

A DYSTOPIAN SOCIETY OR THE MORAL DECAY OF HUMANITY

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ABSTRACT. *The present paper analyses an anti-utopic society, emphasizing the importance of individual liberty over doing the right thing as described and satirized by British writer Anthony Burgess in the book entitled A Clockwork Orange. This matter of choice and free will is characteristic to dystopian societies which represent a futuristic universe in which the oppressive control of the state changes people’s lives. It depicts in a shocking manner the effects a dystopian society has over the individual. Dystopian characters make use of human weaknesses in order to set forth and to prove the destructive power of authoritarian rule. Dystopian societies demoralize people, deprive them of the ability of taking decisions while their personal desires either good or evil, are taken over by the state.*

Key words: *society, dystopia, imaginary future, fear, violence, control*

Utopia versus dystopia

If some people have a positive view of the future and consider it a utopia, that is, a clean place, and an era of technological developments, others regard it as a system that “gradually unravels [and] city dwellers feel the effects in diffuse ways. Food prices rise until many people cannot afford enough to eat. Poor refugees appear at the edges of the city looking for a way to survive. Diseases seem to crop up from nowhere and spread rapidly. Riots explode out of hunger and desperation. A frightened population turns to the government to enforce order by any means necessary.” (Tanzil 2004:1)

An anarchic and undesirable society, referring to a bleak future in which things take a turn for the worse and which displays images of worlds more unpleasant than our own may be called a dystopian society. The inhabitants of such a society lead a dehumanized and fearful life; they struggle for survival. The

border between friendship and hatred is so thin and blurred, that anyone or anything might represent a threat. It is a breakdown from social order and it is closely-related to our present-day society. Religion is usually absent in such societies. People tend to replace God with the government which controls every movement of the citizens. In what concerns the economy of such a society, they do not have too much freedom of choice and are not given any career options. The main character in dystopian fiction will eventually realize that something is wrong with the society he lives in and will break the law or the rules. Human beings have been created free, spontaneous and unpredictable, fact which endows them with endless capabilities. Unlike machines, people must have freedom to move, to speak and to express ideas and feelings. Any trial of mechanizing individuals leads to the emergence of a dehumanized world, eliminating thus, all the above-mentioned human traits.

The social and political scene of the 20th century determined some writers like George Orwell or Anthony Burgess to express their fears about the dark future of humanity. The latter depicted such a society on the edge of destruction, with a demoralized protagonist under the mercy of the authorities' control. Being deprived of free will and choice the individual has to obey and to live in this devastating environment. Dystopian literature refers mostly to the decadence of people reflected in acts of violence, sexual immorality and use of drugs. The protagonists indulge themselves in sin living only in the present. The basic characteristic of the type of society above-mentioned is that the authorities determined an "overall paralysis of any aesthetic sense...everything is machine-made, mass-produced, and sterile, and as a consequence, civilization has lost touch with the qualities that once gave life zest, qualities of passion and vitality, of irrationality and excess that were both its peril and its promise."(Whissen 1992) This system destroys human individualism, controls the information that people receive, claiming that slavery means, in fact, freedom. When humans begin to be treated like machines which only process information in order to obtain or to anticipate a certain result, the so-called "end product" will be more often than not, a dystopian society. Even if one might think that psychological control establishes the order in a society, major drawbacks and repercussions occur.

Anthony Burgess' book entitled *A Clockwork Orange* represents an attempt to improve a decaying world, or better said, a dystopian society. "It is this suspicion of our contemporary liberal humanism, of our willingness to reform rather than punish, to educate rather than discipline that is seen in *A Clockwork Orange*, as a traditionalist's fear of the future. (...) Obviously Burgess's feeling is that there is potentially more good in a man who deliberately chooses evil, than in one who is forced to be good. Men are what they are, and are not forced into being so by any social conditioning or pressures."(Dix 1971:1-2)

The book does not reflect a true story, but a possible one. He takes an extreme example of violence to emphasize his strong belief. It deals with alternative realism because it is a reflection of a future society. Even if it was written in 1962, it renders the society of the years 1995-2000. Personal freedom means to be able to act according to your own will, and not to be restricted by the social paradigm in which you live. Burgess wrote about a future dystopia. If a utopia is an ideal place or a perfect society, where people experience no pain, in a dystopic future there is no goodness or peace. The society this book analyses is a dystopic one, filled with imperfection caused by the government's role in society. It is a society where juvenile delinquents rob, rape and terrorize innocent people in order to satisfy their own desires. They represent a menace to the society. The author raises the opposition between free will and predestination, emphasizing on Pelagianism and Augustinianism.

According to Pelagianism all people are sinners by nature. It denies that God has predestined our lives. Therefore, salvation is within human power, within our control and it is a matter of free will. On the other hand, Augustinianism defended the orthodox doctrine of predestination, rejecting the Pelagian point of view. The position of the Roman Catholic Church is that what man lost through the Fall, was a gift that did not belong to his being but it was something given by God, and therefore, the Fall, left the man in his original state. Burgess adopted an anti-Pelagian position, being closer to Augustinianism. According to him, goodness is something chosen. "Burgess's romantic view of violence (...) is that of an old-fashioned traditionalist who can see no good in our levelled out, contemporary society, which leads to grey totalitarianism. These romantic views again stem from his Catholic upbringing (...). He calls himself a sort of Catholic Jacobite, who hates our present-day pragmatic socialism, because, as he explains in *Urgent Copy*, "...any political ideology that rejects original sin and believes in moral progress ought strictly to be viewed with suspicion by Catholics." (Dix 1971: 1-2)

Social disintegration in the imaginary world of *A Clockwork Orange*

The book opens with the image of Alex and his three friends, Pete, Dim and Georgie who are all wearing fashionable clothes. The author insists on this aspect in order to emphasize the salient characteristics of this teens culture, of their music and garments. He defines the youth culture as conventional, passive violent and destructive. They spend a lot of money on drinking their favourite milk "improved" with drugs in it, called Korova Milkbar. They talk about the girls in the bar and about the hallucinogenic effects these drugs have on the persons surrounding them. They go out on streets at night mocking at old people and assaulting them; they rip out their teeth and their clothes. After that they take a break for another drink and continue their atrocities. They rob a shop and beat the shopkeepers and afterwards return to the bar as if nothing had happened.

They always look for the company of women who are used as alibis and not only. On a deeper level, they return into their arms in the same way children return to their mothers, that is, for protection. Alex feels disappointed, because he does not have a cause to fight for. He is indifferent and has no purpose in life and the author wants to stress this out, as he considered that this was something typical for the British society of the time.

The society Burgess depicts is a mixture of Soviet-style communism and American capitalism. At the time when the book was written this seemed very possible and realistic as the two states above-mentioned were to become the world's greatest powers. This dystopian setting represents in fact, an extension of contemporary conditions. There is a powerful influence of the Russian culture in the book, set forth by the use of the Russian-inflected vocabulary: Korova Milkbar, droogs (word which stands for the English term of "friends"). The language Burgess introduces in the book is called Nadsat. This is the language used by the protagonists when talking about violence. This combination of Russian words, English Cockney and Burgess' invented words, makes the text very difficult to read. The reader should try to figure out the meanings from the context and draw up some sort of a dictionary. For example: blood is called *krovvy* or *tolchock* means to hit.

In the same night Alex finds another old man and beats him roughly until he vomits blood. Being too drunk to react in any way, he tells the boys that people like him cannot live in this world anymore, because it has become a world of the youth culture, full of violence and evil. During their night "walk" the three thugs come across another gang fascinated by the same atrocities. They start a fight but are interrupted by the police sirens and they have to run – moment in which a new idea springs into Alex's mind. He decides they need a car so he leads the boys to a place where they can steal a Durango 95. Afterwards, tired of the same crimes, and under the pretext of needing a glass of water and a phone, they break into some people's home, steal everything they can and rape the woman. The house they terrorize belongs to a writer, F. Alexander. They mock at him and tear his manuscript entitled "A Clockwork Orange", defecate on the carpet and beat them without any mercy. Obsessed by music, Alex even finds a rhythm or a beat in what they are doing: in his sick mind, he hears that the wife's screams follow the rhythm of Dim's punches. The book of this writer will become very illustrative for our topic of discussion, as Alex is deeply impressed by the following phrase: "The attempt to impose upon man, a creature of growth and capable of sweetness . . . laws and conditions appropriate to a mechanical creation, against this I raise my sword-pen."(Burgess 1986:10) The sentence the author uses to end the first chapter "Still, the night was still very young" (Burgess 1986:11) is meant to inform the reader that this is only the beginning for these hooligans. Out of sadistic acts of cruelty, Alex proves that he is only interested in causing pain and not in having loads of money. He steals, but not

each time when he has the occasion. He regards violence as some kind of art. His razor, for example is an object of art that inspires him and awakes his poetic side and urging him to use metaphors from time to time. One act of violence is compared to a masterpiece. Artists never compromise their creations and neither does he. He likes to be elegant in his moves, gestures and vocabulary, and therefore is bothered by his friends' crass gestures and vulgar laughing. The droogs' nightlife best emphasizes the idea of a dystopian society. The first reference to the future is the brand of the car they steal. The author uses irony and satire to create the image of this mass market culture, by putting together elements characteristic both to communism and to capitalist societies. And the output is, of course a fictional world or society. Cinema and TV sets are also brought into discussion. Alex believes that this form of entertainment is a governmental manipulative technique, used by the authorities in order to prevent the people from planning rebellions or from threatening the order already established. Instead of walking at night on dangerous streets, people prefer to stay indoors, in the coziness of their home. Therefore, if TVs are part of a governmental plan, thugs like Alex might also be regarded in this way, as they represent another reason while people avoid getting out. This idea is stressed out by one of the victims: "It's a stinking world because it lets the young get on to the old like you done."(Burgess 1986:23) He suggests that the government tolerates violence and prevents people from taking measures.

Further on, as a contradiction to their behaviour so far, the boys act like law-abiding citizens when having to pay the train fare. The presence of the Korova Milkbar is felt again, as they keep returning there. An altercation occurs there between Alex and Dim because of the latter one's rudeness. Dim is very impolite with a woman, an opera singer, fact which drives Alex mad. He hates mannerless people. However, after having made it clear that he is the boss, the boy drops the argument. On his way home, Alex witnesses several atrocities like, a vandalized elevator, assaulted people, raped women.

Anthony Burgess distinguished two types of good: an aesthetic one and an ethical one, both embodied in his protagonist. Alex commits several crimes, but however, his favourite pastime is listening to Bach and Beethoven. On one hand, this juxtaposition seems awkward, but on the other, there is no logical reason why they should be in contradiction. This duality explains Alex's behaviour when punching Dim for being rude and impolite: he is violent, but still, he hates vulgarity. The opera singer performs a song entitled "barred window" which acts like an omen for Alex's future imprisonment. The protagonist also has suicidal tendencies. While lying in bed and listening to his favourite music such thoughts are crossing his mind: "when the music...rose to the top of its big highest tower, then, lying on my bed with glazzies [eyes] tight shut and rookers [hands] behind my gulliver [head], I broke and spattered and cried aaaaaah."(Burgess 1986:36) His intentions are also reflected in the phrase:

“on to the sill, the music blasting away to my left, and I shut my glazies and felt the cold wind on my litso [face], then I jumped.”(Burgess 1986:37)

Burgess sets forth the communist mentality of the society, by creating some paintings on the walls that represent idealized and dignified workers. Alex is outraged when he sees that some kids have vandalized with graffiti these mural paintings. There is a relationship between serious art and graffiti: if the first one represents a symbol of the state, the second one stands for hooligans. Even if thugs are violent they are less threatening than the state. Graffiti is somehow humanized, as it represents the individual work of independent artists.

The following morning, Alex refuses to go to school, under the pretext of a terrible headache so he dozes off again. His friends are also present in his dreams, which have the same violent nature as real life. When woken up by the visit of his Post-Corrective Adviser, and when accused of certain fights and crimes, Alex, very convincingly, denies everything. However, the Adviser does not believe him and keeps wondering how could he turn out the way he did, with such good parents and contradicting thus, every existing pattern that might lead to such a behaviour: poverty, child abuse, broken families. “We study the problem and we’ve been studying it for damn well near a century, yes, but we get no farther with our studies. You’ve got a good home here, good loving parents, you’ve got not too bad of a brain. Is it some devil that crawls inside you?”(Burgess 1986:40) But Alex is not impressed by this visit at all. Moreover, he is revolted because he disagrees with the governmental policy that denies the citizens the right to behave badly. Therefore, he commits all sort of crimes out of pure pleasure and there is no motivation that could stop him. His sadistic acts have no reason at all. He even explains to the Post-Corrective Adviser: “They don’t go into the cause of *goodness*, so why of the other shop? . . . Badness is of the self, the one, the you or me on our oddy knockies, and that self is made by old Bog or God and is his great pride and radosty. But the not-self cannot have the bad, meaning they of the government and the judges and the schools cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self. And is not our modern history, my brothers, the story of brave malenky selves fighting these big machines?”(Burgess 1986:41)

The newspapers are concerned with the same issue of juvenile delinquency, and the parents and teachers should be held responsible, due to their failure to impose discipline on their children. After this visit Alex finds an explanation for why there is good and evil in the world: God created certain people to be good, and others to be bad. And the government should not try to change God’s creation.

The government depicted by the author is one that can improve things and alter people’s behaviours through education and reform. And Alex seems to contrast and contradict such believes. His actions apparently have no reason or purpose, but if reading between the lines, the reader will realize that, in fact, his

entire violent character is triggered by the desire to oppose the state and a flawed social order. The only choice given to him is that of being evil and of surviving in that society.

After having explored the duality of goodness-evil, the author does not hesitate to go into the opposition between intuition and intellect. Our protagonist considers that only stupid people rely on intellect: "I viddied [saw] that thinking is for the gloopy [stupid] ones and that the oomny [smart] ones use like inspiration and what Bog [God] sends." (Burgess 1986:45) For him intuition means much more than the intellect, as it is a reflection of man's free will. Being committed to violence, he rejects the state's imposed rules and behaviour.

However, intuition is not always the best ally. If in the beginning he was underage and therefore could avoid legal problems, now he is arrested due to his impulsive gestures. His fondness of classical music also proves to be detrimental on the long run as he loses his concentration. The author seems to support Alex's crimes rather than the state's cruelty. The state manipulates the law at its own will – thus Alex gets beaten up by the police without any reason whatsoever. They are similar to any ordinary thugs – the only difference is that their criminal acts are committed under the protection of the state. He is outraged by the state's hypocrisy, which, on one hand beats him brutally, and on the other, wants to redeem him and to establish a certain order, urging Alex to become an exemplary citizen.

If in the beginning Alex was the head of the gang and acted as such, after his imprisonment, he loses his authority and the power goes into the chaplain's hands. Now he has been deprived of what he loved most: freedom and the opportunity of choice. But, the rules of a dystopian state as the one depicted in this book, are a bit different: criminals are not punished in prison, the authorities try to redeem them by determining them to renounce to their free will. It is some kind of brainwashing, as the authorities make them forget about their violent instincts, acting according to the behaviour imposed and approved by the state. And to achieve this, they found an experimental technique called Ludovico's Technique. First of all, they erase Alex's identity by giving him a number – 6655321- instead of his name. The same thing happened to all the other prisoners. They all have numbers, fact which proves that the government has depersonalized a lot of people so far. While in jail, the protagonist has a moment of revelation and he feels like identifying himself with the state. And he does this while reading the Bible and approving of the criminal behaviour of the Roman soldiers who tortured Jesus Christ. Going back to the rehabilitation technique above-mentioned, the Minister decides that Alex should be their main subject.

By trying to establish a new discipline he plans to "cure" the murderers and the hooligans. If in the past, the state encouraged juvenile delinquency, because it was convenient to them, now, it is planning to remove it as it has grown into a threat and bad publicity for the government. Human nature has been

endowed with the freedom of choosing between good behaviour and bad behaviour. Ludovico's Technique is meant to eliminate free will and to turn people into "puppets" or government –created mechanisms or "clockwork oranges". These are symbols of protest against the way in which the state transforms people and turns them into clockwork oranges. The human being is compared to an orange, meaning that the man is capable of growth and sweetness. But unfortunately the government takes away people's freedom of choice. And Alex is the perfect example of such a practice as he is made to operate like a machine. He represents the typical teenager in a society ruled by youth violence. He regards his evil behaviour as art - which he loves very much. The feeling he has when listening to such music is the same with the one experienced when committing a crime. He considers that good and evil are the two sides of human nature and by going for the latter one he expresses his inner self. Anthony Burgess underlined the idea that no matter how evil a person is, his or her acts should not be controlled by the government or by any other supreme authority because this might represent a greater evil than the crimes Alex committed. The protagonist regains his personality only at the end of the book, when the State stops controlling him, giving him the opportunity of becoming conscious of his errors.

As part of the Ludovico procedures, Alex is asked to watch some special movies. As he regards himself as a unique person, he can't imagine that his perceptions might be affected and even changed in this way. But the project coordinator, Branom considers him no more than a subject of his experiment. For him, Alex is a mechanical entity, predictable and unable to make free choices. The "special films" are very similar to Alex's crimes and they seem so real that the boy begins to feel pain and discomfort. It is a procedure meant to convert incorrigible hooligans into honest citizens. The scientists studying the evolution of society were just a few, as they were activating in a relatively new field. They adopted this idea of reforming the criminals, that is, giving them a second chance by removing any criminal instincts. However, there is this risk of removing other pleasures, too. Therefore, this technique is rejected by the protagonist as it reduces his possibility of making moral choices; it also has the side effect of making him hate his favourite music. Ludovico's Technique makes use of the individual's aesthetic pleasures and senses. The author created this method in order to analyse the ethical implications of people's behavior in his society. The individual's right to make free choices is protected by the prison chaplain. Talking to him, Alex offers himself as a guinea pig for the Ludovico's Technique, in order to get out of jail and to make a so-called act of goodness. But the chaplain is not really sure whether this technique works or not. "The question is whether such a technique can make a man good. Goodness comes from within, 6655321. Goodness is something chosen. When a man cannot choose, he ceases to be a man. It may not be nice to be good, 6655321. It may be horrible to be

good. I know I shall have many sleepless nights about this. What does God want? Does God want goodness or the choice of goodness? Is a man who chooses the bad perhaps in some way better than a man who has the good imposed upon him? You are passing now to a region where you will be beyond the power of prayer. A terrible, terrible thing to consider. And yet, in a sense, in choosing to be deprived of the ability to make an ethical choice, you have in a sense really chosen the good. So I shall like to think. So, God help us all, 6655321.”(Burgess 1986:50) If the prison chaplain supports freedom of choice, and the negative consequences that come with the territory, the minister, on the other hand, supports an ordered society. The Minister of the Interior, who comes to power during Alex’s imprisonment, claims that criminals should be cured and reformed, but not punished. Therefore, he sets up an experimental rehabilitation programme which should destroy any criminal instincts. His idea of creating a perfect society is for the government to rule cleanly and efficiently, maintaining order in the streets. He thinks hooligans should use their violence in the service of the state and therefore decides to hire them as police officers. As a consequence there would be more space in prison for political offenders. By creating this character, the author tried to mock at the socialist governments which tend to overlook the needs, the principles or personal liberties of the individual. He is not interested in studying the root of evil but to sacrifice the human individuality at any costs, so as to obtain State security.

This imaginary procedure, adopted to examine a contemporary world is typical for the dystopian state. This new “dislike” of classical music represents for Alex a tragical loss. He does not condemn his friends’ betrayal or the policemen that beat him up, but the idea of being deprived of free will and implicitly of music represents the ultimate sin for him. Having lost his identity, Alex becomes more and more vexed when he vomits for the first time while listening to Beethoven and resorts to extreme acts.

By the time the procedure will come to an end, Alex will become a martyr formed by the state with the purpose of achieving social stability. Being now ready to return to the real world, Alex exhibits a totally different behaviour: he is humble and submissive. The chaplain realizes that this new procedure adopted by the government is nothing more than another embodiment of criminal behaviour. He considers that free will should be valued and appreciated, because once the human being becomes incapable of reasoning, he automatically loses any intention of doing good things and of taking decisions. Alex seems that his mind is under the control of a police force and any time he feels the urge to commit a crime he feels sick. This is the moment when he remembers about the manuscript he saw in the writer’s house and refers to himself as “a clockwork orange”. He feels he has been forced to respond to certain stimuli and he can’t do anything about it anymore. If on one hand he has become harmless and

inoffensive on the other, he is not capable of protecting himself or reacting in any way in the tough world outside the prison walls.

In the last part of the book the reader finds a calm and quiet Alex, passive and mocked at by the people he comes across. If in the beginning he was the aggressor, now he becomes the aggressed one. Even in his family, when being criticized and reprimanded and made responsible for the pain he has caused to his parents, he has no reaction. When the people he had hurt in the past, revenge and beat him up, he displays no violent behaviour. He feels like a humiliated victim. Trying to find a way out, he takes some drugs, hoping that they will induce the same state he had when listening to classical music. But, unfortunately for him, he feels much worse, as the drugs enhance his helplessness.

When getting out of prison, Alex finds a new world increasingly intolerant of crime and therefore he should be safe, if considering his powerlessness of defending himself. But the police have become the new brutalizing force. His old friends, Dim and Billyboy, who have become law enforcement officers stand for the moral and legal decline of the society. However, the government's main concern is to maintain the appearance of order on the streets and not necessarily to reduce crime. When meeting again the writer whose wife he had violated in the past, Alex is treated with compassion and understanding. Hearing about her death (as a consequence of his deeds) he feels no sorrow and he does not regret his actions. Even if his criminal impulses have been smothered he feels no compassion for people and has no remorse. He behaves like a robot programmed to avoid bad things and his only concern is to avoid for his "new" friend to find out the truth about who he really is.

His friend, F. Alexander, whom he regards as a father, eventually finds out that Alex is the one who raped and murdered his wife. Thus, our protagonist becomes an Oedipal symbol and a rivalry develops between the two men. If in the beginning the writer either sympathized with Alex and felt pity for the poor, innocent child, or wanted to use him as a "tool" against the government, now, he experiences new feelings towards Alex: he begins to hate and despise him, looking for revenge. The Freudian son is suggested several times by Anthony Burgess, the government being regarded as a paternal institution. Alex feels as if he is being treated like an object. In order to reach his political goals, F. Alexander decides that Alex would be much more valuable if dead. It will have a greater impact and he might be regarded as a martyr in the criminal hands of the state.

With all sort of manipulative techniques, F. Alexander drives Alex to committing suicide. However he does not die but is seriously injured. While in the hospital, the Minister visits him in order to inform him that he is very proud of the man Alex has grown into, and that he even found him a job. Both F. Alexander and the Minister use Alex for their personal political convictions. And

thus, the matter of choice is brought again into discussion. While hospitalized, Alex regains his old psyche and is happy to listen to Beethoven again which suggests to the reader that he is again capable of violent crimes.

Anthony Burgess claims that “there is, in fact, not much point in writing a novel unless you can show the possibility of moral transformation, or an increase in wisdom, operating in your chief character or characters.” The author refers mainly, to the last chapter of the book where the reader finds a more mature Alex, tired of violence and of his old life. The book ends with the same image it began: Alex and his droogs are in the same bar, planning to commit a crime. But this time, Alex is not that willing and happy about it. He just gives orders and watches how they are carried out. The only thing he can think about is fatherhood. He is almost sure that his future son would follow into his footsteps and refuse to obey to society’s rules. “And nor would he be able to stop his own son, brothers. And so it would itty on to like the end of the world, round and round and round, like some bolshy gigantic like chelloveck, like old Bog Himself (by courtesy of Korova Milkbar) turning and turning and turning a vonny grahzny orange in his gigantic rookers.”(Burgess 1986: 70) This is the moment when Alex leaves childhood behind and becomes an adult, realizing that life follows a cyclical pattern. Alex is now ready for a new life, making plans for the future, for starting a family.

To sum up, Anthony Burgess created a state in which, out of a burning ambition to protect the society the government took away freedom of choice (as such choices affect the safety of society) and replaced it with prescribed good behaviour. So when Alex was “deprived” of his pleasure of stealing and raping and murdering the result was a dangerous one.

Alex embodies the endless flaws of the society he lives in and the extent to which they have affected him. Freedom of choice is a human attribute or a birth inalienable right which distinguishes people from machines and animals. The protagonist of the book under discussion chooses violence and wickedness as a form of manifesting this right. When he is deprived of this inborn right, he loses his individuality and capacity of protecting himself against evil.

Motifs and symbols of a dystopian society

Free will is the highest gift men have been endowed with, as it is the only thing that separates human beings and animals from machines. Therefore, Anthony Burgess created a character typical for a dystopian society. He is only capable of wickedness, and this is somehow accepted as it represents his choice. However, the state robs of his self-determination turning him into nothing more than an “object”. The author also tried to emphasize a Christian conception of morality based on the idea that it is also a matter of choice: good behaviour means nothing if imposed on the individual; if he does not choose goodness because he wants to. The references to Christ provide Alex with a martyr figure

who gives up his identity and self-determination in the benefit of the society. At some point, the reader is confused and wonders which is worse: the protagonist's wickedness or the evil of the government. By using all sort of technological devices, threats, mass-market culture, the state takes all necessary means to control individuals like Alex, to make them act predictably, and thus to protect its stability. Apathy and neutrality are two satirized features used to characterize the average inhabitant of postwar England. Fearing of going outside at night, they prefer to stay indoors and watch TV.

“Duality as the Ultimate Reality” is a phrase coined by Anthony Burgess. “This phrase reflects Burgess’s understanding of the world as a set of fundamental and coequal oppositions of forces. *A Clockwork Orange* abounds with dualities: good versus evil, commitment versus neutrality, man versus machine, man versus government, youth versus maturity, and intellect versus intuition, to name some of the most prominent ones. The important aspect of this theme is that, while one element of a given duality may be preferable to the other - such as good over evil - each force is equally essential in explaining the dynamics of the world. To know one of the opposing forces is to implicitly know the other. The notion of duality comes into play in *A Clockwork Orange* particularly during the debate over good and evil, where Alex at one point debunks the validity of a political institution that does not account for individual evil as a naturally occurring phenomenon.”(SparkNotes 2005:5)

Classical music represents a motif or a symbol in the book. “Alex’s love of classical music within the confines of the novel’s repressive government invokes Plato, who argued that the enjoyment of music must be suppressed if social order is to be preserved. Plato identifies music with revolutionary pleasure, an association that may easily be applied to Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex’s love of classical music is inextricable from his love of violence, and he rarely thinks of one without the other. Both of these passions fly in the face of a government that, above all else, desires a Platonic order. It is thus no accident that Alex’s taste for Beethoven and Mozart sours once he undergoes Reclamation Treatment.”(SparkNotes 2005:5)

Among the symbols used to depict a dystopian society we distinguish: the hallucinogenic milk, the image of darkness, and daylight. The milk represents uniformity and the immaturity of the people who drink it in that bar, proving that the teenagers are less innocent than the adults. People turn into “objects” and become inhuman under the effect of this drug as they are urged to commit atrocities. Darkness is a symbol of the individual’s free will. It gives him the opportunity of intimacy and silence, necessary to make a choice. If at night the protagonist feels relaxed, during the day he is restless and agitated because of the police patrolling on the streets or because of the doctors all dressed up in white. During the day Alex loses his mysterious features and traits and is just an ordinary man.

This paper weighs the values and dangers of individual freedom and state control analyzing whether one is willing to give up liberty for order or the other way around. It depicts in a shocking manner the effects a dystopian society has over the individual. Dystopian characters make use of human weaknesses in order to set forth and to prove the destructive power of authoritarian rule. Dystopian societies demoralize people, deprive them of the ability of taking decisions while their personal desires, either good or evil, are taken over by the state. They control the citizens of society, restrict independent thought, put them under permanent surveillance. People fear the outside world, they live in a dehumanized state where dissent is forbidden. The whole society is in fact an “illusion” of a perfect world, illusion which is maintained through corporate or mass-media control, red tape or incompetent government representatives, new technologies like robots or scientific methods and religious ideology. The dystopian “inhabitant” constantly tries to escape this world in which he feels trapped, he does not trust the social and political system, which, in his opinion, promote wrong values and ideas. Through his own deeds and words, thoughts and feelings, this “inhabitant” helps the reader recognize dystopian societies.

Conclusions

In conclusion, Alex is a dystopic character, with a violent destiny. He spends his youth robbing, stealing, raping or attacking people just for fun, in the same way most of the teenagers do in a post-industrialized world. This “game of cruelty” is interrupted when this dystopian character is arrested and sentenced to fourteen years in prison. Out of pure naïveté and of a strong desire to get out of jail, he accepts to become the “guinea pig” of a governmental experiment which turns him into a mechanism, into a shadow of the man he used to be. The nausea he feels when trying to resume his old habits transforms him into a clockwork orange – fact which questions his humanity. Released by any criminal instincts, he is sent back into a society where he is deprived of any means of defending himself, becoming a victim of brutality.

The author does not support any ethics and moral principles. In fairytales, the good and the evil have a certain shape, while in this book, both of them reside in the same human being. A man cannot be totally good or totally evil. The society described in this book makes the reader reflect over the human nature, while the image created is like a “shot” against violence, and not a supporting argument in its favour. Dystopian worlds reflect human alienation into an imaginary future, disclosing the fragile boundaries that separate good and evil. According to the writer, the character he drew up does not represent the output of social norms; his whole being and his behaviour are a reflection of his own choices on the background of a sombre future in a hopeless world.

The dystopian issues are very appealing and attractive as they connect, to some extent, to the harsh reality of our time, and to the violent society we live in.

There are scenes occurring during the day when the protagonist acts like a normal teenager, and night scenes when people get killed without any reason. This situation is similar to present-day society: we also have ghettos, criminals and unsafe night walks. The dystopian society forces people to become aware of their ephemeral lives in a world where appearances are no more than two relative concepts; the human individual is a simple victim who cannot do anything else but watch. There are no rules or laws in a dystopic environment, and a simple walk at night might cost one, one's life.

Good and evil are two facets of the same coin and it is questionable whether they ever meet. The ideas debated in this paper represent a challenge or an experiment for the reader who is forced to feel and live the cruelties of a dystopian character. His transition from criminal to a simple "object" and later on to a "social machine" is meant to define human nature and the influence society has upon it. Despite the scandalous atrocities Alex has committed, the state caused a greater damage: it interfered with people's personal lives trying to change them and turn them into machines incapable of ethical decisions. Beyond the violent acts of Alex there is the tragical image of the modern man, sad, lonely and helpless who has nothing more to hope for. It is a terrible perspective which, unfortunately might become the reality we live in.

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