


## Roaring Youth Subculture as Street Gang in *A Clockwork Orange*

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**Abstract:** Youth subcultures mostly arise within mainstream cultures that determine the norms of the way of living in communities. The antagonistic way of thinking and manners of youth subcultures emerge together with unique dialects, dressing styles and behavioural patterns. The youth subcultures aim to shatter the predetermined and inherited notions, that are patriarchal, restrictor and discriminator, in the public sphere therefore they are mostly found violent, rebellious and peevish. This study aims to show how youth subcultures emerge from mainstream cultures in societies as reactions to dominant notions of communities and the ways to control them through the excerpts from Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). The work will be examined briefly throughout this study to show that with argots and styles, the members of the subcultures, which may mostly be derived from violent actions, become dissidents in the controlling governments. The government's aim is to penalise dissidents with forced punishments through its institutions, such as prisons or/and asylums. However, any forceful action that is against free will, even if it is innately good, is bad, and dissidents become the victims of the government because the governmental punishments do not pave the way to betterment, on the contrary, its forced solutions against anomalous agents—any agent that performs unorthodoxly—in the communities exacerbate the predicament further.

### Keywords:

Anthony Burgess,  
*A Clockwork Orange*,  
Youth subcultures,  
Street gangs,  
Dissidents,  
Free will,  
Argot

### Article History:

Received:  
23 Jan. 2022

Accepted:  
07 Apr. 2022

### *Otomatik Portakal*'da Sokak Çetesi Olarak Kükreyen Gençlik Alt Kültürü

**Öz:** Gençlik alt kültürleri, çoğunlukla toplumsal yaşama biçiminin normlarını belirleyen ana akım kültürlerde ortaya çıkar. Gençlik alt kültürlerinin antagonistik düşünce ve davranış biçimleri, özgün lehçeler, giyim tarzları ve davranış kalıpları ile birlikte ortaya çıkmaktadır. Gençlik alt kültürlerinin amacı, kamusal alanda önceden belirlenmiş ve kalıtsal olan patriyarkal, kısıtlayıcı ve ayrıştırıcı kavramları alaşağı etmek olduğundan çoğunlukla şiddet içeren, asi ve hırçın bulunurlar. Bu araştırmanın amacı genellikle şiddetten beslenen gençlik alt kültürlerinin toplumdaki ana akım kültürlerden, toplulukların baskın kavramlarına tepkiler olarak nasıl ortaya çıktığını göstermek ve bu toplulukları kontrol etme yollarını araştıracaktır. Anthony Burgess'in *Otomatik Portakal* (1962) isimli eserinden yapılan alıntılar bu çalışma boyunca incelenecektir. Kendilerine has özel dilleri ile alt kültürlerin üyeleri, kontrolcü hükümetlerde muhalif olurlar. Amaç, muhalifleri cezaevleri ve/veya akıl hastaneleri gibi kurumlarda cezalandırmaktır. Bununla birlikte, herhangi bir zorlayıcı eylem, doğuştan iyi olsa da, kötüdür çünkü özgür iradeye aykırıdır ve muhalifler, hükümetin ve onun topluluklardaki şiddete karşı zoraki çözümlerinin kurbanı olurlar. Ancak, özgür irade yok sayılarak bireye dayatılan her türlü eylem özünde iyi olsa dahi kötüdür. Dolayısıyla hükümetin uyguladığı cezai yaptırımlar durumu

### Keywords:

Anthony Burgess,  
*Otomatik Portakal*,  
Gençlik alt kültürleri,  
Muhalifler,  
Özgür irade,  
Argo

### Makale Geçmişi:

Geliş Tarihi:  
23 Ocak 2022

iyileştirmek bir yana daha da kötüleştirmektedir. Hükümetlerin Kabul Tarihi:  
aykırı -normların dışına çıkan- bireylere getirdiği zoraki çözümler 07 Nisan 2022  
şiddeti alevlendirmektedir.

**How to Cite:** Uysal, F. Berna. "Roaring Youth Subculture as Street Gang in *A Clockwork Orange*." *IDEAS: Journal of English Literary Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2022, pp. 60-72.



*A Clockwork Orange* (1962), which is the most famous "novella"<sup>1</sup> (Morrison vii) by Anthony Burgess (1917-1993) from almost the beginning of his career, is a dystopian and anti-utopian work that narrates the life story of a child, Alex, who is the leader of a street gang. It is dystopian because it reflects a dreadful future due to the actions of an ultra-violent government, and is anti-utopian since the government's experimental utopian solutions to decrease the crime rates are harshly criticized (Zengin 91). In the novel, an indefinite future is portrayed together with "a youth culture in revolt, a corrupt police force, a government unable to govern" (Morrison viii). *A Clockwork Orange* was first published by William Heinemann Ltd in 1962, and in 1971, it was adapted to screen by Stanley Kubrick. One question rose after the book had been published and afterwards when the film was on the screen: is it better to choose to be bad than to be forced to be good? Accordingly, the existence of a free will and the right to choose are examined throughout the book. In one of his interviews in 1973, Burgess mentions the importance of the free will to choose to be good or bad. According to him, the choice is essential and everybody has a right to select. If someone wants to choose bad, that is also humane but if the government forces them to be good it is actually worse because it is involuntary. It is worse than the free will to do evil, such as resorting to violence (Gurbanov). Burgess discusses the importance and existence of free will and the enforced power of the state over the citizens throughout the novel. He narrates the story of a teen gang that was born as a reaction to the government and mainstream culture. Hence, this paper will mainly argue that the youth subcultures as a reaction to mainstream culture (which is also known as parent culture) with special dialect and styles are dissidents in the totalitarian states which aim to penalize the rebels with forced punishments in institutions, such as prisons. However, any forceful action is against free will, even if it is innately good, it is bad, and dissidents become the victims of the state and its enforced solutions against violence in the communities.

The title of the book, *A Clockwork Orange*, is related to two controversial ideas; a life as organic as an orange but as mechanical as a clock. It is lively under normal circumstances from the beginning but becomes machine-like through conditioned actions

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<sup>1</sup> The work will be mentioned as novel in this paper.

of the government. The title was influenced by an expression as Burgess states, "I first heard the expression 'as queer as a clockwork orange' in a London pub before the Second World War. It is an old Cockney slang phrase, implying a queerness or madness so extreme as to subvert nature" ("A Clockwork Orange and Nadsat"). This phrase foreshadows the extreme violence committed by the protagonist-narrator, who is Alex together with his gang, and the oppression practised by the state and its governmental institutions later in the novel. As mentioned above, Burgess added an extra dimension to the meaning of the title; a lively, organic, and sweet with a mechanical, cold, and disciplined life which appears as an oxymoron (Stevenson).

The narrator Alex is a young boy, who is extremely confident, cold-blooded and an admirer of Ludwig van Beethoven and appears as the leader of a street gang, and violence immediately starts from the very first chapter of the novel. The descriptions of violence are quite vivid in the novel and at times, the tone is rather comic through manipulating violence and the solutions. There are three parts in the book and each part has a different flow related to the plot. In the first part, an introduction to a youth subculture is given in which violent actions are portrayed in a detailed manner. Alex with his gang drinks milk with drugs which are not clearly described; "what they sold there was milk plus something else" (Burgess 3); he bullies and threatens other people when they come across a boy who carries books as, "'You deserve to be taught a lesson, brother,' I said, 'that you do.' This crystal book I had was very tough-bound and hard to razrez to bits, being really starry . . . but I managed to rip the pages up" (7), and they enjoy the fight and blood as sadists and masochists; "then out comes the blood, my brothers, real beautiful" (7), and so on. There are various crimes like muggings, rapes, fights, threatenings, vandalism, trespassings and killings that the gang commits. All of the violent actions are accredited to the youth in the novel, and the gang is described as ultra-violent, but their existence as a reaction should also be considered since the youth cultures are developed in polarization in society after the WWII as "the advent of the mass media, changes in the constitution of the family, in the organization of school and work, shifts in the relative status of work and leisure" (Hebdige 74). The political, economic, cultural and social changes in the society due to the post-war period were extreme and not easy to adapt to, and the reactions to these changes may have caused chaos since the adaptation processes are painful from time to time. Together with the chaos when the changes started to cause fragmentations, the fragments in the society and upheavals resulting in extreme oppositions led subcultures to flourish as reactions. Chaos is not only seen in the societies but also in the street gangs and among the members stemming from questioning the authority of the leader by the gang members because the problem is authority itself. The inner struggles among the gang members may also cause them to be seen as scapegoats or criminals in the communities because their violent actions such as armed or unarmed fights against each other may bring about disorder in social realms. In *A Clockwork Orange*, Alex's authority is also questioned by Dim and the others (Burgess 23-24). The

members of the gang are innately violent and they question the authority regardless of belonging to the same gang namely, they are individually violent.

Specific to the novel, two opposed powers appear as the government and the dissidents. Alex, who is the teen anti-hero, becomes a guinea pig both for the governmental solutions for violence and for the ideals of the dissidents. The government sees Alex as an apparatus for mental experiments whereas dissidents see him as an advertisement and victim of their rightful case against the government. Since rebellious teenage gangs are “not politically dissident” (Morrison xvi) but unpredictable and cause chaos in social and cultural realms, Alex with his gang becomes a representative of the subculture in the dominant culture. Subcultures are created by the mother cultures and they appear as distractive, slight and insecure. As in Antonio Gramsci’s argument about being unstable and marginal, youth subcultures need approval from mainstream cultures in order to survive (qtd. in Ağın 3); moreover, they also require attention from the governments in case of violent reactions that they perform since “the tensions between dominant and subordinate groups can be found reflected in the surfaces of subculture” (Hebdige 2). The actions of the members of the subcultures are actually reactions to parent cultures and should be considered important in order to understand the problems that appear in the communities so that the solutions may be found via the problems and chaos that appear in subcultures.

Dominant cultures being homogeneous is impossible to be considered as *a priori*, especially in post-war Britain. The changing lifestyles and economic and social changes in urban and rural areas may have caused heterogeneity in communities. In this case, “youth appeared as an emergent category in post-war Britain, one of the most striking and visible manifestations of social change in the period” (Clarke 9). When the mentality of the youth does not fit into the dominant way of thinking, the understanding and attitude are also constructed through the problem revelations of youth subcultures. The things they actually protested may have become the arguments to be solved by the government and its institutions, since the expressive forms of reaction and chaos they cause become the objectives in youths’ appearance as shape and form through using a different language, having a particular style and behaviour. Subcultures are smaller units and more localized so that the members of the various subcultures have signs to show which group they belong to. This may be hairstyle, clothing, or carrying a specific object to that very group. Certain activities in routine (Alex and his gang’s continual violent actions), territorial spaces (streets for Alex and his gang), and music can also be significant to subcultures.

In the first chapter of the novel, the features of subculture in parent culture are also presented. These features are ways to express the will and idea to be separated from the mainstream culture, and this includes a special dialect, mostly argot, that youth prefer to use while speaking among themselves and an exceptional clothing style that separates the youth from the members of the parent culture. Since the main aim is to be different from and against the norms of mainstream culture and this happens through language, style

and behaviour, in *A Clockwork Orange*, Burgess creates a dialect by combining Cockney dialect and Russian, appears as Anglo-Russo-American, and calls it “nadsat” (Morrison ix). *Nadsat* means teen in Russian, and Burgess’s trip to Leningrad in 1961 may have influenced his choice of language while creating a dialect (“*A Clockwork Orange and Nadsat*”). Besides Russian and Cockney slang, at times, the Shakespearean and Elizabethan English, and underground criminals’ dialects are also seen throughout the novel. The Nadsat language is also used to increase the impact of defamiliarisation on the part of the reader. The reader actually has hardships in adjusting the language throughout the book. After reading some pages, the reader gets familiar with the dialect and Russian words. As an example of the dialect that is used in the novel, “we were still only growing malchicks and had school in the daytime” (Burgess 21) in which the narrator tells that they were only boys, and “I could have chained his glazzies real horrorshow” (42) where Dim says that he could have chained his eyes real good, can be given. As criminals, vagabonds, prisoners use their own jargon through changing the discourse of the norm language, youth groups do the same thing. M. A. K. Halliday calls anti-societies these groups who are against the dominant groups and their norms in societies, and the language they use is called an anti-language which “is not only parallel to an anti-society; it is in fact generated by it” (570).

The use of a specific dialect in the gangs may have reasons; since the language is an inherited and pre-determined value for an individual, the individuals in the gangs as happens in the book, refuse to use the determined notions in the language and create their own tongue as a part of the reaction to the norms that are readily given to them. The world is comprehended through representation and this representation is formed through language. As Ferdinand de Saussure states, language “exists only by virtue of a sort of contract signed by the members of a community” (14) and it “is a social institution” (16) which points to Graeme Turner’s explanation of “language provides us with access to a *version* of reality, rather than to *the* reality” (19); because, necessary conventions to articulate a language might change depending on the social body and its individuals which may belong to various cultures and geographies, and have different lifestyles. The alternative versions of reality are presented through language in youth subcultures, namely in Alex’s gang in the novel. Alex and his gang create their reality through Burgess’s invitation of nadsat, which is an anti-language that “creates an alternative reality” (Halliday 575) for the gang members since they are “in an antagonistic relationship with the norm society” (Fowler 259) and reject the reality and norms that are introduced to them. When they reject the main version of reality and create their alternative version of it, plural versions of reality appear. This also shows how the signed contracts between societies and individuals of languages lead the way to create different ways to comprehend the external and internal world of these individuals. This unique dialect also creates an alienation effect between the reader and Alex’s gang and the reader may establish a connection which is rather critical than emotional since it is not an everyday language that people come across all the time.

The way to understand the world may change in youth subcultures and preferring a different language to use might be a way to achieve it. The gang speech has a certain and unique discourse and when the individual internally changes, language changes too, which is seen in comparing Alex's speeches from the beginning to the end of the novel. He leaves the dialect from his teen ages when he decides to have a life that is a production of mother culture. In *A Clockwork Orange*, the use of slang is foregrounded and the amount of swearing may be seen as overused; however, the reality that slang is in the language can be considered as Julia Kristeva's concept of abject. It may also be essential to mention here: if urine, blood, or sperm are inside the body, they are good and seen as the parts of the body but when they are outside the body, they are accepted as disgusting, othered, namely as abject, neither an object nor a subject (Kristeva 53) like the ones who prefers using slang. Slang, swearing words, and dialects are abject because they are a disgrace to use even though they appear in the very centre of the language together with its form, structure and context. When the slang words are articulated, it withdraws the receiver from the sender of the message because encoding and decoding that message causes controversy between different channels since the slang is not accepted as a norm, it is outsider, outlawed, out of rules, and unwanted. Youths that use the argot reject the inherited discourse of the language of the parent culture and become the antagonists which is the aim of the subcultures.

Besides language and special dialect, when the narrator, Alex, introduces his gang in the first part of the first chapter, he also mentions the clothing and behavioural styles that belong to the gang as follows: "The four of us were dressed in the height of fashion, which in those days was a pair of black very tight tights the old jelly mould, as we called it, fitting on the crotch underneath the tights, this being to protect and also a sort of a design you could viddy clear enough in a certain light so that I had one in the shape of a spider" (Burgess 4). Here, the gang members have a kind of uniform that labels them as a part of a community that is not seen as an actual community by the parent culture. Subculture challenges hegemony with style and the principles of unity through being against the myth of consensus. Gramsci, as a Marxist philosopher, points out that the dominant group requires alliances and consent of subordinated groups in order to exert hegemony over them, and he exemplifies this by referring to peasant and agrarian society together with the bourgeois state (443). He claims that "a class maintains its dominance not simply through a special organization of force, but because it is able to go beyond its narrow, corporative interests, exert a moral and intellectual leadership, and make compromises (within certain limits) with a variety of allies who are unified" (Sassoon 230). According to Turner, it can be said that cultural domination may be achieved through continual winning of the consent of subordinated groups because they are convinced that the consent will serve their interest (4) so that parent culture accepts the way the youth behaves and dresses as it happens in Alex's gang and their acceptance by the society. The dominant culture accepts subcultures in order to reduce the level and effects of resistance so that the subcultures are expected not to be that rebel. The idea of

the rebellion of youth is given via clothes and style, and specific use of language, and the aim is to pass the limits in parent culture since “within a subculture, . . . the most mundane object can take on specific meanings” (Turner 90). The dress code of Alex’s gang is against nature, interrupts normalisation and, as Turner mentions, it happens through “offend[ing] ‘silent majority’” (93) and it has a political function as the representative of subculture. They may differ from the parent cultures but “they actually derive from the living patterns of their parent culture and therefore they cannot be judged because they try to differentiate themselves” (Ağın 23).

In *A Clockwork Orange*, an indefinite future may be presented; however, it is clear that the setting is the post-war era and the work is a kind of criticism of war and other social and political conflicts and corruptions in urban areas, and in general, in the governments. For example, Alex finds the adults responsible for his violent actions and he stated that “it was the adult world that could take the responsibility for this with their wars and bombs and nonsense. . . . So we young innocent malchicks could take no blame” (Burgess 32). One of the reasons for the increasing violence rate in society might be the inherited world after the war, especially in terms of social and economic reality. It seems gloomy, helpless and unpredictable because urban areas become crowded each day with hopeful citizens who want to build a new life and chase opportunities and try to gain what they lost before, while the urbanization disappoints them and destroys their hopes. The job opportunities become limited, and harsh living conditions with an extreme financial gap between rich and poor may have caused chaos and violence in urban areas. In need of feeding themselves, people may free the beast within. The criticism of institutions such as family, school, and the police force are also ironic in the novel because the mentioned institutions are not portrayed as standardized or problem-solvers. They are actually where problems and chaos start according to Alex since he does not accept the responsibility for his cruel and violent actions. Society is actually the one that produces the individuals in collectives, and the individual actions and behaviours are the results of this very production. Society banishes the results—here Alex as the representative of violent youth—and it tries to fix the so-called problem, here Alex, and the result ends up instead of fixing the reasons, causing more problems.

In order to solve and control problems that are based on violence, resistance, and rebellion in society, some governmental actions are taken into consideration. In the book, when the first part ends with a revelation of Alex’s being a murderer at the age of fifteen (Burgess 56), the punishments by the government are presented. Alex goes to the jail and the situation of prisons and the ways to punish the criminals are portrayed. First of all, as happens during the WWII to Jewish people, officers in the prison give him a number which erases his identity because “Alex is an enemy of the state and, as he predicts early on, the state will attempt to destroy not only what is evil in him but also his individuality” (Rabinovitz 48). Alex becomes a number rather than an individual. Besides this, police brutality and the horrible conditions of the prison are narrated in Alex’s thoughts, “what I want you to know is that this cell was intended for only three when it was built, but there

were six of us there, all jammed together sweaty and tight. And that was the state of all the cells in all the prisons in those days, brothers, and a dirty disgrace it was, there not being decent room for a chelloveck to stretch his limbs" (Burgess 64). The conditions in the prisons may not be greener pastures yet, it is "the most immediate and civilized form of all penalties" (Foucault 233). Once the penalties were only physical as torture and arranged according to the crimes; however, various crimes appeared throughout history, especially with modernism, and torturing became extreme for some of the crimes. In *A Clockwork Orange*, prison officials perform an experiment on criminals in order to stop their violent selves to "[k]ill the criminal reflex" (Burgess 69) and to transform them into social beings who can live with other individuals without harming them. Different kinds of punishment were in need and prisons were seen to chasten the criminals. Prisons originated from the idea to limit freedom (Foucault 232) by separating the criminal from the society and it is "an apparatus for transforming individuals" (233). The punishment as an experiment in the novel is called the Ludovico Technique which is a cruel therapy to be used to make criminals conditioned in case of violent action. This is where the government takes actions against an individual's free will as a punishment even though the intention is to organise the societal norms and organisation. Alex decides to experience this experiment only because he can be out again after the treatment which also shows that, the very trustworthy governmental solutions against crime may not be that effective to reduce violence rates. Alex dreams about being outside of jail and thinks: "I lay back on the bed and shut my glazziez and thought how nice it was going to be out there again, Alex with perhaps a nice easy job during the day, me being now too old for the old skolliwoll, and then perhaps getting a new like gang together for the nochy" (Burgess 74). He is not interested in therapy and so on, all he wants is to be back to his violent actions on the streets and he can do whatever is required in order to be out of prison. So, when free will is considered, the seeds of the thoughts and actions are rooted in individuals' inner selves.

As a way of experimenting, the doctor makes Alex watch some violent films with classical music in the background. Classical music has special importance as far as Alex is concerned because from the very beginning to the end of the novel, he regularly listens to classical music when he is at home. He defines the music as "gorgeousness and gorgeosity made flesh" and "wonder of wonders" (Burgess 26). Burgess's choice of music as Beethoven and other classical music composers but not the 50s and 60s pop music or rock'n'roll is to show Alex's intelligence as an anti-hero ("The Music of *A Clockwork Orange*"). They also inject chemicals into Alex before the experiment which activates the physical effects of the experiment. When the chemicals become activated while watching the scenes, Alex starts to feel physical pain and wants to sick. He cannot stop the need to sick. Torturing Alex via the experiment to make him a good boy, doctors justify the torture as the physical pain is actually a teacher for Alex to learn violence is bad; "[v]iolence is a very horrible thing. That's what you're learning now. Your body is learning it" (Burgess 80-81). The government with its institutions, here together with prison and doctors,



performs horrible actions to better Alex that are against his free will. When Alex starts to react to violent actions with bodily pain, he says that “I see that it’s wrong. It’s wrong because it’s against like society, it’s wrong because every veck on earth has the right to live and be happy without being beaten and tolchoked and knifed. I’ve learned a lot, oh really I have” (87). Forceful goodness is painful for Alex and the perpetrator becomes the victim of the government and its punishments. For example, he licks the doctor’s boots (93) in order to show that the treatment works for him and unlike before, he becomes obedient and non-violent. The act of free will is questioned by the doctors here as, “He has no real choice, has he? Self-interest, fear of physical pain, drove him to that grotesque act of self-abasement. Its insincerity was clearly to be seen. He ceases to be a wrongdoer. He ceases also to be a creature capable of moral choice” (94). With the experiment, Alex becomes dehumanized like a clock and free from his violent nature. Alex is conditioned to feel sick whenever he sees a criminal action, petty or not, and hears classical music. Besides all of the problems that occur in Alex’s case through the experiment, the government legitimizes violence and oppression.

In the last part, Alex is out of jail as a cured boy, aged nineteen now. He is on the media as the subject of the experiment and the government uses him as a success story by manipulating the media. Especially when Alex sees a government gazette, the piece under his picture tells about Alex’s cure as follows:

What is said underneath my picture was that here was the first graduate from the new State Institute for Reclamation of Criminal Types, cured of his criminal instincts in a fortnight only, now a good law-fearing citizen and all that cal. Then I viddied there was a very boastful article about this Ludovico’s Technique and how clever the Government was and all that call. (Burgess 98)

The government uses Alex to advertise their so-called success which makes Alex the victim in the case of freedom. The government has total power so it can manipulate the data according to its will and needs. The attempts to justify the violent experiments are the scripts in the gazette, which point out Alex as a success story of the governmental and institutional solutions against violence. However, the so-called solutions are cruel and against free will whereby controlling and suppressing individuals. As Hannah Arendt states, “Wherever totalitarianism possesses absolute control, it replaces propaganda with indoctrination and uses violence not so much to frighten people (this is done only in the initial stages when political opposition still exists) as to realize constantly its ideological doctrines and its practical lies” (341). The state in the novel has the control of institutions and exerting psychological violence, especially manipulation, becomes a part of the governing and controlling system by which the citizens can be oppressed and manipulated without even being aware of the fact that the government and its institutions are inherently violent, brutal, oppressive and against freedom. Not following the norms in the society marks individuals as unorthodox agents which is seen as dangerous by governments because the fear of not being selected in the upcoming elections determines

the precautions that governments take. Alex may be willing to be the guinea pig for the experiment, yet his only chance to escape prison is through the experiment. The treatment is meant to cure Alex but it actually bans the idea of freedom by keeping him away from the choice to be bad. Alex becomes the victim of a totalitarian hegemony by losing his free will and right to choose to be bad. He experiences all these because he is a gang member in a subculture which is created by the society that is the mother culture and he is seen as a potential danger to the government and its ruling agency. Alex is the outcome of the community itself. He is not only victimised by society and the government but also when he meets the dissidents, he becomes a victim one more time. One of the dissidents says that "I think you can be used, poor boy. I think that you can help dislodge this overbearing Government. To turn a decent young man into a piece of clockwork should not, surely, be seen as any triumph for any government, save one that boast of its repressiveness" (Burgess 116). They use Alex as the representative of their case which is against the actions of the government. They leave Alex at home with classical music, where he starts to feel ill and think about committing suicide when in physical pain. Since he was conditioned to feel physical pain whenever he hears classical music, he jumps out of the window (Burgess 124). The idea of martyrdom is on rebels' minds and Alex is seen as "A martyr to the cause of Liberty" (121). By committing suicide, Alex serves well the case of the dissidents. Thus, a situation arises against the government and for upcoming elections which is simple and basic; the current government is bad and opposed to liberty because it performs cruel experiments on individuals and disturbs the free will and right of choice according to their wills and needs. Its forced solutions on unorthodox agents, therefore, end up causing more distress.

One more question rises towards the end of the novel: are individuals born violent or do the environmental factors make them violent? The novel does not give a clear answer to this question. However, it seems as if blaming teen ages due to hormonal activities in the body and rising aggression levels are an escape point from responsibility. Because, after all, at the end of the novel, Alex realizes that he is a grown-up and thinks "youth is only being in a way like it might be an animal. . . . Being young is like being like one of these malenky machines" (Burgess 140). The circle of violence continues with future generations according to Alex because he thinks:

When I had my son I would explain all that to him when he was starry enough to like understand. But then I knew he would not understand or would not want to understand at all and would do all the vesches I had done, yes perhaps even killing some poor starry forella surrounded with mewing kots and koshkas, and I would not be able to really stop him. And nor would he be able to stop his own son, brothers. (Burgess 140-141)

Nevertheless, the circle of violence continues with individuals and the point where the aggression, anger and hatred start is essential to figure out the base and origins of violence in the societies. Since the socio-cultural factors are rather important to becoming a violent human being, innate aggression should also be considered. As Neil Boyd states, there is a

correlation between violence and testosterone level; “[m]ore testosterone equals . . . more violence” (120) and experiments show the results. When the testosterone level is at its peak in teenage males, the violent action rates may increase accordingly (121). When Burgess portrays a teenager as a street gang leader full of aggression, he connects the youth and violence as well. Therefore, besides societal causes, there are innate and physical reasons to perform violent actions which may appear as rebellious actions against mother culture. In this case, the claims and answers are tricky because the point of view which sees individuals as naturally brutal is not helpful to solve the problem and circle of violence in communities. Also, blaming the socio-cultural, economic and political factors for the nature of violence is not constructive to establish a violence-free society. All constituents should be taken seriously in case of preventing violence in society.

In conclusion, Burgess draws attention to the existence of youth subcultures and through a street gang, he questions the birth of violence together with the ways of resistance in the communities. Alex, as the leader of a street gang, is a representative of violent youth besides being the victim of that very violence. Alex, being a very common name, represents the plight not of a single individual but of a certain subgroup within the society. When teenagers oppose the mainstream cultures, they do not accept the norms that are readily given to them so they create their own style, behaviour, and sometimes language and dialect. When the government and its institutions are oppressive, the youth subcultures get stronger each day. When the resistance becomes powerful and violent, the government becomes more oppressive, moreover, it starts to act like a tyrant. The tyrannical, controlling governmental systems start to deny freedom in general. Specifically, the freedom of choice and free speech is under the control of the tyrannical governments. Since liberty is limited, the issue of free will is also compromised. Alex, as a representative of the youth subcultures in the novel and society, is denied the right to be bad or to choose bad and even if goodness is preferred under normal circumstances, it is set against freedom since it is enforced. Members of the subcultures exist both as members of a community and as individuals, therefore, even though the suffering of punishments are at an individual level, the pain and punishment may be reflected, as a mirror effect, to the whole gang that forms the subculture. The violence in the societies is reflected in the violence of street gangs in Burgess’s novel. More suppression from the governments may cause more violent actions instead of resolving them.

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