartbeat of his psychic life, the tick and the tock of his good and evil urges" (Coleman, 62). Therefore, Burgess's state-of-the-art mental rehabilitation program will supposedly render Alex "cured" of his evil tendencies and deem him newly reformed. Under Ludovico's Technique, Alex receives a steady diet of atrocity films for the sole purpose of brainwashing the protagonist into believing that such acts of depravity should be reviled. Alex's mind is manipulated to believe the films are disgusting and upon questioning his acute sense of sickness, Dr. Branom, one of Alex's doctors states, "What is happening to you now is what should happen to any normal healthy organism contemplating the actions of the forces of evil...You are being made sane, you are being made healthy" (Burgess, 108). The Technique evokes a number of reactions in Alex as he becomes non-aggressive, non-violent, and respectful to established societal codes (Carson, 203) to counteract his once rebellious nature as a means for premature release from prison. It is only after undergoing Ludovico's Technique that Alex realizes the Establishment's ability to gain full control over one's psyche.

The overall purpose of this treatment is to restore Alex's credibility as an "acceptable" human being and respectable citizen, not the violent megalomaniac sent to prison for murder. With regard to proper surveillance, Foucault states: "For although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of

relations...The power in the hierarchized surveillance of the disciplines is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery" (177). The "hierarchized surveillance" which "functions like a piece of machinery" is comparable to the how the doctor's methodically force Alex to endure countless hours of sensationalized atrocity films and survey his progress. The doctors operate as a cog in the Establishment's all-encompassing machine, "always inhuman and conscienceless" (Rabinovitz, 48) in its methodologies. Since Alex is aware of the medical staff's presence during his cinematic torture, but is unable to gage their reactions to his guttural responses, the surveillance becomes overbearing. Alex not only contributes to the medical staff's successful functionality as a piece of machinery, he assumes the likeness of a machine, wound up like a clockwork toy for the government.

Alex further describes his experience with regard to Ludovico's Technique in the following passage:

> Now all the time I was watching this I was beginning to get very aware of a like not feeling all that well...This was real, very real, though if you thought about it properly you couldn't imagine lewdies actually agreeing to having all this done to them in a film, and if these films were made by the Good or the State you couldn't imagine them being allowed to take these films without like interfering with what was going on (Burgess, 103).

In order to enhance Alex's feeling of self-loathing while viewing these films, he is injected with a "truth serum" disguised as a vitamin supplement prior to all viewing sessions. This serum induces nausea and acts as a twisted accoutrement to the atrocity films, conditioning Alex's brain to believe violence and physical sickness are synonymous with one another. The physicians view these side effects as the body's way of eradicating violent tendencies and through this disciplinary power, Alex will

become healthy. "Discipline subjects the individual to an evolution understood in terms of genesis. It programs the individual for a series of graduated tasks and exercises geared toward some terminal state of being" (Reid, 132). Alex is constantly surveyed and monitored from a "malevolent central tower" (Cohn, 3), a tower that is both figuratively and literally placed on a pedestal far beyond the realm of his comprehension; "Surveillance thus becomes a decisive economic operator and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power" (Foucault, 175). The "tower" in which the doctors reside "is a metaphor for all-encompassing control" (Meerzon, 189) and does not waver in its analysis of Alex's progress. The surveillance, while incorporated with the unbearable sickness, petrifies Alex into believing he is "cured" of his evil ways. Since there are negative connotations to such treatment, the end result is Alex does not truly conform to the stipulations of the treatment, but acquiesces to appease the doctors.

The disciplinary nature of strict surveillance in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* is further developed in the introduction of the panopticon prison structure and the ever-present Foucauldian "Panoptic Eye" with regard to Alex's inability to escape the all-knowing gaze while in the midst of his treatment. The cinema where the atrocity films are being viewed is somewhat of a fixed space, in which Alex does not have the ability to see the doctors viewing his progress, but knows they are scrutinizing. This figurative, disciplinary mechanism is quite successful in demanding a certain results from Alex. To accurately describe the features of the panopticon, Foucault states:

This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which

all events are recorded...in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead – all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism (Foucault, 197).

The panopticon prison structure is meant to reform prisoners by adhering to the methodology of paranoid surveillance: the tactics are such that prisoners become paranoid knowing they are being observed on a continual basis, but are unable to view the individuals performing the observing.

In the panopticon, "the inmates are confined to lighted cells that surround a tower from which a guard observes them while remaining himself invisible" (Cohn, 1), removing any and all privacy. No longer will violent disciplinary spectacles ensue as the newly reformed panopticon coerces prisoners into modeling themselves after the government mandated "ideal citizen". Therefore, "the efficiency of the Panopticon is linked to the way it provides...a machine which automatizes and disindividualizes power" (Selmon, 535). As a component of Alex's final "test" upon completing the preliminary procedures of Ludovico's Technique, the protagonist is placed on a lighted stage in front of a large group of medical and governmental spectators, all eager to see if he has been properly reformed. Since a theatrical setting "produces knowledge by distributing bodies, surfaces, lights and gazes"(535), Alex assumes the role of not only a prisoner pending reformation but a performer forced to be scrutinized by an audience.

The stage is positioned in such a way that Alex is seen perfectly from all angles while a spotlight shines, distorting his visibility of the audience as a means to prevent him from discerning any reactions. In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault hypothesizes that in the properly executed panoptic gaze, "individuals are observed

from a single, central point and a second gaze associate with the public performances, a gaze dependent on multiple points of view and hence less amenable to rigid control" (534). In the case of *A Clockwork Orange*, the central point of observation is the lighted stage as Alex gazes blindly into the all-knowing audience while the doctors/prison officials assume a secondary gaze akin to one used while observing a public performance.

In regards to the architecture of the panopticon prison structure, it adheres to "a new mode of obtaining mind over mind" (Kinyon, 243) with the possessor of this power assuming the role on an "inspector" whose omnipresence is a dark spot in the panoptical universe (243). The authoritarian figureheads observing Alex's struggle to be "good" assume the role of "inspectors", with an unwavering panoptic gaze. The "inspectors" operate on the assumption that the fear of being watched would lead the inmate (Alex) not only to incorporate the rules of the panoptic gaze, but to regulate their own behavior as well (Corbella, 68). Therefore, Alex is re-born in the likeness of a "symbolic automaton" (246-7), a clockwork toy, programmed to adhere to the mandates of Ludovico's Technique and nothing more. This crucial scene in Burgess's novel could be constituted as a "Foucauldian scientific discourse": Alex does not endure a physical form of torture as part of the spectacle, but a powerful mental punishment eroticized for the twisted benefit of an enthralled crowd. The mental and even physical anguish caused by Alex's inability to respond properly to the temptations during his final test is further indication of the grip government has on his psyche. "Our subject is, you see, impelled towards the good by, paradoxically,

being impelled towards evil" (Burgess, 126) with the figurative and ever-present "Panoptic Eye" believing Alex has made a successful recovery.

Alex's methods of obtaining what he desires out of life, no matter how twisted and depraved, represent a feeling of government restraint on the free will of the people to as "labor shortages in a post-war economy also led to a feeling of unease and contempt for the government" (Bhatia, 395). The government mandated mental rehabilitation program is unconventional and methodical, granting Burgess the ability to satirize not only non-sanctioned advances in medical science, but the Establishment's inability to successfully develop a program to effectively control the psyche of criminals for behavior-altering purposes. The very absence of any society which forces Alex to lead a "healthy" life and which Burgess brutally satirizes actually highlights Alex's needs for that particular "system" (Davis, 23). In order to properly conform to the mandates set forth in Burgess's futuristic England, Alex must set aside his inhibitions and succumb to what is required during the treatment: a manipulation of the mind in order to make him healthy. Therefore, the end result of Ludovico's Technique is Alex's inability to adhere to his own free will as he once again becomes an "'alien' in an 'alien' environment struggling to find his way" (Fallis, 68), lost and lonely in state of catatonic despair; Alex is now a pawn, manipulated by the sciences and the state in the name of peace and public safety (Gehrke, 278). The lesson being the earlier such treatments occur, the earlier the mindset of a youthful generation can be altered, thus, the eradication of free will.

CHAPTER V

ALEX'S MATURATION

Despite the futility of societal rejuvenation Burgess proposes in his novel and his anti-hero's transformation from a violent hoodlum to a model citizen, it is important to note the criticality behind the twenty-first chapter as a means to show the ironic success of a Foucauldian scientific discourse present in the slowly maturing Alex. The controversial final chapter eliminated from the American edition of *A Clockwork Orange* and Kubrick's film allows the reader to view Alex several years after his controversial treatment. Alex is much older and wiser as the leader of a new band of young misfits, but recognizes his changing disposition. Alex exudes a certain jaded demeanor as he fervently questions his purpose in society and the dire need to pursue something more worthwhile than violence and debauchery. Alex narrates, "I felt very bored and a bit hopeless, and I had been feeling that a lot these days...More and more these days I had been just giving out the orders and standing back to viddy them being carried out" (Burgess, 182).

Alex's complacency in allowing his "droogs" to pursue the grandiosity of violent tenacity symbolizes the presence of a Foucauldian scientific discourse in the

narrator's life and how he is supposed to act in society. Burgess's Ludovico's Technique, both its indoctrination and unplanned reversal, catapulted Alex into discerning he no longer has a need to partake in the violence which fueled his existence in the first half of the novel; aside from general ennui that has arrived after living such a life of crime, Alex is cognizant of the ramifications of the treatment on his psyche despite the mandated reversal. He narrates:

> I support really a lot of the old ultra-violence and crasting was dying out by now, the rozzes being so brutal with who they caught...But what was the matter with me these days was that I didn't like care much. There was something happening inside me, and I wonder if it was like some disease or if it was what they had done to me that time upsetting my gulliver and perhaps making me real bezoomny (186).

By recognizing his faults and atrocious behavior, Alex's state of maturation is therefore indirectly controlled by the Foucauldian scientific discourse set in place by Burgess. The violent disease which controlled Alex's psyche for the majority of his youth is now sequestered in the notion that there is something almost cataclysmic happening to his being: the natural progression from a heinous sociopath to a respectable, young adult.

After meeting his old friend Pete and his new bride, Alex has an epiphany in which he no longer has the craving to fill his days with anarchistic lust and would rather pursue a family of his own one day. Alex narrates, "I knew what was happening, O my brothers. I was like growing up" (189). There is irony in that the psychological reformation tactic beset upon Alex is not the primary contributor to his rehabilitation, but rather the natural maturation process after Ludovico's Technique which grants him the ability to re-evaluate his life's purpose. By accepting the terms of how one is to properly act in society, the Foucauldian mechanisms of disciplinary

power and surveillance are in effect as Alex gradually progresses into adulthood. Also, the pseudo-authoritarian disciplinary tactics infused within Alex's psyche allow him to more constructively conform to the proposed Foucauldian methodologies as a means to promote social control. Thus, Burgess's scientific discourse is an indirect exemplification of the pinnacle means for controlling youth as an apex of Foucauldian thought.

CHAPTER VI

THE END OF AN ERA

A Clockwork Orange recognizes, by way of Foucault's disciplinary tactics and the detailed examinations of rebellious youth in the "Angry Young Man" movement the need for social reform. There is a feeling in Burgess's novel that Alex is unable or perhaps unwilling to obtain what he wants out of life in a conventional manner, hence why he resorts to violence and destruction. Alex's dictatorial domination of his friends, his brutality, attributes to his sense that the world is ultimately wicked (Rabinovitz, 45) and one must resort to unconventional methodologies to be taken seriously. It is only after having completed Ludovico's Technique and being released back into society that the government intervenes to reverse the treatment; the irony of the reversal is the glorification of Alex's newly reformed "old" self.

The moral vacuity the Establishment laboriously worked to exonerate is touted as being a grave miscalculation, one which endangered Alex's life and the credibility of the rehabilitation program. Burgess's novel is seen not as a retread of the "Angry Young Man" ideals established by Sillitoe and his peers, but a nasty parody and sensational subversion of the genre as the movement progresses into the

middle half of the 1960's. The vileness of Alex's demeanor exemplifies British society's failed attempt to do nothing more than circumvent the issue and through Alex's insubordination, Burgess is satirizing a lost generation who are fueled with contempt and hostility towards the upper echelon of disciplinary activism. Recognizing the need for some form of conformity so as to prevent a hostile takeover of young revolutionaries, Burgess dissects British societal standards in order to instill upon the reader the need for proper Foucauldian discourse without the potentially grim repercussions. Alex, despite his penchant for erring on the side of all things evil had a sense of purpose, a certain grotesque passion for violence which exposed the wretchedness of his soul. However when this wretchedness is reversed while immersed in Ludovico's Technique, the end result is that Alex is nothing more than a hollow shell of a human, void of feeling and of purpose. The Ludovico treatment...forces its victims to become neutral. It removes them from the cyclical process and prevents their transition into a mature phase (Rabinovitz, 47) of existence.

The anger expressed in the "Angry Young Man" movement as seen in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*, does not come from having lost what one possessed, but from having never possessed what one feels he or she deserves to possess (Langford, 241). The heroes recognize the need for social reform, but are cognizant of government's unwillingness to properly conform to the will of the people. The end result is an overpowering feeling of frustration and through this frustration, an expression of anger which could result in an onslaught of physical rage on the Establishment. In *A Clockwork Orange,*

Burgess examines how youthful rebellion is taken to the next level only hinted at in Sillitoe's works. The government mandated Ludovico's Technique tries to redefine how one survives in society and what it means to be truly human. Alex's subjection to the treatment is considered to be an ironic attempt by the state to eliminate the unnatural evil that it is responsible for having generated; it is the destruction of the clockwork analogy all together as it renders Alex incapable of life (Coleman, 63). The end result is that what constitutes Good and Evil is completely shattered as the government creates an army of clockwork toys which ultimately destroy the validity of youthful integrity. Being a dystopian cautionary tale, the impact of *A Clockwork Orange* on the literary scene was such that Burgess managed to frighten an entire generation "straight" though his depiction of one of the most unsettling, nightmarish visions of the future.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Anthony Burgess's unique tale about the dangers of government having too much control over the lives of its citizens by turning them into clockwork toys for the Establishment is one of the most harrowing reading experiences in modern fiction. Despite the novel's satiric stance targeting the impact of the revolting youth in a fragile society and the consequences of mind-altering scientific discourses, *A Clockwork Orange* remains a testimony to the dire need for social reform. Alex's maturation and his indirect realization of the successful Foucauldian methodologies present upon the novel's conclusion, signifies an end to an era of rebellion and progression into a political agenda leaning towards centralized complacency. Upon the realization that he would like settle down and start a family, Alex is also symbolically moving to the "right". He can be viewed as the last survivor of the "Angry Young Man" movement, cognizant that his days of causing anarchy are numbered and have now become redundant.

The futuristic plot structure in *A Clockwork Orange* is used to show the reader what could potentially happen if British society continues to spiral into a morass of

mediocrity and self-doubt: the angry, revolting youth will continually attempt to undermine the authoritarian regime. Burgess's Alex is a sensationalized caricature of the "angry young man", a monstrosity emblazoned with exuberance to take what he desires from society no matter what the cost. Readers of *A Clockwork Orange* may surmise that Alex is genuinely committed to evil residing in "a society that hopes to control him" (Rabinovitz, 43), but he is never truly saved upon completion of the scientific discourse nor does he have the knowledge to fully recognize its impact. It is only after undergoing a natural maturation process that Alex recognizes what he needs to do to properly conform to societal standards: assume the role of a self-sufficient adult. This maturation symbolizes not only the indirect success of a Foucauldian scientific discourse, but the social reform necessary for the positive advancement of Burgess's futuristic British landscape and thus the conclusion of the "Angry Young Man" movement.

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