

Synopsis

A newly revised text for *A Clockwork Orange*'s 50th anniversary brings the work closest to its author's intentions. *A Clockwork Orange* is as brilliant, transgressive, and influential as when it was published fifty years ago. A nightmare vision of the future told in its own fantastically inventive lexicon, it has since become a classic of modern literature and the basis for Stanley Kubrick's once-banned film, whose recent reissue has brought this revolutionary tale on modern civilization to an even wider audience. Andrew Biswell, PhD, director of the International Burgess Foundation, has taken a close look at the three varying published editions alongside the original typescript to recreate the novel as Anthony Burgess envisioned it. We publish this landmark edition with its original British cover and six of Burgess's own illustrations. 6 illustrations

Book Information

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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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