

### 53. Unhomely Homes in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*<sup>1</sup>

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#### Abstract

Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, originally published in 1962, manifests the concept of "home" as both a physical space and a psychological state of the unhomely. This manifestation is an unsettling portrayal of home as a space and place, which serves as a locus of terror and estrangement within the narrative. The narration displays the idea of home through different locations such as room, house and prison each one of which deconstructs the idea of home by decentering it from its established conceptions of a safe, comfortable and cozy place. The juxtaposition of safe and unsafe situations related to home mainly reveals home within an estrangement through which home becomes a place of unhomely and uncanny, a location of terror framed by elements of family ties, cultural and political contexts. Through an examination of social and political dynamics, exemplified by the extreme actions of protagonist Alex and his gang of "droogs," the study aims to unravel the complexities of home as both a place and space of the unhomely and uncanny in Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*.

**Keywords:** Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*, home, unhomely, uncanny

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## Anthony Burgess'in *Otomatik Portakal*'ındaki Tekinsiz Evler<sup>3</sup>

### Öz

Anthony Burgess'in ilk olarak 1962'de yayınlanan *Otomatik Portakal*'ı, "ev" kavramını hem fiziksel bir alan hem de tekinsizliğin psikolojik durumu olarak ortaya koymaktadır. Bu tezahür, anlatıda, terörün ve yabancılaşmanın odağı olarak hizmet eden bir alan ve mekân olarak evin rahatsız edici bir tasviridir. Anlatı, ev fikrini bu fikrin yerleşik güvenli, konforlu ve rahat mekân anlayışlarından uzaklaştırarak yapıbozuma uğratan oda, ev ve hapisane gibi farklı mekânlar aracılığıyla sergilemektedir. Ev ile ilgili güvenli ve güvensiz durumların yan yana gelmesi, evi bir yabancılaşma içinde ortaya koymakta ve bu yabancılaşmanın, evi, aile bağlarıyla ve kültürel ve politik bağlarla çerçevesiyle bir terör mekânına dönüştürmesini, ev kavramından uzak ve tekinsiz bir yer haline getirmesini ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, Burgess'in *Otomatik Portakal* adlı eserinde ana karakter Alex ve onun "kankalar" çetesinin aşırı eylemleriyle örneklenen sosyal ve politik dinamikleri inceleyerek, hem ev kavramından uzak hem de tekinsiz bir mekân olarak evin karmaşıklıklarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Anthony Burgess, *Otomatik Portakal*, ev, tekinsiz

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## Introduction

Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* depicts a succession of violent acts "performed" by the protagonist, Alex, and his "droogs", Pete, Georgie, and Dim. Streets, houses, and dwellings are the locations of this violence, through which Alex and his gang take liberties in exerting power and brutality as a means of enlivening their existence. By portraying the home as a private sphere infiltrated by gangs and consequently rendered a primitive site of terror, the novel deconstructs the concept of domestic space by reimagining it as a locus of the unhomey and uncanny in a range of guises, primarily experienced by its victims through threat, rape, and violence carried out by Alex and the members of his gang, along with Alex's own attempted suicide. This manifestation depicts the home as both a place and space arranged, organized, and governed by social relationships, family ties, and cultural and political dynamics, and a ubiquitous backdrop to events that feed off these dynamics. Accordingly, the novel presents the home as a site of estrangement in which it becomes a hotbed of crime rather than a safe and comfortable place by relating it to individual and social vulnerabilities.

Home, which provides a background to several key events in *A Clockwork Orange*, reveals, to use Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling's phrase, a "*geography of home*" (2006, p. 2) through which different understandings of the term form the basis of the concepts of the unhomey and the uncanny in the novel. Blunt and Dowling examine "the complex socio-spatial relations and emotions that define home" (p. 3) and indicate that "thinking about home has been geographic, highlighting relations between place, space, scale, identity and power" (p. 3). What home constitutes as a concept, then, is not directly linked to the notion of a physical architectural structure or entity as it is with the idea of a house. Kimberley Dovey marks the difference between house and home as follows: "Although a house is an object, a part of the environment, home is best conceived of as a kind of relationship between people and their environment. It is an emotionally based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and their dwelling places" (1985, p. 34).

By stressing a mutual dependency between dweller and dwelling, Dovey highlights the connection between home and identity. Further, he suggests that home "is a highly complex system of ordered relations with place" (p. 39), and within these ordered relations, "home as identity is primarily affective and emotional, reflecting the adage *home is where the heart is*. Identity implies a certain bonding or merger of person and place such that the place takes its identity from the dweller and the dweller takes his or her identity from the place" (p. 40).

In this sense, home relates to various meanings that both define and are defined by behaviors, emotions, everyday practices, identity politics, and socio-cultural politics. It is, for Blunt and Dowling "a *spatial imaginary*: a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct places, extend across spaces and scales, and connect places" (2006, p. 2) (italics in original). They stress that "[h]ome is hence a complex and multi-layered geographical concept. Put most simply, home is: a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relations between the two" (pp. 2-3).

As a "multi-scalar" (6) concept, a "porous" (27) place, and "[n]ot merely a physical structure or geographical location but always an emotional space" (Rubenstein, 2001, p. 1) reflecting private and public identities, politics, manners, and subjects, home embodies a multiplicity of meanings. Within this multiplicity, there exists a general, ubiquitously constructive quality attached to the idea of home which is, as Gorman-Murray and Dowling put it, "typically configured through a positive sense of attachment, as a place of belonging, intimacy, security, relationship and selfhood (2007, p. para. 4)". Yet these

positives are vulnerable, always subject to the possibility of being attacked and harmed either physically or emotionally. Consequently, home represents a place, site, or sphere of negative feelings and actions characterized by anxiety, fear, alienation, terror, and violence. Accordingly, the positive attributes of home, such as family ties, feelings of belonging or attachment, a sense of identity and presence, and sensations of security and comfort, are expunged from the notion of the homely, leading us instead to its counterpoint, the unhomely.

The unhomely is directly linked to the concept of the uncanny. In his 1919 essay 'The Uncanny', Sigmund Freud defines the uncanny as marking the character of anything that, while once recognizable and familiar, has since become unsettling or eerie. Freud states that "[t]he German word *unheimlich* [uncanny] is obviously the opposite of '*heimlich*['homely'], '*heimisch*['native'] – the opposite of what is familiar; and we are tempted to conclude that what is 'uncanny' is frightening precisely because it is *not* known and familiar" (1955, p. 220). Citing Daniel Sanders' *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache* (1860), Freud highlights several meanings of the word "heimlich", including: "belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly, etc. [...] Intimate, friendly, comfortable; the enjoyment of quiet content, etc., arousing a sense of agreeable restfulness and security as in one within the four walls of his house" (p. 222).

Explaining a mutual interaction between the terms "heimlich/homely" and "unheimlich/uncanny", Freud indicates that "uncanny" refers to something secret that should be kept hidden, yet comes to realization, causing a sensation of horror or fear. As he puts it, the uncanny "is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression" (p. 241). In his work *The Uncanny*, Nicholas Royle highlights the interconnection between the known and the unknown that lies at the root of the uncanny, explaining it as

a peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar. It can take the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context. It can consist in a sense of homeliness uprooted, the revelation of something unhomely at the heart of hearth and home. (2003, p. 1)

The term "uncanny", then, embodies a spectrum of meanings associated with the familiar and homely becoming unfamiliar and unhomely and, consequently, generating sensations of fear, horror, shock, and surprise. Dwayne Avery has also commented on this interconnectedness, suggesting that "the uncanny is a multifaceted term that is deeply connected to home" (2014, p. 12). Homely implies feelings of comfort, coziness, and tranquility, whereas unhomely refers to a contrary conceptualization characterized by fear and disquietude. In his examination of the unhomely in contemporary cinema, Avery points out the manifestation of home as "an incredibly alien experience" (p. 2), and states that

On the one hand, *Heimlich*, or homeliness, refers to the capacity to create an intimate and cozy domestic life; here, space is rendered meaningful through a bourgeois ideology that emphasizes the "privacy" and "security" of the home's interior. This is the "tamed" home, a mode of dwelling that differs sharply from some "wild" exteriority. On the other hand, *Unheimlich*, or the uncanny, represents the negation of comfort and security; it is the impossibility of finding home; the uncanny home is a strange and eerie place where the supernatural haunts the dweller; it is a place that abounds in unspeakable horrors and secrets. (p. 20)

A home's interior being susceptible to becoming haunted by external threats renders it a vulnerable space which, in turn, steers the notion of home toward fragmentation and deviation from its normative notions. Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* reflects this deviation, actualized through the

dismantling of home into fragments, a process fueled by threatening gestures, rape, violence, alienation, and the dissolution of familial attachment.

## Discussion

*A Clockwork Orange* relates its narrative through the revelation of violence that dissolves the boundary between street and home, pitting external threat against internal sanctuary. Undermining assumptions of home as a safe place, *A Clockwork Orange* employs the concept of the house as a physical locus of home that has become a haunted territory. In "The Architecture of the Uncanny: The Unhomely Houses of the Romantic Sublime", Anthony Vidler discusses the trope of the haunted house and its close relationship with the uncanny in literary fantasy since the rise of the nineteenth-century Gothic novel. As he puts it, "[t]he house provided an especially favored locus for uncanny disturbances: its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by contrast the terror of invasion by alien spirits" (p. 7). The house, then, which is normatively and pervasively supposed to be a site of—and host to—feelings of belonging, attachment, intimacy, security, happiness, and coziness, is revealed instead to be a disquieting place. In response to Vidler's vision of "invasion by alien spirits", Avery argues that "unwanted social groups or institutions come to represent those 'alien spirits' that aim to take possession of the private sphere" (2014, p. 15). Alex and his droogs essentially represent those alien spirits, an outcast social collective that takes not only possession of the private sphere but also of the lives of the victims in the most literal sense.

Alex, Pete, Georgie, and Dim carry out their acts of "ultra-violence" at night when people are in their homes. In contrast to their victims, the gang regard the streets as a form of home, a space where they can reify their sense of self. Owing to a "shortage of police" (Burgess, 1972, p. 23), Alex and his droogs find themselves at liberty to indulge in their aggressive acts after dark. The marked distinction between day and night is accompanied by a prominent contrast in the spatial occupation of the streets and indoor spaces, as reflected in Alex's words: "The night belonged to me and my droogs and all the rest of the nadsats, and the starry bourgeois lurked indoors drinking in the gloopy worldcasts, but the day was for the starry ones, and there always seemed to be more rozzes or millicents about during the day, too" (p. 33). The streets become dark and empty, as if deserted even by the police. It is not safe to be out, and since those who venture into the streets at nightfall become subjects of violence, most people, especially the middle-aged, stay at home where they feel safe and comfortable. Conversely, Alex and his gang feel relaxed and liberated on the streets, which represent a space in which to escape, breathe, and rest.

Housing, in the form of blocks of flats on the street, appears as a series of "terrific and very enormous mountains" (p. 15) which, for Alex, leads to a sense of alienation. In these flats, middle-aged people watch the same television programs:

these being the flatblocks, and in the windows of all of the flats you could viddy like blue dancing light. This would be telly. Tonight was what they called a worldcast, meaning that the same programme was being viddied by everybody in the world that wanted to, that being mostly middle-aged middle-class lewdies. There would be some big famous stupid comic chelloveck or black singer, and it was all being bounced off the special telly satellites in outer space, my brothers. (p. 6)

However unconquerable those mountainous flats may seem, they can easily become a place of violence because of the intrusion into the private sphere by those "unwanted social groups." Alex lives with his family in one of the flats of Municipal Flatblocks, a space that cannot be correlated with the ideal home in which family relations foster a sense of belonging and attachment. When Alex speaks of his home, he

does so in dry, objective terms characterized by a lack of emotion: “Where I lived was with my dada and mum in the flats of Municipal Flatblocks 18A, between Kingsley Avenue and Wilsonsway” (p. 25). Alex’s description of the building does not correspond with the notion of a “homely home” (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 88). As Blunt and Dowling put it, a “central feature of imaginaries of home is their idealization: certain dwelling structures and social relations are imagined to be ‘better’, more socially appropriate and an ideal to be aspired to. It is these dwelling structures and social relations that become ‘homely homes’” (p. 100). In contrast, the impression given by Alex of Municipal Flatblocks is suggestive of specifically *unhomely* dwellings:

I got to the big main door with no trouble, though I did pass one young malchick sprawling and creeching and moaning in the gutter, all cut about lovely, and saw in the lamplight also streaks of blood here and there like signatures, my brothers, of the night’s filling. And too I saw just by 18A a pair of devotchka’s neezhnies doubtless rudely wrenched off in the heat of the moment. (Burgess, 1972, p. 25)

Divorced from the characteristics of homely homes, Municipal Flatblocks represents a space in which violence and morally dubious behavior have been normalized to the point of becoming quotidian. In their study of apartments and their negative associations, Blunt and Dowling remark that “[f]or much of the twentieth century the high-rise apartment has been understood in terms of an absence of home. One of the reasons for this perception is that high-rises have commonly been built by governments and used to provide public housing” (2006, p. 107). Exemplifying the high-rise as a dwelling built to keep working-class housing outside the city in Melbourne, Australia, Blunt and Dowling point out that these dwellings have tended to be characterized as “unhomely” and as “slums”, leading to fears that “these neighbourhoods bred disease and perpetuated people’s low moral standards” (p. 107) .

In *A Clockwork Orange*, the buildings that make up Municipal Flatblocks are forsaken high-rise dwellings left to determine their own destiny, which come to represent the uncanny and the unhomely in that they generate sensations of discomfort and fear. As a state-sanctioned territory, the buildings are deprived of comfort and security, leaving the idea of homely homes in the dust. The moral deprivation that pervades the buildings is mirrored by their physical decrepitude:

In the hallway was the good old municipal painting on the walls – vecks and ptisas very well developed, stern in the dignity of labour, at workbench and machine with not one stitch of platties on their well-developed plots. But of course some of the malchicks living in 18A had, as was to be expected, embellished and decorated the said big painting with handy pencil and ballpoint, adding hair and stiff rods and dirty ballooning slovos out of the dignified rots of these nagoy (bare, that is) cheenas and vecks. I went to the lift, but there was no need to press the electric knopka to see if it was working or not, because it had been tolchoked real horrorshow this night, the metal doors all buckled, some feat of rare strength indeed, so I had to walk the ten floors up. (Burgess, 1972, p. 25)

This physical deprivation plays host to another form of deprivation: that of the lost ties between Alex and his family. The Municipal Flatblocks’ unhomely status hints at the family’s unhomely home which is marked by a loss of connection. The flat where he lives with his family is no more than a physical structure that embodies neither emotional connection nor togetherness. Alex defines their flat solely by its door number, as if he were a stranger finding his way to a place by following the wording of an address: “I opened the door of 10-8 with my own little klootch, and inside our malenky quarters all was quiet, the pee and em both being in sleepland, and mum had laid out on the table on malenky bit of supper – a couple of lomsticks of tinned spongemeat with a shive or so of kleb and butter, a glass of the old cold moloko” (p. 25). In these “malenky quarters”, Alex and his parents rarely encounter each other owing to their differing schedules and routines. When Alex is home at night, his parents tend to be

asleep; conversely, when his parents are preparing for work in the morning, Alex tends to remain in his room, and they call out to each other without meeting in person. The only point of connection between them is the food left for him by his mother in the morning and at night. In essence, this municipal flat with a door number of 10-8 represents, for Alex, an emotionally disconnected source of shelter and food, which betrays no sense of affection for, or shared history with, his parents. This place does not function as a home, nor do his mother and father function as caring, affectionate parents. Alex's family constitutes, for Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack, a "pseudo family" (2002, p. 22), one that "offers only the illusion of genuine community" (p. 23). In this vision, his parents are like ghosts: an ineffective silent mother and a "humble mumble chumble" father (Burgess, 1972, p. 37), neither of whom would dare to challenge him, let alone claim authority. Davis and Womack emphasize that "[l]ying beneath the facade of pseudo family is the interpersonal violence of self-indulgence" (p. 23) (p. 23) through which Alex aims to make himself visible and superior rather than maintaining an illusory existence. Accordingly, home is not a hearth connoting the interconnectedness between family members, one that refers to a family history inherited and proudly transferred from generation to generation. Instead, home takes the form of a house, a building with a four-walled interior devoid of any aura of attachment. In the guise of a purely material construct, home becomes a reflection of the relationship between Alex and his parents, which is understood simply through material connections. Alex 'bribes' his father with some of his 'earnings' to keep his mouth shut, thereby preventing him from nagging Alex about his activities, both daytime and nocturnal.

Alex's room is his home, providing him with a space where he feels a sense of self and belonging. His room is the territory of his identity, while simultaneously constituting a territory with an identity of its own. It gains its identity as a home through its material composition, which includes Alex's stereo, his discs, his bed, and his "treasure-chest" (Burgess, 1972, p. 35), in which he keeps his "Scotchman". In *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Halton reflect on the close relationship between the objects people keep in their homes and their symbolic functions as expressions of the owners' identity. They state that "[t]he objects of the household represent, at least potentially, the endogenous being of the owner. [...] Thus household objects constitute an ecology of signs that reflects as well as *shapes* the pattern of the owner's self" (1981, p. 17; italics in original).

Nevertheless, this personalized space is a place of rape and abuse which are, in themselves, patterns of Alex's self in *A Clockwork Orange*. Accordingly, considering the lack of a genuine relationship between Alex and his parents, home is not "a matrix of social relations (being particularly valorized as the site of heterosexual family relationships)" (Valentine, 2001, p. 63); rather, it is, to use Csikszentmihalyi and Halton's terms, "a material environment that embodies what he or she considers significant" (1981, p. 123) and "the most powerful sign of the self of the inhabitant who dwells within" (p. 123). His room is a personalized space, yet it is also a place for rape and abuse, a showcase for his animalistic self, with his private belongings contributing to the explosion of this aspect of his identity. This is the case when Alex brings "two ptitsas" who "couldn't have been more than ten" (Burgess, 1972, p. 33) to his room. He gives them his Scotch and "[encourages] them to drink and have another" (p. 35). Having set the "Ninth Symphony" by Ludwig van Beethoven playing on the stereo, he begins to display his uncontrollable violence against these girls, with what seems at first to be fun for them gradually revealing itself to be rape by Alex 'the animal':

There it was then, the bass strings like govoreeting away from under my bed at the rest of the orchestra, and then the male human goloss coming in and telling them all to be joyful, and then the lovely blissful tune all about Joy being a glorious spark like of heaven, and then I felt the old tigers leap in me and then I leapt on these two young ptitsas. This time they thought nothing fun and

stopped creeching with high mirth, and had to submit to the strange and weird desires of Alexander the Large which, what with the Ninth and the hypo jab, were choodesny and zammechat and very demanding. (p. 36)

Alex's room, as a domestic sphere, is one of the primary venues for the expression of his uncontrollable violence, which is directly analogous with his detachment from the idea of the homely. Alex is a stranger to homely experiences. The mutual interaction between Alex and home depends solely on unhomely experiences, characterized by a lack of familial attachment, intimacy, security, or belonging. Unhomely is, for him, the norm, whereas notions of home and the homely strike him as obscure, opaque, and even esoteric. This alienation from the term "home" and its associations is emphasized when Alex and his droogs, in one of their evening schedules, stop at a cottage, the gate of which has a name on it—"HOME"—which strikes him as "a gloomy sort of name" (p. 17). This cottage, a homely place inhabited by the writer F. Alexander and his wife, is suddenly transformed into an unhomely place upon its invasion by the gang. Alex and his droogs proceed to behave like violent, uncontrollable animals for whom home is an alien place: "The four of us then went roaring in, old Dim playing the shoot as usual with his jumping up and down and singing out dirty slovos, and it was a nice malenky cottage, I'll say that" (p. 18). They beat the writer and rape his wife in what is described as a "beasty, snorty, howly sort of way" (p. 20). In "Social Geographies of Women's Fear of Crime", Rachel H. Pain points out the existence of domestic space as one of the geographies of violence against women, stressing that "[t]he vast majority of incidents of violence against women take place in the home or other private and semi-private spaces. An accurate map of urban rape would highlight far more bedrooms than alleyways and parks" (1997, p. 233). Similarly, this "malenky" cottage, initially a home, transitions into a geography of violent rape, as described in Alex's narration:

So he [Dim] did the strong-man on the devotchka, who was still creech creech creeching away in very horrorshow four-in-a-bar, locking her rookers from the back, while I ripped away at this and that and the other, the others going haw haw haw still, and real good horrorshow groodies they were that then exhibited their pink glazzies, O my brothers, while I untrussed and got ready for the plunge. Plunging, I could sloshy cries of agony and this writer bleeding veck that Georgie and Pete held on to nearly got loose howling bezoomy with the filthiest of slovos that I already knew and others he was making up. Then after me it was right old Dim should have his turn, which he did in a beasty snorty howly sort of a way with his Peebee Shelley maskie taking no notice, while I held on to her. Then there was a changeover, Dim and me grabbing the slobbering writer veck who was past struggling really, only just coming out with slack sort of slovos like he was in the land in a milk-plus bar, and Pete and Georgie had theirs. (Burgess, 1972, pp. 19-20)

They smash everything and tear the writer's work *A Clockwork Orange* into pieces. Home as a peaceful, secure place, a sanctuary of private comfort, is suddenly transformed into a vision of hell, a locus of uncanny disturbances and a site of terror. Leaving the writer and his wife "bloody and torn" (p. 20), and being saturated with hatred would not be satisfying soon. Reflecting on his feelings about this cottage called "HOME" while listening to Bach, Alex confesses that he "would like to have tolchecked them both harder and ripped them to ribbons on their own floor" (p. 27).

The gang's invasion of another home again culminates in an ultraviolent act and, ultimately, murder. Though the house they invade seems overprotected, it is easy for Alex to break in. This house is one of the "starry type houses of the town in what was called Oldtown" (p. 43) which Alex describes as follows:

So we came nice and quiet to this domy called Manse, and there were globe lights outside on iron stalks, like guarding the front door on each side, and there was a light like dim on in one of the rooms on the ground level, and we went to a nice patch of street dark to watch through the window what was ittying on. This window had iron bars in front of it, like the house was a prison, but we could viddy nice and clear what was ittying on. (p. 43)



The image of a resilient, overprotected house is thus revealed to be a false representation, while at the same time, the sanctuary of the home is transgressed and violated. When the dweller of the house, an elderly woman with cats, realizes Alex is in the house, she responds by saying “Wretched little slummy bedbug, breaking into *real* people’s houses” (Burgess, 1972, p. 47; italics in original). The woman, characterized as exemplary of the “real people” she’s referring to, is haunted and struck across the head with a silver statute wielded by Alex. This dichotomy, and the violent incident between “real people” and “slummy bedbugs” simultaneously reflects the state of home as the “most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by contrast the terror of invasion by alien spirits” (Vidler, 1987, p. 7). “Real people”, in the guise of homeowners and other claimants of comfort and security, are threatened by those “slummy bedbugs”, the clandestine “alien spirits” that remain unseen and unacknowledged by either the state or society until they reveal themselves through violent or antisocial behavior.

The violation of home as a space of private comfort and the exposed vulnerability of home as a safe, secure place reveal it to be a zone governed by a plethora of differing political models relating to the state, the family, and the personal, private sphere. Additionally, as an internal space, home becomes a register of external affairs defined and regulated by the state. In line with Dovey’s identification of home as “both a ‘statement’ and a ‘mirror,’ developing both socially and individually, reflecting both collective ideology and authentic personal experience” (1985, p. 40), each manifestation of home in *A Clockwork Orange* is both an entity in itself and a reflection of society in general. This, in turn, reflects a dysfunctional system which creates, as expressed by the old drunk man beaten in the street by the gang early in the novel, “a stinking world because it lets the young get on to the old like you done, and there’s no law nor order no more” (Burgess, 1972, p. 12). This absence of law and order allows homes to become unhomey places, sites of the uncanny where children disregard and bribe their parents, and warn them “not to knock on the wall with complaints of what they called noise” (p. 26), where women are raped and older people are ultra-violently beaten and bruised.

This dysfunctional system is not confined to the communal landscape of streets and houses, rendering homes vulnerable and open to violence; it also applies to prisons, which essentially constitute homes for prisoners. Alex is committed to prison after being charged with the murder of the old women with cats. He is sent to “Staja (State Jail, that is) Number 84 F” (p. 57), a “grahzny hellhole and like human zoo” (pp. 57-58) that becomes his new dwelling. His cell, on Tier 6, is his “very vonny and crammed home” (p. 63). The image of the prison as home deconstructs the concept of home and its associations as a secure place, and, instead, presents an insecure, unpleasant, dangerous place, “a dirty cally disgrace” (p. 64).

In her examination of home as a place and its contexts, Anne Buttimer offers an understanding of home within “reciprocal movements” (2015, p. 170). As she puts it, “like breathing in and out, most life forms need a home and horizons of reach outward from that home” (p. 170). Home as the locus of a metaphorical act of breathing in and out, a symbolic center of life, becomes a real center of “the ultra-violence, the crasting, the drasting, the old in-out-in-out” in *A Clockwork Orange* (Burgess, 1972, p. 54). Home, which constitutes a space that supports life by offering the individual a form of “breathing in and out”, is also a site of rape, an act of “in-out-in-out” in Alex’s terminology in the novel. Institutions are envisioned through this in-out imagery throughout the narrative. As with homes broken into, their dwellers exposed to “in-out-in-out”, institutions in general (and the prison in particular) become places where outlaws move frequently in and out. As indicated by the prison chaplain: “Is it going to be in and out and in and out of institutions, like this, though more in than out for most of you” (p. 59). The allusion to rape (“in-out-in-out”) in this statement situates itself within the imagery of both crime and

punishment, the crime (“in-out-in-out”) leading directly to its mirrored counterpart, the movement “in and out of” prison, as exemplified by Alex’s time in the Staja.

Following his subjection to Ludovico’s Technique, a form of aversion therapy used for human behavioral conditioning, Alex is released into society. Now psychologically transformed into a man of good character, Alex has become a “true Christian” of the state, “ready to be crucified rather than crucify, sick to the very heart at the thought even of killing a fly” (p. 96). His new condition leaves him vulnerable to, and powerless against the wrongdoers of society. In his new role as “a good law-fearing citizen” (p. 98) in a new world where the “streets had been made safer for all peace-loving night-walking lewdies [...] and the police getting tougher with young hooligans and perverts and burglars all that cal” (p. 98), Alex’s first thought is of “homeways and a nice surprise for dadada and mum, their only son and heir back in the family bosom” (p. 99). This is the first time Alex has experienced home as a hearth, the locus of the “family bosom”. This reformed version of Alex has developed a sense of belonging and now considers himself to be an heir to his family’s lineage. His entry into the home resembles his passage through a magic door that hides a secret: “So up I went to the tenth floor, and there I saw 10-8 as it had been before, and my rooker trembled and shook as I took out of my carman the little klootch I had for opening up. But I very firmly fitted the klootch in the loch and turned, then opened up then went in, and there I met three pairs of surprised and almost frightened glazzies looking at me [...]” (p. 99).

Alex’s return to home is a disappointment for both him and his parents. There, he finds a stranger, “a bolshy thick veck in his shirt and braces, quite at home, brothers, slurping away at the milky chai and munchmunching at his eggweg and toast” (p. 100). This stranger, named Joe, is a lodger in Alex’s room, and to Alex’s parents he has become “more like a son [...] than like a lodger” (p. 100). Alex, in contrast, is treated as an outsider by his parents, suggesting that he has become estranged from both his home and his family.

The home subsequently reveals itself to be an uncanny place, one that was once familiar but is now alienating and disconnected. As Bennett and Royle put it, “The uncanny has to do with making things *uncertain*: it has to do with the sense that things are not as they have come to appear through habit and familiarity, that they may challenge all rationality and logic” (2016, p. 36; italics in original). Both the logic of things and their familiarity are deconstructed in this new phase of Alex’s life, his alienating exclusion from his home becoming conflated with the unhomeliness and uncanniness he experiences when entering his room:

When I opened the door my heart cracked to the carpet, because I viddied it was no longer like my room at all, brothers. All my flags had gone off the walls and this veck had put up pictures of boxers, also like a team sitting smug with folded rookers and silver like shield in front. And then I viddied what else was missing. My stereo and my disc-cupboard were no longer there, nor was my locked treasure-chest that contained bottles and drugs and two shining clean syringes. (Burgess, 1972, p. 101)

With echoes of Alex becoming divorced from his true identity and his ability to choose between good and evil, Alex’s room has been stripped of the characteristics and the staple possessions that made it a home for him. This new room is an unhomely place for the reformed Alex. What was once a home where he felt he belonged and realized his sense of identity is now a space in which he feels alienated, a room within a home that was once familiar, but is now strange. Reflecting on the concept of the unhomely, Dwayne Avery points out that “the unhomely is a hybrid experience, the feeling of never being able to find a pure sense of identity or location” (2014, p. 15). This hybrid experience is represented through two mediums in the novel: Alex has lost his connection with his home, and his home has lost its meaning

as a provider of his sense of self, his identity. Both Alex and his home have become sites of unhomely experience. Home is decentered, displaced from its central position as an essential place that provides “a series of connections between person and world” (Dovey, 1985, p. 43). Home should have represented the first place to reestablish a connection between Alex and the world after his release, a place from which he could make a new start in society. Dovey, referring to David Seamon, pays attention to the significance of home as a source of regeneration, stating that home is “a place of rest from which we move outward and return, a place of nurture where our energies and spirits are regenerated before the next journey” (p. 45). In Alex's case, home fails to define itself as a source of nurturing energies and spirits. Instead, his return to the flat results in a form of exile from a home that has either lost or deliberately severed its association with him. His parents, unhappy with Alex's reappearance, deny him any form of reintegration and, having been replaced by a lodger and left in an unhomely sphere, he is essentially rendered homeless.

Detached from the family and having no viable bonds with society, Alex is both an exile and a living embodiment of “the unhomely [that] rests on the inability to embed in one's local surroundings” (Avery, 2014, p. 18). His situation is comparable with an unhomely defined as “the triumph of deterritorialization” (p. 18). As a homeless figure in an unhomely sphere, Alex finds himself in search of an alternative home. Losing his connection with his original home leads him to lose his sense of purpose, and he decides to end his life. He goes to the public library where he “might find some book on the best way of snuffing it with no pain” (Burgess, 1972, p. 105), but is recognized by the man who had, at the beginning of the novel, been “beat[en] and kicked and thumped” (p. 107) by Alex and his gang. On recognizing Alex, the man describes his helplessness with these words: “They laughed at my blood and my moans. They kicked me off home, dazed and naked” (p. 107). It is apparent from these words that home as a concept has once again established both a connection with and a means of expressing the implications of violence and disorder. In the library, Alex is called a “[y]oung swine, young murderer, hooligan, thug”, accompanied by a plea to others to “kill him” (p. 108), and is kicked at by the group of vengeful elderly men. When the police arrive at the scene, the riot stops and Alex is taken to a police car by two officers who are revealed to be Billyboy, Alex's old enemy, and Dim, Alex's old “droog”. Alex is beaten violently by them before being abandoned, alone and unprotected, on the ground. In desperate need of a community in which he can feel safe and cared for, Alex is left derelict, a homeless, solitary figure at the beginning of the next phase of his life: “After a bit I was hurting bad, and then the rain started, all icy. I could viddy no lewdies in sight, nor no lights of houses. Where was I to go, who had no home and not much cutter in my carmans? I cried for myself boo hoo hoo. Then I got up and began walking” (p. 112). Alex becomes akin to a meandering migrant, moving from place to place in search of a home, yet finding nowhere he can stay and feel attached and belong to. In his discussion of migrancy, Stephen Cairns states that

Migrancy, in its various enforced and voluntary forms was aligned with the suspect qualities of movement, and so came to be considered to be the unfortunate exception to a more general principle of settlement. Within this logic, the migrant was ascribed kinship with the nomad, the Scythian, the gypsy, the wild man, and other figures that haunted the imagination of the settled citizen. This new journey is conflated with uncertainties and uncanny feelings. (2004, p. 1)

Wandering around with no particular purpose or direction, Alex comes across a sign—“HOME”—on his way to uncertainties: “Home, home, home, it was home I was wanting, and it was HOME I came to, brothers” (Burgess, 1972, p. 112). Alex remembers this “HOME” as the place whose owner was beaten and his wife raped by Alex and his gang. The owner, F. Alexander, welcomes this “victim of the modern

age" (p. 113) who has been turned into "something other than human being" (p. 115), "a little machine capable of only good" (p. 115), "a piece of clockwork" (p. 116).

Though Alexander has recognized Alex, he never lets on, and Alex, feeling warm and protected, experiences a sense of affection for the writer. While this home resembles a sanctuary for Alex, however, it will prove ultimately to be a place in which he becomes trapped and is "hunted" like an animal, a place from which he wishes to escape. Alexander's friends Z. Dolin, Rubinstein, and D.B. da Silva take Alex from the cottage to a flat which becomes his "new home" (p. 122). This new home is "[v]ery very malenky, with two bedrooms and one live-eat-work-room, the table of this all covered with books and papers and dink and bottles and all that cal" (p. 122). This so-called home functions like a model house or a mock-up in which Alex is a guinea pig, "not knowing what sort of a jeezny [he] was going to live now" (p. 123). Having fallen briefly asleep, he awakes to the sound of "slooshy music coming out of the wall" (p. 123) which causes him an intense, debilitating pain:

I slooshied for two seconds in like interest and joy, but then it all came over me, the start of the pain and sickness, and I began to groandeeep down in my keeshkas. And there I was, me who had loved music so much, crawling off the bed and going oh oh oh to myself, and then bang bang banging on the wall creeching: 'Stop, stop it, turn it off! But it went on and it seemed to be like louder. So I crashed at the wall till my knuckles were all red krovny and torn skin, creeching and creeching, but the music did not stop. (p. 123)

Here, home becomes a site of "deliberate torture" (p. 124), leading Alex to suicidal actions, while at the same time representing a political site where Alex's history and the government's strategy of curing criminals by eliminating their freedom to choose between good and bad intersect, leading to a problematic dead end. Home, once more, comes to resemble a frightening space, a locus of terror, rather than embodying notions of dwelling and belonging. Since Alex is locked in and cannot escape, he is forced to resort to a suicide attempt, jumping from the window, which he survives.

Regarding the apparently internalized and well-accepted conceptions of home, Burgess has reflected on their deconstruction in *A Clockwork Orange* as follows: "The place where Alex and his mirror-image F. Alexander are most guilty of hate and violence is called HOME, and it is here, we are told, that charity ought to begin. But towards that mechanism, the state, which first, is concerned with self-perpetuation and, second, is happiest when human beings are predictable and controllable, we have no duty at all, certainly no duty of charity" (Burgess, 2014, p. 48). Thus, home becomes detached from its conceptual moorings as a place of charity, community, togetherness, and benevolence in each successive guise it adopts in the course the novel.

Following his attempted suicide, Alex spends a week recovering in hospital. On regaining consciousness, he believes he has been having "horrorshow dreams of being in some veck's auto that had been crasted by [him] and driving up and down the world all on [his] oddy knocky running lewdies down and hearing them creech they were dying, and in [him] no pain and no sickness" (Burgess, 1972, p. 127). His parents visit him during his recovery, and his father invites him to return home, an offer accompanied by an expression of remorse: "You were in the papers, son. It said they had done great wrong to you. It said how the Government drove you to try and do yourself in. And it was our fault too, in a way, son. Your home's your home, when all's said and done, son" (p. 127-8). While this call to return home implies a sense of affection and creates an image of home as a place of togetherness among family members, it is soon made clear that home will not, on this occasion, serve as a site of attachment and affection. Alex's tyranny has already recommenced when he bullies his crying mother at the hospital: "'Ah, shut it,' I said, 'or I'll give you something proper to yowl and creech about. Kick your zoobies in I will.' And, O my

brothers, saying that made me feel a malenky bit better, as if all like fresh red red krovvy was flowing all through my plot" (p. 128). Alex has regained his desire for terror and violence, and it is clear from the outset that home and its indicators will become the primary geographies of this violence. When the doctors show him a photograph of a bird-nest full of eggs, which can be taken as a metaphor of home, Alex is enthused and excited by his fantasies of destroying it, which inevitably generates an unhomey image:

'Yes?' one of these doctor vecks said.

'A bird-nest' I said, 'full of like eggs. Very very nice.'

'And what would you like to do about it?' the other one said.

'Oh,' I said, 'smash them. Pick up the lot and like throw them against a wall or a cliff or something and then viddy them all smash up real horrorshow.'

'Good good' they both said, and then the page was turned. (p. 129)

The doctors' positive response to Alex's "horrorful" dream of smashing a bird-nest is a paradoxical indicator of how the state can turn homes into locations and places of horror and violence through misguided or malevolent political gestures. Accordingly, home may readily be rendered unhomey as a consequence of such politics. Homi Bhabha conveys the meaning of the unhomey through the politics of the world and the home viewed from a postcolonial perspective. As he puts it, the unhomey emerges when "the intimate recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (1992, p. 141).

In line with Bhabha's concept of home as the culture and history of a nation invaded by social and historical events, homes in *A Clockwork Orange*, whether in the form of a hearth united by strong family ties or a bird-nest violently destroyed, are signs of an intricate (and often confusing) interweaving of individual and governmental policies. Consequently, for Bhabha, "[t]he unhomey moment relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence" (p. 144).

When Alex returns to society and attempts to resume his previous pattern of violent behavior, he undergoes a psychological change which causes him to feel old and tired. He begins to imagine himself as an elderly man sitting by a fire, drinking "a nice bolshy chasha of milky chai" (Burgess, 1972, p. 137). Home is akin to an imaginary place or, in Salman Rushdie's words, an "imaginary homeland" (Rushdie, 1991), existing only in his mind:

There is Your Humble Narrator Alex coming home from work to a good hot plate of dinner, and there was this ptitsa all welcoming and greeting like loving. But I could not viddy her all that horrorshow, brothers, I could not think who it might be. But I had this sudden very strong idea that if I walked into the room next to this room where the fire was burning away and my hot dinner laid on the table, there I should find what I really wanted, and now it all tied up, that picture scissored out of the gazetta and meeting old Pete like that. For in that other room in a cot was laying gurgling goo goo goo my son. Yes yes yes, brothers my son. And now I felt this bolshy big hallow inside my plot, feeling very surprised too at myself. I knew what was happening, O my brothers. I was like growing up. (Burgess, 1972, p. 140)

Though this imaginary gesture grants approval for the construction of home as a homely place, homes will nonetheless continue to be unhomey and uncanny spaces invaded by violence. Alex's utopic vision of his future, which is encapsulated in the concept of home and the figure of his future son, does not

leave home immune to the pervasiveness of the unhomely. Homes will still be raided by “unwanted social groups” and rendered unhomely, as Alex himself acknowledges:

My son, my son. 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 veshches I had d

one, 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. (pp. 140-141)

For Alex, this marks a new phase in his life: “That was something like new to do. That was something I would have to get started on, a new like chapter beginning” (p. 141). Even though Alex has both a new vision and the opportunity of a fresh, benevolent start, he will continue to exist in “[a] terrible grahzny vonny world” (p. 141) where home continues to be a potential site of the unhomely and uncanny.

### **Conclusion**

Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* depicts numerous incarnations of home as a place of the unhomely and the uncanny in its narrative of violence as enacted by Alex and his gang. The novel posits the notion of home a range of settings, including houses, dwellings, institutions, and streets, each of which becomes a location of the unhomely and the uncanny characterized by fear, threat and disenfranchisement. As a backdrop to each of the key events portrayed in the novel, home relates to a variety of intersecting relationships between identity politics and social politics in which aggressive behavior and violence form a bond. As a locus of the manifestation of such politics, home is stripped of its homely notions (which include strong family ties, feelings of affection and a sense of sanctuary). Even the slightest instance of home representing a comforting, safe place is deconstructed, becoming instead a site of the unhomely, a location of terror in the form of threat, rape, abuse, violence, and suicidal acts.

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The author reports there are no competing interests to declare.

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