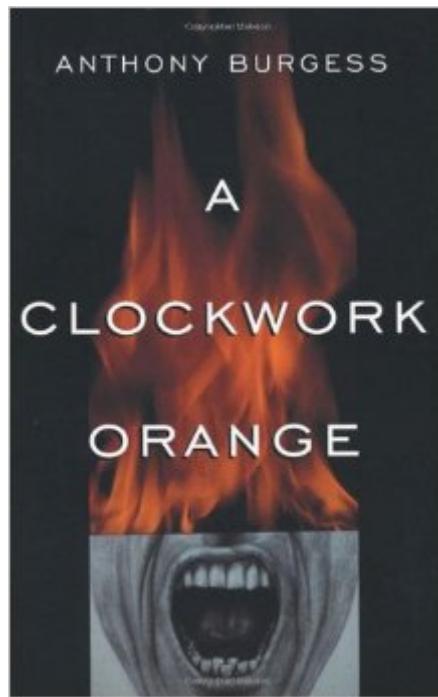


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A Clockwork Orange



Synopsis

Great Music, it said, and Great Poetry would like quieten Modern Youth down and make Modern Youth more Civilized. Civilized my syphilised yarbles. A vicious fifteen-year-old droog is the central character of this 1963 classic. In Anthony Burgess's nightmare vision of the future, where the criminals take over after dark, the story is told by the central character, Alex, who talks in a brutal invented slang that brilliantly renders his and his friends' social pathology. *A Clockwork Orange* is a frightening fable about good and evil, and the meaning of human freedom. When the state undertakes to reform Alex to "redeem" him, the novel asks, "At what cost?" This edition includes the controversial last chapter not published in the first edition and Burgess's introduction "A Clockwork Orange Resucked."

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (1,119 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Fans of Ayn Rand's *ATLAS SHRUGGED* will no doubt disagree with me here, but *A Clockwork Orange* may be the most remarkable man-against-the-State story ever published. Anthony Burgess's approach is in one significant sense the opposite of Rand's: where she tried to project a hero (and in my opinion failed; John Galt seems to be little more than a one-dimensional abstraction), Burgess projects a thoroughly depraved teenager and forces us to root for him anyway. It's not every author who can make you watch a bunch of gratuitous sex'n'violence and *then* conclude that even great moral depravity trumps behavioristic psychology and mechanistic determinism. What "protagonist" (or Your Humble Narrator, at any rate) Alex does in the first half of the novel will make you ill. But what the State does to him to "cure" him makes his nadsat gang

violence seem almost . . . well, "innocent" isn't quite the right word, but the fact that I'm even thinking of that word is an indication of Anthony Burgess's power. For Burgess, the important thing is moral choice, and the possibility of choice entails the possibility of evil. Once Alex has been "reformed" by the very latest techniques of behavioristic science, it's no longer even possible for him to be moral -- and that's somehow more horrible than any of his own horrible acts. But Burgess stops short of making volition an object of idolatry. In the first place, he doesn't make any argument that Alex's actions were somehow "good" merely because he had chosen them; quite the contrary. In the second place, even though Alex bears the full blame for all his depraved actions, there are hints scattered throughout the book that if he weren't living in a "socialist paradise," he just wouldn't have been acting this way in the first place.

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