

A Clockwork Orange

Getting prepared to read a book that goes along with a very good movie can be a little challenging. The reader's ideas about the book can be a little skewed because the movie is not always all that accurate to the text. For example, in the film A Clockwork Orange, the text creators message sometimes gets beguiled by all the pretty colors and shapes produced by the movie creator. Leaving these visual aspects of a story to the audience's imagination is sometimes the best way to get a clear and concise message across. I think that Anthony Burgess nailed this in A Clockwork Orange.

The main character, Alex, undergoes a major life change throughout the book and causes the reader to have very mixed feelings about him. Alex begins in the novel as a no good hoodlum that gets his thrills assaulting and stealing from innocent people. As a reader, I look at Alex at this stage as a very easy character to hate. As the novel progresses, Alex's morals and values change as well. The reader develops admiration for Alex's change during his adventure.

Alex and his friends use a sort of teenage slang throughout the book called Nadsat. Reading the book with no idea what any of these terms mean can be a little confusing, but luckily most of the words used are outlined at the very start of the book in the introduction. Certain words like Bog (meaning God) and Horrorshow (meaning that something is very likable) are used very often in A Clockwork Orange. I feel that the reason Anthony Burgess decided to use Nadsat slang so much in his book is because he wanted to make the reader know that these teens were not anything like their parents.

At the beginning of the novel, the reader almost feels as if they are Alex's parents due to the amount of confusion brought upon by the slang.

At the beginning of the novel, Alex's character is portrayed as a very disturbing one. He has an obsession with classical music like Mozart and Beethoven, but at the same time, his obsession is also in tormenting the innocent. One could characterize someone who listens to classical music as a very sane and controllable person. Alex is not.

Anthony Burgess is not only commenting on the violent lifestyles of these teens, but on the uselessness of the prison system. In the novel, Burgess gives a prison system a bad ~~look~~ by showing their unnecessary strictness and inability to control the inmates.

The reader sometimes gets the hint that Alex may be the victim in the novel; not so much at the start, but as the novel progresses. His conflict with his parents and with the judicial system help to convey the idea that he is the innocent one in the book and that the people with authority are the criminals.

A Clockwork Orange was a bit of a challenging read because of its unique language, but following through with the book was definitely a good choice in the end. The book covers teenage issues and outlines not only the state, but the parent's roles in dealing with these issues. For that reason, I believe that this book belongs in every school library in the world. A Clockwork Orange reminds all readers that ~~there~~ is a little Alex in all of us, and it's not that bad of an idea to keep it.