

## *A Clockwork Orange - Anthony Burgess –*

Full title	· A Clockwork Orange
Author	· John Anthony Burgess Wilson (Anthony Burgess)
Type of work	· Novella
Genre	· Dystopia; philosophical novel; social satire; black comedy
Language	· English
Time and place written	· 1958–1961, England
Date of first publication	· 1962
Narrator	· Alex narrates A Clockwork Orange immediately after the events of the novel.
Point of view	· The narrator speaks in the first person, subjectively describing only what he sees, hears, thinks, and experiences.
Tone	· Irreverent; comical; hateful; playful; juvenile
Tense	· Past, though in the last few paragraphs the narrator switches to present tense
Setting (time)	· The not-so-distant future
Setting (place)	· A large town or small city in England, as well as an English countryside village
Protagonist	· Alex
Major conflict	· Alex asserts himself against the State, which seeks to suppress his freedom by psychologically removing his power to make free choices.
Rising action	· Alex commits several violent crimes that disrupt the order of the State.
Climax	· Alex is apprehended by the police and sent to jail, where he eventually undergoes behavioral conditioning that kills his capacity for violence.
Falling action	· Alex becomes a being incapable of making moral decisions, and he is caught up in a political struggle between the current government and a cabal of revolutionaries.
Themes	· The inviolability of free will; the necessity of commitment; the inherent evil of government; “duality as the ultimate reality”
Motifs	· Nadsat; classical music; Christ
Symbols	· Milk; synthemesc, vellocet and drenchrom (hallucinogenic drugs); night/darkness; day/lightness
Foreshadowing	· In Part One, Chapter 1, Alex foreshadows more violence before the night's end by telling us that the “night is still very young.” In Part One, Chapter 3, the names Gitterfenster and Bettzeug foreshadow Alex's impending imprisonment and suicide attempt, respectively. In Part One, Chapter 5, Alex foreshadows the parallels between himself and Christ, which will continue throughout the novel, and shape the novel's three-part structure. In Part One, Chapter 5 Alex foreshadows his apprehension by the police, as well as everything else that befalls him, when he tells us that he leads his droogs to his doom. In Part Two, Chapter 7, Alex foreshadows the conflict in Part Three between the State and F. Alexander's faction of political dissidents when he tells us that his mention of F. Alexander's manuscript “A Clockwork Orange” hushes the room for a minute.

### ***Context***

A prolific writer, John Anthony Burgess Wilson (1917–1993) didn't publish his first novel until he was almost forty. Born and raised in Manchester, England, Burgess spent most of his adult life abroad in the army before teaching in Malaya with the British Colonial Service. Diagnosed with a brain tumor in 1960, Burgess began writing at a frantic pace in the hope that the royalties from his books would support his wife after he died. He wrote five novels that year alone. When he later discovered that his condition had been

misdiagnosed, Burgess continued to write and publish novels at a rapid rate. Though he wrote nearly forty novels, his most famous work is the dystopian novella *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), which owes much of its popularity to Stanley Kubrick's 1971 film adaptation. Burgess himself thought that *A Clockwork Orange* was far from his best work. In an interview, he dismissed the book as gimmicky and didactic, and rued the idea that this book would survive while others that he valued more were sure to pass into obscurity.

Burgess's novels address fundamental issues of human nature and morality, such as the existence of good and evil and the importance of free will. Burgess was raised as a Catholic, and though he left the church as a young man, he retained his admiration for its tenets and doctrines. Although Burgess was interested in and influenced by numerous religions, Catholicism exerted the greatest influence on his moral views. His portrayal of human beings as inherently predisposed toward violence, for example, reflects his acceptance of the Catholic view that all human beings are tainted by original sin.

Burgess was inspired to write *A Clockwork Orange* during a visit to Leningrad in 1961. There, he observed the state-regulated, repressive atmosphere of a nation that threatened to spread its dominion over the world. At the time of his visit, the Soviet Union was ahead of the United States in the space race, and communism was establishing itself in countries as far-flung as Vietnam and Cuba. Burgess regarded communism as a fundamentally flawed system, because it shifts moral responsibility from the individual to the state while disregarding the welfare of the individual. Burgess's deeply internalized Catholic notions of free will and original sin prevented him from accepting a system that sacrifices individual freedom for the public good. *A Clockwork Orange* may be seen in part as an attack on communism, given the novel's extremely negative portrayal of a government that seeks to solve social problems by removing freedom of choice.

During his visit to Leningrad, Burgess encountered the *stilyagi*, gangs of thuggish Russian teenagers. While Burgess was eating dinner at a restaurant one night, a group of bizarrely dressed teenagers pounded on the door. Burgess thought they were targeting him as a westerner, but the boys stepped aside graciously when he left and then resumed pounding. Burgess insists that he based *nadsat*—the invented slang of his teenage hooligans in *A Clockwork Orange*—on Russian for purely aesthetic reasons, but it seems likely that this startling experience influenced his portrayal of Alex and his gang. Along with English Teddy Boys, a youth culture of the 1950s and 1960s associated with American rock music, the Russian gangs provided a template for the hoodlums in *A Clockwork Orange*.

However, *A Clockwork Orange* shouldn't be understood simply as a critique of the Soviet Union or of communism, because the dystopian world of the novel draws just as much on elements of English and American society that Burgess detested. In his own estimation, Burgess had a tendency toward anarchy, and he felt that the socialistic British welfare state was too willing to sacrifice individual liberty in favor of social stability. He despised American popular culture for fostering homogeneity, passivity, and apathy. He regarded American law enforcement as hopelessly corrupt and violent, referring to it as “an alternative criminal body.” Each of these targets gets lampooned in *A Clockwork Orange*, but Burgess's most pointed satire is reserved for the psychological movement known as behaviorism.

Popularized by Harvard psychologist B.F. Skinner in the 1950s and 1960s, behaviorism concerned itself with the study of human and animal behavior in response to stimuli. Through the application of carefully controlled system of rewards and punishments—a process referred to as conditioning—Skinner demonstrated that scientists could alter the behavior of test subjects more effectively than had previously been thought possible. (In one famous experiment, he successfully trained laboratory pigeons to play ping pong.) To many people, behaviorism seemed to offer an almost limitless potential to control human behavior, and the movement had a profound effect not only in academia, but on education, government, and criminal rehabilitation as well. In *A Clockwork Orange*, Burgess satirizes behaviorism with his portrayal of the fictional Ludovico's Technique.

Burgess was still a relatively unknown writer when he published *A Clockwork Orange* in 1962, and the novel was not an immediate success. To Burgess's dismay, the American version of the novel was published without the final chapter, in which Alex grows up and renounces violence. Burgess strongly disapproved of this decision, which he believed had distorted the novel into a nasty tale of unredeemable evil. Ironically, it was the American edition of the novel that became a cult classic among college students, and it was also the edition that Stanley Kubrick used for his 1971 film adaptation.

Stanley Kubrick's film version of *A Clockwork Orange* was both commercially successful and highly controversial, catapulting Burgess to a much wider fame. Initially labeled with an X rating and widely criticized for glorifying sex and violence, the film was blamed for several incidents of copycat violence, including one notorious British case in which a group of men, in imitation of the film, gang-raped a woman while singing “Singing in the Rain.” Despite the scandal, however, Burgess remained an eminent literary

personality from then on. Regarded as both an artistic luminary and an eccentric crank, Burgess made several television appearances and served as a visiting professor at universities throughout America and England. He continued writing and composing music—like his protagonist Alex, Burgess loved classical music and considered it his first vocation—until his death in 1993.

### ***Plot Overview***

*A Clockwork Orange* takes place in a futuristic city governed by a repressive, totalitarian super-State. In this society, ordinary citizens have fallen into a passive stupor of complacency, blind to the insidious growth of a rampant, violent youth culture. The protagonist of the story is Alex, a fifteen-year-old boy who narrates in a teenage slang called nadsat, which incorporates elements of Russian and Cockney English. Alex leads a small gang of teenage criminals—Dim, Pete, and Georgie—through the streets, robbing and beating men and raping women. Alex and his friends spend the rest of their time at the Korova Milkbar, an establishment that serves milk laced with drugs, and a bar called the Duke of New York.

Alex begins his narrative from the Korova, where the boys sit around drinking. When Alex and his gang leave the bar, they go on a crime spree that involves mugging, robbery, a gang fight, auto theft, breaking and entering, and rape. The last of these crimes is particularly brutal. The boys travel to the countryside with their stolen car, break into a cottage and beat up the man inside before raping his wife while making him watch. They then head back to the Korova, where they fight with each other. Alex, who loves classical music, becomes angry at Dim when Dim mocks an opera that Alex likes. Alex punches Dim in the face, which prompts the others to turn against their arrogant leader. The next time they go out, they break into an old woman's house. She calls the police, and before Alex can get away, Dim hits him in the eye with a chain and runs away with the others. The police apprehend Alex and take him to the station, where he later learns that the woman he beat and raped during the earlier robbery has died.

Alex is sentenced to fourteen years in prison. At first, prison is difficult for him. The guards are merciless and oppressive, and several of the other prisoners want to rape him. After a few years, though, prison life becomes easier. He befriends the prison chaplain, who notices Alex's interest in the Bible. The chaplain lets Alex read in the chapel while listening to classical music, and Alex pores over the Old Testament, delighting in the sex, drinking, and fighting he finds in its pages.

One day, after fighting with and killing a cellmate, Alex is selected as the first candidate for an experimental treatment called Ludovico's Technique, a form of brainwashing that incorporates associative learning. After being injected with a substance that makes him dreadfully sick, the doctors force Alex to watch exceedingly violent movies. In this way, Alex comes to associate violence with the nausea and headaches he experiences from the shot. The process takes two weeks to complete, after which the mere thought of violence has the power to make Alex ill. As an unintended consequence of the treatment, Alex can no longer enjoy classical music, which he has always associated with violence. This side effect doesn't bother the State, which considers Alex's successful treatment a victory for law and order and plans to implement it on a large scale.

After two years in prison, Alex is released, a harmless human being incapable of vicious acts. Soon, however, Alex finds he's not only harmless but also defenseless, as his earlier victims begin to take revenge on him. His old friend Dim and an old enemy named Billyboy are both police officers now, and they take the opportunity to settle old scores. They drive him to a field in the country, beat him, and leave him in the rain. Looking for charity, Alex wanders to a nearby cottage and knocks on the door, begging for help. The man living there lets him in and gives him food and a room for the night. Alex recognizes him from two years ago as the man whose wife he raped, but the man does not recognize Alex, who wore a mask that night. Alex learns later in the night that the man's wife died of shock shortly after being raped.

This man, F. Alexander, is a political dissident. When he hears Alex's story, he thinks he can use Alex to incite public outrage against the State. He and three of his colleagues develop a plan for Alex to make several public appearances. Alex, however, is tired of being exploited for other people's schemes. He berates the men in nadsat, which arouses the suspicion of F. Alexander, who still remembers the strange language spoken by the teenagers who raped his wife. Based on F. Alexander's suspicion, the men change their plans. They lock Alex in an apartment and blast classical music through the wall, hoping to drive Alex to suicide so they can blame the government.

Alex does, in fact, hurl himself out of an attic window, but the fall doesn't kill him. While he lies in the hospital, unconscious, a political struggle ensues, but the current administration survives. State doctors undo Ludovico's Technique and restore Alex's old vicious self in exchange for Alex's endorsement. Back to normal, Alex assembles a new gang and engages in the same behavior as he did before prison, but he soon

begins to tire of a life of violence. After running into his old friend Pete, who is now married and living a normal life, Alex decides that such a life is what he wants for himself. His final thoughts are of his future son

## **Character List**

### Alex

Alex is the narrator and protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange*. Every word on the page is his, and we experience his world through the sensations he describes and the suffering he endures. He is at once generic and highly individual, mindless and substantive, knowingly evil and innocently likeable.

At first, Alex appears to be little more than a robot programmed for violence. In the world of the novel, youth violence is a major social problem, and Alex represents a typical—though highly successful—teenager. He dresses in the “height of fashion,” frequents all of the popular hangouts, and is the undisputed leader of his gang. Like most teenagers in *A Clockwork Orange*, Alex speaks in a highly stylized slang called nadsat. Alex is unique in his unyielding commitment to the ideals of violence, as well as the aesthetic pleasure he takes in his crimes. Alex elevates his evil behavior to the status of art. Alex loves art itself, particularly classical music. A devout enthusiast of Beethoven, Mozart, and other composers, Alex experiences something akin to religious joy when he listens to classical music. To Alex, the delight he finds in classical music is closely related to the ecstasy he feels during acts of violence. When listening to one recording, for example, Alex imagines “carving the whole litso [face] of the creeching [screaming] world with [his] cut-throat britva [razor].” Throughout the novel, Alex further emphasizes the connection between music and violence by reserving his most musical language for the descriptions of his most brutal crimes.

Alex experiences the pleasures of music and brutality in a direct and sensuous manner, without mediation or meditation. Unlike F. Alexander, one of Alex's primary antagonists, Alex remains completely uninterested in explaining his actions in terms of abstract or theoretical notions, and he rarely considers himself in a larger social context. When faced with various hypotheses as to the origin of his depravity, Alex's responses are staunchly anti-intellectual. Unlike his probation officer, P.R. Deltoid, Alex believes that evil represents a natural state for human beings, and is as valid a state of being as goodness. According to this reasoning, Alex believes that the State, which seeks to deprive him of the choice to act cruelly, encroaches on his freedom as an individual. Thus, in choosing violence, Alex ultimately affirms his sense of self.

Alex's vileness in *A Clockwork Orange* underlines the theme that human beings, no matter how depraved, shouldn't be deprived of their freedom of self-determination. The State's destruction of Alex's ability to make his own moral choices represents a greater evil than any of Alex's crimes, since turning Alex into an automaton ultimately sanctions the notion that human nature is dispensable. Alex truly grows as a human being only in the last chapter, after the government removes his conditioning and he can see the error of his ways for himself, without the prompting of an external, controlling force.

### F. Alexander

Though they share a name, F. Alexander and Alex are quite different from each other. While Alex is an intuitive creature who makes decisions based on impulse, F. Alexander is an “intelligent type bookman type” who behaves according to abstract concepts, which he ponders from the safety of his country home, far away from the city streets with which he seems so concerned. F. Alexander thinks in broad, theoretical terms, and has trouble focusing on specifics. When Alex begs for mercy after being beaten by the police, F. Alexander pities him not as a suffering boy, but as an abstract “victim of the modern age.” Similarly, when Alex asks him how he expects to improve Alex's life through the exploitation of his victim status, F. Alexander can't provide an answer. F. Alexander claims to want to help people like Alex, but he remains unconcerned with Alex as a particular, individual person.

F. Alexander's failure to embrace actual human reality can be read as a criticism of liberalist ideologies, which Burgess has criticized for being committed to improving the lot of mankind at the expense of man himself. F. Alexander's belief that man is “a creature of growth and capable of sweetness” is a noble one, especially because he has experienced first-hand the kind of evil men are capable of. However, his readiness to use Alex, also a creature of growth and capable of sweetness, as a “thing” with which to wage war against the State reveals a certain degree of hypocrisy.

### Minister of the Interior

The Minister of the Interior comes into power during the two years Alex is incarcerated. As the highest-ranking representative of the State, the Minister embodies the government's changing attitude toward its citizens. The government he represents is even more repressive than the one Alex knows in Part One, and its

cardinal virtue is the stability of society. To achieve this goal, the Minister has put two sweeping policies into effect with regard to criminal behavior. For already-incarcerated offenders, the Minister has decided to move ahead with an experimental rehabilitation program that destroys criminal tendencies. In this way, he can free up jail space for political dissidents, who threaten the new State order. In his other policy modification, the Minister gives badges to the remaining street thugs so that these violent criminals can authoritatively impose social order.

With the character of the Minister, Burgess satirizes the tendency of socialist governments to overlook the needs and rights of individuals who threaten communal order. Personal liberties mean nothing to the Minister, and neither do principles. He candidly admits to having sacrificed Alex's individual, human qualities in exchange for a passive young man who can't help but act in a socially acceptable manner. In these ways, the Minister differs from both F. Alexander and P.R. Deltoid. Unlike the former, he doesn't care about principles, and, unlike the latter, he doesn't bother to study the origins of violence. Rather, the Minister possesses a distinctly utilitarian attitude toward accomplishing the goal of total State security. Ironically, this acutely pragmatic attitude also prompts the Minister to cure Alex, when the Minister realizes that he needs Alex's endorsement to quell the public outrage stirred up by F. Alexander. In ensuring society's stability, the Minister always observes the following mantra: "The point is that it works."

### ***Themes***

#### ***The Inviolability of Free Will***

More than anything, Burgess believed that "the freedom to choose is the big human attribute," meaning that the presence of moral choice ultimately distinguishes human beings from machines or lower animals. This belief provides the central argument of *A Clockwork Orange*, where Alex asserts his free will by choosing a course of wickedness, only to be subsequently robbed of his self-determination by the government. In making Alex—a criminal guilty of violence, rape, and theft—the hero of the novel, Burgess argues that humanity must, at all costs, insist that individuals be allowed to make their own moral choices, even if that freedom results in depravity. When the State removes Alex's power to choose his own moral course of action, Alex becomes nothing more than a thing. A human being's legitimacy as a moral agent is predicated on the notion that good and evil exist as separate, equally valid choices. Without evil as a valid option, the choice to be good becomes nothing more than an empty, meaningless gesture.

The novel's treatment of this theme includes, but is not limited to, the presentation of a Christian conception of morality. The chaplain, the novel's clearest advocate for Christian morals, addresses the dangers of Alex's "Reclamation Treatment" when he tells Alex that "goodness is something chosen. When a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man." F. Alexander echoes this sentiment, albeit from a different philosophical standpoint, when he tells Alex that the treatment has "turned [him] into something other a human being. [He has] no power of choice any longer." Burgess's novel ultimately supports this conception of morality as a matter of choice and determination and argues that good behavior is meaningless if one does not actively choose goodness.

#### ***The Inherent Evil of Government***

Just as *A Clockwork Orange* champions free will, it deplores the institution of government, which systematically seeks to suppress the individual in favor of the collective, or the state. Alex articulates this notion when he contends, in Part One, Chapter 4, that modern history is the story of individuals fighting against large, repressive government "machines." As we see in *A Clockwork Orange*, the State is prepared to employ any means necessary to ensure its survival. Using technological innovation, mass-market culture, and the threat of violence, among other strategies, the State seeks to control Alex and his fellow citizens, who are least dangerous when they are most predictable. The State also does not tolerate dissent. Once technology helps to clear its prisons by making hardened criminals harmless, the State begins incarcerating dissidents, like F. Alexander, who aim to rouse public opinion against it and thus threaten its stability.

#### ***The Necessity of Commitment in Life***

Burgess saw apathy and neutrality as two of the greatest sins of postwar England, and these qualities abound in *A Clockwork Orange*. Burgess satirizes them heavily, especially in his depiction of Alex's parents. Fearful of going outside and content to be lulled to sleep by a worldcast program, Alex's parents exemplify what Burgess saw as the essentially torpid nature of middle-class citizens. Conversely, Burgess makes Alex, whose proactive dedication to the pursuit of pleasure causes great suffering, the hero of his novel. Alex himself seems disgusted by neutrality, which he sees as a function of "thingness," or inhumanity.

### *“Duality as the Ultimate Reality”*

Coined by Burgess in an interview, 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.

**Motifs** (Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.)

#### *Nadsat*

Nadsat is the single most striking literary device that Burgess employs. An invented slang that incorporates mostly Russian and Cockney English, Alex uses nadsat to describe the world of *A Clockwork Orange*. Its initial effect is one of exclusion and alienation, as the reader actively deals with the foreignness of Alex's speech. This effect is important because it keeps us removed from the intensely brutal violence that Alex perpetrates. Before we can evaluate Alex's character, we must first come to identify with him on his terms: to “speak his language,” literally. In this way, Alex implicates us in the remorseless violence he commits throughout most of Part One, and we in turn develop sympathy for him as our narrator. In some sense, then, nadsat is a form of brainwashing—as we develop this new vocabulary, it subtly changes the ways we think about things. Nadsat shows the subtle, subliminal ways that language can control others. As the popular idiom of the teenager, nadsat seems to enter the collective consciousness on a subcultural level, a notion that hints at an undercurrent of burgeoning repression.

Nadsat's origins also help to illuminate the world that Burgess chooses to depict in the novel. The combination of Russian and English indicates that Alex's society is inspired by the two major superpowers of Burgess's time, American capitalist democracy and Soviet Communism, suggesting that the two entities are not as far apart from one another as we might have thought.

#### *Classical Music*

Classical music enters *A Clockwork Orange* on a number of levels. On the formal level, the structure of the novel is patterned after musical forms. The novel, which is divided into three parts of seven chapters each, assumes an ABA form, analogous to an operatic aria. Accordingly, Parts 1 and 3 are mirror images of each other, while Part Two is substantially different. The A sections both take place on the streets near Alex's home and in a country cottage, while the B section takes place in a jail. The A sections begin with Alex asking himself “What's it going to be then, eh?” The B section begins with the same question, but this time, the prison chaplain asks the question to Alex. The A sections identify Alex by name, while the B section identifies him by number. Additionally, the A sections, as mirror images of each other, feature inversions of the same plot. Whereas, in Part One, Alex preys on unwitting and unwilling victims, in Part Three those same victims wittingly and willingly prey on him. These formal symmetries help us to make comparisons as the thematic material develops over the course of the novel.

On a textual level, Burgess studs the novel with repeated phrases, a very common feature of classical music. Alex supplies these linguistic motifs when he howls “out out out out” to his friends, or tells us that “it was a flip dark chill winter evening though dry,” or when he begins the book's three parts—as well as the final chapter—with the question “What's it going to be then, eh?” Burgess was unique as a writer, in that he aspired to adapt the forms of classical music in his writing. His novel *Napoleon Symphony* derives its structure from Beethoven's Third Symphony, which was initially written for Napoleon.

Classical music also enters *A Clockwork Orange* on a narrative and thematic level. Though Burgess probably did not intend it to, 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.

### *Christ*

The repeated references to Christ serve two functions in the novel. First, they provide a structural and thematic analogy for Alex's life. Alex is a martyr figure who gives up his individual identity for the citizens of his society. His attempted suicide in the last third of the book works as a sacrifice that exposes the repressive State's evils. In addition, Alex's narrative goes through a succession of three stages that invoke Christ's three final days. As Jesus dies, is buried, and is resurrected on the third day, Alex gets caught, is buried in prison, and returns to his former self by the end of the novel. Alex occasionally alludes to Christ, such as when he refers to himself as a Christ figure in Part One, calling himself the "fruit of [his mother's] womb," and again in Part Two, when he mentions turning the other cheek after being punched in the face. Second, the repeated Christ references subtly insinuate that the State is using Alex's violent impulses against him. Alex's impulse toward violence twice leads him to identify with the Romans who torture and crucify Christ. In this way, Alex unwittingly aligns himself with the State, since the Romans who crucified Christ were, in effect, the "State" of biblical times.

**Symbols:** Symbols are objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

### *Milk*

As a substance that primarily nourishes young animals, milk symbolizes the immaturity and passivity of the people who habitually drink it at the Korova Milkbar. Their drinking of milk suggests the infantilization and subsequent helplessness of the State's citizens. By virtue of its whiteness and homogenization, milk also symbolizes uniformity among the teenagers who drink it. The fact that the milk is laced with drugs is ironic, suggesting that these youths are less wholesome and innocent than adults, not more.

### *Drencrom, Vellocet, and Synthemesc*

Referred to generically as hallucinogens in this study guide, these three drugs symbolize neutrality, or "thingness." The people in the novel who use them become inhuman while experiencing the effects of them, receding from the reality around them.

### *Images of Darkness, Night, and the Moon*

These things are associated with Alex's domain, and thus represent peace and security to him. The chaplain, who is garbed in black and defends Alex against the State, might also fall into this category of objects. Darkness represents the privacy and solitude necessary for an individual will to exist and make choices freely.

### *Images of Lightness and Day*

Daytime and sunlight represent danger for Alex. In Part One, Alex notes that there are several more policemen—figures of repression—out patrolling during the day. The harsh lights of the police station interrogation room create a kind of artificial day, and the doctors, with their white jackets, continue the trend of brightness being associated with threat and menace. The only time the chaplain wears white is during an exchange with Alex, where the chaplain gets Alex to snitch on his fellow prisoners in order to further his own career ambitions. Lightness represents the demystification of the individual.